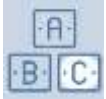




KwaZulu Natal Early Childhood Development Community of Practice

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS 15 MARCH 2022

Meeting held Online



SETTING THE SCENE

KwaZulu Natal (KZN) ECD CoP (Community of Practice) Facilitator, Patsy Pillay, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants to the first KZN BRIDGE meeting. Ms Pillay proceeded to ask participants to introduce themselves and their organisations.

BRIDGE Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme manager, Thandeka Rantsi, gave the following updates:

- BRIDGE has produced a Parenting Programme in ECD Knowledge Product summarising meeting highlights from 2018 to 2021. This product is aimed at organisations that are trying to integrate parenting programmes. To access the knowledge product click [here](#)
- BRIDGE has been brought in to address the consultation process and provide knowledge management services on a project Ilifa Labantwana and the Equality Collective are spearheading. The project is about analysing the health and safety norm and standards to develop a forward looking framework for health and safety norms and standards that are inclusive and attainable for the majority of ECD service providers. To access the meeting highlights, click [here](#)
- A second stakeholder engagement meeting is in the pipeline, CoP members to be on the lookout for communication from BRIDGE
- Migration topic is carried to the National ECD CoP meeting, particularly its implications for the Human Resource (HR) workforce and qualifications. The meeting will be hosted by the Collaboration of ECD Networks (CECDN, BRIDGE, NECDA (National ECD Alliance) and South African Congress for ECD (SAECD)
- Function shift - DBE will not be making any changes in the next financial year. April will be the beginning of the function shift, with no material changes but taking over administration.
- BRIDGE has formed part of the technical team that is reviewing the Second Children's Amendment Bill in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) portfolio committee and the Department of Social Development's (DSD) portfolio committee



UPDATES FROM THE FLOOR

- KZN ECD Indaba is taking place on Thursday 17 to 18 March 2022, there will be speakers from government and civil society.
- Andrea from Johannesburg will be doing a training on the POPI act on 5 April 2022 for ECD in KZN, reach out to Patsy Pillay or Andrea directly if you are interested in attending the 2-hour online course for R250.

- A research report from New Beginnings and Deaf SA, focusing on inclusive education, training of deaf and hearing students is now available to the public
- ECD Municipal Guidelines for infrastructure and support prepared by PPT, click [here](#)



PRESENTATION: LEISEL DU PLESSIS

Leisel du Plessis, Senior Project Manager responsible for the management of special needs housing and ECD programmes at Project Preparation Trust (PPT), a registered trust and NPO, engaged participants on the work that PPT has been doing alongside the eThekweni Municipality to advance ECD access within the eThekweni municipality.

To access
Leisel's full
presentation, click
[here](#)

WORKING TOWARDS A MORE ENABLING ECD ENVIRONMENT IN eTHEKWINI

PPT is currently working on an ECD survey and infrastructure assessments/planning to support the development of the eThekweni ECD Strategy. All work was undertaken in collaboration with the eThekweni ECD Provincial Steering Committee (PSC).

A total of 540 ECD facilities were identified and surveyed (24,548 children) and a comprehensive database was compiled. About 60 centres were prioritised by the PSC (EHPS and DSD). The assessments and improvement plans for these 60 priority centres were put on hold until a more workable procurement system can be found. The ECD Strategy and Sector Plan will be completed by May 2022.

In 2018 – 2019, PPT piloted an ECD Registration Framework in eThekweni North - funded by Impande (previously Network Action Group). eThekweni was one of three pilot sites identified by the DSD and Health for piloting the ECD Registration Framework (gold, silver and bronze levels). 15 unregistered ECD Centres in eThekweni North were identified to test much needed flexibility to include ECD centres in the government system. The Framework was approved and implemented in 2021.

The above mentioned is some of the work that PPT has been working on with the eThekweni Municipality.

Liesel then shared a model with attendees highlighting the role of municipalities within the ECD sector. She looked into municipal multi-stakeholder ECD steering committee, planning, infrastructure, and regulatory matters.

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN ECD

Why involve the local government?

Municipalities play an important role in ECD as it is a national poverty eradication priority, therefore making it critical for the government to understand. The municipal role in ECD is recognised in the Children's Act and is clearly defined in the National policy.

According to Leisel, mobilising municipal involvement in ECD proved difficult seeing as practitioners were unaware of their role in the sector. The majority of municipalities in eThekweni consider ECD to be the responsibility of DSD, with a function shift to the Department of Education (DoE).

The lack of a national intersectoral local government communication and support strategy is not helping the situation, forcing ECD to compete with other community needs.

The roles and functions of the municipality relating to ECD relate principally to:

- Coordinate in close collaboration with the DSD/DBE and other stakeholders through structures such as the Municipal ECD Steering Committee, and the development and utilisation of planning tools.
- ECD planning and budgeting including population based planning, development of a Municipal ECD Strategy, ECD 5-year sector plan aligned with the District Development Model (One Plan), allocation of required resources (e.g. for ECD infrastructure) and prioritisation in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), planning of ECD sites in human settlement projects, etc.
- ECD regulation, compliance and registration principally in respect of: a) environmental health and safety matters, inspection of ECD facilities, issuing of environmental health reports/ certificates for registration; registration of child-minders; b) land use planning (e.g. rezoning or relaxations thereof) and building plans.
- ECD infrastructure/facilities including site allocation, ECD centre improvements to meet minimum infrastructural, health and safety standards, extensions to centres with potential, extensions to/upgrading of community halls, multipurpose centres for ECD services, identification and repurposing of underutilised municipal buildings, and construction of affordable new ECD facilities.

MUNICIPAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ECD STEERING COMMITTEE

Part of the 5-year sector plan includes a Multi-Stakeholder Municipal ECD Steering Committee represented by mandated senior decision making officials from DSD, DoE, DoH, support NGOs, etc. The committee can be initiated by either the municipality itself or one or more departments. According to Leisel, it is important that the committee takes a programmatic and developmental approach to create a more enabling environment for ECD service providers. It should focus on high level collaboration, coordination, population base planning, primarily addressing ECD in low income areas. Dealing with regulatory matters/ bylaws, policies, strategies, systems, procedures, etc., ECD infrastructure response planning, resource allocation, implementation, ECD registration, M&E, etc.

The above-mentioned committee is required in order for ECD to move forward. The committee should be part of the municipal committee structure and report to a standing council. The idea is that whatever is raised in the committee, which has a hundred members seated and includes all of the NGOs and department officials, should report back to this committee. However, according to Leisel, having 100 individuals at this level will simply not work.

The committee should serve as a vehicle for the district integrated ECD forums, which the DSD has been convening.

PLANNING

Planning is required to establish comprehensive, reliable data for a programmatic ECD programme defining institutional roles and effective project pipeline establishment.

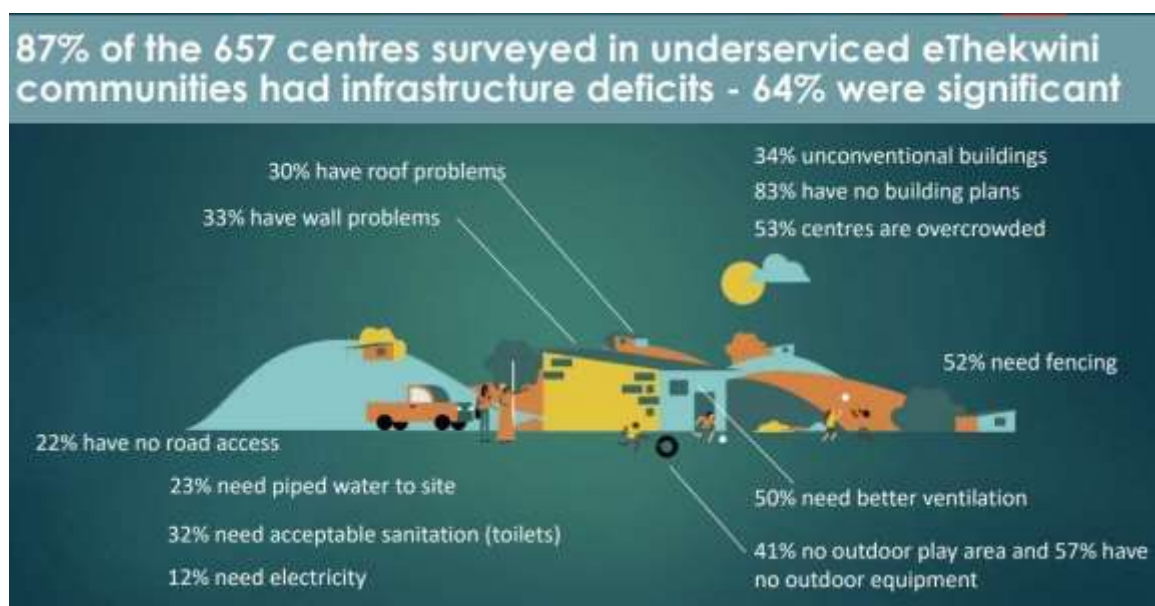
- The municipalities undertook population based planning to improve children's access to ECD services, focusing on low income underserved communities
- Town planning to make sure that there are enough ECD sites when establishing townships (summary of standards and guidelines for the planning of eThekweni social facilities and Open Spaces)
- ECD Strategy adopting a proactive, programmatic, developmental approach to create an enabling environment for ECD service providers
- A 5-year sector plan (eThekweni -initial discussions) in line with District Development Model and eThekweni one year plan
- Pipeline of infrastructure projects, which should be planned alongside supporting budgets
- ECD Model to help categorise which centres to prioritise for improvements
- Allocation of required resources
- All ECD planning to be included in the Municipal Integrated Development Planning (IDP)

Note: 35% of the centres were unknown to authorities prior to the survey being undertaken (DSD / EHPs) – i.e. they were 'off the radar'.

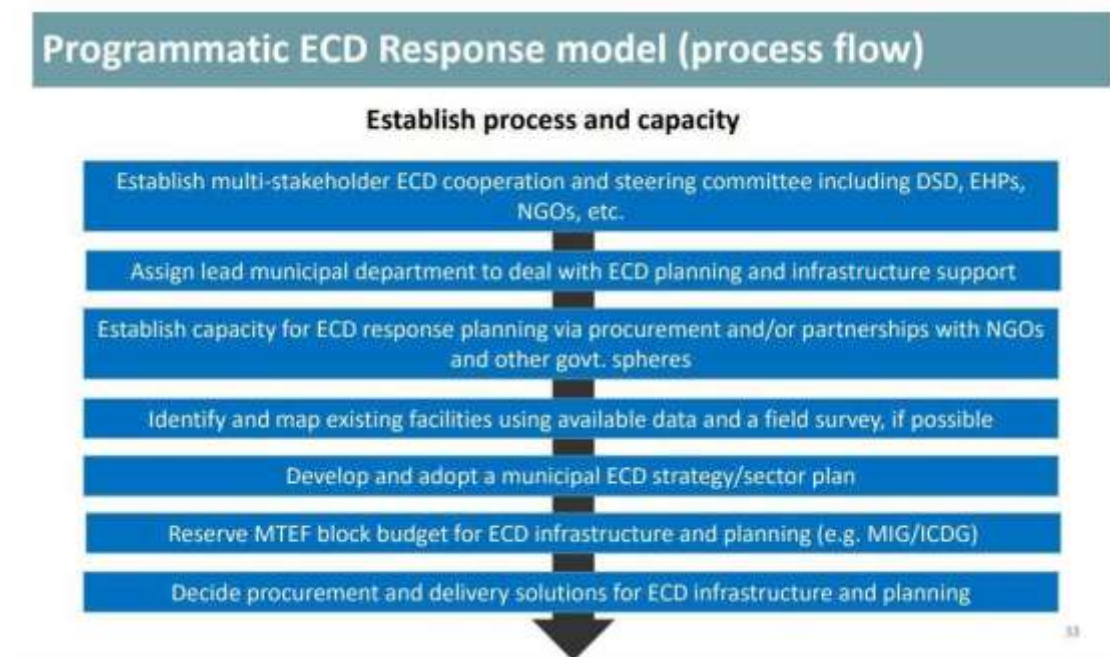
The survey has interesting and rich data, giving some direction to planning. It has helped to develop categorisation results to inform the potential to improve ECD centres in eThekweni if provided with support, including infrastructure support.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Liesel noted that eThekweni Human Settlements was identified as a coordinator for infrastructure support for projects in informal settlements and underserved communities. Infrastructure is the key barrier to ECD programme registration:



A strategic ECD infrastructure response model was developed in terms of the research and pilot projects:



Typical infrastructure improvements include:

- Buildings
- Health and Safety compliance
- Water and sanitation installation
- Outdoor play equipment

REGULATORY MATTERS - Environmental Health and Land Use

The delivery of ECD services is constrained by a burdensome legislative framework spanning across national and municipal laws. The legislative requirements to operate an ECD programme are rigid and restrictive resulting in high levels of non-compliance and exclusion.

- Many municipalities do not have ECD bylaws, for example, environmental health and child care bylaws focus mainly on the requirements for facilities, safety and medical care and administrative issues
- Current infrastructural norms and standards are a barrier to partial care registration
- Depts. of Social Development & Health developed the ECD Registration Framework that provides for more flexibility, allows incremental meeting of norms and standards and conditional registration (bronze or silver) based on a health report.
- Government is keen for municipalities to have dedicated standardised ECD bylaws. eThekweni already has a dedicated bylaw but considers developing a more comprehensive ECD Bylaw with inputs from various municipal departments (all aspects applicable to ECD covered in one bylaw)

Land use and related matters

Land use means the purpose for which land is or may be used lawfully in terms of a land use scheme, existing scheme or in terms of any other authorisation

eThekwini municipality land use challenges are experienced on two fronts:

- (i). within low income areas within land use schemes
- (ii). in areas such as informal settlements or rural areas / on land not designated for development

eThekwini's application of the ECD registration framework means they are providing conditional registration (bronze and silver) without land use documentation and approved building plans - on condition that the ECD centres meet the municipal conditions (e.g. land use and building plans) during the registration period (3-5 years). There are developments in eThekwini to institute flexible arrangements for land use requirements. As an example, the Building Inspectorate is currently consulted to find solutions for 83% of ECD centres in low income areas without building plans and to find ways to make the submission of building plans more affordable. This issue may have to be taken up with the national departments.

CHALLENGES

- Limited awareness among Municipalities that ECD is a national priority programme
- Municipalities see their role in ECD as merely a regulatory/compliance function
- ECD is an unfunded mandate
- Lack of accountability from government
- Insufficient data on ECD services, location, governance and capacity, educational programmes, health and safety issues and infrastructure deficiencies
- Limited access to infrastructure funding
- ECD has to compete with other community needs
- No municipal ECD strategy or sector plan to give strategic direction
- District integrated ECD forums are too big and general to act as drivers of change on a municipal level

OPPORTUNITIES

- ECD is the key to national poverty alleviation
- Source of human capital to drive education, jobs and growth
- Municipalities could provide the government with the most effective vehicle for implementing ECD programmes seeing that they are the closest to the community
- Multi-Stakeholder ECD steering committee to be embedded in municipalities
- National Online ECD Registration Management tool
- Training of practitioners available at the eThekwini District Academy
- Explore cost effective use of limited funding
- Government is keen for municipalities to have dedicated standardised ECD bylaws

- Land use management acknowledges the need to simplify land use application requirements, processes and to ensure affordability – thus enabling the low income ECD operators to meet municipal bylaws and fast tracking the registration process
- Reach out to [Real Reform](#) to see what opportunities are available in the sector for KZN



CHECK OUT

As part of her closing remarks, Ms Patsy Pillay emphasised the need to educate councillors in ECD to drive change that represents the views of the community from the bottom up. The aforementioned can be done by firstly, looking at how the ECD sector can urge the government to partake in ECD programmes and also getting a Multi-Stakeholder Steering committee mandated by senior decision making officials from DSD, DoE, DoH and support NGOs. The Multi-Stakeholder steering committee can be initiated by either the municipality or one or more departments. Patsy went on to speak of the value the sector has in the country.

She closed off the meeting by thanking the presenter, participants and partners.

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE's knowledge management role. All meetings, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE's Knowledge Hub. To view, follow this [link](#).
