

Redundant GTR computers transforming children's lives in Malawi

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Children at a rural primary school in Malawi are learning computer skills on recycled tablets provided by Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) in partnership with IT recycling and education charity the Turing Trust.

The train company donated over 200 redundant Android tablets to the Trust in November 2021. The charity's IT workshop team have carried out a comprehensive, data-secure refurbishment process, loaded new software, and shipped the refreshed equipment to Malawi.

The tablets, once used by station staff, are now transforming the prospects of children at Choma Primary School, near Mzuzu in the north of Malawi: "Invigorating their excitement for school and boosting their chances of graduating to secondary education," says the charity.

James Turing, Founder of the Trust, said: "Your tablets have been gratefully received by the students and are revolutionising the way they are able to learn digitally. We expect to see some remarkable outcomes in the future – at other primary schools that have also received tablets, we've seen the number of pupils graduating to secondary school increasing five-fold.

“These results are a testament to the improved learning opportunities made possible with these digital tools. Thank you so much for making this and so much more possible with all your fantastic support.”

Following that initial donation, GTR were keen to link up with the Trust again, given their capability to erase data securely on donated devices. In August last year the company delivered 70 mini desktop computers – just the first batch of 600 redundant desktops pledged to the charity in total.

A further 150 desktops and 400 monitors have now been shipped to the charity’s workshop, the latest batch arriving last week. At the same time, GTR’s IT team were delighted to hear that the Trust had completed the refurbishment, secure erasure and reloading of software for the first batch of 70, and that they were now on their way to Kenya for installation in classrooms across the country.

Aidan Shanahan, GTR’s Head of IT, said: “Whilst we’re replacing this outdated kit because it no longer supports the latest software we need to use, it’s all potentially invaluable for organisations such as charities and schools who can’t afford the IT equipment they need.

“We’re delighted to be able to work with the Turing Trust to make such a life-changing difference for so many people, by giving the equipment a second life. 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 recommend that other organisations with redundant equipment work with the Trust so it can be re-used securely with such lasting and valuable impact.”

Photo credit: GTR