The Gauteng Community of Practice

LEARNING BRIEF
October 2021

Strategies for learner recruitment and retention in After School programmes

The Community of Practice explored the following areas:
- Different strategies around learner recruitment.
- Tips on learner retention.
- How working with parents and the school community assists in both learner recruitment and learner retention.
- Maximising learner numbers and attendance.

Take-away lessons on learner retention:
- Having direct contact within a partner school is key. This can be the principal, deputy principal or HOD. It is through these individuals that After School Programmes get buy-in from the community. Organisations can communicate directly with parents and learners through the school.
- It is important to continuously communicate and update parents about the programme and the progress of the learners. This helps them keep track of how their children participate and attend the programme which, in turn, has a positive impact on learner retention.
- Building a good relationship between tutors and learners also ensures regular attendance. Generally, learners tend to communicate freely with tutors and build relationships of trust. The higher the tutor consistency, the greater the learner consistency in attending.

Take-away lessons on learner recruitment:
- It is important for organisations to develop a recruitment plan that is reviewed annually. Organisations can choose to include activities such as: school activations, social media campaigns, press releases, programme presentations, etc.
- Recruitment should start before the year ends. There should be a call for applications and advocacy around the programme which is followed by the review of applications, interviewing and the selection phase.
- The recruitment plan is a living document, and it is essential that an organisation looks at what is working well and what the key lessons are for recruitment.
- Again; buy-in from parents and the rest of the community is key in solidifying the voice of the After School programme and its importance. Pitching to these stakeholders is just as important as attracting learners.
- The ability of a programme to retain learners has impact on learner recruitment. A stable and impactful programme attracts other like-minded learners.

The Importance of Planning

Think about timelines and the resources needed when recruiting and retaining learners. The CoP explored the step-by-step plans and activities that different organisations do to prepare for learner recruitment over a period of three months. Even so, it’s helpful to remember that learner recruitment can be an ongoing process throughout the year.

Outcomes from this activity can be viewed on this Jamboard illustration.