

Digital Xtra Fund continues to inspire Scotland's future digital makers



Formula 1, 3D printed drones, lighthouses, and coding for social good are just some of the latest activities to receive support from Digital Xtra Fund, a charity dedicated to inspiring Scotland's future digital workforce through high-quality extracurricular digital activities.

Inveralmond Community High School is one of the new fast-paced projects to hit the track. Funding will enable Inveralmond to become Scotland's first F1 in Schools Centre for Excellence, supporting adrenaline-junkie pupils from secondary schools across Scotland – including Edinburgh – who are keen to take part in the Schools Technology Challenge where they will design, construct, and race miniature Formula 1 cars powered by compressed air, reaching speeds of up to 20 metres per second.

£50,000 has been shared between 11 sustainable initiatives to introduce over 3,000 young people to digital technologies, and show them the range of career opportunities these skills will provide. Five awardees are new initiatives which demonstrated a creative and fun way to engage young people, with the remaining six projects set to build on activities previously supported by Digital Xtra Fund.

The aim of Digital Xtra Fund is for every young person in Scotland to have access to a digitally creative activity regardless of their gender, background, or where they live. The Fund is particularly keen to engage audiences underrepresented in the digital technologies industry, especially girls and young women, and looked to support

initiatives that showed a healthy gender split and were delivered in areas often excluded from extracurricular digital activities through lack of local resources or facilities.

Kraig Brown, Partnership and Development Manager for Digital Xtra Fund, said: "The digital skills gap is well documented, and we believe the best way to tackle this gap is to engage young people through extracurricular activities, where they can be themselves in an informal and creative setting. Initiatives supported by the Fund will inspire them to be more than just digital consumers; they can be digital makers too.

"It's been incredibly inspiring to see the quality and diversity of activities that organisations across the country have come up with. They are fun, engaging, and with the help of Digital Xtra Fund, they are more widely available than ever before. This is very encouraging for the future of digital technologies in Scotland."

Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Shirley-Anne Somerville said: "It is great to see the Digital Xtra Fund supporting deserving extracurricular digital skills projects across Scotland, benefiting over 3,000 young people. The Scottish Government recently launched its STEM strategy, which aims to inspire and enthuse everyone to study STEM and build STEM skills. Charities such as the Digital Xtra Fund, who are enabling inspiring digital and STEM projects to flourish and encourage more young people into the sector are making a significant contribution to this important agenda."

Damien Yeates, Chief Executive of Skills Development Scotland said: "We are delighted to see Digital Xtra Fund going from strength to strength and supporting projects which are addressing the gender imbalance and encouraging more girls into tech. The digital technology sector in Scotland is booming and the Fund is now well established to work

with Scottish employers to collectively support extracurricular digital activities for young people. This is a great way to encourage the next generation of digital makers into the tech sector.”

Now established as an independent charity, Digital Xtra Fund is seeking further support to give every young person in Scotland opportunity to get involved in extracurricular digital activities. Actively working with Scotland’s industries, Digital Xtra Fund is currently raising funds for its 2018 grant awards. Companies interested in supporting young people to gain the digital skills for the future can find out more information at www.digitalxtrafund.scot.

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