

▶ Public Employment Programmes in the care economy

The case for South Africa

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Key insights from South Africa's experience of PEPs in the care economy

Key message 1

PEPs have been an instrumental mechanism for **transitioning volunteers into paid work, expanding the workforce, service delivery and improving working conditions** particularly in the early stages of implementation.

Key message 2

The programmes face **critical challenges related to poor compliance with the intended design** e.g. undervaluation of women's work through payment of low, non-compliant wages, a group that is significantly overrepresented within PEPs in the care economy.

Key message 3

PEPs have a role to play in introducing minimum standards that can result in progressive shifts towards decent work, **after 17 years of implementation, the pace has been slow.**

Key message 4

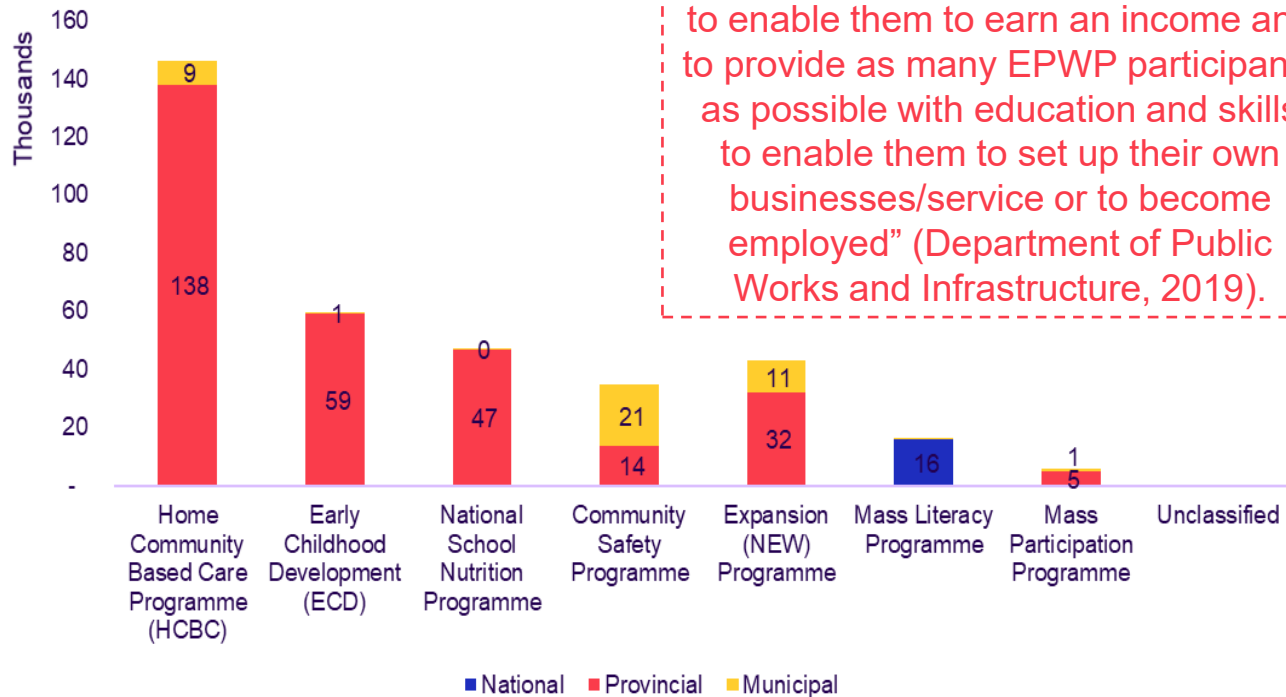
The programmes introduced in the stimulus package highlight the role PEPs play **as a short-term response to market shocks that increase unemployment levels and generate new demands for care.**



Overview of PEPs in the care economy



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME



SOCIAL SECTOR OBJECTIVE:

“to draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work through the delivery of social services to enable them to earn an income and to provide as many EPWP participants as possible with education and skills to enable them to set up their own businesses/service or to become employed” (Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, 2019).

Care services are provided by public and private providers in both the formal and informal market with a substantial proportion of care work delivered through non-profit/government organisations

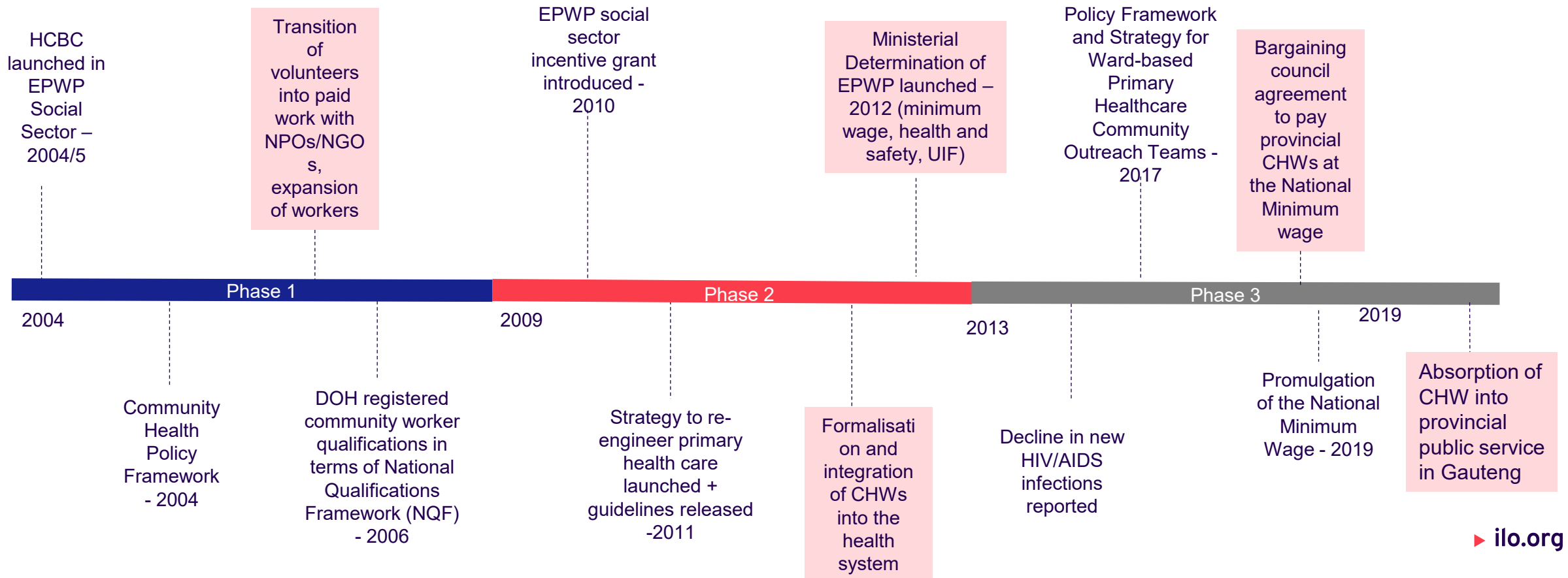
Women perform the majority of the paid and unpaid care work, and

Where care work it is paid, women often underpaid, and their services are undervalued.

Features of the care economy in South Africa

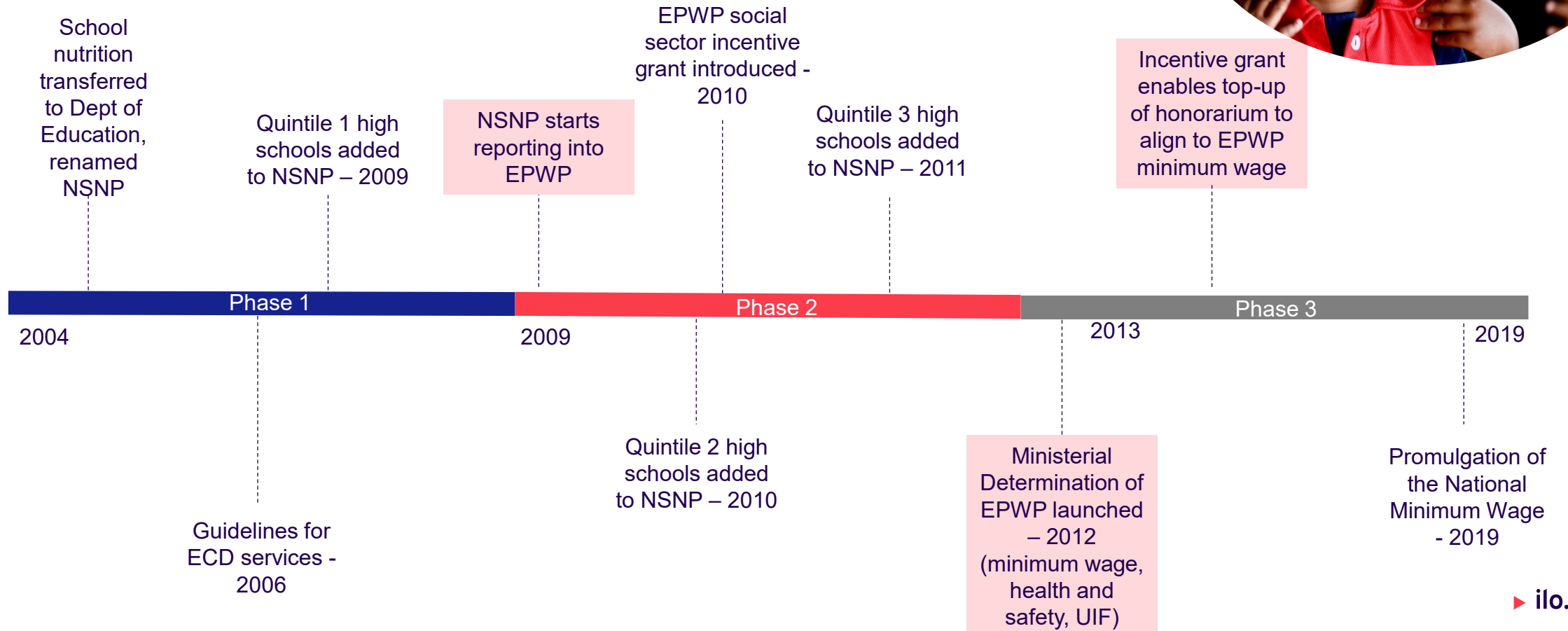
Evolution of the Home community based care and community health care workers programme

Implementing departments: Department of Social Development & Department of Health



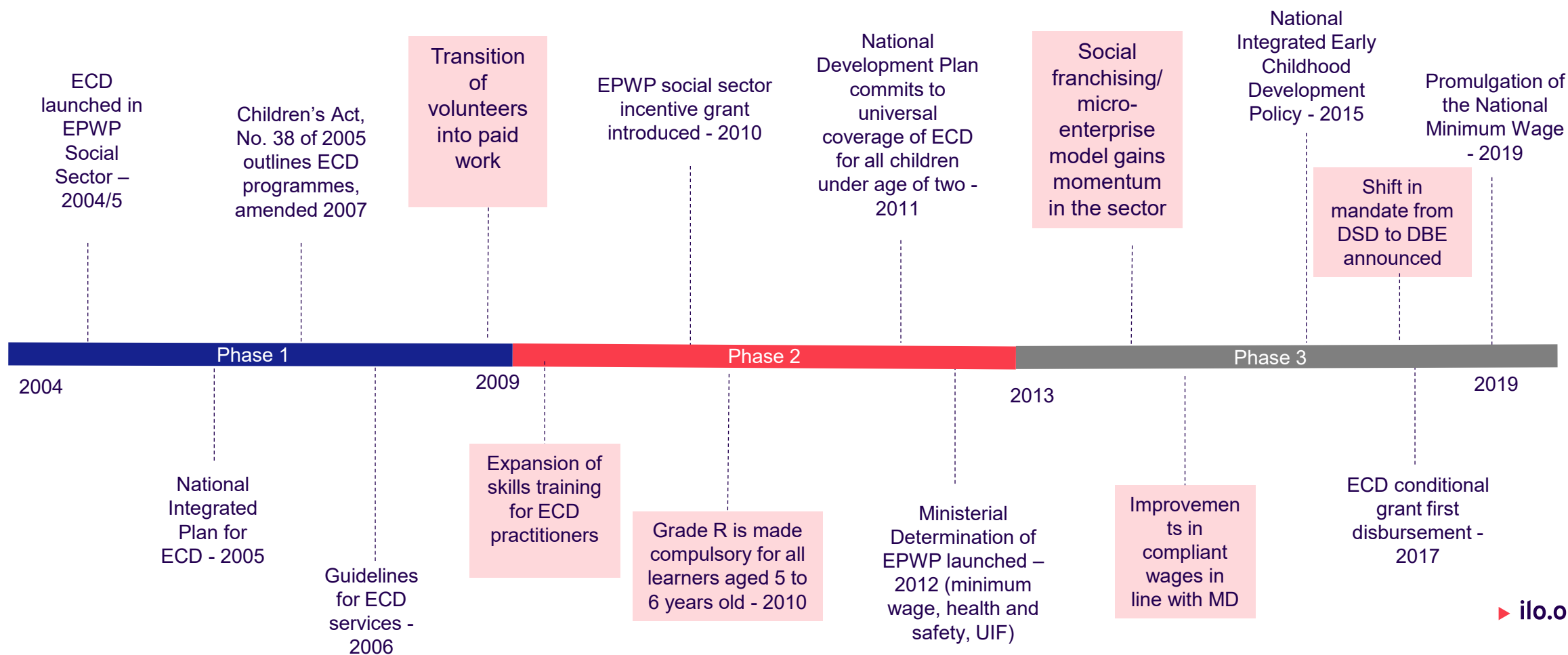
Evolution of the National School Nutrition Programme

Implementing departments: Department of Basic Education



Evolution of the Early childhood development programme

Implementing departments: Department of Social Development & Department of Basic Education



Contributions of PEPs in the care economy in South Africa

- Creation of a new floor in terms of both wages and conditions for participants that were previously working as volunteers in the sector
- EPWP has helped to by women's unpaid care work to be remunerated.

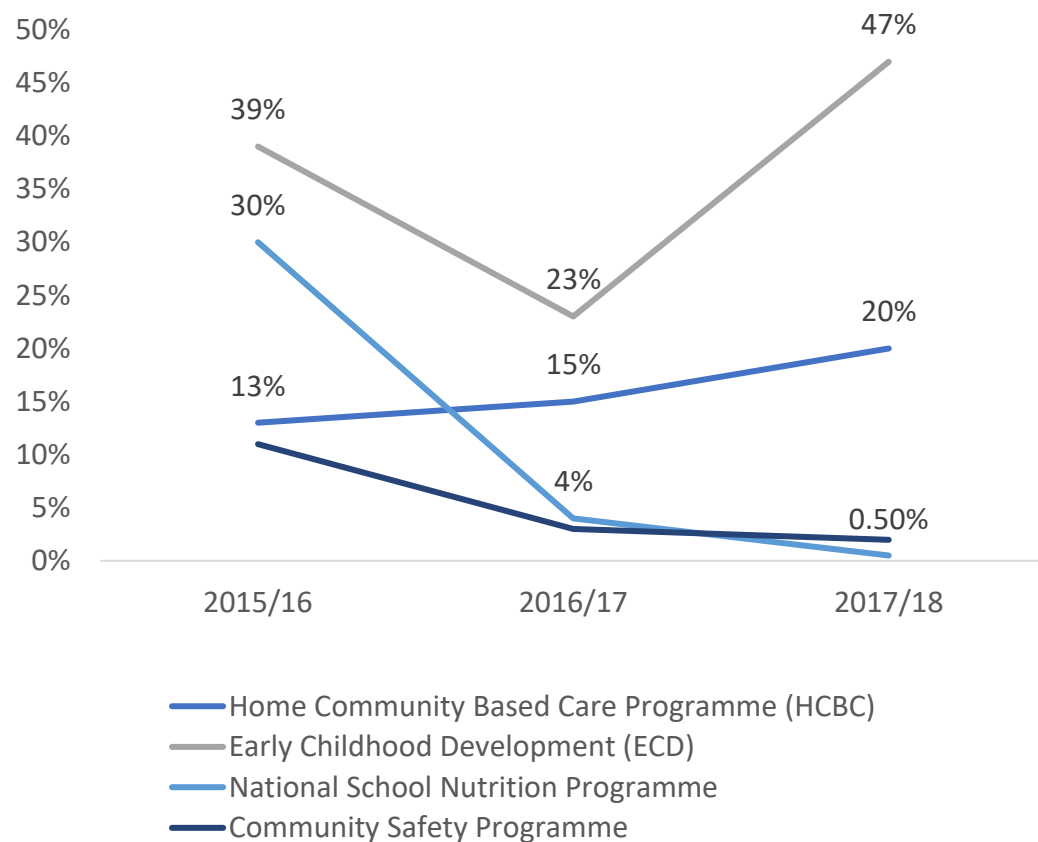


- Significant scale up of the HCBC and ECD programmes in Phase 1 and 2 of EPWP and within the NSNP in later years.
- Contributed to curbing the effects of HIV/AIDS and TB

- Increased the pool of skilled workers in the ECD through the provision of accredited training and upskilling existing ECD practitioners
- This is an important contribution to improved quality of care provided within the sector.

Challenges of PEPs in the care economy in South Africa

Poor adherence to minimum standards and principles



Duration of work

“[For HCBC and ECD, there is a] recognition that whilst the Expanded Public Works Programme has performed innovative work in these areas, the **delivery of these services is continuous in nature**. (Hassen & Altman, 2010: 48)

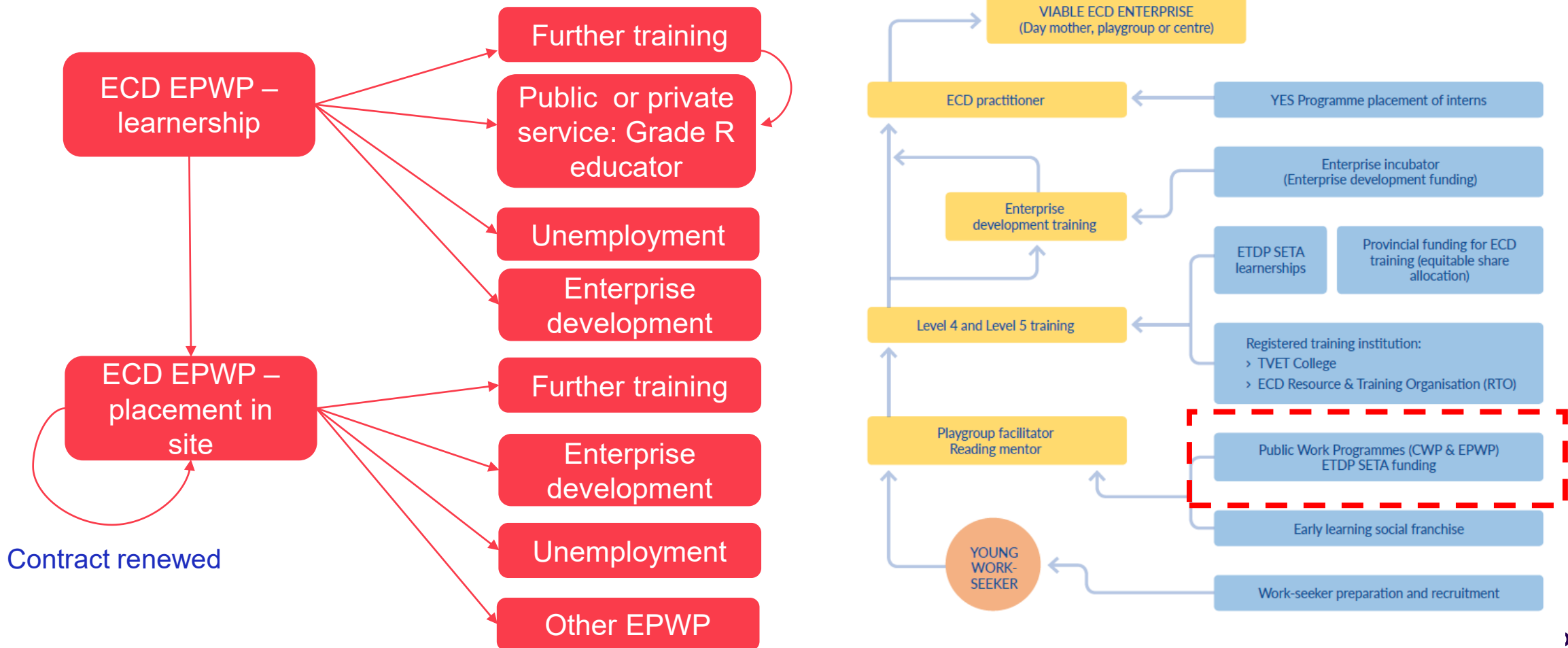
Negative effect on women’s labour market outcomes

“A large number of workers, **mainly female workers**, are employed in welfare and care work, at low wage levels. At least some of this work is undertaken on behalf of Government, and the low wages are partly a result of low levels of government subsidy” – National Minimum Wage Commission, 2016

Limited pathways into decent work

“It cannot be right that some members of the Expanded Public Works Programme have been **on contracts for six and seven years**. This is just slavery. They were supposed to have been trained long ago so they could go find employment and get into the real economy” – Union member

Options to transition out of EPWP – an example from ECD



Opportunities in the care economy in South Africa



According to the
School, registering
equipping children
of creating new

PEPs in the care economy in the care economy in South Africa have already demonstrated the role they can play in expanding the workforce in the care economy. There continues to be a role for them to play, however, the shortcomings must be addressed especially with respect to pathways into sustainable, decent work.

"There is work to do, there are people to do it. Why not bring them together?"

- John Maynard Keynes

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The Presidential Employment Stimulus essential support in response to COVID

PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS

459 797 participants
and beneficiaries

ZAR 7.9 billion
budget

306 031 – job creation

108 833 – livelihoods
support

44 933 – job retention



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS

The Basic Education Employment Initiative

- Reached 320,000 young people at 22,000 schools – unprecedented scale and speed of rollout.
- Reached every corner of the country = spatial equity.
- Schools opted in, were responsible for recruitment and determined the work to be done.
- Payment of National Minimum Wage facilitated support form teachers unions.
- Created meaningful work experience and real social value at a critical time for schools.
- With strong support from non-state sector, rolled out training for 102,985 school assistants, including:
 - Supporting Foundation Phase Maths and Home Languages
 - E Cadres
 - Reading and literacy champions
 - Child and Youth Care workers
 - Janitors and maintenance

▶ South Africa's historical experience is a nuanced story of critical shifts and room for re-design

- PEPs in the care economy have created **a crucial mechanism for expanding the workforce in the care economy** and the wage and working conditions initially yielded desired labour market outcomes. The experience is, however, not homogenous across the three main programmes.
- The NSNP has largely been designed and implemented **as a short-term opportunity and community social protection mechanism** that is embedded within the school system.
- The problems with PEPs in the care economy are most prevalent within ECD where they persisted throughout the implementation period. These are **compounded by the continued dominance of service provision by informal operators with severe funding constraints that has maintained precarious forms of work and low wages in the sector.**
- The healthcare sector has recognised the challenges with **several examples of a slow, but progressive shifts towards decent work for CHWs in the sector**, first through formalisation and more recently through absorption in the public service.
- There is a great need for and extensive employment creation opportunities in the care economy in the country. **PEPs in their current form can play a role in unlocking these, however, they are not comprehensive or appropriate for all types of care services.** A set of measures are required to address the shortcomings.



THANK YOU

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