

# Lessons From Cross-Sectoral Issues: Pathways to greater representation for ECD in the humanitarian Sector

## About the Moving Minds Alliance and Background to this report

The Moving Minds Alliance works to scale up the financing, policies, and leadership needed to effectively support young children and families affected by crisis and displacement everywhere. Originally established in 2017 by a group of philanthropic foundations, today Moving Minds Alliance is a multi-stakeholder partnership combining programmatic, funding, and research expertise to support the prioritization of the youngest refugees and their caregivers.

The MMA's Joint Advocacy Group on Humanitarian Architecture (JAG 2) is working to ensure that early childhood development (ECD) becomes a core component of every humanitarian response. To achieve this goal, the group is pursuing several areas of work focused on effectively embedding ECD work into OCHA-led processes such as the GHO as well as IASC policy channels and the global cluster architecture. In support of this work the following report was developed to understand how cross-sectoral issues have best achieved representation across cluster work streams. The learning from this analysis has been synthesised into core recommendations on how to approach this from an ECD perspective.

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## Acronyms

CALP	The Cash Learning Partnership
D&I	Disability and Inclusion
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDiE	Early Childhood Development in Emergencies
GNO	Global Needs Overview
HCT	Humanitarian Country Teams
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordinating Groups
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

## Introduction

The following report aims to identify how different inter-cluster issues have established themselves within the formal humanitarian architecture in order to inform best practice for the ECDiE sector. The full methodology and scope of the work can be found in Annex 1. The purpose is to understand the key challenges and successes of areas, such as Cash, Youth, Disability & Inclusion (D&I), and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), have had while engaging with the humanitarian structures and to develop a strategic pathway forward. The cross-cutting sectors included in this report were selected based on their similarities to ECD as an issue, for example a community-based approach which is common to ECD, MHPSS and Disability and Inclusion; the focus on a particular age group such as Youth which mirrors the focus of ECD on the youngest children; or the prevalence of the cross-sectoral issue as an indicator of its success e.g. Cash. Other topics such as Gender and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) were discussed but were considered beyond the scope of this exercise. The report will describe how working groups established inside clusters (such as Education, Protection, or Nutrition), reference groups focused on tool and research development and affiliations with thematic clusters have helped to establish the above cross-sectoral issues within the humanitarian architecture. The recommendations of the report are intended as road maps for future priorities for Joint Advisory Group 2 (JAG2) of the Moving Minds Alliance (MMA) to meet its intended purpose of gaining greater traction across multiple humanitarian cluster areas and, subsequently, greater representation of all aspects of ECDiE in humanitarian response.

To identify the key learning for ECDiE, a series of structured interviews were undertaken. The interviews targeted key informants who had represented a cross-sectoral issue, cluster-specific coordinators and staff, and a final round of interviews were undertaken with staff of the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee](#) (IASC). The IASC, established in 1991, is a high level coordinating body which establishes policy, strategic priorities and mobilises resources in response to humanitarian crises and is central to the work of any humanitarian actor. As part of this process, informants were asked to identify literature that they found important for progressing the agenda of their issue. An analysis of these, as well as the outputs from the interviews generated some key findings which were interrogated further to create more specific road maps or recommendations.

Some of the key findings established that while the structure of the humanitarian architecture is changing and there is a strong recognition that a whole person focus is needed, this will take time. While there is a clear indication that humanitarian response is moving toward a structure centred around the needs of communities, there is still a need to utilise the existing structures to highlight how and why ECD should be given a greater space within a response. **Strong donor support, IASC-endorsed guidance and opportunity sharing with key allies were frequently reported as the most pivotal pieces in generating greater traction.**

**The specific recommendation which has been established through the above key informant interviews (KII) and literature review cover four workstreams.**

1. Evidence: While evidence is being developed, it is important that it is targeted to influential demographics, contains case studies and tangible action plans, and has a targeted dissemination plan.

2. Allies: Developing allies within other cross-cutting issues for example, Cash for ECD and Disability and Inclusion for the youngest refugees. Additionally, establishing donor or government champions.
3. Working groups: Ensuring working groups are either resourced over a long period of time to establish consistency or are focused on a very discrete and focused piece of work.
4. IASC Guidelines: Supporting the creation of IASC guidelines for the youngest refugees and their caregivers.

Finally, motivated and capacitated individuals will be pivotal to ensuring ECD is represented on agendas at the policy and global cluster levels; that it is integrated into existing clusters and represented within formal policy and structures.

## Methodology

To understand relevant experiences from the sector, a series of structured interviews were conducted (Annex 2). The interviews were directed to two target audiences, firstly, the cluster leads and staff to capture their experiences of how cross-cutting issues operate within their thematic area of responsibility, and secondly, humanitarian actors who have been involved in representing a cross-cutting issue within these humanitarian structures. A list of key informants were identified at the outset of the scoping activity; these informants representing the key humanitarian thematic areas and cross-sectoral leads.

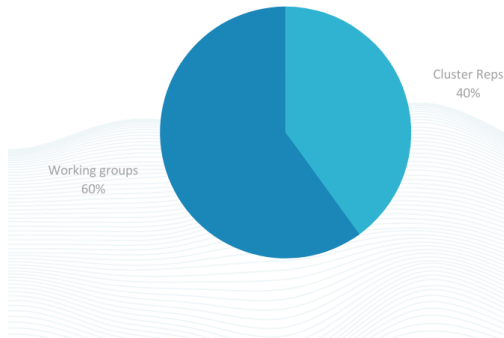
A cascading interview model was then applied where informants identified follow-up interviewees who were also relevant and/or heavily involved in this work. The purpose of this was to ensure that a range of voices are heard and that a range of experiences are learnt from. This two-phased approach aims to provide a rounded picture of the sector or working group and, where needed, follow up on missing information from the first phase.

There were two sets of questions within the interview tool. The first more general and aimed at the cluster leads and staff. The second set are nuanced questions aimed at understanding the minute workings of the cross-issue groups. A final round of interviews took place once key messaging had been summarised from the data collected. These interviews were with IASC staff and provided an opportunity to tease out greater information on processes and test the water with some of the initial findings.

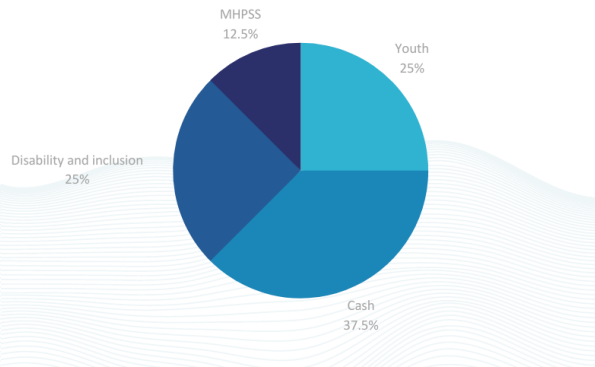
## Summary KII

Content gathering ran from 30<sup>th</sup> January until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Key problems arose around respondent's available time linked to the Turkey and Syria 2023 earthquake response precluding me from accessing some clusters and the voices of the nutrition and health sectors. The below graphs demonstrate the demographics of the respondents.

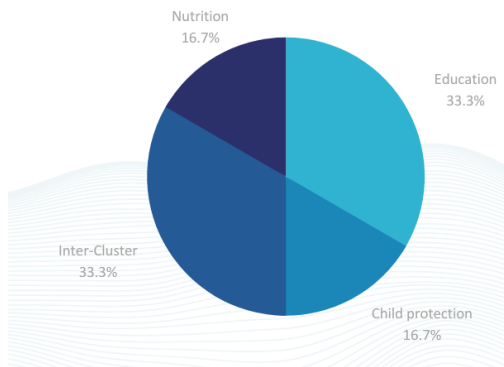
Informants by Function



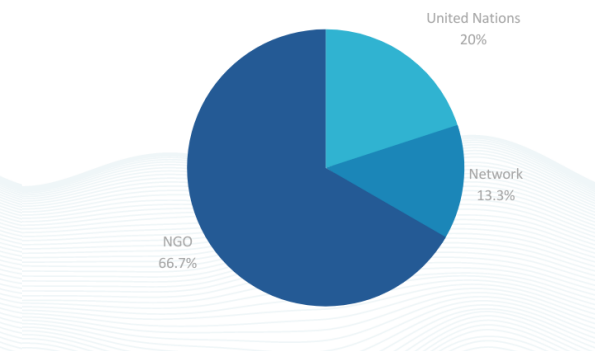
Informants by Cross-cutting Issue



Informants by Cluster Theme



Informants by Organisation Type



## Literature Review Key Messages

The Literature Review took two approaches. The first approach collated a library (Annex 3) of recommended reading from informant interviews. The most common types of texts to come out of the interviews were; guidelines endorsed by the IASC which were seen as lending authority and weight to the issue; case studies which cluster representatives and IASC staff felt gave tangible examples of how to implement activities related to the issue; and notes from key meetings or conferences, for example, a Cash caucus which was held last year which illustrated organisational collaboration and the establishment of a new coordination model. The Cash sector was the most prolific in terms of guidance notes and documents and was also the most frequently signposted as thought leaders by

other cluster leads followed by MHPSS which was held up as strong examples of guidance by IASC staff.

Three particularly pertinent pieces are highlighted for their relevance:

[The GEC Synthesis report on Cash](#) ( The Global Education Cluster, 2021) was highlighted by a Global Education Cluster staff member as instrumental in gaining the backing of the cross-sectoral task team sitting within the GEC. The synthesis collected key evidence and case studies which showed practical application of Cash in an education setting. It was praised for its practicality as well as clear exemplification of why this should be an important focus for the education cluster.

[Language from AAP guidance](#) (IASC, 2022) was highlighted as important for us to be mindful of in the creation of any guidance. The language used in this has been signalled as representative of the new thinking at OCHA and focuses on the agency of the affected population. It clearly and concisely establishes affected populations at the heart of any response.

[The MHPSS IASC Guidelines](#) (IASC, 2007) have been identified by an IASC member of staff as a strong style model to follow. The document is detailed; however, each section focuses on tangible actions and examples to give concrete guidance.

In addition, a light-touch literature review was used to find more information on topics identified in interviews for exploration or to establish background information, for example, the history of The Cash Learning Partnership (CALP, 2023). Outside of the search terms some texts focused on the sector were useful in understanding the shift in thinking of the sector. The New Humanitarian has a series of articles on '[Rethinking Humanitarianism](#)'. Understanding this introspective moment in the aid sector was particularly relevant when understanding the changes in thinking at the global coordination level and particularly useful for ensuring that recommendations were aligned with up-to-date thinking. While useful in fact-finding, it was not as useful as the first approach in identifying actionable recommendations. The importance of self-reported literature was particularly evident as respondents identified the importance they had applied to the documents and could explain how these documents aligned themselves to political and structural nuances within the humanitarian architecture. Through the literature review, Cash yielded the most responses, though there were many duplications of the literature that came out from interviews.

## Lessons learnt

### Understanding of ECDiE

The interviews centred around existing knowledge of ECD, structural components of cross-cutting issues and recommendations for the ECD space. When informants were asked to explain their understanding of ECD, two felt confident to answer and explained ECD to be a holistic approach for the youngest children with one interviewee saying

*"[ECD is] Making sure children 0-6, in an emergency, have an integrated holistic support for healthy and natural development. To thrive the best they are possibly able to. The different*

*sectors all contribute to the wellbeing of under 6's - it includes a little bit of everything. education, nutrition, health hygiene."*

The rest of the respondents stated feeling unsure that they knew exactly what ECD was but that they felt it was more than just pre-primary activities and that it encompassed a number of different elements. Some highlighted protection elements such as birth certificates while other informants highlighted play. All informants included literacy and numeracy. All informants interviewed felt that there was some link, blue dotted line or affiliation with their sector (Education, Nutrition, Protection and Health) however, few described it as being an intrinsic aspect of their existing mandate, excepting education. When informants were asked about any known frameworks or indicators which were present in their sector and relevant to ECD none could respond positively. When asked about the Nurturing Care Framework, guidance developed by WHO, UNICEF and The World Bank outlining five key areas for early childhood development, few knew of it. It is important to mention that not all respondents were asked this question, for example cluster leads and IASC staff responded to a shorter questionnaire.

Structural questions asked informants to explain:

- How their cross-cutting issues were organised within the humanitarian architecture
- What the key catalysts for change had been
- Who were the biggest champions and how had they been bought in

Throughout the interviews, three themes were recurring: home, donor support and reference groups.

## Findings

### Home

The majority of cross-cutting issues represented in the interviews stated that their area had a strong link to a specific cluster. For Cash, they had initially been linked to Food Security; Disability and Inclusion highlighted their strong links to the Protection cluster; and the Youth movement had links to Livelihoods. The notion of a base or 'home' for a cross-cutting sector brought out many contrasting responses. Cash respondents highlighted being linked to Food Security as having been a helpful anchoring from which they grew out of. It provided support and incubation, however, as it was a modality, it was able to avoid being seen as a tool simply for that cluster sector. Disability and Inclusion respondents, however, suggested that being hosted initially in Health wasn't very helpful. It was felt that the connection precluded other actors in engaging with the needs of this group as it was seen as highly specialised. The D&I sector's subsequent links with Protection have been seen as enabling greater traction and has found to be a positive base from which to find allies. When asked about the possibility of establishing a 'home for ECD' respondents highlighted the importance of which sector, for examples, **existing multi-sectoral attitude of the Protection sector was highlighted as being useful.**



Benefits	Risks
An Ally	Ring fenced to a specific area
A house from which to gain traction with donors and in terms of accountability	If linked with some sectors, such as Education, it could be seen as not life saving
Direct links into the cluster systems and priorities	Not seen as a responsibility for other sectors
More consistency	A burden on that sector
A safeguard in changing humanitarian architecture landscape, ensuring that it doesn't get lost.	Competing priorities of that space

MHPSS was raised as an alternative example of a sector which did not have a 'home' within a thematic cluster, though the MHPSS Collaborative are logistically hosted by Save the Children Denmark and the MHPSS reference group sit within the IASC. This raised interesting discussions. Informants from the MHPSS Collaborative established that the lack of association with the Health sector, for example, meant that it wasn't seen as something that only specialised actors could engage with. It was also held up as a strong example by IASC staff as the guidance coming out of the MHPSS movement was grounded in practical guidance applicable in all sectors. **The lack of an established link with one or another sector made it more accessible. Conversely, some cluster respondents saw it as separate and therefore more difficult to adopt within the remit of their cluster sector.**

### Donor support

Informants from Cash and Disability and Inclusion explained that when key governments and donors were involved greater progression could be seen. Both exemplified this with core donors introducing their own guidance around the topic which they utilised to hold actors to account. DFID (as was), USAID and ECHO (ECHO, 2022) have all developed guidance and indicators around the use of Cash within their grants. This was purported by the informants to increase the amount Cash has been used by organisations and the introductions of organisation-wide targets around the percentage of Cash to be used in relation to in-kind aid. World Vision has committed 50% of its humanitarian assistance to be delivered as Cash (World Vision, 2021). The involvement of donors, in combination with the accountability measures included, put pressure on organisations to prove how they would address Cash.

Similarly, Disability and Inclusion identified that the creation of DFID (DFID, 2020) and ECHO (ECHO, 2019) guidelines and indicators bolstered the inclusion of persons with disabilities in responses. It was felt that donor inclusion of indicators increased a level of accountability. Respondents from MHPSS

also suggested that a sympathetic government donor could really push the agenda within their national governments but also other national governments. It was felt that having a champion who spoke the political language would be able to advocate more strongly on behalf of an issue to others in political positions. In addition, national donors supporting an issue and creating guidelines and indicators around this has led to compliance by NGOs. Having a person in the room who understood the political gambit, as well as having power, could influence other government aid agencies into highlighting the agenda.

### Working groups and reference groups

The majority of respondents interviewed highlighted the challenge of creating more working groups in an over saturated structure. The IASC reported 204 active sub-groups in 2021, predominantly reporting to Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) or Inter Cluster Coordinating Groups (ICCG) (IASC, 2021) The idea that having yet another responsibility or subgroup would either suffer from a lack of capacity or burden actors with yet another focus. This issue is further compounded by the number of staff needing to “double hat” (IASC, 2021). Though it is important to note that **all groups interviewed had working groups in various sectors and when asked if they felt there was another way to organise, none could identify a better way.**

Further pitfalls of over saturation have been identified throughout the interviews. **Working groups who showed the greatest successes were ones who had consistency in representation.** The Global Education Cluster Task Team on Cash, for example, has been led by the same two people for the same organisations for the last five years. When working groups are established the bulk of the work or championing will fall to one or two organisations and shifts in organisational priorities or personal can impact the success of the work stream. Additionally, **the time and capacity costs of being an active member of a working group often precludes national actors from joining or from taking part.** This was particularly highlighted in the interviewees with D&I respondents.

A useful consideration raised by IASC was the importance of framing with some clusters more amenable to the idea of synergies as opposed to inter-cluster or cross-sectoral work. It has been suggested, for example, that vocabulary which would highlight a commonality between two distinct areas such as ECD and Nutrition would be more likely to be actioned than a suggestion of them being interlinked. Clusters are protective over the autonomy of their work and, of course, there are further implications on space, buy-in and resources.

Within the working group structures, there were two notable approaches which differed: Cash and MHPSS. Cash has a multi-working group structure all coordinated by Global Cash Advisory Group. The Global Cash Advisory Group is populated by staff from a variety of organisations the representation is broken down into groups: two INGO representatives, one Network (CALP), two local actors, three UN agencies, two chairs and two representatives from the Red Cross/Crescent movement. The representatives dedicate a portion of their time to the Advisory Group and they largely sit at the HQ level (Illustration 1). Then are sector- or cluster-specific working groups such as the Cash for Education task team and the Cash for Child Protection working group. Following this are the country level Cash working groups, the mandate of these has been determined by the New Model for Cash Coordination (IASC, 2022).

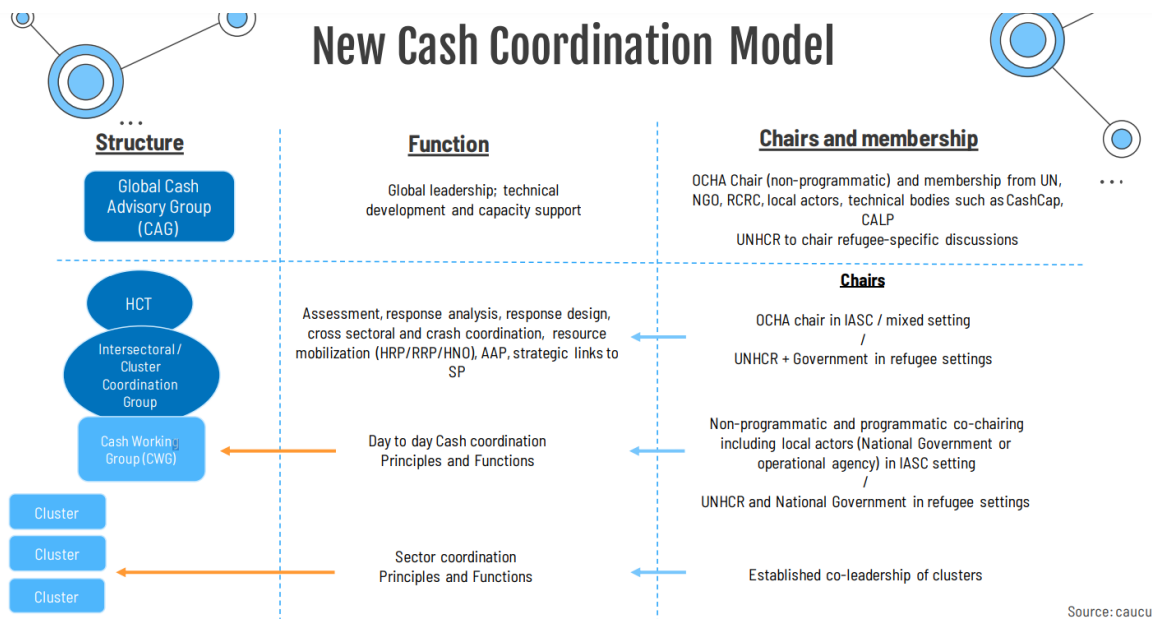
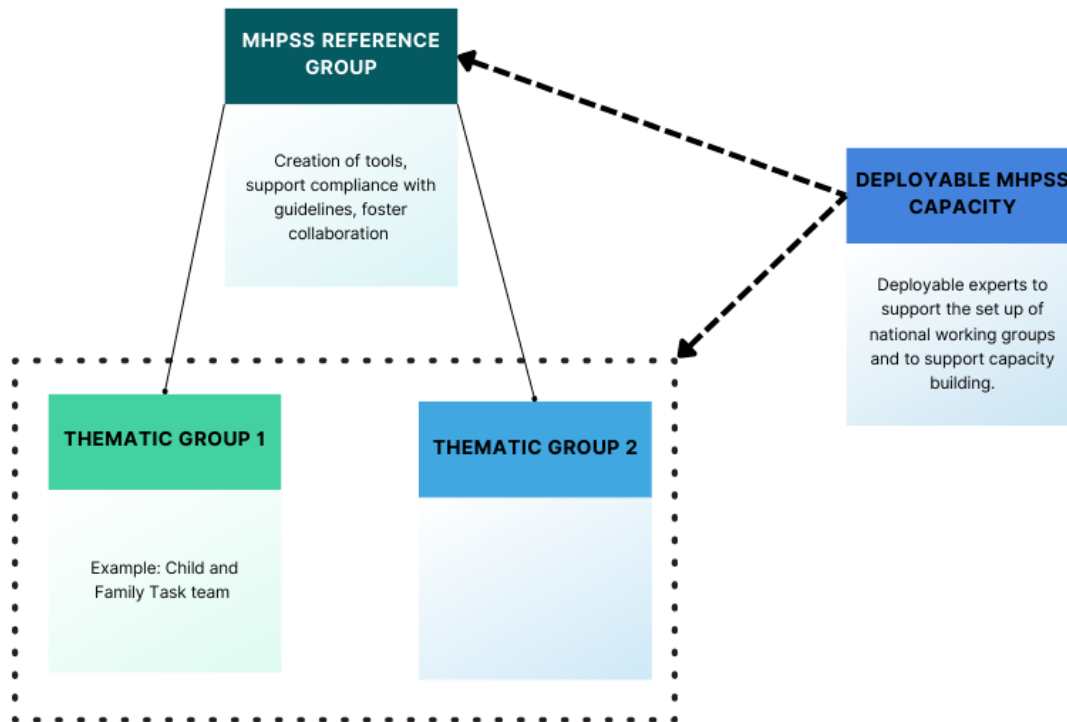


Illustration 1 (IASC, 2022)

MHPSS works in a more streamlined manner. The overarching coordination body, the MHPSS Reference group, is situated within the IASC structure. The aim of this group is to ensure compliance with the IASC guidance on MHPSS, support the creation of tools and foster coordination between a diverse range of stakeholders (IASC, 2017). Similarly, to the Global Cash Coordination Group, the reference group is chaired by one UN member and one INGO member. This is presently being hosted by the Danish Red Cross. Underneath the Reference group there are functional teams focused on thematic areas, for example the child and family group. One key difference between the model used by the Cash sector and MHPSS is the surge capacity. The Dutch Surge Support function, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provides a pool of experts who can be engaged for short term support for the establishment of national and sub-national MHPSS working groups in a response. It also supports training and capacity building for MHPSS professionals (Netherlands Enterprise Agency, 2022).



*Illustration 2<sup>1</sup>*

Groups indicated the importance of a body responsible for coordinating guidelines, tool kits and standards. CALP was highlighted as a key example as it **sits outside of the cluster system but provides guidance across all working groups and acts as a source of knowledge and capacity building**. Similarly, the MHPSS reference team and deployable capacity team were acknowledged as having very tangible and actionable guidance which makes it easier for actors to engage in this area of work.

Collective work on guidance which transcends organisational agendas was highlighted as important. The establishment of the IASC guidelines was outlined in Ken Miller’s report in 2021. It highlights that while not all actors were entirely happy with the guidance, it was acknowledged that the guidance brought together a wide range of interventions and established a need for a multi-level response (K E Miller, 2021). There are likely to be similar stumbling blocks should the ECD community undertake the development of IASC guidance. A key turning point, as highlighted by each movement, was the development of IASC guidelines especially when created and endorsed by a team of passionate individuals who dedicated time to the effort. Respondents from Youth created the guidance with a particular focus on country-level consultation. They used this as their key stage of guidance iteration and then used the feedback generated in-country to take to the clusters in Geneva. This made for a compelling justification for the guidance as it represented the needs on the ground and was created with country and individual needs in mind.

Seedling Education

<sup>1</sup> approximate understanding of MHPSS structure gained from discussion.

## Catalysts

There were four common aspects which cross-cutting issues reported as contributing to their success.

### *Evidence*

- All sector respondents highlighted the importance of evidence in their advocacy for representation across sectors.
- It was also highlighted by cluster representatives, for example, a respondent from the Education cluster highlighted 'Cash in education' case studies as being pivotal to the focus on Cash in the education space.
- More specifically, evidence which indicated direct links between value for money and reach. Cash suggested that this was particularly useful for donors in the run up to key moments such as the Grand Bargain.
- Youth highlighted the importance of case studies relevant to each sector giving practical examples of how their cross-cutting sector was relevant and how it could be applied.

### *Key moment*

- Cash and Disability and Inclusion respondents highlighted the importance of a key 'moment'. Being included in the Grand Bargain was seen as a catalysing moment.
- In the run up to the commitment, lobbying or donor support such as DFID using evidence meant that in the Grand Bargain donors were also pledging their commitment to the cause.
- The inclusion of Cash in the Grand Bargain led to the expansion of the number of working groups present in multiple sectors who could utilise CALP to provide structure guidance.

### *Guidelines*

- The production of IASC guidelines were highlighted as turning points by Disability and Inclusion, Cash and Youth working groups (more detail on process in recommendations).
- The production of the guidelines provided a framework in which each sector could see where their responsibility lay and how to implement. MHPSS was held up as particularly useful as it gave specific examples on how to operationalise any guidelines.
- The process involved working with each cluster to gain approval which also acted as an awareness raising opportunity and led to informal champions in each cluster.
- As a political piece, it also required endorsement by each sector for IASC to adopt the guidelines. This encouraged awareness in the sector and a certain level of buy-in.
- Youth also stated that providing resources such as a deployable team who could train on the guidelines would be helpful.

### *Donor Support*

- Donor buy-in at the outset provided great support for improving representation of cross-cutting areas as mentioned previously. This buy in constituted of support to the messaging around the cause, explicit backing through the inclusion of indicators on the cross cutting area and funding to the specific area. Cash gained particular success with this – money was seen to be a key galvanising factor, particularly when teamed with donor indicators. There was no explicit mention of donor financial support to coordination functions.

## Challenges

A key issue that groups reported was the structure of a working group. The working groups are populated by individuals who are full time employees of an organisation, either NGO, CSO or UN. The individuals are part of the group as they have a specific interest in the cross-cutting area *or* their organisation has a specific mandate or interest in this area. This in and of itself is not problematic however, it does create the below persistent challenges.

1. Capacity: The individual will have many responsibilities and/or may sit on many groups. This means that only a few individuals will be able to meaningfully contribute to the work of the group.
2. Over saturation vs Continuity: There are a significant number of working groups all requiring a dedicated number of people to progress their work. The suggestion has subsequently been to have fewer working groups. Unfortunately, no working group means no consistent representation. Working groups which target a specific task are useful for progressing specific actions but lack continuity.
3. The way working groups are structured and unfunded has specific implications for national NGO inclusions and for including voices from the fields. This is outlined further in the section (localisation).

## Recommendations for implementation OR Route to success

The results from this study and series of interviews produced the following four key recommendations for the Moving Minds Alliance.

### 1. Evidence

A key recommendation which was present in all interviews was the importance of evidence. This is not a new notion for the work of the MMA, nor the work of the wider ECDiE space. The establishment of the research arm of the MMA, the work of organisations such as the Humanitarian Collaborative out of UVA, and the work supported by Sesame Workshop covers a lot of this ground. It is important to then focus in on the type of evidence produced and how to reach stakeholders who are not already sympathetic with the cause. One such example of this type of work is 'Promoting Country-Based Humanitarian Leadership For ECDiE' (Humanitarian Collaborative , 2021). This research piece focused specifically on working with country based humanitarian teams, building champions at the country level.

It is important to produce evidence which speaks to donors. This evidence needs to show how low cost interventions reach a large

#### Localisation: Ensuring the voices of affected populations are heard

Undertake the research suggested in the evidence piece which aims to raise the voices of the population. Following the strategy employed by Child Soldiers International on a multi-country level will provide a clear understanding and evidence of the needs of the population. (This could also provide evidence for the next Global Education Cluster meeting and link to countries in which ECD was included in the HNO).

number of individuals. Cash cited this as a key to unlocking large donor support which increased their footprint in the humanitarian architecture. Case studies which exemplify an individual-centred approach which reaches across sectors with the results will be a compelling case. The education cluster cited the Cash for Education Task team's [synthesis report](#) as a prime example of case studies which actors felt they could use and the MMA [resource kit](#) (The Moving Minds Alliance , 2022) would be an excellent basis for this kind of product.

Research and evidence from children and their care givers exemplifying what it is that they want will be a vital next step. This will be explicitly purposeful in three main ways. Firstly, it will ensure accountability to the affected population. This will ensure that as a humanitarian community, the MMA are providing people with what they want and need. Secondly, this will feed into the development of any guidelines (especially IASC guidelines) and thirdly, this will compel donors and clusters to improve their response in these areas as they will be directly listening to the needs on the ground. There are strong examples of how this can be done for example, [Child Soldiers International](#) undertook a piece to establish the voices of female children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAFAG). They undertook interviews with CAFAG, protection networks, teachers and parents. (Child Soldiers International , 2017).

Ensuring that the evidence is reaching beyond those already sympathetic will be very important. In the approach to key moments e.g. Global Refugee Forum socialising the evidence and messaging devised with target groups, clusters and individuals will ensure the MMA messaging is reaching beyond current supporters. A quick win in this area will be an analysis of resources already available against relevant criteria (Donor friendly language, Education/ Child Protection/ Health/ Nutrition etc. appropriate, generalist language) and the creation of a subsequent ambitious dissemination plan which reaches beyond current allies.

## 2. Find your allies

The establishment of a Government Donor Champion or Member of Parliament (MP) champion should be a key priority. While this sits in JAG1, it will be important to cross-collaborate especially at moments such as the creation of IASC guidelines. The buy-in of a government donor at the outset would ensure that the messaging created would tie in with any messaging a government donor would have. It could lead to the inclusion of indicators and priorities which align with the values of ECD within the humanitarian architecture.

Rather than 'homing' ECD in one or other cluster, a more formal establishment of allies is key. Within existing ECD guidance, gaps can be found across many sub-sectors and cross-cutting issues; "There are gaps in guidance for critical populations, including care for children with developmental difficulties, nutrition for ill children, local language use, and involving fathers and extended family in nurturing care." (The University of Virginia (UVA) Humanitarian Collaborative , 2021). Establishing small working groups on a select few of these are opportunities for collaboration with other cross-cutting issues. It would provide a good opportunity for expanding ECDiE representation into spaces others have already 'conquered'. Some examples of these opportunities.

1. Cash for ECDiE - Working with Cash working groups to establish some core principles of how to use cash for ECDiE or examples of how this could be used.



2. ECDiE and Disability and Inclusion - technical note on ensuring those with disabilities are included in ECDiE programming. (Inclusion of small scale ECD activities in medical settings).
3. ECDiE and MHPSS - short training tool on how these link that could be disseminated by their deployable staff into acute emergency settings.
4. The Global Cluster Coordinator for Nutrition highlighted the opportunity to present in the webinars which proceed the Global Needs Overview process which commences in August.
5. The creation of a two-pager case study with clear PowerPoint slides in collaboration with the Nutrition cluster on how Philippines Humanitarian Country team (HCT) have included ECD.

### 3. Working groups

The establishment of working groups has been highlighted as problematic. While all interviewees conceded there are challenges of obscurity if working groups aren't created, there is also a feeling of overwhelming 'ands'. **It is recommended that working groups are established but for specific tasks** While this can raise the question of consistency and continuity, if the pieces created are targeted at key moments, e.g. building support for guidance in the run up to an event or surrounding a tool which is very practical and socialised at the ground level, this will still be most impactful without over burdening a heavily laden system. To replicate the consistency which has led to the success of task teams such as the Cash for Education task team there will need to be some dedicated funding and agreements with specific organisations to lead the work. Ensuring that individuals have a dedicated percentage of their remit focused on the working group may help to support continuity.

Further to the piece driven working groups, a deployable expert, similar to the one used in MHPSS, could be a productive use of resources. This TOR would need to include significant networking in the startup phase to ensure awareness of the resource and would have a close working relationship with humanitarian coordinators to ensure the uptake of this expertise. In addition to this support to country level, ECDiE coordinators such as those outlined in ECDiE Learning Cohort (Sesame Workshop, UVA, 2022) would ensure a boosting of focus and capacity enabling quicker response times should subsequent emergencies occur. This preparedness was highlighted as a key factor for country level engagement for Disability and Inclusion working groups.

#### Localisation: Ensuring local participation in working groups

Disability and Inclusion working groups include local actors at the forefront of their country's work. This grounds any recommendations or any immediate response in local knowledge of the population and an understanding of the disability context specific to that country. They have cited this as particularly useful. However, this has been challenged by limited resource. Participating in working groups takes time and capacity. This needs to be resourced. To ensure that local actors are present in the conversation, it is important to make sure that they have the resources to do so. In addition, it is imperative to be mindful of challenging power dynamics when donors are in the same room.

Inclusion of these activities in the ongoing work of JAG2 will ensure that the voices of those on the ground and the affected population are being listened to in line with the guidance on AAP endorsed by the IASC (IASC, 2022).



## 4. Support to the creation of IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of the Youngest Refugees and Their Caregivers

A logical next step for the ECDiE movement is the creation of guidelines for the inclusion of youngest refugees and their care givers to be endorsed by the IASC. It is important to note that there is a changing approach developing in the humanitarian sphere away from sectors and towards the individual. This change will take time and it has been highlighted in conversations with IASC staff that **we would not miss the opportunity for inclusion in the current structure but to ensure our mission is future proofed with the correct vocabulary highlighting how it is centred around the need of a missed group** in a similar way to 'no child left behind'.

A further step to the guidance creation would be the resourcing of a deployable source following the style of MHPSS. This was seen as extremely important by the MHPSS respondent, the IASC respondents and was also self-reported as a short fall of the Youth guidelines. Many guidelines do exist which cover the full gambit of nurturing care framework ECD functions, however, none are IASC-accredited and no one guidance or standards document spans all five areas (The University of Virginia (UVA) Humanitarian Collaborative , 2021).

### Localisation: Ensuring community engagement

If JAG2 decided to support the creation of IASC guidelines then it could follow the example of the Youth task team. When putting together the guidance for endorsement by the IASC, Youth first put together a loose approximation of their core themes then they met with stakeholders in-country to understand their views and needs. This formed the basis of the guidance and ensure it was being led by the affected populations. It also then brought those voices to the Geneva-level when workshopping the guidance with different clusters.

## IASC GUIDELINES PROCESS

Review the IASC principles, values and current guidelines to see where ECD may already be covered

1

Put together a committee to come up with a clear one-liner on the ECD guidance ensuring they align with the IASC guidance and principles

2

Reach out to Section Chief, Operations & Advocacy Division at United Nations OCHA to see how this will tag with their values

3

Begin working on guidance - need a strongly committed team for a year's duration

4

Work with local actors

5

Bring the suggested recommendations to Geneva for buy-in with Clusters

6

Receive endorsement from IASC

7

Establish a large event to launch the IASC endorsement

8

Set up a deployable individual or team as per MHPSS

9

## Potential areas for future research

- An analysis of the MHPSS roving component structure
- An analysis of what products have been created and where they have been disseminated.
- Language analysis of texts for language appropriate to each stake holder
- Community level consultation with stakeholders in ECD inclusive of a child friendly focus group discussion.

## Conclusion

When assessing the landscape of cross-sectoral issues common themes emerged. **All indicated that they had an affiliation to a particular sector, excepting MHPSS. There was a consistent message that donor support and the creation of IASC-endorsed guidelines had supported the inter-sectoral representation of their work and that there was a need for evidence which strongly advocated on behalf of the affected population inclusive of their voice.**

A clear picture emerged of a changing humanitarian structure moving away from a focus on individual sectors and towards a structure which centred around the needs of individuals and communities. While this shift in thinking was outlined, it was also evident that, to ensure greater representation for ECD, it is key to be included in the current structure while using language and ideas that reflect the shift to a more people-led approach.

The research stated that we needed to provide evidence which shows the reach and value of ECD programming and evidence clear low hanging fruit. **This highlighted that although there is much of this evidence and work available, it is not necessarily getting past those who are already likeminded to the wider humanitarian community.**

The scoping highlighted opportunities to ensure that the MMA is inclusive of the voices of affected populations at the outset. It is imperative to listen to the people that the MMA are working for through gathering voices, recording our findings and ensuring a participatory approach to guidance creation.

A key outcome of this work provides JAG2 with some interesting low hanging fruit to move forward with. It also provides a greater challenge and logical next step. Many of the core pieces perceived as necessary to progress the agenda of ECD in the humanitarian structures are in place. It is now a case of establishing a network of allies from a greater range of specialisms.

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