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From Evidence into Action looks at various issues relating to social policy in South Africa and has a particular focus on the 'how to' of evidence-based policy-making.

In this issue of *From Evidence to Action*, we look at early childhood development (ECD) and why it is so important for the future of our country. We speak to deputy representative of UNICEF in South Africa, George Laryea-Adjei, and learn more about ECD policy processes and resource allocation – and where there are gaps. Our case study compares ECD with that of another important policy, the Child Support Grant (CSG), and provides a list of important elements which should be included in the policy-making process. We also feature the launch of an exciting new knowledge-hub for children's rights and equity in South Africa, the *Policy Action Network: Children*. We present some helpful tips on impact evaluations as well and, as always, a variety of useful resources.

From Evidence to Action aims to stimulate debate around evidence-based policy-making. If you have anything to contribute towards getting research into policy, and policy into action, whether successful or unsuccessful, please send your submissions to pan@hsrc.ac.za.

Invest in the very young. Now!

In this article, we look at how Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy processes have unfolded, and how decisions on resource allocation for ECD programmes are arrived at. We spoke to Dr George Laryea-Adjei, deputy representative of UNICEF in South Africa, to understand the importance of ECD as well as the successes and challenges of ECD policy implementation.

What is ECD and why is it important?

Early Childhood Development is classified as the process of emotional, mental, spiritual, moral, physical and social development of children from birth to nine years. According to the Department of Social Development's (DSD's) *Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services* (May, 2006), research in South Africa and internationally indicates that the early years of a child's life are critical for development; it is a time when they acquire the concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation

for lifelong learning. Sadly, many South African children do not live in environments that support this valuable developmental phase. The Guidelines explain that to overcome the challenges such as poverty, HIV and AIDS, disability and gender equity that stand in the way of building this crucial foundation, ECD services can provide critical treatment and care which support the development of innate potential and can often reverse the effects of deprivation. Services provided through ECD initiatives range from health to learning, infrastructure (water and sanitation) to family support.

According to a *Diagnostic Review of the ECD sector* (see under Resources), undertaken by the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency and the Inter-Departmental Steering Committee on ECD, with contributions from UNICEF, "children are uniquely sensitive to their environment during the first 1 000 days of life (from conception and including the 270 days of



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pregnancy plus 365 days in each of the first two years). In this period very rapid development, adaptation and consolidation occur, particularly in brain structure and function, metabolic reactions, interpersonal engagement and self-regulation.

Beneficial or protective experiences during this time determine the degree to which a child is equipped to take advantage of further opportunities and to face challenges. Children exposed to risks and adversity in the early years need additional support to help them compensate for missed learning and adaptation. This support is most effectively provided within this unique early 'window of opportunity'. Once this opportunity is missed, remedy seldom occurs naturally in the typical environment of children living in low-resource settings, and intentional efforts to make up for deficits are less effective at later ages and much more costly.

Disadvantaged children who receive little or no support to catch up are less likely to be able to realise their individual developmental potential. They tend to fall further behind their peers, slipping towards the margins, unable to bridge the widening gap between themselves and those who are forging ahead. Inequalities expand and become more intractable and harder to address. The personal tragedy of the unfulfilled promise of one child, combined with that of many other children in similar circumstances, constitutes a serious challenge of dependency, exclusion and ill-health in society. For this reason, ECD services have been called 'a powerful equaliser', because they provide assistance during a time when children are most able to make up for disadvantages carried over to them from previous generations, such as limited education, or challenges that arise in their own development, such as low birth weight or faltering growth.

Early intervention and provisioning make it possible for children to grow and develop to their full potential, thus reducing the need for remedial services to address stunting, developmental lag and social problems

later in life. "Early childhood development services provide education and care to children in the temporary absence of their parents or adult caregivers. These services should be holistic and demonstrate the appreciation of the importance of considering the child's health, nutrition, education, psychosocial and other needs within the context of the family and the community," the Review point out.

Furthermore, these benefits don't just end with the child. "Increased, quality provisioning can free parents and other adult carers to take up opportunities for education and employment, which can dramatically improve the socio-economic status of impoverished families." Therefore, as Laryea-Adjei emphasises, ECD has strong public good characteristics because its benefits do not affect individuals alone; the benefits are society-wide and long-term – and ECD therefore deserves to be treated with the same level of attention and importance as education and health.

Funding approaches and resource allocation

Another study, *Tracking public expenditure and assessing service quality in Early Childhood Development in South Africa*, (see under Resources) conducted jointly by the Department of Social Development (DSD), Department of Basic Education (DBE) and UNICEF, found that government support for ECD has taken mainly two forms:

- (i) expansion of Grade R mainly in public schools, funded by the Department of Education (DoE); and
- (ii) subsidies by the DSD to private community-based ECD facilities serving mainly children too young for Grade R.

"Depending on where a child falls, the funding approach is different. For example, if a child is in Grade R (five to six years old), they benefit from the services that come to the school. In addition, DBE tries to provide funding to enable the integration of Grade R into the school system as well as provide adequate services for children

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in the schools,” explains Laryea-Adjei. “As a matter of policy, DBE is aiming for universal coverage of Grade R. Coverage has more than doubled in the last eight years, with around 80% of children of school-going age in a facility (whether public or private), because government made a decision to adopt Grade R as part of the school system. Through this provisioning role, the State ensures that all children have access to a range of services in learning, school-feeding and other school health programmes.”

“Once you make a strategic shift that as the State you are in charge of a particular grade, it automatically raises resources,” Laryea-Adjei points out. But the State’s oversight role is just one approach to allocating resources. “Because ECD is a combination of health, nutrition, stimulation, cognition, care, safety and so forth, it is

quite a comprehensive package. You have different actors playing lead roles for some key services,” he says. “DBE plays the lead role for the cognitive development in older children, that is, those in Grade R. “But for children from birth to two years old, the health and nutrition requirements are the most important, such as the services delivered through the public health system, for example the immunisation of all children against ‘killer diseases’ such as TB, and addressing the burden of HIV on children by preventing them from contracting it and providing them with treatment if they are infected. And as with the DBE, because the public health system has adopted a stance that the State will take care of such issues, resources flow more easily. Where there are problems, they are outside the main domain of health, for example, around nutrition, which is really a household issue. For instance, the Department of Health

(DoH) can provide nutrition education but the actual combination of practices that lead to good nutrition usually come from household decision-making processes.”

DSD’s approach to delivering services, especially for ECD, has been through the introduction of the DSD subsidy, called the child ECD subsidy, for an amount of approximately R12 to R15 per child per day, via the existing ECD centres. “The good thing about this subsidy is that it is means-tested – it is meant for more deprived children,” explains Laryea-Adjei. “South Africa, unlike many other countries in the continent, has a funding instrument for the nutrition, stimulation etc. side of the ECD services. In other countries that don’t have this, parents have to struggle and that is what creates the divide between children who make it and those that don’t because with ECD, if children miss out at a certain age, the damage is done. The rest is damage control. But it is important to bear in mind that this is just a subsidy – this then pre-supposes that other costs should be borne by others, unlike for the Grade R and public health services.

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Nevertheless, South Africa’s funding instrument is positive – it is an acknowledgement of the importance of ECD and is an effort to provide some State resources to enable parents, community organisations, NGOs etc to respond to the challenges. The question then becomes: can the subsidy be improved to reach more children, especially the more deprived, and can the amounts be increased so that more nutrition, better care and better stimulation can take place?”

Measuring impact, identifying gaps

Studies like *Tracking public expenditure and assessing service quality in Early Childhood Development in South Africa* (see Resources) play an important role in evaluating the impact of the subsidies. “It helps us understand what the subsidy is ‘buying’ – is it buying good nutrition, care and stimulation or is it being spent on things that don’t matter? – and where there are gaps,” says Laryea-Adjei. “It reveals,



for example, that the subsidy is not buying adequate nutrition. But these gaps are not always easy to address.

“If the ECD centres were part of the school system, we could argue that they should be included in the school nutrition programme, but this is also a problem. These centres are largely privately owned by community and not-for-profit (NPO) organisations, and some are even profit making, so it is therefore not easy to make a blanket decision that school nutrition programmes should reach all these centres. Likewise, independent schools cannot be brought on board fully for allocation either, because they are independent.”

“Incidentally, the subsidy has ended up reaching children in organised ECD centres, but it was not designed that way – it was meant to go to organisations that run ECD programmes,” reveals Laryea-Adjei. “However, this in itself automatically leads to centres. And this, again, automatically means that you reach older children (between the ages of three and six), because it is this age group that would attend a centre. Therefore, younger children at the most critical age for development – those under the age of three – are missing out because they are not receiving benefits of the subsidy. So while this subsidy is working for older children, we need to have a funding model for an additional non centre-based instrument that is specifically designed to support children who spend most of their time at home.”

The Diagnostic Review also identifies the need to address the gap created by the subsidy, which is only received by children in ECD centres, and enhance it to reach more deprived children. This is critical because, as the Review points out, children who live in areas without registered centres, many of whom are poor and generally under-served, do not receive the subsidy support. Furthermore, because most ECD centres are private and NPO facilities, they depend on user fees, which the poorest

families cannot afford. This leaves many areas of the country, and many families, without learning and development services.

“There are significant gaps in services – particularly with respect to nutritional support for women and children, support for parenting and families, and childcare support for very young children and children with special needs,” says the Review. “Moreover, there is a disjuncture across age groups relating to the assumed roles of the family and the State in service provision. Services and resources need to be better balanced across the age range, with State assistance for 0 - 2-year-olds, more support for 3 - 4-year-olds more equitably provided, and support for all parents and families across the ECD age range.

Bridging the gaps

One recommendation coming out of the Diagnostic Review is that “the State must put in place laws, funding, infrastructure (including services) and programmes to bridge the access and quality gaps... There is a need for a decisive paradigm shift towards a rights-based ECD framework and accompanying funding model that recognises and is capable of realising the State’s obligations to provide ECD services, especially those living in poor families, rural areas, informal urban areas and children with disabilities.” Laryea-Adjei agrees: “What we really need is leadership from the State. If the State thinks that ECD is as important as public health and basic education, then it has to work out mechanisms to ensure that the sector is fully funded,” he says.

The Review goes on to identify that the key ECD strategies should be:

(i) to deliver comprehensive services to young children, using all opportunities of contact with families; to extend early child care and education (ECCE) services through home- and community based programmes, beginning with the poorest communities not reached by current services;

(ii) to ensure food security and adequate daily nutrition for the youngest children to avert the life-long damaging effects of stunting;

(iii) to launch well-designed high-profile parent support programmes through media campaigns, community activities and services that acknowledge and reinforce the importance of positive parenting for young children.

“But how do we work out programmes for the State to take a larger, more direct role in funding?” asks Laryea-Adjei. “It has to come through programmes. There have been various proposals put forward for non centre-based programmes. Some feel a good parenting programme is the answer because of the burden of orphaning and migration. Others argue that increasing the child support grant (CSG), for example, has had a good effect on ECD services and can further be enhanced because it is already well established and is working. However, the CSG cannot buy good parenting skills or correct decision-making of households in how it spends the grant, and so you still need a programme to target these issues. Therefore, for resource allocation decisions to work, they must firstly be based on the content of programmes; and secondly, they must be based on the role the State wants to play and making ECD a national priority.”

At the ECD conference hosted by the Department of Social Development in April 2012, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, asked the same questions: why are we treating ECD differently? And how do we get to play an enhanced and more proactive funding role? She believes the answer won’t come by just throwing money at it – it will come by designing good programmes and State funding them fully, not partially through subsidies. But, explains Laryea-Adjei, resource allocation decisions are best made when they support a programme. “If you don’t have good programmes designed and in place, they cannot be supported by increased resource allocation either.”

Spotlight on PAN:

Children



PAN: **Children**

The Policy Action Network: Children is a new initiative in which UNICEF and the HSRC will work together to establish and maintain a policy-oriented knowledge-hub on children's rights and equity in South Africa. It will be situated in the HSRC's Research Use and Impact Assessment Unit.

The need for a specific knowledge hub on children has been recognised by various stakeholders in the field. The 2010 National Stakeholders Meeting on Equity and Child Rights (UNICEF 2010) called for "an easily accessible platform that collates data, research and international best practices relating to supporting children and women". Likewise, the 2011 Child Poverty Roundtable organised by the Presidency, Department of Social Development and UNICEF (PSPPD, 2011) suggested that the "systematic gathering and storage of data and evidence is crucial for driving an evidence-based national agenda for children." It recommended the establishment of a community of practice in child poverty research and policy development.

UNICEF and the HSRC have thus collaborated to address these needs and some of the activities that PAN: Children will undertake include:

- Establishing and maintaining an online platform, built on the IT infrastructure provided by the Policy Action Network webportal (www.pan.org.za).
- Establishing and updating a series of topical guides to key topics or sectors intended primarily as a reference to policy-makers. These guides will summarise the current state of affairs in South Africa and highlight practical guidance, lessons learned and case studies.
- Establishing and maintaining a digital repository of the most credible publications available on child rights in South Africa. These will be organised according to thematic areas and will include concise, policy-oriented summaries of each document. Selection criteria will be established to ensure only the most credible and policy-relevant information is included.
- Facilitating engagement and dialogue between stakeholders in activities complementing the knowledge hub such as roundtables, panel discussions and training workshops.
- Establishing and maintaining a community of practice; a moderated electronic space allowing stakeholders to discuss and deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis.

PAN: Children was formally launched on 31 August 2012 at Freedom Park with its first high-level dialogue. The topic was *The Role of Knowledge-Generation in ensuring policy that responds to the rights of children*. Speakers included HSRC CEO Dr Olive Shisana, UNICEF Representative Aida Girma, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child member Professor Julia Sloth Neilsen and Acting Director General of the Department of Women and Children and Persons with Disabilities Ms Thandeka Mxenge.

A panel discussion was held, chaired by HSRC Deputy CEO of Research, Dr Temba Masilela, with panelists Ian Goldman of the DPME, Commissioner Lindiwe Mokate of the SAHRC, Dr Rodgers Hlatshwayo of DSD, Ms Felicity Nxumalo of DWCPD. Concluding remarks were made by Mastoera Sadan of the Presidency and Dr George Laryea-Adjei of UNICEF. The event was well-attended by a broad spectrum of stakeholders and it is hoped that this marks the start of a highly successful and innovative initiative with the potential for growth, development and the stimulation of important child rights discourse.

For more information and to participate in debates and discussions visit children.pan.org.



CASE STUDY:

Child rights policies: The Child Support Grant and Early Childhood Development policy

Lessons from two policy processes in South Africa: what role did evidence play?

Although ideally policy processes should be informed by relevant research, the complexity of the policy-making process and the multiple players and considerations mean that research evidence is only one of a number of factors which influence policy-makers. This case study looks at two related policy case studies which successfully brought about positive change in the country and drew lessons around the policy process and use of evidence: the Child Support Grant (CSG) and Early Childhood Development ECD¹ policy.

The case studies were presented by independent researcher and consultant Penny Parenzee according to four stages (formulation, implementation, evaluation and reformulation) and considering three conditions that make up the policy-making process framework: how the effective use of evidence was enabled; how opportunities for multiple stakeholder participation were facilitated; and whether policy implementation was made central.

Child Support Grant

The CSG is the largest social assistance programme in South Africa by number of recipients (over 10 million children). It was put in place after an assessment of the State Maintenance Grant (SMG), the CSG's predecessor, showed that it was not achieving its objectives. The review of the SMG

was completed by a technical committee, the Lund Committee, appointed by government. One of the key changes to emerge with the transformation from the SMG to the CSG was that the grant amount and age threshold were increased, and have continued to increase over time. Initially take-up was slow, largely attributed to conditions for eligibility and application requirements which have now been removed, such as the need for an ID book and a birth certificate. By August 2011, 10.6 million grants were disbursed nationally.

Reviews were conducted throughout the implementation phase of the CSG by both government and civil society organisations and although this evaluation was vigorous during the first eight to ten years, it has since become limited to determining the number of beneficiaries. Nevertheless, throughout the evaluation process, the information has been very effectively used to improve the system, including:

- Removing conditions for accessing the grant;
- Changing the means test to consider personal income of the caregiver and not household income;
- Expanding the age threshold;
- Redefining the age threshold in respect of date of birth rather than current age;
- Developing a formula to adjust income threshold with grant increases.

Early Childhood Development

ECD in South Africa was defined by extensive research and collaborative initiatives



with multiple stakeholders. It came onto the agenda through a World Bank commissioned study on ECD that informed an interim ECD policy which was then adopted by the Department of Education in 1996. The interim ECD policy provided for the implementation of the National Reception Year Pilot which saw the establishment of 2 730 ECD sites that enrolled 66 000 reception year learners for three years.

This pilot formed the basis of a national ECD audit in 2000/2001 and the information

1. In November 2011, the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD) held a workshop to interrogate evidence-based policy-making (EBPM) as a way of improving the quality of policy-making in South Africa. Presenting at the event was Penny Parenzee, an independent researcher and consultant, on whose research this article is based.



generated from the audit strongly motivated for the need to have an ECD policy. The White Paper on ECD was then formulated collaboratively with the Departments of Education, Social Development and Health. The White Paper placed an emphasis on integration and coordination and was accompanied by the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration and an integrated ECD plan. However, it also diminished scope for stakeholder participation because it was finalised by the Department of Education without stakeholder involvement.

In implementing the ECD policy, a focus was placed on the registration of sites, which was previously unregulated, and on enrolment of learners. There was also an emphasis on practitioner training and curricula development. Financing of this was made through conditional grants as well as direct grants-in-aid. Evaluation of the policy was done primarily through academic studies and commissioned studies by policy developers or funders but internal evaluations were also done by the Department of Education. While recommendations have been made for the reformulation of the ECD policy, they have not been enacted to date.

Meeting the conditions of the policy-making process framework

In her review of the CSG and the ECD policy-making processes to see how they compared in meeting the three conditions

that make up the policy-making process framework outlined earlier, Parenzee found the following:

1) *Effective use of evidence*

- Both processes were strongly evidence-based in that a focus was placed on generating evidence. However, while CSG used evidence to improve implementation, the ECD process did not.
- An active learning approach was adopted for the ECD process, but not sustained. This approach was not apparent in the CSG process.
- Both processes took into account the provincial and national context as well as international experiences.

2) *Focus on implementation aspects*

- Both policy processes were forward looking, although in different ways: the CSG policy developers considered statistical and economic trends to predict the likely impact of the policy; the ECD process on the other hand clearly defined its objectives in policy implementation.
- Both policy development processes acknowledged the cross-cutting nature of the policies and the need to bring in other departments. The CSG, however, did not clearly define relations specifically for implementation and the ECD processes were limited by not prioritising strategies aimed at overcoming the co-ordination and integration aspects.

3) *Stakeholder engagement*

- The nature and quality of the stakeholder participation was inclusive and non-state stakeholders were included in discussions for both policies, but the CSG process had insufficient time for communication with the public.

Key lessons

A key lesson emerging from the two case studies was that for policy processes to yield good policy, these conditions need to be taken into account and the gathering of evidence prioritised throughout the policy process – and evidence needs to be used to continually shape the formulation and reformulation, implementation and improvements of policies.

In addition to Parenzee's case studies, a report, *Situating Children in International Development Policy: Challenges Involved in Successful Policy Influencing*, which draws on Keck and Sikkink's (1998) policy impact framework to analyse the role of evidence and ideas in the policy process through the lens of an international policy research project on childhood poverty, Young Lives, is also of interest. Young Lives was explicitly set up to bridge research and policy, and thus provides a useful opportunity to evaluate the relative successes and weaknesses of a cross-country evidence-based advocacy experience.

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/YoungLives/R8519-Jones-Villar.pdf>



GUIDELINE:

The Magenta Book



All policies, programmes and projects should be subject to comprehensive but proportionate evaluation, where practicable to do so. The Magenta Book is the recommended UK central government guidance on evaluation that sets out best practice for departments to follow. It is hoped, however, that it will be useful for all policy-makers and analysts including those in local government and the voluntary sector.

It presents standards of good practice in conducting evaluations, and seeks to provide an understanding of the issues faced when undertaking evaluations of projects, policies, programmes and the delivery of services. The Magenta Book is not a textbook on policy evaluation and analysis – the field has plenty of such texts. Rather, it is written and structured to meet the specific and practical needs of policy-makers and analysts working in public policy and explains:

- The important issues and questions to consider in how evaluations should be designed and managed;
- The wide range of evaluation options available;
- Why evaluation improves policy making;
- How evaluation results and evidence should be interpreted and presented;
- Why thinking about evaluation before and during the policy design phase can help to improve the quality of evaluation results without needing to hinder the policy process.

The Magenta Book is complementary guidance to the HM Treasury Green Book2. The Green Book presents the recommended framework for the appraisal and evaluation of all policies, programmes and projects. This framework is known as the “ROAMEF”3 policy cycle, and sets out the key stages in the development of a proposal, from the articulation of the rationale for intervention and the setting of objectives, through to options appraisal and, eventually, implementation and evaluation, including the feeding back of evaluation evidence into the policy cycle. The Magenta Book provides further guidance on the evalua-

tion stage of this policy process and central government departments and agencies should ensure that their own manuals or guidelines are consistent with the principles contained here.

Evaluation examines the actual implementation and impacts of a policy to assess whether the anticipated effects, costs and benefits were in fact realised. Evaluation findings can identify “what works”, where problems arise, highlight good practice, identify unintended consequences or unanticipated results and demonstrate value for money, and hence can be fed back into the appraisal process to improve future decision-making.

The Magenta Book will be useful for:

- policy-makers who wish to be able to provide evidence of a policy’s effectiveness and value for money;
- anyone commissioning, managing, working or advising on an evaluation of a policy, project, programme or delivery of a service;
- those seeking to understand or use evaluation evidence, particularly for the purposes of improving current policies and using that learning for future policy development.

The Magenta Book can be downloaded at the following URL: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_magentabook_index.htm

This newsletter is supported by the HSRC and aims to inform policy-makers, researchers and development practitioners in South Africa of emerging developments, results and good practice in the application of evidence-based policy-making. The HSRC has attempted to make the information in this newsletter as accurate as possible and it is intended for personal and/or educational use only. It is provided in good faith without any express or implied warranty. The content of this newsletter can in no way be taken to reflect the views of these partners, including the HSRC.

The HSRC has provided links to other websites as a service to recipients of this newsletter. However, this does not mean that the HSRC endorses those sites or material in any way.

Resources

Reports

Tracking public expenditure and assessing service quality in Early Childhood Development in South Africa (2011)

<http://www.childimpact.unicef-irc.org/documents/view/id/122/lang/en>

This document reports on a survey held in three provinces in more than 300 public schools offering Grade R, more than 300 community-based ECD facilities registered with the DSD, and 90 non-registered community-based ECD facilities. Separate questionnaires were designed for each. Province 1 is a rich province, Province 2 a moderately poor one and Province 3 a large and very poor province, thus the survey reflects the broad spectrum of experiences in ECD.

Child poverty and inequality: New perspectives (2012)

http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Child_Poverty_Inequality_FINAL_Web_web.pdf

This volume, published in August 2012, is a compilation of recent thinking on the issue of child poverty and inequalities. It draws on over two years of UNICEF's collaboration with innovative and leading thinkers on these matters. Papers in this volume discuss child poverty measurement, trends in global poverty and inequality, outcomes for children, and policies to address them.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services (2006)

<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70066>

A review of The Draft Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services that was the product of a long and intensive consultation process. A need was identified, however, to review the latter to ensure that it rises to the challenges facing the ECD sector, i.e. poverty, HIV and AIDS, disability and gender equity to mention but a few.

Diagnostic Review of Early Childhood Development (2012)

<http://www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za/MediaLib//Home/KeyFocusAreas/ECD%20Diagnostic%20Report%20without%20BPs%204%20June.pdf>

The diagnostic review (DR) was commissioned by the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency (DPME) and the Inter-Departmental Steering Committee on Early Childhood Development. The purpose of the DR was to evaluate the current South African ECD paradigm and policy, including the role of the State, and the implementation of ECD services and programmes. It is based on secondary data from over 112 existing papers, consultations with ECD practitioners, civil society, academia and government officials at national, provincial and local levels. Apart from the main report there are 12 Background Papers and an annotation on recommended amendments to the Children's Act required to give effect to ECD priorities.

Training opportunities

Child rights and child law for health professionals

http://www.ci.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=695:child-rights-education-for-health-professionals&catid=36&Itemid=361

This project has developed materials to support a child rights curriculum for South Africa's health professionals and aims to promote the use of these materials by tertiary institutions across the country. The curriculum examines the relationship between children's rights and child health and sets out to equip health professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to realise children's rights in their daily practice. The course will be repeated the week of 3 – 7 December 2012, and from 1 February 2013 over five consecutive Fridays.

Rights of the child

http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=846&language_id=1

The first 18 years of a child's life encompass a wide range of capacities and vulnerabilities. Children have special needs that have warranted particular rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by more countries than any other human rights instrument. The treaty's nearly universal acceptance makes it an important tool for human rights defenders around the globe. This rapid e-course gives an overview of the institutions and mechanisms that serve to fulfil the rights of children. You will explore particular themes that address how children's rights are being compromised, the efforts being made to stop the violations of children's rights, and how to do your part to help.

Coming up

Topical guide on Early Childhood Development

In the next few months PAN: Children will publish an up-to-date Topical Guide on Early Childhood Development. This comprehensive review will be available online with links to all references. The topical guide will be available on children.pan.org.za.

Report on a Roundtable on the National Development Plan: The child focus

PAN: Children will circulate this roundtable report to all subscribers and also load it onto the portal at children.pan.org.za.

If you would like to be alerted when these documents become available, please email Valerie Fichardt at vfichardt@hsrc.ac.za