



Funding of learnerships for early childhood development practitioners: Who, how much, how many and how?

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September 2015

Acronyms

EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early childhood development
EPRI	Economic Policy Research Institute
ESDL	Employment and skills development lead employer
ETDP SETA	Education and Training Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
ETQA	Education and training quality assurance
FET	Further education and training
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
IPAP	Industrial Policy Action Plan
LETCEE	Little Elephant Training Centre for Early Education
MIS	Management information system
NARYSEC	National Rural Youth Service Corps
Nated	National N4-N6 programme
NDA	National Development Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
PIVOTAL	Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic Learning
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector education and training authority
TVET	Technical vocational education and training

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Ilifa Labantwana with the purpose of mapping the channels and the amounts of the various funding sources for ECD learnerships for practitioners working with children aged 0-4 years. The purpose of the report is to analyse the challenges presented by these funding channels for strengthening the human resources needed to ensure the delivery of quality ECD services to all South African children occupying the lowest two quintiles.

This report uses available literature, budget documents and interviews to map out sources, channels, methods and amounts related to the funding of ECD learnerships in the KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape provinces.

The research reveals a complex web of actors, and substantial disparities in the administration of learnerships, funding and provision of training and support, reporting structures and co-ordination across training institutions and government departments in the provincial and national spheres.

The report concludes that the complexity of these funding arrangements negatively impacts on the national prioritisation of ECD by undermining efforts to improve the skills and knowledge of practitioners.

Background and Introduction

The challenges that face expansion of access to quality ECD care and education services include serious limitations in the quality and quantity of human resources required to provide these services.

The 2014 audit on ECD provision in South Africa, undertaken by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) (2014) on behalf of the Department of Social Development, found that more than 35% of principals and supervisors and more than 40% of practitioners and assistant practitioners had not completed grade 12. Only 41% of principals at fully registered ECD centres and 26% of principals at unregistered ECD centres had the required ECD certificate. ECD certificates (at any level) were held by 30% of practitioners in fully registered centres and 14% of practitioners in unregistered ECD centres.

One response to this challenge has been initiatives to provide funding for ECD training and increased avenues for available training. One of these avenues is the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) social sector. This sector became part of EPWP as from 2004, and from the start focused on ECD alongside home- and community-based care (HCBC). The scope of the social sector EPWP has since expanded to other areas, but the focus on ECD has remained.

However, the social sector EPWP is not the only source of funding for ECD training. The *National Audit of Public FET Colleges* (Murray, 2014) commissioned by Ilifa Labantwana, identified the following as among the sources of funding for ECD learnerships:

- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);
- The provincial Departments of Education (DoE);
- The National Skills Fund (NSF);
- The Education and Training Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA);
- The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA); and
- The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC).

The roles of these agencies, in terms of funding ECD training, has shifted over the past five years. With a range of different actors, there has been little co-ordination and there is a lack of understanding of the contribution each party plays in the provision of funding for ECD training.

This paper was commissioned by Ilifa Labantwana with the purpose of a) mapping the methods and amounts related to the various funding sources for ECD learnerships for practitioners working with children age 0-4 years and b) analysing the challenges presented by these interrelated funding sources in resourcing quality ECD services in South Africa. This report uses the KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape provinces as case studies. Kwa-Zulu-Natal and North West were selected because they are the location of Ilifa Labantwana's programmatic work. The Western Cape was chosen as the third province because the literature suggested that it might have more developed systems for ECD learnerships than some other provinces.

Methodology

The methodology used for gathering information included:

- Reading of available literature;
- Identification and analysis of national and provincial budget related information;
- Interviews, with the aim to interview officials from the three provincial Departments of Social Development, the three provincial Departments of Education, the national Departments of Basic Education, Higher Education and Training, Social Development and Public Works; representatives of 2-3 training providers in each province, including both Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges (formerly Further Education and Training (FET) colleges) and other providers; the relevant sector education and training authorities (SETAs) and NARYSEC. In the course of the research, interviews were pursued with several additional role-players including the national and provincial National Development Agency (NDA) offices. Interviews were conducted telephonically or through email.

At the outset we foresaw that availability of information was likely to be a major challenge for this research. We did not, however, adequately anticipate the extent of the challenges we would experience, and the extent to which they would delay the research. The key challenges to the research can be summarised as follows:

- **Securing interviews:** In some cases, securing a telephonic interview or email response with government departments took approximately three months. Even after an extension of the response deadline through adjustment of the research deadline, some key departments did not provide a response despite numerous email requests, submission of background information on the research, official letters from Ilifa, and follow-up calls. Key interviews that had not been secured by the time this report was written included DSD in KwaZulu-Natal, North West and nationally, and DoE in KwaZulu-Natal. Western Cape DSD was the only provincial DSD to respond.
- **Identifying the correct respondent:** For some government departments, ten if not more contacts needed to be followed up before the most appropriate ECD official was identified
- **Insufficient information:** The information provided by some government officials was sparse and lacked depth despite the respondents' having been identified as ECD specialists. Several officials undertook to follow up on the initial response with additional data. In most cases, despite numerous follow-up emails and calls, the information was not provided.

Structure of the report

The report is divided into three sections. The structure follows the standard arrangement used in many studies of first presenting available relevant literature, then presenting “results” (new information) or findings, with a clear indication of the source of the new information, and finally discussing the meaning of the results. This approach seems appropriate in a situation, like this one, where evidence is contradictory and incomplete, as it clearly identifies the source of different evidence, and also facilitates later replication of or checking on the study.

In line with this approach:

- The section immediately following presents key findings from the literature review that are not covered in the subsequent sections and that serve as background for what emerged from the interviews.
- The next section presents findings from the interviews. There are four sub-sections – the first dealing with national agencies, and the remaining three with each of the three case study provinces in turn. Most of the information for each agency comes from the relevant interview, but the information is sometimes supplemented by information from the literature or other interviews. The information is presented by agency rather than by issue. Where information was provided by more than one source, the information is not repeated for each informant unless their information contradicted or in some ways added to what others said.
- The final section summarises the patterns emerging from the research, and discusses the many factors that hamper a) production of a clear picture and b) the efficient and effective funding and training of ECD practitioners.

Defining learnerships

The fact that the term “learner” is now commonly used in South Africa in respect of what might otherwise be called pupil or student, does not mean that all education and/or training takes the form of learnerships. What distinguishes learnerships is that:

- They combine theoretical and practical learning with the latter accounting for at least 70% of the time;
- They are based on an agreement between the learner, the employer, and the training provider;
- The learner does not pay any training fees; and
- The learner must be paid an allowance or wage while studying.

Learnerships are available to both those who are already employed and those who are unemployed. In the first case, this means that the employer continues to pay the wage of the learner while they are studying. In the second case, the learners must be employed – and paid – for the duration of the learnership. The skills development system implicitly places the responsibility for payment of the allowance on the employer and the learnership agreement is always one between the learner, employer and service provider. In practice, however, the research reveals that in the case of ECD learnerships, the allowance often comes from another source.

In the research, none of our informants referred to a contract between the learner and the ECD centre as the employer, or even between the service provider (usually a TVET college) and the ECD centre. One informant – from ETDP SETA in KwaZulu-Natal – explained that although they funded ECD learnerships for existing practitioners, they treated them as if they were in the unemployed

group. This understanding, if widespread, helps explain why the ECD learnerships typically include funding of stipends alongside funding of course fees. Contributing factors could be that “wages” for “employed” practitioners are usually very low (often below the amount paid during learnerships) and many of the learners might be centre managers or owners, rather than employees.

The ETDP SETA Sector Skills Plan Update (2013) notes that learnerships appear to account for the majority of ECD learning opportunities.

Literature Review

Need

The *National ECD Audit* (EPRI, 2014) found that the general qualification of staff is low, with the majority having less than a Grade 12 education and low rate of ECD qualifications. Tables 1 and 2 show the highest qualification achieved amongst ECD Centre supervisors and principals based on centres audited by EPRI. The table distinguishes between fully registered ECD centres, conditionally registered centres and unregistered centres, but the data show no discernible differences in levels of qualifications across these categories.

Table 1: Highest qualification achieved amongst ECD Centre supervisors (%)

	Below Grade 12			ABET Level 1-4			Grade 12			Post Matric Diploma			Degree			Other		
	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U
KZN	25.8	8.7	32.7	8.9	4.3	4.1	50.4	82.6	48	5.6	0	0	1.1	0	3.1	8.2	4.3	12.2
NW	42.1	43.3	35.3	6.7	10	7.1	43.3	40	48.8	3.1	3.3	2.9	0.4	0	0.6	4.3	3.3	5.3
WC	39	25	32.8	14.3	0	17.2	25.7	50	35.9	10.5	25	12.5	2.9	0	0	7.6	0	1.6
Nat	37	37.8	39.2	9.4	9.4	5	40.8	46.6	44.2	5	5	4.3	2.8	0	0.9	5.1	1.1	6.4

Table 2: Highest qualification achieved amongst ECD Matrons/Principals (%)

	Below Grade 12			ABET Level 1-4			Grade 12			Post Matric Diploma			Degree			Other		
	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U	F	C	U
KZN	37.5	30.9	28.4	11.4	8.6	6.7	37.5	56.8	50	4.5	1.2	6.7	3.4	2.5	3	5.7	0	5.2
NW	41.9	58.8	38	2.3	0	7	34.9	41.2	43	0	0	3.5	9.3	0	2.1	11.6	0	6.3
WC	33.1	36.8	39.4	13.4	13.2	14.5	29.7	33.8	28.6	7.9	10.3	8.2	5.1	4.4	2.4	10.8	1.5	7
Nat	34.8	35.5	35.1	10.9	9.9	9.9	39.7	43.3	41.2	4.9	3.3	5.9	2.9	2.1	3	6.8	7.2	4.7

F = Full registration

C = Conditional Registration

U = Unregistered

Budgeting

A study of the literature available on the ECD provisioning reveals that there are multiple sources of funding for ECD learnerships. In some cases, two or more funding sources are related as one agency provides funds which are channelled to a second agency, which might then channel the money to further agencies.

This section of the report discusses the budgets of the provincial departments of education. These budgets are the one source where there is a line item (referred to as a sub-programme) that is primarily intended for the purposes of funding training of ECD practitioners.

One might expect these budgets to be a primary source (if not only source) of information on allocations and expenditure for ECD learnerships given that these departments bear the main responsibility for ECD learnerships.

The budgets of all the provincial departments of education have the same programmes, but there are some differences in structure at the sub-programme level. Thus, across all provinces programme 5 relates to ECD; and within programme 5, all provinces have a Pre-Grade R Training sub-programme. However, provinces differ as to whether they have a separate sub-programme for conditional grants and, if they do have such a sub-programme, how that sub-programme is named.

All provinces separately specify the amounts received for the different conditional grants when presenting information on revenue of the department, but the revenue table is not disaggregated by programme or sub-programme. With regards to the EPWP, each province records two conditional grants in the revenue table:

1. The EPWP social sector incentive grant; and
2. The EPWP integrated grant.

The EPWP integrated grant is intended and used primarily for infrastructure and is therefore not directly relevant for our purposes.

0 below presents information sourced from the 2015/16 provincial estimates of revenue and expenditure. For each of the provincial case studies it shows:

- The amount received for each of the two EPWP conditional grants (the EPWP social sector incentive grant and the EPWP integrated grant discussed above);
- The total allocation for the DoE, which includes allocations for all nine provincial budget programmes;
- The total allocated for the ECD budget programme, which is made up of several sub-programmes that differ to some extent across provinces but all include provision for Grade R; and
- The total allocated for the Pre-Grade R Training sub-programme within the ECD budget programme.

The table also presents ECD as a percentage of the education (“DoE”) total, and Pre-Grade R Training as a percentage of the ECD total. Estimates are shown for three years, with the original (“main”) allocation, adjusted amount and revised estimate given for 2014/15.

Table 3. Provincial departments of education provision for ECD Pre-Grade R Training, 2013/4 - 2015/6 (R000s)

	2013/14	2014/15 main	2014/15 adjusted	2014/15 revised	2015/16
KWAZULU-NATAL					
Social sector EPWP incentive grant		2580	2580	2580	3000
EPWP integrated grant	3 000	2070	2070	2070	2644
DoE total	37158042	38918092	39066103	39092741	42142355
ECD total	437335	651468	651468	522604	694420
Pre-Grade R Training	250	5000	5000	0	5438
ECD as % of DoE total	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Pre-Grade R Training as % of ECD	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
NORTH WEST					
Social sector EPWP incentive grant	8804	2580	2580	2580	9834
EPWP integrated grant	0	4628	4628	4628	2000
DoE total	11665538	12241618	12300407	12582470	13432321
ECD total	330347	413206	409706	209706	468582
Pre-Grade R Training	17570	31766	31766	31766	33620
EPWP Grants	8416	2580	2580	2580	9634
ECD as % of DoE total	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Pre-Grade R Training as % of ECD	5%	8%	8%	15%	7%

	2013/14	2014/15 main	2014/15 adjusted	2014/15 revised	2015/16
WESTERN CAPE					
Social sector EPWP incentive grant	12064	13354	13354	13354	4747
EPWP integrated grant	3000	2564	2564	2564	2818
DoE total	15111220	16007238	16608624	16608624	17744928
ECD total	465535	522449	515449	515449	619191
Pre-Grade R Training	105103	100153	100153	100153	105961
Conditional grants	7949	8744	8744	8744	3165
ECD as % of DoE total	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Pre-Grade R Training as % of ECD	23%	19%	19%	19%	17%

The table clearly shows Western Cape's relative prioritisation of both ECD and Pre-Grade R Training within it, and KwaZulu Natal's relative de-prioritisation of these areas. ECD consistently amounts to 3% of the education vote in Western Cape, and is generally at this level in North West, as against 2% at most in KwaZulu Natal.

In both North West and KwaZulu Natal, the revised estimate for 2014/15 is less than the main or adjusted allocations, indicating underspending compared to plans. When one calculates Pre-Grade R Training as a percentage of ECD, Western Cape is higher than all other provinces for all three years, although the percentages falls steadily over the period. KwaZulu Natal allocates 1% or less of the already low ECD amount. In North West the 2014/15 revised estimate is unusually high, but this is entirely due to underspending on ECD as a whole rather than increased spending on Pre-Grade R Training.

The calculated percentages are misleading to the extent that the EPWP incentive grant funds may also be spent on learner stipends but not included in the sub-programme amounts used for the calculations. As seen below, it seems that this is the case for KwaZulu Natal in 2015/16. However, after adding this to the Pre-Grade R Training amount, the percentage as compared to the ECD total remains lower than for the other provinces.

The provincial budget votes (i.e. the provincial estimates of revenue and expenditure) contain narrative text as well as tables of budget allocations and expenditure. EPRI (2014: 51) notes that EPWP is mentioned in a cursory way (if at all) in departmental Annual Performance Plans, and is reportedly seldom discussed by senior managers. Both EPWP and ECD training are discussed in the budget vote documents, but not in much detail.

KwaZulu Natal's 2015 budget book refers (incorrectly) to the ECD programme as a whole as a "national initiative to strengthen pre-Grade R education, and to make it available to the majority of citizens", with no reference to Grade R. However, in describing the objectives of the programme it makes no reference to training of pre-Grade R staff. It refers only to providing "particular sites with resources required for pre-Grade R."

The KwaZulu Natal narrative subsequently states that the Pre-Grade R sub-programme is responsible for offering “training (skills training to ECD management staff, and other personnel such as caregivers and support staff working in the crèches).” The narrative further states that the 2015/16 allocations are in respect of “bursaries” for practitioners and purchase of training toolkits. A subsequent reference to bursaries suggests that these might be for employees. However, the Social Sector EPWP incentive grant will, it reports, be used for payment of the stipends to Pre-Grade R practitioners.

The North West budget document states that the EPWP incentive grants is used for “payment of stipends to volunteers in order to enhance and expand services within the social sector whilst concurrently creating work opportunities.” This description suggests that it is probably not used to pay learner stipends in this province, which is in line with the spreadsheet referred to above which refers to child minders.

The North West narrative reports FET (TVET) college training of Grade R practitioners, but also states that “1 177 ECD practitioners received training on NCF [sic] Level 4 and 5 and 94 foundation phase specialists were trained on national curriculum framework for birth to four years.” The subsequent narrative suggests that the Pre-Grade R sub-programme is used to provide particular sites with resources required for pre-grade R rather than for training. However, it adds that the Pre-Grade R sub-programme is used to provide training and payment of stipends for Pre-Grade R practitioners, and that the increase over time (seen especially clearly between 2013/14 and 2014/15) relates to an increase in learnership training.

The narrative in Western Cape’s budget book highlights the “considerable growth” for ECD since 2011/12, and offers as one reason for this the use of the “Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Integrated Grant for Provinces to provide for the training of ECD practitioners at ECD sites and to provide resource kits for these sites”. As seen below, the departmental official said that it was the EPWP Incentive grant that was used for this purpose, which seems more likely. It is also the Incentive grant that is referenced in a footnote to the budget table. The increase in the Pre-Grade R Training sub-programme is explicitly explained as arising from an increase in learnerships. The full 2015/16 amount of R106 million is sourced to EPWP funds. The review of the 2014/15 financial year points to learnerships only in respect of Grade R.

In summary, both the KwaZulu-Natal and North West narratives contain internal contradictions, while the Western Cape narrative also appears to contain inaccuracies.

Findings from interviews

1. National agencies

1.1 Department of Basic Education

The national Department of Basic Education (DBE) has two core functions – human resources and “programme” – in the inter-departmental programme of action for ECD which was approved by cabinet in August 2013. The first responsibility was initially conceived as requiring that all ECD practitioners had at least a level 1 qualification; according to the Children’s Act No 38 of 2005 which specified NQF Level 1-6, or equivalent. The Department of Social Development subsequently raised the minimum requirement to level 4 (Murray, 2014).

All the ECD training funded by provincial DoEs is targeted at people who are already working in ECD. The DoE learnerships are offered by the Education Training and Development Practices (ETDP) SETA as well as by the provincial departments. There are separate bursary opportunities for university study for those who want to become Grade R and foundation phase (Grades R-3) practitioners.

The provincial DoE are responsible for contracting training providers but are not responsible for the recruitment and selection of candidates for the training. Instead, DSD provides a list of practitioners from among those at registered ECD centres to the provincial departments of education.

Provincial DoEs report to national DBE quarterly using a standard instrument, and DBE then provides feedback. DBE also conducts some oversight visits to explore issues raised in the reports. DBE reports on an annual basis as training is one of the key results in the department's plan. A verified report which collates information from provincial reports and visits is provided to DBE management.

DBE also reports to the national EPWP steering committee which includes all departments responsible for EPWP training. Both this national EPWP steering committee and similar provincial-level steering committees come together on a bi-annual basis.

In order to inform this research, DBE undertook to provide information by end June 2015 on:

- The number of learnerships provided;
- Funding allocated over the last three years;
- The source of funds;
- Whether particular types of courses are specified for different sources; and
- What stipends are paid and how they are managed.

By mid-August, the authors of this report had not yet received the information.

1.2 Department of Social Development

We could not secure an interview with the national Department of Social Development.

1.3 Department of Higher Education and Training

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for coordination of post-school education, including Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and SETAs. However, DHET itself funds the colleges only in respect of occupational (pre-employment) programmes. These include:

- The National N4-N6 Educare programme (NATED) at the post-matric level, which is directed at ECD practice; and
- The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes - a lengthier qualification made up of three levels and a focus on education and development as a discipline. Each level is a full academic year with seven subjects, one of which could be ECD. The NCV programmes are at the level of Grades 10 -12.

DHET allows colleges to offer both non-accredited and accredited training, but all training must be in line with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) registered qualifications. Further, DHET sets student enrolment targets, divides these targets between the colleges, and allocates funding to the colleges accordingly. The colleges themselves decide how they use the funds within the NATED and NCV programmes. The funds would not be used for learnerships programmes as learnerships are funded separately, through the SETAs, from the National Skills Fund (NSF).

TVET colleges, which are administered by the DHET, do not have any initiatives that focus on or promote ECD. In contrast, universities, also administered by DHET, focus on ECD by means of professional qualifications. The focus on the university level is confirmed by a presentation to the parliamentary select committee on its strategic plan for the period 2015/16-2019/20. During this period, DHET identified ECD educator development as one of five focus areas for improvement in teaching and research at university level. This is not directly relevant for learnership directed at ECD practitioners working with 0-4 year olds. At the time of writing, DHET was in the process of drafting a Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Educators and Other Professionals in Early Childhood Care and Education.

The NSF falls under DHET, but under a separate section from the section responsible for TVET colleges. The funding available to the NSF is made up of 20% of the levies paid by employers to the various SETAs. The NSF is meant to allocate this money for training that would not be covered by levy-paying employers and thus not covered by the employer grants that are paid to employers by the SETAs out of the remaining 80%.

The NSF funded the training of 1 901 learners in respect of ECD during 2014/15. The NSF's information system was not able to generate data on the numbers funded in earlier years, or the expenditure in respect of the ECD learnerships in 2014/15 or earlier.

1.4 Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW) distinguished between the EPWP as a "methodology" and EPWP as a programme that must be "mainstreamed". The former has a dedicated budget, while the latter does not. ECD EPWP falls in the latter category to the extent that DPW does not, according to our informants, budget for ECD programmes. Budgeting is, instead, done by the department(s) of education and, sometimes, by DSD.

Provinces may receive EPWP social sector incentive grants. These may be spent on any social sector EPWP, so are not targeted specifically at ECD. DPW staff reported that to date, the social sector EPWP incentive grant has not been used for training of ECD practitioners. However, as seen elsewhere in this report, this information is contradictory as other sources suggest that the incentive grant has been used for this purpose.

National DPW, through its EPWP training unit, also receives an allocation from the NSF for training for public works participants across all sectors. The NSF covers costs associated with tutoring, training materials, stationery alongside payments for the service provider and training materials. The NSF has rules for utilisation of the funds which state that the funds can be used to cover the costs of:

- Provision of accredited training;
- Training materials;
- Pre- assessment;
- Final assessment;
- Moderation;
- Certification; and
- Training allowances of learners.

The total allocated across all sectors for the five financial years from 2010/11 to 2015/16 was R200 million for short courses and R110 million for skills programmes (which can include learnerships). These totals were not ring-fenced for particular sectors. In 2014/15, 436 ECD practitioners were trained on ECD Level 4 using a budget of R5 738 090 (suggesting a per learner cost of just over

R13 000) from NSF funding. The total was made up of 41 learners from Gauteng, 201 from Limpopo, 173 from Mpumalanga and 20 from Northern Cape i.e. none of the three case study provinces benefited.

To access the NSF funds, provincial coordinators submit applications for approval of training in the first quarter of each financial year. The nine-page application form asks, among other questions, for:

- The names of the learners;
- Details of the unit standards to be covered, and
- The sites or workplaces where learners will receive their workplace training.

The EPWP training unit of national DPW has an operational manual that specifies the procedures to be followed for allocation of funding for training, which were agreed with DHET. The training managers and sector managers coordinate the submission of the training needs/plans from all sectors.

There are reportedly five models for DPW funding using NSF funds, namely:

- Head Office procurement through tenders;
- Decentralisation to provinces, on the basis of quotations;
- Procurement by a SETA on behalf of DPW;
- Contracting of TVET colleges; and
- Unemployment Insurance Fund procuring on behalf of DPW.

In the case of ECD training, the fourth model – contracting of TVET colleges - is used. Where funding comes from the equitable share, the relevant department (DoE or DSD) procures training using its own processes and procedures.

Once approved, DPW procures the services of accredited training service providers and the contracts are signed. In order to ensure effective training implementation and monitoring, there is meant to be collaboration throughout the process between the following parties:

- The EPWP training managers;
- The social sector deputy directors,
- The lead sector departments' coordinators (DSD in this case);
- DBE; and
- The contracted service provider.

DPW's role is to match the information on the application form with the training needs, ensure that accredited training providers are available and monitor until the training has been completed. Programme managers told EPRI researchers that, despite collaboration with SETAs and DHET (in respect of the NSF), the application process for training funds had "not worked smoothly" (EPRI, 2014: 75).

DPW confirmed that all training was directed at existing ECD practitioners who were already working, with the practitioners "filtered" by the provincial DSD ECD coordinator. DSD reportedly does this in line with its responsibility to ensure that all practitioners are trained (including in first aid), and facilities are "healthy and clean". The choice of practitioners is thus driven by the needs of the programme rather than those of practitioners.

In EPWP phases I and II, a budget was set aside to train ECD practitioners, with DBE responsible both for the development of the training programme and developing training. DPW reported that more

recently, DBE sets aside a budget only in respect of training for Grade R, and not for the 0-4 year age group.

DPW is not involved in selection of learners, focusing rather on examining the type of training required, the associated budget, and whether appropriate training providers are available.

1.4.1 DPW involvement in national ECD bodies

DPW participates in the National Interdepartmental Committee for ECD, which covers all aspects of ECD rather than only EPWP and/or training. It participates in the committee because of its role of sourcing funds from NSF for ECD practitioner training. It also participates in another forum convened by national DBE - the ECD Training and Curriculum Development sub-committee. Further, DPW attends meetings of the Social Sector National Steering Committee and Extended National Social Sector Steering Committee in which issues related to training of ECD practitioners are discussed. The discussion is reportedly not restricted to ECD training that is funded through EPWP as the EPWP contribution is currently “very marginal”. According to DPW, the main funding comes from the training budgets of the departments of social development and education. However, DPW said that while DBE (or perhaps provincial DoEs) previously funded training for DSD-linked practitioners, it had stopped doing so in the past financial year. This contradicts information provided by others who reported that provincials DoEs were currently funding learnerships for practitioners for 0-4 year olds. For example, in both North West and Western Cape, as seen below, the provincial department reported current funding of ECD learnerships for practitioners for 0-4 year olds.

1.4.2 Complexities of the DPW reporting structures

DSD and DBE are required to report to both DPW and internally on a monthly and quarterly basis using the EPWP reporting system. Reporting should be on the number of practitioners trained. However, the EPWP reporting system is problematic in this respect in that it does not record the number of people trained, but instead reports the person days of training. It also does not, according to our DPW informants, provide for reporting on training funded through the equitable share, i.e. the “mainstream” budgets. In addition to these regular reports, there may be ad hoc requests for reports from parliament or from cabinet ministers at cluster level.

DPW reports that they “work closely” with the government agencies and “have to be patient with them – we continue to engage ... until they comply and submit their reports.” DPW also reportedly provides assistance with reporting where necessary, as well as with compilation of training application forms.

EPRI reports that the DPW’s performance management system is the only source of financial data which covers all the funding streams for EPWP. This suggests that the system might cover “mainstream” funds, as also suggested by the fact that the Western Cape’s first quarter report for 2014 has budget and beneficiary numbers that are larger than those reported for the EPWP conditional grants.

EPRI reports that programmes are required to report the stipend amount, the overall budget and expenditure (EPRI, 2014: p45). Management costs are not included. EPRI also found “indications” that other data were not always reliable (EPRI, 2014: 47). For example, the data suggested that most social sector programmes spent less than half of their budgets, but in interviews conducted for the purposes of this report, programme managers said there was not much underspending and offered to provide evidence. A DPW regional coordinator responsible for entering data on behalf of

implementing departments said that they had been instructed to record the full budget of the programmes, but to record expenditure only in relation to stipends (EPRI, 2014: 47-8).

1.5 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

1.5.1 Education Training and Development Practitioner Sector Education and Training Authority

The Education Training and Development Practitioner SETA (ETDP) SETA is the primary SETA involved in funding of ECD training and allocates an annual budget for ECD practitioner training, referred to as a learnership). The learnerships are not considered to be part of EPWP.

Lomofsky et al (2008) reported “limited learnerships” – about 100 per year – being funded by the ETDP SETA at the time of their study. This is, however, less than the 856 level 4 and 509 level 5 diploma learnerships reported by Murray (2014) as funded over the two-year period 2010/11-2011/12 to the value of R71,2 million.

Of the case study provinces, KwaZulu Natal accounted for 100 of the Level 4 learnerships recorded by Murray, North West for 152 Level 4 and 85 Level 5, and Western Cape for 436 Level 4. For 2013/14, the ETDP SETA had awarded a national tender for 165 ECD learners across four provinces at the time Murray’s research was done.

The SETA’s 2013/14 annual report (ETDP SETA, 2014) has references to funding of ECD learnerships only in the provincial sub-reports for Free State, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape. KwaZulu Natal records support for 50 ECD learners in respect of Level 5 qualifications. Western Cape records support for unemployed learners at level 4 and level 5 at FET colleges, noting that this supports the Minister of Higher Education’s “vision to make FET Colleges an institution of choice for further study for school leavers.” The province notes the ECD Forum and ECD Congress as “instrumental” in recruiting learners. The financial statements for 2013/14 show a total of R43,5 million in new contracts, but expenditure of only R6,4 million for ECD level 4, and new contracts of R31,9 million and expenditure of R7,3 million for ECD level 5. The report does not indicate the number of learnerships funded.

1.5.1.1 Recruitment and numbers of training service providers

Murray (2014) states that the procurement of service providers for each province is managed centrally by the ETDP SETA, but also states that the SETA does not appear to have a central record of which providers or public FET Colleges they are funding for ECD learnerships. It is not clear how these two facts can be reconciled. The preference is for use of public TVET colleges, but if there are no public colleges that can offer the learnerships, then private providers are considered. The two private providers who, according to information provided to Murray, have received most ECD training contracts are the for-profit enterprises - DirectFlo and SANTS (South African National Tutor Services).

Management of the providers is done by the provincial SETA offices, which have project managers as well as quality assurance (ETQA) officers. A national SETA official provided a list of accredited training providers dated August 2012. The table below shows the number of providers for each of the qualifications in each of the case study provinces.

Table 4. Number of accredited training providers by ECD qualification and province

Name	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Western Cape
ECD Practitioners Level 4 Certificate	8	1	5
ECD Practitioners Level 5 Diploma	3	2	
Higher Certificate: Early Childhood Development	6		2
Higher Certificate: Early Childhood Development, NQF 5	2		
National Certificate: Early Childhood Development Level 4	6	2	3
National Diploma: Early Childhood Development	6	1	1

The SETA official noted that the list of providers might not be up-to-date as they had changed IT providers, and could be increased by 10% given that ECD was a national priority. However, the ETDP SETA Sector Skills Plan Update (ETDP SETA, 2013), suggests that the database may over-estimate the number of providers as it includes providers that are no longer operating. The update also notes the lack of accurate listings of which providers, including TVET colleges, offer which qualifications.

A provincial ETDP SETA official provided separate lists (generated in June 2015) of accredited service providers for the three ECD qualifications for which they provide quality assurance, namely the Level 4 certificate, Level 5 higher certificate, the results of which are shown in table 5 below. Many of the listed providers may be individuals rather than organisations or institutions.

Table 5.

Name	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Western Cape
ECD Practitioners Levels 4	19	15	13
ECD Practitioners Levels 5 Diploma	4	3	13

The SAQA 2015 re-registration document in respect of the Level 4 qualification lists 101 providers accredited to provide the qualification but does not provide a provincial breakdown.

1.5.1.2 Contradictions over targeted recipients of ETDP SETA learnerships

In 2015, the website of the ETDP SETA records it as “currently implementing” five learnerships.¹ The five include the ECD Level 4 certificate and Level 5 diploma. The website explains that given that ECD is prioritised by legislation, national policies and strategies, the SETA “places a huge emphasis on ECD programmes to help improve children's capacity to develop and learn for better long term prospects.”

¹ <http://www.ETDPSETA.org.za/live/index.php/portfolio/etdp-seta-learnerships>, accessed 25 April 2015.

There is some confusion as to whether ETDP SETA's ECD learnerships are targeted at unemployed people or at people working in ECD, but without formal qualifications. Below are examples of the contradictory evidence:

- The ETDP SETA website invited "interested learners" to contact the provincial offices to apply for one of the 5 learnerships described above;
- The ETDP SETA confirmed what was said by others, namely that learners were recruited from among practitioners who were already employed, but without formal qualifications;
- Murray (2014) states that the SETA funds ECD training for unemployed youth; and
- The Western Cape sub-report in the SETA's 2013/14 annual report which refers to ECD learnerships for unemployed learners.

1.5.1.3 Funding of ETDP SETA's ECD learnerships

The SETA funds ECD learnerships using its discretionary grant. The national ETDP SETA allocates funds to each of the provincial offices, and it is then up to the provincial office to decide whether to fund ECD training. The provincial choices in terms of type and level of training are reflected in the provincial SETA's annual performance plans. It appears that it is once this decision is made, that the central ETDP SETA does the procurement through a tender process.

Training providers submit quarterly reports to the SETA, and the SETA reports on a quarterly basis to DHET.

1.5.2 The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority

The Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA) is the primary SETA in respect of health and social development practitioners, and DSD is one of its largest employers. The SETA funds ECD learnerships as part of a social responsibility initiative focused on improving the life experiences and well-being of children, while acknowledging that ETDP SETA bears the main responsibility for funding of ECD practitioner training. An HWSETA official, interviewed for this report, said that the organisation funds colleges to train ECD practitioners upon board approval as ECD is seen as a special project and is funded from surplus funds rather than included in the main budget. There is no EPWP funding involved.

HWSETA funded a first set of ECD learnerships in 2009/10. A total of 450 learners across the nine provinces were trained by 16 organisations (FET Colleges and private training providers) on Level 4 learnerships. The ETDP SETA Sectors Skill Plan Update (ETDP SETA, 2013) notes that the HWSETA was planning to fund 430 learners at level 5 in 2012/13 through an Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) grant, although the link between ECD and the IPAP is not clear. The HWSETA did in fact fund ECD learnerships during that year, (Murray, 2014), although they were 300 in number and not the initially planned 430. The details of the funding which took place is shown in Table 6.²

² The text reads "three" provinces, but Murray's table shows four.

Table 6. HWSETA level 4 funding, 2012/13

Province	College Name	No of learners
Eastern Cape	Ingwe FET College	114
Free State	Goldfields FET College	91
Kwazulu-Natal	Mnambithi FET College	38
Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	57
Total		300

In 2014, Murray reports HWSETA as funding 174 learners at Level 5 in seven provinces. He reports that the SETA funded both learnerships at R15 000 per annum for fees and a learner stipend at R1 500 per month (Level 4 for 12 months, Level 5 for 24 months). In 2014, the training cost for level 4 is R16 000 per learner, and for level 5 if R30 000. The stipend amount remains at R1 500 per month.

In the earlier years, the HWSETA funded ECD Levels 4 and 5 learnerships at both private and public providers. However, over the past two years it has worked primarily with TVET colleges accredited with ETDP SETA. When funding learners (whether for ECD or another area), the HWSETA allocates the responsibility to advertise and recruit potential learners to the college concerned. However, according to Murray (2014), the HWSETA conducts monitoring visits to all providers before they pay the second tranche. They meet the learners, visit work places, and review the portfolio of evidence. Nevertheless, because it is an ETDP SETA qualification, final moderation and quality assurance requires ETDP SETA endorsement. Similarly, the HWSETA does not maintain a list of accredited ECD practitioner training providers because the ETDP SETA is responsible for accreditation of the providers and verification of all training.

The HWSETA reports the number of learners funded to DHET on a quarterly basis.

1.6 National Development Agency (NDA)

The NDA funds training of ECD practitioners, if it is contracted to do so. However, the nature of NDA funding can not be considered a learnership, by the traditional definition, as there is no allowance made for a learner stipend.

The NDA's provincial offices contract service providers who can do training in the province, and the focus is only on NQF Level 4. The national office estimated that between 20 and 100 people would be trained per province each year, depending on the need.

In offering the services, the training providers must state what facilities will be used and show that they meet all the requirements. NDA then reportedly monitors if the training takes place as specified in the agreement.

The NDA spends between R15 000 and R25 000 per person for the NQF Level 4 training, including tuition fees, training venue, catering, materials and accommodation where necessary. The full amount is paid to the training provider. The amount currently differs by province, but the NDA is keen to standardise the amount.

The NDA identifies the trainees, but does so in different ways. The approach is determined, among others, by the provincial office engaging with different stakeholders in that province which may include:

- The provincial DSD that identifies centres with unqualified practitioners;
- The national Minister who, through engagement with provinces and visits to communities, may identify organisations where there is need; and
- Candidates might approach the NDA directly having heard that it provides such training.

In all cases, the focus has been on existing practitioners who are unqualified, rather than unemployed people who want to gain skills in ECD.

1.6 Number of ECD practitioner trainings funded by the NDA

Information in respect of the number of trained practitioners presented or submitted by the NDA during provincial consultations of the Ministerial Committee on the Review of the White Paper for Social Welfare was as follows:

- NDA Eastern Cape reported training at level 4 which had commenced in March 2014 but was scheduled to end only in November 2016. A total of 88 practitioners were being trained.
- Free State NDA reported training more than 50 ECD practitioners at Level 4 over the period 2009-2013, in addition to 80 practitioners who attended skills development courses (not learnerships) at a cost of about R2,5 million. The cost was explained by the geographical distances, requiring accommodation for trainees during block contact sessions. The success rate for practitioner training was more than 98%.
- Mpumalanga NDA reported training of ECD practitioners at NQF level 4 “and beyond” but did not give numbers.
- Northern Cape NDA reported training more than 200 ECD practitioners (most of whom were already employed in centres) since 2007 at a cost of R3,6 million, and with a 96% success rate. Some practitioners had gone on to Level 5 and transferred to Grade R. NGO training providers were said to result in a “better outcome”, because of the less academic approach.

1.7 National Rural Youth Service Corps

The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) is the youth development flagship programme of the national Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The programme has funded Level 4 training for 29 youth in the Western Cape and 83 in the Northern Cape, following ETDP SETA guidelines.

In Northern Cape the Rural TVET College and in Western Cape South Cape College were contracted to provide the training. Unlike most other initiatives covered in this report, the NARYSEC funding targeted unemployed youth, admitted on the basis of both expressing interest in the ECD field and an assessment done by NARYSEC. The provincial DoEs and DSD have assisted in placement of the youth.

NARYSEC planned to expand the initiative to further provinces, with training starting in July 2015 for 32 youth in Northern Cape, 20 in Western Cape, 15 in Eastern Cape, five in Free State and 60 in North West.

NARYSEC’s training is funded from the department’s budget (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform) as well as, in some cases, NSF funding.

2. Provincial Agencies

2.1 KwaZulu-Natal

2.1.1 Department of Education

We did not manage to secure an interview with this agency. Murray (2014) reports that in 2013 KwaZulu-Natal DoE initiated a process for Level 4 learnerships for 720 practitioners with Umgungundlovu FET College in Pietermaritzburg. However, the (presumably provincial) Treasury had not released the funds at the time the Murray research was undertaken. DoE was not funding any other ECD training in the province.

2.1.2 Department of Social Development

We could not secure an interview with this agency despite submission of all information requested several weeks before the extended deadline and interventions by Ilifa confirming the importance of the research. We were told that approval had to be provided by the Head of Department, and that five signatures were required before the request reached the Head.

2.1.3 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

EDTPSETA

Currently ETDP SETA in KwaZulu-Natal is focusing on ECD Level 5 as well as recognition of prior learning (RPL) for practitioners with experience but no formal qualification. The RPL initiative is a pilot programme that started in 2014 in Western and Eastern Cape. From the interview, it seems that practitioners are RPL'ed into the Level 5 programme. In previous years the provincial ETDP SETA has sometimes funded Level 4 learnerships.

The ECD training is budgeted in the same way as other learnerships. For NQF Level 4 the training fee would be R16 000, while the stipend is R2 000 per month, equivalent to R24 000 per year. Although the trainees are already employed, they are treated like unemployed learners because of the low earnings, sometimes as little as R800 per month. The stipend is seen as assisting them to get to the training venue as well as to cover any other costs that they might have.

The ETDP SETA official thought that both DSD and DoE budgeted for ECD training, as well as municipalities. There was no other source that suggested funding by either DSD or municipalities.

For 2013/14 and 2014/15 the SETA had budgeted R2 415 000 for the two-year Level 5 programme, as well as R3 318 000 for the RPL route over a two-year period. This information aligns with the ETDP SETA's 2013/14 report which had KwaZulu-Natal reporting Level 5 learnerships. The source of funding was the standard SETA budget, derived from the skills levy, with no funding coming through EPWP.

One of our informants reported that the SETA obtained some of their funds for learnerships from the DoE. When this was queried, she explained that the DoE was the largest employer in the sector, and thus contributed a large part of the SETA's funds through the 1% skills levy. This contribution was, however, a general one rather than targeted specifically at ECD.

The provincial office reports on a quarterly basis to the national SETA office which, in turn, reports to DHET. Within the provincial office, the project leader or skills advisor reports to the provincial coordinator/manager, who compiles the report for the national office. The reports submitted to the national SETA office include details on individual learners.

One of our informants said that the SETA generally works with ECD forums to achieve annual targets (e.g. X learners at level Y), with the budget linked to the target. The ECD forums assist in achieving the desired mix of urban and rural (with bias towards rural) participants. There is a provincial forum as well as area-specific forums that meet monthly with ECD centre “principals” to discuss issues affecting ECD and any training opportunities available are shared through these forums. The focus is on existing practitioners.

Another informant said that the SETA asked ECD committees or forums and DoE to assist with recruitment. Service providers are recruited through public tenders advertised in newspapers. We were told that unemployed learners must have completed grade 12 and be under the age of 35, but it was not clear whether this referred to all the SETA’s learnerships or ECD learnerships in particular. Those already employed also needed to have completed grade 12.

HWSETA

The HWSETA contracts with accredited TVET colleges to recruit candidates and provide ECD training in mostly rural areas. The HWSETA allocates R33 000 per learner for Level 4, and R66 000 for Level 5, which covers the training fee (R15 000 for Level 4 and R30 000 for Level 5) as well as a stipend of R1500 per month for 12 and 24 months respectively.

The HWSETA provides the funding and monitors utilisation, but relies on the ETDP SETA to do verification of the outcome of implementation.

The SETA reports on ECD learnerships under the indicator “Increase access to occupationally directed programmes”.

2.1.4 National Development Agency (NDA)

KwaZulu-Natal NDA confirmed that they supported training only at Level 4. In 2013, the provincial NDA supported 18 creches but this decreased to 13 in 2014 and 12 or 13 in 2015 due to budget constraints. It is not clear whether these numbers refer to ECD support in general, or funding of practitioner training in particular.

The funding focused on existing practitioners with grade 12, and focused on “poverty-stricken” areas. Each year different districts are funded. The provincial office monitors that the training is taking place and reports on a monthly basis to the head of capacity building in the national office.

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Table 7. Number of ECD Centres supported by KwaZulu-Natal NDA

Year	Number of Centres
2013	18
2014	13
2015	12

2.1.5 Colleges

Coastal KwaZulu-Natal TVET College

Coastal KwaZulu-Natal is accredited for ECD Level 4 and 5 training by the ETDP SETA and registered as a public FET college with DHET. It also offers the NCV in education and development from level 2 to level 4, which includes components of ECD. The focus is mainly on NCV i.e. pre-employment rather than learnerships. The Level 5 learners have typically completed NCV Education and Development Level 4 at the college. The college shifted its focus to the NCV after DHET changed the curriculum. The college had to align itself with the new curriculum and SAQA requirements to ensure continuity of funding.

In 2005/06 learnerships were funded by the SETA through the Employment and Skills Development Lead Employer (ESDLE), who acts as an intermediary in that she or he is awarded the learnership and appoints a provider that she or he coordinates. DoE also provided funding in 2007/08.

One of our informants said that the college had not provided ECD Level 4 since 100 or more practitioners were trained in 2009, but had seen 16 practitioners (of an intake of 20) complete Level 5 and about 90 complete the NCV over the past three years. The Level 5 students were from ECD centres. The current Level 5 training is being funded through the NSF and all NCV training is funded through the NSF. None of the funding has come through the EPWP over the last three years (or perhaps ever).

Another staff member said that the college no longer had any learnerships. When there were learnerships, the learners were "sponsored" by the ETDP SETA. The staff member was not sure whether the learnerships were funded from EPWP funds but said that DoE obtained EPWP funding in 2013/14 for an administration course (rather than a learnership) for ECD practitioners.

Where there is funding for learnerships, the DoE sends some learners to the college, but others are recruited through the college's advertisements. Learners were previously required to find their own site, but the college provided a letter informing the "school" that learners are required to do in-service training. In 2014 the placement officer of the college started assisting the learners in finding placement.

Stipends are paid by the NSF, and were thought to be about R1 200 per month for Level 4 over a period of 12 months, and about R1 400 per month for Level 5 over an 18-month period.

The college reports to the SETA, NSF or whoever is funding the programme on a quarterly basis.

2.2 North West

2.2.1 Department of Education

North West DoE (NW DoE) started funding colleges in respect of ECD learnership in 2010. The funding focuses only on practitioners who are already employed in ECD centres. Table 8 shows the number of learnerships funded for 2012/3 and 2013/4, by college, as well as the success rate for 2012/3 as reported by Murray (2014). For 2012/13 the total across the three colleges and two levels is 1 260, and for 2013/14 it is 1 148. These numbers are slightly different from the 1 121 and 1 117 respectively recorded in the report on an Ilifa Labantwana dialogue held in June 2015 (Ilifa

Labantwana North West, 2015). The numbers might also include some double-counting, especially for Level 5, which has longer duration.

Table 8. North West learnerships funded by Department of Education, 2012/3-2013/4

	Orbit	Taletso	Vuselela
Level 4	2012/3: 100 Certification rate: 95% 2013/4: 294	2012/3: 100 Certified: 100 2013/4: 135	2012/3: 200 Certified: 186 2013/4: 342
Level 5	2012/3: 300 Certification rate: 95% 2013/4: 130	2012/3: 300 Certified: n/a 2013/4: 97	2012/3: 260 Certified: 242 2013/4: 150

In 2015/16 DoE is targeting 1 000 learners for accredited Level 4 or 5 training, with the minimum requirement for entry being matric. The learner stipend is R1 400 per month for practitioners for the 0-4-year age group, and is transferred in quarterly tranches to the training provider, who is then responsible for paying the learners. However, the official used the term “we” in saying that the practitioners were “appointed ... on contract” and “employed”, suggesting some confusion as to who is the employer.

The contracted training providers are Orbit and Vuselela colleges. The colleges submit a proposal and quotation, together with a description of how they will roll out the training. The department and colleges then sign what was variously referred to as a memorandum of understanding, service level agreement and contract. It is not clear if these terms refer to the same document.

Those responsible for ECD training within DoE report to:

- National DBE (on a quarterly basis);
- The Department of the Premier (in response to specific requests);
- The Department of Public Works; and
- Internally.

The fact that there is reporting to DPW suggests that at least some of the learnerships are seen as part of EPWP.

2.2.2 Department of Social Development

There are 942 registered ECD centres in the North West province, with 1 817 practitioners.

The DSD official described the department’s role in respect of ECD training, and learnerships in particular, as conducting a skills audit, recruitment, and submission of information to DoE. Recruitment and selection was reportedly done according to the requirements of the “training department or organisation”, and no challenges were said to be experienced in doing the selection. Both the non-government organisation, Ntataise, and the provincial DoE were said to play a role in selecting practitioners for training, including learnerships. The report on a 2015 Ilifa Labantwana

dialogue in the North West observes that “DSD does not appear to have a strategic plan for targeted selection of the practitioners.”

DSD does not itself fund any ECD training, confining its provision (and related funding) to programme-related training, such as on legislative mandates.

The Directorate Partial Care and ECD Services with DSD reports on training and finances on a quarterly basis to the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, which in turn reports to Provincial Treasury. However, it seems that these reports do not cover ECD learnerships given that DSD is not contributing any funds in this respect.

2.2.3 Colleges

Taletso TVET College

Taletso is registered with DHET as a public TVET college. It offers ECD learnerships for Level 4 and 5, but does not yet have accreditation to provide the training itself and has contracted an accredited provider to do so. The ECD directorate within the provincial DoE has asked colleges to provide these two levels, and the college plans to be accredited by the end of 2015.

At the time of the interview, Taletso did not have any ECD learnerships. In 2012/2013 they trained 100 students at Level 4, and 300 at Level 5. All the Level 4 learners were recruited from among existing practitioners. The theory component of the training was done twice a month so as to avoid disruption of their daily work, which made up the practical component of the learnership. Taletso has not done any Level 4 and 5 ECD training aside from learnerships.

For Level 5, the provincial DoE wrote to targeted districts which, in turn informed all primary schools asking them to accept the practitioners for the practical Grade R components for the two years of the learnership. Once the learners are qualified, some return to the ECD centres where they worked previously while other were kept on as employees by the primary schools.

The learnerships have been funded by the ECD directorate of DoE, and the college has not received any funds through EPWP. (It is possible that DoE channelled some EPWP money to the college, without the college knowing that this was the source.) The amounts received from DoE for the training referred to above were as follows:

- ECD Level 5 (2012/13) Year 1 = R8 019 475
- ECD Level 5 (2013/14) Year 2 = R8 019 475
- ECD Level 4 (2012/13) Year 1 = 2 831 600.

These amounts, combined with the learner numbers reported above, imply a Level 4 allocation of R28 316 per learner and Level 5 allocation of R28 316 per learner in 2012/13.

DSD recruits the learners and provides the list to DoE. DoE then provides the list to the training provider.

The service provider reports to the programme manager at the college who, in turn, reports to DoE. The service level agreement specifies quarterly in-depth reports. There are also shorter monthly progress reports.

Orbit FET College

Orbit FET College provides both Level 4 and Level 5 ECD training and is accredited for both levels. The college is registered with the Services SETA, but accredited by several other SETAs, including ETDP SETA in respect of ECD and the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports SETA in respect of other training. Registration as a college was previously with DoE but had subsequently moved to DHET.

The training targets learners who are already employed. Learners are recruited by DSD from those working at registered ECD centres, and include some who are in Grade R classes. One informant said that DSD identifies the learners from a database of unqualified practitioners at ECD centres.

Currently, learnerships are funded by DoE. The college manages the stipends which are at a lower level than those reported by some other agencies. The college receives the funds in five tranches.

The college started providing ECD training in 2007 and all the training involves learnerships. Table 9 below, shows a summary of the ECD learnerships provided since 2010, as per interview data. The information provided included the sites where the different learnerships were offered, highlighting the extent to which training is decentralised. This decentralisation could be one of the factors resulting in conflicting estimates, as could the fact that DoE is not the only source of funding, and that learnerships can span more than one year.

Table 9. Summary of Orbit College ECD learnerships, 2010-2015

Funder	Level	Learners	Start date	End date	Fee	Stipend
HWSETA	4	50	May 2010	Apr 2011	R15 000	R1 500
DoE	4	72	Apr 2010	Mar 2011	R12 000	R1 000
		144	Mar 2010	Feb 2011		
DoE	4	350	Oct 2010	Sep 2011	R13 200	R1 000
ETDP SETA	4	140	Oct 2010	Sep 2011	R15 000	SETA paid
DoE	4	100	Jul 2012	Jun 2013	R13 196	R1 260
DoE	4	194	Oct 2011	Sep 2012	R13 196	R1 200
DoE	5	300	Jul 2012	Jun 2014	R23 223	R1 260
DoE	4	294	Aug 2013	Jul 2014	R14 500	R1 400
DoE	5	130	Aug 2012	Jul 2015	R31 900	R1 400
DoE	4	153	Sep 2014	Aug 2015	R14 500	R1 400
DoE	5	97	Sep 2014	Aug 2016	R31 900	R1 400

In terms of total budget, we were told that to date, the college had received a total of R21 million from DoE in respect of ECD learnerships, none of which was thought to be EPWP funds. We were also told that for 2015/16, DoE is funding:

- 153 learners at Level 4 for a total of R4 788 900 - R2 218 500 for the training fees and 2 570 400 for the stipends (equivalent to R1 400 per month)
- 97 learners at Level 5 for a total of R3 176 750 – R1 547 150 for the training fees and R1 629 600 for the stipends (equivalent to R1 400 per month)

Our informant did not know whether any of the learnerships were funded through EPWP. The fact that the 153 and 97 match the numbers shown for 2014 in the table above provide support for the hypothesis that part of the problem in reconciling numbers of learners is that qualifications – and thus a single learner – can span more than a single financial year.

Learners are required to have a mentor for the practical component of the training. The mentors are unpaid volunteers who are qualified foundation phase teachers already working at the ECD centre or school where the learner is doing the practical component. DoE was initially assigned responsibility for identifying mentors, but when this did not happen effectively the college tried to “fill the gap”. The college’s facilitator provides informal training to the mentors, which are identified by the college itself.

The college reports on a quarterly basis to the provincial DoE, which requires these reported before it provides further funding. One informant told us that the reporting to DoE is done by the heads of department of the three campuses, namely Brits, Mankwe and Rustenburg. Another said that within the college the reporting responsibility is divided among project officers as the college does not currently have a manager to take on this task. There is also an annual report to DHET. The reporting to DHET is done by senior management, the deputy principal academic. Within the college, there is reporting to the management board.

2.2.4 Beyond the colleges

An informant from North West University (NWU) who had previously worked for a TVET college as a Level 5 facilitator reported that the university did not have an official ECD programme, but had 20 ECD practitioners with whom they were engaging as part of a community engagement project. Community engagement is the third area in which university academics in South Africa are expected to engage, alongside teaching and research.

The informant reported that NWU is struggling with implementation of the training because of its theoretical, rather than practical nature, adding that the university planned to introduce an accredited diploma in Grade R in 2016, and that Level 4 and 5 teachers would attend this programme. The three-year diploma programme would be at Level 6.

The person had worked at Vuselela FET college in Klerksdrop until 2011. She reported that the SETA recruited learners for Level 5 training. The learners were ECD practitioners who had to leave their centres to do the practical component of the training at primary schools. They received a monthly stipend of R1 500. Once the two years of training were completed, they found that they could not return to the ECD centres as other people had been employed. The learners had understood that they would be employed by DoE as Grade R teachers, but this did not happen. The person also expressed concern that learners were not doing their practical component at centres and schools where they could see good practices. Further, some of the facilitators and learning materials developers had no background in ECD.

2.2.5 National Development Agency (NDA)

The NW NDA had previously provided Level 4 training but had stopped doing so on learning that DoE was funding training at Levels 4, 5 and 6. Currently, the NDA in North West provides other support services to existing ECD practitioners, such as basic bookkeeping.

2.2.6 Ntataise

Ntataise's annual report for 2014 reports provision of Level 4 training in both Free State, where Ntataise is based, and North West. In North West, the reference in the annual report is to training funded by Ilifa Labantwana as the provincial government does not fund training other than through TVET colleges. The Ilifa-funded training started in February 2012. It involved training at Level 4 for 25 practitioners already working in ECD centres who were identified by DSD as needing training. Of the 25, three dropped out – one leaving the ECD sector, and two falling pregnant and giving birth during the training period. Three further learners received only partial qualifications as they had not completed Grade 9 and therefore could not complete the mathematics and English and did not have the level of second language required for credits. Only the cost of the training was funded by Ilifa Labantwana, and the learners did not receive stipends. Whether these should be classified as learnerships depends, in part, on whether the ECD centres paid the learners throughout the training period. Ilifa stopped funding such formal training when it realised that DoE was funding learnerships.

Ntataise is currently funded by Ilifa Labantwana to train and mentor ECD practitioners in their centres i.e. to provide site-based support. The target is children aged 3-5. The support includes centre resourcing, programme quality improvements and centre registration. Ntataise are also building the capacity of DSD support staff. None of this support relates to learnerships.

3. Western Cape

3.1 Department of Education

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) provides funding for ECD training at Levels 1, 4 and 5 for ECD practitioners working with the 0-4 year age group. The names of learners needing "additional" training are obtained from DSD, with whom WCED collaborates. Initially training was provided only to practitioners in registered sites, but in the last two years training has also been offered to practitioners in unregistered sites.

WCED funds about 5 000 accredited ECD training opportunities each year. The budget for 2015/16 is approximately R105 million, and was R98 and R94 million respectively in the previous two years. This amount covers the tuition fee as well as the stipends. These funds are from the equitable share. In addition there is the EPWP incentive conditional grant, amounting to R4,747 million in 2015/16. In 2013/14 Western Cape received R12,298 million through the grant, and in 2014/2015 R13,354 million. The conditional grant is "shared" between ECD and nutrition, with the ECD portion for 2015/16 standing at R2,823 million. The budget numbers presented above reveal that not all of this is for Grade R.

For 2015/16 the stipend is R1 514 per learner per month. As from November 2015 it will increase by 6% to R1 605 per month. The stipend amount may differ based on the ETDP SETA agreement with different colleges.

WCED transfers the money to the colleges on a quarterly basis. This differs from Murray's (2015) description of the instalments, namely as 30% on commencement of the course; 40% halfway

through the course; and 30% after completion of the course and moderation of results. The EPWP WCED also provides each college with database capturers and/or technical administrative support people to manage the payment of stipends.

There are six TVET colleges in Western Cape that provide ECD learnerships:

- College of Cape Town;
- Northlink;
- South Cape;
- West Coast;
- Boland; and
- False Bay.

All of these colleges were previously administered by WCED before being transferred to DHET. WCED enters into a memorandum of agreement with each of the colleges. WCED does not issue tenders for the training because this group of experienced training providers is available.

For recruitment, DSD identifies practitioners requiring training on their database. In addition, the individual colleges may encourage people to enrol at a particular TVET college. The colleges do an initial assessment of prospective learners and send through the outcome of the assessment (against the relevant levels) to WCED for the department's records. That database is also used for the payment of stipends. Payments of the stipends and tuition fee are made against invoices submitted by the colleges. The tuition fee for a learner doing level 1 is R15 000 per learner over 18 months, while for levels 4 and 5, it is R16 500 per learner over the same period.

WCED has a monthly meeting with the TVET colleges at which they receive both oral reports and a written report on progress on the learnership. The colleges also submit quarterly management information system (MIS) reports and a report on expenditure. The ECD programme managers at the colleges submit the reports, but the database capturers or technical administrative support person is responsible for the MIS report. The MIS report includes the names of learners, their ID numbers and addresses, and the stipend received. The quarterly and monthly reports go to the ECD Sub Directorate Western Cape unit, while the MIS report goes to the provincial Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW). The WCED sub-directorate's project manager is responsible for monitoring and evaluation, which includes site visits.

WCED reported that it differed from other provinces in that in the latter there are sometimes dedicated DoE staff who deal only with ECD learnerships, while in Western Cape the staff deal with both EPWP learnerships and other deliverables related to learning and teaching support materials for schools for 0-4 years as well as Grade R. The funding thus covers both payment of subsidies and purchase of support materials.

3.2 Department of Social Development

DSD provides WCED with the names of practitioners who need training. DSD also participates in a monthly reference team meeting where DSD, WCED, DTPW, the TVET colleges and training NGOs meet. In the meeting they discuss the following issues:

- The challenges experienced;
- The need for training on different levels;
- Latest developments; and
- The challenges with the systems used to upload the EPWP learners.

The collaboration between WCED and DSD was said to work well.

In July 2015 there were 1 870 registered ECD centres in the Western Cape. At the time of the interview DSD was in the process of collecting accurate data on the number of practitioners in registered and funded organisations, but did not yet have the results. At the last count, 3 500 practitioners were recorded. Most of the registered and funded centres have at least one or two qualified practitioners, depending on the size of the facility. In many, all the practitioners are qualified. The main challenge relates to older women practitioners who might have experience but have only very basic school education and therefore do not meet minimum requirements for entrance to the qualifications.

DSD provides funding for two types of training. Firstly, it has spent an average of R800 000 in each of the past three years on governance and financial training for principals and governing bodies. Ideally, DSD would like to allocate more for this aspect as poor governance impacts on service delivery. Secondly, DSD funds ECD training organisations with registered ECD programmes to build the capacity of practitioners in ECD centres. The ECD training organisations implement a non-accredited site learning programme which was previously based on the National Early Learning Development Standards and is now aligned with the new National Curriculum Framework 0-4 years.

DSD allocates approximately R25 million on an annual basis across 13 organisations to provide this capacity building to principals and practitioners. None of the training funded by DSD relates to learnerships.

DSD utilises EPWP funding to appoint ECD assistants in its own offices to assist with the monitoring and support of the ECD centres in all the areas of the Western Cape. It also uses EPWP funding to provide stipends to field workers and/or home visitors who are part of non-centre-based ECD programmes. The EPWP amounts are included in the line budgets.

The ECD practitioner training is funded from WCED's EPWP funding. This funding was intended for unqualified ECD practitioners. In Western Cape, some volunteers who are attached to ECD centres are also receiving training. DSD reported that WCED has also used part of the EPWP incentive grant to train unqualified and unemployed youth. The youth are selected by WCED and the colleges as they are not in DSD-supported centres at the time they are recruited. The colleges recruit the extra learners if the learners provided by DSD do not fill all available spaces. Some ECD centres have used the services of these young people to avoid spending money on employing staff.

In addition to the government-funded learnerships, there are some NGOs who provide training for ECD qualification training, but do not provide the stipends that are provided with learnerships.

DSD obtains information on qualifications of staff from the quarterly reports submitted by (funded) ECD centres. It is sometimes difficult to determine the level of training without seeing the certificates as some staff might have dropped out of previous learnerships or other training. Verification through certificates is difficult because the colleges experience "endless problems" in getting the certificates from the ETDP SETA arising from difficulties in uploading information on learners and results. Fortunately, the ECD social workers generally have a good idea of which practitioners are in need of training.

WCED is responsible for most of the reporting on learnerships. For the site-based learning, the NGOs are required to report to DSD on a quarterly basis. DSD also attends some of the training to monitor the quality. DSD and WCED also report to their respective national departments.

3.3 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

In the Western Cape, HWSETA “from time to time” funds ECD training at both Level 4 and Level 5. The training is paid for out of the funding that the SETA receives from levy-paying organisations in the sector. For HWSETA, ECD is seen as a social responsibility area given its importance for development of children. HWSETA funds ECD despite its being accredited by the ETDP SETA because DSD, which registers and funds ECD centres, falls under HWSETA as an employer.

When it decides to fund such training, the HWSETA puts out a call for expressions of interest to training providers accredited for ECD, in particular TVET colleges. TVET colleges can also apply for funding of ECD training through the SETA’s standard funding proposal process. The SETA evaluates the applications and allocates funding based on the learner numbers requested by the organisation. The SETA engages periodically with the colleges and the ETDP SETA to determine the need in terms of number of unqualified practitioners and levels. Where learners have been funded at Level 4, the SETA will fund the same learners on Level 5 as well.

The training provider is responsible for recruitment and selection of learners, and for arranging where the practical component will be done. The HWSETA pays the first tranche on receipt of the required documentation, and the second tranche after conducting a monitoring visit. Third and fourth tranches are paid after employers (presumably the ECD centres) submit reports, and the final tranche is paid after learner results have been submitted.

3.4 Colleges

Northlink College is registered as a public TVET college with DHET, which employs the college’s staff. It is also registered with, and accredited for ECD training by, the ETDP SETA and Umalusi. The college offers accredited ECD learnerships at Levels 1, 4 and 5. Over the period 2013-5 the College has 120 Level 1 learners, 480 at Level 4, and 240 at Level 5. Since 2010/11, 857 ECD qualifications have been successfully completed.

All Northlink’s ECD learners are already employed at an ECD centre when they embark on the training. Learners are recruited from databases received from DSD and WCED, but also through walk-ins who hear about the training through word of mouth, including through forums and NGOs. The college does not know how many learners have remained in the sector after qualifying.

Northlink’s learnerships are funded through the EPWP, ETDP SETA and HWSETA. Northlink was thus the only college interviewed that reported receiving EPWP funding. The EPWP funding spans all three levels, while ETDP SETA and HWSETA having provided funding for Level 4. At the time of the interview there were 35 ETDP SETA and 60 HWSETA learnerships.

The college’s project manager attends the monthly reference meetings with EPWP (i.e. DTPW), WCED and DSD and also submits monthly reports to these agencies.

A summary of funding sources and channels

The research has produced a confusing picture. It seems that there is a range of different funding streams, but these operate, in some instances not very effectively, in different ways on both a national and provincial level. This report analysed the provision of ECD training in three provinces and assumes that if all nine provinces had been covered, the provision map would have been even more diverse.

The funding streams identified, none of which is currently used across all three case study provinces are:

- Provincial departments of education – In most instances, according to the interviews conducted and the provincial budget documents, the departments use the EPWP social sector incentive grant for this purpose. In direct contradiction of these statement, DPW indicated that the social sector incentive grant was not used at all for funding of ECD.
- National Skills Fund - the NSF provides funding directly to the national ETDP SETA head office. That head office then distributes the funding to its provincial offices, some of which use the funds for ECD learnerships. The NSF also provides funding to DPW which can be used to cover training costs, but not stipends, related to learnerships.
- EPWP - The DPW manages the social sector incentive grant, for which any project must use at least 80% of its funding for stipends. The DPW also manages the NSF funds referred to above.
- SETAs: Both the ETDP SETA and HWSETA fund TVET colleges to provide learnerships. The ETDP SETA does this using NSF funding. The HWSETA does so using surplus monies from its discretionary funds. In both SETAs, it seems that much of the decision-making as to whether ECD learnerships will be funded happens in the provincial SETA offices.
- TVET colleges: The colleges are currently the main, and government-preferred, provider of learnerships, using funds channelled to them by other agencies. Where a college is not itself accredited to provide training, it may sub-contract with another provider – including an NPO provider – to do so.
- National Development Agency: The NDA distributes funds to its provincial offices, some of which may use some of the funds for ECD learnerships.
- NARYSEC: NARYSEC funds ECD learnerships from the funds it is allocated by its parent department as well, at some points, from funds received from the NSF.

Discussion

The process of documenting the financial flows and processes for ECD learnerships has revealed that the oft-expressed prioritisation of ECD is undermined by the complex nature of the funding arrangement for practitioner training as well as some elements of the design in terms of roles and responsibilities. The factors contributing to the complexity, and which undermine solid achievements, include the following:

- A large number of actors are assigned or claim responsibilities for ECD learnerships, including identifying who is in need of training, administration of learnerships, funding of the training, provision of the training, and provision of mentorship and support while the learnerships are in progress. There are also many different streams of funding, including within a particular institution, and seemingly substantial discretion across provinces both with DSD and DOE and within other agencies such as the NDA. This, in turn, can result in substantial fluctuation from year to year in what any particular agency funds and provides. There seems to be little, if any, coordination of all the different actors. While some might

argue that taking advantage of all possible funding sources, and encouraging all possible funders, increases the pot of money available, instead it seems that “everybody’s business becomes nobody’s business” as there is no central coordinator determining how much training is needed, where and how it will be funded and tracking the extent to which these efforts are contributing collectively to the human resource pool for ECD. The result is a number of different funders providing funds on a seemingly erratic basis with little, if any, knowledge of what others are doing and what is being achieved.

- The term “learnership” is commonly used to refer to the training of ECD practitioners. However, in some cases what is referred to is not a true learnership. Indeed, one could argue that none of the learnerships are standard ones in that in a standard learnership the employer is responsible for paying the wage (in the case of someone who was already employed at the time of starting the learnership) or stipend (in the case of someone who is unemployed at the time of starting the learnership). Identifying the funding and related processes associated with learnerships (in the sense of the arrangement that most closely resembles a standard learnership) requires that one first identifies whether the training funded in a particular case is a learnership or not.
- Many of those who are or should be key actors seem to have limited knowledge and information about the learnerships, and the associated funding and processes. Within any single institution the information is often split across different officials, no-one has the full picture even for that institution, and officials often do not know who else within the institution might have the information. Officials within the same institution sometimes provide conflicting information.
- There are conflicting explanations as to what the different documentary information sources, such as the EPWP management system and reports and the budget documents, include. Disagreement exists, among others, in respect of the funding sources (for example, EPWP-specific or mainstream funding) and the amounts (restricted to stipends, or including other amounts).
- The way in which budgets, expenditure and other funding information is presented by the different institutions usually does not allow easy identification of the funds allocated and spent on learnerships. Although during the research the requests for information were posed in a similar way across agencies, different agencies, even within a particular category, provided differing items of information and in different formats. Some, for example, were able to provide learner numbers, some total allocations, some per learner allocations for fees and stipends, and so on. The information obtained did not have sufficient consistency to allow compilation of standard comparative tables across provinces, institutions, levels and years.
- The information available often does not clearly differentiate between training of practitioners for children aged 0-4 years and Grade R. The fact that the Level 5 training is considered appropriate for both groups, and that some ECD practitioners migrate to teaching Grade R after completing Level 5 would raise questions of interpretation even if the information was always disaggregated by the target child group.
- There is no central agency to which all the actors involved in funding of ECD learnerships report to – even in respect of basic information, such as funding amounts and the number of

learners who are enrolled or graduating. Thus while all actors undertake reporting of some kind beyond their own agency, they report to different places and using different metrics.

- Some of the design features of ECD learnerships and related funding suggest approaches that try to fit square pegs into round holes. For example, the inclusion of ECD learnerships as part of EPWP in the first place does not match the primary EPWP focus on job creation. In the case of ECD, virtually all informants confirmed that the emphasis was on existing practitioners. Therefore, the EPWP in this case does not create a new job. In particular, it does not create jobs for practitioners for 0-4 year olds. There are many stories of those who qualify leaving their jobs at ECD centres once the stipend stops, or trying to do so. Further, those practising with 0-4 year olds who continue to Level 5 must be based in a Grade R classroom while they study. There is no guarantee that they will return to an ECD centre once they are qualified. There is also not a good fit with the model of learnerships for the already employed, as the employer (the ECD centre) does not pay the wage/stipend as is required in other sectors.
- The shifting upwards of the target over time by registering the Level 1 qualification and by increasing emphasis on Level 5 rather than Level 4 threatens to neglect the needs of the most disadvantaged children. Firstly, it means that older practitioners without the necessary formal schooling will not be able to gain qualifications. While the ETDP SETA has introduced an RPL initiative, RPL processes are generally labour- and time-intensive and it is unlikely the scale will be sufficient to address the needs of many less-schooled practitioners. Meanwhile, the children cared for by these practitioners will continue to be denied the improved quality of service that the learnerships are intended to address. Secondly, increased focus on Level 5 is likely to mean most of those who qualify will be lost to the 0-4 year age group – the group in which there are much greater disparities in access for children than for Grade R.
- The DHET policy that the public funders use TVET colleges rather than NPO providers wastes the opportunity to use the valuable resource of experienced private – and particularly NGO – training providers. Further, the fact that the learnerships at colleges are funded from sources other than the colleges' standard annual allocations from DHET, and that the other sources are erratic, means that the colleges are unlikely ever to establish a solid permanent capacity to provide ECD occupational training (rather than pre-employment training) because they do not know from one year to the next whether the necessary funding will be available.

Conclusion

The complexity of the organisation, execution and funding of ECD learnerships in South Africa currently has a negative impact on the country's prioritisation of ECD. Lack of co-ordination of the wide range of actors responsible for various aspects of the learnership programme is undermining efforts to strengthen the pool of qualified ECD practitioners. Addressing this is essential for improved access to and quality of ECD services for all young children in SA.

The ECD sector would benefit from co-ordinated planning and implementation of an ECD learnership strategy, which integrates all actors, with well-defined lines of action and reporting mechanisms. Attention should also be given to the many different streams of funding, linking it to a central strategy focused on building the skills needed to resource ECD in the country.

Thought should be given to the design and implementation of an information management system which provides current, accurate and reliable data around learnerships. Finally, the design of ECD learnerships should be reviewed taking into account the operational realities of the institutions responsible for execution as well as the needs of the ECD practitioners entering the training.

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