



## Report of meeting

### BRIDGE's National ECD Community of Practice

27 August 2013

10h00-15h00

GIBS

#### Attendance

Adam Boros	Tshikhululu
Barbara Dale-Jones	BRIDGE
Bonny Ntsoeleng	Ntataise
Colleen Walker	Safe and Sound
Deyana Thomas	CDP Trust
Edward Phillips	Brain Boosters
Elinor Kern	Tshikhululu
Erica Kempken	ProServe South Africa
Gretchen Wilson	Children's ECD Interactive Museum
Helmut Bertelsmann	Funda Afrika
Ken Maxwell	Convenor
Lorayne Excell	Wits University
Mapula Kataka	Deutsche Bank
Mapule Phora	NDA
Mathibedi Nthite	Lapeng Child & Families
Michele Kay	Eastern Cape ECD Forum
Monica Stach	Cotlands
Nthabi Sibanda	Puo Educational Products
Percy Moleke	National Planning Commission
Petros Lyson	Mother Touch Academy
Phamphang Manoto	National Development Agency
Precious Msimango	Joint Aid Management
Riette Els	READ Education Trust
S.I Christiansen (KNEC)	KwaZulu-Natal Experimental College
Sharon Caldwell	SAMA
Sheila Drew	Saide
Solomon Gumede	Kusekhaya Educare and Community Development Centre
Thabi Molete	Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership

Trishana D Soni	SAALeD
Vanessa Mentor	GDE's ECD Institute
Werner Mostert	Space for Development
Zarina Khan	Facilitator

After welcoming all members, Barbara Dale-Jones of BRIDGE introduced the facilitator for the day, Zarina Khan. Zarina led the group through a check in, and then a key community member, Ken Maxwell, said that there have been many apologies from people around the country and that video conferencing is being investigated by the community of practice (CoP) so it can link to other centres. He thanked those who had travelled from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Zarina said that the check in indicated that the community is operating at two levels; one is the level of networking, sharing and spreading information but the other is the next level and acting. She reiterated the commitment of the community to driving the goals of the integrated plan and the NDP, and urged community members to not only listen to the presentations scheduled for the meeting but also keep thinking about what the information will mean for the community and how it should jointly come up with solutions.

## Presentations

The first presentation was made by Vanessa Mentor, Director of GDE's ECD Institute, who spoke about the universalisation of Grade R as well as some broader issues. Policy frameworks, practitioner qualifications and conditions of service, Grade R registration and universalisation and risks and challenges were addressed by her. For her presentation, click [here](#).

Vanessa framed her presentation by describing the role and purpose of Gauteng's ECD Institute. Click on the YouTube icon below to watch Vanessa describing the role of this institute:



In this video, Vanessa says that the ECDi was established as a co-ordinating structure for services to children from birth to 4. The institute is located within the GDE but it works in close collaboration with all relevant departments that work with birth to 4, and as of last year it has taken care of Grade R. She also talks about universal access to Grade R.

Vanessa went on to describe what GDE has achieved and how it is going forward with ensuring universal access. She said that GDE has developed a 0-4 curriculum as well as a facilitator manual and a participant manual. It was agreed that BRIDGE would circulate these using Dropbox. This curriculum has been trialled by some organisations and GDE has received some positive feedback. The institute has also achieved stakeholder engagement through a series of forums. It now has a combined ECD forum on a quarterly basis too.

Vanessa emphasised the importance of this sort of multi-stakeholder collaboration, and said that there is an opportunity for the members of this community to comment on a number of key documents and policy at a national level. The Departments of Social Development and Education

have asked the ECD sector for comments on the Proposed Terms of Reference for the Inter-Sectoral Forum, the Draft Curriculum for Ages 0 - 4, and the Universal Access to Grade R documents. Click on the icon below to watch Vanessa talking about the opportunity the CoP has to comment on some key documents:



In this video, she says that there is a draft policy framework for universal access to grade R, which has been sent to the CoP. The closing date for comment is 22 September 2013, and Vanessa says we as a CoP have the opportunity to provide comments and inputs, and urges the community to use the opportunity. She also says there is a draft curriculum framework for 0 to 4. These have been uploaded on to the BRIDGE online network and sent to CoP members too. Vanessa adds that Gauteng already has a birth to four curriculum.

She went on to talk about the ECDi's strategy to achieve universalisation by 2014, including key targets and activities and time frames, and also the risks and ways in which the ECDi is mitigating the risks. She concluded with a focus on practitioner issues, and with saying that her concern is there is no extra money at either national or provincial level. GDE has a partnership unit that seeks funding, and she suggested going the partnership route to try to deal with some of the risks. Hopefully at the next meeting she will have feedback on a proposal she is drafting in this regard.

The next speaker was Thabi Molete, Director of Programmes at the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG), and she spoke about the provision of ECD training in Gauteng. She explained that she works for GDE, and that GDE has an institute similar to the ECDi, one which is responsible for capacity-building programmes, namely the MGSLG. It is an NPO, and the mandate of the school is broad in that it designs and implements programmes for teachers, SMTs, councils of learners, SGBs, parents, head office officials, etc.

MGSLG started with a cohort of 1940 in 2011 of pre-grade R practitioners at Level 4. It has started with a second cohort of 882 also doing Level 4. As time goes on, with the new CAPS system, MGSLG will split Level 4 so it has a pre-grade R qualification and a Level 4 qualification for Grade R, and is currently looking at those possibilities with the ETDP SETA and the universities. Thabi said that she does not want one qualification informed by two sets of curriculum. She also said that there is a need for capacity building for governing bodies and parents.

In terms of Grade R, MGSLG has not done a lot of training, but the plan is to start at Level 4 and then go to Level 6. The challenge is the issue of articulation as Levels 4 and 5 sit with SETAs and Level 6 sits with HEIs, which don't recognise SETA-accredited qualifications. The minimum requirement for a Grade R practitioner is a Grade R diploma at Level 6, but most universities don't offer that yet. She said that MGSLG has been successful in terms of rollout and is currently doing monitoring and evaluation to look at what works. Based on that, it will start looking at its vision and reviewing and refining its capacity-building models. A member of the community said that this model could be taken to other provinces and asked how to bring other people into the discussion provincially.

The final presentation was given by Saide's Sheila Drew, who spoke about the ECD fundamentals. For Sheila's presentation, click [here](#). She began by providing a context for the fundamentals, saying

that the ECD fundamentals have been a long-standing issue, that there have been varying levels of capacity and a varying quality of materials and that a collaborative reference group has been pulled together by Ilifa Labantwana, DG Murray and Saide, which includes a networking group and a curriculum group. This reference group has some issues to resolve, but has developed a concept. She said that the fundamentals are integral to ECD qualifications pathways, the professionalisation of ECD, the articulation of qualifications, as well as to bridging the occupational / professional divide and we need to think about the fundamentals when considering professionalising ECD. She said that the fundamentals could provide us with a way to think about a higher standard of ECD qualifications and a higher quality in ECD. She said that the capacity of South Africa's trainers to offer this is an issue as ECD trainers are not necessarily capacitated to do this. Funding is also an issue, and we need to be talking across the departments, which is common in ECD. In this case, though, we have to include DHET too.

Sheila went on to describe broad and national systemic issues, and the current context which is that ECD will fall under the QCTO as it is the new quality assurance body for occupational qualifications. She also went on to talk about foundational learning competence (FLC). Click on the icon below to watch Sheila Drew talk about foundational learning competence:



In this video, Sheila says that FLC is registered as a part qualification at level 2 on the NQF and comprises English language and mathematical literacy. There is a curriculum framework that has been developed (not a syllabus) and it's quality assured by the IEB. See <http://ieb.co.za/> and click on adult assessment and then FLC, where there is information on curriculum, learning materials, exemplars, etc.

Click on the icon below to watch Sheila Drew describing the scoping of ECD qualifications:



In this video, Sheila points out that ECD qualifications will change. The scoping process will help us to think about what are the different components of qualifications. For example, a QCTO one requires knowledge, skills and workplace learning components – what changes will have to be made to meet those QCTO requirements, she asks? The ETDP SETA is playing the role of rescoping the ECD qualifications under the QCTO.

Sheila said that a possible solution is that it's possible to set a higher standard with fundamentals which provides a pipeline of teachers who are more confident, and a lever with which to talk to universities. Teachers can be good at language and maths literacy, she said. If we can give universities confidence that learners coming out of our institutions with Level 5 will cope with Level 6, we may be able to bridge the gap between the occupational and the professional. She said that there is thinking that the curriculum framework can be developed into a learning programme contextualised for whichever sector. It's possible to do an ECD FLC that will be either standalone or integrated into the core. There are limitations, and there may be sectors that need more than that

benchmark is offering. There needs to be an emphasis on verbal and writing skills as well as how to give learners academic skills.

We are aware that some organisations have developed fundamental programmes of high quality, she said, and some have said they will share materials and she hopes they will be OERs. They could be developed collaboratively in line with the curriculum framework for FLC and anyone would be able to access them. You would then need to register as a provider with IEB, and providers would need subject specialists as well as to find ways to upgrade trainers to make them subject specialists.

Currently, Saide is co-ordinating the fundamentals reference group and Ntataise and TREE and the ECD Alliance and the ECD Congress are all participating. Sheila said that they want to broaden the reference group and have as many people as possible feeding in. So, as a way forward, she said that members of the CoP should participate in the QCTO's scoping of ECD qualifications, get special dispensation for FLC to apply to current qualifications, begin developing an ECD FLC concurrently with scoping, and broaden the reference group. She said that anyone interested in joining the reference group and the scoping process should contact her at [sheilad@saide.org.za](mailto:sheilad@saide.org.za).

(Note: Subsequently, several community members have emailed Sheila, who has added them to her group mailing list. Some of those are now going to participate in the scoping process.)

### Group work



After these presentations, the community's group work began. The community was divided into three groups; the first to discuss Vanessa's presentation, the second Thabi's and the third Sheila's. Each table had to:

1. Look at key aspects that need further discussion; and
2. Describe what this means for this CoP and whether there is something the CoP should take further.

Thus, the first table considered what Vanessa had presented about strategy, processes, mind-set, resourcing and capacity and practitioner development. The second table considered what Thabi had said about qualifications, articulation and stakeholders. The third table considered what Sheila had said about scoping, teaching and learning, quality and assessment. A world café format was adopted, and several rounds of discussion were held. The feedback from the groups was as follows.

Group 1 said that the system is fragmented and bringing everyone together is difficult. ECD has little or no voice and this needs to be addressed. With community-based groups, various models need to be used, balanced with how we should regulate them. The suggestion was to look at what exists on the ground already as there are examples of success, which are very varied and which need to be considered. The proposal was that the ECD CoP should make inputs into policy development.

Group 2 said that there are discrepancies among the different provinces and little talk of mentoring or evaluation was made neither by MGSLG nor about parent to child and using the parent base, which is necessary owing to diversity. It was suggested that there should be a focus on upgrading trainer qualifications, and there was a warning that there's a danger of the curriculum being prescriptive. There does not appear to be a plan to move from prescription to natural development, it was claimed, and we take responsibility away from the parents. The proposal was that the ECD CoP should learn about what's happening where and consider how we integrate. It was also proposed that there should not be one curriculum model but a "continuous practice model".

Group 3 proposed that the CoP needs to create awareness that scoping meetings are happening and disseminate that information quickly. From scoping meetings, there's an array of activities about the curriculum, and this CoP needs more members involved in scoping. It was also proposed that the CoP could make an assessment proposal to standardise assessment. This proposal could be made to the ETDP SETA. It was also proposed that the CoP send policy documents out wider so the CoP can get the message out as widely as possible. It was also proposed that the CoP can play a role in creating an awareness among parents and that the CoP can keep us informed about the transition to the QCTO. Specifically, it was proposed that the QCTO should be drawn in to share information with us. It was also suggested that the CoP look at the issue of the articulation of training providers, FETs, HEIs, etc. and see how we can work with fundamentals and see if the universities will recognise those. The CoP would like to draw in training providers who are working with universities for recognition about Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications.

Zarina summarised the wealth of ideas that had emerged. She summarised the following topics:

- Practitioner development, continuous practice development, the fragmentation of training, the setting of standards, how the CoP could look at standards and assessment.

- Policy development and policy influencing; there are draft documents that the CoP needs to comment on by 22 September.
- The scoping process requires representation from this CoP.
- Parental involvement and awareness. This CoP can share models of parental engagement.
- Sharing models in general would be a good part of this CoP.
- The transition to the QCTO – this CoP could be a space where we find further information about that.
- A trainers’ forum was proposed.
- Articulation and lessons where people have succeeded.
- Disabilities, etc.



It was agreed that:

1. This CoP will comment on three draft documents:
  - a. It was agreed that a combined response to the Draft Terms of Reference for an Inter-Sectoral Forum for ECD would be sent to the Department of Social Development by Tuesday 3 September 2013. It was agreed that members of the CoP would be sent a proposed version of the response to DSD that had been prepared based on inputs to date. Members were asked to make additional comments by close of business on Thursday 29 August to Ken Maxwell ([kiwi@icon.co.za](mailto:kiwi@icon.co.za)).
  - b. It was agreed that the CoP would comment on the Draft Curriculum for Ages 0 – 4.
  - c. It was agreed that the CoP would comment on the Universal Access to Grade R document.

On these last two points, it was agreed that a sub-committee of the CoP would form and lead the CoP's response to the draft documents. Volunteers were Lorraine, Michele (linking this to the EC forum), Colleen, Riette, Susi and Solomon. It was agreed that BRIDGE will convene those meetings, and that the volunteers will send a draft back to the larger CoP through BRIDGE. This will be submitted by 22 September.

2. Regarding scoping, it was agreed that there would be value in more of the CoP participating. The more voices, the more ideas, it was agreed. Sheila Drew offered to co-ordinate information and asked members of the community to join her mailing list by emailing her.
3. Gretchen offered to create a logo for the CoP. She will send that out to BRIDGE.
4. It was also agreed that members will consider paying a voluntary affiliation fee for this CoP.

The next ECD CoP meeting date is to be confirmed.