COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

South Africa

Teacher Futures
Progress Report in South Africa

2019 – Year 1

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1. Background and Objectives

The Teacher Futures Programme in South Africa is a collaborative project between SchoolNet South Africa, the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and the Commonwealth of Learning. This project includes development and support for the Faculty of Education staff at the University of Fort Hare, and one hundred teachers from ten schools in the Amatole district of the Eastern Cape which are in close proximity to the University of Fort Hare.

The key focus is on developing digital learning among the UFH faculty staff and project teachers through the concept of communities of practice and to introduce a range of digital media through which participation in communities of learning can be successful and highly beneficial for the participating teachers.

The 15 lecturers and five department of education officials participated in the Commonwealth Certificate for Technology Integration (CCTI) course to provide them with the skills and knowledge of online learning with the long-term objective that they would become online tutors by year 3 of the programme and thus be able to tutor the new short courses being developed by the UFH. A range of programmes were initiated to support teachers and senior management teams at the project schools.

2. Summary of the workshops

Teachers and School Management Teams from the 10 participating schools have attended the following professional development workshops offered by SchoolNet SA facilitators:

- Learning design workshop (SMT, UFH lecturers and Department of Education officials)
- Change Leadership for Digital Learning
- Digital Literacy and Initiating Community of Practice
- Using Digital Resources in the Classroom
- CCTI online course 2 (UFH lectures and Department of Education officials)

The programme kick started in February 2019 with the Learning Design Workshop which included the exploration of possible content for the new short courses as well as establishing the basis for the writing workshops. It is gratifying that most participants felt they had learnt a great deal and that it was going to benefit teaching and learning for both university students and the learners at the 10 schools. Teachers started with the digital literacy course then further learned to integrate digital content, locate subject-specific or phase-specific resources and learned to evaluate content before using it. The course outlined how to use digital resources effectively in the classroom by providing scenarios for finding, evaluating, adapting and managing digital resources in the classroom. During the course, teachers planned lessons, integrated digital resources for their particular subjects and explored how best to assess for deeper learning. The Change Leadership training had a positive impact on the schools and on individuals who persevered and committed to attend the sessions. Their enthusiasm, diligence and cooperation throughout the workshops was evident and highly commended.

As for the CCTI online course, the initial online module proved challenging for participants and had to be paused and a decision was taken to conduct a face-to-face workshop to support participants through the online engagement of the module. This proved successful and participants then made tremendous efforts to complete the second course within a short time frame and deservedly achieved a sense of self-satisfaction and self-confidence, validated by the success of the course. During the workshop, it proved effective to address the challenges voiced

by the participants from the first CCTI course and thereafter to firmly establish a supportive community of practice before transferring to a virtual environment.

3. Progress Summary

Whilst we have successfully implemented all planned activities as per the agreed milestones, there have been some challenges that has been foregrounded in year one. These challenges are highlighted below:

Principals reported that they were unable to release as many as ten teachers simultaneously. One school principal indicated that the majority of his staff were about to retire and were therefore not keen on embarking on digital learning. In some instances, teachers would indicate their intention to attend but end up not attending. Schools whose principals didn't attend the Change Leadership training were the most affected by the lack of commitment and ownership. Schools where this was most pronounced were from Kama High & Jabavu High whilst the attendance at Imingcangathelo High and Thubalethu High were inconsistent. All of these factors contributed to the targeted number of 100 teachers not being achieved.

3.1 Attendance

The statement of work below is indicative of targeted numbers of beneficiaries and activities planned for phase one.

1.0   Statement of Work

1.1.   The Consultant shall work closely with University of Fort Hare to:

1.1.1.   make efforts to involve the national Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Eastern Cape Department of Education(ECDoE) and other key stakeholders in activities of the project as per their individual mandates;

1.1.2.   host a 1-day planning meeting with representatives from UFH to finalise overall project logistics, agree on roles as well as management and reporting of shared responsibilities;

1.1.3.   initiate on-site and online Community of Practice by mobilising 100 teachers from the intervention schools (Annex 1) and teacher educators to take part in the 3-day Workshop on Digital Literacy, while ensuring commitment and completion;

1.1.4.   mobilise at least 37 stakeholders (15 staff from the UFH Faculty of Education, 2 district officials and 20 school representatives) to participate in a 5-day Learning Design Workshop in February 2019; provide 2 facilitators and support the logistics for availability of resources through print, microlearning, Learning Management System (LMS), and other off-line access;

1.1.5.   support at least 15 UFH lecturers and 5 Eastern Cape eLearning officials to undertake 2 Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI) online courses. Course 1, January 28 – March 25; Course 2, April 8 – June 3.

1.1.6.   mobilise at least 30 members of the School Management Teams and 10 UFH staff to undertake the Change Leadership course for Digital Learning in a 7 day face-to-face training scheduled on different days between February 15 until July 19, 2019;

1.1.7.   provide periodic updates to COL on a regular basis over the term of the contract on the status of the activities undertaken, upcoming schedules and any issues or problems encountered regarding the priorities of University of Fort Hare outlined in the the institutional Results Based Management Framework and Implementation Plan in Annexes 2 and 3.

3.2 Year 1 Deliverables

Activity	Learning Design	Digital Literacy	Change Leadership	Using Digital Resources	CCTI Online
Date	03-05 Jul 2019	17-19 Jul 2019	31 Jul – 02 Aug 2019	31 Jul – 02 Aug 2019	08 July – 31 July 2019
Targeted	37	100	20 *(10)	100	15 *(05)
Actual	33	78	12 (02)	62	13 (03)
Reason for variation	All ten schools were well represented. Four lecturers from UFH had other university commitments therefore unable to attend.	Principals unable to release as many as ten teachers simultaneously.	*numbers inside the brackets represent UFH lectures Attendance was inconsistent, schools sent different representatives to different sessions, making it difficult for individual participants to benefit from building skills and knowledge across the full course.	Workshop clashed with the district education programme for matric students. Some of the principals forgot to share the workshop schedule with the teachers.	*05 inside the brackets represent DoE officials DoE official, Mrs Maawu retired at the end of Feb 2019. Mr Mfana Cele was unable to attend due to personal studies Other UFH lectures were unable to attend due to a clash with other programmes they had already committed.

3.3 Success stories

Despite the challenges with attendance, huge gains have been seen and some of these success stories have been captured as anecdotal evidence below.

1. Success stories from Amathole
   https://schoolnetsa.blogspot.com/2019/09/commonwealth-of-learning-teacher.html
2. Community Support for Amathole Teacher Futures School

   https://schoolnetsa.blogspot.com/2019/09/amathole-teacher-futures-school-gets.html

4. Strategies for Improvement in Phase 2

- Visit all ten schools to develop a stronger school based community of teachers collaborating around a common goal. A stakeholders' forum at the start of the second year of this programme will also assist in advocating the programme' s objectives and goals and set expectations of the programme
- Implement School Based Professional Development (SBPD) – classroom coaching for trained teachers

- Include district officials as part of the Project Team. This will assist to avoid clashes when scheduling dates for project activities and the district/school programme thus maximizing workshops attendance and participation
- Improve accountability - All teachers participating in the programme will be asked to sign an accountability form clearly defining the input and outcomes or goals of the programme. In that way teachers will clearly know the benefits of what they are committing to
- Implement micro-learning programmes where teachers attend a larger number of shorter sessions for example, afternoon sessions could be considered to reduce the number of weekend and holiday workshops Conduct follow-up video conferencing sessions for feedback and support after each session and share offline recordings for offline access
- Share teacher professional development activities or performance tracker with the teachers to create healthy competition showcasing progress within the programme
- Provide consistent follow-up with schools and individuals to identify pitfalls and provide support at an early stage
- Consider small incentives to recognise schools and individuals who complete their assignment tasks on time and thereby encourage higher completion rates.
- It is strongly recommended that UFH lecturers experience at least one if not two more courses of the CCTI before they can expect to attain sufficient expertise to become online tutors.