



ECDDAN

Early Childhood Development Action Network

**Strategic Plan 2020-2023:**

A Global Movement to Catalyze Collective Action at Scale for ALL Young Children



Join the movement for young children and their families

Connect with us and hundreds of ECDAN partners across the globe to advocate for a world where every young child is safe, well-nourished, healthy, happy, and learning.

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# Contents

Executive Summary	9
1. Introduction	13
1.2. What is early childhood development?	13
2. Global Early Childhood Development	15
2.1. Opportunities	15
2.2. Challenges	17
3. The Early Childhood Development Action Network	21
3.1. A network of networks	22
3.2. Vision	22
3.3. Mission	22
3.4. Principles	23
3.5. Theory of Change	23
4. Strategy 2020–2023	25
4.1. Strategic objective 1: Advocate and communicate	25
4.2. Strategic objective 2: Learn and share	26
4.3. Strategic objective 3: Coordinate, connect, and align	27
4.4. Strategic objective 4: Establish and grow the global network of partners	29
5. Governance structure and partnership framework	31
5.1. Partners	31
5.2. Constituencies	33
5.3. ECDAN constituents	33
5.4. Benefits of partnership	33
5.5. Governance structure	33
5.6. Secretariat	33
Annex A: Task force members by working group	35
Annex B: Global and regional ECD member networks and partnerships	38
Annex C: SWOT analysis	39
Annex D: Risks and mitigation	40
Annex E: References	41
Annex F: Results framework 2020–2023	42

## Tables & Figures

Table 1: ECDAN’s Strategic Plan at a Glance	11
Figure 1: Global ECD Milestones	16
Figure 2: ECD in the SDGs	16
Figure 3: Systems Challenges	18
Figure 4: Child-focused Challenges	18
COVID-19 and early childhood	20
Figure 5: ECDAN Principles	22
Birthing a Movement	22
Figure 6: Theory of change	23
Figure 7: Global Partnerships	26
Figure 8: Regional Networks	28
Table 2: Benefits of partnership	32
Figure 9: ECDAN’s Governance Structure	34

## List of Acronyms

<b>AfECN</b>	Africa Early Childhood Network
<b>ANECD</b>	Arab Network for ECD
<b>ARNEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>ECD</b>	Early childhood development
<b>ECDAN</b>	Early Childhood Development Action Network
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IPA</b>	International Pediatric Association
<b>ISSA</b>	International Step by Step Association
<b>LMIC</b>	Low and Middle-Income Countries
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCF</b>	Nurturing Care Framework
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization





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## Message from the Executive Group

The Early Childhood Development Action Network's (ECDAN) vision of a world where every child is safe, healthy, well-nourished, happy and learning underpins the Strategy for 2020-2023. The plan presents ECDAN's mission and goals; and lays out its objectives, actions, and expected outcomes for young children, their families and communities. It was prepared in consultation with ECDAN partners and incorporates the recommendations of six multi-stakeholder task forces. (See Annex A for a list of task forces and members.)

ECDAN is a young network, now moving out of its 2016-2019 incubation period as the world faces many challenges from a pandemic that threatens to reverse many of the gains made in the fight against poverty and hunger, to an unprecedented number of children and families displaced by conflict and climate change. To improve the lives of young children in this new normal, building the global movement envisioned in this plan is urgent. There is an urgency as well to intensify ECDAN partners' coordinated efforts to address the short and long-term impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and accelerate progress towards achieving early childhood development (ECD)-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve maximum impact, the ECDAN Secretariat will support coordination, growth and strengthening of the global network.

This strategy is a living document that will be revisited annually. Updates will be important as we welcome new partners into the movement, broaden and deepen stakeholder and partner engagement and participation, respond to challenges and threats, and adjust action to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will monitor progress and generate data via several continuous improvement processes and will act on what we learn.

Together, we are a strong voice for young children around the world. Together, we can rebuild a better future for all young children!

Join us. Join the movement at <https://www.ecdan.org/>.

**ECDAN Executive Group**





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## Executive Summary

The Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) was launched in 2016 by the leaders of UNICEF and the World Bank Group, following a meeting of more than 80 partners. It is a global network of multilateral agencies, international financial institutions, regional ECD networks, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, foundations, universities, think tanks, practitioners and advocates working together and independently to support early childhood development of ALL young children and their parents and caregivers.

ECDAN was established to serve as a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platform that would serve to bridge siloes, stimulate collective action, innovate through collaboration, and produce benefits at scale beyond what individual partners and sectors can do on their own. The value addition of ECDAN was, therefore, to build a global movement to achieve economies of scale through collaborative action and continuous learning, reducing duplication of effort and leveraging complementary assets, and harmonizing and aligning on approaches. ECDAN as a network of networks would advance and promote an ECD agenda that diverse stakeholders and partners can support, advocate fiercely for that agenda, and support collaboration and consistent messaging across multiple sectors.

ECDAN’s multi-stakeholder task forces identified the following challenges:

- Advocacy and communications efforts by partners working together are scarce.
- Diverse networks and actors too seldom collaborate or co-create public goods.
- Learning in silos is not often shared across sectors and disciplines with too many disconnected pilots hinder consistent learning.
- ECD is in the hands of technical experts rather than in the hands of the public and policymakers and therefore limits political commitment to invest in ECD.

Despite growing momentum and many opportunities of global commitments to ECD, and before the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, at least 250 million young children (43 percent of children in low and middle-income countries) were already at risk of not reaching their full potential. With the crisis, this number has likely increased exponentially as more people are infected and communities and families deal with the social and economic fallout and physical and mental health challenges of the crisis.

The pandemic is not just an unprecedented public health emergency, it is also fueling other crises in economic and food security, has disrupted the

education of a whole generation, increased the risks of violence against young children, and amplified disparities and inequalities with many households falling below the poverty line. This has also morphed into multiple crises of care, hunger, protection, safety, and early learning facing young children and their parents, especially the disadvantaged. It has increased the risks of reversing progress previously made and losing the intergenerational social and economic benefits of early childhood development. The cost of inaction to address the impacts on young children in the face of COVID-19 crisis and other growing threats like climate change and displacement will have long term impacts on human capital.

COVID-19 has exposed pre-existing and new weaknesses in the systems that support young children and their families. Yet, the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to scale up our efforts to invest in innovative solutions that build resilient, more equitable and efficient systems and policies. Effective advocacy to rebuild the momentum will be critical. It will require a learning by doing approach with expanded access to curated information and resources and learning opportunities to apply lessons learned across partners and sectors.

ECDAN's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023: A Global Movement to Catalyze Collective Action at Scale for ALL Young Children was developed through an extensive consultative process over several months to determine ECDAN's core added value and strategic priorities. It has been updated to address the short and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It presents ECDAN's vision of a world where every young child is safe, healthy, well-nourished, happy, and learning and mission that recognizes that the early years of life are critical to long-term health, prosperity, and development. ECDAN, through its partners, advocates for higher prioritization of and investment in essential, quality ECD services;

facilitates knowledge exchange and learning; and connects and aligns with global and regional partners and networks across sectors to drive collective action at scale for all young children to realize their full potential.

Putting equity and inclusion at the center of our work, ECDAN believes that our vision and mission can be achieved by focusing on the following strategic priorities:

- Increase and sustain international and domestic political support for and investments in evidence-based ECD policies and programs, to ensure that all young children thrive.
- Increase access to and use of evidence-based knowledge to advance ECD policy and practice.
- Improve alignment, coordination, and collaboration on common goals among ECD stakeholders and across sectors.
- Build and sustain an effective and efficient global network.

ECDAN partners will engage, coordinate, collaborate and contribute to achieving the strategic objectives. The Secretariat will provide support and facilitate partners' collective efforts through a network-based approach to advance the field of ECD and counter threats to young children. The Secretariat will also monitor progress, apply the learning to continuously improve and update the strategic plan in collaboration with partners. The governance and partnership framework, guiding principles, values, results framework are described in the document.

The need for global solidarity, urgent international coordination, and unified global effort for all young children, especially the most disadvantaged, has never been greater. The relevance of ECDAN as a global movement has never been greater. Please join us to grow the movement for young children and their parents and caregivers to secure a more resilient and promising future.

**Table 1: ECDAN’s Strategic Plan at a Glance**

**Vision:** A world where every young child is safe, healthy, well nourished, happy, and learning

**Mission:** Recognizing that the early years of life are critical to long-term development the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) advocates for prioritizing and investing in essential, quality ECD services; facilitates knowledge exchange and learning; and connects and aligns global and regional partners and networks across sectors to drive collective action at scale so that all young children can realize their full potential

**Impact:** Young children’s optimal brain development and productive potential is assured by accelerated scale-up of equitable, good quality multi-sectoral ECD policies, programs, and services

**Strategic Development Goals:** Equitable, accelerated progress towards ECD relevant targets. SDG 2.1, SDG 2.2, SDG 3.2, SDG 4.2, SDG 16.2, and SDG 17.

**Strategic objectives (SO)**

SO1: Increase and sustain international and domestic political support for and investments in evidence based ECD policies and programs, to ensure that all young children thrive

SO2: Increase access to and use of evidence-based knowledge to advance ECD policy and practice

SO3: Improve alignment, coordination and collaboration on common goals among ECD stakeholders and across sectors

SO4: Build and sustain an effective and efficient global network

**Intermediate Outcomes**

Funding increases for ECD are authorized and appropriated ECD policies and programs are adopted, implemented and evaluated

Stakeholders use, share, and value ECD knowledge resources to advance their work.  
Young ECD professionals are active within the sector

ECDAN, regional networks, global thematic and sectoral partnerships collaborate and coordinate

ECDAN governance is improved

**Outputs\***

\*Outputs rely on close coordination and collaboration among ECDAN partners

SO1  
-Regional and international policy forums and events highlight ECD  
-Media and social media coverage of ECD increased  
-Joint global campaigns on increasing investment in ECD are mobilized in collaboration with partners, and feature co-constructed tools such as the cost of inaction tool  
-Levels of engagement on the online knowledge and community platform increase over time

SO2  
-Online knowledge and community platform 1.0 developed, launched, and monitored for growth\* of user engagement  
-Knowledge Fellows (KF) program established and supports discrete knowledge products and diverse communities of practices  
-Curation mechanism is developed and operational  
-Webinars and learning exchange activities are developed, tracked, and refined

SO3  
-Countries have multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms in place  
-Key thematic global partnerships include multi-sectoral ECD in their strategies and/or roadmaps  
-Discrete demand-driven global goods are developed and disseminated  
-Community component of the online platform is developed, launched, and improved based on user engagement and growth  
-Communities of practice function independently and/or interdependently

SO4  
-Executive Leadership Council and Technical Advisory Group is operational  
-ECDAN Secretariat is hosted  
-ECDAN Secretariat capacity is strengthened  
-Partnership model is elaborated and operational  
-New ECDAN partners are onboarded  
-Resources are mobilized  
-ECDAN supports partners effectively  
-ECDAN recognized as the ECD go-to network

**Core functions**

Advocate and communicate

Learn and share

Coordinate, connect, and align

Strengthen the network





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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Challenge: Moving from Science to Scale

The Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) catalyzes collective action at scale for all young children everywhere to realize their full potential by connecting and aligning global and regional partners across sectors; facilitating knowledge exchange and learning; and coordinating advocacy for increased investments in holistic and quality ECD programs. The vision of a world where every young child is safe, well-nourished, healthy, happy, and learning, and the belief that collective action and collaboration is powerful, drives ECDAN's partners and staff.

Since its launch in 2016, by the leaders of UNICEF and the World Bank Group, hundreds of representatives of the early childhood development (ECD) community have joined six task forces, worked through numerous consultations, and have contributed recommendations for the type of action-oriented network needed to advance progress on achieving ECD-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This strategic plan documents a vision for the future of moving from science to scale. This ambitious vision can be achieved by ECDAN partners' collaborative and coordinated action.

### 1.2. What is early childhood development?<sup>1</sup>

Early childhood features the most intense and rapid development of any period in a lifespan and is therefore one of the most significant phases of human life. Development has been defined as the process of developing cognitive, language, and motor skills, as well as social and emotional abilities. These skills help children to think, solve problems, communicate, express emotions and form relationships, and lay the foundations for lifetime health, learning, productivity, and well-being. The early years lay a groundwork for young children's emotional security, cultural, and personal identity.

While early childhood definitions vary across countries and regions, the Committee on the Rights of the Child defines it as the period below the age of eight years. The rights of children reflect young children's reality; they and their families need services from multiple sectors – at a minimum health, education, nutrition, and social services. Ideally, services for young children and their families should work together seamlessly, harmonized, in a continuum across a child's life.

ECD is also affected by complex interactions between the environment and the young child.

1 UNICEF/WBG/IDB, "Concept note for the G20: Investing in Early Childhood." New York; January 12, 2018.

A stable environment is one that is sensitive to children's health and nutritional needs, with protection from threats, opportunities for early learning and interactions that are responsive, emotionally supportive, and developmentally stimulating. One key aspect of a good environment where young children can thrive is "nurturing care",

which emphasizes responsive caregiving<sup>2</sup>, health, nutrition, early learning, and safety. With nurturing care, young children develop competencies, resilience and adaptability, which are the building blocks of future human capital.

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<sup>2</sup> The Nurturing Care Framework (<https://nurturing-care.org/>) presents a specific framework that incorporates health, nutrition, early learning, safety and responsive caregiving for children 0-3 years old; "nurturing care", which is comprised of the indivisible components mentioned above, is applied more generally across the early childhood age continuum of 0-8 years old.



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## 2. Global Early Childhood Development

### 2.1. Opportunities

Investing in young children has been recognized as one of the primary means of achieving human capital, social and economic development, equity, peace, and breaking the cycle of poverty – as embodied in the SDGs.<sup>3</sup>

Evidence shows that investing in ECD leads to benefits for children and nations' economies, yet the world continues to lose the potential of 250 million young children or 43 percent of children in low and middle-income countries by not investing in the early years.<sup>4</sup>

The social and economic fall out of the COVID-19 pandemic has likely increased these numbers with more children deprived of their basic needs. Children are more likely to suffer lifelong consequences from poverty and the growing inequalities and risks.

The commitment and importance of scaling up ECD and doing better for children – including the most marginalized and children with disabilities, and

those living in difficult and adverse situations – has never been stronger as demonstrated by global ECD milestones highlighted in Figure 1. Advances in neuroscience, as well as biological, developmental and economic sciences have provided compelling evidence on brain development, the high return on investment in early years, and the impacts on lifelong health, overall development, productivity, and social cohesion.<sup>5</sup>

The Nurturing Care Framework (NCF), launched at the May 2018 World Health Assembly, takes on these lessons learned and highlights the need for multisectoral, whole of government and whole of society approaches to nurturing care. The Nurturing Care Framework spells out interconnected interventions in health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and early learning.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/earlychildhooddevelopment>

<sup>4</sup> Britto PR, Lye S, Proulx K, et al. (2016). Nurturing care: promoting early childhood development. *Lancet* 2017; 389: 91–102. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31390-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31390-3)

<sup>5</sup> "The rate of return on investing in early childhood programs can be about 13.7 percent per annum, with an estimated benefit/cost ratio of 7.3. This means for each \$1 spent on quality ECD, the return can start at about \$7. The benefits are reaped in better education and health outcomes, lower crime rates, and individual earnings." Garcia JL, et al. (2016). "The lifecycle benefits of an influential early childhood program," Human Capital and Economic Working Group. Working Group 2016 – 035. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w22993.pdf>

The SDG platform provides a global vision for accelerated progress for the world we want. The SDGs acknowledge the links between ECD and equity, productivity and wealth creation for sustainable growth, peace and security, and the

need for effective partnerships to deliver on the SDGs. ECD is an explicit target within SDG 4 for education and is an implicit target in four additional goals.

**Figure 1: Global ECD Milestones**



**Figure 2: ECD in the SDGs**



SDG 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

SDG 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

SDG 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

SDG 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

SDG 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

This is an historic moment when science, evidence, and policy have coalesced around key recommendations. Development agencies have bought into the agenda, and in some cases are partnering with countries to commit to delivering programs at scale to achieve these ambitious goals.

While COVID-19 has exposed the weaknesses in the systems that support young children and has laid bare huge disparities and inequalities, it provides an opportunity to advance innovative solutions that build more resilient, equitable and efficient systems and policies for young children and their families. As a network of diverse partners, ECDAN is well positioned to advocate for prioritizing young children, rebuild the momentum, and leverage and strengthen expertise on the ground where it is needed.

## 2.2. Challenges

The scale and ambition of achieving the SDG targets for young children requires a systems approach, acceleration and sustained progress will rely on country-level coordinated multisectoral action and strong partnership with development partners. There is growing evidence that coordinated multifaceted and evidence-based action can accelerate progress and ensure that children and their caregivers fully benefit from ECD programs and services and achieve better outcomes over the long run.<sup>6</sup>

Currently, there are shortfalls in political commitment, financing and implementation to scale up ECD programs, and increase quality and access for young children, caregivers, families and communities. There is also limited public understanding of the importance of the first years of a child's life, particularly regarding brain development. While there are many players, networks and passionate supporters of ECD, advocacy efforts are fragmented. As a result, there

is little public demand for policies, programs and funding; global champions for ECD in positions of power remain few and far in-between.

International and country investments in ECD interventions remain inadequate, despite compelling evidence that one of the most promising ways of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and achieving sustainable development is to ensure that today's children develop optimally in their early years. Low and middle-income countries spend just one percent of their national health budgets on early childhood nutrition.<sup>7</sup> While international recommendations for investment in ECD are ten percent of national budget, estimates show that low-income countries spend less than two percent of their education budgets on early childhood learning programs, whilst high-income and upper middle-income countries spend on average nine percent and eight percent, respectively.<sup>8</sup> The workforce in low and middle-income countries remains inadequate to scale up early learning,<sup>9</sup> so even if there were political will, ramping up to provide quality care would take time and upfront investment in human resources. Furthermore, data and measurement systems remain weak with limited capacities on the ground and lack of consensus on measurement tools and indicators. The collective consequences of not investing in ECD – and of children not reaching their full developmental potential – has long-term impacts on children, families, communities, and nations.<sup>10,11</sup>

Fragmented, sectoral underinvestment has failed children. Both vertical and horizontal coordination have been hampered by incentive structures that limit collaboration and result in siloes and competition between sectors. Young children's development is holistic by its very nature; every aspect of development is linked – health, nutrition, social emotional development, and learning. Funds and policies in most governments and international organizations are structured in stove piped sectors; even coordination, let alone collaboration, is a challenge. If sectors are not integrated, they should

6 Boothby et al. (2012). Coordinated and evidence-based policy and practice for protecting children outside of family care. *Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal*, 36(10):743-751.

7 World Bank. 2018. *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1096-1.

8 <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/A-world-ready-to-learn-2019.pdf>

9 While eight million new teachers are needed to achieve universal pre-primary education by 2030, low and lower middle-income countries (LMICs) will need four times pre-primary teachers than they have today – that is, they must add over eight million additional pre-primary teachers to their workforce. UNICEF. (2019). *A World Ready to Learn*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/a-world-ready-to-learn-2019>

10 Supplement to: Richter L M, Daelmans B, Lombardi J, et al, with the Paper 3 Working Group and the Lancet Early Childhood Development Series Steering Committee. Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: pathways to scale up for early childhood development. *Lancet* 2016; published online Oct 4. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31698-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31698-1).

11 Figure 3 citations in order: World Bank. 2018. *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1096-1. | UNICEF. (2019). *A World Ready to Learn*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/a-world-ready-to-learn-2019> | Huebner, G. et al. (2016). *Beyond Survival: The case for Investing in Young Children Globally*. NAM Perspectives. Discussion Paper, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. <https://doi.org/10.31478/201606b> | Boothby et al. (2012). Coordinated and evidence-based policy and practice for protecting children outside of family care. *Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal*, 36(10):743-751.

at least be interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing.<sup>12</sup>

Failure to invest efficiently early in the lives of children has a high cost. High returns on investment

for young children would be readily achieved if children in greatest need had complete coverage, yet where quality services are available, they tend to be most accessible to the wealthy. Investments have focused on easy wins, missing out on children in

### Figure 3: Systems Challenges



#### Investment

Governments worldwide spend less than two percent of their education budgets on early childhood learning programs with low- and middle-income countries spending just one percent of their national health budgets on early childhood nutrition



#### Whole child approach

A holistic approach to children has been lacking in the way programs are funded, although growth and development are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing.



#### Governance

Governance of a complex inter-sectoral issue with multiple players in the field. Vertical and horizontal coordination hampered by incentive structures that limit collaboration and result in siloes and competition between sectors



#### Workforce

Eight million new teachers are needed to achieve universal pre-primary education by 2030



#### Political Commitment

Interest in ECD has largely been confined to scientific and technical circles and has not made it to the public domain to generate political support and commitment



#### Measurement

Weak national data and evidence systems to track early childhood development interventions and outcomes across sectors; analyze and report on SDG results

### Figure 4: Child-focused Challenges



#### Adversity

Nearly 1 in 5 children (420 million) are living in areas affected by armed conflict, and almost 30 million children have been forcibly displaced  
In 73 countries with data, about 88 million young children between the ages of two and four are regularly subjected to violent discipline  
Around 300 million children live in areas where the air is toxic, exceeding international pollution limits by more than six times



#### Nutrition

149 million children suffer from stunting and millions more are at risk from poor nutrition



#### Access

Only half of all three to six-year-olds have access to pre-primary education. In low-income countries, just one in five children has access to preschool



#### Poverty

Of the world's 2.3 billion children (those less than 18 years of age), 301 million live on less than \$1.90/day. This means that 13 percent of the world's children are very poor—compared to 6 percent of adults



#### Lack of Stimulation

In 64 countries with data, about 15.5 million of three and four-year olds do not engage in activities such as reading, telling stories, counting, and drawing with an adult. Millions more are not regularly receiving the stimulation that spurs optimal brain development or experiencing early learning opportunities that can make a difference in the life of a child

12 G. Huebner, G. et al. (2016:). Beyond Survival: The case for Investing in Young Children Globally. NAM Perspectives. Discussion Paper, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. <https://doi.org/10.31478/201606b>

adversity, and on short term gains focused on school readiness rather than building key foundational skills that young children need to reach their full potential. Political will is often weak for investment in long term outcomes whose benefits may not be evident.<sup>13</sup>

Young children are generally the most vulnerable members of a population, while the developmental milestones they need to progress through are the most challenging. Chronic and acute adversities have outsized impacts on most young children, yet even where there appears to be interest in addressing young children's needs, the challenge of sorting out whose needs come first, which needs have first call on resources, and how resources will be managed effectively remains problematic.

Challenges faced by children include: adversities such as in-home violence, neglect and exploitation; conflict, displacement; poverty and its broad impacts on child outcomes are well known, often compounded by health problems associated with high levels of pollution and limited services in poor areas; inadequate nutrition with lifelong consequences ranging from reduced attention for learning, to stunting, wasting and death; reduced access to education, particularly quality education; and lack of stimulation in the early years for reasons ranging from parent absence to little knowledge about optimal child care practices.

Shawar and Shiffman identify two key challenges for those seeking to advance ECD as a global priority: (1) consensus and agreement on the definition of the problem and solutions, to enable public positioning of the issue and generate political support; and (2) governance, i.e. building effective institutions<sup>14</sup> to advance global and political commitment and scale up action to achieve collective goals. The pushes and pulls among sectors and actors in the ECD community hamper cohesive messaging to the public and to

policymakers. Lack of consensus (inside and outside the ECD field) on the definition of the problem, target population, and solutions, interacts with the absence of coherent governance and institutions to achieve progress. Governance of a complex inter-sectoral issue with multiple players in the field has also been challenging and continues to slow progress. Both vertical and horizontal coordination has been hampered by incentive structures that limit collaboration and result in siloes and competition between sectors.

As most of the world is now aware, a new threat to the well-being of young children and their families emerged in late 2019, through the COVID-19 pandemic. Tragically the well-known threats to young children's development are now compounded by the virus and have laid bare growing inequalities; economies have contracted; food insecurity has increased; families and communities are struggling with stress and mental health challenges, and even if vaccines or effective medications are developed soon, the risks to young children to survive, thrive, remain safe, develop and learn, particularly in underserved communities, are likely to increase through the period this strategy covers.

It is early to predict the best interventions to support young children and their families during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, ECDAN is examining, analyzing, documenting, and sharing an astonishing amount of new resources and adaptations. ECDAN aspires to be a platform of intense dialogue and learning, a movement where ideas are debated, data and theories are analyzed and critiqued from multiple perspectives, and evidence can be sourced and curated for effective advocacy and public education to ameliorate the plight of families and young children during this pandemic.

13 Figure 4 citations in order: Save the Children. (2019). Stop The War on Children: Protecting Children in 21st Century Conflict. Save the Children. <https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/ed-cp/stop-the-war-on-children-2019.pdf> | UNICEF. (2018). Around 30 million children displaced by conflict need protection now and sustainable solutions over the long term. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/around-30-million-children-displaced-conflict-need-protection-now-and-sustainable> | UNICEF, "Concept note for the G20: Investing in Early Childhood." New York; January 12, 2018 | Ibid. | Fenz, Katharina and Kristopher Hamel. (2019). More than half of the world's poor are children. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/06/20/more-than-half-of-the-worlds-poor-are-children/> | UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group. (2019.) Levels and trends in child malnutrition. WHO. <https://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/jme-2019-key-findings.pdf?ua=1> | World Bank Group. (2016). Education Global Practice: Smarter Education Systems for Brighter Futures. World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/827581468189575720/pdf/98448-REVISED-PUBLIC-03-WB-Improving-Learning-ECD-041116-print.pdf> | UNICEF, "Concept note for the G20: Investing in Early Childhood." New York; January 12, 2018.

14 Shawar, Yusra Ribhi; Shiffman, Jeremy. (2017). Generation of global political priority for early childhood development: the challenges of framing and governance. *Lancet* 2017; 389: 119-24. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31574-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31574-4)

## COVID-19 and early childhood

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic caused by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19. By the end of April 2020, COVID-19 had affected 213 countries, areas or territories, according to the WHO. As nations around the world scramble to understand, contain, and respond to the rapidly growing pandemic and as parents and caregivers juggle multiple challenges to care for and safeguard their children, the global ECD community is coordinating together rapidly to ensure that children's health, development, and well-being are not overlooked amidst the crisis response, as often happens during emergency situations.

ECDAN's strategic framework – with its emphasis on global, regional, and national coordination, connection, and alignment on common goals across sectors among ECD stakeholders – is designed to respond to a changing environment for young children, including pandemic response and recovery. In early April 2020, ECDAN and its partners released a seven-point [call to action](#) that has garnered the support of over 117 organizations and 112 individuals. Over the coming months, ECDAN partners will collaborate to respond to the outlined actions.



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### 3. The Early Childhood Development Action Network

The science is clear; policies and programs to support young children and families are essential for human development and progress. But achieving scale in an era when there are many critical needs for public investment, from climate change to food and water access to a global pandemic and more is a tremendous challenge; benefits to children and families are immediate, but benefits to their societies and economies are years or decades in the future. As climate change also demonstrates, visionary, long-term investments are scarce.

The Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) was established as a network of networks to advance and promote an ECD agenda that diverse stakeholders can support, to advocate fiercely for that agenda, and to support collaboration and consistent messaging across multiple sectors. The value addition of ECDAN was to build a global movement to achieve economies of scale through collaborative action and continuous learning, reducing duplication of effort and leveraging complementary assets, and harmonizing and aligning on approaches.

ECDAN's multi-stakeholder task forces identified the following challenges to this plan of action:

- Advocacy and communications efforts by

- partners working together are scarce.
- Diverse networks and actors seldom collaborate or co-create public goods.
- Learning in silos is not often shared across sectors and disciplines.
- ECD is in the hands of technical experts rather than the public and policymakers.

Achieving timely action for ECD requires a shared mission and collective action by the ECD community. The SDG targets for young children are a frame for better support to parents and other caregivers and strengthen the probability in real time that scaling-up equitable, holistic, inclusive, sustainable, and high-quality ECD programs by 2030 could be achieved.

ECDAN's strategic plan for 2020-2023 is informed by partners' commitment to collective and coordinated action and growing commitment to mutual learning, coalition-building, alignment, and mutual accountability. ECDAN partners are committed to construct a framing of ECD that will promote common goals across sectors, disciplines and stakeholders. Coordination and collaboration are a critical first step towards strengthening political commitment and increasing financial investment.

## Birthing a Movement

With the growth in the number of concerned actors, the establishment of diverse networks and sectoral partnerships linking them, the proliferation of research demonstrating the benefits of addressing ECD, and the inclusion of ECD-related indicators in the SDGs networks are well positioned to advance global priority for ECD.

- Lancet 2017; 389: 119–24

and sectors can do on their own.

Over the next four years, ECDAN partners will contribute where the network can best add value, shaping a common understanding of the problem, gaps and solutions, as well as facilitating the development of common messages and a collective voice for ECD.

It will operate as a network of networks, and as an ECD gateway to amplify the voices of regional, national, and other ECD networks, while connecting and aligning ECD messaging with global sectoral partnerships. ECDAN will also coordinate with thematic networks, all of which promote diverse aspects of early childhood development and have signaled interest in a broader global ECD platform that would convene and coordinate the initiatives, where appropriate.

### 3.2. Vision

A world where every young child is safe, healthy, well-nourished, happy, and learning.

### 3.3. Mission

Recognizing that the early years of life are critical to long-term health, prosperity, and development, the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN), through its partners, advocates for higher prioritization of and investment in essential, quality

### 3.1. A network of networks

Recognizing that no single organization or partnership can address the complex ECD challenges, ECDAN was established to serve as a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platform that would serve to bridge siloes, stimulate collective action, innovate through collaboration, and produce benefits at scale beyond what individual partners

Figure 5: ECDAN Principles



ECD services; facilitates knowledge exchange and learning; and connects and aligns with global and regional partners and networks across sectors to drive collective action at scale for all young children to realize their full potential.

### 3.4. Principles

As a network of networks, ECDAN aligns a diverse group of organizations and actors working within the ECD field. The following principles outline ECDAN’s working ethos and standards for partnership across the movement.

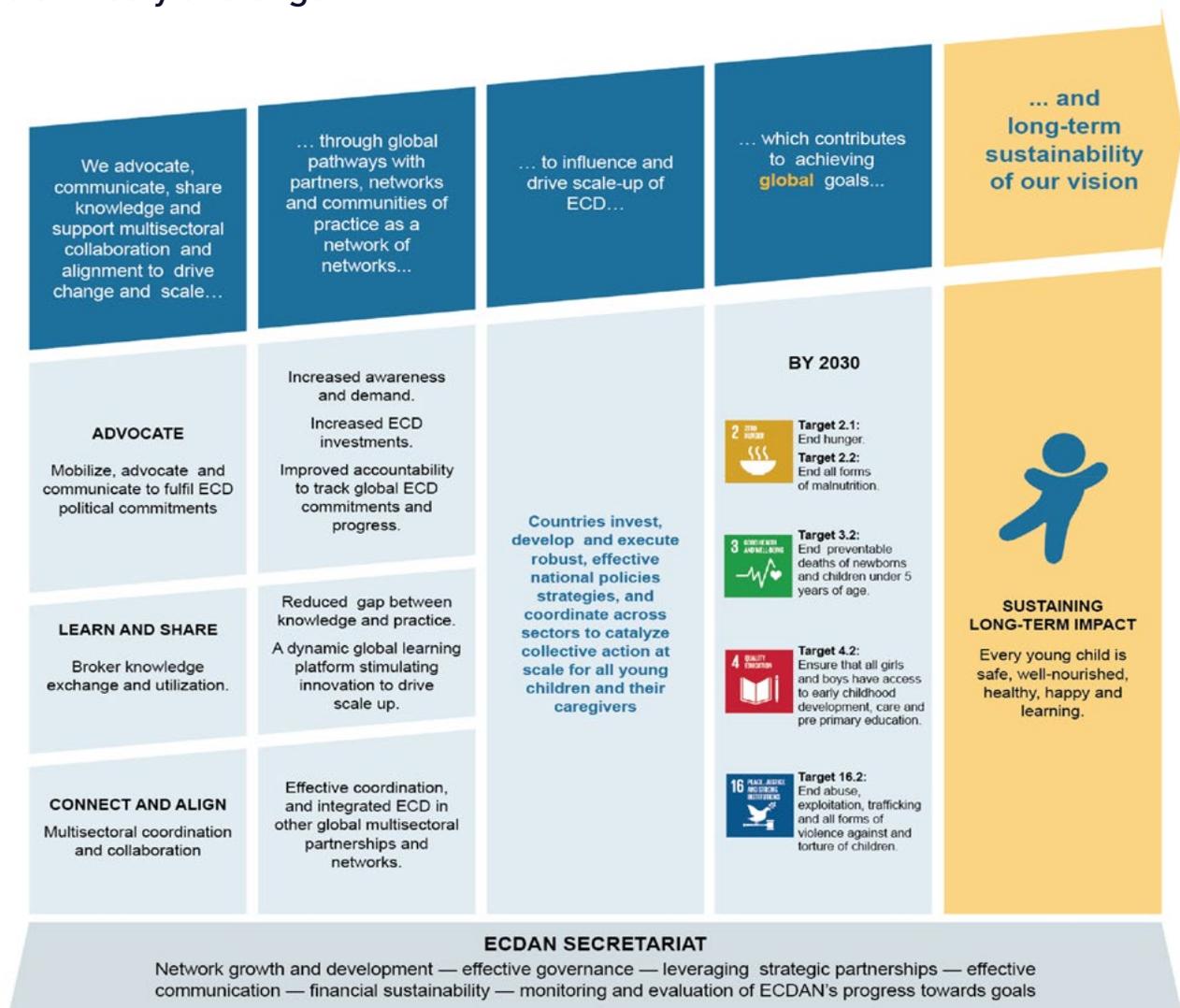
### 3.5. Theory of Change

ECDAN’s theory of change (Figure 6) addresses what is needed to accelerate the scale-up of equitable

and quality multi-sectoral ECD services through a network of engaged and motivated partners:

- A networked partnership model that weaves regional, sectoral, and thematic perspectives to create a united voice and movement for scaling-up quality ECD.
- A convener to work with and across multiple networks and partnerships to develop compelling advocacy and communications campaigns to push the ECD agenda forward.
- An interactive knowledge exchange and learning platform that presents the most current, most compelling cross-sector ECD information, policies, proven and promising practices, as well as evidence-based and cost-efficient interventions, curricula, and tools.
- A lean and effective Secretariat that supports the development and functioning of the network.

Figure 6: Theory of change







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## 4. Strategy 2020-2023

ECDAN's ambitious vision, mission, and strategic objectives for 2020-2023 are aligned to accelerate the achievement of the ECD-SDG related goals, leaving no child behind, and address the threats to young children as they arise.



**SO1:** Increase and sustain international and domestic political support for and investments in evidence based ECD policies and programs, to ensure that all young children thrive.

### 4.1. Strategic objective 1: Advocate and communicate<sup>15</sup>

ECDAN was created "to make ECD a global policy,

programming and public spending priority, to give all young children access to quality services that improve their health, nutrition, learning ability and emotional well-being."<sup>16</sup>

It was conceived as an alliance that would bring together a wide range of partners working across ECD, including groups working on nutrition, maternal and child health, education, and child rights. By working across sectoral siloes, the intent was to forge a holistic, better coordinated and more impactful push that would scale up global support, improve policy frameworks, and increase access to ECD services for all young children and their families. Given the COVID-19 crisis and as the world juggles competing priorities, the need to advocate for prioritizing young children and support to parents has never been greater.

As a diverse global network of networks, ECDAN's primary advocacy role is to formulate a strong, coherent, and consistent global voice for ECD and to mobilize global support and commitments, which in turn can catalyze national-level commitments. The main focus and value-add for ECDAN is to build collective advocacy with aligned messaging among its partners to elevate and strengthen

<sup>15</sup> Advocacy is defined as building political and public support for a cause and/or policy with accountability for action.

<sup>16</sup> World Bank. (2016, April 14.) World Bank Group, UNICEF urge greater investment in early childhood development [Press release]. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/04/14/world-bank-group-unicef-urge-greater-investment-in-early-childhood-development>

**Figure 7: Global Partnerships**



political support at the global level for ECD. In consultation with its partners, ECDAN may adopt specific, time-bound global advocacy targets and issue global campaigns and calls to action as strategic opportunities warrant. It will do so through coordinated action with diverse ECD stakeholders, as highlighted below.

Establish a virtual communications hub for advocacy – In response to demands for ECDAN to facilitate collective action, ECDAN will establish and co-host regular advocacy and communications strategy and coordination calls and create a dynamic, flexible space that regularly brings together ECD advocates, communicators and technical experts. This will be housed on ECDAN's online knowledge and community sharing platform.

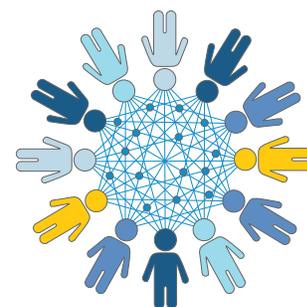
In addition, ECDAN will collect and maintain (for partners' use) an arsenal of core ECD advocacy and communications materials about ECD issues and the network. ECDAN will both develop messages promoting a unified voice and will adapt and share content and tools from other organizations through its online platform.

Leverage leading relevant global partnerships and regional ECD networks to incorporate and align ECD messages in their advocacy and communications efforts – There is tremendous untapped potential and interest among stakeholders for ECDAN to work more closely and strategically with the other major global partnerships and regional networks in ECD spaces (see Annex B for a list of ECDAN partner networks). ECDAN can provide a bridge across these diverse platforms by developing roadmaps and toolkits for coordinated action to influence coherent and aligned messages and investment plans.

Lead a global campaign for ECD financing and accelerated implementation – ECDAN partners must align on key messages and speak clearly with one

voice to put ECD in the public and political domains. ECDAN will leverage and coordinate with the ECD regional networks connecting global, regional and national advocacy efforts. To continue its growth and expansion, ECDAN commits to transparent processes while building its unique brand. To reach the private sector, parents, and ECD advocates not yet part of this movement, ECDAN will share credit across the network, acknowledging the sources, voices, and support of partners working with these groups.

In 2020, ECDAN will leverage the 10-year countdown to the SDGs as well as explore opportunities to join, leverage, and amplify advocacy campaigns with global partnerships and networks. ECDAN will also identify potential ECD champions through its network – policymakers, leaders, donors, advocates – to help mobilize the ECD movement.



**SO2:** Increase access to and use of evidence-based knowledge to advance ECD policy and practice

**4.2. Strategic objective 2: Learn and share**

In 2017, ECDAN brought together more than 100 representatives from government, civil society, bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions,

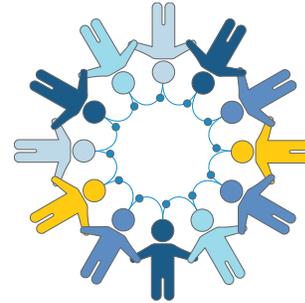
academia, foundations, regional networks, think tanks, and thematic partnerships to work on six task forces with the objective of developing a shared vision for global goods needed to push the ECD agenda forward (Annex A). They recommended that one of ECDAN's key contributions should be to construct and maintain an online platform for sharing curated cutting-edge information, technical resources, tools, policy trends, frameworks, practices, innovations, and advocacy and communications tools, and offer opportunities to translate evidence into action. To do this, in 2020-2023 ECDAN will:

**Develop and launch ECDAN's online knowledge and community platform** – The new platform will be constructed in phases with the online community launched in the summer of 2020. The platform will not duplicate efforts and content provided by other networks or organizations but will link to that content instead. It will serve multiple ECDAN audiences including parents, policymakers, development partners, practitioners, civil society, media, academia, and ECD advocates. Over time it will provide content and support communities of practice in multiple languages.

**Support knowledge and learning exchange, communities of practice, and dialogue** – The new platform will be dynamic, responsive, and continuously improving, not a static repository. Some elements (e.g. the communities of practice and curated resource hubs) will be reviewed and evaluated frequently to ensure they are fit for purpose as a dynamic one-stop shop for cross-sectoral ECD information, practices, curricula, interventions and tools.

**Establish a Knowledge Fellows program** – Working with partners in academia, the Knowledge Fellows (KF) program will recruit young ECD professionals and graduate students from the global south who have an interest in early childhood. To create opportunities for learning, professional development, networking, visibility and service and to increase their interest and engagement in the field of global ECD, the KF program will coordinate with other like-minded programs, such as the World Bank's Early Years Fellowship and the Africa Early Childhood Network's research fellowship. In turn, the fellows will enrich the Secretariat with specialized knowledge, facilitate learning exchange initiatives, and join the ECDAN team of ECD champions. Lessons learned from the Knowledge Fellows program will help inform future ECD leadership

development initiatives.<sup>17</sup>



**SO3:** Improve alignment, coordination, and collaboration on common goals among ECD stakeholders and across sectors

### 4.3. Strategic objective 3: Coordinate, connect, and align

In many programs that serve young children and their families framed by the single sector service delivery model, there is significant interest and untapped potential to scale up activities that improve children's cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development.

ECDAN will connect diverse partners to take collaborative action in support of young children at all levels, from the community, to national, regional, and global levels. This type of engagement has been demonstrated by the partners' call to action to protect and support all young children and their caregivers during the pandemic response that ECDAN coordinated in early April 2020.<sup>18</sup>

Partners can use ECDAN's online platform to connect key actors exploring effective national and sectoral coordination mechanisms, addressing critical gaps, and helping countries develop costed multi-sectoral action plans to accelerate national progress towards achieving SDG targets. Active virtual communities of practice, such as one on Playful Parenting, are participating in the refinement of the online platform.

From 2020-2023, using a collaborative stakeholder engagement approach, ECDAN will engage in the following work:

**Refine ECDAN's partnership model** – ECDAN's partnership model is straightforward: as a network

<sup>17</sup> The long-term vision for the leadership program would include targeting government officials (or other key stakeholders) to champion ECD through a semester-long program in partner institutes with the goal of improving multi-sectoral planning and implementation. Such programs have been successful for women's health and for nutrition.

<sup>18</sup> <https://covidaction.ecdan.org/calltoaction>

of networks, it welcomes partners working in the multiple domains of early childhood development that share the same enthusiasm and commitment for ECDAN's vision and mission and are willing, ready, and eager to promote ECDAN's partnership principles. As ECDAN moves out of its incubation period, it will test its partnership model to scale-up action and investments to address the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to fast track the SDG agenda related to ECD, taking on lessons learned from other networked organizations and from partnership principles identified in the Collective Impact and Network Weaving literature.

Partnership will be emphasized when working with global sectoral and thematic partners and the regional networks in a number of activities: continued uptake of the Nurturing Care Framework;

launch of a global advocacy campaign to increase domestic and international financing for ECD; strengthening the capacity of targeted national networks in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East; exploring the value add of regional and thematic networks for national networks; and developing and sharing knowledge products through the Knowledge Fellows program and communities of practice on ECDAN's online knowledge and community platform. ECDAN will develop Memoranda of Collaboration on joint priorities and activities with regional networks and select thematic networks and global partnerships.

Collaborate with regional ECD networks – Key to moving the global ECD agenda forward is partnership with the regional networks, i.e. the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN), the Arab Network

**Figure 8: Regional Networks**

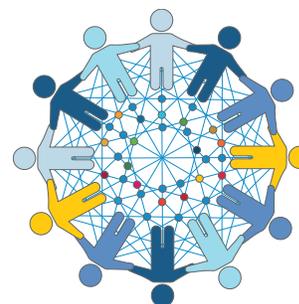


for ECD (ANECD), the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), and several Latin American networks which all play a critical role in supporting and promoting quality and inclusive ECD.<sup>19</sup> Among them, the regional networks have an impressive critical mass of diverse partners and stakeholders that include NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, national networks, individuals, donors, UN agencies, practitioners, early childhood workers, and national ECD networks across four regions.

Regional networks engage large memberships and offer bottom-up regional platforms to grassroots voices from countries and regions. A bottom-up approach informs and enriches the global agenda, and reality checks global priority setting. With the objective of contributing to and promoting cross-regional and global advocacy and learning, ECDAN connects and collaborates with ECD regional networks. ECDAN will also engage with key global sectoral and thematic partnerships to ensure the ECD agenda is aligned and effectively implemented across sectors.

Collaborate and coordinate to develop and share global public goods – To push harmonization of costing tools and methodologies, a cost of inaction “plug and play” tool will enable a wide range of users to estimate their cost of inaction for early life investments.<sup>20</sup> To advocate for ECD action and build capacity for use of data to inform policy and action, ECDAN partners will use country profiles as sources.<sup>21</sup> To promote the harmonization of indicators, ECDAN partners will finalize an ECD indicator framework and coordinate support for strengthening of measurement and data systems at country level. To inform scale up and identify drivers and accelerators of scaled up action, ECDAN will share case studies and promising approaches from implementation research, randomized control trials and impact evaluation including cost effectiveness studies. To facilitate sharing tools, case studies, curricula, and cross-country learning coordinating with the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative will be essential. To address multi-sectoral collaboration, a toolkit will pull together best practices identified by regional networks, sectoral partners, and thematic partners. To champion multi-sectoral ECD in the youngest years, ECDAN will continue to promote the Nurturing Care Framework and launch a knowledge working group.

Strengthen ECD systems and promote mutual accountability – The activities above, under the rubric of collaborate and coordinate, will support strengthening of ECD systems. To promote accountability, ECDAN will work with the Countdown 2030 ECD task force to monitor and review progress through updated country profiles that track progress and will assist to identify what works and what does not work, as well as gaps.



**SO4:** Build and sustain an effective and efficient global network

#### 4.4. Strategic objective 4: Establish and grow the global network of partners

Since its inception, ECDAN’s Interim Executive Group, comprised of 18 representatives from different ECDAN constituencies (UN agencies, international financing institutions, CSOs, ECD regional networks, academia and foundations) has guided its incubation. ECDAN is now ready to formalize its governance to better manage the longer-term expansion and strengthening of the network:

Establish a permanent Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Group – In late 2019, ECDAN began the transition from the Interim Executive Group to a permanent Executive Leadership Council. Similarly, the Task Forces have played a critical role in shaping ECDAN, but it is now timely to put in place stable guidance and terms of reference for a Technical Advisory Group. The governance structure is explained in further detail in Section 5.

Finalize hosting arrangement – In late 2019, ECDAN sought expressions of interest from qualified

19 Latin America and the Caribbean do not have one single regional network, but a combination of several regional and national networks.  
 20 The cost of inaction tool will be a global public good available for approximately 100 countries in the following regions: Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Western Asia, South-Eastern Asia, and Southern Asia. At this stage and based on the existence of robust evidence on their cost and impact, the tool will include CoI estimates for three interventions: home visits and early-life nutrition programs under 3 years of age and preschool programs aimed at children between 3 to 5 years old.  
 21 Country Profiles <https://www.ecdan.org/countries.html>

organizations to host ECDAN. An agreement is pending; terms and arrangements are expected to be finalized in 2020.

Secure resources and appropriate financial support – Over this strategic planning period, ECDAN will continue to pursue long-term funding. This requires appropriate staffing levels and software, e.g. for relationship management. ECDAN will continue to refine its resource mobilization plan to ensure financial sustainability and to expand and diversify its donors and funding sources. During this period, ECDAN's partners' in-kind contributions will continue to be critical for the network's growth and capacity to implement the strategic framework and deliver results.

Ensure network processes and structures function to support ECDAN partners – The Secretariat will ensure its systems and structures support the network, including communications (group email, newsletters, social networks, the ECD Gateway),

funding for collaborative work for communities of practice, and scheduling deliberate opportunities for network reflection and learning.

Strengthen the network – As ECDAN moves out of its incubation phase, it will strengthen the network and attract new partners with an approach based on mutual benefit to all parties. ECDAN will apply lessons learned from other global networks to create an enabling environment that strengthens and deepens partner collaboration. Partners create added value for one another and develop ECDAN's collective value propositions in the process.

Monitor and evaluate – ECDAN will develop a transparent and robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress against the strategic objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs). Two annual surveys of its partners will assess network health and impacts. Secretariat capacity will be built to deliver on this plan.



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## 5. Governance structure and partnership framework

As a global network of networks, ECDAN seeks to mobilize collective action through the aligned and combined efforts of its partners and to promote effective multi-sectoral action. As the network matures, ECDAN will continue to learn and share how best to address, explore, and understand issues that impede or enhance progress towards a world where every child is safe, healthy, well-nourished, happy and learning.

### 5.1. Partners

ECDAN offers its partners a platform for active engagement and coordination of global ECD issues and strategies. Scaling-up inclusive and quality ECD policies, services, and programs is hard. ECDAN's success and impact depends on effective connections, alignment, and increased engagement of partners and other networks to build a critical mass of support for ECD.

ECDAN embraces three partner groups:

1. Global partnerships, regional networks, thematic networks, associations and alliances – These are global or regional networks or partnerships that bring together multiple stakeholders working on ECD or working in ECD-related fields (e.g. education, health, protection). Many conduct similar activities to those performed by ECDAN

- (knowledge, learning, advocacy, etc.)
2. ECD relevant organizations – These include organizations that work directly in, or fund, ECD-related areas as well as other interested organizations that may benefit from being a part of a global network like ECDAN. This may include non-governmental organizations and donors.
3. Individuals – These are individuals that are parenting/caregiving, working in ECD-related areas, or interested in learning more about ECD. This group includes parents, academics, ECD experts, ECD advocates, members of the early childhood workforce, and other practitioners or professionals who may not be affiliated to any institution.

ECDAN will identify and pursue opportunities to collaborate with other global/regional networks and partnerships and build out its core offerings to organizations. Individuals will be engaged through online knowledge, learning exchanges, community platforms, and communities of practice.

ECDAN does not currently require financial investments from its partners but may revisit this in the future when the value add of partnership is clear and significant.

**Table 2: Benefits of partnership**

Benefits	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Direct engagement with Secretariat to compare work plans; identify and collaborate on areas of synergy, including advocacy events, campaigns, policy and programmatic interventions	<b>x</b>		
Recognition on ECDAN website and print materials, including annual report	<b>x</b>		
Nominate candidates for the ECDAN board	<b>x</b>	<b>x<sup>1</sup></b>	
Opportunities to host / co-brand in learning exchanges (e.g. webinars, conferences)	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
Opportunities to participate in advocacy campaigns and convenings	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
Showcase work on ECDAN global communications platforms, e.g. website, social media channels, blog, webinars, calendar of events	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
Priority invitations to high level receptions, global roundtables, global meetings, and advocacy briefings	<b>x</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup></b>	
Use ECDAN logo for events (upon approval)	<b>x</b>	<b>x<sup>3</sup></b>	
Access to the online knowledge and community platform <sup>4</sup>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Access to knowledge products <sup>5</sup>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Opportunity to engage in technical communities of practice contributing to the development of global goods for ECD	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Receive newsletters and email updates	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Invitation to webinars and conferences on latest innovations in ECD, global campaign priorities, and key global work	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>

<sup>1</sup> Contingent on the level of engagement with ECDAN as per the MOU with ECDAN’s Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> ECDAN’s online platform will provide easy access to resources, news and information from a variety of trusted ECD sources with the aim of advancing the state of ECD policy and practice worldwide

<sup>5</sup> Knowledge products include mapping of government commitments, advocacy opportunities, stakeholder activities, and financing approaches

## 5.2. Constituencies

Within its partnership, ECDAN recognizes fourteen constituency networks, which the Secretariat will help activate and engage. Not all constituency networks will be directly represented in the governance structure.

## 5.3. ECDAN constituents

1. Countries
2. Regional and national ECD networks
3. Multilateral agencies
4. UN agencies
5. Bilateral agencies
6. Private sector
7. Foundations
8. CSOs / INGOs
9. Global sectoral and thematic partnerships
10. Academia / think tanks
11. Media
12. Professional associations
13. Parents
14. Advocates

## 5.4. Benefits of partnership

The benefits of partnership for different partner groups are detailed below. The groups are as follows:

- Group 1: Global and regional networks, associations, alliances and partnerships
- Group 2: Other organizations
- Group 3: Individuals

## 5.5. Governance structure

ECDAN's overall governance structure will consist of three decision-making bodies – the executive board, the Secretariat, and the technical advisory group.

Other bodies (i.e. committees and working groups) will be activated and deactivated as needed. The Executive Leadership Council (ELC) will be the highest governance body overseeing all strategic decision-making; it will include representation of organizations across constituencies that make significant technical, financial, strategic, or in-kind contributions to ECDAN.

The Secretariat is responsible for ECDAN planning, management, direction, operations, staffing, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. The Secretariat reports to the Executive Leadership Council.

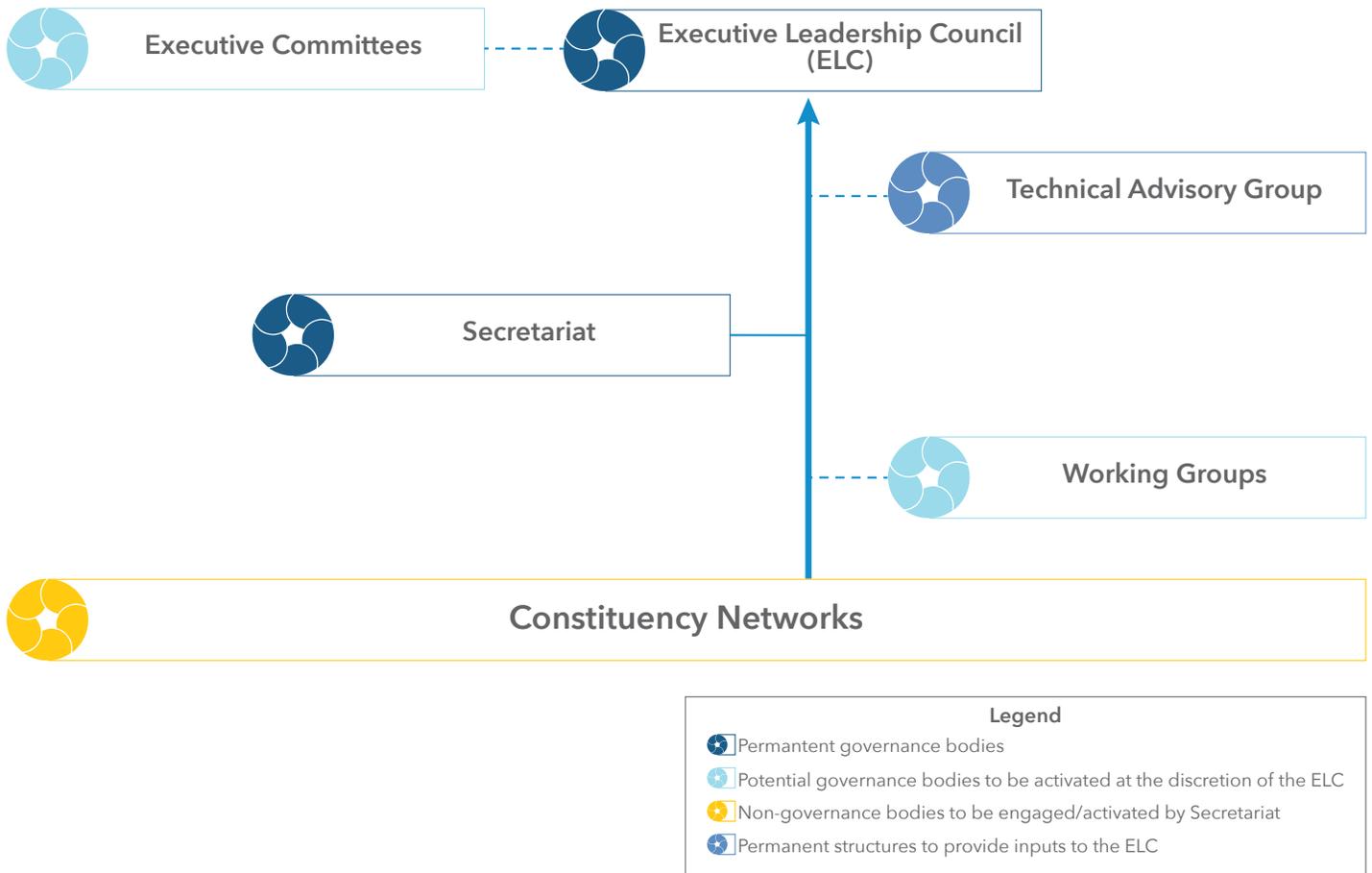
The Technical Advisory Group will provide technical guidance to the Executive Leadership Council and Secretariat, and has the authority to activate working groups.

## 5.6. Secretariat

ECDAN's Secretariat is responsible for the management and programmatic decisions to further the network's goals, and to coordinate and facilitate interactions between various bodies involved in the governance structure as well as the constituency networks.

The Secretariat is responsible for proposing the strategy, accompanying work plans, and any structural changes. It is responsible for management of ECDAN, as well as supporting the Executive Leadership Council in its decision-making. ECDAN Secretariat staff lead its representational work, engaging with different constituency networks and moving forward with advocacy and communications plans. It is responsible for human and resource mobilization, as well as executing work and operational plans, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

**Figure 9: ECDAN's Governance Structure**



## Annex A: Task force members by working group

In 2017, ECDAN brought together over 100 representatives from government, civil society, bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, academia, foundations, regional networks, think tanks, and thematic partnerships to work on six task forces with the objective of developing a shared vision for key global goods needed to push the ECD agenda forward. The task forces focused on (1)

multi-sectoral interventions at scale; (2) workforce; (3) data measurement, and accountability; (4) financing and costing; (5) advocacy; and (6) global results framework. Their collective work has informed the development of this strategic framework.

Names	Organization
<b>Action 1: Scale up essential multi-sectoral interventions</b>	
Interim Executive Group (IEG) liaison: Sara Poehlman, Ghassan Issa, Melissa Kelly, Chloe O'Gara, Pia Britto	
Peter Hynes	BabyWASH Coalition (World Vision)
Maureen Samms - Vaughan	Jamaica's Early Childhood Commission
Katie Murphy	International Rescue Committee
Ana Tenorio	World Vision International
Katherine Merseth	RTI International
Saaed Al Ismaily	Dubai Cares
Meena Gandhi	DFID
Asifa Nurani	AKF East Africa (AKDN)
Alam Khattak	SUN
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Christine Chen	ARNEC
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Tina Hyder	Open Society Foundations
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Nafisa Gulshaeva	AKF Tajikistan (AKDN)
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Mark Elliott	World Forum Foundation
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Aline Villette	LEGO Foundation
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Mihaela Ionescu	ISSA
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### Action 3: Strengthen national data and evidence

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### Action 4: Finance

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### Action 5: Advocacy

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Diane Whitehead	ACEI
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Gillian Huebner	CPC Learning Network
Sajin Varghese	Fisher Price and Mattel
Joanna Rubinstein	World Childhood Foundation
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Leila Nimatallah	Catholic Relief Services

#### Action 6: Results Framework

IEG liaison: Bernadette Daelmans, Pia Britto

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## Annex B: Global and regional ECD member networks and partnerships

ECDAN catalyzes 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 to increase investment for quality services for young children.

The following global and regional organizations are ECD stakeholders and a part of ECDAN’s growing network. See [www.ecdan.org](http://www.ecdan.org) for an updated list of partners.

<b>Child protection</b>	Global Partnership for Ending Violence, Power of Zero, No Limit Generation
<b>Education</b>	Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait, Education Commission, World Bank multi donor trust fund on Inclusive Education, World Bank Early Learning Partnership
<b>Financing</b>	Brookings, HCI, Global Financing Facility, World Bank, IDB, University of Pennsylvania, UNICEF
<b>Gender</b>	Women Deliver
<b>Health</b>	Partnership for Maternal and Child Health (PMNCH), WHO, UNICEF, ECD Task Force, Coalition on HIV/AIDS,
<b>Inclusion</b>	ECD Taskforce, Light for the World
<b>Humanitarian</b>	Moving Minds, Early Childhood Peace Consortium, INEE ECD Task Force
<b>Knowledge</b>	Harvard Center for the Developing Child, Palix Foundation, NIEER, UNICEF, All ECDAN Partners, PATH
<b>Measurement</b>	Countdown 2030, ECD Measures
<b>Nutrition</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), World Bank Early Years Program
<b>Social protection</b>	Sanitation and Water for All, Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, Tackling Childcare, World Bank
<b>Workforce</b>	Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI), Global Social Service Workforce.org
<b>Civil society</b>	ChildFund International, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision International, PATH, and others
<b>Regional networks</b>	Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN)
	Arab Network for ECD (ANECD)
	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)
	Inter-American Dialogue
	International Step by Step Association (ISSA)
	Primero lo Primero

## Annex C: SWOT analysis

Consultations with the ECD community and ECDAN partners over the course of 2018 identified the following strengths and challenges for ECDAN:

- ECDAN's strengths
- ECDAN's vision embedded in Sustainable Development Goals
- The high attention and momentum around ECD over the last two - three years including the endorsement by G20.
- Being a network of networks and ability to connect networks across regions and sectors.
- Strong recognition across the ECD core community, interest, and support from leading global ECD players who have a sense of urgency to advance the ECD global agenda.
- Availability of seed funding.

ECDAN's challenges and threats

- Great potential, but slow progress since incubation and ECDAN not well known beyond core group of experts and their organizations.
  - In late 2019, ECDAN expanded its social media presence and will be launching its new strategic framework for 2020-2023, which will raise its visibility. The launch of the ECD Gateway will also be accompanied by a promotion plan and linked to ECDAN partner websites.
- Need to be additive – not duplicative
  - An example of ECDAN's additive value: the

ECD Gateway will link to existing platforms and resources that add value to the ECD community, as well as share co-created materials.

- Going beyond being a website – making material impact
  - With the Knowledge Fellows program and new tools, such as the cost of inaction “plug and play” tool, ECDAN is moving toward making more material impact on the sector.
- Not having a shared understanding of ECDAN's mandate among partners.
  - This will be a key focus during the development and refinement of ECDAN's partnership model over the next four years.
- Managing partner expectations and conflicting perspectives e.g. ambitious, modest, visible, or work behind the scenes.
  - This will be a key focus during the development and refinement of ECDAN's partnership model over the next four years.
- Limited funding.
  - This is one of the key threats to ECDAN, which now has a resource mobilization plan and is approaching new donors.
- Achieving clarity on governance structure, scope, and priorities.
  - In 2020, ECDAN will launch its new strategy, plus move towards a fixed governance structure, as detailed in Section 4.

## Annex D: Risks and mitigation

Risks	Mitigation
<b>Lack of commitment for collective action</b>	<p>Develop shared work plans with thematic and sectoral partnerships, regional networks</p> <p>Continue high level engagement with policymakers via different global forums</p>
<b>Incorrect assumptions</b>	<p>Use effective communication and leveraging communication technologies and social media to clearly articulate the goals and activities of the network and to engage with different constituents</p> <p>Put strong monitoring and evaluation systems into place to ensure programs and initiatives are well-implemented.</p> <p>Allow for time for reflection post-evaluation; realign approaches if needed.</p>
<b>Insufficient resources to support the network and Secretariat</b>	<p>Approve and implement robust resource mobilization plan</p> <p>Establish development steering committee</p> <p>Establish systems to track potential donors</p> <p>Realign work plan to fit available budget</p> <p>Develop realistic annual operational plans and budgets</p>
<b>Weak governance</b>	<p>Develop a governance structure that is fit for purpose, based on lessons learned from other sectoral partnerships.</p> <p>Reassess and realign (if needed) Secretariat structure on an annual basis as part of operational planning</p> <p>Reassess and realign (if needed) governance structure at the end of this strategic planning period</p>
<b>Confusing or ineffective messaging on ECD</b>	<p>Establish process for developing common messages and speak with one voice</p> <p>Ensure monitoring systems track effectiveness of messages with systematic review by the Technical Advisory Group</p>
<b>Changing (diminishing) political will for ECD and failure to translate momentum into action</b>	<p>Maintain momentum and enthusiasm through coordinated efforts with ECDAN partners in sustaining the interest in ECD</p>
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	<p>Approach any conflict of interest as transparently as possible, seeking to achieve a solution that addresses the needs of those involved</p>

## Annex E: References

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## Annex F: Results framework 2020-2023

	INDICATOR	DEFINITION: How is it calculated?	BASELINE: What is the current value?	TARGET: What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE: How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY: How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE: Who will measure it?	REPORTING: Where will it be reported?
Overall Impact	Accelerated scale-up of equitable and quality multi-sectoral ECD policies, programs, and services to ensure all young children's optimal brain development and productive potential.							
High-level outcomes	SDG2.1 prevalence of undernourishment and food insecurity as per targets	Prevalence of undernourishment (2.1.1)	SDG2: Current value <a href="#">here</a>	By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round	2.1: Scroll to Target 2.1 <a href="#">here</a>	2.1: Scroll to Target 2.1 <a href="#">here</a>	2.1.1: FAO	SDG indicators metadata repository <a href="#">here</a>
	SDG2.2 prevalence of stunting and malnutrition as per targets	Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age (2.2.1) Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight) (2.2.2)	SDG2: Current value <a href="#">here</a>	By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	2.2: Scroll to Target 2.2 <a href="#">here</a>	2.2: Scroll to Target 2.2 <a href="#">here</a>	2.2.1: UNICEF, WHO, World Bank 2.2.2: UNICEF, WHO, World Bank	SDG indicators meta data repository <a href="#">here</a>  2.2.1 Countdown to 2030 profiles <a href="#">here</a>
	SDG3.2 reduce neonatal mortality and under-5 mortality as per targets	Under-five mortality (3.2.1) Neo-natal mortality (3.2.2)	SDG3: Current value <a href="#">here</a>	By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	3.2: Scroll to Target 3.2 <a href="#">here</a>	3.2: Scroll to Target 3.2 <a href="#">here</a>	3.2.1: UNICEF 3.2.2: UNICEF	SDG indicators meta data repository <a href="#">here</a>  3.2.1 Countdown to 2030 profiles <a href="#">here</a>
	SDG 4.2 coverage gap closes as per target	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial wellbeing, by sex (4.2.1) Participation rate in organized learning (one	SDG4: Current value <a href="#">here</a>	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	Scroll to Target 4.2 <a href="#">here</a>	Scroll to Target 4.2 <a href="#">here</a>	4.2.1: UNICEF 4.2.2: UNESCO	SDG indicators meta data repository <a href="#">here</a>

		year before the official primary entry age), by sex (4.2.2)						
	SDG16.2 proportion of children as per target	Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month (16.2.1)	SDG16: Current value <a href="#">here</a>	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.2: Scroll to Target 16.2 <a href="#">here</a>	16.2: Scroll to Target 16.2 <a href="#">here</a>	16.2.1: UNICEF	SDG indicators meta data repository <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Strategic Objective (SO) 1</b>	Increased and sustained international and domestic political support for, and investments in, evidence-based early childhood development (ECD) policies and programs to ensure that all young children thrive							
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>	IO1: Funding increases for ECD authorized and appropriated.							
	Increased funding for ECD authorized and appropriated	Annual/bi-annual monitoring reports or other tracking data	TBD	TBD	OECD/DAC report	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's board of directors (EB), website
	IO2: ECD policies and programs adopted, implemented, and evaluated							
	# of countries adapting ECD policies	New policies in place	68 <sup>1</sup>	TBD	RISE Institute database	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's board of directors (EB), website
<b>Outputs (demand, action, awareness)</b>	# of regional and international policy forms and events highlighting ECD	Regional and international policy forums and events highlight ECD	Set in 2020	TBD	Map of events through ECDAN partners	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	% increase in level of engagement on the Collaboration Hub under the ECD Gateway	Increase level of engagement on the collaboration hub	Set in 2020	TBD	Traffic, download rate, bounce rate, geographic diversity	Quarterly for review by internal staff; annually for review by board	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's Bo
	% increase in media and social media coverage of ECD	Increase in media coverage and online engagement with target audiences on ECDAN agenda	TBD in Y1 pending global advocacy campaign and related metrics	TBD	Media and social media monitoring reports, audience engagement metrics	Quarterly for review by internal staff; annually for review by board	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	# of joint global campaigns on increasing investment in ECD mobilized in collaboration with partners, featuring the cost of inaction tool	A global campaign on increasing investments through coordinated partner efforts on building the evidence for an ECD investment case	0	TBD	Tools developed on cost of inaction, return on investment, benchmarking etc.	Annually	ECDAN staff and partners	Tools and Campaign plans and messages

<sup>1</sup> Reported in the Lancet 2017; 389: 77–90 from Vargas-Barón E. Policies on early childhood care and education: their evolution and some impacts. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015.

SO2	Increased access, use and value of quality evidence-based knowledge to advance the state of ECD policy and practice worldwide							
Intermediate Outcomes	IO1: Stakeholders use, share, and value ECD knowledge resources to advance their work							
	Proportion of partners who rate resources and services accessed on ECD Gateway as highly supportive or excellent to support their work in advancing ECD policy and/or practice	Stakeholders value resources and services accessed via the ECD Gateway as rated on a Likert scale (1 = No value, 2 = Some value, 3 = Value, 4 = Really value, 5 = Highly value)	TBD in Y1	TBD	Annual survey of site users	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	IO2: Young ECD professionals active within the sector							
	Increased # of young ECD leaders, including those from the global south, working in the field of ECD	# of Knowledge Fellows who pursue a career in Global ECD  # of knowledge fellows who value the program as rated	Set in 2020 Set in 2020	TBD TBD				
	Online knowledge and community platform developed, launched, and improved based on user engagement and growth	-Gateway launched - Annual survey of site users -Key KPIs	0 (inactive) Survey TBD in 2020 Set in 2020	1 (active) TBD TBD	-Launch -Annual survey of site users	(late 2019 or early 2020)	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Knowledge Fellows (KF) program established and supporting discrete knowledge products and diverse online communities of practice	-Program financed and functional -# of knowledge products produced -# of fellows from the global south	0 0 0	TBD TBD TBD	-Agreements with KFs in place -Finalized knowledge products -KF profiles	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Virtual and in-person learning exchange opportunities implemented	# of webinars conducted # of in-person learning events conducted Diversity of participants engaging in the learning events	Set in 2020 Set in 2020 Set in 2020	TBD TBD TBD	-Online platform -Project files -Google Analytics and in-person sign-in sheet	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Curation mechanism developed and operational	Guidelines for curation mechanism jointly developed and approved by the ECDAN Technical Executive Board  # of thematic pages developed through the curation process	0 0	1 TBD	Final guidelines posted on online platform  Google Analytics	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Communities of Practice	# of communities of practice functional	0	TBD	Google Analytics	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	SO3	Improved connections and alignment on common goals across sectors among ECD stakeholders						

IO1: Collaboration and coordination between ECDAN, regional networks, global thematic and sectoral partnerships								
Intermediate Outcome	Improved collaboration and coordination between regional and thematic networks and ECDAN	One identified objective for ECD implemented across thematic and regional network work plans	0	6 <sup>[1]</sup>	Finalized work plans include identified objective	Annually	Executive Director	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
Outputs	Key thematic global partnerships have included multi-sectoral ECD in their strategies and/or roadmaps	MOUs established with key sectoral global partnerships Joint Plans	2 (2020)	3	Signed MOU Joint implementation plans	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Discrete demand-driven global goods developed and disseminated	# of new global goods developed with other partners  # of new global goods disseminated	0 0	TBD in 2020 TBD in 2020	Tracked by ECDAN staff	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Online community platform developed, launched, and improved based on user engagement and growth	-Community launched -Annual survey of site users -Key KPIs	0 (inactive) Set in 2020 Set in 2020	1 (active) TBD TBD	-Launch -Annual survey of site users -KPI tracker	2020 Annually Quarterly	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	# of countries with multi-sectoral coordination functioning bodies in place	Functioning multi-sectoral coordination bodies moving ECD policy forward	TBD	TBD	Regional networks	Annually	ECDAN and regional network staff	Annual report to ECDAN's executive board (EB), website
	SO4	Improved enabling environments to build an effective global network of networks						
IO1: ECDAN governance and structures functioning to support the network								
Intermediate Outcome	Improved governance of ECDAN	Increased performance of the EB	TBD in 2020	TBD	Annual EB self-assessment	Annually	Executive Director	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
Outputs	Executive Board operational	Transition from Executive Group complete; Executive Board convenes as per their terms of reference	0	1	Final minutes from four board meetings	Once, 2020	Executive Director, EB chair	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	Technical Advisory Group operational	-Competitive application process established -TAG members selected -Meeting minimum of 3x annually	0 0 0	1 Yes 3x/annually	Final minutes from four TAG meetings	Once, 2020	Executive Director, EB chair	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	ECDAN Secretariat hosted	-Hosting agreement in place -Secretariat transition to new host	0 0	Agreement In situ	Hosting agreement	Once, 2020	Executive Director	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
	ECDAN Secretariat capacity strengthened	-Appropriate levels of staff hired -Operational systems in place	3.5	5	Hiring records	Annually	Executive Director	Annual report to ECDAN's EB

ECDAN subscribers increased	% geographic diversity % increase by constituency # numbers % increase of organizations	Set in 2020 for all	TBD	Google Analytics	Quarterly	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
ECDAN partnership model operational	Defined set of partnership principles and practices documented and shared amongst ECDAN partners	0	1 model	When model is applied to key partnerships	Annually	Executive Director	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
Proportion of new ECDAN partners onboarded	% of new partners after baseline	Set in 2020	TBD	MOU and/or agreement to sign onto ECDAN's mission documented	Annually after launch of new membership campaign	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
Increased # of resources mobilized	-Amount of resources (\$ and in-kind) raised in a fiscal year. -Diversified donor funding	Baseline at beginning of fiscal year	100% of projected annual budget	# of proposal submitted Amount of funds raised	Annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB
Network structures and processes functioning to support the ECDAN partner network	Network structures include -Support for communication (elevator pitch, one pager on ECDAN, mailing list, group email, wikis, blogs, social networking sites, information packets) - Social media -Network hubs/gathering places - Collaborative fund - Scaling/viral mechanisms - Reflection sessions/sharing breakthroughs - Network Weaver training/coaching system - Liberating structures, e.g. open space, conversation café, world café	Structures identified in 2020	TBD	Content analysis, newsletters, metrics, survey	Bi-annually	ECDAN staff	Annual report to ECDAN's EB





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