

**Early Childhood Education in South African Townships:
The Role of Innovation towards Creating Conducive
Teaching and Learning Environments**

J. E. (Elsa) Fourie

*North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, Vanderbijlpark South Africa
Telephone: +27 016 910 3066, Fax: +27 016 910 3098,
E-mail: elsa.fourie@nwu.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Basic Education. Pre-school Practitioners. Community-based Research. Social Inequalities.

ABSTRACT This paper presents a descriptive study of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) intervention project, grounded in a community-research approach that resulted in more conducive ECD teaching and learning environments in township ECD centers in the Gauteng Province (Vaal Triangle) of South Africa. During the implementation phase of the project, grade R (the year before formal schooling) ECD practitioners from townships in the Vaal Triangle participated actively. Data was gathered through administering open-ended questionnaires and by conducting semi-structured interviews. Although the outcomes of this intervention varied, reflection from the researcher and the practitioners indicated that the project has started to address shortfalls in the teaching and learning environments of grade R ECD practitioners and as a result more conducive teaching and learning environments for learners in township ECD centers. This article discusses an ECD intervention project, focusing on innovative practices that impacted positively on the quality of the teaching and learning environments in township ECD centers in the Vaal Triangle. It also reports on improvements in the innovation skills and knowledge of the grade R ECD practitioners.