

Wipro empowers rural KZN school

Wipro has launched a Computer Learning Incubator and a library at the Gobandlovu Primary School, Esikhawini, KwaZulu-Natal. The school is among those that lack both a library and basic computer equipment with internet access.



The Computer Learning Incubator (CLI) provides PCs and internet connectivity to the students, and can be utilised by the local community like an internet café. The construction of the centre was enabled by Breadline Africa and funded by Wipro.

Breadline Africa renovates disused shipping containers and recycles them for essential community purposes. Since its establishment in 1993, it has provided over 190 containers to poverty stricken communities. For the past four years, the Cape Town-based NGO has worked with the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory to place container libraries in each of the nine provinces. To date, 39 library containers have been placed in schools across the country.

The findings of an annual national assessment report on junior education show that the national average performance in literacy stands at 35% among grade three pupils and at 28% for grade six. In addition to the CLI, Wipro stepped forward and fashioned a library from a refurbished shipping container, housing over 5000 educational books and training materials for the students and teachers. This initiative aligns with the South African government's vision to increase access to essential resources for an enriched education.

Giving back

Shailendra Singh, business director, Africa region of Wipro said: "We believe that a successful business should assume responsibility to give back to the society. At Wipro, we are planning many such initiatives to promote education and facilitate self-sustaining enterprises in the local community."

Nokulunga Lungi, a resident of Johannesburg, has been selected to manage the operations of Gobandlovu School initiative and has been trained by Wipro in end-user computing and general business principles and acumen. In the first year, Wipro will bear her salary along with all the operational expenses of this initiative with the vision of growing this enterprise into a self-sustaining entity.

Explaining the significance of this initiative to the local community, Lungi said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to help people in the Esikhawini area. Having access to computers and to the Internet will make a huge difference to our lives. I'm very pleased to be part of this initiative and look forward to learning how to build a business with Wipro's support."

"Literacy and the right to education is a human right," director of Breadline Africa, Tim Smith said of the initiative. "Libraries help foster a love of reading and provide a world of opportunity to children. Through the generosity of companies like Wipro, the initiative has reached more than 30 000 children, many of whom are entering the world of reading for the first time."

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