

The quest for equity, equality and quality in education: *TEACH South Africa intervention. (Paper not published)*

1. Aims of the presentation

- ✓ Explain the need for TEACH SA project
- ✓ Demonstrate the theoretical understanding behind the TEACH SA model
- ✓ Show coverage and Impact to date
- ✓ Highlight challenges or barriers to the success of the programme
- ✓ Create of a picture that necessitates synergies with other players on the educational turf

2. Project justification

Since attaining independence in 1994, the education landscape in South Africa has seen many changes, notably in government expenditure, access and the curriculum (National planning Commission, 2011). Van der berg (2002), acknowledges the role which the government has played in improving equity in school funding since 1994 but asserts that despite this, the quality of education for the poor has remained poor.

Scholastic articles that points out to the link between poverty and education, are many and abound. One of them is Maarman's study of schooling in informal settlements whereby he exposed the various bonds of poverty that hampers the learners' freedom to pursue academic experiences of their choices (Maarman, 2009). The National Planning Commission (2011) identified poor educational outcomes as one of the 9 stumbling blocks to eliminating poverty and reducing inequality. Similarly, Van der berg (2002), Woolard (2002), argue that for the poor, education increases the chances, not only of securing employment but also of earning better. In his concept of capabilities Sen (1992) takes education as a capability that is crucial to the well-being of a person. Hoffman (2006) elaborates Sen's view by asserting that a person's innovative and creative abilities as well as the ability to think critically are largely determined by education.

It can then be deduced that the relationship between poverty and education is one in which either poverty deters the attainment of quality education or whereby a lack of education deprives one a good living.

3. Responding to the call

It is against this backdrop that the TEACH SA founders rose to the challenge by forming a two-fold vision: (a) to recruit as many competent graduates as possible i.e. individuals who wouldn't ordinarily think of pursuing teaching as a career but with a sound academic stamina and passion to uplift communities and mandate them (b) to improve learner performance in under resourced schools.

4. Operational model

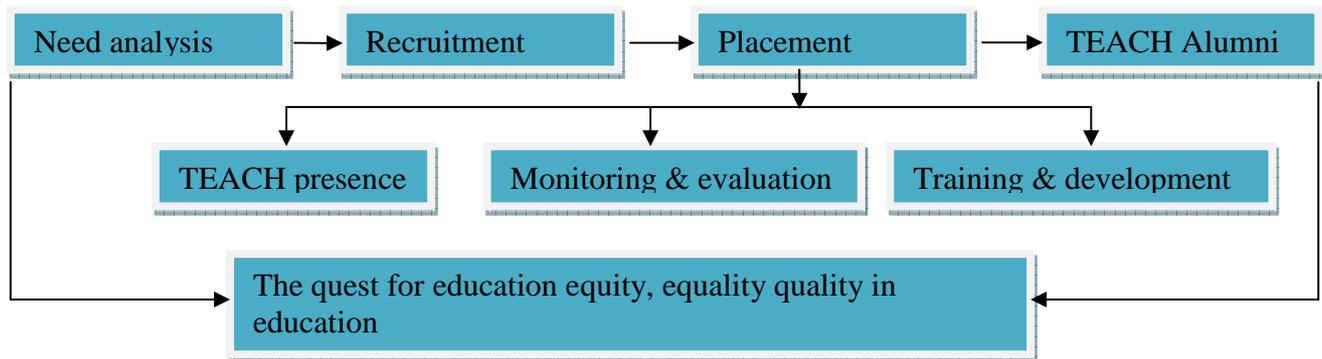


Fig.1 T EACH model

- ✓ **Need analysis:** An audit done to establish the extent to which a given school falls under the underprivileged criterion and to determine the ambassador to place. The procedure primarily looks at the infrastructural status of the school in question so that efforts are made to prepare ambassadors for the challenges ahead.
- ✓ **Recruitment:** A rigorous process of assessing fit of the ambassador to be. It starts with online applications followed by an interview and finally a content competency test. The interview process starts with sample teaching followed by a group discussion of an article then a cognitive test and finally an oral session. Each one of these sessions assesses a unique set of skills. The competency test marks the final component of assessment and one only gets invited to write it should they've succeeded at the preceding stage. Not only does this test determine whether one makes it but also gives an indication of whether the ambassador should be teaching at primary or secondary level.
- ✓ **Training and Placement:** Since the ambassadors have neither a back ground in education nor pedagogical experience, they are given training throughout the 2 year duration. This starts with a 2-week academy and continues for the two year period in the form of quarterly workshops. The Training is therefore designed in a way that will enable them to fulfil basic

instructional as well as classroom management demands. Ambassadors are placed in most cases, in pairs per given school.

- ✓ **Mentorship and development:** A subject specialist is made available to the ambassador to assist with shaping of the ambassador's teaching and provide counselling should there be a need. As part of development all ambassadors should register for a Post graduate Certificate in Education at the onset of their teaching journey such that by the end of the 2 years they would have attained a teaching qualification. TEACH will then seek for bursaries to fund the studies.
- ✓ **TEACH presence:** An attempt by the ambassador to introduce lasting school-wide changes with the intention of creating an environment which stimulate learning. This includes *inter alia*, gardening, newsletters, and debate clubs, to mention but a few. The TEACH On-going support team is there to assist the ambassadors in initiating the most appropriate project and give motivation for the continued existence of the project.
- ✓ **Monitoring and evaluation:** The process of assessing the impact of the TEACH dosage mainly based on results as well as school wide influences. Thus at the end of each school term results are gathered and analysed to determine progress or lack thereof. An increase in the number of learners attaining a C or better grade signifies a movement in the desired direction.
- ✓ **Life after Teach**
 - (a) *Assistance with job networking:* Where opportunities are found, TEACH will attempt to help ambassadors to get employment should the prospects arise which could mean even re-deploying them or negotiating for retention by the schools where they would have been teaching
 - (b) *Alumni movement:* Continued efforts to lead in the fight for educational equity and equality in different economic spheres. There is an attempt to keep the link between the ambassadors and TEACH; and among themselves, warm and vibrant. This could mean the alumni attending TEACH functions or even assisting with marketing and recruitment.

5. Coverage and Impact to date

Since the onset of the programme in 2008, TEACH has operated in 5 of the 9 provinces in South Africa as shown in table1 below.

No. of TA's per Province					Total
Province	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Gauteng (JHB)	24	26	21	15	86
Gauteng (Tshwane)	0		8	2	10
Western Cape	0	10	2	3	15
Eastern Cape	0	3	0	4	7
Limpopo	0		14	6	20
Free State				15	15
TOTAL	24	39	45	45	153

Table 1: The growth per province has not been consistent.

In table 2 below, the TEACH impact at grade 12 between 2009 and 2011, is illustrated.

SCHOOL	SUBJECT	2009	2010	2011	INCREASE	NOTES
Llinge	Maths Lit	51	86	–	35	–
E Monareng	Physical Sciences	29	59	–	30	1 distinction and 6 B's
Healdtown	Agricultural Sciences	33	80	–	47	–
Masiyile	Physical Sciences	7	27	–	20	2 distinctions
Phumulani	Physical Sciences	45	62	–	17	–
E Monareng	English	100	100	–	0	–
Katlehong	English	–	39	75	36	–
Hlanganane	Physical Sciences	–	16	59	43	1 distinction and 1 B
Klipspruit West	Physical Sciences	–	8	17	9	–
Ntswane	Physical Sciences	–	28	57	29	–

Table 2. In terms of impact, there have been some notable improvements in matric pass rates. We would not under normal circumstances advise our ambassadors to teach grade 12 level especially in their first year but due the critical shortages of Science educators especially, they end up teaching grade 12 learners.

6. Private public partnerships

TEACH partners with the government in such a way that the provision of posts and remuneration of the ambassadors is done by the department of education. As part of efforts to lessen the financial burden on the department, we have spread our wings by approaching the corporate world. However, the response has been slow hence the government remains by far our biggest partner/stakeholder. Our wish is to have more and more private companies on board so as to reduce the load on the already burdened department of education.

7. Barriers to the success of the programme

The first problem has been the lack of control (by TEACH) over some critical occurrences which have detrimental impacts on the mandate of the ambassadors. It is unfortunate that TEACH does not have the authority to mandate schools to let the ambassadors stay with the same classes for the entire 2 year period. Ideally we would like to see this happening because in year one the ambassador would have built the necessary rapport that creates a two-way learning interaction between the educator and learners. At the end of the 2-year tenure then the department would put new ambassadors in the same school to ensure continuity and maintenance of the standards set as well as the projects initiated should the school not retain the outgoing ambassador. Unfortunately this has not been happening, instead, the TEACH project has been scattered around the country which makes it difficult to produce meaningfully observable progress.

Also in some schools the ambassadors have been given loads with more secondary subjects than the primary subjects which they were trained to teach. TEACH is however working on a strategy to ensure that schools understand the purpose of this intervention. The second problem is that of securing posts. The programme is post dependent and with the government as the main provider thereof, there hasn't been growth at the level anticipated in the vision.

8. Conclusion

The intention of this presentation has been to raise more awareness regarding the plight of the education sector by detailing the TEACH South Africa journey from inception to date. The TEACH model sees the provision of quality education as the best equaliser and basic remedy to poverty. In essence efforts have been made to portray how this model has operated for 4 years now. There exist a number of stumbling blocks that have stood in the way hence the best fruits of this approach have not been harvested as yet. However if more committed partners especially

from the corporate sector come on board, the TEACH vision will be able to finally address the overdue crisis in education.

References

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