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# *The Weekly Pulse*

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NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



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Vol. 149: PEPFAR, UNICEF Child Alert, & Foreign Policy Event

September 11, 2023

## Quick Summary

In a [recent](#) policy brief titled "**The Importance of the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Set Aside within PEPFAR,**" **First Focus on Children** underscores the significant impact of PEPFAR for child well-being. In addition to its impact combating HIV globally, PEPFAR is well recognized for its role to combat HIV globally and its contributions to strengthening global health systems, imparting crucial training to healthcare professionals, and bolstering pandemic preparedness across more than 50 countries. PEPFAR is also a major driver for programs to support some of the most vulnerable children in the world, those who have been orphaned due to the impact of HIV and other diseases. In the brief, First Focus highlights the importance of the 10% set aside within PEPFAR designated for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). This allocation, established by bipartisan lawmakers in 2003, plays a crucial role in safeguarding and providing care for children who have been severely affected by the HIV pandemic. While AIDS is no longer the dire threat it once was, the number of

orphans worldwide has increased, reaching 14.9 million in 2021. PEPFAR's innovative OVC programs, designed to address the unique challenges faced by children impacted by HIV, now serve as a model for addressing the needs of children who have tragically lost caregivers to the COVID-19 pandemic. This dedicated 10% set aside ensures that the health, nutrition, and overall well-being of millions of children affected by HIV are protected and supported.

Currently, PEPFAR is extending assistance to 7.1 million orphans and vulnerable children, emphasizing the importance of keeping families together and facilitating access to essential treatment services. However, despite these commendable efforts, children still lag behind in the global HIV response. Alarming, just over half of all HIV-positive children are receiving treatment, a figure significantly lower than the roughly 70% of adults in a similar situation. The 10% allocation for OVC within PEPFAR empowers community health workers and case managers to navigate the complex challenges that hinder vulnerable families from accessing and adhering to crucial treatment regimens.

First Focus on Children strongly urges lawmakers to enact a "clean" reauthorization of PEPFAR, ensuring the retention of the program's 10% set aside for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. They argue that this steadfast commitment is vital to continue providing support and protection for these vulnerable populations of children. Click [here](#) to read the full policy brief.

**UNICEF [published](#) a Child Alert, highlighting child migration in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Millions of children and families are leaving their homes due to harsh conditions in their countries. The alert explains that factors such as poverty, deteriorating essential services, armed violence threats, and extreme weather events are driving them to undertake these perilous journeys. Many migrants lack official documentation, the financial means for regular migration, or a sponsor in their desired destination. Additionally, the Child Alert highlights that refugee and migrant children encounter obstacles when trying to access essential services in transit and host countries. UNICEF's Child Alert examined the evolving dynamics of child migration in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on three key migration flows: northern Central America and Mexico, Haiti, and Venezuela. To read the Child Alert, click [here](#).

## Spotlight

Foreign Policy magazine in collaboration with World Vision International and the Oak Foundation held an [event](#) titled "Safeguarding Childhood", which launched the [report](#) "Safeguarding Childhood: An Assessment of National Budgeting Transparency to

Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse.” This event featured insights from Foreign Policy Analytics (FPA) research and discussions with experts, practitioners, and advocates who had worked towards translating public commitments into actionable solutions. FPA is Foreign Policy’s independent research and advisory division. Among the notable [speakers](#) were Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children; Janet Aguti, Founder of Totya Platform; Dr. Mayesha Alam, Vice President of Research, FP Analytics; Allison Carlson, Executive Vice President, FP Analytics & Events, Foreign Policy; Dr. Leanne Beagley, CEO, The National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse; Dr. Daniela Ligiero, Executive Director and CEO, Together for Girls; Andrew Morley, President & CEO, World Vision International; and Ciput Eka Purwianti, Director, Special Protection for Children from Violence, Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia. This event provided important insights into the fight against child sexual abuse and how national budgets played a crucial role in achieving a safer world for children.



In this initiative, FP Analytics, supported by World Vision International and the Oak Foundation, conducted research to track national budgets dedicated to combating child sexual abuse. This research aimed to address the critical gap in understanding how governments allocated resources to tackle this issue in low-, middle-, and high-income countries, ultimately striving to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.2, which sought to end child abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and sexual violence.

In the pursuit of safeguarding children's futures and recognizing the severe impacts of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), the report emphasized that it is essential to shift from vague budget commitments to transparent and consistent funding. Clear and detailed action plans combined with transparent national-level budget information enable observers to comprehend successful programs, identify response and prevention gaps, and extract replicable best practices. Daniela Ligiero, CEO of Together for Girls, emphasized the potential savings for policymakers and decision-makers by effectively preventing or early intervening against CSA, spanning areas like physical and mental health, labor, and the judicial sector.

Recommendations from the research for combating CSA include:

1. **Enhancing budget transparency:** Governments should provide detailed and transparent budgets that include annual allocations and expenditures related to

CSA. This should involve identifying CSA allocations, separating them from other priorities when feasible, and clarifying the purpose of specific budget lines. This transparency aids monitoring, evaluation, and resource adjustment.

2. **Collaborative data collection:** National governments, civil society organizations, and private companies should collaborate to collect and make CSA-related data publicly accessible. This data should address underreporting and undercounting and identify at-risk groups.
3. **Prioritizing prevention:** All countries should prioritize resources for CSA prevention. Budget clarity can help distinguish prevention from response efforts, ensuring continuous prioritization and funding. Establishing a minimum budget commitment, like directing 10 percent of national CSA-related budgeting toward prevention, can be a starting point.
4. **Linking policy and budgets:** Policy and strategy documents related to CSA, such as national action plans, should be paired with clear budgetary commitments, signaling sustained responses and closing future gaps.
5. **Addressing federalized systems:** Countries with federal systems must aggregate and analyze CSA responses nationwide to identify and rectify subnational disparities.
6. **Role of researchers:** Researchers should play a vital role in independently monitoring and evaluating resources for CSA prevention and response. They can build upon the Safeguarding Childhood report's findings by conducting comprehensive national and subnational analyses and comparative research.

To read the report and rewatch the event, click [here](#).

## Events

- Safe Online [webinar](#) “**2023 Safe Online Open Call for Proposals - FAQ webinar.**” September 12, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaboration on Global Children’s Issues [webinar](#) “**Slavery, Child-family Separation, and the Catholic Church in the United States.**” September 12, 2023, at 12 pm ET.
- USAID [virtual event](#) “USAID’s Vision to Advance Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.” September 14, 2023, at 9:30 am ET.
- Government of Honduras, Organized by PMNCH, FIA Foundation, Plan International, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF [virtual event](#) “**Accelerating SDG Commitments: 1.8 Billion Adolescents and Youth Transforming our World: High-level luncheon dialogue.**” September 19, 2023, at 1:15 pm ET.
- The Lancet [webinar](#) “**Spotlight on Child and Adolescent Health: closing the digital divide.**” November 15, 2023, at 11 am ET.

## Reports, Articles & Resources

- Human Rights Watch [article](#) **“Breaking Educational Barriers for Children with Albinism.”**
- Population Matters [article](#) **“No Consent: No Choice but to Marry their Kidnappers.”**
- National Democratic Institute (NDI) event [readout](#) **“Convening Young Leaders at the Second Summit for Democracy.”**
- InterAction [article](#) **“55+ NGOs Call on Congress to Provide Supplemental International Assistance.”**
- Human Rights Watch [article](#) **“No US State Meets Child Rights Standards: Updated Scorecard Shows Improvement, but Many States Still Fail Children.”**



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