

Saving Infant Lives by Strengthening Breastfeeding Support in Humanitarian Crises

Joint media release: The Centre for Global Child Health at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation

Toronto, Canada / Frauenfeld, Switzerland, 6 August 2025 – The Centre for Global Child Health at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation (FLRF) have launched a project to help protect infants from infectious diseases, diarrhea, and malnutrition by supporting breastfeeding in humanitarian crisis settings.

Breastfeeding can save lives – especially in emergencies. Yet breastfeeding is under pressure in natural disasters and climate-change displacements. And in armed conflict zones, for example, just 25% of infants are exclusively breastfed.

This new initiative aims to strengthen breastfeeding support by translating existing guidelines for humanitarian crises into **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** specific to different crisis types – whether conflicts, displacements, or environmental disasters. The SOPs will be developed to reflect the realities of mothers and families and integrate with existing humanitarian response structures, making it easier for humanitarian workers to support breastfeeding mothers.

Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Provides USD 610,000.00 in Funding

The first SOPs are expected during 2026. When complete, the partners plan a second phase to transform the procedures into formats that can be readily used in the field and disseminated for global adoption.

Overcoming Breastfeeding Barriers

In-depth interviews with **mothers in humanitarian crisis settings** will form the basis of the new SOPs and will be enhanced by input from experienced humanitarian workers. Identifying the characteristics of different types of humanitarian crises, and integrating the procedures in the corresponding humanitarian responses, will be a defining feature of the project. The work will provide humanitarian workers with practical ‘how to’ instructions to support breastfeeding in different crisis settings and aims to substantially improve breastfeeding environments for mothers in emergencies.

Quotes from Project Partners



Professor Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Principal Investigator, Co-Director, Director of Research, SickKids Centre for Global Child Health: “Worldwide, millions of families are increasingly displaced or live in dangerous situations. Without targeted support, it can be extremely difficult for mothers to begin and continue breastfeeding. Clear evidence-informed actions for providing effective breastfeeding support are urgently needed and this project couldn’t be timelier in helping us reach that goal.”

Dr. Katharina Lichtner, FLRF Managing Director: “Strong, evidence-backed knowledge already exists; however, time has shown that knowledge by itself does not necessarily translate into operational improvements. This project marks an innovative and critical next step – to make crucial evidence accessible in crisis situations and provide easy-to-use operational procedures for people working in the field.”

About the Centre for Global Child Health at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)

The Centre for Global Child Health is the dedicated hub for global child health-focused activities at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). With a rich history of innovation in global paediatric health and a reputable network of global partners, the Centre for Global Child Health is well poised to effectively address global child health issues. The Centre supports the global health agenda through collaborative research grounded in scholarship, sustainable capacity building through education, advocacy for improved maternal and child health and the active communication of results to local, national and international stakeholders. <https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/centres/global-child-health/>

About the Family Larsson Rosenquist Foundation

The Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, established in Switzerland in 2013, is an independent philanthropic organization revitalizing the journey from science to impact. The Foundation's priority is to increase breastfeeding rates worldwide, so its focus is on helping build innovative, efficient pathways to get there. The team supports and collaborates with researchers, policymakers, practitioners, government leaders, and partner organizations working to ensure every child has an optimal start in life through the benefits of breastmilk. www.larsson-rosenquist.org

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