"It is unfortunate that the learner's ability to be multilingual is not considered as an enabler for effective teaching and learning"

My Name is **Puseletso Fiona Hoaeane**. I was born in Soweto, South Africa and currently stay in a small town called Springs in the Gauteng province. I am a teacher by profession and have been teaching for 17 years. In 2013, I exited the classroom and worked for a teacher union as a professional development coordinator until I joined VVOB South Africa in March 2019. Growing up in Soweto exposed me to many languages and made me able to speak and understand all of the eleven official languages. But the ability to speak these languages doesn't make me special because in Soweto most people are multilingual or are Polyglots.

My ability to know the languages became an asset when I was teaching English to second-language speakers. I was able to understand my learners. Most learners found it difficult to express themselves in English, which in most cases is the language of teaching and learning (LoTL). Being multilingual made it easy for learning to take place. It was and still is unfortunate that the learner's ability to be multilingual is not considered as an enabler for effective teaching and learning. Instead, the education system elevates English as the language of instruction. The ability to use multiple languages in a conversation is discouraged. However, there are several formal assessment activities in the language curriculum, for instance, activities such as debates and public speaking, that can be a used to bring out creative use of languages and of the eloquence of being multilingual.

In South Africa, the influx of immigrants and refugees from other African countries is also adding the number of languages an average South African learner will be able to speak in addition to the eleven official languages. It is just unfortunate that education is not responsive and reflective to this evolution of language as a means for communication and as an enabler for teaching and learning.