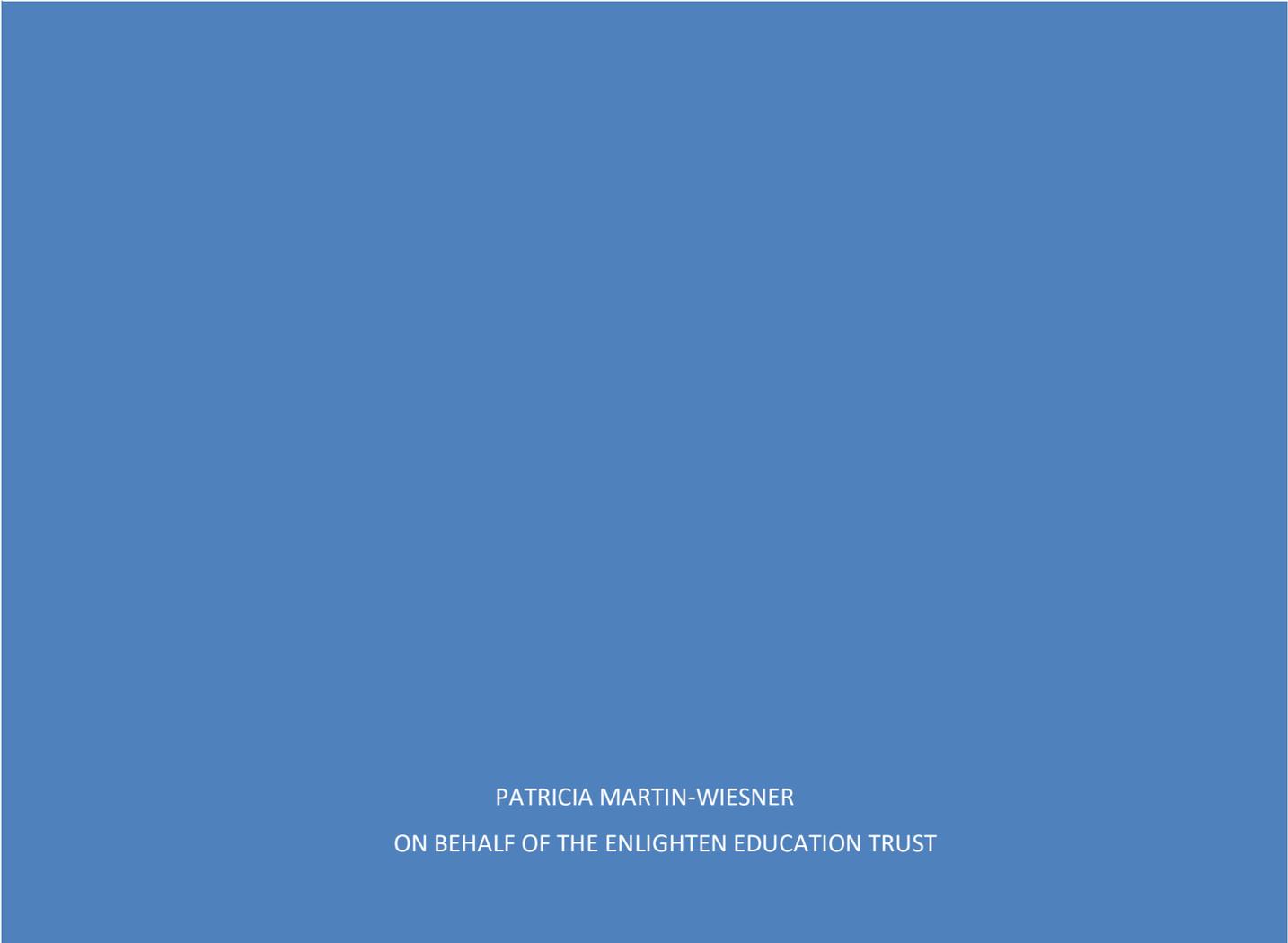




Enlighten Education Trust: A policy brief for scaling up a holistic,
integrated ECD practitioner training model

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PATRICIA MARTIN-WIESNER
ON BEHALF OF THE ENLIGHTEN EDUCATION TRUST

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Introduction

Background

The South African government has committed to universalize the availability of and ensure equitable access to quality early childhood development services as a key strategy to achieving the country's global and national sustainable development goals. The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015)¹ ("the ECD Policy") recognizes that achieving these goals depends on the availability of an appropriately qualified and skilled cadre of ECD practitioners.

A key challenge is the insufficiency of the current cadre - both in terms of numbers and the qualifications and skills of the ECD workforce. There have been several policy and programmatic innovations since the adoption of the policy aimed improving the numbers and qualifications of ECD practitioners. Despite these innovations, the quality of ECD services, especially in under-serviced areas marked by poverty and inequality, remains poor.

Available evidence, drawn from similarly-placed countries and the experiences of organizations in South Africa indicates that the challenge lies, not so much in the curriculum content of ECD practitioner training programmes, but in the design of the overarching, supportive teaching and learning environment, resources and methodology. The evidence points to a pressing need for changing the way early childhood care and education practitioner training programmes, and the systems in which they are embedded, are conceptualized, designed and provided in South Africa.

A holistic, technically sound, integrated and interactive training model that combines theoretical and practical training and ongoing mentoring designed to address common ECD practitioner teaching and learning challenges is critical to meet the imperative for quality ECD services in South Africa. It is critical, not just for improving the quality of ECD training and provisioning; but critically, to address inherent and systemic *inequities*. It is key to breaking the cycle of poor quality ECD provisioning by young people who themselves are the products of poor quality ECD to poor young children in the centres where they are most likely to serve as practitioners – thus perpetuating the negative cycle of inequity, poverty and exclusion.

The Enlighten Education Trust's response to the challenge: The Boland College ECD Partnership

The Enlighten Education Trust is a non-profit organization supporting the sustainable development of communities with reference to assisting and upskilling educators *in* the Overstrand district in the Western Cape. The Trust recognizes that quality early childhood development and education are key to achieving these goals. It therefore has as one of its main focusses the transformation of ECD and education systems to improve quality and the resulting impact on the development of children, and in so doing, the sustainable development of the communities in which it works.

The Trust has, since 2002, worked collaboratively with key government and non-government stakeholders to strengthen education systems. It has supported innovations across a diversity of areas in need of

¹ Republic of South Africa. 2015. National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy. Pretoria. Government Printers

strengthening, including educator training, curriculum development and management, pedagogical practices and parental and community involvement.

The Trust is particularly concerned with ensuring the provision of quality early childhood care and education services as it is at this level that the building blocks for later school and post-school educational success and long-term, sustainable community development are laid. The provision of quality ECD services is *well-recognised* as being fundamentally linked with the quality of the training provided to ECD practitioners.

The quality of ECD provisioning remains of grave concern in South Africa, and is of immediate concern to the Trust, based on its observations of ECD provisioning in the areas in which it works. It has, through its experience on the ground and information provided by its partners, identified inadequate practitioner training as a key systemic weakness underpinning the observed levels of poor provisioning.

The Trust has therefore, with the support of the DG Murray Trust, developed, tested and costed an innovative ECD practitioner training model at the Boland FET College. The project, entitled the Boland College ECD Partnership, has identified and sought to address critical teaching and learning challenges through the provision of a blended, interactive programme of systemic and sustained ECD student support and mentoring to complement and enrich the theoretical education programme.

The challenges identified are common across most ECD training programmes in South Africa and the approach adopted responding to these, contributed to improved learning outcomes at a relatively low cost. The Trust has therefore documented this model to further catalyse and contribute to the necessary policy dialogue that must take place around viable, effective and efficient measures and models that should be adopted to strengthen ECD practitioner training programmes across the country. The Trust is of the view that the positive outcomes of this model suggest that if it is scaled up and systematized as part of a stronger national ECD practitioner training system at all TVET colleges offering ECD training programmes, it has the potential to support government to fulfil its responsibilities to build and sustain a national cadre of ECD practitioners capable of providing quality ECD services.

The purpose of this brief

This brief documents the model as a viable, replicable solution to several critical, common challenges to effective ECD practitioner training and provisioning. It aims to show, based on current policy imperatives, challenges in meeting those, evidence of what is required to meet these, as well as outcomes of the piloted programme, that the model could be applied, as one of a number of measures, to strengthen the national ECD practitioner training system to secure its ECD policy commitments.

This brief describes the programme and model - focusing on its goals, strategy, outcomes, and cost - viewed against the backdrop of the current policy context and evidence related to the provisioning of quality ECD services through an adequate workforce with appropriate skills and qualifications.

The model is presented as replicable and scalable given its:²

² The criteria for a replicable model are distilled from: WHO. 2011. Beginning with the end in mind: Planning pilot projects and other programmatic research for successful scaling up. <http://expandnet.net/PDFs/ExpandNet-WHO%20Guide%20-Beginning%20with%20the%20end%20in%20mind%20-%20May%2019,%202011%20-%20draft.pdf>

- Relevance: The initiative is highly responsive to the current pressing policy priorities.
- Effectiveness: The model shows great potential for making a significant difference at population scale if taken to scale through public investment and systematization of the model at all ECD learning institutions.
- Efficiencies: The initiative offers a systemic and cost-effective solution to a long-standing and pervasive problem.

Policy context

Access to quality ECD services: A global and national development imperative

Globally and nationally access to early childhood development (ECD) services has gained increasing prominence as key to achieving sustainable rights-based and inclusive development. It has near-unparalleled potential to build the foundations of inclusive development in deeply unequal societies. It is one of the most significant interventions to equalize the opportunities of vulnerable children, who without appropriate interventions, are likely to remain socially, economically and politically excluded.

ECD's equalizing potential underpins the prioritization of ECD as a global socio-economic development priority. Universalized access to ECD is an explicit Sustainable Development Goal. More recently, the Group of 20 - an international forum of representatives from governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union with a focus driving sustained financial stability and growth - adopted the ***G20 Initiative for Early Childhood Development: Building human capital to break the cycle of poverty and inequality.***³

The opening two paragraphs of the G20 initiative recognize ECD as central to social and economic development and call for a global commitment to increased public investments in universalizing ECD programmes. The paragraphs read as follows:

1. *We are convinced that early childhood is one of the most significant and influential phases of life - especially the first 1,000 days. It determines the basis for every child's future health, well-being, learning and earnings potential, and sets the groundwork for young children's emotional security, cultural and personal identity, and for developing competencies, resilience and adaptability.*
2. *We recognize that investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD), without any discrimination, should be a high priority as it gives all children the opportunity to achieve the full realization of their rights and capabilities. A focus on ECD brings clear benefits both to the individual and society, reducing health and economic problems that children can carry throughout their entire lives. It paves the way for intervening at the most critical stage of human development in order to break the vicious cycle of intergenerational and structural poverty, societal disparities and inequality of opportunities, ensuring that no child, anywhere, is left behind.*

South Africa's own National Development Plan 2030: Our Future Make it Work ("the NDP") recognizes ECD as the foundation of realizing its goals of reducing poverty and inequality through people-centred and inclusive development. The NDP recognizes that access to quality ECD services for the most

³ http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2018/g20_initiative_for_early_childhood_development.pdf

marginalized and vulnerable is critical to equalizing their opportunities to develop to their full potential, achieve school and tertiary educational success and, in the long run be active participants and drivers of South Africa's social and economic prosperity. The NDP therefore calls on the country to "make early childhood development a top priority among the measures to improve the quality of education and long-term prospects of future generations." It calls for increased investment in ECD programmes to universalize access, specifically for historically marginalized children. Specifically it requires that dedicated "resources be channelled towards ensuring that all children are well cared for from an early age and receive appropriate emotional, cognitive and physical development stimulation."

Critically, however: it is not access to ECD alone that is the lever for the change needed. *The pivotal factor is quality. Quality ECD has the potential to drive redress and realise the promise inherent in the South African Constitution.*⁴

The G20 initiative therefore emphasizes the need for:

Quality ECD programs that guarantee effective stimulation, including the enhancement of parents' and caregivers' capabilities to promote development and learning, are a way of preparing children to benefit from all forms and levels of education. Supportive, child-centred, learner-focused and developmentally staged transitions from home environments to preschool learning opportunities followed by quality education are the essential ingredients for achieving active participation and meaningful learning for all.

The implications of the provision of quality ECD as a socio-economic development imperative: Government's responsibilities

The link between inclusive, sustainable development and quality ECD places a significant responsibility on the shoulders of ECD practitioners to provide quality ECD programmes.

The provision of quality ECD services in turn depends on the adequacy of the ECD workforce – in terms of numbers, qualifications, skills and competencies.

*There is general consensus, supported by research, that well-educated, well-trained professionals are the key factor in providing high quality ECEC with the most favorable cognitive and social outcomes for children. Research shows that the behavior of those who work in ECEC matters and that this is related to their education and training.*⁵

This in turn obligates government to invest in building a strong and effective ECD workforce with the qualifications, skills and support needed to unlock the equalizing potential of ECD in lower and middle-income countries like South Africa. **Critically**, it places a **responsibility** on governments and public institutions **to strengthen the supporting ECD practitioner training system**. Ad hoc and isolated measures that reach only a few lucky practitioners are not enough. A strong system is necessary to ensure a sustainable enabling and supportive environment for the growth of a workforce that has the knowledge,

⁴ L Excell. 2016. Interrogating quality in early childhood development: working towards a South African perspective. South African Journal of Childhood Education. Vol 6, No 1. <https://sajce.co.za/index.php/sajce/article/view/406/278>

⁵ OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research Brief

skills and competencies to universalize access to quality ECD services for all children, especially the most marginalized.

The recently adopted Nurturing Care Framework⁶ co-developed by the WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank provides policy direction on what is required of government and public institutions to unlock the developmental potential of ECD. The Framework consolidates the science and confirms that all children require five essential components of nurturing care to realise their full potential.

- Good health
- Adequate nutrition
- Responsive caregiving
- Opportunities for early learning; and
- Security and safety.

Government is duty-bound to provide an enabling and adequately resourced policy and programmatic framework to ensure that all parents and caregivers (including ECD practitioners) are supported to provide children with the nurturing care they need through access to quality ECD services provided by qualified practitioners.

Critically, the Framework confirms that government's overarching responsibility is to strengthen national systems and funding to ensure that ECD services and supporting human and financial resources are adequate, sustainable, equitably distributed, efficient and flexible to meet the demand for quality ECD provisioning at a population level. The critical point is that measures must be systematic to ensure population coverage and equitable access to services of a sufficiently high quality to ensure the provision of nurturing care for all children, especially the most marginalized.

Evidence shows that current ECD training programmes provide technically sound content – but are producing poor quality practitioners that are not up to the challenge of ensuring quality early learning and stimulation for children, especially those in under-served and poor communities. The underlying problem is systemic in nature. The governing national ECD practitioner training system does not meet the prescribed criteria; it does not enable all practitioners to provide children in their care with the quality nurturing care required by the Nurturing Care Framework. The standard models and approaches to training and the broader teaching and learning resources and environment within which they are provided are inadequate to support students overcome the teaching and learning challenges the practitioner themselves enter the system with. The majority of ECD practitioners who enter training programmes are from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is especially so in South Africa where ECD has been used as a job creation platform for marginalized and poorly educated women who access learnerships through initiatives such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Disadvantaged youth and older women who enter ECD training programmes carry the legacy of poor ECD and an unequal education system. This leaves many ill-prepared for effective participation in ECD practitioner training courses – for reasons that include literacy levels, language difficulties, learning difficulties etc.

⁶ WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank Group. 2018. Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential. Geneva: WHO

This means that the majority of students entering the training system require an appropriately responsive, holistic training model and supportive teaching and learning environment that will nurture and support them to overcome their learning challenges to become skilled practitioners.

Government is duty-bound to develop, systematize and adequately resource an effective national ECD training system that provides not only technically sound content, but provides it within an enabling teaching and learning model that:

1. Compensates for the legacies of the poor ECD and education that create learning challenges for potential practitioners drawn from some of the poorest communities;
2. Offers appropriate teaching and learning support, resources and materials; and
3. Uses proven teaching and learning methodologies for supporting all ECD practitioners to provide quality early learning and stimulation support, especially to equalize the opportunities of their charges.

In sum, government must develop a national training system that prepares ECD practitioners to be effective development partners and active agents in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality that have perpetuated the patterns of exclusion that beset South Africa.

South Africa's national ECD Policy Commitments

South Africa adopted its first National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy in 2015 (“the ECD Policy”). The ECD Policy recognizes equitable access to quality ECD services as the cornerstone of the country’s inclusive sustainable development agenda.⁷ To this end it commits to the public provisioning of universally available quality ECD services. It expressly recognizes that access without quality, and the failure to ensure access to quality services for historically marginalized families and children will not realise ECD’s equalizing potential. It therefore commits to prioritizing measures to ensure access to quality early care and learning services, from birth until children enter formal schooling, for:⁸

1. Children living in poverty
2. Children living in under-resourced communities
3. The very youngest children under the age of 2 years; and
4. Children with developmental delays and/or disabilities.

The Policy further recognizes that realizing universal availability, equitable access and quality provisioning fundamentally depends on having an adequate number of appropriately qualified ECD practitioners. The Policy observes that:

Quality is closely associated with the levels of qualification and related skills, and the supervision and mentoring, of early childhood development practitioners. Qualifications and/or training of practitioners have been found to be associated with improved child outcomes over a range of countries and contexts and are often used as an indicator of service quality.

The policy further notes that the development of an adequate workforce to secure quality provisioning requires more than just qualifications. It recognizes that:

⁷ Page 48, paragraph 4.1

⁸ Page 68, paragraph 5.5

[Q]ualifications alone do not necessarily make a difference; oversight, mentoring and support from responsible departments and programme managers is central to quality improvement and successful programme delivery.⁹

The national ECD Policy objective and government’s associated commitment is to:

[D]evelop appropriate cadres of early childhood practitioners, in sufficient numbers and with sufficient skills to support the implementation of the national integrated early childhood development Policy and programme.

Departmental plans for realizing national ECD policy goals and commitments

Several departments have committed to take concrete measures in the current medium-term planning cycle to contribute to realizing this policy commitment.

The collective commitments are captured in the *National Integrated Implementation Plan for Early Childhood Development in South Africa: Towards 2030* (“the National ECD Plan). The National ECD Plan “provides the macro and strategic direction for the implementation of the National Integrated Policy for Early Childhood Development and related commitments so as to ensure that a full comprehensive age- and developmentally stage-appropriate quality early childhood development programme is available and accessible to all infants and young children and their caregivers by 2030.”¹⁰ The Plan’s strategic focus areas to which all government role players are required to direct their attention in the planning cycle are:¹¹

1. Improved quality ECD programmes which include the most vulnerable and at risk
2. Leadership, management and coordination across the government departments and strategic partners to ensure collective realization of national ECD priorities
3. The allocation of resources, including human and financial resources, infrastructure and materials for development and learning.

The relevant collective commitments are to, by 2030:¹²

1. Ensure universal availability of a full continuum of quality, age, stage and context-appropriate care and early learning; and
2. Provide universally available comprehensive quality opportunities for learning.

The Plan commits to a diversity of measures aimed at strengthening the national ECD practitioner training system to secure the development of a qualified and capable workforce with the knowledge, skills and capacities to develop and deliver quality programmes. Specific Human Resource development measures include:

1. Investing in training early childhood development practitioners, upgrading their qualifications and developing clear career paths
2. Providing governmental support for training, resource and other intermediary agencies so that they can support community-based programmes
3. Encourage innovation in the way early childhood development services are delivered

⁹ Chapter 10, page 108

¹⁰ Page 3

¹¹ Page 6

¹² Paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2

4. Ensure all staff at all levels have the authority, experience, competence and support they need to do their jobs
5. Support the development of specialized programmes in universities focusing on training college lecturers and provide funding for universities to conduct research on the vocational education section
6. Build a strong relationship between the college sector and industry. SETAs have a crucial role in building relationships between education institutions and the employers.
7. The development and implementation of in-service training for ECD practitioners. The Plan notes that currently there is no in-service training module.

Various line departments have picked up on the Policy and Plan commitments and undertaken to strengthen ECD practitioner training in their current planning cycles.

The **Department of Social Development (DSD)** has committed, in terms of its Annual Performance Plan 2018 - 2019¹³ to improve the provision of ECD, specifically by improving the quality of ECD services.

The **Department of Basic Education (DBE)** has, in terms of its Revised Five-Year Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20¹⁴ and its Annual Performance Plan 2018 - 2019¹⁵ committed to strengthening practitioner training systems and invest in training ECD practitioners. A key objective is improving the quality of early learning services in the pre- and Grade R phases through measures to improve training and curriculum implementation. One of the concrete measures in process is the development by Unicef, the Lego Foundation and Cotlands in partnership with the DBE of an online in-service training programme for 150 000 ECD practitioners. The programme will monitor and support training of ECD practitioners in ECD.¹⁶

The **Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)** is responsible for coordination of all TVET colleges. The majority of ECD practitioners access training through TVET colleges. It has committed, in terms of its Annual Performance Plan and budget (2018-2019),¹⁷ to substantially increase its investment in improving the quality of teaching and learning at TVET colleges. It has committed to the use the increased allocated resources to develop TVET colleges to become centres of learning excellence that make develop South Africa’s human resources and in so doing contribute to sustainable development.

In 2018 the Minister indicated that the Department’s budget would be used to develop and implement programmes that will provide skills and empowerment to young people. He noted specifically that there is an urgent need to develop programmes that will transform their lives and give hope to their families.

He committed the DHET to supporting this goal through measures that will “ensure that our public education and training institutions, in particular, are well positioned to provide the learning needed for their success.” Specifically, the DHET has committed to intensify its investment in developing effective skills development programmes in the TVET colleges. TVET colleges are identified as the “institutions that can make a decisive contribution to the youth employment challenge.” To give effect to these

¹³ <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/26632/>

¹⁴ https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201606/dbe-strategic-plan-march-2016.pdf

¹⁵

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Annual%20Performance%20Plan%20201819.pdf?ver=2018-03-14-121624-263>

¹⁶ Annual Performance Plan 2018 - 2019

¹⁷ Presentation to the Joint Meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training and Select Committee on Education and Recreation on 18 April 2018

undertakings, the DHET allocated R10.5 billion to the TVET sector in 2018. The Minister observed that this budget allocation “to the TVET sector indicates our intention to support the colleges so that they become premier institutions of choice for your people. The TVET college sector can, if properly supported, make a huge contribution to South Africa achieving its human resource development goals.”

A concrete initiative to strengthen the skills training programmes in TVET colleges is the development of selected colleges as trade Centre of Specialisation. The DHET chose 13 trades or qualifications and has selected two TVET colleges for each trade to become a Centre of Specialisation for that trade. This means that measures will be taken to ensure that the curriculum is up to date, the facilitators are prepared and that the workshops are available and equipped to facilitate practical learning. In addition, the DHET is strengthening the linkages between the college and employers related to the trade around each college with the intention of securing the required workplace learning for the specified trades.

What is required to meet the ECD quality and HR policy commitments?

What does an appropriate cadre of ECD practitioners look like?

An appropriate and effective cadre of ECD practitioners capable of providing quality ECD services that will drive the development of children as well as the social and economic development of the country must be adequate in number and equitable in spread. In addition, the practitioners must have a diversity of specialized knowledge, skills, capacities and competencies necessary to cultivate and equalize children’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. The competencies required are rendered even more complex in a country such as South Africa marked by extremely high levels of inequality and where ECD is seen as an equalizer.¹⁸

All ECD practitioners need knowledge and skills in promoting early learning and stimulation; child-centered learning and development; effective communication and collaboration; problem solving and relative practice.¹⁹

The behavior of ECD practitioners matters as much as their teaching.²⁰ This requires staff to have knowledge of child development as well as the skills and attitudes necessary to translate that knowledge into developmentally supportive practices; practices in the early learning setting that stimulate the child’s holistic development, including the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. This includes skills such as involving children, stimulating interaction with and between children, and being empathetic, and providing nurturing care.²¹

¹⁸ OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research brief

¹⁹ UK Aid. No date. Reaching expert consensus on training different cadres in delivering early childhood development at scale in low-resource contexts. Technical report

²⁰ OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research brief

²¹ UK Aid. No date. Reaching expert consensus on training different cadres in delivering early childhood development at scale in low-resource contexts. Technical report

What constitutes an effective national ECD practitioner training system?

There is substantial evidence as to what is necessary to create a strong ECD practitioner training system that will produce an appropriate cadre of ECD practitioners to meet the challenges and drive sustainable, inclusive development in South Africa.

The ECD Policy recognizes, based on extensive and growing evidence, that higher qualifications are linked with quality, and this in turn is associated with improvements in children's development.²² However, it is not just qualifications that matter. It "is not the qualification per se that has an impact on child outcomes but the ability of better qualified staff members to create a high-quality pedagogic environment that makes the difference."²³ Critically, the quality of the practitioner training and development programme – that is to say – "how well it prepares new teachers [practitioners] by, for example, grounding them in knowledge of child development and academic subject areas – may be a more critical factor" in determining quality and impact on child development outcomes.²⁴

A national ECD Community of Practice, BRIDGE, facilitated a consultative process among a diversity of ECD role players to distil out a shared, agreed set of quality ECD dimensions – depicted in the diagram below – that together constitute a strong and effective ECD practitioner training system.

What is evident from the diagram and literature is that quality ECD provisioning depends on a strong and effective ECD practitioner training and support system. It depends on the qualifications, skills and attributes of the practitioner, as the broader supportive and institutional teaching and learning environment and systems. It is not just practitioner qualifications, but also the environment in which practitioners are taught, mentored and monitored that are critical to the provision of quality ECD that can equalize and unlock the developmental potential of every child, especially the most vulnerable.

²² Mitter R; Putcha V (2018) Strengthening and Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce: Training and Professional Development. Results for Development Institute. Washington
file:///C:/Users/patri/Downloads/Training_Professional_Development.pdf

²³ OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research brief

²⁴ Mitter R; Putcha V (2018) Strengthening and Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce: Training and Professional Development. Results for Development Institute. Washington
file:///C:/Users/patri/Downloads/Training_Professional_Development.pdf

QUALITY DIMENSIONS

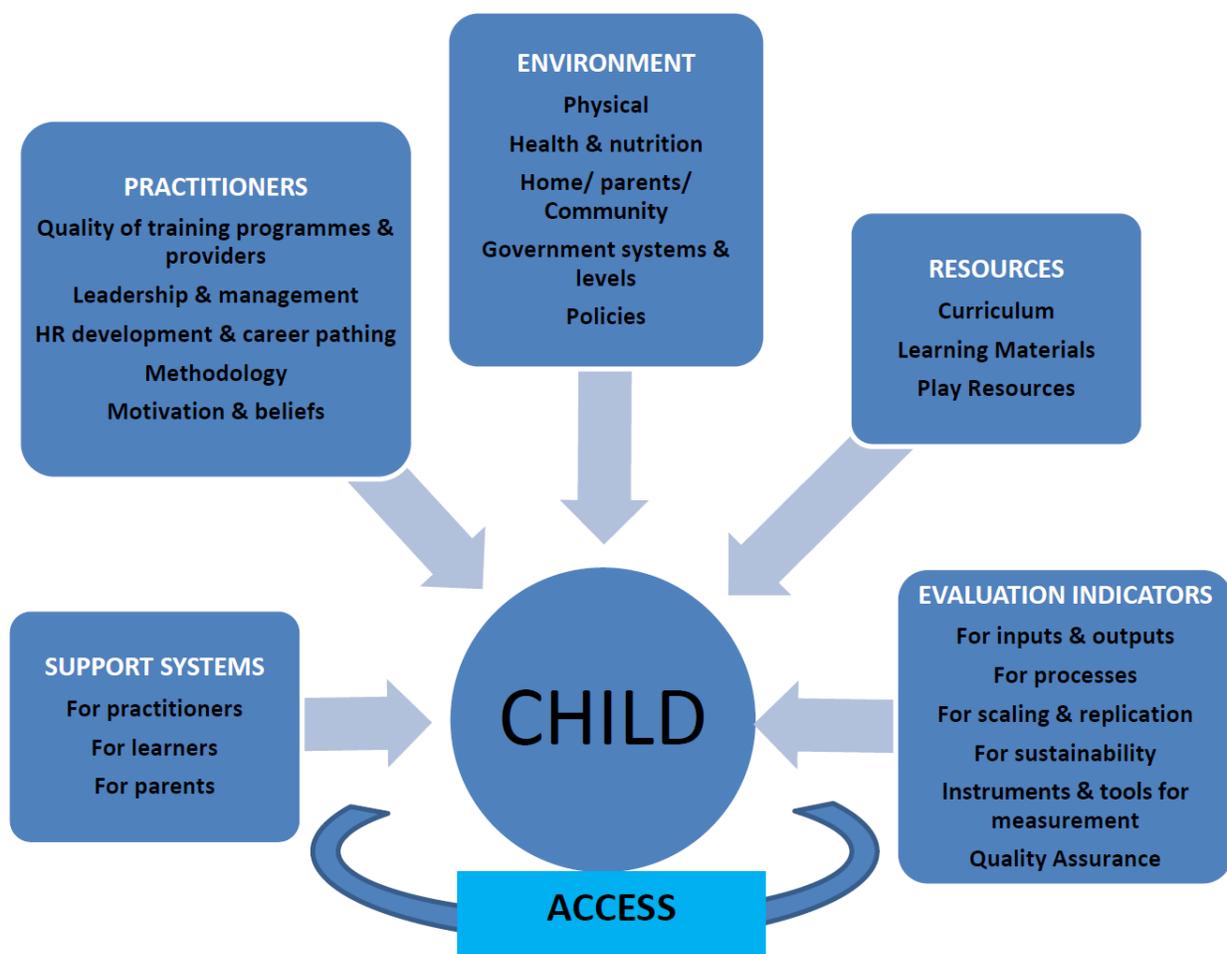


Figure 1: Source: Bridge Towards a Quality Framework: What is Quality in ECD?²⁵

Whilst there is still much to learn about what constitutes quality ECD training, there is consensus that it depends on the provision of theoretical and practical programmes supported by an enabling teaching and learning environment in the lecture room as well as in the practical work environment.²⁶ What is required is not just one or two interventions, but a system of interrelated and mutually supportive high quality components that create and sustain an enabling teaching and learning environment that cultivates the knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes required of an effective ECD practitioner.

²⁵

file:///C:/Users/patri/OneDrive/Documents/Advocacy%20Aid/Documents/ECD/Quality/ECD_QualityThemesSummaryDraft_v02_March-2015.pdf

²⁶ Mitter R; Putcha V (2018) Strengthening and Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce: Training and Professional Development. Results for Development Institute. Washington
file:///C:/Users/patri/Downloads/Training_Professional_Development.pdf

Features of an effective, holistic and coherent system made of different components – all of which are responsive to address challenges

There is substantial evidence as to the essential features of an effective ECD practitioner training system for South Africa. It will include:

Requires:

1. Specialized technical or theoretical content on child development and stimulation. In other words, a quality ECD practitioner curriculum.²⁷ The curriculum should address the particular needs of the workforce in the local context.²⁸ The theoretical learning must be appropriate to the local context.
2. In addition to the theoretical training component, the system must include quality and meaningful practical hands-on training under the supervision of a qualified and informed practitioner that supports the student to understand and apply their theoretical knowledge to create a nurturing and supportive pedagogic environment for the young child. “training and practical orientation in advanced skills such as problem-solving and flexibility [requires] exposure to a *range* of different programmes and approaches to facilitate informed decision-making and programme development and adapting to or responding to local contextual needs.”²⁹
3. In addition, what is recognized as perhaps of even greater importance is the ability or responsiveness of their training programme to impart the necessary skills and capacities - through practical and ongoing mentoring and supervision of the student. “Experience, backed by research, tells us that training alone is not enough. Quality implementation of ECD programmes, whether centre or non-centre, will require regular, sustained on-site support and mentoring trained staff.”³⁰
4. Provision of teaching and learning materials to support practical application of the theory of ECD training. This includes the provision of accessible practical aids such as appropriate books and toys, through for example, access to book and toy libraries.³¹

What training strategies and methodologies deliver the required quality programmes?

“Little is known about the effectiveness of different training strategies to help ECEC practitioners. More research is needed on how to engage staff in learning about and implementing evidence-based practices.”³²

This project has been developed and documented to contribute to the knowledge base of what strategies can be applied to create a quality programme.

²⁷ DFID. UKAID. No date. Reaching expert consensus on training different cadres in delivering early childhood development at scale in low-resource contexts. Technical report.

²⁸ Mitter R; Putcha V (2018) Strengthening and Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce: Training and Professional Development. Results for Development Institute. Washington
file:///C:/Users/patri/Downloads/Training_Professional_Development.pdf

²⁹ DFID. UKAID. No date. Reaching expert consensus on training different cadres in delivering early childhood development at scale in low-resource contexts. Technical report.

³⁰ OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research brief

³¹ Information shared with the project team members during stakeholder consultations

³² OECD. No date. Encouraging quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Research brief

Status of South Africa's training? Does it provide effective teaching and learning in an enabling and supportive teaching and learning environment?

In sum, the answer is no, it does not. The following statement is an accurate reflection of the poor quality of ECD provisioning, notably in under-serviced and marginalized areas, driven by the poor quality of ECD practitioner training:

One of the biggest challenges in early childhood development (ECD) centres in rural districts is that teachers are not trained adequately and therefore they cannot create learning environments in which young children can develop to their optimal potential. In many cases a large group of children is placed in a classroom and no stimulation is given to them, because the ECD practitioner does not have the knowledge or skills to use what is available in the classroom to stimulate the children and facilitate learning. These teachers are desperately in need of guidance to plan age appropriate and suitable activities that will benefit the overall development of learners and prepare them to be ready for school.³³

The problem

The focus on ECD in South Africa over the past few years has driven policy innovations to improve ECD practitioner qualifications. Despite resulting improvements in the ECD qualifications framework and curriculum content, numerous reports and the Trust's own observations indicate that these changes have led to minimal positive changes in the quality of ECD provisioning.

For example, the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators (March 2017)*³⁴ was developed in response to the recognition that the existing qualifications were not providing the number and kinds of ECD practitioners required to deliver the kind and quality of ECD services to ensure children's optimal development. The Policy redefined the ECD qualifications for ECD educators delivering ECD programmes to meet the quality imperative as defined by current development context.

Most ECD training is done by Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) colleges. They offer 5 ECD vocational or occupational qualifications, each of which has different entry requirements and levels of specialization. These include the National Certificate; the National Diploma EDUCARE (NATED); the FET Certificate (Level 4); Higher Certificate ECD; and a National Diploma ECD (N4 – N6).³⁵ The practitioner training programmes have been revised to align with various policy shifts and the theoretical content has improved. In addition to the theoretical components, the training programmes include practical training components where students are meant to apply their theoretical learnings in a practical setting (ECD

³³ M Labuschagne. 2015. Promoting quality learning environments at Early Childhood Centres through service learning. Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Education in Learning support at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University.

https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/15352/Labuschagne_M.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

³⁴ Government Gazette No 40750, 31 March 2017

³⁵ C Murray and L Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

centres). Students doing the national diploma must do 18 months of practical training to qualify. ECD qualifications are also offered through learnership programmes run through TVET colleges. These programmes, funded by a diversity of departments, are generally taken by practitioners already in the system working in ECD centers who are under- or unqualified. They comprise a theoretical component alongside workplace experience.

Despite the curriculum and qualifications improvements and the blended theoretical / practical training model, the Trust and many other NGOs and researchers observed that either the students cannot cope with the programmes and do not graduate, and those who do “qualify”, the majority are not equipped to provide quality early learning and care services.

The problem is well-summarized in the following observation made by ITEC – a training organization that implemented training of the Level 4 FET certificate in under-serviced areas:

Although many of the practitioners on our course are able to learn through practical activities and discussions, they have struggled to develop a theoretical and reflective understanding of what to do with children, and why they should do it. In addition, they struggle with comprehension of the course material (reading and writing for meaning).³⁶

Causes of the problem: Challenges and weaknesses in the practitioner training system

The causes of the problem are systemic and multiple, and include the following:

1. The capacity of the TVET colleges and staff to provide training is very limited. There is a general lack of trained and experienced ECD instructors. Many colleges use lecturers trained to teach education (not ECD) or even other unrelated qualifications.³⁷ This is a critical failing given that research and the stakeholders engaged by the Trust during the project confirm that the quality of training depends on qualified teachers and the provision of high-quality instruction. The project team, participating students and consulted stakeholders confirmed that ECD Training Facilitators must have ECD qualifications and experience, as well as Adult Education skills. If newly appointed training facilitators do not have ECD or Adult Education Qualification qualifications and good experience, then a short-mentored orientation course in a high quality ECD Sites is imperative.
2. TVET capacity is not limited to the training staff. Inadequate administrative staff contribute to poor planning and inefficiencies that frustrate smooth implementation of programmes. For example, this project experienced frustrations with student and facilitator’s material not arriving on time. The cause was identified as an overload of the ECD management teams at TVET Colleges. A management and administration Guideline Brochure for ECD Facilitators should be given to them at the beginning of their employment. This would greatly help them to be more effective more quickly.

³⁶ <http://www.dgmt-community.co.za/organisations/itec/learning-briefs/skills-development-early-childhood-development-practitioners>

³⁷ C Murray and L Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

3. A driver of limited TVET capacity is the irregular funding flows for learnerships. This has discouraged TVET colleges from developing the dedicated capacity required and the establishment of specialized or focused ECD units within the colleges. TVET colleges are generally underfunded to build internal ECD capacity and this limits their ability to plan for and develop specialist ECD planning, management and training capacity.³⁸
4. In the past, the lack of capacity in TVET colleges was augmented by ECD practitioner training provided by the ECD NPO training sector. An audit of the NPO sector in 2013 found that within the NPO sector, there has been a “strong emphasis on on-site support, with many NPOs providing teaching and learning resources, both of which are linked to quality improvement.”³⁹ The NPO sector has a higher ratio of qualified and experienced staff, compared to TVET colleges and as such played a valuable support role. However, this support has not been increased or sustained because of lack of funding for the NPOs – many have closed since the audit – and because of the lack of a formal partnership protocol mandating and regulating partnerships between TVET colleges and the NPO sector.⁴⁰
5. The language of instruction. This project observed, and stakeholders confirmed that the majority of students are not proficient in English. All the students were either Afrikaans or Xhosa speaking, yet all lectures and training sessions are routinely conducted in English. In addition, the project team observed that whilst the theory of ECD as reflected in the Unit Standards Student Handbooks is very good, most students found a lot of it inaccessible with regard to language. The Study Guides are in English using educational/ academic jargon. Wordlists at the beginning of each Unit Standard in the 3 languages most relevant to that area would help enormously.

A similar challenge was identified by the training organisation ITEC which noted that the inability to grasp content was aggravated by the poor reading and writing skills of the students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.”⁴¹

6. The practical learning component of ECD training programmes are weak and inadequate to support students to understand the ECD theory taught in class and how to apply it to develop and implement quality early learning programmes that ensure development of the young child.

This is caused by several factors, including that the learnership programme in South Africa is historically not student-centered – it is not geared towards capacitating the students. Instead it is driven by a job creation model and this results in insufficient mentoring and support. This results in insufficient mentoring and support for quality delivery.⁴²

³⁸ C Murray and L Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

³⁹ Linda Biersteker and Pam Picken. 2013. Report on a Survey of Non Profit Organisations Providing Training for ECD Programmes and Services (birth to four years). Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

⁴⁰ Linda Biersteker and Pam Picken. 2013. Report on a Survey of Non Profit Organisations Providing Training for ECD Programmes and Services (birth to four years). Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

⁴¹ <http://www.dgmt-community.co.za/organisations/itec/learning-briefs/skills-development-early-childhood-development-practitioners>

⁴² C Murray and L Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

The combination of the weak underlying model and TVET capacity constraints result in weak and ineffective practical learning experiences.

This was observed in this project and was a key driver of the chosen strategy aimed at strengthening support for students during their practical training. There was no time for the Boland College facilitators to visit the students regularly in their ECD Centres. They were therefore unable to assess whether the students were able to implement their training. They were also unable to guide them on how to improve.

7. The weak support provided during practical training does not support the translation of the learned theory into quality early learning practices in the classroom. The students are not supported to make meaning of the theory taught in the lecture room.

Observations during the implementation of this project and in the experience of role players consulted by the project team reveal that not enough time is spent on the practical activities that students will need to do daily in their program as qualified practitioners. They do not often see these learning activities being offered correctly in their ECD site. During training sessions there is often too much concentration on completing the Activities for Assessment and not working systematically through the whole Unit Standard. The student's knowledge and skills are therefore fragmented, and they are not holistically supported to implement a quality ECD Program. The student would understand, plan and be able to deliver a good ECD program if they understood the theory better.

8. A further observation by the project team and consulted stakeholders was the weak support and inappropriate attitudes provided by the supervising principal in ECD centres where students do their practical training. Principals / supervisors often do not fulfil their role of supervising and mentoring the students. Principals appear not to be sure of their role. Sometimes they are persuaded by students to sign logbooks incorrectly. On the other hand, many students did not get a mentoring type of support from them. In fact, many had a negative experience. They are used as domestic helpers and are not given enough opportunities to implement and practice their ECD skills. Some principals and practitioners are jealous of the students receiving training and are concerned that the student, once trained, will 'take' their job.
9. The lack of support and oversight by colleges of the practical learning component is compounded by the absence of guidelines regarding the requirements of work experience. There is no shared set of national guidelines on what the required outcomes should be for the student, or guidelines for the ECD principal and/or ECD lecturer on how to support these outcomes, and what standards to use to measure success and drive ongoing improvements.⁴³
10. The Enlighten Education Trust project team observed, and this is confirmed by its interviews with stakeholders, that many of the students complete their practical learnership in an ECD Centre that is itself not an example of a good ECD Learning Environment. Reasons for the poor ECD environment

⁴³ Linda Biersteker and Pam Picken. 2013. Report on a Survey of Non Profit Organisations Providing Training for ECD Programmes and Services (birth to four years). Cape Town: Ilifa Labantwana

included the fact that either the principal of the centre was herself a very weak ECD Practitioner and/or because there were insufficient correct resources in the centre.

The problem sought to be addressed by the project: A systemic summary

The South African state through various channels has invested heavily in sourcing ECD Training in TVET Colleges. However, as this project has shown students coming out of these Colleges are seldom competent ECD practitioners. Most are not able to implement their training effectively. This project sought to trial and document a range of interventions to address several the underlying systemic weaknesses.

Project aims and objectives

The project aim was to substantially and sustainably improve implementation of the ECD training programme in one college – the Boland College ECD through a tested and documented replicable model for improvement in other FET Colleges.

The objectives of the project were:

- to develop a model for improved training at TVET Colleges;
- to assist the students at Boland college to understand their training, to complete their activities and assignments successfully and to monitor and if necessary, mentor them to implement their training;
- to provide to the ECD students and the ECD Centres where they are working with ECD resources from the Trust's Community-/ and Toy Libraries and to expand the resources in these libraries; and
- write up a model for improving the Quality of TVET colleges ECD training through strategic connections with ECD organizations.

The project strategy and activities:

The project adopted a system's strengthening approach. It sought to work collaboratively, from the outset with key stakeholders (government and non-government) to identify critical impediments or challenges to the provision of quality ECD training by a select TVET college in the Overstrand district. It sought to develop and test an intervention to overcome the identified challenges. It further sought, through a process of ongoing dialogues, consultations and assessments to understand the institutional and contextual factors that strengthened and or limited the impact of the intervention to gain a better understanding of the broader systemic innovations necessary to ensure its replication and efficacy at scale in all TVET colleges across the country.

The key strategies and activities implemented through this project include the following:

Partnerships and collaboration: From the outset, the project team approached the project design, development, implementation and assessment in a partnership framework. The project team engaged

with students, NGOs and the TVET colleges to identify, develop, implement and assess the chosen responsive supportive interventions.

The provision of quality and regular supervision and mentoring support to TVET students by qualified experienced ECD practitioners and the provision of supportive teaching and learning materials through the Trust's book and toy libraries.

In 2015, we worked with 42 Level 4 and Level 5 ECD students in ECD Sites in the Overstrand and Bot River, who began their training in June 2014. We visited the students every 3 weeks at their ECD Sites

We observed their interaction and activities with the children. Later we spent time with them discussing our observations, encouraging them and giving advice and assistance. We also spent time going through the ECD Training Unit Standards to improve their understanding of the training content and to answer any questions about their tasks. Most of these students completed their training in December 2015.

We had however not mentored these students for the vital first half their training. This project under the current grant from DG Murray Trust enabled us to mentor the 2016 students, including those in Grabouw, but excluding Caledon, throughout their 18-month training.

We continued meeting, monitoring and mentoring the students as before. An additional activity was to help the students do revision for the National Summative Examination that was due at the end of their training. In this exam, the average of the students we had mentored was 20% higher than those we had not mentored.

Routine interaction between the mentors and TVET ECD lecturers: A key strategy of the project was to integrate the mentoring, and in so doing, enrich and improve the quality of the theoretical teaching provided by lecturers at the TVET college. Throughout the Partnership the Enlighten Education Trust ECD Mentors met quarterly with the Boland College Training Facilitators. Sometimes managers joined these meetings. We discussed the students, our actions and concerns, and the way forward.

Reflection / Learning Brief Exercises: Once the Training Courses were completed at Boland College, the project team undertook a series of reflection/ learning brief exercises. The process began with the students completing a Reflection Module they had used throughout their training (See appendix A for a copy of the tool and some of the student responses). The Enlighten Education Trust mentors and the Boland College Facilitators met and went through a similar exercise and thereafter we shared our provisional findings with the Boland College Management team.

In addition, the project team undertook a wider consultative reflection process with a range of ECD organizations in the Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga using a slightly adapted Reflection Exercise and then in Eastern Cape, Natal and the Free State (See Appendix B for a list of organisations consulted and appendix C for a copy of the reflection tool used).

In all these meetings the team shared the background of the Project and then discussed the Reflection Document, in some cases participants filled in the Documents at the meeting, in others they completed it later and emailed it to us.

The results of the reflection exercise are captured throughout this document and served to inform the key findings of the project as well as the conclusion and recommendations contained in this report.

Project impact and key findings

Impact

All the students, the Boland College Training facilitators and Enlighten mentors observed, in the reflection process, that the monitoring and mentoring intervention of Enlighten Education Trust contributed substantially to making them better ECD Practitioners. All stakeholders consulted confirmed that, based on their experiences in this project and their broader experience, monitoring and mentoring of ECD students at TVET Colleges is essential for effective and quality ECD training.

The students whom we monitored and mentored and who provided subsequent feedback through the reflection process confirmed that the project intervention had not only supported improved ECD knowledge of ECD but had also helped them to be better skilled and more confident ECD Practitioners. (See Comment from students: Appendix C).

As noted previously, the accumulative result of the additional support provided to the TVET college students was a twenty-percentage point improvement in the results of a planned National Summative Examination supported student. This reflects significantly better learning outcomes than students not mentored.

Key finding

A sustained and integrated programme of regular (monthly) mentoring and supervision of ECD students for the duration of their theoretical and practical studies by ECD qualified, experienced and motivated mentors who work in close collaboration with the TVET college lecturers to share learnings is an effective and affordable intervention to address and overcome systemic weaknesses and challenges in the current ECD practitioner training provided at TVET colleges. The provision of integrated and quality student supervision and mentoring, together with enrichment initiatives such as improved access to teaching and learning resources improves the quality of ECD practitioner training and the quality of ECD provisioning.

Whilst the findings of this project are positive, the project team caution against implementation of the intervention as an isolated and vertical initiative. Based on the project team's experience and the available evidence documented in this report, it will only serve to strengthen the quality of ECD provisioning if it is implemented as part of a broader system's strengthening strategy that will ensure that the intervention is implemented to complement a range of other interventions and is sustained through appropriate human and financial resourcing allocations.

Conclusion and recommendations

There is a clear, but unfulfilled responsibility on the Government of the Republic of South Africa to substantially improve the quality of ECD provisioning by strengthening the national ECD practitioner

training system to ensure a cadre of appropriately qualified personnel with the knowledge and capacity to be the drivers of sustainable development through human development.

This project, along with several other reports and evaluations confirm that the current system is beset by several weaknesses and challenges. Not only is it a development priority to remedy these. It is also a legal priority. There is a growing body of evidence, including the evidence generated through the implementation of this project of the necessary measures to rectify the situation. This section of the report stresses the duty on government to be pro-active and offers a number of recommendations as to the next steps based on the learnings from the design and implementation of this project as well as the learnings documented in related reports and evaluations.

The continued failure to improve ECD practitioner capacity through a strengthened national training system perpetuates historical inequalities and undermines the rights of the most vulnerable of children to equal and full enjoyment of their right to develop to their full potential. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made special mention of this failing in its recent concluding observation on South Africa's initial report on the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It has recommended, and requires government to report on measures taken to:

1. Guarantee high-quality early education for all children, especially those from disadvantaged families; and
2. Reduce the high rates of unemployment including by improving both opportunities for vocational training and the educational curriculum as well as by developing programmes, particularly for young people, to meet current labour market demands.⁴⁴

Given the global and national prioritization of quality ECD as a developmental and legal priority, and given the commitment by the DHET and other line departments to substantially improve the quality of ECD practitioner teaching and learning, notably through improvements in the quality of TVET programmers and in-service training programmes, the Education Enlighten Trust urges the DHET to lead a process for consideration and adoption of the following recommendations to strengthen the overarching national ECD practitioner training system:

1. Strengthen specialized ECD capacity at TVET colleges through partnerships with NGOs, and training of TVET staff. Develop and enforce minimum qualifications requirements for ECD lecturers at TVET colleges. As an interim measure, provide short courses for TVET lecturers run by RTOs and NPOs and / or make use of qualified staff from RTOs and NPOs through stronger working partnerships between TVET colleges and local RTOs and NPOs. All TVET College lecturers that are not ECD and Adult Education qualified and experienced must undergo a suitable orientation course. Ensure that there is enough administrative and management capacity in the ECD Departments of TVET Colleges.
2. Extend the length or duration of the training courses so that the Content of the Unit Standards particularly the more practical ones can be thoroughly worked through and better understood as a base for doing the Activities and Assignments and above all for implementation.

⁴⁴ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 29 November 2018. Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa. Geneva

3. All TVET colleges should develop and implement a systemic and integrated programme of monitoring and mentoring of TVET ECD students by qualified ECD practitioners. The programme should be developed and implemented collaboratively as between the college lecturers and mentors, with routine engagements to share learnings and observations to assess the quality of teaching and improve learning outcomes.

This can be done by:

- contracting a good ECD RTO organization to monitor and mentor the students at a suitable professional rate; or
 - ensuring that the TVET ECD facilitators are given the time and supported in the development of the skills necessary to do the mentoring. These visits need to be at least an hour and half on site and must include travel time, which in the rural areas is often long; or
 - contracting a centre principal or student's supervisor to do this. They must themselves have sufficient ECD qualification and skills to do this and must be given a fair stipend.
4. Ensure that students are only placed in registered ECD centres where a quality ECD programme is consistently being delivered and where a competent mentoring supervisor is available.
 5. Establish a quality community ECD Centre (from 3 months to 5 years) with student observation rooms at each or near each TVET Campuses offering ECD Training. This will need to be done in partnership with Municipalities, relevant State Departments and Funders such as Lottery. Each TVET Campus must also have a good well-resourced and managed Book and Toy Library.

To expedite this process, ECD should be included as one of the DHET 13 trades or qualifications around which TVET colleges will be developed to become Centres of Specialisation for that Trade. In line with DHET planning, the Centres of Specialisation, one of which should be the Boland College, should ensure that the ECD curriculum is up to date; that the facilitators are well-prepared; lecturers and mentoring staff are adequately trained and supported; and that the TVET college in question includes an ECD workshop – and ECD centre of excellence attached to the TVET college where students can observe how the theory they are learning is being implemented in a quality ECD learning programme (1 community centre is not going to be able to accommodate all the students for their practical) and receive ongoing mentoring and supervision.

6. Consider and integrate the key findings and learnings from the pilot into the in-service ECD practitioner training module to be developed in terms of the National Integrated Plan for ECD in South Africa: Towards 2030 and in-service training to be developed by DBE.
7. Develop guidelines for mentors and centre-principles responsible for the in-service training of students doing their practical training or participating in a learnership programme that will provide information on the purpose of the learnership, the role of the mentor and the value of quality support. The guidelines should address any potential negative attitudes that the principal or mentor may have towards the learners; prevent the exploitation and use of the students for menial work; and cultivate an understanding amongst the principles and mentors of the value and importance of their mentoring role. The guidelines should thus include theoretical and practical guidelines on the purpose of the learnership; the skills, competencies and capacities that the students should be supported in

cultivating through their practical training; the roles and responsibilities of the principal and/or mentor; practical guidance on how to fulfil these responsibilities. There is a dual value in developing the proposed guidelines for ECD-centre mentors responsible for in-service training and mentoring. It will improve the quality of the training and ultimately enhance the skills and capacities of the ECD principles, and in so doing, support strengthening of ECD management and provisioning in centres providing in-service training and mentoring.

8. Internal capacity and institutional arrangements at TVET colleges will have to be strengthened to support the prioritization of, and improvements in the ECD teaching and learning environment. Implementing improvement interventions, such as provision of quality mentoring for a select number of students, as isolated vertical interventions, rather than as a component of a multi-faceted holistic system's strengthening programmes is unlikely to sustainably and efficiently improve the quality of ECD practitioner training and provisioning for all students.⁴⁵

TVET colleges must strengthen their internal and focused ECD capacity to plan, coordinated, implement, manage and report to ensure systemic, sustainable and effective improvements in the quality of practitioner training for all students.

For example:

- a. Development of dedicated ECD training and teaching, as well as management capacity within TVET colleges
 - a. For example, qualified ECD educators and learnership / practical training managers;
 - b. Establishing a dedicated coaching and mentoring unit at all colleges so that there can be quality assured, sustainable and measurable support to the practitioner in the workplace (a suggestion made by the Western Cape education department to the authors of the TVET ECD training audit)⁴⁶.
 - b. Establishing ECD units within colleges
 - c. Where it is not possible to build internal capacity within the TVET college for planning, implementation, oversight and mentoring, TVET colleges should establish partnerships with the ECD NPO sector to provide specialized support, such as planning, training, on-site mentoring and/or support to assist TVET colleges to deliver a quality programme.
 - d. Establishing work laboratories/ ECD centers of excellence attached to the college to facilitate interactive and dynamic learning across theoretical and practical teaching and learning experience.
9. A coordinated and holistic ECD training funding strategy must be developed to support, encourage, enable and incentivize TVET colleges to plan for and implement holistic ECD training system's strengthening plans of action. Funding streams should be consolidated, and guidelines developed to ensure the required ECD planning, training, management, teaching, mentoring, monitoring and reporting capacity. The 2014 audit of TVET college's provisioning of ECD training observed that

⁴⁵ Chris Murray and Linda Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Ilifa Labantwana. Cape Town

⁴⁶ Chris Murray and Linda Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Ilifa Labantwana. Cape Town

colleges are unwilling and unable, and indeed cannot be expected to plan for and grow their internal ECD specialized capacity if there is no guarantee of regular funding.⁴⁷

10. Government funding should be expanded to provide funding to improve mentoring and workplace support, and for practitioners in non centre based ECD programmes⁴⁸, as well as build internal ECD specialist capacity in TVET colleges.
11. The DHET should allocate a substantial proportion of its increased TVET programme budget specifically to strengthen the ECD-practitioner training programmes and supporting systems in TVET colleges. It is urged and indeed compelled to prioritize improving TVET ECD training programmes given the current global and national commitments to improve access to quality ECD services through human resource development initiatives.
12. The DHET and ETDP SETA should facilitate and fund pilot models between TVET colleges and other ECD service providers for improving quality of lecturing, project management and workplace support. This could be done through structured mentorship opportunities and partnership with strong and experienced institutions that are able to provide support.⁴⁹
13. The DHET should coordinate a consultative process involving all role players, departments and NPOs to develop guidelines for the provision of quality, responsive ECD-training programmes that recognize and address the current challenges to quality practitioner training. The guidelines should speak to the holistic teaching and learning environment and experience, including teacher qualifications, learning and teaching resources and training materials, the language of instruction and how to accommodate linguistic diversity, on-site mentoring and training by the ECD site principle or mentor.

The guidelines should serve to regulate and standardize practices across all TVET colleges and sites of practical training, mentoring and supervision through their inclusion in the SAQA and related registration / accreditation criteria for TVET colleges and the norms and standards for training programmes run by NPOs and ECD sites that are accredited by the Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development, and the Department of Public Works (EPWP).

14. It is critical to recognize that the suite of recommendations cannot be implemented in isolation, but rather as part of a broader national system's strengthening initiative. It is therefore recommended that the DHET lead a coordinated process for the development of a holistic national ECD practitioner training strategy that is grounded in a student-centered system comprised of theoretical and practical components with the objective of building the knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes of

⁴⁷ Chris Murray and Linda Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Ilifa Labantwana. Cape Town

⁴⁸ Chris Murray and Linda Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Ilifa Labantwana. Cape Town

⁴⁹ Chris Murray and Linda Biersteker. 2014. TVET Colleges: Contributions towards HR development in the Early Childhood Development Sector. Ilifa Labantwana. Cape Town

students and which are supported by teaching and learning models or strategies proven to achieve these outcomes in the South African context.

The cost of the key recommendations

In addition to the formal training cost of the present training model at TVET colleges, the costing of our main recommendation is as follows:

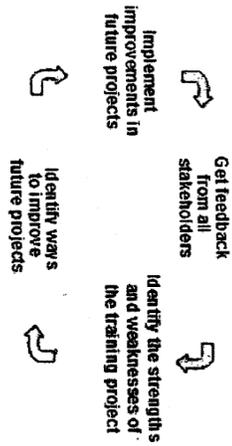
DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED COST
BUILDING: Five room ECD centre with office, storeroom-/ sickroom and toilets	R4,5 million
Monitoring and Mentoring	R 6 250 per student per year 2.5 hours (mentor) x 10 months x R250 (per hour rate)

Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of the reflection tool as completed by students

COMMENTS BY BOLAND STUDENTS - 2017

ENLIGHTEN EDUCATION TRUST



Dear Boland ECD Student

You have now almost finished your Boland ECD Training Course. We hope that it has been a very good experience in your development as an ECD Practitioner. We hope too that both your training at Boland College and the mentoring provided by Enlighten Education Trust in partnership with Boland College has helped you become an excellent ECD Practitioner.

We feel that it is a good time to reflect on this experience. We would like to get feedback from you so that we can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training and the mentoring as well as identify ways to improve.

We would be grateful if you would assist us by filling in the form below. We must all remember the principles of reflection and assessment such as honesty and confidentiality. There is no need to sign.

We wish you luck in your career as a qualified ECD practitioner.

Kind regards,
Enlighten Education Trust ECD Mentors
May 2017

	Yes/No	Reasons/ Explanation (Please print very small if writing)
Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)		
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	It did because they open my eyes and also gave me all the understanding with what I was doing in my Unit Standards.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	because children loved to explore all they did.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	All those Study Guides helped me in the whole 18 Months in the training

	Yes/No	Reasons/ Explanation (Please print very small if writing)
Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)		
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	Firstly my skills need alot of improvement with the help of my mentor Tannie Marge. I really improve alot as a Practitioner.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	The work that I didnt understand were supported with the knowledge and years of experience of my mentor.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	We used the books and toys to improve our ECD daily program.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	Hoara!! Hoara!! without it I would not survive my levels studies.

	Yes/No	Reasons/ Explanation (Please print very small if writing)
Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)		
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes.	A lot. Because your mentor would help you in telling you how to do a lesson or activity in classroom.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes.	It helps me understand the workbook beter.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes.	Children did enjoy book very much
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes.	Very much. Because without that Study Guides I would have been totally lost.

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	It help Very much because there were stuff that I didn't know that I know now.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	most of my activity lay lay out and stuff I didn't know but they help me with it.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	Because most of the time we cant do the activities because there were very few but with the ^{toy library} help.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	But it was not only with L 5 with everything.

Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	She did help me to arrange my class. ✓
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	I could correct my activities or add.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	The children can do music rings with the instruments and build with the blocks.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	The study guides was very help full.

	Yes/No	Reasons/ Explanation (Please print very small if writing)
Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)		
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	They help my with things that I didn't understand.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	No	When they come and visit my, I always done with my word work.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	No	They didnt gave books or toys to your school.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	They give a my one study ^{Go Guides} us. 7408, 7609, 7610 ✓

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	YES	Yes They help to plan the daily programme better and gave new exciting ideas to use.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	YES	I understood my tasks better after they had explain it and bought info to guide us.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	NO	Never used it at as our school has our own facilities.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	It made the understanding of what were asked better and which formats and layouts to be used.

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	EET mentor helped me to overcome my fear, that I cannot do my practice the way I had to.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	I understood more after that.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?		
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	It got to know the important details from the study Guides.

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	Especially when I was unsure of how to do a certain activity. They would guide and explain until I understood it.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	It gave me a broader perspective of options that I can use to do my activities.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?		
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	If I get stuck during an activity, I always refer back to my book for facts.

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	They observed us and could give us feedback. It helped to insight and information on how to do it better.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes.	They help me to understand the unit standards better. And i could impliment it at the school.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	We made use of the Book library, and the stories were nice and helped the us and the children.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes.	We didnt receive any study Guides from the College so it helped me to do my activities with more meaning.
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	The discussions gave us clarity about work that we did not understand yet and was also explained in easier ways.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes	Yes I could used the book together on a theme table or during story time.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	It made our understanding about the work easier.
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	Always support me in my training, at Boland College.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	especially with for me you who don't have internet nearby.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	Yes.	It help me deliver more and beter. ECD learning activities
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	No	During my level 4 training they have also help me. I'm very glad for their support.

Monitoring and support by Enlighten Education Trust(EET)

Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?	Yes	The mentors encourage me to do my work with love.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?	Yes	After the discussions with EET mentors I understand the unit Standards clearly.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?	No	I didn't make use of any toys or books.
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)	Yes	They provided me with Study Guides and also some print outs it helps me so much.

MONITORING AND SUPPORT BY ENLIGHTEN EDUCATION TRUST(EET)

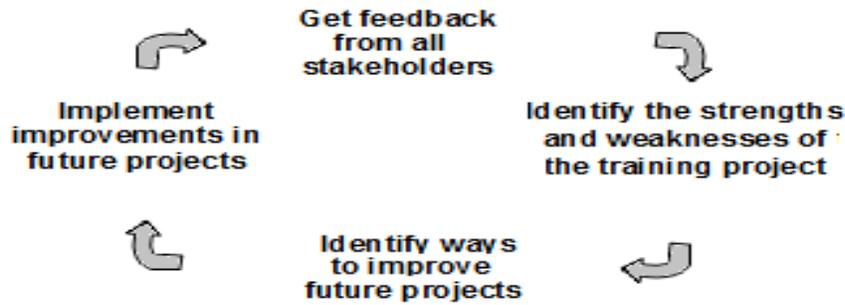
Did the monitoring and mentoring visits by EET mentors help you implement your training in your ECD site?		Yes, it helped me with my training.
Did the discussions with EET mentors on the Unit Standards help? In what way?		Yes, the discussions make you understand the broader picture in detail.
Did being able to use the EET Book and Toy library help you to deliver better ECD Learning Activities?		Yes, new ideas and more experiences
Did it help you that EET provided you with Study Guides? (L 5 only)		Yes without it I couldn't make it

Appendix B: List of organisations the Enlighten Education Trust consulted

DATE	VENUE	ECD STAKEHOLDERS
17 Oct 2017	Centre Early Childhood Development	Cape Town ECD NGOs and RTOs
23 October 2017	Grassroots	Grassroots and ELRU Managers and reps
23 October 2017	Cape College, Athlone	ECD Staff from Athlone and Gardens
25 October 2017	Alphen	Bridge Community of Practice Meeting: ECD
22 November 2017	Sothorn Cape College, George	Management and ECD Training Staff
7 February 2018	Penryn College, Nelspruit	ECD Training Reps from RTO's, Dept Education and Social Development, TVET Colleges and EDTPSeta
9 February 2018	Western Cape Education Department, Cape Town	WCED Officials involved in quality supporting ECD Training
6 March 2018	Barlow World, Johannesburg	Bridge Community of Practice Meeting: ECD
8 March 2018	Cape Town	Department of Higher Education and Training: ECD Training stakeholders (able to briefly discuss Project with those not yet consulted)
23 March 2018	DSD, Polokwane	ECD Training Reps from RTO's, Dept Education and Social Development, TVET College and other departments
27 September 2018	West Coast College Malmesbury	Zandra Prinsloo: Manager ECD Training
11 October 2018	Cape College Athlone	Melody Marecia to see and discuss how their new state of the art ECD Centre with its observation rooms will improve the quality of training
18 October 2018	Port Elizabeth TVET College	Amanda Mayo Manager of ECD training and her trainer
18 October 2018	Buffalo City TVET College, East London	ECD Management and team
22 October 2018	Esayidi TVET College, Port Shepstone	ECD Training team and stakeholders
25 October 2018	Umgundlovo College Plessislaer, Pietermaritzburg	Ruth Mabela, Senior ECD trainer
26 October 2018	Umgundlovo TVET College, Pietermaritzburg	Mr Ramatlana and Mr Sibisi, Managers of ECD Training
7 November 2018	Ntataise, Viljoenskroon	Puleng Motsoeneng. Discuss Ntataise extra post L 4 TVET training to produce quality effective ECD Practitioners

Appendix C: Copy of the reflection tool used to consult CSOs

Reflection/Learning Brief with Enlighten Education Trust and ECD Staff at NGO’s and TVET Colleges



Dear Colleagues

We have finished the monitoring and mentoring stage of Enlighten Education Trust and Boland College Partnership to investigate ways to improve ECD Training.

It is now time to reflect on this experience. We would like to get feedback from you so that we can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training and the mentoring as well as identify ways to improve. This will assist us to develop The Model for future ECD Training by TVET Colleges. To develop such a Model is the actual Outcome of this project.

	Yes/No	Reasons/ Explanation (Please print very small if writing)
Monitoring and support by ECD NGO or TVET ECD Facilitators		
Do you think monitoring and mentoring visits by ECD mentors/facilitators will help the students implement their training better in their ECD site?		
Do you think that discussions with ECD mentors on the Unit Standards would help them? In what way?		
Do think being able to use a Book and Toy library will help them to deliver		

better ECD Learning Activities?		
Please think about the ECD Training at TVET Colleges now		
Do you feel that enough time and attention is given to each Unit Standard ?Please mention Unit Standards/ areas that you think should be given more time		
Was there too much emphasis on only completing the Activities rather than fully understanding the Unit Standards and being able to implement a quality ECD Programme		
Do all the students understand all the English used in the Unit Standards completely? If not what could be done to help the students to understand every word?		
Do you think that there is enough capacity at TVET Colleges to administer and manage the ECD training effectively?		
Do all ECD facilitators/managers at TVET Colleges have ECD qualifications and experience. If not what can be done to give them a deep understanding of ECD?		

Were the ECD sites where the students were placed following a good ECD learning Programme as an example for the students?	
Do the students get sufficient support , help, opportunities from the staff at their ECD sites? How can this be improved?	
What about the stipend? Is it attracting students to do the course simply for the stipend?	
What criteria is being used to select students? Is it working?	
Please bring up any other ideas which will improve ECD Training at TVET Colleges and produce better ECD practitioner.	

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SPENDING THE TIME AND EFFORT TO FILL IN THIS REFLECTION EXERCISE.
We at Enlighten Education Trust appreciate your assistance.

Betsey Joubert
Project Leader

Email: fivebells@telkomsa.net
Mobile: 073 304 1472