

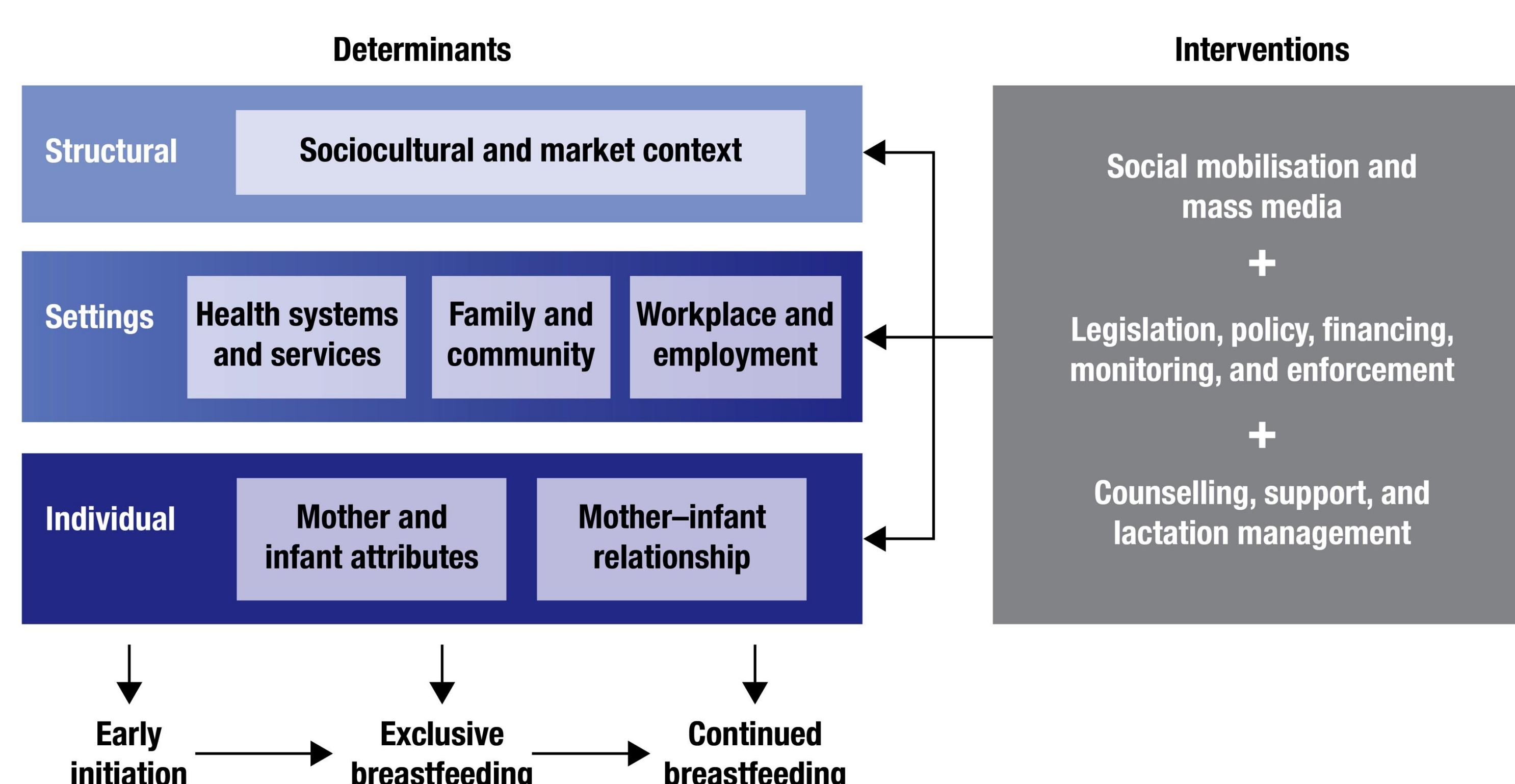
Improving Optimal Breastfeeding in Thailand:

An Investment in Human Capital

Findings from The Lancet Breastfeeding Series

“In all mammalian species the reproductive cycle comprises both pregnancy and breastfeeding: in the absence of the latter, none of these species, man included, could have survived.” – Paediatrician Bo Vahlquist

Building an enabling environment for breastfeeding: A conceptual model



Paper 2: Why invest, and what it will take to improve breastfeeding practices?

- The health and economic costs of not breastfeeding amount to \$300 billion USD annually (about 0.49 percent of GNI) and need to be measured against the cost of investing in breastfeeding.

- In 2014 global sales of all baby milk formula were about \$44.8 billion USD, and are expected to grow to \$70.6 billion USD by 2019, undermining efforts to improve breastfeeding.

- Political support and financial investments are needed for interventions, policies, and programs that are known to rapidly improve breastfeeding practices, including:
 - Strengthen implementation of national laws on marketing of breastmilk substitutes;
 - Expand paid leave policies and ensure breastfeeding friendly workplaces; and
 - Ensure universal coverage of breastfeeding-friendly services, including counseling and support, in all health facilities and communities.

Paper 1: Breastfeeding in the 21st century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect

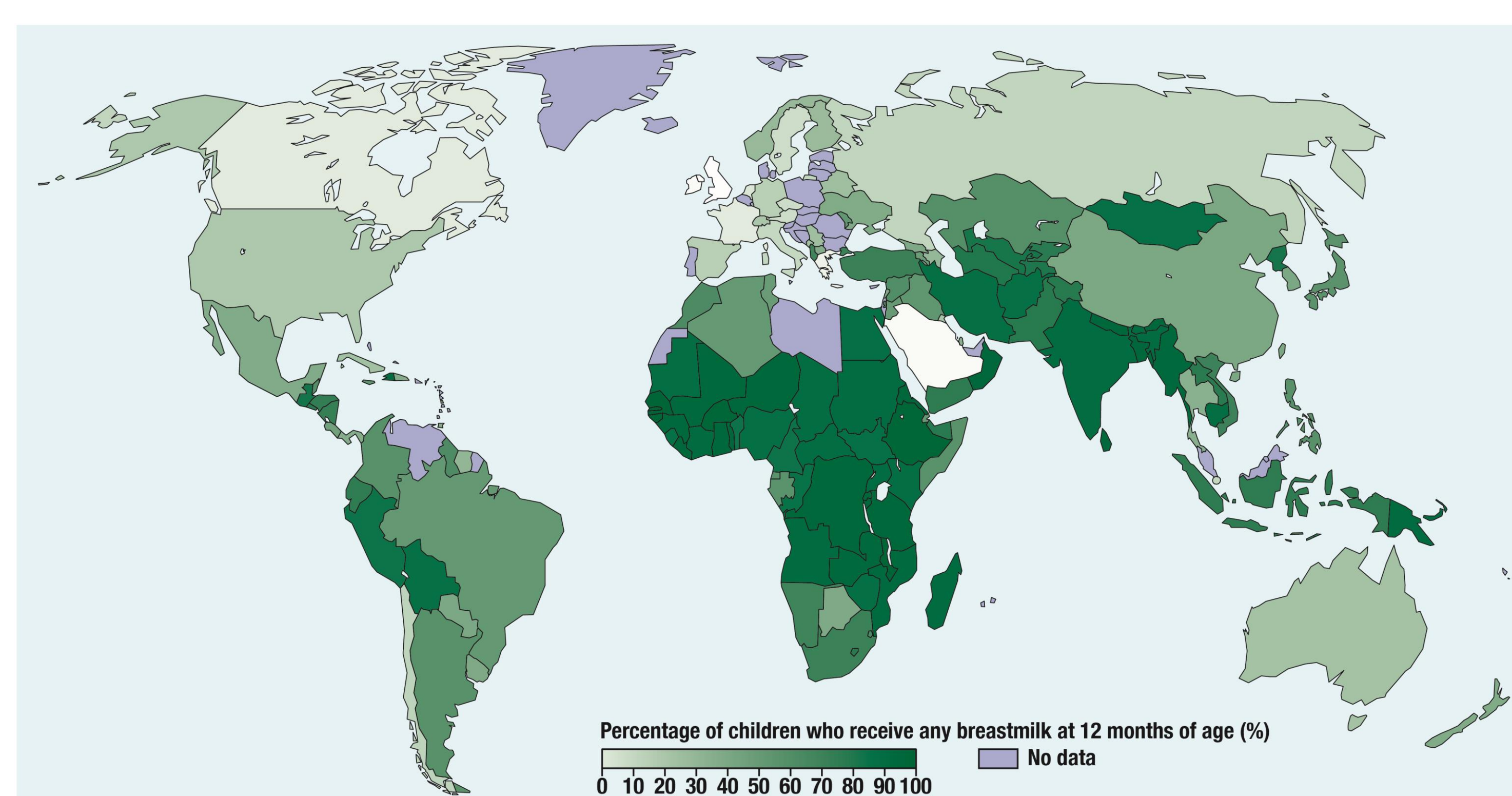
- Findings from studies done with modern biological techniques suggest novel mechanisms that characterize breastmilk as a **personalized medicine for infants**.

- The scaling up of breastfeeding can prevent an estimated 823,000 child deaths each year—87 percent of them under 6 months of age.

- Children who are breastfed for longer periods have lower infectious morbidity and mortality, fewer dental malocclusions, and higher intelligence (up to 3 IQ points on average) than those who are breastfed for shorter periods, or not breastfed. This inequality persists until later in life. Growing evidence also suggests that breastfeeding might protect against overweight and diabetes later in life.

- Each year a mother breastfeeds, her risk of developing invasive breast cancer decreases by six percent. Globally, improved breastfeeding can prevent 20,000 breast cancer deaths every year.

First global map of breastfeeding prevalence



The evidence is stronger than ever that investing in breastfeeding has substantial health and economic benefits for children and women in low-, middle- and high-income countries alike.