

Joint media release from Vodacom and the Department of Communications

25th January 2013

Vodacom and the Department of Communications connect Eastern Cape learners

Vodacom together with the Department of Communications today handed over a mobile computer centre and free data to the previously disadvantaged Jonguhlanga Secondary School in Mthatha. This initiative is the realisation of a partnership between Vodacom and the Department of Communications to give unconnected schools and communities access to basic information and communication technology (ICT) resources. Jonguhlanga Secondary School will now have access to a functional mobile computer centre equipped with 21 work stations, a server and multimedia projector for use by learners to gain basic computer skills that will help improve their learning.

Vodacom's Chief Officer: Corporate Affairs, Maya Makanjee said: "Putting the power of the internet into people's hands is a key strategy for Vodacom and is a critical component of the education value chain. Internet penetration in South Africa is still very low, especially in rural schools. With projects such as these, Vodacom aims to level the playing field for learners who previously had limited or no access to technology. This intervention is not only expected to improve learner pass rates, but is also expected to ensure that learners have had some exposure to ICTs by the time they reach tertiary level. This is in line with Vodacom's Education flagship initiative that seeks to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom."

Speaking at the event, Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Tembisa Ndabeni-Abrahams said: "This is a special day for Jonguhlanga Secondary School as we honour the late struggle icon King Jonguhlanga Dalindyebo who died in exile in 1983 in Zambia, fighting for a better life for his people. We hope that this initiative will enhance learner education and will help make their lives and their community better. In our efforts to provide broadband connectivity to unconnected schools, the department has partnered with Vodacom because we believe that well-resourced and equipped learners will perform better and will improve the matric pass rate. Such partnerships are critical if we are to offer quality education to our learners and to schools, particularly those that have previously not been exposed to such learning opportunities."

"We are delighted to be handing over the computers as it is part of our schools connectivity initiative. We are committed to connecting schools nationwide through both public and private partnerships," said Ndabeni-Abrahams. Principal of Jonguhlanga Secondary School, Nombuyiselo Boya said: "Our school had no computers. We are humbled to be recipients of the mobile computer centre specifically for our learners. This will expose our learners to the internet and will also help improve the quality of education we offer our learners."

Vodacom supports public schools throughout the country by ensuring that teachers have access to the highest quality resources. To date, Vodacom has donated over 280 computer labs country wide.

Ends

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