Mental Health in International Development and Humanitarian Settings (MINDS) Act

**KEY FACTS**

**14%**

Of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental health disorders

**1 in 5**

Individuals in conflict-affected

areas has a mental health disorder

**426 million**

Children are living in a conflict-affected area

**83%**

Of children reported an increase of negative feelings due to

COVID-19

**75%**

Of people with mental health conditions in low and middle income countries receive no treatment

**>1%**

Of health-related global development assistance has

ever gone to mental health

**Why Congress Must Act**

Around the globe hundreds of millions of people struggle with mental health conditions. Communities in conflict-affected areas are particularly impacted: most will experience psychological distress at some point, and more than 1 in 5 have a mental health disorder. 426 million of the world’s children currently live in areas affected by conflict, posing a substantial risk to the long-term mental and physical health of the next generation. The risk factors for mental illness have only grown due to COVID-19. Support for mental health, resilience and wellbeing in both international development and humanitarian settings is critical, and yet funding for mental health has never risen above 1% of health-related global development assistance – with support for child and adolescent mental health receiving only 0.1%.

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is essential to overall health and protection outcomes, and is necessary to ensure people and nations meet their full potential. In order for foreign assistance investments to be effective and sustainable, it is critical that U.S.-funded programming makes progress in addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of communities. The U.S. has an opportunity and responsibility to build a cohesive approach to tackle this global challenge now in order to build a more stable future for the global community.

​**What the Bill Calls For**

The bipartisan, bicameral Mental Health in International Development and Humanitarian Settings (MINDS) Act is the first-ever U.S. legislation that addresses mental health and psychosocial support in foreign assistance.

The bill supports best practices, lays the groundwork for a global mental health strategy, and emphasizes the needs of vulnerable populations – including children in adversity, those living in poverty and conflict zones, women and girls, and other marginalized communities. The MINDS Act:

* Codifies the position of USAID Coordinator for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support;
* Codifies the USAID MHPSS Working Group to promote inter-bureau and interagency coordination and support the integration of MHPSS in U.S. foreign assistance;
* Requires State and USAID to integrate MHPSS programming across regional bureaus and missions; and
* Requires the Executive Branch to brief Congress on implementation of the bill, barriers to MHPSS programing, and overall expenditures on MHPSS programming in U.S. foreign assistance.

**Congressional Leaderships:** Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL), and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC)

**Organizations Endorsing:** Save the Children, UNICEF USA, International Rescue Committee, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, The Borgen Project, RISE Institute, American Academy of Pediatrics