

# Convening Day 2- 9 October 2025

## Overview of Day 2

Day two of the convening marked a strategic pivot from analysis to action, focusing on repositioning Early Childhood Development (ECD) as an indispensable driver of national progress and detailing the components of a compelling investment case.

The day opened with country teams presenting powerful **elevator pitches** that deliberately reframed ECD beyond a social sector issue, aligning it directly with core national economic and human capital goals.

- **Kenya** positioned ECD as the foundation of its *Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda*, highlighting its role in both immediate job creation and long-term workforce productivity, and calling for doubled investment and integration across all economic pillars.
- **Mozambique** presented ECD as the cornerstone of its human capital strategy, essential for reversing the trend of multidimensional poverty and building a skilled citizenry, and called for high-level coordination and a unified national ECD policy.
- **Tanzania** leveraged its robust Investment Case, demonstrating a 1:57 return on investment, to argue that ECD is the most effective strategy to achieve the goals of *Tanzania Development Vision 2050*, urging cross-sectoral early investment.

The subsequent session on **Localising the Investment Case** deconstructed the essential elements required to turn these powerful narratives into fundable, actionable strategies. A high-level panel underscored that a compelling case is built on five interdependent pillars:

1. **Government Leadership:** Emphasizing the need to "domesticate" global commitments and provide local governments with practical guidance for implementation.
2. **Domestic Financing:** Advocating for a shift from narrow "ECD-specific" budgeting to also leveraging "ECD-sensitive" sectoral funds and engaging economists in financing dialogues.
3. **Community Leadership:** Highlighting that deep community ownership, where "a child belongs to the community," leads to tangible local investments and sustains interventions.
4. **Measurement:** Stressing that data must be transformed into actionable evidence for decision-making and accountability, requiring specific metrics to track embedded government ECD spending.
5. **Private Sector Partnership:** Showcasing how corporate initiatives, like extended parental leave and workplace childcare, are integral to the ECD ecosystem.

Collectively, Day 2 provided the conceptual and practical toolkit for transforming ECD into a prioritized, investable national agenda, setting the stage for the concrete commitments to be unveiled on the final day.

The day started with country teams meeting to Reframe ECD as a National Development Priority. The objective of this session was to shift the narrative beyond sectoral boundaries and align it with broader goals such as economic growth, human capital, and social equity.

As output of these discussions, government and partner representatives from Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique developed and delivered concise country “elevator pitches” articulating why Early Childhood Development (ECD) should be positioned as a core national development priority. Each country’s pitch linked ECD to its overarching national agenda—such as human capital development, poverty reduction, and economic transformation—demonstrating how early investments contribute to productivity, social equity, and long-term growth.

Across the three countries, common themes emerged: the recognition that ECD is foundational to achieving national visions and sectoral targets; the importance of integrated service delivery through health, education, and social protection systems; and the need for coordinated leadership, domestic financing, and community engagement. Collectively, the pitches reflected growing political will to move ECD from a sectoral issue to a central pillar of sustainable national development. *(Full country pitches are available in Appendix 3)*

## Localising the Investment Case

The session explored how leadership, financing, community engagement, measurement, and private sector collaboration collectively form the foundation of a sustainable, locally driven ECD agenda. The discussion emphasized that building a compelling national and sub-national investment case requires integrating these five dimensions to ensure that ECD is both contextually relevant and financially viable.

Participants highlighted that **government leadership** is critical for translating global and national commitments into local action. Experience from devolved systems demonstrated that meaningful progress often originates at sub-national levels, where counties and districts have taken the initiative to craft ECD policies and programs aligned with local priorities. However, this has also surfaced challenges of coherence and coordination, underscoring the need for a unified framework to guide implementation and ensure consistency in standards, financing, and service delivery.

On **domestic financing**, it was agreed that progress depends on moving beyond narrow definitions of ECD expenditure. While direct funding for ECD-specific programs remains limited, substantial opportunities lie in ECD-sensitive sectors—such as health, nutrition, and social protection—where existing budgets can be leveraged. The discussion pointed to the importance of recognizing ECD within government budgeting frameworks, engaging economists and planners

in financing dialogues, and developing country-led evidence to demonstrate the economic returns of investing in young children. The session also underscored the vital role of **community leadership** in sustaining ECD investments. When communities are engaged as co-owners of interventions rather than passive beneficiaries, they contribute resources, labor, and local solutions that ensure longevity and relevance. Examples shared included communities donating land for childcare centers and participating directly in management and oversight, reinforcing the principle that “a child belongs to the community.”

**Measurement and evidence generation** were identified as essential tools for accountability and adaptive management. Participants noted that while large amounts of ECD data are collected, their potential is often underutilized. Transforming data into actionable insights requires analytical capacity, contextual understanding, and systems for tracking government funding—often buried within sectoral budgets. Effective measurement frameworks can both inform decision-making and strengthen advocacy for sustained financing.

The **private sector** was recognized as an underutilized but powerful ally in advancing ECD. Companies are increasingly aligning their internal policies with family-friendly standards—such as extending parental leave and establishing workplace childcare facilities—and investing externally in programs that strengthen the care economy. Such initiatives demonstrate that business engagement in ECD can yield shared social and economic value.

Overall, the session concluded that localizing the ECD investment case demands a holistic, multi-sectoral approach—anchored in government leadership, sustained domestic financing, empowered communities, robust measurement systems, and active private sector participation. Together, these elements create the enabling environment needed to transform early childhood investments into national development outcomes.