

# Piloting Diversity and Inclusion Workshops in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics for Children

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*air4children: Artificial Intelligence and Robotics*

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**Abstract**—This document is a model and instructions for L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. This and the IEEEtran.cls file define the components of your paper [title, text, heads, etc.]. \*CRITICAL: Do Not Use Symbols, Special Characters, Footnotes, or Math in Paper Title or Abstract. Nam dui ligula, fringilla a, euismod sodales, sollicitudin vel, wisi. Morbi auctor lorem non justo. Nam lacus libero, pretium at, lobortis vitae, ultricies et, tellus. Donec aliquet, tortor sed accumsan bibendum, erat ligula aliquet magna, vitae ornare odio metus a mi. Morbi ac orci et nisl hendrerit mollis. Suspendisse ut massa. Cras nec ante. Pellentesque a nulla. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Aliquam tincidunt urna. Nulla ullamcorper vestibulum turpis. Pellentesque cursus luctus mauris.

**Index Terms**—component, formatting, style, styling, insert

## I. INTRODUCTION

Guarantee security, accessibility and human dignity can be considered the pillar for inclusivity. However, the disparity of advances in education and technology is not creating environments to construct a fairer society. Recently, Astobiza et al. reported the need of collaborations between industry and a multidisciplinary group of researchers to address concerns on the paradigm of inclusivity in robotics [1]. Similarly, Astobiza et al. suggested that inclusive robotics should be based on: "1) they should be easy to use and 2) they must contribute to making accessibility easier in distinct environments" [1]. Peixoto et al. in 2018 reported the use of robots as tool to promote diversity which lead to improve competences in communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, resilience and entrepreneurship [2], [3]. Pannier et al. pointed out the challenges of increasing the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the areas of Mechatronics and Robotics Engineering as well as the creation of community of educators to promote diversity and inclusion [4]. Pannier et al. mentioned that the prevalence of free and open-source software and hardware made mechatronics more accessible to a diverse group of population [4]. Also, Pannier et al. touched on the evidence and importance of offering workshops to different range of underrepresented students that lead to inspire other programs to create outreach activities for students, trainings, workshops. Recently, Montenegro et al. introduced air4children, Artificial Intelligence for Children, as a way (a) to address aspects for inclusion accessibility, equity and fairness and (b) to create affordable child-centred materials in

AI and Robotics (AIR) [5]. That said, in this work we design and pilot workshops of air4children to test how children of different ages and genders and instructors engage to create an environment of diversity and inclusion.

This short paper presents our findings on the first pilot workshop to promote diversity and inclusion in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. This paper is organised with the introduction of diversity and inclusivity in AI and Robotics for children. We then explain how workshops were designed, present results of the first pilot of the workshop and finalise it with conclusions and future work.

## II. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF AIR4CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### A. Alternative education programs

Alternative education programs such as Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia considers children as active authors of their own development [6]. Such programs that in a way follow same philosophies have been adopted internationally. However the contributed changes of technologies have been started to evolve. For instance, Edwards pointed out the schools deriving from the same philosophy might also need to observe teacher-child interactions, its environments and interview to the past and present parents and children [6]. Recently, Aljabreen pointed out the adoptions of new technologies and how early child education is re-conceptualised [7].

### B. Montessori education

Elkin et al. in 2014 explored the how robots can be used in the Montessori curriculum [8]. Authors conclude that the confidence and experience in robotics is crucial to deliver and communicate the right experience to encourage students [8]. Similarly Elkin et al. posed the question on the revision of new curriculums of technology that do not deviate from the purpose of the Montessori classroom [8]. Drigas and Gkeka in 2016 reviewed the application of information and communication technologies in the Montessori Method [9]. Drigas and Gkeka mentioned the Manipulatives, as objects to develop motor skills or understand mathematical abstractions, are based on cultural areas, language, mathematics and sensorial but little to none on technological areas. Drigas and Gkeka reviewed Montessori materials of the 21st century where interactive

systems with sounds and lights, touch application to enhance visual literacy or the development of computational thinking and constrictions of the physical world [9] These indicate that the incorporation of such manipulatives with the use of robotics might led to reach scneraios to explore motor skill development, visualisation and computational thikning.

Recently, Scippo and Ardolino reported a longitudinal study of the use of computationla thinking in five years participants of primary shcool in a Montessori school [10] Scippo and Ardolino pointed out the importance of alignment of the Montessori material with the computationla thinking acitivities.

### III. DESIGNING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKSHOPS

Considering the challenges of low-to-middle-income countries faces, technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence might not be avaiable to towns. In that sense, we focus this work on a pilot experiment to promote diversity of and inclusion to children to teach AI and Robotics.

a) *Lesson 01: Braking the ice and motivations:* Place figures and tables at the top and bottom of columns. Avoid placing them in the middle of columns. Large figures and tables may span across both columns. Figure captions should be below the figures; table heads should appear above the tables. Insert figures and tables after they are cited in the text. Use the abbreviation

b) *Lesson 02: Human senses and coding my first robot:* Place figures and tables at the top and bottom of columns. Avoid placing them in the middle of columns. Large figures and tables may span across both columns. Figure captions should be below the figures; table heads should appear above the tables. Insert figures and tables after they are cited in the text. Use the abbreviation

c) *Lesson 03: Playing with reaction-action activities:* Place figures and tables at the top and bottom of columns. Avoid placing them in the middle of columns. Large figures and tables may span across both columns. Figure captions should be below the figures; table heads should appear above the tables. Insert figures and tables after they are cited in the text. Use the abbreviation

d) *Lesson 04: Develop your own AIR:* Place figures and tables at the top and bottom of columns. Avoid placing them in the middle of columns. Large figures and tables may span across both columns. Figure captions should be below the figures; table heads should appear above the tables. Insert figures and tables after they are cited in the text. Use the abbreviation

Figure 1 presents four lessons of the workshops.

### IV. PILOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKSHOPS

We invited 14 participants (six female and eight male) with range of age from 6 to 11 years old (average age of 7.64). Three instructors and two coordinators delivered four lessons. Each lessons lasted 90 minutes with breaks of 15 minutes at the middle of each lesson. Figure 2 illustrates instructors and children intercting with activities.

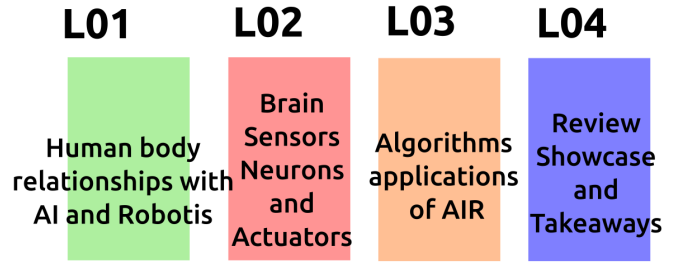


Fig. 1. Curriculum for four lessons (L01 to L04). Lesson 01 introduce the course, lesson 02 provides the basics of anatomy, lesson 03 covers algoirhtms, and lesson 04 wrapup and showcase the project of children.

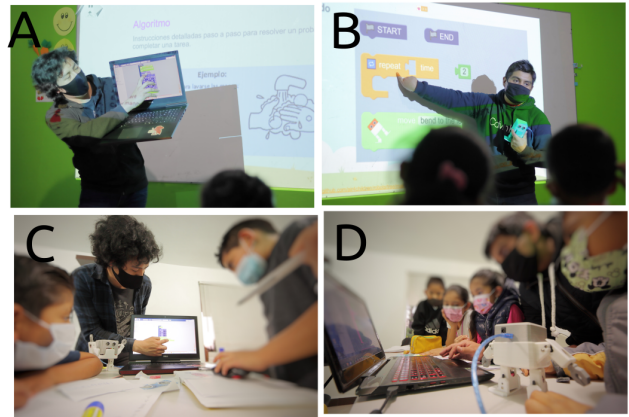


Fig. 2. (A, B) Instructors demonstrating basics of AI and Robotics. (B, and C) Children engaging with robots, classmates and instructors.

### V. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

A pilot workshop to promoto diversity and inclusion to teach AI and Robotics to 14 children was successfully organised in Xicohtzinco Mexico last Novemeber 2021. In such workshop, activiites were designing to encourage participantes to engage with each other. Similarly, the workshops were free cost to encongrage participation of anyone. We realised that grouping children with four participans was challenging because of the space as well as having a more engaging interaction with the subjects of the group. That said, we are planing to organise another workshop in third quatiremster of 2022 where lessons will be better organised, material will combine more interactive activitie and robots and material will be suited for

TABLE I  
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three participants per group.

For curriculums of workshops, we will incorporate a similar approach of the synthesis program which is a new education program aiming to cultivate student voice, strategic thinking and collaborative problem solving [11].

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