

Early Childhood Development in Flamingo Crescent, Cape Town

Background

The informal settlement of Flamingo Crescent in Lansdowne was founded 13 years ago housing approximately 247 residents, 56 of which are children under the age of 10. In order to address overcrowding and safety issues, the City of Cape Town Informal Settlement Department along with the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) and Informal Settlement Network (ISN) intervened three years ago. Prior to this intervention, the concept of early childhood development was not incorporated into the design process of these communities. Through reblocking, areas for recreation and education are designated to best serve the community. By integrating this into informal settlements, community ties are strengthened while providing a safe environment for residents of all ages to interact and grow. Since then, with the help of the Cape Town Project Center, reblocking efforts have continued and the development of a crèche is underway.

Although these efforts have helped to alleviate some of the adversity the community of Flamingo Crescent has experienced in the past, there's still much to be done. This includes the development of a crèche management system, designation of uses for the community center space, a maintenance system, and trained workers and teachers. The goal of this project is to provide the physical aspects the community desires as well as to enhance the opportunities for community development.

Working hand in hand with the community will identify the top priorities of the project ensuring satisfaction upon completion. In addition to the physical construction of a recreational area and the facilitation of the crèche management system, the team strives to develop a model that is not only sustainable but one that can be used in the upgrading process of other informal settlements. Creating a system that will function long past the team's departure is crucial to the success of this project. To attain this, residents need to be involved throughout every step of the process so they gain the necessary knowledge and experience to further the growth of the community. In addition, it will be pertinent to establish solidified working relations between the involved stakeholders and the community members to provide reliable involvement through programmes and funding.

Reblocking and New Opportunities for Early Childhood Development

Looking forward to future developments in Flamingo Crescent, it is important to understand the steps that have been taken throughout the past year in the community. The 2013 WPI group, “Community Mobilisation through Reblocking in Flamingo Crescent,” did extensive research on the most effective ways to upgrade an informal settlement and the steps it entails.



Over the past year, the community of Flamingo Crescent has been working to reblock the settlement. Reblocking is a process developed by Shack Dwellers International (SDI) based primarily on the spatial reconfiguration of shacks in informal settlements. This process is intended to maximize open public space within the settlement. In Flamingo, there was a heavy push to use this newly opened space in the field of Early Childhood Development with a space for a crèche and recreational area. The reblocking also allows for wider roads allowing service, delivery, and emergency vehicles to access the settlement. It is a bottom up strategy that gives back to the community by creating jobs, upgrading residencies, and developing skills. The community is heavily involved throughout the entire process and work to ensure as little disruption to the resident's lives as possible. The process focuses on upgrading the settlement while developing a sense of pride throughout the community by providing them the chance to directly contribute to the community's improvements.

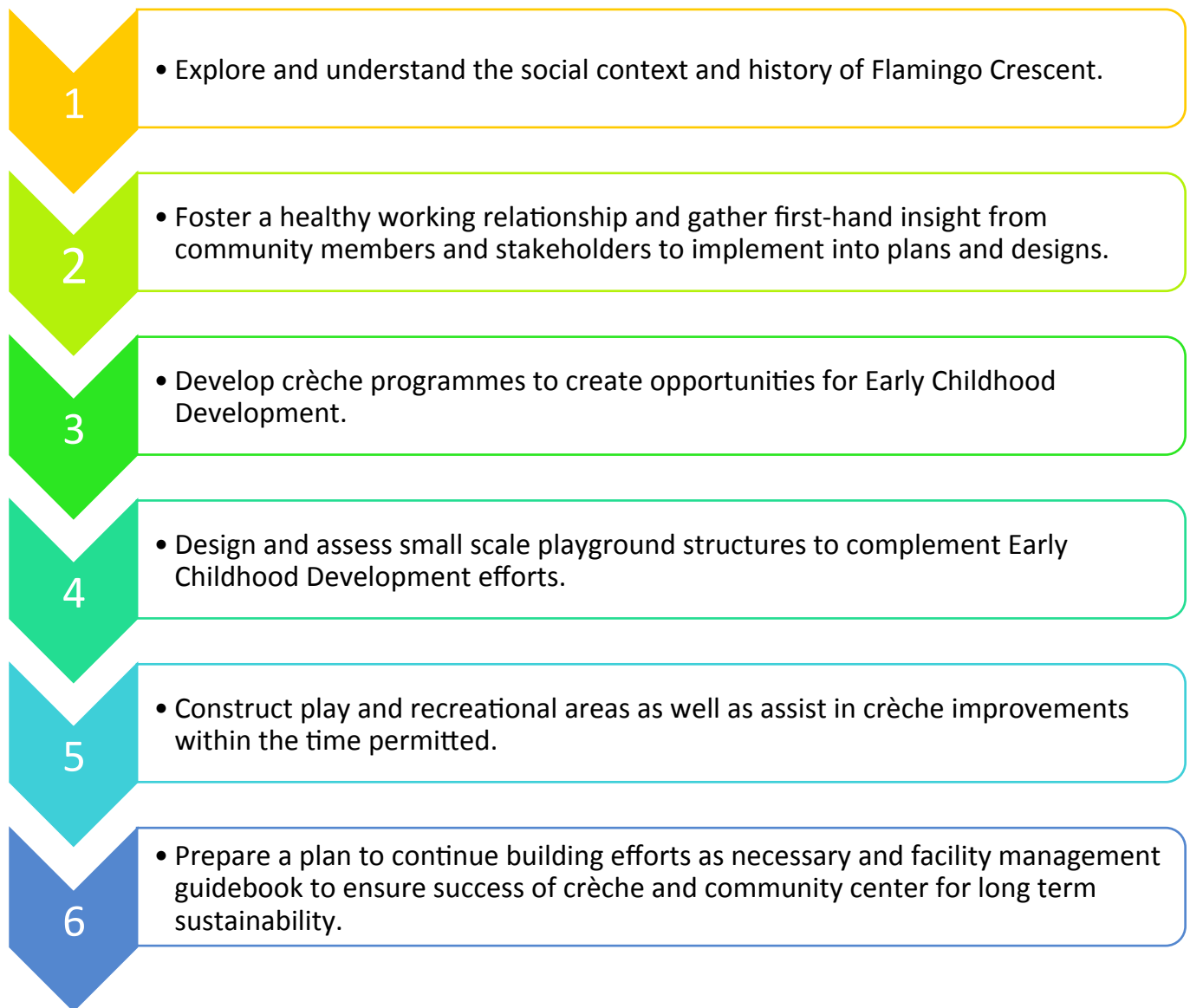
The reblocking in Flamingo is almost completed and they are now moving into utilizing the designated open spaces. Designs for a two story multipurpose center that includes a crèche as well as a recreational area accessible to the children have been developed. This advancement was not handed to Flamingo for free by the government, but rather they were asked to fund as much of the project as possible before being considered. In response, community leaders developed a Savings Group in order to make this project feasible.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Role

Mission Statement:

This project is intended to enhance the opportunities for community development in Flamingo Crescent, South Africa by facilitating the management of the crèche, constructing a community recreational area, and otherwise collaborate with the community to achieve their priorities along with our partners and relevant stakeholders.

Project Objectives:



Sponsors and Organizations

The sponsors and organizations involved in the Flamingo Crescent Project are the Centre for Early Childhood Development, the WPI Student Team, CORC, ISN, The City of Cape Town, and the community members of Flamingo Crescent.



Crèche

Non-governmental Early Childhood Development (ECD) organisations have played a facilitating role in the process to crèche and educational development. These organisations provide communities with various training, guidance, support, and even financial inputs. The training they offer includes the establishment of a course of action that will enable crèche facilitators to fulfill requirements of the ECD curriculum in order to become fully accredited teachers. Public funding for ECD is mobilized from national, provincial, and local government. Funding ECD programmes can help protect the rights of children and women as well as promote human resource development and secure proficient performance by children in school to improve the effectiveness of the schooling system in South Africa.



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Recreational Area

The developmental process of implementing a playground in a community requires consideration of both the physical and conceptual facets. Playgrounds offer more than simply a play space for children; they hold the potential to positively influence all members of a community. By fostering a sense of community and facilitating impromptu encounters between neighbors, residents gain a sense of belonging improving their sense of safety and increasing their motivation to participate in civic responsibilities.

Employing play areas in developing communities with widespread poverty like Flamingo Crescent is especially beneficial due to the free activities it provides residents. Involving the community in the planning and constructing process ensures public satisfaction as well as establishing a sense of pride throughout.

Get Involved

The WPI Team and Flamingo Crescent are seeking for individuals and organizations to support the community on this groundbreaking project. In order for the crèche to be operational, the facility will rely on a sustainable endowment for the first twelve months. If you would like to be a part of the Flamingo Crescent Early Childhood Development Project, please contact the CECD for more information:



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Our goal is “to increase the capacity of individuals, organisations, and communities in delivering early childhood development services”

- Centre for Early Childhood Development

