



Welcome to the highlights of our 4th Quarter, 2014! BRIDGE is a non-profit organisation that drives collaboration and co-operation among educational stakeholders, sharing knowledge and resources within the education community in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the country.

South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition

The South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition (SAESC) is a Community of Practice run by BRIDGE and made up of school leaders and teachers from a group of 22 schools around South Africa. These schools are achievement-oriented schools that provide disadvantaged learners across South Africa with affordable access (low fee or non-fee) to high-quality learning. The SAESC's fourth quarter national meeting took place at LEAP 6 Science and Maths School in Ga-Rankuwa. The meeting included over 50 teachers, leaders and partners, who enjoyed the opportunity to reflect, share working practice, resources and tools. The highlights of the meeting can be found [here](#). If you would like to learn about what makes LEAP 6 extraordinary, click [here](#).



Coalition members sit in a circle to ensure all voices are heard, negate hierarchy and allow for in-depth reflection and engagement.



Members discuss the implementation of the newly-developed School Improvement Plan at Inanda Seminary



Principals Community of Practice

BRIDGE supports two Principals Communities of Practice in the East Rand of Gauteng.

Following the success of the learner review session initiated by the Principals Community of Practice in Gauteng East, the Principals Community of Practice of Ekurhuleni North undertook their own learner review session in order to understand the challenges learners face in their schools.

Ensuring the learners' anonymity, BRIDGE helped facilitate the session and gave feedback on learner issues to the principals. Inspired by the insights of their learners, many of the principals are developing reform strategies in response to this feedback.

The principals of Gauteng East celebrated great news this quarter. The CoZa Cares Foundation initiated a partnership with the principals by making e-learning materials and Open Education Resources (OERs) available and easily accessible by schools through an e-kiosk. The repository makes content available via Wi-Fi and USBs to educators and learners alike, and is situated in a school in the heart of Tsakane, where the principals and neighbouring schools can make use of it.

Teachers Upfront Seminars

The final Teachers Upfront seminar of the year focused on *ICTs in Learning: the issues and challenges*. This is the 21st



seminar held since March 2011. The article [Digital Learning needs a Light Touch](#) gives an overview of key issues discussed (Mail & Guardian 31-10-2014). See the latest 'What's Trending' BRIDGE resource, [What's Trending in ICTs](#).

Sunward Park High School principal, Ms Ansie Peens, presents on 'Implementing ICTs'.

BRIDGE participated in the following engagements:

- Zenex Foundation Literacy Project Launch, Eastern Cape
- CDE Private Sector forum on Maths Interventions in schools
- CDE Breakfast on Expanding Affordable Learning
- UNICEF ECD Knowledge Building Seminar
- ECD Institute Stakeholder Forum
- Launch of the SA Child Gauge 2014
- NPC conversation on Human Resources Strategy on ECD
- Data Driven Districts Engagement at McKinsey

Maths and Science Community Themes in Quarter 4: Supporting Rural Learners and Leveraging Technology for Teaching and Learning

Members of the national Maths and Science Learner Support Community of Practice met to learn from practitioners and evaluators.

- The **Thusanani Foundation** shared its work with the Tertiary Access focus group. Thusanani provides hands-on guidance on accessing post-school study pathways for rural learners. Although the staff complement is relatively small, Thusanani uses a network of thousands of volunteers in institutions across the country to achieve its objectives. Since its creation in 2011, it has helped hundreds of students make their way from challenging contexts into post-school institutions.
- A **Rapid Diagnostic Assessment** for primary schools was the focus of the Monitoring and Evaluation Colloquium. Tshikululu Social Investments and Khulisa Management Services shared the methodology and tools they developed to determine the needs and most appropriate interventions for South Africa's primary schools. These tools are available under creative commons licensing for practitioners, funders and educators.
- The main community meeting took a close look at the **Rethink Education** platform. This start-up is gradually developing a significant repository of curriculum-aligned learning materials for Grades 10 to 12 in Maths, Chemistry and Physics. A premium product is available for schools while a free edition of this tool is available on Mxit for any learner with access to a mobile phone and personal motivation. This community meeting showcased some real alternatives for self-testing and assessment for learners.
- The Teacher Development focus group looked at ICT applications for educator development. North West University showed the group how **Video Annotation (VideoANT)** software is used to review and comment on student teaching. Kelello Consulting's Nicky Roberts presented on the **Nokia Mobile Mathematics** tool (Nokia MoMaths) and its applications for learner support and teacher development.



National Early Childhood Development Community



BRIDGE's National ECD Community of Practice facilitates interaction to strengthen partnerships and to ensure sharing about what works for collective impact.

The Community of Practice has been involved in a number of processes this quarter. It has been exploring the many dimensions of 'Quality in ECD' in order to formulate a common understanding of quality for the sector. This understanding can help establish standards to measure consistency across provision.

Supported by BRIDGE, the community is also in the process of mapping donor activity, training institutions and quality in the

Eastern Cape Province to promote better engagement, communication and collaboration by all stakeholders for systemic impact.

An important acknowledgement of the ECD Community of Practice's value and role is the fact that the community has been elected, along with five other ECD umbrella organisations, to represent civil society on the government's Inter-Sectoral Steering Committee. This committee will meet monthly to collaborate with government departments for improved provision of ECD in South Africa.

Western Cape Communities of Practice

School Leadership

Members of the BRIDGE Western Cape School Leadership community of practice have been in full swing re-connecting with one another and continuing knowledge sharing and collaboration. A key focus has been re-establishing the principal's role as an agent for change in the school through enhancing her role as an instructional leader. The group has been working towards understanding school leadership in the South African context, sharing ideas and working practice in relation to supporting the growth of effective leaders.

ICTs in Education

The BRIDGE ICTs in Education Community of Practice in the Western Cape recently met at Edunova to continue its work disseminating information and sharing experiences about school intervention programmes that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The latest meeting heard from **Kids Who Code**, an NGO in Cape Town, who presented on their drive to instil passion and awareness of coding amongst young learners. Members of this community range from non-profit interventions to tech companies that provide technology support and services to schools.



Early Childhood Development

Linda Biersteker and Fiona Burt led the WC ECD Community of Practice this quarter by facilitating an interactive meeting on quality in ECD. A range of stakeholders debated what constitutes 'quality' in ECD, linking to discussions held on the same topic by the National Community of Practice.

Teacher Professional Development

The Teacher Professional Development focus group meets under the leadership of Western Cape Primary Science Programme director, Ms Zorina Dharsey. The community meets once every six weeks between February and November. The group collates lessons learned, actively seeks opportunities for collaboration among group members and those outside the group who can make sound contributions to the teacher development space. Member of the community also find pertinent research and discuss the implications for practice.

Learner Support

This community meets once a quarter under the leadership of Ms Ferial Parker from the University of Cape Town's Schools Development Unit. Because of the broad nature of this work, learner support has been classified in three ways: Psychosocial, Academic and Extra-curricular. Members of this community seek to engage potential partners for collaboration and shared learning in these areas. A key product from this community is the mapping of support organisations working in Western Cape Schools, available online as the [EduCollaborate database](#).



"If you want to walk fast, walk alone; if you want to walk far, walk together."
[African proverb]

