

# Winning schools receive prizes worth R200,000 in IgniteIT ICT competition

Kingsway Secondary School, Phomolong Secondary School and Willowmoore High School are the three winning schools in the Neotel IgniteIT ICT schools competition.

The schools will receive prizes valued at over R200,000 including an ICT laboratory and e-class solutions with interactive boards, projectors, LCD screens, routers and related equipment, sponsored by Huawei. The N2 Education Hub, a partnership between Neotel and NIIT, will provide the ICT training content.

## Technology driving ideas

The competition challenged teams of learners to create entries according to one of three possible briefs, using technology to design and deliver their ideas. The winning entry by Kingsway Secondary School focused on "A transmedia storytelling report on distracted driving."

Phomolong Secondary School, which took second place, focused on the "Journey to finding the coolest career in ICT" while third place was taken by Willowmoore High School for a report on "Road Safety Texting & Driving."

The competition is a partnership between Neotel, the Department of Communications, the Gauteng Department of Education and Huawei.

Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams noted the vital role of the communications industry in education advancement, information dissemination, cultural development, national identity and the free flow of information. Addressing learners at the event, she said, "Despite this critical importance of ICT, there are still disparities in communication access between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the skills gap in the ICT sector largely emanates from the low uptake of maths and science, especially in rural schools. To address this challenge, the Department has embarked on an aggressive programme to rollout cyber labs at public schools in rural and underserved areas. To-date, 862 identified schools have been connected using Wide Area Network (WAN) installation."

## Career choices in the sector

Neotel MD & CEO, Sunil Joshi added, "The company recognises the shortage of skills in ICT sector and, as part of providing solutions, has initiated various projects to encourage youth and young women from disadvantaged backgrounds to become active participants and also increase the awareness on career choices in the sector. Ignite ICT school's competition is one of projects we have initiated. The company is proud to play an active role in bridging the ICT skills divide

and playing an instrumental role in the creation of jobs for the South African economy. I hope that the participants, whether they won or not, will be encouraged to pursue careers in the sector."

Christina Naidoo, COO Huawei Technologies in South Africa, said, "We understand the need for breaking down barriers preventing women from being part of the ICT revolution, both as part of our corporate culture and Corporate Social Responsibility. We have turned this commitment into practice; the head of the board of directors is a woman, with almost a quarter of the board being female directors. Additionally, the company gives preference to female candidates in selecting managers when candidates' qualifications are on an equal footing. In South Africa currently, our female staff have taken up key management positions such as COO, regional directors, among others as a testament of our promoting women in ICT."

Naidoo thanked Neotel for initiating the Ignite IT schools' ICT competition, adding that it had collaborated in the initiative because it was in line with the company's CSR mission to bridge digital divide in SA through knowledge transfer amongst youth.

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