

REVIEW OF
MEDIA IN EDUCATION TRUST AFRICA (MiETA)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Brief overview of the organization

MiET Africa is a South African-based non-profit organization with a mission “to improve lives of children”. MiETA’s main focus is to support education development as well as health and socio-economic development where they impact on children. Its work is driven by two strategies: firstly, education resourcing and service delivery and secondly, school-based care and support.

1.1.2 Brief overview of the project/ the model/advocacy role

MiETA has developed two models, namely the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS) and Education Centres Supporting Rural Development. For this review, the focus is on the SCCS model which is briefly described below.

Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS)¹

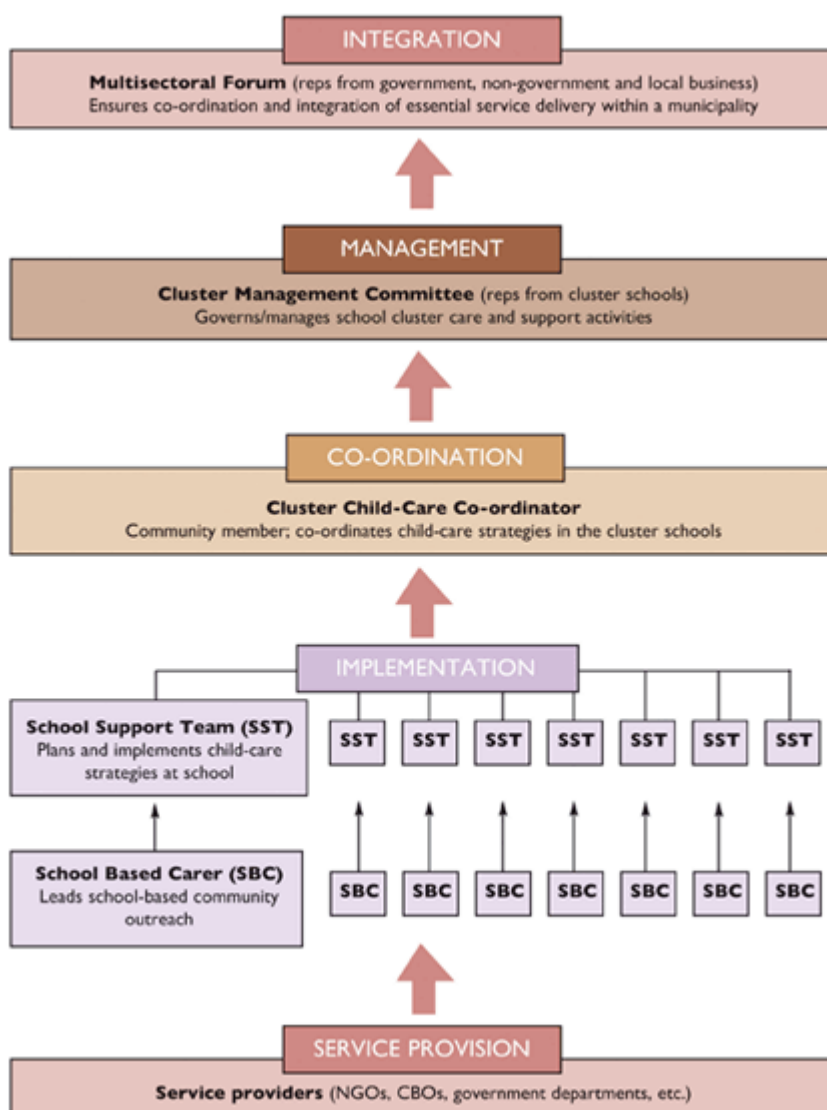
The key principles of this model are:

- schools may be developed as hubs of service delivery for children;
- community participation is essential for this to happen;
- multisectoral collaboration is necessary to address the diverse and complex challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable children;
- government ownership is necessary for interventions to be sustainable.

In the model, schools are clustered around education centres, full service schools (FSS), or nodal schools to promote sharing of resources and to strengthen mutual support. Each school develops a vision of itself as a “centre of care and support”. It establishes a widely representative “school support team”, which leads the care and support program in the school and community around it. This includes identifying community members who can provide voluntary care and support to children and other people in need and strengthening their link with the school, as well as multisectoral networking.

¹ <http://www.miet.co.za/deliveryModels.aspx>

The figure below provides a diagrammatic representation of the model.



1.2 Grant summary

The Rockefeller Brothers Foundation (RBF) has supported MiETA over several years from 2004 - 2008 with two grants (\$244,000 in total). The first grant focused on supporting MiET to develop its psychosocial support aspect of its then-called School Communities Caring for Children (SCCC) project by employing a social worker who worked in 30 participating SCCC schools².

² Category: Improve Basic Education; GRANT NO.04/176 ; June 2004;

Rationale: Encourages the development of an innovative model of care, education and support for orphans and vulnerable children; supports the introduction of a promising basic

The second grant ³ in 2007 was used for an advocacy and communications campaign to promote its SCCS model of integrated service delivery for children through greater consultation and co-ordination between government departments. The goal was to increase and improve access to services for rural children through harmonization among government programs at national, provincial, and local levels. It targeted senior decision-makers within the national and KwaZulu-Natal provincial government departments, implementers of the strategy at the local level and rural school communities.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of the mini evaluation review is threefold:

- Firstly, it aims to explore in somewhat greater depth the results of 12 grantee partners' work in order to establish the outcomes and impacts of their work within the education and vulnerable children sector.
- Secondly, these mini reviews will form one aspect of a meta-analysis which will explore the RBF grant making strategy.
- Finally, the mini reviews also aim to provide the organizations with useful feedback from a peer organization, donor and government representative.

1.4 Methodology

For this review, the team relied heavily on the organization's progress and external evaluation reports (where possible). These were combined with findings drawn from qualitative in-depth interviews held with the organization's director and program staff, as well as interviews held with representatives of a self-nominated peer organization, a government representative and donor.

Questions for the in-depth interviews focused on the organizations' greatest achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. In addition, questions explored the results of institutional strengthening and RBF's funding in specific.

education model; assists a non-profit with basic education projects to integrate HIV/AIDS into its work.

³ **Category:** Improve Basic Education; **GRANT NO.** 07/64 ; March 2007;

Rationale: Supports the Fund's goals of improving the quality and accessibility of basic education and assisting orphans and vulnerable children to achieve their potential.

1.4.1 Selection of organizations

The first selection criterion for organizations to be included in the review was the extent of the RBF support. Only those with a longer relationship or those who have received a relatively large grant with RBF were included. Secondly, an effort was made to select organizations from across three provinces, as well as across the two grant types (education and vulnerable children).

1.4.2 Limitations

One key limitation of this review is the high reliance on self-reporting (either through team interviews or progress reports) by the organization due to the time and budget constraints of the study itself. This was counter-balanced through the inclusion of the perspectives of a donor, a peer organization and a government representative. Program beneficiaries could not be included in the review. This would have allowed the team to verify some of the perceptions. However, where possible, the analysis includes findings from external evaluations. Overall, this has limited the team's ability to make concrete conclusions.

2. Findings

The findings of the MiETA review are presented in three sections. The first section focuses on the organization's overall achievements, as well as factors that supported its effectiveness. Secondly, its challenges, and finally the key lessons learnt are presented.

2.1 Key Achievements

The key achievements of MiETA's Schools as Centres of Care and Support are described below as compared to the objectives of this program. In addition, the factors that supported its success are identified and possible contributions made by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund are explored.

2.1.1 Program outcomes against project objectives

Achievements are presented in terms of an assessment of whether or not objectives have been met.

Objective: Develop Schools as Centres for Care and Support model (SCCS)

Assessment: MiETA, together with its partners in government and the community, developed the SCCS model for which it has been awarded the *2008 Global Best Award* awarded by the *International Partnership Network* in collaboration with the *Conference Board of Canada*. This award recognizes the importance of partnerships between MiETA governments, funders and school communities to improve the lives of children. MiETA won in one of the four categories, *Promoting Health and well-being of Children*

in Education. Adjudicators were looking for a project in which partnerships not only exemplified the link between health and learning but also focused on the well-being of the whole-child, specifically on the project's impact on the child's ability to learn, and affirm their sense of identity and self-confidence⁴. This award recognizes the model as a best practice model. In addition, the August 2008 field test assessment of the model proved that the school clustering approach, with an education centre and/or FSS as a core component of this model, is a good strategy in bringing resources and services closer to school communities. It is also recognized as an appropriate model for inclusive education since it aims to address systemic, societal, pedagogical and intrinsic barriers to education.

Moreover, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has adopted the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS) model as its strategy for achieving the overarching goals of inclusive education, as stated in White Paper 6⁵; which high focuses on:

- diminish barriers to learning for ALL children;
- strengthen schools to function as hubs of integrated service delivery for children, through capacity development of teachers, SMTs, SGBs and community structures;
- increase access to health and social welfare services for orphans and vulnerable children and their families;
- Increase community participation in school-based care and support.

With the support of the RBF funding, the SCCS program strengthened its care structures by providing psychosocial support (PSS). For the purpose of building the capacity of school carers to provide PSS, MiETA has contracted in a service provider (Rob Smetherham Bereavement Services for Children (RSBSC) to train people on the institution-based support team (IST) on PSS and to do some direct work with children where the ISTs are not able to cascade their learning. The initiative has received support of three funders who offered:

- Scholarship programme to 200 girls and 100 boys in the Ngxongwane cluster funded by the Ambassador's Education Initiative (AEI), and HERO (RBF grantee partner).
- A school feeding scheme and grant access programme in the Mandlezulu cluster funded by Absolute Return for Kids (ARK).
- Specific school-building and construction activities in Ngxongwane to repair boreholes, a classroom at Nkabane School, buying water tanks and guttering for schools funded by UNA-USA HERO (RBF grantee partner).

The schools report change in the behavior of children who have benefited from the PSS and related mentoring programs. Orphaned learners are now

⁴ http://www.miet.co.za/news_details.aspx?NewsId=11

⁵ <http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/2001/educ6.pdf>

participating in the classroom activities, “since they are now aware that they are not alone in their difficulties, but there are people who care for them”.

Objective: Increase and improve access to government support services through integration and co-ordination between national, provincial and local departments

Assessment: Evidence suggests that MiETA has played a key role in achieving this objective. Strengthening co-ordination and integration was perceived by the donor and government representatives as one of its key contributions. This was achieved through the SCCS model which used, for example, integrated service delivery events, known as jamborees, to provide rural communities with the opportunity to access government services from a variety of government departments. These included Departments of Home Affairs, Social Development, Education, Health, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), police services, local municipalities, tribal authorities, and NGOs at their local schools. In addition, MiETA is believed to have brought issues of vulnerability to the attention of the Department of Education and linked the department to service provision organizations - both within provincial and national government and with civil society - thereby making its response more holistic. As a respondent explained,

“The Department of Education tends to focus only on the school parameter and expect relationships will happen through *ad hoc* networking. But we realised through MIET that we need networks and these need to be built in a structured way. This structured link has been their greatest contribution. Through this we’re making schools more inclusive and are able to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and to address the barriers they face in terms of accessing quality education. Dept of Education cannot respond to all needs alone and needs to work together with others. MiETA provided the starting point and it is their strength in developing relationships with social partners that has been a great contribution to the program.”

This perception was also supported by the findings of the 2008 field testing assessment, which showed that there was an increased awareness and understanding of Inclusive Education as a policy of the Department of Education, and its application and the potential resultant benefits to the learners due to the advocacy of the field testing, as well as improved multi-sectoral collaboration and realization of integrated service delivery of the different government departments put into practice.

MiETA provided the following services to children during the period April 2007 - March 2008:

Service Provider	Resources obtained	Quantity
Department of Home Affairs	Identity Documents	1 208

Service Provider	Resources obtained	Quantity
	Birth Certificates	909
	Death Certificates	14
Department of Social Welfare	Foster Care Grants	1311
	Child Support Grants	2007
	Disability Grants	39
	Food Parcels	1 907
Department of Agriculture	Seeds	21 Clusters
	Garden Tools	190 Schools
SAPS	Affidavits	1299
	Cases of child abuse reported	78

Objective: Field testing a model for transforming schools into inclusive centres of learning, care and support (SICLCS)⁶ to determine principles and guidelines upon which a scale-up of Inclusive Education (through the establishment of schools as *inclusive* centres of learning, care and support) can effectively be implemented in all KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.

Assessment: The SCCS model was the “Rolls Royce model” which enjoyed unlimited funding. However, in order for government to adopt and implement it, the key elements of the model needed to be identified and tested in a pilot. The field testing assessment report revealed the following outcomes as a result of the pilot⁶:

- Field-tested an essential human resource provision of support for two areas of focus, viz. educational and psychosocial support;
- Built additional and suitable infrastructure at the FSS in order to render them conducive to the delivery of care and support services to learners with a wide range of barriers, including physical disability;
- Established and supported various structures to facilitate and support the implementation of the strategy at the provincial (PTT), district (DCCIE) and school levels (ILST);
- Development and refinement of a training manual which is aligned to Department of Education policy;
- Training of all teachers in the 21 schools, as well as the district officials on the key elements of Inclusive Education;
- Increased morale at the FSS;
- Increased ownership by the acting district manager in the implementation of the pilot which helped to garner the support of all at the district level and circumvented implementation issues;
- Model was costed for taking Schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning, Care and Support to scale in KZN;

⁶ Field-testing the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education’s strategy to implement Inclusive Education Report, August 2008

- Drew great interest both nationally and internationally in the KZN strategy to implement Education White Paper 6.
- More direction and guidance from the National Department of Education, resulting in the nomination of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE) pilot project leader to participate in the National Task Team which had the task of refining the national guideline document on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) strategy.

Objective: Advocate for relevant stakeholders to implement a collaborative care and support strategy

Assessment: MiETA has, through a partnership approach, successfully advocated the implementation of the SCCS model by government. The KZNDoE has adopted the SCCS model as its strategy for achieving the overarching goals of inclusive education as stated in White Paper 6⁷. At a recent conference the National Department of Education provided welcomed guidance to provincial departments by presenting the model - renamed Schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning, Care and Support (SICLCS) as the preferred national model/strategy. Currently the majority of provincial departments are implementing care and support through *ad hoc* activities, without co-ordination, policy framework, clear planning or budgets. The pilot in KZN provides a tested and clear strategy which has been institutionalized. The MiETA team believed that with the support of Minister and two provinces having already started implementing the model, it will encourage others to “pick up the pace”.

In addition, the SCCS program is a southern African partnership model of integrated education, health and socio-economic development with a focus on mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS and creating an enabling environment for all children to receive quality education. Initiated in South Africa in 2003, the program has been implemented in Swaziland and Zambia and, under the co-ordination of the SADC Secretariat, is expanding into all 14 of the SADC Member States⁸. This is believed by the MiETA team to be a real milestone towards the model being owned and implemented provincially, nationally and even regionally. As one respondent said,

“People are excited and can see its potential and are going beyond just doing their job. They are passionate about it and that is why it has worked. They believe in the model and all want to be part of it - this supports and even speeds up the momentum.”

Another indication of the success of MiETA’s advocacy efforts is the recognition by the department for the need of additional posts (something which is notoriously challenging within government) for learner support

⁷ <http://www.miet.co.za/content.aspx?ContentId=13>

⁸ http://www.miet.co.za/news_details.aspx?NewsId=11

educators and counsellors. According to MiETA staff, by 2009 the department will employ 100 support educators and counsellors.

2.1.2 Factors that supported their achievements

The various respondents identified five key factors which were perceived to have supported MiETA in its achievements. The first is the ability of the organization to demonstrate tangible results. Being able to demonstrate tangible results through sound monitoring and evaluation is a strength of MiETA, which encourages stakeholders to get involved. As a peer organization described:

“The MiETA [SCCS] program is making a more visible impact than the Department of Education. We are seeing results at a local level. For example, teachers are being given support and they know that they have a shoulder to lean on. Measurable impacts are being seen at the school level.”

The second supporting factor is MiETA’s advocacy strategy. A government official commented that MiETA “recognizes the policy context and are aware that we operate within a limited budget.” By aligning its SCCS model to existing Department of Education policies, harmonizing policy and frameworks towards specific education outcomes, testing and identifying the essential aspects of the model and working in close partnership with the Department of Education, the model was more appealing to government and easy to adopt. By institutionalizing the model, the department was able to recognize that care and support which was previously considered outside of the education system and responsibilities can be implemented through a multi-sectoral strategy.

The third factor is closely related to the second - namely, working as close partners. The partnership was described by both parties as valuable, flexible, realistic, and supportive. Both partners report having grown in terms of skills throughout the partnership. Key, however, is MiETA’s role in ensuring that the model is not implemented by an “outside NGO” but that the ultimate responsibility for its implementation lies with government, as a government respondent describes:

“They are a *supporter and not a driver* which is the key difference. This has cemented our relationship. In this case, we’re still in charge. MiETA has made a conscious effort to ask us what we want, rather than tell us what they want. They respect us and remind us that the buck stops with us. We have to take responsibility. This is true ownership and they have supported this through their open-minded approach, willingness to work with government with all of its frustrations. They respect the system and understand it. They also deal with delays rather than pointing fingers and come up with a plan. The project always comes first. It’s not about MiETA, it’s about

us and they're supporting us. They take the lead from the department. It is very easy for the department to let the NGO take the lead with the pressures within the department."

This approach has been critical in ensuring the sustainability of the SCCS model.

According to both peer and government a respondent, the success of the model and the strength of the partnership has also been due to the skilled and committed MiETA team. Examples cited include the team's ability to respond to requests under pressure and their ability to provide quality information. This is illustrated by the following quote:

"This is where MiET staff was always able to rise to the occasion. It is such a relief to know that they are there to support the department."

Finally, a supporting factor has been MiETA's ability to keep up with its success by strengthening its administrative and financial systems to manage the large amounts of funding it receives. Its staff who attended the RBF-funded Organizational Development support valued the opportunity to share experiences and learning. They did, however, not benefit tremendously from the process because many organizations are struggling with issues that MiETA has already addressed eight years ago. The one-on-one process was therefore more useful, even though they have not made as much use of it.

Results ascribed to RBF

According to the MiETA team, RBF has provided relatively small amounts of funding for the development and testing of the SCCS model, especially when compared to its other main donors, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. However, they believe that the funds have been strategically important because the grants were used to strengthen the organization. It was RBF who highlighted the need to bolster the financial and administrative systems. RBF also provided the funding to strengthen the organization's skills and capacity in psychosocial support and contributed towards the development of the multisectoral pilot, which has informed the SCCS model. According to the RBF records, the Fund believed that the MiETA's SCCS model was a promising model, and that its continued support was necessary to take it to the next stage—scaling up with government resources—to reach significantly more children, and leverage the Fund's investment. "It is an example of what the Fund strives for when it invests in models of care, education, and support for children impacted by HIV/AIDS".

2.2 Challenges

Respondents identified three key challenges facing MiETA. The first is the threat of losing funding due to the general shift of many funding strategies away from South Africa. Secondly, the organization is faced with capacity issues, example, having few social workers. Over the years it has grown and the demand for its services has increased. However, this demand could not be met in a sustainable manner. The third challenge is with regards to stigma, which results to secrecy and poor disclosure.

2.3 Lessons learnt

As a result of the two challenges, MiETA is in transition. Its previous focus was on learner performance, access to education, and retention, which are all the Department of Education's goals. However, since MiETA should and could never do government's work, it decided to shift its focus to developing innovative educational solutions by piloting ideas in KZN (described as the 'nursery'), influencing policy, and building strong partnerships. In order to address the capacity issues, the organization is shifting from an implementation role to one of consulting. This will involve providing technical support to government through the national department and building the capacity of NGOs on how to implement the model. In addition its focus is to position itself as an African NGO/service provider, thereby creating an opportunity for donors to continue to fund it.

In terms of advocacy, the field testing assessment report highlighted the following key lessons:

- The location of responsibility for driving the strategy within the Special Needs Education Services (SNES) directorate was clearly (with hindsight) not at all strategic. The 'stigma' of everything traditionally attached to inclusivity (disability - the 'medical model') was clearly reinforced in the minds of officials, so much so that any attempts to dispel this view appears to have fallen on infertile ground. Furthermore this narrow perception of the policy limits the impact of the implementation of the policy.
- Careful thought and planning for advocacy is required so that adequate budgetary allocation is provided for the activities to be carried out in order to reach all the relevant stakeholder groups.
- There should be differentiated advocacy strategies for primary schools and high schools as the two institutions are working on different curricula and with different age groups of learners.
- There should be different advocacy programs for big schools and smaller schools because of the differences in structure as well as the capacities found in these schools. For example, in smaller schools there may only be one member on the school management team. Therefore, it is unrealistic to demand that one-member school

management team (SMT) schools implement the strategy in exactly the same way as bigger schools.

- The Department of Education should review the school structure of the smaller schools and provide support to the school management team.
- Advocacy to parents is needed in order to involve them in the learning, care and support of their children.
- Advocacy must be ongoing and must attempt to present concepts simply and practically. A structured and ongoing program of advocacy is crucial to the success of the program at all levels.
- It is important that the advocacy must be led by the highest office that has committed its political will to the transformation process (transforming schools and the system) in the Department of Education.
- However, this advocacy must be visible and permeate all levels, firstly the level of the provincial Department of Education, then district level, and then interdepartmentally.
- Any official of the department engaged in any presentation at any forum - particularly to external (to the department) stakeholders - must speak as a true champion of the process. This can only be done if the official has a complete and thorough understanding of the KZNDoe strategy and her/his section's role in the strategy⁹.

3. Conclusion

MiETA has been working over many years towards achieving its goal of developing a sound, sustainable model that addresses various barriers to education and supports children and families affected by HIV/AIDS and has only recently realized some landmark achievements which recognize its model as best practice.

References

Reports:

1. MiETA progress report to RBF, June 2005: Psycho-social support program
2. MiETA progress report to RBF, September 2006: Psycho-social support program
3. MiETA progress report to RBF, October 2006 - October 2007: Psycho-social support program
4. MiETA progress report to RBF, October 2007
5. MiETA progress report to RBF, April 2007 - December 2007: Multi-sectoral school-based care and support for children: An advocacy and communication campaign

⁹ Field-testing the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's strategy to implement Inclusive Education Report, August 2008

6. MiETA report to RBF on the Jamborees November 2007 (2); February 2008; April 2008
7. KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and MiETA, Field-testing the KZN Dept Education's strategy on Inclusive Education: Schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning, Care and Support
8. MiETA website: www.miet.co.za

Interviews:

1. On-site group interview with MiETA directors, program manager and Monitoring and Evaluation manager
2. Telephonic interview with donor representative
3. Telephonic interview with peer organization
4. Telephonic interview with peer organization