Africa Code Week aims to spread digital literacy

Africa Code Week 2016, a large digital literacy initiative organised on the African continent, will run from 15-23 October 2016, with thousands of free coding workshops and online training courses offered to children and youth aged 8 to 24.

Africa Code Week 2016 will be organised by SAP and hundreds of partners spanning local African governments, NPOs, NGOs, educational institutions and businesses including the Cape Town Science Centre, the Galway Education Centre, Google, AMPION, the King Baudouin Foundation, and ATOS. The Africa Code Week 2016 kick-off coincides with The World Economic Forum (WEF) on Africa in Kigali, Rwanda, on 10-12 May.

The WEF estimates that Africa's growth will be just below 5% this year as the global economy continues to suffer. The continent has the fastest growing digital consumer market and the largest working-age population in the world. At the same time, African companies are scrambling to fill positions with employees who possess the right digital skills. Only 1% of African children leave school with basic coding skills.

Fostering learning

Africa Code Week 2016 workshops for younger aged groups (8-11, 12-17) will be based on Scratch, a learning platform developed by the MIT Media Lab to simplify coding. Students will learn coding basics and program their own animations, quizzes, and games. Ages 18 and 24 will be taught Introduction to Web Technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, SQL), a workshop that will give them a basic understanding of typical website architecture while teaching them how to create a fully operational, mobile-friendly website.

The initiative will run in Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Critical to the success of the programme is the training of thousands of teachers, parents and educators across the 30 African countries. Between the kick-off and the start of Africa Code Week 2016 in October, SAP will conduct thousands of train-the-trainer sessions to help prepare them for the initiative. In addition, access to OpenSAP online courses enables further scale and impact.

"Today literacy should go beyond just knowing how to read and write, even beyond digital literacy- knowing how to use computers. Basic literacy for the next generation should be about coding," commented Jean Philbert Nsengimana, the Minister of Youth and ICT of the government of Rwanda.

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