

NASCEE Regional Chapter - Cape Town

27 AUGUST 2024



"Fostering Effective Collaboration Between NGOs and Government at District and National Levels for Amplified Social Impact, with a Focus on Education Enhancement"

NASCEE is driven by a belief in the power of collaboration to magnify positive impact and influence on education in South Africa. For the Cape Town chapter event, NASCEE CEO, Giles Gillett, hosted a panel with Ashley Roman, the Acting Director for Business Strategy and Stakeholder Management for the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and Wendy Viljoen who is the Knowledge Specialist in Education at WESGRO and oversees Edu Invest. Edu Invest is a division of WESGRO in partnership with the WCED to prioritise and facilitate investment into education across the Western Cape. To achieve this, Edu Invest is focused on directing investment, resources and innovation to education that will make the most sustainable impact in the province.



The panel discussion and audience participation centred on the overarching subject of how to establish links between government and NGOs in ways that best foster effective collaboration. The key themes from the panel underscored the need for careful strategic planning, strong knowledge of the education sector with decisions underpinned by research and data, and clear communication among all stakeholders.

“Be clear in your purpose and align to government priorities”

Approaching government with a **strategy that responds to the question “What problem are you solving and how does it align with government priorities?”** is an important first step in establishing contact and partnering with government. If your proposal is founded in research into what you can viably achieve, demonstrates long-term planning, includes consultation with all relevant stakeholders and directly supports government priorities, a successful partnership is more likely.

Streamlining processes

Wendy Viljoen from WESGRO provided an overview of Edu Invest a public-private partnership initiative between WESGRO and the WCED to attract investment and fuel education innovation in the Western Cape. A big part of this initiative is to **reduce bureaucratic barriers and find innovative ways in which to unlock opportunities** for funding and partnerships and to make sure that funding opportunities are not lost because of these barriers. When organisations have defined strategies and plans in place for achieving sustained impact, it is easier to navigate processes. The department can then effectively guide organisations through the processes they need to follow, direct organisations to the relevant stakeholders to engage within government and assist in facilitating public-private partnerships.



Who, where, what?

With the large number of NGOs in operation, government can't respond to each organisation. The department is continuing to engage with NASCEE on a mapping platform for NGOs to outline what schools they are working in. This will enable the sector to know **who is working where, what they are doing,**



and how they can provide necessary support. It will allow the government to communicate more effectively with NGOs and promote public-private partnerships that facilitate this support.

The emphasis that the panellists placed on the need for greater awareness of those working in education confirms the value of the mapping exercise that NASCEE is in the process of undertaking. For further information on NASCEE's mapping survey and to add your organisation to the database, please follow this [link](#).

Facilitating collaboration

WORKING WITH CORPORATES AND ACCESSING CSI FUNDING

From a funding and resource allocation perspective, the panel discussion highlighted that the Trialogue's 2023 [report](#) showed CSI spending in education was currently at 48% of the R11.8 billion total CSI spend, **it is not a question of the availability of resources but rather of how to access these resources.** The discussion gave insight into the fact that knowledge of corporates' CSI strategies and what areas within education they prioritise is beneficial in identifying potential funders. If an organisation can show a potential donor how their work aligns with government and the donor's priorities and how these priorities will be met, possibilities for receiving funding increase.



Ensuring that the full potential of EdTech is realised is particularly important in South Africa when we consider the many challenges the education system is managing. EdTech provides innovation that offers scalable solutions to government, but most require infrastructure and resources to be in place for this to happen. For EdTech to have a real impact it will require well thought through private-public partnerships where the government and the Edtech entrepreneurs work closely to set up workable solutions that can scale. The establishment of an EdTech Association of South Africa, mentioned by Wendy Viljoen, represents a positive move towards bringing EdTech organisations together with government to **reduce the duplication of efforts and ensure more strategic investment.**

When we're informed, we can make better decisions

Ashley provided insight into how the WCED can potentially utilise available data and tools to understand learner migration patterns and how this data is assisting decision-making and supporting the WCED in responding to this complex problem. With Edu Invest focused on strengthening public-private partnerships to respond to this increased enrolment and the need for new schools, such data is essential to ensuring that resources are directed where most needed. This serves as an **example of the importance of data and research in informing strategy and planning** for current and long-term realities.

The willingness that organisations such as Strong Schools Community Collaborative and Breadline demonstrated in sharing frameworks and monitoring and evaluation tools that they have developed highlights the value of collaborative meetings such as this event. **Sharing of tools and resources avoids duplication which then allows for investments to be directed to other priority areas.** However, greater awareness beyond that which is generated by in-person events is required and it is here that NASCEE's mapping is crucial.



Respectful collaboration

Government faces severe fiscal constraints and **there is a major gap between what it can fund and what it needs to fund**. It is now more important than ever that investments from the private sector be directed as effectively and efficiently as possible to maximise the reach and impact. Ultimately, if there is to be meaningful change in the education field, all stakeholders need to be working together respectfully and innovatively towards clearly defined priorities.

Public-private partnerships hold many complexities and challenges, a reality acknowledged by the panelists and audience members. The interactions during the panel discussion and among attendees indicated a drive to create stronger working relationships between NGOs and government. We are hopeful that some of these interactions mark the start of new relationships that facilitate positive change in the education sector.

