young !nnovators Malawi

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to let you know about a new competition we are running for school children this year called "young innovators Malawi".

The idea of the competition is to excite and encourage school children in Malawi to think about and get involved with technology and innovation.

This is our first year, but our goal is to establish the "young innovators Malawi" competition as an annual event in Malawi. For this year, we have decided to focus on computer programming as the field of innovation.

We will be working with a new, low-cost computer called the "Raspberry Pi". This computer was designed in the UK specifically to attract young people to try computer programming. It comes loaded with a novel programming environment called "Scratch" which makes it very easy to learn and master the basics of computer programming.

This year, we will challenge teams of school children across Malawi to write a computer game that runs in Scratch on the Raspberry Pi.

The competition will run from late 2013 until early 2014 (precise dates yet to be determined).   Applications are welcome from teams of 2 to 5 children (all must be over the age of 12). Applying teams must be 'sponsored' by a teacher from their school (i.e. a teacher must sign their application form and agree to help the team and ensure they complete the challenge).

We will hold a competition kick-off event (called a "Raspberry Jam") where we will provide a computing kit (Raspberry Pi and equipment) to each team that has been registered for the competition, and we will run some demos and teaching activities.

We will recruit a group of professional 'mentors' (experienced technologists or programmers). We will assign a mentor to each team, and they will meet regularly throughout the competition to ensure the team doesn't get stuck or lost.

We would like to ask you to consider joining us as a mentor for this competition.

What that means is that you will agree to spend a few hours each month (for four months) visiting 'your' team's school and helping them with their game project as best you can.

At the end of the competition, we will hold the "young innovators Malawi" exhibition in Lilongwe, where each team will be invited to show its resulting game to each other. This event will be open to the public. At this event, the judges will select the winning teams, and prizes will be awarded for the best teams.

We are very excited about this project and we hope you will be too. We will be in touch in the near future to talk this through with you in more detail, and hopefully you will agree to join us in this project!

For more information, please visit http://malawi.younginnovators.net

Regards

John, Sam, Paul and Vinjeru
young innovators Malawi organisers