ACTION FOR CHILDCARE: THE TIME IS NOW

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Rationale for the Brief

- **Childcare gap** affects **40%** of all young children globally (World Bank, 2021).
- **Affordable and accessible** high-quality childcare offers multiple benefits:
  - ✓ Optimal development
  - ✓ Economic growth
  - ✓ Gender equality
  - ✓ Poverty reduction
  - ✓ Returns on health
- **Global momentum** for childcare policy action
- Yet, childcare not often treated as a **national public good**

What are The Returns on Investment?

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High-quality childcare (0-5 years) is one of the **most effective public investments**, providing a triple dividend to children, women and the society.

- **Improved child developmental outcomes** through access to safe and stimulating environments.
- **Increased educational attainment** through improved school readiness and life-long learning.
- **1 USD = 13%** annual RoI

- **Increased access to decent work** through increased labour participation and reduced wage penalties for mothers - potentially generating **299 million** jobs by **2035**.
- **Closing the economic gender gap** as women spend **3.2** times more on unpaid care work than men, preventing **42%** working age women from paid work.

- **Poverty reduction** through secure, stable and decent jobs, especially for women who channel the resources directly to their children's health and education.
- **High return on investments** through improved long-term outcomes for children, especially in disadvantaged families - public expenditure savings and increased revenues.

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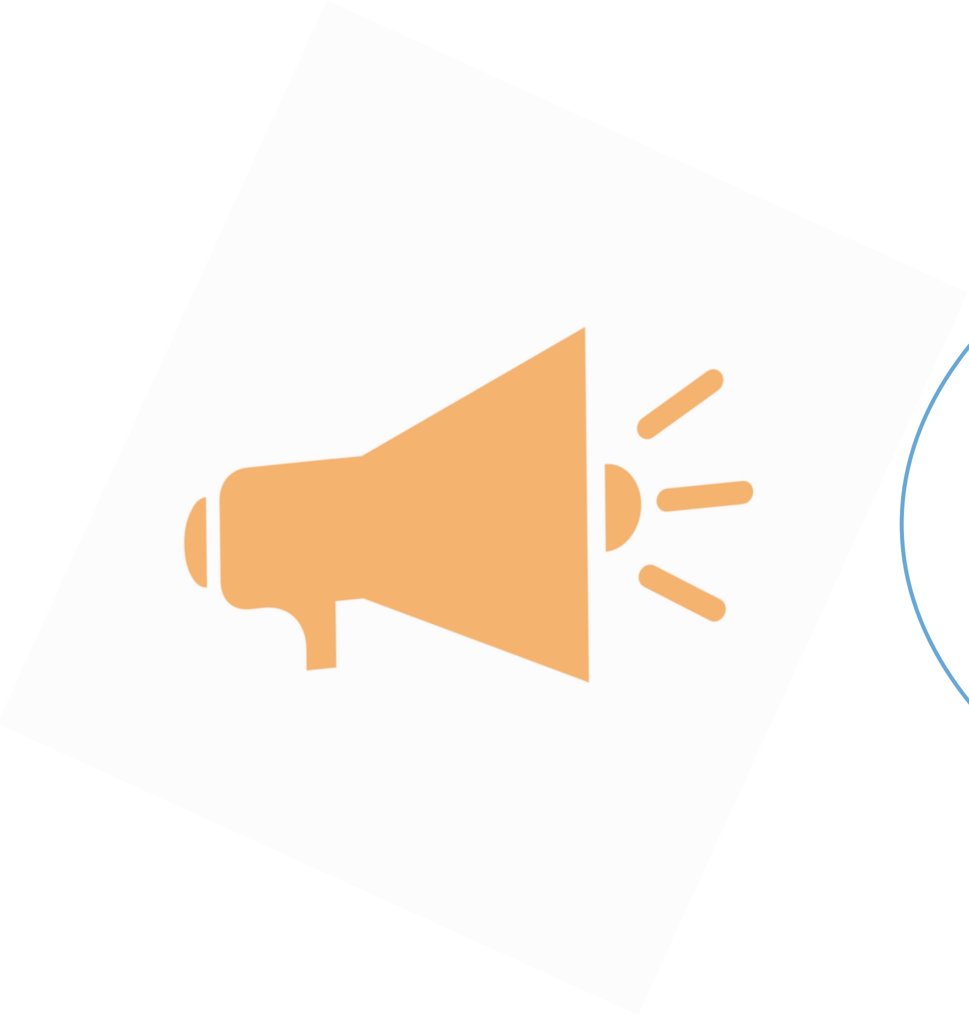
A Call to Action!



Make Childcare a National Public Good!

Policy Changes

Large-Scale Investments

What Can Policymakers Do?

There are **4** key recommendations that policymakers can take to make childcare a **national public good:**

	Establish structured national frameworks. Define mandatory national standards for **quality, accessibility, and affordability.**
	Formalize and professionalize childcare workforce. Create training, certification, and **career progression pathways.**
	Invest in integrated infrastructure and social protection. Establish 'one-stop-shop' centers (integrating care, health, education) and expand social protection (like universal child benefits and parental leave).
	Mobilize adequate public investment. Allocate funds across different sector budgets and incentivize or mandate **private sector contribution.**

What Has Worked in Other Countries?

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The path is **not one-size-fits-all**, but the principles of quality, affordability, and accessibility remain universal.

Financial support to families

- ➢ Childcare subsidy
- ➢ Direct financial aid

Brazil's Bolsa program

Public childcare infrastructure

- ➢ Public childcare centres
- ➢ Integrated child services
- ➢ Integrated infrastructure

India's Anganwadi centres

Childcare labor standards

- ➢ Workforce professionalization and protection
- ➢ Parental leave and care supporting workplace provisions

Ecuador's govt. programs

The Way Forward

Utilize this Brief

- ➢ Bring these **key messages** into policy conversations with policymakers
- ➢ Assess your **local context, fiscal realities, and varied needs of families** in the informal economy
- ➢ Select **feasible policy and financing** strategies
- ➢ Integrate the **various sectors** relevant to childcare

Commit to Action

- ➢ Enact **comprehensive** national policies
- ➢ Fund the policies through **national budgets**
- ➢ Complement this funding with **additional sources**

By doing this, we will together take the strategic steps necessary to establish **childcare as a national public good**, thereby transforming our shared vision into a tangible reality for millions of families.

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Childcare Advocacy Brief

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Making childcare affordable and accessible can help support optimal development in young children, drive economic growth and job creation, promote gender equality, reduce poverty, as well as secure long-lasting returns on child health and well-being. This evidence underscores a huge opportunity that governments have to secure significant gains for their citizens and economies through strategic investment in childcare. Bridging the current childcare gap, which impacts over 40% of all young children globally, is a **foundational investment** that promises multisectoral returns in human capital development, labor market productivity, and long-term poverty alleviation (World Bank, 2021). By committing to ensuring widespread access to high-quality childcare, governments can unlock the full economic and social potential currently unrealized by millions.

This knowledge, coupled with a greater understanding of the childcare gap, has ignited significant global momentum for childcare policy dialogue and action. Now is the time for governments to translate this awareness into action through policy changes and new investments at the national level that guarantee widespread access to childcare, thereby equitably delivering associated benefits to all.

Some countries have already positioned childcare as a public good through strong policies, investments, and systems. This brief showcases some of these practical policy and financing recommendations to help policymakers take decisive action and establish childcare as a **national public good** in their context.

Key Messages:

- **Providing childcare is a transformative economic investment for achieving gender parity** because it helps reduce the unpaid care burden and unlocks the potential to boost national and family revenues.
- **Investing in childcare is a high-yield economic strategy** offering dividends for multiple ministries, including education, health, finance, labor, and social protection.
- **Adopting and implementing policies focused on affordability, availability, and inclusivity of childcare** can be done through strategies such as direct support to families, increased infrastructure, professionalization of the workforce, and parental leave.

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