



NGO Committee on Migration  
Subcommittee on Migrant and Refugee Children  
*in association with the*  
Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC)

## **Brighter Futures: An Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative to Promote Social Cohesion and Development**

### **Our Mission**

To engage in a constructive dialogue to promote social cohesion, development, and more peaceful societies, using ECD strategies at national and local levels.

The purpose of this dialogue is to promote a long-term culture of peace, which is critical for full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Our Goals**

Acknowledging the policies and the initiatives already implemented to promote ECD, our goals in support of SDG 4 are to:

- Raise awareness at all levels across sectors of society in which culturally-sensitive ECD has a critical role to play in laying the foundations for active and responsible citizenship;
- Share information and good practices on the role of ECD as a tool to build a more cohesive and peaceful society based on the real needs as expressed;
- Connect local realities to academic/scientific discussions to install long term, flexible policies and greater inclusivity for all;
- Advocate for the promotion of a more coordinated implementation of ECD programs at local level, facilitating the concrete implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Advocate for the integration of ECD programs in existing sector-specific services that already reach children, caregivers and families, as a more pragmatic and cost-effective way forward;
- Engage women and youth at local levels, promoting their critical role in the implementation of ECD and in the promotion of peace and security; and
- Support advocacy initiatives, helping the country continue to be a leader in ECD implementation.

### **Why does Early Childhood matter?**

Early childhood development directly influences economic, education, health and social outcomes for individuals and society. Investing in ECD is the most powerful investment a country can make for its most valuable resource: children and families. As the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon affirmed: “The Sustainable Development Goals recognize that early childhood development can help drive the transformation we hope to achieve over the next 15 years.”

ECD is particularly beneficial for children living in crisis situations where danger, instability, and insecurity affect individuals, families, communities and societies. Adverse early environments create long-term deficits in skills and abilities that drive down productivity and increase social costs—thereby adding to financial debts borne by the public.

Pandemics such as COVID-19 further traumatize and destroy forcibly displaced families. Children and their caregivers' physical and psychological health need to be protected and supported. ECD programs can respond to those needs in the short and long-term.

ECD supports caregivers enabling them to provide children with nurturing care. ECD services can protect vulnerable children against the detrimental effects of early adversity, which can improve health, education, employment, income, mental health, resilience to stress and prosocial competencies in later childhood and adulthood. Quality and culturally-sensitive ECD services in crisis settings must also integrate preventive care, mental health and psychosocial support for caregivers, who are often traumatized by their experiences, as well as parental coaching, to rebuild caregivers' capacity to provide nurturing care to their young children and rebuild family life.

### **How does ECD promote social cohesion?**

New promising evidence is emerging on how ECD services can be conducive to rebuilding trust and re-connecting groups who have historically been in conflict with one another, resulting in more resilient, inclusive and peaceful societies. In communities marked by intergroup tension, ECD programs can bring together families from different backgrounds around the common goal of child well-being. ECD services can also contribute to sustaining peace through reducing inequality and socioeconomic disparities and fractures in the society.

Hence Early Childhood interventions offer sustainable solutions for nations as they protect society from factors that perpetuate violence. Notwithstanding the evidence available, there is currently limited realization among policy makers on how ECD services can support the prevention of violence and promote peace, setting the ground for prosperous, cohesive, and resilient societies.

### **Why invest in ECD?**

From a cost-benefit perspective, a broad consensus now exists that benefits derived from ECD intervention far outweigh the costs. The estimated rate of return for investments in quality ECD for disadvantaged children is 13% per year. ECD programs are affordable, only costing on average an additional 0.50 per capita per year. The returns include reduced poverty and income gaps, improved outcomes in education and health, and reduction in crime. Breaking cycles of poverty and disadvantages allows future generations the continuing opportunity for economic productivity and social mobility. Providing universal ECD services for all groups can significantly narrow economic and educational inequality gaps, thus reducing risks of conflict.

We look forward to initiating a dialogue to support your implementation efforts to continue to be a leader in early childhood development.