

Committee: UNESCO

Country: Republic of South Africa

Agenda Item: Reducing Inequalities in Digital Education

Delegate Name: Elif Beril Hurlu

South Africa is a country located in the southern part of African continent. The population of South Africa is total 60,442,647 (2024 est.). South Africa tries to get better about some problems. South Africa's energy crisis (or load shedding) is an ongoing period of widespread national power outages beginning at the end of 2007. The South African government-owned national power utility, and primary power generator, Eskom, and various parliamentarians have attributed these rolling blackouts to insufficient generation capacity.

The History of South Africa's Education

-The first European schools in South Africa were established in the late 17th century by prominent leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church, who were committed to biblical education. By the late 19th century, three types of schools received public funding: parish schools providing primary education to a few towns within a region, and a few secondary schools in major cities. Since 2009, English has been taught as a subject in all schools from Grade 1 onwards; all subjects are taught in English from Grade 4 onwards. Afrikaans language schools are an exception, as all subjects are taught in Afrikaans.

One of GNU's key education priorities is to improve accessibility and quality of education for all South African children. A significant milestone in this effort was the signing of the BELA Act, which includes key provisions to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the BELA Act prioritizes strengthening school governance and accountability. The Act aims to create an inclusive and supportive environment for students from diverse backgrounds by promoting anti-racism and social cohesion in schools. Specifically, the BELA Act includes regulations on distance learning and the use of digital content, accelerating the integration of digital tools into the national education system. In parallel with these national efforts, the South African Council for Teacher Education (SACE) has implemented mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules to upgrade teachers' digital pedagogical skills. These steps aim to ensure not only access to digital tools but also the competence of teachers to use them effectively.

The work of SADC

SADC is committed to improving access to quality education in the region, as reflected in the Protocol on Education and Training established in 1997. The importance of education is comprehensively emphasized, and a strategic objective has been established to "increase access to quality and relevant education and skills development, including science and technology, for

SADC Citizens." This objective is expected to lead to increased equitable access to quality and relevant education and enhanced skills development for industrialization.

UNESCO works to empower adolescents and young people and respect their rights to make decisions and create change in their lives and societies. This means actively engaging with institutions and technologies to support Member States in achieving this and creating space for expression, resilience, and innovative solutions.

-In addition to in-school interventions, UNESCO's flagship programme, O3 supports governments and education systems to provide accurate violence prevention, gender, and other health information to children, adolescents, and young people both inside and outside of school through digital and low-tech solutions, primarily using mobile phones, radios, and popular apps.

South Africa's delegation supports the idea of UNICEF working with governments to build resilient, data-driven, digitally transformed education systems; integrating digital technology into national education plans and financial models, generating local evidence on the impact of technology on learning outcomes, and strengthening Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and expanding connectivity through initiatives such as Giga. The South African Delegation calls on UNESCO to establish a mechanism to facilitate the deployment of sustainable, low-cost energy solutions and resilient, affordable internet infrastructure, particularly targeting rural schools.

The delegation of South Africa remains committed to Reducing Inequalities in Digital Education. The Delegation stands ready to work with all Member States and the United Nations to combat Reducing Inequalities in Digital Education.

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