



Key:

- FROM PROGRAMME DESIGN TO SHIFTING POLICY
- SHAPING THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT SO ALL ECD PROGRAMMES ARE RECOGNISED
- INCREASED FUNDING FOR ECD
- DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING
- HARNESSING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TO PROMOTE CAREGIVER BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE
- STRENGTHENING THE ECD ECOSYSTEM



ILIFA LABANTWANA'S STORY OF CHANGE



FROM PROGRAMME DESIGN TO SHIFTING POLICY

2005

- Government launched the **National Integrated Plan for ECD**.
- The **Children's Act No. 38 of 2005** was enacted into law.

2008

- Ilifa tested **5 community-based integrated ECD delivery models** – known as the Sobambisana Initiative.

2012

- Sobambisana found that ECD requires an **Integrated Essential Package of services**, which begins in pregnancy and encompasses maternal and child health, nutrition, parenting support, social services, and early learning.
- Sobambisana informed the **National Diagnostic Review on ECD**.

2013

- Ilifa published **The Essential Package: Early childhood services and support to vulnerable children in South Africa**.
- The *Essential Package* informed the **South African National Integrated ECD Policy (ECD Policy)**.

2015

- The **ECD Policy** was approved by Cabinet.

2017

- Ilifa and partners advocated for the expansion of **community-based ECD services** and their inclusion in policy and financing decisions.

2022

- The ECD function moved from the **Department of Social Development (DSD)** to the **Department of Basic Education (DBE)**.

2023

- ECD Policy and strategy review** was initiated by the DBE.

2024

- DBE published an **ECD strategy to reach universal access**.
- The National Planning Commission published an **advisory on the importance of inter-governmental coordination for ECD**.



SHAPING THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT SO ALL ECD PROGRAMMES ARE RECOGNISED

2015

- Ilifa and Impande proposed a **simpler, faster, data-driven approach to Early Learning Programme (ELP) registration** called **Bhalisa Inkulisa**.

- Ilifa, Project Preparation Trust, LIMA and Assupol Community Trust used the **Strategic ECD Infrastructure Support (SEIS)** project to show why ELPs need physical infrastructure help to achieve registration.

2016

- In partnership with the North West government, Ilifa, SmartStart and Cotlands demonstrated **bulk registration of playgroups**.

2017

- Low-cost new-build ECD centres** were designed and piloted.
- SEIS informed **SA's first nationally funded ELP infrastructure maintenance programme**, the **ECD Maintenance Grant**.

2018

- Bhalisa Inkulisa** introduced a **tiered ELP registration framework**, which allows ELPs to meet registration requirements progressively and would go on to be adopted by the government.

2020

- Ilifa's motivation resulted in the **Maintenance Grant extending to unregistered ELPs**.

- Ilifa and the Equality Collective galvanised the sector in protest of the inadequate Children's Amendment Bill, through the **Real Reform 4 ECD Campaign**. Over 200 organisations were mobilised, resulting in **1,270 submissions to Parliament objecting to the Bill**.

2021

- Ilifa developed an **Infrastructure Procurement Strategy** to assist the government in operationalising the Maintenance Grant.
- Parliament **rejected the Children's Amendment Bill**, which was a win for Real Reform 4 ECD.

2022

- Ilifa assisted with **redrafting the Children's Amendment Bill's for resubmission** to Parliament.



INCREASED FUNDING FOR ECD

2017

- Ilifa supported the government in developing the **ECD financing strategy** and the **ECD Conditional Grant**.

- South Africa's first ringfenced ECD budget for the subsidy and Maintenance Grant was announced at R812mn**. The maintenance grant is the first and only national fund earmarked for upgrading and maintaining ELPs' infrastructure.

- Bulk registration of playgroups** unlocked R6mn in government funding, subsidising 1,365 children.

2018

- Ilifa supported the government to simplify **ECD subsidy guidelines**.

2019

- The ECD subsidy is extended to **non-centre-based ELPs**.
- The **low-cost new-build ECD centre pilot** extended the ECD Conditional Grant to new builds.

2020

- Ilifa and partners published **The Plight of the ECD Workforce Survey** as the pandemic wreaked havoc on the sector.
- The *Workforce Survey* informed governments' **R500mn ECD Stimulus Fund**, which helped ELPs to re-open safely and pay staff.
- Ilifa supported DSD to reallocate **R90mn of the Maintenance Grant for ECD programmes** during the pandemic.

2021

- Ilifa spearheaded the **ECD Covid-19 Response Project**, raising R36mn to relieve the sector.
- The Covid-19 Response project helped **1,700 unregistered ELPs re-open**, over 30,000 children receive meals for 18 weeks, and almost 3,500 ELP workers receive vouchers.

2023

- NPO registration was dropped** as a requirement for ELPs to receive the ECD subsidy.
- Ilifa's financing work contributed to the number of **subsidised children increasing by 20%** to approximately 634,000.
- DBE approved **ECD subsidy guidelines**.
- The **ECD Conditional Grant increased four-fold** since its inception, reaching R1.6bn in 2024.



DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

2015

- With Ilifa's support, Innovation Edge developed SA's first child outcome measurement tool – the **Early Learning Outcomes Measurement (ELOM)**.

2016

- With partners, Ilifa published three editions (2016-19) of **The South African Early Childhood Review**.

2019

- Ilifa **collated a comprehensive database of over 18,600 ELPs** across all provinces, forming the basis of government's **Vangasali Campaign**.

2021

- ELOM tools** were the backbone for SA's first nationally representative survey of preschool children, the **Thrive by Five Index**.

2022

- Ilifa supported DBE in designing a **management information system for ECD** to monitor, plan and allocate resources towards ELPs.
- Ilifa supported the government to design a **Quality Assurance and Support System** so that ELPs can deliver quality programmes.



HARNESSING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TO PROMOTE CAREGIVER BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

2015

- Ilifa launched the national **#LovePlayTalk communication campaign** aimed at caregivers.

2017

- Ilifa prompted SA's first ECD communication campaign for caregivers and health workers, **Side-By-Side (SbS)**, led by the **Department of Health (DoH)**.

2018

- Ilifa supports the DoH in redesigning the national standard health and development record given to caregivers at a child's birth – the **Road to Health Book**.

2022

- DoH allocated **R4.5mn to SbS for 2022/23**.

2023

- SbS radio reached **5.4mn listeners** weekly on 11 stations.



STRENGTHENING THE ECD ECOSYSTEM

2007

- ELMA Philanthropies and the DG Murray Trust **co-founded Ilifa Labantwana** to support the implementation of the National Integrated Plan.

2014

- Ilifa **incubated Innovation Edge**, an impact-first investor in ECD ideas.

2015

- Sobambisana lessons contributed to the establishment of **SmartStart**, an **ECD social franchise** to expand access to quality early learning for all children.

2018

- Ilifa's research contributed to the establishment of **Grow Great**, a **campaign to eradicate stunting in SA by 2030**.

2020

- Ilifa's role as a **strong technical advisor to government was cemented**, demonstrating how government and social partners can collaborate.

2021

- Ilifa led the **convening of social partners** committed to ensuring universal access to the *Essential Package* of ECD services.

2022

- Ilifa supported the DBE as it took up **responsibility for ECD**.



DG Murray House, 1 Wodin Road, Claremont, Cape Town, 7700 | +27 (21) 670 9848

info@ilifalabantwana.co.za | www.ilifalabantwana.co.za

@ilifalabantwana | Ilifa Labantwana | Ilifa Labantwana