



Participant Guide: ECD Networks

Early Childhood Regional Networks Fund
Annual Meeting 2023

Participant Guide: ECD Networks attending the ECRN Fund Annual Meeting

During our annual meeting, we will be discussing the role that networks play in supporting civil society, service providers, policy makers, researchers and others to improve and strengthen early childhood development outcomes across their membership. In particular, we will dive into two thematic topics in ECD: **Fatherhood and Male Engagement in Early Childhood**, and **Young Children in Crisis**.

We will have seven ECD networks represented in our meeting. These are:

- Five regional ECD networks:
 - **African Early Childhood Network (AfECN)** - [jump to section](#)
 - **Arab Network for Early Childhood (ANECD)** - [jump to section](#)
 - **Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)** - [jump to section](#)
 - **International Step-by-Step Association (ISSA)** - [jump to section](#)
 - **Latin American regional cohort*** - [jump to section](#)
- **The ECD Action Network (ECDAN)** - [jump to section](#)
- **The Moving Minds Alliance** - [jump to section](#)

This guide is intended to support participants with helpful background on each of these networks, including the work they have supported to-date on the two thematic issues we will be discussing in our meeting.

** This is not yet a formalized network, but a cohort of national ECD networks across seven countries in Latin America. Read more here.*

African Early Childhood Network (AfECN)



Description:

The African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) is a regional advocacy organization, serving as a platform to champion excellence and collaboration in protecting children's rights, influence policy and practice, strengthen partnerships, and share experiences and knowledge in ECD on the African continent. AfECN supports the ECD agenda through advocacy and partnerships, knowledge generation and dissemination and improved access to quality services.

At regional level, AfECN collaborates with African Union Commission; Regional Economic Communities, and other actors to intensify advocacy for critical issues related to ECED. AfECN contributes to convening of regional forums to accelerate better ECD outcomes across the region. At national level, AfECN collaborates with National ECD Networks, thus, deepening in-country multisectoral collaboration and partnerships for better ECD outcomes.

AfECN is involved in knowledge generation and exchange, providing opportunities to policy makers, researchers and practitioners to share experiences and best practices to inform country-level ECED dialogues. AfECN also supports African scholars working at the intersection of research, practice, and policy to advance ECD in the region. In this regard, AfECN supports sub-regional research communities of practice that involve ECED scholars in the sub-regions.

Membership includes:

AfECN membership is open to individuals, researchers, academia, NGOs and other stakeholders who promote the development of ECED on the African continent. AfECN has 1,756 registered members and collaborates with a network of partners that consist of the National ECD Networks who are AfECN's National Advocacy Partners; the African Union, AUDA-NEPAD, 8 Regional Economic Communities & 2 Health Communities, UN Agencies (UNICEF & UNESCO), 4 Regional Networks (ISSA, ARNEC, ANECD and ECDAN and scholars and researchers. AfECN coordinates the African Union –CESA ECED Cluster , with established links to other AU CESA -Clusters and representatives of the AU member states.

Work on thematic issues:

- *Fatherhood and Male Engagement*

AfECN has been part of the Global Initiative to Support Parents (GISP) Partnership and co-convened the African Regional Convening to Support Parents and caregivers. The role of fathers was addressed during this convening [GISP Africa Regional Convening | AfECN](#). AfECN has also supported the Childcare & Disability Landscape Analyses which looked into the role of fathers in childcare. Fatherhood and male engagement in ECD has also featured in AfECN's

convenings such as the Southern African regional ECD Conference held in March 2023 ([2023 SAR Conference | AfECN](#)) under session 8 titled *Male Engagement in Caregiving*.

In collaboration with key partners, AfECN continue to contribute to knowledge generation and dissemination as well as strengthening of the capacity of frontline workers on male involvement in the advancement of learning through play and playful parenting.

- *Young Children in Crisis*

AfECN programmatic approach focuses on not leaving any child behind; and advocates for policy development and action around inclusive Early Childhood Development targeting children in crisis, those in conflict zones and those affected by Climate Change. AfECN collaborates with National ECD Networks in Conflict and Fragile countries and key global and regional partners in advancing the need to put ECD at the centre of climate change discourse and action. AfECN has collaborated with other Regional Networks [ANECD](#), [ARNEC](#) and [ISSA](#) and Global Early Childhood Network [ECDAN](#) in holding a global webinar on ECD and climate change. The webinar series leverages learning across continents for young children's right to clean, safe and sustainable environments. Multi-media resources are available here <https://afecn.org/ecd-climate-change>. Recently, AfECN contributed to the convening of the Children Climate Summit, providing a platform to secure the voices of children in the Climate Change Discourse. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFHhAiqvCA>.

Arab Network for Early Childhood (ANECD)



Description:

Established in 2014 and hosted by the [Arab Resource Collective](#) (ARC), the [Arab Network for Early Childhood](#) (ANECD) is a participatory and collaborative network of local, regional, and international organizations, governments, experts, and academics in Arab countries.

ANECD's mission is to connect, empower, harmonize, advocate, produce, and communicate adapted, holistic, integrative, and inclusive early childhood development experiences and resources to Arab societies on the rights of young children.

[ANECD's strategy](#) operates through five key intervention areas:

1. ECD in Emergency Contexts
2. Child's Rights
3. ECD Workforce
4. ECD in Environmental Hazards and Climate Crisis
5. Digital Empowerment and Distant Interventions

Membership includes:

ANECD members have a unique composition of multidisciplinary and multisectoral representatives of ministries of education, health, and social affairs, childhood councils, NGOs, and academia, as well as individual experts coming from Arab communities, namely Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, Oman.

ANECD supports and facilitates the establishment of national ECD groups and committees that are flexible in form: either partners of ANECD or chapters of it. Any individuals wishing to become members of ANECD are now steered towards the national ECD groups in their countries.

ANECD also has connections in Bahrain, UAE, Mauritania, KSA, Sudan, Iraq, and Algeria.

Work on thematic issues:

- *Fatherhood and Male Engagement*

- a) [HEPPP](#): the Health, Early Learning, & Protection Parenting Program developed by ARC, is evidence-based holistic, integrative, and inclusive, with several published scientific papers. It has been implemented in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt since 2012. It is available in 3 modalities: F2F, online, & hybrid. ANECD is disseminating it through National ECD networks to reach a regional level, it is digital (hosted on Urjouha), and focuses on the empowerment of the male figure through the participation of fathers in the

implementation, content of sessions, & videos (e.g.: [communication](#), [avoiding violence](#), [equity](#) and [inclusion](#), [families of children with disabilities](#))

- b) Briefs developed:
 - [Evidence on the Effects of Engaging Fathers on Reducing Violence Against Children and Intimate Partner](#)
 - [Best Practices for Engaging Men and Fathers in Programs](#)

- *Young Children in Crisis*

- 1- Networking:
 - a. Support [establishment](#) of national [networks](#) that adopt the theme of young children in crisis through their national strategies, implementation priorities, and coordination.
 - b. Setting the ground for NGOs to coordinate together to respond to crises through different calls to action and collaborative regional work.
- 2- Advocacy work:
 - a. Research:
 - Community Strategic Research Model: can be applied to different strategic themes, implemented by ANECD's [Arab Working Group for EC Research](#).
 - [First SRM: The Situation of Parents and Caregivers in six Arab Countries During Crises](#)
 - [Lebanon ECD Situational Assessment Study](#)
 - a) [ANECD website Blogs](#): developing blogposts addressing and highlighting young children and their families living in crisis.
[Urjouha](#) parenting website campaigns with ECD National Committees: Urjouha is a support, mentoring, sharing, and communication platform for mothers, fathers, and caregivers from Beginning to 8 years.

Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)



Description:

Established in February 2008, the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) builds strong partnerships across sectors and different disciplines, organisations, and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to advance the agenda on and investment in early childhood.

ARNEC provides a common platform for ECD professionals from diverse sectors promoting holistic and inclusive early childhood development (ECD) and advocating for responsive caregiving and playful parenting; multisectoral approaches to ECD; ECD and climate resilience; and ECD workforce. ARNEC draws its membership from both institutional and individual members. Currently it has 25 institutional members and more than 3,000 individual members.

Membership includes:

ARNEC has a set of core team members: Save the Children, Plan International, and ChildFund Alliance. Each has a seat in ARNEC's Steering Committee providing strategic guidance to the Secretariat in terms of priorities. UNICEF-EAPRO, UNICEF-ROSA and UNESCO Bangkok are considered strategic partners and serve as observers in the Steering Committee. Institutional members are civil society organisations (CSOs), national ECD networks, and academic institutions coming from Southeast and South Asia. Individual members are very diverse coming from ECD centers, CSOs, INGOs, academe, and development partners such as UNICEF and UNESCO.

Work on thematic issues:

- *Fatherhood and Male Engagement*

1. **Documentation of Good ECD Practices and Innovations in the Context of COVID-19 (ARNEC, 2022).** The integration report contains the review and analysis of ten case studies of early childhood development (ECCD) programs that were developed or adapted to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with one case from Bangladesh on gender-transformative ECD practices through male engagement in ECD. Available online: <https://arnek.net/resources/arnek-resources/integration-report-documentation-ecd-programmes-responding-covid-19>.
2. **ARNEC COVID-19 Case Study: Gender-Transformative ECD Project in Bangladesh (ARNEC, 2022; for publication in 2023).** The case study documented the shift to alternative delivery arrangements during COVID-19 to promote participation and engagement of male caregivers

in early childhood services in Bangladesh. Link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DRNimhltSFJDbIBeA6ef72cOIRcKGqD/view?usp=sharing>.

- *Young Children in Crisis*

1. **Framework for Action: Young Children and Climate Change (ARNEC, 2023)**. This 2-page document highlights the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on young children across nurturing care components in the Asia Pacific context. It articulates the opportunity for change through a framework for action to address inequities early on and in response to climate change. Available online: <https://arnec.net/resources/arnec-resources/framework-action-young-children-and-climate-change>.
2. **Most Vulnerable to Most Valuable: A scoping study to put young children at the heart of climate actions and environmental protection (ARNEC, 2022)**. The scoping study aims to share the evidence from the Asia-Pacific region and the insights from experts and partners around the world exploring the deep interlinkages between climate change, environmental degradation and ECD to support our goal of enabling ECD systems and services for young children become more climate resilient, adequately funded, and their value better understood and considered by policy makers and climate scientists. Available online: <https://arnec.net/resources/arnec-resources/most-vulnerable-most-valuable-scoping-study-put-young-children-heart-0>.
3. **Young children in crisis: Addressing the impact of COVID-19, climate change, and environmental degradation (ARNEC, 2022)**. The documentation report of the 2022 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on ECD focused on building strong awareness among policy makers and practitioners of the substantial threats young children face due to the multiple crises affecting them, i.e., COVID-19, climate change and environmental degradation. Available online: <https://arnec.net/resources/arnec-resources/full-conference-documentation-report-young-children-crisis-addressing>.

International Step-by-Step Association (ISSA)



Description:

Established in 1999, the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) facilitates learning and collaboration across sectors, disciplines and borders in Europe and Central Asia, to advocate for and support competent Early Childhood Systems.

Building on Open Society Foundations' [Step by Step Program](#), ISSA' vibrant community of nearly [100 members](#) unites diverse organizations on a mission for quality, equity, workforce development and multisectoral approaches in integrated early years services. The network is a platform for members and partners to share, create and disseminate knowledge and practices—weaving a rich tapestry of collective wisdom and action towards greater impact for young children.

Membership includes:

NGOs, foundations, universities, research centers, professional associations, governmental agencies and early years service providers, from 40 countries across Europe/Central Asia. Many members themselves lead networks in their contexts: national advocacy coalitions, learning communities or networks of practitioners. Through collaborative initiatives, the Secretariat and clusters of members work closely with other actors in the region: Foundations, UNICEF, WHO, other European networks focusing on child rights, health, Roma, refugees, parents, gender equity etc. The Secretariat engages closely with the European Commission's Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care and is often called on to offer technical assistance to local or national governments.

Work on thematic issues:

- *Fatherhood and Male Engagement*

ISSA's *Engaging Men in Nurturing Care* is bringing together *expertise* from gender equality, masculinities, fatherhood, ECD, parenting programs, human and child's rights, and the *know-how* on effective programming, policy influencing and system change. This initiative has been launched in 3 countries so far, aiming to be a European movement. The Secretariat has authored: [Supporting Families for Gender Transformative Parenting](#) (resource pack for frontline workers) and [Engaging Fathers](#) (module in Home Visiting resource pack).

- *Young Children in Crisis*

The network has mobilized in every crisis. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, members promoted reconciliation and values-based education. Members in countries of former Soviet Union addressed needs of internally displaced families affected by conflicts. The Secretariat offered technical assistance to local governments in Greece and Germany to support Syrian refugees. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the Network has mobilized to support young children and their families, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries.

Informed by grassroots needs assessment, under its [Ukraine Response](#), the Secretariat:

- provided members/partners with a ready to be rolled-out capacity building program *Psychological First Aid and Trauma-informed Approaches* accompanied by a resource pack; cross-country coaching and peer learning sessions in multiple languages;
- strengthened members' capacity to support local governments in providing responsive services ([Spynkas](#), [PrimoHubs](#), [PlayHubs](#)) using the [Primokiz](#) tested approach;
- created a [web page](#) with curated resources for practitioners, parents and caregivers; and news illustrating the work of members on the ground;
- raised and channeled substantial financial & in-kind support to members on the ground;
- advocated for prioritizing ECD and more support for local actors.

Latin American ECD Networks Cohort

Description:

Since 2020, with the support and collaboration of the FEMSA Foundation and Porticus the Inter-American Dialogue has coordinated work with civil society networks dedicated to improving early childhood in Latin America. Initially networks from Brazil ([RNPI](#)), Colombia ([NiñezYA](#)), Mexico ([Pacto por la Primera Infancia](#)) and Peru ([Copera Infancia](#)) participated and are now joined by groups from Chile ([Pacto Niñez](#)) and Guatemala ([Alianza por la Nutrición](#)). The networks seek to create a platform for sharing ideas and experiences, and equipping decision-makers with technical capacities for ECD policy implementation. Although the initial focus was on a specific group of countries, the work and investments are oriented so that other countries/networks may benefit and eventually participate.

The networks identified as a central challenge the need to strengthen capabilities for advocacy and communications to support better ECD policies. With this in mind they are working to (i) develop their advocacy capacities; and (ii) constitute themselves as a collective (Latin American ECD network) to influence and engage in policy debates at the regional and international level.

[Micaela Finoli](#), from the Inter-American Dialogue will be attending the annual meeting as a special representative and coordinating partner for the Latin American ECD networks' cohort.

Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN)



Description:

ECDAN is a global network of networks that provides a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder platform to connect and bring together diverse key partners and their networks to advocate for higher prioritization and investment in inclusive quality services; facilitates knowledge exchange and learning; and connects and aligns global and regional partners across sectors to drive collective action at scale for all young children to ensure their optimal development, wellbeing, and realize their full potential. ECDAN connects partners and individual members to bridge siloes, stimulate collective action, innovate through collaboration to produce benefits at scale beyond what individual partners and sectors can do on their own.

Our Vision

Every young child is safe, well nourished, healthy, happy, and learning.

Our Mission

The Early Childhood Development Action Networks catalyze collective action on behalf of young children and their families around the world by connecting with global and regional partners, facilitating knowledge exchange, and learning and coordinating advocacy for increased investment for quality services.

Membership includes:

ECDAN's membership is multi-stakeholder and global, with representation across civil society, government, research and academia, think tanks, multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations, and international financing institutions from around the world.

Work on thematic issues:

ECDAN has four strategic objectives:

1. **Advocate and Communicate:** we catalyze joint advocacy efforts
2. **Learn and Share:** Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning exchange through our online platform, webinars, communities of practice, knowledge fellows program, and development of global public goods,
3. **Connect and Align:** catalyze collaborative initiatives around key challenging ECD issues like parenting, childcare, climate change, systems thinking for ECD, early education etc.
4. **Strengthen the Network:** build the infrastructure to enable optimal engagement of the global ECD community

Moving Minds Alliance



Description:

The Moving Minds Alliance is a collaborative group of organisations (foundations, NGOs, regional networks, academic organizations and private sector actors) and early childhood professionals whose collective focus is on young children and their caregivers in emergency and crisis situations, including displaced and refugee children.

We believe that the care provided to children in some crisis situations often falls short of the standard of nurturing care that research tells us is necessary to address the multiple, significant, long- and short-term impacts of crisis on children. Some children in some crises may receive no support at all.

The MMA is working to support a **global systems change movement** for young children in crisis situations, that will transform how they access and receive the support they need.

The Alliance is dedicated to bringing about changes in both the quantity and quality of holistic care for all young children and their caregivers who are affected by displacement, conflict and crisis.

Membership includes:

The MMA started life as a funders collective, but has since expanded to include other organisations that agree to the mission and values of the MMA. This includes foundations, NGOs, regional networks, academic organizations and private sector actors. We continue to expand as a network and in particular will seek to be inclusive of more local, national and community organisations in the future.

See all members here: <https://movingmindsalliance.org/our-members/>

Work on thematic issues:

Young Children in Crisis

Resource kit, e.g.

- <https://movingmindsalliance.org/young-children-in-crisis-settings-resouce-kit/>
 - <https://movingmindsalliance.org/young-children-in-crisis-settings-1-how-the-youngest-children-are-left-behind-in-humanitarian-response/>
 - <https://movingmindsalliance.org/young-children-in-crisis-settings-2-the-developing-brain-in-crisis-contexts/>
 - <https://movingmindsalliance.org/young-children-in-crisis-settings-7-child-protection-for-the-youngest-children-affected-by-emergencies/>

Case Studies:

- <https://movingmindsalliance.org/baytna-early-childhood-development-for-refugees-in-greece/>
- <https://movingmindsalliance.org/little-ripples-community-based-refugee-led-preschool-in-chad/>

Funding:

- <https://movingmindsalliance.org/analysis-of-international-aid-levels-for-early-childhood-services-in-crisis-contexts/>

ECD in crisis situations systems map

- <https://reimagined-futures.kumu.io/humanitarian-systems-map-90682564-0c70-4d0d-9e50-951e1c703854>

Research Forum

- <https://movingmindsalliance.org/our-approach/#forum>