



Moving Minds Alliance and ECDAN Joint Statement on Early Childhood Development and the Afghanistan and Haiti Crises

Thursday, August 19, 2021

On World Humanitarian Day, the [Moving Minds Alliance](#) and the [Early Childhood Development Action Network](#) express deep concern and support for the people of Afghanistan and Haiti and draw attention to the immediate and long-term impacts of these humanitarian crises. The wounds, trauma and instability inflicted by these two events—one geopolitical and one environmental—are unimaginable and [further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic](#). These events come on the heels of humanitarian crises in Lebanon, Palestine, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Syria, and many more places around the world.

Before the current political crisis, almost half the population of Afghanistan—[18.4 million people \(8.2 million children\)](#)—were in need of humanitarian and protection assistance. Since May 2021, [over half a million people](#) have been displaced, and the rights of women, families and children are gravely endangered. According to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), Afghanistan has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world, with [46 percent of the population \(11.7 million children\)](#) under 15 years old. Those who have fled the crisis require immediate and ongoing support, especially families and young children. Afghanistan National Director Asuntha Charles of World Vision, a Moving Minds Alliance member, has aptly [stated](#): “History has shown that the resilience and fortitude of the Afghan people is extraordinary. But it has its limits. They are now at their most vulnerable and we cannot abandon them now.”

The 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on August 14th, followed by Tropical Storm Grace, has left [half-a-million Haitian children](#) with limited or no access to shelter, safe water, healthcare, and nutrition, according to country representative Bruno Maes from UNICEF, a Moving Minds Alliance member and ECDAN partner. With COVID-19 still an imminent threat to the health and safety of Haiti’s population, the loss and damage associated with these most recent natural disasters only further compounds the dire situation so many children and families are experiencing.

The Moving Minds Alliance and ECDAN stand ready to lend our expertise and continue to offer support. Our members contribute programmatic, funding, and research expertise in support of young children and families across the globe, and we are committed to assessing how best to support families affected by these recent developments—as

individual organizations and collectively. We affirm that holistic early childhood development strategies and services are critical to mitigate the current and long-term impact of the adversities facing residents of Afghanistan and Haiti, particularly the most vulnerable young children and families. Many of our member organizations and partners are continuing humanitarian operations and their aid workers should be given all available support.

We call upon donors, humanitarian agencies and government leaders to provide immediate and life-saving aid to young children and families in need. This includes expanded investments in nurturing care as a core part of development assistance, emergency response and in humanitarian action. Finally, we urge the international community to further their commitment to providing increased and sustained funding, diplomatic engagement, and support for long-lasting solutions that protect the rights of children and foster their holistic development.

A generation of children is at risk. Safeguarding young children impacted by crises and prioritizing their survival, development and protection is not only necessary to alleviate suffering and uphold their rights but can also drive economic recovery and build a strong foundation for peace and security, resilience, social justice and social cohesion.

The views expressed in this statement are those of the Moving Minds Alliance and ECDAN at-large and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of each individual member of the organizations.