

Global crisis in early years childcare highlighted by report ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

The international children's charity Theirworld has painted a devastating picture of the early childhood of most of the world's children.

The charity, which is pledged to "ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation", began its recent report, "Act for Early Years—A call for a global movement to support the world's youngest children", with the following assessment:

"Around the world, the situation for the youngest members of society and the people who take care of them—parents, carers, nursery teachers, teaching assistants—is worsening and suffering from a lack of investment and interest. There is truly a global crisis in the early years."

The study collated stark findings on conditions currently facing the world's population under the age of five:

- Malnutrition and stunting impact an estimated 250 million children under five years-of-age, "thwarting their development at a critical moment in their lives" (Ndayizigiye, et al 2022).
- Of the global population of 100 million displaced people, almost 12 million are estimated to be children under the age of five (Moving Minds Alliance, 2022).
- Almost half of all children (250 million) under five years-of-age, in low and middle-income countries, are at risk of not reaching their "development potential" (The Lancet, 2016).
- 350 million children below primary-school entry age globally do not have access to needed childcare (World Bank, 2021).
- Over 175 million children globally (almost half of all pre-primary-age children) are not enrolled in pre-school. In low-income countries, the figure rises to four in five (UNICEF, 2019).
- In European countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), children under the age of three years in low-income households are one-third less likely to be able to participate in early childhood education and care than those in high-income households (OECD, 2020).
- In Cameroon, 69 percent of the richest percentile of three to four-year-olds attend pre-school compared to 2 percent of the poorest. In Malawi, 67 percent of the richest percentile attend pre-school compared to 27 percent of the poorest (World Inequality Database on Education).
- The share of humanitarian aid supporting early childhood development in emergencies is just 2 percent (Moving Minds Alliance, 2020).

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