

7 000 teenagers get ICT skills

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Alex youth were among the more than 7 000 schoolchildren who benefitted from the partnership between NGO Afrika Tikkun, Workonline Communications – a wholesale provider of Internet Protocol (IP) transit and carrier services across Africa – and its partners.

The partnership, which was announced in August last year is to address the slow Internet speeds which had previously hampered the NGO's development goals.

Workonline provided free high-speed Internet access to Afrika Tikkun's centres, delivered over sponsored last mile connections supplied by Sonic Telecoms and Business Services IT (BSIT).

Afrika Tikkun is focused on developing young people 'from cradle to career' through a support model that focuses on education, holistic development, skills development and work placement.

The programmes offered by Afrika Tikkun begin with Early Childhood Development for children aged two to six. Once at school, the children attend after-school developmental programmes throughout their schooling from Grade 1 to matric.

The programmes are aimed at developing the students physically and intellectually, with a focus on the use of technology, to develop them into innovative, active citizens and leaders.

The students are essentially prepared for the world of work and developed towards a career

path. Once they have matriculated, Afrika Tikkun offers a youth skills development and placement programme that prepares them for work more intensively and ultimately places them into entry-level opportunities.

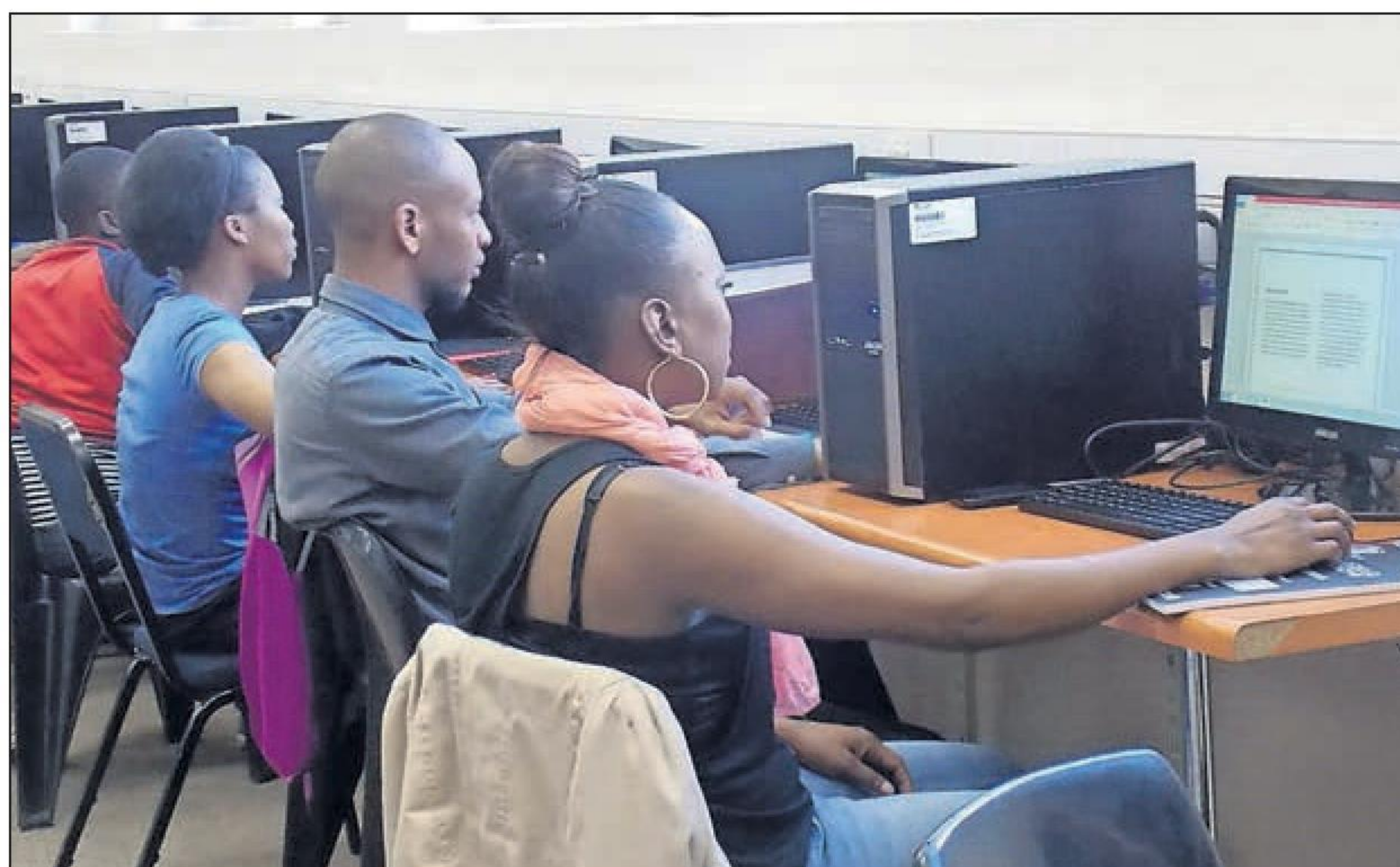
Through the sponsorship from Workonline and its partners, the quality of programme delivery was improved at the Alexandra and Mfuleni Afrika Tikkun centres, reaching 7 440 beneficiaries in total.

The results of this are that the matric results improved from 94 per cent to 98 per cent, including over 64 distinctions, and the Mfuleni centre had a 100 per cent matric pass rate for the first time in five years. A total of 1 419 young people have been equipped with employable skill sets, and since the initial launch of the programme,

587 beneficiaries have been placed in learnerships, internships and entry-level jobs. Those who haven't been placed are currently going through interviews to determine appropriate job placements.

"The sponsorship from Workonline has assisted us in improving the delivery of our service and improving the lives of individuals in all phases of their development and learning.

"We have been able to improve computer literacy through the use of the Internet in all the communities in which we operate, and have implemented an e-learning programme targeted at unemployed youth in all our centres, in partnership with Workonline and Absa," said Onyi Nwaneri, group executive responsible for partnerships and communications for Afrika Tikkun.



Youngsters at their computers at one of the Afrika Tikkun centres in Alexandra and Mfuleni.