

# South Africa

## GRP4ECE: gender-responsiveness in the early years

### Title

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education – GRP4ECE

### Location

KwaZulu-Natal Province

### Timing

2020-2021

### Budget

€ 908,358

### Donor

Belgium

### Education sector

Early childhood education

### Focus

Professional development of teachers (INSET) and school leaders; gender; equity



### Challenge

Research shows that the concept of gender takes shape between the ages of 3 and 7. By the age of 7, gender identities form and stereotypes become set. Early childhood education (ECE) therefore holds exciting potential to develop in learners a gender-sensitive view of self and others, impacting on their (self-) expectations and the choices they make in their lives, for themselves and others. In other words, gender-responsive pedagogy in early childhood education could be key for young children to develop to their full potential according to their unique and valuable talents and interests, irrespective of their sex.

While the number of children enrolled in pre-school in South Africa has increased significantly in recent years, many children do not benefit from age-appropriate quality preschool education provision. Very often, caretakers in ECE centres and preschool teachers lack the practical skills, experience, and concepts to provide play-based early childhood education. While gender-responsive ECE can play a crucial role in reducing gender inequalities, many early childhood teachers do not know how to deal with these stereotypes in their classrooms and very often reinforce them unknowingly through their teaching practice.

### Goal

ECE school leaders and teachers have the competences to create and promote gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in play-based teaching and learning environments.

### Approach

The GRP4ECE programme aims to develop and test a South African approach to gender-responsive early childhood education, based on the international [GRP4ECE toolkit](#), developed by VVOB and the [Forum for African Women Educators \(FAWE\)](#) and endorsed by the [African Union](#) and the [UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa \(IICBA\)](#).

The project is built around four pillars:

- **Contextualisation** of the GRP4ECE toolkit
- Development of **open educational resources**
- **Professional development** on GRP for ECE teachers, school leaders and subject advisors
- **Research** on the effectiveness of the toolkit

### By the end of the GRP4ECE project:

- The international GRP4ECE toolkit is contextualised for use in South Africa, through a highly consultative process that includes a wide range of stakeholders.
- All subject advisors in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, 72 schools and ECE centres, 180 grade R teachers and ECE practitioners and 108 school leaders will have strengthened GRP competences and will continue to develop professionally in professional learning communities.
- The South African education system will be informed by results and lessons learnt from external research on the effectiveness of the toolkit in the pilot schools and ECE centres.

To reach its goals, **VVOB develops the capacity of its partners in South Africa**. VVOB uses capacity development trajectories that give partners maximal responsibility in the execution and management of their own change processes. This is done through technical assistance provided by the VVOB team in South Africa, which includes both local and international educational and change management experts.

### Partners

- [Department of Basic Education \(DBE\)](#)
  - Early Childhood Education (ECE)
  - General Education and Training (GET)
  - Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)
  - Education Management and Governance Development (EMGD)
- Provincial KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE)
- [South African Council of Educators \(SACE\)](#)

### Intervention area

## South Africa

