



LOCATING THE ROLE OF THE ELRC WITHIN THE EDUCATION PROVISIONING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ECD

“Through the eye of the NDP”

1

Restore the Character of SADTU as a Union of Revolutionary Professionals, Agents of Change and People's Education for People's Power in Pursuit of Socialism

PURPOSE

- ▶ This input aims to locate the role of the ELRC within the context of Human Resources Provisioning, with emphasis on Educator Provisioning and in particular the ECD Educators.

INTRODUCTION

3

- At its Polokwane Conference the ANC resolved that Early Childhood Development must become a key focus area. This resolution was informed by the pedagogical understanding of the role of ECD in education.
- Whilst we recognize and appreciate the fact that ECD is a shared responsibility between the Department of Social Development and DBE, the **basic education department has a critical role** to ensure the effective implementation of ECD because of its impact on education outcomes.
- In addition to any allocations by the line function department responsible for ECD, the basic education department must provide adequate resources to **ensure proper and effective interface between ECD and the foundation phase** function including but not limited to remedial interventions, screening and support to foundation phase educators.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4

- It would be prudent to juxtapose and locate the debate on ECD within the following reference documents:
 - Education White Paper 5 on ECD
 - National Development Plan (NDP), Government's 2030 Vision
 - ELRC Research on Policy and Conditions of Service for Institutionalization of Grade R Practitioners / Educators
 - DHET Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Educators.
- We need to find **synergy of issues** raised in these documents and locate the role of the ELRC **to improve the conditions of service for the ECD and Grade R Educators.**

Education White Paper 5 on ECD

5

- ▶ **Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education, (DOE, 2001, p.2) puts forward a number of compelling arguments for investing in ECD, including, among others:**
 - **The early years are critical for the development of the potential of human beings as they form the fundamental pillars of later or lifelong learning.**
 - **South Africa's position in the global economy depends on the competencies of its people and these competencies are developed and set early in life.**
 - **Intervening in the earliest years help to reduce the social and economic disparities and race and gender inequalities that divide South African society.**

National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 Vision

6

- NDP identified a number of challenges and questions that need a **coherent approach** by various stakeholders involved in education provisioning:

Resourcing

- Delivery of ECD depends on availability of infrastructure, i.e. funding, regulations, accountability, **human resources, training**, physical infrastructure, etc.

Qualifications

- What are the implications for professionalization. What type of qualifications should ECD Educators acquire? (DHET's policy)

7

Scope

- The other debate is whether ECD falls within the field of education or social services in terms of the career path of practitioners
- Currently those located in the education sector – are meant to be educators

Funding Gaps

- Poor alignment between DSD and DBE

Curriculum

- Curriculum for training of trainers have not been based on any curriculum needs for ECD; whereby every provider developed own curriculum for training of practitioners.

ELRC Research on Policy & Conditions of Service for Institutionalization of Grade R Practitioners

Objectives of the Study

- To describe how **Grade R provision is to be harmonized with ECD** as a whole, and incorporated as part of a seamless basic education system;
- To formulate policy proposals relating to the funding of **Grade R provision**, with specific reference to the diversity of service providers, teacher salaries, leave and other benefits, teacher education and training;

- ▶ To provide a concise description of the conditions of service:
 - relevant salary scales,
 - leave and other benefits,
 - employment requirements (qualifications and experience);
 - job descriptions,
 - staffing norms,
 - working hours,
 - training and education needs for Grade R practitioners; and

- ▶ To formulate **transitional measures** that would cater for the **migration** of the Grade R ECD practitioners / Educators from community-based independent centers into the basic education system.

DHET Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Educators

- The Policy takes cognizance of the fact that the provision of quality ECD services relies on the availability of a committed cadre of appropriately qualified and passionate employees in the sector.
- It further outlines the roles and responsibilities that particular Sectors have towards the enhancement of ECD: The **education sector**, Civil Society, Government and Universities.
- Such responsibilities are but not limited to:
 - Design and offer qualifications that will afford **professional status** and recognition to ECD educators.
 - Standardize the training and qualifications of and provide a **career pathway** for ECD educators.

- Develop quality programmes to equip ECD educators with information, knowledge and skills to support the implementation of the NCF.

WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE ELRC BE PLAYING IN BRINGING COHERENCE TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE 4 DOCUMENTS ABOVE.

- ▶ It is clear from the 4 reference documents above that the importance of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) phase, including Grade R, is recognized in providing a sound education foundation for young learners.
- ▶ Consistent with this trend, a key policy goal should be the **harmonization of the ECD sector with the foundation phase** of basic education.
- ▶ Although there has been much progress towards achieving this goal, the concomitant **alignment of policy and conditions of service of Grade R teachers remains a challenge.**

- Significantly, the lack of appropriate qualifications appears as a major stumbling block in the integration of Grade R teachers into the education mainstream.
- In light of this reality, the ELRC, needs to be proactive in undertaking the process to:
 - Develop **appropriate policy** for Grade R practitioners,
 - Paying particular attention to the **funding** of the sector,
 - Revision of the **PPN model** to include Grade R Learners
 - Determining minimum requirements for appointment, (**A consideration of the same requirements as that of the mainstream educators M+3 but with specific reference to ECD qualifications as per the DHET's policy**)

- ▶ Developing a **salary grading system** linked to the foundation school phase,
 - ▶ Qualifications needed, informed by the DHET's policy
 - ▶ Training and development needs and other conditions of service.
- ▶ All of these issues will invariably contribute towards enhancing the professionalization of Grade R practitioners.

Example of the Best Practice by the ELRC

- ▶ The ELRC has in the past played a pivotal role in the enhancement of qualifications of the under-qualified educators through an NPDE programme.

CONCLUSION

- In the quest to streamline, professionalize and institutionalize both the ECD and Grade R Educators, the ELRC needs to give consideration to more or less the same approach it took in developing the NPDE for under-qualified Educators.

THE SCOPE OF THE ELRC AS A SECTORAL BARGAINING COUNCIL

16

- This input needs to raise a critical question in so far as the scope of the ELRC as a Sectoral Bargaining Council in terms of the LRA.
- This question is informed by the intricacies of the Public Service. The intricacies the input is referring to relates to the pockets of Educators rendering service in various sectors within the Public Service.
- The following are the examples of educators we find in the system, but employed through different pieces of legislation:
 - CET Lecturers (formerly AET)
 - TVET Lecturers
 - Educators employed by SGB's
 - Educators employed in Correctional Service etc.
- More often the provisions negotiated at the ELRC are usually extended to such Educators.

Challenges

- When it comes to dispute referral, the SGB Educators whilst working under the same conditions as the Educators in the mainstream, find themselves having to declare their disputes to the CCMA instead of the ELRC;
- The CET Lecturers currently find themselves in limbo, in that they do not have the platform to raise the issues concerning their conditions of service;

Envisioning: *Food for thought*

- ➔ Isn't it time for the ELRC to start thinking out of the box and consider expanding its scope to accommodate all educators irrespective of the employing Act, with the implications being to amend the constitution of the ELRC to accommodate such Educators.