

TALKING POINT

# E-learning should be properly coordinated to derive benefits

**W**ith advances in computer technology and especially the Internet, a number of e-learning initiatives and innovations are being made worldwide.

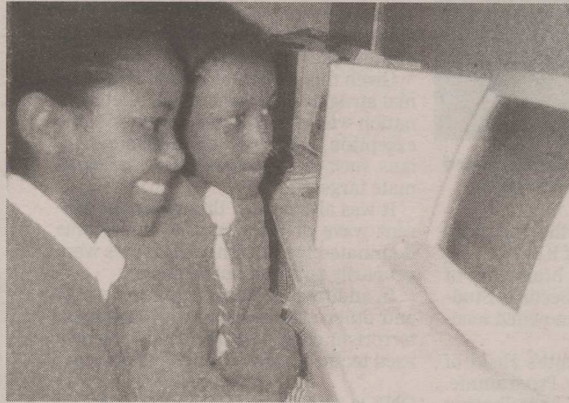
In Kenya, many stakeholders are working hard to make education affordable to many through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Efforts are being made by such institutions as Computers for Schools-Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Education, the Ministry of Education, through the Nepad e-schools initiative, and the ICT Trust Fund.

It is through proper coordination of these efforts that e-learning will achieve its intended purpose.

The ministry is in charge of the policy for e-learning and for overseeing its successful implementation in schools.

Through the Nepad e-schools initiative, which President Kibaki launched in September 2005 at Isiolo Girls School, 142 schools have been turned into e-schools that are connected to the Internet and are supplied with other computer equipment.

While this is encouraging,



**It's real fun, informative and educative: Students using a computer at school.**

private sector participation is wanting. This is because apart from Microsoft, HP, Intel, Cisco and Oracle, the international firms that supplied computer equipment to the six inaugural secondary schools — Mumbi Girls, Menengai, Isiolo Girls, Chavakali, Maranda and Wajir Girls — there is inadequate local private sector involvement.

The Nepad implementing agency could do with support

from local firms to make the e-schools' dream a success. One key issue is the training of teachers.

The participation of the private sector will ensure the same high standards for education and training are met both in government and private schools.

In addition, universities should take a leading role in conducting e-learning research to provide solutions to challenges and critically ex-

amine and appraise e-learning systems.

The model schools approach has worked well in countries like Singapore and Malaysia because the rest will 'learn from the best'.

Since the ICT Trust Fund is a government agency, the best thing to do would be to encourage more private sector involvement in implementation while it retains control as a policy and regulatory agency.

The largest and second international e-learning conference in Africa — the Second e-Learning Africa 2007 conference with the theme: ICT for Development, Education, and Training — was held at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi from May 28 to 30.

That the conference organisers decided to hold this high profile event in Kenya clearly shows their confidence in Kenya's capacity and potential in e-learning innovation.

However, it was disheartening to note that very few Kenyan institutions and individuals presented papers or show-cased their e-learning products at the conference.

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