



120 Schools Project

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Report on training conducted in 2007

The initial aim of this project was to expose 120 schools to Partners in Learning training. 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 these nominated schools three case study schools in Limpopo were also included in the training roll out. To help build capacity this training programme also included some train the trainer training in 2006.

In addition to the 8000 teachers that received training through this project prior to 2007, teachers at the following schools were trained in 2007:

Province	School	Training Dates
Eastern Cape	Qunu Junior Schools	17 - 19 September 7, 13 and 14 October
Eastern Cape	DRC School	9 -11 October and 7 - 8 December
Eastern Cape	Ndabankulu Senior Secondary School	9 - 11 November and 5 – 6 December
Eastern Cape	Gertrude Shophe Primary School	26 -28 October and 2 – 3 November
Eastern Cape	Ncuncuzo Junior Secondary School	26 - 28 October and 16 -17 November
Free State	Mohaladitwe Secondary School	8, 9 10, 15, 17 and 29 October (half days)
Free State	Phiri Intermediate	6 – 7 and 12 - 14 October
Free State	Ebenhaeserhoogte School	28 - 30 November and 3 – 4 December
Gauteng	Isaac Mhlambi Primary	25 to 29 September
Gauteng	Nkgopuleng Secondary School	15 - 16 September and 19 – 21 October
Gauteng	Athlone Girls High School	5 - 7 and 20 – 21 October
Mpumalanga	Uplands Outreach	2 - 4 and 9 – 11 November
North West	Sephola Banatso Middle School	29 - 30 September and 5 – 7 October

Numerous problems were encountered with setting up training in schools this year, not least of which was the teachers' industrial action which caused a number of courses to be cancelled or rescheduled. Many of the schools nominated to receive training by provincial officials were also reluctant to make themselves available for training on weekends or school holidays and after trying several times to make arrangements to conduct training in some schools; training was instead offered to other schools who had specifically requested training. In some cases the nominated schools also lacked sufficient computer facilities to enable staff to be trained. As the success of the ICT for Teachers course relies on teachers being able to immediately start using the skills that they have learnt – it is thus ineffective to provide training to schools without their own computer facilities.



Despite the problems of setting up training, once the training occurred teachers found it to be very beneficial. Below are some quotes extracted from different training evaluation forms that are representative of the overall perception of ICT Skills training conducted through this project:

"It's a very good programme, it's more relevant to our daily activities as teachers"

"The training was very useful, my ICT Skills improved drastically"

It is also interesting to note that despite the initial unwillingness of teachers to give up weekend or holiday time to attend training, once they have experienced the training they often requested more training or expressed frustration that the course was so short. These sentiments are expressed in the quotes below:

"I wish the course can have more advancing programmes so as to make us computer gurus."

"I wish that the training should be an ongoing process"

Many of the teachers trained through the 120 Schools project had never used a computer as this trainer reports:

"The level of competency of the educators was really very low. Some educators indicated to me that they have never touched a computer before, thus it was a bit difficult to start smoothly. With further training I believe that they will be very different."

Whilst training novice computer users may be challenging for trainers, it can also be very rewarding to help facilitate the type of life-changing experience that some participants describe:

"Before attending this workshop I had the belief that learning computers at my age was impossible, but I am now computer literate thanks to this workshop"

"The facilitator is good and best one in introducing of computers. I'm happy of meeting somebody like her especially to me because it was my first time to click and touch it."

"The course was wonderful. It helped me a lot because now I can do and explore the computer without any fear and doubt".

"The course empowered me with knowledge and skills. I learnt a lot within a short time. We worked co-operatively as educators. I will practice computer everyday."

Overall the training courses held through this project were successful, but trainers reported occasionally encountering problems with the computer facilities or the number of computers available:

"I had some difficulties also during the course. The network was not properly configured. Printer was mapped to most of the computers but there were no shared drives. All computers were infected by a lot of viruses and there was no antivirus programme."

“The problem at the school was that the computers were not good enough... Given the large number it was challenging to facilitate them when I did not have a projector to show some examples”

Whilst the process of arranging training involves asking the principal numerous questions about the computer facilities at the school, trainers often report that the facilities are nothing like what they had anticipated based on the responses received from a school. To try and minimise technical problems, we try to get the trainer to visit the school prior to training to check the computers, however as no budget is allocated to this and as schools are often quite far from trainers this is not always possible.



This quotation though, indicates that despite some limitations, the training is still a worthwhile experience when staff members make the most of the opportunity that they have been given:

“The commitment from teachers at this school is really amazing! They are always prepared to work long hours and they really put more effort into their work. They also work well as a team. They are unfortunately, not lucky to have access to the computers anytime of the day since the only available computers are mostly used by learners throughout the day. Some of the teachers came to training with no knowledge, but at the end of training a pleasing progress in them was noted.”

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