

AfECN

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Partnerships for Strengthened ECD Advocacy in Southern Africa

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A Problem Statement

South Africa has one of the world's highest levels of unemployment. Urgent action to increase the coverage and quality of early learning programmes in the country cannot be stressed.

Access to early learning programmes is essential for economic growth and job creation.

However, despite the government's commitment to universal access to early learning by 2030, the sector has been grossly forgotten and underfunded over the years.

“Well-designed investment in ECEC services can have major economic and social pay-offs for families, individual and societies at large by (a) facilitation women’s labour force participation, (b) enhancing children’s capabilities and (c) creating decent jobs in the paid care sector. But this triple dividend is not automatic. It needs to be built into service design and delivery”.

In the United Nations (UN) Policy Brief No. 2: Gender Equality, Child Development and Job Creation: How to Reap the “Triple Dividend” from Early Childhood Education and care services (2015), it is emphasised that an investment in ECCE has the potential to have major economic and social pay-offs for families, individuals and society at large:

- *Facilitating women’s labour force participation*
- *Enhancing children’s capabilities*
- *Creating decent jobs in the early childhood development sector*

“

My life is brighter than before. I know life is hard, but with higher education, all things are POSSIBLE.

Zintathu
South African Graduate

”

The Plight of ECD in South Africa

More than **140 000** skilled **ECD Practitioners** are now **lacking** in South Africa, it is estimated that more than 50% of those who are already working in the field are **unqualified** and in **need of training**.

Institutions of **higher learning** must invest significant effort **to develop and strengthen the ECD workforce** in order to meet the National Development Plan's goal of reaching universal coverage of early childhood development services by 2030.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ECD SECTOR



2,5 million children currently attending ECD centres, only **700, 000** receive a government subsidy

110 000 practitioners currently employed at ECD centres.

Only **35 210** of these practitioners have at least an **NQF Level 4** qualification

24 171 ECD centres in South Africa

3.4 million children still have **no access** to an ECD centre.

The average child-to-practitioner ratio is **22:1**

AN OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ECD WORKFORCE

- **Unqualified** and **underqualified** practitioners represent the **majority** in the sector.
- **Skilled practitioners** make up nearly half (**44%**) of the **ECD Workforce**
- **Women** make up more than **98% of the employees** in registered centers, making up majority of the **ECD workforce. Lacking in male diversity.**
- **Legislation** – burdensome legislative requirements do not provide an enabling ECD system
- **Resources** – inadequate funding, poor infrastructure , lack of educational resources.
- **Demand and awareness** – limited public awareness of the importance of ECD and lack of appeal for further career advancement.
- A **function shift from DSD TO DBE** must ensure that children 0 to 5 years have access to **quality and holistic ECD centres by 2030***, the department will require **100,000 centre-based practitioners** and **40,000 assistants to be trained and deemed competent.**

Our Response to Bridging the Gap



Capacity Building, Access and Support Programme **(CBAS)**



Developing Human Resources in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) (Birth-4)

Sivulithuba is a collaborative partnership between two training organisations based in KwaZulu Natal, **TREE** (Training and Resources in Early Education) and **MCC** (Midlands Community College).

The collaborative partnership proposes the development and implementation of a unique **Capacity Building Access and Support Programme** that will facilitate ECD Practitioners' entry into, retention and success in the Diploma/Degree: Early Childhood Care and Education, by building the capacity of the practitioners through a *blended model of teaching, learning, coaching, mentoring and support.*

Sivulithuba Purpose and Outcomes



A Sivulithuba Student comes with a base of knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes for becoming a successful and resilient ECCE student.

- **Committed students**
- **Students are experienced in practical aspects of the work**
- **Studies show that students with practical experience absorb higher order theory better than those without**

Essentially Sivulithuba...

- **develops competencies for the 21st century ECD workforce and breaks down barriers to distance and life-long learning.**
- **builds ECCE knowledge and practical skills for working with children from birth.**
- **develops teachers who can think and reflect critically and can solve problems in their own context.**

Sivulithuba Purpose and Outcomes continued



- is a blended model of face to face, online and distance learning.
- supports retention of non-traditional students in higher education through coaching and mentoring for academic support and personal growth.

So that:

- there is support for a well-articulated learning and career pathway in early childhood development,
- there is a strengthening of an ECD workforce,
- ECCE teachers/ECD practitioners can work in situation bound ways with children and their families,
- ECCE teachers/ ECD practitioners can provide more sophisticated services and therefore better (more sustainable) enterprises, and
- synergies between Resource and Training Orgs and Higher Educational Institutions are strengthened to address the stochastic approach to education and training in the sector,

Rationale for This Model

To achieve universal coverage of early childhood development services by 2030, this requires that training institutions build the ECD workforce.

To bridge the human resource gap that currently exists, where an estimated (18000+) current ECD practitioners are unqualified and need training. A significant shortage of over 140 000 qualified ECD Practitioners.

Identifying the gap in academic capacity between students who have completed their NQF Level 4 ECD qualification and the requirements by Higher Education Institutions', to further education creating better career pathways.

Project Outcomes

Outcome 1

A quality early learning and care experience, equity, social justice, inclusion and opportunities for all children to reach their full potential.

Outcome 2

Digital competencies for both teaching and learning as well as facilitating inclusion in the 4th industrial revolution.

Outcome 3

A career path in ECCE for non-traditional learners.

Outcome 4

A unified cross-sectoral ECCE workforce.



Sivulithuba- Impact



**‘An improvement
in the scale and
quality of Early
Childhood Care
and Education
(birth to four
years)’.**

Thank you!

Questions?

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