



## BRIDGE Collaboration for 'PLAY' Special Interest Group (SIG) – Meeting Highlights

02 February 2023

Venue: Online (Zoom)



### SCENE SETTING

BRIDGE held its first PLAY focused Special Interest Group (SIG) session on Thursday 02 February 2023, facilitated by Patience Voller, Operations Manager at BRIDGE.

The Collaboration for PLAY SIG aims to highlight the need for collaboration by hosting a group of Early Childhood Development (ECD) experts involved in PLAY to explore their own collaborative journeys and identify how they can collaborate better in future.

It is well understood that collaboration is a key driver in advancing true reform in the education space, but it can be difficult to achieve due to an array of challenges and barriers brought on by factors such as competition for funding, a lack of shared understanding of problems, unequal power relations and so forth.

The following points were explored during the session:

1. Conditions that can enable collaboration
2. Working practice from successful collaborations
3. Tracking growth and impact of collaborations

BRIDGE is interested in using its platform to unpack and extend practical mechanisms to encourage collaborative practices amongst organisations that support stakeholders in learning through play – and hopes to use its convening, facilitation and knowledge product making expertise to further this aim.

### **Why PLAY?**

Play can never become obsolete in the ECD sector; it is how young children learn. One of the major gaps identified in the ECD census is that free play is allocated very little time and the resources meant to induce free play, such as fantasy toys, are usually scarce in lower quintile early learning programmes.



### **JAMBOARD ACTIVITY: Reflecting on collaborations in ECD projects**

The ECD sector cannot overemphasise the importance of play, so as an ice breaker, participants went on a scavenger hunt for five items before starting the activity: a red book, a bank card, paper clips, a teaspoon, and a glue stick.

The reflective activity asked participants to examine projects they had worked on, focusing solely on the collaborative aspects rather than the project details, i.e., what motivated the collaboration (not the project), and what the enablers and challenges in terms of collaboration were. For example, in the Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education (PIECCE) the answer to the question ‘why did we collaborate’ could be as follows: For PIECCE, it was a funder requirement that the project be a multi-sectoral collaboration, with representation from the NGO sector, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and those involved in training ECD practitioners. The purpose of collaborating was to break down silos within the project.

## **PARTICIPANT EXAMPLES**

***Mealang van Heerden: Cotlands*** – Spoke of a large collaboration that spanned several years, which had various partners develop content for online training. The objective of the project was to increase access to training materials. Its main success factor was having clearly agreed outcomes from the onset that looked at the nitty gritty of the how’s, where’s and what’s. This was done to make sure that all partners in agreement were on the same page.

The difficulties that arose were in reaching an agreement, with partners holding on to what they owned, and not being willing to compromise. Because the project was about content development, there were disagreements on a detailed level, which resulted in lengthy discussions that had the potential to derail critical timeframes.

***Julie Hay: Sifunukwenza*** – Three organisations collaborated on the project which sought to reach parents in the community through a home-based programme that taught parenting skills and early childhood stimulation. The different organisations involved brought various skills to the project.

The fact that each organisation had clear roles and responsibilities, with one organisation in charge of the overall project, managing funding, and reporting, was an enabler to the collaboration. The challenges were that expectations were not always clearly understood or explained, resulting in miscommunication. Because the partners were used to leading their own organisations, people had difficulty letting go of their leadership role. Occasionally, tasks were not delegated to the organisation that possessed the specific skill, leaving organisations that lacked that specific skill to take over.

***Gugu Mpembe: Dlalanathi*** – Relationships were an important enabler in the project, which brought together organisations with good personal and working relationships that were based in the same area. Proximity served as an enabler.

There were challenges in communication due to a lack of clear communication on expectations, but these could easily be resolved because of the relationships that the partners had with one another. Issues were rarely left hanging, and time was always made to ensure that everyone could go back to the drawing board to understand what was expected of them, opening up vulnerability to communicate dissatisfaction and what each organisation found challenging.

***Zanele Sibisi: VVOB*** – The BLEND project is an 18 month programme funded by the LEGO Foundation. It is designed to test two modalities, namely synchronous (having an online course and support) and

asynchronous (self-study), for an online course that was developed for Foundation Phase educators. The project examines the capacity of the course to improve classroom practice and how it can be infused in the learning through play methodology based on the global agenda, and centred on the five characteristics of PLAY. CASME is the implementing partner, and the excellent relationship with BLEND facilitates collaboration.

The project's clear goals and objectives, both within and outside the organisation, are enablers of collaboration. The only challenge is that the time frame is really tight with the project still in progress, having begun in October 2021 and due to conclude in March 2023, with ongoing lessons learned.



## DISCUSSION

The group then went into plenary to discuss the following questions:

**Question: *Scale and sustainability – what happens post-project – are there examples of successfully going to scale?***

To be sustainable, scale, and institutionalise, one must begin the project process by asking what success would look like, working with partners to answer the question, and keeping that thought throughout the implementation process. It is important to put notions of success and sustainability post-project upfront as one plans for the project.

Funding is a factor in both sustainability and scalability. It is crucial to position projects in ways that the system can afford to accommodate – i.e., make sure that project elements are cost effective. A funding model that cannot take a project to scale because of high project costs would not be beneficial to beneficiaries.

It is critical to inform beneficiaries that project activities are also about building their capacity, as skills transferred to the community during the project remain in the community and beneficiaries continue to reap the rewards.

It is vital to bring in the right people (district, provincial, and government officials) from the start of the project and to get their buy in while also capacitating them so that there is continuity after the project ends. Projects should not be undertaken in isolation from the system if they are to be systemic. This makes it essential to align with the department's and partners' priorities.

It is important to manage funders' expectations on sustainability and impact to avoid any problems, because dealing with the funder is almost as important as dealing with the department or whoever you are working with on the project.

**Question: *Are there common understandings of the role of play in early childhood development that make it easy to collaborate, or are there different views?***

According to BLEND, which is a VVOB project working in partnership with CASME, focusing on content management came with a PLAY specialist (Vanessa Mentor), who helped define PLAY from the global perspective and incorporated the PLAY global agenda. However, play is interpreted differently by different people. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by The LEGO Foundation and DBE recognises that play is an integral part of learning, therefore when partnering you need to know whether your partner has the same interpretation of PLAY and principles applicable in the classroom once you have developed the learning trajectory. Play for BLEND is centred around the five characteristics of PLAY, which creates a shared and common understanding. The project did not reinvent the wheel, but rather incorporated previous work to create a methodology that teachers can use to strengthen their classroom practice when implementing PLAY.

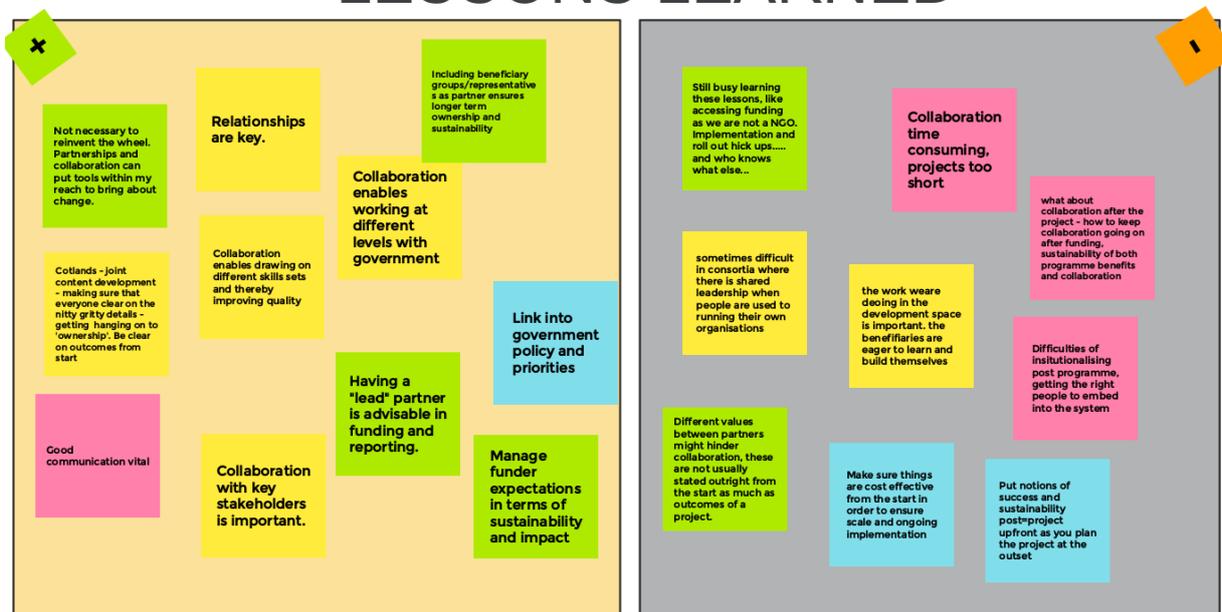
The concept of play seems to ease people because it is often associated with happiness and something that one does to relax, and the ECD sector almost entirely agrees that it is good for children to play. However, when we talk about learning through play in a more pedagogical consideration of the role of play in children's development and learning, we start seeing different views where some people see play as leisure and something you do after or before you learn versus it being a learning pedagogy. It comes down to how you frame it when working with different people and want to reach an agreement on learning through play.

There are agreed-upon guidelines and characteristics for learning through play, which may manifest differently in different contexts, making it essential to have a shared understanding when working in a consortium.

Many organisations agree on the value and importance of play, and are eager to collaborate. Some difficulty may arise during the agreed-upon implementation if organisations allocate shorter or longer amounts of time to play, but these can be resolved through conversation. More significant difficulties arise when the programme reaches the beneficiary level and works with caregivers and parents who do not value play. A lot of time and effort are then required to get the adults in children's lives to understand the value of play before playing can start, which donors sometimes take for granted.

Below is a summary of lessons learned that the group shared to close off the Jamboard activity:

## LESSONS LEARNED



- It is important to share tools and resources when collaborating
- Having partners is important because people might have different ways of solving problems that will be beneficial to you
- There need to be clear roles and responsibilities to avoid misunderstandings and ensure harmony in shared leadership
- Funding is an issue, but there also isn't enough time spent thinking about post-project collaboration; there is a need to start asking 'and then what?'
- Having a lead partner is advisable in funding and reporting
- Have your outcomes very clear upfront and make sure that everyone is on the same page
- It is a problem when people cling to their own processes, approaches and content
- Get the designated official from government to be part of the project so that it can go somewhere
- Good communication and existing relationships are essential and both are significant enablers
- Different skillsets coming together can only benefit the project
- External collaboration, which includes key stakeholders, is necessary because different partners may have different relationships (sometimes a collaborative consortium makes it easier to work with government at different levels i.e., municipal, provincial and national)
- Funders must recognize that time must be set aside before project activities for people to meet and get to know one another, as projects are frequently too short.



## PRESENTATION: Tania Sani – Centre for Social Development in Africa

[Click here](#) to access Tania's full presentation

Tania Sani, Project Manager at the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Centre for Social Development in Africa, comes from an ECD background, having worked with SmartStart in 2015. Tania presented on the community of practice (CoP) for social systems strengthening for child wellbeing – Collaborations, solutions and lessons learnt project, which is currently in its third year.

## Advantages of working in a CoP

- **The key concept behind CoP is the sharing of knowledge**
- They connect people who may otherwise never come into contact
- They provide a shared context for people to communicate and share information.
- They enable dialogue between people who have an interest in solving the same or similar problems.
- They stimulate learning by serving as a vehicle for communication, mentoring, coaching, or self-reflection.
- They capture and diffuse existing knowledge.
- They introduce collaborative processes and encourage the free flow of ideas and information. They help people organise around purposeful actions.
- They generate new knowledge, new ideas and new strategies .

(Cambridge, Kaplan & Suter. 2005)



Based on Allan, B. (2008). Knowledge creation within a community of practice

The project is a four-year collaborative intervention research study funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF), with various levels of collaboration from academic collaborators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), researchers and government partners. Its goal is to learn from real-world practice experience, critical reflection, the use of evidence to inform rigorous wellbeing assessments, and intervention using a customised digital tool to monitor implementation and evaluation.

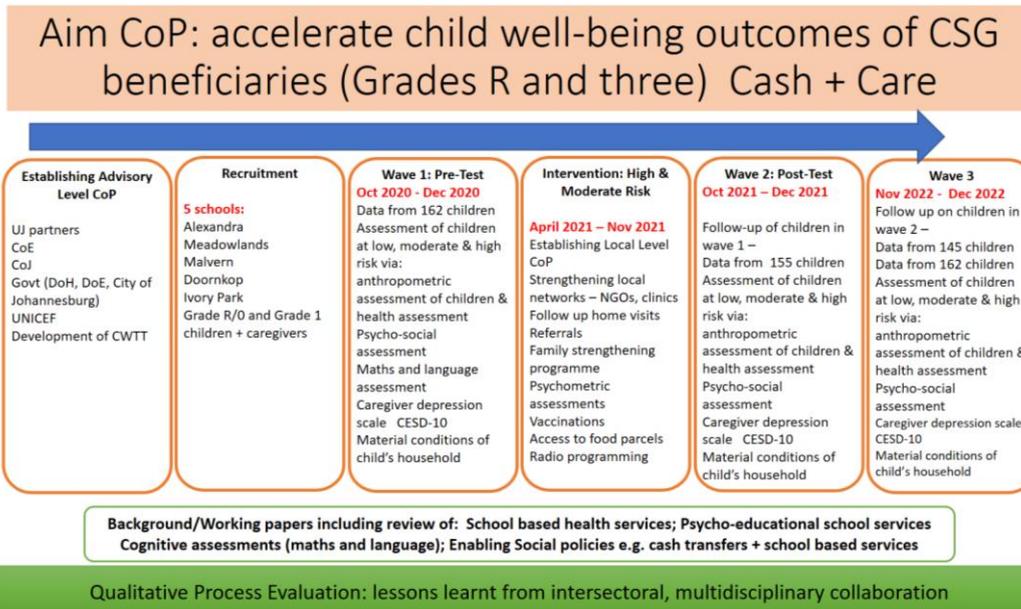
The project came about as a response to South Africa's fragmented social services and lack of functional co-operation between the health, welfare and education sectors which infringes on child wellbeing, with the aim of integrating interventions delivered across the health, welfare and education sectors.

- Short-term outcomes:
  - (i) assess changes in specific child wellbeing indicators over a 12-month period (quantitative);
  - (ii) assess lessons learnt (qualitative analysis)
  
- Longer-term outcomes:
  - (i) assume that the CoP could disrupt negative cycles of intergenerational disadvantage through a systemic, collaborative and partner driven intervention.

The Social Systems Strengthening to Improve Child Wellbeing study is currently being piloted in five under-resourced schools in the City of Johannesburg (CoJ). Children enrolled in the study have been tracked from Grade 0 to Grade 2 (where they are now).

The study looks at the following five child wellbeing domains, namely:

- education (how well are they coping at school)
- food and nutrition (are they eating 3 meals a day and what is the quality of their meals?)
- health (mental health of caregivers included)
- economic and material wellbeing
- protection and care – see slide 9 in the presentation for more information.



A lot of relationship building had to take place even where there was consent from the Department of Basic Education (DBE), especially with the schools. Principals, HODs and teachers had to be convinced that the project was worth their time in order to get them to meet after school and to make provision for children to meet with the project team for data collection. For this a localised CoP was formed in each school made up of teachers, social workers, health workers, education psychologists, local NGOs and School Governing Body members (parents).

Social workers were recruited, trained, and delivered services in schools: they focused on connecting high and medium risk children and families with appropriate care and support services.

Social workers act as case managers and collaborate with CoP and community partners:

- 1) Linking food insecure children and families to schools, community feeding schemes and NGOs
- 2) Linking teachers and families with NGOs
- 3) Linking families with the Sihleng'imizi family strengthening programme.

The project advocated for at risk children to access services and resources through governmental/NGO services. The local CoP was an important collaborative exercise in the project for identifying these children.

## CoP Wave 2: High level findings

- Child hunger declined from 10.4% in Wave 1 to **zero hunger by Wave 2.**
- Interventions by the social work team **improved access to feeding schemes** at school and additional **food relief**
- Food access improved with 9% of children eating three meals per day
- But **three out of ten children did not have enough food** at every meal
- **15% did not eat vegetables at least twice a week**
- **10% did not have sufficient intake of protein**
- 1/3 of children experience challenges with sufficiency of food intake and the quality of food
- No changes in stunting levels (13%) and minimal changes in wasting
- Children who are overweight increased by 6%

The model provided a useful child and family-centred learning vehicle to aid in understanding how to break down silos, collaborate around a common goal, and find local level solutions, with schools serving as the focal point of engagement.

After a successful phase 1 that resulted in additional funding, the project is looking to replicate in a rural area to see if it works, which will begin around April 2023. The project team is aware that the rural area will not have the same resources as the CoJ, but will work closely with government partners.



### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q.** What was the number of parents/caregivers that were involved in the CoP research?

**A.** The project has 162 children and 162 caregivers involved.

**Q.** Out of the 162 caregivers were any of them male, and if so how many?

**A.** Less than ten of the respondents were male.

**Q.** Did all 162 children stay in the study from 2020 up until now?

**A.** No, there were children that dropped out of the study because they changed schools and two because they were uninterested. Ten replacements were found. An ethical follow-up with those who had left was conducted, as they were identified as in need of assistance and referrals were made.

**Q.** How easy or difficult was it to stick to the project scope?

**A.** The process was complex due to the various levels of collaboration. There were different people working on different parts of the project, with a team meeting every other week to give updates to ensure continuous communication, planning and agility. For example, COJ was unable to do what they

were tasked with in the first phase of the project because they needed to deploy nurses to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a strong need to be flexible and well organised for activities to proceed as planned, as well as a need to tap into the skills of other partners.

**Q.** Since the study said hunger was reduced to 0%, in terms of nutrition what tool was used to measure that e.g. Mid upper arm, Mohawk or the body mass index?

**A.** Mohawk was used for screenings. This is how the study could pick up which children had stunting, wasting and obesity. The data collection team included professional nurses from the UJ health department who were employed on their days off to help with the health screenings. Eating and hunger were self-reported by caregivers, who were asked if their children went to bed hungry for three or more days a week. Any child reported to be going to bed hungry by the caregiver was referred to social workers with experience in communities where people were living in crowded and poor conditions. Those children were then enrolled in a nutrition programme at school and linked with NGOs which provided food parcels to those families. The data from the various sources was then compared in order to develop interventions from phase 1 to phase 2.



## **PRESENTATION: Mandisa Melaphi – Collaborations for PLAY: The ECD Census project**

[Click here to access  
Mandisa's presentation](#)

Mandisa Melaphi, Advocacy and Communication Specialist at The LEGO Foundation, presented on a portion of the ECD census, focusing on the collaborative aspect of the project, particularly the communication and advocacy of the ECD census.

The DBE conducted the ECD Census in 2021 in collaboration with The LEGO Foundation, with the goal of collecting data on all ECD programmes across the country to establish a baseline for assessing the quality of early learning in South Africa. This was strongly associated with the presidential proclamation that the function of ECD would be transferred from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to the DBE.

The census data was used by the DBE for planning, particularly in terms of finances and how this would impact the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which is used to manage schools.

The project focused more on data collection than on how ECD should look, or on any of the conversations that were going on around it. It was emphasised that this was not a LEGO Foundation project, but rather a DBE project that the Foundation funded.

The LEGO Foundation believes that in order to be effective as a philanthropy and grant making organisation, they need to connect directly to the country's national focus. This necessitates a collaborative approach. Because the organisation does not necessarily work on direct implementation of their own, The LEGO Foundation's size, as one of the largest private education funders working in education, makes it important to partner with government, and to work around the wheel of impact where it is concerned with collecting evidence on what play-based learning truly looks like.



The Foundation works by understanding which buttons to press in different locations, whether at the system or implementation level.

They work in this manner because they are committed to working systemically, particularly in South Africa, and thus collaborate closely with partners in order to access priorities and ensure alignment.

Systems work is expensive and highly interconnected, so it is critical to understand what you bring as an organisation and what you don't, in order to align with partners who can bring what you cannot, or have more expertise.

The LEGO Foundation is committed to assisting the government and organisations working in the education sector in establishing and expanding data-driven systems, with a preference for funding long-term projects that are not necessarily subject to an annual review and can take 4 to 5 years to complete.

The ECD census did not take place in a vacuum. It came with a lot of uncertainty surrounding which aspects moved from DSD to DBE as a result of the function shift, and wasn't accorded the same focus by all stakeholders.

To move the project forward, it was necessary to determine who needed to be where and doing what among the stakeholders while maintaining the integrity of the work by ensuring that it was not overshadowed by other events. All this occurred at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a particularly challenging period for the sector.

The LEGO Foundation

## context

- ECD new directorate at DBE
- The beginning of a larger project to hand over the portfolio
- Vangasali
- ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund
- Sector Uncertainty

## collaboration

*Focus:*

- Importance of learning through play and how it aligns with the national agenda for ECD advancement.
- Creating conditions for every young person to enjoy their right to play is NB for quality education
- Joyous (Data Collection) campaign as an opportunity to prioritise children in SA



When considering collaboration, the organisation had to consider the unifying factors and the elements that were important to all stakeholders, with the goal being to collect data to form the baseline.

It was discovered that collaboration could be difficult, so the first step for the Foundation was to collaborate with partners who had direct relationships in places where they did not, with PLAY being a crucial factor as that is the Foundation's area of expertise.

Partners included UNICEF, which works extensively with government at the national, provincial and school levels, Takalani Sesame, a trusted voice in the sector, and E-Cubed, which has databases such as Teacher Connect, to name a few. It was critical to demonstrate the project's importance to the ECD sector and engage trusted networks and partners, such as NECDA and the SA Congress for ECD.

Because The LEGO Foundation is not an implementer, it was critical that they capitalize on their existing strengths:

*“If you collaborate for the sake of collaborating and you do not actually do it, it will manifest.”*  
**Mandisa Melaphi**

The LEGO Foundation

# PLAYING TO EXISTING STRENGTHS

- Trusted Voices (NECDA, Takalani Sesame)
- Central Voices (EMIS, ECD Directorate, Ikapa Data)
- Loud Voices (Community Newspapers & Radio Stations)
- Connecting Voices (Government, Sector players)

↓

Joyous (Data Collection) campaign as an opportunity to prioritise children in SA



The key takeaways from the ECD census advocacy and communication section were that it is critical to:

- Be honest in your collaboration
- Ask for guidance and support
- Align the work that you are doing with individual roles to stay focused
- Make sure that outcomes are tangible and measurable
- Be flexible and prepared, and
- Focus on your allies and make room for neutrality.



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q.** How long did the planning phase of such a project take, especially getting all the partners and stakeholders engaged?

**A.** The census was a year-long project that began with the DBE signing an MOU. Once that was completed and it was clear what the project's goals were, it became about finding the right technical partner, which took two to three months after the request for proposals was issued. Then, a one-month pilot was conducted in KZN to see what might have an impact on the census. The actual census took 6 months to complete, with a lot of the planning taking place during the process rather than prior to it, and focussing on aligning all government departments involved.

**Q.** How does The LEGO Foundation measure collaboration amongst NGOs and partners in the sector?

**A.** As a sector, a lot may be held back by seeking full agreement on project elements before embarking on them. People believe a project can't move forward unless every stakeholder who potentially has something valuable to say about a particular subject is involved. This is not true because things can move if people champion them and are willing to collaborate with others.

**Q.** What is Teacher Connect?

**A.** Teacher Connect is a WhatsApp platform that was launched by E-Cubed during peak COVID times for the DBE to disseminate information to teachers, using the WhatsApp Chatbot to answer questions and encourage teachers to collaborate with each other. It was a helpful platform, especially during COVID, because the DBE could send out a lot of health messaging, protocols, and information about how to get children back into school. It also serves as a learning platform for teachers.

**Q.** How big was the number of personnel used on the ground to conduct the census?

**A.** iKapa Data, a research organisation based in Cape Town, recruited and trained fieldworkers throughout the country, examining how many fieldworkers would be required in urban versus rural areas, where to begin, and how to expand. The exact figures can be found in the ECD census reports.

**Q.** How easy or difficult was it to stick to the project scope?

**A.** It is important to convince others that what you are doing is necessary, as this will help you stay focused on your goals. What made the ECD Census project go much more smoothly was that there was a lot of political will because it was a national imperative declared by the president. This made getting people into meetings a lot easier than it would normally have been. This also ensured that those involved kept their end of the bargain, which is extremely difficult in general, especially when working with different departments in government.



## COMMENTS

“Collaboration has become a buzz word as we are trying to move away from silos.” - Mike Kgoroadira

“If a process isn't working, you must modify it rather than sticking to the initial plan. If something isn't happening for whatever reason, you need to be adaptable.” – Melissa King



## PRESENTATION: Margie Roper – Tracking the growth and impact of collaboration

[Click to here](#) to access Margie's presentation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical components of any programme. Margie Roper of Khulisa Management Services presented on tracking the growth and impact of collaboration, by examining the mechanism by which collaborations assist, support, and enable project outcomes.

So **WHY** evaluate collaboration?

We evaluate collaboration to:

- Measure and determine what level of support and influence is needed or is in place to achieve project outcomes
- Examine, explore or measure the frequency, strength and type of interaction / relationship / collaboration

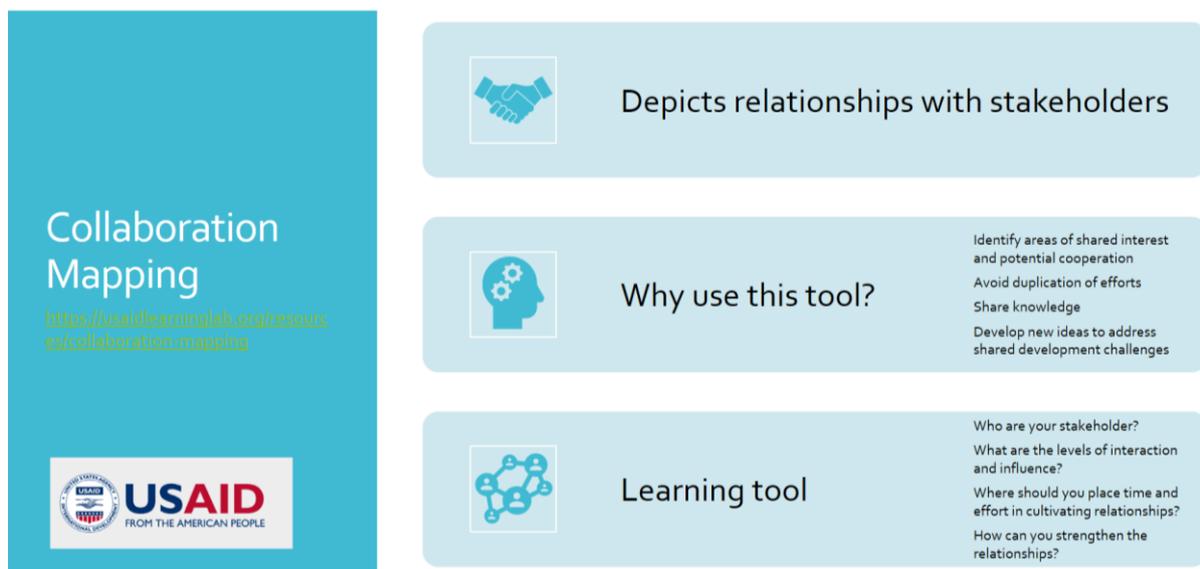
- Increase engagement, effectiveness and the level of collaboration to achieve the outcome/s
- Support strategic management of stakeholder engagement; this might take place at the beginning of a project depending on the design or intervention, and lastly
- Strengthen the collaboration process, activities etc. to help guide where the project should go.

It is therefore important to understand why you are evaluating collaboration, which is specific to each programme:

- WHAT is one evaluating?
- WHERE to evaluate?
- HOW do we evaluate?
- WHEN should we evaluate collaboration? (might not be necessary for all projects)
- WHO should be involved?

Being able to monitor and track the growth and impact of collaboration over time links back to why and how a project came to be. It helps highlight what needs to change or what has changed over time, what needs to be fixed and where more time is needed to build relationships, who has influence in what you are trying to do, and where you have influence in achieving the outcomes. This might all change as the programme develops.

There is a useful open source USAID collaboration mapping tool (see slide 4 of the presentation-snippet below), which includes a facilitator guide, an Excel database, and videos. The tool's purpose is to depict relationships with stakeholders, including across multiple sectors. It can be used when starting a collaborative initiative, when it is struggling, when conducting a reflective process, or near the end of a collaboration when considering what comes next.



**Collaboration Mapping**  
<https://usaidelearninglab.org/resources/collaboration-mapping>  
 USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

-  **Depicts relationships with stakeholders**
-  **Why use this tool?**
  - Identify areas of shared interest and potential cooperation
  - Avoid duplication of efforts
  - Share knowledge
  - Develop new ideas to address shared development challenges
-  **Learning tool**
  - Who are your stakeholder?
  - What are the levels of interaction and influence?
  - Where should you place time and effort in cultivating relationships?
  - How can you strengthen the relationships?

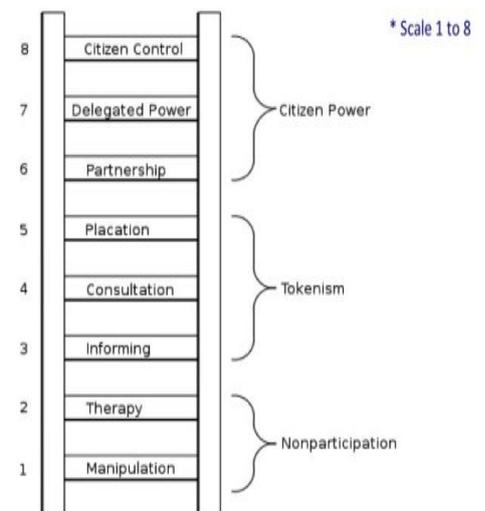
When tracking impact and collaboration over time, it is important to map out a process to guide what you will be looking at. It helps to:

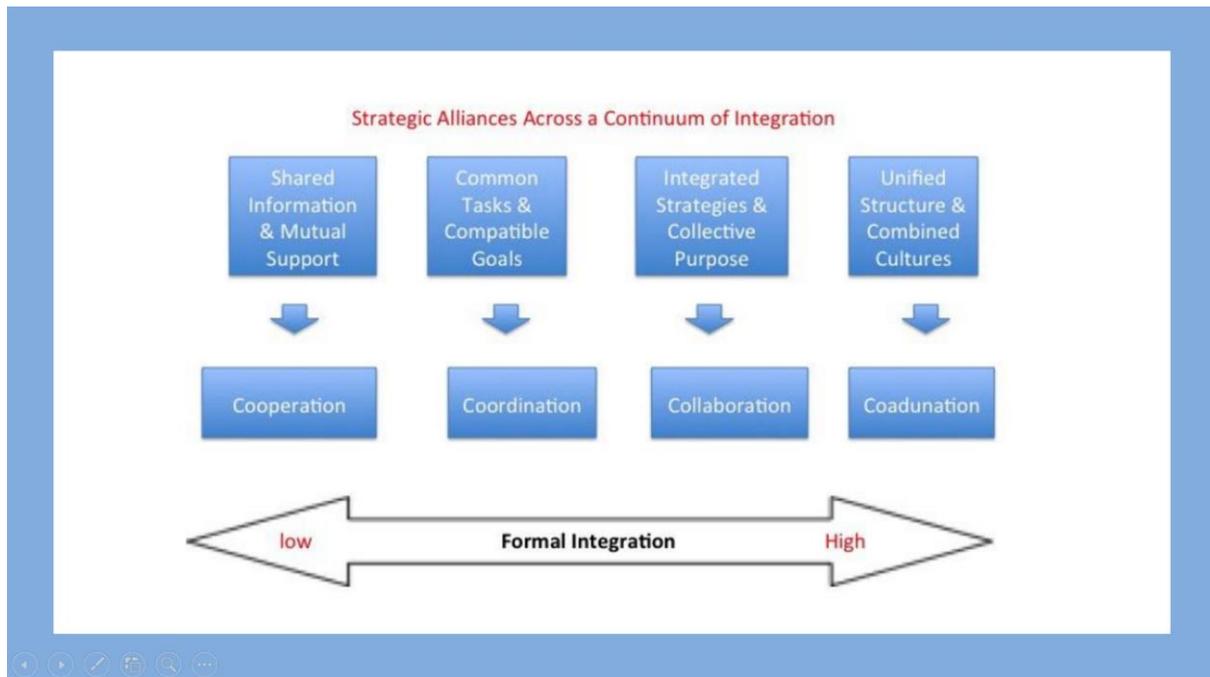
- Have a Theory of Change in place to show why you are collaborating, where the potential barriers are and how collaboration can help the project.
- Set collaborative evaluation question/s and indicators to guide what you are tracking. Linked to that is:
  - Selecting a tool (the how) that will answer your collaborative evaluation questions. The tool needs to be fit for purpose and aligned with what you are doing or aiming to measure.
- Identify and select who should be involved in the collaborative mapping, who needs the information, and when and how you are going to use this information.
- Test your tool/s with your colleagues (internally), and test your analysis.
- Ask participants to tell the story of how the collaboration is working in order to determine the current state and where it needs to go. The process is not only about mapping, but also about collecting qualitative information which is valuable to the people involved.
- Spend time getting your diagram right BUT remember the purpose of why you are tracking collaboration ... and ask the SO WHAT question!

There are numerous tools for tracking collaboration, but the tool must be appropriate for your evaluation purpose. One of these tools is to get people to talk about the ladder of participation (see diagram on the right), which is mostly used to plan and talk about collaboration, starting at the bottom and working one's way up to see how one is collaborating with beneficiaries, participants, and communities. Depending on the stage of the project, one may be sitting at different levels of the ladder.

The following slide illustrates the stages that partners can expect to progress through when working in an integrated way, as well as the characteristics of each stage. This understanding would be useful when integrating a project into a system.

## Ladder of Participation Scale





It is important to make sure the tools you use actually answer your questions on what you are trying to do and measure.

The tools themselves can help the collaboration if they are engaging and interactive, especially if there is a degree of struggle in the collaboration, by helping to define roles and responsibilities, and influencing where people need to be involved during a project vice versa.



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q.** How have you conducted M&E for a collaborative project?

**A.** One of the outcomes of the PIECCE project, a three-year project, was to create a collaboration model to track and monitor the collaboration process between partners, who were mainly NGOs, universities and other HEIs. The tools used were reflection sessions and surveys, which were time consuming but were crucial in getting the narrative. The aim was to understand what collaboration was like from year one to three of the project.

**Q.** Where does the network mapping tool fit into the project cycle; does it come at the analysis or planning phase?

**A.** The network mapping tool can be used at different stages across the project depending on what information you need and when. It can be used when setting up the project to identify who is in the network, who needs to be close to the project and who belongs to the next level. This can change over time and helps reflect what the thinking was in the beginning.



## CLOSING AND CHECKOUT

The idea for a Collaboration for PLAY SIG arose from the BRIDGE national ECD CoP, where participants requested time outside of the CoP to drill down into ideas and create a link between PLAY and the importance of collaboration in ECD.

*“PLAY is the work of the child.”  
Maria Montessori*

The group came to the conclusion that participants and anyone in the sector who thinks the SIGs should continue have to decide whether it is worth taking forward and communicate with BRIDGE in this regard. The availability of funding will determine whether BRIDGE takes the initiative.

In closing the session, Patience thanked everyone who attended and contributed, as well as Thandeka Rantsi for starting the SIGs and the Sasol Foundation for funding the national BRIDGE ECD CoP programme over the years.



## PARTICIPANT LIST

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Akani	Mkansi	BRIDGE
Annika	Savage	Toy library association SA
Enny	Mosima	Hope Worldwide SA
Gloria	Nkosi	Hope Worldwide SA
Gugu	Mpembe	Dlalanathi
Jade	Pieterse	UJ Consortium
Julie	Hay	Singakwenza
Keitumetse	Moalafi	Sasol Foundation
Khosi	Nkambule	BRIDGE
Lindani	Zondo	Hope Worldwide SA
Magdelize	Janse van Vuuren	Play Learn Win
Mandisa	Melaphi	Lego Foundation
Margie	Roper	Khulisa Management Services
Mealang	van Heerden	Cotlands
Melissa	King	BRIDGE
Mike	Kgoroadira	Hope Worldwide SA/Caregivers Learning Through Play
Nkhensani	Mabunda	Hope Worldwide SA
Patience	Voller	BRIDGE

Tania	Sani	UJ Consortium
Zanela	Sibisi	VVOB

### Useful Resources Shared

ECD Census results: <https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/908>

Teacher Connect: <https://www.skillsportal.co.za/content/teacher-connect-app-now-available-whatsapp>

WC M&E CoP where iKapadata presented: [https://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WC-ECD-CoP-Meeting-Highlights-2022-06-09\\_Monitoring-and-Evaluation-of-Early-Learning-Programmes.pdf](https://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WC-ECD-CoP-Meeting-Highlights-2022-06-09_Monitoring-and-Evaluation-of-Early-Learning-Programmes.pdf)

National M&E CoP where iKapadata presented: [https://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ME\\_CoPMeeting\\_Highlights\\_20220922.pdf](https://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ME_CoPMeeting_Highlights_20220922.pdf)

Tools for measuring collaboration: [https://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/5/3/5/35353475/tools\\_for\\_measuring\\_collaboration\\_-\\_nov\\_2019.pdf](https://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/5/3/5/35353475/tools_for_measuring_collaboration_-_nov_2019.pdf)

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE’s knowledge management role. All meetings, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE’s Knowledge Hub. To access the Knowledge Hub, click [here](#).