

Fact Sheet

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

People living in conflict-affected areas have a mental health disorder

452 million

Children are living in conflict-affected areas

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. 452 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.

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 MHPSS;
- 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 submit an annual report on the amount of US foreign assistance spent on MHPSS, how USAID and State are working to integrate MHPSS programming, and barriers to implementation for five years.

More than 20 organizations have signed on to endorse the bill, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, Catholic Relief Services, ChildFund, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, UNICEF USA, and World Vision. S.767 is being led by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) with the companion bill H.R.1570 led by Representatives Susan Wild (D-PA) and Joe Wilson (R-SC).