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- Train and Certify Students and Professionals
- Provide opportunities through networking
- Educate the Public
- Influence Policy Formulation
- Lead in Technology Advocacy

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IIPGH
CODING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In 2018 the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana initiated a coding program for children dubbed "Coding for Kids". The main idea behind the concept was to introduce children to coding/programming at an early age. This is because research has shown that when children start coding early, they are able to build cognitive skills that enable them to become adept at creative, critical and computational thinking. It also improves their problem-solving skills and builds their confidence in generating innovations. These skills enable them enable them to seamlessly embrace science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) which many of them find challenging.

Evidence from developing economies such as China and India attest to the fact that technology has the power of leapfrogging the development of nations. Indeed, in the last 30 years or thereabouts, much of the socio-economic progress that have been recorded in these countries have been largely spurred by technology. It is significant to note that the countries made a conscious effort to invest in their young people by introducing them to technological skills as part of their academic training. India, particularly, is now harvesting the fruits of their investments in technology by exporting their experts around the world.
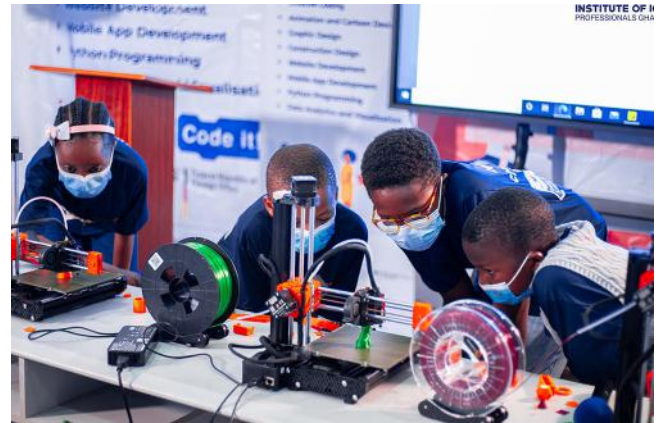
Inspired by the success stories of the above-mentioned countries, IIPGH introduced its Coding Program for Kids with the vision of revolutionizing the teaching, learning and application of technology in Ghana. Fortunately, the Institute received the buy-in of some German organizations, particularly Code for Africa, Code-It! and Tinkertoys who supported the establishment of the Digital Design and Creative Coding Hub. The hub is equipped with ultramodern, state-of-the-art laptops, smartboards and 3-D printers. In the last four years, the Insti-
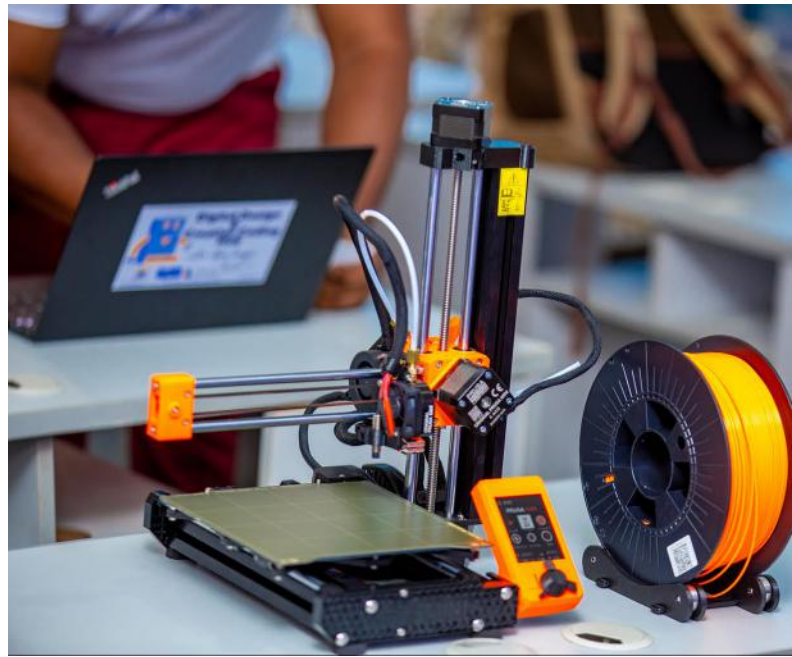
In order to promote and sustain the coding program in schools, IIPGH has entered into an agreement with more than a dozen schools including Englebert School (Airport Residential Area), International Community School (East Legon), Alpha Beta School (Dansoman), Jack & Jill School (Roman Ridge), Angel Specialist School (Tema), Oasis International School (GREDA Estate), Shield International School (Adenta), Redwood Universal (Dzorwulu), West Hill School (New Bortianor) where the Institute has introduced coding as an extra-curricular activity.

With a vision of taking the coding program beyond the national capital, IIPGH in August 2021 birthed a Coding Caravan initiative which toured the southern parts of the country with a mission to introduce coding to young people. The caravan kicked off in Accra and made stopovers in Central, Western, Eastern and Volta regions. In total about 1,000 young people were reached with basic coding tutorials. The initiative was partly sponsored by IT Consortium as part of their corporate social responsibility (CRS) in the celebration of their 20th anniversary. The co-sponsor was Code-for-Afrika.

IIPGH is convinced that by 2030 global technology deployments will be dominated by domains such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Software Engineering, Robotics, Application Development, Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR). The Institute, therefore, views the coding program as a foundation for the future of the Ghanaian child. See attached "Coding Education for Ghana Initiative" for details of the Institute's coding activities.

As part of its 10th Anniversary Celebration, the Ghana Chamber of Telecoms in collaboration with the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana, organized The Coding Caravan in 3 regions

It is never too early to expose or introduce young ones to computer technology. Even children who cannot yet read or spell can grasp the logic of coding, thanks to the use of symbols. It can be beneficial to their future success in school and in life.

In today's world of technology, it is becoming very important to gain skills in coding. Much like learning a new language, it is best to start learning to code at a young age, to build a foundation.

Even understanding the basics will create countless opportunities in the future and encourage creativity, increase problem solving skills and improve communication.

This, the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH), believes in the early start-introducing and exposing young ones to digital skills, to prepare the next generation for entrepreneurship, and new job requirements in today's fast-moving technological world.

Thus, as part of its 10th anniversary celebrations, the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications, decided to give back to society by reaching out to young ones in three selected regions, namely, Volta, Eastern and Central, then impart technology skills through the Coding Caravan program of the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana. This is in line with its strategic partnership with the Institute to scale up its coding program, nationwide and to ensure that many more children, across the country, especially those in deprived and hard-to-reach communities, are introduced to coding. The three locations namely Apam-Junction, Nsawam, and Tsiame hosted the coding caravan team on the 14th, 20th, and 27th of July 2022, respectively.

There are many software programs built around teaching children about using technology, while also teaching key skills for school, such as math and reading. In early childhood, young coders can compose a series of blocks with arrows to make an object move across a screen to a particular destination, taking arithmetic and creativity into consideration. This third caravan, just as the previous ones, offers a simple and motivating introduction to computer programming and other digital skills like 3D design and creative coding for children. It has been very exciting and eye-opening for many children who had never used a computer before nor seen 3D printers.

Tutors during the caravan usually take turns in separate sessions to teach participants practically and playfully to code. With assistants, teaching and learning is made easy as the assistants are seen going round to help students to follow the lead tutor in an instructional method. The Coding Caravan carries along on all roadshows over 150 (one hundred and fifty) laptops, well charged to stay up when faced with electricity challenges. The caravan also makes available its 3D printers to print and showcase 3D designs from creative coding.

Apam Junction

Central Region

The first location selected was at Apam-Junction, Ankamu Al-Kasima Islamic Basic school, where 242 young ones with 5 teachers gathered from the host school and an adjoining school. In 2 batches, the students were introduced to coding. Many of these children had never touched nor used a laptop, however, expressed excitement and the willingness to learn. A few of them were able to answer questions brilliantly. Mrs. Phyllis Asante-Krobea, District Director of Education, Gomoa West, expressed joy for bringing such very necessary and educative program to her district.
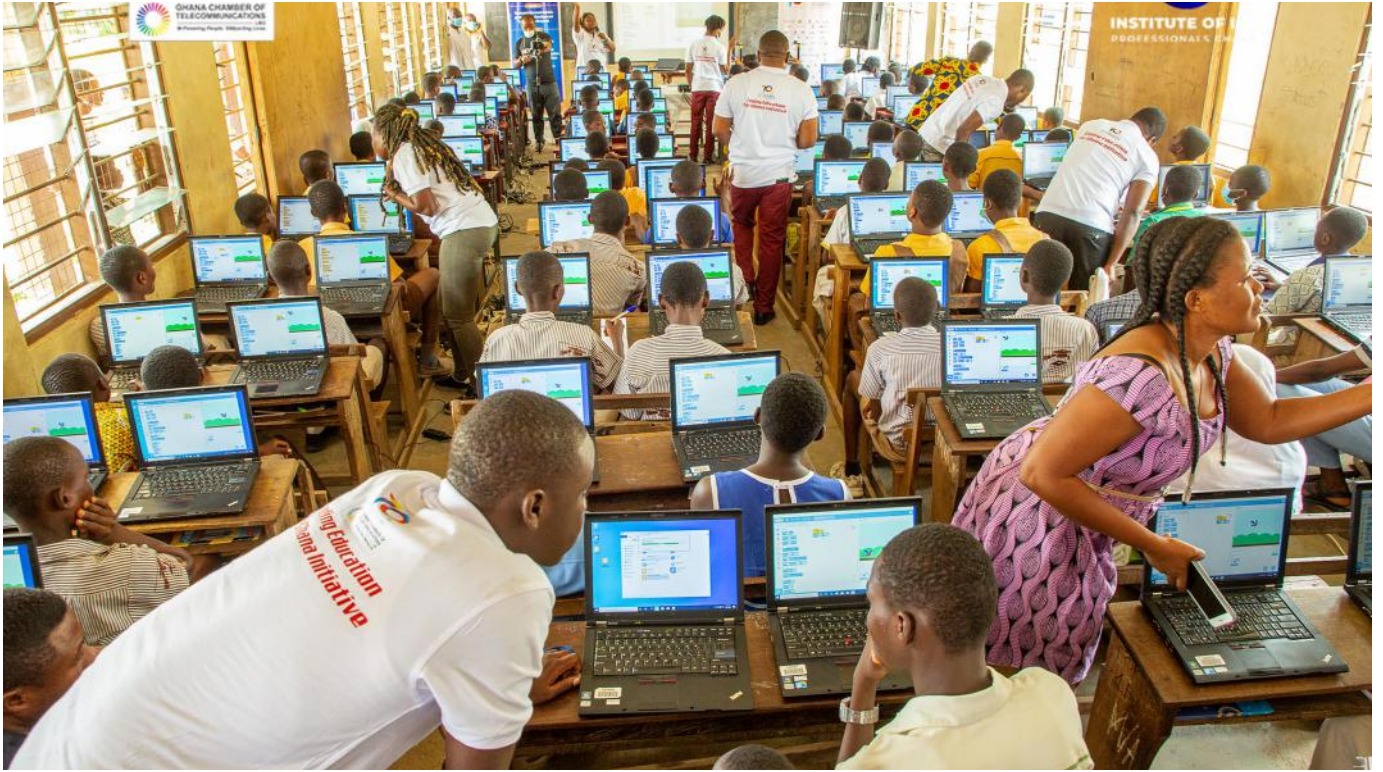
Nsawam

Eastern Region

The Coding Caravan made a second stop at the Nsawam Municipal Assembly Basic School, where the pupils and their teachers drawn from several Education Circuits in the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality participated. The 210 enthusiastic students and over 75 teachers from the Municipality were present for an action packed full day coding and digital design workshop. All 75 teachers stayed through the program to participate and learn. There were two sessions as usual. First batch from 10 am till noon, and the second from midday till 3pm. The Municipal Education Director, Nsawam-Adoagyire Municipal District, Mr. Samuel Otopah Ntow, encouraged the students and teachers to embrace technology, and improv their ICT skills.
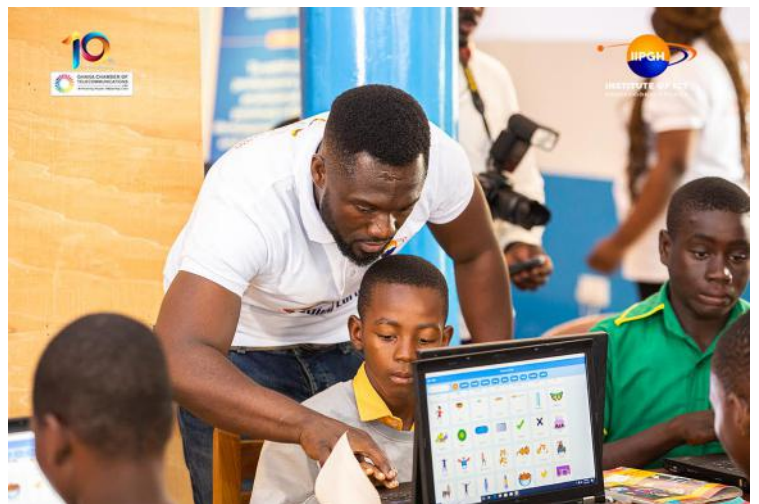
Tsiame

Volta Region

Tsiame, the last location selected for this coding caravan was on the 27th of July 2022, at the Tsiame MA Basic School where another set of 200 students in two separate batches took their turns to learn to code and explore what 3D design is about. The Keta Municipal Education Director, Mr. Gerhard Avudzivi admonished the pupils to take advantage of this opportunity and learn new digital skills. He appealed to the Chamber and its partners to extend this practical skills development program to other schools within the Municipality.

Through the event, the Chief Executive of Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications, Ing. Dr. Kenneth Ashigbey participated and engaged the young ones, sharing experiences and offering doses of advice to the young ones. He presented gifts to outstanding students who answered questions correctly and contributed to the sessions.

Coding Education for Ghana Program

The idea to create sustainable opportunities by training young ones and creating the next future leaders in technology was addressed in a 4-hour long stakeholders' workshop, concluding the first phase of the Coding Education for Ghana program, through "The Coding Caravan" in October and November 2021.

Background and Objective

Technology education and skills development should not be the preserve of a few in society. It must be democratized, revolutionized, and accessible by all. 21st century skills have become a necessity for survival in this age as innovation and emerging technologies are on the rise and at a faster rate. As the purpose of every education system is to make capable graduates to fit and function effectively in their environment, these skills have become inevitable. The main objective of the program is to build teachers' and trainers' capacity to suppor Ghana's coding education, and to impart that knowledge, thereby unearthing creativity in children by learning to code. Also, it is to improve local partners'

capacity in implementing hands-on coding projects, to promote and strengthen coding education in Ghana. Thus, the program seeks to develop a modular framework to integrate art and visual programming into the Ghanaian educational context, to ignite or enhance the development of digital skills. This can be achieved by fostering closer collaboration among education provid

ers, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders in the field of ICT in Ghana, with private sector organizations, such as IIPGH.

Driving an emerging technology-focused capacity-building program to prepare the next generation for entrepreneurship, and new job requirements in today's fast-moving technological world, the Insti

tute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) together with its partner, Code for Afrika, from Leipzig, Germany, has embarked on Coding Education for Ghana program. The program aims to strengthen computer science education in Ghana through coding and enhance computational thinking skills in children since these skills are considered valuable in the 21st century. Skills such as creativity and innovation, digital fluency and literacy, collaboration and communication, exploration and problem-solving, critical thinking, and analysis, are considered essential for all learners irrespective of their fields of interest. The project, developed and tested, offers a simple and motivating introduction to computer programming for children (from 8 years), - conveys basic programming concepts, introduces computational thinking, and shows the creati potential of programming. This program rode on the back of "The Coding Caravan", launched in August 2021

Why learn to code?

In our digitized world coding is becoming an integral part of literacy. To understand and change our digital world, which is increasingly determined by algorithms, one needs at least basic programming skills. Learning to program is no longer just for computer specialists and software developers - in many countries, programming is becoming a mandatory part of school education. In more professions, and social fields, programming skills are becoming a prerequisite.

THE CODING CARAVAN WITH CODE FOR AFRIKA

Given the opportunity and exposure, every child has brilliance. As the skill of the future, it is necessary to introduce coding to every child, strengthening the basics from an early start. Building the youthful population and huge human resource asset of Ghana and Africa, skills development training, particularly in the technology-related fields needs to be introduced early in their formative years before they are out of school. The first phase of the Coding Education for Ghana program had "The Coding Caravan" in three locations: Kasoa, Takoradi, Koforidua, and ended with a stakeholders' workshop in Accra. The Coding Caravan introduces coding basics to young ones, aiming at implementing creative ideas - as one can create computer games, interactive animations and

graphics, and many other applications. It offers all children and beginners an easy and playful introduction to programming.

Tutors during the caravan took turns in each session teaching participants practically and playfully to code. With assistants, teaching and learning are made easy as the assistants are seen going round to help students to follow the lead tutor in an instructional method. The Coding Caravan carries along on all roadshows over 150 (one hundred and fifty) laptops, well charged to be able to stay up when faced with electricity challenges. The caravan also makes available its 3D printers to print and showcase 3D designs from creative coding.
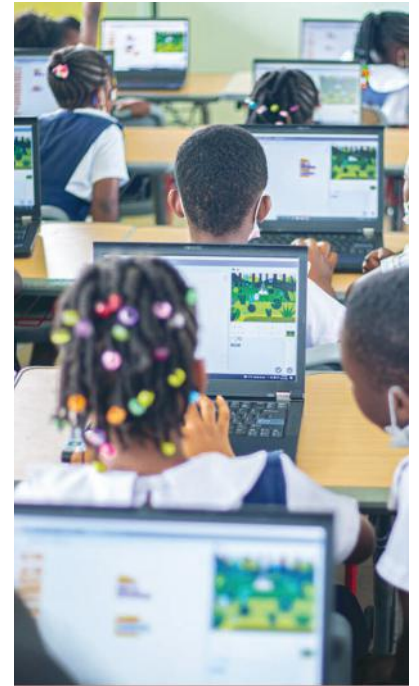
With no prior programming knowledge required, participants can learn to code using software such as Codeit!, practicalizing digital design and creative coding, and 3D printing.

KASOA CODING CARAVAN

The Coding Caravan in Kasoa coincided with the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child. 11th October is celebrated worldwide as the International Day of the Girl Child. A special day to recognize and empower girls. The caravan decided to celebrate this day in a community to introduce coding to girls in Kasoa. Golden Pride International School was the host for the day, and other students from adjoining schools in the community were allowed to participate in the program. About one hundred and ten (110) girls in two batches were introduced to coding and other digital skills.

TAKORADI CODING CARAVAN

Takoradi was the second of three locations planned for this Coding Education for Ghana program. On October 22, 2021, the caravan arrived in Takoradi scheduled for a 2-day workshop for two schools, namely Rev. Grant Methodist JHS, and St Anthony of Padua Catholic School. With great enthusiasm and **testimonie**s, both schools expressed more interest in this program, hoping to have regular exposure to coding concepts and development. At Rev. Grant Methodist JHS, we had over 100 (One hundred) students participating in the program, while St Anthony of Padua Catholic School offered a bit over 150 (One hundred and fifty) students, between ages 8 and 15. This was a very revealing moment for St Anthony of Padua Catholic School especially, as they have already been preparing for a technology competition.

KOFORIDUA CODING CARAVAN

The last location was on the 6th of November, in Koforidua, at Aspire Educational Complex where over 150 (One hundred and fifty) students participated in 3 sessions. The first and second sessions had students from Aspire Educational Complex, while the third session of 50 students came from other selected public schools in the community (Okrase Methodist Basic School, and Edwisu Mile 50 MA School). Just as many others, these students were inspired to learn to code, exhibiting their creativity, confidence, and interests.

STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP

The Coding Education for Ghana program was climaxed with a stakeholder's workshop, which invited all participating schools in the Coding Caravan. Representatives from the three locations of the caravan (Kasoa, Takoradi, Koforidua) were present. Other participants from the maiden TCC in partnership with IT Consortium were also present from three locations in Accra (Oksart Place, Kwame Nkrumah Circle; Alpha Beta School, Dansoman; Shield International School, Adenta), and one location in Ho, Volta Region, Ho-Dome RC Primary/JHS School Complex. A representative from the Council for Technical and Vocational Educational Training (CTVET) participated in the workshop, as well as the President of Academic City University College, Prof. Fred McBagonluri.

The workshop which took place on the 29th of November 2021, at the Fiesta Royale Hotel, Accra, brought together relevant stakeholders to evaluate the pilot coding programs in schools/communities and to formulate implementation strategies for its sustainability. The workshop lasted 4 hours with a presentation of the concept note of the coding education program, and group round table discussions. All three groups made valuable evaluations, and strategies for sustainability, out of which all suggestions will be fine-tuned for implementation.

Learning to code is a lifelong activity. The Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana as a confident organization in capacity building encourages students, parents, educators, and administrators to take a keen interest and sign up for this skill development program to prepare young people for the future of work. Corporate, Civil Society organizations and government agencies are invited to collaborate with the Institute, and its partner, Code for Afrika, to promote coding in communities (both urban and rural) across the country, to drive the message of ICT practical skills development for young people. Other platform developers/providers are also encouraged to come along to make their platforms available for coding and other skills development programs. The future can be bright if we make a conscious effort in preparing our young ones.

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The Coding Caravan

IT Consortium and IIPGH taking ICT Skills Programs into Communities

Technology education and skills development should not be the preserve of the affluent in our society, it must be democratized and accessible by all. This is because emerging technology skills are now essential tools for employment in the 21st century and in the next decade may become a requirement for any type of job. In order to prepare the next generation and equip them with the skills needed to fit into the demands of the future, IT Consortium, one of Africa's leading financial services technology solutions provider, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, joined forces with the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH), to launch The Coding Caravan (TCC).

The first phase of the technology skills awareness program was carried out in August, where over 250 young people in Accra and Ho were introduced to coding (computer programming), 3D designs, and 3D printing.

The Coding Caravan was carried out as workshops, where laptops and coding software were made available for students to learn. Instructors from IIPGH and staff of IT Consortium supported the children to code. For some of these kids, it was their first coding experience. Most of them were surprised they could put together codes in sequential order and produce meaningful outcomes.

Ghana's population is youthful with approximately 57% of nearly 30million of the population being below 25years according to the Ghana Demographics Profile published by indexmundi.com. This youthful population can become a huge human resource asset to Ghana, Africa, and the world at large, if skills development training, particularly in the technology-related fields, are introduced early in their formative years before they are out of school

The world is racing at a faster rate and is constantly in need of innovators that can use technology to come out with the next big product that will bring efficiency and enable business growth. Areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Software Engineering, Robotics, Application Development, Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) are some of the emerging technology areas that will be in demand by 2030, according to World Economic Forum report 2020

The Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) being a professional association of technology experts, is driving an emerging technology-focused capacity-building program to prepare the next generation for these new job requirements. In order to achieve this objective, IIPGH launched the coding for kids program 3years ago and expanded the training program to cover all levels (children, the youth, and adults/professionals). The practical skills development program quickly expanded to all parts of the country, with over 10,000 students ready trained in different coding programs and other IT-related skills training. However, there are still so many people to be trained. To extend coding and other ICT skills development programs to more students, particularly children from underserved or deprived communities, IIPGH collaborated with IT Consortium to run the coding caravan in 4 communities during the month of August 2021. IT Consortium has been involved in the skills development of young graduates as part of efforts to grow tech skills in Ghana and across Africa.

However, this year, as the organization celebrates its 20th anniversary, management and staff want to go beyond training graduates to training kids in communities. The organization believes that its staff who are working in the technology space will serve as champions and role models that will positively influence young people, especially girls, to embrace technology skills development programs such as coding.

Every child needs to be introduced to coding as it is being touted as the skill of the future. However, limited resources will hinder a nationwide first-time deployment of the project. The partners, therefore, agreed the first phase will target

Coding Caravan First Stop - Oksart Place, Kwame Nkrumah Circle

three (3) communities in Accra and one (1) community outside the capital. After an online advertisement for parents to register their kids and arrangement of children from underserved communities in Tema Newtown, on 7th August 2021, over 50 students converged at the Digital **Design** and Creative Coding Hub of the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (Oksart Place, Kwame Nkrumah Circle). At the Hub, laptops were made available to each child present, as they were guided in an intensive but fun learning environment.

The volunteers (staff of ITC) and tutors from IIPGH, gave the children a memorable experience in designing things in 3D using the interactive smartboard and the portable 3D printers. The interactive session gave the children the opportunity to ask questions on Code-it and Tinkertoys (some of the new software used during the coding lessons). They were also fascinated by the 3D printer and were ver

curious to know more about its functionality. The children were given some of the objects designed and printed. At the end of the program, the children were served with packed lunch and drinks. The first workshop ended with smiles on the faces of all participants and all COVID-19 protocols were observed.

Coding Caravan Second Stop – Shield International School, Adenta

The Coding Caravan was designed in a way that every week, the team will organize a workshop in a community. This will afford the volunteers who dedicate a day out of the week, to help young people without impacting too much on their already busy work schedules. The second stop took place at the Shield International School in Adenta on the 13th of August 2021. The setup in the Adenta community was unique. Although the team selected a good private school to host the workshop, the event was **held** on a day when the students were not in school. Rather, children were randomly invited, particularly from the deprived communities where most of them attend public schools. Other students were also selected from public JHS in Madina to participate in the workshop.
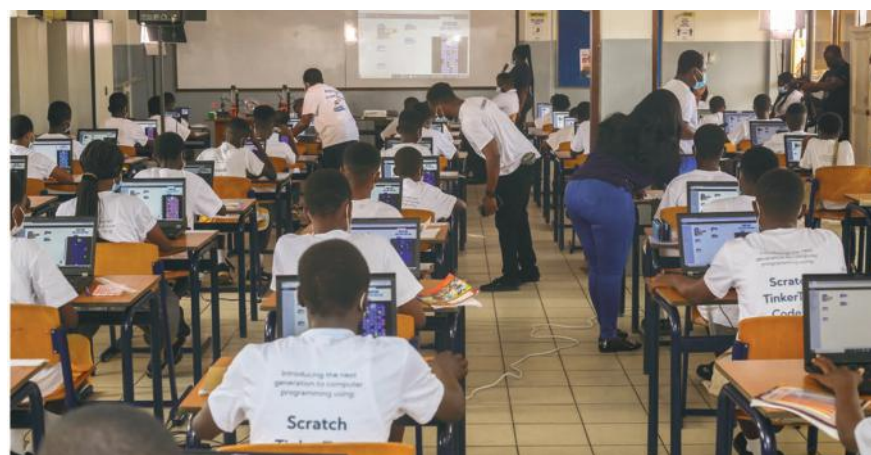
The experience was the same as the first stop, however; it was observed that some children who were randomly called from the street and communities struggled to use the computer. Some admitted it was their first time using the computer and following **coding** instructions was a bit difficult. However, at the end of the program, the students were happy about the concept and were yearning to learn more.

Coding Caravan Third Stop – Alpha Beta School, Dansoman

In every community, the organizers of TCC strived to give equal opportunities to students in privileged private schools and public schools. A quota system was adopted where some children from the community and others from public schools will join the stu dents at the school hosting the workshop. The Dansoman workshop had all these three (3) groups fully represented and a successful program was carried out at Alpha Beta Educational Centre, Dansoman, on 20th August 2021.

Management of the school and the tutors were actively involved in the entire preparation and organization of the coding workshop. The students were enthusiastic about the new things they were being intro

duced to, and the workshop was very interactive. Students from Dansoman Basic II JHS were very active and could follow all the steps. The workshop ended as one of the best organized coding programs.

Coding Caravan Final Stop – Ho-Dome RC Primary/JHS School Complex, Ho.

After three (3) stops in Accra, TCC embarked on a trip to Ho, Volta Regional capital, to engage students in the Ho Municipality. With the help of Genius IT Foundation, the local partner of IIPGH, Ho-Dome RC Primary/JHS School Complex was identified as a suitable host for the coding workshop on the 27th of August. The headmaster of the school was actively involved in organizing the venue for the program and ensured maximum participation of the students. As was done at previous workshops, information was put out in viting the public to bring children to participate in the workshop. There was an overwhelming response, with over 120 students participating in the workshop. To serve all the children, the training was conducted in batches. The first batch comprised younger chil dren, having their workshop in the morning while the older ones had their turn in the afternoon.

Conclusion

The first phase of the coding caravan has been successful with coding and other technology skills introduced to over 250 children/young people in Accra and Ho. The reception was great, and the children embraced the concept. While this is a good indication that all other communities in Ghana will need such awareness programs, it requires collaboration with more stakeholders. To achieve this bigger objective, the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana and its partners are inviting corporate institutions, civil society organizations, and government agencies, to team up for more roadshows and awareness programs in communities, to drive the message of ICT practical skills development for young people. The future can be bright if we make a conscious effort in preparing our young ones.

Published Articles

ICT Insight with Institute of ICT Professionals

The coding caravan
Ghana Chamber of Telecoms collaborates with IIPGH to promote coding in schools and communities

ICT Insight with Institute of ICT Professionals

IIPGH improves digital literacy in Ghana
.... through its Digital Design and Creative Coding Hub project

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Coding education for Ghana Program

By Richard Kafui AMANFU

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Developing a digital literate society:
IIPGH launches "Digital design and creative coding hub"

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We hold three business units in both industrial and consumer businesses, all of which focus on serving clients and communities with the latest technology that enhances their business and lifestyle. These are ICT Solutions, Infrastructure Delivery, Training and Capacity Building.

Our founding members have a total of 60 years' experience in the telecommunications industry, human resource management and capacity enhancement, emerging technologies, project management and operations. Our goal is to create value for clients, our teams, and shareholders. We work to serve our clients with the finest quality built on a strong culture of consistency, loyalty, and high ethical standards. 'Providing consistent quality through a reliable service' is the purpose that unites all our teams at GODI AFRICA

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• Infrastructure delivery

ICT Infrastructure:
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TO BECOME THE MOST RELIABLE PARTNER IN ICT DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA AND BEYOND

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TO MOBILIZE ALL ICT PROFESSIONALS UNDER ONE PROFESSIONAL BODY TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT, STANDARDIZATION AND DELIVERY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ACROSS GHANA

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