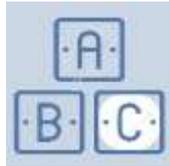


Western Cape Early Childhood Development Community of Practice

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS 22 July 2021

Virtual Meeting



WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

Kayin Scholtz facilitated the CoP and explained that the WC ECD CoP has been exploring the topic of parental involvement and support over the past two CoPs. In the last CoP, we had presentations on positive parenting approaches and parent-child relationship building to achieve optimal child outcomes in the ECD context. To further engage with this theme, this CoP focused again on parents but in the context of building resources and managing databases.

Updates from members of the sector

- The long awaited ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund (ESRF) process has started moving and it seems that the department has seen the approval of the rolling request for the funds. It appears that there will be a second round of payments that will be initiated over the coming months.
- There has been some movement in terms of the ECD vaccination drive. There has been recognition of the ECD workforce, in registered and unregistered sites, as a critical cohort that needs vaccinating.
- Children's Amendment Bill – a technical team has been set up which consists of civil society, DBE, DSD and SALGA and they are there to assist DBE and DSD with the second amendment bill.
- BRIDGE, NECDA and Congress usually collaborate on civil society issues and have been convening to try and come up with a way to engage DBE on workforce issues as the proclamation has been made on the Function Shift. There will be changes for the sector therefore they have been trying to advocate for inclusion of the ECD workforce focusing on to 0-4.
- The Function Shift proclamation has been signed and will transfer from the 1st of April 2022. There is a draft document that the NECT has supported in drafting which outlines the vision of the Function Shift. They are aiming to meet early August for finalisation and will share the document for public comment.
- Due to the unrest in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal, a working group was formed to discuss the extent to which ECD has been affected. The working group has been trying to coordinate the sectoral response to supporting nutritional needs of young children in KZN as the infrastructure has been negatively affected and food prices are rising.

TOPIC 1

SAPPIN Parenthood SA Showcase- Kaathima Ebrahim - Mikhulu Trust



"Parenthood SA" is a project initiated by SAPPIN (South African Positive Parenting Implementers Network). The project aims to develop a holistic, but light touch, platform for parents to access support on anything they may need.

The presentation shared the vision for the project, the first year pilot and how others may work with SAPPIN/Mikhulu Trust on this.

The South African Parenting Programme Implementers Network (SAPPIN) is a relatively new body that was founded in 2018. It is a network of parenting organisations that provide a large range of support services to parents across South Africa. It was formed in the interest of:

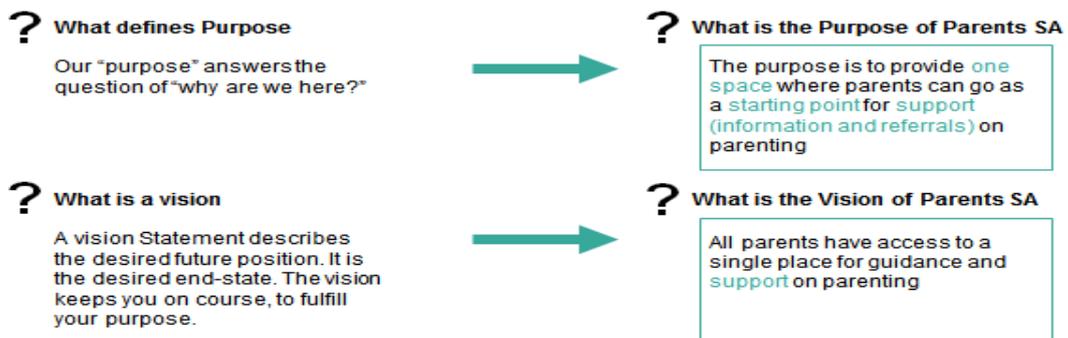
- creating a common voice/message around the role of parenting in education outcomes;
- reducing violence against children and leveraging the theory of change between training and supporting parents and the impact that this has on violence in the home.

The purpose of SAPPIN is to strengthen the voice of civil society working with families through collaboration and shared learning. The vision which is strongly linked to violence against children is that SAPPIN builds a secure future for all who live in South Africa by helping families create warm and non-violent homes for children. Mikhulu Trust is a member of the SAPPIN network.

Parenthood SA is a project that has recently been funded and initiated. The intention of sharing it so soon with the CoP is to get other role-players involved, interested or aware of the work that is going into the project from an early stage and to build interaction with others who are serving parents. The concept came about during the first hard lockdown when NGOs were thinking about how to help the people that they could no longer reach in-person. Many NGOs were looking to support parents through WhatsApp and by creating resource hubs etc. The over-arching notion for the concept was "if there is a way to make it easier for parents to access support without programmes."

The initial thoughts around Parenthood SA:

Draft purpose/vision of "Parenthood SA" – for discussion

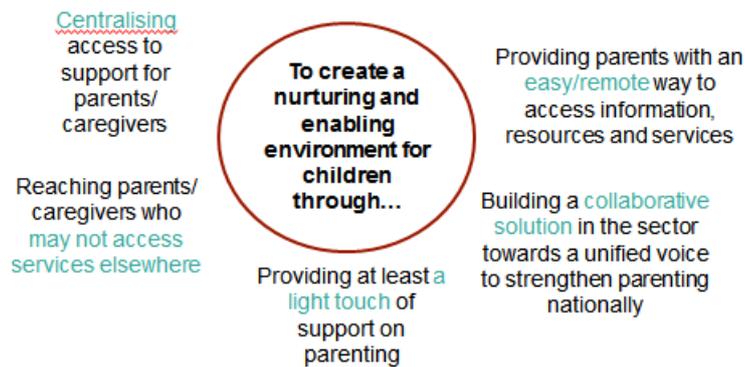


Kaathima emphasised that the purpose is to provide **one space** where parents can go to as a starting point for support on parenting – the purpose is quite general and has a broader vision.

Parenthood SA and it's objectives



Parenthood SA is a platform that provides parents across South Africa with a light touch, but holistic support service. It is a collaborative and digital approach to parenting support.



The project has been funded to look at a pilot/pre-pilot to figure out if parents would be interested in a centralised support system and what this would look like and what it would include.

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

PLATFORM DESIGN

- Design user experience
 - Parent consultations and workshops
- Develop content plan
 - SAPPIN workshops
- Develop brand
 - SAPPIN workshops
- M&E

OPERATING MODEL DESIGN

- Develop blueprint for collaboration and platform management
 - SAPPIN workshops

CAMPAIGN

- Platform launch campaign
- Positive parenting campaign
 - "Celebrate parents"

The platform won't be creating new content but will be a space that holds the resources that already exists.

QUESTION

How would you like to interact with Parenthood SA?
 What benefit can Parenthood SA bring to your context?

Leigh: What about having this centralised but not remote? It would be wonderful if the ECD forum could have a centralised area for parents with the same kind of information that they could find remotely.

Kaathima: This makes a lot of sense and the first step of the project is to ask parents how this would work for them and how can it be structured so that it does work for them and their answers to this will be taken into consideration.

Kayin: I like when the technology matches the potential user-experience as mentioned with the use of WhatsApp. App based processes seem to work better for institutional delivery and WhatsApp works quite well when trying to reach people directly.

Thandeka: What are the things that parents usually look for in terms of resources?

Kaathima: The research that will be done with parents will be content specific and will ask what topics they want support on and they will guide the content that is needed. This is a five-year project and possibly only at the end will it be able to cover all/most of the content pieces that parents are interested in.

"This is going to be a wonderful resource for parents." [Thandeka Rantsi]

Mingnion: Will the different organisations involved in the network each be conducting research with their own cohort of parents?

Kaathima: A user-design company will be communicating with people and parents to understand their needs.

Lydia: In your research questions will you include "what the parent will look like?" as with my own research, often children are parented by siblings or other family members, not necessarily their actual parents.

Kaathima: That is very useful because one of the things that the user designers do is create "personas" and so these insights are useful. We intend to look at a range of parents.

Pam: My assumption is that this is talking to parents of any age of child and how will you ensure that parents of young children are not forgotten (particularly teenage parents) who are often school going themselves?

Kaathima: There will need to be some prioritisation in the next 12 months and we will need to decide on where to start. There will be some initial questions that will ask "how old are you as a parent? And how old is your child?" and then the way that the parent is going to be served will be based on their context. This will be user-driven as parents will come to us with their needs and we will serve them accordingly.

Tara: Please also consider parents of children with disabilities as the primary caregiver.

Kaathima: This will be one of the questions included to parents in order to help them identify the need for access for that type of support.

TOPIC 2



Parenting Resources- Cara Goschen - Do More Foundation (DMF)

Their initiatives focus on young children at a national level specifically around nutrition, early learning and parenting support. They also have various community development projects that focus on easing hunger, ECD and supporting youth through enterprise development in Nkomazi, Worcester, Hammarsdale and Pongola.

The parenting resources platform developed during covid-19 through a two-pronged approach:



RESOURCE HUB

This was developed during the early stages of lockdown where there was a flood of material coming through the ECD space and many organisations were offering their materials to support parents and caregivers. The problem was that this flood of information was overwhelming and parents didn't know where to start which is why this resource hub was set up – to create an eclectic database of early learning resources, psycho-emotional support materials as well as other ECD related resources for principals and practitioners. To build this, DMF harnessed the expertise and knowledge that already existed in the sector. DMF developed a list of websites and apps that focussed on early learning in South Africa. Webinars were hosted with professionals who answered common questions from parents and this was summarised into short audio snippets and written documents were turned into voice recordings in four different languages.

The focus was on making the messages easily digestible and helpful for caregivers. This was to be kept all in one place as a one-stop-shop for parents, caregivers and others. The hub can be found on the Do More Foundation [website](#) and is made up of four sections:

- 1. HELPFUL RESOURCES (AUDIO, INFOGRAPHICS & VIDEO)**
- 2. PLAY IDEAS FROM USEFUL WEBSITES (SOME DATAFREE)**
- 3. HELPFUL ARTICLES**
- 4. USEFUL RESOURCES FOR ECD CENTRE PRINCIPALS & PRACTITIONERS**

What worked well

- 
The way in which resources are uploaded
 Resources loaded onto the site (limited)
 Direct links to the organisations resource page + description
- 
Using private sector partners as distribution channels
 Corporates and businesses engaging employees as parents:
 From factory floor workers to top level management
- 
Other methods of distribution
 Existing communication channels (social media, newsletters etc)
 Whatsapp groups and young child forums
- 
Managing the hub in-house
 Easy uploads and updates (easier than it looks)

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

RCL Foods

RCL foods has shared these resources on their social media channels and through the “Let’s Talk” employees’ app which reaches employees from the factory floor right up to top level management.

There has been significant uptake on the app as well as on social media platforms.

*From post to date

- 
No. of users reached: 8,328
- 
Av. engagement rate: 2.38
 - Anything between 2-3% considered good to great engagement rate
 - Consideration: all organic

*3 month period
 *Current active users: 5,000

- 
No. of visits to this content: 1,833
- 
No. of employees who actively engaged: 1,199

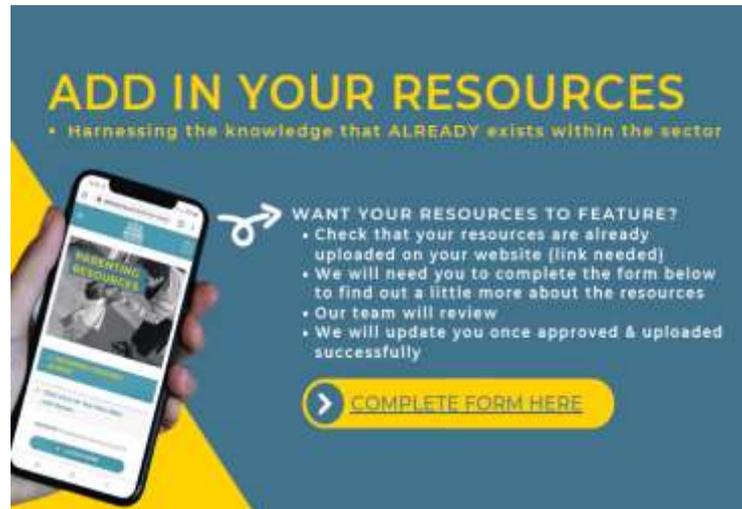
Challenges

- **Limited analytics**- a plug in which is used to measure uptake on the website broke during the initiation phase and took over six months to get right.
- **Zero-rating the hub** is a costly and fees vary monthly based on the usage which makes it difficult to convince funders to cover the costs.

COMMENTS

Pam: There is brilliant content out there but there is very little research on parent uptake and this could be a useful way of us cooperating with the new parenthood South Africa. How do we empower parents to a) know what's out there and b) on how to use technology to download the resources? How do we drive parent uptake and empower them to make use of the resources?

Lydia: The wants of each parent are so different. Covid-19 makes it very difficult to gather this individualised data.



Reos Partners and JET Education Services are embarking on a process to combine their expertise to address systemic challenges in the education sector. Together, they have identified the potential lever of **parental (or caregiver involvement)** in education as an opportunity to significantly improve educational outcomes, particularly in the Foundation

Phase of the child's development. They will be running a series of 4 online capacity-building, prototyping boot camps. More information can be found [here](#).

Thandeka: With the analytics gathered, are you finding that it is more parenting organisations that are using the resources and is it even possible to differentiate this at this point?

Cara: At the moment there are only assumptions and having a website based resource hub limits this type of data for people's protection.

TOPIC 3

Parenting Seminar Working Group Consultation

As a community of practice we have been working towards hosting seminar on parenting. There is a strategic imperative, both because we want to focus on parenting for young children and to identify ways in which to strengthen parent support through networks and organisations in ECD.

Thandeka shared a brief of the concept for the Parenting Seminar:

Elevating the role of parents in ECD Seminar

Parents are the primary role players in the development of their children and bear the ultimate responsibility of providing an environment that is conducive to their holistic development. The pandemic and its on-going effects on children has highlighted further the importance of parental involvement in all aspects of child-rearing and the need to support parents in the current context.

As the BRIDGE WC ECD CoP, we deem it important to highlight this critical role of parents in an effort to initiate dialogue and generate ideas on what parent support looks like and what can be done to expand access to parenting support in SA.

A decision was made to facilitate a seminar. The purpose of this seminar is to galvanise key stakeholders around strengthening support for parents of young children. We aim to promote the importance of the role of the parent and their need for support to grow and develop their capabilities in shaping their children's future and unlocking their potential.

The objectives of this seminar are to:

- identify and showcase what support for parenting exists within South Africa;
- share lessons on what has and has not worked and;
- map what an ideal world for parent support would look like

Our view is that this seminar is only the beginning of a broader outcome to establish a way to strengthen access to parenting support for the ECD civil society and government stakeholders.

The working group, consisting of Thandeka Rantsi (BRIDGE), Kauthar Conrad (BRIDGE), Kayin Scholtz (DGMT), Yomelelani Twetwa (DGMT), Pam Picken (Do More Foundation), Kaathima Ebrahim (Mikhulu Trust) and Faaddiela Ryklief (ELRU) have been meeting regularly to discuss the structure of the seminar and created the purpose and objectives of the seminar seen in the document above. Discussions from the other provincial CoPs have helped to shape the purpose of the seminar and the agenda.

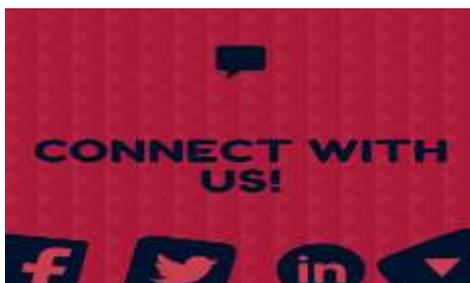
The seminar will be held on 7th September 2021. Further details will also be provided.

UPDATES

- Pam: There is a challenge with the ability to use technology in communities and DMF has been thinking about how to help people with these practical skills. Does anyone know of activities or projects being done regarding this?
- Lydia: There is an organisation called RLabs and they run courses especially for mothers and older people. These courses are free and help people with basic technological skills.

NEXT STEPS

- The parenting seminar and as a result there may be KPs and a follow up seminar. Please contact Kayin, Thandeka or Kaathima if you would like to get involved.
- Next CoP date to be confirmed. Send any topic suggestions to kauthar@bridge.org.za or thandeka@bridge.org.za



MEETING CLOSE

Kayin thanked everyone for joining and contributing to a useful session.