



NDA

National
Development
Agency

**EARLY-CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE**

September 2016



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University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

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WELCOME

DR MVUYO TOM UFH Vice-Chancellor

I want to welcome first and foremost the Honourable Minister of Social Development, Minister Bathabile Dlamini, and the Honourable MEC, of Social Development Nancy Sihlwayi.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Fort Hare, Professor Larry Obi, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Professor George Moyo, the Acting Director-General of the Department of Social Development, Mr Thokozani Magwaza, the Chief Director for Early Childhood Development of the Department of Social Development, Ms Musa Mbere, the Acting CEO of the NDA, Ms Nelisiwe Vilakazi, the President of Wheelock College, Professor Azzi-Lessing, Chairperson, of the Eastern Cape ECD Forum, Ms Michele Kay, the Director of Masibumbane Development Organisation, Ms Tabisa Bata, representative from the Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC), Daryl Braam, representatives from South Africa Partners, members of the National Office of Social Development, the broader early-childhood development members, and the HOD of Social Development - KZN, Ms. Nokuthula Khanyile.

A warm welcome to this milestone event for the development of our children in South Africa, not just in the Eastern Cape or in Buffalo City.

This year is a significant year for the University of Fort Hare. In February the University will be celebrating its hundredth birthday. This is the centenary year for the University of Fort Hare; a historic moment for the iconic institution.

Therefore, we have planned many things to do this year. One of them is to have legacy programmes, centenary programmes for the University of Fort Hare, to turn them around from what they originally were in 1916.

We want to be established as the premier African university. We want to be able to say that the unique programmes that this University delivers distinguishes it from any other university in the world. And the early-childhood development programme is one of those programmes.

The University would like to invite you all to Alice on the 8th, to celebrate this historic moment. There are many other celebrations as well, but this one will be the big one organised by the President of the Republic of South Africa, who wants to make sure that the University of Fort Hare keeps its iconic history of being involved with the African continent.

He wants to have a gathering in May that will be the mother of all gatherings, when we celebrate with heads of countries, and the heads of state in Africa at Fort Hare, celebrating the centenary of the University of Fort Hare, together with African leadership.

You are invited to walk with us on Saturday, the 6th, up the Stewart Memorial Hill. We welcome everyone to this particular occasion, which is also aimed at launching this centenary year for us. We have people from across the Atlantic who joined us here today – colleagues from Wheelock College in Boston, whom we have been working with on this early-childhood development programme.

GREETINGS FROM BOSTON

PROFESSOR LENETTE AZZIZ-LESSING

On behalf of Wheelock President, Jackie Jenkins-Scott, who will be joining your celebration in just a few days, and all of my colleagues at Wheelock College, I want to congratulate the University of Fort Hare on its centenary. We are delighted and humbled to be one of your partners in leading the development of early-childhood development capacity-building in the Eastern Cape, and as the Vice-Chancellor said, this work is not only focused on the Eastern Cape, but the University of Fort Hare is really leading the nation in this work. And so we are delighted and very pleased to be a part of this work with you, and to be one of your partners.



MS MARY TISEO Executive Director: South Africa Partners

On behalf of South Africa Partners, which is based in Boston, but which was established here in the Eastern Cape and East London, and which continues to have a presence here in the province. You will also hear from our colleague, Tabisa Bata who is the Executive Director of Masibumbane Development Organisation.



We are incredibly humbled and grateful that we can be a part of this important programme that the University of Fort Hare has initiated as part of its centenary celebration. I cannot think of anything right now that is more important than focusing on how to prepare the children of South Africa for leadership and for the kinds of challenges that they and every other child in the world are facing.

I want to convey greetings from my Board of Directors and from our staff. We have another staff member, Carol, present as well. She has been working directly with early-childhood development. We are ready to redouble our efforts to join in partnership with the ECD Centre of Excellence and ensure that the University of Fort Hare becomes the leader in the country in paving the way and showing the way on how to improve the lives of children and families in South Africa.



UFH ECD CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – AN INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

PROFESSOR LARRY OBI
Deputy Vice Chancellor –
Academic Affairs and Chair
of the UFH ECD Steering
Committee



This event that we are witnessing today, the Early-Childhood Development Centre, a centre of excellence, emanated against the backdrop of the importance of early-childhood development to the economy because the future of any country will depend on early-childhood development. This is intricately linked to early brain development, so the experiences of childhood will shape the integrity, the cognitive abilities, the emotional intelligence, the health of any child and invariably of the country.

At times when we talk of higher targets, we miss out on the fact that there must always be a beginning, and if that beginning is defective, of course future endeavours will also be defective because a strong house must be built on a strong foundation.

So against this backdrop we started brainstorming at the University to chart a way forward on early- childhood development. In 2011, an initiative was mooted to establish an early-childhood development centre at the University of Fort Hare. In order to actualise this, the Faculty of Education, together with other partners, formulated a proposal, which was then submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training, and were awarded a grant of R47 million by the Department of Higher Education and Training to build the early-childhood development centre.

The Faculty of Education again, in collaboration with national and international partners, formulated a business plan foregrounding a ten-year vision that we nurture the Centre from infancy to a citadel of learning. Funding for this initiative was provided by ELMA Philanthropies.

We also have laudable associations with other partners such as Wheelock College – Boston, South Africa Partners and the National Development Agency. The Wheelock College and South Africa Partners, including the Faculty of Education where this Centre is located, wrote a proposal to ELMA Philanthropies to fund the planning year from April 2015 to March 2016. ELMA Philanthropies donated a sum of R4,5 million to the University.

This Centre is an innovation centre. We have made Inroads, and recorded milestones in different endeavours. Prominent among them is the development or trying to develop a transdisciplinary curriculum, which will focus on early-childhood development.

The curriculum will have a transdisciplinary approach in the sense that our approach to early-childhood development will permit all academic disciplines. It will not be focused on one discipline only because there are many disciplines that will impact on early-childhood development. These are health-related, psychology, sociology and so forth.

To actually ensure that these things are realised we have set up several committees and implementation platforms and, therefore, we have an implementation and evaluation team. The implementation and evaluation



team of the Centre meets monthly and we have SA Partners, Wheelock College and, of course, academics from the University attending.

The second structure we have is the ECD Steering Committee, which is chaired by myself and the Deans, all the Deans of Faculties of the University, Directors, and the Director of the Centre. This has now been calendarised in our University Prospectus where we meet quarterly and provide strategic oversight responsibilities in terms of the Centre.

We have also established a transdisciplinary research group, which meets frequently and consists mainly of academics. We also have representatives of Wheelock College, Boston attending.

There is also a transdisciplinary working group, which comprises UFH Faculty academics, the ECD provincial government representatives, representatives of the Departments of Health, Education, and Social Development, and some ECD practitioners. We have also received support from national and provincial governments.

Recently, specifically in November 2015, we had a high-level round-table discussion, which was attended by MECs of Health, Education and Social Development. Following the round-table discussions Memorandum of Understanding was signed with each of the departments in our quest to establish an innovative Centre of Excellence.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

MS B O DLAMINI, MP

Minister of Social Development Republic of South Africa

Our Programme Director; the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare, Doctor Mvuyo Tom; Professor Obi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Chair of the UFH ECD Steering Committee; our Director General, Mr Magwaza; the Acting CEO of the National Development Agency, Ms Nelisiwe Vilakazi; Ms Michele Kay, Chairperson of the Eastern Cape ECD Forum; Professor Lessing, I am afraid of mentioning the other word because we call it Aziz here, of Wheelock College, Boston; and other international partners; Ms Mary Tiseo, Executive Director, South African Partners; the Deans and Heads of School present here.

I must also recognise women who have kept the fires burning in the ECD

sector. During the times of the struggle, one of the priorities of women, what

motivated them to be part of the struggle, was ECD. Most of them

opened ECDs in their garages, houses and many other things, because women have always known what they want out of the struggle.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of the ANC Women's League who are here because early- childhood development is among our priorities and we have been putting resolutions, pushing them in policy conferences of the ANC and those recommendations have always been accepted. And at the last conference we pushed ECD until it was agreed that it should

be a public good. It is not going to be an easy road but we are getting somewhere.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year is a great year for Africa. This is because the University of Fort Hare has been respected for producing the best leaders in Africa. It

has produced what I usually call the jewel. It produced people that mapped the struggles of Africa and not only South Africa. People who studied here during those times, they are very disparate, they are unique, and they are very confident.

At the beginning those who studied here would get their degree certificates from the Rhodes University. I know that because my 83-year-old father attained a BA at Fort Hare and a UED at Fort Hare. And we are where we are because of those leaders.

There are women leaders who studied here at Fort Hare, like Mama Joyce, who was once the Chairperson of the Gender Commission. But what has always been done is to highlight or talk about male leaders only. Now, Vice-Chancellor, this gives us an opportunity to also talk about female leaders so that we can motivate young women to study – we want to have people who can pursue to study for PHD so that they can help with research and come up with solutions to the challenges faced by the country.



**Ms Bathabile Dlamini,
MP, Minister of Social
Development**

We have a relationship with a university in Maryland in the US, Howard University because the campus is in the middle of different communities and most of the time they study what is happening in their communities and they respond to those with evidence, which helps communities to understand what is going on – alcohol and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, families that are not stable, and other many social ills. They have been getting solutions through working with communities.

We want our children to do the same, work with communities, and the Women's League is there to be part of community activities that will be taking place, not here in town, right there in Alice, in the rural areas, where our people are thirsty for development. Very often we want to talk bad about our people in the rural areas not wanting to work, being lazy but at the same time we have not stimulated them to be able to find jobs.

We should understand that even before the dawn of democracy, there were already high levels of unemployment so we have people that have not worked for thirty years hence it is important for them to receive that stimulation to prepare them for a job. People have a view that women are having children in order to receive social grants whereas there are many children who still do not have access to grants. Hence, the complaint from UNICEF and the employment of social workers/child finders to identify those children who are not receiving grants

I thank the NDA for taking a decision to partner with the University of Fort Hare because there are other institutions that are based in towns, which have child centres and this will assist us

to focus on how we should train our children.

In many countries, for example, Scandinavian countries, you do not just have someone being an ECD teacher or an ECD practitioner. There are people who study for up to four years, they graduate, and then work with our children, because other countries know that ECD is an investment. It is an investment because that is where you develop children to have confidence.

What is of importance is that our children do not just go to an ECD to play and sleep, but they are also going through very special programmes. The department of Social Development commissioned national audit of ECDs, and some of the findings of the report were that certain ECD centres are not in a good condition to accommodate the children and two basic issues were outlined: hygiene and exit doors. There must be more than one so that if anything happens, you are able to take the kids outside. We have partially registered other ECDs, and the NDA is busy training our women.

What needs to be done now is to maximise and strengthen the partnerships we have formed. Women should also work together and form cooperatives that do number of things which will help them to improve their status and wellbeing as women and mothers in their communities. When the department had interactions with mothers of children with autism we found out that they actually pay more than R10,000 for private ECDs. As government we need to intervene in these issues to come up with ways and strategies of how we can ensure that our children go through proper channels from the beginning.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS CONTINUED

There is a need to empower women as some just want to stay with their children because there is nothing for them to do throughout the day except looking after the baby. We are not yet at a stage where we can have a home ECD but we can train mothers to look after their children.



Four years ago the department submitted a proposal to National Treasury for Early Childhood Development, child-headed and youth-headed households, and we were given more than a billion rands to support these programmes and it has made a big difference. However, the department is of strong view that ECD centres should not close during holidays. They should be open even during the weekend they should be open so that we can ensure that our children have a plate of food a day.

The department also has a pilot on mobile ECDs and they are situated throughout the country. There are currently ten of them and we are trying to ensure that at least once a month a child in the rural areas sees what an ECD is. We are going to raise funds because ECD money is part of the budget that goes to

municipalities. ECDs are not taken seriously in our country and they are on the periphery and whatever you have seen throughout the years being opened or launched, it is the money that we ask from people.

We request that people also donate music instruments to our ECD centres, not necessarily sophisticated ones, but things like xylophone as an example, so that the child can start developing the rhythm at an early stage. We are fortunate that the NDP and the Vision 2030 puts ECD at the top of the country's agenda of development.

There is an ECD Inter-ministerial Committee that was formed by the President, with the aim of elevating ECDs. There are currently 1,4 million children who attend ECD and 937 000 of these children receives support

from government; the department also has 26 000 registered ECD centres in its database.

The ECD child grant used to be around R9,00 or R8,00 per child and it has since increased to R15 per child per day which is not for food only but also for the administration and the up skilling of teachers. For 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 the subsidy for ECD is going to increase., the department want to try to push to R16 per child per day and 264 days because previously we were only paying for few days. So we have increased the number of days. I think we all understand that there are incidents of violence against women and children. If we ensure that we open our ECD centres to our children, our caregivers will be able to identify children that are being abused, and therefore, we will respond quickly to those issues. Having ECD centres gives us an opportunity to be closer to our children on a daily basis.

Certain resolutions were taken at the 2012 April conference and the Department of Monitoring and Performance [in the Presidency] and Basic Education has coordinated a diagnostic review of early-childhood development. We have also worked together with our stakeholders and undertaken a review of the national integrated plan for ECD. Through all these efforts, we have developed the South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development, moving ahead from 2013 to 2017. The aim of the plan is to integrate our plans, bring about synergy and coordination to current government programmes undertaken by various departments in the area of early-childhood development.

The integrated plan is primarily aimed at giving the children of our country the best start. As government we are a signatory to the AU and the UN on the Children's Charter or on everything that has to do with children. So we are also committed to 1 000 Days of the Child and 1 000 days should start from gestation.

This is not just about women attending clinics, though it is also important, but it is also about how a woman should behave when falling pregnant so that by the time you give birth to the child, the fetus also starts developing correctly

As mentioned previously, we also want to focus on rural areas. We want women who have children with disabilities to feel free to bring their children to ECD centres and also train the mother of a child with a disability so that she talks to the child on a daily basis, then the child can also be confident of whom he/ she is.

The NDA is focusing on capacitating the ECDs and not only on just funding of programmes as there are many other institutions that are focusing on that. ECD is a struggle and it is about looking after the child, instilling proper values in the child. So our children must be strong and they are going to perform differently, they are going to be the ones who are going to really change our country. They are the ones who are going to understand the issues of social cohesion, non-racialism, non-sexism, issues of unity because we are one. So the future of our children is in our hands. We have a choice to make it better or a choice of letting them do as they please, but the best choice will be building a better South Africa.

THE NDA – OUR EASTERN CAPE ENGAGEMENT

MS NELISIWE VILAKAZI

Acting CEO: National Development Agency



The National Development Agency is a Department of Social Development. It was established in terms of an Act of Parliament and accounts to Parliament through the Minister of Social Development.

We are a Department of Social development entity. There are two entities in the Department, These are South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) responsible for grant administration, and the National Development Agency (NDA) that is responsible for development.

The National Development Agency has two responsibilities in its primary mandates in terms of the Act. The NDA has a primary mandate where it is required to contribute towards poverty eradication and its causes. In addition, it has a responsibility to ensure that it carries out programmes and projects that aim at the development needs of the poor as well as strengthening institutional capacity-building for those civil society organisations.

The secondary mandate of the NDA, which is to carry our research that informs development policy, justifies our existence here today based on our partnership with the University, because in terms of that mandate we have a responsibility to ensure that the NDA promote debate on development issues and also undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy. So this is what has justified our partnership that we have with the University.

And then in terms of our focus programmes, we

have ECD as a priority and focus area. We are also guided by the National Development Plan, which recognises the quality of ECD services, especially for those who are most vulnerable, to ensure that they optimally develop, which leads to educational success and then to the improvement of employment prospects.

We have also recognised that ECD is one of the most powerful tools of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty in South Africa. In terms of our 2014/15 financial year we then prioritised ECD the programme as one of our ways of contributing towards poverty eradication.

In 2013 the NDA embarked on a programme called “Adopt an ECD” campaign, we drove and facilitated resource mobilisation from various stakeholders, be it the corporate sector, be it individuals, or any other relevant stakeholder, even government sectors to support ECD. We also profiled ECD from underprivileged ECD sites as well as link the donors with the profiled ECD sites.

As we mobilise resources, at times we come across companies you will find are even willing to build ECD structures. Some of them you find are even willing to purchase toys or pay for training and so on. So there are key interventions around ECD programme that are done by NDA.

This includes the improvement of the infrastructure, educational equipment, and nutrition through food gardens at the ECD sites. We strongly believe in one ECD centre, one garden. So this is what we are promoting with the parents and even the management committees of those ECD facilities.

The NDA is also doing ECD massification,



Winners of South Africa's Early Childhood Development Awards 2016.

institutional capacity-building, because some of the gaps that we have identified as we profile the ECD centres are challenges around governance. You will remember that our current status quo with ECDs entails that they are managed by the women or those communities where they form management committees and manage the ECD. We find that maybe there will be capacity challenges when we do the capacity needs assessments, hence we are assisting and strengthening the institutional capacity of the ECD practitioners.

The most interesting one as well is the ECD Awards. This is where we come up with different categories as a way of encouraging the women who are actively involved in ECDs, as well as recognising those ECD facilities that have children with disabilities participating in those ECD centres.

An example of the improvement of the ECD structure is its visibility in all the provinces, even one of the examples is an ECD centre at Coffee Bay here in the Eastern Cape, where we have rendered an intervention. They were

operating from that rondavel and upon the NDA intervention they now have a proper ECD centre. NDA does not register ECDs as places of care. It is the mandate of the Department of Social Development in terms of the Children's Act. But you find that at times they cannot register this rondavel because it does not meet the minimum requirements of the norms and standards. So as NDA we come in from a development perspective, whereby opportunities are given to ECDs to be registered and be supported by government.

There is also Siyaka Educare Centre here in the Eastern Cape, which the NDA has contributed in improving its infrastructure.

Currently the NDA has invested more than R81 million in ECD interventions from financial year 2014/15 to date. In conclusion, we want to ensure our commitment to the University in terms of the research that is going to be undertaken by both the NDA and the university of Fort Hare, as well as our commitment to ensuring that we invest in the lives of our early-childhood development programme.

ECD POLICY

**MS. MUSA-NGCOBO
MBERE**

**Chief Director: ECD – National
Department of Social
Development**



ECD is a national priority today and hence it is something to be celebrated. In outcomes 1 and 13 of the National Development Plan it is stated that services must be improved and invested in. I think the key word here is “invest” in children, in pregnant mothers, infants and young children because that is where everything starts for us to be where we are as a country. The NDP recognises the quality of ECD as one of the measures to reduce the impact of poverty and ensure better performance in formal schooling. If we do not invest at that stage we cannot complain when children do not get good results in Matric.

The background also involves the issues that the Minister referred to earlier: the audit, which focused on the services and also on the infrastructure in terms of the centres. The audit was done nationwide. About 20 000 ECD centres were audited in the country. We have this information on our website, and the outcomes of the audit were factored into the development of the policy, significantly addressing the issues of infrastructure, qualifications and training of practitioners, nutrition, children with disabilities, stimulation programmes, curriculum and many other areas.

The process leading to the development of the policy is situated in these three areas, the review of the integrated plan that the Minister talked about, the ECD diagnostic review

which we did with the Department of Planning and Monitoring, and the ECD conference which happened here in East London. In fact, it is called the Buffalo Resolution Conference because resolutions were made then that have taken us to where we are today.

We have a programme of action that the Minister talked about. These are the eight elements that are in that programme of action. It is an integrated programme of action with all the critical departments, the three leading departments being us, Health and the Department of Basic Education. But the Minister was tasked to lead us on the issue of early-childhood development for government.

We have legislation and a policy. The policy has been approved in December 2015, which is now going to inform the Children’s Act. The Children’s Act exists, but we now have to align what is in the Children’s Act, with that which was promulgated in 2010. We have to look at what is in that chapter and then align it to the policy.

Covering issues of institutional arrangements, coordination and integration, issues of human resources, training and capacity-building, the comprehensive ECD programme involves all the government departments that are implicated, the issue of infrastructure, funding and partnerships, research, monitoring and evaluation, communication and awareness. This programme of action runs from 2013 to 2016, so we need to review it also and look at what there is aligned to the policy.

The vision is that all infants and young children and their families in South Africa live in environments that are conducive to the optimal development of young children. The



goal is equitable access, which is universal access to comprehensive age and stage-appropriate quality ECD services. We are going to be prioritising the 40% of children who are from poor families, who cannot afford quality ECD services.

The children must not just be there to sleep and eat, they must be stimulated and must get something that improves their development so that they are growing in a holistic manner, not just learning but also having values instilled and other areas. We are able to detect their disabilities at a very early stage so that there can be interventions.

We have parenting programmes. There should be alignment and harmonisation of intersectoral policies, legislation and

programmes across the different sectors. Early-childhood development is a value chain, so we must look at it from the pregnant mother until the child goes to school.

Collaboration and effective leadership are essential. This is the situational analysis, which states the numbers of children. The burden of poverty is unequally distributed across provinces. The majority of poor children are black, and living in predominantly rural areas, Limpopo, Cape, Eastern Cape, here, and KZN.

We have 15 key policy positions. The age coverage is the first one, the policy covers children from conception until the year before they enter formal schooling, and in the case of children with developmental difficulties

ECD POLICY CONTINUED

and disabilities, until the year before they turn seven, which marks the age of compulsory schooling. In this case they must get into a programme that will start addressing their issues of formal schooling. They must not stay with small children because they are disabled.

ECD is a public good, Universal access and then there is a dual government-regulated model of public and private delivery of ECDs. Some people thought private ECD programmes were going to be closed down. We are not saying they are going to be closed down. As with schools, there are public schools and private schools. But they need to register. If you are taking care of someone's child, of more than six children, you need to be registered.

Institutional arrangement, the policy, assesses the leadership and coordination role of government. We have various structures that are coordinated among the Departments and one of them is our National Departmental Committee, which I chair. There is also a technical committee of the interministerial committee where we report to. The issue of infrastructure with which the NDA is helping us and nutritional support for women during pregnancy, infants and young children are also critical. We are working very closely with the Department of Health on that, and also linking to the issues of food security. Social security ensures that mothers who are pregnant are pre-registered. When the child is born, the child gets child support from the first day of her/his life.

There are children with disabilities, their

inclusion in programmes is crucial, so that people are properly trained to be able to deal with their disabilities. The comprehensive ECD programme has identified essential components of health care, nutrition, social protection, parent support and opportunities for learning and most importantly, playing, because children learn through play.

To ensure that we have an appropriate cadre of human resources, we are required to have sufficient numbers with sufficient skills. We need enough funding for this comprehensive package, to have a communications strategy working with our communication unit to provide information and make parents and caregivers aware of the importance of early-childhood development services and programmes, and how to access the services.

We also need to have a monitoring framework that will help us to monitor whether we are progressing or not, and when it is time to review the policy. If it is no longer relevant to what is happening on the ground, we review the policy. Research needs to be conducted every five years to assess the impact of the policy.

In conclusion, the policy has been approved and the costing of it has been finalised so that we can ensure that we have enough money. The IMC will continue to ensure coordination and the realisation and achievement of the objective of the programme of action policy, and the implementation of legislation requires our commitments to build a better and strong foundation for the young children in South Africa.

POLICY ISSUES ON THE GROUND

MS MICHELE KAY
Chairperson of the EC ECD
Forum



The Eastern Cape ECD Forum's response to the adopted ECD policy on 9 December 2015

The Eastern Cape ECD Forum has been in existence since 2012. We started off as about 20 passionate ECD stakeholders and we have grown to about 200 stakeholders who participate on this forum on a regular basis. The ECD Forum is a multistakeholder, intersectoral grouping and gathering of ECD stakeholders and some of the stakeholders that participate in this are listed there. So we have various government departments, NGOs, funders, educational institutions, civil society organisations, practitioners and individuals that participate on our forum.

So the purpose of our Forum is about creating a platform for dialogue, so we create the platform, we bring different stakeholders together and we dialogue around the issues, promoting collaboration, sharing information and building knowledge. There is so much happening in the ECD space, you have to keep up to date with all the latest developments and policy. And then I am advocating for quality ECD for all children in the province.

So what I am going to reflect on today are some of the inputs that we made into the draft ECD Policy as the ECD Forum. The reflection will be on the issues that have been coming up through the different meetings

that stakeholders have shared that space, enabling us to put our comments together.

The comments, responses, or the position is structured in two parts. One is issues where we are really supportive and then others are just flags in terms of our concerns, in terms of the policy statement. So in terms of the areas, in terms of our support, there are many brilliant things in the policy. The policy is visionary.

We are very supportive of the proclamation of ECD as a universal right, a strong public provision, and, of course prioritisation of the most vulnerable children. In the province, two-thirds of children are in a vulnerable situation, and those are the children we are most concerned about reaching. Research shows the younger you are, and the poorer you are, the less likely you are to access any ECD services.

Some of the key issues are the issue of coordination. Coordination is spoken about a lot in the policy, in different areas within the policy, establishing a structure to coordinate, monitoring, providing oversight to the ECD, and strengthening departments

The current situation in the province is poor implementation of ECD on the ground, where practitioners find themselves in, in the ECD centres. In support organisations, in the municipalities, in all the departments, there is much to coordinate. So we are calling for strong coordination and we have not seen the final policy document yet but we are hoping that there is going to be continuous commitment to strong coordination. We are just flagging that; that is a key element that we want to see surfacing.

POLICY ISSUES ON THE GROUND CONTINUED

Other areas of concern, are key issues around funding. There are funding models proposed in the draft policy but in the reality that we find ourselves in, in the province, and looking at the vision for the policy, there is a huge gap. So how do we bridge this gap? I was really pleased to hear the Minister speak about an increase in the subsidy earlier but we know year on year practitioners are struggling.

There are funding cuts. In reality it is not that easy to get funding. NGOs have funding cuts. When is funding going to be available? Are we going to put more funding towards capacity in government? We do not have an abundance of provincial ECD capacity. We have two full time ECD people at provincial level.

Can we put more funding towards creating more capacity? How can we as stakeholders work together to leverage funding into ECD? So there are challenges, there are concerns. But what can we do to leverage funding? There are funds in municipalities, in community works programmes, corporate funding. Corporates invested R8,1 billion in corporate social investment last year. How can we leverage this into the province for ECD?

The final concern is around issues of human resources. How do we support and grow our practitioner base? How do we also tap into the pool of knowledge that exists in the province around ECD, which is vast? I salute Fort Hare for establishing this ECD Centre of Excellence, which is going to have a strong focus on human resource development, and that is so desperately needed.

In terms of human resources and funding, we need to make those positions available. We need to make sure practitioners are funded, that they get salaries. How are we going to attract more people into ECD if we do not actually get that right? We need billions. Not one billion, billions. How are we going to do that?

In conclusion, all of us have a role to play in making sure that the policy is implemented. Yes, government has driven the development of the policy but it belongs to South Africa, it belongs to all of us, to the children, and to us as stakeholders.

I think there are three key elements that need to exist to implement the policy effectively. And they are, first of all, strong political will. That is absolutely crucial, at the highest level, but also throughout the province at all different levels. We need strong leadership and sufficient funding to be able to implement this policy, because without sufficient funds we will not successfully implement this policy, and to get enough funding we need to drive that politically.

The other point is meaningful partnerships and strong collaboration. How do we support that? How do we buy into that? How do we support each other? Not competing but joining hands and really sharing in our future, in bringing the policy to fruition.

As ECD stakeholders, we all have a stake in ECD; the questions are how are we going to contribute to making the policy a reality? What can we do to drive political will? How can we hold each other accountable? How



can we hold leadership accountable? What can we do to access more funding? How can we work together to access funding? We believe in collaboration, but what can we do to collaborate and share more?

I would like to leave you with two quotations to think about. The collaboration and the energy that we need to drive this ECD policy, we need to think big and outside the box. So the first quotation is by Doctor Seuss, in terms of thinking.

“Think left, think right, think low, think high. Oh, the things you can think up if only you try.”

So let us start thinking about ECD. Let us start thinking about how we can work together. And then just in terms of working as a collective, we cannot do this on our own. We have to work together. I would like to share this quotation by George Bernard Shaw which says:

“If you have an apple and I have an apple, and we exchange these apples, then you and I still each have only one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea, and we exchange ideas, then each of us has two ideas.”

That is the power of the collective; let us really work together to make a difference for the children in this province.

ECD PRACTICE

MS TABISA BATA

**Director of Masibumbane
Development Organisation**



Understanding our reality – services that the ECD Centre of Excellence could render to support ECD practitioners in the Eastern Cape

This programme was started in 2013 and we identified, at that time, seven early childhood development centres that we were going to work with in the areas of Duncan Village, Vergenoeg, and Parkside. We went to the Department of Social Development, and asked them if they could identify ECD centres that do not get any support from any NGOs so that we can support them.

The goal there was to provide management support for community-based ECD principals, because, they needed the support in terms of management and capacity-building; access to training and mentorship for practitioners; development and implementation as well as evaluating early literacy strategies were crucial. I would like to point out that we are in partnership in this programme with our sister organisation, South Africa Partners.

There are eight ECD centres that we work with. We work in early-childhood development centres spread across three townships in East London which are neighbouring peri-urban townships and there are immigrations from rural areas and people live in informal settlements. There are low-cost housing, informal housing, and high levels of poverty,

unemployment as well as crime rates. The centres that we work with, on average, charge about R150 per child per month. This impacts on the remuneration of the practitioner.

These centres are poorly resourced and they do not have enough play materials nor do they have equipment for the children to play on, to be stimulated. Furthermore, there is not enough space and most of the centres are informal structures.

Due to the minimum standards that are given, the centres are not registered either as NPOs or early- childhood development centres or places of care for children. The issues cited there are a lack of infrastructure, sanitation and, safety issues, because if I am in a shack and there is only one door there is an issue with the escape route. However, the most amazing thing that we have noticed is that these centres are led by very humble, very dedicated and passionate women, and these women are responding to the needs in their community.

In total, and this change from month to month, there are 437 children who are taken care of by these centres. The majority of these children are within the range of three to five years old. However, we do have centres with babies, and we do have centres with Grade R, which means five- to six-year-olds.

A quote that drives the point home is that we are being led by humble women who just want to respond to the needs in their community.

Now the emphasis is on training because there is a call that I will make to the Centre of Excellence about what to do to support the training of practitioners in the Eastern Cape.

There are 27 practitioners who are employed across all of these eight centres and that means if you divide them crudely, the number of children per practitioner is 17, and R150,00 per child per month is divided by the number of practitioners in the centre, it then boils down to having a practitioner earning on average R1 000 per month; which is not enough to get by.

The average level of education of the practitioners is Grade 11. Now there are practitioners who are of lower grades, the highest standard of education that they have, Grade 10, Grade 8, and there are practitioners who have Grade 12 but very few who have passed Grade 12. And what we have noted is what the principals deal with most of the time, high levels of attrition. Because R1000 is not enough so I am constantly looking for better opportunities.

And you might guess why, but December, January and June are the most difficult months for the principals. Am I right? And why, because those are the months, the holiday months, school holiday

months. So parents do not bring kids to school, there is no income that month, hey. And then practitioners, we asked the principals, how do you recruit a practitioner? And they said, they are looking for people who have a passion for working with communities and children, and most preferably with a police clearance because they do not want to employ any thugs.

However, what they have said across the board is that none of the practitioners, when they get employed, are ever trained formally.



So obviously then that means those are our beautiful people that we work with, that means then the training is as a big deal.

What we have learned throughout this work is that working with centres in low-resourced areas is a bit of a challenge because you also have to deal with the minimum standards that are set for centres in a high- resourced setting. They almost have to meet the standards of centres that have formal structures, but they are in informal settlements, and that is difficult for them.

Training is a big deal and there is a lot of need for it and demand for it. There are issues of standardisation that we have picked up because one centre would be practising one programme, the other centre another, so if you are interested in having the Centre of Excellence come and evaluate your

ECD PRACTICE CONTINUED

programme when there are so many different inputs; it will be difficult to do so. So it would be nice to develop a standard curriculum or programme where all centres can be able to use that one and we can all evaluate one thing that is standardised.

We also saw that younger practitioners have aspirations to become professionals in ECD, and they are more receptive to training and these are the practitioners that we talked about in the age group 17 to 25.

We have understood from the outset that the centre is looking at developing a transdisciplinary approach it would be good to have our practitioners trained in the transdisciplinary approach where they have to look at a child from a holistic point of view. You know, their health, and to be able to assess their social issues and the psychological issues as well.

Packed into that we also are mindful of the fact that there may be children who have learning challenges who come to these centres and we have not equipped our practitioners with any training to deal with those children so it

would be good for the centre of excellence to explore that as well.

In terms of advocating for training in mother tongue, because the practitioners go and learn in English, and they have to come and practise in Xhosa, because the children are speaking isiXhosa. There are talks about bilingual education now. Why not do both languages and see. Children have the capacity to take on both languages.

We have communities all around East London, maybe beyond, and there is the University of Fort Hare, which is an institution of higher learning. Why can't the Centre of Excellence be the bridge between the communities and the University, so that access to university education can be improved?

As the Minister said, communities should be inspired to become researchers, because you go into these communities and do research and learn from them and then they learn from you. The Centre facilitates all of that and becomes the hub where communities can go get closer to universities.

ECD PRACTITIONER TRAINING

DARYL BRAAM

**ECSECC – Eastern Cape Socio
Economic Consultative Council**



Understanding the training needs of ECD practitioners in the Eastern Cape – a challenge to the ECD Centre of Excellence to fill the gaps

The focus will be focus more on the second bullet of the Mission Statement that says that the Centre seeks to provide contextually relevant service as ECD services. The context in which policies need to find traction, the context in which initiatives need to come to fruition, is sometimes underestimated. More of our attention will be drawn to the aspect of training.

There are three aspects that need to be looked at: Training, a broader idea of training and how the training needs to respond to certain contexts, and some of the contextual issues. Then perhaps also how the Centre itself can be responsive to that.

Earlier on the idea of capacity-building has been used. I think if we use capacity-building it opens up a broader lens in terms of our understanding. And it brings into focus these different dimensions of having your official and State apparatus, currently in the form of the Department of Education, Social Development and the Department of Health, and also a much more extended interdepartmental collaboration; that is the officialdom on the one side.

There are civil society, your citizens, NGOs, who play more of a mobilising role, and sometimes mobilising your State and non-State entities into very useful dialogue and debates about grappling with the issues the most important dimension being children, pregnant mothers and practitioners. We need to use this lens of capacity-building and how we conceptualise our programmes and so on; bearing in mind that it is in these three domains that we have to embark on the task of professionalising the sector.

The capacity-building and training endeavour is about establishing a better terrain as far as social justice is concerned. Investing in a child is very much about human development. It is to a large extent about addressing the legacies of apartheid where we can see patterns in post-apartheid South Africa that are actually similar to patterns during apartheid. That kind of history that has decimated communities into socioeconomic struggle, socio historical struggle, are things that we need to start reconstructing.

Similarly, the mind of pedagogy that we bring to the interface between a practitioner and a child, we need to think about. We cannot take that for granted, we cannot see it merely as a technical function; and it is pleasing to hear the Minister speak about bringing instruments into our centres, which is something that also expands their repertoire of what they can possibly learn creatively.

We need to invest in the human development of our practitioners in ways that have to do with ECD feeding more directly into the project of human development. To briefly draw the relationship between global context, national

ECD PRACTITIONER TRAINING CONTINUED



Daryl Braam reading with children.

and provincial context: at the global level poverty is escalating. I want to draw on this statistic that, globally about a hundred million people are in poverty compared to ten years ago. Poverty is like a gene, it gets passed on from one generation to the next. It is depleting children's spirits, their bodies, their minds, and the next 25 years we are going to have 22 billion more people in the world; Africa being one of those regions; This is some of the reality that the structural problem of inequality that manifest globally impacts and is mirrored in our children, in our centres, in our province. It is something that we need to bear in mind as far as the pedagogy is concerned, as far as our resources are concerned, and the kind of support that we offer children.

At national level a survey of the South African Health and Nutrition Service shows again that issues of stunting, underweight, and muscle wastage, are prevalent. Appallingly 26% of children between zero and three years are

stunted. That is on national level. Much of this is replicated on the Eastern Cape level.

It has been referred to before the audit that was commissioned by the National Department of Social Development is a really useful audit. But just to draw attention to some of the training implications that have been alluded to earlier, 40% of the practitioners did not complete Grade 12. This is nationally. A total of 5% of principals have post-Matric and only 1% of practitioners have a degree. So I think this context nationally also has implications for how the Centre could gear itself towards preparing our practitioners. Historically people do not remain subjugated in context of struggle. They exercise a human agency and they respond, they react to it and they lift themselves up. This is just a demonstration of a community in Zwide in Port Elizabeth, people from the community are actually planting healthy, organic vegetables to feed children in centres.

Similarly, we see that the print environment in some of our schools and ECD centres are acknowledging the critical role of mother tongue education. People do not always have glossy materials but they are using what they have to fulfil that principle.

The taking action collectively is also expressed in other contexts. The Ubuntu Education Fund, for example, where there is about 80% unemployment in the community, a 40% HIV infection rate, that community supports through a social support approach children from babies into universities. And the EC Forum, bringing non-State and State players into conversation, Fort Hare launching the Centre.

There are several demonstrations in the province, which are showing us the way forward, despite those structural issues. And we need to draw on that and start evoking a sense of practical hope on how we can address some of the challenges.

One of the key things that is coming through in our policy, that we need to embed in the Centre, is the support to caregivers. There is a lot of discourse in the policy and elsewhere around the importance of nutrition, practice that enables literacy in bilingual ways, acquiring mother tongue as well as English proficiency, but the mother tongue has to be the bedrock.

Parents should be orientated on how to engage meaningfully with their children. It is shown that meaningful relationships at an early-childhood level reduce the possibility of behavioural problems later on.

There is also home-based care, maybe not in our province but in the Western Cape which is a very successful home-based project where people are dispatched into communities to support the parents on an ongoing basis on how to engage around literacy activities with their children.

The Centre being located at a university will of course go on with its conventional function around theory- building, around entering into conversations around what is the best kind of pedagogy for early-childhood development. Behavioural, social and neurobiological sciences have opened up the transdisciplinary approach and has actually fed into the stage where we are at now, where we can acknowledge as a community the relationship, for example, between ECD and societal

development. That needs to continue as a sort of knowledge project of the Centre.

Ideas around forming cooperatives in communities, strengthening institutions, investing in caregivers, with the theoretical and practical and material provisions, and more infrastructure, should be investigated.

All these dimensions reside on capacity-building and I think when we invest and design the programmes in the Centre, it needs to take this much broader lens of these, all these dimensions so that when we launch our practitioners in this province, into the field, we launch them well equipped to take on the struggle and the hope that it might bring.

ADDRESS BY MEC MS SIHLWAYI

MS NANCY SIHLWAYI MEC for Social Development



Last week Friday the Department had a sad situation where twelve shacks were burned down and twenty people are out of houses as we speak. We managed to do what the mandate is given to us to do as a Department, providing all the necessary amenities that they want. They are now in a big hall here in BCM. Gogos who are 101 years old are in one of our centres. A child who was only a month old is also in one of our centres.

I want to raise few Issues, especially with our partner, the University. The Symposium came at the right time where we have a partner, which has strategic skills to professionalise our programme as a Department and as a country.

The university is responding to the call of the President that says, as government we are unable to achieve our objectives if other partners are not coming to the fore. I think the practitioners for ECD presented very clear challenges with some recommendations, which will enable us to have a very clear investment in our children, which is our objective as a country.

As a province we want to raise the issue of the norms and standards of ECDs that are urbanised, which do not speak about the rural areas. A rondavel that is well constructed with and doors that are well constructed, a well-constructed and clean toilet outside, needs to be considered as acceptable within the

norms and standards of ECD.

The other issue is the training of practitioners. We need to appreciate as government that we put a programme that is developmental, that says initiate your project. We need as a province to move fast in terms of auditing and assisting on the database and those ECDs that we believe have been in the space for some time but are still not compliant.

We will work with the University as we have signed an MOU and we are going to ensure that what we give to our children as foundation education is the best and of high quality so that they can be better leaders of tomorrow, as well as the practitioners to ensure that we are building a sustainable society and leaders.

The province has 1 622 ECDs that are registered. We have ECDs that are not registered and by virtue that they are not registered, the focus is not on them. But the issue is, we have a responsibility, because there are children there. How best can we intervene and build the capacity to be registered? which talks to the improvement of their infrastructure.

We have twenty six (26) ECD centres that are for children with disability. it is important that disability is not undermined because it emerges from particular genes and particular problems of the family. We should be able to assist build that family unit better and when the person, the child, is disabled, we must be there with interventions to support, hence we have ECDs that are focusing on children with disabilities

We all have a responsibility in empowering



MEC Sihlwayi handed over toys to Dikonyana Pre-School, in Ward 12, Matatiel, an ECD Centre.

the sector and It is interesting to listen to Masibumbane on the focus areas that they are dealing with and the challenges that they are dealing with, and calling on all of us, and government and other people to come nearer and assist, so that we build a society together.

ECD CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE RESPONSE

DR NAMHLA SOTUKU

Director, ECD Centre



The University is not competing with the NGOs but rather want to collaborate, contribute and make sure that all children in the Eastern Cape have access to quality ECD services.

Secondly, there are insights into the challenges and successes in ECD provisioning. There was a mention of capacity-building of human resources, there was a mention of having a non-standardised curriculum; there was a mention of the quality of ECD practices. So you are giving us homework on how to respond to those issues as the ECD Centre of excellence.

But what is also important is that you also advised us on the models, on the different models of a holistic ECD provisioning. Presentations here also talked about policies, so they informed us on policies that drive ECD provisioning. And there was a challenge also that if we want to influence policy, we need to look at what are the effective practices of policy implementation in different contexts.

In South Africa our approach so far is that we are using the middle-class norm of how schools work, so we do not want to use the middle-class notion of how ECD centres are supposed to operate. We do not want to use the middle-class notion of how ECD provisioning is supposed to take place.

You also gave us insight into the discourses in the field because that is very important for us. As the University of Fort Hare school of Education where the ECD centre of excellence

is going to be located, for a very long time our strength has been in the foundation phase. So it is adding value to us when we know what the discourses in the ECD field are to enable us not to treat ECD zero to four (0-4 years) like Grade R to Grade 3, we need to know what the differences.

The presentations gave us insights into the magnitude and importance of the work taking place in the field, and also the importance of evidence-based interventions.

Then how do we respond to all of this? In the mission and the vision of the Centre of excellence, the Centre commits itself to respond to the National Development Plan, the 2030 Vision, and also to the Provincial Development Plan. The Minister talked about the University of Fort Hare having produced giants in South Africa. And we, as ECD, as people who are role players in ECD want to produce giants, will see the greatness of the giants if we nurture the calf, because the calf will grow to be a bull.

The ECD Centre at Fort Hare is responsive to the National Development Plan and the Eastern Cape Provincial Development Plan. We want partners so that together we can invest in our children. Currently what are we doing as the University of Fort Hare ECD Centre? The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Obi, spoke about the structures that we have established so far. Those are structures for implementation, those are structures for accountability.

He mentioned that we have a transdisciplinary working group. It is a multistakeholder structure. We appreciate the fact that there are



multiple voices, and also that our approach into ECD provisioning correlates with the Centre's transdisciplinary approach.

We have people from the nursing sciences, we have NGOs, we have people from the government, it is a multistakeholder meeting. And our theme today also states that: there is multistakeholder collaboration in ECD, let us join the dots. Because as the ECD Centre of Excellence we want to move from an informed position in terms of what is happening in the field.

The people who have presented have joined the dots for us. They have joined the dots for us so we are trying to establish a community of practice, a community of implementation, a community of evaluation, a community of accountability. We have to be accountable to you so that we can be accountable to the

children whose future is in our hands.

Collaborations and the establishment of partnerships is one of our key pillars as the ECD Centre. We rely on you that together we can contribute towards making sure that a South African child is well equipped and is ready for the world.

I will quote what the Minister said in one of the items packaged for this symposium:

"I therefore urge all of us to work together to make today, today, better than yesterday and tomorrow the best day ever."

Let us make today for our children better than what some children experienced yesterday, so that tomorrow for them could be the best day ever.

ECD RESEARCH – THE CRITICAL GUIDE

MR MZOLI MNCANCA M.ED

Student supervised by
Professor Chinedu Okeke,
Education Faculty, UFH.



Fatherhood and ECD

I am going to talk about fatherhood in the context of early-childhood education or early-childhood development. I have a little story that I want to share with you. A child asked his father, what is a man? The father replied, a person who takes responsibility for his family and his house, and takes care of them. Then the child said, I hope I will be a man like Mom one day.

This little story shows the confusion and the dangers of the lack of positive fatherhood in the lives of children. To give you a little bit a background about my research, I presented a Master's thesis at the University of Newcastle in Australia in 2015 and the title was, "Black fathers' perspectives on strategies to encourage men's involvement in the education of their zero to six-year-old children in Duncan Village".

Duncan Village is just around the corner, for those who do not know, it is here in East London. Now why do I want to research fathers in early-childhood education? Why is it important for fathers to become involved? We now know that by the age of three months babies know that they have two parents, a father and a mother. And in the first few hours after birth, a baby is primed to react to the father's voice. That is some research coming from the field of neuroscience and one of my supervisors, Prof Fletcher, is in the Faculty of Health Sciences. So he has done a lot of research about ECD from a neuroscientist's point of view.

The way that fathers interact with a baby can literally shape the structure of a baby's brain development, so it is very important that fathers are involved with young children. And we also know that 80% of the development of the human brain takes place before a child reaches the age of four. Despite these very important findings we know that in the case of South Africa, only 36% of children between the ages of zero and four live with both parents. And in most cases, in fact, in about 93% of the cases both parents are still alive but the child lives with only one parent.

So fathers are very important. There are also some other benefits, like academic benefits. Children whose fathers are involved in their lives do better at school than those children whose fathers are not involved. Which means children from single-parent households are likely to perform poorer than children from, who stay with both parents.

Why did I want to research black fathers in particular? Because the literature has been developed mainly in the western world. There is a lot of research done in the western world and there is very little research that has been done in Africa; so the ideas are very Eurocentric – the ideas around fatherhood, and fatherhood are conceptualised in the nuclear family, where everyone is present, the mother, the father and the child. But here in South Africa or maybe in sub-Saharan Africa we see fatherhood as an extended responsibility among different family members, male family members. So the Eurocentric approach is not adequate; it is insufficient to explain the reality in our South African context.

I will not go into the eco-cultural, theoretical framework and how it relates to the study of black fathers. And the other problem with using



the Eurocentric approach is that it is used as a benchmark to assess the involvement of black fathers. And then we say, this father is present; that one is absent. This one is good; that one is bad.

And in most cases if you read the literature critically, you see that the good father, or the present father, is the one who represents these Eurocentric frameworks and the bad father is the typical black father. That is how I saw the literature when I was trying to look for black fathers in the literature. It is very difficult to find them as well.

And, therefore, if we use this framework we can sometimes fall in the trap of perpetuating negative stereotypes. And in any case, if you look at Europe, the family patterns are changing even there because according to the Rand Corporation, which is a global think

tank on policy issues and economics, even in Europe the family patterns are changing.

About more than a quarter of children between the ages of zero and four in UK live in single-parent households. In South Africa it is 36%, in the UK it is 27%. So these Eurocentric frameworks are becoming outdated, even in Europe. So they cannot be sufficient in our context.

I am just going to touch on the research methodology. Basically I went to one preschool in Duncan Village and they recruited ten fathers who became participants. All these fathers had children between the ages of zero and six who were attending preschool, and I used interviews to collect data. Now I am just going to present research question number 3: what must be done in order to encourage the participation of fathers in early-childhood

ECD RESEARCH – THE CRITICAL GUIDE CONTINUED

education? So the next slides will focus on that aspect, research question number 3.

These are the findings. The findings from my study speak to why we are here today. We are here because we are trying to build a multistakeholder collaboration in ECD, and this happened to be exactly the same sentiment that the participants of my research raised. They said, they wanted any initiatives that were aimed at encouraging fathers to include us, to include the community, to include SGBs, to include teachers. They should be holistic; they should adopt a holistic approach.

And the other finding was that many fathers see themselves as breadwinners. That is why I had a theme that stated, my job is to put food on the table, and they did not see themselves as naturals and carers of children. They did not mind helping children with homework. They said, I am involved in my child's education because I pay school fees, because I buy a uniform. So they were in a way trapped in that ATM-fatherhood paradigm where being a father is to provide, provide, provide.

And now we talk more about a term called "father sensitivity," which means fathers should also care, they should not just provide and teach their children how to be strong and how to defend themselves, maybe, in school. So they suggested these strategies. The fathers said, schools should start collecting biographical information because when they register their children in preschools, they said some teachers do not even ask their names or whatever.

They only take the details of the mothers. So they said, we want the teachers to take our details; we should be invited as fathers. A

letter should say, "father," they said, if the letter can have the name of a father, for example, they would come.

They also said preschools should not be islands. They should work, they should forge strong ties with the communities, because in some cases there could be a preschool in Duncan Village but there is nothing that connects that preschool with Duncan Village. The principal does not live in Duncan Village; the principal is not aware what is happening in Duncan Village and so on. So they thought that some preschools operate on their own.

So fathers also want to do class visits, they want to interact with SGBs and importantly, they thought that social workers should also become more involved because in Duncan Village, just like the other presenter said, there are many cases of child abuse, child neglect, and so forth.

This is the last slide that I am going to present: the implications for ECD. Now I am asking the question, is the ECD sector as a whole ready for men? Or do you need training? Yes, actually, I think the ECD sector does need training because in Australia, for example, they did a countrywide study where they found that many teachers are actually not ready to work with fathers, to interact with fathers, and they did not know how to talk to men. And they came up with an initiative called "Father Inclusive Practice" where they actually taught early-childhood practitioners how to deal with fathers, because they are not used to it.

And then when it comes to the implications for the ECD Centre, Doctor Sotuku, my question for you is, how urgent and significant will fatherhood research be in your centre?

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ECD

DR JENNY SHUMBA
 Post-Doctoral Fellow,
 Education Faculty, UFH.



Improving access to ECD

When you talk of access, at its most basic level it is about getting into the system, getting them into the system. The “them” that we are talking about are children. They are better off out there, out there in the school than at home. At least I think it is safer for some, though it might not be safer for others because as has been said, you heard about the structures, you saw the structures up there that revealed ECD centres. Some do not really have the two doors that are needed by our Minister, they are just rondavels and some are containers, which really are not weather-friendly.

But when we talk of getting them in, do they remain there? That is retention. And what about the quality of the experiences they get there? That curriculum that was referred to, Doctor Sotuku is going to have a standard curriculum for all ECD practitioners and centres or not, but she has just told us that everything will be standard. Retention and quality issues can bite back and affect access in a negative way.

I think when there is low quality in an ECD centre you realise, even if you start with the food, it is not well cooked. The next day you withdraw your child, the child does not access the programmes there. Literature poses that access to ECD has improved significantly. However, there is still room for improvement. We have seen that there is this target of achieving universal and equitable ECD by 2030. We are still a few years away; we still have a few years to cover that but you know,

15 years or 14 years, it is now 14 years, I think, is not a long time. So we really need that collaboration to get there.

For us the long-term benefits are why we really need to do research on this and improve the access of children into ECD centres, any school learning is said to improve health, nutritional status, the mental development, and one that really interested me, was that it also contributes towards reduction of fertility rates. I ask myself how? They say, children between ten and eighteen who have accessed ECD centres really delay being mothers. We are here to prove that. But it is stated in literature.

Then we also have the proportion of children who are younger than five years of age who are underweight, declining as the preschool coverage increases in a country. We have heard that, when they access the ECD centres they are provided with food and the Minister actually said, they need that 365, maybe and a quarter, days to get that.

The messages that come out that really delibitate access into ECD centres are poverty, poor infrastructure, and low quality. All those poor infrastructure issues can also impact quality. The prohibitive fees that one really, I would say, somewhat prohibitive fees, which start from R10 to maybe R300-and-something but people are not equal. Some cannot even afford the R10 per month.

Then we have the Eastern Cape context. The unregistered centres normally fail to access subsidy because of the requirements that are still maybe a bit tough on the rural folk; the rural people that we are aiming at because our research is mainly focused on the rural areas. Our research efforts, we have had lots of research projects on ECD but at the moment in Alice, we are really looking at this

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ECD

research, we are looking at provisioning of early-childhood development and we really are focusing on rural centres.

We would see that the government has in place good policies, we have heard some of them and they are really good and would actually improve access. The policies are being implemented but our question is, do the policies address those factors that we talked about, the impacting factors. What is the gap between the policy framework and what is happening on the ground?

And then what is the situation of children in rural areas? What is it really? Our areas of focus for this current project, is analysing the ECD policies. We are also looking at the factors that influence the implementation of ECD policies, the challenges faced by practitioners then the extent to which ECD centres are resourced is another problem area. We also

are looking at how the children with special needs are catered for in the centres. What is the curriculum content coverage? How ECD implementation can be improved so that the children can access these centres. The management of ECD programmes, the state of ECD dominant sectors, what is happening, because we are saying there is collaboration between the Social Development, Health, and the Education Department. What social, psycho-social support do we give in ECD? This covers the practitioners; it covers the children, because they are exposed to so many things. It also covers the parents.

So in conclusion we are saying, this is for us all. It is multisectoral so it calls for everyone, all hands on deck, to try and improve access. However, we have started collecting our data with teachers here and there, and a bit of injection in terms of resources might be needed.



LITERACY PRACTICES IN ECD

MS LULAMA KAHLA
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Empirical evidence that reflects the needs in ECD in the Eastern Cape

How can this research inform the purpose of the UFH ECD Centre of Excellence?

This is a study that was done in Australia, submitted at the University of Newcastle. First of all, before we talk about the Fort Hare ECD Centre, the management saw the need of sending us to Australia, Mr Mncanca and I, to spend some time at the university to learn. When we left South Africa we were not ECD practitioners. I was working in foundation phase and it happened that we were also the guinea pigs at University of Newcastle, because we were the first group.

The best part of the project was that we had in our team, among the classmates, the Directors of the Centres and spending time with them throughout the year and going through those curricula, both the New Zealand and the Australian, it helped us to manage to cover all that was missing, which is going straight to Masters and not understanding the undergraduate.

Which literacies are important? I am posing that question because my study is trying to show to practitioners that the literacies are not for us as teachers. The literacies are for children. I want you to see the gaps and maybe it would answer some of the questions that we have been asking for the past two decades of why we are teaching but children cannot read and write.

Firstly, let me look at the focus of the study. The study seeks to understand the early-childhood educators' beliefs and knowledge about literacy development. Beliefs are based on the practice in classroom and how much knowledge there is on literacy development, how consistent that practice informs what they do in classroom, and how they view children's learning environments in early-childhood centres.

Let me explain why I am doing the study: literacy has shifted. When we spoke of literacy in the past two decades, we were talking about reading and writing a text, and now we move to several meanings of "literacy". We started to look at literacy in technology and mathematics, even visual literacy, and multi-literacies. And now we have cellphones, which we as adults are not comfortable to bring into our classrooms because we know that there should be a basic skill for reading and writing, and we forget that time has shifted.

We are starting to talk about critical literacy, where we look at the literature in the classroom as the textbook that is prescribed. Now we are moving away from the textbook, reading the textbook, and we prefer to buy the manual that is summarising the story. So we are losing that depth of learning new concepts, understanding the setting, the language that is used by the author, and we want to describe the book rather than to be critical to the book.

My research question was how do early-childhood educators' beliefs and knowledge consistently inform their development of literacy, learning environments? What do early-childhood educators believe and think literacy is? What factors help educators to plan and implement literacy-based learning experiences? How do educators find out about literacy learning environments in children's

LITERACY PRACTICES IN ECD CONTINUED

homes? What range of literacy experience and environments do early-childhood centres provide? Those were the questions I asked.

It managed to take me through your schools that you are working in, and that informed my study. That is the collaboration we are talking about.

The two case studies were about two educators, ECD educators, and teaching four to five-year-olds. I attended their classes at two centres in and around the East London township. I looked at Duncan Village, where we know that they teach in certain conditions. These are the tools that I used for the research. There was a semi-structured interview with classroom observation because it was important for me to see the practice.

What I found was that both educators used the resources to the best of their ability. They are willing to work. And I know they are sitting here, the ECD practitioners, they always go an extra mile. But they lack the relevant background education, financial support and resources to develop children's literacy knowledge, understanding and skills because of those factors.

Both educators' beliefs, knowledge and skills with regard to literacy are based on their limited training and limited resources. This morning we were talking about limited training and the resources that are not available. And then again, they recommended telling and communicating as the preferred method because it is very informal and it allows children to be free, and they are able to talk and build their confidence.

They also held a very strong belief that this is the appropriate time for children to be ready to read and write; they acknowledge that there is listening and speaking before reading

and writing, in which some of the people who are teaching literacy are leaving children not being able to brainstorm what they know and what they do not know. And they both seem to be addressing the sociocultural elements of their children's lives in a limited way, but not yet fully accessing the funds of knowledge as a teaching resource.

There was no data generated. Both educators recognised the need to capacitate their knowledge in teaching literacy in the early years, which is a strong appeal to upgrade their qualifications as they can enrol at the University.

These findings point to a number of issues that raise opportunities for further research. Findings indicate that early-childhood educators have not been exposed to ideas about teaching literacy through a number of different approaches that allow children to make choices depending on their learning styles and sociocultural experience. There is the need for teacher training for early-childhood educators from specific language point of view, using an instructional approach.

The second one, educators, early-childhood educators or teachers and lecturers should guide the training and curriculum planning of reading and literacy development for early, emergent literacy. This is further research about early literacy development, to develop locally contextualised research tools. We do not have the tools.

One important focus of research could be to investigate the transition from preschool to school, to investigate the similarities and differences in literacy teaching and learning in preschool and Grade R classes.

The research does not go refute other research. The lack of knowledge of teaching literacy in



the early years had become a call to the entire world. Because of the fact that literacy is a complex social practice, educators need to be trained so that they match the needs of the 21st-century classroom.

The last, but not least implication, however, is that this study informs early-childhood research from a contextual teaching and learning perspective in South Africa.

JOINING THE DOTS – PANEL DISCUSSION

FACILITATOR: MR Bongani Magongo: Executive Director: Research and Development at the NDA



PANEL: MS Tabisa Bata: Masibumbane Development Organisation; DR Namhla Sotuku: Director, ECD Centre; MS Musa Ngcobo-Mbere: Department of Social Development, National; MS Lulama Kahla: investor, Fort Hare; MR Mzoli Mncanca: Master's student. University of Fort Hare

The panel discussion on Joining the Dots discussed the contributing issues that needs to be addressed to improve the provisioning of ECD services for the 0-4 years, especially in the Eastern Cape. This was to provide information on gaps that exists to ensure ECD service excellence. The following thematic issues were paused to the panel which was identified as gaps within the current ECD programme:

- Exclusion of children with disabilities in the current ECD centres programmes
- Compliance to health and safety standards of most ECD centres
- Collaboration and coordination with other departments to increase access to ECD services
- Training of ECD practitioners to ensure quality education at ECD Centres
- Increase demand of ECD services due to migration

Theme 1: ECD Centres and disabilities

There are over a million of disabled children that are not in ECD centres due the design and application of the programme. There a variety of reasons that children with disabilities are excluded, some of the reasons are related

to myths and stereotyping that these children are a curse therefore they must not mix with normal children, the centres themselves are not equipped (infrastructure) to deal with a range of disabilities (diverse needs) therefore such children will not be accepted; that the practitioners themselves are not skilled to handle and educate children with disabilities and last, that the curriculum for ECD learning is not structured to accommodate children with disabilities.

The panel proposes the following point on how to respond to these gaps:

- The Department of Education is doing some work regarding the school going age of children in terms of sign language, they are working with the University of Witwatersrand who are running a programme for deaf children. This initiative will close the gap on how ECD responds to disability needs.
- The new ECD policy, as stated earlier, requires that if a mother gives birth to a child who has a disability, that child should be tracked in terms of the intervention and services so that all the people who are relevant in terms of assisting that family are part of the package, or the basket of services to be given to that family.
- When a disabled child is born there should be tracking systems to ensure that the child does not slip through the cracks. The ECD centres should be vehicles to support and monitor the child road to health-monitoring visits. The ECD centres must also be used as information centres for mothers to know the importance of pre-natal care so that early detection of disability can be detected and the ECD centres are prepared to handle the child when born.
- The ECD centres must have people or staff with some of disability skills to ensure that

they can deal with all forms of disabilities that may affect children. Physical disability is easy to see but there are other disabilities, like speech, mental and others that are difficult to detect early, ECD centres should work with the people who are relevant in terms of speech therapy and all the other therapies that are needed.

- There is a need for regulatory process for neglected and abused children with disabilities as one response, the other possibly is an issue of values, it is an issue of social awareness, of how we interact with each as human beings, about getting into learning circles so that one can debunk ignorance around how we should treat another human being, and start constructing the moral basis and the ethical basis within our learning and teaching interactions about how to treat each other. It can perhaps take time to be rectified, but it is a fundamental response to children being left and chained and so on.

Theme 2: Compliance with health and safety standards (ECD Infrastructure)

Many ECD centres in the Eastern Cape, particularly in rural areas, are not complying with the health and safety regulations. As a result these centres cannot be registered and they are consequential excluded from receiving the child grant. The ECD infrastructure proposed in the policy cannot be afforded in a short space of time, whilst there are many ECD centres in rural areas that does not have even structures that can be given provisional registration. This excludes children from communities with high poverty levels from accessing ECD services, yet ECD services are critical for poverty eradication at they are the backbone for increasing the chances of children education achievement.

The panel proposes the following point on how to respond to these gaps:

- The ECD audit should also focus on holistic needs, where are the gaps, and then how do we have a phased-in plan to address those needs. The compliance to health and safety standards includes the status of the infrastructure in accordance with the Children Act. The audit then provides the information for long term planning to improve the status of ECD Centres.
- The National Development Plan provide up to 2030 to address issues relating to compliance to health and safety standards in ECD centres. We therefore need to have a phased-in plan to deal with this issue. Working with municipalities is very critical. COGTA, is very critical and is part of our core departments in terms of dealing with the issues of Early Childhood Development. We cannot make plans for the municipalities outside their planning processes, that is why we have to work with people who are on the ground to deal with this issue. In KZN, for instance, they have social workers there and they plan according to what the needs are in their wards. And the type of model, this model should be adopted and used by the whole country, to be able to address the needs of children.
- The improvement of infrastructure: the department of social development will get a conditional grant from Treasury for 2017, however, it will be accessed for use in the 2017/18 and 18/19, to assist the ECD facilities that are partially registered to get full registration.
- Partial registration is not just about infrastructure, it is about a lot of different things that need to be in that ECD facility so that we can raise the standard to an

PANEL DISCUSSION CONTINUED

acceptable standard, and not compromise the safety and care of children. Because there are certain basic things that have to be there in terms of safety, in terms of hygiene and in terms of nutrition of children.

Theme 3: Collaboration with other departments in increasing access and quality of ECD services

There is a need for the Department of Social development to work closely with other departments on dealing with challenges of the provision of ECD services. For example, there are schools that have been closed down by the Department of Education, with good infrastructure that can be used for ECD services; The Department of Health is key in ensuring that children (0-4 years) are immunised, get nutritious food and the health and safety standards are promoted; The Local Government should be engaged to look after the infrastructure and provide space for building sustainable ECD centres in communities. The Higher Education Department must ensure that ECD practitioners are properly trained and qualified to teach children at ECD centres and that ECD Practitioners are professionalised with standards of practice.

The panel proposes the following point on how to respond to these gaps:

- The Department of Education and Social Development would need to have a close collaboration on this programme. There are numerous requirements for ECD centres to register, generally they have to register as on-profit organisations, which have their own reporting and financial duties, and then they also need to register a place of partial care, according to the Children's Act, which has also their own requirements, they have to register their ECD programme, which is

actually what they present. This needs to be streamlined so that these registration processes do not hinder the expansion of ECD services to more children, especially the poorest children.

- The streamlining of the registration processes would benefit everyone. It will benefit the Departments in terms of cost-cutting the processes and it benefits the service provider in terms of the many registration processes and reporting that they have to do.
- There is a need to work with the department of health environmental inspectors, they have specifications for spaces inside a classroom, for example, they will say, the space inside the classroom of one child, must be one square metre, however, the policy proposes to be 1.5 square metres. This has a direct effect on how many children you can enrol in a centre, collaboration with the department of health is important as we implement this policy.
- There is a gap somewhere because usually people who move from rural areas are the ones who end up in informal settlements because they do not have formal housing. There are programmes that are dealing with informal settlements in provision of infrastructure with the Department of Human Settlement this has to be taken into account to deal with access to ECD services in those spaces.
- Foundations such as Hollard Foundation, for instance, they are focusing on the childminders. A collaboration with government is essential because they are focusing on the childminders in informal settlements, and training them to use whatever resources they have in those informal settlements, to be able to provide

good services to those children in terms of nutrition, in terms of safety, in terms of training the childminders in those facilities. So there are pockets of good practice happening and that is why we have to also look at best practices that are taking place to learn and spread them around the country.

- On the issue of the standardised curriculum, the Department of Social Development is working with the Department of Higher Education and Basic Education. There is an intersectoral forum at National, provincial and at local levels dealing with this issue. These forums then provide information at all levels and thus promoting sharing information.
- The curriculum, there is a framework that the Department of Basic Education has developed. It is called the National Curriculum Framework, which they are busy training on. Eastern Cape was one of the pilots, where they tested the programme. But that National Curriculum Framework also includes DSD, so that DSD comes with its own requirements that need to be part of the training of practitioners. Health comes with their own requirements such as nutrition and health of the children, first aid, which allows practitioners to be skilled in a range of ECD requirements.

Theme 4: Training and professionalization of ECD practitioners

The training of ECD practitioners should take into account that children between 0-4 years need other interventions such as health, social services and even safety and security services. The ECD practitioners space seem to be relegated to females, male practitioners are few whilst the role of males in this age group is important as some of these children

come from families with no man. This creates an environment where children learn how to relate to men and understand the role of male in their development life.

The panel proposes the following point on how to respond to these gaps:

- Training of ECD Practitioners is a challenge, we need to unpack the lessons that we learned in working with the training of Practitioners. The first one is age related, for older practitioners with lower levels of education, sometimes they become reluctant to get trained because of the issues of the language used during the training, which is English. And that sometimes they might not be, you know, they might have issues of literacy. The second one, younger practitioners that work with ECD centres, are more receptive to training and they have aspirations to become professionals. So these younger practitioners are the ones with formal education which allows them to get better training.
- The Universities, including the University of Fort Hare's Early Childhood Development Centre of Excellence must develop programmes that provide quality formal training for ECD Practitioners so that the age differences can be accommodated.
- The University of Fort Hare is planning through its transdisciplinary working group to have a Certificate Course that will capacitate members of the transdisciplinary working group in the ECD Centre so that we can be better prepared for all the children, this will be rolled out to other role-players in the field.
- There is a need to investigate relevant models of subsidising training of ECD practitioners, there is a good wealth of

PANEL DISCUSSION CONTINUED

knowledge from other stakeholders or role-players in the field who are training ECD practitioners. It is important to have partnerships with them as we deal with the issues of ECD practitioner training and professionalization so that the already existing practitioners are not marginalised and excluded.

- There is a need to encourage the involvement of males as teachers as ECD practitioners. Male practitioners brings an angle of ensuring that children at that age, are used to see males interacting with them thus create the role models for children future. This aspect will also need some research to be done on it to establish a clear beneficial value of having males as ECD practitioners.

Theme 5: Increasing demand for ECD services especially in urban areas

There is an increase of people migrating from rural areas to urban areas in the Eastern Cape. People migrating to these urban areas they bring their families, with young children which they don't have money to pay crèches. In suburbs where many university students have residential rented places, there is a practice that when these students get pregnant they give birth and dump the new born in the gates of ECD Centres around the towns this has increased the demand of ECD services. There is a need to come with a response to close this gap and respond appropriately to these new demands.

The panel proposes the following point on how to respond to these gaps:

- South Africa is a country that is challenged by poverty, unemployment and inequalities, a country that is challenged by the lack of infrastructure. There are young people that drop children at the gates and we need to start to collect accurate information on the women and those children to establish the extent of demand for such children in the ECD centres.
- The children that are dumped in an ECD, the Social Development be called, which refers to our social workers. They must come and pick up those children because it is their responsibility to protect those children. This should not be a sole responsibility of the ECD, so that they are able to see and assist that ECD about the dropping of those children.
- Social Development needs to be tasked with those so that there is a special consideration for them to be uplifted on the basis of their low level of thinking, and on the basis of what are their needs. So it is important that we consider that we have got centres of disabled people and disability does not mean physical disability but a range of limitations individuals experiences.

The focus should also be rural areas to deal with this issue. So we have to take ECD programmes to the rural areas so that such services are accessible and have the same quality standards as the urban ECD centres. The rural areas do not even have a garage so the infrastructure of an urban area is totally different from the infrastructure of rural areas.



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Mission: To contribute to poverty eradication
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