Syafunda e-learning goes free

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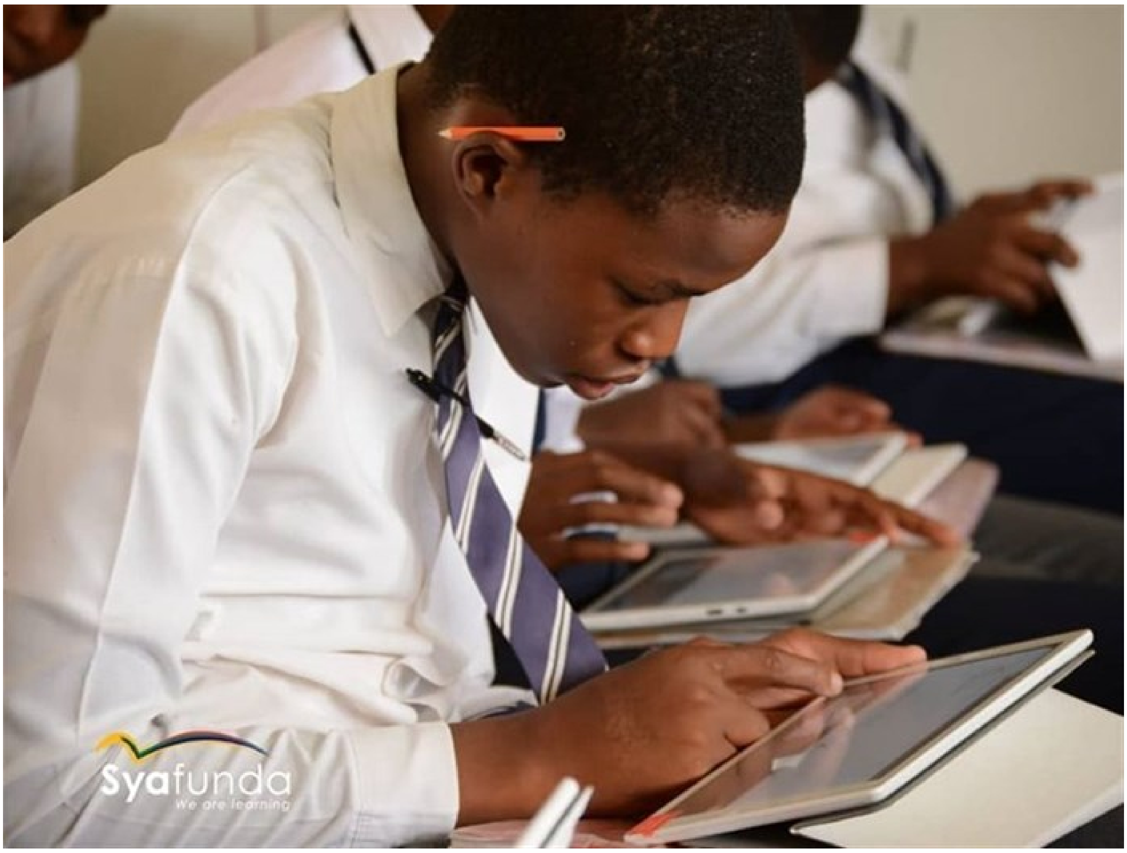
SA EduTech company makes online learning possible for rural students

Syafunda, an educational platform that provides access to digital content through mobile technology, has received investment funding from SME-enabler Edge Growth which will allow them to scale their platform to meet the surging need for online learning in South Africa.

Syafunda, which means “we are learning” in Zulu, was the inspiration of entrepreneur Zakheni Ngubo. Together with his Durban-based Syafunda team, Zakheni is capitalising on South Africa’s high mobile penetration rate to make education more easily accessible.



Syafunda partners with local content developers and publishers, setting up digital libraries in places like township and rural schools where connectivity is limited or non-existent. The digital libraries have five terabytes of pre-loaded content and emit Wi-Fi hotspots so anyone in the vicinity with a mobile device can access and download the material without having to pay for internet.

> *"I grew up in townships where there was a shortage of textbooks and math and science teachers," says Zakheni. "I wanted to solve those challenges and provide digital access for high school and post-high school students. Syafunda is positioned to reach pupils in underserviced communities throughout South Africa."*

By incorporating open-source textbooks and through direct negotiations with publishers, Syafunda provides access to digital content for high school and post-high school students, with a focus on STEM subjects and entrepreneurship, digital skills, and financial literacy.

Edge Growth, a leading SME Venture Fund Manager, specialises in developing small businesses and creating jobs and real transformation through access to funding, skills and markets. Edge identified Syafunda as a key role player in providing access to information for learners in underserviced and rural areas, improving academic performance and enabling teachers to track performance.

> *"The partnership between Edge Growth and Syafunda over the next five years has an opportunity to make an impact that goes far beyond job creation and black wealth creation," says Edge Lead Deal Maker Vuyiswa Nzimande. "The strength of the operations and development teams shows in the quality of the innovation in the free-to-access Syafunda Digital Library. Ultimately, we believe that learners will improve the likelihood of entry into higher learning institutions and training/tertiary institutions."*

In a lockdown and post-lockdown world, access to online learning is key. And Syafunda holds the keys to open doors for many students who currently have little to no access to additional learning resources but do have access to mobile devices.

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