

High schools go digital through Telkom Foundation's virtual classroom initiative

Four South African high schools will receive their own virtual classroom solutions this Youth Month, courtesy of the Telkom Foundation, in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE). This initiative is expected to empower 1,100 learners and 30 teachers with the ICT skills and devices they need to thrive in an increasingly virtual world.



Image source: HONGQI ZHANG – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The Telkom Foundation will host the unveiling at Tiisetsang Secondary and Kgola-Thuto Secondary in the Free State, and Methula Secondary and Qhubulwazi Combined School in Mpumalanga, between 9 and 15 June 2022.

The initiative is part of Telkom's commitment and adherence to Icasa's conditions when the regulator assigned much-needed temporary radio frequency spectrum to operators in April 2020, during the pandemic. This spectrum allocation came with specific social-impact obligations, including to help the DBE deliver virtual lessons to Grade 12 learners at selected schools, which did not have the access to technology to continue with their lessons. The above schools were allocated to Telkom, which was given the role of deploying technology to improve the learning experience and teaching practise, through its Foundation.



Newly launched TelkomOne Ignite offers free educational content

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“This partnership is exciting for us because it means we now have added more schools that are enabled with adequate access to a comprehensive ICT solution that includes, devices, connectivity, a learner management system, educational content, and training, reaching areas that would otherwise not have been reached,” says Sarah Mthintso, head of Telkom Foundation. “We have also equipped the classrooms of these schools with DBE-approved devices and tools like wireless microphones, video cameras and LED display monitors. We have delivered laptops to all the learners and will be providing

zero-rated SIM cards to enable them to access learning without having to worry about data.

"This programme will be part of our continuous effort to widen access to those schools that may not have these resources. It is our view that access will also be critical not only to today's Grade 12 learners but all learners in these schools and potentially youth in the area will also have access to these facilities as part of our digital literacy programme."

This project is expected to showcase the strength of Telkom's partnership with Lightbulb Education, a Telkom supported online education platform, which provides high quality interactive CAPS content, the DBE, as well as leveraging Telkom's capability in connectivity, and its Foundation's experience in effectively integrating technology in education.

"This is just one of several initiatives that provides connectivity and learning opportunities to rural schools. It's our mission to connect everyone to a better life, but that is only possible by facilitating digital skills development and laying a solid foundation of connectivity for all," Mthintso concludes.

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