

Eduvos at Africa Games Week – Empowering education through esports and casual gaming

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Eduvos director, Dr Riaan Steenberg, represented the institution on the panel [Empowering Education through Esports & Casual Gaming](#) at [Africa Games Week](#) 2023 in Cape Town.



The panel brought together experts from various fields to discuss the intersection of education, gaming, and digital inclusion. The focus was on leveraging esports as a catalyst for bridging the digital divide, nurturing skills, and fostering a sense of community.

This year, Eduvos [launched esports](#) at its 12 campuses as the institution recognises the learning potential of esports. Eduvos believes the skills learned through esports will be valuable to its students in succeeding in the fourth industrial revolution.

[Dr Riaan Steenberg](#), executive director at NetEd, under which Eduvos falls, was instrumental in launching esports at the institution. He joined the panel along with [Jaco Sauer](#), CEO of RGB Gaming, [Beyanca Struwig](#), curriculum integration at Microsoft, [Kerry-Ann van der Merwe](#), technology educator and esports coach at Steyn City School, and [Maximus Ametorgoh](#), head of digital at PopOut Ghana.

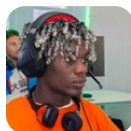
Here's a summary of the key insights shared during the conversation.

Beyanca Struwig commented on Microsoft Education's commitment to leaving no one behind, highlighting initiatives like Minecraft that don't require constant connectivity. It is a means to enhance digital literacy and meet students where they are in their learning journey.

Kerry-Ann van der Merwe advocated for walking the educational journey with students, emphasising the inclusivity and confidence-building aspects of esports. By raising awareness and ensuring accessibility, Van der Merwe sees untapped potential in esports, urging a collective effort to close the digital divide.

Riaan Steenberg drew attention to the supply and demand dynamics in gaming, citing that 85% of Eduvos students show an interest in gaming. He suggested that designing games to meet the needs of an African market should use adaptive technologies – where connectivity becomes a non-essential requirement.

Maximus Amertorgoh pointed out that while rural areas lack internet access, game centres and smartphones are prevalent in Africa. He proposed leveraging these resources for both gaming and learning, stressing the importance of adapting to the existing infrastructure.



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Jaco Sauer said that gaming is the magnet for closing the digital divide, and Steenberg highlighted the significance of esports as a unifying force and emphasised the learning opportunities it provides. Esports, according to Steenberg at Eduvos, fosters a sense of community and socialisation, preparing students for impactful roles in various fields – whether it be in gaming, technology, media studies or content creation. At Eduvos, our 12 campuses have launched a subscription-based esports model, with weekly access and a league table with winners.

Our students also have access to compete in event competitions at events like Comic Con Cape Town, Comic Con Africa and rAge, all of which have been a huge success for our esports leagues and an incredible experience for our students. In addition to our leagues, we've introduced two gaming qualifications to address the skills gap, we believe these will be the bridge to further studies in various areas and we look forward to developing further qualifications.

When discussing practical examples about the transfer of skills, and initiatives the panellists are spearheading, Amertorgoh shared insights into varsity esports in Ghana, showcasing efforts to integrate essential skills into esports education. By collaborating with investors, Amertorgoh's team emphasises critical thinking and problem-solving skills, combining visual arts, marketing, and IT to build inclusive esports clubs at schools. The focus is on training students to become professional gamers.

Struwig shed light on Microsoft's commitment to developing soft skills. By collaborating with HR, Microsoft identified teamwork as a critical soft skill. Struwig underscored how esports inherently nurtures these skills, contributing to the holistic development of individuals.

The panel concluded with a reflection on the unique ability of esports to foster a culture of togetherness, a rare trait in many industries. Esports, they argued, has the potential to unite diverse communities and provide a platform for shared goals and achievements.

In summary, the panel discussion highlighted the transformative potential of esports in education, not just as a form of entertainment but as a tool for empowerment, skill development, and community building in the digital age. The call to action is clear: to continue exploring and expanding the possibilities that esports offer in bridging the digital divide and shaping the next generation of learners.

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