

Press Release

Airbus Foundation launches youth development programme in Botswana

Gaborone, Botswana, 22 February 2019 – The Airbus Foundation, together with its partners – The Little Engineer and Dare to Dream – has launched the Airbus Little Engineer robotics programme in Botswana. The goal of the initiative is to encourage learners to understand and embrace technology, and ignite passion that could grow into an exciting career in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

During its first year, the programme aims to reach at least 1,080 ten to sixteen year olds from urban and rural areas across the southern African country

Botswana-based Dare to Dream, organisation has become synonymous with advancement of women and girls in STEM, aviation and aerospace business leadership skills. The organisation was founded by Captain Kgomotso Phatsima, Botswana Defence Force's first women pilots. Captain Kgomotso uses the power of flight to ignite dreams and help other young women to follow in her footsteps.

The Airbus Little Engineer programme, which is for girls and boys, began with two days seminars for Dare to Dream's trainers, familiarizing them with the Airbus Little Engineer programme. These were followed by a workshop at the Botswana Innovation Hub, involving 30 learners from Gaborone, Ramotswa and Bobirwa.

During this workshop the 30 learners were introduced to the exciting world of aviation, robotics and coding. The students were tasked to assemble an aircraft model, program it with their own algorithm so it is able to manoeuvre on the tarmac, ready for take-off.

"The inherent and extensive nature of science, innovation, engineering and aerospace technology offers boundless possibilities and opportunities for Botswana and its socio-economic development. They are essential to the realisation of Botswana Vision 2036 of achieving a knowledge based economy, the African Union Agenda 2063 of 'The Africa We Want' and the UN sustainable development goals." Said Captain Kgomoto Phatsima

Programmes like the Airbus Little Engineer are designed to support these goals by helping to equip and prepare the future generation of talent needed to take societies and economies forward. Dare to Dream aspires to be the leading social entrepreneur advancing the next generation of aviation and space leaders as well as business aviation leaders of tomorrow not only in Botswana but across the African Continent.

Since its launch in 2012, the Airbus Little Engineer programme successfully positioned itself as an effective vehicle for discovery-based learning, working to enlighten and empower youth in the areas of science and technology through robotics and aerospace. The programme has reached more than 5,800 students and is operating in more than 12 countries.

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About the Airbus Foundation

The Airbus Foundation, chaired by Tom Enders, CEO of Airbus, includes Airbus, Airbus Helicopters and Airbus Defence and Space as founding and contributing members. It is the company's vehicle for corporate philanthropy, using the group's resources, aeronautics and space products, competencies, diverse workforce and culture for driving innovation to address societal issues. In particular, the Foundation supports the global humanitarian community and inspires and prepares young people for the challenges of tomorrow. Since its launch in May 2008, the Airbus Foundation has facilitated more than 60 relief or goodwill flights to numerous destinations around the globe. More information can be found at <http://company.airbus.com/company/Foundation.html>.

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