

Foundation for the Smart Nation creates backpack to empower rural learners

Rural learners face many challenges before finishing school, including having to walk long distances, walking in the dark, they are constant victims of the rainy seasons, having to cross overflowing rivers and sometimes having to study in the dark at home.



Addressing societal and educational inequalities, in particular those brought on by the lack of reliable electricity, the Foundation for the Smart Nation has created a revolutionary school backpack, called the Tshenolo Backpack, that aims to reduce the above-mentioned challenges. The backpack has a portable and rechargeable solar light that can be used to walk to school and study at home when there are no lights. The solar light charges itself as the learners walk to and from school. The backpack also has a rain poncho to help the pupils during the rainy seasons, as well as reflectors for safety and visibility when crossing or walking on the road.

According to research done by the foundation, children in rural areas have unreliable supplies of electricity, and are therefore forced to study using candles or kerosene lamps, exposing them to the various dangers posed by these light sources.



Foundation for the Smart Nation co-founder Sibongile Nkuna said, “The backpack will not solve all the problems faced by rural learners but it will definitely help make school life a whole lot easier for them.”

The foundation was founded by friends Sibongile Nkuna, Delinah Maubane and Sisanda Mbizo, who are all equally passionate about community development.

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