



Spotlight on Talent

"Hands down the most useful conference I've ever attended. I had time to think about important organisational topics/issues that always seem to be pushed down the "to do" list. Being surrounded by such smart and thoughtful individuals was really great. They challenged my thinking process in a manner that I really appreciate. So cool to be a part of this important global group. I feel like I'm part of something much bigger. That's a good feeling." - GSF Member



Participants at the GSF Spotlight, February 2020

Summary

At the end of the GSF Annual Meeting last year, we surveyed members to identify the topics that we should focus on and would be most useful to their work in the coming year. Talent (recruitment, retention, and staff motivation) emerged as one of the themes of interest. Based on this finding, GSF designed an offer on Talent that kickstarted with our inaugural Spotlight event in February. Held over three days (Feb 17 - Feb 19), the Spotlight took place in Johannesburg, South Africa with the main events organised at African Leadership Academy with school visits to SPARK Schools and Streetlight Schools, all GSF members.

We discussed Talent through three different sub-themes:

- Hiring Right as a Retention Device
- Motivating, Celebrating (and Retaining!) Your Staff
- Building Career Ladders

Which we addressed through a number of different formats:

- School visits to member organisations
- Panel discussions
- Challenge Carousel
- Interaction with teachers and school leaders
- Member-led presentations
- Informal networking through coffee chats
- Key-note by a prominent South African educator



25% GSF organisations
participated in the
Spotlight.

Twenty participants representing thirteen member organisations (25% of GSF Member organisations) that operate or work with schools in eight countries joined the event. To boost new member recruitment, we invited Johannesburg-based potential member organisations to the closing session and dinner where they were able to meet with current GSF members and the GSF team.

Dr Priyadarshani Joshi, a Senior Analyst with the Global Education Monitoring Report (which is focused on non-state education in 2021), participated in the Spotlight to understand the work and challenges of the non-state school networks more closely and their contribution to providing equitable access to quality education. Dr Joshi will incorporate her findings in the latest GEMR report.

Highlights

Member-led Sessions

"I really enjoyed that ideas, strategies and presentations came from GSF members. We spotlighted some excellent and implementable ideas and were able to interact directly with the organisation. This changed the discussion from what otherwise may have been very theoretical to a deep and insightful conversation that is based on experience and expertise." - GSF Member

The Spotlight was mainly member-led, and GSF compiled practical content that is applicable in the context that our members operate. Identified members led the presentations for the above sub-themes:



Hira Nomani, TCF, Pakistan presenting 'Hiring Right'

Deborah Kimathi from Dignitas, Kenya and Hira Nomani from The Citizens Foundation, Pakistan collaborated on the sub-theme 'Hiring Right as a Retention Tool' and presented successes and challenges they have had in this area. Together, they compiled and presented good practices of hiring from a school network perspective (TCF) and an intermediary point of view (Dignitas).



Jacques Gevelaar, SPARK, South Africa presenting 'Career Ladders'

Hecky Odera from SHOFKO, Kenya shared his story of increasing staff motivation in his organisation that operates schools in urban slum communities in Kenya, making staff retention a further challenge. He shared tools like staff satisfaction surveys, teacher-created staff assessment tools, and motivation strategies like weekly appreciation meetings as part of his presentation.

Jacques Gevelaar and Bailey Thomson Blake from SPARK Schools, South Africa led the presentation on 'Building Career Ladders' and the success of their unique leadership program called the Trailblazers. Participants found Trailblazers particularly valuable, and several intend to adapt or replicate a version in their context.

100% of the participants agreed on the survey that "The presentations led by GSF members provided me with new information/ideas/perspectives that I can use and implement in my organisation."

School-visits



Participants interacting with students at Streetlight Schools

Hosted by our Johannesburg-based members, SPARK and Streetlight School, the visits allowed members

- To understand the context of the school's operation.
- To interact with school leaders and identify what motivates them to stay and work.
- To have an opportunity to observe their peer's work on the field.

Besides the above, interaction with students and teachers energised the participants and helped connect learnings at the Spotlight to supporting students and staff.

"School Visits should definitely be a part of the conference in the future as well".

- GSF Member



Interaction with South African Leaders in Education

Dr. Lindiwe Ginya is the Branch Head, Teacher Development and ICT Programmes at Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership & Governance, South Africa.

Dr. Ginya shared her journey from being a government school teacher to school leader to finally becoming a key player in the South African education movement. Her challenging personal and professional journey through the complex social landscape of South Africa gave members an understanding of the country's educational history and its current status. Members left the session highly motivated and inspired.



Dr. Lindiwe Ginya delivered the keynote speech.

Panel Discussion with South African Educators



Panel moderated by Lebogang Montjane

The last session of the Spotlight brought together a panel of four teachers and school leaders, all models of exemplary Talent in their roles and organisations. The panel was moderated by Lebogang Montjane, the Executive Director of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), to discuss why teachers choose to leave and stay in their schools. The panel shared honest insights based on their personal experience, and it provided members with applicable ideas to implement with their staff.

Challenge Carousel

The Challenge Carousel, a GSF-favourite, was repurposed for three presenters to share a Talent-related challenge that they face in their organisations with the other members. Listeners brainstormed and recommended practical ideas to the presenter, most of which were based on their own experience with similar challenges.

“What made the advice I got so valuable was that I realised that I was not alone with this problem. My colleagues who were ready to share their wisdom and rich experience had grappled with the same problem.”

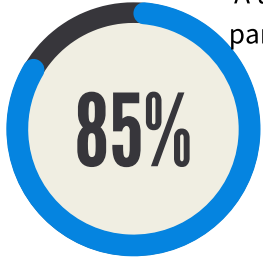
- shared by Urmila Chowdhury



Urmila Chowdhury, Peepul, India



How did we do?



A total of 85% of the participants took the survey.



83% attendees said "I will likely implement a new practice in my organisation that I learnt about at the Spotlight"

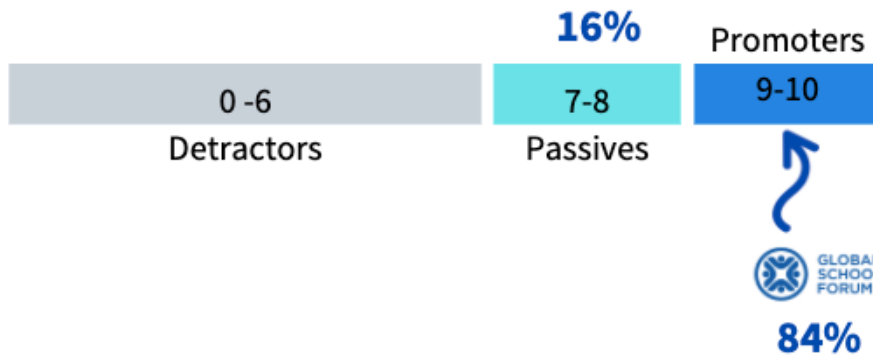


100% attendees said "I felt part of a global non-state education community at the Spotlight"



88% attendees said "I built professional networks with several peers that I hope to stay in touch with after the Spotlight"

Net Promoter Score



NPS = 84%
Excellent

"How likely is it that you would recommend GSF Spotlight events to peers and colleagues?"

Out of the 18 respondents who took the survey, 15 (84%) rated 9 or 10 .



Member's Voice



GSF requested members to share their experience at the Spotlight which you can read [here](#). Hira Nomani from TCF, Pakistan wrote

“The spotlight also served as a handy platform to learn from peer organisations. I found it interesting to learn how different participants are responding and dealing with a varied collection of Hiring-related challenges in their work and context. The discussions with the participants gave me a lot to think about to adapt and contextualise those strategies at scale for TCF.”

Next Steps

As an extension of Spotlight and the positive response it received from the members, GSF has planned a virtual offer on Talent. This offer builds on the topics that members found most useful and expressed an interest to engage in further. Some of these include:

- Virtual Challenge Carousel
- Virtual meetings with experts within the GSF cohort.
- Interaction with experts in the field of hiring, retention, and motivation of staff especially in the context of low-income school networks.
- Compilation of Talent-related resources developed and used by the member organisations

Annexes

- [Pre-reading packet for the Spotlight participants](#)
- [A GSF-produced video providing a glimpse of the Spotlight](#)

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