Jamaica joins over 180 countries for the Hour of Code with coding workshops from Seprod and CB Facey Foundations and Halls of Learning

The Hour of Code is a global learning event that takes place each year during Computer Science Education Week celebrated from December 9th to 15th. This year, over 180 countries will be participating, and over 115,000 events are registered. The Seprod Foundation has been promoting and celebrating the Hour of Code in Jamaica for the past 5 years by encouraging schools to host their own events, and conducting coding workshops in primary schools. This year, is no different. In partnership with Halls of Learning and the C.B. Facey Foundation, the Seprod Foundation will execute 12 coding workshops, across 6 primary schools over the course of the week, impacting approximately 500 students and 12 teachers. The participating schools are Maxfield Park Primary, Clan Carthy Primary, Kingdom Kids Prep, Boys Town Primary, North Street Primary and St. Aloysius Primary.

The students were introduced to the Swift Playground application, a free application that does not require wifi or an internet connection, making it readily accessible for schools to continue to use throughout the year. The students are guided through a fun and interactive activity using the swift programming language to give a character instructions to carry out tasks. The activity reinforces problem solving skills, and critical thinking skills, while emphasizing team work. The workshops are well received by the students and teachers alike, as it supports the new curriculum and the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) that was recently introduced in schools at the primary level across Jamaica.

Executive Director of the C.B. Facey Foundation, Anna Ward was thrilled to have two coding workshops done at Boys Town Primary, a school that the foundation has been working with for generations – *"Although many of the students are accustomed to consuming technology, the Hour of Code presented a unique opportunity for the children to interact with coding for the first time. Workshops such as these are crucial in generating excitement around creating digital content and improving critical thinking skills."*

During the course of the workshops, Halls of Learning founder, Marvin Hall, commented, *"With the increased focus on teaching our children coding skills as we prepare them for jobs of the future, it is equally important to address the gaps in their reading and comprehension abilities so that they may become properly prepared to take advantage of STEM careers."*

Chairperson of the Seprod Foundation, Melanie Subratie reinforced that the Seprod Foundation continues to be committed to providing innovative and cutting edge learning experiences to Jamaican children – *"Computer science, and specifically coding, is changing every industry globally. Introducing children to coding at the primary school level is important in sparking their interest, and laying the foundation for building on their STEM skills. We encourage the schools continue to promote these coding activities, ultimately preparing our students to compete in the modern world."*

Highlights of the workshops included the attendance of Member of Parliament, Julian Robinson at Clan Carthy Primary, the attendance of Member of Parliament, Mark Golding, at Boys Town Primary and visits from representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information at Maxfield Park Primary and St. Aloysius Primary.

SEPROD FOUNDATION

The Seprod Foundation's mandate is focused on strengthening families and communities. The Seprod Foundation does this through a focus on early childhood educational interventions, integrating technology into all learning opportunities, and empowering individuals through awarding scholarships and grants. Furthermore, the Seprod Foundation strengthens communities by investing in infrastructural developments that will uplift community members whether it is recreational areas, health centers, community centers or schools.