

**Report to Mpumalanga Department of Education**  
**on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training**  
**conducted from 2007 - 2011**

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## Introduction

A range of Microsoft Partners in Learning training has been conducted by SchoolNet SA in the Mpumalanga since the inception of the programme in 2005. In addition to funding some of this training, Microsoft continues to fund the development of the Partners in Learning courseware and capacity building for trainers which enables other organizations, corporate social investment initiatives and departments of education to offer Partners in Learning training to more schools than Microsoft could fund itself.

This report describes the Microsoft Partners in Learning training which had been conducted in Mpumalanga from 2007 until the present, as sponsored by Microsoft and the Vodacom Foundation. Other training initiatives may have taken place in the province, organized by the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education using the Microsoft Partners in Learning courseware, but if this is the case these training sessions were not organized through SchoolNet SA or reported on to SchoolNet SA and thus they are not included in this report.

## 1 Training sponsored by Vodacom Foundation

### 1.1 Resource Centre Manager Training

The Vodacom Foundation has refurbished and equipped an ICT resource centre that is situated in the Landau Training Centre near Witbank. SchoolNet SA has been commissioned to support the centre management team; to run a range of Microsoft Partners in Learning courses at the centre; and to train centre staff and other people in the area to be able to run various courses. It is hoped that these interventions will help to ensure that the centre is well managed and that through a range of courses being run at the centre that it becomes seen as a place where teachers can get professional development and support.

In December 2010 SchoolNet SA ran the ICT Centre Managers course with staff from the Witbank centre and other Mpumalanga Department of Education officials. Participants expressed gratitude for this workshop as even though much of the content appears to be common sense and quite routine, many of the discussions raised new aspects to consider. The centre staff felt that they were reminded to implement some of the procedures even though they might have been already familiar with them. All participants appeared to enjoy the course and to benefit from it. It now remains to be seen whether they will achieve their goals and will work towards their vision for their centre.



### 1.2 Sizanani ICT Skills for Community Members Training of Trainers

The Sizanani course was designed to empower community members to learn computer skills and to then use these skills in their own small businesses or community organisations. In December 2010, 10 participants from the Vodacom ICT Resource Centre and surrounding schools participated in the Sizanani training of trainers' session.

Some of the activities included in this course include designing logos and then using these on letterheads and business cards. The participants also designed programs, budgets, and signs making use of the tip sheets and instructions given in the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers courseware. The group was also each given a copy of the Microsoft Learning Suite for Schools. They used this DVD of tools and resources to download Auto Collage, Windows Movie Maker and Songsmith and they were enthusiastic about trying out the new tools, including creating the following Auto Collage:



Of the ten participants, the master trainer appointed six people as Sizanani trainers. They will now be able to run the Sizanani course at the Witbank Vodacom ICT Resource Centre for out of school youth and community members.

### **1.3 HelpDesk Training of Trainers**

The Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions (HelpDesk) course empowers teachers and learners from school to do their own technical trouble shooting and basic computer lab maintenance.



In February 2011, thirty-one teachers, departmental officials and centre staff attended a training of trainers' session at the Vodacom ICT Resource centre in Witbank. Over the course of five days the group worked through the course materials – learning more about the theory of how computers work and engaging in practical activities including assembling a computer and identifying a range of components.

Whilst the comments from the participant evaluation forms below indicate the group enjoyed the course and learnt a lot from it, only two participants were appointed as trainers by the Master Trainer. Whilst it is unfortunate that more people could not be appointed as trainers, qualifying as a trainer for this course requires far more technical knowledge than can be acquired in a five day course, and thus only people who already have an A+ or similar qualification are usually appointed. Despite so few new trainers being appointed we are confident that the teachers representing twenty-two different Mpumalanga schools will be able to help better maintain the computers at their schools as a result of attending this course.

*“The course itself was a fascinating one and it was enjoyable as well as a fruitful experience. I have gained a lot of knowledge particular to the IT. I would like to sincere my thanks to the department and SchoolNet for organizing this course. In future the department should consider the duration of these kind of courses. The trainer was very helpful and well knowledgeable person when it comes to this course.”*



*“The course was interesting, informative and skilful. I came in the course knowing nothing technically about the computer but now I am confident that I can be able to find problems and have ways of resolving them. The facilitator was excellent in terms of delivering the matter and information.”*

*“The course was excellent and it helped me a lot. I have learnt many things and now I am confident with technical skills, I can open my computer and disconnect components of a computer. Also connecting them correctly. I recommend this training to my colleagues.”*

#### **1.4 ICT Skills for Teachers – Training of Trainers**

The ICT Skills for Teachers Training of Trainers course has two components. Firstly, the group experiences the course as participants, which allows them to work their way through various scenarios and to experience the cognitive apprenticeship methodology. The second part of the course involves being trained to train the course which involves learning about the training approach and how one should go about running the course.



On 21 and 22 May 2011 the first part of the ICT Skills for Teachers course took place at the Vodacom ICT Resource Centre at the Landau Training Centre near Witbank. There were 14 participants in total and the trainer reported that on the whole the group had the excellent computer skills which we expect potential trainers to have. In addition to some CAT teachers from local Mpumalanga schools the participants included some provincial department of education officials who had been trained as ICT Skills for Teachers trainers many years ago. We were pleased that these officials used this opportunity to refresh their skills as trainers as hope that some of them will go back to running courses in their districts as they did in the past.



The first day of training commenced with an explanation of how the ICT Skills for Teachers course works and what scaffolding is available in the courseware. The group then began on the mark book scenario followed by the certificate scenario. When the trainer realized that the educators all had good skills he encouraged them to do the advanced mail merge scenario. During this exercise he noted that few followed the instructions included in the courseware as they

all were familiar with the steps required to complete the scenario. After lunch participants were given a choice of which scenarios they would like to work on.

On the second day the trainer demonstrated dynamic mark book scenario. One of the participants reinforced how the dynamic mark book can be used by showing the group some features which are relevant to educators which are not covered in the CD. After some more time was spent completing scenarios of their choice the educators completed the course administration documents.

The second part of the training of trainers' course will take place on 11 and 12 June 2011. At this session we are hopeful that a number of the participants will be appointed as trainers and that this will help to revive the running of ICT Skills for Teachers courses in Mpumalanga.

## **2 Partners in Learning Training Sponsored by Microsoft**

### **2.1 120 Schools Project**

The initial aim of this project was to expose 120 schools to the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers course. The departments of education in North-West, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Free State and Gauteng were requested to nominate schools to receive ICT Skills for Teachers training.

In addition to the 8000 teachers that received training nationally through this project prior to 2007, teachers at a further 13 schools were trained in 2007 including teachers participating in the Uplands College Mathematics Outreach programme who were trained in November 2007.



### **2.2 ICT Capacity Building for College Professionals**

One of the skills development objectives of the ISETT SETA is to “capacitate and skill competent FET college personnel capable of delivering requisite ICT skills for South Africa”. Through this project, Microsoft’s aim was to assist FET colleges by offering capacity building programmes for college professionals.

In 2007 the Nkangala FET College received four days of ICT Skills for Teachers training as part of this project. Despite enthusiasm expressed by colleges, the SchoolNet office battled to arrange dates for training in many colleges including the Ehlanzeni FET College in Nelspruit.

Where training was held it was well received as indicated by these extracts from the participants’ evaluation forms:

*“There were things that I didn’t know I could do but the scenario helped me a lot. I learned a lot. The trainer was so helpful she had time for every one she knew how to accommodate everyone. The pace was excellent.”*

*“The course was well structured and catered for educators with varying abilities. Educators were able to work independently, at their own pace and do activities that were relevant to their needs and interests. The CD is well designed and will be very useful.”*

## 2.3 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Teacher Forum Awards

The Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum Awards recognises teachers who using technology to create exciting teaching and learning opportunities within their classrooms. In 2009 Frans Kalp from Ligbron Academy of Technology in Ermelo in Mpumalanga won the Educator's Choice Award. He then went on to represent South Africa at the Pan African Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Teachers Forum in Mauritius and his success there led to him participating in the Worldwide Forum held in Salvador, Brazil.

Kalp's project was called "Teaching and Learning from a distance". His school community project involved sharing mathematics and science lessons with rural, disadvantaged and underperforming schools by using video conferencing and desktop sharing. Experienced teachers shared their lessons during school hours, giving the teachers and learners of the connected schools the opportunity to raise questions and work on the same lesson from their own classrooms.

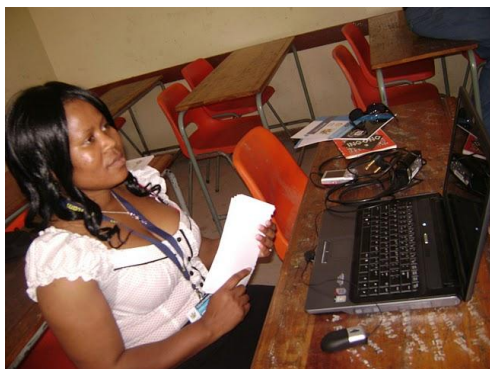


Despite sending out information about this competition to officials in Mpumalanga and schools on our database, and offering to run a provincial Innovation Workshop to assist teachers with projects that use ICT, it is disappointing that very few teachers from Mpumalanga have entered this competition. We are hopeful that the Vodacom Centre in Mpumalanga will become a hub for potential innovative teachers and that in 2012 we will be able to secure more entries from this province through working more closely with teachers.

## 2.4 Preparation for Teacher Laptop Initiative Launch

In August 2010 the Mpumalanga Department of Education held the launch of the Teacher Laptop Initiative at Sitinile Senior Secondary School in the Khanyamazana District.

In order to assist teachers from the school to be able to demonstrate the use of laptops as part of



the launch SchoolNet SA ran a training session for participating educators prior to the launch event. This training included helping teachers to develop lessons that used ICT covering whichever topic they were working on at the time. Teachers were also shown how to create Learning Objects and how to set up a PowerPoint presentation. To do this, use was made of the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers courseware and part of the One Step Further course.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

SchoolNet SA is proud of the training that we have offered to teachers in the Mpumalanga and believe that we have helped to empower teachers to begin to use ICT effectively in education. We are grateful to Microsoft for their continued commitment to enhancing the training materials and developing capacity in the province. It is this investment that enables the DoE and other sponsors to be able to offer quality training more affordably to a larger number of schools.

We are disappointed that in recent years the amount of Microsoft Partners in Learning training that takes place in the province has decreased and we hope that the training currently taking place at the Vodacom centre in Witbank will help to revive the training pool and training rollout in the province.

Our hope is that we will be able to continue to offer training to more teachers at more schools in this province and that we will be able to go back to schools where we have already offered some training to continue to develop skills further. We look forward to working with the Department of Education, Microsoft and other stakeholders to continue to offer professional development opportunities in Mpumalanga.

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**Programmes Manager**

**SchoolNet SA – June 2011**