



**Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the
Cape Flats, Cape Town: Challenges and Opportunities**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, explorative, research study aimed to explore the experiences of ECD principals from Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town. This study collected data through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. A non-probability, purposive sample of twenty ECD principals was selected to take part in this study. The main objective was to understand the context in which ECD principals in the Cape Flats provide their services. In doing so, the study attempts to answer four key research questions, which were centred around motivation, challenges and needs within the community-based service. The research study found that community needs, and lack of employment were key motivators for ECD principals. Several social challenges were identified as impacting the service including gangsterism, unemployment, substance abuse, registration, and infrastructural upgrade requirements. The lack of recognition and support from government departments was another common challenge that emerged from this study. Furthermore, there was an overall frustration around unrealistic standards assigned to compliance requirements and a lack of support for the management and business element of the service. To secure long-term viability and actualize the social and economic benefits of ECD services in post-apartheid communities, the main recommendations of this study called on support from various stakeholders within corporate, government, and non-profit sectors of society.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research study and describes the context of the research as well as the rationale and significance of the study. It outlines the research topic, main research questions, and research objectives. Furthermore, it provides a list of the main assumptions made by the researcher and clarification of key concepts used in the study.

1.2 PROBLEM CONTEXT

Early Childhood Development refers to the various stages of development of a child aged between 0 to 4 years, including physical, social, and emotional growth. It is a term internationally recognized and regarded as the foundation for success for the future (Atmore, 2012:122). According to Viviers, Biersteker & Moruane (2013:34), young children require the support of various agencies and individuals to ensure their overall well-being. This understanding of Early Childhood Development assumes that all state-based organisation, various religious groups, the community, and parents should work together and integrate the provision of services and support within the sector to avoid the issue of fragmentation of such services being rendered to many children in South Africa. The support referred to is further encapsulated in rights guaranteed not only by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa but also by international treaties that South Africa has agreed to. All of these are premised on the fact that Early Childhood Development (ECD) services are a form of public good, as it encourages lifelong learning and is one of the most effective redistributive measures aimed at combating child poverty, thereby contributing not only to the well-being of the child but also the community (Viviers, Biersteker & Moruane, 2013:34).

The recognition of Early Childhood Development services as an effective community development tool has become especially important, particularly in developing countries with limited economic resources. Hence several studies have been conducted over the years to assess the benefits of the service, and the findings were that several advantages prove that economic returns on individual and social

investments in Early Childhood Development substantially outweigh the returns on any other type of human capital investment (Williams & Samuels, 2001:05).

In South Africa, particularly since the new democratic government came into power in 1994, numerous laws have been promulgated. Policies were developed which acknowledge and seek to advance the importance of Early Childhood Development in South Africa (Boulle, Davids, Mabogoane & Goldman, 2020:01). With constant improvements over the years, policies have become far more detailed and better planned. However, despite these improvements, the reality of providing optimal Early Childhood Development services for most young black and coloured children remains a daunting task given the high rates of poverty, inequality, unemployment, violence, and crime that affects their lives daily.

Other contributing factors to South Africa's poor Early Childhood Development service provision are challenges facing many ECD principals, especially those providing the service in the rural areas, the majority of them are not in reach of development services and support on offer from local municipalities (Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:42). They, therefore, place a strong reliance on the income that is generated from fees paid by the parents. Even though many of the parents residing in the rural communities are amongst the lowest-paid workers in the economy, and in most cases, cannot afford the service. As a result of this, ECD principals are constantly struggling to teach in places where resources are scarce, living conditions are not always favourable, and the community needs are far greater than what is capable of being provided (Biersteker & Hendricks, 2012:53). Yet, these are the ECD principals that continue to strive to do their best to ensure that the service is rendered, as they understand the need and value the service brings to overall community development. This study, therefore, seeks to understand the context in which ECD principals (*lived experiences*) on the Cape Flats provide their services in hopes that the findings will present a true reflection of the needs, gaps, and resources available to support and enhance the quality of ECD services currently being offered.

1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The nature of the ECD sector in South Africa is one of a public-private partnership, with the ECD principals forming the backbone of the industry, as they work to create

access for children who need Early Childhood Development services to fulfil foundational development milestones which not only serves to prepare them for successful schooling but also helps them reach their full potential (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:05). The ECD principals who are the custodians of the community-based service, thus play a critical role, mainly because most young children who require Early Childhood Development services are from the country's most impoverished communities.

The Cape Flats are one of the largest poverty-stricken areas in Cape Town and are referred to as a flat, sandy stretch of land located on the City's outskirts. Also described as the "dumping ground of Apartheid" as it is here that people of colour were relocated, in terms of the infamous Group Areas Act (Williams, 2022:01). Cape Flats communities are notorious for several social difficulties, including drug abuse, gangsterism, violence, and crime, all of which have contributed to problems like the inability of the poorest citizens to afford food because these areas have the worst unemployment rates in the province. Poverty has been identified as a factor that strongly influences parenting and, as a result, the development of children. Mainly because, in terms of their nurturing role, parents are tasked with meeting the requirements of their children by giving them security and order. Being physically present and spending time with the child is especially important to their development. However, circumstances sometimes do not allow parents to fully fulfil their role as such, as they need to constantly step back and decide which of the child's needs, they can prioritize at a time. Recent studies show that in Cape Town, 15% of households run out of money to buy food (Jooste, 2012:01). Coloured residents dominate with 23% of households experiencing hunger. In comparison, 14% of Black households, and 4% of White households find themselves in the same situation (Jooste, 2012:01).

Given the nature of Early Childhood Development, mainly community-based services, it is safe to say that it constitutes as one of the most significant interventions to address child poverty and malnutrition in poor communities. Although the focus of Early Childhood Development programming is mainly on children's cognitive and social development, it also contributes to the healthy physical motor development of children by providing regular and nutritious meals to young ones, which is especially important for children from poor households. One of the critical reasons parents send their

children to the ECD Centre is that they know they will receive a nutritious meal. However, the poor communities, particularly the Cape Flats, face the situation that children who come from vulnerable households where people do not have jobs, or a stable income do not have access to those meals.

Even though the South African government has been mandated through various policies and strategies to support the sector, the quality and distribution thereof in poor areas remain a prominent point of contention. One reason for this is the fact that ECD does not fall neatly into one government department. Additionally, ECD Centres must adhere to strict regulations to qualify for the subsidies and conditional grants offered by these government agencies. Many ECD principals working in underdeveloped areas provide home-based care services and cannot afford the registration fees required to access government funding (Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:42).

In terms of safety and capacity-building initiatives available to the sector, the experience for many ECD principals operating in a post-Apartheid landscape, providing a service in these “previously disadvantaged” communities, they may have access to the basics such as electricity and running water, but their other needs in terms of safety and community building interventions are neglected in favour of other communities where access to such essential resources are lacking (Sonnenberg, 2008:04). An audit of ECD Centres was conducted in 1996 and the findings confirmed that the provision of Early Childhood Development services currently on offer is marginalized and highly fragmented since the predominant mode of government support to the sector has been “inherited from white, euro-centric, middle-class contexts” (Hornby, 2005:11). According to Hornby (2005:11) this “laissez-faire replication of this model” in disadvantaged communities without sufficient funding and support results in further disintegration of service provision (Hornby, 2005:11). Atmore (2012:152) further argues that the South African government is failing to coordinate and produce sound Early Childhood Development policies and programmes directed at redressing the inequalities of Apartheid and its effects on the lives of black and coloured children, and in addition to this challenge this sector is still largely under-serviced as far as social welfare resources and support services are concerned (Atmore, 2012:152).

This research study will, however, explore the challenges and opportunities presented to principals providing ECD services within registered and unregistered ECD Centres in the Cape Flats. The motivation for this research study was firstly due to the social and economic benefits such services bring to post-Apartheid communities. As discussed in the problem context of this study, ECD services offer a unique, invaluable opportunity to secure optimal development for the child, the family, and the community. Secondly, to understand the experiences of these principals, their drive, commitment, and continuous resilience that enables them to provide ECD services in some of the poorest and most dangerous communities in Cape Town. Thirdly, this study aimed to fill the gap in knowledge as there are minimal qualitative research studies that specifically speak to the on-the-ground experiences of ECD principals in Cape Flats communities in hopes of discovering new and vital survivalist techniques and risk-managing strategies that could be utilized to enhance ECD services and other informal businesses across the Cape metropole. Lastly, to assess the needs, gaps, and resources available that could improve the ECD service currently being provided through encouraging building and formalizing relationships between various role players, such as local government, parents, community-based organizations, religious groups, and local businesses to support the ECD services being offered in Cape Flats, Cape Town communities.

1.4 MAIN AIM

The overall aim of this qualitative study was to explore the challenges and opportunities of Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats to gain a deeper understanding of the context in which they operate.

1.5 RESEARCH TOPIC

Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town: Challenges and Opportunities

1.6 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What motivates the ECD principal to provide and manage the service?
- What challenges do ECD principals face when providing ECD services?
- What opportunities do ECD principals have access to when providing ECD services?
- What do ECD principals need to ensure long-term sustainability?

1.7 MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To determine what motivates the ECD principals to provide and manage the service.
- To explore the challenges that ECD principals face when providing ECD services.
- To discover whether ECD principals are aware of available opportunities in providing ECD services.
- To analyze the needs of the ECD principals that would ensure the long-term sustainability of the service.

1.8 MAIN ASSUMPTIONS

- ECD principals are motivated to provide and manage services to the needs of the community.
- ECD principals face a variety of political, social, and economic challenges when providing ECD services.
- ECD principals are unaware/uninformed of opportunities available to them when providing ECD services in the community.
- ECD principals require a multitude of resources and support to ensure for long term sustainability of the service.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Early Childhood Development:

The Children's Amendment Act (Act No. 41, 2007) Section 91 defines Early Childhood Development (ECD) as "the process of emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, and social and communication development of children from birth to school-going age" (RSA, 2008:28).

Registered ECD Centre:

According to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, ECD Centres must register as a partial care facility and after-care services with the "Department of Social Development if they are looking after seven (7) or more children and must adhere to the Minimum (health, safety and educational) Norms and Standards" (CECD, 2022:01).

Unregistered ECD Centre:

An Early Childhood Development Centre that is unable to comply fully with the health, safety, infrastructural and informative requirements as stipulated in the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (CoCT, 2013:06).

ECD Practitioner/Principal:

A person who provides formal Early Childhood Development programmes, family support services, playgroups, and training and managerial support services to their workers (RSA, 2015:12).

ECD Practice:

An Early Childhood Development practice is a programme within an ECD service that provides learning and assistance tailored to the child's age and developmental stage. (RSA, 2008:28).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Trust, honesty, and integrity are standard practices and core principles of ethical consideration within social research. For this qualitative study, the following pertinent ethical considerations will be discussed and adhered to, avoidance of harm, informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, sound analysis and reporting.

Avoidance of Harm:

Researchers must ensure that their research does not harm the participants or anyone else. It is the responsibility of the researcher to consider if the study will do any serious emotional, social, or physical harm to any of the participants or any other person associated with the participants or environment (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:522). However, this study had a particular focus, that was to understand the day-to-day experiences of ECD principals providing community-based development services, the analysis indirectly relates to children. Therefore, the researcher has ensured the privacy and confidentiality of the data received during and after the study was concluded. The identity of the participants was not revealed, nor was the details of the ECD Centre they were representing. This was not only to protect the rights of the participants but also to safeguard the children in their care. Secondly, understanding that this is a qualitative study and that information shared might be sensitive to some of the participants as it is directly related to their daily experiences, the researcher ensured that a referral list of counselling support services was at hand during each of the interview sessions in the event assistance from a professional was required. In addition to the above, during each interview session, the researcher provided participants with constant reminders that if they felt uncomfortable having to respond to a particular question, they had the right to refuse to do so at any time.

Informed Consent:

According to Gomez (2011:210), the right to make a free and voluntary decision regarding participation in a research study is addressed through informed consent, which refers to the individual's ability to make decisions based on complete awareness of the risks and benefits that may arise from such participation (Gomez, 2011:210). Therefore, for this study, in addition to the verbal consent presented at the start of each interview, the researcher also administered consent forms (Appendix A) that were signed before each of the interview sessions by the participants who volunteered to participate in this study.

Voluntary Participation:

Under no circumstances should participants in any research study be misled, deceived, or misinformed about the process they are about to partake in. Neither should participants be pressured or offered any rewards or fees to participate in this study. To counteract this problem, the researcher ensured that her identity was revealed, as a research student from the University of Cape Town, including the purpose of the research study, the intention of data collection to support the study, and the method by which it was to be done and presented (Creswell, 2014:137). This was done verbally during the telephonic screening process with a potential sample of participants, then included in the written consent form administered to those who agreed to participate in the research study.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Securing private information shared between two or more people in a trusted relationship is known as confidentiality. It also refers to the nondisclosure of information that might specifically harm informants (Paoletti, Tomas & Menendez, 2003:22). The researcher, in this instance, audio recorded all interviews (with prior permission) through the use of a recording device, which was transcribed verbatim using the Microsoft word application. The data is only accessible to the researcher and safely stored on their computer and UCT drive account (as backup), requiring a password to access. Regarding presentation, the researcher has ensured that the participant's responses are kept confidential in terms of reports and publications, fictitious names have been created for each participant, and the ECD Centre that has participated in this study. Furthermore, privacy also refers to the space in which the interview was conducted (Paoletti, Tomas & Menendez, 2003:22). The researcher was aware of the shortfall of interviewing at the ECD Centre, anticipating that this may present some practical limitations; for example, there might be disruptions at ECD Centre as it is a busy environment. However, as far as possible, the researcher tried to avoid such disruption during the interview by ensuring that a private space was secured where others could not hear or disrupt the flow of the interview. The researcher arranged a secure and private space with ECD principals ahead of time and ensured that these interview sessions were scheduled outside of the peak hours

of the operation. All the stages discussed in the data collection phase of this research study were applied to ensure compliance with the POPIA Act of (2021).

Sound Analysis and Reporting:

Although the study is not intimate, it does look at an individual's livelihood in a context that is mostly trying in a sector that has and still is highly undervalued. It was thus important that the researcher considered all risks that may be presented at each stage of the process and mitigated them as far as possible during and after the study has been concluded. Therefore, the researcher ensured that emergency and referral information was available in case emotional concerns arose during the interview. This was thoroughly reviewed with the research study's supervisor. As a result, none of the participants in this study required referral services. Regarding analysis, it is worth mentioning that part of the risk mitigation processes included the researcher being biased during investigations by excluding negative findings or manipulating any data/responses. Babbie & Mouton (2008:526) argue that "researchers should at all times strive to maintain objectivity and integrity when conducting research" (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:526). Transparency is vital to this stage of the research study; therefore, the researcher ensured that participants were informed of how the data will be managed during and after the study. The transcripts of the interviews will only be accessible to the researcher and safely stored on their personal computer and UCT drive account (as backup), both of which requires a password to access. Once stored, the (raw) data was thematically analyzed by the researcher and then presented to the University of Cape Town in report format. Once the researcher has submitted the final hand-in and received permission to graduate, the researcher will ensure the data is destroyed.

1.11 SUMMARY

This introductory chapter has provided the context, significance, and rationale behind this research study. The research topic, questions, and objectives have also been presented in detail in this section. The next chapter will look at the relevant literature on the research topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review literature applicable to this research study on the challenges and opportunities presented to ECD principals providing the service in the Cape Flats. In so doing, this chapter will start by setting out the theoretical framework that will inform the overall research study, then unpack relevant literature systematically using various themes that are directly linked to the objectives of this study. After that, it will highlight some key policies and legislation that inform Early Childhood Development services in South Africa.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section will discuss, in detail, two theoretical models that support this research study. They are the Developmental Systems Theory and the Basic Need Community Development Theory.

Developmental Systems Theory:

Developmental systems theory (DST) was first formalized by Ford and Lerner in 1992, however elements of DST have been evident in many earlier bodies of work in the field of social development as it draws from the more traditional systems theory and builds in a developmental focus (Griffiths & Stotz, 2018: 225). This theory assists in clarifying the multiple mechanisms linking poverty with children's education and development. DST is closely related to the ecological approach as it conceptualizes interactions across various levels, from basic biological processes to interactions at the individual, family, school, community, and cultural group levels of society (Engle & Black, 2008:03). Important to note is that with any systems model, there are various correlations, such that changes in one aspect of the system may affect relations in another.

The DST has four mechanisms that explain the effect of poverty on the child's development, i.e., education outcomes. First of which is the direct impact of poverty; in this model, poverty influences children's education and development by increasing

risk factors and limiting protective factors and opportunities for stimulation and enrichment (Engle & Black, 2008:03). Children from low-income households, for example, are more likely to suffer from undernutrition and obesity, both of which are linked to food insecurity. Evidence suggests that family conduct influences many of the effects of poverty on children. (Engle & Black, 2008:03). Secondly, the moderate impact of poverty varies across the characteristics of families or children. Families with low decision-making abilities, for example, may have a more challenging time safeguarding their children from the effects of poverty compared to families with members who are, as they would inevitably have better logical decision-making skills (Engle & Black, 2008:04). Children may benefit from moderate effects by being better protected. In this instance, reference is made to parents that ensure that they prioritize activities such as reading and writing with the child; this type of activity may protect the children from the effects of poverty in the long run.

The mediate effects of poverty are the third model of DST, where the products of poverty are felt through disruptions in family functioning, which in turn have negative repercussions on the children (Engle & Black, 2008:04). In this case, poverty is linked to financial difficulties, which can cause family stress and have a detrimental impact on parental emotional well-being and mental health, undermining parenting behaviour and raising the chance of harsh and controlling parenting. As a result, the children have behavioural and developmental issues. Lastly, the transactional effects of the poverty model whereby the impact of poverty resonates through the relations between families and children, incorporating both moderated and mediated processes (Engle & Black, 2008:04). Children's traits may play a comparable role to parental characteristics in reducing the influence of poverty on children's development. Parents of temperamentally challenging children, for example, are less likely than parents of temperamentally easy children to provide sensitive, responsive care and are more likely to report depressive symptoms.

The development systems theory with this, helps to understand and conceptualize poverty since it is the most pressing problem South Africa faces today. Poverty essentially hinders development, any development for that matter, as its effects are felt in all sub-sections of society, namely, the community, the family, the individual and the child. This is primarily due to the integrated nature of the political, social, and

economic environment in which people operate. Although this theory focuses on poverty's effects on the child's education and development, it cannot be divorced from the effects of poverty on parents as a unit that is the primary caregivers and sole providers for these children, notwithstanding community influence, in terms of providing a stimulating environment that assists in shaping the child's identity through upholding the culture and traditional value systems (Engle & Black, 2008:05). All of which strongly influence the child's education and overall development (Engle & Black, 2008:05). The application of the development systems theory assists this study in identifying the ECD Centre as an ecosystem that could support combating poverty in pro-poor communities by providing extended care not only to the child but also to the family and the greater community the service is provided to.

Basic Need Community Development Theory:

A common challenge in sustainable development practice is that communities consider some issues as problems and others as not. This is mainly because they may feel they do not have the means or access to a solution for the situation, a common phenomenon in many underdeveloped communities, as there is a general lack of capacity, as well as the means and access to networks, required to respond to some of their most fundamental challenges (Schutte, 2018:04). As a result, community development is an integral part of the process of finding an appropriate resolution to problems that are beyond their control. Schutte (2018:04) defines community development as "putting people in a position to shift their own goals"(Schutte, 2018: 04). The basic needs dissolution argues that satisfying basic needs within a specific time and space will give rise to the development of a new set of "higher level" basic needs (Schutte, 2018:04). When basic needs prevent people from progressing to "higher levels" of achievement and self-esteem that are beyond their control, the development cycle will get stalled. This cyclical development helix can only be encouraged by the continuous satisfaction of the "lower levels" of needs (basic needs) as perceived by the community (Schutte, 2018:04). Schutte (2018:04) further argues that it is therefore expected that as the target community moves up the cyclical helix of development, fewer issues (of a primary nature) will remain that are beyond their locus of control, and through this, the community gets more control over their living context (Schutte, 2018:04).

However, this theoretical argument can only hold if a valid measurement of a basic need occurs at a specific time. Traditional methods of determining community needs focus solely on participants' order of preference regarding the perceived relevance of a need or collection of requirements. This is done through a variety of unique approaches. Still, they all serve the same purpose, which is to measure the importance or seriousness of one demand against another (Schutte, 2018:04). In some instances, the findings produced in this manner may end up as a wish list of wants, that may generate more problems than alleviate them, particularly in lower socioeconomic areas. Such communities frequently have an urgent need, and ranking requirements in some order of significance is sometimes difficult. Schutte (2018:04) leans towards the fundamental needs theory to provide a solution to this problem. As the basic needs theory proposes the concept of priority to address this issue. Participants, in this instance, are not asked to rank their needs in order of importance. But instead, to combine their assessment of the significance of a particular need with their current level of satisfaction with that same need, to disclose the relative importance and priority attached to addressing that same need (Schutte, 2018:04). Participants are therefore not asked to rank their needs as a result of this prioritization technique since a need that community members view as very important while also being quite satisfied with the current situation regarding that same need will take a lower position on the prioritization list than one with the same level of importance while the status regarding that same item is rated as highly dissatisfied. It is important to emphasize that while employing this technique, the many items that may be on a respondent's list of demands are not directly associated. But rather, each item is compared to two criteria namely, importance, and satisfaction, to determine its priority at a given time (Schutte, 2018:06).

Given the South African context of fragmented Early Childhood Development service provision, the basic needs community development theory is critical to this study. Applying this theory has allowed for a baseline analysis to identify some of the vital challenges and opportunities presented to ECD principals providing a community-based service. In so doing, the researcher was then able to group the needs of these principals' following commonality and then apply the fundamental needs approach as Schutte (2018:06) has done, whereby these needs identified were then further assessed using the prioritization model. That has enabled the researcher to identify

context-specific interventions and programmes required to address the challenges while providing access and enhancing opportunities for the ECD principals in the Cape Flats.

2.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

South Africa is one of the wealthiest nations in Africa, with an evaluated GDP of over US\$368 billion based on a differentiated economy of mining, farming, tourism, and other divisions. It is one of the foremost industrialized nations in Africa and has the second-largest economy after Nigeria. The World Bank classifies South Africa as an upper-middle-income nation (Amnesty International, 2020:16). Since the move to a democratic state of governance, South Africa has made impressive advances in lifting people's income over the worldwide destitution line of US\$1.90 per day. However, South Africa, too, has one of the most elevated inequality rates globally. In 2015 the Gini coefficient found that the degree of disparity rose from 0.61 in 1996 to 0.63. This translated to the wealthiest 10% of the population holding around 71% of the net wealth of the country while the bottom 60% held just 7% (Amnesty International, 2020:16). Intergenerational mobility remains low, meaning inequalities are passed down from generation to generation with little change in inequality over time. There is a strong correlation between race and economic disparities, with black South African households earning less than 20% of the white household average (Amnesty International, 2020:16).

It was in 1999 when the South African government sought to adopt more of a pragmatic approach to development to address the issue of poverty and social inequality by focusing more on Social Development and Socioeconomic Development (Weyers, 2001:265). However, this conservative turn in development thinking emphasized the importance of education in both design and implementation of policy. This became one of the critical outcomes of the government's choice concerning a macroeconomic framework that targeted the country's entry into the global economy as the principal and overarching ideal of the post-Apartheid period (Fataar, 2017:97). This new approach has had international influence and was based on the understanding that apart from the economic benefit, education also had a social impact that was vital to reducing inequality and poverty. Community development

became the vehicle through which these new objectives were achieved, premised on the notion that the collective effort of governments and their citizens needs to come together purposefully to improve the broad socioeconomic positions of the country (Weyers, 2001:263).

Early Childhood Development interventions can be seen as means through which community development and multiple socioeconomic transformation processes can be achieved and even advanced. Nel (2007:10), through a national audit on ECD provision conducted in (2001) found that Early Childhood Development interventions were regarded as particularly beneficial to disadvantaged children to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty. Even more so applicable to women because there was an increasing need for such caregivers to seek employment to help them cope with household expenses (Nel, 2007:10). The availability of ECD services, particularly the community-based service, allowed parents and caregivers to place their children in a safe and stimulating environment, giving them more time to look for employment and allowing them to become involved in economic activities (Nel, 2007:10). Furthermore, ECD programmes are essential for assisting children's transition to formal schooling, especially in terms of identifying children at risk of learning difficulties, social behavioural issues, and health problems (Nel, 2007:10).

Although it has been proven in the past and present context that Early Childhood Development interventions are a form of development necessary to combat the broader democratic challenges faced by South Africa today. It is unfortunate that two decades into democracy and with multiple policies and strategies in place that the sector is still highly fragmented and lacking the capacity it requires to achieve the desired outcomes. However, the following section of this literature review will unpack three themes applicable to this study to better understand the contextual challenges preventing equitable, efficient, and effective service delivery as experienced by ECD principals in the Cape Flats, Cape Town.

Theme 1 – Challenges Facing ECD Principals

Political:

In the past two decades, the democratic government of South Africa has done well to expand access to education for black children at all levels. However, this has not always meant good quality education for all (Amnesty International, 2020:17). This is mainly due to the registration challenges of ECD Centres. This has been a historical challenge of ECD provisioning in South Africa, establishments most affected are the Centres that were marginalized during the previous bureaucracy, such as those that can be found in informal settlements and rural areas that are still not registered, because they cannot meet the requirements which are primarily based on an urban model of the practice (Nel, 2007:06). Nel (2007:06) argues South Africa has uncritically imported day-care Centre models applied in Early Childhood Development policy from Europe and the USA without taking the needs of the majority of ECD learners into consideration. The result is that good, quality, expensive services are only available to a small minority. At the same time, the rest are exposed to high low-equality ECD service provision, if at all (Nel, 2007:06). The main reason for this is that many ECD Centres fail to comply with registration requirements as ECD infrastructure seems to be problematic. In a study conducted in (2015), most of the districts in South Africa found that ECD childcare facilities ranged from well-furnished and resourced houses to one-room buildings with little to no resources (Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:09). Despite the various policies produced by the government for norms and standards related to ECD service provision the sector remains poorly resourced and fragmented. Many privately run ECD Centres rely on income from fees, especially if they receive no subsidy from the Department of Social Development. This source of income is insufficient for improving infrastructure or equipping the Centre with the appropriate resources to better the service. Furthermore, the Children's Act (2005) places no obligation on the government to provide funding for infrastructure for ECD services. Yet, Section 227 of the Constitution implied that local government structures carry that responsibility (Early childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:09). In this, South Africa is yet to develop and implement an Early Childhood policy that could recognize the full spectrum of the population, and not as we have seen in the past, concentrate only on the culture and class which is most familiar and easy to service to policymakers.

Social:

In broader development terms, the aim of social development policy, a paradigm proposed in the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997), is to promote the social well-being of the people through a process of planned social change and economic development (Hornby, 2005:07). However, given the history of South Africa community development is more than the provision of social service it also involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and relations between individuals as well as between various groups within a community. Thus, it is crucial to understand how ECD principals bring these services and resources that can contribute positively or negatively to the development of the community and its relationship with others (Hornby, 2005:07). Understanding that the majority of ECD principals in South Africa are women, although many times they are questioned in terms of the forms of ECD services they offer and how the space allows for child development, at the same time, one should ask what kind of spaces are available to support the development and empower these women (in terms of both social and personal) understanding that what they are offering is a much-needed service aimed at developing not only the child but also families and the greater community.

Economic:

The ECD workforce (principals, educating staff, cooks, cultivators) is consistently underestimated and undervalued by society, mainly because of the nature of the profession. Caring for young children is constantly seen as the commodification of what women do unpaid, or as part of the welfare framework, instead of being seen as the pioneer within the education system. Unfortunately, the childcare system in South Africa is one of the lowest-paid jobs. It relies heavily on women, a group who can be considered one of the foremost marginalized in our economy (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:08). Yet ECD services that are available to the majority of children, are the ones most at risk are primarily offered by these NPO's and subsistent entrepreneurs most of which are women of colour. The sector and its association with childcare practice are less prevalent regarding broader economic impact due to the low status and low-paid work, which further marginalizes these women (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:08). Although the cost-benefit of the service is that sustainability is vitally important not only

for the staff and their households but also for the children who access these programmes and their parents who, through the use of this service, can participate in the job market (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:15). Still this sector remains trying in terms of being recognized for the value-added service it provides and its contribution towards the overall economic fabric of our county.

Various political, social, and economic challenges confront ECD principals in South Africa. Hence conducting further research is vital as these challenges could be explored further, adding not only to the existing knowledge on the topic but also providing a real-time experience of these challenges as it impacts the lives of ECD principals. Furthermore, increased knowledge of issues naturally allows for appropriate and targeted recommendations to address these challenges. Hence, the reason for this research study, as the primary intention, was to do just that.

Theme 2 – Needs of ECD Principals to Provide a Service

Political:

One of the most outstanding achievements of the National Integrated ECD policy (2015) has been that the Early Childhood Development stakeholders in the country have been awakened to the discourse about the importance of integrated application of services offered by government, corporate and NGOs to support the sector. A comprehensive approach was applied in the design and implementation of policy as the National government recognizes that ECD is a universal right of children and a public good to which all young children are entitled (Ashley – Cooper, van Niekerk & Atmore, 2019:15). Although research has shown that since the policy has been instated a more significant number of children to be reached. However, according to Friedman et al. (2016:02), “to show that social interventions have expanded is not also to claim that they have been effective in addressing the social problem at hand” (Friedman & van Niekerk, 2016:02).

In many instances, national policy has the government of South Africa set up steering committees at National and Provincial levels where the different departments involved can collaboratively plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate ECD service delivery. However, in reality, respective government departments have the issue of untrained

frontline staff members and lack of funding for NGOs and CBOs who happen to have most of the skills and expertise to assist with the successful application of the policy, these are but a few of the main challenges to the implementation of policy in South Africa (Sibanda – Moyo, Khonje & Brobbey, 2017:22). Furthermore, the NIECD policy does make mention of the administration and infrastructure support on offer from local municipalities. However, it does not consider how long, complex, and costly the process is for most ECD Centres to comply with the norms and standards required to become registered (Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:110). Friedman argues “that whilst it is common to attribute policy’s limited success to technical weaknesses in government, as it is often said that the government produces good policies but does not implement them, research shows that social policy’s effectiveness is constrained more by policy design than implementation incapacity” (Friedman & van Niekerk, 2016:03).

Although the prospects of this new policy are promising, and the NIECD policy is proof that ECD has been taken more seriously by the national government of South Africa, but it has not been able to make a substantial dent in reducing inequality in the ECD sector. This is for several reasons additional to what was previously discussed, i.e., coordination and skills across government departments and sectors, the model of delivery, funding allocation, inequality in access to benefits, and lack of capacity to achieve objectives (Ashley – Cooper, van Niekerk & Atmore, 2019:15).

Social:

Considering the significant amount of time South African children spend in the care of ECD practitioners and their role in promoting quality ECD care and education, especially realizing the benefits of the service discussed in Chapter 1, it cannot be underestimated. Vorster, Sacks, Amod, Seabi & Kern (2016:03) refer to the value-added services offered through ECD, especially those provided in poor and rural communities. However, there is an underrated element to the service, which is the ECD practitioners' perceptions and experiences that are instrumental in shaping knowledge and understanding of children; this plays a vital role in the type of care they provide (Vorster et al., 2016:03). The ECD practitioners are most of the time expected to not only develop the children through academic curriculum, but also emotionally,

physically, and socially. This type of care and extended support from the practitioner is challenging to define as it relies on the cultural and religious backgrounds and experiences of those providing the service (Vorster et al., 2016:03). Thus, there is a need for qualitative research studies to be able to determine this traditional type of nurturing qualities offered in the home-based ECD service and its benefits, especially since it allows for a more significant number of children to be reached (Vorster et al., 2016:03). Instead, there is a lack of recognition thereof (Vorster et al., 2016:02). South Africa is unfortunately in a position whereby ECD practitioners are not being taken seriously enough. Principals of the service are not recognized for the work that they are doing and the extra mile they go on a daily to ensure that the service is being offered to those who need it most. Vorster et al., (2016:03) argue the need for evidence-based research to broaden the understanding of the unspoken benefits that ECD principals offer to support and educate children outside their home environment (Vorster et al., 2016:03).

Economic:

Finance is critical to ensuring a sustainable future for ECD services. Although the service is based on a small business model, it is not supported as such. The type of financial support on offer from the government is likely to be in grant form, and to access these grants, ECD principals must ensure that the service meets far-reaching norms and standards assigned to ECD practice (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:07). Further challenging the fact that ECD principals are not in any position to take on debt through a loan as most formal and some well-established informal businesses can do. This is especially the case for the majority of unregistered ECD Centre that are not part of the financial system and that barely generate sufficient income to cover all overheads of the business (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:07). Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley – Cooper (2020:87) argue that in no way should ECD principals providing such an essential service feel exploited. The provincial education department must consider formally employing Grade R teachers and possibly teachers of 4- and 5-year-old children. “No longer should they be paid salaries as low as R200 per month and denied decent conditions of service, such as medical aid and pension, adequate leave provision, protection against unfair dismissal and all the other rights enjoyed by teachers in formal schooling” (Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley – Cooper, 2020:87).

Having reviewed the literature applicable to this study, it is evident that there is insufficient research to assist in understanding the specific needs of ECD principals concerning service provision. This is because of the complexity in terms of the standard of the practice that is applied across the sector. Qualitative research studies such as this one becomes particularly important to explore the experiences of ECD principals (in Registered and Unregistered Centres). In hopes of determining the different levels or scales of interventions required to support and encourage the sustainability of the service.

Theme 3 – Management of ECD Services

Political:

Alternative models of ECD provision are becoming increasingly necessary. Especially within developed countries, such as South Africa, whereby political support on offer through various ECD interventions and programmes generally focuses on formal Centre-based provision that is by means to meet regulatory requirements. While informal home-based ECD Centre that provides access to the majority of children, along with having to face a magnitude of political, economic, and social challenges daily, is seen as problematic (Vorster et al., 2016:02). Too significant a burden is placed on ECD principals having to provide a development type childcare service in poor communities. Vorster et al. (2016:02) argue that this is especially true in under-resourced areas where families struggle to afford Early Childhood care due to the high levels of unemployment, violence, and crime (Vorster et al., 2016:02). Yet, there seems to be a blanket, one size fits all approach when it comes to government supporting the sector. Policymakers/politicians must understand that due to the lack of standard practice and continuous fragmentation in the provision, the industry requires more significant support to managers of these alternative ECD models, different levels, and scales of government intervention other than compliance is needed to ensure the sustainability of service.

Social:

Studies have shown that many women with young children suffer from stress and depression, especially those living in poverty; they tend to carry a significant burden as they have little access to services and support beyond family and social networks. This occurrence is particularly prevalent in South African communities (Biersteker & Hendricks, 2012:57). Most of the time, when the parents' well-being is compromised, the capacity to care for young children suffers. In addition, child outcomes such as health, nutritional status, and psychological development are also affected (Biersteker & Hendricks, 2012:57). The ECD principal in many instances, becomes the first responder as there is a level of trust that parents have in the ECD principal. In this relationship, support can be provided to the parent based on first experiences caring for children from the exact location, similar cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. The ECD principal in this becomes the primary support to the parent but is sometimes unable to extend the provision because they do not have contacts or relationships with existing community networks that can provide the support needed. Dunne, Brennan-Wilson, Craig, Miller, Connolly, Leckman, Aber, Yoshikawa, Fitzpatrick, Pham, Vinck, & Walmsley (2021:307) unpack the sustainable development benefits of ECD services, arguing that such service has the potential to promote peacebuilding and social cohesion in conflict-affected communities whilst being an essential catalyst for broader social change within communities by linking and improving relations between communities, service providers and governments (Dunne et al., 2021:307). The need to build networks and relationships with various stakeholders is becoming increasingly necessary given the magnitude of support required to allow for positive Early Childhood experiences and inevitably break the generational cycle of poverty so many South African children are afflicted too.

Economic:

In many developing countries, like in the case of South Africa, several factors contribute to the difficulty of providers of Early Childhood Development services experience due to the low wages and undervalued nature of the work, as discussed previously. Regarding economic challenges related to management in ECD services, attracting and attaining staff is a constant struggle primarily because of the wage

difference between the public and private sectors. As a result, has led to a shortage of specialized skills within the sector (Workforce Council, 2011:05). In addition to this, regulatory burdens brought about by the government have a significant impact on how the service is being offered, especially since there is a lack understanding and definition as to what constitutes as an ECD workforce. The service requires individuals to assume the following roles: managers, administrators, cooks, cleaners, and financial staff. These are all essential components to providing ECD services of excellence. The South African government, in terms of its bureaucracy, has first-hand experience in terms of owners of an organizational system that is required to respond to a particular social problem using policy and legislature that includes a set of regulatory requirements. Each time a policy is implemented, it is determined, led, and monitored by those in services' managerial, administrative, and financial support roles. Similarly, an ECD service requires certain specialized functions to achieve success. The Workforce Council Report (2011:05) argues that the government's failure to view ECD provision (in terms of its workforce) in its entirety also leads to the service being underfunded as most funding models do not consider or incorporate the cost of regulatory, management, and administration required for the delivery of a service (Workforce Council, 2011:05). However, the government can correct this by creating awareness and improving advocacy within the sector, by highlighting the socioeconomic benefits of the service, and creating employment opportunities with a liveable wage to attract specialized staff to the sector.

The management aspect of ECD services is most of the time overlooked. This is particularly evident in the literature reviewed; this critical aspect of the service must be recognized as such. This research study contributes to existing knowledge on the topic by providing guidance and advice on how to manage and oversee the day-to-day running of a community based ECD Centre.

2.4 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The following section will outline the policy and legislation relevant to Early Childhood Development. The key ECD policies that will be discussed in detail are the White Paper on Education (1995), the Children's Act section 38 (2005), and the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015).

The White Paper on Education (1995):

The White Paper on Education came into effect in 1995 and defined Early Childhood Development as an umbrella term that applies to the policies by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally, and socially (Mayatula, 2001:01). The Department of Education was assigned as the lead government department to ensure that an action plan was developed to address the early learning opportunities of all learners in South Africa, especially those living in poverty. At the time the policy came into effect, approximately 40% of young children in South Africa were growing up in conditions constituted by severe poverty and neglect (Mayatula, 2001:01). The government's priority was, therefore, to ensure increased access and improved quality of ECD services to help break the cycle of poverty. Accordingly, the Department of Education with this proposed to address these matters using the White Paper of 1995, with the primary objective that was to establish a national system of provision for the reception year of children aged five years or older which combines both large public and smaller independent institutions (Mayatula, 2001:01).

Children's Act Section 38 of 2005:

The Children's Act that came into effect in (2005) aims to put the needs of children first in all matters, now giving effect to children's Constitutional rights, particularly issues of the family, alternative and foster care, protection, and Early Childhood Development. This Act was informed by the United Nations (UN) Convention of (1989) on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees that children of all ages have the right to survival, development, protection, and participation (Sonnenberg, 2018:01). The Children's Act no.38 of 2005 was later amended to provide for partial care of children, highlighting the need for Early Childhood Development as a supplementary service to further the protection of children. Chapter 5 and 6 of the amended Children's Act no. 41 of (2007) speaks directly to Early Childhood Development programmes and interventions focused on child protection and early prevention services, which the various spheres of government have been mandated to oversee, support and fund (RSA, 2008:04).

National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015):

The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy was developed with the primary objective of transforming Early Childhood Development service delivery in South Africa, particularly to address the critical gaps and to ensure that the provision of Early Childhood Development services is comprehensive, universally available, and equitable (RSA, 2015:08). In so doing, the policy strongly advocates for public provisioning of Early Childhood Development services and programmes to secure universal availability of quality ECD services and equitable access, particularly for children vulnerable to exclusion, including the youngest children (under two years), children living in poverty, children in under-serviced areas and children with disabilities. Considering that no one department or level of government is responsible and can provide an essential or comprehensive package of Early Childhood Development services. However, the approach taken in this policy is geared towards delivering effective Early Childhood Development programmes. That will result from a series of mutually dependent partnerships of role players responsible for the well-being and development of children in South Africa (DBE, 2018:04).

2.5 SUMMARY

This literature review shows that while much has been written on Early Childhood Development service provision, there is not much research that has done on the actual experiences of ECD principals providing the service, particularly those providing the service in the Cape Flats in Cape Town. Thus, this research study aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented to the ECD principals in their day-to-day operations. The following chapter will provide an overview of the design and methodology that will be used to conduct the research study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section will discuss the research design and methodology, which includes population and sampling, data collection and analysis methods used in this study. These are based on the rationale and significance, influenced by the research questions, aims and objectives outlined in Chapter 1.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research study aimed to gain in-depth insight into the experiences of ECD principals providing a development service in communities in the Cape Flats, Cape Town. Due to the nature of this research topic, an exploratory, qualitative research design was used for this study. This is mainly because qualitative research methods allow the researcher to describe and understand rather than explain human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:270). Furthermore, exploratory studies allow for greater insight and comprehension into the topic rather than a generalization or replication of the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 80). Thus, the researcher has selected this method as it was appropriate for achieving the main objective of this research study that is to understand the challenges and the opportunities as perceived by ECD principals on the Cape Flats. In hopes of determining the needs in terms of resources and support that would enhance and ensure the long-term sustainability of the service.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Specific Study Population

It is vital to select a sample systematically to ensure that the audience sees it as a credible and inductive sample, meaning that participants are chosen because they are likely to generate valuable data for the study (Patton & Cochran, 2002:09). Since this research topic directly relates to the experiences of ECD principals in the Cape Flats. The researcher set the following criteria that served as a guide in selecting the sample of participants. Firstly, 20 participants were approached to participate in the study, all of which are principals of ECD Centre from registered and unregistered Centres in Cape Flats, Cape Town. Secondly, the participants selected were active in their role

in the ECD Centre's daily operations, in other words, hands-on in terms of their position in the organization. It is important to note that the years of experience as the principal of the ECD Centre was not an exclusionary factor for this research study; participants could be a principal of the service for any period of time. Furthermore, based on these two criteria, the researcher has relied on existing relationships with ward councillors and ECD non-profit organizations currently servicing the ECD sector to enter the field of research. Once the contact information of the potential participants was received from these respective stakeholders. The researcher then contacted individuals identified, through a telephonic screening process to ensure that requirements were met in terms of the criteria set for participation in this study. This selection process strongly depended on the willingness of those to participate. Only once they agreed to participate did the researcher ensure that the necessary arrangement was put in place to conduct these individual interviews.

Specific Type of Sampling Technique

A qualitative, purposive sample technique was used in this research study. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, refers to the process whereby the sample selected is based on the researcher's knowledge and judgement of the population as well as the purpose of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:166). Although this research study aimed to contribute valuable and new information to the existing knowledge pool within the ECD sector. The researcher knows the sampling technique selected for this study does not represent the entire ECD community. However, to reduce the risk of such apparent limitations, the researchers have chosen only two sets of criteria to assess appropriateness regarding participation in the research study, which was included and formed part of the selection process.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher is employed at the City of Cape Town Department of Social Development and Early Childhood Development. A local municipal division that works closely with several ECD forums, offering various interventions based on compliance and capacity-building support services across the Cape Town metropole. Through this knowledge and experience, the researcher has relied on existing relationships with ward councillors and ECD non-profit organizations currently servicing the ECD sector

to enter the field of research. The researcher, therefore, started by meeting with the respective ward councillors and organizations to introduce the study via a brief presentation of the main objective of the research study, specifically highlighting the need in terms of access to existing databases of ECD service providers that will allow the researcher to select the sample based on their appropriateness and availability. The ward councillors and ECD non-profit organizations then contacted the potential participants and informed them of the research study being conducted. In so doing, the ward councillors and ECD non-profit organizations asked permission from those ECD principals who were interested in participating to have their contact details, such as telephone numbers or email addresses, shared with the researcher. Once this information was received, the researcher contacted the potential sample of participants to get their direct permission. This was through a telephonic screening process that included an in-depth overview of the research study and consent requirements. Only when they agreed to participate and fit the criteria stipulated for this research study, the researcher then administered the standard consent form to them via email. Once a signed version thereof was received. The researcher and the respective ECD principal ensured that the necessary arrangement was put in place to conduct the individual face-to-face interviews. This process was guided by principles stipulated in the South African Protection of Personal Information (POPIA) Act that came into effect in (2021).

Specify Sample Characteristics

As mentioned above, to obtain the relevant data for this research study, 20 participants were selected, all of which were ECD principals currently active in their position and providing the service in communities on the Cape Flats. This sample of ECD principals was recruited from both registered and unregistered ECD Centres in hopes that including both types would allow for a wide range of experiences and perspectives to enhance the quality of the information received.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection refers to the process whereby the research introduces a set of boundaries for the study; this includes how the information will be collected and documented and establishing the protocol for recording information (Creswell,

2014:239). The popular method of data collection in qualitative research is face-to-face interviews, generally involving the use of a standardized questionnaire that serves as a guide to assess and record thoughts, experiences, and behaviours of the population appropriate to the research study (Bhattacharjee, 2012:74). The data collection tools that were used for this research study were face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are conducted based on a loose structure made up of open-ended questions that define the area to be explored (Patton & Cochran, 2002:11). This selection was to be able to explore in-depth experiences of ECD principals providing a much-needed community-based service. Therefore, questions presented during the interview were loosely structured and open-ended, so the participants did not feel restricted in their responses. This is particularly important given the nature of the research topic that is to understand the challenges and opportunities presented to ECD principals providing a service in the Cape Flats, Cape Town. The use of open-ended questions based on themes discussed in Chapter 2 was designed to allow participants to respond to the questions in their own words. Babbie & Mouton (2008:250) describe this to be a significant consideration to qualitative studies as social interaction involves specific norms, expectations, and social roles, participants may have never participated in a research study before and "this may result in them taking on other roles that may affect their responses" (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:250). The researcher, in this instance, tried to, as far as possible, ensure that participants were at ease and comfortable to respond to the questions true to their experience and in a meaningful way; they needed to know that their beliefs and thoughts matter.

Furthermore, whenever a questionnaire contains open-ended questions, "those soliciting participants own answer, the interviewer must record the solution precisely as given" (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:250). Therefore, exactness is necessary, especially regarding data analysis and coding stage of the research process. The researcher, in this instance, recorded all interviews (with prior permission) using a recording device able to generate MP3 audios that were then transcribed verbatim using the Microsoft Word application. The data is only accessible to the researcher and safely stored on their computer and UCT drive account (as backup), requiring a password to access. All the stages discussed in the data collection phase of this research study were

applied to ensure compliance with the South African Protection of Personal Information (POPIA) Act of (2021).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in qualitative research, generally informed by a particular theory, goes hand in hand with other significant parts of the study, namely data collection and reporting on findings (Creswell, 2014:246). The approach is vital in the data analysis process as it provides the researcher with a set of guidelines on how to go about selecting and interpreting the data received through the interview process. The method that guided this research study is the Babbie & Mouton (2008) version of Tesch's (1990) stepped data analysis approach based on the themes discussed in Chapter 2. Refer to Table 3.5.1 in Appendix C for further detail on this approach and how it will be incorporated into this study.

3.6 DATA VERIFICATION

Although interviews resemble everyday conversations, one needs to recognize that researchers' primary objective is obtaining data relevant to a particular study. For this reason, interviews differ from the general discussion due to the concern to conduct them most rigorously to ensure the trustworthiness of the data (Patton & Cochran, 2002:11). Trustworthiness is therefore an essential component of the research study, and the researcher has proof that the findings indeed reflect what the research study aimed to achieve. Babbie & Mouton (2008) provide a set of criteria that was applied to assist the data verification process for this study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Each of which will be discussed in detail below.

Credibility

Babbie & Mouton (2008:277) observe credibility by checking "whether there is compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the participants and those that are attributed to them in the research study" (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:277). One way the research has applied credibility to this study is by ensuring that the semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix B) was piloted and discussed with peers and university supervisors before commencing the field of

research. This was to confirm accuracy in ensuring that the questions directly relate and can generate sufficient responses to meet the study objectives.

Transferability

In qualitative research studies, observations should only be defined by the specific context in which they occur and not generalized to other contexts or even the same context at a different point in time (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:277). Transferability with this refers to how findings can be applied to a different context or sample of participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:277). One way in which the researcher has demonstrated transferability in this study is through the use of the purposive sampling method, meaning that the selected participants are likely to expand the range of helpful information from the context in which the study is being conducted.

Dependability

Dependability examines whether the study results would be comparable if performed with the same or similar sample of participants in a different context (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:278). This phenomenon is challenging in qualitative research because social environments are ever-changing. For this reason, the researcher had very little control over the context in which the research was being conducted. Thus, the researcher for this study has clearly defined the methodology that has been applied. This detail provided therefore allows for ease of repetition of this study in future, should the researcher or others wish to repeat it.

Conformability

Conformability can be described as the extent to which the conclusions reflect the investigation rather than the researcher's prejudice (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:278). As per earlier discussion, the researcher has disclosed that she is currently employed in the ECD sector, being aware of the inherent bias that may result from this. To prove confirmability has been considered in this research study, the researcher ensured that all data collection and analyses were recorded in detail. The researcher has also assured that there were regular discussions on the findings with the assigned university supervisor.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As previously mentioned, this is a qualitative research study. Qualitative studies, like any study based on enquiry, will always have some limitations, and the reasons for this vary across all contexts and disciplines. The most common rule of qualitative research studies is that the research may not be generalized to a more significant population (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:270). However, despite this limitation, the reason for this selection is that the researcher found it most appropriate for this type of exploratory study, that is, to determine the challenges and opportunities facing principals providing ECD services within registered and unregistered ECD Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of qualitative research studies is that it is conducted in the natural setting of social actors (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:270). The researcher was aware of the benefits of the natural setting, and therefore the interview took place at the ECD Centre/s, as it inevitably allowed for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of these ECD principals. However, there were limitations to this approach that, included the risk of interruptions. Given the nature of the practice, an ECD Centre, particularly a home-based one, might be at high risk for interruptions during the interview session. To eliminate such risk, the researcher was in consultation with the respective ECD principles and scheduled these sessions outside of the peak hours of the operation. Lastly, the researcher understood that using an audio device might distract the participant, especially those who have never participated in a qualitative research study such as this one. However, she ensured that the device was placed in a position where it was less noticeable so that the participant was comfortable throughout the interview process.

3.8 REFLEXIVITY

Creswell (2014:235) describes reflexivity as the process in which the researcher reflects on their role in the study in relation “to personal background, culture, and experiences, all of which have the potential for shaping their interpretation of the data” (Creswell, 2014:235). What this means for qualitative studies is that the researcher needs to remain conscious of any potential biases that may influence the research

study. Managing such risks was vital to this research study as the researcher is currently employed in the ECD sector and, by profession, is required to provide specific support to various ECD forums in one of the four areas the organization provides services to. Being aware of how her position may influence the study, the researcher decided to recruit the potential sample for this research study from one of the three areas she is unfamiliar with in terms of her position within the organization. Another important consideration is the context selected for this study, the Cape Flats, Cape Town. Due to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the researcher assumes that most participants recruited for this study based on its context might share the same culture, race, and gender as the researcher, all of which are factors that can adversely affect this study. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to consider these factors so that she could set them aside during the research process. The researcher continuously reflected on the purpose of this research study and attempted, as best as possible, to remain neutral throughout all the stages of this research process. To maintain this position, the researcher relied on guidance and advice from the university supervisor.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design and methodology related to this research study. This study used an exploratory, qualitative research method, and information was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with a selected sample of participants. This chapter provides a detailed breakdown of the approach in terms of population sampling, data collection, data analysis, and verification. The following chapter will present discussions about the findings of the research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the challenges and opportunities presented to ECD principals providing ECD services from registered and unregistered ECD Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town. The first three chapters of this dissertation introduced the study, which includes a review of relevant literature and an explanation of the research design and methodology. Next, a qualitative study was conducted, whereby 20 in-depth interviews with ECD principals were conducted. This chapter will provide a demographic profile of each research study participant who participated in this study. However, to adhere to the ethical considerations of the study, especially the principals of privacy and confidentiality, the participants are neither named nor will any identifiable details be provided. Instead, they will be referred to as "participants". In addition to the participant demographic profile, this chapter will also set out the framework for analysis to discuss the main findings of this research study. After that, the main results will be discussed regarding the literature on the research topic in Chapter 2.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The following table is a demographic profile that includes the race, gender, age, ECD registration status, area, years of experience as well as highest qualification of the research study participants from whom the data for this research study was collected.

Table 4.2.1: Demographic Profile of Research Study Participants

Participant No.	Race	Gender	Age	ECD Status	Area/ Location	Years of Experience	Highest Qualification
Participant 1	Coloured – Cape Malay	Male	43	Unregistered	Heideveld	12 years	Matric & NQF 5

Participant 2	Coloured	Female	56	Unregistered	Hanover Park	7 years	NQF 4
Participant 3	Coloured	Female	59	Unregistered	Ottery	10 years	NQF 5 & Diploma in ECD
Participant 4	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	59	Registered	Wetton	11 years	Teachers Degree
Participant 5	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	50	Unregistered	Kenwyn	25 years	BA degree Major in Education & Diploma in ECD
Participant 6	Coloured	Male	37	Unregistered	Strandfontein Village	10 years	Matric
Participant 7	Coloured	Female	36	Unregistered	Elsies River	3 years	NQF 6
Participant 8	Coloured	Female	68	Registered	Strandfontein	36 years	NQF 5 & Diploma in ECD
Participant 9	Coloured	Female	62	Registered	New Lentegour-Mitchells Plain	18 years	NQF 4
Participant 10	Coloured	Female	56	Registered	Lentegour – Mitchells Plain	10 years	NQF 4
Participant 11	Coloured	Female	60	Registered	Bonteheuwel	37 years	Grade 10

Participant 12	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	34	Registered	Wynberg	13 years	Matric
Participant 13	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	25	Unregistered	Pelican Park	2 years	NQF 4
Participant 14	Coloured	Female	55	Registered	Lavenderhill	22 years	Diploma in ECD
Participant 15	Coloured	Female	61	Registered	Steenberg	30 years	NQF 4
Participant 16	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	32	Registered	Manenberg	14 years	Diploma in Education
Participant 17	Coloured - Cape Malay	Female	30	Unregistered	Kensington	10 years	NQF 5
Participant 18	Coloured – Cape Malay	Female	52	Unregistered	Athlone	14 years	NQF 5
Participant 19	Coloured	Female	33	Registered	Valhalla Park	14 years	Diploma in ECD
Participant 20	Coloured	Female	48	Registered	Vrygrond	32 years	Diploma in ECD

4.3 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

In presenting and discussing the findings of this study, the researcher developed a framework for the data analysis. This framework is set out in the table below and consists of the themes, categories and subcategories that will be unpacked in the findings section of this study.

Table 4.3.1: Framework for Analysis

Theme	Category	Sub-category
Theme 1: Motivation to provide and manage an ECD service	Social	Community need
	Political and Economic	Lack of Employment Opportunities
Theme 2: Challenges facing ECD principals when providing ECD services	Social	Gangsterism, Unemployment and Substance Abuse
	Political and Economic	Registration/Infrastructure Challenges
Theme 3: Needs of ECD principal providing a service	Social	Recognition and Greater Support for the Service
	Political and Economic	Partnership with key Role-players – Access to resources
Theme 4: Management of ECD services	Social	Management and Business Support
	Political and Economic	Policy and Regulatory Requirements

4.4 RESEARCH STUDY FINDINGS

This section discusses the research study's findings following the above framework of analysis.

4.4.1. THEME 1: MOTIVATION TO PROVIDE AND MANAGE AN ECD SERVICE

All participants communicated strong motivation to have started an ECD service in their respective communities. The subcategories that have emerged are social-community need, political and economic - lack of employment opportunities.

Social: Community Need

Many principals open their ECD Centres out of community needs and passion for children. Still, they frequently lack the business management and leadership abilities necessary to run the ECD successfully (Van Niekerk, Ashley-Cooper & Atmore, 2017:05). The researcher agrees with this statement; of the 20 participants that contributed to this research study, 11 indicated the personal motivation for them to have started the service is primarily due to a need identified in their immediate community. Blose & Muteweri (2021:05) support this finding by arguing that ECD Centres provide an essential service needed in every community. This, as the work of ECD Centre principals in rural communities, involves physically, psychologically, and socially nurturing children. ECD principals, better known as leaders, achieve this by assuming the role of a community servant, as they serve the following constituents' children, parents, and staff (Blose & Muteweri, 2021: 05). The following narratives from participants 2 and 8 provide an example of how the ECD principals assumed their role as community servants as referred by Blose & Muteweri (2021:05) in response to the challenges they have identified in their immediate community.

Participant 2: *"I was a volunteer working in my community, and I was working at the schools that time and then I discovered that many of the learners could not read or write their names, and then they were in grade 5 and grade 6, and then I went to inquire by the principle why could these learners not read or write and then I did an investigation, and I said to myself this starts with Early Childhood Development and that is how I became involved in ECD"*

Participant 10: *"In my community where I stay, every day I see how small young children play in the park all on their own; parents are probably working, maybe they are wandering around, but also it was a big concern to me to see these children young*

ones playing on their own, that was part of me just getting these children into a safe space”

Furthermore, a certain level of care and compassion was displayed in responses received from the ECD principals in this research study. Berg, Melaville & Blank (2006:01) shared that there is a growing demand for ECD principals to drive change and be accountable for the success of all children. Therefore, they try to convince parents and communities to pay attention to the multidimensions of a young child's life to help all students to achieve success; they do this by directing attention to the importance of academia and other factors that influence the development of young people—including physical, social, and emotional health; a motivating, engaging, safe environment; family and community support (Berg, Melaville & Blank, 2006:01). Govindasamy (2010:08) further argues that the need for childcare and education especially in the community-based services is mainly due to the government's failure to provide for the zero- to six-year-olds, this has forced the private sector (business) and communities to bear the primary responsibility for ECD provisioning (Govindasamy, 2010:08). These are the responses received from participants 8 and 9 that shows the lead taken by ECD principals to ensure a service is rendered specific to the need identified in their community.

Participant 8: *"Uhm, when my child was born with Down syndrome, I wanted to open up an ECD site for him, and I approached the Down syndrome association at that stage, and you know it was still the Apartheid era"*

Participant 9: *"Look, this was a new area and people going outside of Lenteguer to take their children to an ECD, whereas I mean there is no ECD close by, so I decided to open one, and that motivated me"*

The researcher found that in this section, the responses received from 11 of the participants referred to contextual issues, which led them to have started the ECD service (most of which were home based) in their community.

Political & Economic: Lack of Employment Opportunities

A total of 8 female participants shared that their motivation to have started an ECD service was due to the lack of employment opportunities.

Chikoko & Msibi (2020:62) argue that many ECD principals, during the Apartheid era, growing up in the contexts of poor, underdeveloped and disadvantaged communities, had implications for who they became (Chikoko & Msibi, 2020:62). Many struggled to overcome poverty and hardships and for many the Early Childhood Development practice has become a means to an end. In other words, an opportunity to generate income that would at least allow these women to meet their basic needs (Chikoko & Msibi, 2020:62). Below are the responses received from participants 15, 17 and 20 that refer to the lack of formal employment opportunities that have motivated these ECD principals to start their own ECD practice.

Participant 15: *"If I can start with the last one, I would say no, definitely no, the ward councillor, no, nothing of that sort, but social because I couldn't study at that time, being a child (Apartheid era), I had to go and work and that, I could not study Psychology"*

Participant 17: *"I did not have a job; there were no jobs available I was worried because what was I going to do I just prayed and hoped for the best, and then someone actually approached me uhm don't you want to look after my child, teach my child and all that, so I said okay, took it from there and we still here, we still doing it"*

Participant 20: *"My father was very abusive, and uhm, I was put out of the house because I was pregnant, and that led me to squat, and in the process, my baby got born, and we moved to families in and out, the journey was not well and for me it was the fact that I needed to find a place for my child and the community we were in being unemployed, not having any work"*

Even though the argument by Chikoko & Msibi (2020:62) is plausible, CSCCE (2018:05) further supports this by shedding some light on the reality faced by ECD

principals. Early childcare and education have largely failed to generate sufficient wages that would allow ECD principals and educator to meet their basic needs (CSCCE, 2018:05). This finding has come through several research studies whereby early educators and principals reported food insecurity, worry about housing, and postponement of education and medical treatment (CSCCE, 2018:05). The researcher wishes to share the following responses received participants 3, 12 and 13.

Participant 3: *"I use the fees that I get from the ECD Centre, and if I want to do some extras, then I have to save some money and put it to one side, say, for instance, I want to buy a tv because there is a lot of educational stuff on YouTube that the children like and that I also like so I needed to get a smart TV for them, and uhm whatever I want to buy I have to save up sometimes my husband will say "waar is die geld, dan se ek ek het dit in the creche gedruk waar moet ek geld kry my bank rekening is leeg" then I just have to pray to God please it's just this one last week please make it last"*

Participant 12: *"In all honesty, the reason I made it so far it's because I'm usually selling my personal items, uhm, so during the lockdown, there was no financial aid for us. I sold my vehicle, I sold my tv, I sold my furniture, and we kept going outside of lockdown during the year. Whenever you can, you buy things like tv's or whatever it is you use to sell, to keep going so December you don't really have a salary, and we don't get bonuses parents don't pay us, so we pay our rent short for that month, there is no money for food for our personal houses, you know that is the struggle we go through"*

Participant 13: *"I know I must budget, but how do I do that the money also need to take care of my grocery cupboards. I am the only breadwinner. I also have children that are at school, so how do I do that, the worries with my personal family as well, also this is my father in laws house. My father-in-law said we have to pay rent, so our rent is the rates which are also understandable, but now that also set me back now that the rates I need to sort out as well, but it is hard because some parents aren't paying"*

The researcher found from the 8 responses received from participants referred to in this section that even though the lack of employment opportunities has led them to open their doors to provide a subsistence-type service in the community, the income they are generating is not sufficient to attend to their basic needs and the needs of their families.

As part of this first theme on motivation to provide and manage an ECD service, the researcher looked at both social, political, and economic subthemes. When studying participant responses, the research revealed that community need tends to be a strong social motivator for providing and managing ECD services. Further, regarding political and economic motivators, the results/responses indicated that a lack of employment opportunities tended to be the original motivator for ECD principals.

4.4.2. THEME 2: CHALLENGES FACING ECD PRINCIPALS

Many challenges were reported during each of the interview sessions. But for this study, the researcher will only focus on the following categories/subcategories: Social – gangsterism, unemployment and substance abuse, and political and economic – registration/infrastructure challenges.

Social: Gangsterism, Unemployment, and Substance Abuse

Langa, Masuku, Bruce & Van der Merwe (2016:42) argue that "the increased levels of crime and violence are a sign of weak social cohesion in South Africa and can be ascribed to Apartheid, which led to social disintegration and the erosion of social values in black communities" (Langa et al., 2016:42). Family instability is a common feature within rural areas and townships today and has resulted in absent father figures, high levels of domestic violence, unemployment, crime, alcoholism, and drug abuse (Langa et al., 2016:42). Langa et al. (2016:44) in their study discovered that providing support to Early Childhood Development, may also, in the long run, contribute to violence preventions. The critical issue is that given the nature of such activity, community members and other stakeholders may not always view it as primarily preventing crime (Langa et al., 2016:44). However, apart from the one benefit listed above, implementing Early Childhood Development programmes is one way in

which one can strengthen social bonds based on experiences of mutual assistance and increased consciousness about the need to help those who are less privileged, this in itself is a form of social cohesion that would bring about positive change in these communities (Langa et al., 2016:47). Participants 2, 11, 8 and 19, discuss their experience concerning social challenges present in the communities they serve.

Participant 2: *"Substance abuse is also a big issue in this community because every circle that you go to, there are merchants, poverty is a big problem kids are taught from a young to sell drugs, and so my learners know who the kids are selling the drugs, but I do not allow them to discuss this sort of thing because I have kids that are affiliated to gangs, one of my learner's father was a gangster, but he was shot, it was very difficult, the child was a problem in the ECD the child was pulling the children's hair"*

Participant 11: *"We noticed for this year there are a lot of children that come to the ECD Centre; now this is a big one; how do you say no to the child if the father is a gangster when you see that child needs love, need to be fed, that is a child that has a need, firstly socially to be around children that age, economically, the money is there, they bring the money don't get me wrong they bring the money, how do you say no to a parent that enrolls the child the parent is a gangster, you see he got a gun in his back because he is "mos" afraid to bring this child so if anything happens he has a weapon on him, you sit there you see this, I interview them like normal people, the community speaks so we know who they are and also you see the writings on them the tattoos number 28 you see that"*

Participant 8: *"We have young parents that are addicted to drugs, so with grandparents rearing children and uhm it is a very difficult time because they take the responsibility of the child and it is always, one need to be so alert because there will be times, they will say the parent is not allowed to fetch the child"*

Participant 19: *"From the children's SASSA grant, and they pay the fees like that also the majority of parents are very young children. An Aunty said, I'm looking for a place for these two, they are 3 & 2 years old, but now I thought it is her son's children, and she said no it's my granddaughter's two children and she is 18 years old so she has a*

baby the baby was a year old, and then she had another one, so the mommy is not working so who is going to pay the fees, the grandma is going to pay the fees, that are the situations I have"

Many ECD principals referred to one or all of the social challenges listed above. However, there is a certain resilience that was displayed by these principals, as they continually strive to do their best to overcome these social challenges. The researcher found amongst all the 20 participants that there is a strong commitment and belief in the service they offer and that it will bring about the much-needed positive change in these communities.

Political & Economic: Registration/Infrastructure Challenges

Van der Walt, Swart & De Beer (2016:05) argues directly against the Children's Act concerning requirements for ECD registration. The act, they claim, "defines non-compliance with the registration requirements as an offence, which is understandable considering how the law functions" (Van der Walt, Swart & De Beer, 2016:05). However, this regulation can also be considered extremely harsh considering that people who assume responsibility for children under the most trying circumstances are being criminalised for the care they provide to the most vulnerable within the community (Van der Walt, Swart & De Beer, 2016:05). The regulatory challenges referred to is mainly related to land use and zoning, environmental issues, road and transport and health and safety. Most ECD Centres in rural areas are trying to make a difference. But it is nearly impossible for them to apply for registration under local authorities' control successfully. Access and the desired quality of service are solemnly based on money. As a result, those operating without registration are perceived as criminals in the industry (Van der Walt, Swart & De Beer, 2016:06). The researcher shares the responses from participants 1 and 16 that confirm this statement.

Participant 1: *"One of the main issues that we sit with and is a hindrance for in our ECD's to go forward is the land use, which is step one in terms of becoming a registered facility. The issue specific to our situation is there is something that is called a developmental charge (DC charge) following the size of your ECD Centre. If you*

have a large-scale ECD Centre, the charge that was worked out for this ECD Centre was something in the area of R80 000, and that we need to first pay for us to participant in the registration process, we appealed we wrote to the mayor the mayor found fault in terms of the calculation that they gave, in terms of the charge and it was brought down to half that amount about R 40 000 but even that even that was too much for us to afford"

Participant 16: *"Social Development came; they do visits for me unplanned visits; it's fine. I have nothing to hide; planned visits also it's not an issue, but come in with a constructive criticism that you gonna check and you gonna tell me this and that, you just come to measure, count my children, and that's it, you on your way, health comes in they check they see flies they write you up for flies what must I do its summer everything attracts flies, the people next door have horses, I am so hectically allergic to horses I can't go out by that gate, then my whole face swells because the stables are there, how do I report them? What do I do?"*

In addition to the challenge around ECD registration, although each of the ECD principals agreed that an ECD must be fully registered to ensure the safety of the children, they also feel that the process is limiting, whilst other illegal ECD Centres get to operate without any restrictions. There is a feeling amongst the registered ECD Centres that once registered, there is constant surveillance while those unregistered ECD Centres are left to their own devices and even receive more significant support from stakeholders working within the sector.

Participant 9: *"Mushroom ECD Centres are full of children; there is no, we are limited; we got a certain amount of kids that we can service we are registered whereas an unregistered ECD Centre has kids above the amount you understand what I am saying also they charge cheaper than the normal ECD the ECD that is registered do you understand so all the parents will go to that unregistered ECD that Mushroom one that has no qualifications or nothing at all the child will go there instead of coming to a registered ECD that is a challenge yes" ¹*

¹ *Mushroom ECD Centre is referred to as a pop-up ECD service that is operating covertly without any form of identification.*

Participant 15: *"We need to go via City, and there are no buildings here; they tell you to get a building, but there are no buildings here, so what do we do? I cannot out of my own put up a building because I need the ground to build on, so for me it is yes, I really need the help, when it comes to us asking the City there is no communication – one ECD down the road here they are not even registered if you go into that facility you will find that there are no widows really, there is no, nothing that draws you yet they are operating in a building, but yet they have a play park somebody came and put a play park up there, and they there, but they not registered they don't attend a Forum they don't ask you anything so it is a bit frustrating sometimes for us that is in the area that is registered after 5 years, and here they come, and they have children"*

Participant 13: *"I rather want to operate legally than not, but with the other ECD's they are getting funded with paperwork and equipment and to get the place fixed, and it is sad for me because, to me, it is unfair because why do they get to do that, but it is maybe up to funders who they chose what ECD they want to help or so, but it is just sad for me in a way knowing they can get it but why can't I and we in same boat all of us to help the community"*

The researcher found that in this section, a total of 19 participants referred to the main challenge as ECD registration and the infrastructural upgrades required for the success thereof. 11 Participants indicated that there are existing inequalities within the sector, which is further exacerbated by this registration process, that requires immediate intervention from the government.

While unpacking the responses from participants based on the second theme of this research study, the researcher found various social, political and economic challenges confronting ECD principals providing a service on the Cape Flats, Cape Town. Based on the responses received in this study, the subcategories that emerged in this section were social challenges, namely, gangsterism, unemployment and substance abuse, and political and economic challenges related to registration/infrastructure. Although participants shared through their responses that gangsterism, unemployment, and

substance abuse have adverse effects on the service being rendered, most participants refer to the registration of the ECD Centre as the main challenge, particularly the challenges related to infrastructural upgrades needed for the success and sustainability of the service.

4.4.3. THEME 3: NEEDS OF ECD PRINCIPALS PROVIDING A SERVICE

Participants communicated several needs, all of which, if fulfilled, will ensure greater quality and sustainability of the service. However, for this study, the researcher will only be focusing on two of the primary needs that were identified by participants. The subcategories that will be discussed are social - recognition and greater support for the service, political and economic - partnership with key role-players to allow for better access to resources.

Social: Recognition and Greater Support for the Service

Onjoro, Arogo & Embeywa (2015:04) appraise the government's recognition of teachers in the formal schooling system; motivational needs such as promotion, good salaries, and remuneration are important in achieving quality assurance; and staff training, retraining and development as one of teachers' motivational needs/strategies strengthened to promote teachers' efficiency, productivity, and performance for quality outcomes (Onjoro, Arogo & Embeywa, 2015:04). Furthermore, this as a form of recognition and reward is important for the realisation and quality of both curriculum and educational innovations. In many instances, ECD principals, like principals in formal schools, pioneer and foster excellence in learning and teaching (Onjoro, Arogo & Embeywa, 2015:04). Therefore, recognition through support and reward specifically aimed at ECD principals and teaching staff should be at the forefront of government policies to enhance quality and allow for the sustainability of the service. The following responses from participants 4,10, and 16 reaffirm this statement considering government support by comparing their experience to that of formal schooling.

Participant 4: *"I want the government to acknowledge the intense role we play in a child's life, and then I want the government to support us...just paying part of our salaries; that is the desperate need we have because when your landlords for the*

property want their rent they mean it, some are leased at R30 000 that is without the cost of water and electricity, so if they can just get looked after by them we will offer even more, we doing the best we can under our circumstances"

Participant 10: *"Yes, I will say if you look at where we are today, we are not with Social Development anymore; we are with the Education department, and I mean, they should have a track record of when we started in DSD and what we have done in this community uhm I am sure if they can do it at the school why can't they just plough it into us as well I mean we are the foundation we lay the foundation for these children that is still going to school so even they can play a role and even our government uhm there should be I think, there should be something where they say okay we give it in schools so why can't we help educares' I mean look at the schools even grade R they get all their resources from the department where we have to buy we don't get it for free so if they can come on board and just help"*

Participant 16: *"Personally, government, stop looking at us as I'm going to say we are the "Babbie shops" of school; we open up on every corner we deliver a service, but we are not being noticed like Pick and Pay and Shoprite, so where is the halfway, are we going to become something or are we just going to be those who gets run down, and say no we all moving into schools because we are opening grade R and grade 0 taking on from 4 years to eliminate us, but then they don't do it justice because then they sit with 40 – 50 kids in a classroom and the teacher runs out and cries in the park and whatever because she can't handle all the kids at the same time so where does it meet we as ECD's just get seen when the news want to report something or when you become a statistic or something"*

Interestingly, of the 20 participants, 9 were from unregistered and 11 from registered ECD Centres, all agreed that there is a need for greater recognition and support (financial, resources, mentorship, business management) to the ECD sector, especially from the government as they are mandated through the constitution and various policies and strategies to support this critical sector of development.

Political & Economic: Partnership with key Role-players - Access to Resources

Bhengru (2018:05) discussed two broad perspectives of partnership in ECD practice; for this research study, the researcher will only focus on the latter. First, partnership, in this instance, is viewed as a collaboration where the emphasis is placed on interdependence among various people and organisations (Bhengru, 2018:05). Therefore, this understanding of partnership within ECD practice comprises of every formal arrangement an organisation puts in place be it with an individual, private or public organisation to support programmes and provide resources that will enhance effective teaching and learning (Bhengru, 2018:05). However, despite such potential, no mandatory or standard rule applies to partnership within communities especially in the rural context; instead ECD principals and community partners face significant barriers and challenges to their development and sustainability (DePetris & Eames, 2017:173). The researcher found that from responses received from 20 participants, many barriers and challenges have come to the forefront, with several potential partners, namely, ECD Forums (2 participants), SSOs (3 participants), NPOs (2 participants), government (6 participants), corporates (2 participants), and parents (5 participants).

Participant 18: *"I feel I am not benefiting from the Forum at all; on the Forum, everybody is for themselves; you don't really know when there is a workshop or when there is maybe an event or something like a learning"*

Participant 17: *"I've seen the health inspector more than the SSO, really, and I've only seen SSO at our Forum meetings; that is the only time I have ever seen the SSO; I got their file inside for my registration; they are definitely covering our area, but I have been doing the registration myself with no help from them"*

Participant 2: *"An NGO in our community but uhm, they not doing enough for me personally because during the gang violence in our community, I needed their help, and they only came in once and did not do follow-ups nothing, and that really hurt me because my kids really needed the counselling because they were directly affected with the gang violence"*

Participant 14: *"Politically, the councillors in the area, I would say they can do more as well for the child in the ECD Centre; their contribution is not, there isn't a contribution actually, so I know if there is anything it should come from them and it is not, promises have been made yes, but we didn't get much of it"*

Participant 12: *"More support from bigger companies; they can see the need for us as ECD's like I said, they think that ECD is just a play school, but it is where the foundation of the student is built"*

Participant 15: *"Uhhh especially coming to parents when they have had a service done and not paying you, that is the hardest for me because I always need to attend to the salaries of the teachers first"*

Partnership development is especially important in South Africa as most ECD Centres lack the educational resources to enhance quality Early Childhood education programmes. Aina & Bipath (2022:113) argue that this is particularly evident in ECD Centres in rural areas where they have fewer infrastructure resources that promote quality service because of the dire socio-economic conditions of the parents (Aina & Bipath, 2022:113). As a result, ECD Centre principals in lower-income areas suffer as they cannot purchase the essential resources for quality service delivery at their Centres (Aina & Bipath, 2022:114).

Participant 2: *"Uhm, if I can get more resources to stimulate, you know some of these resources are expensive, there are resources I require, but I cannot afford it, if I can get more stuff, that is, I know the kids has not been exposed to other things, I see resources that other ECD's in the nice areas has, like toy kingdom is very expensive, toy kingdom blocks the kids is crazy about it, but I could only afford to buy one box"*

Participant 12: *"Economic definitely our financial, so you struggle to get funding, you struggle to get sponsors, you struggle to get fees in from parents, and we depend on that sort of income to keep the ECD running because you use your fees to pay rent and to buy food, a lot of the time for stationery because parents don't feel the need to provide stationery because we are an ECD, not a school so we only go up to grade R,*

a lot of people still have the idea that a day-care is a play school, they come to school they play, and they watch tv where ECD has developed so much that we have actual curriculum the kids actually have classroom time so stationery is requirements as well, so it's a big battle for our parents"

Participant 18: *"Today they don't understand what you need for gross motor skills; we make it ourselves because we went to do the ECD learning, we went to colleges, we made the resources, but today parents and that is the challenges coming from parents they come in they look and they say no, but you don't have this and you don't have that and the more you tell them what you create and how you can create play using different equipment that is made really uhm that is a challenge so the support we need is maybe I will say again we are not looking for the money, it's not the money in cash that we want it's for people to come out here to ECD's and come here and say you know what I will support you we will fund synthetic grass for you that is what we need as support and that is all for the safety"*

The researcher found that, from the 20 responses received, there needs to be more partnership amongst various stakeholders, particularly those responsible for supporting and enhancing the service. Also, for too many that have a relationship with a stakeholder, there is a feeling of having to be submissive towards any assistance or support offered by the stakeholder rather than being a partner in development within the community.

After assessing the responses received relating to the third theme of this research study, that was based on the subthemes social, political, and economic. The subcategories selected to describe results were a need for more support and recognition, especially from government departments and a greater need for partnership with key role players to access resources. A common trend across responses was that there needs to be a willingness from government departments to listen to concerns, let alone offer support to the ECD principals who participated in this study. This was further expressed in the examples used to describe the lack of communication and the siloed approach to service offerings, which makes it increasingly difficult for ECD principals to partner at any level. Therefore, the need for

recognition and partnership was prioritised by these ECD principals, especially those offering a home-based care service.

4.4.4 THEME 4: MANAGEMENT OF ECD SERVICES

In analysing the research data relating to managing an ECD service, the following subcategories emerged and will be discussed: social – management and business support; political and economic - policy and regulatory requirements, access to government funding.

Social: Management / Business Support

The complete sample of 20 ECD principals who participated in this study agreed in one way or another that management functions include planning, organising, leading, and controlling (Ronaasen, 2021:02). For example, some of the critical responsibilities of the ECD principal are to arrange the allocation and orientation of ECD practitioners and employees to ensure that the child-to-teacher ratio complies with norms and standards (Ronaasen, 2021:02). ECD principals also need to control and manage finances whilst also leading the staff as a team as to achieve organisational goals each year (Ronaasen, 2021:02).

Without these essential management skills, many important tasks within the ECD practice would be challenging and may not be achieved successfully. Ronaasen (2021:02) further shares that the duties of an ECD principal also include staff supervision, financial management, human resource management, curriculum planning, child advocacy, property maintenance, marketing of the ECD Centre and fostering and organisational culture (Ronaasen, 2021:02). This research study agrees with Ronaansen (2021:02) as many of the ECD principals shared that their role is to assist all aspects of the business, end to end, to ensure for holistic development of the child and sustainability of the service. Participants 8 and 10 refer to the below:

Participant 8: *“My responsibility is to ensure that the school operates at the best in terms of staff doing what they are supposed to be doing in terms of resources, basically when I walk down this corridor, I need to know that every teacher is doing*

what they are supposed to be doing so my job is to ensure that they have the resources whatever they need, we have a set programme so on a Thursday you will ask what you need for the week uhm in terms of planning they need to have their lessons planned on a Thursday in terms of teacher-child ration my job is just to ensure that this business operates the way it should so it is about working towards a budget that we have ensured that everything in terms of the meals is met in terms of whatever needs to make this school function without a hedge and sometimes it can be difficult”

Participant 10: *“I don’t get tea time, I, it’s just that, yes, you give instructions, but at the end of the day, everything still comes back to you getting up first in the morning and going to bed late at night, and I can’t get a week off you have to reconsider all the time, can I take off or not, because its constant meetings, you don’t have your life anymore, life depends on staff, parents and children”*

There was a common theme across all responses that further training and support are needed for business development. Many shared that there is training on offer from various government departments, training colleges and NGOs supporting the sector. However, the training is strongly focused on curriculum development, health, safety, and compliance, all of which they agree are important, but that there is a need for training to support the business side of the service. Below are responses received from participants 5, 7 and 13:

Participant 5: *“From a business perspective, where I would love to get help is to understand how a small business grows, how to maintain it and how to grow it because with the new way things are going, you are going to deal now with staff coming in with diplomas and degrees now if you going to want to do grade R and things like that, and with those come WCED requirements where you register with them and there is a whole different admin package that comes with that, and that scares the hell out of me, and now there are certain things you must have in place uhm logging times, and I don’t even know, so training in that will be great and also training in tax how to do tax papers because that cost me a lot to go to an accountant I am running a small business that is a simple structure but because I don’t have the inklings or expertise”*

Participant 7: *"I think you know what, in terms of that, in my own perspective would like to have like, Uhm, financial coaching as well because that will be a help for me also because sometimes, I know for myself it's just a little money that comes"*

Participant 13: *"I thought of finding someone like that, that can guide me into the management side of the business, like a mentor; it would help me a lot; it starts with myself also being able to manage my business alone because I am the principal I need know what goes on there, also ways I can manage the money, in order to know that this need to go to business, maybe getting a business account and know that at the end of the month, it must go there, I can then save and buy chairs and resources, at the moment there is nothing going into the business, it will also make me a bit satisfied to know that something is going into the business from my pocket and I feel a lot, with the teaching side that is okay, it will also help me to know once I understand how to manage the business side of things I have no experience of it at the moment, I don't know where to start"*

ECD programmes are primarily provided by NPOs and subsistence entrepreneurs or micro–social enterprises, most of whom are women of colour. They provide a service that is mostly needs based in communities with limited cash flow, which places them below the minimum wage (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:06). From responses received from participants, there is a drive towards wanting to become self-sufficient and less reliant on the government to provide the much-needed support in this sector.

Political & Economic: Policy and Regulatory Requirements

Government policy and strategy need a more robust community development focus; government places so much emphasis on the unregistered ECD Centres with one size fits all norms and standard requirements that are almost impossible to attain. Yet this service plays such a crucial role in caring for many of South Africa's poorest children by allowing caregivers to either work or seek work and are thus as important as any other part of the economy" (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:06). In response to the questions around challenges related to management 16 of the 20 participants referred to ECD registration processes and procedures.

Participant 1: *"What makes it very challenging for us is the support or non-support from our authorities, whether it is your municipalities or whether it is the government itself in terms of ECD, all the red tape that's in place you know, it's obviously you're opening, having an ECD is also considered as running a business right but the feeling is that they do not look at the community aspect thereof, the social investment aspect thereof that is so important to the type of work that we do and the feeling is if the government is more on board in terms of supporting Early Childhood Development, then a great deal or there will be much positivity in our community in the long term obviously I mean there's so many things that we can do in terms of the positiveness that can come out of ECD in terms of literacy development, in terms of character development, and just the overall well-being of the child"*

Participant 17: *"So the challenge we have been struggling with is obviously getting registered, so that's been a run around for years; it's been more than 5 years, and we are running around and so forth, and just when we thought we were getting into a straight line it came back so we just back in that circle, and it keeps going, so we still trying to overcome it and we are not giving up we fight back all the time, every time it's we need this and that, but we gave it so now it is what do we need still so yeah we try to keep them on their toes as well, but it is difficult, I am stuck at the City, I've been stuck at zoning for years, but they can't find the building plans so like how can you not find building plans that has been approved and that? How? Where? How is it not there? so that is a big hold up"*

Participant 20: *"I've never been in favour of saying we need to be schools without registration; it's always been my passion that if you look after somebody else's child, you need to be in line with what is asked, and so yes you make money so money can provide but it can't provide everything, and sometimes the standards are too high to get to where we need to get so meet us halfway you know, and if there is really schools that is not then there can be red tape and all that but yes, treat everyone equally in where they find themselves"*

There is a drive from ECD principals to become registered and compliant with norms and standards governing the sector; however, they feel that they need to be fully supported by the government departments to enable them to do so. Many shared that the blockages are mainly at the local government level, where there needs to be more attention to the human aspects of the service, especially the lack of finances to support major upgrades of the building structure for successful registration. Most participants referred to the following bottlenecks responsible for enforcing by-laws related to registration and compliance; City of Cape Town Local Government Department: Land Use Management, Building Management and Fire and Rescue.

In closing, theme four referred to the management of the ECD service of the subthemes social, political, and economic selected for this study. The researcher discovered the following subcategories best describes responses received in this section; management/ business support and policy and regulatory requirements. The participants shared that they must wear multiple hats in their day-to-day operations to ensure the smooth running of the service. Although many of the responses shared were that these ECD principals were okay with going the extra mile to provide support, the main frustration they feel is the unrealistic norms and standards attached to the registration process. Apart from these policy/regulatory challenges, there is also a significant concern around the management and business side of the service; participants feel like this aspect of the service needs to be addressed in terms of the type of support offered in the sector.

4.5 SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of the finding of this study. Four main themes emerged from the results that this chapter unpacked through direct quotations and literature reviewed to illustrate these findings. The key themes explored in this chapter included motivation, challenges, needs, and management of ECD services from ECD principals' social, political and economic perspectives. The next chapter will highlight this research study's main conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes this study and makes recommendations based on the study findings. First, the chapter briefly summarises the problem context, the study's objective, the research questions, the research design and method applied, and the data analysis process. Next, it will summarise the most critical research findings and then offer suggestions based on them. Finally, in closing this chapter, the researcher will describe the study's limitations, with recommendations for further research, as she reflects on what she has learnt from undertaking this research study, and a final summary as a concluding statement.

5.2 SUMMARISING THE PROBLEM CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Early Childhood Development is a term that is internationally recognized and regarded as the foundation for success in the future. It is a form of public good that encourages lifelong learning and is one of the most effective redistributive measures to combat child poverty (Atmore, 2012:122). Furthermore, studies have shown that economic returns on individual and social investments in Early Childhood Development substantially outweigh the returns on any other type of human capital investment (Williams & Samuels, 2001:05). In South Africa, numerous laws have been promulgated, and policies developed which acknowledge and seek to advance the importance of Early Childhood Development. Still, the reality of providing optimal Early Childhood Development services for most young black and coloured children remains a daunting task (Boulle et al., 2020:01). The main objective of this study was to understand the context in which ECD principals on the Cape Flats provide their services, in hopes of giving a true reflection of the needs, gaps, and resources available to support and enhance the quality of ECD services.

The research topic for this study was an explorative study of registered and unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats Cape Town: challenges and opportunities using the following four research questions.

1. What motivates the ECD principal to provide and manage the service?
2. What challenges do ECD principals face when providing ECD services?
3. What opportunities do ECD principals have access to when providing ECD services?
4. What do ECD principals need to ensure long – term sustainability?

The researcher selected an explorative, qualitative research design to develop an understanding of the on-the-ground experience of ECD principals providing a service on the Cape Flats, Cape Town. Through the use of this approach, the researcher was able to set out criteria for participation in the study. Understanding the importance of ethical considerations and adherence to the Protection of Personal Information (POPIA) Act of (2021). The researcher relied on ECD non-profit organizations currently servicing the ECD sector and ward councillors to gain access to the field of research. With permission and information from these bodies, a non-probability, purposive sample of 20 ECD principals was selected to participate in the study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner as the data collection method. The presentation and discussion of the results were afterwards analyzed using Tesch's (1990) framework of analysis as a guide and structure.

5.3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS BASED ON RESEACH OBJECTIVES

This section details the main conclusions drawn from the findings of this research study according to the four objectives.

5.3.1. Objective 1: To determine what motivates the ECD principals to provide and manage the service.

The first research objective was to determine what motivates ECD principals to provide and manage the service on the Cape Flats, Cape Town.

ECD Centres offer a vital service to rural areas, and many of the ECD principals who started the service did so out of a natural passion for children and a need displayed in

their immediate community (Vorster et al., 2016:03). The ECD principal as a result of this assumes the position of a community servant as the service generally extends not only to the children but also to parents and staff. In so doing, the ECD principals must spearhead change and take ownership of every child's progress. Therefore, they emphasize the value of education as well as other aspects of young people's development, such as their physical, social, and emotional well-being, creating a stimulating, engaging, and secure environment, as well as offering to support their families and the wider community (Blose & Muteweri, 2021:05).

In addition to the community need and passion, one must understand that due to the government's failure to provide for children under the age of six, there is a demand for such childcare services (Govindasamy, 2010:08). Rural communities, therefore, depend on the service provided by ECD principals as such private sector (businesses) and local communities are now primarily responsible for delivering ECD services.

Second, to the above, the researcher found that a lack of employment opportunities was also a strong motivator, especially among the female ECD principals. They mainly depend on the service to generate household income. Even though the service fails to create a sufficient wage to meet ECD principals' basic needs, leading to food insecurity, housing insecurity, and deferral of education and medical care (CSCCE, 2018:05). These ECD principals continue to make every effort to ensure that the service is provided as they have a firm belief that such assistance would bring about the much-needed change and uplift their communities.

In light of the first research objective, this study's findings and supporting literature indicate that ECD principals are motivated by community needs, passion, demand for services, and employment opportunities.

5.3.2. Objective 2: To explore the challenges that ECD principals face when providing ECD services.

The second research objective was to explore the challenges that ECD principals face when providing ECD services.

Rural communities frequently experience family instability due to the Apartheid regime's effects on South Africa's communities of colour, which included social disintegration and the destruction of social values. This contributes to father figures being absent, high rates of domestic violence, unemployment, crime, gangsterism, alcoholism, and drug abuse (Langa et al., 2016:42). All of which have direct and indirect effects on the ECD service being delivered. ECD principals in this study mentioned that some of the primary difficulties were payment of fees because most parents are receiving social grants. In some instances, as parents increasingly abuse alcohol and drugs, many grandparents have taken on the responsibility of parenting. However, these are the children that require the service the most. Although ECD programming is mainly focused on children's cognitive and social development, it also contributes to children's healthy physical motor development by providing regular and nutritious meals. Thus, ECD services require consistent income flow to meet the overall objectives of the service.

Furthermore, ECD principals also referred to registration, particularly the infrastructure improvements that must be made to comply with the registration requirements. The law defines non-compliance with registration requirements as a crime, which is acceptable considering how the law functions (Van der Walt, Swart & De Beer, 2016:05). However, the fact that people who care for children in the most challenging situations are being penalized for their assistance to the most vulnerable members of the community makes this law seem incredibly harsh from the participants' perspectives. The regulatory difficulties referred to by the ECD principals mainly include zoning, land use, the environment, roads and transportation, and health and safety. The ECD facilities in these Cape Flats communities work to change lives. However, it seems impossible for them to be registered under the supervision of the municipal government.

The findings linked to the second objective of this study indicate that socioeconomic problems present in Cape Flats communities impact service provision, particularly the payment of fees by parents. This as a large portion of parents in rural areas who are amongst the lowest-paid workers in the economy. In Chapter 2 of this study, Biersteker & Hendricks (2012:53) further argues that ECD principals frequently struggle because they have to teach in environments with limited resources and unfavourable

conditions. As a result, community needs far exceed what can be provided (Biersteker & Hendricks, 2012:53). Participants further shared that adding to this challenge is the cost associated with infrastructure changes necessary for compliance and registration of the service. The Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan (2019), referred to in an earlier chapter of this study, concurs with this finding, arguing that one of the weaknesses of the NIECD policy (2015) is that it does not take into account just how difficult and expensive it is for the majority of ECD Centres to comply with the registration requirement, with particular reference to the processes residing within local municipalities (Early Childhood Development Sector Skills Plan, 2019:110).

5.3.3. Objective 3: To discover whether ECD principals are aware of available opportunities in providing ECD service.

The third research objective of this study was to discover whether ECD principals are aware of the available opportunities in providing ECD services.

The findings of this study indicated that ECD principals are aware that to improve and enhance the service they offer, there is a need for partnership with critical role-players to access resources and further training opportunities. Many known community and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, government departments, NGOs and businesses able to support community service were mentioned in these interviews. However, despite the potential, no requirements or standards apply to community partnerships, particularly in rural settings (DePetris & Eames, 2017:173). As a result, ECD principals and community partners need help with their growth and sustainability.

The researcher also discovered that there needs to be a standard practice regarding the opportunities available to enhance or support these communities' services. However, others countered that these opportunities are typically short-term and are intended to address problems that can be solved quickly rather than those that the ECD principals need assistance with. This result is a typical illustration of the point Sonnenberg (2008:04) makes in Chapter 2 of this study. That is, many principals providing ECD services in post-Apartheid environments find that because these previously advantaged communities have access to the necessities like electricity and

running water, their needs in terms of safety and community-building initiatives are neglected in favour of other communities that do not (Sonnenberg, 2008:04). The participants in this case expressly referred to development opportunities on offer from several local government departments.

According to findings related to the third objective of this study, ECD principals on the Cape Flats are aware of the options available to assist and improve the service they currently provide. They have understood the value of collaborating with role players/ stakeholders in the community and the sector but shared that obstacle, such as lack of recognition for the service, make it challenging to network such opportunities. They have also referred to the effect of support on offer to the sector, which only enables general improvement rather than making a significant impact that would allow for greater, long-term sustainability of the service within these communities.

5.3.4. Objective 4: To analyse the needs of the ECD principals that would ensure long – term sustainability of the services.

This study's fourth and final objective was to analyze the needs of the ECD principals that would ensure the long-term sustainability of the service.

As a result of the findings of this study, ECD Centres in Cape Flats areas lack the necessary resources to provide quality Early Childhood education programmes due to poor socioeconomic conditions, resulting in principals, especially those in lower-income areas being unable to purchase essential resources to provide a quality service. Furthermore, training and support are needed to equip ECD practitioners on the business side of the service; this needs to be addressed, especially when it comes to training and development opportunities made available to support the sector.

There is an understanding amongst ECD practitioners on the Cape Flats that government places so much emphasis on unregistered ECD Centres with a one size fits all rule and standard requirements that are nearly impossible for ECD principals to meet. Although ECD principals are motivated to register and abide by the sector's laws and regulations, they believe that government authorities need to provide them with more assistance. To secure the long-term sustainability of the service, the government

needs to emphasize community development. Along with greater recognition of this service as the service allows parents to work or look for a job and is essential to caring for many of South Africa's poorest children and is therefore just as significant to the economy as any other sector (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:06).

Considering the findings of this study's fourth and final objective, ECD principals acknowledged the necessity for training that places a greater emphasis on the business aspects of the service. Also, for the government to review or apply some lenience to the current norms and standards assigned to the registration procedure to enable ECD principals to receive subsidies and relieve part of the financial burden currently residing with them as service owners.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON KEY RESEACH FINDINGS

The following section presents the recommendation based on the critical research findings according to the research objectives of this study.

5.4.1. Objective 1: To determine what motivates the ECD principals to provide and manage the service.

From responses received from participants related to motivation to provide ECD services on the Cape Flats. It is recommended that government recognizes the fact the ECD service, apart from the direct benefits it has to the growing child, the service also assists in bridging a gap of high rates of unemployment in the country, especially for one of the most vulnerable groups of society, which is women. Without this service, the government will have an added burden to ensure that many of these women, most of whom are unskilled, aged between 40 to 65 years, who also happen to have children and families that are dependent on them to survive. It is possible to consider opportunities to empower and upskill these women and enable them to participate in the mainstream economic activities crucial to achieving this country's national goals in the ECD sector. A community-based, non-formal education programme is one method the government may use to uplift and educate these women. According to Nordtveit (2008:414), a five-year (1996–2001) Senegalese women's literacy initiative, created to encourage a culture of learning and an enabling literate environment, has played a significant role in easing contextual difficulties like unemployment and poverty in some

of its poorest locations. The paradigm for execution was a public-private collaboration with a specific emphasis on bettering health, effective communication, resolving disputes within communities, rural development, self-employment, and woman's empowerment (Nordtveit, 2008:414). Only NGOs could apply for the programme, presented through a government bidding procedure. This was done through a competitive application process, of which one of the requirements was to produce a proposal document with evidence of collaboration with the community (Nordtveit, 2008:407). This programme was specifically created to meet the needs of a particular community and/or cohort. Participants or those interested in enrolling in the programme could choose the schedule and the kind of essential income-generating skills they wanted the programme to emphasize (Nordtveit, 2008:408). In addition to reaching over 200 000 people, this initiative has also demonstrated its effectiveness by upskilling and assisting some of its most vulnerable groups. Hence a similar strategy could be considered in the context of this study.

5.4.2. Objective 2: To explore the challenges that ECD principals face when providing ECD services.

Due to the challenges related to by-laws highlighted by the participants, the government should relook at the current policies and strategies governing the sector, especially those at the local government level. Suppose the government redesign those by-laws or draw on existing initiatives, such as the metropolitan spatial development framework within the council and economic growth and social development strategies. The coming together of these strategies, has the potential to significantly assist in enabling a more realistic implementation. Mainly because those policies and procedures aim to address challenges related to the lack of public facilities in densely populated communities. ECD principals need help registering their facilities due to the cost required for the infrastructural changes necessary for compliance; therefore, such policies need to be aligned with the existing ECD policy at the local government level.

Furthermore, it is essential for a transverse policy to include legislation that enforces synergy between government departments, who have been assigned various tasks and responsibilities, but also create a department that would serve as a one-stop shop solemnly dedicated to ECD service. Further to this recommendation, Richter,

Daelmans, Lombardi, Heymann, Lopez Boo, Behrman, Lu, Lucas, Perez-Escamilla, Dua, Stenberg, Gertler & Darmstadt (2017:06), in their study related to ECD practice, found that one of the common challenges at the political level and referred explicitly to interventions that require support from multiple government departments, such as the issue of untrained staff, lack of management and monitoring of outcomes, lack of funding and insufficient flow of resources between sectors/departments. All of this results in programmes struggling to achieve uniform quality and to demonstrate a significant impact on the child's development (Richter Daelmans, Lombardi, Heymann, Lopez Boo, Behrman, Lu, Lucas, Perez-Escamilla, Dua, Stenberg, Gertler & Darmstadt, 2017:06). She argues the need to advocate and mobilize parents, families, and the community as they are essential drivers of demand for access and quality (Richter et al., 2017:06).

In terms of funding for nutrition, the majority of ECD Centres, whether registered or unregistered, provide children with two meals a day; with the increase in inflation cost of food items almost daily, it becomes increasingly difficult for ECD principals to offer, as the fees are a fixed cost for the year. Only registered establishments are eligible to apply for nutritional subsidies from the government, whilst unregistered ECD Centres, which are the majority, are left to fund this cost alone. Suppose the government is not by the means to provide direct support to these unregistered ECD Centres. In that case, they can use their position to lobby with donors and humanitarian or relief organizations for such provisions to the sector. One such initiative is the Kenyan government's implementation of the ECD feeding programme. This government has entered into a partnership agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP), a five-year initiative (2009 – 2013) in which it received outside support for procuring and providing food for the programme and oversees distribution thereof to each of the sponsored schools (Osman, 2015:04). The programme which includes a computerized monitoring system jointly operated by the Minister of Education and the WPF, has provided so many advantages in helping Kenya's feeding difficulties (Osman, 2015:04). This technology was created not only for tracking and reporting purposes, but it has also helped to identify inadequate management practices and the need for further assistance in vulnerable communities (Osman, 2015:04). Therefore, a similar approach may be taken to help alleviate some of the existing challenges in the sector, which would be advantageous to both stakeholders and service providers.

5.4.3. Objective 3: To discover whether ECD principals are aware of available opportunities in providing ECD service.

Considering responses received, and opportunities that are available for ECD principals providing a service in Cape Flats communities, it is recommended that authorities assist in educating and sensitizing local government officials, public figures, parents and community members, workers, leaders, and other potential partners currently servicing the sector on the value of children's early development, especially highlighting the importance of their roles in planning, implementing, overseeing, investing, and supporting this vital community-based service. This is also supported by Weyers' (2001:263) earlier claim that community development is a crucial tool for achieving ECD goals. Based on the idea that governments and their citizens ought to work together consciously to better the country's general socioeconomic positions (Weyers, 2001:263). Flaspohler, Wandersman, Keener, Maxwell & Ace (2003:50) introduced a multisectoral community lead, "First Steps" comprehensive ECD programme aimed at improving school readiness among children in South Carolina (Flaspohler, Wandersman, Keener, Maxwell & Ace, 2003:50). This programme developed an accountability system to build stakeholder capacity to plan, implement and evaluate their programmes. Prioritizing needs as a group and recognizing and validating stakeholder diversity was essential to this programme's success (Flaspohler et al., 2003:50). With an understanding that although values and evaluation needs may be legitimate, not all of them can be satisfied. Thus, a developmental continuum was designed and used to arrange the evaluation of the needs and values of all structures involved in the programme. So, when diverse needs were presented, it was acknowledged, and in this way, stakeholders felt supported. This system provided valuable tools for promoting programme success and fulfilling accountability requirements from each stakeholder (Flaspohler et al., 2003:50).

Furthermore, there is a narrow focus on support offered to the ECD sector; in most instances, training and other capacity-building initiatives are only aimed at principals and teachers in direct service delivery roles. In addition, these initiatives have a stronger focus on curriculum development and registration requirement. With little regard to the fact that these ECD principals must assume the role of fundraisers,

administrative staff, managers, cooks, and maintenance staff in their day-to-day operations, as these functions play a critical role in the delivery of ECD services and in shaping the regulatory, organizational, and educational environments that influence workforce outcomes. Therefore, training opportunities in the sector should include HR, financial and business management to increase leadership and supervisory skills development. This as, ECD services require certain specialized functions to achieve success. As per the argument Workforce Council Report (2011:05) in Chapter 2 of this study, the government's failure to view the ECD provision (in terms of its workforce) in its entirety also leads to the service being underfunded as most funding models do not consider or incorporate the cost of regulatory, management, and administration required for the delivery of a service (Workforce Council, 2011:05). Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris (2012:25) in this propose a need for a paradigm shift and a new way of thinking about leadership in early childhood within what they called the distributive leadership model (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris 2012:25). The results of this study strongly imply that while ECD leadership involves essential responsibilities for management, leadership, and administration, these can take many different forms (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012:25). There are three significant aspects of distributed leadership that directly relate to ECD environments.

In contrast to leadership, which is a phenomenon that arises from the individual, this is an emergent quality of a group or network of interacting individuals (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012:25). The second benefit is that it broadens the definition of leadership, taking into account the potential participants and collaborators (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012:25).

Thirdly, it recognizes that skills and knowledge are dispersed throughout the business and that, if brought together within a culture of trust and support, they may result in concerted action (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012:25).

5.4.4. Objective 4: To analyse the needs of the ECD principals that would ensure long – term sustainability of the services.

Based on the results of this study, it is advised that the government realize the potential of ECD services as a small business to secure the long-term viability of those services. The service must be acknowledged as such and promoted as a vital

component of our county's economic fabric. The Ilifa Labantwana (2020:15) report concurs with this finding in Chapter 2 of the study and argues that NPOs and subsistent entrepreneurs offer ECD services to the most at-risk children, the cost-benefit of the service is that sustainability is vitally important not only for the staff and their households but also for the children who access these programmes and their parents who through use of this service can participate in the job market, yet the sector is not widespread due to low status and low-paid work (Ilifa Labantwana, 2020:15). An illustration of how the government may help ensure the service's sustainability, is the Rwandan Private Sector Engagement Strategy (2018-2023), which is at the core of the country's private sector growth and provides a comprehensive plan to increase Rwanda's economic competitiveness by boosting the local market through value chain development. Two key channels are used to do this. They first created a clear policy framework to bring together all currently occurring government actions. Second, overcoming supply-side restrictions by making strategic investments to deepen high-potential value chains, improve quality, and increase cost competitiveness (UNICEF Rwanda, 2018:09).

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Whilst conducting this research study, the researcher identified several gaps in knowledge regarding challenges and opportunities faced by ECD principals providing a service in Cape Flats communities. The discussion below highlights suggested areas for further research.

The participants who participated in this research study presented some resources to support the service, whether home-based or operating from a facility in the community. However, the researcher noticed informal establishments within the Cape Flats areas represented in this study. Participants added that they were aware of ECD services in those sections of the community. But the researcher was not able to connect with those ECD principals. Hence, future research studies targeting ECD principals may consider the various operating models of the service applied in a community/area. It may add significant insight to the existing knowledge of the sector.

There were a few participants that referred to the challenge around "Mushrooming" ECD Centres and the lack of government regulation around those, making it increasingly difficult for those registered ECD to operate to their total capacity as parents opt for the cheaper options, and does not necessarily consider the health and safety aspects requirements of the service. Interestingly one of the participants shared that being a registered facility is a setback. However, there is motivation to access government stipends and subsidies; these subsidies are not paid regularly, the application process can take up to 5 years, and it requires the ECD principals to share the salary slips of parents, which is not at all ethical. A parent might be earning a good salary but does the government consider the size of the family and household expenses before disqualifying the application for subsidy or any relief? In this, the researcher suggests that a future research study could focus on how the registration process is perceived by ECD principals in low-income communities/ areas. Perhaps weighing the benefits and drawbacks of operating as a registered ECD Centre in the current socioeconomic environment. This type of research study will allow for new knowledge and an in-depth understanding of the implementations of existing norms and standards governing the sector as the "Mushroom" ECD Centres seem to be a unique occurrence within the industry.

Furthermore, according to some participants, there appears to be a culture of support based on prejudice in FET colleges and SSOs mandated to support the sector. Making it increasingly difficult for ECD principals to equip themselves and their staff members to improve the service offering. In addition to the above-mentioned challenge, there is no defined method regarding ECD Forums and how they are setup and operated. This research study's findings revealed internal politics and an unfair distribution of resources. Participants acknowledged a lack of management and oversight abilities in ECD Forums, which are crucial for its effectiveness, especially regarding the context-specific support such a structure could provide ECD principals. It was interesting to note that all the younger participants believed they had no voice within these structures and that some members, particularly those who had been in the trade for a longer time, did not want to share or transfer any of their skills and lastly, that there was not enough advocacy for the development of the child. To further understand how ECD Forums function and to evaluate how this community structure supports and strengthens those ECD Centres it has joined, it would be worthwhile to conduct a

future research study that is explicitly focused on ECD Forums in rural communities where there is a firm reliance on such structures to bring resources and services to the community.

5.6 SUMMARY

This research study has shown that ECD principals on the Cape Flats from registered and unregistered ECD Centres provide access to quality education, health, and care for young children. They also connect children and families to existing resources and support in the community, such as medical check-ups, library services, guidance, parenting workshops, soup kitchens, employment opportunities, and training and development prospects. They deserve to be acknowledged and supported for their resilience and selfless nature of work in some of the most impoverished communities in Cape Town and the Western Cape.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM



RESEARCH STUDY SWK5001W CONSENT FORM

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

Research Study Title: Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town: Challenges and Opportunities

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to gain in-depth insight into the experiences of ECD principals providing a development service in communities in the Cape Flats, Cape Town.

Participant Involvement:

- ❖ We would like to request that you grant us a once off interview which will be about 60 minutes long
- ❖ Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you can decide to withdraw at any time should you wish to do so
- ❖ Interviews will be recorded on an audio device, and the information received will be managed in adherence to the Protection of Personal Information (POPIA) Act of 2021
- ❖ All information provided during the interview will be treated confidentially. None of your details nor your identity will be linked to any response which you will make.
- ❖ Although there are no known risks involved in participating in this research study. If any distress were to result from your participation, the researcher will debrief you on the matter at the end of the session. If further support is required, the researcher will ensure that a referral is done to the appropriate counselling services.

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

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

AREA/COMMUNITY: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (QUESTIONNAIRE)

Participant Details:

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Age:
4. Location/Community:
5. Name of the ECD Centre:
6. Position at the ECD Centre:
7. Registration Status of ECD Centre:

Introductory Questions:

1. How did you start working in the ECD sector?
2. How long have you been working in the ECD sector?
3. What is your highest form of Qualification? (*Probe*)
4. What motivated you to work in the ECD sector? (*Categories - Social, Political, Economic, Other*)
5. What do you enjoy the most about being an ECD principal?
6. What do you dislike about being an ECD principal?

Theme 1 – Challenges facing ECD principals

1. What are the challenges (if any) that you face providing an ECD service in this community? (*Categories - Social, Political, Economic, Other*)
2. How do you deal with these challenges?
3. Are there any challenge (past or present) that you as an ECD principal have managed to overcome? (*Probe*)
4. If so, how did you overcome it?

Theme 2 – Needs of ECD Principals to provide a service

1. Do you have a relationship or are you in partnership with any of the following community structures i.e., ECD forum, Civic Organization, Neighbourhood watch, Government etc.?
2. How do you describe your relationship with these networks?
3. What opportunities exist for you and your ECD Centre i.e., Financial, Legal, Skills Development Training, Personal Development, Networks and Partnership?

4. Do you have access to these opportunities?
5. If not, what do you think you need to do to access these opportunities?
6. Could you kindly share with me your vision for your ECD Centre (children and staff)?
7. How do you intend to achieve this vision?
8. What kind of support would do you think you need to achieve this vision?
(*Categories - Social, Political, Economic, Other*)

Theme 3 – Management of ECD Services

1. What are your responsibilities at the ECD Centre?
2. What ECD service-related training having you attended?
3. Who have you received this training from?
4. Who covered the cost of the training?
5. Has the training helped you in managing the ECD Centre?
6. What services/facilities are you providing to children in your care? (*Probe*)
7. How would you describe the learning/care environment for children?
8. Are there any admission requirements to the service you are providing? (*probe*)
9. How many children is currently enrolled at your ECD Centre?
10. How many staff members do you have?
11. How many ECD Centre's are in this community? (*That you know of*)
12. How do you finance the operations of your ECD Centre?
13. How would you describe your conditions of service?
14. Are you satisfied with your conditions of service?
15. If not, what sort of business management support do you think is required to improve the condition of service? (*Categories - Social, Political, Economic, Other*)

General:

Is there anything that you would like to share that you feel we did not cover, but you feel would be valuable for this study?

Thank you for participating in this interview and more so for your time.

APPENDIX C: TESCH'S 1990 - DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Table 3.5.1: *Tesch's (1990) stepped data analysis approach as per version as illustrated in (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:490)*

DATA ANALYSIS STEPS	DESCRIPTION AND THE WAY IN WHICH THIS METHOD OF ANALYSES WILL BE APPLIED IN (CHAPTER 4) OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY
STEP 1	The researcher will transcribe the data then read the transcriptions to gain an understanding of the collected data, in terms of its relevance in response to the research question.
STEP 2	In this step of the process the researcher will select (one interview at a time) and assesses "the questions behind the question" as to find the underlying meaning of the information received (Babbie et al., 2008:491).
STEP 3	After assessing the transcriptions and exploring the meaning of the data the researcher will "identify and categorize the data in accordance with themes to establish their connection" (Babbie et al., 2008:491).
STEP 4	In this step of the process the researcher will apply themes to the data and code the text in accordance with those themes.
STEP 5	The researcher will then develop descriptive wording for the themes, this will include various categories, and subcategories. Babbie et al (2008) refers to this process as the "identification of patterns" (Babbie et al., 2008:491).
STEP 6	In step 6 the researcher group similar categories together and make a final decision regarding the categories and codes. It is in this step where irregularity identified will be actioned accordingly.
STEP 7	Step 7 is where the researcher will perform a preliminary analysis of the data gathered in accordance with the themes and categories identified in steps 5 & 6.
STEP 8	This is the final step of the process where the researcher will reflect and reassess the data that has been analyzed.

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

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20 October 2022

Student: **Lameez Butland (BTLLAM001)**

Outcome: **ACCEPTED**

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Registered and Unregistered Early Childhood Development Centres in the Cape Flats, Cape Town: Challenges and Opportunities*. The reference number is SWK-REC-2022-SR013.

I wish you all the best for your study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shanz Hoosain'.

Yours sincerely
Dr Shanz Hoosain
Senior Lecturer
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

The University of Cape Town is committed to policies of equal opportunity and affirmative action which are essential to its mission of promoting critical inquiry and scholarship.