

## **NASCEE Regional Chapter - Johannesburg**

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### **“Exploring collaboration with Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance”**

NASCEE’s role in facilitating conversations on the benefits, processes and practicalities of collaboration is well-known in the education sector. The recent NASCEE Gauteng Regional Chapter event held at the Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) highlighted MGSLG’s strategic partnership with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), and its work in capacity building with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and other stakeholders to improve teaching and learning.

Mr Sibusiso Mahlangu (MGSLG CEO) set the tone by stressing the need for collaboration in areas such as improved teaching, and with a range of actors,

including government agencies, private sector partners, NGOs, unions, officials, educators and learners. A particular need is to strengthen district capacity through partnerships. Examples of collaborative initiatives with MGSLG and others were then presented.

## **Summary of inputs**

Giles Gillet (NASCEE CEO) reflected on the role of NGOs as innovators in education, describing how they pilot ideas that the government can later scale. NASCEE functions through its members as the R&D department of DBE that helps coordinate ideas and innovations, helps members avoid duplication and helps them speak to government with a coherent voice. Collaboration at the district level is especially important, as practical priorities can be addressed, and programme impact will be supported and sustained. He gave an update on NASCEE's Education NGO Dashboard which maps the activities and geographical reach of NGOs. The tool is invaluable in aligning efforts, promoting collaboration, informing NGOs of government priorities and informing government (and others such as funders and researchers) of the types of support that NGOs offer. For further information on NASCEE's mapping survey and to add your organisation to the database, please follow this [link](#).

Dr Lindiwe Ginya Branch Head of MGSLG Vrededorp Campus, shared the institution's mission, values and achievements over the past 20 years. She highlighted its focus on school upliftment in partnership with GDE, through programmes such as ECD practitioner training, leadership development, school safety, and psychosocial support. She underscored the critical role of districts in supporting schools and identified areas where NGOs and civil society could partner with MGSLG for greater impact, including training, research, and community engagement. Dr Ginya emphasized that partnerships must be contextualized and needs-driven to address specific challenges effectively.

Dr Godwin Khosa (NECT CEO) described the genesis and role of the NECT. An important aim was to bring different players in education together; for example, NGOs have deep knowledge of classroom issues but need to take a



more systemic view, while DBE can institutionalise and scale system improvements. NECT has been centrally concerned with working with all tiers of responsibility, from national to local government to school levels. He stressed the need to strengthen the system for those primarily responsible for effective implementation of policy in schools: districts are more than basic administrative hubs and are crucial to improving instructional practice. District capacity is variable, with the 75 districts in the country facing different challenges. One of the critical barriers is that national policies and programme directives lose momentum by the time they reach schools, resulting in 'policy incongruence' and lack of implementation; effective policy mediation is needed if these are to achieve intended impacts. The Integrated District Improvement Plan (IDIP) was developed by NECT and DBE to build district capacity by enhancing systems, processes and cultures that facilitate teaching and learning outcomes at school level, help districts respond to context and needs, and gather data which will inform operational plans and solutions specific to individual districts.

Dr Khosa ended with presenting a framework for a multi-year integrated plan for education programming, which identifies change levers and priorities (rather than list focus areas) and links how these work together: for example, ECD is a focus area, but what are the priorities and change levers that need to be actioned for improvement in this area? Such a plan also needs to be sufficiently funded, use and build state capacity, have developmental monitoring and evaluation measures in place, plan for classroom resources and speak to policy.

Ms. Roshni Parbhoo-Seetha of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) was able to provide a tangible example of how NPOs can effectively partner with the Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance to address critical needs in education and in the schooling environment. She described how they collaborated with MGSLG in providing psychosocial support to schools, and highlighted SADAG's involvement in mental health education, suicide prevention, and counselling services for learners and educators. Regular updates, workshops, and participation in national initiatives





further strengthen their partnership with MGSLG and with the GDE. SADAG promotes MGSLG as a partner in national initiatives, such as the Teen Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Schools being developed with the DBE.

**Participant discussion** focused on the ‘how’ of collaboration and the practical steps that enable these, with the following points emerging:

- Many organisations work in silos but need to tap into each other’s expertise.
- Collaboration is difficult and time consuming and requires investing in relationships. Networking at events such as these is helpful in building relationships.
- SADAG is open to being approached in relation to collaborating with other NGOs.
- MGSLG has clearly identifiable focus areas, and trains for challenges identified within these. They go and see the work of those addressing similar needs or problems rather than sending out general tenders, as partnerships must be needs-driven.
- NECT works with priorities for the system and focuses on building relationships so that when the system requires certain interventions, they know who to approach.

In response to these comments, the role of NASCEE as a facilitator of relationships, dialogue and information-sharing was underlined. NASCEE helps education players find each other and understand what work is happening in order to collaborate. NGOs need to understand the methods of government, government agencies, and private enterprises, and challenge them with co-funding opportunities.

