MAY 6–8, 2026

# INVESTING IN THE EARLY YEARS

## A Global Technical Financing Forum

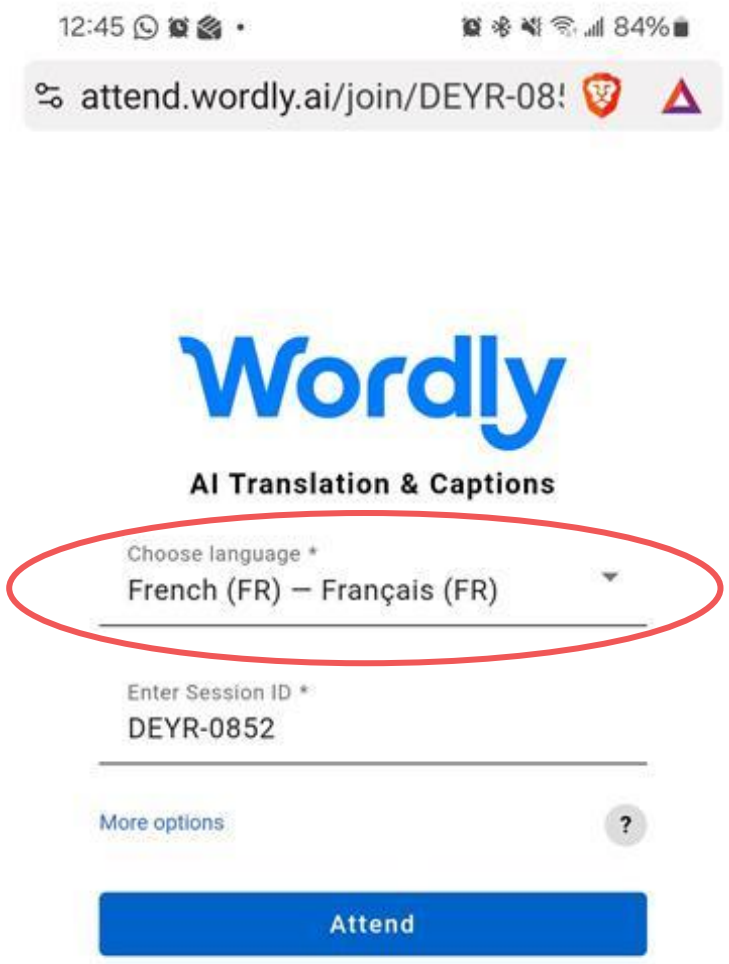
KIGALI, RWANDA

#ECDFinancingForum

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

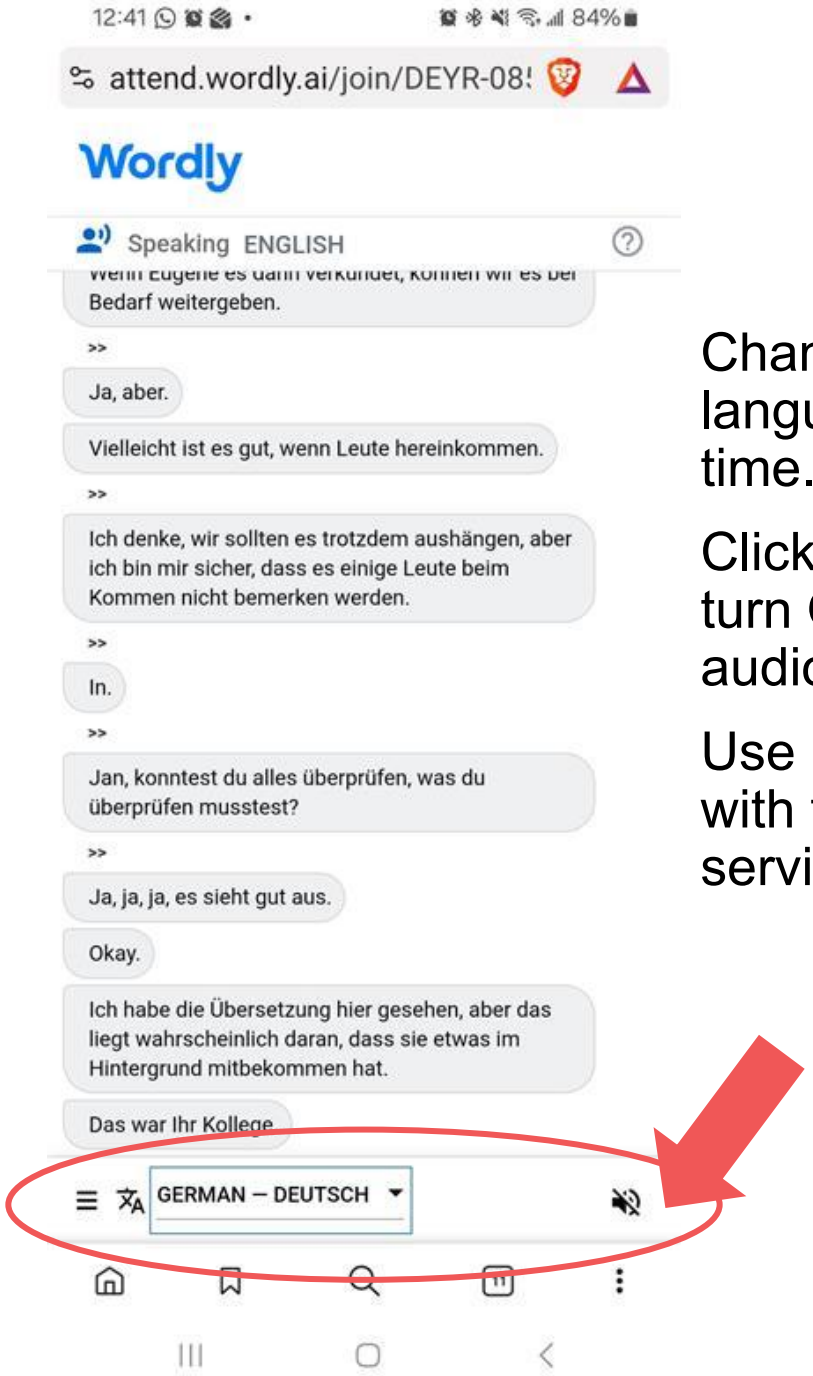
# Interpretation Service




Each room has its own QR code.

Steps:

1. Scan the code.
2. Select your language.
3. Click “Attend.”




Change language at any time.

Click the icon to turn ON the audio.

Use headphones with the audio service.

# Simba Ballroom QR Code

Wifi Password

Marriott Bonvoy
Conference
Password: kigali2022

https://attend.wordly.ai/join/SSMZ-7877

# Our Sponsors

# Day 1 Recap

# Dialogue 2: How can we expand resources, improve efficiency, and ensure equity and quality services?

# Securing sustainable public finance for young children.

# The Early Years Financing Toolbox: What is Included and How it Can Be Used

Dr Matthew Townshend, Economist
Shekufeh Zonji, ECDAN
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# Early Years Financing Technical Working Group

**Arushi Terway**
Senior Lead Research Associate, NORRAG

**Boniface Kakhobwe, PhD**
ECD Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters

**Carlos González-Sancho**
Policy Analyst, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills

**Charlie Habershon**
Associate Partner, Dalberg Advisors

**Chris Desmond**
Professor, School of Economics and Finance, University of Witwatersrand

**Chunling Lu**
Associate Professor, Associate Professor of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital & Harvard Medical School

**David B. Harris**
Senior Research Fellow, Center on Poverty and Social Policy

**Emily Gustafsson-Wright**
Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

**Gilbert Munyemana**
Deputy Director General, National Child Development Agency, Rwanda

**Katy Anis**
Technical Advisor, Apsara Capital and the Fetzer Institute

**Lorenzo Rocco**
Professor of Economics, University of Padova

**Matt Greenfield**
Co-managing Partner, Rethink Education

**Michael Simpson**
Senior Research and Project Manager, Early Childhood Development, Theirworld

**Michelle Neuman**
Senior Fellow, Results for Development (R4D)

**Omer Faruk Metin**
Project Officer, UNESCO

**Ozsel Beleli**
Head of Learning and Engagement, Education Outcomes Fund

**Rokhaya Diawara**
Education Program Specialist, UNESCO

**Sanjana Janardhanan**
Portfolio Manager, Grand Challenges Canada

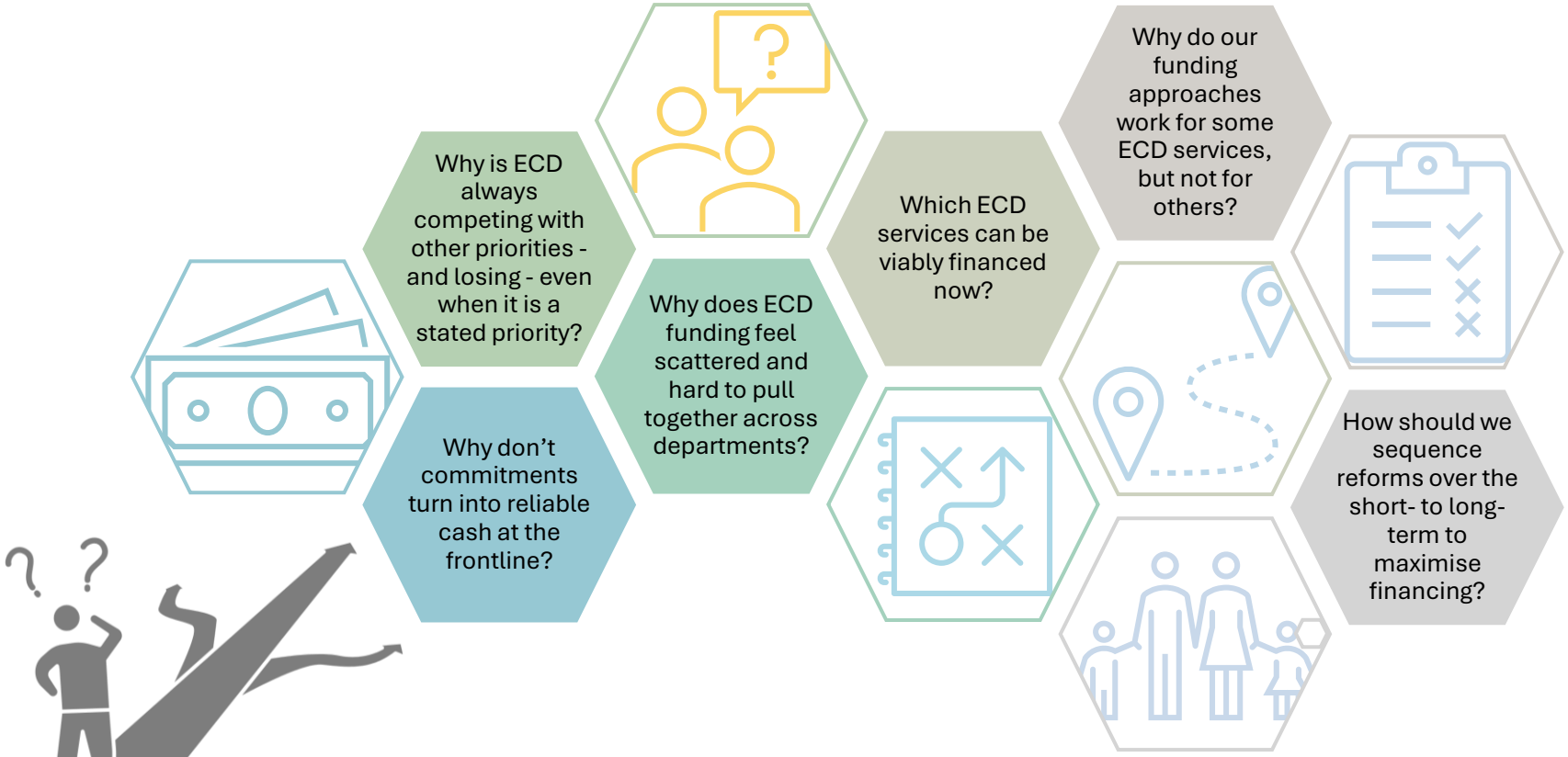
# Rationale for the development of a Toolbox

# Shared frustrations that make ECD financing feel hard

Political commitments to expand ECD financing (including high-profile agreements such as Tashkent & G20) are real.

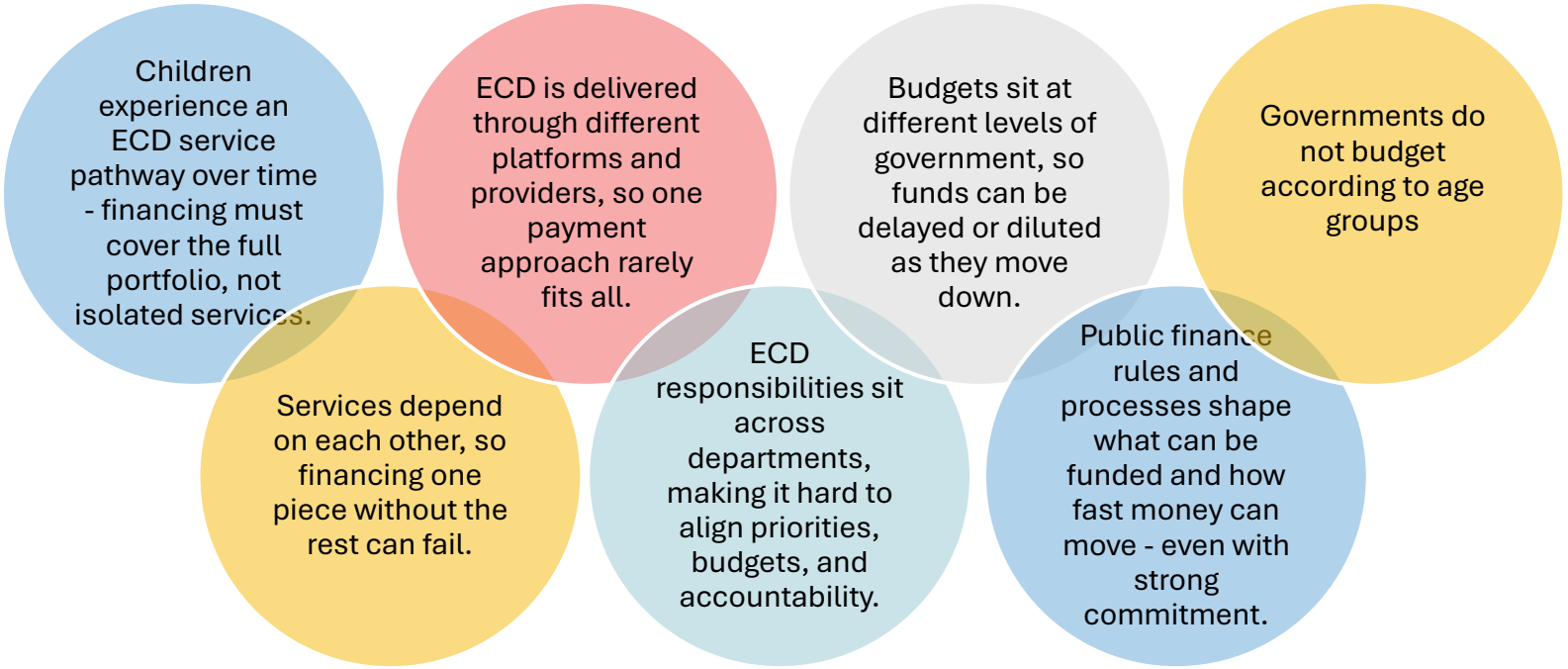
Yet in practice, financing increases are usually modest, uneven, or delayed - and don't keep pace with costs/needs.

The frustration is rarely intent; it is converting commitments into verifiable financing along the full service pathway.



# Complexity is often blamed for financing challenges

- When we ask why ECD financing feels hard, most teams answer: “because it’s complex.” They’re right - ECD financing is multi-dimensional.




- It is tempting to stop at “it’s complex”. But complexity is a feature of ECD financing, not a flaw. Progress comes from making complexity legible and then fixing the specific blockages that stop money flowing.

# Why the ECD financing conversation must evolve

- ECD will not reach scale through “more pilots” or patchwork solutions.

**The gap is structural**

- Demand significantly exceeds available fiscal space
- Fragmented services and funding flows
- Budget rules limit what can be financed

**We often optimise the wrong things**

- More pilots ≠ scale
- More/Complex instruments ≠ system fit
- Financing breaks between allocation → payment → delivery

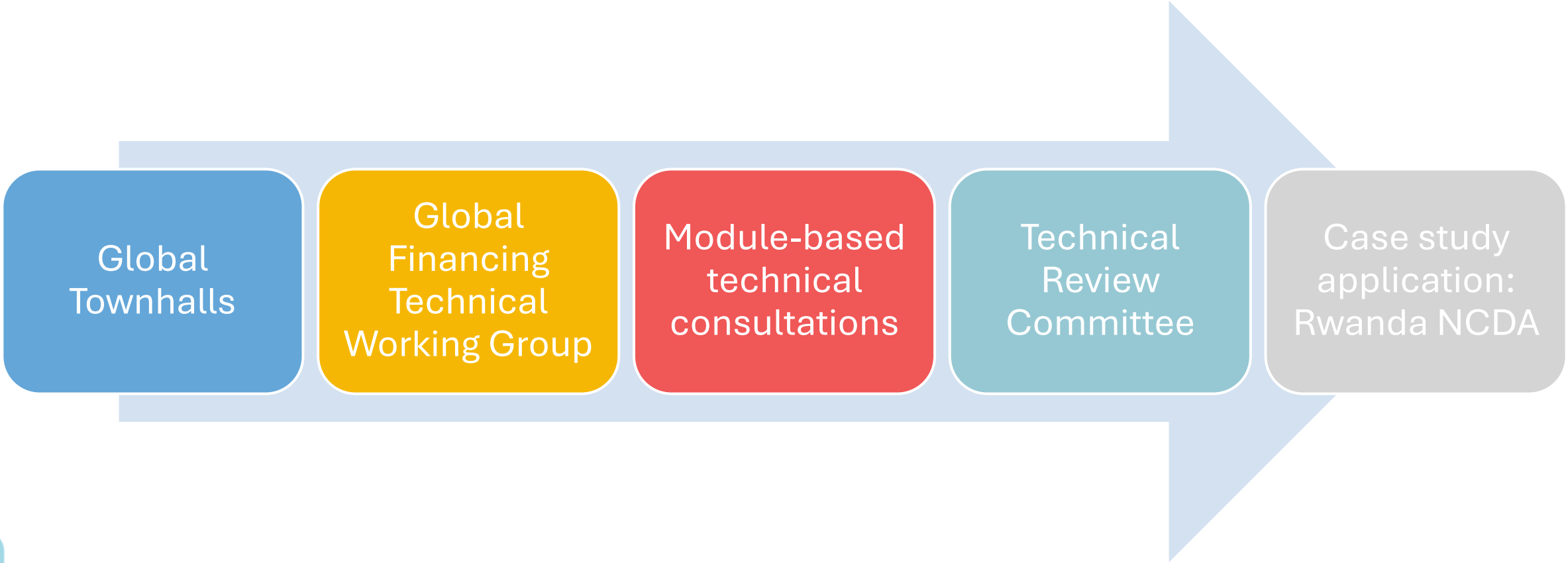
- The challenge is not ideas - it is **financeable pathways to scale**.

**The shift: a financeable portfolio**

- Public finance protects the equity-critical core
- Private finance complements where appropriate
- Services must be packaged into budget-ready, executable pathways

# Development and consultation process

- The Toolbox development has progressed through a rigorous process.



# Introduction to the Toolbox

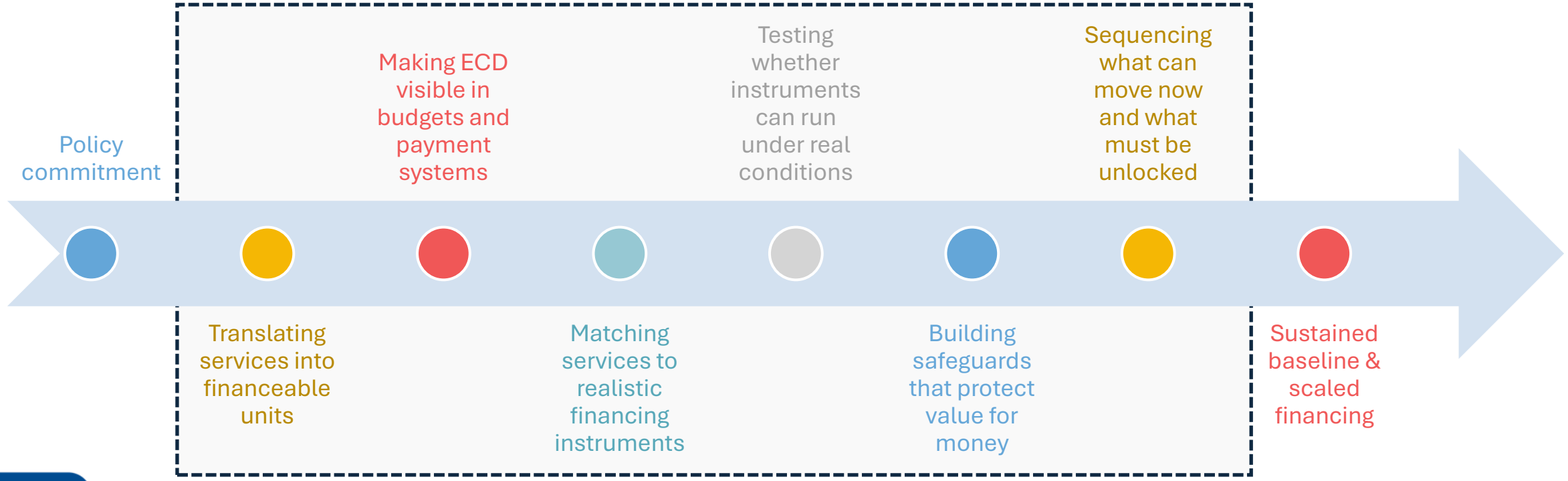
# ECD needs more money — and better pathways for using it well

- Many countries have **strong ECD ambitions**, but the **pathway from policy priority to usable, sustained financing is often unclear**.
- What typically happens:

- **Funding gaps** matter, but weak **financing pathways** often prevent both existing and new resources from reaching services reliably.

# The gap sits between ECD ambition and budget execution

- ECD financing often breaks down **after commitment**, but **before reliable delivery**.
- This missing middle encompasses the **practical steps that help mobilize funding and make the money genuinely usable for services**.



# What the Toolbox is - A practical framework for country-owned financing decisions

- The Financing Toolbox for the Early Years helps governments and partners answer one core question: ***How can this ECD service be financed in a way that is feasible, value-for-money conscious, and scalable?***
- It provides a structured process to:

Diagnose where financing is breaking down for a service

Test whether the service is ready for stronger financing

Identify financing instruments and sources that fit

Check what is feasible under current country conditions

Sequence what should move now, next and later

# Different actors, one shared financing pathway

- The Toolbox is designed to help stakeholders with different financing questions:

***Stakeholders with additional financing space***

"We have new resources, but do not yet know how to channel them effectively."

***Stakeholders working within fixed budget envelopes***

"We have fixed resources, but do not know if the financing chain or value for money are weak."

***Stakeholders trying to finance scale-up credibly***

"We want to scale services, but don't know the optimal financing instruments and structures."

## The Toolbox works best as a joint process

| Line ministries and ECD coordinating bodies | Finance authorities | Delivery and execution actors | Partners and complementary actors |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What they bring:** Service priorities, policy objectives, sector knowledge, and accountability for outcomes.<br>**Why they matter:** They help define what needs to be financed and what success should look like. | **What they bring:** Affordability testing, budget realism, fiscal sustainability, and sequencing into the budget process.<br>**Why they matter:** They help ensure that proposed pathways are financially credible and budget-operable. | **What they bring:** Knowledge of how funds flow in practice, operational constraints, and local delivery realities.<br>**Why they matter:** They help test whether the financing pathway can actually work on the ground. | **What they bring:** Technical support, complementary financing, implementation perspectives, and alignment behind government-led priorities.<br>**Why they matter:** They help strengthen, support, and align around the pathway — rather than promote disconnected solutions. |

# Built for real-world country diversity - The Toolbox does not prescribe one ECD package, instrument or pathway

- The Toolbox provides a neutral, rules-based process for helping each country move from its current starting point to a credible route to scale.
- The core embedded principes include:

| | |
|---|---|
| Works with different ECD packages & models | Countries can start from national ECD strategies, sector plans, the Nurturing Care Framework or existing service lists. |
| Keeps all instruments in play | Public, private, donor, employer and household-linked financing options are considered before evidence-based rule-in/rule-out decisions. |
| Uses transparent decision rules | Choices are auditable and based on service design, system feasibility, value-for-money risk and recorded rationale. |
| Supports single services or portfolios | The Toolbox can be applied to one priority service or a wider multi-service ECD package. |
| Builds a sequenced route to scale | Each country leaves with a practical pathway from its current situation (affordability & PFM system): now, next and later. |

# The Toolbox logic - From uncertainty to a credible financing pathway

- The modules are technically robust, but the practical logic is simple: **understand the service, understand the system, choose what fits, and sequence action**.

**Module 1** — **Map the service**

*What exactly are we trying to finance?*

**Module 2** — **Diagnose blockages**

*Where does the financing chain break?*

**Module 3** — **Test value for money**

*Is the service ready to absorb stronger financing?*

**Module 4** — **Code the financing footprint**

*Who is paid, for what, how often, through which route, and with what proof?*

**Module 5** — **Identify & shortlist instruments**

*Which options fit, and which are feasible now?*

**Module 6** — **Build the pathway to scale**

*What should be protected now, improved now, asked for next, or built later?*

# What countries leave with - The Toolbox produces decision-ready financing outputs

**A country application should leave users with a practical financing pathway pack. This includes:**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A full and prioritised list of ECD services & models | A diagnosis of the binding financing blockages | A value-for-money readiness judgement | A service financing profile | A shortlist of suitable financing instruments and sources | A feasibility decision: ready now, conditional, or not yet | A route-to-scale plan with owners, timing and next steps |

- Most importantly: Countries leave with a clearer answer to **what should happen next** on their path to advancing financing for ECD services.

# Rwanda case study: One ECD objective, three delivery models, three financing pathways

**Service objective**: Expand access to early learning for children aged 3–6.

**Country context**: Rwanda has developed multiple delivery models under one policy framework → but financing approaches have not yet been differentiated.

**Home-based ECD**

*(Community-led, low-cost model)*

**Delivery characteristics:**

Parent-led rotation model ; Minimal infrastructure; High community participation; Flexible, decentralised delivery

**Financing reality:**

Low-cost but unstable; Heavy reliance on in-kind contributions; Limited budget visibility

**Financing options:**

Community grants → Ready now

Parent matching → Equity risk

**Next steps:**

Define and pilot a **standardised community grant model** → led by National Child Development Agency + districts

**Community-based ECD**

*(Hybrid model bridging community and formal services)*

**Delivery characteristics:**

Dedicated centres with trained caregivers; Moderate infrastructure requirements; Nutrition + learning integrated; Stronger supervision and standards

**Financing reality:**

Mixed capital + operating costs; Fragmented funding sources; Weak recurrent financing stability

**Financing options:**

Operating grants → Ready / Improve now

Infrastructure grants → Ready but partial

Output-based contracts → Conditional (verification gap)

**Next steps:**

Develop a **standardised operating grant + infrastructure support package** → led by Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning + NCDA

**School-based ECD**

*(Formal, high-cost model)*

**Delivery characteristics:**

Classroom-based provision; Formal teachers and infrastructure; Strong compliance requirements; Integrated into education system

**Financing reality:**

High and predictable costs; Dependent on public financing; Pressure on fiscal sustainability

**Financing options:**

Capitation → Already in place

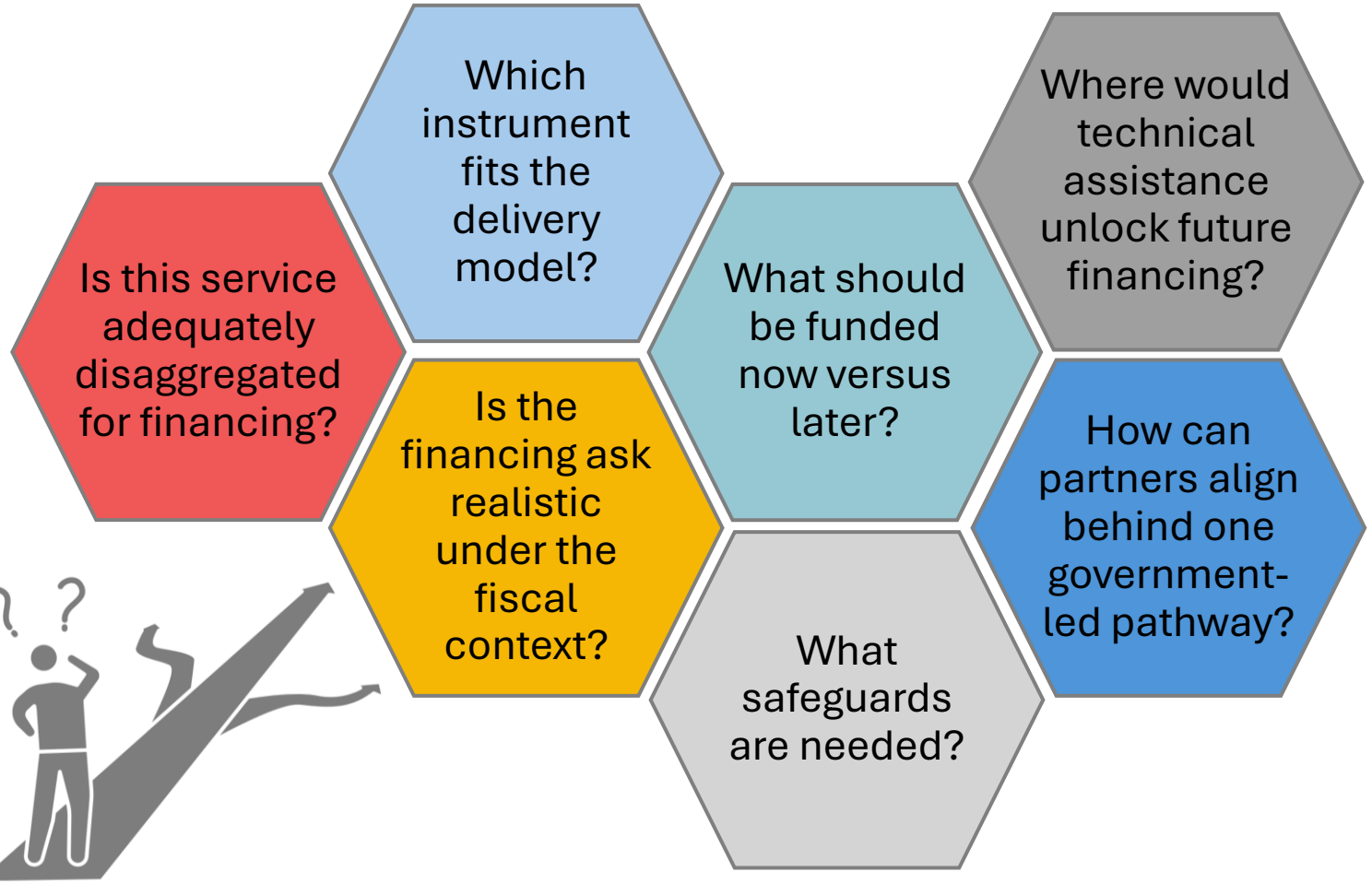
Equalisation transfers → Conditional (system readiness)

**Next steps:**

Strengthen **capitation adequacy and targeting** before expanding → led by NCDA/Ministry of Education + Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

# Why this matters for funders - Better pathways reduce risk and improve the quality of financing

- For funders, the Toolbox can help answer key questions that **improve the quality of the ask before financing is committed**:



The Toolbox reduces financing instrument misfit and risks, strengthens government ownership, and builds more opportunities to scale financing for ECD services.

# The pathway output - A disciplined financing package, not a wish list

- For each service, the final pathway should separate:

**Protect now**

What must continue and be defended in the current budget.

**Improve now**

What can be strengthened through better design, visibility, or small practical fixes.

**Ask next**

What requires an explicit financing decision or partner support.

**Build later**

What should remain in the pipeline until conditions improve.

- This structure turns **technical analysis into a practical financing proposal** that governments, donors, and partners can act on.

# Next steps

# Help shape the next phase of the Toolbox - From financing ambition to services that reach children

- The Financing Toolbox for the Early Years is entering its next phase: moving from a robust technical framework into structured country applications that strengthen real financing decisions at different levels.

### Uptake by countries:

Use the Toolbox to advance your ECD financing priorities by applying it to selected services, testing financing options, and building a clearer pathway for budget and partner dialogue.

### Partner support for uptake:

Support country-led application and finalisation by backing facilitated use of the Toolbox, practical templates, case studies, and the conversion of emerging lessons into a field-ready global resource.

### Donor support for digitisation and usability:

Support digitisation and ready-to-use enhancements - including a practical, user-friendly interface, guided workflows, and digital templates - to make the Toolbox easier for countries to use efficiently.

# Pre-Forum Financing Workshop with NCDA and Ministry of Finance, Rwanda

# Thank you

Together, we can unlock financing that will translate evidence into budgets and budgets into services for young children and their families!

# Country Dialogue: South Africa

- **Chair:** Daniel McLaren, Public Finance Economist, Ilifa Labantwana
- Tressa Johnson, Director, Programs, ELMA Philanthropies
- Sam Varney, Director of Operations, DataDrive2030
- Hopolang Selebalo, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Smart Start Early Learning
- Grace Leach, Technical Analyst for Public Finance in ECD, Treasury, South Africa

# Harnessing Public-Private Collaboration and Investment to Accelerate Equitable Access to Quality ECD: Lessons from South Africa

Daniel McLaren, Ilifa Labantwana
May 7, 2026

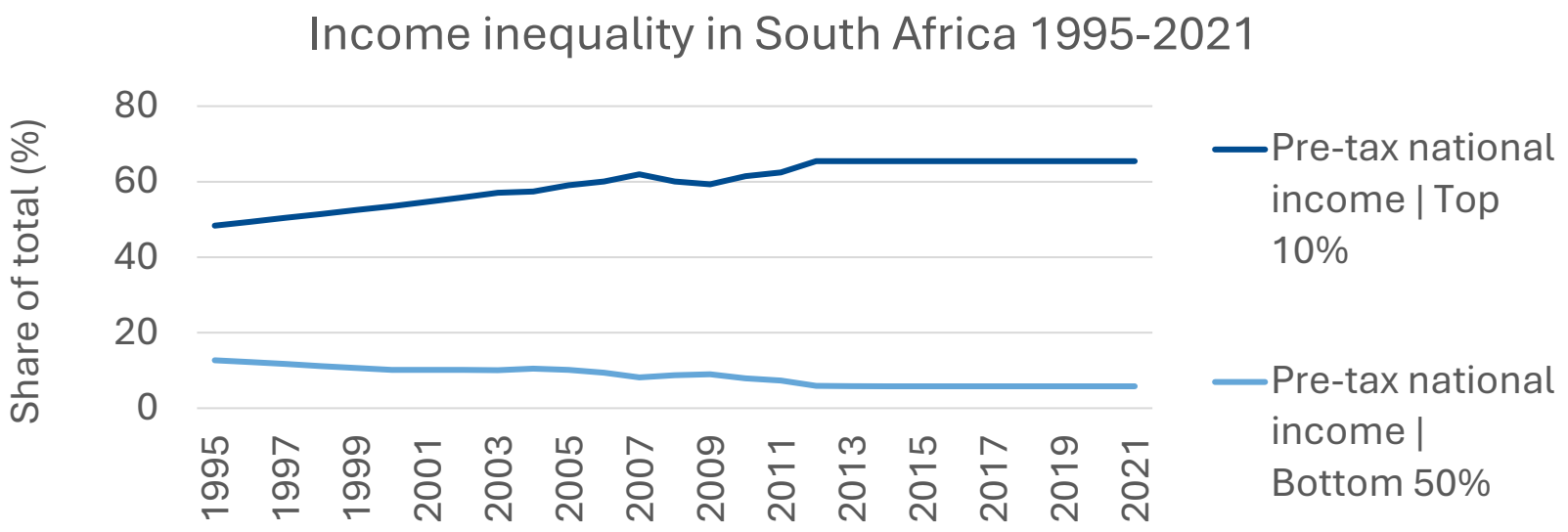
In support of act FoR Early Years

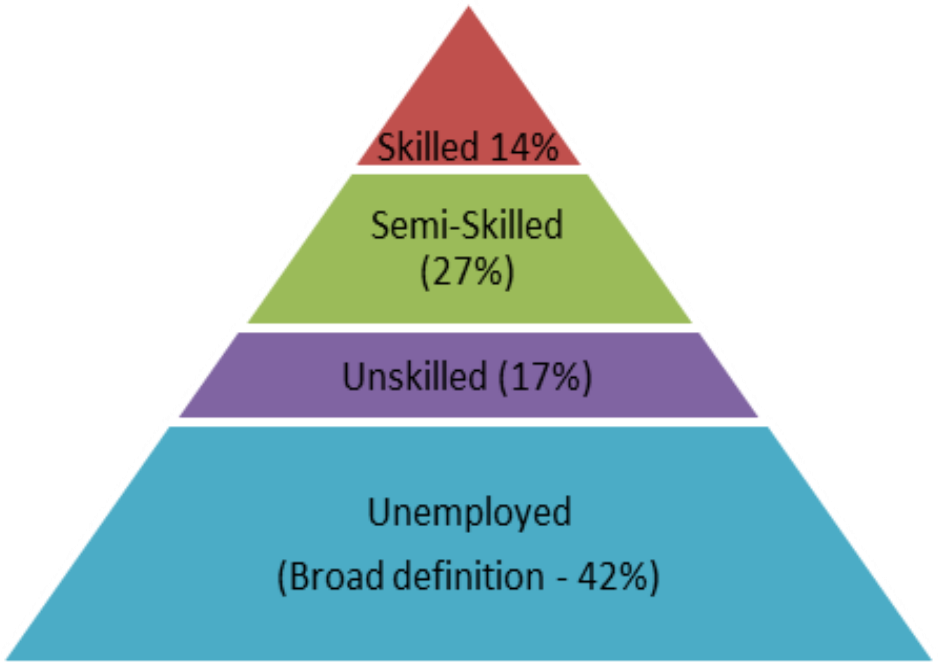
Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# South Africa is a middle income, but highly unequal country

- Top 10% of HH earn 65% of all income, bottom 50% share 6%
- Majority of adults unemployed or in unskilled, low paying jobs
- 70% of children live in poverty
- 1 in 4 are stunted by age 5

- State redistribution reduces Gini coefficient from 0.77 to 0.59
- Now need to decisively address the ***predistribution of income and opportunity***, particularly from wages and skilled work




*Data source: World Inequality Data (2022); Statistics South Africa (2023)*

ilifa labantwana

# ECD is a women-led, community based service

ECD in South Africa is provided by a network of

- ~ 60,000 programmes run by
- ~ 250,000 women attended by
- ~ 2,300,000 children

State is not directly providing ECCE to 0-5s.

Goal of policy and funding is to support, improve and grow existing ECD sector.

***Olwethu Leshabane engages children in an early learning activity at Thuto Ke Lesedi Early Learning Center in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. Photo credit: SmartStart***

ilifa labantwana

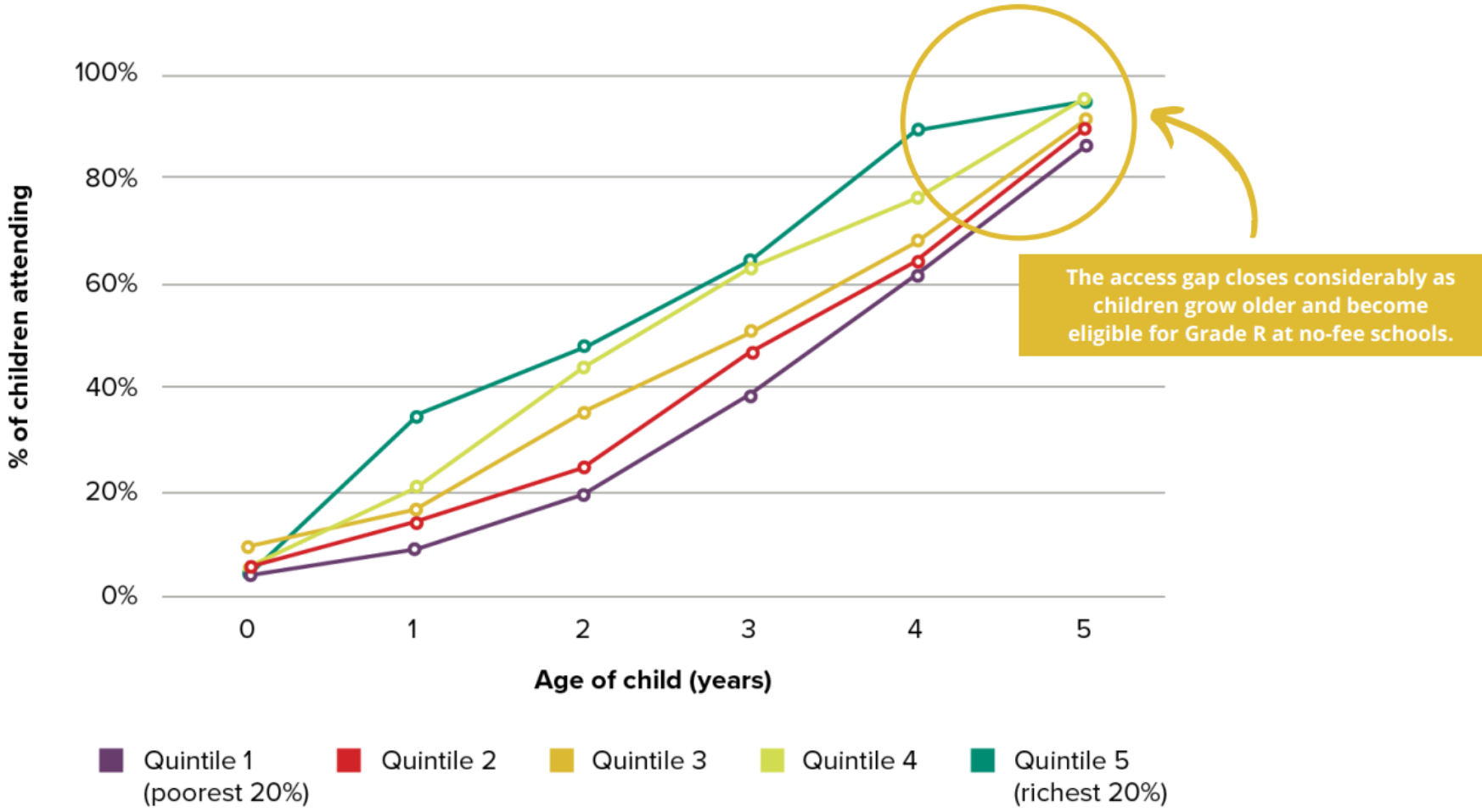
# Access to quality ECD remains highly unequal

**Access:** Children from low-income families 2-3 times less likely to access ECCE than their better off peers.

**Quality:** Only 42% of children enrolled in ECD programmes are developmentally on track.

**Practitioners:** 90% earn less than the minimum wage[2]

FIGURE 23: INEQUALITY IN ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN IN GROUP LEARNING PROGRAMMES



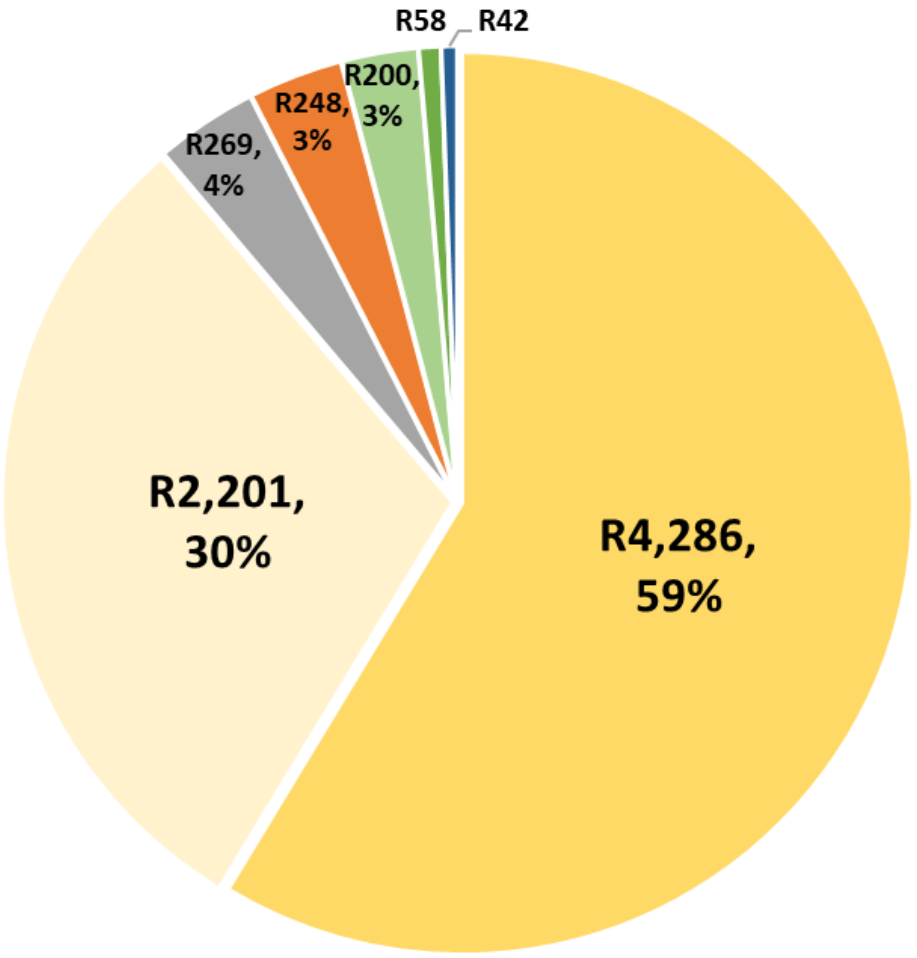

1 Ilifa Labantwana, Early Childhood Review, calculation using Statistics SA (2022). General Household Survey 2022.

2 2024 Thrive by Five.

ilifa labantwana

# Financing for ECD is shared by households and the state

## **Public financing** = R7,4bn

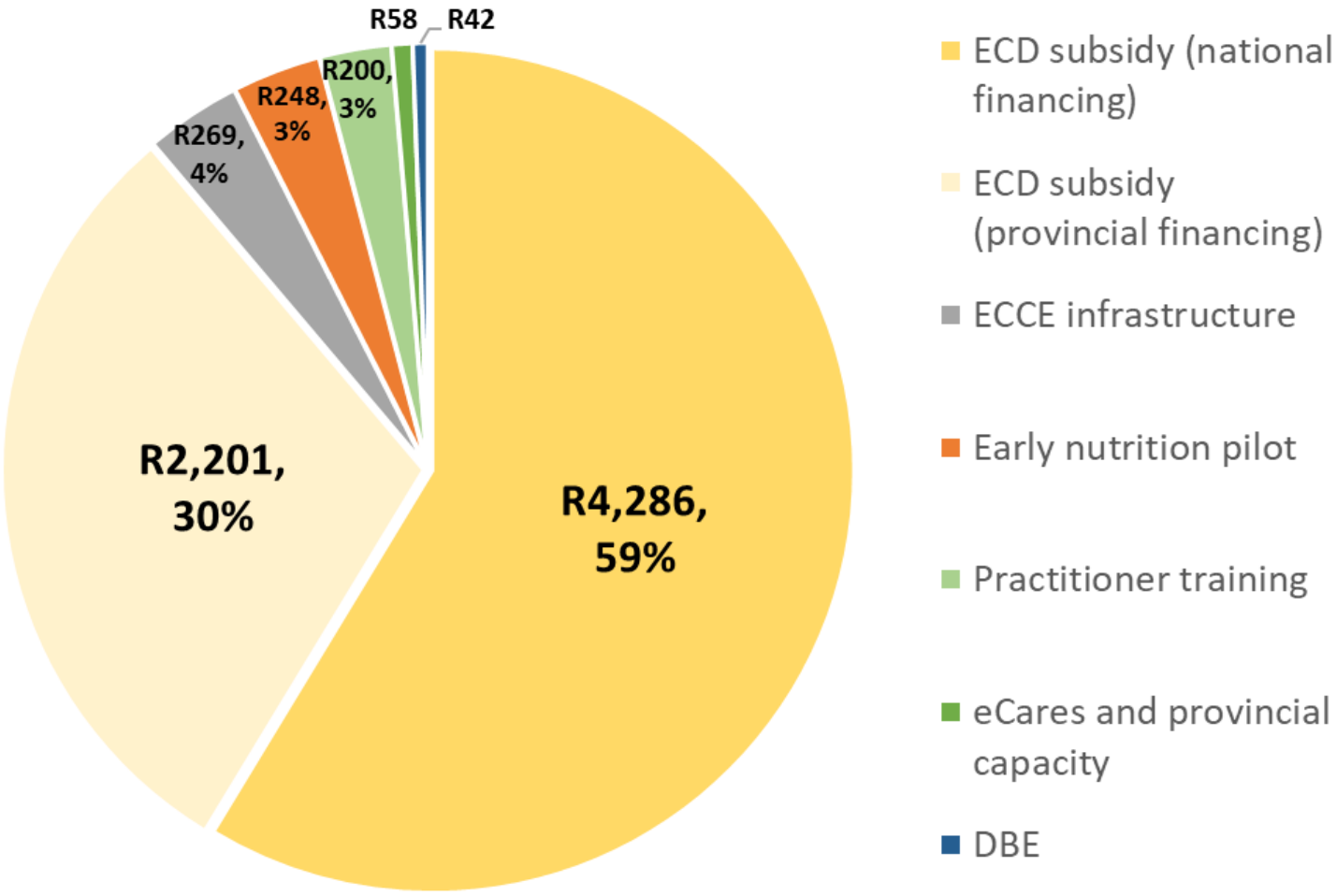



- ECD subsidy (national financing)
- ECD subsidy (provincial financing)
- ECCE infrastructure
- Early nutrition pilot
- Practitioner training
- eCares and provincial capacity
- DBE

Estimates for 2026/27 based on National Treasury (2025-2026) and World Bank data (South Africa Public Institution and Expenditure Review, 2023)

# Financing for ECD is shared by households and the state

## **Public financing** = R7,4bn



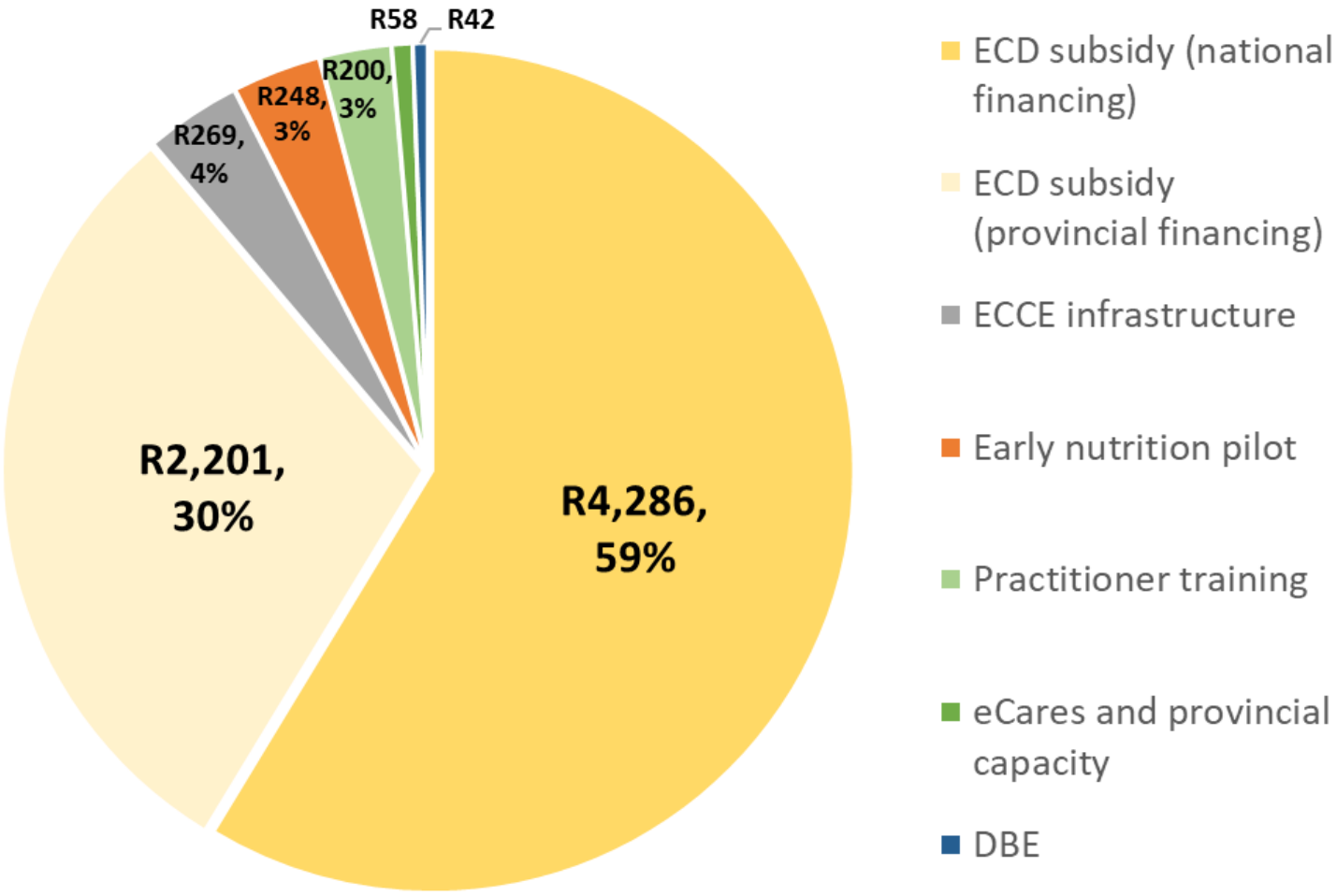

## **Household financing** = **~R17.0bn**

- Families contribute more than double what is provided through the fiscus
- ~R4.5bn is from the poorest two thirds of households

Estimates for 2026/27 based on National Treasury (2025-2026) and World Bank data (South Africa Public Institution and Expenditure Review, 2023)

# Financing for ECD is shared by households and the state

## **Public financing** = R7.4bn




## R7.4bn is only 0.3% of government non-interest expenditure

- But supports
  - ~18,000 ECD programmes
  - ~250,000 practitioners
  - ~900,000 children

Estimates for 2026/27 based on National Treasury (2025-2026) and World Bank data (South Africa Public Institution and Expenditure Review, 2023)

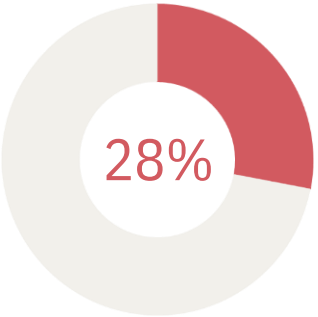
# How the ECD subsidy operates

- Subsidy is provided to registered early learning programmes
- Calculated per enrolled, eligible child, for 264 days per year.
- 2026 value is R24 per child per day (US$1.40 pc/pd / US$R370 per annum)
- ELPs in priority wards fully funded without means testing

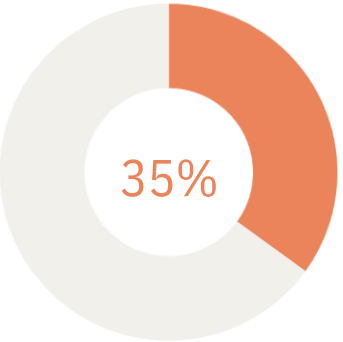
ilifa labantwana

## How the ECD subsidy operates: challenges

- Most ELPs are unregistered
- Most eligible children are not funded
- Fees remain the central barrier to access because subsidy does not cover the cost of provision




of the estimated **60,000** early learning programmes in South Africa are **registered and eligible for state subsidies**




**1 in 3** children from low-income families benefit from **subsidised access** to an ECD programme

**R24**
per child per day

The value of the ECD subsidy is estimated to be **half or less** of what it costs to deliver a quality programme.

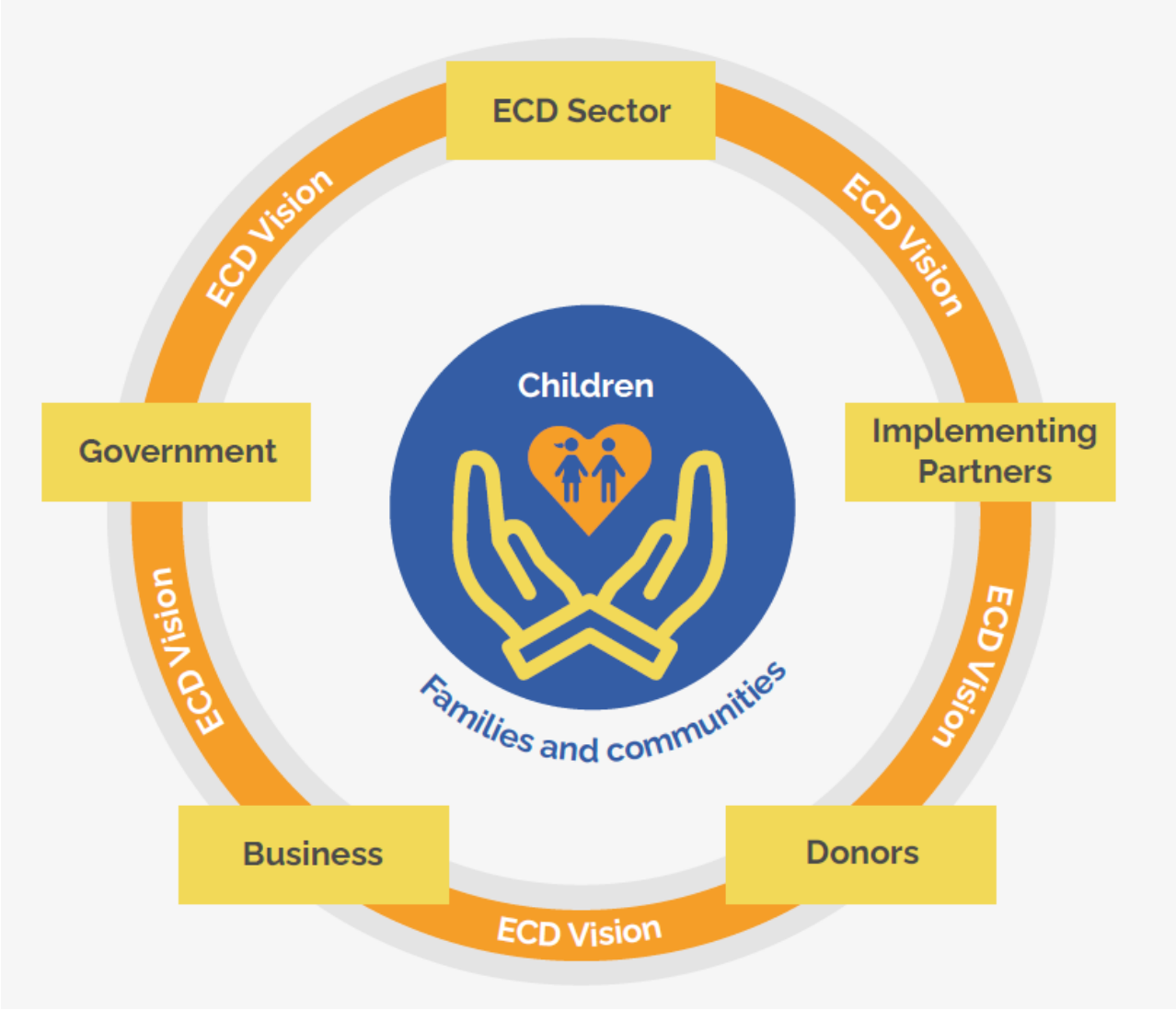
ilifa labantwana

# What is changing?

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – <u>transition to DBE</u>

- In 2022, responsibility for ECD shifted from social development to the **Department of Basic Education (DBE)**
- Prior to this, Constitutional rights and good policies were not translating into meaningful changes in the ECD ecosystem
- As a major **delivery institution**, the transition to DBE created new conditions for progress …



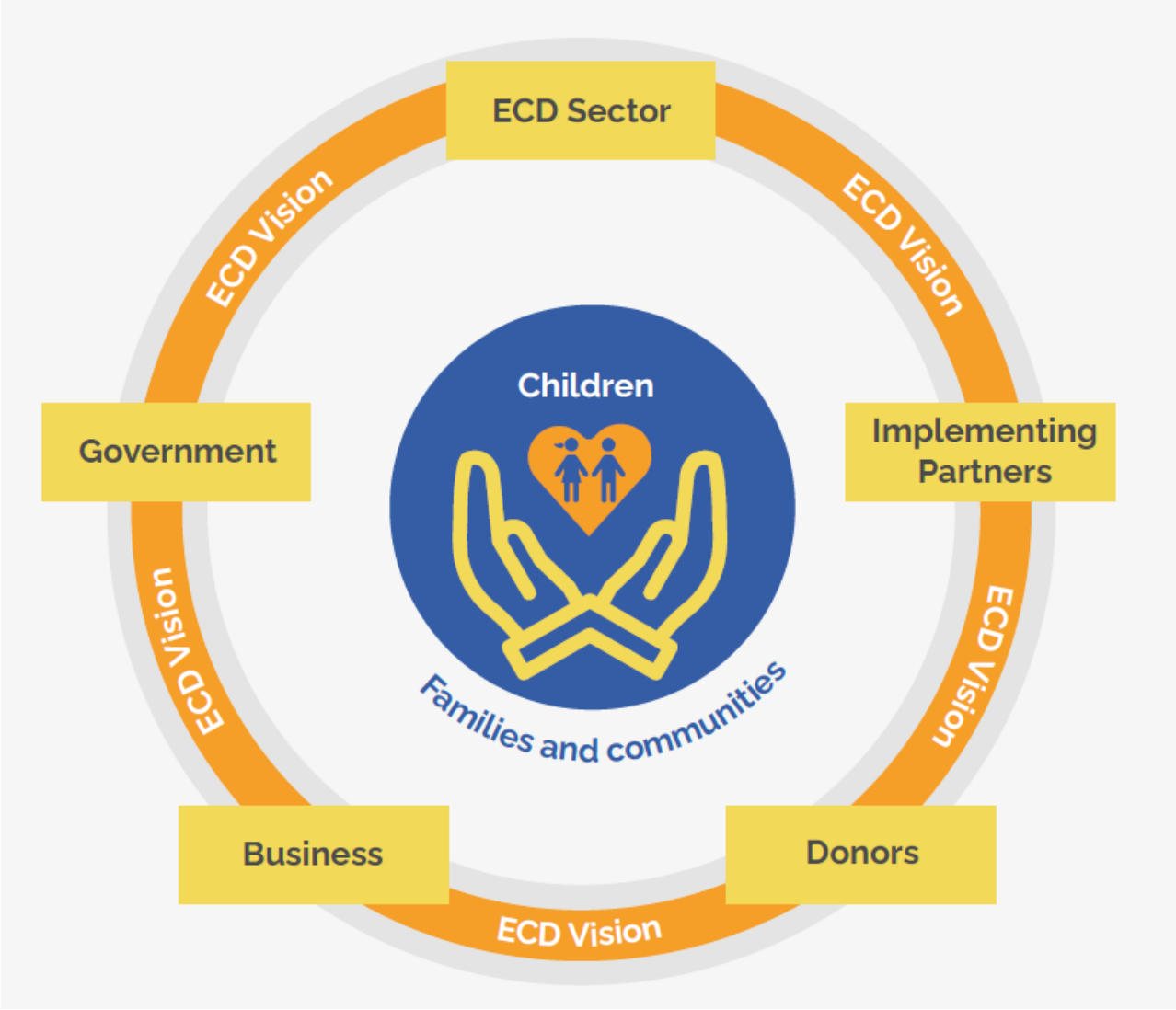

*"A new social compact for ECD" in South Africa's 2030 Strategy for Early Childhood Development Programmes, Department of Basic Education, 2024*

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – transition to DBE

DBE's openness and experience managing the school system has

- significantly enhanced collaboration between government, civil society and philanthropy
- increased political visibility of ECD
- improved the systems capacity and implementation expertise available to the ECD sector



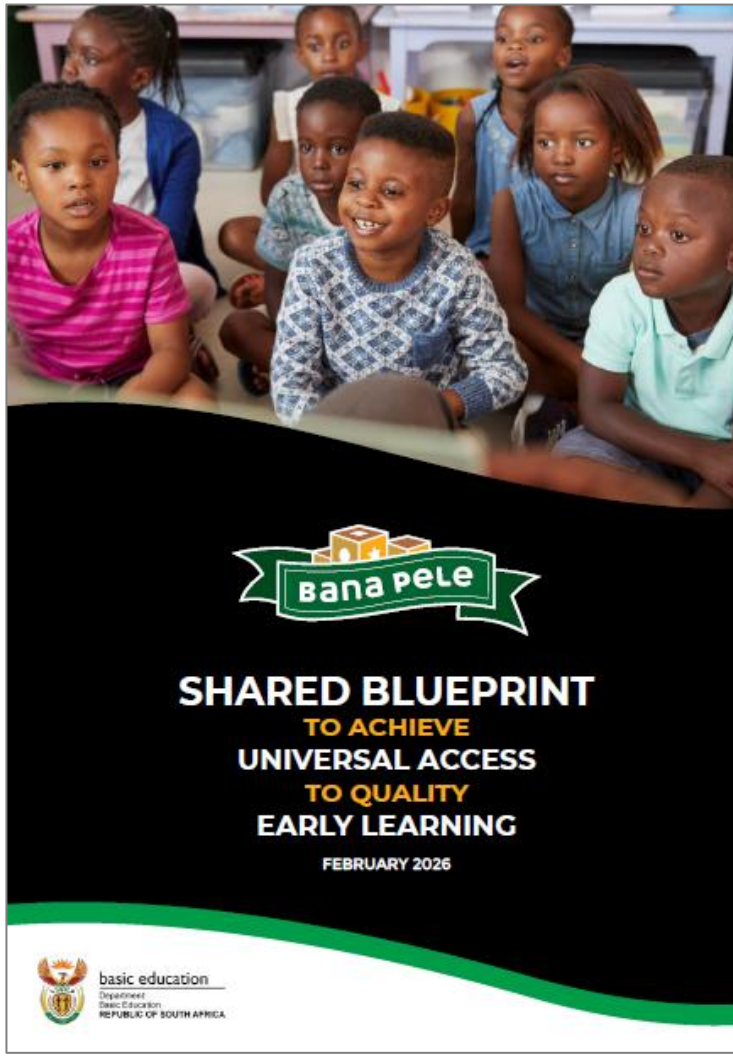

*"A new social compact for ECD" in South Africa's 2030 Strategy for Early Childhood Development Programmes, Department of Basic Education, 2024*

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – transition to DBE

DBE's *2030 Strategy for ECD Programmes* and *Bana Pele Blueprint* are creating a social compact which aims to:

- Support all ECD programmes to register with the state
- Triple access to the ECD subsidy to 2.3 million children
- Increase the subsidy value to ~R40 pc/pd*




ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – enhanced data collection

Several data collection exercises initiated by DBE and by private actors in partnership or with support of DBE:

- **ECD Census** aimed to collect data on every ECD programme operating in SA to begin building a national ECD data management and administration system
- **eCares** (ECD Administration and Reporting System) creates a management information system for ECD, for the first time, enabling a data-informed planning, financing and decision-making
- **Thrive by Five** survey measures quality and outcomes in children attending ECDs

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Baseline Assessment
TECHNICAL REPORT

ECD Census 2021
because children count

eCares
Early Childhood Administration & Reporting System

DATA DRIVE 2030

2024 thrive5
thrive by five | INDEX

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – stronger evidence base

- Research and analysis on where we are, where we could be, and the potential benefits
- **RESEP** working paper series
- **Child Gauge**: ECD special edition
- **Ilifa and Data Drive** webinars, publications

RESEP
Research on Socio-Economic Policy

ilifa labantwana

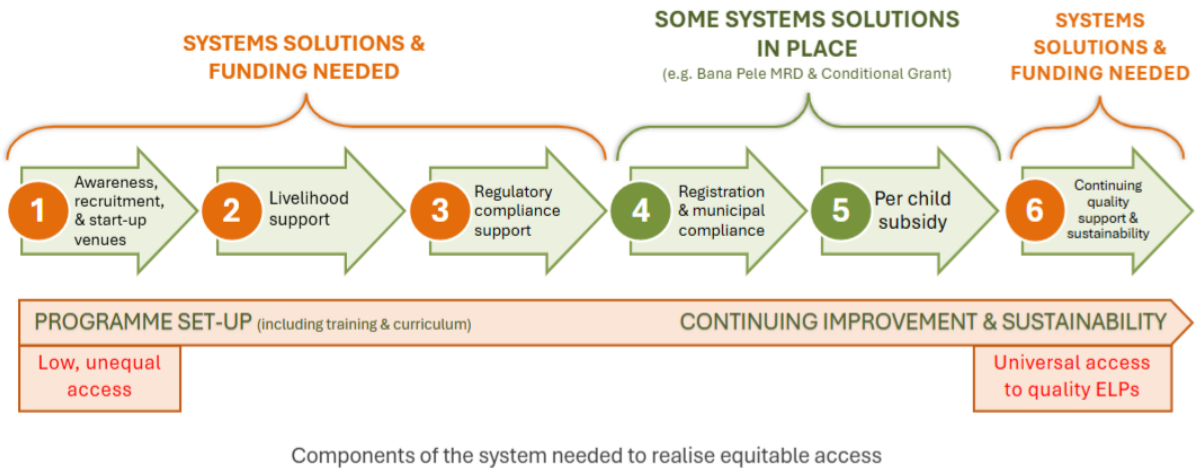
CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

DATA DRIVE 2030

# The momentum shift – ecosystem partnerships that changed what government could see and do

- Frontline/implementation knowledge informing the policy architecture, regulatory framework and delivery design from realities of programmes on the ground.
- A mindset shift toward home & community based ELPs – recognising them as a legitimate, fundable modality.
- A life-cycle lens on what universal access actually requires – financing must support stages of programme establishment through to sustainability.
- Implementation insights on barriers facing ELPs shaping government tools and guidance – including ECD Red Tape Reduction Toolkit.

System gaps in the life-cycle of early learning programmes




Components of the system needed to realise equitable access

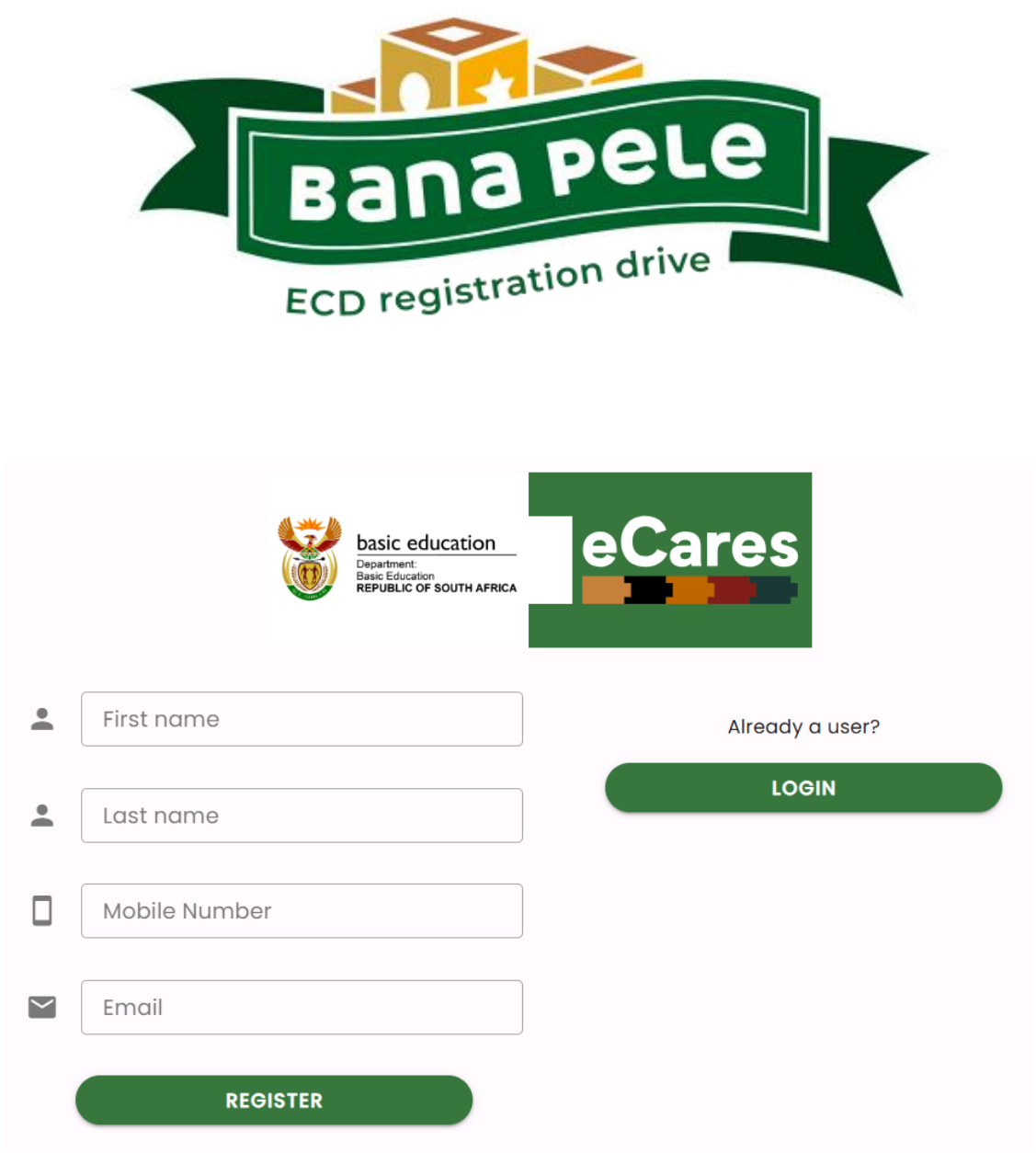
ilifa labantwana

smartstart
GIVING EVERY CHILD THE POWER TO SUCCEED.

# The momentum shift – <u>enhanced collaboration between government, philanthropy and sector</u>

## Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive

- Led by an externally funded Project Management Office that brings together government and private actors to implement policy at scale
- Leverages eCares – itself a public-private collaboration
- 14,500 previously unregistered ELPs brought into “Bronze” registration net
- Fundamentally changing our view of the ECD sector and how it can be supported.



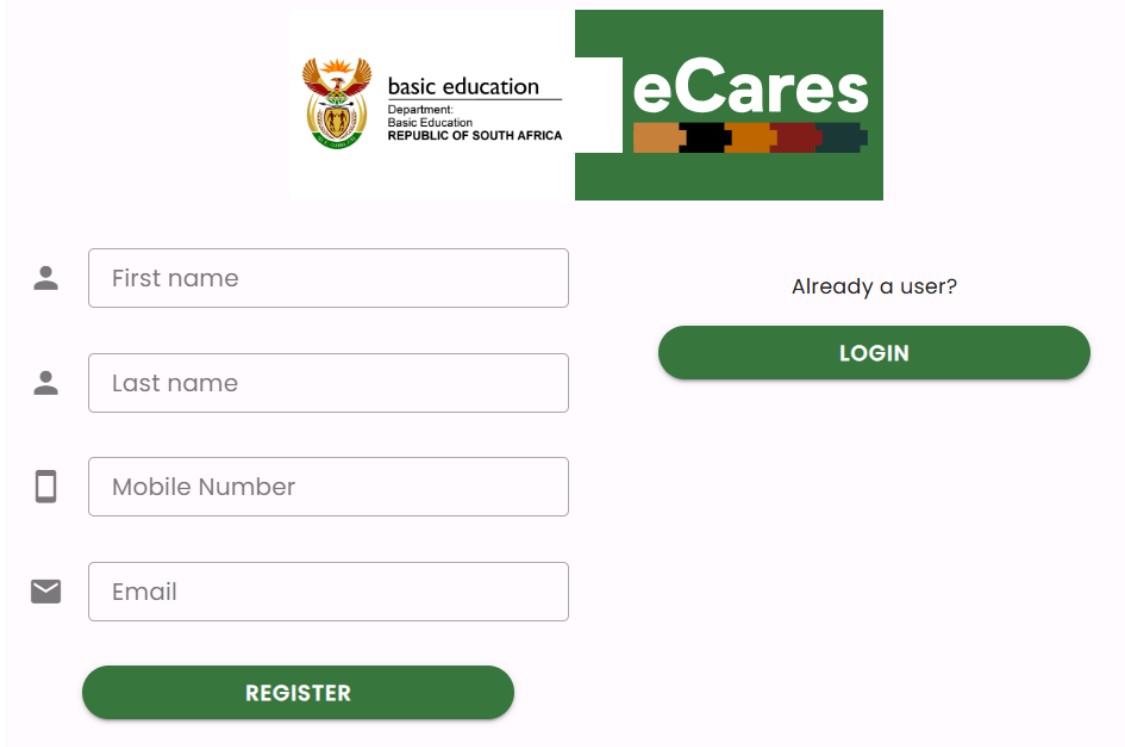

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – <u>enhanced collaboration between government, philanthropy and sector</u>

## Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive

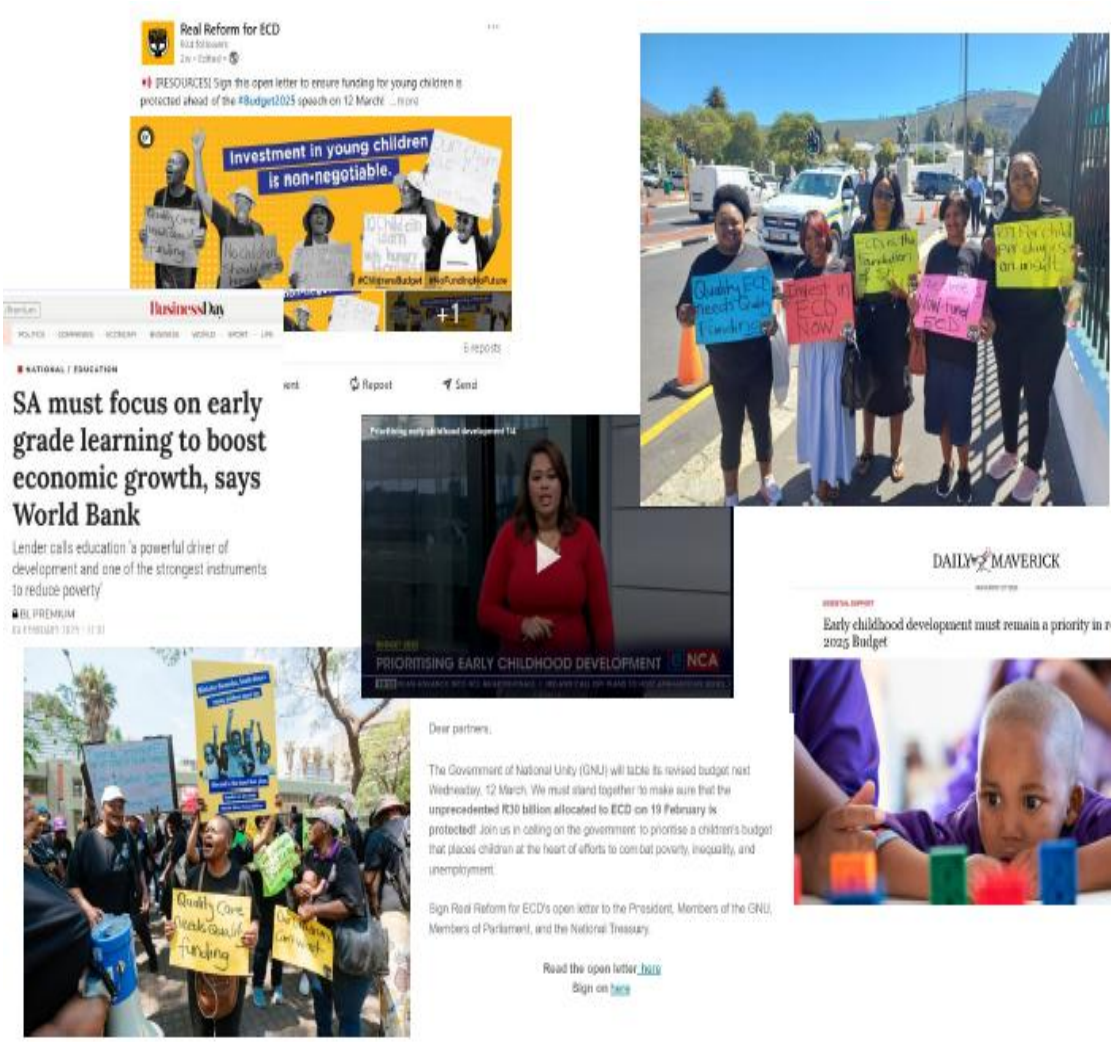
- Challenge now is to shift Bronze ELPs to Silver/Gold registration and support them to access the ECD subsidy
- Health and safety packs
- Compliance Support
- Data driven support optimisation
- Provincial capacity

- And to improve quality, using ELOM tools and Thrive By Five data – also both public-private collaborations



# The momentum shift – heightened advocacy

- **Real Reform 4 ECD** network informing thousands of practitioners of their rights and enabling their engagement in policy and budget advocacy
- Submissions to Parliament
- Protests at DBE, Parliament
- Sustained media engagement



*Launch of Real Reform for ECD's People's Manifesto in Johannesburg.*
*Photo credit: Mlungisi Mlungwana for Real Reform for ECD.*

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – reframing the economic opportunity

- To focus on the economic dividend beyond improving child outcomes and tackling gender inequality
- Directly linking ECD investments to the biggest challenges and top priorities in South Africa: creating jobs, tackling gender inequality and stimulating local economic development.

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ilifa labantwana

smartstart
GIVING EVERY CHILD THE POWER TO SUCCEED.

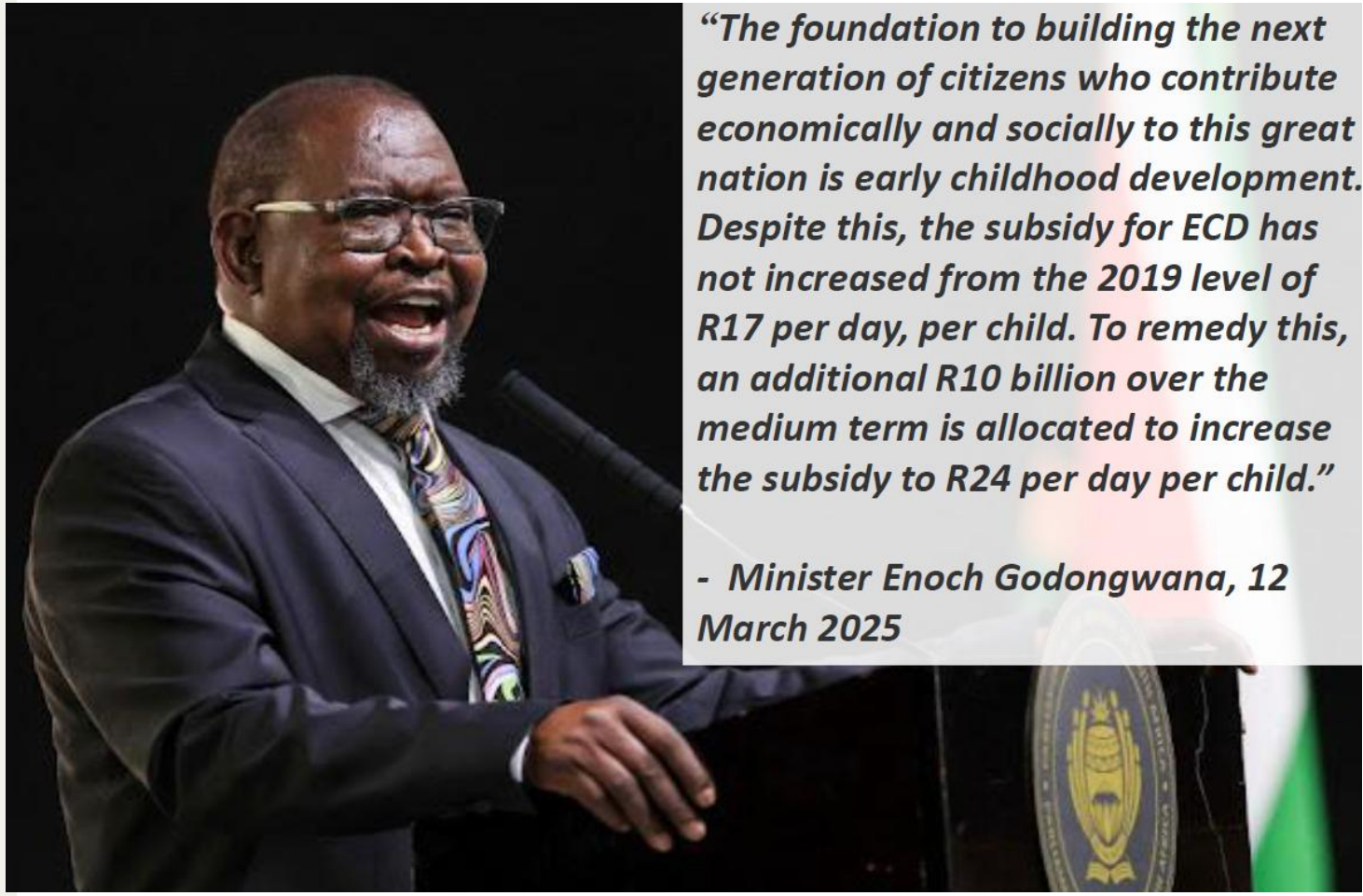
# The momentum shift – <u>political will!</u>

- President spotlighting ECD in successive State of the Nation Addresses
- President spoke of “30 years of regret” for not investing in ECD, at early 2025 ECD Summit
- 2024 Government of National Unity created renewed political energy and accountability
- Minister of Basic Education Siviwe Gwarube prioritises ECD interventions

ilifa labantwana

# The momentum shift – political will!

- **R10bn (US$600mn) new allocation to ECD in 2025 budget**
- Tripling national funding for ECD subsidies
- Increased subsidy value by 41%
- Enabling universal funding: supporting increased access for ~100,000 children in 2026



*"The foundation to building the next generation of citizens who contribute economically and socially to this great nation is early childhood development. Despite this, the subsidy for ECD has not increased from the 2019 level of R17 per day, per child. To remedy this, an additional R10 billion over the medium term is allocated to increase the subsidy to R24 per day per child."*

*- Minister Enoch Godongwana, 12 March 2025*

ilifa labantwana

# Dialogue 3: How can we strengthen the financing architecture for young children?

## Moving from funding to financing.

# Shifts in the Financing Landscape: What New Partnerships Are Emerging?

- **Chair:** Layusa Isa-Odidi, Partner, Dalberg Advisors
- Nelson Mandera, Senior Manager, Housing and Infrastructure Portfolio, Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD)
- Amanda Devercelli, Global Co-Lead for Early Childhood Development, World Bank Group
- Tressa Johnson, Director, Programs, ELMA Philanthropies

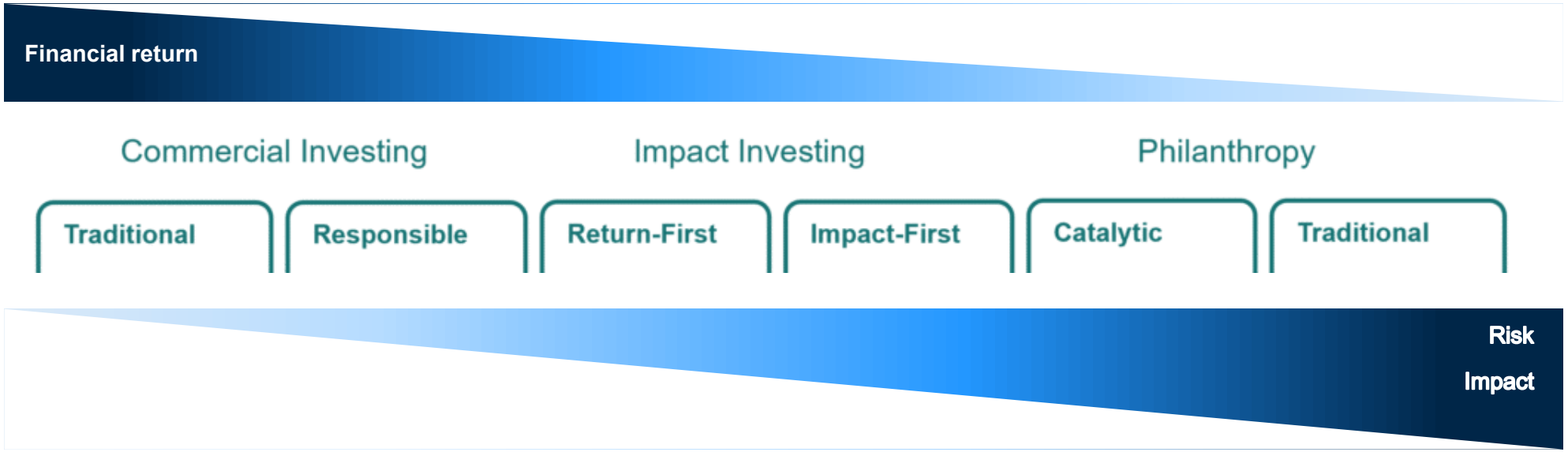
# Leveraging the Continuum of Capital for Young Children

Layusa Isa-Odidi, Dalberg Advisors
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

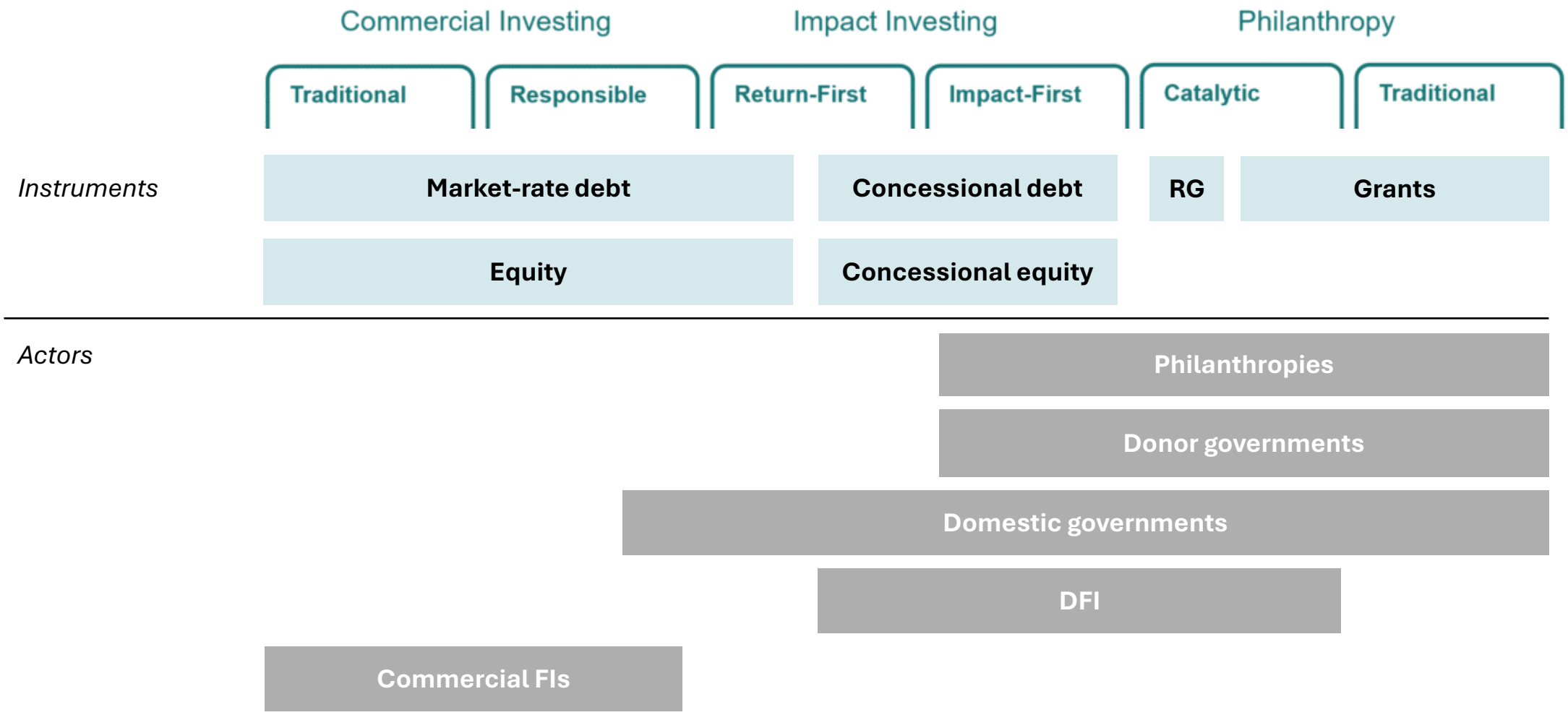
# What is the “continuum of capital”?




Time horizon

Different funding / investment approaches reflect a <u>spectrum of different expectations</u>

# What is the “continuum of capital”?



# What do we mean by ‘leveraging the continuum of capital’?

These can be *structured* or *sequenced* in a way that (i) unlocks capital that would not have otherwise flowed and (ii) bridges a pathway to scale

## STRUCTURING

The **Impact Bond Innovation Fund (IBIF) is a three-year social impact bond** in South Africa aimed at improving ECD in the Western Cape. Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, Future Growth Asset Management, and LGT Venture Philanthropy collectively invested US$540,000. IBIF delivered above market returns during the period, with investors earning, on average, **annual returns of 14%**.

## SEQUENCING (THEORETICAL BUT BASED ON WORK BY)

**Scaling a local daycare network:**

- Grant funding: A philanthropic foundation provides non-repayable grants to help entrepreneurs set up centers
- Concessional finance: Impact investors or DFIs provide low-interest, long-term loans to renovate buildings, purchase materials
- Private equity / microfinance: Once the daycare network has a proven track record, an MFI provides affordable commercial loans for further expansion

# Why does it matter for ECD?

- We need scale!
- We must recognize that in seeking scale, we are solving not just for a lack of capital but also for a mismatch of capital
- This is especially true in a scarce funding and financing context
- The continuum of capital underscores the importance of partnership even as individual institutions increase their contributions

# Investing in Tomorrow: A Review of the World Bank's Early Childhood Portfolio and the Early Learning Partnership

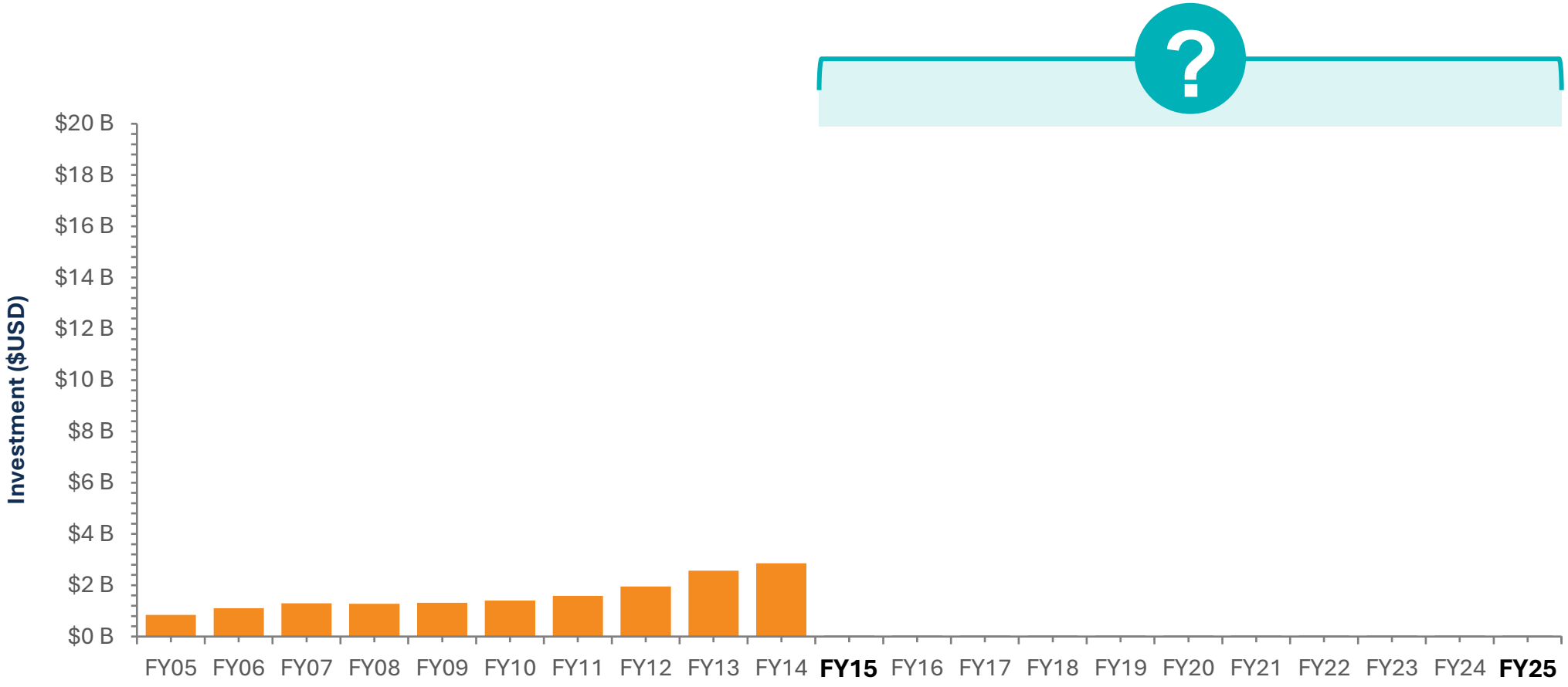
Amanda Devercelli, World Bank Group
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# The evidence on early childhood has been clear for decades….but investment has not followed

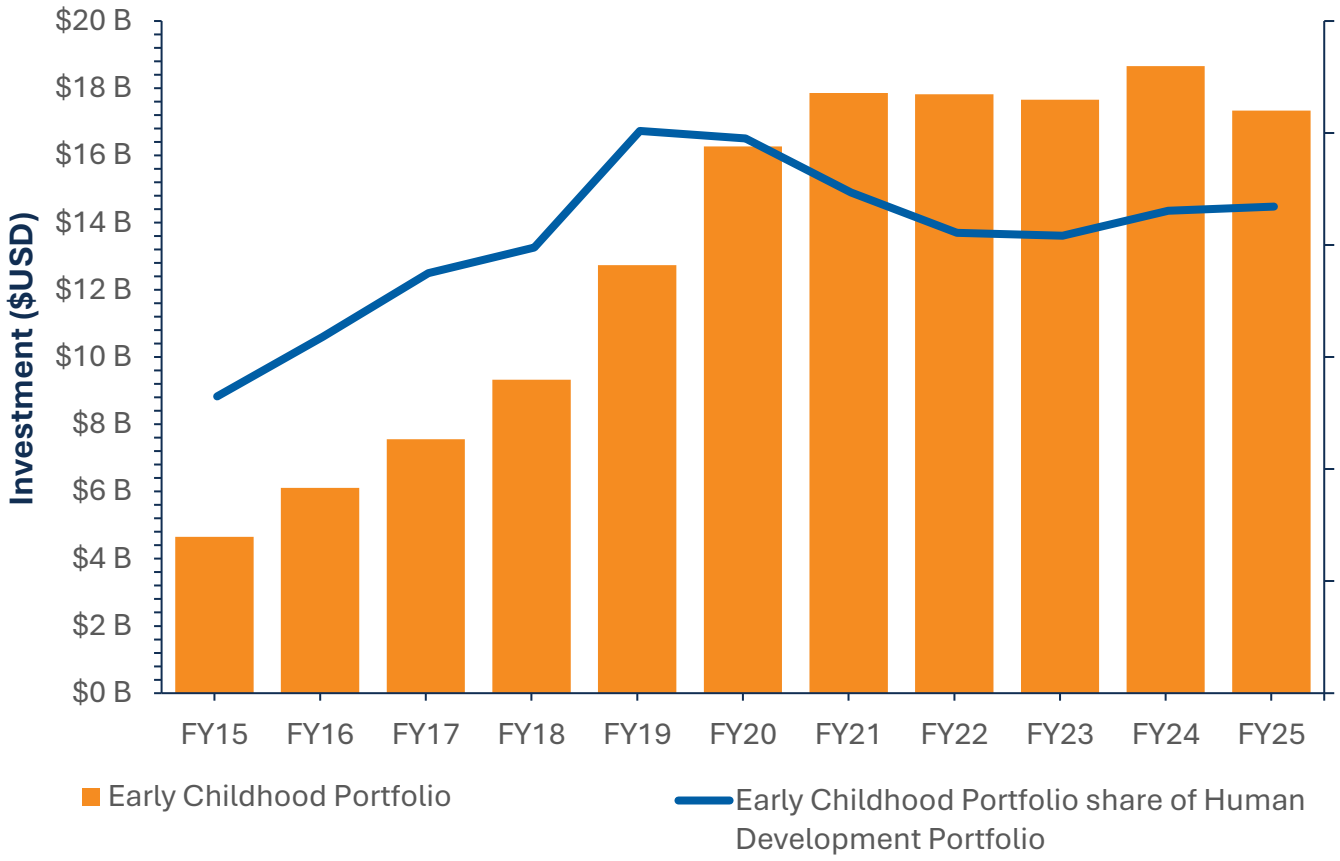
**World Bank financing for Early Childhood Development 2005–2025 ($USD), IDA/IBRD**



# World Bank investments in early childhood have increased substantially over the last decade

## ECD Portfolio grew 4x:

$4.6 billion in 2015 → $17.6 billion in 2025



# A shift from niche to mainstream….

- **2x increase in the percentage of projects including early childhood activities**

  40% in 2015 → 80% in 2025

- **6x in Fragile and Conflict settings**

  $949 million in 2015 → $6 billion in 2025

**A NEW CONSENSUS** in how early childhood is positioned within the World Bank and prioritized in country policies and financing decisions.

# This has translated into large-scale results

**272 million**
**women and children** receiving health and nutrition services

**57 million**
**families** supported with cash transfers and parenting programs

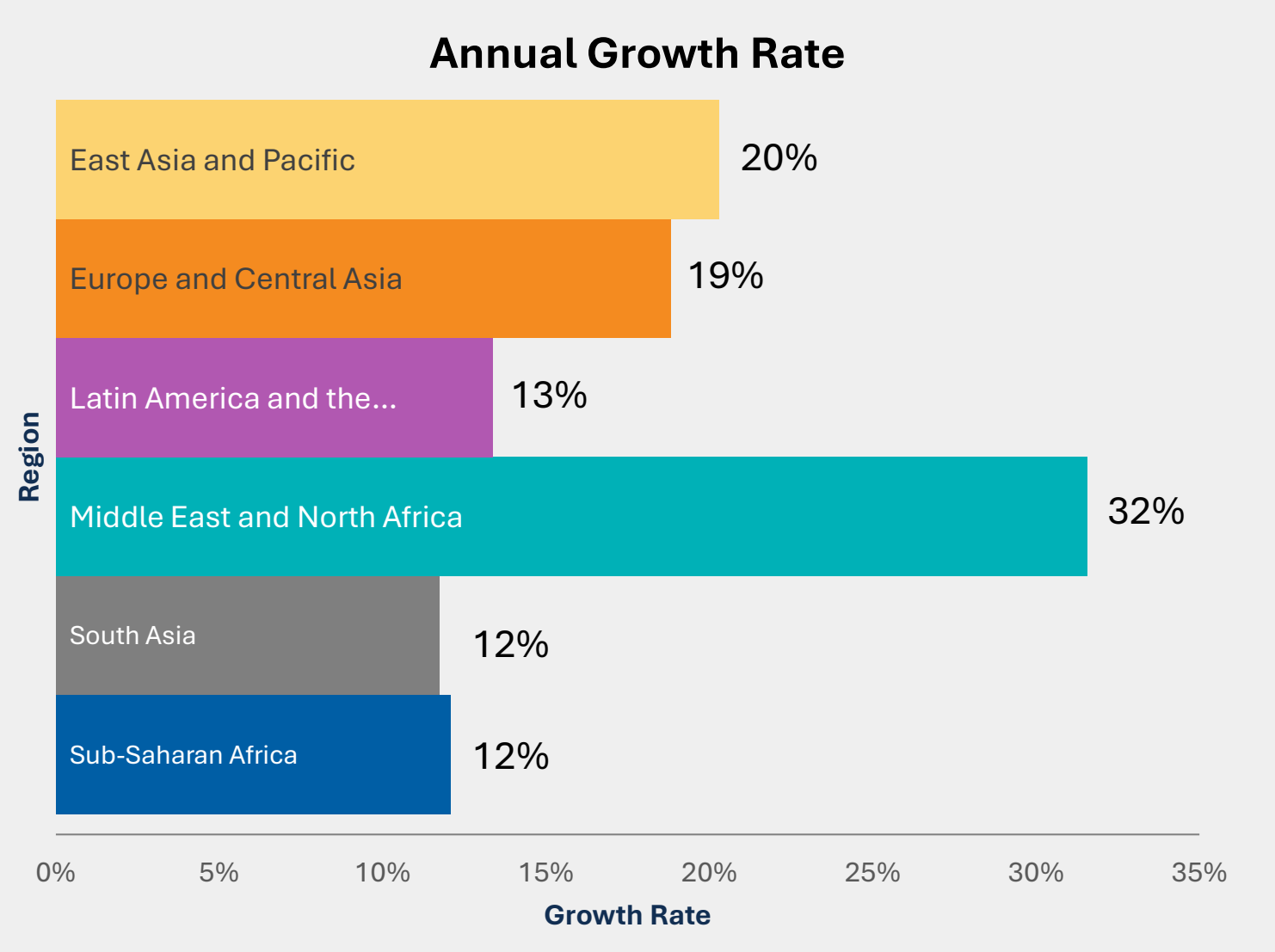
**132 million**
**babies** delivered by trained providers

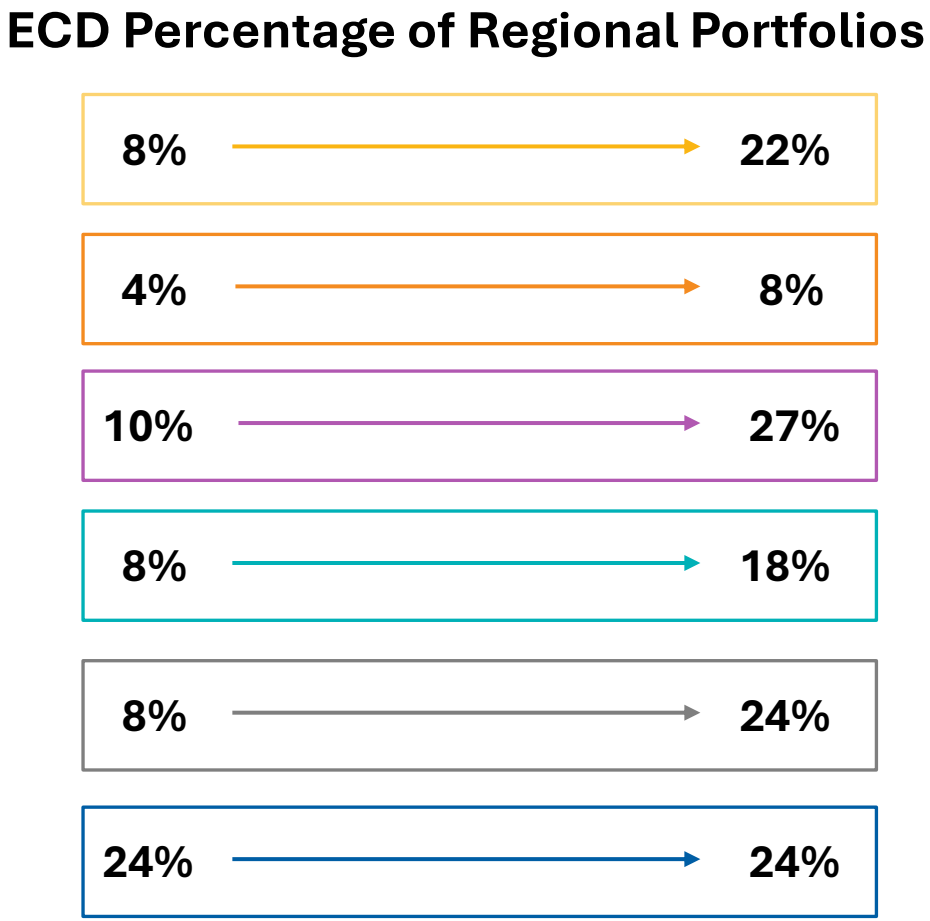
**45 million**
**health care workers** trained in maternal and child nutrition

**34 million**
**children** reached with early learning opportunities

**380,000**
**preschool teachers** trained or recruited

# Strong growth across all regions




*Source: forthcoming review of WBG investments in early childhood*

# The Early Learning Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund

- **Created in 2015** to support countries to scale-up *more and better investments in early childhood*
- **Raised $175 million** from 8 Foundations and 6 Governments

Bernard van Leer FOUNDATION

CIFF CHILDREN'S INVESTMENT FUND FOUNDATION

echidna giving

Gates Foundation

CONRAD N. Hilton FOUNDATION

WILLIAM + FLORA Hewlett Foundation

The LEGO Foundation

PORTICUS

Australia

Canada

Germany

Italy

Switzerland

United Kingdom

ELP EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

# The ELP Model

**We started with the constraints facing countries in 2015.**

| 3 Workstreams | Activities |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCE** | • Small, catalytic grants ($250k)<br>• Matching grants to scale-up childcare for IDA/IBRD (up to $10m) |
| **INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE** | • Distilling evidence and insights and identifying new frontiers<br>• Tools / resources to support teams |
| **CAPACITY BUILDING** | • Internal WB Capacity<br>• Early Years Fellowship<br>• Early Childhood Policy Academy |

**Country implementation**

*From adaptation and innovation to scale*

**Continuously distilling insights from country work to feed into global workstreams**

# ELP impact #s

## $175 million investments

Generated

## $9 billion+ IDA/IBRD/GPE/GFF and domestic finance

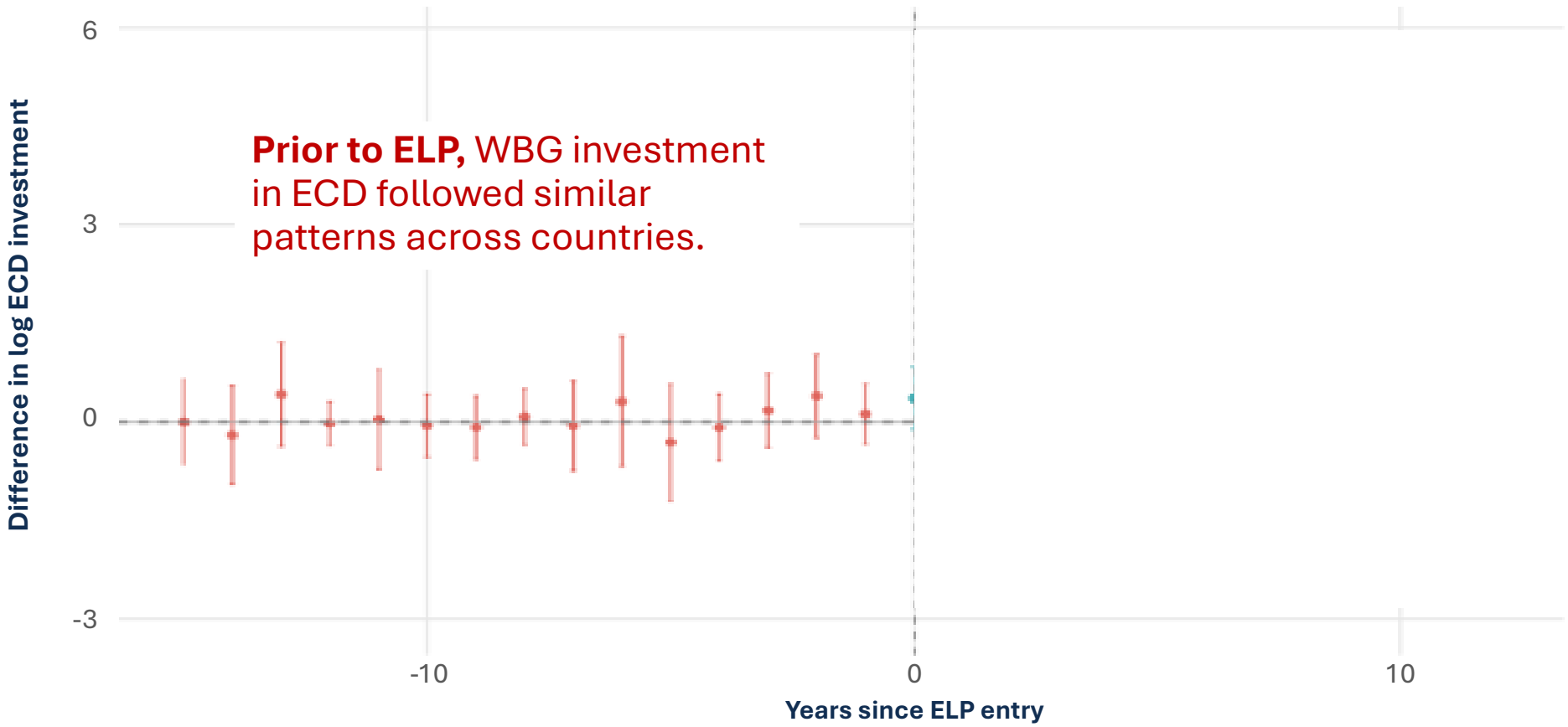
| | |
|---|---|
| 240 | Small catalytic grants |
| 22 | Grants to governments matched by IDA/IBRD |
| 130+ | Products (guidance notes, tools, reports, etc.) |
| 59 | Early Years Fellows recruited to drive change in their home countries |
| 500+ | Policymakers reached with ongoing capacity-building and cross-country sharing |

| | |
|---|---|
| 300 | Operations |
| 98 | Countries |
| 50 | Countries with substantial new policy and finance shifts |

ELP EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

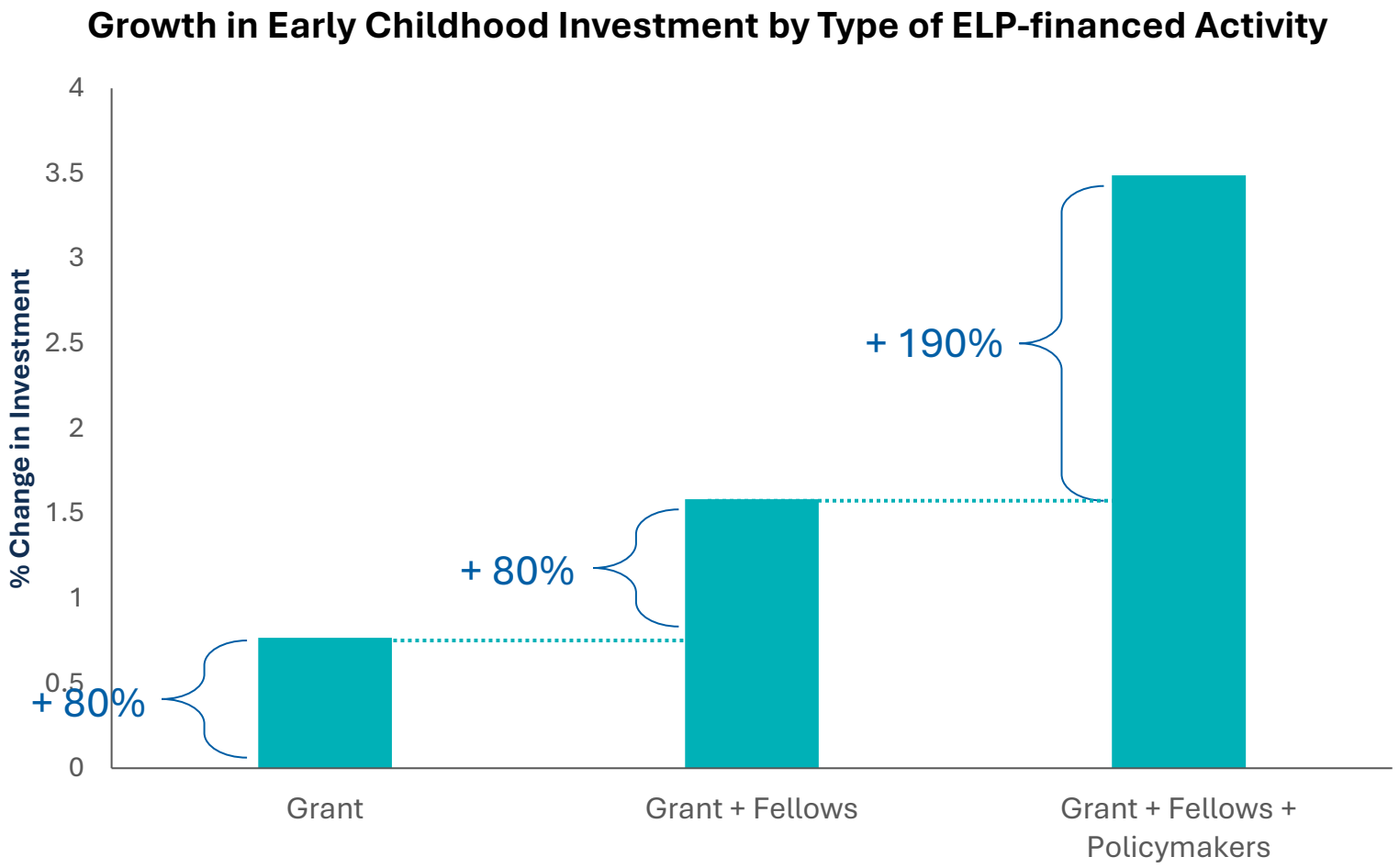
# How has ELP contributed to the growth in the World Bank's ECD portfolio?

**Early Childhood Investment and ELP Participation Over Time**
(Difference between ELP and Non-ELP Countries)




*Note: ELP participation is staggered across countries. This graph's x-axis reflects years relative to each country's initial entry into ELP.*
*Source: forthcoming review of WBG investments in early childhood*

# A powerful combination of finance, knowledge and capacity-building




**Combined 350% increase**

*Note: Point estimates should be interpreted with caution due to data limitations.*

*Source: forthcoming review of WBG investments in early childhood*

# A pathway to impact

**Relatively small, targeted investments and support for knowledge, policy dialogue and capacity building can help countries unlock large-scale financing for early childhood.**

We can do more, even if we have less.

# Tea Break

# Innovative Financing in Action: What Can We Learn from Real Examples?

- **Chair:** Shekufeh Zonji, Global Technical Lead, ECDAN
- Alex Mutua, Program Manager Newborn & Child Health Section, Ministry of Health, Kenya
- Ivelina Borisova, Senior Early Childhood Expert, UNICEF
- Chemba Raghavan, Global Lead, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF
- Angela Rugo, Country Lead, Rwanda Nkuza Neza Program, Education Outcomes Fund
- Ezinne Anyanwu, Head of Partnerships, Africa, Instiglio
- Pacifique Kwizera Irumva, Director, Kumwe Hub, Save the Children International

# Innovative Finance Framing Presentation

Shekufeh Zonji, Global Technical Lead, ECDAN
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# Building the Field: Innovative Finance for ECD

**Co-convened by:** ECDAN | Education Financing Network | Education Outcomes Fund | Brookings Institution

**30+ organizations | 5 sessions | 12 months**

**Session Topics:**

1. Introduction to Innovative Finance for ECD → 2. Blended Finance for ECD → 3. Outcomes-Based Financing for ECD → 4. Learning from Other Sectors → 5. Practical Application

**Partners:** Bilateral agencies (FCDO, GAC, SECO, SDC, USAID); Multilaterals (GPE, OECD, UNICEF); Foundations (British Asian Trust, Bridges Outcomes Partnership, LEGO Foundation, UBS Optimus Foundation); Research (Brookings Institution, NORRAG, Results for Development)

***"The challenge is not capital — it is financeable pathways to scale"***

# What Innovative Finance Is — and What It Isn't

- **It's not about replacing public finance — it's about strengthening it.**
- Every instrument only works if it's anchored in public systems. The goal is to use catalytic and structured capital to unlock and complement what governments are already doing.

- **It's not about subsidizing capital — it's about engineering investment.**
- Blended finance reallocates risk so that capital that wouldn't otherwise move can flow toward children. Catalytic capital absorbs downside risk, improves the return profile, and builds markets.

- **The challenge for ECD is not the lack of capital — it's the lack of financial structures.**
- The returns from investing in young children are massive — but they're long-term, distributed across sectors, and captured by society, not by investors. ECD needs deliberate financial structuring to bridge that gap.

# Innovative Finance for ECD: The Instrument Landscape

- **Domestic Public Finance Innovations**

Social health insurance · Earmarked levies · Budget tagging · Intergovernmental fiscal transfers

- **Results-Based and Outcomes-Linked Instruments**

Outcomes-based financing · Results-based financing · Development impact bonds · Social impact bonds

- **Risk Mitigation and Credit Enhancement**

First-loss guarantees · Credit enhancement facilities · MDB guarantee platforms

- **Capital Mobilization Instruments**

Social bonds · Sustainability-linked bonds · Debt-for-development swaps · Sukuk

- **Market-Building and Provider Financing**

MSME financing · Catalytic and recoverable grant facilities · Co-investment platforms · Aggregation vehicles

***The right instrument depends on what you're financing, who you're financing, and what the system can absorb.***

# Why ECD Is Barely in the Innovative Finance Conversation

## 1. ECD doesn't look like one thing

It's cross-sectoral — health, education, social protection. Investors and DFIs finance sectors, not cross-sector outcomes. There's no single "ECD bond" because the service package spans multiple systems.

## 2. The building blocks aren't in place

Structured finance requires costed service packages, provider registries, outcome metrics, and payment mechanisms. Many countries don't have these yet for ECD.

## 3. The transition question is unresolved

If a pilot has no pathway into public budgets, it's not catalytic — it's temporary.

***"Early childhood cannot survive on goodwill alone."***

# As You Listen — Hold Three Questions

## Track 1: Readiness and Country Criteria

- What had to be true before this instrument could work? And where was the system not ready?

## Track 2: Measurement, Results, and Verification

- How do they verify that outcomes were actually achieved? What does “good enough” measurement look like?

## Track 3: System Integration

- What happens after the pilot? Is this being absorbed into public systems — or does it stay standalone?

# Financing the Systems That Shape the First Years

Chemba Raghavan & Ivelina Borisova, UNICEF
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

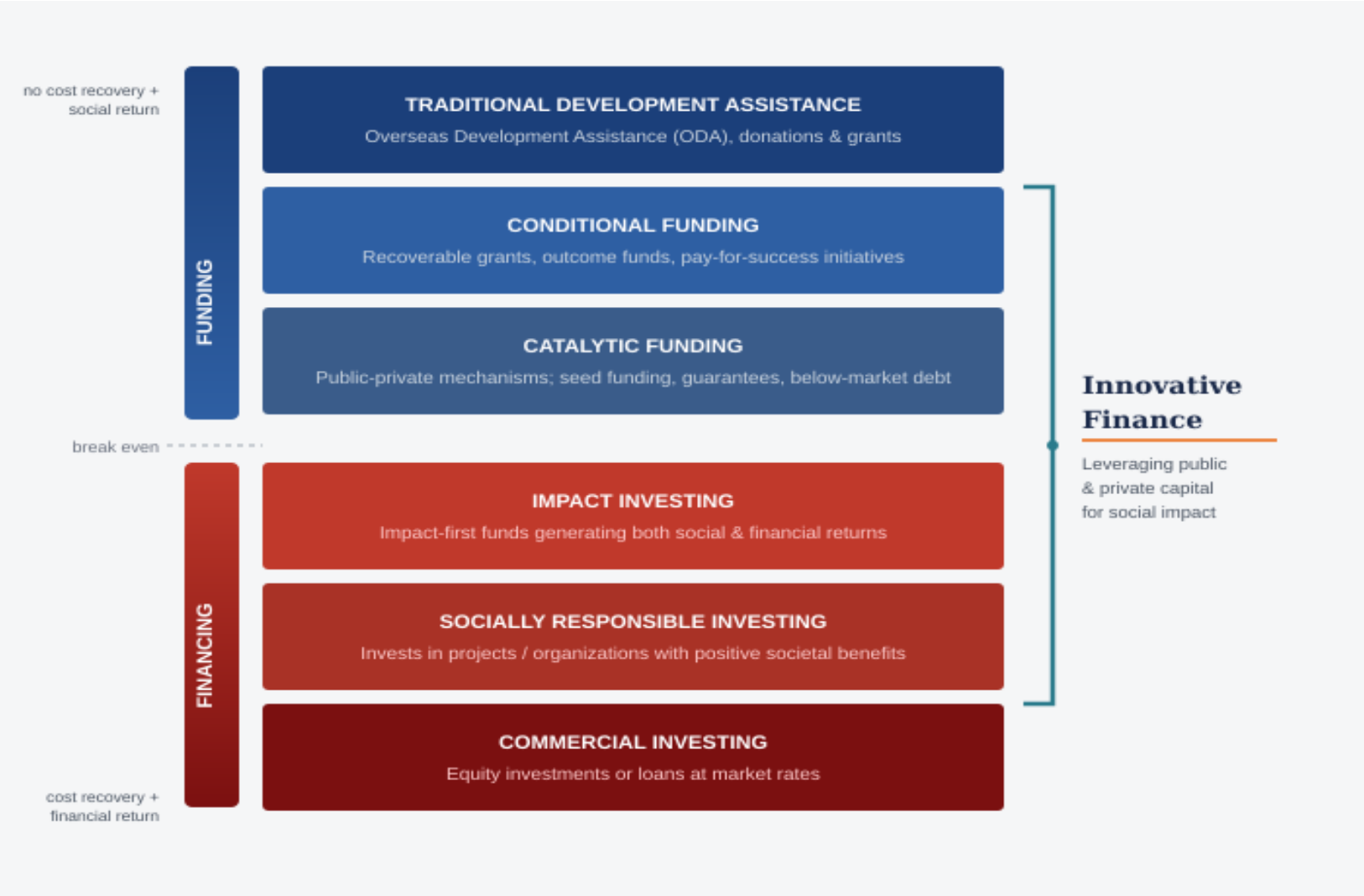
# The changing financial ecosystem

**The Challenge:**
Many Governments are reform ready, but fiscally constrained and seeking new financing solutions
Fragmentation, unclear costs, weak measurement

**The Opportunity:**
Global blended finance is holding steady at $18bn (123 deals in 2024). MDBs mobilized $87.9bn in private capital in 2023 — up 24%. Capital is not the bottleneck: investable, child-focused pipelines are.

**The Considerations:**
Equity: Reaching the most marginalized
Strengthening delivery infrastructure: Investing in systems to deliver cash benefits, parental leave, caregiver support & services at scale

# The Innovative Financing Spectrum




## What this means for ECD

- Core services must remain publicly financed - no financing model changes that obligation
- Catalytic & conditional instruments are most relevant for ECD — where proof-of-concept funding can unlock public budgets
- Impact investing is viable where service delivery generates measurable, verifiable outcomes — e.g. childcare, parenting programmes with clear metrics
- Commercial investing is rarely appropriate for universal ECD services - risk of exclusion and quality erosion is high

# Three-Track Approach to Innovative Finance for ECD

## 01

### Build the Architecture

*Designing instruments that connect policy reform with capital ,where relevant*

- Outcome-based financing linked to verified ECD results
- MSME financing to de-risk expansion of quality non-state providers
- Municipal credit enhancers for childcare infrastructure investment

## 02

### Strengthen National Systems

*Building the readiness conditions that make financing possible*

- Policy and costing diagnostics: what is financeable vs. what must stay public
- Trust infrastructure: provider registries, data systems, payment rails
- Assessment-to-action journeys with 7+ countries in CELFF first-mover cohort
- Building government contracting and monitoring capacity

## 03

### Broker & Convene

*Connecting actors who would not otherwise find each other*

- Convening governments, development banks, private investors, and technical partners
- Designing equity safeguards and quality guardrails into every instrument
- Learning across country cohorts and sharing evidence globally

# CELFF

Childcare & Early Learning Financing Facility

*strategic demonstration case focused on childcare*

Gov't | Technical | Capital

***Not a fund. A vehicle connecting three worlds.***

UNICEF-anchored | First-mover: 7 countries

### Policy reform + financing — together

CELFF doesn't treat financing as separate from governance. Country engagement starts with assessment and policy alignment before any instrument is designed.

### CELFF doesn't replace government spending

It leverages and unlocks it. The $**76B** Barcelona Target gap in ECA alone cannot be filled by CELFF - but it can be the catalytic platform that crowds in the right financing.

### Instruments built for the context

Outcome-based financing, MSME guarantees, municipal credit enhancers, ECEC sukuk — each instrument is matched to readiness, not imposed from the top.

### 7-country first-mover cohort

Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Türkiye — each at different stages of country journey, generating learning across the portfolio.

# Financing pathways to leverage & mobilize resources, leveraging public funding

## Two key approaches to leveraging

### Outcome-based financing

- Leveraging domestic spending in ECEC to unlock outcome payments per pre-defined outcome metrics

### MSME Financing

- Leveraging public finance to de-risk and attract additional sources of financing through loans/guarantees for MSMEs

## More niche approaches

### Municipal ECEC credit enhancer

- Helps municipalities borrow responsibly for childcare infrastructure by improving their credit terms.

### ECEC sukuk

- Mobilizes ethical Islamic investment to fund childcare and early learning infrastructure through Sharia-compliant bonds.

**First mover cohort:**
**Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Türkiye**

# Building on What Exists: The Serbia Case

**Context**

- CAPEX: $521.9M | OPEX gap: $846.6M
- Financing gap ~0.34% of GDP — moderate but regionally unequal
- Government not taking on new sovereign IFI loans
- Strong existing tool: National Development Fund
- Priority: address urban-rural disparity in childcare access

### PPP feasibility study

PPPs could accelerate expansion — but only with clear fiscal frameworks and risk-sharing mechanisms in place. The study revealed the pre-conditions, not a green light.

### Entry via existing mechanisms

The National Development Fund — already established — allows private ECEC providers to access affordable capital without increasing sovereign debt. Build on what works.

### Targeted pairing for equity

Providers matched with high-inequality municipalities for PPPs — using the financing mechanism to explicitly address regional disparity, not just expand supply.

*The Serbia lesson: the financing instrument follows from context — not the other way around. Build on existing architecture, design for equity from the start.*

# Not All Services. Not All Contexts. The Match Matters.

## Five Lessons from the Field

**01**

### Capital is not the constraint — pipeline is

Investors are ready. What's missing is a credible, verified pipeline of investable ECD opportunities with defined outcome metrics and government backing..

**02**

### Equity must be designed in, not added on

IF instruments default toward the 'bankable' — typically less marginalised populations. Deliberate design choices (equity screens, targeted allocation, geographic targeting) are essential from the outset.

**03**

### Instrument-context mismatch is the biggest risk

We've seen instrument-driven design crowd out needs-driven analysis. The question is never 'can we use an impact bond?' but 'is this the right tool, for this service, in this context?'

**04**

### Policy reform and financing must move together

Financing without policy reform creates parallel systems. Policy reform without financing creates unfunded mandates. CELFF's architecture deliberately links both — this is the innovation.

**05**

### Absorption timelines must be built in from Year 1

Every pilot needs a defined trigger for national budget absorption — what outcome, what vehicle, whose ministry. Partners must commit to progressive handover, not open-ended co-financing.

# Quick reference – Innovative Finance Mechanisms

| Mechanism | Description | Leverage Potential | Complexity | Timeline to Launch |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development Impact Bonds | Pay-for-outcomes contracts | 3-5:1 | High | 18-24 months |
| First-Loss Guarantees | Absorb initial investment losses | 5-10:1 | Medium | 12-18 months |
| Debt Swaps | Convert debt to development spending | 1:1 (redirected) | High | 24-36 months |
| Social Bonds | Debt securities for social programs | 5-8:1 | High | 18-24 months |
| Parametric Insurance | Automatic payouts on triggers | 10-15:1 | Medium | 12-18 months |
| Co-Investment Platforms | Joint ventures with corporations | 1-2:1 | Low-Medium | 6-12 months |
| Outcome Funds | Pool funding for verified results | 3-5:1 | Medium-High | 12-18 months |
| AMCs (advance market commitments) | Guaranteed markets for innovations | 5-10:1 | Medium | 18-24 months |

# Innovative Finance Experience in Kenya

Alex Mutua, Ministry of Health Kenya
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# Context – Expanding UHC in Kenya

- **The right to health** is guaranteed in the constitution of Kenya.

- The Government of Kenya decided to implement big **reforms to make significant progress to universal health coverage** (UHC).

- **Main barriers to UHC identified**: Unequal access to health care, many and different schemes under the NHIF providing different benefits to different segments of the population (fragmentation), high out-of-pocket spending (OOPS) leading to impoverishment of households, particularly affecting lower income households.

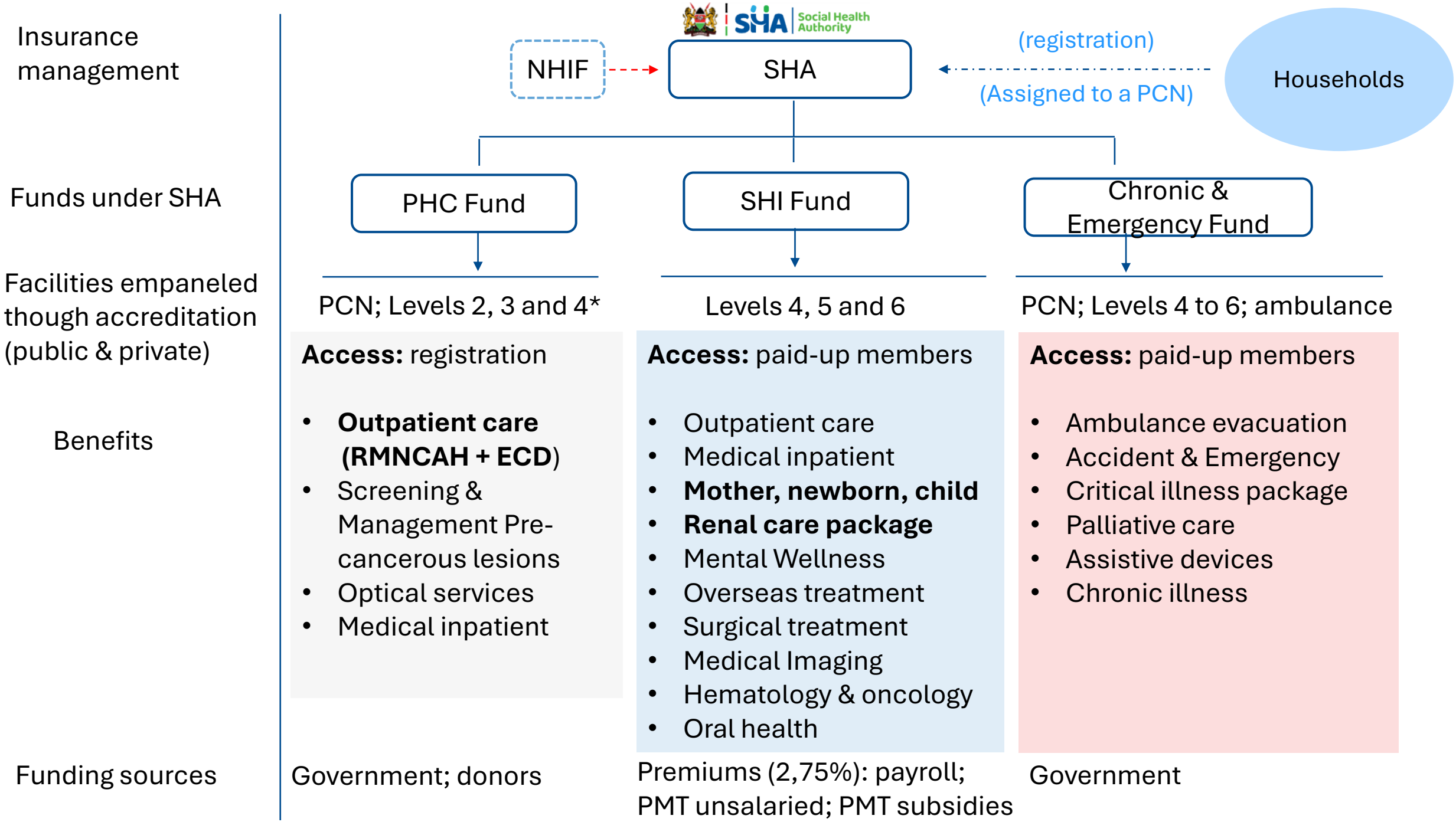
# KENYA 2023 UHC Laws
# Leave No Kenyan Behind

## Holistic Approach – 4 Key UHC Laws

1. **Primary Health Care, act**
   - PCN and CHP networks
2. **Social Health Insurance Fund, act**
   - Social Health Authority
   - Strategic Purchasing to Health Facilities
3. **Facility Improvement Financing, act**
   - PFM reforms – facilities to retain revenues
4. **Digital Health, act**
   - DHA and Full interoperability of Information Systems

## The UHC reforms intend to:

- **Improve access to healthcare services** according to the need (not the capacity to pay)
- **Reduce inequalities to access**
- **Improve the quality and efficiency of the healthcare services**, focusing on PHC approach, adequate and skilled workforce, better management of resources at the Health Facility level, and digitalized information systems – interoperability.
- **Improve financial protection of vulnerable populations**, to avoid delays in care seeking and financial hardship due to utilization of services.


Insurance management
SHA Social Health Authority
NHIF
SHA
(registration)
(Assigned to a PCN)
Households
Funds under SHA
PHC Fund
SHI Fund
Chronic & Emergency Fund
Facilities empaneled though accreditation (public & private)
PCN; Levels 2, 3 and 4*
Levels 4, 5 and 6
PCN; Levels 4 to 6; ambulance
Benefits
Access: registration
• Outpatient care (RMNCAH + ECD)
• Screening & Management Pre-cancerous lesions
• Optical services
• Medical inpatient
Access: paid-up members
• Outpatient care
• Medical inpatient
• Mother, newborn, child
• Renal care package
• Mental Wellness
• Overseas treatment
• Surgical treatment
• Medical Imaging
• Hematology & oncology
• Oral health
Access: paid-up members
• Ambulance evacuation
• Accident & Emergency
• Critical illness package
• Palliative care
• Assistive devices
• Chronic illness
Funding sources
Government; donors
Premiums (2,75%): payroll; PMT unsalaried; PMT subsidies
Government

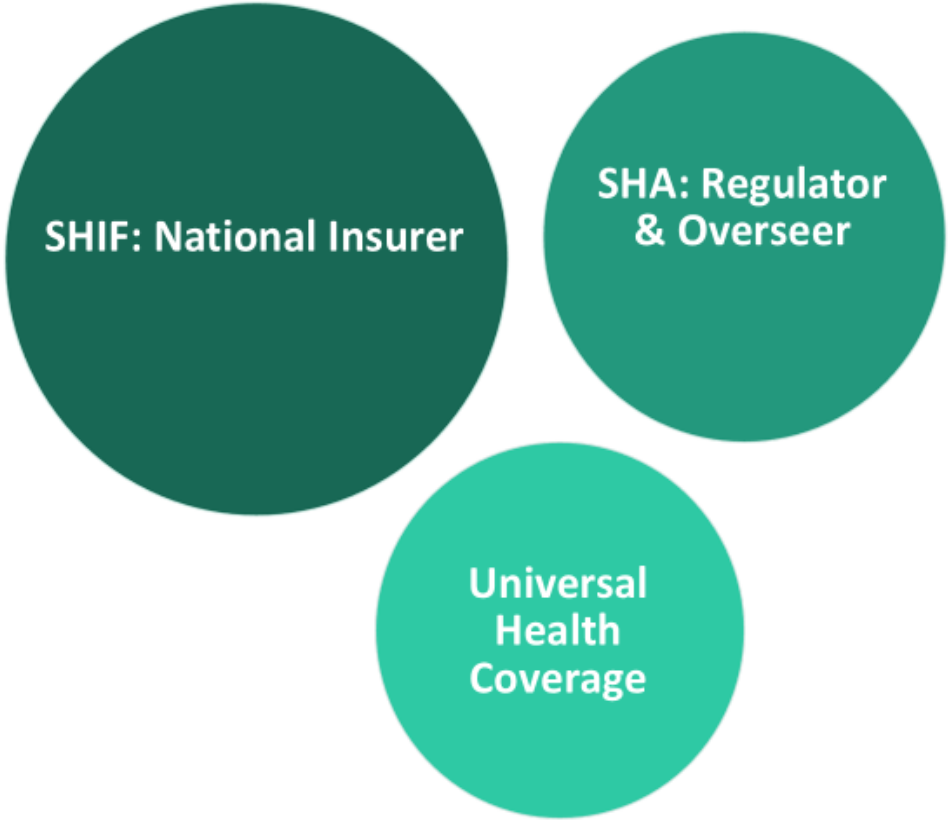
# FACILITY NAME

## LEVEL X PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FUND SERVICE CHARTER

### ALL SERVICES ARE FREE AND FULLY PAID FOR BY SHA

| Service | Cost | Description (Examples of services given) |
|---|---|---|
| Consultation, diagnosis & treatment | FREE | Doctor or nurse checks you, examines you, and prescribes treatment |
| Laboratory tests | FREE | Urine test, blood sugar test, malaria test, pregnancy test among others |
| Radiology services | FREE | Ultrasound |
| Medicines (drugs) | FREE | Painkillers, antibiotics, malaria drugs, diabetes and blood pressure medicine among others |
| Disease screening | FREE | Checking diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV testing, cancer, pregnancy check-up, mental health check up, counselling among other conditions |
| Minor surgical procedures | FREE | Stitching, wound cleaning and dressing, and other procedures done under local anaesthesia |
| Antenatal care (ANC) clinic | FREE | Complete pregnancy check-up including supplements, tetanus injection, health advice for the mother |
| Post-natal care | FREE | Check up for mother and baby, breastfeeding advice, family planning counselling |
| Family planning | FREE | Pills, injections, implants, condoms, family planning advice among other services |
| Immunization | FREE | Polio, measles, BCG, tetanus and other KEPI vaccines |
| Treatment of common illnesses | FREE | Diarrhea, pneumonia, worms, skin infections, stomach infections |
| Treatment of chronic conditions | FREE | TB, diabetes care, high blood pressure treatment, long-term follow-up, |
| HIV & STI services | FREE | HIV testing, counselling, ARVs, STI treatment |
| Referral services | FREE | For further management to other facilities |

## Key Takeaways




SHA and SHIF represent Kenya's commitment to a more transparent, efficient, and equitable national healthcare system — ensuring every Kenyan has access to the care they need.

# Together, They Serve All Kenyans

### Access

Universal coverage for formal, informal, and unemployed citizens

### Efficiency

Streamlined fund management replacing the old NHIF model

### Equity

Affordable, high-quality care across public and private hospitals

# Key Benefits of SHA

# Key Benefits of SHA

SHA delivers affordable, accessible, quality healthcare to all Kenyans — aligned with Universal Health Coverage goals.

### Universal Coverage

Covers all residents regardless of age, income, or status. Registration is automatic.

### Contribution System

Rates based on employment status; minimum Ksh 300/month for informal sector members.

### Comprehensive Benefits

Covers outpatient services, chronic disease management, maternal and child health, and more.

### Cost-Effective

No Kenyan dies or suffers due to inability to afford care — from basic check-ups to life-saving treatments.

### Review & Update

Benefits panel ensures tariffs are evidence-based, equitable, and financially sustainable.

Made with GAMMA

# Thank you

Together, we can unlock financing that will translate evidence into budgets and budgets into services for young children and their families!

# Outcomes Based Financing Model

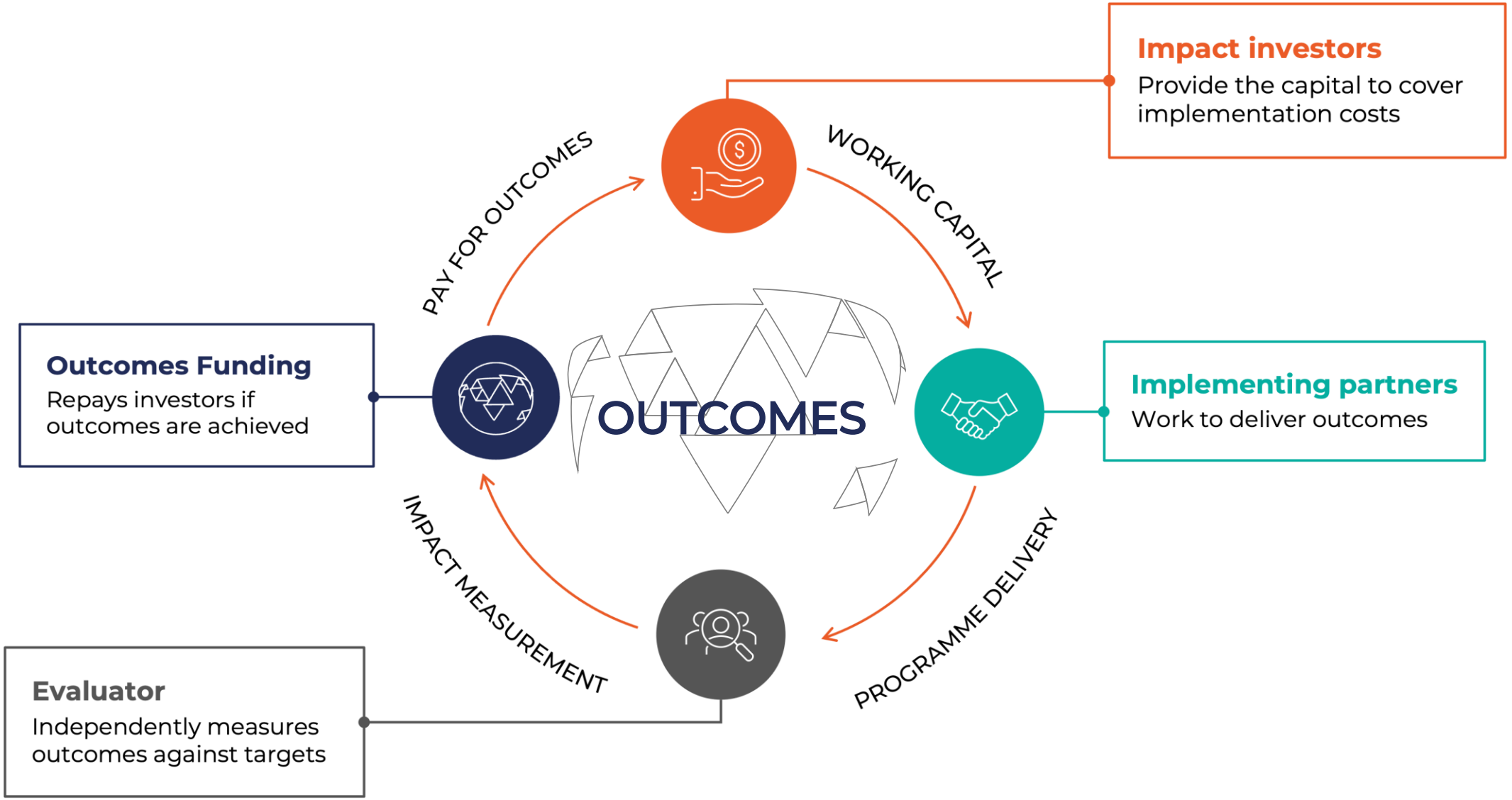
Angela Rugo, Education Outcomes Fund
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

HOW WE WORK

# OBF Mechanism



HOW WE WORK

# Common motivations for adopting OBF

Unlike traditional grants, **OBF focuses on achieving outcomes** rather than funding activities, **shifting accountability** and **aligning incentives around results.**

This gives implementing partners the **flexibility to innovate and adapt** their approaches to programme participants' needs.

### Align incentives
Links policy with payment, focusing on results.

### Promotes partnership
Outcomes funds align diverse partners to maximise impact and shared value.

### Flexibility in delivery
Adapts to complexity and encourages new ideas.

### User-centred design
Encourages tailored, localised approaches.

### Risk transfer
Shifts risk of failure to pre-financers (typically impact investors).

### Data rich systems
Builds strong monitoring and learning frameworks.

### Targets priority groups
Create additional incentives to support priority groups where barriers are greater.

### Cultural shift
Changes language and mindset around service delivery.

### Paying for what works
Government and funders pay only for verified outcomes, not activities.

CASE STUDY

# *Nkuza Neza* ('Help Me Grow') at a glance

## Rwanda ECCE Outcomes Fund

| | |
|---|---|
| **OBJECTIVES** | Enhance the quality of community-based pre-primary centres across Rwanda, especially for children with disabilities, to bridge the gap between formal and informal sectors. |
| **INDICATORS** | ↑ Process Quality<br>↑ Structural Quality<br>↑ Holistic child development outcomes<br>(X2 Premium for Children With Disabilities) |
| **GEOGRAPHY** | Nation-wide with a total of 3 lots |
| **DURATION** | 2025-2029 |
| **FUND SIZE** | **$12.6M** |
| **PARTICIPANTS** | 25,000 3-5-year-old children across 390 centres |

### Partners

Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Education

NCDA National Child Development Agency

The LEGO Foundation

### Service Providers

Save the Children

Help a Child Rwanda

PLAN International

Caritas

African Enterprise Rwanda Office

### Investor

Bridges Outcomes Partnerships

*ECCE = Early Childhood Care & Education*

# INNOVATIVE FINANCING SESSION
# What made these models work — or struggle?

01 ASSESS SUITABILITY FIRST

## Before design, get the conditions right

- A **theory of change** maps what success looks like, aligning everyone around a shared vision.
- A **feasibility assessment** checks whether the conditions exist: sufficient funding, a viable procurement pathway, government commitment to co-design, provider capacity, and data.

02 BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THAT HOLD

## Trust is load-bearing, not optional

- Government, providers, investors, evaluators - **everyone needs to know everyone's role**.
- EOF's work is **balancing ambition with feasibility** through constant dialogue: testing, validating, and being willing to change course when the design meets reality.

03 DESIGN FOR SIMPLICITY & CHANGE

## Clear logic. Built-in flexibility.

- Every design choice affects another.
- **Simplicity:** keep the logic, incentives, and payment mechanisms as clear as possible.
- And **plan for change** - the design will meet reality, and something will always need to adapt.

# Making Innovative Finance Work in Practice: ECD in Colombia

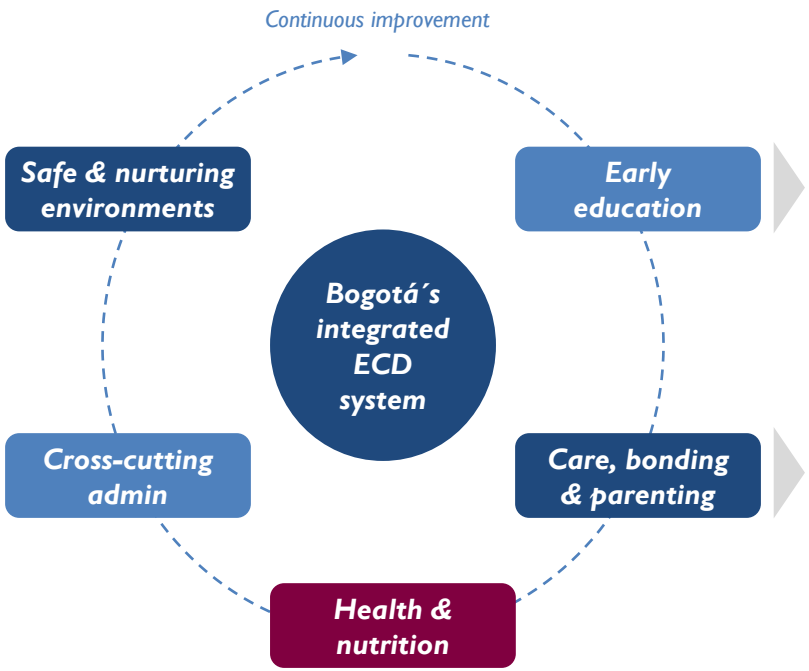
Ezinne, Anyanwu, Instiglio
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# ECD service provision in Bogotá, Colombia

## Incentivizing service quality through RBF, and redesigning Creciendo Juntos to better address the populations 'needs.




**Pilot 1: RBF in ECD centers**

- **12 centres 8 service providers**
- **≈ 2.400 girls and boys**
- **≈ $2,55 million USD for implementation**
- **Payment metrics in attendance and quality**
- **Funds tied to results are a risk-free bonus**

**RBF pilot results**

**+80%** of the kids reached the continuous attendance goal

**1st time** Building evidence on quality

**Pilot 2: Creciendo Juntos**

**Higher frequency & continuity**
More frequent sessions, complemented with remote follow-up where needed, to deepen and sustain the accompaniment.

**Differentiated care pathways**
Distinct components and emphasis for pregnant women, children 0-2, and families, recognizing each life stage requires a different response.

**Introduces a livelihoods axis for the first time**
Not paying caregivers to bring children to school but connecting them to formal employment pathways and income-generating activities.

### *Challenges*

***570,000 children, only 300,000*** *are served by public or private providers.*

***Average attendance continuity is below 70%*** *across the system.*

***Lack of information*** *regarding service quality.*

***Current models*** *do not fully respond to families needs.*

***Achieving*** *ECD and livelihood outcomes requires and integrated approach.*

# What this case reveals about making innovative financing work in practice in public systems

RBF is serving as a magnifying glass to evidence institutional challenges at the programmatic and systemic level.

***Build the systems that can measure and deliver outcomes***

### Information systems

Reliability gaps surfaced between physical attendance lists and system records, prompting stronger data collection processes.

### Organisation alignment

Improved alignment across technical, contracting, and financial teams, even on basic definitions (e.g., attendance vs. enrolment).

### Supervision processes

Moving beyond compliance checks toward capacity building to improve service quality and ensure data reliability.

### Enabling environment for providers

Some implementers declined participation despite RBF being a risk-free bonus, due to perceived heavy supervision burdens.

## Governments need to be in the driving seat

1. **Government-led co-design:** Solutions designed with the government, not for it, building ownership and institutional buy-in.
2. **Continuous engagement:** Sustained support across deployment, iteration, and scale-up phases makes a measurable difference.
3. **Institutional capacity strengthening:** Beyond delivering results, strengthening the government's capacity to sustain results over time.

# Lessons Learned from Kumwe Hub

Pacifique Kwizera Irumva, Kumwe Hub, Save the Children International
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

*Angel ran a childcare centre with only 3 rooms.*

*About 70 children arrived every morning.*

*Ever since she started in 2022, she had never received business training, never accessed a loan, and did no have pathway to grow.*

# She doesn’t need charity.
# She needs capability, capital, and belief.

KUMWE HUB
Part of
Save the Children

# Capital Ladder

STAGE 1

## Catalytic Grants

Non-recoverable
Absorbs early-stage risk

**The missing layer**

→

STAGE 2

## Recoverable Grants

Repaid on structured timeline

Recovered capital funds the next entrepreneur

→

STAGE 3

## Concessional Loans

Below-market rate
Builds formal credit history

**90%+ repayment**

→

STAGE 4

## External Capital

Impact investors, DFIs, local banks

***Kumwe feeds the pipeline. It doesn't compete with it.***

# Results to Date | Rwanda Portfolio Since 2022

**$1M+**
Catalytic capital deployed

**150+**
Enterprises created or strengthened

**50,000+**
Children reached

**+73%**
Avg revenue growth per enterprise

**90%+**
Repayment rate after 3 years

**120+**
New jobs created

***Results span urban neighbourhoods, rural communities, and refugee camps. Over 70% of ECD caregivers received formal training for the first time through Kumwe Hub.***

KUMWE HUB
Part of
Save the Children

# +38%

enrollment growth
in one term

*Ireme Academy, Rwanda · $2,784 recoverable grant · NESA accreditation achieved*

**69 children on day one.**

**95 by end of term.**

*$184 per term in structured repayments is already underway.*

*When we invest in Angel, we are not only improving one center. We are strengthening children's futures, women's economic power, and national development*

KUMWE HUB
Part of
Save the Children

# 108%

increase in weekly income
for refugee women

*Mahama Camp, Rwanda · 144 children · 100% refugee-led · <$50K catalytic grant*

**117 women now engaged in income activities.**

**4+ additional hours freed every day.**

*Expanding across all refugee camps in Rwanda.*
*Launching in Dadaab, Kenya.*

KUMWE HUB
Part of
Save the Children

Lesson 1

# Finance must follow quality, not precede it.

Lesson 2

# Recovered capital funds the next entrepreneur.

Lesson 3

# Make invisible markets legible to capital.

**“Capital alone does not transform systems.**

**Capital paired with capability does.”**

KUMWE HUB
Part of
Save the Children

# Thank you

Together, we can unlock financing that will translate evidence into budgets and budgets into services for young children and their families!

# Dialogue 3 Track 1: Readiness and Country Criteria (Simba ballroom)

- **Focus:** What are the enabling conditions for investments?
  - How are the incentives and investment strategies of DFIs, philanthropy, and private actors changing relative to financing for young children?
  - What can these different actors realistically contribute, and what are the limits of their capital?
  - What are the optimal partnership models and conditions needed for these relationships to support public priorities, systems building, and long-term sustainability?
- **Chair:** Priyanka Upreti, Evidence Hub Manager, Global Schools Forum
- **Framing:** Katie Brauer, Senior Project Leader, Open Capital
- **Discussants:**
  - Eunice Fedha, Director Resource Mobilization and Partnerships, Council of Governors, Kenya
  - Kwabena Bempah Tandoh, Thrive Country Manager – Ghana, Co-Principal Investigator – Ghana, Oxford Policy Management
  - Jessica Harrison Fullerton, Managing Director of the Strategy and Build team, Global Development Incubator
  - Jessica Brown, Co-Founder, Early Years Impact Center
- **Rapporteur:** Elaine Wacuka Hurt, Director Policy & Partnerships, Kidogo Early Years

# Dialogue 3 Track 2: Measurements, Results, and Verification (Kinigi 1st floor)

- **Focus:** What is the minimum data and verification needed to support financing instruments such as contracts, subsidies, guarantees, or results-based payments?
  - What is the minimum data and verification needed to support financing instruments such as contracts, subsidies, guarantees, or results-based payments?
  - How can accountability and verification systems be designed so they are credible and practical, without overwhelming governments or excluding smaller providers?
  - What underlying systems—such as provider registries, payment rails, quality assurance, and grievance mechanisms—need to be built to support transparency and trust?
- **Chair & Framing:** Emily Gustaffson-Wright, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- **Discussants:**
  - Simone Carter, Financial Director, DataDrive2030
  - Jane Aik, Senior Director, Education Financial Products, Opportunity International
  - Grace Malthape, Executive Director, SmartStart
  - Angela Rugo, Country Lead Rwanda, Education Outcomes Fund
- **Rapporteur:** Lauren Pisani, Associate Director, Research Program on Children and Adversity, Boston College

# Dialogue 3 Track 3: System Integration (Gasabo 1st floor)

- **Focus:** How can public-private partnerships be leveraged for long-term sustainability?
  - How do we ensure catalytic and private finance complement, rather than replace, public responsibility for services for young children?
  - What guardrails are needed to prevent exclusion, quality erosion, and unsustainable financing obligations?
  - How can financing pilots or blended models be absorbed into national budgets, transfer systems, or longer-term public financing pathways?
- **Chair:** Anastacia Ngunjiri, Associate, iGravity
- **Framing:** Ivelina Borisova, Senior Early Childhood Expert, UNICEF
- **Discussants:**
  - Carien Vorster, Director Global Partnerships & Advocacy, Federer Foundation
  - Shoeshoe Mofokeng, Executive Director, Network of Early Childhood Development of Lesotho (NECDOL)
  - Sheunesu Tawanda Mutsau, Representative, Chief Accountant, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe
  - Pacifique Kwizera Irumva, Director Kumwe Hub, Part of Save The Children International
- **Rapporteur:** Michael Kiema, Senior Associate Consultant, iGravity

# Day 3 Preview

# Day 3 Options

| Location/ Time | Simba ballroom (ground floor) | Muhabura & Gasabo rooms combined (first floor) | Kinigi & Kivu rooms combined (first floor) | Inyange boardroom (first floor) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8:30-10:30 | Public Expenditure Review for Early Childhood Years made easy with AMPERA – OPM/Thrive | Launch of the Home-based Childcare Alliance – NurtureFirst, SmartStart, OneSky, aeioTU, BRAC IED, NAFCC, Tiney | From Commitments to Results: Capacity Building for Strengthened ECD Advocacy in East Africa – AfECN (invitation only) | Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the 2026 Global Report on Early Childhood Care and Education – UNESCO (invitation only - 9:00 start time) |
| | | *Tea break* | | |
| 11:00-13:00 | Big Wins to Bold Commitments – Theirworld and Genesis Analytics | Rwanda's Nkuza Neza Fund, Designing and Delivering Outcomes-Based Financing in Practice – Education Outcomes Fund | Continue | Continue |
| | | *Lunch* | | |
| 14:15-16:15* | The Critical Role of Cost Data in ECD for Advocacy, Budget Allocation, Priority Setting, and Scaling – Brooking Institution | Driving Systemic Change in Early Childhood: Aligning Government Capacity, Capital, and Service Transformation in Colombia – aeioTU | Continue | Continue |
| | | *Tea break* | | |

*Thrive Workshop in Inyambo boardroom (ground floor)

# Lunch Break

# Reflections on Dialogue 3

## What are the enabling conditions for investments?

| 1. Readiness and Country Criteria | 2. Measurements, Results, and Verification | 3. Systems Integration |
|---|---|---|
| What are the enabling conditions for investments? | How do we ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in service delivery? | How can public-private partnerships be leveraged for long-term sustainability? |
| **Chair:** Priyanka Upreti, Evidence Hub Manager, Global Schools Forum | Emily Gustaffson-Wright, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution | Anastacia Ngunjiri, Associate, iGravity |
| **Rapporteur:** Elaine Wacuka Hurt, Director Policy & Partnerships, Kidogo Early Years | Lauren Pisani, Boston College | Michael Kiema, Senior Associate Consultant, iGravity |

# Country Dialogue: Colombia

- Victoria Arciniegas, Executive Director, aeioTU
- Alexander Montes, Director of Quality, Cartagena Department of Education, Colombia

# Country Dialogue: Colombia

Victoria Arciniegas, Executive Director, aeioTU

Alexander Montes, Director of Quality, District Secretary of Education of Cartagena

May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# Why Colombia?

- Colombia faced the same fiscal and structural constraints seen across much of Latin America.
- Within those limits, it built one of the region's most ambitious early childhood systems, reaching national scale.
- The deeper question was never access alone, but whether quality could be sustained over time.

**50M**
People

**4.3M**
children aged 0–5

**32**
Departments

de cero a Siempre
ATENCIÓN INTEGRAL A LA PRIMERA INFANCIA

BIENESTAR FAMILIAR

**Sources:** Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), Observatory for Child Wellbeing, *Data for Change: Early Childhood Situation in Colombia*, April 2025.

aeiotú

## Colombia: from protection to rights

# Over four decades, Colombia built a strong early childhood system, anchored in a rights-based and holistic approach to development

**1968**

**Creation of ICBF**

Establishment of a permanent national institution for child protection and family welfare.

**1986**

**Welfare Homes**

Expansion of childcare coverage through community-based provision.

**1991**

**Political Constitution**

Children's rights were given constitutional priority.

**2006**

**Law 1098:**

Comprehensive early childhood development was established as a legal right from pregnancy through age six.

**Colombia expanded access, strengthened institutions, and moved toward a more formalized early childhood system, with a strong focus on reaching the most disadvantaged children**

**Sources:** (ICBF, n.d.; Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991; Congreso de Colombia, 2006; Universidad de los Andes, 2010)

## De Cero a Siempre: national early childhood system

# 2011 marked a turning point: Colombia introduced the early childhood comprehensive care strategy, De Cero a Siempre ("From Zero to Forever"), to transform and strengthen early childhood systems from birth to age five

**Policy objective**

To expand and strengthen early childhood education and care (ECEC), ensuring children's rights through high-quality, inclusive, and comprehensive services, with a focus on universal coverage for the most vulnerable.

**Focus**

- Improve the quality and coverage of ECEC provision
- Ensure implementation across departments and municipalities
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems
- Develop knowledge management systems for ECEC
- Mobilize society to support early childhood development

**Sources:** DANE Population Projections; Presidency of Colombia in Early Childhood Matters (2018); ICBF (2025), *Data for Change: Early Childhood Situation in Colombia*.

# As early childhood became a national priority, political momentum built and translated into rapid expansion at scale

de cero a Siempre

ATENCIÓN INTEGRAL A LA PRIMERA INFANCIA

| | |
|---|---|
| **4.7M** | children 0–5<br>at launch (9.2% of population) |
| **+200%** | coverage growth<br>125K to 380K children (2011–16) |
| **2.2M** | children reached by 2025 |

**Sources:** DANE Population Projections; Presidency of Colombia in Early Childhood Matters (2018); ICBF (2025), *Data for Change: Early Childhood Situation in Colombia*.

aeiotú

## System Balance

# A shared national framework guides delivery, but implementation depends on decentralized actors with uneven capacity

**Government built the architecture**

**Quality Definition**
**6 dimensions**
of Comprehensive Early Childhood Development

**Financing**
**+35.8%**
Growth in public investment in early childhood education by 2025

**Governance**
Created a single policy framework across health, education and child protection: Intersectoral Commission and Comprehensive Care Pathway

**But delivery happens through multiple actors**

**ICBF**
central operational role
standardized financing packages tied to service delivery

**Local governments**
Territorial coordination
Funding and implementation oversight.

**Schools**
Pre-primary education delivery
Municipal and district systems

**Implementing Partners**
NGOs and foundations
Contracted service providers

**System-level consequences**

**Uneven access**
Coverage expanded nationally, but rural children remained less likely to access services.

**Fragile continuity**
COVID exposed how fragile service continuity really was.

**Inconsistent quality**
Same national standards, but children experienced very different levels of quality depending on who delivered services.

**Sources:** MEN Colombia, 2025 · Cartagena Cómo Vamos, 2023 · LEE Javeriana, 2024 · Ley 1804, 2016

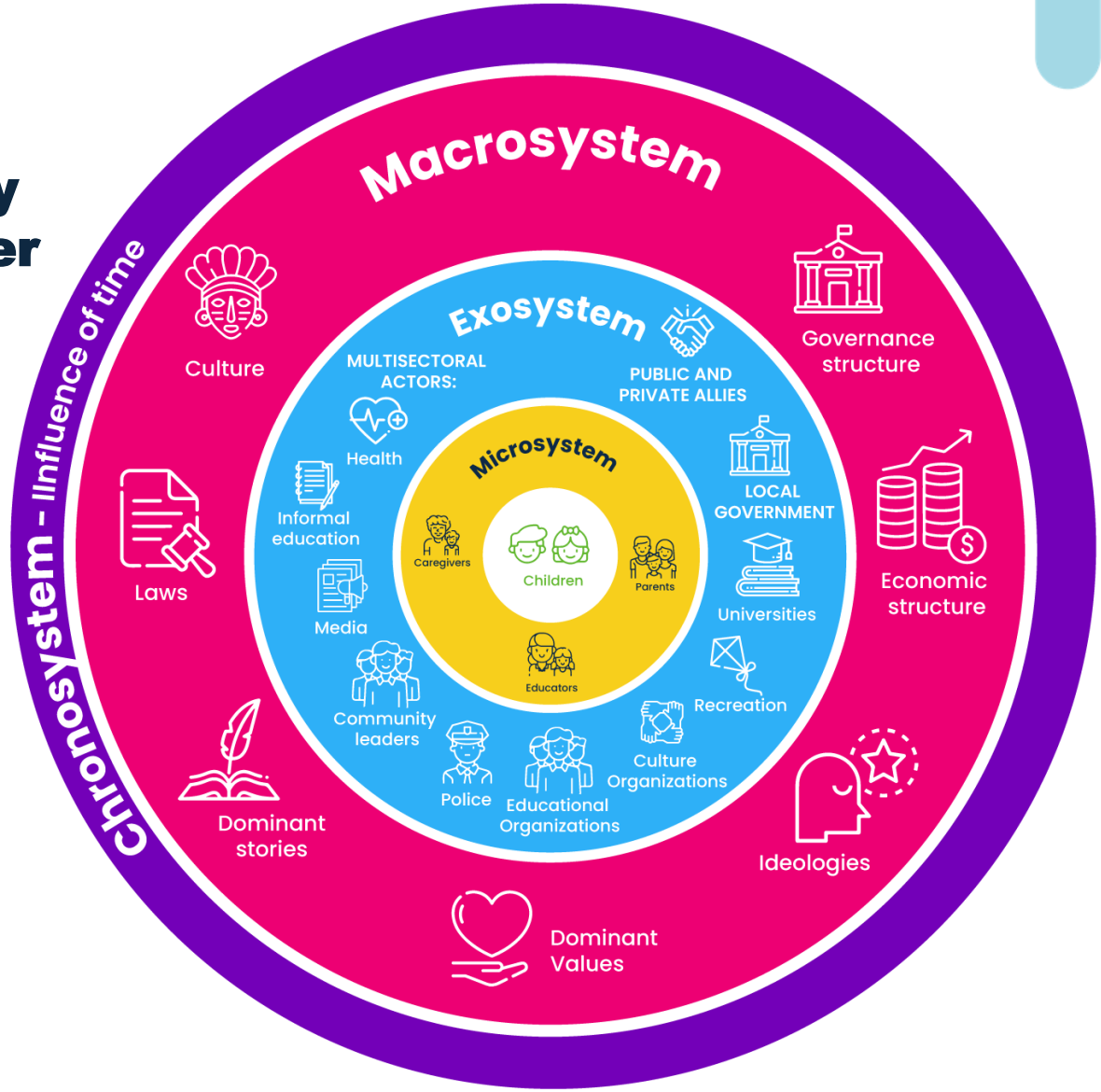
aeiotu

# This raises a practical question:
# what does it take to sustain quality in a system delivered by multiple actors?

## Systemic Approach Framework

# Quality depends on interactions, not components:
# Child development outcomes are shaped by how actors and environments work together over time, not by any single intervention

- **From fragmented delivery to system integration:** Quality cannot be sustained through isolated providers; it depends on consistent coordination across families, educators, and institutions.
- **System-level change requires strengthening capacity:** uneven implementation is not solved by better programs, but by improving how actors operate and sustain quality over time.
- **Continuity drives results:** Short-term or fragmented interventions limit impact; sustained engagement is what allows practices to change.




Ecological Systems Theory, Bronfenbrenner, adapted by aeioTU

## Cartagena context

# Cartagena illustrates how national early childhood policy is implemented in practice at the local level

**1 in 10**

**children drop out of preschool**

Highest rate among Colombia's major cities

**24,000**

**people in extreme poverty (2023)**

A UNESCO World Heritage city and an economic port, also one of Colombia's most unequal cities

### SCALE

**+983**

new children enrolled in preschool (2024)

**First city in Colombia to increase ECE coverage**

### COVERAGE GAP

**48%**

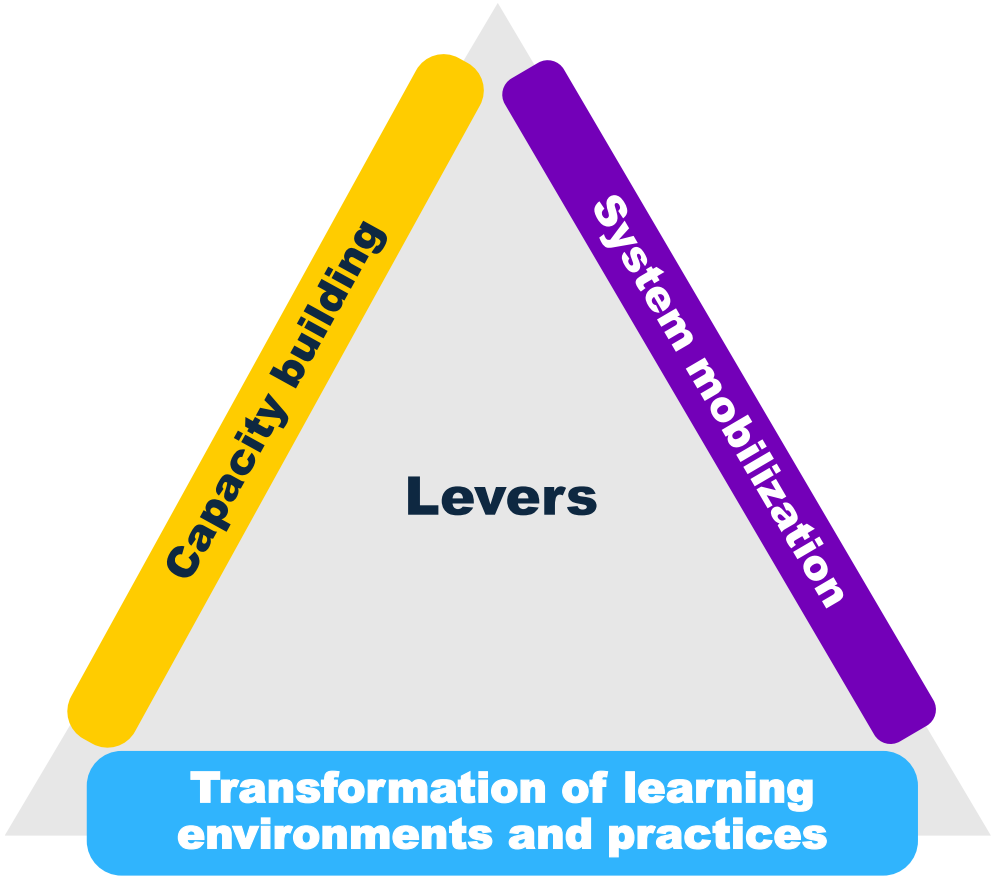
of projected children reached by ICBF (2023)

**37,961 served of 79,087 projected**
**8,758 under age 4 in the education system**

**Sources:** Caracol Radio, 2024 · Cartagena Cómo Vamos, 2023 · Nores, Bernal & Barnett, 2019 (U. Chicago / Heckman) · aeioTU, 2026

## Cartagena as a System Transformation Case

# This setting allowed us to test a systemic change model under real operational and institutional conditions




**Cross-cutting components:**
**Understanding Local Context - Stakeholder Mapping - MEL**

**Capacity building**
Changing what people know and what they can do.

**System mobilization**
Through communities of practice.

**Transformation of learning environments and practices**
Creating rich spaces that support children's development.

**Cross-cutting components**

These levers are supported by three cross cutting components. Alone they do not guarantee sustainability, but together they make it possible to design and manage it.

## Results (1/2)

# Cartagena helped us understand how to mobilize a system in real conditions, by aligning capacity, stakeholders, and investment

### Capacity building

**5,000+** educators strengthened

**100,000+** girls and boys reached

**38,000+** families engaged

### Ecosystem mobilization

**USD 6M** investment mobilized

**USD 170K** mobilized through organic actions within the CoP

**1** Community of Practice | **2.8** years | **30+** sessions | **27+** active members

### Transformation of learning environments and practices

**40+** spaces strengthened

Investment increased by nearly **30%**

### Cross-cutting components

**30** programs

**25** organizations to identify gaps and coordinate service delivery

**2** outcome evaluations conducted at the local level

aeiotu

## Results (2/2)

# Cartagena delivered real gains in beliefs, leadership, and coordination, but transforming practice requires system structures that support long-term processes

| | Capacity building | Ecosystem mobilization | Transformation of learning environments and practices |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Early gains** | Teacher beliefs shifted | Leadership and coordination strengthened | Classroom environments improved through one-off investments |
| **Evaluation findings** | **Practice transformation lagged**<br><br>No significant classroom practice change | **Participation lacked continuity**<br><br>**24%** completed all workshops<br>**1.6** workshops attended on average | **Sustainability gap**<br>Changes in beliefs and knowledge do not consistently translate into changes in practice |
| **System constraint** | Budget allocation covers minimum provision, not continuous workforce development | Coordination requires dedicated ownership, time, and resources | Sustained quality requires long-term changes in teaching practice, which are rarely financed |

**Sources:** Universidad de los Andes, 2024 · Río, Juego y Aprendo / GCC · MEN Colombia, 2025

## Key insights

- **Colombia shows the enabling role of public policy:** over several decades, the country built a national early childhood system, and through De Cero a Siempre sustained political commitment and expansion at scale.
- **Cartagena:** at the city level, a structural gap becomes visible between policy design, budget allocation, and the conditions required to sustain quality over time.
- **The next phase:** De Cero a Siempre now depends on translating this evidence into system and financing designs that can sustain quality consistently across contexts.

aeiotü

# Thank you

# Dialogue 4: What is the roadmap to increasing sustainable financing for young children?

## Moving from dialogue to action.

# Ramona Luminati

Manager Partnerships, Advocacy and Switzerland, Federer Foundation

# Leveraging G20 to Advocate for Investment in the Early Years

Ramona Luminati, Manager Partnerships, Advocacy and Switzerland, Federer Foundation
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# The **evidence** is clear, but **investment** still lags: Making the early years a financing priority

# Our strategic focus

FEDERER FOUNDATION

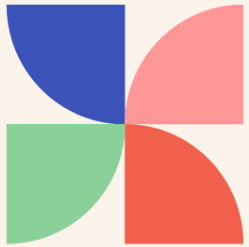
## Supporting children's learning journeys from 3 to 9 years old

### Early and foundational learning

Supporting quality learning across literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional and physical development, with continuity from early childhood to end of primary school.

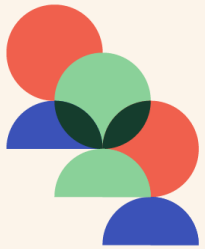
### Data and measurement

Strengthening child development tracking, education, data systems, and the use of evidence to inform policy and investment decisions.



### Evidence and advocacy

Learning what works and supporting more informed, targeted and coordinated investments in early and foundational learning.



### Stakeholder mobilisation

Working with governments, communities, implementing partners and funders to align efforts and ensure every child has the opportunity to play, learn and thrive.

Advocacy works across **multiple levels**: local voices, national alignment, regional learning, and global momentum must reinforce one another.

# Learning Brief G20

# Prioritising Early Childhood Development:

## One powerful solution to many global challenges

Leveraging investment in young children to achieve multisectoral G20 goals

act FOR Early Years

B Center for Universal Education at BROOKINGS

ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network

FEDERER FOUNDATION

Theirworld

# Scan to read the full Learning Brief!

# Philanthropic Funding:
## A catalyst to mobilise more sustainable resources for early learning and development

FEDERER FOUNDATION

**Claude Niyibizi**

Global Youth Ambassador, Theirworld

**Michael Simpson**

Head of Early Research and Policy, Theirworld

# The Pathway to the International Finance Summit for Early Childhood

Claude Niyibizi, Global Youth Ambassador, Theirworld
Michael Simpson, Head of Early Research and Policy, Theirworld
May 7, 2026

In support of act FoR Early Years

Republic of Rwanda | ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network | AfECN Africa Early Childhood Network | unesco | unicef | World Health Organization | NCDA National Child Development Agency

# ACT FOR Early Years

**Act For Early Years is a global campaign to give every child the best possible start in life.**

We work in partnership with civil society, government and businesses to advance priorities for young children —building on what is already working within countries and connecting experience, evidence, and ambition from across the world.

**Together, we act for the early years.**

**The campaign has three objectives:**

**1. Mobilize new funding commitments** from governments, international donors, businesses and philanthropic donors through the **first-ever Global Early Years Summit in 2027.**

**2.** Ensure the early years become **a political priority** across domestic agendas, regional initiatives and global processes.

**3. Future-proof the global goals:** ensure the early years becomes a priority in the global development agenda and new SDGs.

**Act For Early Years — What We Are**
**A global campaign, driven by local leadership.**

- Advocacy and campaigning led by organisations rooted in communities around the world
- A movement of coalitions and partners influencing real decisions for young children
- We create campaign moments that build momentum, visibility, and action

**What we provide:**

- Evidence and research on what works
- Campaign tools and strategic support
- International advocacy and connections

**Our purpose:**

- To ensure the realities of children and families are present when decisions are made

**Our approach:**

- Locally owned, globally connected
- Grounded in what countries know is already working
- Serious in ambition, but unapologetically hopeful, optimistic — and child-centred

Congresswoman Lorena Ríos, Colombia

act FoR Early Years

# Our Call to Action Manifesto

act for Early Years

**The Act for Early Years ‘Minifesto’ is a child-sized manifesto urging leaders to make big investments in the littlest children.**

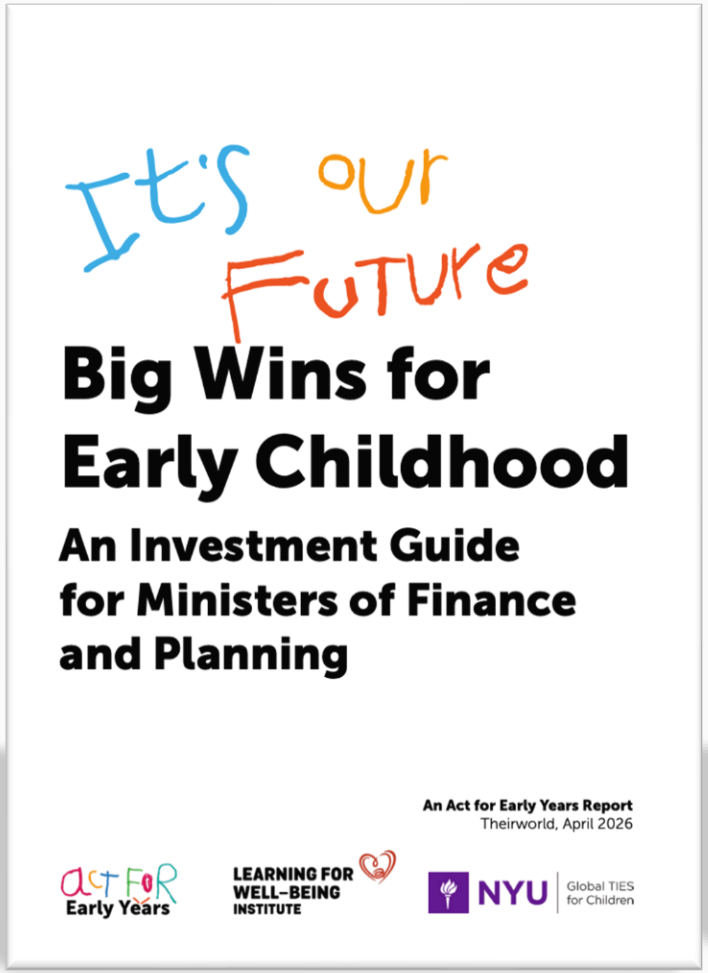
The ‘Minifesto’ three goals

1. Universal access to **quality primary healthcare**, supporting health, nutrition, wellbeing and development from pregnancy to early childhood.
2. Universal access to quality **preschool** education.
3. Universal **family support** including affordable quality childcare, child benefits and parents and caregiver support.

To achieve these goals, we’re calling for leaders to make bold new commitments at the first-ever International Financing Summit for early years in 2027.

We’re asking ministers, mayors, MPs, and community or business leaders worldwide to take action by signing it, to demonstrate their commitment to making early childhood a top priority.

## Creating advocacy resources and messaging bringing together experience and evidence



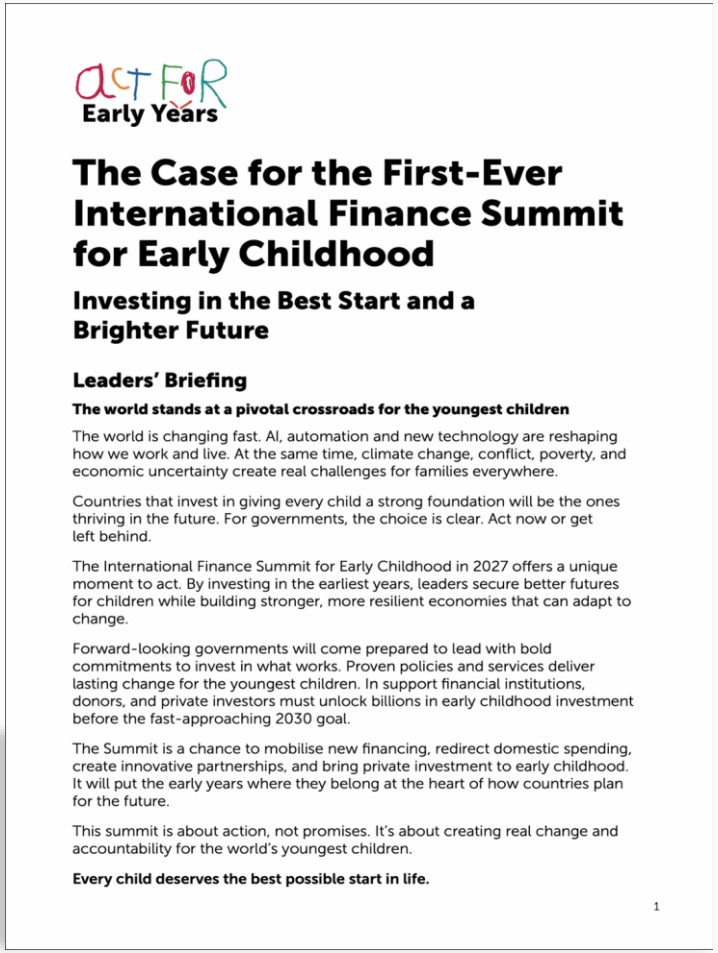
It's our Future

# Big Wins for Early Childhood

## An Investment Guide for Ministers of Finance and Planning

**An Act for Early Years Report**
Theirworld, April 2026

Act For Early Years
LEARNING FOR WELL-BEING INSTITUTE
NYU Global TIES for Children



Act For Early Years

# The Case for the First-Ever International Finance Summit for Early Childhood

## Investing in the Best Start and a Brighter Future

### Leaders' Briefing

**The world stands at a pivotal crossroads for the youngest children**

The world is changing fast. AI, automation and new technology are reshaping how we work and live. At the same time, climate change, conflict, poverty, and economic uncertainty create real challenges for families everywhere.

Countries that invest in giving every child a strong foundation will be the ones thriving in the future. For governments, the choice is clear. Act now or get left behind.

The International Finance Summit for Early Childhood in 2027 offers a unique moment to act. By investing in the earliest years, leaders secure better futures for children while building stronger, more resilient economies that can adapt to change.

Forward-looking governments will come prepared to lead with bold commitments to invest in what works. Proven policies and services deliver lasting change for the youngest children. In support financial institutions, donors, and private investors must unlock billions in early childhood investment before the fast-approaching 2030 goal.

The Summit is a chance to mobilise new financing, redirect domestic spending, create innovative partnerships, and bring private investment to early childhood. It will put the early years where they belong at the heart of how countries plan for the future.

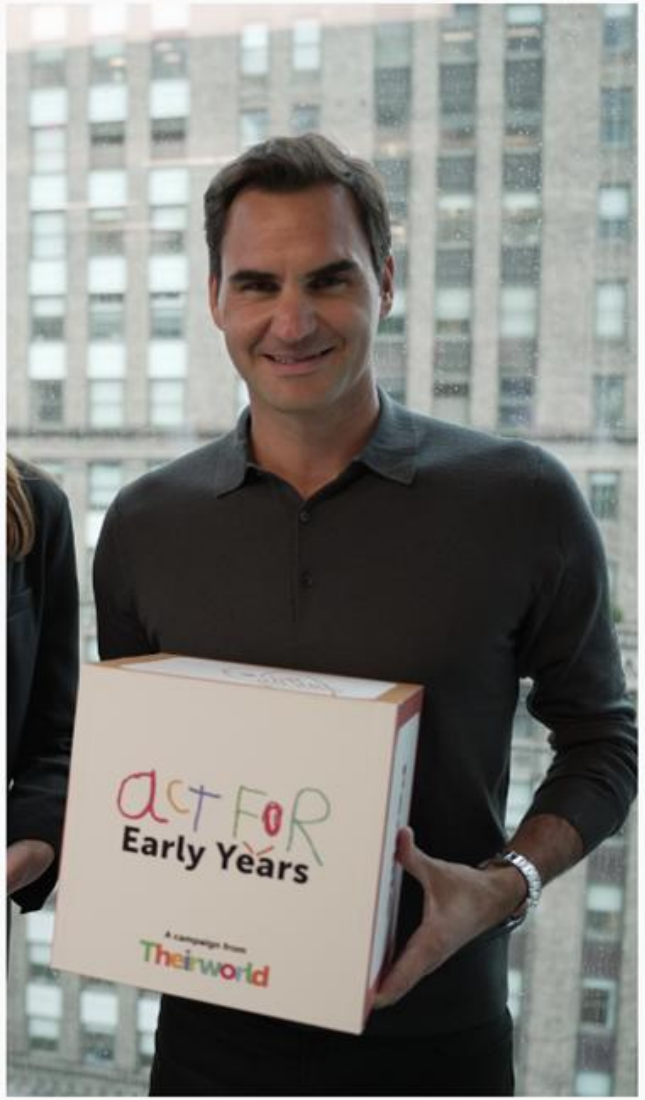
This summit is about action, not promises. It's about creating real change and accountability for the world's youngest children.

**Every child deserves the best possible start in life.**

1

## Building Champions

**Ministers**
**Mayors**
**First Ladies & Gentleman**
**Youth**
**Business leaders**
**High profile Advocates**

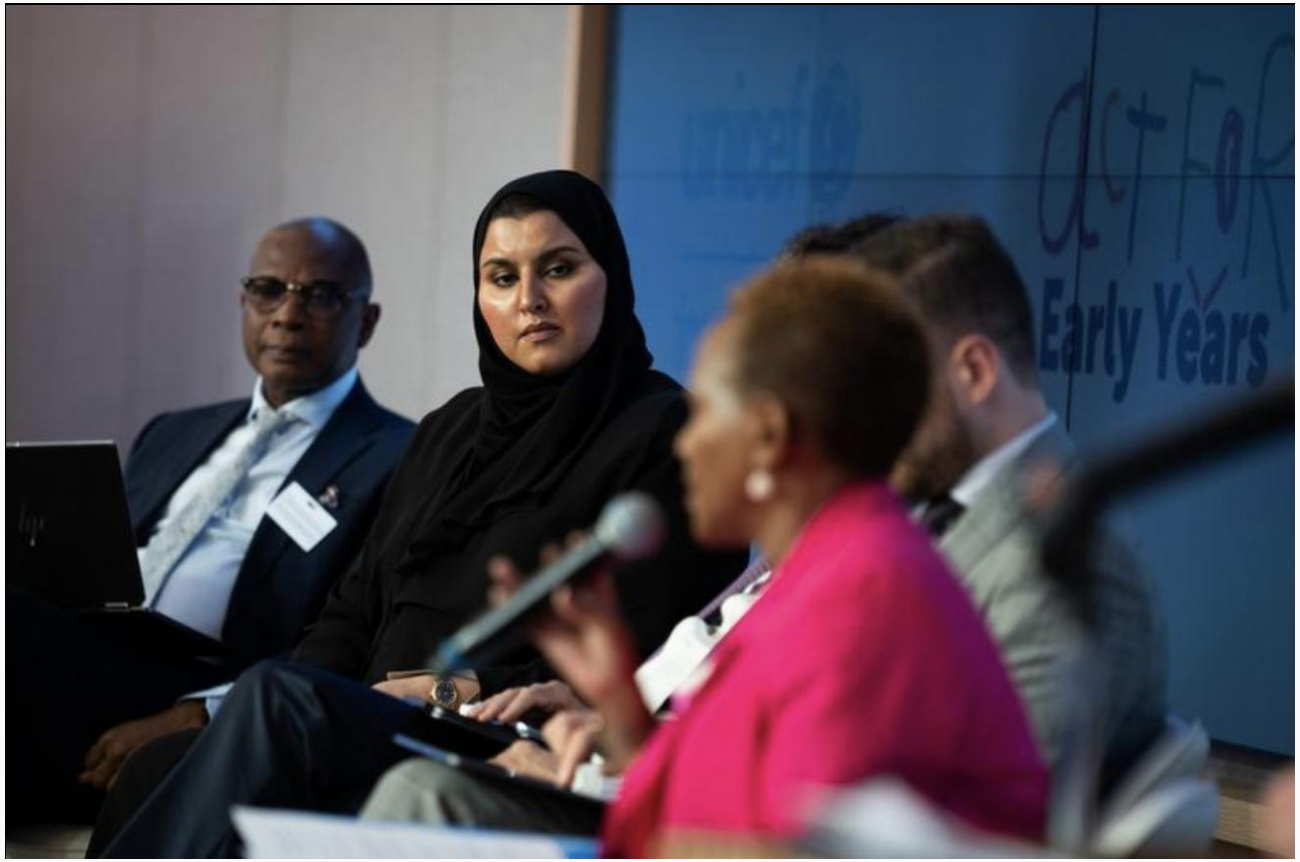


# The First-Ever Global Early Years Summit

A country-led moment to accelerate progress already underway— where countries come forward with **their own priorities for young children, backed by financing and delivery plans**.

A platform to:

- **Make new commitments and plans** that strengthen what is already working, bringing together a growing global movement of champions and advocates
- **Unlock additional financing** for the early years
- Move from **progress to scale** through sustained, practical delivery



**Why Now**

New technologies, shifting labour markets, instability and global pressures are reshaping how societies grow and compete.

At the same time, families face increasing strain— the rising cost of living is making it harder for parents to provide the nurturing care their children need in the years that matter most.

When families cannot access affordable childcare, quality healthcare, or basic income support, the consequences fall first and hardest on the youngest children, in ways that are difficult and costly to reverse. That cost does not disappear. It accumulates quietly across a childhood and is carried by economies for decades

The question is no longer whether to act—but how to invest in ways that deliver long-term stability, resilience, and growth.

Even amidst all the current changes and instability the Summit can help us envisage a world where young children and families are free to thrive, and we have the tools, investments and policies to make that happen.

## Who is the Summit For

A broad coalition aligned around delivery:

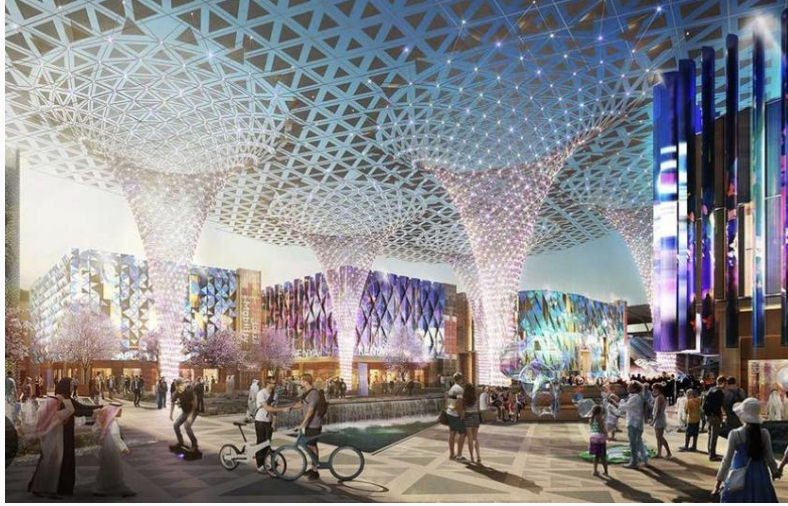
- Heads of Government and Ministers of Finance, Planning, and line ministries
- Regional and city leaders
- CEOs and business leaders
- Development partners and financial institutions
- Civil society, youth, early childhood workforce and early childhood networks, coalitions and partners

Each brings a distinct role—**aligned behind locally-led progress.**

act FoR Early Years

# A Summit with Distinct but Connected Spaces

- ✓ Platforms for Action Statements and Announcements
- ✓ Learning Zone
- ✓ Partnerships and innovation



act FOR Early Years

## What the Summit Will Do

The Summit supports governments, partners, and business leaders to:

- Advance existing national and city priorities for young children
- Align financing—public and private—behind country plans
- Accelerate delivery of proven approaches at scale
- Share practical lessons across countries and sectors
- Strengthen coordination between policy, financing, and implementation

## How it works

- Countries, Regions and Cities define their own locally led Action Statements and priorities
- Built through consultation and planning processes
- Grounded in data, existing systems, and what is already working
- Supported by partners, financial institutions, and business where useful
- Progress is shared transparently to support delivery, learning, and continuous improvement

This creates **mutual accountability—owned locally and supported by partners.**

Space for multiple pathways and diverse Action Statements, including from the business community, donors and financial institutions.

act FOR Early Years

**Journey to the Summit (2026–2027)**

Now: Sensitisation and Mobilisation

April: World Bank Spring Meetings (Big Wins)

May: Global Technical Financing Forum & Toolkit (ECDAN)

September: UNGA -> Summit Launch

October: Regional Convenings in Portugal (ISSA), Indonesia (ARNEC) and Mexico (Somos Crianza)

November 20 → UNESCO Global ECCE Report Launch

Mid 2027: **First-ever Global Early Years Summit**

# Thank you

Together, we can unlock financing that will translate evidence into budgets and budgets into services for young children and their families!

# Leveraging Civil Society to Mobilize Public Demand

- **Chair:** Rosemary Mwaisaka, Technical Advisor, Africa Early Childhood Network
- Mwajuma Davina Rwebangila, Executive Director, Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network
- Gertrudes Noronha, National Coordinator, Rede para o Desenvolvimento da Primeira Infância, Mozambique
- Rachael Makena Kithinji, Partnerships & Programmes Manager, Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya
- Gilles Petreault, Representative to UNESCO, OMEP - France
- Pauline Acayo, Project Coordinator - SCORE ECD Project, Catholic Relief Services

# Day 3 Preview

# Day 3 Options

| Location/ Time | Simba ballroom (ground floor) | Muhabura & Gasabo rooms combined (first floor) | Kinigi & Kivu rooms combined (first floor) | Inyange boardroom (first floor) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8:30-10:30 | Public Expenditure Review for Early Childhood Years made easy with AMPERA – OPM/Thrive | Launch of the Home-based Childcare Alliance – NurtureFirst, SmartStart, OneSky, aeioTU, BRAC IED, NAFCC, Tiney | From Commitments to Results: Capacity Building for Strengthened ECD Advocacy in East Africa – AfECN (invitation only) | Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the 2026 Global Report on Early Childhood Care and Education – UNESCO (invitation only - 9:00 start time) |
| | | *Tea break* | | |
| 11:00-13:00 | Big Wins to Bold Commitments – Theirworld and Genesis Analytics | Rwanda's Nkuza Neza Fund, Designing and Delivering Outcomes-Based Financing in Practice – Education Outcomes Fund | Continue | Continue |
| | | *Lunch* | | |
| 14:15-16:15* | The Critical Role of Cost Data in ECD for Advocacy, Budget Allocation, Priority Setting, and Scaling – Brooking Institution | Driving Systemic Change in Early Childhood: Aligning Government Capacity, Capital, and Service Transformation in Colombia – aeioTU | Continue | Continue |
| | | *Tea break* | | |

*Thrive Workshop in Inyambo boardroom (ground floor)

# Closing and Way Forward

# Key Takeaways

- The question is not only how much we invest, but how **effectively**, **efficiently**, and **equitably** we use our resources to achieve maximum impact.
- **Equity cannot be an afterthought**; scaling without consideration of all children will increase inequalities.
- Despite the shifting financing landscape, **governments have many opportunities** to still expand their fiscal space.
- We need to reframe ECD as part of **broader agendas** (e.g., human capital development, care economy, humanitarian response, economic development, poverty reduction) so that young children are everyone's concern.
- **Domestic financing is the backbone** to scale up sustainable services, while philanthropy and private capital are catalytic and fund innovation.
- **Investment in caregiver support** is very low yet is highly effective and brings benefits across sectors and domains.

# Key Takeaways, continued

- We need to address political economy challenges and continue to **increase public demand**.
- As long as governments underinvest in ECD, the **burden of the cost remains on the household**.
- We need to invest in a financing architecture-built around the **services** that families actually use, the **systems and delivery platforms** that reach them, and the **cross-sectoral collaboration** that makes holistic services possible.
- **Improved public finance management** is the backbone of efficiency.
- The **Financing Toolbox for the Early Years is the bridge** between diagnosis and action.
- It takes **strong leadership**, **partnerships**, and **cross-sectoral collaboration** that is institutionalized to make financing effective.

# Next Steps

- Publish outputs from the Forum including presentations, videos, pictures, and a report.
- Finalize the development of the Toolbox, customize to countries, and make it open access.
- Mobilize countries, implementers, and donors to use the Financing Toolbox for the Early Years.
- Include key Forum outcomes in the upcoming Global Monitoring Report.
- Build momentum from the Forum to the International Finance Summit for Early Childhood in 2027.
- Prepare for the post-2030 agenda.

This is the beginning of the conversation. Let’s keep building movement and translating commitments into action together!

# Our Sponsors