

# Early Childhood Development Policies in Eastern and Southern Africa

Regional Meeting on Measurement of Early Childhood Development in Eastern and Southern Africa

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# Overview of multisectoral ECD policies in Eastern & Southern Africa

ECD policies are in place in **13 countries**, some are outdated (over 10 years old)



In **five countries** - Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe – new ECD policies being developed

Burundi and Comoros developed an ECD strategy

No information for **three countries** – Eswatini, South Sudan, and Somalia



# Features of newly developed policies

- National ownership enhanced
- Variety of coordination mechanisms applied
- Evidence and costing are determining priority actions
- Improved governance, accountability and monitoring



# Two frameworks are guiding policies and actions

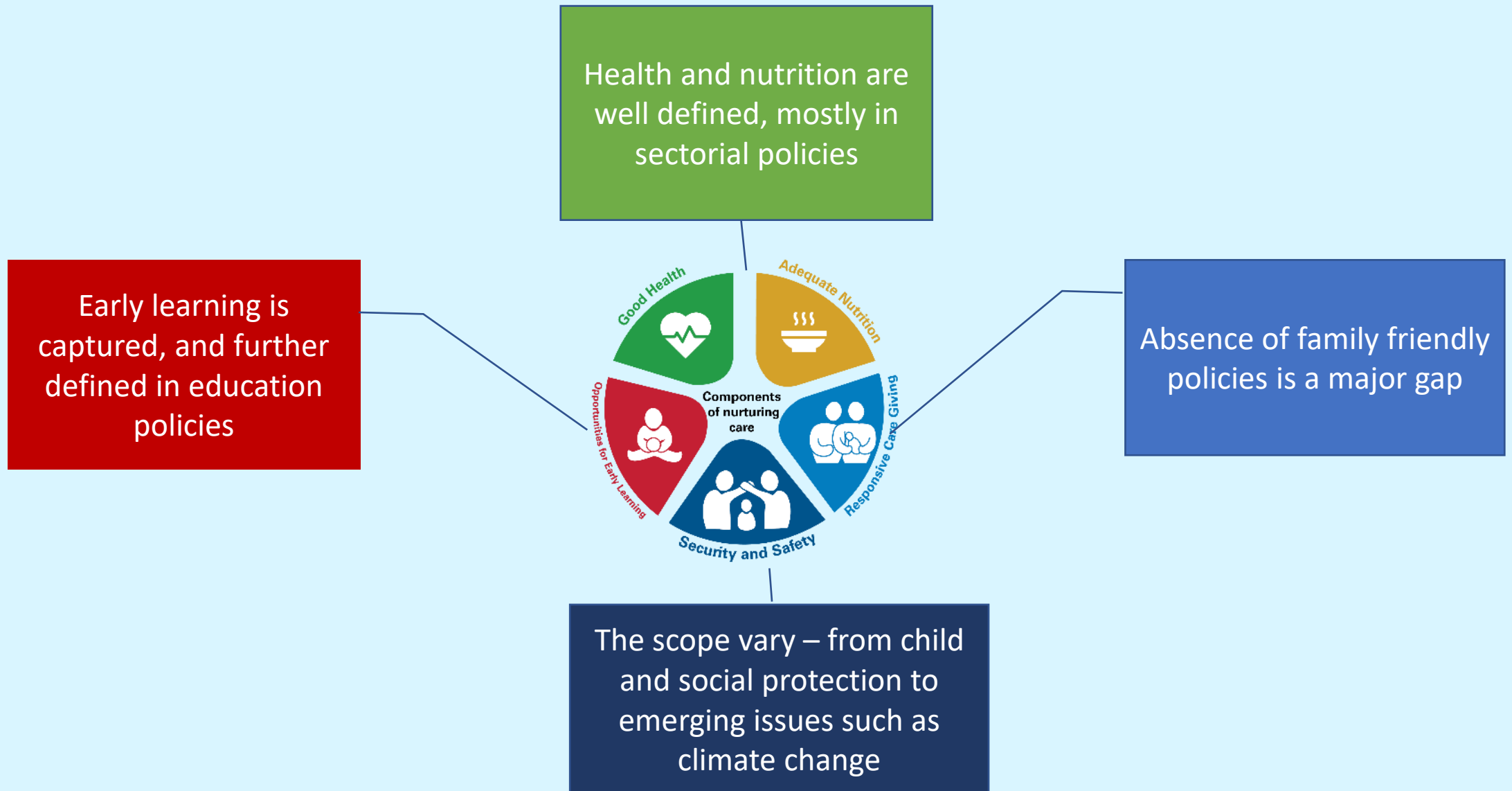


What the child's brain and body needs



Enabling environment for nurturing care:  
Policy, services, communities

# Main components of ECD policies

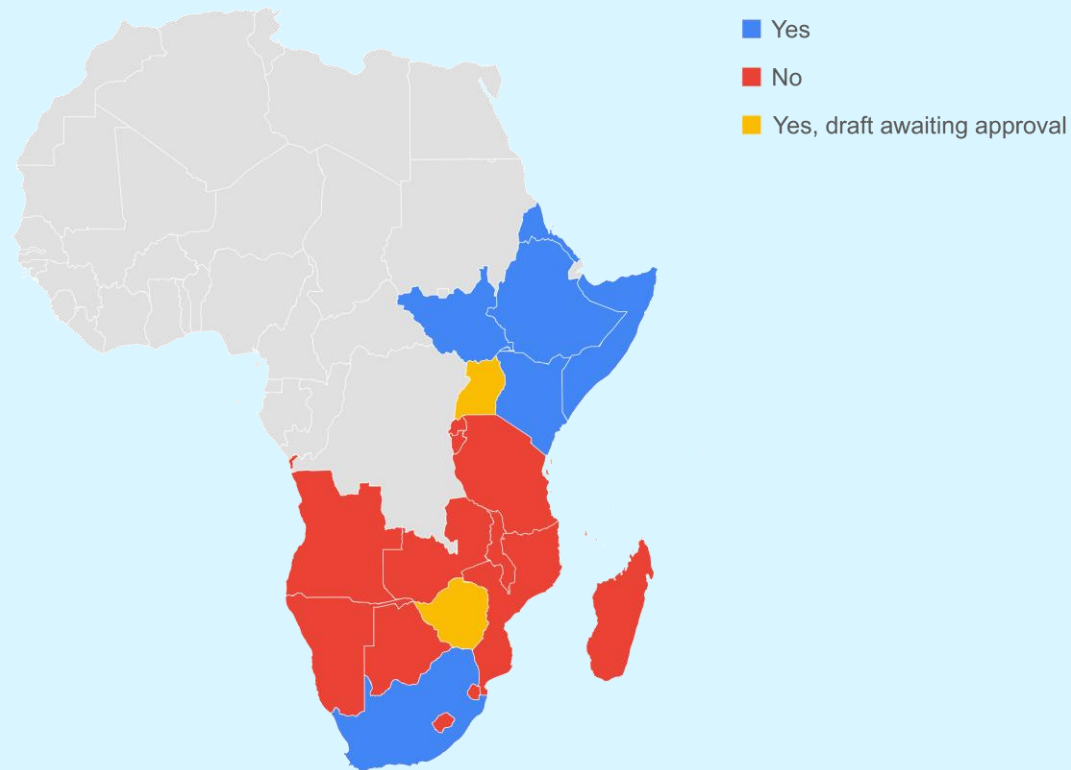




**Example of critical gaps in policies for young children and their caregivers**

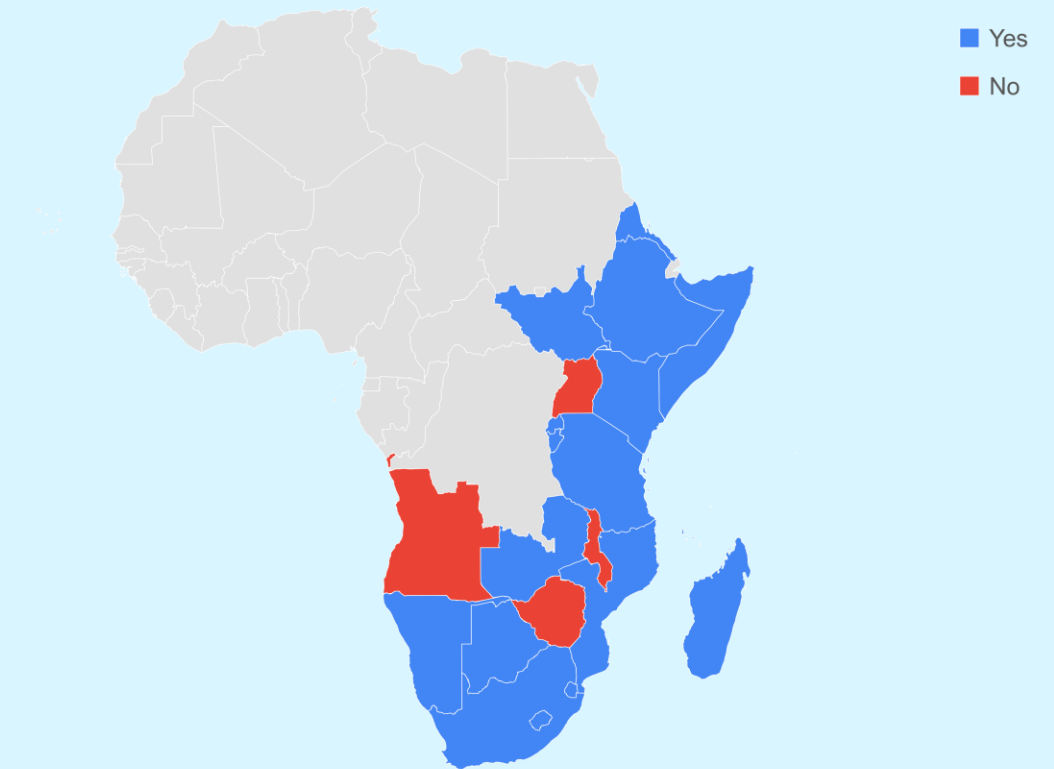
# The absence of a stand-alone pre-primary policy is noticeable, and compensated with a strategy and/or implementation plan

Stand alone pre-primary policy



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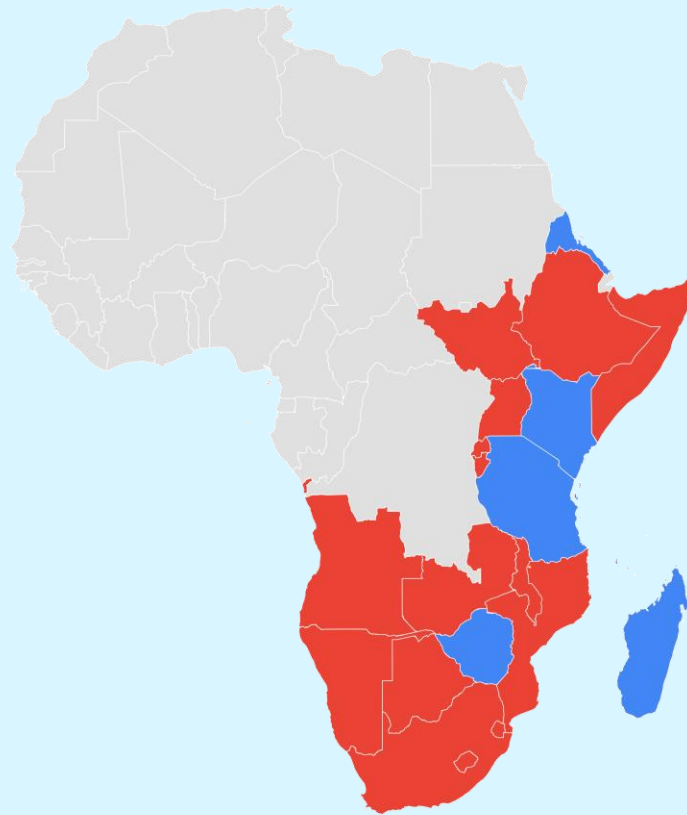
National pre-primary strategic or implementation plan



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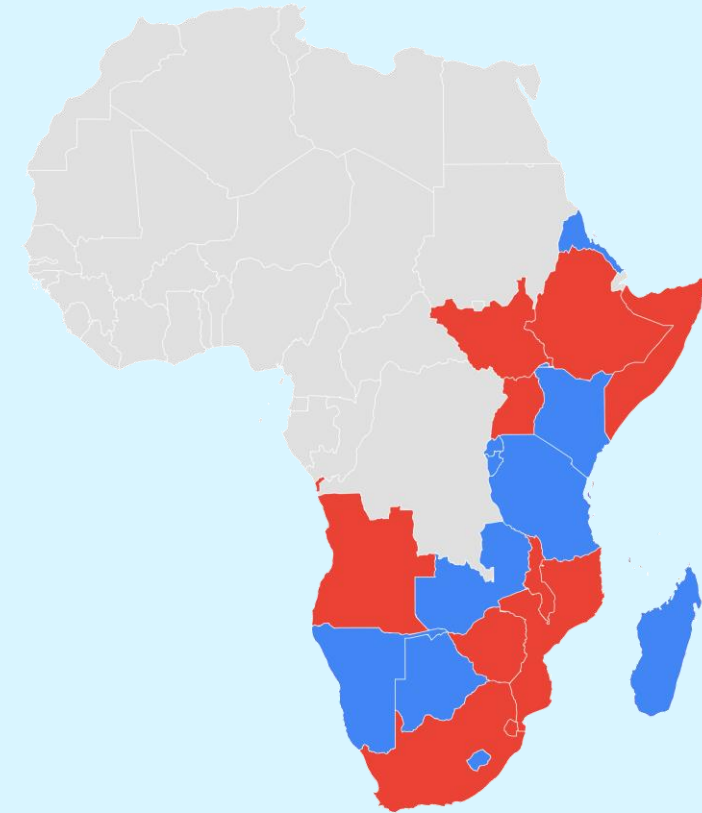
# A critical policy issue that is preventing the poorest to benefit from ECE

Pre-primary is compulsory



■ Yes  
■ No

Pre-primary is free

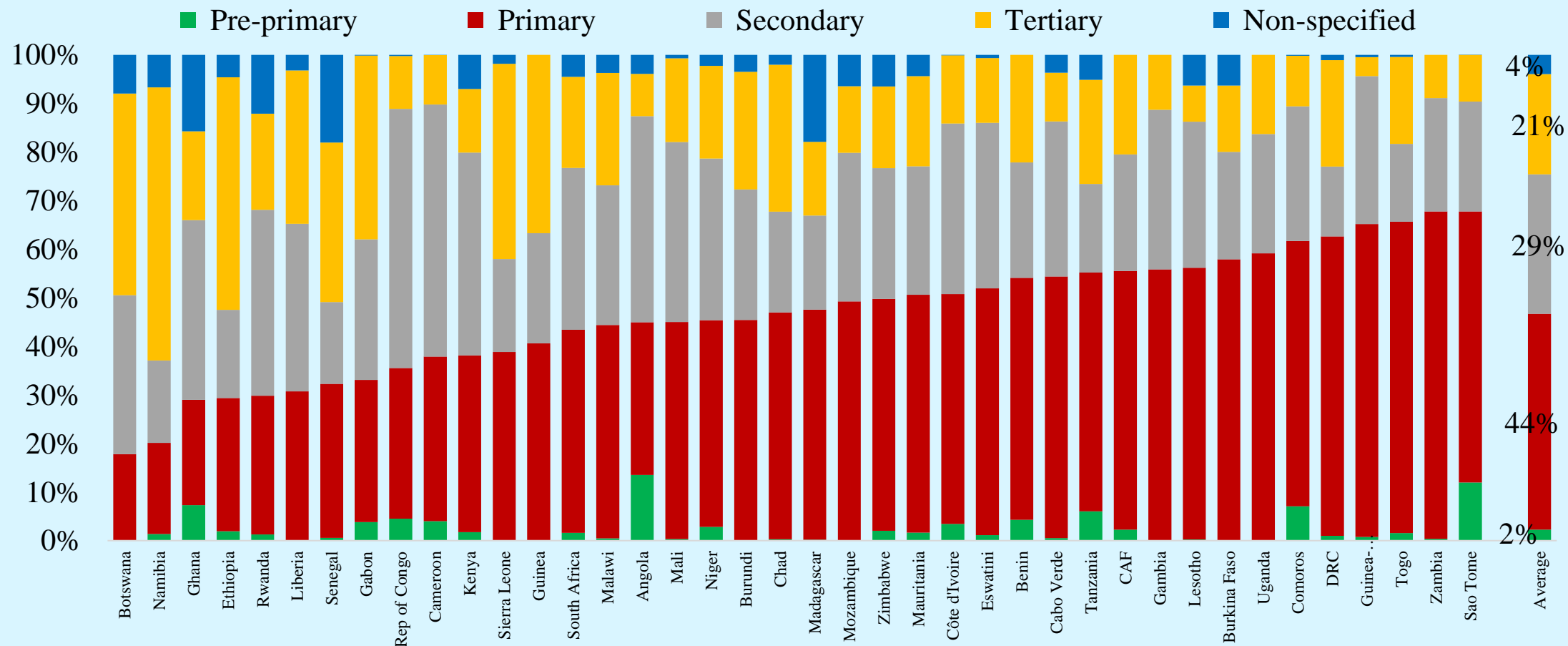


■ Yes  
■ No



# Pre-primary, least funded level of education

Figure 2.6: Expenditure by level of education in African countries, 2019 or latest available (as a % of total government expenditure on education)







# Critical policies that support responsive caregiving


- Parents need skills, time, and resources
- Some parents need all the support they can get
- **Family-friendly policies:** promote minimum wage, paid parental leave, breastfeeding breaks at work, affordable childcare, universal health insurance...

INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT HELP CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SOCIETIES THRIVE.

POLICIES THAT SUPPORT FAMILIES INCLUDE:

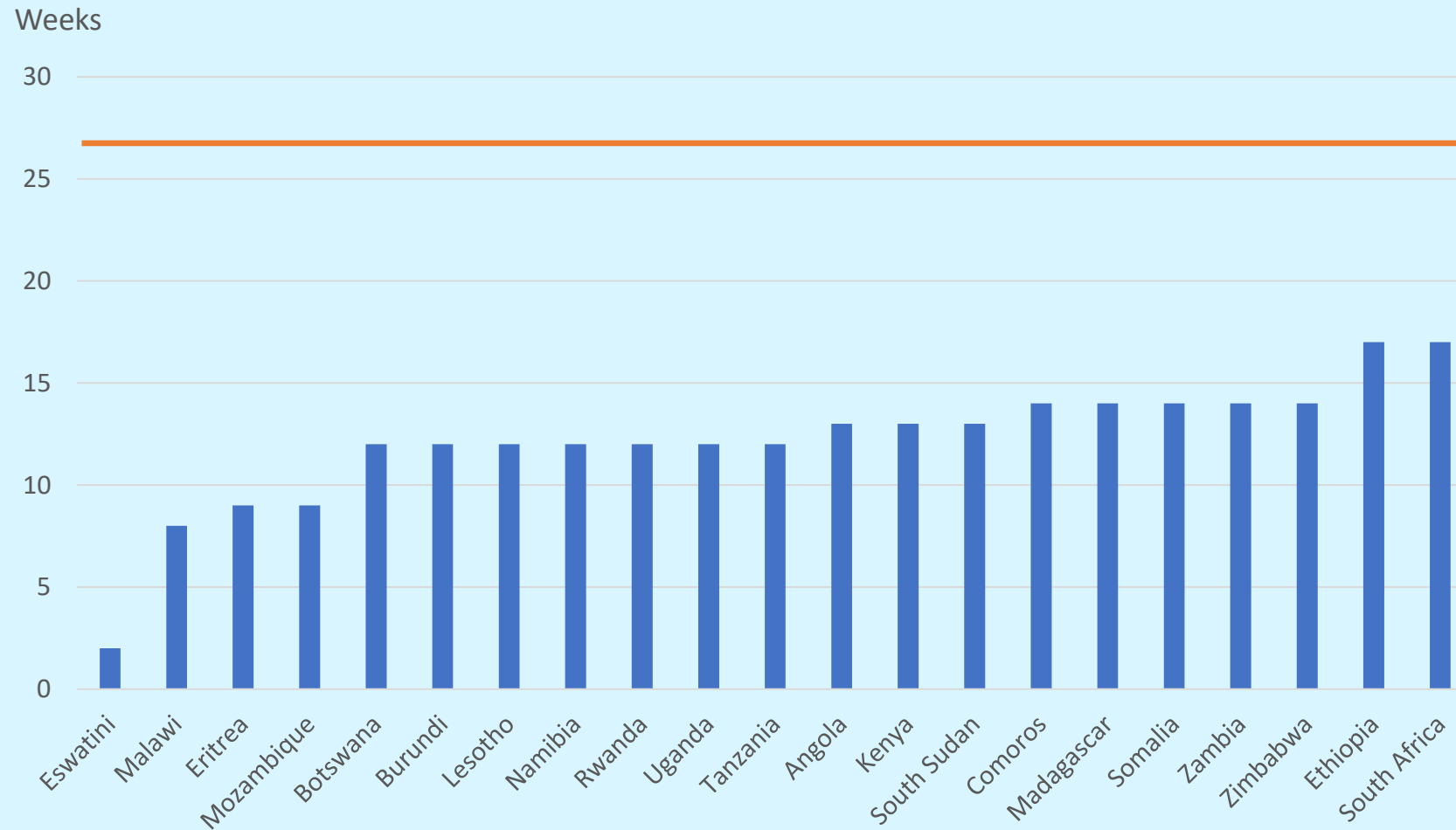
-  PAID MATERNITY LEAVE
-  CHILD BENEFITS
-  AFFORDABLE QUALITY CHILDCARE



 World Health Organization

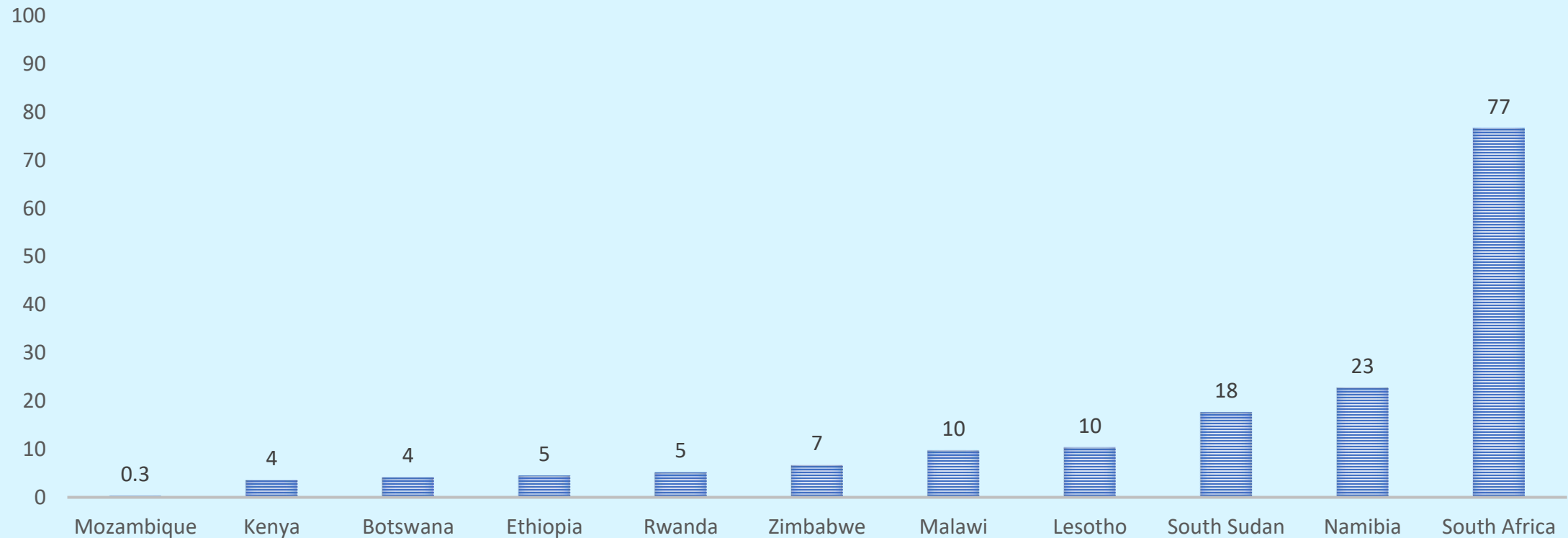
EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE RESPONSIVE CARE.

# Is the duration of paid maternal leave sufficient for mothers to provide nurturing care?

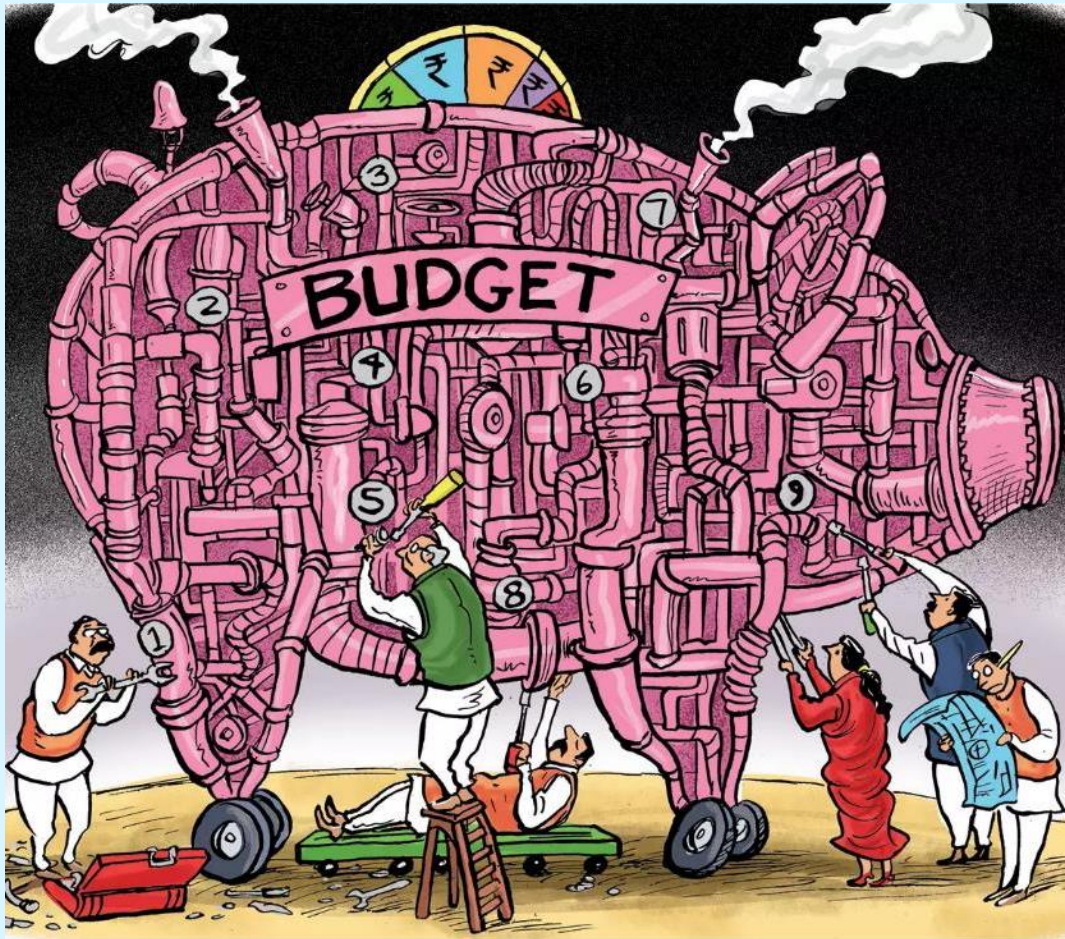


# Family cash benefits are not meeting the needs of the poorest

Proportion of children/households receiving child or family cash benefits, by country



## What the data tells us...



**ECD financing is the major bottleneck in creating enabling environment for young children to thrive**

# Frontloaded expenditure in children is the smart thing to do!

Giving back 13% annually

Loss of 37% of the adult income

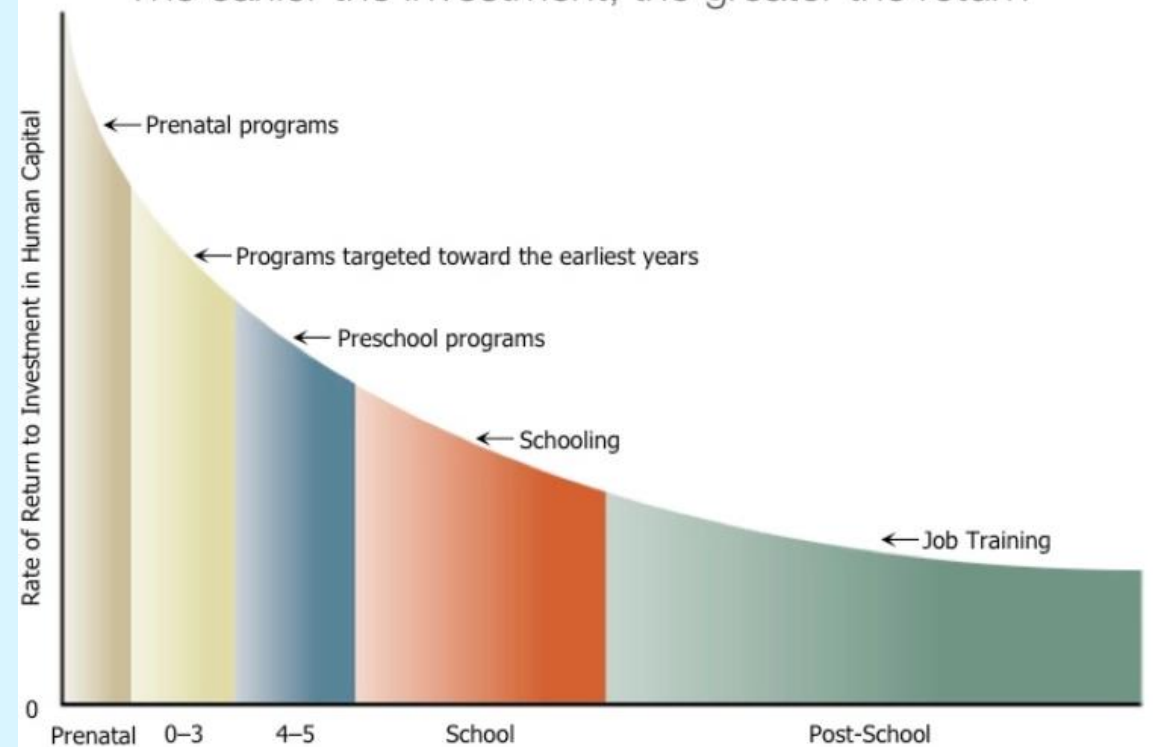
2-3 times greater loss than current health expenditure

Return to investment: 2-18\$

The highest return from investing as early as possible, in disadvantaged families

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS A SMART INVESTMENT

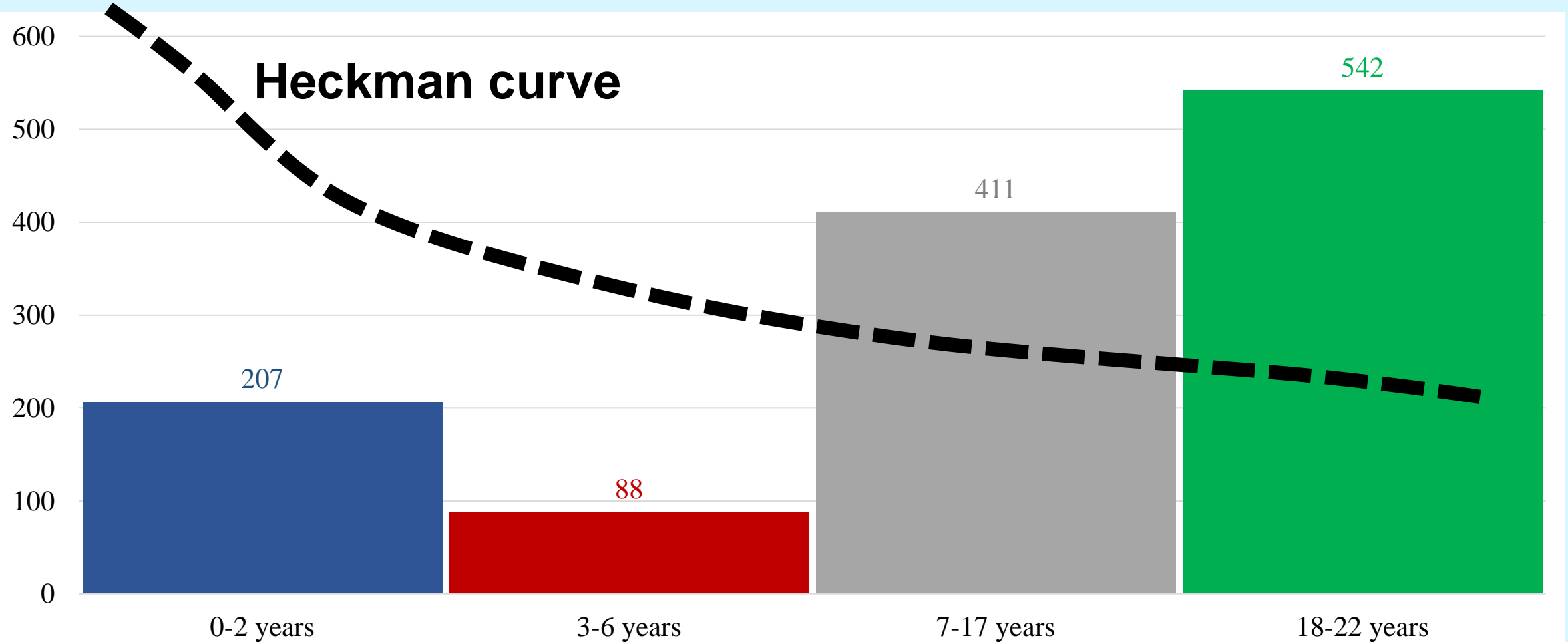
The earlier the investment, the greater the return



Source: James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics

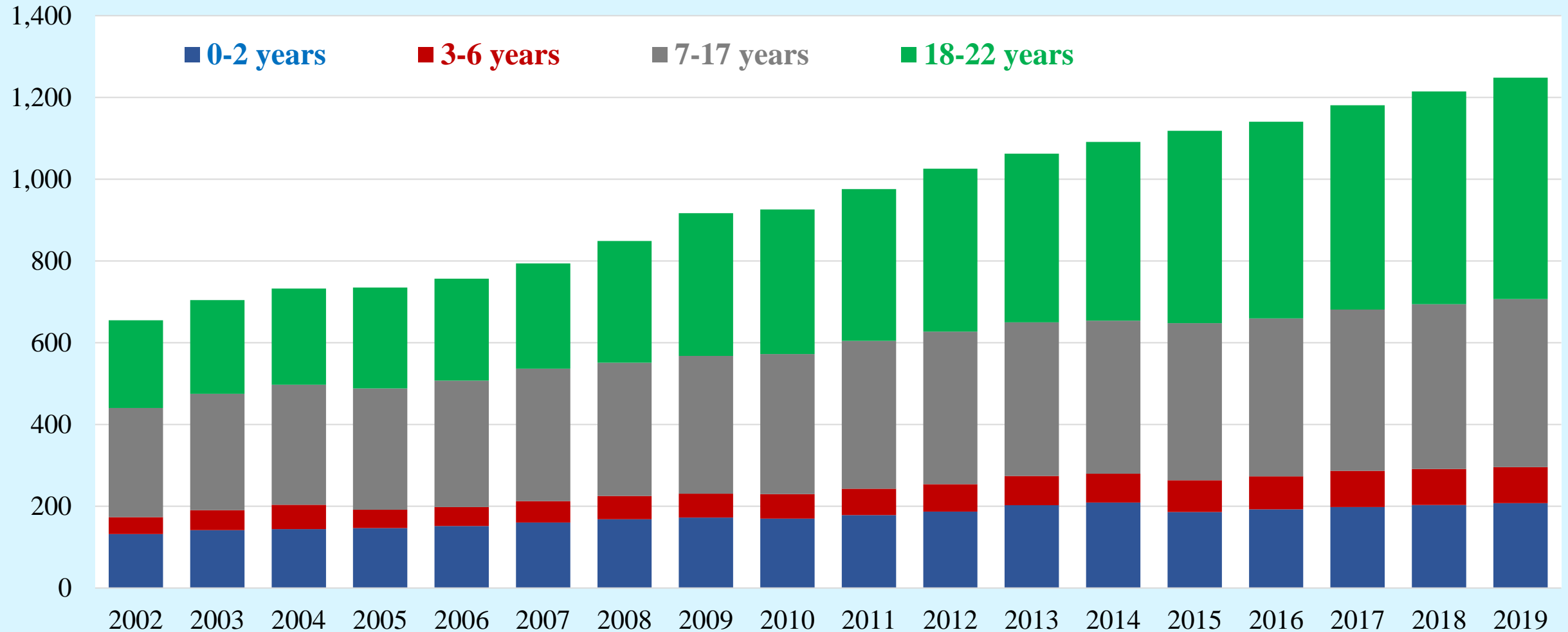
# Currently – too little, too late – backloaded expenditure

Avg per capita government and donor spending on human capital sectors by age group in ESA, 2019 (in US\$)



# The gap is increasing over years

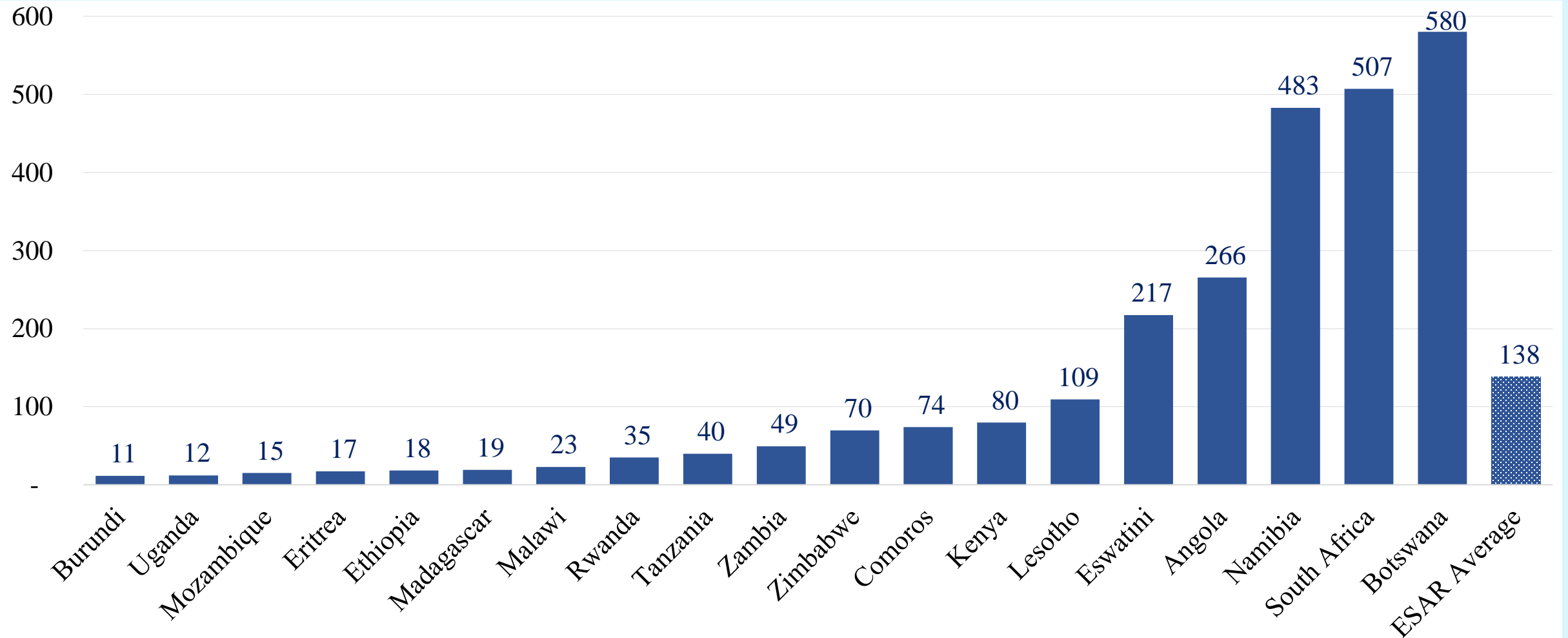
Avg per capita government and donor spending on human capital sectors by age groups in ESA, 2002-19 (in US\$)





# Low investment in early years in most countries

Per capita government expenditure in early (0-6) years in ESA, 2019 (in US\$)



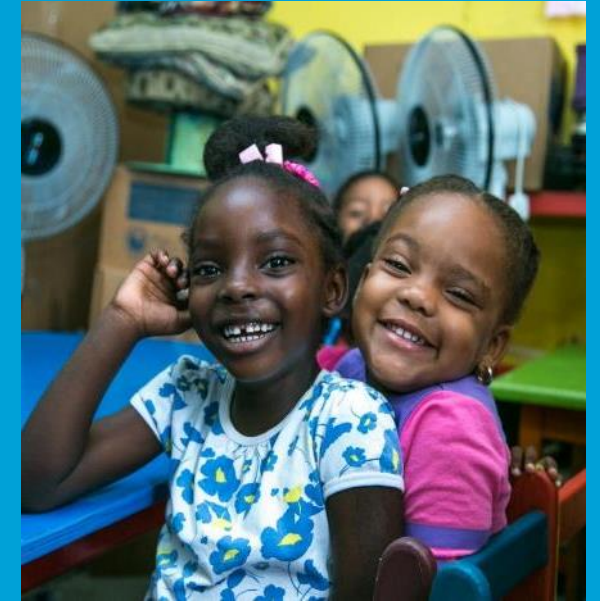
**What do we need to do  
to reverse the trend?**





Increase investment in early childhood development, starting with the youngest and the most deprived

*If we change the beginning of the story, we will change the whole story!*



# Thank you

