
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 72: Children and Youth Sign-On Letter, Updated Caregiver Loss Numbers, & Global Disability Summit 2022.

Feb 21, 2022

Sign-On Letter

The Children and Youth Working Group at InterAction is circulating a **CEO-level sign-on letter to President Biden highlighting the multiple impacts of COVID on children and youth** and urging him to lead in making them a priority at the planned **White House COVID Summit** this spring. The letter outlines the significant impact COVID has had on children and youth globally, noting that:

- “More than 616 million children are still affected by full or partial school closures, and education disruptions in low- and middle-income countries have left up to **70% of 10-year-olds unable to read**,”
- “Shuttered schools, lockdowns, and disruption to services that protect girls mean an additional **2 million could suffer from female genital mutilation** over the next decade. Similarly, **10 million additional child marriages** may occur before the end of the decade as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” and

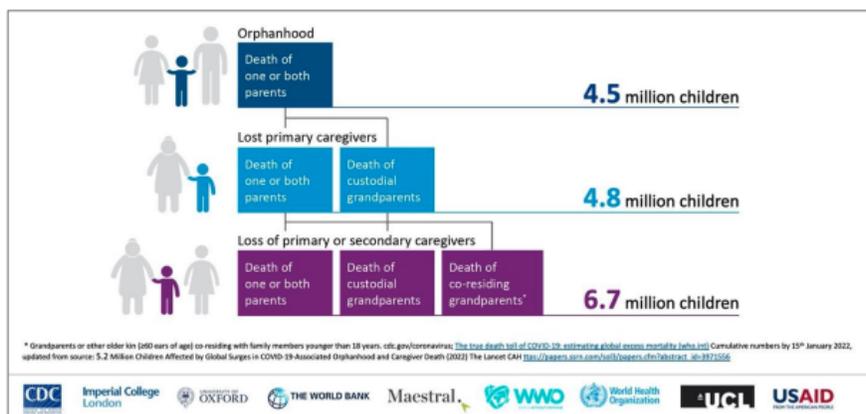
- “An additional **9 million children could suffer from wasting**, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition, due to the pandemic’s impact on children’s diets, nutrition services, and feeding practices.”

Click [here](#) to read the CEO sign-on letter. **To sign on, please fill out [this form](#) no later than Friday, February 25th, 2022.**

Quick Summary

Maestral International updated the estimated loss of caregivers globally in their most recent [report](#) “Urgent Action to Overcome the Threat of COVID-19-Associated Orphanhood in LMICs.” The report now estimates that **“6.7 million children have been victims of COVID-19-associated orphanhood and caregiver death in the past two years.** This number is rapidly growing: every 6 seconds another child loses a parent or caregiver.” **4.8 million of these children have lost one or both primary caregiver(s)**, which can leave them orphaned. The report emphasized that these children face “extreme threats, including abuse, violence, and high-risk sexual

Figure 1: Global minimum estimates of children affected by COVID-19-associated orphanhood, January 2022



behavior.” Maestral advocated the US Government to “Leverage the U.S.-hosted Global COVID-19 Summit in March to incorporate care for COVID-19 orphans in the “Save Lives Now” pillar of the global response;” “Advocate for all countries to include

care for affected children as a matter of policy in their COVID-19 strategies;” and “Lead by example by investing an incremental \$1.5bn over five years through existing USAID and PEPFAR platforms to help protect 2.4 million COVID-19 orphans in 15 high-burden countries in sub-Saharan Africa.” To read the report, click [here](#).

The U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations, and Global Corporate Social Impact held a [hearing](#) on “Renewed American Engagement with International Organizations: Goals, Priorities, and Successes.” The subcommittee heard from [Michele J. Sison](#), the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs at the U.S.

Department of State. She stated that “President Biden has made clear that we will put our core U.S. values at the center of our foreign policy. This means we must actively out-compete efforts by nations that stand in opposition to U.S. values on human rights, democracy, labor rights, and transparent economic practices. To achieve this, we must work in partnership with other nations; our nation is stronger when we lead the way in crafting strategic, cross-regional partnerships.” Sison emphasized the importance of American leadership on the international stage, including joining the Paris Climate Agreement and COP26, **pledging \$10 billion dollars to multi-year initiatives to global food security**, and reengaging with the UN Human Rights Council. She also highlighted recent positive developments, including “**On February 1st, Ambassador Cathy Russell began her tenure as the new Executive Director of UNICEF.**” To watch and learn more about this hearing, click [here](#).

The UN Child Rights Committee and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict [called](#) on the Member States the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict \(OPAC\)](#). They stated that “Today, as children continue to be used in hostilities, OPAC remains critical. According to the [Study on the evolution of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate 1996-2021](#), more than a third of all grave violations since 2005 involved the recruitment and use of children by parties to conflicts. This corresponds to more than 93,000 children taking part in hostilities, including in fighting roles.” [In 2020](#) over 8,500 boys and girls were recruited by armed forces. Boys were used as spies, cooks, combatants whereas girls were used as cleaners, sex slaves, and child brides. They also reminded Members States of Security Council Resolution 2427 (2018), which calls for “reintegration programs for children who have been recruited and released must be long-term and sustainable, sensitive to their gender and age, and must provide them with access to health care, psycho-social support, and education.” Click [here](#) to read the call to ratify to the Member States.

Collaboration Opportunities

The Civil Society Working Group (CSWG) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is putting together recommendations on the [U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally](#) and the [USAID Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#). They are asking to “identify major gaps or important material that has been omitted” and “identify areas where clarification is needed on policy positions or terminology.” This is a critical opportunity to provide feedback to the USG to ensure that all perspectives are included. Please email Megan Corrado at mcorrado@allianceforpeacebuilding.org if you are interested in providing feedback **by February 22, 2022**.

The Brave Movement and the G7 Survivors Task Force are seeking the endorsement of alliances, coalitions, and organizations of its call-to-action “**Survivor’s G7 Call to Action: Prevention, Healing, and Justice to End Childhood Sexual Violence.**” They are calling to action the G7 to prioritize ending childhood sexual violence, deliver on existing G7 commitments, engage with survivors, and develop and implement National Action Plans and Strategies. Click [here](#) to read the call to action. If your alliance, coalition, or organization is interested in endorsing this call-to-action, please send your logo endorsement **no later than February 28, 2022**, to ollybuston@futureadvocacy.org.

Spotlight

The Global Disability Summit 2022, [hosted](#) this year by the governments of Norway and Ghana, provided a platform for governments and leading organizations to make and discuss critical commitments that can help achieve better outcomes, meaningful inclusion, and real change for persons with disabilities. The summit objectives were to “Raise global attention and focus on neglected areas and inclusive sustainable development,” “Strengthen the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities in the Global South and their engagement with governments,” “Mobilize targeted and concrete commitments on disability inclusion and inclusive development,” and “Showcase best practice and evidence from across the world on disability-inclusive development, and progress made from the GDS in 2018.” The summit brought together leaders from the United Nations, countries, and civil society organizations to focus on the need for disability-inclusive policies and programs. **During the Global Disability Summit 2022, approximately 1,300 commitments were made, including commitments from 44 country governments, with a strong focus on children and youth.**

Notable speakers included the **United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Samatha Power, USAID Administrator; and Sara Minkara, Special Advisor on International Disability Rights for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the Department of State.** Administrator Power announced that “Today the United States is not just bringing a commitment to the summit, we bring 23. **Our 23 commitments, 16 from USAID and seven from the State Department will expand the reach of our development efforts and demonstrate that we are serious about making global development accessible to all.**” Power committed \$25 million to the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology. She also highlighted that “For far too long, as you well know, activists with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, have been overlooked as change agents worth supporting. So we are going to expand partnerships

with organizations led by people with disabilities and empower underrepresented activists with the knowledge and connections needed to push for policy change, at the ballot box and beyond it.” Click [here](#) to learn more and watch her speech.

In addition to the Global Disability Summit, the **Global Disability Youth Summit 2022** convened with support from IDA, UNICEF, and the Atlas Alliance represented by Youth Mental Health Norway to ensure the inclusion of youth in the Global Disability Summit. The Global Disability Youth Summit “showcased the innovations of organizations led by youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities at the local, regional and global levels have created groups and activities, both online and offline, fostering a sense of community, even during the COVID-19 period.” Throughout the Global Disability Youth Summit, it was highlighted that barriers for youth with disabilities needed to be addressed and dismantled in order to have more leadership and participation. Some of the objectives of the Global Disability Youth Summit included “Meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders including states representatives, UN Agencies, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), agencies for development and cooperation, youth CSOs and other interested parties, including at country and regional levels in discussions led by youth with disabilities,” “Mobilizing targeted and concrete commitments and stressing accountability towards the inclusion of youth with disabilities in development, human rights, and humanitarian actions,” and “Mobilizing the critical mass of youth with disabilities in line with the principle of “Leaving No One Behind” (LNOB) following the CRPD principles of “Nothing About Us, Without Us!”.” To learn more about what was discussed at the Global Disability Youth Summit, click [here](#).

Simultaneously, Save the Children Norway, UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report, Light for the World, Cambridge Network for Disability and Education Research, Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and Global Campaign for Education-US (GCE-US) co-hosted **Inclusive Education: Learnings from the GEM Report and COVID-19**. Speakers included **Anna Cristina D’Addio**, Senior Policy Analyst, UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report; **Nidhi Singal**, Professor of Disability Inclusive Education, University of Cambridge; **Seme Lado Michael**, Disability Inclusion Facilitator, South Sudan; **Birgitte Lange**, CEO, Save the Children Norway; **Josh Josa**, Disability Inclusive Education Specialist, USAID; **Hanna Alasuutari**, Global Thematic Lead for Inclusive Education, World Bank; **Nafisa Baboo**, Director, Inclusive Education, Light for the World; Board Member, Global Campaign for Education; and Member, GEM Report Advisory Board; **Rafat Sabbah**, President, Global Campaign for Education; and **Jennifer Rigg**, Executive Director, GCE-US. All speakers talked about the importance of inclusive education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) to watch the recording. To search all materials that were shared during the webinar, click [here](#).

Virtual Events

- The Prevention Collaborative [webinar](#) **“Prevention of violence against adolescent girls - sharing experiences from practitioners and researchers.”** February 23, 2022, at 9:30 am ET.
- The D.C. Consortium on WPS [virtual event](#) **“The Need to Diversify the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda.”** Feb 23, 2022 at 6 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues [webinar](#) **“Youth Matters: Engaging Young People in Research, Policy, and Practice.”** Feb 24, 2022 at 12 pm ET.
- The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security [virtual event](#) with guest speakers including **Saji Prelis**, Director, Children & Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground; Co-Chair, Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security **“Untapped Power: Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion.”** Feb 25, 2022 at 10 am ET.
- Save the Children [virtual event](#) **“Save The Children Inclusive Education Resources and Toolkit - Global Launch Event.”** Mar 1, 2022 at 9 am ET.
- PLAN International [virtual event](#) **“Will USAID localization advance gender equality and youth participation?”** Mar 9, 2022 at 10 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- Reuters [article](#) **“World’s children bearing brunt of COVID pandemic, Vatican studies say.”**
- We Protect Global Alliance [report](#) **“Child sexual exploitation and abuse online: Survivors’ Perspectives.”**
- Human Rights Watch [Tik Tok](#) **“Women and girls should be able to choose what they want to wear! A HijabBan in Karnataka India violates the right to express religious beliefs.”**
- Save the Children [article](#) **“Afghanistan: A Fifth of Starving Families Sending Children to Work as Incomes Plummet in Past Six Months.”**
- The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative [podcast](#) **“How can we free education from harmful gender stereotypes?”**
- The Guardian [Op-Ed](#) by Waris Dirie **“Girls should be educated, not mutilated. The cutting of women must end, now.”**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) [publication](#) **“Working for a brighter, healthier future: How WHO improves health and promotes well-being for the world’s adolescents.”**

Funding Opportunities

Blue Future is recruiting for two funding opportunities for young people leading up to the 2022 midterm elections. First is a **paid Organize for Democracy Leadership Program**. This program will allow “young people, no matter their race, gender, zip code or income will have the opportunity to learn about the principles of field organizing while making a difference on some of the most competitive campaigns across the country.” To learn more and apply, click [here](#). Second is the **Youth Power Fund 2022**. This fund is an “open call funding opportunity for progressive youth organizers and youth-led organizations across the country who are looking to get involved in the elections this year. We’re making grants of up to \$5,000 to invest in local political organizing, especially in BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disability communities.” Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.



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