

**WHAT WORKS
IN
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT?**

**28 & 29 February 2008
Birchwood Hotel & Conference Centre
Viewpoint Road
Bartlett, Boksburg**

**Conference Report
March 2008**



CONFERENCE REPORT

WHAT WORKS IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT?

**Birchwood Conference Centre, Boksburg
28 and 29 February 2008**

Maren Bodenstein

From the 28th to the 29th of February 2008 a conference entitled '*What Works in School Development?*' was hosted by Murray & Roberts and JET Education Services. The purpose was to bring together government, donors, educational researchers and service providers and to look at trends in school development in South Africa.

The questions that the conference set out to answer were:

- Which school development models are most appropriate for schools at different levels of functionality? How can existing programmes be improved?
- How can government and donors work more closely together in promoting the quality of teaching and learning in all South African schools?



Godwin Khosa and Shiri Vandeyar of JET register for the conference

The audience of 150 was made up of approximately one-third NGO's, one-quarter each of government and business representatives, 10% academics and a number of representatives from a variety of teacher bodies, embassies and media organisations. Many of the papers presented generated a sense of urgency around improving the poorly functioning schools (estimated at 80% of our schools), and the consistently poor performance in numeracy and literacy. However, all of the papers did provide solutions to changing the situation, albeit school-by-school and district by district.

A palpable energy was created amongst the delegates as the conference brought together strong representations from both provincial and national government, the corporate sector and international donors, a range of NGOs, academics and educational researchers, all looking for solutions. One participant even claimed that

they were generally conference-fatigued but that this one had managed to draw them in. Clearly the conference spoke to highly relevant issues.

To ensure that some of the interesting and valuable details of the conference are not lost, this report has identified a number of important themes that emerged from the papers and the discussions. These are:

1. Customising intervention programmes according to the level of school functionality
2. Locating programmes in the system/ effecting systemic change
3. Money alone is not enough to leverage improvement
4. Building teacher capacity
5. Rethinking pedagogy
6. Developing educational leadership
7. The need to base school improvement programmes on research
8. How donors and government can work more closely together

A short summary of the papers presented at the conference can be found on the JET web site at http://www.jet.org.za/item.php?i_id=262.

THEMES

1. Customising intervention programmes according to the level of school functionality

Nick Taylor's analysis of school performance indicated that some 79% of the country's high schools function very poorly, producing only 15% of Senior Certificate mathematics passes at the higher grade, while moderately functioning schools (14% of the total) produced 19%, and the top performers (only 7% of all schools) graduated two-thirds of all HG passes in maths. Evaluations carried out on school improvement interventions over the last 20 years show two strong findings. First, interventions which are targeted at improving both school management practices and teacher subject knowledge do have a significant impact on learner performance in a minority of schools. Second, most programmes to date have had little or no effect on the performance of poorly functioning schools.

In his description of the differentiated approach to school development currently happening in South Africa, Nick Taylor pointed out that, when working with the poorest performing schools, it is important to get things such as time management and teacher attendance and commitment right before interventions at the curriculum level could have much effect. In the moderate and top performing schools, on the other hand, curricular interventions, such as improving teacher knowledge and providing cognitive resources like textbooks and calculators, show more immediate effects on student learning because such schools have the capacity to absorb the additional inputs.

As a result of these findings, there is a growing trend in South Africa to move development funding away from poorly functioning schools - almost all of which serve the poorest communities - towards moderately to highly performing schools. This move, among both corporate sector donors and government, arises out of the frustration caused by the difficulty of turning around dysfunctional schools. Brian Schreuder, Deputy Director General in the Western Cape Education Department,

illustrated this shift in thinking by putting out a challenge to the conference: “Should we continue to focus on the weakest and most dysfunctional schools or should we put our resources into the middle groups where we will be able to show systemic shifts faster? Should we not take an entire staff out of these poorly performing schools and replace them with highly skilled integrated staff?”

The Department of Education’s Dinaledi Project, working in 488 high schools in all provinces, is one of the programmes that has made a conscious shift from working with poorly performing schools to working with schools with potential. The reasoning is that this is a more cost-effective way to channel limited resources. At the same time Dinaledi hopes to create role models for the poorly performing schools. The same desire has inspired the Zenex Programme - which focuses on a cluster of some twenty moderately functioning schools in each of four provinces - in its quest to create “beacons of hope”.

The Optima and Epoch Trusts, under the guidance of Tshikululu Social Investments, on the other hand, have made a strategic decision to invest in good schools that are serving the poor and are producing relatively large numbers of Higher Grade maths graduates. “The strategy is to move quickly to where money can be best utilised. We need to shore up institutions who are delivering to hold the line and then to expand beyond that,” said Margie Keeton of Tshikululu. A finding of this initiative that gives cause for great concern is that many of these high functioning schools are under severe strain and it seems as if for some, the additional financial support has come at a critical time.

The Independent Schools Association of South Africa’s (ISASA) Maths and English Programme places poor students who show academic potential in carefully selected high functioning independent schools. These schools range from high-fee schools to poorer schools. A spin-off of the programme is that low fee schools receive additional funds. In her presentation, Jane Hofmeyr, director of ISASA, pointed out that, while not being able to solve large-scale problems, the programme does address the creeping danger of neglecting poor learners with potential who are stranded in low performing and dysfunctional schools.

However, a number of donors, particularly the large bilateral agencies such as DFID and US AID, continue to support the most poorly performing schools. This approach is practiced in the Khanyisa Programme, funded by DFID, where work is done in all schools in the poorest districts in Limpopo. Khanyisa is working closely with the Limpopo Department of Education at all levels of the system, from the Office of the MEC, and through the provincial head office to the districts and circuits which administer programme schools. While all the other programmes described above maintain some or other relationship with one or more of the 10 Departments of Education at the provincial and national levels, Khanyisa is a systemic initiative which aims to improve the functionality of the provincial system itself.



Kate Miszewski, Old Mutual Foundation chats to Margie Keeton, Tshikululu Social Investments

2. Locating programmes in the system/ effecting systemic change

This brings us to a second theme discernible in the conference presentations and discussions: the changing relationships between Departments of Education, service providers, and donors. During the years of apartheid in South Africa, funders gave money directly to NGOs who were running programmes to address the shortcomings of the education system. After 1994, attention shifted and many NGOs started working directly with the state, helping it to implement the new policy of Outcomes Based Education. However, the generally poor performance of the education system over the years has made people wonder how, despite so much effort and money being put into school development, there seems to be so little improvement. Funders are increasingly asking where to put their money for maximum results and a general shift can be seen towards putting resources and energy towards effecting systemic change.

Thus, the Khanyisa Programme of the Limpopo Department of Education is designed by the provincial department but has a strong partnership with JET and Cambridge Education who bring technical assistance and project management input. Godwin Khosa from JET explained how Khanyisa draws its lessons from evaluations and research conducted on other large-scale interventions in South Africa and from the start was designed for replication throughout the province. Khanyisa does not only work at the level of school and district development, but also provides assistance to the provincial government in its efforts to strengthen provincial level systems. This includes improving the planning function of the Department, collection and management of information and organisational performance. MEC for Education in Limpopo, Dr Aaron Motsaedi outlined his vision for capacitating district and circuit offices so as to provide better monitoring and support services to schools; as part of this process, the province has appointed 500 subject advisors at the district level in the last year.

Many corporate sector donors, such as the Zenex Foundation, are moving away from proposal-driven programmes towards developing close partnerships with provincial Departments of Education. At the same time districts are providing a dedicated person to implement donor-funded programmes. Thus, from the teachers' perspective, the Zenex programmes are seen as belonging to the respective provincial departments. As

Gail Campbell, CEO of the Zenex Foundation said, “We are looking at what we can imbed in the systems... We want to see how we can build models of success in individual schools that can serve as beacons of hope to the system.”

Margie Keeton from Tshikululu Social Investments echoed this desire to complement government effort:

“Too many interventions have limited impact *inside* the system and have not been taken over by the system. The research also found that there are gaps in the system at so many levels, that the ability of the system to maximise benefits is constrained.”

The Department of Education is also beginning to run its own programmes. Currently one of the largest of these is the Dinaledi Programme which, as part of the state’s maths and science strategy, is giving support to nearly 500 moderately functioning schools with potential to increase the participation and performance of historically disadvantaged learners in mathematics and physical science. Edward Mosuwe of the national Department of Education explained that the 371 schools that have been part of the programme since 2005 have increased their maths Higher Grade passes by 26.5%, and Standard Grade passes by over 13%.

In order to address the appallingly low performance of the majority of primary schools in teaching basic literacy and arithmetic a number of provincial departments have started literacy and numeracy programmes. The longest running of these is the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), which was launched as a 10-year intervention in 2006, to complement the province-wide testing programme which commenced in 2002. In his presentation Brian Schreuder, Deputy Director General in the WCED highlighted some of the achievements of and challenges encountered by these initiatives to date. Early success in literacy has been achieved, with Grade 3 reading scores improving by 12 percentage points (34% on baseline) between 2002 and 2006, while Grade 6 reading performance registered a 7 percentage point (20%) increase between 2003 and 2005. However, mathematics is clearly a harder nut to crack, with Grade 3 numeracy scores declining by 6 percentage points over this period, while Grade 6 performance in maths increased by 2 percentage points. Brian emphasised that systemic change is slow, and requires sustained effort if success is to be achieved: “The biggest challenge is to sustain what we are doing and not to be distracted by a new government or another priority.”

Dr Mona Mourshed, co-author with Sir Michael Barber, of the McKinsey International report on the ten best performing school systems internationally, pointed out during the discussion following her presentation that to bring about systemic change, the administration has to have a razor sharp focus on what it wants to achieve:

“Political leadership has to be willing to say I’m going to the mat on this issue. Political reform is going to involve battles and there will be some form of resistance and you have to be aware of that. The worst thing in the world is to back track because of political pressure.”

“But how can this be taken to scale?” was a question repeatedly asked of programmes at the conference. Jeremy Ractliffe responded by warning: “We must not lose sight of the wonderful embryonic interventions that can lead to scale. Don’t move to scale too quickly. Let the embryonic pilot work itself through.”

Others responded with an appeal to a persevering focus. Nick Taylor ended his paper by stating, “Change is a 30-year project, and you have to solve the situation district by district and school by school”. Graeme Bloch of the Development Bank of Southern Africa noted that the models that were being proposed at the conference differed from the old top-down models, in that each is tailored for specific conditions:

“This work happens very systematically, professionally, very hands on. It’s a long haul. And somehow at that community or cluster level you can draw on a range of resources, which may be government or non-government – and through that we generate models that we publicise. And if we all do that in our own back yard there might be systemic change.”

Dr Mona Mourshed goes so far as to call this process a mystery. “The mystery of education is not how to have a good school. We know what it takes to have a great school – the mystery is how you replicate this across the country every day.”



Mona Mourshed presents the McKinsey Report

3. Money alone is not enough

One of the findings of the McKinsey global initiative report shared by Mona is that putting more money into a school system does not necessarily improve it. It seems that at a certain level it is not so much about how much you spend but how resources are used to leverage quality. This point was also raised by Nick Taylor when he showed that, while South Africa is the fourth most affluent country of the 14 southern and eastern Africa countries which participated in the SACMEQ Grade 6 testing programme, SA was ranked ninth in both reading and maths, scoring well behind a

number of countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique, whose GNPs are around one-tenth that of the Republic.



Nick Taylor CEO of JET and Brian Schreuder of the WCED

4. Building teacher capacity

It is becoming increasingly clear that teachers' poor grasp of the subjects they are teaching is a major problem in South African schools. Nick Taylor illustrated the point by showing the results of tests carried out to ascertain the level at which to pitch in-service training for the Integrated Education Programme. For example, a group of 63 Foundation Phase maths teachers were tested on a set of items designed for Grade 4 learners: before the onset of training, the mean score achieved by these teachers was 25%, and after the four year intervention programme the mean had improved to 40%.

While teachers obviously need training to address this situation, Nick Taylor suggested that teachers could do much to improve their own subject knowledge by using textbooks regularly, both to learn more about the subjects they are teaching and to prepare their lessons on a daily basis. Instead, one of the unfortunate effects of the way in which OBE has been interpreted in South Africa is that teachers very rarely use textbooks, either to prepare lessons, or as a teaching tool during their classes.

The first finding of the McKinsey report is that teacher quality is the most important lever for improving student outcomes. Mona Mourshed explained: "This is because what happens in education is what happens between teachers and their students." To improve teacher quality highly performing schooling systems around the world have found ways to raise the status of the teaching profession – be it through paying good salaries or through attracting top people into the profession. The recruitment and training of teachers is key to the quality of teaching and learning. Top performing systems are also meticulous about teacher *pre-service*. Candidates are carefully screened before being accepted into pre-service **and** on entry into the school. While they are at university they are also continuously monitored for minimum qualifications, skills, attitude, aptitude and personality.

In terms of *in-service* training, Mona Mourshed pointed out that training in a very targeted fashion can have positive impact. "Training teachers requires a relentless focus to make it happen." In studying highly effective systems three tactics of professional development, used inside the classroom, were identified. These are:

- Peer observation – teachers can see what great teaching looks like so that they can emulate it.
- Lesson studies – teachers develop model lessons together and reflect on good practice.
- Demonstration lessons – a teacher does a mock class with other teachers participating and observing.

When asked how one could turn dysfunctional systems around, Mona responded that it is important to start controlling who is coming into the system. While in poorly performing systems, teachers are taken from the bottom percentage of students, in successful systems those who enter the teaching profession come from the top quartile of their class.

To deal with teachers already in the system, a differentiated approach is advocated. Firstly, star teachers are identified in schools and across the system so that they can become role models and mentors. The next identified group is those who have high motivation but lack skill. These are then given skills and paired up with role models. The third group are those who lack motivation to change, possibly because they are close to retirement. This group could be persuaded to try to change in small increments. The final group are those who do not have skills and lack motivation. Dr Mourshed advocates that this group be given an incentive scheme for attending specific kinds of training. This group of teachers are given a choice, if they choose not to move they will not be given access to new opportunities. “But there is also a policy issue on how long this situation can be allowed to last because of the harm to children perpetrated by poor teaching.” However, the research has shown that once there is a critical mass of teachers who choose to improve their teaching it can create an important demonstration effect.

In localising the issue, Prof George Euverard, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University pointed out that, despite more teachers than ever acquiring extra qualifications in SA, there has never been such poor teaching. The concern is that Universities and the Department of Education are not working together closely enough to effect change. In South Africa, teacher in-service training is moving away from short afternoon workshops. To address the issue of poor teacher knowledge, it is necessary to have extended and intensive residential training. Thus Dinaledi exposes teachers to 100 hours of training which focuses on content knowledge of maths and science. Similarly, in the WCED the Cape Teaching Institute has been established so that teachers can be taken out of school for extended periods to undergo intensive retraining.



Jeremy Ractliffe, Chairman of JET chats to literacy expert Marlene Rousseau while Graeme Bloch of the DBSA looks on

5. Rethinking pedagogy

Some of the most passionate discussions, both in formal session and in breaks between sessions were around the failure of OBE. While in the past most school development programmes focused on changing teaching methodologies to make them more 'learner based and learner paced', there is growing concern that this approach has ignored learner performance. There is thus a shift towards judging the effectiveness of programmes through their ability to change learner performance. This goes hand in hand with a stronger focus on research and evaluation. Eric Schollar sums up the thinking:

“In SA, some evaluation studies show that in the last 15 years, while there are significant changes in teacher and learner behaviour,...there is no equally consistent impact on learner performance.”

Many of the papers and comments, either subtly or directly, linked the poor performance of the system to the implementation of OBE in South Africa. There was a sense that it was time to question OBE in a public forum. Eric Schollar continues:

“One of the most important aspects of this conference is that it is the first time that we are hearing some of the theologies questioned... We have to start questioning the theory / theologies on which the system is based. We have to ask whether, for example, OBE and constructivism are an appropriate basis from which to teach young people mathematics. These are theories and these should not be forbidden questions.”

The main problem identified with the implementation of OBE seems to be that it has resulted in teachers focusing on processes to the detriment of substance. Carol Bertram of the University of KwaZulu Natal commented:

“As a result of Curriculum 2005 many teachers are still teaching in unstructured and unboundaried ways. While we are trying to put structure and coherence and progression back we need to ask the question whether OBE is the most appropriate curriculum framework? It divides the curriculum into atomistic assessment standards and can make assessment very technical. Many schools are spending more time on assessment rather than teaching.”

As teachers develop their own work programmes it increasingly becomes a matter of luck whether a child learns something or not; the idea of a national and provincial syllabus has almost been abolished. As a result of this, the quality of outcomes has varied wildly from school to school as the completeness and complexity of content to which learners are exposed come to depend on individual teachers.

This unstructured approach has also resulted in the problem of low curriculum coverage in the schools – a major problem that was mentioned repeatedly by speakers. Another problem that was mentioned a few times was that learners are being promoted from one grade to another often without having mastered the content of the previous grade. The teacher thus sits with a classroom full of children whose knowledge base varies widely. “Every classroom is becoming a multigrade classroom!” was one frustrated call.

In reaction to the issue of poor curriculum coverage and the quality of teaching being left to chance, many programmes, including Khanyisa in Limpopo and the Western Cape Education Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, are re-introducing common assessments and common work plans. Programmes are being designed to bring curriculum coherence and progression back into the classroom.

Another problem observed by Eric Schollar, is that some of the learning practices under OBE have resulted in the virtual disappearance of memorisation, consistent drill and regular extensive practice of learned content. In response, the Primary Mathematics Research Programme designed primary school maths materials which rely on these ‘old fashioned’ methodologies. The materials were tested using a randomised experimental design and very encouraging results were obtained: after only fourteen weeks of using the materials in 20 project schools in Limpopo, rapid and very significant improvements in learner performance were achieved, compared with a control group.

Another programme that has shown dramatically improved literacy scores at Grade 3 level in 7 primary schools is the Bitou 10 programme located in Plettenberg Bay. In her presentation Marlene Rousseau attributed these results to the use of the ‘emergent literacy’ approach, where children are encouraged to write stories, commencing in Grade 1.



Limpopo MEC for Education Aaron Motsoaledi and Prof Mary Metcalfe of the Wits School of Education

6. Developing educational leadership

One of the other lessons that can be learnt from highly functioning systems is the importance of good leadership in schools. Thus Mona Mourshed stated, “It is impossible to have a great school without a great principal who walks the passages.” The McKinsey Report notes that, in top performing systems, principals are provided with management and leadership courses which vary in length from 6 months to a year. In some countries teams of candidates spend one day a week in a school where they have to find innovative approaches to tough problems. Another approach is for candidates to be placed for two weeks in a major corporation to shadow top private-sector executives.

Principals are also not necessarily selected from the ranks of experienced teachers. Rather they have to show themselves to be top performing teachers who have a desire and aptitude to be leaders.

Dr Motsoaledi felt that of the four lessons presented by Mona Mourshed, good leadership is possibly the quality that most affected the effectiveness of a school. He stated that improving school functionality is the biggest challenge to the education system overall. “We must get schools to be open for forty weeks per year and teachers must teach and learners must learn enough, read enough and write enough.” The feeling was that many of the key factors in school dysfunctionality – poor time management, absenteeism, lack of curriculum coverage, teacher attitudes – can be addressed through developing school leadership.

Brian Schreuder pointed out that often the problem of poor leadership extends to the circuit and district offices. All three provincial programmes represented at the conference work extensively to train and resource districts. The Western Cape Education Department’s Literacy and Numeracy Strategy has used provincial primary school advisers to drive the training. The Khanyisa programme responded by focusing on developing district offices and establishing Multi-Functional Teams which consist of officials from curriculum advisory services, governance and labour relations. The Zenex Systemic Programme also works with circuits and districts.

One obstacle to districts providing the necessary monitoring and support to school development programmes has been the fact that in many areas unions are still opposing classroom visits by officials. In Limpopo this is being dealt with by involving unions right from the start in developing the school monitoring and support strategy.



Eric Schollar presents the findings of his Primary Mathematics Research Project

7. The need to base school improvement on research

For many years funders and organisations such as the Zenex Foundation and JET have been using research and evaluations as reflective tools to refine and interrogate models for school improvement. There is a growing trend towards making research an integral part of programmes. This is to prevent them from suffering from what Margie Keeton calls “being well meaning but ineffectual”. Newer programmes such as Khanyisa, which have had the benefit of hindsight, are therefore making research an integral part of their work. Similarly, the Primary Mathematics Research Programme developed materials for trial in the province directly from the findings of research in classrooms.

Dr Mourshed emphasised the need for detailed data in turning dysfunctional systems around – data about the state of functionality of schools and knowledge around the quality of principals and teachers.

Professor Brahm Fleisch put the issue succinctly:

“We need to build our school improvement interventions on the back of robust empirical research. We need to have tangible evidence that particular interventions lead to substantive outcomes. The real issue is: is there substantive evidence and can it be replicated in other contexts and what does it take to go to scale? We need to know how the approach is sustained after the intervention is completed. How is it sustained? We need to invest now in the long term on high quality empirical research. Randomised control trials need

to be understood as a long term and fundamental process of improving our system.”

Nomsa Masuku in her paper on effective business investment in schooling also emphasised the need for donors to have data that has been analysed and synthesised.



Jeremy Ractliffe with Nomsa Masuku of Standard Bank

8. How donors and government can work more closely together

The last session of the conference focused on the relationship between donors and the national and provincial Departments of Education. This session also provided some actionable outcomes to the conference. On the previous day Hemant Waghmarae had pointed out that since 1994 corporate funding has shifted. While in the past corporates gave when and where they wanted, they are now aligning themselves more to the Department of Education’s objectives.

Kate Miszewski from Old Mutual pointed out that donors were still working in a vacuum of information.

“We need to map the social spend as to where it’s going in South Africa. Once we understand what the spend is doing we can collaborate. If we understood what the map looked like we would be able to do some really fine interventions in a collective manner that would truly plug the gaps and really make a big difference to South Africa.”

Nomsa Masuku in her paper on businesses investing in school development spoke about the symbiotic relationship between business and society. She emphasised that to build *effective partnerships* between the state and business, both need to have a firm understanding of who they are, what they need and what it takes to make them function optimally. This reinforced the earlier statement by Gail Campbell that funders no longer see themselves as grant makers but that they have become developmental agencies in partnership with government.

Dr Motsoaledi bewailed the fact that often donor agencies are spreading funding too thinly and sometimes donations do not fit into the overall plan of the province while still creating demands on the human resources of the Department. He would welcome it if donors came directly to him to see how they could fit in with a provincial plan.

The Deputy Minister of Education, The Hon Enver Surty echoed this sentiment and stated that projects which have been conceptualised with direct provincial departmental participation have a greater chance of leading to success.

Nomsa Masuku however, emphasised that this partnership can only work if the state offers a strong leadership role in the partnership and takes responsibility for co-ordinating and channelling efforts in a systematic fashion. This would allow business and NGOs to be clear when they are rallying around a goal or when using their own initiatives. She gave as an example the fact that the Trialogue donor mapping initiative was driven by an NGO and not by the state. She also pointed out that companies often had their own agendas, using social investments as a public relations tool. “CSI has become a competitive space and it is leadership from Government that can help to get us out of this.”

Deputy Minister Surty agreed that the state should have a facilitating and co-ordinating role and made the following suggestions:

- In order to create an alliance involving the school, government and the donor community, the national and provincial Departments of Education could establish a school development facilitating committee to make sure that the public have access to dedicated personnel whose responsibility it is to facilitate and co-ordinate private donors.
- Data around where schools are located, who is supporting which schools and the needs of specific schools can be made available by the department. This can be used by donors to make investment choices. This information could be placed on the Departmental website.

He then asked whether donors would be prepared to give some kind of funding for a co-ordinating mechanism.

Annalize Fourie of Irish Aid, South Africa cautioned against creating more structures, and advised that those already in place should rather be used optimally. The National Treasury has the overall responsibility for co-ordinating official development assistance. She also felt that it was important not to re-invent the wheel but to look at the hard-learned lessons of international donors which have been articulated in the Paris Declaration¹.

Cornelius Hacking of the Royal Netherlands Embassy pointed out that international donors have established an education and training partner forum and would welcome international and South African NGOs, universities and researchers to participate. While they had received some input from the National Department of Education, they too would welcome a stronger leadership role from the state. They would also welcome it if they could be given guidance around where the state would like input.

¹ “The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials adhered and committed their countries and organisations to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Development Co-operation Directorate*. http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html



Dr Motsoaledi makes a point while Deputy Minister Surty and Penny Vinjevold of the Department of Education listen intently

CONCLUSION

While the first day was spent mainly laying out the problems that faced school development, the second day focused on specific solutions. There Mona Mourshed's paper provided a stimulating impetus from an international perspective to look afresh at our problems and see if any of the lessons can provide some practical solutions.

During the last session of the conference time was given to thinking about what actionable steps could be taken to provide greater co-ordination between the Department of Education, private sector supporters, independent educators and researchers. Some of these were:

- The establishment within the Department of Education of a school development facilitating committee.
- Providing data on school development needs through the Department of Education website.
- Participants were encouraged to participate in an education and training partner forum set up by foreign donors and currently being chaired by the Royal Netherlands Embassy.
- Donors were also encouraged to give details of their work to the Trialogue social spend mapping programme.

While this report has tried to cover some of the most important themes of the conference, it can never do justice to the richness of the debate between such strong players in education. What was perhaps striking was the sense that without honesty and robust debate around issues there can be no chance of improving the dismal landscape of South African education. Dr Masuku ended her paper with the plea that, "Robust debate should not paralyse action, instead it should help sharpen our thinking and focus".

The last word aptly belongs to Lerato Motaung, from Murray & Roberts whose frustration with the lack of co-ordination and shared goals was the impetus for this conference:

“The purpose of this conference is for each one of us to see where we can plug in to effect change. However, bigger than this is the issue of identity - if we as a country don’t really look at who we are and where we want to see ourselves in the future and plan towards that, everything that we are doing will mean nothing. We need to have the collective spirit of a nation that we had in the days of Mandela.”



Conference organisers Nevina Smith of JET and Lerato Motaung from Murray & Roberts congratulate Deputy Minister Surty on his presentation

Glossary

CSI	Corporate social investment
DFID	Department of International Development
GNP	Gross National Product
HG	Higher grade
MEC	Member of Executive committee
NGOs	Non governmental organisations
OBE	Outcomes based education
SACMEQ	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SG	Standard grade
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

Conference Programme

Thursday 28 February 2008

08h00 – 08h45:	Registration
08h45 – 09h00:	Welcome (Caswell Macama – Murray & Roberts)

Session 1: Chair: Godwin Khoza (JET Education Services)

09h00 – 9h45:	Differentiating our effort: current interventions in School Development in SA (Nick Taylor, JET Education Services)
9h45 – 10h30:	Excellence serving the poor: the Dinaledi intervention (Edward Mosuwe – Department of Education)
10h30 – 11h00:	Refreshment Break

Session 2: Chair: Carla Pereira (JET Education Services)

11h00 – 11h45:	The Zenex Systemic Programme (Gail Campbell, Zenex Foundation)
11h45 – 12h30:	What about the poor? Part 1: getting the talented poor to good schools (Jane Hofmeyr, Independent Schools' Association of South Africa)
12h30 – 13h30:	Lunch

Session 3: Chair: Hemant Waghmarae (Education consultant)

13h30 – 14h15:	Working at the top end: maximising business investment in schooling (Margie Keeton, Tshikululu Social Investments)
14h15 – 15h15:	What about the poor? Part 2: the Khanyisa programme. (Aaron Motsoaledi, MEC Education, Limpopo and Godwin Khosa, JET Education Services)
15h15 - 15h45:	Refreshment Break

Session 4: Chair: Mary Metcalfe, Wits School of Education

15h45 – 17h00: Discussion on models of school development

17h00 – 19h00: Cocktail party hosted by Murray & Roberts

Friday 29 February 2008

Session 5: Chair: Gcina Hlope (JET Education Services)

08h30 – 09h45: Teacher, teachers, teachers – the key to successful school systems (Mona Mourshed, McKinsey International)

09h45 – 10h30: How we can achieve significant impact on the teaching of mathematics in SA. (Eric Schollar, Eric Schollar & Associates)

10h30 – 11h15: How we can achieve significant impact on the teaching of reading in SA. (Marlene Rousseau, Bitou 10 Project)

11h15 – 11h45: Refreshment Break

Session 6: Chair: Jeremy Ractliffe, (Chair JET Education Services)

11h45 – 12h30: Business investment in schooling – coordination or cacophony? (Nomsa Mosuku, Standard Bank)

12h30 – 13h00: Address by the Hon Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Education

13h00 – 13h30: Closing discussion: How can government and donors work more closely together?

13h30 Closure and Lunch