

Gauteng Community of Practice

JULY 2021

Community-level Collaborations

The Education ecosystem consists of the school, the home, and the community. Collaborations between these key role players in the sector are important for building relationships, mobilising resources, and sustaining quality After School programmes.

In July, the Community of Practice (CoP) explored community-level partnerships and collaborations. We draw on our own experience and share tools to leverage community collaborations.



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Key lessons learned from 'engaging stakeholders through community-level collaboration'

For a programme to thrive, it is crucial to **engage various stakeholders** in the community with a similar passion.

Collaborating with community members, government departments and churches helps in identifying existing resources that can be used to benefit the programme.

Communities are also more likely to support a programme with **clear goals and evident results**. It is therefore key to communicate thoroughly what it is that the programme does through the voices of beneficiaries.

We are all interconnected and the work that is done in the After School sector contributes to **improving education** in South Africa. Look around the community you work in and see which other organisations are working there.

Think about the **benefits of working together** and how this collaboration would work. Take it a step further and approach the organisation with ideas on collaboration. For instance, a sports programme could benefit from their learners receiving academic support from an organisation in the same community.



What does it take to make collaboration work at a community level?

- Having **Memorandums of Understanding (MoU's)** in place so that all parties involved are aware of their responsibilities.
Collaboration is not easy, and it is important to put emphasis on everyone's role to avoid misunderstandings. MoU's ensure that there is accountability, consensus, and transparency.
- Collaborating with other **like-minded organisations** that will balance your needs. An academic support programme with a focus on certain subjects can collaborate with others that offer different subjects so that the learners in the programme are given a wide range of support.
- Developing **strategic partnerships** with gatekeepers – Make an effort to involve members of the community that show resistance to the programme through targeted activities that would benefit the community and encourage participation from these individuals.
- **Open communication** around the programme's progress is essential. This means not only communicating successes but also reflecting on challenges and frustrations. This will foster a culture of more brainstorming to solve these challenges collectively, resulting in fresh ideas from collaborating organisations.



Working together as a community not only impacts our individual organisations positively but also provides more support to the learner at the centre of the education ecosystem. It is important that we continue to engage on how we can work together and improve our programmes to adapt to the ever-changing needs of learners.

Collaborating and being open to working with the community can be challenging but worth doing. There are many benefits that can be seen with organisations that have embarked on this journey.

Next Gauteng CoP?

This will take place on 13th October. Further details will follow.

This learning brief was produced by The Learning Trust following the Gauteng Community of Practice (CoP) meeting held in July 2021.

The CoP is a TLT-coordinated platform that encourages peer support and networking amongst extended learning organisations. The objective is to ultimately amplify and improve the work of practitioners, their organisations, and the sector at large.