Abstract: Digital Skills Development Initiative for Public Primary School Children in Tanzania

Project Overview

The ComTech Scholars program launched in August 2025 to address the critical gap in digital literacy among public primary school children in Tanzania's Arusha Region. Working in partnership with the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) and the local NGO Sustainable CommunityTech Alliance (ComTech Alliance), this initiative developed and piloted an age-appropriate digital literacy curriculum using a Mobile Computer Laboratory delivery model. The curriculum covers fundamental computer operation, internet navigation, online safety and digital citizenship, introductory artificial intelligence concepts, and keyboarding skills.

The project centered on building sustainable local capacity through a comprehensive Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop that equipped 12 local educators with youth-centered pedagogy, culturally adaptive teaching methods, and practical digital instruction techniques. Using culturally relevant examples such as M-Pesa and Kiswahili content enhanced both trainer and student comprehension. The mobile laboratory model allows the program to reach underserved schools that lack permanent computer facilities, creating a scalable solution for expanding digital access to primary-aged learners who have been largely overlooked by existing government and donor initiatives targeting older students.

Results and Beneficiaries

The pilot program directly trained 26 primary school learners at Fikiria Kwanza Academy, many of whom used a computer for the first time. Twelve local trainers (teachers and volunteers) completed the ToT workshop and are prepared to continue delivering sessions independently. Intermediate beneficiaries include the three shortlisted public primary schools that will receive training in subsequent program phases, school leadership teams engaged in planning, and the broader Arusha region educational community that will benefit as the Mobile Computer Laboratory expands to additional schools. The program has been integrated into NM-AIST's community engagement framework and ComTech Alliance's ongoing mission, ensuring sustained impact beyond the initial pilot phase.

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