Before I turned 18, one of the coolest things I did was to intern as a software engineer at a tech company in Shanghai. My boss believes that everyone in the company should be part of the decision-making; thus, even I was a high school student, I was always invited to join meetings with staff from the globe. Once I joined an online meeting hosted by Google Meet Up, where people were brainstorming designing programming courses for the kids. Preeti Vyas, a volunteer teacher from India, said that in India few kids have the access to the computers, let alone learning programming. Her words stunned me. I thought most people in India should be able to use computers as the CEOs of Google, Microsoft, and Adobe are Indians. How come their country have limited access of computer resources for the kids?

After the meeting, I discussed a little bit more with Preeti about the programing education environment in India, and I decided to make a free for all and easily accessible programming learning platform for everyone in the world.

I started to research the prerequisites I need for achieving this project. In order to build a website that’s suitable for everyone to study computer science easily, I will need to have an algorithm to automatically provide course curriculums for each user according to their learning statistics. I will also need to design a set of courses to let the artificial intelligence to assign them to the user. Despites the courses themselves, the users will also need a computer to access the site and code exercises on it. One of my Canadian software engineer colleague has told me that every kids in Canadian public schools get a free computer to access digital courses and resources, but it is impossible for countries like India or Nigeria to promote certain policies because the cost of one laptop is just so high. An idea of making a cheap and portable laptop for people to learn computer programming has also evinced in my mind.

To complete all these requirements, I will need to learn computer science, education, and electrical engineering knowledge. Although I can self-study some of them, but I will still need more professional and systematic courses to both cover my need for this project and be prepared for the future. NYU Abu Dhabi has covered all these areas that I have mentioned. Especially in the Artificial Intelligence course under Computer Science major and Education and Society course under the Pre-Professional Courses, I get to learn about constructing the artificial intelligence model and designing course curriculums suitable for the global stage.

What’s more excited besides the ample academic resource I could rceive from NYU Abu Dhabi is that I could get substantial helps from the startAD program to turn my ideas into reality. Under startInvest and Beyond the Pitch programs under the startAD program, I can learn how to start a company supporting my idea through partnerships with local industries and communications with local angel investors. Besides them, I can also use the Microcontrollers and 3D printers to build prototypes for my computer in Al Warsha. I could boost the progress of the project and made them into reality faster than before. And if my project was finished, I could go for the venture launchpad and get further startup supports both economically and technically for the project’s future development.

As a bonus, I can promote my project through joining the local hackathon event, hackAD. In the middle east, where the programming resources is also lacking, I could help the kids in the middle eastern countries lacking computer programming resources to learn computer programming by using this event as a springboard. I can also witness and get inspirations from many other innovative projects from the others. By discussing with both these people and the locals on how to improve my projects, I can bring this project to the whole world!

Despite the hackAD event in Abu Dhabi, I am also very interested in exploring the city itself. As a person who loves to travel around the world, I have never been to the middle east before, and I would love to go there. I would bring my camera with me and take pictures of the moments that I believe worth preserving. I would talk with the locals and learn the local culture, language, and traditions. Just like NYU’s school spirit has mentioned, “In and Off The City”, I would like to spend the every seconds besides course times in and off this unknown and fascinating Arabic World.