



Report on SchoolNet SA Teacher and Learner ICT Development Training in South Africa

October-December 2021

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Background

SchoolNet South Africa is a public benefit, not for profit company established in 1997 and acts as an advocate for effective digital learning as a catalyst for positive educational change. Digital learning is at the core of our focus and our work strives to engage learners, encourage and motivate teachers and senior managers to enhance their teaching approaches using the affordance of digital technologies and to build an inclusive society through Digital Skills for All.

SchoolNet SA serves the vital function of changing dialogue around technology in education and advocates for change leadership as an essential factor in the success of any technology in education initiative in South African schools. Our rationale is closely aligned to Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan and output goals of the national *Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*¹

Teacher Professional Development

SchoolNet has, over the last 24 years, supported the Department of Basic Education's programmes and policy implementation by facilitating teacher professional development in public sector schools throughout the country. Our national footprint allows us to implement projects within short time frames in schools and districts where support is most needed. Our model is to work in-school or in geographic locations that afford educators optimal opportunity to attend and actively participate in the professional development workshops. All our programmes are SACE endorsed, and we further ensure that our facilitation methods showcase independence in ICT development and more importantly are focussing our efforts on the change in teaching practice.

Due to the COVID pandemic, our model has shifted to being mostly online, however we realise that in certain areas, face to face is still the best option as stable connectivity is still a challenge. In this quarter, there was an increase in face to face training, however online training still remains the focus area due to reach. Below is an account of the workshops completed in 2021.

¹Department of Basic Education (2014)

Summary of Workshops

The table below captures overview of the projects and workshops that SchoolNet has coordinated and facilitated in 2021. We have successfully completed workshops with 10411 participants from all provinces in South Africa.

Project	Province	W/shops	F-2-F	Online	Number of Participants (2021)												YTD TOTAL
					Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Telkom Connected	Gauteng	6	1	4		188	49										237
Telkom Connected	EC	4	1	4		55	53										108
Cyberlabs	EC	8	4	1			48	36			10		39				133
MS Virtual	WC	16				0	2741										2741
ISPA	National	4		4		77	26	17									120
Healdtown	EC	5	3			9											9
KZN 2 Schools	KZN	2	2			40											40
MS Virtual	EC	18		36			1162										1162
COL-Women & Girls	National	22	10	10				221	524	197	23						965
C-DELTA	National	100	50	50			161	164	308	709	77	174	869				2462
Google Skills for Africa	National	16		16					32	293	320	234		228	315	23	1445
Telkom ICASA	FS & MP	11	6	3								55	58	157		171	441
Adobe	National	2		2									81				81
Ikamva	National	6	6											78			78
Biotherm	NC	3	1												20		20
SNSA Training	National	10	3									53	205	81		30	369
TOTAL		233	87	125	0	369	4240	438	864	1199	430	516	1252	544	335	224	10411

Overview of Workshops

ICASA Schools

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DBE in partnership with ICASA adapted their national programme and Telecommunications companies were required to adopt the Virtual Classroom Distance Learning approach for its 2021-2022 Grade-12 intervention program. SchoolNet is Telkom's training service provider for the Virtual Classroom Distance Learning solution which is focused on supporting the delivery of lessons to Grade-12 learners on personal smart devices. This initiative additionally will support School Management Teams (SMTs) and teachers on basic digital literacy and the use of the sponsored digital infrastructure to achieve the goals of this initiative and next year expand to learners early in Quarter 1 of 2022.

Development for Senior Management

Training for the Senior Management Team kick started in August for all four Telkom schools. Modules one to four of the Change Leadership for ICT Integration course have been covered thus far.

This course is influenced by literature on the key elements of change management and the debate about change leadership which is underpinned by Michael Fullan's work on Learning to Lead Change; the idea that change needs energy, ideas, commitment and ownership rather than a controlling management is the focus with strategies for building strong independent school teams in positive working environments.

These workshops are aimed at setting the scene for a successful Telkom initiative by providing timely insights on the moral imperative for using the sponsored Infrastructure and planning for how to optimize its use in the schools. 53 Senior Management Team Members have been reached thus far.

Teacher Development

ICT Skills for Teachers

The Senior Leaders training sessions held in August ensured that the school leadership set expectations for the teacher training in September and October. This allowed teachers to follow the commitment showcased by their senior management. The ICT Skills training programme was selected for teacher training as it had a range of skill levels with advanced scenarios directly relating to the needs articulated in the baseline survey that was conducted before training and their roles as teachers. A total of 138 teachers have attended the Initial ICT Skills training.



Introduction to Digital Teaching

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, teachers have had to quickly adapt their engaging, aligned, in-person lessons into online learning for their learners. They needed to be able to transition to remote learning quickly, to connect in a community to share best practices, and to learn from each other. It was for this reason that the Introduction to Digital Teaching was chosen for the ICASA Teachers.

The Introduction to Digital Teaching Course was designed to provide capacity for teachers who would like to adapt to engaging with their students in an online or virtual set up. This course equips teachers with necessary tools to prepare themselves for Digital Teaching. The session for the ICASA schools took place on 28 October 2021 with 40 teachers in attendance.

Asynchronous Training Session

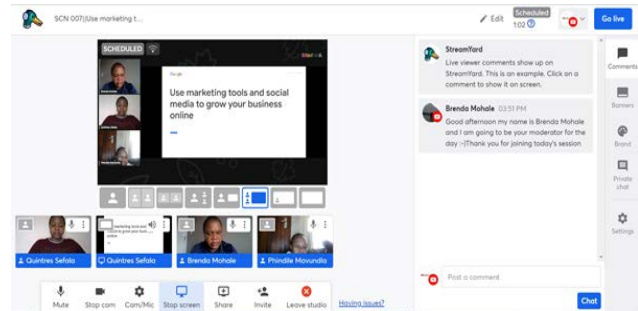
As a training organization in the education sector we are aware that the fourth term was a very busy time for teachers as final exams were in progress and that meant most of teachers' time was occupied with exam preparations, invigilating, marking and all other activities.

We therefore proposed a different model of training (Asynchronous Model) which would allow teachers to go through pre-recorded sessions and complete some activities at their own schedule within a given time frame. The recording was shared through Email, SMS and WhatsApp groups. About 171 teachers were reached through these training sessions.

Google Skills for Africa

SchoolNet SA in partnership with Google Digital Skills for Africa has continued to provide the free training through live streaming on YouTube. These workshops are advertised on all SchoolNet SA Social Media platforms and are open to any interested participants. The topics that are covered in these sessions are focusing more on how small businesses can grow online, how they can use free tools that are available online.

Through this training intervention SchoolNet has reached 2068 participants so far; these numbers include participants who attended live sessions and those who viewed the recorded videos after the training. The Training sessions will continue until the 9th of December 2021.



Biotherm Renewable Energies

Biotherm Energy is an independent power producer that recognised the need to provide underserved and rural communities with inclusive access to digital technologies and basic digital literacy. To this end, Biotherm Energy requested SchoolNet South Africa to propose a solution to enable a learning environment at Witbank Primere Skool, Northern Cape through the provision of an ICT lab, teacher professional development and basic digital literacy training for the out of



school community around the school. The computer lab renovations are completed and the computer lab fully installed. 20 participants attended the ICT Skill training sessions that took place in early November 2021. The participants were grateful to be part of the training sessions. They learnt a lot and were excited that they would use the skills they learnt from the training to better themselves.

Ikamva Youth

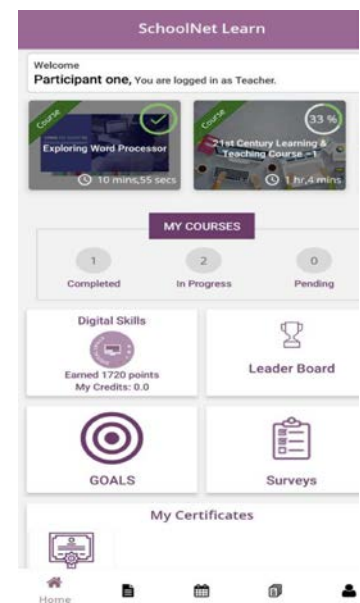
SchoolNet, in collaboration with Ikamva Youth provided a one-day face to face teacher professional development in order to create awareness and enhance teacher's roles to support teaching and learning using virtual and online environments as well as other digital technologies available to teachers. It was estimated that this initiative will reach 100 beneficiaries in Limpopo, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. All the training sessions were completed in a face to face setting with COVID-19 protocols being observed. Teachers attended a full day face to face workshop in the four selected provinces scheduled in October 2021. A total of six workshops were completed with a total attendance of 68 teachers.

SchoolNet Training

SchoolNet SA in collaboration with Eastern Cape Department of Education, OR Tambo Inland district to train all the ICT champion teachers from all 604 schools in the district. The idea was to equip them with basic integration skills so that they are able to go back to their respective schools and help other teachers start integrating ICT in teaching and learning. Intel Teach Getting Started was identified as a suitable course for this purpose. The course is an entry level ICT skills course including activities focused on basic computer skills and 21st Century teaching. The course introduces learner-centered teaching approaches, critical thinking and collaboration. A total of 369 participants have been trained and 111 were trained in the last quarter of 2021.

SchoolNet Learn

SchoolNet SA has developed an online platform for teachers and learners to access professional development courses at their own pace and at a time suitable for them. The platform is still in development, but is designed to include badges and certificates for completion of courses. This platform will allow users to participate in their own professional development which will build their digital integration knowledge. Integrated teaching and learning processes enable learners to acquire and use basic skills in all the content areas and to develop positive attitudes for continued successful learning.

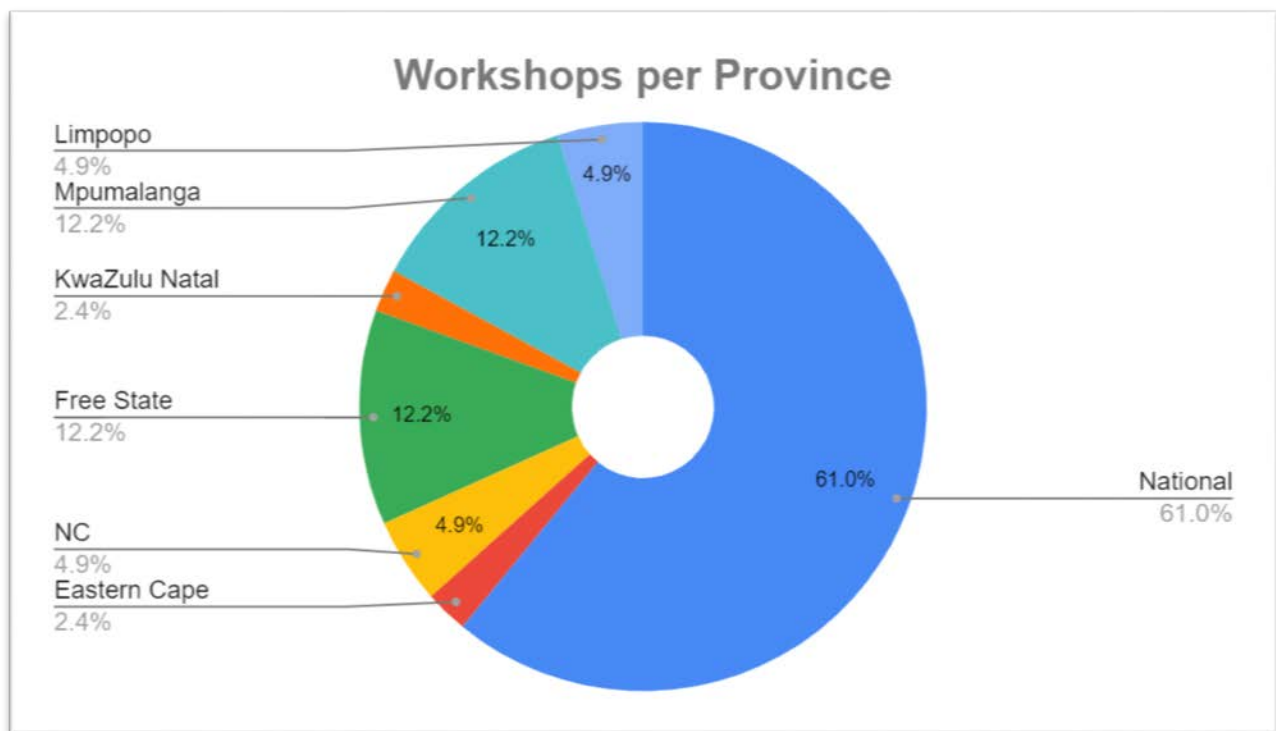


The platform will launch officially at the end of the first quarter of 2022.

Training Statistics

SchoolNet has reached over 1020 participants in ICT in Education workshops in the fourth quarter of 2021 and a grand total of 10411 throughout the year. These workshops have ranged from Digital Skills, the use of Virtual Platforms for Teaching and Learning, Digital Education Leadership, Finding and Using Digital Education Resources and Designing Blended Learning.

The provincial breakdown of workshops follows in the chart below:



There were a total of 41 workshops facilitated between October and December 2021. National workshops held virtually formed the majority of the workshops with 61 % participants having attended the online facilitation. Both Free State and Mpumalanga provinces displayed a 12,2% attendance due to the face to face sessions being organised in the respective provinces.

Conclusion

SchoolNet prides itself on facilitating digital training workshops to enhance teaching and learning and optimising the affordances of digital technologies. For SchoolNet, training is not merely a count of attendance, but rather our measure of success is how well participants have understood the content and can implement their learning independently. This is why SchoolNet is so successful in its projects over the last 25 years. Our plans for 2022 will ensure that we continue with our good work to implement workshops that align to the Department of Basic Education's policies and Frameworks and provide basic digital skills for administration of teaching and learning, lesson planning and workshops to support Virtual and Blended teaching and learning modes.

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