



MAY 2017

# Newsletter



**Inclusive  
Education**  
SOUTH AFRICA

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## Contact Us

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# From the Director's Desk

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Every year, at the beginning of April, IESA hosts a Project Review Day for the programme teams to showcase their work over the past financial year to our whole staff and Board. It is an opportunity to consolidate our work over the year, take a step back and see what we have achieved as an organisation in the field of inclusive education.

I was once again awestruck and inspired by our phenomenal staff whose passion and endless enthusiasm for the work they do shone through on the day. Our organisation's four programmes are: Early Childhood Development; Inclusive Schools; Information & Support and Advocacy. Each programme team shared highlights, impact and the real stories of changed lives resulting from their work over the year.

Demand for our services increases significantly year on year, particularly in light of our expanding national footprint. Our schools work in the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape stood out as particular highlights. Important pilot projects testing out the model of a Resource Teacher and Professional Learning Communities to support the continuous professional development for inclusive teaching practice showed extremely positive results and are models we are incorporating into all of our schools work.

Our ECD Team provided inclusive orientation training to 1100 ECD Practitioners and worked intensively in 28 ECD Centres supporting them to function as inclusive centres with the skills to identify barriers to learning and development and intervene to include all young children in learning.

Through our Information and Support Service our social media presence has exploded! Through our Facebook page, website, twitter and also Pinterest and Instagram we are able to reach so many more parents, teachers and professionals and share

inclusive messages, strategies and information. We believe that knowledge empowers and being able to share valuable insight into how our inclusive education system can and should function empowers parents and teachers to go forward.

On the advocacy front we were very pleased to have played a leading role in the coordination and development of a civil society shadow report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focusing on Article 24: the right to Education. This was a widely consultative and collaborative effort and has produced a significant report to be taken forward in advocating for improved education for children with disabilities in South Africa.

These are only a few of the many examples of the scope and impact of the work of IESA over the last year. A few more of these stories are shared in more detail in this newsletter. We are looking forward to a new year where we embark on a pilot induction programme for new teachers in inclusive education in partnership with the national Department of Basic Education. In addition we are hoping to roll out a programme to ECD Service Providers following on from a pilot where we looked at support organisations to infuse inclusive practice throughout their programmes.

It is certainly a very exciting time to be involved with this amazing team of people making such a difference to the inclusive education landscape in South Africa. I am very proud of the IESA Team... let's keep up the good work!

*Director*  
**Robyn Beere**

# Highlight from 2 Day ECD Practitioner Workshop

The Two Day Inclusive Education Workshop for ECD Practitioners serves as an introduction to ensure that All children are given access to meaningful participation in learning in the South African general education system\*.

The focus is on identifying barriers to learning as early as possible; planning for intervention; understanding behaviour; planning for support and accessing support. During November 2016, Shireen Kaiser from Smart Kidz Educare attended one of these workshops. She was receptive to the new information on inclusion and to adjusting her daily programme.

Early this year, a parent contacted IESA's Information and Support service seeking help in finding an ECD centre for her son. Ethan is a little boy of 5 who lives with his mom, gran & his twin brother, Ezra. Ethan has cerebral palsy (CP) and has received therapy at the CP clinic at Red Cross Children's Hospital from an early age. His mom was first referred to IESA by the clinic in January 2016 as the therapist recommended that both boys would benefit from the stimulation of an early childhood development programme. Mom was nervous about approaching centres with Ethan, but was encouraged to try a centre that had participated in our inclusive training programme. At that stage, the centre had space for only one child, so she enrolled Ezra and continued to care for Ethan at home. Early this year however, Ezra was moving to Grade R, mom was working, and she was advised once again to try to find an ECD centre that Ethan could attend.

One of the centres we suggested to her was Shireen's and we were delighted when Smart Kidz Educare welcomed Ethan as one of its 2017 learners. Principal Shireen had a meeting with the learners and staff before Ethan's first day at the centre. She wanted everybody to understand the barriers he is living with and how they will ensure he is included in all learning programmes at the pace he can manage. Ethan still continues his physio sessions and enjoys the "learning through play" approach that IESA promotes.

With information, training and follow-up support from IESA, another child who probably would have been excluded from the ECD learning experience has been welcomed and included.

\*IESA's Two day IE workshops are funded by WC Department of Social Development's Early Childhood Development Programme.

Written by  
**Ashleen Marcus**



# The Value of Parent-Teacher Partnerships

The best thing any teacher can do is to get to know the parents of learners and to establish ways of keeping regular contact with parents. Building a good relationship with parents/caregivers can be one of the main factors in supporting a child who is experiencing barriers to learning and development. This can be a challenge for busy teachers and parents who have their hands full, but a good teacher-parent partnership can save time and creates a wonderful opportunity for the child to develop to his/her full potential, both in school and at home.

As part of our Inclusive ECD Centre work, I have the privilege of working closely with teachers and parents/caregivers. A highlight for me is seeing the wonderful interaction between parents and teachers playing and learning about ECD together. Most of all I appreciate the cooperation parents offer the centre and one another. In the parent-teacher workshops, we share activities that parents and teachers can engage in to support their children's learning.

Parent involvement in early childhood has a number of lifelong benefits, such as establishing the importance of education. Parents who are involved in their child's education create a connection between the home and school. At home the parent is able to replicate and extend activities that their child experienced at school. By just daily chatting to the child about school, the parent will get a sense of who their child's friends are, how he/she is getting along in the group, as well as pick up where the teacher has left off. This also gives the parent an idea of what the parent could work on to increase the child's competence and confidence.

At one of the ECD Centres I've worked with intensely for 12 months, Banana Express in Belhar, the principal highlighted the gap in parent involvement and cooperation at the school. We've discovered that parents feel the only times they are invited to the school is when there is a problem or concern. I've worked intensely on parent partnerships, with the result that parents are taking ownership of their school. They are more involved in the school's activities; they volunteer to help when staff goes on training and offer support on school excursions. This helps the staff tremendously and parental visits and involvement have had a positive effect on the daily running of the school. Teachers and staff really appreciate the assistance and support.



*Belhar parents creating games with household goods*



*Happy parents and children after our Parent Passport Workshop in Belhar on Saturday, 18 March 2017*



*Parent Workshop in Belhar: Parents telling stories about their playdough creations*

*Written by*  
**Cindy Olivier**

# Out of School, but not “down and out”

Shaakirah’s family first made contact with IESA’s Information & Support service in May 2015. Early in April they were invited to share their story on ENCA news.

Mom was feeling very nervous, so I promised to come around and sit with them before the interview. Shaakirah will be turning eleven this year and has never been accepted into the schooling system. Due to her parents perseverance she now attends the Carbanado Autism Centre, an NGO operating out of a local high school and so at last has the opportunity to be part of a stimulating programme and educated in a way suited to her needs.

As I sat in the home of this family, their humility and hospitality were so tangible. It was an experience that I will always treasure. As each of their five children woke up one by one and came to greet me one could sense the respect, warmth and love this family had for each other.

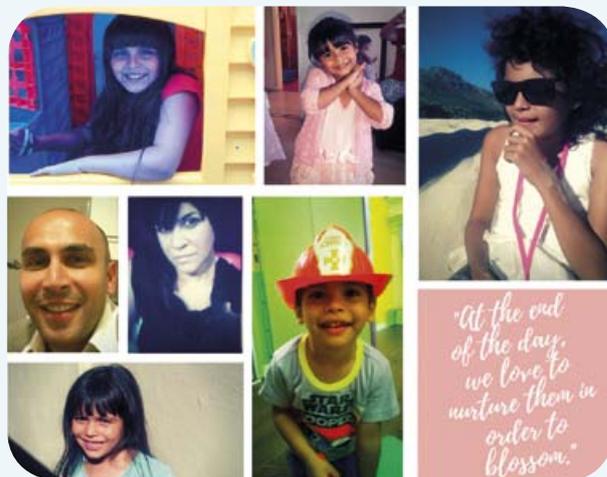
So many feelings and thoughts were shared during the interview, but as is the nature of the industry, the story was condensed into a few minutes. With that in mind, we wanted to give parents, Rifqah and Imran Haffejee the opportunity to share more with our readers and posed some questions to them.

## Tell us a bit about Shaakirah – the special things about her that others don’t get to see.

Shaakirah is very loving and caring, especially when it comes to her little brother. She enjoys watching her sisters sing for her. She does get irritated with all of us when we don’t give her some space because we such a big family. She loves her music time she gets at school and she does it at home as well. She always makes sure all her siblings are together wherever we go. Shaakirah is very specific when it comes to going to certain places but her favourite trips would be to the beach, anywhere outdoors and she loves feeding the birds.

## What has the journey to try and find schooling for Shaakirah been like?

It was a very long, stressful and strenuous journey for all of us. One moment you have hope and the next you cry your eyes out as you have been



disappointed yet again. It takes time to come to terms with the news that your child has autism, especially when she did the same things as her twin. You basically go from one specialist to another and they refer you to certain places you must go to, you try anything and everything just to help your child. Our journey was tricky as well because we have five kids and we have to give the others attention too. With one person working, it made it more difficult as specialists and schools don’t come cheap.

## What has been most challenging to deal with in trying to secure her education?

The most challenging has been the red tape to get children with special needs into schools. The process to get your child into a school is too demanding on the child and because they have special needs it’s even harder for them to pass the tests these schools have. These kids need time to adjust and gain your trust before you can get anything out of them and the specialists should know this.

We feel the special needs schools that we have experienced (where Shaakirah has had the assessment) don’t have the patience and passion for these children. It seems as if they want the children to be “normal”. You get given false hope and only receive communication if you as a parent follow up. After many emails sent to the school the reply was that our child will not get a second chance for an

observation and that she was taken off the waiting list. I just feel that there was no care and it was very blunt. If it wasn't for the support of organisations like Inclusive Education South Africa, Autism Western Cape, our Occupational Therapist, Fathima Ebrahim – and of course our saviour Sunkiree Verasaamy of Carbanado Autism Centre – we would still have been struggling.

### How has all of this impacted your family?

This whole journey was so exhausting and draining and it really tested us as a family. As a husband and wife we had to deal with a child who has become so frustrated being at home while her sisters are going to school. Through all of this we were also just trying to lead an "almost normal" or "our normal" life. We would probably always have to work around what Shaakirah loves doing but we still challenge and push her and include her in everything her siblings do and vice versa; and in that way everyone is happy. At the end of the day, we love to nurture them in order to blossom. This journey is a never-ending journey but with the help of the almighty we will succeed.

### Any words of wisdom you want to share with our readers?

"If they can't learn the way we teach, we teach them the way they learn" These are the words that drive

the centre Shaakirah now attends. And secondly we would say "Always believe in your child!"

"The experiences and emotions described by the Haffejee family are not unique", says Caroline Taylor, IESA's senior Information and Support officer. "For many families of children with high support needs, acceptance into a special school seems beyond their reach. Alongside a growing understanding of their child's special needs comes a realisation that, despite a constitution that declares the right of every child to access education, in the current system this does not actually apply to all! Stories such as the Haffejees help us to better understand where the education system is failing children with disabilities, and we are grateful to them for sharing it."

IESA recently coordinated the writing of an Alternate (Civil Society) Report on South Africa's implementation of Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children with Disabilities – also outlined in this newsletter.

We wish to thank the Haffejee family for not only opening their home to us, but their hearts as well. And we wish them continued success on their journey with Shaakirah.

*Interviewed by*  
**Natalie Watlington**



*Shaakirah with mom Rifqa at the Carbanado Centre which she now attends*

# Highlights from Inclusive ECD Centres Project

As an ECD facilitator who works mostly in the Southern Cape, I was fortunate enough in the last six months to have taken over the training of two centres in Cape Town: Sunset Daycare and Jumpstart Pre-School & Educare.

Fortunate, as the groups I was working with were fantastic and it was a very interesting exercise comparing ECD practice in Cape Town with that in the Southern Cape.

What became very apparent to me working with these two Cape Town-based centres is that the support and training available to practitioners in and around Cape Town far outweighs what is available to practitioners in the Southern Cape. Understandably this impacts on classroom practice, including challenging and changing attitudes towards inclusion in education. We have much work to do before we achieve what the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, stated in her speech at the Early Childhood Development Symposium held in January last year: "It is high time that our children, regardless of where they live or their social background, receive the benefits of proper development at an early age so that they can compete at the same level as those coming from communities that have always enjoyed this service."

The group of practitioners I was working with at Sunset Daycare included a group of principals doing their level 5 at Northlink College as well as three of their lecturers. IESA received wonderful accolades from both the students and lecturers alike. An excerpt from a letter of thanks we received from the college reads as follows:

*"The workshops (have) given the students tremendous insight and (have) equipped them with skills to assist their learners. It added more value to their Diploma course. Words cannot express our gratitude and appreciation for what your organization (has) done. It has been wonderful working with you and hope that there will be many other partnerships in the future."*

It was very affirming for me as an IESA facilitator to know that our training not only benefitted the ECD



Sunset group at a Community Mapping Workshop

practitioners but also complemented their Level 5 syllabus. Hopefully the lecturers who attended the training will continue to support and promote the development of more inclusive practices in ordinary ECD centres as a matter of course.

Early on in the training I was approached by Lora, the principal of Sunshine Educare in Delft, who had in January tentatively placed a child with Cerebral Palsy in her centre. At their doctor's recommendation, the parents had approached the principal to ask whether she would be willing to accommodate their daughter. Lora said that having been part of IESA's training she felt, albeit slightly warily, equipped to accommodate 'Grace' (not her real name). Lora had given feedback from her IESA training to all her staff and they all agreed that 'Grace' should not be excluded. They began by preparing the learners to accept 'Grace's' differences by discussing disabilities and telling them about people who are different. I am pleased to report that 'Grace' is doing wonderfully at Sunshine and IESA is about to embark on a two year Inclusive programme with the centre to further strengthen their inclusive practice.

Written by  
**Kim Andreoli**

# IESA supports Nobuntu Daycare to accommodate learners

Nobuntu Day Care is an ECD centre situated in KwaNomzamo in Strand. I started working with the centre last year, supporting the principal, practitioners and the learners about strategies for inclusion so that all children can access learning. When visiting them this year, the principal introduced me to a beautiful girl called Akhani.



She is 5 years old and is non-verbal. She can hear but takes time responding to instructions. Akhani had never been in an ECD centre before. As a result it was difficult for her to interact with other children. She hits children and makes strange sounds when she is angry but she is able to participate in some activities at her own pace.

The principal reports:

*"First week with the child was hectic as it was difficult for practitioners to handle the child but the involvement of us in inclusive education workshops especially disability awareness session helped us a lot. We know how to communicate with the child and we apply different strategies, making her feel welcome and other children to accept her as well. Akhani has not yet settled but we understand that it's still early. She has spent only three weeks with us."*

**Written by  
Victoria Dlomo**

## Persona Doll Training is offering the following upcoming training:

PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINKS TO FIND OUT MORE:

One day Persona Doll Training including a doll and a manual ...

- <http://pdt.org.za/images/newsletters-2017/PDT-TrainingInvite.pdf>

A 2 Day Diversity Course ... [read more](#)

- <http://pdt.org.za/images/newsletters-2017/May%202017%20Invite%20For%20Diversity%20Training.pdf>

A 3 Day Facilitation Course ... [read more](#)

- <http://pdt.org.za/images/newsletters-2017/PDT-Facilitation-Course.pdf>



# A Principal's Letter of Appreciation – Vestas Project (Eastern Cape)

*"The IESA project has impacted positively to the school as a whole. Teachers have gained more insight into learner profiles. Teachers have changed their mindset in that at the beginning they (LP's) were done only for the learners with learning difficulties."*

The identification of learners with barriers is done at an early stage for early intervention. IESA has instilled the concept of supporting learners within the school instead of referring them to special school. Support is based on the observations done by teachers holistically. The IESA project has introduced an observation tool which is user friendly known as "Word Picture". Teachers are able to develop a teacher intervention programme for an individual learner based on his/her "word picture".

The school culture is changing and improving day by day. The school is easily identifiable as a full-service school in the entrance through the posters that are displayed in the foyer. The project has assisted the school in crafting the new vision and mission statements which talk to embracing diversity. There is also a group of learners that owns a project to teach each other about diversity.

There are some learners that have benefitted in the IESA project since it commenced in 2016. We have learners who are able to access education through the IESA training of SIAS policy as reinforcement. Learners are keen to come to school regularly and enjoy schooling through the support they receive from teachers who are being capacitated by IESA. The monthly visits by IESA are capacitating the teachers. They are able to show their responsibilities and to have an ongoing support to learners. The project has also reinforced the parental involvement in the programme through the meetings the facilitator is holding with the parents.

Above all this project has built and maintained a good working relationship between IESA facilitator (Ms E Bulawa) and Elundini Full-Service School.



*Mrs N. E. Gxasheka, Principal of Elundini Full-Service School*



*Written by*  
**N.E. Gxasheka**

# Civil Society reports to the United Nations on Inclusive Education in South Africa

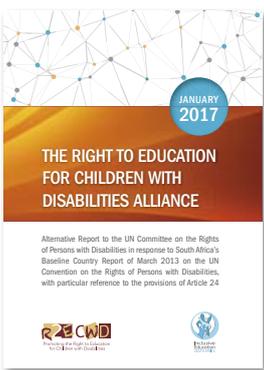
In 2014 the Government of South Africa (GOSA) submitted an initial report on their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The report was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2016, Open Society Foundations (OSF) provided funding for IESA, in collaboration with the Campaign for the Right to Education of Children with Disabilities (R2ECWD), to submit a civil society shadow report in response to GOSA's initial report, with specific reference to GOSA's compliance with its obligations set out under the convention, in particular, Article 24, inclusive education.

R2ECWD and IESA worked together closely to coordinate the process of drafting a collaborative response to GOSA's report. This included engaging a reference group and authors; hosting a stakeholder engagement, attended by national and provincial civil society organisations; and several redrafts of the civil society report. The finalised report (Figure 1) was endorsed by 53 individuals and organisations.

**The Civil Society Report highlighted the following the points:**

- Violation of children's rights
- Discriminatory attitudes and practices
- Lack of disaggregated data
- Lack of funding
- Inadequate transport
- Inadequate monitoring and reporting
- Lack of meaningful participation
- Inadequate teacher development



**Figure 1**

Currently, the civil society report is being promoted on television, radio, print, digital and social media. It will be submitted to the CRPD for its process (Figure 2), of holding GOSA to account for the provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities in South Africa.

It is our keen desire to represent South African civil society and participate in the CRPD's session with civil society in Geneva in 2018 to advocate for inclusive education for all children.



**Figure 2**

## Downloadable Resources

- **R2ECWD Alliance Press Statement**  
<http://www.included.org.za/2017/03/press-release-children-disabilities-dire-straight/>
- **Civil Society Report to CRPD**  
<http://www.included.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FINAL-UNCRPD-Report.pdf>
- **Robyn Beere interviewed by Koketso Sechane on Cape Talk**  
<https://omny.fm/shows/the-koketso-sachane-show/children-living-with-disabilities>



*Stakeholders collaborating on the civil society report for the CRPD*

Written by  
**Vanessa Japtha**



Inclusive  
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# IESA SACE – Accredited Short Courses

*IESA offers a number of SACE – Accredited courses on Inclusive Education topics, presented on request at venues throughout South Africa.*

These workshops are relevant for a wide audience, including Educators, Principals, Support Staff, School and District-based Support Teams, School Governing Bodies, School Management Teams and Professional Learning Communities.

1. Paving the Way – An Introduction to Inclusive Education
2. Understanding and Identifying Barriers to Learning and Development
3. Understanding Behaviour as a Barrier to Learning – Creating a Positive Behaviour Environment
4. Understanding Disability in the Educational Context as an Element of Diversity.
5. Teaching to Diversity
  - a. Learner Diversity and Classroom Strategies
  - b. Differentiated Lesson Planning
  - c. Differentiated Assessment and Reporting
6. Effective School-based Support – Strengthening the Effectiveness of the SBST
7. Individual Support Planning to address Barriers to Learning
8. Understanding and Managing ADHD in the Classroom
9. Care and Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools (CSTL)
10. Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and its Impact on Learning (FASD)
11. Managing Language Diversity
12. What is an Inclusive School?
13. The Role of School Leadership and Governance in an Inclusive School
14. The SMT as Mentors for New Teachers in their Inclusive Education (IE) Induction Programme
15. Understanding SIAS and the Role Players in the SIAS Process
16. Understanding and Managing Curriculum and Assessment Differentiation in Schools
17. Promoting a Culture of CPD for IE at your School using PLC's as a Model of CPD for IE
18. Understanding and Implementing SIAS
19. Curriculum and Assessment Differentiation to Support Learners Experiencing Barriers to Learning
20. Induction Programme for Inclusive Education
21. Establishing and Facilitating PLC's for CPD in Inclusive Education – for Educators
22. Establishing, Facilitating and Supporting PLC's for CPD in Inclusive Education – for District Officials and SMT's

For more information or to request a quote for a workshop, please contact Charlene Petersen at 021 762 6664 / [projects@included.org.za](mailto:projects@included.org.za)

# Add your voice to the call for Inclusive Education!

**3 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME AN IESA MEMBER**

**WE BELIEVE ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN**

Add your voice to our collective advocacy efforts which aim to heighten awareness of EVERY child's rights in an inclusive education system.

**BENEFITS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- Inclusion on our mailing list
- Discounted rates for IESA's training opportunities
- Information & guidance around support for children experiencing barriers to learning & specific disabilities

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK**

Your support also helps us to provide crucial Inclusive Education training and support to:

- ECD practitioners
- Primary and High school teachers
- Parents and support service-providers

We believe that ALL children CAN learn, and have the right to learn in the way that BEST SUITS THEM.

**LET'S JOIN HANDS AND GIVE ALL CHILDREN A CHANCE.**

R 150 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP  
R 300 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

021 - 762 6664    natalie@included.org.za

WEBSITE:  
<http://www.included.org.za>

As a membership organization we benefit tremendously from your diverse experiences, interests and shared inclusion journeys. As a member your voice is added to our collective advocacy efforts which aims to heighten awareness of EVERY child's rights in an inclusive education system. Your support helps us to provide crucial Inclusive Education support to:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners
- Primary and High school teachers
- Parents and support service-providers (health and other professionals)

We trust that as a member you will benefit from being a part of our organization and enjoy access to:

- **Inclusion on our mailing list** to receive bi-monthly newsletters, invitations to networking meetings and information of interest from other service providers
- **Up to date information and resources** regarding IE policy and practices from our team of professionals who work in ECD centres and schools
- **Discounted rates** for IESA's training opportunities
- **Guidance and assistance** around support plans and strategies for children experiencing barriers to learning or specific disabilities.

Our Membership year runs from **1st April to 31st March** and fees are modest. Please join us in becoming part of a growing call for an inclusive education system that puts care and support at the centre of all our schools and early education centres, and allows ALL children to become the best that they can be. We welcome you on board!

For a membership application form and more information on IESA and our services and projects, please visit our website at [www.included.org.za](http://www.included.org.za) or Facebook page (search for Inclusive Education South Africa).

We look forward to welcoming you to IESA soon!

*Director*  
**Robyn Beere**