

Chapter 3

The process

The structure of the FCM Programme

The FCM approach has proved useful in environments where there is little or no infrastructure (a lack of buildings, equipment, services and trained people) to support early childhood development and a systematic outreach to families is required. An operational structure for this approach is described below.

A series of 'key messages' lies at the heart of the FCM Programme. These key messages are to be found in the Masithethe series of handbooks and can be used as the basis for a shorter period of programme intervention. This approach has been piloted in dense urban settlements.



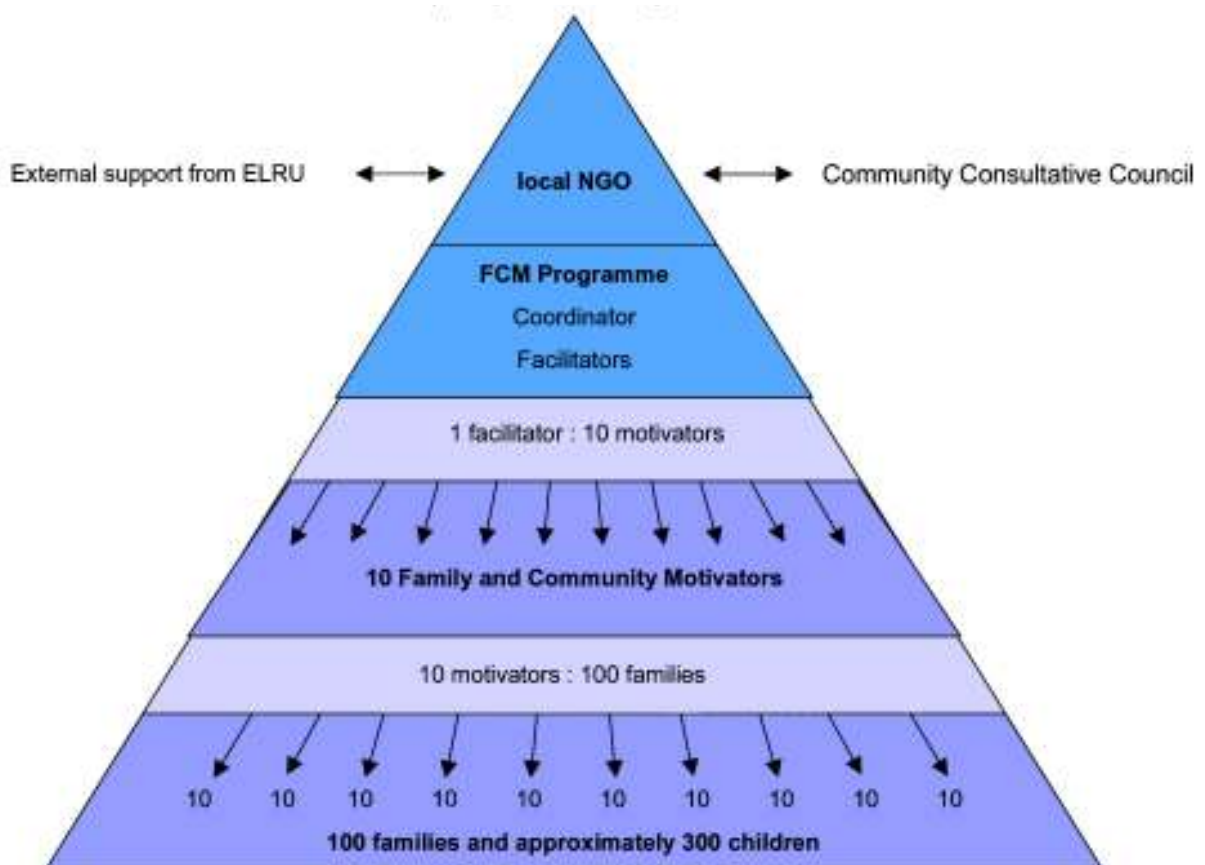
The FCM approach

The FCM approach works on the ratio of

- One local non governmental organisation (NGO) or community based organisation (CBO) with one coordinator and one trainer (the coordinator and the trainer positions will depend on the scale of the FCM Programme)
- One facilitator (ratio of one facilitator to ten motivators)
- Ten motivators (ratio of one motivator to ten primary caregivers)
- One hundred primary caregivers and approximately one hundred families
- One hundred families and approximately three hundred children.

The NGO is advised by the local community consultative council (or local development forum) from which members of the community based management committee are elected.

The NGO can request support from an experienced NGO (for example ELRU).



Strengthening outreach and service delivery to families in children in at-risk communities.

Adapt to suit different circumstances.

Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are related to the programme objectives (which are developed out of the baseline survey) and the intended outcomes. The coordinator, facilitators and motivators set out to investigate the availability and nature of local resources, services and income generating opportunities. Working with the caregivers own beliefs and practices around child raising they provide information around the child's developmental needs in order to strengthen positive child outcomes.

“We encourage the motivators to keep ‘ears to the ground’ and to gather information wherever they can find it. To listen to the radio and in some places TV to hear what is becoming available for people in our area for example: emergency food parcels, child support grants and HIV and AIDS information and treatment.”

Facilitator report

The coordinator

The FCM coordinator of the local organisation is responsible for the overall supervision and support of the FCM Programme. She reports to the director and to the community management committee at the local site.

The main task of the FCM coordinator is to manage the implementation of the FCM Programme according to a clear workplan. Integration of the FCM programme into the life of the NGO can be further achieved by providing a clear diagram to show how the purpose, objectives and the intended outcomes link to job descriptions, training programmes and the community consultative process. Tasks include:

- Finalising the budget and workplan
- Partnership agreements
- Staff contracts
- Facilitator and motivator ongoing staff development plan
- Training programme design and development
- Baseline and community maps
- Site visits to support facilitators
- Oversight of record-keeping system
- Networking with key stakeholders, government, NGO's, private sector
- Fundraising plan and visitors
- Quarterly reports to the NGO director including summary of facilitator reports
- Evaluation reports – learnings integrated into workplans
- Contributing to the annual report of the organisation

The facilitators

The facilitators set the tone of the FCM Programme through their dedication, passion and support for the programme.

Monthly site visits, reportback meetings and ongoing training sessions

They conduct regular on-site visits so that each motivator is visited at least once a month and more often if circumstances, such as distance, allow. They also meet with their group of motivators in a general reportback meeting monthly in order to assist them to work out how to assist the caregivers to gain access to what they need according to each caregiver's plan, noting key issues such as that HIV and AIDS is still not an open topic for discussion in many areas. It is at these meetings that the ongoing training takes place, the topics emerging from the needs and experience of the motivators.

Networks to resources, services and between families

They assist the motivators to develop the local networks to include local people as stakeholders and resources in the community. These may include the matron at the local clinic, the chiefs and ward councillors, the preschools in the area, the schools. They assist the motivators to forge links with Departments of Health, Education and Welfare etc., Poverty and other programmes, other NGOs and potential donors and they encourage the motivators to develop the networks between families at the local level because of the barriers and isolation caused by poverty, hardship and despair.

Conflict managing, counselling and de-briefing skills are part of the job.

Networks

They oversee the reporting system starting with the files for each caregiver. A series of forms have to be kept up to date in order to maintain the integrity of the reporting system. One of the facilitators is responsible for capturing data as it comes in and making a monthly summary which feeds into the workplan review which happens every quarter.

Evaluation

Arrangements for the midterm and final evaluations sit with the facilitator and matters arising from these evaluations must be integrated into subsequent workplans.

The motivators

The motivators attend the local community consultative meetings, conduct regular home visits to their families, network and establish links to services such as the government departments for birth certificates, pensions, identity documents, child support grants, emergency food and HIV and AIDS counselling and support services.

The caregiver plan includes the outcomes intended for both the caregiver and the child/children in her care.

“The home visits include observation and demonstration.

Observing the ways in which the caregiver is interacting with the child/children and demonstrating play activities that encourage the caregiver to become involved in order to ensure that the educational needs for young children are being met. Insights from the observations are discussed at the reportback to the facilitator meeting. The motivators are encouraged to be alert to local beliefs and practices around child raising and to seek positive outcomes.”

FCM coordinator

Children with special needs are identified and referred to suitable services wherever such services are available but they are hard to find in rural areas and the cost of transport in both rural and urban areas can be a barrier.

Monthly cluster workshops are arranged at times and venues that suit the caregivers and their children. Any other interested people are included in these workshops.

Links to **income generating activities** are actively pursued.

The importance of a careful system of **data collection** is a requirement of the work of the motivators and information must be provided in the monthly reports to the facilitators.

Training programmes and meetings. Motivators are expected to attend and to sign the attendance registers.

Ethical considerations frame these roles and responsibilities and include the importance of confidentiality in relation to information that is reported about a particular caregiver, child or family to the facilitator meetings and in the regular report.

Putting the structure into operation



Getting started

The local context

Consultative process

includes awareness raising,
entry and exit strategies
including going to scale

Staff selection

Training

Support & monitoring

Evaluation

Research & advocacy

The consultative process

The consultative process has proved essential for community buy-in and sustainability. Situating and adapting the FCM Programme can start in different ways. ELRU has in some situations been approached to provide support with identifying the site and establishing the FCM programme, and in other situations the site, partners and role players are largely predetermined (government tender).

The term “levels” is often used (government, NGO, community) but the levels are not intended to be hierarchical. In our view balances have to be found between the more powerful partners who provide the money and the technical expertise and the community which provides the access and expertise related to how things work at the local level.

FCM coordinator

The initial consultation phase must identify and consolidate via an appropriate structure the key relationships e.g. ELRU and the local NGO, the government departments, private sector partners, other NGOs and the community-based partners.

Example of process:

Following the presentation and discussion about the FCM programme and objectives the decision to proceed (or not) is taken. The aim is to reach an agreement about who will partner who and what will be done with clear terms of reference (TOR) leading to formal Agreements at all levels.

The consultation process is ongoing and includes the election of the FCM Programme Community Management Committee (CMC) if needed. The CMC works in conjunction with the local NGO and it or an agent appointed by it (another NPO) will take the work forward, particularly if the NGO plans to replicate the programme elsewhere.

Entry and exit strategies

Entry and exit strategies are critical for FCM programme sustainability and must be determined at the outset to avoid raising false expectations or creating conflict.

Entry strategies include establishing what the key issues are in the local setting.

The key question to ask is:

What are the issues that affect the vulnerable children and their parents or primary caregivers?

The context is further developed via the baseline survey and community map making but also by the observation, discussion and the agreements that are reached in order to decide on the shape that a particular FCM programme will take and the various elements that will be included.

The baseline survey provides information about the particular needs of children and caregivers in the local setting and is useful for planning programme inputs. The number of caregivers surveyed via the questionnaires depends on resources to some extent. The motivators are trained to manage the questionnaires as part of the training programme.

The baseline at Masikhule pointed to the need for clean water and in Browns Farm and Weltrevreden Valley pointed to the need for child safety. In both cases these and other issues were addressed in ongoing training sessions, cluster workshops and workplans.

Centre manager

The community mapping exercise which is included in the training programme alerts the facilitators and motivators to the availability or otherwise of resources and some of the hazards in their area.

The maps at Masikhule indicated the need to address water safety. In one of the villages two children died when they fell into a dam.

Motivator, Maqhinebeni

The exit strategy

Discussion around exit in the Masikhule/Maqhinebeni FCM programme took place at the start so that everyone knew that there was to be a reduction in support from both ELRU and Masikhule over a set period of time. The aim was to ensure that the authority and responsibility for the FCM programme would begin and remain with the local community. The exit strategy included:

- Empowering the community consultative council (CCC) management committee, the facilitators, the motivators/nomakhaya via the training programmes and workshops.
- Developing funding proposals for Masikhule FCM programme and for the Maqhinebeni Nomakhaya programme following the strategic planning workshop in January 2005 when ELRU finally exited from the programme.

The Masikhule workplan of 2005 included the strong assumption that the Maqhinebeni FCM/ Nomakhaya programme had developed enough capacity to sustain the programme and that the Department of Social Development (DSD) would provide regular funds according to the negotiated business plan.

ELRU FCM coordinator

Scale

The extent and scale of the outreach in terms of the numbers of caregivers and children reached will depend on the available infrastructure (facilities, staffing, training, support and monitoring and funds).

Replication, management and administration

If the intention is to replicate the FCM Programme then the local NGO will partner with a community-based structure which can become a registered NPO. The aim is to locate the management and administration initially with the NGO but to shift responsibility to the community-based NPO so that the NGO can move on to another site but remains available to play a mentoring role for an agreed period if required. Some ongoing training and administrative support may be required from the local NGO.

The selection process

The family and community motivators are selected by the local community structure and each motivator is usually responsible for a minimum of ten families. The number of visits to each family and the period during which the family will be visited will depend on factors which include population density, the extent of need and budget constraints. The FCM receives a small stipend and is entitled to a job description and a contract.

Criteria for selection of motivators are established in advance and usually include that the motivator must reside in or be familiar with the community in which she will work and she/he must speak the local language. Literacy and numeracy at Grade 8 is usually the minimum standard but candidates with strong community development experience are often selected and make a valued contribution to the programme. Motivators attend a training programme and receive support and monitoring visits from the facilitator usually on a ratio of ten motivators to one facilitator. Men are also encouraged to apply for posts in order to raise the profile of men in early childhood development – a sector left mostly to women

FCM coordinator and the facilitators

There is a more formal selection process for the FCM coordinator and the facilitators who receive a salary and are also based in the local organisation. The selection process involves advertising the post locally and the submission of a CV¹ and a letter of application to the selection committee.

1. Curriculum vitae (CV) which provides information about the candidate including educational qualifications and experience in relation to the job description.

Training programmes

Training programmes include training for the motivators, the facilitators and training for the community management committee members. Whatever knowledge, skills and experience they bring, they must be given the opportunity to acquire information in order to implement the FCM programme successfully.

Methodology

The FCM Programme training approach has over the years built on the findings of earlier ELRU programmes (Appendix 2), was influenced by work in other parts of the world and in South Africa and was based on the writings of Paulo Freire.

The *Training for Transformation*² series based on Freire and developed out of community practice in other parts of Africa and elsewhere was our initial tool and formed the basis of our programme design. We also use participatory methods such as role plays, mapping exercises, games, case studies drawn from PRA³ and PLA⁵ which follow a dialogical approach in which the questions framed encourage the participants to trust their own experience and knowledge. We also draw on the *Human Rights Approach to Programming* which integrates rights at the legislative and policy level into the work on the ground and *appreciative inquiry* which affirms what people know and builds on their knowledge and skills around child-raising.

Examining cultural understandings of how children grow and develop and using participatory methods to encourage the participant's own experience and ideas is equally important.

“When I was a child it was not allowed that we should look at the adult or say out our views. This is still the same today in some of the villages but in some places things have changed. When my mother left to go to find work in Cape Town nobody told me of that, she just went away one day and I was really in shock about that, I even became sick. I think I was about five years old.”

Nomakhaya

2. Hope, A & Timmel, S *Training for Transformation* series of handbooks
3. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
4. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

Working with Masithethe

The ELRU Masithethe series aims to get people talking about what parents and caregivers can do to help babies and young children develop their full potential.

The Masithethe handbooks contain **key early childhood development messages** which relate to children's needs, the needs of the caregivers and the needs of the motivators and the facilitators. The aim is to get people talking about what children need in order to challenge situations such as child abuse and domestic violence and what they can do to help children to develop their full potential based on their own beliefs and practices around child raising.

Facilitation techniques such as the importance of being a good listener and the art of asking questions are included in the handbooks in order to create a learning environment for the motivators, the caregivers and the children. The handbooks can also complement other training programmes and were developed out of the FCM work at the different sites. The developmental programme includes a rights based approach where all children are regarded as rights holders including poor children, children with disabilities, chronic illnesses, displaced and refugee children and children with HIV and AIDS.



The motivator works with the caregiver to help access human rights and children's rights and to strengthen this understanding through the process of discussion and reflection on their own situations.

There are currently six A4 handbooks in the series. Current titles include:

- Guidelines for facilitators²
- Building a culture of children's rights
- Lindiwe's story
- You are the child's first teacher
- Food for life
- My family and HIV/AIDS
- How your baby learns
- Let's protect our children.

All the titles are available in three languages English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Some titles have also been translated into other South African languages by other family-based programmes.

I have an exercise about child rights which we do in an outside space. It is in the Masithethe handbook and people really enjoy it, it encourages people to talk about rights, what are they, where do they come from and so on. People have a lot to say and they find it exciting.

Many have not heard of rights before. One person said "Many people do not agree with child rights they feel it undermines them, children can say I have rights and then they are hard to discipline!" Another said that "everyone must take responsibility for raising the child, the parent is not alone not now in the urban areas because children need more supervision because of the dangers" (of kidnapping, child abuse).

Whatever the views of the people the discussion is very important because they learn a lot from each other and I learn a lot too. I've done it many times but I always learn.

Trainer interview.

2. In process

Training and support for the motivators

The intention of the training is to develop the capacity of interested and committed people to become motivators who will support caregivers, children and families living in difficult circumstances (deep poverty, high levels of unemployment etc.) in their own communities. The emphasis in training is on gaining experience through practical exercises and hands on situations such as home visits, workshops, followed up by meetings where information and ideas are shared.

The FCM Programme has developed three approaches to training and support for the motivators:

- Training and support for motivators using the 'key messages' approach.
- Training and support for motivators using the modular approach.
- Ongoing training and support for both approaches.

Key messages approach

In this approach the workshops are informal and are based on the key messages in early childhood development supported by the approach and information which is included in the Masithethe handbooks. The number of workshops will depend on time factors, distance and available funding. Faith based and community based organisations are increasingly interested in promoting this work. The workshops are very practical and are designed to encourage local people to become motivators in their areas.

Modular approach

A two module non-accredited training programme for the motivators has been developed by ELRU and has been piloted at different sites. ELRU provided the initial training supported by the local NGO who then took responsibility for the second module. The training programme was designed as follows:

Module 1 which was offered over three weeks and included conducting the baseline survey and community mapping. This training was followed by the selection and deployment of the motivators.

Module 2 was offered six months later by the local NGO in consultation with ELRU and in response to local needs.

Content includes:

- Our democratic framework and the rights framework with practical exercises.
- Gender issues including power relations between men and women.
- The context for vulnerable children and families in South Africa including a situational analysis.

- Trust building, facilitation skills, counselling skills, referrals and conflict management skills.
- How adults learn as different from how children learn (adult learning theory with practical examples).
- How children learn – developmental goals and practical activities (infant, toddler, preschool ages) aligned with the role of the caregiver and the role of the motivator.
- HIV and AIDS awareness, strategies, treatment.
- Role and responsibilities of the motivators and the facilitators.

Practical sessions include:

- Basic information gathering and collation skills development related to the child profile forms, the child progress reports and household registers.
- Conducting home visits
 - Home visit preparation form including entry and exit issues.
 - Home visit report
 - Household register
 - Child profile forms
 - Child progress forms
- Conducting an interview and filling out a questionnaires required for the baseline survey.
- Mapping community resources and services and pooling of ideas and information.
- Developing a workplan
- Developing and administering an intervention/plan for each homestead (child and primary caregiver) in order to
 - identify specific needs
 - develop strategies for meeting the needs
 - make a plan including timeframe for meeting these needs e.g. access to grants
 - monitor progress in terms of meeting the needs
- Making improvised toys and understanding their significance for child development
- How to use the Masithethe series with its resilience messages.

Skills related to conflict management, de-briefing, counselling and referrals are critical for this work as the FCM Programme operates in very harsh environments where outbreaks of violence which threaten project functioning are not unusual.

FCM coordinator

Ongoing training workshops

Ongoing training is embedded in the FCM programme approach whatever form it takes. Topics arise from the work in progress and in a format which encourages reflection and action. This ensures that the FCM programme remains dynamic and responsive to the needs of the caregivers and children that it is designed to reach.

The motivators then replicate the workshop with their clusters.

The motivators attended their first workshop on book making.

They were asked ahead of time to bring waste materials or anything that they could find. We started with brainstorming – what was their understanding of books? How could books be relevant to the under 6's? A two way learning process emerged. Motivators had many ideas, some were known to the facilitator, and some were new ideas. Working individually the motivators were asked to choose what kind of book they wanted to make (e.g. a feely book about different textures, a book about counting, a colouring book, picture books etc.) Each person chose from the materials that were available what they wanted to use, cardboard, pictures, leaves, small stones etc.

Tembi left the room to gather some objects outside to use in her feely book. At the end we talked about what she found and where and how she used the things. Patrick said that that the beginning he had no idea at all about how to make a book but during the discussion ideas began to grow and he was very pleased with the result. The motivators made a number of different kinds of books for different ages of children that day and they then replicated this workshop with the caregivers in the cluster groups.

After a cluster workshop one of the caregiver's told the motivator:

“My boyfriend asked me what is it that I learn from these sessions? In the beginning I had nothing to show but then I made a child's book and I was able to tell him what the child learns when he looks at a book. My boyfriend became very interested and was willing to support me to attend the cluster meetings.”

Facilitator report.

Four key learning areas

The four learning areas include:

- Personal growth
- Working with adults
- Working with children
- Working with systems.

Workshops and discussion sessions take these learning areas forward but it is not necessary to use examples from four areas at each training session or workshop. A session can probably work well with examples from two or three areas.

Personal growth

This is about our own personal growth (managers, coordinators, facilitators, motivators and caregivers) as an ongoing process. We look at ourselves and our own needs in order to understand our own feelings, fears, ability to communicate and handle conflict in order to work more effectively with others.

The coordinator ran a workshop on communication skills. When asked what they had learned a Motivator said:

“The workshop was a great help to me. I have been feeling like I am very stupid. I have nothing to offer. Now I can see that we all have such fears and that I am not alone. This came about because we were able to talk freely about our worries and our hopes for this FCM programme.”

Motivator interview

Working with adults

The facilitators work directly with the motivators who work directly with the caregivers. Working with adults requires sensitivity and understanding about their circumstances in order to build the confidence of individuals and to encourage their capacity for teamwork .

The concept of ‘the family’ as a mother, father and children does not work well for us. For example: sometimes our ‘families’ are not blood relatives but people who share the same space (toilet and kitchen facilities) and give some support to the caregiver to raise the child.

Facilitator interview

We have also learned however that the primary caregivers of the very young children are not always adults. Increasingly older children and youths are taking responsibility for children and they need to have opportunities where they can learn about children’s needs and discuss issues such as how to discipline a younger sibling.

Working with children

The beneficiaries of the FCM programme are the primary caregivers and the children. Children need learning opportunities that stimulate the areas of physical, social emotional, cognitive and language development. Adults and other children help children to learn when they observe, encourage, praise, support and extend the child's learning. Each child is unique and learns according to his/her stage of development.

The home provides many opportunities for learning. Adults help children to learn when they listen, talk to, point things out and provide a variety of opportunities for learning at home. The child first learns to talk, to walk, to explore and experiment with objects and ideas in the home setting. Young children easily model their behaviour on adult ways of behaving and doing things.

Temba (3) is playing with a pile of stones of different sizes and shapes. His caregiver hears him say (to himself) "A big one, a small one" as he feels and sorts the stones into piles in front of him. Temba is learning about size, weight etc. with her support. His caregiver asks him, "Show me the big stone" and he shows her. Then she asks to see a small stone and he shows her. She nods at him as he speaks which shows him that she can hear his words and she is proud of him.

Motivator observation report.

Working with systems

Motivators assisted by the facilitators need to develop a system to administer and manage the FCM programme and to make it work. This includes the instruments (baseline survey, questionnaires, community maps), the tools (budgets, registers, checklists, reports) and the methods that are needed.

Training the facilitators

The facilitators are increasingly expected to have accredited ECD Level 4 training and the elective on family work or a community development practice elective and/or project management elective. Some facilitators bring a strong background in health and adult education. Facilitators are encouraged to attend training programmes on counselling and conflict management and to complete modules on HIV and AIDS and action research.

Management committee training

Training for management committees includes drawing up a constitution, registering as a not for profit organisation, understanding roles and responsibilities of committee members, understanding the importance of family based work as part of ECD. Practical sessions include taking minutes of meetings and keeping financial records.

Support and monitoring

Support and monitoring for the motivators by the facilitators is the most critical middle management part of the programme with a senior staff member supporting the facilitators in a FCM programme. At the next level, an experienced NGO (in family-based work) can be asked to support a local NGO to establish the programme. It is then up to the local NGO to support the work on the ground or to contract out to a local NPO with some support services.

Evaluation and mentoring

A well planned evaluation system helps the FCM Programme to grow in a way that is responsive to local needs.

Tools that encourage participation include venn diagrams, ranking, mapping, rating scales as mentioned earlier.

The mid-term or ongoing evaluation is particularly important because it provides an opportunity for an experienced and fresh look at the work; the purpose and the progress and the results and work plans are adjusted to include any suggestions which emerge.

The final evaluation should be done in time for it to help shape the new proposal. The timing of the evaluations needs to be carefully considered so that they do not clash with other big events and so that they can be meaningfully used.

Mentoring of the FCM Programme may be required in order to support local capacity. Mentoring involves experienced staff members who 'walk alongside the programme' as the 'begeleider' providing ongoing support.

Mentoring has proved particularly important in times of transition such as happened at Masikhule with the changeover of two senior staff members, the director and FCM coordinator.

FCM coordinator

Research and advocacy

A research and advocacy component is an important feature of FCM programme training and management and provides the necessary framework for reaching the intended outcomes via a careful system of data collection, collation, analysis and reports. Results have been fed into policy work at local and national levels contributing to raising the profile of ECD family work in South Africa.