



Early Childhood Development during COVID-19 Pandemic

*Keynote presentation during
webinar co-hosted by UNESCO IICBA & AfeCN on*

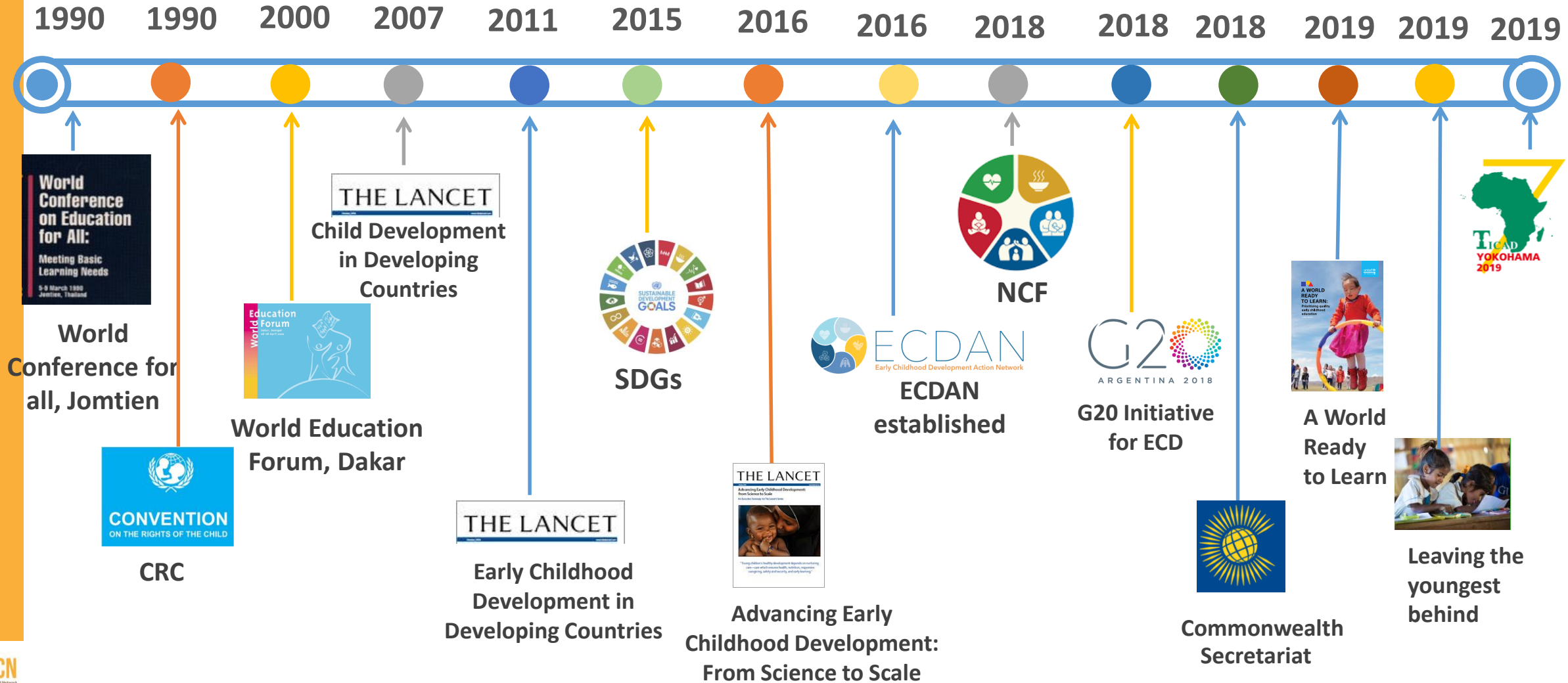
Distance Learning at Early Grade

Levels *Lynette Okengo, PhD*
24th June, 2020

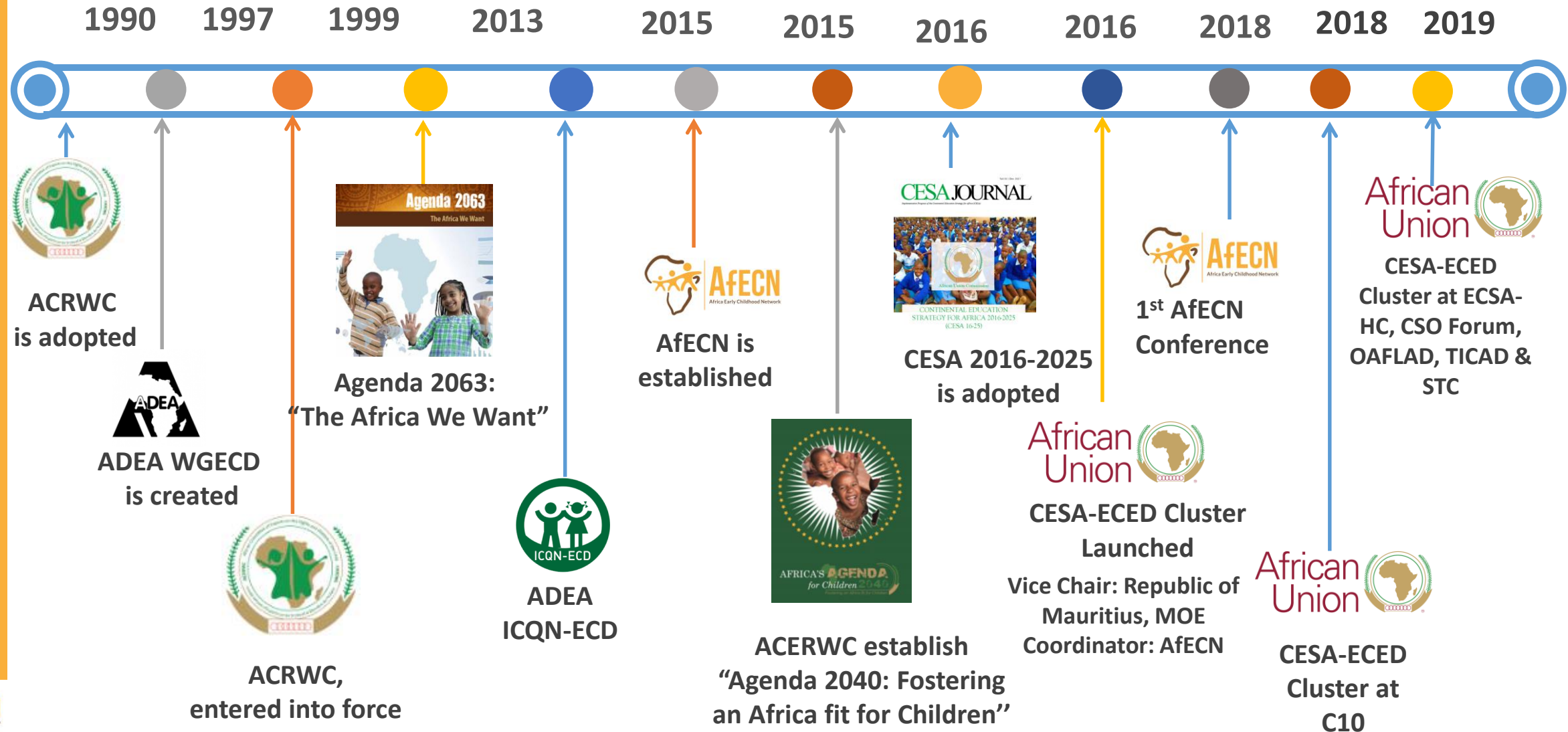
What we now know: ECD is central to economic and social development

- 1 The early years lay a foundation for future development
- 2 Biological and psychosocial risks during early childhood can lead to lasting deficits
- 3 Quality early experiences shape the developing brain
- 4 Quality pre-primary education has a positive effect on overall development, school readiness and future economic potential
- 5 Investments in quality programmes yields a high rate of return (up to 17%)

Where have we come from? The last decade has featured a growing global prioritization of ECD



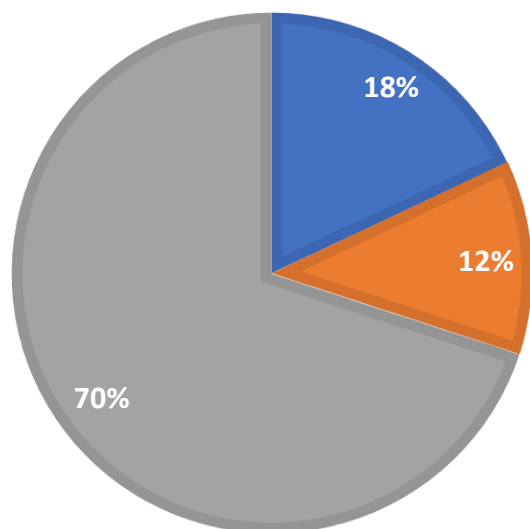
Where have we come from? Across the region, ECD has also been recognized as human right and essential ingredient to enhancing human development



Before COVID-19

FREE ECE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

■ Emerging ■ Established ■ Non-Established



Only 12% of countries have an established legal framework for FREE pre-primary education

60%

Countries with ECD policies in SSA

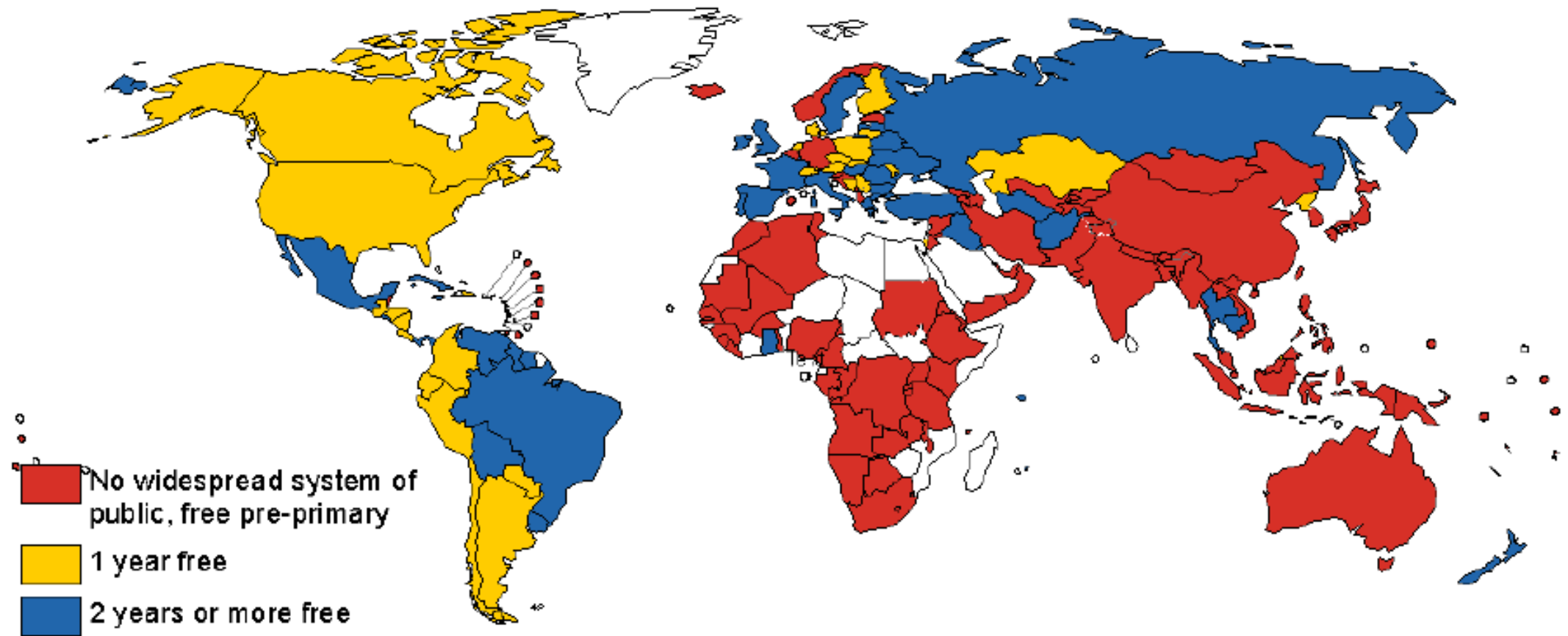
18%

Countries with multisectoral coordinating mechanisms

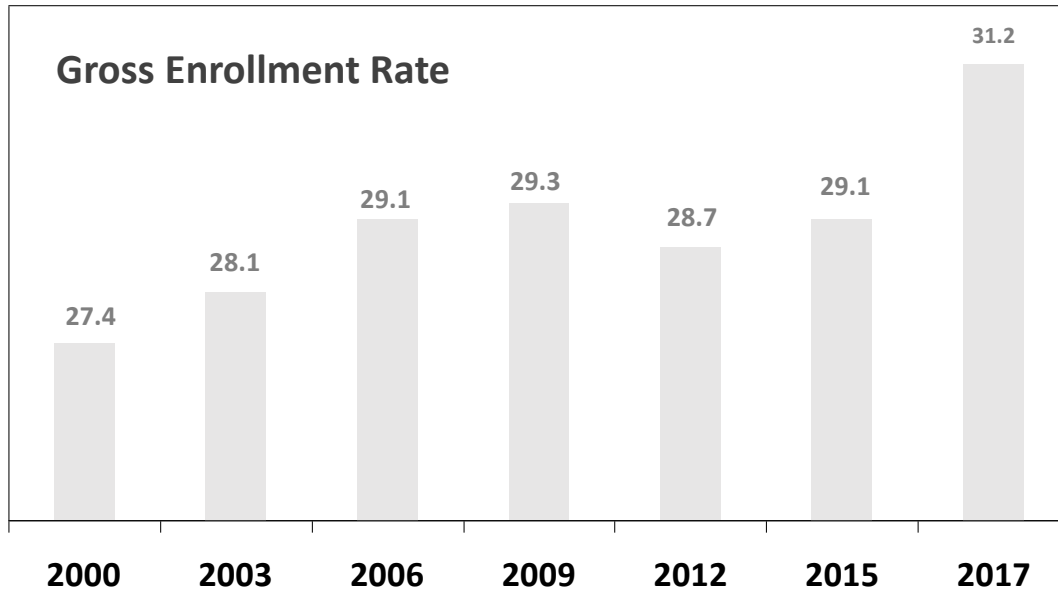
Growing

Countries with pre-primary as part of basic education structure

Access to Public, Free Pre-Primary Before COVID-19



Before COVID-19.....



Average gross enrollment rate in pre-primary education was 33% in 2107

57 MILLION

Children in Africa not yet enrolled

33%

Average enrollment in private institutions

4.3x

The wealthiest children are 4.3 times more likely to attend ECE programmes

Before COVID-19.....

Curriculum

35%

Countries with established pre-primary curriculum

Limited availability of play and early learning materials

Lack of child-centered and play based curricula

Weak links between school and home/limited parent engagement

Infrastructure

41%

Of pre-primary facilities lack infrastructure standards

Assessment

Limited assessment tools to track child development

Inadequate early identification systems and early intervention services

Lack of tools to guide teaching practices

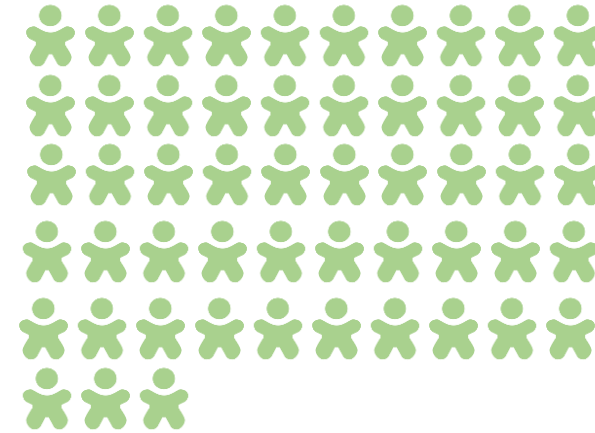
Before COVID-19.....

**Over
50%**

Trained pre-primary
teachers
in in SSA & Northern Africa

CAPACITY GAP

- Few teachers are adequately paid
- Limited supervision and mentorship for current teachers
- Lack of professional development and career advancement
- Less than 40% of countries have established entry requirements to become a pre-primary teacher



**PTR:
1:52**
2017
Average

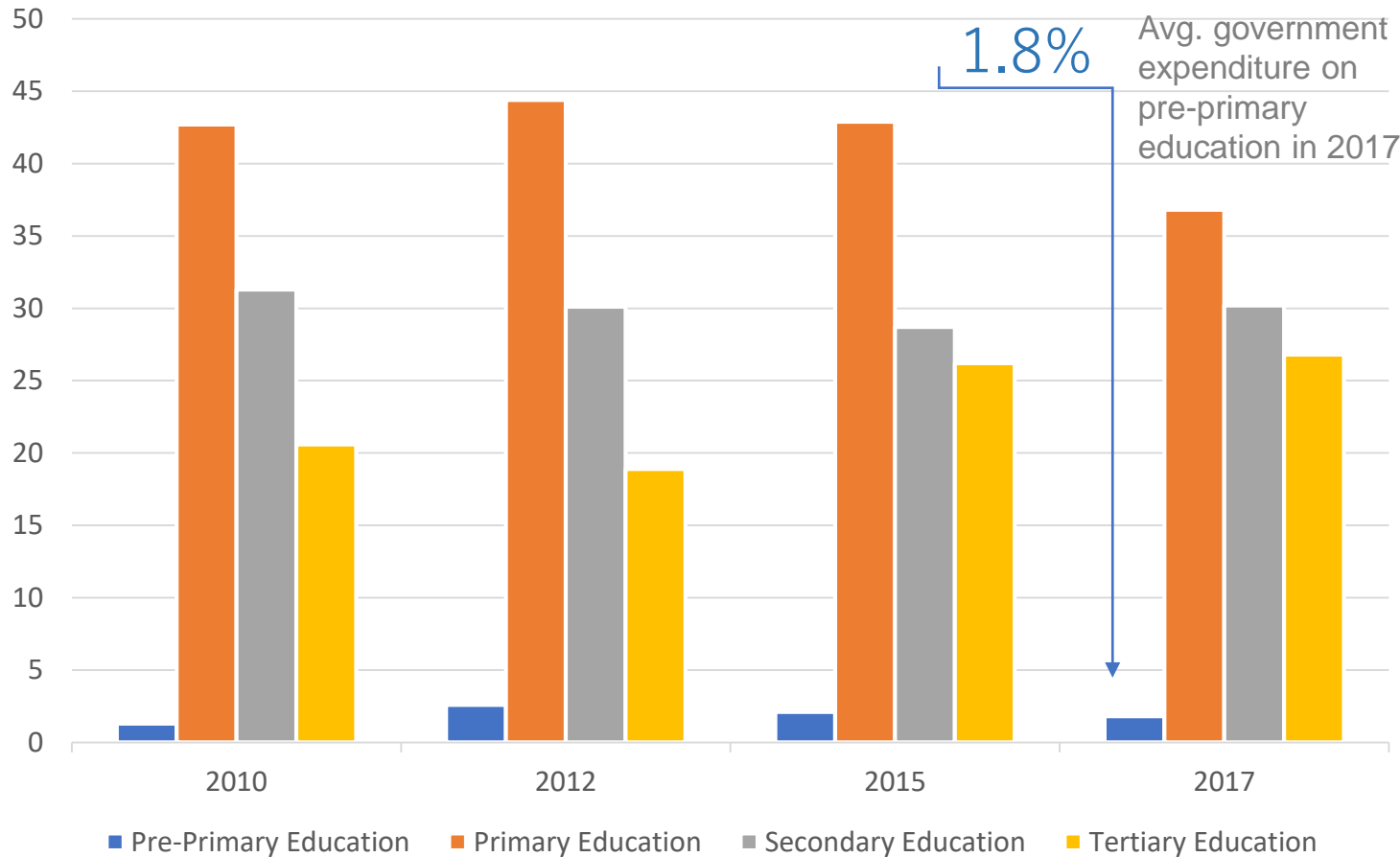
**5.1
MILLION**

Estimated total teachers
needed by 2030 to meet
universal target with a PTR of
1:20

**3.4
MILLION**

Additional teachers needed
by 2030 to meet universal
target

Before COVID-19.....



Distribution of government expenditure on education across subsectors (2017)

59% Countries

Allocate less than 2% of their education budgets to pre-primary education

Majority of funding from:

- Parents/caregivers
- Aid agencies
- Philanthropists
- International organizations
- NGOs & FBOs

During COVID....

1.

Advocacy for inclusion of young children in global, regional and national COVID-19 response plans

2.

Advocate for and support the integration of early learning in school reopening plans

3.

Provide consistent support to parents and other caregivers

4.

Commit to provision of early learning and systems to support continuous improvement

5.

Strengthen partnerships across state and non-state actors?



Opportunity?



Working Group	Chair(s)	Convener
Policy & Advocacy	Republic of Zambia	UNICEF (<u>ESARO</u> , WCARO, MENA)
Governance	Republic of Seychelles	Commonwealth Secretariat
Research	Republic of Mauritius	
Quality	Republic of Cote d'Ivoire & Republic of Senegal	Save the Children
		Child Fund
		Plan International

After COVID -19?

1.

Advocate to ensure early learning does not fall further down on the list of global, regional & national priorities?

2.

Rethinking service delivery?

3.

Strengthening plans to support mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery?

4.

Mitigating the effects of COVID? Growing inequalities?

5.

Strengthen partnerships across state and non-state actors?





"RAIN
WETS A
LEOPARD'S
SKIN, BUT
DOES NOT
WASH OUT
THE SPOTS"

African Proverb



If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent the night with a mosquito.

-African proverb

Thank you for your attention!