

## Update on Telkom's R 200 million Investment in Education



The Telkom Foundation announced its major investment in education last month when it pledged more than R 200 million over the next five years to contribute towards improving the quality of teaching and learning with a specific focus on Mathematics, Science, English and Technology in disadvantaged communities. The programme is being rolled out in five Ga-Rankuwa schools in Tshwane West, Gauteng and will expand to two schools in Despatch, in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. The schools in Ga-Rankuwa will see Telkom provide hi-tech devices to every Grade 8 learner in 2017 and to subsequent grade 8 learners over the next three years. Learners will align with the Gauteng Education MEC's paperless schools programme when learners are in Grade 11 and 12 at the five schools in Ga-Rankuwa.

This project is focussed on learning using digital devices and tools. To this end Telkom decided to model the principles of Operation Phakisa: ICTs in Education to ensure that it included partners in the connected schools project that would provide Infrastructure, Digital content, Connectivity for the school, Teacher professional development as well as a learner support programme to ensure that the maximum number of learners become economically active.

SchoolNet's role is to offer a range of ICT programmes for Teachers, Senior Managers and Teacher Champions to build their ICT competence and change of ICT practice in the classroom and in the school.

For senior managers, SchoolNet started with the Change Leadership for technology integration to prepare the SMT to include strategies for the integration of technology along with ideas for supporting, mentoring and modelling the change that is envisioned for the school, its learners, its teachers and the community at large.

The teacher professional development programme started with differentiating the needs for teachers and then offered focussed skills training to optimise the level of competence of teachers. Teachers complete and submit portfolios of evidence to attest to the skills learnt and this is followed up with in-classroom support that would provide coaching and guidance to teachers on how to better integrate ICTs into the teaching and learning activities in the classroom.



The Programme for teacher champions is the Peer Coaching programme which offers a blended mode of instruction for teacher champion to learn how to be coaches, enhance communication skills, analyse ways to improve lessons through the use of digital technologies.

Since April this year, we have had many learnings and are implementing these as the project develops:

### **Learnings from the project**

- Teachers must have compulsory practice sessions organised by teacher champions at school
- Use of digital devices must be encouraged as a daily activity for all teachers
- Digital subject content is available and teachers need to describe how they are incorporating these into their teaching activities
- The SMT must know the staff at their school for example are they able to say how many teacher need basic, intermediate or advanced skills
- The school needs to delegate key champions/ interns to ensure that teachers are supported to complete activities. "Supporting" does not mean "doing for" teachers

- SMT must encourage all staff to make electronic submissions of admin docs by the end of an agreed on time frame- this will ensure that staff are aware and fully mindful that support is on hand until that point of time.
- SMT must encourage teachers to use tools and devices with learners in the classroom.

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August 2017