



## KwaZulu-Natal Early Childhood Development Community of Practice

### Meeting Notes

Durban Teacher's Centre, Overport  
26 March 2019, 10.00 – 13.00



#### WELCOME, CHECK-IN & INTRODUCTIONS

Patsy Pillay, the facilitator for the KZN ECD CoP, welcomed all the delegates to the first BRIDGE KZN ECD CoP for 2019. A special welcome was extended to Ela Gandhi from the Gandhi Development Trust. The meeting was met with a positive attendance by CoP members and created an environment for involvement and sharing to take place. The main feature of this CoP was the showcasing of an organisation called Siyakwazi which is an organisation in KZN that is involved in inclusive education. The CoP also discussed the announcement of the migration of ECD from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education and the implications of this move.



#### UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL ECD COP

Patsy shared on the revised quality tool which would be revealed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2019 at the National ECD CoP. The ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool came about through discussions on quality in ECD at previous CoP meetings. Members were keen to understand what quality in ECD means but also came to the conclusion that quality is different in every context and that it is not a standard concept. In order to guide practitioners to think about the quality of their own work, the method of self-reflection was introduced as a means for practitioners to think deeply about their own work. The project commenced in 2015 with a pilot that was aimed at gathering information from training organisations on what the key elements of the quality tool should contain. The pilot was completed in 2016 and now the quality tool is finalised and will be shared with the ECD community in due course.

Patsy noted that The Collaboration of ECD Networks (BRIDGE, NECDA and SA Congress) has extended the deadline for the surveys that aim to garner the positions of the ECD Community on two major issues: The migration of ECD services from DSD to DBE and the implications of the changing landscape in education, training and development in the ECD sector.





## SHOWCASE-SIYAKWAZI ORGANISATION –UGU DISTRICT KZN

Cathy Mather-Pike, director at Siyakwazi, and two ‘Siaysizas’ (Thuwe Jula and Xoli Ngaleka) spoke about their organisation. Siyakwazi is a community organisation that focusses on giving support to children within rural communities of the Ugu district, no matter what their disability, learning problem or circumstances may be, to help unlock their full potential and overcome any barriers preventing their success. For example, Siyakwazi accepts and assists children with learning difficulties or who experience challenges physically such as those with cerebral palsy and cognitive barriers to learning such as autism.

An ice-breaker took place where the activity involved blowing up balloons of various colours, sizes and shapes. This served to illustrate an important observation: the ability or subconscious tendency to observe differences before anything else and that society often shuns or ignores children that have physical or mental challenges. In certain areas, there is also a cultural stigma that is normally attached to children with barriers to learning or with disabilities. These children are most often kept at home with very little or no mental stimulation especially those with Down Syndrome, Autism and Cerebral Palsy.



### QUESTIONS:

Question: How do you communicate with autistic children who cannot speak?

Response: You can communicate with them using pictures and symbols.

Question: How do we identify children with barriers to learning in the community?

Response: Clinics, parents, neighbours as well as word of mouth. Siyakwazi uses the strategy of employing local unemployed members to assist and prides itself on working to minimise these challenges in children 0-5 years and in some cases prevent learning difficulties by identifying them, diagnosing correctly and implementing further steps.

Question: Is there training for practitioners?

Response: Yes, Siyakwazi can help.



### DISCUSSION: THE IMPACT (POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE) AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MIGRATION OF ECD FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

The recent SONA which was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 announced the migration of ECD from DSD to DBE. The issue was discussed by a group of ECD activists in Durban and further tabled at the

DSD district meeting. There were no clear answers on how this process will unfold. Patsy noted that it was mentioned at the National Intersectoral ECD meeting that the two Ministers had to yet meet and subsequently more information will be shared. Mrs Ganie noted that there is a provincial meeting that will be held this week and more information is expected.

### **GROUP WORK**

The following questions were raised regarding the migration of ECD from DSD to DBE:

1. What happens to the unqualified ECD teachers above the age of 35?
2. Who will train them?
3. Should Grade RR move to primary schools or remain in ECD centres?
4. What happens to NGOs working in ECD?
5. What happens to non-centre based programmes?
6. What about nutrition, which was in-house at DSD? With DBE outsourcing meals this could lead to more corruption with tenders etc.
7. What about the safety of our toddlers amongst much older children?
8. Does the infrastructure (such as toilets) in schools support the ECD learner?
9. Where will the teachers come from, is there a budget for this?

The following concerns were raised:

- The current education system, specifically in terms of grade R has not been a successful model thus far. There is a lack of resources and infrastructure in schools presently. How will schools handle having to include ECD in this already fragmented model?
- The school system is rigid and may formalise grade RR too much and take away from the learning-through-play philosophy.

### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- DBE and DSD need to have clarity on the migration process
- There are a lot of logistical problems especially in rural areas- this will require more qualified and trained teachers as well as more facilities
- The teacher-child ratio in early learning should be ideally 1 teacher to 25 learners
- A pilot school with a separate ECD section with meals/nutrition and health screenings needs to be created



## GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS

- A concern about a meeting held in Amanzimtoti held by DBE was raised. The meeting discussed grade R being moved to public schools. A Department representative noted that there was no place for those teachers that were teaching Grade R in community based schools in the DBE system, therefore a concern on job security was expressed regarding this. Can KZN be linked to national meetings via video link> Requested national BRIDGE ECD CoP to look into.
- The OCTO ECD materials will be made available to NGO'S from the ETDP SETA
- Colleen Osborne noted that NECDA is seeking materials for the new training content for the new ECD qualification supported by UNICEF. Contact Colleen regarding this.
- A reminder about the NASCEE conference (National Association of Social Change Entities in Education) on 28-29 May 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Rosebank, Johannesburg. The conference hopes to draw in NGOS working in ECD.

"It's so good that BRIDGE is taking critical issues to the communities and that the meetings address key issues of concern." – CoP member

## NEXT STEPS, CHECK-OUT & MEETING CLOSE

Patsy thanked all those present for attending and noted the long distances travelled and for their enthusiasm, passion and active participation in the meeting. She thanked Cathy and her staff for the excellent presentation and insight into inclusive education as well commended them for the amazing work done in the Ugu district of KZN. She also thanked the team from New Beginnings for the logistical support.

## NEXT MEETINGS

KZN ECD CoP date - 25 June 2019

National ECD CoP date - 2 April 2019

## MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Name:	Organisation:
Bahle Khwela	JAM
Ben Henderson	Khula Education
Bilkish Vawda	GROW with Pretty Palms
Cathy Mather-Pike	Siyakwazi
Chrissie Kritzinger	iThemba Projects
Colleen Osborne	Midlands Community College
Dedere Welgemoed	Animal Farm Pre-School
Deepa Patel	Grindrod Family Trust
Denise Cordier	Illovo Glen Private Primary
Ela Gandhi	Gandhi Development Trust
Ivan Krishna	JAM
Juue Ogle	Kids Paradise



Khanya Padyachee	Gandhi Development Trust
Kim Rosser	Grow with Educare Centres
Laetitia De Jager	iSchool Africa
Mari Van Der Merve	CCRC
Marlene Pillay	New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation
Melisha Perumal	New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation
Noluthando Jule	Siyakwazi
Nomandla Mbele	Gandhi Development Trust
Nora Saneka	Point and Inner City ECD Forum
Nothile Ndwandwe	Khula Foundation
Patsy Pillay	New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation
Pearl Nyanda	Grow with Educare Centres
Phumelele Ngidi	DSD Ethekwini North
Rebecca Wakeford	Midlands Training College
Robyn McGarth	Singakwenza
Rookaya Henry	Sanctuary of Learning Pre-school
Rookshana Ganie	Department of Social Development
Sammy Louw	Kids Paradise
Shanice Lawrence	Everland Daycare
Simphiwe Mlaba	Imfendie Local Municipality
Stephanie Kleinbooï	Kingdom Life Educare
Tara Rosser	Grow with Educare Centres
Tshepo Letsapa	iThemba Projects
Vuka Zulu	SA Congress
Wendy Shelembe	iThemba Projects
Xolisile Ngaleka	Siyakwazi
Yogis Moodley	New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation
Zama Mthethwa	DSD Ethekwini South

