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CATALYZE ECCE TOGETHER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EVIDENCE (T4ECE) – SOUTH AFRICA

BACKGROUND

Enhancing access to low-cost and high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) provides a solid foundation for advancing inclusive development objectives. It can improve child development and learning outcomes, promote women’s economic empowerment, enhance family welfare, and drive overall economic growth. Yet, [less than half of children](#) living in low- and middle-income countries are enrolled in pre-primary education. Pre-primary education systems are still developing in many countries, and the quality and coherence of the services are fragmented. These emerging pre-primary systems require reliable information about program quality and child development outcomes to ensure they provide high-quality services and to track progress toward [achieving universal access to quality pre-primary education](#).

Under prior activities supported by USAID in 2021, members of the South African T4ECE Task Force team contributed to the largest survey of preschool child outcomes ever attempted in South Africa. The Index was the first in a series of surveys that monitors over time the proportion of children who are on track for their age in key areas of development. Simultaneously, the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) has launched other initiatives to improve the availability of data including an early childhood development (ECD) Census to document every Early Learning Programme (ELP) across the country and an ELP Baseline Assessment to rate the quality of the learning environments. Alongside this increase in available data, the DBE and partners have invested time and resources in building the

necessary administrative information systems and frameworks for early childhood, including data management tools and reporting systems.

CATALYZE T4ECE

The USAID CATALYZE ECCE Together for Early Childhood Evidence (CATALYZE T4ECE) Activity is designed to build the capacity of host country governments, USAID Africa Missions, and local country partners to engage in ECCE work, with an emphasis on generating evidence to inform future policy and activity design. CATALYZE T4ECE is a continuation of previous work initiated by ECD Measure at University of Nebraska Medical Center. Since 2018, T4ECE began convening government, academia, and civil society stakeholders across four African countries and identified their needs related to ECCE data and measurement, drawing on global and regional expertise. This effort complements other CATALYZE EduFinance programming in South Africa focused on increasing financing for ECCE operators and supporting lead-safe ECCE environments that enhance children's development and learning.

T4ECE SOUTH AFRICA

Life of Activity: October 2023 – September 2025

Country: South Africa

Prime implementer: Palladium

Implementing partner: ECD Measure at University of Nebraska Medical Center

In-country partner: Ilifa Labantwana

Under CATALYZE T4ECE, the South Africa research team, led by Ilifa Labantwana, will identify key indicators to be included in a new ECD M&E Framework for the National ECD Policy. Within this framework, various government departments will report collectively on progress of ECD service delivery and ultimately, improved child outcomes across all the domains of the [Nurturing Care Framework](#). The development of this new ECD M&E framework is a key step towards bringing all existing data sources and systems together in a meaningful way that directly ties into the government's population-based planning process, while building a shared infosystem of ECD data and information products.

GLOBAL EVIDENCE BUILDING

In addition to informing ECCE country-specific policy and activity design, CATALYZE T4ECE evidence contributes to a broader goal under the CATALYZE Education portfolio. All learning and evidence generated under CATALYZE T4ECE is integrated into a dissemination effort to make the case for blended finance approaches to address substantial global education funding gaps and improve and sustain learning outcomes for children and youth globally, particularly those most vulnerable.

MORE INFORMATION

Join: [CATALYZE T4ECE Newsletter](#) (via ECD Measure) | **Visit:** [CATALYZE T4ECE Website](#) |

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