

A Note on COVID-19

April 2020

The profound impact of the COVID-19 virus on the day-to-day life of billions of people around the world cannot be underestimated. For those families with young children affected by displacement or conflict, such additional impacts are in danger of removing the meagre resources and routines that keep families afloat.

Heightened Concerns for Young Children and Families Already in Crisis

For communities already coping with crisis and displacement, stresses will only increase as countries close borders, impose lockdowns, enforce greater social distance, and curtail access to basic services. The consequences will be compounded for communities already experiencing limited access to information, overcrowded accommodation, inadequate sanitation, and poor health care.

Caregivers' capacities to provide a nurturing and responsive environment will be further stretched when they feel they cannot protect their children, especially when the few early childhood interventions that may have been available previously – such as immunizations, check-ups, home visits, parent coaching and mental health and psychosocial support, and play and learning activities – are put on pause. At points like this, strains can become intolerable.

How We Are Responding

The Moving Minds Alliance is working to ensure that the rights of the youngest refugees¹ and their families are not overlooked during and after this crisis.

¹ The Moving Minds Alliance uses the term “refugee” broadly to encompass persons in refugee-like situations, regardless of their legal status. The population of concern includes young children and families who are forced to flee their homes and communities due to armed conflict, generalized violence, natural disaster or environmental degradation, and who seek safety and protection either within their own countries or across international borders. Moving Minds also seeks to support young children in communities affected by displacement, such as host populations. (Adapted from definitions in UNHCR [Global Trends 2017](#).)

Foundation members are in touch with their partners to understand the situation on the ground as COVID-19 spreads through vulnerable communities. We will aim to ensure that partners are well positioned and supported to deliver for young refugee children and families.

As a collective, we will share amongst funders – within Moving Minds as well as others – what we are learning about partners’ needs as they emerge and how best to support them.

As the economic, social and political fall-out from the virus becomes more fully understood, we will also work together with our advocacy partners to ensure that refugee children and families are visible and active participants in response and recovery.

For a daily updated overview of helpful resources, visit the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) web page [Early Childhood Focused COVID-19 Resources](#).