

Western Cape Monitoring & Evaluation Community of Practice

Meeting Highlights – 05 February 2020

Meeting held at True North, Vrygrond, Cape Town

SETTING THE SCENE



In a continued effort to encourage knowledge sharing and peer-learning, the Western Cape Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) CoP invited individual CoP members to present and discuss their M&E journey at CoP meetings.

The first M&E CoP of the year took place at True North Consulting, a Cape Town based NPO that is at the forefront of pioneering Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives within Cape Town's marginalised Vrygrond community. Vicky Kumm, Managing Director of True North, volunteered to host the meeting and present on their M&E journey. The CoP was attended by returning CoP members as well as new members from civic society and the private sector. Asgar Bhikoo, M&E specialist, presented on our 2020 theme '*Developing Your M&E Plan*' and Maurisa Moloto, education consultant, facilitated the CoP. Kauthar Jacobs from BRIDGE gave an introduction to the work of BRIDGE, highlighting the purpose of a Community of Practice, and its organisational purpose and values.



Presentation by Vicky Kumm (Managing Director, True North Consulting)

Vicky Kumm presented on the history of True North, their M&E journey and how it has evolved. Vicky spoke to the inputs, outputs and outcomes of their 21-year Logic Model which started in 2007 with a vision to support preschools in delivering quality programming. She explained how the preparation phase of their Logic Model is always evolving and went on to unpack their Rainbow Development Framework and Leadership Development course – both integral parts of their implementation phase. Vicky's presentation containing their Logic Model and Rainbow Development Framework can be found [here](#).

After the presentation CoP members were taken on a tour of the True North office space, where they met the staff and gained insight into how everyone on the True North team from the Finance Manager to the Receptionist plays a role in their organisation's M&E.



2. The community resource shop at True North allows principals to 'purchase' resources using the credits they have earned through completing various training workshops



1. CoP members meeting the True North staff and learning about their respective M&E roles

Presentation by Asgar Bhikoo, M&E Specialist – Developing an M&E Plan

Asgar Bhikoo has played a vital role in holding the technical M&E space of the CoP thus far. Asgar's presentation spoke to our overarching theme for 2020: *Developing Your M&E Plan*. The presentation described what goes into an M&E plan and argued that it is a means of centralising separate documents into a single cohesive document. It also provided resources for finding out more about M&E plans and outlined the bare essentials of what is needed in an M&E plan. Asgar's presentation also brought together some of the topics discussed in previous CoPs, and what is to be covered in more detail in upcoming CoPs. The presentation can be accessed [here](#). Below are some stand-out points of the presentation:

- M&E jargon is confusing – It is important to avoid being trapped by the jargon and the separate tools, but rather to see them as all forming part of one cohesive approach which is captured in an M&E Plan.
- Utility and simplicity are important for M&E to be embedded as a function. True North provides a good example of how an organization with a lean team has been able to integrate M&E into their organisation.
- Data collection tools need to mean something for those who are using them. If the users and subjects of research/data collection do not know why data is being collected, and what the data means to them, then it will not be useful. True North has overcome this through simplifying tools and making sure that the tools have been co-designed.

- Developing M&E capacity is a journey – there is no such thing as a perfect system or capacity. It will always be in flux, but as long as it functions and provides utility, it has value.



DISCUSSION

In a discussion guided by Maurisa Moloto, members were asked to consider Vicky’s presentation and share what they liked, what they would adopt in their organisation and what the similarities were between their organisation and True North.

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE’s knowledge management role. All meetings, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE’s Knowledge Hub, as are any other specific knowledge products relevant to ECD. [Here](#) is the link to this.



BRAINSTORMING SESSION

M&E is possible without a dedicated M&E department.

A learning point: In its simplest form, M&E is looking at what you want to achieve and how you want to measure it. That is how Vicky started developing her M&E Framework.

It is important for one’s organisation to realise that M&E should not only be done for funding. It is about an organisation’s continuous improvement and development, as we have seen with True North.



CLOSING

To maintain and grow an M&E function in an organisation requires commitment, investment and direction. True North's journey is a great story of an organisation that has been able to do this with minimal investment into their M&E department, but now wants to formalise it so that their efforts are more aligned. The CoP gave members an experiential learning opportunity as they not only learnt about True North's M&E journey but also saw first-hand how M&E is integrated and utilised in their organisation.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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