

LESEDI EDUCARE ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



*26 Years of making a difference
where it matters most . . .
. . . to young children
1993 - 2019*



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JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019

**CELEBRATING 26 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST . . .
. . . TO YOUNG CHILDREN!**

*“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived.
It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that
will determine the significance of the life we lead”.*

Nelson Mandela

FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK . . .

OVERVIEW OF LESEDI’S INTEGRATED ECD CARE PACKAGE (Programme approach):

Central to Lesedi’s Integrated ECD Care Package (IECP) is the firm belief that community ECD Centres and Structured Community Playgroups are well placed to provide valuable nodes of early education, care, support and community outreach, focusing on young children and families living in especially difficult circumstances.

Lesedi’s IECP focuses on:

- ◆ **The quality of ECD provision for young children through community ECD Centres:** *ECD Level 4 Practitioner Training Programme and ECD Centre Enrichment Programme;*
- ◆ **The quality of childhood for young children and their well-being in the family, at home and in the broader community,** especially reaching out to young children who, because of their life circumstances, have no access to any ECD programme; *Community Development and Family Support Programme* which includes the Level 4 community development training of ECD Outreach Practitioners (ECDOP’s) who work through community ECD Centres with the community in the vicinity of the ECD Centre, on a variety of interventions based on the needs of the community, and especially the needs of young children, eg. weekly structured playgroups for children who have no access to ECD provision using the ECD Centre as a valuable resource);

SmartStart is also now included in our outreach to children who have no access to ECD, through Playgroups and Day Care Mothers;

- ◆ **Direct outreach through Lesedi’s 2 Come-and-Play Buses and Mobile ECD Unit,** reaching out to the many young children and their parents/caregivers, who are outside of any ECD provision, especially in informal settlement communities and isolated rural communities. *This is through a structured*

playgroup programme and every effort is made to include young children with disabilities in all playgroup activities.

Lesedi's Level 4 training for ECD Practitioners and ECD Outreach Practitioners leads to nationally recognized qualifications and credits in Early Childhood Development and Community Development.

Through the 3 components of its IECF, Lesedi works towards providing "a gentle, just and stimulating childhood for all children" (Lesedi's Vision).



"Investments in primary and secondary education will not see the intended returns if young children do not enter school with the foundational skills needed to learn. Investment in early childhood development is critical to ensure better performance in formal schooling which will result in improved levels of employment".

(Ilifa Labantwana: SA Early Childhood Review)



HIGHLIGHTS DURING 2019 . . .

This report gives an overview of all project activities for the period 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. This reporting period has again been exceptionally busy, exciting, inspiring and challenging for Lesedi as we have continued to focus on making a difference where it matters most . . . to young children.

There have been a number of significant highlights during this reporting period:

- **NDA/DSD Dialogue** on the Social Sector, Bloemfontein, 14 February 2019: this was attended by our Deputy Director and focussed on how best government support can benefit the work done by NGO's/Civil Society Organisations in communities.
- **Provincial & National Dialogues:** During this reporting period, Lesedi has attended and participated in provincial and national dialogues i.r.o. the proposed ECD function shift from the Dept. Social Development to the Dept. Basic Education:
- **National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) Dialogue**, Johannesburg: 12 April 2019;

- **Collaboration of ECD Networks (CECDN) National Dialogue** Johannesburg: 31 July 2019;
- **National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) Provincial Dialogue**, Boemfontein: 15 August 2019;
- **Provincial CECDN Dialogue**, Viljoenskroon: 11 September 2019
- **SmartStart Franchise:** As an appointed Regional Franchisor, Lesedi has participated in a number of SmartStart initiatives throughout 2019. We presently have 72 SmartStart Franchisees in Botshabelo and Bloemfontein and recently expanded the programme to the isolated Oppermansgrond area of the western Xhariep District, where 15 SmartStarters have received their start-up training.
- **Na'li Bali Workshop**, 22 February 2019: Na'li Bali is a national organisation focussing on the awareness and importance of nurturing reading and a love of books from a young age. The workshop included parents / caregivers of playgroup children as well as Lesedi staff. A second Na'li Bali Workshop took place on 22 August 2019 and we are now hoping to establish reading clubs with our playgroup children and their parents/caregivers.
- **Bright Kid Foundation Edutainer:** this was delivered to Malerato Day Care Centre, Bloemfontein, on 13 March 2019, through our partnership with the Bright Kid Foundation.
- **Takalani Sesame:** During April 2019, our Bus and Mobile Unit 2 parents participated in research focus groups facilitated by The Children's Institute (UCT), to assess the needs of primary caregivers and people working with children, in order to inform the development of future Takalani Sesame programmes.
- **Workshop on "Creative Approach to Emotional Wellness in ECD Programmes"**, Johannesburg, 14 – 16 May 2019: attended by our Playgroup Co-ordinator and one of our Playgroup Facilitators. This was an exciting workshop on using the creative arts to encourage and ensure children's emotional well-being, and will be extremely useful for all our Playgroups Facilitators in their daily interaction with children and parents.
- **National ECD Alliance AGM**, Johannesburg, 06/07 June 2019: this was attended by our Deputy Director, who also gave a presentation on the UNICEF Parent Support Programme which we facilitated for our Bus and Mobile Unit Playgroup parents/caregivers.
- **Internal Strategic Review/Reflection**, 11/12 July 2019: This was attended by the Lesedi Management Team and the Financial Team, to review/reflect on all aspects of the organisation and its programmes, and proved to be extremely valuable and constructive.
- **Mandela Day Celebration 18 July 2019:** we took our Bus Playgroup children on an exciting outing to visit the impressive statue of Nelson Mandela which overlooks Bloemfontein. We were joined by the staff of Woolworths Northridge Mall who generously brought with them baskets of lovely fruit and snacks for the children! It was a happy, fun-filled day!
- **HCI Foundation Workshop, Johannesburg, 25 July 2019:** this was attended by our M&E Co-ordinator and our Deputy Director. The workshop focussed on "Monitoring and Evaluation" as well as "Growing a Sustainable and Effective Organisation". The HCI Foundation is a co-funder of our Bus Playgroup Programme, and the workshop was for all the projects and programmes which they fund in and around Gauteng. (The Free State was included in this workshop).
- **Letsatsi ECD HUB Enrichment Certification**, 08 August 2019: 11 ECD Practitioners from Bloemfontein, Soutpan and Dealsville, participated in this Certification Function, which took place in Dealsville. Our Deputy Director and ECD Enrichment Trainer attended the Function, as well as the Community Liaison Officer from Letsatsi Power, Bloemfontein. Letsatsi Power funded the Enrichment training for this group of practitioners. It was a very happy occasion!
- **Ntataise Annual Conference**, Johannesburg: 19 – 22 August 2019: This was again a very informative and inspiring conference focussing on the many issues impacting on the ECD landscape. It was also a great privilege to have South Africa's First Lady, Dr. Tshepo Motsepe, give the opening address.

- **“SA 24 Hour Movement Guidelines Birth – 5 years”** Workshop, Bloemfontein: 30 Sept. 2019: This took place at Free State University and was attended by our Training Co-ordinators and our Playgroup Co-ordinator.
- **National Alliance for ECD (NECDA) Provincial Workshop**, 30 October 2019: This focussed on the registration of ECD Training Organisations with the Dept. Higher Education and Training (DHET) and ECD “WAZI MAPS” which is an on-line ECD data gathering tool which is in the process of being developed.
- **Visit from Custoda Trust**, 06 November 2019: It was a pleasure for us to receive a visit from the Director and Admin. Manager from the Custoda Trust, based in Delportshoop, Northern Cape. The purpose of their visit was to learn more from us about our Bus and Mobile Unit Structured Playgroup Programme. It was a very constructive meeting and we greatly valued our discussions and networking with them.
- **16 Days of Activism Community Workshop**, 07 December 2019: This was attended by our Playgroup Co-ordinator and the purpose of the workshop was to strengthen community awareness and response to Woman and Child Abuse. It was facilitated by FAMSA and the Bloemspruit Police Unit and was extremely inspiring and valuable.

- **Visits by Funders:**

We are extremely grateful to the core of regular funders who have generously supported Lesedi for many years, and who continue to believe in the work that we are doing. Without their support, we would not be able to continue to make a difference where it matters most . . . to young children.

Visits by our funders are always welcome and during this reporting period it was a great pleasure to be able to host: the Childwick Trust - 14 February 2019; Kinderfonds Mamas - 21 February 2019; The Solon Foundation - 07 March 2019; Interstate Bus Lines - 20 May 2019 + 13 June 2019 + 30 July 2019; Kinderfonds Mamas - 30 July 2019; FNB Fund / Tshikululu - 07 October 2019; HCI Foundation - 14 October 2019.

The visits provided wonderful opportunities for field visits, as well as much valuable time for constructive discussion, sharing and exchange of ideas.

OTHER INITIATIVES IN WHICH WE HAVE PARTICIPATED DURING 2019:

- 26 Feb. 2019: ETDP-SETA Roadshow, UFS, Bloemfontein
- 01 March 2019: Official opening of the Bright Kid Edutainer at Amohelang Day Care Centre, Ladybrand.
- 28 March 2019: Ntataise Directors’ Meeting, Johannesburg
- 02 April 2019: ECD Community of Practice Meeting, Johannesburg: to discuss the proposed migration of ECD from Dept. Social Dev.(DSD) to the Dept. Basic Education (DBE).
- 18 April 2019: Nelson Mandela Foundation Dialogue, Johannesburg: to discuss the location of Pre-Grade R in the future ECD landscape.
- 20 June 2019: Ntataise Network Directors’ Meeting, Johannesburg.

- 15 July 2019: ELOM Research Study Report meeting, Cape Town: Bus playgroup participated in this study during 2018, and discussion focused on the outcomes of the study.
- 23/24 July 2019: NECTA Meeting, Queenstown: very worthwhile and informative meeting which included a presentation on the Department of Health’s Side-by-Side Programme. (Lesedi is a member of NECTA)
- 25/26 July 2019: NAG Workshop, Thaba’Nchu: Compliance and Registration of ECD Centres with DSD
- 13 August: 2019: ECD Community of Practice Meeting, Johannesburg : our Deputy Director was able to participate in this meeting on-line.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Research consistently shows that investing in early childhood development is crucial, because it is early in life when the brain has the maximum capacity to develop. Investment here also reaps rewards throughout a learner’s life – more so than interventions later on”.



(Extract from Mail & Guardian article)

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TRAINING PROGRAMME 2019 : SUMMARY

◆ ECD Training Programme

The following training sessions have taken place with our groups of ECD practitioners during this reporting period:

- Introduction & overview: 1 x 5-day session + Baseline Visits (for Ladybrand Group)
- Level 4 Qualification: 32 x 5-day courses (including Portfolio Compilation)
- Enrichment Programme: 6 x 5-day HUB sessions (Including Making ECD Resources Session)

Of special note:

- A new innovative way of facilitating the ECD Enrichment Programme has been introduced: the HUB model. The Programme now commences with a full 5-day “Making Resources Course”, where practitioners start by actually making toys and other equipment from waste materials. Our trainer then spends one full week out of each month with the group. The first 2 days are devoted to the Theme workshops where the entire group attends, and on the remaining 3 days, our trainer visits 3 ECD Centres for demonstration and monitoring purposes. During these visits, practitioners from the other participating Centres, are invited to come and observe, and each month 3 different ECD Centres are visited. This ensures that demonstration visits take place at all participating centres on a rotational basis.

◆ **Community Development Training Programme:**

During this reporting period the following training sessions/activities have taken place:

- Level 4 Qual. - Core only: 28 x 5-day courses.

◆ **Special Additional Workshops:**

3 Additional workshops were held which focused on “A Creative Approach to Emotional Wellness in ECD Programmes” (i.e. using the creative arts to ensure children’s social and emotional well-being):

- 05 June 2019: Botshabelo ECD Practitioners
- 13 June 2019: Botshabelo ECD Outreach Practitioners
- 20 June 2019: Bloemfontein ECD Practitioners

◆ **Visiting Programme:**

- During this reporting period, a total of 58 on-site support / assessment visits were carried out to ECD Practitioners. These focused mainly on Baseline Assessments , as well as on-site support / formative assessment / demonstration visits.
- 31 Visits were also carried out to Community Development Practitioners / ECD Outreach Practitioners. During this reporting period, visits focused mainly on support for community interventions, especially structured playgroups.

◆ **Preparation for Verification:**

Since the end of September/early October 2019, the focus of our Training Team has been on the preparation process for the Verification of Learner Achievements for Practitioners who have completed their training, both ECD and Com. Dev.

Practitioners’ portfolios of evidence are in the process of being marked and assessed and where “gaps” have been identified, the relevant practitioners have had to work on “filling the gaps” and completing their Portfolios. It is a very time-consuming and thorough process and our ECD and Com Dev. Co-ordinators are still busy with the marking and assessment of all the portfolios for the 165 practitioners awaiting verification.



*“Parents have the right to choose the kind of education
that shall be given to their children.*

Make every home, every shack a centre of learning!”

Nelson Mandela



Direct Outreach: Mobile ECD Units and Come-and-Play Buses

During this reporting period:

- Our 4 Come-and-Play Bus Playgroup Facilitators have facilitated 16 regular weekly structured playgroups (8 per bus) in 10 informal settlement communities on the outskirts of Bloemfontein. (Khayelisha; Phase 9; Matlarantleng; Caleb Motshabi, Dinaweng, Freedom, Phase 7; Peter Swartz; Phase 4; Chris Hani)

- Our Mobile ECD Unit 1 Playgroup Facilitators have facilitated 8 regular weekly structured playgroups in communities in 4 rural Xhariep District towns : Zastron, Smithfield, Rouxville, and Wepener as well as in the isolated community of Boesmanskop.
- Our Mobile ECD Unit 2 Team has facilitated regular weekly playgroup sessions in the rural Xhariep District communities of Reddersburg, Bethany Farm, Fauresmith, Jagersfontein, Edenburg, Philippolis and Trompsburg.
- All playgroups have specifically targeted young children who, because of their difficult life circumstances, have no access to early childhood development.
- 408 Children have been reached weekly through the Come-and-Play Bus Playgroup sessions, with 229 young children reached through the Mobile ECD Unit 1 playgroups each week, and 192 children reached through Mobile ECD Unit 2 playgroups. i.e. total 829 children.
- All weekly playgroup sessions have continued to be 2,5 hours long, with daily activities planned and linked to themes and a daily routine covering all areas of early learning and development.
- Regular parent sessions have also been held at the same time as the playgroup sessions. Each parent session has covered a topic linked to children's well-being and development. During 2019, parents have again attended the UNICEF Parent Support Programme with a very positive response. 403 Parents / caregivers completed the UNICEF Parent Support Programme and during November 2019, received their Attendance Certificates.
- All children attending the playgroup sessions have been provided with fortified porridge and a nutritious snack. Through our valuable partnership with Woolworths, we have been able to augment the food provided for the children and have also been able to provide families with substantial food parcels each week. Our partnership with Woolworths started at the beginning of April 2019.
- Enrolment records for each child have been completed. Daily attendance registers for children and parents have been kept and playgroup facilitators have also completed monthly reports, as well as weekly planning sheets.
- Playgroup Facilitators have assessed and recorded children's progress and development, with a special focus on those children going to school in 2020. Younger children (3-4 yrs) have been assessed twice and older children (5-6 yrs) have had 3 assessments. Fine Motor Skills and Cognitive Development have again been the lowest developmental domains overall and need on-going attention. Gross Motor Skills and Language and Speech Development have been the highest domains of development:
- At the end of November 2019, 150 children graduated to go to Primary School during 2020.
- All children have up-to-date portfolios and those going to Primary School have taken their completed, fully updated portfolios with them, together with their graduation certificates.
- Our 4 book lending libraries continue to be a great source of excitement and enjoyment for both parents and children, with books being exchanged and taken home each week. During August 2019, through funding from the Solon Foundation, we were able to give a beautiful Book Dash story book to each one of our playgroup children to take home and to keep as their very own!

- House visits have focussed on supporting especially vulnerable children and families, and during 2019, our Playgroup teams managed to constantly monitor and support 11 Playgroup Families whose difficult life circumstances were of great concern.
- Children without birth registration and birth certificates are an on-going challenge and we have continued to do our very best to assist and support families faced with this situation.
- Every effort has again been made to include children with disabilities and to enable them to join in playgroup activities. Our Bus and Mobile Unit Playgroup Facilitators have made simple adaptations which have enabled 10 children with various disabilities to happily participate and enjoy playgroup activities with their peers.
- The Playgroup Team has returned to the Lesedi office each Friday for reflection and review especially on personal and community well-being, planning, reporting and admin purposes.
- Our Playgroup Co-ordinator has provided regular monitoring and on-site support visits to both the Bus and Mobile ECD Unit Playgroups.
- Our M&E Co-ordinator has assisted with gathering, verifying and analysing relevant information and data to measure the impact of the playgroup programme.
- The practical, hands-on support of Interstate Bus Lines (IBL) has again been invaluable. IBL has re-committed themselves to supporting the Bus Playgroup Programme through continuing to cover all vehicle costs linked to the programme. They have also fully re-furbished and re-vamped both of our Come-and-Play Buses! We are extremely grateful to IBL for their continued support!



“Serve others. The unfailing recipe for happiness and success, is to want the good of others”.

Desmond Tutu



CURRENT STATUS:

◆ **ECD Practitioners reached:**

62	ECD Practitioners presently in training
126	ECD Practitioners presently awaiting verification by the ETDP-SETA
<u>71</u>	ECD Practitioners verified, awaiting certification by the ETDP-SETA
259	TOTAL

◆ **ECD Outreach Practitioners reached (Com.Dev):**

30	ECDOP's presently in training
65	ECDOP's presently awaiting verification by the ETDP-SETA
<u>31</u>	ECDOP's verified, awaiting certification by the ETDP-SETA
126	TOTAL

◆ **Number of ECD Centres reached: 211**

◆ **Children reached :**

829	Directly through Bus and Mobile Unit Playgroups
<u>12766</u>	Indirectly through community ECD Centres
13595	TOTAL

◆ **Parents/Caregivers reached:**

403	Directly through Playgroup Programme (UNICEF PSP)
5294	Indirectly through community ECD Centres & Trainees (estimate only)

◆ **SmartStart:**

72	Trained SmartStarters
19	Recently received SmartStart Start-up training
547	Children outside of ECD reached

◆ **TOTALS:**

1708	Children and Adults reached directly by Lesedi
18607	Children and Adults reached indirectly by Lesedi

STAFF / PERSONNEL:

- ◆ Lesedi presently has 20 permanent staff members and 4 part-time staff members.
- ◆ In June 2019, we welcomed a new member of staff, Kerileng Seepamore, who joined our Mobile ECD Unit 2 Team and is based in Edenburg. Kerileng is an extremely valuable member of the team and is passionate about her work with our children and parents!
- ◆ Staff Development and Capacity Building remains a priority and during this reporting period staff have attended the following:
 - 22 Feb & 23 Aug: Na’li Bali Workshops on early reading and a love of books;
 - 14 – 16 May: CDP Workshop on “Creative Approach to Emotional Wellness in ECD Programmes”;
 - 25 – 26 June: SmartStart Social Franchise Workshop (Jobs Fund planning + Programme Leads gathering)
 - 22 July: SmartStart Webinar for Finance Team
 - 24/25 July: SmartStart Coach Review, Johannesburg
 - 25 July: HCI Foundation Workshop: “Monitoring & Evaluation” and “Growing a Sustainable and Effective organisation”.
 - 30 Jul – 02 Aug: DSD Course on UNICEF Parent Support Programme
 - 19 – 21 Aug: Ntataise Network Conference: this was a very informative and inspiring conference.
 - 29 – 31 Oct: SmartStart Coach Reflection
 - 08 Nov 2019: Training on FNB on-line Enterprise Business Banking system
 - 11 – 13 Nov 2019: SmartStart Workshop on “Scaling Up Social Impact”

- ◆ End of Year Staff Lunch: This took place on 05 December and was a very happy occasion! Because of the unpredictable weather we did not have our usual picnic, but went to the Windmill Casino Spur for lunch. We had a wonderful afternoon together and ended the year on a high note! A very sincere thank you to all our Lesedi staff for all the hard work, commitment and dedication during 2019!

GOVERNANCE:

- The support and guidance of the Lesedi Board of Directors is greatly valued, not only during Board meetings, but their willingness to assist and help whenever called upon to do so is greatly appreciated. We would like to thank each and every Board member for always being there for us, and for always being “just a phone call away”. We are extremely grateful.
- The Board’s firm belief in the work we are doing for young children and families, strengthens our resolve and commitment to making a very real difference in the lives of as many young children as we possibly can through the various programmes in our Integrated ECD Care Package!

FUNDRAISING:

Lesedi and its many beneficiaries would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our funders and sponsors for their generous support during 2019. Without their continued support and belief in the work that we are doing, we would not be able to make a difference where it matters most . . . to young children!

- ★ ANGLO AMERICAN CHAIRMAN’S FUND
- ★ CHILDWICK TRUST / JIM JOEL FUND
- ★ DAVIES FOUNDATION
- ★ DR. NELIA WESSELS
- ★ ELMA FOUNDATION
- ★ FIRST NATIONAL BANK FUND
- ★ HCI FOUNDATION
- ★ INTERSTATE BUS LINES
- ★ KINDERFONDS MAMAS
- ★ OPPENHEIMER MEMORIAL TRUST
- ★ SMART START
- ★ SOLON FOUNDATION SA
- ★ THE SOUTH COAST FOUNDATION

Donations in kind:

- ★ INTERSTATE BUS LINES : Vehicle Fuel, Maintenance, Roadworthy and Licensing, Refurbishing i.r.o. Lesedi’s 2 Come-and-Play Buses
- ★ SOLON FOUNDATION: Book Dash Story Books for distribution to our Playgroup Children.
- ★ WOOLWORTHS: Weekly Donations of food for our playgroup children and their (Northridge Mall Branch) families



**WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF OUR FUNDERS.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BELIEF IN THE WORK THAT WE ARE DOING,
AND FOR HELPING US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST . . .
. . . TO YOUNG CHILDREN!**



Closing Thoughts:

***Access to a gentle childhood is a right which all children should enjoy
But in the far-from-ideal world in which we live.
It is the children who suffer most, and a gentle childhood is not theirs to enjoy.
The future of our country, and indeed our world,
Lies in very small hands, and their future lies in our hands!
We all need to make a difference where it matters most . . .
. . . to young children!***

Christine Waldie
Managing Director - Lesedi Educare
December 2019



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