

# Grappling with robotics in Gugulethu



The Monday team – with robots

Inspired towards Science, Engineering and Technology (I-SET) is a community engagement flagship that aims to inspire and create awareness of science, engineering and technology through the fun activities of robotics. The activities include the building of an autonomous robot using the MindStorms kit and the programming of the robot using the NXT-G programming language. Through robotics, engineering fundamentals and programming concepts are explained and understood.

On 19 and 20 August 2013, the I-SET team, consisting of a presenter, an administrator and three I-SET buddies, presented robotics workshops in Gugulethu as part of the Chance to Advance programme. On Monday, at the JL Zwane Hall, the participants were slow in arriving – but by 11:00 there were 12. The challenges included the building of a robot, and the programming of movement in rotations to return to its original position. Lunch faded into zero significance as the participants grappled with the robotic moves!

On Tuesday, at the College of Cape Town Gugulethu Campus, the 60 learners first used the venue to write an exam. The robotic session officially started only at 10:30. Zero experience of programming or building robots! Despite warnings that students ‘usually’ vacate the lecture halls by 14:00, the robotics class continued way past 16:00. Lecturers were perplexed by the student participation and enthusiasm to learn! It was definitely the loudest robotics class EVER!

## Comments from the I-SET buddies

- *The workshop closed after 4pm, with the expectation of the learners and teachers to see the ISET team back next year for more robotics lessons! In their hearts they said “We won’t give up” and they wanted robotics to continue in their community.*
- *During the presentations, the students were bored! But they were thrilled by the practical, that continued even after we went for lunch. No one left, they were so impatient for the next session to commence.*

Sincere thanks to the Chance to Advance team who made this all possible! Kind regards from I-SET team and the robots (Ben, Eva and Wally).



Students involved in robotics



Oh...that's easy!