

Township schools to get advanced IT training

The Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) is on a mission to introduce information and communications technology (ICT) and robotics to township schools in Nelson Mandela Bay as part of its plans.



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The incubator of small, medium and micro enterprises will do this by introducing coding and robotics to high school pupils in the townships.

Presenting an update on its work to the economic development and agriculture committee on Friday, Seda centre manager Phumza Mfenyana said the project was already being piloted in 10 township schools in Nelson Mandela Bay.

It was not clear which schools were part of the programme.

"If you go to private schools, in Grade 8 they start to introduce the pupils to coding - a form of programming.

"We would like schools in the townships to be introduced to programming as these are critical skills.

"We don't want them to fall behind. Within ICT there are certain opportunities and we want to highlight these and bring them

to our principals," Mfenyana said.

She said it was not enough that pupils were only being taught end user computing.

"We want to make sure robotics is introduced in schools and also coding. We are starting small with a pilot programme that we can upscale and get more schools in the programme."

Mfenyana said the incubator was also looking at partnering with Nelson Mandela University and technical and vocational education and training (Tvet) colleges to assist in exposing students to business tools as part of a residency programme.

"We are not functioning in isolation, we are functioning within an innovation chain and sometimes there are certain gaps that we think we can fill.

"Universities are coming up with all these wonderful technologies and our question is how those technologies can [be found] in the commercial space where they can assist some of our business to thrive."

EFF councillor Yoliswa Yako suggested the incubator engage the Department of Education.

"I think the state of the ICT space is like that of the oceans economy. If you want to introduce the ICT space within school it is important to rope in the department of education."

"You are going to need commitment from the department as you have to provide computers for your coding," Yako said.

DA councillor Samantha Beynon said it was fantastic the incubator had linked up with Tvet colleges.

"Outside of ICT, when one analyses is the higher education sector, Tvet colleges are a sector that is highly neglected in terms of funding and other things. You have ,"

The fact that you have brought this idea closer to that sector, you have created opportunities for students in that particular field," Beynon said.

Committee chairman Andre Whitfield said the metro was we are very proud of their our partnership with Seda.

"It's aligned completely to our forward thinking of city pillar to being an innovative city. If we are going to compete globally, we need to get ahead the curve and often we are behind the curve.

"I have discovered every day that there are pockets of talent and ideas in this city and connecting them is very important," Whitfield said.

Source: Herald