



INTEGRAL EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING VALUES THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

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DECLARATION

I, Kanyakumarie Padayachee, student number 21557621, declare that this work has not been previously submitted for examination for any degree. However, a part of the findings has been used to write a paper entitled: Rethinking the Integral Education Approach: Ascertaining Curriculum Gaps in the Early Childhood Development Curriculum with Opportunities for Advancing Indigenous Knowledge Values within the South African Context. The paper was published in the Alternation Journal Special Edition 29 (2019).

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ABSTRACT

Democratic South Africa is engulfed in violent, unethical and anti-social practices and ways of life, which collectively signify a deficit in the moral foundation of our society. These realities suggest an urgency to bring about a new order of socially responsible and civic-minded citizens, beginning in the earliest years. The Early Childhood Development National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four (2015), however, appears ineffective in achieving this outcome. Its pedagogic approach excludes the equal and simultaneous development of all the human domains. The study, therefore, proposes a holistic Integral Education approach with Ubuntu values for whole child development. Its aim was to determine the extent to which this approach in Early Childhood Development could contribute to the development of social responsibility and civic mindedness. The study adopted exploratory, developmental and intervention designs with qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) research methodologies.

The locations of the study were Umbumbulu on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast in South Africa and Adhchini Village, in New Delhi, India. Purposive, stratified and nonprobability sampling was used in the selection of the South African sample in the exploratory phase. This comprised ECD staff, parents and grandparents from six selected ECD sites, as well as key informants. This phase used qualitative research methods of focus group and individual interviews, content analysis of practitioners' journals and their observations. In the developmental phase, an Integral Education programme with Ubuntu values was developed and implemented in three of the sample ECD sites. Finally, in the evaluation phase, qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to evaluate the implementation of the programme.

Learnings from two preschools in India are incorporated in the study.

The research findings indicated gaps in the ECD curriculum regarding explicit values that promote social responsibility and a lack of whole child

development in its pedagogic approach. Based on these findings, a curriculum framework for integral education at the early childhood level was developed.

Finally, the study demonstrated that an effective whole child approach to preschool education, as evidenced in IE with Ubuntu values, has the capacity to develop a new generation of balanced and compassionate citizens for participatory democracy in South Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training	
ANC	African National Congress	
CCECD	Coordinating Committee for Early Childhood Development	
CIED	Centre for Integral Education and Development	
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention	
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practice	
DBE	Department of Basic Education	
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training	
DoE	Department of Education	
DoH	Department of Health	
DSD	Department of Social Development	
DWCPD	Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities	
ECD	Early Childhood Development	
ECE	Early Childhood Education	
EFA	Education for All	
GNU	Government of National Unity	
IE	Integral Education	
IK	Indigenous Knowledge	
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems	
IKV	Indigenous Knowledge Values	
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal	
MDG	Millennium Development Goals	
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children	
NCF	National Curriculum Framework	
NDP SA	National Development Plan South Africa	
NELDS	National Early Learning and Development Standards	
NGO	Non-Government Organisation	

NQF	National Qualification Framework	
NUFFIC	Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation	
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme	
REC	Research Ethics Committee	
SA	South Africa	
SAAECE	South African Association for Early Childhood Educare	
SACECD	South African Congress of Early Childhood Development	
SAFIER	Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Integral Education and Research	
UN	United Nations	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
US	United States	
WP	White Paper	

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CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research studies and policy statements around the world confirm that early learning opportunities make a real and lasting difference in children's lives. The National Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy (2015) asserts that the Government of the Republic of South Africa has prioritised early childhood development within its National Development Plan (NDP) for 2030. This is mainly because of the overwhelming scientific evidence which attests to the tremendous importance of the early years for human development and to the need to invest resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception (RSA, DSD. 2015: 8). Thus, the acknowledgement by the government of the critical importance of ECD in shaping the lives and life chances of children and its commitment to focus on ECD, offer opportunities to optimally utilise this phase of development for redress and transformation.

Democratic South Africa in the 21st century is engulfed in violent, unethical and anti-social practices and ways of life, mostly attributable to the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. In addition, the current pandemics of poverty and corruption that add to the legacies of the past suggest an urgency for social change (Devenish 2012; Pendlebury and Enslin 2007; Richardson 2003). Thus, the development of a new order for democratic South Africa through early education for social responsibility and civic participation is both essential and realisable. The ECD National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four (2015), however, is ineffective in achieving this outcome, mainly because of its mainstream pedagogic approach that lacks the capacity to develop equally and synchronously all domains of the child. Conversely, this study proposes an integral education (IE) approach, which is essentially holistic, educates the whole child in all dimensions – mental, psychic, spiritual, and physical – vital for completeness of being (Partho

2007: 19; Adams 2006: 35). Integral education, as developed by Sri Aurobindo, has specific characteristics. Fundamental to this approach is the acknowledgement that (1) human beings have many dimensions to their wholeness – the physical, emotional/vital, mental, and spiritual/psychic, and the awareness and integration of these dimensions are essential to education, (2) there is an interrelatedness that extends to all processes of life and all areas of knowledge, and (3) self-knowledge and knowledge of the world are equally important educational aims (Adams 2006: 80).

Sri Aurobindo's principles underlie the pedagogy in integral education (IE) schools. His first principle in education is that nothing can be taught. The second is that the mind must be consulted in its own growth, and the third is all teaching works from that which is to that which shall be (from the near to the far). These fundamentals and principles allow children to discover, develop, and pursue their unique capacities and life purpose (*ibid*). The benefit of this approach to South African children is the possibility of transformative education through the processes of self-discovery and experiential learning facilitated by the synchronous development of all human aspects within an affirming and supportive cultural milieu. The increasing levels of violence and unethical and immoral conduct in South Africa calls for a new social order. This study proposes that an appropriate and effective education system, starting from early childhood can make a significant contribution towards this new social imperative. Although this opportunity existed at the inception of democracy in 1994, this study argues that the current curriculum developments in ECD may be ineffectual for a range of reasons, such as the lack of resources, fiscal constraints, downsizing the public service, inadequate data and the need for capacity building of personnel, which are further elaborated on in Chapter 2.

Moreover, in embracing integrality, the child is encouraged to develop naturally with a deep understanding and awareness of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all beings for harmonious co-existence. Intrinsic to this approach of integral education is the inclusion of the indigenous or local

knowledge of the community in which the child lives (explicit in the third principle, “from the near to the far”), thus, connecting the home and school environments for cultural well-being and affirmation (Serpell and Nsamenang 2014: 26).

While most of the current education focusses almost exclusively on the head, an integral and unitive education addresses the head as well as the heart, the body and the spirit – thus, an education of the whole person (Partho 2007: 19). This approach makes allowance for the development and evolution of the self within the collective and, as such, would be more suitable to the purpose of promoting a socially responsible society for democratic South Africa. Additionally, this study proposes that the integration of indigenous knowledge (IK) values of Ubuntu, such as compassion, tolerance, empathy, equality, hospitality, honesty, solidarity, mutual responsibility, respect and concern for others’ welfare, in the ECD curriculum can engender social responsibility and civic participation for participatory democracy. This imperative aligns with UNESCO’s standpoint on education for the twenty-first century that it is important for children living in democracies to be educated in democratic citizenship.

In this context, Moss (2011: 1), points to the long-standing tradition of viewing democracy and education as inseparably interconnected in the sense of democracy as a basic value and practice in education and education to strengthen and sustain democracy. He argues further that a vision of education that takes democracy seriously is not confined to later stages of education because it can be a fundamental value in the approach to early childhood education. Similarly, Halstead (2006 cited in Botha, Joubert and Hugo 2016: 1), proposes in his model for citizenship education, which he calls education for active citizenship, that children should be prepared for active participation in the civil, political and social life of the community. Engaging children in the early years with the appropriate knowledge and skills, attitudes and values for social responsibility and active citizenship has the potential to create a new and transformed citizenry living harmoniously

and cohesively. This study, therefore, proposes that integral education as propositioned by Sri Aurobindo and underpinned by indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu at the early childhood development stage lays the foundation for youth and adult social responsibility and active citizenry.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Early childhood development is defined as “the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially” (RSA, DoE. WP 5 2001: 5). Thus, quality early learning programmes are critical since this phase is recognised as the foundation for success in future learning, preparing children for adulthood and providing them with the necessary opportunities for social, cognitive, spiritual, physical and emotional development. These programmes assist in laying the foundation for holistic development, whilst cultivating a love for lifelong learning (Biersteker and Dawes 2008: 185).

Similarly, the importance of ECD is unequivocally endorsed by the democratic government, featuring in the National Development Plan (NDP) as “a top priority among the measures to improve the quality of education and long-term prospects of future generations”. It further indicates that “dedicated resources should be channeled towards ensuring that all children are well cared for from an early age and receive appropriate emotional, cognitive and physical development stimulation” (RSA, Ministry in the Office of the President. NDP 2012: 69). This critical redress and transformation turning point is intended to reverse the circumstances which children were subjected to in the past. The history of the majority of children in South Africa is one of deprivation and under-development. The racist practices of apartheid and related socio-economic inequalities created a childhood of adversity for mostly African children. In addition, the ECD sector has been marginalised and undervalued, relegated to a less important phase in education and development. Thus, most African children will continue to face disadvantages unless the vicious cycle of the past and present is interrupted.

1.2.1 History of ECD in South Africa

The chequered journey of ECD provisioning in South Africa before democracy is documented in the Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8 – 10). According to this report, the forerunners to the current ECD programmes in South Africa were introduced to address the high infant mortality and morbidity rates in the early 20th century for which, the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare was established. It began investigating fatal diseases and providing support to families and communities, leading to parent and community initiatives that provided care and education to young children outside the home. By 1940, the Union Department of Social Welfare was providing a per capita subsidy for day-care centres while provincial education departments supported nursery schools. The standards for these services were established by the Nursery School Association of South Africa (later known as the South African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE), inaugurated in 1939 and serving as an association of White nursery schoolteachers.

In 1940, nursery schools became recognised as an ‘adjunct to the national system of education’, separated from crèches that provided mainly custodial care. While welfare subsidies were available for all groups, African nursery schools were not eligible. Fixed subsidies and rising costs of running pre-schools meant relying increasingly on fees for sustainability. Eventually, these became privileged middle-class facilities with trained teachers, while African working-class children were only given custodial care. The affordability of escalating fees by White parents entitled them to better quality services than that provided to the African, Coloured and Indian racial groups.

These racial disparities extended to the training of pre-school teachers, most of which was provided by non-government Organisations (NGOs) and subsidised by the state. Between 1948 and 1969, however, there was a decrease in government support for early childhood services, and the little that was available was directed towards White children. ECD provisioning for

White children grew in the 1970s because of the National Education Policy Act (1967), which empowered White provincial education departments to take responsibility for nursery education. Generally, departments of education facilitated growth by paying the salaries of qualified White teachers, subsidising the private centres, establishing pre-primary classes in some schools and introducing teacher training at many colleges.

In contrast, ECD services for African children were reduced through various legislation. Welfare subsidies for African children were eliminated by setting limits based on parental incomes. From 1958, most training courses for African teachers were restricted, while those for Whites, albeit on a smaller scale, were allowed to continue. Lower-level teacher training courses, set up by the provincial education departments, were phased out by the end of 1990 (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8-10).

According to Stevens (1997), the void in preschool education for the vast majority of Black (African) children led several women from their communities to organise preschools called "educare centres" in the rural homeland areas and townships. In many instances, these women had no formal training in early childhood education (ECE), most had not completed secondary education, and few had any formal knowledge of child development. Yet, these community women were motivated to organise ECE centers and become educare teachers because of their love for young children and their awareness that children needed assistance to lead healthy and safe lives and be prepared for formal primary schooling. In support of the community-initiated educare centres and the absence of support from South African government agencies, NGOs assumed responsibility for training educare teachers (Stevens 1997: 398).

As reported in the Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa, by the 1980s the state finally began to acknowledge the importance of ECD, especially in the wake of the high drop-out and failure rates among African pupils in schools. The De Lange Commission report emphasised the need for

pre-primary education for children from disadvantaged communities and recommended the creation of a bridging course for entry into formal education. Despite the White Paper (WP) on the Provision of Education in South Africa (1983) endorsing a bridging course, the state withheld funding on ECD on account of technicalities with other legislation (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8-10).

State involvement in education, as with all other sectors, at the time was characterised as inadequate, segregated, fragmented, uncoordinated and lacking a comprehensive vision. Thus, parents, communities and the private sector bore the responsibility for ECD provisioning. In their report on pre-school provision, policies and issues, Van den Berg and Vergnani (1986 in Bot 1987: 59), indicated that while there were a few state-owned pre-primary schools, all but one catered for whites only. In addition, the daily subsidy for white children was R1,00 for Coloureds and Indians it was 80 cents and for Africans 10 to 30 cents.

The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa demonstrated that the attempts by the apartheid government to deal with ECD essentially reinforced the fragmented and inequitable provisioning. The White' Education Affairs Act of 1988 made provision for public and private pre-primary services while the Child Care Act (1983) for 'at risk' children, made provision for children's homes and places of care. Although the latter represented another limited step towards formalised ECD provisioning, it entrenched the separation of the notions of 'care' and 'education' and the relative downgrading of 'places of care' in relation to 'educational centres'. In practice, the benefits accruing to the private and public pre-primary schools, such as subsidies, tax exemptions and special dispensations in respect of rates, were denied to places of care and educare (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8-10).

During this period, inadequate ECD provisioning especially for African children continued. According to the Interim ECD Policy document (RSA, DoE. 1996: 7), only 9 to 11% of all South African children from birth to six

years had access to ECD facilities. The usual racial disparities were evident with one in three White infants and children receiving ECD services, compared with one in eight Indian and Coloured children and one in sixteen African children. Furthermore, it appeared that twice as many urban children were receiving ECD services as their rural counterparts.

The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa states that the history of racial disparity in the provisioning of ECD in South Africa was also reflected in the representation of ECD educators. Although the South African Association of Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) allowed membership of other population groups in the early 1980s, it was still unrepresentative of the population demographics operating mainly in the urban areas and relatively advantaged communities. The many organisational struggles in the ECD sector mirrored broader political and social struggles in the 1980s (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8-10).

The amalgamation of the National Interim Working Committee (launched in 1990 to democratise the structure and sector) and the SAAECE in 1994 was the genesis of the democratically formed South African Congress of Early Childhood Development (SACECD) which plays both a lobbying and organisational role in the sector (RSA, DoE. 2001: 8-10). In addition to the marginalisation and fragmentation of ECD in the past, the predominant model of provisioning was based on White, Euro-centric, middle-class contexts, inappropriate for the majority of South African children.

1.2.2 Prospects for ECD Transformation

In 1994, the post-apartheid government dismantled the race-based and unequal education system. As part of the transformation process, a high premium was placed on ECD as evidenced in the 1995 WP on Education and Training (RSA, DoE. WP 1995). The policy elevates ECD to an essential factor in building a foundation of social relations and the starting of human development strategies. In 1997, the Department of Education launched the national pilot project aimed at testing the interim ECD policy. One of the

significant recommendations emerging from the pilot was that ECD needed to be mainstreamed within the DOE. The subsequent nationwide audit of ECD provisioning and services (2001) spawned the Education WP 5 on ECD which at the time constituted the largest ever government commitment to the provision of ECD. This included the policy framework for the establishment of a national system of provision for the Reception Year. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) worked on a strategic plan for intersectoral collaboration for children younger than five years of age (Parliament of SA, Research Unit 2014: 3).

Although the stage seemed set for ushering in change to the sector on a grand scale, the actual translation of these policies into qualitative implementation was problematic, as evidenced in Van der Berg and Hofmeyr's (2018: 5) assessment of the current ECD sector as "weak, fragmented and poorly resourced". Equally concerning is the analysis of the data on ECD accessibility which found that "about half of South Africa's four-year-olds are not currently attending any form of early childhood development programmes, particularly in rural areas" (*ibid*: 6). Overall, the assessment on the state of ECD is dismal:

"The literature agrees that the quality of cognitive and other development activities in ECD centres in South Africa generally, leaves much to be desired, and that such centres often fulfil a more basic function for parents, namely looking after their children while they are working. More attention to quality is difficult given the small staff involved in monitoring ECD facilities, with the consequence that most attention falls on monitoring physical aspects of these centres, which in itself is a daunting task" (*ibid*: 8).

Thus, although the advent of democracy in South Africa may have affirmed the role of education in deconstructing past iniquities and injustices for young people through a transformed education enabling the State to bring dignity to a child's life (Porteus 2004: 362-3), the opportunity to realise this appears to have been lost.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The early childhood period is considered to be the most important developmental phase throughout an individual's lifespan. What happens to the child in the early years is critical for the child's trajectory and life course (Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman 2007: 6), particularly in South Africa with its plethora of social ills and various manifestations of violence. These are the formative years in which behaviour, attitudes and values that children are exposed to will be learnt through imitation and role-modelling and which will determine much of their later behaviour (Burton 2008: 6). The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015) confirms this critical link between early childhood development and outcomes later in life when it highlights that ECD investments bring about higher levels of positive self-regulation which lead to significantly less crime and greater public safety, reduced public violence and greater social cohesion and civic participation (RSA, DSD. 2015: 23). This opportune period for transformation is especially significant for South African children with an embedded memory of intergenerational violence (Jansen 2010: 1) and ongoing confrontation with violence and escalating immorality in society which ordinary South Africans encounter daily in all forms of media.

South Africa has a deep and long history of violence. At the core of this violent history is the 258 years of colonial rule, 51 years of the racist Union of South Africa and 46 years of grand apartheid, underpinned by patriarchal relations. In addition, throughout these hundreds of years, generations of the oppressed majority waged struggles for liberation against successive illegitimate and repressive regimes (RSA, Ministry in the Office of the President. 25 Year Review 2019: 10). Apartheid left a legacy of political intolerance and dominance, in which power was maintained by violence, thereby provoking violent resistance (Simpson, Mokwena and Segal 1992), to the extent that even the negotiated settlement for majority rule in South Africa, which culminated in the 1994 democratic elections was accompanied, before and after, by violence.

Von Holdt (2013: 591) views post-apartheid South Africa as a highly unstable social order characterised by new forms of violence and the reproduction of older patterns of violence defined as violent democracy. Predictably, amongst the youth in South Africa, violence and anti-social behaviour and attitudes feature prominently and the levels of violence remain extraordinarily high (Meyer and Chetty 2017: 122; Burton 2012: 5). A World Bank report (2012 cited in Burton 2012: 1), indicated that for many young people in South Africa, violence is a part of life because it is a feature of their homes, schools and communities, and has become an accepted component of young people's social interactions. This is confirmed in a 25-year review report on the status of South Africa by the Office of the President (2019), which indicated that between 1994 and 2018 the country recorded an 11% increase in contact crimes, with a growing number of cases of gender-based violence, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence and femicide. These indicators point to a society whose social fabric and morality are slowly being eroded (RSA, Ministry in the Office of the President. 2019: 237).

As a result, the overall community and societal environment that children in South Africa are exposed to is not a healthy and peaceful one. Violence breeds violence, and young children learn what they see and if they are exposed to violence on a regular basis, then violence becomes a way of life. Exposure to violence has been consistently linked to antisocial behaviour among youth (Weaver, Borkowski and Whitman 2008: 96), a reality that is becoming increasingly evident in South African society. A national schools' survey conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) on violence in schools in 2012 found that 22% of children had experienced a form of violence, a finding which showed little change in youth violence when compared to the 2008 national survey on violence in schools (Leoschut 2013: 1). This ongoing ubiquity of deviant attitudes and behaviours amongst the youth indicates a crisis.

The attempts by Government (DOE 2001) and DBE (2011) to institute values-based interventions at the school levels acknowledge and confirm the

moral predicament and, consequently, the need for more considered responses and preventive initiatives in the form of directed and embedded education programmes towards social transformation. New and Ghafar (2012), argue that education transforms both societies and people in a particular direction by shaping and reshaping their patterns of thoughts, means of problem-solving and ways of life. This contributes to further individual and social transformation (New and Ghafar 2012: 95).

Studies indicate that interventions for behaviour and attitude changes are crucial and most sustainable at earlier levels of development and critical at the ECD stage for optimal learning opportunities (RSA, DSD. National Integrated ECD Policy 2015: 16), making it imperative to target children at an early age in relevant ECD programmes (Burton 2008: 6). The government's national integrated policy on ECD highlights the scientific evidence that points to the importance of the early years for human development and, consequently, the need for investment in resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception (RSA, DSD. 2015: 22). It also notes that ECD investments can result in reducing levels of violence in society and promote socially responsible conduct (*ibid*: 22-23). In addition, the South African National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four (RSA, 2015), spells out that ECD programmes in South Africa, particularly, are driven by the urgent need to effect social transformation through integrated care and education. This is especially critical on account of the socio-political and economic realities (such as, the history of apartheid, the inequalities and conditions that threaten young children, the status of children from birth to five) and the need to promote a new vision for citizens in democratic South Africa (RSA, DoE. NCF 2015: 1).

Considering the potential of ECD to bring about sustainable behaviour and attitude changes and in light of the aforementioned scourge of violence and many forms of deviant behaviour and unethical conduct, this study proposes an alternate and holistic teaching and learning programme. According to García and Weiss (2016: 1) education programmes that can contribute to

social transformation should prioritise or, at least, afford equal prominence to non-cognitive social and emotional skills and values with that of cognitive skills. This study, therefore, posits an Integral Education (IE) approach for ECD in South Africa. This approach recognises that since the child is collectively the body, instincts, heart, mind and consciousness, child development must nourish the collaborative epistemic participation of all these human dimensions and cannot be directed exclusively at the mind (Ferrer, Romero and Albareda 2005: 7-8). The IE approach to ECD implies the synchronous development of all the parts that constitute the child's complete being rather than its discrete parts. Fundamental to this approach is the conscious unfolding of the innate knowledge and cultural identity that reside in the child. Thus, the ECD programme should be underpinned by the African Indigenous Knowledge (IK) values of Ubuntu for cultural affirmation and well-being of all children at the ECD level. These values, according to Bonn (2007: 2), safeguard the wellbeing of the community as a whole and promote the harmonious existence of the individual within the community.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim/purpose of the research is to determine the extent to which Integral Education underpinned by Indigenous Knowledge Values (IKV) in ECD could contribute to the development of social responsibility and civic mindedness in preschool children.

The study focuses on ECD and its exceptional opportunity to engage preschool children in the critical values of social responsibility and civic participation and, therefore, proposes an IE approach incorporating the IKV of Ubuntu. Integral Education, founded in India by Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872 – 1950) and Mirra Alfassa (1878 – 1973), addresses the whole person by creating an environment in which children engage in learning processes and experiences that focus on developing and integrating the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual intelligence (Adams 2006: 23). In this way, they develop a sense of wholeness and connection with self, family, community, society, nation, and world. This viewpoint includes what it means

to be a feeling, thinking, participatory, and conscious member of humanity (*ibid*: 33), apt for social responsibility and civic participation in the South African context.

Equally, this study embeds the African humanist system of Ubuntu which promotes interconnectedness and interdependence with all life forms. Consequently, the introduction of this transformative education approach to children in the preschool years could educate a completely new generation of citizens for participatory democracy in South Africa. Although this study was predominantly located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, it was guided by learnings from two IE schools based in New Delhi, India considering the universality of colonial rule, especially its deleterious influence on education. The two schools aligned to the Aurobindo Society are the Auro Navakriti Preschool, and the Mirambika Free Progress School.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study focuses on community-based ECD provision and asked the question: To what extent could an Integral Education approach, underpinned by the Indigenous Knowledge values of Ubuntu, be applied in Early Childhood Development to develop social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children?

1.5.1 Overall Goal and Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of the study is to develop a framework for a transformative early childhood development integral education programme with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation towards participatory democracy in South Africa. The development of the programme framework is guided by the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of this study.

The study comprises three sequential phases: exploratory, developmental and evaluation. In accordance with these three phases, the objectives of the study are the following:

- (i) Investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from integral education which incorporates indigenous knowledge Ubuntu values and principles for social responsibility and civic participation.
- (ii) Explore the theoretical and philosophical considerations that should guide the development of an integral education ECD programme underpinned by Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation.
- (iii) Develop an IE ECD programme based on the indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.
- (iv) Implement the programme in three of the six ECD sample sites and evaluate the programme by applying the evaluation instrument prior to and post-implementation.
- (v) Develop a framework for an IE ECD programme underpinned by the IK values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.

The study is underpinned by the following assumptions:

- (i) that a transformative ECD IE programme anchored by Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation is critical crucial for establishing a new order of participatory democracy in South Africa.
- (ii) that the gap in the NCF in not applying an IE approach with Ubuntu values to ECD fails to optimally utilise the early years to develop critical social and emotional skills in children for wholeness;
- (iii) that short-term or 'knee-jerk' reactions to the levels of violence and unethical conduct, amongst the youth, are unsustainable and unlikely to result in any significant and widespread behaviour change;
- (iv) that IE and Ubuntu are based on holistic, humanistic, ethical and moral paradigms and, therefore, have the potential to develop in children an awareness of being part of an interconnected and mutually beneficial collective, and

(v) that South Africa can learn from the experiences of another colonised country such as India, especially in the critical sphere of education because of its transformative power.

Based on the objectives identified, as well as the above assumptions and guided by a critical theory framework of the theories of postmodernist, post colonialist and reconceptualist approaches, this study argues that the ECD pedagogic approach and curriculum guidelines as set out in the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS) (RSA, DoE. 2009) and the NCF (RSA, DoE. 2015) call for a rethinking. The ECD curriculum and pedagogical approach need to incorporate IE that develops children holistically by nurturing all human dimensions - intuitive, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, social and individual - collaboratively, thus enabling an awareness of a deeper sense of themselves within the collective of community and society. The inclusion of the communitarian African Indigenous Ubuntu values reinforces the social solidarity ethic and affirms cultural identity (Msila 2015; Shepherd and Mhlanga 2014; Bonn 2007; Teffo 1999). Accordingly, the study set out to explore the extent to which an IE ECD programme with Ubuntu values could be beneficial to preschool children in fostering social responsibility and civic participation using a focus group and individual interviews in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Delhi, India. It then developed and implemented, in the sample sites in Umbumbulu, an IE ECD programme with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation and evaluated the impact.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The primary motivation for this study is to make recommendations for the development of an IE ECD curriculum framework aimed at training practitioners in the application of an IE approach. The application of an IE approach could meaningfully contribute to mitigating the impact of the growing scourge of violence and immoral behaviour on successive generations of children. A transformative education model implemented at

the earliest and most opportune time for learning and development could be beneficial in educating for a 'new order' for democratic South Africa.

The IE ECD curriculum framework is designed to foster the interconnection and importance of the mind, body, heart, spirit and community towards 'whole child' development and the unfolding of a caring, compassionate and humane society. In addition, this study will contribute to research on the emerging philosophy and literature of IE for a greater understanding of this holistic approach to ECD. It will offer a foundation for a model of systemic integral education, for future application in early childhood education and development in South Africa.

The inclusion of the African value system of Ubuntu, which encompasses humaneness, character building and morality, resonates with the holistic IE approach to learning. Central to the Ubuntu philosophy and ways of knowing, is the interconnectedness of people, each one existing through the other, mutually and reciprocally (Metz 2014: 71; Mabovula 2011: 42). More significantly, incorporating Ubuntu values in the ECD curriculum should be viewed as a corrective measure, given its devaluing and marginalisation in the South African context of colonialism and apartheid. The incorporation of Ubuntu values into the IE ECD programme at a time when there are ever frequent pleas for the restoration of humanity in the South African citizenry is timely.

Ramphela (2019) argues that there is overwhelming evidence that the cost of South Africa's failure to embrace the values of Ubuntu is very high, reflected in the high levels of violence, crime, corruption and unaccountability in both the public and private sectors that are threats to its nascent democracy. Thus, the study leads the way to further research on the inclusion and application of Ubuntu values in the ECD programme and curriculum and its impact on behaviour and attitude. This study contributes towards rethinking a more appropriate education paradigm for post-apartheid South Africa and participatory democracy.

1.7 RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE AND WORLDVIEW

In 2016, the researcher and other like-minded colleagues established the Centre for Integral Education and Development (CIED), a non-profit organisation to advance integral education in Early Childhood Development, Community Development and Community-Based Participatory Research. It is expected that the outcomes of this study, particularly the ECD IE curriculum framework with IK Ubuntu values, will inform the establishment of an ECD centre with IE trained practitioners.

Between 1985 and 2010 she taught in the senior secondary phase of the South African schooling system. Since the beginning of her career, she has been involved in progressive movements for education transformation, both within the sector and in the broader social and political structures. Thus, her knowledge in education is grounded in the span of experience and the wider participation as a social and political activist in the struggle against apartheid. The researcher was deeply invested in the achievement of South Africa's democracy in 1994 with the first democratic elections and firmly held onto the belief that majority rule would herald a new and prosperous era for all citizens. This vision of a peaceful, just and egalitarian society, however, has proven fallacious. Two and a half decades into democracy, South Africa is plagued by violence, intolerance, hatred, immoral and unethical behaviour impacting society at every level. South African households, communities and state institutions including public and private business enterprises are plagued by these values and practices which are inculcated in children's lives from their early years of development.

Education is a powerful means of reorienting society, as proven in the successive oppressive governments in this country and their use of the system to further their own socio-political and economic agendas. The post-apartheid government may have had the broad idea or vision as suggested in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994) to overhaul the education system, but it failed to do so in any meaningful way especially in actively developing compassionate, integrated and socially responsible

citizens committed to the democratic ideals enshrined in the Constitution. Thus, the expectation that citizens will *naturally* orientate towards a new democratic order, was myopic as we witness the terrible destruction of social systems to the extent that even school grounds have become dangerous battlegrounds. Primary and high school violence statistics, as indicated, attest to this reality.

While education policies, at all levels but especially at the ECD level – the subject of this study - articulate the aspiration to promote a new vision for citizens in democratic South Africa, the translation into action and application remains unrealised. This study, therefore, emanates from the researcher's commitment to contribute to scholarship about an education model that can bring actual change at a deep and sustainable level for the advancement of the individual in the context of the community, the nation, and all humanity. To this end, the researcher believes that, amongst others, radical change must be made to the ECD education model, the ECD programme content and the training of ECD practitioners.

In a mechanistic education system, discrete parts of the child are educated with the focus mainly on the head (cognition) while an IE approach promotes the synchronous development of all domains of the child. Similarly, IE teachers become more integrally informed in their practice, and able to better serve the transformation of themselves, their children and schools (Esbjörn-Hargens 2011: 16), and ultimately society.

In addition, programme content in ECD has remained largely unchanged, despite the imperatives for cultural identity and affirmation after centuries of coerced acculturation. Significantly, the African philosophy and principles of Ubuntu emphasise that the individual realises her/his humanness through the well-being of others and the community as a whole. Ubuntu also emphasises the principles of equality and respect for human dignity, cultural diversity, sharing resources produced by the efforts of all, work by everyone and exploitation by none. Thus, the researcher believes that any initiative to

develop and inspire the culture of social responsibility and civic participation must use the rich indigenous knowledge and values emphasised in the philosophy and principles of Ubuntu.

The researcher takes the view that an education model that integrates the emotional, spiritual, physical and mental intelligence educates for a better quality of a person, one who would be aware that they are not only individuals, but they are interconnected, interdependent, and interrelated to everyone and everything around them, in the world and the cosmos, and all their actions impact everything around them. This perspective assumes greater urgency for serious consideration following the appearance in South Africa in 2020 of COVID-19 when South Africans and societies around the world realised the imperative for social solidarity and responsibility in confronting the myriad effects of the pandemic.

1.8. MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Motivation for the research topic came about in 2016, two years after the researcher conceptualised and established a values-based ECD training project in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal with the support of the regional office of the Department of Social Development. The primary purpose of the programme was to address the increasing exposure of children to the levels of violence and unethical conduct in South African society. Against that background, it was unlikely that children would develop naturally into caring and socially responsible adults since they mainly learn how to behave by watching people around them (Refer to Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005); Rogoff (2003); and Vygotsky (1896–1934) in Chapter 3).

The ECD Values Education Project, under the aegis of the Gandhi Development Trust a non-profit organisation based at the Durban University of Technology, was an intervention programme designed to introduce a set of universal values in children by training the classroom practitioners. The training, based mainly on storytelling, engaged the practitioners in the values to (i) develop a personal and professional values frame of reference and, (ii)

integrate these into the daily ECD programme. Between 2014 and 2015, the programme was piloted in the Inanda, Ntuzuma and Kwa Mashu (INK) areas in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The evaluation demonstrated significant improvement on, *inter alia*, teaching practice and behaviour and attitude in children. Consequently, it was taken to a greater scale through the inclusion of programmes in creative arts, food and nutrition, physical literacy and parent enrichment.

The positive results of this intervention and the general development the project introduced, caused the researcher to investigate ECD programmes generally and programmes that develop children holistically. The exploration eventually led to finding an integral education model founded and practised in India by Sri Aurobindo but which had relatively recently been theorised by Western theorists, most notably, Jean Gebser (1905 - 1973) and Ken Wilber (1949 -). The researcher firmly believes that this approach to ECD education could prepare preschool children for social responsibility and civic participation in democratic South Africa. Thus, the researcher undertook a study to investigate the possibilities of adapting the Aurobindo model and developing an IE programme framework for South African public preschools.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based in one township (Umbumbulu) in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and two IE schools in New Delhi, India and therefore limits the extent to which generalisations may be made from the study.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The use of case studies, however, does not deter from the value of the study. IE as an educational approach to ECD is new to South Africa and its application in India is confined to the Aurobindo schools and others that may apply some form of the model such as, the community-oriented educational programmes based on the teachings of Yogananda, Sri Atmananda and Krishnamurti, Gandhi, Montessori, Steiner and Fox. Thus, there is a deficiency of literature and research on an IE approach to ECD. In addition,

there is no practical application of the approach in South Africa, which presented its own challenges and necessitated the exploratory design and an exploratory phase to the study.

1.11 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This study is organised according to the following chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the study by identifying the problem and providing context to it.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive account of all aspects of the constituent parts of the study and the existing literature on them.

Chapter 3 frames the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Chapter 4 details the study design and the research methodology applied in the research process.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 present findings in the three phases of the research process, the exploratory (5 and 6), developmental (7) and evaluation (8).

Chapter 9: presents a case study of the learnings from India.

Chapter 10 comprises the consolidation of the findings, the IE programme framework and conclusion to the study.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter pointed out that optimal early learning opportunities make a real and lasting difference in the lives of children and that the advent of democracy in South Africa was the most opportune time for meaningful transformation and redress in ECD. This is particularly significant because of the apartheid history of deprivation and under-development that the majority of children in South Africa faced. Equally and additionally, the growing violence and anti-social behaviour amongst young people could be further indicators of the inadequacy of education in the early years and consequently impact the life chances of children.

This study argues that social change in South Africa is urgent and proposes that the ECD National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four (2015), is ineffective in achieving this outcome, mainly because of its mainstream pedagogic approach. Accordingly, this study advances a holistic integral education approach with Ubuntu values to educate the whole child for higher consciousness and completeness consistent with the Aurobindean paradigm. The fundamental principle of integrality on which this approach is based fosters, *inter alia*, a deep understanding and awareness of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all beings for harmonious co-existence and, it is argued, may be effective in developing social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTERPRETING THE PARTS OF THE WHOLE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the clearly defined and internationally acknowledged outcomes articulated in ECD policies and programmes (RSA, DoE. WP on Education and Training (1995), the Interim Policy for ECD (1996), the National Plan of Action for Children (1996), the WP on Social Welfare (1997), the WP for the Transformation of the Health System (1997), the WP 5 on ECD (2001), the National Integrated Plan for ECD 2005–2010, the Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005, RSA DoE National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) 2009; RSA DoE National Integrated Policy for ECD 2015; RSA, DoE National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2015), and the National Plan of Action for Children 2012–2017), achievement of them appear to be severely constrained in South Africa. The proposal in this study is, therefore, that an ECD IE approach with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation will be more apt and effective in delivering on the mandate for ECD. The study investigated three critical themes – ECD, IE, IKS Ubuntu values to determine the viability of their combination in a curriculum framework for preschool children. The intention of such a curriculum is the creation of a new socially responsible and civic minded generation for participatory democracy in South Africa. Consequently, the literature reviewed in this chapter covers these broad themes to respond to the research question.

According to Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel (2013: 2), a literature review shapes the research project, which should be informed by the gaps, omissions or unanswered questions on a chosen topic. Thus, in respect of the first theme of ECD, an examination of its state in 1994 at the advent of democracy, its current status and the national policies and programmes that guide and shape its trajectory are discussed to determine possible gaps and omissions. In relation to the second theme of IE, the areas expounded are its

philosophical underpinning as conceptualised and created by Sri Aurobindo and its broad and specific application towards consciousness education and completeness of being. The third theme of IKS and Ubuntu values includes an understanding and contextualising of IK within which Ubuntu humanism is described to demonstrate its benefits to individual and community well-being and wholeness. The concepts of social responsibility and civic participation are explained to show the potential of Ubuntu values for inculcating social responsibility and active citizenry, which contribute to participatory democracy. The researcher is of the view that social responsibility and active citizenship are two critical factors for the building of a cohesive and harmonious society in South Africa.

2.2. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The Education White Paper 5 on ECD (2001: 5) describes early childhood development as an overarching term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially. This incorporates a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children in this age category with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential.

Hyde and Kabiru's (2006: 13-14) definition, relevant to an African context, broadens the above definition to include early socialisation, education and readiness for school, as well as, the provision of basic health care, adequate nutrition, nurturing and stimulation within a caring environment. The role and importance of ECD have been acknowledged by a number of international agreements including the Universal Declaration of Children's Rights (1959), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Education for All Declaration (1990), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and the UN Special Session for Children (2002). In addition, two international conferences on early childhood in Africa – The Early Childhood Care and Development Conference in Kampala in 1999 and

the Asmara Child Development Conference in 2002 - highlighted the importance of ECD in human resource development.

Based on a strong child rights' foundation, ECD is expected to provide for the all-round growth and development of children. As noted in Chapter 1, the actual translation of this, however, into qualitative implementation appears ineffective, especially with regard to the capacity of the current early childhood education programme to develop children holistically, as claimed.

2.2.1. The state of ECD inherited in 1994

Chapter 1 documents the history of ECD provisioning prior to 1994 and notes that while the ECD sector was generally poorly resourced and underserved, African children typically were the most disadvantaged because of the racist and unjust apartheid system. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994) was intent that early childhood educare (the term used in the years leading up to the first democratic elections in 1994 to promote the ideology holistic care of young children), had to be an integral part of the education and training system. It went on to elucidate that the provision of educare for young children was an important step toward lifetime learning and the emancipation of women. It proposed an expansion of early childhood educare through (i) increased private and public funding; (ii) institutionalising it within the ministry and the provincial departments; and (iii) raising national awareness of the importance of such programmes. At the same time, it committed the government to bear the responsibility for training, upgrading and setting national standards for the educare providers, with the assistance of civil society (RSA, Ministry in the Office of the President. RDP. 1994: 65).

Consequently, the first Education White Paper, Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System (RSA, DoE. WP 1995), acknowledged the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a fundamental pillar of the foundations for later or lifelong learning by incorporating ECD as an intrinsic component of the White Paper Policy

Framework for Education and Training in a democratic South Africa. The term Educare was formally replaced by the internationally recognised, ECD, to include children from birth to nine years.

The subsequent Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (RSA DoE 1996: 7-8), detailed the effects on the majority of the South African population as a consequence of colonial and apartheid legacies. The following account is a summary of the 'Introduction' and 'The Inherited Situation' from the policy, relevant to this section.

The manifestations of the socio-economic conditions of communities were, *inter alia*, impoverished families (those who are unable to meet the developmental needs of their children without assistance), young children at risk (those with inadequate resources in the community for their health, nurture and education; particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, diseases and premature death; effects of migrant labour and other exploitative labour conditions which divide families and put them under stress; victims of domestic, social and political violence), poor parents with little or no schooling experience (those unable to provide parental guidance for school preparation) and families lacking basic needs (commodities such as shelter, water, sanitation, primary health care, nutrition, employment and adult basic education) for survival. Young children living under these harsh conditions had little prospect of development of any kind, without state intervention.

In this regard, Porteus (2004: 347) argues that:

It would be a mistake to interpret this history as simply a combination of lack of state capacity, bureaucratic neglect and under expenditure. The treatment of children under apartheid was an important piece of the apartheid scaffolding. Beyond the destruction of potential good, apartheid served to actively construct a society based on the principles of inequity and human disgrace - the patterns of development, the differential seeding of human possibility, conceptions of power and worth.

Thus, the provision of material resources for ECD constitutes only one part of redress, excluding the critical area of quality and appropriate early education

programmes towards the realisation of individual potential and development. The abdication of government responsibility meant that the backlog for the provision of early childhood services was massive. The situation was inadequate, fragmented, uncoordinated, unequal and generally lacking in educational value. It was further characterised by a long history of the discriminatory provision regarding race, geographic location, gender, special needs and funding. The inadequate funding of ECD services for African communities resulted in ECD provisioning for these communities being characterised by:

- (i) a lack of financial resources for salaries for practitioners and resources and food for the children;
- (ii) the demotivation of ECD staff and a high turnover of non-formally trained ECD practitioners;
- (iii) low morale amongst practitioners due to the non-recognition of their non-formal qualifications;
- (iv) the unavailability of appropriate physical structures for ECD services, and
- (v) difficulties arising from unrealistic regulations relating to norms and standards making subsidisation of community efforts very difficult (RSA, DoE. 1996: 7-8).

In the absence of effective state intervention, the provision of ECD services to communities occurred through non-governmental agencies and the efforts of parents and community-based organisations. Consequently, ECD NGOs in South Africa accumulated immense expertise in the ECD field and received considerable international recognition. Considering the long history of neglect and the absence of a coherent government policy for ECD, the situation demanded a comprehensive plan for reversing the rough history of neglect of early childhood development.

2.2.2. The current ECD context in South Africa

The unequivocal protection of the right of every child, in the early years, to develop to her or his full capacity indicates the valuable opportunity for holistic and synthetic human development in this phase. For South African children, particularly, it marks a critical transformation from the time when this

fundamental and human right was denied to the majority of them. Post 1994, according to Atmore (1998: 298), was the first time the political will to meet the needs of young children was evident in South Africa. The burden of responsibility, therefore, is made more onerous for the democratic government that enacted these changes, to make amends for this discrimination and deprivation of the past.

The raft of policies, plans and frameworks, mentioned above and guided by the Constitution (RSA 1996), legitimises the right of all children to ECD services and programmes. Despite the government's concerted efforts, through policy, at redress and transformation, ECD is still failing to holistically develop children to meet the demands of a society in transition; one that is emerging from centuries of racial oppression, subjugation, degradation, dispossession, institutionalised violence and authoritarianism, and with the typical struggles and socio-economic problems peculiar to postcolonial, developing countries (RSA, Ministry in the Office of the President. 25 Year Review 2019: 62). It seems obvious, therefore, that after achieving democracy children would need to be educated for a new social order that deliberately sets out to contest and to prevent a recurrence of the past regime, founded on domination, segregation and fear. In acknowledging the education potential of the early years for lifelong learning (RSA, DoE. ECD Policy 2015; RSA, DoE. NCF 2015), the critical values of democracy, cooperation and solidarity should be specifically included in the ECD programme, enabling a new order of socially responsible citizens for a transformed society.

Generally, ECD programmes and policies internationally are guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) frameworks for economic and social development. CRC has been the most powerful human rights tool for early childhood, focusing on the rights of a child from an ecological development perspective (Hodgkin and Newell, 2007 in Britto, Yoshikawa and Boller 2011: 7). The CRC guidelines are supplemented by information on

how to foster environments and contexts to promote the holistic development of all children (Britto and Ulkuer, 2012 in *ibid*: 8).

In this regard, one of the socially relevant and progressive ECD programmes is in Cuba which has relevance to South Africa given the similarities of conditions of disadvantage and deprivation between African children in apartheid South Africa and Cuban children before the Revolution. According to Tinajero (2010), three proven principles guide early education programmes: the need to provide services from an early age, the need to provide high-quality teacher training, and the need to ensure participation of the family, the community, and other key individuals in a child's development. The pedagogical-conceptual framework of the Cuban programme recognises the importance of living conditions and early experiences in the development of a child's personality. Children's positive interaction with their environment (family and community) is essential for comprehensive development (Tinajero 2010: 13).

Equally, the northern Italian town of Reggio Emilia has attracted a worldwide following in early childhood education for its holistic and alternate paradigm. Malaguzzi (founder of the Reggio Emilia schools) constructed a pedagogy predicated on children and adults working together to construct knowledge (and values and identities) – making meaning through processes of building, sharing, testing and revising theories, always in a dialogic relationship with others (Moss 2016: 173). Reggio Emilia is a system of publicly provided schools inscribed with values of democracy, cooperation and solidarity, demonstrates that there are alternatives to mainstream education systems (*ibid*: 168). Similarly, New Zealand's, Te Whāriki, recognised nationally and internationally as a progressive curriculum, was the first national curriculum to 'represent and reflect Maori politics and pedagogy' (Te One 2003 cited in Duhn 2006: 195). Developed through negotiations and debates and, therefore, founded on collectivity and connectivity, the curriculum is designed to empower children and challenge existing power relations by focusing on the child in the context of his or her family (*ibid*).

Conversely, in China, early childhood programmes appear to have undergone little change pursuant to new understandings of the construct of childhood and children's agency. Research undertaken in the early 1990s indicated that Chinese early childhood education lacked age-appropriate materials for learning and play and had few opportunities for free play, individualised interactions with teachers and social interactions with peers (Xiang and Liao, 1995 cited in Li *et al* 2016: 428). Chinese preschool teachers tended to focus on academic skills, discipline and rule enforcement rather than socio-emotional development (Xiang 1995 in *ibid*). These findings are largely consistent with a 2010 study in Beijing which found that teacher-directed group activities occupied most of a school day with few opportunities for free play. Most teacher-child interactions were one-way in a large-group manner with little attention to children's individual learning needs and interests (Pan *et al.*, 2010 cited in *ibid*). Generally, ECD programmes in other countries of the world are aligned with international trends based on the rights of the child within a collective. The Chinese case in point, however, seems to suggest close similarities with mainstream utilitarian school systems.

Importantly, it should be noted that the ECD curricula and programmes are only as effective as the proficient training of teachers in interpretation and application. Neglecting this critical aspect runs the risk of unsuccessful or misguided implementation and, ultimately, failing the aims of the programmes.

2.3. ECD POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

2.3.1. ECD policy and implementation challenges

The stage for public service ECD provision appeared to have been set as a critical component of the government's redress and transformation strategy. Porteus (2004) argues that the visions of the pre-1994 policy processes did not translate into the post-1994 experience. While the early policy processes emphasised integrated service provision and partnerships – placing value on community-based services, NGO innovation, a wide range of sites of quality

to service children facing the challenges of poverty and significantly increased state financial support for ECD provisioning, the post-1994 period has ultimately emphasised shifting ECD services from a diversity of typologies to school-based Reception classrooms and demonstrated limited support in the form of public expenditure (Porteus 2004: 360).

In the run-up to the 1994 elections, according to Blumenfeld (1996), it was clear that the most urgent and daunting policy challenges for the 'new' South Africa were to generate rapid economic growth whilst simultaneously alleviating the poverty and deprivation affecting the majority of the Black population. The RDP was the primary vehicle through which the new Government of National Unity (GNU) sought to address these challenges.

A post-election RDP White Paper (1994), however, made clear that the RDP was to function strictly within the limits set by 'responsible' monetary and fiscal policies. These policy shifts paralleled the more general shedding of long-held ideological positions in ANC economic policy thinking. Consequently, the 'growth and development strategy' needed to place more emphasis on the 'growth' than on the 'development' aspects of the problem (Blumenfeld 1996: 1-4), as a possible result of which ECD, characteristically, was one of the casualties of this ideological conversion. The sector's expendability is evidenced in:

Yet, while there is this growing consensus that what happens during these early months and years have dramatic consequences for the rest of childhood and adolescence, our children across the country and the world are most neglected in our policies, programmes and budgets. In our view, the time of early childhood development should merit higher priority attention. It is the time when responsible governments must make decisions about policies, laws, programmes and the provision of money. Yet, in our country, as in the rest of the world, for children and nations, these are the years that receive the least (RSA, DOE. WP 5 2001: 7).

Equally, the challenges of policy implementation rear in the non-delivery of programmes and services. According to the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS) document (RSA, DoE. 2009: 3), South Africa's ECD policy position is described as boasting some of the best

policies in the world...but the strengthening of the implementation processes of these policies is still needed. Twelve years beyond this admission, the government continues to grapple with execution failures. In this regard, Torkington (2001 cited in Hyde and Kabiru 2006: 58), suggests that policy implementation is a challenge that requires the definition of strategies and responsibilities, and the provision of resources. In addition, the increased commitment of government resources, capacity building through creation and strengthening of coordinating structures and staff training are essential ingredients for policy implementation (*ibid*: 72).

According to the South African Early Childhood Review (2019: 7), from a policy perspective, South Africa has made good progress, yet many of the services defined in the National Integrated ECD policy (RSA, DSD, DoE, DoH. 2015) have made little or no progress over the past few years, particularly in nutrition, early learning and caregiver-support areas, of which - early learning - is of particular relevance to this study. In this regard, early learning refers to the particular model being proposed and not only the delivery of the service.

In addressing the issue of policy implementation failures, Atmore (2018: 194-5), argues for an ECD policy implementation framework as part of the policy, clearly indicating the government's strategy for implementation, the 'what, why and how' of the policy. In addition to this, a policy implementation plan should deal with actual details of when and where it will happen, who will make it happen and with which resources. Considering the ongoing policy implementation challenges and the deleterious impact on the children at the receiving end, it seems cogent to build in strategic frameworks and plans for effective and successful delivery. Failure to do so means that the vast inequalities in children's circumstances and opportunities continue to be replicated, consigning them to continued lifelong disadvantage.

Furthermore, policy gaps reflect another facet of challenges faced in the sector in the form of a misdirected or ineffectual approach to teaching and

learning. As noted in Chapter 1, the assumption this study makes is the gap in the ECD curriculum in its failure to apply a holistic integral education pedagogic model with Ubuntu values that could bring about behaviour and attitude change in the early years for social responsibility and civic participation. Despite the explicit acknowledgement that, “[t]he early years have also been recognised as the ideal phase for the transmission of the values that are essential for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society” (RSA, DOE. WP. 2001: 9), there appears no actual evidence of optimising these critical years to this end. Violence and anti-social behaviour and attitudes continue to be features of South African youth amongst whom the levels of violence remain extraordinarily high (Meyer and Chetty 2017: 122; Burton 2012: 5).

The integral education model proposed in this study is transformative, culturally appropriate and can prepare children for a new social order, an aspiration articulated by the first democratically elected president of South Africa, when he said: “The vision of a new society that guides us should already be manifest in the steps we take to address the wrong done to our youth and to prepare for their future” (Mandela 1995: 3/2-4).

2.3.2. ECD National Policies and Programmes

This section reviews ECD policies and programmes applicable to this study. The review reveals that, generally, their application appears to be deficient in achieving the stated goals, most notably, transformation and redress, an appropriate and effective pedagogic approach and an Ubuntu-based curriculum/programme.

2.3.2.1 White Paper on Education and Training (1995)

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) defined the government’s commitment to young children, including their intention to phase in a “reception year” as part of compulsory schooling. Aptly entitled, ‘First Steps to Develop a New System’, though not necessarily executed, the White Paper (WP) on Education and Training (RSA, DoE. WP 1995) was the first policy

document on education and training in post-apartheid South Africa under the Government of National Unity (GNU). It was intended to formulate and spearhead the process of transformation in education and training and to bring about a system that would serve all South Africans, its new democracy, and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RSA, DoE. WP 1995: 19). According to Moyo and Mamobolo (2014: 947), since the attainment of democracy in 1994, development planning was imperative because the government was faced with numerous challenges that had roots in the apartheid era - policies of racial discrimination, economic marginalisation and oppression of Blacks through excluding them from ownership and control of productive resources.

The RDP, therefore, was an attempt to transform the power, political, social and economic relations in democratic South Africa to promote the creation of an egalitarian, non-racial and non-sexist society and to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment (*ibid*). Equally, Adelzadeh (1996), argues that the Reconstruction and Development Programme was the ANC's main policy platform (Adelzadeh 1996: 66). The primacy of the RDP is unequivocally reflected in the White Paper (1995):

All Ministries are expected to re-orient their programmes and budgets in accordance with RDP priorities. From one perspective, the entire work of the national and provincial Ministries of Education supports the objectives of the RDP, since education and training are by definition developmental. From another perspective, the education and training sector requires transformation like any other because of the structural imbalances in provision, funding, quality and output, the need to deliver education services to neglected adult, youth and early childhood constituencies, to rewrite curricula and textbooks, link schooling and the world of work, restructure governance systems, upgrade the professional competence of teachers, gear learning outcomes to the country's reconstruction and development agenda, and much more" (RSA, DoE. WP 1995: 19).

The reality, however, is that the government's development priorities soon gave way to the preference of growth, to the extent that after the first year the GNU's general incapacity to deliver on its election promises in the developmental field became apparent. The RDP became an equally potent

symbol of that failure (Blumenfeld 1996: 1). According to Tikly (1997: 181), the redistributive aims of the RDP gave way to the 'imperatives' of the free market, fiscal discipline and economic growth, exemplified both in relation to the 1995 budget and the gradual watering down and marginalisation of the redistributive aims of the RDP. Thus, the RDP building block for education transformation and redress was sacrificed on the altar of “the neo-liberal framework and its associated policies” (Adelzadeh 1996: 67).

According to Abendroth and Portfilio (2015, cited in Sims, 2017: 2), neoliberalism is an “anti-democratic force that gives the corporate elite of global capitalism power of nation states”. More apposite to the context of this study, the impact of neoliberalism on the early childhood sector is harmful, particularly because of its focus on “standardisation, push-down curriculum and its positioning of children as investments for future economic productivity” (*ibid*: 1). This narrow understanding of ECD, according to Atmore (2018: 21) focuses on the young child’s performance in meeting rigid developmental outcomes set by regulatory authorities and simultaneously sacrificing social justice, holistic development and equity. Consequently, the strident call is made for resistance to neoliberalism in ECD and for early childhood educators to be reflective and critical in their work to lay appropriate foundations for the development of citizens with a commitment to “the fundamental principles of justice and freedom that lie at the heart of a robust democracy” (Giroux, 2015, cited in Sims 2017: 2).

In light of the foregoing, redress and transformation expected in the ECD sector emanating from this White Paper (1995) has been sluggish. Atmore (2013) argued that eighteen years into democracy, the majority of young children in South Africa were still negatively impacted by a range of social and economic inequalities, including inadequate access to health care, education, social services and nutrition. Despite the Bill of Rights clause (RSA Constitution 1996) making provision for children's socio-economic rights, including the right to basic education and protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation, the development of the majority of South Africa’s

children continues to be undermined (Atmore 2013: 152-3). Porteus (2004: 339) contends that in the post-apartheid policy development, the processes of ECD have been widely relegated to the periphery of policy attention, particularly in the education sector. Consequently, the current trajectory of development not only fails to ameliorate the conditions of young children but could deepen the inequities they face.

In acknowledging the fundamental importance of ECD, the White Paper (1995) further recognises the critical need for appropriately qualified teachers as noted in, “The young child's learning, in educare centres, pre-schools and in the early school grades, must be entrusted to teachers who have specialised training in the educational needs of this age group” (RSA, DoE. WP 1995: 32). The shift to “a market-based plan” (Moyo and Mamobolo 2014: 947) appears to have been antithetical to state subsidisation through study bursaries or financial aid schemes to incentivise ECD qualifications. Quality teaching and learning are essential for effective early development to take place. Regardless of the situation or the facility in which a child is placed, a quality teacher can provide a learning environment in which a child can develop optimally and in a holistic manner (Atmore *et al.* 2012: 133).

In practice, however, practitioner training and appropriate qualifying standards have been neglected which could result in the provision of poor quality ECD services and increased risks for children (Biersteker and Dawes 2008: 195). According to Atmore, in a Western Cape study assessing the quality of ECD services, it was found that only 35% of practitioners responsible for infant and toddler classes and only 47% of practitioners responsible for older children had any form of ECD qualification (Atmore 2013: 157). Further, van den Berg and Hofmeyr (2018: 9), indicate that ECD practitioners are extremely poorly paid, with the result that personnel quality in ECD centres is generally poor. Training and selection issues are vital and an increase in subsidy levels to attract more able practitioners is critical.

During apartheid, the lack of state involvement in ECD resulted in communities and nongovernmental organisations shouldering most of the burden of providing ECD services and training for Black (African, Coloured and Indian) children as mentioned in Chapter 1. This historical reality is affirmed in, “The tradition of community provision of pre-schooling is an appropriate and valuable asset which should in no way be undermined but, on the contrary, should be encouraged and supported. The role of non-governmental organisations, including religious and other community-based structures, has been strategically important” (RSA, DOE. WP 1995: 82).

Although the role of communities as the backbone of ECD provision in pre-democratic South Africa is acknowledged in the White Paper (1995) to the extent that they “should be encouraged and supported”, the implementation is deficient. In this regard, Atmore (2013: 158) indicates that proper administrative and management systems are lacking in community-based ECD centres and, therefore, may be unable to meet the minimum standards set by the Department of Social Development. Financial management of many of the community-based ECD facilities is poor and more than 50% of these centres do not have many of the necessary administrative documents and structures set up (Atmore 2013: 158), rendering them noncompliant for registration and state subsidisation of the child. This suggests a serious lack of the encouragement and support alluded to in the policy and, overall, seems to indicate the dissonance between policy statements and their implementation. According to Porteus (2004: 357), ECD policy, more than any other policy area, provided an opportunity for the public sector to embrace and financially support community initiatives and local model development. Instead, this opportunity was not taken up resulting in the policy choice being largely against, rather than with the diversity of local initiatives in the area.

On the issue of institutional capacity to offer support to community-based sites, Biersteker (2008: 43), points out the lack of dedicated ECD staff in the district offices and the incapacity of the social workers to effect credible

quality checks not to mention their inability to offer encouragement and support. Thus, the White Paper (1995), however well-intentioned in honouring the contributions of community-based ECD providers, has been ineffectual in actually enabling relief to those who were already disadvantaged and burdened before democracy. Ironically, the WP seems to have fallen victim to its own cautionary note: "Policy is important, but execution is more important" (RSA, DoE. WP 1995: 8).

However, it should be noted that the WP (1995) was the first official policy declaration of the state to include a reception year (Grade R) into the basic education school phase. While this should be acknowledged as a significant step towards government provision of ECD services to the young, at the same time its unfavourable impact on community-based ECD provision, the primary focus of this study, is of concern. In referencing the 2001 National ECD Audit (DSD) that found community-based centres fragile because of their over-reliance on parental fees, Porteus (2004: 358), suggests that the persistent household poverty among the ECD cohort – made worse in current times by the Covid -19 shut down could have acute outcomes for the continued viability of these centres. Compounding these problems are the decline of donor funding and the reluctance of the Departments of Health and Social Development to increase investment into the sector. In addition to these gloomy prospects, the expansion of school-based Grade R classrooms and the concomitant removal of 5-year-old children from this system, could displace community-based sites and result in the overall decline in services to the age cohort they serve. Added to this is the expected exodus of qualified practitioners from low-paying ECD sites to the more stable and higher-paid state employ. Overall, the situation looks unfavourable for the poorest children.

2.3.2.2 White Paper 5 on ECD (2001)

The Education White Paper 5, 2001 emphasises the key role of early intervention in the lives of children below the age of 3 years and up until the age of 9 years. It introduced the Reception Year (Grade R) aimed at

preparing 5-year-old children to transition from pre-school to primary school and undertook to address the challenge of ECD for children younger than 4 years by prioritising inter-sectoral collaboration. The strategic plan focused on the delivery of the range of programmes, towards addressing the inequitable provisioning of early childhood development programmes and remediation of the fragmentary early childhood development legislative and policy framework (RSA, DoE. ECD WP 5 2001: 6).

This policy document was preceded by the Interim Policy for ECD (RSA, GNU, DOE. 1996) and a national pilot project to investigate phasing in a reception year (Grade R) and the accreditation of teachers and training providers. The Interim ECD Policy (1996), consistent with the ethos and principles of participatory democracy, was the result of a wide range of stakeholder representation under the aegis of the Coordinating Committee for Early Childhood Development (CCECD) included representatives from DoE and other government departments, national ECD stakeholder organisations, ECD specialists and South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD). In addition, it incorporated a large number of submissions from organisations, individuals and provincial consultative forums in the field of ECD (SA, DOE. 1996: 2). However, Atmore (2018), points out that this policy was for the most part written by an American education consultant with no consultation with ECD representative organisations and stakeholders. The explanation offered by the most senior DoE ECD official in response to the consequent challenge was the sufficiency of stakeholder consultation prior to 2001 (Atmore 2018: 112).

Despite this serious neglect, the release of the Education White Paper 5 was a significant milestone in ECD in South Africa (DoE, 2001), not least because it prioritised the poorest of the poor. In this regard, the policy indicates that because approximately 40% of young children in South Africa grow up in abject poverty and neglect, an action plan to address the early learning opportunities of especially these children is imperative. Given that timely and appropriate interventions can reverse early deprivation and maximise

potential, access to ECD programmes, particularly for poor children, must be increased (RSA, DoE. WP 2001: 5).

The intention to ameliorate the circumstances of particularly the poor children by enabling access to ECD services is laudable and corresponds with the redress and social justice position advanced in this study. Notwithstanding, the policy focus is on the Reception Year (Grade R) and, with the exception of proposing inter-sectoral programmes for children from birth to five years, appears to be almost silent on the early education of this age cohort of children. Porteus (2004: 354) concurs that the White Paper singles out 5-year-old-children, gives minimal attention to pre-Reception year services, and provides no guidelines or concrete support toward this end. The responsibility for the 0–4-year-old cohort is largely shifted to the Department of Social Development (DSD) and while there is a reference to collaborative programming between education, health and welfare departments, little direction and no funding specifications are suggested. Referencing this omission, Atmore (2018), argues that government did not have the political will and capacity to accommodate this age group in its major ECD policy (2001) document. As such, it demonstrates that despite the rhetoric of successive Ministers of Education, DoE officials and education department documents, ECD remained on the periphery of the education system. This dereliction on the part of the government was particularly disappointing seven years after democracy in South Africa (Atmore 2018: 113). Thus, the White Paper 5 (2001), fails the 0-4-year-olds in the provision of ECD services and programmes and, more pertinent to this study, neglects to optimise the critical years for the acquisition of social responsibility and active citizenry, which as it avers is “the ideal phase for the transmission of essential values for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society” (RSA, DOE. WP 5 2001: 9).

According to Young (2015: 99), policymakers and government leaders must appreciate that the need to invest in early childhood development is immediate and that the returns come in long-term, positive effects for

children, families, societies and nations. She, therefore, advocates for building the necessary infrastructure for early childhood from the bottom up, beginning with families in local communities, supported by a framework of national policy and a network of local, regional and national institutions. Thus, starting with the family, the government has a responsibility to empower parents with the requisite skills and knowledge for effective parenting.

Although, the White Paper (RSA, DOE. 1995: 31), identifies this need as essential to ECD as noted in, “ECD depends on and contributes to community development, and the education of parents should go hand-in-hand with the education of children”, the Policy (2001) “does not take advantage of the possibilities of better linking early childhood and parental services. The link between ABET programming and ECD programming is conspicuous in its absence” (Porteus 2004: 354). In the context of this study, the deficiency in this regard relates to transformation and redress. According to the Interim Policy for ECD (RSA, DOE. 1996: 6), a high proportion of poor parents have had very little or no schooling and experience difficulty preparing their own children for formal learning and for acquiring skills such as reading. It, therefore, becomes imperative that programmes for Adult Basic Education and Training and ECD should be closely linked. In addition, parental involvement in the early development of children could bridge the gap between home and preschool and enable holistic development for the all-round well-being of children and future citizens.

2.3.2.3 The National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) (2009)

The National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS) is a curriculum-related policy initiative that focuses primarily on the early learning needs of children from birth to four years. The policy provides early learning standards expressed as desired results, indicators and competencies of expected learning achievements for young children in a designated age range to improve children’s learning experiences in their different environments. The desired results are based on the domains of child

development: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, perceptual, moral, spiritual and aesthetic (RSA, DoE. NELDS 2009: 14).

Although the document “promotes an integrated approach to encompass all the different skills, knowledge and abilities that children are expected and encouraged to attain in the different domains” (*ibid*:14), its mainstream pedagogic approach tends to develop discrete domains of the child, segmented into learning areas (literacy, numeracy and life skills). Another feature of mainstream teaching and learning practice is its overemphasis on developing the cognitive domain, to the relegation of the other domains in varying orders of insignificance. For instance, the spiritual, moral, aesthetic, perceptual or intuitive domains do not receive equal weighting in the ECD programme, since the focus is on school readiness. With regard to the NELDS, Ebrahim (2012: 4) notes that the cognitive domain features more strongly than the others. This study argues that child development must be holistic, and the dominance of the cognitive domain and the concomitant inferiority of those domains strongly associated with character formation will fail to develop the values of social responsibility and civic participation.

The guiding principles of NELDS derived from the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) emphasise democratic values, social justice, improved quality of life for all, equality and protection of all citizens (RSA, DoE. 2009: 8). This would entail a strong/equal emphasis on the development of non-cognitive skills that engage children in values of democracy and citizenship. This vision of places of learning as the “nursery of values” (Asmal 2001: 8) for South African youth is articulated in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001). The purpose of this manifesto is to nurture a sense of the democratic values of the Constitution in young South Africans (RSA, DoE. 2001: 7). According to the foreword:

The Manifesto recognises that values are the common currency that makes life meaningful, and the normative principles that ensure ease of life lived in common. Inculcating a sense of values at school is intended to help young people achieve higher levels of moral judgement. We also believe that education does not exist simply to serve the market, but to

serve society, and that means instilling in pupils and students a broad sense of values (Asmal 2001: 3).

This study argues, however, that this and other similar post-apartheid initiatives to restore a values ethic and a moral sense (see, for instance, The Moral Regeneration Movement (2000); Department of Basic Education, Values in Action (2011)) are reactions to the degenerate behaviours and attitudes amongst youth. Unless they are embedded in the teaching and learning processes of the education system, they tend to remain complements, outside the mainstream of learning. In this context, Howe and Covell (2009: 23) contend that a values framework for children to learn about their own rights and responsibilities should be accompanied with opportunities for meaningful participation. When children are treated as citizens of the present rather than of the future, they are much more likely to become motivated and engaged in the practice of citizenship. This calls for an approach that is grounded – not one that is appended - in values of social responsibility, justice and civic participation, which, in turn, necessitates the equal and synchronous development of all domains of the child.

Fundamental to this study is the issue of cultural and contextual relevance, as noted in Chapter 1, in the integration of Ubuntu values in the ECD curriculum. In relation to the applicability to the South African context, the developmental standards advanced in NELDS, according to Miyahara and Meyers (2008, cited in Ebrahim 2012: 2), are based largely on research from North America and Europe and may be inappropriate for local uses. The Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are aimed at defining expectations for children's development for the use of school readiness and monitoring. They are developed with the specific intention to gather information through observing children in their settings and can be used to make judgements on quantity, quality, value in relation to early care and education. These standards have relevance for children in particular countries. In the minority Western world, the development of Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), supported by high knowledge, skills, financial resources, substantive participation and technical expertise, can be

localised. The Majority world (reference to the majority of the population, poverty, landmass and lifestyles located in Africa, Asia and Latin America), however, must rely on support from international organisations like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for ELDS initiatives (*Ibid*: 2), and consent to standards and practices that are contextually inappropriate.

Broadening this argument of Euro-Western dominance, with particular reference to Africa, Pence and Marfo (2008: 80), note that much of the research traditions and knowledge bases shaping ECD programme content and delivery mechanisms remain dismissive of cultural differences. Although over 90% of the world's children live outside the Euro-Western Minority World, the vast majority of developmental and ECD literature comes from the Minority World, and in particular from the United States (US). Despite increased recognition of ecological and eco-cultural theories that shape early childhood development, they are largely under-researched.

Ebrahim (2012: 7), argues that conceptions of child development from the majority world and South Africa, in particular, are generally weak. Referring to the competencies in the standards (NELDS), she suggests that they comply with a normative administrative model with a Euro-American base of child development. As such, the model overpowers efforts to ground who South African children are, what they should know and be able to do. Consequently, correcting the epistemic imbalance and shifting the power dynamic, necessitates redressing the paucity of child development research and output emanating from the Majority world. Ebrahim's (*ibid*: 9) reassurance that such measures can move early childhood care and education into a powerful space of influence to transform the sector, finds resonance with this study that adopts postcolonial and postmodernist theoretical lenses.

2.3.2.4 The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015)

This policy document is aimed at the provision of comprehensive, universally available and equitable early childhood development services in South Africa. Consistent with the National Development Plan 2030, the Government of South Africa has prioritised early childhood development citing overwhelming scientific evidence of the tremendous importance of the early years for human development and the need for investing resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception (RSA, DSD, DoE, DoH. WP 2015: 8). Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel (2013: 4) confirm the importance of a young child's early years based on research evidence that the early stages of life lay the foundation for all future development. They point out that a lack of opportunities and interventions, or poor-quality interventions, during early childhood can significantly disadvantage young children and diminish their potential for success.

Thus, while the critical importance of the early years for human development is irrefutable, the concerns raised relate to the quality and type of interventions currently applied. This study emphasises the ECD programme, which is inadequate and ineffectual for the transformation mandate expected of the democratic government. Although the quality of ECD programmes in South Africa has not been qualitatively assessed, findings from two limited studies, one in low-income, rural communities and the other in a largely urban province in Reception Year classes, indicate poor programme quality. A public expenditure tracking study in over 600 Reception Year classes and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) facilities for younger children (Department of Basic Education, 2010) found programme quality to be better in schools located in the top three income quintiles indicating that children from financially advantaged backgrounds received better service (Biersteker *et al*, 2016: 337). According to Van der Berg and Hofmeyr (2018: 8), social gradients in education are not an uncommon finding, in part because wealthier parents can offer their children more support, including support with

schoolwork. The failure to provide quality and effective ECD programmes, equally, diminishes the potential for success in young children and is, therefore, unlikely to yield meaningful social change running the risk of replicating the social ills that currently beset society.

The policy acknowledges that the first and early years are a critically sensitive period of rapid growth and change, determined by intrinsic, as well as external factors. As such, children's optimal development depends on a supportive and nurturing environment that secures their access to a full complement of services that, in turn, secure all their protected rights (RSA, DSD. 2015: 19). In the absence or neglect of socio-economic redress, however, the policy statement appears hollow, especially considering the government's shift away from the ideology of reconstruction and development to neoliberalism. On the ground, quality and equitable early childhood development provision remain one of the fundamental and critical imperatives to disrupt the intergenerational cycle of deprivation amongst African children. In addition, the traditional family structures have been eroded and poverty-stricken female-headed, as well as child-headed households, are common. HIV and AIDS are a serious threat to livelihoods and family structure. Low levels of literacy among many primary caregivers make it difficult for them to fully support their children's early education (Biersteker *et al*, 2016). Furthermore, the persistence of child poverty consigns children to a cycle of disadvantage. Poor children are more likely to have low academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to have health, behavioural, and emotional problems (Moore *et al* 2009: 2/2-4)), as is the case in South Africa with successive generations of poverty and deprivation.

Significantly, the policy principle of respecting the views of the child (RSA, DSD. 2015: 45), resonates with an IE approach that promotes a sustainable, participative culture of learning through dialogue and discussion. The child, therefore, is an active participant in the process of self-discovery (Partho 2007: 167). In this regard, Atmore (2018) draws attention to the changing construction of childhood in ECD policymaking in South Africa. Over a 25-

year period (1990 to 2015), the constructs of 'child as dependent within the family' and the 'child as learner within a community of learners' dominated. The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (RSA, DSD. 2015), in foregrounding child rights ushered in a construct of child as a citizen within a social community (Atmore 2018: 18).

Sorin (2005), reconceptualises the dominant construct of childhood which views children as incapable, powerless and in need of adult protection. She argues that early childhood policy and practice is seen as a time of passivity, where children receive knowledge and experiences chosen and provided for them by their adult caregivers. Instead, the 'agentic child', challenges the notion of the innocent, powerless child, as children are considered social actors who participate in their education and lives (James, Jenks and Prout 1998 cited in Sorin 2005: 18) and co-construct childhood with adults (Corsaro 1997 cited in *ibid*: 12-18).

The concept of 'child centredness' (RSA, DSD. National ECD Policy 2015: 45), however, tends to exclude other approaches. According to Ebrahim (2012), the concept forms part of the dominant discourse of best practice in early education associated with change and quality. This view emanates from the reconceptualist deconstruction of the concept based on its association with theorists like Piaget who believed that children should be taught according to their needs and interest on the basis of ages and stages of child development. When the approach of child centredness functions as universal pedagogy it is viewed as essentially appropriate for all children (Cannella and Viruru 1997 cited in Ebrahim 2012: 7). Consequently, in advancing a position against the dominance of the Minority World and the exclusive promotion of Euro-Western models of child development, the reconceptualists argue that the Western notion of child-centredness should include multiple layers of local people's ways of knowing and doing (*ibid*: 7).

In this context, referencing Pence and Marfo's (2008) concept of 'a co-constructed generative curriculum approach', Brink (2016: 4), argues that in

the South African context this would constitute a more appropriate and culturally sensitive way of ECD delivery by retaining those aspects from imported models which have utility value and integrating into existing indigenous knowledge systems of early childcare and education. In this way, engagement with all role-players is enabled instead of the typical top-down approach, which excludes voices and agency on the ground. Clearly, this participatory and broad-based approach accords with the philosophy and principles of the integral education approach with Ubuntu values proposed in this study.

2.3.2.5. The South African National Curriculum Framework (2015)

The comprehensive South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (NCF), based on the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS), and underpinned by the South African Constitution (1996), provides guidelines for the design of early learning programmes. According to the framework, a curriculum aims to help every child to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours for life, learning, schooling and work (RSA, DoE. 2015: 2).

Laevers (2005) suggests that curriculum frameworks generally agree on what should be developed in children. The challenge, however, lies in the implementation of the innovation devised by the developers of these curricula. If the strategy to guide implementation is based on, a dated, linear-rational paradigm one cannot expect an improvement in the quality of education. Instead, creating a powerful, dynamic and holistic learning environment within an open framework approach consistent with the constructivist view, demands a lot more from teachers. Hence, professional development must be at the centre of any strategy that supports the implementation of new curricula (Laevers 2005: 28). Similarly, in identifying key elements of effective ECD programmes, Schweinhart (2013), suggests the use of a valid, interactive child development curriculum in which both children and teachers have a hand in designing children's learning activities. Equally, implementing such a curriculum requires serious interactive training,

study and practice particularly for teachers who have little experience with this type of education (Schweinhart 2013: 394).

Given the current shortage of trained and capacitated staff including practitioners, departmental officials and managers to support existing opportunities for early learning of all kinds (Bhana, *et al* 2014: 73), the obvious concern relates to professional development and capacitation of practitioners for the implementation of the NCF. In this regard, Laevers (2005: 20) cautions that a curriculum can be a powerful instrument to make the educational system more effective in developing human potential, but it can also engender processes that bring us farther away from this main goal because they go against the principles of good practice. In the current South African ECD context, contrary to the principles of good practice, the implementation strategy appears problematic.

According to the NCF (RSA, DoE. 2015: 1), ECD programmes in South Africa are fundamentally different from those of other countries because they are based on the urgent need to effect social transformation as a result of apartheid, the inequalities and conditions that young children face and the need to promote a new democratic vision. This study argues that applying an IE approach with Ubuntu values of social responsibility and civic participation would give concrete expression to the urgent need to effect social transformation through education for the youngest children. This 'open framework approach consistent with the constructivist view' (Laevers 2005) and underpinned by values education is more likely to foster a new vision for citizens in democratic South Africa.

Values education refers to the aspect of pedagogical practice in which moral or political values, including norms, dispositions and skills grounded in those values, are mediated to, or learned by pupils (Thornberg 2008, cited in Thornberg 2016: 243). The concept focuses on pedagogical processes in which young people learn values and morality and acquire knowledge of this domain about relating to other people, together with the ability and disposition

to apply the values intelligently (Aspin 2000, cited in *ibid*). It is in the early childhood period that children develop their basic values, attitudes, skills, behaviours and habits, which may be long lasting. As early childhood education is about laying a sound intellectual, psychological, emotional, social and physical foundation for development and lifelong learning, it has an enormous potential in fostering values, attitudes, skills and behaviours (Samuelsson and Kaga 2008: 12).

Although the NCF (2015) promotes a holistic vision of ECD and is aligned to the values of a democratic society based on freedom and equality in the South African Constitution (1996), its failure to explicitly incorporate a values pedagogy is problematic. Values education in the ECD phase, as indicated, has the potential to optimally use the early learning opportunities to acquire values especially in relationships with other people for cohesive communities and society. In this regard, Young (2014: 10) argues that despite the convincing evidence of the critical value of children's early years for the formation of skills and capabilities, the tendency, instead, is to focus on cognitive skills, measured by achievement, to the neglect of the critical importance of social skills, self-discipline, motivation, and other personal attributes that enable interaction effectively and harmoniously with other people. As this study argues, the acquisition of the values of social responsibility and civic participation in the preschool phase could develop a new generation of citizens for participatory democracy in South Africa, a vision that will not materialise without deliberate intervention.

Incorporating the theories that consider culture and context as critical for developmentally appropriate practice, the NCF (2015) is guided by the principles of diversity, inclusivity, equity, democracy and therefore the incorporation of local context and indigenous resources (RSA, DoE. 2015: 4). This is consistent with many development agencies embracing the importance of local knowledge and practices and, consequently, designing culturally appropriate interventions (Pence and McCallum 1994 cited in Schafer, *et al* 2004: 64). In practice, however, this diversity and social and

cultural sensitivity appear to be largely lacking. Biersteker (2008 cited in Gwele and Biersteker 2012: 4), argues that despite growing international recognition that good quality ECD programming should be sensitive to and build on the local and indigenous knowledge and practices, most local models and curriculum guidelines still privilege Western child development theory and models of ECD provision. Thus, the so-called inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge and practices in South African ECD programming is rhetoric since these are often overlooked by programmers and practitioners, resulting in the negation of parents/caregivers and communities' own beliefs and practices. In addition, the values and principles on which Western ECD goals and interventions are based may be inappropriate to local conditions, clash with local values and result in misguided and unsuccessful implementation (*ibid*).

The growing awareness within the ECD sector of the need for interventions to respect and build on local and indigenous knowledge, as well as to record accounts and stories before they disappear (*ibid*), resonate with this study in its promotion of relevant and culturally appropriate Ubuntu values for young children. Moreover, as has been alluded to in Pence and Marfo's (2008: 80) argument that despite anthropological research on the implications of cultural differences, the ECD movement in the Majority World continues to be challenged by research traditions and knowledge bases shaping ECD programme content and delivery mechanisms that overlook cultural differences.

In this context, the NCF (RSA, DoE. 2015: 81-2) cites as its sources the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand (NZ) and Canada. The framework includes ideas for practice developed from internationally-based programmes such as High/Scope (US), Montessori (Italy), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Head Start (US) and Sure Start (UK) as well as from ECD programmes in New Zealand, Australia and Scotland. Almost as an afterthought, best practice in South African ECD programmes has been incorporated. Clearly, drawing (almost) exclusively from Euro-Western

programmes and practices the NCF, thus, raises issues of relevance and applicability in a(n) (South) African context. Viewed through a reconceptualist lens, the framework seems to be perpetuating the Euro-Western 'universal' prescriptions for "best practice" which continue to dominate the ECD field and privilege these forms of knowledge, which can create power for certain groups of people and oppress others (RECE 2014). Viruru (2005: 14-15) argues that very few early childhood educators are willing to give up the idea that children develop in a universal, linear sequence toward maturity, which appears to be the situation in South Africa.

The provision of ECD in South Africa has traditionally been the responsibility of members of the community trained by service providers such as ECD Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and/or government departments. The curriculum literature and training materials, however, derived from Western sources, mainly adaptations of Montessori and High Scope methods (Penn, 1997 cited in *ibid*), may not be completely appropriate to South African local cultures and contexts. Although materials may be adapted, the western tenets that inform them are generally assumed to be universal (*ibid*), a situation that has seen no significant changes despite the opportunity for meaningful change afforded in 1994, after the advent of democracy in South Africa. This study concurs with these views that early childhood education worldwide, and particularly in South Africa have been profoundly influenced by dominant Western discourses about the education and development of young children. Therefore, any new South African curriculum should be more reflective of cultural and contextual realities to give effect to the spirit of transformation and redress articulated in the first Education and Training Policy in democratic South Africa that, "it cannot be business as usual" (RSA, DoE. WP 2001: 2).

The developmental needs of the young child vary according to a range of differentials, such as culture, language, belief structure, or life circumstances, hence the NCF (2015) indicates its underpinning by appropriate, developmentally based educational responses (RSA, DoE. 2015: 6).

Grieshaber (2010: 37), however, points out concerns about the child development theories that early childhood educators have relied on to understand children's behaviour and to plan early childhood programmes. The three issues of relevance to this study are, focusing on the individual child instead of locating children in social, cultural, and political contexts (Lubeck 1994, cited in *ibid*); regarding developmental theory as normative and excluding children who do not fit developmental milestones (Cannella 1997, cited in *ibid*); and, adopting universal patterns of development for all children at about the same ages to achieve (*ibid*).

Thus, the danger exists of blindly applying Euro-Western standards to understand behavioural patterns of children to develop ECD programmes in South Africa. The resultant misfit can lead to ineffective programming and possibly cause more harm than good. Overall, the national ECD policies and programmes, though originally framed by the RDP ideology for education transformation and redress, have had to reorientate to the neo-liberal framework resulting in the majority of young children in South Africa still being negatively impacted by a range of social and economic inequalities. Moreover, as noted, they have been greatly influenced by dominant Western discourses about the education and development of young children, including rigid and inappropriate developmental outcomes while sacrificing social justice, holistic development and equity. Consequently, the failure to lay appropriate foundations for the development of citizens with a commitment to the basic principles of social responsibility and civic participation at the heart of a robust and participatory democracy represents a major gap. Further, the general and common discordance between policy statements and their implementation compound the problems associated with poor delivery of ECD services.

2.4. INTEGRAL EDUCATION

This study proposes an Integral Education approach to ECD in South Africa based on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950). Although the origin of IE is India, as an approach to education, it has universal application. In his

writings on education, Aurobindo formulated a theory that could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, fostering the growth of integral consciousness in every child and bringing back legitimate authority of the spirit to a matter fully developed and utilised (Raina 2002: 374). Its aptness to South African children is the possibility of transformation through the simultaneous growth and development of all aspects of the human being within an affirming and supportive cultural milieu. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is an imperative for a new social order in South Africa. Although this opportunity existed at the inception of democracy in 1994, this study argues that the current curriculum developments in ECD may be ineffectual as indicated.

2.4.1. Philosophical underpinning of Sri Aurobindo's IE

Originally a poet and a socio-political activist for the liberation of India from British rule and domination, Sri Aurobindo engaged in the practice of Yoga and, through it, developed a philosophy of complete affirmation (Chaudhuri 1972, cited in *ibid*: 375). Yoga is a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of one's latent potentials and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent existence (Aurobindo 1977). Integral Yoga, a manifestation of a higher level of consciousness, seeks to change the inner-self (psyche) and outer-life (social disposition). Overall, his system of yoga was a synthesis of Western psychology, which focuses on the outer personality and social behaviour, with Eastern spirituality which focuses on the inner person and the psyche. Aurobindo believed that Hindu spirituality and meditative yoga would augment his new vision of political thought, social work, and the quest for self-realisation as interconnected activities (White 2007: 122). He was acutely aware of the significance of the discrepancies in the conceptualisation of man, his life and destiny, of the nation and of humanity and the life of the human race reflected in the respective philosophies of education over time. The development of integral education was rooted in 'the developing soul of India, to her future need, to

the greatness of her coming self-creation, to her eternal spirit' (Sen 1952, cited in Raina 2002: 375).

White (2007: 121), describes Aurobindo as a philosopher, a 20th Century Renaissance person and an *avant-garde* intellectual. His intense analysis of human and social evolution by philosophically reconciling Western science with Eastern metaphysics was largely enabled by his education in the West and spiritual enlightenment in the East. According to Wolfers (2017: 278), Aurobindo was sent to England to be educated at St. Paul's School and later at King's College Cambridge, where he distinguished himself as a scholar of classics. On his return to India, he taught at the state college and immersed himself in translating Bengali and Sanskrit texts, literary criticism and poetic composition. In Pondicherry where he retreated in 1910 Aurobindo, together with Mirra Alfassa and her husband Paul Richard, launched the philosophical monthly, *Arya*, which functioned as the mouthpiece for his unique synthesis of spiritual thought across East and West, Dorman (n.d.: 1), notes that over the course of his life, Aurobindo framed this synthesis in terms of integration between the material success of the West and the spiritual success of the East. He believed that only through such an integral process could the global community progress. Thus, Aurobindo's philosophy was rooted in the co-mingling of his western education and eastern spirituality, both knowledge systems in which he excelled.

Aurobindo's magnum opus, *Life divine*, 'the philosophical masterpiece of the century' (Vrekhem 1999, cited in Raina 2002: 374), together with his letters, revolutionised India's conception of psychology. Through this, he formulated a profoundly new approach to sociology in 'The human cycle' and showed how a truly spiritual attitude is an essential foundation for a new and lasting social order. In 'the ideal of human unity', he extended the application of this approach to the sphere of international politics. Aurobindo's writings provide the necessary force for action, realisation and transformation reflected in his philosophy and arrived at through inner experience. He wrote: '...in fact, I

was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later on I founded my philosophy' (Heehs 1989, cited in Raina 2002: 375).

Sri Aurobindo believed that India has always seen in the individual a portion of the Divinity enclosed by mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit. Thus, the indivisibility or oneness of the divine (spiritual being) and nature (corporeal being) manifesting in the individual (Aurobindo 1990, cited in Raina 2002: 375). In his educational philosophy, Aurobindo upheld the basic principle of the spirit as the living and vital force, the clash between an imported civilisation and the greater possibilities of the Indian mind and nature and between the present and the future. This national fervour in a call to revive the spirit and psyche of the Indian for India's rebirth after British occupation and the destructive impact of colonisation is expressed in Sri Aurobindo's words:

India of the ages is not dead, nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable *Shakti* (sacred force representing the Hindu concept of the divine feminine aspect, sometimes referred to as 'The Divine Mother') recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma (basic principles of the cosmos that gives order to the universe) (Sri Aurobindo 1911)

Thus, an education that would incorporate all that was innate in a human being towards a realisation of one's own fulfilment and completeness. Implicit in this is a challenging of the Western concept that education involves the rational faculty only and excludes the core or essence (spirit) of one's being.

Similarly, Gardner (1983;1993), argues that modern Western education focuses almost exclusively on the development of the rational mind, with little attention given to the maturation of other dimensions of the person. As a result, most individuals reach adulthood with a somewhat mature mental functioning but with poorly developed somatic, vital, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive, and spiritual intelligence (Gardner, 1983;1993 cited in Ferrer *et al*

2006: 19). Because modern education does not enable the autonomous maturation of the body, the instincts, and the heart, these worlds cannot participate in an inquiry process unless externally guided. Further, after many generations of mind-centred life and education, these worlds are undeveloped, to the extent that when an individual seeks knowledge within them and encounters negativity, it can seem that these worlds are epistemically barren. Thus, what is needed, is the creation of spaces in which these human dimensions can achieve epistemic competence and autonomous maturation to become equal partners with the rational mind and participate in co-creating a truly integral process of inquiry and learning. Integral Education, therefore, aims at the multidimensional inquiry and the collaborative construction of knowledge (*ibid*).

These ideas find resonance in this study apropos the formulation of an education system that addresses the current and inherited deficits in South Africa. According to Sri Aurobindo, in devising a true and living education, three key elements – the person, the individual in his commonness and his uniqueness; the nation or people; and universal humanity, should be reflected (Raina 2002: 375). This philosophical underpinning provides the framework for a new way of learning for a new and transformed society, the foundational idea of this study. Aurobindo conceived education as an instrument for the true working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual, the nation and of all of humanity. He thought about an education that would make its central objective the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities for the individual, while the nation will focus on the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the culture and its virtue, referred to as dharma and raise both into powers of life. The fundamental concept underlying integral education is the inextricable link between education and the individual's highest objective, the awakening and development of his spiritual being (Aurobindo 1990, cited in *ibid*: 376).

Aurobindo considered the spiritual path the most direct for the evolution of consciousness of human beings and committed to its progression. His way of

defining and expressing the spiritual, however, included no dogma, worship, or obeisance that might be identified as religious (Adams 2006: 82). Instead, the spiritual is an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body. It is an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to enter into contact with the greater Reality. Spiritual values associated with seeking the non-material or incorporeal are central values and they must therefore govern and guide all the values and aspects of education. In the spiritual life, there is no sense of the separate self, finding oneness with all around (Aurobindo, 1990 cited in *ibid*).

2.4.2. Application of IE

Modern Western education -- “mainstream,” “conventional,” or “traditional” forms tend to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, development of cognitive skills and individual achievement. As noted, this form of education does not create spaces for the independent maturation of the body, the instincts, and the heart. In contrast, “alternative,” “holistic,” and “transformative” education models include many aspects of an individual such as the emotional, moral, interpersonal, cultural and spiritual (Esbjörn-Hargens 2011: 2-4), enabling the development and maturation of other critical human dimensions for completeness of being. The primary goal of holistic, integral education is the fullest possible development of learners’ self-actualisation. Such development of the learner includes higher levels of consciousness through educational intellectual development while also cultivating their relationship with others in society (White 2007: 120).

According to Adams (2006), IE, as developed by Sri Aurobindo, derived from his awareness of an evolutionary turning point for humanity in the early twentieth century. He believed that the mental capacities of human beings far exceeded their spiritual, emotional, and physical development, and the size and complexities of the emerging civilisations far surpassed the capabilities of the educated populace. Creating an integral model of education was one of his responses to this crisis. Fundamental to this approach is the acknowledgement that:

- (i) human beings have many dimensions to their wholeness, the physical, emotional/vital, mental, and spiritual/psychic, and the awareness and integration of these dimensions is essential to education;
- (ii) there is an interrelatedness that extends to all processes of life and all areas of knowledge, and
- (iii) self-knowledge and knowledge of the world are equally important educational aims (Adams 2006: 80).

The basic principles of IE, as mentioned in Chapter 1, that underlie the pedagogy are:

- (i) In education, nothing can be taught;
- (ii) The mind has to be consulted in its own growth; and
- (iii) All teaching works from that which is to that which shall be (from the near to the far).

The application of these fundamentals allows children to discover, develop, and pursue their unique capacities and life purpose (Aurobindo 1974: 2-3). Integrality of education is conceived as a process of organic growth, and the way in which various faculties/dimensions could be developed and integrated is dependent upon each child's inclination, the rhythm of progression and the law of development – inherent disposition (*swabhava*) and inner nature (*swadharma*). Integral Education is not conceived as a juxtaposition of a number of subjects, or even a juxtaposition of varieties of faculties. Instead, the idea is to provide facilities for varieties of faculties, varieties of subjects and various combinations of pursuits of knowledge, power, harmony and skill in work. These faculties are so provided that they could be used by each child and the teacher so that a natural process of harmonious development would be achieved (Partho 2007: 189-221).

Sri Aurobindo believed that “knowledge is already dormant within the child and so the teacher does not impart knowledge” (Aurobindo, 2003 cited in Vengopal and Kumari 2010: 62), but respects and accepts the knowledge which each one brings to the class. Thus, learning grows from the events and interpersonal dynamics that are a part of every child's life. The pace of

learning, too, is not uniform or standardised facilitating the treatment of children as individuals in the process of learning so that each child is allowed to discover its own rate of learning (*ibid*). He emphasised that education should create dynamic citizens to meet the needs of modern and complex life.

In this context, Partho (2007: 189-221), delineates the aims of education that Aurobindo specified: The chief aim of education is physical and spiritual development. Other important aims are to train all the senses which must achieve purity before any development is possible; to achieve full and harmonious mental development of the child; to develop conscience and morality. Sri Aurobindo emphasised that without moral and emotional development, mental development becomes harmful to human progress. Thus, the heart of a child should be so developed as to show extreme love, sympathy and consideration for all living beings. In emphasising the primacy of spiritual development, Aurobindo maintained that within every human being is some fragment of divine existence and that education can detect and develop it fully. Finally, IE demands highly conscious and developed teachers who have committed themselves to their own ongoing integral growth. The teacher is always a role model to her children that mere imitation can enable them to reach higher and higher stages of development (*ibid*).

2.5. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND UBUNTU VALUES

2.5.1. Understanding and contextualising IK

In its broadest sense, IK can be defined as a “complex set of knowledge and technologies existing and developed around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to a particular geographic area” with an emphasis on how “these forms of knowledge have hitherto been suppressed” (Ocholla 2007: 2). Essentially, IK, that is, local/traditional/ folk knowledge, ethnoscience is a dynamic archive of the sum total of knowledge, skills and attitudes belonging to and practised by a community over generations and is expressed in the form of action, objects and sign language for sharing. Numerous examples exist as to how IK thrives in beliefs,

medicine, community development, education, communication and entertainment, farming practices, food technology and arts and crafts (*ibid*).

The rise of colonialism in Africa had a profoundly negative impact on IK through the imposition of Euro-Western cultures and knowledge and the concomitant suppression of integrating other forms of knowledge, particularly IK (Kaniki and Mphahlele 2002: 2). Shizha (2010 b, cited in Shizha 2013: 4), furthermore, draws attention to the pervasive decimation of IK in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially with regard to its exclusion from education, one of the primary means of continuity. He argues that the advent of colonisation brought in foreign knowledges as so-called “scientific knowledge” that denigrated IK as unscientific, untried and untested for education and social development. He ascribes the dominance of Western knowledge, which continues to overpower and dismiss the value of other knowledge sources as contributing to the neglect of using IKs in the education system in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Pence and Marfo (2008: 85), similarly affirm that the knowledge, values, and beliefs of indigenous Africans have been challenged and dismissed by the colonisers from the earliest days of Western contact. They point out, however, to an increasing restlessness in many parts of Africa to identify what can be considered “indigenous” in current actions and future activities. Included in this resurgence are the theories and practices of early childhood care and development (Nsamenang 2008 cited in *ibid*: 79), an innovation that finds resonance in this study.

2.5.2. The holism of Ubuntu

The IK focus of this study is Ubuntu which has its roots in African traditional society and philosophy and means humanness or the quality of being human and espouses the ideal of interconnectedness among people. Gade (2011: 316-318), defines Ubuntu, as it was understood through the different historical periods, as a human quality, connected to a philosophy or an ethic, as African humanism and as a worldview. As a human quality, Ubuntu

speaks of humanity and its goodness. The word has the meaning of being human, generous and gracious, and prevailing in Africa even prior to the arrival of the missionaries (Kolini and Holmes 2010 cited in *ibid*: 316). During the idea of transformation of society in South Africa, the idea of Ubuntu and its link to a philosophy or an ethic became widespread. This is exemplified in, for instance, Ubuntu is a philosophy that promotes the common good of society and includes humanness as an essential element of human growth (Venter 2004 cited in *ibid*: 317) and could assist in rebuilding within and amongst different communities (Motsei 2007 cited in *ibid*). Ubuntu characterised as 'African humanism' involves aid-giving, sympathy, care, sensitivity to the needs of others, respect, consideration, patience, and kindness (Prinsloo 1998 cited in *ibid*).

More especially, in the South African context, it is part of a spiritual reconstruction for filling the void of meaning and value left by the dismantled apartheid regime (Lenta 2003 cited in *ibid*). In the category of a 'worldview', it is argued that Ubuntu has the potential in South Africa and the whole global world to be free of all forms of racism by adhering to its basic values of humanness, love, intense caring and sharing, respect and compassion (Ansell 2007 cited in *ibid*). Connected to the proverb, 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu', Ubuntu is identified as integral to traditional African values and generally translated as "people are people through people" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1998 cited in *ibid*: 318), and aligning with the distinctly South African lineages of humanism (Bangstad 2007 cited in *ibid*).

On the whole, Ubuntu, in all its manifestations, remains a value system that generates amongst its adherents a strong sense of the self and the community to engender compassionate, harmonious and respectful coexistence. This sense of interdependence is captured in, 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (Teffo1999: 154). The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA DSD. WP Social Welfare (SW) 1997: 12), defines Ubuntu as:

The principle of caring for each other's well-being will be promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.

At the heart of this definition are the values of social responsibility and civic participation, captured in, "caring for each other's well-being", "spirit of mutual support", "humanity", "relationship", "people are people through other people", "rights and the responsibilities of every citizen", "individual and societal well-being". Although, the guiding principles of Ubuntu espoused in this policy document and others, resonate explicitly with the values promoted in this study, the implementation of these values appear deficient. Confirming this, Ntuli (1999 cited in Msila 2015: 5), argues that in light of the cultural and moral collapse in South Africa, the spirit of Ubuntu has long disappeared. He ascribes the profligacy in South African society to the marginalisation of Ubuntu.

According to Msila (*ibid*: 4), the foundational interconnectedness of Ubuntu extends to child-rearing practices. Children are not brought up by their biological parents only but by the entire village. This extended, collective participation includes educating children, which is undertaken while simultaneously inculcating the cultural ethos. This informal education, however, did not replace the efforts of the professionals who taught very specialised knowledge and skills, especially at given milestones in the life cycle of the developing child. The education was also very practical in conception and methodology, oriented towards problem posing and solving at the individual and communal levels (Mugo 1999: 213). This sense of communality, in opposition to a Western capitalistic system fostering individualism and competitiveness, is at the core of social responsibility and solidarity.

Similarly, in a study to determine children's understanding of Ubuntu, Bonn (2007: 865-6), refers to the general understanding of the socialisation of a

child. Through this process, a child learns about customary practices and traditional values in the family, the community and society. Thus, what is gathered in the child's mind is dependent on the society to which that child belongs. As such, it is the duty of the whole community to mould the child into a good member of that specific community, society and the whole human race. According to Mnyandu (1997, cited in *ibid*: 865), the principles of Ubuntu should be taught and passed on to the child in a manner that will enable the child to develop into a unique human being, endowed with Ubuntu. The values inherent in the Ubuntu system, however, are not innate but are acquired in society and transmitted from one generation to the next by means of oral genres such as fables, proverbs, myths, riddles and storytelling (Kamwangamalu 1999 cited in *ibid*: 871). These values include compassion, tolerance, care, charity, understanding, empathy, equality, hospitality, honesty, trust, conformity, solidarity, mutual responsibility, taking care of everyone in one's community, respect, dignity and a concern for others' welfare. (*ibid*: 864), consonant with the overarching values of social responsibility and civic participation.

This study, therefore, posits the introduction of the Ubuntu value system into the ECD programme content through a range of culturally affirming and values-based artefacts, such as stories, poems, proverbs, songs, dances, games. According to Marfo and Biersteker (2011: 2), education must (1) be locally relevant and (2) transmit a society's enduring values and best traditions across generations. Despite these compelling standards, the Euro-Western education system continues to dominate in Africa, *inter alia*, negatively impacting the cultural identities of children and breaking intergenerational continuity in the core values and traditions. They argue further that these Euro-centric traditions that have governed educational practice on the continent together with the history of colonial domination supporting those traditions could have exacted a lasting impact on Africa's cultural psyche in ways that have profound implications for African children's sense of worth and identity. Early childhood education may present the ideal

opportunity for African educationists to revive the continent's rich values and social mores, performing arts, and forms of learning (*ibid*: 14).

The introduction of Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation in the ECD programme proposed in this study contributes to the urgent curriculum transformation in democratic South Africa. The integration of IK Ubuntu values opens the space for "inclusive perspectives in knowledge production and mediation" (Shizha 2013: 14). Expounding further, Shizha suggests that the approach to pedagogy should be from multifarious perspectives for cultural variations and sensitivity in the classroom. Classroom life should, therefore, reflect the social and cultural contexts of children's experiences, while classroom experiences should focus on the need to meet the current societal needs (*ibid*: 14-5), thus, creating the balance between social and cultural relevance for affirmation and contemporaneity.

2.6. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

2.6.1. Opportunity for transformation

The end of authoritarian rule in South Africa (colonialism and apartheid) and the beginning of democracy heralded a new opportunity for its people, generally, and specifically, as noted, for young children on the brink of a new epoch, from the injustice and deprivation of the past. The Education White Paper 5 on ECD (RSA, DSD. 2001: 7-8), spells out clearly the great possibilities that this moment presented for all children to grow up in dignity and equality. Consequently, the government committed to affording high priority attention to ECD. This decision was backed by the growing scientific evidence from local and international child development research about the importance of the early years, such as:

- the largest part of brain development happens before a child reaches three years old;
- what happens during these early months and years have dramatic consequences for the rest of childhood and adolescence;

- what happens during the prenatal period and the earliest months and years of a child's life can last a lifetime;
- by the age of 2½ years, a child's brain has achieved 50% of its adult weight, and by the age of 5, the brain has grown to 90% of its adult weight; and,
- many of the brain's structures and biochemical routes are developed in the first two years of life.

Arising from the above research, knowledge of the impact of ECD on children, especially those pertinent to this study, include:

- children develop their abilities to think and speak, learn and reason and lay the foundation for their values and social behaviour as adults;
- the development of the potential of human beings;
- rapid physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral development;
- development of all the key elements of emotional intelligence, such as confidence, curiosity, purposefulness, self-control, connectedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness (Ibid:7-8).

The point of convergence of these early childhood potentialities is the critical window period of the early years for character formation, through values, ethics, mores, habits and social interactions, among others. These noncognitive skills are essential for comprehensive child development. Notwithstanding the potential of ECD to bring about sustainable behaviour and attitude changes in the early years, the programme must prioritise or, at least, afford equal prominence to noncognitive (social and emotional) skills and values with that of cognitive skills (García and Weiss 2016: 1). Wilson (2008: 1) maintains that early childhood education should address the moral development of the child, especially the caring and compassionate aspects of morality that teach children a sense of caring and social responsibility. According to Grieshaber and McArdle (2014, cited in Brownlee *et al*, 2016: 262), schools have traditionally been expected to take responsibility for children's moral learning, to producing adults who become socially

responsible citizens. As such, they see early childhood institutions as places of identity construction where children engage in the formation of ethical identities.

Considering this opportune time, both biologically (early childhood) and politically (nascent democracy), it seems negligent that the ECD curriculum and programmes fail to include the fundamental principles of democracy - social responsibility and civic participation - to prepare children from the earliest years for a new social system. Moreover, in post-apartheid South Africa, the recurring presence of violence and other forms of anti-social conduct features in almost all spheres of the society and, increasingly, amongst young people as evidenced in Chapter 1. Pendlebury and Enslin (2007: 238) argue that it would have been naive to assume that the task of transforming an evil social order as apartheid could be accomplished soon. They maintain that many practices of the apartheid era persist, as do age-old vices such as murder and incest. Added to these are widespread corruption at all levels of the public service and new vices such as a shocking spate of baby rapes, all leading to a collective moral outrage, if not despair. Thus, they propose values-based education in South Africa, consistent with this study which emphatically proclaims that unless and until education interventions for social transformation in the early years are seriously considered, it is unlikely that anti-social and deviant behaviour will abate.

2.6.2. Appropriate values for democracy

According to the White Paper 5 on ECD (RSA, DoE. 2001: 9) “The early years have also been recognised as the ideal phase for the transmission of the values that are essential for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. These values include respect for human rights, appreciation of diversity, tolerance, and justice” (DoE 2001:9).

In this regard, Swartz (2006: 560) maintains that attempts to rebuild South African society from the fractures of apartheid have included a growing focus (in theory) on shared values and renewed morality which points in the

direction of Ubuntu. Emerging from the aforementioned expositions of Ubuntu, the unifying theme is one of humanist collectivism that is undergirded by compassion, respect, interdependence and a strong moral code. It imagines a humane and responsible society of people who value themselves and others with equal respect, to the extent that all actions are primarily motivated by concern for the common good.

In this regard, Waghid (2004, cited in Solomons and Fataar 2011: 228) cautions that although members in a democracy usually value, claim and defend their individual freedom of choice determined by their personal value choices, they ought to equally (researcher's emphasis) value a society where there is adherence to the common good. Thus, the challenge facing democracies, including South Africa, is where individuals pursue their self-interest without regard for the common good. Kymlicka (2000, cited in *ibid*) argues that democracies become difficult to govern, and even unstable when their citizens do not possess these values of shared responsibility and concern for the good of all. It would appear, therefore, that the limitations inherent in western-style democracies are more likely to replicate individualism and egoism and subvert the mission of creating a new social order founded on humaneness and interconnectedness and impelled by the ethic of the common good.

Ubuntu has the potential for providing a compelling vision of human thriving if promoted alongside both democratic participation and socio-economic justice (Swartz 2006: 561). Shepherd and Mhlanga (2014: 1), argue that Ubuntu can be realised if these values begin to have emphasis at an early age through the education system. Its early introduction has the potential to lead to a society with morally upright citizens who respect fellow citizens, tolerate people of diverse cultures and citizens who work towards common objectives for the betterment of the society. At the same time, however, they caution that Ubuntu can no longer be captured in its pre-modern genre because of the dynamism of culture. Thus, while many beliefs and practices may not

necessarily be applicable in current times, the essentials for cultural moral revival can be instilled in learners (Makuvaza 1996, cited in *ibid*).

Thus, conceptually, the 'democratic' values of social responsibility and civic participation proposed in this study resonate with the values and principles of Ubuntu. These holistic and culturally and contextually relevant values, it is argued, are most apt to contribute to the realisation of a transformed South African society by optimising the development potential of children's early years. Children develop an understanding of the social world incrementally, through a long and slow process of construction in which they learn how people treat one another. Increasingly, they develop ways of dealing with social concepts and skills as they expand their immediate experience to understand the world around them (Carlsson-Paige and Levin 1992, cited in Carlsson-Paige 2005: 98). The seeds for social responsibility and civic participation inspired by Ubuntu must, therefore, be planted early and nurtured throughout a child's life.

2.7. CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents a comprehensive conceptualisation and understanding of the key components of the study, namely, ECD, IE, IKS and Ubuntu values focusing on social responsibility and civic participation. The literature detailed critical aspects of these areas to arrive at a contextually appropriate and transformative approach to ECD for participatory democracy in South Africa. Based on this review and the findings of the study, an ECD IE curriculum framework with Ubuntu values will be developed. The literature reviewed on the concept of ECD indicates that singularly this phase has the greatest potential for sustainable learning opportunities and should, therefore, be utilised for the early development of a new generation of socially conscious citizens. Currently, the ECD curriculum fails to develop equally and simultaneously all aspects of the child and tends to focus on cognitive development. Conversely, an IE approach integrates the many dimensions that constitute the wholeness of the human being which are the physical, emotional/vital, mental and spiritual/psychic and are

essential to the educative process. In this way, the child begins to acknowledge and understand the interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings. This ethic is further cemented by the integration of culturally and contextually specific IKS Ubuntu values with a particular focus on social responsibility and civic participation for cohesive and harmonious relationships in societies as opposed to the individualistic practices of Western democracy. Thus, collectively these critical components will positively impact the ECD curriculum and, by extension, participatory democracy for South African society.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the main philosophical ideas and the theoretical framework that guided this study. The theoretical framework is preceded by a brief discussion on some of the main child development theories to better understand the study's theoretical framework.

Bell (2002), referencing Wittgenstein's (1953) idea on perspective in philosophy, suggests that the central aim of philosophy is to "see something as it is" which he proposes can be a reasonable point of reference for approaching another "thing as it is" and, accordingly, seeing another's world "as it is", especially with regard to other cultures. Philosophy then is not just a matter of one's own perspective. An understanding of the world one inhabits could be a starting point for venturing to understand another's world and possibly enabling mutual understanding (Bell 2002: 18), a position that was proscribed and unachievable for African philosophy and philosophers.

In this context, Wiredu (2004) notes that in colonial times African philosophy was generally not investigated in philosophy departments in Africa. It was left to departments of religion and anthropology, usually staffed by foreign scholars, to study African thought as best they could and generally reflected the uncritical use of foreign categories of thought (Wiredu 2004: 11), and described, more appropriately as "ethnophilosophy, a branch of ethnology mistaken for philosophy... a new standard of philosophical practice specific to Africa and such other areas... one that was bound to hinder the African philosopher or, for that matter, the so-called primitive or semi-primitive philosopher" (Hountondji 2004: 530). Without negating Western philosophy, this study, however, acknowledges and opposes the epistemic injustice in the subordination and marginalisation of African, particularly, and non-Western knowledge systems, generally. In this context, it argues that the inclusion of

IKS Ubuntu values in the ECD curriculum is both critical for ontological and cultural wholeness and restitutive in the canons of thought and knowledge.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK: AFRICAN HUMANISM AND UBUNTU AND HOLISM

The main philosophical concepts guiding this study are African humanism, (inclusive of the intersecting principles of Western humanism) and Ubuntu and holism.

3.2.1 Humanism and Ubuntu

In essence, liberal humanism differs from African humanism, although there may be points of commonalities between them. Liberal humanism is a cultural position premised on the essential decency of human beings. It promotes democracy, individualism, tolerance, rationality and civilised values (Dupuis and Hall 2002 cited in Rwodzi 2014: 1916). Implicit in the concept of liberal humanism is that people should have social and political freedom and be allowed to make their own decisions about moral issues (*ibid*). Thus, central to this worldview is the individual and the exercise of his or her free will to determine a moral and ethical stance, guided by the tenets of “essential decency” and “civilised values”.

According to Copson (2015), humanism was not invented or founded by anyone, instead, the word describes a certain set of linked and interrelated beliefs and values that collectively make up a worldview that many people all over the world have had for thousands of years. Humanism arises in human societies quite separate from each other and the basic ideas that comprise humanism can be discerned in China and India from ancient times and in the ancient Mediterranean and the modern West (Copson 2015: 5).

Radest (2013: 24), describes humanism as a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism or religious belief, affirms the ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfilment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. The life-stance of humanism, which is guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience, encourages

supporters to live well and fully. In clarifying the concept of individual agency in humanism, Pinn (2013: 36), suggests that even though humanism may be driven by self-will, it recognizes the sense that individual behaviour needs parameters, or guiding structures, allowing for the promotion of a good greater than that of any particular individual's will or desire. This is not to suggest that the individual's freedom is subverted, but that it is guided or directed toward "the promotion of a good greater".

This aspect of communal well-being is consistent with that of Elias and Merriam (2004, cited in Taylor and Cranton 2012: 6) who maintain that although humanism is founded on notions of freedom and autonomy, personal choices are constrained by heredity, personal history, and environment. Pinn (2013: 36) also argues that the philosophy is supported by relationships based on common understanding amongst like-minded people, with a centering ideal that includes the deeper dimensions of socio-political, economic and cultural concerns.

Countering this claim, however, is the perspective that in practice humanism appears insensitive to the prevailing political, social and cultural realities, suggesting its exclusivity. Critiquing its insularity and elitism, Novack (1973 cited in Isaac 2012: 85), argues that liberal humanism is not a philosophy of the working class. Its teachings are not founded on the facts of economic life but on supposedly universal ethical standards, which are binding on all people based on their humanity. As such, this perspective seems to resemble abstract individualism upon which the ideology of bourgeois democracy rests, decidedly different from the participatory model of democracy inherent in African humanism.

Modern African humanism, according to Gordon (2008 cited in Isaac 2012: 92), emerged from Africa's response to colonisation, conquests and the slave trade and contains elements of Christian and secular liberal values. Thus, African humanism, including the political perspective of African socialism, is identified with movements of national independence and development of the

collective African identity. The broader base of African humanism and socialism, used to underscore the values of a common African heritage and unite in the struggle for freedom from colonialism, includes the ideological works of Franz Fanon and the inspiration of national leaders as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor and Kenneth Kaunda (Bell 2002: 58).

After World War II, it became clear to many African leaders that Western colonialism was undermining and destroying the African social infrastructure based on traditional humanistic values, especially through the impact of capitalism equated with colonialism and incompatible with African culture (ibid). Thus, African humanism has its roots in its peoples' struggles for freedom and independence. It is imbued with revolutionary fervour as a grassroots movement to unify and mobilise against oppressive forces and is, therefore, different from the more intellectual liberal humanism associated with the West.

Within this framework, Ubuntu, an African humanistic philosophy, aims to provide a unifying vision of community built upon compassionate, respectful, interdependent relationships, in which responsibility is collective and others are treated as extended family or siblings (Broodryk 1997, cited in Swartz 2006: 560). While the term Ubuntu is of South African origin, the phenomenon contains a wider African reality enshrined in African humanism, communalism, and what Nkrumah (1957) calls "consciencism." Like most fundamental concepts, however, Ubuntu defies a single definition or characterisation. Consequently, it has been variously equated with African communalism or African humanism and has been associated as mentioned previously with values such as caring, sharing, hospitality, forgiveness, compassion, empathy, honesty, humility, or "brotherhood" (More 2004: 156), and consistent with those that promote interconnectedness and interdependence and cohesion within communities.

In interpreting Ubuntu, Metz (2007: 323) references the more familiar aphorism, associated with the philosophy, “a person is a person through other persons”. He argues that its implication is that one’s identity as a human being causally and even metaphysically depends on a community. It also has prescriptive senses to the effect that morally one should support the community in certain ways. Shutte (2001, cited in Metz 2011: 537), sums up the basics of the ethic as a deep moral obligation to become more fully human which entails entering progressively deeper into a community with others. Morality, therefore, is through a process of assimilation into the community, further noted in Wiredu (1980), “what is morally good is what brings dignity, respect, contentment, and prosperity to others, self, and the community at large” (Wiredu 1980 cited in More 2004: 157), further aligning with the concept of holism when parts change to “become incorporated into a whole”.

Similarly, Gbadegesin (1991), argues that “...human persons are conceived as communal beings embedded in a context of interdependence sharing the same common interests and values” (Gbadegesin 1991 cited in Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi 2012: 17). This sense of mutuality and reciprocity is equally demonstrated in the words of Buthelezi (1984 cited in More 2004: 156): “long before Europeans settled in South Africa..., indigenous African peoples had well-developed philosophical views about the worth of human beings and desirable community relationships. A spirit of humanism called Ubuntu (humanness) ... shaped the thoughts and daily lives of our peoples. Humanism and communal traditions together encouraged harmonious social relations”.

Ubuntu’s sense of communalism and co-existence, encapsulated in “harmonious social relations”, is founded on a societal bond that links community members. In this regard, More (2004), argues that fundamental to African political philosophy and ontology is the view that an individual is not a human being except as he or she constitutes part of a social order. This is a conception of the self as intrinsically linked to, and forming a part of, the

community. In this communal orientation, the self is dependent on other selves and is defined through its relationships to other selves (More 2004: 157).

African humanism is further different from the 'Western classical' notion of humanism which stresses a particular concept of education and civilisation, premised on Greek ideas such as a balance of the arts and sciences, cultivation of individual values and the exercise of rational self-control. Also, it places a premium on acquired individual skills and favours a social and political system that encourages individual freedom and civil rights (Bell 2004: 60). Moreover, humanism, according to Gaylard (2004), has come under fire for some time because of the idea of a shared humanity common to humankind which invites the criticism of actually being culturally specific, and to the accusation that its Eurocentrism has, in fact, helped to legitimise colonial expansion and conquest. In other words, Enlightenment man took his norms and values as universal (Gaylard 2004: 266). According to Fashina (1998), Fanon recognizes that Africans and Europeans do not share a common vision of humanity because as human beings Europeans believe they are superior to the inferior (African) human beings they colonise. This kind of double standard, therefore, would negate any theoretical basis for universal humanism. (Fashina 1998 cited in Hallen 2004: 132). Viewed through this lens, therefore, the ideological chasm between the two humanisms seems to preclude a common humanism.

African humanism is rooted in traditional values of mutual respect for fellow kinsmen and a sense of position and place in the larger order of things, one's social and natural order as well as the cosmic order. It is rooted in dependencies linked to communalism in Africa (Bell 2004: 60). In this context, however, and in contrast to its Western counterpart, African humanism has been criticised for subordinating individual identity in favour of the communal one. According to Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye (1997), the idea that one's identity is conferred by the group - "I am because we are" - is "radical communitarianism" which conceives of identity or

personhood as "wholly constituted" by the community or group to which one belongs. "Moderate communitarianism", however, recognises "individuality, individual responsibility and effort" where a person is constituted only partly by the community or by the social relationships into which he or she necessarily enters. This view recognises the claims of both communality and individuality and acknowledges the "intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual", who, therefore, possesses "rationality and moral sense" and a capacity for "evaluating and making moral judgements" (Gyekye 1997 cited in Gaylard 2004: 269). Likewise, Eze (2008) asserts that the community is not prior to the individual and the latter does not pre-exist the community. The individual and the community are not radically opposed in the sense of priority but engaged in a contemporaneous formation (Eze 2008: 106). This mutual and reciprocal relationship with individuality and communality co-existing appears to deviate from liberal humanism which places greater emphasis on the individual and free will.

Kamwangamalu (1999 cited in Gaylard 2004: 270), draws the contrast between African and Western cultures in that in African societies "interdependence is valued highly" as opposed to "independence ... is the norm" in the West. Although this does not preclude Western societies regarding Ubuntu values such as "warmth, forgiveness, compassion, respect, dignity, empathy, supportiveness, cooperation, mutual understanding" as important, they are not emphasised to the same extent, and, in terms of social organisation, are not encouraged. According to Gaylard, although the values associated with Ubuntu are more likely to take root in communities with face-to-face interaction, respect for human dignity and the rights of others are, however, core values of Western humanism, thus, constituting a link between the two apparently contrasted "humanisms", the African and the Western (ibid: 271).

In addition, the New Humanism Project's (Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, 2009–2010) initiative to understand being human together in South Africa may contribute to bridging the 'humanism gap'. According to de Gruchy

(2011), since the humanist impulse in southern Africa is rooted in its earliest indigenous peoples, the reformulation of a new humanist consciousness to affirm this evolutionary interconnectedness of all human beings was imperative. This form of humanism would be relational rather than individualistic and would recognise a moral imperative and accountability beyond human self-interest and manipulation. In addition, it would acknowledge that secular and religious humanists can and should find common cause in the struggle for human dignity, justice and peace, despite the difference in presuppositions (de Gruchy 2011: 2).

This understanding of humanism finds common ground with African humanism, especially in respect of a commitment to such values and principles as, “evolutionary interconnectedness of human beings”, “relational rather than individualistic”, “moral imperative and accountability”, “common cause” and “human dignity, justice and peace”. Thus, while the differences between liberal and African humanism exist, this study acknowledges aspects of commonality. Notwithstanding, the inclination toward the particularities of African humanism is apparent given the focus of the study and the researcher’s bias.

Moreover, the systematic suppression during colonialism and apartheid of African philosophy, the key to African rationality and identity, must be addressed. Ramose (1999 in Maris 2020: 308), advocates for the demolition of Western hegemony and the reconstruction of the African worldview and way of life, apposite to contemporary Africa that can also be attractive to the rest of the world. This study, which is motivated by the integration of indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu in the ECD curriculum, resonates strongly with this position. In addition, the study advocates epistemic justice, transformation and redress in South Africa and within Africa.

3.2.2 Holism

Holism, credited to South African soldier, statesman and politician, Smuts, is defined as the science of the “whole” (Jaros 2001: 14). According to this

worldview, the universe is a seamless whole, evolving over aeons of cosmic time. Life is an intimate web of relations, and nothing is independent of any other thing (Laszlo, 2001 cited in *ibid*). In advancing the revival of holism, critical to the survival of mankind, Jaros (2001) argues for a Holistic Millennium (*ibid*).

One of the most crucial concepts in holism is the way parts change when they become incorporated into a whole. Thus, the sum of the parts is already different because the parts themselves change. The implication of this is that whenever we become associated with a larger whole, we need to change ourselves according to the requirements of the whole, but not to the extent that we lose our own identity (Jaros 2001: 24). This principle of individual change is related to the Ubuntu principle according to which a person only becomes a person through others. In fact, the only way for an individual to change is through the community to which he or she belongs. Becoming a part of a whole is thus a prerequisite for individual development (*ibid*).

In this vein, Maris (2020), suggests that according to the African philosophy of life, the individual gets to know himself and the surrounding world through his community and is, therefore, part of a larger whole (Maris 2020: 316). The Malawian philosopher, Sindima (1990 cited in *ibid*: 315), argues that whereas liberalism gives priority to the individual and his rights, African thinking abhors individualism (but not individuality). In the African view, people are interconnected in a web of life. “For the African, it is the respect for life and community that is a priority”, exemplified in Mbiti’s (1970) dictum, “I am because we are”, a principle specifically put forward in this study.

In the field of education, the concern of this study, holistic thinkers hold to the belief that the industrial age and its particular education paradigm has almost completely obscured the central importance of the spiritual qualities and possibilities of human life (Miller 1997: 57), in favour of superficial materialistic pursuits. Equally, this deeper sense of self towards the attainment of a higher consciousness or self-actualisation (Maslow 1954) is

discernible in the guiding principles of an integral education approach and an Ubuntu value system. The holistic worldview, described by Miller (1997), acknowledges and recognises the inner human qualities, such as mind, emotion, creativity, imagination, compassion, a sense of wonder and reverence, and the urge for self-realisation as vital aspects of human existence. As a spiritual worldview, it treasures the more subtle, deeply personal qualities that are potential in all persons, and which are essential for true personal fulfilment and social harmony (Miller 1997: 57). The development and nurturing of these inner qualities, as this study argues, is at variance with a mainstream approach to education, one that Partho (2007) argues regards humans as tools to efficiently serve a vast socio-economic machinery compatible with the Machine Age (Partho 2007: 203). In this way, social norms and values become embedded in the consumerist-industrial ethos that advances primarily individualistic thoughts and practices in opposition to individual relationships within a collective and based on a common understanding of how socio-political and economic systems as a whole should benefit the community and society.

3.3 THEORISING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

ECD policies, programmes, practices and frameworks for promoting children's development derive from child development theories. These theories, generally the domain of developmental psychologists, explain how children change and grow during childhood. Worldwide, the field has been greatly influenced by dominant Western discourses about young children (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 14). These dominant discourses draw heavily from the work of theorists such as Piaget and Vygotsky, Western discourses, and in contemporary contexts by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), an association in the United States representing early childhood education stakeholders, which discusses the concept of 'Developmentally Appropriate Practice' (DAP). According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999 in *ibid*), these ideas have dominated and even colonised the world of early childhood education.

Challenging this domination, in the 1980s a group of scholars (referring to themselves as reconceptualists), drawing on critical, feminist, postcolonial and postmodern perspectives, reconceptualised Early Childhood Education (Swadener and Che 2007; Cannella 1997; Kessler and Swadener 1992). They questioned the belief that scientific truths could be "discovered" about any individual or group of children and then applied to all children, regardless of the culture, language, belief structure, or physical life circumstances (Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education (RECE 2014), and effectively shutting out children in the Majority World. Nsamenang (2008: 74) draws attention to the negative impact of ignoring the sociocultural contexts through the Euro-Western ideological positioning and knowledge bases that drive ECD policies and practices in Africa. The history and funding of work in child development, he argues, has led to a skewed view of the lives of young children, with little attention to the 90 or more percent of the Majority World in which most children live. Neutralising the dominion in the sector, Ball and Pence (1999: 47) advocate for a 'generative curriculum' approach which could complement the approach advocated in the revised DAP and, further, embrace community and culturally appropriate practice. In this way, programmes could include community-specific indigenous knowledge and cultural practices as well as Euro-Western research, theory, and practice models (UNESCO and NUFFIC 2002: 199), as promoted in this study.

The more influential theories guiding mainstream and conventional practice in early childhood development can be broadly classified into four perspectives: behaviourism and social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory, sociocultural theory, and ecological systems theory. These theories are briefly discussed below.

3.3.1 Behaviourism and social learning theory

B.F. Skinner (1904–1990), is renowned for his theory of behaviourism or more specifically operant conditioning theory, which is based on the premise that children's behaviour can be increased based on the presentation of reinforcers and decreased through punishment (Berk, 2000 cited in Grisham-

Brown 2009: 2). Social learning theory, created by Albert Bandura (b. 1925), expands on operant conditioning by adding the idea that imitation or observational learning increases the chances that children will learn new behaviours. Bandura calls the process of social learning, modelling and provided four conditions, namely, attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation. The theory's central concept is reciprocal determinism, whereby the interacting factors in learning are both cognitive and environmental, acting on the child's behaviour (Bandura 1977 cited in Tchombe 2011: 183). These determine not only the child's emotional reactions but also the beliefs, expectations and behavioural manifestations (ibid: 183). Behaviourists, generally speaking, believe that children's development is outside of their own influence, that it is shaped by environmental stimuli (Daniels and Shumow 2003: 505).

3.3.2 Cognitive-developmental theory

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) is credited with the cognitive-developmental theory that “views the child as actively constructing knowledge and cognitive development as taking place in stages” (Berk, 2000 cited in Grisham-Brown 2009: 2). According to this constructivist theory, children pass through four distinct stages of development: the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), preoperational stage (2 to 7 years), concrete operational stage (7 to 11), and formal operational stage (11 and beyond). Piaget believed that reasoning deepens in children as they grow, engagement in the physical and social world enhances development, and “conceptual change occurs through assimilation and accommodation” (Daniels and Shumow, 2003: 497). According to Tschombe (2011: 184), for Piaget real learning comes from experiences that arouse children's curiosity and give them the chance to work out their own solutions. His central position on learning is discovery learning, where the learner learns from actions rather than from passive observations.

In a multicultural critique of the Piagetian and post-Piagetian constructivist orientation, however, Soto (1997a, cited in Soto & Swadener 2002: 42)

challenged the field to move beyond the scientific and biologically derived origins of the Piagetian perspective toward a 'critical constructivist paradigm' that examines issues of power and pursues a utopian dream of equity and social justice in the arena of early childhood education. In spite of Piaget's remarkable research for over half a century, the genetic epistemology of these writings is evidenced by the language included in the descriptions of 'the individual,' 'the organism,' 'assimilation' and 'accommodation'. Similarly, scholars such as Walkerdine (1984, cited in Viruru 2005: 18) have shown how Piaget's theories of child development, in particular, were heavily influenced by the need to create a rational world, in which such horrors as World War II could never happen again.

3.3.3 Social constructivist theory

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) saw child development as a kind of social constructivism, in which development is determined by culture. According to Berk and Winsler (1995 cited in Grisham-Brown 2009: 2), several tenets are unique to social constructivism. First, because children's culture influences the activities, language, and education to which they are exposed, these variables affect children's development. Second, while some development is innate or influenced by biology, higher-level development is affected by culture. Finally, the theory incorporates the zone of proximal development, that is, the range in children's development between their ability to perform a task independently and their ability to perform a skill with the assistance of a more competent member of their culture (adult or older child).

Although Vygotsky developed his theories around the same time as Jean Piaget, he emphasised the importance of relationships and interactions between children and more knowledgeable peers and adults. He saw children as active partners in their own learning and believed that their cognitive understandings were enriched and deepened when they were 'scaffolded' by parents, teachers or peers (Berk 1996 cited in Grisham-Brown 2009: 2). Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the socio-historical aspect of knowledge is an important contribution to the field. Like Piaget, Vygotsky

believed that learning is developmental but distinguished between 'spontaneous' (naturally occurring) and 'scientific' (structured) learning concepts. (Soto & Swadener 2002: 41-42).

3.3.4 Ecological systems theory

The ecological systems theory originates from Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005) who believed that children developed “within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the environment” (Berk 2000 in Grisham-Brown 2009: 3). He emphasised a balance between nature (heredity) and nurture (environment). To illustrate his theory, he depicts the child as surrounded by four concentric circles, each representing a different set of factors that influence the child and impact development. The four sections, from the innermost to the outermost, are first the microsystem which involves those that are part of children's most immediate environment, including the child's parents and other primary caregivers. The second system is the mesosystem and involves systems that interact with the people in the microsystem, including childcare programmes and schools. Exosystems, which follow, are places in which children do not spend time but still impact their development, including the parents' workplace policies. Finally, the macrosystem consists of “the values, laws, customs, and resources of a particular culture” (*ibid*).

Child development theories generally guide the teaching practices of children from birth to 8 years of age. Daniels and Shumow (2003: 501) describe differences in instructional practices based on theoretical orientation. Teachers who espouse behaviourist theory generally follow more teacher-directed instructional practices, including didactic instruction with an emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. Other child development theories emphasise child-centred practices. Teachers who support the constructivist theory provide child-choice, guided discovery, and cooperative learning. They emphasise critical thinking, problem-solving, and intrinsic motivation. Social constructivists build their practices around a community of learners, instructional conversation, and authentic tasks, and emphasise cultural

literacy, collaboration, and metacognition. Teachers, emphasising the ecological systems theory in their classrooms stress parent and community involvement, out-of-school activities, and cultural instruction. They teach social cognition, cultural awareness, and adaptive habits of coping, which align with an IE approach to ECD.

The focus on Foucauldian theory that came to prominence in the 1990s added to the new understandings of childhood and development, which largely drove the reconceptualist movement (as noted earlier) in early childhood. Soto and Swadener (2002: 52-3) argue that researchers and scholars of child development perspectives have tended to portray themselves as the only knowledge brokers in the field. In so doing, they have created a climate that ignored and at times suppressed multiple players and multiple perspectives. Equity and social justice in the early childhood sector, therefore, necessitates more voices and collaboration, which this study attempts to address.

Without a doubt, research and practice, in early childhood have been incrementally enriched by the inclusion of many perspectives. The opening up of new ways of thinking has challenged the image of the child and, in many cases, has been replaced by multiple understandings of children, childhood and families. In addition, a focus on the voices of children as agents and the professional's relationship with children and families has emerged (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 15), but, like all change, especially in emergent democracies, the application is slow and labourious.

3.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL THEORY: POSTMODERNIST, POSTCOLONIALIST and RECONCEPTUALIST APPROACHES

This study is guided by critical theory incorporating postmodernist, post colonialist and reconceptualist theoretical approaches and will be discussed as a tentative theoretical framework to the study. In highlighting the significance of the theoretical framework, Grant and Osanloo (2014), deem it

the foundation of knowledge construction in a research study, serving as the structure and support for the study rationale, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions (Grant & Osanloo 2014: 12). According to Lysaght (2011), a researcher's choice of framework reflects important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge, how it exists (in the metaphysical sense) in relation to the observer, and the possible roles to be adopted, and tools to be employed consequently in the study (Lysaght 2011 cited in *ibid*).

In the case of this study, grounded in social justice issues of transformation and redress arising from the injustices of colonialism and apartheid, the critical theory lens which includes postcolonialist, postmodernist and reconceptualist approaches was found to be appropriate. The overall approach of critical theory that guides and frames this study positions it as challenging the traditional hierarchies of power and dominance as a result of Euro-Western imperialism. As such, it is consistent with the concerns of critical theorists in the creation of a more egalitarian and democratic society (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 5). The researcher's orientation is that of a Black woman engaged in social and political activism during both apartheid and democracy in South Africa and therefore, profoundly invested in the democratic participation of the citizens in the country, most especially the children (as indicated in Chapter 1). Thus, the positionality and perspective of the researcher derive from that of community activism and working 'on the ground', reinforced by the community-based participatory research method used in the study, giving voice to and drawing knowledge from the community and engaging community practitioners in the cocreation of the programme in the developmental phase.

Furthermore, the study considers education generally and early childhood education, particularly as a powerful transformation tool. In the South African context, the imperative is to foster a more harmonious and compassionate society, as indicated. The deep scars of division and suspicion that characterised South African society before democracy were carried into the

democracy. Knowledge of the past is transmitted intergenerationally through indirect memories so that children with no direct experience of apartheid and colonialism could behave as if they were there. The only way out of the cycle is through critical interventions that rupture inherited knowledge with alternative visions of the past and the future (Jansen 2010: 1).

3.4.1 Critical Theory

Influenced by the work of Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber, critical theorists are concerned with power and oppression and believe that the lived experience is socially constructed and mediated through power relations. Althusser (1971 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 6) argues that social services like education are part of an ideological state apparatus. Consequently, the promise of democracy in capitalist society is necessarily flawed as the 'state' will hold the ultimate power which will not always work in the interests of true social democracy, despite the appearance of neutrality or social-democratic rhetoric (Macfarlane, 2006 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel (2013: 6). This distraction was evidenced in South Africa's nascent democracy with the shift away from the much-vaunted redistribution and redress programme based on liberatory ideology towards neoliberalism at the expense of the previously disadvantaged majority as highlighted in Chapter 2. Thus, ideological critique, according to Brookfield (2001 cited in Wang, *et al*, 2019: 237), is an essential element of critical theory which attempts to understand the state of affairs as a necessary prelude to changing it (Brookfield 2005, cited in *ibid*). According to Wang *et al* (2019), critical theory, with its core of questioning assumptions, challenging established worldviews, and critiquing ideologies is not merely desirable, but strongly necessary in education and the world today (*ibid*).

However, Kincheloe and McLaren (2011), maintain that defining critical theory poses problems because (a) there are many critical theories; (b) the critical tradition is always changing and evolving; and (c) critical theory attempts to avoid too much specificity, to accommodate disagreement among critical

theorists (Kincheloe and McLaren 2011: 287). They do, however, identify certain basic assumptions that critical theorists accept. These are:

- All thought is mediated by power relations.
- Facts can never be isolated from the domains of values or ideology.
- The relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is underpinned by capitalism.
- Language is central to subjectivity.
- Certain groups in any society are privileged over others.
- Oppression exists in many forms and is part of many interconnections.
- Mainstream research practices perpetuate or reproduce oppression in relation to class, race and gender (Kincheloe, *et al* 2018: 420).

Explicit in these assumptions is the focus on the power differential in capitalist society and the exercise of it by state apparatuses over those that are subordinate (citizenry). Thus, it is in the interest of those that wield power to perpetuate the inequality and subjugation. Nichols and Allen-Brown (1996 cited in Wang, *et al* 2019: 235), indicate that the aim of critical theory is to “make problematic what is taken for granted in culture” for the purpose of “social justice,” to the benefit of “those who are oppressed”. In this way, critical theory as a theoretical orientation acknowledges power imbalances and represents a dialectic methodology (Bradley-Levine and Carr 2015 in *ibid*).

Critical theory that understands power in other ways and has a postmodern approach is more aligned to the early childhood field, especially regarding the oppression associated with vulnerable children and families (Ponterotto, 2005 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 6), pertinent to the construction of social and historical power relations in South Africa. Additionally, the challenges to the traditional images of childhood lay the foundation for the transformational characteristics of critical theory and its use in research, and which manifested in its reconceptualisation at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This reconceptualisation, known as a critical social theory, situates

critical theory as concerned with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system (Kinchloe and McLaren, 2011: 286). Practices that create power for some children and families while marginalising others become a focus for challenging “public discourse that has historically used ‘children’ to further political agendas” (Cannella, 2005: 20), which, as noted in Chapter 2, was evident during apartheid for Black African children and has not been adequately addressed for children from poor and marginalised communities in democratic South Africa. Thus, the situation necessitates recognition of the changing contexts of early childhood and rethinking pedagogy and practice to suit new demands to discover profoundly new ways of perceiving the world in which we live (Theobald 2005 cited in Sorin: 12).

Kincheloe *et al* (2018) point out that in the last quarter of the 20th-century critical theory, in some ways, was overtaken in the literature by “postdiscourses”, including postmodernism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Foucault, 1975), poststructuralism (Derrida, 2006), posthumanism (Barad, 2003; Butler, 2004), postcolonial (Bhabha, 2004; Spivak, 2013), and critical indigenous inquiry (Smith, 2012). This has brought new insights into the extent that social and historical forces impact individuals, highlighting differences, singularity of experiences, and identities. Thus, awareness can be raised of the specific needs and strengths of particular communities as well as the violence of erasure that many have historically endured. Moreover, this work has proven vastly important to acknowledging diverse ontologies and epistemologies and how subjective constructions of the world affect research and legitimise Western knowledges (Kincheloe *et al* 2018: 418-9), the latter of which is a key focus in this study.

3.4.2 Postmodernism

The reconceptualisation of critical theory has shifted focus to how power operates to shape thought and consciousness and thus, oppression (Kinchloe and McLaren 2011: 290). This shift in thinking has coincided with

the rise of postmodernism which theoretical trajectories take as their entry point rejection of the deeply ingrained assumptions of Enlightenment rationality, traditional Western epistemology, or any supposedly “secure” representation of reality that exists outside of discourse itself (*ibid*: 302).

Generally considered to have first emerged at the end of the 20th century, postmodernism perceives the current social conditions as discontinuous, uncertain, insecure and nostalgic (Jenks, 1996 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 6). According to Kinchloe and McLaren (2011), the postmodern times we live in are characterised by ‘hyper-reality’, that is, a society “saturated with ever increasing forms of representation” (Kinchloe and McLaren, 2011: 302), and an inability to distinguish what is real from what is not. This hyperreality contributes to the discontinuous and insecure nature of life as it is currently experienced (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 6).

The core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, any discourse or genre, or any tradition or novelty has a universal and general claim as the “right” or privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism suspects all truth claims of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles. But conventional methods of knowing and telling are not automatically rejected as false or archaic. Rather, those standard methods are opened to inquiry, new methods are introduced, and then they also are subject to critique (Richardson and St. Pierre 2018: 1413).

Postmodernists challenge the notion of absolute or universal truth. These researchers also challenge understandings of fixed identities, believing instead that identities are multiple, complex and ever changing. These identities are also positioned in relation to particular discourses and discursive practices (Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 8). Thus, Postmodernism challenges the hegemony of Euro-Western pedagogical practices, including unilateral claims to assert certain knowledge and viewpoints as essential elements of a

required canon of knowledge about childhood and care and to deny the legitimacy of other (usually non-Western) knowledge (Ball and Pence 2000: 5).

Consequently, increasing numbers of theorists and investigators construe development, and curriculum about development, as the storying of lives, as dialogical process, and as sociocultural construction (Kessler and Swadener, 1992; Singer, 1996; Woodhead, Faulkner, & Littleton, 1998 cited in *ibid*). For the postmodernist, discourses produce particular notions of truth and taken-for-granted understandings, which must be deconstructed to understand the effects of power (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 8).

3.4.3 Postcolonialism

There are two strains of thought on postcolonialism in current times according to Cannella and Viruru (2004), those who believe that the use of the prefix 'post' is inappropriate because physical imperialism still exists, and others who believe that the postcolonial discussion and construction of theory is very much a Western intellectual endeavour (Cannella and Viruru 2004: 27), suggesting the persistency of the colonial project and Western domination.

Postcolonial critique, equally in the realm of interrogating power differentials, aims to address the legacy of colonialism imposed by Western attempts to create an empire over the past 500 years. This particular "will to power" was profound because of the global influence, totalisation of diverse societies into one universal, and the imposition of a narrow economic path on societies. Although some consider colonisation to have ended, postcolonial critique recognises the extraordinary continuing influence of Western imperialism. Committed to developing "new forms of engaged theoretical work" (Young, 2001 cited in Cannella and Viruru 2004: 27) in the pursuit of social transformation for liberation, the goals are to contest forms of domination, create equal access, and generate political and cultural identities collectively.

One of the main focuses of the study is an exploration of the current ECD curriculum and programmes to substantially and effectively educate South African children to meet the needs of a society trying to come to terms with its new-found democracy. Inherent in this is the imperative to overhaul systems that continue to perpetuate, implicitly or explicitly, unequal power relations. According to Viruru (2005: 9), postcolonial theory addresses the legacy of colonialism imposed by western attempts to dominate the globe over hundreds of years. It is not, however, limited to the study of how nations have recovered from colonisation but is more concerned with the adoption of an activist position, seeking social transformation. Similarly, Nieuwenhuys (2013: 4), characterises postcolonialism as concerned with challenging the unquestioned Eurocentric ways of looking at the world and seeks to open up intellectual spaces for those who are termed 'subalterns' (term used to describe the oppressed people with no agency or voice during European colonial domination and remain so today).

According to Macedo (1999 cited in Viruru 2005: 10), colonialism imposes 'distinction' as an 'ideological yardstick' against which others are measured and found deficient. Schools are often the institutions through which such measuring and relegation are done and unless the legacies of colonialism are examined within the field of education, "our minds, if not our hearts will remain colonised", which is where we are currently located in South Africa, amidst small pockets of radical opposition. The idea of colonialism can be said to have been modelled on particularly authoritative and repressive models of child-rearing. Furthermore, dominant ideologies of how children grow and develop have become another of colonialism's 'truths' that permit no questioning and is imposed unhesitatingly upon people around the world 'for their own good' (*ibid*: 14).

3.4.4 Reconceptualists

The ECE reconceptualists examine how early childhood education can be recreated in ways that are most socially just and representative of diverse ways of knowing (Berk 2000 in Grisham-Brown 2009: 3; Grieshaber and

Cannella 2001; Viruru 2001; Cannella 1997; Walkerdine 1997; Steinberg and Kincheloe, 1997). The focus on Foucauldian theory that came to prominence in the 1990s added to these new understandings of childhood and development and has driven this movement to challenge taken-for-granted understandings of practice and notions of childhood (aligning with postmodernism), seeking to see practice being more informed by multiple perspectives rather than regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980 cited in Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013: 14).

Expressing their collective perspectives and experiences as researchers, teachers, parents and grandparents and using a postmodernist theoretical lens, the reconceptualists are primarily concerned with correcting power imbalances that impact the sector, at all levels. This activist approach is deeply grounded in the ways in which socio-political and economic power affects the actual and daily realities faced by early childhood teachers and young children (Soto and Swadener 2002: 52), which, in the context of this study, drives the imperative for meaningful transformation.

Early childhood reconceptualists (Soto and Swadener 2002; Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001; Jipson and Johnson 2001; Cannella 1997; Tobin 1997 Block 1992; Lubeck, 1996; Silin, 1995; Kessler and Swadener 1992) are committed to bringing about social change and to improving the lives of young children by changing discourses and educational practice. These inroads have been created by focusing on how 'innocent early childhood practices... produce inequalities that are mirrored in the broader society' (Genishi *et al.*, 2001 cited in Yelland and Kilderry 2005: 3) and by taking action against the forces that cause or promote these inequalities. Thus, this theoretical orientation is particularly suited to address the continued inequalities in the ECD sector in South Africa.

The direct critical actions of the reconceptualist early childhood researchers and educators have been practically oriented toward basic issues in education and childcare, such as teacher education programme

development, a curriculum for young children, community politics and public policy, nonviolent protest, and even the reconceptualisation and transformation of research practices (Canella 2005: 17).

Dominant discourses related to the notion of 'child' based on modernist Western assumptions about the world, including children and interpretations of them, have been challenged. These include aspects such as diversity and ways of being in the world, the construction of authoritative structuralist expertise that would judge others, and the generation of knowledge that is legitimated in the name of science and labelled as 'best practice'. This work creates possibilities of new spaces and positions from which fields like early childhood education can be reconceptualised (*ibid*: 19), an opportunity lost at the inception of South Africa's democracy.

Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel (2013: 14), argue that postcolonial and poststructuralist (analysis of language use and its relationship to truth and power) theories are challenging the image of the child that early childhood professionals might hold. This sector, largely governed by Piagetian theory (Piaget, 1951) from the 1970s, has had an image of the child driven by romantic understandings in many respects. From the 1970s, the practice of many staff in early childhood education and care settings was underpinned by DAP and by a culture of non-interference in children's play. As indicated, these notions have now been challenged to include many images of childhood, particularly transformative for non-Western children in reducing the possibilities for marginalisation.

Consequently, the focus on Piaget has been lessened with other understandings, such as those of Vygotsky (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979), Rogoff (2003) and Malaguzzi (1993), coming to the fore. This has meant that practice in early childhood has become more varied and open to new ways of thinking, including a greater focus on the voices of children and improving the teacher-parent-child relationship. This means that there are many opportunities for research in ways that allow co-construction to occur (*ibid*:

16), an approach demonstrated in this study with community participation in all phases of the research process.

Overall, the application of a critical theory framework with postmodernism, postcolonialism and a reconceptualist approach is particularly compatible with this study in its interrogation of the exercise of power over the oppressed, especially children.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the philosophical and theoretical framework that guides the study. In the main, it detailed the differences in perspective and focus between the philosophies of liberal and African humanism and Ubuntu. These essential points of disparity demonstrate the suitability of African humanism and Ubuntu to this study, which is the promotion of interconnected and interdependent communities manifested in these philosophies. Equally, holism, with its emphasis on the transformation of the parts within the whole resonates with Ubuntu and the central ethic of social solidarity. Further, the adoption of the critical theory framework is consistent with the study's philosophical underpinnings, particularly concerning the creation of egalitarian and socially just societies and representative of diverse ways of knowing.

CHAPTER 4

FRAMING THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter on Research Design and Methodology includes details on how the researcher planned and implemented the study to achieve the intended purpose of the research. As such, it covers the following: Research design and methodology; target population and sampling method; data collection; data analysis; research challenges; validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Research Design and Methodology

Creswell (2009) describes research designs as the plans and procedures for research that stretch across a range of decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell 2009: 3). Similarly, Bickman and Rog (2009) describe the purpose of research design as the architectural blueprint of a research project, which links design, data collection, and analysis activities to the research questions to ensure the complete research agenda is addressed (Bickman and Rog 2009: 11-12). The design of this study is exploratory given the paucity of research on the topic of integral education at the ECD level in South Africa.

Kothari (2004) defines research methodology as the means to solve a research problem systematically and scientifically. It includes the various steps in the research process that are generally adopted by a researcher as well as the logic behind them. Thus, research methodology has many dimensions which will encompass the reason for the study, how the research problem has been defined, in what way and why the hypothesis [or assumptions] has been formulated, what data has been collected, what particular method has been adopted and why a particular technique of data analysis has been used (Kothari 2004: 8).

More specifically, the mixed method research methodology, adopted by this study, is defined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) as the broad inquiry logic that guides the selection of specific methods informed by conceptual positions, such as, the rejection of “either-or” choices at all levels of the research process. This distinguishing feature separates a mixed method research approach from that practised in either the quantitative or qualitative methodology. Thus, this ‘methodological eclecticism’ means that mixed methods practitioners select and then synergistically integrate the most appropriate techniques from several quantitative, qualitative and mixed strategies to thoroughly investigate a phenomenon of interest (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2010: 6).

This study used a mixed methods research approach by means of which “the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study or program of inquiry” (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007b cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie 2009:14). The philosophical orientation most often associated with this approach is pragmatism, focusing on “what works” and acknowledging that the values of the researcher play a large role in the interpretation of results (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 14). It involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007 in Creswell 2009: 4).

The study draws largely on the knowledge and lived experiences of the ECD community (preschool supervisors, practitioners, parents, grandparents, community members) and the specialised knowledge of relevant key informants (IE, ECD, IK), which indicated the accessibility and appropriateness of the mixed method approach. Data collection and analysis, however, featured the qualitative methodology more prominently because of the exploratory nature of the research and the newness of the topic. In this context, Morse (1991) points out that where a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because of the paucity of research on it, then it warrants a

qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is exploratory and useful when a topic is new or has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people (Morse, 1991 in Creswell 2009: 18). Qualitative methods focus on techniques associated with the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of narrative information (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 13). The research process involves emerging questions and procedures with data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell 2009: 4). Consequently, the use of a qualitative research methodology for most parts of this study was cogent. The quantitative methodology was used for confirmation of the findings in the evaluation phase. Quantitative methodology is associated with the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical information (*ibid*: 12). It is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables that can be measured so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (*ibid*: 4). Thus, the use of quantitative data collection and analysis in the evaluation phase of this study provided the basis for the confirmation of findings.

The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is often framed in terms of the use of words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). The two strands of qualitative and quantitative methodology occur chronologically in this study, and the conclusions drawn from the first strand informed the design of the next strand. The final inferences are based on the results of both strands of the study. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009: 268), point out that emphasis of approach refers to whether both the qualitative and quantitative phases have approximately equal emphasis/status with respect to addressing the research question(s), or whether one component has significantly higher priority than the other phase (dominant status). As noted, in the case of this study, the

qualitative phases had significantly higher priority and, therefore, dominant status.

The intention of an exploratory sequential design is to first explore a problem qualitatively because the questions may not be known, the population may be understudied or little understood, or the site may be difficult to access (Creswell 2015: 6). In the case of this study, all three of the considerations applied directed the researcher towards the use of the exploratory sequential design and qualitative methodology. The quantitative methodology was used for confirmation of the qualitative data in the evaluation phase. The use of the qualitative methodology in the evaluation phase was found to be more appropriate and accessible, especially in consideration of the data collection tools of the practitioners' observations, journal entries and narrative accounts in the pre-, during and post-implementation interview guides.

4.2.2 The Case Study Method

Included in this study was a case study (Refer to Chapter 9) based on the Sri Aurobindo Society and data collected from two of its IE schools, Auro Navakriti Preschool and Mirambika Free Progress School and collectively representing the Indian perspective of the research.

The case study method in qualitative inquiry is focused on an in-depth description of a process, a programme, an event, or an activity. Whether the case is understood as an object of study or a methodology, it is an exploration of a "bounded system" or a case (or multiple cases), over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and rich in context (Miller and Salkind 2002: 2). Stake (1995 cited in *ibid*: 3-4), identifies the following procedures for conducting a case study:

- (i) Provide an in-depth study of a bounded system.
- (ii) Ask questions about an issue under examination or about the details of a case that is of unusual interest.
- (iii) Gather multiple forms of data to develop in-depth understanding.

(iv) Describe the case in detail and provide an analysis of issues or themes that the case presents.

(v) Interpret of the meaning of the case analysis.

As noted, the case in this study related to the Auro Navakriti Preschool while data collected in the Mirambika Free Progress School was used for confirmation of the findings. Both these schools fall under the auspice of the Sri Aurobindo Society. A description of this case study is presented further below.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the study was to develop an ECD IE curriculum framework with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation that prepares children towards being caring and responsible adults who engage meaningfully as active citizens in a democratic South Africa.

IE is a whole programme that begins with the transformation of self by developing in the child self-awareness and self-mastery while harmonising all aspects of his personality. Thus, later in life, he can find his true place to participate in creating a cohesive and peaceful society.

Accordingly, the study asked the following research question: To what extent could an Integral Education approach underpinned by Ubuntu values be applied in ECD to develop sustainable social responsibility and civic participation in South Africa?

Arising from this main research question were the following sub-questions:

Does the current ECD curriculum adequately prepare children for social responsibility and civic participation?

What theoretical and philosophical considerations should be used to guide the development of children's social responsibility and civic participation through an ECD IE approach with Ubuntu values?

In answering the research question, the following objectives, presented below (Refer to Table 4.1) were identified according to the phases of the study:

TABLE 4. 1: Phases of the study and the linked objectives

PHASE	OBJECTIVES LINKED TO THE PHASE
Exploratory Phase 1	(i) Investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from integral education which incorporates indigenous knowledge Ubuntu values and principles for social responsibility and civic participation. (ii) Explore the theoretical and philosophical considerations that should guide the development of an integral education ECD programme underpinned by Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation.
Developmental Phase 2	(iii) Develop an integral education ECD programme based on the indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.
Evaluation Phase 3	(iv) Implement the programme in three of the six ECD sample sites and evaluate the programme by applying the evaluation instrument prior to and post-implementation. (v) Develop a framework for an IE ECD programme underpinned by IK values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.

4.3.1 The Research Process

The research process is described according to the three phases of the sequential exploratory design.

Exploratory Phase 1: The research question was first explored using the qualitative methodology with a focus group and individual interviews for data collection and analysis by means of codes and predetermined themes.

Developmental Phase 2: The developmental phase followed, during which the qualitative results and the theoretical and philosophical considerations from the literature were used to develop an IE ECD programme with Ubuntu values.

Evaluation Phase 3: In this phase, the programme was evaluated using qualitative methods with data collection strategies including pre-and post-implementation evaluations, observation, journal entries and focus group

interviews. Data was analysed using codes and themes. In addition, this phase included the use of quantitative methodology through a questionnaire for confirmation of the qualitative results.

The Indian case study of the two Sri Aurobindo Society IE schools provided an in-depth understanding of the application of the approach through focus group and individual interviews and observation. Analysis of the data was thematic.

4.4 LOCATIONS OF THE STUDY

The locations of the study were Umbumbulu, an underserved township on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast in South Africa and Adchini Village, a fully urbanised village in North-East Delhi in New Delhi, India.

Both South Africa and India, as former colonies, experienced foreign education systems, which as indicated in Chapter 2, not only embedded the unjust and unequal power relations of the coloniser and the colonised but also marginalised and devalued indigenous and local knowledge systems. Consequently, education served the narrow ends of an oppressive system to subjugate people. In South Africa, this was followed by apartheid education, an inferior and unequal system meted out to Black African people.

In attempting to transform the inherited education system in post-apartheid South Africa, this study has proposed that South African education could derive benefit from the Indian IE experience. Integral Education, as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo (the founder of the IE approach), focuses on self-development towards helping the child integrate with its true self, its surroundings, its society, its country and humanity and, thus, become a complete being.

This approach to education, especially at the preschool level, has great potential to transform colonial and apartheid education for a new order in post-apartheid South Africa.

4.4.1. South Africa: Umbumbulu Township

Umbumbulu township, forty kilometres away from Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal, forms part of the eThekweni Metro jurisdiction.

Historically, townships in South Africa were a creation of the apartheid system and previous regimes of white rule. The townships were racially discriminatory in that “Black” African, “Coloured”, and “Indian” people were ordered by the Land Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Act of 1950 to live separately. Even within black townships, ethnic groups were often segregated into separate areas for Zulus, Xhosas, Sothos, and others. Townships originated from South Africa’s unique economic requirement for inexpensive migratory labour. After apartheid, living conditions remained uncomfortable in most black townships (Bond 2008: 405-407).

Comprised of 25 smaller districts, Umbumbulu and its surrounding areas is home to about 600 000 people (SA 2011 census), who live lives that are not vastly different to those of their parents and their grandparents. It is under-serviced with virtually no economy and a place where much suffering has taken place as a result of sporadic political and faction-based violence in the past (Machen 2011: 2/1-4). Since the advent of democracy in Umbumbulu, more roads, schools and clinics, and electricity and water are gradually being delivered, but the fundamental problems of poverty, unemployment, crime and political violence remain very much a part of the fabric of communal life (*ibid*: 3/1-4).

Although formal segregation ended with the new democracy, many township areas, as well as other low-income housing areas (such as informal settlements and low-income housing estates), have grown rapidly (Pernegger and Godehart 2007: 2). All these areas are characterised by low levels of community facilities and commercial investment, high unemployment, low household incomes and poverty (*ibid*: 3). Thus, the general association of township life with poverty, unemployment, crime and violence is still very much part of the South African reality. Learners living in townships require a

good deal of protection and resilience to overcome the obstacles and adversities in their context of development (Mampane and Bouwer: 2011: 115). This is the lived reality to which the larger majority of South Africa's population is subjected, and it is within this context that this study viewed the urgency of education interventions, generally, and ECD interventions, particularly. Chapters 1 and 2 of this study highlighted the increasing violence amongst youth in South Africa and proffered that good quality and directed early interventions can significantly alter the life chances of children who were and are disadvantaged through socio-political and economic realities.

Township ECD centres are characterised as low-economic environments (Fourie 2013 in Fourie 2014: 510), where the standard of education for most learners is still of inferior quality. In a study conducted by Harwood et al. (2012 in Fourie 2014), it was found that township ECD centres in South Africa have yet to receive the kind of support needed to overcome the legacy of inferior schooling (Harwood *et al.*, 2012 in Fourie 2014: 510). While this is largely attributed to the lack and quality of resources, the situation is further exacerbated by South African early childhood practitioners having no formal training for educating and developing the young child (*ibid*).

Additionally, any prospect of upgrading or improving the quality of schooling and education is foiled as many township residents move out or use facilities outside the townships. Thus, townships continuously lose the impetus for improvement. Parents who can afford to send their children to schools outside the townships make improving the quality of township schools an even more difficult task (Pernegger and Godehart 2007: 7). Thus, the location of the study in a township in South Africa was an appropriate one considering the compelling urgency for transformation in such environments. More important to the researcher was the listening and gathering of the experiences and perspectives of the respondents who live, work and educate their children in township preschools. Moreover, the selection of Umbumbulu Township is bolstered by the researcher's familiarity with parts of the area, having worked on a training project with a range of ECD sites there. In

addition, the researcher lives close to the township affording comfortable and cost-effective access to the sample sites.

4.4.2 India: Adchini Village

Adchini Village in New Delhi, a fully urban ‘village’, is the location of the two Aurobindian IE schools in the study. According to Manna (2015: 3), urban villages are omnipresent in the Indian urbanscape, a development that has grown significantly during the post-independence period. Former rural villages are now defined as urban because they are characterised as high density with greater dependency on non-agricultural activities.

The schools are situated on one of the main South Delhi north-south arterial roads, aptly called Sri Aurobindo Marg or Aurobindo Marg, named after Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. The Delhi campus of Sri Aurobindo Ashram is also located on the road. The area appears generally affluent and middle class with a bustling hive of city activity which belies the schools’ abundant gardens and natural vegetation behind the walls surrounding them.

Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy and teachings, in the areas of individual perfection, social transformation, and human unity in diversity continue to be promoted through the Aurobindo Society, an international not-for-profit NGO founded in 1960 by the Mother (Sri Aurobindo’s collaborator and a spiritual guru). The arm of the society that has relevance to this study is the Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Integral Education and Research (SAFIER) which actively advances an IE approach. The Aurobindo Society owns and manages nine IE schools in India, all of which emphasise fitness of the body, emotional well-being, mental development undergirded by self-awareness and introspection.

Two of these schools included in this study are Auro Navakriti School, a preschool for children from 2 years of age established in 2005, and Mirambika Free Progress School started in 1981 for children between 4 and 15 years. Both are consummate examples of organisations that apply the IE approach with successful outcomes as evidenced in the interviews and

observations detailed in Chapter 9. India shares a history of colonial conquest and domination with South Africa. In India, the establishment of British territorial control and the concomitant transfer of power resulted in changes in different spheres of life, most notably and pertinent to this study in education, as one of the means of subjugation. Typically, indigenous knowledge systems were discarded and replaced by foreign (Western) knowledge systems. In this regard, Mukherjee (2015) argues that the contradictions between Western epistemologies and indigenous ways of knowing gave rise to anxiety about a moral crisis among the population (Mukherjee 2015: 167), an insight which is instructive to South Africa as the country grapples with its own challenges in this regard and which is a prominent feature of this study.

4.5. RESEARCH SAMPLE

Sampling, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a cited in Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 151), involves selecting units of analysis, such as, people, groups, artefacts, settings, in a manner that maximises the researcher's ability to answer research questions posed in a study. The unit of analysis refers to the individual case or group of cases that the researcher wants to express something about when the study is completed and is, therefore, the focus of all data collection efforts (*ibid*). Further, Brynard *et al*, (2014: 56), define sampling as a technique used to select a small group (the sample) to determine the characteristics of a large group (the population). If selected discerningly, the sample will display the same characteristics or properties of the large group. In the case of this study, the 'units of analysis'/'sample' comprise(s) the ECD community (staff and parents/grandparents/community members) in six South African preschools, the IE ECD community (IE practitioners and parents/community) in two schools in India and various key informants with specialist knowledge from whom data was collected and analysed. The researcher's participation in the ECD sector and knowledge of it, particularly in the South African context, enabled the discerning selection of the 'small group' to reflect the 'properties of the large group'. In India, the

staff of both schools were included, and, in the case of the community interviews, the researcher utilised snowball or chain referral sampling sourced from the Auro Navakriti School's past and current associations with parents and community members. In both situations, purposive, stratified and nonprobability sampling was used.

Purposive sampling techniques, primarily used in qualitative studies, are defined as selecting units based on specific purposes (rather than randomly) associated with answering a research study's questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003a, cited in Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 154). Maxwell (1997, cited in *ibid*) suggests further that purposive sampling is one in which "particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices". Researchers using purposive sampling want to generate a wealth of detail from a few cases, making sampling decisions crucial (*ibid*).

The stratification of the sample in the study is according to gender (male/female) and geographical location of the sites (urban/rural/semi-rural). The gender aspect was deemed necessary to include the male gender representation, regarded as acceptable "[w]hen various subgroups of a population need to be represented" (*ibid*: 297). Regarding geography, the researcher was of the view that this factor would enable the implementation of the programme across a wider and more diverse area. Non-probability sampling is used when it is not feasible to draw a random probability-based sample of the population due to time and/or cost considerations. In these situations, sample group members must be selected based on accessibility or personal judgment of the researcher, and although it has an element of subjective judgement, it is most helpful for exploratory stages of studies (Dudovskiy 2016: 2/1-5), as in the case of this phase of the study.

4.5.1 Exploratory Phase

4.5.1.1 Sample in South Africa

The South African sample in the exploratory phase comprised of ECD supervisors/practitioners, parents and grandparents of children in the sample preschools and interested community members and key informants. As indicated, purposive, stratified and nonprobability sampling was used in the selection of the Umbumbulu sample in the exploratory phase. Consequently, six registered and funded ECD sites situated in urban, rural and semi-rural areas, equally, were identified to enable implementation of the programme across a broader geographic and spatial area. The researcher was aware that the sample was not representative of the general ECD community mentioned above. Purposive sampling limits the ability of a researcher to make valid generalisations beyond the elements included in the sample (Daniel 2012: 11) which accords with the broad purpose of gaining valuable insights on the study topic.

The sample group of the ECD community directly concerned with the education of their children was apt because of their lived experiences and close understanding of the relevant issues. The three predetermined themes of Values, IK and IE were new to the ECD community (preschool staff (supervisors and practitioners), parents, grandparents and community members) of Umbumbulu sampled for this study. The inclusion criteria in this study were (i) well-managed sites with competent site supervisors; (ii) functioning management committees and sound infrastructure; and (iii) a minimum of four in the complement of teaching staff for meaningful discussions during the interviews. In addition, the ECD supervisors and practitioners in the study had to have a minimum ECD qualification of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 4 certificate and a minimum of 2 years' ECD experience to enable meaningful contribution to the development and management of the IE programme. Four key informants drawn from South Africa were sourced from the literature review of the study.

The sample for the exploratory phase in South Africa comprised forty-two (42) ECD supervisors and practitioners who constitute the staff. All were female. Community members made up of parents, grandparents and other community members totaled two hundred and eighteen (218), of which one hundred and seventy-eight (178) were female and forty (40) male participants. The four key informants were three males and one female. The total sample for this phase was two hundred and sixty-four (264) participants. Refer to Table 4.2 below.

4.5.1.2 Sample in India

In Delhi, India the researcher employed snowball or chain referral sampling which was facilitated by the Principal of the Auro Navakriti School and sourced from past and current associations with the school. Two key informants from the Aurobindo Society, the director of education programmes and the Principal of the Auro Navakriti School provided valuable and relevant data. In addition, a Ugandan IK specialist who was in Delhi at this time was also interviewed as a key informant. In this regard, Patton (2018) suggests that expert sampling rests largely on the selection of people who are especially knowledgeable about a topic and are willing to share their knowledge. This type of sampling involves identifying key informants who can inform an inquiry through their knowledge, experience, and expertise (Patton 2018: 2).

In Delhi, the total number of participants was forty-six (46). The sample was made up of IE teachers, parents and grandparents of children in IE schools and parents whose children had previously been in IE schools and other interested community members linked to both Auro Navakriti and Mirambika Free Progress Schools. The sample group comprised thirty-nine (39) females and seven (7) males. There were three key informants interviewed in Delhi, two on IE one (1) male and one (1) female and one (1) male on IKS. Refer to Table 4.3 below.

In total (South Africa and India) this study included interviews with three hundred and ten (310) participants, two hundred and sixty (260) females and fifty (50) males.

South African Sample:

TABLE 4. 2: Focus Group and Key Informants

	Sample	Number	Male	Female
1	ECD Staff (Supervisors and Practitioners)	42		42
2	ECD Community (Parents, grandparents and community members)	218	40	178
3	Key Informants	4	3	1
	Total	264	43	221

Indian Sample:

TABLE 4. 3: Focus Group and Key Informants

	Sample	Number	Male	Female
1	IE Staff (Senior Staff and Practitioners of Auro)	14	1	13
2	IE Staff (Principal and Staff of Mirambika)	5		5
2	IE Teachers	11	1	10
3	Parents, grandparents and community members	13	3	10
4	Key Informants	3	2	1
	Total	46	7	39

4.5.2 Developmental and Evaluation Phases

The sample for the developmental and evaluation phases was intentionally decreased because of the nature of the activities which were aligned to the objectives for these phases. The researcher together with the managers/supervisors of the six sites initially agreed that each site would have one ECD practitioner participating in the developmental phase as it required development and implementation of a programme that would be followed by the evaluation phase.

The selection of the participating practitioners was based on (i) the interest and preparedness of the site supervisor to support and facilitate the study; (ii) the agreement of the site supervisor that the research will involve one of the ECD practitioners teaching a cohort of 3 – 4 year-olds at her site; (iii) the

interest, commitment and capacity of the ECD practitioner to participate; (iv) the agreement of the participating ECD practitioner to constitute a research team with the researcher; and, (v) the undertaking by the participating ECD practitioner to complete all research tasks for the duration of the study.

At the point of implementation of these phases, however, three of the sites were unable to participate owing to specific challenges regarding capacity and time constraints in their individual sites. After consultation with her supervisors, the researcher continued these two phases with the remaining three sites, comprising urban, semi-rural and rural sites. It should be noted that the reduced number in the sample did not influence the richness and depth of data gathered for these two phases because of the commitment, experience, deep knowledge and full participation of the three ECD practitioners who were involved in these two phases.

Thus, in each of the three preschools, one practitioner represented it and, collectively, the three formed the participating practitioner team responsible for co-creating with the researcher the ECD IE programme, implementation of the developed programme and its evaluation. Refer to Table 4.4, below.

TABLE 4. 4: Participating practitioners' sample for the developmental and evaluation phases

ECD Participating Practitioners					
	Participants	Qualification	Experience	F	M
1	Practitioner A: Preschool A	NQF Level 4	3 years	1	
2	Practitioner B: Preschool B	NQF Level 4	9 years	1	
3	Practitioner C: Preschool C	NQF Level 4	6 years	1	

4.5.3 Summary

Overall, as indicated, both the sampling methods and size were apt for this study. The researcher was confident that the sample in all three phases of the study competently represented the whole population in each phase. As noted, it was not the aim of this study to achieve generalisability but to gather from the selected sample valuable learnings from the participants' experiences, knowledge and insights to inform the development of an ECD IE curriculum framework. In a sense, in the South African context, the

representative sample was also a vehicle to represent the community voices in the development of a programme that could bring about material changes to early learning and social reordering. The selection of the key informants, each an expert with specialist knowledge and vast experience in the area of their contribution to this study, was equally prudent. Finally, the strength of the sample in this study was tested in the data collected which was both rich and varied.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Creswell (2003: 19-20), describes a mixed methods approach as one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds using strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. Data collection also involves gathering both numeric information as well as text information so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. In this study, data collection was sequential in accordance with the three phases (exploratory, developmental and evaluation) and relied predominantly on qualitative (interviews, observation and journals) information with confirmation of findings in the evaluation phase by means of quantitative (questionnaire) information.

4.6.1 The Exploratory Phase

Data collection methods used during the exploratory phase included focus group interviews, individual interviews, observation, and a case study. In South Africa data was collected through individual and focus group interviews and in Delhi, India, through the case study, observation, individual and focus group interviews.

The collection of data in Umbumbulu, South Africa transpired from December 2017 to June 2018 through focus group interviews. An initial face-to-face meeting was arranged by the researcher with the site supervisors and ECD practitioners of all six participating sites to propose and discuss participation based on the study topic, the research process and the expectations of both

the researcher and participants. In all these meetings, the researcher was accompanied and assisted by an ECD practitioner/research assistant for isiZulu-English translations. All present in these meetings were encouraged to ask questions and to seek clarity where required.

A determination had to be made with regard to the site supervisor and the staff of each of the six sites on their (i) understanding of the study topic; (ii) agreement with the topic; (iii) acceptance and willingness to participate; and (iv) undertaking to assist with all arrangements for the focus group interviews. These preliminary conversations provided the framework for the respondents to express their own thoughts in their own words and to collect information about the research question/s (Leonard 2003: 3). All six sites agreed to participate in the study and, in each site, the dates and times of both staff and community focus group interviews were mutual, though provisionally in the case of the community ones, set up.

In the Indian case study, data collection was carried out between 9 to 15 November 2017. The research aims and a summary of the study which had been emailed to the principal of the Auro Navakriti School in the initialising process were sent to all potential respondents as determined by the principal and staff of the school. The researcher also spent time in both IE schools (Auro Navakriti and Mirambika Free Progress) as an observer. The interviews and observations in Delhi made possible greater insights and a deeper understanding of the application of the IE approach.

O'Sullivan (2003: 3) describes focus groups as a research approach whereby a group of individuals is selected to discuss together the topic under research in a focused and moderated manner. This method of data collection is flexible enough to be used both as a self-contained method and a technique that may be used in conjunction with others. Individual interviews with specialists are used as another data collection tool in this study. In this context, Leonard (2003: 3) notes that interviews, which can be semi-structured or unstructured are 'conversations with a purpose', designed to collect information about a

certain topic or research question. Interviews are deliberately set up by the interviewer, follow certain rules and procedures to which the interviewee consents. Both parties know the general areas the interview will cover, and the interviewee is made aware that the conversation will be recorded in some way.

The observation method was also employed in this phase of the study. Observational techniques in data collection are used to determine how individuals or groups of persons, react under specific circumstances, either natural or artificial (De Wet *et al.*, 1981 cited in Brynard *et al*, 2014: 48). Every recording made should be a true reflection of what was observed at the precise moment and not of what was anticipated or predicted (*ibid*), as was the case in this study.

The questions in the interview schedule (focus group and individual) were adapted to accommodate the different target groups and were based on the following predetermined themes drawn from the objectives of the study: values-based ECD; ECD IE/holistic approach; IK Ubuntu values in ECD. The questions were primarily open-ended questions with some closed-ended ones and the interview type was semi-structured. In semi-structured interviews, although the broad topics are predetermined, flexibility plays a key part in structuring the interaction enabling adaptability of the research instrument to suit the research respondent(s). Thus, despite the set of specific topics, interviewees are allowed sufficient freedom to digress, and questions are generally open-ended to gain richer information about attitudes and behaviour. Respondents can develop their answers in their own terms and at their own length and depth (Leonard 2003: 4-5).

Six interview schedules for data collection, specific to each group, were carefully prepared to ensure competent coverage of all the relevant aspects to thoroughly answer the research questions. The groups were as follows:

- (i) ECD staff in Umbumbulu, South Africa (Focus Group 1, Annexure C); (ii) ECD staff in Delhi, India (Focus Group 1, Annexure E); (iii) ECD community

in Umbumbulu, South Africa (Focus Group 2, Annexure D); (iv) ECD community in Delhi, India (Focus Group 2, Annexure F). A generic interview schedule (with minor differences for relevance) for the key informants in ECD, IE and IK (Annexures G (South Africa), H (Delhi, India) was also compiled. Samples of some of the questions in each predetermined theme are detailed.

In Umbumbulu, South Africa, a sample of staff (ECD supervisors and practitioners) and community, questions on values-based ECD model included understanding the concept of values; identifying personal values; determining values for 3-4-year-olds; exploring the benefit of values; ascertaining the values associated with home, school and community; and connecting values with behaviour and attitude.

The questions on the second theme, ECD IE/holistic approach, incorporated an understanding of the concept of an ECD holistic/IE approach; determining the wholeness of the current ECD curriculum; exploring the benefits of a holistic/IE approach; and determining the possibility of a holistic/IE approach.

The third theme, IK Ubuntu values in ECD, included questions on an understanding of the concept of IK; determining the extent of IK inclusion in the school, home and community currently; exploring personal memories and the impact of IK; understanding the importance of mother-tongue instruction in ECD; identifying methods of collecting IK, and evaluating the benefits of IK in the ECD classroom today.

In the Delhi, India sample, the interview schedule for staff (IE practitioners) and community focus groups was adapted for the specificity of the context and to extract rich data on IE and its application specifically. Thus, the questions based on theme two, ECD IE/holistic approach, also included the following in the staff focus group interviews: explaining the motivation to be an IE teacher and the requisite professional training; exploring teaching experience in mainstream/IE and differences, if any; and understanding the actual implementation (day-to-day activities) of an IE approach. The

additional questions for the community focus groups were identifying the reason/s for choosing an IE approach to early learning, determining the difference between mainstream and an IE approach, and explaining the extent of parental involvement in the programmes of the school.

In the interview schedule for the key informants, the questions were based on each of the three predetermined themes. In the case of the Delhi, India key informants on IE, questions on context and background of the Aurobindo schools were included. In theme one, values-based ECD, questions included the understanding of the concept of values; determining the extent to which values are taught in ECD; identifying the relevant/appropriate values for 3 and 4-year-olds and the method of engagement; exploring the aptness of a moral code for children. The questions on theme two, ECD IE/holistic approach, were an understanding of the concept of IE and whole child development; determining the extent of the emphasis on whole child development in ECD; determining the benefits, if any, in an ECD IE/holistic approach; and examining the possibility of IE implementation in a SA context. The third theme, IK Ubuntu values in ECD, included questions on understanding the concept of IK; determining the extent of the use of IK in the current ECD curriculum; ascertaining the aptness of IK in a modern ECD context; determining the advantages/ disadvantages of IK artefacts in the ECD context; exploring mother tongue instruction in ECD; determining the methods of IK research and documentation; examining the impact of IK on children's psycho-social and cognitive development; determining the benefits to communities of IK/ local knowledge inclusion; and, ascertaining the links between home and school for children's well-being. The generic interview schedule was adapted for the two key informants in the Indian context, especially to gather data on IE. Additional questions included exploring the history and philosophical underpinnings of Aurobindo schools and understanding the implementation of IE in relation to its philosophy.

All interviews (focus group and key informant in both South Africa and India) began with the issuing to participants/respondents of information letters

(Annexure B). In South Africa, the information letters were in English and isiZulu, the latter in the case of focus groups. The community focus groups in South Africa were mainly conducted in isiZulu, the preferred language of communication by almost all the participants. As indicated, the researcher was accompanied by a volunteer isiZulu/English translator to all focus group interviews. The focus group and key informant interviews conducted in India were all in the medium of English, with some translations from English to Hindi, where necessary and facilitated by the Auro Navakriti School staff.

After the introductions, a summary of the research study and its objectives, general questions and clarifications were invited before the questions from the interview schedule (see Annexures C, D, E and F), in the listed order, were posed. This process was replicated in the key informant interviews (Annexures G and H).

All discussions in the focus group and individual interviews were between 1½ - 3 hours each in duration. Transcripts were recorded in a question-by-question format ensuring the researcher's reference to them after the interviews. Focus groups rely on the interaction within the focus group itself, benefitting from the sharing of views, experiences and stories among participants, and the insightful and rich data produced (O'Sullivan 2003: 121), which was clearly the case in the discussions in this study. The information derived from the focus groups was reported on for the group as a whole and no individuals were highlighted. Furthermore, there was no risk nor discomfort to the participants as no names, only participant numbers, were used in the study and research reports.

The community focus group sessions in Umbumbulu also generated from participants (during and after the interviews) indigenous stories, rhymes, folk tales and songs from which relevant values around social responsibility were distilled for the co-created ECD programme content based on a 'generative curriculum model' (Pence and Schafer 2006: 4). In all the community focus group sessions in Umbumbulu, South Africa, participants were enthusiastic to

share their personal store of IK and many volunteered to participate in further sessions dedicated to the retrieval of IK artefacts (as indicated in Chapter 7, the Developmental Phase).

All focus group and key informant interviews, South Africa and India, were recorded, with the prior permission of the participants, using a digital recorder. Data from the interview schedules, the researcher's records and audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and cross-checked for validity. In this regard, Leonard (2003), suggests that the advantage of verbatim transcription is its certainty that all possible analytic uses of the data are considered, especially since significant aspects of the data may only be revealed during verbatim transcription (Leonard 2003: 7).

The case study method was employed to present data obtained from India on relevant aspects of IE, gathered through the interviews, observations and literature reviewed. According to Creswell (2009), as a qualitative strategy, case studies involve the researcher's deep exploration of a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Also, the case(s) are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period (Creswell 2009: 227).

The case study presented in the research were the Delhi, India learnings on IE through the interviews (key and focus group), researcher's observations and documents obtained from Auro Navakriti and Mirambika Free Progress Schools. Yin (2009) points out that a common type of evidence for case studies comes from open-ended interviews that can offer rich and extensive material. These are generally less structured and have the potential to reveal how interviewees construct reality and think about situations, not merely responding to specific questions. In some instances, this construction of reality provides important insights which gain further value if the interviewees are key persons in the organisations, communities, or small groups being

studied (Yin 2009: 264), as was the case in this study, especially from those affiliated to the Sri Aurobindo Society.

In total, data collection in this exploratory phase employed a range of tools. The interviews, which constituted the main source of the collection of data was conducted between November 2017 and August 2018 (10 months), the total duration of which was 33 hours. Furthermore, the researcher presented papers on aspects of this study at three conferences, two in Durban, South Africa and one in Mauritius. In addition, an article on the exploratory phase of this study and the preliminary findings was published in *Alternation*, an interdisciplinary journal for the study of the Arts and Humanities in Southern Africa, in May 2020. The publication is entitled, *Rethinking the Integral Education Approach: Ascertaining Curriculum Gaps in the Early Childhood Development Curriculum with Opportunities for Advancing Indigenous Knowledge Values within the South African Context* (2019). (*Alternation* Special Edition 29 (2019) 190 – 222 190 DOI <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2019/sp29a9>)

The conference presentations, in chronological order, were *Epistemic Justice: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Early Childhood Programmes through Community Engagement* (June 2017); *Community-Based Participatory Research: Exploring the value of Indigenous Knowledge for Early Childhood Development* (June 2018); *Integral Education for Early Childhood Development: Building Values through Indigenous Knowledge* (September 2018). The conference presentations and the responses facilitated the triangulation of the data. Comments from the conference participants were entirely favourable and endorsed the study concept. The use of IK in ECD generated much interest and strong support. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources and/or methods to measure a construct or a phenomenon to see if they converge and support the same conclusions. The more diverse the sources and methods, the greater confidence there is in the convergence of the findings (Bickman & Rog 2009:

22-23), as evidenced in this study. Refer to Table 4.5, below, for the composite list of data collection tools in the exploratory phase of the study.

TABLE 4. 5: Data collection methods in the exploratory phase

Methods	South Africa	Delhi	Mauritius	South Africa
Individual interview	4	3		
Focus group	12	4		
Conference presentation			1	2
Published article				1
Observation		2		
Case study		1		

4.6.2 The Developmental Phase

The developmental phase was based on data collected during the exploratory phase according to the three predetermined themes to inductively discover further patterns, themes, and categories in this data (Teddle and Tashakkori 2009: 30). The exploratory phase aimed to probe the existing ECD curriculum by questioning the extent to which an IE approach with IK values could be effective in developing socially responsible and civic minded preschoolers. Despite growing evidence that these early years are pivotal for promoting socially responsible and cohesive societies, existing research indicates a dearth related to values that promote active citizenship in young children (Invernizzi and Williams 2008 cited in Brownlee *et al*, 2016; Howe and Covell 2009) indicating that this study fills a gap. Thus, drawing on the qualitative data that confirmed the inadequacy of the current ECD model to effectively develop children holistically, the next strand was the development of an IE/holistic programme.

This process involved an IE training programme between the researcher and the participating ECD practitioners towards the eventual co-creation of an IE ECD programme based on Ubuntu values. The programme comprised four modules: (1) Introduction to IE; (2) Philosophy of IE and Ubuntu; (3) Application of IE; (4) Preparation of Self.

The training workshops had general and specific foci. In the first training session, general introductory questions were posed to elicit from participants

their understanding of key concepts such as education and knowledge. Thus, the interview guide (Refer to Annexure L), included questions on the concept of education and the purpose of education; the concept of knowledge and sources of knowledge; the sense of preschool teaching; and a teaching approach. In light of the alternative to the mainstream education approach that IE advances, discussion around these concepts established the groundwork for the engagements that followed.

Data collected from the workshops was audio-recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis, the findings of which informed the development of the intervention, an ECD IE programme with Ubuntu values.

The theoretical and philosophical considerations discussed in the literature guided the development of the intervention of the alternate and holistic programme to prepare children to function optimally by developing self-mastery, becoming self-aware and self-reliant and naturally contributing towards their own development within a collective.

4.6.3 The Evaluation Phase

The evaluation of the application of the intervention used both qualitative (participant interviews, observations, journal entries and post-application-practitioner evaluations) and quantitative (pre-and post-test questionnaires) data collection methods in this phase. Refer to Table 4.6, below.

TABLE 4. 6: Range of data collection methods for intervention application evaluation

No	Collection Strategy	Collection Method	Date
1	Participant Interviews	Qualitative	07/03/2020 and 21/03/2020
2	Observations	Qualitative	Throughout
3	Journal entries	Qualitative	Throughout
4	Participant evaluations	Qualitative	Throughout
5	Questionnaires	Quantitative	01/03/202 and 18/03/2020

The qualitative data collection methods were based on the pre-and post-implementation evaluations, as well as the practitioners' journal entries and observations during the implementation phase. Practitioners were required to

complete the pre-implementation evaluation, which included questions that related directly to their education experience and practice. As a subjective measurement tool, it explored the extent to which the existing ECD programme promoted a reflective practice. It incorporated questions around teaching experience; training in ECD; ECD course content; role in the classroom; teaching style; interaction with children; pre-class self-preparation; assessment of the teaching method; essential qualities for preschool teachers; and a self-assessment of personal qualities (Refer to Annexure L).

The implementation phase of the IE programme with IK Ubuntu values was in the classes of 3- to 4-year-old children of the three ECD practitioners. During this phase, data was collected from the practitioners' observations and their journal entries. The observations were based on a sample of six children per class (three practitioners x six children), numbering eighteen children. The selection of the sample was based on the class register of names arranged in alphabetical order and separated by gender. Three girls and three boys were selected after every fifth name in the lists of both girls and boys.

The practitioners' observations on the sample of children were guided by questions on the following aspects based on an IE approach: gross and fine motor skills; use and knowledge of the senses; strength and fitness; self-discipline, confidence and fair play; emotional balance; qualities such as calmness, tolerance, patience, honesty; emotions such as sympathy, empathy and reflection; cognitive competence; literacy skills; connection with nature; knowledge of self and identity; and, responsibility and respect (Refer to Annexure L). The journal entries were the practitioners' personal reflections on their experiences, thoughts, ideas, suggestions, comments and challenges based on the processes of observation and implementation.

The post-implementation evaluation (Refer to Annexure L) was a self-assessment tool to determine the implementation experiences of the ECD practitioners in three critical areas: (i) IE for the teachers; (ii) IE for the

children; and (iii) the IE programme. In the first category (teachers), the questions explored their understanding and experience of teaching and facilitating; self-preparation and awareness; relationship building; personal change or transformation; and teacher-child relationship.

In the second category (children), the questions investigated the following with regard to a comparison between the existing curriculum (NCF) and the IE intervention: behaviour and attitude changes; changing from within; holistic development; Ubuntu and cultural identity; and building character and self-awareness.

The third category (programme) examined the IE programme directly and included questions on the differences or similarities between an IE and a mainstream (NCF) approach; flexibility in an IE approach; classroom impact; application challenges and strengths; and opportunities for change. Data collected in the evaluation phase showing pre-, during and post-implementation procedures is presented in Table 4.7 below.

TABLE 4. 7: Data collection in the evaluation phase showing pre-, during and post-implementation procedures.

Procedure	Dates	Duration
Pre-implementation evaluation	03/02/2020 – 28/02/2020	4 weeks
Implementation	02/03/2020 - 20/03/2020	3 weeks
Post-implementation evaluation	01/04/2020 - 30/04/2020	5 weeks
Total Duration		13 weeks

Data collected through the quantitative method was largely confirmatory and corroboratory. In this regard, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009), confirm that mixed methods are used to assess the credibility of inferences obtained from one approach or strand. Hence, there are generally exploratory and explanatory or confirmatory questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2009: 287).

The pre-and post-test application evaluation of the IE intervention programme took the form of a questionnaire based on broad developmental aspects for children's holistic development using an IE approach. The evaluation comprised a comprehensive schedule of a range of abilities or aspects for the

all-round development and blossoming of children. Participating practitioners evaluated each of the six children in the class sample before (01/03/2020) and after (18/03/2020) the application of the intervention. Each aspect carried a numerical value of between 1 and 5, with 1 representing the lowest score and 5, the highest.

4.6.4 Summary of data collection

Overall, data collection in the three sequential phases of the study included both qualitative and quantitative methods, with a dominant qualitative status. As noted, the exploratory phase used qualitative research methods of focus group and key informant interviews, observation and case studies. In addition, the presentation of papers at three conferences and a journal publication enriched further the data collection in the exploratory phase of the study. The developmental phase which included implementation of the intervention adopted a qualitative method of data collection through the training programme. The evaluation of the application of the intervention used both qualitative (participant interviews, observations, journal entries and post-application-practitioner evaluations) and quantitative (pre- and post-test questionnaires) data collection methods in this phase.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

A thematic content analysis method was used, with the data organised and analysed according to the identified three pre-determined themes of the research including the sub-themes that arose from data collected. The process of data analysis involves making sense out of data, preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. In the case of qualitative data, it is an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data and asking analytic questions (Creswell 2009: 184), while quantitative data analysis involves the analysis of numeric data using a variety of statistical techniques (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 223).

Accordingly, in this study, qualitative data from the total number of respondents and derived from the range of collection tools was collected and analysed thematically in accordance with the identified objectives relevant to the three phases (exploratory, developmental and evaluation) of the study. This involved working through text passages to form aggregated data units, first in codes, and then by collapsing the codes into themes (Creswell 2015: 30). Additionally, the use of line-by-line coding was beneficial in respect of directing the researcher towards paying close attention to what the respondents actually said and, accordingly, to construct codes that reflected their experiences of the world, not that of the researcher nor any theoretical presupposition held by the researcher (Gibbs 2012: 15-16).

As indicated, the greater part of this study used qualitative research methods and quantitative data analysis based on numerical scores in the evaluation phase was used to confirm the qualitative findings.

4.8 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

On March 26, 2020, as a result of the global Coronavirus pandemic, the President of South Africa declared a national disaster and a total lockdown (a state of isolation instituted as a security measure). This study that was scheduled to proceed into the month of April 2020 had to be aborted on 20 March 2020 during the implementation phase. In addition, before the COVID-19 national lock-down, the absentee rate in the preschools rose significantly because of the general scare. As a result, the ECD practitioners were unable to implement the programme thoroughly or with the same rigour as would have been possible in normal times. The interview guide for the post-implementation phase (Annexure L) was also difficult to complete on account of the critical situation the practitioners confronted, as a result only one (Practitioner C) of the three practitioners was able to fulfil. ECD practitioners are usually very poorly paid and were at risk of being terminated indefinitely. Thus, the researcher had to accommodate the personal and professional predicament of the practitioners.

The organisation of focus group interviews in Umbumbulu, South Africa were a challenge. Notwithstanding the preschools' willingness to arrange and host the focus group sessions, the scheduled dates were subject to numerous changes on account of a range of contextual factors. Consequently, the focus group sessions were spread over eight months. According to Leonard (2003), interviews may take a long time to arrange and conduct and is particularly problematic where respondents are geographically widespread. The interviewee must be accommodated by the interviewer who arranges their time accordingly (Leonard 2003: 7), which was the position in all the interviews the researcher organised.

In addition, the audio recording and transcription of the interviews (1½ – 3 hours) were extremely labourious and time-consuming, as well as costly. The nature of the study, however, necessitated this method of data collection. Moreover, giving voice to the communities in Umbumbulu and the resultant rich data from all the sessions, offset the inconvenience.

The researcher's repeated attempts to draw in expert knowledge and experience from both the Department of Social Development (DSD) ECD directorate and the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD), the national mass-based representative body of ECD, were unsuccessful. The resultant 'silence' from two important perspectives was, however, overcome by other ECD interviewees.

The community focus group interviews in Umbumbulu, South Africa were all conducted in isiZulu and although the researcher was assisted by a translator, some detail may have been lost in the translation.

4.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Creswell (2009: 190) argues that validity does not carry the same connotations in qualitative research as it does in quantitative research, nor is it a companion of reliability (examining stability or consistency of responses) or generalizability. Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings, while qualitative reliability indicates that the

researcher's approach is consistent, transcripts accurate and codes unchanging (Gibbs, 2007 cited in *ibid*).

4.9.1 Qualitative phase

The reliability of the focus group interviews was enabled by the presence of the same translator who served equally as a research assistant during all the discussions to assure the trustworthiness of the information. Furthermore, the focus groups and the individual interviews were transcribed verbatim to retain the authentic voices and words of the respondents. The researcher ensured the meticulous coding of the data which was also cross-checked by a conference presentation and a published journal article on the preliminary findings in the exploratory phase.

Validation of the first set of data collected in India (Auro Navakriti and Mlrambika Free Progress Schools) on 25 September 2019 was triangulated by presentation to the respondents on a subsequent visit to the schools and the Sri Aurobindo Society.

4.9.2 Quantitative phase

The numerical scores obtained from the pre-and post-implementation questionnaire completed by the three participating practitioners in the evaluation phase confirmed the validity of the qualitative findings. Thus, the consistency in the two sets of findings served to validate the results.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The mandatory ethical clearance for the research was granted by the Durban University of Technology with which the researcher is registered through the ethical clearance letter issued by the Faculty of Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (REC 77/17). Refer to Annexure J. In addition, DSD permission for the research study in the six sites which was sought in November 2016 was officially granted by the KZN Head of Department of the Department of Social Development on 14 August 2017. Refer to Annexure A.

Concerning focus group data collection in South Africa in the Exploratory Phase (Phase 1), the researcher prepared ECD staff in all the sites in the sample by issuing information letters in both English and isiZulu (Annexure B) in which was explained the aim of the study, the process to be followed and the benefits to the community. In the case of the community members who were invited via the sites and had limited prior knowledge of the study, the information letters in both English and isiZulu (Annexure B) and the explanations were provided in the meeting.

In all the focus group interviews (staff and community) it was clearly indicated that there would be no financial gain for participation in the study, nor would the participants incur any costs and that there would be no risk to those involved in the study. It was also explained that the focus group interviews would be voice-recorded for the purpose of being transcribed verbatim.

The key informants in the individual interviews were invited by the researcher to participate by direct contact after which a summary of the study and its aim was emailed to each one. At the start of the interview, interviewees were granted an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity. All respondents understood that participation was voluntary. It was also explained that the focus group interviews would be voice-recorded for the purpose of being transcribed verbatim. Consent forms were issued to all respondents (Refer to Annexure I).

In the Developmental and Evaluation Phases (Phases 2 and 3), the researcher explained to the participating practitioners the expectations of participants for the full duration of the study. Participants were granted an opportunity to ask questions. All the participants understood that participation was on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw at any stage. Participants signed a consent form prior to the commencement of data collection in Phases I and 3 (see Annexure I).

Participants in the focus group interviews in India were prepared by means of powerpoint presentations which detailed the South African context, the aim of

the study and the process to be followed. Participants were granted an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity. All the participants understood that participation was voluntary. It was also explained that the focus group interviews would be voice-recorded for the purpose of being transcribed verbatim. Consent forms were issued to all respondents (see Annexure I).

All information gathered was considered strictly confidential. Data collected was anonymised by giving participants numbers and no names were used throughout the study. Also, during the focus group transcription process, participants were not identified by name to further ensure their privacy. The data collected will be stored in a locked cupboard in a locked storeroom in the Department of Public Administration for a period of five years after which it will be disposed of by shredding. Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to the data. Electronic data is password protected and will be deleted after five years.

4.11 CONCLUSION

The methodological approaches elucidated in this chapter were used in this study to develop, implement and evaluate an ECD IE programme with Ubuntu values to develop social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children.

In Phase 1, the exploratory phase, data was collected in South Africa and India from the focus and individual interviews, using qualitative approaches. The data was then thematically analysed. In Phase 2, an intervention programme was developed based on the data of the focus groups and individual interviews with key informants, and undergirded by the philosophies of IE, Ubuntu, African humanism and holism. Critical, postcolonial and postmodern and reconceptualist theories were used as frameworks. Based on these philosophical and theoretical concepts, the researcher was able to identify the critical elements of an ECD IE programme with Ubuntu values for the South African context. This programme was designed to develop children holistically in the early years and prepare them

to be caring and responsible citizens later in life to participate meaningfully as active citizens in a democratic South Africa and, thus, facilitate the long-delayed redress and transformation.

In preparation for the implementation phase, ECD practitioners in the sample were trained in the theory and practice of an ECD IE approach. In the implementation phase, the developed intervention programme - IE programme with IK Ubuntu values - replaced the existing programme in the classrooms of the three practitioners over a period of four weeks (curtailed on account of Covid – 19 shut down). Evaluation of the programme was effected through the pre-, during and post-implementation instruments and analysed. In addition, a quantitative (questionnaire) approach was used to confirm the qualitative findings. Finally, the challenges experienced during the research and the measures undertaken to enhance its quality were outlined.

Chapters 5 to 6 will present the findings of the Exploratory Phase, the Developmental Phase (Chapter 7), the Evaluation Phase (Chapter 8) and the Case Study (Chapter 9).

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORATORY PHASE FINDINGS: ECD SUPERVISORS AND FACILITATORS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As noted, Chapters 5 to 9 present the findings of the research. Chapters 5 and 6 present results and discussion of the South African sample interviewed in Phase 1, the exploratory phase, undertaken to achieve the first objective of this study, which is: to investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from IE which incorporates IK Ubuntu values and principles for social responsibility and civic participation. In this chapter findings from focus group interviews of the ECD staff-supervisors and practitioners ($n = 42$) are presented. Continued under the exploratory phase, Chapter 6 presents findings from the ECD community (parents, grandparents, community elders and other members) and key informants.

According to the interview schedule, the findings are presented under the predetermined themes of Values, Integral/Holistic Education and Indigenous Knowledge and Ubuntu. It should be noted that while these themes are presented separately, they are nevertheless integrated through the interrelatedness of the aspects in the topic. Firstly, the 'values' segment investigates the explicit inclusion of values in the curriculum as well as the potential benefits of inclusion. Secondly, the IE component is explored to determine its application in the delivery of the ECD curriculum and the potential benefits of this approach. Thirdly, IK is explored regarding its integration in the curriculum, its likely impact on children in current times and effective methods of collection. Finally, the viability of an ECD IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu is probed.

5.2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: VALUES

This section presents the results and discussion from the interviews of focus group 1, comprising ECD staff- supervisors and practitioners on the 'values'

aspect of the interview schedule (Annexure C). According to Thornberg (2016), values and moral assumptions, even when dealing with the preschool context and practice, cannot simply be taken for granted but must be scrutinised and discussed (Thornberg 2016: 251). It is within this context of consensus and participation that the focus group interviews were conducted, especially regarding the ‘values’ component of the research study, given its fluidity of interpretation.

Data analysis of the ECD supervisors and facilitators focus group interviews yielded four categories: Conceptualisation of values, Extent of values in the ECD curriculum, General behavioural and attitudinal tendencies and Benefits of values in ECD, all critical to investigating the gaps in the ECD NCF in a values-based approach for whole child development. The results will be discussed according to the categories and the emergent sub-themes, as indicated in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5 1: Summary of the categories and sub-themes of ECD Staff Responses on Values

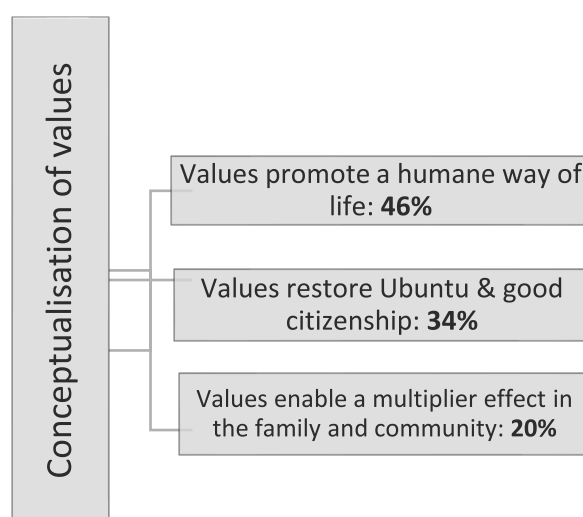
Category	Conceptualisation of values	Extent of values in the ECD curriculum	Common behavioural and attitudinal tendencies	Benefits of values in ECD
Sub-theme 1	Promotes a humane way of life	Significant gap in values’ focus	Aggressive and self-centred behaviour	Sets foundation for critical life skills
Sub-theme 2	Restores Ubuntu and good citizenship	Privileging of cognitive development	Sense of personal responsibility, empathy and affection	Essential early learning opportunity
Sub-theme 3	Enables multiplier effect in family and community	Neglect of emotional stability	Fighting and use of vulgar words	

5.2.1. Conceptualisation of values

Participants were invited to explore their understanding of the concept of ‘values’ as a starting point to the interview. This was essential to avoid imposing a definition of values on the participants (ECD staff). In this

category, three broad themes emerged, namely, (i) Values promote a humane way of life, (ii) Values restore Ubuntu and good citizenship, and (iii) Values enable a multiplier effect in the family and community. Refer to Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5. 1: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff's conceptualisation of values



(i) Theme 1: Values promote a humane way of life

The majority (46%) responses understood values to be essential for promoting a humane and empathetic way of life, consistent with the study's proposal for an ECD IE approach with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation. This view is encapsulated in the following comment, most notably in the words, “*empathy*”, “*sympathy*”, “*sharing*”, “*give*”, “*happy*” and “*good*”, made by one of the participants:

“Why would a value of empathy be important not only inside the classroom, but also in the outside world? It is very important because children should learn at an early stage that sympathy means you are sharing people’s feelings and also teaching them to always give what they will be happy about when it comes back to them. Teaching them that doing good for someone will return when you need it most.”

The correlation between values and the well-being of the collective, is rooted in Ubuntu and an IE approach which emphasises that the welfare of the individual is inextricably linked to that of the community/society. This

congruence between Ubuntu and an IE approach is demonstrated in the following: Ubuntu can be said to articulate communal interconnectedness, common humanity, interdependence and common membership to a community (Letseka 2014: 3) and an IE approach is based on an understanding that humans are not only individuals but are interconnected, interdependent and interrelated to everyone and everything in the cosmos and that all their actions have a ripple effect on everything around them (Vengopal and Kumari 2010: 62). The concept of interconnectedness within the collective is further demonstrated in a comment which, most importantly, places great value on “emotional connection”, from another participant:

“To me, one of the values I think is important to the children is compassion because children need to learn to share or feel for each other, love each other without boundaries and also learn to comfort each other at bad times. We are trying to build up on that emotional connection.”

Significantly, the concern for future interactions as individual and social beings are also highlighted in the following comments, demonstrating the practitioners’ acknowledgement of the long-term impact of values on preschool children towards a more cohesive and socially responsible society:

“Children should respect each other at an early stage, because it is not only for now, but also teachings for the future”; “I think values are the right way of living life, it is being a proper citizen that belongs to certain values structures of life”.

In this regard, Hawkes (2010) argues that values education can positively influence the expansion of universal values, which have such a powerful effect on the culture of the school and on the development of the student [as a socially responsible being] and the fostering of a civil, caring and compassionate society (Hawkes 2010: 237). Significantly, in this theme, the consistent repetition of the values of “love”, “respect”, “responsibility”, “compassion” and “cooperation”, collaboratively resonate with the core principles of social responsibility for a humane, interconnected and interdependent society, which are the primary objectives of an IE approach with Ubuntu values.

(ii) Theme 2: Values restore Ubuntu and good citizenship

Closely aligned to this theme and reinforcing the humanist way of life, 34% of the responses in this category indicated that values restore Ubuntu and promotes good citizenship. Ubuntu is a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion, and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family (Broodryk 2002 in Letseka 2014: 1). Saule (1998) argues that Ubuntu is strongly based on one's traditional values, beliefs and practices acquired from childhood to adulthood (Saule 1998 in Bonne 2007: 864). These values, like the Ubuntu system from which they flow, are not innate but are acquired in society and transmitted intergenerationally by means of oral genres such as fables, proverbs, myths, riddles and storytelling (Kamwangamalu 1999 in *ibid*). Ubuntu which incorporates a strong sense of communal humaneness and humanness shares strong connections with participants' understanding of values. This is demonstrated in such responses as,

"I think it is who you are, being a good citizen, having respect towards other citizens, all in all, having Ubuntu"; "Values are the fundamentals of Ubuntu, teaching us to know that we are because of others, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"; and, "For these young ones it is important to teach them Ubuntu and ECD is the best time to teach youngsters how to love, share for one another".

The understanding that Ubuntu values promote a sense of the collective for humane co-existence expressed in these comments finds resonance in Swartz's (2006) contention that "it has the potential for providing a compelling vision of human thriving if promoted alongside both democratic participation and socio-economic justice" (Swartz 2006: 561), and in one of the main arguments in this study.

(iii) Theme 3: Values enable a multiplier effect in the family and community

The third theme, values enable a multiplier effect in the family and the community, accounted for 20% of the responses. The understanding that values are not confined to individuals, but have a snowball effect and can,

therefore, be advantageous in its spread within the preschool, in families, in communities and in the society, is clearly expressed here. This theme reinforces the way of life encapsulated in Ubuntu at the core of which is the dissemination of the value system to cohere and protect through and for a common good. The participants' comments in this theme, strongly supported by the motif of a 'chain' to symbolise succession, include the following:

"I think values are the chain in our children's life... Showing children respect, love, caring and good communication towards others is important, definitely a child will adopt that and influence the families or the community they belong to"; "First, I would like to mention showing love to other people, because if you show love they will also pass that to others... Secondly, respecting one another of which it must start from me respecting myself and automatically people will also show respect to me"; and, "Teaching values is a chain. Respecting each other as adults influence children so much, they observe and also listen eventually you see them acting out of what you do as an adult".

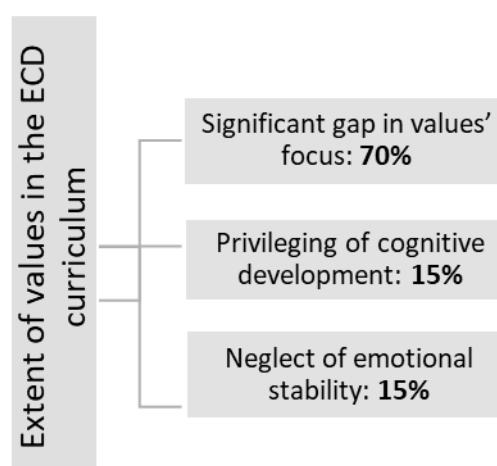
Additionally, this theme aligned closely with intergenerational modelling indicating the importance of the adults' role in living and promoting prosocial values since a child observes closely the behaviour and attitude of teachers and parents. Aspin and Chapman (2007), define the ontology of values as inextricably part of human actions and relations, as both individual and social beings. Values are generally ideas, principles, rules and conventions that people accept, agree to, appreciate, incline towards, see as important and act upon (Aspin 2007: 31-2). Similarly, in the ECD staff's conceptualisation of values it emerged that values are regarded as innate and integral to both personal and collective fulfilment. The practitioners agree, generally, on those affirming and benevolent values that should guide the behaviour and action of children and, by extension the community, for the realisation of a humane, compassionate and cooperative ethos. Refer to Figure 5.1.

5.2.2. Extent of values in the ECD curriculum

The purpose of this category was to determine the extent to which values and values education explicitly featured in the ECD curriculum and, by extension, in the ECD classroom. The ECD staff was best positioned to provide first-hand accounts based on the teaching and learning content being delivered.

Three themes were distilled from the responses. They are, (i) Significant gap in values' focus, (ii) Privileging of cognitive development and (iii) Neglect of emotional stability. Refer to Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5. 2: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff to the extent of values in the ECD curriculum



(i) Theme 1: Significant gap in values' focus

The majority (70%) responses that came out in this category was that there is a significant gap in the ECD curriculum in not including values explicitly. Although values feature tangentially through such activities as the morning prayer and other school rituals, they are not part of the curriculum nor engaged with on a deeper level. This finding has specific bearing on the study which makes the claim that the deliberate integration of values, generally, and Ubuntu values, specifically, can have a positive impact on children's behaviour, attitude and actions, especially if introduced in the preschool years. The responses of the ECD staff, however, suggest a conspicuous absence and where values are included this is generally driven by the personal values ethic of the practitioner, rather than following set curriculum guidelines. Responses clustered under this theme, pointing to the absence of explicit values education in the curriculum, include the following:

“It is only through our knowledge that we teach values but the curriculum does not include values”; “We don’t have curriculum that is linked to the values but we do teach them because now we have an understanding of the values that impact a child”; “Not specifically, because we never really had values in our teachings and also the curriculum does not give us anything concerning values”,

and,

“Values to these children are acted out of being taught Ubuntu, finding at times children co-operating showing love and care, but for the curriculum to provide this kind of teachings? No”.

Thus, the responses are unequivocal about the values gap in the ECD curriculum, and, as indicated, engagement with values is commonly the personal responsibility of the practitioner. Generally, values associated with personal hygiene and courtesies are included in relevant lessons, but there appears no wide-ranging coverage of values on social responsibility and civic participation, critical components of cohesive communities for participatory democracy. In this regard, Wilson (n.d.) argues that although it is important for children to learn and abide by “rules” of etiquette, this does not constitute moral education nor does it mean that when children ‘behave themselves’ that they have developed a sense of goodness or morality (Coles, 1997 in Wilson 2008: 2). Morality includes a sense of justice, compassion and caring about the welfare of others. It also includes the ability to discern how someone might be thinking or feeling (ibid). Morality as well as convention coexist in children’s thinking (Turiel 2001: xiii) and can, therefore, be nurtured and developed.

(ii) Theme 2: Privileging of cognitive development

The second and smaller theme indicated that 15% of the responses validates and extends the first, is that the cognitive development for the child’s academic school readiness is privileged over non cognitive skills development, thus, relegating values to the periphery. Moreover, as Young (2014), contends, the formation of capabilities is synergistic, as one capability enhances another. Cognitive and non-cognitive skills interact dynamically to shape the evolution of subsequent capabilities (Young 2014: 11).

Consequently, as the study contends, whole child development cannot be achieved if the cognitive domain is prioritised. Participants' comments in this theme include the following:

"The books instruct us to develop children cognitively but do not have relation with values and connection with the child" and, "The current curriculum ... teaches children only curriculum-related activities, not the entire holistic development of a child".

Implicit in the responses in this theme and, as indicated in Theme (i), is that practitioners in their individual capacity and based on their own presumed value systems, are expected to integrate values into the lessons. This raises two issues, one, is that the engagement with values in the ECD classroom is inconsistent and two, is that the training of practitioners does not include values and, therefore, practitioners are ill equipped. In either or both circumstance(s), engagement with values is indefinite. According to Powell (2010), teachers bear a crucial responsibility for contributing to the development of children's characters and moral dispositions (Powell 2010: 213), but without curriculum guidelines and relevant teacher training, fulfilling this may be problematic.

(iii) Theme 3: Neglect of emotional stability

The third theme with 15% responses, equal to the second one, affirms that the development goals tend to focus on children's cognition levels. An IE approach, however, which is advanced in this study, includes equally all aspects of the child's being, the mental (mind), spiritual (spirit), physical (body), psychic (soul) and vital (senses), for whole and complete development of the child. The neglect of whole child development in the current ECD curriculum was highlighted by participants, especially with regard to actively encouraging the emotional well-being of the child. This is evidenced in,

"The curriculum does not include emotions as results or outcomes in activities",

and,

“Children should be taught to overcome their emotions, not using aggressive acts as a solution to their problems”.

Thus, the current ECD curriculum deficits and its pedagogical approach, appear inadequate to the purpose of supporting children’s emotional development, key to cognitive development. According to Vorster et al (2016), the first couple of years after birth are crucial in the development of not only a child’s cognitive development but also their physical, emotional, social and moral development. Appropriate interventions at this time can support lifelong growth, physical health, development and learning (Vorster, et al 2016: 3).

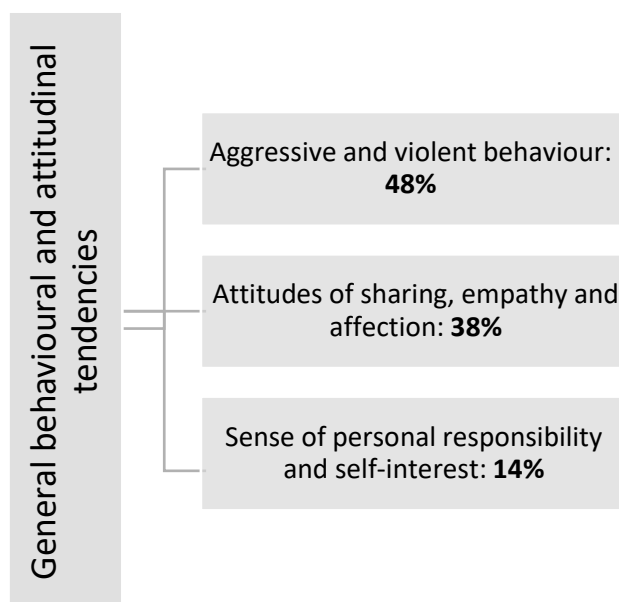
Collectively, the responses in this category confirm the values’ void in the ECD curriculum. The dominant theme of a significant gap in an explicit values’ focus and the concomitant responsibility of individual practitioners and preschools to foster values suggest a misguided ECD model that fails to optimally utilise the early years to embed values to engender a caring, compassionate, and interconnected society. The two smaller and equal themes of a privileging of the cognitive domain and the neglect of emotional development, respectively, serve to reinforce the first theme and validate the assumption made in the study of the failure of the current ECD curriculum to afford equal importance to the development of all domains, for whole child development.

5.2.3. Common behavioural and attitudinal tendencies

Considering that one of the study objectives is to determine the extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from IE which incorporates IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation, establishing the general behavioural tendencies of the children in the care of the ECD staff was important. As evidenced in the literature (Chapter 2), anti-social and deviant behaviour amongst young people is commonplace. The preschool staff’s actual experience would, therefore, be critical to an understanding of the situation and establishing the motivation for an intervention. The three principal themes that surfaced in this category were (i)

Aggressive and violent behaviour, (ii) Sharing, empathy and affection, and (iii) Sense of personal responsibility and self-interest. Refer to Figure 5.3.

FIGURE 5. 3: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff to general behavioural and attitudinal tendencies



(i) Theme 1: Aggressive and violent behaviour

The predominant (48%) responses in this category highlights the ECD staff's encounters of aggression and violence amongst many preschool children.

Although these attitudes and acts of deviant behaviour refer to "some children", the accounts seem to reinforce the statistics of school and classroom violence alluded to in Chapter 2 as precursors to later tendencies. Generally, participants ascribe this to the negative environmental influences in the township and the exposure to violence on television, through electronic games and the media.

According to a 2012 report based on Bronfenbrenner's (bio)ecological systems theory (Refer to Chapter 3, 3.3) Violence against Children in South Africa, children who inhabit violent spaces across a range of settings may begin to experience violence as a norm and may be socialised into accepting and tolerating violent behaviour unless there are countervailing sources of socialisation that counteract these forces (DSD, DWCPD and UNICEF 2012:

5). The comments from respondents refer repeatedly to words, such as, “brutal”, “aggressive” and “violence” and collectively depict attitudes and actions of children that are harsh and rough. Participants’ responses that highlighted anti-social and violent behaviour through environmental influences and factors, are evidenced, amongst others, in:

“Children come to school sometimes with aggressive acts towards others...”;

“...strange behaviours of over excessive violence”; “I think the violent behaviour comes from their environment...”; “...the TV, TV games... teach them violent behaviours”, and, “I see a lot of beating each other up and brutally using bad language”.

While most of participants describe their classroom and preschool experiences with children displaying negative and violent behaviour, most were actively countering these with prosocial values and principles. These interventions (“countervailing sources of socialisation”), however, unless embedded in the curriculum, will remain *ad hoc* and the devices of only some practitioners, consequently excluding most of the children. In this context, the study’s proposal of applying an IE approach with Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation in ECD is imperative.

(ii) Theme 2: Attitudes of sharing, empathy and affection

The second theme emerging from this category and appearing antithetical to the first and dominant one is that children in the classes of some of the practitioners (38%) display behavioural and attitudinal tendencies of sharing, empathy and affection with concerted interventions by the practitioners. While this theme indicates a positive perspective on children’s behaviour in these classes, it also draws attention to two issues, the first being that without the interventions of the practitioners, children’s behaviour and attitudes may not change and the second, is the variance in the classroom/teacher experiences with preschool children, confirmed by the dominance of the first theme on aggression and violence. Responses that were grouped under this theme include the following benevolent values:

“Sharing is the most common value, also caring in my class”; “...I told them that we are all going to share the toys... they just need to be constantly reminded of values” and “...the percentage of children showing empathy, love and care is on a big percentage...”

Implicit in the foregoing responses is the suggestion that these tendencies are the individual experiences in particular preschools and classrooms and with specific practitioners, possibly correlating with circumstances such as, site and classroom management, individual capacity and class sizes. For example, one of the participant's comments refers to a measure of control exerted at site level as a possible reason for children's prosocial behaviour:

“Some of them are coming and they show respect towards each other, abiding to classroom rules and as they progress, we enforce values in all grades”.

Participants underlined the prevalence of empathy in this theme as a significant indicator that preschool children are sensitised to the feelings of other children. This is especially featured in accounts of situations in which a child is in need/vulnerable and is assisted by another. Amongst the comments demonstrating this quality are:

“So, they are learning a sense of empathy. So, I think that will grow with them and they will teach the next coming generation”; “The values that children display is the respect and love to each other, you will find them sympathising because one didn't have lunch and they will give him/her food so they show caring for each other”; and, “Children show sympathy and comfort to each other when they see that one of them is not feeling okay”.

In this context, Prout and James (1997) indicate that according to the sociology of childhood, children are both constrained by structure and simultaneously active agents acting in and upon structure (Prout and James 1997 in Thornberg 2016: 247). As such, they do not simply internalise the social world, including adults' socialisation practices, but strive to make sense of their culture and to participate in it as active and creative agents (Corsaro 2005 in *ibid*).

Collectively, the values depicted in this theme are associated with children's display of compassion and collaboration, usually guided by the practitioner.

This finding tends to confirm the capacity of preschool children to engage with values, generally, and with social responsibility and civic participation, particularly. Where these values are consistently and sustainably fostered through an IE approach, the possibility exists for a new order or generation to fulfil the demands of a democratic South Africa. In this context, Howe and Covell (2009), point out that that sustainability of a democratic society requires - at some level - the cultivation of civic virtue (or dispositions and habits favourable for democratic participation), a sense of social responsibility, and a periodic willingness among citizens to set aside private interests and participate in the wider community and in the democratic process. Without public spiritedness and active citizenship, a democratic society dedicated to protecting the rights of individuals is not likely to be secure (Howe & Covell 2009: 22).

(iii) Theme 3: Sense of personal responsibility and self-interest

In this minor theme, 14% of the respondents described their experiences of behavioural and attitudinal tendencies that generally typify preschool children. They identified, in particular, a strong sense of personal responsibility for belongings or personal items, rather than an accountability for behaviour and actions. In addition, self-interest as understood as a selfish disposition, was construed as a "... 'my' attitude", by one of the participants. Some of the responses in this theme, included:

"Children have a sense of their own belongings when they start their schooling and do not want to share their things but as they learn and adapt to the teachings of unity, they start to change that behaviour and share"; and "Children also have a sense of belonging because they know that they have to take back their things after they have used it".

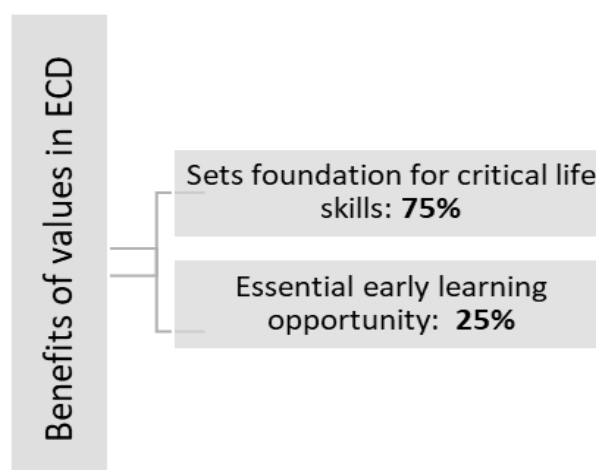
Respondents seem to accept these individualistic behaviours as initial tendencies, developing in due course, with guidance and intervention, to engagement with other children. Overall, in this category the participants' responses reveal a dominance of the aggressive and violent behaviour

theme. This finding conforms with the statistics of youth violence in Chapters 1 and 2 and underscores the imperative for intervention in these early years when sustainable learning is optimal. Significantly, in the second theme, 'Attitudes of sharing, empathy and affection', it was noted that these benevolent behavioural and attitudinal tendencies amongst children emerged as consequences of *inter alia*, the practitioners' guidance and intervention or the conditions existing in the preschools. This draws attention to the potential risk of pervasive anti-social behaviour where prosocial interventions are not consistently and universally applied.

5.2.4. Benefits of values in ECD

In view of one of the main arguments that this study makes of the potential for the early years to sustainably embed prosocial behaviour and attitudes through values, this category was a crucial confirmatory indicator. In addition, it sought to establish what actual benefits could accrue from the explicit inclusion of values at the ECD level. According to Hawkes (2010), values education is a term used for a wide range of implicit and explicit activities devised to develop a values-base to the life and work of the school. It focuses on values such as respect and honesty, which are principles that guide behaviour. It explicitly develops an ethical vocabulary and looks for ways that values can be expressed through positive behaviour in the school and community. Values education is also an important feature of the so-called hidden curriculum, what is learnt through customs and conventions, discipline, and role modelling by adults (Hawkes 2010: 233-4). Two sub-themes came out from the responses of the ECD staff in this category which are, (i) Sets foundation for critical life skills, and (ii) Essential early learning opportunity. Refer to Figure 5.4.

FIGURE 5. 4: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on the benefits of values in ECD



(i) Theme 1: Sets foundation for critical life skills

The major (75%) responses in this theme were that the explicit inclusion of values in ECD sets the foundation for the acquisition of critical life skills. Participants strongly voiced their views that only benefits could derive from values in ECD, endorsing one of the significant aspects of the study, the integration of Ubuntu values in the ECD curriculum for social responsibility and civic participation. Some of the responses in this theme included the following:

“These values will be with them for the rest of their lives, they will be better people even when they leave for primary school and high school. Decision making will be guided by their conscience and humanity” and “I think they will benefit a lot in terms of behaviour related acts, calming themselves in certain situations, overcoming fear and learning to express themselves in a good way”.

The unanimous acceptance of the importance and benefits of values in ECD for positive and prosocial influence on children, both immediate and long term, is consistent with the study’s claim. In this context, Wilson (n.d.), argues that early childhood education should address the moral development of the child, especially the caring and compassionate aspects of morality of which social responsibility is key. Positive moral characteristics do not appear

spontaneously (Berkowitch & Grych, 1998 in Wilson 2008: 1), thus, addressing the cultural moral crisis requires the commitment and involvement of many elements of society, including early childhood education (ibid).

(ii) Theme 2: Essential early learning opportunity

25% responses for this theme also endorses the benefits of values in ECD and focuses on the optimal use of the early learning opportunity. As indicated in Chapters 1 and 2, studies have shown the lifelong benefits of early interventions. According to Schonkoff (2017), half a century of research has documented that early childhood interventions can produce positive outcomes in multiple domains (Shonkoff 2017: 2). Similarly, responses in this theme are consistent with this critical stage of learning opportunities. The responses include the following:

“I think values are benefits in their own, in isiZulu there is a saying that says ‘ligotshwa lisemanzi’ which means ‘children should learn values of life in an early stage for them to live a better life’. Because if a child adopts values at an early stage, they will grow with them”; “Children in this stage are similar to sponges, they suck up everything...”; and, “There are children who will even learn early to associate themselves with good crowds and stay out of trouble”.

The responses in this theme underscore children’s openness to learning opportunities at the preschool stage for sustainability. These comments drawn from the knowledge and experiences of the ECD staff validate this critical phase in human learning and, consequently, support the proposal as indicated in Chapter 1 that early learning opportunities make a real and lasting difference in children’s lives.

In summary, this aspect of the research study explored a range of relevant components on and around ‘values’. The categories are, (i) Conceptualisation of values, (ii) General behavioural and attitudinal tendencies, (iii) Extent of values in the ECD curriculum and, (iv) Benefits of values in ECD. Comprehensively, the main themes appearing from each of the categories established that the ECD Staff understand values as being innate and integral to both personal and collective fulfilment and agree that

affirming and benevolent values should guide the behaviour and action of children for a humane, compassionate and cooperative ethos in communities and society. Regarding behavioural and attitudinal tendencies amongst children, the dominant theme was the prevalence of aggressive and violent behaviour. In establishing the extent of values in the current ECD curriculum, the major theme was a significant gap in an explicit values' focus, resulting in individual practitioners and preschools having to engage children in a values ethic. Finally, the predominant theme in the category exploring the benefits of values in ECD was its importance in setting the foundation for critical life skills in children. The responses of the ECD staff, thus, confirm the occurrence of anti-social behaviour amongst preschool children, a values deficit in the current ECD curriculum and the considerable benefits derived from the inclusion of values in ECD. The following insight offered by one of the participants encapsulates this finding:

"Maybe if we had this values education long time ago, we would have been at least a better country. We have lost our roots and no more are afraid of making wrong decisions or adopting wrong habits..."

5.3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: INTEGRAL EDUCATION

IE is a pedagogic approach that originated in India with a limited and specific application in that country (as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2). It is, therefore, not likely to be known nor understood in South Africa, generally, and in the study location, specifically. In an effort to compensate for this shortcoming, the more familiar, 'holistic education' descriptor was used to elicit responses on this aspect from the focus group. According to Adams (2006), when applied to education, holistic and integral, in their definitions and approaches have often been used interchangeably because of their apparent epistemological similarities in promoting holistic, inclusive methods (Adams 2006: 34). In addition, the research questions based on the interview schedule (Annexure C) that probed this aspect of the study accommodated the participants' inexperience.

The analysis of the ECD staff focus group responses ($n = 42$) yielded three categories: Conceptualisation of IE, Extent of IE in the ECD curriculum and Benefits of IE to ECD, emerging from these three categories were six themes, two in each category. Refer to Table 5.2.

TABLE 5 2: Summary of the categories and sub-themes of ECD Staff Responses on IE

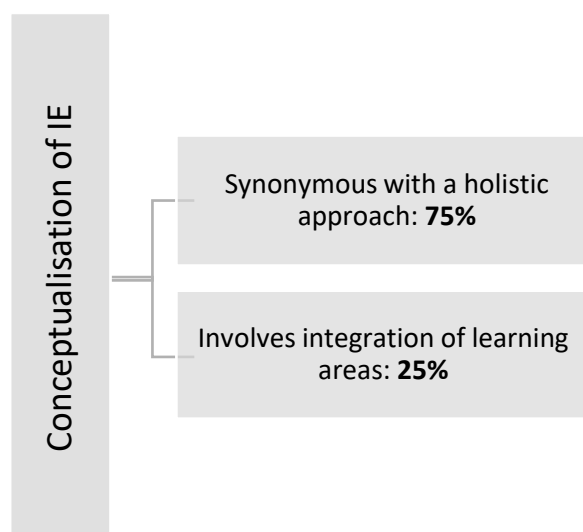
Category	Conceptualisation of IE	Extent of IE in the ECD curriculum	Benefits of IE to ECD
Sub-Theme 1	Synonymous with a holistic approach	Curriculum focus on cognitive development	Facilitates whole child development
Sub-Theme 2	Involves integration of learning areas	Parent's role in holistic development	Engages children in prosocial values

5.3.1. Conceptualisation of IE

Partho (2007) defines IE as a unitive education of the whole child that addresses the head, heart, body and spirit, unlike a mainstream approach that focuses almost exclusively on the head (Partho 2007: 19). According to a US-based Aurobindoean IE school (New Creation International), this education addresses the totality of the whole person, mainly by developing a sense of integrity, harmony, and beauty in all aspects of humanity. The application of an IE approach allows children to become responsible and creative citizens who strive for excellence and are committed to the progress of themselves and their community.

The responses in this category to investigate the conceptualisation of IE yielded two themes (i) IE is synonymous with a holistic approach and (ii) IE involves integration of learning areas. Refer to Figure 5.5.

FIGURE 5. 5: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff's conceptualisation of IE



(i) Theme 1: Synonymous with a holistic approach

The dominant (75%) responses in this category show the similarity between IE and holistic education. Participants could identify elements of holistic education, such as, “committed to educating the whole person and integrating the multidimensional aspects of being human; educating the person as a whole as opposed to an assemblage of parts, and educating the person within a whole comprising family, school, community, society, culture, and the universe” (Miller 1991, 2001 cited in Adams 2006: 35). Their responses included an education that created connections with the community, the environment, and humane values, all of which resonate with the fundamental principles of an Integral Education approach. The comments demonstrated strong support for IE, as was understood in,

“...respect the world, if you respect the world, the world will respect you” and “the connection that we have as human beings with the environment”.

The responses also acknowledged the optimal and sustainable learning opportunities in the early years – *“taught to a child in an early stage... to live long with the child”* – a key driver to this study for developing social

responsibility and civic participation in the ECD phase through an alternate and effective education model. Likewise, the critical early years are highlighted in the draft policy on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in noting the scientific evidence of the importance of the early years for human development and, consequently, the need for investment in resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception (SA, DSD. National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy 2015:12).

In addition, the correlation between a holistic/IE approach and children's spiritual development encompassing the interconnectedness with life around them – *“teachings related to their spiritual growth”* and *“understand the rest of the world you're living in and the people and religions”* – endorses one of the primary goals of whole child development in IE. Aurobindoean education aims at the evolution of a spiritual individual, community and humanity. It seeks the fulfilment and spiritual transformation of the body, life and mind (Shinde 2016: 5-6). Spiritual values are central values, and they must therefore govern and guide all the values and aspects of education. In the spiritual life, there is no sense of the separate self (Ghose 1990 cited in Adams 2006: 21), thereby, fostering the connectedness to other humans and all forms of life. This sense of consciousness is at the core of social responsibility and civic participation.

Significantly, the assumption made in the study of a gap in the NCF in not adequately focusing on educating the whole child, and consequently neglecting the critical soft or social skills for the evolution of humane societies, seems to be confirmed in the focus group responses. This was demonstrated in the differentiation between the holistic (IE) approach and the current ECD model and a clear partiality towards the holistic approach which could more likely contribute to positive self-regulation in children, especially since the existing approach seems to be ineffective in this regard.

(ii) Theme 2: Involves integration of learning areas

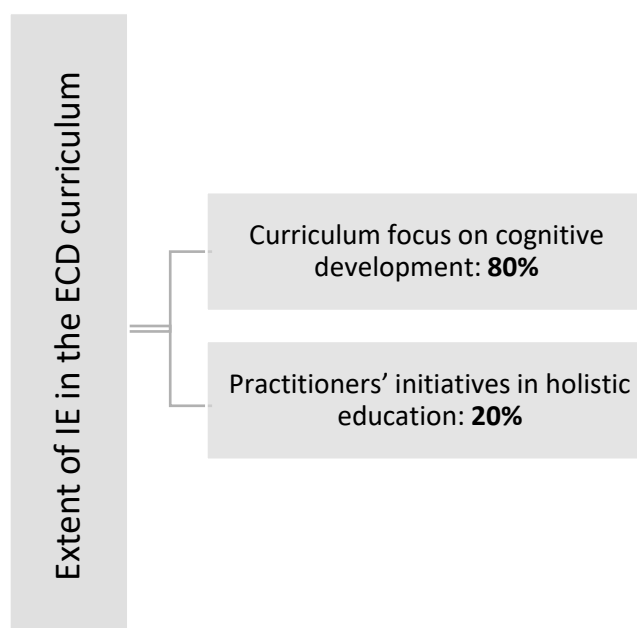
The minor theme with 25% of the responses in this category took a narrow, though not an inaccurate perspective of integral to mean the integration or linking of learning areas, instead of the integration of human developmental domains. This understanding of 'integration' was based on its use in the current ECD programme, The National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS), which promotes an integrated approach that includes all the different skills, knowledge, and abilities that children are expected and encouraged to attain in the different domains of their development (SA, DBE 2009:18).

This understanding is evidenced in, *"talking about the number of eyes they have, how many hands do they have and linking it with mathematics", "linking of themes", "linking of subject areas" and "integrating of subjects"*. While this interpretation does not capture the depth and scope of IE, it suggests some understanding of the concept of 'connecting', which is key to IE's underpinnings. The two themes that surfaced from this category, therefore, display a clear understanding of an IE/holistic approach to preschool education as an alternative educational approach that comprehensively develops all aspects of the child's being, especially the humane and compassionate parts of character formation.

5.3.2. Extent of IE in the ECD curriculum

As with determining the extent of values in the ECD curriculum (5.2.1.2), this category similarly investigated the extent or use of IE, currently. In demonstrating an understanding of the concept of IE and its comparability to holistic education, the ECD staff responses were based on their classroom practice and experience. Two themes appeared in this category, (i) Curriculum focus on cognitive development and (ii) Practitioners' initiatives in holistic education. Refer to Figure 5.6.

FIGURE 5. 6: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on IE in the ECD curriculum



(i) Theme 1: Curriculum focus on cognitive development

In this major theme, 80% of the respondents agreed that a holistic (or IE) approach was not currently being used in ECD, but there could be great value and worth if implemented. The relevant early learning developmental areas (ELDAS) in the NCF - well-being; identity and belonging; knowledge and understanding of the world (RSA, DoE. NCF 2015: 20) - are intended to develop positive life skills. The mainstream fragmented pedagogic approach and emphasis on cognitive development, however, are unlikely to achieve the outcomes of the prosocial behaviour and practice of social responsibility and civic participation. Whereas holistic education approaches include many aspects of an individual (e.g., emotional, moral, interpersonal, spiritual, and cultural), these are often contrasted with the more “mainstream,” “conventional,” or “traditional” forms of education, which tend to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, development of cognitive skills and individual achievement (Esbjörn-Hargens 2011: 2).

Significantly, most referred to the holistic approach as one that is different from the existing curriculum, and with the potential to develop the emotional and moral aspects of the child. This was revealed in such comments as,

“...teachings of today they don’t really concentrate on the heart” and “our curriculum only looks after the needs of the mind and body, but nothing about the heart and the morals of the complete human being”.

The repeated reference in the responses to the omission of “heart” in relation to the current curriculum serves to confirm the focus on the cognitive domain and the concomitant neglect of the affective domain. This is reiterated in another response which also highlights the insubstantial ‘integrated approach’ (NELDS) promoted by the ECD curriculum:

“...it is only the basic integration between subjects, but for the heart teaching them to love, to respect or to be compassionate...that is not in our curriculum”.

Thus, this theme confirmed that neither an IE nor a holistic approach in ECD is currently used because of a disproportionate focus on the cognitive domain. The subsequent relegation of the equal and balanced development of all domains to lesser importance can be disadvantageous to children’s whole well-being.

(ii) Theme 2: Practitioners’ initiatives in holistic education

This minor (20%) response indicated that individual practitioners on their own initiatives were moving beyond the curriculum to include values, ethics and morals in their teaching and learning programmes. Although some participants were of the view that a foundational value system should come from the home, the consensus was the absence of holistic education as evidenced in, *“in the curriculum there is no specific thing that really specifically teaches them those aspects”*, confirming that the existing ECD programme does not purposefully use a holistic approach for whole child development.

In recognition of the curriculum deficiencies with regard to a holistic approach through guiding principles and values, practitioners compensate by introducing some practices that could contribute to the development of social or soft skills and provide balance to the cognitively skewed curriculum. This is demonstrated in,

“...in the morning assembly we teach them to pray”; “...on a spiritual base ... we are developing that and also with the values...”; and “we do teach them morals, values, physical training, but when they leave for the mainstream to other schools, they never learn about these things”.

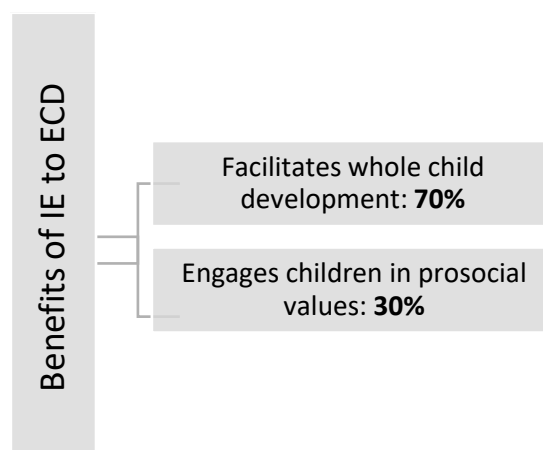
Thus, the individual efforts of the practitioners again draw attention to the ad hoc application of aspects of holistic education and, further, may not always achieve successful outcomes if the approach is ‘half baked’. This confirmation of the non-existence of an IE/holistic approach in the ECD curriculum, despite its clearly articulated advantages noted in the majority responses, serves to reinforce the assumption made in this study of a significant gap in the ECD National Curriculum Framework in not applying an IE/holistic education approach.

Most of the respondents in this category confirmed that the ECD curriculum is skewed in favour of the cognitive development of children and, as a result, the other aspects of a child’s life and being – emotional, physical, spiritual and psychic – are underserved. In addition, the participants understood and favoured an alternate and holistic mode of teaching and learning to develop all these aspects of the child. According to their responses, this balanced approach had the potential to develop socially acceptable ways to get along well in society and to maintain a healthy sense of self.

5.3.3. Benefits of IE to ECD

In this category which seeks to establish the benefits of an IE approach to ECD, the participants drew on their knowledge and familiarity of holistic education. Two themes were identified, (i) Facilitates whole child development (ii) Engages children in prosocial values. Refer to Figure 5.7.

FIGURE 5. 7: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on the benefits of an IE approach



(i) Theme 1: Facilitates whole child development

The majority (70%) responses in this category suggested unequivocally that an IE approach was beneficial because it facilitated holistic and all-round child development, as opposed to the existing ECD curriculum which focused on the mind or cognition. These views surfaced in, *“children will be able to grow spiritually”*; *“children will respect nature and its productions”*; and *“they will learn...tools to face challenges in their future”*. Moreover, the emphasis on the value of such an approach in the preschool phase reinforces the study’s proposal concerning the early years for sustainable learning opportunities, as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2.

The understanding that, unlike the current ECD curriculum that prepares children narrowly for school readiness, an IE or holistic education approach prepares children for life readiness was evidenced in, *“children will develop many skills and knowledge”*; *“develop another way of reasoning”*; *“open their eyes into understanding situations in life”*; and *“develop all areas of the child”*. These collective IE affirmations summed up in, *“the indigenous and integral will form this good concrete foundation for children”*, strengthen the argument that an ECD IE approach with IK Ubuntu values can be beneficial to the development of children.

(ii) Theme 2: Engages children in prosocial values

The minor (30%) response in this category, that IE engages children in prosocial values, is an extension of the first theme in this category since the facilitation of whole child development is linked to the acquisition of prosocial values. Thus, the participants view IE/holistic education as beneficial to ECD and support the contention made in the study of this alternate pedagogic approach to foster social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children. Responses in support of this include,

“...these teachings will then form one human being who knows who he is, to respect the space he shares with others. It will also teach them the good way of presenting themselves to the world” and “It will be beneficial because maybe children will start to understand what is really love, how do we show love and also maybe they will learn to tolerate each other...”.

Overall, the responses suggest that an IE or holistic approach could add great value in the preschool phase through engagement with prosocial and affirming values to better equip children to respect themselves, others, and the spaces they share with others. These values are critical to countering the violence and anti-social behaviour and attitudes that are increasingly features of South African youth, especially in schools as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2. Finally, the results in this category highlight the benefits that could derive from an ECD IE/holistic education approach towards whole child development and engaging with prosocial values which could significantly change the trajectory of preschool education in South Africa and of the society.

5.4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: IK UBUNTU

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) may be defined as the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces. Indigenous

Knowledge Systems are not confined to the material sphere, but often interconnect with spiritual and nonmaterial realms of existence (Emeagwali 2014: 1) and is consistent with an IE approach that respects the inclusion of the spiritual dimension for completeness.

The focus group interviews were aimed at determining the participants' views on a series of aspects of IK, (i) a conceptual understanding of IK, (ii) the extent to which the current ECD curriculum includes IK, (iii) the impact, if any, of IK on the lives of the participants, and (iv) the possible benefits of the inclusion of IK in ECD. Developing out of the four categories, were eight themes, two in each of the four categories. Refer to the summary in Table 5.3.

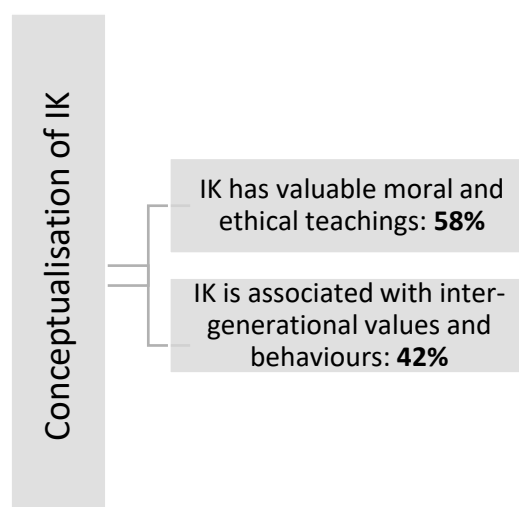
TABLE 5 3: Summary of the categories and sub-themes of ECD Staff Responses on IK

Category	Conceptualisation of IK	Extent of IK in the ECD curriculum	Personal impact of IK	Benefits of IK in ECD
Sub-theme 1	IK has valuable moral and ethical teachings	Dominance of Western ways of knowing and doing	Embedded values and life skills	IK can offer solutions to modern challenges
Sub-theme 2	IK is associated with inter-generational values and behaviours	Exclusion of IK impacting cultural relevance	Communal ethos of interconnectedness and interdependence	IK is associated with cultural well-being

5.4.1. Conceptualisation of IK

In initiating this section of the interview, participants were encouraged to offer their understanding of the concept of IK. Two overarching themes emerged in this category, (i) IK has valuable moral and ethical teachings and (ii) IK is associated with inter-generational values and behaviours. Refer to Figure 5.8.

FIGURE 5. 8: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff's conceptualisation of IK



(i) Theme 1: Indigenous Knowledge has valuable moral and ethical teachings

The majority (58%) of participants identified a clearly defined connection between Indigenous Knowledge and moral and ethical attitudes and behaviours as evidenced in, *“Old time teachings were good and also prevented many problems...which we are facing today on a high rate due to lack of local teachings”*.

In the application of indigenous knowledge, honesty and integrity were never compromised and people lived by a strong, collective moral code. In this context, Letseka (2000) argues that Ubuntu has normative implications in that it encapsulates moral norms and values such as “altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, and respect and concern for others” (Letseka 2000 in Letseka 2012: 48). Even communally narrated stories could raise a conscience *“unembeza”* and always necessitated accepting the good and rejecting the bad, *“I think it does teach you the difference between the bad and the good through stories which give you some sort of lesson that you will experience later in your life”*.

Indigenous Knowledge guidelines kept people on a righteous path as opposed to the new South African democratic constitution which respondents

felt was being violated and, as such, failed in its main objective of promoting a democratic ethos founded on social responsibility,

“...there are certain people who lived the certain way and when you see them today they are good citizens, and the reason for that is that they lived with indigenous guidelines and today children are more based on government’s rules (and not the indigenous community guidelines) and terms in how to grow children, because indigenous knowledge teaches them the proper way of living and the constitution is against these teachings”.

According to the participants, indigenous knowledge could succeed where modern laws failed or were ineffectual. Phrases and comments about the moral aspect of Indigenous Knowledge included, *“awareness of our surroundings”, “the value of respect, honesty and love”, and “groomed us”.*

(ii) Theme 2: Indigenous Knowledge is associated with intergenerational values and behaviours

The second, smaller (42%) response was that which related Indigenous Knowledge to their ancestors and forebears and drew a clear link between inheriting a positive value system and the imperative to pass this knowledge on to future generations, demonstrated in, *“We refer most of the things from the elders”.*

Words and phrases referencing inherited knowledge and wisdom included,

“...through our grandparents and parents”; “respect for nature”; “natural and organic remedies”; “good foundation”; “respect for every human being” and “spiritual growth”. Some of the older respondents spoke about, “still living by the rules of Indigenous Knowledge because they taught us so much of the good”.

Many recalled the indigenous games their parents taught them and the resultant wholesome lifestyles, which they feared would be lost to the current generation. The cumulative effect of all the comments is the dominating

presence of a strong value system based on communal love and respect, evidenced in,

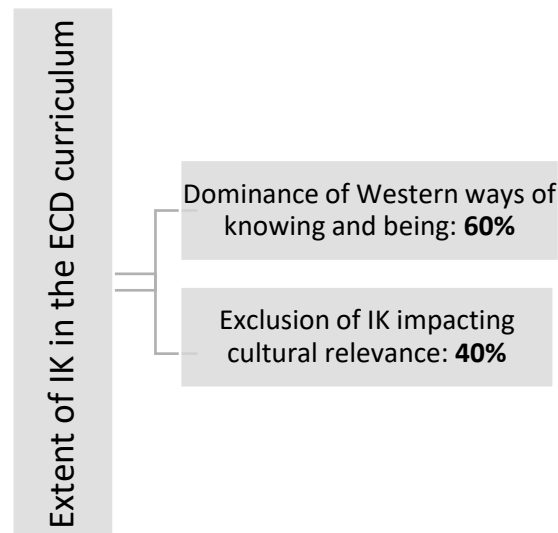
“My parents used to teach me different games – how to grow up and look beautiful, how to respect, how to love one another” and “If only we could go back to the indigenous knowledge, maybe these new generations growing up will have a concrete foundation”.

Emeagwali and Dei (2014) contend that at the core of African indigeneity is the understanding that knowledge resides in people and cultural memory, in accumulated techniques, skills, and strategies for survival, in epistemological frameworks and points of reference, in language and oral and written forms of documentation, in value systems and their diverse modes of explanation, in cosmology and various ways of understanding the universe – in spite of European colonialism (Emeagwali & Dei 2014: xi). The statement, *“The children are the links in the chain of knowledge because when the elders die, they must carry on passing the knowledge”, sums up the value placed on IK and the hope for its continuity.*

5.4.2. Extent of IK in the ECD curriculum

Although the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four (2015) spells out the inclusion of indigenous and local African resources (RSA, DoE. NCF 2015: 5), in practice, however, this is not the case. Gwele and Biersteker (2012), point out that despite lip service to the inclusion of local childrearing knowledge and practices in South African ECD programming and a growing focus on diversity, most local models and curriculum guidelines privilege Western child development theory and models of ECD provision (Gwele and Biersteker 2012: 4). In exploring the actual extent of IK in the current ECD curriculum, the following themes emerged, (i) Dominance of Western ways of knowing and doing, and (ii) Exclusion of IK impacting cultural relevance. Refer to Figure 5.9.

FIGURE 5. 9: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on the extent of IK in the ECD curriculum



Theme 1: Dominance of Western ways of knowing and doing

The predominant (60%) response in this category is the domination of Western influences on the curriculum and practice and the concomitant exclusion of IK. While there may be ‘windows of opportunity’ for practitioners to include some IK content – under particular and relevant themes and topics – this is largely through the endeavours of individuals and not standard practice, similar to the inclusion of values, in particular, ECD classrooms. Furthermore, the idea that IK and cognitive development are diametrically opposed surfaced in, *“No, we don’t have IK linked to our programmes because our children are fed with the curriculum based on cognitive development programmes only”*.

This fallacious and misleading view appears to be the consequence of successive eras of white Western domination in South Africa. In this regard, Shizha and Abdi (2014), argue that the problematic deconstruction of African indigenous epistemic systems did not only manifest during the colonial era, but continued even after political independence in most African countries. Indigenous discourses were and continue to be marginalised by the indigenous post-colonial elite who did/do not challenge much of the colonisers’ projects in this domain. Only in recent years, this way of thinking has been recognised as an important critical opposition to the

modernity/coloniality perspective (Shizha and Abdi 2014: 2). Further evidence of this mental subordination reinforcing the exclusion of IK is in its representation as *“old stuff (injula)”*. Comments of participants such as,

“No, because going back to the IK teachings will be opposed by parents due to parents adopting Western culture” and, “Parents of today are against the teachings that are related to the roots of Ubuntu because even they have adopted Western culture”.

In the main, respondents referred to the established Western practices and programmes and the absence of IK. In this regard, comments such as,

“...we are influenced a lot by the Western way of doing things... everything we teach doesn’t really come from our backgrounds...all the content is still Western-based...nothing from the children’s own cultural world... so the current programme does not have IK stories – African stories”.

Theme 2: Exclusion of IK impacting cultural relevance

The smaller (40%) response highlighted the absence of Indigenous Knowledge content in the Early Childhood Development programme and the resultant cultural irrelevance to, in this sample, African children. The participants indicated that the teaching/learning content still favoured Western/Eurocentric pedagogy and materials and, as such, excluded the children’s own cultural world, *“it is worrying that a whole culture can be wiped out if the current older generation doesn’t pass the knowledge on”*.

Many spoke about “lost games” (*“amagende”*) or (*“amatshe”*) which *“used to sharpen our minds, sight (hand-eye coordination) and motor skills”*. Learning is more impactful, meaningful and relevant when the cultural background and experience of children are taken into cognisance. Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education enable a child to develop their cultural identity. This is made possible when children are rooted in their indigenous knowledge and skills. Indigenous knowledge equips children with cultural values and practices in their environments and serves as tools with which they function in their environment. Indigenous knowledge provides the platform on which

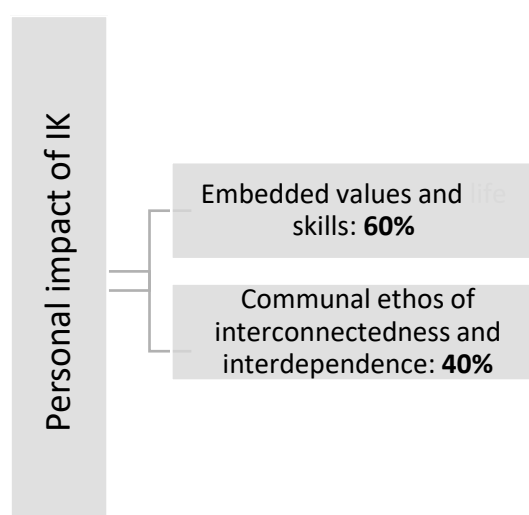
elements of culture can form and shape the personality of the child (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang 2013: 87).

Thus, in investigating the extent of IK in the current ECD curriculum, the results in both themes reveal an exclusion of IK, a dominance of Western content and the consequent cultural paucity. In addition, the concern expressed of the imminent loss of IK on account of the diminishing number of knowledge holders is encapsulated in, *“IK must be in the curriculum but there is so much we have to do to put it in, especially finding people who have this knowledge”*. This view also points to the urgency to source and include IK in the ECD curriculum, a primary goal of this study.

5.4.3. Personal impact of IK

This category explored the extent to which the ECD staff was exposed to IK in their personal lives and the impact, if any, this may have had on them and the prevalence of IK use amongst them in their classroom practice. Two themes were identified in this category, (i) Embedded values and life skills and (ii) Communal ethos of interconnectedness and interdependence. Refer to 5.10.

FIGURE 5. 10: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on the personal impact of IK



Theme 1: Embedded values and life skills

In this dominant (60%) response, participants identified through their personal experiences of IK the positive and affirming values and life skills that are embedded in their lives and continue to manifest in their actions and relationships. The overarching values most referenced were “*respect*”, “*humanity*”, “*compassion*” and “*love*”, essential values for social responsibility and civic participation which are key components of this study. Through games, stories, poems and other cultural artefacts, values and lessons were imparted. Respondents’ comments in this context were, “*There were games and rhymes that groomed us into becoming good citizens and people who respected and embraced nature*” and “*...stories are useful for learning life’s lessons and values*”.

The notion of “becoming good citizens” through IK interventions features regularly and suggests strongly that imparting values, morals and ethics were an integral part of the process of raising children which adults undertook with no opposition, as noted in,

“In the old days, teachings were enforced on children, but today it seems as if they have rights and choices to do anything” and “... today children are out of line, and you can’t intervene because you will be going against the constitution”.

Implied in these responses is resistance to Western democracy and its obvious incongruity to African principles of democracy. In this respect, Ake (1993), proposes that democracy must be recreated in the context of the given realities in political arrangements which fit the cultural context, without sacrificing its values and inherent principles (Ake 1993 in Letseka 2012: 52), a point which Letseka (2012) invokes in defence of the uniqueness of African democracy (*ibid*).

Similarly, Teffo (1999), contends that African humanism, applicable to all societies, is typified by some norms and values, amongst which are justice; respect for person and property; tolerance; compassion with and sensitivity to the aged, the handicapped and the less privileged; clear-cut sex and

marriage controls; unwavering obedience to adults, parents, seniors, and authority; courtesy, reliability, honesty and loyalty. While Africa has largely [some] retained these values, the West has tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate them. Hence Africa's bequest to posterity lies in its morality (Teffo 1999: 154). In total, respondents in this theme attested to the value of IK, based on their own life experiences and the foundational knowledge derived from learnings acquired naturally and organically.

Theme 2: Communal ethos of interconnectedness and interdependence

In this smaller (40%) response, participants cited the communalism that IK fostered within and among communities, especially in consideration of the individualism of Western systems. In this regard, Ntuli (2002), submits that contrary to Western thought, African thought sees life as a cycle; the world as an interconnected reality; human beings, plants, animals and the universe are one interconnected whole, and that our survival depends on how these forces interact with each other. In all societies, the beginning and meaning of life lie within the world of myth, and these myths are given form through rituals (Ntuli 2002: 58). This perspective is expressed in,

"I remember a game called 'wema dlamini'...games like this were having teachings for people. If only they can come back so that we can redeem the spirit of togetherness amongst people".

Teffo (1999) describes the African ethic of community centredness ('communeocentricism') as anti-individualism and pro-collectivism. It relies on equal collective participation in whatever is being done. The people are cemented together by a feeling of common concern, care, sharing and infinite love for each other as members of the human race (Teffo 1999: 163). Similarly, this communalism that encircles communities is manifest in the community's shared responsibility of raising children, a system that entrusts all adults/elders in the community to nurture and support the development of children. This is evidenced in, "... it takes a community to raise a child, back then a child was everyone in the society's responsibility, discipline was coming from every angle in the community" and "... teaching that said a child

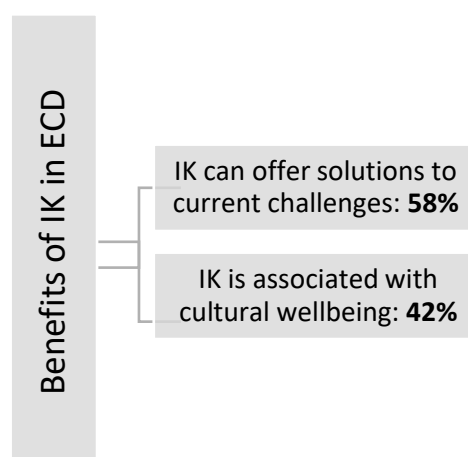
is groomed by the whole community, which means any adult is allowed to correct any bad behaviour”. The concept of collective responsibility is captured in, *“discipline was coming from every angle in the community”*. Distinctly different and in opposition to the Western nuclear family unit, this communal ethos, underpinned by interconnectedness and interdependence, is the bedrock of social responsibility and civic participation.

The two themes emerging from the impact of IK on the ECD staff, the embedded values and life skills and the communal ethos of interconnectedness and interdependence, collectively highlight IK’s potential for human and social development, particularly critical for South Africa in current times.

5.4.4. Benefits of IK in ECD

This category sought to interrogate the potential benefits of IK for possible inclusion in the ECD curriculum. As indicated in 5.5.1.2, while the current ECD curriculum framework creates opportunities for the inclusion of local and indigenous content, the reality in ECD classrooms bears no indication of this, resulting in an almost total exclusion. Two themes emerged from the data, (i) IK can offer solutions to current challenges and (ii) IK is associated with cultural well-being. Refer to Figure 5.11.

FIGURE 5. 11: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD staff on the benefits of IK in ECD



Theme 1: Indigenous Knowledge can offer solutions to current challenges

The dominant (58%) response in this category was the potential value of Indigenous Knowledge to solve current challenges resulting from an industrialised and consumerist society and an education system that has an almost singular focus on cognitive development. Responses included,

“Children of today, don’t have time to play and enjoy themselves... their bodies are not physically fit”; “...even these sicknesses that we have now were never there because we used to plant, get food which was organic”; and “Children today are dependent on technology for all solutions and don’t develop skills to learn on their own”.

The deleterious effects of an isolated and individualistic society, largely the result of the domination of European and Western influences, feature strongly in the responses. Obomsawin (1993), argues that Indigenous knowledge, with its roots in reciprocal and redistributive cultures, is perceived as providing the basis for an alternative to the dominant economic and moral system of the West, which has been blamed for damaging the planet and compromising the survival and quality of life of future generations (Obomsawin 1993 in Pence & Schafer 2006: 2). This is summed up in,

“In the old days, we had teachings that taught us to be strong, not to allow temporal situations to kill us, teaching that gave us hope for tomorrow...”.

This theme raised a range of possibilities vested in IK and expressed in descriptors such as, *“rich knowledge”, “importance of nature”, “life, hope and values” and “living and learning experience”*, all of which highlight the holistic development of children associated with IK in ECD.

Theme 2: Indigenous Knowledge is associated with cultural well-being

The smaller (42%) response was that of the association between Indigenous Knowledge and cultural wellness. Respondents were clear on the issue that children needed to have a strong sense of their culture, which they said would contribute to firm foundations in life, especially for the growing child. Education always occurs in a specific ecological and cultural context. In this context, Rogoff (2003) proposes that the eco-culture shapes the educational environment, as every facet of education is deeply influenced by the local

context. As such, a contextually-oriented approach is preferable because Africa's children are not socialised only in school; they also receive family-based education as they develop as accredited participants in their cultural communities (Rogoff 2003 in Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011: 11). Therefore, their education is best promoted considering the cultural practices and circumstances of their families and communities, which also change (Smale 1998 in *ibid*).

Indigenous Knowledge stories and other cultural artefacts are important to children for cultural wholeness and identity as expressed in the following response, *"to give them a sense of history and where they come from and, as human beings, you should know where you come from as a whole"*. Many expressed the view that unless children were affirmed in their own culture, there was limited scope for them to learn about and appreciate the different cultures, especially in a multi-cultural country like South Africa.

Given the current moral and ethical deficit in South Africa, this theme resonated with the participants who made the connection between Indigenous Knowledge and a sound value system that was needed to ground the children in the early years. Many held the view that telling stories that promote values and ethics from their own culture with their identity was important because children adapt more naturally to what is familiar to them and their worlds. Reference was made to stories like *"Unogwaja no chakijana"* and also books like *"injula"* which have values-based stories, rhymes and songs of local knowledge. In this context, Tangwa (2011) suggests that culture is central for any system of education given that it is a way of life of a group of people, underpinned by adaptation to a common environment, similar ways of thinking and acting and doing, similar attitudes and expectations, similar ideas, beliefs and practices (Tangwa 2011: 102).

Two respondents were uncertain and unsure about the current relevance of Indigenous Knowledge material, which may be incongruous in the modern classroom. This notion stems from the fallacious argument that indigenous

knowledge is primitive and backward and therefore irrelevant and, further, contradicts the holistic and integrated nature of a people's culture. The two themes confirmed that the inclusion of IK in the ECD curriculum could have benefits by mitigating current problems in society and reinforcing children's cultural identities, summarised in,

“Now we are using Western rhymes... don't really matter about the message that is sent to the child. The stones game (amagende) or (amatshe) used to sharpen our minds, sight (hand-eye coordination) and motor skills”.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The results and discussion of the exploratory phase of this study based on the interview schedule (Annexure C) delineated in this chapter (Phase 1, Exploratory) reveal that the ECD staff (Focus Group 1) indicated a gap in the ECD curriculum regarding explicit values and unequivocally endorsed the benefits of including values that promote social responsibility in the preschool phase, especially considering the prevalence of aggressive and violent behaviour amongst preschool children. Equally, the results confirm that the ECD curriculum lacks an IE/holistic approach, despite its clearly articulated benefits which include whole child development for individual well-being within a collective and, therefore, support its proposed application. The devaluing and marginalisation of IK were highlighted and, drawing from knowledge and actual experience, respondents endorsed the positive influence of IK and the benefits that could accrue with its incorporation in the ECD curriculum through IK Ubuntu values.

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORATORY PHASE FINDINGS: ECD COMMUNITY AND KEY INFORMANTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a continuation of the exploratory phase 1 and presents the results and discussion of the ECD community, Focus Group 2, and individual interviews in Phase 1. Focus group 2 comprised parents, grandparents, community elders and other members ($n = 218$). Key informants are specialists in each of the critical fields interviewed in South Africa and India, 2 in ECD, 3 in IK and 2 in IE, totaling 7.

As in Chapter 5, the results and discussion for the focus group interviews and individual interviews of key informants are presented under the three predetermined themes, Values, Integral/Holistic Education and Indigenous Knowledge (Ubuntu).

6.2 FOCUS GROUP TWO: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: VALUES

6.2.1 Conceptualisation of values

This segment presents the results and discussion from the interviews of Focus Group 2 on the 'values' aspect of the interview schedule (Annexure D).

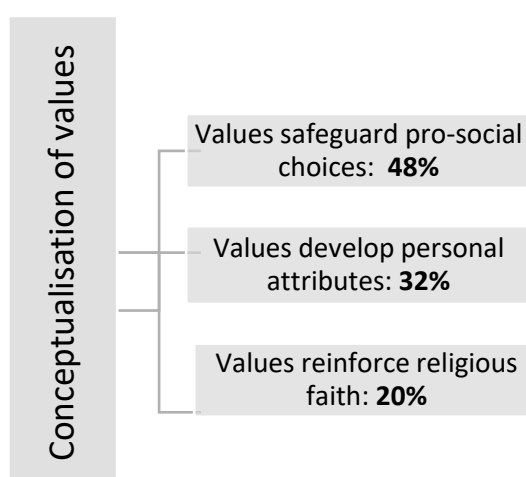
The ECD community focus group interviews yielded four (4) categories, Conceptualisation of values, Values in current preschool education, General behavioural and attitudinal tendencies and Benefits of values in preschool, all crucial to exploring the views of community members on these aspects of values relating to the preschool education of their children. Refer to Table 6.1.

TABLE 6 1: Summary of categories and sub-themes of ECD Community Responses on Values

Sub-Themes	Conceptualisation of values	Common behavioural and attitudinal tendencies	Extent of values in preschool education	Benefits of values in preschool
1	Values safeguard prosocial choices	Inexplicable aggression and vulgar language	Specific evidence of positive influence	Potential for personal and country honour
2	Values develop personal attributes	Indiscipline associated with parental negligence	Demonstration of values ethic	Cultivates parental pride
3	Values reinforce religious faith	Violence mimicked from exposure to TV, games and media		

As with Focus Group 1, participants were invited to explore, based on the interview schedule, their understanding of the concept of ‘values’ to establish a broad overview of the area under discussion. In this category, three broad sub-themes emerged, namely, (i) Values safeguard prosocial choices, (ii) Values develop personal attributes, and (iii) Values reinforce religious faith. Refer to Figure 6.1.

FIGURE 6. 1: Dominant sub-themes from ECD community’s conceptualisation of values



(i) Values safeguard prosocial choices

Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the participants saw the positive social worth of values for children's well-being. They were unequivocal about the potential impact of values on children to make ethical and socially responsible choices. This is evidenced in the most common interpretation of values as *"respect"*, *"responsibility"* and *"love"* which collectively define prosocial relationships for interconnected and cohesive communities. Included in this is a strong moral imperative to develop in children the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong actions, demonstrated in, *"Good behaviour and good way to handle themselves"* and, *"Teaching children the difference between right and wrong, giving them teachings about the importance of living their lives in a correct and simpler manner"*.

The reference to *"simpler manner"*, is a cautionary note to be respectful of the environment and mindful of our impact on it, a response which appeared in relatively small measures in some of the interviews. Significantly, an IE approach is based on complete integrality, including nature and the universe as indicated in, "The [IE] curriculum emphasises the synthesis of science and spirituality, cultures, all beings, and the universe (Vengopal and Kumari 2010: 62). Respondents drew a notable correlation between values and simple courtesies, *"thank you"* and *sorry*, which present as some of the concrete and daily manifestations of respect. The deeper application of 'respect' surfaced in,

"...I think it's important for them to respect other people, to be children who can be disciplined and who listen" and "I think it's important for our children to learn more about respect and the spreading of love throughout the community and to everyone at large".

The 'responsibility' value features regularly in the responses of participants, mainly in the context of personal or individual responsibility for one's actions. For example, *"...take responsibility for their actions"* and *"You can't have values without even knowing how to take responsibility"*. In this case, personal 'responsibility' should be seen in conjunction with social

responsibility since the former is considered a forerunner to the latter. Thus, the development of socially responsible children is given due regard and aligns with one of the primary goals of this study. Values are, therefore, essential principles by which people live for the purposes of promoting integrated and peaceful communities. The participants' emphasis on *"responsibility"* as one of the guiding principles for children to develop confirms this. Thus, the inclusion of explicit values education in the preschool curriculum should be earnestly considered.

(ii) Values develop personal attributes

A smaller number of respondents (32%) viewed the development of values as important for personal development and well-being. Values have the potential to ultimately contribute to the benefit of the common good as indicated by this comment, *"So, you will wish that they grow up to be people who are most respected and who are most important in the community they live in"*. Other responses under this theme included the following:

"I also think it's important for every child to respect and know the importance of education...they will grow to be smart and most respected people in the future" and

"It's important that our children know what they want to achieve in their lives".

The general understanding is that values can engender positive and affirming characteristics in children which, in turn, can promote personal success and community well-being.

(iii) Values reinforce religious faith

Values were associated with strengthening religious faith by 20% of the respondents. Although some participants located values within the realm of religion, they regarded values as instructive to daily life and social conduct, revealed in, for example,

"Basic things like respecting God and responsibility and also share love with everyone around them" and, "It's important to teach our

children...respect of father, God, our saviour...we should give thanks to our God, our saviour”.

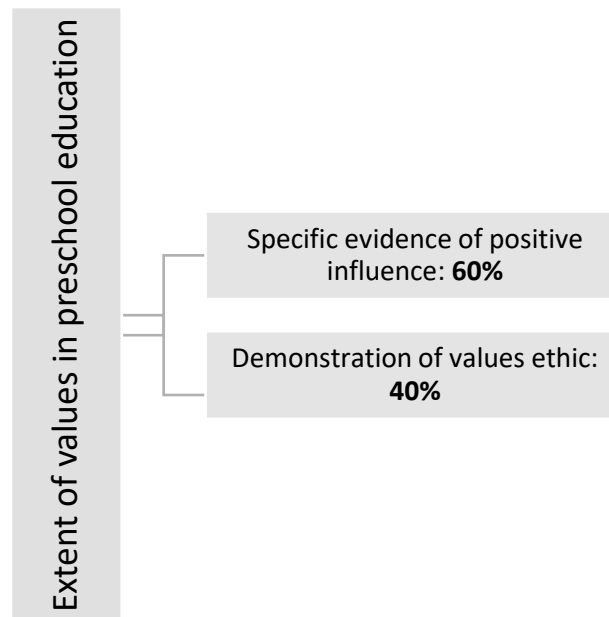
According to Hawkes (2010), traditionally, ethical thinking came from families and religion, but this can no longer be assumed to be generally the case. Thus, in a values-based school, children develop a growing understanding of the meaning of words such as respect and humility and try to adopt them in their lives (Hawkes 2010: 233). Some participants, however, retain the understanding that religion is a ‘tried and tested’ means of promoting a moral and ethical standard of living, thus, it is not uncommon that values are coupled with religion in this theme. The responses further indicate a concern for a society moving away from the clutch of religion, revealed in, for example,

“My grandmother used to teach me the importance of knowing God, honouring him ... growing our kids from that foundation of God”. Implicit in this is the belief that adherence to religious faith and practice could possibly embed a values ethic in children.

6.2.2. Extent of values in preschool education

In this category, the ECD community responses are based on their lived experiences with the children in their care. This necessitated them exploring the extent to which children in preschool programmes were demonstrating values in their daily lives because of their exposure at the schools and in the teachings. Two sub-themes surfaced, (i) Specific evidence of positive influence and (ii) Demonstration of values ethic. Refer to Figure 6.2.

FIGURE 6. 2: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD community on values in current preschool education



(i) Specific evidence of positive influence

Sixty per cent (60%) of participants' saw evidence of positive influences on their children through affirming values at the preschool. These responses referenced the specific preschools their children attended. As such, the values ethic is dependent on the ethos adopted by the preschool and the efforts of the practitioner in reinforcing these values. The application of this essential component for whole child development remains, therefore, uncertain. Conversely, if values education were explicitly included in the ECD curriculum, as this study proposes, all preschool children would benefit, equally. Values lie at the very basis of all effective education. The promotion of child well-being means enabling those conditions in which potentialities, such as, physical, affective, cognitive, social, spiritual or moral can flourish. The well-being of the child cannot be attained or maintained without values and their actualisation in the educational setting, starting with the valuing of children (Clement 2010: 55).

This discrepancy of values in selected preschools only is reiterated in the following response, *"Schools' curriculum only teaches children about*

intellectual or cognitive development, not much on values". Confirmatory evidence in support of this theme is demonstrated in,

*"Yes, for me U***K*** (name of preschool) is one of the creches that we know that teaches our children good behaviour, praying and even appreciating when we as parents do things for them."; "There is also a crèche close by that helped me a lot when I had a problem with my child... D*** (name of preschool) is the name of that crèche"; and "I do have a granddaughter who was here at M*** (name of preschool) ...She still demonstrates values that she learned from this crèche".*

Significantly, the responses attest to the importance participants placed on children engaging with values sustainably in the preschool phase.

(ii) Demonstration of values ethic

The responses of forty percent (40%) of participants suggest ample evidence of the positive impact of values on children and therefore, further supports the explicit integration of values in the ECD curriculum. As in sub-theme 1 (above), the responses indicate a strong link between the specific preschool and the values ethic. This is suggested in responses such as,

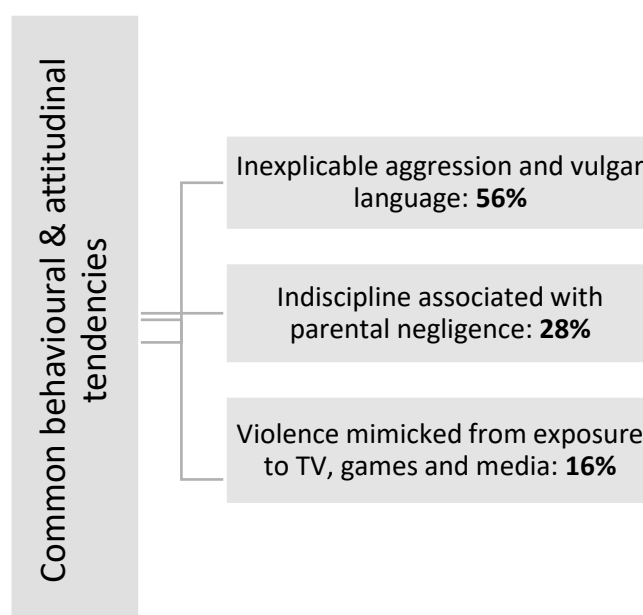
*"My child is maybe about 10 days enrolled in this crèche but it's like she's long been here due to the change that I see since she began coming here" and "I am aware because I have seen so many changes in our children... since she started here at M***...".*

As evidenced, however, the values referred to by the participants are generally around courtesies and manners, which implied opening possibilities of a values ethic as a precursor to the deeper values associated with social responsibility. The reference to 'respect', in the following response demonstrates, this 'deeper' value, *"For me, respect is the first thing they learn and have here at M***"*. Thus, participants' responses in this category indicate strong evidence of children's engagement with values, albeit at preschools that individually promote a values ethic. As this study proposes, the application of an IE approach with Ubuntu values will enable the universality of access.

6.2.3. Common behavioural and attitudinal tendencies

Determining the general behaviour and attitudes of children from the perspective of the parents and grandparents was essential to validate the views of the ECD staff in this category, confirm what the statistics are revealing (Chapters 1 & 2) and advance the application of an IE approach underpinned by Ubuntu values. In this category, three sub-themes were evident, (i) Inexplicable aggression and vulgar language, (ii) Indiscipline associated with parental negligence and, (iii) Violence mimicked from exposure to TV, games and media. Refer to Figure 6.3.

FIGURE 6. 3: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD community on general behavioural and attitudinal tendencies



(i) Aggression and vulgar language

Overall, responses, such as, “*vulgar language*”, “*bad language*”, “*aggressive behaviour*”, “*dirty talks*”, “*anger*”, “*strong language*”, “*insults*” and “*strange things*”, summed up the views captured in this sub-theme by 56% of the participants. Although the participants could clearly identify the manifestations of the children’s anti-social behaviour, they were unsure of its

origin, especially since they believed they were raising children to be 'respectful and disciplined'. This concern is captured in,

"... in our homes, we teach them not to disrespect and try by all means to trim bad behaviour but to them, it just automatically slips out of their minds"

and

"...you don't even know where she/he learned this kind of language, especially when you know as a parent that you teach your children a good way of living and sometimes you hear them using bad language or speaking anyhow".

The evidence of deviant behaviour featured in this theme, for example,

"My grandson usually does some strange things when he is playing with girls, more of sexual acts towards girls which shocked me and left me asking myself where he took this kind of a behaviour"

and

"Even when they are playing together, they will be brutal to each other and sometimes it leads to extreme injuries of which you wonder where these acts come from",

underscores the scale of these perversities. The prevalence of this aberrant behaviour amongst preschool children bodes ill for their primary and secondary schooling (as evidenced in Chapters 1 and 2), necessitating early and sustainable intervention for behaviour and attitude change.

(ii) Indiscipline associated with parental negligence

While the responses (28%) are a smaller number, it does, however, underline the sense of culpability concerning children's deviant behaviour that many of the parents and grandparents expressed. Generally, this is attributed to the absence of parents (mainly, work commitments) and parents as poor role models. Responses such as,

"Sometimes even the lack of communication between a parent and the child is also the reason for these behaviours. We as parents are working most times and we end up losing focus of our kids and end up not giving ourselves some time to talk to them and also hear their daily

troubles, so neglected children happen to develop anger through frustrations”

and

“Sometimes this is the result of our behaviour as parents. We talk sometimes not aware that our children grasp fast, it can be insults, words of degrading and negative things to other people. Children adopt these behaviours from us sometimes”,

attest to these, respectively. Furthermore, parents indicated a sense of powerlessness and despair because of their parental neglect and its impact on their children. This is noted in,

“As much as I don’t spend much of the time with my children, but there are strange behaviours that I have noticed in my son – he is too aggressive, and it worries me”.

This view seems to echo the typical condition expressed by ordinary working parents unable to allocate sufficient time to their children.

(iii) Violence mimicked from exposure to TV, games and media

Sixteen per cent (16%) of the participants seemed to indicate a causal link between children’s exposure to violence from the media and their ‘acting out’ similar behaviour or actions, as demonstrated in,

“I think as parents we need to be careful of these TV, TV games, etc. children end up modelling what they see on TV”.

Participants realised that, on the one hand, children are impressionable and could be easily influenced –

“Children adapt to everything around them and tend to take the wrong things than the right things” – on the other hand, they seemed unable to intercept the harmful exposure – “...it’s even difficult for parents to control these influences because to them [children] it sounds and looks good”.

Other damaging media influences on children’s behaviour are suggested in,

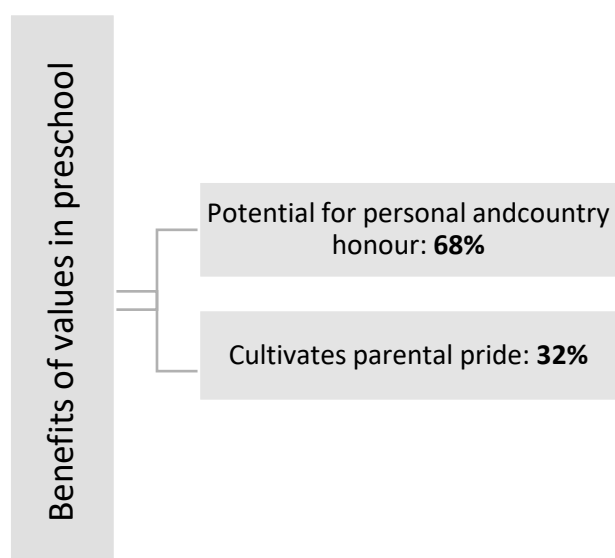
“Some behaviours are those aggressive playing...they even name themselves after some wrestling actors... play rough through what they see” and, “The influence of these songs and artists as their role models who use vulgar language and encourage violence...”.

Hence, the perception of a causal association between children's anti-social behaviour and 'perverse' media influences.

6.2.4. Benefits of values in preschool

In advancing an Ubuntu values-based curriculum in this study, determining the views of the ECD community in this category is critical to the supporting role of parents in reinforcing a values ethic in the home. Two sub-themes were identified, (i) Potential for personal and country honour and (ii) Cultivates parental pride. See Figure 6.4.

FIGURE 6. 4: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD community' on benefits of values in preschool



(i) Potential for personal and country honour

According to 68% of participants' responses, values have the potential to develop personal honour in children, create peaceful and cohesive communities and, by extension, enhance the image of the country. This idea aligns with the concept of a working and participatory democracy where prosocial values develop an integrated citizenry for the benefit of the collective. This idea finds resonance in,

“I think it is part of future investment because crime is the result of a lack of values, so I believe there will be peace through these values. It won’t affect only certain individuals or communities, but the whole country”. Similarly, “it is not only the point of social benefits, but everyone is benefitting on different levels because it shows the image of the country”,

captures the connection between individual social well-being and the “*image of the country*”. Implied in these comments is the collapse of the moral fabric of South Africa and its concomitant battered international image which must be rescued. The personal honour resulting from the application of sound values is demonstrated in,

“...but mostly it is for their benefit and who they will become” and, “... so you will teach them some new things and groom them in a way that tomorrow they will be something better one day”.

Thus, the strong recommendation for the adoption of sound values in the early years can augur well for both individual and national pride and jointly contribute to the achievement of democratic ideals, especially considering the threats facing South Africa’s nascent democracy. Howe and Covell (2009) indicate that amidst concerns over the stability and quality of established democracies in recent decades, citizenship education in schools with quality teaching and programmes could improve democracy, social cohesion and active citizenship (Howe & Covell 2009: 22).

(ii) Cultivates parental pride

Thirty-two percent (32%) of responses reflected, to some extent, a self-indulgent view of the benefit of values in preschool education. Responses indicated a sense of personal/parental pride with the demonstration of values, as evidenced in, *“...a parent will get the fruits of bringing up the child in a good way”.*

Although, the general understanding was that the acquisition of a sound value system would enable the development of upstanding people for the betterment of society, for example,

“For me, it is to become proud of your children and maybe one day they will be leaders and be helpful to their communities” and, “It’s also satisfying that your child adds a value to this country’s dignity if they are taught well”.

The responses suggest a definite commitment to a values ethic in the preschool phase and parental and community support for this inclusion for the benefit of the child and the community:

“Although we won’t benefit with material things, but it is only for satisfaction of the heart. When you know that you have done a good job when raising your children, you become less worried about their future and people around them”.

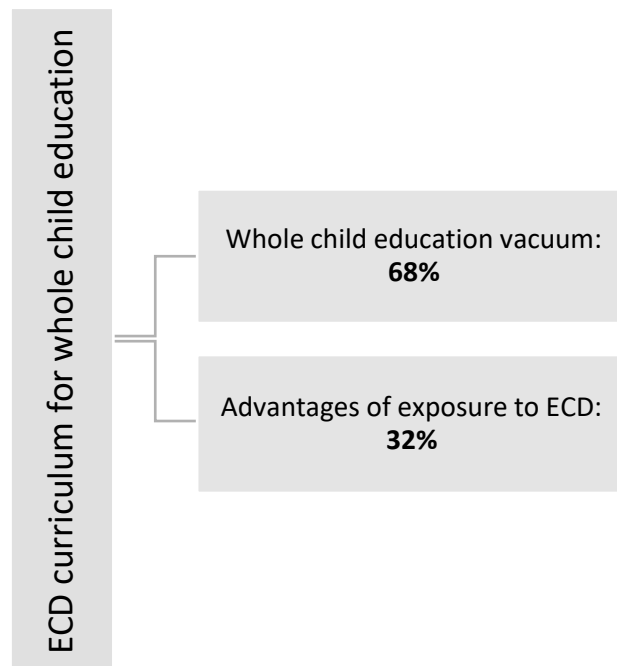
As indicated, this category showed significant support for the benefits that could accrue from a values-based ECD curriculum/programme.

6.3. FOCUS GROUP TWO: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: IE/HOLISTIC EDUCATION

A single key question concerning the adequacy of the current ECD programme in addressing the needs of the child’s education was put to the participants. The researcher deemed this sufficient in view of the correlation between this aspect and that of ‘values’ which was investigated in-depth with this sample group (refer to 6.2.). The responses yielded the category of ECD curriculum for whole child education from which two sub-themes emerged, (i) Whole child education vacuum and (ii) Advantages of exposure to ECD. Refer to Figure 6.5.

6.3.1 ECD curriculum for whole child education

FIGURE 6. 5: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD community on ECD curriculum for whole child education



(i) Whole Child Education Vacuum

Sixty-eight per cent (68%) of participants robustly expressed their perspectives on the inadequacy of the education system, generally, and the ECD curriculum, specifically, to meet the needs of their children. Despite the scope of the discussion confined to the preschool phase, participants vocalised their views on the South African schooling system, especially in the context of mainstream education which fails to consider all aspects of the child. This is evidenced in the following views,

“...ruining our children’s future since it is only made for our children to pass [exams] and not to develop them holistically which is obvious that is the reason why our children are like this” and, “I think our education needs its own improvement because it is too poor”.

In this regard, Partho (2007), argues that the traditional and mainstream schooling system is based on the Industrial Age paradigm evidenced by, amongst others, the disproportionate emphasis on the development of the

intellect. In order to produce an ideal industrial-age efficiency, the whole school machinery is directed to the most efficient use of the mind in assimilating the information and skills imparted by the school. Accordingly, other faculties or skills are considered distractions and therefore relegated to the margins of the educational process. Thus, the result is an education that addresses only the head and marginalises the heart and the body. The emotions are things to be weeded out of the system by a hegemony of reason (Partho 2007: 205-6). Similarly, in defence of alternative education models, Miller (2003), contends that when education honours the creative spirit and respects the individuality of every learner, it cannot be standardised. Nor can it be managed in undemocratic, authoritarian ways, becoming obsessed with measuring “outcomes” or bureaucratically mandating what every child must “know and be able to do” (Miller 2003 in Vengopal & Kumari 2010: 63).

Moreover, the concern regarding the relevance of education because of the disjunct between theory and practice is one that is commonly associated with mainstream Western education systems and expressed in, *“Our children’s education is more theoretical than practical which confuses our children sometimes”*. On this subject, Partho (2007), submits that once the processes and the environment of learning are artificially divorced from real life, learning loses its relevance and meaning, without which it cannot be a learning experience (Partho 2007: 211). The integral teacher, therefore, ensures that the learning experience is integrated with real life. This principle of real learning is fundamental to IE, necessitating a shift from a pedagogic model to a child-centred model, from teaching to enabling learning, from instruction and curricula to dialogue and personal engagement (*ibid*: 215), transitions that seem to resonate with the issues raised in this theme, and generally in the focus group interviews.

This standpoint of ushering in change to the education system is accentuated in the participants’ endorsement of the study to develop an ECD IE

curriculum framework with IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation, in the following:

“...all curriculums come guided by so many policies...develop this curriculum... because the main aim is to develop some sense of values” and, “...we get so many curriculums coming and going although we have never heard of one like that with values and IK but we know that it will help us...”.

In highlighting the deficiencies in the education system, this theme affirms the claim made in the study of the failure in the ECD curriculum to affect whole child education.

(ii) Advantages of exposure to ECD

This smaller number of respondents (32%) acknowledged the advantages of children’s exposure to ECD programmes as opposed to having no access. Thus, the sub-theme does not recognise the advantages of the ECD curriculum in and of itself, rather it underscores the benefits of access to ECD, as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2. This is evidenced in,

“...if children are playing and have all the support tools to play, they grow cognitively and physically and even solving problems that are on their level...”; “ECD support the growth of our children’s minds that you can also see or notice it when they are playing together that they even insist on fair play, share love, know each other and also feel for each other”; and, “ECD have also helped our children into making family relations with other people they live with, even at school”.

The responses indicate the general improvement and development of children because of their access to ECD and, in the case of these interviews, speak more directly to the individual preschools sampled in this study. As a whole, this category serves to confirm what the study avers, that although ECD is crucial for children’s development and interventions during this phase are most opportune, the ECD curriculum fails to implement a whole-child education approach.

6.4 FOCUS GROUP TWO: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Chapters 1 and 2 detailed the devaluing and marginalisation of IK as consequences of colonialism and the domination of Western epistemology. Schafer et al (2004), argue that some interest in IK has been gradually generated following this “neglect and disdain”, but that educational institutions have been slow on the assimilation. Furthermore, interventions and programmes in ECD, especially, tend to be based on an accepted body of knowledge built on Western experience and practice (Schafer *et al* 2004: 61-2), despite the existence of a great wealth of knowledge on local cultural practices in the fields of child-rearing, education, and socialisation (Evans & Myers, 1994 in *ibid*: 64). Similarly, existing local and indigenous knowledge and care and support arrangements are often overlooked by programmers and practitioners, resulting in the negation of parents’/caregivers’ and communities’ own beliefs and practices.

Furthermore, there is a growing awareness within the ECD sector of the need and desire for interventions to respect and build on local and indigenous knowledge, practices and efforts of poor caregivers and families, as well as to record accounts and stories before they disappear (Gwele & Biersteker 2012: 4). Thus, one of this study’s objectives to investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from the incorporation of IK Ubuntu values and principles for social responsibility and civic participation is a means to contribute to addressing this gap.

This section presents the results and discussion on the IK aspect of the interview schedule (Annexure D). The data from the Focus Group 2 interview will be discussed according to the categories of (i) Conceptualisation of IK, (ii) Extent of exposure to IK, (iii) Personal impact of IK and (iv) Benefits of IK in ECD, and the emergent sub-themes, two in each of the first three categories and one in the last category numbering seven. Refer to the summary in Table 6.2.

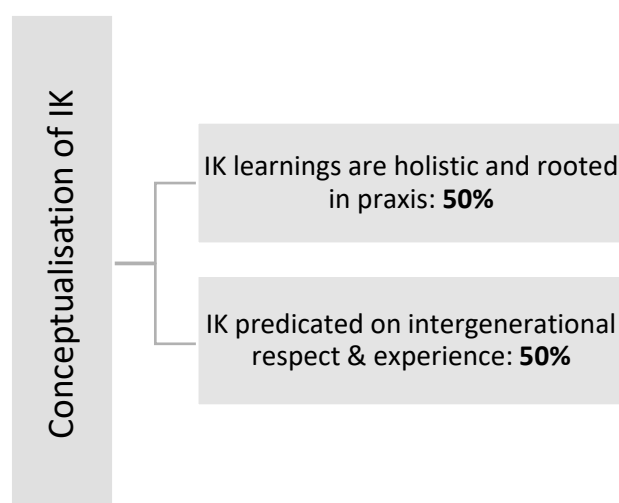
TABLE 6 2: Summary of the categories and sub-themes of ECD Community Responses

Category	Conceptualisation of IK	Extent of exposure to IK	Personal impact of IK	Benefits of IK in ECD
Sub-theme 1	IK learnings are holistic and rooted in praxis	IK and cultural identity are disappearing	IK is associated with lifelong learning and experience	IK promotes meaningful and relevant education
Sub-theme 2	IK predicated on intergenerational respect and experience	IK viewed as clashing with modernity	Communalism and belonging to a community	

6.4.1. Conceptualisation of IK

This category explored the ECD community's common or general understanding of IK which, overall, conformed with the conceptualisation of IK (5.4.1) as manifesting in a range of forms and accumulated over time within a particular locality. In addition, Hoppers' (2002), explanation that indigenous refers to the root, something natural or innate (to) (Hoppers 2002: 8), featured prominently in this interview as respondents recalled their own direct or inherited experiences with a range of IK practices and cultural artefacts. Two sub-themes of equal weighting surfaced, (i) IK learnings are holistic and rooted in praxis, and (ii) IK is predicated on intergenerational respect and experience. Refer to Figure 6.6.

FIGURE 6. 6: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from ECD the community's conceptualisation of IK



(i) IK learnings are holistic and rooted in praxis

Fifty per cent (50%) depicted IK education as holistic and integrated into the daily lives of communities, to the extent that theory and practice were seamlessly interwoven. Nsamenang (2004), argues that the ways in which children are taught or teach themselves to become competent members of their communities vary across cultures. In the case of African cultures, different phases of children's emerging minds are recognised and tacitly wedded into their participatory curricula to sequences of perceived cognitive capacities (Nsamenang, 2003b in Nsamenang 2006: 296). The embedded knowledge, skills, and values children learn from participatory curricula are not compartmentalised into a different activity, knowledge, or skill domain, but are massed together as integral to social interaction, cultural life, economic activities, and daily routines (Nsamenang, 2005 in *ibid*).

Consequently, children are rarely instructed or prodded into what they learn but discover it during participation (*ibid*). This "participatory curricula" is demonstrated in responses, such as, *"IK for me is those good teachings from*

schools, at home and from elders we had in our communities... sewing classes, gardening, even farming skills.... Evident in this is (i) the affirmation of IK (*“good teachings”*), (ii) the multifarious knowledge sources and the multipronged approach to teaching, and (iii) the range of skills acquired in the course of *“daily routines”, towards becoming “competent members of their communities”*. This competency based on praxis in their everyday lives and experiences is further revealed in the following descriptions of the teachings by the respondents, *“we were groomed well in a complete way”; “about our roots, our culture and what is Ubuntu”; “learned to control our feelings and ourselves”; “taught us as men to respect women” and “taught us about life and everything around us”*.

In addition, the learnings seem to pre-empt and address most of the current challenges faced by the community referred to in 6.2.3. (Common behavioural and attitudinal tendencies), and could, therefore, bolster the argument in this study for the inclusion of IK in the ECD curriculum.

(ii) IK predicated on intergenerational respect & experience

Sharing equal (50%) importance with sub-theme 1, sub-theme 2 responses highlight the hierarchical order based on seniority that undergirds IK. Respect for the status and experience of the elders or seniors in the community is given priority – *“we respected our elders, and we even live by those teachings”*.

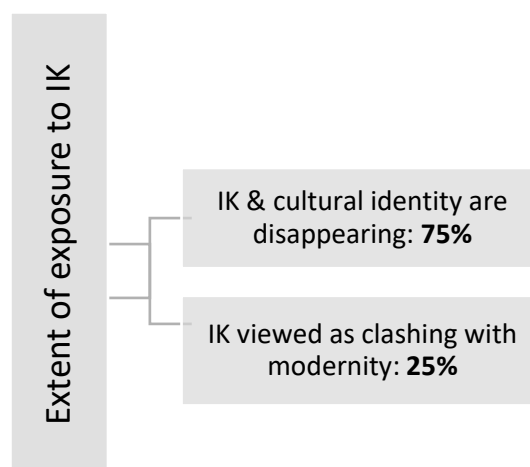
Mweru (2011) refers to this form of chain of command as the seniority principle which means that older individuals are always in charge and younger individuals must always respect and obey their elders (Mweru 2011: 251). Responses such as, *“compare today’s teachings and those of our grandmothers and forefathers, it had quality and a value”; “...people who learned IK teachings still live by them today” and “Respect was very important, back then our elders instilled values more than anything else”,* reveal several insights associated with the value placed on intergenerational respect and experience for the transmission of values and principles. The

predominance and coupling of “elders” and “respect” display the deep respect for elders and the great importance afforded to respect by elders in shaping behaviour and attitude. Equally important is the sustainability of the values – “*still live by them today*”. Collectively, the themes in this category demonstrate the respondents’ conceptualisation of IK as knowledge that is holistic, integrated into daily life, fosters values, hierarchical and sustainable.

6.4.2. Extent of exposure to IK

Considering that the ECD community, unlike the ECD staff in this category (5.3.2.), were not able to comment on the actual extent of IK in the ECD curriculum, questions in the interview schedule were tailored to children’s exposure (school, home, community) to IK. Two sub-themes surfaced here, (i) IK and cultural identity are disappearing and (ii) IK is viewed as clashing with modernity. Refer to Figure 6.7.

FIGURE 6. 7: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from the ECD community on the extent of exposure to IK



(i) IK and cultural identity are disappearing

In this dominant (75%) response, respondents were unequivocal about the disappearance of IK and the concomitant loss of cultural anchors. In this context, Ntuli (2002), asserts that colonial discourse marginalised African knowledge systems and adversely impacted the colonised. As a result, the

colonised ceased to be the subject of their own histories and became the construct of the dominant coloniser, accepting the colonisers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality and institutions. Even after independence, the new regimes-maintained disdain for indigenous knowledge and values. It is crucial, therefore, that in the search for new paradigms for change, sources of knowledge are recovered and diversified (Ntuli 2002: 65-6). This perspective is confirmed in the following responses of the respondents,

“...there is not much IK teachings nowadays... children are experiencing these modern times education that is extracted from the western culture...”; “...we as parents are failing our kids through enforcing that they should learn or stress to learn English more than their own language. This ends up confusing the child about how important is their own identity”, and “It is important that we try to bring back these teachings as the support tool to groom our children”.

Thus, responses generally accept the causal link between Western hegemony and the disappearance of IK, acknowledge parents' own failures in 'allowing' this dissolution of IK and declare the imperative to restore aspects of IK, particularly for cultural relevance and authentic identity.

(ii) IK viewed as clashing with modernity

Twenty-five per cent (25%) of respondents drew attention to the potential conflict between tradition and modernity with the restoration of IK. In this context, tradition and modernity have always co-existed and nurtured each other in every human culture for a peaceful and sustainable community livelihood. The values and practices of sharing, cooperation and tolerance emphasised in most traditional practices are not contradictory with modernity (Kaya & Padayachee 2013). Nevertheless, Kanu (2003), argues that all people understand and construct their identities in terms of the traditions of which they are part (Kanu, 2003 in Ndofirepi & Cross 2016: 17). Regardless of their technological evolution, every human society pays a large amount of attention to conveying its cultural heritage to its young members. This facilitates social solidarity and has contributed to the endurance of societies over the ages (*ibid*).

In the same vein, Shizha and Abdi (2014), argue that there should be a growing desire and determination by Africans and others around the world to redeem for themselves and future generations reconstructed knowledge and knowing clusters that re-affirm their histories and contemporary needs as they are situated within local communities and meaningful living relationships (Shizha and Abdi 2014: 4-5). Conversely, respondents in this sub-theme suggest that reviving IK could be regarded as retrogressive:

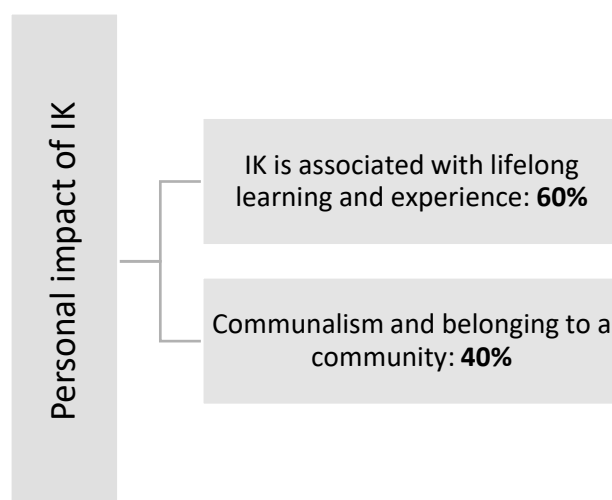
“There is a difference between teaching a person something than going back to something” and, “I think we won’t be able to because we are on the 21st century”.

The recurring association between “going back” and IK seems to resonate with Ntuli’s (2002) argument regarding the mental enslavement of indigenous people in, “Christianity, education and culture were used as instruments of control until they reached a hegemonic stage where the Natives believed that what they were taught was the truth, the only truth and nothing but the truth” (Ntuli 2002: 54). Thus, in investigating children’s exposure to IK, the larger sub-theme of its continuing disappearance and the imperative of revival is instructive to this study which makes the claim, amongst others, that the IK values of Ubuntu should be included in the ECD curriculum.

6.4.3. Personal impact of IK

This category, as in the case of the ECD Staff (5.4.3), explored the impact of IK at a personal level. Two themes were distilled from the data, (i) IK is associated with lifelong learning and experience and (ii) Communalism and belonging to a community. Refer to Figure 6.8.

FIGURE 6. 8: Dominant sub-themes with percentages of responses from the ECD community on the personal impact of IK



(i) IK is associated with lifelong learning and experience

Sixty per cent of responses (60%) associated IK with lifelong learning and experiences. Participants described the critical life lessons gleaned from IK teachings that both prepared them for the developmental phases of their lives and continue to guide them as adults and elders. Some of these learnings are demonstrated in, *“teachings made us who we are and what we stand for”*; *“groomed us to be strong women from our young age”* and *“making a difference between wrong and right”*.

These responses illustrate the affirming values fostered in individuals from a young age ultimately impacting the collective well-being of the community. References to songs, sayings, stories, dances, rhymes and idioms used to transmit valuable life skills featured prominently in the responses – *“These stories guided us in our upbringing until today they still guide us”* - bolstering one of the goals of this study to include IK Ubuntu values using these media forms. The teachings in these various forms covered a wide range of everyday concerns, such as values, grooming, hygiene, school and education, protection of women and personal safety,

“They taught us a lot of things that we wouldn’t learn if they were not instilled in us that way”.

Against this backdrop, Letseka (2012) argues, that African systems of thought have their own internal logics, local sense-making and augmentation, innovation, Indigenous interpretations of evidence, rationality, reason, and criticality. These knowings are steeped in cultural-specific paradigms, including, but not limited to, community and communal interdependence conveyed through the wisdom of sages as ‘Indigenous thinkers,’ and also laced in local parables, fables, folktales, proverbs, songs, cultural stories, myths, and mythologies (Letseka 2012 in Dei 2014: 169). Similarly, in calling for the inclusion of such teachings in school curricula to enhance youth learning, Dei (2014), contends that proverbs, riddles, and folktales reveal different levels of intellectual sophistication and depth and represent a philosophy of life. They are embedded in customary teachings and wise sayings about social action and daily practice. The power of such cultural sayings and knowings is that they allow the learner to grow mentally, spiritually, and morally into adulthood. As part of African philosophies, the body of epistemology espoused in proverbs, riddles, and folktales connect place, spirit, and body and relate to the concept of self and the community, responsibility, respect for oneself, peers, and authority, and mutual interdependence and community-building (*ibid*: 175).

(ii) Communalism and belonging to a community

This smaller forty per cent (40%) response arising from the personal impact of IK on the ECD community, revealed the sense of communalism and community belonging. Traditional Africans, according to Ndofirepi and Cross (2016), regard the community as the custodian of the individual, and community life and communalism are emphasised as a living principle founded on the ideology of community-identity (Ndofirepi & Cross 2016: 17-18). Reinforcing this communal/community ethic, Mentiki (1979), argues that, unlike Western society, African society is not ‘an additive “we” of individuals ‘but a thoroughly fused collective “we”; individuals being socially constructed,

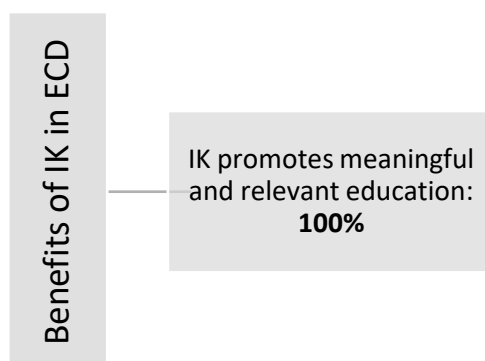
compared to society being constructed of individuals. Conversely, Western society has moved to a minimal definition of the person, while the African view is a maximal definition (Mentiki 1979 in Fatnowna & Pickett 2002: 257). Respondents described the communalism that surrounded them to the extent that they feared straying away from community beliefs and practices. This is demonstrated in, *“We used to have beliefs that made us have fear of doing something wrong... bring shame in our homes and the communities we belonged to”* and *“...we learnt respect and to take everything seriously”*.

In addition, the strong sense of “we” was rooted in respect so as not to impugn – “bring shame” – to their homes and communities. In addition, ceremonies and rituals fostered a sense of community while educating and socialising members, *“We used to also attend maiden rituals “Umkhosi Womhlanga” where we learned the importance of keeping yourself pure and as a woman to respect your body”*. In this context, Ntuli (2002), explains that education was also carried out through secret societies, initiation schools and through the amaqhikiza system – a type of mentorship programme where older girls mentored younger girls to ensure sexual abstinence until the girls were ready to take full control of their affairs. Both male and female initiation programmes sought to prepare youth to take control of their lives within the broader community (Ntuli 2002: 61). Jointly, the themes reinforce that IK as a wellspring of wisdom, experience, knowledge, culture and practice has positively impacted the lives of the respondents and continue to act as critical pathfinders in their lives.

6.4.4. Benefits of IK in ECD

In this category, from which a single theme emerged - IK promotes meaningful and relevant education - responses were undisputed. Although there were a few concerns raised about introducing change into an established and monolithic system described as, *“western culture teachings”*, the respondents were clear about IK being beneficial in ECD. Refer to Figure 6.9.

FIGURE 6. 9: Singular sub-theme with percentage of responses from the ECD community on the benefits of IK in ECD



IK promotes meaningful and relevant education

This single theme that emerges from the data is a clear indication of the respondents' views on the possible benefits of IK in ECD. It also supports this study's claim of the potential of IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation in ECD, as argued in Chapters 1 and 2. This theme is encapsulated in,

"Its focus will be building a child in a complete sense of knowing where they come from, knowing what is good for them and also respecting everything and everyone they sharing the space with in this world".

Implicit in this response are the assumed gaps in the current ECD curriculum which fail to (i) focus on whole child development towards "building a child in a complete sense", (ii) incorporate cultural context to give meaning to "where they come from", (iii) embed a strong value system to support "what is good for them", (iv) synchronously develop the head, heart, body and spirit to enable, "respecting everything and everyone" and, (v) foster an understanding that as individuals they are interconnected and interdependent to fulfil "sharing the space in this world".

In addition, the collective responses in this theme confirming that IK promotes meaningful and relevant education in ECD are demonstrated in,

“... maybe people will go back to respecting their environment, trees, plants and animals”; “There is something about a child’s culture that gives them a sense of identity and draws interest to them”; “Children will gain a lot more especially about their roots and their culture” and, “so these rhymes, maybe, will build our children’s character and bring back their conscience”.

References to “roots”, “culture”, “identity”, “character”, “conscience” and “environment” arising out of these responses underscore the rationale for the inclusion of IK – cultural affirmation and moral and ethical values. This undivided and unitary theme, therefore, demonstrates that the respondents accord significant benefits to the inclusion of IK in the ECD curriculum for meaningful and relevant education and, therefore, supports one of the primary goals of this study.

6.5 KEY INFORMANTS’ DISCUSSION

The key informants participating in this research from India, South Africa and Uganda (interviewed in India) had specialisations in the three critical areas that collectively compose the key question in this study: to what extent can an ECD IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu build social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children in South Africa?

The participants were: (i) an ECD researcher (Early Learning Research Unit-South Africa), (ii) an independent ECD researcher (UNICEF & World Bank) (South Africa), (iii) the director of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Studies (University of KwaZulu-Natal) (South Africa), (iv) an independent IKS academic and scholar, (v) the founder and director of the Mpambo Afrikan Mother Tongue Multiversity (India\Uganda), (vi) the director of education programmes at Sri Aurobindo Society (India) and (vii) the principal of the Auro Navakriti Integral Education Preschool (India).

The responses of the key informants will be identified by the codes as presented below in Table 6.3.

TABLE 6 3: Composite list of Key Informants with codes, South Africa and Delhi, India

Key Informants	Code
ECD researcher (Early Learning Research Unit-South Africa)	KI 1
Independent ECD researcher (UNICEF & World Bank)	KI 2
Director of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Studies (University of KwaZulu-Natal) (South Africa),	KI 3
Independent IKS academic and scholar,	KI 4
Founder and director of the Mpambo Afrikan Mother Tongue Multiversity (Uganda-interviewed in India)	KI 5
Director of education programmes at Sri Aurobindo Society (India)	KI 6
Principal of the Auro Navakriti Integral Education Preschool (India).	KI 7

Based on the interview schedules (Annexures G & H), the participants' responses were sorted into six categories to cover broadly the range of the questions. These are as follows: Impact of values in the preschool phase; Values around social and ecological consciousness; Possibilities of an IE approach to ECD; and Effect of IK in the preschool phase. Collectively, these categories address the three central issues and predetermined themes in the study, values, IE and IK. The key informant interviews drew on the expert knowledge and experience of the participants to explore the extent of explicit values in the existing ECD programme and the opportunities for an IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu for preschool education.

6.5.1 Impact of values in the preschool phase

As in the case of the focus group interviews which explored relevant aspects of values associated with the current ECD programme, the key informants' responses in this category are likewise indicated. Initiating the deeper and focused discussion on values, a broad conceptual understanding of values was elicited. The responses covered values as arising from personal and individual aspirations and impacting personal and interpersonal relationships. KI 3 used a sociological lens and defined values as what a person aspires to be and are, as such, personally impelled. According to him, the values that children are taught are what the society wants them to be as members of that

society using approaches and ways to make them reach what they want them to be. KI 6 was of the view, however, that values are not necessarily universally applicable since they largely depend on the individual and his needs in accordance with his life vision instead of being socially imposed. This perspective harmonises with the IE approach which advocates for the natural evolution of values through its holistic programme. Values are, therefore, not imposed externally. Accordingly, a person will accept and develop those values that are needed for the achievement of his aim, within the larger IE ecosphere. Thus, the distinction is drawn between the general concept of values and that which exists for an individual within integral frameworks as emanating from the single value of love.

The common thread amongst the other responses is that values are morally and ethically motivated, to the extent that KI 1 indicated that some of the moral challenges facing our society today could be the result of having neglected values. Definitions of values include behaving and acting in a manner that avoids inflicting pain on one another, a desire to do the best for the entire ecosystem, demonstrating respectful and good behaviour and an awareness of human interconnectedness for harmonious coexistence.

Thus, following on the establishment of a consensus that values guide positive social behaviour and attitude for both personal well-being and the common good, the respondents offered their views on the existence of values in the current ECD programme and the likely impact on children's behaviour and attitude. According to KI 4, consistent with education systems in most countries in present times, the entire South African education system educates for knowledge, skills and competencies and fails to educate for feeling, attitude and behaviour. Whereas in a previous age knowledge and action were interlinked, modern history reveals that knowledge and action do not have an obvious connection, necessitating a different approach that educates for feeling by integrating values to influence how children interact with others, including measuring and assessing the interaction. On this point, and in confirmation of the complexity of educating and measuring for feeling,

KI 2 noted her experience in the process of designing an early learning outcome measure for pre-grade R children. According to her, children found it immensely difficult to talk about feelings, how people were feeling and what should be done. She points to the dearth in emotional literacy which is linked to values and engaging children in their feelings about themselves and other people and showing empathy.

In this regard, the suggestion by KI 4 that preschool learning should make better use of the family could be an effective approach because shaping consciousness should begin at an early stage which involves child-rearing practices, especially the nurturing influence of the mother. Thus, finding ways of integrating the family into the education system and breaking that distance between the public and the private is crucial to developing a different approach to education. On a similar note, KI 1, drawing from his own experience and observations, indicated that currently, early childhood development does not address the issue of values. Concurring with the foregoing respondent (KI 4), he pointed to the historical reality that in South Africa and the continent the educational system places more emphasis on technical education to the exclusion of values. While children are competent at manipulating electronic devices, a value system is lacking. As such, he argues that the right type of education resides in indigenous systems, especially the holistic nature of incorporating values, belief systems and skills, starting at an early stage in childhood development.

This exclusion of explicit values in ECD is reiterated by KI 1 when he points out that despite values in the curriculum being no different from other aspects of teaching and demonstrating, the curriculum does not prioritise values. He maintains that certain socially relevant values should be integrated into the existing themes in the ECD curriculum especially in light of the established evidence of the optimal and sustainable learning potential in the early years. According to KI 2, the ECD NCF (2015) covers everything, especially the section on identity and belonging which is linked to values. There are issues around how to communicate and solve problems and a strong emphasis on

social and emotional skills. She notes, however, that as a framework, the NCF ultimately depends on interpretation in practice by the practitioners which appears to indicate less emphasis on the soft skills.

In acknowledging the existing space for the inculcation of values in the ECD programme, KI 2 references her ECD fieldwork experience which revealed contention between parents and children's learning at school. Generally, the concern raised by parents was that formal ECD programmes equipped children to a greater extent with their rights while omitting values and responsibilities. This perspective was echoed in the response of KI 1 who also drew from his field experience and indicated that parents have expressed confusion about children's rights. Communities feel that the way children's rights are taught is troubling for them because it impedes the enforcement of discipline and compromises children's accountability for their actions. Consequently, the allusion was made to the paradox of creating a group of '*educated/uneducated*' people because although they may be educated their education will be devoid of values as they understand them in their context. In a similar vein, KI 2 cites an experience in the Eastern Cape where people made the distinction between schooling and education. Education concerns all of life, what people need to be like to live with other people and be in society whereas schooling is acquiring academic skills without engendering values. Hence, she proposes and supports this objective in the study that the ECD programme adequately address issues of values.

In summary, the responses ranged between an inadequate focus on values and an exclusion of values in the ECD programme and, therefore, collectively support this claim made in the study and indicate an affirmation of the inclusion of values. This view was bolstered by the concern of parents and communities who believe that engaging children in a value system based on responsibility is beneficial.

6.5.2 Values around social and ecological consciousness

In investigating appropriate values for preschool children and the possible methods of engagement, the collective responses indicate exposure to values that resonate with social responsibility and interconnectedness with all life forms.

KI 2 explained that while the starting point should be the way we treat each other as human beings, it needs to extend beyond this to include animals and the planet. She added that although currently there is a lot in the preschool day that is set up to engender values and how to share and structure things, for instance, waiting for a turn, serving each other, these actions stop short of getting people to think about and work with them. Thus, they are largely ineffectual and unsustainable. Instead, she advocates for underpinning values for looking after one another and the world which covers everything, like being kind, diligent, working hard and showing respect. In addition, cultural sensitivity is an important value that needs to be included as part of the values work.

In addition, the respondent proposed that children should have an age-appropriate moral responsibility, especially since the idea of having duties as well as rights is a crucial indigenous local value that also helps parents considerably. She includes conscious teaching of ecological wisdom and sustainability which have been neglected. KI 1 also emphasised moral responsibility based on the clash in communities between children's rights and accountability. According to him, respect is a value that is losing currency in communities, especially respect for older persons. Previously, there existed an understanding that every parent and community member had a responsibility to take care of the children, regardless of biological relationships. Notwithstanding current threats of crime and violence towards children in society, communities still cling to the concept of communal rather than individualistic rearing of children. In this regard, he argues that the Western way of raising children has deleterious consequences, especially in relation to sharing and understanding the responsibility not only towards

themselves but towards the whole community, encapsulated in the spirit of Ubuntu that has kept communities together. Similarly, from an IK perspective, KI 5 stated that the best terrain for the children to learn or to be taught values is in the home or the community, the village and the streets where families live. While this may not be possible or practical in urban and peri-urban areas, it reinforces the point of communal responsibility towards children and the interrelationship between theory and practice. Children learn and practice the values of the adults around them.

According to KI 4, the determination of appropriate values for preschool children should be guided by the whole question of obligation to the next person. He suggested that in a world with cruelties and violence, exclusions and discriminations, a permanent responsibility to the next person is crucial. Thus, values are rooted in a strong sense of social responsibility. On similar lines, KI 3 indicated the values of cooperation, respect for one another, empathy, compassion and protection of the environment as critical for early learning since they cannot be learnt later. Thus, children should understand as fundamental tenets the need to have a clean and safe environment and to live peacefully with others.

Parental involvement for instilling values at an early age, according to KI 4, should be encouraged through formal relationships in a committee of parents or providing exemplary lessons in behaviour. Equally important are children seeing affirming values when adults relate to one another in a range of situations since feeling is generally picked up intuitively through observation. In addition, identification can be a very forceful mechanism or tool for learning behaviour. Other respondents suggested that values can be taught through play with children and with adults. Also, they can be picked up through children attending ceremonies, working by themselves and with others, being taught how to take responsibilities in a few chores every day and using time-honoured learning tools such as stories, games, songs, dances and similar cultural artefacts.

In summary, the respondents in this category generally concur that teaching values that promote socially responsible and respectful behaviour and attitudes to one another and the environment in preschool children is critical. The emphasis on family and community participation in the process resonates with this study, in respect of both the inclusion of IK rooted in the cultural lives of communities and its community-based participatory approach.

6.5.3 Possibilities of an IE approach to ECD

As indicated (Refer to Chapters 1 and 2), IE and an IE approach with its origin in India is largely applied within the Aurobindo Society in that country and its affiliates in other parts of the world. Consequently, the more familiar concept of holistic or whole child education is used to describe this approach, although it does not adequately encompass the depth and complexities of IE as evidenced in the responses of the IE respondents. As a whole, however, the common understanding was encapsulated in such descriptors as, “interdisciplinary education”, “addresses all the needs of the child and the community”, “responsibilities in the community and their family”, “encompasses all aspects of life in society”, “developing a useful and responsible person”, “bridging the disjuncture between learning and living” and “unity of human experience and knowledge”. These descriptions resonate strongly with a whole child or holistic education that assimilates and unifies the child’s learning for the seamless transition from home to school.

The responses of KI 6 and KI 7, however, offered valuable insights into the concept and practice, especially those of KI 7, which respond to this particular category.

KI6 explained that the specific aim of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was the development of a life based on a higher consciousness to enable that life to become better than what it was. According to Sri Aurobindo, most of the conflict, ignorance and confusion in society emanates from people expressing themselves diversely. If people’s thoughts and feelings that drive

actions derive from a common source and is inspirational, whatever is expressed will have a natural tendency to fall into harmony.

Integral education has two basic components, the primary one is to help the child connect with that inner source of inspiration, the inner soul with its capacity to guide the mind in the best possible way and to challenge the emotions. The second one is to assist the child in developing its capabilities in the body, emotions and mind while aligned with the higher source of inspiration to ensure that it does not lose control. If the first process is not achieved, however, all the learnings and development acquired by the child will be at risk of not being put to the right use and way. Thus, integral education is the alignment of the outer personality with the inner source of inspiration. It is an education that helps the child connect with that deeper source and integrate the various parts under the guidance of a facilitator tasked with drawing things out from that source and helping the child become inspired.

On a practical level, especially in relation to the implementation of IE, KI 7 indicated that the practical application entailed substantial awareness to tabulate growth modules in physical progress, awareness of the self and the other as well as cognitive development. IE is an experiential mode of learning and is not guided by a traditional syllabus nor is it time-bound, thus, allowing the child unhurried all-round development. Learning, according to the respondent, is to have an adventure, during which activities and experiences seamlessly flow according to, amongst others, the season or the readiness of the group. In this approach, the teacher's or facilitator's role is to help the child assimilate or integrate the learning, to bring about the child's self-awareness, awareness and understanding.

She adds that there are no standardised or universal ability-driven developmental outcomes as in mainstream preschool education. In IE, as the child becomes more accustomed and independent, the outcome is the child's progress towards figuring out the world. It is not about what the child can and

cannot do; instead, it is a determination of his ability to exercise choice or decision making in his actions, his state of consciousness, his sense of collaboration, his spirit of enthusiasm for learning or taking on challenges. Thus, the objective is to arrive at a psychological development evaluation, not a static judgement.

According to IE, every child is 'a soul in evolution', a phrase that encapsulates the larger framework which means that each being must unravel and reveal the reason for taking this journey on earth and the contribution to be made. This translates to 'what have I come to offer, what have I come to learn, how do I surrender the child's and my own growth to a higher working in every dimension, mental, emotional, vital, physical while keeping the psychic centre stable and calm'.

The practical application for both child and teacher involves constant self-awareness and collaborative awareness. Therefore, unlike mainstream education where one qualifies before teaching, IE teachers work first with children and then go back to an early childhood pedagogy to discover the relevance before validation. Thus, the IE teacher training programme develops the awareness of the teacher, her mental understanding, emotional openness to each child and ability to witness her own growth with each child and how she will make the child free, independent and self-assured. In addition to a teacher training programme, a parent counselling component with very regular communication with parents about every change observed in every field of growth is included.

In consideration of the apparent exclusivity of an IE approach and its presumed inapplicability to public preschools, KI 7 clarifies that IE is applicable in any situation and locale. The approach can be effective in a classroom of 90 children or one of 20 children because IE is the progressive development of one's own awareness to bring one to the development of each child, and the spiritual aspect derives from the abundance and joy of one's spirit.

KI 2 indicated her unfamiliarity with the term integral education but understood it as holistic education. According to her, all parts of the being should be included in education which is an underlying value in the NCF (2015) but lost in interpretation. As such, she proposes that any material developed for the promotion of a holistic approach should align with the relevant policy documents or risk going nowhere. Drawing on her experience, she indicated that many teachers are trying to adopt a holistic approach, but these tend to be the more middle-class ones with much more background to draw on. Thus, the poorer [majority] teachers with little or no teacher education, are much more prone to sticking with what they have been taught and are not comfortable to bringing in innovative and new ways of doing.

The respondent was totally in support of the application of an ECD integral education approach, one that takes account of everything that the child is, based on a values' framework and does not privilege particular kinds of knowledge. In this regard, she referenced the Africa A+ creative education project (for sustainable whole-school transformation towards promoting a quality, future-based early education) which similarly promotes an approach based on garnering multiple intelligences to develop different kinds of 'smart' in children: body, people, logic and nature. In confirming the efficacy and success of this approach, she cited the affirmatory response of teachers to the programme. Through their exposure to this alternative and holistic approach, teachers have found it particularly useful and realise that there are many areas that need to be developed and not just the kind of 'logic smart', which is the approach of mainstream educational approaches. Furthermore, evidence (Van der Berg, 2015) suggests the constructive impact on academic performance as a result of the development of the other capacities, like being with other people, working together and feeling confident yet, it is relegated little importance in schooling.

In summing up the views of the key informants in this category, a strong case is made for an IE approach to ECD because at its most fundamental level it develops in children a deep sense of awareness of the self and of the

surroundings enabling a consciousness of individual and collective well-being. This imperative, it is argued, is especially critical for a new generation of children to engage meaningfully and positively in the country's democracy in later life. Additionally, the point of consensus in the responses here is the importance of the teacher/practitioner/facilitator in this reciprocal learning process, which is directed towards making the child free, independent and self-assured in the journey to "figuring out the world". Finally, the suggestion that the NCF (2015) promotes in spirit a holistic approach to ECD, is not carried through in practice. Consequently, only a select group of teachers have the capacity to effect this approach, thus excluding the majority of poorly trained and resourced teachers and children.

6.5.4 Effect of IK in the preschool phase

In this category, participants responded to a range of questions on including IK in the ECD curriculum. As in the other categories (5.5.1 and 5.5.3), responses on a conceptual understanding of IK were solicited. The broad consensus in this regard was that indigenous knowledge is a pro-life holistic type of community knowledge developed over time that people in a particular environment produce and use in their daily activities in terms of skills, technology, values and belief systems. They devolve particular knowledge systems to survive in that particular environment and are, therefore, an authentic expression of themselves as a people. That is why indigenous knowledge is culturally and ecologically specific. Intergenerational transfer of this knowledge is through certain ways of teaching, storytelling or through certain practices that are deemed important in the particular communities. Although some of that knowledge has been erased because of the influence of the West much remains in communities, without being encouraged or promoted. KI 5 added that IK is rooted in a spiritual relationship with the land that translates into a spiritual relationship with people and engenders the Ubuntu philosophy of sharing and being responsible to one's brother and sister and all things around.

The issue of the term, 'indigenous', was raised by KI 1 and KI 4 citing similar concerns for considering the nuances associated with its unqualified use. The view of KI 1 is that IK implies past knowledge that is construed as obsolete which is inaccurate because a lot of knowledge is still in communities and still practised on a large scale, especially in child-rearing practices. Thus, the term 'local knowledge' has been appended. The view of KI 4, however, derives from the historical and pejorative interpretation of the term when colonisers defined the existing knowledge in the countries they invaded as indigenous in relation to their own modern practices. He argues that identity cannot be defined without relating it to a place, locality and political geography and the term 'indigenous' is not identified with a place. Consequently, he advocates for the more explicit identification of 'indigenous' as a system by Africans (or Indian, Chinese, etc) developed before the Western invasion. These qualifications resonate with this study in its reference to local and community knowledge and in recognition of the deleterious effects of colonialism on local knowledge systems and its concomitant purpose in explicitly introducing the IK values of Ubuntu in the ECD curriculum for values that promote cohesive and peaceful societies.

In response to the question on the current use of IK in ECD programmes, KI 2 indicated that although the NCF (2015) proposes the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, in practice this has not been effected. Additionally, she advised deeper discussions on the inclusion of IK and its application in a globalised world, especially where the inclusion is perfunctory and placatory. According to her, IK tends to fall into a more top-down teacher-directed style which aligns with the traditional way children were taught and raised, denying them agency, participation and voice.

On this issue of IK inclusion, KI 1 indicated that although studies on this issue have been done over the years and the curriculum has space to initiate ways for IK to be incorporated, this knowledge has not been integrated into the ECD programmes. Confirming the viewpoint of KI 2 on the absence of IK in practice, he supported the addition of those aspects of IK which have not

been satisfactorily included, especially those that have been tested over time like storytelling, songs, rhymes and certain concepts that help children to test their creativity and understanding and could create a body of this knowledge over time, a perspective which harmonises with the study's objective to incorporate in the ECD programme those cultural artefacts that promote IK Ubuntu values. This is reinforced by the response of KI 2 in her support for the introduction in the ECD classroom of African fables and stories with affirming role models, heroes and indigenous kings who have been excluded from the programme.

In response to this concern, KI 3 and KI 4 concurred with this view on the omission of IK, partly because of the general weakness of early childhood education and that education at all levels is Western education through Christianity, which marginalised and devalued IK. KI 3 argues, therefore, that in striving to make the current formal education more relevant, there must be an acknowledgement that Western knowledge is not the only knowledge. The incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge is imperative in consideration of the background of the children, in terms of their indigenous languages and the ways of knowing. According to KI 4, the parents and the knowledge practitioners in the community must have a place in the classroom which is not the case now because formal education views IK as primitive and unscientific and, therefore, out of our reach.

The responses in this category indicate that both the NCF (2015) and the South African Constitution create space for the inclusion of IK and the affirmation of cultural identity. In practice, however, IK continues to be marginalised and excluded from the ECD programme, despite recognition of the value of engaging children on what is important in their heritage and home and, more broadly, gives them confidence and affirms them and provides them with a place from which to branch out and explore new things. Collectively, the respondents strongly support the explicit incorporation of IK in ECD, especially the culturally relevant stories, poems, rhymes, proverbs and songs which carry particular meaning and learning for children.

6.5.5 Summary

The responses of the key informants in this exploratory phase were categorised into the three predetermined themes of the study – values, IE and IK – and classified into four broad sub-themes, the impact of values in the preschool phase, values around social and ecological consciousness, the possibilities of an IE approach to ECD and the effect of IK in the preschool phase. Insights drawn from each informant's knowledge, experience, practice and scholarship in the particular area of expertise is brought to bear on this phase of the study providing constructive clarity and direction. Collectively, the responses indicated an insufficient focus and deeper engagement with values in the ECD programme and the concomitant pressing need for their incorporation, especially values that promote socially responsible and respectful behaviour and attitudes to one another and the environment. In this regard, the respondents strongly support the application of an IE approach to ECD because of its capacity to develop the whole child towards engendering a higher consciousness and deeper understanding for individual and collective well-being. Fundamental to this approach is the incorporation of IK which is viewed as beneficial to affirming a child's sense of self within a cultural milieu and which continues to be marginalised and excluded from the ECD programme. On the whole, the responses demonstrate an unequivocal confirmation of the value of this study and its objectives and jointly uphold its central argument that an ECD IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu can build social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children in South Africa.

6.6. CONCLUSION

The results and discussion of the exploratory phase of this study based on the interview schedule (Annexure D) presented in this chapter (Phase 1, Exploratory) confirm that values promote socially responsible behaviour and have the potential to positively impact people and society and should be explicitly included in the curriculum especially considering evidence of increasing anti-social behaviour amongst young children. In addition, the

obvious curriculum weakness in not using a whole child or holistic approach in ECD could result in deficient development of social and emotional skills, relatable to deviant conduct. The inclusion of IK Ubuntu values was regarded as valuable and essential for the all-round development of children and was, therefore, strongly advocated.

Finally, the results of the interviews with the key informants, based on the interview schedules (Annexures G and H), individually and jointly, acknowledge the importance of this study and validate its proposal for an ECD IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE 2

INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 4, the developmental phase followed the exploratory phase, the results of which (focus group interviews in South Africa), presented in Chapters Five and Six, revealed a gap in the ECD curriculum regarding explicit engagement with values and the consequent endorsement of the benefits of including values to promote social responsibility and civic participation in the preschool phase. In addition, the results confirm a deficit in the implementation of an ECD IE/holistic approach with IK Ubuntu values and support, in pursuance of the goal of this study, its proposed implementation for the preschool phase. According to Creswell (2015), in an exploratory sequential design, the information gleaned from the examination of the results based on the qualitative analysis contributes to the design of the new measures, instruments or intervention activities and generally improve on the existing programme because it is grounded in the actual experiences of participants (Creswell, 2015: 39). Thus, drawing upon the results of the exploratory phase and guided by the philosophies and theories that underpin the study, an ECD IE intervention programme incorporating IK Ubuntu values (stories, poems, songs) with a focus on social responsibility and civic participation (refer to Annexure M) was co-created by the researcher and the participating practitioners.

This chapter sets out the process of the development of the ECD IE intervention programme which included a series of IE training workshops with the participating ECD practitioners to facilitate the co-creation of the intervention and the subsequent implementation of the developed IE programme in the sample sites. As indicated in Chapter Three, the philosophies of humanism and holism, which underpin an integral education approach and are consistent with the Ubuntu philosophy and way of life,

guided the development of the intervention. Underpinning these philosophies is the vision of a humane and responsible society of people who value themselves and others with equal respect, to the extent that all actions are primarily motivated by concern for the common good of communities and societies.

In consideration that the training and practice of the practitioners in the sample were in mainstream ECD programming only, a basic understanding of the IE approach was deemed necessary for the co-creation of the ECD IE intervention programme and its implementation.

The training began with a set of general questions around levels of training, experience, teaching style, classroom ethos, preparation and personal qualities. The responses showed a basic qualification (NQF L 4) and experience ranging between two and nine years in ECD. All the practitioners used a child-centred approach expressed in,

“I always believed in a learner-centred approach where I allow my class (pupil) to show their pre-knowledge and their competencies... full engagement on the teaching and learning process...to reach their full potential” and, “Teaching that gives children the voice, choice and autonomy to take control of their own learning... Children get a chance to collaborate”.

This tendency towards a participatory teaching style was reinforced by their collective desire for more fun and play-based learning instead of rigidly following the prescripts of the curriculum. Their personal qualities suggested an aptness for the early learning environment with a sincere and committed interest in children’s growth and development and a love of children. The responses to questions on teacher preparedness, however, elicited the conventional concerns around classroom cleanliness and lesson preparation, rather than an emotional and psychological readiness for the mutual learning experience. In summary, based on their openness and progressive mindsets, it was the considered view of the researcher that the practitioners were well suited to participating in the creation, implementation and evaluation of an alternate and holistic ECD programme.

7.2 IE TEACHER PREPARATION

The development phase included an IE teacher preparation component comprising four workshops and covering the content of the four modules (Refer to Annexure L). The content for the modules was based on (i) data from relevant interviews in the exploratory phase; (ii) Basic Principles of Education (Aurobindo 1974); (iii) Integral Education: A Foundation for the Future (Partho, 2007); (iv) Introduction to Integral Education: An Inspirational Guide (Ranade, 2006).

Data collected from the workshops was audio-recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis, the findings of which informed the development of the intervention programme. A brief discussion capturing the main points of each module and relevant comments from the participants follow.

7.2.1 Module 1: Introduction to IE

Objective: Participants should be able to understand the origin of IE, its particular approach and its complementarity with IK and Ubuntu values.

In the first training session, general introductory questions were posed to elicit from participants their conceptual understanding of education. Thus, the interview guide (Annexure L) included questions on the concept of education and its purpose (education); the concept of knowledge and its sources (knowledge); preschool teaching; and a cultural perspective of teaching (teaching). In light of the alternate education approach that IE advances, discussion around these concepts established the foundation for the engagements that followed. Generally, the responses indicated that the purpose of education was to develop a child holistically in both academic and social skills, to navigate the real world for life at home and work, to inculcate respect for religion, parents and other people and to promote lifelong learning. Significantly, participants did not correlate the purpose of education with preparation for the job market, despite this key element in the conventional or mainstream education systems. Furthermore, the aspects identified, preparation for the real world, holistic learning, social skills and

lifelong learning, which are not key features in mainstream education, align with an IE or holistic approach.

In determining the sources of knowledge, the participants included personal experiences, parents and grandparents, thus, highlighting alternate knowledge sources which resonated with the study's inclusion of IK Ubuntu values. Extending the aspect of IK was the recognition of cultural context and the importance of an education that affirmed cultural identity. Participants drew attention to the confusion in children and the loss and erosion of cultural values because of the dominance of Western culture. Overall, the responses to the introductory questions suggested a deeper understanding of education, especially the contrast between holistic and mainstream systems.

The first module, an introduction to IE, comprised the historical background of IE and the conceptual understanding of the IE approach and the Ubuntu value system, key components of the study. Firstly, it described the Indian roots of integral education and the conception of a new way of life based on a higher consciousness by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Included was the account of the three-stage process towards the creation of a harmonious co-existence amongst all life forms and the strategic plan to facilitate its spread, both within India and internationally.

Secondly, in understanding the IE approach the foundational principles of IE and its implementation in education, particularly in the preschool phase, were elucidated. The concept of alternate and holistic education models was defined and compared with the conventional and mainstream paradigms. The aptness and viability of a South African public facility implementation were also explored especially with regard to the objectives of this study.

Thirdly, the Ubuntu value system component contained an exploration of IK, generally, and Ubuntu, specifically, within the context of colonialism and apartheid. In addition, the recent small pockets of the revival of the Ubuntu philosophy in South Africa to stem the tide of unethical, immoral and violent behaviours and attitudes were investigated. Also included were the obvious

synergies between an IE approach and the African value system of Ubuntu. The incorporation and collection methods of Ubuntu values in the form of stories, rhymes, songs, etc. was considered to redress the past and current exclusion at the preschool level.

Emerging out of this session was an awareness that the concept of higher consciousness started with encouraging the child towards an inward journey, through the learning activities/programme, to learn about themselves. Participants suggested that being spiritually connected with oneself would more likely direct one to serve people honestly because of the concern for the feelings of people. Higher consciousness is a state of mindfulness while being conscious of everything and everyone around and appreciating everything (Aurobindo, 1972 cited in Adams 2006: 35). As IE facilitators, changing perspective and ways of doing and being to embrace an integral way of life, mainly the harmonious co-existence with all life forms, was essential (Vengopal & Kumari 2010: 63).

The gap in the NCF (RSA, 2015) in adequately addressing the development of all aspects of the child should be confronted, especially in light of the realisation that the current education system does not appear to be delivering positive outcomes (Refer to Chapters 1 and 2 with regard to the anti-social and violent behaviour in schools). This was evidenced in the practitioners' comments,

“Everything that happens around them seems to develop anger in them”, “experiences over the weekends, she brings to school”, “children pick up bad behaviour at a young age”, “selfish behaviour” and “class prejudices from their homes”.

In addition, the current education system did not promote independent thinking nor recognise other knowledge sources, especially the innate knowledge of the child who was made to believe that the only learning was that acquired in the school environment and from the practitioner/teacher. This exclusion also applied to local, community or indigenous knowledges that were not afforded equal status to European and Western-based

knowledge sources. This rigidity that characterised the mainstream education system was in sharp contrast to the flexibility and openness of the alternate, holistic IE education approach.

Participants indicated that exposure to the workshop content introduced a deeper understanding of education to the extent that teachers were facilitators whose role should be to guide children using their pre-knowledge and not force on them what should be learnt. Moreover, curriculum developers seem to have little or no knowledge of the conditions on the ground and the material was often based on global trends far away from the worlds of the children they taught. Hence, the demand for relevance in the curriculum and classrooms.

7.2.2 Module 2: Philosophy of IE and Ubuntu

Objective: Participants should be able to identify and compare the philosophical underpinnings of both IE and Ubuntu

The philosophical underpinnings of humanism and holism in Integral Education and Ubuntu were interrogated, especially with regard to the holistic development of individuals within an interconnected and interdependent collective.

Discussions in this session reverted to an understanding of a 'higher consciousness' and responses included, "deep level of the emotional part", *"mind is more linked with your heart"*, *"touch your heart"*, *"satisfaction at the level of the heart"*, *"change/happiness"*, *"concentration"*, *"deep mind"*, *"spiritual aspect"* and *"connection with your inner self"*. Thus, a strong correlation between the higher consciousness and values of compassion, love and empathy was made and suggests an education programme that developed these qualities in children. Harmonious collaboration could only be possible with a higher consciousness that rejects a focus on outer diversity and conflict. The collective inspiration of an IE approach was more likely to foster harmonious thoughts and actions since the procreative goals would be universal.

Participants raised the issue of the tendency of mainstream education to limit or prohibit the development of the child's intuition or instinct, based on the principle that education should be directed by the mind only. Conversely, an IE approach respected and developed equally all dimensions of the child, even the spiritual, which in mainstream education models was often and erroneously conflated with religion. In an IE approach, the spiritual being of the child is consonant with a total self-giving and love manifesting in a oneness with all life forms.

According to the practitioners, although the NCF (2015) promoted IK and family participation, in practice, this was not the case. The IE model, however, drew strongly on IK through Indian scriptures, dance, song, stories, etc. premised on the understanding that cultural identity and affirmation were crucial to a child's well-being. Thus, the inclusion of IK Ubuntu values which was proposed in this study to promote group solidarity, humanness and interconnectedness was consistent with an IE approach.

7.2.3 Module 3: Implementation of IE

Objective: Participants should be able to explain the application of IE and describe its fundamental teaching principles and developmental aspects

The content comprised two parts, IE principles and aspects and their implementations. The three fundamental principles of IE were (i) to draw out the child's innate knowledge, (ii) to inspire in the child the desire to learn and (iii) to engage the child first with the familiar and knowable, especially about its heritage and ancestry. The five aspects of IE are aimed at the flowering or unfolding of the child's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual personality. To achieve this complete education were five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being, the development of the physical, the vital, the mental and the psychic towards the spiritual. Each of the five aspects was explained individually and collectively and their implementation specifically for ECD was delineated. IE in practice in the

classroom was described using four actual programmes and methods for simple replication.

Responses in this session included an understanding of the fundamentals of an IE approach with particular reference to all-round development according to each child's unique and inner makeup, the development of self-awareness and integrated learning with no separation into subject areas.

Comparisons between mainstream models and IE were explored with responses indicating that IE was directly opposite to mainstream to the extent that it filled the child with prescribed knowledge without the child being an active participant in the learning process. In addition, in a mainstream system, children were manipulated and not encouraged to think for themselves, there was no development of creativity, and all learning was curriculum-based whereas IE was more external and internalised. Accordingly, the existing ECD programme was inadequate to effectively prepare the child for all-round, complete development.

7.2.4 Module 4: Preparation of Self

Objective: Participants should be able to identify the personal and professional demands and expectations of an IE teacher/practitioner

The purpose of this module was to focus on the IE practitioner's preparation and included responses from the pre-evaluations in the classes of the three practitioners in the sample for contextual relevance. The practitioner undertook a commitment to self-awareness and self-discipline and fulfilled the clearly defined prerequisites of personal evolution, growth in consciousness and its manifestation in work with children and with teaching colleagues. Thus, the steps to becoming an IE teacher together with the requisite personal qualities were enunciated.

Responses from the practitioners on the personal changes for IE facilitation, in particular, the personal or inner development and flowering and the psychological clearing of the mind were encouraging. There was an understanding and acceptance of the basic IE principles that the IE teacher

could only succeed in changing others if she had changed. This necessitated a close observance of oneself in respect of weaknesses and strengths and character (sincerity, honesty, morality and ethics). In addition, a pledge of a lifelong commitment to learning, growing and self-becoming should be undertaken. The agreement was evidenced in, *“prepare yourself to be a teacher”, “if you want to teach children about values, you shouldn’t have to teach, they should learn these from you”, “they must be the manifestation of who you are as a teacher” and “children learn through you”*. According to them, IE expected you to engage with the child, to give sufficient space to think about situations and possible actions towards teaching self-awareness and independence.

Finally, according to the participants, empathy was important because it initiated change in life and encouraged children to do something about a situation that was not quite right. They would feel for others and learn to ask, *“what have I done about...”*. This sense of collective well-being was critical to the study’s proposal of building social responsibility and civic participation in the early years through an ECD IE approach.

In summary, the IE teacher preparation comprising the above four modules presented a comprehensive overview of the critical aspects of the study and prepared the participants for the ensuing processes, most notably the pre-observation period, co-creation of the intervention programme, the implementation of the intervention programme and the post-observation period. Throughout the programme, the practitioners participated sincerely and enthusiastically in their responses to all the allocated tasks. Implicit in this was the collective acknowledgement that the ECD programme was inadequate and that the proposition of an alternate IE approach could be a viable option.

7.3 PRE-PROGRAMME OBSERVATION

Proceeding the IE training workshops and preceding the development of the intervention, the participants undertook a close observation of the sample in

each of the three classes in the three preschools. The purpose of this exercise was to gain experience of the key aspects of the children's development prior to and after the intervention programme, following the new learnings from the discussions in the IE preparation workshops. The following developmental domains for 'all-round development of a child' and the accompanying play-based activities provided a general guide to the participating practitioners during the observation. (Refer to Table 7.1).

TABLE 7 1: Suggested play-based activities for the development of the domains (Source: IE School, India)

Domain	Suggested Activities
Sensory:	Hearing; smelling; tasting; seeing; feeling activities; water play; sand play; creative art; clay work; tearing; finger painting; using manipulative material
Cognitive:	Social and natural science; experience; nature walk; mathematics; matching; naming; classifying; identifying; sorting; sequencing; seriating; discussion; puzzles; riddles; maze; sand; waterplay; gardening; celebrations; festivals; cooking; building blocks; constructional materials
Language and Communication:	Songs and rhymes; stories; conversation; informal talk; books; picture /chart reading; labelling; dramatic play; puppet play; vocabulary/ command games; sound games; riddles; rhyming games; doll play; show and tell; recall story; draw and talk; auditory and visual games
Emotional and Aesthetics:	Music and movement; dance; creative drama; action play and games; collage work; clay work; care of animals and garden
Personal:	Dramatisation; role-play; doll play; mealtime activities; cleaning and grooming self; cleaning and tidying up
Social:	Stories; songs; rhymes; puppet activities; dramatisation; groups/team games; doll play; dressing up play; blocking building; sports; festivals and birthdays; participation in daily chores and routines
Physical Gross Motor:	Running race; games; exercises; pushing; pulling; stretching; bouncing; sliding; rocking; throwing; catching; kicking; rolling; swinging; climbing; balancing; hopping; jogging; jumping; creeping; crawling; gardening; cycling; nature walk; walking
Fine Motor:	Finger play; action songs; block building; threading; stitching; tearing; cutting; pasting paper; drawing; colouring; painting; chalk/slate drawing; pattern making

Although the IE intervention programme would be applied to the whole class of each of the three participating practitioners in the three different preschools for the duration of the study, only six children in the age cohort of three to four years (3 – 4) in each class constituted the study sample. Consequently, these six children (6 children x 3 practitioners/sites = 18) were closely observed and reported on for the duration of four weeks (03 – 28/03/2020) in

respect of the intervention. The observation notes on each of the eighteen children in the sample were loosely guided by the developmental domains identified in the play-based activities chart (Refer to Table 7.1). In addition, the participating practitioners were encouraged during this phase to keep journals of personal reflections on their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, comments and challenges relevant to the research study.

The practitioners' observations of the three samples are reflected separately as Practitioners A, B and C from Preschools A, B and C. (Refer to Tables 7.2, 7.3, 7.4) and are followed by a discussion on each of the samples as well as the limited, though thoughtful, journal entries.

TABLE 7 2: Observation evaluations undertaken by Practitioner A of the sample in Preschool A

Preschool A

	BOYS	GIRLS
1	According to the initial evaluation, the child appears well balanced with clearly defined prosocial characteristics that collectively indicate a positive development trajectory. He may show a tendency to being slightly introverted but is caring and compassionate towards his peers. Descriptors include, "very quiet", "clever", "good listener" and "always on time", "friendly with others", "sympathetic and caring", "openminded and a quick thinker", "one of the best students", "neat and trustworthy", and "knows what's right and what is not". The minor detractors noted are "keeps to himself a lot" and a susceptibility to "sleep in class".	This child is described as a good listener, helpful to others, shows great promise in her work and "gives her best". Overall, she appears to be exemplary, both in behaviour and attitude. Some of the descriptions are, "always eager to help", "interest in every new thing", "learns quickly", "clever, neat and takes times doing her work", "self-disciplined and likes to discipline other children", "trustworthy" and "respectful to her friends". According to her teacher, "her work speaks volumes about her", and it would appear that her positive character matches her work ethic.
2	Overall, the child appears introverted, even shy, but has been known to bully other children at times. Although he "does not talk much", he does show love for his classmates, to the extent of sharing lunch. He is also evaluated as slow and tends to "take his time", suggesting working at his own pace. In addition, he is compliant in class and turns down any offer of help. His absenteeism has been noted.	Also, a first-year pre-schooler, the child is an "introvert", "very clever" and "takes her time doing her work". She clearly "does not like playing with others" nor "sharing her stuff" and "keeps to herself a lot and is very quiet". Although she seemed to be showing signs of settling in, made a friend, participated in activities and started being helpful to the teacher, her subsequent repeated absenteeism suggested illness or a problem at home.

	BOYS	GIRLS
3	As a first-year pre-schooler, he is talkative, “loves learning new things” and “prefers being outdoors”. Initially, he was not willing to interact with other children, mainly because of unfamiliarity with them, over time, he began opening up and getting to know them, to the extent of making friends with some children. Although he is described as a “ball of fun”, he has difficulty with concentration despite his “high intellectual ability”. He shows a clear affinity for helping others, but continues to be boisterous, “always playing around”.	This child seems to exist “in her own world” and although “good”, “does not like playing with others much. This could be attributed to adjusting to the new environment, routine, faces, people and different behaviours. She “shows calmness and patience” and “knows how to express her feelings and is not shy to speak her mind”. According to the teacher, she found out that her perceived detachment was the result of her move to her grandmother because her mother was working away from home. Some slow improvement noted was through the weeks.

Observation Discussion: A

The boys in the sample appeared generally to be on a positive trajectory with sound values and good work progress. Apart from indications of mild withdrawal, some bullying and rowdiness, possibly typical toddler behaviour and adjustment issues, there were no significant behavioural or attitudinal problems identified. The girls also appeared to be well adjusted with minor individual issues. They were also described as quick-witted and bright but may have been less noisy than the boys. In both cases, there were problems with absenteeism. The sample appeared to be apt for the study, especially in respect of developing aspects such as interest in learning, social skills and channelling energy for self-reflection.

Journal Entry: A

The following extract, while revealing painful recollections for the practitioner, is instructive to the study in drawing attention to the value of the IE programme in improving the capability of pre-schoolers and the gradual inward journey of the participating practitioner, critical for self-awareness and deep self-reflection expected of IE teachers.

“I have never had a journal before, and it has not been long (2 years and 6 months) that I worked as a teacher. But doing this work, I slowly see why I ended up being a slow learner and it pains me. Because I can see if only my parents knew all the things I know now, it would

have made a difference in my life. I know that I'm a slow learner, but I always ask myself, how come I am? I'm learning a lot about myself; things I didn't know I knew about me. It is not easy but I'm learning. I think I'm slowly finding the inner child I never thought was there".

TABLE 7 3: Observation evaluations undertaken by Practitioner B of the sample in Preschool B

Preschool B

	BOYS	GIRLS
1	This child is described as "slow", "shy" and "scared of being around other children in class". Attempts by the teacher to reach out to him appear fruitless, probably the result of his slow settling in. A slight improvement was noted when, despite his general lack of response, he was 'teaching' 3-year-old child things being discussed.	The child's "senses are very sharp and is also a very curious child". She alerted the teacher to another child in distress, showing care and compassion for which, she was praised. She has also shown that she enjoys sharing with the other children. A bright and capable child, she translates English version songs and rhymes into Zulu and sings them loudly and clearly, demonstrating her confidence and assertiveness. She is helpful in the classroom and is constantly volunteering to assist her teacher with classroom responsibilities.
2	Although this child is "so playful in class", he has "a focused and friendly energy", and is "mindful and supportive towards other children in class". He tends to be boisterous and restless but has demonstrated responsibility and leadership when tasked with activities in class.	The child is capable and creative and is able to make connections with what she learns at home and her school lessons. She is responsible and has strong leadership qualities, to the extent of assisting the teacher organising and arranging the children in the class. In addition, she participates readily in class activities and "helps other children with song, music and rhymes". According to the teacher, her behaviour towards the other children is "impressive based on the kind of love and care she has for the other people around her".
3	The child is experiencing "some difficulties in adjusting to the environment", being "the only child at home". Small incremental development to his sociability, took the initiative to welcome another new child into the class. Has a good memory and is able to correlate seemingly disparate things/events.	The child is generally having difficulties with activities on motor coordination, senses and breathing for calming possibly because she started school late.

Observation Discussion: B

In this sample, the boys seemed to be adjusting slowly but displayed no significant behavioural issues. There was some evidence of leadership surfacing, but none of them were evaluated as bright or smart intellectually. Two of the girls, however, showed very positive capabilities with descriptors such as “*sharp senses*”, “*bright*”, “*creative*” and “*capable*”. Collectively, the sample showed promise for all-round improvement, especially the honing of existing skills, values and capacities.

Journal Entry: B

The personal reflections here reinforce the critical importance of the early years of children’s learning for sustainable development and growth and underscore the central argument in the study:

“I understand that ECD is where a child from a baby to 5 years old starts to learn how to develop his/her fine and gross motor skills, etc. It also helps a child develop holistically, develop self-confidence and the ability to listen, communicate with others as to the same ability to express their thoughts, eye-hand coordination, reading and thinking skills. In my opinion, I think ECD is an important factor in a child’s life, it ensures the holistic development of a child because they do it through play and through activities that allow a child to use their thinking skills, motor skills. It has also helped me a lot with the understanding and knowledge because when I first started to teach, I used to think that I would not be able to cope with the kids, but then... I eventually studied at an institution, that was when I started to see things differently and also, I started gaining knowledge to what the most important qualities should a teacher or anyone have when looking after toddlers, 1-5 years”.

Preschool C

TABLE 7 4: Observation evaluations undertaken by Practitioner C of the sample in Preschool C

	BOYS	GIRLS
1	The child is “respectful towards adults”, “seems nice” and is responsive. His motor skills are not fully developed possibly because he tends to keep away from activities in class and physical activity outside. He prefers and works at his own pace, is a “good listener and not easily distracted”. He appears amenable to being engaged on issues affecting him, especially his inability to control his feelings. Generally bubbly and “very helpful around the class”, showing responsibility and industry.	Although this child is a very smart girl who likes to be in class and loves her teachers, she shows a noticeable lack of confidence. She has many friends who are probably drawn to her by her energy. She loves to help but can be inattentive and unresponsive when given instructions. Tendency to be emotionally fragile but can get over these times quite readily.
2	Alert and active child and keen to share. He is an attentive listener during story time really enjoys the sessions and asks questions. He loves meeting new people and seems to have no particular friends, but “plays with everyone”. He is very aware of his surroundings and his belongings. In addition, he is always very keen to assist the teacher with classroom chores and wants to be involved in all the activities.	A very happy child who wants to be part of everything including participating in the class discussions. Tends towards bouts of naughtiness and emotional instability at times. She shows no interest in anything done individually because she wants to be part of a group or pair. She is adventurous and physically capable.
3	The child is “shy, quiet, and has difficulty talking clearly”, to the extent that he is withdrawn and “not willing to engage in conversation”. He appears to have little interest in being in school but is happy outside on the jungle gym. Generally, he has “good listening skills”, obedient but “does not respond verbally until he feels the need to talk”. He is “not always keen to be around people” and prefers his own space showing a lack of social skills. When he has to concentrate, he is absorbed but tends to get agitated until he is assisted. Two characteristics are particularly curious, his nonresponse when called and his lack of interest in learning. He is, however, never disruptive.	The child shows signs of “defensive behaviour”, “looking out for herself all the time” even noticeable in her facial expressions. She loves people and enjoys being around other children but is short tempered. Tendency to isolate herself and refuse participation in activities but can overcome these ‘moments’ when left alone. She enjoys participating in sport, has sharp senses and is a curious and alert child.

Observation Discussion: C

The boys in this sample appeared generally to be coping well with some evidence of shyness and working at their own pace. The lack of interest in learning resurfaced here though in the midst of sound and commendable values which was encouraging. The girls, however, showed a noticeable prevalence of emotional fragility which was of concern. There were, however, some positive tendencies amongst them. The sample was equally (as the other two) suitable for the intervention, especially with regard to making learning enjoyable and developing all developmental domains simultaneously.

Journal Entry: C

The following comments are deeply insightful concerning the new learnings about child development arising from the IE programme with which the practitioner has engaged. Her comparison between the conventional way of teaching and child development and the IE holistic approach resonates with this study's central argument of the inability of the existing ECD programme to develop the child holistically for life readiness. Equally, it echoes the views of the other two participating practitioners with regard to deep reflection and heightened self-awareness as essential preparation for teachers.

"I have never really felt the need to even think deeper about the true meaning behind each child's behaviour although I have worked with kids over the past years. I have always thought that whatever situation a child may face, education fights all battles in life. It's a shame because I have seen the deepest sense of values in a child's life with holistic development. In a short space of time, engaging with different people on the IE knowledge and teaching, I have realised the gap in our learning and teaching process compared to an IE teaching and learning approach. We tend to forget that not every child learns in a similar way to the other... On my pre-observation process, I really felt like I am on the journey of self-reflection, of looking at things from another perspective and being open-minded to learn on the same lane with my kids. As I am observing every day different milestones reached, different emotions out of them, different backgrounds were left with question marks and so many values and behaviours were noticed. ...We as teachers really think we are taking them from a clean

slate, which is the reason why we tend to do forced learning because we believe their learning relies on us. ... I realised that sometimes they know the consequences of their wrongdoings or mistake. You find them crying after doing something wrong which shows that they are consciously aware that they have done something wrong. In a way the IE approach has changed the way I look at the child according to their state of mind, important aspects to groom, importance in their learning and teaching experience, even reprimands that we tend to think are the only way to enforce good behaviour”.

Overall, the pre-programme observation period was beneficial on a range of levels. Most importantly, it introduced the participating practitioners to one of the fundamental tools of IE, observation of the self and the child. According to an IE teacher (Mirambika, India), “In IE there is no programme rather gathering experience, observing and evaluating each child daily... First is an understanding of the child and the individual needs of the child”. It also afforded them the opportunity, post-training, to engage with the key aspects of child development. Moreover, the close observation of the children (as evidenced in the observation notes in Tables 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4), made the practitioners more acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses in children and to adjust programmes and strategies, accordingly. The data from the observations and the journal entries collectively point to the appropriateness of the sample to test the efficacy of the intervention and the participating practitioners’ gradual awareness of the changes in them and to the teaching and learning process, respectively.

7.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVENTION

The intervention programme encompassed broadly the psychic, vital, mental and physical aspects of the child’s development through the integrated, equal and simultaneous building of intrinsic strengths, developing the ethical and aesthetic sense, promoting self-awareness, developing the senses, character formation, unfolding core human values (courage, sincerity, goodness, nobility, etc.), refining the mental faculties (observation, concentration, memorisation, imagination, reasoning, etc.) and carrying out daily physical activities (Dini 2018). Thus, promoting a deep psychological knowledge of the self towards discovering the child’s own exceptional nature. The programme

encouraged self-knowledge, an awakening of the centre of one's being and a consequent process of integration and harmony towards progressive self-awareness and self-mastery (Partho 2007: 24-25).

In reference to the data from the observation period and the practitioners' knowledge, experience and implementation of the existing ECD programme, a daily/weekly intervention programme was created based on IE ECD activities and exercises (Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, *An Integral Education for Growth and Blossoming*, Dini, 2018). (Refer to Annexure M). Indigenous stories, poems and songs collected during and after the community focus group interviews from community elders and other knowledge holders were included in the daily programme. The pedagogical design of the programme followed the model of the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) daily and weekly programme (RSA, DoE. NELDS 2009), adapted where relevant for contextual aptness. The intervention programme sought to develop four key interlinked aspects, the psychic, the vital, the mental and the physical (Partho 2007), the collective and simultaneous implementation of which is Integral Education.

Table 7.5 presents the four aspects and the learning objectives or aims relevant to each aspect (Partho 2007: 28 – 156). The first, the psychic aspect is the font of all the finer human feelings and higher human awareness. It includes the development of profound qualities and values like generosity, selfless love and self-giving, deep compassion, devotion and reverence, the pursuit of truth, reality, beauty and sincerity. It is the psychic that pulls the human, with or without his conscious consent, towards the unitive state of being and the unitive experience for a deeply conscious and harmonious co-existence, the core of Ubuntu and social responsibility.

The second is vital education, fundamental to integral transformation and perfection. The vital (meaning life) aspect includes the whole spectrum of emotions and feelings and is the source of all relationships, with other humans, with the environment, with work, and with the world at large. The

education of the vital is fulfilled through a transformation of the emotional nature, the sensitisation and refinement of the senses, and the transformation and progressive perfection of the character. The outcome of educating the vital is a change in the quality of personal life leading to a change in the quality of collective and social life to reinforce the central aims of social responsibility and civic mindedness proposed in the study.

The third aspect is mental education, including both intellect and intuition, with a pronounced de-emphasis on the intellect and concomitant emphasis on developing the intuition, especially in the early years. Integral mental education comprises the development of concentration and attention, developing the capacities of expansion and richness, organising ideas around a central idea, developing mental silence and quietude and rejecting undesirable thoughts.

The fourth aspect, integral physical education, aims at freeing the body of all psychological influence, developing its own awareness and evolving along natural lines. Included in the training is personal knowledge of how the body functions and what it needs and an understanding of the body-mind system in the dynamic relationship between thought, belief, emotion and health. In addition, physical education comprises awareness and knowledge of the body rhythms which are material activity and assimilation (eating, digesting and evacuating), pranic activity and assimilation (breath, rest and sleep) and psychic assimilation (physical quietude, harmony and balance).

TABLE 7 5: Presentation of the four aspects and learning objectives of Integral Education (Adapted from Partho, 2007; Dini, 2018).

ASPECT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Psychic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cultivate what makes everyone a unique being with unique qualities • Encourage self-awareness • Promote the depth of being and elevation, simplicity, and aspiration • Cultivate enthusiasm, gratitude, and wisdom • Encourage a noble and healthy aim in life in the service of those around us of nature and the future • Foster aspiration for the good, the beautiful, the true • Understand the true motive of existence and the purpose of life on earth • Discover personal will, determination, and perseverance • Search within for what is independent of yourself and your life • Understand the interconnectedness with all life • Cultivate generosity, selfless love and self-giving, deep compassion, devotion and reverence, a need for truth, reality, beauty and sincerity •Promote the transformation of the child's nature and consciousness towards reaching the highest and deepest potential
Vital Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop emotional intelligence to become aware of emotions, reactions, and impulses • Cultivate the capacity to know and master oneself and to flourish • Awaken the aesthetic sense to express beauty and excellence through movements, emotions, thoughts, and actions • Cultivate holistically the fundamental qualities of being human, such as courage, empathy, compassion, sincerity, kindness, love, and solidarity • Develop a powerful will, at the service of what is noblest and highest • Develop and use optimally all the sensory fields, sight, sound, scent, taste and feel and the kinaesthetic • Enable awareness and character transformation • Develop focus and alertness for multifaceted interests and talents • Encourage acceptance, respect, and tolerance • Enable selfhood by giving conscious choice and control of the learning process and honouring individuality • Develop an awareness of the destructive/ negative and creative/positive emotional states • Enable quietude, aloneness, and stillness of the brain • Facilitate the development of self-awareness and mindfulness

Mental Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mental faculties in a methodical and interesting way towards observation, comparison, concentration, memorisation, imagination, reason, intuition • Learn to communicate, express emotions and needs, and understand others • Develop ethics as well as integrity • Cultivate self-discipline • Train discernment to choose what is healthy and harmonious • Develop a lively, subtle, and intuitive intelligence • Capacitate expansion, widening, complexity and richness • Organise ideas around a central idea/theme • Control thought by developing mental silence to reject undesirable thoughts • Perfect the mind's functioning and awaken and develop the mind for the higher evolution • Develop observation to notice details, through all the senses, with full concentration and interest • Train the analytic intelligence to develop and perfect the power of reasoning • Recognise and differentiate between the intuitive and the intellectual • Train the mind's patterning mechanism to create new patterns and challenge existing ones • Develop a quiet and concentrated observation that can work on all levels of cognition to silence the mind
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage consciousness of the three rhythms maintaining harmony amongst them • Cultivate flexibility, strength, agility, endurance, stamina, grace, and rhythm • Strengthen the character (will, courage, endurance, team spirit and leadership) through collective sports, field events and activities • Learn to listen to one's body, its messages and needs • Maintain a healthy lifestyle incorporating various activities and postures, time of assimilation and rest, food, and sleep • Cultivate sharp senses in training for precision and sensitivity • Maintain control and discipline in the functioning of the body • Develop integrally, methodically and harmoniously all parts and movements of the body • Maintain cleanliness and hygienic habits • Encourage good eating habits with food that nourishes the body and brain • Promote knowledge of the nature of food and the most favourable conditions for eating and digestion • Cultivate a basic breathing programme of deep belly, chest, and whole breathing • Maintain a training programme for deep and proper rest and conscious relaxation • Cultivate self-awareness, quietude and alertness of the senses and control and mastery of the body-mind system

The process of the intervention development was facilitated by the data emerging from the training workshops, the observation period and the

practitioners' personal reflections (journal entries). The exercises and activities, based on the Sri Aurobindo Integral Education programme, was drawn from its publication (Dini, 2018) and the stories, songs and poems for IK Ubuntu values were the contribution of the Umbumbulu community, the study location. Thus, the intervention programme, co-created with the participating practitioners and including the wider community members, accentuates the community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach used in this study and, therefore, augurs well for its implementation.

7.5 INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the intervention programme in the three classes of the participating practitioners following the observation period of four weeks (03/02 – 28/02/2020) was scheduled for five weeks (02 – 31/03/2020). Instead, only three weeks of implementation was completed (02 – 20/03/2020). Pursuant to this period the post-programme observation was planned to occur over five weeks (01 – 30/04/2020) (Refer to Table 7.6).

On the 18th of March, however, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ECD operators were instructed by the Department of Social Development (RSA, DSD) to close in order to prevent the spread and acceleration of infections. Owing to the lockdown, the majority of ECD operators, catering to the poorest children in South Africa and operating in a quasi-informal manner, were not able to collect fees from caregivers which they rely on to pay salaries and other fixed costs. A snap survey on the impact of Covid-19 on the ECD sector, conducted in April 2020 by a range of ECD NGOs, found that 99% of ECD operators had stopped receiving fees owing to the lockdown, 83% of ECD operators were not able to pay the full salaries of staff over the lockdown period, 96% of ECD operators indicated that their income was not enough to pay their operating costs and 68% were concerned that they would not be able to reopen (BRIDGE 2020: 3). Thus, the ECD sector has been one of the worst affected by the pandemic and recovery continues to appear remote, especially since ECD centres remained closed for 2020.

In the case of this study and the three participating practitioners, two have not returned to their preschools since the start of the lockdown (18/03/2020) and their services have since been terminated on account of insufficient numbers at their preschools. The third one returned to her preschool in August 2020, on the understanding that she would not be remunerated.

Consequently, the study had a minor setback in not having the opportunity to complete the full duration of the implementation and the post-programme observation periods. In addition, in the local and global build-up to the COVID-19 scare, preschools experienced significant absenteeism to the extent that observation during implementation was negatively impacted. The journal entry, during the implementation period, of one of the participating practitioners clarifies, the COVID-19 impact, particularly on the study:

“As I was starting to use/apply the IE, kids are starting to be absent at school which will be bad for me, but I cannot say or do anything about it because parents are protecting their kids. This world is being shaken by coronavirus and now parents are keeping their kids at home which makes it hard for us to work and even more hard for me because I am doing this programme and I need to observe and also implement in class. Now the rumour has started that the schools may close before the school calendar. I pray it does not happen. Already I have half of the class absent which is not good for my project. I am going half-crazy and there is nothing I can do about it. This virus looks like it's going to take over our lives and we won't have any progress in 2020. Now schools are closing before the school calendar and the opening date is unknown”.

Despite the set of unfortunate circumstances, however, the practitioners completed the post-test questionnaire enabling the accomplishment of the evaluation phase of the study.

The implementation of the intervention programme commenced on 02/03/2020. In addition to the learning objectives (Refer to Table 7.5) that guided the overall teaching process, the fundamental or key principles of the IE programme (Dini, 2018) undergirded the daily programme (Refer to Annexure M. These served as daily incentives to the practitioners to promote and experience the benefits of an IE approach.

TABLE 7 6: Key principles of IE, adapted from Dini, 2018

	PRINCIPLE	IMPLEMENTATION
	Changing ourselves to change the world	Through their actions, teachers can offer children all the conditions conducive to bringing out the best in them, lavishing them with affection and offering them a living example of what they could become. It is a whole programme which begins with the changing of self to better change the world.
	Formal teaching of basic human values	Mainstream education offers little to appreciate the importance of human values. Education is much more than imparting the knowledge and skills to achieve narrow academic goals. It is also about opening the child's eyes to the needs and rights of others and that their actions have a universal dimension. Building on their natural feelings of empathy, children develop a sense of social responsibility.
	Towards teaching ethics	Moral sense is to a large extent inborn. To encourage the ethical sense, children should grow accustomed to listening to their feelings and intuitions from an early age and to listen deeply within and to follow their deep feelings.
	Cultivating happiness	Today, happiness is generally acquired through the possession of objects and the satisfaction of desires. Being at peace with oneself, however, will naturally contribute to spreading peace to one's family, community, country and throughout the world.
	Training one's self-mastery	To be master of oneself is taking control of one's life. The vital refers to the character, impulses, feelings and emotions. The goal of vital education is to master, harmonise and then direct these powerful energies towards the creation of what is most deep, noble and true in everyone. To achieve this goal, self-mastery and fulfilment are required.
	Training one's mental abilities	The development of mental abilities includes observation, comparison, concentration, judgment, memory, reasoning, imagination, logic and intuition.

		Starting from their natural curiosity and interests, children can be brought to perfect the tools necessary to acquire knowledge.
	Practising mindfulness	The benefits of mindfulness are reducing stress, anxiety, depression and misbehaviour. Children who practice this are calmer and have a better ability to manage their emotions. In addition, they have increased self-esteem and improved sleep, developed better social skills and showed more empathy. Their attention, memory and reasoning skills are also heightened. Teachers who regularly practice these mindfulness exercises feel better, are less prone to burn-out, organise their classrooms better, have increased self-esteem and are less stressed.
	Training the body	It is best to introduce children in the early years to a variety of physical activities to train all body parts. Once the habit of carrying out physical exercises is acquired, there will be no need to motivate them, the habit and the well-being felt will energise this cycle, sport – health – harmony – discipline – progress – joy.

According to IE practitioners (Mirambika, India), the IE programme is predicated on building a relationship with the children to the extent that the practitioner can ‘look into’ the mind of the child to fathom what is in it and what it wants to do. Thus, no pressure is placed on the children because they decide what is right for them. Throughout the process, children are helped to enhance their thought and sensory processes on which activities, games and stories are based while connecting them with nature.

IE teachers work with a conviction that preschool children already have some profound sense and diffused intelligence which they draw out in the child. It is the discovery of *Swabhav* (one’s own nature) of a child on which teachers work trying to identify the innate nature of the child to nurture it. Consequently, the planning of the day is arranged according to the child’s nature and need. Where a child is not interested in a particular game, other activities are offered towards enabling children to know more about

themselves in terms of self-awareness and inner development, thus, developing their confidence (Comment at the Navakriti IE teachers' focus group interview, 2017).

Accordingly, central to an IE approach is a deep connection between the practitioner and the child that facilitates an understanding of the child's individuality. This presupposes an undertaking by the practitioner to commit to accepting the uniqueness of each child. This alternate approach, however, is inconsistent with the conventional or mainstream approach that is largely a 'one size fits all' one which the participating practitioners in this study have been trained to apply. The personal and professional changes expected of them in applying an IE approach have been unreservedly accepted and appreciated. Refer also to 7.2.4 (Preparation of Self) in this regard. Two of the journal entries captured during the implementation of the intervention demonstrate the endorsement of the programme and the transformation they have experienced:

"Had to learn through the programme layout and understand what I had to do in class. As a new practitioner, I got to learn more about being in class and how I teach in class. With this it is going to change me and how I teach. It has taught me how to prepare myself and how I teach in class. It has taught me how to make my lesson plans easily so if I'm not at school and someone stood in for me, she will know what we do in class and how to do it".

"It always feels good to be part of a change and knowing you are developing a child to be a better someone. Looking at it now, I know not every child will be as expected and not every child reacts the same to changes like this, but Michael Jackson once said, "If you want to see change, look at yourself in the mirror and make a change". To me it clearly means with or without the manual, I owe it to myself to make a free and safe nation for the child for them to feel free to adapt to all changes of life. All activities are fun although we need to find a way of understanding a child and their level of capabilities, for example, imagination activities are not easy because also as a teacher it is hard to see if they are engaging, inner-self check activity is also hard for them if you ask them "how are you, class?", they will say "I am fine". Even when crying, they will say they are fine and if you ask what is wrong, they will burst into tears after that. All in all, I am most happy with the programme because, for the first time in 8 years of being an ECD practitioner, I felt so involved in positivity, so involved in change

and so involved in positive progress which is most gratifying than receiving a fat pay cheque and learners are broken inside and lost in this world”.

These personal reflections are significant indicators of a transformative approach to ECD and one that is more likely to usher in the new generation of children that this study is proposing can be effected through an ECD IE approach with IK Ubuntu values.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the development of the intervention programme and its implementation. It included the training of the participating practitioners to adequately prepare them for the range of research tasks that followed. The responses to the preliminary set of questions established the suitability of the participants for the IE training which was successfully completed. Although the pre-programme observation generated valuable data for the development of the intervention programme which was accomplished with the participating practitioners, the implementation of the intervention was interrupted by the sudden and treacherous advent of COVID-19. The resultant widespread absenteeism in the participating preschools and the total lockdown of the country hampered the complete collection of data. Notwithstanding the limited implementation and the constrained evaluation processes, all aspects of the study were finally concluded, as evidenced in this chapter and the following one that details the evaluation phase.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

EVALUATION PHASE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the evaluation of the implementation of the intervention and presents both qualitative and quantitative data in support of this phase. As indicated in Chapter 7 (Refer to 7.5), the implementation of the intervention experienced a setback on account of the national shutdown of preschools (18/03/2020) to curb the spread of COVID-19. Consequently, the implementation of the intervention programme in the three classes of the participating practitioners which was scheduled for five weeks (02 – 31/03/2020) and the post-programme observation over five weeks (01 – 30/04/2020), were interrupted. As a result, the implementation of the programme was over three weeks (02 – 20/03/2020) and the post-programme observation was not completed by two of the three practitioners/preschools. Although the planned evaluation phase was moderately affected, the evaluation of the implementation proceeded, under the circumstances referred to in Chapter 7, between 02 – 20/03/2020 and produced credible results, mostly in support of the intervention.

As noted in Chapter 4, the evaluation of the intervention used both qualitative (participant interviews, observations, journal entries and post-implementation practitioner evaluations) and confirmatory quantitative (pre- and post-test evaluations) data collection methods (Refer to Table 8.1). The qualitative data is presented individually according to each strategy utilised and discussed to evaluate the implementation of the intervention. The quantitative evaluation of the intervention applied a measuring instrument in the form of a questionnaire (Refer to Annexure L) to the sample group ($n = 18$).

8.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

The use of multiple strategies in this phase facilitated a more thorough evaluation of the implementation. The two participant interviews, participant observations and journal entries were undertaken during the implementation

phase and the post-programme observation and practitioner evaluation were completed after implementation. Data from each strategy is presented and discussed.

8.2.1 Participant interviews

As noted in Chapter 7 (Refer to 7.4, Table 7.5), the intervention programme (Refer to Annexure L) encompassed broadly the psychic, vital, mental and physical aspects of the child's development through a range of classroom activities which the practitioners applied. Table 8.2 matches the objectives with the developmental aspects observed through the classroom activities in the intervention programme. The data emerging from the participant interviews is categorised according to these four objectives for the evaluation of the implementation.

TABLE 8. 1: Corresponding developmental aspects and objectives in an IE approach (Dini 2018, Adapted).

	Objectives	Observation Aspects
1	Psychic Education The development of the ethical and the aesthetic sense Self-awareness	Connects with the world of nature Emotional balance, calm, tolerant, patient and honest Sense of self and identity in terms of knowledge of her/himself, family, friends and community
2	Vital Education The development of the senses The mastery of one's character, the blossoming of core human values as well as the intrinsic strengths of the child	Good use and knowledge of the senses Evidence of self-discipline, confidence and fair play Understanding of others' feelings, sympathy, empathy and reflection Evidence of responsibility and respect shown in the daily activities at school
3	Mental Education The methodical refinement of the mental faculties (observation, concentration, memorisation, imagination, reasoning, etc.)	Demonstration of cognitive competence including memory, simple reasoning, language development Acceptable levels (for 3–4-year-olds) of listening, comprehension and speaking skills
4	Physical Education Daily physical activities and the mastery of one's body and its functions	Satisfactory gross and fine motor skills Satisfactory levels of strength and fitness for her/his age

The initial participant interview, arranged after one week of the intervention implementation, was set up to discuss all aspects of the introduction of the programme in the three sample classes and to address any challenges that may have arisen. In particular, participants were requested to provide status reports on the programme implementation and children's early responses to the activities and the new programme. A second interview was conducted three weeks into the implementation period to discuss the status of the intervention implementation following the announcement of the national lockdown and the closure of preschools. Additionally, as noted in Chapter 7, in the run-up to the announcement of the closure, the high rate of absenteeism in the preschools constituted another prohibitive factor for implementation and observation and necessitated the second participant interview.

Data collected from both interviews were categorised into the four broad areas on which the objectives for the classroom activities are based (Refer to Annexure M). In consideration of the circumstances indicated, there were gaps in data collection in particular areas of evaluation. Overall, the practitioners' evaluation of the intervention implementation was favourable. Based on their responses, the programme was working well, and the children were easing into the routine of a new set of activities and a different way of learning. Notably, the programme was transformative for the practitioners, personally and professionally.

The following responses of the practitioners confirm the benefits of the programme:

"...since February, we have grown an inseparable bond"; "They have become so comfortable"; "This programme is also therapy, what we are doing, in a way, is healing ourselves"; "Previously, they were not so cooperative and sometimes defiant, but now that has changed"; "I'm hoping that this behaviour becomes a habit"; "So, as far as implementation is going – super!"; "I find that it's an approach that not only has a theory but practice, as well. It allows the children freedom, and they are part of it"; and "my feedback on the programme is the fact that it's in them, we don't have to do much"

The challenges to the uninterrupted progress of the planned implementation were experienced by all three practitioners in varying degrees, but particularly by practitioner B representing Preschool B. According to her, despite initial difficulties in *“connecting with the children”*, compounded by *“a problem with absenteeism”* and the concern that children would have forgotten the programme activities during their absence, she retained *“a positive outlook on the programme”*. This is noted in:

“We did implement some of the activities, like the prayer during mealtimes, physical development and learning the letters of the alphabet through song. Children are enjoying what we are doing, but I am worried about this coronavirus”.

This response was an encouraging and sincere evaluation of the progress of implementation in her classroom. The practitioner in Preschool A expressed similar concerns regarding absenteeism and possible memory lapses of the children. All participants agreed that upon return to their classes, further time would be required to re-acquaint children to the programme. As noted, the participants' responses were categorised into the following four areas to determine the impact of the implementation for the purpose of evaluation.

8.2.1.1 The development of self-awareness (Psychic Education)

According to Partho (2007), all movements and parts of the being - physical, vital, mental and psychic function in unison and influence one another. The first step in self-awareness is to identify and become closely familiar with the different movements and parts of the being. The beginning of self-mastery manifest in the power of conscious choice is psychic education, the axis of the whole process of integral growth and education (Partho 2007: 28 – 31).

For the IE teacher, therefore, it is not so much a teaching as a transforming, not theorising or moralising but direct touch and communication. The teacher is a guru (guide) whose touch and influence could radically transform the child's nature and consciousness and enable the child to reach his highest and deepest potential (*ibid*: 37-38). Implicit in this is the primacy of the teacher in leading and guiding the child towards the influence of the psychic.

In this context, one of the practitioners captured this succinctly in, “A teacher asked me recently ‘how do I teach a child responsibility’ and I said you don’t teach, you show practically”. The inward reach towards the soul or inner/deep self in this area of development is manifest in the following response by a practitioner:

“...to change our lives which makes me think that you have to come back to yourself. So, even when we get sick, it’s because we don’t come back to our bodies/minds (refers to Randy Crawford’s, ‘I’ve never been to me’ and Michael Jackson’s, ‘The change starts with me’). I feel that music can have that impact/effect, and this is so related to what is happening to us in this [IE] programme – the Universe is showing us that we’re on the right track...”

Breathing is the very basis of the physical life on Earth...the quality of breathing simultaneously determines and expresses the quality of life and consciousness (Partho 2007: 135). Accordingly, breathing exercises are a fundamental part of an IE approach and, as such, feature in the intervention programme. The practitioners indicate significant successes with the implementation of these exercises (Refer also to 8.2.1.1 in Physical Education):

“I use [breathing exercises] before storytime to encourage listening closely and they imagine themselves in the story. After this exercise, I find they listen attentively. I want to find out how they feel with the breathing...I want to interpret their feelings in this regard”

and

“I’m trying to replace the early morning TV watching with the breathing exercise. My class sits down and listens closely to all the surrounding sounds. This is an example of the [IE] programme impact, hoping that the school changes accordingly...”

The responses of the participants, even in the first weeks of the intervention implementation, demonstrate the gradual transformation in them and the children. The deeper awareness of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the holistic development of the children is an affirming indicator of progress, especially towards the objectives of the study. The following

response from a participant sums up the impact, thus far, of the IE intervention implementation:

“I’m so happy that children as young as 3 will be exposed to this kind of programme, they will know so much going forward, all this learning will be instilled in them at such a young age, especially calming themselves in any situation. I think we are going to have super kids, really confident with self-esteem. That is why, I so wish that parents can engage with this”.

8.2.1.2 The development of character (Vital Education)

The practitioners were in agreement about the gradual and noticeable awareness of the demonstration of values as the children were being consciously and explicitly exposed to qualities of appreciation, kindness and gratitude. The response of one participant captures this new learning in her class:

“About the cook and showing gratitude. I hadn’t realised the deeper implications of this. I discovered they were not doing this [saying thank you to the cook] before and then I wrote it down. We talked about gratitude, but I didn’t tell them to do/say anything, and then, on their own, they began saying ‘thank you’ to the cook and saying, ‘I love you’. So, they were guided towards this behaviour through the discussions/conversations, indicating that it is in them already, it is up to us to bring it out/to show it, etc. Following on this, the cook said ‘thank you’ to me. She said she comes even when she is not well because she worries about the children, and it was so good to feel appreciated”.

In addition, another response endorsing the impact of the explicit exposure to values is demonstrated in the comment,

“I taught them values and they love them; they will use the pictures to identify the values and repeat in both English and Zulu”.

According to Dini (2018), the balancing and collaboration of emotional intelligence and cognitive development makes a powerful and beneficial combination. This ‘heart-intelligence’ enables the full potential of the human being. Every child has the potential to achieve this towards becoming an enlightened, supportive, caring, and dynamic human being, thus contributing to the well-being of all and the construction of a bright future (Dini 2018:

2702). Striving toward this balance the IE practitioner finds ways to develop equally both faculties. In this context, the practitioner constantly motivates and encourages the child, beginning with the creation of a nurturing and welcoming environment to which children are naturally drawn, and of which the researcher had personal experience in the two IE schools visited in India. Referencing this account, the participants expressed their goal of achieving the same level of enthusiasm for school in children. The following responses are particularly promising in this regard and indicate the teachers' sincere efforts to apply an IE approach and the affirming feedback from children:

"I started that [welcoming children] and I can see the changes in this child. I began engaging him and now he knows that when he gets to the school gate, he expects me to be there. If it happens at home, he will do the same" and, "I am really loving this new activity of greeting them in the morning and I want to share this. I took their handprints onto a page, coloured them and put them up on the wall together with some motivational/inspirational comments. This has made a difference, they come in so happy to be there – the hands show me their need to be appreciated/wanted/needed – then came this idea that the hands are welcoming everyone. Thus, so many activities we can use to manifest good behaviour",

and

"It's been going good with the morning routine; they are helpful when they come in and they show those who put their bags down how to do this properly. They even come in and start with the picture books".

Participants were equally confident about engaging children in talking about values using the IK Ubuntu values' stories sourced from the community. This was expressed in,

"... [I] created a story wall, using a boy and a girl and use them for the Ubuntu story in our programme. They became engaged in the story and imagine they are in the garden. The stories are so good...",

and

"The [Ubuntu values] stories, some come back with feedback, the questions are so good, I loved them. The children became so engaged in the stories and the questions make them, and us, reflect".

Education, according to Sri Aurobindo, should produce effective individuals in the sense that they realise their responsibilities to society. For him, individual and social aims of education are not contrary to one another (Bora & Sirswal 2011: 7). Thus, the emphasis in an IE approach is on the development of the individual within a collective. Towards this end, most of the IE activities are based on sharing, being together and developing a communal spirit. This is evidenced in a practitioner's response,

"I have found that they enjoy sitting on the floor and eating during mealtimes. This method is very accessible to communal sharing and enjoying the company".

While character formation is, by all accounts, progressing well in the implementation, one practitioner expressed concern about the general lack of contrition amongst children in her experience. She attributes this deficiency to mimicking adult behaviour and is hopeful of change, with an IE approach.

"What we have to work on is the sense of feeling sorry when they do something wrong, apologising is not easy. They have to realise their wrongdoing without fear. Also, the worry is about those that dominate and stifle others. But we can bring change slowly. Because adults are like that, so too are children".

8.2.1.3 The development of the mental faculties (Mental Education)

The first process of an integral mental education is understanding the external world, perceiving the universe through the senses and attempting to comprehend it in the mind (Partho 2007: 87). However, unlike conventional education systems that depend mostly on memorisation; in an integral education approach, the focus is on the development of mental faculties through observation, comparison, concentration, judgement, memory, reasoning, imagination, logic and intuition.

Starting from the natural curiosity and the interests of the children, these tools to acquire knowledge should be perfected. Throughout this process, the emphasis is on the development of faculties rather than on the amount of information to be learned, a process that will naturally lead to learning (Dini 2018:3771). Towards the goal of developing the faculties of awareness,

attentiveness and focus, mindful movements are encouraged. The participating practitioners agreed that the concentration activities in the programme, despite the short period of implementation, were already showing benefit:

“Now when the children get noisy or disruptive, I ask them to do the coordination activity which makes them concentrate on getting it right. Now, they do it all the time”.

In addition, the participants were in unison on the issue of parental participation in children’s preschool experiences, which is fundamental to an IE approach. They maintained that reinforcing learning activities in the home could contribute to beneficial changes in children.

8.2.1.4 The development of the body (Physical Education)

According to Partho (2007), achieving health and harmony, the objective of integral education, necessitates personal knowledge of one’s body. Thus, the child has to learn how the body functions, from personal knowledge which is facilitated by the practitioner. A systematic regimen of exercises, amongst other essentials, is critical to an effective physical education programme (Partho 2007: 129 – 131). In this regard, the participating practitioners described the successful implementation of the physical development programme, which includes breathing exercises to cultivate a healthy strong, agile and enduring body (Dini 2018: 988). One respondent described the positive health impact of physical activity and the collaboration it fostered,

“Yes, for the first time. I put hoops on the ground, and they had to hop inside while I count to 5 and then clap when they reach 5. The spectators participated by clapping. Then, I made them sit cross-legged for breathing and told them to also do this at home”.

In summary, the responses using the participant interview strategy to evaluate the intervention are a clear indication of the beneficial impact of the programme in the initial stages of implementation. Also noted is the conscious transformation of the practitioners in their practice. The contributions to the development of the core areas of an IE approach – psychic, vital, mental and physical – show progress and potential to make

further headway. Consequently, the researcher is confident that if the programme had proceeded to a full term as planned, without the interruption of Covid – 19, the results would have been undoubtedly convincing.

8.2.2 Post-programme observation of sample

As indicated, the implementation period and the post-programme observation were interrupted on account of Covid- 19. As noted, the implementation period was reduced from the scheduled five weeks to three weeks in all three preschools. The post-programme observation, however, was only completed in one of the three preschools (Preschool C) because the other two (Preschools A and B), experienced earlier absenteeism in their classes, especially amongst the sample. Table 8.3 below details the post-programme observation of Practitioner C in Preschool C.

8.2.2.1 Preschool C

TABLE 8. 2: post-programme observation of sample

	Boys	Girls
1	Incremental changes were noted in the child. Although this could be ascribed to his getting accustomed to the school routine, but his interest in the morning prayer and his attempts to learn it, is development. In addition, he is clearly enjoying the activities which are sustaining his interest noted in his persistence to master them. He enjoys his games and never allows himself to fail at them. The positive qualities of gratitude and responsibility are developing and a sense of initiative, especially in making choices.	The child responds well to the activities and engagement with the values which are reinforced by her Sunday school programmes. She seems to understand clearly the discussions around the adoption of prosocial qualities in our daily lives and participates very well in the breathing and calming sessions.
2	Gratifying to note that the child is becoming more involved in the morning prayer. Although he responds well to the calming breathing activities, he seems unable to grasp his imaginary activities. In addition, of concern is his disinterest in outdoor activities, he remains aloof while other children are engaged with nature and physical exercise. His tendency to be	The tendency in this child to be too playful during some activities (prayer and breathing) and not participate as fully as expected. Although this could be typical behaviour in her age group, she can cause distractions among her peers. Noticeable lack of gratitude and appreciation which can develop, given time and more exposure to seeing these qualities in the

	emotional can be resolved with problem-solving strategies which are being tried.	others in her class.
3	The child is increasingly enthusiastic and excited to get to school and interact with his friends. He is definitely more at ease and less fearful than he was, probably the result of developing trust. Noticeable demonstration of respect and gratitude, both in the class and the kitchen. Has a natural enjoyment for outdoor play and nature. Clearly, there have been positive behaviour changes in him as a result of the programme, to the extent that his facial expressions suggest the goal was achieved. In addition, his interest and excellence in sport are positive indicators.	The child participates in the activities and the programme and understands well the discussions on sound values and qualities. She is a keen listener and enthusiastic about the progress of the programme. Her deep awareness of herself and everything that happens around her are good indicators of her firm grasp of the programme which, in time, can yield positive outcomes in overall change. Concern about her controlling ways remains which could be attention-seeking behaviour, but discussions with her in this regard are continuing.

Post-Programme Observation discussion: C

In general, the boys appear to have responded favourably to the IE programme activities, most notably in the morning prayer. In this context, the IE programme intervention included a discussion on the morning prayer to avoid repeating the traditional practice of mere recitation with no engagement (Refer to Annexure L). Thus, the expected outcome was an understanding of the prosocial and benevolent values in the text. In addition, the children's enthusiastic responses to the directed activities and games were encouraging with the potential to contribute to behaviour and attitude change/development. Equally promising was the engagement with affirming and benevolent values which were previously omitted from their programme, and which were a critical inclusion in the ECD IE approach. The close observation fostered by the IE intervention/approach facilitated the ongoing awareness of the practitioner, especially for early detection of barriers to the holistic growth of children and the capacity for redress.

The girls were as responsive as the boys to the new programme and appeared to have participated with equal enthusiasm in the activities. With the notable exception of one child in whom the participating practitioner was confident of a more gradual transformation, the girls were engaging well with

the values and the discussions around them. Clearly, the children (boys and girls) were acclimatising to the programme and the participating practitioner had a deep and involved interest in its furtherance and embeddedness.

8.2.3 Journal entries

As indicated in Chapter 7, the journal entries of the participating practitioners were valuable insights into their thought processes and served as honest reflections of their engagement with the IE programme. Although the entries may not have been as extensive or exhaustive as the researcher would have wanted, sensitive consideration of the circumstances of the participating practitioners in terms of time and capacity was paramount.

Overall, the entries explored the changes in them as teachers, generally, and as becoming reflective practitioners, specifically. They evaluated the merit of the approach and the programme and the differences they saw between the way they were and how they were transforming. This awakening of consciousness, as evidenced in the responses, suggested the potential for further growth. According to Adams (2006), integral education demands highly conscious and developed teachers who have committed themselves to their own ongoing integral growth. Teaching and being with children are their life (Adams 2006: 80). The participating practitioners appeared to be sensitised to the needs of the children in their care and to develop them to their highest potential.

Preschool A

In the main, the response of the ECD practitioner in this entry demonstrates a deeply personal transformation of self-realisation and emotional healing, possibly enabling transparency and honesty in her classroom practice. The interrelatedness between her self-awareness, the anticipated changes to both her teaching and her life and the positive impact of the intervention is an indicator of the affirmative effect of the implementation. In addition, she identifies some of the heightened understandings of children and teaching that she acquired through the process of participating in the study.

“I’m also glad we have journals, they allow you to reflect and encourage self-awareness, it makes me think daily, as I’m doing with and for the class, it’s making me think about myself and the experiences I have had, so I am constantly reflecting... I never had knowledge of IE, little did I know it was going to change my life and the way I teach in class. It has improved my knowledge and skills. I have got a chance to look at myself how I grew up and look at things differently. One could say I have found me in me. The relationship I have with the children in my class has improved a lot and I get to have one on one with them and get to know them better than before I started this programme. This programme has taught me that it’s not always about the pen and paper and that all children are different and have different ways of learning. I have grown a bond with the parents and also the learners who I teach, and it has been a beautiful process to get to know the kids better and the things that goes through their little minds. Letting them be free to talk about anything... Letting them be kids and free to do whatever and also learn at the same time. I have also learnt a lot about myself, this programme has helped me in so many ways. It has made me open up and get to know myself better. It has made me grow mentally, helped me with my emotions and also helped me know more about myself about me and my thinking. ... It has made me look at life differently. ...And I feel, if it hadn’t been for this lockdown, I would have learnt a lot during the implementation of the programme at school and getting to know children better and also helping them”.

Preschool B

In this entry, the ECD practitioner’s transformation tends more towards the professional (teaching style) than the personal, and clearly endorses the programme’s beneficial impact. Her new insights into particular aspects of child development are encouraging in terms of the efficacy of the intervention.

“This programme has allowed me to be more open-minded, it changes the way I thought teaching should be and has shown me that children can learn a lot through play. As a teacher it has allowed my creative side to shine bright and broaden my idea about how play can influence a child’s personality, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and many other different aspects – it develops a child holistically”.

Preschool C

The ECD practitioner in this entry, as in the previous one (Preschool B), acknowledges the opportunities for creativity that the IE approach affords.

Unlike programmes that are conventional or mainstream that mostly adhere to the rigid implementation of the curriculum, an IE approach eschews any form of imposition on the child. Instead, it draws from the child's own nature, needs and inclinations, consistent with the IE principle of 'consulting the mind in its own growth' which suggest that the child must be induced to expand in accordance with its own nature (Partho 2007: 196). Additionally, the response demonstrates that the implementation of an IE approach enables a deeper, personal engagement as opposed to the perfunctory one associated with the conventional approach.

"[The] IE programme allows me to be creative as far as possible. It changes the total dynamics of teaching and learning process for me. In my point of view, it brought freedom to the pedagogy. As a teacher, you will always want something that will be flexible and also allow space for your opinion and your creativity as long as it is age-appropriate and sorts the holistic needs of a child. ...the good thing about it is that it allows you to create your own activities. ... Children's response to the programme was positive because it is very hard to take routine out of the child's mind because that's how they learn and instill information to their minds through repetition and routines. ... if you tell a child to say thank you without giving a reason behind that they show no affection but just a simple thank you for them and nothing more. But after a little talk about reasons why we say thank you, etcetera, they remain after saying thank you to see if aunty smiles to recognise the appreciation gesture. In that way, through IE we are developing reasoning and independent problem-solving. Children enjoy learning when they are given chances to participate effectively, it that way they enjoy learning".

In summary, the journal entries establish the benefits of an IE approach to personal growth and development, teaching and learning and positive change and learning outcomes.

8.2.4 Participant evaluation

The post-implementation evaluation with the participating practitioners is a comprehensive evaluation of the IE approach and the intervention, incorporating the three critical constituent parts for this evaluation: Teachers, Children and Programme. Data collected from the responses to the Participant Evaluation interview schedule (Annexure L), is presented

according to each question posed in each of the three parts identified. The identification of the subfields within the three constituent parts is a combination of the intrinsic elements of IE and the objectives of this study. (Refer to 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6).

8.2.4.1 Practitioners' Post-Implementation Responses on IE Teacher Impact

IE for Teachers

Difference between teaching and facilitating

Essential to IE is a facilitative approach instead of a teaching one that generally presupposes that the teacher is the repository of knowledge to be handed down to the child. In addition, the conventional teaching method views the child as a *tabula rasa* with no existing or innate knowledge. In response to the observable differences in the method of engaging with the children during the IE implementation, participating practitioners distinguished between the 'teaching method' and the 'facilitation method'. Teaching, according to their understanding, is associated with inflexibility and regarded as '*a set to rules*', '*deliverance of the matter*', '*immediate outcomes*' and '*according to the curriculum*'. Facilitation, however, is a learner-centred approach that is conducive to participatory engagements with children. This approach was described as "*learn together in a group*" "*understand the children*", "*express themselves*" "*develop a sense of reasoning*", "*engage more with the children*", "*pre-knowledge and past experiences*" and "*bringing out and focusing on the wisdom of the group*". Thus, participants were inclined towards facilitation for effective and sustainable learning.

Self-Preparation and Awareness

Responses to the changes to which they committed in preparation for the implementation period suggested a heightened awareness of their teaching practice and a willingness and readiness to embrace change as evidenced in, "*awareness of teaching and learning*", "*introduction to different teaching methods*", "*change my pedagogy*" and "*change my attitude towards each*

child". The practitioner's responses indicated that the positive changes augured well for improved learning possibilities.

Building relationships

In consideration of the imperative in IE to work within a supportive and nurturing ecosphere for the advancement of the child's learning and development, practitioners are required to initiate and maintain stable and affirming relationships. The responses confirm the establishment of greater parental and family participation through the efforts of the practitioners. The insights into people's attitudes and behaviour and the closer relationships with children were highlighted in this section.

Transformation/Change of Self

Establishing personal changes in the participating practitioners since exposure to the IE programme is crucial to understanding the depth of engagement. Transformation of self can only occur when practitioners have demonstrated meaningful involvement with the IE philosophy, principles and practices. In this regard, responses include innovative and transformative practices, demonstrated in, *"teaching and learning in fun and different ways"* and *"acceptance of certain situations and working around them for a better change"*.

Teacher and Friend

Respondents in this category confirmed the need and importance to be both a friend and teacher to the child while acknowledging the necessity of boundaries. Relationships based on openness and closeness with the child, create the opportunity for inhibited counsel and support from the teacher. According to Partho (2007), a friendly teacher may be more effective and impactful than the most learned or competent one (Partho 2007:188).

In this regard, responses include, *"makes things easier for everyone"*, *"learners open up to you"*, *"you are able to help them"* and *"keep close bonds"*.

In summary, the core characteristics of an IE teacher are facilitation, self-preparation, relationship building, the transformation of self and being a friend to the child. The responses of the participants demonstrate their collective affirmation of these qualities in the implementation of the programme to achieve the goals of an ECD IE approach.

8.2.4.2. Practitioners' Post-Implementation Responses on IE Children Impact

IE for Children

Behaviour and Attitude changes

Although respondents recorded few observable changes, in consideration of the short period of implementation, there were promising indications of small developments. There was a noticeable demonstration for the first time – *“they never did or even known to be important”* - of values such as responsibility, appreciation and gratitude. In addition, the exercises on concentration appear to be engaging the children to the extent that when they were omitted the children were *“all over the classroom and distracted”*.

Changing from within

The understanding of ‘changing from within’ is based on a deeper consciousness with respect to behaviour and attitude change in ways that are not superficial or learnt by rote but are the result of reflection and introspection. Responses indicated minor changes in children including being *“comfortable to express their feelings”* and able to *“play freely with others”*. In addition, the limitations of the mainstream or conventional approach were raised in relation to the development of spiritual well-being and independent thinking through the co-creative participation of the “mind, body, heart, surroundings and love for nature” that are encouraged with an IE approach.

Holistic development

While the mainstream or conventional (NCF) approach is associated with the holistic development modality, its implementation as noted elsewhere is

problematic (inadequate content, guidance and training). This was highlighted in the responses which pointed to its singular focus on the development of “*intellectual capabilities*” and excluding “*holistic growth*” which develops “*all aspects of the person*”. This is illustrated in further responses,

“NCF mostly deals with writing” in contrast to IE which “deals mostly with the child directly, observing the child on its every move on a daily basis”, “engage[s] with children in the development of the teaching and learning process”, “encourages children to be problem solvers in all kinds, through nature or anything that is out of the ordinary”.

Ubuntu and Cultural identity

Intrinsic to an IE approach is cultural affirmation and identity which the study proposes through the explicit inclusion of IK Ubuntu values in the stories, rhymes and songs incorporated into the intervention programme. Respondents were unambiguous about their beneficial impact, evidenced in,

“...kids understand their culture and identity”, “they understand their values in life”, “they used to western stories and rhymes”, “telling stories in isiZulu caught their attention” and “referring to the stories and lesson behind each story”.

Character building and self-awareness

The participating practitioners interrogated ways in which character building and self-awareness were realisable using an IE approach. They understood self-awareness as, “*knowing your values, personality, needs, habits, emotions, strengths, weakness*” all of which relate to character formation. Respondents maintained that an “*IE approach is the right tool*” to engage children in prosocial and benevolent behaviour as noted in, “*develop responsibility*”, “*develop children as critical thinkers*”, “*people who see others as humans that they share space with*”, “*develop reasoning in children and self-introspection*” and “*trim certain behaviours because they are aware of the consequences beforehand*”. Conversely, the NCF “*does not talk about*

children developing a sense of humanity, sense of seeing others as humans before judgement and sharing love with animals, nature and people”.

In summary, the impact on the children of the programme implementation was determined by an evaluation of the key indicators broadly aligned to the study objectives. These were behaviour and attitude changes, changing from within, holistic development, cultural affirmation and character building and self-awareness. Overall, the responses of the participants indicated slight but noteworthy changes and positive reception to the programme, thus, suggesting further favourable outcomes.

8.2.4.3 Practitioners’ Post-Implementation Responses on IE Programme Impact

IE Programme

Differences/Similarities between IE and Mainstream (NCF)

Respondents addressed the issue of the comparison between the NCF and the IE approaches based on the implementation of the intervention. In general, they confirmed that the IE approach was largely inadequate in developing children’s social and emotional skills with its focus on academic development. In this regard, responses highlighted the uniform pace of learning in the mainstream system, while an IE approach facilitates the acquisition of *“social and life skills even if they don’t make academic gains”*. Additionally, specific programme and approach differences between mainstream and IE were indicated, some of which were that the physical development component in mainstream comprised practical physical training only while IE included self-realisation and inner wellness. Other IE benefits were *“connection with nature and gratitude towards nature”* and *“showing gratitude towards everyone”*.

Flexibility to adapt

Responses to the IE programme’s flexibility to adapt to children’s needs and natures referenced the rigidity of the NCF in not allowing *“teachers and*

learners to be flexible and work according to each and every child's uniqueness". Conversely, the IE programme was flexible and adaptable allowing "children to be themselves before any teaching and learning process even begins". In addition, the IE approach is "easy for them to adapt because the approach is to facilitate not to be fed with information".

Classroom impact

Respondents evaluated the impact of the IE programme based on its implementation and their own views. Generally, they highlighted the benefits and the specificities of the programme that were working in the best interests of the child, as demonstrated in, *"mastery of one's body and its functions", "mastery of one's character", "development of the ethical and aesthetic sense" and "values...change the atmosphere in the class or even the workplace".*

Implementation challenges/strengths

Overall, the participating practitioners identified some of the challenges around the reorganisation of the existing routine and the children's ability to adapt, which is a universal concern with systemic change. In addition, particular aspects of the programme, like the breathing exercises and evaluation within, were challenging to apply on account of not *"understanding the reason behind it"*. The strengths highlighted in the implementation included, *"allowing them to be themselves", "praising them for each individual's positive behaviour" and "connecting with nature and exploring their strengths and abilities"*.

Opportunities for change

The respondents were unequivocal on the potential and positive benefits of the IE programme and identified particular changes that it was likely to accomplish based on their training and experiences in the implementation period. Some of these responses with regard to changes in children were,

“... differentiate between wrong”, “have a background of who they are...at an early stage”, “allow children to approach their feelings”, “to be positive decision-makers and independent adults” and “have Ubuntu towards one another”.

The aspects evaluated in the IE Programme were contrasting the IE and mainstream approaches, flexibility to adapt, classroom impact, challenges and strengths and opportunities for change. In total, the responses indicated the greater benefits to applying an IE approach, its flexibility to accommodate various aspects of child development and teacher freedoms and the possibilities to effect positive change. The challenges identified were largely around difficulties with replacing existing programmes and did not detract from the strengths and advantages of an IE approach.

Overall, the participant interviews post-implementation of the intervention programme constituted a significant part of the evaluation process based on qualitative data collection methods. As a comprehensive evaluation instrument (Refer to Annexure K), comprising the three critical aspects of teacher, child and programme, the emergent data furnished thorough information into the implementation process. The evaluation findings in all three aspects indicate favourable responses to the programme and incremental progress on its implementation. The affirmative cross-sectoral impact (teacher, child and learning programme) of the intervention augurs well for the realisation of the objectives of this study. Further, it looks forward to the wider implementation of an ECD IE programme with IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation towards the development of a new generation of children for a truly participatory democracy in South Africa.

8.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

As indicated in Chapter 4 (Refer to 4.2), this study used a mixed methods research design with a dominant qualitative method. The use of the quantitative method was largely confirmatory and corroboratory. In this regard, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), confirm that mixed methods are used to assess the credibility of inferences obtained from one approach or strand.

Hence, there are generally exploratory and explanatory or confirmatory questions (Teddle and Tashakkori 2009: 287), as noted in the evaluation questionnaire (Refer to Annexure K).

This pre-and post-test implementation evaluation of the IE intervention programme took the form of a questionnaire based on broad developmental aspects for children's holistic development using an IE approach (Refer to Table 8.7, Annexure K). The evaluation comprised a comprehensive schedule of a range of abilities or aspects for all-round development and flowering of children, without privileging the cognitive development (as in conventional or mainstream models). Participating practitioners evaluated each of the six (3 boys and 3 girls) children in the class sample before (01/03/2020) and the after (18/03/2020) the implementation of the intervention. Each aspect carried a numerical value of between 1 and 5, with 1 representing the lowest score and 5, the highest.

The results of this evaluation are presented in numerical quantities (Refer to Table 8.8) and depicted collectively on charts (Refer to Figures 8.1 & 8.2). Both the presentations are separated according to preschool (A, B & C) and gender (boys & girls). In the presentation of the numerical scores (Table 8.8) of the pre- and post-test evaluation, the pre-test scores are in white, and the post-test ones are shaded in grey. The discussion of the results follows.

Table 8. 3: Developmental aspects of evaluation questionnaire (Refer to Annexure K)

No	Developmental Aspects
1	Shows satisfactory gross and fine motor skills
2	Possesses good use and knowledge of the senses – hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, seeing and intuition
3	Has satisfactory levels of strength and fitness for her/his age
4	Evidence of self-discipline, confidence, and fair play (in outdoor/indoor games and activities)
5	Child is emotionally balanced, shows calmness, tolerance, patience, and honesty
6	Evidence of an understanding of others' feelings, sympathy, empathy and reflection
7	Demonstrates cognitive competence including memory, simple reasoning, language development
8	Acceptable levels (for 3–4-year-olds) of listening, comprehension and speaking skills
9	Connects with the world of nature
10	Sense of self and identity in terms of knowledge of her/himself, family, friends, and community
11	Evidence of responsibility and respect shown in the daily activities at school

TABLE 8. 4: Composite scores of pre-and post-test implementation evaluation questionnaire

Pre- and Post-Test Implementation Scores																									
Preschool	Aspect*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Aggregate												
Boys																									
A	1	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	2	5	3	5	2	5	2	5	2	5	26	49
	2	3	4	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	29	42
	3	3	4	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	24	43
																							79	134	
B	1	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	35	43
	2	4	5	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	40	46
	3	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	41	48
																							116	137	
C	1	3	4	3	4	3	5	2	4	3	5	3	4	3	5	3	5	2	4	3	4	3	5	31	49
	2	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	4	4	2	3	3	5	2	5	3	4	30	44
	3	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	5	3	5	2	5	3	4	28	46
																							89	139	
Girls																									
A	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	54	55
	2	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	3	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	41	52
	3	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	24	43
																							119	150	
B	1	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	40	51
	2	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	39	43
	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	36	44
																							115	138	
C	1	3	4	3	4	3	5	2	4	3	4	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	31	44
	2	3	4	3	5	3	5	2	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	31	44
	3	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	34	41
																							96	129	
* Refer to Developmental Aspects 1 – 11, Table 8.7																									

* Refer to Developmental Aspects 1 – 11, Table 8.7

FIGURE 8. 1: Chart depicting pre- and post-test implementation evaluation scores of the boys' sample

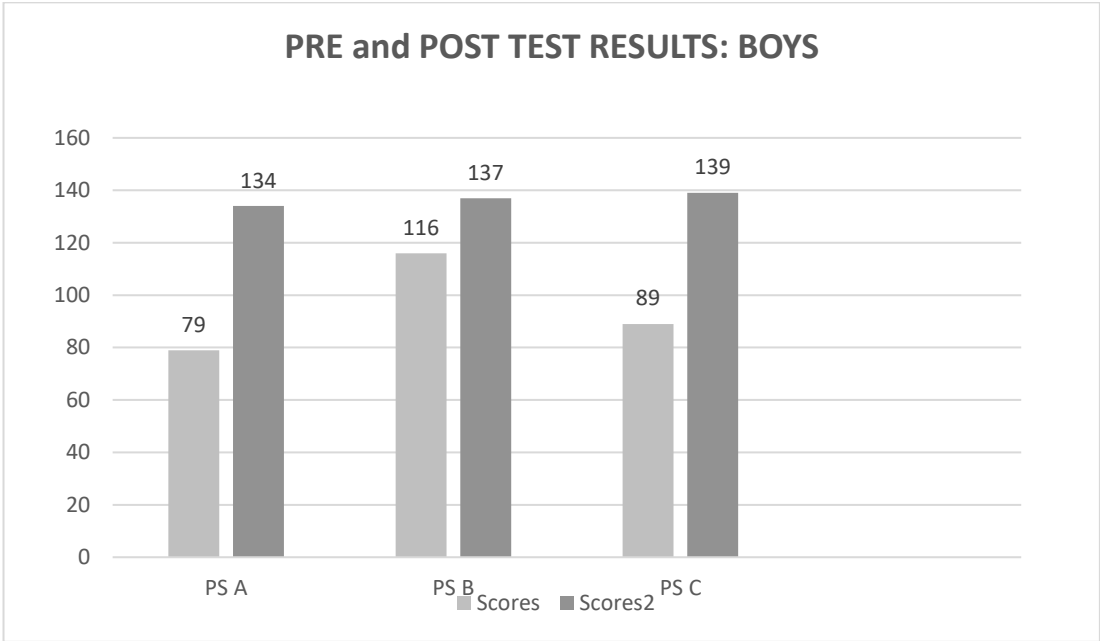
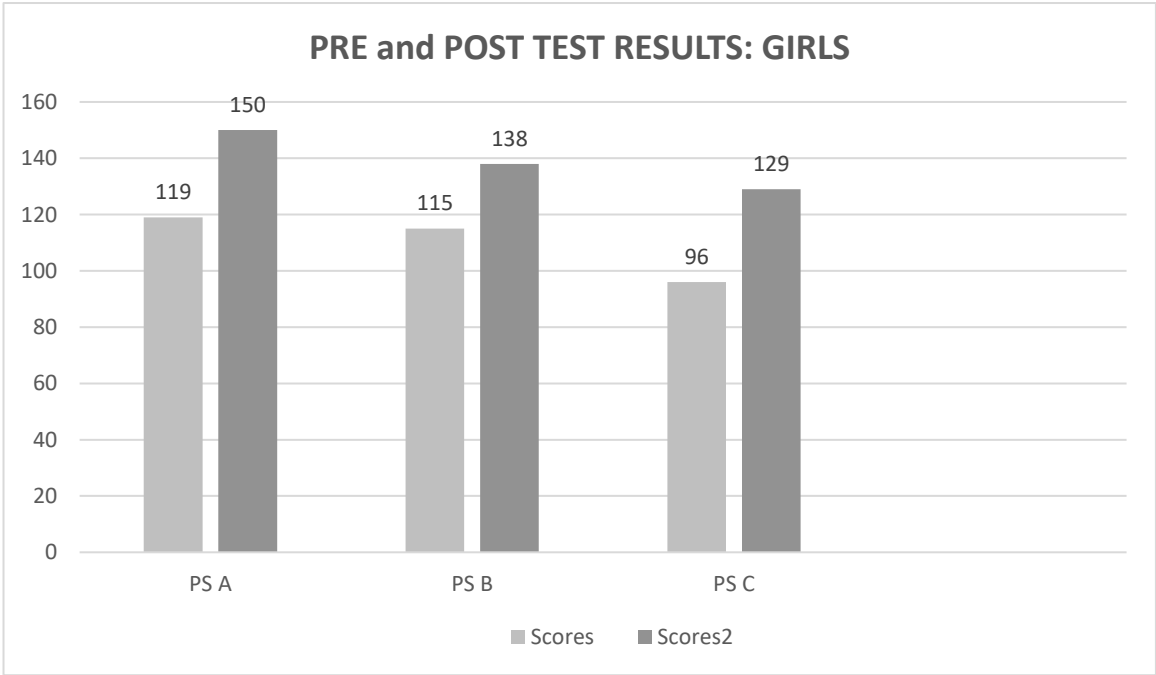


FIGURE 8. 2: Chart depicting pre- and post-test implementation evaluation scores of the girls' sample



8.3.1 Quantitative evaluation discussion

Preschool A

Boys

Generally, the scores improve in the post-test showing significant increases in the fields of development of the senses; self-discipline; empathy; cognition; literacy; connection with nature; identity and responsibility. Although possibly attributable to closer and focused observation, the evidence of observable and progressive changes in the children in the aspects of values and social skills is particularly noteworthy considering the study's objectives.

Girls

The scores are generally favourable with some increases. The majority unchanged scores were from one of the samples scoring a full five (5) pre- and post-tests in ten of the aspects, showing great capability, especially as a positive influence on peers. Another child demonstrated significant increases (two points) in almost all of the aspects with the exception of self-discipline. On the whole, the increases in scores are a firm indication of the good impact of the intervention.

Preschool B

Boys

Minor increases in scores are noted in some of the fields with no changes recorded in the development of physical fitness, emotional balance, empathy, cognition, connection with nature, identity and responsibility. The limited outcomes in Preschool B could be ascribed to the practitioner's initial slow start in initiating the programme and consequently the shorter observation and evaluation periods. Notwithstanding these findings, the practitioner has elsewhere indicated positive and affirming responses to the programme.

Girls

The scores appear to be similar to those of the boys in this sample, showing no significant improvement, with many remaining unaltered, though not

particularly poor (3 (three) and upward). As explained above, a slow start in Preschool B, but favourable accounts of implementation.

Preschool C Boys

The scores here, in the main, have increased marginally with the exception of one child in two areas, self-discipline and cognition. In consideration of the fundamental principle of the IE programme accommodating the individuality of the ability and pace of each child, the potential for further development is assured. The significant increases in the development of the aspects of physical fitness, self-discipline, emotional balance, empathy, cognition, literacy, connection with nature, identity and responsibility are promising indicators of the positive impact of the holistic IE programme.

Girls

The scores show overall increases, with the majority unchanged ones occurring in the same sample and, therefore, would need more attention for development in the weaker areas of self-discipline, empathy, literacy, identity and responsibility. The noteworthy markers showing significant improvement are in the development of the senses, physical fitness, self-discipline and connection with nature. These aspects are closely aligned to the IE programme and are, therefore, positive indicators.

As a whole, there are no noteworthy differences in scores between the abilities of boys and girls in the selected aspects, with the exception of the scores emerging from Preschool A. The scores of the girls in both the pre- and post-tests are higher than those of the boys (Refer to Figures 8.1 and 8.2). In consideration that this discrepancy surfaced in the quantitative results only and is not prevalent in the scores of the other preschools (B & C) in the sample, it is, therefore, not impactful on the overall results and the primary objective of the evaluation.

Finally, the findings of the evaluation questionnaire confirm and corroborate the findings of the qualitative methods which comprised the participant

interviews, observations, journal entries and participant evaluations. The implementation of the IE intervention programme is beneficial and has meaningfully impacted the children as evidenced in the significant improvements in the scores of the selected developmental aspects for a holistic approach.

8.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter addressed the evaluation of the intervention implementation, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative data. It was noted that the implementation phase was negatively impacted by Covid – 19 and, consequently, could not be completed by the practitioners in the classroom. Despite this setback, the evaluation of the implementation with the participating practitioners' commitment to the study and its objectives was undertaken using data from the participant interviews, observations, journal entries, post-implementation practitioner evaluations and pre-and post-test evaluations. The responses from the qualitative methods indicate the conscious transformation of the practitioners in their practice and the children's positive reception to the programme and its beneficial impact in the initial stages of implementation. The findings of the evaluation questionnaire confirmed the favourable findings of the positive impact that emerged from the qualitative data. Thus, the evaluation phase with a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies, as described in this chapter, provided the researcher with rich data sets including both narrative and numerical data to determine the efficacy of the intervention.

CHAPTER 9: LEARNINGS FROM THE INDIAN CONTEXT

CASE STUDY OF AURO NAVAKRITI PRESCHOOL

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings based on data collected from the case study in India. According to Yin (1994), case studies are, generally, the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the researcher has little control over events and when this focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin 1994 cited in Burton 2000: 4), as is the case in this context. Through the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) in Pondicherry, India, two schools in Delhi, India (Auro Navakriti Preschool and the Mirambika Free Progress School), were selected as representatives of the integral education philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s translation of this philosophy into its practical application as an alternate and holistic approach to education. The selection of the preschool (Auro Navakriti) was its correlation with the age cohort of 3 – 4-year-old children relevant to this study. Notwithstanding that Mirambika Free Progress School starts with children from the age of 4, the school was included in the sample to gain further insights into the IE programme and its application and, in addition, as a source of validation of data collected from the primary sample (Auro Navakriti). The philosophical foundations for both programmes are parallel, drawing on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and adhering to the interpretations of his work by the Mother. The data was collated through primary and secondary sources: interviews, observations, literature and documentation review

To understand the case study in context, an outline of the background to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s philosophy and goals in India are presented and their application to the integral education paradigm.

9.2 BACKGROUND

9.2.1 Introduction

As argued in Chapter 1, the urgency for social change in democratic South Africa seems to indicate an education for the development of a new generation of socially responsible, caring and compassionate children invested in the well-being of themselves and the society. The current education focuses almost exclusively on the head, while an integral and unitive education addresses the head, heart, body and spirit – thus, an education for completeness of being (Partho 2007: 19), and for the development and evolution of the self within the collective. IE is the conception and innovation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in India where the IE schools are mostly located and was, therefore, selected as the location of learnings for this study. In addition, India shares with South Africa the yoke of colonialism and the remnants of that control, most notably manifest in the national education systems. In this regard, Singh (2016) suggests that a few Indian leaders and thinkers, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi advanced their models of education with varied measures of success or failure for a range of reasons. The failure to make a revolutionary impact, however, evidenced by their exclusion from the mainstream education system could be ascribed to the lack of political will (Singh 2016: 44-45). It seems appropriate, therefore, that South Africa being similarly placed with an outmoded and inappropriate education system could take advantage of the Indian alternate education approach of IE, based on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

9.2.2 Education for the Future

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Sri Aurobindo and his spiritual partner the Mother offered a visionary and holistic approach to the lived experience and consequently founded the integral yoga tradition. This approach focuses on a progressive advancement of self-realisation, recognizing the individual nature, multi-dimensionality, and interrelatedness of human beings. In aligning these ideals with teaching and learning, they

proposed innovative guidelines toward the formulation of a unique branch of whole-person-centred progressive education, placing great emphasis on individual, global, and spiritual worldviews that had been and remain largely absent in Western education (Zulaski 2017: 20). This perspicacity and prescience seem to steer humanity in the direction of a new way of being on earth by turning to one's inner sources of knowledge and wisdom towards oneness and harmony and away from division and fragmentation. According to Partho (2007), we are witnessing in almost every sphere of human activity, the birth of a new world, driven by powerful evolutionary forces and leading to mankind determining in profound ways what shall exist on this planet in the generations to come. As such, the way the youth are educated today will determine the way life will be lived in the years to come because education moulds most significantly people's beliefs, attitudes and culture. The creation of a new future, therefore, necessitates the creation of a new consciousness in the youth. This means that the education for the future will have to be a *consciousness education*, an education nurturing the growth of consciousness in all aspects and parts of being (Partho 2007: 1-2). Underscoring the importance of such an education especially in current times of global uncertainty and confusion, Ranade (2006), argues that education is the key to overcoming the world crisis because it offers the possibility of preparing the new generation that will lead the world. Thus, he cautions that if the current generation is raised in an environment of narrowness, conflict, and confusion, these qualities absorbed in their hearts and minds will be the contribution they take into the world. Consequently, the responsibility of teachers and parents is safeguarding the fate and the future of humanity and the world (Ranade 2006: 1-2).

Equally, O'Sullivan (2008), addressing the imperative for transformative learning in the 21st Century based on the possibility of the imminent destruction of the carrying capacities of Earth, exhorts societies to forge a new creative presence of human–Earth relationship by developing a new vision that sees the human species cooperatively embedded in the “web of

life". In addition to the deep-order ecological problems, is the presence of unimaginable violence throughout the world. Referencing Freire's model of a "critically conscious and visionary education" in the Pedagogy of Hope, (1992), O'Sullivan views transformative learning as involving a massive change in consciousness that could bring about a new order of social justice and ecological balance (O'Sullivan 2008: 27-30).

Bolstering the argument about the precarious condition of the Earth and life on it, the principal of Auro Navakriti Preschool made the following assertions and the value of IE in this context:

IE is basically the transcendence of the mind for which the whole planet and the universe are ready. At present, we cannot breathe the air on earth, even the air is not finding the space to come about and fill my life (At the time of this research, air pollution levels in Delhi had soared to hazardous levels with the air quality index reading for pollution particles in the air reaching nine times the recommended WHO level. The local government declared a public health emergency, schools were shut down and road and air traffic severely restricted). We have overindulged ourselves to the 'thingness' of life, be it physical, mental or emotional and hitting some kind of a ceiling everywhere. Was life meant for so much activity? The egoic process, the desire to control, modulate, direct, formulate, solve, has an underlying aspiration for coming together, but we are not silent enough to see that nor do we return to ourselves. Instead, we seek more and more, ideas, solutions inventions, comforts or relationships. IE is, therefore, an opportunity to come to that surrender, the guidance is there in our roots, it is so simple, but we have lost the way.

In the present day, however, the cautionary 'safeguarding the fate and the future of humanity and the world', assumes belated and fearful proportions in the wake of the COVID-19 global chaos. In an analysis of future trends in a post-Covid pandemic society, Sanei and Abedian (2020), argue that the pandemic has demonstrated the tension between two concurrent trends and two sets of forces at odds with each other. One which is ultimately disintegrative and thus negative is a long-running human system that operates within a framework of fear of the unknown, segregation of the other, material accumulation for its own sake, and the relentless pursuit of individualism at the cost of the greater community. The other, which is ultimately integrative and thus positive, is the rapidly developing

technologies, ideas, movements and discourses that aim to take humanity to its next level of development and societal integration, aligned to fairness, elimination of prejudice, and the creation of sustainable and equitable socio-economic systems.

Accordingly, COVID-19 has afforded individuals acute insight into the needs of the collective human society necessitating a re-thinking, re-imagining and reinventing of their inner balance to do better both as individuals and for humanity as a whole (Sanei & Abedian 2020: 14 - 15). This twenty-first-century insight, and a plethora more encapsulating the same spirit, most notably in popular culture in the present, finds resonance in Sri Aurobindo's early twentieth century holistic approach to life as evidenced in "self-realisation, recognizing the individual nature, multi-dimensionality, and interrelatedness of human beings" (Zulaski 2017: 20). Furthermore, increasingly because of COVID-19 consciousness, phrases such as "blends of heart and mind", "individual improvement for collective well-being", "human community" and "collective humanity" appear in the context of the preservation of societies and the future of humanity (Sanei & Abedian 2020: 16). It seems cogent, therefore, that education for the present and future is IE, described by Partho (2007) as an education nurturing the growth of consciousness in all aspects and parts of being (Partho 2007: 1-2).

9.2.3 The evolution of IE

As elucidated in Chapter 2 (Refer to 2.3.2.1), Aurobindo (1872-1950) was in his lifetime, amongst others, a spiritual figure and a politician who was imprisoned for his political activism against British rule in India. While in prison he went through a spiritual transformation that redirected his political activism towards advancing a conscious transformation of all humankind. As such, he viewed himself as a spiritual revolutionary advocating a new politics of consciousness based on humankind's unique evolution as a species and the concomitant collective custody of future evolution (White 2007: 122).

In understanding the advancement of Sri Aurobindo's work towards the achievement of this goal, the director of the education programmes at the Sri Aurobindo Society, SK, explained the evolution of IE from its conception to its time-honoured materialisation. Included in the account is an understanding of a higher consciousness and the IE path towards achieving this state for harmonious co-existence. The following is a summarised version:

There are three organisations [Sri Aurobindo Ashram (a spiritual community located in Pondicherry, India and founded by Sri Aurobindo); Sri Aurobindo Society (started by the Mother in 1960 to advance the philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo); Auroville (an "experimental" township in southern India dedicated to human unity and based on the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother)] set up by the Mother in order to propagate a new way of life based on a higher consciousness which a person has the capacity to develop and find expressions in life. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo were aiming at the finding and founding of this dynamic way of life, based on the inspiration that comes from within.

That happened in three successive stages and all three are continuing. The first one happened in a closed community which they called Sri Aurobindo Ashram where certain principles needed to be established and discovered in a certain sense, much like a scientist would do in a scientific laboratory. As such, a pilot study had to be conducted in a closed environment until the principles were discovered. Once they had been discovered, the work was to find application for them to become practically available to the people at large.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram which was founded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was the laboratory in which the experiment of transforming a human consciousness into higher consciousness was attempted. When the experiment reached a certain stage, after the principles had been discovered, necessary conditions had to be created where it could be attempted at the practical level to a common man's life. For this stage, another organisation to carry this experiment to the outside world had to be set up and, therefore, the Sri Aurobindo Society in Pondicherry was created with a specific aim of spreading the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for a life based on a higher consciousness. Converting this science into technology was given to the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) to find the application of these principles which had been discovered. These are the insights of human psychology into every possible human field of endeavour, be it education, management, health, village development,

finding their application and basing these fields on a different level was essential to help the life to become something better than what it is today.

When SAS started, it created centres all over India and when it reached a certain stage the Mother felt that the time had come to make the reach international. As SAS was created for people in India, she wanted to create something to reach out to people outside of India too. For that, rather than creating centres abroad, she had this idea of creating an international township that would find representation from various countries and that is how Auroville was conceived. When it was founded a handful of soil was brought from 24 countries as a symbolic depiction that every element of humanity is represented. She created an objective for Auroville, which was to find a life based on inner unity and outer diversity. This means that the diversity that manifests in the normal world usually causes disagreement and conflict. In a way, that looks at a higher consciousness. However, diversity becomes harmonious when divergent ideas are put together to create an idea, which is much better than the idea created individually. This is possible when the source of thoughts and feelings is one common to everybody and of an inspirational nature. Conversely, if you draw from a common source of ignorance and confusion with too many ideas and emotions fighting with each other, our work will inevitably be in disharmony with yours. If there is a possibility of creating a community life in which everybody draws inspiration from the same source, which is a higher consciousness and it can express itself so diversely that the diversity becomes a harmonious play manifesting in an immediate abundance and richness of life which was unheard of, unthought of and which was never possible in the previous world. This is the reversal which they were attempting and of which Auroville is an experiment to draw in the international communities' participation.

[Extending this philosophy into the realm of education], the two key components of integral education are: helping the child connect with the higher source of inspiration which remains with him and the second one is helping the child develop his capabilities in his body, emotions and mind while aligned with his higher source of inspiration. In reality, they are always aligned with that higher consciousness, which is within and innate, and aligning this outer personality with the higher source of inspiration is what we call integral education. It is an education that helps the child connect with that deeper source and also integrate the various parts of his being under the guidance of the teacher. In a sense, there are no absent features in integral education, because the teacher is already within, and we are already under its influence when we are born to the extent that

natural development comes from a kind of inbuilt knowledge which is not only there in human beings at the source but is there in the earliest stages of evolution.

At a highly evolved stage, the person becomes so integrated and becomes one person with a full command of the mind who can think dynamic thoughts creatively at every moment of this life. He already has a well-developed personality, which can express emotions in an unlimited and instinctive way. When he shows his love, it is unlimited in nature, so too when he gets into work, it gets expressed in the body and more dynamic than what is usually available. That kind of person is what we would like to call an integrated personality and integral education wants to achieve such integrated personalities who can contribute dynamically to a completely different way of life founded and connected with a unity which is deep within but expressing itself as diversely and spiritually as possible. This is the rationale of initiating the work of which integral education is one part but a very fundamental and root part because if it is introduced to children, it is most accessible and sustainable. The child must grow in the most natural and beautiful way surrounded by people who are capable of drawing out their innate knowledge.

In this process, IE is not a system but a framework that accommodates all other systems [alternate and traditional/conventional] needed for the child's growth from the inside out and which is only possible if one retains that source of inspiration.

Thus, IE is the process of interlinking the child's innate higher consciousness, his core or centre, with the capabilities in his body (physical), emotions (vital) and mind (mental) and, as indicated, to effect this in the early years for sustainability. The transformation resulting from this approach is expressed in, "a full command of the mind", "thinking dynamic thoughts creatively", "a well-developed personality", "expressing emotions in an unlimited and instinctive way", "an integrated personality", "a completely different way of life", "founded and connected with a unity" and "diversely and spiritually". As a whole, these results reflect the literal flowering of the child towards an outpouring of creative dynamism as an individual and as a constituent member of a collective. As such, they contribute to reinforcing the study's proposal that an integral education transformative preschool programme should be applied for the establishment of a new generation of balanced,

compassionate, caring, active citizens to contribute to participatory democracy in South Africa.

9.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS AND SAMPLE

9.3.1 Introduction

The researcher utilised in Delhi, India, the snowball or chain referral sampling facilitated by the Auro Navakriti Preschool, one of the Sri Aurobindo Society schools. Data was collected using interviews with key informants (The Director of Education Programmes at Sri Aurobindo Society (SK); the Principal of The Auro Navakriti Preschool (NB)) and focus groups (Staff of the Auro Navakriti Preschool; Community IE Teachers; Parents, Grandparents and Community members; Principal and Staff of the Mirambika Free Progress School) (Refer to Annexures E, F, H) The research aims, a summary of the study and the interview schedule were emailed to all potential respondents, with the assistance of the principal and staff of the Auro Navakriti School. In addition, the researcher spent time in the two IE schools (Auro Navakriti Preschool and Mirambika Free Progress School) as an observer.

Although the two IE schools were samples, the data collection was not equally distributed. Auro Navakriti Preschool was the primary site, its principal and staff, community IE teachers, and its parents, grandparents and community members were interviewed, while observations and interviews of the principal and staff, arising from the observations took place in Mirambika Free Progress School. The data from Auro Navakriti Preschool was adequate to represent the range of perspectives on IE, given that both schools function on the same principles of IE. Thus, this case study focuses on the collection and analysis of data from the Auro Navakriti Preschool and its community. The data collected from Mirambika Free Progress School (Principal and staff and researcher's observation) mainly confirmed and validated the responses of the Auro Navakriti Preschool IE staff and community teachers with further elucidations.

9.3.2 Auro Navakriti Preschool

The school which was established in 2005 is housed, together with the Sri Aurobindo Public Library and the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Communication, in the Delhi branch of the Sri Aurobindo Society founded in 1976 and located at Adhchini on the Shaheed Jeet Singh Marg, New Delhi, India. The preschool admits children in the age group between 1 and 4 years old. It has a staff of 15 teachers, 1 Principal, 3 senior teachers and 11 other staff members. The enrolment numbers fluctuate annually/per term with each class/group comprising up to 20 children, attended to by three teachers and one teacher assistant (*didi*).

The Auro Navakriti Preschool's vision, philosophy, aim and objectives are based on the teachings and principles of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. As such, the understanding and application of early childhood theory are bolstered by integral education. The teaching staff are trained in IE and are guided by senior teachers who have long-term experience in the practice of this approach.

The basic aim of the school is to help children grow at their natural pace, according to their inner temperament and capacities and to impart the necessary training to their physical, vital and mental domains to achieve overall integral growth. To this end, the child is assisted to become more self-aware by focusing on the growth of the child's own understanding. The teachers facilitate the child's insight into her feelings and sensations with the requisite space to express these freely. Teachers learn to listen to each child which, in turn, teaches the child to listen to her peers. The awakening of the child's innate curiosity, openness and harmony is assisted by the sensitivity to nature and socialisation to help the child find her own voice for peace and harmony and move towards conscious and enlightened reasoning and choices. Auro Navakriti Preschool views the child as an evolving soul, a being who has come to fulfil a role on earth given by the Divine. In this regard, the school's ethos and programme, although deeply rooted in Indian spirituality, are not bound by any religious doctrine.

9.4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collective findings in this case study indicate that the application of an IE approach through the simultaneous and holistic development of the physical, vital and mental domains is effective in contributing to the process of developing children's self-awareness, building character and fostering a deep sense of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life.

Data was collected through two sets of focus groups: i) IE teachers (Auro Navakriti Staff and Community IE teachers) and ii) parent and community participants. Three key informants were interviewed individually. Questions were mainly open ended to facilitate free and open discussions and allow an easy flow of the discussion. In total, the respondents numbered forty-five (46), forty-three (43) in the focus groups and three (3) key informants. The data incorporates a description of the researcher's observations of the on-site engagement between the teacher and the children in a classroom context.

9.4.1 Staff and community IE teachers

9.4.1.1 Introduction

The data collected from the IE teachers derive from three focus group interviews, based on the interview schedule (Annexure E) the Auro Navakriti Senior Staff, the school's general staff and the Community IE teachers (a constituent part of the school community). The responses from the groups were collapsed to form a consolidated data set. In addition, some relevant responses of the principal of the Auro Navakriti Preschool, one of two key informants from Delhi, India, have been included in this section.

Similar to the parent and community participant interviews, these IE teacher sessions began with presentations of the contextual background of preschool education pre-and post-democracy in South Africa followed by a summary of the study and its objectives.

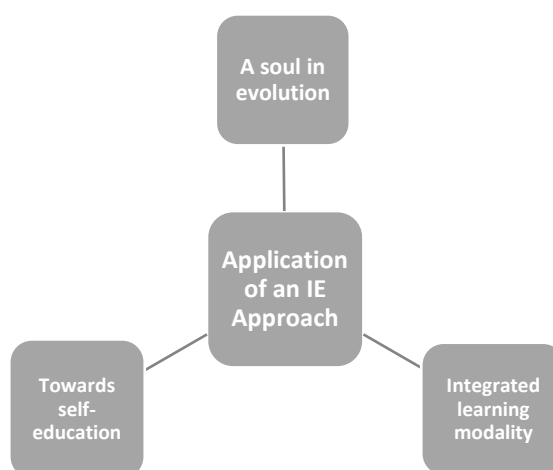
The data collected from these interviews is categorised and presented according to relevant aspects that address the specificities of teaching predicated on an IE approach. Thus, the three broad categories include the

application of IE, the readiness of an IE teacher and the intrinsic assimilation of IK and values in IE.

9.4.1.2 Application of an IE Approach

In this category the dominant themes that appeared from the data centred around the three basic elements of an IE approach, (i) an understanding and acknowledgement of an emergent soul, (ii) a constant movement towards self-education to promote independence and individual well-being and, (iii) an integrated and multipronged learning model that promotes whole child development. Collectively, they elucidate the actual application of an IE approach to teaching and learning.

FIGURE 9. 1: Representation of the category and the three themes are drawn from the data set of the IE teachers



9.4.1.2.1 A soul in evolution

According to Montesorri (1974), “there is a part of the soul of the child that has always been unknown, and that must be known. Beyond the observation and studying of the child by psychology and education, the unknown child remains. We must seek for him in a spirit of enthusiasm. The task of the adult, therefore, is searching for this unknown something hidden in the soul of the child. This is the labour in which we all must participate for it will mean the

generation of an indispensable factor for the moral progress of humanity” (Montesori 1974: 60). Implicit in this is an understanding and acknowledgement of the centrality of the soul of the child to the educative process and which conventional education cannot nor strives to reach. The connection between the quest for the soul and the “moral progress of humanity” resonates with the response of the principal of the Auro Navakriti Preschool:

The philosophical underpinning of IE is the understanding that every child is a soul in evolution and each being has to unravel to reveal the reasons for having taken this journey on earth, to contribute, to offer, to learn, and how to surrender the child’s growth and one’s own growth to a higher working. According to Sri Aurobindo, in every aspect of education, mental, vital or physical, the psychic centre remains stable and calm, witnessing the consciousness revealed and to increasingly step back to see whether one’s word, action or feeling is awakening. That is the whole basis of this work, to find one’s own soul in evolution while finding the child’s soul.

The construct of “moral progress” is encapsulated in each being’s proposed purpose on earth, “to contribute, to offer, to learn”, as opposed to the current and commonplace dictum of ‘take, expect and disregard’ and which has led to the global moral meltdown and resultant immeasurable harm. Conversely, an IE approach encourages a community feeling and contribution to society is compelled. Children learn that they are not only individuals but that they are interconnected, interdependent, and interrelated to everyone and everything in the cosmos and that all their actions have a ripple effect on everything around them (Vengopal & Kumari 2010: 62).

Equally, the mutual and reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the child is demonstrated in, “to find one’s own soul in evolution while finding the child’s soul”, which is a testament to the commitment to the soul seeking process and in conformity to the “spirit of enthusiasm” expected of the adult. The following response elucidates the implementation process that the IE teachers undertake in this respect:

The child is blessed with a unique soul and our responsibility as facilitators is to understand the child and then give it love and respect. We are not only tasked with the physical and cognitive development but understanding the soul quality of each child because every child is different. So, the first thing is to understand this soul quality which is why we say that nothing can be taught and that the mind must be consulted because the child within him/herself contains the world of wisdom and understands best what he/she needs and intuitively knows what is to be done because of the child's soul, so we first understand that and facilitate that in self-expression through observation and respect... The third pillar, from near to far, is in the sense that content has to be relatable and contextualised. This also means that learning is gradual and incremental starting with the child's immediate environment and knowledge of it to that which is beyond.

The process of enabling the soul quality of the child to unfold is in the application of the three principles/pillars of IE alluded to above. These are nothing can be taught (the teacher is not an instructor/taskmaster, he is a helper and guide); the mind has to be consulted in its own growth; and work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be (from concrete to abstract).

A participant explains the indication of this in the classroom as follows:

The actual practice in the class of the three pillars is giving children a choice of four corners and the child instinctively chooses and the relevant resources are made available. We do not actually teach the child how to execute the activities since everything is largely intuitive. Moreover, learning is more receptive if it is self-imposed and not directed by an adult which encourages rote learning and stifles independent thinking and decision making. Any imposition on a child's learning is restricting that journey of self-discovery and further implies our creative mind is blocked. Understanding and respecting the child's work opens the door for the functioning of the imagination and self-expression. It must be understood that because the soul is not stagnant but evolving in response to whatever is happening, the observation period is ongoing and is supplemented and complemented by an understanding of a wide range of knowledge pertaining to the family and parents. Parents are continuously asked about all aspects of the child, while away from school. Thus, there is observation at all levels, even when the child is not

at school and even on the way to school which also teaches us so much about the child's interactions.

As noted, the IE programme activities are underpinned by the all-important requirement to encourage the instinctive and intuitive actions of the child. This is contraindicated in the mainstream/conventional education system founded on the exclusive promotion of the intellect and rational thought. This mutually exclusive relationship between intuition and intellect is addressed by the Mother:

In education, both tendencies should be encouraged side by side: the tendency to thirst for the marvelous, for what seems unrealisable, for something which fills you with the feeling of divinity; while at the same time encouraging exact, correct, sincere observation in the perception of the world as it is, the suppression of all imagination, a constant control, a highly practical and meticulous sense for exact details. Both should go side by side. Usually, you kill the one with the idea that this is necessary to foster the other – this is completely wrong. Both can be simultaneous... In education, this would be particularly important: to see the world as it is, exactly, unadorned, in the most down-to-earth and concrete manner; and to see the world as it can be, with the freest, highest vision, the one most full of hope and aspiration and marvelous certitude – as the two poles of discernment (The Mother 1974: 6-7).

In IE, therefore, the synchronous and equal development of all the domains of the child is fostered for the education of the whole person and consequently distinguishes it from the conventional system that privileges the cognitive. Reinforcing this perspective, Partho (2007), avers that the objective in an IE context is to develop the intuition and the capacity to synthesise equally with the development of the intellect and the capacity to analyse. One is needed to balance the other. When the intellect is given predominance in the educational process, and the intuitive, the emotional and other aspects are almost neglected that education leads to imbalance and disharmony in the individual and ultimately in the society (Partho 2007: 221). Thus, one of the ways of creating this balance between the intellect and the intuition in IE is an understanding that the evolving soul is the pivot around which the educative process revolves, and which is manifest in “finding the child's soul”.

9.4.1.2.2 Towards self-education

According to Aurobindo, the understanding of education made significant progress from a mechanical forcing of the child into tracks of training and knowledge to acknowledging its capacity to awaken the child's own intellectual and moral capacities based on the psychology of the child's nature. He argued, however, that this was still inadequate because the child continued to be regarded as an object to be educated. Despite this shortcoming, there was some slight realisation that each human being is a self-developing soul and the responsibility of the parent and teacher is to help the child educate himself to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities (Aurobindo 1974: 1). Extrapolating this IE characteristic of the child's own agency in his education, the principal of Auro Navakriti Preschool provides the following understanding of its application:

Practically, IE involves a great deal of awareness to recognise the need in each child. The programme develops the child's innate self-awareness and directs it to his own awareness and understanding in a way of not being instructed by the teacher but being helped to become aware of something. The perception in each child is different and the teacher's skill is in understanding these differences and suppressing the instinctive adult urge to direct it.

Thus, the concept of self-education is crucial to the application of IE and the concepts of awareness and self-awareness. In this regard, Partho (2007), points to the paradoxical position of the integral teacher who does not teach. The work of the teacher is to facilitate and enable learning, based on the belief that the child is a being growing in consciousness with a power of conscious choice in learning and growth (Partho 2007: 159). Accordingly, the respondents refer to their teaching ethic of allowing children free choice in the selection of activities for self-development as demonstrated in the following responses: *"the children decide for themselves what is right for them"; "in a way it is totally up to the child what they want to do"; "we plan according to the child's need if the child wants to play, then they play, if they want to do something else, they are free to do it"; "we do activities according to what the*

child wants” and “we focus on the feelings of the child”. Although these responses indicate the child is given free rein about the selection of activities, one of the respondents qualifies this with the following insight:

The concept and practice of ‘free choice’ in the programme afford the child a great deal of choice but does not mean no restrictions. This is a more difficult discipline because although the child is free to choose, there must be guidance. The process is also an observation opportunity to discover to what the child is naturally drawn thus; all activities are complementary.

Thus, the rationale of freedom to choose contributes to the ongoing processes of self-awareness, self-discovery, self-expression and self-education. It gives the child the opportunity to decide, use his instincts and intuition in exercising his free will and develop his own capacities. Similarly, this ‘stepping back’ and allowing the child to make decisions is evident in issues around moral decisions. One of the respondents explains the application of self-education in this respect:

Children are taught to know and understand themselves – anderkadosht – there is a friend [conscience or inner voice] within you whom you consult on issues of right or wrong, good or bad. When children default in some way, rather than pointing out the wrongdoing they are given the space to judge their actions for themselves. This practice enables and empowers them to the extent that they rely less on the judgement of the adult in making moral choices.

Accordingly, the child is offered a range of opportunities to develop, with his own agency and guided by the teacher, his intellectual and moral capacities towards his self-education.

9.4.1.2.3 Integrated learning modality

Becoming an integral teacher is becoming a guide and a guru, to oneself and to all others who come into contact with oneself, which demands an absolute and lifelong commitment to learning, growing and self-becoming (Partho 2007: 158). Thus, deciding to become an IE teacher involves a commitment to guide one’s own journey on the path of guiding those of others. This

seems to safeguard a deeply reflective practice through the constant presence of the subjective lens as demonstrated in the following responses:

I think IE makes us strong from inside in many ways and, thus, is not only for children. Its values are that when we are calm, we can guide children in a better way; It is my own awareness growing through my work with children and within that field of awareness, the understanding of the child's needs and from me seeking that help I can give the child. Thus, it is my own awareness that is growing and making the collective work possible.

An integral learning relationship must be mutually empowering, since much of the learning depends on the relationship between the teacher and the learner (*ibid*: 161) and, therefore, necessitates an open and trusting relationship and, importantly, one that is free of authority and hierarchy. Thus, the IE programme is designed to foster a participatory learning ethos and its application aims at flexibility. This is indicated in the following comment by the principal of Auro Navakriti Preschool:

While other schools operate according to a prescribed syllabus and completion is generally time-bound, conversely, IE is like an experiential mode of learning. Our work is not something to complete with a summative assessment, but to have an adventure where everything flows, according to, amongst others, the season, the readiness of the group or the choice of the children.

The outline of the IE programme derived from multiple sources of learning, presented by one of the participants and representative of the IE teachers, is clarified in the following summarised response:

We believe that learning is most effective when children are actively involved and engaged in carrying out tasks that are meaningful to them. Young children learn from everything that happens to them and do not separate their learning into subjects. Therefore, we try to achieve the various goals of our curriculum through integrated learning which incorporates the Play way Method (Activity-based or Hands-on Experience learning), Thematic Approach (Selection of a theme for teaching concepts), Circle Time (Social interactions for play and learning) and Montessori Method (Education based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative play).

These aspects of the curriculum were explained further by the participants.

Play-way Method

Young children's growth and development have a pattern and sequence which is related to age. Children progress in several areas such as physical growth, capacities for language, comprehension or in skills of interactions. They move to order to master body control, they need to explore, manipulate objects and repeat the action to exercise their mental, social and manual skills with enough opportunities to handle materials, experience the world around them and perform tasks of increasing complexity. Play is vital to children's learning and is not an activity but an attitude. It is a vehicle for motivating children to explore, discover, become involved in organising and expressing feelings. The play-way method helps us periodically to reinforce all the concepts done earlier in a fun, participatory and interesting way.

Thematic Approach:

This is a way of teaching and learning whereby many areas of the curriculum are connected and integrated within a theme. We have divided our curriculum into various themes on a monthly basis. Preferences were given to those themes to which children could relate better and experience in their immediate environment.

The thematic approach helps us to internalise every concept to the children. They can be easily motivated and actively involved. They develop learning skills quicker as each one is connected to and reinforced by the others.

Circle Time

Setting up circle time is the start of a process of involving children in the classroom. It helps create an environment conducive to a real consultation, shared responsibility and decision making. Circle time helps to nurture the emotional health of the children. It offers them a place to develop social and emotional skills, learn to provide supportive listening and acquire a language for sharing feelings and ideas.

By conducting circle time periodically, we found it was really fruitful to the children as it helped to develop teacher-child bonding. Moreover, by sitting in a circle everyone is visible to everyone else. This physical visibility also fosters emotional visibility. Each child's chance of feeling significant is enhanced. It also promotes inclusion.

Montessori Method

This method was used as the base for introducing language through phonetics, social and life skills through EPL (exercise of practical life) activities, numbers and to give sensorial exposure to the world around them. Montessori apparatus is scientifically designed to sharpen a child's power of observation and analysis. Rather than rote learning, the children are encouraged to experience the world of form through handling concrete objects of sizes, shapes, colours and dimensions. Much emphasis is placed on becoming self-reliant.

Thus, through a combination of play way, thematic approach and Montessori method, our main aim is to motivate the child to become confident and cognitively developed. A lot of activities are introduced to enhance their gross and fine motor skills. The children are made aware of their culture by celebrating and discussing festivals and doing related art and craft activities to reinforce the same. Discussions, storytelling and circle time are periodically done in class to inculcate social values in the children which make their personality blossom. Hence our focus is on facilitating the child's abilities and interests so that he/she can work towards complete personality development.

The response underscores four important aspects of the IE teaching methodology, "actively involved and engaged", "tasks that are meaningful to them" "learn from everything that happens to them" and "do not separate their learning into subjects". Intrinsic to these aspects are the elements of a pronounced participatory ethic, relevant and relatable learning, experiential learning in real-life situations and a unitive and non-fragmentary approach, respectively. Collectively, they encompass an alternate and holistic approach to education, and distinctly different from a mainstream approach which is characterised by one that is, inter alia, teacher-centred with a hierarchical power dynamic based on a uniform and standardised curriculum to serve all children despite natural differences and teaching-centred learning in controlled learning environments and fragmented into discrete subjects/learning areas. This narrow, self-limiting approach is summarised in the response of one of the participants:

Being a student who passed through the normal rut of our education system, where learning was restricted to a particular class, a particular

topic, a particular test, learning that had no relevance to my life. It was no learning AT All. All my learning happened after school when I faced the real world. The experiences I had, the challenges I faced and the connections that I made helped shape my personality. And in that whole wide world, the only thing to fall back on were the deep-rooted values that my parents embedded in me and the trust that they had in me. All this gives me reassurance that mainstream education is a failure. The world has changed and so [has] the education system.

In sharp contrast to this dim view of mainstream education, the following responses highlight the proficiencies of IE, “we awaken the intelligence of the child”, “experiences and activities towards self-awareness”, “development of true reasoning”, “discovery of new ideas, inspirations and ways of being physically, emotionally and mentally”, “total progress of the child” and “social, national and civic responsibilities”. Significantly, the combination of these elements of IE is closely aligned to the ECD curriculum framework that will emerge from this study.

Lastly, it must be noted that contributing to the competence of the IE programme is its use of multiple knowledge sources to encourage universal learning and the flexibility of the programme, as noted in the following response:

How we receive the children will determine the day’s programme and generally we alternate between indoor and outdoor choices based on the activities the child engaged in on the previous day. So, grouping according to the needs of the children and planning organically are the fundamentals of IE. Then, they will evaluate the day that has passed.

In addition, the role of the IE teacher is critical to the delivery of the programme and its effective application. This is clarified in the following three responses:

Throughout, the teacher’s role is to be with the children and be fully involved with them; the children become emotionally attached to us and we understand them; it is not the difference in activities, but rather the way the children react to them together with the understanding of these responses by the teacher.

Thus, the IE teacher has a critical role in the process and, therefore, has to have exceptional qualities. In this respect, Partho (2007), argues that “the integral teacher has to be a bit of an extraordinary person – integrated, sane, balanced, vitally mature, mentally clear and focused, physically and spiritually awakened (Partho 2007: 191).

9.4.1.3 On Being an IE teacher

According to Bainbridge (1974), in the present age of transition and the wake of the realisation of man’s conscious power of the dominant creative intention on Earth, a new type of teacher is emerging. In light of this, these educators seek to:

...put the growing soul in the way of its own perfection, to lead into the light of full awareness and life-expression the true self within. Such teaching is above and beyond all technique, finding its source in the spirit. Teachers of this perception and understanding recognise that the deepest and most enduring forms of learning and development take place through an awakening of latent capacities in the minds and hearts of students. With sensitive wisdom born of personal experience, these men and women help to facilitate the student or seeker in the discovery of his own illimitable powers of being (Bainbridge 1974: 33).

The testimonies of the IE teachers resonate with these views, most notably that teaching to them is “*above and beyond all technique, finding its source in the spirit*” for the purpose of activating the “*latent capacities in the minds and hearts of students*”. Consonant with this perspective, the principal of the Auro Navakriti Preschool, explains the training rationale and its application:

IE involves constant self and collaboratory awareness. We have almost the converse of the conventional practice of receiving a teaching qualification before working in a school. In IE the teachers work with the children first by making their practice relevant and validating it. There is a teacher programme that includes the awareness of the teacher, her mental understanding and emotional openness to each child and her ability to observe. This is particularly important, observe her own growth with each child and to determine how she will make the child free,

independent and self-assured. The process is helped by being in these natural surroundings in the 'presence' of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In general, the responses of the teachers with regard to what informed their particular choice of IE teaching and their exposure to teacher training include, "love of children and working with them", "Ashram [Sri Aurobindo] training", "volunteered at Mothers International School", "I wanted to know what IE is and how it works", "I experienced the Mother's call", "self-discovery, introspection", "divine intervention", "wanting to help children", "whatever experience of teaching I have is from Mirambika and Auro Navakriti", "It helps and motivates me to be involved with moral values with spiritual and external power", "whenever I came here I felt like this is where I was meant to be" and "I got the education by being around here".

The responses indicate the deliberate personal and professional choices the respondents made and confirm both the spiritual source and the 'in-house' training at the IE schools. It appears that the teachers gravitated to the school and IE seeking something akin to completeness, a point of view which is demonstrated in the following responses:

When we grow within ourselves, then things change. For me, in my 12 years' [IE] experience I think I have grown up as a good human being and what I have not learnt in my 35 years I have learnt here in my 12 years. It helped me to grow from the inside and as we are improving ourselves, we help our children, our family, our own home. I think that is IE or a part of IE.

In an education structure [mainstream] that shuts down children's thinking and forces children for cramming and rote learning, I feel pleased to be a teacher who believes that learning happens at every step, and one must strive for learning throughout their life...what I have understood after getting associated with Auro Navakriti is that in order to be able to educate a child, is to educate oneself. Sincerity, honesty, courage, kindness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control and grit are all things that can be taught by example than by giving moral classes in the school. As parents and teachers, we must serve as role models and provide experiences to children that are captured and taken as opportunities for learning. Opportunities become a learning tool for the

child, for self-development, self-regulation and self-reflection. In the end, To make the change, We need to BE the change!!

The respondent's reference to teachers as exemplars is an a priori condition in IE and prospective and existing teachers commit to it. According to another respondent, the teacher is the role model, we make real examples for them to follow and create an atmosphere of positivity around the child. The parents, therefore, are an important component of this process to extend that ethos in the home. In the words of the Mother, "One must have a perfect attitude to be able to exact a perfect attitude from the students. You cannot ask anyone to do what you don't do yourself. That is a rule" (The Mother 1974:1). Thus, from the foregoing responses, IE teachers make a conscious choice to follow the particular path of this teaching approach and way of being which engenders personal transformation and that of the child for whom they undertake to facilitate "the discovery of his own illimitable powers of being".

9.4.1.4 Assimilation of IK and values in IE

I/Community K and the use of mother-tongue are intrinsic to an ECD IE approach despite contemporary arguments (mainly driven by epistemic hegemony) of its clash with modernity and the general haste in former colonies and developing countries to become proficient in English use. According to Aurobindo, the mother-tongue is the proper medium of education and therefore the earliest years of the child should be directed to the thorough mastering of the medium.

In addition, the imagination, instinct for words, inherent aptitude for drama, ideas and memory of the child should be absorbed in the literature and history of the nation...he should be introduced to the most interesting parts of his own literature and the life around him and in his past, and they should be presented to him to attract and appeal to the qualities ... all other studies in these early years should be devoted to the perfection of the mental functions and the moral character...every child is a lover of interesting narrative, a hero worshipper and a patriot. Appeal to these qualities in him and through them let him master without knowing it the living and human parts of his nation's history (Aurobindo 1974: 3-4).

Thus, Aurobindo underscores the importance of the early years of the child for optimal learning opportunities and development through the early grounding in his ancestral history and cultural identity. Similarly, the study proposes the value of including IK in the ECD programme, especially Ubuntu values for “moral character” through stories, poems, songs and other media. Consonant with the IE approach and its seamless integration of I/Community K into the ECD programme, the principal of the Auro Navakriti Preschool offered the following insight:

The intrinsic value of IK is very important, it has to be reclaimed, and the dynamism of it is your heart, this has to be imbibed by education. In addition, IK has to be rejuvenated and enlivened by the modern imagination and through the engagement of the consciousness of people. If, for instance, I hear a story about a mythical hero touching a mountain and materialising water, it can be made relevant because it is the story where people were digging for a well and somebody knew where to dig. I would bring it out of its spiritual and miraculous context and make it something of a real living experience in the moment.

Beyond confirming the significance of IK (“intrinsic value”), especially for education (“imbibed by education”), the response addresses two other related aspects – reclamation and rejuvenation of IK - especially relevant to the South African context, generally, and this study, particularly. Firstly, it is common knowledge that IKS in South Africa and Africa has been devalued and marginalised, hence reclaiming this knowledge source is critical for both epistemic justice and value in restoring and affirming the cultural identity of a people and, in this case, of a new generation of children. Secondly, the prospect of rejuvenating IK is imperative to rebut the ongoing argument of the clash between IK and modernity (Refer to Chapter 4, 4.4.2.2 for findings that confirm the fallacy of this argument). The references to, “dynamism”, “enlivened”, “modern imagination”, “made relevant” and “real living experience”, suggest the opportunity for IK to be adapted to current times while still retaining the essential “literature and history of the nation” and “the living and human parts of his nation’s history”.

With the exception of one respondent who expressed concern relating to the contemporaneity of IK with regard to stories drawn exclusively from ancient times and the concomitant neglect of emerging values, the other respondents indicated that IK was a critical and integral part of the ECD programme and that its values include, amongst others, knowledge generation, cultural awareness, the transmission of morals and identity. Some of these responses are the following:

Includes not only language, but culture, too, it is food, a lifestyle that has evolved over years. Will play a very important role in keeping knowledge alive. Sustainability is a very important part of IK.

We all learn from the types of environments that we come from. The environment has an influence on each person living in it, as well as their circumstances and surroundings. We do include our own teachings in the IE programme, that way coming generations can learn about our traditions and culture.

If we combine basic knowledge with moral knowledge then children will be rooted, and this will help the child and be a pillar of strength. Children are very flexible; they do whatever they want. Moral knowledge in the form of stories will be very helpful.

Like we tell the story of the Ramayan to children by acting it out. There is an aim to doing all of this. Family upbringing makes an influence on a child, how they respect elders, how they take care of others. Telling them stories with morals at times through different mediums like books or puppets etc. We give them this knowledge through singing the stories.

In my thinking, the technique of teaching is very important for our civilisation, and if that is so, then we will become disinterested in our main identity. That is why it is important to have these teachings.

In consideration of the embeddedness of values to an IE approach, the discussion on this aspect seemed superfluous although it was conducted within the framework of the interview schedule. Overall, respondents confirm the ethos of love, respect, kindness, happiness, peace and unity that surround the school and are reinforced by the teachers and all personnel.

Included in the love that all exude is that of the love for nature and all life forms, regardless of size. The responses to the questions on the engagement with values in an IE approach include the following:

Respect is an important value and every stakeholder in the community should be respected. Integral education is returning me to the simplicity of being a very small speck in that amazing milky galaxy of existence, knowing that if I am gone tomorrow nothing changes but while I am here, I may contribute.

...we live in peace and friendship with each other. They tell this to us daily, this touches the children's hearts, and they tell this to their parents as well. Peace, friendship and happiness are what we base all our activities on, and we take that forward.

We see values in a simple form in the classroom, like, where we help others, help each other, do our own work, help someone who has fallen.

We focus on all-round development of the child, and we try to combine nature with their habitats and society and living in harmony with all that the children get different types of experiences and in this way, they are able to communicate their thoughts to their friends and family but at other institutions, children don't get a chance to voice their thoughts because they focus more on results than the happiness of students. We limit their thoughts to being a liability, but we should teach them to do things from the heart. They should do what makes them happy and do it from the heart and should not be considered a liability.

Thus, emerging out of the responses is the symbiotic relationship of love, harmony and compassion between the teachers and the children in their care. Significantly, the values that the children are exposed to at school appear to be extending to their parents and homes. In addition, the comparison between the promotion of values like freedom, openness and happiness in Auro Navakriti Preschool and other schools reinforce the special character of an IE approach in the natural and coherent transference of values in the application of the programme. In summary, the responses confirm the seamless assimilation of I/Community K and values in IE and reinforce the study proposal of the aptness of an ECD IE approach with IK

Ubuntu values for a new generation of children to effect participatory democracy in South Africa.

9.4.2 Parents and community

9.4.2.1 Introduction

The parents, grandparents and community members that constituted this focus group interview had IE knowledge and experience through their children or family member or community member's past or current early education through affiliation with the SAS. As such, many of the respondents maintain some form of relationship with the Sri Aurobindo Society or the Auro Navakriti Preschool. The principal of the school invited them to participate in the study to which they responded.

The participant interviews began with a presentation of the contextual background of preschool education pre-and post-democracy in South Africa followed by a summary of the study and its objectives. Subsequent to this was an introductory discussion on their conceptual understanding and purpose of education. Interestingly, the views correspond with those expressed by the ECD practitioners in the teacher preparation workshop (Refer to Chapter 7, 7.2) which collectively expressed a nonmainstream/alternate perspective on the purpose of education to the extent of dissociating it from the utilitarian and main purpose of preparation for the job market typical of conventional or mainstream education systems. Responses included the following insights:

“Education is a foundation, not only academic but how to interact with neighbours”,

“Education is how to grow sustainably, be self-aware, to know myself and the environment”,

“Become good human beings, better and confident”,

“Deal with situations around me, people around me, understand my child”,

“Utilise or implement what we learn”,

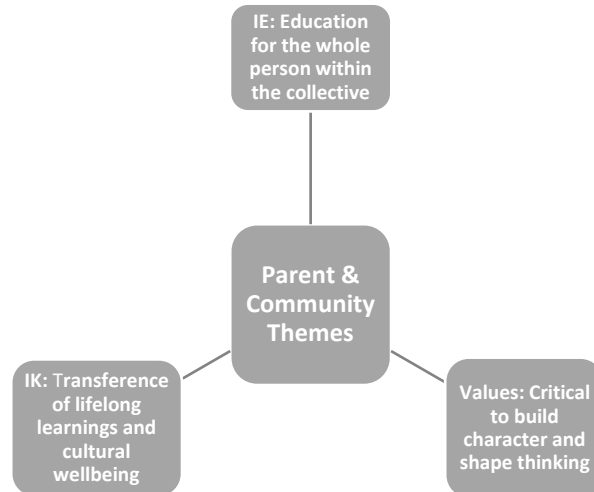
“Education is unlocking oneself” and

“Local language is important”.

Emerging from this initial discussion is an unambiguous understanding amongst the respondents that the purpose of education must extend beyond the limitations of cognitive development, which is referred to tangentially, and include the development of the whole human being, primarily for individual and collective well-being. In this regard, Marshak (1997), explains that the purposes of education for Aurobindo were developing the need to learn to think for oneself, change one's consciousness, evolve one's true personality in an integral way and to live the truth which is discovered, yet education must focus not only on the individual but also on its relationship to opportunities and responsibilities as a member of its community, nation, and species (Marshak 1997: 92). Education, therefore, at any level but especially at the EC one, cannot be for individualistic development which necessarily excludes coexistence within the collective.

The data collected from this interview based on the interview schedule (Refer to Annexure F) is categorised according to the three central predetermined themes of the study: IE, IK and Values. Although all three coalesce within the IE framework, they are presented individually to explore specific aspects of the programme. Within each theme, the dominant ideas (Refer to Figure 9.2) that emerged from the data are presented.

FIGURE 9. 2: Representation of the three themes drawn from the data set of the Parent and Community focus group interview



9.4.2.2 IE: Education for the whole person within the collective

The responses in this category address the participants' understanding of IE, the impact of IE on the developing child and the rationale for opting for an IE approach. Emerging out of the data are views that confirm IE as exceeding the mainstream or conventional education approach which tends to limit the child's freedom and natural development; promotes a humanistic worldview rooted in values; respects the individuality of each child; prepares the child for participation in community life; develops the whole child synchronously and encourages a spiritual foundation. Thus, the findings validate the appropriateness of an IE pedagogic approach for educating a new generation of children with a deep sense of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life forms.

According to Zulaski (2017), the model of integral education offered by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother emerges from a spiritual worldview and proposes a comprehensive whole-person approach, defining the value and purpose of learning as being central to self and communal enrichment and fulfilment (Zulaski 2017: 22). Similarly, the views of the respondents embody the concepts of "spiritual worldview", "whole-person approach" and "self and

communal enrichment and fulfilment” as noted in the following three responses:

IE focuses on the holistic development of the child and goes beyond the traditional curriculum-based education. It takes into consideration that every child is a member of the society and has an important role to play in shaping the community he/she lives in. Hence, it is not only the academic credentials that matter but also how the child imbibes certain values that are inherent in every family, community and society as a whole. For instance, the core value of respecting your elders and taking care of them when they grow old is a value ingrained in the Indian society and we have grown up seeing our parents take care of their parents and grandparents. And IE would definitely take this into consideration while imparting education. The IE teaching methodology and the way Auro Navakriti focuses on developing compassion, encourages the child to become emotionally and physically independent, and emphasises learning from nature and play rather than books and audio-visual content. We are inspired by the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Holy Mother.

That which is within is brought out and developed further so that a higher truth can be manifested here in our life. Not just mental rote learning but developing latent capacities to be able to function better in the world. Developing all parts that constitute a human being: physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, intuitive and deeper levels, not just to function well in the world and contribute towards human development but also to manifest the higher truths so that humanity can go one step higher as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo. The openness of mind and heart made us love Auro Navakriti. The love for nature, a simple lifestyle, attachment to the roots of the country and the spiritual thoughts. They let the child be herself. They consider all children as a free soul who is free to explore the new given world. They practically allow the child to take her own decisions yet instil in them the right mode of doing things.

We would think IE would have a broad spectrum with the common link of some form of spiritual foundation or/and deep experiments. The spiritual rather than overt religious makes such experiments suitable to the modern and amenable to a more universalistic and humanistic ethos. At the level of the child, IE privileges a spiritualised sensitivity towards training the mind and body than the more instrumental and pedagogically ambitious methods where the learning output becomes the central focus. The Auro Navakriti school, in our view, combines the best of all worlds with a great investment of the labour of love and gentleness with spiritual essences drawn from practical teachings of Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and certain ideas of nature and environment. Because they are sensitised to the teachings of Mother

and Sri Aurobindo, the teachers are guided to be more sensitive to the deeper level of existence and the inner freedom that already exists in a child. The child's unique inner expression is not thwarted by the mental and moral code enforced from the outside for them to be part of the herd.

The responses are explicitly linked by the common adherence to the philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and individually highlight the differentiating aspects of IE in comparison to the mainstream education system. The constraints and deficiencies of mainstream education alluded to in this study in respect of the ECD curriculum, are indicated in, *“goes beyond the traditional curriculum-based education”, “Not just mental rote learning”, “not only the academic credentials”, “learning output becomes the central focus”* and *“more instrumental and pedagogically ambitious methods”*. Thus, successfully developing the whole child based on this approach is improbable. Equally, the integration of humanistic values in an IE approach contributes to the development of a “higher truth” and directs children towards a common good.

9.4.2.3 I/Community K: Transference of lifelong learnings and cultural well-being

In response to the merit of indigenous/local/community knowledge in ECE, collectively there was unequivocal affirmation that, amongst others, I/Community K has invaluable importance for character formation and cultural identity. In this regard, Bialystok (1992), argues that during early childhood (3–7 years old), children are able to engage in symbolic thought and are learning to classify objects and people according to prominent characteristics (Bialystok, 1992 cited in Serrano-Villar & Calzada 2015: 22). Thus, the familiarity of the child's social and cultural milieu can be teaching and learning opportunities in the early years of development. Moreover, the inclusion of I/Community K could promote the seamless transition from home learning to that of the school buttressing the child's knowledge acquisition. The following responses confirm the value and lasting impact of IK teachings on the respondents:

IK is the bedrock of every society. It is a blend of over centuries of collective wisdom of our ancestors. IK focuses on core values of human existence. Hence, its importance cannot be undermined. IK has within its fold, a well-developed value system that focuses on the importance of family as the basic unit of the society; it focuses on the strength of the human mind and the way it can leave a lasting impact on history. IK also includes the teachings that have been passed on for generations through scriptures, religious texts, folk-lore, songs, poetry, drama, short stories, the epics such as the Ramayana. Every society has a treasure trove of IK that has been passed on for generations.

IK provides the comfort of the familiar as much as the joy of discovering the forgotten familiar (to parents, grandparents). These memories are activated through such teaching/learning contexts. In terms of them shaping our lives, such knowledge operates as the same invisible thread running through our changing selves. We would think that the indigenous and the modern are not diametrically opposed. In fact, the modern may create room for an acceptable form of the indigenous. In that sense, the indigenous is set to appear within the future of the modern as much as it is in its present.

I am so grateful to my grandmother for helping me imbibe certain values early on in my life. That early education about compassion, love, humanity, nature, honesty, truthfulness, integrity has shaped my life in many different ways. It has helped me deal with some tough challenges in life because it was a natural choice to take the path of righteousness. I grew believing that Lord Rama must be my ideal in life. Teachings from the Mahabharata are all about human nature and the choices we make in our lives. I learnt early on that I need to watch out for feelings of anger, hatred, jealousy that could dent my personality and make me bitter and hinder my growth as a person. I really wish my daughter could get the same environment and company of her grandparents.

Indigenous community knowledge is so very important that it must be an integral part of the school curriculum. There are hidden gems in the stories and songs that have come to us from the great poets and storytellers. I remember that in my school, my Hindi Literature teacher would always ask a question after telling a short story. And the question was – What did you learn from this story? So, I always looked for learning in every piece of literature. For example, there was a short story written by Munshi Premchand that I read in my 6th standard. The story revolved around how we get influenced by friends we have and how quickly we take flight from reality and allow arrogance to seep into us. The learnings from this story still remain with me.

Every community/country has some unique qualities developed over years of work and that is called culture. When a child is growing up in

a certain culture/community, he imbibes the uniqueness of that culture through language, stories, songs, attitudes and life in general. These helps reinforce what the child is imbibing on his own from his immediate environment. This helps the child to understand himself better, have a strong sense of identification with that culture, which gives him the security to move out to the larger unknown world and express himself in his own unique way without getting lost or losing his own self. When he knows himself well, he is also confident in exploring what he doesn't know and doesn't get lost.

Children have amazing comfort in indigenous stories/songs. I have the ease with which they relate to the characters. As a matter of fact, a lot percolates to the child in this process of narrating, reciting indigenous stories. Rhymes/songs, more important for Indian culture as a lot of wisdom resides in our old scriptures, languages.

One of the themes in the responses is that IK connotes with the familiar and is associated with succour and well-being as noted in, "passed on for generations", "comfort of the familiar", "discovering the forgotten familiar", "comfort in indigenous stories/songs" and "learnings...still remain with me". Generally, the responses indicate the primacy of IK and validate its teachings.

As a whole and in support of the study's proposal, the responses confirm the application of IK in IE and the potential, for a range of reasons, to positively guide children towards making responsible choices.

9.4.2.4 Values: Critical to build character and shape thinking

The engagement with values in IE is both implicit in the teaching methodology and pedagogic approach and explicit in the modelling of the teachers and ethos in the IE schools. According to Aurobindo, the synchronous focus on the heart, spirit, body and mind in the integral approach is what encourages self-development and helps the child develop intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities. These, in turn, support the development and evolution of the self, within the collective, to engender a more interconnected, caring and compassionate society (Sri Aurobindo 1997: 33) - the values proposed in this study for social responsibility and civic participation for participatory democracy in South Africa. The respondents

endorsed the intrinsic importance of values in a preschool programme when learning opportunities are optimal and learning is sustainable.

In addition, the responses highlighted the contribution of values in directing moral and ethical behaviour and emphasised fostering values for the care and protection of all life forms. These insights, amongst others, feature in the following responses:

Values are the foundation of the human persona. Our values define us as to who we are as a person. They shape our thinking and reflect in our conduct. Values are beliefs that we adhere to under any circumstances and help us grow as a person.

The righteousness. Moving ahead in life morally and ethically. Respecting all beings, nature, animals, birds. Being compassionate towards them. Loving and cherishing our country. Working towards welfare, happiness, love, freedom and the goal of one's life.

Early childhood learning stays with you forever. So instilling values early in life has its own benefits. My grandmother would always tell my mother that till the plant is tender you can steer it in any direction but once it becomes a tree you can't make any change to it. What she meant was that if you want to define the personality of your child and instil values in him, you need to do it in the early years. But once he becomes an adult, you will be unable to bring about too many changes in his personality. Hence imparting values-based education at the preschool level is absolutely necessary.

Benefits are immense at personal, community, ecological levels. I believe as an educator and a parent we should try to inculcate these values at the earliest possible stages of child development. Once the seeds are sown, right nurturing will surely bring healthy children in all walks of life and create a beautiful environment than our generation

These early years will form the subconscious pattern that will guide children in their entire life. Hence, it is important that preschool children are exposed to and taught the right values from now onwards for them further as they grow and lead a fruitful life

We would think values operate in the middle grounds between morality and ethics and thus are spontaneously accessible to cultures as aspirational ideas in the conduct of daily life.

In summary, the responses of the parents, grandparents and community members of the Auro Navakriti Preschool underscore the benefits and advantages of an IE approach to ECD, most notably for its capacity to

develop all the dimensions of the child simultaneously and holistically towards the pursuit of a “higher truth” and a common good. Additionally, the respondents affirmed the incorporation of IK and values as critical aspects for validating cultural identities and providing moral and ethical support, respectively.

9.5 MIRAMBIKA FREE PROGRESS SCHOOL

9.5.1 Introduction

The Mirambika Free Progress School is located close to the Auro Navakriti Preschool and is generally regarded as its ‘feeder’ school. An interview with the principal and some staff members was arranged by the principal of Auro Navakriti Preschool. The purpose of the interview was to confirm and validate the findings of the data collected from the primary site, Auro Navakriti Preschool.

9.5.2 School background

Mirambika was a conscious attempt in the 1980s at evolving newer ways of learning and thinking and going beyond structured schooling into the freedom of inner growth. The school’s ‘free progress’ concept stems from a spiritual vision and understanding that education is the process of awakening and evoking the psychic presence within, and through that process bring about a progressive unfolding of the whole person. This blossoming is a natural and joyful process of growth and learning flowing from within to without. As such, learning is free of structures that bind and stifle and should increasingly become a dynamic process of self-discovery and self-actualisation.

Following a teachers’ annual camp at the Delhi Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1980, the participants expressed the imperative for a change which resulted in the development of a teachers’ training programme. Mirambika was first conceived as an integral school to support the integral teachers’ education and experimentation. In July 1981, Mirambika opened with fifty-seven children and ten teachers and, within a few years, went on to

become a very significant experiment in 'Free Progress' education which is an education for the free and unhampered growth of the psychic being.

The school admits children between the ages of 4 – 16 years and has been in existence for forty years. It does not have a pre-set curriculum or syllabus because its focus is on the naturally evolving rhythm of learning. Teachers are alive and sensitive to the child and in this way are in touch with the child's learning process out of which the open ended and flexible curriculum evolves. There are no conventional tests or exams conducted, thus, children are not graded or categorised. Instead, sensitive assessments by the child, the parents and those working with the child are undertaken. At the core of the programme is the development of inner self-discipline towards a growing sense of responsibility, sensitivity and maturity.

9.5.3 Results and discussion

9.5.3.1 Introduction

The focus group interview at Mirambika Free Progress School comprised the principal and four staff members. The interview was unstructured with open ended questions. In this regard, Yin (2009) indicates that open-ended interviews are a common type of evidence for case studies as they offer richer and more extensive material than data from surveys. In addition, less structured, open-ended interviews tend to assume a conversational manner and reveal how interviewees construct reality and think about situations, rather than merely answering specific questions. This construction of reality can provide important insights into the case and gain even further value if the interviewees are key persons in the organisations, communities, or small groups being studied (Yin 2009: 265). As such, the participants described freely aspects of their teaching ethic, teacher training and the objectives of ECE and the impact of IE. The responses closely aligned with those presented by the staff and community IE teachers and thus, confirmed and validated those responses. The further insights emerging from the discussion were beneficial to a deeper understanding of IE and are noted here.

Overall, the IE teachers indicated their deep understanding of the children based on a mutually close relationship. The complete dedication to teaching underpins their practice and is evidenced in, “the qualities that are there inside the children”, “values and qualities nurtured”, “surrounding them with positive thoughts, positive role models and good vibrations”, “my heart, mind and soul” and “my thoughts are shown in my action, in my deeds and the qualities I have”. Consistent with the Auro Navakriti responses, IE teachers commit and devote themselves fully to the development of the children, to the extent that teaching is not a job but a vocation. According to the principal of the school,

Most of the people who spend time here come for the inner need they feel to grow as teachers and work with the children. This is their passion and the love within them enabling the flowering of the child. The teachers have been trained to observe the children’s behaviour from the first day. They observe all aspects of the child with the parents for character/personality building until the personality gets settled.

Thus, the symbiotic relationship between the IE teacher and the child is highlighted and the growth is mutual. One of the critical insights emerging from the discussion is the IE focus on the incremental and unhurried development of life skills to connect to the outside world. Although this aspect is addressed in the Auro Navakriti Preschool interview in the highlighting of the goals of self-awareness and independence, the explicit application of this principle is significant. Contrary to the objective in mainstream education to develop the cognitive competency of the child towards school readiness, an IE approach prepares the child for life and understands that this early development will enable improved cognitive functioning. In this regard, the principal explains further:

In Mirambika, for the first two years, there is no teaching, no learning the alphabet, numbers or phonics. This does not mean that we are not working with the child, rather the child is learning so many ways on how to live life, his relationship with his own being and the world outside. They just explore different things as it evolves with no outer planning. The child is making the connection of the self and the surrounding world. The

individual and collective rhythm have been fixed here as the child learns how to interact with his peer group, older ones, younger ones and nature. Practically, the child learns all this, how to use the hands and the body and to establish relations to do these things. Early Childhood Education should work towards developing children in preparation for life, to train the body to be the temple of that soul quality which has manifested. We must not condition that soul quality which is very natural at a young age. The child wants to live on earth, to experience this earth as it is growing. The wonder in his eyes needs to be nurtured and the task of teachers must be to follow the rhythm of that which the child is bringing.

In the initial years of the child, holistic preparation is affected, especially with regard to enabling the natural growth of the child without interference. This suggests the deliberate exclusion of literacy and numeracy skills in favour of “how to live life”. Equally important is the nurturing of the child’s curiosity and innate characteristics which are typically crushed in mainstream education by the imposition of learning.

Considering that the genesis of Mirambika was the teacher training programme that continues to remain a part of the IE programme, accurate understandings of this component were revealed. As noted in the Auro Navakriti Preschool interviews, the preparation of the IE teacher is pivotal to the effective implementation of the programme and necessitates a transformation of self. In the following account, greater detail of the changes is highlighted. This is summarised in, “life learning”, “wonder and curiosity”, “deconditioning and wellness”, “not taught but lived”, “intense self-observation” and “return to the self”. The principal explains this process and the outcome:

We take three years to initiate the teachers into IE because it is a life learning, and we want them to go with the same wonder and curiosity with which they have come and how much they can translate it in their own life first before they start teaching. This entails some deconditioning and wellness which takes place in this [Ashram] conducive environment. It must be noted that this value of life is not taught but lived and unless one sees it, experiences it, feels it, becomes sensitive to it, no change will occur.

There is intense self-observation while they quieten themselves and then the work proceeds, always from that inner movement to the outer,

always a return to the self and then the children are observed from that place of seeing without partiality or prejudice or bias.

After the teacher training, the teacher can decide whether she wants to stay here or join a mainstream school. Many have infiltrated and wherever they have gone there has been light. In my opinion, however, IE and mainstream teacher training should remain separate because if you are trained in IE, it is not easy to make the shift to mainstream. This would entail unlearning the traditional method and relearning an IE one.

The Auro Navakriti Preschool interviews discussed the intrinsic importance of indigenous knowledge to IE. Emerging from the Mirambika data, however, is the experience of English as a first language and the deleterious impact on the children. The return to Hindi (and later Sanskrit), demonstrated the benefit of mother tongue teaching, consistent with international acknowledgement of this fact. The response of the principal is as follows:

On the issue of the use of the indigenous language, in a country like India [former colony] English was taught as a first language which was an unnatural medium. It was detected in the children's outlook and personality and also, they would never pass a Hindi exam. In the Sri Aurobindo school, they would get the highest score in English but fail in Hindi. As a result, we decided to shift to Hindi first language and it is really helping the children with learning two languages together, the strength is established. In fact, we have introduced Sanskrit which is providing a firm foundation.

Thus, the use of mother tongue, one of the issues raised in this study enhances the child's language acquisition, is critical for affirming a child's cultural identity and improves all-round learning capacity. On the whole, the responses in the Mirambika Free Progress School confirm and validate those that emerged in the Auro Navakriti Preschool, with the addition of aspects not explicitly expressed, most notably, teacher training, preparedness for life and the use of mother tongue in the early years.

9.6 OBSERVATION

9.6.1 Introduction

The arrangement to observe the children on-site and in their classrooms during the school day was made with the assistance of the principals of both schools. Considering that this study focuses on the application of an IE approach for the age cohort of 3 – 4-year-old children, the observations were located in the appropriate classrooms. In Auro Navakriti Preschool the 3 – 4-year-old group (Teacher A on 14/11/2017) and in Mirambika Free Progress School the class of 4-year-old children (Teacher M on 13/11/2017).

9.6.1.1 Auro Navakriti Preschool (Class of Teacher A)

The children arrive at the school, either picked up by the school transport or are dropped off by their parents. In either instance, they are escorted through the school gate and handed over to the receiving teacher who enthusiastically welcomes their arrival. If the child uses the school van, she/he is accompanied by a teacher assistant in the vehicle with the driver forming part of the support structure for the child. The arrival of the children at school is a ritual charged with outpourings of excitement and love. No child appears reluctant or unhappy to be at school and parents are encouraged to linger on if the child is uneasy about the separation. Generally, children are gathered in the school grounds which are relatively expansive for a city school and engage in free play or are occupied with their teachers who are constantly at hand.

The school day begins at 9.45 and ends at 12.00. At the start of the school session, the children gather with their teacher at an open-air assembly and are addressed by the principal with affirming and encouraging messages or advice in a conversational tone. Thereafter, the children proceed into their classrooms with their teachers – three per class with a teacher aid – for their first indoor session. The classroom has four learning corners equipped with materials, apparatus and toys (puzzles for cognitive skills; chalk slate for eye/hand and imagination; joining blocks for imagination and motor skills;

sorting for fine motor skills) for acquiring different skills. This involves all the children playing and working on various tasks in the same classroom, under the close guidance of the teachers. Based on a child-centred approach to teaching, the learning corners give children the freedom to choose what to do and promotes socialisation in learning. As indicated (Refer to 7.4.1.2.3), the IE programme draws from the Montessori method, in this case of letting children learn together, work with tasks that build concentration and encourage independent and inquiring learning styles. In this exercise, children are given the freedom of choice in the selection of an activity/game in a corner which seems to encourage greater interest and enjoyment and more motivation to work and play. Moreover, they learn to make decisions and have self-determination, the key to the IE goals of early learning education. Significantly, learning is never static nor repetitive because as the child masters each area, the challenges are increased incrementally.

Drama, dance and music are an integral part of the indoor activities promoting communal participation, an appreciation of the arts to develop an aesthetic sense and reinforcing the cultural identity of the children. During this time up to half of the class is engaged in their own tasks and teachers are free to focus on small groups or one-on-one with some children. Throughout, the teachers observe closely making mental notes of significant markers. These will be aired at the end of the school day in a gathering of the full complement of the teaching staff with the principal. These lively daily discussions offer a space for the teachers to share their experiences as well as concerns and plan for the following day based on the children's needs.

The first session draws to a close at 10.15 and children are prepared for their 'tiffin time' (a 'tiffin' is a metal food storage container that keeps food warm) between 10.30 and 11.00. Children bring their own food and sharing amongst them is encouraged. Thus, mealtimes are another opportunity to reinforce the close connection between the teachers and the children who sit together in a circle on the floor. A conversation is initiated by the teacher during this time

and children participate readily albeit in an orderly manner, simultaneously learning the value of listening and being heard.

Outdoor play comprising painting (easel stands and paint are set up at various points in the school grounds), games (such as ballgames, jumping, skipping, crawling, climbing), gardening and watering plants and feeding the rabbits (a rabbit pen in the school grounds for teaching animal love and care) follows the mealtime session. Children are engaged in the range of activities between 11.00 and 11.45 with their teachers in close attendance and fully participating in the games. Each activity has a particular learning skill in the midst of play, fun and enjoyment. To this end, Montessori equipment and educational toys are used. In addition, children go on regular guided nature walks through the campus to foster a sense of oneness with the natural world, especially as an antidote to city living.

Towards the end of the school day, at 11.45, there is a 15-minute meditation session that focuses on peace, happiness and harmony to ensure that children are brought to a calmness and quietness after the range of activities. On the campus is a shrine area that children are encouraged to visit for a sense of spiritual wellness. On the whole, the daily programme at Auro Navakriti Preschool demonstrates the effective application of a multidimensional, holistic pedagogic model that seeks to develop all aspects of the child's being. The close and trusting relationship between the teacher and the children, referenced throughout the study and, particularly, in this chapter seems to be key to the delivery of the programme. The teachers are constantly engaging the children, sustaining their interest and assisting them, when necessary, in an ethos of understanding and love. The children appear immersed in the fun and play-based learning activities and exude enthusiasm and enjoyment throughout the school day.

9.6.1.2 Mirambika Free Progress School (Class of Teacher M)

The school day begins at 9.00 and children begin arriving by 8.45, welcomed by the class teacher individually outside the class. Each parent signs a daily

register and records the time of drop off when handing the child over to the teacher. Exuberant children are held by the teacher and calmed very briefly. Generally, parents exchange with the class teacher some relevant information about the child, similar to the handing over exercise typical in staff rotation situations. Children appear eager and happy to be in school and with the teacher. This brief period already establishes the close connection between the teacher and the children, especially noted in the children's sense of ease and comfort as they transition easily from home to school. This personal and trusting teacher-child relationship is likewise demonstrated in Auro Navakriti Preschool.

The class session begins with a 5-to-10-minute dialogue between the teacher and children on any topic the child wishes to discuss or raise. Each child speaks briefly while the teacher and the other children listen attentively to the comment/story. The exercise promotes engagement between the teacher and the children and amongst the children. It also develops thinking and listening skills, language proficiency and patience. Equally in Auro Navakriti Preschool, dialogue and engagement with the children are used liberally to build trust and cement the teacher-child bond.

The session is followed by a birthday celebration of one of the class children and the event is artfully transformed into a learning opportunity. The teacher, together with the trainee teacher and parent volunteer (this is a typical combination of adults in attendance) escort the children to the garden to collect flowers in honour of the celebration and to beautify the classroom. Children learn about sharing joy, appreciating nature and the outdoors and harmony and collaboration. In addition, the children's careful concentric arrangement of the collected flowers develops their fine motor skills. Throughout the process, the teacher sings gently creating a calm and serene atmosphere in the classroom which has the same effect on the children.

Continuing the birthday theme for the day, the children sing songs of their own choice in celebration of the birthday. The accompanying hand and body

movements are part of their gross motor skills in physical education. At 10.00 piped music in all the classrooms indicate the daily ten-minute meditation exercise, similar to the session at Auro Navakriti Preschool. Meditation and yoga are essential components of the IE programme based on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's teachings.

The restful, meditative session is followed by practice of the arts in the form of energetic song and dance with children enthusiastically participating. During this time the teacher observes closely, as noted in Auro Navakriti Preschool during the learning corners session and can identify any child not fully participating. In this instance, special effort is made to draw the child in which demonstrates the importance of close observation for immediate corrective measures and the acceptance that children develop differently. Additionally, the observation indicates the teachers' commitment to individualised attention, a principle that is fundamental to an IE approach.

The art and craft session on that day is the design and creation of a birthday card which involves the teachers' careful preparation. A range of skills is developed in this exercise, including the reinforcing of critical values which underpin the IE programme. Analogous to the Auro Navakriti Preschool atmosphere, guided by the teachers, quiet and calm prevails in the school. The small numbers could be contributory although, in general, the children themselves appear to exude peaceful dispositions. In summary, the observation at Mirambika Free Progress School which reinforced learnings made at Auro Navakriti Preschool demonstrated the enthusiasm of the children, the teachers' complete immersion in their work with the children, the innovative daily programme which encompasses the spectrum of the child's learning domains and the general atmosphere of composure.

The observation of the application of the IE daily programme in the classes of the two schools was a necessary corollary to the focus group interviews to provide deeper insight into the workings at site level and to corroborate the responses. On the whole, there is considerable consistency between the

accounts and responses of the participants and the researcher's (albeit, limited) observations. Additionally, there is obvious congruity between the two schools in their application of an IE approach, the qualities of the teachers, the wholeness of the content and the prevailing ethos.

9.7 SUMMARY

In summary, the findings from the focus group and key informant interviews, observation and relevant documents provide valuable learnings on the key aspects of IE relevant to this study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in the final interpretive phase, the researcher reports the "lessons learned" from the case (Lincoln and Guba 1985 in Miller & Salkind 2002: 4). These include specifically understandings that true education involves the centrality of the quest for the child's evolving soul, the prerequisite of self-education and alternate and holistic learning based on a multiplicity of early childhood education modes. In addition, knowledge about the conscious choice, commitment and specific training of IE teachers was revealed in conjunction with the seamless inclusion of the critical components of I/Community K and values in IE. Equally, appreciations of an IE approach to ECD were highlighted for its capacity to develop the whole child towards the pursuit of a "higher truth" for individual growth and the common good, the incorporation of IK for validating cultural identities and values for providing moral and ethical support.

Finally, the findings (focus group interview and observation) from Mirambika Free Progress School confirm and validate those of Auro Navakriti Preschool on a range of relevant elements of an IE approach.

9.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter provides a diverse range of learnings from Delhi, India derived from a variety of sources (Refer to Table 9.1) connected to the Sri Aurobindo Society the cradle of IE on which this study is based. The learnings relate to an IE approach, generally, and an ECD IE approach, specifically. Collectively, they provide valuable insight and support for its recommendation

as a necessary and practicable alternative pedagogic model to early childhood education in South Africa. As this study proposes the gaps in the ECD curriculum framework (NCF, 2015) indicate its incapacity for equal and synchronous development of the whole child towards individual progression in the context of the collective for harmonious and collaborative coexistence. In particular, the lessons learnt have confirmed the primacy of the child's innate knowledge, the dedication and commitment of the IE teacher, a multipronged and holistic pedagogic model, relatable and appropriate content honouring a diversity of knowledge sources and the explicit incorporation of a values-based ethic for character formation. In total, the combination of these aspects within an IE framework as demonstrated in the actual experiences set out in this chapter is strongly proposed to change the trajectory of ECD in South Africa and, by extension, that of society.

CHAPTER 10: CONSOLIDATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the first part identifies and critically discusses the key findings in the three sequential phases of the study relevant to the research question and the identified objectives, as well as the key learnings from the Indian perspective. The second part presents a conclusion of the study which will be followed by the third part, the recommendations.

10.2 CONSOLIDATION OF FINDINGS

The consolidated findings presented here are based on the findings and discussions in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the case study in Chapter 9 from which key learnings will be set out. The objectives of the study were to investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from integral education which incorporates indigenous knowledge Ubuntu values and principles for social responsibility and civic participation; explore the theoretical and philosophical considerations that should guide the development of an integral education ECD programme underpinned by Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation; develop an IE ECD programme based on the indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation; implement the programme in three of the six ECD sample sites and evaluate the programme by applying the evaluation instrument prior to and post-implementation and develop a framework for an IE ECD programme underpinned by the IK values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.

The key findings are presented according to the three phases and linked to the study objectives.

10.3. PHASE 1: EXPLORATORY

The first objective of the study, as noted in the introduction, was to investigate the nature and extent to which the current ECD curriculum and practice could benefit from integral education which incorporates IK Ubuntu

values and principles. To this end, the exploratory phase sought to determine whether there were gaps in the ECD curriculum in not applying an IE approach to achieve the identified outcomes to develop a new generation of caring and compassionate children to prepare for meaningful participation in democracy in South Africa.

As noted, (Refer to Chapter 4), the interview schedules in this study were segmented broadly into three predetermined themes – Values, Integral/Holistic Education and Indigenous Knowledge Ubuntu - and, collaboratively, explored critical areas to respond to the research question.

10.3.1. Values

10.3.1.1. Finding explicit values gaps in ECD

One of the key findings of the focus group interviews in South Africa, critical to this study, was a significant gap in the ECD curriculum in not explicitly including values. The term ‘values’ was generally understood to connote characteristics of kindness, empathy, virtue and essential for individual and collective well-being. There was also the conception that implicit values in the form of prayer, hygienic habits, courtesies and similar school rituals promoted values in preschools. While these forms of instilling values may serve the purpose of reinforcing a values ethic, this study argues instead for the explicit inclusion of values in the curriculum with engagement on a deeper level. In clarifying this distinction (Thornberg 2008), indicate that explicit values education refers to preschools and schools’ official curricula of what and how to teach values and morals, including teachers’ explicit intentions and practices of values education, while implicit values education is associated with a hidden curriculum and implicit values embedded in school and classroom practices (Halstead 1996; Thornberg 2008 cited in Thornberg 2016: 247). Thus, the finding of the explicit values gap in the curriculum had a specific bearing on the study which claimed that the deliberate integration of values, generally, and Ubuntu values, specifically, could have a positive impact on children’s behaviour, attitude and actions, especially if introduced in the preschool years.

The responses were unequivocal about the explicit values gap in the ECD curriculum and supported the claim made in the study of its incapacity to develop all aspects of the child, especially those associated with character education. In this respect, Kwak (2007), dispels the apparent competing tendencies in values education between character education based on virtue ethics and citizenship education based on democratic values. According to him, they are both embraced as character education and should complement each other rather than compete in values education (Kwak 2007: 147-8), a position which resonates with this study. Character education under the umbrella of values education should incorporate both virtue ethics and citizenship education which jointly contribute to the development of the individual within a collective toward harmonious social co-existence, the aim of this study.

Particularly germane to this study was the finding that the cognitive development of the child was privileged in the preschool curriculum for academic school readiness as a result of which non-cognitive or social skills were relegated. In this context, Aspin (2007), questions whether the transmission of knowledge should be the central concern of schools as educating institutions. There are, he argues, other aims of education and to concentrate emphasis upon this one only is to risk falling into the fallacy of mistaking the part for the whole (Aspin 2007: 45). Similarly, Patry, Weyringer and Weinberger (2007) maintain that knowledge education and values education are typically seen as antagonists and doing one automatically inhibits doing the other because it is presumed that the two goals cannot be combined (Patry, Weyringer and Weinberger 2007: 160). Thus, whole child development in the early education phase, the central argument of this study, cannot be achieved with the higher ranking of the cognitive domain over the other domains.

This finding of an explicit values gap in the ECD curriculum emerged equally in the interviews with the South African key informants. The view was that the omission of values education in present times was consonant with

mainstream education systems in most countries which educate for knowledge, skills and competencies to the exclusion of feeling, attitude and behaviour. In view of the increasing disconnect between knowledge and action, a different approach that educates for feeling (emotional literacy) by integrating values education to influence how children interact with others, was imperative. In this regard, the right type of education may reside in indigenous systems, especially the holistic nature of incorporating values, belief systems and skills, starting at an early stage in childhood development.

Further, it was suggested that an effective approach to preschool learning should consider making better use of the family since shaping consciousness should begin at an early stage which involved child-rearing practices, especially the nurturing influence of the mother. Thus, finding ways of integrating the family into the education system and bridging the divide between the public and the private were crucial to developing a different and alternate approach to education.

The point was noted that although the ECD NCF (2015) incorporated a wide range of developmental aspects that linked to values, it ultimately depended on interpretation in practice by the practitioners, an approach that appeared to indicate less emphasis on the soft skills. Thus, without the explicit inclusion of values education, children were unlikely to develop skills in values in the same way as they would in numeracy or literacy. According to Aspin (2007), values education is concerned with the promotion of moral, social, political and aesthetic values as vital elements in programmes of education for future life; for personal growth, which includes the values of democracy, and for the development of autonomous individuals in society, a process that will necessarily last throughout an individual's lifespan (Aspin 2007: 30), and which is consonant with this study's purpose.

10.3.1.2 Prevalence of deviant behaviour and attitudes in preschools

As noted in the literature, anti-social and deviant behaviour amongst young people was increasingly commonplace in South Africa. The ECD staff's experiences of aggression and violence amongst many preschool children seemed to validate the research on violence amongst youth in schools. The collective responses depict attitudes and actions of children that tend towards being harsh and rough, findings that appear consistent with the levels of violence in the country and to which children are continuously exposed.

According to the Department of Social Development/ Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities/UNICEF (2012) report on violence against children, South Africa is replete with high levels of violence which can be explained variously, including its historical roots, most notably the State-sanctioned violence to solve problems. Thus, for the majority of people in the country, violence was and continues to be used as a strategy to resolve conflict (RSA, DSD, DWCPD and UNICEF 2012: 3-4). In addition, as noted in Chapter 2, children may also be victims of the violence of the past as a consequence of the intergenerational transmission of past knowledge and experience (Jansen 2010: 1). This form of inherited violence, therefore, could continue to play out in children's lives, more especially in "sub-economic urban areas such as the townships" (RSA, DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012: 3-4), where this study was located. This reality was confirmed in the findings where respondents ascribed the prevalence of adverse tendencies, inter alia, to the negative environmental influences in the township. Consequently, there is an obligation to transform the existing pedagogic approach, as this study avers, to one that develops a higher consciousness (a state of mindfulness while being conscious of everything and everyone around and appreciating everything) starts with encouraging the child towards an inward journey. in the child toward individual and collective wellness.

An equally significant finding was of some of the ECD staff respondents countering the prevailing accounts of children's deviant behaviour by

indicating that the children in their classes displayed mainly prosocial tendencies of sharing, empathy and affection, because of their concerted interventions. Participants underlined the prevalence of empathy as a significant indicator that preschool children were sensitised to the feelings of other children. This finding reinforced the study's claim that children's aberrant behaviour and attitudes could be corrected with conscious and targeted interventions through an appropriate ECD approach. Additionally, while the variance in the classroom/teacher experiences with preschool children by some respondents was noted, the experiences of children's aggressive and deviant behaviour and attitudes dominated in both focus group interviews and underscored the imperative for intervention in these early years when sustainable learning is optimal.

10.3.1.3 Beneficial impact of values in ECD

The view of most of the ECD staff respondents was that the explicit inclusion of values in ECD sets the foundation for the acquisition of critical life skills. Participants indicated strongly that only benefits could derive from values in ECD, endorsing one of the significant aspects of the study, the integration of values in the ECD curriculum.

In a similar vein, most of the ECD community respondents indicated that the benefit of values in ECD was the potential to develop personal honour, create peaceful and cohesive communities and, ultimately, enhance the image of the country. Implicit in this is the general concern for the deepening moral and ethical crisis in South Africa and its battered international image which must be redeemed. In this context, Turiel (2001) maintains that engaging in education in the moral domain is imperative. Most people want the children of their society to be, at least, guided in the process of becoming less aggressive, less violent, more altruistic, more fair, more charitable, more civil, and much more (Tauriel 2001: ix).

In addition, ECD staff respondents endorsed the benefits of values in ECD because it exploited optimally early learning opportunities. As indicated,

studies show the lifelong benefits of early interventions. According to a World Health Report (2007), children's experiences in the early years set a critical foundation for their entire life course. This is because ECD, including health, physical, social/emotional and language/cognitive domains, strongly influence basic learning, school success, economic participation, social citizenry and health (Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman 2007: 5). The responses underscored children's openness to learning opportunities at the preschool stage for sustainability and support the argument made in the study of the potential in ECD for transformative education.

The findings on appropriate values for preschool children were those that resonated with social responsibility and interconnectedness with all life forms. Thus, the starting point suggested was the way human beings treat one other and should extend beyond this to include animals and the planet. Included was the sine qua non of moral responsibility, especially since the idea of having duties as well as rights was a crucial indigenous local value that also helped parents considerably. In this context of moral responsibility, respect for the hierarchical system of relationships was a value that was losing currency in communities, especially respect for older persons. Western ways of raising children have had deleterious consequences, especially in relation to sharing and understanding the responsibility not only towards themselves but towards the whole community, encapsulated in the spirit of Ubuntu that had kept communities together.

In the same way, ecological wisdom and sustainability which have been neglected by ECD programmes should be consciously taught, especially in light of the current condition of the planet. This neglect of ecological education in the preschool phase finds resonance with Hägglund and Samuelsson's (2009) position on the issue. They argue that while efforts have been made to include education for global survival in school curricula, little attention has been paid to the way early childhood education might (and should) be involved (Hägglund and Samuelsson 2009: 49).

10.3.2 Integral/Holistic education

10.3.2.1 Lacking ECD holistic education

The majority finding was the agreement of the respondents that a holistic (or IE) approach was not currently applied in ECD, but that there could be great value and worth if implemented. Although the relevant early learning developmental areas (ELDAS) in the NCF, well-being; identity and belonging; knowledge and understanding of the world (RSA, DoE. NCF 2015: 8), were intended to develop positive life skills, its mainstream approach privileged cognitive development. Conversely, an IE approach enabled the equal and simultaneous development of all developmental areas, inclusive of the emotional, moral, interpersonal, spiritual, and cultural. Moreover, the fragmented pedagogic approach in mainstream education approaches of the subject or learning area categorisation and the separation between theory and practice are contraindicated for integral and unitive education. In this context, Partho (2007) argues that the child is integrally the head, heart, the senses and the body, and more, representing its wholeness which an integral education approach honours (Partho 2007: 19).

The majority of the respondents referred to the holistic approach as one that is different from the existing curriculum with the potential to develop the emotional and moral aspects of the child. Equally, the findings confirm that the current curriculum focuses on the cognitive domain, a view reinforced by the insubstantial or ineffectual 'integrated approach' (NELDS) promoted by the ECD curriculum which merely integrates or links the learning areas while privileging cognitive development. Similarly, the ECD community responses indicated the inadequacy of the current education system, generally, and the ECD curriculum, specifically, to meet the needs of their children by failing to apply whole child education which would better prepare them for harmonious co-existence in their communities and society.

The finding also highlighted the general dissatisfaction with the South African schooling system, especially in the context of mainstream education which

failed to consider all aspects of the child's development. In this context of the mainstream schooling system, Miller (2005) in a paper on holistic education, advised the following:

...we need to understand the limitations of educational systems. Schools do not change society; schools primarily serve to maintain a society's self-image...When cultural transformation begins to support a more holistic worldview, then we will see holistic education practised more widely than in isolated independent schools or the classrooms of unusually radical teachers (Miller 2005: 6).

These insights on mainstream, most pointedly into its limitations in capacity (or purpose) to effect social change seem to align with the findings from the ECD community interview. The general disillusionment with the schooling system and the ECD curriculum, referenced above, strongly indicate the perspective of a failure to meet their expectations. The option, however, of holistic education is currently largely the preserve of the economically privileged class and can only be realised in public preschools with the introduction, as this study proposes, of an IE/holistic approach to ECD.

In highlighting the deficiencies in the education system, the respondents affirmed the claim made in the study of the failure in the ECD curriculum to affect the whole child education. Furthermore, the prospect of ushering in change to the education system is accentuated in the finding of the participants' endorsement of the study to develop an ECD IE curriculum framework with IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation.

10.3.2.2 Supporting all-round or whole child education

The majority findings in this aspect indicated that an IE approach was beneficial because it facilitated holistic and all-round child development, as opposed to the existing ECD curriculum which focused on the mind or cognition, a perspective which was articulated in the aspect of the extent of IE in the ECD curriculum (Refer above).

The understanding is that, unlike the current ECD curriculum that prepared children narrowly for school readiness, an IE or holistic education approach

prepared children for life readiness by applying the principle of all-round child development.

The collective findings that IE engaged children in prosocial values, extend and reinforce the majority finding of whole child development which has a natural affinity to the acquisition of prosocial values. Thus, the participants view IE/holistic education as beneficial to ECD and support the contention made in the study that this pedagogic approach could add great value in the preschool phase through engagement with beneficial and affirming values to better equip children to respect themselves, others and the spaces they share with others. These values are critical to countering the violence and anti-social behaviour in schools, as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2.

Emerging from the responses of the IE key informants was that an IE approach is predicated on the development of a higher consciousness. In this way, thoughts and feelings which drive actions will derive from a common source and be inspirational and naturally harmonious, which is the goal of integral education in all its fields of application. In education, generally, and ECD, specifically, as a holistic paradigm, it seeks to develop in children individual well-being within the collective. The sense of interconnectedness with community and society is largely what impels the educative process. According to White (2007), the field of holistic education has as its primary goal the fullest possible development of learners' self-actualisation. Such development of the learner includes higher levels of consciousness through educational intellectual development while also cultivating their relationship with others in society. The advancement of society is held to be a consequential correlation to facilitating a person's self-actualisation (White 2007: 120).

According to the theory of integral education, there are two basic components to its application. The first one is to help the child connect with its inner source of inspiration or soul to guide the mind and challenge the emotions (psyche) and the second one is to assist the child to develop its capabilities in

the body, emotions and mind (social disposition), while aligned with the higher source of inspiration. Thus, integral education is the alignment of the outer personality with the inner source of inspiration, “a synthesis of Western psychology, which focuses on the outer personality and social behaviour, with Eastern spirituality which focuses on the inner person and the psyche” (*ibid*: 122). It is an education that helps the child connect with that deeper source while integrating the various parts under the guidance of a facilitator tasked with drawing things out from that source and helping the child become inspired.

An IE approach considers every child as ‘a soul in evolution’, a phrase that encapsulates the larger framework of IE. Thus, development is ongoing and continuous and determined by the individual pace of the child. In this way, no child is left behind or made to feel incompetent, especially according to the universal standards, generally based on Western and Eurocentric standards and measurements of child development (Refer to Chapter 2, 2.2). The education process, therefore, requires perpetual reflecting on what will be offered, what will be learnt, how will the teacher surrender her and the child’s growth to a higher working in all the dimensions - mental, vital, physical - while keeping the psychic centre stable and calm.

Equally significant was the finding that an IE approach is applicable in any situation and locale and can be effective in a classroom of 90 or 20 children because it involves the progressive development of the teacher’s own awareness toward the development of each child, coupled with the personal gratification of preparing the child for life readiness. In this context, the possible concern that the origin and application of IE is India and, therefore, may not be contextually relevant to South Africa, is accordingly dispelled. Thus, the teacher training programme is a critical component to the effective application of an ECD IE approach, as evidenced in the intervention phase of this study (Refer to Chapter 7).

In summing up the findings of the interviews with key informants, a strong case was made for an IE approach to ECD because, at its most fundamental level, it develops a deep sense of awareness of the self and the surroundings in children, thus, enabling a consciousness of the individual toward self and collective well-being. This imperative, it is argued, is especially critical for a new generation of children to engage meaningfully and positively in South Africa's democracy. Additionally, the point of consensus in the responses here is the importance of the teacher/ practitioner/facilitator in this reciprocal learning process, which is directed toward making the child free, independent and self-assured in the journey to "figuring out the world". Finally, despite the NCF (2015) promoting in spirit a holistic approach to ECD, this is not carried through in practice. Consequently, only a select group of teachers has the capacity to apply this approach, thus excluding the majority of poorly trained and under-resourced teachers and children who are primarily the beneficiaries in this study.

10.3.3 IK/Ubuntu

10.3.3.1 Devaluing IK in ECD

The majority finding in this aspect emerging from the ECD staff interview is the domination of Western influences on the curriculum and practice and the concomitant exclusion of IK. While there may be 'windows of opportunity' for practitioners to include some IK content – under particular and relevant themes and topics – this is largely through the endeavours of individuals and not standard practice, similar to the inclusion of values in only some ECD classrooms (Refer above).

The findings further indicate that the absence of IK content in the ECD programme has the effect of cultural irrelevance to, in this sample, African children. The teaching/learning content still favours Western/Eurocentric pedagogy and materials and, as such, excludes the children's own cultural identities and worlds (Refer to Chapter 2), despite research indicating that learning is more impactful, meaningful and relevant when the cultural background and experience of children are substantially accommodated. In

this context, Hyde and Kabiru (2006) confirm that the centre-based programmes in Africa tend to be heavily influenced by Western culture and sometimes are not relevant to the needs of children and society. The curriculum in these centres tends to ignore the positive aspects of the people's culture. Moreover, parents and communities are rarely involved in the development of the curriculum as a result of which their strengths, values, beliefs, aspirations, creativity and accumulated knowledge are not incorporated into the ECD activities (Hyde and Kabiru 2006: 81-2). Similarly, Evans and Myers argue that indigenous child-rearing practices and beliefs are important for early childhood care and development because they are both pragmatically sound and intrinsically valuable (Evans and Myers, 1994 in Pence and Schafer 2006: 2). The value, therefore, of IK in ECD for the range of reasons indicated, cannot be overstated, not the least of which is the ongoing epistemic injustice in the continued exclusion of the "strengths, values, beliefs, aspirations, creativity and accumulated knowledge" (ibid) of communities.

Thus, the findings on the extent of IK in the current ECD curriculum reveal an exclusion of IK, a dominance of Western content and the consequent dearth of cultural relevance. In addition, the concern is expressed of the imminent loss of IK on account of the diminishing number of knowledge holders in the absence of the perpetuation of this valuable knowledge source. The findings also point to the urgency to source and include IK in the ECD curriculum which is a primary goal of this study.

Analogous to the ECD staff finding of the exclusion of IK and consequently the detrimental impact on cultural relevance is the majority finding of the ECD community that the disappearance of IK leads to the loss of cultural anchors and identity. This perspective was reinforced in the findings that indicate the general acceptance of a causal link between Western hegemony and the disappearance of IK. In this regard, parents acknowledged their own failures in 'allowing' or not attempting to prevent this dissolution of IK and, therefore,

concede the imperative to restore aspects of IK, particularly for cultural relevance and authentic identity (Refer to Chapter 6).

Thus, the majority finding in this aspect of children's exposure to IK is its continuing disappearance and, consequently, the imperative to restore relevant and appropriate components. This finding is instructive to this study which makes the claim, amongst others, that the IK values of Ubuntu should be included in preschool learning programmes, for, inter alia, cultural context, relevance and affirmation.

10.3.3.2 Reclaiming IK and its value system

The significant finding in this aspect is that IK can offer solutions to solve current challenges resulting from an industrialised and consumerist society and an education system that has an almost singular focus on cognitive development and, consequently, neglects valuable life skills. Respondents referenced the deleterious effects of an individualistic society, largely the result of the domination of European and Western influences. Included in the responses was a range of possibilities vested in IK which highlighted the holistic development of children associated with IK in ECD. Many expressed the view that unless children were affirmed in their own culture, there was limited scope for them to learn about and appreciate the different cultures, especially in a multi-cultural country like South Africa.

The major finding in this aspect is that IK promotes meaningful and relevant education. The few concerns expressed about the possibility of introducing change into an established and monolithic Western cultural system bolsters the argument of the devaluing and marginalisation of IK (Refer to Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and 10.2.3.2 above), and the hegemony of knowledge types and sources. Overall, respondents were unequivocal about IK being beneficial in ECD and, therefore, supported this study's claim of the potential of IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation in ECD, as argued in Chapters 1 and 2. Implicit in this response are the assumed gaps in the current ECD curriculum which fail to (i) focus on whole child development, (ii)

incorporate cultural context, (iii) embed a strong value system,(iv) synchronously develop the head, heart, body and spirit, and (v) foster interconnectedness and interdependence.

The finding is that despite the NCF (2015) making provision to initiate ways for IK to be incorporated, this knowledge has not been integrated into the ECD programmes. The imperative to incorporate IK, based on studies undertaken over the years, remains a glaring omission. This is of particular importance to this study given the assumption that the current ECD curriculum/programme is inadequate in applying a holistic education model through cultural affirmation. The recommendation, however, for deeper discussions on the inclusion of IK and its application in a globalised world is noted, especially if the inclusion is perfunctory and placatory. This concern is based on the experience that the inclusion of IK generally tends to fall into a more top-down teacher-directed style of teaching and learning which aligns with the traditional way children were taught and raised, denying them agency and participation.

On the whole, the viewpoint on the absence of IK in practice is endorsed and the addition of those aspects of IK which have not been satisfactorily included is supported, especially those that have been tested over time like storytelling, songs, rhymes and certain concepts that help children test their creativity and understanding. In this way, over time, a body of this knowledge can be created. This perspective harmonises with the study's objective to incorporate in the ECD programme those cultural artefacts that promote IK Ubuntu values and enrich the ECD curriculum. Further, the introduction in the ECD classroom of African fables and stories with affirming role models, heroes and indigenous kings that have hitherto been excluded from the programme reinforces this objective.

The finding that the omission of IK is the result of the general weakness of early childhood education but also the discriminatory education at all levels is critical in the context of redress proposed in this study. This bias is ascribed

to Western education through Christianity which marginalised and devalued IK. Thus, in striving to make the current formal education more relevant, there must be an acknowledgement that Western knowledge is not the only knowledge. The incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge is imperative in consideration of the background of the children, in terms of their indigenous languages and ways of knowing. In addition, the parents and the knowledge practitioners in the community must have a place in the classroom which is not the case now because formal education views IK as primitive and unscientific and, therefore, irrelevant (Shizha 2013: 4)

The findings indicate that both the NCF (2015) and the South African Constitution create space for the inclusion of IK and the affirmation of cultural identity. In practice, however, IK continues to be marginalised and excluded from the ECD programme, despite recognition of the value of exposing children to what is important in their heritage and home and, more broadly, gives them confidence and affirms them and provides them with a place from which to branch out and explore new things. Collectively, the respondents strongly support the explicit incorporation of IK in ECD, especially the culturally relevant stories, poems, rhymes, proverbs and songs which carry particular meaning and learning for children.

10.3.4 Summary

The findings of the exploratory phase reveal that the ECD staff and community focus groups signalled a gap in the ECD curriculum regarding the inclusion of explicit values education and unequivocally endorsed the benefits of including values that promote social responsibility in the preschool phase, especially considering the prevalence of aggressive and violent behaviour amongst preschool children. Equally, the results confirm that the ECD curriculum lacks an IE/holistic approach, despite its clearly articulated benefits which include whole child development for individual well-being within a collective and, therefore, support its proposed application. The devaluing and marginalisation of IK were further highlighted and, drawing from knowledge and experience, respondents endorsed the positive influence

of IK and the benefits that could accrue with its incorporation in the ECD curriculum through IK Ubuntu values. Finally, the findings of the interviews with the key informants, individually and jointly, acknowledge the importance of this study and validate its proposal that an ECD IE approach with IK values of Ubuntu can and should be applied to build social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children.

10.3.5 Philosophical and Theoretical Frameworks

10.3.5.1 Finding Synergies between African humanism and the integral paradigm

The second objective of the study is identifying the philosophical and theoretical considerations that should guide the development of an integral education ECD intervention programme based on IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation. Accordingly, the philosophies of African humanism and holism which underpin an integral education approach and the Ubuntu way of life, guided the development of a holistic ECD programme to prepare the child to function optimally in life by becoming self-aware and self-reliant and naturally contribute towards human development (Refer o Chapter 3).

An integral paradigm develops all the constituent elements of a human being for individual and collective welfare simultaneously and equally. and, therefore, has the potential to create a new social order of socially responsible, caring and compassionate people. Similarly, the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu, essentially an African philosophy of humanism, has much in common with the fundamental concept of integral education and its way of life. Ubuntu aims to provide a unifying vision of community built upon compassionate, respectful, interdependent relationships and collective responsibility. This fundamental respect for the rights of others and a deep allegiance to the collective identity, rooted in a moral and ethical foundation, are manifest in both Ubuntu and Integral Education.

10.3.5.2 Promoting equality of opportunities

Theoretically, the study employed a critical theory framework with particular emphasis on the theories of postcolonialism and postmodernism and a reconceptualist approach to interrogate the South African ECD curriculum, programmes and practices that continue to be grounded in Western child development literature and thus, perpetuate a colonial mindset that privileges Euro-Western standards while simultaneously negating other cultures, practices and knowledge sources. Consequently, it proposed an alternate transformed ECD curriculum to better serve the ideals of a democratic society founded on Ubuntu values.

One of the main focuses of the study is an exploration of the current ECD curriculum and programmes to substantially and effectively educate South African children to meet the needs of a society trying to come to terms with its new-found democracy. Inherent in this is the imperative to overhaul systems that continue to perpetuate, implicitly or explicitly, unequal power relations. Hence, through the lens of postcolonialism and the stance of activism, the study proposed social transformation (Viruru 2005: 9). Equally, the study drew on the postmodernist theory of the ECE reconceptualists who examine how early childhood education can be recreated in ways that are most socially just and representative of diverse ways of knowing to correct power imbalances that impact the sector, at all levels (Soto & Swadener 2002: 40).

10.4 PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENTAL

The third objective is to develop an integral education ECD programme based on the indigenous knowledge values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation. In preparation for this process, the participating practitioners were workshopped on relevant aspects of the approach and generally prepared for its application.

10.4.1 Awakening to a new ECD approach

Teacher preparedness in IE involves an emotional and psychological readiness for the mutual and reciprocal learning experience. The

practitioners' concept of this aspect, however, was confined to the material and conventional concerns around classroom cleanliness and lesson preparation which are mainly administrative functions requiring no personal or inner growth.

As a whole, the IE teacher must acknowledge and accept the child's self-identity and aspire to facilitate the evolution of its consciousness. Implicit in this is enabling a deep awareness and sensitivity instead of filling the mind with information. The IE teacher shares a oneness with the child and, thus, allows their mutual and joyful learning which must derive from a multiplicity of sources. Thus, the expectations of the IE teacher exceed those of the teacher in a mainstream or conventional education system, as attested to by the participating practitioners in their responses and reflections.

The respondents understood that the concept of higher consciousness - a state of mindfulness while being conscious of everything and everyone around and appreciating everything - starts with encouraging the child towards an inward journey. This is facilitated by the learning activities/programme which must begin with learning about oneself, consonant with teacher development goals that learning is mutual and reciprocal. In addition, participants suggested that being spiritually connected with oneself would more likely direct one to serve people honestly because of the concern for the feelings of people. This perspective is areligious (Refer also to spirituality in the curriculum in 8.2.2.1) and refers to the deeper reflective powers that enable both a subjective and objective perspective. As IE facilitators, changing perspectives and ways of doing and being to embrace an integral way of life, mainly the harmonious co-existence with all life forms, is essential.

The respondents pointed out that although the NCF (2015) in theory promoted the holistic development of the child - emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually – in practice learning is fragmented and there is no understanding, nor a clear programme of how holistic development could be

achieved. This finding was significant in highlighting that while the holistic approach was promoted in the NCF, it lacked interpretation and, therefore, application (Refer to Chapter 4, 4.5.1), as evidenced by the responses of the practitioners. Thus, the gap in adequately developing all aspects of the child should be addressed, especially in light of the apparent failure of the current education system to deliver positive outcomes (Refer to Chapters 1 and 2 regarding anti-social and violent behaviour in schools).

Moreover, the respondents understood the need for personal transformation and the responsibility of the IE teacher to commit to a mutual and reciprocal learning relationship with the child in pursuance of a higher consciousness.

In summary, the findings from the IE teacher preparation workshops reveal that participants acknowledged and understood that educating children was a mutual and reciprocal process necessitating transformation of the self to bring about the evolution of a higher consciousness in the child. Significantly, there was a collective agreement that the ECD programme was inadequate and that the proposition of an IE approach could be a viable option for meaningful change in children and, by extension, in society.

10.4.2 Co-creating new knowledge

The findings from the IE teacher training workshops informed the development of the intervention, an ECD IE programme with Ubuntu values for children's social responsibility and civic participation.

The development of the intervention programme was based on data from the training workshops, the practice and experience of the participating practitioners, the existing ECD programme, the relevant literature, learnings from the Indian perspective, including an IE programme published by the Sri Aurobindo Society and the stories, songs and poems for IK Ubuntu values from the Umbumbulu community, the study location (Refer to IE Intervention Programme, Annexure M).

10.4.3 Summary

The findings from the development of the intervention reveal that participants were fully cognisant of the IE approach and its divergences from the existing mainstream programme and approach. Consequently, they acknowledged the gaps in the NCF (2015) on a range of levels, most notably its inadequacy in applying a holistic approach, its failure to draw from the child's own knowledge and intuitive power and its exclusion of IK for cultural affirmation.

10.5 PHASE 3: EVALUATION

The objectives were to implement the programme in three of the six ECD sample sites and evaluate the programme by applying the evaluation instrument prior to and post-implementation and develop a framework for an IE ECD programme underpinned by IK values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation.

10.5.1 Discovering reflective practice

As noted in Chapter 7, the intervention programme encompassed broadly the physical, emotional, mental and inner (psychic) aspects of the child's development through a range of classroom activities, which the practitioners applied.

Findings from two participant interviews based on the learning objectives for the evaluation of the application are presented as a whole.

The findings from the responses show the beneficial impact of the programme in the initial stages of application. The results also indicate the conscious transformation of the practitioners in their practice, consistent with the findings above (Refer to 10.4.2). The findings confirm the changes in them as teachers, generally, and as becoming reflective practitioners, particularly and they acknowledge the merits of the approach and the programme. Their awakening of consciousness, evidenced in their responses, suggests a higher sensitisation to the needs of the children and the potential for their continued growth.

The findings range from deeply personal transformation based on self-realisation and emotional healing to enabling professional evolution. In the case of the personal change, it facilitated transparency and honesty in the classroom and a heightened understanding of children and teaching. The professional changes indicated, *inter alia*, the development of new insights into particular aspects of child development, freedom to be creative, the opportunity to draw from natures, needs and inclinations of the children and engaging with children on a deeper and personal engagement level. In summary, the journal entries establish the benefits of an IE approach to personal growth and development, teaching and learning and the anticipated positive change and learning outcomes.

The post-application evaluation with the participating practitioners, a comprehensive evaluation of the IE approach and the intervention, incorporate the practitioners, children and programme. The findings from this segment are presented in each category.

The findings in relation to the practitioners reveal that the core characteristics of an IE teacher are facilitation, self-preparation, relationship building, transformation of self and being a friend to the child. The responses of the participants demonstrate their collective affirmation of these qualities in the application of the programme to achieve the goals of an ECD IE approach.

The findings on the impact of the programme application on the children emerged from an evaluation of the key indicators broadly aligned to the study objectives. These were behaviour and attitude changes, changing from within, holistic development, cultural affirmation and character building and self-awareness. Overall, the responses of the participants indicated slight but noteworthy changes and positive reception to the programme, thus, suggesting further favourable outcomes.

The findings on the IE Programme included a comparison between the IE and mainstream approaches, flexibility to adapt, classroom impact, challenges and strengths and opportunities for change. In total, the

responses indicated greater benefits in whole child development in applying an IE approach, its flexibility to accommodate various aspects of child development and teacher freedoms and the possibilities to effect positive change. The challenges identified were largely around difficulties with replacing existing programmes and did not detract from the strengths and advantages of an IE approach.

In summary, the findings on the evaluation in all three aspects indicate favourable responses to the programme and incremental progress on its application. The affirmative cross-sectoral impact (teacher, child and learning programme) of the intervention augurs well for the realisation of the objectives of this study. Further, it looks forward to the wider implementation of an ECD IE programme with IK Ubuntu values for social responsibility and civic participation towards the development of a new generation of children for a truly participatory democracy in South Africa.

10.5.2 Summary

Collectively, the findings from the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the IE intervention programme indicated the conscious transformation of the practitioners in their practice and the children's positive reception to the programme and its beneficial impact in the initial stages of application. The findings of the evaluation questionnaire confirmed the favourable findings of the positive impact that emerged from the qualitative data.

10.6 LEARNINGS FROM THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Key findings from the Indian perspective were drawn from the focus group interviews and the researcher's observations.

10.6.1 Staff and community IE teachers

10.6.1.1 Respecting wholeness

In an IE approach, the educative process concerns itself with connecting with the soul of the child and is, therefore, a deep, penetrating and time-intensive process unlike that of conventional education that is largely made up of filling the child's mind with information. This 'soul searching' process is manifest in

the finding that the application of IE assists the child in unravelling the purpose of its life, the contribution to be made, the offering to be given, the learning to be undertaken, and how to yield to its own growth and that of the teacher to a higher working (Refer to Chapter 8). Thus, the foundational principle of IE is the development of the self toward contributing to the collective, a model most apt for South African preschool education, as this study proposes, for the development of a new socially responsible generation toward participatory democracy.

In educating the child, the teacher acknowledges and respects the world of wisdom that is innate to the child. This wisdom residing in the child enables it to understand best what is needed and intuitively knows what is to be done. Thus, the task of the teacher is to understand the child's soul and facilitate that in self-expression through observation and respect.

The process of enabling the unfoldment of the soul quality of the child is in the application of the three principles/pillars of IE as mentioned in Chap 2. The actual practice in the class of the three pillars is giving children a choice of four corners and allowing the instinct of the child to determine the choice of activity. No instruction is given on the execution of the activity to enable the intuitive skills of the child. The IE programme activities are underpinned by the all-important requirement to encourage the instinctive and intuitive actions of the child. This is contraindicated in mainstream/conventional education which prioritises the promotion of the intellect and rational thought and generally views intuition and intellect as mutually exclusive. One of the ways, however, of creating a balance between the intellect and the intuition in IE is understanding that the evolving soul is the pivot around which the educative process revolves, and which is manifest in discovering the child's soul.

Furthermore, the learner-directed methodology presupposes that learning is more receptive if it is self-imposed and not directed by an adult. Directed learning tends to encourage rote learning and stifles independent thinking and decision making. Any imposition on a child's learning restricts the journey

of self-discovery and blocks the creative processes. Thus, understanding and respecting the child's work and own efforts 'opens the door' for the functioning of the imagination and self-expression.

In addition, because the soul is not stagnant but evolving in response to whatever is happening, the observation of the child is ongoing and is supplemented and complemented by an understanding of a wide range of knowledge pertaining to the family and parents. In this way, parents are continuously asked about all aspects of the child, while away from school. Observation at all levels of the child is important.

The IE approach is underpinned by a participatory learning ethos. Thus, the collaborative learning process aims at flexibility and, accordingly, eschews a prescribed syllabus. IE is like an experiential mode of learning, dependent on the child's needs and pace and its programme. Therefore, it is not something to complete with a summative assessment, typical of mainstream methods of learning and assessing.

The outline of the IE programme derives from multiple sources of learning and is based on the principle that learning is most effective when children are actively involved and engaged in carrying out tasks that are meaningful to them. Young children learn from everything that happens to them and do not separate their learning into subjects. One of the attributes of IE is that it honours other approaches to education and is committed to being knowledgeable about the strengths and limits of conventional, alternative, holistic and transformative approaches to education. Each of these approaches has valuable contributions to make towards a more integral approach (Esbjorn-Hargens, Reams & Gunnlaugson 2010: 6).

The findings from the responses further pointed to the multifaceted benefits of IE in contrast to mainstream education that discourages children's independent thinking and forces them into academic work and rote learning. Furthermore, it is mostly irrelevant and a failure in preparing children for engagement with the real world (Refer to 10.2.2.2). Conversely, IE has the

capacity to simultaneously develop children's physical, emotional and mental faculties to awaken their intelligences, encourage self-awareness, true reasoning and inspirational thoughts and ideas. It is an education incorporating social, national and civic responsibilities for the complete progress of the child.

10.6.1.2 Committing to mutual learning

The decision to become an IE teacher involves making a firm commitment to guide one's own journey on the path to guiding those of others. This foundational principle of the teaching training programme seems to safeguard a deeply reflective practice through the constant presence of the subjective lens and observing one's own strengths and weaknesses in the process of growth and development. In this context, Esbjorn-Hargens, Reams and Gunnlaugson (2010: 6), maintain that becoming more self-reflective and increasingly aware of trigger points could make us reactive, dismissive, or shut down to ideas and other people is an ongoing process. By learning to look at what we don't want to see in ourselves (and others) we become more compassionate and open to learning.

IE involves constant self and collaboratory awareness necessitating a training programme that accommodates these characteristics. As such, teachers certified in mainstream or conventional education are re-trained in an IE teaching programme while working with the children, making their practice relevant and validating it. The teacher programme includes the awareness of the teacher, her mental understanding and emotional openness to each child and her ability to observe. This attribute of observation is particularly important because the teacher observes her own growth with each child to determine how she will make the child free, independent and self-assured.

The finding that teachers are exemplars in every sense is an *a priori* condition in IE and prospective and existing teachers commit to it. Responses demonstrate that the teacher is the role model, making real examples for children to follow, thus, creating an atmosphere of positivity around the child.

Equally, the parents are an important component of this process to extend the positive and affirming ethos in the home.

10.6.1.3 Honouring all knowledges

IE is premised on mother-tongue and indigenous and ancestral knowledge as the foundational education in the earliest years of the child. According to Aurobindo (1974), a child should be introduced to the most interesting parts of his own literature and the life around him and in his past, ... let him master without knowing it the living and human parts of his nation's history (Aurobindo 1974: 3-4). Thus, Aurobindo underscores the importance of the early grounding in a child's own ancestral history and cultural identity. Similarly, the study proposes the value of including IK in the ECD programme, especially Ubuntu values for cultural affirmation and moral character through stories, poems, songs and other media.

This principle in an IE approach of the seamless integration of Indigenous/Community Knowledge in the ECD programme is reinforced in the finding that the intrinsic value of IK is particularly important and, therefore, has to be reclaimed. In addition, the dynamism of IK is innate and has to be imbibed by education through a process of rejuvenation and invigoration by the modern imagination and the engagement of the consciousness of people.

Thus, the significance of IK to education, generally, and ECD, specifically, is indicated. Furthermore, the reclamation and rejuvenation of IK are of specific import to the South African context within which this study is located.

Correspondingly, the underpinning of values in an IE approach ensures its natural transmission through both the programme and the ethos promoted in the schools. The findings in this context confirm the ethos of love, respect, kindness, happiness, peace and unity that surround the school and are reinforced by the teachers and all personnel. Included in the love that all exude is that of the love for nature and all life forms, regardless of size.

10.6.1.4 Preparing for life

One of the critical insights emerging from the discussion is the IE focus on the incremental and unhurried development of life skills to connect to the outside world. Although this aspect is addressed in the Auro Navakriti Preschool interview, the explicit application of this principle is significant. Contrary to the objective in mainstream education to develop the cognitive competency of the child towards school readiness, an IE approach prepares the child for life and understands that this early development will enable improved cognitive functioning. Thus, for the first two years in Mirambika, there is no teaching, no learning the alphabet, numbers or phonics while the child learns ways on how to live life, his relationship with his own being and the world outside. Early Childhood Education should work towards developing children in preparation for life, to train the body to be the temple of that soul quality that has manifested. Equally important is the nurturing of the child's curiosity and innate characteristics which are typically crushed in mainstream education by the imposition of standardised learning.

10.6.1.5 Applying basic principles

As noted, the relationship between the child and the IE teacher is characterised by closeness, trust and love in the sense of *in loco parentis*, to the extent that parents hand over their child to the receiving teacher who enthusiastically welcomes the arrival (Refer to 10.4.2).

During class children time, similarly, teachers maintain a high visibility and presence, constantly engaging the children. Throughout, the teachers observe closely making mental notes of significant markers. These are aired at the end of the school day in a gathering of the full complement of the teaching staff with the principal. These lively daily discussions offer a space for the teachers to share their experiences as well as concerns and plan for the following day based on the children's needs.

The ethos in the class is calm and gentle and an obvious sense of respect and attentiveness when either the teacher or a child speaks. This practice

promotes engagement between the teacher and the children and amongst the children. It also develops thinking and listening skills, language proficiency and patience. Dialogue and engagement with the children are used liberally to build trust and cement the teacher-child bond.

On the whole, the findings from the observations show the effective application of the IE daily programme based on a multidimensional, holistic pedagogic model that seeks to develop all aspects of the child's being. The close and trusting relationship between the teacher and the children, referenced throughout the study and in this chapter seems to be key to the delivery of the programme. The teachers are constantly engaging the children, sustaining their interest and assisting them, when necessary, in an ethos of understanding and love. The children appear immersed in the fun and play-based learning activities and exude enthusiasm and enjoyment throughout the school day.

In summary, the responses confirm the seamless assimilation of I/Community K and values in IE and reinforce the study's proposal of the aptness of an ECD IE approach with IK Ubuntu values for a new generation of children to effect participatory democracy in South Africa.

10.6.2 Parents and community

Key findings from the parents and community focus group interview (Refer to Annexure F) are presented.

10.6.2.1 Educating the individual within the collective

The findings confirmed IE as exceeding the mainstream or conventional education approach which tends to limit the child's freedom and natural development and fails to develop a sense of the collective. Conversely, an IE approach promoted a humanistic worldview rooted in values, respects the individuality of each child, prepares the child for participation in community life, develops the whole child synchronously and encourages a spiritual foundation based on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Thus, the findings validate the appropriateness of an IE pedagogic approach for

educating a new generation of children, as this study proposes, with a deep sense of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life forms.

Collectively, the responses were explicitly linked by the common adherence to the philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and individually highlight the differentiating aspects of IE in comparison to the mainstream education system. The constraints and deficiencies of mainstream education alluded to in this study in respect of the ECD curriculum were indicated. Implicit in this is the improbability of mainstream education to successfully develop the whole child. Equally, the integration of humanistic values in an IE approach contributes to the development of a “higher truth” and directs children towards a common good. This commitment to the collective is a primary objective of the study.

10.6.3 Summary

The learnings from the focus group interviews, observations and relevant documents provide valuable learnings on the key aspects of IE relevant to this study. These include specifically understandings that true education involves the quest for the child’s evolving soul, the prerequisite of self-education and alternate and holistic learning based on a multiplicity of early childhood education modes. In addition, knowledge about the conscious choice, commitment and specific training of IE teachers was revealed in conjunction with the seamless inclusion of the critical components of I/Community K and values in IE. Equally, appreciations of an IE approach to ECD were highlighted for its capacity to develop the whole child towards the pursuit of a “higher truth” for individual growth and the common good, the incorporation of IK for validating cultural identities and values for providing moral and ethical support.

Finally, the study’s fifth objective of recommendations for the development of a framework for an IE ECD programme underpinned by IK values of Ubuntu for social responsibility and civic participation follows.

10.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ECD IE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

10.7.1 Introduction

This section presents the recommended framework based on the findings of the study and the philosophies and theories of the study for an ECD IE approach with Ubuntu values for the explicit aim of fostering social responsibility and civic participation in preschool children in the age cohort of 3 – 4-year-old children. The learnings from the Indian case study contribute to the curriculum framework.

10.7.2 Principles underpinning the programme design

The following design principles were compiled from the participants' responses in the study. The principles are categorised according to the three overarching themes in the study and the prevailing aspects that emerged from the data. Collectively they reflect the guiding principles of the curriculum framework.

TABLE 10. 1: Design principles of the framework based on the participants' responses.

ASPECT	PRINCIPLE
	VALUES
1. Humanism	The explicit inclusion in the preschool curriculum of values that resonate with Ubuntu principles for a humane, interconnected and interdependent society that equally co-exists with animals and the planet.
2. Morality	The incorporation of morality at the preschool phase for a sense of justice, compassion and caring about the welfare of others and the ability to discern how someone might be thinking or feeling.
3. Emotional Mastery	Building children's emotional stability by teaching them how to exercise control over their emotions and avoid using aggressive acts as a solution to problems.
4. Democracy	Aligning with the concept of participatory democracy, children should be introduced to citizenship education for the development of an integrated citizenry to benefit the collective.
5. Feelings	Teaching emotional literacy that involves educating children for feeling about themselves and other people.

6. Knowledge Transfer	Preschool learning for shaping the consciousness of children should make better use of the family by integration into the education system. The parents and the community must have a collaborative place in the classroom without denying children's agency, participation, and voice.
7. Responsibility	The determination of appropriate values for preschool children should be guided by an obligation to the next person through instilling a permanent responsibility to that person.
8. Children's Rights	The contested ground between children's rights and parents' understanding of their roles must be mediated to include values, responsibility, and accountability.
9. Media Influences	Children's exposure to violence from the media should be managed by supporting parents.
10. Learning Tools	Opportunities to teach values include play, work, household chores, cultural events, stories, games, songs, dances, curriculum integration, observation, and identification.
IK/UBUNTU	
1. IK Teachings	Restoring the gravitas of IK teachings that are rooted in morals and ethics could be guidelines for children to follow a righteous path.
2. Heritage	The inclusion of IK exposes children to the importance of culture and heritage, and, more broadly, affirms them to branch out and explore new things.
3. Western Hegemony	The incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge is an imperative in consideration of the background of the children and acknowledges that Western knowledge is not the only knowledge.
4. Communalism	IK fosters communalism within and among communities who share the responsibility of raising children by entrusting them with the adults/elders in the community, thus, promoting a participatory curriculum with both formal and informal learnings.
5. Cultural Identity	<p>To give expression to the NCF (2015) and the SA Constitution for the inclusion of IK for affirmation of cultural identity with, <i>inter alia</i>, the incorporation of African fables and stories with affirming role models, heroes and indigenous kings excluded from the ECD programme.</p> <p>The inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge interventions to redress existing negation and to record accounts and stories before they disappear.</p>
6. Completeness	The focus of IK is building a child in a complete sense through promoting meaningful and relevant education which will include respecting the environment, trees, plants, and animals while learning about their roots and their culture and building character.

IE/HOLISTIC APPROACH	
1. Holism	The right type of education is holistic in nature, incorporating values, belief systems and skills, starting at an early stage in childhood development. IE education is holistic and integrated into the daily lives of communities removing the disjunct between theory and practice
2. Inner Inspiration	An IE approach to learning is a two-fold process of assisting the child to connect with its inner source of inspiration while developing its capabilities in the body, emotions and mind to ensure that it does not lose control.
3. Interconnectedness	Children's education is multidimensional and within a collective of family, school, community, society, culture and the universe for preparedness toward life readiness.
4. Experiential Mode	IE is an experiential mode of learning to enable all-round development through discovery. The facilitator's role is to help the child assimilate the learning, toward the child's self-awareness, awareness of the other and understanding.
5. Figuring out the World	The range of experiences develops the child to become more habituated and independent towards figuring out the world which is observed in his ability to exercise choice in his actions, his state of consciousness, his sense of collaboration and his spirit of enthusiasm for learning or taking on challenges.
6. Awareness	The IE teacher training programme develops the awareness of the teacher, her mental understanding, emotional openness to each child and ability to witness her own growth with each child and the ways in which she will make the child free, independent and self-assured.
7. Higher Consciousness	The concept of higher consciousness or mindfulness starts with encouraging the child towards an inward journey to learn about herself and to develop a spiritual connection to promote service to people based on the concern for the feelings of people.
8. Inner Knowledge	An IE approach promotes independent thinking and recognises other knowledge sources, especially the innate knowledge and intuitive skills of the child.
9. Participatory Learning	A learner-centred and collaborative approach based on fun and play that gives children the voice, choice, and autonomy to take control of their own learning in an open, progressive and participatory ethos.
10. Teaching Rigour	IE facilitators accept a fundamental change in their ways of doing and being to embrace an integral way of life that incorporates self-awareness, self-discipline, personal evolution, and growth in consciousness.

10.7.3 Objectives of the framework

The main objective of the curriculum framework is to develop a new generation of socially responsible and civic minded preschool children to contribute towards participatory democracy in South Africa. In accordance with the curriculum, children will:

- embrace basic human values by being awakened to the needs and rights of others knowing that their actions have a universal dimension. Building on their natural feelings of empathy, children develop a sense of social responsibility that incorporates family, community, society, animals, nature and the planet to make a positive difference for themselves and others
- realise that they are not only constituted of a body and a mind but also a soul within a human frame that seeks to know its real nature. Thus, the curriculum is designed to foster harmony of body, mind, and soul through the growth and evolution of the vital, mental, psychic and spiritual aspects of the personality
- learn the principles of citizenship education and participatory democracy as part of the future investment in children for cohesive and harmonious communities and the whole society
- engage with holistic local and indigenous knowledge systems incorporating its values, belief systems and skills for cultural affirmation, confidence and ethical guidelines
- take control of their lives by developing self-mastery and exercising control over the vital which is concerned with character, impulses, feelings and emotions
- acknowledge their innate moral and ethical sense by growing accustomed to listening to their feelings and intuitions from an early age and to follow these deep feelings
- train and develop their mental abilities through a range of skills and, by inciting their natural curiosity and interests, children can learn to perfect the tools necessary to acquire knowledge

- practice mindfulness toward a higher consciousness to reduce stress, anxiety, depression and misbehaviour. In this process, they learn to be calmer and to manage their emotions
- train all parts of the body through a variety of physical activities which will develop into a habit for the resultant sense of well-being
- appreciate diversity by exploring individual and cultural diversity toward genuine regard, appreciation, and acceptance of people who are different from themselves. They learn skills to become allies with others to counter bias, prejudice,
- and help build positive inter-group relations
- learn by experiential and collaborative methods and express themselves freely. The curriculum is the result of the interaction between the teacher, the child, and the world largely determined by what the child wants to learn and, as such, he becomes responsible for it.

10.7.4 Components of the framework

The framework comprises five key components, a philosophy that guides an integral and unitive approach with Ubuntu values to ECD; theories that underpin a transformative and socially just ECD approach; a pedagogy based on an IE approach to build Ubuntu values of social responsibility and civic participation and praxis that integrates theory and practice (Refer to Table 10.2). This IE curriculum framework is intended to contribute to bringing about a new social order for meaningful participation in the democracy of South Africa.

TABLE 10. 2: Framework for the IE ECD with Ubuntu values programme

Component	Composition and Description
Philosophy	<p>(African) Humanism and Holism</p> <p>Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that affirms human beings' ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfilment for the greater good of humanity. It is supported by relationships based on common understanding amongst like-</p>

	<p>minded people and undergirded by a sense of community with shared ideologies, values and virtues. The communal way of life is held together by a deep sense of spirituality, the foundation of holism, which recognises humanity's profound connections to the continuing evolution of life and the universe. Humanistic and holistic thinkers subscribe to the centrality of communal and spiritual qualities and possibilities of human life, discernible in the guiding principles of an integral education approach and an Ubuntu value system.</p>
Theory	<p>Critical Theory: Post-Colonial, PostModernism, Reconceptualist</p> <p>These theories have the potential to overhaul systems that continue to perpetuate, implicitly or explicitly, unequal power relations.</p> <p>Critical theory, as a form of social and cultural criticism, is concerned with creating a more egalitarian and democratic society and, therefore, interrogates the ways in which power relations manifest in relation to class, race and gender imbalances.</p> <p>Post-colonial theory addresses the legacy of colonialism from an activist position seeking social transformation. Colonialism's dominant ideologies of how children grow and develop continue to be imposed on people around the world.</p> <p>The reconceptualists using postmodern theory are concerned with correcting power imbalances within the sector and, therefore, examine ways in which early childhood education can be socially just and representative of diverse ways of knowing.</p>
Pedagogy	<p>Integral Education and IK/Ubuntu</p> <p>Intrinsic to the pedagogy of both IE and IK/Ubuntu is the education of the whole child within the familiar cultural milieu of family and community. Thus, the child's learning, especially in the early years, is well rounded and holistic. The IE approach educates all aspects of an individual, emotional, moral, interpersonal, mental, physical, cultural and spiritual, enabling the development and maturation of critical human intelligences which include somatic, vital, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive and spiritual. It is based on the understanding that because knowledge exists within the child, the teacher respects and accepts it and builds on it. In this way, learning grows from the events and interpersonal dynamics which is part of a child's life. Equally, in IKS, the socialisation of a child occurs</p>

	<p>through customary practices and traditional values in the family, in the community and in society. Thus, what is gathered in the child's mind is dependent on the community to which that child belongs implying a collective responsibility to mould the child into a good member of that specific community and the whole human race. The Ubuntu values of caring for one another in a spirit of mutual support will be naturally fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Thus, the pedagogy is underpinned by the concept of shared values and social solidarity and is not limited to cognitive development.</p>
Content	<p>1. Teacher Programme</p> <p>Introduction to IE: The historical background of IE and the conceptual understanding of the IE approach and the Ubuntu value system.</p> <p>Philosophy of IE and Ubuntu: The philosophical underpinnings of humanism and holism in Integral Education and Ubuntu are interrogated, especially regarding the holistic development of individuals within an interconnected and interdependent collective.</p> <p>Application of IE: The content comprises two parts, IE principles and aspects and their applications.</p> <p>Preparation of Self: The focus is on the IE practitioner's preparation to self-awareness, self-discipline, personal evolution and growth in consciousness.</p> <p>2. ECD Programme</p> <p>The IE approach comprises the simultaneous and equal development of the following four domains which collectively will lead to the spiritual realm, the highest purpose.</p> <p>Psychic Education: Promotes transformation of the child's nature and consciousness by understanding the true motive of existence and the purpose of life toward encouraging a noble and healthy aim in life in the service of those around him, nature and the future.</p> <p>Vital Education: Encourages the development of personal agency in the child through self-mastery and fulfilment. The vital is concerned with character, impulses, feelings, emotions and senses requiring mastering, harmonising and then directing these powerful energies towards the creation of what is most deep, noble and true in the child.</p> <p>Mental Education: Develops the mental faculties in the child in a methodical, interesting and lively way based on the skills of observation, comparison, concentration, memorisation, imagination, reason and intuition. Starting from their natural curiosity and interests, children can be brought to perfect the tools necessary to acquire knowledge which includes learning about ethics and integrity.</p>

	Physical Education: Develops integrally, methodically and harmoniously all parts and movements of the body while learning to listen to the body, its messages and needs and cultivating a basic breathing programme. Through collective activities, the character (will, courage, endurance, team spirit and leadership) is strengthened.
Praxis	Experiential Learning The IE approach is an experiential mode of learning underpinned by a participatory learning ethos and, therefore, dependent on the child's individual needs and pace. The learner-directed methodology is premised on learning that is more receptive if it is self-initiated and not directed by an adult which tends to encourage rote learning and stifles self-discovery, independent thinking and decision making.

10.7.5 Implementation of the programme

The initiation of teachers in applying an IE approach to ECD is critical. Teacher preparedness in IE involves a physical, emotional and psychological readiness for the mutual and reciprocal learning experience which is notably different to teaching in a mainstream system. The integral approach to learning is practical and child-centred and encompasses the psychic, vital, mental and physical dimensions of child development through fun and play-based daily experiences, activities and exercises. According to Partho (2007), the child's being needs to play, physically, mentally and emotionally because it is through the varied dynamics of play that children learn and assimilate what they learn. Moreover, learning happens naturally and spontaneously when the child is living his daily life and engaged in daily activities (Partho 2007:215), consonant with an IK way of life.

10.8 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore the gaps in the ECD curriculum in not applying an IE/holistic approach underpinned by Ubuntu values for whole child education and consequently being ineffectual in preparing children for life readiness generally and serving the ends of redress and transformation for a

socially cohesive and democratic South Africa, specifically. The research findings demonstrate that despite the Education White Paper 5 on ECD (RSA, DOE. 2001) clearly acknowledging that “young children are capable learners” with the potential to develop in these early years “all the key elements of emotional intelligence, namely confidence, curiosity, purposefulness, self-control, connectedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness (WP 5 ECD 2001: 7-8), indicated a gap in the ECD curriculum regarding explicit values that promote social responsibility in the preschool phase and lacks an IE/holistic approach, despite its clearly articulated benefits which include whole child development for individual and collective well-being. Moreover, this deficit appears to contribute to a noted prevalence of aggressive and violent behaviour amongst preschool children. The study further found that the positive influences of IK Ubuntu values could be beneficial to children’s behaviour and attitudes through its incorporation into the ECD curriculum.

Consequently, the implementation of the developed ECD IE intervention programme with Ubuntu values in the research sample indicated the conscious transformation of the practitioners in their practice and the children’s positive reception to the programme noted in its beneficial impact. Notwithstanding the brief implementation phase cut short by the advent of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the national shut down, the findings demonstrated the efficacy of the intervention and further the potential for significant results with a more widespread and sustained application of the programme. Ironically, the serendipitous appearance of COVID-19 in the midst of this research study proposing the creation of a new generation of socially responsible and civic minded children for interconnected and interdependent societies served to bolster its central argument. The worldwide crisis has shown humanity, inter alia, the obligation to acknowledge and respect the needs and rights of others and the extent to which our actions have a universal dimension. It is possible, therefore, that an effective whole child approach to preschool education, as evidenced in IE,

has the capacity to build on children's innate goodness and natural feelings of empathy to develop a sense of social responsibility and civic participation for lifelong learning. According to Aurobindo, it is by allowing Nature to work that we get the benefits of the gifts she has bestowed on us. Instead, humanity in its education of her children has chosen to thwart and hamper her processes... (Aurobindo 1974: 4).

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: DSD Permission Letter

		social development Department: Social Development PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
FAX	: 033-264 2076	HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon	: 033 264 2078	174 Mayors Walk
Enquiries / Imibuzo / Navrae	: Mr VW Gumede	Private Bag X9144
E-mail	: velaphi.gumede@kznsoedev.gov.za	Pietermaritzburg
Reference /Inkomba/ Navrae	: S6/5/3	3200

Mrs Kanya Padayachee
3 Whitfield Drive
Kingsburgh
Durban
4126

Contact No: 031 373 5816/ 083 791 963
Email: kpadayachee@gdt.org.za

Dear Mrs K Padayachee

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SIX (6) EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) SITES IN ETHEKWINI SOUTH, DURBAN.

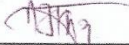
Kindly be informed that permission has been granted by the Head of Department for you conduct research at the Department of Social Development for you to fulfil the requirement of the study.

The permission authorizes you to: -

- a) Approach and distribute your survey questionnaires to employees who are willing to participate in order to solicit information intended for your research;
- b) Interview management at their consent who deemed relevant to your research project and maintain high level of confidentiality; and
- c) Share your findings with the Department.

Wishing you success during your research project.

Yours Faithfully



MS NG KHANYILE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Date: 2017/8/14

Annexure B: Participant Letter of Information

Annexure B



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Participant

Thank you for the opportunity to explain my research to you and how you can participate in this important study.

Title of the Research Study: Integral Education (IE) for Early Childhood Development (ECD): Building Values through Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Kanya Padayachee (MA)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Professor D. Lortan and Dr S. Maistry

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The ECD curriculum promotes the all round development of children yet it seems that essential values for social responsibility and civic mindedness are not being specifically addressed. Increasingly we are faced with high levels of violence in various forms, widespread alcohol and drug abuse, cheating and corruption, etc. Children who grow up in environments like this are inclined to repeat this behaviour. Since studies show that behaviour and attitude interventions are crucial and most sustainable at the ECD level, embedding these values should be done at this stage of development. This study plans to show that an integral education early childhood development programme underpinned by an Indigenous Knowledge (IK) values system could contribute to address these shortcomings.

Outline of the Procedures:

- The Durban University of Technology has been approached to get permission to conduct the study
- You will need to sign a consent form to indicate that you agree to participate in the study after I explained the procedures to you
- If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a focus group and/or individual interview, which may be, at the most, 3 and comprise a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 14. These interviews will inform the development of the values programme
- All focus group interviews will be conducted in the relevant area at a central venue
- The discussions in the groups will be voice recorded so that the researcher can refer to these later
- All the information will be reported for the group as a whole and no individuals will be highlighted
- The results of the study will determine whether an integral education early childhood development programme based on, amongst others, indigenous knowledge values will result in any positive behavioural and attitudinal changes in children within the programme.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:

- There will be no risk as the data collected will be treated confidentially and only the researchers will have access to it
- There will be no discomfort to the participant

Benefits:

- As a participant in this study you can make a valuable contribution by sharing your knowledge, ideas, experiences and expectations and participate in the development of the values programme
- Research will be published in accredited journals and presented at national and international conferences
- An integral ECD IK values programme will be developed with the potential to be tested on a wider scale
- It is envisaged that the research outcomes will reliably inform the development of an integral ECD IK values education curriculum framework
- The research process will constitute a pilot programme in community engagement and give practical expression to the higher education transformation agenda

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:

- Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the study
- Where there is non-compliance or incapacity during the research, a participant may be advised to withdraw
- In both instances above, no adverse consequences will accrue to the participant

Remuneration:

- No pay will be given to any of the participants

Costs of the Study:

- It will not cost you anything to participate in the study

Confidentiality:

- No names will be used in the study and research reports. You will be given a participant number
- Data will be stored in safekeeping for a period of five years after which it will be disposed of by shredding. The researcher and supervisors will have access to the data

Research-related Injury:

There is no risk of a research-related injury.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

For any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the researcher, Kanya Padayachee on +27 837961963, my supervisor, Professor D. Lortan on +27 31 373 2297 or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on +27 31 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S Moyo on +27 31 373 2577 or moyos@dut.ac.za

Thanking you

KanyaPadayachee



Annexure C: Interview Schedule Focus Group 1 (South Africa)

ECD Site Supervisors and Practitioners

1. What are some of the values that are important in your daily life? Please explain why?
2. How do these values influence your classroom practice?

3. What are some of the values you think are important for children and please explain why?
4. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?
5. Currently what set of values are demonstrated by the children in your care?
6. What are some of the common behavioural and attitudinal issues you experience with the children in your class?
7. From your observations of the children in your class, can you describe if the children are:
 - 7.1 caring towards one another?
 - 7.2 responsible and respectful?
 - 7.3. kind and loving?
8. Does the current ECD programme deal specifically with values? Yes\No
Please elaborate
9. What do you think are the benefits of teaching values to 3 – 4 year old children?
10. What is your understanding of indigenous knowledge?
11. Does the learning/teaching content of the current ECD programme include indigenous knowledge?
12. Do you have memories of indigenous stories, games, songs, etc? Please explain
13. How have these stories, games etc shaped your own life?
14. Do you think indigenous knowledge can add value to teaching? How?
15. Do you think children can benefit from indigenous stories/rhymes/songs? Please explain how?
16. What methods will be best suited for gathering indigenous stories, rhymes, folk tales/lores, games, etc?
17. What is your understanding of integral education at the ECD level?
18. To what extent does the current ECD curriculum use an integral education approach?
19. Do you think integral education can be beneficial in the classroom? Please explain how?

20. Do you think an IK values programme using an integral approach at ECD level is viable? Yes\No. Please elaborate.

Annexure D: Interview Schedule Focus Group 2 (South Africa)

Parents, Elders and Community Members

1. What are some of the values you think are important in your daily life? Please explain
2. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?
3. What are some of the values you think are important for children? Please explain
4. What are some of the common behavioural and attitudinal issues, if any, of 3 to 4yrs old that you personally experience or are aware of in your community?
5. Are you aware of the school/site teaching children relevant values? Please identify and explain these values
6. To what extent are these values reinforced at home and in the community? Please explain
7. What do you think are the benefits of instilling values in the 3 – 4 year-olds?
8. What is your understanding of indigenous knowledge?
9. From your knowledge, to what extent are children exposed to indigenous knowledge:
 - 9.1 At school? How?
 - 9.2 At home? How?
 - 9.3. In the community?
10. Do you have memories of indigenous stories, games, songs, etc.? Please explain
11. How have these stories, games etc. shaped your own life?
12. Do you think indigenous knowledge can add value to teaching? How?
13. Do you think children can benefit from indigenous stories/rhymes/songs? Please explain how?
14. What methods will be best suited for gathering indigenous stories, rhymes, folk tales/lores, games, etc.?

15. Do you think the current ECD programme is sufficiently addressing all the needs of your child's education? Please explain
16. Do you think that children should be taught in their mother tongue? Please explain why?

Annexure E: Interview Schedule Focus Group 1 (Delhi, India)

Sri Aurobindo Schools Staff

A. Integral Education (IE)

1. What is your conceptualisation of IE?
2. Is your professional training specifically in the preschool phase?
3. Explain what motivated you to teach in an IE pre school
4. What training did you receive to teach IE in the preschool phase?
5. Has your teaching experience only been in IE? Please explain
6. What, in your understanding and/or experience, are the differences between IE and mainstream preschool learning and teaching?
7. Please explain how the teaching/learning experiences support the development of the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual intelligences in an IE classroom
8. Do you think integral education can be beneficial in the classroom? Please explain how

B. Indigenous/Community Knowledge

9. What is your understanding of indigenous knowledge?
10. To what extent does the learning/teaching content of the current IE programme include indigenous/community knowledge?
11. Do you think indigenous knowledge can add value to teaching and learning? Please explain
12. Do you have memories of indigenous stories, games, songs, etc? If so, please explain if these have in any way shaped your own life?

13. Do you believe that indigenous/community knowledge is relevant in modern classrooms? Explain

14. How can an IE approach at preschool level support an IK values programme? Please elaborate

C. Values

15. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?

16. What are some of the values that are important in your daily life? Please explain why

17. How do these values influence your classroom practice?

18. What are some of the values you think are important for children and please explain why

19. Does the IE programme deal specifically with values? Yes/No? Please elaborate

20. From your observations of the children in your class, can you describe if the children are:

20.1 caring towards one another?

20.2 responsible and respectful?

20.3 kind and loving?

21. What are some of the common behavioural and attitudinal issues you experience with children in your class? Explain

Annexure F: Interview Schedule Focus Group 2 (Delhi, India)

Parents, Elders and Community Members

A. Integral Education (IE)

1. What is your understanding of IE?

2. Why did you choose to send your child to the Auro Navakriti school? Explain

3. To your knowledge, is there a difference between this education programme and the mainstream one? Please explain

4. Do you think the current IE programme is sufficiently addressing all the needs of your child's education? Please explain

5. To what extent are you involved in the programmes of the Auro Navakriti schools? Describe your involvement/not

6. In your opinion, should there be parental and community participation in the school and its teachings? Explain

B. Indigenous/Community Knowledge

7. What do you think includes indigenous/community knowledge?

8. From your knowledge, to what extent are children exposed to indigenous/community knowledge:

8.1 At school? How?

8.2 At home? How?

8.3 In the community?

9. Do you have memories of indigenous stories, games, songs, etc.? Please explain

10. How have these stories, games, songs, etc. shaped your own life?

11. Do you think indigenous/community knowledge can add value to teaching? How?

12. Do you think children can benefit from indigenous stories/rhymes/songs, etc? Please explain how

13. What methods are best suited for gathering indigenous stories, rhymes, folk tales/lores, games, etc.?

C. Values

14. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?

15. What are some of the values you think are important in your daily life? Please explain

16. What are some of the values you think are important for children? Please explain

17. To what extent are these values reinforced at home and in the community? Please explain

18. What are some of the common behavioural and attitudinal issues, if any, of children in pre schools that you personally experience or are aware of in your community?

19. What do you think are the benefits of instilling values in preschool children?

Annexure G: Interview Schedule Key Informants (South Africa)

- 1. ECD Research Unit, Early Learning Research Unit (ELRU): KI**
- 2. Independent ECD Researcher: KI 2**
- 3. NRF/DST/IKS Research Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN): KI 3**
- 4. Independent IKS academic & scholar: KI 4**
- 5. Mpambo Afrikan Mother Tongue Multiversity: KI 5**

1. To what extent does the current ECD programme adequately address the issue of teaching children values? Please explain
2. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?
3. How can values be taught/demonstrated to 3-4 year-old children? Please explain
4. What values do you think are important for children to learn? Please explain
5. What is your understanding of integral education (IE)?
6. What benefits, if any, to the ECD teaching/learning process could accrue with the integral education approach?
7. Do you think IE could successfully be applied to Early Childhood Development (ECD)? Please elaborate
8. In the current ECD curriculum framework, do you think there is sufficient emphasis on whole child development? Please explain
9. What is your understanding of whole child development?
10. What is your understanding of indigenous knowledge?
11. To what extent does the current ECD programme include the use of indigenous knowledge in its content?
12. Do you think there is a place in the contemporary ECD class for indigenous knowledge content? Please explain

13. What do you think are some of the advantages/disadvantages of including indigenous knowledge stories, songs, dance, rhymes and proverbs into the ECD programme?
14. How is mother tongue communication/instruction beneficial at ECD level? Please elaborate
15. Do you think 3 – 4 year-old children should have moral responsibilities, such as justice, peace, ecological wisdom, sustainability? Yes\No. Please elaborate
16. In your understanding, is there alignment between ECD policy and implementation in practice? Yes\No. Please elaborate
17. What methods of research and documentation will be best suited for gathering indigenous stories, rhymes, folk tales/lores, games, etc?
18. To what extent can indigenous knowledge systems contribute to the psycho-social and cognitive development of children? Please explain how.
19. What, if any, would be the benefits to communities of including local cultural content in ECD programmes?
20. Do you think it is important for children's learning to be reflected in their everyday life and experiences? Please explain why?
21. What, in your view, is the value of creating strong links between home and school life?

Annexure H: Interview Schedule Key Informants (Delhi, India)

Sri Aurobindo Society

1. Sri Aurobindo Society/India Council for Integral Education: KI 6

2. Sri Aurobindo Society Auro Navakriti Preschool: KI 7

A. Context & Background

1. Explain the history of the Auro schools and its initial founding
2. What philosophy underpins the schools and the programme?

B. Integral Education

3. How is Integral Education (IE) conceptualised?

4. How is IE implemented in relation to its philosophy and conceptualisation?
5. What benefits, if any, to Early Childhood Development (ECD) could accrue with the IE approach?
6. In the current National ECD policy, do you think there is sufficient emphasis on whole child development?
7. Do you think 3 – 4 year-old children should have moral responsibilities, such as justice, peace, ecological wisdom, sustainability? Yes\No. Please elaborate

C. Indigenous Knowledge

8. What is your understanding of indigenous knowledge?
9. To what extent does (1) the National ECD policy and (2) the IE programme include indigenous knowledge in its content?
10. What do you think are some of the advantages/disadvantages of including indigenous knowledge in the ECD programme?
11. Do you think it is important for children's learning to be reflected in their everyday life and experiences? Please explain why
12. To what extent can indigenous knowledge systems contribute to the psycho-social and cognitive development of children? Please explain how
13. Who constitutes the community of the school?
14. To what extent is this community involved in the school and its programme?
15. What, if any, would be the benefits to communities of including local cultural content in ECD programmes?

D. Values

16. What is your understanding of the concept 'values'?
17. What values do you think are important for children to learn? Please explain
18. To what extent does the mainstream ECD programme adequately address the issue of teaching children values? Please explain

Annexure I: Consent Form



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Kanya Padayachee, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 77/17
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth and initials will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature/Right Thumbprint

I, Kanyakumarie Padayachee herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

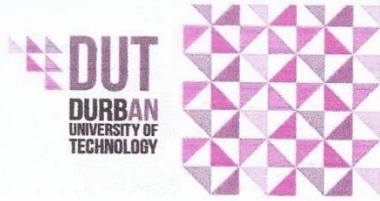
Kanyakumarie Padayachee

Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature

Annexure J: Ethics Clearance



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Barwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

9 October 2017

IREC Reference Number: **REC 77/17**

Ms K Padayachee
3 Whitfield Drive
Kingsburgh
4126

Dear Ms Padayachee

Integral Education for Early Childhood Development: Building Values through Indigenous Knowledge

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that Full Approval is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Please note that approval has been granted for the developmental phase of the study. Kindly note that once the final data collection tool has been developed for the intervention phase, please submit the tool to the IREC office.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor J K Adam
Chairperson: IREC



Annexure K: Phases 2 & 3 Data Collection Tools

1. Qualitative Data Collection

1.1. Pre-Training Practitioner Assessment

Please respond to the following questions:

- 1.1.1. What is your experience in ECD?
- 1.1.2. What training have you had in ECD?
- 1.1.3. Describe your training in terms of content.
- 1.1.4. How do you see your role in the classroom?
- 1.1.5. Briefly describe your teaching style.
- 1.1.6. Describe an interaction you had with a child that touched you deeply and taught you to look at yourself or look at things differently.
- 1.1.7. What self-preparation do you undertake before each class?
- 1.1.8. Given an opportunity and the freedom needed, how would you like to change the way you teach in your classroom?
- 1.1.9. What qualities should preschool teachers have?
- 1.1.10. How do you see yourself in relation to these qualities?

1.2. Pre-Implementation Observation of the sample (6 children)

Please give examples and explanations in your responses below

- 1.2.1. Shows satisfactory gross & fine motor skills?
- 1.2.2. Good use and knowledge of the senses – hearing, tasting, touching, smelling and seeing?
- 1.2.3. Has satisfactory levels of strength & fitness for her/his age?
- 1.2.4. Evidence of self-discipline, confidence and fair play (in outdoor/indoor games & activities)?
- 1.2.5. Is the child emotionally balanced? Does she/he show calmness, tolerance, patience and honesty?
- 1.2.6. Is there understanding of others' feelings, sympathy, empathy & reflection?
- 1.2.7. Is there cognitive competence including memory, simple reasoning, language development?

1.2.8. Are there acceptable levels (for the age group) of listening, comprehension & speaking skills?

1.2.9. Does she/he connect with nature?

1.2.10. Is there a sense of self & identity? Does the child know her/himself, family, friends & community?

1.2.11. What evidence of responsibility & respect does she/he show in the daily activities, at home or at school?

1.3. Pre-Implementation Journal Entries

The journal reflections are your own notes, like diary entries, about your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, comments, etc. on the processes of observation and implementation. If this teaching approach has challenged you. Whether it changed your understanding of ECD from what you were doing previously. Did it make any changes to you, personally?

1.4. Implementation Observations (based on questions 1.2 above)

1.5. Implementation Journal Entries (As for 1.3 above)

1.6. Post-Implementation Observations (based on questions 1.2 above)

1.7. Post-Implementation Journal Entries (As for 1.3 above)

1.8. Post-Training Practitioner Evaluation

Please give your views, based on your experience with the Intervention programme, on the following:

1.8.1. IE for Teachers

1.8.1.1. Difference between teaching and facilitating

Are there any differences in your method of engaging the children? What are these, if any, and provide some examples

1.8.1.2. Self-Preparation & Awareness

What changes, if any, did you have to undergo to prepare you for the IE programme application?

1.8.1.3. Building relationships

Have there been changes in relationships with your supervisor, practitioners, children, family, community, etc.? If so, please explain

1.8.1.4. Transformation/Change of Self

What personal changes have you experienced, if any, since engaging with the IE programme?

1.8.1.5. Teacher & Friend

Do you think being a friend to the children is important and, if so, have you been able to be a friend to the children. Provide some examples

1.8.2. IE for Children

1.8.2.1. Behaviour & Attitude changes

Have you observed any such changes in your children, even if minor? Provide some examples

1.8.2.2. Changing from within

What is your understanding of this and how does it compare with a mainstream programme?

1.8.2.3. Holistic development

What are the differences, if any, in holistic development between an IE approach and the NCF?

1.8.2.4. Ubuntu & Cultural identity

Are the Ubuntu stories making a difference in understanding values and culture? Please explain

1.8.2.5. Character building & self-awareness

Provide some examples, if there are, of how you can achieve this using an IE approach. Could the NCF programme give you similar outcomes?

1.8.3. IE Programme

1.8.3.1. Differences/Similarities between IE and Mainstream (NCF)

Provide some examples of the above, based on your application of the IE programme. Please explain impact

1.8.3.2. Flexibility to adapt

How easy to adapt to children's needs and natures do you think the IE programme is? Is this the same/different with the NCF?

1.8.3.3. Classroom impact

What overall impact do you think an IE approach can have on learning? You can base this on your application in class and what your views

1.8.3.4. Application challenges/strengths

What were the above during application of the IE programme and what do think they could be in the future?

1.8.3.5. Opportunities for change

Do you think the IE approach can bring about positive change in behaviour and attitude that the NCF may/cannot? Please explain

2. Quantitative Data Collection

2.1. Pre- & Post-Implementation Questionnaire

Please indicate your response to each item below on each of the 6 children in the sample in your class using the scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest:

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1. Shows satisfactory gross & fine motor skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.2. Good use and knowledge of the senses – hearing, tasting, touching, smelling and seeing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.3. Has satisfactory levels of strength & fitness for her/his age?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.4. Evidence of self-discipline, confidence and fair play (in outdoor/indoor games & activities)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.5. Is the child emotionally balanced? Does she/he show calmness, tolerance, patience and honesty?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.6. Is there understanding of others' feelings, sympathy, empathy & reflection?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.7. Is there cognitive competence including memory, simple reasoning, language development?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.8. Are there acceptable levels (for the age group) of listening, comprehension & speaking skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.9. Does she/he connect with nature?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.10. Is there a sense of self & identity? Does the child know her/himself, family, friends & community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.1.11. What evidence of responsibility & respect does she/he show in the daily activities, at home or at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Annexure L: Integral Education (IE) Training Workshops for ECD Practitioners

PREPARATION FOR INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

JANUARY 2020

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1.1. BACKGROUND

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Module 1: Introduction to IE

1.1. Background

Integral education has its roots in the initial idea of a new way of life by **Sri Aurobindo** (Indian philosopher, yogi, guru, poet, and activist) and the **Mother** (spiritual guru and partner of Sri Aurobindo). This new way of life was based on reaching **a higher consciousness** (higher level of awareness, thinking and being) through which one would have the capacity to develop and express in life.

To spread this way of living, **three organisations** were set up by the Mother. Thus, the finding and founding of this dynamic way of life, drawn from the **inspiration** that comes from within, happened in three successive stages and all three still continue: The **first stage of transforming a human consciousness** into higher consciousness was in a closed community in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, similar to that of an experiment in a laboratory. Here, the principles of Integral Education were established and was followed by developing the means to apply this education model. Hence, the **Sri Aurobindo Society** was created to carry the message to the outside world and people at large of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for **a life based on a higher consciousness**. Equally important was to create something to **reach out to people outside of India** in the same way that the Sri Aurobindo Society was created for people in India. The Mother, rather than creating centres abroad, came up with the idea of creating an **international township** with representation from various countries, and that was the start of **Auroville** (experimental community in southern India, where people from all over the world could live in harmony).

Although the principles of IE are applied to all aspects of life – as a way of life – for **harmony and co-existence amongst all life forms**, the focus of this study is its application in the education of preschool children. It is an approach to learning that attempts to make the child **physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally self-reliant** and to foster a **oneness with all of nature**. It includes the development of true **reasoning** and, through this, the development of **understanding** in the child, the discovery of **new ideas, inspirations and ways of being** towards a **complete education** of the child.

1.2. Integral Education Approach

An integral education approach is premised on the understanding that **every child has an inner and natural knowledge** from which the creation of **new knowledge** is encouraged. According to Sri Aurobindo (1997), “each human being is **a self-developing soul** and the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate her/himself, to develop her/his

own **intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities** and to **grow freely** as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material" (Sri Aurobindo 1997:33). The aim of education, therefore, should be to help the child develop the **powers of the human mind and spirit**. In order to be complete, education should take into account **five aspects of human nature**: namely, the **physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual** self. Thus, the ideal teacher does not really teach in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, she **guides and assists** the child to ultimately follow his own "law of growth."

Integral Education rests on three basic principles: (i) **nothing can be taught**, since children are encouraged to want to seek new knowledge rather than being forced into learning; (ii) the child is **actively consulted and involved in her/his growth and learning** in a participative culture; (iii) the process of learning works **from the near to the far**, since children learn better when they meet the familiar and the knowable and when the learning is relevant (Partho 2007:165-174). Implicit in this **child-centred and co-creative approach** to learning is that a child enters the education space with in-built attributes that must be nurtured. In mainstream education, the intellect is given far too much importance while the intuitive, the emotional and other aspects of the child are almost completely neglected. Thus, an integral education approach creates a **balance** by developing **the intuition** and the capacity to synthesise as much as to develop **the intellect** and the capacity to analyse (Partho 2007:219-221), creating a well-rounded and holistic education model.

This 'whole child' development approach to child development acknowledges that the child is not made up of separate parts, but is **collectively the body, instincts, heart, mind and consciousness**. Consequently, these processes should **nourish** all the human dimensions and cannot focus only on the mind (Ferrer, et al 2005).

An IE curriculum is designed to foster the **harmony of these different aspects** of the personality towards the **evolution** of the **individual, the nation and humanity**. In this way, children learn that they are **not only individuals** but that they are **interconnected, interdependent and interrelated** to everyone and everything in the cosmos. In addition, that all their actions have a **ripple effect** on everything around them (Vengopal and Kumari 2010: 59).

1.3. Ubuntu value system

In the South African context, the African value system of Ubuntu, which encompasses **humaneness, personhood and morality**, is similar to the philosophy of IE. Central to this **African way of life** is the **interconnectedness** of people, each one existing through the other, **mutually and reciprocally** (Mabovula 2011). The points of similarity in IE and Ubuntu, are the development of a deep sense of humaneness, an interconnectedness with all beings and an inner moral code.

According to the NCF (2015), “strong emphasis is laid on offering the programme design and activities for children and their families according to **indigenous, local and traditional knowledge**, skills and behaviours which enhance children's development and learning (NCF 2015: 30). In practice, however, there is little to no ‘indigenous, local and traditional knowledge’ in the learning/teaching content. Consequently, developing a **positive value system** through **cultural identity and affirmation** may not be achieved through the current approach. In contrast, IE stresses the inclusion of indigenous/community/local knowledge. One of its three basic principles, ‘working from the near to the far’, means that **children learn better** when what they learn is based on **local/community knowledge** that is familiar and relevant to their worlds.

Module 2: Philosophy of IE & Ubuntu

The philosophies of Integral Education and Ubuntu are **humanism and holism**. Both these ‘ways of life’ share the fundamental purpose of the

holistic development of people. The humanist approach is the development of **self-fulfilled, interdependent** (independent-individualism- is the neo-liberal form of humanism) people through learning which develops both **affective** (emotions and feelings) and **cognitive** domains. Learning is **learner-centered** and **personalised**, and the teacher's role is that of a **facilitator** within a **cooperative, supportive** environment.

IE develops simultaneously all the parts that constitute a human being – physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and intuitive – and, therefore, prepares the child to function optimally in life by becoming **self-reliant** and contribute towards **human development**. Similarly, the African indigenous philosophy of **Ubuntu**, an African philosophy of humanism, has much **in common** with the basic concept of IE. The **respect for the rights** of others and a deep commitment to the **collective identity**, rooted in a **moral and ethical** foundation exists in both Ubuntu and IE.

The ECD IE approach in this study includes the Indigenous Knowledge values of Ubuntu. Within this framework of developing the child's physical, mental, vital, psychic and spiritual aspects, the **culturally affirming** Ubuntu values are included. African indigenous stories, songs, dances, games and other appropriate artefacts that promote Ubuntu will be integrated in the daily programme.

Module 3: Application of IE

3.1. Principles and Aspects of IE

The aim of IE, specifically for the teacher, is to **shift from teaching to learning**, from **pedagogy to facilitation**. The method of the pedagogue is **teaching and instructing** while the facilitator **facilitates and enables learning**. Whereas, the pedagogue believes that the child is **an empty vessel** to be filled by information or values or even 'consciousness', the

approach of the facilitator is based on the belief that **every child embodies** the fullest potential for the highest evolution and all that the child needs to learn and know is already within her and needs only to be drawn out.

Children will become **independent learners and original thinkers** if they are brought up consciously and systematically in an environment of facilitation, amongst adults who **respect their learning needs and potential** and avoid **imposing an external curriculum** on them (Partho 2007:165).

Thus, IE rests on three fundamental principles (pillars):

Principles of True Teaching

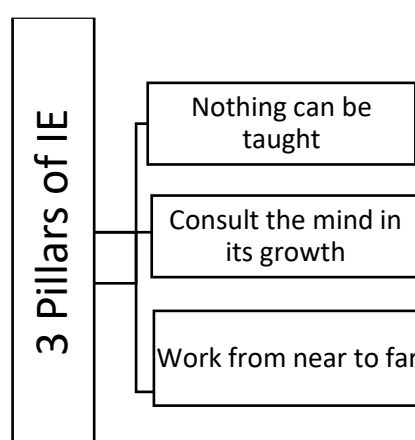


Figure 1: Representation of the 3 Fundamental Principles of IE

Application of the 3 pillars of IE

Nothing can be taught: The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, but a **helper and a guide**. Her task is **to suggest** and not to impose. She does not actually train the child's mind, she only shows the child how to perfect the instruments of knowledge, how to **acquire knowledge for herself**.

Because every child is different, the teacher is tasked with understanding the **soul quality** of every child. This refers to the child within her/himself which contains the **world of wisdom** and understands best what she/he needs, when she wants to eat, play, run, etc, the child **intuitively knows** what is to be done because of the child's soul. Thus, the teacher must first understand that and facilitate that in self-expression. This requires much observation.

The practice is giving children a **choice of four free corners** from which the

child automatically chooses according to **individual preference**. Resources are made available and, based on the principle that nothing can be taught, the child will **draw from her own inspiration and intuition** to use them creatively. The understanding is that **self-imposed learning** is more receptive, while the alternative approach of instructing the child encourages rote learning and does not foster **independent thinking**.

Consult the mind in its own growth: The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is harmful. **The child must be encouraged to expand** in accordance with her **own nature**. Consulting and involving the mind in its growth and learning leads to a **participative culture** where the teacher and learner are both equally involved in a relationship that facilitates learning. An **integral participative culture** assumes the child's control over the learning process which is an authentic and valued experience because of the personal involvement and 'conscious intention'.

Dialogue and discussion facilitated by enquiry makes the child question and critically examine everything that is presented.

Work from Near to Far: This principle of education means to work from that which **is** to that which shall **be**. The basis of human nature is influenced by one's ancestry, heritage, surroundings, nationality, country and the sights, sounds, habits to which one is accustomed. Children learn better when they meet the **familiar and the knowable** and when the learning is relevant. Conversely, children fail to assimilate their learning if they do not **feel connected** to what they are taught. Traditional psychology of the unity of body, mind and soul posits the existence of an **innate self-nature** that is unique to every being. Thus, to create **human excellence**, what the child **is**, what the child **loves** and **connects with** should be the starting point of the educational process.

Aspects of IE

IE aims at the **flowering** of the child's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual personality. It is the **progressive widening of consciousness**

which helps the child to manifest that within her, which is uniquely hers, leading to an increasing satisfaction and success in **individual** and **collective** living, **locally, nationally and internationally**. To achieve this complete education, there are **five principal aspects** corresponding to the **five principal activities** of the human being. These are the development of the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual.

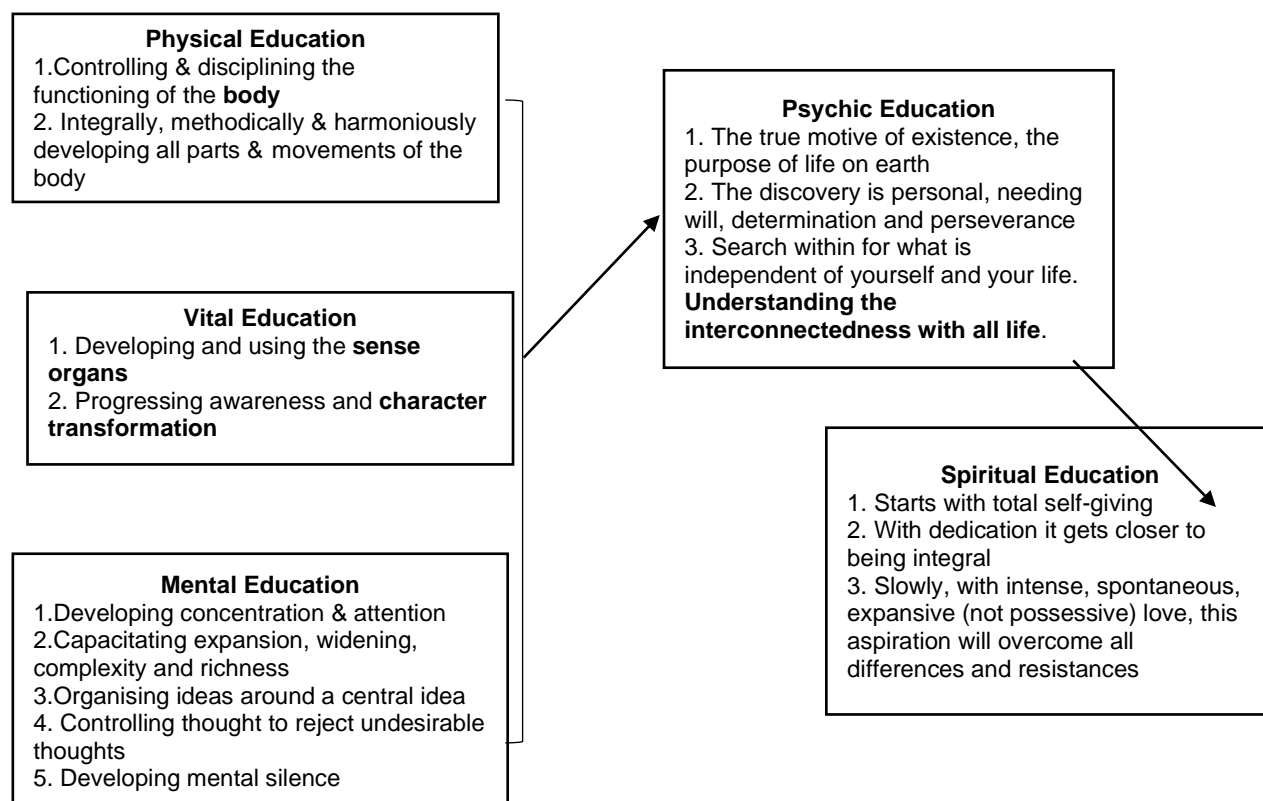


Figure 2: Representation of the 5 aspects of IE: On the left are the 3 external aspects for personality and consciousness, and on the right, preparation for psychic and spiritual aspects of the inner being for higher consciousness

Below is an explanation of these five aspects of education and their interrelationships:

Physical Education

Of all the domains of human consciousness, the physical is the one most completely governed by method, order, discipline and process. In this organisation is the **interdependence and interpenetration** of all the domains of the being. The education of the body will be translated into **habits**

which should be **controlled** and disciplined, while remaining **flexible** enough to adapt to the needs of the growth and development of the child. All education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout life.

This education must be based upon a **minimum knowledge of the human body**, of its structure and its functioning. As the child develops, she must gradually be taught to observe the functioning of her internal organs to increasingly control them to ensure **normal and harmonious** functioning.

The **diet** that helps children in their growth should be followed with the inclusion of the instinct of the body.

Although the body knows what is good and necessary for it, to be effective, one must educate the child to **distinguish desires from needs**. Children should be given food that is necessary for their development and the balanced growth of every part of the body.

The child should be taught from the early years to enjoy **cleanliness** and observe **hygienic habits**.

The child must have **methodical and regular development** of all the parts of her body daily. **Sports and outdoor games** should have a prominent place to assure **good health**.

Sufficient number of hours of **sleep** according to her age, is crucial. During the waking hours, **relaxation** is indispensable to maintaining nervous balance.

Children, from an early age, should be taught to respect **good health, physical strength and balance**.

Vital Education

Vital education is perhaps the **most important** and the **most indispensable**, mainly because the human mind is confused about this subject and its undertaking is very difficult. The indispensable starting point is a **detailed and discerning observation** of the character to be transformed.

The vital education of the child should begin **as early** as possible, as soon as she is able to use her senses. This has two principal aspects: the **first** concerns the development and use of the **sense organs**, and the **second** progressing awareness and control of the **character**, culminating in its **transformation**.

To the general education of the senses and their functioning there will be added, as early as possible, the cultivation of **discrimination** and of the **aesthetic sense**, the capacity to choose and adopt what is beautiful and harmonious, simple, healthy and pure. This education will have very happy effects even on her character. Development of a truly refined taste will, because of this very **refinement**, feel incapable of acting in a crude, brutal or vulgar manner.

The second aspect of vital education is the character and its transformation. To become conscious of what one does and why one does it, is the starting point. The child must be **taught to observe**, to note her **reactions and impulses and their causes**. The growth of the power of observation must be accompanied by the **will for progress** and **perfection**.

Mental Education

Mental education is the most **widely known and practised** yet there are **gaps** which make it something very incomplete and quite insufficient. Generally, **schooling** is all the mental education necessary, yet it cannot impart to the human mind the abilities it needs to become a **good and useful instrument**.

The **psychological action** is most important and effected through **arousing** in the child an **interest** in what you want to teach, a **liking** for work, a **will** to progress and a **love** to learn.

Through **widening and enriching** of the mind, the child will gradually learn that everything can become **interesting** if it is approached in the right way. Introducing many varied topics and approaching a single subject in various

ways, will remove all rigidity from her brain, making her thinking richer, more supple and prepare it for a more complex and comprehensive synthesis.

Like all the other parts of the human being, the mind too needs **rest** and the greatest possible rest is **silence**. When one has learned to **silence the mind at will**, there will be no problem that cannot be solved, no mental difficulty whose solution cannot be found.

Psychic & Spiritual Education

Every human being has the possibility of a **greater consciousness** beyond the bounds of one's present life. What the human mental consciousness does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does, **like a light** that shines at the centre of the being **radiating** through the thick coverings of the **external consciousness**. Many children are under its influence, seen at times in their **spontaneous** actions and even in their words.

The concentration on **external things** occurs in the three lines of education - **physical, vital and mental** – which are the means of **building up the personality**, raising her **out of a subconscious state** and making her a **self-conscious being**. With **psychic** education, however, the **purpose of life** on earth is understood and realised.

The starting point is to seek in the self that which is independent of the body and all the circumstances of life. One must find a **sense of universality, limitless expansion, unbroken continuity**. Then, one decentralises, **extends and widens** oneself and begins to see the interconnectedness of **all things and beings** and lives life from this understanding. The barriers separating individuals from each other break down.

In spiritual education, the most effective starting point is **total self-giving**. If this is made with **persistence and compassion**, it becomes more and more **realised and integral**. It will be accompanied by the **aspiration for**

identification which will overcome all differences and all resistances, especially if with the aspiration there is an **intense and spontaneous love**.

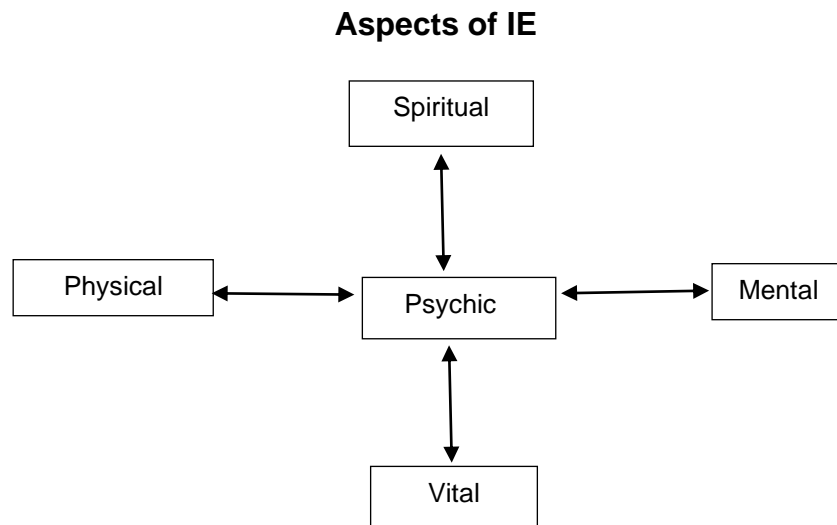


Figure 3: Representation of organic & interconnected IE framework for personal evolution

Application of the Aspects

These 5 principal aspects of IE are applied in the following ways:

1. Physical Development: gross & fine motor skills; sensorial training; strength & fitness; grace, beauty & harmony; self-discipline; confidence; impartiality/fair play.
2. Vital (emotional) Development: adopt the right emotions; identify conscious emotions; development of the senses; tolerance; patience; honesty; understanding others' feelings; sympathy; empathy; reflection.
3. Mental: cognitive development; memory; reasoning; logical/critical thinking; discrimination; language development; training the senses – imagining-hearing-listening (comprehension & understanding)-speaking-touching-smelling-tasting.
4. Psychic: consciousness; light/love within; true motive/purpose of life; live the experience; one with nature; connecting with your inner being (without mind in action) – teachers creating the ambience.

5. Spiritual: connecting with the divinity within, being peaceful, calm and responding to life with equanimity.

3.2. IE in Practice

Integral education begins with introducing the child to her **inner self** by exploring the **free spirit** to make her more compassionate, strong, confident, independent and interdependent. Thus, through IE that which is within is brought out and developed further so that a **higher truth/purpose** can be manifested here in life

The planning of the day is made as per the **child's nature and need**. In this way, children get to know more about themselves in terms of **self-awareness** and **inner development** and their confidence is developed.

Keeping in mind the **basic principles of child development** and the philosophy of IE, the curriculum is planned and organised into goals and relevant activities to facilitate the achievement of '**all round development of a child**'. Fundamental to the programme development is the understanding that learning is most effective when children are **actively involved and engaged** in carrying out tasks that are meaningful to them. **Young children learn from everything that happens to them and do not separate their learning into subjects**. Therefore, the various goals of the curriculum are achieved through **integrated learning**:

1. Play way Method
2. Thematic Approach
3. Circle Time
4. Montessori Method

1. Play way Method

Young children's growth and development have a pattern and sequence which are related to age. Children progress in several areas such as physical growth; capacities for language; comprehension or in skills of interactions; moving to order to master body control; exploring, manipulating objects and

repeating the action to exercise their **mental, social and manual skills** with enough opportunities to handle materials; experience the world around them; and, perform tasks of increasing complexity. The following chart helps to plan a range of activities in various themes through different play activities:

Suggested play-based activities

Sensory:	hearing. smelling. tasting. seeing. feeling activities. water play. sand play. creative art. clay work. tearing. finger painting. using manipulative material
Cognitive:	social & natural science. experience. nature walk. mathematics. matching.naming.classifying.identifying.sorting.sequencing.seriating .discussion.puzzles.riddles.maze.sand.waterplay.gardening. celebrations. festivals. cooking. Building blocks. constructional materials
Language & Communication:	songs & rhymes. stories. conversation. informal talk. books. picture /chart reading. labelling. dramatic. play. Puppet play. vocabulary/ command games. Sound games. riddles. rhyming games. doll play. show & tell. recall story. draw & talk. auditory & visual games
Emotional & Aesthetics:	music & movement. dance. creative drama. action play & games. collage work. clay work. care of animals & garden
Personal:	dramatization. role play. doll play. meal time activities. cleaning & grooming self. cleaning & tidying up
Social:	stories. songs. rhymes. puppet activities. dramatisation. groups/team games. doll play. dressing up play. blocking building. sports. festivals & birthdays. participation in daily chores & routines
Physical Gross Motor:	running race. games. exercises. pushing. pulling. stretching. bouncing. sliding. rocking. throwing. catching. kicking. rolling. swinging. climbing. balancing. hopping. jogging. jumping. creeping. crawling. gardening. cycling. nature walk. walking
Fine Motor:	finger play. action songs. block building. threading. stitching. tearing. cutting. pasting paper. drawing. colouring. painting. chalk/slate drawing. pattern making

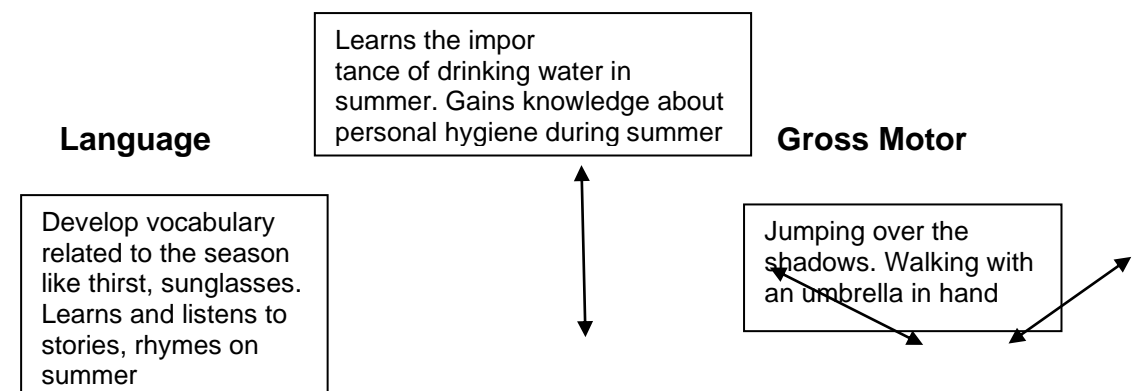
Play is vital to children's learning, it is not an activity but an attitude. It is a vehicle for motivating children to **explore, discover**, become involved in **organising and expressing feelings**. The play way method works very efficiently and helps to motivate the children while a concept is being introduced. In addition, this method demonstrates amazing results in the reinforcement of any concept. Eg. under the theme 'summer', the game 'run and pick' can be introduced. Picture cards of various summer-related things, like fruits and vegetables, along with other picture cards are placed in front of the children to identify and pick up the summer-related ones. This game helps to revise the summer season in a fun and enjoyable way while also

teaching the concept of sorting/arranging/identifying. Another example is the game of 'climbing up and down stairs' to make them understand ascending and descending order (1-10). The children will be able to grasp the concept in a short time through this method, while also being engaged in physical development. An exercise to reinforce mother tongue language, through word building is another example of the play way method. By matching the different letter cut-outs, children form words and increase their vocabulary. Thus, through the play way method all the concepts can be reinforced in a fun and interesting way.

2. Thematic Approach

This is a way of teaching and learning by which many areas of the curriculum are **connected and integrated** within a theme. The curriculum is divided into various themes on a monthly basis and preferences are given to those themes with which children can relate better as well as experience in their immediate environment. Eg. in the month of December, the theme 'summer' can be used, and monthly goals set accordingly, as given in the example below:

Socio Personal



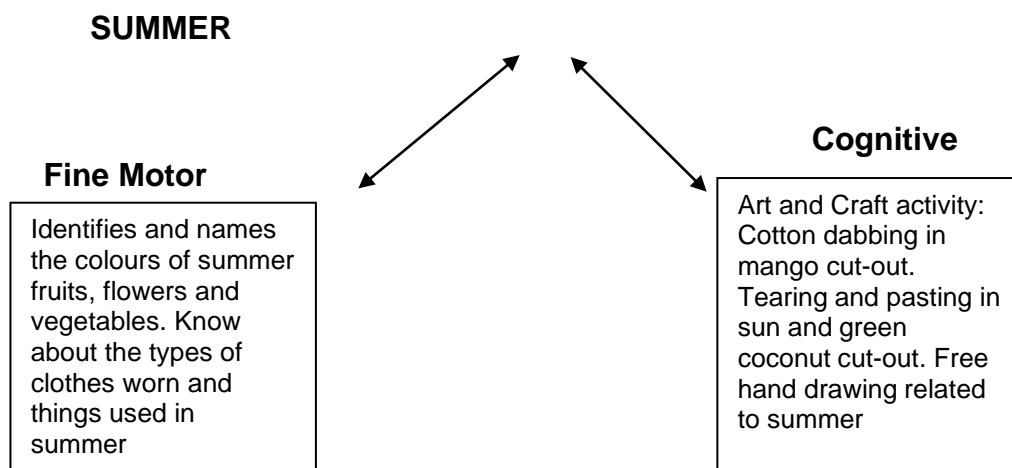


Figure 4: Sample of the application of the thematic approach

The thematic approach helps children **internalise** every concept. They can be easily **motivated and actively involved**, developing learning skills quicker as each one is connected to and reinforced by the others.

3. Circle Time

Setting up circle time is the start of a process of involving children in the classroom. It helps create an environment conducive to **real consultation, shared responsibility and decision making**. Circle time helps to nurture the **emotional health** of the children by offering them a place to develop social and emotional skills, learning to provide supportive listening and acquire a language for **sharing feelings and ideas**.

For instance, under the theme summer season, circle time can be used by asking children leading questions to initiate conversation. Eg. what indoor/outdoor activities do they like in summer? This was done while passing a ball in a circle and sharing thoughts. Another idea could be a class discussion on, “Why we should drink lots of fluids in summer?” Also, a discussion on, “What makes you happy and what makes you upset?” This sharing of emotions takes place with the help of a sand tray.

By conducting circle time periodically in the year, it can be fruitful to the children in helping to develop **teacher-child bonding**. Moreover, by sitting in a circle everyone is visible to everyone else. This physical visibility fosters **emotional visibility**. Each child's chance of feeling significant is enhanced and inclusion is promoted.

4. Montessori Method

This method is used to introduce language through phonetics, social and life skills through the exercise of practical life (EPL) activities, numbers and to give sensorial exposure to the world around them. Montessori apparatus is scientifically designed to sharpen a child's **power of observation and analysis**. Rather than rote learning, the children are encouraged to experience the world of form through handling concrete objects of sizes, shapes, colours and dimensions. Much emphasis is placed on becoming **self-reliant**.

Through a combination of play way, thematic approach and Montessori Method, the main aim is to motivate the child to become **confident and cognitively developed**. A lot of activities are introduced to enhance their gross and fine motor skills. The children are made aware of their **culture** by celebrating and discussing festivals and doing related art and craft activities to reinforce the same. Discussions, storytelling and circle time are periodically done in class to inculcate social values in the children which make their **personalities blossom**. Hence the focus is on facilitating the child's abilities and interest so that she/he can work towards complete personality development.

In the classroom storytelling is used to develop the child and enhance her thought processes. They are encouraged to use their **imaginations** in creative writing. There is always a story hidden in every child, the exercises help bring out that story.

In education, both tendencies of the **imagination and reality** should be encouraged to exist side by side: the thirst for the marvellous, the seemingly

unrealizable, for something that fills you with a sense of divinity, while at the same time encouraging the perception of the world as it is. Generally, people suppress one to develop the other, a practice which is totally erroneous. The two can coexist, and as knowledge grows, a moment comes when there is an understanding they are two aspects of the same thing, namely, a clear vision, a **superior discernment**.

In IE, the teacher's **own awareness** grows through her work with the children and, within that field of awareness, comes the understanding of the child's needs and seeking that help she can give the child. Thus, the growing awareness contributes to making the **collaborative work** between teacher and child possible. Accordingly, the programme is based on **building a relationship** with the children. The role of the teacher is to look into the child's mind to see what is in it and what it wants to do, and without any pressure, the children are allowed to decide for themselves what is right for them.

The four methodologies, Play way Method, Thematic Approach, Circle Time and the Montessorri Method collectively and integrally facilitate the development of the three external lines of education - physical, vital and mental. These form the primary means of the three-fold process of: character building, developing a deeper self-awareness and becoming a well-defined self-conscious being, towards the goals of the interconnectedness and interdependence of life and living. These communitarian goals are echoed in Ubuntu values which are based on a unifying vision of community relationships that are compassionate, respectful, interdependent and interconnected (Broodryk, 1997). Similarly and simultaneously, through these external processes the child is prepared for the psychic (the purpose of life) and the spiritual (divine consciousness) aspects of her evolution.

Module 4: Preparation of Self

The fundamental demands on the IE teacher are **rigorous self-awareness and self-discipline**. This means that when someone wants to work in

education and contribute positively to it, the first requisite is a mind that is **dynamic, creative and capable of finding solutions**. This necessitates undergoing a **discipline and preparation** so that the mind hooks up with the higher inspiration enabling the **dynamism, creativity and inspiration** to flow through.

Prerequisites of the integral teacher

Teaching in an integral school is a **lifetime's pursuit** of personal evolution, of growth in consciousness, and its conscious manifestation in one's work with children or with fellow teachers.

- First prerequisite is a sure and clear **aspiration** for the work, supported by a **will** to realise one's aspiration
- The second prerequisite is a **willingness to work** towards the goals of integral education, **personally and professionally**

Preparatory work for the Integral Teacher

- **Observe and understand** each part of one's own being, the disharmonies and discords, the secret longings, the points of resistance and openness to a higher light
- **Know**, through personal experience, where one's sources of strengths and weaknesses are and discover the origin of all movements and motivations of one's being
- **Pledge** an absolute and lifelong commitment to learning, growing and self-becoming

Steps to becoming an Integral Teacher

- **Facilitate and enable** learning because education is a personal process and must be meaningful to the child to allow growth in consciousness
- **Respect** the child's being, its uniqueness and independence
- Be in touch with the **learner within oneself** and thus relate to the child on an equal footing
- Detach from the 'business' of teaching, thus become more of a **friend** than a teacher

- Free oneself of the sense of hierarchy and of self-importance because learning is through **nurturing relationships** that inspire mutual respect and honour and is creative
- Share with the child the **joy and the passion** of learning, not merely content and information
- Enrich the learning experience by providing the necessary resources from within oneself and combining **multiple sources of learning**
- Focus on the **process of learning** so that the learner, the learning environment and the learning relationship become more important than the teacher, the classroom and the school

Personal qualities of the integral teacher

The core competencies include:

1. Emotional competence

- To develop and maintain **effective learning and facilitative relationships** to be empowered and empower others
- To be **emotionally fulfilled**, balanced and independent and **interdependent**
- **Empathy** enables the teacher to have an effective learning relationship with her children and can help open the channels of meaningful and transformative relationships

2. Intellectual competencies

Simultaneous with emotional competencies are intellectual ones:

- To facilitate **universal learning**, the integral teacher will need to first develop as a multidisciplinary learner who is a universal learner
- To develop a high degree of **mastery** in her own area of interest or any subject pursued with passion and interest

3. Physical competencies

- The integral teacher must be **physically competent** - active, alert and strong and cannot function without high levels of enthusiasm and energy

4. Psychological preparation

- The integral teacher must be **personally prepared** to be involved in an integral system
- The first step in the preparation for integral education is **personal flowering** and **growth of consciousness**
- The preparation for integral teaching will have to begin with **self-enquiry**, knowing what integral education implies, for both teacher and child
- The second step is a form of **psychological and intellectual cleansing** – shedding all mental baggage from our past
- A teacher in the integral system must also illustrate by **personal example** the whole range of possibility for human excellence and perfection

The qualities and attitudes that an integral teacher would have to develop through her own education are the following:

- The most important quality the child would look for is **friendliness**, which entails being non-judgemental, empathise, stand by quietly, willing to lend a helping hand without forcing herself on anyone
- An important quality for an integral teacher is not being **obtrusive**, the best teacher is one who does not need to teach, one who can allow learning to happen naturally

The IE teacher is a dynamic personality who has many excellent qualities – to be relaxed and alert, a good listener and a refined speaker, gentle, firm

and joyous in her being aware that she is invested with the power and freedom of consciously creating thought, intention and perception in the child.

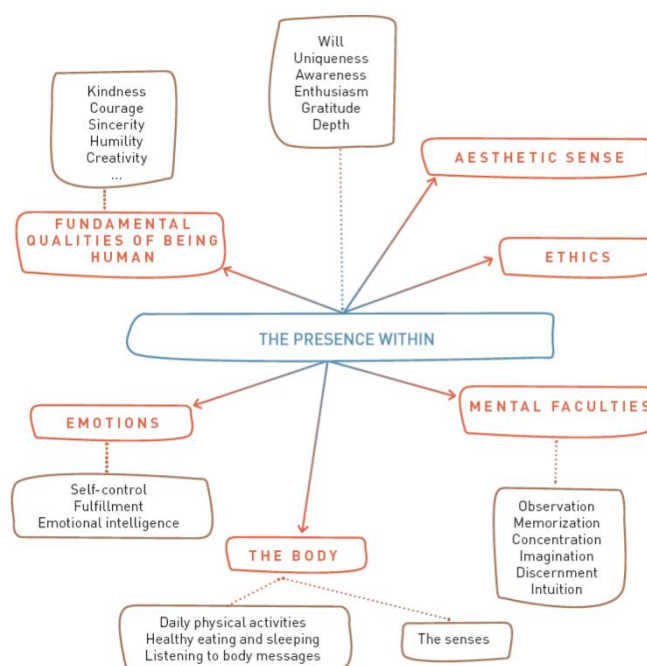
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Annexure M: ECD IE Intervention Programme

**ECD RESEARCH STUDY
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
of an
INTEGRAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

for

3-4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN



Integral Education Weekly Programme: February – May 2020

Programme Schedule

Dates of Observation: Before	03/02 – 28/02
Dates of Implementation	02/03 – 20/03; 01/04 – 10/04
Dates of Observation: After	13/04 – 08/05

Initial last column on completion

Programme Outline

Integral Education is a whole programme which begins with the changing of self to better change our society

No	Daily Programme*	Action
1	Arrival	Personal welcome, showing warmth, excitement and connection with each child

		(where possible)
2	Prayer	The prayer should be followed by a short (1 minute) discussion on its meaning. You can choose different topics, like love, respect, responsibility, thanks, nature, etc See examples below
3	Morning Ring	This is a time for you to have special and close talks with your children. Make sure that the children are calm and relaxed when you start these sessions. See activities and exercises for this time
4	Sports/Physical Development	Children should have at least 30 minutes of outdoor exercises and activities. Please discuss the exercises and activities with the sports person in your school
5	Activity/School Readiness	This is a time when children can be introduced to new learning opportunities. The activities and exercises during this time will allow you to observe the children closely. Make sure that they are enthusiastic about the activity and are fully participating so that they can get the benefit of the activity which should be fun and enjoyable
6	Toilet Routine	The toilet routine is an opportunity for you to teach important concepts and values. For example, if you sort them out according to colour of clothes, then you are teaching them that concept and organisation. Also, you will talk to them about hygiene and why it is important, what does cleanliness mean. In this time, you can also include values, like “cleanliness is next to godliness”, good clean habits are lifelong and make the link between cleanliness and good health, the spread of disease, etc
7	Breakfast Time	Eating together is another very important value that they will learn about being together and sharing time and food, where possible. They must be comfortable and relaxed and enjoy this time. Use the time to develop other values and skills, like gratitude and appreciation, see mealtime activities
8	Snack Time	See “Breakfast Time”
9	Free Play	This is a great opportunity to observe

		<p>closely children's abilities, especially since they will freely choose the activity that most interests them. The group work here also encourages them to learn many good values, like working together, sharing resources and ideas, fun of play, value of relationships. You must be walking around and encouraging them throughout so they feel confident that what they are doing is right. See Free Play exercises and activities</p>
10	Story Time	<p>These sessions must be set up so that children are excited about listening to the story. Try and build up their enthusiasm by talking about story time during the day so that they wait for this special time. The stories are from the Ubuntu stories. Every time you start a story, tell them about what Ubuntu is and why it is culturally important to them, its values (see below) and after the story, discuss the themes that the story brings out. Guide children to answer the questions given.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ubuntu</p> <p>Ubuntu is a bundle of precious values in African societies. It values such as respect for human beings, human dignity, and compassion, hard work leading to achievement, honesty, tolerance, generosity, kindness, gentleness, humility, and love. These bind the community together. This is clearly seen in the phrase, 'umuntu ngubuntu ngabantu' which means "I am because we are".</p>
11	Tidy up Time	<p>During this time, you can talk to the children about responsibility and respect, reinforce their good behaviour, say positive things about this activity and try to extend this practice outside of the classroom to their homes</p>
12	Toilet Routine	See "6" above
13	Lunch Time	See "Breakfast Time"
14	Nap Time	<p>Before naptime, you should encourage them to forget any stress. Children should fall asleep under the best possible conditions and in a calm and happy</p>

		atmosphere. See exercises in preparation for this time
15	Free Play	See "9" above
16	Day End/Departure	Like the arrival, this is a time, where possible, to give personal attention to children. They should feel happy and content with what they did in the time spent with you and be excited about returning to you the next day. The goodbyes are warm and loving

* Order may change according to schools

NOTES FOR PRACTITIONERS

1. Although the programme is flexible, you should try to complete as many activities/exercises for effective implementation. You may add appropriate and relevant ones
2. Before you start every day, review the previous day's activities and learnings
3. Integral Education is the development of all 5 aspects of the child's being. While activities/exercises are presented to you separately, as far as possible, keep the links alive. Eg. Sensory development, character formation should be present in all the activities and exercises and reinforced throughout
4. Your role is very important in bringing out the best in children, shower them with affection and offer them a living example of what they could become. Praise them all the time so they feel the sense that they're doing well and want to be there
5. During the day, take regular breaks, encourage the children to exercise and stretch, or simply to run, walk or play outside
6. There are exercises and activities that can be used where they fit best, Eg. If an exercise is under ACTIVITY, you can fit it as an ICEBREAKER (IN BETWEEN)

ACTIVITIES & EXERCISES (numbered as per Programme Outline)

2. PRAYER

Dear Lord,
I love you with
All my heart,
bless my day
and my night,
give us your peace today.

Discuss: Love & its effects; respect; peace; personal happiness & comfort

OR

Dear God, thank you
for my home and
for my entire family,
thank you for the love
you give to each one of us
so we can share it with others,
help us to live a happy life.

Discuss: Thanks & appreciation; family love; happiness; respect; empathy

3. MORNING RING

3. 1. Develop motor coordination

- Pinch your nose with the right hand and your right ear with the left hand, then alternate: pinch your left ear with the right hand and your nose with the left hand.
- Pat your head with the right hand gently while the left hand draws circles on the belly, then alternate: the right hand draws circles on the belly and the left hand gently pats your head.
- Close your right fist and move your arm up and down (as if you were shaking a bottle); during this time, your left hand is open and your outstretched left arm makes a forward movement at the level of the abdomen and comes back to touch your belly. Then, reverse the movement of the right and left hands.
- Describe how a flower opens and then invite them to explore the movement themselves by sitting curled up on the floor like a seed or a closed bud. After taking a few breaths in this position, ask them to imitate the flower; for example, by starting to move a finger, followed by an arm (as a flower when touched by the first sun rays), and then gently opening the rest of the body (while remaining aware of their breathing, muscles and movements in space). They can finalize their radiant blossoming by opening their chest and arms towards the sun, thus stretching their bodies entirely.
- For an hour, try to use only your left hand if you are right-handed, and vice versa.

- Pair the children up; one is blindfolded, the other holds the first one's hand and leads her/him for a walk outside.
- Ask them to run on the spot or imagine all kinds of exercises and movements to be done in class or outside. Then ask them to stop suddenly and then: touch their head, toes, etc or name the colour on the wall

3.2. Develop the abilities of awareness, attentiveness and focus

- Stretch or make very slow movements, concentrating on each movement and their breath. Ask them to try to feel all their muscles. Ask them to move forward as slowly as possible, to move their arms and body extremely slowly and carefully, without any thought.
- Walk slowly and to keep full awareness of the movement of the body, toes, soles, ankles, knees and move the body weight from left to right.
- Match the movements and deep breathing by adding instructions such as "I raise my left hand while breathing in, I lower my left hand while breathing out, I raise my right hand while breathing in ...; I raise my head while breathing in, I lower my head while breathing out; hands on the waist, I lean toward the right while breathing out, I return to the center while breathing in (do the same toward the left); walking slowly, I lift my foot while breathing in , I put my foot down while breathing out.

3.3. Breathing for calmness

- Ask them to breathe in and out with a hand on their stomach and feel it rise and fall; they should not force it, and keep the natural rhythm of the breath and count:
- 1. Breathe in, 2. Breathe out, 3. Breathe in, 4. Breathe out...
- At any time of the day and when you feel the need, repeat this exercise to help them concentrate, be calm, and refocus.

3.4. Finding good

Encourage them to find a person at preschool or at home who they can congratulate for something beautiful that she/he has done and praise her or him by giving details.

3.5. Turning inward

Regularly ask the children to look inward, to check how they feel: Are they sad, happy, tired, etc.? What thoughts are inside right now? Do they feel any body sensations? If so, where exactly and how strongly? What kind of sensation is it (tingling, heat, etc.)?

3.6. Discovering superpowers

Explain to the children that like superheroes, they too have superpowers. Start by identifying the five main character strengths that make their character "special":

THANKFULNESS; DETERMINATION; GOODNESS; HOPE; BRAVENESS;
KINDNESS; FAIRNESS; PEACE; OBEDIENCE; HONESTY

Read out and explain the character strengths (above) and ask them to tell you the ones that are in them. You can ask them to name one recent situation where they have shown that strength.

They should think of a picture for their superpower, for example:

KINDNESS: they just have to press a button for magic flowers to appear in their hand.

3.7. Building character

Choose a "quality of the week" and cultivate it: start in the morning and try to keep that quality alive throughout the day, check on it at the end of the day, draw a picture or a poster on it, etc.

3.8. Develop mindfulness

Ask children to choose an ordinary activity (walking, brushing teeth, taking a bath, doing the dishes, etc.) and to do it mindfully. They should be totally present, awake, conscious of the body sensations, sounds, emotions and thoughts that present themselves. Then, every time they realize that they get lost in their thoughts, become conscious of it, let go and come back with ease to the present moment.

3.9. Develop responsibility

- Ask them if there is anything they have done or said that they are not proud of? Find out if they are sorry and will they accept the responsibility; guide them to think about having the right attitude the next time.
- How could their attitude be more kind toward loved ones?
- Ask the children to choose a small action that can be done daily, eg. every day, before leaving, I clean up my things or I wash my bowl in the morning, etc.

3.10. Show thanks

Ask the children to think of someone close to them and name the things that this person does for them, for others, for animals or for nature. They should find a way to thank this person (by doing an action, encouraging, helping, accompanying her/him, etc.).

3.11. Practice imagining

- Encourage the child to talk about all possible responses to a situation. Eg. a child bumps into them, what will they do (hit him, ignore him, cry, call the teacher, talk to him, run away)?
- Ask them to choose an object and imagine many ways of using it, Eg. a paper plate: play frisbee, draw on it and make a work of art, cut it up into shapes to colour. Find as many ways as possible to use a paper clip, a pan, etc.

3.12. Reinforce goodness

When they do something good, congratulate them, encourage them: when they are honest, helpful to someone, show respect to nature, make an effort to be good, and so on. Then, ask them: How did the feeling come about? How did they feel about doing the right thing? What character strength did they use? How could they repeat this attitude another time?

3.13. Develop awareness

- Tell them to look at something for 2 to 3 minutes, a candle for example, then close their eyes and try to see that image in their head. Repeat the process several times until the mental image is perfectly clear.
- Ask them to imagine the road to school or to a friend's home. They should do the whole journey mentally, in silence, or aloud.
- They can close their eyes and imagine they are entering their room; turn to their right and look at the wall, what do they see (window, table, color, object)? They go around the room and describe each wall, then the rest of the room. They should try to give as many details as possible.
- Give an orange to each child and then guide them: "Look at the orange carefully, turn it around to see it from all sides. What color is it? Is it the same color everywhere? Feel your fingers. Put your nails in its skin. Look at the juice flowing. Peel the orange and take in its smell. Listen to the noise it makes when you peel it and separate the parts. Feel the juice that sticks on your fingers. Eat a piece of the orange and feel its flesh in your mouth and on your teeth.
- Encourage them to spend time doing some work (in their home, school, community)
- Find out what is really important to them? Give them a moment to think about this and tell you their thoughts.
- What is their dream? Is it possible to have a dream that lifts them up and gives them joy and does not harm either themselves or others?
- If they had a magic wand giving them special powers to help others, what would it be?
- What can they do today (even a very small step) to get closer to their dream?
- Regularly take 30-second to two-minute breaks during the day: get them to close their eyes and focus on breathing, they smile lightly without forcing anything. They breathe in, feel peace and goodness fill them, breathe out, they feel the calmness spreading all over them; they take several breaths in this way.

3.14. Rhyme to recite

Title: Rain come

Themes: Gratitude, Nature's Rewards, Fun & Play, Togetherness

Come rain, rain on us!!!
with your cold raindrops.
We kids love your cold-rain-drops when we play games.
Co.... Co... Ucabhayiya.

The wind tells us to wait
Rivers are overflowing.
Streams are overflowing.
Where are we going to sleep?

4. SPORTS/PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Movement learning

Numerous learning fields can include movement; one can discover letters by mimicking them with the body, writing them with a stick on the ground, searching for objects that have the shape of these letters, singing, and so on. With a little imagination and creativity, many passive or boring activities can become interesting and can become an active, lively and efficient learning.

4.2. Body awareness

Guide the children: Eyes closed, think about the body: how does it feel? Get into a comfortable and upright position. How does that feel? Note the body from the top of the head to the tips of the toes and observe the different feelings. Is there a body part that is felt more strongly? Is there a pulse, a tension, a heaviness, a tickling? If this is the case, take three breaths at the place of the sensation. Are there body parts that are not felt? If the body could express its needs, what would it ask for? Does the body need anything?

Focus attention on the head, feel the forehead and eyes, how does the jaw feel? Is it relaxed or tense? Relax it. Sense the neck and shoulders; relax the shoulders. Feel the air that inflates and deflates the chest, try to feel the heart beating. Concentrate now on the stomach; how does it feel? Is it knotted, is it empty, does it make noises? Now concentrate on the pelvic area, then on the back. How are the legs? Calm or restless? Feel the ankles, the soles of the feet, and then move the toes, stretch gently.

4.3. Cat stretch

Ask them to be in an upright position, when breathing in, they raise their arms in front of them very slowly to the horizontal and put them back down while breathing out.

They gently lift their arms in front of them until they are on top of their head while breathing in, and then put them back down while breathing out.

They lift their arms above them, go on to their toes and stretch. Enjoy the movement, they feel their whole body stretch. Stretch like a cat does after sleeping.

They gently roll their head several times in each direction.

Without moving their head, they look upward and downward several times, then left and right several times. Taking time, they make a few complete circles with their eyes.

4.4. Develop senses

Choose a straight line of three to four meters and ask them to walk back and forth. They should walk very slowly (for three minutes), placing all their attention on the feeling of their feet touching the ground. Everyone should walk at their own pace. Encourage them to pay attention to sounds, feelings and then to see if they can let go and redirect their attention to thinking about the feelings in their feet, toes, ankles, etc.. You can get them to discover

various textures (walking on a carpet, on tiles, in the sun, in the shade, on grass, on stones, etc.).

5. ACTIVITY/SCHOOL READINESS

5.1. Body awareness

Draw an outline (frontal view) of the body and then get the children to colour the body parts where something is felt: stress, pain, stinging, heaviness, itching, tingling, ache, etc. Note how strong the feeling is on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not noticeable, 10 being very strong). Take note of its features:

What is its colour? Is it warm, hot, cold, icy, boiling, neutral, dry, wet, etc.?

What is its shape? Is it rather round, square, triangular, flat, diamond-shaped, star-shaped, rectangular? How does it feel? Is it rather rough, smooth, soft, sticky, sharp, etc?

5.2. Sensory awareness

Get the children to sit with a straight back, closed eyes and take three deep breaths. They should imagine that something from a faraway place is put in their hand. Open their hand (at this point put three raisins in their hand) and ask them to feel one of these objects with their fingers: weight, texture. They make it roll gently between their fingers.

Now they can open their eyes; look at one of these objects carefully. Look at its color. If it has different colors, compare and look at them from different sides. They can roll it between their fingers; notice how its look changes. Find its darkest wrinkles. If they imagine being as small as a speck of dust, how would they see this thing? The smallest wrinkle would then seem to be a giant hole. Examine its shape; does it have different parts?

Perhaps this thing speaks a secret language? They bring it to their ear and roll it between their fingers. Do they hear the secret murmur of this object? What is it talking about?

Now, they smell it gently, as if it were a flower. How does it smell? Is the smell strong? If they press it lightly, is the smell stronger?

Now they get ready to taste the raisin. Before they eat it, what does their body say to them? They bring it very slowly to their mouth, aware of their arm moving to their mouth as well as any other reaction in their mouth or body.

They touch their lips with the raisin. Being aware of their mouth, the upper and then the lower lip, teeth, gums and tongue. Now they put it gently on their tongue and move the raisin in their mouth, against the palate, under the tongue.

When they are ready, they bite the raisin, how does it taste? Chew it slowly, and then swallow. Now explain to the child the journey that raisin is taking into the body...

5.4. Observe and compare

Guide the children to draw one of their favorite objects. Then ask them to observe this object very closely, you can adapt the words and the steps to the likes and the age of the children:

Observe the general shape of the object: is it vertical, horizontal, small, slim, flat?

Then, ask them, in pairs, to compare their drawings and share their experiences and discoveries.

First they imagine a cat: its long bushy tail, the white patches on its legs, the softness of its fur, its wet little nose, its walk, its movements, the different noises it can make (purr, meow). Now, show a picture of a cat, ask them to compare the length of its tail with its body. How many whiskers does it have? What about its pads on the feet? What is the shape of its claws, its eyes?

Compare it with another cat, note the similarities and differences to develop our ability to compare. Ask them to give more and more details and to observe with all their senses.

Everything can be observed and compared: noses, mouths and smiles; ways of holding a crayon; different voices, laughs.

5.5. Sense of smell

Play a smell memory game: with the children, choose about five things that have a distinct smell and place them in small boxes; then invite the blindfolded children to identify them by smell.

5.6. Sense of taste

To increase their ability to appreciate different flavours, let them discover and appreciate the taste of pepper, ginger or garlic, etc.

Let the children discover herbs such as thyme, rosemary, parsley, coriander, mint, etc. Play games: blindfolded, ask them to describe or guess the name of the herb you make them taste.

5.7. Discover emotions

Get children to make "a bag of emotions" so that they can show what happens in them – by cutting shapes in paper (anger: a flash, joy: a sun, sadness: a black cloud, love: a heart, etc.). As time passes, the child will learn the effects of these emotions.

Children should be encouraged to become aware of their emotions and the body sensations, thoughts, actions, words that come with them. Get children to do the following:

- Imagine that they are filled with joy; they have just heard good news, they are happy... Now every time they meet someone, they show this joy.

- Now they are tired, exhausted, they can hardly walk.... Now they greet those they meet.
- Now they are sad. Something bad has happened... feel how their body shows sadness, and then greet those they meet.
- Now they are angry. Imagine something that annoys them; they feel their face strain, their body tense and then they greet others, keeping this feeling.

Other emotions or attitudes can be explored in this way: shy, dreamy, embarrassed (they made a mistake), and so on.

Ask them to feel it throughout their body; draw their attention to the differences in the body, back, legs, head; does their breathing change too or is it still the same? Are their thoughts different? What do they notice in others?

5.8. Solve problems together

Do this exercise with the children to understand the other person's point of view and solve problems with respect.

In a light atmosphere, with the children, talk about how fights happen (sharing toys, during group work, etc.). Why do these fights happen? Find out how each one can do better when these fights happen (or beforehand). After a week, look at the changes and efforts made.

5.9. Develop concentration

Guide children to start by noticing their breathing, without changing it. Ask them how is their breathing and where do they feel it (neck, lungs, stomach)? What is its rhythm (jerky, short, long)? How are their shoulders? Take another 30 seconds. Ask them to notice their breathing. After this observation time, are there changes?

Ask the children to sit comfortably and take a few moments to observe how they feel: how do they feel physically (tension, relaxation, etc.), emotionally (sad, agitated, etc.) and mentally (many or few thoughts, etc.)?

Now, breathing through their noses if possible, guide them to feel their diaphragm come down and swell the stomach while breathing in; while breathing out, the air leaves through the nostrils and the diaphragm rises.

By breathing calmly and sufficiently, can we calm excitement, anger and bring about calm, well-being, peace?

5.10. Develop calmness

Sit in a comfortable position with the back straight. Take three slow, deep breaths. Focus their attention on breathing and look for the most comfortable breathing. Stay alert during the entire breathing in and out, effortlessly. They should think about something that makes them happy or someone they love. Feel thanks or well-being.

Get the children to stand in a circle; ask a child to hold an imaginary ball in her hands by acting out its weight and size. Once the weight and size are established, she throws this imaginary ball to another child. The second child catches it, respecting the weight and size. She then changes the object's size and weight (very heavy and large, or tiny and light, etc.) and sends it to someone else.

The children are outside, they have just played, are full of energy, push and tease each other and are laughing. Before they enter the classroom, remind them that they will now change activity and switch to silent mode to enter a period of calm for a set time. You can turn it into a game: see who can sit at their place without making any noise at all.

Ask the children, if everyone agrees to work for a while in silence? Please remember that working in silence means not talking or looking at others, but also trying to be silent in the head and not think of anything else; they should

be totally focused on what they are doing for ten minutes. Now, praise them – “Very good!” Then, before they start, ask them to do a small concentration for a minute to calm down a little.

5.11. Sense of hearing

The children close their eyes and try to notice all the surrounding sounds: listen to the one most far away, then the one closest; count how many different ones there are; hear all sounds without thinking of a particular one; compare the sounds to each other; choose a sound and give it a colour, shape, texture. What image does it have?

5.12. Develop gratitude

Once a week, settle down comfortably and look at the week that just passed. Ask the children to tell you about people or events for which they are grateful. Also, they can tell you two things that went well during the day. Encourage the children to try to think carefully from inside themselves.

Here are some ways to help the children:

- What moments were pleasant for them on a day? What beautiful things did they see (a flower, a tree, a child's smile, etc.)?
- What actions made them feel proud?
- When did they laugh or smile?
- Why did this good thing happen?
- What does this mean for them?
- What can they do to make this event happen again?

5.13. Develop enthusiasm

- Encourage children to talk about two activities that bring excitement in them. Then, ask them to close their eyes and think about how they feel when they think about these activities
- Ask them if there is a body feeling too? Where is it in the body? How do they feel? Can they describe the feeling?

- How do they feel when they are enthusiastic (emotions, thoughts, breathing)?
- Ask them to think of an activity or theme that makes them enthusiastic
- Is it possible to feel enthusiasm all the time?

7. MEALTIMES (also for 8 & 13)

7.1. Develop observation

During mealtimes, have the children eat with their eyes closed or blindfolded. Have them discover different foods, ask them to guess what it is: vegetable, cheese, juice, fruit. Then, little by little, teach them to describe their experience, like a great expert.

During a meal, get the children to pay attention to the smells of the different foods, to learn the names of the various spices and ingredients, the textures of different foods, etc., then ask them to close their eyes during the next meal and ask them to guess what's on the menu.

7.2. Show thanks

A meal can also be an occasion to awaken thanks: for nature (sun, rain, animals, plants) and for all the men and women who have worked along the food chain.

Here are some ideas to bring out this quality:

- Imagine all the people, all the animals (bees, earthworms, etc.), all the plants that have contributed in one way or another to the food being on the plate
- One can take a moment to explore with the children all the work necessary for preparing a meal so that they become aware and value the work and love that the cook has put into it
- With the children, imagine the journey of the food from the plant to our plate and think about all the people who had a direct or indirect role to play in this process: the farmer, his wife, the friends who helped him,

the distributor, the sorters, the truck driver, the salesman and his employees, and then the mom or dad who will carefully choose and buy the food.

One can thus realize that the cooperation of so many people was needed at every stage of this process. Ask them if they impressed and thankful for the amazing organization and great cooperation of thousands of human beings, plants and animals necessary for each stage and for each food?

9. FREE PLAY (Also 15)

9.1. Sense of touch

Ask the children to choose three objects in nature and describe the differences to the touch (smooth, grainy, rough, sharp, etc.), then to organize them from the smoothest to the most rough, from the strongest to the most delicate, from the heaviest to the lightest, from the largest to the smallest.

Ask them to compare a small stone and a piece of wood: what differences do they notice? Do they realize that the stone is heavier than the piece of wood? How is it possible?

In groups of three, ask them: "Will the heaviest or the lightest object fall the fastest?" Compare the responses of the different groups: does everyone have the same answers? At the end of the exercise, discover the right answers all together by experimenting with practical exercises.

With the child's eyes closed, give her a shell, a small stone or a leaf. Give her time to feel this object, then you put it among other objects and ask her to find it again.

10. STORY TIME

Prepare for this time by finding relevant pictures for each story. You can even take small sections of the story to act out and get the children more involved. Like Story 3, get them to act out the meeting of the animals. Also, at the end, after question time, you can ask them to draw something from the story, like in Story 1, a flower or a butterfly.

10.1. Title: Thamela was a happy child

Themes: Happiness, Love and Protection of Nature, Friendship, Sharing

Thamela was always happy. Her life made her to always laugh and smile. When she was not feeling well or was sad, she would often say, “I am off to look at the sky” This was her way of making herself feel better and comfort herself.

Thamela’s friends used to wonder how she managed to always laugh, smile and play happily. Thamela had a secret garden where she played and spent most of her time in. This garden had everything Thamela loved such as flowers, butterflies and this was part of what made her happy.

One day she had to show her friends her happy garden. She took all of them and showed them this beautiful garden. When her friends saw the garden they were amazed and fell in love with it. One of Thamela’s friends, Khethi said, “No wonder you are always happy, this place is very beautiful and one can enjoy spending time here.”

She gave them a tour around and then instructed them not to litter and emphasized the importance of caring for nature, adding that it brings joy and happiness when taken care of.

Questions:

What made Thamela happy?

Can you remember what was in Thamela’s garden?

Do you have a secret place? Would you share this place with your friends?

What are some of the things you love in Nature?

10.2. Title: A chicken that wanted to fly

Themes: Love, Freedom, Determination, Braveness, Understanding difference

There was a chicken named Skhukhu. This chicken was different from others because it had a wish to one day be able to fly to the sky.

Skhukhu: “I have power and wings, so why would I not be able to fly?” she thought to herself.

Skhukhu then went and told her mother about her wish to fly to the sky and meet up there with different birds. Her mother was very shocked but sat her down and tried to talk her out of it.

“Skhukhu, my child, you are a different bird to those you see flying up to the sky. You do not have the ability to fly to the sky. This is because of our wings.”

Skhukhu was very sad when her mother told her this, but she was determined to fulfil her wish to fly to the sky. She even kept trying.

One day she climbed on top of the hen house and tried to fly but she fell on the ground. Other chickens laughed at her. Despite this embarrassing setback, she did not give up. She kept trying to fly with no success.

Seeing her child not giving up and not willing to listen to any discouragements, her mother was now supporting and encouraging her to keep trying to fly.

One day, early in the morning, she woke up and went straight to the top of the hen house. She took off and flew up high for a moment but, sadly, she fell. On this day she came to accept that she cannot fly up to the sky like a bird.

Questions:

What was Skhukhu's wish?

What did Skhukhu's mother tell her?

Do you have a wish for yourself like Skhukhu?

Will you also not give up until you try to fulfil it?

What happened when Skhukhu tried to fly?

10.3. Title: Wild animals

Themes: Love, Cooperation, Togetherness, Democracy, Sharing, Continuity

There were animals in a certain forest. One day they called for a meeting. The aim of this meeting was to propose the idea of inviting other animals to come and live in the same forest. The meeting took place and the animals discussed this issue.

In making his input, the lion said, "I hear that some of us are complaining about boredom, but if we were to invite other lions, I'm going to have competition for the meat."

The rabbit also got up and said, "I think I'm the only one out of all of you who is smart in this forest, now I do not need competition."

The monkey laughed so loud and said, "This means I'm going to have to stop to get you fruits that are far up the tree. Now you must get your new members to get them for you."

After all animals had spoken, the snake said, "This means I have no value here and of no help to you because I cannot do anything. It's painful to hear this but the way I see things we are all important because we have different abilities which are crucial for survival for each and every one of us."

Welcoming more animals with more abilities would mean a long-life span for us all.”

Questions:

Why did the animals have a meeting?

What did the lion say?

Why did the monkey say?

Was the snake right? Why?

10.4. Title: The Rabbit and Granny’s Kids

Themes: Honesty, Shrewdness, Self-seeking, Fairness

There was a very naughty rabbit and it had a fear of crossing the river. One day the rabbit had to go across the river. She sat and thought how she was going to cross the river to get food. Suddenly granny’s kids appeared from nowhere moaning about their missing granny.

“Hawu!!! Here is the rabbit, let’s catch him, maybe he can show us where granny is.” They chased the rabbit, but the rabbit turned into a stone. The kids took the stone and threw it over the river. The stone turned back into a rabbit and laughed so loud. The rabbit thanked the kids.

Pe!pe!pe! You helped me cross the river.

Pe!pe!pe! You helped me cross the river.

The kids were very angry.

Questions:

What was the rabbit afraid of?

Why were the kids worried?

Why did the kids catch the rabbit?

What did the rabbit turn into?

Did the kids find their granny?

10.5. Title: Tortoise and the Rabbit

Themes: Humility, Patience, Honesty, Tolerance, Shrewdness

There was a rabbit and a tortoise. One day they were arguing about who would win a race between the two of them.

The Rabbit: “Tortoise, do you know I can win against you in a race because you are too slow?”

Tortoise: “Never, you think you are too clever for all of us, rabbit. You think you can beat us all here in a race because we have never been put against each other.”

Rabbit: “Let us not waste time. This afternoon when the heat has died down, can we have a race just between the two of us?”

The tortoise agreed and quickly thought of placing each of its relatives at some points of the race route. The race started and they both took off. The tortoise got tired at a point where one of its relatives was placed and the relative took over. The rabbit did not see this, and it continued at each point where there was a tortoise relative. The rabbit was amazed at how the tortoise could keep up pace and not tire.

Later in the race the rabbit got tired and took a rest, still amazed by the tortoise’s pace. The tortoise won the race and the rabbit did not ever undermine the tortoise.

Questions:

What did the rabbit say to the tortoise?

How did the tortoise answer back?

Was the tortoise honest during the race?

How did the rabbit get delayed?

Who won the race? How?

10.6. Title: Loyal Beetles

Themes: Honesty, Good Leadership, Aspects of Nature, Loyalty

The nation of beetles was a big nation and they did not have black spots. One day came heavy rain that swept away half of the beetles. Among the beetles that were swept away was the leader of them.

The few that were left behind had a competition meant to elect a new leader. They decided there was going to be three beetles who were going to contest for the leader position. Each contestant was instructed to go and look for a puddle of water in the mountains.

The first one went and came back praising the sweetness of the water and how full the puddle was. The second one went. It came back and also praised the sweetness of the water and how beautiful flowers were on top of the mountain.

When it was time for the third one to go, it said, “If I remember correctly it is summer now, so I do not think there is even a drop in those puddles.” All beetles were shocked, asking themselves why contestant number three was saying this.

When they all went to investigate, they indeed found out that all puddles were dry and the animals that were there had died. The beetles who had lied were cursed with black spots. The third beetle was officially appointed as the new leader.

Questions:

Why did the beetles have to choose a leader?

How many contestants were there for the leadership?

Where the first two telling the truth about what was on the mountain top?

What did the third say was on the mountain top?

What happened to the two beetles who lied?

10.7. Title: The Monkey and the Crocodile

Themes: Honesty, Leadership, Shrewdness, Loyalty, Fairness

One day in the forest the mood was sour because the king of the crocodiles was sick. There was word that the king would heal and get better if they got a heart of a monkey.

They went all out in search of monkeys until they spotted them across the river.

Crocodile: "I love you monkeys. I love it when you jump from one branch of tree to the next, swinging with your tails. I look at you in envy."

Monkey: "He! He! He! It's because we eat fruits that make us healthy that is why we always have strength, but could you help me cross the river? You know me and water do not mix."

Crocodile: "Come, let me help you cross the river."

Quickly the monkey got on the back of the crocodile.

Crocodile: "You are such a fool monkey. My king is sick, and for him to get better I need to get your heart."

Monkey: "Oh my God!!! Why did you not say so, crocodile? You know we are able to jump from one branch to the next because we take out our hearts and put them on the tree branches. They are heavy and they are big. As I speak to you right now, I left it hanging from the tree. Why did you not say you wanted my heart, but take me back I will get it for you."

Crocodile: "Mmm...I have to take you back."

The crocodile turned back and took the monkey back so that the monkey could go and get its heart.

The minute the monkey got on to the tree, it said, “You are such a fool crocodile. Where have you heard someone taking out their hearts, putting them on a tree and still breathing?”

Crocodile: “Hawu, I’m such a fool!!!”

Questions:

What was wrong with the crocodile king?
Why did they need a monkey’s heart?
How did the crocodile trick the monkey?
Who was cleverer in the end?

10.8. Title: Njinji and his Mbira

Themes: Love, Cooperation, Happiness, Community Love & Spirit, Unity

Njinji was a small boy who loved music. He was blessed with a beautiful voice and he loved playing his mbira.

Njinji’s music would unite the whole community. People would sing, dance and laugh.

One day Njinji’s mbira fell and broke into two pieces. The mood was sad. Njinji informed the community because he knew his music was uniting the community. It was indeed sad news to everyone but there came an idea that the community buy him a new mbira.

It was a good idea because things were very bad when the mbira had broken and there was no music. Everyone contributed and the community bought Njinji a new mbira. Njinji was very happy and he immediately started singing again.

Questions:

What two talents did Njinji have?
Do you have a talent?
What did Njinji’s music do for the community?
What happened to Njinji’s mbira?
How did happiness come back to the community?

11. TIDY UP TIME

As a game, ask them to make as little noise as possible (while cleaning up, eating, walking, etc.). To make the exercise fun, they can imagine that the noise affects them and that the slightest noise is unbearable.

Clean up together, they will like company and be inspired to do as you are doing. Show them they are not on their own, you support them. Cleaning up

together can be more fun, takes less time and often encourages a reluctant child to participate.

14. NAP TIME

Create a calm, happy atmosphere where the child feels protected, loved and at peace. Guide the children to...

Relax the muscles and nerves and release any stress in the body.

Clear the tensions from the emotions experienced during the day.

Bring calm in the head. Fall asleep in a peaceful, soft atmosphere.

Ask the children to become aware of their breathing.

Feel the air that enters and leaves through their nostrils.

While breathing in, they should imagine filling themselves with peace and that their whole body relaxes while breathing out.

They can even smile lightly.

Get them to repeat the exercise while you count down starting from five

Five (stomach fills up) "I am at peace"

Four (stomach flattens) "I am relaxed"

They feel good, comfortable, safe.

Let us, together, nurture their inner fire to become more conscious human beings!

Reference:

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INTEGRAL EDUCATION FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING
VALUES THROUGH
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

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