

Mpumalanga Community of Practice

BUILDING PATHWAYS TOGETHER

Key Takeaways from the Mpumalanga After School Community Convening

In October 2024, the Mpumalanga After School community gathered for its first convening in Middelburg. This event brought together diverse After School Programme (ASP) leaders to network, share challenges, and collaboratively find solutions.



This learning brief captures the key questions raised by ASPs during the meeting and offers practical solutions that emerged from the rich discussions. The insights shared here are grounded in the collective expertise of the after-school sector and include valuable resources to help you enhance your programme.



THE BIG QUESTIONS

What creative partnerships can we form to access more **venues**?

How can we keep **volunteers** engaged and motivated?

How can we foster a positive, inclusive learning environment that balances **discipline** with encouragement?

What are the best ways to source **educational materials** for our learners?

What strategies can help us tackle **disengagement** and support learners who struggle?

How can we address the broader **social challenges** affecting our learners?

How can we build stronger connections with parents to ensure they are allies in their children's learning journey?

How can we improve **digital access** in our communities?

How can we position our ASP as a valuable community asset and secure more **consistent funding** from various sources?

How can we collaborate with community stakeholders to create **safer environments**?

By addressing these critical questions, after-school programme leaders can strengthen their programmes, improve learner outcomes, and create more sustainable, impactful solutions for their communities.



LEARNERS

- **Get to know them:** Learn about their backgrounds, interests, and challenges.
- **Show them love:** Always create a supportive and caring environment.
- **Keep them excited:** Use icebreakers, games, and competitions to keep energy levels high.
- **Celebrate success:** Publicly recognise achievements through prizes and celebrations.
- **Understand behaviour:** Learn why learners may misbehave. [Watch this Masterclass on Child Development.](#)
- **Praise good behaviour:** Even small efforts should be acknowledged.
- **Give responsibility:** Help disruptive learners feel valued by giving them leadership roles.

PARENTS

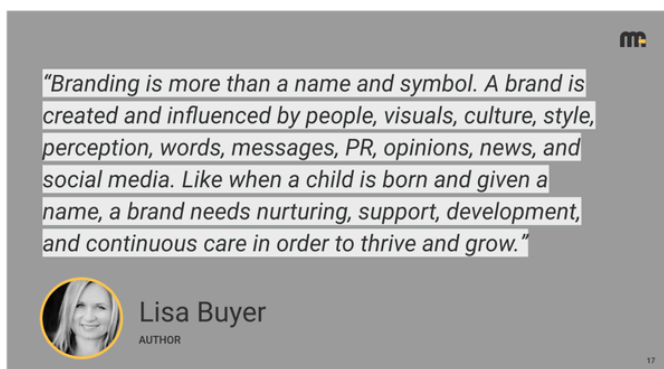
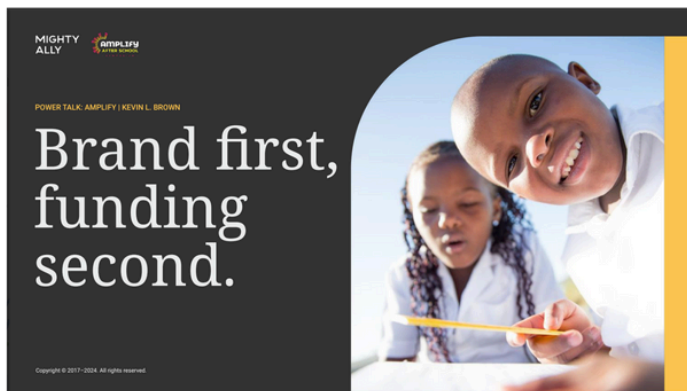
- **Start early:** Engage parents during registration with consent forms.
- **Invite them in:** Get them involved in open days and events. Read more on engaging parents and caregivers here.
- **Include them:** Invite parents to be part of Boards and decision-making activities. Ask for their input!

FUNDING

- **Improve your branding:** Be clear on your [mission and goals](#).
- **Be consistent:** Align your message and make sure your team knows what's needed.
- **Get everyone involved:** Ensure the whole team is on the lookout for funding opportunities.
- **Be findable:** Set up a social media presence or website. Read more about how to enhance your social media [here](#).
- **Use local advocates:** Encourage people to talk about your work on local radio or in the news.

“Brand is strategy; fundraising is execution...If you are fundable and findable, the funding will come.”

—Kevin L. Brown



Network and be visible: Don't hesitate to ask people for what your programme needs.

SAFETY

- **Work with local police:** Build a relationship with local police forums for extra safety.
- **Team up with parents:** Create a "walking bus" to ensure learners get home safely.
- **Have clear rules:** Set up procedures for how learners get home (e.g., adult pick-up or walking in groups).
- **Involve the community:** Get volunteers to help with security or walking learners' home. Offer them branded T-shirts to boost visibility.

SOCIAL ILLS

- **Attract youth:** Offer fun and relevant programmes to keep learners engaged.
- **Talk about difficult issues:** Have open conversations about substance abuse, sexuality, etc.
- **Create referral systems:** Make sure learners in need get the support they require.
- **Involve alumni:** Encourage alumni to become role models and advocates.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Build relationships with schools:** Stay patient, keep showing your work, and invite principals to events.
- **Set up Memorandums Of Understanding (MOUs):** Formalise partnerships with venues like libraries and churches.
- **Be flexible:** Adjust your times and dates to accommodate school schedules.





RESOURCES

- Explore both online and offline tools: [TLT Treasure Box](#) has a variety of resources to guide you.
- You can also access fun art activities from Butterfly Art Project [here](#).
- Use recycled materials: Get creative with what you have. Check out Play Africa's tips [here](#).
- Ask for donations: Approach companies, individuals, and local businesses. [ForGood](#) is a site that helps organisations access in-kind donations.
- Check out TLT's Practitioner Masterclasses on some of these important topics via the [TLT YouTube channel](#)