

EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE – MARCH 2024

Side Event and Learning Session – Concept Note

Title

'The Best Investment: How do we move from evidence to action in financing of early childhood development in East Africa?'

Overview

Insufficient financing of ECD is one of the biggest challenges facing east Africa. With some of the most youthful populations on earth, countries in this region stand to reap a significant demographic dividend – however, this rests on their ability to develop human capital in their young people. This human capital development starts from early childhood. The benefits of supporting early childhood development (ECD) services under the 'Nurturing Care Framework' have been found to promote lifelong health and learning, improved productivity, break intergenerational cycles of poverty and even prevent crime.¹ Financing is an essential input into the provision of services for ECD. Without it, salaries cannot be paid and commodities cannot be purchased. However, there is a great need to reposition spending on ECD as an investment rather than a cost. There is now overwhelming evidence on the enormous return on investment associated with scaling up ECD services. Recent investment cases produced in east Africa illustrate these points and outline a strong moral and economic rationale for increasing financing on young children.²

Across East Africa, however, countries continue to struggle to spend enough and spend well on critical ECD services. A recent study in the east and southern Africa region found public spending in ECD in the region goes in the opposite direction of the Heckman Curve, with public spending being lower amongst younger age groups.³ The average per capita spending ranged from US\$ 524 for young people aged 18 – 22 years, US\$ 411 for children aged 7 – 17 years, US\$ 207 for children aged 0 – 2 years, and US\$ 88 for children aged 3 – 6 years.⁴ This means that ESA countries may struggle to gain the benefits associated with investing in early childhood, if investment is not increased.

Objectives

In light of this context, Genesis Analytics proposes to hold a half-day side event focusing on the latest research related to investing in ECD and what is next on the agenda. In particular, we would seek to:

- Present an update on spending on ECD across east Africa through powerful data visualisation tools;
- Showcase work on improved financing for ECD which has been developed across the region;
- Facilitate a discussion on the challenges and bottlenecks to improving investments (domestic and international) in early childhood across the region; and,

¹ O. Y. Addo, A.D. Stein, C.H.D. Fall *et al.* (2015). 'Parental childhood growth and offspring birthweight: pooled analyses from four birth cohorts in low- and middle-income countries', *American Journal of Human Biology*, 27: 99–105 | Walker SP, Chang SM, Wright A, Osmond C, Grantham-McGregor SM (2015). 'Early childhood stunting is associated with lower developmental levels in the subsequent generation of children', *Journal of Nutrition*, 145: 823–28.

² UNICEF Burundi (2021). *An Investment Case for Early Childhood Development in Burundi*, (UNICEF: Bujumbura, Burundi) | UNICEF Tanzania (forthcoming). *Building the Foundations: An Investment Case for Early Childhood Development in mainland Tanzania*, (UNICEF: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) | UNICEF (forthcoming). *For the Future: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Pre-Primary Education in Uganda*, (Kampala, Uganda) | UNICEF Rwanda (forthcoming). *For the Future: An Investment Case for Early Childhood Development in Rwanda*, (UNICEF: Kigali, Rwanda).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

→ Provide an interactive workshop on the technical approach and methodologies for economic evaluations in ECD to support advocates in using this evidence effectively.

Session	Summary	Indicative Presenters/Facilitators	Expected Duration (minutes)
Introduction	Outline itinerary and objectives of the event, includes ice breaker activity.	TBC	5
Presentation: Recap of the Evidence	Short presentation providing overview of global evidence on ECD investments and improved long-term outcomes	Genesis Analytics	10
Data Dashboards: Status of Financing in ECD	Short presentation of data dashboards showing trends and status of investments in services for early childhood development.	<i>Mr. Oscar Kadenge</i> , Independent Consultant and ECD Expert [Presenter]	15
Presentations: Investment Case for ECD ⁵	<p>Investment Case for Early Childhood Development in Burundi</p> <p>Building the Foundations: An Investment Case in Early Childhood Development in mainland Tanzania</p> <p>Investing in the Future: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Pre-Primary Education in Uganda</p> <p>For the Future: An Investment Case for Early Childhood Development in Rwanda</p>	UNICEF Country Office Staff and Government Partners [Presenters]	60
Panel Discussion: Bottlenecks to Better Financing for ECD	<p><i>Example Questions:</i></p> <p>How will the findings in these Investment Cases support you to improve financing for ECD?</p> <p>What additional evidence do we need to invest better in ECD?</p> <p>What challenges do we face in promoting more spending on ECD?</p> <p>What are the most promising strategies to harness more financing for ECD?</p> <p>Do you have concerns about the efficiency or effectiveness of spending on ECD?</p>	<p><i>Mr. Gilbert Munyemana</i>, Deputy Director General of the National Child Development Agency in Rwanda [Participant]</p> <p><i>Ms. Maniza Ntekim</i>, Senior Programme Officer at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation [Participant]</p> <p>Social Policy Specialist at UNICEF (Regional or Country Office)</p> <p><i>Mr. Ian MacAuslan</i>, Partner at Genesis Analytics [Facilitator]</p>	60
Master Class: Tools and Technical Approaches to Promote Better Investments in ECD	<p>Introduction: tools and technical approaches to promote more and better investments in ECD (fiscal space analysis, budget and expenditure tracking, economic evaluations)</p> <p>Tracking Public Spending on ECD – Presentation on an innovation in budget and expenditure tracking in Rwanda</p> <p>ECD Investment Case Methodology Masterclass – Presentation and Group Work to explain the methodology behind the ECD investment cases.</p>	<p>Genesis Analytics & UNICEF</p> <p>UNICEF Rwanda & National Child Development Agency (Rwanda)</p> <p>Genesis Analytics</p>	90

⁵ NB: we have also submitted proposals for abstracts for this work. If successful in this proposal for a side event, we would then suggest not to duplicate.

