



Strong foundations

Early childhood care
and education

Committee for Economic
Development,
Washington, 7 March 2007

Education for All Dakar Goals and Millennium Development Goals

EFA Goals

1. Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education
2. Universal primary education by 2015
3. Learning and life skills programmes for youth and adults
4. 50% increase in adult literacy rates by 2015
5. Gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015
6. Improving quality of education

MDGs

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality, and other health goals

No country in need should be denied international assistance



Thinking comprehensively

Holistic programmes encompass:

- Nutrition
- Health and hygiene
- Physical and emotional development
- Social skills
- Education

Acting early pays off

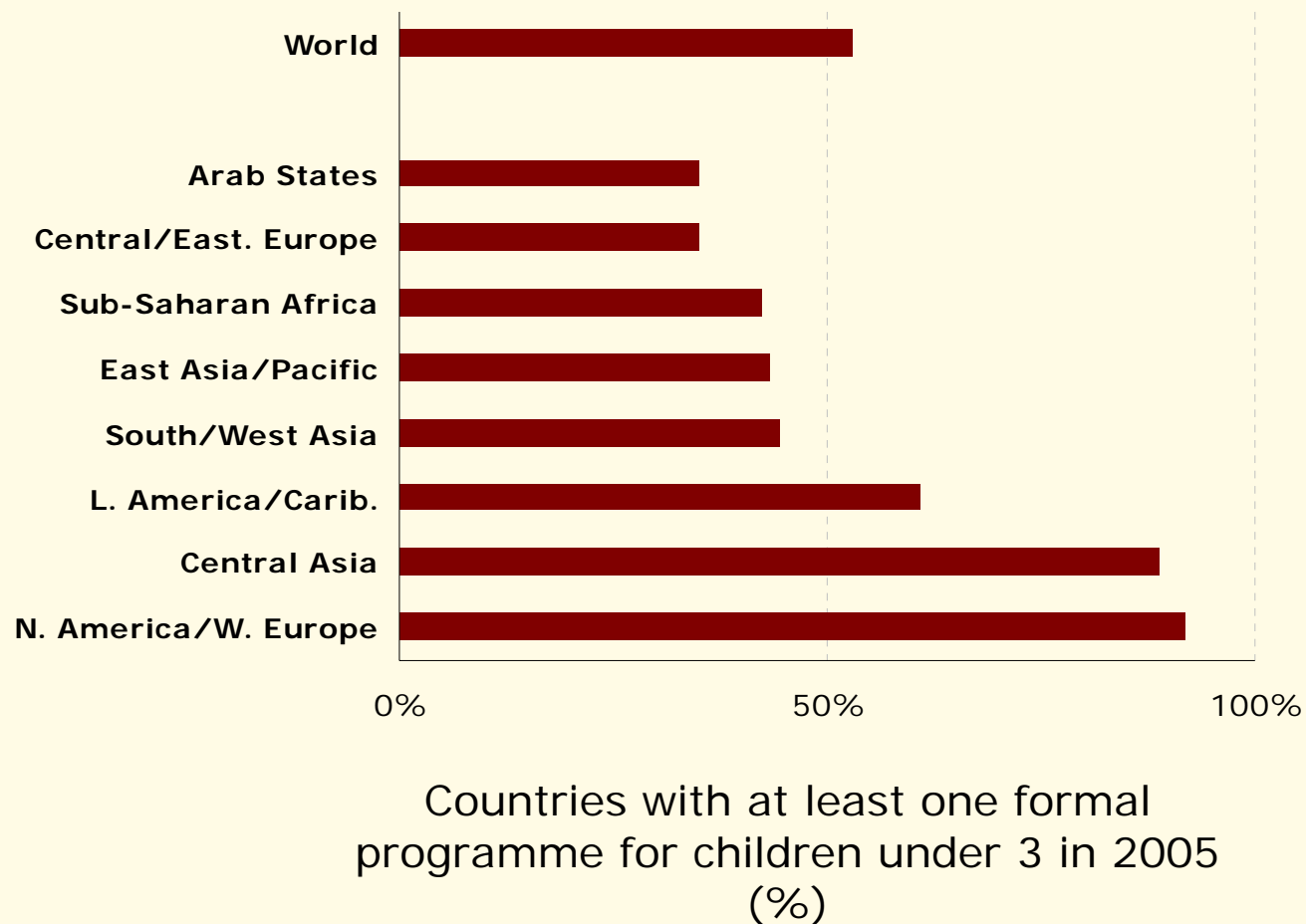
'It is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy.'

James Heckman, Nobel economics prizewinner

- Most rigorous studies on benefits come from developed countries
- U.S. High/Scope Perry study of low-income African-American children
 - higher IQ at age 5
 - enhanced success at school
 - higher earning at age 40
- High returns to programmes in India, Egypt, Colombia, Bolivia, Indonesia
- Returns greatest for poorest and most disadvantaged children

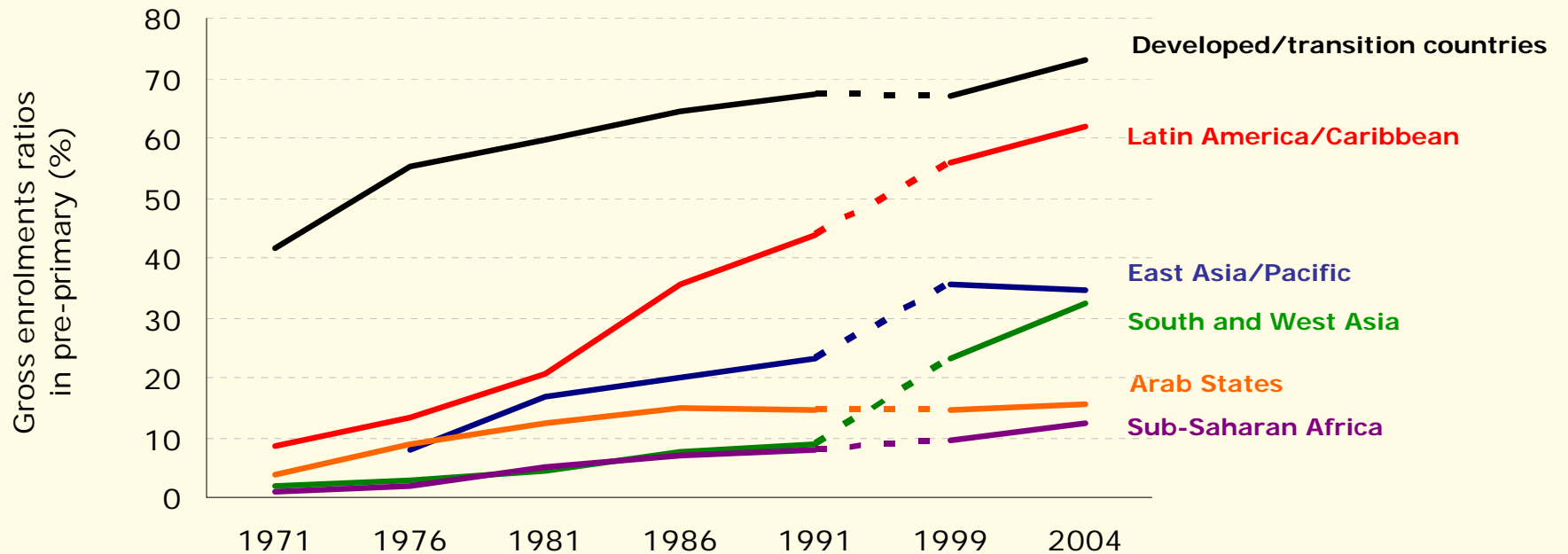
Programmes for the under-3s

Many countries lack programmes addressing health, nutrition, care and education of the under 3s, a critical period in the child's life



Regional trends in pre-primary

A three-fold increase in pre-primary enrolments over 30 years
More than 1 in 3 children now enrolled but huge regional differences

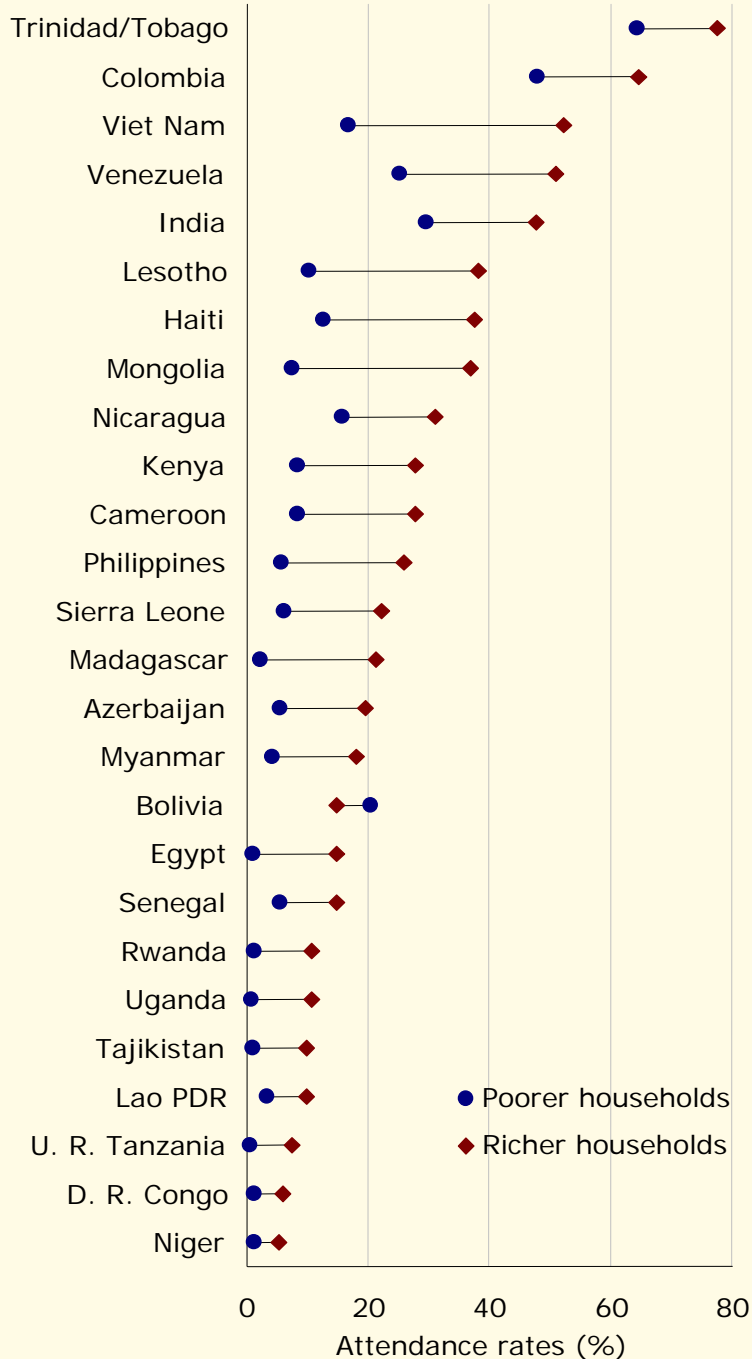


Measuring child well-being in rich countries

Dimensions of child well-being	Average ranking position (for all 6 dimensions)	Dimension 1 Material well-being	Dimension 2 Health and safety	Dimension 3 Educational well-being	Dimension 4 Family and peer relationships	Dimension 5 Behaviours and risks	Dimension 6 Subjective well-being
Netherlands	4.2	10	2	6	3	3	1
Sweden	5.0	1	1	5	15	1	7
Denmark	7.2	4	4	8	9	6	12
Finland	7.5	3	3	4	17	7	11
Spain	8.0	12	6	15	8	5	2
Switzerland	8.3	5	9	14	4	12	6
Norway	8.7	2	8	11	10	13	8
Italy	10.0	14	5	20	1	10	10
Ireland	10.2	19	19	7	7	4	5
Belgium	10.7	7	16	1	5	19	16
Germany	11.2	13	11	10	13	11	9
Canada	11.8	6	13	2	18	17	15
Greece	11.8	15	18	16	11	8	3
Poland	12.3	21	15	3	14	2	19
Czech Republic	12.5	11	10	9	19	9	17
France	13.0	9	7	18	12	14	18
Portugal	13.7	16	14	21	2	15	14
Austria	13.8	8	20	19	16	16	4
Hungary	14.5	20	17	13	6	18	13
United States	18.0	17	21	12	20	20	-
United Kingdom	18.2	18	12	17	21	21	20

UNICEF 2007

OECD countries with insufficient data to be included in the overview: Australia, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, South Korea, Turkey.



Poverty limits access

- Higher attendance for children from richer households
- Lower attendance among poor who would benefit most
- Other limiting factors:
 - Lack of mother's secondary education
 - Living in rural households
 - Lack of birth certificate

Why the policy neglect?

Early childhood is still not a priority
in many developing countries

- Slow response to social and economic trends
- Role of the family vs role of the state
- Diversity of sector makes coordination difficult
- Child development research results not well known
- Lack of rigorous studies in developing countries
- Governments prioritize primary education
- International aid focuses on other education levels

Strong policies for young children: What is needed?

Policy Environment

- Top-level political endorsement
- A national early childhood policy grouping multiple players
- A lead agency to coordinate early childhood policies
- Integration in national development plans and PRSPs

Policy Elements

- Staffing, training and standards for all providers
- Explicit provision for disadvantaged and vulnerable
- Partnerships: NGOs, private sector and international agencies
- Financing: higher spending, targeting and more aid

Quality: what is needed

The quality of interaction between carer and child is the single most important determinant of programme success

- Better training and support for ECCE staff
- Working directly with parents
- Minimum standards covering private and public providers
- Continuity between home, ECCE and primary school
- Promoting inclusion
 - cultural diversity and gender equality
 - mother tongue learning
 - children with disabilities and other special needs

Financing ECCE: Finding the balance

How to allocate limited resources to children most in need?

Funding is public and private

Less than 10% of public education spending goes to pre-primary

Even in OECD countries, parents' share can run up to 60%

Universal coverage + extra support to disadvantaged children (OECD)

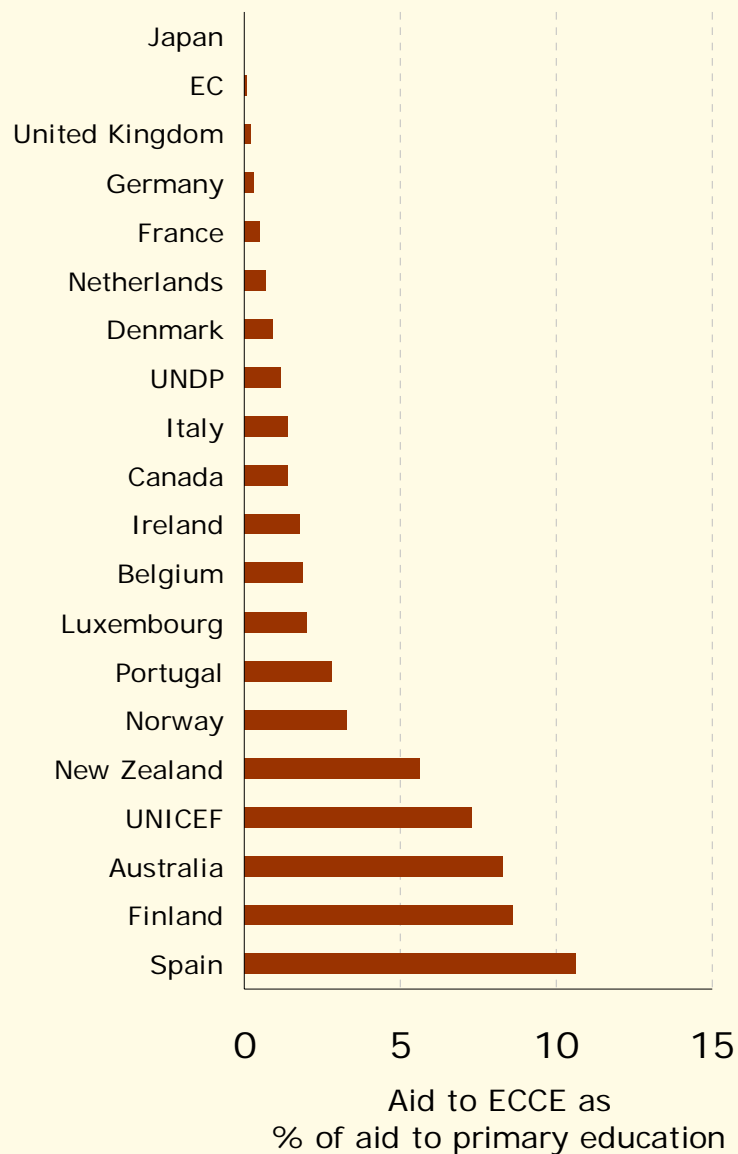
Income targeting

Geographical targeting
(remote areas, urban slums)

Targeting specific groups: disabled, those in emergency situations

A universal policy with targeted spending on most disadvantaged?

ECCE: A low priority for donors



Almost all donors allocate to pre-primary less than 10% of what they give to primary

Bilateral donors give priority to centre-based programmes for children from age 3

Contact Information

EFA Global Monitoring Report Team
c/o UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07
France

efareport@unesco.org
www.efareport.unesco.org

