

KwaZulu Natal Early Childhood Development Community of Practice Meeting Highlights 28 October 2019

Meeting held at Durban Teachers Centre, Overport, Durban

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Patsy Pillay, the facilitator for the KZN ECD COP welcomed participants to the third CoP for the year. The previous meeting was held in June 2019. The August meeting was cancelled due to the provincial function shift dialogue being held in the same week. The participants were given an opportunity to introduce themselves and a special welcome was given to the two speakers.



UPDATES AND EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CoP PARTICIPANTS

- Romany Roberts announced that her school was selected as the first '5 star school selected in KZN' within the GROW franchise. Romany acknowledged that through the networking at the BRIDGE Forum she was able to advance her site
- Lynette from the New Lands Forum noted that at the last BRIDGE CoP meeting, The Unlimited Child representative approached her to do training of their forum membership and they received resources as well
- Patsy reported on the Midlands Digital course: Digital Literacy for ECD Practitioners, which is taking place either from 4th -8th November or 11th – 15th, November at MCC. Contact Rebecca for more information
- Patsy reported on the new short course for ECD caregivers currently available with the QCTO. It carries 37 credits and is NQF level 2

NATIONAL ECD COP UPDATE

The last BRIDGE national CoP was held on 22 October 2019. The CoP included a showcase done by Charmaine Botha which detailed support interventions of an organisation called EduExperts. She then lead CoP members through an activity to explore support in CoP members own contexts.

The main focus of the CoP was on human resources and the Department of Labour presented on this. The discord between the legislations and the realities faced by many ECD centres was highlighted:

- Minimum wage is R20 per hour

- Not all sectors have been exempt from this exempt farming and few others
- The Department of Labour is legally bound to enforce legislations as ECD has no exemptions

It was agreed that:

The ECD community needs to write a letter and direct that to the minister as he has the final say. The BRIDGE reference group will lead this process.

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE's knowledge management role. All meetings, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE's Knowledge Hub, as are any other specific knowledge products relevant to ECD. [Here](#) is the link to this.



TJ & PALS: PRESENTATION

Mike Hishovitz – The Early Education Foundation

Mike presented on the new ECD interactive programme targeting Grade RR children in the context of the South African National Curriculum Framework.

- The languages that will be used are English and isiZulu. It is expected to incorporate other languages as well. Themba Ndlovu is the voice over
- Nine ECD sites have been selected as part of a mini pilot which will start early next year and all practitioners have been issued with monitors to practice. The concept is the brain child of Ashley Lazarus, producer of the e'Lollipop movie
- TJ & PALS combines 'smart' computer technology and interactive software to generate edutainment to introduce young children to a set of animated characters based on familiar classroom objects e.g. rulers, pens etc.
- The concept is based on the essential educational principle of "Learn As you Play".
- Romany's school was selected to participate in the pilot and she expressed that "it's so exciting, a first in KZN, bringing technology into the class. It can help children with learning difficulties too."
- Nomandla emphasised that the programme is not replacing the curriculum but that it will be integrated into the curriculum



HUMAN RESOURCES IN ECD

Ruby Motaung

To view the full presentation, click [here.](#)

Ruby explained that she originally worked for an NGO before she joined Government and has returned to the NGO field as the Director of TREE.

Grade R is part of the Foundation Phase. Ruby drew attention to the Integrated Policy for ECD which was legislated in 2015, chapter 10 in particular talks to Human Resources and Chapter 6 speaks to roles and responsibilities, including that of civil society

Human Resources in ECD relates to:

- Integrating staffing at different levels
- Training and Development
- Motivation - with poor salaries, this is a huge challenge in the field
- Maintenance - once people are motivated, we need to maintain them in the field

HR integrates

- Health promoters and health community health workers
- ECD practitioners
- ECD co coordinators/supervisors
- Childminders
- Cooks
- Toy librarians
- Community based health care practitioners (as per chapter 10 Integrated ECD Policy of 2015)

Challenges facing ECD in South Africa

- Financial constraints (i.e. no qualifications = low or no salary)
- Socio economic factors (i.e. malnutrition and ill health)
- Inadequate training (i.e. no standardised systems to support and monitor training providers – function shift of Grade RR from DSD to DE -8 January 2019 White Paper precursor to this decision)
- Unqualified/non-qualified practitioners (has been no policy to standardise qualifications from birth - 4 years)
- Noted the value of being a practitioner as you are a specialist in your area of work

Opportunities in the ECD Sector

The President made the announcement to expand access to ECD by the introduction of a second year of compulsory schooling – it's a process and will take some time. We need to continue to advocate and improve quality of ECD programmes

Through:

- Organisational design - HR management and labour relations – need to review our organisation to meet new demands
- Change management - starts with an individual
- Infrastructure and assets – for organisations , ECD sites
- Finances
- Information and communications
- Policies - Read relevant policies , encourage reading
- Advocacy - for a better ECD

Where to from here

- Articulation of the ECD qualifications for access and progression - target 2021 – need to tweak our training so that they talk to the standardised document prepared by Universities
- Ruby also spoke about the PIECCE project and the new ECD qualifications expected to start in 2020
- Higher Certificate in ECCE – maybe offered by False Bay College
- Build links with Higher Institution of learning

Questions:

Q. Will there be bursaries?

A. Yes - NSFAS/Fundiswa. The issue of cut off age for applications for bursaries - to be investigated

Q. Who will pay qualified practitioners?

A. Clarified the various Diplomas – Diploma in ECD, Diploma in Grade R, new Diploma in ECCE.

Agreed to forward two key policy papers that all delegates should be familiar with.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Payment for private ECD centres to town planning was highlighted by the representative of Newlands ECD Forum. Rookshana from DSD explained that there is a huge problem regarding rezoning of the crèches. It was recommended that crèches come together to address this issue under the umbrella of the BRIDGE KZN ECD CoP.

Patsy handed out the questionnaire to assist with planning for 2020. Eleven delegates handed back completed forms. It was agreed that it will be great to start off with the DoL presentation. Inclusive ECD was also recommended. The issue of planning an advocacy day and more networking and sharing was also highlighted. See the attached summary.

The participants expressed the need and value of the forum and still wanted them four times a year and they noted that the meeting should allow more time to discuss issues pertinent to KZN.

Patsy also raised the importance of responding to the invite and attending as it impacts on planning and logistics. Romany Roberts, on behalf of the delegates thanked the facilitator for the planning and excellent facilitation of the forum sessions this year and also thanked the team at national office for the support.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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