PRESS RELEASE 2:

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Title: CodeJIKA.com Campaign wants to see 20% of Schools Teach Code by 2020

CodeJIKA.com - a movement that aims to bring coding into every school - is calling for coding and computer science (CS) concepts to be taught as part of the formal schooling curriculum. It is advocating, implementing coding programmes and galvanising support to reach its initial target of having coding and CS skills be taught in 20% of South African secondary schools by 2020.

The organisation works closely with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for the increased uptake of CS in South African schools and to ensure that these skills are transferred into formal education policy or curriculum revision in the future.

The DBE has acknowledged that computer skills drive innovation in almost all industries and fields of study, stating recently that computing deals with information processes buried in the "deep structures" of many fields - for example, quantum waves in physics, DNA in biology, brain patterns in cognitive science, and information flows in economic systems.

CodeJIKA.com – an initiative of non-profit organisation Code for Change - believes that exposing the youth to coding and computer-based skills develops their computational and critical thinking skills and shows them how to create, not simply use, new technologies.

To fast-track uptake in support of the 2020 objectives, CodeJIKA establishes student-run coding clubs in secondary schools. These clubs compete for prizes and encourage other students to participate in coding, programming and CS. In addition to this, the visionary team employs a "start-up" mentality to the challenge and has, as a result, developed a mobile friendly, online learning tool, as well as an offline curriculum which can be used on any PC without requiring the installation of any software.

Code for Change has the following goals for education in South Africa:

- Introduce a new CS elective in secondary schools
- Ensure the new CS elective covers entry-level course requirements for CS University degrees
- Introduce mandatory ICT Classes for all 8th and 9th graders
- Encourage mobile operators to offer free access to mobile-friendly educational resources, especially those that offer CS themes

The campaign has been adopted and supported by dozens of educational projects throughout the country and has seen a very enthusiastic uptake both online and offline in Mpumalanga and Limpopo. It also enjoys support from local and international corporates organisations such as Microsoft, Dell, DataTec, Tata Consultancy Services, PNET, IRESS and others.

Why is coding important?

As the workplace evolves, candidates with both entry-level coding skills and advanced CS experts are increasingly in demand. As Steve Jobs famously advocated, everyone should learn how to programme, "because it teaches you how to think." This is due to the fact that coding problems are broken down into simple step-by-step commands, which is synonymous with how any complex problem is solved. This computational "learning how to think" therefore drives innovation and problem-solving across many disciplines.

International companies such as JP Morgan, Tesla and Microsoft encourage a basic understanding of programming and computer science for all their staff. Contrary to the perception that advanced computer skills are only valuable for information technology (IT) professions, over 70% of computing occupations are outside of the IT industry. A knowledge of computer science is increasingly critical in research, finance and manufacturing.

How to get involved

CodeJIKA is encouraging one-million young South Africans to try their hand at coding for one hour as part of the Hour of Code campaign during international Computer Science Education Week (CSEdWeek), from 3 December to 9 December 2018.

To get involved, visit www.codejika.com/5min on your cellphone. This will take you to a page that will allow you build your first website in only five minutes and demonstrate how code works in HTML. It's a great first step for anyone wanting to learn how to code.

"It's a phenomenal way to engage and just have fun with a new skill which is future-safe and exciting" says Sibusiso Khoza, Provincial Coding League Manager at CodeJIKA.com.

Screenshot: 5-Minute-Website

You can also:

- Help your child's teacher and principal plan their Hour of Code
- Spread the work about CodeJIKA on social network
- Ask your employer to host an Hour of Code as a teambuilding event
- Set aside an hour of your time during CSEdWeek to learn about coding

To get in touch sign up at www.codejika.com or contact the team members below:

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