

Police Scotland support IT course for young people in Malawi and Zambia

More than 40 young people from Scotland, Malawi and Zambia have enrolled in a globally-recognised information technology course which is being supported by Police Scotland.

A number of Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV), Young Scots and international students with links to Scotland are now two months into the free, year-long course run by IT firm, Cisco Systems.



Students take part in video calls every four weeks, and split off into discussion groups, while also using an app to contribute to discussions and provide peer support to each other throughout the course.

On completion of the study period, which also has the backing of Glasgow Caledonian University and Scotland Women in Technology (SWiT), participants will receive a Cisco qualification which can provide a direct route into the technology industry.

Sergeant Ashley Beck, who worked in IT before joining policing, is a qualified instructor in Cisco Networking Academy courses who is mentoring participants, alongside her day job within Police Scotland's National Systems Support.

Sergeant Beck said: "It's fantastic to see this industry-standard training on networking and cyber-security being given

to young people, and the enthusiasm they have to learn.

“These skills are increasingly important to policing. Investing in the development of our young people, and providing them with qualifications for their futures, is an initiative I’m really proud to support.

“We also know women are under-represented in technology and as someone who’s passionate about changing this, it’s hugely encouraging to see half of those enrolled on the course are female.”

Half of the 42 students, who are aged between 14 and 23, on the programme are female, and six students are from Malawi and Zambia.

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie (Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing) said: “Police Scotland has, in conjunction with the Scottish Government, been delivering programmes designed to support local policing in Malawi since 2010, and in Zambia since 2019.

“Officers from our International Development and Innovation Unit have well established relationships with communities and officials in both countries, and we are pleased to be able to support this project remotely during the currently public health situation.”

Jenny Gilruth MSP, Minister for Europe and International Development, said: “It is vital, particularly at this time, that young people are not left behind and continue to have access to training opportunities. So it is great to see that students in our partner countries of Malawi and Zambia, alongside those in Scotland, will have the opportunity to develop world class IT skills through a partnership between Cisco, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland Women in Technology and Police Scotland.”

Grace Lungo, 18, from Zambia, is an IT student who is enrolled

on the course. She said: "I like studying technology because I believe in progress. Technology makes tasks easier and systems run faster. I'm enjoying the course and I hope to get good educational opportunities and skills."

Niamh Boyle, 23, from Renfrewshire, has a degree in computing and is currently in full-time employment.

She said: "I am passionate about the technology industry and I'm really keen to move into a role where I can apply the knowledge I have gained from my studies.

"This has been a great opportunity and it's brilliant to see so many other females enrolled on it too."