

# COP MEETING 18 NOVEMBER 2020 ONLINE

## LEARNING BRIEF: FINISHING STRONG!

This learning brief was produced by The Learning Trust in partnership with the After School Programme Office which drives After School programming as a priority project of the Western Cape Government. The brief emerged following the fourth Community of Practice (CoP) meeting held in 2020, which marked the 17th CoP organised by its partners since 2016.

**In November, the Community of Practice focused on finishing this year strong! We primarily evaluated our work, extracting lessons from our experiences and planning our collective approach to 2021. With the rapid shifts brought about by COVID 19 to the education space, After School Programmes made readjustments to normality while finding ways to remain relevant in a time of crisis. What lessons do we intend to take forward and what do we leave behind as we step into 2021?**



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After School  
Programme Office



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## KEY LESSONS LEARNT IN 2020



### Working with LEARNERS

#### Establishing online tutoring programmes

Even though only a portion of learners owned smartphones and could afford data, online tutoring remained the most effective way of keeping in touch with learners whilst maintaining core programming. With these tutoring sessions, many organisations incorporated fun activities to keep learner engagement at a growing pace.



### Working with PARENTS

#### Improving communication with parents via WhatsApp groups

The COVID 19 pandemic, which has proved to be far from over, showed the influence parents have on children and their learning. Even though learning has returned to the classroom, parents continued to hold the fort throughout the pandemic. Many

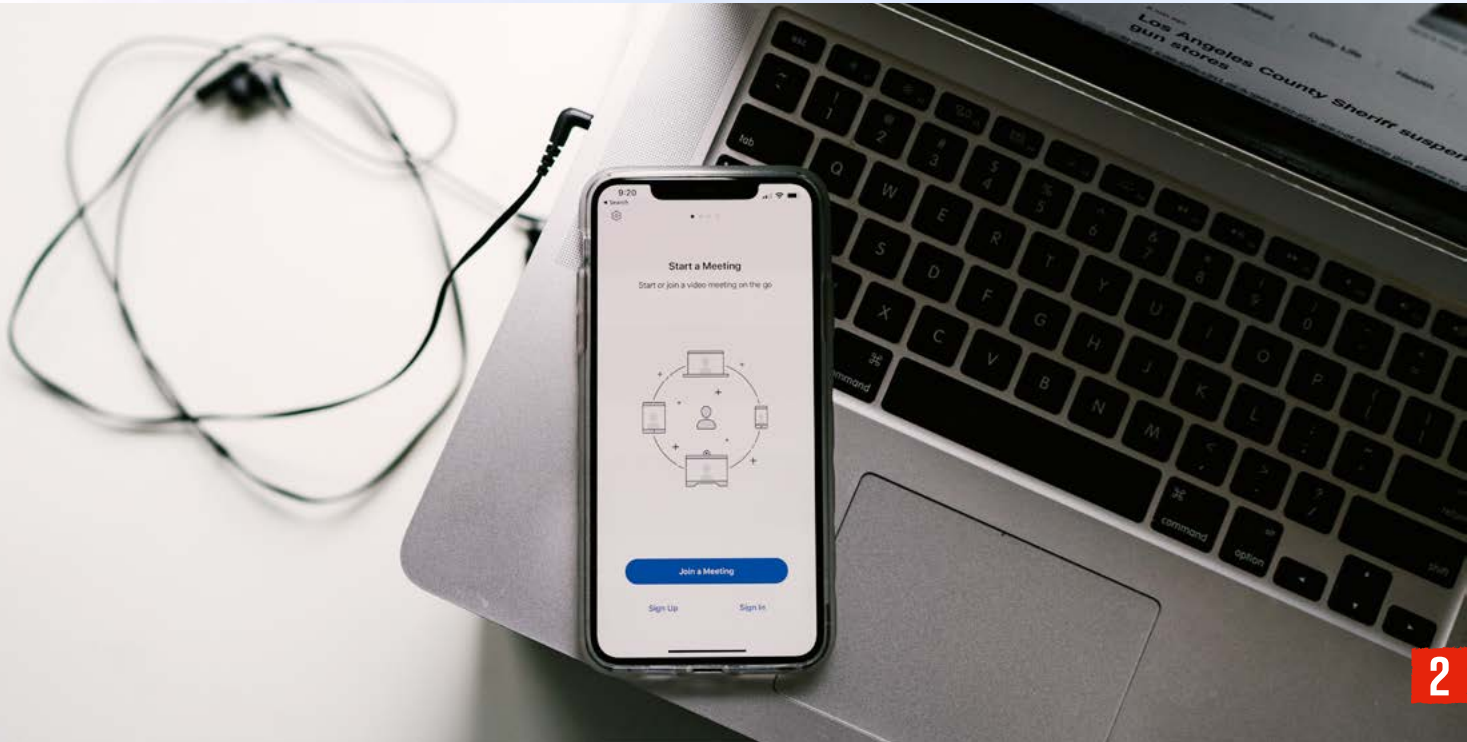
After School organisations adapted to change by forming close relationships that continue involving and engaging parents. On a more practical level, parents supported online tutoring by engaging on the activities given for the learners and continued providing feedback.



### Working with SCHOOLS

#### Strengthening relationships with partners schools

Communication remained at the core of the work that After School Programmes drove during the pandemic. Ensuring that we kept in touch with the school staff brought After School organisations closer with partner schools and allowed for the smooth transition when in-person learning was reintroduced. Organisations played the role of wellness support for the Principals who have been very stressed and overworked during the trying times.





## WHAT WE INTEND TO RETAIN IN 2021

### HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

In the coming year, After School Programs aim to continue focusing on the expansion of the necessary structures and technological systems for virtual learning. As organisations continue to come together, sharing lessons and taking best practices forward – the power of the youth in enabling the transfer of best technological practices should not be overlooked.

### REVITALISING PHYSICAL LEARNING

To reignite classroom learning, and to undo the many months of isolated learning, important socialisation and learning experiences must be shared in the After School space. Going forward, After School Programmes are to play a vital role in fostering strategies for effective in-person interaction to encourage further learning and development.

### MAXIMISING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIONS

Due to extended school closures and even now as the new school year is about to begin, one of the greatest lessons of the pandemic is how much organisations lean on each other to maximise impact. Going into 2021; we cannot deny the role that partnerships and collaborations have played in improving on efficiency and effectiveness, while allowing programme redesign and development. These relationships are key to initiating and sustaining change.

### STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

After School Programmes are a vibrant part of the education ecosystem and many young people from low-income backgrounds rely on them. To ensure that we maintain continuity; the relationship pillar between learners, schools and parents must continue to be strengthened.

### MAINTAINING ACCURATE RECORD-KEEPING

Working on ensuring effective database methods is key going forward. Collecting accurate contact information and ensuring timely updates of these will help us to engage efficiently with parents and partners.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIVE TOOL - METAMORPHOSIS ACTIVITY

Over and above everything else, we cannot deny that COVID 19 also afforded us opportunities to co-construct and deconstruct certain aspects of our lives. On this last CoP of the year, we invited our After School community to participate in a Metamorphosis activity by writing a letter to reflect on the past year and project wishes for the future. The Metamorphosis process speaks to how butterflies begin their lives as

caterpillars and then transform into beautiful flying insects. Much like this, we have to look back and reflect on the journey we have walked and be honest about the lessons learnt along the way; while wishfully looking into the future with our heads held up high.

Below you can read just one of the beautiful letters that emerged from the activity, as shared by one of the participants at the CoP:

COP - 18 Nov 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

**Emotion** - I'm excited for the possibilities the future holds and I am doubtful weather I'm doing my best for my own family. I need to put their needs first

**Super Power** - I am absolutely amazing at working with youth and developing them to their own potential as a mentor & coach. My cytonite would be my family's need, wife & children.

**Challenge** - career - liked to finance also my organisation is too rigid to survive or thrive or respond real time.

**Choice** - choose to develop myself the better. I am the better I can be the better quality I can give of myself. The greater my impact, my legacy

**Value** - quality time & moments which allows growth & development of individuals - Society who have been held back.

**Insight** - My purpose is my passion and its being created, my ability is being created, tuned, honed

**Next Step** - I must build myself so that I can be there for myself, family, kids and work - in which ever form.

**What excites me** - Possibility of a better bigger, brighter exciting future of growth happiness laughter safety.



## A GUIDE TO THE METAMORPHOSIS ACTIVITY

### STEP 1: WHAT YOU NEED

- A space to write – preferably a piece of paper and a pen
- 10 minutes – don't overthink it.
- Next to each word, write a response.

### STEP 2: LETTER TO YOUR FUTURE SELF

Dear me (future self),

Emotion

Superpower (and your kryptonite)

Challenge

Choice

Values

Insights

Next steps

What excites me?



## LOOKING AHEAD

COVID 19 is a pandemic that shook the world. Looking back at the year, After School Programmes have undeniably played a significant role in closing the education gap. As we look ahead to the coming year, some lessons learnt this year will continue to shape programming. Innovation, relationship building and online learning are some of the best practices we take into 2021.

## RESOURCES & LINKS

- [Access to previous Learning Briefs](#)
- [After School Activity Packs](#)