The role of ECD Organisations and the struggle for Democracy in South Africa

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Reflecting on the Foundation for Community Work (FCW)
"... a risk worth taking"

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A special word of thanks to Professor Adam Small who served as the first Director of the organisation until he left to become the Head of the Social Work Department at UWC. In the formative years of the organisation Professor Small is credited with the organisation's focus on young children and extending its focus from the coloured community across all poor communities to bridge the racial divide imposed by the apartheid government. Special thanks and acknowledgements to the Boards of Management under Dr Franklin Sonn and Dr Lionel Louw who collectively served the organisation for more than 30 years. This selfless sacrifice and commitment helped to steer the organisation through various stages in its development. Ensuring that the organisation renders effective and efficient services.

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The story of FCW cannot be told without acknowledging the important role played by many others in the development and establishment of the Early Learning Centre. Special thanks to Professor Richard van der Ross and the early pioneers who ensured that the ELC became a bastion for ECD research, training and information dissemination not only in Athlone or the Western Cape, but throughout South Africa. In this regard we acknowledge the contributions of Ann Short, Linda Biersteker, Karen van der Merwe, Mary Newman, George Gibbs, Freda Brock, Lionel Woldson and many others who were passionate about ECD and worked hard to make ECD a reality for children in our poorest communities. A very special word of thanks to Valerie Erasmus for preserving and looking after a rich history of documents, photographs, newsletters and newspaper clippings that helped to tell the story of FCW and the Early Learning Centre.

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In conclusion we express our gratitude to the Department of Social Development for their generous support in the expansion of the Family in Focus programme, the DG Murray Trust, Community Chest, Imam Abdullah Haron Education Trust and the Jet Lee Trust Fund for supporting our work.

The Ambassadorial Connections

South African Ambassador: Netherlands 1981
1974: Part of a group of prominent people involved in the launch of WESWOK/FCW
1979: Elected Chairperson of the FCW Board

Dr Frank Quint

South African Ambassador: USA 1994–2000
1981-1994: Elected Chairperson of the FCW Board

Dr Franklin Sonn

South African Ambassador: Belgium, Brussels 1998-2000
South African Ambassador: Luxemburg, Luxembourg 1998-2000
South African Ambassador: European Union, Brussels 1996–2000
Permanent Representative of South Africa to the IMF/World Bank Washington DC 1987-1990
Professor of Economics: University of the Western Cape, 1974-1986
FCW Board Member and Treasurer: 1977–1987

Professor Elias Links

South African Ambassador: Spain 1998–2001
1971–1974: Appointed as the first Principal of the Early Learning Centre
1975: Appointed as Rector at UWC
1983: Nominated as Patron of FCW who took over ownership of the Early Learning Centre

Professor Richard van der Ross

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Foreword by Advocate Lynette Myburgh

On 16 December 1974, the organisation was launched at the Landdrost Hotel in Lansdowne. Forty-two people from different communities around the Cape attended the ceremony. The chairperson for the day was Dr. Frank Quint, former ambassador to the Netherlands, and the keynote speakers were Prof. Erika Theron and Mr. Renier van Rooyen. Prof. Theron was then Head of the Department of Social Work at the University of Stellenbosch. She was known for her work in combating poverty and also chaired a government commission to investigate poverty in the "Coloured" community. Renier Van Rooyen, on the other hand, was a businessman and in his address to the meeting, he referred to the needs of the poor and the fact that "the government was doing far too little to help the poor and the destitute and that there was a responsibility to bring about conditions and opportunities so that people can develop and improve".

The fact that Renier van Rooyen, a businessman and owner of PEP Stores, made a personal contribution of R500 000 to fund the work of this welfare organisation, which was hampered by the policies of the day, and had to establish the Renier van Rooyen Trust to serve as a conduit to fund the work of the organisation.

News articles of December 1974, described Renier van Rooyen as an unusual man to give away half-a-million rand. When he was asked what had made him give away such a large sum of money, the response was that he had been motivated purely by feelings of compassion. He said he felt that there was a tremendous need for this sort of thing not only in the Western Cape but all over the country. Mr. Van Rooyen said there was a desperate need for an organisation to see to people's needs and to bring about conditions and opportunities "so that people can develop and improve".

During the 1970s FCW was involved in building pre-school centres or helping communities to do so. But the realization that pre-school centres were not reaching enough children, compelled the FCW Board to make a radical policy decision to stop building centres and to concentrate on building people. The idea was to help mothers and caregivers to stimulate and educate children at home. During the 1980s this was not a popular decision. Mainstream ECD was concerned with creches and pre-school centres and parents aspired to send their children to pre-schools where government subsidies provided some support to struggling parents. The reality was that thousands of young children were not benefitting from services and the challenge for

FCW was to explore with cost-effective alternative programmes. In response to this challenge, FCW piloted a home-based ECD programme in Ocean View in 1983 which developed into the Family in Focus (FIF) Programme. The FIF Programme encouraged caregivers and neighbours to share responsibilities for the care and upbringing of children – giving credence to the saying "your child is my child".

Over the past few years we have successfully incubated and replicated several Family in Focus projects in various communities that are operating as independent NPOs with their own governing structures. The idea of social franchising might seem new, but in FCW and our work we have been doing this successfully for at least 15 years.

The cornerstone of our organisation's success must certainly rest with its governance structures. For NGOs to be effective, their Boards and governing bodies have to be responsible for strategic direction, and ensuring that there are adequate resources to do the work, and to provide adequate oversight in respect of financial controls, legal and ethical standards and most importantly to regularly review its programme work. The FCW Boards under the leadership of the likes such as: **Rev. Gert Cornelisson** who stepped down after the name changing saga, was followed by **Dr. Frank Quint** in 1979 who was a leading educationist who later became ambassador to the Netherlands. Between 1981-1993 the organisation was led by the inspirational **Dr. Franklin Sonn** until he was appointed ambassador to the United States. **Dr. Lionel Louw** then served as Chairperson between 1993-2006. He was head of the Social Work Department at UCT, and also a member of the SA Council for Social Work, and also served on various academic councils. As a renowned theologian he also served his community as a Church Minister.

The collective leadership over a period of 40 years had the foresight to make strategic decisions to build bridges between communities separated by apartheid legislation, to invest in the building of communities and its families, and to depart from mainstream ECD services to explore with alternative models that could reach more young children in poor communities, is a reflection of the quality of their visionary leadership. Reflecting on the history of the organisation this aspect of governance and the role of the Board members is an outstanding feature that laid the foundation for the future and ongoing success of FCW as an organisation. Considering the fact that the work of Board members remained voluntary and after-hours, the time and commitment from Board members over the years have become priceless in their service and contribution to the organisation and the broader community.

When we reflect on the legacy of our organisation there is no doubt that much has been achieved since 1974. However, more effort is required to ensure a brighter future for our young children.

Thank you to the FCW Board and staff for their continued hard work and dedication. FCW extends its sincerest appreciation to our donors and funders for their support and continued faith in the work that we do.

Adv. Lynette Myburgh

Professor Adam Small – First Director of the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work

At the occasion of the FCW 40th Celebration Professor Adam Small was invited to share some of his thoughts on the early days of the organisation and its trajectory over the years. When the organisation was launched in 1974 with a generous donation of R500 000 by Renier van Rooyen, Professor Adam Small was appointed as a trustee of the Renier van Rooyen Trust Fund with Dennis Adonis, to administer the smooth transition of funds between the Trust and Weswok (Weskaaplandse Welsyns Organisasie vir Kleurlinge).

On this occasion Professor Small stated as follows " … reg in die begin was daar 'n verkeerdheid deurdat die eerste naam van die organisasie, maak nie nou meer saak deur wie nie, die Weskaaplandse Welsyns Organisasie vir Kleurlinge (WESWOK) was. Bid jou dit aan!! In daardie naam was daar geen versiendheid nie, en 'n slaafdheid ten opsigte van apartheid. Indien daardie naam sou bly, watter teleurstelling - watter klad eintlik sou dit op daardie wonderlike man, Renier van Rooyen, se naam gebring het. As deel van die beheerraad was ek oor twee dinge besorgd. Eerstens, daardie naam moes uit, al verskuif ek ook hemel en aarde om dit reg te kry! Tweedens, dat ek daarop kon aandring dat meneer Van Rooyen se skenking nie vir algemene welsynswerk aangewend word nie, maar spesifiek vir voorskoolse sorg en voorskoolse opvoeding vir ons gemeenskap. Die hemelse dank dat ek my sin kon kry in albei sake! Ek was jonk en koppig, wat maar bewys dat jonkheid nie noodwendig 'n teken van gebrek aan insig en versiendheid is nie. Dit was die oumanne wat destyds klei getrap het. FCW het die pad op daardie grondslag trots bewandel tot by hierdie heuglike aand vanaand".

Professor Small also reflected on the logo of the organisation - the little girl on the swing, and shared how he asked his two children to draw something that could represent the organisation. His son drew a rabbit and his daughter had a neat drawing of a girl on a swing which impressed him. On making the choice he related how bitterly disappointed his son was! For more than 35 years the young girl on the swing has proudly represented FCW.

Professor Small also paid tribute to the people who walked the road with him at FCW.

- He acknowledged that Renier van Rooyen personally shared with him his motivation for making the donation to the organisation. The fact that he was moved by destitute children sleeping on the streets of Cape Town, and prepared to use the money he saved for the building of his house says a lot about the big heart of Renier van Rooyen.
- He also acknowledged the appointment of his first secretary/Girl Friday, Valerie Deelman. He related how he arrived at the Superama Building on the first day without anyone and only a plan in his head. He shared how she made sacrifices "beyond the call of duty". She used to accompany him on fieldtrips and on one occasion they visit the Boland and offered a lift to two young boys on the side of the road. To their dismay they discovered that the boys worked on a pig farm and they were overwhelmed by the awful smell that engulfed the car.
- Vanessa Reynolds/ Lister,

who served as an alternative secretary, until she left for Australia.

- Mehboob Modack, the bookkeeper, whose experience and skill helped to keep the organisation out of trouble with the auditors. Professor Small related how he and Mehboob went to collect money that was owed to the organisation by someone that they did not want to get into trouble with the law. "Die ou het die R400 noot vir noot in Mehboob se hand gestop!" They had a good laugh afterwards.
- Desia Weitz/Lombaard, who he remembered as a hardworking and reliable worker who married Trevor Lombaard one of the community workers.
- He had special praise for Beulah Fredericks who followed him up as director of the organisation. He had no hesitation to recommend Beulah's appointment to the FCW Board when he was appointed Head of the Social Work Department at UWC.
- He also acknowledged Rita Edwards, Vivian West and Francie Lundt who was part of his community development team in the Superama Building in Athlone.

Of his appointment as head of the Social Work Department at UWC, he acknowledged that FCW was his passage to a social work qualification because he feared that the authorities would not tolerate a director of a welfare organisation without a social work qualification. He obtained the qualification through Unisa in 1981, and had supervisors such as Helen Starck (Child Welfare) and Di Bishop (Nicro) along the way.

In conclusion Professor Adam Small paid tribute to the current leadership of the organisation and lauded the ongoing outreach work and innovative ways to reach children in poor communities as far afield as Oudtshoorn. He had praise for FCW's collaboration with other NGOs and the ongoing drive to wean projects towards independence. "I am also aware that FCW has had its ups and downs, and doubts, but the ship is sailing well now, and the organisation is prospering. To have ups and downs is a very heavy thing, and courageous people will see it through.

"Ek is veral ook bly om te sien dat 'n inisiatief wat reeds in my tyd in die laat sewentigs en vroeë tagtigs begin is, goed voortgaan - die versorging van kinders tuis deur goedgekeurde moeders.

"I finally conclude by saying well done FCW over 40 years of concern for the children of our community. It has been a time worth living. Go well into the future, en hoop julle sien my weer hier op 50!"

Introduction

We so often hear it being talked of development and growth in our country. Some commentators have become so depressed that they claim that South Africans are today worse off than they have been before 1994.

There is also scepticism about democracy and claim that the Constitution is under assault and so are the institutions which were established to serve as bastions of freedom and limit the State's capacity to undermine democracy.

I am not one of those who share these sentiments. However, I do believe that we must remain vigilant. We must be aware that we were the people who secured our democracy through hardship, threat and struggle. It is part of our heritage that we in FCW survived an onslaught on our life when a powerful bomb exploded in the boardroom where we were to have a FCW Board meeting in 1989. We have paid bitterly for democracy and we must ensure that democracy, positive growth, development and improvement of the quality of life of all our people continue. We must make bold to speak up wherever we can, where there is rampant corruption, inefficiency and incompetent service delivery, discrimination against certain elements in the Black community like the Coloured people in the work place, uncontrolled crime and failure of the state to successfully prosecute criminals, bizarre licentiousness like Nkandla and for our purposes the sheer neglect of prime development agencies like NGO's who are truly surviving in a hostile financial environment.

I remember that during the transition to democracy, the new government boldly stated that it would take responsibility for democracy and that international grants and donations are best channelled through the State agencies.

When I ardently argued with American donors to continue and improve their giving, they argued that Apartheid is over, SA is a relatively wealthy country able to look after its own poor. Other indigent countries also asked donors to explain why grants were continuing to flow to the democratic South Africa.

There are a number of disappointments in the new democracy other than the above. We are not growing at the required 5 or 6% that we had hoped for. Our approach to the core development instrument for our people, education, has been a source of great sadness and disappointment.

Hilary Clinton wrote a book titled "It takes a village to rear a child". This is so right. We cannot have development without the visible development of children.

At the end of every year I ask each of my two children whether they feel that they are further ahead in their own economic and social growth than they have been a year ago. If they answer in the affirmative they are developing positively, if they answer "no" they are in fact sliding back.

It is a question we as community developers will do well to ask of ourselves in the work we do. How do we account for the fact that teachers are quite willing to work less rather than more and even to abandon the poorest of the poor children in pursuit of the benefits of teachers — legitimate as those might be. To me it is a criminal and unforgiveable offence against the only hope for development of our poorest and most destitute children.

In pursuance of the mantra of Hilary Clinton, the rest of the village must rise up against such threats to our children's future — sure this is worse than Apartheid because in those terrible times we stuck to making the dreams of our children real. We stood in front of hungry and poor children with the promise that with education they have a better chance even under Apartheid South Africa. We also warned that should our children not have education in the promised democracy, they will still be poor, still be suffering as if Apartheid had never gone.

My question is: "What has happened to the idealism of some of our teachers?" The most

beautiful elements of education and educators are to be found in the realm of early childhood development. Here one finds idealism and devotion, despite deprivation. They are the veritable angels of the education sector. They are the people who buffer little ones exposed to risks like poverty, poor health, physical dangers, sexual abuse and malnutrition. We devote all our education resources to primary, secondary and tertiary education, yet research shows that children who from an early age fail to develop properly, to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially are much less likely to be well educated and economically productive adults able to take care of themselves and contribute to the development of our society and our country.

Also when a large number of children's development is threatened, national development is at stake. Recent research shows that even where children have access to early childhood institutions, the quality was variable and literacy and numeracy testing of grade 3 learners done by Western Cape Education Department in 2003 and again in 2010 indicated that children are poorly prepared for school and that the school system was not able to redress the effects of early social and economic deprivation and risks.

We must pay tribute to the Early Childhood Development efforts in our own province and say so boldly and publicly. The growth and development of our children are sacrosanct and supersede all else. It takes a village — the whole village to rear a child.

I applaud the efforts of our provincial government for prioritising investment in Early Childhood Development as they call it:

- a vehicle for early intervention and childhood protection.
- the basis for improving school outcomes and laying the foundation for lifelong learning;
- a means to reduce childhood poverty;
- an opportunity to develop the skills and competencies required for economic opportunities in later life;

and if I might add, to enable our young to be more resilient against the countless threats they face even like sexual exploitation at an early and vulnerable age.

My personal mantra, I teach my own ten- and eight-year-olds is a hymn I was taught in Sunday School in the location where we lived in Queenstown.

Dare to be a Daniel
Dare to stand alone
Dare to have a purpose true
Dare to make it known.

We must from an early age internalise into our children a sense of integrity, independence and pride — to be able to stand alone.

Finally, ECD is today an enterprise. It is a self-standing and independently managed enterprise. Behind the scenes there are financially and organisationally skilled officials and leaders who technically struggle to make ends meet — to do more with less, to find ways and means to keep the noble ship afloat.

Andersen's study has shown that poor children are more risk resilient and more able to benefit from school and that cognitive development of children are improved and in a nutshell — they have more hope of developing and becoming integrated in a modern and competitive society by furthering their education and skills and believing in themselves as citizens of integrity and independence. The entire village must become involved in ECD. We must take a leaf from the churches eg. New Apostolic Church of total involvement. Hand-outs is not the whole answer. Involvement is! Total involvement!

Dr. Franklin Sonn

Unravelling Apartheid

Twenty years into the "new democracy" and experiencing the 2014 general election it is important to reflect on the long road we have travelled in South Africa and how much more is required to ensure "a better life for all". The release of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1991 and the hard work to ensure a peaceful transition from an apartheid state to a democratic order was the result of huge sacrifices on the part of the oppressed masses. The forces against democracy was hell bent on setting South Africa on a course for a bloody revolution. However, statesmanship on the part of Nelson Mandela and the old guard guaranteed our first democratic elections of 1994.

27 April is now recognised as Freedom Day. A day on which South Africans in their millions went to the polling stations to cast their vote and to exercise their right to vote for a political party of their choice. A day on which a lifetime of oppression and hardship was changed by a "X" on a ballot paper. This right gives every South African citizen the power to decide which political party earns and deserves their vote and support.

In the South African context the struggle for democracy was much more than earning the right to vote. Democracy was about ensuring the effective participation of people in community struggles and campaigns. Democracy was about ensuring that the issues of women and children, students and workers, unemployed and employed, urban factory workers and farm labourers and mineworkers were given an equal voice. It was about the right of people to have access to information, and making public, private and community organisaions accountable and transparent in their actions (Taylor, V. 1997).

In this regard community organisations and voluntary associations played a critical role in laying the foundations for participatory democracy. In order for people to become involved in the struggle for their political rights, it was also important that they become involved in the decision-making processes. In the struggle against apartheid "democracy" became a powerful ideological concept and within voluntary associations the members' commitment to democracy was a key driver of change in communities (Walters, S. and Matiwane, M. 1986). It was therefore important for community organisations that emerged on the Cape Flats during the 1970's to have visionary leadership that understood the challenges faced by poor communities and how to mobilise people to become active in the struggle for change.

Facing the media: Frank van der Horst, Dr Allan Boesak, Bishop Tutu, Prof Jakes Gerwel, Molly Burton, and Dr Lionel Louw.

Prof Adam Small

Dr Franklin Sonn and Prof Jakes Gerwel facing the caspirs.

Understanding the increasing tempo of rolling mass action

In 1971 Steve Biko wrote that it was a waste of time in South Africa to try and find logic in why the white government does certain things. Biko argued that black people should not be surprised by the atrocities committed by the government against them. To expect justice was to be naïve. The white government had a duty to themselves and their electorate to show that they still had the upper hand over the black people, and there was only one way to show that — by ruthlessly breaking down the back of resistance amongst the blacks.

Biko was of the opinion that the security forces were trained to intimidate and perpetuate the super race image of the white man — ''if you cannot make a man respect you then make him fear you''.

Against this backdrop of total oppression and intimidation, the oppressed Black community engaged in a process of mass mobilisation which eventually succeeded against insurmountable odds to achieve a democratic government. Taylor (1997) in her book ''Social Mobilisation'' describes three phases of mobilisation. The first phase describes the defiance campaigns against pass laws during the 1950's. The pass laws restricted the movement of black people in the cities. This so-called ''dom pass'' gave a black person permission to be in a particular area. This era was characterised by civil disobedience campaigns.

The government's response to the defiance campaigns was to enact the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 which made any act of protest or defiance a criminal offence for which transgressors could be whipped, fined or imprisoned.

The second phase of mobilisation was characterised by underground political activity and the development of an international profile of the ANC. The 1960's also saw the ANC turning to armed struggle. The ANC-in-exile managed to convince the Commonwealth countries to exclude South Africa from its ranks, and the United Nations general Assembly demanded that South Africa change its racial policies. It is needless to say that the South African government refused to heed the calls of the international community.

This period also saw the emergence of strong trade union activity. Several strikes and stay-aways helped to mobilise ordinary workers and raise consciousness amongst the working class. Added to this the 1976 Soweto Student Uprising against Bantu education — where Afrikaans was made a compulsory subject in black schools — led to hundreds of unarmed protesting children being shot and brutalised by the police and armed forces. This led to an international outcry and strengthened the solidarity against the Apartheid government. This was also the turning point in South Africa's history where ordinary people, teachers, students, workers and NGO's came together to organise themselves.

The third phase during the 1980's saw the emergence of the United Democratic Front (UDF) which was originally established to oppose the 1983 formation of a tri-cameral parliamentary system that allowed the Whites to keep the political power, and providing limited power to the Indians and Coloureds, and excluded the Blacks. What made the UDF a force to be reckoned with was the fact that it consisted of over 600 affiliates and about 2 million people who were supporting the movement. The UDF was an alliance of youth, students, workers, NGO's and religious organisations that became a strong political force in South Africa. With leaders such as Albertina Sisulu and Dr Allan Boesak, the platform was created to bring about fundamental political change. Under the banner and logo ''The UDF unites, Apartheid divides'' hundreds of community-based organisations through the length and breadth of the country was mobilised under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front.

The current experience of participatory democracy in action

The struggle for democracy in the decades leading up to the first democratic election in 1994 was about mass social mobilisation and to create awareness and exert pressure on the apartheid government to concede that the apartheid system was unjust and doomed. The purpose of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) was therefore to ensure that the South African masses were mobilised across South Africa under a range of civil society structures such as civic and ratepayers associations, student movements, labour and trade unions, NGOs and faith based organisations that laid the foundations for ongoing participatory democracy.

As we celebrate 20 years of South African democracy since the 1994 elections, it is important that we reflect on the trajectory from apartheid authoritarianism, through the institutionalisation of formal procedural and electoral democracy, into an era that expanded the institutions and processes of democracy into the domain of greater and more continuous popular participation. At the time of the 2003 Ten Year Review the South African Government set its 2014 goals (PCAS, 2008) pertaining specifically to aspects of democracy, and in particular to the deepening of democracy and citizen participation. The mechanisms for achieving these goals were intended to strengthen the relationship of participation and engagement between government and citizens, through:

- The direct interface between state and government structures, such as Municipal Ward Committees, and the Integrated Development Plan(IDP) Process;
- The collaborative interface between state and both public and private representatives such as National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), Pension Funds and Workplace Forums;
- The promotion of democracy in terms of rights and participation that is represented by the Chapter 9 institutions;
- Direct engagement between citizens and government structures, as illustrated through the Community Development Worker (CDW) initiative;
- Communication between citizens and government structures via the Batho Pele Gateway initiative; and
- Direct citizen participation via the Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs), recently renamed the Thusong Service Centres.

The Constitution offers all citizens the right to political activity, including the right to campaign for a particular cause. It enshrines principles such as equality, human dignity and freedom of expression. In addition, every citizen have the right "peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions" (Constitution, 1996: Chapter 2). Chapter 6 of the Constitution underlines public participation in the mechanisms of government through various legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act no. 32 of 2000, the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act No 13 of 2005.

The IDP refers to the strategic planning instrument that is used to guide and inform all government-led planning and development initiatives, as well as the decisions that inform planning, management and development in a particular municipality. Section 25(1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 outlines an integrated development plan as "Each municipal council must, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality which (a) links, integrates and co-ordinates plans and takes into account proposals for the development of the municipality; (b) aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan; (c) forms the policy framework and general basis on which annual budgets must be based; and (d) is compatible with national and provincial development plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation".

The constitutional process

South Africa's Constitution is the result of protracted negotiations with a clear understanding of the injustices of the country's undemocratic past.

Negotiations: 1989 to 1994

- 1989: Secret talks held, FW de Klerk takes over and the Mass Democratic Movement rises up
- 1990: Nelson Mandela is released and the ANC is unbanned
- 1991: Codesa begins
- 1992: Negotiations stop and start
- 1993: Interim Constitution settled

Constitutional democracy: 1994 onwards

- 1994: First democratic election held
- 1995: Constitutional Assembly writes final Constitution
- 1996: Constitution finalised and certified

What is significant about this process was that President Nelson Mandela signed the Constitution into law in Sharpeville, on 10 December 1996, which is International Human Rights Day.

The Constitution came into effect on 4 February 1997. The week of 17 to 21 March was named National Constitution Week, and more than seven million copies of the Constitution were distributed in all 11 South African languages.

Preamble to the South African Constitution

We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely-elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to —

- **Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;**
- **Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;**
- **Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and**
- **Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.**

May God protect our people.

The National Development Plan (NDP, 2013) recommends that the Preamble be displayed in all workplaces, and that all school children learn, and regularly recite a pledge based on it.

The role of voluntary associations and welfare organisations in the 1970's

The emergence of community organisations during the 1970s and 1980s throughout the country was mainly funded by private enterprise, private foundations and church bodies in response to a deepening socio-economic crisis. By 1976 African unemployment stood at 2.3 million (Walters and Matiwane, 1986). Between 1973 and 1976 nearly 200 000 black workers were involved in a wave of strike action across the country, and university students began to mobilise in support of worker's struggles. The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) grew on Black campuses, and the establishment of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1969, was to mobilise students, and the Black Community Programmes (BCP) was established to ensure community work to promote black theology, black communalism, black business enterprise and a rejection of apartheid institutions. During 1972-1977, community organisations were involved with literacy training, health, building schools, clinics and community centres, home education programmes, cooperative bulk buying, the promotion of black theatre — drama, poetry and art.

The University of the Western Cape also had a strong SASO following and a new tradition of student politics saw increasing focus on organisation on and off campus. During this time a range of business funded organisations emerged to deal with the challenges of

urban blacks in local townships and informal settlements. Big businesses wanted to see some reforms and in the aftermath of the 1976 revolt, the Urban Foundation was established. Traditional funding of community organisations came from church structures such as the SACC, overseas foundations linked to their governments or churches or local business enterprises. In contrast, the Urban Foundation was viewed with suspicion because they were set up by corporations with ties to the ruling party who also wanted to "address" the so-called problem in black communities. As a new donor the Urban Foundation created division in communities amongst organisations who were eager to receive funding for charitable work as opposed to other progressive organisations who were cautious not to collaborate with suspicious structures.

In order to clamp down on the work of community organisations the apartheid government introduced 3 social welfare bills which were enacted in 1978 which gave the government wide powers to control welfare services. The most contentious as described by Matiwane and Walters (1986), was the Fundraising Act. Social welfare legislation required registration for fundraising purposes and they entrenched the principles of separate development.

Dealing with the effects of forced removals and increasing poverty and crime on the Cape Flats, many organisations and religious bodies set up social welfare service programmes for which a new breed of community worker was needed. Social Workers were employed as community workers to oversee community programmes and projects that focused on improving social and educational challenges in local communities. Community Work as a method of social work practice became popular because of the range of programmes that organisations focused on such as preschool training programmes and support to teachers, management committee training, youth and afterschool care programmes, cultural programmes and the establishment of cooperatives for income generation. Community Workers such as Achmat Davids, Faiek Gamieldien, George Gibbs, Francie Lund, Rita Strydom, Freda Brock, Eric Atmore, Lionel Woldson and many others that followed did pioneering work at a time when state funding for essential social services in poor communities were non-existent and organisations were dependent on foreign aid and small scale community fundraising initiatives.

As a way of entering the community, Rommel Roberts went about with his guitar accompanied by social work students, Cheryl Delport, Fatima Hendricks and Fatima Khatieb. Informal playgroups formed and mothers watching showed an interest. In time, some of them formed the hub of The Crèche Group, or were drawn into other interest groups (Madressa, soup kitchen, civic association or neighbourhood committees) by the BABS workers. Mrs Martin, Mrs Cupido, Mrs Lakay and Mrs Abrahams were among those who ran the little playgroup in the BABS street offices at 48 Kudu Street which was the beginning of the later full-scale ECD centre, now known as the Pegasus Centre (Freda Brock, May 2014).

Mrs Hoarus and Forster, Fredericks and Mrs Morta. **Courtesy of Mrs Lakay**

Voluntary Associations and Community Work Organisations established during the 1970s

Organisation	Aims and Objectives	Activities	Contact details
Catholic Welfare Bureau (1970)	To build up poor communities and eradicate poverty	Cape credit union; Knitting and Spinning co-op; Old age homes	37 A Somerset Rd, Cape Town
Early Learning Centre (1972)	To promote and further the interest of disadvantaged and underprivileged children in SA.	Preschool education programmes; Training of teachers; Library; Research	ELC, Springbok Street, Kewtown
Build a Better Society (1973)	To establish self-help programmes; To promote community involvement; To act as catalyst between community and resources.	Educare centre; Youth club; Senior citizens club; Art classes; Housing advice; Education programmes	PO Box 271, Athlone, 7764
Grassroots Education Trust (1972)	To promote the interest of all preschool children by assisting communities to manage their own centres.	Provision of assistance and support to staff and management of community run centres; Education and training workshops; Adventure bus programme	350 Victoria Road, Salt River
Metropolitan Action for Citizens (1972)	To highlight civic affairs and relate them to various community activities	Pre-school education; Infill schemes	Achmat Davids, Muslim Assembly, Newfields
Foundation for Social Development (1975)	To provide community education that will increase people's sense of individual and collective ability; To encourage self-help programmes	Preschool programmes; Youth development; Legal education; Co-operatives; Study projects	PO Box 186, Elsies River
Early Learning Resource Unit (1977)	To promote early education throughout SA	Preschool education programmes; Training of teachers; Library; Research	ELC, Springbok Street, Kewtown
Western Cape Welfare Organisation for Coloureds (1974) Western Cape Foundation for Community Work (1978)	To address the need of the poor communities on the Cape Flats	Managing preschool centres, feeding schemes, community centres and facilities through various community work programmes.	Superama Building, Birdwood Street, Athlone

(Walters, S. And Matiwana, M. The struggle for democracy — a Study of community organisation in greater Cape Town from 1960's to 1985; UWC, 1986)

The role of the Early Learning Centre as a bastion for ECD on the Cape Flats

District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg, both sites of diverse and vibrant subcultures, but viewed as slums that had to be cleared by the apartheid government, who was intent on enforcing separate development for different ethnic groups. Sophiatown was razed to the ground in 1957 to make way for the white area of Triomf (Triumph).

Between 1969-1974 most of the families living in District Six were forced to move to areas such as Manenberg, Hanover Park, Elsies River and Ravensmead, Steenberg and Retreat. Because of the cosmopolitan nature of the community, mixed race families were separated. If the father was black the family was destined to live in Langa. To keep the black people out of the coloured settlements regular checks for "dompasses" were enforced that kept mixed families apart. "A Walk in the Night" (1962) by Alex La Guma gave District Six a place in literature. In 1986 Richard Rive wrote his novel "Buckingham Palace, District Six" and "District Six — The Musical" (1986) by David Kramer and Taliep Petersen helped to capture the mood of people during this period of forced removals.

It is therefore important to note that the ELC had its roots in the establishment of a new cultural centre in Athlone to continue the cultural work of the Eoan Group that was forced to shut down in District Six. The new Cultural Centre was designed to meet the Eoan Group's need for a building of its own with a 450 seat theatre and studios for classes and rehearsals. The Centre was completed in 1969, and is currently known as the Joseph Stone Auditorium.

The Eoan Group also operated a small day care centre and they considered it important to include a nursery school as part of the Cultural Centre complex if funds could be raised to cover the building costs. When it became known that the Bernard van Leer Foundation made a donation towards the building of the theatre, they also expressed interest in supporting a preschool development programme to support disadvantaged children in South Africa. A working group of an urban planner (Revel Fox), two architects and a social worker was established to examine the needs of preschool children in poor communities on the Cape Flats. The report **"The Education of the Disadvantaged Preschool Coloured Child at the Cape of Good Hope"** (Fox, R. et al, 1969), was submitted to the Bernard van Leer Foundation in September 1969 (Short, A. "Seeking Change — Early Childhood Education for the Disadvantaged in South Africa", 1985).

"There was agreement amongst local specialist that no lasting benefit would result from providing another nursery school, however well run. Educational, psychological and welfare amenities should be provided with a bias towards research and experimentation in teaching" (ELC Newsletter, No 4, 1975).

Although the site earmarked for the Early Learning Centre (ELC) belonged to the Eoan Group, the project became too big to continue under the auspices of the Eoan Group Trust. The Cape Education Trust (CET) was then established in April 1970 after the Bernard van Leer Foundation agreed to fund the building and the administration for the first three years. The CET served under the Chairperson of Mr. C. S. Corder, and Mr, L. C.V. Walker was tasked to oversee the work of the Steering Committee to finalise the plans for the ELC. The building process commenced in January 1971, and the ELC was officially opened by Mr. Oscar van Leer in March 1972. The centre enrolled 120 children and the basic criteria was that they must be from the Kewtown community.

The ELC was set up as an educational institution for preschool children and parents who live in socio-economically depressed circumstances. The aim of the centre was to work with the families in providing the children with an environment in which they will be able to develop their full potential during the first six years of their lives, an important developmental phase during which the foundations are laid for later education. Within this framework the major functions of the centre were:

1. To investigate and develop new approaches and materials for the education of preschool children living in low income communities — The ELC was therefore best regarded as a programme development centre.
2. To assist parents and other adults in the community who care for children, to be more effective educators, and
3. To work with other institutions and organisatons in stimulating expansion and improvements to preschool education in disadvantaged communities.

(ELC Newsletter, No. 4, April 1975).

The Early Learning Centre was an ambitious project with a proposed budget of about R92 000 in 1969, and a staff complement of 43 that made provision for a clinical psychologist, consulting paediatrician, doctor, psychiatric social worker and a dietician.

Prof. Richard van der Ross with Princess Alice and Lady Barbara Bottomley when they visited the Athlone ELC and Alicedale Primary School. (Photo: courtesy of Mrs Amelia Lakay, Kewtown).

Extracts from the inaugural speech delivered by Oscar van Leer at the opening of the Early Learning Centre

What the Athlone Early Learning Centre is all about, is to provide compensatory intervention for a number of disadvantaged children still young enough in their development to profit from such intervention and belonging to the category of those for whom the conditions necessary to realise their God-given potential would otherwise not be fulfilled. It is, in its own setting, an important and powerful tool in the crusade against the most pitiful form of waste - the waste of the potential of children. If a society does not like to be reminded of its past mistakes, so be it, but it should at least be sensitive to any present or possible future ones. Any society aught at least to take notice of the existing inadequacy, regardless of who has created it or allowed it to come into existence. Having done so, it should proceed to do something not only to prevent that the inadequacy will increase or spread, but also to provide its children who have not reached the point of no return as yet, with the compensation necessary to forestall their being harmed for life. Failure on the part of society to do at least this, is unpardonable.

Whether it was or was not their responsibility, those who have been so devotedly committed to the cause of the Athlone Early Learning Centre, have in fact taken on a part of society's burden.

However, as to the wastage of potential of children disadvantaged by environmental inadequacy, the surface has not even been scratched. There is still a great deal for the Cape Society to do, a duty which it could discharge if it would choose to carry on from where this courageous and enlightened beginning here in Athlone, from necessity of limitation, must leave off.

The Cape Society could do so by considering and treating this early learning project in Athlone not as an end-product limited by its own boundaries, but rather as a mould from which many specimens to be spread around the province, can be cast. The casting of these additional specimens is an additional and considerable effort in itself, but the task is infinitely lighter with the mould already made, proven and available. It would provide the multiplication factor coveted as much by the initiators of the project as by our Foundation.

It is the multiplication factor which extends the action radius of this, as of any project, beyond the borders of the community this project was designed to serve. The quality of the Athlone Early Learning Centre project, its approach and its genesis fully warrant that it be endowed by as large a society as to which its lessons can be made to apply, with the largest possible multiplication factor. It is amply justified that the example and pattern of the Athlone Early Learning Centre be followed and repeated, obviously with the necessary local adaptations, on as large a scale as possible.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has been involved with a great many projects in a great many countries. But the thoughtful care, the careful thought, the vision and the courage, which have stood around the cradle of this project, are second to none we were privileged to observe on any other occasion. For this the greatest respect is due, especially considering the special difficulties, impediments and obstacles which have had to be overcome in the setting here. The approach which gives this project its uniqueness is the consistency of the

holistic attitude throughout its genesis.

Its roots are in the Eoan Group. For an opera group to have undertaken the responsibility for a creche is a sign of awareness of relationships which are likely to occur only in minds with an holistic tendency. When out of this creche the idea of a nursery school (cum research unit) was born and when this nursery school was to be provided with facilities necessary to allow it to serve its community as adequately as the opera group did in its own domain, not the nursery school in Athlone was considered, but nursery school-dom in all of the Cape Province, with an eye on nursery- schoolery in the republic.

When the school building was planned, it was made the task of a multi-disciplinary team of unusual and dedicated professionals of widely diverse expertise, representing, amongst others, architecture, paedogogy, psychology, sociology, and paediatrics. A multi-disciplinary undertaking is, no doubt, holism at work.

I have not singled out anyone for their contributions to the realisation of this project, because I think the integrity of the wholeness of the Eoan Group, the Athlone Early Learning Centre and the Cape Education Trust together with all that they support and all those by whom they are supported ought to be acknowledged as an indivisible group.

The significance of the Athlone Early Learning Centre is, that its establishment is one of those clearly contoured steps. One of those steps which bears the seeds of life itself, because it brings hope.

The hope that disadvantaged children will live to see the day that they will in fact become what they were meant to be.

The hope that disadvantaged children will get a chance to fruitfully use the only gift they may ever get - their inborn potential.

The hope that by realising the innate potential of disadvantaged children they will consummate, and profit by the only privilege they may ever receive.

(Inaugural speech by Oscar van Leer, Chairperson of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, at the occasion of the opening of the Athlone Early Learning Centre, 21 April 1972).

DIT GEBOUW IS

GESCHONKEN DOOR DE

BERNARD VAN LEER

STICHTING 'sGRAVENHAGE

1972

Management of the ELC

Dr. Richard van der Ross held the position of Principal of the ELC from September 1971 to December 1974. He was seconded to the centre for a period of 3 years by the then Administration of Coloured Affairs, where he had the position of School Inspector. Before that Dr van der Ross was a teacher in primary and high schools for 12 years, and also served as Principal of Battswood Training School for 12 years, and 5 years in the Education Department of Coloured Affairs. With his appointment in September 1971, he had a short time to assemble a staff of 27 people to prepare for the launch of the ELC project in 1972. Under his guidance the staff soon found their feet and the ELC project developed recognition throughout Southern Africa as an educational institution. Dr van der Ross left the ELC when he was appointed Rector of the University of the Western Cape.

Dr Frank Kessel, a developmental psychologist was appointed as Research Director from July 1971 — December 1973. Dr Kessel was very sensitive to the needs of preschool children in poor communities and with the rest of the team undertook various research projects that piloted ECD programmes for children in centres as well as the Home-School Programme, Teacher-Aide Programme and the Home Early Learning Programme (HELP). Dr Kessel was also responsible for attracting a number of psychology students from UCT who assisted with the research work.

Mrs Jill Blaine was appointed supervisor of the teaching division from January 1972 — May 1974. She was an experienced nursery school teacher and responsible for the initial development of the Teacher-Aide Programme.

Ann Short became Principal of the ELC in 1975. She was involved in the ELC Project since December 1971 as a Research Assistant and then as a Research Associate. Before joining the ELC she was a lecturer in psychology at Barkly House College for Nursery Education. Her major contribution was in the development of centre-based educational programmes.

The Steering Committee of the Cape Education Trust established in April 1972 under Mr C.S. Corder and Mr L.C.V Walker, continued to administer the project until June 1972 when it was replaced by a smaller Executive Committee with Mr K.L.G. Geeling as the Chairperson of both Shell and the Executive Committee. The daily administration of the CET was entrusted to the Honorary Secretary, Mr R. Nankivell. When Dr van der Ross shared his earlier experiences with us on 21 May 2014 on the occasion that he visited the ELC, he elated how they had to improvise whilst the building was still in process and they had to have meetings on the site seated on paint drums. When the building was eventually completed he could not wait for the office furniture and ventured to buy a desk for his office. However, when Mr Nankivell became aware of this, he quickly cautioned that proper office furniture will be acquired.

During the early days 110 children were enrolled at the ELC with 40 children and three teachers in the two nursery school units, 15 toddlers (two year olds) with a teacher and an aide, and 15 infants cared for by a nursing sister and three creche aides. The following programmes were implemented at the ELC:

The Nursery School Programme focused on the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of children which was built into the normal nursery school routine to ensure that children learn through play, art, music and stories. While the emphasis was on cognitive and language development the Programme did not teach academic skills such as reading, writing or arithmetic. The attempt was rather to foster the development of independent thinking and problem solving skills, creativity and curiosity, and the ability to use language as a tool of thought and communication. The Programme was therefore designed to increase the child's general knowledge of his physical, social and natural environment.

The aim of the **Home-School Programme** was to inform parents about what children were learning and what they can do at home to reinforce what children were taught in the centre. This was achieved through informal activity orientated evening sessions twice per term.

The Teacher-Aide Programme was introduced in 1972 to involve mothers more directly in the education of their children at the ELC. In 1973 a teacher-aide training course was offered to mothers from the surrounding communities. The course involved four hours per week of practical work in the classroom and regular workshop sessions facilitated by the supervisor over a period of one year. By the end of 1974 twenty women completed the course (9 from Kewtown), and in 1975 there was already another 15 involved in the programme.

The Home Early Learning Programme (HELP) was introduced to assist mothers and caregivers who had preschool aged children at home to provide a more adequate and stimulating learning environment within the home. The programme had two phases:

- The Home Visiting Phase was for children 9 months to two years. The home visitor was used to demonstrate activities and teaching techniques which mothers could use with their children. In the first few years 5 home visitors were already supporting 60 mother-child pairs.

- The Follow-through Phase was designed for mothers with older children 3-6 years. The programme involved a series of workshops and training sessions and the support of a toy-lending library to strengthen the skills of mothers to educate their children at home.

The BABS (Build a Better Society) Project (1973)

The BABS Project started out as a project of the ELC during 1973 with George Gibbs, a local social worker from the Kewtown community. With the help of social work students a survey was undertaken to develop a better understanding of the community's needs. Through street playgroups, clubs and discussions on street corners and in courtyards they managed to gain the community's confidence. The ELC served as a hub for various community projects managed between the social workers of the ELC and BABS. The focus on youth and at-risk adolescents were to get children off the streets and involved in afterschool care and sports clubs during different times of the week. The Brownies met on Saturdays and the dancing club met twice a week, as well as a karate club operated from the centre. During the June school holiday of 1975 a popular two week holiday programme was conducted, and this had to be scaled down during 1977 when staff was reduced at the ELC. The centre also operated a Kupugani depot that sold food stuff at drastically reduced prices to the community on Saturdays. As a social worker, Lionel Woldson was responsible for this project. This project shifted to the BABS cottage when they obtained their own premises in Kewtown during 1975.

By 1976 BABS had a staff of five under the directorship of George Gibbs with three social workers — one was Freda van der Ross. Through the work of BABS, Kewtown had become a friendlier place with a network of small organisations that set themselves the overall task of building a community centre. Today the BABS centre in Pegasus Street is evidence of the work started by a handful of dedicated people.

The ELRU (Early Learning Resource Unit) Project (1977/8)

The Athlone ELC was funded as an experimental preschool project by the Bernard van Leer Foundation with grants for the building project and subsequent grants for operational expenditure between 1970-1977. A key task of the ELC was to develop, implement and evaluate educational programmes for preschool aged children in South Africa. Research was therefore an essential element of the development of curriculum in early childhood development. The ELC project also began to disseminate its educational methods and programmes. As a result of the increased dissemination and training efforts, the Bernard van Leer Foundation agreed to fund a project, the Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) to promote early childhood education for disadvantaged and underprivileged children throughout Southern Africa (Short, A. 1985).

The Bernard van Leer Foundation contributed R220 000 towards the building of the ELC, and between 1972-1978 provided operational grants of about R470 000 (ELC Progress Report No. 12, 1978). The Cape Education Trust (CET) was therefore heavily dependent on the Bernard van Leer Foundation for the running of the ELC. This resulted in the first restructuring exercise to reduce costs by 40% and all specialist staff employed by the ELC involved in research, programme development, dissemination, training and community projects were retrenched at the end of 1977. Fortunately, the Bernard van Leer Foundation already agreed to fund the new ELRU project which could continue to build on the good foundation laid by the ELC. The ELRU staff based at the ELC developed a range of training and workshop programmes, and the ELC continued to serve as a community service centre and preschool demonstration and training centre. By the end of 1983 the Athlone ELC and ELRU had reached through training programmes and workshops nearly 600 preschool centres throughout South Africa that benefited nearly 49 000 disadvantaged children (Short, A. 1985). The ELRU had a core staff of 7 professionals which included Ann Short, Linda Biersteker, Karin van der Merwe and Mareldia Tape who was an administrator at the time.

The ELC and Grassroots Partnership

By 1975 the ELC and Grassroots started to collaborate on the training and capacity development of practitioners. This collaboration also strengthened the campaign for greater government recognition and subsidisation of Coloured and Black preschools. This also led to the two organisations becoming involved in a joint commission with the Institute for Social Development (ISD) preschool survey (Slabbert and Thomas, 1976, cited in Short, A. 1985)

The Weekend Workshop Programme convened by the two organisations was open for trained and untrained preschool staff. The workshop programme presented a platform to share basic preschool practice with untrained staff, and to share new ideas to stimulate the trained teachers. Preschool committees were requested to allow their staff to attend one full day workshop per quarter. The Peninsula was divided into three areas, and the workshops were rotated. Seven workshops were presented in the series and about 180 people attended. Because of the limited opportunities for basic preschool training the joint workshop programme helped to improve morale amongst teachers and strengthened the resolve of service providers at the time to work harder at developing and implementing training programmes.

During 1977-78 a partnership between the ELC and the Foundation for Social Development focused on building the capacity

Dr Richard van der Ross on the occasion when he visited the Early Learning Centre on 20 May 2014.

Pictured with him on the couch is his daughter, Freda Brock, former Director of ELRU, Riedewhaan Allie, Director: FCW and George Gibbs, Founding Director: BABS, Prof. Eric Atmore, Director: CECD, Tracy van der Heyde, Director: ELRU, Avril Cupido, Director: Early Years Services, Yusuf Patel Former Director: Grassroots, Mareldia Tape, Director: Grassroots, Madeline Foster, Western Cape Convenor of the Social Work Veterans Forum.

of preschool principals who had no formal training. This became known as the Preschool Training Programme and was successfully continued by ELRU until 1983 (Short, A. 1985).

The Arrival of the Foundation for Community Work

When funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation ceased, it became important for the Cape Education Trust to explore funding options with local partners. A limited budget forced the Early Learning Centre to scale down its work without compromising the operation of a preschool with 120 children. The Western Cape Foundation for Community Work, established in 1974 with a R500 000 donation from Renier Van Rooyen appeared as a new player in the early childhood development sector with several local preschools affiliated to it. In exploratory meetings between the CET and the FCW Board it emerged that the CET could no longer afford the upkeep of the ELC and suggested that the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work take over the management of the ELC.

As Chairperson of the FCW Board, Dr Franklin Sonn and Dr Adam Small (Director) took responsibility to formalise the agreements with the CET under Dr Paul Houmoller. By 22 August 1983, the agreements were finalised, and on Tuesday 6 December 1983, the agreements were signed between Dr Adam Small and Dr Paul Houmoller, and by 17h30 that afternoon FCW moved into the building after liaising with the ELC Management and Ros Herbert who was then the Principal of the ELC.

The FCW Board welcomed the idea that Dr Richard van der Ross, who served as the first Principal of the ELC be nominated as Patron of the FCW. He was delighted with the nomination and thus allowed us to pull the thread through the ELC that started with him and gave birth to several projects and ended with the Early Learning Centre under the management of Foundation for Community Work with Dr Richard van der Ross as Patron (FCW Minutes, 21 1983, 20 July 1983, 5 September 1983, 7 February 1984).

In conversation with some of the early pioneers.

The Cape Times, 14 October, 1971

Research Director and Principal of Learning Centre

THE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE that is being established at Athlone will have Dr. F.S. Kessel as research director and Dr. R.E. van der Ross as principal. Dr Van der Ross, who is on a short educational tour oversea, has been seconded to the centre from the Department of Coloured Affairs, in which he was an inspector of education.

The Centre at Athlone, consisting of pre-school and research units and a creche, should be in full operation early next year.

The research unit will have qualified professional staff and the pre-school unit's creche, also adequately staffed, will cater for 120 children.

The Cape Educational Trust's aim is twofold: To conduct research into and determine the most effective ways of handling and teaching under-privileged Coloured children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years; and to demonstrate that suitable buildings can be erected at low costs to meet similar needs elsewhere.

It is expected that the results of the research conducted at the Centre will benefit all deprived communities in the Republic and elsewhere and the Trust hopes to interest the authorities, and ultimately secure their participation in its activities.

It is also expected that links with universities and private State educational institutions will be established to create opportunities for students in relevant disciplines to gain some practical experience and understanding of the work to be undertaken at the Centre.

The Cape Educational Trust, controlled by a board of trustees, is supported by funds from the Bernard van Leer Foundation of Holland, and its day-to-day management is provided through a leading South African oil company.

Ms Ann Short from the Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Athlone with one of the 120 kindergarten children at the centre.

The Cape Times, 1 March, 1972

Early learning may change Kew Town

Cape Times Education Reporter

TO THE CASUAL observer Kew Town's newly-opened Early Learning Centre could be just another nursery school. But the 120 children — from some of Athlone's poorest families — are involved in a unique educational project which aims to touch not only the needs of the pre-school child but also those of the sub-economic community of Cape Town.

A group of little boys and girls, whose families are among the poorest in Athlone, lose themselves in pre-school activities provided for them by the Early Learning Centre.

The Early Learning Centre — a project of the Educational Trust — is, in the words of its director, Dr R.E. van der Ross, "a practical embodiment of the ideology preached in Project Grassroots".

But its aims stretch beyond pre-school education.

Community involvement is a concept which the Early Learning Centre hopes to embrace.

"We must look to work with people not for them. We must look to their strengths rather than their weaknesses," Dr Frank Kessel, Research Director of the institute explained.

Dr Van der Ross added: "We have a strong social function. Our commission is to find ways of changing the community of Kew Town."

An important objective is that of getting the parents involved in the education of their children. Ultimately it is hoped that mothers of children who attend the centre will assist in the running of the place. Lessons on nutrition and health are envisaged and the formation of a sewing group is proposed.

Dr Van der Ross explained: "We want to give these people a new evaluation of themselves".

Primarily an educational institution, the Early Learning Centre is based on the idea that the first six years of a child's life — the pre-school period — are an important phase in the child's development, a phase when the foundations are being laid for later education.

The centre's basic aim, then, is to work with the family in providing these early foundations so that the child will be able to develop his or her educational potential as fully as possible.

With this framework the centre is testing ground for the pre-school education of young children, a demonstrative centre where new approaches will be passed on to other people involved in pre-school education and a centre for basic research into the early education of low-income children.

The research director, Dr Frank Kessel, warned against wrong expectation of a project of this type.

The Argus, 29 April 1972

In Town and Out

At the opening of the early learning centre in Kewtown, Athlone, were (from left) the principal, Dr R.E. van der Ross, and Mrs van der Ross, Mr K. Walker and Mrs J. Blaine, suprvisor at the centre.

Right: There is always time for storytelling everyday after the group games. Ms L. Biersteker, with the group of children, is presently in charge of the mother-to-child group programme, but the home visitors are being prepared to accept the programme.

The Argus, 22 April 1972

Early learning centre opens at Athlone

THE most pitiful form of waste was not environmental waste such as pollution, but the waste of potential of children.

This was said by Mr Oscar van Leer, chairman of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, at the official opening last night of Athlone Early Learning Centre.

The centre caters for 120 children, drawn mainly from Kew Town. The principal is Dr R van der Ross.

The Cape Educational Trust has established the centre for the purposes of determining the best ways to handle and teach underprivileged Coloured children between the ages of three months and six years and to demonstrate that suitable low-cost buildings can be erected in other needy areas.

The aim is to ensure that potential will not be impeded by cultural inadequacies.

COMPARISON

Mr van Leer said: 'Mankind is booming out his worries about large masses of people at a ... frighteningly early date not having enough food to eat, clean air to breathe or fresh water to drink to sustain material life ... while in comparison the voice of concern about large masses of people never even coming to life in any non-material sense resembles the timid sound of a squeaking mouse.

He said the centre brought the hope that a good many disadvantaged children would live to see the day when they would in fact become what they were meant to be.

Guests at the opening included Mr F.L. Gaum, Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, and his wife, Mr W. Theron, Director of Coloured Education, and Mrs Theron, and Mr Justice J. Steyn and Mrs Steyn.

KEWTOWN - Where it all started

In his book "Children of the Flats" George Gibbs wrote that when the first townships were proclaimed on the Cape Flats during the 1930s people were attracted by the prospects of spaciousness and new beginnings, with your own house and a garden. This was the attraction that drew a growing swell of settlers to West London, away from the overcrowding and slum conditions of District Six (Albert and Gibbs, 1980). West London was the area along Klipfontein Road from the Red Cross Children's Hospital in the direction of Vanguard Drive. This area was renamed Athlone after the British governor of Cape Town, the Earl of Athlone. When his wife, Princess Alice visited Cape Town during 1972, she made time to visit the Early Learning Centre as well as a local Primary School. Alicedale was then named in her honour.

Athlone was described as a rural village during the 1930s with a Dutch-gabled post office, Atlantic Petrol garage and Empire Bioscope. The area was characterised by blacksmiths operating under trees, horse drawn fish and vegetable carts plying their trade up and down sandy Thornton and Belgravia roads with little Jewish shops and chemists. The area was developing slowly where people could buy houses in Jamestown, or rent in Bokmakierie, Alicedale or Silvertown. According to Gibbs (1980) the voluntary settlement of families hoping to live in garden villages, soon led to apathy and disillusionment when plans for mass housing and resettlement under the Slum Clearance Act and later the mass forced removals under the Group Areas Act forced thousands of families onto the Cape Flats. Family life was soon threatened by unemployment and a shebeen trade that gave rise to other forms of crime. In a community such as Kewtown where more than 9000 people were forced to live in only 1200 dwellings consisting of single storey houses and blocks of flats where the average household income was less than R1300 per year and where most of the adults were ordinary labourers with limited formal schooling one can only imagine the despair.

Dealing with the despair and apathy, Gibbs indicated that trying to bring about social change one had to involve township people in their social upliftment. Instead of showing the way to "a better life" one has to lead by example, and as social worker you have to be a catalyst instead of a motive force.

In this regard he wrote of the Early Learning Centre in Kewtown as "a spur to further action because it prompted questions about the future of young children. Those who spotted the problem grasped that the only solution was a massive communal reconstruction. To secure a future for young children a whole community had to be made safer, healthier, more productive.

What was needed, above all , was to awaken the people of Kewtown to the realisation that their lives could be improved by their own efforts and will, not through social programmes imposed from outside or hand-outs" (Albert and Gibbs, 1980).

The attached photographs were shared by George Gibbs.

The blocks of flats and children playing on the tarmac in front of the ELC

In the common room at the ELC where BABS started

George Gibbs and Beulah Fredericks

Snippets from Ros Herbert

Change . . . that is what the Early Learning Centre was all about, supporting a community of "disadvantaged" families living in Kewtown on the Cape Flats, to bring about change. First of all change in the attitude and awareness of the importance of early education of young children. This could, we believed, lead to change in the future of the young generation as they could create a better and brighter academic, social and economic future for themselves.

In January 1972 the Cape Educational Trust opened the doors of the Early Learning Centre – fondly referred to as the ELC. Initially a total of 110 children aged between three months to six years were admitted. The ELC was a non-governmental organisation totally funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in The Hague, in Holland. The first ELC staff team consisted of a Principal, two psychologists, two social workers, a supervisor, nursing sister, visiting medical doctor, two admin staff, eight teaching staff, and a groundsman.

The building consisted of offices, a general common room, large kitchen, ablution facilities, hall, and admin/reception area. The two nursery school teaching units each had their own adjoining kitchen and staff rooms while the baby and toddler unit was located close to the communal kitchen with the nursing sister's office/medical room right next to it. The Red Unit provided play and learning space for 12 babies and toddlers aged 3 to 18 months, and 18 children up to 3 years. The adult-baby/toddler ratio was 1:6 and older children 1:9. The nursing sister kept a watchful eye and assisted the staff of the Red Unit at feeding time, and whenever they needed extra help.

The Yellow and Blue Units each consisted of spacious playrooms divided into a "quiet" area and a large "noisy" and messy area with a locker and toilet area in between. The adult-child ratio was approximately 1:13 in these two units of 3 to 6 year olds; however, the older group of 5 to 6 year olds consisted of 15 children. I was the teacher of this group in the Yellow Unit and enjoyed three years working with lively, adorable children. At the beginning of the school year the children were phased in over a period of about a month to ensure that they settled, and teacher and pupil bonded well. The experience and "new" environment was quite overwhelming for most of the children and we spent many hours over those first few weeks calming and assuring the young learners. The ELC was a unique facility for Kewtown and I remember some comments from community members. "Is dit die nuwe rent offices?" (Is this the new rent office?). "Juffrou kan ons ook kom leer?" (Teacher, can we also come and learn").

At that time the new ELC building was unusual in its architectural design, situated next to the Joseph Stone Auditorium on the edge of Kewtown with its small council houses and blocks of flats. The large water tank above the front of the hall was an attraction in itself with its large coloured dots, and resembled a giant toy cube. Forty years later the water tanks have started to leak and now requires running repairs.

The children's parents were very interested in what we were going to do in this colourful environment. I was very amused with some comments. A mum shoved a shy child in at the door: "Gaan in, gaan in, jy moet gaan leer". (Go in, go in, you must go learn). They got the message about learning and would later discover it was a very different type of learning to what they had experienced in their first encounters at school. Another:

"Slat hom, slat hom, hy's net stout". (Beat him, beat him, he's just naughty). Here, the learning through play, was a foreign idea and as the parents noticed the warm and welcoming attitude of the staff they soon became interested themselves in what was happening in the classrooms. Friendly and inquisitive faces peered through the glass doors each morning and afternoon. These were of older siblings, parents, mostly mothers or grandmothers. Children and their families soon became very special and many close relationships developed between staff and community members. Today, after 42 years, I fondly remember my pupils (some now grandparents themselves) and their families.

In the Yellow and Blue Units we worked according to a Daily Programme to structure the day's activities. Initially it was based on the conventional South African Nursery School Programme. To ensure good health and nutrition the kitchen provided daily balanced meals (breakfast and lunch) and morning and afternoon snacks. This included fortified biscuits and "cocoa-pan", a chocolate milk drink; plant-based (soya) meat as well as meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, and dairy products. A food bank, Kupugani, provided the health foods, and it could be purchased at a reduced price for NGOs such as the ELC and other community based organisations. Let me add here that the staff also enjoyed generous meals with the children. In hindsight, it was probably part of the plan so that we could keep up with all the action, especially the outdoor active play – demonstrating movements on the jungle gym, or pushing squealing little girls in pushcarts! We were also required to put in extra hours of work, researching ideas and planning different ways of stimulating play and learning. The research team put many questions to us, modelling ways of helping children to think about what they were doing – "Why do you use soap when washing your hands?" – questions like these sounded simple but surprisingly could have several answers! This brought us to another aspect of verbalisation. How much language did children have? How much language did parents use at home? Did we understand the dialect of this community? All this was very interesting and weekly sessions became extremely important to the entire team.

While the medical team (nursing sister and visiting doctor) weighed, measured and monitored the children's health, the teaching team monitored the other aspects of development, viz, cognitive, social, emotional and physical. This was the nature of the work of the project during the first few years.

During the first days, though, and less serious, was when we became lightheaded from the fumes of the newly painted classrooms, and new carpeting. We also braved being seated on milk crates before the delivery of the adult furniture. Thankfully it was before the children were taken in. The uniqueness of the project tested our own creative skills too, as we got involved in making educational equipment for specific maths and discovery activities.

The educational work was based on the work of the psychologist, Piaget. First we worked on encouraging the children to communicate in full sentences as many had limited vocabulary and started out giving one word answers or nods and shrugs. The first few months required a lot of patience and tons of love and understanding. It also led to home visiting and discussions with families. We gained deeper insight into the circumstances under which families lived and this, I believe, was a good basis for the educational and development Programme of the ELC. Early Childhood Education as a foundation for lifelong learning became meaningful and I realised I was on the "right track" to help in the process of change.

As I drew closer to the parents through their children, I also came to understand the value of the home in the role of education.

During the second year we became involved in developing parent ideas for supporting young children. I had many interesting and enjoyable times working in the playrooms and watching children grow into confident outgoing little pupils, eager to partake in all kinds of challenging activities planned and prepared for their age group. There are many anecdotes which I plan to write up later, and two classic ones I will record now were from the same child – now a wife, mother, and hair stylist.

We were preparing for the Christmas Nativity play at the end of our first year. After singing the Christmas carol, "Away in a Manger", I wanted to make sure the children understood what they had sung as it was in English, their second language.

Teacher: "Wat is cattle?" (What are cattle?).

Child: "Ja, juffrou, ek weet! Dis daai ketel daar in die kombuis wat juffrou gebruik om die water in to kook!" The same enthusiastic child also suggested that Joseph and Mary should have gone to the rent office in Bethlehem to find accommodation! The Nativity play was a huge success and the first "graduation" of pupils to big school was a highlight in the community that year. Everyone was very proud and spoke about it for days.

I had always considered any new assignment to be a challenge and enjoyed the informal approach to teaching, testing of ideas, and activities in ECD work. During the second year a new Nursery School Supervisor joined the teaching team and brought fresh ideas as an experienced ECD specialist. The "open plan" was introduced giving the children freedom to choose any of the activities from within the six areas of the playroom during activity time. This was a less structured approach from the one we had been implementing. The five other teachers immediately agreed to put it to the test, except myself. I chose to work with my older group in the quiet part of the playroom. There was no pressure that I should accept the idea until my group and I were ready to do so. This experience became an invaluable one later in my teacher training career when confronted with teachers who resisted new ideas. What I valued from these early experiences at the ELC was the flexibility we were given in taking on new ideas – only when we were confident from the one we had been implementing and ready to do so.

Our first attempt to involve parents in the education of their children was to create a Parent's Room. The medical room at the end of the passage closest to the Yellow Unit was comfortably furnished and provided teas and coffees for parents or grandparents to, or on their way to Athlone, where they usually did their shopping. A social worker was available for an informal chat, as well as the teacher of a child the parent needed to see. As there were many other chores waiting to be done at home, not many younger mothers stopped by – grandmothers were more likely to do so. A few grandmothers and other interested friends used the facility. Some of them became candidates for our first teacher-aide and home-visiting programme. In essence this is where the spade work for family outreach work started.

I enjoyed the support and eager assistance of the parents. In the Yellow Unit there was a mother and a teenage brother in the same family, as well and three other mothers who came on a weekly rotating basis. This was during the busy indoor and outdoor activity times including snack, toilet and lunch time. While, at first tidying up playrooms and bathrooms, or wash cups and plates, later they showed more interest in what the teachers were doing. We encouraged them to do more observations. Soon they were sitting down in the Make-Believe area, "sipping cups of tea", joining in at music and movement time, and later playing with children in the educational toy area, or looking at books. These parents told us that they had never had opportunities of this kind as their children now and just enjoyed the

experience – playing and learning together. They observed the way in which the teachers interacted with the children and it took a few months before the ELC embarked on the beginning of a Teacher-Aide Programme.

Our concern was about parent involvement on a larger scale, and to improve communication. Traditionally teachers were responsible for teaching children. We wanted parents to recognise that they had a big role to play. Parents were quite eager to attend meetings and listen to what the school committee and the Principal had to say about the school and the progress of the children. This outdated approach needed to change. At the first few meetings this was the norm. Teachers stood aside and served refreshments afterwards. Attendance was average and we all expressed our concerns about the attendance and absence of fathers – 90% were mothers. The children's art displays on the walls of the hall went almost unnoticed. Seating in straight rows did not help either and it was mostly a one way communication event. Very few questions were asked about the children's progress.

After discussing different ideas, consulting with the team as well as with the regular parent support group who helped in the classroom, we decided to do things very differently. After all, we agreed that the children were the main focus. During a morning group time I suggested we prepare invitations to mum, dad, and grandparents asking them to visit our classroom and to taste the cupcakes we were baking as a discovery activity. The children enthusiastically filled their names in on the invitations and drew a picture of a cupcake. They had lots of fun doing this and more fun experimenting with the ingredients and baking the cakes. There was lots of excitement amongst the children about taking the invitations home and constant reminders about the time and day of the classroom visit. A register of family names was posted at the entrance of the classroom.

On the evening as parents arrived, they made a tick next to their family and child's name. Three children dressed in pyjamas came along too. What excellent classroom ambassadors they turned out to be that evening! They tugged mum and dad along eagerly showing off their art displayed on the walls and took activities off shelves to show how they played and worked. 90% of the children had parents or guardians attending and the rest sent apologies. I had an opportunity to chat to individual parents about their child's progress as well as explaining and demonstrating what a daily ELC Programme entailed. We also spoke about what the children discovered and learnt while making the cupcakes and how their involvement in simple chores at home helped them in their development. The success of the event was more evident the following day when I heard reports from the children themselves about what their parents had told them about their classroom. Added to this was the contribution from the three who were witness to the event to the envy of those who were sound asleep at home at the time. Anyway, we had found one main key idea to get parents and teacher to communicate more freely as well as the value of the 3-way involvement – child, parent and teacher.

After an interesting three years of teaching in the Yellow unit, the position for Liaison Teacher came about. Having been involved in the Early Child Development work with children and their parents it was a new challenge to promote the work of the ELC. A VW Kombi was equipped with educational toys and books and I visited all Nursery Schools and Creches on the Cape Flats and surrounding areas from Athlone to Bellville and some suburbs from Grassy Park to Cape Town. Some of the educational toys were purchased from the Grassroots shop in Salt River. Grassroots, became our partner in running ECD workshops, first at the ELC and later at sites throughout

the Peninsula. I realised that the supervisors and principals of these preschools had little or no contact with each other and started a Support Group which met at the ELC on a monthly basis. By the second meeting it became clear that distant travelling became a problem and we decided to meet in three area groups – each group appointed their own Group Leader. While my input was sharing the ELC Programme, the supervisors and their teachers shared their experiences and ideas. It was also an opportunity to ask for our assistance. Regular visits were made to all the schools to observe how the ELC ideas were being adapted to suit the needs of the particular school. Some schools were poorly equipped and the workshops provided opportunities to make educational toys, books, playroom furniture etc. from waste material. We supported the schools by helping to rearrange playroom arrangements, maximise the use of outdoor space, plan daily programmes, etc. Later the workshop and support visits spread out to greater Cape Town areas, into the Helderberg and Paarl areas.

Although I enjoyed my job outside the ELC Yellow Unit with an office in the building, I missed the Kewtown children. The appointment of ELC principal was just what I needed to do at the time and I eagerly accepted the position. Again I had contact with the Kewtown families. By now our first babies of 1972 had moved onto the Yellow and Blue units and we had ELC "graduates" and their parents visiting regularly to show off their "big school" uniform and results – the latter being as impressive as expected. The ELC was indeed helping in bringing about change.

During my time as Principal I was training groups of teacher-aides using the ELC TAP Programme. By this time we had the Baby Care Training Programme written up and I had the privilege of training the ELC Red unit staff who had over the three years been part of the experimental work in that unit.

A new community programme, **Build a Better Society** (BABS) had been "born" on the ELC premises, starting out in our Parents' Room. Several papers on the work of the ELC were available as well as training Programmes in the form of sets of manuals including the **Home Visiting Programme** which was staffed by six Home Visitors.

As the ELC expanded in staff and new programmes, it became necessary to raise more funds. The social workers made BABS take on a wider role in Kewtown. Changes in the ELC staff took place as most of the staff were taken over to the Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) which evolved out of the ELC. The ELC became an affiliate of the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work (FCW). As Principal, I was taken along with FCW under the Directorship of Professor Adam Small, and took on the co-ordination and training of all their affiliated projects. The ELC workshop programmes continued and for the following two years I was training the ELRU trainees as well as working with the FCW supervisors, teachers, and alongside their social worker with the Management Committees.

I resigned from the post of Supervisor and Planner of ECD Programmes after three years

Ros Herbert continued her pioneering work in various roles within the Early Learning Resource Centre (ELRU) until she formally retired in 2011 and emigrated to Australia with her family.

The Early Learning Centre as a Site of Struggle

On Thursday, 31 August 1989, at about 20h35 a powerful bomb ripped through the hall of the Early Learning Centre and the offices of the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work. The bomb went off minutes after a meeting of the Cape Youth Congress in the building. This happened during the run-up to the general election on 6 September 1989, when South Africa was in the grips of massive anti-election and anti-apartheid campaigns in which scores of demonstrators and activists were arrested and detained after clashes with police. The former director, Beulah Fredericks and Dr Lionel Louw, chairperson of the board, strongly condemned the blast and indicated that the attack on the organization was an attack on the community that it served because it took place on the evening of a planned quarterly board meeting and the regular meeting of the Kewtown Youth.

It was later learnt that the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) recruited a person from the local community to plant a limpet mine in the building which was intended to kill and instill fear in the hearts of the local community leaders. In Correspondence to the Bernard van Leer Foundation in the Netherlands, Beulah wrote as follows "... we cannot give up now and there is no time to look back. Given our commitment to the struggle for a democratic non-racial South Africa, we will not be silenced. One day in the future we will be free people and justice will prevail."

During the TRC and amnesty hearings it emerged that six applicants, CCB managing director Joe Verster, Abram "Slang" van Zyl, CCB chairman Edward Webb, Leon "Chappies" Maree, Daniel "Staal" Burger, Calla Botha and Wouter Jakobus Basson – the nephew of Wouter "Dr Death" Basson, applied for amnesty. Most of the members have also sought amnesty for the bombing of the Early Learning Centre, the plot to murder the Minister of Transport at the time, Dullar Omar, who was an anti-apartheid activist, and Weekly Mail journalist, Gavin Evans.

From the media reports we learnt the following "...Colonel Verster admitted he sanctioned the bombing of the ELC, but said the CCB had not intended anyone to die in the explosion. It was meant to destroy the building and to send a message to the young political activists. Peter Williams, a youth activist at the time of the bombing had the opportunity to cross examine the bombers during the amnesty hearings in his capacity as a practising attorney. Peter Williams was the co-leader of the Cape Youth Congress, which met at the Early Learning Centre in Athlone, where a remote-controlled limpet mine was placed in the crèche by a local gangster, Igsak Hardien, who had been recruited by CCB operatives. For his dirty work Hardien was paid R18 000.

Mr Williams, who told the commission that he had waited 11 years for the truth, said he believed that the CCB had intended to kill the young political activists who used the Early Learning Centre as a meeting-place. The eight activists who were with Mr Williams in the crèche at the time of the explosion, stood up. Their attorney, Selwyn Hockey, asked Colonel Verster whether he was sorry he had called them "gangsters who were enemies of the state".

Colonel Verster refused to be drawn into a public confession, in spite of hearing that the intended victims were teachers, social workers and academics. Among those he refused to apologise to were, Osman Alexander, at the time a university student, Chris Ferndale, a social worker, Nazeema Mohamed, a university researcher and Miranda Abrahams, then a nursery school teacher.

Mr Williams shared with the commission that they were lucky to be alive and that the CCB had intended to kill them. “I was in the building at the Early Learning Centre when the bomb exploded. I ran outside and immediately noticed that there was a Casspir on the scene. Within minutes there were also policemen and bomb experts. Did they have prior knowledge of the bombing?” Mr Williams enquired. In response Colonel Verster said that the Early Learning Centre had been chosen as a target because the premises had been used for “leftist activities”. He further stated that “I was under the impression that the centre was used to plan bomb explosions.”

In another report Joe Verster, admitted under cross-examination by senior advocate George Bizos that the plot to kill Mr Omar had been hatched after information supplied by a gangster. It was understood that the gangster referred to was Edward “Peaches” Gordon, the Dixie Boys gangster who was murdered after testifying at the Harms Commission hearings into Third Force activities. Verster claimed his operatives had recruited hoodlums because the “anti-apartheid terrorists” had been “creeping around with gangsters”. Mr Bizos countered that according to the evidence it was in fact the CCB operatives who were “creeping around with the gangsters”. Mr Bizoz on behalf of Dullah Omar said that the applicants failed to make full disclosure to the Amnesty Committee. “They are not sorry for what they did. I don’t get the impression that for them there are any moral, ethical or human considerations”. Mr Omar further stated that reconciliation suffered a serious setback when the hearings were moved from the Early Learning Centre in Athlone to the TRC headquarters in the City centre as a result of an urgent application to the Cape High Court by Van Zyl who feared for his personal safety in Athlone (Cape Argus, 13/14 March 2000).

Inspecting the damages after the bomb blast

During the hearings Calla Botha broke ranks with his former CCB boss and apologised unconditionally for bombing a crèche. “I feel remorse like you won’t believe it,” he told the media after apologising to the head of the Early Learning Centre, Beulah Fredericks, who escaped – by five minutes – being blown up in the limpet mine blast in Athlone. Botha, an explosives expert, who has been linked in court testimony to the assassination of activist David Webster and attorney Anton Lubowski – said he was “deeply sorry” about the bombing.

Although Beulah Fredericks shook hands with Botha, she was clearly uneasy. “I am reserving judgment until Botha takes the stand, maybe he is genuinely reaching out, maybe he is just in a corner. I have seen a lot of insincerity this week” (Cape Argus, 17 March 2000).

With generous support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation the building was restored and rededicated on 13 June 2000.

“Dare to be a Daniel.
Dare to stand alone.
Dare to have a purpose true.
Dare to make it known.”

Dr Franklin Sonn, addressing the ECD sector at Community Chest

June 2013

The influence of Social Work in the ECD sector

Many Social Workers have played key roles in the mobilisation of communities to bring about positive change. Being a Social Worker during the seventies and eighties meant that Social Workers were at the coal face when Apartheid laws were at its fiercest. Discrimination, displacement and forced removals of communities, separation and segregation of families along colour lines led to untold heartache and trauma for families and Social Workers had to assist families to pick up the pieces. As a profession there was also discrimination which ensured that only non-white Social Workers were allowed to work in poor Coloured and Black townships, and earning much less than their White colleagues.

Conventional Social Work practice in welfare organisations and government departments meant that Social Workers were assigned caseloads and expected to work with clients and families on an individual basis. In the South African context when our communities like "Rome" was literally burning, community work became a more radical method of Social Work practice and intervention. Community Workers employed by welfare organisation and charities were engaged in a range of community work programmes and activities that involved the active participation of community members. The notion of "helping people to help themselves" became prominent and communities experienced the impact of their involvement. Social Workers were also influenced by the work of Paolo Freire and his ideas around popular education and liberation. Community Workers began to organise social, sports and recreation clubs and groups that became the nucleus of youth and civic bodies. These activities also led to the mobilisation of communities. Taylor (1997) described mobilisation as "organised mass action based on a high level of awareness to attain a certain goal". To mobilise communities into action in the form of marches, protest demonstrations, boycotts, petitions and mass meetings or the formation of street committees, there must be a sense of organisation on the ground. According to Taylor (1997) mobilisation involved stimulating and conscientising people to play a critical role in issues affecting their lives in an organised way. Mobilisation in the South African context was about creating an enabling environment for a vibrant civil society to challenge state power and to promote equitable development. It can therefore be argued that the struggle for democracy in South Africa was rooted in the terrible conditions experienced by the poorest and most disempowered people.

The poor socio-economic situation of people on the Cape Flats were influenced by the Group Areas Act of 1950 and resulted in families being resettled in townships with inadequate housing to accommodate families, leading to overcrowding and the building of illegal backyard dwellings that also impacted on the health of families. Cape Flats communities were characterised by the poverty syndrome — long periods of unemployment or intermittent employment, providing unskilled, domestic or farm work, families affected by high rates of marital instability, communities affected by crime, violence, substance abuse and poor scholastic performance.

With this context in mind Short (1985) noted that most welfare work in the Kewtown community involved individual casework with Social Workers burdened by heavy caseloads, and social benefits and welfare services being grossly inadequate. Despite severe problems of community disorganisation, Short's (1985) assessment were that community work organisations were virtually non-existent in the 1970s. We however know that Community Workers such as Achmat Davids, Faiek Gamieldien, Lionel Woldson, George Gibbs, Francie Lund, Rita Strydom, Freda Brock, and many others that followed did pioneering work at a time when state funding for essential social services in poor communities were non-existent and organisations were dependent on foreign aid and small scale community fundraising initiatives.

Freda Brock described their work on the streets of Kewtown with Rommel Roberts with his guitar accompanied by Social Work students, Cheryl Delport, Fatima Hendricks and Fatima Khatieb. Informal playgroups were formed and mothers watching, began to become interested. In time some of them formed the hub of 'The Crèche Group', or were drawn into other interest groups (Madressa, soup kitchen, civic association or neighbourhood committees) by the BABS workers. Mrs Martin, Mrs Cupido, Mrs Lakay and Mrs Abrahams were among those who ran the little playgroup in BABS' street level offices at 48 Kudu Street which was the beginning of the later full-scale ECD centre now known as the Pegasus Centre (Freda Brock, May 2014).

The ECD sector were also blessed with academics who had a direct role in the management of organisations. Dr Lionel Louw and Professor Adam Small were both Heads of Departments of Social Work at UCT and UWC respectively. In their management role of the Foundation for Community Work their guidance and leadership played a crucial role in how the organisation positioned itself in the community. With communities segregated along racial lines welfare organisations could easily plod along and do as the "law" prescribed. It was however important for Professor Small and Dr Louw to ensure that FCW and its work involved building and strengthening bridges that connected Black and Coloured townships. A rhetorical question posed by Professor Small in one of his poems was "what about the law?" questioning the injustice executed in the name of the law.

The early years of FCW were the breeding ground for community development and transformation. In the biography of Renier van Rooyen and his association with FCW, Edna van Harte shared the following: "The awakening of community development work happened during the mid-seventies. We were a group of community activists who questioned the role of organisations that continued to maintain the status quo by not taking issue with community concerns … we did not refer to it as transformation, but in essence the questions asked were about change and relevancy. We consulted broadly and actively listened to community voices." (Van Rooyen, J, 2010)

Beulah Fredericks, former Director of FCW described the organisation as a "coloured" welfare organisation that outgrew apartheid restrictions and moved from welfare to community development work (Van Rooyen, J. 2010).

The Foundation for Community Work was also fortunate to have academics associated with the University of the Western Cape who were prepared to work in the community. Francie Lund, a lecturer in Sociology, and attached to the Institute for Social Development was appointed as the organisation's first Community Worker. Edna van Harte an experienced researcher with close ties with the university was also a member of the FCW Board, and together these two pioneers compiled a manual for community work titled "COMMUNITY WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE", that became a reference book for many social work students at the UWC. This study explored the views of social workers involved in community work and their experiences during the early 70s. Working at the coal face meant a close up view of the poverty and deprivation experienced in marginalised communities where issues of unemployment, housing and overcrowding or life in informal settlements or squatter camps as it was known, required the community worker to be resourceful, and have the ability to mobilise communities into action. The authors concluded as such "Community work by itself will never overcome the social problems that have arisen in a society based on the grossly unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity. We firmly believe, however, in the contribution it can make to development and change" Lund, F. J. and Van Harte, E. L (1980).

In the foreword of this publication Professor Adam Small, as Director of FCW had the

following advice for Social Workers "In a socio-political climate such as South Africa's, community workers face some unique problems as presented in the study, is worthwhile for social workers to be doing two things equally hard all the time: work in the communities in a down-to-earth grassroots fashion all the time, and think evaluatively about what they are doing also all the time".

The 1980s also witnessed a wave of radical young lions joining the ECD sector to be employed as field and community workers. The likes of Professor Daniel Plaatjies, Harold Coetzee and Terence November were employed at Grassroots and Trevor Lombaard and Quinton Arendse joined the Foundation for Community Work under the guidance of Beulah Fredericks and Eunice Ferndale. Chris Ferndale was also a prominent member of the local Kewtown Youth League. Others who joined were Jann Wattlington, Jacqui Tooke, Claudia Brown, Sonja Adams, Nomfundo Mdingi and Nomfundo Memane and Baba Ngcotto who all played crucial roles in the expansion of ECD programmes and assisting committees with training and capacity building. Many social workers that started out in the ECD sector moved on to become leaders and directors of organisations and in government departments and other parastatals.

Cape Herald

Helping people to help themselves

What it takes to be a Social Worker

Many young men and women who want to devote their lives to the service of people less privileged than themselves are turning to social work. It is a new and exciting profession and social workers are in great demand.

In order to be fully equipped as a social work, a young man or woman must complete a three-year degree course at a recognised university.

Apart from her BA (Social Science), the social worker is also required to have a pleasant personality and a sympathetic nature.

She should never become emotionally involved in her work. The idea is to get the clients to help themselves.

Coloured social workers are gradually filling positions at various organisations. But lots more are needed.

A matriculant with a normal pass can register for a diploma course in social work, but the diploma does not carry as much weight as a degree in social work.

For the degree course the subjects required are sociology, psychology and social work, and also the normal art and language subjects.

Three

Social work is split into three types: case work, group work and community organisation.

The Case Worker deals with specific problems such as alcoholism, the handicapped and marital guidance.

The Group Worker's primary function is working with clubs and groups, for example groups of aged people. Alcoholics and people with motherhood problems can also be dealt with in groups.

Community Organisation involves getting the community to undertake welfare projects themselves. The community organiser tries to find out from the community what it needs and get these people to have an active part in the need solving process. This is what former Capetonian Mr Adam Small is now doing in Riverlea, Johannesburg.

A lot of good work is being done by social workers from Athlone. Various cases are dealt with at the Early Learning Centre.

Rita Strydom studied for a diploma course at the Minnie Hofmeyer College in Worcester.

Fatima Khatieb is doing practical work at the Early Learning Centre.

Rita Strydom, supervisor of the H0me Early Learning Programme.

Cheryl Delport, social work undergraduate studying at the University of the Western Cape.

She worked for two years in Somerset East as a social worker. At present she is an undergraduate styding at the University of the Western Cape.

Supervisor

Rita is the supervisor of a programme called 'HELP' (Home Early Learning Programme).

Her programme is aimed at a better understanding between mother and child. She is assisted by two ordinary women. The three of them will visit a family in the community for one hour. They then work with mother and child.

Rita is unmarried but declined to give her age. She has a beaming look in her eyes when she speaks of her love for people. I love my job and I love working with people, she said smilingly.

Freda van der Ross is the daughter of the educationist Dr Richard van der Ross. Freda recently graduated at the University of the Western Cape and holds a BA degree.

At the Early Learning Centre she holds the post of BABS (Build a Better Society) co-ordinator and is the link between Babs and the Early Learning Centre. She previously worked at Child Life in Wynberg.

Her sharp reply to the reason for her doing social work was simply: 'I was attracted to the job.'

Nineteen-year-old Cheryl Delport has been with the Early Learning Centre for the past few months. She is an undergraduate. Her concern is with group and street work. Cheryl deals with both mentally retarded and normal children. Should she encounter a problem too difficult to handle, she hands it to Freda van der Ross who then deals with it from a case worker's level.

George Gibbs, like his colleagues, has a personality to suit a social worker's position. He has been with the Early Learning Centre for one year.

'There is a crying need for family case workers,' he said. 'Especially with problems arising all the time. The only people to undertake family case work is the Department of Coloured Affairs.'

Social Workers' Forum

Social service workers unite against Apartheid welfare system

Protest action

The government is faced with a formidable challenge of mass protest against its Apartheid policies unprecedented in the history of South Africa. The people have seized the initiative and are determined to destroy Apartheid in all spheres of life. Recently we have witnessed the anti-Apartheid campaign unfold and the gains achieved against discrimination in health, education and social amenities.

Facts about Apartheid welfare system

The South African welfare system is entrenched by racial discrimination which manifests itself in 14 different State departments which serve the various population groups. This welfare system is costly, duplicates services and promotes the unequal allocation of resources to benefit Whites.

The Black population in South Africa have no political rights, thus no say in influencing the flow of welfare resources in their direction.

The following statistics speak for itself:

Welfare budget

House of Assembly	(Whites)	43.04%
House of Reps	(Coloureds)	26.00%
House of Delegates		6.76%
Homelands Blacks		23.76%

Presently the government is implementing its privatisation policy in welfare. The State is avoiding its responsibility and wants the poor to provide for its own welfare needs. This policy is doomed to fail as one out of every four families in the platteland have no income.

Privatisation would escalate conflict and decrease the survival possibilities of our Black population.

Our demands towards a people's welfare

1. We demand one welfare department for all South Africa's people.
2. We demand living, equal pensions and grants for our people.
3. The abolition of all discrimination in the welfare field and all spheres of life.
4. We demand equal subsidisation for all social work salaries.
5. We demand a non-racial welfare system
6. We demand welfare not warfare.
7. Stop own affairs welfare.
8. Houses, security and employment for all.

Social service workers' response

The Social Workers' Forum must unite all social service workers in the field to spearhead our campaign.

Social service workers must work towards redefining their role in a post-Apartheid welfare system.

A call is made to all social service workers to concretely demonstrate their opposition to the present conditions in the welfare system.

The Social Workers' Forum has organised a picket demonstration for Friday 6 October 1989. Social workers who want to take part in the demonstration please contact the following people:

1. Mr G Kholer at Ph. 952-3594
2. Mrs Marcella Naidoo at Ph. 959-2851
3. Mrs Ann Ntebe at Ph. 638-1164 during office hours, before Friday 6 October.

VIVA SOCIAL WORKERS' FORUM

FORWARD TO A PEOPLE'S WELFARE SYSTEM

Pamphlet issued by
Social Worker's Forum
July 1989

Prof. Adam Small and the Committee of Jack and Jill in Morningstar, Durbanville.

Perspectives on ECD

Views shared by:

Linda Biersteker
Lauren van Niekerk
Prof. Eric Atmore
Riedewhaan Allie
Michaela Ashley-Cooper

Cape Argus, 18 October 2012

SA's young needs a solid start — the sooner the better

The cycle of inequality must be broken writes Linda Biersteker

South Africa's school results are generally appalling. Poor performance begins in the foundation phase and the gap between rich and poor pupils simply keeps widening as pupils progress through school.

In an attempt to close the gap, the National Development Plan proposes an additional year of pre-school education.

This has generated much media attention, which has detracted from the plan's important focus on the developmental needs of much younger children — for, without early intervention, an extra year of preschool may simply be too little, too late.

Investing in early childhood development has the potential to shift the life chances of those born in poverty, equalise opportunities and break the intergenerational cycle of inequality.

The first 1 000 days, from conception to two years, are a particularly sensitive period for brain development. After this, brain development slows and builds on the base already acquired.

Good nutrition, health and stimulation are therefore essential from the very beginning. Without this strong foundation children will not be able take full advantage of their pre-school education. Therefore, intervening early is most effective and offers the greatest returns.

This is particularly true for children who experience multiple forms of deprivation, such as malnutrition, poor health, poor and overburdened caregivers, and limited access to services.

Specific measures are needed to ensure that these very vulnerable children are supported.

Although the government's National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development (ECD) provides for a comprehensive range of care and support services for children from birth to the age of four, and prioritises 2.6 million young children living in poverty, the sad reality is that ECD services still do not reach the youngest and poorest children, and those with disabilities.

While about 80 percent of five-year-olds attend Grade R, including many of the poorest children, only 18 percent of children under three, and about half of three- and four-year-olds, attend preschools or crèches.

Children over three benefit from structured learning in groups, and poor children get the greatest benefits from exposure to good programmes.

But only one in five of the poorest children attends a pre-

Good nutrition, health and stimulation build a strong base
PICTURES: MATHEW JORDAAN

school, because families cannot afford fees, or no pre-school is available. Centres in poorer communities are often of poorer quality.

While children with disabilities are a priority group for early childhood services, they make up less than 1 percent of the enrolment in ECD centres. It is usually better for babies and toddlers to be cared for at home, but there is a serious lack of affordable child care for working or studying parents.

Though most care takes place at home, there are very few programmes to support parents with childcare, early learning and access to essential services.

Children under two are the most vulnerable to malnutrition and stunting, which affects brain development.

In the absence of an effective public-health programme to identify children at risk and provide adequate nutrition, the child-support grant remains the main instrument for addressing children's basic needs.

While the grant is associated with improved growth and preschool attendance, children under two are less likely to receive it than older children, primarily because their births have not yet been registered.

Ilifa Labantwana's Sobambisana programme has recently evaluated different strategies for increasing access to ECD services in vulnerable communities in four provinces in SA.

The study found that the youngest children, and those least likely to access services, are best reached through programmes that work with families, either at home or in the community.

These programmes have been effective to link children to services, and support early stimulation and responsive parenting.

The message is clear — if all young children are to realise their potential and right to development, we need to invest in young children and ensure that these services reach those children most in need.

Linda Biersteker is head of research at the Early Learning Resource Unit. She is a contributing author to the South African Child Gauge 2012, released yesterday by the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town. It focuses on children and inequality, and is available on www.ci.org.za

Cape Argus, 28 November 2011

Small steps in caring for the young

SA's future depends on ensuring children are fed, safe and equipped for life, write Lauren van Niekerk and Eric Atmore

Each year on November 20 the world celebrates Universal Children's Day, when we mark the day on which the UN first adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and then the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

This is the month, this year, in which four children in North West province died because they had not eaten a decent meal in weeks.

The Mmupele children — Onkarabile, 2, Nkune, 6, Mapule, 7, and nine-year-old Sebengu were found dead in the veld, apparently as a result of suffering from hunger and dehydration after setting out to find their mother.

The bodies of the two younger children were found about three days after the children left the Verdwaal, Itoseng settlement, about 25km from Lichtenburg, while those of the older children were found more than two weeks later.

As a country, SA's commitment to children's rights is contained in our constitution which makes provision that no person should be without the basic necessities of life. Each child has the right to basic education, nutrition, shelter, health care services and social services and Universal Children's Day is an appropriate time to reflect on and assess how SA is doing in realising these rights for all children.

Children now make up 38 percent of SA's population. Many of these children live separately from their parents, with a significant number of children (50 percent) living in rural areas of Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It is in these rural provinces that so many children live in child-headed households and where all members are under the age of 18. The General Household Survey in 2009 indicated that SA had 95 000 children living in child-headed households. These children are more at risk than others of poor access to services, inconsistent income and poor living circumstances.

International law and the Constitution acknowledge that children have the right to social assistance when their families are unable to meet their basic needs.

In 2009, the General Household Survey showed that 61 percent of children lived below the poverty line of R522 a month.

Closely linked to this income poverty indicator is unemployment. Stats SA (2009) indicated that about 6.6 million children lived in households where no adults were employed. While the government provides financial support to children through social assistance programmes such as the Child Support Grant of R270 a month, this was still far too little.

By April 2011, 10.5 million children from birth to 16 years of age were accessing the Child Support Grant, making it the

largest child poverty alleviation programme in SA. This grant has contributed towards food and education for millions of children across the country.

Every child has the right to an education. Being educated is fundamental to economic opportunities and it is encouraging to note that SA has a high rate of school enrolment, with 97 percent of children of school-going age attending school.

However, these high levels of attendance disguise the poor quality of basic education and the high drop-out rate. Analysis of school attendance shows that the drop-out rate increases sharply once children reach 16.

Reasons for school drop-out include disillusionment with the quality of education, financial constraints, exam failure and pregnancy among teenage girls.

It has been documented that SA is the country with the highest number of people living with HIV.

Paediatric HIV is propelled by the adult epidemic, with most children being infected before and during the birth process, as well as later, through breastfeeding. The Actuarial Society of SA 2008 (ASSA2008) Aids and Demographic Model indicated that while the prevalence of paediatric HIV was rising, the rate at which it was spreading was dropping.

This could be attributed to

HAUNTED: Apple Dilapiso was the last person to see the four Mmupele children alive. They died of hunger and dehydration in the veld when they went in search of their mother. Their plight reflects those of hundreds of thousands of children in this country. Picture: Phill Magakoe

the increased survival rates of children who now have access to antiretroviral treatment. In 2010, an estimated 438 000 children under 15 were HIV-positive.

A commonly used gauge for measuring health status and socio-economic development is the infant and under-five mortality rates. In 2000, the SA government adopted the Millennium Development Goals for reducing poverty and inequality in the world. The fourth goal aims to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds from the 1990 figure of 60 deaths per 1 000 live births, to 20 by 2015. ASSA2008 has estimated that the infant mortality rate has steadily declined from 52 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2000 to 34 in 2010.

It has also been reported that the under-five mortality rate had increased progressively up until 2003 when it reached a peak of 74 deaths per 1 000 live births and then gradually decreased to 50 in 2010. This reverse in the trend correlates with the national mother-to-child prevention programme that was implemented in 2003, thus indicating the programme's success.

Despite the fact that the government has established a range of programmes aimed at reducing hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity, child hunger remains a challenge, with approximately 16 percent of children (3 million) living in households where child hunger has been reported.

This is a substantial decrease in reported child hunger from 30 percent in 2002 to 18 percent in 2007. Similar to poverty and unemployment, hunger is highest among black African children, with 17 percent of the total black African child population living in households that reported child hunger, compared to 13 percent of coloured children, 2 percent of Indian children and only 1 percent of white children.

Our constitution states that everyone has the right to access to sufficient water, as well as to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being.

Water is a requirement for health, hygiene and sanitation. While young children have the right to sufficient water, the water that they have access to is often of poor quality, resulting in our young children being particularly vulnerable to cholera and diarrhoea.

In 2009, it was recorded that 7 million children live in households with no direct access to clean drinking water. There has been very little improvement in children's access to water between 2002 and 2009.

There are significant differences in access to water across provinces, with 46 percent of children having access to clean water in KwaZulu-Natal, 44 percent in Limpopo and only 32 percent in the Eastern Cape. These figures are compared with those in the Western Cape, Free State and Gauteng, where over 90 percent of children have access to drinkable water.

In addition to this is the lack of children's access to basic sanitation in many households: 6.8 million children do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities, and are forced to make use of unventilated pit latrines, buckets and/or open land. Inadequate sanitation results in young children being susceptible to a range of illness and diseases compromising their health and nutritional status.

It is clear that our children's rights are not being realised. It is now time for policies and plans to be put into action, so that events such as that which led to the deaths of the Mmupele children never happen again.

It is crucial that our government commits itself to the survival, protection and development of our children. Our future depends on this.

Lauren van Niekerk is programme manager at the Centre for Early Childhood Development. Eric Atmore is associate professor in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town.

Cape Argus, 8 January 2014

Boosting pre-school education can help alleviate poverty

Investing in developing children during their formative years is one way of securing the country's future, writes Riedewhaan Allie

Matric results are normally the yardstick we use to determine how well our country is. Angie Motshekga, Basic Education Minister, and her team have to be congratulated for ensuring a steady increase in the pass rate from 62.6 percent in 2008 to a healthy 78.2 percent last year.

But as we celebrate with our matriculants and wish them every success in securing "a better life", we have to acknowledge that so much more needs to be done, much earlier, given the conditions under which many thousands of our children are still living.

Success in matric must be viewed as part of a trajectory that starts with quality early-childhood education and development.

All children need a solid foundation in their formative years if we hope to address the challenges of poverty.

The Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman has argued that investment in early childhood has a future return of more than 7 percent, and that young children who are exposed to quality early-childhood development programmes are more likely to complete school and become gainfully employed in their adult years.

Part of the return on this investment comes in the form of future government savings on rehabilitation, welfare programmes and social security — a significant consideration in a country where more than 16 million people receive government grants and more than 11 million children are beneficiaries of child support grants.

However, in poor and marginalised communities, early childhood development programmes and services are not always available, and are only accessible to those who can afford them.

In the Western Cape, we have nearly 500 000 children under four, but only 1 025 registered preschools that provide for about 80 000 children, and a further 1 500 unregistered facilities that absorb another 30 000 children.

The reality for many children is that they will end up in preschool programmes that are inadequate because the teachers do no have formal training and experience or the physical environment may negate the potential for stimulation and development because of overcrowding and the absence of learning resources.

Many children therefore enter

the formal school system at a disadvantage and also without the benefit of exposure to the basics of the Grade R curriculum, and are compelled to play catch-up in Grade 1.

It follows that many thousands run the risk of not making it through formal schooling and ending up as recipients of government grants.

Obviously, we are not investing enough in the early years of our children.

Analysis of the 2011 census suggests that about 5.7 million children will enter school in the next seven years, one million more than the enrolment over the past seven years.

This will require additional schools and classrooms and educational resources that will stretch the capabilities of education departments to breaking point if they are already struggling to deliver to existing children.

We have to start looking at reducing the number of hoops children have to jump through before they even get into the formal school system, and designing innovative ways to make it easier for children in their formative years.

In the Western Cape, there is a good foundation to build on. Grassroots Educare Trust runs extensive playgroup programmes where groups of caregivers and their children come together regularly to be part of a stimulation programme and have the opportunity to access a meal.

The Early Learning Resource Unit's Family and Community Motivators programme as well as the Foundation for Community Work's Family in Focus programmes concentrate on taking learning opportunities for young children into the home with the hope that families take responsibility for the stimulation, development and safety of their children.

Similar outreach programmes that support the caregivers directly are also implemented by the Centre for Early Childhood Development, Sikhula Sonke and Valley Development Project in our poorest communities such as Masiphumelele, Guguletu, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain, Atlantis, Langa, Valhalla Park, Delft and on the West Coast.

This programme is an intervention strategy that empowers communities at different levels, including, at a community level, encouraging communities to manage projects effectively.

When donors understand the challenges experienced by young children in poor communities, it helps to strengthen their partnership with non-profit organisations.

In communities where many children do not have the benefit and experience of a formal preschool environment, this type of collaboration helps to give children a headstart.

Realising that we have challenges in education requires the government, business and civil society to work together to address the difficulties experienced by our children.

We can take some lessons from President Barack Obama. In his State of the Union address last February, he acknowledged that more investment was required in early education to turn things around for the American economy, noting that "the lack of access to preschool education can shadow children for the rest of their lives".

To fund his "Preschool for All" initiative, he promised to allocate $75 billion (R796bn) over the next decade, to be financed through ring-fencing a tax increase of $0.94 per packet of cigarettes.

Obama's appeal to his senate was: "Let's do what works and make sure that none of our children start the race of life already behind."

We should be doing the same.

Riedewhaan Allie is the director of the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work.

Cape Argus, 24 March 2014

A joint effort is needed to put an end to deprivation

Grants have helped but many children require more support, Lauren-Jayne van Niekerk and Michaela Ashley-Cooper write

Despite global recognition of the importance of upholding children's rights, millions of South African children still suffer poverty, homelessness, abuse, neglect, preventable diseases and unequal access to education. For our country to flourish, these basic human rights need protecting.

Every year since 1994, March 21 has been observed as Human Rights Day to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre and celebrate South Africa's constitution, which grants equal rights to all.

Human Rights day is a suitable time to reflect on the progress made in realising rights for our children.

Some areas show progress while results are disappointing in others.

Of the population of 51.7 million, 5.6 million are age 4 or younger (10.8 percent), 4.8 million are between 5 and 9 (9.3 percent) and almost 4.6 million are between 10 and 14 (8.9 percent).

The eighth Children's Institute Child Gauge, released last October, presents detailed findings on the state of children in South Africa.

A key challenge is income poverty. Children living in income poverty, or below the poverty line, refers to children without enough resources to meet their needs (estimated at about R604 per person a month). Income poverty is critically linked to poor health, diminished access to education and unsafe environments.

In South Africa, these rates for children are worryingly high, with 58 percent of all children living below the poverty line in 2011.

Encouragingly, the figure has decreased every year since 2003 — probably because of the significant expansion of the child-support grant in the past 15 years.

The effects of that grant cannot be underestimated. Last year, more than 11 million children had access to the grant (set at R300 a month from October).

The programme's expansion means that from 2005 to 2013 and extra 5 million children have benefited from the grant.

Encouragingly, it is estimated that roughly 76 percent of eligible children (children whose primary caregiver earns less than R3 000) have access to the grant.

Another area of significant government spending is education. Worryingly, this area yields the poorest results. In 2011, about 330 000 children of school-going age (out of 11.3 million) were not attending school.

Although the attendance rates are high, they disguise the issue of school drop-outs, particularly among children 14 and older.

Attendance rates slide once schooling is no longer compulsory: 98 percent of 14-year-olds go to school, 97 percent of 15-year-olds, 93 percent of 16-year-olds, 88 percent of 17-year-olds, and 81 percent of 18-year-olds.

Among reasons for non-attendance, the most predominant is the high cost of education — and a perception that "education is useless".

Of great significance is the recently published, legally binding, norms and standards for school infrastructure put out by Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga.

For the first time in South Africa's history, by law every public primary and secondary school must have electricity, water, working toilet facilities, classrooms that are safe, with a maximum of 40 pupils, internet access, adequate security, and, after these are in place, adequate libraries, laboratories and sports facilities.

Considering early childhood development, it is promising to see there has been an increase in access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes.

It is crucial, however, that these numbers increase much more, particularly in the younger age cohort of birth to four, as the early years have been recognised as the most critical time for brain development, as well as the ideal phase for passing on values important to building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society.

Early and appropriate provisioning and intervention for children at risk can reverse the effects of deprivation and make it possible for children to grow and develop to their full potential,

HARD TIME

Millions of children suffer from poverty, abuse and unequal access to education, the writers say

PICTURE: COURTNEY AFRICA

reducing the need for remedial services to address developmental lags and social problems later in life.

These programmes not only affect the individual but society, in terms of economic success and social well-being.

In 2011, the Department of Basic Education calculated that 284 595 children were enrolled in 4 607 early childhood development centres with 784 680 more attending pre-Grade R and Grade R at primary schools (94 percent at public schools and 6 percent independent schools.

To break this down further, for children in the 3-to-6-year age cohort, 73 percent attended some form of ECD facility in 2011, with 90 percent of children aged 5 to 6 attending Grade R or pre-Grade R.

One of the most critical of human rights for children is the right to health and access to health services, including HIV/Aids prevention and treatment programmes, South Africa has one of the world's highest rates of people living with HIV.

A devastating high number of children are infected with HIV in South Africa, estimated in 2011 at 450 000 for children 15 and younger.

There were significant differences in rates across the nine provinces (ranging from 1.3 percent of children in the Western Cape to 4.2 percent in KwaZulu-Natal. Of concern is that, of those children eligible to receive anti-retroviral therapy, only 67 percent were getting this treatment.

Although the prevalence of HIV for children and adults is increasing, the rate of increase is getting smaller each year.

This could be due to the increased rates of survival as a result of improved access to treatment programmes.

Following this positive trend in child survival rates for children affected with HIV is the steadily decreasing infant and under-5 mortality rate.

The infant mortality rate (defined as the number of babies less than one-year-old who dies, in a given year, per 1 000 live births) has decreased from 52 in 2 000 to 30 in 2011,

Similarly the under-5 mortality rate (defined as the number of children under five who die, in a given year, per 1 000 live births) has decreased from a peak of 74 in 2003 to 42 in 2011.

Other programmes which the government has implemented have been aimed at reducing food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition.

However, in 2012, 2.5 million children in South Africa (14 percent) were reported as living in households where child hunger was present. This figure has decreased over the years from 16 percent in 2006 and 17 percent in 2010.

The fact that these figures have remained at this level, and not reduced significantly, speaks to efficacy issues and possible ineffective targeting strategies of the programmes being implemented.

From these figures, it is clear that the majority of South Africa's children are not having their basic human rights met.

Our commitment to the rights and well-being of children is more in words than in action. Current policies will not result in changing the lives of our youngest citizens without strong political will and sufficient financial resources.

The government and society need to work together to create a country where all children are protected, healthy, educated, and cared for.

Until this happens, the patters of inequality and trends in child poverty will largely remain unchanged.

Lauren-Jayne van Niekerk and Michaela Ashley-Cooper are programme managers at the Centre for Early Childhood Development in Cape Town. All data presented here is taken from the Child Gauge 2012 and Child Gauge 2013, produced by the Children's Institute.

The Foundation for Community Work "... a risk worth taking"

Renier van Rooyen and his investment in children's future

In a 2003 interview with Beulah Fredericks (FCW Director: 1983-2003) Renier van Rooyen explained what motivated him to set up an endowment fund and his relationship with the Foundation for Community Work:

> "One night I attended a business dinner at the Mount Nelson Hotel. It was over 30 years ago but I will never forget it — it must have been two in the morning when I drove home through the city and saw very small children sleeping under newspapers in a doorway. The sight made me sad and I felt that we could not allow this to continue — we must do something, in fact I must do something. At the time I was already involved with one or two creches in Kuilsriver and my idea was to donate a farm I owned near Witsand in the Southern Cape to be a Boys' Town or a Girls' Town for homeless children, but the farm was in a 'white group area' and the apartheid bureaucrats refused permission.
>
> "In those days I was not a very wealthy man, R500 000 was my savings towards the building of my house, but I felt the time was right to use the capital for a community project. It was not up to me to decide the needs and how to spend the funds. Show a spark of confidence in people and they will take responsibility," he said.
>
> "In the FCW today we have an organisation that South Africa can be proud of — all the children it has reached, the women who have developed their skills, the families that have been strengthened. The FCW has moved beyond the coloured welfare label to a more developmental approach in communities. The Family in Focus (FiF) Programme is the future for FCW and it could go countrywide, not necessarily under the FCW banner. FiF serves the purpose of love, support, reaching more children. Especially now with our new-found freedom, FCW needs to be marketed and made known to all who matter, including new donors. I am blessed to be associated with FCW. This was a risk worth taking ..." (from Fredericks, B. files as cited in Van Rooyen, J. 2010, p 122-124).

The compassion and philanthropy of Renier van Rooyen is well documented. As the MD of PEP, he was responsible for building houses in Blackheath for the employees of the company who were living in shacks. These houses were built for about R10 000 each and employees had to repay at R90 per month. Renier van Rooyen supported several welfare initiatives and in particular a mobile soup kitchen that eventually fed about 6 000 children per day by 1982.

He also supported several schools and educational programmes in the Western Cape and Upington where he started his business. His involvement and contributions towards scholarships and bursaries is also well known. In this regard a young Jakes Gerwel benefited from such a grant in the 1970s. In 1998, the late Jakes Gerwel, as Director General in the office of former President Nelson Mandela, used a lunch meeting to personally thank him for his contribution (Van Rooyen, J. 2010).

Why this man gave R500 000

AN AFRIKANER businessman, Mr Renier van Rooyen, has started a trust fund for Coloured welfare with a personal donation of R500 000. The Renier van Rooyen Trust was officially launched this week.

The launching was attended by Coloured leaders from all fields as well as Whites.

In his address to the gathering, Mr Van Rooyen, chairman of the board of Pep Stores Ltd., said he has had many years' experience of requests for financial contributions for a great diversity of charities.

"They vary from the simple, sincere and humble request of a church man, or a young hungry child, to the impressive glossy brochures of one or other rich university with its highly professional PRO."

These were often less deserving cases and often, liars and cheats who asked for help, he said.

Unchallenged

In the Western Cape, Mr Van Rooyen said, there were not many welfare organizations as well organized as the Community Chest which gave help on a wide scale every year.

"Through the years," he said, "I have also realized that the real poverty and misery which goes unchallenged around us are never pointed out by these organizations and collectors."

The suffering and actual lack of bread which, for instance, is experienced in the Western Cape by thousands of Coloured children, old people, workless and underpaid are always just referred to "by the way". The stigma of the slums of hungry, wet, cold children of homeless families are forgotten by the community for the sake of comfort.

"It is not talked about in good company," Mr Van Rooyen said. "It would rather be forgotten."

Opportunity

Mr Van Rooyen said there was a desperate need for an organization to see to these people's needs.

A further responsibility, he said was to bring about conditions and opportunities "so that people can develop and improve".

"It is my personal contention that people are prepared to work harder to sacrifice and to strive to reach the next step on the ladder if they are given the opportunity to strive that far."

Van Rooyen ... tragic pictures moved him

In April, 1973, he said, he saw a picture of two little Coloured children about 10 years old, sleeping under newspapers in an Adderley Street shop doorway. A week later it was a little boy of 12 who was found by the owner of a shop in front of his door in the middle of the night.

There was no place for these children to go.

Moved by the unwritten but tragic story behind these two pictures, Mr Van Rooyen approached a Kuils River minister of religion, Rev Gerry Cornellisen, over the possibility of trying to do something for such children "of whom there are hundreds, perhaps thousands".

The result of all this was the establishment of the Renier van Rooyen Trust and the Western Cape Welfare Organization which were launched this week.

It was a personal commitment by a South African, a White South African, an Afrikaner, to the eradication of poverty and suffering in the Coloured community.

And for many who witnessed the event and heard Mr Van Rooyen talk, it was a lesson in humility and concern for one's fellow men.

Paying tribute to Renier van Rooyen

Franklin Sonn, Chairperson of the FCW Board, 1981-1993

"Renier van Rooyen will occupy a proud place in our history — not for donating a large sum of money to establish FCW, but for the way he did it. Renier van Rooyen left us no doubt that he considered the oppressed and devalued people of the Cape Flats more than able to manage that large sum of money on our own and without his guidance and interference. The times we asked his advice he gave it hesitantly and sparingly, always assuring us that we knew best. He always acted with dignity and with the utmost respect and by so doing inspired dignity and respect. He in a real way inspired us even when we doubted ourselves. To us Renier van Rooyen stands out as a hero in our early quest for empowerment"

Edna van Harte, Board Member, 1979-1980

"FCW's work in communities was groundbreaking in a time when apartheid was reaching new and painful heights. A man with a great vision made this all possible. We need to acknowledge contributions towards a better South Africa and to do this across the rainbow nation. Acknowledgement is not about glorification, but rather to encourage others to follow in the footsteps. How does one measure what he has done — touching the lives of so many children and their families, especially the mothers. Our actions should not tarnish the Renier van Rooyen legacy. His visionary abilities, his love for and belief in people, and the manner in which he gave money — these are all very special".

Dr Lionel Louw, Chairperson of the FCW Board, 1993-2006

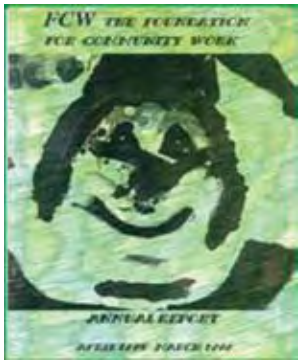
"What this man did still amazes me. Only in the last couple of years has he spoken about how he had to negotiate with people like Chris Heunis and go through hoops, to be able to make that donation for the upliftment of people of another colour — at a time when government had a stranglehold on how money could be spent. He has always taken an interest but never imposed, never told us what decisions to take. He never came to a single Board meeting. Somebody represented him but with no veto right, more as a gesture when people told him he should have a representative. Generosity and humility are his hallmarks. He still makes contributions and then there are the extras that come out of the blue — like a truck full of toys from a factory that he put up."

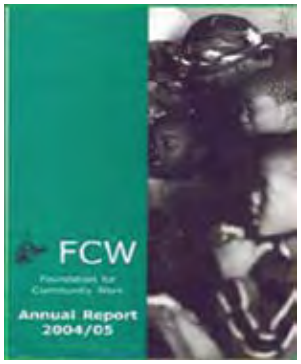
Beulah Fredericks, Director

Our attempt to tell the story of FCW and its achievements over the past 35 years have to begin with the acknowledgement of the role played by Renier van Rooyen who made the initial investment of R500 000 during the early 1970s to address the plight of destitute children on the Cape Flats. To mark the occasion, Beulah Fredericks who served as director of the organisation until 2002 paid tribute to Renier van Rooyen.

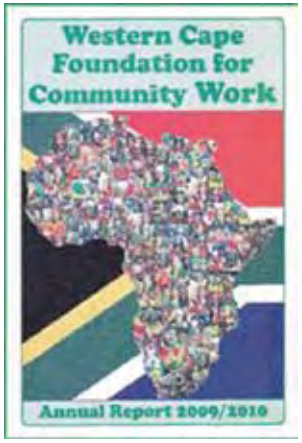
As a tribute to Mr van Rooyen the training hall was renamed in his honour.

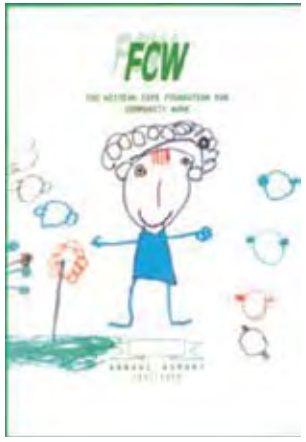
Beulah in front of the Renier van Rooyen Hall

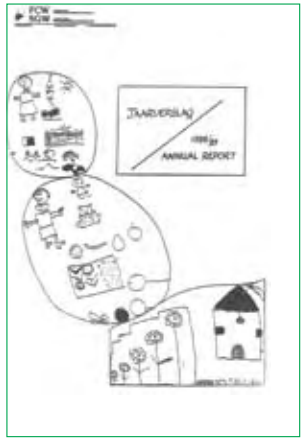




Reflecting on the history of the FCW







1974: Launching the organisation — WESWOK. On 16 December 1974, the organisation was launched at the Landdrost Hotel, Lansdowne, Cape Town. The chairperson for the day was Dr. Frank Quint and the keynote speaker was Prof. Erica Theron who, in her address focused on the need for a constitution, format and structure and its value for future stability. Mr. Renier van Rooyen, in addressing the gathering, referred to his motivation for making the R500 000 donation. The organisation was known as "Die Weskaaplandse Welsyns Organisasie vir Kleurlinge" (Weswok) with Gert Cornelissen as chairperson and Peter Neethling as the treasurer. Weswok was registered according to the Welfare Act of 1960 as a charitable institution with a focus to address the needs of the impoverished Coloured communities.

1976: The constitution of Weswok was approved by the Coloured Affairs Department. The Renier van Rooyen Trust Fund launched with the R500 000 donation by Renier van Rooyen and appointed Adam Small and Dennis Adonis as the first trustees of the newly-established trust fund. Weswok operated from the offices of Maskew Miller Publishers (Cape Town) where Adam Small obtained office space.

1977: Weswok obtained a suite of offices in Superama Building, Birdwood Street, Athlone. Adam Small was appointed as the first Director of Weswok, and Francie Lund appointed as the first community worker. Elias Links joined the Weswok Board of Management. (He later left to take up a position as SA Representative at the World Bank Monetary Fund. He then became SA ambassador to the European Community). A sub-committee was appointed to deal with the possible name change of the organisation as debate around this crucial issue intensified. First official Annual General Meeting held since registration.

1978: Official name changed to the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work. Registration in terms of Welfare Act. Franklin Sonn joined FCW board of management and became Adam Small's successor as trustee. Treasurer, Peter Neethling resigned, but remained on the board as an additional member. Elias Links appointed as the new treasurer. Jack 'n Jill (Durbanville) and Aquila Way (Ocean View), affiliated to FCW. More and more community projects with an ECD focus sought the assistance of FCW and affiliated — at the end of 1978, 7 ECD projects have affiliated to FCW.

1979: Dr Frank Quint elected as Chairperson. Lionel Louw joined the FCW Board of Management. Board members requested to serve on a sub-committee of their choice and to participate fully on these committees. The monthly meetings of the board of management changed to quarterly meetings to enable the sub-committees to live out their role. Planning sub-committee under the auspices of Lionel Louw and Edna van Harte commissioned by the FCW Board of Management to address the vision, mission and the direction of the Organisation. A second Community Worker in the person of Rita Edwards, appointed.

1980: FCW's third development stage. Policy decision with regard to the erection of buildings taken; i.e. FCW as a community development organisation should invest in people — their development and empowerment have a higher premium than bricks and mortar. The policy decision to invest in people came about after the strategic planning meetings, which resulted in a clearer focus of the organisation — this was the first paradigm shift from charity to development. Resignation of both community workers Lund and Edwards was unfortunate but coincidental. Dr. Quint resigned as he was appointed SA Ambassador to the Netherlands. Edna van Harte resigned from the FCW board in protest because of Dr. Quint's decision to take up an ambassadorship to represent an apartheid government.

1981: Franklin Sonn elected as chairperson of FCW. Under the new leadership, the roles of the director and the board members were revisited to re-affirm the position and direction of the organization. The shift from charity to a more developmental thrust was an important one.

1982: FCW has now become an established and registered welfare organisation, more rooted and more developmentally focused. This has lead to the realisation that the personnel on board need some form of financial security, hence the linkage with a pension fund for the staff of the organisation. Educare projects affiliated to FCW became part of the World Vision sponsored programme. Vrolike Vinkies Nursery School (Malmesbury) and Little Stars (Wellington) affiliated to FCW. Building project of Annette se speelkring (Wellington) off the ground.

1983: Beulah Fredericks appointed as Community Worker. Structural changes in the organisation to enhance career paths and upward mobility of employers. Deliberations with Cape Education Trust (CET) with regard to the transfer of the Athlone ELC to FCW. BVLF/CET transfers the Athlone ELC to the FCW unconditionally. Amendment of constitution to enable patronship. Prof. Richard van der Ross (Chairperson of the CET) and Peter Neethling who both played a very significant role in the shaping of the ELC and the FCW respectively, appointed as patrons. Dr Adam Small resigned from FCW to be appointed as the first black person to become Head of the Social Work Department at UWC.

1984: Beulah Fredericks appointed as Acting Director. Adam Small appointed as voluntary consultant to the FCW Director. Eunice Abrahams appointed as Community Worker. FCW Director participated in ECD focused seminar held in Johannesburg (ELRU/BVLF). Home-based Ocean View model replicated in Mitchell's Plain with slight amendments. FCW played active role in Aspect (Association for Pre-school Education.) Training of Educare personnel in liaison with Early Learning Resource unit. FCW appointed its first training co-ordinator, Rosaline Herbert, and Amelia Fester as the health care trainer.

1985: Beulah Fredericks appointed as Director of FCW. Rationalisation and savings strategy. Outreach to all new community projects on hold, cut-down on administration overheads, field visits streamlined; required careful and purposeful planning. Dr Welling (executive director of BVLF) visited FCW together with Nico van Oudenhoven, Edzo Tonkes and Paul Houmollen.

1986: Constitutional matters in spotlight and amendments with regard to membership and electoral procedures approved: written nomination to reach the FCW director 21 days before the AGM; Secret ballot system; ECD projects affiliated to FCW have 5 votes. If elected, committee members and parents nominated by their respective communities can serve on the FCW Board of Management. FCW took formal transfer of the building of the Athlone ELC. FCW employed Marilyn Petersen as another full-time trainer.

1987: Resignation and farewell of Elias Links as he was to take up a position at the World Bank.

1988: Financial constraints experienced by FCW resulted in a vigorous awareness campaign of the funding situation of FCW. Strategy of "down-sizing" the organisation, implemented by the freezing of all vacant positions.

1989: Bombing of the offices of FCW five days before the last white election. Limpet mine explosion at Athlone ELC. Health co-ordinator, Amelia Fester, retired as a financial savings measure, FCW decided to freeze the health post. Peter Neethling appointed as patron of FCW together with Prof Richard van der Ross. Dr Rien van Gendt (Executive Director of BVLF) visited FCW soon after the bombing to show moral support. "Community Enablement" — BVLF SA network seminar hosted by FCW successful event and the keynote address of both Prof. Adam Small and Dr. Neville Alexander set the basis for thought-provoking discussions during the seminar.

1990: FCW Director to the USA on a six-month scholarship programme at De Anza College. Salary dispute resulted in a number of staff resignations. Eunice Abrahams to Germany on staff development programme funded by BVLF.

1991: FCW Board of Management restructures, enabling active participation of staff on the board. Human resource development and policies with respect to staff appointments and service conditions updated. Policy of fixed term employment contracts implemented due to financial difficulties experienced by FCW. Expansion of services and training to Xhosa-speaking communities. FCW started to consolidate its service delivery to 24 affiliated community educare projects, focusing on the independence process.

1992: 'The McGregor experience'. Strategic planning and evaluation of FCW in terms of its vision, mission and policies facilitated, by an external evaluator. BVLF roundtable meeting in Johannesburg where the FCW Director presented a case for alternative models in ECD.

1993: "Visioning and Team-building" workshop held in Faure, Bellville,

1994: Post-apartheid South Africa development of a FCW staff policy manual. Farewell function of Franklin Sonn, appointed SA Ambassador to the US.

1995: Dr Lionel Louw appointed as trustee of the Renier van Rooyen Trust fund. FCW and 5 other Resource and Training Organisations (RTO's) in a workshop with Engen to address areas of operation, rationalisation and funding. Dr Rien van Gendt, accompanied by two BVLF trustees, visited FCW. Dr Gerard Salole also of the BVLF visited FCW in the same year. Joint Education Trust supports FCW training unit. 134 Educare workers received certificates at the close of 1995. FIF outreach programme launched in Bokmakierie. The FIF programme presented to the Community Benefit Fund in Atlantis and received a donation. The programme highlighted the plight of Atlantis, "The lost City".

1996: Dr. Louw visited the Bernard van Leer Foundation in the Netherlands and this visit resulted in the initial deliberations for the documentation of the FCW story.

1997: 21st Celebrations, mayoral function hosted by Mayor of Cape Town in salute of service delivery to the people of the Cape. Business luncheon in honour of Renier van Rooyen for planting the seed during the dark years of apartheid! M-Net Cares screened double feature on the work of FCW. Eunice Ferndale, after 13 years of unbroken service departs from FCW. Hazel Brown joins the FCW team finance unit. 155 Trainees completed their training, Ms Naledi Pandor, Chief Whip of the ANC, delivers inspiring keynote address.

1998: The first certificate programme in home visiting completed by 12 home visitors. Training extended to 9-month programme.

1999: Closure of the Education and Training Unit at the end of 1999 was an important policy decision and paradigm shift. An emotional farewell to the small team of Madeline Foster, Vanessa Davidson and Mathulo Masitsa. Seventy adult learners received certificates in level-based training. Dr Edna van Harte inspired FCW and community with message of hope and encouragement. FIF unit manager presents FIF programme at conference held in Uganda (showcasing innovative programmes in promotion of family and community wellbeing on the African Continent)

2000: Millennium Era — new challenges. 25 Years of community service celebrations. Integrated approach to ECD provision. 9 FIF staff members graduated from a 36-week FIF certificate programme in home visiting and child minding. A delegation of 5 ECD practitioners from the Lesotho Ministry Education in ECD division on fact-finding and learning mission; hosted by FCW.

2001 FCW at the Crossroads. FCW one of 5 partners in Masibambane Consortium — a way of pooling respective resources in the interest of building communities. Marketing and communication programme with community radio in Atlantis, Bellville and Khayelisha focusing on the involvement of parents. Hart fellow student from Duke University (USA) develops marketing tools. Developing indicators for the FIF programme

— participatory research undertaken under guidance of UWC. Findings call for parent involvement strategy; child development assessment tool; and stronger emphasis on the role of home visitors. Sebastiao Rocha from Brazil assesses and discusses findings.

2002: Regeneration. The FCW board was concerned about the impact of the organisation in communities and gave the Director permission to undertake a study to determine what would be the best way of taking the organization forward. This created anxiety and resistance amongst staff.

2003: Ronnie Simon appointed as director of FCW on a one-year contract. The FCW board felt that it was important that a separate entity should be established to undertake the research outside FCW. Beulah Fredericks was then appointed Director of the FCW Support Trust. FCW withdraws from the Masibambane Consortium.

2004: Swimming upstream.
The resignation of the programme manager, Jann Wattlington, and Nomfundo Memane, the community worker left a big gap in the operation of the organisation. The appointment of Riedewhaan Allie as the programme manager and later as director of the organisation left him with the challenge of turning the organization around, and ensuring support to the new-born Support Trust.

2005-2010: Strengthening and Expanding the FIF Programme
Securing a three year grant from the Department of Social Development for the implementation of the FIF Programme on farms in the Paarl district. The support and vision of Garth Morkel and Marion Johnstone effectively gave FCW a renewed purpose for moving forward. On the invitation of Julinda Kruger and Karen Vervaart we travelled to Oudtshoorn to introduce the programme to the local stakeholders. Despite the cool reception in 2006, the FIF programme has created more than 100 work opportunities for local women from the surrounding areas with huge support from the local ECD Forum.

2011–2014 and beyond: Incubating and replicating community organisations
Growing the FIF Programme across the Western Cape was about creating opportunities for thousands of children who had no access to ECD services. The steady increase in the number of families who were directly benefiting from the programme grew from 378 during 2005/2006 to more than 10 000 families and their young children today with nearly 300 home visitors employed in the programme. The ideas of social enterprise and social franchising is not new to FCW. As an organisation we have been growing, strengthening and supporting emerging community organisations to become fully fledged NPOs. Looking at the future and increasing the social impact in poor communities we are now seriously collaborating with NPOs of similar strength to adopt the FIF model as an intervention strategy that can make a difference.

Sound Governance – The cornerstone of the organisation

All NGOs want to be successful and want to deliver on their vision and mission. Unfortunately the changing environment in which NGOs operate is the biggest hurdle. For this reason NGO Boards play a key role in ensuring that the organisation is effectively governed to achieve its stated purpose. Effective governance is achieved when a board exercise its roles and responsibilities in such a way that the organisation experience sustained success. In order to be effective Boards and Governing Bodies have to be responsible for strategic direction, ensuring that there are adequate resources to do the work, and to provide adequate oversight in respect of financial controls, legal and ethical standards and regular reviews of programme work.

Reflecting on the history of the organisation, the aspect of governance and the role of the Board members stand out as an outstanding feature that laid the foundation for the future and ongoing success of FCW as an organisation. Between December 1974 when the organisation was launched and our most recent Board meeting on 6 August 2014, a total of 462 Board meetings and Sub-Committee meetings (Special, Executive, Finance Committee and Project Committee) meetings were held. The FCW Board first met bi-monthly and later as the board members became more settled, meetings were held on a quarterly basis. Only on two occasions before 1998 there was not a quorum to constitute a formal meeting. This is a remarkable record for a NGO that had to contend with political upheavals during the 1980's and 1990's. Despite increasing crime and violence on the Cape Flats the FCW Boards continued to deliver the goods. Considering that this work is unpaid and after hours, the time and commitment from Board members over the years have become priceless in their service and contribution to the organisation and the broader community.

Having a Board can be a big help to an organisation. However, having the right Board members is a significant advantage. A well motivated and committed Board can help the management team, not with the day to day running of the organisation, but by giving professional advice, support and assistance. Whilst the conventional roles of office-bearers were clearly spelled out, the Board set up several sub-committees that aimed to address different aspects of the organisation's operations. The emergence of these committees served to (1) broaden the grassroots base, (2) provide the project representatives with opportunities for their participation in the decision making processes, (3) tap the resources of the community, and (4) made information accessible to the community.

The very first sub-committee was a small group of three board members who drafted the constitution and later another group was mandated to address the issue of the name change. By 1979 at least four sub-committees were established in finance, fundraising, planning and administration. The nineties saw the birth of another three sub-committees: (i) Family in Focus Programme; (ii) Education and Training and (iii) Community Development and Capacity Building. Board members served on a sub-committee of their choice and participated fully on these committees. Serving members of

the FCW Board, guided by their interest and skills, joined particular sub-committees together with other co-opted community people. The monthly meetings of the Board of Management then changed to quarterly meetings to enable the sub-committees to work more effectively.

The full participation of the FCW Board is unquestionably a strength and asset of our organisation. Their leadership, commitment and support have filtered through to all levels of organisational and programme work.

Although the aspect of gender never surfaced as a challenge, there is acknowledgement that the FCW Boards were male dominated with influential and strong personalities such as Mr Gert Cornelisson who stepped down after the name changing saga, and in 1979 was followed by Dr Frank Quint who was a leading Educationist who later became Ambassador to the Netherlands. This move led to one of the few strong women on the Board, Ms Edna van Harte, to walk out in protest. Between 1981 — 1993 the organisation was led by the inspirational Dr Franklin Sonn until he was appointed ambassador to the United States. Dr Lionel Louw then served as Chairperson between 1993-2006. He was Head of the Social Work Department at UCT, and also a member of the SA Council for Social Work, and served on various academic councils. As a renowned theologian he also served his community as a Church Minister.

Advocate Lynette Myburgh, who served as Dr. Louw's deputy accepted the Chairperson's mantel in 2006 and became the first woman to serve as Chairperson, and significantly under her leadership, the organisation has grown bigger over the past 10 years compared to its growth over the first 30 years.

> In the FCW today, we have an organisation that South Africa can be proud of. I am blessed to be associated with FCW.
> This was a risk worth taking ...

Renier van Rooyen
speaking on his investment in the establishment of FCW

Taking ECD forward

Over the years there were constant attempts to organise the ECD sector provincially and nationally.

Association for Preschool Education, Care and Training (ASPECT)

ASPECT was an association of various organizations and individuals involved in or interested in the preschool field in the Western Cape. Its main aim was to establish liaison amongst organizations concerned with preschool education, care and training, in order to strive towards co-operation and co-ordination of the efforts of organizations and individuals concerned with the preschool child, to improve standards of education, care and training, and to function in an advisory capacity in relation to planning in respect of the preschool.

Membership was open to organizations concerned with preschool provision and training. ASPECT was managed by a Council consisting of a representative of each of the affiliate organizations plus an equal number of elected members from those having individual and group membership. Council in turn elected an Executive Committee from among its own members and employed a full-time Coordinator.

ASPECT offered workshops or seminars, produced an annual newsletter and provided an advisory, information and consultation service.

The Southern African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE)

The Association was formed in 1939 as the Nursery School Association of South Africa. Its focus were to set standards that would ensure a solid foundation for the growth of the Nursery School movement, to promote the idea of preschool education and to try to persuade the authorities to provide funding for the establishment of Nursery Schools. Subsequently the Association broadened its vision to include all aspects of preschool provision. The national headquarters was in Pretoria, which were the base of the executive secretary of organization.

The local societies consisted of 9 Societies for Early Childhood Education (Durban and Coastal, East Rand, East London and Border, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, Soweto [which affiliated in 1984], and Western Cape) and the Bloemfontein Nursery School Society. Considerable differences existed between the local societies in terms of their range of activities and strength of support (Van den Berg and Vergnani, 1986).

The South African Congress for ECD (SACECD) was established as a national mass-based, non-governmental early childhood development (ECD) organization in South Africa representing the interests of over 6 million young children, ECD workers and the ECD sector in general. The organization still operates out of a national office based in Pretoria and is represented by Provincial Executive Committee's (PECs) in all nine provinces. The organization was launched at a national conference during 23-25 March 1994 in Port Elizabeth, and is governed by a National Executive Committee that comprises eight office bearers who are elected at a General

Meeting held every third year. The National Executive Committee also appoints a Chief Executive Officer.

This historic launch was a result of a four-year long process of intensive organizing, mobilising and unifying of the ECD sector. As a result, the two national organizations previously representing the ECD sector, the National Interim Working Committees (NIWC) on ECD, and the South African Association for Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) dissolved in favour of the united SA Congress for ECD. The launching conference was one of the most representative ever held, with the participation of over 350 delegates from all over South Africa.

The birth of the South African Congress for ECD was in itself part of the broad thrust for democratic transformation and reconstruction of the South African Society. In the early childhood development sector, the birth of the SA Congress for ECD signalled the initiation of an institution with a sector mission and mandate to "unite, mobilise, organize and democratise".

The purpose adopted for the ECD Sector was that the SA Congress should drive the following:

- Organise a national organisation that is non-racial, representative and non-sexist ;
- Develop organizing structures in every province and region in South Africa;
- Lobbying the ruling party to have a national advisory body for ECD in which the government and non-formal structures could participate to accelerate access to ECD;
- Lobby for the recognition of ECD Practitioners in the education sector.

Some of the achievements of the SA Congress for ECD were:

- A partnership with the National Department of Education in 2003, acquiring a national tender to train 4 500 ECD Practitioners towards a full qualification at NQF Level 4 — the first ever training in ECD of its kind, with a pass rate of 90%.
- Hosting the first ever OMEP World Council and Conference in Durban in 2002 at the International Convention Centre.
- Hosting the first ever awards ceremonies for ECD Practitioners and organisations in co-operation with the ABSA Foundation and the Sowetan newspaper.
- Co-facilitating the five year report on the status of the child in South Africa, to the United Nations, with the National Children's Rights Committee. (Saul, L. Unpublished SACECD document, 2014).

Understanding the hype of 1994 and our first democratic elections and building on this, the launching of the SA Congress for ECD, and despite the listed achievements over the years, there were also those that argued that the organisation was not doing enough for the sector. In July 2005 we witnessed the launch of the **National ECD Alliance** in Cape Town with more than 100 ECD organisations in attendance. The focus of the Alliance was to strengthen the position of ECD organisation and to lobby donors and funders in this regard. A consortium of donors agreed to fund the development of an accredited ECD level 4 qualification to strengthen the position of Alliance members in their registration with the ETDP SETA and as accredited service providers, offer training to address the huge gap of untrained and unqualified practitioners in the ECD sector.

During this period and until the recent general meeting of the Alliance during July 2014, it's business was operated from the offices of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) under the Chairpersonship of Professor Eric Atmore. The new Chairperson of the Alliance, Bertha Magoge, is also the Director of TREE and as such the Alliance office now operates from Durban.

The National Development Plan (2030) is another brave plan to turn our country around and to address the challenges of poverty and inequality. In its reflection on the RDP (1994) we are reminded as follows "No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must

therefore be the first priority of a democratic government." While the achievement of the objectives of the National Development Plan requires progress on a broad front, three priorities stand out: raising employment through faster economic growth; improving the quality of education, skills development and innovation; and building the capability of the state to play a developmental, transformative role.

In terms of the NDP, South Africa has set itself the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, growing the economy by an average of 5.4 percent, and cutting the unemployment rate to 6 percent by 2030. Education, training and innovation are therefore critical to the attainment of these goals.

The NDP acknowledge that "the single most important investment any country can make is in its people. Education has intrinsic and instrumental value in creating societies that are better able to respond to the challenges of the 21 century. Lifelong learning, continuous professional development and knowledge production alongside innovation are central to building the capabilities of individuals and society as a whole" (NDP 2030).

With regards to ECD the NDP recognise the benefits of early intervention such as:

- better school enrolment rates, retention and academic performance;
- Higher rates of high school completion
- Lower levels of antisocial behaviour
- Higher earnings
- Better adult health and longevity

The NDP recognises that for millions of South African children, life is a constant struggle from a very young age, and that access to quality early childhood development services is uneven. Early childhood development services for children under 4 years are mainly provided by private for-profit operators, community-based organisations and large non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Through a family income means test, a per-child subsidy is provided to registered centres. This covers over 400 000 children nationally and about 150 000 in the Western Cape. However, because early childhood development is still privately provided, registered centres are unevenly distributed and do not yet reach the most vulnerable poor children, especially in rural areas. Fees also inhibit the poorest families from using what services are available. The vision of the NDP is to expand ECD services with government support, to reach all vulnerable children, including children with disabilities.

The NDP's proposals for ECD are:

- To make ECD a top priority amongst the measures to improve the quality of education;
- To broaden the definition of ECD to include all the developmental needs of a child;
- To make 2 years of quality ECD enrolment compulsory for 4 and 5 year olds before Grade 1.
- To give children the best start in life, nutrition programmes for pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, will be introduced to address the health related issues of long-term malnutrition and stunting that affects almost 1 in 5 children.

Developments in the Western Cape

The Integrated Provincial ECD Strategy was adopted by the Western Cape Government in 2012 as a response to some of the following challenges of provisioning in poor communities and where children have access to services it is often of poor quality with untrained and unqualified practitioners operating from facilities with poor infrastructure that compromise safety and learning for children.

At the heart of the Provincial ECD strategy is the drive to ensure that as many children as possible have access to quality, affordable ECD provision. The strategy acknowledge that centre-based provision for all children 0-4 years is not realistic and that out of centre or home and community based programmes will have to be increased. The integrated approach clearly specifies the roles of key departments:

Agriculture:

Technical advice and support in the establishment and maintenance of food gardens for ECD centres and programmes.

Education:
Provide public and ECD independent schools for Grade R learners (4 and a half to 6 years).

Provide nutrition for Grade R-3 learners in public schools in poor communities.

Provide accredited training in ECD at FET colleges at levels 1, 4 and 5.

Design and facilitate the pre-Grade R curriculum.

Health:
Provide child health, nutrition, health promotion and environmental health services.

Social Development:
Register ECD centres, and conduct accreditation of ECD learning programmes, and monitor compliance with norms and standards.

Develop alternative models of service provision.

Develop an ECD Provisioning plan to inform planning and budgeting.

The Province also makes a clear distinction between private care arrangements between parents and caregivers in their homes as opposed to services operated by registered NPOs with functional Boards or Committees. In this regard home or backyard facilities with fewer than 20 children will not automatically qualify for funding.

In the development of alternative models, the Province acknowledge the work of local community based models, but understand that effectiveness depends on the concentration of larger numbers of home visitors to become effective in their role of strengthening the safety nets for young children. The need for small scale projects to be taken to scale will require closer working relations within the health and social services system will help with monitoring, support and supervision at the coalface and enable the outreach workers to become better as the "eyes and ears" of other services professionals.

Western Cape ECD Congress
Developments in ECD sector also saw a resurgence of the ECD Congress in respect of their role in the provincial and national ECD awards and using this platform to mobilise practitioners. Realising that there was no specific dispensation for the ECD practitioners and that thousands of practitioners who worked for many years would retire without any benefits, Congress embarked on the establishment of a provident fund. Congress was hopeful that preschools would register their staff for pension, disability and death cover and give poorly paid practitioners something to feel good about.

The Western Cape ECD Congress also hosted an ECD Summit on 10 November 2014 where Professor Brian O'Connell reminded practitioners of the importance of laying a solid foundation for our country's young children, and the important role they play in the education of children.

Augusta Brandt and her Provincial leadership

Collaborating for greater social impact

In March 2009 the Department of Social Development appointed the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work as the lead partner to manage a R5 million initiative to improve and extend services to young children in the ECD sector. The mandate was to work with 10 District Offices in the province and to establish an ECD plan for taking services forward. **The 10 NGOs in the Collaborative ECD Initiative Project were: ELRU, Grassroots, Centre for Early Childhood Development, Early Years Services, Sikhula Sonke, Badisa, Catholic Welfare and Development, Sakhuluntu, Ikamva Labantu and Child Welfare Society in George.**

The partner organizations consisted of NGOs with a traditional welfare background, while others were considered as pioneers in the ECD sector who specialised in the training of preschool teachers and working towards ensuring quality programmes for young children.

The catalyst for the Collaborative ECD Initiative Project was the need to increase services for young children in line with the vision of the National Integrated Plan for ECD. The NIP intended to create environments and situations in which particularly vulnerable children, can learn, grow and thrive socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively. In addition it wanted to reduce the adverse developmental effects of poverty and other forms of deprivation on children.

The first task of the Collaborative ECD Initiative Project was to conduct a strategic think tank to clarify shared understanding and to establish ground-rules for working together as partners and with District Offices. Many NGOs never had the opportunity to work directly with district offices, and as potential partners it was important to ensure that the relationship started on a good footing. Between April and September 2009 the partner organisations facilitated a series of community consultative meetings with key stakeholders and preschool forums to establish firsthand

the extent of the challenges and difficulties experienced in the sector. The consultative process would then also become the basis around which the strategies for a comprehensive ECD plan would be fashioned.

The draft ECD plans had to be completed by the end of September and coincided with the submission of service plans to the Department of Social Development at the end of October. Key themes that emerged from the plans were:

1. The registration and renewal of registrations of ECD sites had to be fast-tracked to ensure that more children benefit from the DSD subsidies.
2. The need for ongoing engagements and relationship building with local government and municipalities regarding the registration requirements of ECD sites remained vital. Local authorities did not always understand the important role they played in the registration process.
3. The need for infrastructure support to ECD sites are required to ensure that sites becomes compliant. The aspect of conditional registration had to be considered to ensure that funding or subsidies are utilised to address the short comings of the sites.
4. Training and capacity development of pre-school teachers were flagged as a serious challenge. Many were untrained and had no experience, resulting in poor quality services for young children.

ECD Registration Drive Project

Building on the success of the 2009/2010 ECD Collaborative Project, FCW was again appointed as a lead partner for the Registration Drive Project with the Department of Social Development. The unfortunate incidents in Pinelands and Mitchell's Plain where two young children died while in the care of day-mothers served to jump-start the Department to fast-track the registration of about 2000 unregistered ECD sites in the province. The former MEC, Patricia de Lille announced a 6 months amnesty for all unregistered preschool to become registered by June 2011.

The registration drive project focused on the following key areas:

- **Audit of all the unregistered ECD sites**
  Under the supervision and guidance of Linda Biersteker, and the involvement of 12 service providers more than 2000 sites were visited although the database reflected 1638 sites. Concerns raised in the audit report showed that more than 50% of the practitioners and principals had no formal training in ECD and less than 2 years experience which also raised questions about the quality of their services.

- **Development of the Busy Bee database and website**
  Once the audit was completed Grassroots Educare Trust undertook to upload the details of all the ECD sites that were visited and categorized all the sites from A to D. Those that were listed as category A were ready for immediate registration while those listed as category D had serious challenges that could lead to recommendations that they be closed down.

- **Development of ECD learning programmes**
  On 25 and 26 July a key group of ECD organisations met with officials from the Departments of Social Development and Education to explore some of the challenges and barriers to quality service provision in the province and a task team had to work on the design of a learning programme. In line with the Children's Act all ECD sites and their learning programmes had to be registered with the DSD. This process then led to the registration of the Grassroots, Leer & Leef, Badisa and Klein Karoo Resource Centre's programmes on the undertaking

that they support some of the ECD sites with the development and implementation of their learning programmes.

- **Provincial ECD Conference: Woodstock Holiday Inn, October 2011**
  The Provincial ECD conference hosted by the Centre for Early Childhood Development presented local ECD organisations and the Provincial Department of Social Development with an opportunity to showcase their work in the province. The Department of Social Development partnered with CECD and also enabled 30 local preschool practitioners to attend the 3 day conference to benefit from the various presentations and the opportunity to network with the various roleplayers in the ECD sector

ECD Roundtable Conversations

The series of roundtable conversations in the ECD sector was driven

by the fact that organisations were still working in isolation. The sector therefore needed to get together to start with more meaningful engagement and to guard against planning "more of the same" as we moved forward.

The series of conversations started with a small group and very quickly grew.

The Wellington Roundtable (25 October 2012) started off by trying to contextualize the ECD challenge with Linda Biersteker presenting an overview of the audit of unregistered ECD sites and Prof Eric Atmore sketched a picture of the funding realities for NPOs and ECD in particular.

The Khayelitsha Roundtable (28 November 2012) focused on the current crisis in education, service delivery protests, and farm workers' protest for better salaries. The approach was that we shouldn't waste a good crisis. It's in time of crisis that leadership and strategy comes to the front! In this regard we looked at the work of Equal Education on how best to start an advocacy campaign in the ECD sector.

The Athlone Roundtable (27 February 2013). At this meeting we had the good fortune of both the NDA and Community Chest presenting their plans for the sector.

The roundtables also resulted in the establishment of a business group who planned to attract business and corporates to the sector. This group included Sharon Follentine (DSD Director: Children and Families), Debbi van Stade (DSD Director: Partnerships), Jessica Fortuin (NDA), Jenna Monk (Rotary), Tina Thiart (Grant. Net), Pam Picken, Riedewhaan Allie and Rebecca Davids (ECD Sector). On 18 April Tina Thiart and Grant.Net hosted a business meeting with Dr Franklin Sonn as "Champion" for the ECD sector to help make a case for investment in ECD with business. At FCW we hope to build on this as we move forward.

The value of collaboration

In the past, organisations were known to work in isolation, and were very protective in terms of their work and "turf". In recent years ECD organisations have realised the need to work in partnership in order to deliver more effective services. FCW played a key role in bringing organisations together in order to strengthen our collaboration.

Collaborative efforts and partnerships allow like-minded individuals and organisations to reach out in order to address issues that affect our work in the sector. The axiom that two heads are better than one is true when it comes to strengthening children and families in a holistic way. By thinking, planning, and working together, the organisations and partners that were part of the collaborative managed to accomplish goals that might have been difficult on their own.

The process of building collaborative partnerships was multi-dimensional:

- seeking support and involvement from diverse and non-traditional partners (ECD training organisations and conventional welfare organisations);
- recognising opportunities for change;
- mobilising people and resources to create changes;
- developing a vision of long-term change;
- building trust amongst collaborating organisations; and,
- developing learning opportunities for partners.

Creating trust and a shared vision

Regular meetings enabled the partners to find common ground and enabled partners to familiarise themselves with each other and with the participating organisations. As discussion developed around general issues affecting the ECD sector it was important to encourage our partners to exchange specific ideas, perceptions and concerns.

The process of developing a shared vision was open-ended and exploratory. It required partners to set aside individual and organisation-specific views in favour of a broader, community-based perspective.

The collaborative action created learning opportunities for all the partners through regular sharing of views and ideas that helped to educate partners about the benefits of collaboration.

> That its establishment is one of those clearly contoured steps. One of those steps which bears the seeds of life itself, because it brings hope. The hope that disadvantaged children will live to see the day that they will in fact become what they were meant to be. The hope that disadvantaged children will get a chance to use the only gift they may ever get – their inborn potential.

Oscar van Leer, Chairman of the Bernard van Leer Foundation
at the opening of the Athlone Early Learning Centre
22 April 1972

Strengthening the case for family outreach work

HELP!

"In a revolutionary project on the Cape Flats, helpers are going into homes to provide the stimulation lacking in the grey lives of the very young. Their efforts so far spell the difference between a dismal first year failure rate and a flying start to school". This is how the Fair Lady (May 23, 1979) reported on the impact of the Home Early Learning Programme (HELP).

HELP stands for the Home Early Learning Programme, a force organised by the Early Learning Centre in Athlone. In daily sorties that penetrate into overcrowded and sometimes poor homes of Kewtown, HELP is showing grandparents, parents and child-minders how to reach children through play with simple, homemade toys, helping them learn to crawl, communicate, count handle crayons, sing and dance.

During the 1970's home visitors from HELP were breaking down the traditional belief that children should be clean and quiet, seen and not heard.

During that time the 450 children in the programme, and at least an equal number of brothers and sisters who were around when the home visitor arrived and who also participated in the activities, have shown that they were better able to cope with primary school, and did not swell the frightening numbers who failed the first grade.

For the first five years HELP, as one of the Early Learning Centre's projects, was funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. But as a 'seeding' body, which only provided start-up funding for projects which, once they are off the ground had to be financed by the communities they served. So, the article that appeared in the Fair Lady was a call for HELP who was then looking to South Africa – to help make a difference in the lives of children.

At the time Margaret Jeffries, a home visitor was followed around Kewtown and the article described "the blocks" in Kewtown as looking quite gay on the outside. They were freshly painted. Fluttering washing decorated most balconies. Here and there a child's face was pressed against a window pane, or a granny peered out between the pot plants. Music was everywhere. A man sitting on his balcony wall strums a guitar. Except during serial time on Springbok Radio, one was followed everywhere by Radio 5, pop music punctuated with pop patter and commercials.

But in the stair wells that cored the buildings, the light merged into gloom, deepened by the dull brick and plaster walls. There was a stench of urine... smashed bottles and soggy newspapers battled with the overflow from choked drains. Higher up the stairs, there was an old bicycle frame, a car tyre – children's playthings – and a roll of damp, foul bedding. At night, homeless vagrants slept on the stairs.

Thirty odd years later this description has remained unchanged.

Margaret Jeffries, a determined-looking HELP home visitor, dodged debris and puddles and stepped briskly up four flights to number 14. Margaret has just been trained, although home visiting is not new to her because her own child was in the programme. The De Beer family, on whom she was calling, also know what to expect, as Margaret's predecessor used to call on the oldest De Beer grandchild, Yolanda, now five. Granny De Beer, who looked after the two children, was one of many who cared for their grandchildren while the mothers worked.

The Home Early Learning Programme (HELP), pioneered during the 1970's became the forerunner of today's Family in Focus (FIF) Programme.

help!

In a revolutionary project on the Cape Flats helpers are going into Kew Town homes to provide the stimulation lacking in the grey lives of the very young. Their efforts so far spell the difference between a dismal first-year failure rate and a flying start to school

PHOTOGRAPHS: WILLIAM BAKER

ABOVE: Helen plays with Lance October, nine months. Simple toys in the foreground are a board with nails hammered into it, on which children love to fit cotton reels; and a set of different sized tins, which either nest or stack

OPPOSITE: Helen Duarte helps Sharon Cupido with her 'sewing' using a simple toy any mother can make. It is a card, punched with holes that need not be arranged symmetrically, and a length of string or sashcord attached to a short dowel which serves as the 'needle'. Sharon is two and has been a target child since she was six months. Her confidence, compared with others who had just started, was immediately obvious. Sharon's mother, Sarah Cupido, looks on

LEFT: Margaret Jeffries supports seven-month-old Portia Alphonso as she struggles to crawl towards bright plastic rings and a set of empty tins covered with bright paper

HELP! An invasion is under way. HELP stands for the Home Early Learning Programme, a force organised by the Early Learning Centre in Athlone, Cape. In daily sorties that penetrate into the overcrowded and sometimes poor homes of Kew Town, HELP is showing grandparents, parents and child-minders how to reach children through play with simple, homemade toys, helping them learn to crawl, communicate, count, handle crayons, sing and dance.

Home visitors from HELP are breaking down the traditional belief that children should be clean and quiet, seen and not heard.

The 450 children in the programme, and at least an equal number of brothers and sisters who are around when the home visitor arrives and who also take part in the activities, have shown they are better able to cope with primary school, and do not swell the frightening numbers who fail the first grade.

For five years HELP, as one of the Early Learning Centre's projects, has been financed by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. But this is only a 'seeding' body, which starts projects which have to be financed by the communities they serve once they are off the ground. So HELP is now looking to South Africa — for help.

'The blocks' in Kew Town look quite gay on the outside. They are freshly painted. Fluttering washing decorates most balconies. Here and there a child's face is pressed against a window pane, or a granny peers out between the pot plants.

Music is everywhere. A man sitting on his balcony wall strums a guitar. Except during 'serial time' on Springbok Radio, one is followed everywhere by Radio 5, pop music punctuated with pop patter and commercials.

But in the stair well that cores the buildings, the light merges into gloom, deepened by the dull brick and plaster walls. There is a stench of urine . . . a smashed bottle . . . soggy newspapers battle with the overflow from a choked drain, and lose. Higher up the stairs, there is an old bicycle frame, a car tyre — children's playthings — and a roll of damp, foul bedding. At night, homeless vagrants sleep on the stairs.

Margaret Jeffries, a determined-looking HELP home visitor, dodges debris and puddles and steps briskly up four flights to number 14. She knocks. 'They don't know we're coming.' Margaret has just been trained, although home visiting is not new to her because her own child was in the programme. The De Beer family, on whom she is calling, also know what to expect, as Margaret's predecessor used to call on the oldest De Beer grandchild, Yolanda, now five. Granny De Beer, who looks after the two children, is one of many who care for their grandchildren while the mothers work.

A survey showed that about 90 per cent of preschool children in Kew Town were looked after by grandmothers, aunts or caretakers, while their parents work.

Crammed in a bedroom alongside are three beds, plus another folded up against a wall. The bed comes down at night, but it is hard to see where it would fit. Two couches in the lounge sleep another three — a bed folds out beneath one of them. With the bedding out of sight now that all the breadwinners have left, one would never believe that at night the two bedrooms and lounge are dormitories for 13 people. This is not as bad as elsewhere, but typical of life in Kew Town.

There are bright plastic flowers on the table, and religious pictures on every wall. Tinsel and gilt adorn a mirror on which is stencilled: 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' But all attention is on 'Juffrou' — Margaret and her big black leather bag. The children follow her. She is not offered a seat. Juffrou never sits on a chair. She sits down on the floor, half under the table with the other arm pressing against the sofa. Daniel, two years old, slides under the table. He is the 'target child'. But his sister Yolanda cannot be ignored. She was one of HELP's target children until the age of three, and if she were ignored now her whole attitude to education and the teacher figure could crumble into distrust or dislike. Margaret first gives her a piece of paper and a pencil, and then turns to Daniel.

She produces, from her bag, a set of plastic hoops and a rod on which Daniel must put them. He begins to tremble with excitement — he recognises the hoops from last week. In his haste to get them on the rod, he fumbles and knocks it over, lunges at them, and puts them on in any order. When he sees the rod is full, he claps his hands and a 'whoop' goes up from Margaret, Granny and Danny himself. Margaret takes it apart again, and then encourages Daniel to take the biggest hoop first. But he is so eager that he seizes whatever he can lay his fat little hands on, and squeals as soon as he has impaled all the hoops. But after ten minutes, and lots of encouragement, he gets the idea. He starts looking at the hoops, seeking the bigger one first. He is less impulsive, acting and playing more deliberately. At two years, Daniel is learning to classify.

His granny is watching, chuckling from time to time. She enjoys having the home visitor, but if she didn't and were to leave, Margaret would call her back. The aim of the visit is to teach the mother how to relate to the child, just as much as it is to help the child. Asked what changes have taken place as a result of the home visitors, Granny de Beer enthuses: **'Yolanda het baie ge-improve — baie, baie . . .'** (Yolanda has improved greatly — lots, lots . . .'). She says Yolanda used to sit quietly when she was a toddler, cry when she needed something, and at three the only word she knew was 'Mamma'.

The home visitor changed her, says Granny de Beer. She talks 'beautifully', sings rhymes, plays school with her friends and sings with them. She is ready for school and looking forward to it. Daniel has had a head start, because he has been influenced by playing with his sister. Mrs de Beer admits she would spend less time playing with her grandchildren were it not for the home visitor. But she does not resent the gentle interference. She also enjoys the visit for the social contact it gives her, apart from what she can see it does for the children. 'Not many people are prepared to work in the blocks,' says Granny de Beer. 'Because the home visitors accept us, we accept them.' The disappointment and tears when Margaret pried herself out of the De Beer's cramped lounge showed that to the children she was the bright spot in an otherwise largely grey week.

OUR NEXT CALL was in a ground-floor flat across the road. The lounge here is less cluttered. In an adjacent bedroom there is a small TV set perched on top of a cupboard. Most houses and flats boast television sets, and a big topic of conversation is the monthly payments and how the hire purchase companies fleece buyers. On the other hand, it keeps the children in, and provides entertainment, safe and at home. Marlin, a six-month-old baby boy, is the target child, and the grandmother the caretaker.

Her daughter, Marlin's mother, is unmarried. Her son lives at Crossroads and has six children, one of whom is delinquent and has run away from school. Marlin, the youngest grandchild, is being 'given a chance' says his granny, by living in Kew Town with her.

Margaret plays with Marlin. At this stage, everything goes into his mouth. She tries to make him crawl. 'Oh, he only

(Please turn to page 185)

Parents who are learning to show children the way

In a province with just over 561 000 children under the age of seven, only a quarter of them receive early childhood development stimulation at conventional pre-schools or creches. Staff Reporter **Philda Essop** and Staff Photographer **Rogan Ward** found out why, and spoke to a group who're trying to close the gap

Kids get Bokmakierie care and skills

Family in Focus Programme

The Family in Focus Programme is an early childhood development (ECD) programme which focuses on the needs of pre-school age children and their families living in environments characterised by poverty, unemployment, crime and violence. The focus is on the family as the primary source of care for young children.

The Aim of the Programme

- To serve as a strategy for ECD intervention in Impoverished communities.
- To assist primary caregivers and women in particular, to form groups in order to support each other, and to access resources in support of their children.
- To create a cadre of cost-effective ECD workers who provide support to the child's primary caregiver and other family members.

How Does the Programme Work?

- The Family in Focus Programme is based on a partnership approach with local communities.
- In consultation with the community, people are identified to be trained as home visitors.
- Each home visitor is responsible to work with 5-10 families per day.
- The home visitor will spend at least 2 hours with a family or a cluster of families at a time.
- Experienced home visitors are expected to reach at least 45 children every week.
- Caregivers are also expected to participate in a parenting workshop facilitated by the home visitors or outside facilitators on topics that focus on particular needs of the parents.
- In each area/community the team of home visitors are supported by a Project Co-ordinator.
- The Project Co-ordinator is responsible for anchoring the project in the community, networking with local stakeholders, and liaising between the committee and the community.
- Each community project will have its own committee consisting of community stakeholders to whom the Project Co-ordinator and Home Visitors will be accountable.

Growing the FIF Programme

The value of early childhood development programmes for young children is now generally accepted. Recent independent evaluations of the Family in Focus Programme concluded that FCW was making a significant contribution in ensuring that more young children in poor communities have access to ECD stimulation and development. The FIF Programme has shown that it can combine ECD service provision and through the training of Home Visitors create employment opportunities in impoverished communities. The situation of ECD in South Africa is that the vast majority of poor children are not exposed to ECD programmes due to financial constraints or to an absence of programmes in communities. It can therefore be argued that outreach and home-based programmes fill that gap and aims to ensure that children are afforded some opportunity to reach and develop their potential.

As an intervention strategy in ECD the Family in Focus Programme has the following benefits:

- It increases the involvement of parents in the development of their children.
- It caters for children who would otherwise not have been in ECD programmes.
- It makes use of Home Visitors from the community who are trained in the programme.
- The ratio between children and home visitors are low and this permits individualised attention.
- Feedback from parents to home visitors and vice versa can be immediate.
- Various members of the household can participate in the learning sessions.
- Help can be individualised and tailored to the needs of the parent or child concerned.
- Contact between home visitor and parent can be arranged at the parent's convenience.

Growth of the FIF Programme

Year	No. of Families	No. of children	No. of home visitors
2005/2006	378	644	18
2006/2007	1220	1250	38
2007/2008	1573	1980	61
2008/2009	3351	3484	85
2009/2010	7097	7406	152
2010/2011	7886	10221	161
2012/2014	10066	11790	260

In 2005 the Family in Focus programme was relatively small. The projects in Greenpoint, Kleinvlei, Bokmakierie, Mitchell's Plain, Franschoek and Atlantis only had two or three home visitors and their outreach was to only 378 families with 644 children benefiting from their support. For the 2010/2011 period the FIF Programme managed to create 161 employment opportunities in the communities where the projects are located. For the 2009– 2010 year 938 children graduated to the formal school, and during the 2010/2011 year about 1500 children were prepared for the challenges of the formal school system.

The home visiting programme has made a positive change to caregivers' parenting practices and has improved the quality of care and early learning environments for vulnerable young children. Caregivers' comments validate that the change is in fact due to the programme and not other extraneous factors. There are four areas which have seen the most change and these relate to (i) caregivers' skills and knowledge to stimulate their children using improvised learning materials; (ii) caregivers' capacity to encourage their children to develop language and patterned speech; (iii) caregivers' ability to take a primary role in

the cognitive development of their children in preparation for formal schooling; and (iv) caregivers' positive responses towards their children, this includes active listening, positive instruction and responses and physical interaction.

Incubating community organisations

Introducing the Family in Focus projects in various communities was intended for the communities to eventually take ownership of the programme. In each project a local co-ordinating committee was established to oversee the smooth running of the project. In order to develop the capacity of the committees to become effective, they were expected to participate in various governance and management training programmes offered by various NGO partners as well as the Community Chest. Developing skills and experience amongst the local communities to manage their projects effectively was a long-term ongoing process that required of FCW to walk alongside the projects to ensure skills transference. As an organisation FCW is proud to have served as an incubator where emerging community projects were nurtured to become independent and autonomous organisations. The following projects have received NPO status.

FIF Project	NPO Registration	Location
Athlone FIF	044-811	Metro Central
Atlantis FIF	066-681	Metro North
Baardskeerders Bos	079-055	Overberg
Beaufort West	081-088	Central Karoo
Franschoek FIF	034-826	Cape Winelands
Klapmuts FIF	084-881	Cape Winelands
Mitchell's Plain	060-831	Metro South
Oudtshoorn FIF	084-626	Eden District

Ongoing innovation

To support Home Visitors in their work with caregivers and families the organisation introduced Mobile ECD Units to provide caregivers and their children the opportunity to engage and play with educational toys and equipment to facilitate the children's development. The Mobile ECD Units are equipped with 11 colour coded toolkits that consist of various construction and building toys, puzzles, story books, as well as art and craft equipment to ensure that children of various age groups can develop a range of literacy, numeracy and life skills that are important for their school preparation. Three fully equipped mobiles visit projects on a weekly basis to support children in rural communities and on farms.

The use of the Mobiles are also part of ongoing monitoring and support in the field to ensure that caregivers and parents are actively involved in the work with their young children.

Strengthening Language and Literacy Development in the FIF Programme

For ECD programmes to be effective, they need to offer a package of services. This package should include literacy and numeracy development. In 2012, FCW partnered with Wordworks to strengthen the early language and literacy component of their ECD Home Visitors programme in Atlantis. Wordworks is a non-profit organisation that was established in 2005 to support the literacy and language development of young children, through the provision of innovating programmes, high quality training and user-friendly materials. This partnership between Wordworks and FCW has important lessons for others trying to implement literacy development in their own programmes.

Wordworks provided training and resources directly to Home Visitors in the Atlantis area, and also worked with the FCW programme co-ordinators. Wordworks also gave input into the development of the contents of a new manual for Home Visitors. Working directly with Home Visitors in Atlantis ensured a hands-on approach to training and development of materials. However, the inclusion of the co-ordinators was vital in ensuring that the literacy and language work was integrated into the FIF programme as a whole.

Training and Resources for Home Visitors in Atlantis

Training of Home Visitors in Atlantis gave them an overview of different ways of supporting literacy and language development and provided them with practical ideas to share with parents. They were given tasks to complete at home, and many brought examples of their own children's stories and drawings. The training included opportunities to practise using shared book reading to develop language, participation in drawing activities and of playing listening games such as "I spy with my little eye …".

This initial training was followed with workshops for Home Visitors and parents to revisit some of the ideas introduced earlier, present new ideas, and assess to what extent Home Visitors were using their new knowledge. This was followed by visits to families with the Home Visitors to observe the language and literacy progress/development of the programme.

The Wordworks team developed material to support the Home Visitors' work with parents, which included: storybooks across three languages, picture sequences, practical ideas for making and using small books and boxes with objects starting with different sounds to support the development of letter-sound knowledge. Home Visitors were also provided with crayons and blank drawing books to give to each of their families to use in between visits.

The Importance of Resources for Language and Literacy Development

The partnership between FCW and Wordworks has highlighted the need for resources to strengthen the language and literacy work of Home Visitors.

As books are a scarce resource, the provision of high-quality books across three languages was key to improving book sharing practices. Through the programme, the Home Visitors developed a partnership with the local library to make provision for Home Visitors, the parents

Training with a Focus on Early Literacy and Language Development

The following elements were included in the initial training and follow-up workshops:

1. The importance of talking for language development ("responsive parenting" and "good talking moments")
2. Developing language through play
3. Telling stories
4. Making little books and using picture sequences to tell stories
5. Scaffolding drawing and emergent writing
6. Reading books (doing a "picture walk" and "interactive storybook reading")
7. Developing letter knowledge and awareness of sounds in words.
8. Paying attention to print in the environment

The rationale was for caregivers and parents to first start with creating space for storytelling, listening to their children and asking question. This space for conversation between children and parents would serve as a foundation before moving to the stage of shared book reading which involved posing questions before, during and after the story to develop children's language and understanding of the stories.

and children to visit the library during the morning for story-telling and to allow the young children to explore the library and engage with books.

Although the Atlantis Home Visitors had access to a range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating resources, there was nevertheless a need for material that have been carefully selected to achieve special outcomes for language and literacy. The kits provided to develop awareness of sounds and letter knowledge proved to be a valuable tool for developing this aspect of early literacy.

While improving resources of Home Visitors is key to strengthening language and literacy, there is also a need for parents to have resources that make it possible for them to give children daily opportunities to develop their language and literacy (for example: storybooks, crayons and blank drawing books).

Developing the Knowledge and Skill of Home Visitors

To achieve change in practice, the Home Visitors had to come to a personal realisation of the value of activities such as good talking, storytelling, and book sharing for language development, and to an understanding of the importance of these activities for children's later performance at school. When Home Visitors reported on how the training had changed how they interacted with their own children and grand-children, it became clear that the value of this work had been understood.

The shift in thinking then needed to be followed by modelling and practice to develop Home Visitors' skills. Although many of the Home Visitors knew "what" to do, the input from Wordworks helped them to know "how" to do things in ways that strengthen early language development. An example of this was storybook reading. Home Visitors knew that reading books to children was important, however at the first training session it was evident that they were generally reading books from cover to cover without much interaction with children and therefore not maximising this opportunity to develop language. Wordworks modelled and practised doing a "picture walk" and talking about the pictures in the book before reading and including children in book sharing by asking questions before and after reading the story. In the follow-up training session some of the Home Visitors demonstrated a storybook reading session that provided a model of good language practice.

As Home Visitors developed new knowledge and skills, language and literacy activities needed to be integrated into weekly planning sessions and balanced with the other work that needed to be covered in visits to families. There was a need for a certain amount of structure in terms of what activities should be covered in each visit and how long these should take. It was therefore essential that the Project Co-ordinator attended the Wordworks training so that she could play a role in providing ongoing guidance.

Once Home Visitors have acquired new knowledge, mastered new skills and integrated the language and literacy activities into their visits to families, the next step is to ensure that they not only model good practice for parents, but give parents opportunities to try out new activities and give them constructive and sensible feedback. If this is not achieved, the risk is that Home Visitors end up playing the role of a visiting "teacher" and the impact of the work is limited to the time the Home Visitor spends with a child. Parents must be empowered to respond in a positive way to their children, practise good talking and listening and tell and read stories on a daily basis. Small "homework" tasks between sessions could help to give parents manageable goals and encourage language-rich interaction between parents and children. Home Visitors need to engage parents and caregivers, getting them to take ownership of their children's early learning, not just by "doing for", but modelling to them "how to". This is the challenge of all home visiting programmes, not just in the realm of literacy development. Parents, as much as children, should be the focus of a successful home visiting programme.

This learning brief was developed through a collaborative process of reflection by the Foundation for Community Work and Wordworks and published by the DG Murray Trust.

Showing a return on the investment

The Fredericks Family

Mrs Susan Fredericks was a community member, residing in Klapperbos Street, next to the church, and saw how the Early Learning Centre was built out of the ground. As a concerned resident she became an active member in the work and programmes offered by the ELC. Her grandson Kevin, was one of the first children enrolled in the programme during 1972 as shown in the photo with Princess Alice when she visited the area.

Mrs Bernice Fredericks, Kevin's mother, also joined the ELC as a teacher's assistant and later became a qualified Grade R teacher who had a long career at the centre from February 1987 to December 2006.

Kevin's children, Kyle and Jamie-Lee were also products of the ELC and both are in good jobs today. Kyle works for a national financial institution, and Jamie-Lee graduated with a business qualification and works as a consultant for an accounting firm.

The Fredericks family reflects four generations of involvement in the ELC, and underlines the important role of parents in the development of children and a brighter future. Bernice Fredericks shared with us that her mother treasured the photograph over the years. In a recent conversation with Cheryl Delport who was a social work student at the time, she related how they had to practice their curtsey for the Princess.

Photo: courtesy of the Fredericks family

The Marlie Family

The Marlie family in Bokmakierie is another family that reflects similar involvement with their children and grandchildren. Mrs Firghana Marlie started out as a home visitor in the Family in Focus programme and with her dedication she soon progressed to become the Project Co-ordinator in her area. As a home visitor she also had a responsibility

towards her own children. Young Zainab, benefited directly from her mother's intervention by joining the children in the street when her mom came to work with other caregivers and their children.

Under Mrs Marlie's leadership the Athlone FIF Project became autonomous in 2010 and started to raise and secure their funding independently. The programme grew from a small team of 3 home visitors to a team of 20 people that now works across Athlone including the areas of Heideveld and Hanover Park.

Zainab matriculated in 2007 and recently completed a business degree at university.

She currently serves as an intern at FCW. Mrs Marlie' granddaughter, Malieka, is now a Grade 8.

"Let me tell you, I wanted to be out there working with the children, but I was also scared – could I do the job properly. Going on my first visit, I turned back. I could not work in other people's homes. I spent 4 days in the office until the community worker agreed to go along to give me support. We were both sitting on the floor working and playing with the children, and I didn't even notice the community worker leaving. As I went out day after day I became a stronger person, through the experiences at the different homes."– **Firghana Marlie, Project Manager, Bokmakierie, (2007 interview)**

"This programme has made a big impact on my life and this year I have devoted myself to community work. As a young person I am serving as a leader of the Youth Movement, secretary of the Seniors Club and Committee member of the local FIF Programme in Bokmakierie. Throughout my high school years I was closely involved with the FIF Programme and I am trying to give back to the community what I gained." **Zainab Marlie**

The Lakay Family

Mrs Amelia Lakay was trained as one of the first Teacher-Aides at the ELC, and became an active member of the ELC and BABS programmes. Over the years she remained a community activist.

Mrs Lakay's daughters were also part of the ELC programme, and her daughter Shireen was part of the first intake. Mrs Lakay was very proud that her grandchildren were also products of the ELC. She proudly shared the photographs of Lyle Johnson when he was at the ELC during 1992 and his Batchelor of Business Administration degree obtained on 20 July 2012. The support children receive from their parents echoes the research findings that children who are part of quality ECD programmes will do well at school, will not engage in risk-taking behaviour, and will grow up to become good contributing citizens.

When we first met with Mrs Lakay, she was a fiery old lady who did not mince her words and commented that the ELC was no longer serving the local community. She related how the ELC was a vibrant hub of activity with the preschool, and the various youth and sports clubs meetings and even afterschool care and home work sessions supervised by some of the senior residents. According to her the ELC was alive with activity and even had a Kupugani store that sold food products to the local community at vastly reduced prices – a service that the Kewtown community appreciated.

She was full of praise for the work done by George Gibbs, Lionel Woldson, Sheik Faiek Gamieldien, Sister Fester, Freda Brock and many others. She even indicated that she was still in regular contact with Rommel Roberts who are now living in East London. She even advised that I speak to Ms Sharon Follentine for advice on the type of programmes we should implement to give a new spark to the centre.

Mrs Lakay epitomise the spirit and character of selfless residents that offered their time and worked hard for improvements and change in the community. The stories we tell in celebration of our democracy are the stories of ordinary women such as Mrs Amelia Lakay.

Rose van Schalkwyk

Mrs van Schalkwyk was also trained as a teacher-aide during 1972, and after two years, she moved on to the Silvertown créche. During her time at the ELC her children Carmen and Ryan were also in the preschool and she had to work in the Blue Unit with the older children.
Mrs van Schalkwyk was born in Bokmakierie and when she was 6 the family relocated to Kewtown and was schooled at the Methodist School where the Athlone library is currently located.

The Van Schalkwyk family has witnessed how Kewtown grew over the years and how crime and gangsterism started to negatively influence the community. She was however quick to point out that the residents of the community want the best for their children and that only a small minority could not care less. Her advice was that parents and especially mothers at home had to be vigilent and hands-on with their children, monitor their coming and going and to make special effort to attend school meetings in order for children to know that their parents care.

Mrs van Schalkwyk and her daughter Carmen recently visited the ELC and were hoping that one-year-old Desrone could be registered in the babies' and toddlers' group for 2015. For the family the ELC was their first choice and there was no alternatives because of their personal experiences and the track record of the ELC.

Gail Griego and Valerie Erasmus

Gail Griego and Valerie Erasmus has served FCW and the Early Learning Centre for 25 and 35 years respectively.

Valerie Erasmus was one of the first recipients of a bursary at the ELC during 1976 and after completing her training she was employed at the ELC in 1979. Valerie was one of the first home visitors in the Home Early Learning Programme (HELP) that was pioneered by Ann Short and Linda Biersteker to support parents and caregivers in the Kewtown community. The HELP was therefore a forerunner of the current Family in Focus programme.

During Valerie's 35 year period she also served as principal for the past 20 years. A lot of credit goes to Valerie for preserving the history of the organisation in the form of newspaper clippings, records, training material and photographs. The Oscar van Leer speech, made at the opening of the centre was handed to her by Sister Fester when she retired, and she in turn made it available for our records and archive.

Valerie's son was a product of the HELP that she implemented and as a proud mother her youngest son is a recipient of a scholarship awarded by the Rupert Foundation. He hope to start a business degree in 2015.

Gail Griego has proudly served FCW as a housekeeper for the past 25 years – the longest serving FCW employee! As a Kewtown resident we are proud to state that her son, Father Dominic, is currently an intern at the Vatican in Rome. He graced us with his presence at our 40th celebration.

Gail formerly retired on 12 December 2014, and we wish her the very best as she and her husband, Uncle Raymond, continue to paint the town red.

Father Dominic Griego

Julita Dorman and Sakha Isizwe

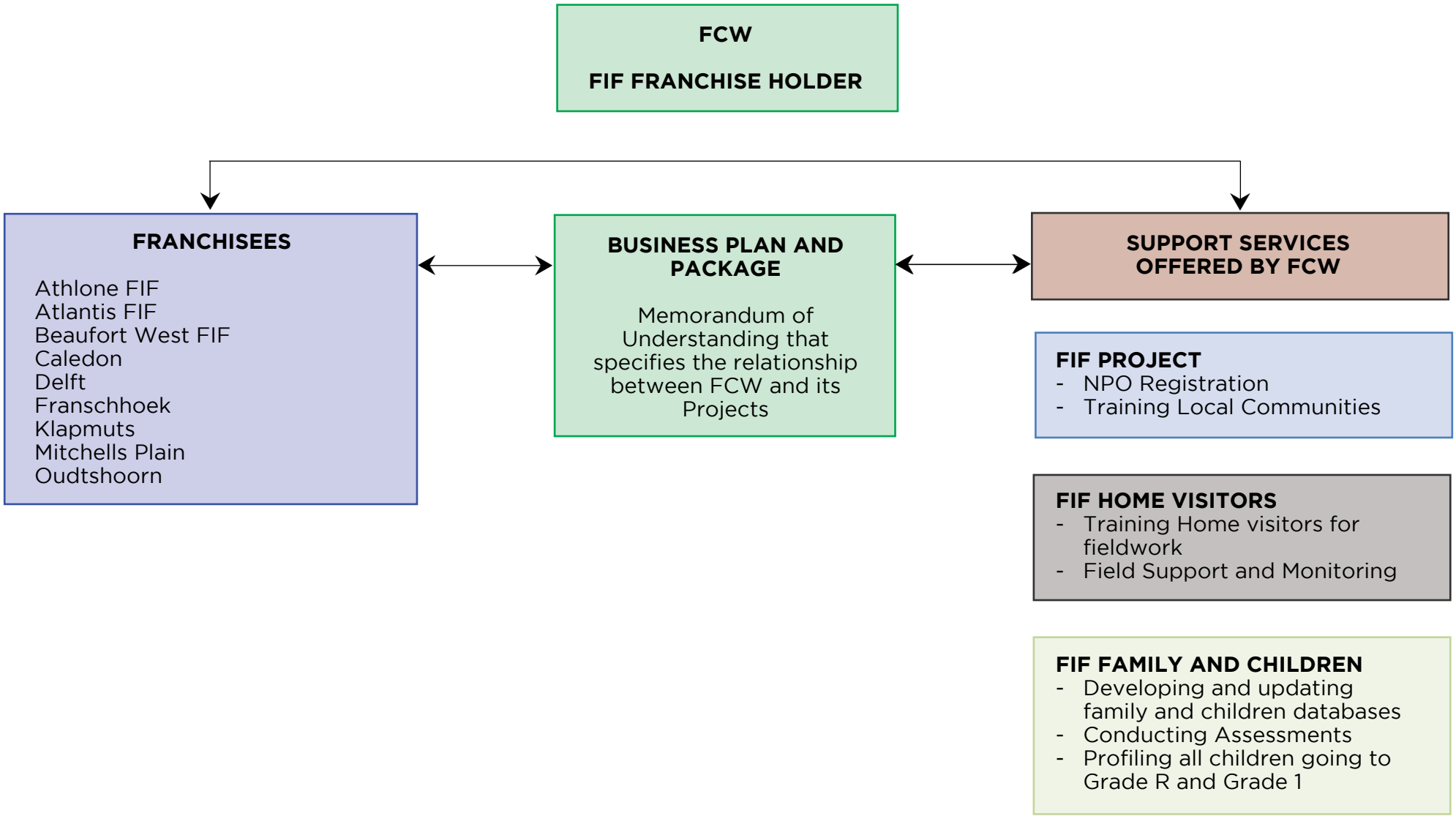
Julita's story and personal development is captured in a recent publication "Building and healing a community " - a story that describes the lives of ordinary Home Visitors in the Delft community. Swartz (2014), Programmes Manager at the Institute for Healing of Memories, collaborated with the Family in Focus Project in Delft that helped to ensure that all the Home Visitors in the project were supported through a series of personal development training that helped them to deal with their past and allowed them to move forward.

Julita dropped out of high school in Mitchell's Plain and started her working career as a tea girl in a corporate company. With support over a six-year period she was eventually promoted to the position of creditor's clerk. She however wanted to work with people, and in 2005 she got the opportunity to join FCW. What stood out about Julita at the time was her involvement with the Prison Care and Support Network, was passionate about her community and we needed a project co-ordinator in Mitchell's Plain. Julita was tasked with the responsibility of pulling the FIF project together in Woodlands and Rocklands and was thrown in at the deep end. She quickly learnt that community development and ECD were two sides of the same coin and grasped that working with people required an approach that worked with the grain and not across the grain.

Julita was encouraged to get something behind her name and eventually she completed matric in 2010, and in 2012 she started her own development organisation, Sakha Isizwe, where she now works as Project Manager. In 2013 Shakha Isizwe signed a memorandum of understanding with the Foundation for Community Work to manage the Family in Focus programme in Delft. As Project Manager she was tasked with the responsibility to ensure the smooth operation of the project. "When I arrived in Delft on 7 July 2012, I met these wonderful women, held interviews and sent them to work the next day. For the first three weeks the Home Visitors were meeting organisations and networking with stakeholders to introduce themselves and the programme". For her it was important for Home Visitors to understand how organisations complement and collaborate with each other to serve the community. The Home Visitors were trained in 6 modules that covered community development, ECD, child protection, health and HIV/Aids. Through the training the Home Visitors understood the importance of regular weekly visits to the families and exploring with caregivers the use of materials in and around the house to teach literacy, numeracy and other life skills, and in doing so, prepare children for school.

Her biggest challenge was how to deal with people that were leaving the project. She explained that some were leaving for other jobs, and some for no apparent reason. This was puzzling in a community such as Delft where people were desperate for work and a secure income and some would just resign. She realised that Home Visitors were struggling with their own issues and needed their confidence to be restored. The opportunity to introduce personal development training offered by the Institute for the Healing of Memories allowed Home Visitors to talk about their lives and challenges, and their process towards inner healing. For Julita the big lesson was that building up communities start with healing ourselves.

Growing the FIF Programme



Social enterprise and social franchising: Is this the way forward for ECD?

Every year International Social Work Day is celebrated on 18 March and the local social work fraternity has started to organize a series of seminars with local and international academics focusing on the social challenges that our poorest communities face. Social workers are putting their heads together to find solutions for the growing social and economic crises that cripple poor communities across the world.

Social workers are trained as agents of change and to bring about positive transformation when supporting individuals, families and communities who experience some forms of social dysfunction. The number of people, families and households facing hunger is growing. Over the past 6 months the cost of living increased at an alarming rate. Price increases in basic and staple household goods as a result of the petrol price, electricity, and rates increases are affecting the lives of all communities.

In poor and marginalized communities where families do not have savings, are unemployed or do seasonal work, their daily survival becomes a struggle. When families are challenged to make ends meet the attraction of crime, drugs and gangsterism seems to be the only escape for young people trapped in poverty. Cape Flats communities have experienced high levels of gang violence that claims innocent lives on a daily basis, and communities are becoming desperate.

It is in these contexts that social workers, development workers and a range of community workers are expected to perform miracles and find solutions to address and remedy the social dysfunction. In South Africa social work has been identified as a critical skill because they experience burn-out and opt to leave the country in search of the pound and dollars. Social service professionals employed by NGOs, government departments and municipalities are now forced to think out of the box and to develop intervention strategies that can empower communities to take ownership to collectively address and eradicate the dysfunction they experience.

The work of NGOs in poor communities are well documented, but unfortunately reduced funding impacts on the level and scale of services to communities. It is therefore important for NGOs to break away from the dependency on grants and donations. In order to source new streams of income NGOs are considering "Social Enterprises" as a vehicle to generate income by adopting commercial and business practice in order to remain sustainable. In the social and welfare arena business and commercial language was always profit directed which was contrary to the aims of non-profit organisations.

Social Enterprise may be a relatively new area for NPOs, but as a concept, it originates from the long-established field of entrepreneurship and the idea that certain entities can exist for the social benefit of communities. Examples such as cooperatives, bulk-buying initiatives and even "stokvels" emerged as interventions to address the poverty experienced by people.

As social service professionals we have to start looking at innovative strategies to make the profession attractive to young graduates and young people looking for a career path. Young school leavers and graduates are looking at the business and corporate sector for opportunities instead of NGOs in poor communities as a choice.

Imagine the potential of local preschools in poor communities who embark on bulk-buying initiatives and the amount of muscle that they can flex in the process. With the price of basic foods skyrocketing they can negotiate better discounts and secure more food and better nutrition for the young children

in their care. We cannot expect children to learn on an empty stomach and when money is tight we should not necessarily compromise on the nutrition and health of children.

Following the business argument that social enterprise is about generating income to sustain and advance the work of NGOs without being entirely dependent on donor funding, we also have to encourage NGO to explore replication of their social and intervention models. In the welfare sector different intervention strategies are applied to deal with issues of child protection, rehabilitation and substance abuse programmes, diversion programmes to keep young people out of prison, ECD programmes to ensure that more children have access to services.

Alter (2010) explains that a social enterprise is driven by two strong forces: the pursuit of social value creation as well as the need to drive sustainability through economic value creation. Alter further describes: "A social enterprise as any business venture created for a social purpose — mitigating/reducing a social problem or a market failure — and to generate social value while operating with the financial discipline, innovation and determination of a private sector business."

A social enterprise's primary objective is therefore to alleviate social problems/issues through a financially sustainable business model, where surpluses/profits are utilised to address the particular social problem/issue.

Sustainable business models are those ventures that can be replicated and their track record can guarantee success. In the South African context franchising as a business format started in the fifties when George Halamandres started the first Steers. Thereafter, Ed Gold started the first Wimpy in Durban and these businesses were instant successes. Business models and franchises such as McDonalds, Kentucky, Milky Lane, Wimpy grew in popularity over the last 40 years.

The success of recognised franchises is that it can be replicated because it operates on the principles of a business model. It can therefore be argued that social franchising in the welfare sector can be equally successful when the business principles of commercial franchising are applied to promote social benefit rather than private profit.

Social franchising and the replication of good welfare programmes requires a contractual relationship between a welfare NPO and an emerging community based organisation where they join a social franchise network for the provision of a selected social service over a specified area in accordance with an overall blueprint devised by the welfare organisation serving as the franchise holder. In this regard the Foundation for Community Work has packaged its Family in Focus programme along similar lines where the organisation has established memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with local Family in Focus Projects in the various communities across the province where the programme has been implemented. Once joining the Family in Focus network, CBOs are supported to become registered NPOs, and provided with training in management and governance. In addition the CBO management committee are given the right to employ field staff who are trained by our organisation to conduct the fieldwork based on the model and the material that have been developed. On a regular basis the projects and field workers are monitored to ensure that the work is carried out as determined by the training and the MOU.

The Family in Focus programme is an intervention strategy that aims to take learning opportunities for young children directly into their homes by trained home visitors who support caregivers in the educational stimulation of their young children in poor communities where there are no or limited access to preschool services.

As an outcome of social franchising and as a means of enabling social enterprises and the social economy the programme has managed to create more employment for disadvantaged people. Through the Family in Focus programme more young children are supported to enter the formal school system better prepared and at the same time employment opportunities are created for

trained fieldworkers — to address a social issue.

The Family in Focus programme is an intervention strategy that empowers communities at different levels:

- At the level of Home Visitors employment opportunities are created for locals who are trained to become the foot soldiers in the ECD programme.
- At the level of the participating families the direct work between Home Visitors and caregivers and their children, parents are empowered to take responsibility for the stimulation, development and safety of their children by making their homes conducive for learning.
- At the community level, stakeholders and formal and informal community leaders are encouraged to establish coordinating or management committees that are trained in management and governance in order to effectively manage the local Home Visitors and to take ownership of the intervention strategy in their communities. Developing skills and experience in local communities to manage projects effectively is a long-term process that requires our organization to walk alongside the project to ensure proper skill transference.

The Foundation for Community Work is proud to serve as an incubator where emerging community projects are nurtured to become independent and autonomous organisations. Family in Focus projects in Athlone, Atlantis, Mitchells Plain, Klapmuts, Franschoek, Beaufort West, Oudtshoorn and Delft have become registered NPOs, and some of them are receiving funding from donors and institutions such as Community Chest and the Lotteries.

Realising that we have challenges in our delivery system that requires government, business and civil society to work together to address the difficulties experienced by our children, we can take some lessons from businesses and forge closer working relationships that will enable business and corporates to invest differently in the capacity development of the NPO sector.

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