The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY

Vol. 145: READ Reauthorization Act, U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation, and Youth Power 2 event.

August 14, 2023

Call to Action

The White House Gender Policy Council is [inviting](#) nominations for girls aged 14 to 18 to celebrate the upcoming International Day of the Girl on October 11, 2023. They are seeking nominations of girls who are driving positive change and addressing crucial community challenges. To submit your nominations, fill out the [form](#) before 11:59 pm ET on Friday, August 25, 2023.

Quick Summary

Advocates are ramping up efforts to pass the bipartisan READ Reauthorization Act 2023 ([H.R.681](#)/[S.41](#)), t which was first adopted in 2017 and requires urgent reauthorization to prevent it from expiring September 30, 2023. The READ Act aims to strengthen education systems globally and improve learning outcomes, particularly for

young girls and marginalized populations. The READ Act has led USAID's efforts in over 50 countries to promote inclusive basic education. This support has enabled millions of children to acquire the skills necessary to contribute positively to their communities and societies. Currently, many children in crisis settings lack access to education and nurturing care. The READ Act addresses this urgent global emergency, with an estimated 222 million school-aged children affected by crises in 2022. Additionally, it acknowledges the importance of early childhood education and care, particularly for pre-primary children. Denying access to education and care during this crucial developmental phase can have severe and lasting consequences. Additionally, the Act holds the administration accountable through annual reports to Congress and ensures the ongoing update of the basic education strategy. The READ Act is set to expire in September, making its reauthorization imperative. Members of Congress are urged to extend the legislation to continue prioritizing international education and its transformative impact. To learn more about the READ Reauthorization Act, click here.

The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is a US government entity that has a Board of Directors composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the U.S. Trade Representative, the Administrator of USAID, the CEO of MCC and four private sector members appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate. Currently, the MCC board has only one out of four of its required private sector directors, Ander Crenshaw, whose term ends in September. Without the addition of new private sector directors, the MCC board will lose its decision-making quorum, impacting its ability to approve new project agreements and address any challenges with existing projects. Although the White House put forward the name of one board nominee, Steven Swig, his approval by Congress is still pending. Traditionally, private sector board members are approved in pairs, nominated by both Republican and Democratic leaders. The MCC hopes that Congress will expedite the nomination and approval process to avoid a lack of quorum at the December board meeting.

Recently, the MCC has **underscored** the significance of its mission, especially its role in funding education initiatives, which are important for poverty reduction and economic growth. Research consistently demonstrates that investing in education is pivotal for sustainable development. MCC recognizes that poverty reduction and economic growth can be realized when nations prioritize the education of their citizens. The impact of education extends to gender equality, with particular benefits for girls and women. Empowering girls through education correlates with accelerated economic growth, reduced population growth rates, elevated wages, increased agricultural productivity, and enhanced well-being within households. The MCC aligns their projects with national goals and strategies, which ensures that investments in education are in sync with a

country's unique needs. As the MCC faces the challenge of a diminished private sector board membership, it is essential to recognize the urgency of its work. To read more about this, click here.

UNESCO recently released its report, "2023 Global Education and Monitoring (GEM) Report: Technology in education: A tool on whose terms?" which highlights the relationship between technology and education worldwide. The report examines the integration of technology in education through the lenses of relevance, equity, scalability, and sustainability. The report emphasizes the importance of placing learners' interests at the heart of educational endeavors. It contends that digital technologies should complement and enhance human interaction within education, rather than attempting to replace it. Distance learning had a potential reach of over 1 billion students; but it also failed to reach at least half a billion, or 31% of students worldwide – and 72% of the poorest. It also discusses how to leverage technology to bridge educational gaps for disadvantaged learners while making learning more accessible, engaging, and cost-effective across a broader spectrum. Globally, only 40% of primary, 50% of lower secondary and 65% of upper secondary schools are connected to the internet; 85% of countries have policies to improve school or learner connectivity. This entails enhancing the quality of teaching and cultivating essential digital skills that align with real-life requirements. Moreover, the report acknowledges technology's role in efficiently managing education systems, especially concerning assessment data and educational management information. To read the 2023 GEM Report, click here.

Spotlight

USAID's YouthPower 2: Learning and Evaluation (YP2LE) Gender CoP held a webinar titled "Unleashing Potential with the Gender and Youth Analysis Toolkit," where participants delved into the transformative power of the toolkit and its implications for creating an inclusive environment for young women and marginalized groups.

Participants gained insights into the core components of the Gender and Youth Analysis Toolkit. The event spotlighted the challenges faced by young women and marginalized groups globally, emphasizing disparities in education, access to resources, and societal norms. Michelle Stern, a distinguished Gender and Social Inclusion consultant, shared her expertise in gender equality, women's empowerment, and positive youth development. Her insights provided a valuable perspective on bridging gaps and driving positive change. The toolkit's role in conducting youth-focused gender analyses was a focal point.

Attendees also learned how to employ these analyses to design and monitor interventions that address the unique needs and challenges young women and marginalized groups face. The event underscored the toolkit's potential to empower communities and contribute to economic and social development. By adequately capturing environmental factors and constraints, attendees discovered pathways to better support women, youth, marginalized groups, and other social segments.

The event marked a significant step toward fostering an enabling environment for young women and marginalized groups, setting the stage for a more equitable and prosperous future. To learn more about the Youth and Gender Analysis Toolkit, click here.

Events
- Education Cannot Wait, PLAN International, and Youth For Education in Emergencies webinar "**Youth Connect for Education in Emergencies**." August 31, 2023, at 1 pm ET.
- Foreign Policy virtual dialogue "**Safeguarding Childhood**." September 7, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- Foreign Policy virtual dialogue "**Defending Democracy: How young changemakers are demanding progress.**" September 12, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- Global Fund for Community Foundations event "**Shift the Power: A Global Summit.**" December 5-7, 2023 in Bogota, Colombia.

Reports, Articles & Resources
- Center for Global Development working paper "**How Much Would Reducing Lead Exposure Improve Children's Learning in the Developing World?**"
- UNICEF article "**How to keep your child safe online: 5 ways to help keep your child's online experiences positive and safe.**"
- PLAN International article "**Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities.**"
- UNICEF publication "**International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC).**"
- YouthPower2 article "**Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 3: Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policy and Decision-making Processes.**"
- IREX article "**Three principles for teacher-powered education quality improvement.**"

TIDES