

We believe that teachers should be life-long learners

That's why the Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance (AREA) offers professional development on the Reggio Emilia approach for educators in South Africa, including:

- Annual conferences
- Study tours to Reggio Emilia
- Workshops (introductory as well as customised to specific schools or contexts)
- Collaborative projects
- Telephone advice
- School visits
- Mentorship

Who is AREA?

The Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance is the official reference point for the Reggio Emilia approach in Africa – as appointed by Reggio Children in Italy. Our role is to facilitate the communication of information between Reggio Children and those interested in the Reggio Emilia approach in Africa, including our members and the general public.

“Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning. Observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before.”

Loris Malaguzzi



Photo by 3-4 year olds at Mimosa School

“We always carry Reggio Emilia in our hearts; when we speak of Italy we cannot but think of Reggio Emilia. We are linked with profound attachment and immense gratitude that is hard to put into words.”

Oliver Tambo

Join us

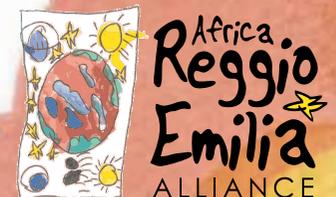
We're a non-profit company primarily funded by donors and grown through the work of volunteers. You can support our work by becoming a member and helping nurture a Reggio-inspired community of educators in South Africa.

Do you have questions, comments or insights on the Reggio Emilia approach in South Africa?

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Inspired education from birth to 99



Who or what is Reggio?

The Reggio Emilia approach is a philosophy of education founded in early learning – but with implications for all stages of life. Established in 1945 in the municipal preschools and infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia, Italy, the Reggio Emilia approach is:

Community driven

The first schools were built by parents determined to provide a better future and a different kind of education for their children – some schools were built brick-by-brick out of the ruins of World War II. Today, parents are welcomed as vital collaborators in the work and life of the school, and each school's identity and learning journey is deeply informed by their immediate context and community. No two Reggio Emilia schools are the same.

Globally influential

What started in a small town in Italy is a source of learning and inspiration for educators the world over. The international profile of the approach really took off in 1991 when *Newsweek* identified the Diana Municipal Preschool in Reggio Emilia as the most avant-garde school in the world for education in early childhood. Since then, the approach has been the subject of much study and publication. Most famously, Project Zero of Harvard Graduate School of Education is a regular collaborator with Reggio Children, and together developed the publication, *Making Learning Visible: Children as individual and group learners*. Today Reggio Children International Network has over 33 member countries, including South Africa.

“All children are intelligent: a truth, an aspiration, a commitment.”

Carlina Rinaldi

Locally resonant

During apartheid, the City of Reggio Emilia supported Southern African liberation movements – an act borne out of Reggio Emilia's own struggle with oppression. It's this history of friendship that has helped the Reggio Emilia approach find fertile ground in South Africa today. With AREA and Reggio Children, the Gauteng provincial government wish to pilot the approach in their ECD centres, and a memorandum of agreement between Gauteng and AREA affirms mutual support in the provision of professional development on the approach for ECD practitioners in Gauteng. Beyond official government structures, a number of teachers and schools around South Africa are inspired and informed by the philosophy, and a small cohort of postgraduate students at the University of Cape Town are researching how the approach is being expressed and translated locally.

Reggio Children was founded in 1994 to promote and defend children's rights and to organise the pedagogical and cultural exchanges already taking place between Reggio Emilia's municipal early childhood centres and teachers, academics and researchers from around the world. For more information, visit www.reggiochildren.it



Photo of students at Reddam House Waterfall

The rights of children

What's most striking about the Reggio Emilia approach is how it sees children as having rights not needs; as curious and competent, intelligent and resourceful, deserving to be listened to, and having their ideas and creations valued and respected.

The 100 languages

Children in Reggio Emilia schools create breathtaking art – but it's not about the product but the process. It's about expressing ideas in different creative media, leading to deeper thinking. Graphic media, clay, photography, light, music, movement are all celebrated as different languages in which children learn to express themselves.

Laboratories of research

The Reggio Emilia approach breaks down the traditional power relations of a school, where teachers are experts and children are passive recipients. In Reggio Emilia schools, teachers and children are co-researchers, discovering things together, building on each other's ideas. It's about parents, teachers and children collaborating as protagonists in the learning journey. Together they form not just a school but an educational community.

It's about sustainability

In Reggio Emilia schools, the environment is seen as the “third teacher” – able to provoke enquiry, stimulate learning and encourage relationships. Natural objects and recycled materials are used in the school, fostering empathy with the environment and an ability to see multiple possibilities in natural and recycled objects.