Report to KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training
conducted between January 2011 and June 2014

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Introduction

Since 2005, Microsoft has offered a range of Partners in Learning courses and events to teachers and schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The Vodacom Foundation supports an ICT Resource Centre in Pinetown and Microsoft is a key strategic partners in this initiative. SchoolNet SA has built capacity at this centre for staff to run a number of Microsoft Partners in Learning courses which are now being offered to teachers in the district around the centre. In addition to these initiatives Microsoft continues to fund selected training sessions in KwaZulu-Natal to build local capacity and as proof-of-concept projects. For example, on an annual basis Innovation Workshops are held in KwaZulu-Natal to encourage teachers to enter the Microsoft in Education Forum – a competition for innovative teachers. Over the years a number of teachers from KwaZulu-Natal schools have been selected to participate in regional and global Microsoft in Education forums based on their engaging uses of technology. Microsoft has also sponsored a number of professional development sessions for teachers in KwaZulu-Natal to show them how to access educational resources and a global community of practice using the Microsoft Educators Network. These various initiatives are described in this report.

In previous years, SITA sponsored training of a cluster of teachers in the Mpopomeni area to use technology for educational purposes which included some Partners in Learning training and Multichoice invested in infrastructure and Microsoft Partner in Learning Training in three schools in KwaZulu-Natal. For reports on these and other initiatives that included Partners in Learning training or events that took place prior to 2011, please consult the reports archived on the SchoolNet SA website – reports page. In the 2010 report on Partners in Learning projects that have taken place in KwaZulu-Natal a pilot project that involved using a Microsoft X-Box Kinect to promote literacy and numeracy in junior primary learners at Lakeside Primary in Vryheid in KwaZulu Natal was described. A recent exciting development is that based on the success of this initial project, the DG Murray Trust is currently sponsoring the roll out of an enhanced version of this project to further schools in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

1 Partners in Learning training sponsored by Vodacom Foundation in KwaZulu-Natal

In addition to the Microsoft Partners in Learning training which has taken place at the Pinetown ICT Resource Centre, between 2011 and 2012 Vodacom Foundation sponsored a number of courses for schools in the Port Shepstone, Pinetown and Umlazi districts. These various courses and the sessions that took place are listed below:

1.1 Partners in Learning – ICT Leadership for Education Managers

This course is aimed as decision makers so that they can lead the adoption of ICTs. Participants are shown how ICTs can improve administration and become a catalyst for pedagogical change. Modules include:

- What managers can do with ICT
- Management of ICT resources
- Uses of ICT for administration and teaching
- Issues regarding the ICT policy
This course was offered to clusters of school leaders as follows:
- Port Shepstone District (29 – 31 March 2010)
- Pinetown and Umlazi Districts (23 – 25 April 2010)

1.2 **Partners in Learning – HelpDesk**

Schools are increasingly facing the challenge of troubleshooting current technology and deploying and maintaining new equipment. This programme assists both learners and teachers from schools to face this challenge with confidence. This course develops capacity within the schools to solve basic technical problems and to conduct simple network installations. The course also helps develop an interest in IT as a profession amongst learners who attend the course.

Clusters of teachers and learners from various schools attended clustered training as follows:
- Port Shepstone District (10 – 14 June 2010)
- Umlazi District (22-24 October and 5 - 6 November 2010)

1.3 **Partners in Learning – ICT Skills for Teachers**

This introductory ICT skills training provides teachers with initial, intermediate and advanced scenarios that directly relate to their roles as teachers. The course caters to the teachers’ needs and interests, emphasizing the development of independent learning skills. Scenarios include:
- Create a simple mark-book
- Create a class database
- Mail merge a letter
- Create a multimedia presentation

Each of the following schools received the ICT Skills for teachers course on the dates listed below:
- Luthuli High (23 – 25 April and 1 – 2 May 2010)
- Ithongasi Primary (28 June – 2 July 2010)
- Siphapheme Primary (21 – 23 April and 4 – 5 June 2010)
- Jamengweni Primary (15 – 16 May and 14 – 15 June 2010)
- Zakhele Primary (14 – 18 June 2010)
- Siyaphambili High School (31 July and 6-9 August 2010)
- Swanvale Primary School (30 July and 1 August 2010 and 7 August and 11 September 2010)
- Amangcino Primary School (10-18 November 2010)
- Kwagwegwe Primary School (8 -23 November 2010)
- Isipingo Beach Intermediate School (15, 23 and 30 October and 29 November and 1 December 2010)
- Uthando Primary School (November 2010 and 3-5 December)
- Mangquzuka High School (12-14 November 2010 and 11-12 March 2011)
- Intakemezolo Combined School (27 June-1 July 2011)
- Mceleni Combined Primary School (15-25 August 2011)
1.4 **Partners in Learning – Peer coaching**

The peer coaching programme is a whole-school professional development model aimed at training teacher leaders to serve as coaches for colleagues. Through the peer coaching process, teachers are encouraged to promote engaged learning and to incorporate ICT integration into teaching and learning practices.

Two clusters of the Peer Coaching course were offered in KwaZulu-Natal through this project:

KwaZulu Natal: Port Shepstone District:
- Session 1 (19 February 2011)
- Session 2 and 3 (19-20 March 2011)
- Session 4 (7 May 2011)
- Session 5 (11 June 2011)
- Session 6 (July 2011)

KwaZulu Natal: Pinetown and Umlazi Districts:
- Session 1 (24 February 2011)
- Session 2 (23 March 2011)
- Session 3 (30 March 2011)
- Session 4 (14 April 2011)
- Session 5 (18 April 2011)
- Session 6 (30 July 2011)

1.5 **Partners in Learning – ICT Integration: One Step Further**

In this course, teachers are guided through the use of Microsoft Encarta and Microsoft One Note in order to develop information skills and the ability to design simple learning objects for teaching and learning. This course is aimed at computer literate teachers who want to progress towards ICT integration.

Clusters of teachers who had done well in the ICT Skills for Teachers course were invited to attend the following clustered training sessions:
- Port Shepstone District (24-25 June 2011)
- Pinetown and Umlazi District (12-13 August 2011)

1.6 **Partners in Learning – Innovation Workshops**

Microsoft Innovation Workshops are run in order to provide insights and practical strategies to teachers wishing to become innovative educators by enhancing their lessons using technology. The workshops expose teachers to a range of tools that they can use, and they give examples of how other teachers have used these tools in their lessons.
An Innovation workshop was offered to teachers in the Port Shepstone district on 12 March 2011.

1.7  **Partners in Learning – ICT Integration: WebQuests**

This course introduces teachers to a simple project template for implementing ICT-integrated projects in the classroom. WebQuests are learner-centred and inquiry-based; they promote higher order thinking skills and challenge learners to explore the web for information. The course is designed to show teachers what WebQuests are and how to find examples online, evaluate them and adapt them for their own use.

Clusters of WebQuests training took place as follows:
- Port Shepstone District (26-28 August 2011)
- Umlazi Pinetown District (27-28 August 2011)

2  **Partners in Learning training at Vodacom Foundation Supported ICT Resource Centres**

Since 2010, SchoolNet SA has been offering master training and support to centre management teams at the nine provincial ICT Resource Centres supported by the Vodacom Foundation situated in the proof-of-concept districts in each province in South Africa. Microsoft is a key strategic partner of this initiative, contributing its Partners in Learning Courseware, assisting with capacity building, and offering its Office 365 services to the centres. The Vodacom Foundation supported ICT Resource centres have each received the following courses:
- SchoolNet SA - Centre Managers Course
- SchoolNet SA – Sizanani ICT Skills for Teachers – Training of Trainers
- Microsoft Partners in Learning - ICT Skills for Teachers - Training of Trainers
- Microsoft Partners in Learning – HelpDesk Course – Training of Trainers
- Microsoft Partners in Learning – Innovation Workshop
- Intel Teach – Easy Steps – Training of Trainers
- Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Leadership for Education Managers (for school managers at schools surrounding the centres)
- Peer Coaching (being run for schools clustered around 4 centres in 2014)

Below is a description of the Microsoft Partners in Learning training that has taken place at the ICT Resource Centre supported by Vodacom Foundation in KwaZulu-Natal.

2.1  **Microsoft Partners in Learning - ICT Skills for Teachers - Training of Trainers**

From the 13 – 15 July 2012 Sam Tobias conducted the Train the Trainer session for ICT skills for teachers. All the participants were practicing teachers and as a few of them were new to the profession this course was very exciting for them. The centre manager, Ms Lindiwe Dlamini, was very helpful in terms of resources as well as motivating. On the 17- 18 August 2012 the follow up session of ICT skills for Teachers took place. The training was conducted Mr Victor Ngobeni. From the group
of 13 educators five new trainers were selected. These new trainers will now be able to offer the course at the ICT resource centre or at schools in the area.

2.2 Microsoft Partners in Learning – HelpDesk Course – Training of Trainers

Training was conducted by Thema Mabaso on the 7 – 11 May 2012. It was attended by participants from the district; one Centre Manager, one out-of-school youth who was the Centre Manager’s son and 28 Educators from the 20 Vodacom Schools supported by this resource centre. From this group only two participants had technical skills and an A+ qualification. The master trainer asked these two participants to stay in contact with him so that he could equip them with the training strategies required to run the HelpDesk course for others.

2.3 Partners in Learning - ICT Leadership for Education Managers

A group of 30 school principals and deputy principals gathered at the Dokkies Vodacom ICT Resource Centre on the 22-24 April 2014 to attend the ICT Leadership training which was conducted by Sandile Mohlakoana. Training was a great success even though participants indicated they required more training. They were enticed and were enthusiastic yet were uncertain of skills gained they enquired about possibilities of having such workshops in their respective schools.

2.4 Partners in Learning – Innovation Workshop Pinetown

Innovation workshops were scheduled twice for the Pinetown Vodacom ICT Resource Centre centre, however they failed to take place. The first workshop was called off due to the SADTU industrial action and the second workshop was called off at the last minute when on the Friday before the scheduled training session the centre management informed SchoolNet SA that the building owners would not allow Saturday sessions as there is no building security on weekends. This session will be rescheduled once the KwaZulu Natal Vodacom ICT Resource Centre has been relocated to its new premises.

3 DG Murray Trust sponsored training

During 2010 and 2011 Microsoft sponsored a pilot project at Lakeside Primary School in Vryheid KwaZulu-Natal testing a premise that the use of gaming technology, specifically Kinect for Xbox 360, will help improve literacy in the first three grades. Teachers were then trained by a SchoolNet
facilitator to use games to create learning opportunities, for example: using the creation of an Avatar to teach life-skills around physical characteristics and using the tenpin bowling game to develop numeracy skills.

The course facilitator noted that “the atmosphere during the course was relaxed and fun, and teachers were encouraged to voice opinions and take ownership of the new technology. They seemed excited at the possibilities, and most seemed to overcome the fears and doubts they might have had.” He hoped that “as this project moves forward, it will be exciting to see whether these teachers can rise to the challenge of developing their creativity and so enhancing the learning of their charges by innovatively making use of this exciting technology.”

The evaluation of the programme in 2011 showed that learners had developed numeracy and literacy skills as a result of the project and that there had been other benefits such as improved use of English and a drop in absenteeism.

Based in part on the success of this pilot project in 2014 the D G Murray Trust awarded a grant to SchoolNet South Africa to introduce the Microsoft Xbox Kinect and a bank of tablets into Grade R and Grade 1 in 5 schools in the Helderberg Basin in the Western Cape and in 5 schools the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. The aim of this project is to explore learning through play in Grades R and 1 in 10 schools in two provinces of South Africa - using innovative technologies.

More specific objectives will be:

- To create awareness among leaders to the affordances of technology in education
- To change the pedagogical approaches of teachers
- To expose learners to learning environments dominated by play
- To increase learner literacies (Literacy, Numeracy as well as – motor coordination)
- To evaluate these learning gains

The following KwaZulu-Natal schools, have been selected to participate in this project:

- Cedara Primary
- Nogqaza Primary
- Qhamukile Primary
- Thembelihle Primary
- Triandra Farm School
4 Microsoft sponsored Partners in Learning Initiatives

4.1 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovation Workshops
As already discussed, Microsoft Innovation Workshops encourage teachers to develop creative and engaging teaching strategies that involve using technology to develop 21st century skills. Whilst it is hoped that many of the teachers who attend the Innovation workshops will go on to upload a Learning Activity to the Microsoft Educators Network (www.pil-network.com), the sessions also promote good teaching practices for teachers who do not yet feel confident enough to apply to be Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts. Below the various Innovation Workshops that have taken place in the KwaZulu Natal are described:

2011 - Durban – KwaZulu Natal
A full house of 30 teachers attended the Durban workshop and the facilitator, Charli Wiggill reported that “most who attended were very able computer-wise, but some rather traditional in their approaches to education. Many of the innovative teaching ideas were totally new to them. On the bright side, most were blown away by the ideas and projects presented and were keen to learn new things.”

Charli noted that some teachers in the group said that they were not interested in entering a competition and instead had attended the workshop to pick up new ideas. Despite this, a number of teachers have since bounced ideas off the facilitator via email and even some of those who initially did not seem that keen have requested more information about entering.

As many of the teachers at the session were already familiar with the theoretical concepts of 21st century learning the facilitator skimmed over some of the courseware and added in some of his own content and ideas. For example, as an ice-breaker, he introduced them to Mouse Mischief using a competition format. This activity allowed the group to work in teams and to get to know one another. The activity also exposed the teachers to a fun tool that they can use in their own lessons.

Charli noted that the best part of the workshop was “the collegiality and wonderful spirit in touching base with other forward thinking and passionate educators as well as the incredible examples of successful projects from previous ITF entries. They were truly blown away by some of the projects presented and questioned thoroughly on many aspects of these projects”. He said that the whole group, without exception, were really impressed with the previous ITF projects. According to Charli “they continued to rave on at the two teas and lunch and left on a high after the completion of the day - with many ideas for their projects already forming and bubbling over”.

One of the participants, Mrs Brenda Bezuidenhout of Brighton Beach Senior Primary School, made the following comment: “5 star presentation! Thanks. I found it very rewarding to see what other educators have been doing!"
2011 - Port Shepstone – KwaZulu Natal

The Port Shepstone Innovation workshop was sponsored by Vodacom Foundation as part of this project; however teachers at the Vodacom Schools were all invited to the Innovation Workshops and were told that they could attend any of the KZN workshops. A number of the participants are part of the Peer Coaching cluster that is being run in Port Shepstone, and others were encouraged to attend by their district official or the principal of the host school.

The facilitator of this workshop described the participants as “eager to learn” and said that they were “motivated by the videos and other samples”. She noted that the course material was well laid out with a good flow from one aspect to the next. Most importantly she felt that the workshop inspired the teachers and reported that many enquired about further training programmes.

Andrew T. C. Muzhona of Port Shepstone Islamic School made the following comments about this workshop: “I appreciate this initiative and have taken the lessons to heart. I am going to incorporate more technology in my teaching and I am definitely entering my learners for the Innovative Forum Awards. Many thanks for this workshop and insightful facilitator.”

2012 - KwaZulu-Natal – Pietermaritzburg Innovation Workshop

On Saturday 18 February 2012 an Innovation Workshop was held at the Olwazini Discovery Centre of the Golden Horse Casino in Pietermaritzburg. Former Microsoft Innovative Teacher winner, Hlengiwe Mfeka had been employed by SchoolNet SA to work with a cluster of six schools in the Natal Midlands and to offer training in the Microsoft Partners in Learning and Intel Teach courses. It was hoped that some of the teachers who had shown promise in this SITA sponsored project would be ready for the challenge of implementing a project using technology in the classroom and thus all the SITA teachers were invited to this workshop.

Nombuso Mnguni a teacher at Asithuthuke Combined School – a small, rural school in the Umgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal was part of the SITA project and she attended the Innovation workshop. After receiving training from former Innovative Teacher Charli Wiggil, Nombuso was mentored by Hlengiwe Mfeka and she participated in some online sessions. Her project on “Designing and building a model of bridge” made it to the finals of the Partners in Learning Forum – a fantastic achievement for a teacher who could barely type at the start of the SITA project.
4.2 2012 Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum – Durban, South Africa

From the almost 100 entries that were received for the Partners in Learning Forum, twenty finalists were selected to present their projects on 1 April 2012 in Durban.

Whilst the past few Forums have involved finalists each presenting their projects to all finalists and judges, the 2012 competition saw finalists each erecting a poster describing their projects and individual interviews being conducted between each finalist and three or four judges.

All the finalists who responded to the post-event survey reported being either very satisfied (78%) or somewhat satisfied with the event (24%). They enjoyed the networking, commented on the professionalism of the judges and noted that their travel and accommodation arrangements were superb. Below is selected feedback that indicates how much the Forum was enjoyed:

I think this is a wonderful opportunity. Firstly to give some credit to teachers that goes the extra mile. Secondly, in applying for this it forces you to rethink your own teaching and how you can improve.

I really enjoyed the experience and found the networking most valuable.

A totally new experience for me- the judges were professional and the feedback I got from them was helpful and encouraging. I had never had my work displayed for other people to see - it gave me more insight to what I could do.

Loved every minute of it.

As part of the prize for making it to the finals, finalists were invited to attend the South African Basic Education Conference which was held at the Durban ICC immediately after the Partners in Learning Forum. Unfortunately the presentations at this conference did not appeal to the group as a whole and many preferred the informal session on the judging criteria run by Sarietjie Musgrave as well as her workshop on “Learning all around us”.

At the awards ceremony held at the South African Basic Education Conference on 2 April 2012 teachers were recognized in various categories. The following four teachers were announced as the winners of the 2012 South African Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum and they will be attending the Middle East and Africa Partners in Learning Forum to be held in Morocco in August 2012:

- Caroline Adelaar, St Mary’s School, Gauteng – Trees4Africa
- Maxwell Funo, Mkhanyiseli Primary School, WC – Our Community Our Pride
- Gaye Pieterse, Durban Girls’ College, KZN – Inside Outside
- Charli Wiggill, Eden College Durban, KZN – Braille Memory Game and Toys for the Blind
A total of nine teachers from KwaZulu-Natal entered the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum and of these five teachers were selected as finalists. In addition to Nombuso, Gaye Pieterse and Joan Martin from Durban Girls’ College made the finals for their pair entry called “Project Runway”. Neith Moore who had been a finalist in 2011 was so inspired by that experience that she built on her project and her mobile digital classroom “Flipping a Studio” project won a judges’ award for Use of Technology.

Charli Wiggill from Eden College won the Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom award for his project on “Braille Memory Game and Toys for the Blind” and Gaye Pieterse of Durban Girls’ College won the Knowledge Building and Critical Thinking” category for her project entitled “Inside Outside”. These two KwaZulu-Natal teachers were amongst the teachers selected to represent South Africa at the Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum in Morocco.

4.3 2011 Microsoft Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum – Aquaba, Jordan

This event took place in Aqaba, Jordan between 6 and 8 August 2012. The principals and ICT coordinators of two South African Innovative Schools participated in the Forum – St Cyprians as a Mentor School and Rondebosch Boys Preparatory School as a Pathfinder School. Three Lesotho teachers and five South African teachers participated in the Innovative Teacher track including Ryan Galvin from St Nicholas Diocesan College whose project on Romeo and Juliet had won him a place. A further KwaZulu-Natal teacher, Susan Ausmeier of Durban Girls College had won the Partners in Learning Network competition and attendance at this event was awarded as her prize.

During the Forum teachers were divided into groups and taken to a range of attractions in the Aqaba area including an aquarium, film school and citadel. They were then tasked with taking themes and discussion points that emerged during these visits and designing a collaborative group project using this as inspiration. Groups began working on their projects at the Forum and judging took place a few weeks after the Forum to give teachers an opportunity to implement their ideas.
4.4 2012 Microsoft Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum – Marakesh, Morocco

From 27 – 29 September 2012 more than 200 participants from 25 countries participated in the Middle East and Africa Partners in Learning Forum held in Marrakesh, Morocco. Included in the group were seven winning teachers from the South African and Lesotho Partners in Learning Forums who presented their projects to other innovative teachers from the region. Charli Wiggill (from Eden College in Durban, South Africa) and Kabelo Lucille Mahlatsi (from Leqele High School in Maseru, Lesotho) were among the winners selected to represent their region at the Global Partners in Learning Forum which will be held in Prague in November, 2012.

Charli Wiggill’s project, “Pay it Forward for the Blind” involved learners identifying with the blind and manufacturing memory game cards in Braille. As an extension project, they adapted existing educational games and designed and created new educational games and toys for the blind. As a Pass it Forward-type exercise, they communicated with and collaborated with other learners in their class and around the world to collect stories recorded as MP3 files which blind children can access and listen to.

4.5 2012 Microsoft in Education Global Forum – Prague, Czech Republic

Based on his success at the Regional Forum, Charli Wiggill was amongst the South African representatives who attended the Microsoft in Education Global Forum held in November 2012 in Prague, Czech Republic. Being part of a Global Forum is a life changing professional development event for a teacher. It is a chance to network with some of the most dynamic and creative teachers from around the world, to showcase one’s own project and to hear from cutting edge keynote speakers about the latest trends in education.

4.6 KwaZulu Natal: School Visits

A number of schools in KwaZulu-Natal have been visited to encourage teachers to sign up for the Partners in Learning Network, known as the Microsoft Educators Network form 2014 (see www.pil-network.com). SchoolNet SA’s two KwaZulu-Natal based trainers have also made an effort to encourage teachers to sign up during other training sessions. Some of these sessions are described below:

Isibongo Primary: Mpophomeni Township

Isibongo Primary School received nine tablets for participating in the Touchable Earth project in 2012. SchoolNet ran a Journey with Tablets course for teachers at this school on 2 May 2013 to help show staff members how to use the tablets in the classroom. One of the sessions included using e-mail and most of the teachers had no e-mail account. One the teachers had signed up for email they discussed the benefits of email. One advantage that was raised was being able easily sign up for other Professional development networks and to stay connected. This led to an
introduction to Partners in Learning Network as one of the professional development websites worth joining as a teacher.

**Thembelihle Primary: Howick**

Thembelihle Primary school bought laptops for the teachers and other computer hardware in May 2013 and SchoolNet offered an Intel Getting Started course. The session started off with the principal sharing how some teachers are already using technology in the classroom. This sharing prompted the facilitator Hlengiwe Mfeka to tell the group about Partners in Learning Network where teachers could access more exciting tools. Teachers were assisted to join and a number of teachers showed interest in entering the ‘Expert Educator’ competition.

**Mpophomeni High: Mpophomeni Township**

An appointment to do a Partners in Learning Network demonstration was set with this school for 21 May 2013. The school adjusted the periods and the School Management Team showed much enthusiasm for this session. Some of the teachers at the school are still technophobic, but many were excited by the resources on offer. A follow-up session will be done to find out if teachers managed to sign up on their own and to give support where necessary.

**Julukandoda Primary School - KwaHaza**

The principal was very excited to learn about the Partners in Learning Network and other opportunities available for teachers during a telephone conversation and agreed to a Partners in Learning demo on 3 June 2013. After the presentation teachers asked lot of questions regarding the ‘Expert Educator’ competition e.g. Does the competition include Primary Schools? What if the teacher doesn’t have ICT skills but interested in entering? They were so motivated such that they took out their cellphones and requested assistance to sign up however the network/reception was very weak and teachers then promised to join from home.

**Mconjwana High School computer lab - KwaHaza**

Teachers were already busy with marking, invigilating and examination related duties when this session took place on 3 June 2013 but school management allowed time for the presentation. Some of the teachers did not look happy about the presentation at the outset but become engaged by the discussion around professional networks that they belong to. Before the presentation ended teachers were already on the website asking questions on how they needed to proceed. After few days, the facilitator received calls from individual teachers enquiring about entering ‘Expert educator’ competition and teachers were assisted accordingly.
Ekukhanyeni Special School - Imbali
The visit to this school on 4 June 2013 included meeting with the School Management Team to discuss the upcoming Intel Elements Collaboration workshop as well as a presentation on the PiL Network. One teacher stood up and commented on how the group was motivated and looking forward to engaging with the tools. The teachers who had to leave due to prior commitments promised to register during the holidays.

Nyonithwele Secondary School - Edendale
On 5 June 2013 the Hlengiwe Mfeka arrived at this school to find a staff room packed with all 26 staff members who had been “promised something good” by their principal who had been briefed about the Partners in Learning Network on the phone. Teachers shared interesting stories about professional networks that they belong to and saw the value of joining the PiL-Network. The principal asked a lot of questions and said that he hoped that this session would be the start of a good relationship between this school and SchoolNet. As this school has a good computer lab and offers CAT as a subject the trainer was sure the resources would be put to good use.

Okumhlophe High School: KZN
On 30 April and 1 May 2013, Nomty Gcaba provided one-on-one instruction to teachers at this school who used their free periods to learn more about the PiL Network. Educators enjoyed the presentation and were interested in the free tools and discussion forums. 26 educators registered using the trainer’s laptop and others will register once the school’s internet is fixed. A number of educators did not have email addresses; and this session gave them an opportunity to create these.

KwaGwegwe Primary School: KZN
13 teachers attended this demo on 7 May 2013. Unfortunately the school’s internet access was very slow but a number of teachers signed up using their cell phones and others used trainer Nomty Gcaba’s computer to register. Educators were very interested in the resources available and mentioned different ways of how they thought they would be able to use the PiL network.

Amagcino Primary School: KZN
On 9 May 2013, 20 teachers attended a Partners in Learning Network demo. Educators were especially interested in software that could help their learners. They had an opportunity to use Maths Generator and also downloaded some other software to try out. Educators hope to explore more and expressed interest in the innovative lessons that are posted on the website. The internet was fast at this school and most educators had good computer skills which made facilitating this session a pleasure.
Delani Primary School

The Microsoft in Education demonstration at Delani Primary School was disturbing. Firstly the educator planning the session did not know whether or not the computers were working but assumed that they were because they were new laptops. On the trainer’s arrival the laptops were still inside the trolley box and not charged. The trainer was the first to make use of the devices and some teachers were also able to register from their phones. Thirteen teachers attended this session on 16 April 2014.

Mziwamandla High school

This Microsoft in Education demonstration was a great success. The laptops were ready for use and the internet worked. Educators took the session seriously and asked questions on different tools that were discussed. After the session most of them joined the Microsoft in Education network and started downloading different tools. They also joined the SchoolNet membership programme. This session took place on 22 April 2014 and was attended by 25 educators.

Piltochry Primary School

Twenty educators attended this session that took place on 25 April 2014. The internet was working very well and some educators had already joined the Microsoft Educators Network. The trainer had an opportunity to talk about SchoolNet and the courses on offer. She then discussed the Microsoft in Education network and asked educators to comment on the tools and gave them the opportunity to try some of the tools. Educators were concerned that most tools are supported by Windows 8 as some of the computers at the school have Windows 7. The principals told them that all new laptops will have Windows 8.

KwaZulu-Natal ICT Resource Centre

This subject advisors workshop took place on 5 and 6 May 2014 and involved a total of 57 participants. In both cases the sessions took longer than scheduled as the delegates were eager to stay on to download tools and to practice using them. The event organisers thanked Microsoft and SchoolNet for the opportunity and said that the subject advisors who had attended the event would work with schools in their districts to expose them to the Microsoft Educators Network.

Eden College-Durban

The Microsoft Educators Network demonstration for Eden College took place on 19 May 2014 and was attended by 32 teachers in two groups. Both groups were very interested and looked forward to the presentation. Most of them had already registered the day before and others registered on
the same day. All educators were comfortable with internet and computers which made it easy for them to try different tools. Educators tried different tools and some complained that Fresh Paint demanded that they have a Microsoft email address. Educators from primary schools liked using fresh paint and they looked at the activities for educators using fresh paint. AutoCollage and Math Worksheet Generator were also very popular.

4.7 Microsoft supported conferences and events in KwaZulu-Natal

District ICT Coordinators & Education Centre Managers Workshop
On 20 and 21 February 2013 SchoolNet SA ICT trainer and support specialist Hlengiwe Mfeka attended these sessions for 40 people per day. Whilst the workshops had been organized primarily to train district and centre staff on how to use an interactive whiteboard, Hlengiwe asked for a session in the programme to demonstrate to the group how the Partners in Learning Network works so that district officials could encourage teachers in their districts to join. Some people in the audience were able to sign up from their cellphones during the sessions but unfortunately the cell phone reception was not good. All were impressed with what was on offer and promised to sign up.

Intel Teach One Day Conference
Almost 200 teachers from across KwaZulu-Natal attended this one day event on 13 April 2013 at Maritzburg College to learn how to improve lessons for their learners using ICT. The main focus of the day was on the four new courses that form part of the Intel Teach: Elements programme however Megan Rademeyer also ran a session on signing up for the Partners in Learning Network and using the resources to enhance lessons. Teachers were encouraged to use their mobile phones or to sign up for the PiL Network at the stand in the main hall. At the closing plenary two mini-speakers were given away as lucky-draw prizes for two teachers who had signed up on the day and this incentive encouraged many new registrations.

Conclusion and Recommendations
Through the contributions of various funders a large number of teachers in KwaZulu-Natal have benefitted from some Microsoft Partners in Learning training. In some cases the exemplary projects entered into the Microsoft in Education Forum show that teachers in the province are using technology in engaging and innovative ways. The success of the X-Box pilot project and the subsequent follow up project provide exciting opportunities to use new technology to promote education. We look forward to working with the Department of Education, Microsoft and other stakeholders to continue to offer professional development opportunities in KwaZulu-Natal.

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