



In support of **act4r**
Early Years

Forum Agenda

Last updated: 5/5/2026



Forum Objectives

1. **Raise awareness:** Highlight the economic and social returns of ECD and the critical financing gaps that hinder progress.
2. **Contribute to global processes:** Provide input into the UNESCO/UNICEF/OECD Global Monitoring Report on Early Childhood Care and Education and the Act for Early Years campaign.
3. **Facilitate policy dialogue:** Convene government, academic, civil society, private-sector, and development partners to discuss barriers to and opportunities in financing for ECD.
4. **Promote cross-country learning:** Share lessons on effective financing across the public-private spectrum.
5. **Catalyze action:** Develop practical tools and recommendations to increase and improve financing for ECD.

Day 0: Tuesday, May 5th

Time	Location	Agenda Item
15:00-18:00	Ground floor	Registration

Day 1: Wednesday, May 6th

Time	Location	Agenda Item	Session Objectives	Key Guiding Questions
7:30-17:00	Ground floor	Registration		
8:00-9:00	Simba ballroom	ARRIVAL	• Network with fellow participants. • Find a seat and settle by 8:45.	

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9:00-9:30	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Opening Ceremony	- Receive welcome from the Government of Rwanda. - Appreciate the importance of the work ahead.	
Forum Framing Question: How do we establish sustainable financing ecosystems for young children at scale?				
9:30-10:00	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Setting the Scene: Forum Overview	- Understand the big picture vision for early years financing and the roadmap to the summit in 2027 from the forum's co-hosts. - Align on the expected outcomes of the Forum.	
10:00-11:00	Simba ballroom	KEYNOTE The Global Financing Landscape Has Shifted: What Does It Mean for Young Children?	- Review the implications of how the financing context has shifted substantially. - Outline the opportunity to move beyond fragmented funding toward financing approaches that are more strategic, durable, and systems based.	- What has changed in the global financing landscape since the SDG era began, and how does it affect financing for young children? - How do we effectively respond to a volatile context in a tighter fiscal space and changing capital flows? - Why is the old model of fragmented funding no longer sufficient, and what does that imply for countries preparing for the 2027 International Finance Summit?
		KEYNOTE The Financing Gap and Opportunity: What Is the Scale of the Challenge?	- Understand the broad trends shaping current spending. - Examine recent global evidence, including UNESCO's work on ECCE financing, to form a shared picture of where things stand today.	- What do we know globally about the returns of investing in young children and the costs of inaction? - What do current spending trends show about how much governments and partners are investing today? - How large is the remaining financing gap, and what does it tell us about the scale of action now required?
		KEYNOTE What Are We Financing? Core Systems and Reform Priorities for Young Children	- Understand the core systems and reform platforms that financing for young children must support. - Examine the foundational public systems—across health and nutrition, childcare and early learning, and social protection and	- Which core systems and reform platforms matter most for delivering results for young children and families? - Why is financing isolated services not enough without financing the wider systems that support delivery, quality,

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			family support—that must be built, strengthened, and financed together.	and continuity?
11:00-11:20	Ground floor	<i>Tea break</i>		
Dialogue 1: Why are young children not prioritized in public expenditure? Moving from political commitment to sustainable public financing.				
11:20-12:35	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION A Dialogue with Governments	- Hear real experiences that explain the blockages and barriers to acting on political commitments. - Compare models and practical fixes that have worked in different contexts to improve costing, budgeting, execution, coordination, and service delivery.	- Where does the financing chain break most often in your context, and why do young children lose out in budget cycles? - What are the main political economy and institutional barriers—across ministries of finance, line ministries, and decentralized systems—that prevent financing from reaching services? - What reforms, strategies, or practical fixes have helped make financing for young children more visible, protected, and spendable?
12:35-13:50	Restaurant	<i>Lunch</i>		
Dialogue 2: How can we expand resources, improve efficiency, and ensure equity and quality services? Securing sustainable public finance for young children.				
14:00-14:45	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Country Dialogue: Rwanda	- Hear perspectives from actors within different parts of the ecosystem. - Learn what has worked well and not worked well in their country context.	
14:45-14:55	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Introduction to Dialogue 2 Tracks	- Understand the expectations for the second dialogue tracks. - Decide which track to join.	
		<i>Transition</i>		
15:00-16:30	Simba ballroom	PARALLEL SESSIONS Track 1. Expansion: <i>Expanding the financing envelope to support key early years policy priorities: How can</i>	- Identify additional domestic public resource streams and fiscal policy levers beyond core budget lines. - Generate examples of how public financing can be broadened using financing tools that can increase investment in a realistic and sustainable way.	- What additional public financing sources could governments draw on to increase investment in young children? - Which public financing options are most realistic, meaningful, and worth prioritizing in practice? - What policy or institutional changes are needed to unlock and use these public

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		<i>we responsibly diversify public financing sources?</i>		financing sources more effectively?
	Kinigi & Kivu rooms combined (first floor)	Track 2. Efficiency: <i>Strengthening domestic finance to support early years policy priorities: How do we improve value for money within sectors and across sectors?</i>	- Examine how governments can improve value for money through effective and efficient execution and guard against leakage. - Generate examples of practical domestic reform levers such as expenditure efficiency, reprioritization, intergovernmental transfers, and costing frameworks that make financing more credible and resilient.	- Where are the biggest losses in value for money in current spending for young children? - What reforms can help governments protect and strengthen fiscal space for young children despite tight budgets? - How can costing, budgeting, and transfer systems be improved so that financing is more credible, efficient, and sustainable?
	Muhabura & Gasabo rooms combined (first floor)	Track 3. Equity: <i>Improving equity and quality: How do we ensure financing expands high-quality access to early years services equitably?</i>	- Examine how public resources can better reach underserved children and families. - Generate examples of strategies that reduce the burden on families and extend services to hard-to-reach and crisis settings.	- How do we budget and plan for quality and equity? - How can public financing reduce out-of-pocket burdens and expand access more equitably? - What safeguards are needed to ensure that financing expansion improves inclusion, quality, and fairness at the same time?
16:30-17:00	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Reflections on Dialogue 2	- Report back on the top 3–5 key insights and any lessons learned from each track. - Ask questions and offer contributions.	
17:00-17:15	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Conclusion of Day 1	- Reflect on the key messages of the day. - Understand the direction the Forum will take on Day 2.	
17:15-19:00	Personal time			
19:00	Simba ballroom	<i>Networking dinner</i>		

Day 2: Thursday, May 7th

Time	Duration	Agenda Item	Session Objectives	Key Guiding Questions
8:00-9:00	Simba ballroom	ARRIVAL	- Network with fellow participants. - Find a seat and settle by 8:45.	
9:00-9:05	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Framing of Day 2	- Clarify the flow and expectations for the day. - Review the overall objectives of the Forum.	
9:05-9:30	Simba ballroom	PLENARY The Early Years Financing Toolbox: What is Included and How it Can Be Used	- Understand the vision for the Toolbox. - Gain clarity on how ECD services can be matched with financing instruments. - Learn about the input gathered to date in the development process. - Discuss next steps for piloting tools with country stakeholders.	
9:30-10:15	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Country Dialogue: South Africa	- Hear perspectives from actors within different parts of the ecosystem. - Learn what has worked well and not worked well in their country context.	
Dialogue 3: How can we strengthen the financing architecture for young children? Moving from funding to financing.				
10:15-11:00	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Shifts in the Financing Landscape: What New Partnerships Are Emerging?	- Hear perspectives of development banks, philanthropy, and private actors on the role they play alongside governments. - Understand the opportunities and limitations of each type of actor in practice. - Consider how stronger partnerships can be built to strengthen public systems.	- How are the incentives and investment strategies of DFIs, philanthropy, and private actors changing relative to financing for young children? - What can these different actors realistically contribute, and what are the limits of their capital? - What are the optimal partnership models and conditions needed for these relationships to support public priorities, systems building, and long-term sustainability?
11:00-11:20	Ground floor	<i>Tea break</i>		
11:20-12:35	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Innovative Financing in Action:	Learn what types of innovative financing have been used successfully, including blended finance, outcomes-based models, bonds, and other approaches.	- What do real examples of innovative financing for young children show about what is possible in practice? - What conditions, partnerships, and design

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		What Can We Learn from Real Examples?	- Understand what conditions have made these efforts possible. - Clarify how to determine which approach might be best in a specific context.	choices helped these models work—or caused them to struggle? 3. What lessons do these examples offer for matching financing approaches to the right services, contexts, and system needs?
12:35-12:45	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Introduction to Dialogue 3 Tracks	- Understand the expectations for the third dialogue tracks. - Decide which track to join.	
12:45-14:00	Restaurant	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:00-15:30	Simba ballroom	PARALLEL SESSIONS Track 1. Readiness and Country Criteria: <i>What are the enabling conditions for investments?</i>	- Explore the conditions that must exist before catalytic or private finance can responsibly enter. - Learn from countries' experiences distinguishing between services that require full public financing and those that may be suitable for blended or private-enabled models.	- Which services or components for young children are realistically financeable with outside sources, and which should remain fully publicly financed? - What minimum readiness conditions need to be in place—such as defined service packages, costing, delivery roles, payment mechanisms, and accountability? - How do countries avoid instrument-driven solutions and ensure that financing choices follow service needs, rather than the reverse?
	Kinigi & Kivu rooms combined (first floor)	Track 2. Measurements, Results, and Verification: <i>How do we ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in service delivery?</i>	- Examine the “trust infrastructure” of financing—data systems, verification anchors, results measurement, and accountability mechanisms. - Learn from countries' experiences ensuring that governments can pay, partners can verify, and communities are protected.	- What is the minimum data and verification needed to support financing instruments such as contracts, subsidies, guarantees, or results-based payments? - How can accountability and verification systems be designed so they are credible and practical, without overwhelming governments or excluding smaller providers? - What underlying systems—such as provider registries, payment rails, quality assurance, and grievance mechanisms—need to be built to support transparency and trust?
	Muhabura & Gasabo	Track 3. System Integration: <i>How</i>	Explore the risks inherent with innovative financing and pilots that are set up	How do we ensure catalytic and private finance complement, rather than replace,

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	rooms combined (first floor)	<i>can public-private partnerships be leveraged for long-term sustainability?</i>	outside the public system. Generate strategies for how catalytic and private finance can complement public responsibility, protect equity, and transition into durable public financing over time.	public responsibility for services for young children? 2. What guardrails are needed to prevent exclusion, quality erosion, and unsustainable financing obligations? 3. How can financing pilots or blended models be absorbed into national budgets, transfer systems, or longer-term public financing pathways?
15:30-16:00	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Reflections on Dialogue 3	- Report back on the top 3–5 key insights and any lessons learned from each track. - Ask questions and offer contributions.	
16:00-16:30	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Country Dialogue: Colombia	- Hear perspectives from actors within different parts of the ecosystem. - Learn what has worked well and not worked well in their country context.	
Dialogue 4: What is the roadmap to increasing sustainable financing for young children? Moving from dialogue to action.				
16:30-16:50	Simba ballroom	KEYNOTE Global Advocacy for Early Years Financing	- Learn about the milestones from now until the Summit in 2027. - Understand how champion governments can prepare commitments.	
16:50-17:20	Simba ballroom	PANEL DISCUSSION Leveraging Civil Society to Mobilize Public Demand	- Hear from civil society actors about their experiences holding governments accountable for commitments. - Learn strategies that civil society can deploy to ensure equity and accountability for financing that delivers for young children.	
17:20-17:30	Simba ballroom	PLENARY Closing and Forum Wrap-Up	- Reflect on the achievements of the Forum. - Review the next steps for the Toolbox. - Commit to actions that take the work forward. - Appreciate the contributions of all Forum participants. - Review options for parallel sessions on day 3.	

Day 3: Friday, May 8th [Partner-led sessions]

Location/ Time	Simba ballroom (ground floor)	Muhabura & Gasabo rooms combined (first floor)	Kinigi & Kivu rooms combined (first floor)	Inyange boardroom (first floor)
8:30-10:30	Public Expenditure Review for Early Childhood Years made easy with AMPERA – OPM/Thrive	Launch of the Home-based Childcare Alliance – NurtureFirst , SmartStart, OneSky, aeioTU, BRAC IED, NAFCC, Tiney	From Commitments to Results: Capacity Building for Strengthened ECD Advocacy in East Africa – AfECN (invitation only)	Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the 2026 Global Report on Early Childhood Care and Education – UNESCO (invitation only - 9:00 start)
Tea break				
11:00-13:00	Big Wins to Bold Commitments – Theirworld and Genesis Analytics	Rwanda's Nkuza Neza Fund, Designing and Delivering Outcomes-Based Financing in Practice - Education Outcomes Fund	Continue	Continue
Lunch				
14:15-16:15*	The Critical Role of Cost Data in ECD for Advocacy, Budget Allocation, Priority Setting, and Scaling – Brooking Institution	Driving Systemic Change in Early Childhood: Aligning Government Capacity, Capital, and Service Transformation in Colombia – aeioTU	Continue	Continue
Tea break				

*The Thrive workshop will be in Inyambo boardroom (ground floor) at this time and is by invitation only.

Day 3 Parallel Session Descriptions

Public Expenditure Review for Early Childhood Years made easy with AMPERA – OPM/Thrive

Public Expenditure Review (PER) is the most reliable way to analyze government budget allocations. But until recently, conducting a PER on a cross-sectoral issue like ECD remained out of reach of most governments. It was a highly resource-intensive one-time exercise that would take large teams many months to complete, which few governments can afford. To make PER more accessible, Oxford Policy Management (OPM) has developed the AMPERA tool. This harnesses the power of new technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence to deliver PERs more quickly, more accurately, and more affordably. AMPERA equips policymakers to understand what investments are being made in ECD, and to decide whether these are appropriate, at a fraction of the cost and in a fraction of the time of a traditional PER. Join us in this session to learn more about how OPM's AMPERA tool can equip you to find the answers you need.

Launch of the Home-based Childcare Alliance – NurtureFirst, SmartStart, OneSky, aeioTU, BRAC IED, NAFCC, Tiney

This session marks the official public launch of the Global Home-Based Childcare Alliance, a new global coalition dedicated to elevating home-based childcare as a first-choice, high-quality early childhood care and education option to improve equitable access to high-quality childcare globally and support positive child development outcomes. The event will bring together the Alliance's founding members, ECD funders, and practitioners from across the globe to address a critical gap in the early years financing landscape: the persistent underinvestment in home-based childcare despite its prevalence, cost-effectiveness, and potential for scale. Join us to learn more about how the Alliance will mobilize finance and global policy to make home-based childcare a recognized, resourced, and high-quality option for families, supporting universal and equitable childcare coverage.

Big Wins to Bold Commitments – Theirworld and Genesis Analytics

The world's first International Financing Summit on Early Childhood takes place in 2027. It will only recognize funded, time-bound, and deliverable commitments from governments, mayors and local leaders, business leaders, and philanthropic actors. The work to secure those commitments starts now, at national and sub-national levels, with the coalitions and networks who understand both the evidence and the politics well enough to connect them. This session uses the Act for Early Years Big Wins for Early Childhood framework as a practical commitment-building tool. Working backwards from the Summit, participants will map what it takes to move a specific decision-maker toward a specific, credible pledge in their own context, whether that decision-maker sits in a national ministry, a city government, a development bank, or a business. Join us to begin to identify the political entry points, financing pathways, and coalition conditions that make a commitment achievable rather than aspirational.

Rwanda's Nkuza Neza Fund, Designing and Delivering Outcomes-Based Financing in Practice – Education Outcomes Fund

Nkuza Neza is a \$13 million outcomes-based fund within Rwanda's early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector. This interactive session will help participants understand its distinctive features and its financing architecture. Attendees will analyze how outcomes funds can be structured in close partnership with government to align with national budget cycles and public financial management processes. Additionally, the session will clarify strategies for risk allocation and incentive alignment, providing participants with a framework for using outcomes-based models to strengthen domestic systems rather than creating parallel mechanisms. Participants will gain actionable insights from the program's transition from design to implementation, which illustrates how such models can be effectively embedded within a national education reform agenda. Join us for this deep dive into Nkuza Neza and explore how outcomes-based financing might work in your country context.

The Critical Role of Cost Data in ECD for Advocacy, Budget Allocation, Priority Setting, and Scaling – Brookings Institution

There has never been a more critical time for governments, funders, and implementing organizations to make sound decisions about financing early childhood interventions. But to make informed decisions, cost data are critical at local, national, and global levels to allow for accountability of spending, priority setting, budgeting and planning, managing program activities, and advocating for investment. This session aims to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the opportunities for increasing the amount of high-quality and consistent cost data in the sector. The Brookings Institution will be sharing its dual approach—partnering with local actors and governments through Costing Labs using the Childhood Cost Calculator (C3) while addressing longer-term institutional barriers through the

Global Costing Taskforce for Education and ECCE. No costing expertise required, only a commitment and desire to work together to address this critical gap in the sector!

Driving Systemic Change in Early Childhood: Aligning Government Capacity, Capital, and Service Transformation in Colombia – aeioTU

Colombia offers an emerging example of how systemic change in early childhood can be pursued by aligning service transformation, government leadership, and financing architecture. While the country has made important progress in expanding access and building policy continuity, sustaining quality at scale remains a major challenge. This session will focus on the case of Cartagena, where local government, service providers, and philanthropic actors are working together to strengthen quality in early childhood services. Through this example, participants will explore the financial, operational, and institutional conditions required to sustain quality improvements at scale. The session will combine short framing presentations with an open discussion on how governments, funders, and implementation partners can move from fragmented initiatives toward more sustainable systems for young children.

Thank you for joining us!

Together, we can unlock financing that will translate evidence into budgets and budgets into services
for young children and their families!

