

PLUGGED & UNPLUGGED CODING CONTEST 2026

OFFICIAL COMPETITION HANDBOOK

Theme: Create. Code. Imagine. Solve.

Organized by: Creative Child Foundation

Contest Date: 30 October 2026

Location: Kampala, Uganda

Primary Creative Coding Platform: OctoStudio

Contest Format: Plugged and Unplugged Creative Coding

PART I: ABOUT THE COMPETITION

1. Introduction

The Plugged & Unplugged Coding Contest is an inclusive creative coding and computational thinking competition designed to empower children and young people to create, experiment, solve problems, tell stories, and develop innovations using technology and non-digital methods.

The competition recognizes that coding education should not be limited to computer laboratories. Through the **Plugged** category, learners use digital devices and creative coding platforms such as OctoStudio to create interactive projects. Through the **Unplugged** category, learners explore computational thinking using physical materials, games, storytelling, movement, puzzles, and other activities without requiring a digital device.

The contest provides children with a platform to:

- Showcase their creative coding projects.
 - Share their OctoStudio learning experiences.
 - Develop and demonstrate computational thinking.
 - Solve real-world problems.
 - Learn from other children and educators.
 - Build confidence in presenting ideas.
 - Explore technology as a tool for creativity and innovation.
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2. Contest Objectives

The competition seeks to:

1. Introduce children to creative coding in an accessible and engaging way.

2. Promote computational thinking and problem-solving.
 3. Encourage children to create rather than only consume technology.
 4. Support teachers and educators to introduce coding in classrooms.
 5. Provide opportunities for children to share their creative work.
 6. Encourage technology-based solutions to local challenges.
 7. Promote inclusive participation regardless of access to expensive technology.
 8. Build a community of young creators, educators, mentors, and innovators.
 9. Expand creative coding opportunities across Uganda and East Africa.
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PART II: COMPETITION CATEGORIES

3. Junior Category

Recommended age: 7–12 years

Projects should demonstrate creativity, basic computational thinking, and the learner's ability to explain what they created.

Examples include:

- Interactive stories.
 - Simple games.
 - Animations.
 - Digital storytelling.
 - Educational projects.
 - Simple simulations.
 - Community awareness projects.
-

4. Senior Category

Recommended age: 13–18 years

Projects should demonstrate more advanced problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and computational thinking.

Examples include:

- Interactive applications.
- Games.
- Educational tools.
- Social impact projects.
- Environmental projects.
- Simulations.

- Interactive stories.
 - Digital prototypes.
-

5. Unplugged Coding Category

This category is open to learners who demonstrate computational thinking without relying primarily on a digital device.

Projects may use:

- Paper.
- Cards.
- Physical objects.
- Board games.
- Role play.
- Human movement.
- Puzzles.
- Storytelling.
- Physical prototypes.

Participants may demonstrate:

- Algorithms.
 - Sequencing.
 - Loops.
 - Conditional logic.
 - Pattern recognition.
 - Debugging.
 - Decomposition.
 - Abstraction.
-

6. Educator and Mentor Category

This category may be open to teachers, mentors, facilitators, university students, and other adults supporting creative coding education.

Submissions may include:

- Classroom coding activities.
- Unplugged coding activities.
- OctoStudio projects.
- Teaching resources.
- Creative coding methodologies.
- Inclusive approaches to coding education.

PART III: COMPETITION RULES

7. Eligibility

Participants must:

- Belong to the appropriate age category.
- Register through an approved school, organization, community group, or approved individual process.
- Submit an original project.
- Comply with the official contest rules.
- Present or explain their own work.

Teams may consist of **one to three learners**, unless otherwise communicated by the Organizing Committee.

8. Originality

Projects must be substantially created by the participating learners.

Teachers and mentors may:

- Teach coding concepts.
- Provide guidance.
- Ask questions.
- Help learners troubleshoot.
- Support presentation preparation.

Teachers and mentors must not create the project on behalf of learners.

9. Use of External Resources

Participants may use:

- Tutorials.
- Educational resources.
- Open-source resources.
- Platform-provided resources.
- Permitted media and assets.

Where appropriate, external resources should be acknowledged.

10. Artificial Intelligence

AI tools may only be used in accordance with the official rules.

Participants must remain the primary creators of their projects and must understand the work submitted.

Where AI is used substantially, participants may be required to disclose:

- The AI tool used.
- How it was used.
- What the learner personally created or modified.

PART IV: OFFICIAL SCORING RUBRIC

11. Plugged Coding Scoring Rubric

TOTAL: 100 POINTS

Criterion	Maximum Points
Creativity and Originality	20
Problem Identification and Relevance	15
Computational Thinking and Coding	20
Innovation and Potential Impact	20
Functionality and User Experience	10
Presentation and Communication	10
Teamwork and Collaboration	5
TOTAL	100

12. Detailed Scoring Guidance

A. Creativity and Originality — 20 Points

Excellent: 17–20

- Highly original concept.
- Strong creative expression.
- Imaginative use of coding.

- Distinctive and memorable project.

Good: 13–16

- Clear creativity.
- Some original elements.
- Good use of imagination.

Developing: 9–12

- Some creative elements.
- Project shows limited originality.

Beginning: 0–8

- Very limited creativity.
 - Project largely replicates existing work.
-

B. Problem Identification and Relevance — 15 Points

Excellent: 13–15

- Clearly identifies an important problem.
- Demonstrates strong understanding of the target users or community.

Good: 10–12

- Problem is clearly identified and relevant.

Developing: 6–9

- Problem is partially understood.

Beginning: 0–5

- Problem is unclear or lacks relevance.
-

C. Computational Thinking and Coding — 20 Points

Judges should consider the participant's age.

Excellent: 17–20

- Strong understanding of coding concepts.
- Logical and purposeful use of programming.
- Demonstrates sequencing, events, loops, conditions, or other appropriate concepts.

Good: 13–16

- Good understanding of coding concepts.
- Code generally works logically.

Developing: 9–12

- Basic understanding demonstrated.

Beginning: 0–8

- Limited understanding of the underlying coding concepts.
-

D. Innovation and Potential Impact — 20 Points

Excellent: 17–20

- Highly innovative.
- Strong potential to address a real problem.
- Clear potential for further development or impact.

Good: 13–16

- Innovative and potentially useful.

Developing: 9–12

- Some useful ideas but limited development.

Beginning: 0–8

- Limited innovation or impact.
-

E. Functionality and User Experience — 10 Points

Consider:

- Does the project work?
 - Is it interactive?
 - Is it understandable?
 - Is it engaging?
 - Is it easy to use?
-

F. Presentation and Communication — 10 Points

Consider:

- Clarity.
 - Confidence.
 - Understanding.
 - Ability to answer questions.
 - Ability to explain the creative process.
-

G. Teamwork and Collaboration — 5 Points

Consider:

- Shared participation.
 - Respect.
 - Cooperation.
 - Evidence of meaningful contribution by team members.
-

PART V: UNPLUGGED CODING RUBRIC

13. Unplugged Coding Scoring Rubric

Criterion	Maximum Points
Creativity and Originality	20
Computational Thinking	25
Problem-Solving	20
Relevance and Potential Impact	15
Explanation and Communication	10
Teamwork and Participation	10
TOTAL	100

PART VI: OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

14. PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORM

PLUGGED & UNPLUGGED CODING CONTEST 2026

A. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Country: _____

City/District: _____

B. SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION

School/Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

District/Country: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

C. TEAM INFORMATION

Team Name: _____

Team Category:

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

- ☐ Unplugged Coding
- ☐ Educator/Mentor

Team Members

No.	Full Name	Age	Role
1			
2			
3			

D. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: _____

Project Category: _____

Project Description:

What problem does the project address?

How does the project use coding or computational thinking?

What inspired the project?

E. MENTOR INFORMATION

Name: _____

Organization/School: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to Participant/Team: _____

F. DECLARATION

I confirm that the information provided is accurate and that the submitted project complies with the official rules of the Plugged & Unplugged Coding Contest.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PART VII: PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

15. PARENTAL CONSENT AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

PLUGGED & UNPLUGGED CODING CONTEST 2026

I, _____, being the parent/legal guardian of:

Child's Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School/Organization: _____

hereby give permission for my child to participate in the Plugged & Unplugged Coding Contest 2026 organized by Creative Child Foundation.

I understand that the competition may involve:

- Training activities.
 - School or community-based sessions.
 - Travel to the contest venue where applicable.
 - Project exhibitions.
 - Presentations.
 - Photography and video recording.
 - Interaction with educators, mentors, judges, and other participants.
-

15.1 Medical and Emergency Information

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Telephone: _____

Alternative Emergency Contact: _____

Telephone: _____

Relevant medical information or allergies that organizers should know about:

15.2 Media Consent

I understand that photographs, video recordings, interviews, and other media may be captured during contest-related activities.

Please select one:

☐ I consent to my child's image, voice, project, and participation being used for educational, reporting, documentation, and promotional purposes.

☐ I do not consent to my child's image being used publicly.

Note: The child's participation and project may still be documented for necessary administrative and safeguarding purposes.

15.3 Participation Consent

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the competition information.
- I permit my child to participate.
- I understand the competition rules.
- I understand that the child's project must be substantially their own work.
- I authorize the Organizing Committee to provide appropriate emergency assistance where reasonably necessary.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PART VIII: SCHOOL PARTICIPATION GUIDE

16. GUIDE FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The success of the competition depends on schools creating an environment where learners can explore, experiment, and create.

Schools are encouraged to follow the process below.

STEP 1: Identify a School Coordinator

Each participating school should appoint one teacher or staff member as the contest coordinator.

The coordinator will:

- Receive official communications.
- Coordinate school activities.
- Support registration.
- Coordinate mentors.
- Communicate with parents.
- Submit projects.

STEP 2: Introduce Creative Coding

Schools should introduce learners to:

- Creative coding.
- Computational thinking.
- OctoStudio.
- Algorithms.
- Sequencing.
- Problem-solving.
- Unplugged coding.

Schools are encouraged to organize introductory sessions before learners begin developing projects.

STEP 3: Encourage Exploration

Learners should be encouraged to:

- Ask questions.
- Experiment.
- Make mistakes.
- Try different ideas.
- Work individually or in teams.
- Explore community challenges.

The goal is not to make every learner create the same project.

STEP 4: Develop Projects

Learners should:

1. Identify an idea or problem.
 2. Explore possible solutions.
 3. Design the project.
 4. Create the project.
 5. Test the project.
 6. Debug and improve it.
 7. Prepare a presentation.
-

STEP 5: Conduct Internal Selection

Schools may organize a mini-contest or exhibition to select their official project(s).

Selection should be based on:

- Creativity.
 - Computational thinking.
 - Relevance.
 - Innovation.
 - Learner ownership.
 - Ability to explain the project.
-

STEP 6: Register Official Teams

The school should submit:

- Participant registration.
 - Project details.
 - Mentor information.
 - Parent/guardian consent.
 - Required project files or links.
-

STEP 7: Prepare for the National Contest

Learners should practice:

- Explaining the problem.
- Demonstrating the project.
- Explaining the coding.
- Answering questions.
- Working as a team.

Presentations should be prepared by the learners themselves.

PART IX: SCHOOL COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

17. SCHOOL CHECKLIST

Before Registration

- ☐ School coordinator appointed
- ☐ Learners introduced to creative coding
- ☐ Learners introduced to OctoStudio or unplugged coding
- ☐ Teams formed
- ☐ Projects developed
- ☐ Internal selection conducted

Before Submission

- ☐ Participant information completed
- ☐ Parent/guardian consent obtained
- ☐ Project title confirmed
- ☐ Project description completed
- ☐ Mentor information completed

- ☐ Project file/link submitted
- ☐ School contact information verified

Before Contest Day

- ☐ Travel arrangements confirmed
 - ☐ Participant attendance confirmed
 - ☐ Required consent documents carried
 - ☐ Devices charged
 - ☐ Backup project files prepared
 - ☐ Presentation rehearsed
 - ☐ Team understands contest rules
-

PART X: JUDGE SCORE SHEET

18. PLUGGED CODING JUDGE SCORE SHEET

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Number: _____

Project Title: _____

Team Name: _____

Category: _____

Judge Name: _____

SCORING

Criterion	Maximum	Score Awarded
Creativity and Originality	20	
Problem Identification and Relevance	15	
Computational Thinking and Coding	20	
Innovation and Potential Impact	20	
Functionality and User Experience	10	
Presentation and Communication	10	

Criterion	Maximum	Score Awarded
Teamwork and Collaboration	5	
TOTAL	100	

JUDGE COMMENTS

Strengths of the Project:

Areas for Improvement:

Most Impressive Element:

Would you recommend this project for a special award?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Recommended Award:

Judge Signature: _____

PART XI: UNPLUGGED CODING JUDGE SCORE SHEET

19. UNPLUGGED CODING SCORE SHEET

Project Number: _____

Project Title: _____

Team Name: _____

Judge Name: _____

Criterion	Maximum	Score Awarded
Creativity and Originality	20	
Computational Thinking	25	
Problem-Solving	20	
Relevance and Potential Impact	15	
Explanation and Communication	10	
Teamwork and Participation	10	
TOTAL	100	

Comments

Judge Signature: _____

PART XII: FINAL RESULTS SHEET

20. OFFICIAL RESULTS SUMMARY

Rank	Project No.	Team	Category	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Average	Final Rank
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								

PART XIII: SPECIAL AWARD NOMINATION FORM

21. SPECIAL AWARD NOMINATION

Project Number: _____

Team: _____

Category: _____

Recommended Award:

- ☐ Best Creative Coding Project
- ☐ Best Unplugged Coding Project
- ☐ Best Community Impact
- ☐ Best Innovation
- ☐ Best Storytelling
- ☐ Best Beginner Project
- ☐ Best Teamwork
- ☐ People's Choice
- ☐ Other: _____

Reason for Nomination

Judge Name: _____

Signature: _____

PART XIV: CONTEST DAY PROTOCOL

22. Recommended Programme

8:00–9:00 AM

Registration and setup.

9:00–9:30 AM

Opening ceremony.

9:30–11:00 AM

Project exhibitions and demonstrations.

11:00 AM–1:00 PM

Judging sessions.

1:00–2:00 PM

Networking and lunch break.

2:00–3:30 PM

Final presentations and special challenges.

3:30–4:00 PM

Judges' deliberation.

4:00–5:00 PM

Awards and closing ceremony.

The official programme may be adjusted by the Organizing Committee.

PART XV: CONTEST VALUES

The competition is guided by the following values:

CREATE

Every child should have the opportunity to create.

EXPLORE

Curiosity and experimentation are encouraged.

COLLABORATE

Learning is strengthened when people share ideas.

SOLVE

Technology should help us understand and address real challenges.

INCLUDE

Every child deserves an opportunity to participate.

INSPIRE

Every project can inspire someone else.

FINAL DECLARATION

The Plugged & Unplugged Coding Contest is not simply a competition to identify the best coder.

It is a platform to help children become:

- Creators.
- Problem-solvers.
- Storytellers.
- Designers.
- Innovators.
- Collaborators.
- Confident communicators.

The competition celebrates the journey from **curiosity to creation**.

CREATE. CODE. IMAGINE. SOLVE.

Organized by Creative Child Foundation

Contest Date: 30 October 2026

Location: Kampala, Uganda

Official Information: creativechildf.org/octostudio