

# Relational Equity and Inclusion in Early Childhood Development and Education

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# Presentation overview

- **Exclusion in ECDE**
- **Relational Equity and Social Emotional Learning**
- **Relational Equity and Inclusion**
- **YEI Relational Equity Research**
- **The YEI RE Product**
- **The YEI Challenges outcomes and benefits**
- **The YEI outcomes and benefits for ECDE**
- **YEI and ECDE Practitioners**
- **YEI and Young Children**
- **Recommendations for the ECDE sector**



# Exclusion in ECDE

- **Sukisa was born mentally disabled**
- She is not able to talk or communicate
- **When the Parents discovered she was mentally disabled they kept her away from people**
- They didn't know how to interact with her
- As she grew up and was ready for Preschool they didn't send her to a Pre-school because they new that the teachers there would not know how to handle her
- Preschools are only for abled children- that's what they saw



# Sukisa's Relational eco-system

## Excluding Sukisa

- Sukisa's parents are unaware of the role of Relational equity in their child's life
- As a result they are unaware of her value
- They cannot see their role in her Relational eco-system and how they can model and encourage her despite her disabilities



# Relational Equity and Social Emotional Learning



- Relational Equity includes competencies such as self-love, caring, inclusivity, sharing, respect, empathy, self-agency, co-operation, collaboration, appreciation of differences, tolerance and patience.
- All these **Relational Equity competencies are characteristics of Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** which is very important in the ECDE Inclusion discourse .
- Relational equity happens when our **Relational Intelligence is activated and awakened.**



# YEI Relational Equity Research

Young Enterpriser Initiative (YEI) is a high impact social enterprise which is **pioneering the activation of "Relational Intelligence" and subsequent generation of "Relational Equity"** within learners and educators in the education system, with the aim of providing a foundation towards achieving equitable, enterprising and sustainable communities.

Relational Equity impacts all aspects of our lives leading to self actualisation and that of others.

YEI has been researching its product for the past 5 years.



# The YEI product



Inspired by the Relational equity in nature, **YEI uses a unique "Challenge model" and "Activation Pedagogy" to trigger innate relational intelligence** and the subsequent learning from self, others and nature.

YEI set out a **series of 24 challenges** that stimulate a participant to explore their relationship with themselves, others and their environment.

The experience entails stories from nature providing context, followed by questions and activities that result in breakthroughs in "*me as I relate to myself*"; "*me as I relate to others*"; "*others as they relate to me*"; and "*applying myself*".



# The YEI Challenges Outcomes and Benefits



## Competencies developed by participants\*

- Self-discovery
- Unity
- Teamwork
- Professionalism
- Creativity
- Self-confidence
- Maturity
- Respect
- An appreciation of challenges
- Self-esteem
- Purposeful living
- Possibility mentality
- Value for life and people
- Courage
- Empathy
- Self-value
- Boldness
- Companionship

\*Outcomes recorded following an independent study of the impact of the YEI Challenges by Plymouth Institute of Education and Plymouth Business School University, UK (2022)

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# Relational Momentum generated by YEI



## Intrinsic relational behaviour actualised by participants:

- honouring diversity and integrate with humans and nature
- tapping into creativity to solve problems and co-create
- self reflection and evolving to optimise experience
- observing and listening to others and honour what is said and discovered
- coping and regulating with complete freedom of expression
- identifying opportunities to be useful
- matching their talents and skills with those opportunities
- activating themselves to be an enterpriser in any situation



# YEI Outcomes and Benefits for ECDE



Adult competencies for fostering Relational equity in young children:

- Optimal relationship with self
- Self-reflection and self-regulation
- Conscious role modelling
- Relational observation of self and others
- Mastering activation and holding space to encourage self-learning and self-mastery
- Relational momentum - appropriate honouring of attachment



# YEI and ECDE Practitioners

YEI evidence has shown that practitioners have discovered and learnt from themselves and others important lessons about relating which have an implication on their Relational equity, for example,

- **"The way I am feeling at that moment can mislead or assist someone to relate to me positively"**
- **"My feelings are very important they need to be taken care of"**
- **"It is important that I learn to spot different emotions from people so I can be able to offer sympathy or love or support when needed"**

These discoveries assist in growing a practitioners social emotional wellbeing which is important for their resilience, self-confidence and abilities to facilitate SEL in all young children.



# YEI and Young Children

Early Childhood is the foundation for all human growth and development. Whatever a child learns and experiences during this period has a long-lasting impact into adulthood.

## **A child is set up for the world:**

- Untainted relationship with self
- Self-discovery and resourceful
- Unconscious mastery i.e. Learning to walk
- Curious and socially motivated
- Grows in confidence through self mastery however easily influenced
- Healthy attachment

**And unfortunately, through socialization, adults often suffocate these attributes**



# Relational Equity and Inclusion in ECDE

Relational equity is critical to inclusive relational behaviour patterns which involve :

- Ensuring care and support (Physical, material and emotional)
- Provision of safety and protection
- Ensuring sense of belonging and love

**Sukisa needed all of the above**



# Reccomendations for the ECDE Sector

**Adults own Social Emotional wellbeing** is an important factor on how the child's SEL is shaped as a foundation for all their learning experiences and their future.

YEI enables ECD Practitioners to acquire and become more aware of their own **Relational Equity competencies**, which equip them for relating with themselves, others (all young children), parents and their communities.



LET US CREATE AN  
INCLUSIVE ECDE  
ENVIRONMENT THROUGH  
RELATIONAL EQUITY

**Thank you!**

