

An exploratory study of the challenges and opportunities that early childhood development centre principals experience in providing services to children in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town.

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master in Social Science in Social Development.

Faculty of the Humanities

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2014

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

This research project, entitled ‘An exploratory study of the challenges and opportunities that early childhood development centre principals experience in providing services to children in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town’ adopted a qualitative research design using a semi-structured interview schedule for face-to-face interviews with participants. It comprised of 20 participants, all female aged between 44 and 74 years, who had worked as principals in a registered ECD centre for three years and above. The sample was arrived at using a purposive sampling method.

The study revealed that principals are faced with a number of challenges. Key among them are burglary; poor communication coupled with inadequate subsidies often paid late by the Department of Social Development; poor salaries and infrastructure; lack of fundraising skills and trained teachers; and inadequate funds, food, educational equipment, blankets and mattresses for children. To address these challenges, principals receive support from the government, namely, the provincial Departments of Social Development and Education, and the City of Cape Town, in the form of subsidies. In addition, they receive various forms of support from the private sector, non-governmental organisations, ECD centres, parents and their communities.

The study proposed a set of recommendations to the government (national, provincial and the City of Cape Town), private sector, non-government organisations, the Gugulethu community and principals with an aim to provide support to address the challenges that principals faced.

Among the main recommendations were for the national government to take a proactive and bold decision to improve the conditions of service for ECD principals as a matter of urgency as they play a crucial role in building the learning foundation for children. It was also recommended that the private sector should develop sustainable partnerships with ECD centres in Gugulethu. They could, for instance, contribute to the establishment of a community fund to support the operation of ECD centres. In addition, the study recommends that NGOs should support ECD principals to lobby and advocate not only for improved conditions of service but also increased government funding to the ECD sector.

Furthermore, the research study unearthed some issues which need answers. It is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the practicality of government employing principals and teachers in the ECD sector.

Collective capacity is essential in solving some of the challenges experienced by principals when providing services to children in Gugulethu. It is recommended that the community, working in collaboration with the government, NGOs and the private sector, should be involved in improving ECD centres. For example, parents who do not work could volunteer during the week to assist with the maintenance of ECD centre grounds and buildings while those who work could do the same over the weekends.

For principals, it was recommended that, with the support of NGOs and other stakeholders, they should lobby and advocate strongly for improved working conditions and for inclusion in decision making at local, provincial and national government levels.

Acknowledgements

I firstly wish to thank God Almighty for having taken care of me during the period of this study, from the beginning to the end.

I wish to thank and offer my sincerest gratitude for the support and assistance rendered to me by my supervisor, Adjunct Associate Professor Eric Atmore. I am grateful for his guidance and constructive feedback given to me from inception to development of the final product of this thesis.

Thanks also go to the Centre for Early Childhood Development and its staff for the support, information and logistical assistance given to me during fieldwork.

I would like to thank my wife, Ivy Mutumba Nasilele, for her unwavering support and encouragement, and my children, Wabei, Chitengi and Masela, for their patience and love as well as for coping with life despite my absence from home. They provided me with the encouragement to do the best that I could.

To my family and friends, I say thank you for all your prayers and emotional support.

Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early childhood development
ESKOM	Electricity Supply Commission
ETDP	Education, Training and Development Practices
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSD	Provincial Head of Social Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Generally, it has been agreed that to improve the quality of education in South Africa, there is need for investment in early childhood development, starting with improving nutrition and diet, especially for children under the age of three, and promoting other key early childhood interventions (National Planning Commission, 2012). One of the critical interventions which this research contributes to is the analysis of the role played by ECD principals in providing services to vulnerable children in marginalised urban townships such as Gugulethu.

This thesis is based on a study conducted in Gugulethu Township in Cape Town, with the aim to explore the challenges and opportunities that principals of early childhood development (ECD) centres experience in providing services to children. Understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by ECD principals provide insight and information to government and other stakeholders for the development and implementation of solutions that will ultimately contribute to quality education in South Africa.

This chapter begins by highlighting the problem context, study area, rationale and significance of the research. This is followed by the research topic, research questions, main assumptions and research objectives. Thereafter, the ethical considerations and reflexivity are discussed and then major concepts of the study are defined. The chapter ends by outlining the layout of the rest of the research report.

1.1. Problem context

In the past two decades, there has been accumulation of overwhelming scientific evidence that confirms the importance of investment in early childhood development services by countries. This investment not only helps in determining capacity (education and earnings), but also health and longevity (especially related to chronic disease), and personal (stress, anxiety) and social (withdrawal, aggression) adjustments (Richter, Biersteker, Burns, Desmond, Feza, Harrison, Martin, Saloojee & Slemming 2012). Therefore, the lack of access to quality ECD not only impacts negatively on children's development, but also on the ability of the primary caregivers (usually women) to pursue their own income earning, education and other activities (Vally, 2005). Therefore, ECD practitioners, especially principals, play an important role in ensuring that children receive quality ECD services.

In South Africa, Biersteker and Streak (2008) point out that historically, non-governmental, community-based and faith-based organisations have provided the majority of ECD services

to poor children, mostly in the form of ECD centres but also with some parent support and education, and community safety net initiatives. In addition, Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake, & Smith (2013) point out that lack of clear legal obligation by the State for the funding of ECD programmes for children pre-grade R make many centres lack the necessary resources to offer a basic learning programme and food. This situation, coupled with other factors, makes the working environment for ECD principals much more challenging especially those working in marginalised communities such as Gugulethu. The researcher chose to undertake this study in Gugulethu because this community is characterised by severe social and economic conditions which manifest in high levels of urban poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, alcoholism, poor infrastructure, disease and violence (Cristovao, 2011).

1.2. The study area

Gugulethu Township is a predominantly black community with an estimated population of 650 000 (Liziwe and Kongolo, 2011:53). It is located 15 kilometres from the central business district of the City of Cape Town and is part of the Cape Flats township community, a vast sandy plain surrounding the city. The township owes its history to the Apartheid Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950) which resulted in many residents being forcefully moved in the 1960s from places like District Six and Sophia Town.

In addition, the township is a product of the migrant labour system of the apartheid era, through which the number of migrant workers from Transkei became too great for the township of Langa to contain (Wheshe, 2009). The township thus became divided into the formal and informal settlements. The informal settlements are mainly occupied by young, poorly educated and unemployed people as opposed to the formal settlements.

According to Cristovao (2011), the township of Gugulethu can be described as consisting of a combination of poverty, disease, vibrant life and violence. During the apartheid era, the township experienced a wide range of violence from police brutality to endemic violence, and the scars of this past are still visible as the area is characterised by gangsterism and high levels of alcohol abuse which have exacerbated crimes such as robberies, murder, rape and assault.

Like most of the black townships in the Cape Metropolitan area, the township is characterised by problems of urban poverty which manifest in poor access to basic services such as housing, education, water and sanitation, congestion and high unemployment (Teppo & Houssay-Holzschuch, 2013).

1.3. Rationale and significance of the research

According to The Presidency (2012), there is currently no government support for the establishment of either centre-based early childhood development or expanded services in underserved areas, nor are there policies to ensure that children from families who cannot afford fees can still access services, either in centres or in home - and community-based programmes. This leads ECD service delivery in underserved areas to be almost entirely conducted through private entrepreneurs and charitable initiatives, presenting considerable problems of access in poor and vulnerable communities (Penn, 2008).

Understanding the challenges principals of early childhood development centres experience when working with children unearthed vital information useful for the improvement of the quality of education for young children. The information could be used for policy and programme design and implementation by the state and other non-state actors working in the ECD sector in South Africa. In addition, this information will contribute to a better understanding of the circumstances in which ECD principals in poorly resourced communities operate. This could potentially reduce the divide between poor and rich resourced communities in Cape Town.

1.4. Research topic

An exploratory study of the challenges and opportunities that early childhood development centre principals experience in providing services to children in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town.

1.5. Main research questions

- What is the motivation for the ECD centre principals to manage ECD centres?
- How do the ECD centre principals describe their working environment?
- What kind of support do ECD centre principals receive from stakeholders?
- What constraints do ECD centre principals face when providing services to children?
- What opportunities do ECD centre principals see in providing services to children?

- What do ECD centre principals think needs to change for them to provide better services to children?

1.6. Main assumptions

This study has four main assumptions namely;

- ECD centre principals are motivated to manage ECD centres as a way of addressing poverty among children in Gugulethu.
- ECD centre principals receive inadequate support from stakeholders when providing services to children.
- ECD centre principals face a number of challenges to the provision of services to children in Gugulethu.
- ECD centre principals see economic and social opportunities for themselves in providing services to children.

1.7. Research objectives

- To explore what motivates the ECD centre principals to manage ECD centres.
- To explore how the ECD centre principals describe their working environment.
- To explore the kind of support ECD centre principals receive from stakeholders.
- To understand the constraints that ECD centre principals face when providing services to children.
- To explore the opportunities that ECD centre principals see in providing services to children.
- To describe what ECD centre principals think needs to change for them to provide better services to children.

1.8. Ethical considerations

In any research undertaking, it is always important to take into consideration the rights and values of participants to avoid obtaining information at their expense. This is supported by Strydom (2011:113) who comments that “for researchers in the social sciences, the ethical

issues are pervasive and complex, since data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings.” When dealing with participants in this research, the researcher observed and adhered to ethical standards before, during and after going into the field to collect data from the participants.

The researcher obtained the lists of potential participants from the Department of Social Development, Gugulethu office, and Centre for Early Childhood Development. After this, the researcher then secured **voluntary informed consent** from every participant before being included on the final list of participants. In addition, the researcher obtained consent from the participants to record the interviews using a digital recorder. The participants also signed a consent form (see Appendix A) so that consent could be verified. To **avoid deceiving** participants, the researcher also explained to the participants the research purpose and processes. A letter of introduction from the researcher’s supervisor was also availed to the participants (see Appendix B). None of the twenty participants were forced to participate in the study.

Interviewing participants on the challenges they were facing at times raised **false hope** that the researcher had the solution to addressing their challenges. However, the researcher at all times explained to the participants that the research was purely an academic exercise with no immediate solutions and benefits.

The researcher guaranteed **anonymity** of the participants in the study by assigning them with pseudonyms to safeguard their privacy and identity. The participants will be referred to in the findings as *participants M1 to M20*. However, the researcher marked the questionnaire containing the biographical details of participants with their pseudonyms. This was done to allow the researcher, in some instances, to conduct follow-up interviews with some participants.

In terms of **confidentiality**, the researcher assured the participants during and after the interviews that their personal information will be kept confidential in order to protect them. This also ensured that participants were free to share information. Therefore, all the personal information in the study was kept confidential as only the researcher’s supervisor accessed it for examination purposes.

When writing this final report, the researcher compiled the information **accurately and objectively** to ensure that it depicts the true findings of the study. In addition, the researcher analysed the interview transcripts in a neutral manner to avoid undue influence on the themes and categories that emerged. The researcher ensured that all sources of material were

adequately referenced and shortcomings highlighted. Some of the participants requested to have a copy of the findings of the study and, accordingly, the researcher intends to share the final report with the Gugulethu ECD Forum after all examination processes are complete.

1.9. Reflexivity

Although the researcher had been living in Cape Town for more than a year at the time of this research, he was not familiar with communities such as Gugulethu. Being unfamiliar to Gugulethu posed a number of barriers namely; a lack of knowledge of the local language, culture and beliefs of the population in which the participants resided. This caused some difficulty in capturing the feelings, views and experiences of the participants. Secondly, due to Gugulethu's reputation as a crime-prone community, the researcher was cautious during data collection in this community.

However, the researcher had the opportunity to work with colleagues from the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Department of Social Development, Gugulethu office, who were familiar with the language and environment and were able to guide and show the researcher the safe areas. Furthermore, the researcher familiarised himself with the community context by reading about the history, cultural values and beliefs of Gugulethu. This gave an opportunity for the researcher not only to understand the challenges that ECD principals face, but also to appreciate the positive contribution the participants were making in their communities.

1.10. Definition of concepts

Early childhood development: is defined 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” (Department of Education, 2001:5).

ECD service: The Children's Act (Republic of South Africa 2007) defines an ECD service as one that promotes the development of children from birth to school-going age. It is provided regularly by a person who is not a child's parent or caregiver. An ECD service may, for example, be a crèche, a pre-primary school, or a home-based intervention focused on the development of young children.

ECD programme: The Children’s Act (Republic of South Africa 2007) refers to an early childhood development programme as a programme structured within an early childhood service to provide learning and support appropriate to the child’s developmental age and stage.

ECD centre: The Department of Education (2008, as cited by the Presidency, 2009:70) defines an ECD centre as “any building or premises maintained or used [...] for the admission, protection and temporary or partial care of more than six children away from their parents. [It] can refer to a crèche, a day-care centre for young children, a playgroup, a pre-school, after-school care.”

Children: persons below the age of 18 (Republic of South Africa, 2005:20). However, the children being referred to in this research study are those aged six and below, and catered for by ECD centres.

Principal: the person with highest authority in an organisation (i.e. the head of school, college, or university) (The Oxford Reference Dictionary, 1986: 660). In this study the ECD principal was either the owner of an ECD centre or alternatively the person responsible for its daily management.

1.11. Layout of the report

This research report is presented and organised in five distinct chapters; **Chapter One** introduced the study by giving the context of the problem as well as highlighted the study area, significance, ethical considerations and reflexivity.

Chapter Two is the literature review which enhances the understanding of the research topic by reviewing scholarly works related to the field of study. **Chapter Three** covers the methodology of the study by focusing on the research design, sampling strategy and procedure, data collection and analysis as well as the limitations faced during data collection and analysis. **Chapter Four** discusses the findings by highlighting the six themes and categories that were linked to the objectives of the study. Finally, **Chapter Five** consists of the conclusions and key recommendations of the study.

The next chapter reviews literature relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

To develop an understanding of the topic, the researcher consulted a number of journal articles, books, web-based scholarly articles, pamphlets, theses, policies and legislative documents. In order to understand the challenges and opportunities of ECD principals in Gugulethu, the literature review centred on their working environment, training and career development opportunities, support from stakeholders as well as suggestions to take advantages of the opportunities as well as address challenges.

The review begins with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, namely social exclusion, human rights and the fundamental human needs approaches. This is followed by an overview of government policies and programmes on early childhood development in South Africa. In addition, studies done within, and outside of, South Africa on the challenges faced by ECD principals linked to the research objectives are presented. The chapter ends with a summary.

2.2. Theoretical framework

To develop a further understanding of the challenges that ECD principals experience when providing services to children, the perspectives of social exclusion, human rights and fundamental human needs are used in this study. The social exclusion perspective is used to provide an understanding of the working environment of principals who operate in the socially and economically excluded community of Gugulethu. The human rights perspective provides a further understanding of the status of ECD principals in South Africa while the fundamental human needs perspective provides insight into the needs of ECD principals.

2.2.1. Social exclusion perspective

The theory of social exclusion examines the relationship between the individual, communities and society as well as the dynamics of this relationship (Taket, Crisp, Nevill, Lamaro, and Graham & Barter-Godfrey, 2009).

In the context of this study, this theory is useful when examining the multiple relationships in which ECD principals find themselves. Firstly, social exclusion helps us to examine the relationship between the principals and the community of Gugulethu in which they work, which is a socially and economically excluded community.

Rosa (2012) points out that social exclusion results in certain individuals, communities and societies being excluded from taking part in various aspects of social, economic and political life based on particular characteristics, such as geographical location, gender, age, race, religion, nationality, health status or even socio-economic status.

Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2009:18) highlight that, in South Africa, the apartheid government's practice of separate development, "brought about hardships in which white privilege existed alongside black poverty and deprivation in every aspect of life: in access to amenities; and in the provision of health, education and welfare services." This exclusion resulted in white communities and children having greater access to ECD services of a higher quality when compared to those living in communities such as Gugulethu.

In this case, the principals who work in Gugulethu face challenges such as poor working conditions and low salaries which increase the high incidence of poverty and unemployment in Gugulethu. This makes it difficult for centres to charge and collect fees from the parents of children to improve the working condition of principals and teachers.

This is confirmed by a study done by Theron and Perez (2012) in Delft, another marginalised community in Cape Town, which found that total crèche income from parent fees across all 30 sites was an average of R7 722 a month. The authors highlight that owners of the crèches interviewed in Delft did not take a regular salary, and their income was based on whatever was left at the end of the month, which was sometimes nothing. They add that employees' salaries ranged from R800 a month to R3 000 a month for fully qualified pre-school educators.

Social exclusion is more closely related to geographical location than to individual factors (Taket et al., 2009). Participation in society is mainly dependent on mobility, proximity and networks. Location promotes social exclusion through concentration of difficult socio-economic environments, and physical and social distance to society.

Thus principals who reside and work in Gugulethu experience limited access to resources for their active participation in the ECD sector when compared to their colleagues in well-resourced communities. Furthermore, geography may not only limit access to resources for participation, but can also generate exclusion through so-called statistical discrimination. For example, the principals of Gugulethu could be discriminated against by not receiving certain services from service providers thereby worsening the exclusionary effects of their geography.

ECD centres and principals in communities such as Gugulethu therefore face challenges such as the lack of adequate learning materials and resources at their centres (especially within the classroom setting), minimal funding, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate security for children whilst at the ECD facility, as well as poor toilet amenities (Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development & United Nations Children's Fund, 2010). Furthermore, principals who work in excluded communities such as Gugulethu are likely to have poor social capital. Social capital facilitates individuals to gain (or lose) access to resources (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004, as cited in Taket et al., 2009). Therefore, it can be inferred that principals who work in these communities are more likely to be excluded from access to support from stakeholders such as funding.

According to Du Plessis and Conley (2007), more than half of South Africa's children live in severe poverty which is mainly due to the inability of their parents and guardians to take care of their needs. The effects of poverty also extend to the people who work with children such as ECD principals. This is revealed by Theron and Perez (2012) who interviewed owners of ECD centres in Delft. All those interviewed said that their own pay depended on whatever money was left after all other expenses had been paid, and that this sometimes left them with nothing.

Altman (2008) points out that, while the statistics on the ECD sector are weak, it is probable that the majority of workers are women. She also adds that African women in particular tend to be crowded into low paying jobs in specific areas of the service sector. This is because most women in South Africa lack access to productive skills and education which limits their participation in social and economic activities and leads them to perform low paid jobs, as highlighted above.

Thus, poverty rates among female-headed households are higher than average and women continue to earn less than men, even though the differences in education have been narrowed (National Planning Commission, 2011). Therefore, women who work as ECD principals experience poverty which manifests in many ways, such as lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood.

2.2.2. Human rights approach

Principals of early childhood development centres play an important role in ensuring that children enjoy their basic right to education which is essential for building lifelong learning and economic opportunities (National Planning Commission, 2012). The state therefore has

an obligation to ensure that the economic and social rights of all citizens, in this case ECD principals, are equally respected and protected.

In South Africa, the right to basic education is guaranteed in section 29(1) of the Constitution. This right is immediate and unconditional and corresponds to schooling from grades 1 to 9. In addition, section 29(2) establishes the right to further education (grades 10 to 12) which the state must make “progressively available”. South Africa is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets a standard of universal free education at the primary level (Article 28) (UN General Assembly 1989).

However, in South Africa the state is not obliged to provide ECD services to children as the Constitution only gives guarantee to basic education. This not only denies the rights of children to education but also results in a spill over of negative effects onto those who work with children, such as principals and teachers. This limits principal’s enjoyment of their social and economic rights to equal treatment and access to services such as employment and other conditions of services such as decent salaries and pension, among others.

Atmore and Ashley-Cooper (2012) indicate that poverty and inequality in South Africa limit children from impoverished communities such as Gugulethu in the enjoyment of their socio-economic rights and results in inadequate access to healthcare, education, social services and nutrition. This has a multiplier effect in that people who work and support children in these poorly-resourced communities, such as principals are equally affected by the poverty and inequality which manifests in the form of poor access to funding, poor salaries and infrastructure.

According to Vally (2005), the human rights approach to children’s education requires the recognition of education as a fundamental right that gives rise to government obligation to respect, ensure, protect, and promote this right and the people that support children. Vally points out that rights-based education entail a safeguard for the right to education, human rights in education, and the advancing of all human rights through education. This is complemented by Pendlebury and Lake (2009) who argue that education is not only a right but also empowers people including children to claim and realise their other rights such as the right to access adequate housing, nutrition and healthcare.

In the ECD sector principals are either employed by governing bodies or they are the owners of centres and are thus subjected to different conditions of service depending on the resourcefulness of the centre.

Access to decent jobs enables people to lead decent and prosperous lives as they have access to an income which enables them to obtain basic services such as food, clothes and shelter. This has the potential to contribute towards the reduction of poverty and inequality.

Although the Presidency (2009) points out that ECD plays a crucial role in children's realisation of their right to survival, development, protection and participation, the lukewarm support that ECD receives from government and other stakeholders limits the rights of children and principals as well as teachers who work in this sector.

The rights-based ECD approach and accompanying funding model is important in the ECD sector as it will ensure the realisation of "the State's obligations to provide ECD services, especially those living in poor families, rural areas, informal urban areas and children with disabilities." (Richter, Biersteker, Burns, Desmond, Feza, Harrison, Martin, Saloojee & Slemming, 2012:2).

2.2.3. Fundamental human needs

According to Max-Neef (1991), human beings have fundamental needs which must be satisfied (i.e. subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity and freedom). If one of these needs is not satisfied, it creates negative emotions that prevent the individual from experiencing well-being and development.

ECD principals must, for instance, meet subsistence needs such as access to food, clothes and shelter to ensure that they function well as members of the Gugulethu community and South Africa at large. Meeting these needs will not only lead to the improved well-being of ECD principals but also the children and community which they serve. This has a multiplier effect of contributing to poverty reduction. ECD principals can only meet subsistence and other needs if the work they do provides them with a decent income to access services in the market. However, Short (1992, cited in Atmore, 1998) estimates that, at the time of his study, some 71% of staff working in educare centres in black communities such as Gugulethu were untrained and there was a high turnover of educare workers due to poor salaries, lack of benefits and job security, and large child-to-adult ratios.

According to Haralambos and Holborn (2004) employment provides the most important and vital means for people to fulfil their basic needs, their individuality and their humanity. Therefore, a decent income and other conditions of service that come along with being

employed not only act as a buffer to poverty but also confers individuals with social legitimacy and access to full citizenship rights (Davids et al.,2009).

Lack of benefits, job security and poor salaries in the ECD sector entails that principals and teachers have no social protection which is one of the fundamental human needs. Lack of social protection for instance, entails that workers have no protection against life-course contingencies such as maternity and old age, or work-related contingencies such as unemployment or sickness. This scenario exposes ECD principals and teachers to poverty and vulnerability.

2.3. Policy Framework Governing Early Childhood development

2.3.1. White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development

In 2001, the Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development identified a number of critical areas to be addressed in an integrated ECD strategy. However, as highlighted by Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper (2012), the document is vague with regards to children four years and younger as it only proposes, “the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration, focusing on improving the quality of early learning programmes.” (Department of Education, 2001:11).

Nevertheless, the White Paper 5 indicates that financial responsibility for Grade R is the responsibility of provincial Education Departments and says that, in the short term, provision is made for subsidies to be paid to schools to allow them to establish Grade R facilities. Eventually Grade R sites will be funded via norms and standards for Grade R funding. The intention is to subsidise Grade R by 75% because, “the financial burden for ECD falls disproportionately on the poor” (Department of Education, 2001:12).

Biersteker and Dawes (2008) observe that Grade R is treated differently to other school grades in respect of the employment of educators and financing methods. The authors highlight that Grade R educators are not employed by the government but are financed via a direct grant-in-aid from provincial departments of education to school governing bodies, which employ the teachers.

In addition, Berry, Jamieson and James (2011) indicate that the Department of Education provides funding for the training fees and a stipend for the persons being trained. The training fee is paid directly to the training service provider. The authors point out that in some

provinces the stipend is also paid through the service provider, but in other provinces it is paid through the ECD centre where the person who is being trained is working.

2.3.2. National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development

The National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development is government's response to early childhood development programmes for 0-4 year olds, also known as *Tshwaragano Ka Bana*. The plan, according to the Department of Education, Department of Social Development, Department of Health & UNICEF (2005), envisages that all ECD practitioners will be supported as professionals with a career ladder, on-going professional development opportunities, and compensation that will attract and retain high quality educators. Theron and Perez (2012) believe that, although this plan recognises the role of ECD centres in providing employment, the objective of creating employment and professionalisation do not necessarily coincide.

The plan recognises a number of different approaches to service delivery in addition to ECD centres, and brings together the departments of Social Development, Health, and Basic Education in interdepartmental committees to address the developmental needs of young children. The plan recognises that ECD services can be delivered in homes, communities and/or ECD centres using a range of approaches including:

- Direct services to children (e.g. ECD centres, clinics or informal community-run playgroups);
- Training of ECD practitioners (e.g. preschool teachers, ECD family workers);
- Parenting education and support through workshops and home visiting programmes;
- Community development initiatives to improve the environment in which young children and their families live; and
- Public awareness campaigns to encourage support for ECD and take up of services.

Hall, Woolard, Lake and Smith (2012) conclude that, even though the plan provides an enabling policy framework that supports the delivery of integrated services for young children, challenges remain in ensuring access to quality services.

2.3.3. Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services

The guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services set out the minimum standards for items relating to health, safety, and nutrition (Department of Social Development and UNICEF, 2006). The following are some of the key elements in the guidelines:

- Parents, communities, non-governmental organisations and government departments have a role to play in ensuring that integrated early childhood development services are provided to children and are holistic and attend to the child's health, nutrition, development, psychosocial and other needs.
- The guidelines stipulate that administrative systems and procedures must be in place to ensure the efficient management of ECD centres and its activities.
- To protect and respect the privacy of families and children, there must be admission policies that provide for children who are affected by, or infected with, HIV and AIDS.
- All practitioners must be trained and must receive on-going training in early childhood development and the management of programmes and facilities for young children. In addition, practitioners should receive training to deal with and identify children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Regarding staff turnover, the guidelines comment that all efforts should be made to limit staff turnover as it is good for children's development if the same practitioners care for them for the whole year. The guidelines observe that if staff members come and go during the year, it often makes children unhappy and insecure.
- Regarding the qualification of practitioners, the guidelines stipulate that the minimum qualification of practitioners is the registered Basic Certificate in ECD NQF Level 1 of the South African Qualifications Authority. ECD centre supervisors should have a minimum qualification of the National Certificate in ECD at NQF Level 4 by the South African Qualifications Authority. They should have management skills that enable them to tackle the various daily responsibilities at a centre, as well as communicate, liaise and meet the needs of all stakeholders at an ECD centre.
- Regarding working with families and communities, the guidelines points out that parents are the primary caregivers of their children and must be involved as much as

possible in the functioning of the centre. As early childhood development services are part of the community, they must make sure that there is a good relationship between them and families.

2.3.4. The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2012) recognises that achieving quality education requires investment in early childhood, starting with improving proper nutrition and diet, especially for children under the age of three, and promoting other key early childhood interventions. In addition, the plan envisages that by 2030, all children should start their learning and development at early childhood development centres.

These centres should be set up and properly monitored. In addition, the National Development Plan recommends that, to overcome the apartheid legacy, everybody in the ECD sector should have access to services of a consistently high standard regardless of whom they are and where they live. This will require that specific consideration be given to the most vulnerable children, those who are living in poverty or with disabilities.

The National Development Plan proposes the introduction of minimum qualifications and formal qualifications for school principals. In addition, the plan proposes that new principals should possess the entry qualifications and gives old principals ten years to acquire the qualifications or be retrenched. However, the plan is silent on the kind of support to be provided to principals and teachers who work in the ECD sector.

2.3.5. Expanded Public Works Programme

According to the Department of Public Works (2009), the South African government has been implementing the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) since 2004 with the purpose of creating jobs for the unemployed utilising labour-intensive rather than capital-based technologies. Le Mottee (2012) indicates that the Expanded Public Works Programme was also introduced as a means to support the evolution of the ECD sector and to put in place possible career options, particularly for the unemployed. In addition, Richter et al (2012) points out that since 2004, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) ECD Programme is a major source of funding for the training of practitioners in early learning and care. DSD identifies practitioners in registered ECD sites and the DBE selects candidates, offers training and pays a stipend during the training. She points out that the current target for 2014 is to train 80,000 practitioners and Grade R teachers at Levels 4 and 5

(Richter, et al., 2012: 32-33). However, Richter et al (2012) observe that, it is not clear how many practitioners have been trained, how many practitioners have been placed in Grade R or in ECD, and how permanent the work opportunities are. She concludes that Grade R, which offers a better salary package, tends to draw practitioners away from ECD, once they have been trained.

According to Berry, Jamieson and James (2011), the training funds from the provincial Departments of Education are seen as part of government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Phase II of the EPWP started in 2009 and offers a potential source of ECD funding in the form of a Community Works Programme (CWP). The CWP supports community-based projects as the communities are selected on poverty-related criteria (Berry, Jamieson & James, 2011). The authors highlights that, within each selected community, community members decide what types of work is needed (for example, road building, school infrastructure, or ECD services).

2.4. Challenges of working in the ECD sector

2.4.1. Working environment

In a study done by Patel (2009), participants working in the services and care sector were in agreement that they were motivated by a desire to help others, to respond to community needs, to access training, learn skills and gain experience with the hope of obtaining employment.

Loffell, Allsopp, Atmore and Monson (2008) point out that there is no minimum wage for ECD workers and thus these educators are exploited. In addition, the survey in 2000 found that almost half of ECD workers earned less than R500 per month. Furthermore, low salaries; no benefits; poor working conditions such as long hours; and the insecurity of working for a 'community project' result in a high staff turnover.

This view is complemented by Altman (2008) who points out that pay at ECD sites appears to be low, and very similar to that earned by low-skilled workers in domestic jobs or the informal retail trade. She adds that the stability of employment and pay can be weak as it depends considerably on the low and sometimes irregular payments from mostly poor households. Furthermore, the author argues that the subsidy, in combination with fees, falls dramatically short of the operational costs, even for sites that pay around R1 000 per month for an ECD teacher.

Altman (2008) highlights that ECD jobs are generally paid as a result of fundraising efforts and payments by poor households themselves. A study done by Carter, Biersteker & Streak, (2008, as cited in Altman, 2008:126) in the Western Cape to explore the costs involved in establishing and operating different types of ECD centres found that, in most cases, salaries and food account for about 50% and 15% of running costs respectively. It is calculated that it would cost approximately R500 to R700 per child per month, not including establishment costs, to operate these ECD centres at a level required by the National Integrated Plan. Furthermore, in these centres, teachers would earn between R1 800 and R3 800 per month, depending on the size and sophistication of the centre. If the centre receives the Department of Social Development subsidy, it would still need to raise R350 to R500 per month to cover its costs (Carter et al., 2008, as cited in Altman 2008:126).

Atmore (1998) adds that money for salaries, equipment and feeding of the children is lacking if not non-existent, especially in ECD centres operating in poorly resourced communities. This is because subsidisation is inadequate (or non-existent) and the parents, whose fees must support the facility, are often unemployed or earn low wages. The author concludes that a serious consequence of the lack of financial resources is the unacceptably high number of children per adult in most programmes.

In addition, Atmore (1998) observes that most centres lack equipment and operate in less than adequate settings. These include plastic shelters, wood and iron structures, backyard shelters and garages.

Altman (2008) highlights that pay for an ECD teacher tends to be linked to their length of service, availability of finance and, to a lesser extent, skill level of the worker. The Human Sciences Research Council case studies show that in the more marginalised centres, teachers might earn about R900 per month, rising to R2 600 in the more resourced centres (Carter et al., 2008).

2.4.2. Training and career development opportunities

According to Ebrahim (2013) the major public response to early care and education in South Africa is centre-based provision which is problematic for a number of reasons. The leading reasons are a lack of demand due to unemployment and poverty, lack of access due to geographical constraints, and variable quality. Ebrahim highlights that most practitioners that

work in these ECD centres are untrained women, and not highly qualified. Although practitioners are keen to improve their qualifications, they are discouraged by the limited ECD career options.

Penn (2008) observes that the Expanded Public Works Programme trains women from poor communities as early childhood workers as part of an employment initiative. Accordingly, the trainees receive a stipend whilst they are training. However, she argues that this raises the question of pay and career opportunities in the ECD sector as pay is very low, most provisions are self-funded, and there are very few career opportunities. This is supported by a study conducted by the Western Cape Department of Social Development (2009) which found that training opportunities, and support from external resources including the Department of Social Development, are limited, but highly valued if offered.

Biersteker and Dawes (2008) points out that the provision of funds for ECD practitioner training is currently inadequate. They add that ECD practitioners are poorly paid and cannot cover the costs of training themselves. ECD learnerships constitute a large component, but data on numbers trained (and of those who successfully completed the training), including those trained by FET colleges, NGOs and in the private sector, could not be provided by the ETDP - SETA.

Le Mottee (2012) observes that, although the EPWP has trained a large number of ECD practitioners (to Level 4 qualification); many have nowhere to go afterwards. As a result, a large number either leave the sector completely, or are absorbed into Grade R teaching (which is a central focus of the current orientation of the EPWP). The consequence is that the practice of ECD has not expanded in capacity where it is most needed.

Theron and Perez (2012) comment that it appears there might be perverse consequences to the drive to professionalise ECD centres, from the perspective of creating sustainable employment. In their study, Theron and Perez (2012) report that a representative from an NGO supporting crèches in a neighbouring area said that the stipends paid to practitioners through EPWP to attend training was more than many owners could pay in salaries, so qualified ECD educators often found themselves earning less than when they were training. The authors conclude that this also contributes to attrition of ECD professionals and the struggle to attract people to the profession.

Hyde and Kabiru (2003) write that the demand for ECD training far exceeds the available capacity and there are still many untrained teachers. In addition, there is inadequate

supervision and follow-up with trainees by the ECD trainers both during and after training. In addition, ECD teachers have poor terms and conditions of service. In most cases they are employed by different bodies including private organisations, NGOs, individuals and communities. Their salaries vary tremendously, with those employed by communities earning low and irregular wages. The low salaries and lack of status tend to demoralise the teachers, affects quality and impacts equity. The authors highlight that most governments do not employ preschool teachers.

2.4.3. Support from stakeholders

Hyde and Kabiru (2003) highlight that in most African countries, a major proportion of resources for ECD services is provided by parents and communities, national NGOs and international funding agencies. Communities meet the costs of ECD services by putting up physical facilities, providing equipment and materials and paying staff. In some countries local authorities finance ECD by employing teachers and supervisors, constructing facilities, sponsoring the training of teachers and supervisors and providing materials and equipment.

Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper (2012) highlight that, in South Africa, the vast portion of ECD centre funding nation-wide comes from fees paid by parents. Government funding for ECD comes mainly from the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education at the provincial level. The authors highlight that there are two primary ways in which the Department of Social Development in each province provides funding to ECD. The first means of funding is through a subsidy for registered ECD facilities, calculated at R15 per child per day (but varying by province, in some instances) for those children from birth to four years of age. Not all children qualify to receive the subsidy as children whose parent's/caregiver's income falls above a specific level (as assessed by an income means test) are not eligible for the subsidy. This means that only those ECD facilities that cater to the poorest of families benefit from this subsidy (Giese, Budlender, Berry, Motlatla & Zide, 2011). Another form of funding by the Department of Social Development is by NPOs that provide capacity development and support services to ECDs either at community or ECD centre level.

Penn (2008:31) observes that 20% of ECD centres receive grants which are given directly to the centre, and their use is restricted. This has to be spent directly on services for the children, food and equipment and so on – it cannot be used for basic staff or other running costs.

On the other hand, the Department of Education provides funding to ECD centres for Grade R programmes. The three primary channels of funding are: funding for Grade R in public schools; subsidies for registered community-based Grade R facilities (either in the form of a per child subsidy or as the payment of salaries for Grade R teachers); and funding for training fees and stipends for those ECD practitioners who receive learnerships (Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper, 2012).

Even where ECD centres have successfully gained subsidies for children in low-income families, the DSD subsidies, “do not cover even the minimum staff ratios at low salaries” (Carter et al., 2009, cited in Giese et al., 2011). In fact ECD centres struggle to pay decent salaries to staff, and many run at a loss.

The City of Cape Town (2013) points out that educational equipment and material is lacking in poorer areas such as Gugulethu, which limits teachers’ ability to expand children’s opportunities for play and development. However, to address this challenge several sub-councils provide ward allocations (grant) funding for ECD educational materials and training.

This argument is complemented by Theron and Perez (2012) who write that the City of Cape Town also offers free training to ECD workers and their governing bodies. The increased emphasis on training of ECD practitioners has been described as one of the most significant shifts in ECD services over the past five years (Giese, et al., 2011).

According to Hyde and Kabiru (2003) in many Sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana, Ghana and Nigeria, communities play a central role in the management of ECD programmes. People come together, identify land, and contribute money, labour, time and other resources required for putting up the centre. Usually an elected committee manages the ECD centre and a caregiver or teacher from the community is paid from fees collected from parents.

In addition, parents may also provide food and learning materials. The day-to-day management of the programme is carried out by a committee elected by the parents and community. However, many community-led programmes may run into problems as the fees charged may not be high enough to support the caregiver on a regular basis or provide enough quality inputs (Hyde and Kabiru, 2003). In some countries there is concern that parents and local communities are over-dependent on NGOs and other agencies in the provision of ECD services and programmes (Hyde and Kabiru, 2003).

In terms of resource mobilisation by ECD centres, a study by Carter et al., (2008) found that fundraising was sourced either from donors or from community events. The authors point out that fundraising in poor communities was not successful in any of the case studies. In addition, they found that fundraising from donors was only possible for ECD centres that had sufficient capability in financial reporting. Furthermore, in some urban centres, about 5% to 10% of parents paid intermittently, depending on their circumstances.

According to Berry, Jamieson and James (2011) the Department of Social Development (DSD) is the lead department responsible for implementation of the sections of the Children's Act (No. 41 of 2007) that deals with ECD services. The Act states that the provincial head of Social Development is responsible for the registration of partial care facilities and of ECD programmes, but it allows the provincial Head of Social Development to hand over some or all of the registration duties to a municipality. In a study by Theron and Perez (2012), one ECD owner interviewed described the process of applying for funding from DSD and other sources as a full time job, particularly without access to a computer.

Another form of community support for ECD centres in communities is their respective ECD Forums. In Theron and Perez's (2012) study, some participants revealed that the Forum had been particularly helpful in helping the ECD centre handle a particularly sensitive incident with a staff member that ended with her dismissal. On the other hand, others felt that the Forum is not helpful in addressing the challenges that ECD teachers face.

2.4.4. Some suggestions from the literature to address challenges

According to Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper (2012) there has been an under-emphasis on the development of the basic skills of management at ECD centres, especially financial management; general administration; record keeping and staff recruitment; selection; and development. The authors argue that, in order to improve learning environments, there is a need to strengthen the management of ECD centres, particularly in the areas of governance, management, financial management, fundraising, human resource management, report-writing and registration with the provincial Departments of Social Development.

Hyde and Kabiru (2003) observe that in Sub-Saharan Africa there is a gender imbalance among ECD teachers. Only Zambia and Kenya have a female percentage less than 60% whereas in other countries female teachers represent more than 60% of their ECD teaching force. Djibouti, Seychelles and Mauritius report that they do not have any male ECD teachers

and 14 countries have a female teaching force over 90%. The authors argue that this wide imbalance raises questions about the impact of the absence of men in ECD centres on the development of young children, especially boys, who may miss out on male role models during these formative years. Primary education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa that have a high proportion of female teachers also tend to have higher female enrolments.

In addition, Altman (2008) comments that the low pay and uncertainty encourages those trained through the ECD programmes to leave as soon as a better opportunity becomes available. This poses a threat to the expansion of quality ECD services.

According to Biersteker and Dawes (2008) there should be an appropriate job-grading or career ladder and rate of pay at each grade. The author proposes that these grades would more explicitly cover skills ranging from Adult Basic Education and Training to National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels 7/8. Examples range from cook, cleaner, child minder, volunteer, different levels of ECD practitioner, supervision, financial management, quality control, to multi-site management or trainer.

According to Loffell, Allsopp, Atmore and Monson (2008), there were 7 332 practitioners in subsidised ECD sites in training. However, there is no educator development strategy or programme for the ECD sector that takes into account overall needs. The authors highlight that a training and development strategy for ECD personnel is urgent, as is advocacy for professional recognition of ECD workers. The lack of a clear regulatory framework for ECD personnel inhibits planning and action.

A number of studies have identified the potential for ECD to generate affordable jobs (Altman, 2006). The author observes that ECD for children from birth to five years offers the largest employment opportunity, since this is where the largest service gap lies, potentially creating half a million jobs depending on the type of model implemented by government to intensify services and relieve backlogs.

According to Hyde and Kabiru (2003), effective ECD programmes result from well-coordinated efforts of different partners including parents, communities, civil society, and local and national governments, NGOs and funding agencies. All of these play a significant role in establishing, managing and financing ECD programmes. The authors conclude that, to increase access to, and improve the quality of, sustainable integrated ECD services, different stakeholders need to collaborate and work in partnership, complementing and supporting one another.

Harrison (2012) argues that the requirement that facilities must register as both an ECD programme and facility should be lifted. There should be a single registration process for all ECD programmes, with specified sections dealing with centre- and non-centre-based programmes.

According to Richter et al (2012) there is need for a human resource development strategy to pay staff in early learning centres, improve staff qualifications and retain ECD workers. She proposes that this should include an audit of existing staff qualifications and resourcing for initial training and upgrading for all workers in the sector including those in support and monitoring positions, as well as centre-based and outreach ECD practitioners.

2.5. Summary

This chapter has presented a review of literature related to the research topic. The following chapter presents a detailed discussion of the methodological processes that were employed when conducting the research study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology used in the study. The chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part covers the research design, sampling strategy and procedure. The second provides information on data collection, data analysis and data verification. The third highlights the limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.2. Research design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) research design can be understood as “a plan or blue print of how” the study is conducted. In this study, the qualitative approach was adopted as the researcher sought to explore the complex nature of the challenges and opportunities that faced participants. The qualitative research paradigm, according to De Vos et al (2011:65) refers to “research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. Accordingly, this approach helped the researcher to describe and understand the challenges and opportunities that early childhood development centre principals’ experience (positive or negative) in providing services to children in Gugulethu from their point of view (Leedy and Ormrod 2005).

In addition, the approach also allowed the researcher to collect rich unique data using the in-depth interview method. This enabled me to interact with participants more freely and explore in detail the meaning they attached to their everyday life of working in the ECD sector. An inductive approach to data analysis was used as pointed out by De Vos et al (2011) that qualitative data analysis is a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorising far removed from structured, mechanical and technical procedures.

3.3. Sampling strategy and procedure

According to De Vos et al (2011:223) a sample “comprises elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study.” For this study, the sample comprised of twenty ECD principals. This section will highlight the steps that were followed in arriving at the sample.

3.3.1. Sampling type

The sampling type that was used in this study is purposive sampling which falls under non-probability sampling. The researcher used purposive sampling method because he wanted a sample that represented some attributes of the population to serve the purpose of the study. Therefore to gain access to this sample the researcher worked closely with organisations that work with ECD principals in Gugulethu, namely the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Department of Social Development, Gugulethu office.

These organisations gave the researcher a list of forty registered centres in Gugulethu, containing their contact details. From this list, the researcher contacted the prospective participants to ask them to participate in the study.

3.3.2. Sampling criteria

The twenty participants were selected using clearly stated criteria of: an adult (female or male) who worked as a principal or owned an ECD centre in Gugulethu that was registered with the provincial Department of Social Development. In addition, the participant should have worked in the ECD sector for three or more years. Interestingly, all participants in this study were female.

3.4. Data collection

The researcher used semi-structured, in-depth interviews to collect data from participants. Data collection was conducted from the 3rd July 2013 to 31st August 2013 in Gugulethu, Cape Town. In order to capture all the words spoken by the participants, the researcher used a digital recorder to record all the interviews. The digital recorder was used as it allowed the researcher to fully focus on the proceedings of the interview as well as take note of the observable objects and behaviours. It also enabled the researcher to establish rapport with the participants throughout the interview process.

3.4.1. Data collection tool

Greeff (2011) highlights that semi-structured, in-depth interviews are important in qualitative research as they determine individuals' perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts, and their reactions to initial findings and potential solutions. In addition, Greeff (2011:347) defines this type of interview as "those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth."

Accordingly, the researcher used semi-structured interviews as a tool in gathering data from the participants.

3.4.2. Interview process

All the twenty interviews followed the same process. The interview sessions first began by both parties introducing themselves. The researcher then explained once again to the participants the aim and objectives of the study as an academic requirement for Masters Students at the University of Cape Town.

The researcher then explained the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality to the participants and clarified that there were no associated benefits that would accrue to them by taking part in the study. In addition, the participants were encouraged to answer questions freely as the researcher was not looking for 'right' answers and they were advised that they were under no obligation to answer all the questions.

Thereafter, the researcher confirmed the voluntary participation of participants by asking for their written consent (see Appendix A). Consent was also obtained to use a voice recorder and interview schedule. In addition, the researcher assigned participants pseudonyms for anonymity.

Having done this, the researcher introduced a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix C) which asked for the biographical details of the participants such as age, highest level of education, ECD courses completed, residence and number of years working as a principal. After the participant had completed the questionnaire, the researcher utilised the voice recorder, and the interview guide (referred to in section 3.4.3 below) to guide the participant in answering the questions. The order of questions varied from participant to participant.

Once the interview came to a close, the researcher switched off the voice recorder and asked the participant how they felt about the interview process, and if they had any additional information which they would like to share or questions to ask the researcher. After this process, the researcher thanked the participant for their valuable time and participation as well as wished them well in their job. Finally, the researcher left the venue of the interview.

3.4.3. Data collection instrument

A flexible semi-structured interview schedule was used by the researcher as an interview guide during data collection (see Appendix D). This tool helped the researcher to be focused and discursive as well as allowed him and his participants to explore the issue under study in

detail. However, this tool was used as a guide allowing the researcher to ask questions outside of the interview schedule in circumstances where the researcher saw the need to probe the participants further.

The semi-structured interview guide contained six major themes centred on the six research objectives and questions of the study which asked the principals about their challenges and opportunities when working in the ECD sector. In addition, the questions asked about their motivation to work in the ECD sector, working environment, support received from stakeholders, opportunities and what they felt were the changes needed to improve service delivery in the ECD sector.

3.5. Data analysis and interpretation

After conducting interviews, the researcher listened to them one by one. This was done to ascertain whether or not the researcher had captured useful information in line with the research objectives and questions. Next, the researcher transcribed these manually and printed out the interview transcripts for data analysis. According to Mason (1996:7) data analysis can be understood as, “a range of techniques for sorting, organising and indexing data.” In analysing the data, the study used an adaptation of the Tesch model cited in De Vos (1998). Find below an outline of steps that I followed:

- 1 The researcher transcribed all twenty interviews and analysed each transcript to have a comprehensive understanding of the data collected.
- 2 After reading all the transcripts, the researcher selected and read one transcript with the view to understanding the respondent’s answers in relation to the objectives of the study.
- 3 In analysing the data, labels were assigned to each transcript, so as to get an understanding of respondents’ meaning.
- 4 The text was then coded according to main themes, categories and sub-categories.
- 5 Supplementary refinement of this coding was done, in order to arrive at a coding schema, which made sense of the data.
- 6 The research findings were then written up using the coding scheme as a guide.

- 7 Concrete quotes from respondents were used to exemplify the themes, categories and sub-categories. The quotes were then correlated to various authors in the literature review.
- 8 In discussing the research findings, the researcher added his critical observations by comparing and contrasting the findings with those of other studies. The objective of this exercise was to conclude whether the findings were similar or different.

3.6. Data verification

Assessing the quality of data collected in a research undertaking is a worthwhile activity to ensure that questions surrounding internal and external validity or representativeness, reliability and objectivity are answered. In this type of research study, four constructs (i.e. dependability, transferability, credibility and conformability) reflect the assumption of the qualitative paradigm more accurately (Lincoln and Guba, 1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2011). This section will discuss in detail each of these four constructs.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011), the construct of **dependability** in a study seeks to examine whether using the same procedures and processes would produce the same results in the same context. Therefore to ensure dependability in this study, the researcher provided a detailed account of every step taken in the chapter on methodology. It is also highlighted above how the data was analysed to arrive at the conclusions and findings. Hoepful (1997) argues that dependability is used to examine both the process and product of the research for consistency.

De Vos, et al (2011:420) comments that under the construct of **transferability** “the researcher asks whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another.” In this study, the researcher did not particularly emphasise the issue of transferability. But instead the focus was on understanding the topic under investigation with the particular characteristics of principals who worked in a registered ECD centre in Gugulethu.

In this study, the researcher ensured **credibility** in four main ways. Firstly, the researcher accurately identified and defined the sample by strictly following the selection criteria as outlined earlier. Secondly, the researcher used the literature review to ensure that there was a theoretical framework to work with, and that the research activities were within the

parameters of the study. Thirdly, the researcher worked with a colleague and supervisor who checked the data and provided critical feedback during the research process.

Confirmability is more concerned with the degree to which the findings of the study can be confirmed by another researcher as a result of the study data and not the researcher's own opinions and bias (De Vos, et al., 2011). The researcher undertook the following steps to ensure that the findings are free from the biasness and opinion of the researcher. The researcher had to summarise to the participant what he understood in order to confirm whether he had captured correctly or otherwise their view. After listening to the interviews when transcribing, the researcher took deliberate effort to go back in the field to counter check where he noticed inconsistency with the participant's responses. In addition, the researcher backed his views and findings with empirical evidence through the use of actual quotes from participants.

3.7. Limitations of the study

The researcher identified two major constraints that are associated with the research methodology used in this research study. These were associated with the sample size and context, and the data collection process.

3.7.1. Sample size and context

Qualitative studies by their nature usually involve small samples when compared to quantitative designs which in itself are a major shortcoming. This poses a challenge as the findings cannot be generalised to other situations. Similarly, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other principals in other settings as the sample which was used is too small and only targeted participants in one community of Gugulethu. However, the focus of this study was not on generalising the findings to other settings but to understand the unique challenges and opportunities that participants faced in providing services to young children.

3.7.2. Data collection process

The researcher conducted the interviews at the ECD centres of the participants where they worked and hence in some instances, there was noise which arose from children singing and clapping during their activities. This noise acted as an obstruction in terms of the participant and researcher getting clearly what was being asked and answered in certain instances. However, the researcher took time to clarify what was being said by repeating the questions.

3.8. Summary

This chapter covered the research methodology that was adopted by the researcher in this study. The chapter was divided into three main parts. The first part covered the research design, sampling strategy and procedure. The research design that was used in the study was qualitative as the researcher sought to capture the feelings and experiences of 20 principals regarding the challenges and opportunities they were going through when providing services to children in Gugulethu. The second part provided a presentation of data collection, data analysis and data verification. The third part highlighted the research limitations. The next chapter that follows focuses on the findings and discusses the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is based on the data obtained and analysed from the undertaking of 20 interviews with ECD principals in Gugulethu Township on their challenges and opportunities in providing services to children. The first section provides a discussion of the profile of the participants (see Table 1). The second section is a detailed discussion of the findings as captured by the framework (see Table 2).

4.2. Profile of participants

All of the participants in this study were female and aged between 44 and 74 years, with 17 (85%) residing within Gugulethu and 3 (15%) in Khayelitsha. This finding confirms the observation by Altman (2008) that the majority of workers in the ECD sector are women. This wide imbalance raises questions about the impact of the absence of men in ECD centres on the development of young children, especially boys who may miss the presence of male role models during these formative years (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003).

Despite having different education levels, ranging from Grade 9 to Bachelor's degrees, all had completed an ECD course, the lowest being ECD NQF Level 3 and the highest being a diploma. Therefore, all participants, apart from one, met the requirements of the guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services which require that ECD centre supervisors have a minimum qualification of the National Certificate in ECD at NQF Level 4 by the South African Qualifications Authority.

The majority had more than ten years of working experience as an ECD principal with only two having worked for less than ten years. The majority of participants did not own the building in which the centre was operating in, only 6 (30%) owned the buildings as individuals.

The next section will draw on the key characteristics presented in the Table below.

Table 1: Profile of participants

Participant	Sex	Age	Education level and ECD Course done (NQF level)	Owner of centre building	No. of years of working as principal	Residence
M1	F	46	Grade 11 & NQF 5	City of Cape Town	20	Gugulethu
M2	F	50	Grade 12 & NQF 4	Principal	7	Gugulethu
M3	F	44	Grade 12 & NQF 6	Family	20	Gugulethu
M4	F	50	Grade 9 & NQF 5	City of Cape Town	17	Gugulethu
M5	F	74	Grade 11 & NQF 4	Principal	18	Gugulethu
M6	F	49	Grade 8 & NQF 4	Community	3	Gugulethu
M7	F	53	Grade 11 & Diploma	City of Cape Town	20	Gugulethu
M8	F	60	Grade 11 & NQF 4	Church	13	Khayelitsha
M9	F	56	Grade 12 & NQF 5	Community	24	Gugulethu
M10	F	64	Bachelor's Degree & NQF 5	Principal	10	Gugulethu
M11	F	45	Grade 12 & NQF 5	Alchaad Org	10	Gugulethu
M12	F	55	Grade 11 & NQF 4	Community	21	Gugulethu
M13	F	53	Grade 12 & Diploma	Principal	18	Gugulethu
M14	F	71	Grade 11 & NQF 4	Family	28	Gugulethu
M15	F	49	Grade 10 & NQF 4	Community	20	Gugulethu
M16	F	59	Grade 12 & NQF 5	City of Cape Town	22	Gugulethu
M17	F	51	Grade 11 & NQF 5	City of Cape Town	16	Gugulethu
M18	F	48	Grade 12 & NQF 4	Principal	14	Gugulethu
M19	F	61	Grade 11 & NQF 3	Child Welfare	19	Khayelitsha
M20	F	52	Grade 10 & NQF 4	Principal	17	Khayelitsha

4.3. Analysis and discussion of research findings

Table 2: Framework for analysis and discussion

THEMES		CATEGORIES
4.4	Motivation	4.4.1 Personal description
		4.4.2 Love and wellbeing for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unemployment ✓ To learn about ECD
4.5	Working environment	4.5.1 Working in the ECD sector
		4.5.2 Direct responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Most enjoyed ✓ Disliked
		4.5.3 Education and ECD training
		4.5.4 Financing
		4.5.5 Conditions of service
		4.5.6 Working relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nearby ECD centres ✓ Parents ✓ Community
4.6	Support from stakeholders	4.6.1 Assistance received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Feeding ✓ Funding ✓ Education equipment ✓ Coaching and mentorship
		4.6.2 Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Government ✓ Private sector ✓ NGOs
		4.6.3 Views on support provided
		4.6.4 Support needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Service provider
4.7	Challenges faced	4.7.1 Significant challenges faced
		4.7.2 Source of challenges
		4.7.3 Dealing with challenges
4.8	Opportunities and future plans	4.8.1 Opportunities
		4.8.2 Future plans
		4.8.3 Means to realise plans
		4.8.4 Support needed to realise plans
4.9	Suggested improvements	4.9.1 National government
		4.9.2 Provincial government
		4.9.3 City of Cape Town
		4.9.4 Gugulethu community

4.4. Motivation

This theme gives insight to how participants described themselves and their motivation for working in the ECD sector. This gave an opportunity for the researcher to establish rapport as well as to understand the participants in the research.

4.4.1. Personal description

The research brought on board participants of different personalities who described themselves in a number of ways. Most participants described themselves by their name, marital status, their job title and then outlined their reasons for working in the ECD sector:

“I am [name withheld], married with four kids, staying in Gugulethu since I was born in 1949.... I started operating this crèche because of my grandchildren; I did not have someone to stay with them in 1999.” (M11)

“I am [name withheld].... I was married but my husband passed away after we had divorced.... I started working here in 1992/3. I just love children.” (M7)

“I am [name withheld]; I am the principal of since 2000. Yes, before I was a teacher that was from 1997 until 2000. Then I was promoted to be a principal. So I have been a principal since 2000 until now.” (M17)

Some participants such as M20 went further, stating their age, length of service and where they resided:

“My name is [name withheld]. I am 52 years old; I am the principal of.....ECD centre. I have been working here for 17 years but I am staying in Khayelitsha.....” (M20)

4.4.2. Love and wellbeing for children

The study revealed that participants were motivated to work in the ECD sector by a number of factors. The majority were motivated by their love for, and the wellbeing of, children as life in Gugulethu was regarded as “tough”. This is exemplified by the following comments:

“I love the children and also I wanted the children to be safe because life in Gugulethu is tough.” (M15)

“I started getting the feeling that children are just running around here doing nothing and children are being raped, children are molested.” (M14)

“.....There were very few preschools at that time, so we realised there were many children playing around with no supervision in the streets, so these children were in danger of being abused.....” (M10)

“At that time in Gugulethu, there were many fights, people were fighting and children did not have people or places where they could be taken care of.... so I decided that I should take care of children...” (M1)

In addition, lack of employment was another factor that motivated some participants to work in the sector:

“... mostly because I did not have a job I used to be a housewife so I went around trying to find a job and I was motivated to do training.....” (M7)

“Because there was lack of employment at that time, I found myself being in this field” (M3)

Interestingly, one participant was motivated by her eagerness to learn about ECD:

“To learn more about ECD because I didn’t know anything about ECD so I started as a volunteer.”(M16)

Similarly, a study done by Patel (2009) found that participants working in the services and care sector were in agreement that they were motivated by a desire to help others, to respond to community needs, to access training, learn skills and gain experience with the hope of obtaining employment.

4.5. Working environment

This theme attempted to understand the working environment of the participants in terms of working in the ECD sector, their responsibilities, conditions of service and working relationship with other actors such as other ECD centres, parents, non-governmental organisations, their community, private businesses, and government.

4.5.1. Working in the ECD sector

There were contradictions in participants’ views of working in the ECD sector. Some participants described it as a not “nice sector” while others described it as a “nice”, “wonderful and challenging” sector for various reasons as recorded below. One participant said:

“It is not a nice sector because sometimes we do this job because of the love of children not because of the love of the money.....The little money we get from the ECD subsidy, we pay the staff, and also we buy the groceries. We combine that money with the school fees so that we can give the salaries to our staff but you find that some other times we do not have the money so we have to sacrifice, in order to get paid. Even now I did not get the subsidy from the Department of Social Development so I have to make it a point; I had to borrow from the bank to pay the staff.” (M17)

This finding resonates well with the observation by Altman (2008) that the subsidy from the Department of Social Development, in combination with fees, falls dramatically short of the operational costs of ECD centres.

Some participants said:

“... It is nice working in the ECD sector but there are some challenges financially. For instance, here in Gugulethu we don't get sponsors easily, sponsors go to Philippi, Khayelitsha.” (M10)

“This sector is a wonderful sector,...because without this [ECD centre] many children fall astray and it is like you are giving them a start in life.....” (M8)

It seems that centres in Gugulethu were affected by statistical discrimination as they do not easily get sponsors compared to those in Philippi and Khayelitsha townships.

Some participants revealed that working in the ECD sector was a struggle as most parents cannot afford to pay the fees they were charging:

“We are struggling in my community, we are charging the parents school fees [most are failing to pay] but we are not sending anyone home....” (M11)

This finding is supported by Atmore (1998) who argues that centres operating in poorly resourced communities lack money for salaries, equipment and feeding of the children because subsidisation is inadequate (or non-existent) and the parents, whose fees must support the facility, are often unemployed or earn low wages.

There was no consensus on participants' views as to whether working in the ECD sector was better in previous times, as explained by these participants:

“My view is that now it is difficult, it is not like the past, in the past it was very interesting, we used to have many workshops, the centres [Grassroots, Centre for Early Childhood Development, Early Learning Resource Unit] used to call the principals to show them how [to] do ECD books, how the classroom should look, how to read, how to deal with the classroom and stress, but now I do not see that anymore. Now it seems everybody is just interested in money.” (M16)

It seems the lack of workshops which used to be held on a regular basis by NGOs working in the ECD sector (e.g. Grassroots, Centre for Early Childhood Development, Early Learning Resource Unit) led to some participants' feeling that working in the ECD sector is more difficult now.

Some participants felt that, although working in the ECD sector was better now, there were still some challenges around salaries and food for the children:

“It is a little better now but it is not exactly the way that I want because we are still getting the minimum salary of R2000. If at least, if the maximum could be R5000.” (M20)

“When I started it was a bit tough because I was using my husband’s money for buying food, because that time a child would only pay between R10-R15. Now it is better but not better for food because food is very expensive....” (M14)

Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake, & Smith (2013) point out that lack of clear legal obligation for the funding of ECD programmes for children pre-grade R make many centres lack the necessary resources to offer a basic learning programme and food.

4.5.2. Direct responsibilities

Generally, the participants performed a number of responsibilities in addition to their main role as managers. The majority described their direct responsibilities as ranging from calling parent meetings, attending ECD Forum meetings, supervision, managing, cooking, administration, teaching and bookkeeping:

“I manage all the staff and the school.” (M16)

“To look for the children’s food, to cook for them, to give them the education and my responsibility is also to supervise the teachers, to see what they are doing.” (M1)

“I do administration, I also teach a Grade R class because I want to lead by example. I do not want the teachers to complain that they cannot teach. I am teaching literature that is English.” (M11)

“I look after the accounts books, I must claim money from social development, attend forum meetings. If I had a teacher to teach [she also teaches] I can be free to do my things.” (M6)

Interestingly, some participants revealed that, apart from managing their centres, they also provided in-service training to their teachers:

“I do manage the centre as a whole. So I know everything here, so I can monitor them and also do some in-service training...” (M7)

Some participants revealed that the responsibilities they enjoyed the most were administration, working with children and teaching:

“Apart from administration, I enjoy the most teaching the children. Like I mentioned I am teaching Grade R.” (M11)

“I love working with children [teaching].” (M10)

In terms of what they disliked, participants said:

“I do not like to sit in the office and to be my own boss. I like to be hands on.” (M16)

“... I like to work anywhere, like teaching children or being in the kitchen, apart from being a principal.”(M6)

Most participants stated that what they disliked the most are the challenges, especially the late payment of salaries to teachers as they often did not receive the subsidy from the Department of Social Development on time. This was based on the fact that participants depended on parent fees and the subsidy to pay their staff and to buy food. The following were some of their comments:

“... The only thing is not to fulfil the agreement you have with your workers, that makes me very sad. You cannot wake up in the morning taking the bag to work and then at the end of the month, because the [Department of Social Development] didn't fulfil the agreement with me [paying the ECD subsidy]” (M13)

“What I dislike is when there is no money to pay the teachers. I usually have sleepless nights.” (M11)

“Sometimes parents don't pay, Social Development does not give us enough money and teachers need their money. Sometimes I don't even get paid. I must look for money for teachers. Sometimes even for three months I don't get paid.”(M1)

This finding confirms the study by Theron and Perez (2012) who interviewed owners of ECD centres in Delft who all said that their own pay depended on whatever money was left after all other expenses had been paid, and that this sometimes left them with nothing.

Some participants, whose centres received funding from both the Departments of Social Development and Education, indicated too many responsibilities as their major dislike. They revealed that, despite having too many responsibilities, their salaries were still not enough, as stated by this participant:

“It is now too much responsibilities ... The Department of Education, they expect so much from you, the Department of Social Development, they expect so much from you, yet even when we do not get enough salaries.” (M10)

4.5.3. Education and ECD training

The participants had varying educational levels. The majority (16) had completed grade 11 or grade 12 while the remaining four had grade 10 and below. All the participants had done an ECD course, two had NQF level three, eight had NQF level four, seven had NQF level five, and three had done NQF level six at 12 different training centres within Cape Town.

Interestingly, three participants had pursued further training with two having a diploma in ECD while one had a Bachelor's degree in Education. In addition, some of the participants had been trained in a number of areas such as basic health, gardening, management, drug abuse, computer studies, science and technology as well as in other skills. Participants revealed that:

"I have skills in gardening.... I also have skills in home care, basic health, and drug abuse." (M1)

"I have done level 5 and a diploma in ECD." (M7)

"I have got level 1 through level 5. I have done science and technology [courses] ... I have done computer studies ... I had to go for education, I started to do a Bachelor of Education but I didn't finish it." (M13)

This finding disputes the assertion by Ebrahim (2013) that most practitioners that work in ECD centres are untrained women, and not highly qualified. To the contrary, all of the women in this study were trained and some were highly qualified.

Participants revealed that the various ECD training they had been exposed to was very helpful in managing their respective centres:

"Yes, it has helped me a lot, I can now manage my books, before I did not know but now I know how to manage my centre....." (M20)

"The training has indeed helped me in managing the centre..." (M11)

"It has helped me [the ECD training], I am not so much in the teaching of children, but I know when the teachers are not doing the right things. I know that they are getting a good education." (M8)

4.5.4. Financing

Most participants mainly relied on three sources of funding to finance the operation of their centres. These are school fees from parents and the subsidies from the Departments of Education and Social Development. The majority of participants depended on parent fees and the subsidy from the Department of Social Development to pay salaries and buy food and equipment as only a few received funding from the Department of Education. When participants were asked how they financed their operations, they revealed that:

"I receive money [a subsidy] from the Department of Education and Social Development." (M9)

“Just from the two sources: from the Department of Social Development and parent fees.” (M20)

“The funds [subsidy] we get from the Department of Social Development and the [R50, R70] we get from the parents.” (M18)

“I receive money [subsidy] from the Department of Social Development and most of the children pay the fees but the money I use to buy food for them and other stuff are from Social Development. Also I buy food and pay the staff.” (M15)

“I get fees from the parents, those that can manage to pay as it is not everyone who can manage to pay fees, and the bit of money we get from the Department of Social Development. We try to do a bit of fundraising but it does not go far.” (M14)

Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper (2012) highlight that in South Africa the vast portion of ECD centre funding nationwide is from parents’ fees. Government funding for ECD comes mainly from the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education at the provincial level.

Participants indicated that some parents are reluctant to pay school fees, especially after the month of June:

“The parents, from the beginning of the year, they do pay the school fees up to June, although they continue making excuses, so you find that only 35 have paid out of 97...” (M17)

Some participants explained that the inability by some parents to pay fees was as a result of lack of employment, as revealed by this participant:

“Some of the parents are not employed...” (M3)

Only one participant indicated that her centre was receiving funding from a non-governmental organisation (Community Chest) on a monthly basis:

“We do have funding from Community Chest ... They give us approximately R1 700 a month.” (M8)

Some participants stated that the City of Cape Town had financed their centres:

“This year, we have a surprise from the City of Cape Town; they gave us R16 000 to buy toys for the children. This is the first time.” (M11)

“We got R25 000 in June this year [from the City of Cape Town] to renovate our building. We can buy toys for the children, mattresses, anything for the children..” (M18)

This finding supports the claim by the City of Cape Town (2013) that several sub-councils provide ward allocations (grant) funding for ECD educational materials and training.

Some participants indicated that the subsidy from the Department of Education only catered for the salary of the Grade R teacher and equipment. This made some participants wonder what the department expected the children to eat:

“[The] Department of Education is not funding us, they are funding the Grade R teachers, because 80% of the subsidy goes to the Grade R teacher’s salaries and then the 20% is for running costs, you cannot buy food from [the] Department of Education’s money.....So they don't seem to understand that we need to feed these children, yes we do, and because we can't say you are a Grade R you cannot eat.”
(M13)

This finding points to the need to implement the recommendation by the National Development Plan (National Planning Commission 2012) that to achieve quality education, there is a need for investment in early childhood, starting with improving proper nutrition and diet, especially for children under the age of three years, and promoting other key early childhood interventions.

Participants revealed that they fundraise but in most cases they do not raise enough funds. Generally participant’s fundraising activities were carried out within their centres targeting the parents of children. In some instances they also targeted organisations outside Gugulethu. The following were their comments:

“We try to fundraise... our fundraising does not do that much...maybe we can make R400 but it is something that can buy things like vegetables and fruits for the children.” (M16)

“I write funding proposals.... like two years ago we got something. Eskom is the other place that helped us with funds.” (M12)

“We give the parents collection sheets, they collect money outside [Gugulethu] and so on and we try and write to the sponsors but you never get anything from the sponsors.....” (M14)

This finding is consistent with a study by Carter et al., (2008) which found that funds by ECD centres was sourced either from donors or from community events. Similar to this study, the authors pointed out that fundraising in poor communities was mostly unsuccessful in the case studies.

4.5.5. Conditions of service

The majority of the participants revealed that they were not satisfied with their conditions of service. They particularly voiced their lack of satisfaction with their salaries. This is what participants had to say:

“.. I would say I am not satisfied with my conditions of service ... I do not have a problem with the hours that I work here ... But I do have a problem with my salary, like for instance this month. I have had to take money from my own pocket, from my salary savings because the money did not come in [subsidy from the Department of Social Development] I am not happy with what I am getting paid.” (M7)

“The hours we work are not a problem ... my salary is not right.” (M12)

“It is too little [salary], I am not satisfied ... My salary is R1 700 a month. For these teachers it is R1 500 per month.” (M6)

“I would not say I am satisfied with my conditions of service because we have got nothing. Look at me, I am 71 years old and I have got nothing in my hands that I can say that I have saved this or I have done this.” (M14)

This finding strongly supports the observation by Loffell, Allsopp, Atmore and Monson (2008) who highlight that there is no minimum wage for ECD workers and these educators are exploited. In addition, these practitioners have low salaries, no benefits, poor working conditions such as long hours, and the insecurity of working for a ‘community project’ results in a high staff turnover.

4.5.6. Working relationships

Most of the participants revealed that they had very good working relationships with other nearby ECD centres as they did not only share information but also supported each other in various ways especially during periods when the Department of Social Development had delayed in paying them the subsidy. They stated that:

“We have a very good working relationship.” (M18)

“It’s very good, and also I am the chairperson of all the Gugulethu centres [Forum]...” (M15)

“Good because we have a Forum and then if you have got something that is not going right you can easily go to share with others and sometimes we exchange the teachers.” (M13)

In addition, they revealed that they have an ECD Forum in Gugulethu which acted as a platform bringing them together to share experiences and information amongst themselves and outsiders. Some participants said the Forum:

“Is very helpful, because it’s where we discuss how to run our schools, to work with people, even how to work with the Department of Social Development.” (M1)

“We are working very well, we are helping each other, because we have got the Forum that’s where we go and share information.” (M17)

This finding reveals that one form of community support for ECD centres is their respective Forums. This confirms a study done by Theron and Perez (2012) where participants revealed that the forum had been particularly helpful in managing their ECD centres.

Most participants indicated that they had good working relationships with parents of children. They revealed that some parents attend meetings when called and others provided help in the form of food. Some participants had this to say:

“Yes we [have] got a good working relationship, when we call the meetings they come.” (M9)

“Our relationship is good, sometimes you just see a parent of the kids, ‘M6’ here is a pack of oranges to give to the children, and another will bring pasta. We are working well.” (M6)

This finding resonates with Hyde and Kabiru (2003) who point out that parents may also provide food and learning materials. In addition, the day-to-day management of the programme is carried out by a committee elected by the parents and community.

Generally participants also revealed that they had good working relationships with their communities as they found them to be supportive:

“The community members are supportive of what we are doing here.” (M19)

“My community ... I do not have a problem with them, we have a good relationship. Even my teachers are from Kanana.” (M20)

“The community is very supportive, especially the one near us [neighbour] who works with the councillor. He organised funding for us from the City of Cape Town.” (M18)

This finding supports the belief by the Department of Social Development and UNICEF (2006) that parents, communities, non-governmental organisations and government departments have a role to play in ensuring that integrated early childhood development services which are holistic and attend to the child’s health, nutrition, development, psychosocial and other needs are provided to children.

Some participants complained about the high levels of theft being perpetuated by community members:

“I have got a lot of problems here like burglary, so I must use always the money to do all these things because the community does not do anything here.” (M9)

“You get these skollies (thieves) they come in and get our stuff ...They come and vandalise and take whatever, they start from the fridge, and they take the food for the kids.” (M19)

This finding supports Cristovao (2011) who claims that the township of Gugulethu can be described as a combination of poverty, disease, vibrant life and violence. During the apartheid era, the area experienced a wide range of violence from police brutality to endemic violence, the scars of this past are still visible in this area as it is characterised by gangsterism and high levels of alcohol abuse which have exacerbated crimes such as robberies, murder, rape and assault.

The majority of participants revealed that they had a poor working relationship with the private sector (businesses) within and outside Gugulethu. They revealed that this was despite getting in touch with the local businesses through letter writing and physical contact, few private businesses made an effort to either respond or provide any help. The following is what participants said:

“You write to them, you do not get any answer. I was happy that they are going to open a mall here. I wrote to them, not even one answered me.” (M11)

“Not good, because the only thing that I do is to go there and buy groceries at their shops but they are not supporting me. I applied to Shoprite but they did not even acknowledge receiving my letter.” (M17)

“.....You can write a letter and take it to Caltex [garage within Gugulethu] but you do not receive a response.” (M7)

Generally participants had good working relationships with NGOs but revealed that there were now fewer NGOs supporting them than in the past:

“The big centres like [the] Centre for Early Childhood Development, Early Learning Resource Unit, Grassroots, and all those centres, we used to have meetings and they used to call up workshops and train us in a lot of things such as how to make things but I do not see that nowadays.” (M16)

It seems that the challenges that NGOs are facing in terms of access to funding in South Africa has also affected their ECD service delivery.

Some participants felt that their relationship with some NGOs was abusive as some NGOs were receiving funds on the pretext that they are helping ECD centres. Two of the participants explained that:

“The NGOs, you know one time there is a lady called Mrs. Helen she is the director of the Ikamva LaBantu, she went to America where she got funds for the ECD

members. I remember last year she sent somebody to my school so that she can get the sizes of my children's shoes, but until today I haven't received those shoes. Maybe they are doing that for themselves but I know those people from America provide funds for us but we do not see those funds.” (M15)

“We have got ... Ikamva Labantu is another one, but that Jewish woman is really abusing us ... If she brings sponsors, or the funders whatever, and the funders [decide] to do something for you she will say no, give it to me because we are going to share it. She is abusive. Then she says the funder must send the money to her and not to you directly.” (M14)

Most participants had a poor working relationship with government; they specifically singled out the Department of Social Development as they indicated that they had a cordial relationship with the Department of Education. Their displeasure with DoSD was centred on three issues. The first one being a lack of communication on registration and certification, as they felt that the DoSD had not provided adequate information on the new requirements for registration so as to enable them get their certificates which were critical for receiving funding. The second was the late payment of the ECD subsidy, while the third issue was the number of children who qualified for the subsidy. The displeasure of participants is captured in the following comments:

“It is poor. I do not want to lie. It is very poor because even now there is a problem with certificates. We have not got the certificates...” (M20)

“Sometimes their money comes very late. Sometimes even for three months we don't get the subsidy.” (M1)

“I only got registered four years ago. Even now they do not want to pay for all the children I have got. They are funding me now for 21 children, not for all [74 of the] the children.” (M5)

These findings strongly support the observation by Giese, et al. (2011) that not all children qualify to receive the ECD subsidy, as only children whose parent's/caregiver's income falls under a specific level (as assessed by an income means test) are eligible for the subsidy. This entails that only those ECD facilities catering to the poorest of families benefit from this subsidy.

4.6. Support from stakeholders

Under this theme the researcher sought to investigate not only the partnerships that participants had, but also their views about government, private sector (businesses) and non-governmental organisation support to their respective ECD centres. In addition, the kind of

assistance they received and the support that participants wanted in order to perform their work better was explored.

4.6.1. Assistance received

As previously mentioned, all the participants' centres were registered with the Department of Social Development. Therefore, the most cited form of assistance was the ECD subsidy from this Department. In addition, some participants were also receiving a subsidy from the Department of Education. They used these subsidies to buy food, education equipment and pay teacher salaries.

In terms of NGO food assistance to participants, the findings revealed that only a few centres were receiving food parcels on a monthly basis from the Food Bank:

"I take a percentage from social development to buy food. Then I get food from the Food Bank once a month." (M1)

"...Food Bank is giving us food once a month like dry vegetables, onions, rice, and a packet of soups but at least it makes life easier..." (M11)

However, participants revealed that, for them to receive the food parcels from the Food Bank, they had to pay R250 a month as expressed by this participant:

"...Food Bank [is giving us food] but even then we have to pay R250 a month." (M11)

Participants indicated that they received once-off assistance in terms of food, training, education equipment, funding from individual and embassy donors, fellow ECD centres, private companies and NGOs:

"We receive educational toys from the organisation Thembisa works for (Centre for Early Childhood Development) and Grassroots." (M6)

"I would say we have another sister ECD centre, Peter Penn. It is in Maitland... Peter Penn supports my teachers once in six months." (M11)

"We do have support in training, it's Grassroots and also Nthemba Labantwana and we also have ECD Works and we also have an Early Learning Resource Unit." (M8)

"We usually buy meat from the butchery, Mzolis butchery; they do help us like they do give us some bones so that we can cook for the children....." (M7)

"I have been supported by the Australian High Commission and ESKOM...." (M17)

This finding shows that, although the Presidency (2009) points out that ECD has a crucial role in children's realisation of their rights to survival, development, protection and

participation, the lukewarm support that ECD receives from government and other stakeholders limits the rights of children and practitioners who work in this sector.

Another form of assistance that participants revealed was Learnerships to support teacher training:

“We get learnerships from Northlink Cape College for our teachers.” (M1)

“Yes like today one teacher is receiving training at the College of Cape Town ... the Department of Education is paying, they receive a stipend.” (M10)

“Yes, Social Development is the one providing Learnerships and maybe sometime during our forums we organise workshops just for two or three days to support each other with our financial books.” (M17)

This finding is similar to the claim by Biersteker and Dawes (2008) that the provision of funds for ECD practitioner training is currently inadequate. ECD learnerships constitute a large component for training delivered by FET colleges, NGOs and the private sector.

Most participants lamented the lack of assistance in the form of coaching and mentorships to help them in running their centres. When one participant was asked whether she receives assistance with coaching and mentorship, she said:

“It’s only the Department of Social Development that comes to help us with the books, finances ... Social Development monitors us, they were here the 17th of January and at the end of the year they are coming again.” (M11)

This finding strongly supports Hyde and Kabiru (2003) who argue that there is inadequate supervision and follow-up of trainees by the ECD trainers both during and after training.

4.6.2. Partnership

All of the participants in this study had a funding partnership agreement with the provincial Department of Social Development as they were registered and receiving a subsidy. Although most ECD centres had children in Grade R, only a few had a funding partnership with the provincial Department of Education as participants revealed that the centres that were receiving funding from them were part of a pilot study. One participant said:

“The Department of Education, they said that they do not fund crèches in the yard....It is surprising because some of the crèches do receive funding from WCDE (Western Cape Department of Education) and they said some of those crèches are the pilot....”(M11)

“I do not have any partnership agreements, apart from the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education.” (M7)

Another partnership that participants alluded to was with the City of Cape Town, which mostly centred on participants leasing community ECD centres. One participant, when asked if she had a partnership with the City of Cape Town, said:

“Yes, because I am leasing their place.” (M1)

Some participants revealed that the City of Cape Town used to provide support to ECD centres in the form of subsidy and educational equipment but they had ceased to do so:

“Before, they used to give us grant money but they are no longer giving it to us now.” (M1).

“I did get some educational toys. I think it was about three or four years ago, it was from the City of Cape Town.....” (M17)

Interestingly, one participant who had received funding from the City of Cape Town revealed that she got the grant with the support of one of her community members who was working with the councillor.

“The community is very supportive, especially the one who stays near us [neighbour] who works with the councillor. He organised funding for us [from the City of Cape Town]. We got R25 000 in June this year.” (M18)

It seems that access to funding and educational equipment from the City of Cape Town is based on social networks. In addition, ECD practitioners who work in excluded communities such as Gugulethu are likely to have poor social capital. Social capital facilitates individuals to gain (or lose) access to resources (Szreter & Woolcock 2004, cited in Taket et al., 2009).

These findings reveal that most of the participants did not have well established partnerships with the private sector and NGOs as their relationship was based on once-off support when they had resources to support them.

4.6.3. Views on support provided

Participants had differing views about government, the private sector (businesses) and non-governmental organisation support to their ECD centres. There were mixed reactions when participants were asked about their views on government support. Participants appreciated the fact that government was funding them but expressed unhappiness with the amount of subsidy they were receiving in comparison to other provinces; the lack of recognition

compared to their counterparts in public schools; low salaries, corruption, late payment of subsidies, registration, lack of communication and participation in decision making as well as the inability by the Department of Education to cover meals for children in their subsidy as discussed earlier. The following were their views:

“I am very grateful to the government for supporting us because you cannot live on fees.” (M19)

“We had a meeting with the Minister of ECD [Minister of Social Development], and she was saying all the provinces are getting R20 per child, we are the only province getting R12.....” (M11)

“They are not trustworthy...there is a hell of a lot of corruption with the Department of Social Development.....What they do is that there are some centres with less children but they get more money than the children they have....” (M14)

“They do give us the money but not on time, like for instance now [1st August, 2013] we have not yet received the money ... They used to give us the dates, two to three years ago but now they do not do that, you do not know when you are going to get money.” (M7)

“The government decides for us, they don’t know what we need they just tell us what they need and they don’t know how we are working here at the ground level.” (M16)

“Government is not doing enough, they are funding us for 58 children while we have got 98 and then they do not come to re-register us. I reapplied; I don’t know how many times, they don’t come.” (M1)

“The salaries are not enough, I am not going to lie, but we were supposed to be getting the R20 per child per day from 2010 like every other province...” (M13)

This finding resonates well with the observation by Hall, Woolard, Lake and Smith (2012) that, even though the government of South Africa has put in place the National Integrated Plan which provides an enabling policy framework that supports the delivery of integrated services for young children, challenges remain in ensuring access to quality services.

Participants also expressed differing views on private sector and business support to their ECD centres. The general picture that emerged was that participants felt that the private businesses were not providing support and also not doing enough. Below were their observations:

“They are not doing enough.” (M1)

“The private sector only supports those informal settlements like Khayelitsha, not us. When you say you stay in Gugulethu, they do not provide you with support.” (M20)

“They don’t support ECD centres because we did, at one stage after we had this Gugulethu mall, send out letters asking for donations and things like that but there was no response.” (M19)

Similarly, participants had diverse views on the support provided by NGOs. Their sentiments ranged from being: “grateful”; to feeling that they were “not doing enough”; or “should do more”. Some participants said:

“I am very grateful to NGOs like Grassroots...whenever there is training, they inform us....” (M19)

“They are not doing enough now, before they used to give us training but not now they do not.” (M17)

“They should do more.” (M1)

This finding reveals that geography may not only limit access to resources and participation, but can also generate exclusion through so-called statistical discrimination. For example, ECD practitioners working in Gugulethu could be discriminated against by not receiving certain services from service providers, hence worsening the exclusionary effects of geography.

4.6.4. Support needed

When participants were asked what kind of support they needed as principals of ECD centres, the majority revealed that they needed support in training for their teachers, educational equipment, funding, food, salaries for their teachers, and infrastructure upgrades. This is what some of the participants said:

“Training for my staff ... and relevant equipment.” (M16)

“If they can help us in training our staff....” (M7)

“First is to have my staff trained.....” (M17)

This finding reveals that the demand for ECD training far outstrips the available capacity and there are still many untrained teachers (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003).

In addition, some participants said:

“We need educational materials ... We also need money to make renovations to the school.” (M1)

“The support I need is funding [money] because the money the government gives us is too little....” (M6)

“I need a new building because the toilets for the children are not flushing... Assistance also with food, for feeding the children and educational toys because the toys, the children they break them every time, so we need to replace the toys.” (M10)

This finding is similar to the observation by Atmore (1998) that most ECD centres lack equipment and operate in less than adequate accommodations. These include plastic shelters, wood and iron structures, backyard shelters and garages.

Further, participants stated that they need support with food and salaries for their teachers:

“Like now I have got no food, so I need support with food for the children, I get R5 300 [from the Department of Social Development] but it is not enough...” (M5)

“Firstly, of all the support I would [have is] better salaries for my people [teachers] ...” (M14)

“I need money ... to buy enough food for the children and then also to pay the teachers good salaries because they are doing a good job.” (M20)

It seems that practitioners who reside and work in Gugulethu experience limited access to resources for their active participation in the ECD sector when compared to their colleagues in well-resourced communities.

Participants stated that they had been writing funding proposals and letters to potential funders but in most cases they did not get replies. Hence, they felt that they needed support with fundraising skills:

“What we do is we write funding proposals, they do not even reply ... I think we do need [fundraising skills] because I feel we are not writing the proposals in the right way.” (M10)

“I would be very pleased to learn how to fundraise, how to approach donors and write proposals....” (M7)

In addition, some participants stated that they needed support in:

“Accounting skills, if I can get help in that one...I have never been trained in that one.” (M7)

“Computer lessons, I want computer lessons.” (M3)

This finding is strongly supported by Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper (2012) who argue that there has been an under-emphasis on the development of the basic skills of management at ECD centres, especially financial management, general administration, record keeping and staff recruitment, selection and development. The authors argue that, in order to improve learning environments, there is a need to strengthen ECD centres' management,

particularly in the areas of governance, management, financial management, fundraising, human resource management, report-writing and how to register with the provincial Department of Social Development.

Responding to a question about who, in their opinion, could provide the support they needed, participants said:

“Government and NGOs, even private companies.” (M1)

“Of course the NGOs like Centre for Early Childhood Development.” (M16)

“The government.” (M20)

Surprisingly, the majority of participants did not comment on parents and the community’s role in providing support. Instead they felt that NGOs, the private sector and government were best suited to help them. Accordingly, Hyde and Kabiru (2003) comment that, in some countries, there is concern that parents and local communities are over-dependent on NGOs and other agencies in the provision of ECD services and programmes.

4.7. Challenges faced

Under this theme, three issues were investigated. The first was the significant challenges faced by the participants. The second and third aspects were to find out the source of challenges and how participants dealt with these challenges.

4.7.1. Significant challenges faced

Participants were faced with a number of significant challenges when managing their respective centres. The most commonly cited challenges were burglary, poor communication coupled with inadequate subsidies often paid late by the Department of Social Development, poor salaries and infrastructure. In addition, they had challenges in lack of fundraising skills and trained teachers, and inadequate funds, food for children, educational equipment, blankets and mattresses. The following responses emerged:

“I’ve got a lot of problems here. Like burglary.....” (M9)

“Lack of communication, the Department of Social Development they do not communicate with us, because they just do things without consulting us. Like when the money is coming late, they do not tell us.....” (M20)

“Lack of adequate food, inadequate toys and lack of mattresses and blankets as they were stolen. The security of the ECD centre is poor....” (M19)

“We have only [one] toilet working, the classrooms are too small. I also need a bigger space.” (M18)

“Salaries, food and educational toys.” (M14)

“I can say that the biggest challenge is not having my own building. I find it difficult to operate.” (M8)

“The first challenge is the issue of the toilets, I have told you, secondly is the salaries of the teachers, they work very hard but they only get paid R1 500 a month which is very little money...” (M6)

“As I have said before, I think, it’s the third time now, lack of finance.” (M1)

This finding is strongly supported by the Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development & United Nations Children’s Fund (2010) who highlight that ECD centres in poorly resourced communities such as Gugulethu face a number of challenges such as lack of adequate learning materials and resources at their centres, especially within the classroom setting; minimal funding; lack of qualified teachers; inadequate security for children whilst at the ECD facility; as well as poor toilet amenities.

In addition, some participants revealed that the high turnover of teachers was another challenge:

“When you employ someone and then you train them for years and then after that she just leaves you without even letting you know. It is like you are being left in the desert.” (M7)

Similar to this finding, Short (1992, as cited in Atmore, 1998) reported that there is a high turnover of educare workers due to poor salaries, lack of benefits and job security.

Some participants further stated that the most significant challenge they faced was the inability of parents to pay fees and attend meetings:

“Some parents don’t even want to pay fees, and they do not want to come to the meetings....” (M1)

4.7.2. Source of challenges

Participants attributed the source of their challenges to a number of factors. Some of the leading factors were a lack of resources; and a lack of money, which led to participants’

being unable to buy food, educational equipment, blankets and mattresses for children as well as to upgrade their infrastructure. As expressed by some participants:

“The money from the fees is little and the money we receive from the Department of Social Development money is not enough.” (M5)

“Lack of resources.” (M11)

“The money we are getting is not enough (from the Department of Social Development).” (M10)

“We are not receiving enough funds; some parents are not working while others are getting little salaries. Some of the parents are working as domestic workers.” (M1)

It seems that most of these challenges emanate from a lack of obligation by the state in South Africa to provide ECD services to children as the Constitution only gives guarantee to basic education. This leads to poor funding which entails that participants are unable to buy adequate food and education equipment as well as pay good salaries to their teachers.

Participants regarded the poor working conditions that prevailed in the ECD sector as the reason why teachers left after training:

“They are looking for greener pastures, because they become marketable and they go work somewhere.....” (M7)

Similar to this finding, Altman (2008) comments that the low pay and uncertainty encourage those trained through the ECD programmes to leave as soon as another opportunity becomes available. This poses a threat to the expansion of quality ECD services.

A few participants attributed the failure of parents to attend meetings as being due to their lack of time as they return home from work very late:

“They don’t want to come for meetings they say that they come late from work...” (M15)

4.7.3. Dealing with challenges

There was no conformity in the way participants dealt with the numerous problems that confronted them. Responses ranged from “doing nothing”, “finding another teacher”, “managing with what I have”, “sitting and being frustrated”, “using buckets as toilets” while others stated that they held meetings with their teachers to explain the situation. Below are their responses:

“I do nothing.” (M15)

“I have to find another teacher to replace the one who has left us.” (M7)

“I just manage with what I have, like blankets, I get the old ones and sew them...” (M5)

“I just sit and be frustrated...” (M16)

“In terms of the toilets, we are using the buckets...” (M11)

“I am trying my best, we have weekly meetings with the teachers and we also have meetings with the parents once a month...” (M10)

“Like for the teachers, when we do not have money, I sit down with them to explain the situation.” (M1)

As the findings in this study reveal, the effects of poverty which affect more than half of South Africa’s children also extends to the people who work with children in the ECD sector (Berry, Jamieson & James, 2011).

4.8. Opportunities and future plans

This theme explored the opportunities that participants saw in the ECD sector, their future plans, and the means and support they need to realise these plans.

4.8.1. Opportunities

The findings show that, on one hand, some participants saw opportunities in the sector while, on the other hand, some did not. Those who saw opportunities indicated that they would want to expand their ECD centres so as to recruit more children. Those who did not see any opportunities indicated lack of space (land) for expansion as the major impediment. The following were some of their comments:

“Yes, if I can have space. I cannot say I see opportunities because I do not have space (land).” (M20)

“I do not see any opportunities because even getting land; it’s very difficult here in Gugulethu.” (M7)

“Yes I see opportunities, if I can only expand my centre and recruit more children, if I can get the funding.” (M18)

“I see opportunities for my centre to grow.” (M5)

“Yes, I see opportunities only if I can get a bigger space. I can admit more children...” (M17)

“Opportunities, I can say, we can move from this ECD centre to the orphanage home because that is my dream and to also set up an after school care.” (M1)

“Yes, I see the opportunity of increasing the number of children who come to our centres if we are to pull (up) our socks.” (M6)

4.8.2. Future plans

This study also investigated the future plans of participants at individual and ECD centre level. At ECD centre level, participants had wide-ranging plans as revealed by their comments:

“In terms of the staff members.....I want to introduce something like a thirteenth cheque.” (M13)

“..... My dream is to have a well-resourced centre.” (M11)

“I do want to rebuild the crèche and build a double storey, but the thing is there is no money.” M20

“My future plans as a centre is to see this place flourishing with kids, having everything. Toys, whatever we need ... make the place nice. I think child friendly ...” (M19)

“I am planning to have an aftercare.....” (M7)

“What we were planning with the governing body committee is that we should build a double-storey preschool with all the facilities.” (M10)

“If I can have the bigger space I can admit more children and create more jobs, because if I have another class I can employ other people, so I would like to give employment to others.” (M17)

“I would like to have a well-resourced centre, with very good infrastructure and, for health reasons, more toilets.” (M11)

This finding concurs with the observation by Theron and Perez (2012) that, although the National Integrated Plan recognises the role of ECD centres in providing employment, the objectives of creating employment and professionalisation do not necessarily coincide as there is not enough support to tap into opportunities of expanding centres to recruit more practitioners and children.

At individual level, participants said that they would like to retire, thus they had identified and started grooming individuals to take over from them. However, they wanted the individuals to have proper training before handing over:

“I am grooming someone to take over from me; I am still waiting for the Department of Social Development as I would like her to have proper training....” (M14)

“My plans are that, if am still alive, I have got to do the job and support my teachers. If I am going to die, my plan is that I have somebody who is going to take over my place, that is why I am grooming my youngest daughter.” (M5)

One participant revealed that they would like to set up a skills centre for the unemployed parents of the children:

“..... I would set up a skills centre [for people to acquire skills in sewing, gardening etc.]. So that people who are unemployed can have something to do.” (M1)

4.8.3. Means to realise plans

The majority of participants stated that, in order to realise their dreams, they did not only need money to build or expand their ECD centres but also needed land. In order to access these resources, participants revealed that they needed to fundraise from various potential funders. In addition, some participants revealed that they will approach the Department of Social Development for funding and advice. The following were their explanations with regards to their means of realising their dreams:

“If I can fundraise, I can also approach donors and the Department of Social Development.” (M1)

“I am going to knock on Lottery club doors. I am trying to knock on other doors. Yes, from the City of Cape Town, I have started to do that. Then I am planning to go to Engen.....” (M13)

“All I just need is to get the funding and extend my centre.” (M18)

“Go out and get sponsorship now, you cannot just sit.” (M14)

“I need to discuss with the Department of Social Development so that they can advise me what I should do.” (M7)

“By fundraising, there is no other way.” (M10)

4.8.4. Support needed to realise plans

When participants were asked to state what kind of support they needed to realise their dreams, different responses emerged. However, the general view was that participants wanted to be support with fundraising, training, funding, and building or upgrading their centres. Participants indicated that:

“...I need someone to help me with fundraising skills ... I am always writing proposals, I always get rejects.....” (M1)

“If I can get any support (funding) that is going to help the children such as food, equipment and then if the money came in,.....then buy equipment and then I can buy bricks to build my ECD centre because I do want my ECD centre to be big and grow.” (M20)

“I would love my people (practitioners) to be trained in fundraising [and] for the Department of Social Development to give her [the person being groomed as successor] the training.” (M14)

“Finance is the first thing that we need, and constructing a new building outside this centre.” (M8)

These findings strongly support the view by Max-Neef (1991) that human beings have fundamental human needs which must be satisfied.

4.9. Suggested improvements

This theme provided an opportunity for participants to give suggestions in terms of what they wanted to see changed in the ECD sector at government (national, provincial and city council), community and ECD centre levels. The changes participants wanted to see at ECD centre level have been captured above under section 4.8.2

4.9.1. National government

Some participants indicated that government should recognise the important role that ECD teachers play by not just paying them good salaries but by also allowing them to participate in decisions that affect them:

“You know that ECD, we are the poorest of the poor, we do not even have a bonus, why are they treating us like we are nothing, yet we are building the bridges, doing the ground work. We get no bonuses, not even good salaries....” (M11)

“The government decide for us, they don’t know what we need they just tell us what they need and they don’t know how we are working here at the ground level, so I would like them to start here, and then go up. They must not plan from the top they must come here at the bottom.....” (M16)

“If they can recognise us, as they say that the foundation is always important and maybe appoint one in the parliament who can be representing us on our behalf.” (M17)

“I want the government to recognise us that we are people...” (M14)

“The changes that I want are that if the government can acknowledge that the principals are working very hard they must try to give us salaries like other principals in government schools.” (M15)

“I wish the government can recognise us as ECDs ... To recognise us like teachers in public schools...They should recognise us as teachers and give us better money.” (M20)

These findings resonate with the rights based approach and accompanying funding model’s importance in the ECD sector as it will ensure the realisation of “the State’s obligations to provide ECD services, especially those living in poor families, rural areas, informal urban areas and children with disabilities.” (Richter, et al., 2012:2)

4.9.2. Provincial government

Most of the participants outlined a number of things they wanted to see change at provincial government level. They wanted government to increase the subsidy from R12 to between R15 and R25 as well as pay them on time. In addition, they wanted the Department of Social Development to improve the way it communicated with them. Below are some views of the participants:

“If they can increase the subsidy we are getting from the government and also if they can pay us on time.” (M1)

“I wish the government could give us more money. ... at least maybe R15 a day, I think it can be much better.” (M6)

“If they could increase our subsidy and make it R20 or R25 per child. I think this would make our work easy especially with paying salaries.” (M11)

“If the Department of Social Development can improve their communication because there is a big gap between us and them in terms of communication because we do not want to go and protest (toi-toi) anymore...” (M7)

“If we can have better communication with the social development, they call you any time; they never prepare us for meetings.” (M8)

4.9.3. City of Cape Town

Most of the participants proposed that the City of Cape Town should provide them with funding, land and pay salaries for their teachers. Participants said:

“If they can give us land so that we can build a centre.” (M1)

“If they can assist us with grants. Because I believe that they can give us grants.” (M17)

“If the city council can help us in paying our teachers because salaries are a problem.....” (M7)

This finding is supported by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) who point out that in some Sub-Saharan countries local authorities finance ECD by employing teachers and supervisors, constructing facilities, sponsoring the training of teachers and supervisors, and providing materials and equipment.

4.9.4. Gugulethu community

Some participants felt that the community should take care of the ECD centres as their own property. They further revealed that the community should work together with ECD centres to deal with challenges such as vandalism and crime:

“The community must understand that the centres are their children’s property, they must not vandalise the centres, and they must work together with the people at the centres.” (M16)

“The community, especially the one living around, should look after the building by taking care of them as their own, because they break in (steal) sometimes.” (M8)

“There are lots of people, lots of parents sitting down doing nothing so we should work together with the police, if the government say we going to go to that place and make safety there. I think it’s going to be alright.” (M12)

These findings resonate strongly with Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2009) argument that people should be active participants in their development either at individual or community level by defining and finding solutions to their own problems.

4.10. Summary

This chapter discussed the key findings of the study regarding the challenges that face ECD principals in Gugulethu. The chapter began by discussing the profile of participants who were female aged between 44 and 74 years. This was then followed by presenting the framework which was used for analysis and discussion and which contained six themes derived from the research objectives. Thereafter, key findings were presented and the chapter that follows presents the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the main conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. The discussion begins by presenting the research study conclusions and the key recommendations to the government (national, provincial and City of Cape Town), private sector, non-government organisations, the Gugulethu community and principals as well as recommendations for future research. Thereafter, a final summary is stated.

5.2. Main conclusions

5.2.1. Objective 1

To explore what motivates the ECD centre principals to manage ECD centres. The main conclusions are:

- Participants were motivated by their love for, and the wellbeing of, children as life in Gugulethu was regarded as tough.
- Lack of employment was a significant factor that motivated some participants to work in the ECD sector.
- Some participants were also motivated by their eagerness to learn about the ECD sector.

5.2.2. Objective 2

To explore how the ECD centre principals describe their working environment. This objective covered participants' view of working in the ECD sector, their responsibilities, conditions of service and working relationship with other ECD centres, parents, non-government organisations, their community, private businesses, and government. The main conclusions are:

- Participants had different views of working in the ECD sector. Some participants described the sector as being 'not so nice' because of the inadequate funds they get from the ECD subsidy and parent fees. Location of the ECD centres also had a bearing on its financial situation going by the view held by the principals that access to finances was a challenge because most sponsors go to Philippi and Khayelitsha.

- Participants claimed that working in the ECD sector was a struggle as most parents cannot afford to pay the fees they were charging due to unemployment.
- Some participants indicated that working in the ECD sector was pleasant and wonderful because without them most children would fall victim to social ills in Gugulethu.
- There was no consensus on participants' views as to whether working in the ECD sector was better in previous times or now. Participants who felt that working in the ECD sector is more difficult now made reference to the lack of workshops which previously were held on a regular basis by NGOs working in the ECD sector.
- Participants who considered working in the ECD sector as having improved from previous times held that there were still some challenges around salaries for teachers and food for the children.
- Participants mainly relied on three sources of funding to finance the operation of their centres. These are school fees from parents and the subsidies from the Departments of Education and Social Development. These funds were used to pay salaries and buy food and equipment.
- Participants performed a number of responsibilities in addition to their main role as managers. They described their direct responsibilities as ranging from calling parent meetings, attending ECD Forum meetings, supervision, managing, cooking, administration, teaching and bookkeeping and they also provided in-service training to their teachers.
- Most participants claimed that what they disliked the most are the challenges, especially the late payment of salaries to teachers as they often did not receive the subsidy from the Department of Social Development on time.
- Some participants, whose centres received funding from both the Departments of Social Development and Education, indicated too many responsibilities as their major dislike. They revealed that, despite having too many responsibilities, their salaries were still not enough.
- The participants had varying educational levels. The majority (16) had completed grade 11 or grade 12 while the remaining four had grade 10 and below. All the participants had done an ECD course, two had NQF level three, eight had NQF level four, seven had NQF level five, and three had done NQF level six at 12 different training centres within Cape Town. Three participants had pursued further training with two having a diploma in ECD while one had a Bachelor's degree in Education.

- Fundraising activities by participants did not raise enough funds. These activities were carried out within their centres targeting the parents of children. In some instances they also targeted organisations outside Gugulethu.
- The majority of the participants were not satisfied with their conditions of service. They particularly voiced their lack of satisfaction with their salaries.
- Participants had very good working relationships with other nearby ECD centres as they did not only share information but also supported each other in various ways especially during periods when the Department of Social Development had delayed in paying them the ECD subsidy.
- Participants had good working relationships with parents of children. They claimed that some parents attend meetings when called and others provided help in the form of food.
- Participants had good working relationships with their communities as they found them to be supportive. Although some participants complained about the high levels of theft being perpetuated by community members.
- Participants had a poor working relationship with the private sector (businesses) within and outside Gugulethu. They indicated that this was despite getting in touch with the local businesses through letter writing and physical contact, few private businesses made an effort to either respond or provide any help.
- Participants had good working relationships with NGOs but stated that there were now fewer NGOs supporting them than in the past. Some participants felt that their relationship with some NGOs was abusive as some NGOs were receiving funds on the pretext that they are helping ECD centres.
- Most participants had a poor working relationship with the Department of Social Development but they indicated that they had a cordial relationship with the Department of Education. Their displeasure with the Department of Social Development was centred on three issues. The first being a lack of communication on registration and certification, as they felt that the Department of Social Development had not provided adequate information on the new requirements for registration so as to enable them get their certificates which were critical for receiving funding. The second was the late payment of the ECD subsidy, while the third issue was the number of children who qualified for the subsidy.

5.2.3. Objective 3

To explore the kind of support ECD centre principals receive from stakeholders. The main conclusions are:

- The most cited form of assistance by participants was the ECD subsidy from the Departments of Education and Social Development. They used these subsidies to buy food, education equipment and pay teacher salaries.
- Participants also received once-off assistance in terms of food, training, education equipment, funding from individual and embassy donors, fellow ECD centres, private companies and NGOs.
- Learnerships to support teacher training was another form of assistance that participants received from the Departments of Education and Social Development.
- Participants lacked assistance in the form of coaching and mentorships to help them in running their centres.
- Although most ECD centres had children in Grade R, only a few had a funding partnership with the provincial Department of Education.
- Some participants had partnership with the City of Cape Town, which mostly centred on leasing community ECD centres. The City of Cape Town used to provide support to ECD centres in the form of subsidy and educational equipment but they had ceased to do so.
- Participants appreciated government support to their ECD centres, however they expressed unhappiness with: the amount of subsidy they were receiving in comparison to other provinces; the lack of recognition compared to their counterparts in public schools; low salaries, corruption, late payment of subsidies, registration, lack of communication and participation in decision making as well as the inability by the Department of Education to cover meals for children in their ECD subsidy.
- Participants generally felt that the private businesses were not providing adequate support and were not doing enough.
- Participants had diverse views on the support provided by NGOs. Some felt NGOs were doing enough while others had contrary views. The majority of participants felt that they needed support in training for their teachers, educational equipment, funding, food, salaries for their teachers, and infrastructure upgrades.

- The majority of participants did not comment on parents and the community's role in providing support. Instead they felt that NGOs, the private sector and government were best suited to help them.

5.2.4. Objective 4

To understand the constraints that ECD centre principals face when providing services to children. The main conclusions are:

- The most commonly cited challenges that participants faced were burglary, poor communication coupled with inadequate subsidies often paid late by the Department of Social Development, poor salaries and poor infrastructure.
- Participants had challenges in the lack of fundraising skills and trained teachers, and inadequate funds, food for children and educational equipment.
- The high turnover of teachers, the inability of parents to pay fees and attend meetings were further challenges.
- Participants indicated that the source of their challenges were a lack of resources; and a lack of money, which led to participants' being unable to buy food, educational equipment, blankets and mattresses for children as well as to upgrade their infrastructure.
- Participants felt that the poor working conditions that prevailed in the ECD sector were the reason why many teachers left after training.
- Participants had various ways of dealing with the numerous problems that confronted them. Their responses ranged from "doing nothing", "finding another teacher", "managing with what I have", "sitting and being frustrated", "using buckets as toilets" while others stated that they held meetings with their teachers to explain the situation.

5.2.5. Objective 5

To explore the opportunities that ECD centre principals see in providing services to children. The main conclusions are:

- Most participants indicated that their future plans at ECD centre level were to expand so that they could recruit more children.

- At individual level, some participants expressed that they would like to retire, thus they had identified and started grooming individuals to take over from them. However, they wanted the individuals to have proper training before handing over.
- In order to realise their dreams, ECD principals did not only need money to build or expand their ECD centres but also needed land. To access these resources, participants needed to fundraise from various potential funders.
- Participants felt the need to be supported with fundraising, training, funding, and building or upgrading their centres to realise their dreams.

5.2.6. Objective 6

To describe what ECD centre principals think needs to change at government (national, provincial and City of Cape Town) and community levels for them to provide better services to children. The main conclusions are:

- Participants indicated that the national government should recognise the important role that ECD teachers play by not just paying them good salaries but by also allowing them to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Participants outlined a number of things they wanted to see change at provincial government level. They wanted the provincial government to increase the subsidy from R15 to up to R25 as well as pay them on time. In addition, they wanted the Department of Social Development to improve the way it communicated with them.
- Most of the participants proposed that the City of Cape Town should provide them with funding, land and pay salaries for their teachers.
- Participants felt that the community should take care of the ECD centres as their own property. They indicated that the community should work together with ECD centres to deal with challenges such as vandalism and crime.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Recommendations for national government

The recommendations for national government are:

- National government should take a proactive and bold decision to improve the conditions of service for ECD principals as a matter of urgency as they play a crucial role in building the learning foundation for children. This could be done by the placement of all principals and their teachers on the government payroll as is the case

with their counterparts in public schools. This will go a long way towards addressing the issue of poor salaries prevalent in the ECD sector. Improving the salaries of principals will ensure that they have access to an income which will ultimately contribute to poverty reduction which affects mostly women and children in South Africa (National Planning Commission, 2012).

- National government should extend the national school feeding programme to include ECD centres in poorly resourced areas such as Gugulethu to ensure that the challenge of food is addressed. This will enable the principals to free some of their energy and time to concentrate on their work. It seems that most of their time is occupied with their search for either food, or funds to cover their food costs.
- National government should provide tax incentives and exemptions to private companies that support ECD centres in impoverished communities. This will, over time, encourage and promote increased participation of the private sector in the ECD sector.

5.3.2. Recommendations for provincial government

The recommendations for provincial government are:

- Provincial government, through the departments of Education and Social Development, should support principals with the development of business plans to be used to access funding to realise their expansion plans. In addition, the provincial government, working in close collaboration with the private sector and NGOs, can support the establishment of an ECD Fund to support principals with financing to realise these dreams. Supporting ECD principals with expansion plans entails that they will be able to create employment opportunities, thus contributing to addressing unemployment which is high among women and the youth in South Africa.
- For the provincial Department of Social Development to inform principals on the working mechanisms of the ECD subsidy in terms of what factors they take into consideration for children to qualify for the subsidy.
- The provincial Department of Social Development should improve communication with principals by providing accurate and timely information on registration and the date when principals are to receive the subsidy. The department can use the ECD Forum as a channel of communication. In addition, the department should upscale its

work with NGOs to provide support on registration and access to subsidies. The provincial government should promote the participation of principals in decision making in matters that affect them rather than issuing directives as the findings show.

- The Department of Education should consider introducing the provision for food in addition to their subsidy.
- For the ECD centres that receive funding from the Departments of Education and Social Development, there is a need for these two departments to streamline their reporting requirements to one reporting template to avoid burdening principals with too many reporting responsibilities.

5.3.3. Recommendations for the City of Cape Town

The recommendations for the City of Cape Town are:

- The City of Cape Town should support ECD centres with access to land so as to enable them to realise their expansion plans. This has the potential to contribute to local economic development in Gugulethu.
- The City of Cape Town should intensify their publicity around grants that they give to ECD centres. This will enable participants to become aware of the requirements and when to apply.

5.3.4. Recommendations for the private sector

The recommendations for the private sector are:

- Develop sustainable partnerships with ECD centres in Gugulethu. They could, for instance, contribute to the establishment of a community fund to support the operation of ECD centres. In addition, they could also introduce an ‘adopt-an-ECD centre’ programme, in which businesses adopt a facility and make a monthly or annual pledge to the ECD centre. This could be done by working in close collaboration with the Department of Social Development local office in Gugulethu and the ECD Forum.
- Improve their communication with ECD centres by making deliberate efforts to respond to the letters and other requests they receive from principals.

- Support the coaching and mentorship of principals in terms of how to run an ECD centre as a business entity. This will help address some of the challenges that ECD centre principals in this study face, such as access to funding for expansion purposes.

5.3.5. Recommendations for non-government organisations

The recommendations for non-government organisations are:

- Support ECD principals to lobby and advocate not only for improved conditions of service but also increased government funding to the ECD sector. They could work together with the ECD Forum in Gugulethu to bring the challenges that principals experience to the attention of government and other stakeholders. In addition, the NGOs should advocate for the inclusion of ECD principals in decision making by government and other stakeholders as this will ensure that they are active participants in defining and solving their own problems.
- Upscale support to ECD principals in the areas of infrastructure upgrades; coaching and mentorship; training, especially around financial management; and fundraising. In addition, they should organise events which can bring together potential donors and ECD principals through the ECD Forum.
- Build on the work being done by ECD centres by playing the role of initiators and brokers linking ECD centres in well-resourced areas to those in poorer communities. This will not only contribute to social transformation but will also strengthen social capital as the ECD centres will be able to expand their networks and ensure they have access to information.

5.3.6. Recommendations for the Gugulethu community

The recommendations for the Gugulethu community are:

- The community, working in collaboration with the government, NGOs and private sector, should be involved in improving ECD facilities. For example, parents who do not work could volunteer to assist during the week with the maintenance of ECD centre grounds and buildings while those who work could do the same over the weekends. In addition, those who live near the ECD facilities could be involved in community policing working with the existing Community Police Watch.

- The community should work together with the ECD centres and other stakeholders to organise community meetings to educate members of the public on the importance of taking care and preserving ECD centres. In addition, they should encourage young people to take voluntary jobs at ECD centres as a way of building community service and solidarity.

5.3.7. Recommendations for ECD principals

The recommendations for ECD principals are:

- Through the local ECD Forum, organise joint fundraising ventures to attract potential donors and other service providers rather than doing it alone.
- Take proactive action to seek funding and other opportunities through forging networks and partnerships with other ECD centres, NGOs, businesses within and outside Gugulethu and through the ECD Forum.
- With the support of NGOs and other stakeholders strongly lobby and advocate not only for improved working conditions but also for inclusion in decision making at local, provincial and national government levels.

5.3.8. Recommendations for future research

This research study has unearthed some issues which need answers. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore:

- Strategies to increase male participation in the ECD sector.
- The practicality of government employing principals and teachers in the ECD sector.

5.4. Summary

This research study shows that ECD principals face a number of challenges and opportunities which require a concerted effort by all stakeholders to address them. The starting point in addressing some of the challenges would be the formal recognition by the state of ECD principals and other ECD practitioners that work with children at various ECD centres in South Africa. This will not only support improved work conditions but also restore the dignity and honour to thousands of people who work with South Africa's children in building a foundation for a strong and prosperous country.

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Appendix A: Consent form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Social Development

Private Bag Rondebosch 7701 RSA

Telephone: 27-21-6504221

Fax No: 27-21-6892739

CONSENT FORM

Research Topic

An exploratory study of the challenges early childhood development centre principals experience in providing services to children in Guguletu Township, Cape Town.

Research objectives

- To explore what motivates the ECD centre principals to manage ECD centres.
- To explore how the ECD centre principals describe their working environment.
- To explore the kind of support ECD centre principals receive from stakeholders.
- To understand the constraints that ECD centre principals face in providing services to children.
- To explore the opportunities that ECD centre principals see in providing services to children.
- To describe what ECD centre principals think needs to change for them to provide better services to children.

Participant's involvement

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research project, acknowledging that the objectives and nature of the study have been clearly explained to me and an opportunity availed for me to ask any questions I might have.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in the research and can decide to withdraw at any stage.
- I agree to this interview being used for purposes of the research on condition that my privacy is respected.

Initials of participant:

Name of researcher:

Signature:

Signature:

Date

Date:

Appendix B: Letter of introduction

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Social Development

Private Bag Rondebosch 7701 RSA

Telephone: 27-21-6503481

Fax No: 27-21-6892739

Email: eric.atmore@uct.ac.za

20th June 2013

Dear participant,

Introducing Mr Kapalu Muswala (Student number MSWKAP001)

I write to introduce Mr Kapalu Muswala, a Masters Student, studying social development in our department. He will be doing an exploratory study of the challenges that early childhood development centre principals experience in providing services to children in Gugulethu.

This study is part of our requirements for students to complete a dissertation as part of the Masters programme.

We would greatly appreciate the support and co-operation that you can offer to him during the period he is collecting data. If you have any queries pertaining to the study, please contact me on 082 5680200.

Kind regards

.....

Adjunct Associate Professor Eric Atmore
Supervisor

Appendix C: Biographical details

SEX	MALE			FEMALE	
AGE					
Highest school level qualification	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Other (specify)
ECD course done	NO		YES (Kindly specify)		
Name of course provider					
Who owns the building in which the ECD centre is?					
What type of building is the centre in?					
How long have you worked as ECD principal here?					
How many members of staff do you have?	Teachers		Support staff		
What qualifications do they have?					
Do you reside in this community	NO (Kindly specific where you reside)		YES		
If yes, how long have you lived in this community	(Years)		(Months)		

Appendix D: Semi-structured interview guide

THEME: Motivation to manage ECD centre

- Please tell me more about yourself?
- How did you start working in the ECD sector?
- What motivated you to work in the ECD sector?
- What is your view of working in the ECD sector?
- What are your direct responsibilities?
- What do you enjoy the most about being an ECD principal?
- What do you dislike about being an ECD principal?
- What training do you have? (probe)
- Has the training helped you in managing the centre?

THEME: Working environment of ECD principals

- What services/facilities are you providing to children?
- What are your admission criteria? (probe)
- How would you describe the learning/care environment for children?
- How do you finance the operations of your centre?
- How would you describe your conditions of service?
- Are you satisfied with your conditions of service?
- How do you describe your working relationship with other nearby ECD centres?

THEME: Support to ECD principals

- What kind of assistance do you receive (funding, feeding, teaching materials, training, coaching, mentorship) at national, provincial, local, NPO and community level?
- What kind of partnerships (if any) do you have with the provincial government, Cape Town city council, provincial government departments in Gugulethu, private companies, NPOs (local and international)?
- What are your views about government, private sector and NPO (local and international) support to your ECD centre?
- How would you describe your relationship with children's parents, community members/organisations, private sector, local/provincial government?
- Is each type of support a challenge for your ECD centre?
- What kind of support do you need as principal of the ECD centre?
- In your opinion who can provide this support?

THEME: Constraints of ECD principals

- What are the most significant challenges (if any) that you face as a centre?
- What is the source of these challenges?
- How do you deal with these challenges?

THEME: Opportunities for ECD principals

- What opportunities exist for you and your ECD centre?
- What do you think you need to do to realise these opportunities?

- Could you kindly share with me your future plans (for individuals and the ECD centre)?
- How do you intend to achieve these plans?
- What kind of support would you need to achieve these plans?

THEME: Changes to improve service delivery

- What improvements or changes would you want to see in the ECD sector (at national, provincial, community and ECD centre levels)?

What else (if anything) would you like to share?

Thank you so much for your participation and your time.