

## Eastern Cape doing their thing with the Telkom Foundation

### Background

School Net SA conducts professional development workshops as part of an initiative for the Telkom Foundation. Telkom is making meaningful contributions to improving the quality of education in the Eastern Cape Schools. School Net SA is conducting training in the course, *Change Leadership for Technology Integration* with Senior Management Teams in 12 schools in the Queenstown area of the Eastern Cape. *Facing Challenges* is one of the modules covered in September. Effective school leaders are key to large-scale and sustainable education reform.



Leaders have a deeper and more lasting influence on their organizations and provide more comprehensive leadership if their focus extends over maintaining high standards.

Training was conducted by Mr M Rafu on 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015. Sozizwe Primary school was chosen as a training venue as it was central to the schools involved. The trainer reported that 41 participants attended the training. The purpose of the module was outlined and the outcomes of the modules were communicated with the participants. The trainer reported that

at first the participants were reluctant to share

ideas about the challenges they faced at their respective schools and this was part of the activity in Module 4.

After the trainer has explained the importance of the activity, the participants understood why they had to do the activity so that they come up with solutions. They realised that collaboration and sharing were the best approaches to solving problems. They were able to see the difference between technical challenges and adaptive challenges.

The trainer reported that he emphasised the plan of action as a conclusive stage in solving problems.



They did another activity on embracing resistance instead of avoiding it. The teachers did a role play activity to rehearse situations in preparation for a future performance and to improve their abilities within a role. The teachers realised that as a change leader, you can view resistance to change as a problem, as an obstacle, as a negative and something to overcome, crushed or disposed of. However there

is a positive side to resistance to change and, those who would lead successful change efforts, are well served by tending to resistance. Resistance to change is evidence that people care about something and want to protect it. So it can actually improve a change effort's chances of success.

### *Experience*

The trainer realised that participants were familiar with what the module entailed as far as the challenges and what was happening at schools. However, there was also an inability to determine whether those were technical or adaptive challenges. The participants worked through these issues and confirmed with the trainer that a lot of work is required of the School Management Teams.

### *Participants' Attitudes*

Participants were appreciative of the training because the module depicted situations that were happening in the schools and reported that the training gave valuable information. It also guided them in solving real-life situations which encouraged them to participate actively in activities during the training.

Participants also displayed understanding and willingness to put into practice what they had previously seen as failure areas at their schools and collaboration around this was encouraged by the trainer.



### *Conclusion*

It can be seen from this brief report from one of the Eastern Cape trainers in this Telkom Foundation funded project that Senior Management Teams are being well prepared for challenges and circumstances that arise due to the influx of learning technologies in schools. Senior Management Teams become empowered to deal effectively with such challenges and feel equipped to manage technology projects and more importantly to fully support their teachers throughout.