



**BRIDGE**  
**Monitoring & Evaluation Colloquium**  
**RMB FUND**  
**MATHS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**  
**- EVALUATION**

**Pat Sullivan**  
**16 October 2013**

# A reflection point

The single most important lesson learnt about schooling by researchers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government , in a decade of activity in schooling, is that it is a social phenomenon of immense complexity, opaque to the best-intentional interventions based on the most self-evident righteous explanations.....it would seem that no one knows quite why the best efforts have produced so little change, or quite why schooling outcomes at levels other than matric, despite our best efforts, seem to have declined even further.

Getting Schools Working

Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003:128)



# The Brief

- RMB Fund, through TSI, engaged JET Education Services to conduct an evaluation of 17 funded projects under the banner of Maths Leadership Development. Funding had been given to the selected service providers over a period of five years, although not all projects received five years of funding.
- The evaluation was developmental in its approach and combined formative and summative evaluation in a mixed model, collecting both quantitative and qualitative information.



# Evaluation Questions

1. How has each of the **17 projects** in the MLP programme **performed** in relation to each project's objectives and targets as detailed in the project-specific strategy?
2. What **factors** contributed to the **achievement (or not)** of each project's model's set objectives and targets?
3. Which **intervention model** delivers the most **desirable outcome** with the least investment to inform future resource allocation?
4. How can the programme be **improved** for **future project design** and effectiveness?
5. What is the **relevance** of each intervention given the **current systemic gaps** in the education landscape?
6. Given the systemic gaps in the secondary education landscape, are the **RMB Fund's programme objectives relevant** to the **current status quo**. If not, why?



# Programmes that were evaluated

## ➤ Bridging

SciMathUS

Midlands

## ➤ Resource Based

TRAC

## ➤ Outreach (Teacher Development)

RADMASTE

St. Mary's

Vula at Hilton

Khanyisa – Maritzburg

## ➤ Outreach (Learner Development)

Maths Centre

Alex Education Committee  
Uplands

St Andrews

Tomorrow's Trust

Ikateleng

## ➤ Bursaries

SSP (Student Support Prog.)

AIMSSEC

Leap 3 (Alex)

ISASA

# Method and Tools Used

## 1. Quantitative

Analysis of matric results

Analysis of class results (learner performance tool)

## 2. Qualitative

RMB finder questionnaire

TSI programme manager – question list

Facilitator Interview

Observation tool

Parent Questionnaire

Teacher Interview 1 (teacher who teaches learner)

Teacher Interview 2 (teacher who teaches teachers)

Questionnaire for Project Managers

Questionnaire for Principal or HoD

Questionnaire for learners



# Comments on Tools

1. The tools were developed to meet the objectives of the brief;
2. They were informed initially by the interviews of the funder and TSI;
3. They were informed by the following system challenges:
  - **Quantity v quality** – despite improving pass rates, quality of passes remains a challenge, especially in maths and science;
  - **Teachers cannot teach what they do not know** (how to teach fractions and how to do fractions leads to learners understanding and than can calculate fractions).



## Key aspects for focus

- **Dosage versus Reach:** can the project reach many learners and if so what is the intensity of support, in hours/days per annum?
- **Value for money:** what does it cost per learner? which learners pass matric maths with +60% or more?
- **Mass delivery or targeted delivery:** is it better to have few with excellent results or many with a range of results?
- **Sustainability without RMB Fund finance:** will the project be able to 'go it alone', and when? Can the government 'take it over'?
- **Listen to what is not said, as well as what is said, and follow up:** the mainly qualitative evaluation leads.



## Findings

- Logic models are often not clearly defined and this can lead to project scope creep;
- Internal monitoring and self-reflection can be weak;
- Trainer/facilitator competency assumed but not verified;
- Lack of human and physical resources is common;
- Lack of needs analysis and baselines was evident;
- School external training projects cannot influence subject choice at school;
- Volunteer teaching is not sustainable;

## Findings (continued)

- The system **cannot accurately identify** learners who would benefit from additional support as the marks in school are unreliable and often learners with potential are lost. Projects lower entrance requirements or test themselves;
- Lots of **educationalists** working in projects are **'mature'** – knowledge gained will be lost in the future;
- Projects which have a **separate fundraising** arm seem to be more sustainable;
- **Donor synergy** is important – risks are that different donors make different demands and so projects can change direction;
- The longer the outreach programme the more there is risk of **project fatigue**.

# Recommendations - START

## START:

- Projects meeting to share stories;
- Mentoring successful learners at university;
- Projects to incorporate IT solutions;
- Projects to use effective formative assessment techniques to improve teaching and learning with rubrics and are needs based and have defined selection criteria;
- Work with other donors to align interventions;
- Clarify roles of all involved.



# Recommendations - CONTINUE

## CONTINUE

- Supporting data-driven projects;
- Middle income initiatives;
- Projects that can demonstrate excellence in a practical and measurable way;
- Projects that factor language into the delivery process;
- Projects that have identified real needs.



# Recommendations - STOP

## STOP

- Projects that are only workshop- or holiday-based;
- Projects with volunteer staff;
- Projects where the dosage is low (once or twice a term);
- Projects where most of the budget goes on travel and direct costs;
- Projects that cannot demonstrate change in practice.



***Thank you***

