INNOVATIVE CODE CLUBS FOR GIRLS LAUNCH IN TANZANIA

Embargoed 00:01 local time Wednesday 8th March 2017

Vulnerable girls and young women in Tanzania are being given a unique chance to learn vital coding and technology skills in a safe space through a new innovative pilot project called Code Clubs.

The Code Clubs are launching this International Women's Day by global children's charity Theirworld in partnership with BRAC Mandeleo Tanzania.

Code Clubs provide a safe space for girls to learn coding, foster their creative thinking and increase important business and health-related knowledge and skills to help transform their lives. The clubs are located in the Temeke district of Dar es Salaam where many girls have dropped out of school and the risk of teenage pregnancy is high.

Bisma Mowjee Paul, Project Manager at Theirworld, said "With a safe space to learn and play, a mentor to inspire, and access to technology to be able to explore, create, and code we can increase learning opportunities and empower girls to fulfil their potential. Every girl should have the opportunity to go to school, learn, grow, and have a future they choose."

"At Theirworld we know that investing in a girl has social and economic returns that go beyond her, extending not only to her family and future children, but also to her community. We don't shy away from challenges and are prepared to tackle the big problems that stop children from learning," added Bisma Mowjee Paul.

Despite thousands of jobs being created in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) industries across Africa- gender discrimination and lack of access to education and technology means girls are often kept out of the work force and unable to break the cycle of poverty. On average, women make up less than 30% of the people working in STEM.

Girls and young women aged 11-25 years will learn how to build a Kano computer, make games and artworks and express themselves with code. Integrated into the curriculum are also concepts of health and nutrition where girls reflect on their daily routines and the importance of hygiene, exercise and nutrition using online tools. The older girls also learn how to create their own websites using HTML, CSS & Java as well as gain skills for future employment and business. All girls are provided with a healthy snack.

Amina Shaaban, Deputy Manager for Education at BRAC, said: "The opportunities that coding will create for the girls in these communities is immeasurable. Most, if not all, have never even seen a computer before. The coding clubs will have a much broader impact in the girls' lives that goes beyond just coding. An understanding of computer science is becoming increasingly essential in today's world. Computational thinking fosters critical thinking skills. Girls will be able to have a logical thought process, ability to spot mistakes and willingness to solve a problem that comes from learning to code. Africa is crying out for young women with STEM skills and

knowledge, these coding clubs will provide these young girls a whole new window of opportunity and interest that they never had a chance to explore."

Code Clubs run once a week in six month cycles. Girls will be taught a bespoke programme of online coding content by a trained teacher, and given access to numeracy, literacy, art and music to support their formal education. The Kano computer kits used in the clubs are low-cost, easily transportable, can be rebuilt multiple times and are highly applicable in countries where connectivity is low.

ENDS

Photos and case studies are available here: https://theirworld.webdamdb.com/lightbox/downloadlightboxqueue.php?method=getfile&k=S5zqIA0HrBnL2bvm&source=0

For more information or interviews contact Jessica Bryant on jessica@theirworld.org or call on +442031162737

Notes to editors:

- About Theirworld: Theirworld is a children's charity that believes all children everywhere deserve the best start in life. We work for a future where all children are born safely, have a quality education and the chance to change the world. For more information go to www.theirworld.org
- About BRAC Mandeleo Tanzania: BRAC is a development organization dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor, operating across 11 countries. BRAC started its work in Tanzania in 2006 by adapting and implementing its comprehensive development models reaching approximately 2.64 million people, with programmes in microfinance, small enterprises development, education, agriculture, poultry, livestock and empowerment and livelihood for adolescents.
- Code Clubs in Tanzania are kindly supported by Johnson & Johnson.
- Kano – the tech to power the hubs – is a DIY computer and coding kit for all ages. It is a simple, human way to make and play with technology to build a computer, make games, music, and artworks, and express yourself with code.
- Codecademy – the accredited course – will give girls an accredited skills base and the know how in online learning. Codecademy rethinks education from the bottom up and creates an engaging educational experience.