

# Demonstrating the Feasibility of Universal Early Childhood Education

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# Overview of Presentation

- 1 The Odds for Scaling up Globally
- 2 Country Cases
- 3 Based on the above:  
Conclusions to inform Action Plan

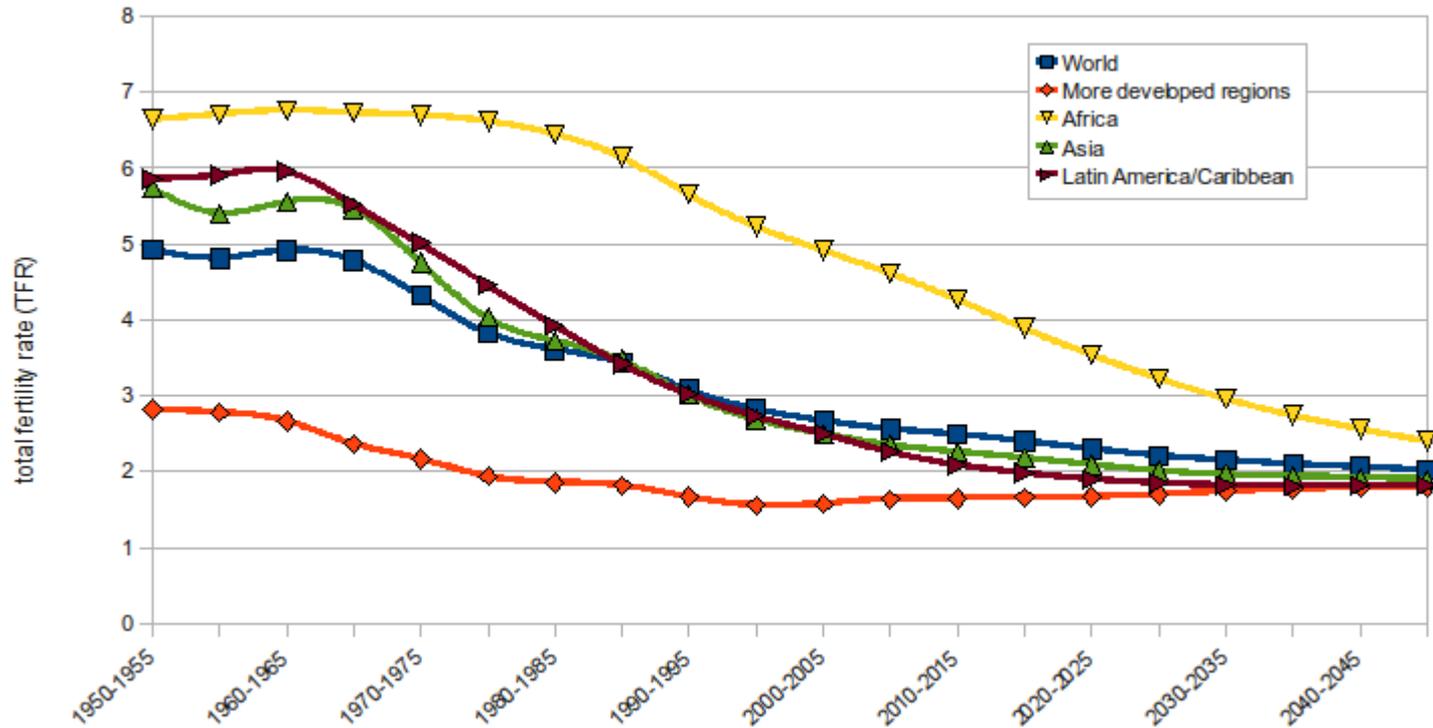


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# A window of opportunity: decreasing fertility rates

Source: Wikipedia using UN-data and projections

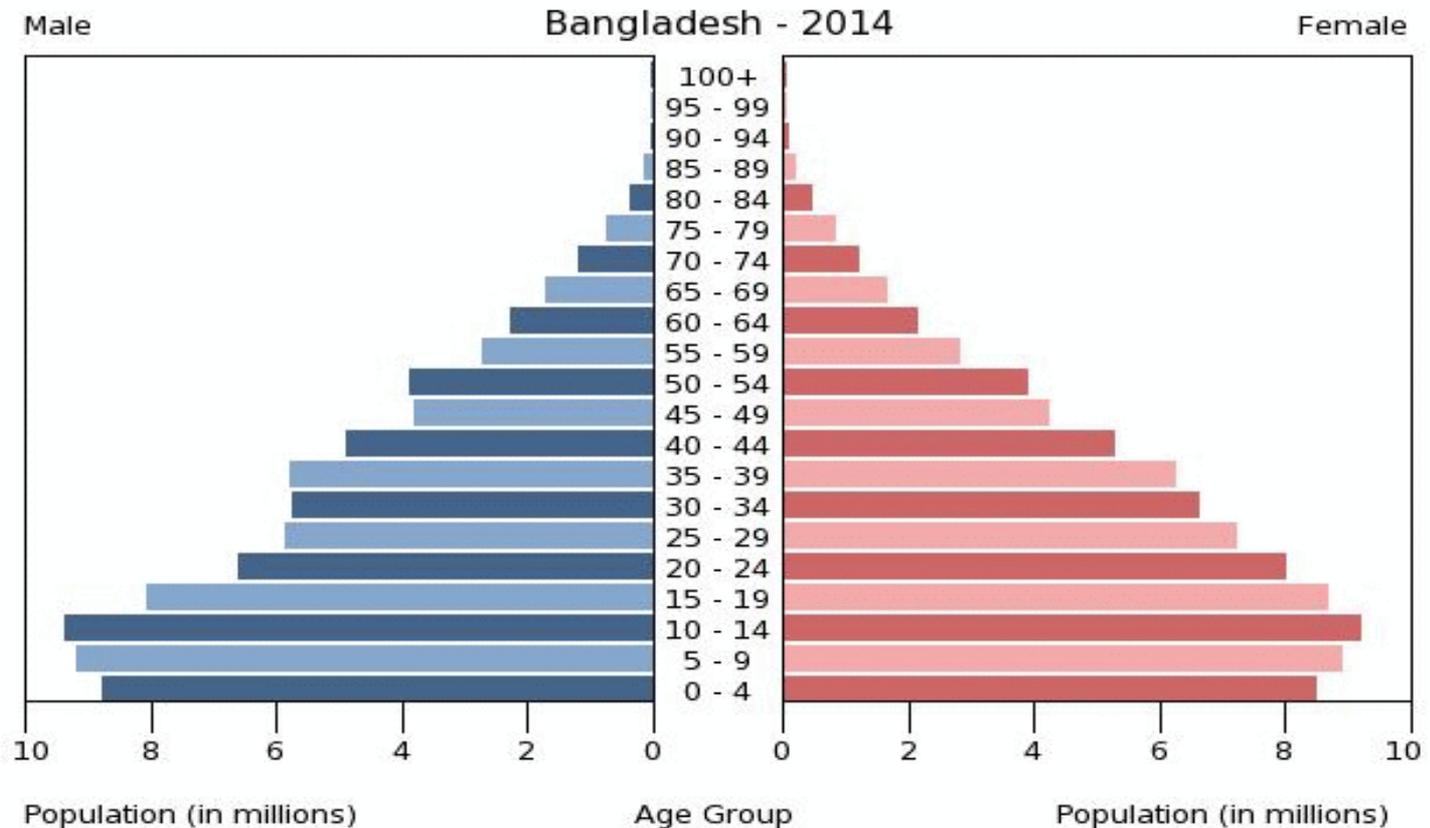
Trends in Total Fertility Rate by Region, 1950-2050.



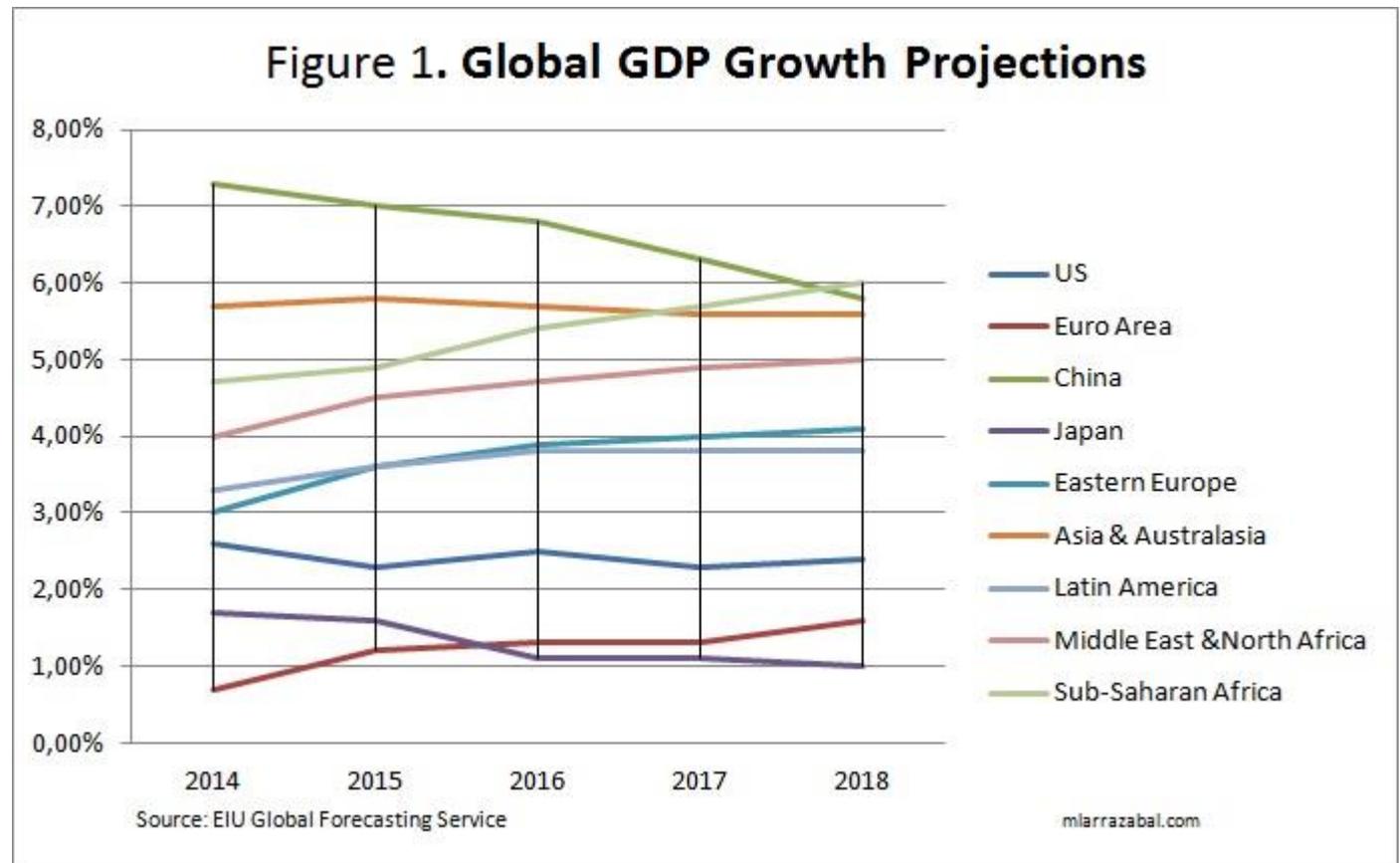
# Bangladesh

Already: less children of (pre-)school age  
Soon: a larger work-force to sustain education spending

Source: Indexmundi, using CIA World Factbook



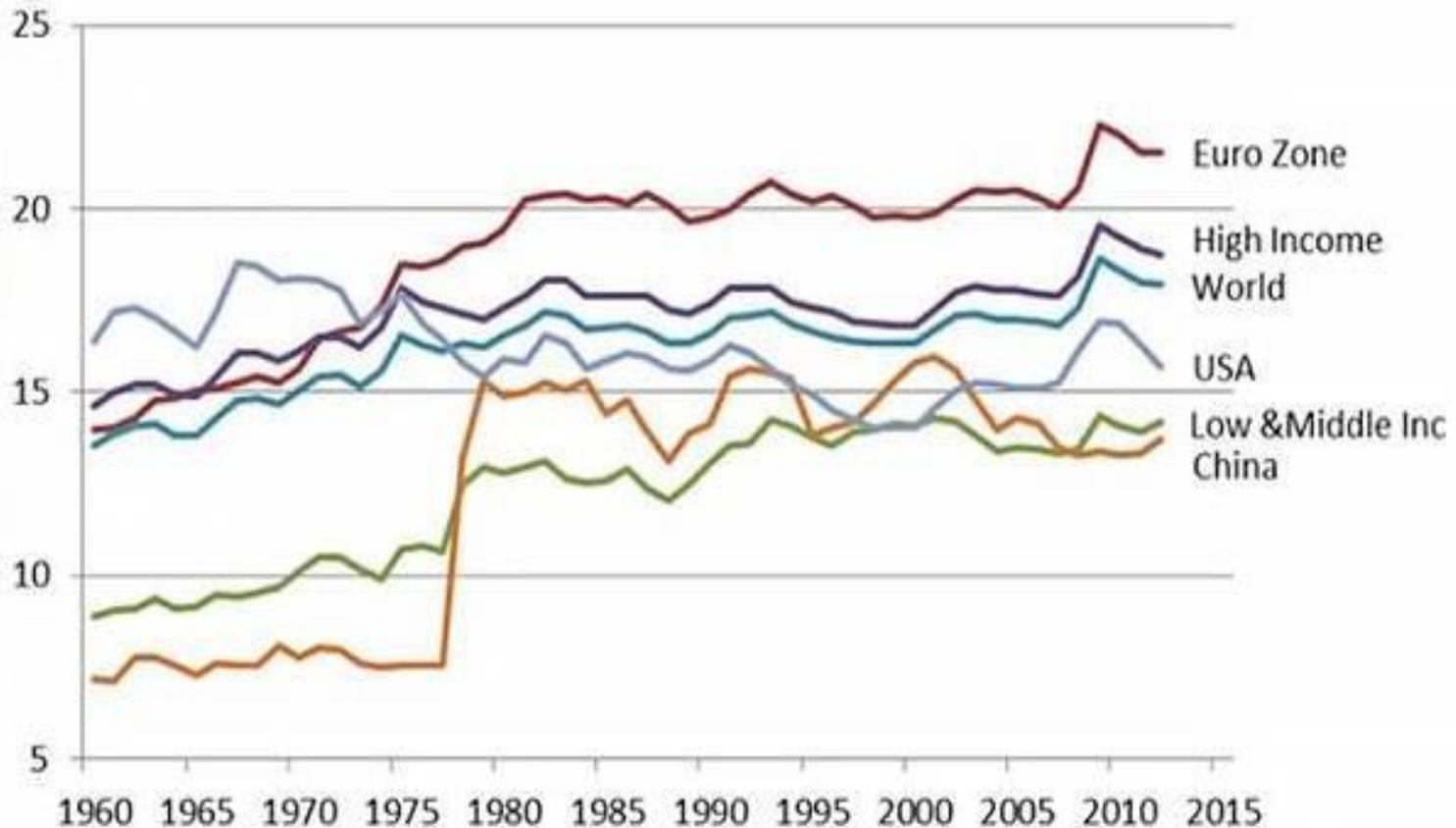
# High GDP growth in poor countries



# Yet, developing countries still suffer from tax evasion

## Public Spending as a % of GDP

Source: Mauro F. Guillén, using World Development Indicators



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## Some emerging benchmarks:

- Invest 5% of GDP in education
- Invest 10% of education budget in ECE
- This is generally sufficient for universal attendance at ages 3, 4 & 5 (or 4, 5, 6) assuming low fertility rates
- Even small increases of GDP growth and/or tax revenue can generate these resources

## Corruption:

- 5% of global GDP is stolen:  $\pm 10$  times what is needed for universal ECE
- Corruption happens even *within* ECE sector



# Part 2. Country experiences

Key messages in advance:

- Universal ECE is feasible: financially, practically, and in terms of human resources
- Some countries are making smart choices, others less so
- What makes the difference is political will and capacity for sound policy development and implementation
- The latter is now the weakest link



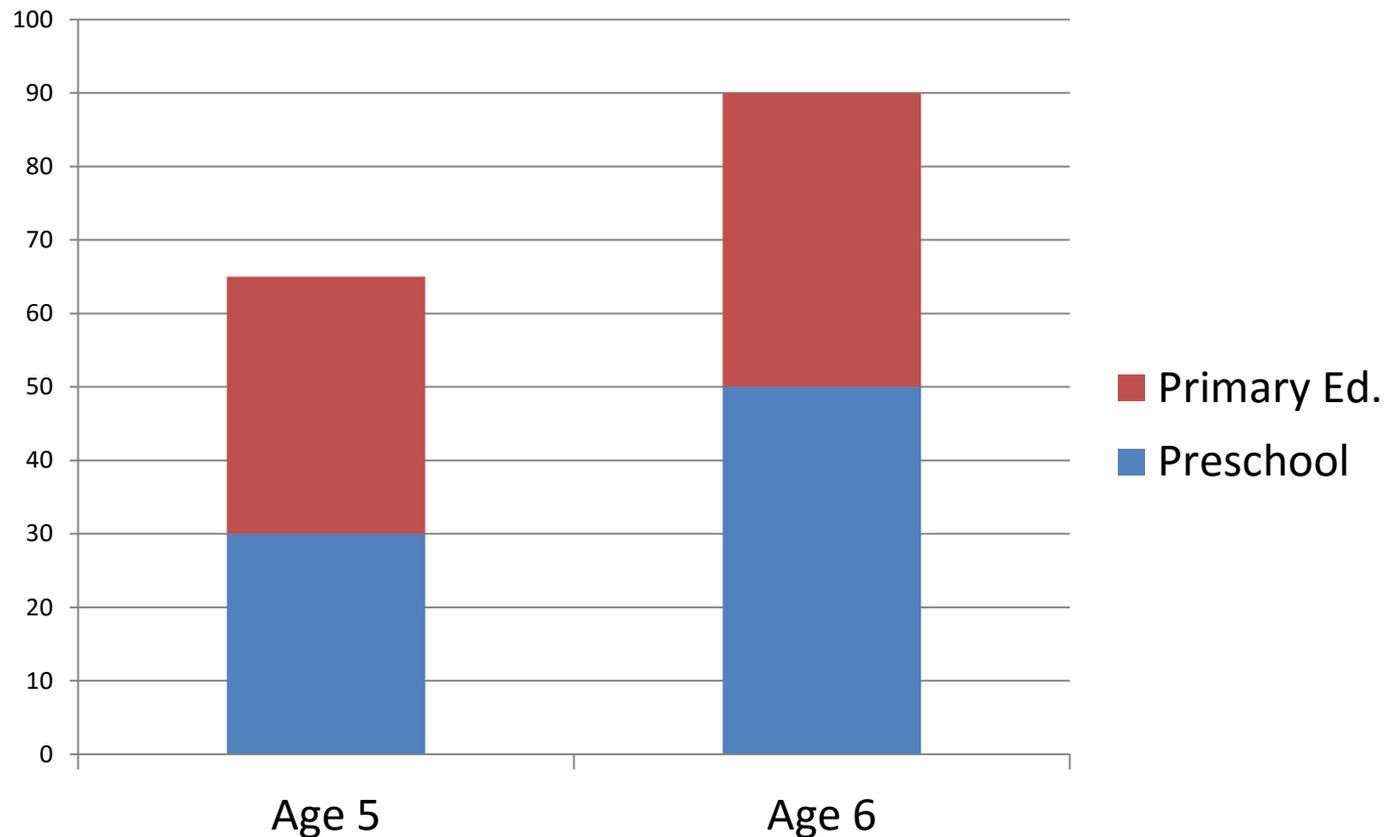
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# Tanzania

Primary school starts at age 7; preschool is for ages 5 and 6. However, many children of 6 and even 5 are in primary school. They are already paid for but in the wrong place. This problem is very easy to resolve but goes unnoticed.

## Primary and preschool enrolment at ages 5 and 6 (2007/09)

Source: van Ravens using estimations based on EMIS-data



# Uganda (1)

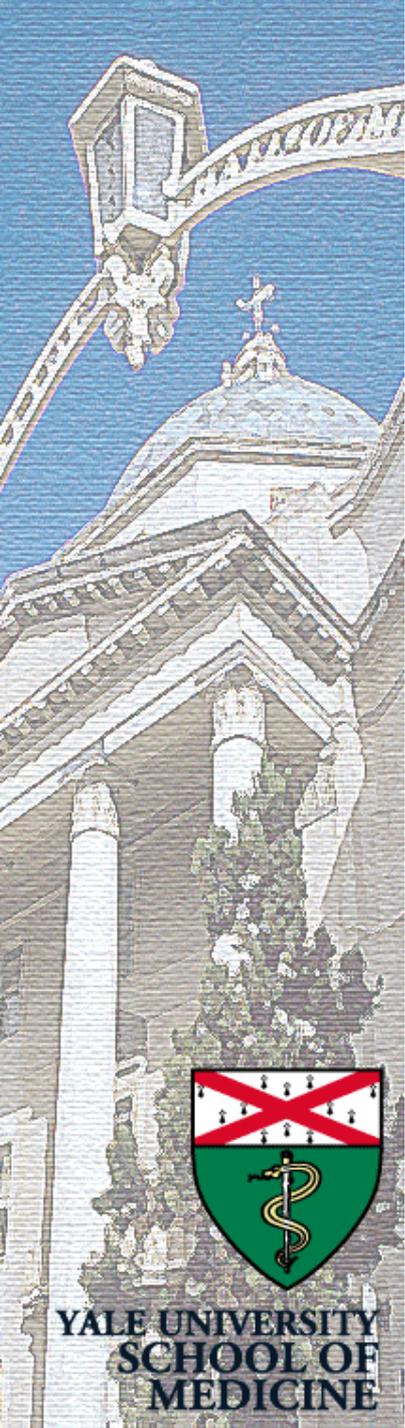
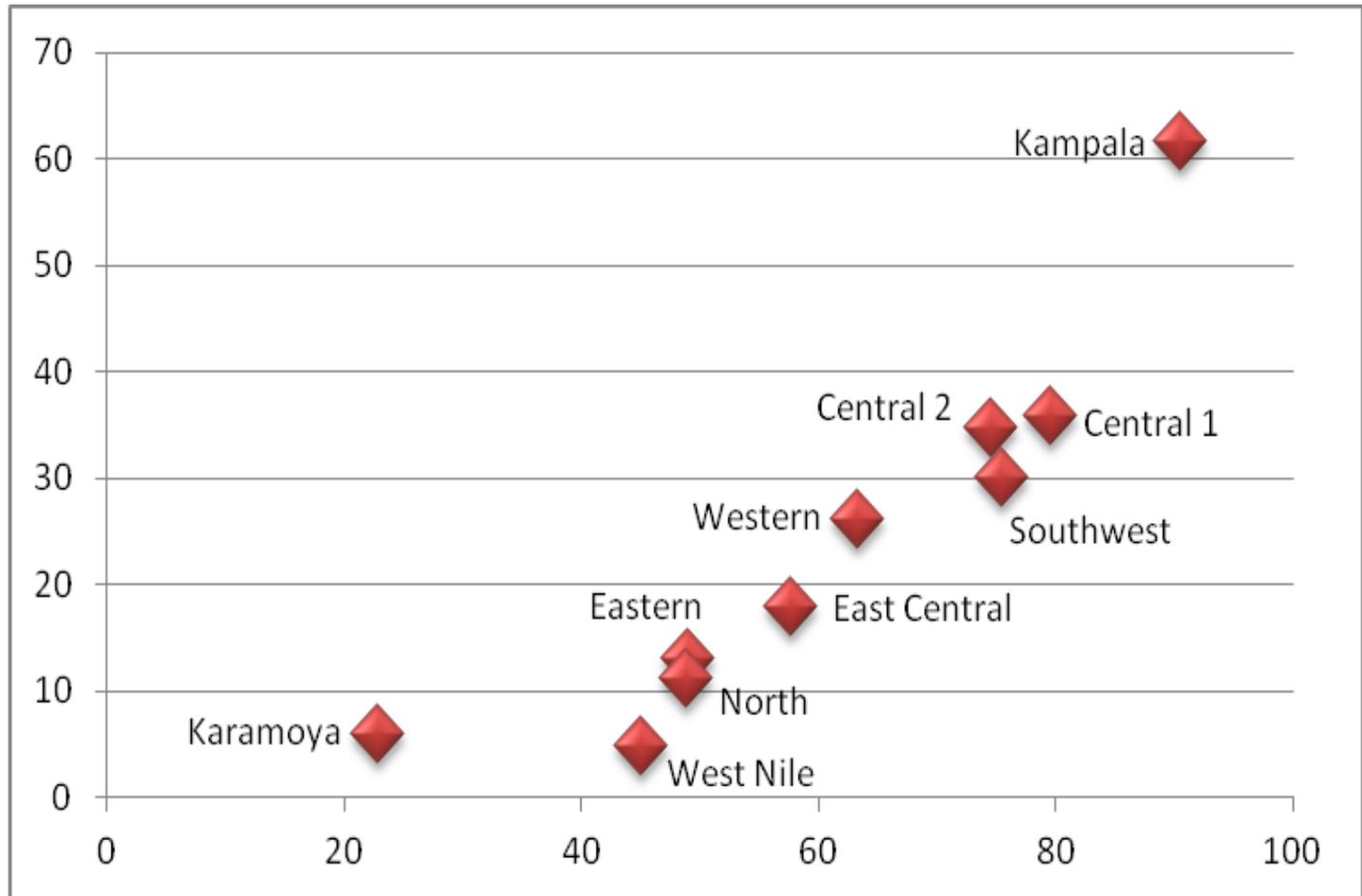
- Low official ECE enrolment: 6.6% (2011)
- But a survey found 41.4% attendance, *despite zero government funding*
- Explanation of this gap: many commercial and religious preschools are not registered
- These can be upgraded at relatively low costs
- Faith-based organizations (Catholic, Muslim, Protestant) provide land to build nurseries
- A per capita contribution of 3,000 Shillings per child per month can reduce disparities. This costs 1% of education budget



# Uganda (2)

## Net Attendance in Preschool by Female Literacy Rate

Source: van Ravens and Behrman, using DHS 2011



# Indonesia

- As in Uganda: no substantial public funding
- Expansion is driven by local initiatives (“a popular movement”) rather than the market, supported by a large World Bank project of community based centers and UNICEF’s Taman Posyandu (health posts with KG)
- But disparities persist (as in Uganda), exacerbated by decentralization: poor districts are in no position to universalize ECE. Marginalized children excluded.
- General finding:
  - Without Government funding, enrolment may reach a level of 70%, with unacceptable disparities
  - Universal ECE requires *some degree* of public funding



# Nepal

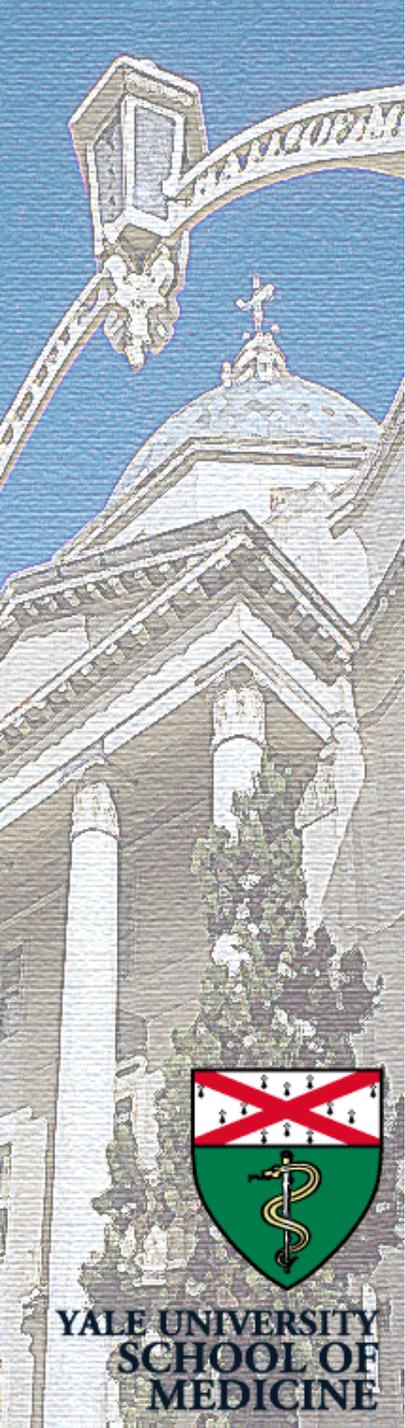
- Primary school starts at 5. Small centers, close to the home, provide ECE for ages 3 and 4
- Government pays teachers a stipend of about 25% of a normal salary. Parents top-up. The higher the village the higher the stipend
- Nepal was on its way to 70% enrolment
- But SDG 4.2 is now frustrating progress. Government focuses on school readiness programs at age 4
- Age 3 is no longer a priority



# Azerbaijan

- As in Nepal: priority to providing a one year school-readiness program
- In Azerbaijan this concerns age 5
- Interesting: strong and possibly decisive role for Ministry of Finance
- Framework on next slide may explain





	<b>RETURNS <u>WITHIN</u> THE EDUCATION SECTOR</b>	<b>RETURNS <u>BEYOND</u> THE EDUCATION SECTOR</b>
<b>SHORT TERM RETURNS</b>	E.G. LESS GRADE REPETITION AND DROP-OUT; BETTER ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT	E.G. BETTER YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY; LESS CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE
<b>LONG TERM RETURNS</b>	NONE	E.G. HIGHER INCOME AND TAX REVENUE; BETTER HEALTH, LESS HEALTH SPENDING; LESS WELFARE

Most of the returns on investment materialize beyond the education sector (free rider problem).

For political use, therefore, the productivity argument must be internalized by the President's Office and Ministry of Finance, not just Education

# Timor-Leste

- The quality paradox:
- Ministry insists on a university degree (Bacharelado) as qualification requirement for preschool teachers
- This was based on research from OECD countries
- But there is no such degree in Timor-Leste...
- So the country loses 5 years of progress: 1 year for course development plus 4 years of study before the first small group of students graduate
- These mostly urban graduates are unlikely to move to the remote jungle areas with the highest needs and minority languages. This is a global issue
- In short: mis-perceptions of quality make expansion unnecessarily difficult and frustrate progress



# A broader view of quality

- The Madrasa Early Childhood Program has all the answers. Kenyan case is presented in session 3!
- In Uganda: intensive training of *local* women, followed by frequent mentoring
- Trainees may have limited prior education. This is compensated by their strong motivation and their dedication to children and the community
- This is a result of a four year process of community sensitization/mobilization to secure sustainability
- In Zanzibar, the Madrasa program is reaching many children. However, there is now a (donor-driven) tendency towards school-based ECE.



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# Colombia

- A leading country in ECE/ECD.
- The ICBF operates an excellent home-based program “Madres Comunitarias”
- High coverage; very cost-effective
- But currently at risk of being replaced by larger ECD centers because of low esteem of home-based provision



# Pakistan

- Home-*visiting* is another cost-effective alternative to preschool enrolment, especially for children up to age 3, perhaps age 4
- Lady Health Workers: a nation-wide service of home-visiting nurses
- A psycho-social component (early stimulation) was introduced against no additional recurrent costs (only development costs and training)



# Former Eastern Bloc

- Attempts to enhance the system of Patronage Nurses by adding socio-psychological elements, since access to the Soviet / Yugoslav kindergarten is limited (too expensive to scale back up)
- Short programs are seen as cost-effective alternatives
- An emerging standard is the 600 hour program:  
3 hours \* 5 days \* 40 weeks
- Can be half-day job, or a full-day job teaching 2 shifts
- In the “All to Preschool” initiative in Montenegro, the short program is financed by raising the fee in the full-day program. No additional costs to Government
- Decentralization is an issue throughout Eastern Bloc



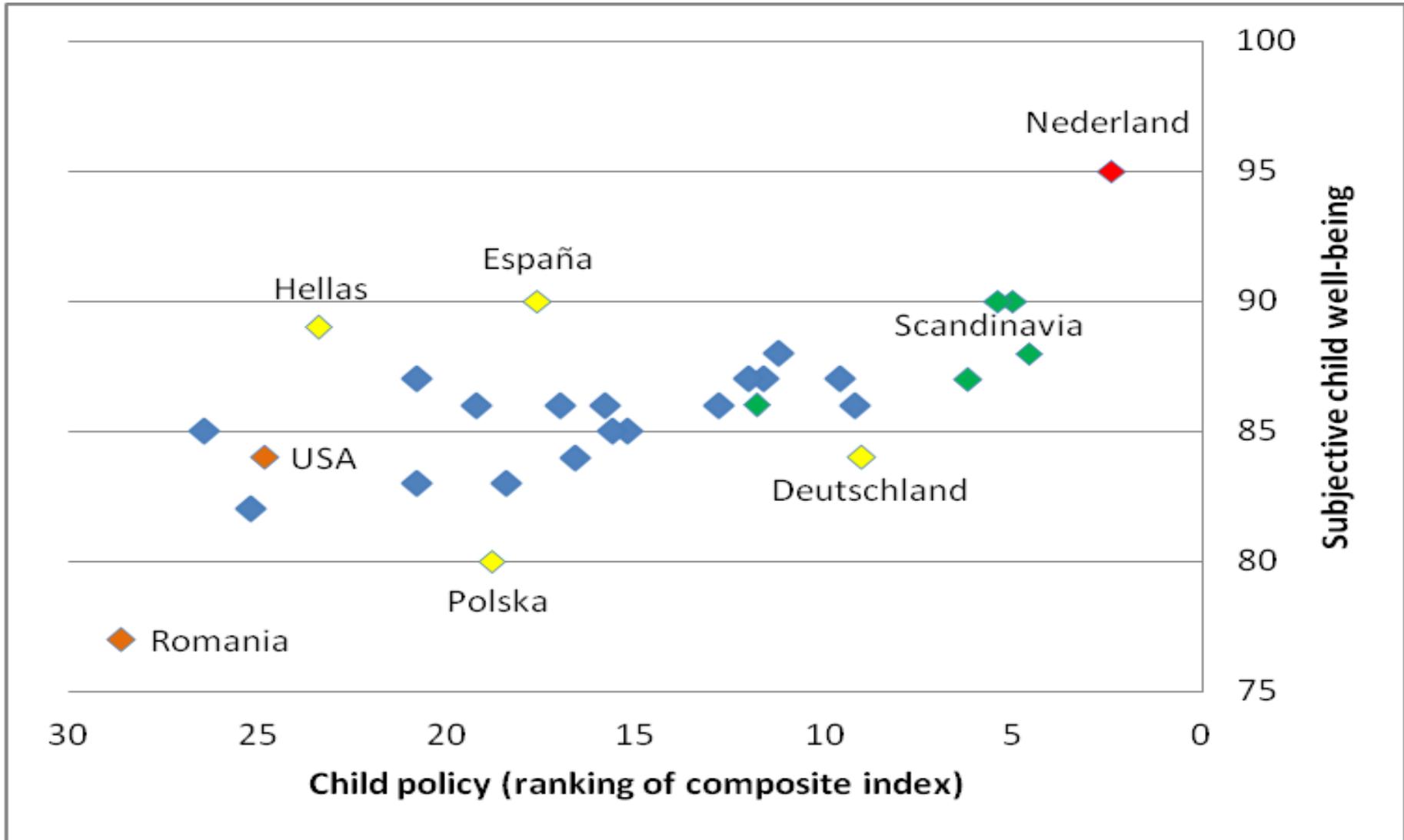
# Kenya

- In decentralization processes, ECE is often among the services or functions that are devolved to local authorities, while primary and higher forms of education remain the purview of central government
- However, local authorities often lack the capacity and the resources to expand ECE
- E.g., Kenya (the best performing country in East Africa with 70% enrolment) is now caught in a dispute on who pays ECE teachers: Federal or County Government

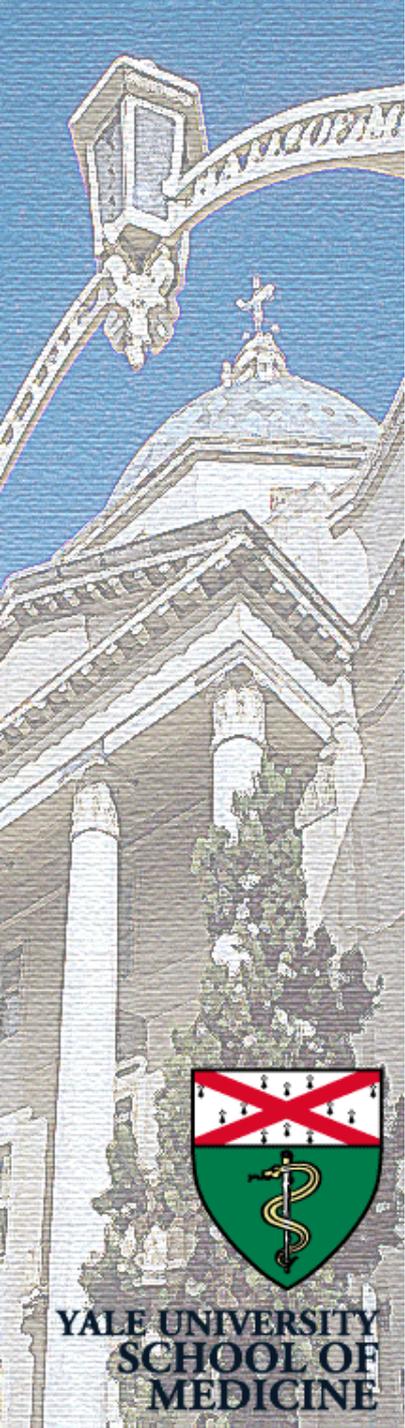
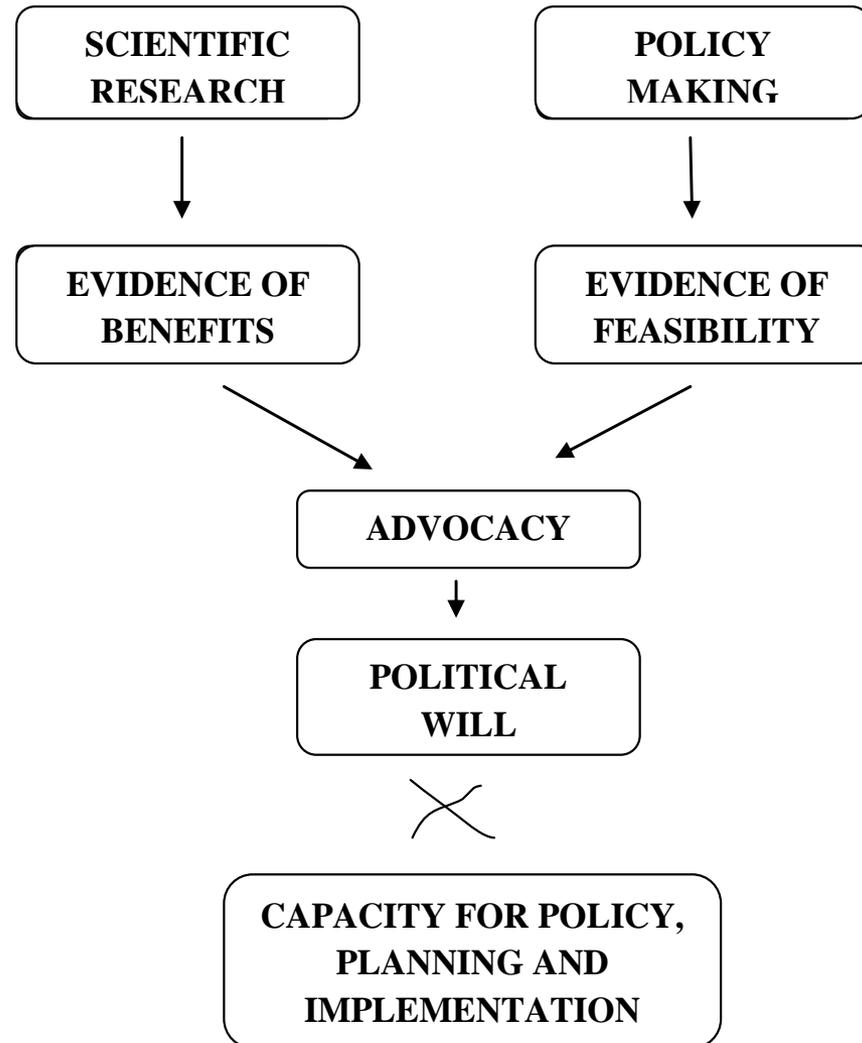


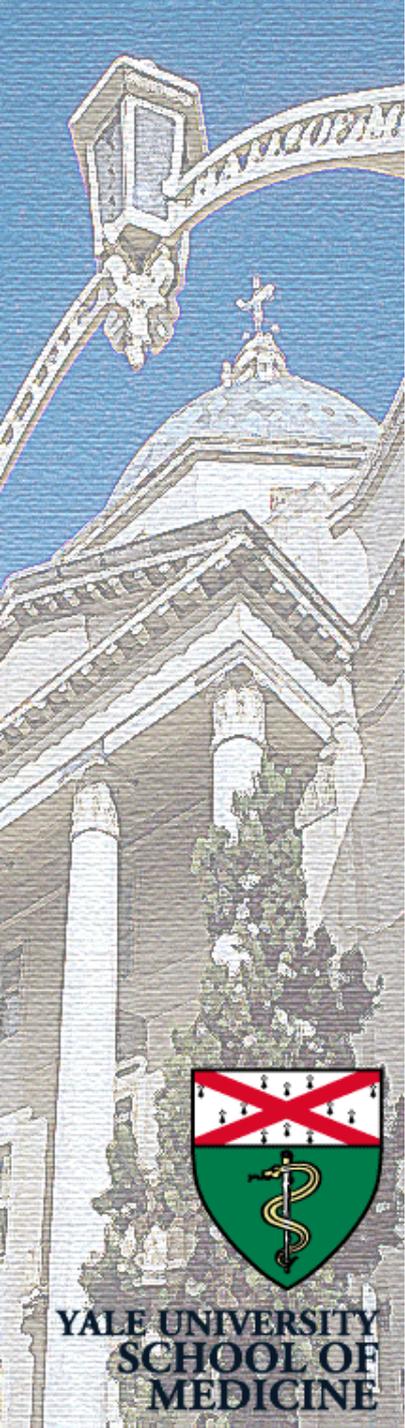
# Child Well-being in High Income Countries

Source: Jan van Ravens (2015) Child Policy in Young Nation States



# Part 3





## Opportunities

- Lower fertility rates and more GDP growth
- Bringing commercial and religious providers into the ECE system
- Cost-effective alternatives such as home-based ECE and home-visiting for the youngest

## Concerns

- Weak national and local capacity for policy development, planning and implementation
- Rigid (not localized) thinking about quality
- Unclear boundaries between ECE and primary education
- Disparities due to expansion without funding
- Tax evasion and corruption
- SDG 4.2 counterproductive

## Recommendations

- For sustainability, the ECE sector must emancipate itself from philanthropy (NGOs and donors)
- But philanthropy can assist in this transition by focusing on enhancing capacity for self-reliance, rather than on funding programs directly
- Instead of international consultants who “write” the ECE policy, we need national policy makers who negotiate the policy
- Planning, finance and implementation must be dealt with in the policy, not later



# Thank you.

This presentation is based on a number of reports on expanding and improving early childhood education in various countries. These reports can be obtained by contacting the author at [van.ravens@yale.edu](mailto:van.ravens@yale.edu) or [janvanravens@hotmail.com](mailto:janvanravens@hotmail.com).

A general analysis can be found in an essay titled “Child Policy in Young Nation States”, posted at the website of the US National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.



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