

Leading e-schooling in North Africa

The Egyptian Minister of Education, Dr Yousry Al-Gamal, officially launched the NEPAD e-Schools Demonstration Project at Al-Haddain Secondary School in El Behaira Governate, Egypt, last month. The project is a joint venture of the Egyptian Government, HP Consortium, Oracle Consortium and the NEPAD e-Africa Commission.

Egypt is the sixth country and the first in North Africa to launch the project after Uganda, Ghana, Lesotho, Kenya and Rwanda.

Welcoming the introduction of the new technology in her school Habiba, a student at Al Haddain said: “We now have a very good chemistry teacher who teaches us from Cairo via the Internet. As he teaches, we see him and what he is teaching on a big screen. It is like we are with him in the classroom in our village. Chemistry is now very interesting to learn. I now want to become a doctor and save lives.”

The NEPAD e-Schools Project is led by the NEPAD e-Africa Commission -- the NEPAD information and communication technology (ICT) task team responsible for developing the NEPAD ICT programme and implementing related projects.

Connect schools across Africa

The project focuses on providing end-to-end ICT solutions that will connect schools across Africa to the NEPAD e-Schools Network and the Internet. Solutions also include the provision of content, learning material and the establishment of health points at schools.

Said Dr Henry Chasia, the executive deputy chairperson of the e-Africa Commission: “NEPAD has put together an innovative public-private partnership to ensure the most effective and expedient implementation of the demo project. This partnership involves more than 50 companies, which are providing, deploying and operating appropriate end-to-end technology solutions, including human resources, to the schools allocated to them.

“This initiative is intended to graduate from our schools people who are strong in body, mind and character; young men and women who will be equipped with ICT skills to meet the challenges of the information society and knowledge economy.

“The initiative is also expected to provide benefits to communities around the schools and also help these communities to develop and participate in the information society, and in doing this, contribute to the attainment of a number of the Millennium Development Goals,” he added.

Project sponsors

The HP and Oracle consortia and a number of other private companies are sponsoring the demonstration project, consisting of six schools in each of the 16 participating African countries, for a period of 12 months.

The countries participating in the project are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.

In each country, the project aims to transform all African secondary schools into NEPAD e-Schools within five years of implementation start date and all African primary schools within 10 years of implementation start date.

In total, more than 600 000 schools across the continent will enjoy the benefits of ICT and connectivity to the NEPAD e-Schools Satellite Network on completion of the project.

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