



ASSUPOL COMMUNITY TRUST

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY MODEL

January 2020

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACT	Assupol Community Trust
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CWP	Community Works Programme
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
NDA	National Development Agency
NDP	National Development Plan
NPO	Not for Profit Organisation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PPT	Project Preparation Trust

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CHAPTER ONE

PROUDLY SERVING.... THE ASSUPOL WAY

The Assupol Community Trust is a registered public benefit organisation in terms of section 30 of the Income Tax Act of 1962. It was established pursuant to the scheme for the demutualisation of Assupol Life for the benefit of communities in geographical areas in which a substantial number of insurance group scheme members reside.

The purpose of the Trust is to benefit designated communities in a non-profit, charitable manner by carrying on public benefit activities.

In broad terms, the goal of the Trust is to contribute towards universal access to quality early childhood Development (ECD). This is achieved through the following strategic objectives:

- a) To improve access to children between 0-5 years in Nellmapius, Msinga and Nquthu by 2022.
- b) To improve the quality of ECD services in Nellmapius, Msinga and Nquthu by 2022.
- c) To facilitate compliance with basic standards of registration, health and safety in line with the Children's Act and Municipal by-laws in ECD facilities in Nellmapius, Msinga and Nquthu by 2022.
- d) To promote good governance, partnerships and stakeholder relations in the City of Tshwane and uMzinyathi District Municipality.

The expected outcomes of the Assupol Community Trust intervention are:

- Increased number of children accessing ECD in Nellmapius, Msinga and Nquthu.
- Increased number of children living in an environment of care, development, safety and security.
- Children performing better and being ready for school (health, growth and nutrition)
- Parents involved and supporting the development of their children.
- The City of Tshwane, uMzinyathi District Municipality, Msinga Municipality and Nquthu Municipality prioritising ECD through funded programmes in their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).

The Trust aims to contribute to the **National Development Plan (NDP) vision 2030**, with a specific focus on ECD. It aligns with the view that articulated in the NDP that quality ECD services, especially for the most vulnerable, is a sustainable and cost-effective way of ensuring optimal development of children.

The NDP enjoins government to make early childhood development a top priority measure to improve the quality of education and long-term prospects of future generations. Dedicated

resources should be channelled towards ensuring that all children are well cared for from an early age and receive appropriate emotional, cognitive, physical development and stimulation.

The ACT also wishes to contribute to the implementation of the **2015 ECD Policy**. The policy acknowledges that government has a responsibility to create conditions for the realisation of the right of every infant and child to develop “his or her potential to the maximum and extend possible, to become physically healthy, mentally alert, socially competent, emotionally sound and ready to learn – cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically and psychologically – to their full potential”.

It further sets out a framework for transformation of “early childhood development service delivery in South Africa, in particular to address critical gaps and to ensure the provision of a comprehensive, universally available and equitable early childhood development services”.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure the universal availability of, and equitable access to, early childhood development services through a national integrated system which is embedded within a coherent legal framework that identifies, enables and compels the fulfilment of early childhood development roles and responsibilities of relevant role players;
- Establish the organisational and institutional arrangements necessary to lead, plan for, implement, co-ordinate and monitor the provision of early childhood development and support;
- Ensure the provision of adequate public funding and infrastructure for sustainable universal availability of, and equitable access to, quality comprehensive early childhood development services, and;
- Establish appropriate monitoring, quality assurance and improvement systems to secure the provision of quality early childhood development services and outcomes to young children in South Africa.

The long-term goal is to achieve a “full comprehensive age and developmentally stage appropriate quality early childhood development programme, available and accessible to all infants and young children and their caregivers”.

The policy directs that the following ECD services and support must be publicly provided:

- Parenting support and capacity development.
- Child-centred social security.
- Free birth registration.

- Health care.
- Food and nutritional support.
- Safe and affordable day care for children where parents are absent.
- Early learning support and services.
- Protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Play and recreational facilities.
- Inclusive and specialised services for children with disabilities.
- Early childhood development information.

The Trust strategic thrust aligns to government policy priority in ECD in that there is “overwhelming scientific evidence (that) attests to the tremendous importance of the early years of development and to the need for investing resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception. Lack of opportunities and interventions, or poor-quality interventions, during early childhood can significantly disadvantage young children and diminish their potential for success”.

“The science is conclusive: investment in ECD yield lifetime development returns for the child, his or her family and society. Access to ECD has significant positive impact on a) the mental health and physical health of children and adults b) school enrolment, retention and performance; c) a stronger economy; d) inequality; e) poverty; and f) a safer and more inclusive society.

In relation to specific areas supported by the Trust, the policy articulates the following:

Nutrition at ECD Sites

The government commits to ensuring that by 2030, all infants and young children enjoy healthy physical growth, are well nourished and enjoy sustained access to nutritious food. It advocates a comprehensive multi-sectoral national strategy for children from birth until the years before they enter school aimed at eliminating stunting and malnutrition, reducing obesity and preventing hunger and food insecurity”

The objectives are to:

- To increase access of infants and young children to adequate and nutritious food;
- To improve the knowledge of caregivers of infants and young children regarding good nutrition practices.

ECD Practitioners Training

Regarding skills and qualifications of practitioners, the policy strives to ensure that all caregivers, child-minders and practitioners across the continuum of early childhood development services have the knowledge, skills, infrastructure and materials necessary to provide quality support for children's early learning and development.

ECD Infrastructure Improvement

In respect of ECD infrastructure, the policy seeks to ensure that:

- There are secure, safe and accessible play, recreational, library and cultural facilities that are both inclusive and age and development stage appropriate in all communities, especially poor communities and under-served rural and informal urban communities.
- To ensure that the design and development of play, recreation, library and cultural facilities programmes comply with universal principles of design to be accessible to infants and young children with disabilities.
- To ensure that local municipalities and the Department of Human Settlements make adequate provision in their human settlements, town planning and budgeting processes to secure universal availability and equitable access to play, library, recreational and cultural facilities.

ECD Compliance and Governance

The Children's Act No.38 of 2005 defines safety and quality norms and standards for ECD programmes. The 2015 ECD policy further expands these by making provision for the registration and control of safety and quality of services by child-minders.

It defines a role for local municipalities in:

- the accreditation and registration of child-minders with local municipalities to ensure the provision of safe, quality early childhood development services.
- developing differentiated norms and standards which are appropriate to different services and programmes.
- ensuring management, oversight and support capacity, where necessary, with relevant departments and spheres of government to ensure implementation of the national early childhood development quality control and improvement system.

Further, the policy recognises the role of local government in ECD as articulated in the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000 and the Children's Act No.38 of 2005. These pieces of legislation direct local government to:

- Provide basic services, including water and sanitation to communities.
- Develop policies and by-laws governing childcare facilities, including child minder services.
- Guide municipal planning and spatial development, including providing and regulating land used for childcare facilities and for safe and adequate play and recreational facilities.

In conclusion, the policy provides a **framework for the regulation of the necessary partnerships** to ensure non-government organisations (both profit and **non-profit**), **support the realisation of government’s national integrated childhood commitments** and that all **services provided comply with government commitments**. It further stipulates that “all responsible role players are required to commit to, and align their policies, laws, programmes and budgets to achieve the common national integrated ECD vision, goals and objectives.

The realisation of this commitment requires that role players work together to:

1. **Network** – this involves the exchange of information for mutual benefit.
2. **Coordinate** – this involves a process of information exchange as well as altering activities to achieve a common purpose.
3. **Cooperate** – this involves sharing of information for mutual benefit, altering activities for a common purpose as well as sharing resources for attainment of a mutual benefit and common purpose.
4. **Collaborate** – this involves networking, coordination and cooperation as well as improving the capacity of the other partner for mutual benefit and a common purpose; and
5. **Contract** – where financing and service delivery are provided by different role players, to ensure accountability and cost-effective provision of early childhood development services.

CHAPTER 2

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES... A JOURNEY THROUGH STEPS

PROJECT INITIATION

The ACT intervention in targeted communities is guided by the strategic plan approved by the Board of Trustees. This plan defines the strategic focus areas, key strategic objectives, performance indicators and budget allocations. In delivering on the strategic and operational plans, the following **generic tasks** need to be undertaken to ensure seamless project planning and execution.

Conduct needs assessment

This involves getting a group of interested and affected stakeholders in a community to identify and define a problem through participatory processes. Various methods such as focus group discussions, community consultative meetings, individual interviews, community profiling and surveys may be utilised to inform the identification and definition of needs.

Generate the idea for the project

The needs assessment process should generate data and information that will guide the community in conceptualising projects. Stakeholders need to analyse these and explore possible options/solutions to address the community need/problem.

Conduct feasibility study

Given the possible options/solutions that may have been canvassed and presented, a rigorous process of analysing the feasibility of implementing these (options/solutions) must be conducted.

Choose which project to implement

Based on the feasibility study, stakeholders should then choose an implementable project based on the critical features, namely, cost, time and quality/performance.

Define the overall aim and objectives of the project

The critical guiding question is: what do we want to achieve as a result of implementing the project? This must be followed by the methods that will be employed to achieve the aim and objectives of the project? What will be done? Who will do it? Who will benefit? How long will it

take? As a rule of thumb, the objectives must be SMART (Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound)

Define targets

Any project should have a target group at the time of conception. The term target is used interchangeably with beneficiary. We prefer to use “target group” as the term beneficiary assumes a passive recipient of goods and services. The ACT development philosophy is that communities have agency to deal with their own challenges.

In dealing with the target group, you need to pay attention to needs, size, methods of communication and possible group affiliation or association in the community or country.

Define critical success factors

Stakeholders need to reflect on factors that will positively or negatively impact on the project. A SWOT analysis may be helpful as a tool of conducting a reality check on project implementation capability.

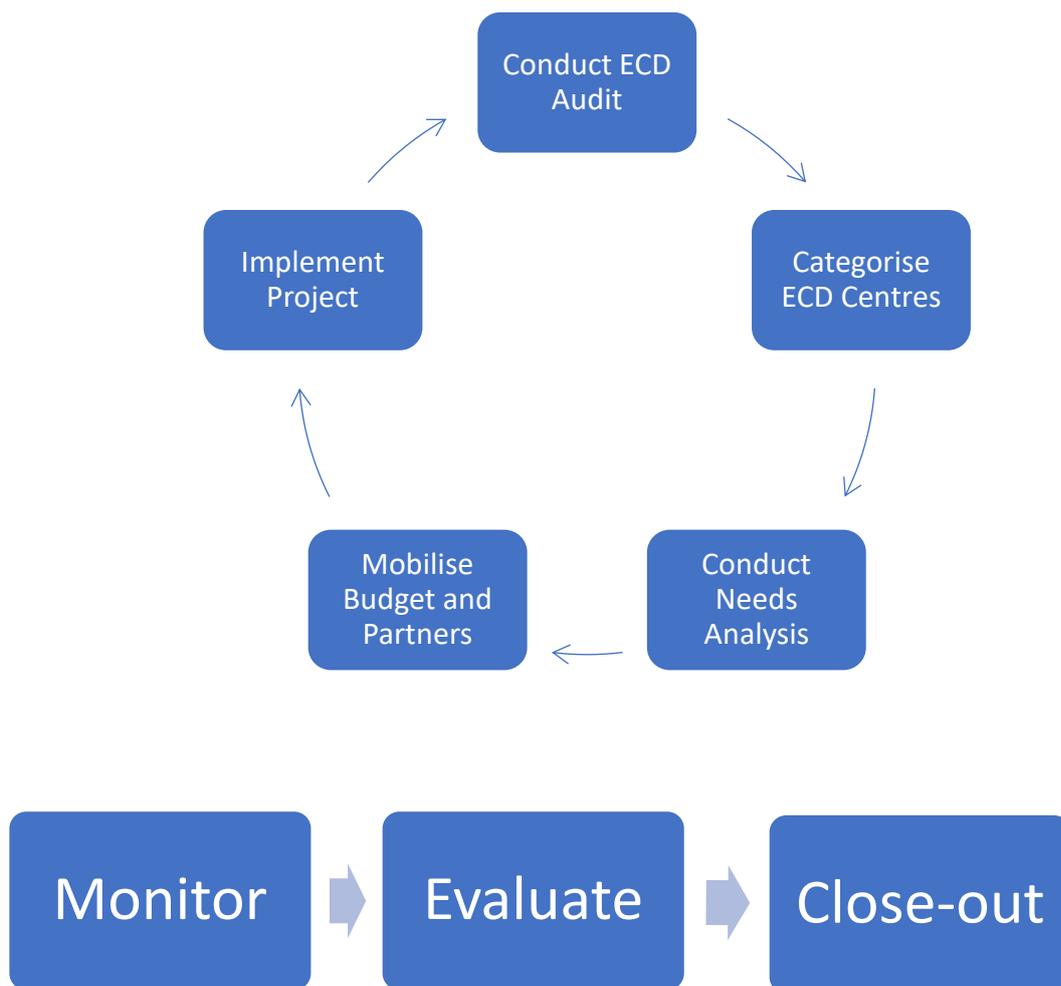
Examine assumptions, risks and obstacles

It is critical for stakeholders to ensure that the project is grounded in realistic expectations from identification, planning, organising (resources), implementation, monitoring and evaluation perspectives.

Appoint project team

A competent project team is critical to the success of the project. We need right people in the right place. A good project team should be able to provide guidance, support and promote accountability.

Within the **specific context of delivering on ECD interventions** in targeted communities, the following model is adopted to improve planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation. The detailed steps of the model are unpacked in the subsequent chapters of this booklet.



CHAPTER 3

CONDUCT ECD AUDIT IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES

The purpose of ECD Audit is to provide evidence-based data and information that will direct and guide development of interventions in targeted communities in relation to the nature and extend of ECD provisioning, services, resources and infrastructure through which the best possible outcomes can be realised for children 0-5 years.

The primary goal of the audit is to assess access and quality of ECD services. Specifically, the audit is intended to provide data and information on various aspects of effective ECD provisioning covering, but not limited to, the following:

- Registration and compliance
- Funding
- Food and Nutrition
- Curriculum
- Indoor teaching and learning equipment
- Outdoor teaching and learning equipment
- Teaching and learning material
- Infrastructure
- Safety and security

Given that **registration and compliance** are key requirements for the recognition of an ECD centre, the audit is further expected to provide information in relation to the ECD's institutional capacity to meet set **Norms and Standards for Partial Care and Early Childhood Development** as defined in the Children's Act, 38 of 2005. These are divided into **Operational Norms and Standards** as well as **Programmatic Norms and Standards**.

The Operational Norms and Standards must relate to:

- Skilled and qualified staff.
- Safe environment.
- Proper care for sick children.
- Space and ventilation.
- Clean water.
- Toilet facilities.
- Refuse disposal.
- Separating ages.

- Dealing with emergencies.
- Health care.
- Responding to child abuse and neglect.
- Administration.

The Programmatic Norms and Standards include:

- The provision of appropriate developmental opportunities.
- Programmes aimed at helping children realise their full potential.
- Caring for children in a constructive manner and providing support and security.
- Respect for and nurturing of the culture, spirit, dignity, individuality, language and development of the child.
- Meeting emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social, communication and developmental needs of a child.

CHAPTER 4

CATEGORISE ECD CENTRES BASED ON PRE-DETERMINED IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

ACT has adopted the ECD categorisation framework developed jointly with other partners such as the Project Preparation Trust (PPT), Ilifa Labantwana, TREE and various municipalities in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

This step involves mapping and categorising the ECD centres based on the following criteria:

- a) **Well-functioning (A)** – Usually DSD-registered, may have minor deficiencies.
- b) **Basic functional with good potential (B1)** – Can usually achieve DSD registration if there is some support and improvement.
- c) **Low functioning with potential (B2)** – May take more time to achieve DSD registration. Greater flexibility and more support may be required.
- d) **Low functioning with limited potential (C1)** – Often providing only basic “child minding”.
- e) **Higher risk and dysfunctional (C2)** – May need to be closed-down and children accommodated elsewhere.

The purpose of the categorisation is to:

- Identify and select ECD centres with potential to facilitate access to a large number of children (maximise impact).
- Map the geographic spread of ECD centres per ward with the view of intervening where the centres are few.
- Identify and select ECDs that have the potential to be registered.
- Enable prioritisation of ECDs with potential for infrastructure and other support to enable registration.
- Enable decision making regarding budget prioritisation and allocation.

The categorisation is done by a Project Steering Committee established in each targeted area of ECD investment. The PSC consists of ECD stakeholders and role-players (such as Ilifa Labantwana, Department of Social Development, Department of Basic Education, District and Local Municipalities) who may contribute policy insights, technical assistance, information and networking opportunities, advocacy and outreach capabilities as well as funding. Currently, the PSC exists at the level of a district municipality. It is envisaged that this may be devolved to local municipalities depending on the nature of the intervention and the role of key stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5**DETAILED NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ECD SITES AND COSTING**

This is a fairly complicated, but necessary step, in project preparation. The Project Manager needs to conduct a detailed analysis of needs of the ECD centre ranging from infrastructure, food and nutrition, learning material and equipment, remuneration of practitioners, institutional capacity of the site, learning and development needs of practitioners, and develop a realistic budget. The fact that a budget is developed for every need does not imply that ACT will be expected to cover each aspect. It simply means that ACT is aware of the total cost of the project and dependencies to realistically inform project funding decisions. In all probability, ACT will engage other stakeholders to meet some of the project costs that fall out of the scope of its funding limit or criteria.

The success or failure of projects is largely dependent on the quality of the need's assessment, analysis process and costing. No project can be implemented without dedicated financial resources. A Financial plan must be prepared to quantify money required for each stage of the project. The total cost of labour, equipment and materials is quantified and an expense schedule is defined which provides the Project Manager with an understanding of the forecast spending vs the actual spending throughout the

project. Preparing a detailed Financial Plan is extremely important as the project's success will depend on whether it is delivered within time, cost and quality estimates.

Stakeholders have certain expectations regarding the quality of goods and services. It is, therefore, important to clarify quality expectations upfront. A quality plan must;

- Define what quality means in terms of this project.
- List clear and unambiguous quality targets for each deliverable (criteria and standards).
- Outline a plan of activities which will assure the stakeholders that the quality targets will be met.

Finally, it is important to review the quality not only of the deliverables produced by the project but also of the management processes which produce them.

At this stage, the primary aim of ACT is to provide financial assistance for the “bare minimum” to enable the selected ECD centres to run facilities that are safe, secure, registered and compliant; and offer recognised ECD learning programmes.

CHAPTER 6

BUDGET MOBILISATION

Based on the audit, needs analysis and costing, the Project Manager is expected to prepare an internal project proposal, **based on approved template**, to motivate for funding for each ECD project.

The project proposal must, at the minimum, contain the following information:

- Project identification information
- Budget with detailed line items.
- Brief Description of current situation (institutional capacity, Governance, Personnel, ECD Practitioners, Administration, Food and Nutrition, Fees, Health and Safety, Ages of children, ECD Programmes, Infrastructure, Tenure/Land Ownership).
- Link between project and ACT strategic objectives.
- Performance measures of the project.
- Expected impact resulting from ACT investment.
- Commentary on relevance, sustainability and possible replication of support.

The project proposals earmarked for support must be technically reviewed by an internal team before submission to the ACT Board for approval.

CHAPTER 7**MOBILISATION OF PARTNERS**

In all its programmatic interventions, the ACT seeks partnerships to maximise impact and value of investments. Consequently, partnerships are an integral part of the ACT ECD Delivery Model.

Project Managers are expected to source partnership at every level of the project cycle and execution – ECD audits, needs assessment and analysis, resource mobilisation and sharing, budgeting, procurement of ECD supplies, technical assistance, training and development.

Specifically, partnerships must be leveraged to reduce and maximise the costs of infrastructure improvement, provision of learning opportunities for practitioners, strengthening of institutional capacity and administration, capability for information sharing and exchange, provision of learning material and equipment, acquisition of health and safety equipment; and capacity to enhance networking and advocacy for universal access to ECD.

CHAPTER 8**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Project execution is probably the longest phase in the project life cycle. This phase is about implementing the activities and tasks as articulated in the project plan.

Apart from ensuring that the key deliverables are executed, the project Manager/Team must pay specific attention to time management, cost management, quality management, change management, risk management, issue management, procurement management, communications management and acceptance management.

CHAPTER 9

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of the ACT ECD Delivery Model. They serve as accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress, constraints, achievements of projects and programmes by stakeholders.

Monitoring can be defined as the ongoing **process of tracking inputs and comparing actual input levels to target input levels**. It focuses on the regular collection of information to track programmes and projects and to alert management as to whether the actual results are being achieved as planned.

On the hand, evaluation is defined as a **process of assessing programme or project performance against set objectives, targets and performance measures**. It is designed to contribute to better informed decision-making, promote greater accountability and to foster an environment of learning for both the beneficiaries and the implementing/ funding partners.

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to:

- Assess understanding of project goals, objectives, strategies and timelines.
- Assess ongoing project activities.
- Assess whether or not the project is conducted as planned.
- Assess progress in meeting the project's goals.
- Assess impact of project activities on individuals and groups of individuals.
- Assess whether or not the project is addressing identified and felt needs of targeted population.
- Assess project success based on pre-determined criteria.

CHAPTER 10**PROJECT CLOSE-OUT**

As indicated previously, every project has a beginning and an end. Project closure involves undertaking a series of activities to wind up the project. These include identifying any outstanding items, producing a hand-over plan and report, and communicating closure to all interested stakeholders.

Project closure is essentially a final performance review or evaluation. In a development context, this is referred to as summative evaluation.

This step involves the assessment of performance against defined objectives and compliance with management processes outlined in the planning phase.

CHAPTER 11**GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH FUNDING PARTNERS**

1. Form strong relationships with funding partners.
 - Understand partner's goals and strategies.
 - Inform partners about funding and selection process.
 - Initiate frequent contact.
2. Talk to funding partners about where they are in the life-cycle of the organisation.
3. Consider how the selection process can be helpful to funding partners.
4. When possible, get out of the office and interact with funding partners.
5. Answer questions.
6. Be conscious of power dynamics.
7. Learn from funding partner experiences.
8. Stay abreast of research in the field.
9. Understand those you seek to help.
10. Collaborate with other funders in affinity groups to share information and co-develop strategies.
11. Take advantage of professional development opportunities to develop expertise.
12. Talk with funding partners about your level of availability.
13. Consider technical assistance such as marketing and communications.
14. Provide information about research on best practice.
15. Provide general management advice, strategic planning advice or assist with developing performance measures.

CHAPTER 12

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROJECT MANAGER/PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Every project requires competent and capable project manager. The roles and responsibilities of such project Manager involve:

- **Project planning** to ensure that tasks and activities are scheduled sequentially and are implementable.
- **Resource allocation** to enable project capacity to deliver on the project scope of work (labour, materials and equipment).
- **Financial planning**, management and reporting to key stakeholders.
- **Communication** of project implementation information to key stakeholders at agreed intervals or as required.
- **Risk management** to assist the project to deal timeously with challenges during project implementation.
- **Procurement** of goods and services to support project implementation.
- **Performance of administrative functions** to enable effective and efficient project implementation.