Empowering young leaders of tomorrow through digitalization

The Hong Kong Management Association David Li Kwok Po College (HKMADLKPC) encourages its students to contribute to various NGOs by applying their acquired knowledge in app creation to enhance the organizations' services.

Sponsored by the DBS Foundation's InnoFuture Youth Programme, the HKMADLKPC, located in the Yau Tsim Mong District, has recently forged a partnership with MakerBay Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to enabling students to make a positive social impact. This collaboration aims to equip students with AI knowledge and no-code skills, enabling them to create their own applications and make contributions to society with their acquired knowledge.

No-code refers to a development approach that empowers individuals to build software applications without the need for expertise in traditional programming languages or coding skills. Instead, no-code platforms offer visual interfaces, automation, and other functions that facilitate a more intuitive and user-friendly app creation process. This simplified method of application development serves as a great starting point for technical beginners.

Mr. Marco Chung, Program Manager of MakerBay Foundation, states, "We offer students classes on AI and no-code to help them develop the basic skills for app development. Subsequently, we collaborate with different NGOs, such as The Conservancy Association, to encourage students to understand the current challenges these organizations face and attempt to solve existing problems through digitalization."

Taking The Conservancy Association as an example, during their food collection process, they depend on volunteers to manually record essential information, such as the types of food, their weights, quantities and expiry dates. Then, officers are required to manually input the information into an Excel spreadsheet, which creates inconvenience due to the time-consuming nature of the task and hampers overall efficiency.
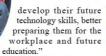
Ms. Karen Wong, Project Manager of The Conservancy Association, explains, "Given that many of our volunteers are elderly and unfamiliar with complex computer settings, we primarily rely on paper-based processes. I believe that our volunteers will find it easier to comprehend and navigate these no-code apps due to their user-friendly interfaces. Successful digitalization of our data is expected to streamline our volunteer services, resulting in increased convenience and efficiency."

In addition to enhancing the food collection process, Karen highlights how the app will benefit their membership management. Instead of relying on manual paper-based record-keeping for member attendance, the app will eradicate the need for such records. Karen adds, "With the app, we can effortlessly track attendance without the need for manual counting."

Mr. Kosby Fu, a representative from DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, explains their sponsorship: "We sponsor this program because we hope to provide students with a free opportunity to develop their future technology skills, better preparing them for the workplace and future education."

Ms. Elisa Wong, Principal of HKMADLKPC, agrees to the importance of equipping students with AI skills early on. As AI becomes increasingly prevalent, many schools are incorporating STEM education into their curricula. Ms. Wong believes it is essential for their school to keep pace with this trend, stating, "From previous statistics, a lot of students choose AI-related subjects when entering university. That's why we think it's important to include AI education in our curriculum. AI programming serves as a universal language, and we want students to acquire relevant knowledge at an earlier stage. Therefore, this year we offered students from Form 3 to have classes on apps development." She also highlights the school's commitment to encouraging students to apply know-how to real-life scenarios and making a positive impact beyond the classroom.

For the students, this marks their first foray into app development. One student admits, "Our knowledge in AI and programming was limited, but we quickly learnt the basics within a few classes." Another student initially expresses fear and uncertainty about the challenge but later notes, "As my knowledge of no-code skills increased, so did my confidence. Developing a useful app for those in need gave me a sense of satisfaction and sparked my interest in learning more about AI in the future."

Willis Ho, a student from Class 3E, applied the skills he learnt in class to further create a useful app for the school's Open Day. The app allows users to scan a barcode, providing access to the map of the event, progress tracking for tasks, and the opportunity to claim small gifts from booths based on their progress.

The school's ICT teachers, including Ms. Tracy Liu, express their pride in the students. Ms. Liu explains, "Apart from ICT-related knowledge, the school aims to teach students the importance of helping others and contributing to society through meaningful learning experiences. They have also developed teamwork and communication skills through collaboration with their teammates." Ms. Liu believes these skills will not only benefit students during their time at school but will also serve them well in the future, even after graduation.