



**National Early Childhood Development Community of Practice**

**MEETING HIGHLIGHTS 2 APRIL 2019**

Meeting held at Sasol, Sandton



**Setting the scene**

The facilitator Nonhlanhla Koza welcomed everyone and drew participants' attention to the two resources they received on registration: the new ECD flyer that sets out the CoP's goals and activities; and the ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool. The sharing of the final version of the Reflection Tool was a highlight of this ECD CoP gathering.



Click [here](#) to read the **ECD CoP brochure**

The online version of the **ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool** is available [here](#) as an Open Education Resource.

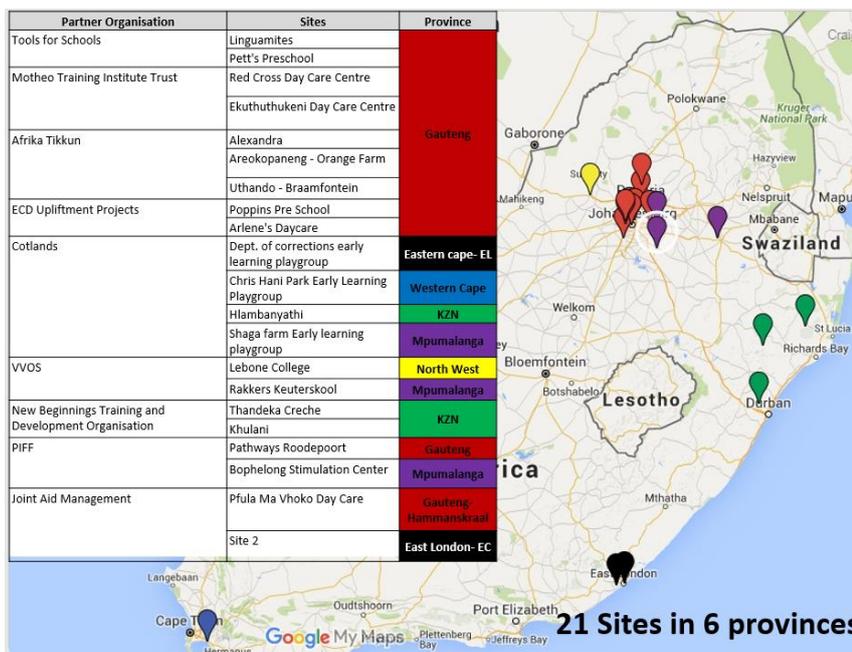


## The ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool: A CoP Collaboration

Melissa King from BRIDGE led this session, and began by stressing the fact that the Reflection Tool is the output of a genuine and evolving collaborative process which took place over a number of years. Key players included the national and provincial ECD CoPs, members of the advisory committees supporting the BRIDGE team, the nine Pilot Partner organisations, and our funders. About one third of the 53 participants in the room had actively participated in the creation of the Reflection Tool, either through taking part in the 2016 pilot of the Tool, or through submitting input and feedback on various iterations of the Tool. Another third of the room was familiar with the Tool through hearing updates and presentations on its progress, while the final third were coming across it for the first time.

Melissa took CoP members through a timeline of the collaborative journey. Discussions on ‘what is quality in ECD?’ began in the BRIDGE Western Cape CoP in 2015, and this topic was then taken up by the National ECD CoP. These discussions led to the notion of four ‘dimensions of quality’ in ECD: quality in Teaching and Learning; quality in the ECD Environment; quality in ECD Policies; and quality in ECD Leadership and Management. As discussions deepened, it became clear that there were different understandings of these aspects of quality, and that these differences were often linked to the varying contexts in which ECD takes place. The relationship between ‘context’ and ‘quality’ is central. It was for this reason that the CoP moved towards the idea of tapping practitioner understandings of quality: the CoP felt that it was essential to gather more insights on quality from the perspectives of practitioners on the ground, operating in a range of different contexts. Reflective practice could be used as both a means of collecting this information and as a means of empowering practitioners to grow their own professional understanding of quality issues. Research has shown that reflective practice is generally considered to be an enabler of life-long learning, increased professional competence and enhanced service quality across a range of sectors.

To see the timeline and Melissa’s presentation, click [here](#)



The Tool would initially be mediated by experienced ECD professionals in the framework of a structured pilot project. The pilot took place in 2016, and included 9 ECD partner organisations, with mediators visiting 21 sites in 6 provinces. The sites ranged from centre-based to community-based, to home-based sites, as well as covering rural, peri-urban and urban locations. A full report on the pilot programme, its processes and all the data collected is available [here](#).

A number of recommendations came out of the pilot process (these are detailed in the pilot report). The most important of these was that the pilot version of the tool needed to be reworked into a simple, user-

friendly version designed for ECD practitioners. Given that this group can range from non-literate or semi-literate home-based carers to highly qualified professionals, we needed to agree on a target reader profile for the tool. The decision was made to write the tool for practitioners whose English language reading and writing skills would fall in the NQF Level 1 to 4 band. This decision was partly based on the pilot practitioner profile, which included a number of practitioners working towards a Level 4 or Level 5 qualification. This does not mean to say that the tool cannot be used with those who might battle with written English text, as it could be mediated verbally or versioned into other languages. The Tool was reworked into its current format, informed by a focus group session with practitioners hosted by Cotlands. It was also agreed that the design should be focused on a print resource to make it widely available to practitioners. This version is available on the BRIDGE website for downloading.

As a prelude to group work, Melissa then briefly took participants in the room through the Reflection Tool file which everyone had been given. She noted that for print versions, the ring-binder file format had been chosen as the Reflection Tool is seen as a living resource ‘owned’ by each practitioner: the intention is that practitioners add in their own pages of reflections and other types of resources, thereby building up a portfolio capturing their own practices and professional growth.

<b>Part 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	The introduction explains what self-reflection is, and how to use this Quality Reflection Tool. It also gives you a dictionary of common terms.
<b>Part 2: ECD QUALITY AREAS</b>	This is where you will keep notes of your own reflections. You are given guidelines on what quality might mean in different aspects of ECD care and teaching. These ‘reflection questions’ will help you to think about what you know and do in your own work.
<b>Section A: Teaching and Learning</b>	
<b>Section B: ECD Environment</b>	
<b>Section C: ECD Policy Framework</b>	
<b>Section D: Leadership and Management</b>	
<b>Part 3: PLANNING and RESOURCES</b>	This section helps you plan for your own growth and professional development, and provides some resources which you can build up.

In **Part 2** of your file each Quality Area has a separate section, set out as follows:

A	Title of Section [e.g. Section A: Teaching and Learning]	
1	What is [this section]?	You will find a brief description of this area and what it is about, and an explanation of any specialist vocabulary or terminology.
2	My Reflections	In this part you will find: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection Questions on the topic</li> <li>Some ideas to help you think about this topic</li> <li>Space to write down your own experiences, views and thoughts on the topic and your own practice. You can add extra pages into the file as you need to.</li> </ul>
3	Looking at my strengths and weaknesses	You can use the answers you have given to the reflection questions to help you think about your own strengths and weaknesses in this area. There are also some ideas about where you might find support.

BRIDGE would like to thank the ECD Community of Practice, and all those involved in contributing to the development of the ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool.

We are very grateful to the funders who supported BRIDGE at different stages in the development of the tool:

<b>ApexHi Charitable Trust</b> 	<b>Deutsche Bank SA</b> 	<b>Ilifa Labantwana</b> 	<b>Sasol Global Foundation</b> 
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*Melissa King from BRIDGE presenting the ECD Practitioner Quality Reflection Tool*



## Group Work: applications and contexts for using the Quality Reflection Tool

The ECD Quality Reflection Tool belongs to the CoP and to the sector, and all CoP members are urged to use it and share it in whatever ways suit their contexts best. Both the hard copy version and the online version are open education resources (OERs) and can be replicated with acknowledgements. BRIDGE will be putting processes in place to gather feedback from CoP members on how they use the Tool with their constituencies in the field.

CoP participants were asked to consider ways in which the Tool, or adaptations of the Tool, could be used in different contexts and for different purposes. Below is a summary of points captured.

User Category	Possible Uses
<b>FUNDERS</b>	<p>For Monitoring and Evaluation purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use to design measurable progress or success indicators in ECD projects</li> <li>• Use to assess change or impact in projects</li> <li>• Could be used as a pre- and post-assessment tool in the context of an intervention</li> </ul> <p>Other purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use in selection/ profiling/ induction of beneficiaries (e.g. practitioners) in a programme</li> <li>• Apply to funding criteria for service providers (e.g. whether or not they will address various quality components)</li> <li>• Provide the tool to beneficiaries as an additional resource</li> <li>• Help funders identify which quality areas need more investment and development</li> <li>• Help funders understand ECD as holistic, in terms of interventions taking all quality areas into consideration</li> </ul>
<b>TRAINING PROVIDERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to the curriculum / plug in to existing course frameworks</li> <li>• Use as a hands-on tool in training</li> <li>• Use reflection to assess whether the course content promotes increased knowledge and confidence in different areas</li> <li>• Use to inform Continuing Professional Development Guidelines</li> <li>• Get mentors to mediate the tool, and to use in building relationships with practitioners</li> <li>• Empower practitioners and create ownership of their own views and experiences</li> </ul>
<b>NGOs OFFERING GENERAL SUPPORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use for needs analysis/ profiling of specific sites or groups of practitioners, in order to identify where specific services could be developed</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use as a general resource for capacity-building in different areas</li> <li>• Catalyse planning and action</li> <li>• Help sites to develop a self-reflective environment in all their activities / promote self-reflection as a value</li> <li>• Use reflection results for gap assessments, which can help inform funding proposals relating to NGO support for ECD</li> <li>• Use as an awareness-raising and advocacy tool in the sector</li> </ul>
<p><b>ECD SITES</b> (practitioners, principals, managers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use as a platform to get feedback from practitioners</li> <li>• Principals could use the tool for counselling/ supporting staff/ capacity building for staff</li> <li>• Use the tool to help practitioners communicate with parents</li> <li>• Choose different areas of the tool as topics for practical discussion in monthly or weekly staff meetings</li> <li>• Use as the basis for a Personal Development Plans</li> <li>• Practitioners can develop the tool as a resource for their own use, and as a Portfolio of Evidence (e.g. for RPL)</li> <li>• Use in joint peer-to-peer reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACADEMICS/ RESEARCHERS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the tool as a launching pad for research, e.g. to understand what practitioners mean by 'play'</li> <li>• Use the tool with teacher education students: e.g. adapt for students' self-reflection in teaching practice/ WIL</li> <li>• Identify gaps in the tool, such as a focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and ICT integration into ECD practitioners' skills sets</li> <li>• Adapt the Tool for different levels of self-reflection for potential students, and for professionals in ECCE</li> <li>• Inform the development of new ECCE resources, such as course content, text books or other learning materials</li> <li>• Provide some data on practitioner views on quality</li> <li>• Link understanding of 'quality' to human resource/ workforce issues in ECD policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>GOVERNMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt the tool into a way of measuring compliance</li> <li>• Different 'quality areas' could guide discussions at district meetings</li> <li>• Some of the content is relevant to IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) and PMDS (Performance Management and Development System)</li> <li>• Mediation of the tool by district officials could give government deeper insight into specific concerns in different areas</li> <li>• Inform funding and development needs, and project endorsement</li> </ul>
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could be versioned into a parent's information kit</li> <li>• Extracts could help with increasing parental awareness</li> <li>• Could be versioned into other languages</li> </ul>

Some questions were also raised:

- What happens when self-reflection brings negative feelings to the fore – where do practitioners take these feelings? There is little trained help on the ground. Is there a need for an ECD ‘hotline’?
- Is the Tool applicable to all programme and site types – e.g. playgroups, home-based and centre-based?
- Is there any way in which elements of the Tool could be used to help standardise ECD practices?
- What impact does such a self-reflection tool have on learner outcomes?

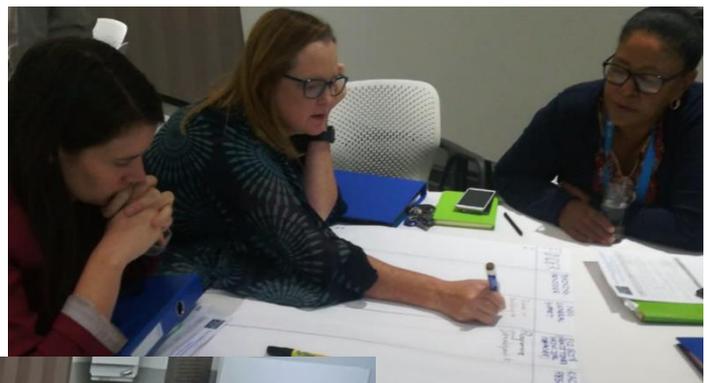
The session ended with a gallery walk to share the insights from different groups.

FUNDER	TRAINING PROVIDER	NGO GENERAL SUPPORT	ECD SITE (PRACTITIONER PRINCIPAL/ MANAGER)	ACADEMIC RESEARCHER	GOVERNMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• profiling</li> <li>• selection</li> <li>• induction of beneficiaries (eg the practices in a programme)</li> </ul> <p>Guiding &amp; Setting of standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicators for M+E</li> </ul> <p>Criteria to inform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funding criteria, grading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD development guideline</li> <li>• ECD set accreditation?</li> </ul>	<p>Source for capacity building purposes.</p>	<p>capacity building of staff</p> <p>develop human relations, attitudes towards children</p> <p>Influence behaviour of children</p>	<p>Evaluations</p>	

BRIDGE - THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SPEARHEADING THIS WONDERFUL PROJECT!!



CoP members during group discussions and gallery walk





## Sector Survey Themes: Views on the Migration of ECD Services from DSD to DBE

### Presentation by Thandeka Rantsi (BRIDGE)

BRIDGE has partnered with NECDA (The National Early Childhood Development Alliance) and South African Congress for Early Childhood Development to form a group/alliance called the Collaboration of ECD Networks (CECDN) whose purpose is to address common issues affecting the ECD sector with the aim of representing multiple voices within the ECD sector to government and other relevant agencies. CECDN has direct access to the National Intersectoral Forum through the Steering Committee, which ensures that a strategic line of communication is maintained. CECDN intends to use networks to harness the position of organisations on the ground to affect changes in the sector, for advocacy and to engage stakeholders.

CECDN commissioned a survey which has been sent out over the past few weeks to address common ECD issues in the sector, and to get the position of the ECD sector on the migration of ECD from DSD to DBE. The survey found some common themes:

- **Responsibilities that should be managed by the DBE, DSD, DOH and any other relevant government agencies:**

#### Responsibilities for DBE

- Training, professionalization and payment and development of ECD practitioners
- Provision of curriculum, resources, programme registrations and monitoring
- DBE should lead and coordinate - e.g. committees/bodies set up by each implementing government agency should be overseen by DBE

#### Responsibilities for DSD

- Support with social aspects of a child
- Nutritional support
- Providing a safe environment for learning (monitoring ECD sites)
- Support to parents

#### Responsibilities for DOH

- Road to health (immunisations)
- Health and nutrition of mom and baby
- Monitoring of health related to ECD sites

To see Thandeka's presentation, click [here](#).

- **General concerns and issues to pay attention to:**

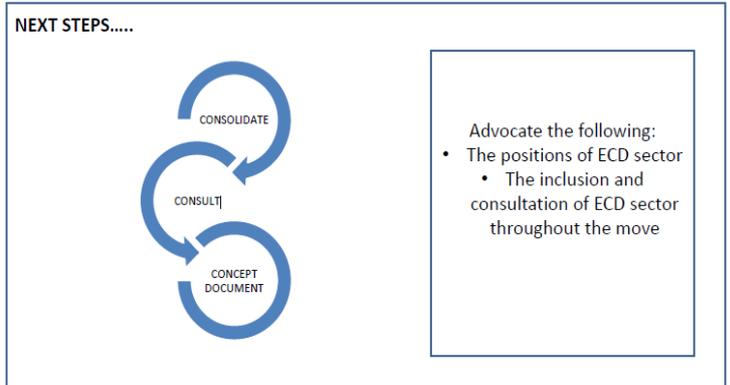
- Capacity – enough human resources as well as the funding for this
- Maintenance of ECD principles, such as learning through play
- Concerns regarding the schoolification of ECD
- Implementation of the move – poor consultation of the ECD sector and poor planning in terms of the structure dedicated to the move

- **The role of ECD centres, home and community-based ECD sites, and other modes of delivery**

- Developmental structures that are already present must be integrated and improved upon
- DBE must consult these at every stage of this move
- There is a role for DBE to monitor and regulate sites
- Sites need to continue to provide a safe learning environment for children

▪ **The impact of the move on training and capacity building provided by RTOs**

- There is a concern surrounding practitioners/teachers qualifications: when the move takes place, will higher qualifications be required?
- Government should contract RTOs for large scale training programmes
- There are opportunities when registering with DHET to collaborate with TVETs who do not have workplace/in-service training.



**Group Work: Deep Dives into the Migration**

Thandeka then opened the same questions in the survey for CoP members to discuss in groups:

<b>Sector Survey Themes: Views on the Migration of ECD Services from DSD to DBE</b>	
<p><b>What responsibility should be managed by the DBE, DSD, DOH and other relevant government agencies?</b></p>	<p><b>DBE-</b> curriculum, coordination function, practitioner training, teacher training, in-service training and infrastructure for centres and schools.</p> <p><b>DSD-</b> subsidy for 0-3, social welfare and child protection, parenting programmes, NGO support and psycho-social support.</p> <p><b>DOH-</b> facilitate registration, environmental health, nutrition (pre and postnatal), nutrition standards and monitoring in programmes and immunisation.</p> <p><b>Other-</b> the role of municipalities-service delivery to ECD sites, funding of infrastructure and health and safety regulations.</p>
<p><b>What are your general concerns about the move and what issues need attention?</b></p>	<p>Concerns about younger children – no provision for age 5 &amp; 6 in legal documents used for registration; the accommodation of 4-5 year olds in school; concerns about play areas with older children; amount of classrooms available; curriculum and the budget for this; capacity to deliver curriculum. DBE is not equipped to support grade R learners; how will they support younger children?</p> <p>Grade R educators not being remunerated by the DBE.</p>

	<p>Communication – there is a lack of communication with the public about the migration as well as within the departments that are involved.</p> <p>The general lack of parental involvement in ECD.</p> <p>Professionalisation – the training of teachers and where this responsibility will lie.</p>
<p><b>What is the role of community ECD centres, home-based ECD sites?</b></p>	<p>Entities should remain, government must not ‘takeover’ from them.</p> <p>These will play a vital role; however, they must be given a mandate.</p> <p>All ECDs need to be legal and compliant – government needs to re-think the requirements for these sites to ensure that they are capable offering the service and maintain the level of education needed.</p>
<p><b>How will the proposed move impact on training and capacity building?</b></p>	<p>There is a need for the Skills Development Act to be amended.</p> <p>Legacy qualifications are about to become obsolete after 2020. Do we need more occupational qualifications?</p> <p>ECD workforce should not be forgotten in the process.</p> <p>Principals should be educated about the ECD environment.</p> <p>Need to strengthen what is already there - DBE must consult and listen by working with RTOs.</p> <p>RTOs can serve as advisors to government.</p> <p>What is expected from RTOs with regard to compliance?</p> <p>There needs to be a stronger focus on parenting.</p> <p>DBE’s continuation of RTO forums is necessary.</p> <p>Balance between quality and individual approaches need to be met.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes (not inputs) needs to take place.</p> <p>Government must not be restrictive and bureaucratic.</p> <p>Readiness for the shift – a common understanding needs to be developed between DSD and DBE about how this will impact on RTOs.</p>

## Updates and event announcements by CoP participants

- The deadline for the survey regarding the migration of ECD from DSD to DBE and the role of RTOs was extended to **Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2019**.

- World Play Day is on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 – we need to advocate getting this onto the UN calendar.
- Monica Stach from the Toy **Library Association** gave the CoP a short overview of the organisation, and also provided the CoP with important dates in the ECD sector.



Toy libraries provide developmentally appropriate educational play materials to early childhood development service providers, parents or children. Toy libraries might offer play and learning sessions, toy-making demonstrations, individual lending and/or lending to early childhood development service providers.

To see Monica’s presentation, click [here](#).

## Check out & meeting close

Closing remarks from CoP members:

“There is a lot of opportunity around these questions and there are opportunities to collaborate, debate and energise the sector again.”  
CoP member

“I like the positive energy and proactive communication!”  
CoP member

“I am excited to collaborate more in working towards strengthening the voice of the sector.”  
Gugu Zulu, SASOL

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

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Beverly Wilson	Professional Childcare College
Boitumelo Mthethwa	Mothers2Mothers
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Cindy Williams	Little People Pre-School and Care Centre
Cynthia Malinga	SASOL Foundation
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Rex Molefe	Motheo Training Institute Trust
Rufus Wesi	SASOL Foundation
Sheila Drew	SAIDE
Robyn Wienand	Preschools 4 Africa
Rosemary Cromarty	North West University
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Sandra Maleke	Creative Training
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Terry Morgan	Thusanang Trust
Wilma Mooi	Little People Pre-School and Care Centre
Wondra Pretorius	Read Education Trust