

ICT in education needs to be fast tracked

The President of the Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa (IITPSA), Admire Gwanzura, has called for more urgency in the introduction of ICT education in schools, saying children in Africa are falling behind those elsewhere in the world.



Photo by Christina Mbrillo via www.pexels.com

Gwanzura welcomed the South African Department of Basic Education's plans to introduce coding and robotics into the school curriculum for Grades R to 3 and Grade 7 this year, but said efforts to introduce ICT in education needed to move faster. He said digital literacy training, advanced ICT skills development, and the use of ICTs to enhance teaching and learning had to be a top priority in all schools across the continent.

"Our children and youths cannot wait for multi-year government projects to be implemented: the ICT sector is evolving all the time, and our young people to be empowered now, to live and work in the 4IR," he said.

Gwanzura noted that the [digital divide](#) had been highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when multitudes of children had fallen behind in their schoolwork due to a lack of access to digital technology and connectivity. "Without digital access and ICT skills, Africa's children will remain at a disadvantage when it comes to education, and opportunities in a borderless digital workplace," he said.



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"Unless we equip them to compete for lucrative opportunities in a global job market, they will continue to labour on the wrong side of the digital divide. On the other hand, the benefits for individuals, communities and African GDP and development as a whole would be immense if all our children were digitally skilled and globally employable."

“It should be noted that numerous individuals and organisations are making strides in empowering children and youths to master digital technologies,” Gwanzura said.

The IITPSA has recognised several of them, including Nyari Samushonga, the winner of the 2022 IITPSA IT Personality of the year award and CEO of WeThinkCode and, a tech academy with a presence in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Tiyani Nghonyama, the IITPSA IT Personality of the Year award in 2019, is COO of Geekulcha, which is teaching technology skills to rural and under-privileged youth. Girl Code, an NPO empowering young girls and women through technology, was the winner of the Social Responsibility/Community Award at the 2020 IITPSA President’s Awards.

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