



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The role of early childhood development forums in fostering community development and strengthening early childhood development centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek.

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ABSTRACT

This research study explores *'The role of early childhood development (ECD) forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek'*. An exploratory, qualitative research design was adopted and face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect the data. Purposive sampling was used to select seventeen participants to take part in the study based on their local knowledge of ECD forums in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek, Western Cape.

The research study found that ECD forums emerge and are formed either by the community ECD centres themselves or by external institutions. ECD forums that are started by communities themselves are more community-driven and empowered. ECD forums strengthen ECD centres as it creates a platform for supporting and assisting newly established ECD centres and they play a role in setting the standard of ECD provision in their area through sharing best practice and resources. ECD forums develop connections between ECD centres as they create a space for ECD centres to provide information, advice and guidance on a variety of topics to one another. The forum members discuss issues and provide assistance on how to solve problems, drawing on their collective experience and knowledge. ECD forums also play a critical role in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. ECD forums create connections with local government, provincial government, non-profit organisations (NPOs), and link ECD centres to training opportunities that enhance ECD centre sustainability.

The main recommendations of this study are that: ECD forums should be formalised and structured entities, governed by a constitution, with a management committee with clear roles and responsibilities; ECD forums should have formalised processes on how ECD centres become forum members; ECD forums should meet regularly and have a communication structure in place to connect with each other in between these meetings; local and provincial government and NPOs use ECD forums as a community structure to communicate and disseminate important information pertaining to the ECD sector; and that ECD forums must be seen as an effective community-driven model for ECD interventions and they should be strengthened and promoted in the ECD sector.

Enhancing the capabilities of ECD forums to be more sustainable will in turn strengthen ECD centres and improve the quality of early education and care. The ECD sector must build on the social capital that ECD forums have, in order to improve the accessibility of ECD to young children in South Africa. Lastly, it is recommended that government and policy-makers include working

with ECD forums as a key component of providing a comprehensive package of ECD services to young children.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research is an exploratory study of the views and experiences of stakeholders in the early childhood development (ECD) sector regarding the roles of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. ECD has long been neglected in South Africa; “young children in South Africa grow up in a profoundly unequal society in which poverty threatens the sound early development of the majority of children” (Berry, Dawes & Biersteker, 2013:26). A child’s access to quality early learning is directly linked to caregiver income level. Most young children in South Africa do not have access to quality ECD programmes that promote their holistic development. Most children attend community-based ECD centres that are in informal structures and have untrained teachers, minimal resources and poor nutritional food. It is in these areas where quality ECD is much needed to break the cycle of poverty and inequality. ECD forums are a geographic network of principals; forums act as a representative body for ECD centres, a place for sharing information, collective decision-making and access to resources. This research study aims to provide stakeholders views on the way in which ECD forums operate and how they can be utilised to empower communities, specifically around ECD in South Africa. It also unpacks the importance of networks in the ECD sector and how they can be used to strengthen the quality of the early learning opportunities that ECD centres offer to the young children in their care.

This chapter contextualises the problem identified and then explores the rationale and significance of the study. The chapter stipulates the research topic, main research questions and main research objectives. It clarifies concepts that are used throughout the research report. The structure of the report is outlined and the key ethical considerations detailed. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a reflexivity section.

1.2 Problem Context

ECD is an umbrella term that applies to the processes through which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2001:9).

In South Africa there are an estimated 6 million children under the age of six and of these children, 4 million live in poverty (defined as a household that earns less than R923 per month) (Hall et al., 2016:3). Importantly, there are an estimated 3,756,040 children, under the age of six, who are not in any type of early learning programme (Ashley-Cooper, van Niekerk & Atmore, 2019:7). The data

around enrolment rates for ECD centres is inadequate. Ashley-Cooper, van Niekerk and Atmore (2019:12) have estimated the number based on the 2001 audit of ECD centres and by taking into consideration annual growth rate and attrition rate. They found that there are approximately 29,800 ECD centres in South Africa with an estimated 1.3 million children in these centres (a provision rate of 21.8%). Attending an ECD centre offers a good opportunity for early learning to take place but the number alone tells one nothing about the quality of these ECD centres (Hall, 2016:124). The above information paints a dire situation for young children in South Africa, given the importance of ECD.

ECD is critical in determining the future behaviour, health and learning of a child. The first 1000 days (counted from conception to two years old) is a time of rapid growth and development. Research tells us that healthy brain development is dependent on the quality of the environment before birth (for example, the nutrition of the mother) and in the first two years (Berry, Dawes & Biersteker, 2013:26). Poverty and related issues (such as poor health, limited stimulation and inadequate care) have huge, negative impacts on early development especially when these factors act together. Berry, Dawes and Biersteker (2013:26) explain that this contributes to "...a trajectory of poor health and schooling outcomes that perpetuate the cycle of poverty." This is reflected in South Africa's low throughput rate from Grade 1 to Grade 12. In 2014, only 36% of those who started Grade 1 in 2003 matriculated (Spaull, 2015). In addition, a study conducted by Spaull and Taylor (2012:12), highlights that countries with high 'nominal' primary school enrolment rates do not always have high 'effective' enrolment rates; South Africa is such a case. 98% of Grade 6 learners in South Africa are enrolled in a school but only 71% of these children are functionally literate and only 59% are functionally numerate. Spaull and Taylor (2012:12) explain that this indicates that "at least a quarter of children are enrolled but have learnt so little in six years of formal full-time schooling that they have not even mastered functional literacy and numeracy."

One of the contributing factors to South Africa's poor educational outcomes is poor ECD provision. Hall et al (2016:3) summarise the significance and importance of ECD in South Africa as the authors state that:

The foundations for lifelong learning are built in the first 6 years of life when the brain is most receptive to stimulation. Children who do not attend quality early learning programmes, start formal schooling at a disadvantage. The gap between them and their more advantaged peers widens over time.

In South Africa, there are large inequalities in education and these are evident from the early years (before a child enters Grade 1). This is made worse by a child's entry into a highly unequal formal schooling system (Hall et al, 2016:124). Hoadley (2013:73) states that the country has 'two education systems'. One system that is well resourced and serves about 25% of children where learning happens and learners perform adequate to well. The other system is made up of the remaining 75% of schools that are low performing and where largely poor and black learners are persistently failed by the schooling system. These learners attain poor outcomes (Hoadley, 2013:73).

Early learning programmes are a critical mechanism to breaking the cycle of inequality as they reduce the differences in learning potential between children before they enter formal schooling; they 'level the playing field' (Hall et al, 2016:124). According to Ebrahim, Seleti and Dawes (2013:70), international studies have shown the positive outcomes for children in low-income countries who attend quality centre-based programmes. The positive outcomes include better cognitive outcomes as well as better school attendance, performance and retention (Ebrahim, Seleti & Dawes, 2013:70). The importance of investing in ECD has become well recognised on a global scale. Investing in ECD produces better economic and social outcomes. It is essential that the 'foundation' is set at a young age as this allows children to fulfil their potential. Interventions, such as ECD centres, that aim to promote ECD are essential. ECD centres in disadvantaged communities can "offset potential negative impacts on a child's cognitive and social development" (Human Science Research Council [HSRC], 2015:4).

1.3 Rationale and Significance

This research study looks at the role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek. In South Africa, an ECD forum is a "voluntary network of local ECD centres which serves as a representative body for community ECD centres..." (City of Cape Town, 2013:9).

ECD forums in South Africa provide a platform for dialogue and discussion on ECD and how to improve the quality of ECD centres in communities. Typically, forums are specific to geographic areas and are comprised of ECD principals in those areas. ECD forums differ in their structure, some are more formal and others less so. ECD forums provide a space for skills sharing, collective decision-making and support amongst ECD centres. The ECD forums are also the link between outside service providers and resources, and the centres. Many ECD service providers conduct their work through the forums. ECD forums provide a collective voice for principals and the forums have

scope to engage with provincial and local government. Thus, the motivation for this research study is to better understand how ECD forums foster community development (for example, through collective decision-making) which is essential to further empower communities. Secondly, the research study aims to explore how ECD forums strengthen ECD centres. This is vital as strengthening ECD centres means that children will receive quality early interventions which have a significant impact on children, as outlined in the above section (see section 1.2 Problem Context). This research study is important as there is minimal literature that specifically speaks to the role of ECD forums in South Africa and how forums can be utilised to enhance ECD. This research study aims to fill this gap in knowledge.

The ECD forums from Khayelitsha and Franschhoek in the Western Cape were selected as the focus of the research study as ECD centres in these two communities serve vulnerable children. The ECD forums in these areas are also functioning and currently play an active role in their communities. Thus, conducting research on these forums provides valuable knowledge about how ECD forums can foster community development and strengthen ECD centres.

1.4 Research Topic

The research topic is as follows:

The role of early childhood development forums in fostering community development and strengthening early childhood development centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek.

1.5 Main Research Questions

The three main research questions are:

- When and why did ECD forums emerge?
- How are ECD forums set up and how do they operate?
- What role do ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres?

1.6 Main Research Objectives

The research study has three objectives. These objectives are:

- To determine when and why ECD forums emerged.
- To ascertain how ECD forums are set up and how they operate.
- To describe the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

1.7 Main Assumptions

Neuman (1991:44) is of the view that “concepts and theories build on assumptions about the nature of social reality or a particular phenomenon”. The main assumptions for this research study are:

- ECD is critical for the holistic development of children;
- Access to quality ECD services is poor and needs to be enhanced;
- Strengthening ECD centres is critical to increasing children’s early learning opportunities;
- ECD forums are area based and have voluntary membership;
- ECD forums are community-driven structures;
- ECD forums act as a link between service providers and ECD centres;
- ECD forums play a critical role in fostering community development;
- ECD forums play an essential role in strengthening ECD centres; and
- ECD forums increase access to and the quality of ECD centres.

1.8 Concept Clarification

The following details key concepts in this research study.

Early childhood

According to the National Integrated ECD Policy (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2015:10) early childhood refers to the period of human development from birth until the year before a child enters formal schooling.

Early childhood development

ECD is an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially (DBE, 2001:9).

ECD centre

In this research study, ‘ECD centre’ refers to a partial care facility that provides an early childhood programme with an early learning and development focus for children between birth and the year before they enter formal schooling (DSD, 2015:11).

Informal ECD centre

An informal ECD centre refers to a place of care and education for young children predominately living in vulnerable communities. These centres are not registered with DSD as a partial care

facility and are typically unable to do so because they do not comply with the minimum norms and standards (Housing Development Agency [HDA], 2014:4).

ECD practitioner

The National Integrated ECD Policy defines an ECD practitioner as an individual who provides ECD services through formal ECD programmes, training and family services. It also states that the term ECD practitioner includes individuals who provide management support services to these workers (DSD, 2015:11).

ECD services

ECD services refer to services and support provided to young children or to their caregivers by government or civil society organisations with the intention of promoting a child's holistic development (DSD, 2015:11).

ECD service providers

ECD service providers can include government agencies, public organisations and private institutions that provide a range of services to the ECD sector. In this report, the term 'ECD service providers' will refer to non-profit organisations (NPOs) that provide services to the ECD forums and ECD centres operating in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek.

Partial care facility

The Children's Amendment Act No.41 of 2007 defines the term 'partial care'. It states that,

Partial care is provided when a person, whether for or without reward, takes care of more than six children on behalf of their parents or care-givers during specific hours of the day or night, or for a temporary period, by agreement between the parents of care-givers and the provider of the service...
(Children's Amendment Act No.41 of 2007, 2007:ss76).

Therefore, partial care facility is a facility at which seven or more children are cared for, as per the above.

ECD forum

The City of Cape Town (2013:9) defines an ECD forum as a "voluntary network of local ECD centres which serves as a representative body for community ECD centres and it is governed by its approved Constitution."

Primary caregiver

The primary caregiver is an individual who takes primary responsibility for meeting the needs of a child, whether they are related to the child or not (DSD, 2015:13).

Centre-based ECD services

The South African Child Gauge defines these as ECD services that are provided to young children at a partial care facility such as an ECD centre (Berry et al., 2012:25).

Non-centre-based ECD services

These are services that are provided to young children in communities or the home environment (not in a facility). Home-visiting programmes, playgroups and toy libraries are considered non-centre-based ECD services (Berry et al., 2012:25).

1.9 Structure of the Research Report

The structure of this research report is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces the study. The chapter details the context and background of the problem. The rationale and significance of the study are explained and the impact and importance of ECD in South Africa is explored. The chapter also looks at the current challenges in the sector and highlights that many children do not receive quality early learning and care.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Two examines the pertinent literature on the ECD sector and specifically, the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. The chapter explores the role of ECD forums in enhancing early learning opportunities in ECD centres and the wider community and describes relevant ECD policy and legislation: Education White Paper 5 on ECD, the Children's Amendment Act No.47 of 2007 and the National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015. The chapter also examines three theoretical frameworks that underpin the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Chapter Three specifies the research design of the study; the study is qualitative and exploratory in nature. The chapter details the sampling, data collection method, data analysis procedure and verification, and also presents the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Research Findings

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research. The research findings are described using quotations from participants and are examined according to the literature discussed in the second chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter Five presents the conclusions of the study on the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. The chapter also makes recommendations that have emerged from this study on how ECD forums can be utilised to enhance the quality of ECD in South Africa.

1.10 Key Ethical Considerations

De Vos et al (2005:57) define ethics as “...a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations” about the most correct way to conduct social research. It is essential that researchers conform to the standards of conduct of a given professional board (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:528). For this study, the researcher abided by the values of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town and the South African Council for Social Service Professions. The following pertinent ethical considerations are discussed: avoidance of harm, informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality, sound analysis and reporting, and competence of the researcher.

Avoidance of Harm

The fundamental ethical consideration of social research is to protect participants from harm, physically and/or emotionally. Research participants should be informed beforehand regarding the possible impact of the study and the researcher should give the participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study at this time ((De Vos et al., 2011:115). This research study was not of an intimate nature but in order to ensure that the participants were protected from emotional harm, the interview questions were thoroughly discussed with my supervisor. If emotional issues emerged during the interview, the researcher would use her social work skills to support the participant and the researcher would stop the interview. During the data collection process, this did not occur.

Informed Consent

Another ethical consideration is the use of informed consent (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:522). De Vos et al state that emphasis should be placed on “accurate and complete information so that subjects

will fully comprehend the investigation...” (1998:26) and thus be able to make a reasoned decision about whether or not to participate in the research. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time if the interview was causing distress. The participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix I) to sign at the start of the interview. The consent form explained the main aim of the study so that the participants were aware of what the research was about and what it entailed before committing to take part.

Voluntary Participation

Linked to the ethical consideration of informed consent is voluntary participation. Participants must voluntarily take part in the study and not be coerced. Researchers must be aware that incentives can be seen as a form of coercion. Because participants volunteer to take part in the research, they can opt out of the study at any time (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:521). The consent form stated that the participant could withdraw at any point and this was explained at the start of the interview. There were no incentives for the participants to take part in the study and all did so voluntarily.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy, in the case of social research, refers to the participant’s right to decide the level of information that they want to share with the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:522). Privacy in this study was ensured as participants were told that they did not necessarily have to share aspects of their lives that they deemed private. Confidentiality is when the researcher “...can identify a given person’s response but promises not to do so publicly” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:523). In order to ensure confidentiality, the researcher did not name the participants in the written report-pseudonyms were used instead. The participants are referred to as, for example, ‘Participant 1’. In this way only the researcher can identify the participants.

Sound Analysis and Reporting

It is the responsibility of the researcher to uphold an ethical standard in the final research report. It is vital that the researcher compiles the final report “as accurately and objectively as possible” (De Vos et al., 2005:126), making certain that the findings of the study have not been fabricated or plagiarised and that the methodological limitations of the study are presented (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:527). The researcher upheld this standard as all the research findings have been detailed and discussed, and the limitations of the study are included in this report.

Competence of the Researcher

The final consideration is the competence of the researcher. De Vos et al (2011:123) explains that “researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent, honest and adequately skilled to undertake” the research study. One way to ensure this, and which was the case in this study, is that the researcher needs to be provided with supervision throughout the research process.

1.11 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process that involves researchers ‘taking stock’ of their actions and roles in the research process, to be aware of their potential impact on the research outcomes (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004:274). One’s experiences, values and beliefs can impact on the interpretation of the data. In qualitative research, in particular, the researcher’s biases and opinions can have an influence on the research. Therefore, the researcher must be aware of the subjective nature of qualitative research and act accordingly. The researcher needs to be conscious of any biases she may have before conducting a research study in order to not let them influence the data collected. If one is aware of biases and stereotypes, then one is able to put them aside when conducting research. I was cognisant throughout the process that I needed to remain objective and not allow any biases I may have to influence the direction of the interviews.

I come from a social work background and therefore needed to prevent myself from using skills that I would use for a therapeutic interview. During the interviews, I was also conscious not to ask leading questions as I already have knowledge on the research topic.

1.12 Summary

This chapter provides the research context as well as the significance and rationale for undertaking this study. The research topic, main research questions and main research objectives were provided. The chapter also clarified relevant concepts and provides the reader with the structure of the report. The key ethical considerations were discussed and a section on reflexivity was provided. The next chapter explores the relevant literature in this field of study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses literature relevant to this field of study. The literature review focuses on the policy and legislation that informs and guides the ECD sector and discusses some of the sector's challenges. The chapter details three theoretical frameworks that underpin the research topic: human development, the capabilities approach and systems theory. Lastly, this chapter examines literature pertinent to ECD forums, with a focus on: the emergence of ECD forums, the governance of ECD forums, and the role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

2.2 Policy and Legislation

This section outlines policy and legislation relevant to the field of ECD and ECD forums. The following policy and legislation is discussed: the Education White Paper 5 on ECD (2001), the Children's Amendment Act, No.41 of 2007 and the National Integrated ECD Policy (2015).

2.2.1 Education White Paper 5 on ECD (2001)

Education White Paper 5 on ECD (hereafter referred to as White Paper 5) outlines the importance of investing in ECD and defines ECD as a “comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential” (DBE, 2001:ss1.3.1). The policy priority of White Paper 5 was the implementation of a pre-school Reception Year (now known as Grade R). The policy states that the medium term policy goal was to progressively realise government's constitutional responsibilities to provide learners with ten years of compulsory schooling (Grade R – Grade 9). The policy document goes on to state that its target, to be achieved by 2010, was for all learners who enter Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited ‘Reception Year’ (DBE, 2001:ss1.4.3). Service provision to children four years old and younger is not as much of a priority, although it states that “with regard to children four years and younger, this White Paper prioritises the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration, focusing our efforts on improving the quality of early learning programmes” (DBE, 2001:ss1.4.5).

2.2.2 Children's Amendment Act, No.41 of 2007

The Children's Act, No.38 of 2005 has nine main objectives. These are summarised below:

- To promote the preservation and strengthening of families;

- To give effect to the constitutional rights of children;
- To uphold South Africa's obligations concerning the well-being of children in terms of international instruments;
- To make provision for structures and services to promote and monitor the development of children;
- To develop and strengthen community structures that assist in providing care and protections for children;
- To afford care and protections to children who are in need to care and protection;
- To recognise the special needs that children living with disabilities have; and
- To generally promote the protections, development and well-being of children (Children's Act, No.38 of 2005:18).

The Children's Act, No.38 of 2005 was amended to provide for partial care, to provide for ECD, to make further provision for the protection of children, and to provide for children in alternative care amongst others. Chapter 5 in the Children's Amendment Act, No.41 of 2007 is on Partial Care Facilities and Chapter 6 is on ECD Programmes. Chapter 7 and 8 are also relevant to ECD as they focus on child protection and early prevention and intervention services, respectively. The Act outlines details of ECD services and programmes, legal requirements for these services and services that the government is obliged to fund. The Children's Amendment Act, No.41 of 2007 focuses on bringing all ECD centres up to a certain standard by establishing norms and standards that must be met as a prerequisite for registration and accessing a subsidy of R15 per child per day. The Minister of Social Development, after consultation with interested persons and the Minister of Education, Finance, Health, Provincial and Local Government and Transport, determines the national norms and standards for partial care facilities (Children's Amendment Act, No.41 of 2007, 2007:17).

2.2.3 National Integrated ECD Policy (2015)

The National Integrated ECD Policy, approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015, is the first South African policy that is dedicated to integrated ECD. The purpose of the policy is to facilitate the provision of a comprehensive package of ECD services for all infants and young children and covers the period from conception until the year before children enter formal schooling (DSD, 2015:8). In summary, the policy provides (DSD, 2015:8):

- *An overarching multi-sectoral enabling framework of early childhood development services, inclusive of national, provincial and local spheres of government;*

- *A comprehensive package of early childhood development services and support, with identified essential components;*
- *Identifying the relevant role players, their roles and responsibilities for the provision of the various components of early childhood development services; and*
- *Leadership, coordination and collaboration in the delivery of early childhood development services.*

At the time of undertaking this study, no national implementation plan had been developed to guide implementation and to assist provinces and municipalities in developing their own plans. Interestingly, the policy does not mention ECD forums and the role that they play in the ECD sector.

The National Integrated ECD Policy has been framed within the country's National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP states that ECD needs to be made a priority and services need to be channelled toward ensuring that all children are cared for from an early age and receive appropriate cognitive, emotional and physical development and stimulation (National Planning Commission, 2011:69). The policy makes provision for this. Government has paid lip service to the fact that they are making ECD a top priority since the publication of the new policy. For example, in 2017 former President Jacob Zuma made mention of government's ECD achievements in his Human Rights Day address, stating that, "government has remarkably grown the [ECD subsidy] programme from supporting three hundred thousand children to 1.4 million children. Government pays a subsidy of R15 per child per day and also pays a subsidy to each approved centre" (Zuma, 2017). Similarly, President Cyril Ramaphosa mentioned ECD in his State of the Nation Addresses in 2018 and 2019. In 2018, Ramaphosa stated, "We know...that if we are to break the cycle of poverty, we need to educate the children of the poor. We have insisted that this should start in early childhood" (Ramaphosa, 2018).

The policy also links to global development plans such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SGD 4 is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. There are various targets within this overarching goal. One of the targets is "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education" (United Nations [UN], 2015).

2.2.4 ECD Policy Challenges

Laryea-Adjei and Sadan (2012:76) state that there must be increased political commitment and significant investment in ECD by the government. If this does not occur, inequality and exclusion will continue to grow. Berry, Dawes and Biersteker (2013:30) reiterate the need for political will to invest in ECD: “to forgo greater investment in ECD interventions means compromising the wellbeing of South Africa’s communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, poor educational attainment, ill health, inequality and socio-economic challenges.” The National Integrated ECD Policy seemingly reflects the government’s commitment to ECD. Martin (2012:4) states that quality ECD programmes could be enhanced if there is more focus on the involvement of parents, increased investment in ECD teacher training, better ECD centre management and more monitoring of ECD services by the government. The new policy incorporates all of these elements and it has taken a comprehensive approach to providing ECD services in South Africa.

Despite the fact that the policy details a comprehensive package of services for ECD and is indicative of the government’s intention, the test will be how effectively it is implemented. Kumo, Omilol and Minsat (2015:2) state that although there have been improvements in overall service delivery in South Africa, implementation of policies has generally been slow and unequal across different areas in the country. According to Richter and Dawes (2008:79), South Africa has prioritised child rights policy and legislation but the implementation of these policies is often ineffectual and is one of the biggest challenges facing the ECD sector.

In addition, Professor Eric Atmore (2016) who is the director of Centre for Early Childhood Development and an expert in the field is concerned about the implementation phases of the policy. The policy is to be rolled out in three time phases: by 2017 (this deadline has been missed already), by 2024 and by 2030. While there may be a need to progressively implement the policy given funding constraints of government, these time frames mean that a huge cohort of children will not receive a comprehensive package of services.

Another challenge in the sector is the fact that the responsibility for ECD is spread across three government departments: Department of Social Development, Basic Education and Health. Currently, there is little communication between the three and therefore a comprehensive package of services for ECD is difficult to implement. Desmond (2012) highlights the need for a single agency at a national level to coordinate implementation. Similar calls have been made by civil society operating in the sector. The need for a coordinating body has been heeded by government

and Chapter 7 in the National Integrated ECD Policy explicitly details the leadership and coordination of the ECD system. The policy (DSD, 2015:74) states that:

Government will, by 2015: 1. Establish a National Inter-Ministerial Committee on Early Childhood Development, supported by a National Inter-Departmental Committee for Early Childhood Development structure, which will be responsible for coordinating, monitoring and overseeing the implementation of this policy and of the multi-sectoral comprehensive national programme for early childhood development...

Thus far these agencies have been set up in name only. The test will be whether or not they are able to operate efficiently and effectively (Atmore, 2016).

The latest policy development in the field is that primary responsibility for ECD will now fall under the Department of Basic Education and a second year of compulsory early learning before school will be introduced. This was announced during the 2019 State of the Nation Address. Harrison (2019) states that this one of the clearest commitments to ECD that South Africa has ever had but that the challenges facing the sector is not the government department it is in but “...the lack of coordinated provision of services to children” (Harrison, 2019). He goes on to explain, “...child nutrition, early language development and inclusion of children with disabilities are everybody’s responsibility – but practically nobody’s responsibility” (Harrison, 2019). Similarly to Desmond (2012), Harrison (2019) recommends that ECD be organised through a dedicated national agency that reports directly to the Presidency.

2.2.5 Neo-liberalism in ECD Policy

Heckman (2006:1902) states that “Investing in disadvantaged young children is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large.” Economist James Heckman (2012:1) coined the term the ‘Heckman Equation’ which posits that ECD fosters achievement and success in school and life in the long term, investing in ECD (especially for poor children) reduces social costs and investing in ECD is a cost-effective approach for facilitating economic growth. Figure 1 below illustrates this concept. The figure shows that the economic return from quality ECD services is higher than the return from later formal school interventions.

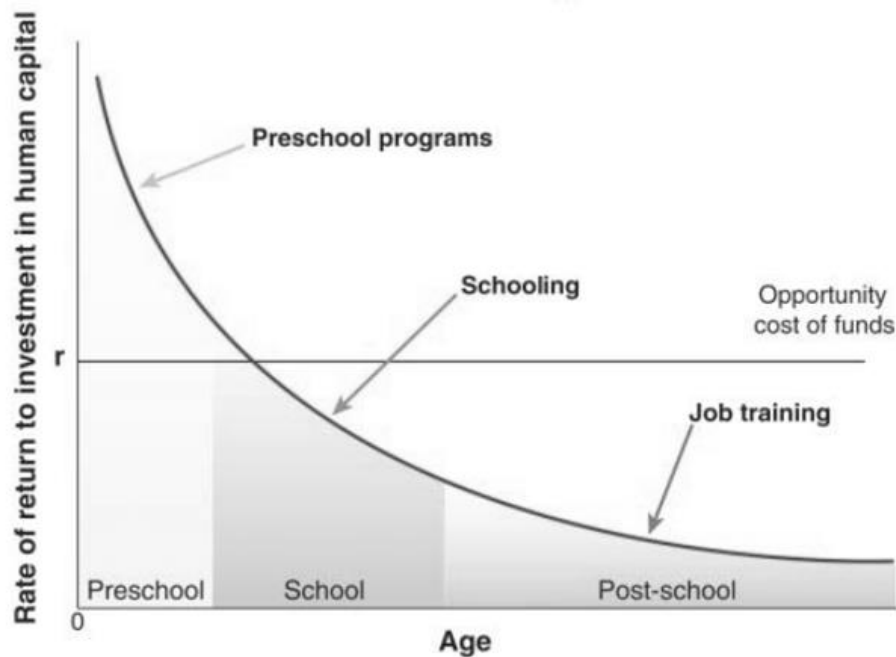


Figure 1: Heckman's rate of return of investment in human capital (Heckman, 2006:1901)

Discussion around ECD as an 'economic investment' is a dominant discourse both globally and nationally. It is driven by a neo-liberal orientation and has influenced ECD policy in South Africa. Sims (2017:1) states that, "neoliberalism has a devastating impact on the early childhood sector with its focus on standardisation, push-down curriculum and its positioning of children as investments for future economic productivity." In South Africa, the neo-liberalism discourse can be seen in the:

"...accreditation, standardisation, evidence requirements, regulation, control, measurement, compliance, meeting desired goals, accountability and quality standards through testing and ECD programme registration requirements. National norms and standards, adherence to government regulations and practices, curriculum statements, and specified learning outcomes are the main drivers of ECD programmes in South Africa focusing on quality, which is seldom defined, and on the economic benefits of ECD provision, ignoring other aspects of child growth and development" (Atmore, 2019:19).

Atmore (2019:19) goes on to explain that this narrow definition of ECD emphasises a child's performance in meeting strict, defined outcomes, often focused on 'school readiness' and preparing children for the capitalist economy. This is to the detriment of social justice, equity and holistic development. Moss (2017:19) refers to this narrow understanding of ECD as "...an instance of the dictatorship of no alternative, and is commensurate with any prospect of a democratic politics of education." Cheeseman, Press and Sumsion (2015:823) explain that this approach codifies early

learning, thus over-simplifying the complex nature of young children's learning. It reduces childhood experiences to "quantifiable measures that generalise and totalise learning and experience". The authors explain that globally there is an increase in state involvement in ECD and the regulation of learning programmes and practice through various policy documents.

One can see the top-down approach by the South African government to ECD as the sector has become progressively regulated with a set of minimum norms and standards as stipulated by the DSD. ECD centres are legally bound to comply with these standards in order to become registered as a partial care facility and access the ECD subsidy (Atmore, 2019:20). Poor infrastructure is the main reason why ECD centres are not able to register as partial care facilities. Many ECD centres in poor communities will likely never be able to register as they cannot meet these strict standards (Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper, 2012:129). The dominant neo-liberal approach to ECD and its policy in South Africa has implications for ECD forums and the way in which they function. Moss (2017:11) explains that although the neo-liberal discourse is widespread, it is not "...the only discourse in early childhood education, there are alternatives that are varied, vibrant and vocal; not silenced but readily heard by those who listen and forming a resistance movement."

2.3 Theoretical Models

This section details the three theoretical models that underpin this research study: human development, the capabilities approach and systems theory.

2.3.1 Human Development

Human development can be defined as "a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living" (Alkire, 2010:4). The concept of human development grew out of a global discussion on the links between economic growth and social development as it was clear that economic growth did not necessarily improve the lives of people (UNDP, 2015). Figure 2 below outlines the dimensions of human development that are foundational (they are directly related to enhancing human abilities) and elements that are contextual (they help to create conditions for human development) (UNDP, 2015). Previously, the development of a country was simply measured by its GDP. This was insufficient as economic growth does not always translate into a better quality of life. Therefore, the Human Development Index (HDI) was created to measure the social achievements of a country (Jolly, Emmerij & Weiss, 2009:2).

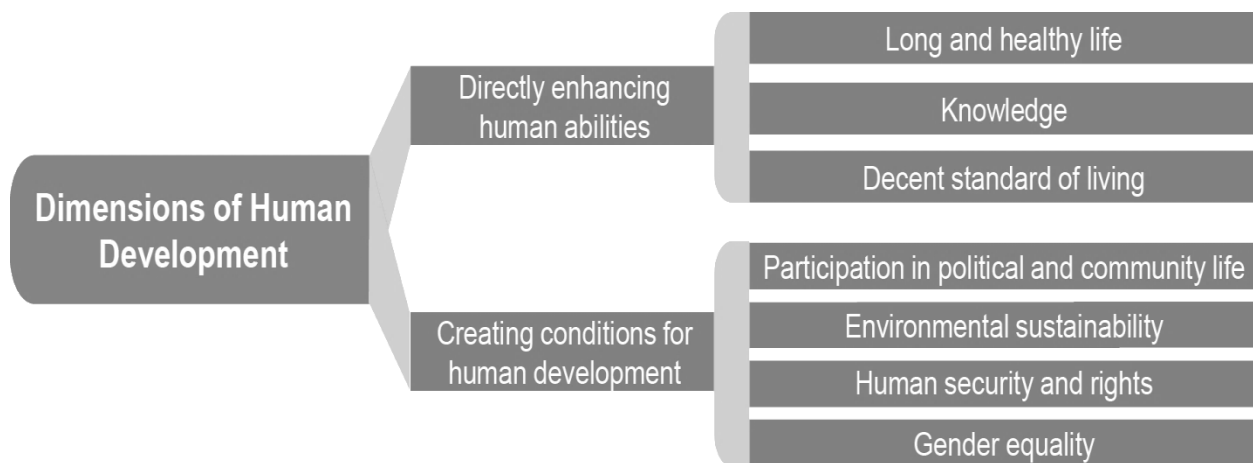


Figure 2: Dimensions of human development (UNDP, 2015)

Kanbur and Squire (2001:200) explain that factors such as a lack of education and poor health impact on an individual's ability and capacity to work. Kanbur and Squire (2001:201) go on to explain that health and education are 'building blocks' and without them, poor people are not able to take advantage of employment opportunities. The authors illustrate this with an example from Conakry, Guinea, where it was found that education raises the income of men and women in all three of the sectors that were analysed: self-employment, public way employment and private way employment. This shows the benefits of education. In addition, it was found that completing primary schooling raised the hourly profit for self-employed women in the informal sector by 30% on average (Kanbur & Squire, 2001:201). A statement by Kanbur and Squire (2001:201) sums up the link between human development and economic growth: "The provision of basic social services, besides being important in its own right, therefore constitutes an important element in the growth of a society."

Improving the quality of early education directly impacts on a child's ability to access employment opportunities later on. The NDP outlines the benefits of investing in ECD. It includes better school enrolment rates, retention and academic performance; high rates of high school completion; lower levels of antisocial behaviour; higher earnings; and better adult health and longevity (NPC, 2011:297). These factors are vitally important given the high number of children in South Africa. The NDP (NPC, 2011:299) states that in 2030 there will be 4 million children under the age of 3, an estimated 2 million in the age group 4-5 and just under 1 million 6 year old children.

Focusing on ECD is one of the best ways to promote human development as it directly enhances human abilities, one's ability to live a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

2.3.2 The Capabilities Approach

The human development approach discussed above, which was developed by the economist Mahbub Ul Haq, is anchored in Amartya Sen's capabilities approach (UNDP, 2015). Sen defines poverty in terms of capabilities. Capability is the "substantive freedoms people enjoy that permit them to lead the kind of life they have reason to value, such as social functioning, better basic education and health care, and longevity" (Kanbur & Squire, 2001:192).

The capabilities approach is centred on the notion of freedom of choice and the idea that individuals need to have the ability to choose opportunities and act on them, as this influences their wellbeing. Therefore, development is seen as the expansion of substantive human freedoms and not just economic growth. However, the idea of 'social' is not meant to be seen in contrast to 'economic'. Similarly to Kanbur and Squire (2001), 'social' and 'economic' are seen as complementary in this approach (Dreze & Sen, 2002:7). Dreze and Sen (2002:7), when analysing India's development, argue that economic measures such as market mechanisms are essential for the presence (or absence) of social opportunities. Freedoms (or capabilities) such as access to basic education and good health are valuable as they are elements that make up quality of life but they are also vital to generating economic achievement that, in turn, contributes to the enhancement of human freedoms in other ways (Dreze & Sen, 2002:7).

Increasing access to and quality of early learning opportunities is critical. This is important because of the intrinsic value of access to knowledge as well as the fact that education enhances freedoms and increases a child's likelihood of employment as an adult. This point is reflected in the human development section.

The capabilities approach also links to the theory and practice of community development. Community development can be seen as a process that enhances people's capabilities and freedoms. Buysee, Wesley and Skinner (1999:237) detail how a community development approach can be used to improve services for young children. The authors go on to explain that strategies for parent involvement, such as public speaking, advising, and serving on a parent group, are community development approaches that are often used to improve early opportunities for children (1999:237). Buysee, Wesley and Skinner (1999:241) researched a programme that used a community development framework to start "a process for bringing about change to improve the quality and accessibility of local childcare and early intervention services." The authors state that community forums were essential in this process and that the forums highlighted the need for more parent support and advocacy education. Clampett (2016:79) found that active involvement of parents in

ECD centres increases the performance of their children. Furthermore, parental involvement in the activities and the decision-making of ECD centres increases their overall quality.

The capabilities approach posits that as poor people are able to access and develop more capabilities, they are able to take advantage of more social and economic opportunities. Ansari, Munir and Gregg (2012:815) warn that in a low income community, building capabilities is extremely difficult. It is challenging as poor communities are isolated from the required resources and often lack the collective action necessary to achieve their development goals. It is argued that in order to achieve development goals, social capital is “a necessary ingredient for community development and may provide the necessary bridge between the poor and the resources available through external groups or institutions” (Ansari, Munir & Gregg, 2012:815). This links to ECD forums as they are often the ‘bridge’ between ECD centres and external institutions such as the local municipality. Thus, ECD forums can be seen as enhancing the social capital of their communities. Building social capital can address many challenges that communities face.

2.3.3 Systems Theory

In systems theory, a ‘system’ can be described as “a complex of interacting components together with the relationships among them that permit the identification of a boundary-maintaining entity or process” (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998:8). In other words, a system is made up of interacting spheres that influence each other. A system always functions in relation to other systems. Each system is part of a bigger system and each system is made up of its own smaller, subsystems (Homan, 2004:39). Homan (2004:39) states that the interconnectedness of systems means that what happens in one subsystem may have an effect on the entire system and that what occurs outside the system will also impact on the system itself. Essentially, the theory explains complex interactions by looking at the properties and relationships that are internal and external to a system and how they impact on it (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998:8). According to systems theory, a system can be divided into various subparts that work together to create a functioning whole; “an indivisible unity” (Laszlo & Kripper, 1998:10). A systems theory approach is useful as it attempts to look at the world in terms of the ‘whole’ as well as the complex interrelationships between various systems (Laszlo & Kripper, 1998:11).

This study uses this approach as a lens through which to understand ECD forums and how forums can be seen as a system made up of subparts that also functions within a broader context. An ECD forum system is made up of, for example, the management committee and the principals. This system interacts with other systems such as the wider community it supports, other ECD forums,

government departments and ECD service providers. If the chairperson of a forum is not effective in running the forum, this subpart will negatively impact on the entire system. It may result in poor communication with external service providers regarding training opportunities for teachers, and this would affect the quality of education that the teachers provide to young children. Furthermore, the broader environment or system within which the ECD forum is located will also have an impact on it. For example, the government system influences and has an impact on ECD forums by putting in place certain policy priorities.

2.4 A Brief Description of Franschhoek and Khayelitsha

This section presents a brief description of Franschhoek and Khayelitsha. It is important to understand the context in which the ECD forums operate.

Franschhoek is located 75km outside of Cape Town. A community of French Huguenots was given land in the area by the Dutch government in 1685 (South African History Online [SAHO], 2018a). There are over 20 wine farms in the Franschhoek area. Most of the ECD centres in this area cater for children whose parents work on the farms.

Khayelitsha was established in 1983 by the Apartheid government and was built “under the principle of racial segregation” (SAHO, 2018b). It was developed to accommodate informal residents living on the Cape Flats. During the 1990s, the population in Khayelitsha grew greatly as migrant workers from rural provinces of South Africa arrived in search of work (SAHO, 2018b). Table 2.1 below looks at the demographics of Franschhoek and Khayelitsha.

As one can see from the table, Khayelitsha has a far greater population than Franschhoek with a higher population density. This is because Khayelitsha is a large, urban township whereas Franschhoek is a small town located in a wine farming area of the Western Cape. Both areas have a significant number of female-headed households: 37.7% of households are female-headed in Franschhoek and 42% in Khayelitsha. Franschhoek has 1,843 0-4 year olds and Khayelitsha has 46,773.

Table 2.1: Demographics of Franschhoek and Khayelitsha

Demographics		Franschhoek	Khayelitsha
General	Total population	17,556	391,749
	Population density	2,491 persons/km ²	10,120 persons/km ²
	Female-headed households	37.7%	42%
	Formal dwellings	50.5%	44.6%
	Number of 0-4 year olds	1,843 (10.5%)	46,773 (11.9%)
	Predominate language	Afrikaans (56.5%)	isiXhosa (90.5%)
	Percentage with a matriculation qualification	23.5%	30.8%
	Percentage with higher education	6.3%	4.9%
	Percentage without any form of income	23.5%	18.8%
	Percentage earning between R19,601 – R38,200 per month	24.8%	19.4%
Race groups	Black African	41.5%	98.6%
	Coloured	52%	0.6%
	Indian/Asian	0.4%	0.1%
	White	5.1%	0.1%

Source: Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2011a; StatsSA, 2011b)

Khayelitsha and Franschhoek have a similar percentage of informal dwellings (44.6% in Khayelitsha and 50.5% in Franschhoek). At first, this statistic is surprising as Franschhoek is a wealthy town and is considered the food and wine capital of the country (SAHO, 2018a). However, there are townships, such as Langrug, located on the outskirts of Franschhoek, 3kms north-west of the centre of Franschhoek. It is home to around 2000 informal dwellings that house over 4700 people. It is estimated that one third of these homes do not have access to electricity or sanitation (SDI South African Alliance, 2012).

In terms of race groups¹, Franschhoek is 41.5% Black African and 52% Coloured. Khayelitsha is 98.6% Black African and the predominate language spoken is isiXhosa (90.5%). 30.9% of the population speak isiXhosa in Franschhoek and 56.5% speak Afrikaans.

¹ South Africa has five racial, population categories by which people can classify themselves. These are Black African, White, Coloured, Indian/Asian and Unspecified/Other.

When looking at educational levels in each area, the statistics are similar. Only 6.3% of people living in Franschhoek and 4.9% living in Khayelitsha, have any level of higher education. Interestingly, Franschhoek has a higher percentage of individuals without any form of income (23.5%) compared to Khayelitsha (18.8%). This can be attributed to the fact that Khayelitsha has a large informal economy (Morris, Pitt, & Berthon, 1996:65).

2.5 The Emergence of ECD Forums

This section examines the emergence of ECD forums. As there is a dearth of literature on the emergence of ECD forums in South Africa, this section first looks at community forums more generally. ECD forums can be considered a type of community forum. Following this, when and why ECD forums emerged in South Africa is discussed.

Community Forums

In South Africa, community forums first emerged in response to the Apartheid government and, post-Apartheid, they developed into critical spaces that encourage active citizenry and ‘fight’ for basic needs that are not being met. Community forums can be defined as “...networks dedicated to addressing critical needs and improving the quality of life in a specific geographic area” (HSRC, 2015:6). These forums provide a platform for communities to collectively discuss issues and reach consensus on how to solve problems. In South Africa, community forums are seen as essential to enhancing democracy as they provide communities with the platform through which to participate in the governance structures of their area (HSRC, 2015:6).

A document compiled by the HSRC details the characteristics of community-based forums. These characteristics include:

- They are generally independent from control or influence by other organisations.
- They are governed by a board of citizens broadly reflective of the communities they serve.
- They engage in a range of community leadership and partnership activities (HSRC, 2015:6).

Buysee, Wesley and Skinner (1999:236) explain that improving the quality of ECD interventions requires changes that reach beyond a single classroom or programme. Developing a comprehensive system of services involves building strong relationships within communities through the use of forums (Buysee, Wesley & Skinner, 1999:236).

Influence of External Institutions on the Emergence of ECD Forums

Carter, Biersteker and Steak (2008:67) looked at costing ECD centres based in the Western Cape and part of their findings pertained to ECD forums. They found that two communities, located within a few kilometres of each other, each had a separate ECD forum that consisted of 12 ECD centres. These two ECD forums were formed by a donor organisation that worked in these communities. The donor organisation provided the ECD centres with Pick 'n Pay vouchers to be used for specific purchases such as food. The principals had to attend the monthly ECD forums meetings with the donor to produce receipts of their purchases and collect vouchers for the following month. The forums were not linked to other external institutions such as government departments. The ECD centres that attended the meetings stated that the meetings were “constructive for information sharing with each other and provided help as the need arose” (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:67).

Plastrik and Taylor (2006:50) warn against a forum having this type of relationship with a donor. They explain that funders may well exert influence over the governance of the forums and prevent a forum from emerging in a community driven way. This is harmful given the potential positive impact of community based forums on ECD. Plastrik and Taylor (2006:50) explain that donors are often not patient enough to allow forums to develop their own direction and growth as they prioritise rapid development.

ECD forums may also be started by government departments. An ECD forum in Johannesburg (Region B) was initiated in 2002 by an official from the local government, Human Development Unit. At the time, the forum was made up of 10 ECD centres; by 2008 it had 30 centres. The forum was started as a way to encourage the ECD centres to work together, to share daily programmes and activities. In 2008, the ECD forum became independent from local government, however the Human Development Unit still had a degree of representation within the forum (STALK, 2003).

Influence of Communities on the Emergence of ECD Forums

Carter, Biersteker and Steak (2008:67) found that some ECD forums are started by the community themselves. 12 ECD centres in a particular area started a forum in response to a lack of government support. This forum had a level of governance in place as it had developed a constitution to guide its activities. The authors found that this ECD forum was spoken of highly by the member ECD centres (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:67).

The HSRC (2015) looked at why ECD forums were started by various communities in KwaZulu-Natal. This research found that the main driver for the formation of ECD forums was the concern of communities regarding the quality of ECD services being offered (HSRC, 2015:30). Often, the emergence of ECD forums is led by a single community member who is concerned and motivated to act. The excerpt below is from an interview with a forum leader and it highlights why the ECD forum in this area emerged (HSRC, 2015:33):

“I formed this ECD forum based on the fact that there was a need. In Lamontville we had many crèches but they did not work together. As much as we communicated, it was not enough. Sometimes the crèches had similar events or activities that could have been merged. The only time that we would meet was at community meetings. From that, we decided that we should also have meetings to discuss matters pertaining to ECD centres.”

2.6 The Governance of ECD Forums

This section looks at the governance of ECD forums. Specifically, this section examines how forums are set up and how they operate. Similarly to the above, there is little literature available on the governance of forums and this study aims to fill this gap.

Governance of Community Forums

In order for a community forum to have a meaningful impact, it should be owned and controlled by forum members. The forum members need to be responsible for setting the agenda and managing the activities of the forum. Having a community driven forum creates a sense of ownership amongst its members which increases its sustainability and effectiveness (HSRC, 2015:11).

Plastrik and Taylor (2006:50) state that forums need to understand and have clarity about their governance and management functions. Governance, in this case, is the responsibility for providing the policy direction of the forum and management is responsible for “rowing the community forum boat” (Plastrik & Taylor, 2006:50).

Governance of ECD Forums

In the Western Cape, ECD forums are often formalised structures, guided by a constitution (City of Cape Town, 2013:9). The HSRC found this to be the case with some of the ECD forums that they examined in KwaZulu-Natal. The Wentworth ECD forum comprises of 22 ECD centres. The forum has a constitution and a formalised management committee. The forum has several portfolios that are chaired by various forum members. The forum meets once a month and the meeting is chaired

by a principal who is assisted by the management committee (HSRC, 2015:30). Another example is the Folweni ECD Forum. The forum was started by community members who saw that they needed a “central organ” to receive information and pass it on to the ECD centres (HSRC, 2015:35). This is one of the core functions of the forum. There is a joining fee for new members as well as an annual membership fee. The forum meets on a monthly basis and is run by a management committee (HSRC, 2015:35). The ECD forum in Region B in Johannesburg has an executive committee that is elected biennially. The forum is governed by a constitution and has a professional code of conduct (STALK, 2003).

KwaZulu-Natal has a provincial ECD forum, made up of 45 community ECD forums, which was established in 1998. The role of this forum is to liaise with relevant stakeholders in the field, facilitate meetings between the various ECD forums, build capacity by sharing best practice models, and organise collective action (HSRC, 2015:36). Individuals who represent their forums at a provincial level share the information from the meetings with the members of their local ECD forum. One participant from the research study conducted by the HSRC explained this: “At the provincial level we create an opportunity for the crèche forum to attend the provincial meeting. The requirement is that the information shared at the forum must be cascaded to the forums” (HSRC, 2015:36). Interestingly, Khayelitsha has area specific ECD forums (ECD forums for Site B, Site C and so forth) that are part of a greater, Khayelitsha ECD forum. The large population size of Khayelitsha means that there need to be smaller ECD forums in order to reach the number of ECD centres that operate in the area.

The HSRC study also recommended that the leadership capacity of forum leaders be strengthened, particularly around how to leverage resources and their governance and management skills. This enhances the sustainability and effectiveness of the ECD forums (HSRC, 2015:114).

2.7 The Role of ECD Forums

This last section reviews the role that forums play in fostering community development and the ways in which they strengthen ECD centres. Specifically, the section looks at how ECD forums create connections with external institutions as well as between ECD centres. The role forums play in facilitating community activism is also detailed.

Creating Connections with External Institutions

ECD forums are often the link between ECD centres and external institutions such as local government, provincial government and NPOs.

In order to make a widespread and sustainable change in the ECD sector, ECD needs to be scaled up across the country. Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:30) detail that there are four main components to the sustainable scaling up of ECD. Figure 3 below illustrates this concept. One of the components is the need for “links and relationships between the state, NGOs and ECD centres” (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:30); ECD forums are essential as they facilitate these relationships. ECD forums are a community driven model that can be used to scale ECD.

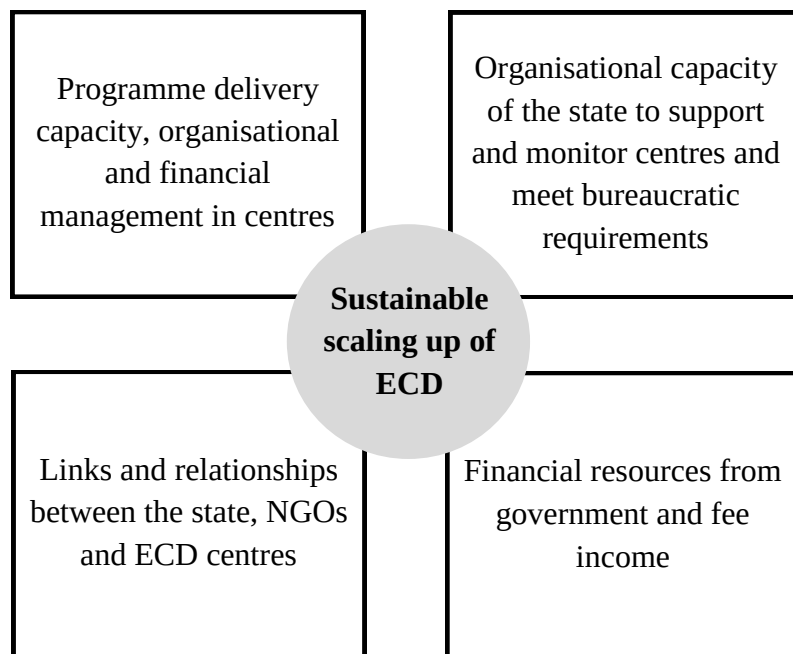


Figure 3: The pillars of quality ECD scaling up (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:30)

Local Government

Khayelitsha falls within the City of Cape Town municipality which recognises the role of ECD forums in strengthening ECD centres. The City of Cape Town states that the importance of ECD forums is that they “create a space for support, learning and discussion” and that the emergence of forums has been useful in “connecting teachers of different ECD centre within the same area” (City of Cape Town, 2015:27). The City of Cape Town officials provide the forums with relevant ECD information (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:253). Connecting to the forums is an easy way for the City of Cape Town to disseminate information to the ECD centres. Since part of their strategic focus in ECD is on empowering ECD forums to ensure that they are effective and sustainable, the City of Cape Town offered training to ECD forums on how to effectively manage their forums. This training covered topics such as: governance, leadership, fundraising and financial management (City of Cape Town, 2015:28). The City of Cape also support initiatives to establish new ECD forums (City of Cape Town, 2013:10).

In Mitchells Plain, the ECD forum felt that the large number of unregistered ECD centres in their area negatively impacted on the safety of children and the forum actively engaged with City of Cape Town officials on this issue. They started a process to encourage officials to attend their forum meetings, to conduct on-site visits and to build trust between the principals and the City of Cape Town (City of Cape Town, 2015:21).

Franschhoek falls under the Stellenbosch Municipality. In their Draft ECD Policy 2017/2018, the municipality recognises that the ECD forums coordinate ECD centres at a community level and acts as a representative body. The policy states that “it is the responsibility of the forum to disseminate information among its members...” (Stellenbosch Municipality, n.d:18).

Provincial Government

The provincial DSD links to ECD forums in the same way in that they provide information to ECD centres through the forums. An ECD centre in Khayelitsha stated that occasionally the DSD social workers attend the forum meetings and use it as a platform to reach all the ECD centres in an area (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:253). Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:66) found that many of the ECD centres they assessed were under the impression that they are required, by DSD, to be part of an ECD forum. This is not the case and the DSD simply encourages centres to belong to a forum as this helps them communicate with ECD centres. Membership to an ECD forum is voluntary (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:66).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges

The College of Cape Town offers an ECD Learnership Programme. This programme offers NQF Level 4 and 5 ECD teacher training to untrained and unqualified individuals. The goal of this programme is to provide these individuals with a “defined career path in the ECD field” (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:200). The ECD Learnership Programme is distinct as individuals who enrol for the programme do not pay fees and in fact receive a stipend to assist with travel expenses and other study-related costs (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:200). The City of Cape Town consults ECD forums to share information about the programme to their network of teachers. The ECD forums also assist the College of Cape Town in their student selection process (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:205).

NPOs

ECD forums are increasingly becoming formal structures within communities. In many areas, NPOs and other ECD service providers have to consult with ECD forums before they can work with ECD

centres (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:248). ECD forums are seen as ‘gatekeepers’ between the ECD centres and NPOs. A research report compiled by the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) detailed 12 case studies of effective ECD programmes offered by organisations across the country. In these case studies the NPO community entry process was detailed and many stated that they worked with and/or through ECD forums. Table 2.2 below provides some examples of this.

Table 2.2: Examples of NPOs consulting ECD forums during ‘community entry’

Programme	Programme Description	Community Entry/Consultation
The Unlimited Child - ECD Programme	The Unlimited Child ECD Programme is an “integrated, rapid-impact model” used to educate and stimulate young children in KwaZulu-Natal (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:136).	“The Unlimited Child enters communities firstly by consulting with ECD forums and associations and through support from local and regional ECD coordinators” (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:140).
Ikamva Labantu - Principals Training Programme	This programme assists principals to meet the DSD norms and standards and it increases their leadership skills to effectively manage their ECD centres (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:183).	“Ikamva Labantu recruits participants through a consultative process with the local ECD forums in the respective areas. The forums play a supportive role in assisting the organisation to recruit and select ECD centres in the community to participate in the training programme” (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:188).
CECD - ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme	This project assists ECD centres in meeting the DSD minimum norms and standards for infrastructure (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:267).	“After identifying all existing ECD centres in an area, CECD organises community engagement sessions with the principals, usually via an ECD forum...” (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:271).

The downside to ECD forums being ‘gatekeepers’ is that they can control areas and ECD centres that are not part of the forum may not be able to access some resources. Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:67) also found that some forums were known for protectionism and fee-fixing.

Training Opportunities

Training opportunities for ECD principals and teachers are mostly advertised through ECD forums as forums are easily able to disseminate information (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore,

2017:253). The training opportunities usually come from TVET colleges, NPOs and local government. These institutions offer ECD qualifications and skills enrichment training. The training opportunities cover topics such as: classroom management, positive discipline, child nutrition, financial management, how to effectively use educational equipment and so forth. Being able to access training and education is seen as being of great value to forum members and is a “major drawcard for ECD centres to belong to a forum” (HSRC, 2015:38). Access to training is critical as it is estimated that 25 – 50% of ECD centre principals (and even more ECD teachers) have no ECD qualification and this negatively impacts on the quality of ECD that they offer (Viviers, Biersteker & Moruane, 2013:39).

Resource Leveraging

Because ECD forums develop relationships with external institutions, they play a critical role in leveraging resources for ECD centres. ECD forums identify the needs of ECD centres in their area and then engage stakeholders to provide support (HSRC, 2015:41). ECD forums are seen as powerful and as representing a collective which gives them legitimacy when approaching stakeholders for resources (HSRC, 2015:13).

Creating Connections between ECD Centres

Besides creating connections between ECD centres and external institutions, ECD forums build connections within and between ECD centres in a specific geographic area. ECD forums:

“...act as a catalyst for change in ECD practices as forum members share experiences, resources and tools, and best practice; they support each other as peers. The assumption is that change in ECD services can be initiated by intervening in and investing in ECD forums” (HSRC, 2015:15).

ECD forums create a space where principals can learn from one another and share best practices. ECD forum members are not only passive recipients of information, they actively share with each other and benefit from “collective knowledge and experience” (City of Cape Town, 2015:28) and this improves the overall quality of ECD in a given area (HSRC, 2015:10). The HSRC (2015:10) states that “creating binding linkages” between its members increases social cohesion and the impact of forums. The ECD forum members share with each other on a variety of topics, including child protection, staff development, ECD programming and how to comply with regulatory requirements. These topics are critical to enhancing early learning in ECD centres. The topics discussed in the meetings are based on what forum members see as pressing issues (HSRC, 2015:37).

At the ECD forum meetings, ECD centres also share the challenges they are experiencing and collectively seek solutions. For example, some ECD centres in a particular area did not have sufficient outdoor and indoor equipment. This challenge was resolved by the forum as members donated excess equipment and others allowed these ECD centres to use their facilities, where appropriate (HSRC, 2015:38). Similarly, ECD forums gauge the ‘level’ of centres in their area. They encourage and support the centres that are seen as being ‘behind’ to improve their service. This enhances the overall quality of early learning and care in the area (HSRC, 2015:30).

ECD forums also play a crucial role in assisting new ECD centres. They provide guidance and advice about how to manage and run an ECD centre (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:251). Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:34) looked at ECD centres that are small, and usually functioning out of a room in someone’s house. These centres are invisible to government because of their location and size, and many stated that “government does not come down to our level” (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:34). Unless this type of informal ECD centre is connected to a forum, they have no access to information regarding compliance requirements, government support and training opportunities (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:34). Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:67) also found that smaller ECD forums seem to work better than larger forums as they are able to operate more efficiently. Because ECD forums are social networks, they are formed on trust. Carter, Biersteker and Streak (200:67) explain that “natural bonds of trust required to keep these forums functional have natural limits” and the authors posit that around 15 members is likely to be this limit.

Community Activism

ECD forums promote community activism in their areas and the ECD sector in general. The HSRC (2015:11) stated that the value of ECD forums should not be limited to resource leveraging and funding, but they should be known for their ability to be leaders in their communities. A clear example of this is the leadership and activist role that the Khayelitsha ECD Forum plays. In November 2017, the Khayelitsha ECD Forum marched to the DSD district office in Cape Town. More than 120 ECD forum members attended the march and demanded that the DSD consult with them when making policies that have an impact on ECD (Cawe, 2017). The forum handed over a memorandum of demands that included a call for a change to the norms and standards for registration as a partial care facility and an ECD subsidy increase (from R15 to R18 per child per day). The public relations officer for the forums stated that “the current meagre R15 subsidy per child per day is a disgrace” (Cawe, 2017).

The Khayelitsha ECD Forum is often consulted by the media on issues relating to ECD. For example, the forum spoke out about the death of toddlers in the area when a five year old child was raped and stabbed to death in Makhaza. The forum pressed government to put in place strict penalties against individuals guilty of abusing and killing women and children (Obose, 2018). The chairperson of the Siyaqhubeka ECD Area Forum stated that, “as the Khayelitsha ECD Forum we want the courts to ensure that the perpetrator rots in jail” (Obose, 2018).

Many ECD principals and teachers are members of the South African Congress for ECD (SACECD). The SACECD lobbies government to keep ECD issues on the agenda and to “maintain [SACECD's] involvement with ECD policy development processes to ensure that South African children have access to quality ECD services” (SACECD, 2013). The organisation organises peaceful protests and annual rallies to raise concerns in the ECD sector (SACECD, 2013). In 2011, the SACECD organised a march with 2000 ECD teachers, calling for “the immediate implementation of the Children’s act and an end to the ‘marginalisation’ of the ECD sector (Sitole, 2011).

2.8 Summary

Through reviewing the literature, it is clear that there is insufficient research on the role and functions of ECD forums and how these forums strengthen ECD centres in the Western Cape. Thus, it is intended that this research study explores the topic. The theoretical framework provides an understanding of ECD forums in terms of human development, building capabilities, community development and systems theory. The ECD policy and legislation provides the broader context, challenges and contestations within the sector. This chapter looked at the role of community forums in general and then specifically at ECD forums in terms of why they emerged, how they operate and the role that they play within their geographic areas. The following chapter provides an overview of the design and methodology used for the research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Methodology refers to the approach that the researcher uses to conduct a research study. The methodology that one chooses to use is influenced by the overall purpose of the research. This chapter sets out the methodology used for this research study and discusses the research design, the sampling approach used, how the data was collected, how the data was analysed, data verification and limitations to the research.

3.2 Research Design

Due to the nature of the research topic, an exploratory, qualitative research design was used. Exploratory research studies lead to comprehension and insight into a topic rather than generalisable data; this is in line with the purpose of this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:80). The purpose of the research is to explore the role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. Babbie and Mouton (2007:270) state that the main goal of qualitative research is to describe and understand rather than to explain human behaviour. Furthermore, a qualitative research design "...is in-depth ('thick') descriptions and understanding of actions..." (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:270). Similarly, the purpose of the research study was to gain in-depth insight into how ECD forums originate, their functioning and the role they play in promoting community development as well as strengthening ECD centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek.

3.3 Methodology

This section outlines the research sample, data collection and data analysis.

3.3.1 Sampling

Sampling Considerations

Gaining entry into the field of research can be difficult and the success of qualitative research often lies in the "...accessibility of the setting" (De Vos et al., 1998:258). There were several steps to gaining entry into the context in which the study was undertaken. The researcher works for CECD, which is a NPO that works closely with ECD forum stakeholders. Specifically, CECD fieldworkers work closely with the ECD forums and principals. Through their knowledge, the researcher was able to make contact with gatekeepers in the community. Using CECD's database, the researcher made contact with ECD forum members (including the 'management' of the forums and the

principals) to ascertain if they would be willing to take part in the study. If the individual was willing, a time and date for the interview was decided upon.

Sampling Approach

The sampling approach used for this research was non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is conducted without the intention of randomisation (De Vos et al., 1998:195). Within non-probability sampling, there are various categories and this research study used purposive, non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgmental sampling as the sample is selected based on one's own knowledge, its elements and the nature of the research objectives. Babbie and Mouton (2007:166) states that purposive sampling is "...based on your judgement and the purpose of the study." Thus, the stakeholders who were involved in ECD forums were selected as the sample as they have local knowledge and insight into the topic.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher looked at two ECD forums – the Khayelitsha ECD Forum (and its area forums) and the Franschhoek ECD Forum. These two ECD forums were chosen to focus on in order to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding into the role of the ECD forums in these two communities. Looking at these two forums allowed the researcher to contrast the way in which the forums promote community development and strengthen centres in areas with different contexts and demographics. To gain a good understanding of the research topic, data was collected from three stakeholder groups that are involved with these ECD forums: the 'management' of the ECD forums, ECD principals who are part of the forum (these two groups overlapped at times) and development workers from ECD service providers who conduct their work through the forums. Seventeen participants were selected according to their availability and appropriateness.

The breakdown is as follows:

- 2 x development workers who conduct their work through ECD forums
- 6 x Franschhoek ECD centre principals (one is currently part of the management and one participant was the previous chairperson)
- 9 x Khayelitsha ECD centre principals (two participants are part of the management committee, one was a previous chairperson and one participant is a founding members of the ECD forum)

3.3.2 Data Collection

Data Collection Approach

Data collection can be defined as "a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions" (Creswell, 1998:111). Babbie and Mouton

(2007:288) state that the most frequently used method of data collection in qualitative research is individual interviews. As mentioned above, data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Babbie and Mouton (2007:289) describe these interviews as “an open interview which allows the object of study to speak for him/her/itself ... is characterised by being flexible, iterative and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone.” This type of interview allows the researcher to arrange the interview around the area of study and, importantly, it allows for flexibility, scope and depth (De Vos et al., 2005:348). The use of face-to-face interviews to gain data is in line with the purpose of the study which is to explore the role of ECD centres in promoting community development and strengthening ECD centres.

Face-to-face interviews were also decided upon after a discussion with one of CECD’s fieldworkers. A focus group with principals who are part of the ECD forum was going to be one of the tools to collect data. The fieldworker explained that principals may not speak honestly about the role of the forums in their community in front of one another out of fear that if they said something negative about the forum, it would ‘get back to’ the forum and that this could impact on the support they receive from the forum. This concern from the CECD fieldworker talks to the power of the forums and this was explored with the principals in the face-to-face interviews.

Data Collection Tool

Due to the fact that the data for the research was collected using face-to-face interviews, the data collection tool was a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix II). A semi-structured interview schedule can be defined as a “...set of predetermined questions...appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain” (De Vos et al., 2005:350). The interview schedule was piloted to ascertain what changes needed to be made to the tool before the actual interviews were conducted.

Data Collection Apparatus

De Vos et al (2005: 298) explain that where possible, the use of a tape recorder to record interviews is beneficial as it allows the researcher to concentrate more and for a fuller record than note taking. The data collection apparatus used for this research study was a cell phone recorder. The use of the cell phone recorder enabled the researcher to record the interview and thus, be more focused and attentive during the actual interview.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be defined as “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (De Vos et al., 2005:333). Due to the fact that this research study is qualitative in nature, the data was analysed by using De Vos et al’s (1998:343-344) adaption of Tesch’s data analysis approach. Table 3.1 below details the data analysis steps that were used, according to Tesch’s approach.

Table 3.1: Data analysis (De Vos et al., 2005: 343-344)

Data Analysis Steps	Description	Steps Taken in this Research Study
Step 1	In this step, the researcher transcribes the interviews and reads the transcripts in order to gain an overall sense of the collected data.	Each interview was accurately transcribed and from this format, each transcript was read through.
Step 2	In step 2, the researcher selects one interview transcription and asks, “What is this about?” and thinks about the underlying meaning of the information.	The researcher did this and wrote down notes on the emerging meaning of the data.
Step 3	After reading through the transcriptions and exploring the meaning of the data, the researcher develops a list of all themes.	The researcher compiled a list of themes that came out of reviewing the data.
Step 4	In this step, the researcher applies the themes to the data by coding the text. De Vos et al (2005:411) states that the main task of coding is to “...identity and label relevant categories or topics of data.”	The researcher coded the text according to the main themes, categories and subcategories. The researcher also looked out for any new, emerging categories during this process.
Step 5	The researcher develops descriptive wording for the themes, categories and subcategories. The researcher also groups similar categories together.	The researcher decreased the list of categories by grouping some together.
Step 6	In step 6, the researcher makes a final decision regarding the categories and codes.	The categories were analysed, refined and decide upon so that the coding framework could be created.
Step 7	The content of each theme and category is gathered into one place so that a preliminary analysis can be done.	The content was assembled according to the coding framework. This allowed the researcher to make sense of the data and to analyse it.

Step 8	The researcher recodes the information, if necessary.	The researcher recoded the data where it was necessary.
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The framework that was used to analyse the findings of this research is outlined in Chapter 4 (Table 5) under the ‘framework for analysis’ section. Direct quotations from the interviews are used to illustrate the various themes and categories and to link the collected data back to the reviewed literature.

3.4 Limitations of this Study

This section discusses the limitations of the research study namely, the research design and the data collection approach.

As has been mentioned previously, the research design for this study is qualitative. A limitation to the qualitative research design is that it is not generalisable. Qualitative research data cannot be generalised to the greater population and cannot be used to comment on it as a whole. This is because of the nature of qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative research is not its ability to be generalisable (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). Despite this limitation, a qualitative research design is appropriate as the focus of this research study is to gain insight into and explore the role of ECD forums within Khayelitsha and Franschhoek rather than to generalise.

A second limitation of this research study is the chosen data collection approach that is to conduct face-to-face interviews. The researcher’s subjective opinions and biases can impact on the face-to-face interviews. To counteract this, the researcher needs to be aware of her own biases as this is a way to ensure that biases do not impact on the data gathering process. Linked to data gathering is the quality of the research; this is dependent on the skills and ability of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:291). Not having the appropriate skills to extract meaningful data is a limitation of this approach. Another limitation that is linked to the interviewing process is that there are possible practical limitations. For example, the interview can be disrupted which would break the flow of the interview. The researcher, as far as possible, avoided disruptions during the interviews. This was a challenge at times as many of the interviews were conducted in ECD centres which are busy and interruptions were unavoidable. In addition, the use of an audio recording device can be seen as obtrusive (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). It may make the participant feel uncomfortable and could limit the data that is gained from that interview. The researcher used her interview skills to make the participant feel as comfortable as possible with the recording device.

3.5 Data Verification

When conducting qualitative research, the issue of objectivity arises. Babbie and Mouton (2007:276) state that this comes down to the trustworthiness (the neutrality) of the findings. There are four criteria to verify the trustworthiness of the data: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the ability to ensure that the participants have been "...accurately identified and described" (De Vos et al., 2005:420). Credibility aims to make sure that there is congruence between the realities of the participants and how these are attributed to them in the research study. One way to ensure this is 'referential adequacy' in which an audio recorder can be used. In this study, a device was used. Moreover, the process of 'peer debriefing' can be used to ensure credibility. This is when a peer outside of the research takes on a 'devil's advocate' position in order to critically look at one's data and data collection tool (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). The researcher provided her data and semi-structured interview schedule to her peers and dissertation supervisor to examine.

The second criterion is transferability that looks at whether the research findings can 'transfer' to other cases. Qualitative research and its lack of generalisability is seen as a weakness. However, De Vos et al (2005:420) state that one can challenge this weakness by referring back to the theoretical framework and thus show how the collection of data and its analysis is guided by the framework. The use of the framework indicates the boundaries of the research. Purposive sampling, which is in contrast to random sampling that quantitative data uses, aims to maximise the range of specific information about the objectives of the study by purposefully selecting certain participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). The data collection and analysis in this research study are grounded in theory.

Dependability is the third criterion. Dependability deals with whether the same or similar results would occur were the research to be repeated (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:278). This is difficult in qualitative research as phenomenon, and interpretations thereof, change. The researcher needs to account for the ever-changing social environment in which the research took place (De Vos et al., 2005:346). In order to ensure this, the researcher thoroughly detailed the research context and the research methodology.

The fourth criterion is confirmability that looks at to what degree the findings is a result of inquiry and not the bias of the researcher. Confirmability can be ensured through the examination of the

raw data, data reduction and analysis, process notes, material relating to intentions and instrument development (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:278). For this research study, this criterion was ensured through discussions on the findings with the dissertation supervisors. All data collection and analysis process steps were detailed so that a paper audit could be conducted to ensure confirmability.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design and methodology. It looked at the research design, which was qualitative, and how this relates to the sampling and the data collection approach used. It outlined how the research data was analysed and verified and examined the limitations. The following chapter provides a presentation, discussion and analysis of the main findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the profile of the participants who took part in this study. Due to confidentiality, the participants are not named. Instead, they will be referred to as ‘participant’ throughout this research report. The chapter outlines the framework used to present and discuss the main findings of this study. The main findings of the research study are presented and discussed with reference to the existing literature on the topic.

4.2 Profile of Participants

Table 4.1 below details the profile of each participant interviewed.

Table 4.1: Research participants

Participant	Location	Position	Experience
Participant 1	Franschhoek	- Principal	- Has been a principal for two years - Previously worked at an old age home
Participant 2	Franschhoek	- Principal	- Has been a principal for three years - Before that, worked as a Family in Focus outreach worker
Participant 3	Franschhoek	- Principal - Secretary of the ECD forum	- Has been a principal for five years - Worked at another ECD centre before that
Participant 4	Franschhoek	- Principal	- Has been a principal for six years
Participant 5	Franschhoek	- Principal - Previous chairperson of the forum	- Has been a principal for 10 years - Chairperson of the forum for two years
Participant 6	Franschhoek	- Principal	- Has been a principal for four months
Participant 7	Khayelitsha	- Principal - On the committee of the area forum	- Has been a principal for 16 years
Participant 8	Khayelitsha	- Principal	- Has been a principal for three years - Volunteer at Philippi Primary School
Participant 9	Khayelitsha	- Principal - Deputy chairperson of the area forum	- Has been a principal for nine years

Participant 10	Khayelitsha	- Principal	- Has been a principal for four years
Participant 11	Khayelitsha	- Principal - Founding member of an ECD forum	- Has been a principal for 32 years
Participant 12	Khayelitsha	- Principal	- Has been a principal for 10 years
Participant 13	Khayelitsha	- Principal - Previous chairperson of the area forum	- Has been a principal for 12 years
Participant 14	Khayelitsha	- Deputy principal	- Has had this position for 11 years
Participant 15	Khayelitsha	- Principal	- Has been a principal for 15 years
Participant 16	Works in the Northern Cape and Western Cape	- Development worker at an ECD service provider	- Has worked in the ECD field for nine years - Conducts training, needs assessments and mentoring and support for ECD principals and teachers
Participant 17	Works in the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape	- Development worker at an ECD service provider	- Has worked in the ECD field for 10 years - Conducts training, needs assessments and mentoring and support for ECD principals and teachers

4.3 Framework of Analysis

Table 4.2 below presents the framework of analysis for this research study.

Table 4.2: Framework of analysis

Theme	Category	Subcategory
<i>Emergence of ECD forums</i>	Influence of external institutions	
	Influence of communities	
<i>Governance of ECD forums</i>	Management committee	
	Membership	
	Communication with ECD forum members	a. Meetings
		b. WhatsApp
	Training	
<i>Role of ECD forums</i>	Creating connections with external institutions	a. Local government
		b. Provincial government
		c. NPOs
		d. Training opportunities

	Creating connections between ECD centres	a. Area forums linked to overarching forum
		b. Information, advice and guidance
		c. Set the standard for ECD provision
		d. Resources
	Community activism	
<i>Challenges and Recommendations</i>	Challenges	a. Internal 'politics'
		b. Unequal division of resources
	Recommendations	a. Consolidated planning
		b. Dedicated forum management

4.4 Findings

This section presents and discusses the findings of the research study. The research findings are examined in accordance with the above 'framework for analysis' table.

4.4.1 The Emergence of ECD Forums

In analysing the research data, the emergence of ECD forums in Franschhoek and Khayelitsha is discussed in two categories: the influence of external institutions and the influence of the community in setting up forums.

Influence of external institutions

One of the principals from Franschhoek explained that the Franschhoek ECD forum emerged in 2005 due to the influence of an external institution, in this case, a NPO working in the area. This principal was the first chairperson of the forum.

Participant 5: Non-profit organisations call us together and then we set up a meeting and then they decide we must have a forum and then we start with the forum...It's also non-profit organisations that invest in the ECD forum. So then I was chosen as the first chairperson for the ECD for Franschhoek.

Over the last 13 years, the membership of this forum has grown significantly.

Participant 5: It was just a couple of them, I think six or seven crèches....At this stage, I think it's twenty-four.

In Khayelitsha, one of the smaller area forums was also initiated by a NPO operating in the area.

Participant 7: I'm the part of the bigger one, but I'm not executive there, I'm the executive in the other forum, at Ikamva Labantu, yes, also here in Khayelitsha, but it's also working with ECDs, yes, but it was formed by Helen Lieberman.

Helen Lieberman is one of the founding members of Ikamva Labantu, an NPO that operates in Khayelitsha. One of the participants, who works for an ECD NPO, explained that her organisation had set up ECD forums in rural areas when they found that there was no forum. They initiated the forum as a way for isolated ECD centres to connect with each other and access information. The NPO has also found working with forums to be an efficient way to communicate with all the ECD centres in an area. This is a motivating factor for starting ECD forums in areas that do not have one.

Participant 17: In most of those areas in Cape Town, I would say, actually have forums. It's just the rural areas and information is scarce to them, so it's even worse, and what we've tried to do is, we've tried to kind of connect ECD centres in those type of areas so that they could share information. In fact, in... I think it's in the Northern Cape, we've actually tried to collaborate a forum with other ECD centres in the Northern Cape, because it's non-existent there. So we've actually tried to do that, and they allow them to communicate via WhatsApp so they get more information.

Participant 17: I've had in the past, where I probably had to go to twenty ECD centres in one area, and I could actually tell them, you guys, you're having a forum meeting next week, instead of me coming to each and every single ECD centre...I needed to see the principals actually, I could actually get them at the forum meeting and do everything, you know, there.

ECD forums being established by external institutions does happen in other areas. Carter, Biersteker and Steak (2008:67) found that two ECD forums in the Western Cape that they researched were formed by donor organisations. Similarly, an ECD forum in Johannesburg was initiated in 2002 by a local government department (STALK, 2003). Plastrik and Taylor (2006:50) warn against an external institution establishing a forum as it may prevent it from emerging and operating in a community-driven way. The external institution may also wield undue influence over the governance of the forum and will impair the empowering, community development nature of such forums (Plastrik & Taylor, 2006:50). The influence of external institutions can be seen in the comment below. Participant 5 was the first chairperson of the Franschhoek forum and at that time had to give feedback about the ECD forum to the NPO that established it.

Participant 5: *You know, it was really difficult by that time, they didn't assist us financially, but with the information that they've got and the feedback that we'll have to give to them, they will decide on how we do it and what we're going to do, and so once a month there was a representative that sit in for them, and so we'll have to give feedback to that representative and they will discuss it on their term, and then they will come back and discuss it with us, and so we'll have to give feedback to the forum.*

The process of establishing the forum in Franschhoek can be seen as disempowering to some degree as the community did not set it up and the NPO continued to play a major role in decision-making. An external institution establishing a community forum does not have to be disempowering if this is done in the correct manner. The leadership and management of the forum must be run by community members and the forum needs to be independent from control or influence by external organisations (HSRC, 2015:6).

Influence of communities

In looking at the influence of communities on forming ECD forums, the establishment of the ECD forums operating in Khayelitsha is relevant.

Participant 11: *We had lots of problems in the ECDs. Especially with the churches and the white people coming to Khayelitsha, and they take our centres over to them. We have started this from grassroots, so they want our... when they see there's crèches in Khayelitsha, they wanted to take them, but there were not so many centres in Khayelitsha at that time. We decided that we must get together and fight the problems that are affecting us. We organised the forum, it was here in my place where we started the forum, and I was just a member... It was in 1985...at that time, the forum was really active.*

Participant 16: *They all started informally a long time ago, but with no direction. But it's only now that they also know that they have to have an NPO, they have to register, they have to have a committee. But before, it was just the principal who come together and just talk about their issues.*

The HSRC (2015:6) states that community forums in South Africa are essential as they offer a space for communities to discuss issues and reach consensus on how to solve them. This is reflected in the ECD forum in Khayelitsha as it first emerged in 1985 as a way to collectively fight against the challenges they were facing at the time and to discuss shared issues. The HSRC (2015:30) and Carter, Biersteker and Steak (2008:67) found that many ECD forums in South Africa are started by the community themselves.

4.4.2 Governance of ECD Forums

In terms of the governance of ECD forums, there is little literature on this specific topic. For this theme, four main categories emerged: the management committee, membership, communication with ECD forum members and training.

Management committee

ECD forums are often formalised structures that are governed by a constitution (City of Cape Town, 2013:9; HSRC, 2015:35). The majority of the participants, from both Franschhoek and Khayelitsha, and the participants from ECD NPOs, indicated that the structure of the ECD forum is formalised and that they have a management committee in place. They also stated that they are guided by a constitution.

Participant 4: *It's a chairperson and treasurer and secretary and the Board members, they come after these people, but they are working together. Yes, they are working together, and then the EXCO members, is only the chairperson and the secretary and the treasurer, without the Board members.*

Participant 7: *It's that lady [public relations office] and chairperson, vice chairperson, organiser, secretary, vice secretary, and a treasurer. It has a constitution.*

Participant 16: *They have a committee, they have a constitution and they're most.. they're NPOs.*

Participant 17: *I would say they have a proper.. they actually follow a proper system so they would have, you know, they'll actually have a proper governing body in their forum.*

Participant 5 from Franschhoek was previously the chairperson of the ECD forum. She provided a verbal overview of the various management committee positions and their respective roles and responsibilities. This is reflected in Table 4.3 below. The committee is usually made up of nine ECD centre principals and the office terms are two years.

Participant 4: *...there are nine people for the Board members, including the secretary and the chairperson and everybody.*

Participant 3: *It's [office term] two years.*

Table 4.3: Structure of Franschhoek management committee (Participant 5)

Position	Roles and responsibility
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The chairperson meets with the board.• The chairperson is the forum's link to other NPOs.• The chairperson provides information about meetings and relevant

	training opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chairperson helps ECD centres with their documentation to become registered as a partial care facility.
Deputy Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deputy chairperson has a similar role to the chairperson. • She/he “<i>evaluates everything with the chairperson.</i>”
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secretary is in charge of all the correspondence with the ECD centres, stakeholders and government. • The secretary writes letters on behalf of the ECD centres where necessary. • The secretary also determines the needs of the centres. For example, the secretary will check what equipment is needed at each centre.
Vice Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vice secretary provides support to the secretary and ensures that everything is in place.
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The treasurer is in charge of the finances of the ECD forum, including fundraising. • The treasurer deals with the income and expenditure. • The treasurer is in charge of organising transport and catering for ECD forum members.
Additional Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional members are in charge of anything else that comes up. For example, they will “<i>check the venue [for training] is ready.</i>” • There are usually four additional members.

Khayelitsha has area specific ECD forums (ECD forums for Site B, Site C and so forth) that are part of a greater, Khayelitsha ECD Forum. The population size of Khayelitsha means that it has to have smaller ECD forums in order to reach the number of ECD centres operating in the area. Participant 9 is the deputy chairperson of an area forum in Khayelitsha. She explained the structure of the overarching Khayelitsha ECD Forum and indicated that the governance structures of the smaller area forums would be the same. Table 4.4 records the forum positions and their roles and responsibilities.

Table 4.4: Structure of Khayelitsha management committee (Participant 9)

Position	Roles and responsibility
Public Relations Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Relations Officer (PRO) oversees all functioning of the forum. • The PRO approaches and liaises with sponsors. • The PRO approaches government departments (DSD, DBE and Department of Health) on behalf of the ECD forum and ECD centres.
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chairperson is responsible for the administrative functioning of the forum. • The chairperson determines the needs of the ECD centres that are members. • The chairperson liaises with other networks.
Deputy Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deputy chairperson takes the place of the chairperson if they are absent. • The deputy chairperson supports the chairperson.

Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The treasurer, along with the PRO, is in charge of all fundraising activities. • The treasurer is responsible for oversight of all the finances of the ECD forum.
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secretary writes and compiles the minutes from all the meetings. • The secretary drafts the agendas for the meetings. • She develops the necessary registers. • The secretary also works with the finance committee and provides them with support where needed.
Deputy Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deputy secretary steps in when the secretary is absent.
Organiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organiser sets up the venue for meetings and relevant trainings.
Additional Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional members are around to step in where needed. • They also step in if another committee member drops out. • The additional members are also part of the decision-making.

Participants from Khayelitsha explained the relationship between the management of the overarching ECD forum and the smaller, area forums. The details of the relationship between these forums are discussed in more detail in section ‘4.4.3 The Role of ECD Forums’.

Participant 7: *We have got a big forum, it's called Khayelitsha Early Childhood Development Forum. And also from that forum, we've got branches like Site C, Khayelitsha Site B, Nkanini, [Kuyasa] eZwezwe...*

Participant 9: *Yes. Big forum, they assist us. They tell our chairpersons when they have information... So the chairpersons take that report then to us.*

Participant 16: *What they do, because Khayelitsha is big, and because the areas have got different areas, so the principal from Site B, they will meet in Site B, maybe on a Monday, Khayelitsha Macaassar all over. And then when there is a general meeting for everybody, each and every person, whether you are the member of Site B forum, you also come to the big forum.*

The participants also indicated the different sizes of the forums. The Franschhoek ECD forum is made up of 24 ECD centres and the Khayelitsha ECD forum is made up of “...two hundred or so...” (Participant 13) ECD centres. The forums cater for both registered and unregistered centres. The size of smaller area forums differs from forum to forum.

Participant 8: *You can say maybe it's twenty-five or thirty. Yes, registered and unregistered.*

Participant 12: *Thirteen*

Participant 13: *It's fifteen*

Participant 14: *It's about thirteen, around there. Unregistered and registered.*

Membership

Being a registered ECD centre is not a criterion for membership for either the Khayelitsha or Franschhoek ECD forums. This is critical as many participants stated that becoming registered is one of their biggest challenges.

Participant 3: Because we also have the problems of the springing up crèches and stuff...people struggling with the registration, but they can't throw the children away, because there's a lot of children coming in...

Participant 8: Okay, some of the challenges they talk about, mm. Fire. Some of them, their centres are in the shack, so it's difficult to be registered. It's those things. And then the fire [inspector] doesn't give them the certificate, even if they've got those things they need... Because most of the people, they've got their centres in a shack, it's difficult for them.

Participant 16: The challenges when it comes to that, the ECD, it's the registration process with the Department of Social Development. The centres are struggling to get registered. The infrastructure is a big challenge. Most of the centres are home-based centres, so it's like someone's house, and then she started the ECD centre. Now she find it difficult that she must move out of the centre, because she cannot put the children at the back of the house, because it's a Wendy house, the law doesn't allow that.

This challenge is reflected in the literature as it states that many ECD centres in impoverished areas are unable to meet the minimum norms and standards for infrastructure for registration as partial care facilities. Many ECD centres have inadequate sanitation, no running water and no fence around the property to provide security for the children (Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper, 2012:129). Registration is a prerequisite for accessing the ECD subsidy of R15 per child per day (the Children's Amendment Act No.41 of 2007, 2007: 17). Without the subsidy, ECD centres struggle to be financially sustainable (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:267).

In order to become a member of the ECD forum, an ECD centre must: operate in the relevant geographic area, fill in an application form and pay a joining fee. Once it has joined the forum, a centre needs to pay an annual membership fee. In Khayelitsha, the principals pay a fee for both their area forum and for the Khayelitsha ECD Forum. The HSRC (2015:35) also found that the ECD forums they researched had a joining fee for new members and an annual membership amount.

Participant 2: *Yes. For joining, you have to fill in a form, that is an agreement, then you're going to be for the year. So every year, you need to fill in a form. So okay, so I did do that, and a registration for money was R50 that time...and R100 a quarter, so it's R400 per year. R450 a year.*

Participant 5: *Yes, it's R50 for registration and it's R100 per quarter.*

Participant 7: *You that you pay R500 to join the forum, to be the member of the forum. In the bigger forum. In the small forum, you also join with R100 per year.*

Participant 12: *I'll start with the bigger one, the umbrella body, it's a big forum with the different ECD centres from the whole Khayelitsha. So when you go there, you need to be a member, must have a joining fee to be a member.*

Two of the participants from Khayelitsha stated that the membership fees can be a challenge for principals of unregistered ECD centres as they may not be able to afford them and, therefore, cannot access the benefits of being part of an ECD forum.

Participant 10: *And if you didn't pay that money, they won't work for you. If you have a problem, they won't assist you. They said you are not a member...which it's not fair because some, they are not registered yet, they are still struggling to register, so they don't have this big monies.*

Participant 8: *At the moment, I didn't join the bigger one because you have to pay that R500s first. In this one [the area forum] you pay R200. Then I joined this one, then I didn't join the 500's.*

Communication with ECD forum members

There are two main ways in which ECD forums communicate with their members: through meetings and through WhatsApp.

Meetings

The HSRC (2015:30) found that the ECD forums they studied met once a month. This also emerged in this research study. When asked how often their ECD forum met, this is what some of the participants said:

Participant 2: *Once a month.*

Participant 4: *We meet once a month. The last week of the month, like for instance now next week on the 28th, we're going to have it there.*

Participant 7: *...once a month.*

Participant 9: *We meet on a monthly basis, unless it is a special meeting.*

Participant 10: *We meet once a month. Sometimes when there's something that we need to.. maybe to solve a problem, maybe once a week. Maybe the problem we are facing as ECDs, then we need to sort that.. maybe someone has a problem that maybe doesn't receive funds from DSD, then we meet often.*

The participants from Khayelitsha (Participant 7, 9 and 10) indicated that their ECD forums may meet more than once a month if a special meeting is called or if a pressing issue arises such as not receiving the ECD subsidy on time from the DSD.

WhatsApp

It was also found that ECD forums mostly use WhatsApp to communicate with one another between the monthly meetings.

Participant 7: *...because if there's a problem, and someone can't get something...we've got a group there, then you write a message on the group and.. I've got this kind of problem, if it's a very urgent one, if you can't wait for that day we meet, then you just say it on the group chat.*

Participant 10: *... we've got a WhatsApp group now, so it's where we update others.*

Participant 15: *Yes, and we've also got a group, WhatsApp group, and they tell if there is something quickly we must sort it out.*

Training

A recommendation of the HSRC (2015:114) study on ECD forums is that the leadership of the forums need to be strengthened through capacity building. They need training on governance and management. This will enhance their sustainability and effectiveness (HSRC, 2015:114). Findings from this study support this recommendation. Participant 5 explains that she received no training on how to be a chairperson. Participant 12 and 16 state the need for training of the management committees.

Participant 5: *For me, it was really difficult, because I didn't know what it was, by that time, to be a chairperson. And I didn't have a clue how to start and how to do things. So it was really difficult, it was a tough time for me, for the first time, and I really didn't understand what it is to be a chairperson of the forum.*

Participant 12: *I think the forums need to be equipped, like sort of knowing exactly what to do, yes. Sometimes, I think that's the main problem they face. If they could understand exactly the need of the*

forum. Because it's not just accepting the information and then that's it. I think there's more things that we should be doing to equip the forum.

Participant 16: ...if there's a problem, you don't have to look in one side you have to look... and you have to come up with a solution. So you don't take sides. That is a lack, they need more training on that, because when we look at the forum committees like she's a friend and then a friend and... I think they need more training, as the committees of the forum.

In the Western Cape, the need for training on the management of ECD forums has been recognised by the City of Cape Town. They funded training for ECD forum management on governance, leadership, fundraising and financial management. The City of Cape Town wants to empower ECD forums to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness (City of Cape Town, 2015:28).

4.4.3 The Role of ECD Forums

This section presents the findings on the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. Three main categories emerged in terms of the role they play: creating connections with external institutions, creating connections between ECD centres and community activism.

Creating connections with external institutions

This section details the role that ECD forums play in developing connections between ECD centres and external institutions. This research study found that ECD forums develop connections with local government, provincial government, NPOs, and link ECD centres to outside training opportunities.

This finding is important as creating links between government, NPOs and ECD centres is critical for sustainable ECD services to be scaled up across South Africa. Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:30) detail a model for the sustainable scaling up of ECD services that is made up of four main components. One of these components is “links and relationships between the state, NGOs and ECD centres” (Carter, Biersteker & Streak, 2008:30). This research study found that ECD forums play a critical role in facilitating these relationships.

Sen's capabilities approach is centred on enhancing people's capabilities and a capability is defined as the “substantive freedoms people enjoy that permit them to lead the kind of life they have reason to value, such as social functioning, better basic education and health care, and longevity” (Kanbur & Squire, 2001:192). Ansari, Munir and Gregg (2012:815) posit that building capabilities is

difficult in poor communities as they are isolated from much needed resources and do not have the collective action required to access resources and enhance their capabilities. Building social capital in communities is one way to achieve development goals. Social capital is needed for community development and creates the bridge between poor communities and the resources available to them through external institutions (Ansari, Munir & Gregg, 2012:815). This research study found that ECD forums facilitate these relationships and the discussion that follows illustrates this.

Local government

The participants from Franschhoek and Khayelitsha indicated that there is a strong connection between the ECD forums and local government.

Participant 2: *That is Funeka [from the local municipality], so she don't come to the crèches, she come to the forums, and when there's new information about how to get money and stuff like that, then she come to the forum...*

Participant 8: *Because when you are joining the forum, they told you that if you join the forum, you are going to get.. if the City of Cape Town is giving you something, then you are going to get the part on those things. I did get the mattress from them. What else? And the two fire extinguisher. That's the only thing I get from City of Cape Town, through the forum.*

Participant 12: *There was other time where the municipality, they provided cleaning stuff. So what they do, they just brought the things at the bigger forum, and then from that forum, the bigger forum will contact the smaller forum's heads, and then look at it and see if.. is there any centres that needs assistance.*

Participant 12: *So with working with them, we've got information, so they equip the forum if they've got something that they need to share, the rules that they need to share, they go to the forum and spread the word there, whereby everybody is there. And then from there, we've got area forums.*

The comments above show that the connection between local government and ECD forums is two-fold. Firstly, local government relays important information for ECD centres through the forum structures. This relationship is reflected in the literature as van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore (2017:253) found that City of Cape Town officials disseminate relevant information to ECD centres by attending ECD forum meetings. Similarly, the Stellenbosch Municipality explicitly states that the role of ECD forums is to circulate information to its members. Secondly, local government provides resources, for example fire extinguishers, to the ECD forums who then distribute them to the ECD centres that are in need.

Provincial government

This study has found that there is a strong link between provincial government and ECD forums. Specifically, the participants discussed the relationship between the forums and provincial DSD. Van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper and Atmore (2017:253) explain that the provincial government uses the ECD forums as a mechanism to distribute information. It has been found that provincial government does this in two ways. Firstly, they attend the ECD forum meetings and update principals at these meetings and secondly, they contact the chairperson of the forum who then relays important information to the other members. This is reflected in the comments below.

Participant 5: So I did have a meeting with the social workers once a month with the stakeholders meeting in Paarl. So I went once a month to Paarl and give feedback with the other crèches. And so I link with them, and all the information that they sent through, was through me, to the crèches. Then I report back from the crèches side to the social workers.

Participant 10: It is, because when you receive maybe the news from DSD, they don't update sometimes all of us, and all of us maybe we don't have emails, so they send the messages to the chairperson, so the chairperson... we've got a WhatsApp group now, so it's where we update others, by WhatsApp, that we have to meet somewhere and submit maybe the progress report on the claim form.

Participant 11: The chairperson will be.. maybe she will have a message from the Department of Social Development. Then what is.. the chairperson will do, she will have to contact the area forum chairperson and pass the message. So it passes very easy, because it's from the bigger forum to the smaller ones. And then it's easy for.. because it make it easy than calling everybody in Khayelitsha.

It is clear that the ECD forums play the essential role of connecting ECD centres and provincial government structures. ECD forums provide an efficient platform for the distribution of important information. This platform is significant given the high numbers of unregistered ECD centres (Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper, 2012:129). Unregistered ECD centres are not on the provincial database but by being part of an ECD forum, they are able to access critical information about the sector. Another finding of this study is that provincial government also uses ECD forum meetings as a space to offer advice and support, rather than visiting each ECD centre. An example of this is provided by participants from Franschhoek and Khayelitsha. This finding is new and did not come through in the reviewed literature.

Participant 4: *Like for instance the organisations who, like the people for the ECDs, like the Social Development, even them, they come to our forum, and then they suggest to us what do we have to do, what we are not allowed to do...*

Participant 8: *Especiallly Social Development come a lot to us, and explain to us what.. the things we are supposed to have in order to be registered. And they even ask us how far we are, in order to be registered.*

NPOs

All of the participants highlighted the connection between NPOs and ECD forums. In the literature it was found that most NPOs consult with ECD forums before they start work in the area with the ECD centres (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:248). The ECD forums are seen as ‘gatekeepers’ in the community. This point is reflected by the two participants who work for ECD NPOs. Both participants indicated that they would approach ECD forums before they begin a project, to introduce the objectives and intended participants of the project and to source information from the forums regarding the ECD centres in the area.

Participant 16: *We come in contact with the forum if we have a new project that we want to roll out in a particular area... We phone and set up the meeting and say, when are they having their next forum meeting, and then they will tell us, and then we will come and introduce us, as an organisation... And we tell them about the project what we want to roll out. We tell them about the objectives and also we'll be specific, how many centres we want to work with, if it's registered or unregistered, so we know. And they also know who's going to benefit or not benefit.*

Participant 17: *Okay, so if we go into an area, and I want to work with the ECD centres in the area, I would actually go first to DSD, if they're in the area, and just enquire by them, and then they would actually tell me, look, there is a forum, who's the Chairperson, and then I'll go and see the forum first. I won't just go into the community.. I would only go that route, if there is.. if I don't know, you know, how else to go about it, and I would always ask, if it's a ECD centre that I'm approaching, I would ask them, do you guys belong to a forum? Is there a forum in this area? Because it's better to first speak to them, they will give you all of the info.*

The other participants, all forum members, also highlighted the fact that NPOs work through the forums. The participants also explained that NPOs depend on ECD forums for information about ECD centres, in particular, the needs of the ECD centres.

Participant 1: *Yes, they do. That's why I say, we're always connected with them, because the forum will also organise a meeting with them, or they will come and discuss something with us, that's going*

around, that we don't know about, then they will organise a meeting, and then they will come and sit in our meetings.. discuss.

Participant 4: Like.. they are coming to our forum, like if the people from Lunch Box, Jam, something like that, you know. When they are coming, they can.. they ask us, what our needs in our centres. And then we told them, some of the children, they are coming with empty stomach...

Participant 7: They work through the forums. Yes, because CECD, they go to the forum and ask for the – how do we call it? - the needs or sometimes they need the.. - how do you call it? I forgot it - the database of the ECDs. Yes. And they take that amount of teachers, of the staff and the principals, to train.

The NPOs acknowledge that ECD forums play a critical role in receiving and sharing information and they represent ECD centres in their areas. This is illustrated by the high level of engagement between ECD forums and NPOs. NPOs recognise that they need to partner with ECD forums to provide ECD interventions in a particular area. Engaging in “a range of community leadership and partnership activities” is a characteristic of a well-functioning community-based forum (HSRC, 2015:6). One participant highlighted that the large number of NPOs working in the ECD sector can pose a challenge to ECD centres.

Participant 5: But it's really difficult with all the stakeholders that's coming in, all the service providers that want to implement their programme and now you've got a programme.. Instead of just link to the programme that you have.

The literature indicates that ECD forums play a role in leveraging resources for ECD centres. The HSRC (2015:41) details that ECD forums are able to identify the needs of ECD centres and engage external stakeholders to provide the needed resources. They can do this as they represent a collective which gives them legitimacy when approaching stakeholders (HSRC, 2015:13). This research study found that the ECD forums are able to identify the needs of ECD centres and relay these to NPOs. However, the participants indicated that ECD forums did not go out and access resources for their forum members.

Training opportunities

The literature highlights the role that ECD forums play in providing access to training opportunities for ECD principals and teachers. Training opportunities from TVET colleges, NPOs and government are often advertised through ECD forums. Viviers, Biersteker and Moruane (2013:39) estimate that 25 – 50% of ECD principals have no formal qualification and accessing training

opportunities enhances the quality of the early education and care that they provide. The College of Cape Town's ECD Learnership Programme is essential as it encourages principals and teachers to enrol in a formal ECD qualification. Individuals who enrol do not pay fees and they receive a stipend to assist with travel expenses (van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:200).

Participant 1: Yes, they get to the municipality, because they've got all the.. they are connected like with all-in-all, and then they will say there's a course on this, or there's first aid, or there's.. so. So they make it even easier for us, the stuff we can go to, they will organise it.

Participant 2: But yes, most of the time, the forum is looking out for trainings for the people. Also I think mostly now, she will look out for training for the teachers.

Participant 5: We discuss things like workshops, trainings, and who's going for that workshop and who's doing that training... Boland College, the FET colleges, they link us up with the college, or stuff like that.

Participant 15: And the trainings, when they trainings, Social Development send the trainings to the forum, then the forum tell us, the trainings, you must go maybe False Bay College, all that old colleges, and they tell us, the teachers must have trainings.

Participants from Franschhoek stated that their ECD forum provides transport or financial support for forum members to attend training. Being able to access training and education is seen as being of great value to forum members and is a "major drawcard for ECD centres to belong to a forum" (HSRC, 2015:38).

Participant 2: And they also support us, when there's training, and it's too far, they just ask for a car and the forum give half of the money, and then the crèches will give the other half of the money. So they.. they help.

Participant 5: if you want to go on workshops maybe it's out of Franschhoek, then they provide transport, or if it's in Franschhoek and it's for the whole day, they provide maybe a lunch or some snacks or things.

The human development theoretical framework states that being able to access 'knowledge' is foundational for human development. Knowledge and education directly enhance human capabilities (UNDP, 2015). In addition, the capabilities approach posits that access to education for poor people is critical as it increases one's quality of life but also, it is essential for generating economic accomplishments that in turn, enhances human freedoms (or development) in other ways (Dreze & Sen, 2002:7). Using these frameworks, one can see that ECD forums play a role in

enhancing capabilities as they link ECD centre principals and teachers to education and training opportunities that they would otherwise not have access to.

Creating connections between ECD centres

This research study found that ECD forums play an essential role in creating connections between ECD centres in their relevant geographic areas. ECD forums facilitate community development. It was found that ECD forums are a form of community forum. The HSRC (2015:6) defines community forums as “...networks dedicated to addressing critical needs and improving the quality of life in a specific geographic area”. The HSRC (2015:6) goes on to explain that community forums provide a space for communities to collectively discuss issues and how to solve them, and that this enhances democracy. This is reflected in the research findings that emerged. It emerged that ECD forums act as a platform for ECD centres to connect with one another in various ways. Firstly, they provide information, advice and guidance to each other. Secondly, they set the standard of ECD provision in their area and thirdly, they share resources.

Buysee, Wesley and Skinner (1999:241) found that community forums were critical in improving the quality and accessibility of ECD services and that these forums stated that they needed more support from parents. Furthermore, Clampett (2016:79) states that the involvement of parents in ECD centres improves the overall performance of children and increases the quality of ECD provision in those centres. It is important to note that none of the participants mentioned the involvement or possible involvement of parents at a forum level.

Buysee, Wesley and Skinner (1999:236) state that improving the quality of ECD interventions requires changes that reach beyond a single classroom or programme, and that creating a comprehensive system of services involves building strong relationships within communities through the use of forums. This research study found that ECD forums do in fact build strong relationships within a community as they connect ECD principals and teachers to each other. In addition, ECD forums are important as they:

“...act as a catalyst for change in ECD practices as forum members share experiences, resources and tools, and best practice; they support each other as peers. The assumption is that change in ECD services can be initiated by intervening in and investing in ECD forums” (HSRC, 2015:15).

Area forums linked to overarching forum

The section examines the relationship between smaller, area forums and the larger, overarching ECD forum in Khayelitsha.

Participant 14: *They talk about things like claim forms, and like everything that.. health inspectors, Social Development, fire, everything.*

Participant 15: *Then when you've got a problem, you go to the small forum, and the small forum check it and take to the big forum then, to solve the problem. The executive, they.. the problem, they go to Social Development to solve the problem.*

Participant 10: *We do talk about different things, because in the big forum, it's where every forums, individual forums né, they bring their problems to the bigger forum. And then in the small forum, it's where the individual Principals, they bring their problems.*

Participant 10: [talking about area forums] *Maybe the other one there has got a burglary in their centres, so if someone has a burglary, and then they advise us not to buy something that is for sale, because it's been stolen from the other ECD centre. So it might happen to your centre too.*

Participant 10: [discussing the Khayelitsha ECD Forum] *The zoning, ja, and the registration, and the money that you not receive from DSD.*

This research study found that the area forums take their perceived 'bigger' problems (for example, issue with registration as a partial care facility) to the Khayelitsha ECD Forum to solve. The area forums are places for individual principals to discuss more specific challenges they are facing (for example, burglaries in their area – see Participant 10). The Khayelitsha ECD Forum is a way for ECD centres from across Khayelitsha to connect on common issues they face in the ECD sector. This relationship is not highlighted in the literature on ECD forums in South Africa.

Information, advice and guidance

The participants stated that the ECD forums create a channel for ECD centres to provide information to one another.

Participant 2: *First.. my first meeting it was, I was just sitting there, listen what the people say and doing all this stuff, they talked, then so.. it was like in.. oh, I think I'm going to enjoy the forum, because lot of information will come out, a lot of training will come out in the forum.*

Participant 6: *Like in.. sometimes when we don't actually know what to do, or where to go to get certain things, but through the forum, we always know what to do, because they give you information.*

Participant 4: *You know what? If you start to have your own centre, and you didn't go to join the forum, it's a lot of things you will never know. But if you are going to join the forum, it's where you can know more things, and then you can get even the suggestion to the others. They already have the information.*

Participant 13: *Mm, there is information and lots of things, there's not the one thing.*

In addition, the ECD forums from Franschhoek and Khayelitsha bring ECD centres together and the principals give one another advice and guidance on a variety of topics. The principals collectively discuss issues and provide assistance on how to solve them. This role is outlined in a City of Cape Town document on investing in ECD as it states that ECD forum members share with each other and benefit from “collective knowledge and experience” (City of Cape Town, 2015:28).

Participant 1: *I wouldn't make it so far up to now, because I must say, they are really supporting us in a meeting, things you don't understand, they will make it easier for you to understand. You work with the children it's fine, it's no problem, but there are these finer things that we can't get to, then they will explain to you, and they will push you in the right direction, things that you need to know. That's what I'm saying, it's good to be in a body like that.*

Participant 3: *And to also be a guidance.. a guide, guiding some of the ECD here.*

Participant 12: *Yes, it is very helpful, because that's the only way that make it easy to understand each other and solving problems each other. So.. and assisting each other. So it works.*

Participants specifically explained that ECD centres provide advice and guidance on the process of registration and meeting the minimum norms and standards through the ECD forum structure.

Participant 4: *Yes, like the forum is providing the support, like maybe you want to know how to make your centre to be registered, they give us the way forward, where you can go, which door you can go to, to knock it, and you must go there, you must do like that.*

Participant 7: *But here in the forum, we help each other, like coming to say I need a teacher with Level 4, I need fire extinguishers, things like that. How can I be registered? Then we help each other there. Giving advices, what can you do if you've got a problem with your staff, then we sit down and advise each other, what can she do.*

Participant 17: *And once they are in the forum, they get that support, so that they do comply, that they do have necessary.. they meet the norms and standards, but not.. so ja, I'm actually all for having forums in areas, it works better.*

In addition, the participants explained that the ECD forums play an important role in supporting and guiding newly established ECD centres, especially around registration. This is critical as new ECD centres usually start out small, operating out of someone's residential home, which makes them not visible to the government and their services. Carter, Biersteker and Streak (2008:34) explain that unless this type of informal ECD centre is part of an ECD forum, they do not have access to information about compliance, government support or potential training.

Participant 1: I find the forum very.. it's like a good stepping stone for all principals. You talk about things that you don't understand, and they are there to give you advice on how to manage your crèche, how to.. things you don't understand, to register, to manage your office.. We discuss all these things there at the forum. If you don't know, you can ask, and we'll refer you to someone. So it's very educational, I must say, the forum.

Participant 3: I know before I started, there wasn't a forum then, so it's very difficult because each one's try to struggle to [..], because especially when you're new and you don't know, it's rough, what you must do, where you must go...but now when you're at the forum, then there's some place you can go, because if I don't know something I can ask them...

Participant 8: I think they can guide us, the new centres. They can guide us about what we are supposed to do first in order to be registered.

A finding that emerged is that ECD forums conduct a 'spatial needs assessment' when a new ECD centre opens up. The participants from Khayelitsha indicated that the ECD forum may visit a new centre and determine whether it is needed based on its proximity to already operating ECD centres. This assessment is done as a way to combat the 'mushrooming' of ECD centres. This practice was viewed negatively by Participant 8.

Participant 8: I think it's the way they welcome you in the forum, because they don't appreciate you to open the centre, that they come with a lot of things, especially to me, they call me inside and then they ask me a lot of questions, why did you open the centre? Then, they say they're going to come to me and see how long is my distance between me and the other centre, there's a crèche at the back in the shack...they said they're going to see our distance between me and her. If our distance is too short, or it's too big, I cannot open my centre.

Participant 9: Mm, anyone can open, but if he.. but what it helps, the forum, it helps to the spaces, the distance, because I can't have another crèche, especially in the informal settlement. Some are coming.. a crèche in that part behind that part, they can't have a crèche, because of distance.

Participant 11: *If my centre is here, one centre must be a distance from mine, we didn't want them mushrooming.*

Set the standard of ECD provision

Participants emphasised that the ECD forums play a role in setting the standard of ECD provision in their area. This increases the overall quality of their early education and care. This can only occur because the ECD forums connect the ECD centres. They are able to support, and share best practice through the forum. ECD forum members often examine the standards of the ECD centres in their area and encourage and guide centres that are behind to improve their services (HSRC, 2015:30).

Participant 1: *A forum is, for me, it's something good. I will stand behind that, because I would really say, if it wasn't for a forum, then I don't think our ECD centres would be in the standard that they are in today.*

Participant 5: *It make a big difference, because the crèches that wasn't registered are now registered. They've got a lot of policies in place, they've got a lot of admin stuff in place. So you know, it's part of.. just share with each other. So most of the crèches are now on the same level, on the same page...*

Participant 6: *The forum, for me, it's a good thing, because you get to get new information from the forum and you all work together and you're all on the same page, actually, so now we all know what to do, and what everyone is doing in their centres, we all do the same thing in every centre.*

Participant 9: *What I've always advised to the informal ones, please guys, let's always keep the level up to the normal standard.*

Resources

Through their research on ECD forums in KwaZulu-Natal, the HSRC (2015:38) found that ECD centres share resources. For example, one ECD centre donated excess educational equipment to another centre. Redistributing resources is also a way to set the standard of ECD services in an area. This is reflected in the findings of this research study where the participants highlighted that, through the forums, the ECD centres share materials and resources.

Participant 1: *Everybody knows what their role is, we come together in our meeting to discuss. Even with our material stuff, if I have too much material, I go to forum and say, listen I've got extra of this, would you like.. You see, we are sharing ideas, we are sharing materials.. we are helping each other in a big way.*

Participant 2: *Yes, and ask.. maybe I have stuff, and your stuff is.. you don't have enough, then I can say, okay, I have enough, you can get some of my stuff.*

Participant 6: *Ja, and they need something or they need to know something, or it's something they have to have, like policies and something, and we do have that, we always share with each other, so we have a good relationship.*

Participant 8: *Because most of the registered, they do have those things. So they contribute their things to us, unregistered.*

Participant 9: *We help each other. Even if I don't have porridge powder, we give each other here in the informal ones, we help each other. Even if in one of the forums, someone had a.. there's someone give.. Jessica gave me many potatoes, do you have potatoes?*

Community activism

The participants from Khayelitsha emphasised that the Khayelitsha ECD Forum promotes community activism. The forum has organised protests to put pressure on the DSD on issues that negatively affect ECD centres. The most recent protests have been around compliance with the minimum norms and standards and the ECD subsidy. The participants explained that the ECD forum represents the centres at a government level. This is reflected in a newspaper article on a march that the Khayelitsha ECD Forum organised (Cawe, 2017). It is critical that ECD forums are known to be leaders in their communities in order for community development to take place (HSRC, 2015:11) and for them to drive change in the ECD sector.

Participant 8: *Yes. They do, because last year, they have the toyi-toyi in Cape Town.*

Participant 9: *We go and toyi-toyi mos in Social Development. They get their monies.*

Participant 10: *Like last year, we were having a problem, but there are so many ECDs here in the Khayelitsha, that they were in the shacks, so they are not allowed to be registered. So we were fighting for that, so that all of us must be registered, because when are they going to get the money to feed the children.*

Participant 11: *Yes. But now, I think since last year, they stood up and they were asking like those people who didn't have zoning, they must have food parcels, why they are waiting for their zoning, and the zoning is taking too long. And even fire, fire is also taking too long to come to the people.. I think we did have a march to DSD, and we wrote down everything about what we want.*

Participant 12: *Yes, it's the voice for ECD centres.*

The participants in Franschhoek indicated that they were members of the SACECD and it is the SACECD who represents them at a government level and who promotes activism. The SACECD is a national body made up of members and it organises marches to raise concerns around important ECD issues (SACECD, 2013).

Participant 5: But if it's from South Africa Congress side, you can call them, because you pay them a fee, and ask what's going on? Why isn't this in place? Why isn't that in place? And they will go to the Department of Education, and they will give you feedback in no time, they will give you feedback. And South Africa Congress' heart is really into ECD, and they fight for all this things. But South Africa Congress is national wide.

Participant 7: Some of my colleagues are part of SA Congress. So Congress is the one who goes to Pretoria and fight about these zoning things, and fire because they are a bit of a problem

4.4.4 Challenges and Recommendations

This section examines the main challenges and recommendations of ECD forums according to the participants.

Challenges

When asked about the main challenges to the functioning of ECD forums, two themes emerged: internal 'politics' and unequal division of resources.

Internal 'politics'

Participants from both Franschhoek and Khayelitsha indicated that there are internal 'politics' between ECD forum members and the management committee.

Participant 5: And you see, with the board members, we'll have to have board members at our centres and the board members want to take over your crèche, the thing that you start for ten years, twenty years, now they want to take it over, and that's a big problem.

Participant 7: Yes, there is conflict between members sometimes, yes, because sometimes some other people.. if they say, I'm the chairperson, so we must obey your rules, which is true. Some other people doesn't want to listen.

Participant 12: Yes, there's nothing different because this is just a politics, and politics, they are everywhere. It's just politics. Because you know, when I started, things were different. Things were very easy, the mentality of the people that were there in forums, they were just humble people and understanding, but now politics are taking over.

Unequal division of resources

Some participants stated that the management committee gives preference to friends when distributing resources. It was also stated that if you are not present at a certain meeting, you will not receive resources and the principals felt this to be unfair.

Participant 5: *Or say, for instance, I'm not in the meeting, I am the Principal and I was not in the meeting and here is ELRU [a NPO] coming and ELRU give some crayons or whatsoever and I'm not there. So I can't receive because I wasn't present. And so because maybe it's less, or more, or.. you see, and they can't distribute it equal amongst the crèches and you see. So I'm feeling out, if I didn't have any.*

Participant 9: *Sometimes they [the board members] take the sponsors to their friends...*

Participant 11: *It does, but they take their chommies [friends], they don't announce it in the forum anymore. You can phone maybe the chairperson of the forum, or anybody in the forum, the top bodies, but they won't.. they will choose their chommies [friends].*

Recommendations

The participants highlighted two main recommendations for ECD forums: consolidated planning and dedicated forum management. As there is little research on the role of ECD forums in South Africa, these recommendations are interesting.

Consolidated planning

Participants from Franschhoek recommended that all the principals consolidate and do their planning together.

Participant 2: *I think the challenges for the principals in the ECD forum, is they need to come together and work, specifically on the daily programme. So there is one programme. So if we come together once a week, maybe on a Friday, and we put out the planning for the next day or for the next week, and we learn from each other.*

Participant 5: *But the thing is, that we'll have to sit together and discuss all this things; just set up a programme, say you bring in your ELDA's, I'll bring mine NELDS, they bring their CAPS, or whatsoever; and we sit together and work out a programme for the whole Franschhoek.*

Dedicated forum management

The principals who are part of the forums are often busy and this impacts on their ability to be actively involved in the ECD forums. Many of the principals are also ECD teachers, which compounds the problem.

Participant 8: *Ja, running their own centres. They cannot be perfect, because they are running their own centres. They are the principal as well. So they cannot be perfect, they cannot concentrate to all centres, because they have got their own centres, they have to be part of their centres.*

Participant 10: *And when the meetings are called, often you notice that you are busy in your centre, so there's no time for your centre, so you have to attend the meetings now and then, of which is too much.*

Participant 16: *And they're also busy because most of them are also practitioners, so they teach.. most of them they teach Grade R classes. They don't have enough time to attend to the forum issues.*

One participant provided a recommendation to this challenge. The participant recommended that ECD forums have dedicated forum management who have the time to promote activism, visit ECD centres and engage potential sponsors.

Participant 3: *Ja. So yes, that is a bit of a challenge for us also, but for us to get it all, we need people, we have open space. The place where we can go and really have a voice.. people who work just for the forum, who can fight for the forum. You can go out, have the commitment to go out and seek sponsors, go out and tell about the forum... Yes. Ones who can go out and just see people.*

4.5 Summary

This chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of the main findings of the research study. Direct quotations were used to illustrate these findings. The findings were also discussed and examined with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The following, final chapter will highlight this study's main conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five focuses on the main research conclusions that have been drawn from this research study and which are based on the key findings. The chapter also details twelve main recommendations for ECD forums and the role they play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

The main research questions for this research study are: (1) When and why did ECD forums emerge? (2) How are ECD forums set up and how do they operate? (3) What role do ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres?

5.2 Main conclusions

The main conclusions drawn from this research study are discussed according to the three research objectives. This section details the main conclusions and findings that relate to each objective.

1. To determine when and why ECD forums emerged.

The first research objective was to determine when and why ECD forums emerged in Franschhoek and Khayelitsha. The study found that ECD forums were initiated either by the community ECD centres themselves or by external institutions.

ECD forums first emerged informally in Khayelitsha in the 1980s. The forums emerged as a way for the ECD centres to fight collectively against the common issues they were facing. The forums were set up by ECD principals and teachers as a platform to discuss issues. ECD forums set up in this way, grassroots and community driven, are empowering for their members.

In contrast to these forums in Khayelitsha, the Franschhoek ECD Forum was set up by an external institution, an NPO working with ECD centres in the area. An area forum in Khayelitsha was also started by an NPO and not by ECD centres. NPOs set up ECD forums as a way to connect isolated ECD centres with each other and to access important ECD information. NPOs working in the ECD sector use ECD forums as a mechanism to communicate easily with all the ECD centres in a geographic area. The way in which an external institution sets up an ECD forum is vital. It needs to do so using community development principles and to ensure that the ECD forum is empowered to govern itself. ECD forums must be independent from the control or influence of these external institutions in order for the forums to be sustainable and community-driven.

2. *To ascertain how ECD forums are set up and how they operate.*

The second research objective was to ascertain how ECD forums are set up and how they operate. This section provides the main conclusions on the governance of ECD forums, specifically around: the management committee, membership, communication with ECD forum members and training.

The ECD forum management committees in Franschhoek and Khayelitsha are structured and are guided by a constitution. The Franschhoek ECD Forum management committee has nine board members who are elected into their positions every two years. The ECD forum's management committee consists of the following positions:

- Chairperson
- Deputy chairperson
- Secretary
- Vice secretary
- Treasurer
- Additional members

Each of these positions has specific roles and responsibilities that are understood by the ECD forum members. The Franschhoek ECD Forum is made up of 24 ECD centres. Khayelitsha has area specific ECD forums that are part of a greater, overarching Khayelitsha ECD Forum. The large population size of Khayelitsha means that it has to have smaller ('area') ECD forums in order to reach the number of ECD centres operating within it. The Khayelitsha ECD Forum also has a set structure for its management committee:

- Public relations officer
- Chairperson
- Deputy chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Deputy secretary
- Organiser
- Additional members

The smaller Khayelitsha area forums replicate this structure for their management committees. As with the Franschhoek ECD Forum, each management committee position has detailed roles and responsibilities. The Khayelitsha ECD Forum is made up of around 200 ECD centres. The area

forums consist of anywhere between 13 and 30 ECD centres each, depending on the size of the area.

Being registered as a partial care facility is not a criterion for membership to the ECD forums in both Franschhoek and Khayelitsha. This is important as many ECD centres are not registered; they struggle to reach the minimum norms and standards for registration, as set out by the DSD. The inability to become a registered ECD centre is one of the main challenges in the sector. Registration is a prerequisite for accessing the ECD subsidy of R15 per child per day and without this subsidy, ECD centres will not be financially sustainable.

To become a member of an ECD forum, the ECD centre must be operating in the relevant area. The principal of the ECD centre has to fill in an application form and pay a joining fee to the ECD forum. Once this has been done, there is an annual membership fee that is paid by each ECD centre. In Khayelitsha, the principals pay this fee for both their area forum and the Khayelitsha ECD Forum. The joining and membership fees can be seen as obstacles for unregistered ECD centres.

The Franschhoek and Khayelitsha ECD Forums meet once a month, unless a special meeting is required. Between these monthly meetings, the forum members communicate with each other using WhatsApp.

A conclusion from this research study regarding the governance of ECD forums is that the management requires more skills training. The management committees need capacity building on their role and on governance, leadership, fundraising and financial management.

3. To describe the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

The third research objective in this study was to describe the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. This study concludes that both ECD forums play a role in connecting ECD centres with external institutions and with each other, and promoting community development and activism.

ECD forums develop connections with local government, provincial government, NPOs, and link ECD centres to outside training opportunities. This conclusion is critical as creating these relationships is needed for the scaling up of ECD services to take place sustainably. Without the connections between ECD centres and external institutions, it is extremely difficult to do so.

Linking ECD centres to outside institutions builds the social capital of the ECD centre and the community. Social capital is needed for community development and creates the bridge between poor communities and the resources available to them through external institutions.

The connection between ECD centres and local government is two-fold. Firstly, local government shares important information with ECD centres through the forum structures. Secondly, local government provides resources to the ECD forums who then distribute them to the ECD centres that need resources. Similarly, provincial government, mostly the DSD, use ECD forums as a mechanism to disseminate important information to ECD centres. The DSD distributes information to the ECD centres by attending forum meetings or by contacting the chairperson of the forum, who then relays the information to the other members. ECD forums provide an efficient platform for the distribution of important information. Provincial DSD officials also use the ECD forum meetings to offer support and advice to all the principals in an area. This platform is significant given the high numbers of unregistered ECD centres who are not on the provincial database. NPOs consult with ECD forums when they enter into the community as the forum is seen as a legitimate 'gatekeeper'. The NPOs use the platform of the ECD forums to introduce their programmes and to source information about the ECD centres in an area. The ECD forum also plays a role in providing access to training opportunities for its members, as these are often advertised through the forum.

ECD forums create connections between ECD centres. Developing strong relationships within communities is essential for creating a comprehensive system of ECD services in South Africa. The forums create a space for ECD centres to provide information, advice and guidance on a variety of topics to one another. The forum members discuss issues and provide assistance on how to solve problems, drawing on their collective experience and knowledge. For example, the ECD forums provide guidance to each other on the process of registration, on how to comply with the relevant norms and standards, and on the subsidisation process.

The ECD forums are instrumental in supporting and assisting newly established ECD centres, which would otherwise be isolated from critical information about early childhood education and care. The ECD forums in Khayelitsha conduct 'spatial needs assessments' when a new centre opens, to determine its proximity to an already established ECD centre. This may be done as a way to combat the 'mushrooming' of ECD centres.

ECD forums play a role in setting the standard of ECD provision in their area; this increases the overall quality of ECD. This occurs as forum members share best practice and help centres who are

seen as being ‘behind’ to improve. The ECD centres also share materials and resources. The well-established ECD centres provide excess resources to other ECD centres that need them, thus improving the overall quality of ECD provision in their area. The ECD forums do not create connections between parents and the ECD centres. The Khayelitsha ECD Forum promotes community activism as it organises protests to put pressure on government on issues that affect the sector.

This research study concludes that internal ‘politics’ and an unequal division of resources are the main challenges facing ECD forums and their effectiveness, and that ECD forums should play a greater role in promoting consolidated planning amongst ECD centres, particularly around the learning programme. ECD forums should have dedicated forum management who have time to promote activism and leverage resources for the ECD centres.

5.3 Main recommendations

This last section sets out the twelve main recommendations of this research study based on the study’s findings and is structured according to the research objectives detailed in Chapter One.

1. To determine when and why ECD forums emerged.

ECD forums that are started by communities themselves are more community-driven and empowered. These ECD forums are started by dedicated principals who see the need for a collective platform to discuss their shared challenges. Given the important role that ECD forums play, it is recommended that NPOs that wish to establish an ECD forum should facilitate the process, but must not take the lead in establishing the forum. This will allow the ECD forum to be community-driven, remain independent and be able to govern itself. This is important for the ECD forums to be effective and sustainable.

2. To ascertain how ECD forums are set up and how they operate.

It is recommended that ECD forums be formalised and structured entities that are governed by a constitution. ECD forums should have a management committee with clear positions and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The management committee should be elected into these positions every two years.

The ECD forums should have formalised processes on how ECD centres become ECD forum members, the fee that they pay to join the forum and their annual membership fee. Being registered as a partial care facility should continue to not be a criterion for membership of ECD forums. At

times, the fee could be waived for an ECD centre that is unregistered, newly established or who may not have the finances to pay. This type of informal ECD centre will greatly benefit from being part of an ECD forum and not being able to pay the fee should not hinder their access.

To function optimally, ECD forums should meet once a month and have a communication structure in place to connect members with each other in between these meetings.

3. To describe the role that ECD forums play in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

ECD forums play a critical role in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. ECD forums connect ECD centres with external institutions such as local government, provincial government and NPOs, and link ECD centres to outside training opportunities. It is recommended that local government, provincial government and NPOs use ECD forums as a community structure to communicate and disseminate important information pertaining to the ECD sector. ECD NPOs and other service providers should work with ECD forums when running programmes aimed at ECD centres in order to gain buy-in from the community. External institutions need to recognise the local knowledge that ECD forums have on the ECD centres in their area. ECD service providers and government structures must be aware of the critical role that ECD forums play in their communities and need to work with them as an effective channel for their work.

ECD forums create connections between ECD centres. The ECD forums create a place for ECD centres to provide information, advice and guidance to each other. The principals discuss challenges and use their collective experience and knowledge to solve them. ECD forums strengthen ECD centres as they create a platform for supporting and assisting newly established ECD centres and they play a role in setting the standard of ECD provision in their area. This is done by sharing best practice and distributing resources.

It is recommended that ECD forums should play a role in connecting parents and ECD centres by promoting parental involvement in centres. Parental involvement is important for the holistic development of young children.

It is recommended that ECD forums across the country play an active role in promoting community activism. ECD forums must be the ‘voice’ of the ECD centres in their area and represent them at a

government and policy-making level. ECD forums can be the force that mobilises the ECD sector and puts ECD at the forefront.

External institutions must recognise the value of ECD forums and provide programmes that support and mentor them. In order to make the ECD forums more effective, skills training needs to be provided to management committee members to enhance their capacity to run ECD forums. ECD forums must be seen as an effective community-driven model for ECD interventions that needs to be strengthened and promoted in the ECD sector. Enhancing the capabilities of ECD forums to be more sustainable will in turn strengthen ECD centres and improve the quality of early education and care. ECD forums must be empowered to leverage resources from external institutions based on the needs of ECD centres.

It is recommended that the ECD sector builds on the social capital that ECD forums have, in order to improve the accessibility of ECD to young children in South Africa.

It is recommended that government and policy-makers include working with ECD forums as a key component of providing a comprehensive package of ECD services to young children. The primary responsibility for ECD will in the future fall under the DBE (Ramaphosa, 2019). It is recommended that the DBE works closely with and consults ECD forums as this transition occurs. The DBE must consult with ECD forums when developing any new policy documents.

As there is little research in South Africa on the role of ECD forums, it is recommended that further research be done across the country.

5.4 Concluding statement

ECD is critical in determining the early development, health and learning of young children. In South Africa, there are huge inequalities in the provision of ECD as many young children do not have access to quality early education and care. Early learning programmes are a critical mechanism to break the cycle of poverty and inequality as they reduce the differences in learning potential between children before they enter formal schooling. Attending an ECD centre offers a good opportunity for early learning to take place but many ECD centres are unable to offer quality early education.

This research study has shown that ECD forums play an essential role in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres. ECD forums are a critical community structure that

connects ECD centres to external institutions such as government, NPOs and training providers. The ECD forums are a platform for ECD centres to connect with one another, share best practice and resources and provide guidance, especially around the process for registration as a partial care facility. ECD forums are a critical mechanism to enhancing the quality of ECD provision and for the scaling up of sustainable ECD services. ECD forums need to be empowered to further strengthen ECD centres in South Africa.

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Appendix I: Consent Form



Research Study SWK5001W - Consent Form

You are requested to participate in a research study that is conducted by the University of Cape Town, Department of Social Development. This form contains information explaining this research study. If you agree to participate as a participant please complete your details below and then sign and date this document.

Research study title: *The role of early childhood development forums in fostering community development and strengthening early childhood development centres in Khayelitsha and Franschhoek.*

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to explore the views and perspectives of ECD forum stakeholders with regards to the role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres.

Details:

- We are requesting that you grant us an interview which should take about 45 minutes.
- Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time should you wish.
- All information provided during the interview will be treated confidentially. None of your details nor your identity will be linked to any response which you will make.

Having read and understood the above I agree to voluntarily participate in this study.

Name:

Signature:

Organisation/ECD forum:

Date:

Appendix II: Interview Schedules

Interview Schedule for ECD service providers

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Name of the organisations:
4. Position:

Work-Related Questions

1. How long have you been working at your organisation?
2. How long have you worked in the field of ECD and what is your role?
3. Do you work with ECD forums? If yes, which ECD forums and how long have you work with them?

'The emergence of ECD forums'

1. What are some of the challenges regarding ECD and the work that you do?
2. Why do you think these challenges exist?
3. Do you know when the ECD forum that you work with were set up?
4. Could you tell me why the ECD forum was started?
5. From your perspective, what role do ECD forums play in the community?

'The governance and functioning of ECD forums'

1. In terms of governance of the ECD forum, does it have a formalised structured (i.e. legal entity, constitution, chairperson, NPO registration, etc)?
2. Does the ECD forum have a 'management committee'? If yes, what structure does this take and who is part of this committee ? If no, why does it not?
3. What is the criteria for becoming part of the ECD forum?

'The role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres

1. When do you work with ECD forums?
2. Why do you work with the ECD forums?
3. What has been your experience of working with the ECD forums?
4. Earlier on we spoke about the role of the ECD forums, are there any other details you would like to add (e.g. meetings, decision-making, sharing of challenges, etc)?
5. What support do the ECD forums provide to the ECD centres?

6. Does the ECD forum act as a representing body/voice for the ECD centres in the geographic area?
7. Does the forum effectively co-ordinate the ECD centres? If yes, do you have examples of this being achieved.
8. From your perspective of working with the forums, what challenges do the forums face?
9. Besides your organisation, who are the other stakeholders that work with the forums?
10. Do ECD forums act as a link between ECD centres and other external institutions such as NPOs./training organisations and government?
11. What is the relationship like between the ECD forums and these institutions?
12. Have you ever attended an ECD forum meeting? If yes, were you invited and why?
13. What role does the ECD forum play in supporting and building consensus amongst the ECD centres?
14. Are there negative aspects to the forums?

General

Is there anything that you would like to share that you feel we have not covered, and that you feel would be valuable for this study?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Interview Schedule for ECD principals and ECD forum management

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Name of the ECD centre:
4. Position at the ECD centre:
5. ECD forum:
6. Position at the ECD forum:

Work-Related Questions

1. How long have you been working at the ECD centre?
2. How long have you been part of the ECD forum?
3. How long have you worked in the field of ECD?
4. What is your role at the ECD centre?
5. What is your role at the ECD forum?

6. How long have you been a member of an ECD forum?
7. What motivates you to work with young children?

‘The emergence of ECD forums’

1. What are some of the challenges regarding ECD and the work that you do?
2. Why do you think these challenges exist?
3. Do you know when the ECD forum that you are part of started/was set up?
4. Could you tell me why the ECD forum was started?
5. From your perspective, what role do ECD forums play in your community?
6. Why did you join an ECD forum?

‘The governance and functionings of ECD forums’

1. In terms of governance of the ECD forum, does it have a formalised structured (i.e. legal entity, constitution, chairperson, NPO registration etc)?
2. Does the ECD forum have a ‘management committee’? If yes, what structure does this take and who is part of this committee ? If no, why does it not?
3. What is the criteria for becoming part of the ECD forum? Do you have to pay?
4. How often do you have contact with the ECD forums and the other principals who are part of the forum?
5. If you are part of the ‘management committee’, how often does that committee meet/communicate with each other?

‘The role of ECD forums in fostering community development and strengthening ECD centres’

1. Earlier on we spoke about the role of the ECD forums, are there any other details you would like to add (e.g. meetings, decision-making, sharing of challenges, etc)?
2. What support do the ECD forums provide to the ECD centres?
3. Does the ECD forum act as a representing body/voice for the ECD centres in the geographic area?
4. Does the forum effectively co-ordinate the ECD centres? If yes, do you have examples of this being achieved.
5. *ECD forum management*: What are the challenges that the ECD forum experiences? And why are they experiencing this?

ECD centre principal: From your perspective, what are the challenges of being part of an ECD forum?

6. *ECD centre principal*: What are the benefits of being part of the ECD forum?

7. Besides principals, who are the other stakeholders that work with the forums?
8. Do ECD forums act as a link between centres and other external institutions such as NPOs/training organisations and government?
9. What is the relationship like between the ECD forums and these organisations/government?
10. At the ECD forum meetings, what kind of topics are discussed?
11. What role does the ECD forum play in supporting and building consensus amongst the ECD centres?
12. Are there negative aspects to the forums?

General

Is there anything that you would like to share that you feel we have not covered, and that you feel would be valuable for this study?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

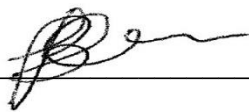
Appendix III: Plagiarism Declaration

University of Cape Town
Department of Social Development

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the Harvard convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this research study from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.
3. This research study is my own work.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy our work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
5. We acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this is our own work

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 23 April 2019