

2024 LEAP Challenge



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Executive Summary

Introduction

In recent years, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) agenda has garnered significant attention from governments, civil society and business. The recognition comes from a realisation that to thrive later in life, the right foundations are essential and not optional. In South Africa,



poverty, unemployment and the rural-urban divide continue to be significant barriers to accessing basic services including ECD. It has become apparent that different modalities are required to respond to the needs of families with different socio-economic circumstances. As such, Seriti's aRe Bapaleng programme has, for five years, provided basic capacity-building to parents and caregivers of children aged 0-8 years with the intention to empower them to assume the role of the first teacher — providing home-based early learning and stimulation using minimal and inexpensive resources. Through aRe Bapaleng's Active Learning Workshop methodology, cohorts of parents and caregivers are trained on six sessions which provide relatable information of various aspects of child development including health and nutrition, stages of development, the importance of learning through play and psychosocial support, among other topics. To complement this information, parents and caregivers are also provided with an activity book, a set of Lego Six Bricks, flashcards, and story books to demonstrate the types of learning activities they can implement with their children. Additionally, the programme has implemented other interventions including home-based visits and awareness campaigns to strengthen the support provided to families and communities.

To date, aRe Bapaleng has reached **52, 665** parents and caregivers through its interventions and has indirectly benefited **102, 534** children.

Organisation's role & strength

Seriti Institute, established in 2009, is a non-profit and public benefit organisation focused on building resilient communities through innovative and sustainable solutions. Working

collaboratively with social partners, Seriti delivers technical support, programme management, and implementation services to help vulnerable people achieve self-sufficiency and create meaningful lives.

Seriti's aRe Bapaleng programme demonstrates a unique value proposition in the South African ECD space through its holistic, community-centred approach, emphasising the importance of home-based nurturing care and household resilience in advancing educational outcomes for children aged 0-8. The programme empowers and equips parents and caregivers with essential skills while building sustainable local ECD ecosystems through active learning workshops, caregiver networks, and strategic partnerships that foster nurturing environments for children's development.

Over the past five years of successful implementation, and three Partner Networking Events aimed at building linkages within the South African early learning and development ecosystem, Standard Bank South Africa remained a steadfast pillar of support. Seriti's aRe Bapeleng programme has advanced significantly and made it through to the 2024 LEAP Challenge supported by MIT and the Jacobs Foundation. Seriti's aRe Bapeleng programme demonstrated global relevance, becoming one of ten global finalists to participate in the LEAPathon. Through LEAP, Seriti has been able to strengthen the aRe Bapaleng programme's Theory of Change, Intervention Design, Data Collection Strategy, and strategic thinking around fundraising in the South African ECD, parental support and household resilience landscape. The LEAP challenge has provided access to research and social enterprise thought leadership at a global level, embodying a strength for continuous learning for future program iterations. As Seriti enters 2025, aRe Bapaleng is well-placed to innovate and attract enduring forms of support for this important intervention in the lives of parents, caregivers and children.

Need summary

The Seriti Institute shared several needs and areas for exploration related to their aRe Bapaleng early childhood development programme:

- a) A review of their Theory of Change involving key indicators, their multiple interventions, and their interconnections ([Deliverable 1](#))
- b) A set of recommendations to strengthen their intervention design based on a literature review ([Deliverable 2](#))

- c) A proposed approach to their data collection strategy aiming to enhance their monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes ([Deliverable 3](#))
- d) Key recommendations for their fundraising strategy connected to the reflections of the overall project ([Deliverable 4](#)) Key recommendations for their fundraising strategy, based on insights from the mapping and landscaping of ECD organizations, emphasize the importance of diversifying funding sources, mitigating donor cannibalization, and positioning aRe Bapaleng's unique household-focused interventions as a key driver for long-term impact and sustainability.

Solution summary & next steps

The Seriti Institute's engagement with the LEAP initiative has resulted in actionable insights across four key deliverables, aiming to enhance the aRe Bapaleng programme's impact and sustainability:

- **A refined Theory of Change** now sharpens the focus on core interventions and parent and caregiver outcomes while ensuring adaptability and clarity in programmatic objectives.
- **Evidence-based recommendations on strengthening the aRe Bapaleng intervention design** highlight the potential value of combining group workshops and home visits, optimizing intervention dose, and emphasizing the role of skilled providers and father involvement.
- **A proposed data collection strategy** outlines insights and considerations for incorporating a Likert-scale approach and emphasizing parental self-efficacy as a primary outcome measure, while also introducing the potential for child outcome tracking using validated tools.
- **Lastly, an analysis of Seriti's fundraising strategy and positioning in relation to other similar interventions** based on insights from the mapping and landscaping of ECD organizations, emphasizes the importance of diversifying funding sources, mitigating donor cannibalization, and positioning aRe Bapaleng's unique household-focused interventions as a key driver for long-term impact and sustainability.

Moving forward, the Seriti Team may consider several next steps, guided by their organizational priorities, funding, capacity, and strategic goals. These include:

- Piloting and institutionalising the refined Theory of Change and intervention designs and developing a set of accompanying key indicators
- Incorporating revised data collection tools to measure parental self-efficacy and child outcomes
- Exploring opportunities to scale program components through strategic partnerships, aligning their narrative to funder interests, and showcasing the long-term societal benefits of their work to ensure sustainability and resilience in their impactful ECD interventions.

Deliverable 1 - Theory of Change

Introduction

During Phase I: Learning, the Seriti team indicated a strengthened Theory of Change (ToC) as one of their desired deliverables. Thus, the Fellows team set out to understand Seriti's ToC in its current state, its strengths, and areas for improvement.

Methodology

During Phase I: Learning and Phase II: Drafting and Iterating, the Fellows and Seriti convened for several working sessions to:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of Seriti's aRe Bapaleng program, including the key social challenge it seeks to address, the stakeholders and communities it aims to support, the target behaviors it seeks to change, the key interventions, and their intended impact.
2. Identify strengths and areas for improvement in Seriti's working ToC
3. Develop a working framework that would clearly articulate the *how* and *why* behind aRe Bapaleng's expected impact and serve as a programmatic roadmap

During the consultation process, the Fellows and Seriti collectively identified several key areas on which to focus to arrive at a more refined ToC:

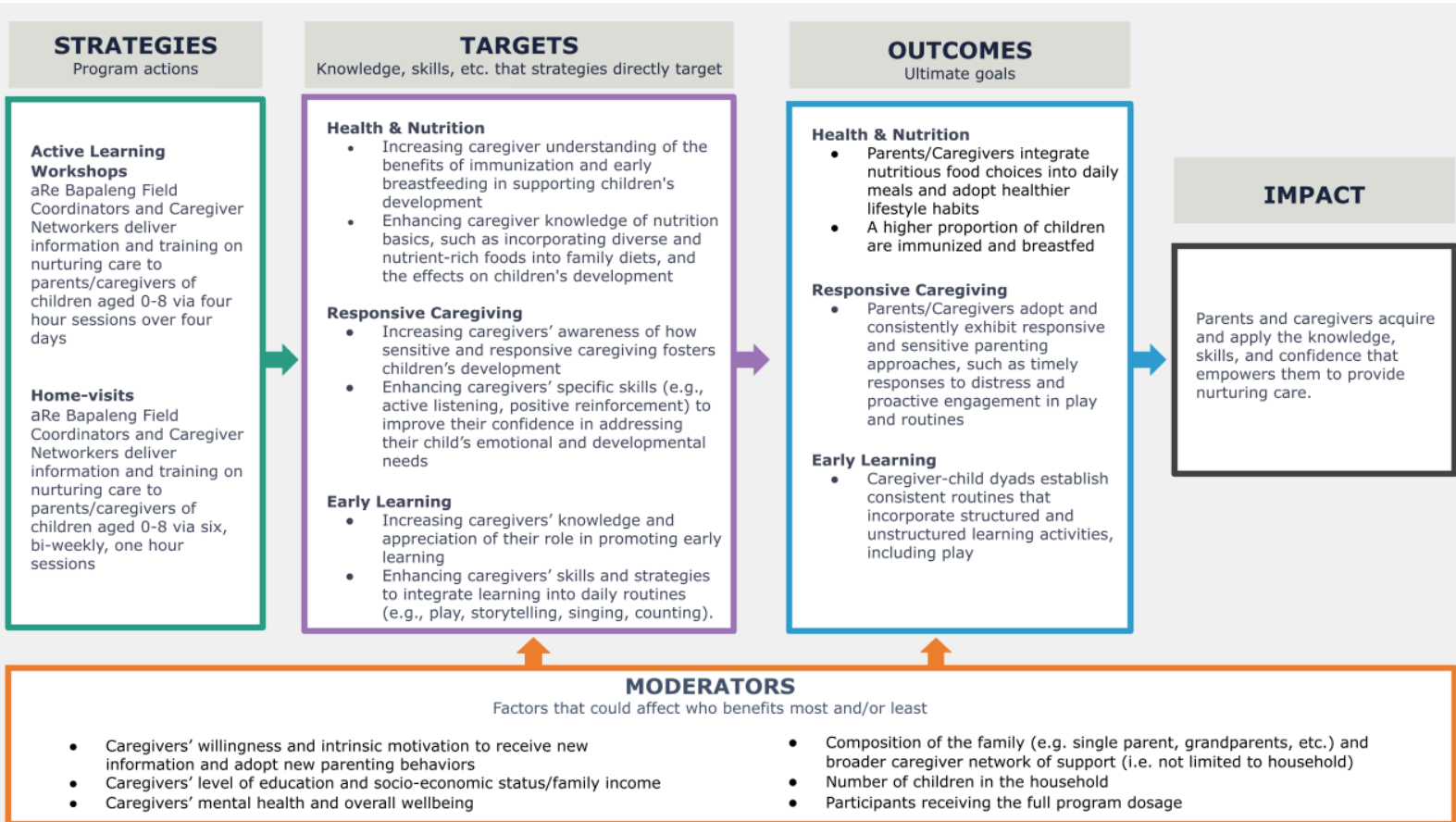
1. **Streamlining program approach:** The initial draft of the ToC took a broad, systems perspective, encompassing several activities that aRe Bapaleng implements. This included their core interventions — Active Learning Workshops (ALWs) and home visits — and building the capacity of early childhood development (ECD) centers, awareness campaigns, and a youth employment program. The Fellows recommended concentrating the scope of ToC on the ALWs and home visits, to ensure the ToC accurately reflects the core interventions underpinning the aRe Bapeng program — those which directly influence the target outcomes for parents and caregivers.
2. **Focusing on outcomes at the parent/caregiver level:** While ensuring that children meet their developmental potential is the ultimate goal of aRe Bapaleng, the core interventions target parents and caregivers. Focusing the ToC on outcomes at the parent and caregiver level helps to establish clear if-then (causal) connections between the core interventions, the key parenting behaviors, attitudes, and skills the program aims to influence, and the methods for measuring these outcomes.

Following consultation with the Seriti Team, the Fellows identified the [IDEAS Impact Framework](#) from the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University as a framework that could support Seiri in developing a streamlined, efficient, and flexible ToC (see [Appendix A](#)).

The Fellows and Seriti envisioned a streamlined ToC would serve as a programmatic roadmap and support key organizational activities including:

1. Facilitating ongoing learning, adapting, and program improvement efforts by pinpointing why, how, and for whom a program works or doesn't work
2. Aligning program objectives and what's measured (indicators)
3. Guiding successful implementation (documenting the program's fidelity or the degree to which the program is implemented as intended)
4. Communicating to stakeholders at a glance what the program is about

Deliverable - Refined Theory of Change



Once the Seriti Team adapted their working ToC to the Center for the Developing Child framework, the Fellows provided detailed feedback and provocations to support Seriti's thinking and instigate additional reflections on further refining their framework. Key revisions included:

- Program Statement and Impact Statement:** The Problem Statement serves to draw "boundaries" or guide choices about what is inside and outside the program scope and sharpen the aRe Bapaleng program's focus. The Program Goal/Impact is a reframing of the problem to the desired change or outcome to be achieved.

Problem Statement	Parents and caregivers lack adequate access to resources and support to cultivate awareness and skills needed to provide nurturing
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	care that meets children's developmental needs within the first six years
Impact Statement	Parents and caregivers acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and confidence that empowers them to provide nurturing care.

- **Assumptions/Moderators:** The Fellows recommended adding an Assumptions/Moderators section to the ToC. These are assumptions that must prevail for the program logic to work as intended or factors that could affect who benefits most and/or least. According to USAID, “the surfacing and articulation of key assumptions can help [program] managers evaluate and learn about the effectiveness of the approach under specific conditions. The invalidity of assumptions can also serve as important signals that the logic model and TOC need to be revisited, and likely adjusted, to yield better outcomes during implementation,” (USAID, 2017).

- **Strengthened Strategies:** Strategies are the actions the program will take to achieve desired changes and are essential for documenting the program’s fidelity, or the degree to which the program is implemented as intended. Clearly articulated strategies move us from the question, “Does it work?” to “What about it works?” (Center for the Developing Child, *n.d.*).

Considering that the ALWs and home visits as core interventions would now be the focus of the ToC, the Fellows suggested more clearly articulated formulations — short, narrative descriptions beginning with action words that note who is taking the action (e.g., facilitators provide) and summarize key aspects of the intervention such as content, focus, and dosage.

- **Strengthened Targets:** Targets are the skills, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge that the strategies aim to change in parents and caregivers (Center for the Developing Child, *n.d.*). Given that parents and caregivers receive aRe Bapaleng strategies directly, not their children, the Fellows emphasized the importance of staying at the parent/caregiver level in the Targets section and addressing any impacts on children as Long-term Outcomes.

The Fellows also recommended that the Targets be evident in aRe Bapaleng’s program materials and explicitly linked to the key messages surrounding knowledge, behaviors, or skills emphasized in the ALWs and home-visits. For example, a session designed to increase parental responsiveness should correspond to a Target of “increasing parenting responsiveness.”

Deliverable 2 - Strengthened Intervention Design

Introduction

A refined Theory of Change forms the basis for subsequently adjusting interventions to enhance their effectiveness. Seriti's aRe Bapaleng Programme has expanded rapidly in recent years, reflecting the organisation's commitment to impactful action. This section of the report examines these interventions through the lens of relevant literature, aiming to highlight their strengths and identify opportunities for improvement. Particular attention is given to aRe Bapaleng's Active Learning Workshops (ALWs) and home visit interventions, which have been identified as core components of the programme.

Although South Africa is classified as an upper-middle-income country with a relatively high GDP per capita, it experiences significant inequality across demographic groups, particularly in terms of race, socioeconomic background, and income. Within this context, aRe Bapaleng specifically focuses on underserved communities and groups. Accordingly, we concentrate on interventions conducted in low- to middle-income countries, which, while not fully reflecting South Africa's unique context, are more relevant to aRe Bapaleng's target communities than models from high-income countries.

Methodology

The approach for this review involved synthesising insights from types of scientific literature that can be considered "gold standard", that is, systematic reviews or meta-analyses that predominantly include randomised controlled trials (RCTs). We included sources relevant for the scope of aRe Bapaleng activities, focusing on literature that targets interventions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) for parents of young children. This literature included interventions that addressed some or all of the topics featured in Seriti's program content, such as health and nutrition, cognitive development, and social-emotional development. We include insights from eight systematic reviews and meta-analyses, encompassing evidence from over 200 studies. The reviews vary in whether they focus on reporting parental outcomes, child outcomes, or both. We pay special attention to several intervention design components relevant to aRe Bapaleng, **leading us to formulate recommendations regarding five topics:**

1. Comparisons between group settings, such workshops and individual settings, such as home visits
2. Effects of intervention dose
3. Characteristics of intervention providers
4. Father involvement
5. Integration of technology

After reviewing these specific topics, we provide an overview of the intervention content and measurements covered by each of the reviews cited, as well as a showcase of selected intervention programmes.

Recommendation 1: Combine group settings and individual settings

Two core intervention types used within aRe Bapaleng are group settings, the so-called Active Learning Workshops, and individual settings, household visits. Both types of interventions cover six topics as outlined in an accompanying guidebook for parents and caregivers, comprising an introduction to early childhood education, developmental stages, areas of development, learning through play, child health and nutrition, and psychosocial support. These topics are covered over four days of four-hour-long workshops for 25 parents or caregivers at a time in the Active Learning Workshops. In individual home visits, the content is covered during visits that take place twice a month spread over a 3-month-period in the household visits. Parents recruited for household visits are not necessarily the same as those who attend workshops. One question on

the aRe Bapaleng team's mind is the relative role of the two intervention types: more concretely, whether one type of intervention is more efficient than the other, whether a given parent should attend one or both types, and whether the interventions should offer similar or complementary content.

All reviewed interventions included both studies using group and individual settings, but not all reviews explicitly compared effects across these settings. Across studies, both individual and group settings lead to positive parental outcomes, indicating the suitability of both settings for early childhood intervention work. However, when compared, group settings tended to lead to better child outcomes than individual settings (Jervis et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). In addition, combining modalities was found to be most effective for both child and parental outcomes (Brito et al., 2015). The studies also highlighted the complementary role individual and group settings play depending on the developmental domain addressed. For instance, Brito et al. (2015) found that home visits were the main format for health-related programs. If group settings were used for such programs, they were more efficient when combined with other modalities such as individual counselling or the distribution of pamphlets. In terms of psychosocial stimulation programmes, where active engagement between caregiver and child is critical for reaching improvements in children's cognitive development, individual visits are important to induce such engagement, and thus interventions using home visits only or home visits in combination with group settings proved the most efficient (Brito et al., 2015).

This review highlights that combining both delivery modes for a given family can be beneficial for outcomes. While group settings are most efficient for conveying knowledge on a broad range of topics, individual visits are more adapted for specific content areas that require practical demonstration and active parent-child engagement.

Recommendation 2: Intervention dose

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the two program components offered - Active Learning Workshops and household visits - require varying levels of engagement over time, either a concentrated effort over a few days, or a more prolonged engagement over the course of several months.

Intervention dosage can be divided in several aspects: Frequency, duration, and intensity of interventions. Understanding the effects of intervention dosage is often quite challenging in systematic reviews as there are often inconsistencies or a general lack of implementation data reported to examine these questions. In addition, those studies included in

a given review might only cover a small range of all possible dosage options, limiting possible conclusions.

Regarding the frequency of sessions, programs with more sessions were found to be more successful (Brito et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2021). It is difficult to quantify what exactly “more” is to mean: The Zhang et al. review, for instance, divided interventions into those with less than 12 sessions and those with 12 sessions or more, and found better outcomes for the latter.

As to intervention length, the more expansive review by Brito et al. (2015) reported longer interventions to have better outcomes. Jervis et al. (2023) reported interventions of less than 12 months to lead to better outcomes on child factors such as cognition, language, and motor development, however, their review only considered interventions with a length between 6-12 months, thus, which are all longer than the aRe Bapaleng programs. We summarise the ranges and means of interventions reviewed (Table 1).

Although, as foreshadowed, the evidence is mixed and not straightforward to interpret, a consistent recommendation that can be made is to, where possible, try and encourage consistent engagement with the Seriti programme for a prolonged period, and beyond the one-week Active Learning Workshops.

Table 1.

Note that we only include those reviews that provided relevant information on the below categories

Citation	Frequency (range)	Frequency (average)	Number (range)	Number (average)	Duration (range/months)	Duration (average/months)
Zhang et al., 2021	2 x per week - 2 x in 6 months	<=2 x per month in 9 studies, > 2 x per month in 12 studies	2-124	15 out of 21 delivered in >= 12 sessions	2-24	14 out of 21 <12 months
Jeong et al., 2018	1 x per week for 2 months- 1 x 2-3 months for 15 months	n/a	6- 63	21.7	6-24	11.5

Jeong et al., 2021	1 x per week - 5 x in 15 months	n/a	5-96	n/a	6-24	n/a
Jeong et al., 2023	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jervis et al., 2023	1 x per week - 2 x per month	n/a	n/a	n/a	6-24	n/a
Pederson et al., 2019	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1-25	n/a

Recommendation 3: Intervention providers

The aRe Bapaleng programs rely on different collaborators for delivering the intervention content both for Active Learning Workshops and household visits. In particular, during their rapid expansion over the past years, they developed trainings for caregiver-networkers, who are recruited from the community and can deliver intervention content after the training.

The papers reviewed show that who holds an intervention can impact outcomes (Brito et al., 2015). For both group and home settings, “authority figures” such as doctors, nurses, or educators were listed among most successful service providers, followed by trained local female coordinators with relatively high education level (both in home and group settings). Local leaders (e.g. religious leaders) in community-based programmes are listed as an alternative.

These findings demonstrate that providers with a certain profession and/or training can increase intervention success, and that this knowledge should be considered when planning training providers. These findings should not discourage the promising training approach developed by aRe Bapaleng to accommodate its expanding number of households targeted, but might help in balancing width and depth in the future. For instance, monitoring training quality and efficacy delivered by caregiver-networkers could be an important step before further expansion. Also, strategic allocation of professionals versus community caregiver-networkers for different program components is worth considering. Given the relatively higher number of intervention providers needed for household visits, it might be a viable consideration to have workshops led by professionals, and home settings covered by carefully trained local coordinators.

Recommendation 4: Foster father involvement

The aRe Bapaleng program reports that the majority of caregivers that participate in their Active Learning Workshops are female (87%), but that male involvement has been growing from 4% in 2022 to 13 % in 2023. What impact can increased involvement of fathers have?

Few studies so far focus on the impact of father involvement, but find that, if fathers are involved, this shows promising positive effects on intervention outcomes (Brito et al., 2015). One review specifically addressed this question (Jeong et al., 2023). Because of the scarcity of studies, the review does not include a broad range of intervention targets, but primarily addresses child nutrition and health, and includes studies of which the design is not always high quality. As to parental outcomes, father-inclusive interventions had positive impacts on maternal, paternal, and couples' relationship outcomes. The degree of supportive evidence was more varied for child outcomes, with some studies showing positive evidence. The pathways through which paternal involvement may ultimately benefit child outcomes still need more investigation and are an important subject of further study.

In conclusion, focusing on increasing father involvement and measuring the impact thereof is a promising, timely, and distinguishing approach.

Recommendation 5: Integrate the use of technology

In addition to their existing programmes, aRe Bapaleng is developing a technology-based platform for their programme. What does effective practice look like for technology-mediated parenting interventions?

Similar to the literature on father involvement, the effects of technology use are still relatively under-researched, and is specifically covered by only one review (Valero et al., 2023). This review covers interventions targeting families with children up to adolescence, and providing technology-assisted parental training based on a behavioural approach.

Out of the programmes reviewed, online interventions were the dominant programme form, and could come in various formats, such as podcasts, videos, apps, or videoconferences. Although not all studies provided information on dose, a median number of sessions out of those reported was 6 sessions. Programmes either had professional support or were self-administered. Attrition rates, where reported, were very variable across programmes (ranging from 0-57%) and not systematically linked to a specific delivery mode.

As to results, we note that the review does not allow us to draw straightforward conclusions on a key question, namely the difference between tech-involving and

non-tech-involving programmes. Although many of the studies had a control group, the way the control was implemented varied widely, ranging from waiting lists to alternative technology-involving interventions (e.g. interactive versus non-interactive technology), thus not making it possible to compare programme types systematically. Although some studies report no differences between technology-based and face-to-face programmes, evidence is still scarce. In addition, the large variability in delivery modes and other programme characteristics makes it hard to get in-depth insights on specific promising approaches. Therefore, the insights from this review rather pertain to general guidance on the promise of including technology.

Child outcomes, mostly focused on externalizing or internalizing behavioural and emotional problems, were the primary measure in most studies, and in all but one study showed positive effects after participating in an intervention mediated by technology. Positive results were also obtained for parental variables such as parental knowledge, behaviour and discipline, parental efficacy, mental health and parental satisfaction (small to large effect sizes).

To complement this general evidence, we provide pointers to three individual studies showing the potential of technology for children younger than 5 years of age. Given our recommendation to focus on self-efficacy as a parental measure (Deliverable 3), an article about a parent-based app to help improve parents self-efficacy compared to a control group might be of interest (Outhwaite, 2023). Further, the methods for developing the evidence base in the mixed methods evaluation of a web-based application for parents with children aged 0-2 years in Sravanti & Mundkur (2024) might be helpful. Finally, again related to tools for secondary outcomes recommended in Deliverable 3, we point to Crouse et al. (2023), which describes the design, implementation and evaluation of the Thrive by Five app.

Overview of reviewed studies

Table 2 summarises some key characteristics of the studies covered in the literature reviewed. Many of the reviews cited include tables with more detailed overviews of each included study, and we refer the reader to the original studies for more informative detail.

Table 2.

Note that we do not include the review on technology-based interventions in this overview, since many of its characteristics are not informative for aRe Bapaleng interventions

Citation (# studies, range group size)	Region	Age (years)	Intervention	Outcomes
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Zhang et al., 2021 (21 studies, group size 19-701)	12 countries (Africa, Latin America, Asia)	0-2	Nurturing care: health, nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving, learning opportunities	Child: cognitive, language, motor, and socio-emotional skills
Jeong et al., 2018 (15 studies, group size 70- 757)	Bangladesh, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, South Africa, Jamaica, Antigua and St Lucia.	0-2	Stimulation interventions (i.e., enhancing learning opportunities for children by promoting developmentally appropriate parent-child interactions)	Parent: Home stimulation, mother-child interactions, maternal parenting knowledge, maternal depressive symptoms
Jeong et al., 2021 (7 studies, group size 64-757)	Jamaica, Uganda, Colombia, South Africa, Pakistan and a multisite Caribbean study (Jamaica, Antigua and St. Lucia)	0-3	Caregiver interactions, behaviours, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or practices to improve ECD	Child: cognitive, language, motor, executive functioning, socioemotional, behavioural Parent: behaviour, depressive symptoms.
Jeong et al., 2023 (33 studies, group size 39-1000)	20 countries (46% sub-saharan Africa, rest Asia, Europe, South America)	0-5	Knowledge, attitudes, practices, or skills pertaining to nurturing care (i.e., health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, early learning)	Child: Health, nutrition, development Parent: Health, nutrition, parenting, psychosocial, relationship quality, emotional support, decision making, partner violence
Jervis et al., 2023 (18 studies, group size 29-3192)	Jamaica, Bangladesh, China, India, Madagascar,	0-3	Reach Up program: Jamaica-based play-based	Child: cognitive, language, motor development, home

	Colombia, Peru		stimulation intervention	stimulation. Parent: maternal depressive symptoms.
Perderson et al., 2019 (32 studies, group size 10-1489)	Africa (n = 14), the Americas (n = 5), Southeast Asia: (n = 2), Europe: (n = 4), Eastern Mediterranean: (n = 2), Western Pacific (n = 5)	0-24	Focus on better parenting practices to increase mental well-being for the parent/caregiver, child/youth, and to better family relationships; psychosocial, psychoeducational and/or skills building	Child: Behavioral problems, anxiety, depressive symptoms, stress, quality of life Parent: Practices and behaviours, family relationships, social support, mental health, quality of life
Brito et al., 2015 (105 studies, group size 100-75,000)	36 countries in 7 regions of the world (37.1 % from upper-middle-income countries)	0-8	Programmes aimed at improving parenting interaction, behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, practices. Intended to improve children's physical health, encourage cognitive development, support social and emotional well-being	Comprehensive

In addition to the overview in Table 2, we provide some pointers to more detailed example descriptions of programme implementation. Brito et al.,'s (2015) review contains a well-structured overview of the interventions reviewed, including a range of concrete programme

implementation examples. Jervis et al.'s (2023) review is based on interventions following a specific programme, Reach Up, which is a well-developed reference programme (<https://reachupandlearn.com/>).

As to outcome assessments, most review papers provide detailed overviews on the concrete tools to assess parent and child outcomes. Commonly, studies use standardised questionnaires and tests to assess the various outcome dimensions listed in Table 2, accompanied by custom questionnaires where adequate. Commonly used standardised questionnaires for cognitive, language, and motor development include the Ages and Stages Questionnaire ([ASQ](#)) or [Bayley's scales](#), and for the home environment include [HOME](#) or [FCI](#). For an overview, see, for example, Table 2 in Zhang et al., 2008, or Table 2 in Jervis et al., 2023.

Insights for strengthened intervention design

The aRe Bapaleng team are considering a longitudinal study to measure the effects of the programme on the primary and secondary outcome measures as formulated in the revised Theory of Change. As of now, the design considerations involve tracking 100+ parents/caregivers for 12-36 months, implementing an experimental group and control group design, and including both workshops and household visits as training components. Based on the review above, we summarise some recommendations and pointers for this endeavour.

The plan to track the programme over a period of 12-36 months aligns with the evidence for a higher efficacy of longer programme periods, and invites to also reconsider the dosage of the programme, for instance to distribute the implementation over longer time periods. This could be combined with designing a curriculum where workshops and home visits play complementary roles, such that programme elements are strategically assigned to delivery modes, and such that caregivers are encouraged to participate in both types of programmes successively. We also point specifically to the review by Jeong et al. (2021), which focused on studies that tracked long-term outcomes of interventions, mostly in the time-frame of 1-3 years post-intervention, and which can provide further insights into the way such studies were designed.

Our reviews mostly focused on RCTs, thus, included a control group. When possible, we recommend to also implement the control group design as a RCT, to augment study quality. The way the control is implemented can vary widely, as the reviews we cited also document. To get an overview of different control group designs, we refer to the overview tables in the reviews we cited, for instance Table 1 in Jeong et al. (2018) or Table 3 in Jeong et al. (2021). How exactly a

control group is implemented is dependent on both practical and theoretical considerations. For instance, an active control group that receives training in different domains is very resource-intensive, but can be considered necessary if the goal is to document improvement in a specific domain. In the case of aRe Bapaleng, which targets a broad range of developmental domain, it is not even desirable that the intervention only leads to improvements in specific domains, and such a closely matched control might not be necessary. Furthermore, based on the current stage of development of aRe Bapaleng, it is advised that the team focus on demonstrating the feasibility, or “proof-of-concept” of their programme in ideal conditions. As such, a waiting list control group is recommended. Participants in this group do not receive the intervention being studied immediately. Instead, they are placed on a waiting list to receive the intervention after the study concludes or at a later phase. (see Green et al., 2019).

Most of the studies reviewed relied on standardised tests or questionnaires for measuring both child and parental outcomes, and we recommend to consider such tests in addition to the currently used pre-post measures. These tests are well-validated and known by specialists in ECD and education, leading to interpretable and shareable results. Deliverable 3 provides more depth on the potential parent and child outcome measures, including some of those listed in the systematic reviews discussed above.

Deliverable 3- Improved Data Collection Strategy

Introduction

This deliverable aims to provide Seriti Institute with pathways for improving their data collection strategy. To achieve this aim, we will:

1. Summarise evidence and recommendations for improving Seriti’s data content, including in line with their new theory of change (Deliverable 1);
2. Present potential outcome measures and data tools that can offer practical solutions as Seriti continues to develop.

Seriti current practice

Seriti currently implements two different evaluation surveys, before (pre) and after (post) the Active Learning Workshops component of their aRe Bapaleng Programme ([see Appendix B](#)). The pre-training questionnaire includes one open-ended question (“what is ECD in your understanding?”) and nine statements, to which parents respond ‘True’ or ‘False’. The nine statements are repeated in the post-training questionnaire, in an attempt to measure the effect of the Active Learning Workshops. On the whole, the nine statements attempt to capture parent’s knowledge and perspectives of early child development. The post-training questionnaire also includes an additional seven questions with open-ended or multiple choice answer options. These items aim to capture changes in parents’ understandings of ECD and their role in supporting their child, as well as practical reflections on which elements of the Active Learning Workshops were most useful alongside suggestions for improvements.

Some of these items provide useful practical information for the Seriti Institute (e.g., “Which information did you find most insightful in the ALW?” “Is there other information you want that was not part of the ALW?” and “Would you recommend other people to attend an ALW?”). However, the content and structure of some of the other items could be improved to enhance Seriti’s efforts to demonstrate the effect of the Active Learning Workshops on parent (and child) outcomes. We make three recommendations, which are discussed in more detail within the sections below:

1. Use a Likert scale approach in the pre and post-training evaluation surveys, rather than ‘True’ and ‘False’ statements. This will improve the sensitivity of the outcome measures for demonstrating the potential effect of the Active Learning Workshops.
2. Adjust the surveys to focus on parental self-efficacy, rather than parent knowledge. This will ensure the outcome measures are aligned with the new theory of change.
3. Work towards including child outcomes as a second outcome measure that can demonstrate the wider impact of the Active Learning Workshops.

Recommendation 1: Use a Likert scale approach in the pre and post-training evaluation surveys

As described above, Seriti currently uses nine ‘true or false’ statements to assess parents’ knowledge and perspectives of early child development. While this approach is advantageous for its simplicity and efficiency- allowing parents to respond quickly- it presents

several challenges in accurately capturing the nuances of parents' understanding and establishing the potential effect of the Active Learning Workshops.

The binary nature of the 'true or false' response options limits Seriti's ability to capture how confident parents feel about their answers. For example, Parent A may be very confident that the statement "Playing helps children to develop relationships" is true. Meanwhile Parent B may be unsure or guess their answer. However, if Parent B responded 'True', their answer would be considered with the same weight as Parent A, even though Parent B's understanding may be less robust. Without a mechanism to capture confidence levels, it becomes challenging to differentiate between knowledge that is firmly established and knowledge that is tentative or newly acquired.

Furthermore, the simplicity of the true/false format increases the likelihood of parents scoring at or near the ceiling, particularly if the statements cover well-known or familiar concepts. This poses significant challenges for measuring meaningful change in response to the intervention (i.e., the Active Learning Workshops). For example, if a parent answers 'True' to all or nearly all nine statements at pre-test, there is little room for improvement to be reflected in the post-intervention scores, even if the workshops have genuinely enhanced their knowledge, confidence, or understanding of early child development.

To improve the opportunities to capture the effect of the Active Learning Workshops, we recommend that a Likert scale approach is adopted in the pre and post-training evaluation surveys. For example, instead of a binary true/false response, parents could be asked to rate their level of agreement with each of the nine statements on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). Ideally, parents' responses to the nine statements would be added together to provide a 'Parent Knowledge Total Score' (minimum score = 9; maximum score = 45). In this example, there is a mid-point option (i.e., 3 = neither agree or disagree). While research shows there is no difference in the reliability of participant's responses when there is a midpoint option, compared to when there is not (Jebb et al., 2021), in the context of the aims and objectives of Seriti's measurement goals, the option to express 'neutrality' will be valuable (see below). Overall, this 5-point Likert approach is beneficial for two reasons.

First, this approach would allow parents to express varying levels of certainty or confidence in their responses. For instance, a parent who is unsure about the statement "Playing helps children to develop relationships" might select a 3, reflecting neutrality or uncertainty, while a parent who is confident in the statement might select a 5. Such a scale would provide richer data and would enable the Seriti team to measure not just whether parents

know something, but how strongly they believe or understand it. Second, this approach would create more room for detecting changes in knowledge or confidence over time. Specifically, it would allow for more variation in parents' 'Parent Knowledge Total Score', which is important when detecting change in response to an intervention. If this revised survey was completed by parents before and after the Active Learning Workshops, it would enable the partial capture of potential workshop effects. This approach could provide valuable initial insights into the impact of the intervention and help establish its 'proof-of-concept', before scaling to a larger, more complex evaluation strategy (Green et al., 2019).

However, it is important to highlight that this approach (or current data collection practices) alone cannot determine whether observed improvements are specifically attributable to the workshops or whether they might have occurred independently of the intervention. To rigorously assess the specific benefits of the Active Learning Workshops, it would be essential to include a control group, such as a business-as-usual group or a waiting-list control (i.e., parents who have not yet participated in the workshops). This is typically implemented within a randomised control trial or quasi-experimental design and would form part of the broader evaluation strategy. These approaches are considered the gold standard for establishing causal relationships between an intervention and its outcomes. If this avenue aligns with Seriti's future goals, we recommend seeking additional research guidance to design and implement a robust evaluation study that builds on the evidence generated from the current practice and recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Use parental self-efficacy as the primary outcome measure

Furthermore, in light of the revised theory of change, we recommend that the primary outcome measure of interest is re-oriented to be parental self-efficacy. Parent knowledge may still be of interest, as research showed parent knowledge can mediate the relationship between parent self-efficacy and children's outcomes (Hess et al., 2004). However, the strength of this mediating relationship is not as well established in the literature as the links between parental self-efficacy and parent and child outcomes (Albanese et al., 2017). Furthermore, while the parent knowledge measure may indicate what parents understand, a focus on parental self-efficacy will capture their ability to translate that understanding into effective actions, which is more directly linked to parenting behaviours and child outcomes, which are ultimately the goals of Seriti's programme.

What is parental self-efficacy?

Grounded in social cognitive and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), parental self-efficacy is the belief or confidence that parents have in their ability to successfully fulfil their role as caregivers and positively influence their children’s development and outcomes (Eccles & Harrold, 1996). A ‘task-specific’ perspective on parental self-efficacy focuses on parents’ judgements about their capacity to perform specific parenting tasks, navigate challenges, and support their child’s needs in various domains, including their early learning and socio-emotional development (Coleman & Karraker, 2000; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2010). The Revised Parental Involvement Process (R-PIP) model proposes parental self-efficacy as a foundational component to parent’s motivations and decisions to engage in educational activities, persist in overcoming challenges, and ensure high-quality involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005). Supporting this framework, a systematic review of 115 studies found that higher parental self-efficacy is linked to stronger parent–child relationships, more responsive parenting practices, improved parental mental health (including resilience to cope with challenges) , and better child development outcomes (Albanese et al., 2017). Consequently, parental self-efficacy is considered a key focus for early childhood interventions aimed at enhancing nurturing care, strengthening parent–child relationships, and improving developmental outcomes for children (Giallo et al., 2013; WHO, 2020).

How can we measure parental self-efficacy?

There are various existing measures of parental self-efficacy that can be readily used in research and practice (e.g., Outhwaite, 2020). A systematic review conducted by Wittkowski et al. (2017) provides an overview of 34 questionnaire-based measures designed to assess parental self-efficacy among caregivers of children aged 0–18 years. The review also summarises the psychometric properties of these measures, offering valuable insights into their reliability, validity, and applicability across various contexts. For example, the Self-Efficacy for Parenting Tasks Indexes (SEPTI; Van Rijen et al., 2014) is a task-specific measure of parental self-efficacy, typically used in early childhood. The 26-item questionnaire captures parents’ confidence in four key domains:

- 1) Nurturance, e.g., “I am able to sense when my child is starting to become distressed”
- 2) Discipline, e.g., “I have trouble getting my child to listen to me”
- 3) Play, e.g., “I can always think of something to play with my child”
- 4) Routine, e.g., “I am not very good at getting my child to stick to a regular daily schedule”.

Parents respond to each item using a 6-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree 1; Disagree 2; Somewhat disagree 3; Somewhat agree 4; Agree 5; Strongly agree 6). As highlighted above some of the items are negatively framed (e.g., “I have trouble getting my child to listen to me”). This is good practice in survey design. It helps to ensure that participants are carefully engaged with the questionnaire, reducing the likelihood of response bias caused by repetitive or inattentive answering. However, negatively framed items require re-coding during data analysis to ensure accurate interpretation. For example, if a parent strongly disagrees with the statement, “I have trouble getting my child to listen to me,” their response would need to be re-coded from 1 to 6, aligning it with the positive direction of the scale. This step is crucial for maintaining consistency across the dataset and ensuring meaningful results. Once the negatively framed items are re-coded, the scores for each of the items can be added together to create a total parental self-efficacy score. Higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy. The full SEPTI measure is included in the [Appendix C](#) with the negatively framed items highlighted.

Recommendation 3: Child outcomes as a secondary outcome measure

Building on the evidence linking parental self-efficacy to child development outcomes (Albanese et al., 2017), we also recommend considering child outcomes as a secondary outcome measure. This will enable Seriti to evaluate the broader impact of their programme within the framework of their new theory of change. There are a range of existing tools available that measure key developmental domains, including early literacy, early numeracy, executive functioning, and social-emotional competencies. Notably, many of these tools have been specifically developed for use in LMICs (McHenry et al., 2024; Pushparatnam et al., 2021).

For example, Pushparatnam et al. (2021) have developed a 20-item questionnaire (see [Appendix D](#)), which is administered on a 1-to-1 basis by the intervention team with parents of children aged 4-6 years. Parents respond with one of the following options: “Cannot do it yet” (scored 0), “Can do it with help” (scored 1), or “Can do it independently” (scored 2) (minimum score = 0; maximum score = 40). This parent-completed measure has established reliability and validity in 12 LMICs.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3, Squires & Bricker, 2009) is another example of a comprehensive child outcome measure that was used in many of the studies reviewed in Deliverable 2. The ASQ-3 is comprehensive in the sense that it covers a broad range of life skills, covering communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social skills. If necessary, this survey also has a companion tool (ASQ:SE-2, Squires,

Bricker, & Twombly, 2015) targeting social-emotional development. It covers ages 1 month to 5 ½ years, which corresponds to the age-range targeted by the programme.

Both of these examples are parent-completed measures and offer several advantages, including ease of administration and a focus on parental insights. However, they are not without challenges. One key limitation is the potential for social desirability bias, where parents might overestimate their child's abilities to present themselves or their children in a more favourable light. Additionally, recall bias can occur, as parents may struggle to accurately remember or evaluate their child's abilities across specific developmental tasks, especially if the tasks are not frequently observed in daily life. There are also potentially issues associated with resource intensity. For example, although the measure is administered one-to-one by the Seriti team, this approach will require time and potential upskilling of Seriti staff, as well as ensuring standardisation across multiple assessors.

These challenges can be addressed through alternative measurement approaches. For example, Snelling et al. (2019) developed the Early Learning Outcome Measure (ELOM), which is a validated and standardised measure of literacy, numeracy, motor and cognitive skills for children aged 3-5 years. Importantly, this measure has been designed to be used by non-professionals, specifically in the South African context, including five official languages (Afrikaans, English, Setswana, isiZulu, and isiXhosa). As this measure has been normed to the South African population, it is possible to convert a child's raw total score into a scaled score. This means it is possible to see whether a child is performing far below, below or at expected levels for their age range (see Tredoux et al., 2022). This can also facilitate comparisons to other interventions within South Africa using the same measure. Overall, we recommend that child outcomes are incorporated into the long-term development of Seriti's data collection strategy. In the first instance, priority should be given to establishing the data collection and analysis protocols of the parental self-efficacy outcome measure.

Recommendation 4: Use offline-solutions to support remote data collection

In addition to the potential challenges raised about the validity of parent-completed measures, there are also logistical issues to consider. For example, the Seriti team shared that they had identified issues within their data collection pipeline, which meant that data was not always accurately recorded. There were also inconsistencies with the tools/platforms used; although Google Forms were preferred, there were challenges with internet connectivity. Seriti's experiences are similar to challenges documented in the research literature, particularly in the

field of early child development in LMIC contexts (McHenry et al., 2023). Previous LEAP Project Hosts have also expressed these challenges, and innovative solutions have been proposed, which may also be applicable to Seriti. For example, KoboToolbox is a reliable and versatile electronic data collection solution, which can be used on mobile devices (<https://www.kobotoolbox.org/>). There are several features that are applicable to the Seriti team:

Customised data collection forms: KoboToolbox enables users to create their own data collection forms with a range of question types (e.g., text, multiple choice etc). This means that the recommended data collection content materials can be easily implemented into this platform.

Data visualisation tools: KoboToolbox also offers a range of data visualisation tools, which can provide the Seriti team with additional assistance with analysing, interpreting, and sharing their evidence internally, and with external stakeholders. The data can also be easily exported to other data analysis tools, such as Excel and R.

Offline data collection: KoboToolbox can be used offline, which can help the Seriti team when working in situations where there may be limited internet connectivity (e.g., during home visits or Active Learning Workshops). However, internet connectivity is needed to set-up the tool and to synchronise and download the data once recorded. It is also recommended that reliable data storage solutions (e.g., cloud-based solutions, like Google Drive or Dropbox) are in place to store the data once collected.

Robust security measures: KoboToolbox also has robust security measures in place, including compliance with industry standards for data protection and encryption. Administrators can also control who has access to data, which will enable users to adhere to research ethics standards.

Deliverable 4 - Funding insights

Deliverable 4 consists of the following:

- 1. Mapping and landscaping**
- 2. Insights and take-aways**
- 3. Recommendations and suggestions**

Please note the actual mapping can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Mapping and landscaping

The mapping and landscaping of comparative ECD organisations involved undertaking desktop research on various community centres, initiatives, and organisations dedicated to promoting early childhood education and care. The process began with identifying key stakeholders, including NGOs, government entities, and local community groups that play a significant role in ECD, mainly in South Africa although foreign entities were also considered. The mapping effort aimed to create an overview of existing ECD programs, encompassing established community centres, innovative pop-up initiatives, and other relevant projects. This is not an exhaustive list - information was gathered from mainly websites, which also signals to the user the extent that marketing and outreach takes place.

A noteworthy component of many of the mapped entities is the emphasis on sustainability and resilience in their ECD services. The mapping process catalogues the different types of ECD organizations and assesses their operational strategies to determine how they adapt to changing community needs and external challenges. The full mapping can be seen in Appendix E, and an accompanying excel spreadsheet allowing for filtering according to various attributes.

Insights and take-aways

Several aspects are highlighted from the mapping:

1. Some of the projects mentioned are in fact partners (or rather, implementing entities) of Seriti. This brings a risk that the same funders are approached, and donor cannibalisation can take place. Worse, if the partner isn't as strong as Seriti might be, but still "blocks" access to the funder, not only is potential donor funding "stranded" but poor partner delivery might impact upstream and negatively impact Seriti

2. Many of the entities reviewed have formed collaborative partnerships with corporate sponsors, governments, and local communities, forming a type of "causal chain" between corporate mission and local impact - a form of "outsourced" impact creation. This close cooperation amplifies resource mobilization and enhances program scalability.
3. Organisational approaches to multi-faceted challenges were varied and appeared, at least superficially, fit for apparent purposes. Focuses included training caregivers and educators, establishing food security through gardens at ECD centres, and creating innovative solutions like "Edutainers" and mobile units to reach underserved communities. Moreover, organizations like Singakwenza and BRAC emphasize sustainability by using recycled materials and local resources in educational interventions. These diverse approaches contribute to a seemingly comprehensive landscape of ECD support
4. There is a notable diversity of programs available, ranging from well-established community centres funded by NGOs to emerging pop-up initiatives that cater specifically to local demands. This variety underscores the adaptability of ECD services in addressing different community contexts and needs. The programs also cater for varied developmental dimensions, such as cognitive skills, physical health, nutrition, and social-emotional growth, often integrating these areas within their strategies. Organizations like Lesedi Educare and Do More Foundation combine structured play with nutritional support and community engagement.
5. Training programs for caregivers and practitioners emerged as a common thread, aiming to upskill individuals and ensure quality service delivery. Organizations like the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Spur Foundation focus heavily on training and mentorship.
6. The focus on sustainability is a prominent theme among some organizations. These ECD programs are designed to provide immediate educational benefits and to ensure long-term viability and resilience against potential disruptions. The mapping also revealed some resource gaps, particularly for those smaller or newer ECD initiatives who rely on sources of funding that are not permanent or long-term (eg crowdsourcing). So, while the "coverage" of ECD solutions appears deep and wide, the funding thereof may not be.
7. The role of community engagement in successful ECD programs seems critical. Initiatives that actively involve local communities seemed to be more effective in meeting

the specific needs of families and children. The engagements fostered a sense of ownership and investment in the programs, ultimately leading to better anticipated outcomes for participants.

Taking into account the above points, and comparing those to the characteristics of Seriti's aRe Bapaleng as drawn from a series of direct conversations with the organisation, and analysis of its current programmatic state, the following is apparent:

- Seriti's aRe Bapaleng is a strong and enduring program. It shares many of the positive characteristics of the successful organisations assessed in the mapping, including a clarity of purpose, strong funding relationships and crisp funding narrative
- It has positioned itself as a fairly unique fit-for-purpose program to meet local needs of communities, as determined from the ground-up. Its mission to meet the ECD needs of children wherever they may be, and the consequent focus on directly with engaging caregivers in the home, is a bold statement of intent and delivery. While these direct engagements can add additional layers of costs, our work at LEAP has identified that this is a valuable and crucial intervention.
- It has (very) successfully been able to secure long-term funding, from large organisations including banks. This has been an impressive and stand-out feature and sets the program apart in its ability to showcase its value to a set of often times hard-to-convince funders. It has also shown itself able to adapt to changing funder trends, being agile and innovative.

Recommendations and suggestions

aRe Bapaleng's fairly unique focus at the household level, and through its household-based interventions targeting care-givers, is both a blessing and a possible curse: the upside is that the intervention is unique in its methodology and scale. Yet, in a funding landscape that can often change quite rapidly, both in terms of focus, intention and motivation, aRe Bapaleng may need to exhibit an even higher degree of flexibility and agility - something that might not be possible or conducive to the actual impact outcomes.

Therefore, to "future-proof" aRe Bapaleng (as much as possible), and to ensure its success is maintained along with the integrity of its interventions, below are some key recommendations:

1. *Pop-up centers*: Exploring overlapping the value of the home-based approach (intimate, safe, targeted and "meeting the needs where they are") with an increasing focus by

funders on centre-based modalities. Having “pop-up ECD centres”, Junxions, in low-income areas could be beneficial for parents and caregivers that do not have access to community ECD centres. These pop-up centres could be positioned at malls, taxi ranks, home affairs etc; areas that are likely to have high foot-fall as well as long waiting times. Having them in such areas reduces travel costs and time for parents and caregivers as they can overlap their training with other necessary activities including shopping, queuing for public services, or waiting for a taxi. It also enables interventions to be placed in an immediately available manner, still serving families through home-based interventions that otherwise would be impossible to do due to distance, costs etc. Eg. street vendors with children, domestic workers etc. Finally, pop-up centres eliminate the need for permanent buildings, and the costs associated with this, bringing services directly to underserved communities.

2. *Building resilience*: Position the high-touch, sometimes expensive modality that directly targets care-givers in physical areas that are hard-to-reach and therefore costly, as a key ingredient in the necessary activity of building long-term household, and societal resilience. This is not an easy causal chain to establish, despite intuition clearly making the link. The LEAP work itself may help in this regard - with an important outcome showcasing the value for money spent, in relation to the possible systemic risks mitigated, could be very high. A second point could be made in addition to the societal resilience argument: unless the fertile groundwork is established for future interventions (eg ensuring a child has a strong ECD foundation upon which future skills training can be built), these future interventions are meaningless. To be clear, while many corporates spend funds on skills development, financial literacy etc, these interventions themselves will lack any traction unless the person being trained in the first place has some level of basic development to absorb this new learning. While the long-term nature of ECD can be too far removed from the short-term nature of skills development or financial literacy training, a possible argument could be made for the in tandem deployment of these interventions.
3. *Building the whole*: most funders understand little of the nuance and complexity of impact delivery in multi-layered environments. Funders generally seek impact partners that meet their (the funder’s) immediate corporate needs of reporting and showcasing impact, and in turn some are willing to provide multi-year, significant funding commitments. Funders aim to lower the number of “moving parts” they need to deal with, and seek to maximise impact areas met, and results delivered. Finally, funders often

demand the interventions deliver direct causal links between activity and outcome, that can be difficult to objectively measure in the time available. All the while, the above occurs with increasing pressure to “do-more with less”. These aspects impose decision points on entities like Seriti in terms of scope, depth, and value for money. Should programs try and provide many activities, hoping for as broad a range of outcomes as possible so as to ensure a competitive edge? Or, should the focus rather be niche, unique, simple to explain, and singular so as to be set apart due to unique experience and skill sets?

How are these distinctions measured, and narrated? These are critical scene-setting questions as they have impact on future strategic direction. With the important caveat that the mapping and analysis was limited and time-bound, the recommendation is that Seriti continue to offer a broad, wide response to a deep and existential challenge (the future human capital of the country). Its current intervention base, through its own skills base and through that of its partners, allows for funders to obtain significant impact, that is spread across entities and areas. It also allows for Seriti to piggy-back off downstream partners’ successes (a benefit to the first point mentioned under the *insights* section above). Therefore, narrowing the focus may limit the value Seriti has and the unique position as a network or “web” that it currently offers. It is not so much a hub-and-spoke model, as it is a collective director of resources/talent/interventions through in-house distribution channels. It’s more analogous to an upstream dam, deploying resources through its various tributaries until it reaches its end pond/watershed. Seriti’s value is in identifying which tributaries to use, and what type of pond is fit-for-purpose. Seriti also has the institutional “muscle” to design and create new types of interventions, eg pop-up ECD centres at scale, that others cannot.

Therefore, a central ECD focus that is wrapped/embedded within more opportunistic plays (such as providing financial literacy, or an area-specific approach in agriculture), with a strong focus on illustrating the link between the ECD focus on the medium term outcome of ensuring more receptive beneficiaries of other interventions, and the long-term creation of societal resilience, is the proposed route. This is more complex and time-consuming than a narrower, more simple approach, but through consistently well-thought out narrative building and donor education, as Seriti has shown, this seems the best course.

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Appendix

Appendix A: [Theory of Change - Center for the Developing Child](#) and supporting slides



Children 0-6 are developmentally on track

Parents and caregivers are empowered to provide nurturing care in a systematic and intentional way

1. Understand the importance of early years
2. Confident that can they have everything they need and can make a huge impact regardless of their situation
3. Have practical, science based tips that they can use everyday

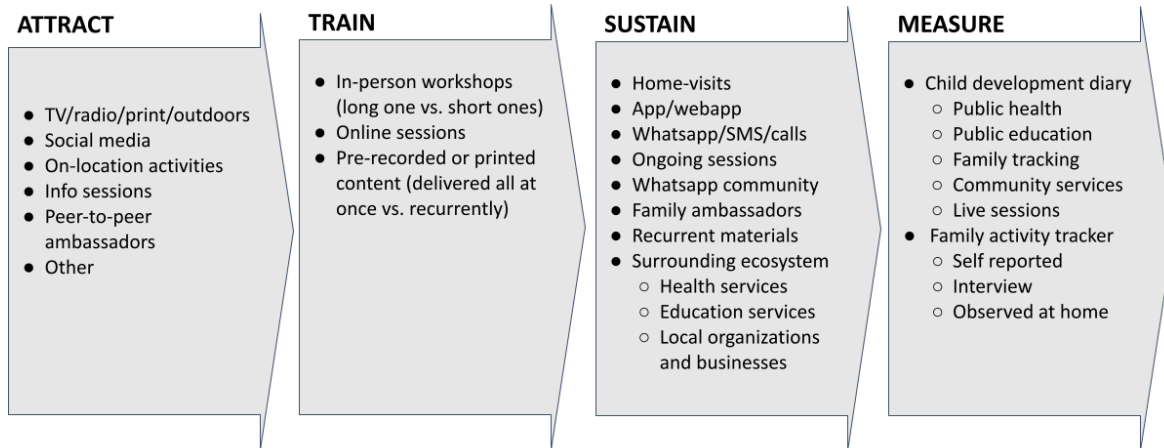
Key questions to measure

1. What do they need to know about early years and kids being “on track” (developmental milestones)?
2. What should they know and do in terms of nutrition and physical health?
3. What should they know and do to promote comprehensive brain development?
4. Shall we aim to track children developmental milestones?

Key questions to act

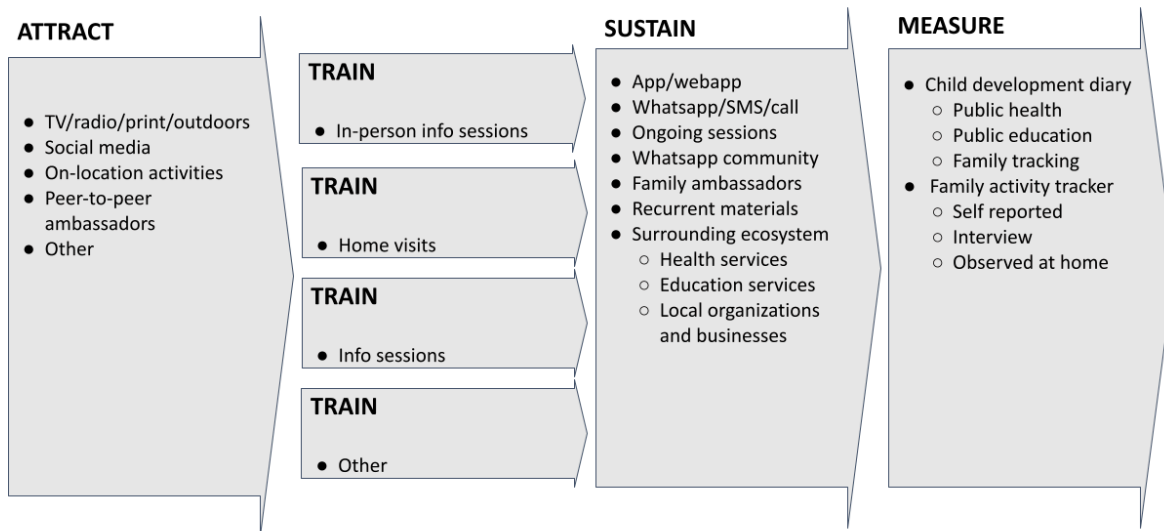
1. What is the profile of families and caregivers we want to reach? How many?
2. What content do we want to bring them? What is the most relevant format? What is the right channel?
3. How do we follow-up with parents to root the practice, nourish them and address any doubts/concerns?
4. How do we measure what we defined, learn from it and refine our intervention?
5. What processes, tools, skills, partnerships and resources are needed for all of the above?

Proposed intervention process



Select/prioritize/stage those that may be more relevant and feasible

Alternative intervention process



Appendix B: Existing pre and post-training evaluation survey

Pre and Post-Training Evaluation Survey

Pre-Training Questions

1. What is ECD in your understanding?
2. ECD is only the concern of teachers (True/False)
3. Children can eat anything if they grow (True/False)
4. ECD does not impact a child's life in the future (True/False)
5. Children are the same at all ages (True/False)
6. Reading to a one-year-old is not important (True/False)
7. Playing helps children to develop relationships (True/False)
8. Playing with children as a parent will cause them to disrespect you (True/False)
9. A parent's stress levels have an impact on their children (True/False)
10. Play is a natural way in which children learn about the world around them (True/False)

Post-Training Questions

1. ECD is only the concern of teachers (True/False)
2. Children can eat anything if they grow (True/False)
3. ECD does not impact a child's life in the future (True/False)
4. Children are the same at all ages (True/False)
5. Reading to a one-year-old is not important (True/False)
6. Playing helps children to develop relationships (True/False)
7. Playing with children as a parent will cause them to disrespect you (True/False)
8. A parent's stress levels have an impact on their children (True/False)
9. Play is a natural way in which children learn about the world around them (True/False)
10. Has your understanding of ECD changed after attending the ALW? (Yes/No) How?
11. What do you understand to be the role of parents and other role-players in ECD after attending the ALW?
 - Engaging your child in stimulating activities
 - Creating a safe and nurturing environment for your child
 - Building stable and responsive relationships with people around your child
 - Providing your child with good nutrition
 - Other-specify
12. Which information did you find most insightful in the ALW?
 - The benefits of play
 - Activities intended to stimulate different areas of development (cognition, language, Social, gross and fine motor skills)
 - The importance of good nutrition
 - Mental wellness for children and caregivers
 - Other-specify)
13. How will you apply the information that you gained during the ALW?
 - I will start engaging in play with my child/ren
 - I will start reading and singing with my child/ren
 - I will improve the way I prepare my child's food to promote good nutrition
 - I will start my own food garden
 - I will now pay attention to stress related symptoms

- 14. Is there other information you want that was not part of the ALW? (Yes/No). Please specify.
- 15. How do you understand the role of play in helping children to grow and learn?
- 16. Would you recommend other people to attend an ALW? (Yes/No)

Appendix C: Self-efficacy for Parenting Tasks Index-Toddler Scale (SEPTI) Short Form (van Rijen et al., 2014)

The Self-Efficacy for Parenting Tasks Indexes (SEPTI; Van Rijen et al., 2014) is a task-specific measure of parental self-efficacy, typically used in early childhood (see Deliverable 3). The full items are detailed below.

Item	Domain	This item is negatively framed and needs to be re-coded for data analysis
I am able to sense when my child is starting to become distressed	Nurturance	n/a
My toddler knows that I understand when his/her feelings are hurt	Nurturance	n/a
I think my child knows by my behavior how much I really adore him/her	Nurturance	n/a
My child feels very loved by me	Nurturance	n/a
I think I am tolerant and understanding when my child displays negative emotions	Nurturance	n/a
I definitely fulfill my parental duties when it comes to providing emotional support for my child	Nurturance	n/a
When my child has a problem, he/she knows I will want to help	Nurturance	n/a
Disciplining my child does not seem to be coming as naturally to me as other parts of parenting	Discipline	Yes
I have trouble getting my child to listen to me	Discipline	Yes
Other parents seem to have more success with setting limits for their children than I do with my child	Discipline	Yes

Setting limits for my toddler is relatively easy for me	Discipline	n/a
When my toddler tests the limits that I have set up, I find myself becoming extremely discouraged	Discipline	Yes
Telling my child “no” when safety isn’t the issue is hard for me	Discipline	Yes
I can always think of something to play with my child	Play	n/a
I am a fun playmate for my toddler	Play	n/a
I find it hard to loosen up and just play with my child	Play	Yes
I am able to get actively involved in playing with my child	Play	n/a
Playing is part of my relationship with my child that I have very little difficulty with	Play	n/a
I really need to learn how to just have fun with my child	Play	Yes
I think I spend an appropriate amount of time just playing with my child	Play	n/a
I have been able to establish a daily routine with my toddler that feels comfortable to both of us	Routine	n/a
I am able to provide my child with a comfortable amount of daily structure	Routine	n/a
I have been successful in getting my child to eat on a fairly regular schedule	Routine	n/a
I am not very good at getting my child to stick to a regular daily schedule	Routine	Yes
I don’t seem to be able to establish a regular bed time routine with my child	Routine	Yes
I have worked out a fairly regular morning routine with my toddler	Routine	n/a

Appendix D: Core items from caregiver report questionnaire (Pushparatnam et al. 2021)

The caregiver report questionnaire developed and validated by Pushparatnam et al. (2021) is a recognised parent-completed measure of children’s development between ages 4-6 years. The full items are detailed below.

My child can...

Item	Domain
Name at least 10 letters	Literacy
Read four simple words	Literacy
Read/follow the text in a correct direction from left to right and from top to bottom (even if they cannot read)	Literacy
Write at least three letters or some letters in his/her name	Literacy
Write a simple word	Literacy
Count from 1 to 10	Numeracy
Count from 1 to 20	Numeracy
Know the difference between tall and short using two animal examples	Numeracy
Know the difference between heavy and light using two animal examples	Numeracy
Tell if it is yesterday, today or tomorrow	Numeracy
Know that a one-digit number is more than another one-digit number (e.g. 4 is more than 2)	Numeracy
Pay attention when doing an activity	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
When asked do several things- remembers all the instructions	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Plan ahead	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Stop an activity when told to do so	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Keep working at something until they are finished	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Get along with other children they play with	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Adjust easily to transitions (e.g., to a new teacher or	Executive function & socio-emotional

classroom)	competencies
Accept responsibility for their actions	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies
Settle down after periods of exciting activity	Executive function & socio-emotional competencies

Appendix E: Landscaping and mapping

ECD Landscape

The results of a mapping exercise of the ECD landscape in South Africa present context for framing Seriti's aRe Bapaleng program in the context of other related initiatives that support improvements in early learning and childhood well-being. This may be used to better position Seriti's program and frame it directly when seeking funding and other forms of support. The review of how other related programs are supported offers insights into potential strategies Seriti could pursue to enroll additional sponsorship and diversify financial support for aRe Bapaleng.

Organis ation	Location	What they do	How they fundraise
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<p>Do More Foundation</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>The Foundation has launched various National Young Child programmes directed at improving nutrition, early learning and providing parent/caregiver support. The Foundation also facilitates several deep-rooted community-specific projects in partnership with various stakeholders to drive significant impact around Early Childhood Development (ECD), youth enterprise development and hunger alleviation.</p> <p>-Program Focus: The EAT LOVE PLAY TALK Parent Education Programme targets ECD principals and practitioners to engage parents and caregivers of children up to five years old. The program emphasizes healthy eating, building loving relationships, playful learning, and language development.</p> <p>-Approach: It employs a train-the-trainer model to empower local ECD workers, enhancing their capacity to facilitate workshops that promote nutrition and developmental activities at home</p>	<p>The Do More Foundation employs several strategies for fundraising to support its Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs:</p> <p>1. Annual Campaigns: The foundation organizes two major annual campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mandela Day Events: In July, the foundation collaborates with "Do More Heroes" across the country to host events at local ECD centres. These events involve volunteers who assist with infrastructural upgrades, activities for children, and donations of resources such as games and educational materials. -World Food Day Campaign: Held in October, this campaign raises awareness about hunger and malnutrition. It aims to implement the ECD Nutrition Hub concept by providing food gardens at ECD centres and nutrition training for staff. <p>2. Partnerships: The foundation has established partnerships with various businesses and organizations. Particularly, its collaboration with KFC through the "Add Hope initiative" allows customers to contribute a small voluntary donation when purchasing meals. This initiative has successfully funded millions of nutritious meals for children in need.</p> <p>3. Corporate Contributions: The foundation benefits from significant support from RCL Foods, which provides cash funding, product donations, and employee-driven fundraising efforts. This partnership enhances the foundation's operational effectiveness and expands its funding base.</p>
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			<p>4. Community Engagement: The foundation encourages community involvement through volunteer opportunities and small-scale fundraising efforts, emphasizing that even minimal contributions can collectively lead to substantial impacts on children's lives.</p> <p>5. Awareness Campaigns: Through various initiatives, the foundation raises public awareness about the importance of ECD and nutrition, mobilizing support from individuals and organizations to contribute financially or through resources.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/our-projects/other-domore-projects</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/media/Home/DMF-5-Year-Journey-Publication-3.pdf</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/blog/add-hope-nourishing-childrens-brighter-futures</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/donations</p> <p>https://domore.org.za</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/our-projects/national-youth-child-programmes</p> <p>https://domore.org.za/about-us</p> <p>https://spurcorporation.com/greater-good/spur-foundation/</p>
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<p>Centre for Early Childhood Development</p>	<p>Cape Town, South Africa</p>	<p>They provide training, resources and support in the field of early childhood development, enhancing individual and organisation capacity; they develop and disseminate resources; and carry out research specifically related to the African context. They work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communities, providing technical assistance to early childhood development projects -Organisations, enhancing organisation efficiency and effectiveness. -Individuals, developing skills and increasing their capacity. -Parents, providing information on the development of children <p>-Services: This NGO provides training, resources, and support to enhance early childhood development services across South Africa.</p> <p>-Focus Areas: Their initiatives include developing educational materials and conducting research specifically tailored to the African context, ensuring that ECD practices are culturally relevant.</p>	<p>No Information on the site.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://cecd.org.za/</p> <p>https://cecd.org.za/impact/</p>
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<p>Lesedi Educare</p>	<p>Bloemfontein, South Africa</p>	<p>Programs: Lesedi Educare offers an Integrated Early Childhood Development Care Package that includes training for ECD practitioners and outreach programs for families.</p> <p>Impact: The organization reaches thousands of children and parents through structured playgroups and community development training, enhancing the quality of ECD provision in both rural and urban settings</p>	<p>1. Sponsors: Lesedi Educare receives funds from various sponsors, and these include: APEX-HI Charitable trust, Bigen Africa, The Elma Foundation, The First National Bank Fund, First Rand foundation and the HIC Foundation.</p> <p>2. Individual donations: the foundation encourages individual donations on their website.</p> <p>3. Government contracts: whenever its feasible, the organisation enters into relevant Government and private training contracts, which also supplements its income.</p> <p>4. Fundraising their package: Lesedi Educare fundraises through their Integrated Early Childhood Development Care Package (IECP) to cover costs of implementing the various components of its IECP.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://lesedieducare.co.za/sponsors/#</p> <p>https://lesedieducare.co.za/</p>

Spur Foundation	South Africa	<p>The Spur Foundation is predominantly focussed on early childhood development and supports projects and organisations that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empower the women (and men) who dedicate their lives to our youngest members of society • put the child at the centre i.e. quality school readiness programmes, ECD resources, parent education and support groups, play, maternal health <p>One of their beneficiaries is, The Early Care Foundation and its main focus is to develop and facilitate early childhood development training programmes for under-skilled practitioners and owners of home-based creches. Their training equips beneficiaries with the necessary skills to provide a stimulating educational environment and meet the nutritional needs of the children in their care.</p>	<p>No information on the site.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://spurcorporation.com/greater-good/spur-foundation/</p> <p>https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/629/148590.html</p>
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<p>Singakwenza</p>	<p>KwaZulu Natal, South Africa</p>	<p>Singakwenza empowers women by transforming crèche practitioners into skilled facilitators of early childhood development. Their program provides on-site training and mentoring, helping practitioners understand the role of play in education using recycled resources. Trainers visit each crèche weekly for at least two years, guiding practitioners to create structured, fun, and educational programs. The goal is not only to enhance children's development but also to help crèches become sustainable businesses, enabling them to continue independently after Singakwenza's support ends.</p> <p>-Training Programs: Singakwenza focuses on training practitioners, parents, and caregivers to create educational activities using recycled materials. Their programs emphasize play-based learning as a critical component of child development.</p> <p>-Community Engagement: They offer workshops that teach how to make toys from waste materials, promoting creativity and</p>	<p>1. Individual, family and business contribution: Singakwenza encourages financial donations through their website.</p> <p>2. Partnerships: the organisation has partnerships with various retail stores (Woolworths, Waltons, Spur, Toy R Us among others) that enable people to donate without paying anything. All they have to do is to start by signing up through the organisation's website. After that, a certain percentage of what they spend in any of the selected stores is donated by the store.</p> <p>3. Annual fundraising event: Singakwenza (in collaboration with WILDTRUST, DUCT, NSRI AND Project Rhino) host a charity swimming event called Oceans 8 Charity Swim to provide a reliable and sustainable flow of funding to deserving non-profits with a footprint in KwaZulu-Natal to support their work and allow them to continue to engage in and deliver on projects which have an impact and influence on education, environment, community development and upliftment for those most in need.</p> <p>Citation: https://www.singakwenza.co.za/myschool-nations/</p>
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		resourcefulness in households	
Rays of Hope The heart of Alexandra	Alexandra, South Africa	<p>Their programmes provide essential educational foundations, nurturing care, and developmental resources, setting the stage for lifelong learning. Through interactive play and targeted interventions, we ensure that every child has the best start in life.</p> <p>Parents are engaged in the learning process. Home visits are conducted, and psychosocial support provided to ensure that the child and their family benefits from the programme.</p>	<p>1. Individual donations: the foundation encourages individual donations on their website.</p> <p>2. Partnerships and Collaborations: Rays of Hope focuses on developing significant partnerships with local stakeholders and funding organizations across South Africa (these include- ABSA rewards, Nedbank, Discovery, KFC). This collaborative approach helps secure resources and enhance the sustainability of their projects.</p> <p>Citations: https://raysofhope.co.za/</p>

<p>Save the Children</p>	<p>KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Free State, South Africa</p>	<p>Through interventions that engage young children, as well as their parents, caregivers, and communities, Save the Children's Early Childhood Development programs ensure that young children survive and thrive — that they are physically and emotionally healthy and intellectually curious — and school readiness programs prepare them for school success.</p>	<p>1. Individual donations: the foundation encourages individual donations on their website.</p> <p>2. Partnerships and Collaborations: Save the Children collaborates with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other NGOs to receive resources and expertise. These partnerships often lead to joint fundraising initiatives and shared funding opportunities, maximizing the impact of their ECD programs.</p> <p>3. Digital Fundraising Initiatives: Utilizing online platforms for fundraising has become increasingly important, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Save the Children has adapted to virtual implementations, allowing them to reach a broader audience through online fundraising events and campaigns</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://www.savethechildren.org.za/what-we-do/our-work/education</p> <p>https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/education/early-childhood-development</p>
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<p>The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation</p>	<p>Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania</p>	<p>The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative takes a holistic, two-generation approach to ensure caregivers and their young children receive the support they need in this critical phase of life. In doing so, they seek to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, forging a path to improved education, economic and health outcomes for families and communities.</p> <p>A Holistic Approach: Enhancing Intergenerational Well-being. Their vision is to ensure that children from prenatal to age three reach their full potential. They achieve this by investing in a two-generation approach that empowers caregivers and strengthens health services, providers, and policies for better child development outcomes.</p>	<p>No information on the site.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/work/our-initiatives/global-early-childhood-development/</p> <p>https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Early-Childhood-Africa_S25_2024.pdf</p>
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<p>BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities)</p>	<p>Bangladesh</p>	<p>BRAC operates in multiple countries (Afghanistan, Liberia, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Uganda) and focuses on ECD through home-based education, parenting support (engaging parents and guardians in parenting sessions and play material development workshops, bringing the core elements of the model into their homes to ensure learning continues outside the classroom. A fathers' forum supports fathers to be more involved in their children's education), and community-based childcare. Their "Play Lab" model, for instance, emphasizes early learning and social development through low-cost, culturally relevant activities.</p>	<p>Partnerships with Donors and Governments: BRAC actively collaborates with national and international donors, including government entities, to secure funding for its ECD programs. This includes proposals to donor groups that encourage coordinated relationships with multiple funding sources.</p> <p>2. Innovative Funding Models: BRAC has developed innovative funding models, such as the Play Lab initiative, which is supported by organizations like the LEGO Foundation. This project focuses on establishing play-based ECD programming in humanitarian contexts, showcasing BRAC's ability to create scalable and replicable models that attract investment.</p> <p>3. Community Engagement and Fees: To ensure sustainability, BRAC incorporates community involvement in funding efforts. This includes collecting fees for certain services, which helps maintain operational sustainability while also engaging local stakeholders in the process</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://bracied.com/projects-2/</p> <p>https://bracinternational.org/reports/BRAC%20ECD%20Strategy_v4.pdf</p> <p>https://www.brac.net/sites/default/files/BRAC's%20Education%20Support%20Program.pdf</p> <p>https://bracinternational.org/early-childhood-development-2/</p>
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<p>AGA KHAN Foundation</p>	<p>Headquarters-Geneva, Switzerland</p> <p>They work in- Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Portugal, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda.</p>	<p>The foundation strengthens parents' and caregivers' knowledge and skills on holistic child development and responsive caregiving. They focus on gender-responsive parenting, fathers' engagement, caregivers' mental health and wellbeing, and developing contextually relevant and accessible play and learning resources for parents and caregivers.</p> <p>They also facilitate the establishment of sustained learning spaces for out-of-school preschool children, train pre-primary educators on holistic child development, nurture safe and playful learning environments and develop locally rooted school readiness resources and solutions. They also support the establishment of affordable quality childcare models linked to women's economic empowerment.</p>	<p>1. Partnerships with Foundations: AKF collaborates with various foundations, such as the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to secure funding for specific projects aimed at enhancing ECD workforce capacity and improving child development outcomes in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. These partnerships often involve grants that support training and resources for local educators and health workers.</p> <p>2. Research and Evidence-Based Approaches: The foundation conducts research to gather evidence on the effectiveness of its ECD programs. This data is crucial for attracting funding from donors who seek measurable outcomes and evidence-based practices in their investments</p> <p>3. Training Programs and Capacity Building: AKF invests in training programs for ECD staff, which are often supported by external funding sources (such as, the government). By enhancing the skills of educators and health workers, AKF increases the quality of its programs, making them more attractive to potential donors who are interested in impactful interventions</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://www.aku.edu/ihd/projects/Pages/ecd-workforce.aspx</p> <p>https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-foundation/akf-early-childhood-development</p> <p>https://the.akdn/en/what-we-do/developing-human-capacity/early-childhood-development</p>
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<p>Plan International</p>	<p>Headquarters- United Kingdom</p>	<p>In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, Plan International promotes ECD by supporting family-based initiatives, educating caregivers on early childhood learning, nutrition, and positive parenting.</p>	<p>1. Child Sponsorship: A significant portion of Plan International's funding comes from child sponsorship programs. Individuals and families sponsor children, providing ongoing financial support that directly benefits ECD initiatives in local communities. This model not only helps fund programs but also fosters a personal connection between sponsors and the children they support, enhancing donor engagement.</p> <p>2. Grants from Institutions and Corporations: Plan International secures funding through grants from various institutional donors, including governments and international organizations, as well as corporate partnerships. These grants are crucial for implementing large-scale ECD projects and ensuring sustainability over time. The organization actively seeks partnerships with corporations aligned with their mission to promote children's rights and gender equality.</p> <p>3. Public Donations: Plan International also encourages public donations through various channels, including their website and social media platforms. They promote specific ECD projects that need funding, allowing donors to contribute directly to initiatives that resonate with them.</p> <p>4. Fundraising Events and Campaigns: The organization regularly conducts fundraising events and campaigns to raise awareness and funds for its ECD initiatives. These events may include community-based activities, online campaigns, and global awareness days focused on children's rights and education.</p> <p>Citations: https://plan-international.org/campaigns/ https://plan-international.org/sponsor-a-child/</p>
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			https://plan-international.org/accountability/finance/
Thrive	Bangladesh, Ghana, Kiribati, Sierra Leone and Tanzania	<p>The Family Strengthening Intervention for Early Childhood Development (FSI-ECD) is an evidence-based, home-visiting program designed to promote responsive and nurturing care among caregivers of children aged 0-3. Originally developed in Rwanda, it has shown effectiveness in improving caregiver practices, enhancing child-caregiver interactions, and reducing family violence. The program has been scaled to approximately 10,000 households in Rwanda and is now being adapted for use in Sierra Leone to support families affected by war and violence.</p>	<p>1. Partnerships with Foundations and Organizations: Thrive collaborates with various foundations and organizations that provide financial support for their ECD initiatives. Notable partners include: UK International Development, CHR. Michelsen Institute, IFS, New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade and Stockholm University.</p> <p>Citations: https://thrivechildevidence.org/projects/the-family-strengthening-intervention-for-early-childhood-development-fsi-eed/</p>

NGO funded ECD community centres

Organisation	Location	What they do
Impande	South Africa	<p>This organization focuses on improving the quality of ECD by providing safe infrastructure, nutritional support, and training for educators. They have established over 240 ECD centres, ensuring children receive daily meals and access to trained teachers through government partnerships.</p> <p>Citations: https://impande.org/</p>

Biblionef	South Africa	<p>This organization donates educational materials to under-resourced ECD centres and implements Family and Community Motivator programs to support children who are not attending formal ECD facilities. Their goal is to enhance learning environments through resource provision.</p> <p>Citations: https://www.biblionefsa.org.za/overview/early-childhood-development-eecd-centres/</p>
Thusanang Trust	South Africa	<p>Founded in 1986, this NGO aims to enhance the well-being of young children through community-based ECD centres. They focus on capacity building and advocacy for universal access to quality ECD services.</p> <p>Citations: https://www.thusanangtrust.org.za/</p>

ECD community centres that are focused on sustainability and resilience

Organisation	Location	How they work
Do More Foundation	South Africa	<p>DO MORE Foundation emphasizes partnerships across sectors to enhance climate resilience in ECD settings. Their initiative Funda eGadini programme and isiZulu phrase meaning "Learning in the Garden," is an organic food garden project rolled out in ECD centres in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Results from the 2023 Food and Nutrition Study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal indicate that 70% of households are food insecure, with Zululand being particularly susceptible) aims to embed sustainability into early childhood education, preparing future generations to tackle environmental challenges.</p> <p>Citations: https://domore.org.za/blog/integrating-climate-actions-into-early-childhood-development</p>

<p>Wild Impact</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Wild Impact currently works with 23 communities in Mpumalanga. The organisation has established climate wise food gardens in 16 ECD and Home-based Care centres, providing invaluable working models for future expansion. Specific crops are being selected, and seedlings purchased to provide balanced nutritional value. These included starches like maize, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and beets, along with greens such as chard, local spinach and cabbage. These long-term food gardens will support children attending these crèches for generations to come. Planting and maintaining a food garden would be quite impossible without a reliable water supply. Where needed, boreholes are being repaired or drilled, fresh-water access points are being created and Hippo Water Rollers are being provided to enable the easy collection, transport and storage of clean water.</p> <p>Citations: https://wildimpact.earth/climate-resilient-communities/</p>
<p>Johannesburg Development Agency: Building a better city.</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the City of Johannesburg’s implementing agency, has undertaken more than 1000 infrastructure projects, and has begun the construction of the Yetta Nathan Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Community Centre on behalf of the city’s Social Development Department. The construction of the Yetta Nathan ECD Centre, a resource-efficient green building, will build stronger local communities, support children’s education and development, and serve as a multifunctional, sustainable, and safe environment to provide children with enhanced playing and learning experience. The ECD centre will be an extension of the existing multi-purpose community facility at Yetta Nathan, Soweto and will encapsulate modern childhood development facilities. Including classrooms, play spaces, indoor and outdoor ancillary spaces like kitchens, libraries, and toy stores.</p> <p>Citations: https://www.jda.org.za/a-green-sustainable-community-and-early-childhood-development-centre/</p>

ForAfrika		<p>ForAfrika, which is Africa’s largest humanitarian and development organisation, recently started building its showcase ECD centre in Rwanda’s Kamonyi district. According to ForAfrika, ECD centres can indeed be used as a gateway to access vulnerable communities with integrated programming that leads to transformation and sustainable community development. The ForAfrika Rwanda ECD Model ensures a good gender balance in all areas, including representation and participation, good health and nutrition, social development and well-being and learning outcomes. Their new ECD centre includes three classrooms, child-friendly toilets, a kitchen, and a rainwater harvesting system. It also features a playground with locally made equipment and a vegetable garden to provide nutritious meals for children. The centre is also designed to benefit 400 children and their families while supporting mothers by providing a safe place for their children during work hours. This initiative alleviates the pressure on mothers to stay home, allowing them to contribute economically.</p> <p>Citations: https://stories.forafrika.org/stories/pre-school-lays-foundati-on-for-brighter-future/ https://novuspressbulletin.co.za/blog/forafrika-well-functioni-ng-e-c-d-centres-make-for-better-off-communities https://reliefweb.int/report/rwanda/forafrika-well-functioning-e-c-d-centres-make-better-communities</p>
Bright Kid Foundation	South Africa	<p>The Bright Kid Foundation has pioneered the use of shipping containers, known as Edutainers, transforming them into fully equipped ECD centres. These units are designed to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment for preschool and Grade R children. Each Edutainer includes essential facilities such as classrooms, kitchens, hygienic ablution units, and outdoor play equipment, creating a comprehensive educational space. The conversion of shipping containers into educational facilities allows for rapid deployment in areas lacking infrastructure. This model not only addresses immediate educational needs but also promotes long-term community development by providing children with access to quality early learning experiences. The Bright Kid Foundation has successfully delivered over 500 of these Edutainers across various regions in Africa, significantly impacting early childhood education accessibility. Furthermore, the use of durable materials like shipping containers contributes to sustainability efforts while providing safe environments for children</p> <p>Citations: https://brightkidfoundation.co.za/ https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/stories/true-commitment-early-childhood-development</p>

Ulwazi Educare	Cape Town, South Africa	<p>Ulwazi Educare is an innovative early childhood development (ECD) centre located in Cape Town, South Africa, notable for its sustainable building practices. The construction of Ulwazi Educare employs environmentally friendly materials such as tyres, rammed earth, eco-bricks, and natural plasters. This choice of materials not only reduces the carbon footprint but also promotes sustainability within the community. By utilising local resources and sustainable practices, Ulwazi Educare serves as a model for future ECD projects, demonstrating how education facilities can be built responsibly while supporting community development.</p> <p>Citations: https://www.naturalbuildingcollective.com/ulwazi-educare/ https://www.iol.co.za/news/look-cape-town-eed-being-built-with-sustainable-material-4c367e51-6a1d-4f3a-96e7-f63be32bbf5</p>
Kromdraai ECD Centre	South Africa	<p>The Kromdraai Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre is part of a broader initiative to enhance early childhood education in South Africa, utilizing innovative solutions such as converted shipping containers. This approach is particularly significant in addressing the challenges faced by underprivileged communities in accessing quality early education. The Kromdraai ECD Centre exemplifies the innovative use of shipping containers to enhance early childhood education, demonstrating a commitment to improving access and quality for South Africa's youngest learners.</p> <p>Citations: https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/stories/true-commitment-early-childhood-development</p>

Pop-up ECD initiatives

Initiative	Description
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<p>The People Upliftment Programme</p>	<p>The People Upliftment Programme (POPUP) is a South African initiative focused on empowering underprivileged communities through skills training and development. Established in 1999, it has evolved into a comprehensive program that operates multiple centres across the country, offering a variety of educational and vocational training opportunities. POPUP aims to restore dignity and hope to individuals by providing market-related, cost-effective training that enables them to become self-sufficient and contribute positively to their communities. The organization believes in a holistic approach to development, addressing not only skills but also mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. While primarily focused on skills training, POPUP has expressed interest in expanding its reach through mobile ECD services that could potentially include setups in malls or community hubs.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://popup.co.za/</p> <p>https://popup.co.za/about-us/</p> <p>https://popup.co.za/get-started/</p> <p>https://popup.co.za/our-impact/</p>
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<p>Community ECD Network</p>	<p>Sifunda Ngokuthetha (We Learn by Talking Together) is an innovative Early Childhood Development initiative aimed at enhancing verbal interactions between caregivers and children, particularly in low-resourced communities in South Africa. Launched in 2016 by Community ECD Network, this program focuses on utilising everyday environments to foster learning through conversation.</p> <p>Key Features of Sifunda Ngokuthetha</p> <p>-Objective: The program is based on research indicating that back-and-forth conversations between caregivers and children are crucial for early brain development. It emphasises that "talking is teaching," even before children can articulate words.</p> <p>-Implementation Locations: Initially piloted in supermarkets, Sifunda Ngokuthetha aims to expand into other common spaces such as malls, taxi ranks, markets, and community centres. These locations are chosen for their accessibility and high foot traffic, making them ideal for reaching families.</p> <p>-Visual Prompts: The initiative employs engaging, character-based signage that prompts caregivers to interact with their children during routine activities. For example, signs might encourage caregivers to count items or describe colours while shopping, turning everyday errands into educational opportunities.</p> <p>-Community Engagement: By situating ECD resources in familiar environments, Sifunda Ngokuthetha aims to reach families who may not have access to formal ECD centres. This approach helps integrate learning into daily life and supports caregivers in fostering developmental skills.</p> <p>-Future Expansion Plans: The program aims to saturate geographic areas with educational prompts, thereby increasing awareness and engagement among families. Future sites may include laundromats, health clinics, and other venues frequented by parents with young children.</p> <p>Impact and Goals</p>
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	<p>Early evaluations suggest that Sifunda Ngokuthetha positively influences both child development outcomes and customer experiences in participating venues. By making learning accessible and enjoyable, the initiative seeks to improve developmental outcomes for children in economically disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://sapartners.org/our-work/programs/supporting-south-africas-youngest-children</p>
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Play Africa

Play Africa is an innovative organization dedicated to creating inclusive spaces for play and learning, particularly through its pop-up experiences.

Overview of Play Africa

-Mission: Play Africa aims to champion children's rights and foster social inclusion through high-quality play experiences. The organization operates a de-centralized children's museum in Johannesburg, transforming spaces into joyful environments for discovery and learning.

-Location: Their main facility is located at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, but they recognize that not all children can access this site.

Pop-Up experiences

-Community Engagement: To reach a broader audience, Play Africa creates pop-up experiences in various urban settings, including:

-School halls

-Parks

-Community centres

-Inner-city rooftops

These locations are chosen to ensure accessibility for children from low-income and underserved communities.

-Target Audience: The majority of visitors to these pop-up centres include children who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those who are physically or mentally disabled, neglected, or orphaned. This focus ensures that the most vulnerable children have access to quality play and learning opportunities.

Educational Impact

-Play-Based Learning: The pop-up centres emphasize play as a fundamental aspect of early childhood development. Children engage in activities that enhance

	<p>their cognitive, social, and emotional skills through playful learning experiences rooted in educational pedagogies.</p> <p>-Outreach Programs: In addition to the pop-up centres, Play Africa conducts outreach and advocacy programs aimed at promoting the right to play for children across South Africa, directly benefiting tens of thousands of children nationwide.</p> <p>Future Prospects</p> <p>Play Africa has developed a scalable model for its pop-up experiences, allowing them to expand into multiple urban contexts throughout sub-Saharan Africa. They are actively seeking strategic partnerships to further enhance their reach and impact.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://hundred.org/en/innovations/play-africa</p> <p>https://playafrica.org.za</p> <p>https://www.saferspaces.org.za/organisation/entry/play-africa</p>
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Summary of the ECD organisations

Organisation	Summary
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<p>Do More Foundation</p>	<p>Do More Foundation focuses on enhancing Early Childhood Development (ECD) through innovative and community-based interventions.</p> <p>Key Interventions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> EAT LOVE PLAY TALK Program- This parent education initiative targets ECD principals, practitioners, and playgroup facilitators, engaging them in workshops that cover essential topics such as healthy eating, relationship building, playful learning, and language development. The program utilizes a train-the-trainer model to empower local leaders to facilitate discussions with parents of children up to five years old, promoting sustainable behaviour changes in nutrition and caregiving practices. Nutrition Education and Food Security- The Foundation emphasizes nutrition as a critical component of child development. They manage the distribution of short-dated food stock to support vulnerable groups and enhance food security in ECD settings. This initiative includes establishing food gardens at ECD facilities to improve access to nutritious food choices for children and their families. Resource Development and Training- Do More Foundation collaborates with Resource and Training Organisations (RTOs) to produce high-quality early learning resources tailored to the National Curriculum Framework for ECD. They provide ongoing training for adults using these resources in various environments, ensuring that ECD workers are equipped with the necessary skills to support child development effectively. Community Engagement and Capacity Building- The Foundation works closely with local communities to build capacity among ECD practitioners. By implementing programs like EAT LOVE PLAY TALK, they not only educate caregivers but also foster community involvement in child development initiatives, which helps create a supportive environment for young children. <p>Do More Foundation's Approach-</p> <p>Collaborative Model: The train-the-trainer approach allows for scalability and sustainability by empowering local leaders to take ownership of ECD initiatives within their communities.</p>
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Culturally Relevant Programming: The Foundation tailors its programs to be culturally appropriate, ensuring they resonate with the communities they serve, which enhances engagement and effectiveness.

Integration of Nutrition and Education: By combining nutrition education with early childhood learning, the Foundation addresses two critical areas that impact child development simultaneously, promoting healthier lifestyles from an early age.

To sum up, the Do More Foundation employs a comprehensive strategy that combines education, nutrition, community engagement, and resource development to enhance early childhood outcomes in South Africa. Their focus on empowering local facilitators and integrating health messaging into educational practices sets them apart in the field of early childhood intervention.

Citations:

<https://domore.org.za/our-projects/national-young-child-programmes>

<p>Centre for Early Childhood Development</p>	<p>The Centre for Early Childhood Development, established in 1994 and its primary mission is to enhance the education and care of children from disadvantaged communities through various interventions and support programs.</p> <p>Interventions and Services</p> <p>1. Capacity Building- CECD focuses on increasing the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities involved in early childhood development. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Training: Providing comprehensive training opportunities for ECD workers to improve their skills and effectiveness in caring for young children. - Technical Assistance: Offering guidance to communities and organizations to enhance their operational efficiency and program delivery. <p>2. Resource Development- The centre actively develops and disseminates resources tailored to the specific needs of the African context. This includes educational materials and tools that support ECD practitioners in their work.</p> <p>3. Policy Advocacy- CECD plays a crucial role in advocating for policies that improve conditions for young children. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisting policymakers in identifying effective and affordable ECD program models. - Promoting awareness about the importance of early childhood development through community engagement and resources dissemination. <p>4. Community Support- The CECD works directly with communities to establish ECD centres and programs, ensuring that local needs are met. They aim to strengthen community-based initiatives that provide essential services to children.</p> <p>5. Research Initiatives- Conducting research related to ECD is a key component of CECD’s work. This research informs their practices and contributes to the broader understanding of early childhood development challenges and solutions within the African context.</p>
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To sum up, the CECD distinguishes itself through its holistic approach that combines training, resource development, policy advocacy, community support, and research. By focusing on these areas, the centre aims to create sustainable improvements in early childhood education and care, particularly for marginalized populations in South Africa.

Citations:

<https://cecd.org.za/about/>

<https://cecd.org.za>

<p>Lesedi Educare</p>	<p>Lesedi Educare Association is a non-governmental organisation, focused on early childhood development (ECD) interventions, particularly in underserved communities. Their approach is characterized by several unique features that set them apart in the field of ECD.</p> <p>Integrated Early Childhood Care Package- Lesedi's Integrated ECD Care Package is central to their operations. This comprehensive framework includes three main components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality ECD Provision: They enhance the quality of ECD through community centres and accredited training programs for practitioners. This includes both Level 4 accredited training and practical enrichment programs for ECD practitioners. 2. Community Development & Family Support: Lesedi emphasizes the importance of family involvement and community support in children's development. They provide training for outreach practitioners who work within communities to address the diverse needs of children and families, ensuring that support extends beyond the classroom. 3. Direct Outreach Services: Utilising mobile units known as "Come-and-Play Buses," Lesedi reaches children who lack access to traditional ECD services. This initiative not only provides structured playgroups but also engages parents through informational sessions, thereby fostering a supportive environment for child development. <p>Community-Centric Approach- Lesedi adopts a community development approach, recognizing existing community resources as vital for providing early learning and care. They engage local stakeholders to create sustainable, community-managed interventions that enhance social cohesion and support families. This collaboration helps integrate various services, including health and safety programs, into their ECD initiatives.</p> <p>Holistic Development Focus- The organization understands that children's development is holistic, encompassing cognitive, emotional, nutritional, and sensory-motor aspects. Their programs are designed to address these areas comprehensively, ensuring that children receive well-rounded support necessary for their growth.</p> <p>Innovative Outreach- Lesedi's use of mobile units to deliver ECD services directly to hard-to-reach areas exemplifies their innovative approach. This method not only increases access to quality education</p>
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but also allows them to adapt their offerings based on the specific needs of the communities they serve.

In summary, Lesedi Educare Association stands out due to its integrated and community-focused approach to early childhood development, which aims not only to educate children but also to empower families and strengthen community ties.

Citations:

<https://www.saferspaces.org.za/blog/entry/lessons-from-children-youth-case-studies>

<http://lesedieducare.co.za/focus-areas-and-programme-components-of-lesedis-iecp/>

<http://lesedieducare.co.za>

<https://www.saferspaces.org.za/resources/entry/lesedi-educare-association-making-a-difference-where-it-matters-most2>

<https://www.interstate.co.za/lesedi-educare-creche-project/>

<https://slideplayer.com/slide/7631279/>

<p>Spur Foundation</p>	<p>The Spur Foundation is a key initiative of Spur Corporation, established on International Mandela Day in 2012. Its primary focus is on Early Childhood Development, recognizing that investing in this area is crucial for eradicating poverty and fostering sustainable growth in South Africa.</p> <p>Spur Foundation's ECD Intervention</p> <p>Comprehensive Training Programs- One of the foundation's standout initiatives is its partnership with the Early Care Foundation. This collaboration aims to provide extensive training for principals and teachers at under-resourced daycare centres. The training equips caregivers with essential skills to create stimulating educational environments and meet the nutritional needs of children in their care.</p> <p>Focus on Nutrition- The foundation emphasizes the importance of nutrition in early childhood development. Their Full Tummy Fund initiative addresses food insecurity by partnering with NGOs to deliver nutritious meals to children at daycare centres. This program underscores the belief that "you can't teach a hungry child," highlighting the critical link between proper nutrition and effective learning.</p> <p>Community Engagement and Support- The Spur Foundation actively engages with local communities through various support programs, including parent education and play initiatives. By empowering caregivers and fostering community involvement, the foundation aims to create a supportive environment for children's development.</p> <p>Sustainable Practices- In addition to immediate nutritional support, the foundation promotes sustainability through projects like Full Tummy Gardens, which establish food gardens at ECD centres. These gardens not only provide fresh produce but also serve educational purposes, teaching children about responsibility and the origins of their food.</p> <p>Holistic Approach- The foundation's approach is holistic, addressing multiple facets of child development—nutrition, education, and community support. This comprehensive strategy aims to lay a solid foundation for children's future success and well-being, recognising that early intervention can significantly impact long-term outcomes.</p> <p>In summary, the Spur Foundation uniquely combines training, nutrition, community engagement, sustainability, and a holistic</p>
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	<p>approach in its ECD interventions, making it a vital player in improving early childhood outcomes in South Africa.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://spurcorporation.com/latest_news/leading-for-the-greater-good-in-education/</p> <p>https://spurcorporation.com/greater-good/spur-foundation/</p> <p>https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/629/148590.html</p>
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<p>Singakwenza</p>	<p>Singakwenza is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing early childhood development in economically disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Their approach focuses on training and mentorship, empowering caregivers and practitioners to provide quality education through innovative, cost-effective methods.</p> <p>Key Interventions by Singakwenza</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training and Mentorship Program- Singakwenza's primary initiative involves a two-year mentorship program where trainers spend one day a week at crèches, providing hands-on support and guidance. This program transforms caregivers from merely supervising children to becoming facilitators of play-based learning. The emphasis is on using recycled materials to create educational toys, fostering an environment where children can learn through play without the need for expensive resources. 2. Waste 2 Toys Workshops- These workshops teach caregivers and parents how to craft toys from household waste, such as plastic bottles and cardboard. This not only promotes creativity but also highlights the importance of play in child development. The workshops cover various developmental skills, ensuring that participants understand that the value of play lies not in the cost of toys but in the engagement they foster. 3. Occupational Therapy Support- Singakwenza employs occupational therapists who visit crèches to identify developmental delays among children. They provide training for caregivers on recognizing "red flags" in child development and offer strategies for addressing mild issues. This holistic support ensures that no child is left behind due to developmental challenges. 4. Basic Bookkeeping Training- To foster sustainability, Singakwenza offers bookkeeping training to crèche owners. This program equips them with essential financial management skills, helping them run their facilities as viable businesses. This aspect of their intervention ensures that the educational programs can continue independently after Singakwenza's mentorship concludes. <p>Singakwenza's Approach</p> <p>-Focus on Recycling: By utilizing recycled materials for educational toys, Singakwenza not only addresses the lack of resources but also promotes environmental sustainability.</p>
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-Community Empowerment: The organization emphasizes empowering women and local practitioners, fostering a sense of ownership over educational practices within their communities.

-Long-term Impact: The two-year mentorship model allows for sustained engagement, ensuring that the benefits of training are deeply embedded in the community's educational practices.

To sum up, Singakwenza stands out for its innovative use of local resources, commitment to community empowerment, and focus on sustainable practices in early childhood education. Their work significantly contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty through education by equipping caregivers with the necessary tools and knowledge to foster children's development effectively.

Citations:

<https://www.singakwenza.co.za/training-mentorship-program/>

<https://www.singakwenza.co.za/what-we-do/>

<https://datadrive2030.co.za/sustainable-early-learning-with-singakwenza/>

<https://www.singakwenza.co.za>

<https://borgenproject.org/early-childhood-development-in-south-africa/>

<p>Rays Hope: The heart of Alexandra</p>	<p>Rays of Hope is a vital community intervention initiative based in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, operating since 1991 under the auspices of the Rosebank Union Church. The organization uniquely combines various support services aimed at addressing the multifaceted needs of vulnerable populations, particularly orphaned and at-risk children.</p> <p>Holistic Approach to Community Support</p> <p>Rays of Hope employs a holistic model that encompasses spiritual, physical, and psycho-social dimensions. This approach ensures that beneficiaries receive comprehensive care tailored to their individual circumstances. The organization focuses on developing partnerships with local stakeholders and funding bodies to sustain its initiatives, which currently impact over 2,000 individuals within the community.</p> <p>Key Programs Offered- Rays of Hope runs several specialized programs designed to meet the diverse needs of the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ithemba Labantwana: Provides support for vulnerable children through family-based care, including emotional and social support. -Gender-Based Violence Support: Offers assistance to victims by providing shelter, counselling, and essential resources. -Gogos of Hope: Engages elderly caregivers through community gatherings and crafts, promoting social interaction and support. -Home-Based Care: Delivers health-related support to individuals on chronic medication, ensuring they receive necessary care and encouragement. -Food Redistribution Program: Collaborates with local businesses to distribute food donations weekly across Alexandra. -Early Childhood Development: Operates the Hlayisanani ECD centre and enhances smaller creches through training and resources. -Educational Support: Includes tutoring for primary and high school students, as well as extracurricular activities to foster academic growth. - Work Readiness Training: Equips youth with essential life skills for employment readiness.
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Aspects of Rays of Hope- What sets Rays of Hope apart is its integrated service delivery model, which not only focuses on immediate needs like food and shelter but also emphasizes long-term development through education and life skills training. The organization promotes resilience among its beneficiaries by fostering a supportive community environment that encourages personal growth and empowerment.

In summary, Rays of Hope stands out in its commitment to a holistic approach that addresses both immediate challenges and long-term developmental goals in Alexandra Township. Through its diverse programs, it aims to transform lives by nurturing the potential of individuals within the community.

Citations:

<https://ruc.org.za/outreach/rays-of-hope/>

<https://www.embrace.org.za/service/rays-of-hope/>

<https://raysofhope.co.za>

<https://raysofhope.co.za/early-childhood-development/>

<p>Save the Children</p>	<p>Save the Children (SCSA) implements various Early Childhood Development interventions in South Africa, focusing on enhancing the quality of care and education for young children.</p> <p>Key Features of Save the Children's ECD Interventions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive Training for Practitioners- SCSA emphasizes the capacity building of ECD practitioners and caregivers. They aim to train 1,000 practitioners and support 100,000 caregivers to improve the quality of early childhood care and education. This training includes equipping educators with skills to foster a safe and stimulating environment for children, focusing on both physical and emotional development. 2. Child Protection Focus- A significant aspect of SCSA's ECD initiatives is child protection. They provide training that empowers educators to recognize, report, and respond to violence against children. This proactive approach aims to create safer environments in ECD centres, particularly in regions where children are at high risk of violence. 3. Community Engagement and Support- SCSA collaborates with local communities, government bodies, and civil society organizations to enhance the effectiveness of their programs. This includes linking ECD centres with local schools and health services, ensuring that children receive comprehensive support beyond just educational needs. 4. Innovative Learning Through Play- Their programs incorporate play-based learning strategies, which are essential for cognitive and social-emotional development in early childhood. SCSA supports caregivers in implementing these strategies at home, recognizing that parental involvement is crucial for children's development. 5. Advocacy and Policy Influence- SCSA actively engages in advocacy efforts to promote early childhood education policies at national levels. They work to raise awareness about the importance of investing in ECD as a means to achieve long-term societal benefits, aligning with national development goals. 6. Adaptation to Challenges- During the COVID-19 pandemic, SCSA adapted their interventions by utilizing virtual platforms for training and support, ensuring continuity in education despite restrictions. This flexibility highlights their commitment to maintaining quality care even in challenging circumstances.
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To sum up, through these multifaceted approaches, Save the Children uniquely positions itself as a leader in enhancing early childhood development in South Africa, focusing on both immediate educational outcomes and long-term societal impacts.

Citations:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.za/News-and-Events/News/A-drive-to-empower-ECD-centres-on-child-protection>

<https://www.savethechildren.org.za/what-we-do/our-work/education>

<https://image.savethechildren.org/laying-the-foundations-ch11044456.pdf/7e28077vfa81e471h611e7abskrb07cm.pdf>

<p>The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation</p>	<p>The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is actively engaged in enhancing early childhood development through innovative interventions that integrate ECD services into primary healthcare systems. Their unique approach focuses on a holistic, two-generation strategy aimed at improving outcomes for both children and their caregivers.</p> <p>Key Interventions and Strategies</p> <p>Integration into Primary Healthcare- The Foundation collaborates with various organizations, such as PATH and R4D, to embed ECD services within existing healthcare frameworks. This integration allows health workers to utilize routine healthcare visits as opportunities to promote child development. For instance, the Care for Child Development package has been implemented in community and clinical settings across several countries, including Kenya and Mozambique. This package trains healthcare providers to offer developmental monitoring and counselling as part of standard care.</p> <p>Holistic Two-Generation Approach- The Hilton Foundation’s ECD initiative emphasizes a dual focus on children and their caregivers. This approach aims to empower parents by enhancing their parenting knowledge and practices while simultaneously addressing their well-being. By providing resources and support, particularly for young parents under 24, the Foundation seeks to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.</p> <p>Evidence-Based Resources and Training- The Foundation invests in creating and disseminating evidence-based resources that guide policymakers and practitioners in implementing effective ECD strategies. They support the development of training curricula and materials that can be adapted for local contexts, ensuring that interventions are culturally relevant and practical.</p> <p>Focus on Vulnerable Populations- A significant aspect of the Hilton Foundation's work is targeting vulnerable groups. Their initiatives include group-based parenting support programs and mental health screenings integrated into primary care, particularly in regions facing high levels of adversity. This focus helps ensure that those most in need receive adequate support during critical developmental phases.</p> <p>Collaborative Efforts- The Foundation actively collaborates with global partners like UNICEF and WHO, which enhances the reach and effectiveness of their programs. By fostering a community of practice among practitioners from various sectors, they facilitate</p>
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	<p>knowledge sharing and collective learning aimed at improving ECD outcomes globally.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://r4d.org/projects/strengthening-primary-health-care-to-support-optimal-child-development/</p> <p>https://www.path.org/our-impact/media-center/path-and-the-conrad-n-hilton-foundation-partner-to-promote-child-development-services-in-facilities-and-communities/</p> <p>https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/news/cognitive-development-interventions-gain-momentum-in-health-delivery-settings-in-east-and-southern-africa/</p> <p>https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/work/our-initiatives/global-early-childhood-development/</p> <p>https://nurturing-care.org/organization/conrad-n-hilton-foundation/</p> <p>https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/news/early-childhood-development-offers-a-brighter-future-to-entire-nations/</p>
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<p>BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities)</p>	<p>BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities) is a global leader in early childhood development through its innovative and community-driven interventions, particularly its flagship Play Lab model. This model uniquely integrates play-based learning with broader community engagement and support systems, addressing the developmental needs of children aged 3 to 6 years, especially in low-resource and humanitarian contexts.</p> <p>Key Features of BRAC's ECD Interventions</p> <p>1. Play Lab Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Community-Driven Learning: Play Labs provide safe spaces where children can engage in playful learning activities that foster cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. The curriculum is culturally relevant and designed to help children heal from trauma, especially those affected by crises. -Inclusive Approach: BRAC's initiatives reach over 115,000 early learners across Asia and Africa, including children with disabilities and those impacted by humanitarian crises. <p>2. Strategic Pathways- BRAC employs interconnected strategic pathways to enhance its ECD interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Direct Implementation: BRAC directly implements its play-based models to fill gaps in service delivery, particularly in underserved areas. -Capacity Building: The organization builds the capacity of national systems and partner organizations to strengthen ECD services through training and technical assistance. -Advocacy for Play: BRAC advocates globally for the importance of play in early learning, seeking to raise awareness and secure investments in play-based ECD. -Research and Evidence Building: Continuous research is conducted to refine the Play Lab model based on evidence from implementation, ensuring that practices are effective and scalable. <p>3. Holistic Support for Caregivers- BRAC recognizes the role of caregivers in child development. The Play Lab experience includes:</p>
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-Parent Coaching: Sessions are provided to educate parents on nurturing practices that support their children's development.

-Community Engagement: Local community members are trained as Play Leaders who facilitate learning and support the creation of low-cost educational materials.

4. Adaptation for Humanitarian Contexts- BRAC has adapted its Play Lab model for use in refugee settlements, such as those housing Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. These adaptations focus on creating a sense of normalcy and resilience among children affected by trauma.

5. Impact Measurement- BRAC employs rigorous evaluation methods to assess the impact of its ECD programs. Studies have shown significant improvements in children's developmental outcomes when participating in Play Labs compared to traditional preschool settings. The organization also focuses on sustainability by embedding ECD practices within local government systems and community structures.

In conclusion, BRAC's unique approach to early childhood development through the Play Lab model exemplifies how integrating play-based learning with community involvement can create impactful educational experiences for young children. By addressing both immediate educational needs and broader systemic issues, BRAC not only fosters individual child development but also contributes to building resilient communities capable of supporting future generations.

Citations:

https://bracinternational.org/reports/BRAC%20ECD%20Strategy_v4.pdf

<https://bracinternational.org/early-childhood-development-2/>

<https://bracied.com/projects-2/>

<https://www.air.org/project/impact-evaluation-bracs-nutrition-and-early-childhood-development-program>

	https://bracusa.org/new-research-underscores-the-centrality-of-play-in-early-childhood-development/
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<p>AGA KHAN Foundation</p>	<p>The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has a robust and multifaceted approach to Early Childhood Development, focusing on holistic child development from before birth to age six.</p> <p>Their interventions are unique in several key areas:</p> <p>Comprehensive ECD Framework- AKF employs a holistic approach that integrates health, education, and community support. This framework ensures that children receive nurturing, relevant, and quality learning opportunities. The foundation collaborates with various sectors, including health services and education institutions, to create an environment conducive to child development.</p> <p>Training and Capacity Building- a significant aspect of AKF's ECD initiatives is the extensive training provided to caregivers and educators. In 2022 alone, they trained over 44,000 preschool educators and reached approximately 1.3 million parents and caregivers. This training emphasizes responsive caregiving, gender-responsive parenting, and the importance of mental health for caregivers. The foundation also supports the establishment of community-based preschools and affordable childcare models, which are linked to women's economic empowerment.</p> <p>Evidence-Based Interventions- AKF's programs are grounded in research and evidence-based practices. They utilize data to inform their strategies, ensuring that interventions are effective and tailored to local needs. For instance, evaluations have shown that children in AKF-supported schools perform better in school readiness assessments compared to those in non-supported centres. This focus on measurable outcomes helps refine their approaches continuously.</p> <p>Policy Engagement- AKF actively engages in policy dialogue at local and national levels. They provide advisory services to strengthen policies related to ECD and work on capacity building for policymakers. This engagement ensures that their programs not only benefit individual children but also contribute to systemic improvements in early childhood education across the countries they operate in.</p> <p>Global Reach with Local Adaptation- The foundation operates across multiple countries, including Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, and Uganda. This global presence allows them to adapt successful ECD models to different cultural contexts while maintaining a consistent commitment to quality. Their initiatives have</p>
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reached over 2.3 million preschool children annually, demonstrating significant impact on a large scale.

Innovative Learning Environments - AKF emphasizes play-based learning as a core component of their educational approach. They create safe and engaging learning environments that promote exploration and creativity among young children. This method is crucial for fostering cognitive and social-emotional skills during the critical early years of development.

In summary, the Aga Khan Foundation's ECD interventions stand out due to their holistic framework, extensive training programs, evidence-based practices, active policy engagement, global reach with local adaptations, and innovative learning environments. These elements collectively contribute to improving outcomes for millions of children worldwide.

Citations:

<https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-foundation/akf-early-childhood-development>

<https://www.elmaphilanthropies.org/story/learning/agakhan-ecd>

<https://the.akdn/en/what-we-do/developing-human-capacity/early-childhood-development>

<https://www.akf.org.uk/what-we-do/early-childhood-development/>

<https://www.akfusa.org/ourwork/early-childhood-development/>

<p>Plan International</p>	<p>Plan International implements Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions that are distinctively focused on promoting gender equality and inclusive practices. Their approach is tailored to address the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalized children, particularly girls.</p> <p>Key aspects of their ECD interventions:</p> <p>Plan International's ECD Interventions-</p> <p>1. Gender-Transformative Programming- Plan International emphasizes a gender-transformative approach in their ECD initiatives. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Challenging and changing harmful gender norms that affect both boys and girls. -Promoting men's engagement in nurturing care, recognizing that active fatherhood can positively influence child development and challenge traditional gender roles. - Providing resources and training for parents to reflect on gender norms and their impacts on children's development. <p>2. Focus on Vulnerable Populations- The organization targets vulnerable and excluded children, especially in low-income or conflict-affected regions. Their goal is to ensure these children receive essential care, support, and services necessary for healthy growth and development.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing barriers that prevent access to quality early learning opportunities. - Implementing programs that cater to the unique needs of children with disabilities or those living in marginalized communities. <p>3. Integrated Support Services- Plan International integrates various support services within their ECD framework, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutrition counselling, breastfeeding support, and hygiene education for families to promote healthy child development. - Access to healthcare services, particularly in emergency settings where children are at higher risk of abuse and neglect.
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4. Community Engagement and Capacity Building- The organization works closely with local communities to build capacity among caregivers and educators. This includes:

- Training early childhood educators on gender-responsive pedagogy.
- Facilitating community discussions to promote positive parenting practices that support both girls' and boys' development equally.

5. Emphasis on Play-Based Learning- Plan International advocates for play as a critical component of early childhood education, recognizing its role in fostering cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Their programs often include:

- Activities that stimulate learning through play, which is essential for holistic child development.

Plan International's Approach

-Gender Norm Change: By actively engaging men in caregiving roles, Plan International seeks to reshape societal expectations around gender, promoting a more equitable distribution of parenting responsibilities.

-Emergency Response: Their ECD programs are adaptable for emergency contexts, ensuring that even in crises, children receive the necessary support for resilience building through play and learning activities.

-Holistic Development Focus: The organization's commitment extends beyond immediate care; they aim to create long-term changes that enhance children's developmental outcomes while addressing systemic issues related to gender inequality.

Thus, Plan International's ECD interventions are uniquely positioned at the intersection of gender equality and child development, focusing on inclusive practices that empower both children and their caregivers while addressing broader societal norms.

Citations:

<https://www.educaid.be/system/files/2021-12/Plan%20Int%20GLO-ED%20Edcuaid%20presentation%2002.12.21.pptx.pdf>

	<p>https://plan-international.org/publications/promoting-mens-engagement-in-early-childhood-development/</p> <p>https://plan-international.org/publications/early-childhood-development-and-child-protection-in-emergencies/</p> <p>https://plan-international.org/publications/research-into-gender-equality-and-ecd-initiatives/</p> <p>https://www.plan.org.au/our-work/early-childhood-development/</p> <p>https://plan-international.org/publications/overview-early-childhood-development/</p> <p>https://www.planusa.org/our-work/what-we-focus-on/early-childhood-development/</p>
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<p>Thrive</p>	<p>Thrive is a comprehensive initiative focused on enhancing Early Childhood Development in low- and middle-income countries. Its unique approach encompasses several key components that distinguish it from other ECD interventions.</p> <p>Overview of Thrive</p> <p>Thrive operates as a multi-country research and policy program aimed at improving childhood health, nutrition, education, and overall wellbeing. It emphasizes the importance of nurturing care services that can significantly impact child development outcomes. The initiative is active in countries such as Bangladesh, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, and is backed by organizations like the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Oxford Policy Management.</p> <p>Features of Thrive</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-Based Interventions- Thrive utilizes evidence-based interventions like the Family Strengthening Intervention for Early Childhood Development (FSI-ECD), which promotes nurturing care through home visits. This intervention has shown effectiveness in improving caregiver interactions, dietary diversity for children, and reducing family violence. Focus on Scaling Effective Programs- Thrive aims to scale successful ECD programs rapidly while ensuring they remain inclusive and effective. This involves building national research capacities to support sustainable ECD services beyond the lifespan of the initiative. Collaboration with Global Partners- Thrive collaborates with multiple research institutions and organizations globally to share insights and best practices. This collaborative framework enhances the program's ability to adapt successful strategies across different contexts. Data-Driven Insights- a significant aspect of Thrive is its commitment to using data for decision-making. By collecting and analysing data on child development outcomes, Thrive can identify effective practices and areas needing improvement. <p>In conclusion, Thrive stands out in the field of Early Childhood Development by combining rigorous research with practical interventions tailored to local contexts. Its focus on scaling effective</p>
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	<p>programs, fostering collaboration among global partners, and utilizing data-driven insights positions it as a leader in transforming ECD services in vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/thrive-early-childhood-development</p> <p>https://thrivechildevidence.org/projects/the-family-strengthening-intervention-for-early-childhood-development-fsi-eed/</p>