

Leadership Exchange Programme Visit Report

1. Organisations

1a. Overseas participant

Participant Name and Title (Ms., Dr., etc)	Mr Sello TG 'Mabathoana
Participant Position	College Principal
Participant Gender	Male
Institution Name	Taletso Technical and Vocational Education and Training College (TVET)
Institution Address	Kgora Building, 2766 Dr. Albert Luthuli Drive Private Bag X128 Mmabatho, North West province 2735 South Africa
Institution Telephone	+27 18 384 2346
Website	http://taletso.edu.za/
Participant Direct Telephone	+27 83 254 3214
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1b. UK participant

Participant Name and Title (Ms., Dr., etc)	Mrs Dipanwita Ganguli
Participant Position	Assistant Principal – Finance and Business Support Services
Participant Gender	Female
Institution Name	Westminster Adult Education Service
Institution Address	219 Lisson Grove, London NW8 8LW
Institution Telephone	020 7641 8146
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Participant Direct Telephone	020 7641 1825
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2. Overview

Please provide an overview of the activities which took place during your involvement in the Leadership Exchange Programme. (500 words)

The weeklong stay at Mafikeng was hectic with lots of activities and information gathering. Due to the national conference, the Principal, Mr 'Mabathoana (Sello) was not able to give much time to me in the early part of the week, however on the positive side, I was able to work with a cross section of people in his organisation and

gain a wider understanding of the functions and the roles within the college. It also allowed me to listen first hand to some of the challenges faced by colleagues and students in South Africa.

During the stay, I visited all three of their campuses – Mafikeng, Lehurusthe and Lichtenburg. I met lecturers, students, student support staff, campus managers and a range of administrative staff. I was fortunate to spend time interviewing staff and gathering their views of the TVET sector.

I also gave a presentation of the FE sector in the UK, which led to some interesting discussions about the similarities and differences between the two countries.

At the Lichtenburg campus, I was fortunate enough to visit the farm, owned by the college where they offer 'Primary agriculture', and animal production courses. The theory is delivered at the campus and the practical run at the farm. This provision is very different to what my college offer and I was very impressed with the detailed knowledge and the systems they had in place at the farm to track information without any IT infrastructure – something we cannot even think of here.

At the Lehurushte campus, I met lecturers and students who had come in especially to meet me, as it was 'Recess' at the South African colleges.

It was a very humbling experience meeting the lecturers, who despite the many challenges facing them, i.e. lack of resources, frequent student absence due to financial restrictions, lack of continuing professional development etc, are so dedicated and committed to their role. They work over and above their job description. At the Mafikeng campus, it was upsetting to see the scale of resources, which are not lying redundant due to lack of funding and courses.

I spent a lot of time with their Head of Finance understanding the funding methodology and the way the budget is set. I also got an overview of the Ministerial direction concerning budget setting and management of the bursary payments.

The frequency and results of student strikes was a real revelation.

During my time at Taletso, all the colleagues were very welcoming, open and excellent hosts.

I had meetings with Sello where we discussed the leadership challenges faced by us in our roles within our colleges.

Apart from the work activities, Taletso college also organised for me to visit an Mmbana centre – a centre for creative arts and crafts that nurtures the creative and sporting talents of young people and develops them to a very high standard.

I also visited a Game Reserve, which was a fantastic team building activity with Sello and his senior leadership team.

3. Learning

Please summarise your learning from the Leadership Exchange Programme. What did you gain from your participation? (500 words)

I went to South Africa with an open mind, knowing that there will be aspects of the TVET sector that I could learn from. Since applying for the LEP, my role will be changing, so on a personal note, I was very keen to work with Sello to understand some of the challenges that a Principal in a college faces.

Starting from the orientation meeting, where an official from DHET gave us an overview of the further education landscape in South Africa, to the individual conversations that I have had with lecturers, managers and learners have all been very informative and thought provoking.

Although there are many similarities, the differences are greater. The TVET sector caters from Level 2 to Level 6 (N2-N6), whereas at my college we work with Pre-entry levels to Level 4. Pre-entry level in SA is delivered by Community colleges, which only started last year and there are only 6 colleges across the country.

Teachers in the TVET sector are professionals in their field, but not teacher trained. This led me to questioning whether in my college, there is an over emphasis on teacher training qualifications for all teachers or whether more specialist provision required an industry expert instead of a trained teacher.

The lecturers face many challenges, they work with minimal supervision, and there is no observation or opportunities for continuing professional development. Despite all that the outcome for learners in the TVET colleges are very high. My college on the other hand have so many quality assurances processes and a rigorous observation schedule, which has not led to increased achievement for our learners. This is an area where I will review our policies and procedures and consider whether it is too onerous in my college.

I learnt about the funding methodology in the TVET sector in SA. In the UK, I sit on a national board chaired by the Education and Skills Funding Agency that looks at changes in funding methodology, so getting a detailed explanation of the TVET sector was very informative. It made me appreciate how the methodology allows us the flexibility to deliver our provision to an optimum level.

The biggest learning for me was to appreciate the resources and the malleable processes that we have in the FE sector here. I am also very motivated with the positive attitude that the lectures have in SA despite the hardships. I will encourage my new college (where I start as a Principal in January) to embrace the skills exchange programmes sponsored by the British Council.

Finally, I would like to consider our corporate social responsibility and subsidise the learning for some students who are unable to pay the fees like the unfunded learners in SA, thereby giving something back to the Community where we work.

4. Action Plan

Your application form will have stated a challenge or issue related to leadership and management faced by your institution. Unless otherwise agreed with British Council, the expectation is that your international exchange visit will have focused on this issue and that, following the learning, discussions and reflection, which will have taken place, you will now be in a position to create an informed plan to tackle this problem with support from your partner. Please use the template below to articulate this plan.

4a. Problem statement:

The problems that I had identified was the discord between the funding priority and the demand for courses and the environment where we are continuously asked to do 'more for less'. I also wanted to find out more about the levy system in place in South Africa as UK have only just introduced the levy for large employers for the delivery of apprenticeships. My leadership challenge was also to make my Service self – sustainable so that the reliance on Government funding can be reduced.

4b. Overall objective:

Fact finding about the TVET sector in South Africa, especially the role or the SETA in delivering the skills required for the completion of a qualification.
Taletso college is a merger of three colleges – information about how the merger happened and who agrees the curriculum delivery at each of the campuses
Marketing of the courses to attract learners

4c. What steps will you take to solve your problem and meet your overall objective?

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Start Date	Deadline	Resources Required	Challenges and Risks	Result Indicator
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will take action to complete this step?</i>	<i>When will you start completing this step?</i>	<i>By when should this step be completed?</i>	<i>What will you need to complete this step?</i>	<i>Is there anything which might prevent from you achieving this step? How will you overcome challenges and mitigate risk?</i>	<i>How will you measure if this step has been successfully completed?</i>
Review the observation of teaching and learning policy within the Service	DG	I will review the process when I start in my new role	Once reviewed, I will have to share it with the Board of Governors to get it ratified	Consultation with Unions and other colleagues	It may be perceived that a reduction in quality assurance processes may lead to a decline in quality	Increase in the achievement of learners through less onerous scrutiny of the teaching staff
Evaluate whether all lecturers need to be teacher trained, especially with specialist industry knowledge e.g. an accountant teaching accountancy	The senior management team	Discussion at WAES and then discuss at my new college	Review so that any changes can be implemented at the start of the new academic year 2018-19	Review and compare against other college processes and procedures. Run a pilot in a specialist area to see if leads to improvement in standards	May create a disparity between payment structure for tutors May be seen as discriminatory by the Union I will have to listen to the comments from the consultation.	Increased student satisfaction and up to date knowledge of curriculum
Increase class sizes	The curriculum team	Start of next term in	This should be an on-going policy	Consultation with tutors, course	Tutors performance declining as a result	Evaluate the class sizes and the

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		January	decision as currently the class sizes are restricted to 15-20, whereas in SA class sizes can range from 30-45	leaders and curriculum leads. More additional support in the classroom to assist tutors with larger classes	of larger classes Classroom management deteriorating.	feedback from tutors and learners at the end of each course.
Support Sello in creating an open and effectively performing senior management team	DG and SM	After Sello's visit to the UK	This will be an evolving process and hopefully will continue long after the LEP has finished	Shadowing and observing team dynamics when visiting	I think this will be a good partnership as often a Principal's role can be quite isolated, so having a neutral peer to observe will be beneficial	Better relationship with senior colleagues and within the college.
Share policies and procedures with the extended management team at Taletso	DG to liaise with Senior Managers at Taletso	As soon as the information is requested – this came about after the presentation at	As and when required	Send the information that is requested as and when	No	Email trails and changes in the processes at Taletso

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		Taletso where colleagues appreciated an alternative way of doing things				
Research and apply for skills exchange for other departments within my organisation	DG and other senior colleagues	After briefing the Governors once I am established in my new role as Principal of Sutton College	Partnerships will be formed as soon as an opportunity presents itself	Horizon scanning to look out for opportunities Promote the benefits of exchanges to the wider college	Lack of funding or Governors approval. Presenting the benefits for the individual and the college should hopefully mitigate any reluctance	Number of engagements in the next three years.
Work with external partners to offer a holistic service to the learners	Student support team within the organisation	As soon as possible	Should be an on-going offer to our learners	Contact the health Service to offer health screening to our learners at regular intervals like the HIV screening in SA	Lack of funding Negotiate with external partners and help with to achieve their targets	Better service for the learners and early intervention in case of serious health issues

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				colleges		

4d. What support do you hope to receive from your Leadership Exchange Partner while implementing this Action Plan?

I am looking forward to welcoming Sello to UK. Sello will have the advantage of visiting Westminster (my current college) and Sutton College where I will be based when he visits in February. He will be able to see the difference in two colleges – one that is inner London and the other one in the suburbs. A lot of the action plan is based on reviewing our current process and introspection, but hopefully the partnership will continue. Personally I would be looking for support from Sello as a Principal of a college as from January that is a role that I will be taking over for the first time.

4d. Additional notes:

Thank you British Council for the amazing opportunity. It has been a great experience and has benefitted me hugely in my continuing

professional development as a senior leader of a further education college.

Please note, British Council will follow up with your institution in the future to find out about progress made on this action plan.

5. Feedback
5a. Please describe any key similarities and differences between your institution and your partner's. (250 words)

Although on paper Taletso and Westminster Adult Education Service may appear to have very little in common, with WAES being an inner city local authority run adult education provider, there are many similarities between the two colleges. In the main, it was the ethos and the passion to do the best for our learners that was the emerging similarity. Other key similarities between the two colleges are

- Multiple sites, although the distance between the sites in Westminster are not the same as those at Taletso.
- Primarily Government funded though some fee payers
- Governance structure through a Board of Governors and various committees reporting into the Board.
- Budget year straddles two funding years with very complex budget setting processes that must adhere to funding regulations.
- Diverse curriculum offer and very dedicated teaching staff

Key Differences – At Taletso college,

- Provision is from Level 2 to Level 7, with no lower level provision or community provision.
- Recruitment of learners is in excess of what they are funded for, this is a ministerial directive in SA. In UK, very few colleges will be recruiting above the funding allocation. In fact, within the sector, there is a decrease in participation, hence a clawback of funding from colleges.
- Massive campuses and farm so very asset rich.
- Not all teaching staff are teaching trained

5b. Which elements of the Leadership Exchange Programme did you find most useful? Are there any parts of the programme you would like to see changed? (250 words)

Visiting the different campuses and having an opportunity to speak to the support staff, the lecturers and the students was very useful as I got a flavour of the TVET sector and not just from the Senior leadership team.

The programme is organised well and I have benefitted from it, however, the timing of the exchange could be looked at further. When we visited South Africa, all the colleges were on recess and therefore we did not get an opportunity to observe teaching and learning, which would have enriched our experiences even more.

6. Signatures

Signature of Principal/Senior Leader:



Name: Dipanwita Ganguli

Date: 16/10/17