

# Cookhouse Wind Farm invests in ECD centres by upskilling local practitioners

Through its flagship project, Cookhouse Wind Farm has enabled 47 early childhood development (ECD) practitioners in the communities of Cookhouse, Somerset East, Bedford and Adelaide to achieve a formal qualification.



Thabdokazi Mkwena, an ECD practitioner at Luvuyo Special Needs Centre achieved her NQF Level two qualification at the end of last year, she will also receive ongoing mentorship and coaching, ensuring that the knowledge and skills that they have gained from the training is applied in the classroom.

The ECD practitioners achieved their NQF Level two qualification, having graduated at the end of last year.

Thabdokazi Mkwena, an ECD practitioner at Luvuyo Special Needs Centre said, “The training has been very helpful, especially as this is the first time that I’ve worked with special needs children.” She went on to explain, “At first I didn’t know how to approach a class of children with intellectual disabilities, but the knowledge gained from my training has provided me with the necessary tools and the understanding that all children develop differently and at their own pace.”

## Quality childcare and education

“These practitioners, who come from twenty-six ECD centres, are now able to provide quality childcare and education to over 500 young children up to the age of six, in accordance with their developmental needs,” explained Elton Gordon, special projects manager for Cookhouse Wind Farm.

Commenting on the impact of the programme, a parent from Msobomvu Family Development Centre remarked that the teachers are far more engaging and encouraging, which has led to a marked increase in her child's eagerness to attend school.

Similarly, a parent from Eyethu ECD Centre said that she had noticed a marked improvement in her child's language and social development. She has also noticed the improvement in communication between the school and parents, remarking how the practitioners are involving parents more in their child's education.



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## Addressing poor performing ECD centres

The project aims to address the challenge of poor performing ECD centres due to ineffective governance structures and management systems. Practitioners are supported by a dedicated mentor to bridge the gap between study models and classroom assimilation.

Practitioners who have graduated will also receive ongoing mentorship and coaching, ensuring that the knowledge and skills that they have gained from the training is applied in the classroom. Mentors visit participating ECD centres to observe lessons and ensure that content from study modules are effectively implemented. Assistance on how to improve lessons or manage challenging issues is also provided.

A thorough baseline assessment was conducted on the ECD centres participating in the project, which highlighted the vast need for improved early childhood development facilities and competent practitioners to meet the needs of developing children.

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