Setting the scene

This was the third meeting of the National Pre-service Teacher Development Community of Practice (CoP), established in June 2015. The aim of this community is to form a network and collaborative advocacy group of schools and organisations who have been involved in implementing alternative pre-service teacher education and induction programmes. One innovation is the emergence of school-based internships where student-teachers are paired with experienced teachers and placed in schools for the entirety of their studies while they study towards a BEd or PGCE qualification through distance learning.

> **The goal of this CoP is to nurture our common purpose while celebrating our different contexts. Innovation can come from combining practice which is already happening in new ways.**

> **This CoP can help us create platforms rather than work as separate entities, which in turn will give us a stronger and more coherent voice in any negotiations.**

Overview of presentation by Save the Children

Nqabakazi Mathe presented on the scope and progress of Save the Children's **District Based Teacher Recruitment Strategy.** This project is based in QwaQwa in the Free State, and is a partnership between the Department of Basic Education, the Free State provincial department and Save the Children. A number of other stakeholders are involved in various design and implementation stages of the project (e.g. ELMA, UNISA, Harambee and Vuleka School). This is a multi-stakeholder programme which requires a high level of coordination and negotiation of roles and responsibilities. Nqabakazi emphasized the importance of buy-in from the province so that they can take ownership of a new model of recruitment after the project ends.

The two main catalysts for this programme were (i) a high level of youth unemployment in the local region and (ii) a shortage of teachers in Foundation Phase, especially in key areas such as language and maths. Compounding this is the lack of willingness from many newly qualified teachers to work in rural areas, and dissatisfaction regarding the products of distance education teacher training.

Key features of the project include:

- Structuring recruitment, bursary and profiling processes to attract higher numbers and better motivated individuals to the profession.

- A school practice approach, where students are put into the classroom and paired with experienced Foundation Phase teachers as soon as possible to observe and then apply their skills.

- A mentorship model in which students have regular meetings with the mentors. The class teacher functions as a Foundation Phase mentor dealing with transfer of skills and knowledge, while an

external mentor (all of whom are former principals in high performing schools) gives academic and psycho-social support.

- Good materials in terms of tools, resources, guidelines and mentoring manuals are an essential part of the design of the project.

Documenting the processes and outcomes of this project is vital, as the aim is to develop a model and strategy to recruit and produce quality Foundation Phase Teachers as well as to improve existing teacher development programmes, especially those aimed at distance education students.

To view the presentation click here:

[Save The Children Presentation](#)

The 2016 intake of future Foundation Phase teachers

Shout outs for this project:

> **This is the first time there has been a formal internship in public schools.**

> **The different streams of work reflect partnerships and collaboration.**

Overview of presentation on Dell Young Leaders

Helen Vaughan of the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation presented on the Dell Young Leaders Programme, a project partnering with University of Cape Town and the University of Pretoria.

The target beneficiaries are the poorest of the poor who get access to university, are using NSFAS, and who meet a number of profile criteria (such as the ability to problem solve and overcome adversity). Many of these types of students fail to complete their course of study, or manage to find positions after graduation, because of lack of support and various contextual factors.

The outcome target is an 80% graduation rate and 100% of programme graduates continuing into employment or further study. The model uses a technical solution to keep students in touch with mentors, counsellors and peers throughout their programme of study. Students are provided with swipe cards that have travel and food allocations, and the technology platform helps with the administration of this level of support. It is also focused on early detection of barriers and problems through a tracking system of academic

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progress, so that interventions can be made as required. The tracking system uses measures such as check-ins, tools to develop goals and milestones and so on. This data also becomes very useful at the point of helping students find employment once they have graduated. The project provides students with employability guides and assistance in job placements. Former alumni of the programme become ambassadors, recruiters or even employers of the student groups who follow them.

Holistic support model

Career

Psycho-social

Financial

Academic

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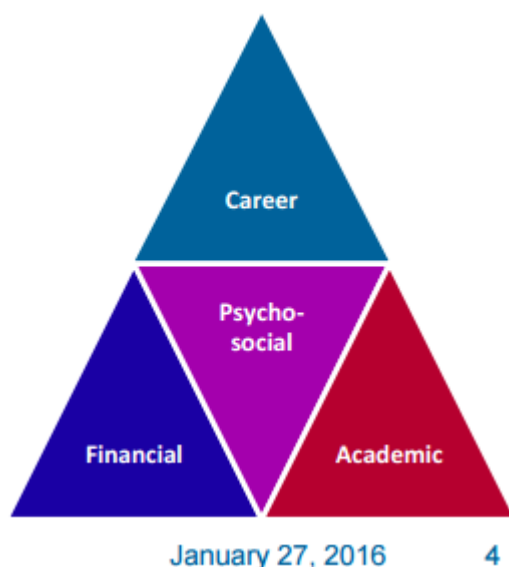
The key characteristic of this approach is that it is multi-faceted in that it offers support in different areas and on a number of levels. At the same time the technical platform encourages self-reliance and self-monitoring. The underpinning assumption is that bursary schemes offering only financial aid cannot be successfully scaled up. What is required is to equip students with self-empowerment tools alongside some financial aid.

> View the presentation here:
> Dell Young Leaders Presentation

Shout outs for this project:

> **Information and data management about student progress really helps in offering support.**

> **Transferability in relation to this project may be on a conceptual level, the role of alumni, or knowledge sharing about some of the technology tools.**

@CoP
Discussion

- Gerrit Coetzee of the DBE noted that DHET is starting to focus on some of the findings around Initial Teacher Education research, and to acknowledge the need for better-equipped graduates. But graduates of any quality still need induction programmes. Some of the issues around induction programmes for public schools are as follows:
  - There is a lack of professional standards to guide induction; JET and SACE are currently working on these.
  - DBE and the nine provinces would need to link these standards to an induction programme.
  - Induction programmes will need to take contexts and diversity into account.
  - DBE is in the process of developing an orientation booklet for schools and school managers, but this cannot be seen as an induction programme as there is no mentoring element. Mentoring is seen as an essential component of induction.

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- We also need to think about 'compensatory induction' for those already in the system, and struggling.

- Some of the models discussed in this forum are based on support for distance learning, as preparation for teaching while doing practical work in the classroom. This is a pioneering notion of preservice teacher training as embedded process where learning and teaching happen at the same time. Our universities need to recognise that some of their programmes only offer pretence at application with no real experience or work integrated learning. International practice is shifting to embedded experiential learning, in which induction happens during and not after graduation.

- Distance education is more affordable and lends itself better to an internship model while studying. The majority of Funza Lushaka students are however full time students, partly because of concerns regarding the non-alignment of some distance education programmes to the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education policy.

- There was some discussion on how to understand some of the financial implications of different models in terms of savings and scale. One model is for schools themselves to become 'colleges' or sites of learning, and networks of schools become a different concept of a campus. There could be savings here over a four year programme in that there are shared costs: the schools would bear some of these but would benefit in that students would be teaching. From the state's point of view this could be cheaper than supporting students at residential university programmes. A well supported, structured franchised model of distance education should be cheaper in that it would use existing infrastructure.

- Some 'next steps' might include the following:
  - The CoP could shift from being a knowledge-sharing space to a work project approach: that is, some 'work around the work' needs to be undertaken. To develop this, members agreed to convene a task team through BRIDGE to articulate the approach through the development of a concept paper and a collective voice among organisations invested in the work. The first meeting of this task team will be held on 1 March 2016 at BRIDGE at the Education Hub (6 Blackwood Avenue, Parktown) from 14h00-16h30.
  - A presentation on how Funza Lushaka operates and an exploration of how the stipend works could be useful.
  - We need to bring policy into the discourse and link it to our contexts.

> **DBE and DHET have the scale without managing the detail; our projects have the detail without the scale: how do we bring the two together?**