# Department of Social Development

# An exploratory study of collaboration among Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisations in the Western Cape Province

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Science in Social Policy and Management

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Course: SWK5001F

27 July 2015

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**Abstract**

Collaboration among Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisations (ECD NPOs) in South Africa is an unexplored area of research. Little is known about the ECD NPO sector, let alone the strategies they employ to remain viable, effective and efficient in the face of a declining resource base. Collaboration is one of these strategies and it is hoped that this qualitative research will make a contribution to the understanding of the state of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. The study explores how ECD NPOs and government participants understand collaboration in this sector, and investigates the factors that are considered before entering past and present collaboration initiatives. The study further explores the value of collaboration, and the factors enabling and those inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. Nineteen (19) face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with participants from sixteen (16) ECD NPOs and three (3) government departments.

The study revealed that ECD NPO and government participants had a common understanding of collaboration. ECD NPOs considered various factors such as capacity, time/time frame, cost and benefit analysis, partner's track record and the need for service before engaging in collaborative initiatives, while government participants only considered capacity (human resources and expertise) and collaborating partner's track record before engaging. The study indicated that there were more benefits than challenges to collaboration among ECD NPOs. In addition, the study established that the factors enhancing collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape include shared or similar vision, good working relationships, networking, common knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector and an open mind approach. On the other hand, the factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs include shortage of resources, competitiveness, time constraints, organisational culture differences, fear of the unknown and geographical location. Participants spoke positively about their collaboration experiences and noted how this would be a strategy to pool resources and enhance their survival, effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery in the ECD NPO sector.

The study concluded that collaboration among ECD NPOs is an invaluable tool to ensure that these organisations boost their resource capacity, and improve their effectiveness and efficiency in the wake of declining global resources. As part of the recommendations, this study developed a collaboration checklist that is not only potentially useful in the Western Cape, but elsewhere in the country and abroad. The findings of this study are envisaged to have wider application in South Africa as a whole, and Africa at large. There is however, a need to conduct similar studies in different provinces of South Africa and other African countries in order to enhance the generalisability of the results.

# Acknowledgements

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# Abbreviations

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| CECD | Centre for early Childhood development |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| DSD | Department of Social Development |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| ECD NPO | Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisation |
| MOU | Memorandum of understanding |
| NECDA | National Early Childhood development Alliance |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NPO | Non-Profit Organisation |
| RDT | Resource Dependence Theory |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| SETA | Sector Education and Training Authority |
| StatsSA | Statistics South Africa |
| WCED | Western Cape Education Department |

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The South African Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) sector has played a vital role in the support of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa through organisations known as Early Childhood Non-Profit Organisations (ECD NPO). The ECD NPO sector has played a vital role in the design and implementation of ECD projects in South Africa since the 1970s (Biersteker & Picken, 2013). ECD NPOs provide services such as training and support (funding, material and advocacy) to the ECD sector. In 2012, over sixty-four (64) ECD NPOs provided the backbone of curriculum development, materials development, training and ECD service provision in South Africa and this has been the case for the past thirty five (35) years (Atmore et al., 2012:16).

Early Childhood Development has become one of the priorities of the South African government which led to the recognition and formalisation of the ECD NPO sector. A recent ECD NPO quarterly meeting hosted by the Department of Social Development in Cape Town identified the need to provide efficient ECD services in the Western Cape Province with the current capacity of the existing ECD NPOs (DSD, 2014). Collaboration was identified as a possible solution to address this situation.

This study is an exploratory study of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. According to Biersteker and Picken (2013), there is limited information on ECD NPO collaboration, and it is hoped that this study will make a contribution towards understanding the state of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

## 1.2 Research Problem

There is a dearth of literature on collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. This study views collaboration as a possible strategy to mobilise resources in a field plagued by financial and material resource shortages and, as a strategy to

provide effective ECD services in the Western Cape Province. As a result, this study hopes to contribute a body of knowledge on collaboration in the Western Cape Province. It investigates how ECD NPOs and government participants understand the concept of collaboration and the factors that organisations considered before engaging in collaborative initiatives. The study further explores the value of collaboration, the factors that enhance and those that inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. It aims to hear the voices of ECD NPOs and government participants regarding their collaborative experiences.

## 1.3 Background to the research

Little is known about the size, scope and capacity of the ECD NPO sector in South Africa (Biersteker & Picken, 2013). In addition, there is a paucity of information documented on the collaboration of ECD NPOs as a strategy to enhance sustainability in a sector that has been misunderstood, underfunded and poorly supported over the past decades in South Africa. This has resulted in a poor understanding of the importance of Early Childhood Development as a foundation for lifelong learning.

Some funders have made it clear that they do not fund or support the ECD sector (Ramklass, 2012), yet international research provides evidence for its enormous potential long term social and economic benefits (Heckman, 2006; Barnett & Ackerman, 2006; McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007). The ECD NPO sector plays a vital role in the servicing, advocacy and representation of the ECD sector.

In the wake of limited resource capacity, collaboration among ECD NPOs is envisaged to play a vital role in the provision of effective services in the Western Cape Province. In order to provide holistic ECD services, there needs to be effective collaboration among organisations providing different components such as children's health, nutrition, development, psychosocial and other needs.

## 1.4 Rationale and significance of the study

*Rationale and Significance of the study*

The ECD NPO sector has played a prominent role over the decades in the design and implementation of ECD programmes/projects in South Africa. However, according to Atmore, van Niekerk and Cooper (2012:16), over the past fifteen years, about 46 ECD NPOs have closed down and over 20 have downscaled due to a lack of funding and support. This reflects how vulnerable the ECD NPO sector has become. The role of the ECD NPO sector has been crucial in enabling about 1.2 million children in South Africa to access ECD programmes. As previously discussed, by 2012 over sixty-four (64) ECD NPOs provided the backbone of ECD service provision in South Africa (Atmore et al., 2012:16). Atmore et al (2012) asserts that the size of the current ECD NPO is insufficient to cover the whole country with ECD provisions varying across provinces. In light of limiting resources, it is envisaged that collaboration may improve effectiveness and efficiency, as well as enabling a wider coverage of ECD services.

There is a paucity of literature on collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in South Africa to comprehensively inform and influence wider and stronger collaborations. This study will explore the nature of ECD NPO collaboration in the Western Cape Province. In particular, the study explores the merits of collaboration as well as factors that enhance or inhibit collaborative relationships. In order to motivate for further collaboration, it is vital to understand the concept and goal of collaboration. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the benefits and mechanisms of collaboration among ECD NPOs, and potentially foster wider collaboration not only in the Western Cape Province, but further afield.

## 1.5 Research questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

*Main question*

1.5.1   What is the nature of collaboration in the Early Childhood Development Non-Profit sector in the Western Cape Province?

*Secondary Questions*

1.5.2   How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and government participants understand collaboration?

1.5.3   What are the factors considered before entering past and present collaborative initiatives?

1.5.4   What value has collaboration brought to ECD NPOs in the Western Cape?

1.5.5   What are the factors that enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape?

1.5.6   What are the factors that inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape?

## 1.6 Research objectives

The research aims to address the following objectives:

*Main objective*

1.6.1 To explore the nature of collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape

*Secondary objectives*

1.6.2   To explore how ECD NPO and government participants understand collaboration

1.6.3   To establish the factors that were considered before entering past and present collaborative initiatives

1.6.4   To explore the value that the collaboration has brought to the ECD NPOs in the Western Cape

1.6.5 To explore the factors that enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape

1.6.6 To ascertain the factors that inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape


## 1.7 Research approach, design and methodology

A qualitative research design and approach were utilised to develop an in-depth understanding of the nature of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. The research design clearly specifies how the research will be executed to answer the research questions and reach sound conclusions (Terre Blanche, Durkheim & Painter, 2006). This study can be categorised as explorative (Babbie, 2004).

A combination of snowball and purposive sampling techniques was applied to select sixteen (16) senior management staff members from sixteen (16) ECD NPOs working in the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province. In addition, three (3) government participants from three governmental departments were purposefully selected to take part in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted using an interview schedule and were digitally recorded. The data collected were transcribed and analysed using Tesch's (1990) method to create various themes, categories and sub-categories. The research design and methodology will be discussed in detail in chapter three.


## 1.8 Ethical considerations

This section outlines ethical issues which were considered in the study. Ethics are a set of principles which are suggested by a group or an individual, which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects, employers, sponsors, assistants, students and other researchers (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). Research ethics were considered as a critical component of the research as they formed the foundation of the research process.

Drawing on the writings of various authors the ethical considerations relevant to this study are described below.

*Informed consent and voluntary participation*

According to Halai (2006), researchers are obliged to obtain informed consent from all parties involved in the research project, in this case the ECD NPO participants and government participants. This involves informing participants about the goals of the investigation and procedures to be followed, possible advantages and disadvantages, as well as any dangers that participants may be exposed to in the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had a right not to participate if they did not wish to. In order to avoid deception (perceived or otherwise) of participants, the goals of the research were presented fully and correctly to the participants.

Ethical clearance was obtained for this study from the University of Cape Town (UCT), Department of Social Development. In addition, the researcher obtained ethical clearance as required by the Western Cape Department of Social Development in order to interview the participant from this government department. The researcher contacted the selected ECD NPO and government participants telephonically, to introduce himself and clearly state the background and objectives of the study while requesting the participants' voluntary participation in the study.

After the participants' telephonic agreement to participate in this research, dates and times of the interview were set. At the start of each interview, participants were again fully informed about the nature of the study and the fact that they could withdraw at any stage. In addition a consent form (see Appendix A) was signed at the start of each interview and the signed form was held as proof of consent.

*Harm to subjects/participants*

According to Dane (1990), the researcher needs to protect the participants against any form of physical or emotional discomfort, which may emerge in the confines of the

research project. In this study, the participants were handled with care to avoid situations where a participant breaks down and is left exposed with vulnerable feelings. To guard against this kind of harm, participants were allowed to stop the researcher if they felt uncomfortable. There were no such incidents.

*Anonymity and violation of privacy*

The research was conducted in a manner that ensured the participants' anonymity and privacy. The researcher assured the ECD NPO participants and government participants that their identity would remain anonymous and that their privacy would not be violated by disclosing the ECD NPO participant's or government participants' names in the research, but rather referring to them as e.g. ECD NPO participant 1 or ECD NPO participant 2 and government participant 1 or government participant 2.

*Action and competence of the researcher*

This refers to the researcher's skills to conduct research in an objective manner that is not harmful, not placing judgments or imposing his own biases. The researcher is sufficiently competent given his experience in research through the completion of two research projects in the past.

*Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is closely related to anonymity and is commonly understood as being associated with principles of privacy and respect for autonomy (Gregory, 2003; Oliver, 2003). Gregory (2003) defines confidentiality as information given to another person that should not be repeated without permission. In this research, participants were assured of the confidentiality of this research and that it is exclusively for academic purposes. In addition, the researcher kept the recordings and transcriptions private and safe; under lock and key. The findings of this study are going to be made available via the UCT library.

## 1.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is defined as the researcher's ability to reflect on possible errors that the study in question may present (Mouton, 1996). Mouton (1996) further asserts that the challenge is to continuously monitor how one feels and how one interprets what is observed and to show how this would affect the process of research and data analysis. This process involves checking for bias at various levels.

The researcher was aware of his biases during the study as a former employee of an ECD NPO that is included in the sample. The researcher was able to consciously suspend his experience and assumptions and separate them from the research in order to provide an accurate reflection of the study. Based on his work experience in the ECD NPO sector, the researcher was aware that he could be inclined to believe that ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province were too competitive and unwilling to collaborate because they did not recognize the value of collaboration, prefer to work individually rather than collaboratively and that not much notable collaboration among ECD NPOs has taken place in the Western Cape Province.

As the researcher undertook a literature review and interviewed the ECD NPO and government participants, the preconceived ideas were set aside. This enabled the researcher to have an accurate view of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province thus enabling the researcher to have an open minded approach to fresh learning from the study. The supervisor's guidance was helpful in this regard through feedback and comments on submitted work and motivating the researcher to deepen his analysis of the study. These processes reduced the researcher's possible biases.

## 1.10 Structure of the report

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for the study and presents the research problem, background to the research, research questions and objectives. The chapter also

outlines rationale and significance of the study, the research approach, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, and a section on reflexivity and sets out the structure of the report.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The chapter presents literature relevant to the subject of study. The chapter first discusses the theoretical frameworks of the study. It is further divided among three broad sections which include: the nature, state and importance of the Early Childhood Development sector in South Africa; the state of the South African ECD NPO sector, legislative frameworks, supporting structures and challenges faced. This is followed by the concept and types of collaboration, factors affecting collaboration, the benefits, challenges and barriers to collaboration.

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

The third chapter presents the research approach, design, sampling, data collection, data analysis and data verification. It concludes with a discussion of the limitations and the practical challenges experienced during the study.

**Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of findings**

This chapter presents the research findings. These are presented in the form of themes, categories and sub categories that emerged from the analysis. The findings are presented, compared with literature and discussed, with relevant quotations from the participants included to support the findings.

**Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

The chapter draws conclusions from the study and examines whether the objectives of the study were met. In addition, recommendations are offered for the consideration of ECD NPOs, government departments and grant makers. A collaborative checklist is also recommended for the consideration in collaborative initiatives.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This study is an exploratory study of collaboration among Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisations (ECD NPOs) in the Western Cape Province. In order to set the scene for this study, appropriate literature has been reviewed. The literature review presents theoretical frameworks (Ecological Systems Theory and Resource Dependence Theory) of collaboration; an overview of ECD (its importance and state); ECD NPO sector (legal frameworks and supporting structures), and collaboration (state, benefits, challenges and barriers to collaboration).

The research draws literature from various sources such as reports, journals, internet articles, books, newspaper articles and academic theses. The researcher found limited literature on the ECD NPO sector in South Africa, let alone collaboration among ECD NPOs, hence the researcher presented local and international literature.

## 2.2 A theoretical framework for a study on collaboration

### 2.2.1 Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological systems theory was first introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner, and is a meta-theory that offers a way of thinking about assessing the relatedness of people and their impinging environments (Meyer, 1983).

The ecological systems theory divides society into parts which include the micro, mezzo, and macro components. The micro component refers to the direct environment that people have in their lives. The micro system creates a platform for social interactions with social agents such as family, friends and teachers among others. The mezzo system refers to the relationship between micro systems in one's life. The macro system refers to the larger societal structures such as the individual's culture (Sincero, 2012). This theory is based on three key assumptions. The first is that individuals function as a part of many systems and can affect and be affected by these systems.

The second assumption is that systems are in dynamic interchange and a change in one part of the system will affect other systems. The third assumption is that problems arise because of a misfit between individuals and the systems of which they are a part (Meyer, 1983). In the context of this study, the various systems at play in the ECD scenario include ECD NPOs, the staff, policies, the beneficiaries, funders, government agencies and interested stakeholders.

### 2.2.2 Resource Dependence Theory

The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) was developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and is concerned with how organisational behaviour is influenced by its external resources such as raw materials. The RDT is based on the assumption that organisations' ability to gather, exploit and alter resources faster than their competitors may be fundamental to their success and that the access and control over resources is a basis of power. RDT is also based on the assumption that resources are often out of the control of organisations that need them and that organisations have to develop strategic means to attain the resources and maintain their autonomy at the same time (Davis & Cobb, 2009).

RDT's application to the NPO sector has been met with mixed reactions. In the light of the RDT, Provan (1984), Zuckerman and D'Aunno (1990) and Zinn et al (1997) argue that collaborative relationships are established as a result of turbulent environments or conditions. Turbulent conditions such as limited resources and government grants for social services, and contract competition between NPO and the private sector has increased and led to NPOs using marketisation techniques used in the private sector to sustain their existence. In contrast, scholars such as Eikenberry and Klover (2004) argue that the marketisation in the NPO sector leads to a decrease in the quality services provided by NPOs.

Based on Provan (1984) and Guo and Acar (2005), it can be argued that collaboration assists organisations to obtain vital resources and reduce uncertainty. Loss of operating autonomy is identified as the greatest cost of collaboration and will be discussed in

section 4.7.1.1. In the light of the RDT, due to resource scarcity in the ECD NPO sector exacerbated by the Global Economic Recession, ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province might be more pressured to collaborate in order to access vital resources. Collaboration may be identified as a strategic way of gathering resources that are already limited in the ECD NPO sector (especially funding) as it enhances the pooling and sharing of resources (Todeva & Knoke, 2005). In this study, the RDT is particularly relevant to collaboration.

## 2.3 Early Childhood Development

According to the South African Children's Act no. 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005:151) "Early Childhood Development is the process of emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical and communication development of children from birth to school- going age (0- 9 years)". The management of this process is vital for laying a firm developmental foundation for lifelong learning in children. The following sections will present the importance of ECD, the state of ECD services in SA and the state of ECD services in the Western Cape Province.

### *2.3.1 Importance of Early Childhood Development*

Local and international research indicates that the period from birth to seven years is a vital period characterised by rapid mental, physical, emotional, social and moral growth and development (UNICEF, 2006). These early years are a period when children acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning (Heckman, 2006; Barnett & Ackerman, 2006; McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007). Child development at this stage includes the attainment of language, perceptual motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem solving skills, a desire for learning and the establishment and maintenance of relationships (Barnet & Ackerman, 2006).

According to Atmore et al (2012:1), appropriate ECD provisions result in "increased primary school enrolment, enhanced school performance, lower repetition and drop-out rates, reductions in juvenile crime rates, reduced remedial education costs and

improved economic and social productivity in adulthood". UNICEF (2009) adds that ECD is vital for setting the foundation for a successful academic path, especially for those children living in situations of disadvantage. ECD enhances substantial social, education and economic returns that outweigh the cost of returns on other forms of human capital investment (Atmore et al., 2012). It is therefore crucial to interrogate the state of ECD services in South Africa.

### 2.3.2 Early Childhood Development Services in South Africa

Children's rights are recognised in section 28 of the South African constitution (RSA, 1996) which gives children the right to nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services among other rights. The South African Children's Act no. 38 of 2005 notes the importance of ECD and stipulates that every child has the right to quality ECD. The South African Early Childhood Development sector plays a vital role in the provision of various services to ensure successful child development. The Department of Social Development (DSD) is primarily responsible for the 0-4 years age range insofar as ECD provision is concerned, while the Department of Education (DoE) is responsible for the 5–9 years age range.

According to Atmore et al (2012), there is very limited quantitative data on the South African ECD sector with only one national study having been completed in 2001. However more up-to-date statistics are available for the Western Cape Province (see section 2.3.3). Some findings of the nationwide audit of ECD Provision in South Africa conducted by the DoE indicated that in 2001, approximately 1 million of the 6 million children in South Africa in the 0-6 year age bracket were enrolled in some form of early childhood care (DoE, 2001), leaving more than 80% with no access to ECD services.

According to DoE (2001:1), the 2001 ECD audit, indicates that there are over 23,482 ECD sites across South Africa and 16% of the child population is enrolled in these sites. About 60% of the ECD sites are located in urban areas, while 40% are located in the rural areas. In the same year, it was established that ECD NPOs played a key role in

the development of these ECD services and the training of ECD practitioners (ECD White Paper, 2001).

By March 2012, there were over 836,000 children in 19,500 registered ECD centres nation-wide and 488,000 of these (58%) received the ECD subsidy from the provincial Departments of Social Development (Atmore et al., 2012:10). It is also indicated that there are enormous disparities in access to ECD services across provinces with Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal having lower than the national average (Atmore et al, 2012). Based on the above, Atmore et al., (2012) argues that the biggest challenge in ECD is to increase geographical access to ECD programmes and improve their quality.

Drawing on different authors such as Viviers, Biersteker and Moruane (2013), Biersteker, (2007) and Atmore et al. (2012), the ECD sector faces various challenges including difficulties in registration of ECD centres to access state subsidy, limited funding, poor staff retention, lack of community and government support, and lack of adequate infrastructure. These challenges facing the ECD sector as a whole will not be discussed in detail since they are outside the scope of the study. The next section focuses on the state of ECD in the Western Cape, which is the study area.

### 2.3.3 State of ECD in the Western Cape Province

The legacy of apartheid in the ECD sector in the Western Cape includes inequality which sees a large group of disadvantaged children having access to poor quality ECD services, while advantaged children have access to high quality services (D.G Murray Trust (DGMT), 2014).

According to the Community Survey of 2007 by StatsSA (2007), there were over 956, 528 children between the ages 0-9 years in the Western Cape Province. According to the DGMT (2014:12), there are over 896 ECD facilities in the Western Cape registered with and subsidised by the DSD which can accommodate 64,249 children between the 0-4 years age range. Statistics for the 5-9 year age range were not provided in the

article. A recent audit reflected that there are an estimated 1,700 unregistered, unfunded ECD facilities with a capacity to accommodate about 55,000 children, with 70% of this total located in the metropolitan area (DMGT, 2014:13). The number of children who access ECD services provided by the private sector is unknown. There are therefore disparities in ECD access and quality along historical, providers and geographical lines.

## 2.4 South African Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisation sector

The ECD NPO sector has played a vital role in the design and implementation of ECD projects in South Africa since the 1970s (Biersteker & Picken, 2013). ECD NPOs provide services such as training and support (funding and material) to the ECD sector. Over the years ECD NPOs have also been involved in community playgroups, home visiting, toy libraries, mobile programmes, ECD centre outreach and community development as aspects of the broadening of ECD services (Biersteker & Picken, 2013). According to Atmore et al (2012:16), the role of the ECD NPO sector has been crucial in enabling about 1.2 million children in South Africa to access ECD programmes. Despite that over sixty-four ECD NPOs have supported the growth of the ECD NPO sector in South Africa for the past 35 years, ECD provision is insufficient considering the demand (Atmore et al., 2012:16)

An earlier study by Biersteker and Picken (2013) identifies ninety six (96) ECD NPOs reflecting an increase from the previously mentioned sixty-four (64). On this note (Atmore, personal communication 2015, February, 2) clarifies that the previously identified sixty-four (64) are ECD NPOs exclusively specialised in ECD while the other thirty two (32) provide ECD as one of their broad services. There is limited up-to-date and accurate information on the size, capacity, scope and geographic distribution of ECD NPOs involved in ECD training services for children aged 0-4. As a result the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned to survey the ECD NPO sector in South Africa in late 2012. Of the identified ninety six (96) ECD NPOs only

seventy six (76) participated in the survey. The survey sought recommendations from participants on what should be done for these organisations to scale up ECD training services. A meeting arranged by an organisation called Ilifa Labantwana (Ilifa) in 2013 confirmed the need for collaboration and partnership of ECD NPOs in planning the scaling up of quality ECD services (Ilifa, 2014).

The current study identified over nineteen (19) ECD NPOs and service providers in the Western Cape Province, 16 of whom participated in the study (see Appendix F for a list of ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province). Out of the 19 ECD NPOs, the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) database (2014) identifies twelve (12) ECD NPOs located in the Western Cape Province. The other seven (7) ECD NPOs were identified through snowball sampling.

### 2.4.1 Legislative framework for the ECD NPO sector

Recently, ECD has been made a priority by the SA government and has been identified as one of the key levers for social development with the understanding that investment in ECD creates a foundation for combating poverty at community level (Wotshela, 2014). The ECD sector has been receiving significant official attention and also features in the South African National Development Plan and its Vision 2030 (NPC, 2011). This creates a window of opportunity for the upscaling and development of ECD in South Africa. The ECD NPO sector is part of both the NPO and the ECD sector and some of the legislative documents directly relating to the ECD NPO sector include the NPO Act of 1997 and the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005. ECD NPOs are required to register according to the regulations of the NPO Act of 1997. ECD NPOs provide ECD services in terms of section 30(2) of the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005.

### 2.4.2 Supporting structures for the ECD NPO Sector

According to Atmore (2015), supporting structures for the ECD NPO sector are informal and the size and capacity of these supporting structures are not well published or known. This study identifies two supporting structures including community ECD forums and the National ECD alliance.

*2.4.2.1 Community ECD Forums*

Wotshela (2013) identifies community ECD Forums as one of the supporting structures for the ECD NPO sector. According to Wotshela (2015), community ECD Forums are membership and community based structures initiated by ECD centre owners. Wotshela, (personal communication 2015, June 25) adds that community ECD Forums conduct their own fundraising through sponsors or donors. In addition, the City of Cape Town is also actively involved in the funding and registration of Community ECD Forums as these will act as a representative body of local ECD centres (Wotshela, 2013). ECD NPOs benefit from these forums as they involve information sharing and updates on the current state of the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province and how to deal with the associated challenges.

*2.4.2.2 National Early Childhood Development Alliance*

The national ECD ALLIANCE (NECDA) was established in 2005 and has a current membership of 192 registered ECD NPOs. NECDA supports the ECD sector in South Africa through funding, training and accreditation. Over 95% of the ECD NPOs in South Africa are supported by NECDA (NECDA, 2015).

**2.4.3 Challenges faced by the SA ECD NPO sector**

In this study, the challenges faced by the ECD NPO sector have been separated from those faced by the ECD sector as they are not necessarily common to both. In some cases challenges faced by the ECD sector may also affect the ECD NPO sector since they are also involved in dealing with challenges faced by the ECD sector. The challenges discussed include poor funding and low sustainability, shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, insufficient coverage of ECD services and insufficient ECD learning materials.

*2.4.3.1 Funding and sustainability*

The SA NPO sector was severely affected by the global financial crisis which saw the fall of the United States of America's (US) financial institutions, leading to the downgrading of the US economy (Ramklass, 2011). The decline of the donor

Rand/Dollar exchange rate and the classification of South Africa as a middle income country have seen a drastic decrease in funding for the NPO community, especially in developing countries. Donors have redirected funding from the middle income South Africa to low income countries (Ramklass, 2011).

This has led to the downsizing and closure of some ECD NPOs in South Africa since many are mainly dependent on donor funding (DGMT, 2012). A study by Biersteker & Picken (2013) indicates that ECD NPOs face challenges in raising sufficient funds to maintain optimum programme delivery and staffing.

### 2.4.3.2 Shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced staff

A shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced staff is identified as one of the challenges facing the ECD NPO sector. According to Biersteker and Picken (2013), if planned scaling up levels of ECD are to be achieved, there needs to be a substantial increase in the number of trainers in ECD NPOs. In addition, the qualifications and skills of many existing staff members would need to be upgraded. Based on the estimations of the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) Sector Skills Plan Update 2013/4, (Biersteker & Picken, 2013:14) notes that, with the current child population, over 50000 practitioners would require initial training; while 40 000 would require further training. This lack of, or shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced staff may compromise the quality and upscaling of ECD service provision.

### 2.4.3.3 Insufficient Coverage

According to Ilifa (2014), the ECD training NPO sector is moderately small and lacks the capacity to scale up ECD services and programmes for children aged 0 – 4. In addition, there is a substantial imbalance of distribution, which finds most ECD NPOs located in metropolitan areas in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces, whereas those in the rural provinces are considerably under-serviced.

*2.4.3.4 Insufficient learning materials*

According to Biersteker and Picken (2013), various studies have indicated that many ECD programmes lack the adequate materials thereby limiting the provision of a variety of educational activities. A number of ECD NPOs provide various materials such as posters, toy kits and books in support of their training programmes but not all ECD NPOs can afford the costs, hence constraining effective programme implementation. In this context, collaboration may be a possible solution to boost capacity.

## 2.5 Collaboration

An understanding of collaboration in the context of expectations, benefits and challenges, is vital for any organisation considering this avenue. Several scholars have proposed definitions of what collaboration is. Rowitz (2014:2) defines collaboration as "a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more individuals in organisations who work toward common goals by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability for achieving results".

According to Huxham (1996:1), "Collaboration is taken to imply a very positive form of working in association with others for some form of mutual benefit. Himmelman (2002:3) defines collaboration as "a process in which organisations exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities, and rewards."

While these scholars might have varied definitions of collaboration, they share the common elements of working together towards a certain goal and a sharing of responsibility. For the purposes of this study, the researcher adopted Himmelman's (2002) definition, which provides three strategies for working together: networking, coordinating, and cooperating. These strategies build upon each other along a developmental sequence. Himmelman (2002:2) defines networking as the exchange of information for mutual benefit; coordinating as the exchange of information and the alteration of activities for shared benefit and to achieve a common purpose, and

cooperating as the sharing of resources, altering activities, and exchange of information to achieve a common purpose and for mutual benefit.

Himmelman's (2002) definition of collaboration assumes that when organisations collaborate, they share responsibilities, rewards and risks. Each of these contributes to the enhancement of each of the organisations' capacity to attain a common purpose. Furthermore, collaboration is characterized by high levels of trust, extensive areas of common turf and substantial time commitments (Himmelman, 2002).

## 2.6 Forms of collaboration among Non-Profit Organisations

Kohm, La Piana, and Gowdy (2000) argue that collaboration among NPOs works in three ways which they arrange in order of increasing formality and decreasing autonomy. These range from collaboration (joint planning, programme coordination and information sharing), through alliances (joint programming and administrative consolidation), to integrations (joint venture, management service organisation, parent subsidiary and merger). However, integrations and alliances are often merged into one larger category of more formalised and permanent collaboration referred to as strategic restructuring (Kohm et al., 2000). For the sake of this study, a management service organisation is defined as "an entity created to provide administrative and management services to other organisations (Anderson & Grey, 2013).

Guo and Acar (2005) categorises the above mentioned different types of collaboration in two main forms namely formal and informal collaboration. Informal collaborations involves information sharing, sharing of office spaces, while formal collaboration would include joint programming, joint ventures, merger and parent subsidiary. Guo and Acar (2005) add that, in the process of informal collaboration, organisations do not make ongoing commitments to the partnership and that the decision making power remains with the individual organisations. In contrast, Kohm et al (2000) notes that in informal collaboration, organisations establish an ongoing relationship via shared services, combined or transferred services, programmes or resources.

Collaboration is one of the strategies that falls into a bigger picture of social planning and community development. According to Rothman (2001) as cited by Ohmer and DeMasi (2009:11), social planning is "a form of community organizing that focuses a technical process of problem solving regarding substantive social problems that utilizes the expertise of professionals." According to Cox, Erlich, Rothman and Tropman (1987), when social planning focuses on the connections between consumers and service providers, resource suppliers and providers; the planning problem may be viewed in three ways. Lack of continuity (where one service cannot be successful without leading to the other); Lack of compatibility (where one service complements the other) and lack of comprehensiveness (involves dealing with multiple aspects of the problem). There is therefore need for high levels of collaboration among these parties to provide a bundle of coherent services.

In this study, types of collaboration are presented and used as outlined by Huxham (1996), Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) and Ontario Communities Coalition (OCC) (2014). These authors do not differentiate between formal and informal forms of collaboration. This study identifies the various forms of collaboration that exist among NPOs ranging from loose network affiliations to fully collaborative structures which are formal and complex (OCC, 2014). This section describes networks, alliances, coalitions, partnerships, full collaboration and funding-partner collaboration.

*2.6.1 Networks*
Networks are informal forms of collaboration as identified by Kohm et al (2000) and are based on informal relationships regulated by commitments of trust, reciprocity and sustainability (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). Networks have no official obligations and have few expectations of organisations. Informal networks may form as a result of the clustering of activities and people. Great importance is placed on the role of hybrid individuals, 'Reticulists', who have the capability to work across inter-organisational boundaries. In this context, 'reticulists' are individuals who possess the skill in servicing, creating and manipulating communication networks. In addition they have the ability to identify where in the interested organisation, a decision should be made (Williams &

Sullivan, 2010). Commonly, networks are purposively used to promote the sharing of resources, tools and information among individuals (OCC, 2014). Networks do not necessarily conduct work although members may collaborate on activities and tasks.

### 2.6.2 Alliances

Alliances are characterised by more formalised relationships amongst individuals and organisations with a particular focus on a mission or issue. It may be unlikely that legal obligations are in place, but there is clarity on task performance expectations, conduct and contributions. Alliances are typically created as a means to respond to policy that is viewed as detrimental to advocate for the development of policy (Huxham, 1996; Kohm et al (2000) and OCC (2014). Kohm et al (2000) identifies alliances as part of strategic restructuring as noted earlier in the introduction of section 2.6.

### 2.6.3 Coalitions

These are formal types of collaboration (Kohm et al., 2000) characterised by more formal relationships between more than one organisation and sometimes involving a few individuals, which allows working together on a specific project or issue. A coalition would often have its own funding and staff either allocated from partners' members' organisational budgets and human resources or externally funded (OCC, 2014). The South African NGO coalition (SANGOCO) is an example of a coalition among NPOs.

### 2.6.4 Partnerships

According to OCC (2014), partnerships are formal relationships characterised by a contract or written agreement. A partnership can be defined as a relationship amongst organisations in which they share resources and responsibilities to achieve a common objective. The partnership model is exclusively based on joint decision-making and production (Klijn & Teisman, 2000). This model regards collaboration as a mutually engaging process where joint interests are conceptualised, verbalized and transformed into various activities. Furthermore, partners share responsibility in outlining the need for action, and determining the plan of action and implementation. In this type of relationship, each partner is required to halt its own power and self interest in the quest

of a shared outcome. The Beyers Naudé Schools Development Programme is an example of a partnership type of collaboration between Kagiso Trust and Shanduka foundation in the development of schools in the Free State Province.

*2.6.5 Full collaboration*

Based on Kohm et al (2000), this is a formalised type of collaboration which occurs when organisations work together on an initiative. This initiative establishes its own identity in terms of the "terms of reference" or constitution, budget, plan of action and dedicated human resources (OCC, 2014). An example of would be a collaborative initiative between the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Foundation for Community in the building and management of ECD centres.

*2.6.6 Funding-partner collaboration*

According to (Atmore, personal communication 2015, June 26), funding-partner collaboration occurs where one partner is the project funder and the other implements the project. An example of funding-partner collaboration would be CECD collaborating with the DSD in the training of ECD teachers. Since the researcher could not find reference to this in the literature consulted. Building on the term coined by (Atmore, personal communication 2015, June 26), the researcher will merge the previously identified types of collaboration. The funding-partner collaboration may be formal or informal in nature and may take the characteristics of the previously discussed full collaboration, alliance, coalition or partnership type of collaboration. The main distinction would be that one of the collaborative partners would be a funder while the other or others are implementers.

## 2.7 Sectoral types of collaboration in South Africa

Collaboration has been known to be common in the public and community sectors where organisations get together to provide co-ordinated services such as community education or advice, or to combat social problems such as drug use and sometimes major national conflicts (Huxham, 1996). Sectoral collaboration is common in South Africa where various NPOs provide services on behalf of government in various sectors

such as early childhood development, education, community development, poverty alleviation, crime prevention, child protection and drug awareness.

The various types of sectoral collaboration in the South African context include: NPO and Government (public sector) collaboration, NPO and business (private sector) collaboration and NPO to NPO collaboration. An example of NPO-private collaboration would be collaboration between the Centre for Early Childhood Development and First National Bank in the provision of equipment and ECD teacher training. Collaboration in this context is usually in the form of funding for a specific cause under the corporate organisations' corporate social responsibility budget. NPO-private sector collaboration is quite common in South Africa with organisations such as the D.G Murray Trust (DGMT) playing a vital role in the funding of ECD projects (DGMT, 2014).

An example of a public-NPO collaborative initiative would be the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Provincial Department of Social Development in training or upgrading preschools in Cape Town townships. An example of a current ECD NPO-government collaboration is in the development of the National ECD Policy.
An example of NPO-NPO collaboration would be between the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Foundation for Community Work in the registration of ECD centres.

## 2.8 Factors affecting collaboration

A study by Patel et al (2011) outlines collaboration in the Information and Technology industry. These authors identify various factors affecting collaboration which can be applicable in the ECD NPO context. Drawing from a variety of authors, Patel et al (2011) identifies factors and sub-factors of collaborative work including context, support, task interaction processes, teams, individual factors and overarching factors. These factors are discussed below.

### 2.8.1 Organisational Context

According to Patel et al (2011), context refers to the individuals and teams involved in the collaborative work, and the types of tasks to be carried out. The organisational context determines the type of support that needs to be provided for collaborative work which may impact on team effectiveness and the process of collaboration. The context includes factors such as the organisational culture, environment (political, economical), and organisational structure inter alia.

Organisational culture comprises of values, beliefs and attitudes shared by employees, which impact on employee morale and behavior (Mullins, 1999; Patel et al., 2011). Patel et al (2011) adds that organisational culture often develops from an organisation's overall vision and objectives which can influence the 'openness' of communication, willingness to change, types of social interaction that take place between people, organisational effectiveness and organisational trust. It may be necessary for ECD NPOs with similar organisational cultures to collaborate as this may prevent conflict triggered by organisational differences (Huxham, 1996). The work environment including working conditions are vital for motivating collaboration as they affect the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals. It is important that organisations have structures and policies that support collaboration (Patel et al, 2011).

### 2.8.2 Organisational support

Appropriate and effective support is essential and marks the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful collaboration regardless of the type of collaboration (Buchanan & Badham, 2008). Such support includes resources and management support. Support may be in the form of training (for skills, knowledge and attitudes), supportive networks and complimentary job design. Organisational support factors may include resources, tools, networks, training, team building and knowledge management. Policy may also play a vital role as a supporting factor for collaboration. In this study policy may be in the form of organisational policy and national social or economic policies.

### 2.8.3 Task characteristics

According to Patel et al (2011), teams and individuals engage in collaboration in order to complete tasks and achieve outlined goals. They assert that team task performance is as vital as collaborative performance. Task characteristics are identified as a chief category that affects collaboration because the type of task or tasks assigned interacts with the interaction processes, team work and technical support systems. The type and structure of the task determines the need for communication and can also impact, determine or influence the extent and degree of collaboration (Girard & Robin, 2006; Higgs et al., 2005; Patel et al., 2011). The structure of the assigned task should be appropriate to the demands of the task and should engage all teams to avoid duplication of effort.

### 2.8.4 Interaction processes

One view on collaborative work is that individuals and teams are components of a collaborative working environment in which processes such as decision making, coordination, communication and learning define the actions of people assigned to the given tasks. The process involves a series of tasks and behaviours that influence the tasks that will come later. The final product is created through these processes to achieve the organisational goals. The interactive processes are coordination, communication and decision making.

Coordination and communication are important determinants of a successful collaboration and should be clear at all levels of the collaborative process. Collaborative decision making is important as it enhances employee commitment and satisfaction (Hammond et al., 2001; Patel et al., 2011; Weiseth et al., 2006).

### 2.8.5 Teams

Teams play a specified function in contributing to the organisational objectives. These teams will include individuals engaging in a shared task with a similar goal for which they are accountable. The sub-factors under teams include roles, relationships, shared awareness or knowledge, common ground, composition and group processes. In

general, all these factors should be in sync to enable effective or successful collaboration.

Patel et al (2011) emphasises the importance of establishing good relations and group dynamics among teams and among individuals. It is vital to establish shared awareness and common ground which should be communicated to encourage organisations to work in harmony during the collaborative process and should be communicated effectively as organisations work towards a mutual goal. Collaboration can be affected by the team composition, size and heterogeneity. Collaborating organisations should be mindful of team characteristics such as gender, background, roles, skills, attitudes, expertise and personalities as collaboration can be negatively or positively affected by cultural differences.

### 2.8.6 Individual factors

Patel et al (2011:12) argues that individual work is crucial to team work and outlines individual factors such as skills, psychological factors and wellbeing. Individuals from collaborating organisations bring their own set of knowledge, skills and experiences. Organisations should be aware of this situation in order to effectively utilise their human resources and determine the role of every individual in the collaborative process (Huxham, 1996).

### 2.8.7 Overarching factors

Overarching factors are those that are believed to interact with the above mentioned six identified factors and their sub-factors. Overarching factors include trust, conflict, experience, goals and performance. The overarching factors determine whether the collaborative initiative will be a success or a failure.

Conflicts may arise due to incompatibility of individuals' characteristics (opinions or perspectives, goals or personalities) related to work and personal or social differences. Conflict may also emerge as a result of poor common ground, lack of shared understanding of each other's skills and knowledge and poor social dynamics.

Management support is critical for the success of the collaborative process and managers should provide the necessary support and communicate their expectations. The factors affecting collaboration should be understood along with the benefits and challenges of collaboration in order to understand the value of collaboration.

## 2.9 Benefits of collaboration

This section presents the benefits of collaboration namely, collaborative advantage, capacity, adaptation and learning opportunities, organisational efficiency and service delivery and, greater reach and impact of services. These benefits will be explained in detail.

### 2.9.1 Collaborative advantage

Collaborative advantage is when organisations jointly achieve something that they could not achieve individually (Huxham, 1996). Sullivan (2007) adds that, collaboration enhances the capability to gain influence over territory and enhances the ability to penetrate markets and develop a strong competitive edge.

### 2.9.2 Capacity

According to Holland (2014), many social problems exceed the capacity of individual organisations. Through collaboration, organisations have a better chance to design an effective solution to the problem. He further argues that the combination of skills and resources from each of the organisations increases capacity and results in better outcomes than either could do alone. This speaks to collaborative advantage as previously identified by Huxham (1996).

### 2.9.3 Learning opportunities and adaptation

Collaboration creates opportunities to learn and adapt; develops competencies; can jointly develop new products or services; and enhances the possibility to provide better services (Williams & Sullivan, 2007). Collaboration enhances formal and informal learning opportunities (Patel et al., 2011; Sullivan, 2007). Through collaboration, teams and individuals can learn from one another and increase knowledge through team task

performance (learning from successes and failures) and can improve or develop skills. This can be considered as a learning curve to improve future work. Organisations which improve based on experience (changing behaviours, mind-sets and methodologies) are referred to as learning organisations (Kelly, 2015). Senge (1990:3) defines learning organisations as "organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together".

### 2.9.4 Organisational efficiency and service delivery

Collaboration increases organisational efficiency through the improvement in the quality and cost-effectiveness of services (Todeva & Knoke, 2005; Williams and Sullivan, 2007:20; Patel et al, 2011). Collaboration can also enhance the sharing of ideas and information on the designing of innovative products/ services and better ways to deliver services. According to Williams and Sullivan (2007) Collaboration enhances integration, reduces the duplication of activities between agencies and enhances the possibility of providing better services. In agreement, Huxham (1996:3) notes that collaboration can be viewed from an efficiency argument which stems from the "practical imperative of avoiding duplication of effort and assuring that the efforts of the various agencies are coordinated into a directed and coherent whole."

### 2.9.5 Greater reach and impact of services

Collaboration enhances the capacity to increase the coherence, reach and impact of sector interventions which helps organisations to address complex issues which require cross-sectional or multi-disciplinary approaches (Vernis et al., 2006).

## 2.10 Challenges of collaboration

This section presents the challenges of collaboration namely, loss of autonomy, coordination, communication and conflict; differences in aim, procedures, culture and perceived power imbalances. These challenges will be explained in detail.

### 2.10.1 Loss of autonomy

The greatest cost of collaboration is the loss of operating autonomy and the ability to individually control outcomes of a certain task or project. In their quest to maintain a balance between sustaining autonomy and managing resource dependency, organisations choose different forms of collaboration (Guo & Acar, 2005). Collaborations often fail if this balance expectation is not met by the collaborating entities (Sullivan, 2007).

### 2.10.2 Coordination, Communication and Conflict

Coordination of work can be demanding when working across multidisciplinary organisations and teams as this requires clear communication to optimize collaborative activities (Patel et al., 2011). Poor communication can result in ineffective coordination and failure to reach the targeted goals thus resulting in inefficiency and the failure of the collaborative process. Conflict may also arise due to poor communication of goals and expectations of the collaborative process. This results in lack of common ground, different opinions on work processes and poor social dynamics. Once a collaboration gets locked up in a cycle of poor communication, coordination and conflict, trust wanes, willingness to share information and ideas dwindles and partners engage in 'adversarial collaboration' (Patel et al., 2011).

### 2.10.3 Differences in aim, procedures, culture

Organisations involved in collaborative initiatives may have different aims and it is these differences that provide leverage that is gained from collaborating. However, different aims may also mean different reasons for collaborating and some of the reasons might not be in alignment with the overt purpose of collaboration and may not be clarified. These differences in aims may result in conflict and satisfying the different aims may be a challenging task (Huxham, 1996).

The difficulty might be exacerbated if collaborating partners are from different disciplines for example social workers and police as they would work in different ways and may have different views of the situation at hand. In addition, organisational cultural

differences may lead to processes being conducted differently and may exacerbate conflict as individuals make unjustified assumptions of how processes and procedures are carried out in the other organisation (Huxham, 1996; Patel et al., 2011).

### *2.10. 4 Perceived Power imbalances*

According to Bucklin and Sengupta (1993:34), "the presence of power imbalances [in an exchange relationship] creates the potential for discrepancies". In the light of RDT, if dependencies are unbalanced in a relationship, in some cases a stronger partner will try to exploit the other (Brouwer, 2014). The weaker party may feel vulnerable and defend itself from vulnerability thus creating further misunderstandings. Irreconcilable differences may occur and collaborating entities would need to spend vast amounts of time in reaching agreements and understandings. The worst scenario would be ensuing conflict and misunderstandings (Huxham, 1996).

After looking at the challenges faced during the collaborative process, it is also imperative to gain an understanding of the inhibitors of collaboration in order for organisation to manage such barriers and increase the chances of engaging in collaborative initiatives.

## 2.11 Barriers to collaboration

Despite the benefits of collaboration as outlined and explained in detail in section 2.9 some organisations seem to have no interest in collaboration. Why is collaboration an exception and not the rule? Why do NPOs mistrust each other? Vernis, Iglesias, Sanz and Saz-Carranza (2006) note that identifying the key factors underlying the absence of collaboration is instrumental to minimising their impact and fostering a culture of collaboration. Successful collaboration requires that barriers be reduced and aspects of facilitation be maximised. Barriers to effective collaboration in this section include limited resources, competitiveness, organisational culture differences, fear of the unknown, a shortage of staff and time and geographical location/ distance. These are outlined and explained below.

### 2.11.1 Limited resources

According to Vernis et al (2006), a collaborative process requires management which would require allocation of resources, either material, personnel or financial resources. Due to limited resources some organisations prefer not to collaborate simply because they do not have the resources to share which is often required in collaboration. In the context of the South African ECD NPO sector, limited resources may be partly attributed to the Global Economic Recession which saw a decrease in NPO funding in SA as previously discussed. Limited resources may lead to competitiveness among organisations.

### 2.11.2 Competitiveness

According to Patlack, Balogh and Nass (2012), competitiveness and an unwillingness to share data and resources are commonly identified as a cultural challenge of collaboration which may potentially lead to unsuccessful collaborations. In a context where organisations are targeting the same clientele, contracts, funding and resources, competition is bound to exist. Vernis et al (2006) concurs that the new operating, financial and institutional environment resulting from public policies that empower private organisations pushes NPOs and or companies to compete for resources especially service users and service contracts. Vernis et al (2006) adds that strong competition isolates organisations effectively, leads to the zealous guarding of information and the perception of joint ventures as a threat.

### 2.11.3 Organisational culture differences

Organisational culture influences individual organisations' approaches to tasks and openness to change, and these differences are often a source of conflict and fear of the unknown when interacting with outsiders (Huxham, 1996; Vernis et al., 2006; Hall, 2007; Patel et al., 2011). It is therefore often recommended that partners with similar organisational cultures collaborate as it reduces friction. For organisations with different cultures and ways of working, it is often important to create mutual practices which will govern the collaborative initiative. For example organisations may mutually agree to follow procedures and practises in their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

### 2.11.4 Resistance to change

According to Hall (2007), resistance to change often starts as a personal resistance or unwillingness to change and is followed by the organisation's collective resistance. This leads to organisations resisting the embracing of new ideas which are often associated with collaboration (Quinn, 1996). Change-aversive organisations are often reluctant to collaborate. These organisations, often lacking in creativity and clear visions, usually stick to obsolete rules and regulations, and fear a loss of authority. Organisations are often fearful of what the change would bring thereby creating a fear of the unknown. However, "collaboration demands a listening disposition, a good dose of humbleness and a critical spirit, as well as some curiosity for others and the will to tolerate differences" (Vernis, 2006:69).

### 2.11.5 Shortage of staff and time

Jackson and Maddy (2015) identifies the lack of staff and time to participate in collaborative efforts as a barrier to collaboration. Vernis et al (2006: 69) concurs that the haste and pressure of daily operations tends to "obstruct strategic thinking, the basis for clearly defined missions and visions shared by the entire management team." In the context of this study, the lack of time and staff may occur as some ECD NPOs may be too busy with the implementation of projects, management and operations in their organisations thus creating a barrier to collaboration. The difference comes in where some organisations are willing to create time to collaborate while others are unwilling to do so.

### 2.11.6 Geographical location/distance

According to Dastidar and Zaheer, (2009) and Van Bevervoorde (2014), geographical distance is a critical factor of collaboration as it may have the greatest impact on collaboration. Ghemawat (2001) adds that geographic distance has a major negative effect on the transfer of knowledge through communication. In some cases, distance among organisations creates an overreliance on email and phone calls where face-to face contact is needed. Non-verbal communication such as emails may lead to misunderstandings or different interpretations of the message which may in turn lead to

conflict. Poor communication may result in ineffective coordination and failure to reach the targeted goals thus resulting in the inefficiency and the failure of the collaborative process (Weiseth et al., 2006; Patel et al., 2011).

The constraints of distance are compounded by limited resources to keep a variety a communication lines open (including travel to forum meetings, seminars or workshops) where collaborative potential might exist. ECD NPOs located outside the Cape Town Metropole might often have to deal with these challenges. This may create huge travelling and related expenses for these organisations which might already be financially constrained.

## 2.12 Summary

This chapter has presented relevant literature, starting with the theoretical frameworks (Ecological Systems Theory and Resource Dependence Theory). It was further divided into three major sections which include the nature, state and importance of the Early Childhood Development sector in South Africa; the state of the South African ECD NPO sector, legislative framework, supporting structures and challenges faced. This was followed by the concept and types of collaboration, factors affecting collaboration, the benefits, challenges and barriers to collaboration. The next chapter will present the research methodology of the study.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the methodology of the research including the approach, design, sampling, data collection, the pilot study, the interview process, data analysis and data verification. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and the practical problems experienced during the study.

## 3.2 Research Approach

According to Marshall (1996), the choice of research approach is determined by the research questions. The study was an exploratory study aimed at getting the participant's subjective interpretations of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. A qualitative approach mainly uses open ended questions in order to give the participants the freedom to narrate their experiences as noted by Mouton (1996). An exploratory qualitative approach was applied, hence the use of qualitative research design.

## 3.3 Research Design

According to Terre Blanche and Durkheim (1999), the research design clearly specifies how the research will be executed to answer the research questions and to reach sound conclusions. An exploratory qualitative research design was utilised in this. Burns and Grove (2001) defines exploratory research as a research conducted to increase knowledge on a phenomenon, discover new ideas and gain new insights. Exploratory qualitative research aims to study people in their natural environment and strives to understand human behaviour and what governs that behaviour (Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996). In this study, the research design was influenced by the research goal, research questions and approach.

This study endeavoured to understand collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province thus a qualitative research design was employed. A qualitative research

design aimed to acquire an in-depth understanding of the ECD NPO's and government participant's understanding of collaboration, the value that collaboration has brought to the ECD NPOs, the factors considered prior to collaboration and the factors that enhance and those that inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs and among ECD NPOs and government participants in the Western Cape Province. The research further used an inductive approach to data analysis.

## 3.4 Sampling

### 3.4.1 Research population

A research population is defined as the total of all the individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher (Polit & Hungler 1999; Strydom, 2005). In this study, the research population consisted of ECD NPOs, government departments and provincial a local authority in the Western Cape. The ECD NPO population was acquired from the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) database (2014) to attain the desired ECD NPO sample size as discussed in section 3.4.3. The government participants were purposefully selected from provincial government departments and a local authority which are known to be playing an active role in the servicing and regulation of the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province. ECD NPO and government participants and their organisations were required to meet the selection criteria outlined in section 3.4.4.

### 3.4.2 Sampling technique

Babbie and Mouton (2001) define a sample as a certain number of people/participants who are interviewed out of the population in order to draw conclusions about the topic being researched. The current study adopted a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select the required number of participants for this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability type of sampling technique. In some cases, it is appropriate to select a sample according to one's knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of research aims (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this study, only ECD NPOs and provincial government departments and a local authority involved in the

provision of training and other services to the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province were selected using the criteria outlined in 3.4.4.

### 3.4.3 Sampling process and size

The researcher used a two-step purposive sampling technique to select the 1) participating organisations, and 2) participants to be interviewed which included government participants. The total sample size was nineteen (19) participants, comprising sixteen (16) ECD NPO participants from sixteen NPOs and three (3) government participants from three government agencies.

- NPO sampling

The Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) database used consisted of over sixty three (63) ECD NPOs across South Africa, twelve (12) of which are located in the Western Cape Province, which is the study area, which were thus selected as participants. The researcher further employed the snowball technique through one of these 12 participants to identify an additional five (5) ECD NPOs because the previously selected twelve participants were too few to constitute a desired sample of twenty (17 ECD NPOs and 3 government agencies) as per departmental requirements. The researcher did not reach data saturation in this study may be because he had a cut off of 20 participants as per UCT departmental requirement. From the selected seventeen ECD NPOs, two (2) ECD NPOs dropped out and will be discussed in detail in section 3.11.1. In attempt to replace the two, the researcher snowballed for two more organisations but only managed to access one more thus making a total of sixteen (16) ECD NPOs. The rationale for selecting these organisations was that they were in a position to give an account of ECD NPO collaboration in the Western Cape Province because of their involvement in collaborative initiatives. The selected sixteen (16) organisations were contacted telephonically and some via email to request their participation.

- Sampling of NPO Participants

The directors of the selected ECD NPOs were responsible for the selection of

participants to represent their organisations for the research using the selection criteria outlined in 3.4.4.

- Government participant sampling

Government participants refer to the three (3) participants who were purposefully selected from two provincial government departments namely the Western Cape Department of Social Development, Western Cape Department of Education and one local authority namely the City of Cape Town using the selection criteria under 3.4.4. The rationale for the selection of the two provincial government departments and one local authority was that they are actively involved in the servicing and regulation of the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province and were likely to provide an account of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province from a government perspective. In this study they were considered as collaborators since they had also been involved in funding-partner type collaborative initiatives with ECD NPOs. All three were contacted both telephonically and via email to request their participation similarly to the ECD NPO participants. For the purposes of this study, the two provincial government departments and one local authority are referred to as government agencies.

### 3.4.4 Selection criteria

- *ECD NPOs*

Three criteria were considered: 1) the ECD NPO had to be a registered with the DSD as a Non-Profit Organisation; 2) The organisation had to have at least five (5) years' experience in the field of early childhood development (ECD) to give an account of their past and current collaborative initiatives and 3) the ECD NPO had to be located in the Western Cape Province. This approach yielded fifteen (15) ECD NPOs with experience of collaboration and one (1) with no experience of collaboration.

- *ECD NPO participants with experience of collaboration*

In order to obtain detailed and accurate data, the selected ECD NPOs' director was to nominate or select a staff member who is regarded as most knowledgeable or experienced in collaboration and must have been involved in the planning and/or coordination of the organisation's collaborative activities (either currently or in the past).

- *ECD NPO participants with no experience of collaboration*

The rationale for including one ECD NPO with no experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs was to develop an understanding of the reason for this lack of collaboration. In addition, the researcher had limited access to other ECD NPOs and wanted to reach the desired sample size of twenty. As with the other ECD NPOs, the director of the selected ECD NPO was to elect a staff member who was regarded as most knowledgeable about the organisation and would be likely to discuss their reason for lack of collaboration with other ECD NPOs.

- *Government participants*

After the government agencies were purposefully selected, one of the ECD participants provided the contact details of the senior management staff members of these organisations. The three senior staff members were responsible for the selection of participants to take part in the study. Their positions were not disclosed for confidentiality and anonymity purposes. The selected participant was to be working for a governmental department, directorate or local authority that has played or plays an active role in the governing and regulating of the ECD sector. In addition, the participant was supposed to be from a government department or local authority that had been previously or is currently involved in collaborative initiatives with ECD NPOs. These criteria ensured the selection of the most relevant departments, local authority and participants having past and/or present collaborative experience with ECD NPOs as funders and coordinators in order to obtain appropriate data to find answers to the study questions.

## 3.5 Data collection

This section outlines the method which was employed for gathering data to meet the objectives of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The section discusses the data collection approach, data collection instruments and the data collection apparatus that were used.

### 3.5.1 Data Collection Approach

This being a qualitative study, a qualitative data collection approach was used. This was in the form of 45 - 60 minute long face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule.

A face-to-face interview "is a purposeful discussion between two or more people that can help you gather valid and reliable data that is relevant to your research objectives" (Muise & Olson, 2014:1). Since this study is exploratory in nature, a face-to-face semi-structured interview was appropriate and valuable to explore the topic since it enables personal communication which enhances further probing (Muise & Olson, 2014). The interviewer's presence makes it easier for the participant to either ask for clarification of some of the questions or clarify answers. Face-to-face interviews ensure relatively high response rates and an absence of non-responsiveness to questions thus increasing the quality of the data collected (Dialsingh, 2008).

The main limitation associated with this type of data collection is that it can be time consuming and costly as compared to other modes of data collection, depending on the amount of information being collected and the sample size (Dialsingh, 2008; Muise & Olson, 2014). Another disadvantage is that, participants might be pressured to give immediate responses which may not be accurate. Participants may also not be given enough time to provide responses that are thoroughly thought out as compared to responding to an internet or mail survey.

### 3.5.2 Data Collection Instruments

Three semi-structured interview schedules were used as guides for data collection. The first interview schedule was for organisations that had experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs (see Appendix B) while the second one was for ECD NPOs who had no experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs (see Appendix C) and the third one was for government participants (see Appendix D). The interview schedules were designed with loosely structured key open-ended questions that linked to the research objectives. These schedules were used as guides and adhered to. In addition, probing questions were used to acquire more information.

### 3.5.3 Data Collection Apparatus

With the respondent's permission, a digital recording device was used to record the interview, allowing the researcher to concentrate on exploring the topic and noting the non-verbal cues. De Vos (2005) argues that recording an interview is effective as an aid as no valuable information is lost or forgotten during the interviews. Recording and taking field notes also makes the transcription and analysis process easier. De Vos (2005) notes that the use of audio-visual methods and field notes has the potential to add value to the research and develop a stronger argument. The researcher only used a few of the field notes during the transcription process to make sense of some of the points illustrated in the interviews. The researchers tended to place more reliance on the recorded interviews during the transcription process.

## 3.6 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small experiment designed to gather information and test the tools prior to a full study in order to improve their efficiency and quality (Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson, 2004). A pilot study was conducted to test the interview schedules in order to reveal any possible deficiencies in the proposed instrument design, data collection and process. The pilot interview was conducted about two weeks before the full study with one purposively selected ECD NPO participant from an ECD NPO with experience of collaboration. After the pilot interview, the researcher listened to the recording and self-reflected to check where improvements could be made in terms of the quality of the

interview. The researcher shared his experience and reflections from the pilot regards what went well and what could be improved with the supervisor in order to refine the tools and the process.

The pilot study revealed that 1) an interview would take about 45 minutes to an hour; 2) the researcher needed to improve the coherence of questions to avoid repetition and overlaps; 3) in-depth probing was needed to acquire detailed information; and 4) it was valuable to summarise after every section to ensure that he fully understood what the participant was saying, which was also an indirect way to probe for more understanding. The lessons from the pilot study ensured that the interview schedule questions were phrased in a logical manner.

## 3.7 The Interview process

At the start of each interview, participants were fully informed about the nature of the study and were requested to sign the consent form. Fourteen (14) face to face interviews were conducted at the ECD NPO participants' or government participants' offices, four (4) were conducted via Skype and one (1) at a mall at the convenience of the respondent. Mutually agreed venues and times aimed to minimise interference with the respondent's work schedule so as to avoid rushed engagements. The shortest interview was thirty one (31) minutes and the longest an hour and twenty eight minutes. At the end of every interview, participants were requested to complete a biographical sheet which included the organisational details and participant details (see Appendix E). The data collected through the biographical sheets are presented and analysed in tables 4.1 and 4.2.

## 3.8 Data analysis

The nineteen (19) recordings of the interviews were transcribed and each transcript was analysed. Data analysis is defined as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). During the

process of analysis, the researcher explored and inspected data with the purpose of highlighting the valuable information necessary for suggesting conclusions. The data collected from the field research was analysed using an adaptation of Tesch's (1990) eight (8) steps of analysis as outlined in De Vos and Fouché (1998):

Step 1: The researcher read the transcripts in order to develop a general understanding and wrote down ideas that came to mind.

Step 2: After reading all the transcripts, the researcher selected one interview, the most interesting transcript with a view to understanding the ECD NPO participants' and government participants' responses in relation to the research objectives.

Step 3: The researcher further studied the transcript and identified the categories and sub-categories as they emerged. The researcher discussed the categories and sub-categories with the supervisor in order to get her input.

Step 4: The researcher used the list of the identified categories and sub-categories as the units for analysis.

Step 5: In this step, the researcher identified the themes on all transcripts and developed the most descriptive wording for the topics. The researcher repeated step 3 delicately in order to clarify the categories and sub-categories by looking at how they were interrelated. Categories were inductively generated by the researcher from the transcripts.

Step 6: This step included the finalisation of the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged.

Step 7: In this step, the researcher assembled the data under the developed themes, categories and sub-categories. After the themes were identified, the data were coded

and the researcher performed preliminary analysis. The researcher checked for consistency mostly through assessment of interconnectedness of data in each theme.

Step 8: In this step, the researcher compared the themes, categories and sub-categories to the transcripts to check if there was any data left out. The researcher compared the findings with literature and other research finding and added his critical commentary/ interpretation in the discussion.

## 3.9 Data Verification

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the trustworthiness of a study is essential in evaluating its value. They further note that trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe a series of techniques that can be used to conduct qualitative research that achieves their outlined criteria. In this study, the researcher adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) verification techniques which include a thick description technique and an inquiry audit.

The researcher used the 'thick description technique' of terms and definitions to establish the transferability of the study which can also be used as a tool to ensure external validity of the study. 'Thick description' means describing a phenomenon in abundant detail. The researcher used the thick description technique in the definition of terms and concepts in the literature review and the research methodology. With this description, one can begin to assess the extent to which the conclusions drawn can be transferred to other contexts, settings, times, people and situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the technique for establishing the dependability of the study is through an inquiry audit which involves having an external researcher to examine both the process and product of the study. In this study the researcher's supervisor examined the process and the final product. The final product of the study would then be evaluated by two external examiners.

## 3.10 Limitations of the study

### 3.10.1 Research design

Although praised for its ability to allow the researcher to engage with the respondent, qualitative research designs are known to have low generalisability, low reliability and are subjective. However, this approach is considered well suited to gather data and generate information in poorly researched subjects.

### 3.10.2 Sampling technique

The main limitation to purposive sampling is that it rests on the subjectivity of the researcher's decision making. This alone creates a source for potential bias (Oliver, 2006). This was minimised by ensuring consistency between the aims and epistemological basis of the research as well as the selection criteria which were used for selecting the purposive sample. Possible researcher bias was addressed in detail under Reflexivity in section 1.9. The main limitation of snowball sampling is representivity. Snowball sampling by definition is usually not representative or random and may result in internal and external validity limitations and selection bias (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). However, the snowball technique was only used as a secondary technique to identify the five extra ECD NPOs to reach the desired sample of seventeen ECD NPOs as outlined in section 3.4.3.

### 3.10.3 Literature on ECD NPOs

There is very limited literature on the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province and in South Africa, let alone on collaboration among them. The researcher was only able to access a few articles and publications through the participants. Biersteker and Picken (2013) confirmed that there is little up-to-date information on the size, capacity, scope and geographical distribution of the ECD NPO sector in South Africa. However, the researcher explored relevant local and international literature from the U.S.A and U.K inter-alia to provide a broad overview on the ECD NPO sector.

## 3.11 Practical problems experienced during the study

### 3.11.1 Availability, distance and financial resources

The researcher faced a challenge that some of the participants were unavailable during the allocated time for research interviews as outlined in the MOU with the research supervisor. This led to various postponements causing the researcher to shift interviews a month further thus shifting the research from its originally planned timeline. To deal with this scenario, the researcher had to extend the timeline for fieldwork. In addition, some of the participant's organisations were located far from the researcher's reach which required extended travelling and various calls despite the researcher's heavy financial limitations. In four cases, the researcher organised to have Skype interviews with these NPOs.

Two (2) of the ECD NPO participants were withdrawn from the interview as they initially expressed their unwillingness to participate in the study. The first one withdrew when the researcher requested to postpone the first interview time due to transport challenges. The second one continuously promised to respond to the researcher despite the numerous emails and phone calls until the researcher ran out of time and he concluded that the participant did not want to participate in the study. There were however no other ECD NPOs to replace the dropouts, hence the researcher had no choice but to work with those that were available and willing to take part in this study.

### 3.11.2 Ethical clearance challenges

The researcher faced a challenge with obtaining ethical clearances from the Western Cape Department of Social Development in order to interview one (1) government participant. The department required additional ethical clearance on their side over and above the one the researcher obtained from the university, and this was only communicated two days before the scheduled interview. The main challenge was that the turnaround time from the Western Cape Department of Social Development which took a month in which the research interviews were anticipated to have been

completed. This shifted the research timeline originally outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the researcher and the supervisor.

### 3.11.3 Sample size

The researcher faced a challenge in compiling an accurate number of ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. He was only able to sample from the CECD database (2014). The CECD database only identified twelve (12) ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province out of the desired seventeen (17) required for the study. To address this, the researcher used a snowball sampling technique to acquire five (5) more ECD NPOs to reach the desired sample size. The researcher was able to access a total of nineteen out of the required twenty participants as per the Masters Dissertation requirement. The inability to include the required number of ECD NPOs may be attributed to the limited accurate and up-to-date information on the size, capacity, scope and geographical distribution of the ECD NPO sector in South Africa as indicated by Biersteker and Picken (2013).

### 3.11.4 Network problems

The researcher experienced internet connection problems with two of the four Skype calls. The researcher had to reschedule calls or conduct them in bits and pieces because of poor connectivity. This therefore had little impact on data collection.

## 3.12 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research methodology including the research approach design, sampling framework, data collection, data analysis and data verification. The chapter has also presented the limitations of the study and the practical problems experienced during the study and how the researcher managed to deal with these limitations. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the findings.

# CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

This study explored the nature of organisational collaborations that have arisen in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province, explored how ECD NPOs and government participants understand collaboration, and investigated the factors that were considered before engaging in past and current collaborations. The study further explored the value of collaboration among ECD NPOs, as well as the factors enhancing and those inhibiting this collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. An exploratory qualitative approach was applied and a qualitative research design was utilised. The study purposefully sampled a total of nineteen (19) participants including sixteen (16) ECD NPO participants and three (3) government participants.

This chapter presents the findings of the study. At the onset, a profile of each of the ECD NPO participants is tabulated below (See table 4.1). This is followed by profile of the government participants (See table 4.2). Table 4.3 presents the categories and sub-categories that emerged from the study. An analysis of and presentation of the findings follows this table.

### *4.1.1 Profiling ECD NPO participants and government participants*

Table 4.1: Profile of the 16 ECD NPO participants in the Western Cape Province

| Pseudonym | Year organisation established | Number of employees | Number of years participant employed in organisation | ECD as specialty or department of the organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | 1978 | 23 | 8 | Specialised |

| Participant 2 | 2001 | 38 | 14 | Specialised |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 3 | 1974 | 14 | 10 | Specialised |
| Participant 4 | 1994 | 12 | 20 | Specialised |
| Participant 5 | 2004 | 11 | 17 | Specialised |
| Participant 6 | 1992 | 30 | 11 | ECD Department |
| Participant 7 | 2008 | 4 | 5 | Specialised |
| Participant 8 | 1998 | 8 | 5 | ECD Department |
| Participant 9 | 1985 | 6 | 27 | Specialised |
| Participant 10 | 1993 | 6 | 3 | Specialised |
| Participant 11 | 2005 | 15 | 20 | Specialised |
| Participant 12 | 1993 | 12 | 21 | Specialised |
| Participant 13 | 2003 | 1 | 15 | ECD Department |
| Participant 14 | 1994 | 16 | 20 | ECD Department |
| Participant 15 | 1999 | 2 | 1 | Specialised |
| Participant 16 | 2005 | 9 | 10 | Specialised |

Table 4.1 presents the participants' pseudonyms, year the NPO was established, number of employees and the number of years the participant was in the employ of the current organisation. "Specialised" refers to organisations whose core business is ECD while '"ECD Department" refers to organisations providing ECD services through a specialised department among other services. Twelve (12) of the participants were from specialised ECD NPOs while four (4) of the participants had ECD as a functional department. The number of employees in ECD NPO participant's organisations ranged between 1-38 employees (with an average of about 13) and the number of years working for their employing bodies ranges from 1-20 years (with average of 13 years). The participant's positions and the geographical locations of their organisations were deliberately not disclosed to protect their anonymity and their organisations as outlined in the research ethics section in chapter 1.

Table 4.2 presents pseudonyms of the three (3) government participants, the year their department was established, number of employees in the department and the number of years the participant was in the employ of the department.

Table 4.2: Profile of the three government participants in the Western Cape Province

| Pseudonym | Year organisation established | Number of employees in department | Number of years participant is employed in organisation | ECD as specialty or department of the organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government Participant 1 | 1994 | 7 | 40 | ECD Department |
| Government Participant 2 | 2006 | 4 | 11 | ECD Department |
| Government Participant 3 | 1994 | 18 | 39 | ECD Department |

The years of organisation's establishment indicated are all post 1994 which was post the democratic elections in South Africa. All three government agencies provide ECD services through specialised departments. The number of employees in government departments ranges from 4-18 (average of 10) employees and the number of years working in the current organisations ranges from 11-40 years (average of 30 years). Based on the data in table 4.1 and 4.2, it can be noted that ECD NPO participants have more human resources in comparison to the government participants' organisations leading the latter to outsource ECD projects to ECD NPOs and other service providers.

The researcher's rationale for including government participants in the analysis was that government participants were likely to provide an account of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province from a government perspective. The results of this study excluded the participant's views of collaboration in the Western Cape as these overlapped with their experience of collaboration. The results of "views of collaboration" and those from "experience of collaboration" are thus presented together. Views on what collaboration should be like are included as recommendations in chapter 5.

### *4.1.2 Themes and categories*

The themes of this study were acquired from the research objectives and were incorporated in the interview schedules. Categories and subcategories then emerged from these themes. The themes are outlined in Table 4. These findings are arranged in this order to give a visual presentation of collaboration as if in the process of deciding whether to collaborate or not. In this chapter ECD NPO participants will be referred to as (EP) while Government participants will be referred to as (GP).

Table 4.3: Themes, categories and sub- categories emerging from data collected

| Themes | Categories and Sub- Categories |
|---|---|
| 4.2 **Understanding of collaboration** | 4.2.1 Definitions of collaboration |
| | 4.2.2 Types of collaboration in the study |
| **4.3 Factors considered before collaboration** | 4.3.1 Capacity |
| | 4.3.2 Time/ time frame |
| | 4.3.3 Cost-benefits analysis |
| | 4.3.4 Partner's track record |
| | 4.3.5 Demand / need for the service |
| | 4.3.6 Shared vision |
| | 4.3.7 Summary of factors considered before collaboration |
| **4.4 Factors enhancing collaboration** | 4.4.1 Shared or similar vision |
| | 4.4.2 Good working relationships |
| | 4.4.3 Networking |
| | 4.4.4 Open mind approach |
| | 4.4.5 Knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector |
| | 4.4.6 Summary statement |
| **4.5 Benefits of collaboration** | **4.5.1 Potential Benefits of collaboration** |
| | 4.5.1.1 Collaborative strength |
| | 4.5.1.2 Networking |
| | 4.5.1.3 Cost saving and reduction of duplication |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **4.5.2 Experienced benefits of collaboration** |
| | 4.5.2.1 Enhanced Capacity |
| | • *Enhanced Financial capacity* |
| | • *Enhanced human resources and expertise* |
| | 4.5.2.2 Collaborative advantage |
| | 4.5.2.3 Implied benefits of collaboration |
| | • *Relationship building and Simplified consultative process* |
| | |
| | **4.5.3 Potential and experienced benefits of collaboration** |
| | 4.5.3.1 Sharing of skills and resources |
| | 4.5.3.2 Greater reach and impact of services |
| | **4.5.4 Summary of benefits of collaboration** |
| **4.6 Factors inhibiting collaboration** | 4.6.1 Shortage of resources |
| | 4.6.2 Competitiveness |
| | 4.6.3 Time constraints |
| | 4.6.4 Organisational Culture Differences |
| | 4.6.5 Fear of the unknown |
| | 4.6.6 Geographical location |
| | 4.6.7 Summary of factors inhibiting collaboration |
| **4.7 Challenges of collaboration** | **4.7.1 Potential challenges of collaboration** |
| | 4.7.1.1 Loss of autonomy |
| | 4.7.1.2 Perceived power imbalances |
| | 4.7.1.3 Balance of effort |
| | 4.7.1.4 Personalities and leadership styles |
| | **4.7.2 Experienced collaboration challenges** |
| | 4.7.2.1 Project delivery related challenges |
| | 4.7.2.2 Communication challenges |
| | **4.7.3 Summary of challenges of collaboration** |
| | **4.7.4 Benefits vs. challenges** |

## 4.2 Understanding of collaboration

*4.2.1 Definition of collaboration*

ECD NPO participants (EP) and Government participants (GP) reflected their understanding of collaboration through a variety of definitions.

> *"It's when two or more than two organisations work together for the benefit of those participating in the collaboration, so it's a very simple concept. It's working together in order to pursue a goal where a number of partners contribute, either equally or on a differentiated basis".* (EP 4)

> *"For me it means to work with the other party and both parties are equal and they start off a project together and sharing ideas, sharing roles and responsibilities and there is no dominant figure when it comes to collaboration."* (GP 1)

> *"Organisational collaboration to me is very much like the art of different organisations coming together to pursue very much concrete goals towards the development of the communities in order to combat or reduce social ills... that have been identified...by that particular group of organisations".* (EP 2)

These definitions present the following common aspects: 1. Organisations working together; 2. Pursuit of a common goal; 3. Partners making contributions in various forms; and 4. Sharing responsibilities, roles, successes and challenges. The common messages in these definitions are consistent with the definitions of Himmelman (2002:3) and Rowitz (2014:2). This finding reflects that ECD NPO and government participants share a common understanding of collaboration which is consistent with literature.

*4.2.2 Types of collaboration in the study*

Participants were requested to discuss two collaborative initiatives, one past and one current. In terms of types of collaboration, most of the initiatives were ECD projects related to staff training and ECD centre registration while the minority were around ECD networking forums and ECD resource distribution and information dissemination platforms. Based on the classification of Huxham (1996) and Ontario Communities Coalition (OCC) (2014), most of the collaborative initiatives identified were thus full collaborations, and partnerships while a few were networks and funding-partner type of collaborative initiatives .

A total of thirty one (31) collaborative initiatives (5 by Government participants and 26 by ECD NPO participants) were discussed during the 19 interviews. Five (5) of the participants (1 Government Participant and 4 ECD NPO participants) could not discuss a second collaborative initiative as required in the study for various reasons. Concerning the ECD NPOs; the first was that their current collaborative initiative was a continuation of the past collaborative initiative, the second one noted that they had completed their yearly collaborative initiatives; the third one noted that they scaled down their operations since the DSD took over and started providing ECD training through FET colleges and the fourth one did not provide a reason why they were currently not involved. The one government participant did not provide a reason why they were currently not involved.

One of the ECD NPOs had no experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs. They noted that, the reason for lack of collaboration was that they disagree with other ECD NPOs' approach with regards to what constitutes quality ECD provision and also that their organisation was still new and upcoming. In addition, they noted that there tends to be a lack of support for small ECD NPOs in the Western Cape. The ECD NPO with no experience of collaboration, similarly to ECD NPOs with experience of collaboration, discussed the definition, perceptions, potential benefits and challenges of collaboration in the Western Cape Province. However they could not provide any account of collaborative experiences since they did not have any. The next section will discuss the factors that were considered by participants before engaging in collaborative initiatives.

## 4.3 Factors considered before collaboration

These factors play a vital role in deciding whether or not to engage in collaborative initiatives. The various factors identified by participants included capacity, time/time frame, cost benefit analysis, partner's track record, the demand/ need for the service and shared vision.

### 4.3.1 Capacity

The majority of the ECD NPO participants noted that they took their own capacity into consideration before reaching a decision to collaborate with other ECD service providers. In this context capacity refers to financial, human, or material resources and expertise.

> *"So what we looked at is how much is it going to take of our time, of our staff, of our resources, of our management, and we also looked at the issues like we didn't want any organisation or the leading organisation ending up managing us."* (EP 2)

In light of the RDT a combination, collaboration involves the exchange of information and sharing of resources with the collaborative partners to enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit as noted by Rowitz (2014), Huxham (1996) and Himmelman (2002). RDT adds that, in an environment plagued with shortage of resources such as the ECD sector, collaboration would be an ideal strategy to acquire resources in order to increase the capacity of the collaborative partners. ECD NPOs should be prepared to share their resources with collaborative partners in the process. It is essential for ECD NPOs to ensure that they have the resources to share in the collaborative process. Through collaboration, collaborating organisations would combine their resources in order to develop the collaborative strength essential for the delivery of the collaborative initiative. All government participants took into consideration the capacity of the ECD NPOs that they collaborated with especially their human resources and expertise. This is reflected in the government tenders that they use as a recruitment procedure.

### *4.3.2 Time/time frame*

A few of the ECD NPO participants noted that they considered the duration of the collaborative project and their availability to participate before making the decision to collaborate.

> *"We looked at the issues of time. How much of our time is it going to take?"* (EP 2)

In addition EP 3 argued the importance of the 'right timing' of a collaboration. The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted. Government participants did not identify time as a factor considered prior to collaboration.

### *4.3.3 Cost–benefit analysis*

A majority of the ECD NPO participants noted that they considered the costs vs. benefits as a factor before engaging in collaboration. They considered the potential benefits of collaborating in relation to the possible costs. The most common benefit considered was financial capacity.

> *"Sustainability is critical for the kind of work we do…is it going to be paid for? Is it going to help to put bread on the table, then also for organisations, a collaborative effort might be noble but for many organisations that are struggling… for them it's about will the time and the effort in terms of our contribution.. be worth it?"* (EP 3)

Some of the ECD NPO participants took into consideration what both organisations were going to benefit from the collaborative initiative. They also considered how the collaborative partner would complement their services.

> *"Well, I think that both organisations had...a component which when combined would be collectively stronger than either of those components on their own."* (EP 3)

These findings are consistent with Todeva and Knoke (2005) who notes how collaboration enhances the pooling and sharing of resources. In this context collaboration is effective as organisations bring resources that the partners might be lacking whether be it funding, expertise or information. In light of the RDT, collaboration is one of the strategies for acquiring resources and if a collaborative initiative has more costs than benefits, it is only logical that an organisation would decide not to engage in the collaborative initiative and vice versa.

### 4.3.4 Partner's track record

Only two of the ECD NPO participants noted that they considered their collaborative partner's track record and experience among other things, before engaging in collaborative initiatives.

> *"Do they have a track record? Do they have a strong governance ethos? Do they have a strong management team? Do they have a work ethic? Do they put quality first? Are they people that we could work with?"* (EP 4)

The three government participants noted that they considered the track record of the collaborative partners when they collaborated with ECD NPOs through a tender system. The rationale for this might be that a good track record enhances the creation of trust and the confidence that collaborative partners will fulfil their roles and responsibilities to the best of their ability with a high standard of quality and integrity. The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted.

### 4.3.5 Demand/need for the service

Two of the ECD NPO participants noted that they considered the demand or need for service in the target area as a deciding factor prior to collaboration.

> *"Before we went into it, I think the factors we took into account were that... there was demand, there was a need."* (EP 8)

On the other hand, the three government participants considered the demand for services before engaging in collaborative initiatives as part of their provincial ECD strategies.

> *"It was a demand driven approach then we responded. We understood that there's a gap in terms of assisting capacity building of the ECD NPOs"* (GP 2)

In addition, GP 2 noted how they are directly involved in needs analysis to determine the needs of various communities across the Western Cape Province and design various programmes to meet the identified needs. The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted.

### 4.3.6 Shared vision

A few of the ECD NPO participants noted that they considered shared vision as a factor before engaging in collaborative initiatives.

> *"We had to take into account the feasibility of the organisation of the NPO we were collaborating, in other words their vision and mission, is it aligned with ours?"* (EP10)

Supporting literature by Parkinson (2006) and Patel et al (2011) notes the importance of establishing a shared awareness and common ground which should be communicated effectively as organisations work towards a mutual goal. Organisations with a similar vision are likely to develop common ground easily which is a vital component to a successful collaboration. Government participants did not identify shared vision as a factor considered prior to engaging in collaborative initiatives.

### 4.3.7 Summary of factors considered before collaboration

The study has shown that the most common factors considered by ECD NPO and government participants before entering their past and current collaborative initiatives included capacity, time/ time frame, cost-benefit analysis, partner's track record, shared

vision and the demand /need for the service. The most common factor considered by government participants before collaboration in this section was partner's track record, which was a basis for the tender through which they would collaborate with ECD NPOs. The factors considered or to consider before collaboration need to be understood along with the factors enhancing collaboration. This will assist organisations to make well informed decisions and consider factors that will benefit their organisation and enhance effective service delivery.

## 4.4 Factors enhancing collaboration

Participants were requested to share their perceptions of the factors enhancing collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. For the purposes of this study, the factors enhancing collaboration are discussed outside the collaborative process as factors that are likely to promote or increase the chances of collaboration among ECD NPOs. The factors identified included a shared or similar vision, good working relationships, networking, open-mind approach, knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector. The various factors were arranged in order from most mentioned to the least mentioned factors.

### *4.4.1 Shared or similar vision*

Shared vision was previously identified as a factor enhancing collaboration in section 4.3.6. A majority of the ECD NPO participants noted that having a shared vision and mission had been critical in enhancing collaboration among the various ECD service providers in the Western Cape Province.

> *"A common goal and a shared vision and mission, like-minded people, just in terms of wanting to provide the same essential services to the ECD sector."* (EP 10)

One of the three government participants agreed and noted how shared vision enhances collaboration. These findings are consistent with Parkinson (2006) who identifies shared vision as a vital component leading to the success of collaboration.

She argues the need for collaborative partners to share the same vision with mutually agreed upon mission, strategy and objectives. Shared vision might already exist at the inception of collaboration or may be developed as organisations work together. Patel et al (2011) also stresses the importance of establishing a shared awareness and common ground which should be communicated effectively as organisations work towards a mutual goal.

### 4.4.2 Good working relationships

A few of the ECD NPO participants and no government participants identified good working relationships as a vital factor that enhances collaboration in the Western Cape Province. It is easier for organisations who have successfully worked together in the past to collaborate since relationships have already been built and they have knowledge of how each partner functions, they understand each other's strengths, weaknesses, capacities and have established mutual trust.

*"I think the biggest factor that enhances collaboration is the fact that the leadership at these three organisations respect each other, have known each other for a long time, get on well, have similar visions for the early childhood sector and they basically trust each other".* (EP 4)

These findings are consistent with Parkinson (2006:3) who notes that "a collaborative relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards." Relationship building is thus an essential instrument to promote collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape, which can be enhanced through networking in addition to sharing a common vision as mentioned earlier.

In contrast, one of the ECD NPO participants noted that organisations with a long history of collaborating may create negative relationship dynamics if they tend to give

preference to their past collaborative partners while side-lining potential partnerships with other organisations.

### 4.4.3 Networking

A minority of the ECD NPO participants identified networking as a vital factor enhancing collaboration in the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province.

*"When we talk about collaboration in the Western Cape, the Department of Social Development, that is the provincial government... it's very much also on the driving side, you know, assembling different ECD organisations in quarterly meetings to encourage collaboration and encouraging the sharing of resources among the organisations and also distributing resources to different organisations."* (EP 2)

Various provincial government departments such as the Western Cape Department of Social Development Western Cape Department of Education and a provincial government authority such as the City of Cape Town have played and continue to play a vital role in fostering or enhancing collaboration among ECD providers through quarterly meetings and conferences to network and discuss the issues around the ECD sector in the Western Cape Province. These meetings and conferences may be utilised as a platform to communicate and foster or enhance a shared vision of ECD in the Western Cape Province. While taking an RDT stance, networking is one of the ways in which organisation can connect with potential partners through which they can acquire critical resources through collaboration.

### 4.4.4 Open mind approach

A few of the ECD NPO participants and one government participant noted that keeping an open mind enhances collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

*"I think that when one sort of lacks the ego, where you put yourself in a place to be reflective on your own practice and that you are also willing to learn on a daily basis, you can become enriched yourself by collaborating with others… I think part of it is actually opening oneself to the knowledge and understanding that one doesn't have all the answers."* (EP 12)

This notion is supported by Vernis (2006:69) who asserted the importance of a listening disposition, humility, a critical spirit, and a tolerance of differences as crucial for any would be collaborators.

### 4.4.5 Knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector

A minority of the participants noted that an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector as a whole can enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

*"Knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector. These are all positives that I look for in terms of collaborating with other organisations, these are things that I think are what makes our collaborations strong".* (EP 10)

The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted. Once ECD NPOs are fully aware of the complexities of the ECD sector, they can be empowered through networking platforms to contribute to solutions to address these complexities which would often require collaboration as some of the complexities outweigh the capacity of some ECD NPOs. Collaboration can be a collective way of addressing the various challenges in the ECD sector.

### 4.4.6 Summary statement

As ECD NPOs develop an understanding of the factors enhancing collaboration they may be in a better position to make well informed decisions and consider factors that may enhance the possibilities of engaging in collaborative initiatives. It may be vital for ECD NPOs that as they develop an understanding of the factors enhancing

collaboration, they should also develop an understanding of the benefits of collaboration. This may enhance the possibilities for collaborative partners to predict the possible benefits of collaborating as a step towards deciding whether to collaborate.

## 4.5 Benefits of collaboration

With the exception of one NPO with no collaboration experience, the participants identified and discussed a range of potential benefits of collaboration as well as those they had experienced. For the purposes of this study while differentiating from the previously discussed factors enhancing collaboration, the benefits of collaboration will be discussed in the context of the collaborative process.

The benefits of collaboration will be presented under four sub-categories. 'Potential benefits of collaboration' refers to those perceived as possible benefits of collaboration. 'Experienced benefits of collaboration' refer to the benefits experienced by participants. 'Potential and experienced benefits of collaboration' refers to potential benefits which were also practically experienced by participants while 'Implied benefits of collaborations' refer to those which were not necessarily mentioned as experienced benefits but were clearly positive experiences for the collaborating organisations.

### 4.5.1 Potential benefits of collaboration

In response to a question about the potential benefits of collaboration, ECD NPO and government participants identified collaborative strength, networking and cost saving and reduction of duplication.

#### 4.5.1.1 Collaborative strength

A minority of the ECD NPO participants, and no government participants identified collaborative strength as a potential benefit of collaboration.

> *"The first benefit is that as no single organisation has all the skills needed, particularly if it's a big project... So often you collaborate with partners who can add value to what you can provide".* (EP 4)

In agreement with EP 4, EP 1 said:

> *"You would also have complimentary... strengths that could enhance to support your own delivery".* (EP 1)

Although collaborative strength was portrayed differently by ECD NPO participants, there is a common theme of how a combination of resources and organisational strengths enhances capacity and strengthens service delivery. Based on these observations, it was clear that collaborative strength includes a combination of strengths, skills and resources from collaborative partners in the collaborative process. Supporting literature notes that collaboration enhances the pooling and sharing of resources thus creating capacity for collaborative partners (Todeva & Knoke, 2005). Capacity will be discussed in section 4.5.2.1. In addition a combination of collaborative strengths leads to collaborative advantage as discussed in section 4.5.2.2.

*4.5.1.2 Networking*

Three of the ECD NPO participants identified networking as a potential benefit of collaboration. Collaboration encourages the formation of networks which in turn creates a platform for engagement with more collaborative partners.

> *"[Collaboration] It's very much part of a strategy to network and connect with others because it really can allow a movement to grow and spread more quickly if you working with others who have certain connections perhaps you don't have, you know, that can allow for an opening somewhere".* (EP 8)

The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted. However, the various networks in the Western Cape Province include ECD Forums and various information dissemination networks or meetings such as the Department of Social Development quarterly ECD NPO meetings and the National Early Childhood Alliance (NECDA) among others.

Two of the three government participants noted that the above mentioned networks have the potential to enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs or ECD service providers as they meet, share ideas and discuss possible collaborative initiatives.

One of the three government participants noted how the City of Cape Town plays a critical role in the formalisation and funding and registration of Community ECD Forums as they act as representative bodies of local ECD centres (Wotshela, 2013). (Atmore, personal communication 2015, May 4) on the other hand, draws attention to informal supporting structures for the ECD NPO sector, the size and capacity of which are not well known.

### 4.5.1.3 Cost saving and reduction of duplication

A few of the ECD NPO participants and none of the government participants identified cost saving and reduction of duplication as a potential benefit of collaboration.

> *"It will be cost saving ... to avoid duplication"* (EP 1)

Supporting literature by Patel et al (2011) and Todeva and Knoke (2005) indicates that collaboration enhances the ability to save or reduce costs as it enhances pooling of resources and cost sharing as well as the sharing of cost efficient practices. Collaboration can be viewed from an efficiency standpoint which stems from the "practical imperative of avoiding duplication of effort and assuring that the efforts of the various agencies are coordinated into a directed and coherent whole" thereby improving efficiency (Huxham, 1996:3; Williams & Sullivan, 2007).

### 4.5.2 Experienced benefits of collaboration

Experienced benefits of collaboration were those which were identified by participants as actually experienced in their past and present collaborative initiatives. Only enhanced capacity and collaborative advantage was identified as an experienced benefit of collaboration. This section will further present implied benefits of collaboration. Implied benefits of collaboration refer to experienced benefits which were not directly

acknowledged as such but were clearly positive experiences for the collaborating organisations. These experienced benefits will be discussed in detail.

### 4.5.2.1 Enhanced capacity

Six of the ECD NPO participants and one of the three government participants identified improved capacity as an experienced benefit. They acknowledged that through collaboration they were capacitated in various ways which enabled them to implement projects they would otherwise not have managed on their own. This is confirmed by Todeva and Knoke (2005) and Patel et al. (2011) who asserted how collaboration enables the pooling and sharing of resources (financial and human resources).

### *Financial capacity*

While a majority of the ECD NPO participants did not acknowledge financial capacity as a benefit of collaboration, a few outlined increased financial capacity as one of the major benefits of the collaborative initiatives that they had engaged in or were currently engaged in.

> *"The benefit of the collaboration to the organisation was that…It was fairly lucrative, we got well-funded for this project".* (EP 4)

Most ECD NPOs in South Africa rely on donor-funding, which is widely acknowledged to be declining (Ramklass, 2012). Many donors recognise the benefits of collaboration, especially improved and efficient delivery, and increasingly prefer to fund collaborations rather than single organisation projects. One ECD NPO mentioned this.

> *"The second benefit is that the donor community are increasingly requiring collaboration between partners on projects. They want to see the organisations working together so the second potential benefit is that you probably increase your likelihood of obtaining funds if you are in a collaboration as opposed to if you are doing it yourself".* (EP 4)

*Enhanced human resources and expertise*

A minority of the ECD NPO participants noted that they benefited from enhanced human resources capacity through their collaborative initiatives. EP 3 noted how additional human resources provided by the funder contributed majorly to the success of their collaborative initiative (the Western Cape ECD Audit Project of 2011). Two of the three government participants noted how they acquired human resources and expertise through various ECD NPOs since they lack adequate personnel and sometimes expertise to implement the various ECD projects in the Western Cape Province. In addition, they noted how the knowledge and expertise gained from ECD NPOs has been valuable in the planning of various provincial government departmental strategies in the Western Cape Province. The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted.

### 4.5.2.2 Collaborative advantage

A majority of the ECD NPO participants gained collaborative advantage reflected by the description of the collaborative process although they did not openly acknowledge it as an experienced benefit of collaboration. The few who acknowledged having gained collaborative advantage noted that through collaboration they were able to achieve their goals in major projects in the Western Cape Province that they would not have done on their own. They believed that through collaboration, organisations could perform efficiently or better when equipped with capacity acquired through the combination of collaborative strengths as previously discussed in section 4.5.1.1. This observation is consistent with Huxham (1996) who identifies collaborative advantage as a benefit of collaboration whereby organisations are able to meet organisational goals or objectives collectively that they might not have been able to meet as individual organisations. However, government participants did not identify collaborative advantage as an experienced benefit of collaboration.

### 4.5.2.3 Implied benefits of collaboration

The researcher extracted implied benefits from the data collected. Implied benefits of collaboration were those that were not necessarily mentioned as benefits but were a

positive experience to the organisations in the collaborative process. Implied benefits included relationship building, and simplified consultative processes.

- Relationship building and simplified consultative processes

Based on the experiences shared by two ECD NPO participants, relationship building was identified as an implied benefit of collaboration. One of the two ECD NPO participants noted that collaboration enhanced the building of relationships with stakeholders, other NPOs and governmental organisations which enhanced the speeding up of the work process of the collaborative project. As ECD NPOs and stakeholders collaborated repeatedly, the work was performed faster than that of organisations that were collaborating for the first time. This may be attributed to relationships that were created from previous engagements.

The second ECD NPO participant said:

> *"We also built relationships...We could walk in and out of the DSD offices and everybody knew us and we knew them...and that helped the ECD centres with the registration process... In terms of processing paperwork, it was done fast, getting site inspections; getting reports... the turnaround time was faster."* (EP 6)

In light of the RDT, the ECD NPO built collaborative relationships with various stakeholders that contributed positively to the success of the project. The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted. However, relationship building and networking are critical components of collaboration. Good relationship building and networking enhances the development of trust and contributes towards positive community and stakeholder engagement. In support of this, one of the government participants noted how they had positive community engagements with various stakeholders prior to their involvement in the target area which was beneficial in terms of cooperation with stakeholders in the process of service delivery. This finding speaks to the concept of community entry prior to engaging in a community project in order to facilitate consultative processes. One ECD NPO confirmed this.

*"Well, it's about logistics that you don't have to travel so far, that you've got relationships in local communities. So established footprint of...a particular organisation which goes a long way in terms of locating the correct people to be engaged with the programme and where the best benefit... is likely to occur.* (EP 18)

The researcher did not find reference to this finding in the literature consulted. Although government participants did not identify this as a benefit, this is clearly implied in the experience of EP 18.

### 4.5.3 Potential and experienced benefits of collaboration

Potential and experienced benefits of collaboration refer to potential benefits which were also practically experienced by participants. The potential and experienced benefits of collaboration as identified by participants included sharing of skills and resources and greater reach and impact of services.

*4.5.3.1 Sharing of skills and resources*

A majority of the ECD NPO participants acknowledged that they benefited from learning from their collaborative partners through knowledge exchange and skills sharing.

*"The [potential] benefit of collaboration certainly is about different organisations when they work together having the opportunity to learn from one another, having the opportunity to share in the resources pool of organisations in terms of skill, experience, intellectual property."* (EP 3)

*"The [potential] benefit of collaboration is very much on the organisational growth. When I'm talking about organisational growth, I'm talking about professionalism within the organisation, the growth in the capacity of the employees of the organisation".* (EP 2)

These findings are consistent with Williams and Sullivan (2007) who notes how collaboration creates learning and adaption opportunities, develops competencies and enhances the possibility of providing better services. Sullivan (2007) and Patel et al (2011) concur that through collaboration, teams and individuals can learn from one another and increase knowledge through learning from successes and failures. This enhances the ability to improve or develop skills which can be considered as a learning curve to improve future work.

Resource and skills sharing has a positive impact on learning organisations as they are able to change their behaviours and mind-sets as a result of experience (Kelly, 2015). As organisations collaborate, they share skills, new methodologies and ways of working thus improving their skills and approaches to different ways of problem solving and working that are up to date thus remaining relevant (Senge, 2006). Learning organisations would have the capability to learn within and outside their organisations during and after the collaborative process.

### 4.5.3.2 Greater reach and impact of services
One of the ECD NPO participants identified greater reach as a potential benefit of collaboration.

> *"I think firstly just being able to reach more children, family… if we look in the ECD sector, so greater reach"* (EP 16)

On the same note, another ECD NPO participant noted that through collaboration they were able to extend the reach and impact of their programmes into communities that they had never worked in before. In addition, the ECD NPO participants noted that collaboration enhanced the improvement and efficient provision of services as they collaborated with an organisation providing a different yet critical component of services.

Two of the three government participants noted that collaboration enhances an effective response to challenges of a target group. The government participants noted that they

are responsible for community needs analysis which enables them to develop a plan to address needs through employing ECD NPOs. Supporting literature argues that collaboration may increase the coherence, reach and impact of sector interventions which helps organisations to address complex issues which require cross-sectional or multi-disciplinary approaches (Vernis et al., 2006).

### 4.5.4 Summary of benefits of collaboration

It is clear from the study that there were more benefits experienced than those identified as potential benefits of collaboration. As organisations develop an understanding of the benefits of collaboration, they should also develop an understanding of the challenges and factors that may inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs. This understanding plays a critical role in the process of weighing the cost vs. benefits of collaboration and considering whether or not to collaborate.

## 4.6 Factors inhibiting collaboration

Factors inhibiting collaboration are those that are likely to prevent or reduce the possibilities of collaboration among organisations. In this study, the factors inhibiting collaboration are differentiated from the previously discussed challenges. The challenges of collaboration were discussed in a context of the collaborative process while the factors inhibiting collaboration were discussed outside the collaborative process. The various factors identified included shortage of resources, competitiveness, time constraints, organisational culture differences, fear of the unknown and geographical location. The various factors were arranged in order from the most commonly mentioned to the least mentioned factors. Competitiveness and organisational culture differences were identified by participants as potential challenges of collaboration and also as inhibitors of collaboration. However, they were merged in this section to avoid overlaps.

### 4.6.1 Shortage of resources

A few of the ECD NPO participants and one of the government participants identified a shortage of resources, especially funding, as one of the inhibitors of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

*"As long we have a lack of resources on the part of the NPOs. The lack of having adequate resources to run their programme…they'll continue to not fully participate in collaboration because they tend to compete with each other."* (GP 2)

In addition to the current economic difficulties faced by the South African economy, funding and resource shortages in the NPO sector can be attributed to the global economic recession which led to a decrease in funding for the South African NPO sector (Ramklass, 2012) as mentioned in section 2.4.3.1. A shortage of funding and resources can lead to ECD NPOs competing for funding and resources.

### 4.6.2 Competitiveness

Many of the ECD NPO participants identified competitiveness especially for funding and resources as one of the major factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

*"The funding, it's competitive, it's competitive and I think that is almost a drawback in terms of getting more organisations to collaborate".* (EP 1)

A majority of the ECD NPO participants argued that competitiveness is a key factor leading ECD NPOs to work in isolation rather than in collaboration in the Western Cape Province. On the other hand, a few of the ECD NPO participants identified competitiveness for funding as one of the potential challenges of collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province.

*"The key challenge would be, if you collaborating with another ECD organisation or organisations, down the line it could be competition for funding because we all in the same field tapping into the same funding and resources, so that could be a big challenge with collaboration"*. (EP 6)

In addition, three of the ECD NPO participants identified protectiveness of intellectual property as one of the motivating factors of competitiveness. Five of the ECD NPO participants noted how intellectual property is a sensitive topic. They further noted that some of the ECD NPOs who have invested time and finance in developing intellectual property, usually programmes and methodologies of working were usually unwilling to freely share their intellectual property. On another note, competitiveness among ECD NPOs can be attributed to the limited resources which may have been exacerbated by the Global Economic Recession resulting in the reduction in donor funding on which many NPOs in South Africa rely (Ramklass, 2012).

Patlack, Balogh and Nass (2012) identifies competitiveness and unwillingness to share data and resources as a commonly identified cultural challenge of collaboration. Strong competition effectively isolates organisations, leads to the zealous guarding of information and the perceiving of joint ventures as a threat (Vernis et al., 2006). One of the three government participants acknowledged the presence of competitiveness among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. Government participants did not identify competitiveness as a factor inhibiting or as a potential challenge of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

### 4.6.3 Time constraints
A few of the ECD NPO participants identified time constraints as one of the factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. They further noted that ECD NPOs in the Western Cape are so occupied with delivering their services that they do not take time to collaborate.

*"I think people are just too caught up in delivering their own particular things and not looking at the fact that well actually we are doing the same thing, let's join forces".* (EP 1)

On the same note, one of the government participants noted that due to time constraints and limited resources, they are unable to meet with stakeholders or NPOs more than once per term to discuss potential collaborative initiatives in the ECD sector. Supporting literature by Vernis et al (2006: 69) argues that the haste and pressure of daily operations tend to "obstruct strategic thinking - the basis for clearly defined missions and visions shared by the entire management team."

### 4.6.4 Organisational culture differences

One of the ECD NPO participants identified organisational culture differences as one of the factors inhibiting collaboration in the Western Cape Province.

When asked about what inhibits collaboration, EP 15 said:

*"Different organisational culture and background, and values, levels of operation".* (EP15)

EP 15 noted that organisational culture speaks to activities such as time keeping, report writing and protocol observation. She further noted the need to create a mutually agreed culture built around values and expectations that will govern the collaborative process.

Organisational culture comprises of values, beliefs and attitudes shared by employees, which impact on employee morale and behaviour (Zvâncă, 2011; Patel et al., 2011). Organisational culture differences often lead to conflicts related to assumptions made by the partners about how processes and procedures must be conducted (Huxham, 1996; Patel et al., 2011). In some cases some of the differences are irreconcilable and some organisations are unwilling to compromise thus inhibiting collaboration. Sometimes different organisational cultures lead to resistance to change, exacerbated

by a fear of the unknown as outlined in section 4.6.5. However, government participants did not identify organisational culture differences as an inhibiting factor or potential challenge of collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province.

### 4.6.5 Fear of the unknown

A minority of the ECD NPO participants identified a fear of the unknown as one of the factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. Some organisations tended to feel threatened by organisations with ideas and approaches different from their own. They felt threatened by the change that it would bring to the organisation.

*"People feel threatened by new ideas, any ideas that might destabilise what they have become very comfortable with. So if you have an organisation that has been practicing in a certain way and along comes a new organisation with new ideas, that could easily threaten this organisation because they didn't think of it so there would be a defensive manner".* (EP 14)

Fear of the unknown leads to a resistance to change which can also be attributed to the organisation's culture; 'change-aversive organisational cultures' as identified by Vernis et al (2006). According to Vernis et al (2006:71) "Organisations are often reluctant to collaborate when they resist change and new ideas. These organisations, lacking in creativity and clear visions, usually stick to obsolete rules and regulations and fear a loss of authority". Hall (2007) concurs and adds that as organisations become comfortable with their current situations, they tend to develop a general lack of desire to learn a new procedure or system. Government participants did not identify fear of the unknown as a factor inhibiting collaboration

### 4.6.6 Geographical location

A few of the ECD NPO participants identified geographical location as one of the factors inhibiting collaboration or collaboration potential. These participants were those located outside the Cape Metropole. Some of these organisations noted that they had limited or

no access to the various ECD meetings, usually held in Cape Town, due to limited time and funding to travel to such meetings.

*"So, the communication; it's difficult for me just to attend meetings to get the collaboration effort on, to go on because it's expensive whereas the director of some Metropole NGO can go to the meeting and be back the same day after 2 hours..."* (EP 13)

EP 13 notes how geographical location is problematic as some of the ECD NPOs located outside the Cape Town Metropole might be missing on opportunities to collaborate with other ECD NPOs. In addition, it may be problematic for these organisations to be continuously updated and access information on ECD in the province as noted by one of the ECD NPO participants. This finding is consistent with Ghemawat (2001) who concurs how geographical location may be a factor inhibiting collaboration. The government participants did not identify geographical location as a factor inhibiting collaboration in the Western Cape Province.

### 4.6.7 Summary of factors inhibiting collaboration

The most common factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape include shortage of resources, competitiveness, time constraints, organisational culture differences, fear of the unknown and geographical location. Competitiveness and organisational culture differences were identified as both factors that may inhibit collaboration and also as potential challenges of collaboration and were merged in this section to avoid overlaps. ECD NPOs should gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and challenges of collaboration along with factors that may inhibit collaboration in the Western Cape. This may assist organisations to make well informed decisions and reduce the factors that may inhibit possibilities of collaboration and minimise its challenges.

## 4.7 Challenges of collaboration

The challenges of collaboration in this study will be discussed in a context of the collaborative process while the factors inhibiting collaboration are those perceived to reduce the chances of collaboration. Potential challenges and experienced collaboration challenges were identified by various participants as they discussed the challenges in their past and current collaborative initiatives with other ECD NPOs. Challenges of collaboration will be presented in two sub-categories. 'Potential challenges of collaboration' refer to those perceived as possible challenges of collaboration. 'Experienced collaboration challenges' refer to the challenges actually experienced by ECD NPO participants and government participants during collaboration.

### 4.7.1 Potential challenges of collaboration

Potential challenges of collaboration included, loss of autonomy, perceived power imbalances, balance of effort and personalities and leadership styles.

#### 4.7.1.1 Loss of autonomy

A few of the ECD NPO participants and no Government participants identified loss of autonomy as one of the potential challenges of collaboration which results from an inability to monitor the collaborative partner's outcomes or processes. This in turn results in a loss of control over some processes of the collaboration.

> *"I suppose ultimately being responsible for outcomes that you can't control as an organisation, it's gonna be dependent on the other organisations committing and doing what they are supposed to…if you are responsible for outcomes you can manage your staff and deliver whereas the other organisation that is contributing it's not always possible to manage that process, so maybe not having as much control over processes".* (EP 16)

This notion is supported by Williams and Sullivan (2007:22) who mention that "loss of autonomy and ability to unilaterally control outcomes may result in goal displacement and loss of control". Guo and Acar (2005) state that the loss of autonomy is the greatest

cost of collaboration. The real challenge for organisations is the ability to balance organisational sustainability and managing resource dependency. The loss of autonomy was identified by a minority of the ECD NPO participants as a potential challenge rather than as an experienced challenge.

### 4.7.1.2 Perceived power imbalances

A minority of the ECD NPO participants identified perceived power imbalances as one of the potential challenges of collaboration.

> *"Resources or finances and allocation of budgets might create some problems and the other organisations wanting to dominate others like for example if we are talking about let's say up scaling of ECD services and then some of the organisations would pursue their own programmes… to be the models that should be used in the collaborative whereas you know there should be a collective agreement towards which programmes we are going to use".* (EP 3)

> *"Another challenge could be if one organisation sees themselves as more dominant than another organisation so could be the approach or the methodology. They want to be seen that as being spearheaded in the collaborative initiative versus another organisation".* (EP 1)

This often occurs when one partner or organisation tends to impose its practices, model or methodology of work on a collaborating partner or partners. This may sometimes be followed by the tendency to want to take credit for the success of the collaborative initiative. Bucklin and Sengupta (1993:34) concur that unequal power dynamics are a potential threat to collaborations. This is supported by the RDT where the stronger partners tend to exploit the weaker ones (Brouwer, 2014). The weaker partner would feel vulnerable and defend itself often resulting in conflict and misunderstandings thereby threatening the collaboration. According to Malatesta and Smith (2014) organisations possessing the necessary resources are in a position of power while those depending on those resources are vulnerable to control. The RDT stresses the

importance of reducing resource dependency on the other organisation as a way to maintain their autonomy. One way of reducing dependency is to have many collaborative partners (Malatesta & Smith, 2014).

### 4.7.1.3 Balance of effort

The majority of the ECD NPO participants identified unequal effort as a potential challenge of collaboration which usually occurs when collaborative organisations contribute unequally, but receive an equal amount of remuneration from funders. The majority of the ECD NPO participants felt that organisations should be remunerated according to the amount of effort contributed towards the collaborative initiative, rather than their capacity, size or experience.

> *"Often, partners to a collaboration feel that they are not getting value for money, so they feel that the return on the input is not as great as what it should be meaning one organisation may feel that they doing all the work but the other organisation is getting the same amount of reward for lesser work".* (EP 4)

Two of the three government participants said that unequal remuneration occurs due to different capacities which see organisations with more capacity receiving higher remuneration than those with less capacity. Balance of effort was identified as a potential rather than as an experienced challenge of collaboration.

### 4.7.1.4 Personalities and leadership styles

A few of the ECD NPO participants argued that personalities and leadership styles may potentially interfere with the collaborative process or collaborative potential.

> *"Leadership styles can get in the way…so people who are very dogmatic, people who are very fundamentalist; this is the way, the only way to do things… exclusionary behaviour".* (EP 14)

EP 14 noted that the success of some of the major collaborative initiatives in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province can be attributed to the ability to set aside leadership differences and egos. In support, Williams and Sullivan (2007) mention that leadership in collaboration is negotiated, contested and sometimes unknown, and argues the need for new forms of leadership that reflect diversity, fragmentation of power and shared responsibilities.

Some ECD NPO participants argued that the funders should be responsible for assigning lead partners. Two of the ECD NPO participants who have been lead partners in numerous collaborative initiatives noted the need for highly experienced ECD NPOs as lead partners to manage the collaborative initiative especially in group collaborative initiatives. Personalities and leadership styles appeared as more potential than experienced collaboration challenges. Government participants did not identify personalities and leadership styles as potential challenges of collaboration at all

### 4.7.2 Experienced collaboration challenges
The challenges of collaboration experienced by the participants included project delivery related challenges and poor communication.

### 4.7.2.1 Project delivery related challenges
The majority of the ECD NPO participants noted that most of the challenges experienced were related to the practical components of their collaborative initiatives such as the inability of a collaborative partner to meet deadlines, the organisations' geographical location, language barriers, getting local authorities involved and the sustainability of the collaborative initiative. The project delivery related challenges faced by government participants included time constraints and the inability of collaborative partners to meet reporting deadlines. One of the government participants noted that their inability to meet with collaborative partners (ECD NPOs) on a regular basis was due to limited time and funding to establish formal meetings to discuss critical matters and collaborative opportunities in the ECD field.

*4.7.2.2 Communication challenges*

When asked about collaboration challenges experienced, two of the ECD NPO participants who discussed one unsuccessful and one stressful but successful collaborative initiative respectively noted a lack of communication as one of the major challenges.

> *"Pheew, many difficulties, communication because everybody doesn't have the necessary technology so we have to go physically through to [name of town] every time."*

One of the two ECD NPO participants who identified a communication breakdown as an experienced challenge of collaboration attributed it to the geographical distance between collaborative partners which required vast amounts of travelling. This was compounded by a lack of necessary communication infrastructure from the partner's side. Government participants did not identify a lack of communication as a challenge of collaboration.

Patel et al (2011) concurs that poor /lack of communication in a collaborative initiative is a threat to effective coordination and attainment of targeted goals. If goals and expectations of the collaborative process are poorly communicated, this may cause a discord in work processes, social dynamics or the misunderstanding of each other's skills and even a lack of trust.

### 4.7.3 Summary of challenges of collaboration

It is clear from the study that more potential than experienced challenges to collaboration were identified. The challenges experienced were mainly related to the practical components of the collaborative initiative rather than the collaborative relationship itself. It is vital to develop an understanding of the benefits and challenges of collaboration along with the factors that may enhance or inhibit collaboration. This understanding may assist organisations to weigh the benefits and challenges in the process of making the final decision to collaborate or not to.

### 4.7.4 Benefits vs. challenges

The results of the study indicated that the benefits of collaboration (experienced benefits, implied benefits and, potential and experienced benefits of collaboration) included collaborative strength, networking, cost saving and reduction of duplication, relationship building and simplified consultative processes, sharing of skills and resources, greater reach and impact of services. On the other hand, the experienced challenges of collaboration included project delivery related challenges and communication challenges. In comparison, it can be noted that there were more benefits than challenges of collaboration experienced by participants in this study.


## 4.8 Summary

This chapter of the report presented and discussed the findings of the study including the categories and sub categories that emerged through the analysis of the findings. ECD NPO and government participants reflected a similar understanding of collaboration that was consistent with literature. The findings reflected that there were more experienced benefits of collaboration (potential and experienced and implied benefits of collaboration combined) than those which were identified as potential benefits. Furthermore, the most common factors enhancing collaboration included shared or similar vision, good working relationships, networking, open mind approach and knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector.


The findings of the study further reflected that there were more potential challenges of collaboration than those that were actually experienced by ECD NPO and government participants. Furthermore, the most common factors inhibiting collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape included shortage of resources, competitiveness, time constraints, organisational culture, fear of the unknown and geographical location.

The findings of the study also indicated that the most common factors which were considered by ECD NPO participants before collaboration included capacity, time/ time frame, cost-benefit analysis, partner's track record and the demand/ need for the service. The most common factors considered by the three government participants were capacity (expertise and human resources), partner's track record and demand/

need for the service. A majority of the ECD NPO participants and the three government participants spoke positively about their collaborative experiences and noted that collaboration has great potential among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province; that it would be valuable if ECD NPOs develop an in-depth understanding of collaboration and explore its value. This research indicates that overall, there were more benefits than challenges experienced of collaboration by the ECD NPO and government participants in the study. The next chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations of the research which will be inspired by and rooted in the findings and their analysis.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This study explored how nineteen (19) participants understood collaboration in the ECD NPO sector; investigated the factors that were considered before participating in past and current collaborative initiatives, further explored the value of collaboration among ECD NPOs, as well as the factors enhancing and those inhibiting collaboration in the Western Cape Province ECD NPO sector. Semi structured, face to face interviews were conducted with nineteen participants: representatives of sixteen (16) ECD Non Profit Organisations and three (3) government participants from government departments in the Western Cape Province.

In order to accomplish the research goal, five research objectives were developed, each of which will be discussed in section 5.2. Recommendations were made based on the research findings, for the attention of the ECD sector: NPOs, grant makers and Government ECD role players such as the Western Cape Department of Social Development, City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Department of Education. Finally the study proposes a collaboration checklist for the sector.

## 5.2 Conclusions

The main conclusions are drawn from the research findings and will be presented in relation to the five objectives of the study.

### 5.2.1 Objective 1: To explore how ECD NPO and government participants understand collaboration

The findings indicated that the ECD NPO and government participants held a common understanding of collaboration which was consistent with literature. While several definitions emerged from the participants, they contained common themes. Based on

these findings, it may be concluded the ground in the Western Cape may be potentially fertile for collaboration.

### 5.2.2 Objective 2: To explore the factors that were considered before entering past and present collaborative initiatives

This objective was met to a large extent. The findings indicate that ECD NPO participants considered various factors such as capacity, time/ time frame, cost and benefit analysis, partner's track record, the need for the service and a shared vision before engaging in collaborative initiatives. On the other hand, government participants mainly considered capacity (human resources and expertise) and the ECD NPO partners' track record before engaging in collaborative initiatives. This could because some of the government departments have limited human resources and expertise in the ECD field, so would outsource from or to the ECD NPO sector. It can therefore be concluded that these may be the most common factors considered by ECD NPOs and government departments prior to collaboration in the Western Cape Province. An understanding of factors that would benefit their organisation and enhance effective service delivery would enable organisations to make well informed decisions.

### 5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore the value that collaboration has brought to ECD NPOs in the Western Cape

The value of collaboration was determined by a comparison of the benefits and challenges of collaboration as experienced by participants in this study. This objective was met. The results indicated that there were more experienced benefits of collaboration combined (experienced benefits and implied benefits of collaboration) than those identified as potential benefits. Furthermore, most of the challenges identified in this study were potential, rather than experienced.

A majority of the ECD NPO participants and government participants identified collaboration as a strategic way of working, pooling resources in a field currently faced by financial and resource shortages due to economic constraints.

*5.2.4 Objective 4: To explore the factors that enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape*

This objective was met. The findings indicated that the various factors that may enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province in this study include shared or similar vision, good working relationships, networking, knowledge and understanding of the ECD sector and an open minded approach. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that these are the most common factors enhancing collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province. An understanding of factors enhancing collaboration may be valuable for organisations who wish to maneuver themselves into a position that enhances collaboration in order to reap its benefits.

*5.2.5 Objective 5: To ascertain the factors that inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape*

The objective was met. The findings indicated that the various factors that may inhibit collaboration among ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province in this study include: shortage of resources, competitiveness, time restraints, organisational culture differences, fear of the unknown and geographical location. It can be concluded that these are the most common factors inhibiting successful collaboration of ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province in this study.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Given the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered for the consideration of the ECD NPOs, government ECD role-players and grant makers.

### *5.3.1 ECD NPOs*

It is recommended that:

- ECD NPOs actively seek out projects that open up opportunities for collaboration as this has potential to broaden their skills, expertise and enrich their experience.

- ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province consider collaboration as a way to deliver effective and efficient ECD service with a far reaching impact. In the process it may be essential for ECD NPOs to create or foster organisational policies and cultures which accommodate collaboration.

- ECD NPOs collaborate around ECD information resource sharing and the development of the best collaborative practices. This study recommends that ECD NPOs develop an open source platform or network where ECD NPOs can share information and resources including current developments in the ECD field, the work that needs to be done and how it can be done. In collaboration with government departments, ECD NPOs can share information about and from workshop and conferences, can share methods, approaches and procedures in the form of case studies of their collaborative experiences, how they handled scenarios, the benefits and challenges and the lessons learnt in the collaborative process. These will create a learning opportunity for various ECD NPOs to draw on for their future collaborative initiatives.

- ECD NPOs create a virtual internet forum that connects all ECD NPOs if meetings are out of their reach, especially those located outside Cape Town. The virtual forum would include audio or video recordings of the meetings and essential documentation of important meetings concerning the ECD NPO sector. Furthermore, the virtual platform may be used as an interactive platform to share information, resources, practices as well as a platform to seek out collaborative opportunities. It is recommended that ECD NPOs continuously play an active role where necessary in the creation of various networks as platforms for information resource sharing. Various government bodies need to play an active role in the networking process as outlined below.

### 5.3.2 Government Agencies

It is recommended that:

- Government agencies such as the Western Cape Department of Social Development, City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Department of Education enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs through the creation of relevant policies and legislation, funding support and participating in networking platforms. A spirit of collaboration may be fostered through the existing ECD Forums, quarterly meetings, seminars and conferences. This may be done through a discussion of the state of ECD in the province and creation of collaborative opportunities in which ECD NPOs may be involved. These platforms may be utilised to enhance a united problem solving approach to complex ECD challenges through involving the various ECD NPOs to contribute their knowledge and experience to these complex challenges.

### 5.3.3 Grant makers

- It is recommended that grant makers including the private sector, government funders and donors (individuals or foundations) prioritise the funding of collaborative projects across the Province as a strategy to enhance collaboration among ECD NPOs. This is against the backdrop of the evidence provided by this study on the benefits of collaboration which, if well managed, can include improved effectiveness and efficiency in delivering a high quality and widespread ECD service in the province.

### 5.3.4 Collaborative checklist

Based on the findings of this study, the following collaboration checklist is recommended. Use of this checklist would promote the preparedness of organisations to collaborate.

- Firstly organisations should ensure that they have the capacity (financial, human and material resources) and the skills available to conduct the identified collaborative work or project.

- Secondly, organisations should ensure that they have the time or 'the necessary amount of time' set aside to embark on the collaborative initiative with one or more organisations in a manner that does not interfere with the other work of their organisation.

- Thirdly, there should be a relationship building phase to establish a shared vision and mission for the envisaged collaborative initiative, as well as trust. Relationship building should be factored into the project timeline.

- Fourthly, organisations should ensure that they agree to an agreed l power sharing partnership or relationship and ensure a uniform organisational culture and procedures in relation to the collaborative initiative. Uniform procedures and cultures are easier to agree on when collaborative partners have similar organisational cultures. In some cases the funder may select a leading organisation that is extensively experienced in the work related to the collaborative initiative.

- Fifthly organisations need to ensure that the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each partner are clearly communicated and allocated; that there is clarity of what each organisation will contribute to the collaborative initiative. Transparency and communication are vital to a successful collaboration.

- Lastly, collaborating organisations should ensure that they constantly and jointly monitor and evaluate the collaborative process and initiatives as a whole. Monitoring and evaluation should be built into the collaborative initiative's MOU as parts and parcel of the process. As learning organisations, they would constantly reflect, learn and adopt methods that enhance effective service delivery.

### 5.3.5 Recommendations for further research

The findings point to areas that need further investigation. It is recommended that:

- Further studies are conducted on collaboration among ECD NPOs outlining the best collaborative practices and the development of models of collaboration appropriate to the various Provinces in South Africa.

- It is also recommended that studies be conducted on the size, capacity, scope and geographical distribution of the ECD NPO sector and their supporting structures (e.g. forums) not only in the Western Cape Province, but in South Africa as there is limited accurate and up to date information on ECD. Understanding the size, capacity, scope and geographical distribution of the ECD NPO sector and their supporting structures would be essential for government departments and ECD NPOs in the planning and dealing with the challenges of collaboration across South Africa and determining the role that ECD NPOs can play in dealing with such challenges.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY
## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT)

I have been asked to participate in a research study by <u>Schwarzenegerr Kusikwenyu.</u>

**Title of Research study:** "An Exploratory Study of collaboration among Early Childhood Development Non-Profit Organisations in the Western Cape Province"

**Confidentiality/anonymity:** I have been given the assurance that my privacy will be protected and that any information I provide will be reported anonymously and that my name and identity will not be disclosed at any time.

**Right to withdraw:** My participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the research study at any time.

**Compensation:** I will not receive any compensation for my participation in this study.
**Procedure:** I will be asked questions by the researcher and the interview may be recorded on a digital recorder.

**Verification:** If I have any questions about this research study, I may contact Dr Margaret Booyens at the UCT Department of Social Development on 0216503483.

**I_____ volunteer to participate in the research study.**

_____                                         _____

Participant's signature                                                                                  Date

_____                                         _____

Researcher's signature                                                                                 Date

**Appendix B: Interview Schedule (NPOs with experience of collaboration)**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**SWK5001 MINOR DISSERTATION**

**Interview schedule for NPOs with experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs**

**INTRODUCTION**

- Student to introduce himself

- Discuss ethical considerations: voluntary participation; audio recording of the interview; anonymity; confidentiality and clarify no compensation for the interview

- Share the purpose of the research (including that the research is strictly for academic purposes)

- Clarify that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses

- Mention that there are a number of questions that will be posed (hence the notepad and pen)

- Mention the approximate time span of the interview

- Request permission to jot down notes during the interview

- Request organisational and respondent's biographical details (attached as appendix A)

**Section 1: Understanding of Collaboration**

1.1 What is your understanding of the **concept** of organisational collaboration?

1.2 What do you think are the **potential benefits** of collaboration?

- Probe: the benefits of collaboration to the organisation

1.3 What do you think are the **potential challenges** of collaboration?

- Probe: the challenges of collaboration
- Probe: what do you think leads to the identified challenges?

**Section 2: Collaboration in the ECD Sector in the Western Cape Province**

2.1 Could you please describe what you consider to be a **successful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province - one with which you and your organisation are NOT involved?

- Probe: indicators participant used to assess this as being a successful collaboration
- Probe: what participant thinks led to this collaboration being successful

2.2 What do you consider to be an **unsuccessful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province?

- Probe: views on what led to this collaboration being unsuccessful

2.3. What are your views on **collaboration** in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector in general?

- Probe: what is going well
- Probe: what enhances collaboration
- Probe: what is not going well
- Probe: what inhibits collaboration
- Probe: views about what collaboration should be like in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector, in the opinion of the participant

**Section 3: Past Collaboration experiences of the ECD NPO**

3.1 Please identify and talk to me about one example of a collaborative arrangement your organisation had with another in the past.

- Probe: How the  collaborative arrangement came about
- Probe: what the collaboration was on (type of collaboration; project, service delivery, policy)
- Probe: Initiation of collaboration

3.2 What **factors** were considered **before** your organisation entered the collaborative initiative?

3.3 What **worked well** in the collaboration?

- Probe: the benefits of collaboration to the organisation.

3.4 What were the **difficulties** in the collaboration?

- Probe: the nature of these challenges
- Probe: what led to the identified challenges

3.5 How were the difficulties **dealt with**?

3.6 Did the collaboration **continue** for the full duration of the collaborative initiative? If not, Why not?

**Section 4: Present collaboration**

4.1 Please talk to me about a current collaborative arrangement between your organisation and another.

- Probe: how this collaborative arrangement came about
- Probe: what the collaboration was on (type of collaboration; project, service delivery policy)

- Probe Initiation of collaboration

4.2 What factors were considered **before** your organisation entered the collaborative initiative?

4.3 What is **working well** in the collaboration?

- Probe: the benefits of collaboration to the organisation

4.4 What are the **difficulties** in the collaboration?

- Probe: what led to these challenges

4.5 How are these challenges being **addressed**?

4.6 Please would you **summarise** for me, what you/your organisation is doing differently, with regard to collaboration, based on your learning from past collaborative initiatives?

**Section 5: Closing/ Conclusion**

- Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview.

- Do you have any questions or comments before we conclude?

- Do you have any other information that you would like to share that was not mentioned during this interview?

- How has this interview been for you?

- Share with the  participant the positives of how the interview has been for you

- Reassure the participant of confidentiality

- Remind the participant of the purpose of the interview

- Remind the participant how he/she can contact you, if he/she would like to do so, in a research-related connection.

**Appendix C: Interview Schedule (NPOs with no experience of collaboration)**

# UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### SWK5001 MINOR DISSERTATION

**Interview schedule for NPOs with no experience of collaboration with other ECD NPOs**

**INTRODUCTION**

- Student to introduce himself

- Discuss ethical considerations: voluntary participation; audio recording of the interview; anonymity; confidentiality and clarify no compensation for the interview

- Share the purpose of the research (including that the research is strictly for academic purposes)

- Clarify that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses

- Mention that there are a number of questions that will be posed (hence the notepad and pen)

- Mention the approximate time span of the interview

- Request permission to jot down notes during the interview

- Request organisational and respondent's biographical details (attached as appendix A)

**Section 1: Understanding of Collaboration**

1.1 What is your understanding of the **concept** of organisational collaboration?

1.2 What do you think are the **potential benefits** of collaboration?
- Probe: the benefits of collaboration to the organisation

1.3 What do you think are the **potential challenges** of collaboration?

- Probe: the challenges of collaboration
- Probe: what do you think leads to the identified challenges?

**Section 2: Collaboration in the ECD NPO Sector in the Western Cape Province**

2.1 What do you consider to be a **successful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province?
- Probe: views on the indicators of successful collaboration in the ECD NPO sector
- Probe: views on what leads to a successful collaboration between ECD NPOs and other organisations in the Western Cape Province

2.2 What do you consider to be an **unsuccessful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province?
- Probe: views on what leads to collaboration being unsuccessful

2.3. What are your views on **collaboration** in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector in general?
- Probe: what is going well
- Probe: what enhances collaboration
- Probe: what is not going well
- Probe: what inhibits collaboration
- Probe: views about what collaboration should be like in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector, in the opinion of the participant

**Section 3: Collaboration/Collaboration Motivation**

3.1 Please share with me the reasons why your organisation has not collaborated with other organisations?

3.2 What, in your view, would encourage your organisation to enter into a collaborative relationship sometime in the future?

- Organisational policy, time, human resources, funding, networking, autonomy guarantee, clarity on roles and benefits of the collaborative initiative

**Section 4: Closing/ Conclusion**

- Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview.

- Do you have any questions or comments before we conclude?

- Do you have any other information that you would like to share that was not mentioned during this interview?

- How has this interview been for you?

- Share with the  participant the positives of how the interview has been for you

- Reassure the participant of confidentiality

- Remind the participant of the purpose of the interview

- Remind the participant how he/she can contact you, if he/she would like to do so, in a research-related connection.

**Appendix D: Interview Schedule (Government Participants)**

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## SWK5001 MINOR DISSERTATION

## Interview schedule for government participants

## INTRODUCTION

- Student to introduce himself

- Discuss ethical considerations: voluntary participation; audio recording of the interview; anonymity; confidentiality and clarify no compensation for the interview

- Share the purpose of the research (including that the research is strictly for academic purposes)

- Clarify that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses

- Mention that there are a number of questions that will be posed (hence the notepad and pen)

- Mention the approximate time span of the interview

- Request permission to jot down notes during the interview

**Section 1: Understanding of Collaboration**

1.1 What is your understanding of the **concept** of organisational collaboration?

1.2 What do you think are the **potential benefits** of collaboration?

- Probe: the mentioned benefits of collaboration to the organisation

1.3 What do you think are the **potential challenges** of collaboration?

- Probe: the mentioned challenges of collaboration
- Probe: what do you think leads to the identified challenges?

**Section 2: Collaboration in the ECD Sector in the Western Cape Province**

2.1 Could you please describe what you consider to be a **successful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province - one with which you and your organisation have NOT been involved?

- Probe: indicators participant used to assess this as being a successful collaboration
- Probe: what participant thinks led to this collaboration being successful

2.2 What do you consider to be an **unsuccessful** collaboration in the ECD NPO sector in the Western Cape Province?

- Probe: views on what led to this collaboration being unsuccessful

2.3. What are your views on **collaboration** in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector in general?

- Probe: what is going well
- Probe: what enhances collaboration
- Probe: what is not going well
- Probe: what inhibits collaboration

- Probe: views about what collaboration should be like in the Western Cape ECD NPO sector, in the opinion of the participant

## Section 3: Past Collaboration experiences of the GOVERNMANT PARTICIPANT'S ORGANISATION

3.1 Please identify and talk to me about one example of a collaborative arrangement your organisation has had with an ECD NPO in the past.

- Probe: How the  collaborative arrangement came about
- Probe: what the collaboration was on (type of collaboration: project, service delivery, policy)

3.2 What **factors** were considered **before** your organisation entered the collaborative initiative?

3.3 What **worked well** in the collaboration?

- Probe: the mentioned benefits of collaboration to the organisation.

3.4 What were the **difficulties** in the collaboration?

- Probe: the nature of these challenges
- Probe: what led to the identified challenges

3.5 How were the difficulties **dealt with**?

## Section 4: Present collaboration

4.1 Please talk to me about a current collaborative arrangement between your organisation and an ECD NPO (if any).

- Probe: how this collaborative arrangement came about

- Probe: what the collaboration was on (type of collaboration; project, service delivery policy)

4.2 What factors were considered **before** your organisation entered the collaborative initiative?

4.3 What is **working well** in the collaboration?

4.4 What are the **difficulties** in the collaboration?

- Probe: what led to these challenges

4.5 How are these challenges being **addressed**?

4.6 Please would you **summarise** for me, what you/your organisation is doing differently, with regard to collaboration, based on your learning from past collaborative initiatives with ECD NPOs?

**Section 5: Closing/ Conclusion**

- Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview.

- Do you have any questions or comments before we conclude?

- Do you have any other information that you would like to share that was not mentioned during this interview?

- How has this interview been for you?

- Share with the participant the positives of how the interview has been for you

- Reassure the participant of confidentiality

- Remind the participant of the purpose of the interview

- Remind the participant how he/she can contact you, if he/she would like to do so, in a research-related connection.

**Appendix E: Biographical sheet**

## ORGANISATIONAL AND PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

## ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name/ Pseudonym of the Organisation** | |
| **Location of the Organisation** | |
| **Year Established** | |
| **Year Registered** | |
| **Area of Specialty/ expertise/ Specialisation** | |
| **Number of employees** | |

## BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name/ Pseudonym of the participant** | | | | |
| **Position in the Organisation** | | | | |
| **Duties Performed** | | | | |
| **How many years' experience in the organisation** | | | | |
| **Have you been involved in the planning and coordination of collaborative activities** | | | | |
| **Type of involvement in collaborative activities over the years** | Project | Service Delivery | Policy formulation | Advocacy |

Appendix F: **List of ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province**

| | List of ECD NPOs in the Western Cape Province |
|---|---|
| **1** | BADISA |
| **2** | Centre for Creative Education |
| **3** | Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) |
| **4** | Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) |
| **5** | Early Years Services Community |
| **6** | Edupeg |
| **7** | Ekuhlaleni Preschool Project |
| **8** | Foundation for Community Work (FCW) |
| **9** | Grassroots Educare Trust |
| **10** | Ikamva Labantu |
| **11** | Inclusive Education |
| **12** | Klein Karoo Voorskoolse Bronnesentrum |
| **13** | Knysna Education Trust |
| **14** | Operation Upgrade |
| **15** | Pebbles Project |
| **16** | Persona Doll Training |
| **17** | Sikhula Sonke |
| **18** | The Early Education Centre |
| **19** | Word works |

# Declaration

| |
|---|
| **Name: SCHWARZENEGERR KUSIKWENYU**<br>**Student Number: KSKSCH001**<br>**COURSE: SWK5001W** |

**Declaration**

1.  I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.

2.  I have used the <u>Harvard</u> convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this <u>report</u> from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

3.  This <u>report</u> is my own work.

4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.


Signature _____