



SARAECE

South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education
Promoting a shared vision of research, training and development

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

Dear SARAECE Members and the ECE community,

We extend our sincere gratitude for your unwavering commitment and enduring interest in the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE). It is our pleasure to present the inaugural issue of the SARAECE Newsletter, which also serves as our annual report.

SARAECE has made significant strides since its official establishment in 2014. The roots of the Association trace back to 2011, emerging from concerns about the state of early childhood education and research. At that time, there was a compelling need for a central hub—a foundation—for all matters related to Early Childhood Education (ECE) in South Africa. Today, SARAECE stands out as an exclusive research association in South Africa dedicated solely to ECE, covering the care, development, and education of children from birth to nine years of age. Importantly, SARAECE is not restricted to academics alone; it is an inclusive home for all individuals, authorities, and institutions who share an interest and commitment to advancing the field. Over the past 9 years, SARAECE has provided a nurturing environment for those deeply invested in ECE and actively dedicated to advancing its cause.

We were lucky to be guided for seven productive years, by former president Giulietta Harrison, and former deputy president Naseema Shaik, whose commitment to the ECE sector, and the research sector, and mentorship of others in the fields, are exceptional and inspiring. We are honoured to have had this leadership steering the SARAECE ship, and are grateful for the opportunity to grow SARAECE going forward.

We are also thankful that SARAECE continues to grow due to the commitment of the steering committee who have maintained their consistent hard work in achieving the vision and aims of the Association. SARAECE is fortunate to have a diverse range of expertise among its committee: leaders in ECE, distinguished and established researchers, and emerging young academics. By including international members on the committee, SARAECE is expanding its network beyond South Africa's borders, paving the way into the international landscape of ECE.

Warm appreciation is extended to Michaela Ashley-Cooper

for her supportive role as deputy president. She stands as a pivotal figure in both the NPO world at the Centre for Early Childhood Development and as the deputy president of SARAECE, effectively bridging these spheres. Her contributions, as a researcher, leader, and multi-talented individual, bring a fresh perspective and valuable strengths to SARAECE, significantly enriching the Association. A big thank you also to our treasurer, Dr Giulietta Harrison, for overseeing the Association's finances, managing financial administration, and preparing financial reports. While extra funds would be beneficial for SARAECE to achieve more, the financial situation is stable and efficiently managed by SANTS Private Higher Education Institution, the treasurer's base. Also, a heartfelt thank you to our secretary, Dr Donna Hannaway, for overseeing SARAECE's Secretariat with excellence. Throughout the year, Dr Hannaway ensured the efficiency of our regular committee and standing committee meetings, swiftly and proficiently managing various tasks, including drafting and circulating meeting notices and agendas, as well as recording and distributing meeting minutes.

As a research association, we uphold our affiliation with the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE). It is noteworthy that SAJCE recently attained a commendable impact factor of 0.9 on the Web of Science. Thanks to the dedication of the Editor, Professor Elbie Henning, and her team, SAJCE has continued to maintain its high standing as the leading journal for Early Childhood Education research in South Africa. We invite you to consider submitting your publications to this journal and to contribute as reviewers and section editors. Your involvement will help foster the development of the field and uphold its high standards.

A key goal of SARAECE is to enhance our visibility, influence, and impact as a leading research association in Africa. To achieve this objective, we foster knowledge creation and robust discussions among the ECE community on crucial issues affecting or advocating for ECE in South Africa and globally. We take pride in SARAECE's ongoing influence and impact demonstrated through events like the Knowledge Building Seminars, ECD conference, and our inaugural e-publication. In this issue, we reflect on the three thought-provoking public, open-access Knowledge Building Seminars (KBS) we hosted with world-renowned specialists in their respective spaces. This newsletter also features the national

ECD conference themed "Quality Early Childhood Development in South Africa: A Call to Action," which we hosted in partnership with the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) and the College of Cape Town (CCT) on 27-29 September 2023. This "Call to Action" served as a platform for connecting diverse and influential stakeholders in the ECD sector. Together, we shared insights, inspired one another, and took action to advance ECD and research in South Africa. The delegates consistently highlighted the necessity for change in the ECD sector and stressed the importance of working collectively to enhance outcomes for young children in South Africa. The excellent presentations sparked vigorous and robust discussions, establishing the research agenda for ECE in South Africa.

Special appreciation goes to the SARAECE committee and specifically the conference organising standing committee for their constructive role in the abstract review process. We also thank our members for their active participation in the conference, whether through presentation or representing SARAECE on this platform. Our deep appreciation goes to our partners, the CECD and the CCT, for co-hosting the conference and playing a fundamental role in bringing this world-class event to life. The partnership has been a valuable learning experience, offering numerous lessons for our journey ahead. The contributions from this year's ECD conference present another opportunity for SARAECE's upcoming open-access e-publication – which aims to showcase influential contributions, highlighting the current research agenda in South Africa.

As we collectively acknowledge, ECE in South Africa, and globally, continues to grapple with intricate challenges. Effectively addressing these challenges necessitates a collective effort from prominent voices across the ECD sector: deep thinkers, rigorous researchers, committed non-profit organisations, dedicated activists, donors, government officials, and passionate educators and professionals. This dedication and collective commitment to addressing the state of childhood are evident within our Association. In this Newsletter, we also showcase our members' activities and achievements as evidence of the pivotal role you play in enhancing the state of childhood in South Africa.

On a more administrative note: SARAECE has taken on the significant task of revamping and transitioning its website to a more contemporary platform. Despite encountering some challenges, the new website is now live, and we are actively updating it to ensure all pertinent information remains visible and current. We express gratitude to Mr Arthur Knox for his assistance in redesigning and maintaining the website.

A particular appreciation extends to our deputy president, Michaela Ashley-Cooper, for her visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to portraying SARAECE optimally through the website. We invite our members to visit the website www.saraece.org.za and kindly offer us feedback on how we can enhance it. Also, please share the link with potential new members, encouraging them to complete the online membership form to support the growth of our membership and Association.

Throughout the year, we have received numerous communications from Roancha Janse Van Rensburg. Her role as administrative officer of SARAECE has been instrumental, and we extend our gratitude to her for her kindness and for consistently keeping us informed about SARAECE and other ECE-related matters.

In conclusion, we are all significant and integral parts of the intricate early childhood ecosystem. We urge you to actively engage in SARAECE's activities and spearhead the advancement of the Association's goals through your involvement, both within and beyond SARAECE. We genuinely appreciate your unwavering dedication to SARAECE's vision and your support in establishing us as a leading voice in ECE within our nation. Your commitment and passion have been crucial in our journey, and together, we will persist in improving childhood and shaping the future of ECE in South Africa and beyond.

Linda Bosman



About SARAECE

SARAECE is a **dynamic research association** committed to advancing Early Childhood Education (ECE) in South Africa for children aged from birth to nine years. Our mission is to promote excellence in ECE through research, research capacity development, teacher education, and the overall development of the ECE sector. SARAECE recognizes the unique contextual realities of ECE in South Africa and adopts a trans-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach to address research, policy, and practice needs. We aim to advance the field of early childhood research by embracing innovative ideas while preserving and promoting the rich tradition of African early childhood thought.

The **principal aims of our association** are to:

- Provide a platform in South Africa for the development and dissemination of research in ECE.
- Facilitate cooperation and collaboration among researchers and relevant stakeholders in South Africa working with, for, and on behalf of young children.
- Promote collaboration between research, practice, and policy to prioritise evidence-informed practices and practice-informed evidence in shaping decisions within ECE in South Africa.
- Offer interaction, support, and mentorship for individuals engaged in ECE.
- Raise the visibility and status of African research.

The principal aims are fulfilled by:

- Hosting conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, and relevant meetings.
- Maintaining connections with the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE) for research dissemination.
- Sharing information across multiple platforms for global outreach.
- Providing a comprehensive database of ECE research, policies, and resources.
- Engaging in activities supporting research, policy, and practice in ECE.
- Establishing regional, national, and international research networks.
- Building relationships with national and international ECE research associations.
- Developing research and publication skills through mentorship.
- Leading and advocating projects through diverse media channels.



The SARAECE Committee

SARAECE boasts a **dynamic committee of 27 individuals** who collectively strive to fulfil the Association's mission.

The committee collectively brings extensive experience and commitment to the **advancement of early childhood development, care, and education in South Africa**. The committee encompasses a broad range of expertise, including early childhood education, programme management, qualitative and quantitative research, higher education practice, and technology-based teaching and learning. Their collective experience spans various disciplines within the birth to nine years age range, covering areas such as child participation, play-based pedagogies, and inclusive early childhood care and education.

Members of the SARAECE committee have actively engaged in international and local projects, contributing to educational publications, presenting at conferences, and leading important research and intervention programmes. Their commitment is evident in advocating for transformative change in pedagogy, promoting children's participatory rights, and fostering positive learning spaces. The committee's work extends beyond academic roles to include involvement in NPOs, such as Africa A+ Schools, the Centre for Early Childhood Development and collaborations with organisations like UNESCO.

This diverse committee is deeply involved in research, contributing to national and international journals, book chapters, and scholarly articles. Their research interests cover a wide spectrum, including early literacy, citizenship education, technology-based teaching, and the exploration of innovative pedagogies. Moreover, the committee members actively mentor and supervise postgraduate students, contributing to the growth and development of future scholars in the field.

Overall, the SARAECE committee is committed to being a leading voice for the advancement of ECE in South Africa. Their collective efforts aim to enhance the quality of early childhood development, care, education, and research, reflecting a dedication to inclusivity, collaboration, and critical discourse in the pursuit of excellence in the field.

To view the full committee, and find their contact details, you can visit the SARAECE website here: [Meet the Committee \(saraece.org.za\)](https://saraece.org.za)





Treasurer's Message

The treasurer of an organisation carries the responsibility to report on the financial health of an organisation.

SARAECE is an unusual ECE organisation in that we are driven primarily by research and supporting up and coming researchers through our knowledge sharing and conferences. This means that there are not many opportunities to swell our coffers. The majority of our funds come from hosting conferences and our annual memberships. We would however like to look at new ways to increase our funds and are open to new ideas.

You may be wondering what we use the SARAECE funds for especially as most of our work is done pro-bono by the committee and in some instances members. There are three main expenses that we carry namely, monthly payment to host a website, a web-manager for the website and administrative support for our memberships and conferences. We are fortunate to fall under the umbrella of SANTS Private Higher Education Institute who host us for our financial oversight and we are pleased to say that they do an excellent job in this regard.

A few fund-raising possibilities that we are considering include putting in research proposals to larger funders to fund research and bursaries related to ECE, setting up an ethics committee to assist with ethical clearance for NGOs doing research and a Go Fund Me page to raise non-committed funds to carry unusual costs such as printing or travel to conferences. We would love to hear from you if you have good ideas to share with the SARAECE committee. Please feel free to drop us an email.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you all for the greater good of early childhood development in South Africa.

Giulietta Harrison



Secretary's Message

As the secretary of SARAECE, I am delighted to share some exciting updates and information with you.

Membership Renewal: We extend our gratitude to all members who recently joined our association. We have 137 registered members as at August 2023 which is a slight growth from the previous year at 120 members. For those who have not yet registered, we want to remind you about becoming a member or renewing your membership. Please locate the relevant forms and account details under the Membership section on our official website, here: [Become a SARAECE Member](#). Your continued support strengthens our community and its mission.

Upcoming Events: We have a range of engaging events annually including our knowledge building seminars and regional and national conferences which enhances cooperation and collaboration among national and international researchers, strengthens connections between research, practice, and policy in the field, and elevates the recognition and prominence of ECE research. Keep an eye on your emails for more details. Your participation in these events is invaluable in fostering collaborative growth.

Member Spotlight: In each newsletter, we showcase member's achievements, research, or noteworthy work. If you would like to be featured or know someone who deserves recognition, please contact us. Your accomplishments inspire us all.

Stay Connected: Connect with us via a visit to our website to stay updated on the latest news, resources, and opportunities in early childhood research. You can explore the SARAECE Website at www.saraece.org.za

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to the advancement of early childhood research in South Africa. Together, we are making a positive impact on the lives of young children.

Donna Hannaway

SARAECE Projects and Events

In order to achieve our mission to advance ECE in South Africa, SARAECE has been busy with various initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and growth in the ECE research and practice fields. The three main recent activities that we have focused on included a national conference, which allowed for networking, knowledge dissemination, and collective commitment towards enhancing the quality of ECE in our country. We held a series of knowledge building seminars highlighting important research in the ECE field, both nationally and internationally, featuring experts who delved into critical aspects of early childhood research and practice, enriching our collective understanding and building the SARAECE network. We also published an innovative open-source e-publication documenting current ECE research and best practice in South Africa, which provided a platform for diverse voices and perspectives and embodied our commitment to mentorship, collaboration, and the democratisation of knowledge within the ECE sector.

National ECD Conference

On 27 - 29 September 2023 SARAECE partnered with the Centre for Early Childhood Development and the College of Cape Town, Crawford Campus, to host a national ECD conference, entitled: 'Quality Early Childhood Development in South Africa: A Call to Action'. The conference took place face-to-face at the College of Cape Town, Crawford Campus, in Cape Town. This conference worked to connect stakeholders, share knowledge and information, inspire engagement and act for quality ECE in South Africa.

Among the various warm welcomes from distinguished speakers, was a [recorded welcome message](#) from the Mayor of the City Geordin Hill-Lewis (If you are interested in knowing how the mayor of Cape Town views ECE, this is definitely worth watching!) and Mr Achmat Gafieldien, Deputy Principal Innovation & Development of the College of Cape Town. The CECD's staff then all took to the stage for a colourful rendition of "Welcome to Cape Town." Young learners from the College's ECD centre completed the welcome with a song.

The keynote address was delivered by the highly respected,

Professor Nuraan Davids, Professor of Philosophy of Education in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University, and focused "on Love and Playfulness". A second plenary was presented on "The development of emergent biliteracy in young children" by Dr Xolisa Guzula, Senior Lecturer in Applied Language and Literacy Studies at the University of Cape Town.



Overall, the conference held 71 engaging presentations and addresses, covering the themes of: effective ECD programmes; ECD leadership and management; bridging the divide for quality ECD (policy, research and practice); and ECD causes and calls for action.

The full abstract book can be found here: [abstract book](#).

The full programme, and all of the presentation can be found here: [programme and presentations](#).

For more information about the conference, visit www.qualityecdconference.co.za.

Knowledge Building Webinars

In the spirit of fostering knowledge exchange and enriching our shared understanding of early childhood research and practice, SARAECE successfully hosted three enlightening online Knowledge Building Seminars (KBS) over the past year. The wealth of insights and expertise shared in these sessions has not only broadened our perspectives but also laid the foundation for the committee's future initiatives.

KBS 1: Child Participation - Shaping Our Understanding

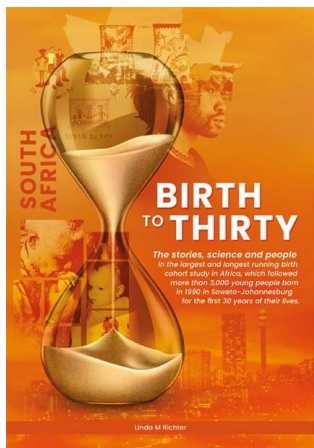
On August 17, 2022, we had the privilege of hosting Professor Alison Clark, a prominent figure in the field of early childhood education. Her thought-provoking presentation Child participation: "Lessons for early childhood research and practice" along with the enlightening panel discussion featuring Linda Bosman, Naseema Shaik, Tessa Browne, and Francesca Malliaros, offered valuable insights. The event contributed to expanding our comprehension of child participation within our unique context and sector, fuelling our efforts to reshape our collective understanding of children in diverse early childhood spaces.



Prof Alison Clark: Professor of ECE at the University of South-Eastern Norway and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at UCL Institute of Education, London.

KBS 2: The 'Birth to Thirty' Study - Unveiling Key Findings

On November 8, 2022, Professor Linda Richter, the co-founder of the ground-breaking "Birth to Thirty" study, presented a summary of this extensive birth cohort study. The study's findings underscored the long-lasting impact of cumulative adversities on physical and mental health, emphasising the crucial role of early responsive caregiving and learning opportunities in shaping adolescent development. The seminar was an eye-opener, shedding light on the significance of nurturing environments and their potential to mitigate the effects of early adversities on children's well-being.

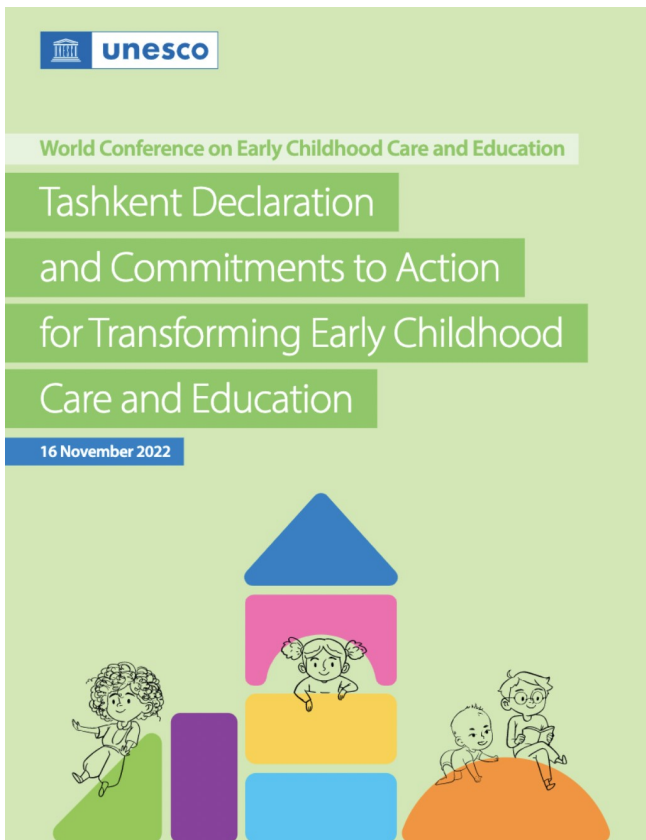


Prof Linda Richter: Distinguished Professor in the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand

KBS 3: Empowering Early Childhood Education - The Path Forward

Our most recent seminar "Empowering Early Childhood Education: Insights from the Tashkent Declaration and DBE's Latest Initiatives" on June 13, 2023, delved into the global perspective of early childhood education. Dr. Yoshie Kaga from UNESCO shared valuable insights from the Tashkent Declaration and the Commitment to Action for Transforming

Early Childhood Care and Education. Her presentation provided a glimpse into the realities of our work moving forward, leaving attendees inspired and better equipped to contribute to the sector.



Following this, Dr. Janeli Kotzé, Acting Director for Early Childhood Development at the South African Department of Basic Education, discussed the department's initiatives in support of the Tashkent Declaration, unveiling the promising path ahead for early childhood education in the country.



Dr Yoshie Kaga leads the Learning to Live Together (LTLT) Team at UNESCO Regional Bureau for West Africa based in Senegal.



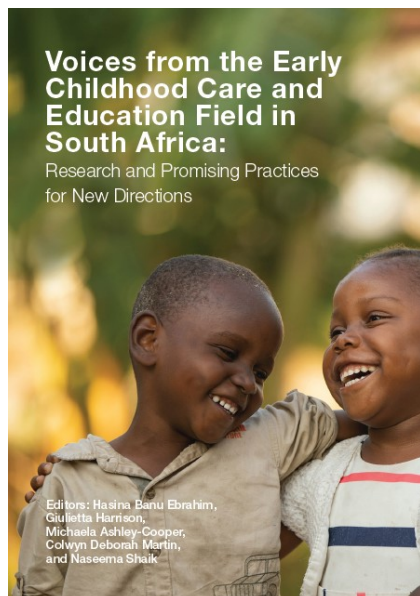
Dr Janeli Kotzé, Acting Director for Early Childhood Development at the Department of Basic Education.

These SARAEE Knowledge Building Seminars have undeniably left a profound impact on the researchers, academics and practitioners, guiding our journey towards a brighter future in early childhood research and practice. We look forward to more such engaging sessions in the future, facilitating the continuous growth of knowledge and understanding within our community.

To keep up to date with our upcoming events, visit our events page on our website here: [SARAEE events](#).

ECD e-Publication

SARAECE's Groundbreaking E-Publication: A Beacon of Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing in ECCE



“Voices from the Early Childhood Care and Education Field in South Africa: Research and Promising Practices for New Directions”.
Editors: Hasina Banu Ebrahim, Giulietta Harrison, Michaela Ashley-Cooper, Colwyn Deborah Martin and Naseema Shaik.

In a bid to foster collaboration, share promising practices, and empower novice authors in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector, the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE) proudly announced the launch of its innovative e-publication.

Exploring the Core Issues Addressed in the Publication

The roots of this remarkable e-publication can be traced back to the July 2021 conference, where critical issues were identified and addressed. One crucial aspect was the recognition of the ECCE sector's passion and collaborative potential, prompting SARAECE to emphasise the importance of sharing research presentations as a collective effort. Additionally, in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, SARAECE emphasised the significance of disseminating 'promising practices' to drive positive change. Departing from traditional conference proceedings, SARAECE chose a format that nurtures the writing skills of contributors. Moreover, the publication's scope extends beyond research, encompassing various on-the-ground themes such as food issues, educational technology, transformative pedagogy, and creative teaching methods involving loose parts.

The Aims and Advantages of the e-Publication

The objectives of this forward-thinking e-publication are diverse and encompass several key aspects: Firstly, it aims to

mentor and empower novice writers in the ECCE field, offering them support to share their insights effectively. Secondly, it serves as a unifying platform, bringing together a multitude of voices from the ECCE sector to showcase a wide array of research and promising practices. Thirdly, it highlights the sector's continued innovation, even in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a space to celebrate and share these achievements. Moreover, the publication underscores the enduring passion and resilience of ECCE professionals in South Africa, who persist in their work despite historical challenges. Lastly, the choice of electronic publication ensures a swift turnaround, enabling novice authors to see their work published without the lengthy delays common in traditional publishing processes.

Why an Electronic Publication?

The decision to opt for an electronic publication was fueled by a strong commitment to accessibility, with a twofold advantage. Firstly, the electronic format guarantees broader access, breaking down geographical barriers and making the publication easily available to a wider audience. Secondly, the publication's open-source nature ensures free access for all, regardless of their location or available resources, thereby democratising knowledge within the ECCE field.

Who Will Benefit and How to Access the Publication

This ground-breaking e-publication serves as a valuable resource for a diverse range of stakeholders within the ECCE field. ECCE professionals and Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners will discover insights, best practices, and innovative ideas to enhance their work. Funders keen on supporting ECCE initiatives will gain a deeper understanding of the sector's challenges and successes. Pre-service teachers, including both undergraduates and postgraduates, can utilise this resource to expand their knowledge, conduct research, and fulfil academic assignments. Furthermore, educators and facilitators can harness the publication as a valuable teaching and training tool. Government officials will also find valuable insights into the ECCE sector, enabling them to identify areas where they can provide meaningful support and contribute to its advancement.

You can download the full e-publication here: [“Voices from the Early Childhood Care and Education Field in South Africa: Research and Promising Practices for New Directions”](#)

South African Journal of Childhood Education

The South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE) is an open-source, peer-reviewed journal that provides a forum for the dissemination of research in childhood learning and development and the care and education of children from birth to 12 years. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and seeks to stimulate the exchange of ideas in a variety of subjects, contexts and issues in childhood education and childcare

The SAJCE is the affiliated journal of SARAECCE. The following piece is from Elizabeth Henning, SARAECCE committee member, and the Editor of the SAJCE.



Editor's Message

The good news for the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE) is that the journal has been awarded an impact factor of 0.9 on the Web of Science. This recognition is because of the

manuscripts that are submitted and reviewed or refined by the pool of reviewers and the publisher, where the work of Ms. Tracy McOwen, our submissions manager at AOSIS, stands out.

Volume 13 comprises a greater variety than usual, with several published articles highlighting the 'bigger picture' of childhood education. Researchers in the field of learning support, children's behaviour at school, the ongoing challenges of learning to read and to understand mathematical concepts continue to submit manuscripts. There has been a rise in research about learners with special educational needs, with several articles providing evidence of the struggles of inclusive classrooms.

Teacher education and professional development have remained a focus in this issue, which makes us think that a special collection (or special issue) about teachers should be planned for Volume 14. I would suggest in-depth studies that not only capture teaching and teachers qualitatively but

that middle-scale research could be reported about teachers' understanding of learning. For that, studies based on teachers' knowledge of cognitive science would be welcome.

One such area, the 'science of reading', has seen some resistance as it became used widely. The words of wisdom from a leading reading education specialist, Prof. Catherine Snow, are that this term simply means evidence-based knowledge. I would like to add that a basic knowledge of the neuroscience of reading can be helpful for interpreting evidence.

Soon, the Journal will hopefully welcome the new editor. In the meantime, I thank the Section Editors, Naseema Shaik, Veronica Dwarika, Hanrie Bezuidenhout and Fikile Simelane for assisting the editor. I thank the authors, reviewers and readers for your support of the journal.

Elizabeth Henning
Editor
SAJCE

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

To read more about the SAJCE, you can visit the website on www.sajce.co.za

SARAECE Member Spotlight

In the dynamic landscape of early childhood education in South Africa, a constellation of scholars have illuminated the path towards innovation, excellence, and inclusivity. These dedicated individuals, each contributing their unique expertise, have not only achieved significant milestones but have also become trailblazers in shaping the future of education for the youngest members of society. As we celebrate their diverse achievements, from ground-breaking research to programme accreditation and leadership roles, we embark on a journey to acknowledge the transformative impact these scholars have had on the field, setting new standards and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

This section highlights some of the amazing achievements of SARAECE's dedicated members.

Mrs Anitha Jansen van Vuuren at North-west University (NWU)

Mrs. Anitha Jansen van Vuuren, associated with North-West University, played a pivotal role in achieving accreditation for the new BEd in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The registration of this program in the National Qualifications Framework marks a significant accomplishment for NWU. Mrs. Jansen van Vuuren's leadership and dedication to providing a well-rounded education in the early years is evident in this achievement. Her efforts contribute to equipping graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills, emphasising competence in the early childhood education sector.



Prof Christine Pascal at the Centre for Research in Early Childhood, UK

Prof. Christine Pascal, affiliated with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in the UK, is a prolific researcher and leader in early childhood education. Her contributions, such as the chapter in "The Bloomsbury Handbook to Friedrich Froebel," showcase her exploration of the Froebel Storytelling Approach during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, her leadership in ambitious international



collaborative action research projects, like the Supporting Children's Engagement in Nature, underscores her commitment to understanding and enhancing early years settings. Prof. Pascal's role in evaluating the Early Years Scouting Pilots further solidifies her influence in shaping innovative and impactful practices in early childhood education.

Dr Colwyn Deborah Martin at University of Witwatersrand (WITS)



Dr. Colwyn Deborah Martin, the Head of Division for Foundation Studies at the University of Witwatersrand (WITS), stands as a beacon of expertise and leadership in the field of early childhood education. Her prolific publications, such as "Struggles at the Frontline in Pandemic Times," showcase her commitment to addressing contemporary challenges in South Africa. Dr. Martin's collaborative projects, including the Early Childhood Workforce Project and the Afritech Project, underline her dedication to fostering innovation in education. As the Head of Division, she brings her wealth of knowledge and experience to shape the foundational studies at WITS. Dr. Martin's multifaceted contributions make her an influential figure, driving positive change in early childhood education and beyond.

Dr Donna Hannaway at University of South Africa (UNISA)



Dr. Donna Hannaway, situated at the University of South Africa (UNISA), emerges as a trailblazer in early childhood education with the accreditation and launch of the Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). This significant milestone reflects UNISA's commitment to advancing education in South Africa. Dr. Hannaway's visionary approach involves not just launching a diploma but initiating a pilot project with objectives ranging from fostering shared understanding to establishing a robust framework for seamless implementation. Her work aligns with the notion that professionalism is the remedy for South African education challenges, as emphasised by Morrow (2007:28). Through this accreditation, Dr. Hannaway shapes

the future of early childhood education by enhancing its quality and professionalism.

Prof Elbie Henning at University of Johannesburg (UJ)



Prof. Elbie Henning announced that the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE) has achieved a noteworthy impact factor of 0.9 on the Web of Science, reflecting the high quality of submitted manuscripts and the dedication of our reviewers. Volume 13 showcases diverse articles addressing childhood education, including learning support, behaviour in schools, and challenges in literacy and mathematics. The focus on learners with special needs underscores our commitment to inclusive classrooms. Looking ahead to Volume 14, we consider a special collection on teachers.

Dr Giulietta Harrison at Africa A plus schools and SANTS Private Higher Education Institution



Dr. Giulietta Harrison's impactful research project in the Malungeni district showcases her dedication to promoting quality early childhood education (ECE) practice in challenging environments. Collaborating with A+ facilitators, Dr. Harrison addresses the unique needs of a rural community, emphasising an asset-based approach and the use of 'loose parts' to overcome resource limitations. Her innovative programme implementation at SANTS, particularly the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative, demonstrates a commitment to social justice in education. Dr. Harrison's work stands as a testament to her ability to inspire positive change by empowering teachers and communities in the pursuit of quality ECE.

Dr Hannelie du Preez at University of Pretoria



Dr. Hannelie du Preez, affiliated with the University of Pretoria, is a notable figure in the realm of early childhood education. Her publications, such as "The Sensory Classroom Teacher Questionnaire" and "Exploring South African Preschool Teachers' Roles," showcase her expertise in assessing conducive classroom conditions and

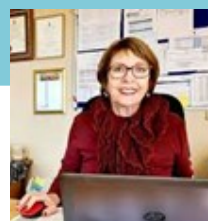
understanding the responsibilities associated with executive functions. Dr. du Preez's research contributes valuable insights to the field, providing practical tools for educators. Her commitment to enhancing play pedagogy and sensory engagement highlights her dedication to creating optimal learning environments for young children. She has been appointed as Section Editor and serves on the Editorial Board of the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE).

Prof Hasina Banu Ebrahim at University of South Africa (UNISA) and UNESCO Co-chair in ECD



Prof. Hasina Banu Ebrahim, holding a position at the University of South Africa and serving as a UNESCO Co-chair in Early Childhood Education, Care, and Development, is a distinguished scholar with a focus on appreciating the past to plan for the future. Her collaboration on the open-access UNESCO publication, "Sankofa: Appreciating the Past in Planning for the Future of Early Childhood Education," highlights her commitment to weaving past experiences into current and future considerations. Prof Ebrahim's work is endorsed by leading individuals in the field, making her a significant contributor to evidence-based solutions in early childhood education in Africa. You can access the e-publication here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384942>

Prof Ina Joubert at SANTS Private Higher Education Institution



Prof. Ina Joubert, Academic Director of SANTS Private Higher Education Institution, stands out for her active involvement in shaping Initial Teacher Education standards. Her participation in the Council on Higher Education (CHE) reference group reflects her commitment to developing foundational guidelines for teacher education audits. Additionally, her contributions to research, as evident in the second revised edition of "Navorsing: 'n Gids vir die Beginnervorsers," position her as a key figure in guiding novice researchers. Prof. Joubert's multifaceted role in education standards and research showcases her dedication to advancing teacher education and early childhood research in South Africa.

**Dr Julie Shantone Rubbi Nunan
at University of South Africa (UNISA)**



Dr. Julie Shantone Rubbi Nunan, an emerging scholar at the University of South Africa (UNISA), has made impactful contributions to early childhood education. Her work in the African Research Association of Early Childhood Education's publication "Voices from the Early Childhood Care and Education Field in South Africa" showcases her dedication to addressing linguistic inequities. Dr. Rubbi Nunan's research on the factors influencing underperformance of foundation phase learners, as presented in the Journal "Curriculum and Teaching", sheds light on teacher perspectives. She also highlights the impact of challenging behaviour in South African primary schools in her other research outputs. Collaborating with Prof. S. Ntombela, she delves into the intricate dynamics of students' challenging behaviour in Phoenix primary schools, South Africa. Driven by a commitment to positive change, Dr. Julie Shantone Rubbi Nunan's research significantly contributes to enhancing early childhood education practices in South Africa.

**Dr Linda Bosman at
Stellenbosch University (SUN)**



Dr. Linda Bosman had the privilege of being part of an international team of experts led by Weipeng Yang (University of Hong Kong), Sarika Kewalramani (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia), and Jyoti Senthil (University of Bath, UK) on a publication titled "Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Education in the Early Years: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals." This scholarly publication (available [here](#)) constitutes the 12th book in the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Series, "Towards an Ethical Praxis in Early Childhood: From Research into Practice." This publication consolidates recent and relevant research from across the globe, providing a comprehensive overview of the cutting-edge state of STEAM education in early childhood settings. Bosman contributed a South African perspective to the global debate with her chapter entitled: "Because every kid can think like a scientist": Reflecting South African children's voices on being scientists based on their inquiry-based science and engineering experience. This chapter mirrors her focus on

children's voice and agency, emphasizing their active participation in both pedagogy and research.

**Dr Makie Kortjass at University
of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)**



Dr. Makie Kortjass, based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), is a distinguished researcher with a focus on innovative methodologies. Her upcoming paper presentation at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and involvement in the Global Childhoods Interdisciplinary Webinars underscore her commitment to advancing research on childhoods. As a coordinator of the South African Educational Research Association (SAERA) Self-reflexive Methodology Special Interest Group (SIG), Dr. Kortjass plays a pivotal role in fostering reflective research practices among academics. Her contributions reflect a dedication to pushing the boundaries of research methodologies in the context of South African education.

**Dr Ramashego Shila Mphahlele
at University of South Africa (UNISA)**



Dr. Ramashego Shila Mphahlele, a recipient of the Emerald Real Impact: Early Career Researcher Recognition Award 2023, exemplifies a commitment to driving the impact agenda in inclusive learning. Her achievements include the development of a Four-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) designed for teachers and a Short Learning Programme for Technical Vocational Education and Training. Dr. Mphahlele's recognition underscores her dedication to making a tangible difference in education through innovative and accessible learning initiatives.

**Prof Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi at
South African Council of Educators**



Prof. Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi, promoted to Associate Professor and holding a C3 Researcher rating from NRF, is a prominent figure at the South African Council of Educators (SACE). Her publication on the role of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in inclusive education reflects her commitment to diverse and inclusive perspectives. Prof. Mulovhedzi's promotion and NRF rating highlight her standing as a respected researcher,

contributing to the knowledge base in inclusive education. Her achievements mark her as a valuable asset to both academia and the broader education community.

Dr Susan Greyling at North-West University (NWU)



Dr. Susan Greyling, an esteemed faculty member at North-West University (NWU), has significantly contributed to the scholarly discourse on education for sustainable development and blended learning. Her noteworthy publications include chapters in the 2022 AOSIS Scholarly Book, "Education for Sustainable Development in BRICS," where she collaborates on the transformation of early childhood education student-teacher assessment and explores the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Higher Education. In the 2021 IGI Global Book, "Re-Envisioning and Restructuring Blended Learning for Underprivileged Communities," Dr. Greyling, alongside colleagues, delves into the integration of technology to support learners with barriers to learning in rural classrooms. Dr. Susan Greyling's work exemplifies a commitment to advancing education practices that are not only sustainable but also inclusive, addressing challenges in both pre-service teacher training and technology-enhanced learning in underprivileged communities.

SARAECE Committee highlight

The 31st European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference, themed "Children's Curiosity, Agency and Participation: Challenges for Professional Action and Development," held in Cascais near Lisbon, Portugal from August 30th to September 2nd, 2023, saw significant contributions from our dedicated committee members. There was representation from academics across various South African universities. Our president, Dr Linda Bosman, our secretary, Dr Donna Hannaway, and esteemed committee member, Dr Keshni Bipath, all made outstanding presentations during the conference adding an African perspective to the knowledge base. In addition to their valuable contributions, they actively participated in the enlightening keynotes and symposia, gaining fresh insights into early childhood education. Moreover, they had a productive meeting with the EECERA president, Chris Pascal and Tony Bertram, both

from the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), to foster international relations and enhance our research association's professional development. Their dedication and active involvement will be instrumental in advancing our mission, and they look forward to sharing their experiences within the committee and broader association as SARAECE continues to grow.



In the symphony of accomplishments that resonate through the South African early childhood education community, these scholars stand as beacons of inspiration and progress. Their dedication to enhancing education from birth to foundation years has laid a robust foundation for the future. As we applaud the programme accreditations, research accolades, promotions, and innovative projects, we recognize that the ripple effect of their work extends far beyond accolades—it reaches into classrooms, communities, and the hearts of those who are shaping the next generation. Together, they have woven a narrative of commitment, passion, and scholarly excellence, leaving an indelible mark on the canvas of early childhood education in South Africa.

Contact Us

You're welcome to get in touch with us using the relevant contact details below:

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Become a member, by filling out the form here: [membership form](#).



SARAECE

South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education

Promoting a shared vision of research, training and development