



**March 3, 2020**

## **Youth For Understanding Global Response COVID-19**

As widely known, countries in Asia and other regions around the world are currently facing COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) as a public health emergency. The rapidly escalating spread of the virus from China to neighboring countries in Asia and more recently to Europe and beyond represents a risk to mobility programs such as the ones Youth For Understanding (YFU) is carrying out.

Across the global YFU network, the health and safety of our students is our top priority, and our actions are guided by this.

A YFU Global Crisis Response Team, comprised of staff from YFU's Global Office, has been set up and is responsible for:

1. Collecting and compiling information relating to the spread of the disease and the impact on our programs;
2. Weekly communication to YFU Member Organizations that will highlight significant changes in policy at a global and national levels;
3. Ongoing risk analysis;
4. Content messaging to ensure the YFU Global Organization presents a united front in its communications to stakeholders.

The YFU USA team monitors the resources below for pertinent updates:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [About 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\)](#).<sup>[1]</sup>
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [U.S. Department of State \(travel advisories\)](#)

### **The Current Situation**

The global YFU community has already made the decision to terminate programs in China during the early stages of the outbreak, based upon information at that time, especially with regards to schools being closed for an unforeseeable duration and severe travel restrictions being imposed. The YFU global network has also delayed the departure of Spring 2020 semester students to Japan to coincide with the April 6<sup>th</sup> school year start date in the country.

Based on current available information, we believe that there is no need for similar actions in other countries, especially considering that most confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported from China have occurred in adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The YFU global network therefore continues to operate as usual and will maintain students on program, unless circumstances change to the point that the program is no longer feasible (as was the case in China). YFU hosting organizations in countries affected by the virus are strictly adhering to the guidelines issued by the international and national health authorities. On-program students are being sent these guidelines by their host YFU organization and instructed to follow them closely.

### **2020 Summer Programs**

At present, the global YFU network plan is to maintain departures to all destinations, except in the event that schools in the host country close down, at which point the program starting date will be postponed.

In early April, YFU USA must make commitments to vendors regarding the number of students we will send abroad this summer. YFU USA views early April as the benchmark by which a critical decision to proceed, delay, or cancel 2020 summer programs will have to be made. Until that time, YFU USA will work closely with the Global Office Task Force, monitor the COVID-19 situation, and act accordingly.

Enrollment for summer programs is still strong, but we realize that may change as the coronavirus situation evolves. On a case-by-case basis, we are extending enrollment deadlines and loosening restrictions on refund of deposits for tuition-paying summer program students.

We are prepared to be flexible with our corporate partners to the extent possible.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and will keep you informed of developments that might change our assessment. If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.