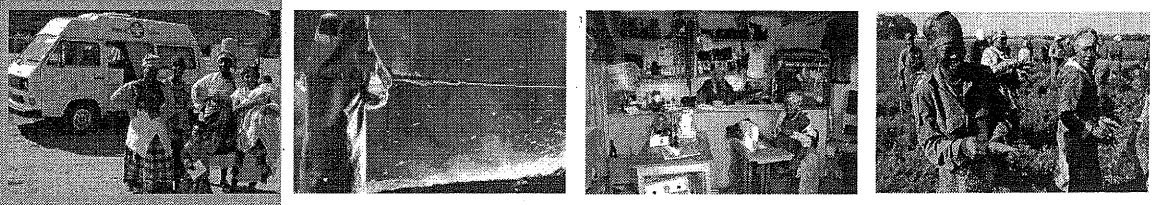

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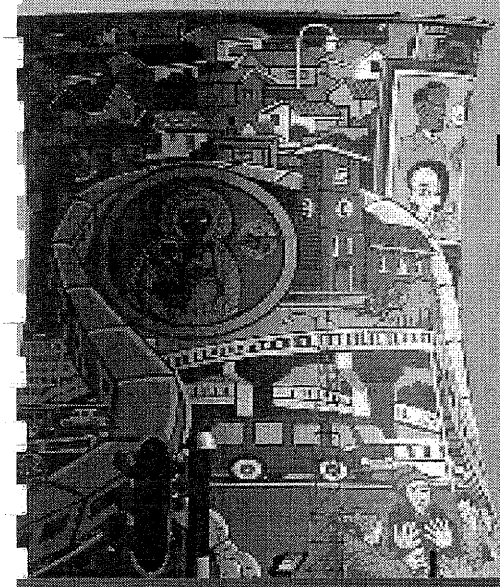

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: A Case for Upscaling Employment Opportunities in the Sector

Prof. R. September; Dr. R. Du Toit; Dr. J. Kvalsvic; Ms B. Koopman

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DATE

Jan 2006

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Globally, the creation of public works programmes has emerged as a strategy with the potential to play an important role in delivering services and infrastructure to communities formerly excluded from them. Within Southern Africa the popularity of public works programmes seems to be increasing as a means of creating jobs, increasing the assets of the poor and of contributing to social protection and poverty alleviation. Conversely, international experiences of these programmes have largely been within the infrastructure sector, which has been criticised for its inability to produce significant numbers of sustainable job opportunities. In contexts of deep poverty, questions are therefore often raised about whether public works programmes can play a significant role in the long-term social protection challenges that many nations in the Southern African region face (SALDRU, 2005).

In South Africa, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was announced by the President at the beginning of 2004. Since then millions has been budgeted from government's own funds for the national EPWP, aimed at drawing significant numbers of unemployed people into productive work. The programme includes training opportunities to increase the capacity of people to earn a sustainable income. The goal of the programme is to create 450 000 new jobs per year to reach the government's objective of halving unemployment by 2014. The premise is that government expenditure could be a key influence of the nature and pace of job creation in sectors where government is a provider or procurer of services. For this reason the infrastructural and social services sectors were identified as priority sectors for the EPWP. Both these sectors rely extensively on government resources, and expansion of employment opportunities was motivated on the grounds that government's direct role in creating employment opportunities for semi-skilled and unskilled labour would have a significant impact on these sectors. Government targeted the social services sector because of its relatively high

employment coefficients and its ability to absorb a large proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled labour (Altman, 2004).

To facilitate the goal of expanding job opportunities the departments of Social Development, Health and Education developed the EPWP Social Sector Plan 2004/5 to 2008/9 (SSP). In this plan, early childhood development (ECD) and home- and community-based care (HCBC) have been identified as key sectors for the implementation of the EPWP. The SSP describes a broad implementation strategy for the EPWP in the ECD sector. Consistent with the dominant development rationale (to counter dependency on and the welfarism associated with direct transfers through government spending on welfare), the EPWP programmes in this sector aim to create work for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The rationale behind introducing these programmes is that this would not only result in greater benefits for children, in social independence for individuals, and in greater social cohesion for individuals and communities, but that it could also complement social welfare services delivery and decrease the need for "safety net" benefits.

The focus of this study was on the implications of the expansion of employment opportunities in the ECD sector. The study involved a mixed-methods research design, including structured interviews and focus groups conducted with ECD service providers. The use of these methods aimed at exploring the readiness of the sector to expand and at gaining a bottom-up understanding of the possible implications, opportunities and challenges of expanded job creation in the sector through government's EPWP. In addition, a round-table discussion was conducted with senior policy makers. Specifically, the study involved ECD facilities that serve children under the age of five.

1.2 Methodology

The aims of the study were to:

(i) Enhance understanding of the capacity of ECD facilities to expand;

(ii) Inform future planning for expansion in the sector in terms of the following elements of ECD programming:

- infrastructure and institutional arrangements, and
- implementation and service-delivery mechanisms, including ECD models, human resources, training and development, and financial arrangements;

(iii) Obtain views of the respondents regarding the implications of expansion and proposals for processes of expansion.

The study included six case studies and four focus groups and a round-table discussion with the ECD reference group, which encompassed members of the core government departments, including the departments of Social Development and Education; a health representative from the Office on the Rights of the Child; and representatives of the Social Policy Unit in the Presidency and UNICEF.

The case studies constituted a convenience sample, which included a combination of care facilities and training providers. The studies were facilitated through a questionnaire administrated by the researchers. Of the case studies, two were conducted in the Western Cape, two in the Eastern Cape; one in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and one in Gauteng. The focus groups were facilitated by the researchers with the use of a semi-structured questionnaire guide. Focus groups were conducted in the Western Cape, Gauteng , Eastern Cape and KZN.

The selected NGOs were included on the basis that they worked within the ECD profile targeted by the EPWP, i.e. previously excluded, low-income, rural and urban individuals and communities.

The purpose of the focus groups was to gain an understanding of the capacity and perceptions of ECD service providers regarding the expansion of the ECD sector through the EPWP. Each focus group was conducted with practitioners and senior ECD staff, mostly the directors of ECD facilities in the

selected provinces. The researchers led the discussions, while the focus groups were recorded by trained research assistants. The duration of each focus-group session was approximately three to four hours. .

1.3 Rationale

It is widely recognised that what happens during the earliest years of a child's life, from birth to three, influences how the rest of childhood and adolescence develops (UNICEF, 2001:2). For this reason, the quality of early care and nurturing has a decisive and lasting impact on how children grow, learn, and develop their capacities into adulthood. Child rearing, caring and nurturing happen in families, communities and nations. Children cannot do well unless their families do well, and families do not do well unless their communities and nations do well. Moreover, children from poor and low-income families, compared to their better-off peers, are more likely to suffer from preventable diseases, fail at school, become involved in conflict with the law, and become parents before they are ready to parent. These children often reach adulthood without the tools necessary to access jobs and earn a decent living, and consequently become the next generation of the unemployed.

In South Africa and other parts of the world, this situation is compounded by the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Young orphans in poor communities are usually taken in by other branches of their families, adding further strain to the already meagre resources of these households. Community-based ECD sites could play a key role in supporting caregivers and young orphans in poor communities, by providing suitable care and stimulation for these children and their families. If expanded, the ECD sector could also provide important employment opportunities for many low-income families.

Unemployment is a significant contributor to poverty and exclusion. The provision of access to quality employment is, therefore, an essential way of achieving sustainable livelihoods, which in turn are a crucial means of reducing poverty and inequality (May, 2000). Because the socio-economic position of parents always affects the achievements of their children, the most powerful approach to better the chances of children to succeed is to improve

the financial security of their parents in the present. From this perspective, the most basic intervention should be geared towards helping parents to access work and to succeed in the workplace. This, however, does not mean that poor families only need employment opportunities to survive. Clearly, for families who may need additional support, access to other essential services, such as housing, social protection, and psycho-social support, is equally important.

In South Africa, finding effective ways of overcoming persistently high levels of unemployment is a significant challenge. The extensive rate of unemployment in South Africa is directly associated with deep poverty at household level, which affects large numbers of children who, as a result, suffer hunger, disease, lack of access to essential services, and orphanhood (Haarman, 2000; Streak & Van der Westhiuzen 2004; September, 2004). In 2004, the unemployment rate was estimated to be 41.2% if the broad definition of unemployment is used (including people who had given up looking for work) and 27.8% using the strict definition (Statistics South Africa, 2004) The highest unemployment rates tend to be concentrated in rural areas, and unemployment rates are highest among Africans, , among women and the youth, and among those with no previous work experience. Moreover, the legacy of apartheid is still stubbornly entrenched, as is reflected in the structural and systemic nature of South Africa's poverty profile. Poor people face multiple problems of unemployment, low quality of jobs, and a skewed labour market, which does not adquately provide for semi-skilled or unskilled labour (Bhorat and Hodge,1999). The challenge is therefore not only to create jobs, but to create better quality and sustainable jobs.

The South African labour market is broadly divided into the formal and informal sectors. The formal sector is further divided into primary and secondary labour markets. The primary labour market is regulated and characterised by higher wages and skills requirements, an organised workforce and opportunities for upward mobility. The secondary labour market is less regulated Workers in this sector have lower skill levels, are paid less

and have limited opportunities for further training and upward mobility. The informal sector comprises informal and casual labour, unpaid labour, domestic labour, and family labour. Poor people are often relegated to the secondary labour market and the informal segment of the market, and have difficulty moving into the primary labour market as a result of various barriers (May, 2000). The kind of work required by the secondary labour market and the informal segment is done mainly by women, and the level of income generated by their activities tends to be low. May (2000) has identified six basic categories of the unemployed poor, suggesting that each category requires a different strategy from government. These categories are:

- Poorly educated rural unemployed;
- Poorly educated urban unemployed;
- Young unemployed with no labour market experience;
- Long-term unemployed with no labour-market experience;
- Those with labour-market experience and some education; and
- Highly educated unemployed poor.

For unemployed people with low levels of formal education in both rural and urban settings (mostly comprising the long-term unemployed), strong growth in labour-intensive employment, support for informal sector activities, and intensive education and training may be required to integrate them into the job market. In the interim, community-based public works programmes and adequate social safety nets could be important interventions. For unemployed youth with no labour-market experience, more jobs, skills training and assistance with job searches may be the most appropriate solutions (May, 2000). However, labour-market policy on its own cannot be the main instrument for poverty reduction. To be credible for participants and employers, these programmes also have to provide support services that address workers' life situations and the issues that make it difficult for them to succeed and to remain employed. These include substance abuse, childcare, transportation, housing, and health issues (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005). An effective, successful process of poverty eradication requires

coordinated government strategies and action from a diverse and integrated network of welfare, health, education, and other economic interventions.

For the coordination and integration of government interventions to be guaranteed, the design of the social-services component of the EPWP focused on ensuring that the process of implementation would mobilise and engage diverse social institutions, such as the labour market, communities and government (Department of Social Development, Department of Education and Department of Health, 2004) .2004). The overall well being of people and the strength of the economy are intertwined. For this reason, the goal of poverty-reduction programmes should be to promote the general welfare of communities instead of viewing the economic and social domains of people's lives as being in competition with each other.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report presents: (i) profiles of selected ECD facilities on the basis of the case-study data; (ii) perceptions of ECD service providers about the capacity of the sector to create more job opportunities through the EPWP (focus-group data); (iii) input from the ECD reference group convened by the national Department of Social Development (round-table data); and (iv) the conclusion. Individual case studies are attached in the annexure to the report.

SECTION TWO:

PROFILES OF SELECTED ORGANISATIONS

This section of the report presents some general trends in the profiles of the facilities studied, including governing structures, infrastructure, and key service-delivery dimensions.

2.1 Structure and Governance of the Organisations

All the facilities studied were governed by a governing board. Most of the boards comprised community members. Individuals serving on the boards were all volunteers who were also regarded as leaders in their fields. They were mainly people with expertise in the areas of child health, education, community development, finance, and human resources. In some organisations parents served on the governing boards, but this was not the general trend. Where parents were excluded from governing boards, the opinion of the interviewee was that there were other forums for parents to be included in decision making, such as parent meetings. Overall the boards' functions were to:

- Ensure that the organisation remained accountable to the community;
- Oversee programme work through quarterly reports;
- Approve policies;
- Ensure that donor money was wisely spent;
- Appoint management staff within the organisation; and
- Be accountable for finances and oversee the general running of organisation.

The directors or programme managers reported to the board. One of the bigger organisations was organised under a trust consisting of two sub-structures (both boards with management committees), one for the training of practitioners and the other serving as an umbrella preschool association for 40 smaller ECD centres based in local communities. Each of these sites had

its own parent service committee, which consisted of the principal, vice principal and elected parents.

Another training provider was attached to a university and had indirect representation on the university's senate.

All the sites studied were registered with the Department of Social Development for monitoring and subsidy purposes. Two of the smaller sites were not registered as Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). A respondent from one of these sites said that, although they were registered with the Department of Social Development, they did not have any contact with the Department. Their service was also not being monitored or evaluated by the Department. The training organisations were all registered with the Education Training Development Practitioners (ETDP) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA). Three of the bigger organisations reported with concern that they were aware that there are thousands of unregistered and informal ECD care situations in the country.

2.2 Partnerships, Professional Relationships and Networks

Representatives of the bigger and older NGO-type facilities said that there had been a strong ECD national body, but that it seemed to have disintegrated. While all agreed that it would be useful to have such a structure, they felt that, if the goals and functions of this structure were not clear and practical and if there were no direct benefits for organisations, then to belong to such a structure would be a waste of their time. One organisation mentioned that the South African ECD Congress had once been very strong but that it had faced challenges and could now no longer be seen as the umbrella organisation for the sector. It was reported that there had been discussions in the Department of Education about the need for greater dialogue on sectoral issues. Suggestions were made for quarterly sessions to share best-practice models and training with a focus e on sharing of experiences.

Respondents reported a good deal of other activity and dialogue within the sector on training and service-delivery levels. For example, it was reported that an ECD task team had been established at the ECD stakeholders' forum held in October 2004. There are active provincial ECD working groups and other provincial developments; for example, in KZN the ECD stakeholders' forum is now held at district level, where each of the four education regions of KZN has hosted its own ECD Imbizo. Currently the stakeholders' forum is still heavily biased towards education in that the major stakeholders are from the Department of Education, which means that children under five are virtually ignored. In the Western Cape, the Department of Social Development has developed an integrated ECD policy, which is on route to the legislature. There was awareness among respondents that all provincial governments were developing plans for ECD. In general, respondents expressed the need for a policy framework for government to work more closely in an interdepartmental way. Respondents also expressed a need to find mechanisms to bring government departments and civil society closer together.

Donor and other resource-based relationships are very important to all ECD service providers. Without these external resources they would not be able to survive. Several facilities maintain close networks and relationships with their local communities.

2.3 Assets of the Responding Organisations

The assets of the responding organisations included moveable assets, such as motor cars, furniture, and office equipment, including computers, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, outdoor play equipment and training materials. The numbers and quality of assets were strongly determined by the size and scope of the organisation and its geographical location. The training organisations and larger NGO-type facilities were generally much better equipped than the smaller care facilities. There is a huge difference in the assets and quality of ECD facilities. The facilities that operate from private homes, especially those in black townships and rural areas, are generally

under-resourced. These facilities are mainly sustained through fees of parents, which only cover food and salaries.

Three of the responding training organisations owned their buildings. The community-based centres rented the buildings, in some cases from the local municipality. The programmes were either operated from brick buildings (own ECD building, churches, or community centres), container-type classrooms, private residences, or pre-fabricated classrooms. The respondents reported that the biggest drains on resources were the buildings and the maintenance of the classrooms. One organisation said that it could accommodate more children on its property but could not afford to extend its facilities.

The training organisations were generally well equipped and capacitated. They had developed extensive training materials for all levels, which they were able to print, present, and distribute to training participants. Other assets included good training facilities and equipment.

2.4 Service-delivery Profiles

2.4.1 ECD models and programmes

There was general consensus that the type of ECD model used was usually dependent on location conditions, demand, resources and context. Respondents felt that in most societies there was a need for all types of ECD models, including centres, home-based care facilities, and home-visiting programmes. The discussions did not favour one type of model over the others, but rather emphasised the need for quality control and safety monitoring.

Where there was a strong call for centre-based models, the main reason given was that these provided for more standardised care and monitoring of quality. The negative side to centre-based models was that they did not always allow for small groups and individual attention and were usually not accessible to poor families and rural communities. Those respondents that strongly advocated home-based ECD models emphasised that these models were more accessible to rural communities and poor families. This,

it was suggested, would curtail transport costs, and prevent young children from having to walk long distances. (In rural KZN children who walk long distances are usually not accompanied by adults but by other children.) The down side of home-based care was that the programmes were often interrupted by other people coming in and out of these homes and that the care givers were not as focused on the children in their care as they would have been if they were not in their homes. The biggest disadvantage of the home-based care and child-minding model was that unless these facilities functioned within a regulated context they could be dangerous if their environmental conditions, quality of care, and educational stimulation were left unmonitored.

The "Family in Focus" (FIF) model was also promoted as a viable choice if it was carefully implemented. These programmes involve home visits by a trained ECD facilitator/home visitor, who conducts ECD programmes with parents and children in their homes. However, this model cannot operate as a stand-alone programme, but works better as an extension of existing community-based ECD centres. All of the programmes are very dependent on the quality and dedication of the individual caregivers/practitioners.

2.4.2 Staffing issues

(i) Recruitment and selection of staff

The participants described various ways of recruiting staff. Many facilities advertised vacancies and conducted interviews with the use of a selected panel. Decisions about appointments were usually made by the management committees and the principals. Some respondents reported that they preferred recruiting staff directly from the community. Others reported that they first tried to recruit from among their existing staff and volunteers. The organisations provided the following criteria for appointing staff members:

- No family members of existing staff are appointed;
- The candidate must be between the ages of 22 and 40;

- The candidate must love children;
- The candidate must have been involved in community initiatives before and have shown a willingness to work hard;
- The candidate must have shown a willingness to work full time for one year while undergoing training;
- Staff members are selected on the basis of their competence, knowledge of the language spoken by the community, qualification, and attitude.

(ii) The educational qualifications of the staff

The staff of training service providers was generally better qualified than the staff working at centres and home-based care facilities. The staff members of those facilities that were affiliated to or had strong relationships with training providers were almost all qualified at NQF level 4. The smaller independent facilities had less qualified staff. There did not seem to be a generally applied norm for staff qualifications.

(iii) Implementation of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act

Two organisations reported that they adhered strictly to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act; others reported that:

> "The working conditions are very poor and in most cases don't adhere to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. As far as salaries go, even if they wanted to pay their staff according to minimum requirements, there is simply no money to do so."

> "All centres work towards implementing the LRA but are very difficult."

> "Don't think they even know that there are basic conditions of employment."

It was reported that there are practical considerations that are challenging for staff working in rural areas. The work is extremely difficult and requires a high

degree of dedication. Because many parents do not work and cannot afford to pay the fees, many children are excluded from these facilities. While the FIF family-based model requires and encourages parental involvement, it takes a lot of work to motivate parents and keep them involved. For the home visitors it is hard because there is often no public transport and where there is public transport they have to pay for it themselves. Home visitors also train under extremely difficult circumstances. It is often difficult to find suitable training venues and the venues used do not always have even the most basic facilities.

(iv) The role and involvement of volunteers

Many of the respondents reported that volunteers were involved in their programmes at different levels. Some of their opinions about ways of involving volunteers are reflected in the following direct quotations:

> "As an organisation no formal volunteer programme exists because it is too unreliable and the volunteers expect some kind of stipend. However schools do create opportunities for local women to volunteer from time to time."

> "Has 120 volunteers who do work weekly. Volunteers are all students who are studying."

> "Some parents come in as volunteers when needed."

> "Local committee members attached to the FIF programmes."

> "We occasionally have overseas volunteers to help us out here and they have very good understanding of volunteerism."

> "A lot more work can be done in developing volunteer programmes in communities and finding innovative ways of recognising them. Need to look at whole issue of volunteerism and find ways to make it more attractive to people."

Generally the respondents reported that volunteerism is a huge problem in poverty-stricken communities because everyone in these communities is struggling to survive. Respondents felt that volunteers should be paid a stipend or should be compensated for their transport costs.

2.5 Relationships with and Accountability to Communities

Many respondents reported that there was local accountability through the use of parents' service committees and representation on boards. Responses from the respondents included the following comments:

> "If schools want a grant from social welfare, they have to be accountable."

> "Yes, but little. Don't understand the importance of early childhood development and because the sites are not registered and subsidised they are answerable to no one. So there is nobody who can really uphold standards and ensure that they meet basic minimum best practice."

> "The project/centre management committees effectively represent the interest of the broader community, and any concerns raised by parents will need to be addressed by the committee."

2.6 Ethical and Professional Considerations pertaining to Working with Children

Most of the respondents reported that there was an understanding in their facilities of the professional considerations of working with children and that these professional considerations were usually included in the training of staff members. Adherence to these considerations was encouraged, enhanced and monitored through specific policies and procedural manuals. There were also examples provided of misconduct that would qualify for immediate dismissal, such as child abuse and harassment. However, some training service providers doubted the existence of these policies and procedures:

"I doubt that there are written policies but they have them for training. Train the teachers and committees, but committees change every year so not much continuity and not much chance of developing policies."

"Registration and subsidy by Department of Welfare and regular inspections would play a very important role in ensuring that facilities adhere to policies"

2.7 Finances and Strategies for Sustainability

The respondents reported that they received funding from donors (both international and local) and from government departments. With regard to the donations from government departments, the Department of Social Development provides most of the support and subsidies for children under the age of five. In most facilities parents pay fees. Other respondents reported that they received funding for their training services from various organisations, including the Department of Education, the Department of Labour, and the SETAs. Other sources of income included the national lottery, investment income, private-sector donors, and fundraising.

In terms of budgets and expenses the respondents identified items in their budgets that they considered the most costly. By far the greatest cost was salaries. Most of the respondents attributed this to the fact that they were working within a labour-intensive sector. They also reported that donors were reluctant to cover the cost of salaries.

Other items perceived as costly included food, the maintenance of buildings, printing costs, training resources, rental rates, and electricity and water expenses. The participants also spoke readily about high vehicle and travel expenses. They attributed these expenses to the fact that they covered huge geographic areas as part of their outreach programmes and that their trainers were often required to visit sites. In addition, they also referred to the ever-increasing petrol costs.

The respondents also identified items that they considered the least costly in their budget. Some programmes explained that they did not pay staff benefits, such as pensions and medical insurance, although they wished to do so that they could improve the quality and permanency of staff. One organisation felt that everything was expensive, claiming that bank charges were the lowest items on their budget. Other items that were listed as being lower on their budgets in terms of cost included staff development (in instances where staff had already been trained). Some organisations seemed to find general ways to lower costs by buying in services such as financial services rather than appointing fulltime staff and by sharing accommodation, catering services, building maintenance and administration costs with other organisations. Respondents also suggested that the use of stationery, telephones, and electricity (were closely monitored by the executive committee and internally through tight controls.

A number of strategies were employed by the facilities to sustain their organisations, such as the regular marketing of the services via local radio and newspaper, open days where parents of potential learners were invited to see the facilities and services, and exhibitions at libraries to advertise their services. They felt that the quality and presentation of their service were very important because the service should advertise itself and demonstrate that their services met the needs of the local community.

In addition, the respondents reported that they nurtured their relationships with their donors, and that they continuously held fundraising events. Participants highlighted the importance of cutting costs wherever possible. They also stated that they preferred to have a number of donors rather then one or two donors to depend on. Other respondents reported that they sustained their organisation by planning strategically, having long-term investments and endowment funds, making stop-order payments, investigating government subsidies and applying for government tenders, and renting office space and training venues. Additionally, they built into their contract work some income generation for the organisation.

The participants reported that they received various non-monetary donations and support, including furniture, books, food parcels, paper, improvised toys and waste to make toys, paint, second-hand educational games, outdoor equipment, and knowledge resources. Other resources received included IT equipment, free legal advice, vehicles, and reduced prices for goods purchased An organisation also reported that a corporate company had adopted their organisation as their flagship project and provided them with time, printing, publishing, and various skills, including HR, organisational and development skills. They also received old machines and clothes from this company. One of the participants also mentioned that their organisation was exempted from paying bank fees. Some facilities reported that they did not receive any non-monetary resources.

2.7.1 Accounting and reporting mechanisms

Many of the organisations reported that they adhered to standard business practices, that their organisations were audited quarterly or annually, and that they published an annual report. Others stated that they reported to their donors every three months. The smaller sites explained that they had bookkeepers who managed the financial affairs of the organisation.

The accounting systems and procedures varied according to the type and size of the organisation. The bigger organisations had very sophisticated systems in place, while the smaller organisations reported that their books were done by an external volunteer for auditing purposes. It seemed that the preference was for external accounting. The tasks of these accountants included: writing reports to the governing bodies; making financial investments where appropriate; producing financial audited statements annually or on a quarterly basis; convening financial sub-committee meetings; reporting to donors; ensuring a minimum of two signatories; developing financial policies and procedures to approve annual salary increases; preparing and submitting budgets; and getting budgets approved.

2.7.2 Procurement policies

Many of the participants reported that they did have procurement policies in place and spoke readily about their organisations' commitment to BEE. They reported that they usually asked for three quotes when services had to be procured and stated that standard contracts were used for any procurement.

They also stated that they procured goods and services from the local community and bought from small suppliers to build SMMEs. Some facilities reported that their procurement policies had not yet been finalised.

The participants reported that which individuals were responsible for making procurement decisions was dependent on the size and importance of these procurements. They maintained that the board of trustees and management committee would make the decisions about massive procurements, while the programme heads or directors procured line items that had been budget for. Other participants reported that the only governing body and board would be responsible for making these decisions.

Problems surrounding procurement that were experienced by these respondents included the poor quality of service and the lack of timely receipt of payment from government departments. Other participants reported that they had not experienced any problems in the procurement of services and goods.

In general, the participants reported that, wherever possible, they tried to meet equity targets in terms of their procurement policies, but that their main consideration was cost.

Most of the participants reported that they created secondary employment expansion possibilities through the procurement of goods and services. They frequently mentioned catering, laundry, cleaning and maintenance of buildings, toy making, and gardening as services that they outsourced to members of their local communities.

Other respondents reported that the creation of secondary employment opportunities by their organisations was limited because they were such small organisations.

2.8 Services provided to Surrounding Communities other than Core Business

Most of the services provided to the surrounding communities were aimed at the development of skills for the purposes of a specific project. Organisations also made their buildings available for use by the broader communities. One organisation reported that they ran a community-development workers programme that was offered to 80 local people in collaboration with a university. In addition to this, the organisation's schools were often used for community-development programmes, such as dance classes. A training provider reported that it invited everyone involved in ECD, including parents, to participate in its community holiday programmes. In these programmes children and parents were involved in making improvised toys. Churches and local government also used the buildings of the training organisation.

One of the ECD facilities studied had initiated many community-based projects, including the provision of free counselling and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and the establishment of a shelter for the destitute. This facility also helped set up a "business information centre" and is currently working on a project to place people with mental and physical disabilities in very basic jobs.

Other participants mentioned that they shared information with the ECD sector, that they shared their buildings with community stakeholders for meetings, functions, church services, AGMs, and social clubs for pensioners, and that they also served as a consultation and advice bureau.

Some organisations provided a rallying point for services to young children, raising awareness about the importance of child development and providing a networking function for various stakeholders to meet together and discuss young children's issues. Other organisations provided employment and self-

development opportunities for women in the community through training. These programmes were developing into self-help groups and were promoting income-generating activities.

2.9 Programme Evaluation

2.9.1 Assessments

A preschool association reported that they conducted a formal assessment at each of their schools. During this assessment, they evaluated the principal's management skills and the teaching standards of the school. Spot-checking of nutrition was also done on a regular basis, while a university evaluated the ECD programme externally.

Another training organisation reported that it conducted on-site assessments and continuous assessments with the intention of identifying gaps and developing bridging courses. The assessment and monitoring had thus far been outsourced, but the organisation intended to do these assessments itself.

One organisation mentioned that it applied a project management style of evaluation and that following the evaluations it held weekly or fortnightly meetings, in which members reflected, discussed problems and made adjustments where necessary.

Other participants reported that they assessed their programmes by conducting regular formative evaluations with participants, providing supervision of participants by programme managers, and by conducting external evaluations. Still other organisations mentioned that they submitted a series of reports after each module of training.

An organisation reported that it did assessments but that these assessments tended to be ad hoc and carried out in response to challenges as they occurred. At present, this organisation had no formal system of internal evaluation and monitoring. Most evaluations were project based.

Monthly reports were generally submitted to boards by the principals of ECD facilities.

Many organisations reported that they had no standardised measures of assessment since evaluation methods were tailored to suit each programme. Organisations adhered to curriculum standards and standards that they received (from Outcomes Based Education (OBE) workshops of the Department of Education and in the past had been inspected by the Department of Social Development.

Some participants mentioned that their organisations used a series of reports and evaluation forms for schools before, during and after training. Others used reporting systems that involved regular reports on projects and staff members.

2.9.2 Setting goals and clear expectations of desired outcomes

The bigger umbrella organisations reported that each school prepared a business plan outlining the specific outcomes for the term and then reported on a quarterly basis the progress they had made towards achieving the specified objectives. Other respondents mentioned that they had specific annual objectives that guided their work. While some reported that these objectives were encompassed in their operational plans, others reported that they were about to employ an external strategic planning consultant, and had recently extensively workshopped job descriptions for this position.

2.9.3 National priorities to be achieved in the short, medium and long term

Some participants claimed that their organisations were using the social services' finance policy guidelines and the White Paper on Social Welfare. as their guideline for achieving national priorities. Other participants reported that they worked within a framework set up by the national and provincial education and social services departments, that they worked informally within the Social Development Framework and that they looked at issues of poverty reduction, education, childcare, HIV/AIDS and ECD. Organisations also

reported that they tried to keep up to date with developments in government policies and priorities.

2.10 Training and Development

2.10.1 Problems experienced with current training

The training problems identified by the respondents included the following:

- Too many providers focus on general training content rather than on training content for a specific context.
- There is a lack of the basic educational equipment in the preschools needed to implement what trainees have been taught.
- There is a lack of good after-training support.
- There is a lack of good training opportunities for staff.
- Training fees are too high and the quality of training too low.
- Training of committee members has to be facilitated after hours or over weekends because of members' working commitments.
- Service providers are reluctant to train in informal settlements or to meet with committees after hours.
- There is confusion around trainers' qualifications and ECD qualifications; staff can do level 5 ECD but they need to do a level 5 trainers' qualification, which includes more content on adult education and methodology.
- Meeting the requirements of the ETDP SETA means that a lot of contact time with children is lost because teachers are out of school for four days per month. The organisation has to bear the cost of providing substitute teachers and of the travel expenses of the teachers on training.
- Funding is a problem; basic training should be supported by government or free.

- There is a lack of funding for the development of good training materials, and a lack of access to suitable venues because of the inability of practitioners to pay for training.
- Training service providers that are offered contracts must be able to show how the learners will work within a holistic supportive structure and how they intend to support them.
- Service providers and government must commit themselves to working together in order to build better partnerships.

In addition to the problems listed above, the lack of government registration and subsidising of sites was also mentioned as a problem.

2.10.2 Support for the trainees after the initial training

The training service providers reported that there were a number of ways in which they supported their trainees after the initial training. These included trained and accredited mentors being made available for support and guidance to facilities; weekly staff meetings to discuss matters; regular consultation sessions and workshops; access to school-support officers for work-related concerns; a well-established support network, and a pool of resources. One service provider also indicated that it provided an ongoing programme of support, which assisted participants in obtaining jobs after training. However, ECD sites stated that there was a general lack of such support. Two direct quotations in this regard follow:

"Yes but it needs to be done in a more concentrated fashion."

"We have no facilities to provide advice."

2.10.3 Career pathing of ECD trainees

Career pathing is generally perceived as an important element in building the professionalism of the ECD sector. Such career planning should include the whole spectrum of the ECD profession. The EPWP SSP makes provision for such career paths through its learnerships and educational qualifications. In

practice, however, ECD facilities at the lower levels struggle to get their workers adequately trained. The dilemma of these facilities is that they need additional staff to replace staff members who are attending training courses. Another important issue raised by respondents is that career pathing can only be implemented when full-time jobs are available.

2.11 Ideas for Expansion of Services through EPWP

2.11.1 Plans for expansion

Many of the participants reported that they did not have expansion plans but that they would welcome any initiative to work with partners to increase ECD opportunities, which would mean more access to early childhood development for children. The general need expressed was for resources, including more multi-purpose centres.

Other participants reported that they did not have the necessary funds to expand but that they were exploring the possibility of opening crèches in low-income areas where there was a need for childcare. These participants stated that if they succeeded in finding partners that could erect the buildings, they could recover salary costs from school fees.

Some specific plans for expansion included the ideas of:

- Focusing on improving the quality of delivery and implementation at ECD sites;
- Developing a network of ECD community workers in each area who would run workshops for ECD practitioners to keep them up to date and to provide them with additional skills, particularly around HIV/AIDS and its impact; parenting programmes; and management of ECD sites and accessing of resources;
- Becoming a referral service for particular children or particular needs and referring ECD facilities to specialist services for resources or for help with fundraising;
- Training managers in business skills and in the entrepreneurship skills necessary to run crèches as businesses;

- Acquiring more space and playground facilities and equipment; and
- Making better use of centres as community facilities and in this way also supporting children in communities, especially those outside of the centres.

2.11.2 Involvement in the EPWP

The respondents reported that they could be incorporated into the EPWP in various ways. Many of their suggestions were related to the provision of training, including the following:

- The organisations' schools could be engaged through the national learnership programme and used to train people on learnerships since all the school principals are trained mentors.
- Toy libraries could be developed within a group of schools.
- Youth programmes could be developed where trainees could be employed and trained.
- Community development workers could be trained in ECD.
- The organisations could work with the local authority to make sure that children's issues are taken into account.
- The organisations could play an important role in the planning, design, management, and implementation of the EPWP.
- They could train ECD sites, such as home-based care and child-minder sites and could facilitate the registration and organisation of these smaller programmes, which could be attached to preschools.
- Sharing of the centres' resource
- Help service providers and government to monitor the ECD workers and practitioners.
- The government could conduct training workshops with providers.
- The organisations could work more developmentally and in a coordinated community-development way.

- EPWP provides communities with opportunities to expand their services. It will also provide the organisations with the opportunity to develop a strong partnership with communities they serve.

2.11.3 Possible impact of the EPWP on staffing profiles

On the question of whether the younger trainees who had followed the EPWP route would replace the existing older practitioners, the respondents reacted as follows. While some respondents maintained that the EPWP would not affect the careers of older staff in their organisations, others felt that even if the EPWP had the potential to affect these staff members, employers were obliged to adhere to the Labour Relations Act and could not retrench or displace current workers. They felt that people that retired could be replaced with people already working in existing centres. Respondents explained that programmes did not usually recruit older people because they needed workers with high energy levels. There had to be a balance between younger staff and experienced workers. Experienced and committed staff had no reason to feel threatened. All the extra help in the ECD programmes would be used to ensure that more children could be reached. Two respondents made the following statements:

> "There is a huge conflict in some communities between experience and qualifications. There is arrogance about having a certificate."

> "ECD is not attracting young women into the organisation, largely because of salaries not being competitive and the lack of career prospects."

2.11.4 Financial implications of expansion

The participants reported that the primary effect of expansion would be infrastructural because they would require extra buildings and resources (both human and other) for effective service delivery. This would require major fiscal investment. The organisations would also require additional finances for

staff and materials. One organisation felt strongly that if it expanded it would require financial skills and acumen.

2.12 Contributors to Success

The following factors were identified by the respondents as imperative for the successful delivery of ECD programmes:

- Adequate infrastructure, e.g. brick buildings, enough grounds for play and recreation (there are huge variances in the provinces and among programmes in this regard and better standard setting is required);
- Qualified, committed and loyal staff and competent leadership and management to increase the scope and improve the quality of the sector;
- Comprehensive training curricula of good quality, which are applicable to diverse contexts;
- Well-designed monitoring and evaluation systems and resources that are aligned with national norms and standards;
- Investment in a fair amount of marketing that influences the perception of the quality and reliability of service offered by the schools;
- Subsidy and support from the Department of Social Development;
- Good profiles with donor community;
- Strong links with the community;
- Coordination of the programme model with other community projects; and
- Well networked instead of independent organisations.

2.13 Success Inhibitors and Challenges to the Delivery of ECD Services

The most common problem identified by the participants was the lack of finances for increased and more effective service delivery. The paragraphs below provide some examples of the problems identified by the participants.

Salaries for practitioners are necessary so that the teacher pupil ratios can be improved to 1:10 or 1:15. At the moment salaries are paid with the help of the

donor funding, which is not always consistent. The cost for this year is already running at a R70-per-child deficit per month. There are waiting lists of 500 children for some facilities. One respondent said that they had the infrastructure but not the money to pay salaries

There seem to be differences in the subsidies paid by the provincial departments of Social Development. For example, it was reported that in the Eastern Cape the subsidy was R4,50 per child per day of attendance – this rate had not changed since 1997. In KZN the Department of Social Development paid R9 per child but only provided subsidies for very few ECD sites and was considering reducing the amount and increasing the number of sites it subsidised. Respondents said that it had become difficult to provide quality services and to pay the ECD practitioners. Traditionally subsidies are intended for the children and not to pay the practitioners; the parents' fees were supposed to cover salaries.

The ideal ratio of staff to pupil cannot be adhered to because of the limited income of the schools. A small number of preschools receive support from the Department of Social Development; the rest run their schools on the fees that parents are able to pay. This has the potential to lead to a situation where the poorest children are excluded from the schools.

Centre-based programmes are better able to provide privacy, safety and security than are private homes. At centres the continual coming and going of people, which occur at homes, can be avoided. Providers operating from their homes are often distracted by the constant movement of people and are unable to follow their programmes as planned. Centres can also accommodate more children than homes, e.g. they can cater for 25 children per worker.

Most of the preschool centres are operating at between 50% and 70% of their capacity. As a result of unemployment, the numbers of children who attend these centres are steadily dropping in some of the communities because their parents cannot pay the fees. In these cases, although the lower numbers of

children make the teacher-child ratios easier to manage, there is no improvement in the quality of the teaching.

The FIF model requires parent participation. Most often parents refuse to participate and send their young children to the centres on their own.

The lack of infrastructure at the sites limits the number of children the sites can accommodate and because of the remoteness of the areas in which they operate some crèches are small and not very cost effective.

Home-based care has great sustainability possibilities. However, the poverty of communities presents huge financial challenges. Also in rural areas the distance between the homes makes it very difficult for volunteers to reach families.

Poor communities are not always homogenous, especially in urban areas. This means that the ECD interventions must be carefully planned to suit the local deands and conditions. It is not always possible to use existing models and materials from one programme to another.

The Department of Education Grade R training has a disruptive influence on those facilities that cater for the under-five age groups because they have in the past used more expensive venues and have provided better meals. Children and their families have therefore been drawn to these programmes. In addition practitioners will resign from the facilities to join the Grade R programmes because they pay better and provide training.

HIV/AIDS is having an impact on the facilities in that many practitioners are becoming ill and the children attending the facilities are often either affected by the death of parents and families or are infected themselves.

SECTION THREE: PERCEPTIONS OF ECD SERVICE PROVIDERS ABOUT THE CAPACITY OF THE SECTOR TO CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE EPWP

3.1 Introduction

The following perceptions were collated from the comments made by the ECD service providers that participated in the focus groups and from relevant extracts from the interview data. Although the majority of the participants indicated that they had heard about the EPWP through newspapers and ECD networks, only the more formal and bigger NGOs understood what it involved. There was a general lack of information on how government was planning to implement the EPWP in the ECD sector. For the purposes of this study this may have been a constraint. On the positive side this lack of knowledge allowed the participants the flexibility to think "out of the box" and provided them with the opportunity to influence the expansion plans of the government within the sector.

In general the expansion was perceived by participants as being primarily a skills-development and training opportunity that could be used to improve the chances of semi-skilled and unskilled workers gaining employment. The responses therefore related to the provision of training and the importance of coordinating the training programmes with the sites that would ultimately need to supply and sustain the jobs. There was also a persistent concern that a focus on training alone without a holistic view of what else would be needed to expand sustainable job opportunities in the sector would be erroneous.

A few of the general points that were raised are presented below followed by more detailed responses about some of the key considerations for expansion. In general the participants felt that the EPWP should:

- Start in the affected communities, using existing ECD centres or community centres because it would be easy to access the parents

and broader extended families of the children registered at the schools (taking into account the number of HIV/AIDS and violence-related orphans and parentless households in existence);

- Be a combined effort of the various departments of government, e.g. the Department of Education, the Department of Welfare Services, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Labour, the Department of Public Works, and the departments of Finance and Economics, Trade and Industry, etc;
- Be community owned, planned, based, developed, managed and sustained;
- One stop service centres would facilitate more holistic intervention and access; These centres should be available for other community activities, (e.g. training, aftercare for older school children, and broader community use.)
- Offer a broad spectrum of services, which would all interlink with ECD, i.e. besides the ECD service it should also provide an ECD resource library, a social worker, a nurse, trained assistant teachers for every class, computer facilities in the form of an Internet Café, community gardens, craft operations, toy libraries etc.

3.2 Target Audience or Beneficiaries of EPWP in the ECD Sector

All the participants felt strongly that all involved in the EPWP should understand that the primary beneficiaries of the expanded ECD programme through the EPWP would be the children. Beyond the primary beneficiaries it was suggested that local unemployed mothers should benefit from the programme in that they should be trained to make and use educational toys; establish food gardens; sew and do beading; and run micro enterprises in general. This approach would provide a holistic "child in family" service and link ECD with community development so that the service could be enabled and strengthened.

The unemployed ECD graduates who had completed the Early Childhood Development learnership qualification should also be considered as beneficiaries of the programme as should unemployed teachers. (In some instances these people were said to have degrees.) An advantage of making people in these categories beneficiaries of the programme would be that they would improve the level of skill and increase the effectiveness of service delivery in the sector.

Another group that should be considered as secondary beneficiaries of the EPWP programme is the existing staff members, such as the cooks, laundry people, and the cleaners, who have learnt how to work with children through observation and in practice when they have been called upon to stand in for staff during emergency situations and when, on occasion, they have had to act as assistant teachers. In addition, after-care staff, management, administration staff, boards of trustees, and committee members should fall into this category of beneficiaries since they all need further training to enable them to deliver a service that can be regarded as best practice in their areas of responsibility in ECD.

The broader community would benefit from an expanded ECD community-based centre. The following people and institutions should be trained to understand the EPWP and assist with the implementation of an ECD EPWP:

- The Chiefs and the Amakosi;
- Local government;
- Local business;
- Councillors;
- Parents; and
- Youth.

3.3 Recruitment and Selection of Candidates for Training Opportunities

Various ideas were expressed about the selection of candidates. The differences in ideas arose out of the lack of clarity as to how the EPWP would be implemented. The respondents who thought that it was to be implemented through existing ECD sites generally felt that potential trainees should be selected by people in the communities served by these sites. This led to the question of which groups in the community should be tasked with selection. It was suggested that members of parents' committees or women's groups would be the most appropriate people to serve on these selection committees in consultation with local authorities. Another opinion was that the ECD sites should select people who had expressed interest and who were already volunteering.

In cases where participants thought that the SETA would be responsible for recruitment, they suggested that there should be consultation with the training organisations and facilities about suitable applicants. There were also strong opinions regarding the selection of service providers by the SETA.

Both groups of participants expressed considerable support for drawing up a set of guidelines. It was pointed out that if in-service training were to take place at registered sites, some attempt should be made to clarify the standards needed for the registration of the sites. Similarly, it was felt that there should be a set of broad guidelines for the selection of trainees. Several issues emerged in the discussion about the selection of trainees.

The key informants suggested that the first choice of trainees should be taken from existing (probably volunteer) staff that lacked adequate training, on the basis of their experience and dedication. The informants felt that the second choice of trainees should consist of people in the community who had shown initiative and motivation.

Several participants were concerned that the Department of Labour's need to create large numbers of jobs would result in the training and employment of

people who had no interest in, or aptitude for, ECD but who found the prospect of a stipend while training attractive. Several respondents pointed out that this kind of recruitment for learnerships often resulted in people leaving the ECD sector immediately after training and applying for a learnership in another sector.

There was a tension between whether younger, unemployed people or older, experienced (volunteer or underpaid) community ECD workers should be selected as trainees. This could probably be resolved by the dual selection system suggested by the first and second choices of trainees mentioned above in terms of which some existing (older) staff could be brought up to standard and some young unemployed people could be selected. This dual selection system would ensure continuity in the system and allow for the introduction of younger people with higher energy levels to the ECD sector.

While the emphasis in the ECD sector has always been on women, one service provider pointed out that when her organisation had trained young men as helpers, they had been rejected by community members on the grounds that men were suspected of ulterior motives in their dealings with young children. It seems unwise to allow this discrimination to be perpetuated, especially in the context of the AIDS epidemic where young men are required to become the caregivers of younger family members when parents die. There was some suggestion of a middle ground, in terms of which young men could be trained in supporting roles for ECD centres as gardeners, administrative staff and drivers.

While the university-based ECD service providers had mapped out a career path for ECD trainees, other organisations did not feel confident that this was possible and were of the opinion that an injection of government funds was needed if higher training and further employment in the sector were to be viable at all.

The following -training candidates and employment applicants for entry into the ECD sector were suggested as preferable:

- People willing to undergo training for an extended period;
- People with children under the age of six;
- People already involved in a playgroup;
- People referred by ECD structures and organisations; and
- Approved and referred ECD ETDP level 4 graduates.

The following job requirements were suggested:

- Experience in caring for children (preferable) and a reliable referee to confirm this;
- Good communication skills since children of the age group 0 – 4 need clear communicators;
- A community-service ethic, which would make the candidate more likely to be content with the level of remuneration offered and more willing to work overtime in times of emergency and crisis; and
- A minimum education requirement of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) level 1 and the ability to to read and write in order to manage a registration and attendance list and to administer medication.

In addition a candidate would be required to be reliable, observant, sympathetic, honest, willing to learn, punctual, and able to keep time,

It was also suggested that the recruitment and selection process could be modelled along the following lines:

- Local newspapers and radio stations could carry the advertisements, which could be developed though provincial government structures.
- Candidates for training and possible employment could fill out application forms (centre-specific forms or government regulated and printed forms).

- The candidates would then be selected according to agreed upon criteria and short listed. At least two sets of interviews could follow and the suitable candidates would be chosen on the basis of the interviews.
- The principal with senior staff could do the first set of the interviews and the ECD governing bodies could consider a short list supplied by the staff from which the successful candidate(s) could be chosen.

3.4 Training

The comments and input received on training and development for the sector included the perceptions of the trainers, the ECD providers who had already been trained, and those who had staff that still needed training. There are already many diverse training programmes in existence. Some respondents suggested that:

- Standardised training should be developed for three basic categories of child-care workers: centre-based and home-care workers, and home visitors.
- Basic training for ECD workers should cover nutrition, health care, hygiene, immunisation, the necessary documentation, accessing grants, early stimulation, play, love, and psychosocial support.
- In view of the fact that South Africa has the highest levels of HIV/AIDS of any country in the world, all ECD courses need to include HIV/AIDS issues and bereavement counselling.
- Training should be in line with OBE principles. In order for training at NQF level 4 to be accessible to ECD workers with low levels of education, bridging courses were thought to be advisable.
- In addition to the training of child-care workers, there should be training for other service providers who could serve a cluster of sites and programmes, thus promoting cooperation rather than competition between sites. The following training topics and programmes should be considered:
    - Legislation and policies on the care of children;
    - Housekeeping and cooking;

- Business skills;
- Infrastructure needs, such as plumbing, bricklaying and electrical services;
- The making and distributing of toys through a toy library;
- Community development with respect to children: networking, social grants, liaison with local authorities to make sure that particular children's needs are taken into account, identification and referral of children who have disabilities, are affected by HIV/AIDS or are vulnerable in some other way;
- ECD levels 1 to 4, depending on the need of the centre;
- Department of Labour skills training programme;
- ABET levels 1 to 4 training.

Strong feelings were expressed regarding the training providers. There was consensus that the training should be offered by training providers accredited by the ETDP SETA. These training providers could be government agencies in education and social services or they could be non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) or corporate businesses.

3.5 Income during and after Training

The general view from respondents was that people in this sector were underpaid to the extent that this bordered on exploitation. They felt that this led to the undervaluing of ECD. They suggested that people who volunteered to work in ECD might be very committed to the proper care of children as an ideal, but that, in the context of high unemployment, some volunteered "in the desperate hope that it will lead to a job". They felt that on the whole people in impoverished communities were prepared to be "good neighbours" and help to a certain extent without recompense, but that it was difficult to rely on such help. They believed that there were other benefits to volunteering. For some the work was its own reward, but it also provided opportunities to develop skills, confidence and self-esteem.

In light of the intention of the EPWP to create adequate employment for previously unemployed people, interviewees expressed a need to ensure that good people in community-based sites earned a living wage and that they received some benefits. At present, in conditions of poverty the stipend that accompanies a learnership becomes an end in itself and is sometimes higher than the amount being received by full-time staff in community ECD sites. However, the stipend accompanying ECD learnerships is lower than that from Community Development learnerships, which reinforces the sector's "Cinderella" status. Similarly, the salaries of Grade R teachers are substantially lower than those of Grade 1 teachers, and the income of people who work in community-based sites is even lower. The stability of ECD programmes is affected by these discrepancies because people move to better paid positions once they are trained.

3.6 Ensuring Quality of the Training and Outcomes

This was a thorny topic for most respondents. In general, respondents complained that there was a lack of national standards of care and of operationally defined quality goals and outcomes for the EPWP. They expressed a need for indicators and measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the EPWP programme on children.

These were some of the concerns put forward by the respondents:

- Current government-sponsored training is too short for trainees to master the necessary skills, and consequently is a waste of time and money.
- There is a need for the progress of trainees to be monitored and for mentors to be assigned to trainees to provide them with support and to ensure sustained quality, and improvement with experience.
- Malpractices, such as the taking on of too many children, arise in impoverished sites if the sites are not supported and monitored.
- The outcomes of training need to be evaluated in terms of accountability to parents (through open days and report-back

sessions) and accountability to donors through written and verbal reports.

3.7 Resources

If the EPWP is to succeed in creating sustainable employment for trainees, thought needs to be given to the resources that newly trained ECD workers would need for them to give adequate care to children. Thus, basic educational equipment should be provided such as tables, chairs, toys, stationery, outside play equipment, and fencing.

3.8 Communication around the Implementation of the EPWP

The respondents felt that there needed to be agreement among the role players as to the most practical and productive way of dealing with the implementation of the ECD component of the EPWP at local, provincial, and national levels. The suggestions made by respondents are outlined below.

Local level: The respondents thought that at local level working relationships needed to be established between ECD role players, local government with links to Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), and community structures. These working relationships would be largely informal and based on mutual respect and cooperation. Local-level responsibilities would include the construction of a database of ECD sites and the responsibility for the roll-out and monitoring of the programme. Small steering committees could be established where necessary and could draw in local business people, CBOs, NPOs, social workers and educators. Other experts could be co-opted onto these committees from time to time.

Provincial level: Site subsidies, a key component of the stability and sustainability of sites, should be determined at provincial level. Requirements for registration should not be too onerous, and provincial government departments should give support where necessary (including food parcels, funding for equipment, etc.) so that trainees from the EPWP go into sites that are sufficiently well supported to enable them to carry out their duties. Provincial structures should be responsible for the overall monitoring of the

programme roll-out and effectiveness. Public/private partnerships between provincial departments and NPOs that specialise in ECD should be encouraged so that the experience and expertise residing in the NPOs can be harnessed.

National level: Overall policy was naturally seen to be the concern of national government departments. Respondents in this study were especially critical of the role played by national government in selecting suitably skilled organisations for the implementation of ECD programmes, and of the lack of consultation about the EPWP.

The NPO sector reported that key role players from the NGO sector were left out of summit discussions held by government departments, although they had valuable experience to contribute. Grant tenders were put out in ways that fragmented the field instead of building productive relationships. Despite the fact that all of the NPOs interviewed had been leading organisations in the field for a considerable length of time , they had no information on the EPWP apart from what they had read in the press, and expressed frustration that they could not make an input into the planning process. Respondents pointed out that government needed to strike a partnership with the leading service providers and utilise their capacity and experience. One of the respondents pointed out that:

> "Government should conduct workshops with providers. These programmes are stagnating and operating under great strain."

Others made the following comments:

> "There is a lot to do around the development of South African models of development that are peculiar to our communities and situation – it's time we looked at development through different lenses and the only way we can do this is through rich debate. We need to all become learning organisations (Government and NGOs) and to learn continuously, consciously and predominantly from our own

experiences. We don't document and share good practice and we need to do more of this."

"Research partnerships could be valuable to help with technical issues – setting up comprised records and Geographic Information Systems."

Government should make ECD a national priority, enact clear legislation and develop clear policies. These should be cross-cutting and holistic operations, not split between the departments of Health, Education and Social Development, and should add value to what already exists. The different professional inputs could be better coordinated if their coordination is carried out within a single entity. Existing structures within provinces should be institutionalised and an infrastructure legislated at national, provincial and local levels. This consolidation of ECD should have its own fiscal relations and investment. At present departments tend to avoid joint responsibility for ECD, and even within departments (such as the Department of Health) several sub-directorates deal with children and not in an integrated way. Presumably this fragmented approach persists because existing communication and integrated action mechanisms are inadequate.

3.9 Sustainability

Respondents put forward several ideas for supporting the development of ECD through the EPWP. The following suggestions pertaining to ECD operations were made in this regard:

- Orientation and induction of new staff should take place.
- Weekly reviews of the trainees' development at site level should occur.
- Local networks of training agencies should contribute to improvements in training.
- Adequately trained practitioners and accredited mentors should be employed.
- Strong mentorship and supervision programme should be developed.
- ECD sites should be linked with other activities in the community to improve site sustainability.

- Financial rewards should be offered to sites as they develop more services.
- Outreach to children currently not in ECD facilities should take place once there are sufficient trainees to do this.

The following concerns were raised regarding operating a programme in low-income communities:

- Child-to-staff ratios are still too high in many places.
- Site registration and basic grants are difficult to access in rural areas in KZN. One of the reasons for this is that there are too few social workers in rural areas and those that exist have other priorities. The grants are not intended for staff salaries, but sometimes parents refuse to pay fees on the grounds that the site is subsidised.
- The introduction of Grade R programmes has weakened many of the community sites by drawing off children form other programmes. Grade R programmes are subsidised and therefore cheaper than community sites and often offer lunches. Parents sometimes lie about their children's ages to get them into Grade R.
- Transport is an enormous expense in rural areas.

3.10 Synergy with Existing Programmes

It was felt that a starting point for providing synergy between ECD programmes could be that the existing home-based programmes could expand to become community-based programmes or that the two models could co-exist and work together in the same community.

It was also felt that there was a distinct need for community-based ECD centres, which could become hubs for other community programmes.

It was suggested that task teams and partnerships at government, provincial government, and local government levels could be established so that the

forging of synergy between newly implemented programmes and existing programmes could be ensured.

One respondent had designed parallel training courses for ECD practitioners and community workers specifically to put the two groups of trainees in touch with one another. Trainees from the two courses would have sufficient common understanding of how to undertake the task of providing safe, nurturing environments for children to be able to work together towards a common goal, but each would have their own area of competence, one in child development and the other in community development.

Another respondent pointed out the possibility of training young people to help with the establishment of toy libraries and food gardens to serve a number of ECD sites. This would have the added advantage of converting what is often a competitive relationship between ECD sites into a cooperative venture as they shared resources, and this would help to establish a community sense of pride in the provision of resources for young children. Ultimately this could lead to the maintenance of parks, safe communal play areas, and road crossings for children.

Other respondents noted the potential for linking ECD sites and primary schools with centres for parenting and home-visiting programmes. ECD sites could also be connected to social work concerned with child and youth matters and child-support grants. Respondents also discussed the potential for services that could open and sustain communication between parents and childcare professionals through a grouping of services for children.

3.11 Best Practice and Monitoring and Evaluation

Participants felt strongly about sustaining current practices that work well and the need to enhance the development of best practices in the sector. According to the participants the development of best practices could be assured through continued monitoring, evaluation, review, and documentation of best practices. The following instruments to achieve this were suggested:

- The implementation and regular updating and checking of the management information systems (MIS) in the areas of finance, procurement, centre management, operations management, human resource policies and procedures, and in the records and minutes of all meetings;
- The use of monitoring and evaluation tools, such as checklists;
- The submission of regular progress reports;
- The monitoring of the implementation of the ECD expansion by working closely with existing facilities;
- The appointment of good financial auditors;
- The appointment of external evaluators;
- Performance evaluations at various levels, including:
    - Interactions with the children;
    - Interactions with management;
    - Interactions with other staff members;
    - Interactions with stakeholders and partners.

In addition, best practices developed by CBOs, NPOs and FBOs and newly established centres should be provided with the support needed to avoid problems and learn from best practices.

SECTION FOUR: ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION WITH POLICY MAKERS (THE ECD RESOURCE TEAM)

The round-table discussion was conducted with key national government departments, including the reference group and other relevant resource persons. The purpose of the round-table discussion was to provide the researchers with the opportunity to share, discuss, solicit further input, and validate the findings from the structured interviews and focus groups. This section of the report presents the key messages from these discussions.

The participants concluded that the findings affirmed their own experiences and emerging knowledge on the status of the sector. In particular, there was an alignment between the findings and their understandings of the gaps in the system and the challenges that the sector faces with regard to the implementation of the EPWP.

The following summary of key findings includes the outcomes of the round-table discussion.

4.1 Synergy and Linkages between the EPWP and Departmental Goals and Priorities

There appear to be diverse understandings in the sector of the functions, roles and conceptual linkages of the different government departments; the EPWP; the learnerships offered via the SETAs; and the Integrated ECD Plan. It was therefore considered important to open these topics for further discussion.

4.1.1 The Integrated ECD Plan

The aim of the integrated plan is to bring greater synergy and coordination to current government programmes undertaken by various departments in the ECD area. The plan explains the leading role of the government in formulating, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes on early childhood development. It also incorporates the important role played by NGOs and CBOs. The Integrated ECD Plan is primarily aimed at giving young

children the best start in life by building a solid foundation of physical, emotional, psycho-social, cognitive, and healthy development through a range of ECD experiences and settings (Department of Education, 2005:4).

One participant saw the EPWP as equal to ECD and the ECD as equal to the Integrated ECD Plan. But this was not the only perception. Another participant felt that the EPWP was a government programme that was concentrated on only one strategy of ECD, i.e. employment creation, while the goals of ECD were much broader. The Integrated ECD Plan was seen as an important policy document that served as a framework to integrate the plans of all the significant players into one comprehensive plan. This discussion was important because it highlighted the different understandings about the scope, nature, extent, status, and location of the EPWP within the broader framework of related work already done in this area by the various departments. For example, for the Department of Social Development the EPWP was one component of their broader ECD programme, which included other aspects of ECD, such a primary focus on the best interests and well being of all children and their obligation to monitor the quality and standards of facilities through registration and regulation. The Department of Health saw their primary contribution as the health aspects of ECD; for the Department of Education this was their educational programme.

This discussion also highlighted how government designs and operationalises its financing mechanisms for integrated government initiatives and deliverables. For example, although national treasury has allowed for an increased ECD budget, the national gross amount looks significantly different when it is broken down into proportional shares for provinces. It was argued that from a national perspective funds allocated are part of the provincial equitable share. This means that provinces have the power to decide how the money in their budget is allocated and how it is used because provincial government departments that want to access the funds have to bid for them at provincial level. The allocation finally provided depends on how strongly the individual government departments bid for it. Some participants argued that

for these reasons conditional grants managed from national level would work better for certain intergovernmental flagship projects. Others maintained that conditional grants interfere with the autonomy of provincial governments. The participants could not agree on a mechanism that would facilitate a more coherent resource allocation that would ensure that the goals as conceptualised and designed on national level translate into sustainable action at local level.

4.1.2 Learnerships

There was a perception that many beneficiaries of learnerships and CBOs were not always certain about the links and differences between key government interventions. This uncertainty was also found among participants in this study. The participants said that although learnerships are closely linked to the EPWP programmes and would most certainly be part of them in the future, these learnerships had been developed through another national strategy and through separate systems. The National Skills Development Strategy, the South African Qualifications Framework and the SETAs are the governing and implementation mechanisms for the learnerships. In the ECD sector, learnerships had been advertised and delivered by ECD training providers prior to the advent of the EPWP. These training opportunities were not linked to or coordinated by ECD service providers. The ETDP SETA is the facilitating body of ECD training programmes and as such worked mainly with the Department of Education in identifying service providers. It is anticipated that the ETDP SETA will continue to be a primary partner in the role-out of the EPWP for the ECD sector and that it will continue to use the current learnership implementation strategy.

4.2 Comprehensive and Holistic Planning: A Challenge for Delivery

Although all the participants agreed that the development of integrated strategies is imperative for government to reach its goals, they felt that the government has several important challenges that it must address. There

must be clear and collective understanding of what these strategies can achieve. Policy makers at a national level cannot implement the policies. In the absence of clear implementation guidelines or specifications, there are, therefore, often huge gaps in the way these policy level ideals are translated into provincial and local government level actions. Provincial government departments are often left to find effective ways of translating plans into operational structures and programmes that fit into their core business. In addition, and because of the pressure felt to accompany these national "flagship projects," these programmes often become the exclusive focus of the departments while other important work gets neglected. These programmes are usually also the priority focus of political principals and constitute the basis on which their performance is measured. Officers therefore feel compelled to concentrate on these programmes.

There was general agreement that the social service sector is the fastest growing sector and therefore an important sector for the EPWP to expand.

4.3 Comments on the Recruitment of Participants and Beneficiaries for the EPWP: ECD Sector

Participants agreed that careful consideration must be given to the recruitment and selection of those candidates included in the programme. The EPWP: ECD sector is different from the construction sector in that this field deals with vulnerable children. Individuals must be screened for previous behaviours that may put children at risk and for general required competencies. Placements in ECD facilities cannot be made on a short-term basis because relationships with children are the basis of the work and cannot be started if they will be frequently disrupted or quickly terminated. For this reason, the job opportunities created must be sustainable for at least two years or longer. On the basis of this, participants agreed that the strategies employed in this sector should be appropriate for the needs of the sector. For example, the strategy of recruiting by advertising and offering learnerships that are not context specific would not work here because the workers

selected must have distinct qualities and must be placed in jobs that existing facilities are able to sustain.

On the question pertaining to the age of candidates, it was agreed that age should not be a stand-alone criterion, but that it should be included with a range of other important criteria. It was agreed that there should be enough flexibility to include both youth and older experienced persons who are already in the sector. Priority should be given to those already volunteering or earning a low income. There was a question about whether the programme should only target people who are unemployed or whether it should also target those who are active but who earn very little. It was suggested that to avoid confusion the definition of "unemployed" should be used as referred to by the Department of Labour and the National Skills Fund.

An issue was raised in a focus group as to whether men should be recruited as ECD providers. Although there was some appreciation for the position that men should excluded because of the difficulty of keeping children safe from abuse, a position was taken that all people who work with children should be screened and that not only males abuse children; females do too. It was also argued that such biased positions were often based on broad underlying assumptions about sexuality and that positions should rather be based on factual indicators of deviant sexual behaviours rather than on gender or sexual orientation.

The issue of what should constitute the minimum criteria for education levels was raised. It was agreed that there should be a continuum of different options and programmes that would provide for all low-income, semi-skilled or unemployed people, including those who cannot read or write and those with physical disabilities. Primary considerations should be where they will work and whether their positions can be sustained.

4.4 Complementarity of Government's ECD Progammes

In this regard, the concern raised by the ECD sector respondents was echoed by the participants in the round-table discussions. Currently the Grade R programme is being implemented throughout the country. Many lessons and successful experiences are being recorded. There seems to be growing concern that the benefits provided by the Grade R programmes are luring both ECD practitioners and some children away from the other ECD facilities. The reasons given for this by the respondents were that the salaries of the practitioners, and the facilities and the meals provided by the Grade R programmes were of a higher standard than those provided by the average ECD facility.

Although ECD facilities should be focusing on children under the age of five, they cannot compete with the Grade R sector. This has led to the exodus of ECD caregivers with level 4 and higher qualifications. Even more alarming were the reports about how many young children were walking for miles to attend Grade R facilities. Parents send their children to these facilities not only for the educational benefits but often primarily for the meals that are provided. Not only do these children walk long distances but they also often carry with them their much younger siblings in the hope that they too may have a good meal. These reported scenarios are, firstly, important indicators of hunger and poverty and, secondly, signs that there are huge gaps in the equitable provision of ECD in the country. The expanded public works strategy for ECD could be an important leverage to facilitate a process towards narrowing these gaps. Collaboration between the departments of Education and Social Development in this regard is imperative.

4.5 Infrastructure and Systems for Implementation

There is huge incongruence between and non-alignment of policies and the systems and mechanisms necessary to implement and deliver on the policies. This seems to be a problem at multiple levels.

National policy processes do not necessarily percolate down to the provinces in the same way as they are conceptualised at national level. For example, if policy documents are not accompanied by regulations and guidelines for implementation, including appropriate training strategies, implementation can prove difficult, and can be delayed or ignored.

Participants discussed the feedback from training institutions that expressed concern that the training that they provide is sometimes not implementable because of a lack of facilities and resources, such as training materials and equipment. A question in reaction to this was raised as to whether the training that is provided is appropriate for the context in which the caregivers operate. On the other hand, it was argued that equipment and facilities provided for poor children should never be of low quality just because these children live in poor environments (a strong caution was sounded for planned inequalities, discrimination and structural exclusion).

4.6 Training and Capacity Development

The discussion on training included issues related to the overall developmental needs of the ECD sector and to specific strategies for capacity development and training programmes designed to facilitate more sustainable jobs.

It was agreed that capacity development must take into consideration the differences between the focus of the EPWP and the broader purpose and goals of the comprehensive ECD sector. While the EPWP focuses on increasing the numbers of trained ECD providers and caregivers and their ability to access jobs, the comprehensive ECD sector focuses its training and capacity-development portfolio on much broader matters, including the provision of adequate infrastructure and resources for effective operations.

Training and capacity development must be consistently followed up and monitored at site level. The publication of training manuals and the

appointment of mentors were seen as critical ways of ensuring success at the level where it matters most.

Emphasis was placed on how very differently the social services sector should operate and be managed compared to the EPWP's construction programmes. The training and development strategies of the social services sector should be aligned to what happens in practice and should focus on what can be sustained by these programmes in the long term. Serious concerns were expressed regarding the sustainability of the jobs created through learnerships. The EPWP considers a learnership as a job opportunity. However, after the learnership has been completed the job opportunity ends. Learnerships as currently designed and delivered, therefore, do not necessarily provide long-term job security as an outcome. Careful attention should be given to exit strategies from the learnerships so that longer-term employment opportunities can be ensured. In addition, linking practice placements to the learnerships should be a planned and coordinated endeavour and should not be left to individuals or to chance. EPWP plans in the sector must result in a better coordinated, systematic and organised ECD sector and should not lead to further fragmentation.

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

There seems to be a need for a follow-up audit that would provide baseline information that could be used for planning of service provision and budgeting. The development of an ongoing strategy to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EPWP in the sector, including impact assessment, is an important component of the programme and should not be left to chance if this sector is to deliver the goals set out in the Integrated ECD Plan.

4.8 Current Status

According to the participants, the following processes and plans are currently unfolding in the sector:

- All provinces have developed draft intersectoral ECD Plans.
- These provincial inputs have informed the development of a National Integrated ECD Plan.
- For 2005, the government has provided R4.2 billion for the implementation of the EPWP SSP.
- Provinces are expected to develop specific operations and business plans and to implement their plans with their available resources.
- The National Integrated ECD Plan is expected to be finalised soon and presented to Cabinet.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The context of ECD programmes

There is long-standing scientific evidence of the importance of very early interventions for children living in poverty. It is also often said that investment in early education is the most profitable educational investment that developing countries can make (Coordinator's notebook, 2004). But early childhood is an important life stage in its own right, not just for preparation for adult life or for good citizenship. Investing in early childhood development is a key to achieving children's rights in line with Constitution. South Africa has also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and by doing this has expressed a commitment to adhering to this international treaty. Quality early childhood programmes can facilitate these commitments by focusing on the rights of all children to a fair start – a life free from discrimination and exclusion. Attention to the whole child in early childhood development interventions is necessary to ensure that children grow up healthy and protected from harm. These interventions must be at the forefront of strategies for achieving poverty eradication.

A theme that surfaced in many guises in the study was the inadequate and low level of current state provision for young children and the consequent undervaluing of early education as an educational concern in the minds of the general public. Many parents, especially those in rural communities, are unaware of modern knowledge about the importance of early stimulation for young children, and are poorly informed about nutritional and childcare issues. For many years there has been no comprehensive strategy and investment plan for community-based preschools. The emerging focus and investment of government through various ECD initiatives are therefore being received with enthusiasm and expectation; the prospect of a suitable policy framework for the 0 – 4 year olds has been particularly welcomed.

There is also hope that the proposed expansion and adequate resourcing of the sector through the EPWP will happen soon. As a result of the time lag

between the provision of Grade R for children of five and six, and the registration and subsidisation of community ECD sites for 0-4 year olds, community sites are collapsing at a time when they should be expanding. Such expansion is deemed essential in the light of the increasing demand for ECD services in general, as well as the potential of ECD facilities to accommodate and augment other services required at community level for children, families and communities that are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Families living in poverty are usually at double jeopardy because many of them are chronically unemployed and cannot afford to send their children to early childhood development programmes. This exclusion means that there children are less likely to succeed at school and find productive employment. In addition, the poor state of ECD facilities that operate in poverty-stricken environments affects the effectiveness of the ECD sector in a number of ways. For example, it seems particularly difficult to provide ECD services to scattered homesteads in poor rural communities. In a context where basic needs such as nutrition, clean water, sanitation, health and other services are still inadequate, ECD and education are often not seen as priorities.

5.2 Institutional arrangements

At present there are significant institutional constraints that limit the implementation and expansion of ECD programmes. These include the lack of: coherent coordinating structures at national and provincial levels; standardardised service systems; role assignment and clarity of responsibilities of all stakeholders; and adequate human resources.

5.3 Key partnerships and complementarity of services

ECD provision is the responsibility of parents, civil society, government, NGOs, and the corporate sector. In South Africa, NGOs and FBOs have historically played a crucial role in the provision of social and community services, including doing substantive work in the ECD sector. The lack of consultation between the government decision makers and the NPOs about

the ECD component of the EPWP was a consistent theme throughout this research. The study highlighted the importance of linkages between the stakeholders involved in the delivery of ECD services. The recommendation of the participants was that the government needed to pay immediate attention to stronger integration and synergy within the sector so that the goals of the EPWP could be facilitated.

There was agreement that the different government departments did not necessarily know the content and extent of each other's programmes and that policies and programmes should be designed and implemented in a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive way. The critical recommendation seemed to be that the different parts of the ECD service should be better coordinated. It was suggested that many problems would be reduced if one department took full responsibility for the sector. This would mean that the necessary skills and competencies of the other departments would have to be incorporated into that one department.

5.4 Role of volunteers

The ECD sector depends heavily on volunteers at various levels. Volunteer jobs usually include serving on governing bodies, maintaining buildings, preparing meals, and caring for children. It is generally accepted that volunteering nurtures a community's social networks and makes an important economic contribution to society. In the South African context of high unemployment, volunteerism is often seen as a route towards paid work opportunities. Volunteer opportunities also often lead to skill and knowledge acquisition, which has the potential to make the transfer to paid employment easier.

5.5 Funding

Government funding for ECD programmes (0 – 4) has traditionally been provided through service-level agreements with the NPO sector or through direct department budgets for core services, such as monitoring and

evaluation of service providers. There are no existing models for national-level integrated and inter-sectoral ECD programming for children under five. The implementation of the Grade R model driven by the Department of Education is an example of a national programme that has been implemented at provincial and local levels. Funds from the departments that plan and implement specific programmes are allocated in small amounts on a discretionary basis, relative to the real demand. The expansion and maintenance of the ECD programmes will rely heavily on substantial and continuous funding.

At the local level, community sites are dependent in the main on fees. Current services cannot reach the children who need additional care the most. Similarly home- and community-based programmes, reliant as they are on external funders, are often unable to support elderly or very young caregivers. The lack of adequate remuneration for ECD workers impacts on the sector's ability to retain trained people and limits the numbers of children that can be reached and the quality of the service provided.

5.6 Training

The ECD sector depends heavily on the delivery of adequate and applicable quality training for the sector to be supplied with the appropriate skills and competencies. There is a need for ongoing training and support in this field in light of the nature of the work, which is often seen as difficult and draining.

The training initiative of creating learnerships for ECD, which is proposed in the EPWP Social Sector Plan 2004/5–2008/9, appears to be a good strategy for linking the development of people working in the social services field to the National Skills Development Strategy. However, the implementation of a public works programme in this sector would require critical consideration of the special nature of this sector. For example, the ECD as a care sector requires long-term jobs rather than short-term employment opportunities. In

addition, the appropriateness of the training programmes and the continuous development and career pathing of the learners are vital considerations.

The risks for children in urban areas differ from those in rural communities as do the opportunities for early education afforded by the different environments. ECD trainees need context-appropriate training and context-based information (such as referral routes for child with mental-health problems or physical disabilities, or in cases of abuse) if they are to work optimally during and after their training. Even in a single locality a one-size-fits-all provision is too rigid to meet community needs. Parenting programmes, home visiting, site-based programmes and Grade R programmes all have unique value within a community in providing a variety of services.

Trained professionals are needed in rural areas. Because working conditions in remote areas are often difficult with respect to transport and accommodation, not many professional ECD workers are prepared to work in these harsh conditions. Attention needs to be given to making life easier for ECD workers in deeply rural areas.

5.7 ECD as an important catalyst for community development

The expansion and development of the ECD sector will provide extended opportunities for community development. ECD sites naturally bring together different interest groups in a community. Many sites already provide venues for a number of community enterprises, such as adult education classes, social clubs for pensioners, community food gardens, craft centres, and other community activities. These joint activities and the sharing of resources have the advantage of sharing costs. The innovative work being done within the ECD sector with regard to HIV/AIDS is an important example of how ECD providers have incorporated and extended their services to meet broader community needs. Some programmes are beginning to indicate that ECD workers with their basic training in childcare are well placed to assist families trying to cope with the additional financial burden of looking after orphaned children. In addition, these children may have special problems, which are the

result of a traumatic bereavement, moving to another home (sometimes several moves), and rivalries with the biological children of the same caregiver. Training programmes on childcare increasingly, therefore, incorporate material applicable to meeting the needs of children who are in difficult circumstances as a result of the AIDS epidemic.

5.8 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of any mass expansion of ECD services. The development and implementation of an effective monitoring system for the expansion of ECD are important because, in order to provide management with accurate information about the programmes, the programme coordinators need to review progress, identify problems, and make adjustments. Formal externally conducted evaluations are necessary so that information can be provided about the programmes' impact on, for example, sustainable employment in the sector.

The study indicates that for the EPWP (ECD) sector to work, well-designed implementation strategies, which take into consideration the elements of recruitment, assessment and screening of candidates; job readiness training; sector readiness; and orientation, placement and retention, should all be in place long before the individuals begin the training. Such a strategy would require the sector and the relevant government departments and NGO partners involved to work together as a team at multiple levels.

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