# PIECCE July 2018 Mid Term Review
## Summary of Wider Consortium Collaboration Reflection Day: 9 July 2018

**Workshop Aims:**

- To reflect on how collaboration within the wider consortium has evolved
- To consider the benefits of collaboration at different levels
- To share ideas on a stakeholder strategy
- To reflect on our theory of change in relation to our stakeholder strategy

## 1. Quick Review: Why and how have we collaborated?

Melissa King from BRIDGE summarised the journey of the wider consortium so far. In PIECCE the 'wider consortium' includes the original cross-sector consortium members (university, NGO and TVET sectors) and the universities involved in TEECEP (Teacher Education for ECCE), which is part of DHET's partnership with the European Union on TLDCIP (Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme).

PIECCE's key output[1] is the development of a standardised Programme Framework for the diploma and degree for ECCE teacher educators, while TEECEP participants were tasked with developing programmes for delivery of ECCE teacher educator programmes. Given these linked goals, it would make no sense to build a framework of common standards in isolation from the broader HEI sector engaged in developing teacher programmes. PIECCE therefore combined with TEECEP to work on PIECCE outputs, in order to feed into the TEECEP deliverables of registered and accredited ECCE university programmes.

A summary of key collaborative events is given below. These cover the PIECCE outputs relating to the Research Review output, the Programme Framework output, and reflections feeding into the Collaboration Model output.

| Dates | Collaborative event |
|---|---|
| July 2015 | Teaching and Learning for Early Learning and Inclusive Education Lot 1: Consortium proposal - UNISA, Saide, Rhodes CSD, BRIDGE |
| Mid 2016 | EU accepts proposal |
| August 2016 | Meetings with DHET to extend collaboration to 10 universities in TEECEP within a wider PIECCE consortium |
| 14-17 November 2016 | First meeting between core team and wider consortium of 8 universities [orientation, principles for collaboration, key project drivers, PIECCE name (at Saide)] |

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[1] The Framework is informed by a survey and literature review, which was also undertaken collaboratively. Click here to see the PIECCE brochure which gives more detail on PIECCE outputs.

| | |
|---|---|
| 21-23 February 2017 | Wider consortium, + 2 more NGOs (Ntataise & Tree) + 1 TVET (False Bay College) workshop [orientation for new members, set up Research Review Task Teams (at Rhodes)] |
| 1-4 August 2017 | Wider Consortium workshop [reflection on collaboration in RR Task Teams, set up work with Programme Framework Task Teams (at Burgers Park Hotel)] |
| 26-27 September 2017 | Wider Consortium Programme Framework development workshop (at Burgers Park) |
| 28 September 2017 | PIECCE Community of Practice meeting [sharing the Research Review findings and Programme Framework categories: wider consortium + multi-stakeholder participants (at Burgers Park)] |
| 19-22 February 2018 | Wider Consortium workshop [Programme Framework + Programme Development & Submission processes to DHET, CHE & SAQA (at Burgers Park)] |
| 7-9 March 2018 | Programme Development & Submission workshop (at North West University) |
| 8 May 2018 | Core Consortium Collaboration Reflection Workshop (at BRIDGE) |
| 4 June 2018 | ECCE Teacher Development Qualifications Articulation Roundtable [PIECCE-initiated multi-stakeholder meeting to discuss alignment of qualifications at different NQF levels  (at Emperors Palace Convention Centre)] |
| 9-11 July 2018 | PIECCE Mid-Term Review Workshop [reflection on collaboration and stakeholder strategy, reflection on programme framework elements, introduction to materials development processes (at Manhattan Hotel)] |

PIECCE: COLLABORATION LEVELS
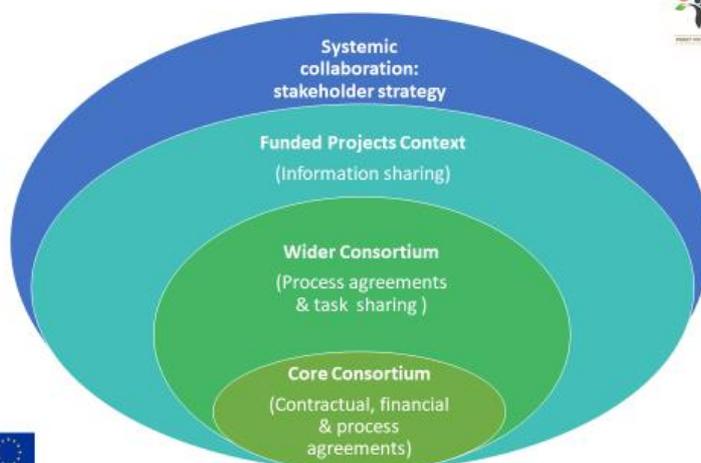


The different levels at which collaboration in the field can take place were discussed, ranging from tight contractual & financial agreement in the core consortium, to work-focused collaboration through interactive task teams in the wider consortium, to looser information-sharing and debates within the sector.

The PIECCE Collaboration Model is based on a cycle of monitoring and tracking collaborative processes, with reflection on lessons learned at key stages in the project. The three key elements of the model are:

- **Boundary Conditions**: this refers to the context (e.g. features of the sector) in which collaboration takes place, and the motivating factors (e.g. funding requirements; shared mission) for collaboration.
- **Foundational Drivers**: this refers to the factors that influence the way collaboration evolves (e.g. benefits, goals or principles).
- **Process Agreements**: this refers to agreements about how collaboration will happen, or operational protocols.

The final output will consider how these collaboration elements play out at the different levels of collaboration in PIECCE.

The presentation set the scene for reflecting further on why we have collaborated through PIECCE, and what we as the wider consortium have learned about the process so far. To view the whole presentation, click here.

## 2. Group Work: Reflecting on Collaboration in PIECCE

The brief given for group discussions was as follows:

> Discuss the benefits (or not) of collaboration for developing a standardised Programme Framework in the ECD sector.
>
> What have the benefits of collaboration been:
>
> - for you as an individual?
> - for your organisation/ institution?
> - for the wider consortium as a multi-stakeholder group?
> - For the sector? What three key lessons on collaboration in ECCE can we share with the sector?

Feedback from groups in each of these categories is summarised below.

### 2.1 At the individual level:

Frustrations at the individual level were noted through the following examples:

- The time factors that impacted on the project: individuals sometimes felt frustrated by the demands of the collaborative process, and the fact that time frames didn't allow for goals to be reached in the right sequence (e.g. the literature review should have been followed by the Programme Framework development process, which should have come before the Programme Development and submission process). These factors were however outside the control of PIECCE.

- Individuals sometimes felt isolated when back at their institutions, and over-burdened in that they are not released from their regular responsibilities in order to take part in PIECCE and TEECEP.

However, there were more benefits than drawbacks noted. Groups felt that the most tangible benefits happened at the individual level, as there were many complications and barriers to collaboration at other levels. For individuals the following was noted:

- Capacity building for people in both university and NGO sectors was key, with the following examples mentioned:
  - Increased conceptual understanding through the literature review.
  - Increased technical expertise in areas such as writing outcomes and module development.
- Increased understanding of what happens in ECCE teacher development in different sectors was also stressed. For example, universities learned a lot from the way in which NGOs carry out WIL / teaching practice on the ground, and how they approach adaptation and innovation. NGOs gained deeper insight into some of the challenges faced by universities, as well as the cognitive and academic expectations placed on students who enter HEI for teacher education. In addition, all sectors are now better informed about the types of teacher education in ECCE offered by TVETs, by NGOs and by universities at the different levels; these insights will feed into articulation and alignments debates in relation to ECD practitioner qualification and career pathways.
- The development of personal relationships with colleagues in other universities or organisations was also seen as a key benefit. The development of trust (one of the PIECCE collaboration principles) between people from different institutions was noted as an important result of collaborative work.

"There is a therapeutic dimension to collaboration as well, in that collaborative work becomes a safe space in which to acknowledge gaps in your knowledge."

"It takes time to build relationships. Those that stay the course will reap more benefits."

"Individual roles change as collaboration evolves: there are times you learn and times you teach, and times you get and times you give."

## 2.2 At the organisational/ institutional level:

In the first wider consortium meeting, roles and responsibilities for consortium members were discussed. One of these was for individuals to act as a conduit between the consortium and their institutions, taking feedback from the collaborative process to colleagues and bringing feedback from the institution back into the process. In the HEI context, in general, this has not happened: sharing

with colleagues has proved difficult, partly because of workloads, and sometimes because of a lack of a collaborative culture within the institution. People also felt that the institutions which they represent do not necessarily 'buy in' to the project. This could partly be due to marginalised status of ECCE in HEIs; there is much more interest in Grade R and the Foundation Phase, and a lack of understanding of how Birth to Four should be seen as a continuum with other phases. In addition, there is a lack of communication within HEI hierarchies; for example, it would seem that policy information (such as the DHET ECCE educator qualifications policy) doesn't always filter down to those who need it. Perhaps the consortium should reflect on how individuals can use their agency to advocate for some of the concerns raised this forum with their own institutions.

In some cases, there has been a lack of continuity in participation in PIECCE: for example, people have moved institutions, and new participants have been brought into the consortium without a history of growing collaborative practices and trust.

In relation to TVET participation, this was seen as very important and useful for sector understanding during the period that one TVET college participated. Unfortunately, this college has withdrawn, and the consortium now lacks a TVET voice. The key reason for lack of TVET participation appears to be human resource capacity; also, there seems to be a lack of interest in participation at a decision-making level from other colleges that have been approached.

The key takeaway from this discussion is that there is a disjuncture between participants in this collaboration and the institutions involved: this disjuncture is linked to communication issues, and an underpinning change process. It must also be noted, however, that a lot of these institutional issues relate to the big picture context: HEIs are under pressure because of factors such as #feesmustfall and general capacity issues.

On the plus side, institutions have benefitted from the personal relationships and expanded networks that collaboration have brought: for example, participants have started drawing on each other as external examiners.

In relation to institutional collaboration in general, one possible lesson is the need to make expectations about both individual and institutional contributions clear at the outset.


## 2.3 At the multi-stakeholder/ sectoral level:

The following points were made:
- There is a general lack of integration between different projects in the field (the genesis of PIECCE and TEECEP being one example), and of shared research in the field. For example, where is the research on the numbers of students who will potentially enrol for the diploma and the degree, and how will these qualifications benefit them?
- From an HEI point of view, research and publications are important; however, these publications must be meaningful if they are to have impact. We are not in the situation that some other countries are in, in which solid university-based research can direct policy.
- How do we get funders and decision-makers to listen to the concerns of implementers on the ground?
- While it is acknowledged that there are growing connections between the HEI and the NGO sector – who have at least been debating as sectors under one roof for the first time – there

are still concerns that this collaboration has not given enough voice to the NGO sector. And the lack of the TVET voice is an ongoing issue. Partnerships with TVETs are vital to delivering the diploma, and to ensuring articulation with Level 5.

▪ How can this collaboration continue to 'roll out' beyond the project – that is, how do we strengthen the notion of collaboration in practice and in the field? There are some examples of HEI / NGO collaboration: University of Fort Hare supports a trans-disciplinary group of different providers and practitioners working with women and children; Rhodes CSD works with a number of NGOs in the area.

▪ Collaboration breeds collaboration: are there any partnerships that have emerged from this collaboration? Should we have made partnerships an explicit deliverable in conceptualising the project rather than considering it just as a 'hoped-for' outcome?

## 3. PIECCE Theory of Change and Stakeholder Strategy

Sheila Drew from Saide led a discussion on the PIECCE Theory of Change (ToC). She noted that the EU did not require PIECCE to have a ToC but rather a log-frame: this sets out deliverables, dates, risks and other project elements, many of which we have no control over. However, the consortium felt strongly that this project is about change, and we therefore need a theory of change. PIECCE aims to make a difference: but how do you do this unless you know what difference you want to make, and what needs to change in order to make this difference?

Sheila referred to the PIECCE Theory of Change document (click here to access) and noted one description of a Theory of Change as the following:

"… a very powerful learning lens, which makes us ask ourselves and others simple but important questions about what we are doing and why, helping us to explore and make explicit our understanding of how change happens – the pathways, factors and relationships that bring and sustain change in different contexts. We believe it helps us all to discuss, plan for and measure change, enabling us to develop more clarity and effectiveness in our approach and a clear framework for monitoring and evaluation. It can also help us strengthen our organisations, partnerships and communication."

[Comic Relief and Theory of Change, August 2011]

Sheila noted that the PIECCE ToC is not fixed or finalised, but can be adapted as we reflect throughout the project. Our ToC also serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool, in that our 'learning questions' can help track development of key concepts within the project as we work towards the final outputs.

What change do we want to see, and how can we participate in tracking this? She asked that people reflect on this definition and pass on any feedback to her.

The Theory of Change is based on the three key drivers identified for PIECCE: **collaboration**, i**nclusivity** and **quality**. For each of these 'drivers', we have developed 'learning questions' linked

to indicators which could potentially be used to measure to what degree the questions have been answered – that is, how do we know that any change is happening in relation to each driver?

A stakeholder strategy for sharing and communicating in the wider sector could help us answer our learning questions on collaboration. Sheila talked us through the draft strategy illustrated below, as a basis for discussion and adaptation.
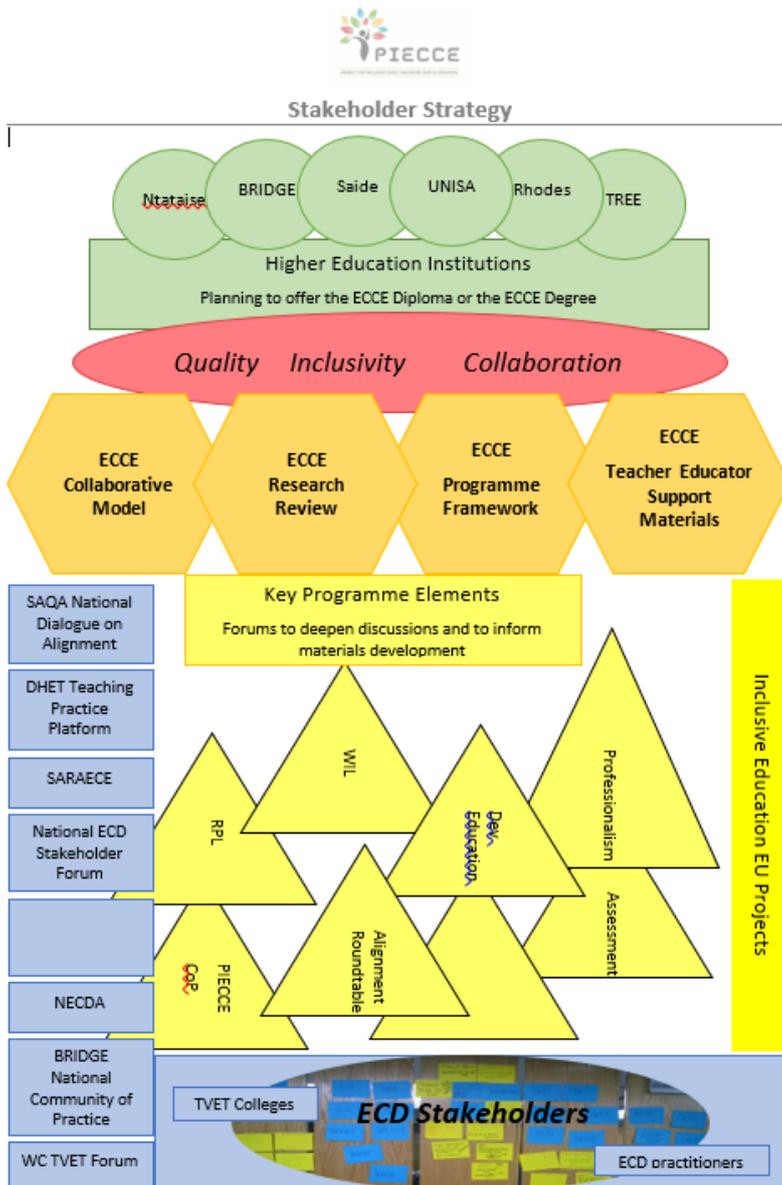


In discussion it was noted:

- The top levels indicate consortium partners and project outputs.
- On the left are lists of potential forums through which various key debates can be deepened.
- The triangles represent key issues which could be linked to specific stakeholders: that is, target particular stakeholders for specific issues. Which issues need deeper engagement with which stakeholders, such as DSD or QCTO? Are there more 'triangles' to add in to the diagram?
- PIECCE needs to engage more closely with other EU projects.
- The stakeholder band at the bottom will list many more important stakeholders, including (for example) DBE, DSD, DoH, President's Office, SACE, ETPD SETA, QCTO etc.

Sheila noted that discussions over the next two days would lead to an amended version of this diagram.

## 4. Group Work: Reflection on Collaboration Learnings Questions in ToC

Groups were asked to discuss the Learning Questions and Indicators for the driver of Collaboration as set out in the Theory of Change document.

| LEARNING QUESTION | INDICATORS |
|---|---|
| 1. How does **collaboration build consensus** on:<br>1.1 what constitutes quality ECD;<br>1.2 what constitutes the professionalisation of ECD practitioners;<br>1.3 what inclusivity means in an ECD context? | • Agreement is reached on the elements of quality in ECD.<br>• This agreement is informed by multiple perspectives and shows cross-contextual understanding.<br>• Agreement is reached on broad standards for practitioners.<br>• The professional pathway for the practitioner is accessible in terms of entry and modes of delivery. |
| 2. How does collaboration **improve relations, address silo thinking and lessen tensions** between different providers in the sector? | • Historical tensions (e.g. competitiveness) between service providers are managed and negotiated within the consortium.<br>• Practices and lessons learned are shared between different providers within and beyond the consortium.<br>• A birth-4 Community of Practice convenes diverse ECD stakeholders who develop trust, common purpose and share practice for the reduction of duplication.<br>• There is growing agreement on common standards. |
| 3. What is the **scope of** this collaboration and how is it **sustained?** | • Formal partnerships are maintained throughout the project.<br>• Wider consultation is achieved through collaborative forums throughout the project.<br>• The uptake and engagement of the project's outputs by the wider sector via social media is monitored.<br>• Post-project mechanisms for collaboration are set up (e.g. the Birth to 4 CoP).<br>• Innovative storage, sharing and communication platforms are utilised during and beyond the project. |
| 4. What are (How do we **track) the benefits of and barriers** to a collaborative process for programme design for future applications? | • Key principles and processes for collaboration are agreed on and adhered to.<br>• Monitoring tools are used throughout the project.<br>• Partners in the process feel engaged and empowered.<br>• An informed model for collaboration (based on experiential learning, feedback and reflection) results from the process. |

The brief given for group discussions was as follows:

▪ What answers do we have already to our learnings questions on collaboration?
▪ How does the stakeholder strategy support us in answering our collaboration learnings questions?

Feedback from the groups and from a subsequent reflection on Day 1 is summarised below.

## 4.1 Quality

▪ One group discussed the wording of point 1. What does 'quality ECD' mean in the context of the PIECCE project? 'Are we referring to the impact of collaboration on 'quality in ECD provision in general', or on 'quality in ECCE teacher education programmes'? If these indicators are to be used for monitoring and evaluation of PIECCE, this is an important issue that relates to the scope of PIECCE. We may need to re-word some of this text.

▪ At the same time, it was noted that there has been some consensus in understanding the concept of 'quality' in ECD in general, as reflected in agreement on certain modules and outcomes in the Programme Framework. This deepened understanding of what constitutes quality needs to be taken to other stakeholders.

## 4.2 Inclusivity

▪ In relation to the idea of 'inclusivity', we need to distinguish between inclusivity in terms of who we include or exclude in our collaboration, and inclusivity in terms of an inclusive approach to teaching and learning.

▪ Do we add the concept of 'inclusivity' as another triangle in the Stakeholder Strategy above? Noted that the concept should come into every module.

## 4.3 Data sharing

▪ The issue of sharing data from other projects was also raised. Examples were: data gathered about the views of parents and practitioners on various issues, including ideas about quality; content from the transformative pedagogy project; and the role of technology in teacher education and in ECD provision. How do we deepen these aspects of the framework and who do we do this with?

## 4.4 Capacity of Teacher Educators

▪ The consortium itself needs some enrichment in understanding Birth to Four: i.e. teacher educators who have not worked in this space before need to extend their understanding. In relation to this point, we must remember that NGOs have been working in Birth to Four for many years, and we need to draw on this expertise from both inside and outside the wider consortium.

▪ Much of the capacity in relation to Birth to Four resides in the field of psychology rather than education. We need more trans-disciplinary interaction and a broader discipline base for considering Birth to Four.

▪ The PIECCE CoP should focus on Teacher Education rather than Birth to Four provision in general, and can play a capacity building role in this regard. This focus might relate to 'the change we wish to see'.

## 4.5 Scope of Birth to Four

▪ Teacher education programmes should work from a needs analysis, not just perceived needs. We must be careful not to minimize the care elements, and make sure that we ground health and safety issues in real contexts (continued latrine-pit drownings are a stark illustration of this point).

- The point above relates to the inclusion of DoH, DSD, municipalities and DBE in the stakeholder strategy.
- How do we close the gaps between Birth to Four and Grade R and Foundation phase? Grade R belongs conceptually more to Birth to Four than to the Foundation Phase, but in terms of policy it belongs in the schooling system. This suggests that in the Programme Framework we should push for a more seamless understanding of the continuum from Birth to Nine years.

## 4.6 Collaboration and Stakeholders

- The chapter on WIL in the framework, with its different case studies from different sectors, illustrates that there has been a lessening of 'silo thinking' in ECCE teacher education.
- In relation to collaboration between different sectors and stakeholders, it was noted that there will always be some competitiveness between different providers. Such dynamics are outside the control of PIECCE. It was also suggested, however, that tensions between different providers are not always a bad thing, as they can sometimes be a spur to action.
- Funders also need to engage with the concept of collaboration and become more aware of the costs and time pressures that collaboration involves for the project implementers. Time and quality are related.
- How do we take collaborative practice into the field, and nurture on-the-ground partnerships, such as the example given by Fort Hare?
- There is still a feeling in the project that some voices are more powerful than others; in spite of our deliberations and reflections on inclusivity, the final product will have a dominant HEI voice, and even between universities there are different power relations. Some of the contributing factors to this have been identified: for example, the ratio of HEIs to other sectors; the difficulties of including the TVETs; the different times at which participants have come on board the project; and the different priorities of the two combined projects. We need to continue to be mindful of these dynamics and think of practical and behavioural ways to address these, while accepting that this is a learning curve in ongoing collaboration between different players and sectors.

## 4.7 Scope of PIECCE

- Each consortium partner should try and use her agency to share and influence the systems within her own constituency.
- In relation to extending our collaborations and discussions to other stakeholders, we must remember that PIECCE is a project with a budget and a defined scope and lifetime. It can however serve as a catalyst for further discussion, and perhaps kick-start a longer term forum such as a Teacher Educator CoP through the PIECCE CoP.
- The issue of Level 5 is vital as it is the pipeline into the diploma and the degree. PIECCE has contributed to these debates through making alignment and articulation issues explicit, and will continue to do this through the stakeholder strategy, in particular through a planned engagement with SAQA.
- Do we wish to make more of a difference to policy or practice (especially in relation to the points raised under 5 above)? It was noted that we can't do much about policy, although there

will be opportunities when Mr TEQ ECCE is reviewed. We can however focus our impact on practice, and continue with an advocacy role.

A recurring concern is the question of how we continue addressing some of these major conceptual issues when universities are already in the process of submitting their programmes. In summing up on this point, Sheila noted the following:

- There is some limited scope to play around with the module outcomes and assessment criteria within the different iterations required by DHET.
- We could take some of the issues forward in the materials development process.
- We can take a long term view and consider the evolution of these programmes beyond the first submission.
- We can use the Framework for general advocacy in the field, and for linking to other bodies that can take some of the issues forward.

She invited universities to continue to come on board and participate in Programme Framework discussion beyond their own programme submission priorities.