

South African Early Childhood Development excellence sector achievements

The annual South African Early Childhood Development Awards entries for all community practitioners, centres, organisations who have demonstrated best practice and exemplary participation in the early childhood development (ECD) sector have closed.

The National Development Agency (NDA), the custodian of the Awards, partners with the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development, Departments of Social Development, Basic Education and UNICEF to ensure that all ECD policy stakeholders are represented and play a role in recognising sector services and programmes that benefit young children throughout the country.

Entries have been received for the following award categories:

- Best ECD Centre of the Year
- Best ECD Practitioner of the Year
- Best Programme for Children with Disabilities of the Year
- Best ECD Trainer of the Year
- Best Non-centre Based Programme of the Year
- Best Publication of the Year

"The majority of entries were received from the North-West followed by the Eastern Cape. To our disappointment, Gauteng submitted the lowest entries despite the recent Department of Social Development audit that showed that most ECD centres are concentrated



South African Early Childhood Development Awards

in this province. North West was a front runner in leading entries in the last awards as well – we are pleased with the participation directly linked to the ECD massification programme in conjunction with other government organisations," says Nkhensani Mthembu, SA ECD Awards Chairperson. The Little Saints Nursery School in the province won second overall prize in the Best ECD Centre category in the 2015 SA ECD Awards.

The entries have been short-listed and verification site visits are also underway with the finalists. Award ceremonies will be staged in the provinces during February that then culminate into a national awards ceremony that will be hosted by Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini on the 8th of April 2016 in Johannesburg. The finalists spend a week in Johannesburg undergoing various training workshops and preparing for final adjudications that will reveal the national winners in all the categories.

Award winners are eligible for cash prizes for their organisations as well as developmental or scholarship opportunities for the practitioners. A total of R540 000, 00 has been set aside for prizes. Monetary prizes are used to advance practitioner training as well as improve the centres to continue their ECD programmes and interventions nationwide.

WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 2



Drought devastating on emerging agricultural cooperatives

PAGE 3



Early Childhood Development 1994 and 21 years on...

PAGE 4



Grant funding unlocks potential for added support to cooperatives

GAUTENG PROVINCIAL OFFICE MOVE

The National Development Agency Gauteng provincial office has moved from 10th floor, Braamfontein Centre in Jorissen Street in Braamfontein to 26 Wellington Road in Parktown Johannesburg. The contact numbers remain (011) 339 - 6410.

Drought devastating on emerging agricultural cooperatives

The agricultural sector is suffering setbacks in producing critical crops due to all-time drought and changing climate conditions. More so, for small cooperatives who rely on surrounding dams that have run dry within the province.

The Akehlulwalutho Pineapple and Vegetable Farming Cooperative is located along the heartland of South Africa's queen pineapple production belt, Hluhluwe in the poor uMkhanyakude district municipality. An estimated 90% of the country's pineapple production comes from the area. Established in 2010 to combat the high unemployment rate in Nqhindi (KwaNobela), the cooperative is now experiencing drought that is affecting crop production on the 20-hectare land and its sustainability towards job creation.

"The pineapples require little water, however, the complete absence of rain and scarcity of water have proven detrimental even for the substitute vegetables that we grow for cash flow whilst preparing the pineapple to fruit for market" says the Project Coordinator, Thobile Msezane.

The National Development Agency (NDA), a poverty eradication agency of the Department of Social Development, assists cooperatives to run community based projects and programmes that contribute towards the eradication of poverty. The NDA's intervention assisted the cooperative to commence pineapple and vegetable farming activities that created jobs for the surrounding village and selling of products targeting local stall markets as well as the tourism market frequenting the area. The farming of pineapples is a skill that most of the community members have as the area is along the pineapple production belt.

External factors

"Hluhluwe continues to harvest good produce, particularly the bigger farmers, however it is the small cooperatives that suffer the most as they do not have resources such as irrigation systems, insurance and available funds to combat the external factors. The farming of pineapples is also rather expensive as it is," explains Yolisa Ndima, Provincial Manager of the NDA.

Small cooperatives are forced to seek other ways of remaining productive and to provide services to the communities they operate in. Akehlulwalutho members

have also been trained to offer responsive awareness, preventative community and school Sukumasakhe programmes responding to teenage pregnancy, anti-substance abuse and social cohesion problems in partnership with relevant government departments. Msezane says that there has been a significant drop in incidents since the formation of the programme in the Hluhluwe region.

Ndima concludes that the NDA is looking for ways to assist this particular cooperative, and many others in the province, to ensure that they are able to get to a point where they can be fully productive. "We would like other government departments to assist us in this regard."



Did You Know

DSD GBVCC WINS GOLD!

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE COMMAND CENTRE WINS BEST TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION WORLD AWARD

The Department of Social Development's Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC) – has been named the Best Technology Innovation – Small Centre of the world at the Global Best Contact Centre Awards in Las Vegas on November 5.

As the Gold Medal Winner, this means the GBVCC is ranked number one in the world in its category.

CONGRATULATIONS

Toll free number: 0800 428 428 (0800 GBV GBV).

Building a Caring Society Together. www.dsd.gov.za

social development
Department: Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NDA
National Development Agency

sassa
South African Social Security Agency

Early Childhood Development 1994 and 21 years on ...



By Leonard Saul, Chief Executive Officer of South African Congress for Early Childhood Development

In February 1992, former President of the Republic of South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela and the banned political parties were unbanned and set free. It was a day of joy for the oppressed and an uncertain day for the oppressors.

Many people died fighting the apartheid regime and families were hopeful to see their children who left the country to fight the struggle and were based in the UK, USA, Sweden and neighbouring countries. The Free Mandela Campaign and the Economic Sanctions brought sanity to a situation that deteriorated and virtually isolated a prosperous country.

Within this environment, many mothers and community-based organisations tried to take care of children who faced an uncertain future. In the 1980's early childhood development (ECD) organisations were formed to give support to mothers and practitioners who organised children with the aim to provide some care and support. Training programmes and home-based care facilities were established – marking the beginning of a process to identify and provide for the needs of children. About 500 000 children were in some sort of formalised ECD, leaving about 5 000 000 other children outside of an organised and routine programme.

Around this period of time, the idea of organising and mobilising the ECD sector took full effect. Stalwarts such as Roy Padayachie, Daniel Plaatjies, Eric Atmore, Pravina Naidu and others took to the streets of the country to mobilise ECD practitioners and communities. On Thursday, 24 March 1994, the South African Congress for ECD (SACECD) was formed and launched at the Feathermarket Hall in Port Elizabeth. The formation was the pinnacle of negotiations between the South African Association for Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) and the National Interim Working Committee (NIWC), with 400 delegates in attendance at the 3-day

launch.

21 years later, SACECD has formed and created an environment wherein ECD has been recognised by government as a public good, an ECD policy has been developed. Other instrumental milestones include: SACECD hosted the inaugural OMEP International Conference at the International Convention Centre in Durban in 2002, a South African ECD Awards Recognition programme was launched in 2003, the Amended Children's Act was launched on 1 April 2010, a National Curriculum Framework has been drafted, government departments have directorates and units for ECD at national, provincial and municipal level, qualifications are formalised and registered on the South African Qualifications Framework, a Provident Fund was launched for ECD Practitioners on 1 April 2012, ECD Centres are registered as Partial Care institutions and are eligible for subsidies of R15 per child per day and soon ECD Practitioners will be recognised as professionals by the Department of Social Development.

SA ECD Provident Fund

SACECD established an ECD provident fund for ECD practitioners (date?). The Fund was established due to a resolution adopted at the Seventh General meeting that was held in Polokwane (date?). The Fund is governed by trustees who are registered with the Financial Services Board, which regulates all financial institutions and programmes in South Africa. The Administrators of the Fund are NBC Holdings with offices located in Johannesburg.

A provident fund offers lump sum retirement and withdrawal benefits for employees. A provident fund is similar to a pension fund but the main differences are:

- Under a pension fund at least two-thirds of the final benefit must be paid as a pension for the rest of the pensioner's life.

A maximum of one-third of the final benefit may be taken as cash.

- Under a provident fund, the full amount of the benefit available at retirement may be taken as a lump sum cash payment, irrespective of whether the benefit is calculated on a defined benefit or a defined contribution basis.

Contributions to the provident fund are as follows:

The employer pays 7,5% of the monthly salary of each employee into the provident fund and 7,5% of the monthly salary deducted from each employee's salary is paid by the employer into the provident fund. The full contribution will be 7,5% (employer) and 7,5% (employee) = 15%.

Example: If an employee receives a salary of R1000,00 the following amounts will be contributed:

R75 (employer), plus R75 (employee) = R150 paid into the provident fund monthly.

The contributions will be deducted from the bank account of the ECD Centre which is the employer.

Membership

SACECD is a membership organisation that represents the interest of children, birth to six years, and coordinates adults who are responsible for the care and education of these children. SACECD therefore has individual and organisation membership. The following fees apply:

Individual membership	R80.00
ECD Centres and Training Organisations	R300.00

The membership for ECD centres and organisations will be valid for a three year period.

Membership for individuals and ECD Centres are coordinated through the provincial Executive Committees.

Training organisations take membership directly through the SACECD National Office.

Membership forms are available from the provincial Executive Committees as well as on the following website: www.sacecd.co.za. More information can be availed at the national office on 012 321 5154.

Veterans Forum

The KZN Congress for ECD launched a provincial Veterans Forum on 6 November 2015 (name of venue and area?) for members and individuals who have retired from active service and who wish to plough back to the ECD community. There were jubilant voices raised as members who have retired from active service were celebrated and encouraged to dedicate some time to the service of children.



Nokuthula Zulu, President of the Congress (far right with head band), with Veterans at the launch.

Grant funding unlocks potential for added support to cooperatives

Batlaphela Bokone Service Centre is located at Ga-Dikgale in Maganyane village, outside Polokwane. It was revamped and funded by the National Development Agency (NDA) after a visit in 2012 by the Department of Social Development Minister, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, when she found little economic activity and no place of safe-keeping for the vulnerable elderly persons within the community. In response, members of the cooperative set out to create an environment that caters for the elderly who come in daily to partake in recreational activities, socialise, get provided with a nutritious meal and kept safe until there are people in the home stead. This initiative links and responded to previous attacks and abuse on the elderly in their homes in the community a few years back.

The cooperative manages a few activities: an old age care facility, vegetable and broiler poultry farming. The NDA, an agency of the Department of Social Development, assisted the members with the establishment of food security projects with the intent to promote the creation of jobs within the community through broiler production. Crops such as onions, mint, carrots, spinach, beetroot and cabbages have already been harvested and sold. "We rely on the surrounding community everyday

sales and SASSA pay points to keep the cooperative running. The poultry products are more popular and are our main source of income," explains Abednigo Mathebula, Project Coordinator.

Batlaphela Bokone Service Centre business model is one that shows that further support by other government departments is crucial to the sustainability of small cooperatives. The Department of Agriculture came on board to assist with the water requirements and provided a water tank, irrigation drip system and increased broiler production. The Department of Social Development provides daily subsidies for the elderly people's meals. The Independent Development Trust (IDT) built a second chicken house for chicken egg laying production. The National Lottery continues to assist the centre with the day to day operations.

"Our funding enabled the cooperative to reach a point of compliance and credibility that allowed them to seek further support from other organisations. We are happy that additional partners have since come on board and bought into the idea by pledging their support. The collaboration with other organisations is necessary for the sustainability of these cooperatives. Often funding institutions are also limited to their offering, it is nearly



impossible for one organisation to provide for the overall needs" explains NDA Provincial Manager, Zach Chuenyane.

The cooperative continues to face challenges in the form of high electricity costs due to fencing and lighting of the poultry houses. The area is characterised by high temperature levels and this often impacts on the mortality rate of the chicks and this affects productivity levels and total income. Chuenyane says that more partners that can support this initiative are invited as they can assist with further expansion of the cooperative. "The amount that was allocated from the NDA for Batlaphela Bokone Service Centre has been depleted with recommendation that this model can be replicated in other communities" concludes Chuenyane.

WHERE TO FIND US

Province	Contact details		
Limpopo	Suite 8, 19 Market Street, Polokwane	(015) 291 2492	limpopoprovince@nda.org.za
Eastern Cape	08 Donald Road, Vincent, East London	(043) 721 1226 / 7	ecprovince@nda.org.za
Free-State	3 rd Floor Allied House, Cnr Charlotte Maxeke & Westburger Street, Bloemfontein	(051) 430 2024	freestateprovince@nda.org.za
KwaZulu-Natal	Suite 1201 Nedbank Centre, 303 Smith Street, Durban	(031) 305 5542	kznprovince@nda.org.za
North-West	Old Mutual Building, 127 Providence Street, Mmabatho	(018) 392 5432	northwestprovince@nda.org.za
Northern Cape	13 Dalham Road, Kimberley	(053) 831 4828	northerncapeprovince@nda.org.za
Mpumalanga	Office 103 Ground floor Biwater Building, 16 Branders Street, Nelspruit	(013) 755 1478	mpumalangaprovince@nda.org.za
Gauteng	26 Wellington Road, Parktown, Johannesburg	(011) 339 6410	gautengprovince@org.za
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