

Moving Minds Alliance 2025-2026 Research Fellowship Program

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR APPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

About the Fellowship

The Moving Minds Alliance Research Fellowship Program supports local researchers in the Global South to carry out studies on issues related to young children (aged 0-8 years) and their caregivers in emergency contexts. It offers an opportunity to be part of a global community of researchers who are advancing knowledge and evidence in this field, while working with the MMA Research Forum team. It also offers the opportunity for Fellows' research to be disseminated widely through the MMA Network, and through the [Research Forum on Young Children in Emergencies](#).

We are now seeking applications for the 2025-26 Fellows cohort, with five positions available to conduct research related to the theme: **Early Childhood Development in Climate Emergencies**.

As a Fellow, you will be supported to carry out relevant (to your country or local context) studies with young children and families over a 12-month period by:

- Providing a one-time stipend of US \$5,000 to be used toward research activities
- Convening a community of practice of researchers around the world who are focusing on young children and families in climate emergency contexts
- Providing opportunities for knowledge sharing, mentoring, and dissemination of your research to a global audience (through learning events and webinars to which you will be invited to share your findings)

Research Requirements – ECD in Climate Emergencies

In the last six years, more than 43 million children have been displaced due to weather-related disasters (UNICEF, 2023), leaving them unable to access adequate education or nurturing care through their families. Children face the loss of home, family, and community, but the youngest children are exceptionally affected, due to their physiological, social-emotional and cognitive characteristics, which are distinct from any other moment in life (ECDAN, 2023).

There exists a critical gap and thus limited knowledge and research related to:

- Relationships between climate emergencies and mental health for young children and caregivers
- Programmatic interventions or approaches in Early Childhood Development for young children, caregivers, and communities affected by climate disasters
- Post-reconstruction efforts and approaches following climate disasters and emergencies
- Child-friendly policies for climate disasters
- Policy research into ECD in climate emergencies, including solutions and supports for systems change

Research should be:

- Original and creative, but may form part of an existing or ongoing project
- Rigorous and methodologically sound, which will be supported and reviewed with mentors
- Based on and conducted in countries within the Global South
- Thematically aligned or addressing issues identified as knowledge and research gaps above, as they relate to ECD in climate emergencies

Selection of research proposals that meet the above criteria will be prioritized.

Therefore, to be successful, research fellows will need to work towards either or both:

- **Conducting primary research** (qualitative, quantitative or mixed method) to highlight important issues at the national/sub-national level related to the themes of the [Nurturing Care Framework \(NCF\)](#) **within the context of early childhood development in climate emergencies**. This can include:
 - Responsive caregiving
 - Security and safety
 - Opportunities for early learning
 - Good health and adequate nutrition
 - Mental health and well-being in the context of young children in or affected by climate emergencies
- **Using existing sources** of national/sub-national datasets on young children to bring a novel perspective to support the achievement of quality early childhood development for young children in climate emergencies and crises

The fellows are expected to share the methods and results of their research with the Research Forum members and, eventually, the public through a publication (terms to be agreed with Fellows; this may include publishing research briefs or full reports on MMA's Research Forum, sharing across networks, and use of research to inform future work).

Please note: Fellows do not need to complete an entire research project in the 12-month period; some applicants may have other funding to do a larger project, and the fellowship funding will contribute to a part of it. Nevertheless, the fellows should produce a piece of original research in the 12-month period. Support will be provided through mentors for Fellows that will be matched based on research interest, geography, and cultural relevance.

Research Fellow Profile

MMA is committed to recruiting Fellows who are:

- Born into, live in, or have worked in a country affected by climate crisis (this can include lived experience of climate displacement or rebuilding, particularly in the Global South)
- Have some level of experience with conducting research and research analysis, but ideally suited to applicants who are in their early careers and/or have experience and knowledge gained through volunteer work, community projects, grassroots initiatives, or non-traditional research roles
- Have deep connections with communities and local organizations serving young children, particularly in ECD support or early learning
- Willing to periodically engage with research mentors and Research Forum mentors throughout the duration of the Fellowship, and participate in learning events / webinars to share their work.

The Fellowship is open to Fellows at any stage of their career (however we strongly encourage those in early stages of their work to apply), and can include students, researchers or practitioners from non-governmental organizations, (NGO) and civil society backgrounds. The Fellowship aims to support individuals from diverse nationalities.

Selection Criteria

Key criteria for selection include:

- **Originality:** What gaps do your research fill in the current research landscape on young children, caregivers, and their communities in climate emergencies or children living in climate vulnerable

areas? (refer to Research Requirements above)

- Potential to inform programming and policy: are the issues relevant across contexts?
- Alignment to thematic priorities outlined above, within the context of climate emergency, disaster, or displacement for young children (aged 0-8) and their caregivers and communities
- Feasibility of research within the 12-month time frame, with a final report to be completed and submitted by mid-April, 2026

Application & Research Proposal

During the application process, you will be asked for the following information:

- Information about your research plan:
 - Topic and title (if possible)
 - Location of study
 - Target population and sample size
 - 1-3 Key research questions
 - Methodological approach
 - How you plan to include voices of affected children, caregivers, or communities in your research
- A brief CV (no more than two pages)

To apply, please submit your application at this link no later than **Sunday, February 16th, 2025**:

[2025-26 MMA Research Fellowship Application & Proposal Form](#)

Should you have any questions about the application process or other queries, please contact the following e-mail: sarah.ulhaq@movingmindsalliance.org.

Please note that applications will not be accepted via e-mail. Applications should only be submitted to the link above.

Please note that at this time, due to the reviewing team's limited resources, we are only able to accept applications in English (however, this should not act as a deterrent for you; your research may be completed in the language of your choice, and MMA can support the official translation of the final report as needed). Please also note that it is expected that the Fellowship will be facilitated in English when engaging with the Research Forum and associated MMA staff.

The last date to submit the application is **February 16th, 2025**.

Applications will be reviewed and assessed by the MMA Research Forum team, based on the criteria outlined above and considerations related to quality, potential, and originality as well as the qualifications and track record of the applicant. Shortlisted applicants may be invited to discuss adjustments to their proposal in an interview. The MMA Research Forum team will not be able to provide feedback on proposals not selected.