

Vodacom's Virtual Classroom agile, innovative and modern: Motshekga

Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, says the Vodacom Virtual Classroom innovation allows the country to have all learning resources in one fit-for-purpose portal designed by experts with the interest of learners and teachers in mind.



Vodacom Virtual Classroom launch

Motshekga was speaking at the handover ceremony of Vodacom's Virtual Classroom Solution held in Midrand, which marked the official transfer of the hardware installed at the schools to deliver Wi-Fi over a secure cloud-based SD-WAN network.

This forms part of the Covid-19 Disaster Regulations imposed by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) to support online learning and ease congestion on the country's telecommunication network.

The Minister said that government and Icasa agreed that all mobile network operators must establish a Virtual Classroom solution to support virtual learning and teaching during Covid-19 induced intermittent school closures.

She said that it was pleasing to note that Vodacom has complied with the Icasa regulations without external pressure.

Motshekga has lauded the Virtual Classroom solution as agile, innovative and modern.

“This clearly indicates that Vodacom takes corporate citizenship more than seriously beyond compliance issues. The investment made by Vodacom in public schooling today has the ripple effect of benefiting the next generation of learners and teachers,” she said.

The Minister said the country must learn not to spend its children’s inheritance; but invest to benefit the next generation.

“In the main, the Virtual Classroom will make a difference to teachers and learners in selected schools by improving connectivity and making gadgets accessible, thus enhancing computing skills and appreciation of the power of ICTs,” she said.

Improved learning

Motshekga said that this solution in secondary schools will allow teachers to transform their pedagogical practices by providing improved educational content and more effective teaching and learning methods.

The Minister emphasised that the ICT professional development for teachers is pivotal for the success of this project.

She added that this solution will improve the learning process by providing more interactive educational materials that increase learner motivation and facilitate the easy acquisition of basic skills in various subjects.

“We are slowly beginning to narrow the great digital divide in the public schooling sector, which warms my heart,” she said.

Digital support

The Minister said that the Vodacom Virtual Classroom complements the department’s first-of-its-kind online programme dubbed: The Comprehension Across the Curriculum, which was recently launched to turbocharge reading for meaning.

Minister Motshekga reported that the department has finalised a plan to deploy digital Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) through ICTs at all levels of the basic education sector since 2019.

The plan provides the Basic Education Department with a strategy to make the vision of the White Paper on e-Education a reality.

“At the heart of basic education, reforms are imperative to eliminate the digital divide by ensuring that all schools and education offices access the internet and data within six years,” she said.

The Minister said that education, skills development, and jobs are vital national imperatives to unlock economic growth and sustain livelihoods.

“We are proud that Vodacom has responded positively to the NDP’s clarion call for partnerships to improve education for all.

“Thanks to a meaningful partnership with Vodacom, we can reach needier schools in the shortest possible time,” the Minister said.

The Minister praised Vodacom for becoming an ally for the growth of public schooling.

“With the innovation and commitment to societal change by Vodacom and its stakeholders, today’s launch of the Virtual

Classroom Solution is a giant leap into the digital future,” the Minister said.

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