

“Improving Education Through the use of Technology”

INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLS IN COFIMVABA

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), through the Innovation Skills Development Unit (ISD) organized the Technology Innovation Awareness Week at Cofimvaba. The theme of the event was, ‘Improving Education through Technology’. This will be an annual event throughout the country. The first roll out of this programme was launched in the Cofimvaba District of the Eastern Cape where 2000 learners from 32 Schools were invited to experience various science demonstrations in a week long programme. The event was hosted in collaboration with the Department of Education, Cofimvaba District and the CSIR Meraka Institute.

The main attraction of the event was to launch Dr Maths in Eastern Cape. Dr Maths, an initiative of the CSIR Meraka Institute, is a mobile tutoring service which allows mathematics learners to ‘chat their way to better maths results. This involves the use of Mxit mobile instant messaging service on their cell phones to access tutors who provide real-time support and assistance with mathematics homework and revision.

When using Dr Math, learners are able to have a one-to-one ‘conversation’ with a tutor who supports them in solving mathematical queries (e.g. maths homework assignments) in real time. The service can be likened to a text-based call centre, where individual learners are assigned to tutors, based on tutor availability.

Launched an initiative “ Adopt a School Programme” to assist learners with mathematics and science...

During the roll out project, the TIA ISD unit also introduced another project named TIA Adopt-A-School Programme which is run in conjunction with TIA Technology Stations based at institutions of higher learning. In this case, the Technology Station at Walter Sisulu University. The programme aims to nurture young innovators in the system through sustained promotion and awareness of science,



technology, engineering and innovation amongst secondary school learners. (when is the opening/launch?)

TIA Group Executive: Corporate Affairs, Ms Makgopelo Mkhwanazi was a guest speaker at the launch event. Her message was truly inspirational as evidenced by the standing ovation she received at the end of her address.

“These programs are intended to excite learners at an early age and encourage them to develop an interest in mathematics, science, engineering, innovation and technology and thus foster the development of a society that values and appreciates Science Engineering,” said Ms Senisha Moonsamy, TIA’s General Manager of Innovation Skills Development

Information on Cofimvaba District

Currently there are 1675 learners enrolled in grade 12 with 75% are registered for Mathematics; 25% registered for Maths Literacy and 43% registered for Physical Science. The Cofimvaba District is currently number one in Life Science and Physical Sciences and number two in Mathematics in the Eastern Cape province.

With the assistance of the TIA’s m-Learning programme the district is striving to be number one in Mathematics in the Eastern Cape. The ISD Unit will use the statistics provided by the district as a baseline to monitor the increase in the number of learners taking maths and science from grade 10-12. This will also assist in the monitoring of the improvement in results from grades 10-12.

Following the Eastern Cape, the plan is to launch the ISD Programmes in Limpopo with the intention to be fully national by 2013.

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