

Kwa-Zulu Natal Early Childhood Development Community of Practice

Meeting Notes

Durban Teacher's Centre, Clayton Road, Overport, Durban
24 April 2017

In order to promote improved co-ordination and the sharing of knowledge at both national and provincial levels, BRIDGE convened the first provincial ECD Community of Practice (ECD CoP) in KwaZulu Natal (KZN). The purpose of the KZN ECD CoP is to provide a platform for ECD stakeholders based in the province to connect, share, collaborate and innovate to advance ECD. The meeting involved approximately 25 participants including ECD Practitioners, representatives of ECD NGOs, RTOs, DSD, DBE, schools etc.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- (i) Introduce BRIDGE and share more about the National ECD CoP;
- (ii) Define the need for collaboration in KZN;
- (iii) Discuss what role the CoP can play in strengthening ECD in the province;
- (iv) Plot a way forward for the KZN ECD CoP.



The meeting was facilitated by Director of New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation and BRIDGE KZN Champion, Patsy Pillay. Patsy explained that a KZN Forum used to convene ECD stakeholders about 2 years ago, but the leadership collapsed and so the forum was discontinued. Given the current vacuum in KZN, the convening of a KZN ECD CoP by BRIDGE is welcomed.

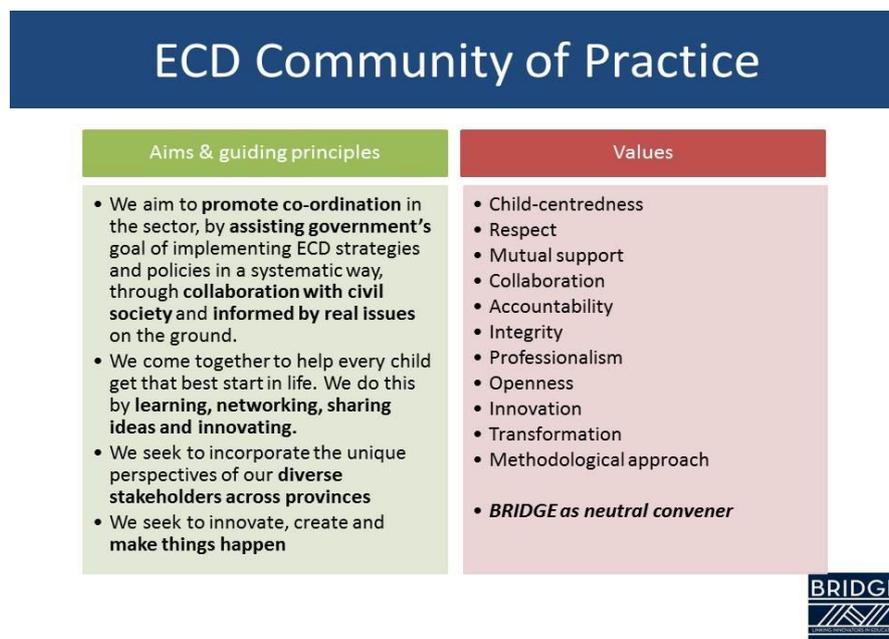
In line with BRIDGE's CoP methodology of bringing all voices into the room, the meeting kicked off with a check-in where participants introduced themselves and described what has brought them to the meeting. Some of the check-in reflections were as follows:

- '...learn more about what is happening in the ECD in KZN and get encouraged by what others are up to'

- ‘It has been a long while since the ECD community has met in KZN, so I am here to listen, share and learn from others experiences’
- ‘...Here to network’
- ‘...Grateful for something local’
- ‘it is so important to know our ECD partners’
- ‘...would like to filter information shared here down to my network of 22 schools’
- ‘...learn and keep informed to empower myself and others’
- ‘...need to know what is happening to be a collective voice to advocate for what the sector needs’
- ‘... we need to pull our experience together because the collective voice is valuable’

Overview of BRIDGE & ECD Community of Practice

To introduce BRIDGE and the ECD CoP, Kaley Le Mottee of BRIDGE presented an overview of BRIDGE, the guiding principles, values and activities of the ECD CoP and BRIDGE’s provincial CoP model. The presentation can be accessed on the BRIDGE Knowledge Hub by clicking here: <http://bit.ly/2oFOtg2>.



Group work: Determining the role of themes for the KZN ECD CoP

The participants broke into four groups to discuss the following questions:

- (i) Is there a need for a CoP in KZN?
- (ii) What role could a KZN ECD CoP play in strengthening ECD in the province?
- (iii) What themes/topics should the CoP explore?
- (iv) Who else should be invited to the KZN CoP meetings?

Is there a need for a CoP in KZN?

All groups 100% agree.

What role could a KZN ECD CoP play in strengthening ECD in the province?

- Share information and network to keep up to date with new information. There is power in the collective group voice for advocacy.
- Work together with government (All parties) to improve ECD.
- Identify the needs and gaps in the sector.
- Learn more about fundraising and funding ideas.
- Exposure to new knowledge and knowledge exchange.
- Filter information down and up – from provincial and national: dual exchange.
- Work closely and draw parallels between KZN ECD CoP and National ECD CoP.
- Represent the ideas of ECD stakeholders working in KZN.
- Showcase best practice and innovative work by KZN CoP members at start of each meeting.
- Keep up to date with ECD developments and feed into these (e.g. ECD Occupational Qualifications etc.)
- Identify collaborative partners for continuous development

What themes/topics should the CoP explore?

- Accredited training/ Mentoring and support
- Government to consider practitioners' salaries and resources and then take us seriously e.g. formalisation of the ECD sector
- Latest info on practitioner qualifications and career path
- Playgroup info sharing
- Training and development and quality control
- Current developments in ECD. E.g NCF for 0-4 years
- Showcase what WE are doing
- Inclusive education
- Open dialogue between DSD and DOE (gov departments) and civil society
- Innovation in ECD and other sectors which affect ECD e.g IT
- Inter sectoral collaboration
- How do we fit into the bigger picture (COGTA)
- Communication strategies – between sectors and keeping abreast of latest developments
- Non-centred based approaches need equal coverage
- Launch of national initiatives to be hosted in KZN
- Fundraising/Partnership building

Who else should be invited to the KZN CoP meetings?

- DoE, Dept of Sports, Dept of Home Affairs, Dept of Environmental Health, Fire Departments

- HEIs & TVET Colleges
- SA ECD Congress
- ETDP SETA and QCTO
- Other KZN Forums
- Pre-school Forums
- SASA
- Local municipalities
- ECD specialists in:
 - Disabilities
 - M&E
 - Quality Control issues
 - Research

General updates

- **Free Play course** www.playsa.org
 - 5 hours of contact training
 - Course online – get Professional points
- **Conference:** WITS university in June: conference on the deaf learner (Kaley to send flyer in follow-up email)
- Next **National ECD CoP meeting** – 24 May 2017
- New **ECD Qualification Policy on higher education** qualification pathways up to PhD
- **Part-qualification at Level 3:** members of the ECD sector were invited to a scoping meeting on 14 April 2017 for Occupational ECD Assistant Practitioner, NQFL3. On arrival members were informed that it would, in fact, be a profiling meeting as the scoping meeting had been completed. This was unexpected. The follow up curriculum development meeting was scheduled for the 2nd-5th May 2017. There is concern that research of the qualification needs of practitioners and the process of consultation with role-players has been insufficient. A Task Team of NECDA, ECD CoP, SA ECD Congress and Ntataise has requested a meeting with ETDP SETA and QCTO to discuss these issues.
- UNISA, Saide, BRIDGE and Rhodes are leading a project called **PIECCE (Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education)** which aims to professionalise the sector by developing a common framework for training of ECD practitioners working in the Birth to Four phase. The specific aim of the project is to develop Standardised Programme Frameworks for the ECCE Diploma and BEd at Level 6 & 7. The consulting partners on the project are TREE, Ntataise, False Bay College and East Cape Midlands College. At the request of the Department of Higher Education (DHET), the consortium was also extended to include 9 Higher Education Institutions. Since this is a collaborative and inclusive project, there will be a number of ways in which CoP members and the sector more widely can provide input into the project.

General discussion re NCF training:

At a NCF meeting last year, training providers were told that there would be widespread training for teachers. NCF training is underway with ECD Centres. Khumbuzile (DBE) stated that each district was sending out invitations to the creches and not the providers. Khumbuzile indicated that she was not sure about what was said at the National meeting regarding the involvement of service providers, since she did not attend the meeting and had not seen the meeting report.

However, at the national meeting, DOE asked for the help of the providers. Khumbuzile was asked to take this up with DOE to inquire about when and if RTO's would be notified about the training.

A Whatsapp group was created after the national meeting – even Themba was on it. And the expectation was that the training providers would assist with the NCF training.

Themba was responsible for contacting the providers about who should be at the workshops.

Ethekwini South (DSD) and DOE – collaboration taking place over NCF between the departments. Mapped out dates in Umlazi area and then moving out to Chatsworth.

Ethekwini North: Pinetown – there is a close relationship with DOE, but they don't know the dates of the NCF training either.

RTOs were encouraged to reach out to the district officials to find out about available training.

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Plotting the way forward

- KZN ECD CoP meetings will take place quarterly approximately 2 weeks after National ECD CoP meetings
- The venue will be rotated between the Durban Teachers Centre and St Nicholas school in Maritzburg
- CoP members will interact and make contact in between meetings via email, Facebook and other means
- BRIDGE will circulate new policies and updates as received
- Next KZN ECD CoP will take place on 8 June 2017 at 10h30 – 13h00 at Durban Teachers Centre (need bigger venue)

Reflections on the meeting

The following words were used to describe the meeting:

- Excited
- Useful
- Informative
- Hope

- Location!
- Link that was missing – has been found
- Building bridges has been established
- Connections
- Sharing is caring
- Inspiring
- Reviving
- Breathing room
- Invigorating
- Engaging
- Team spirit

Meeting attendees:

Name:	Organisation:
Charmayne Forster	Consultant
Chrissie Kritzinger	iThemba Projects
Cathy Bean	Inanda/BRIDGE
Colleen Larkin	Midlands Community College
Geraldine Job	DSD
Glynis Hamiel	WECDF
Hlengiwe Mfeka	SchoolNet SA
Jacqueline Govender	New Beginnings
Joleen Dinge	St Nicholas School
Kaley Le Mottee	BRIDGE
Khumbuzile Mathe	Department of Education
Lulu Pitso	Toyota Teach Primary School Project
Lynette Francis	WECDF
Mary JAMES	LETCEE
Patsy Pillay	New Beginnings
Pierre Horn	Family Literacy Project
Rebecca Wakeford	Midlands Community College
Rookshana Ganie	DSD
Romany Roberts	WECDF
Sammy Louw	Kids Paradise Training
Sandy Naidoo	Sinosizo Siyaphambili
Teressa Ngobese	Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE)
Wendy Dobson	St Nicholas School
Zanele Hlophe	HiHopes

