

# How response-driven innovation can address challenges in ECD

The Community Chest of the Western Cape in partnership with the HomeChoice Development Trust hosted the Early Childhood Development Conversation 2014 at the Sports Science Institute on Thursday, 6 November, focusing on emerging needs, innovative ECD approaches, and gaps in ECD support, with the aim of addressing challenges, such as access and affordability, facing the ECD sector.



The conference created an opportunity for ECD stakeholders to discuss how response-driven innovation can address these challenges without disrupting the current ECD system.

The theme of this year's event was *Innovation, Co-operation vs Duplication*. Innovation across the ECD sector already has become evident through initiatives such as the spread of technology, out-of-centre based interventions and the value of ECD resource centres within communities, while co-operation and the leveraging of resources within the entire sector is essential to prevent duplication.

Community Chest WC Chief Executive Officer Lorenzo Davids said, "By sharing innovative practices we can continue to explore new ways of creating synergy and enhancing our collective impact in the ECD sector."

## Constructive dissatisfaction

"The conversation tapped into the energy and ideas of innovators who are either driven by their 'constructive dissatisfaction', or by the sense that existing early childhood programs and policies are good, but not sufficient."

HomeChoice Development Trust Chairman Rick Garratt made the opening remarks. The Trust was established by the HomeChoice Holdings Group in 2005 and has over the last three years provided funding to 90 educare centres, and supported over 5,000 children. The Trust is founded on the philosophy that quality early childhood development programmes are a powerful means of overcoming the effects of poverty.

Garratt was followed by Roy Hellenberg, Head of History, Senior Housemaster of Mason House, and HOD: Civic Engagement, at Rondebosch Boys' High School, who gave the keynote address, "Early Childhood Development: the logical solution".

Three breakaway sessions dealt with *Holistic models: process to solution*, *ECD innovation with technology*, and *Taking ECD to the child*. These were led respectively by Nicky Kumm from True North; Dr Ian Corbett and Alister Payne from SASDI Foundation; and Thembekazi Nxesi and Mdebuka Mthwazi from Sikhula Sonke. All three non-profit organisations focus on the ECD sector.

"Response-driven innovation offers a continuous cycle of idea development, testing and feedback that can help improve our ability to implement successful interventions and ultimately change the trajectory of more children's lives," said Davids.

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