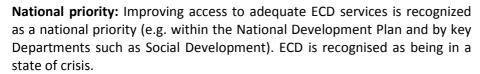# ECD Support for Informal Settlements in eThekwini: Summary Profile

Part of the EU-funded Presidential Programme to Support Pro-poor Policy Development (PSPPD) and a collaboration between PPT, TREE and UKZN. Additional funding provided by Ilifa Labantwana.

Rationale: Large numbers of children within informal settlements lack access to acceptable early childhood development (ECD) care and services. In addition, they often face a range of health and safety threats. Most ECD centres in these settlements are as yet not registered and thus fall outside of the current system of registration and related support. The challenges are both in terms of ACCESS (i.e. enabling more children to access centres which are within the system) and QUALITY (e.g. in terms of quality of programmes, skills of practitioners and infrastructural adequacy).

National priority: Improving access to adequate ECD services is recognized as a national priority (e.g. within the National Development Plan and by key Departments such as Social Development). ECD is recognised as being in a state of crisis.

New ECD approach: An enhanced, programmatic and scale-able response model is required to more effectively reach large numbers of children in as-yet unregistered centres. There is consensus that greater flexibility is required in respect of enabling improved ECD access and quality within prevailing resource constraints. Many centres are well-established with committed staff and there is significant potential for improvement and facility registration provided certain support, investment and assistance is provided. Others with less capacity and potential may still require short term interventions to mitigate health and safety threats. Still others are non-acceptable and other solutions for children need to be found.

Project objectives: To research, pilot and establish a new and improved model of support to ECD centres within eThekwini in order to achieve access to improved care, learning and safety for children.

Activities: 1) Field survey and inspections of all ECD centres within a pilot study area to understand the status quo, challenges and potentials. 2) Development of an ECD response model which enables various types of support and assistance for centres in different categories (high vs. basic vs. low-functioning). 3) Infrastructural improvements (including extensions and possible new builds) at approximately 12 pilot sites along with other support such as training and possible centre registration with KZN DSD. 5) Refinement of the response model based on learning from pilot projects with a view to planning for implementation at scale.

Outputs: 1) ECD survey tool (electronic, Android, tablet-based). 2) Survey report for pilot informal settlement study area (and potentially in time for all settlements). 3) Research report. 4) Infrastructure improvements (including possible extensions and new builds) at 12 pilot sites based on plans. 5) Impact evaluation report. 6) Plan for upscaling including stakeholder roles, basis for centre categorisation and sources of infrastructure funding.

Funding secured: PPT has secured R1.7million in funding to provide the survey, research, training, planning and technical support for an initial phase (R1.3million from Presidency/EU, R150,000 from Ilifa Labantwana, R150,000 from PPT/Angela Mai and R100,000 from UKZN. The support work will be undertaken by the collaboration of PPT, TREE, UKZN, NAG with some assistance from Ilifa Labantwana.

Infrastructure funding: Funding will need to be secured during the course of the project for infrastructure improvements, extensions and possible new builds at approximately 12 pilot sites. It is hoped that eThekwini ICDG funding will be utilised for these purposes (an initial scoping has indicated potential in this regard). However a key part of the new ECD response model is to identify other sources of infrastructure funding for the long term for implementation at scale (e.g. from Lotto, DSD, MIG, CSI).

Collaboration: The ECD support initiative is a collaboration between several well-established NGOs and the University of KwaZulu Natal (UZKN), working closely with eThekwini's Environmental Health Department (EHD) and the KZN Department of Social Development (DSD). The support NGO's are Project Preparation Trust of KZN (PPT), Training and Resources in Early Childhood Development (TREE), Network Action Group (NAG) with some assistance provided by Ilifa Labantwana.

eThekwini role: eThekwini's Environmental Health Department (EHD) is the key Department responsible for assessing ECD centres from a compliance perspective and works closely with the KZN DSD in respect of centre approvals/registrations. The EHD approved the ECD support initiatives and will be represented on the Project Steering Committee along with the KZN DSD. EHD officials will assist with the field survey, given their extensive existing involvement within informal settlements. EHD will assess sites, make input into ECD infrastructure improvement plans and, where necessary put forward motivations for City infrastructure budget for improvements at the 12 pilot projects (including extensions and possible new builds).

KZN DSD role: The KZN DSD is a key role-player. There are already close working relationships with both the Provincial as well as District Offices (principally via TREE, NAG and Ilifa Labantwana which has an existing ECD MOU with the KZN DSD.