

## PRESS RELEASE

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### The LEGO Foundation and KIRKBI announce 100MDKK grant to support vulnerable children in Haiti and Afghanistan

Billund, Denmark, 26 August 2021: [The LEGO Foundation](#) and [KIRKBI](#), the owners of the LEGO Group, today announced a new 100M Danish Kroner (DKK) grant (equivalent to \$15.7M USD or £11.5M GBP) to support vulnerable children in Haiti and Afghanistan with partners including [UNICEF](#), [UNHCR- the UN Refugee Agency](#) and [Education Cannot Wait](#) (ECW).

30M DKK will go to UNHCR, 20M DKK will go to UNICEF; and 35M DKK to ECW. 15M DKK will be distributed in due course, as the needs of the emergencies unfold.

*"The humanitarian crises that are happening in Haiti and Afghanistan are unimaginable and only intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both require a response that focuses attention on the immediate and long-term impacts"*, said **Thomas Kirk Kristiansen, Chair of the Governing Board, The LEGO Foundation, and 4<sup>th</sup> generation representative of the LEGO owner family.**

*"KIRKBI and the LEGO Foundation, as the owners of the LEGO Group, have an immense opportunity to respond to the crises. With the grant, we hope to take a targeted approach to support the needs of the people of Haiti and Afghanistan – not least the children who are in a urgent need of protection assistance."*

Before the current political crisis, almost half the population of Afghanistan - [18.4 million people \(8.2 million children\)](#) - were in need of humanitarian and protection assistance. Since May 2021, [over 500,000 people](#) have been displaced, and the rights of women, families and children are gravely endangered. According to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), Afghanistan has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world, with [46% of the population \(11.7 million children\)](#) under 15 years old. Those who have fled the crisis require immediate and ongoing support, especially families and young children.

*"These grants are an important part of our ongoing commitment to supporting children affected by crises. We know that by giving attention to young children and their continued access to learning in crisis settings, especially their early stimulation needs, we can make a big positive difference to them immediately and in the long-term. Together, we hope to provide more children with access to early childhood and education services needed to develop skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving. Social and emotional skills are vital for children to overcome the stressors caused by crisis situations, and to build resilience and adapt to the needs of the rapidly changing world."* said **John Goodwin, CEO, The LEGO Foundation**

The 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on August 14th, followed by Tropical Storm Grace, has left half-a-million Haitian children with limited or no access to shelter, safe water, healthcare, and nutrition. With COVID-19 still an imminent threat to the health and safety of Haiti's population, the loss and damage associated with these most recent natural disasters only further compounds the dire situation so many children and families are experiencing.

*"As a global fund dedicated to education in emergencies, our First Emergency Response is one of impatience. Education cannot wait until the emergency is over. Thanks to the rapid support by the LEGO Foundation we can now establish safe learning spaces for children, and*

*provide mental health and psychological social support without delay*" said **Yasmine Sherif, Director, Education Cannot Wait.**

*"Early Childhood Education needs are central to our response, alongside other components of quality education. In Afghanistan, this additional funding will enable us to continue implementing community-based education to target the most vulnerable children, with an emphasis on girls."*

To learn more about how LEGO Foundation supports children around the world, visit [www.LEGOfoundation.com](http://www.LEGOfoundation.com).

In addition to the 100M DKK grant from the LEGO Foundation and KIRKBI, Ole Kirk's Fond has supported the people of Afghanistan with a 50M DKK grant to Red Cross in Denmark. Visit [www.olekirksfond.dk](http://www.olekirksfond.dk) for more information.

## **About KIRKBI**

KIRKBI A/S is the Kirk Kristiansen family's private holding and investment company founded to build a sustainable future for the family ownership of the LEGO® brand through generations. The KIRKBI Group is focused on three fundamental tasks all contributing to enabling the Kirk Kristiansen family to succeed with the mission to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow: To protect, develop and leverage the LEGO brand across all the LEGO branded entities, commitment to a long-term and responsible investment strategy to ensure a sound financial foundation for the owner family's activities as well as contributing to a sustainable development in the world. And, dedicated support the family members as they prepare for future generations to continue the active and engaged ownership as well as supporting their private activities, companies and philanthropic work. KIRKBI's strategic activities include among others 75% ownership of the LEGO Group.

## **About the LEGO Foundation**

The LEGO Foundation aims to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow; a mission that it shares with the LEGO Group. The LEGO Foundation is dedicated to building a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners. Its work is about re-defining play and re-imagining learning. In collaboration with thought leaders, influencers, educators and parents the LEGO Foundation aims to equip, inspire and activate champions for learning through play. Learn more on [www.LEGOfoundation.com](http://www.LEGOfoundation.com).

**For more information or further commentary**, please reach out to Ketchum at: [lon-legofoundation@ketchum.com](mailto:lon-legofoundation@ketchum.com)