

March 2018 - February 2019

# NAG ANNUAL REPORT

Catalysing Investment in Early Childhood



Data Driven  
**PROFILING**

Zero 2 Five Trust  
**BETTER NUTRITION**

ECD Framework  
**POLICY & SYSTEMS**

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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Grassroots organisations are at the heart of the Network Action Group. This year it has been a privilege to leverage many new investments for our member organisations in UGU district and to see the enthusiasm that our member organisations still have to provide essential social services for their underprivileged and often remote communities. We must always be reminded that it is people who are themselves often from households living below the poverty line, who are reaching out to provide these community services to those around them.

We have been happy to continue our partnership with Unlimited Child this year with 22 new ECD centres receiving educational toys, training and on-site mentoring. We have also developed a new key partnership in nutrition with Zero2Five trust who provide Unity porridge to all ECD centres in UGU who do not have DSD subsidy. In quantity terms this is 2 tonnes of porridge every month for children in ECD centres in UGU district. Our policy and systems work reached National level with a pilot project of the ECD Registration framework which we were appointed to conduct across 3 provinces. It was our pleasure to work with Department of Social Development and Environmental Health officials across 3 provinces and at national level. We look forward to this work progressing in 2019/20. In the Eastern Cape province we entered into a new project with Ilifa Labantwana and the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development to extend our ECD Registration work in O.R. Tambo District and start up in Chris Hani District.

In the last couple of months we made the strategic decision to spread our wings beyond UGU district with our ECD Network programme and began a partnership with Bizana ECD forum in the Eastern Cape province. Bizana is in the poorest district in the country so the needs are great within ECD but also the passion and commitment in the forum have really impressed our team. We have begun our partnership well with Zero2Five committing nutrition support also, which will make a big impact in that area. We look forward to continuing into the third year of our strategy aimed at giving every child a fair start in life'

**BRIAN LIGGETT**

NAG Director



# ECD PROFILING

## DATA DRIVEN ECD PRACTICE

Data is central to all that we do at NAG, we use it to support investment recommendations and drive social change. There is a great lack of data in the ECD sector in South Africa, this leads to many organisations theory of change based on assumptions of what ECD services exist in communities, how many children are attending those services and what the reasons are for children not attending ECD services. For us these are three key questions that we need answers to in order to plan appropriate interventions to ensure a fair start in life for all children. We are proud to say that we have answers for the first two questions on this list for UGU, our home district where we research and develop scalable systems to improve ECD. Our team used every spare minute of this year profiling all ECD services in marginalized communities in UGU district. Below and throughout this report will be a snapshot of the findings.

# 424

## ECD Centres

profiled within the  
UGU region



### 60% OF ECD CENTRES

have an income of less than R1000 per month from fees

*Parents Fee's in UGU ECD centres range from R10 per month to over R200 per month with the average being around R60 per month. On average across the approximately 1200 ECD practitioners in the district they earn 996 rand per month.*



**38% OF ECD CENTRES DON'T HAVE ANY BOOKS**



**47% OF ECD CENTRES DON'T HAVE ANY PUZZLES**



**41% OF ECD CENTRES DON'T HAVE ANY BUILDING BLOCKS**



**44% OF ECD CENTRES DON'T HAVE ANY ARTS/ CRAFT MATERIALS**

# OUR NETWORK

## A GROWING NETWORK OF ECD ORGANISATIONS

**60% OF ECD CENTRES**

have been operating for more than 10 years

NAG run quarterly ECD network meetings in partnership with the municipality and Department of Social Development (DSD). The ECD centres meet at a central venue in the four different municipalities in UGU District.

**196**

**ECD Centres**

Attended network meetings in UGU District

**32 ECD Centres**

Assisted with Partial Care Registration

**22 Meetings**

Across four different municipalities of the the UGU District

**59 ECD Centres**

Assisted with Lotto Funding Applications of which 17 have thus far been granted programme funding.

**8 ECD Centres**

Assisted with NPO appilication



*"Our ECD Centre joined NAG in 2012. We started with very little, since being part of the network we have a new building, have received training, have been assisted with administration and fundraising. NAG has given us direction and we would not be where we are without them "*



# RAISING THE QUALITY OF ECD

## MONITORING & TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR QUALITY ECD

NAG has found that provision of training is not sufficient if we want to see improved ECD services in marginalised communities. We therefore facilitate local learning groups where ECD practitioners are given technical support whilst they review, report back and look at ways to improve programming. Great progress is made as practitioners learn from others and expand their theoretical skills.

**270** LEARNING GROUP SESSIONS

ECD PRACTITIONERS **380**



Central to the learning process is a participatory M&E tool that NAG developed in close consultation with practitioners and ECD training providers. It has been found to be user friendly and aid practitioners to improve quality giving children adequate opportunity to learn.

### 4-5 YEARS

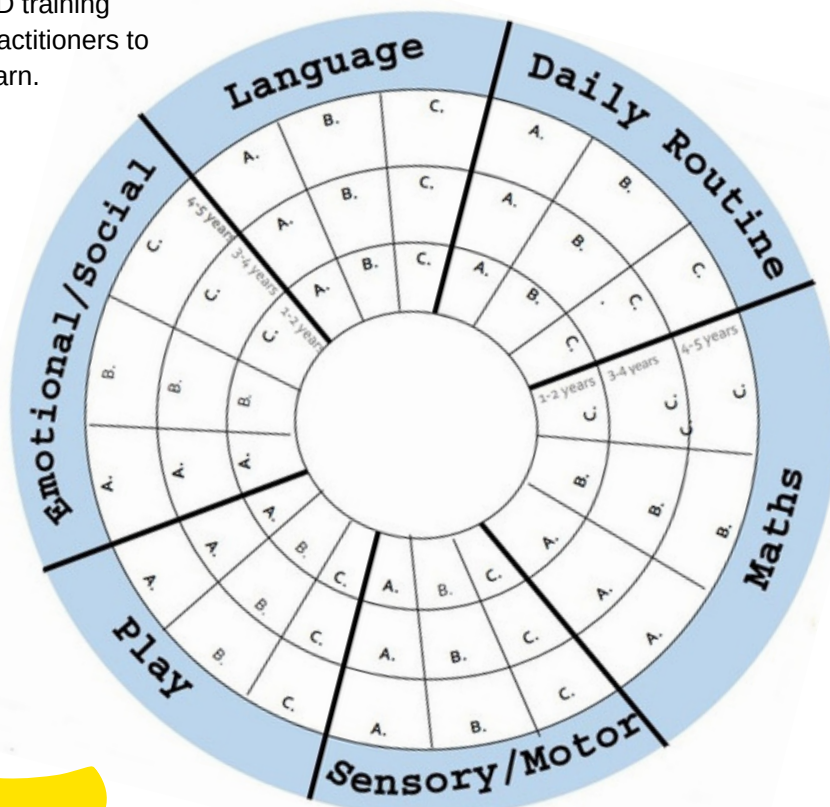
Initiate own imaginative and varied play scenarios using props/ objects

### 3-4 YEARS

Initiate own play e.g. make choices and create play scenarios

### 19-35 MONTHS

Play in a variety of ways e.g. construction, creative & fantasy



# PARTNERING FOR BETTER NUTRITION

## LINKING NUTRITION SUPPORT TO ECD CENTRES

NAG has developed a new partnership with the Zero2Five Trust. NAG's network assists ECD Centres who are not allocated a government subsidy with receiving free porridge to support children's nutrition. ECD Centres who do receive a grant are also able to access the porridge as a nominal fee. The porridge supplied by Zero2Five trust includes a balance of macro and micronutrients which support a child's early development. An average of 2100 learners are supported with nutrition each month.

700

BOXES OF  
PORRIDGE  
DISTRIBUTED

## EXPANSION INTO BIZANA

Monthly supply of porridge through partnerships with Zero2Five Trust to 236 ECD centers that are not receiving subsidy from DSD, impacting over 3000 children.



72% OF ECD  
CENTRES  
serve children  
lunch

*Children that attend subsidised ECD centres are served lunch every day. There are only 12 non-subsidised ECD centres that serve lunch. Zero2Five highly fortified porridge has made a huge impact as a highly nutritious breakfast for these non-subsidised centres.*



# SPACE TO LEARN

## PARTNERING FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL GROWTH

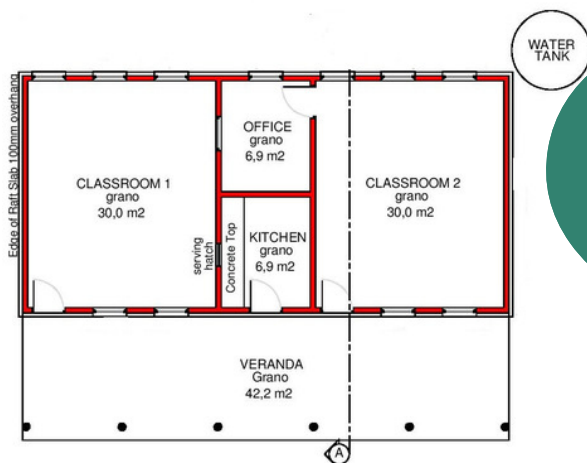
An ECD Centre often starts in someone's house or in a small empty building. It would generally be run voluntarily by a few local women who are passionate about children. At the start they would have had no training or knowledge of formal structures to enable them to get outside support.

## 15 NEW ECD CENTRES

- The prescribed space for classrooms is 1,5 sq metres per child, in reality, most centres we work with have approximately 0,7 sq metres per child.
- 7 ECD Sites were fenced

We are proud to have been able to build for members who were operating out of mud buildings or other informal structures. Through the use of local community resources, we implement a cost-effective ECD infrastructure programme which allows for large scale implementation

Our model for building new ECD Centres focuses on working with what already exists in the community. Our process includes selection, profiling and due diligence and for the construction phase we have a low-cost implementation model, by making use of local-based community resources.



A Standard ECD Centre will include two classrooms, a kitchen and a storage room or office

6% OF ECD CENTRES have roofs that leak



14% OF ECD CENTRES do not have child safe toilets

**600**  
CHILDREN HAVE  
SPACE TO  
LEARN

# POLICY & SYSTEMS

## NATIONAL ECD REGISTRATION FRAMEWORK

NAG has for the past 5 years developed expertise on the ECD Partial Care Registration system as detailed in the Children Act of South Africa. We have been training and mentoring more than 500 government social workers and environmental health practitioners through our Bhalisa Inkulisa re-engineered registration processes and tools to make ECD registration much more efficient. This has resulted in more than 1000 new registrations of ECD centers across KZN and Eastern Cape during our short mentoring period in each district and many more after we have exited each district.

One of the main constraints in the registration system which Bhalisa Inkulisa did not address was the misalignment between policy and practice when it comes to norms and standards for infrastructure, health and safety. The policy on paper is divorced from the reality of poor communities in the most unequal country in the world.

### THE POLICY ENVISAGES CENTRES LIKE THIS...



### THE IMPLEMENTERS FIND ECD CENTRES LIKE THIS...



Our experience on the ground with implementers combined with National DSD's recognition of the problem as well as their recognition of the interconnectedness of the system with Environmental Health led to us producing a draft Registration Framework in 2016 which was shared amongst provincial governments for comment. Here is the explanation in governments own words:

*The norms and standards that are in the Children's Act are not always easily met and do not take the different contexts of the country into account. However, in recognition of this, the children's Act makes provision for conditional registration. National DSD have developed an ECD Registration Framework that creates a developmental path for an ECD centre to enter the system and progress. This is the entry at Bronze level (minimum compliance), progression to Silver (improved compliance) and Gold (full compliance).*

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

**MEETS ALL NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR NEHNS AND DSD**

FULL

**FAILS ONE GOLD STANDARD OR MORE BUT MEETS ALL SILVER STANDARDS**

CONDITIONAL

**FAILS ONE SILVER STANDARD OR MORE BUT MEETS ALL BRONZE STANDARDS**

CONDITIONAL

### COMPLIANCE NOTICE

FAILS ONE BRONZE STANDARD OR MORE  
ISSUED WITH A COMPLIANCE NOTICE FROM  
DEPARTMENT WHOSE STANDARDS HAVE NOT  
BEEN MET. 3 MONTH VALIDITY

### NOTICE OF ENFORCEMENT

IMMEDIATE THREAT TO CHILD SAFETY –  
SERVICE INFORMED TO CEASE  
OPERATIONS WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

We were excited to be appointed to facilitate a pilot of the Framework across three provinces in 2018 with government officials registering 15 ECD services in each province using the framework. The results were very encouraging and showed that the framework will help to open up the registration system and make it accessible for thousands of unregistered services throughout the country who are operating from informal buildings in under resourced communities. By the end of the year government were in negotiations to plan a national rollout of the framework so that all registrations going forward utilise the framework and associated toolkit. NAG are so excited to be influencing and reshaping national ECD policy implementation!



# PARTIAL CARE REGISTRATION

Partial Care Registration is the most important documentation for an ECD Centre or Preschool to have. It is the licence to operate, approving that the centre meets basic health, safety and child protection standards and that the staff have been screened on the child protection register. Throughout South Africa you will typically find less than 50% of ECD services in a district registered. Therefore we are very proud of the achievements in UGU district in partnership with DSD and UGU Environmental Health.

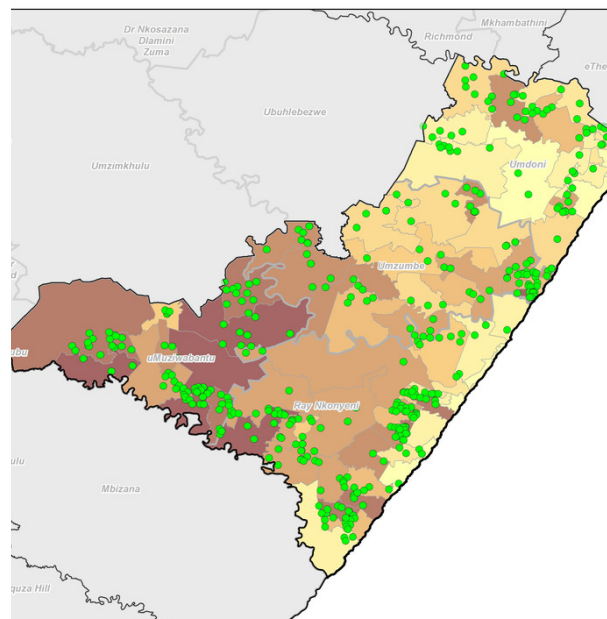
**80%** OF ECD CENTRES IN UGU HAVE **FULL OR CONDITIONAL PARTIAL CARE** REGISTRATION

Government aims to subsidise ECD services for poor children in the country, but to access the subsidy, ECD services need to have partial care registration. Due to UGU's high registration rates and high poverty levels we also have probably the **highest percentage** of funded ECD services in the country

**75% OF ECD CENTRES** in UGU are partially subsidised by DSD

*In total 12399 children attend 318 subsidised ECD centres and 2466 children attend 106 non-subsidised ECD centres*

DSD funded ECD centres are subsidised for approximately 55% of the children that actually attend. This is because of government's lack of budget to subsidise all the children that are in ECD Centre and means their commitment to pay R15 per child per day is essentially watered down to around R8 per child per day.



*NAG helped us with our registration with DSD. The money that we received from DSD allows us to buy food to feed the children, get resources like toys, blankets and books and helps pay towards the stipend of the teachers who work at the ECD Centre.*



521 ECD CENTRES WERE IDENTIFIED FOR REGISTRATION IN TWO EASTERN CAPE DISTRICTS BETWEEN MARCH 2018 AND FEBRUARY 2019.



256 ECD CENTRES RECEIVED REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES.



271 OF THESE CENTRES SUBMITTED A COMPLETE PARTIAL CARE REGISTRATION APPLICATION.



THE AVERAGE TIME TAKEN FOR ALL REGISTRATIONS WAS LESS THAN THE MANDATED 180 DAYS.

# SUCCESS STORIES

**IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE DETERMINATION AND PERSEVERANCE OF WOMEN WITH A HEART FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, THERE WOULD BE NO ECD CENTRES IN MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES.**

## STORY A

One of NAG's network members was working as a home-based carer looking after patients, with HIV/AIDS, in their homes, taking them to hospitals for their medication, and helping these patients with food and clothes.

"When visiting people in their homes I saw that parents who were sick had older relatives looking after them and their homes, but there was no one to look after the babies and the children who were just left alone."

Seeing these children left alone she realised that she could be the parent to these children. "I wanted to teach them how to respect a person, how to know the difference from right and wrong, how to pray and develop a relationship with God and help to educate them so they are able to be ready for school."

The ECD Centre opened in 2001 run out of the woman's rondavel. There were very little resources available but through small donations from the community and some outside help she was able to provide the children at the centre with a healthy breakfast and lunch to support their development.

One of the children who joined the creche lost his mom to AIDS and was being looked after by the 'Gogo'. He showed signs of obvious developmental delay. The practitioner took the young boy with his Gogo to the clinic to receive treatment. Through her support he was able to learn how to sit, crawl, stand and walk.

When he was old enough to start school, it became obvious that he was not 'ready' for school and so the practitioner allowed him to continue attending the ECD Centre with the endeavour to have him 'school ready'. The young boy finished Grade 7 last year and will be starting High School.

***"When I go to the nearby school Grade R graduation, I see children who were from my Centre 'Hello, Teacher' they say. This makes me happy because I know that I helped them get there."***



***"I used to see this young girl carrying buckets of water, she was very young. She would be on the side of the road crying. This young girl really touched me."***

## STORY B

Another story that showcases the commitment of NAG's members is an ECD Centre which opened up Inzingolweni in 2013.

The centre was started to help children who were suffering. There were many cases where children were being raped and abused in their homes or abducted and killed for 'traditional medicine'.

The centre was opened and run out of the woman's home, a small rondavel. She used the little money that she had to buy food for the children and resources for the centre. She wanted to allow children a safe space during the day while their parents were out working.

Since starting she has managed to register her ECD Centre and they have received a new building which allows them to support 104 children in the area.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Our strategy has always been to catalyse significant investments for our member organisations from the money spent to run our UGU network. Usually this is investments outside of our financial system, but you will see that now increasingly donors are also sending money through NAG to invest in member organizations and this is now 50% of the income in our accounts. At the same time the funding for UGU programmes is very hard to come by and this is the engine to drive the policy and systems consulting and the investments for NAG member organisations. The balance between these is essential to ensure that our strategy can be sustained over the medium term. Our newly defined strategy shall hopefully enable us to communicate our work better and enable an increasingly strengthened financial position. Please do not hesitate to contact us for a copy of our audited financial statements for a more detailed overview of our finances or to ask us any questions related to our finances.

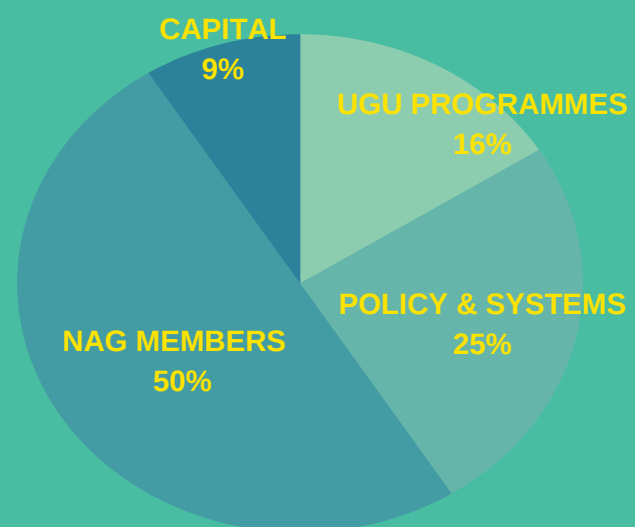


Due to the scale up of our NAG infrastructure work we have split our income into the following four sections to show you how things are evolving:

**UGU Programmes**

**Policy and Systems Consulting**

**Investments to NAG Members**



zero2five  
Early Childhood Nutrition & Play



SIMANYE  
ECONOMIC AND EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT

Wordworks  
Changing lives through literacy

The  
Unlimited  
Child  
SHIFTING OUR NATION'S FUTURE

IMPANDE  
GAMALAKHE FOUNDATION NORWAY

ilifa  
labantwana

INNOVATION EDGE



social development  
Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Province of the  
EASTERN CAPE  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



NAG  
NETWORK ACTION GROUP

Network Action Group is a non-profit organisation based in Port Shepstone, South Africa working with community driven ECD services based in marginalised communities.

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