



NECDA

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

"Building a better Future for Children"

NATIONAL ECD ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25



ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE



Organisation Name :	National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA)
National Office Address :	47 Topsham Road, Plumstead, Cape Town, 7808
NPO Registration Number :	043-894
SARS Section 18A PBO Number:	930018365
Website:	<u>www.ecdalliance.org</u>



THE BOARD

	Office Bearer	Name	Organisation	Province
1.	Chairperson	Rex Molefe	Motheo Training Institute Trust	Gauteng
2.	Vice Chairperson	Puleng Motsoeneng	Ntataise Trust	Free State
3.	Treasurer	Caroll Warmberg	ITEC	Eastern Cape

Board Members

- Dr.Riedewhaan Allie FCW (Western Cape)
- Tseli Scharer Ntataise Lowveld (Mpumalanga)
- Anneri Kruger Grassroots (Western Cape)
- Malcolm Mooi Dr CL Smith Foundation (Gauteng)
- Gloria Nkosi Hope Worldwide (Gauteng)
- Theo Toolo (Gauteng)

National Office

Abigail Peacock

Chief Operating Officer

Mobile : 068 443 2019 /068 401 3702

WhatsApp : 081 723 4921

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Executive Summary

The National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA) is a national network of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Resource and Training Organisations, as well as sector experts. NECDA unites these members around a shared commitment to strengthening the ECD sector through quality training, resource provision, and capacity building.

Established in 2005, NECDA was born out of a critical need to professionalize and capacitate the ECD sector in South Africa. Today, it serves 120 member organisations across all nine provinces, reaching over 45,000 practitioners and impacting more than 2 million children.

Our Vision

A strengthened and capacitated human resource in Early Childhood Development.

Our Mission

To support and strengthen ECD Resource and Training Organisations in building a better future for South Africa's children, families, and communities, through:

- Skills development and capacity building
- Strategic partnerships and alliances
- Advocacy and lobbying for ECD



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024/25

Theme: “Strengthening Partnerships ”

Date : 10th October 2025 | Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Venue: Zoom

Time	Agenda	Speaker
10h30	Welcome and Opening	Gloria Nkosi (Programme Director)
10h35	Chairperson Address	Rex Molefe (Chairperson)
10h50	Keynote Address: “Strengthening Partnerships” Department of Higher Education (DHET)	Dr. J.Setshedi
11h05	Adoption of the Minutes/ Matters Arising	Gloria Nkosi (Secretary)
11h10	Secretariat Report	Abigail Peacock (Chief Operations Officer)
11h20	Treasurer Report	Caroll Warmberg (Treasurer)
11h30	NECDA Subcommittee Reports	Subcom Leads (Board Members)
12h00	Inspiration and Innovation	Dr. David Molapo (ICAN Foundation)
12h15	Vote of Thanks	Dr Riedewhaan Allie (Board Member)
12h30	Close	

Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting

Date: 08 August 2024

Financial Year: 2023/2024

Welcome and Opening

The NECDA Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 2023/2024 financial year was officially opened by Ms. Praviena Naidoo, who warmly welcomed all members in attendance.

An engaging icebreaker was facilitated by Ms. Puleng Motsoeneng to set the tone for the meeting.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Molefe extended congratulations to FCW on their 50th anniversary milestone. He also expressed appreciation to our partner from Zimbabwe for her presence and continued commitment to NECDA.

Special thanks were given to Mr. Peter Ducray from Real Refine Software for his ongoing support and dedication to NECDA, particularly his willingness to go above and beyond in assisting the alliance.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous AGM were read by Ms. Abigail Peacock and made available to all attendees.

- Proposed by: ITEC (Carol)
- Seconded by: Hope Worldwide (Carol)

Chairperson's Report

Delivered by Mr. Molefe, the Chairperson's Report covered key areas including:

- The Operating Environment
- Capital-Raising Initiatives
- Strengthening of Member Organisations and Staff

- Positioning NECDA for Growth
- ICT and Technological Advancements
- Strategic Partnerships and Achievements
- Challenges Faced

Key challenges highlighted included:

- The withdrawal of traditional funders due to shifts in strategic focus. NECDA remains committed to securing sustainable funding.
- Ongoing difficulties in securing Level 4 accreditation among members. NECDA will continue to support members in the accreditation and NPC registration processes.
- A lack of understanding around Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes among members, despite its critical importance in the sector.
- Low levels of participation and delayed responses from some members, which negatively impact the alliance's progress.

Recommendations & Acknowledgements:

Mr. Molefe made several recommendations to strengthen the alliance and extended heartfelt appreciation to Carol Warmberg and Abigail Peacock for their continued dedication and service.

A special farewell was bid to Ms. Kayin Scholtz, who stepped down from her role due to new professional responsibilities.

- **Adoption of the Chairperson's Report:**

- **Proposed by:** Puleng
- **Seconded by:** Natalie (SAMA)

There were no questions or objections raised regarding the report



Financial Report

The financial report was presented by Treasurer Carol Warmberg, with members given the opportunity to request the full financial statements if desired.

- Adoption of the Financial Report:
 - Proposed by: Gloria (Hope Worldwide)
 - Seconded by: Mareldia (Grassroots)

Ms. Naidoo also extended thanks to NECDA's online participants for their engagement

Board Tenure Proposal

Presented by Puleng Motsoeneng and Carol Warmberg, three proposals were tabled regarding board tenure:

1. Existing co-op members to be voted in as full board members for the continuation of NECDA projects.
2. A Special AGM to be convened to further discuss this matter.
3. If Proposal 1 is adopted, the board will be limited to 8–10 members, with additional nominees serving as subcommittee members.

Members were shown the NECDA organogram to clarify the proposed options.

Constitutional Alignment:

In response to a query from Ms. Patsy Pillay, Ms. Carol Warmberg confirmed that the proposals are in line with the current NECDA Constitution.

Outcome:

Proposal 1 received the majority vote. A Special AGM will be scheduled to update the Constitution accordingly, ensuring alignment with current laws and governance standards.



Reports from Subcommittees and Programmes

- Parenting Programme:
 - Report delivered by Ms. Abigail Peacock.
- RPL Subcommittee:
 - Report presented by Ms. Puleng Motsoeneng, who outlined NECDA's partnership with CIPPT, aimed at enhancing professionalism within the ECD workforce.
 - Notably, the RPL Indaba is scheduled for September, with the goal of engaging stakeholders and regulatory bodies to advance the RPL framework, address challenges, and plan for future implementation.
- Provincial Structures & Membership Management:
 - Presented by Ms. Lindsey Petro, who emphasised the importance of member registration via the Membership Management System and encouraged participation in the designated WhatsApp groups.
- Membership Survey Report:
 - A comprehensive overview of the proposed membership model was provided, including a breakdown of the new tiered structure for members.
- Finance and Fundraising Subcommittee:
 - Delivered by Ms. Caroll Warmberg.
- Board Assist Presentation:
 - Delivered by Mr. Peter Ducray, highlighting tools and resources available to the board.

Special Acknowledgements

Members joined in celebrating Ms. Mareldia Tape from Grassroots with a heartfelt rendition of "Happy Birthday."

Closure

The AGM was officially closed by Dr. Riedewhaan Allie, who expressed deep gratitude to all members for their participation in NECDA's first Annual Conference and AGM. He also extended appreciation to the dedicated team whose hard work made the two-day event a success.



CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I present the Chairperson's Report for the 2024/25 financial year, a particularly momentous occasion as NECDA marks its 20th anniversary.

This milestone year has been both challenging and rewarding, as we continued to champion the rights and development of young children across South Africa.

Our primary focus remained on ensuring the sustainability of skills development in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes, a critical investment in the future of our nation.

Despite operating in a complex and evolving socio-economic environment, NECDA's collective commitment forged through strong partnerships with members, stakeholders, and government entities has yielded tangible progress toward our shared mission. The past year has underscored the power of collaboration and the resilience of our alliance in advancing the ECD agenda.

Strategic Achievements

One of the most outstanding achievements this year has been the strengthening of our partnership with Investec. This relationship has opened new avenues for growth and expansion of the National ECD Practitioner Training Fund (NEPTF) and stands as a testament to the value of cross-sector collaboration in driving systemic change.

A highlight of our accomplishments was the successful completion of the National Parenting Programme, through which we not only met but exceeded our targets. Of particular significance was the historic milestone achieved in engaging fathers and caregivers, reflecting our enduring commitment to transforming the ECD landscape in a manner that is both inclusive and sustainable.

This initiative has strengthened family-centred approaches and reinforced the role of men in early childhood development – a critical step toward nurturing supportive and resilient families.

Navigating Challenges

We remain acutely aware of the persistent challenges confronting the ECD sector, ranging from financial constraints to shifts in regulatory frameworks. The recent function shift in ECD oversight, however, has brought renewed government commitment and strengthened NECDA's relationships with key departments, including the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development. Our ability to adapt and respond proactively has enabled us to navigate these challenges effectively, catalysing innovation, sharpening our advocacy efforts, and deepening collaborations across the sector.

Strengthening Our Voice

NECDA's influence in policy dialogue and national discourse continues to grow, bolstered by our regional and international engagements. Notably, our role as Vice Secretary of the Southern African Network for ECD (SANECD) – representing nine member states, including South Africa, Malawi, eSwatini, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Angola, and Botswana – has expanded our reach and amplified our impact.

Through sustained collaboration with government departments, civil society organisations, and grassroots partners, NECDA has continued to elevate the voices of ECD practitioners and advocate tirelessly for the rights and needs of young children, both within South Africa and across the Southern African region.

Looking Ahead

As we chart our course for the future, our strategic focus remains clear:

1. Strengthening Member Support:

We will continue to deepen engagement with our members, ensuring they receive the resources, training, and platforms needed to thrive.

2. Professionalising and Scaling Quality ECD Programmes:

Our efforts will prioritise the enhancement of practitioner skills, the expansion of quality ECD provision, and the embedding of inclusivity and equity at the heart of our programmes.

3. Ensuring Grassroots Voices Shape National Policy

We are committed to creating spaces where community-led insights and local challenges inform and drive national ECD policies and priorities. The road ahead demands continued dedication, unity of purpose, and courageous leadership. I am confident, however, that together united in our mission and strengthened by our diversity – we will rise to the occasion and build on the solid foundation laid over the past two decades.

Acknowledgements

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to the NECDA Board, the Secretariat, our Chief Operations Officer, our member organisations, and all our valued partners and stakeholders. Your unwavering commitment, expertise, and passion have been the bedrock of NECDA's achievements and ensure that our alliance remains a beacon of quality, equity, and sustainability in early childhood development.

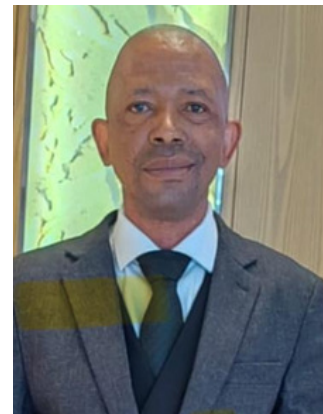
Together, we are building a stronger, more hopeful future – not only for South Africa's ECD practitioners but, most importantly, for the children who represent our nation's greatest promise.

Thank you.

Rex Molefe



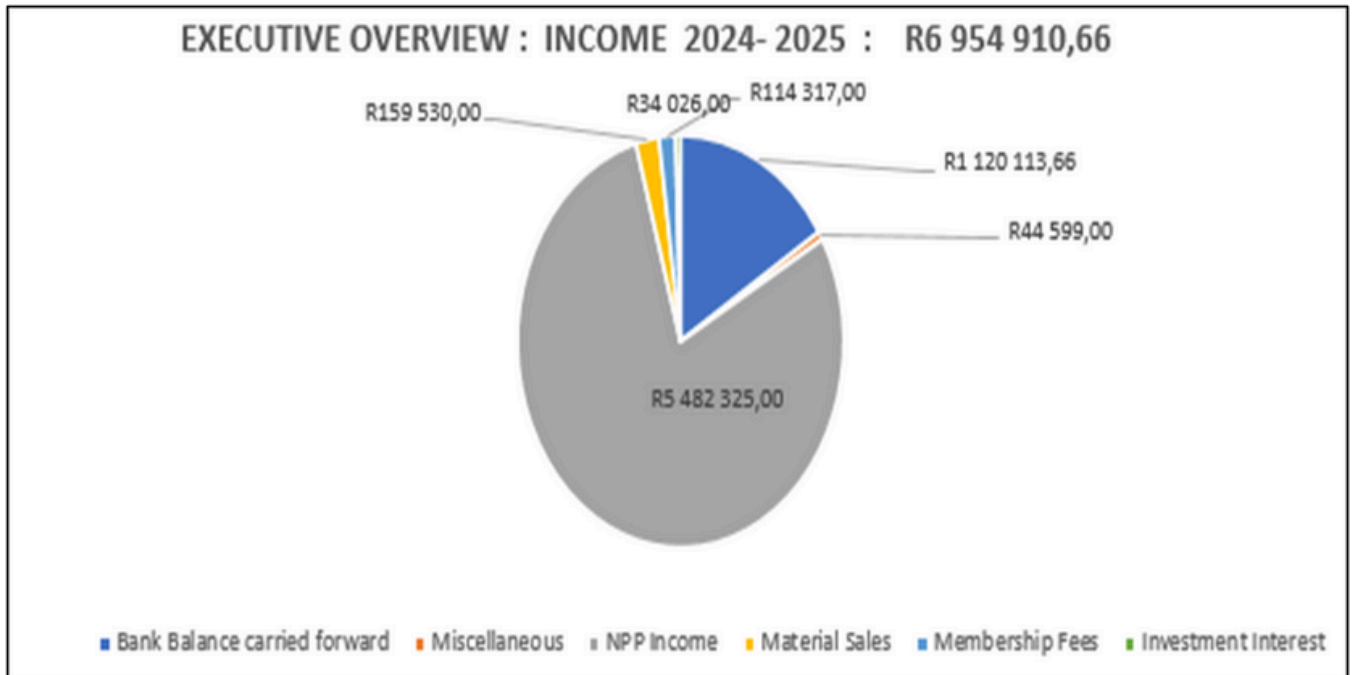
**Chairperson of NECDA
(2024–2027)**



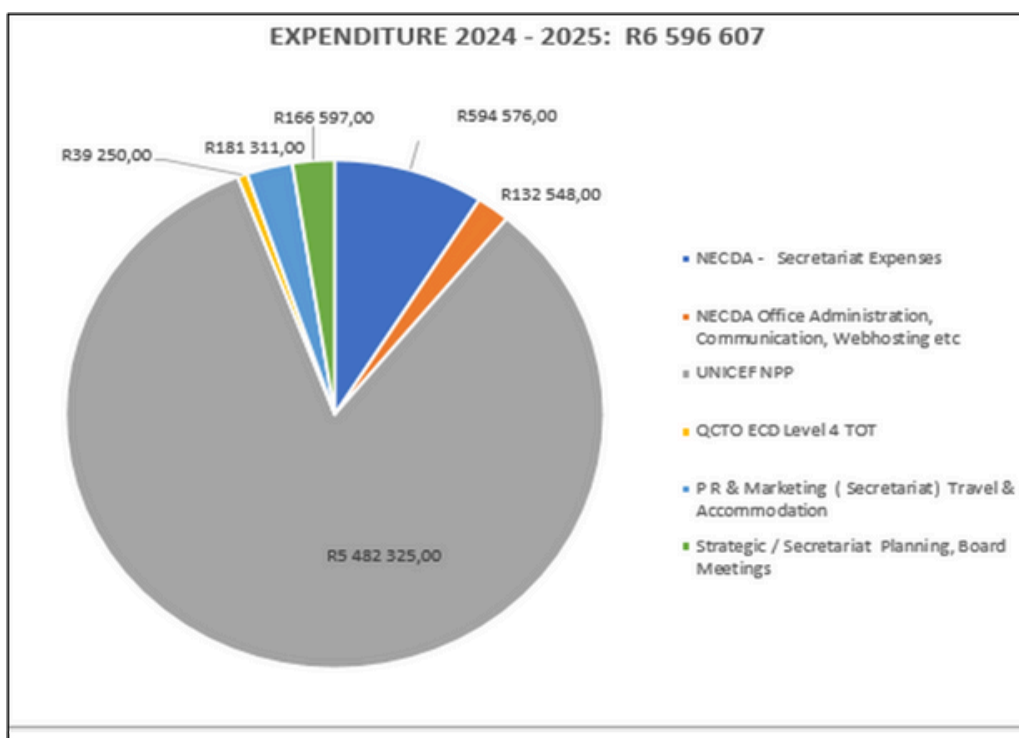
TREASURER REPORT

DRAFT AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025 EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

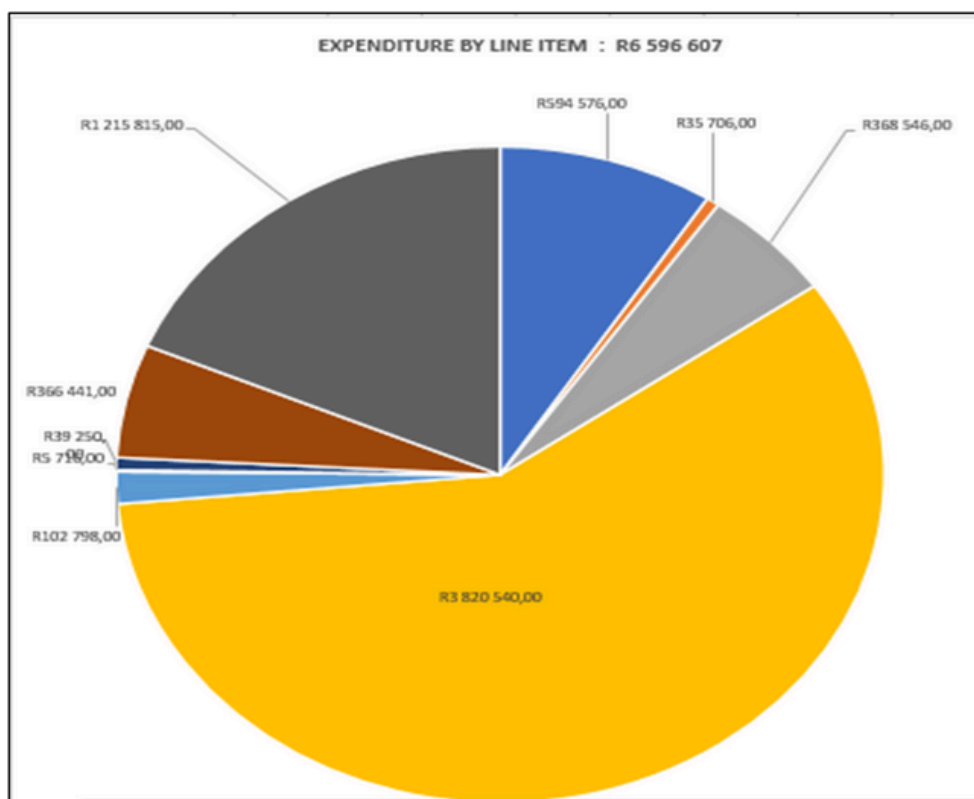
INCOME



EXPENDITURE



LINE ITEM EXPENSES AS AT END MARCH 2025



Accounting / Bookkeeping Fees	R 47 219,00
Admin / Board Expenses Secretariat	R 594 576,00
Bank Charges	R 35 706,00
Catering - NPP Project Expenses	R 368 546,00
NPP Contracts / Service Providers	R 3 820 540,00
Capacity Strengthening Costs - NPP	R 102 798,00
Printing, Stationery & Resources	R 5 716,00
NECDA Training of Trainers - QCTO Level 4 TOT	R 39 250,00
Book Procurement, Stationery & Resources - NPP	R 366 441,00
Travel & Accommodation - NPP (incl 2 x TOT's)	R 1 215 815,00

LINE ITEM EXPENSES AS AT END MARCH 2025

Financial Status at 31 March 2025

- NECDA Investment - R471 995,00
- Bank Balance -R 19 438,00
- Funds Outstanding DGMT - R180 000,00 (Launch NEPTF)

Funding Proposals at end September 2025

- VVOB ECD Practitioner Training (Mpumalanga) - R1 191 131,25
- IRD Global Fund – KZN R8 488 000.00
- Startwell Nutrition Programme (In Progress)- R4 500 000.00 (Pilot Provinces)

Caroll Warmberg

Treasurer

2024-2027



SECRETARIAT REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025

1. Overview

The Secretariat has had a strategically impactful year, further establishing NECDA as a leading and credible voice in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector. Through sustained engagement with government, donors, partners, and member organisations, NECDA has made measurable progress in influencing sector priorities, strengthening capacity, and mobilising investment.

Key milestones include the successful hosting of NECDA's First Annual National Conference and AGM, the launch of the National ECD Practitioner Training Fund (NEPTF), and the consolidation of strategic partnerships that will shape the sector's future.

2. Key Achievements and Sector Engagements

Quarter 1 & 2 (April – September 2024)

- Participated in TRANAC SADC meetings to enhance regional collaboration.
- Successfully rolled out the National Parenting Programme (NPP) with 24 member organisations, reaching 16,595 parents across all nine provinces.
- Hosted the EXCO Strategy Session and Board Meeting in Cape Town.
- Successfully completed the UNICEF Risk Assessment Audit.
- Hosted NECDA's First Annual National Conference and AGM, launching the Sedick Galant Skills Development Award.
- Delivered QCTO Level 4 ToT training in Gauteng and conducted NPP monitoring site visits.
- Conceptualised the NEPTF in collaboration with sector expert Lindsay Owen.

Quarter 3 (October – December 2024)

- Finalised a partnership agreement with Click Charity to expand funding access for members.
- Presented the NEPTF proposal to DBE and Investec, receiving in-principle support from Minister Siviwe Gwarube.
- Co-hosted the ECD Quo Vadis Webinar with ETDP SETA.
- Appointed as Vice- Secretary of SANECD, representing South Africa among nine SADC countries.
- Contributed to the DBE National Parenting Programme Report.
- Partnered with CIPPT to host an RPL Webinar.
- UNICEF filmed NPP programme success stories in the Northern Cape.

Quarter 4 (January – March 2025)

- Participated in the Investec OMT Breakfast and AFECN meetings
- Delivered the Q4 NECDA Board Meeting.
- Featured in a SABC News interview, highlighting NECDA's national impact.

3. Strategic Partnerships and Organisational Progress

Department of Basic Education (DBE)

- Active collaboration on the NEPTF and participation in both national and provincial G20 ECD Summits.
- NECDA delivered strategic presentations on sector coordination and systems strengthening.

QCTO & ETDP SETA

- Hosted two national QCTO webinars (June and September) with 74 participants.
- Key topics:
 - Accreditation processes and compliance
 - Expiry of Level 4 qualifications (June 2026) and transition planning
- Curriculum alignment and RPL inequalities
- NECDA to co-lead the RPL Indaba, in partnership with QCTO and ETDP SETA.

UNICEF

- Successfully implemented the National Parenting Programme reaching 16594 parents across the nine provinces.
- Joint focus on member capacity-building and programme documentation.
- Interim reporting submitted; final report due early 2025.

Ilifa Labantwana

- Strengthened advocacy collaboration.
- NECDA invited to a sector Task Team (Terms of Reference available for review).

4. Project Highlights

4.1. National Parenting Programme

The National ECD Alliance (NECDA) was contracted to reach 16,000 parents and caregivers across 31 sites in all nine provinces.

Achievement:

- 16,034 parents reached through face-to-face/practical workshops
- 560 additional parents reached through the digital online programme

Target exceeded

This success was made possible through:

- The efforts of NECDA
- A network of 27 Implementing Partners (IPs)
- Strategic collaboration with DBE and UNICEF

Key Activities:

- Finalised priority districts in partnership with DBE
- Recruited and onboarded Implementing Partners

- Developed and rolled out a national implementation strategy
- Delivered national and provincial Training of Trainers (ToTs)
- Hosted virtual inductions and bi-monthly support webinars

4.1.2. Milestones Achieved:

- National Master Trainers ToT held with DBE, DSD, and DOH
- Provincial ToTs delivered in all provinces
- 32,000 parent-child books procured and distributed
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) tools developed and translated into 5 local languages
- National M&E site visits launched with supporting digital tools
- Increased male caregiver participation
- Strong civil society ownership, with increased in-kind and financial contributions from IPs
- Broad support from Provincial and District Education officials, especially with training logistics
- Developed a Digital/Online Parent Training Programme

Challenges Faced:

- Delays due to the national elections
- Limited venue access during school holidays
- Budget constraints under the per-parent allocation model
- Varied implementation modalities across provinces required adaptable management

Despite challenges, Implementing Partners remained committed, ensuring quality programme delivery.

4.2 National ECD Practitioner Training Fund (NEPTF)

- Fund formally registered with Investec.
- R180,000 secured from DGMT for donor mobilisation.
- Key engagements:
 - Donor Dialogue hosted (May)
 - Presentation at DBE Ministerial Stakeholder Engagement (July)
 - Presentation to the ECD Directorate (September)

Proposals submitted to:

- Peermont Group
- Jim Joel Fund
- Trevor Noah Foundation

4.3 NECDA & Start Well: Linear Growth Proposal

- A joint R4.5 million proposal is underway and will be finalised for submission to Investec.
- Focus: Development of nutrition-focused training materials aligned to QCTO Level 4, including:
 - Caregiver training
 - ECD centre support
 - Growth monitoring interventions

4.4 NECDA & Sasol Foundation

- Initial engagement showed strong alignment with NEPTF objectives.
- Awaiting formal feedback following September meetings.

5. Governance Updates

Board Resignations: The following members stepped down due to professional commitments , Ashnee Injerdith (TREE) and Thandeka Rantsi (Smart Start). Mary Venter (Khululeka) Nareshini Rangathan (ELET)will continue serving on subcommittees.Secretary Appointment: Following the resignation of Kayin Scholtz, Lyndsey Petro was nominated and appointed as NECDA Board Secretary.

7. Conclusion and Way Forward

In our 20th Anniversary Year, NECDA stands on a foundation of strengthened systems, deepened partnerships, and national influence. Through intentional systems leadership and collaboration, NECDA is helping shape a professional, well-resourced, and equitable ECD workforce.

Strategic Priorities Ahead:

- Expand the NEPTF and its impact nationally.
- Deepen collaboration with DBE, QCTO, ETDP SETA,CHE and sector partners.

- Continue supporting member organisations with resources, advocacy, and policy alignment.

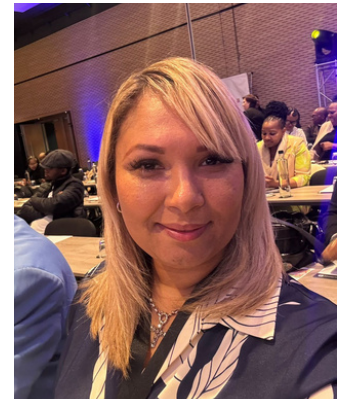
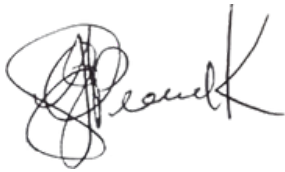
We are pleased to extend our sincere gratitude to our Chairperson, Mr. Rex Molefe, for his exemplary leadership, and to the NECDA Board for their steadfast commitment. We also acknowledge our valued members and partners for their ongoing collaboration and support.

As we mark a significant milestone, we invite you to join us in celebrating NECDA's 20th Anniversary Conference, provisionally scheduled for 19 November 2025.

We are honoured to announce that Minister Siviwe Gwarube will deliver the keynote address at this special event.

Together, we continue to strengthen and shape the future of the ECD sector in South Africa.

Abigail Peacock



**Chief Operations Officer on behalf of the NECDA Secretariat
2024/25**



Subcommittee Reports

1. Member Management and Provincial Structures Subcommittee Report

The subcommittee is mandated to ensure that NECDA offers an attractive value proposition to organisations in the broader ECD ecosystem and that members feel that their membership adds value to their work/organisation.

In light of this, the subcommittee's key deliverables are:

- Effectively integrate the NECDA member management system into operations
- Establish provincial communication channels that engage members, support participation and ensure successful dissemination of information and knowledge
- Implement a refined membership model that is more appropriate and effective in meeting the needs of different types of members

Over the past few months, the subcommittee has:

- Reached out to members to get them to register on the NECDA member management platform. To date, 35 member organisations are signed up. A key challenge with the system is the value (or lack thereof) it currently offers members. The full specifications of the system and the planned roll-out are to be shared with the subcommittee for review.
- Successfully supported member participation at the first NECDA conference and AGM.
- Revised the membership and pricing model. This was presented at the NECDA AGM and was approved by members.
- Increased engagement with members via WhatsApp channels as part of NECDA's provincial structures strategy. The provincial structures strategy needs to be revisited and finalised in 2025 as the approach has not been systematic to date.
- Supported the roll-out of three NECDA webinars – on qualifications, a fundraising opportunity with Click Charity, and on RPL.
- Updated the NECDA contact details database. There needs to be a more efficient way to ensure these details are up to date.
- Continued to support members involved in the National Parenting Programme initiative.

2.NECDA Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Subcommittee Report

NECDA has partnered with the Chartered Institute of Professional Practitioners and Trainers (CIPPT). The partnership is dedicated to uplifting the standards of ECD practice and ensuring the recognition and development of practitioners (including ECD practitioners, assessors, trainers, etc.). In line with NECDA's objective to build the capacity of its membership, this collaboration aims to advance the goals of the RPL subcommittee: to explore how RPL can contribute to human resource development in the ECD sector at scale.

The first step has focused on:

- Helping members understand what RPL is,
- Challenging perceptions that RPL is unattainable or too complex.

Subcommittee Activities:

- Survey Conducted:

Purpose: To assess understanding, challenges, and support needs regarding RPL.

Responses: 19 organisations participated.

- Key Findings:

1. 63% do not understand RPL processes.
2. 47.4% find RPL too complex to implement.
3. 42.1% cite limited funding.
4. 80% of respondents want to offer RPL but need more support.

- Webinar Hosted (with NECDA & CIPPT):

Presented by Dr Shirley Lloyd.

Covered the basics of RPL and practical applications across sectors.

Tailored to address findings from the survey.

Agreed Actions from the Webinar:

- Engage ETDP SETA for financial support to:
- Design an appropriate RPL tool/method for ECD.
- Pilot the tool/method with selected students.

- Meet with the Minister of Basic Education to advocate for RPL and secure ministerial support.
- Host a follow-up webinar/workshop to allow RTOs to share existing RPL practices and identify best practices for the sector.
- RPL Indaba (Planned for early 2025):
- Focus on RPL policy and procedures aligned with SAQA and DHET guidelines.
- A proposal to support the subcommittee's actions will be finalised in Q4 of 2025, informed by:
 - Outcomes of the RPL Indaba.
 - Actions agreed upon in the webinar.

3. Skills Development Training Subcommittee

Focus Area: QCTO Training and Support

1. Standardization through NECDA Curriculum

- Significant uptake of the QCTO Level 4 Occupational Qualification curriculum for ECD Practitioners.
- 21 institutions across South Africa have adopted NECDA's standardized materials.
- Promotes consistent learning outcomes aligned with national qualifications.

2. Training of Trainers (ToT) – Provincial Rollout

- ToTs conducted provincially to build local capacity.
- All listed institutions participated.
- Led by Master Trainers, covering:
 - Curriculum orientation
 - Facilitation, assessment, and reporting
 - Workplace-based learning integration
 - Implementation challenges and solutions
- Positive feedback: ToTs were empowering and encouraged peer learning.

3. Material Sales and Financials

- Curriculum material sales reached R392,300.
- Funds reinvested into:
 - Curriculum updates
 - ToT sessions
 - Sector support

Financial participation indicates strong sector buy-in.

4. Technical Support & Quality Assurance

- Ongoing support provided for:
 - Accreditation (QCTO, ETDP SETA)
 - Assessor/moderator registration
 - Workplace learning strategies
 - Support for smaller/rural providers
- Goal: Full compliance and effective delivery

5. Sector Impact

- Institutions now actively implementing QCTO Level 4.
- Improved accreditation alignment and standardized delivery.
- Better learner outcomes.
- Increased collaboration through shared ToT sessions.

6. Next Steps (2026)

- More ToT sessions (new & refresher).
- More on-site support visits.
- Ongoing curriculum review & updates.
- Engagement with funders and government for expansion.

7. Conclusion

NECDA has made significant progress in supporting the national QCTO rollout, building sector capacity, and promoting consistent, high-quality training for ECD practitioners. Plans for 2026 aim to scale and strengthen this foundation.



Gallery of the Year in Review





Unicef National Parenting Project BDO Risk Assessment at ITEC



Northern Cape ITEC NPP Participants preparing for the film shoot



National ECD Practitioner Training Fund Donor Dialogue hosted by Investec supported by DGMT



Partnerships



Well-resourced ECDs crucial for bridging the gap in education system

A huge task lies ahead to address the challenges in the early childhood development

COMMENT

REDEEMAH ALLE

AS WE wind down the academic year, we know that the country has their eyes on the matriculants. Success in matric and the overall matric results have become a benchmark for the government to measure success and overall progress in the country. It is however important that we put the situation for young children into perspective against the overall South African education system.

For the past 15 years at least one million children started school in Grade 1 each year. However, each year the number of matriculants were on average about 500 000 – with a dropout rate of about 50% by the time learners reached Grade 12.

There is no rocket science to understand that children from middle-class and wealthier communities are doing much better at school compared to children from poor and marginalised areas.

South African statistics and research shows that families are sinking into poverty and experience hunger daily. In this regard the Stats SA, General household Survey 2022 shows that 11% of young children are living in poverty. This must be seen against the backdrop of 16 million people who are receiving government grants. Of the 11 million children who are beneficiaries of child support grants

and commissioned the ECD Census 2021 Report which highlighted the following:

- 42 420 Early Learning Programmes were counted.
- 1.7 million children were enrolled in ECD programmes with a further 750 000 children in Grade R or Grade 1.
- Only 58% of centres were registered.
- Only 5 739 ECD centres (33% of registered ECD centres) were receiving subsidies.
- 627 000 out of 3.5 million children (3 – 5 years) were benefiting from the subsidy allocation.

The Thrive by Five Index Report found that a staggering 65% of children enrolled in preschool programmes fail to thrive by 5 and were not on track for cognitive and/or physical development. The report also found that about 49% of the children lacked the basic learning foundations and would need additional support as they transitioned into Grade R.

To the credit of the DBE was the realisation that the Children's Act (2005) had to be overhauled to make the registration of ECD programmes and centres easier. The Children's Amendment Bill (2024) considered the requirements for registration as partial care facilities to be removed and registration as non-profit organisations (NPO status) to be waived to fast-track registration with the DBE to hopefully qualify for the DBE subsidy. A re-evaluation of the National Integrated ECD Policy (2015) also recognised alternative modalities such as parenting programmes, playgroups, children's centres, toy libraries, mobile programmes and outreach programmes in the Amendment Bill, to ensure that more children have access to ECD programmes in communities where resources are limited or non-existent.

resources to make a difference in our poorest communities. Based on the current number of children benefiting from the ECD subsidy (627 000), it cost government about R2.8 billion.

However, the DBE Census and audit of ECD indicated that the average fees paid by parents are about R500 per month for 1.7 million children.

Based on the logic that parents are paying fees, it can be argued that parents are already contributing at least R10.2bn annually. If the government wants to increase access for at least 1 million more children, it should work towards matching the contribution of families and caregivers in our poorest communities for a service that constitutionally is considered a right to which all children are entitled to.

The current subsidy was also considered to be inadequate and not keeping up with inflation and the rising cost of living. Despite the NGO sector urging the government to adjust the subsidy from R17 to at least R30 per day per child, this will not be likely given the current budget constraints, increasing poverty and unemployment.

a huge challenge set of children who start do so with a huge hope that they will up with their peers and wealthier communities Basic Education (Beda) Act 201, definition that from from Grade R when years, to Grade 12, a recent Constitutional Court which clarified policy education to or Grade 9, this do the right to basic extend to Grade 12, den have the right from Grade R to Grade 12.

The current less that prevail need to make communities and children. With hence experienced in municipalities, it remains families to ensure become thriving children.

school we will

ACCORDING to the ECD Census 2021 Report only 55% of early childhood centres were registered and of that, only 23% were receiving subsidies, 3 | INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS







SANECED/ TRANAC Engagements







Lesotho ECD Conference







Vote of Thanks



On behalf of the Board we wish to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to:

- NECDA's Network Members
- Motheo Training Institute Trust
- ITEC
- Investec
- DGMT
- UNICEF
- Department of Basic Education
- Department of Higher Education
- ETDP SETA
- CIPPT
- Startwell Foundation
- SANECD
- AFECN
- ICan Foundation
- QCTO



Chairperson Closing Remarks

Esteemed colleagues,

May peace, mercy, and blessings envelop you, guiding our collective journey toward excellence and purpose.

The Imperative of Conviction: A Call to Stand Firm

In the pursuit of our shared goals and the fulfillment of our mission, I urge each of you to anchor yourselves in unwavering conviction, for it is the bedrock upon which faith, resolve, and progress are built.

Let us steadfastly keep doubt at bay, recognising that its insidious influence can erode the very foundations of our beliefs and undermine the clarity of our path.

There is perhaps no greater peril to a leader's vision – and to the trust placed in us by those we serve – than the creeping tide of doubt overshadowing the light of conviction.

Let us, therefore, nurture a spirit of certainty, rooted in principle, fortified by purpose, and illuminated by the transformative power of our collective endeavor. For it is in embracing conviction – unshakeable, courageous, and aligned with our highest aspirations – that we unlock the resilience to navigate challenges, the clarity to inspire others, and the strength to leave an enduring impact.

May we stand firm, colleagues, emboldened by the convictions that drive us, united in our pursuit of excellence, and steadfast in our commitment to the cause we champion.

**Thank you.
Rex Molefe
(Chairperson of NECDA)**

