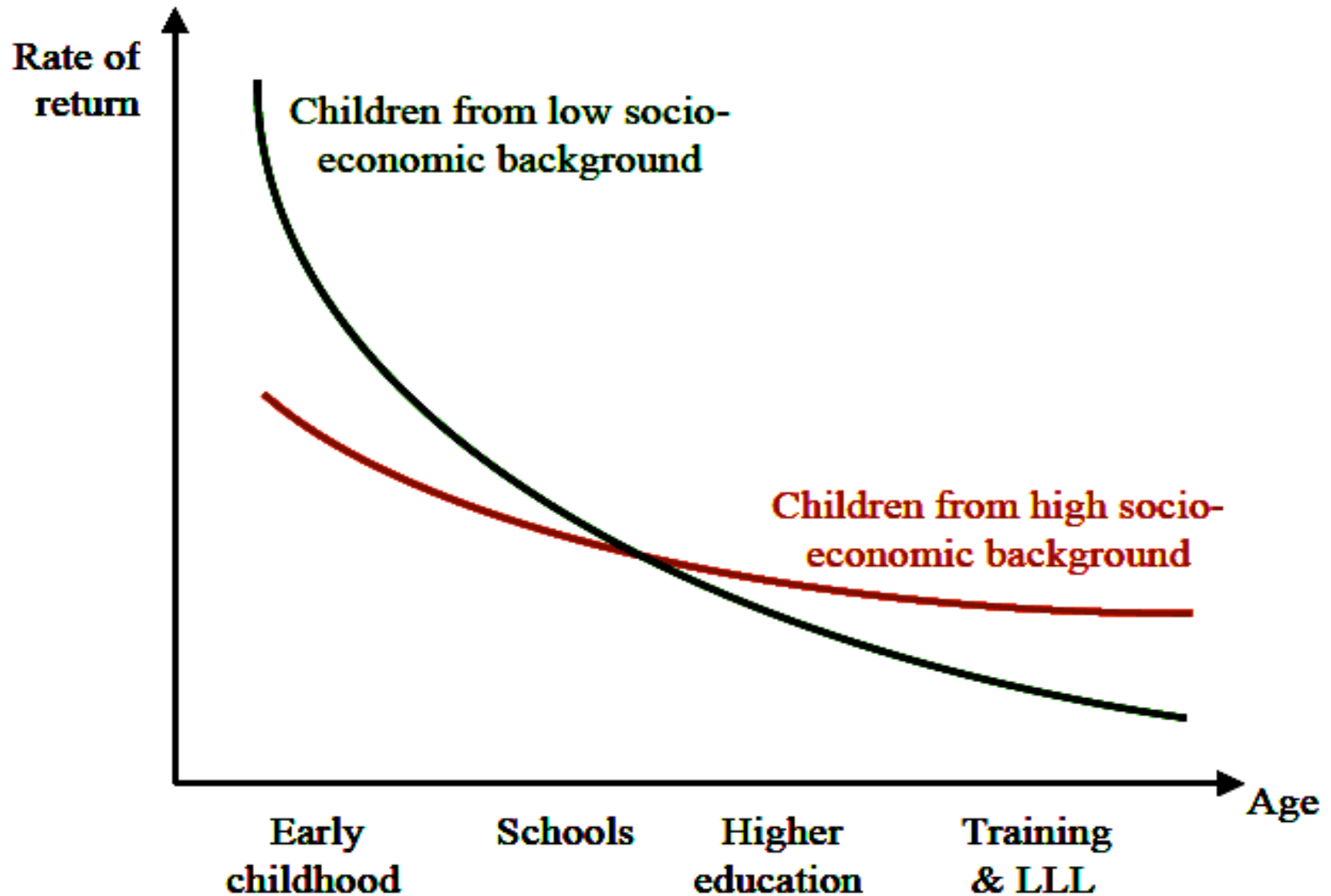


Early Education: Why and how should we make the investment?

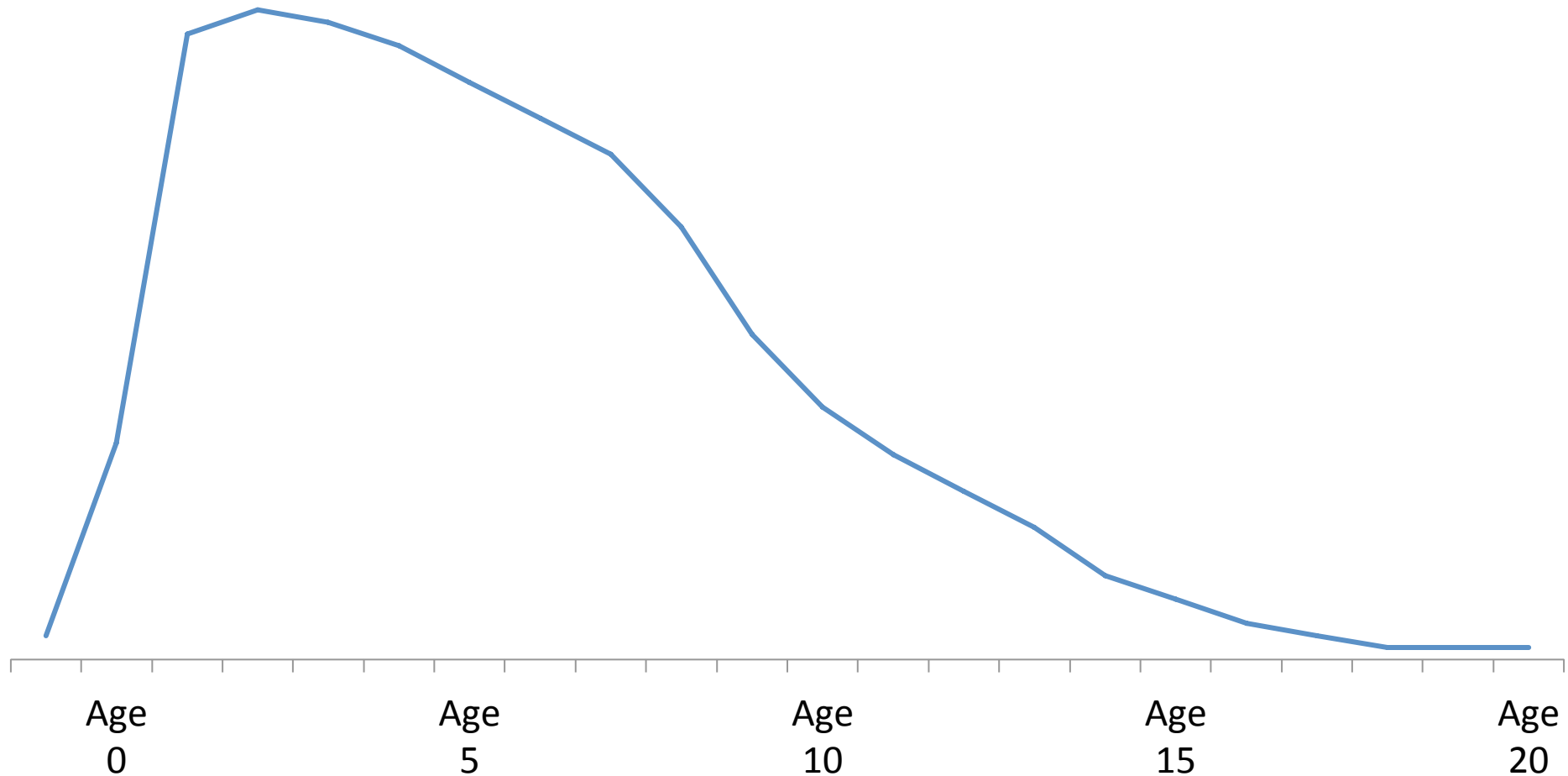
Regional Ministerial Education Conference
Istanbul, 10-13 December 2013

By Jan van Ravens, Yale University

Evidence from two angles: economics...



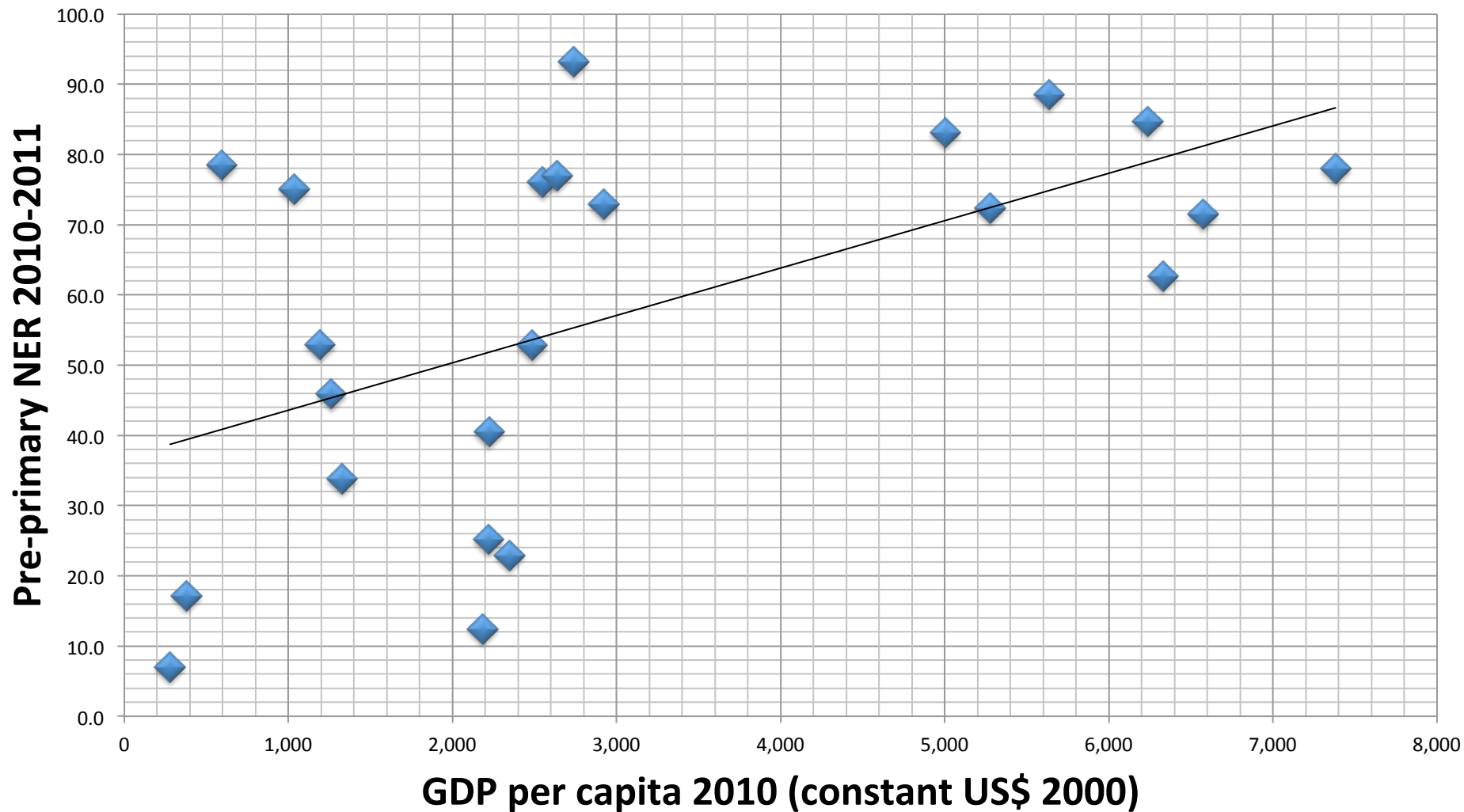
.... and neuroscience. Brain development (cognitive function) peaks early too.



Adapted from C. Nelson (2000) "From Neurons to Neighborhoods"

CEECIS countries with lower income *can* have high coverage of early education

Source: Transmonee database



Universal enrolment from age 3 is feasible

- Early education is a people service. Most of the costs is remuneration. If average income in country A is twice as high as in B, salaries will also be twice as high. So affordability is the same in both countries.
- But unit costs do differ by program. They are 4 to 7 times lower in short programs than in fullday kindergarten.
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: very cost effective three-shift model.
- Aga Khan in Kyrgyzstan runs the “satellite model”. A central kindergarten supports home and school-based programs that would otherwise have a sub-critical scale.
- Albania, Romania and probably more countries: shorter programs on offer within the regular kindergarten system.

What we know about the returns

- Studies based on comparison of treatment group and control group found returns of 4, 6 and even 17 times the initial investment. Disadvantaged groups show highest returns.
- Analysis based on country level regression analysis (Lancet 2011) found a return on investment of 17.
- Unresolved question: within countries, poor groups show higher returns than rich groups. But across countries, the poorer ones show lower returns than richer ones. Why?
- E.g. in Uganda, an ex-ante benefit cost analysis found returns of 1.6 – 8.6, not 17 (Behrman & van Ravens).
- Country specific benefit-to-cost analysis can also be done in CEECIS countries to support advocacy.