

15 OCTOBER 2018

BRIDGE SAESC COP MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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01 SETTING THE SCENE

The nature of the most recent SAESC meeting was a reflective and evaluative session. The CoP looked back at what the SAESC has achieved thus far, and thought about whether or not the community should continue as it has up till now. This CoP meeting was a re-imagining of the SAESC as members explored how this community can become more adaptive to our current context. Members also explored how they might expand the vision of the community and think about its work in broader terms, and develop a plan of action for the CoP going forward.

02 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

LEAP schools founder, John Gilmour, explained the purpose of the meeting and asked the CoP to reflect on its core practices, its construct and to imagine what changes they would like to see in the education space, and what levers within the SAESC could be used to affect this change on a large scale.

Some of the ideas and issues shared by the CoP were:

- Discipline of learners is an issue – must encourage more restorative discipline practices.
- Teachers should be equipped to be facilitators, not just educators, in the classroom.
- Other skills should be prioritised, not just academics, but soft skills too like collaboration and being a humanitarian.
- The standard of literacy in primary schools needs to be improved.
- Teacher training colleges should focus on literacy in their training.
- The national curriculum should change to accommodate more learner focused activities, and teachers should actively be involved in curriculum design as they know the realities they are faced with in the classroom.
- The curriculum is currently not focused on developing learners' entrepreneurial skills. Instead, their successes are measured by the rate of entry into university which is not the only post school pathway.
- There must be a reimagining of the teacher workforce into one that is able to derive meaning from what it does. Currently, teachers are far too influenced by unions and this is a barrier to their professional development.
- Technology is a critical lever when we think about interventions going to scale in the education space.
- There needs to be a shift in education from a hope for excellence to a hope for equity.
- When a child is expelled there is no real place for them to go to address the issues that have led to their expulsion. There should be more effective interventions to help learners reintegrate into schools.



**Our schools
should be
education hubs,
and these can be
levers in
rewriting the
story of education
in South Africa.**

JUDY TATE

03 TOP TEN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SAESC'S WORK

In celebration of the CoP's 8 year journey, Inanda Seminary's Judy Tate led CoP members through a reflection on the successes of the CoP on both a private and professional level.

Some of the reflections shared by CoP members included:

- Appreciating the work others are doing in the education space
- Visiting different school environments
- Sharing fears and expertise, solutions and practice with a group of trusted peers
- Professional networking opportunities
- Sharing funder information, facilities and job opportunities among CoP members
- Easy access to BRIDGE's tools and resources, which are co-created with the CoP (KPs may be accessed on the BRIDGE website)

04 RE-IMAGINING THE SAESC

John Gilmour asked the CoP to re-imagine the SAESC's purpose and practices with the following key prompting questions:

- **Do we find a way of running these meetings differently? Do we have a summit? Regional meetings?**
- **If we go to scale, what will it do to this space and how will that affect our learning here?**
- **If we want the impact of this work to connect with the system, we need to ask: how do we invite people? How do we connect people and get principals to understand our mission and objectives?**
- **What should the broad non-negotiables of the community be as we think about inviting others to the CoP, and ensure their commitment to the work of the SAESC?**

05 PEER REVIEWS AT NEW LEVELS AND THE WAY FORWARD



Phadiela Cooper from COSAT and BRIDGE's Hassiena Marriott gave a brief overview of the Peer Review process and invited CoP members to reflect on its efficacy, its impact, and to think about the ways in which it might be refined. Some of the reflections shared by CoP members were:

- Would be good to have follow up peer reviews to track a school's progress over time.
- There should be a platform for schools who share similar issues and have key successes to share with one another.
- How do we connect the peer review process with the CoP and its expertise?
- How do we internalise and institutionalise the Peer Review as practice?

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**The Peer Review
is moving from
an event, to a
process, to
practice.**

JOHN GILMOUR

06 NON-NEGOTIABLES OF THE SAESC

Noloyiso Lange, from Dominican Convent School, asked the CoP to review the SAESC non-negotiables, to affirm the values they felt were integral to the CoP, and air any issues related to the community's structure and processes. The CoP's contributions were as follows:

- If there is to be growth within the CoP, that growth must be organic – facilitated by ensuring every school brings one other school into the CoP by 2019 (need to get out into our communities and advocate about the work of the SAESC).
- Thinking about the construct of the SAESC – majority of people in the meeting should be teachers and instructional leaders. How are government schools incorporated?
- How do we ensure sustainability and commitment to the SAESC? Do we need a membership fee to formalise the process or do we let members affirm their commitment by prioritising their own attendance?
- There is founder syndrome within the CoP – what would happen without founders driving this space? Would it still exist?
- Members should take what they learn at the SAESC back to their colleagues in their respective schools. Perhaps create professional development sessions at member schools to spread the SAESC learnings and firmly establish them in member schools?

The meeting ended with 3 self-nominated CoP members that agreed to form part of the community's steering committee to take the CoP's discussions forward into 2019.