

# Call for papers

**Thrive scientific conference** Scaling early childhood development programmes and policies in low- and middle-income countries

**Location:** London, England

**Date:** 24-25 June 2025.

**Call for papers deadline:** The call for papers is now open and will close on **16 February 2025**.

Thrive (on behalf of Oxford Policy Management and Institute of Fiscal Studies) is organising an international interdisciplinary conference on the topic of scaling early childhood development (ECD) programmes and policies in low and middle income (LMIC) countries.

Thrive is a multi-country research programme funded by UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) that aims to support countries in turning what we know about positive ECD into practical, scalable programmes. IFS is an independent research institute in the UK which aims to analyse and inform economic and social policy decisions internationally.

## Conference focus

This conference will focus on papers that inform implementation of ECD policies and programmes in LMIC. There are 4 main areas of focus; papers outside of these areas may also be considered as long as they are relevant to the overall focus on scaling ECD.

### **What works - Innovative ECD approaches with potential for scale**

Papers on 1) developing and testing ECD innovations with potential for scale in LMIC settings, and 2) that increase understanding of the process of early childhood development in LMIC settings.

### **Implementation at scale – Transitioning to large-scale interventions**

Papers that focus on implementation of ECD interventions at scale and provide evidence to inform a successful transition of ECD programmes to scale.

### **Equity and inclusion – how to make sure scaling is equitable and inclusive**

Papers that contribute evidence on how to ensure gender equity, access for marginalised and disadvantaged groups, caregiver empowerment and father engagement in ECD at scale.

### Measurement and assessment at scale

Finally, we welcome papers that inform ECD measurement and assessment at scale in LMIC settings. This includes for example innovation in measures of child development and/or validation of existing measures in new settings.

We invite submissions of high-quality academic research papers from the Thrive focus countries (Ghana, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone and Kiribati) and all other LMIC settings.

## Submissions

Extended abstracts 800-1000 words (maximum 1000) should be submitted via should be submitted via [this](#) form or by email at [Thriveconference@opml.co.uk](mailto:Thriveconference@opml.co.uk).

Abstracts must include background and justification, aims/objectives, methods, results and conclusions/implications. Abstracts without sufficient details of results will not be accepted. A maximum of 2 tables may be included and will not contribute to word count. The reference list will also not contribute to the word count

Please indicate on your submission which of the 4 main areas of focus your paper is most relevant for. If outside of these areas please provide a brief statement on relevance to the overall conference theme.

There is no fee to attend the conference. Grants will be available for travel and accommodation for those whose paper has been accepted and who do not have access to institutional research funds.

**Notifications of acceptances:** Notifications of acceptance will be circulated by **28 March 2025**. The conference will use a variety of presentation modalities (presentations varying in length, poster presentations, etc.). Successful applicants will be notified about the type of presentation their paper is selected for.

## Plenary Speakers

- **Joseph Agbenyega** (Associate Professor in the Counseling, Special Education and Neuroscience Division at Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE))
- **Amanda Devercelli** (Global Co-Lead for Early Childhood Development, Education, The World Bank)
- **Lia Fernald** (Professor of Community Health Sciences, Brian and Jennifer Maxwell Endowed Chair in Public Health, University of California, Berkeley)
- **John List** (Professor of Economics, University of Chicago)
- **Joan Lombardi** (Adjunct professor, Thrive Center for Child, Families and Communities)
- **Florencia Lopez-Boo** (Director, Global Ties, NYU)
- **Mushfiq Mobarak** (Professor of Economics, Yale University)
- **Mark Tomlinson** (Professor in the Psychology Department at Universiteit Stellenbosch)

## Organising Committee

- Conference Chair - Sonya Krutikova (University of Manchester and Institute for Fiscal Studies, UK)
- Ingvild Almas (IIES/Stockholm University, Sweden and FAIR/Norwegian School of Economics, Norway)
- Jophus Anamuah-Mensah (University of Education, Winneba, Ghana)
- Bet Caeyers (Chr. Michelsen Institute and FAIR/Norwegian School of Economics, Norway)
- Imran Rasul (University College London and Institute for Fiscal Studies, UK)
- Susan Walker (The University of West Indies, Jamaica)

## About Thrive

Thrive is a multi-country research programme that aims to support countries to turn what we know about positive early childhood development into practical, scalable, low-cost programmes, able to transform societies over multiple generations. Working closely with policymakers and other stakeholders, Thrive aims to build an understanding of early childhood development service delivery models and how they can be provided cost-

effectively and at scale, and how these systems can innovate, improve, and better serve children and communities in low- and middle-income countries.