



Students enjoying the new Media Centre at Mnyakanya High School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Transforming learning in rural African school

By Claire Lomax

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STUDENTS at a school in one of South Africa's most deprived rural areas have access to the internet for the first time thanks to three years of international collaboration.

The Bambisanani Partnership - which was started 13 years ago by St Mary's School, Menston, and Mnyakanya High School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, has worked with the Rotary Club of Aireborough and Eshowe Rotary Club in South Africa to secure funding of £30,000 to create the computer based classroom at Mnyakanya High School.

Aireborough Rotary Club committed £10,000 towards the project and after a rigorous process of grant applications, further funding was approved by Rotary International.

The purpose built classroom which will transform education at the remote rural school finally opened this month. It has full internet connectivity for 20

modern computers with associated software and additional hardware, including projector and screen. The grant money will also fund significant training for teaching staff together with technical support and connectivity fees for the next five years.

A delighted Catherine Chattoe, Bambisanani co-ordinator at St Mary's, said: "This is a great achievement for The Bambisanani Partnership, Aireborough Rotary Club and Eshowe Rotary Club. Providing 20 computers and access to the internet will make such a difference to the students and teachers at Mnyakanya High School.

"The teachers will be able to use the facility to improve their teaching and students will be able to use the computers to aid their learning and access valuable information that may impact on their futures."

The Secretary of the Rotary Club of Aireborough, Graham Davies, added: "We are pleased to have been able to facilitate the funding of this project which

we know will have a massive positive impact on the lives of both the students and the teaching staff at the school.

"In conjunction with the Bambisanani Partnership, we look forward to seeing how they have all progressed."

The Media Centre is known as 'Mary's Room' with respect to St. Mary's School and to Mary Jowett, who left a legacy to Aireborough Rotary Club which helped to fund the project.

The Rotary District Governor in KwaZulu-Natal Jaco Stander visited the school to officially open the new facility.

Ronnie Ngeleka, Principal at Mnyakanya, said: "We thank everybody concerned for the new Media Centre which will help transform our school for both learners and educators.

"We have already applied to the Department of Education to introduce Computer Application Technology as a subject across all grades to ensure that our learners are well equipped to face the real world and play their part in it."