TICZA

TEACHER INTERNSHIP COLLABORATION SOUTH AFRICA

TICZA CoPs 2025: Integrated Report

December 2025

The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) Series

Contents

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCF   Common Competency Framework

CoP   Community of practice

DBE   Department of Basic Education

DHET   Department of Higher Education and Training

ESTIs   Extended Student Teacher Internships

HEI   Higher Education Institution

ITE   Initial Teacher Education

MERL   Monitoring, Evaluation, Research/reflection and Learning

NASCEE   National Association of Social Change Entities in Education

NGO   Non-governmental Organisation

SACE   South African Council for Educators

1 Background

The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) is a programme element in the TICZA workstream 'Sector-Wide Collaboration'. TICZA CoPs are a collaborative mechanism through which stakeholders share knowledge and practice, discuss key initial teacher education (ITE) issues and expand the evidence base on student-teacher internship models. CoP reports capture a range of inputs and shared insights which feed into the TICZA project; TICZA partners are expected to leverage and integrate these views into TICZA plans and workstreams.

TICZA stakeholders comprise the following: government in the form of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), as well as provincial education departments; the South African Council for Educators (SACE); teacher unions; higher education institutions (HEIs); non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in ITE as well as continuing professional education; and funders. TICZA CoP events are open to all these groups.

2 2025 Attendance and Topics

Relevant individuals from all stakeholder groups were invited to the three 2025 TICZA CoPs. The attendance breakdown is noted below. Variability in attendance is linked to topic, inputs and scheduling.

NOTES:
● Total participant numbers include more than one individual from one stakeholder organisation.
● The TICZA Convening Team is not listed as a stakeholder category, but team members from different organisations are included in the total for number of participants per CoP.

Table 1: Attendance at CoPs 2025

Stakeholder Organisations	CoP 16 – 26 March 2025 Reflecting on Collective Impact and MERL in the TICZA Project	CoP 17 – 12 August 2025 Integrating and Using the Common Competency Framework in ESTI Models	CoP 18 – 10 November 2025 Setting up for Success: Prototyping the ESTI Standardised Model in 2026/2927
NGOs	7	8	6
HEIs	1	1	2
DBE	-	-	-
DHET	-	-	1
Unions	1	-	-
SACE	-	-	-
Funders	1	1	1
External presenters/ researchers	3	-	-
Total individuals	**19**	**20**	**21**

(online and in person)			

3 CoP 2025 Highlights

3.1 CoP 16: Reflecting on Collective Impact and MERL in the TICZA Project

1. Collective Impact in Review (Jennifer Bisgard, Independent MERL Advisor)

The five elements of Collective Impact are shared measurement, continuous communication, a common agenda, a backbone function and mutually reinforcing activities. A programme example showed how weakened implementation of some of these factors undermined success, while another example illustrated high impact with long-term, holistic, multi-stakeholder approaches. The updated Collective Impact model introduces new success drivers, such as policy change and strengthened community involvement. Participants shared different stakeholder perspectives on how Collective Impact approaches have played out in their roles in TICZA.

2. The role of MERL in the Collective Impact Approach (Herman Meyer, Southern Hemisphere)

The CoP was updated on the progress of the TICZA Evaluation by Southern Hemisphere, sharing some key learnings. Emphasis was on the importance of using monitoring and evaluation processes for continuous learning, reflection and feedback in order to be responsive and agile in adapting strategies for impact.

Key takeaways

- Institutionalisation, continuous support and strategic learning need to be integrated into collective impact programmes for sustainability, and the use of common metrics needs to be strengthened.
- Successful collective impact requires consistent commitment at decision-making levels if systemic change is going to happen. For TICZA, this applies to the DBE, the DHET, and the education faculties of HEIs. TICZA partners, for their part, need to align with government policies and procedures and comply with quality assurance mechanisms.

Read the CoP 16 Report

3.2 CoP 17: Integrating and Using the Common Competency Framework in the context of ESTIs

1. The CCF Status Briefing – Process and Product (James Keevy and JET Team)

The Common Competency Framework (CCF) was developed through a collective process with TICZA partners, and the **pre-validated version** is now available on the JET website see. The CCF is aligned with the SACE Professional Teaching Standards, and its aim is to serve as a set of practice standards to guide observation of holistic competence and behaviours in student teacher interns. The CCF sets out competencies in the three domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes, levelled from beginner to more experienced. Participant discussions on integrating the CCF into ESTI programmes covered its possible roles in mentor training, student assessment, and as a checkpoint for various programmatic elements. Links to tools used in HEI were also discussed. The validation process due to take place in

2025 will now be integrated into the Standardised ESTI Model Prototyping process beginning in 2026. Preparatory plans for this process were shared.

Key takeaways

- The CCF is considered detailed and complex, so it will need to be clearly mediated and shared in different formats with ESTI project managers, mentor teachers and students to facilitate its practical use. Participants noted several ways this could be approached and emphasised that implementation will happen gradually.
- As a high-level guiding document for the standardised ESTI model, the CCF can support stronger alignment across ESTIs and provide a common reference point for partners such as HEIs and provincial education departments.

Read the CoP 17 Report

3.3   CoP 18: Setting up for Success – Prototyping the ESTI Standardised Model in 2026/27

1. From Vision to Impact: Prototyping the ESTI Standardised Model (James Keevy and Tarryn de Kock, JET Team)

TICZA's collaborative achievements over the past five years include the Standardised ESTI model defining Essential Wrap Around Support (EWAS), the Common Competency Framework (CCF), the Cost Benefit Analysis research, the TICZA Evaluation and the TICZA Meta analysis (in process), as well as a number of other TICZA knowledge products reflecting progress and refinement of ideas.

Prototyping is a method of demonstrating design intent leading to a high-fidelity prototype model as close to its final form and cost as possible, with the aim of providing evidence for proof-of-concept. Core principles, design steps and effectiveness indicators were described. The prototype is empirically tested in its use-context, with its proposed end users and stakeholders.

2. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Initial Teacher Education (University of Johannesburg [Dr Dean van der Merwe] and North West University [Dr E Küng and Mr E Kok])

Two universities shared the main features of their institutions' WIL models in order to assist participants to consider the nature of partnership applications for the 2026 prototyping process. The following areas were covered:

- Coordination and logistical processes (e.g. student recruitment, school placements, relationship management)
- Support processes (e.g. orientation, mentors, academic and other support systems)
- Alignment of WIL to the HEI academic programme and adjustments for distance education students
- Ongoing WIL challenges and areas of concern.

Key takeaways

A major aim of this CoP was to share the plans for the 2026 two-year prototyping process for proof of concept. This will involve empirical testing of the ESTI model in its use-context, with its stakeholders and end users, including test and control groups of Bachelor of Education (B Ed)

students. Four partnerships between HEIs and NGOs are proposed, working in close collaboration with the DBE at national, provincial and district levels. The two research questions to be answered are:

- Does the Standardised ESTI model identified through the TICZA process produce **teachers who are more competent** than teachers trained through other distance education programmes?
- Can the standardised ESTI model be delivered at a cost **affordable to government funding schemes** such as NSFAS, Funza Lushaka and SETA learnerships?

The drafting of requests for proposals and their application criteria is in the final stages.

CoP 18 was the final CoP in the TICZA CoP series.

Read the CoP 18 Report

4 Conclusion of the TICZA CoPs Series

Over the past five years, the TICZA CoPs have played an important role in the workstream Sector-Wide Collaboration, and as a critical element in the collective impact approach. CoPs have run in tandem with the other TICZA workstreams, providing a forum for stakeholders to explore key aspects of TICZA and enabling partners to come together in an informal and conversational way to ask questions, share information, identify areas for collaboration and drill down into topics of interest. Several working groups were set up on the back of CoP meetings (Mentorship, School Support and HEI Alignment, followed later by the CCF Working Group), and these deliberations contributed to TICZA Research and Knowledge Products.

In 2025 TICZA also collaborated with NASCEE to run a webinar series for a wider audience in the education sector, sharing insights on collective impact, competency frameworks and prototyping processes as well as relating these to TICZA's progress.

The table below provides an overview of the CoP journey over 18 CoPs.

Table 2: Tracking the CoP journey 2021-25

COP #	DATE	TOPICS
2021		
1	12 August 2021	Crafting Objectives for the TICZA CoPs
2	8 September 2021	TICZA Theory of Change and M&E Indicators
3	29 September 2021	Outcomes Mapping NGO Inputs on Selection, Mentorship & Support
	26-27 October 2021	Innovation Lab: Innovative Platforms & Approaches to Work-Integrated Learning for educators
4	23 November 2021	Reflection Session and Establishment of Working Groups
2022		
5	3 March 2022	Views from Interns: Panel Discussion

COP #	DATE	TOPICS
		IP Partnership Agreements
6	18 May 2022	Working Group Report Backs: (i) HEI/NGO alignment (ii) Teacher Competence Framework (ii) Mentorship
7	6 July 2022	Critical issues for Teacher Education: School Readiness & Support for New Teachers
8	7 September 2022	Newly Qualified Teachers Induction Programme; and Competency Frameworks and Teacher Learning
9	2 November 2022	Monitoring, collecting evidence and using data in NGOs UNISA communication protocols
2023		
10	19 April 2023	UNISA and NGO Internship Implementing Partners Roundtable Discussion
11	7 August 2023	SACE Registration The Common Competency Framework Progress Report
12	18 October 2023	SACE Professional Teaching Standards and the Common Competency Framework alignment
2024		
13	20 February 2024	Sustainability and Scale in the context of ESTIs: Perspectives of Funders and Implementers
14	5 June 2024	Mentorship in the context of ESTIs
15	3 October 2024	Enhancing Teacher Training through Innovative Distance and Blended Learning Models: Insights, Collaborations and Research
2025		
16	26 March 2025	Reflecting on Collective Impact and MERL in the TICZA Project
17	12 August 2025	Integrating and Using the CCF in ESTIs
18	10 November 2025	Setting up for Success: Prototyping the ESTI Standardised Model in 2026/27