

(L. Chitanana)

Introduction

In the new millennium one can no longer speculate as to whether computer technology has a place in education. It has become clear that computers provide an unprecedented opportunity to make education an agent of social change and development. In Zimbabwe, like in any other country in the world, computers have become a strategic resource in the globally networked economy. As such, the Zimbabwean government adopted a national ICT policy in 2005 that was informed both by a host of preceding general and sectoral policies including Vision 2020, the National Science and Technology policy adopted in 2002, and the Nziramasanga Education Commission Report which, in 1999, recommended the promotion of the educational use of computers for teaching and learning in educational institutions. The country's position with regard to that issue has been clearly demonstrated by His Excellency, President Robert Mugabe's active leadership in supporting children's access to computers through computer donations to ten schools in each of the ten provinces in the country, two of these being in rural areas. Consequently, the integration of computers in schools is now high on the national education agenda.

The government's vision is to transform Zimbabwe into a knowledge-based society by 2020. To achieve that goal, the government wishes to accelerate the development and application of ICTs in support of economic growth and development. The government is committed to the promotion of the development of ICT infrastructure, provision of education and training programmes to produce knowledgeable workers and qualified human resources, establishment of relevant structures and institutional mechanisms which promote ICTs, and to encourage equitable access to ICTs across gender and to youth, the elderly and to people with disabilities. It also has a separate section on human resource development where it promotes skills training and capacity-building at all levels in the private and public sectors and in all training centres and institutions of learning.

Definition of the Concept of ICT in Education

The concept of ICT has emerged from the concepts of Information Technology (IT) which embraced computers and communication technology inclusive of digital data networks, television, satellites, phone, etc. The inevitable merging of different technologies meant that IT became inadequate to express the emergent technology, hence the emergency of ICT. ICT captures all the latest technologies used for communication, data processing and data storage. However, there seems to be a restricted conceptualisation of ICT where focus is on the quality of computers (desktops, laptops and servers) that are needed in schools. The accent seems to be on rolling out computers in each of the schools, for each