

# Computers for schools in Africa

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Published: 25 July 2024



Hundreds of redundant Isle of Wight Council laptops will be given a new life building digital literacy in some of the world's poorest communities.

The council has partnered with The Turing Trust, the Edinburgh-based IT and educational charity which refurbishes old tech to give to rural schools and academic institutions in Africa.

So far, the council has donated 330 Lenovo computers which will be reconditioned at the trust's specialist workshops.

After all devices complete a rigorous data destruction process, the trust loads educational software and then distributes the equipment to schools and charities both in the UK and overseas which would otherwise be unable to afford IT equipment.

It is estimated that the council's donation will bring computing and IT education to around 5,940 students while the recycling of the equipment will also benefit the environment, offsetting around 92 tonnes of CO2 emissions, which is the equivalent of planting 23 trees.

The energy savings created are also enough to power 23 homes for an entire year.

Roger Brown, the council's strategic manager for ICT and digital services, said: "This is not the first time the council has helped charities by providing them with our old equipment — such as Sight for Wight — but it is the most significant provision by size.

"We chose The Turing Trust because of their incredible work to bridge the digital divide in Africa. We were inspired by their mission to provide education and training opportunities to underprivileged communities.

"These partnerships ensure the computers we donate will be put to good use and make a real difference in people's lives. We were also impressed by their focus on sustainability, which ensures that the technology we provide will be functional for as long as possible.

"We estimate that another 200 laptops may also be appropriate for handover in the future."

Critically for young people IT skills open career opportunities and make university more accessible. Since some of the charity's partner schools have started teaching IT they've seen 20 per cent more of their students attending university.

IT skills can also have an important economic impact too. On average those with IT skills can increase their incomes by 39 per cent.

Councillor Karen Lucioni, the Cabinet lead for ICT, said: "We are excited to be a part of the positive change that the Turing Trust is creating, and we believe that our donation will have a meaningful impact on the communities they serve.

"The demand for refurbished computers is so high that even the hundreds of units we're donating is a drop in the ocean, so we hope other organisations are encouraged to work with the trust so their redundant equipment can be re-used securely with such lasting and valuable impact."

The Turing Trust was set up by the family of the late Alan Turing who was famed as a mathematician and computer scientist, and this work on breaking the German Enigma codes in the Second World War.

Earlier this year, through the council's contract with mobile phone provider, HMD Global (Nokia), around 3,250 trees were planted at Kandrary, Madagascar, as part of the company's 'Let's Plant Together' scheme.