
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 150: #TakeltDown, Ready, Set, READ!, & House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing

September 18, 2023

Quick Summary

ChildFund [launched](#) their #TakeltDown campaign to address the alarming rise in Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) circulating on online platforms. CSAM refers to any content depicting sexually explicit activities involving children, a heinous crime with profound and lifelong consequences for its survivors. Last year, over 27 million unique CSAM files were reported, which represents a 23% increase over the prior year. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that 59% of the victims are prepubescent and 8% are infants or toddlers.

In the United States, tech companies have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse imagery once it comes to their attention. However, they are not mandated to actively search for such content. Furthermore, there are no consequences for platforms

that fail to promptly remove this material, and there is a lack of established standards concerning transparency and accountability in addressing this issue.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSclz6bphZw>

Recently, The #TakeItDown campaign is quickly gaining prominence and building public interest on this issue. MSNBC's [Morning Joe](#) featured the campaign. Both w[Danielle Lilly](#), Director of Policy at ChildFund, and Senator Dick Durbin ([D-IL](#)) participated in the program to underscore the importance of tackling CSAM head-on and to engage in a meaningful conversation about the campaign's objectives. ChildFund is reaching out to mobilize individuals, organizations, and policymakers to join the effort in combating CSAM and ensuring a safer online space for all children. To learn more about the #TakeItDown campaign, click [here](#).



<https://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/watch/-takeitdown-raises-awareness-around-online-child-exploitation-192767557620>

Foreign Policy [Magazine](#) and the National Democratic Institute ([NDI](#)) held a [virtual event](#) titled "**Defending Democracy**". This event explored how young changemakers are reshaping the democratic landscape. [Speakers](#) included U.S. Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-CA); Lu Argueta, Secretary General, Latin American Youth Network for Democracy; Marina Csikós, Project Officer, Phiren Amencia International Network; Abby Finkenauer, Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues, U.S. State Department; Maggie Lake, Veteran Journalist and Founder, Maggie Lake Media; and Eliud Luutsa, Co-Founder, Innobid & YE! Advisor, International Trade Centre in Kenya. They spoke about how youth populations worldwide has become increasingly disengaged from traditional politics, leading to a decline in formal political participation and trust in established institutions. This generation has faced complex challenges like economic inequality, environmental degradation, and geopolitical conflicts. They brought together policymakers and rising youth activists who discussed how this younger generation views democracy, how they are redefining it to address their unique challenges, and ways to support them in tackling broad-based democratic issues. It was an opportunity to engage in a crucial conversation about the future of democracy with these esteemed speakers. To learn about this event, click [here](#).

UN Women [published](#) their new report “Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022.” The report highlights concerning trends in achieving gender equality by 2030. Despite the SDG Goal 5 aim to advance gender equality, the latest data indicates that the world is falling behind in this regard. Various factors, such as the impact of COVID-19 and challenges to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, are further hindering progress. High levels of violence against women persist, exacerbated by global crises like health, climate, and humanitarian emergencies, particularly affecting the most vulnerable women and girls. Additionally, women continue to feel less safe than before the pandemic, and their

representation in positions of power remains below parity. The lack of available data makes it difficult to track progress effectively, rendering women and girls largely invisible in these efforts. Furthermore, the report stresses the central role of women and girls in leading the way towards achieving these important development goals. The report is a call to action, emphasizing that the time to act is now to ensure a more equitable and inclusive future for all. To read the report, click [here](#).

The House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a [hearing](#) titled “Children are not for Sale – Global Efforts to Address Child Trafficking” The panel of witnesses for the hearing included [Tim Ballard](#), Senior Adviser, The SPEAR Fund; [Jeanne Celestine Lakin](#), Survivor-Expert; and [Jennifer Podkul](#), Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). During the hearing, attendees gained valuable insights into global efforts to combat child trafficking and the critical work being done to protect vulnerable children around the world. The panelists referenced the importance of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and other protective measures, such as ensuring legal counsel and social services for unaccompanied children, safe return and reintegration of unaccompanied children, strengthening border screenings for trafficking, and expanding the Central American Minors (CAM) Program. It was an informative session highlighting the prevalence of child trafficking and describing effective ways for addressing this pressing issue. The witnesses called for government oversight of the private sector to ensure appropriate work relating to children and emphasized the need to invest in protective measures for children in their countries of origin to address the root causes of child migration. Click [here](#) to learn more and to rewatch the hearing.

Spotlight

GCE-US, UNICEF USA, Humanity & Inclusion, Together for Girls, World Vision, Kenya Education Fund, Building Tomorrow, NABU, World Learning, International Rescue Committee, JRS USA, Basic Education Coalition, RESULTS, ChildFund, and the Youth Alliance Working Group held a hill event titled "Ready, Set, READ!" This event celebrated International Literacy Day and highlighted the transformative power of literacy and education. It also underscored the importance of U.S. foreign assistance in education, especially for marginalized children and youth who face educational barriers, including girls, children with disabilities, and those affected by crises and conflict.

Distinguished speakers from Congress, USAID, partner organizations, and youth advocates gathered to promote the reauthorization of the READ Act, which otherwise is set to expire in September 2023. The event featured remarks from congressional and government leaders, as well as prominent figures in the field of education, such as

Former Congressman Ed Royce ([R-CA](#)); Senator Dick Durbin ([D-IL](#)); Rep. Lois Frankel ([D-FL](#)); [LeAnna Marr](#), Deputy Assistant Administrator and Acting Senior Coordinator of United States International Basic Education Assistance, USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation's Center for Education; [Carol Jenkins](#), President and CEO, World Learning; [Dr. Joanne Carter](#), Executive Director, RESULTS; [Ngozi Lawal](#), Principal, Early Actions; [Dr. Alison Byrant](#), Chief Research, Data, and Impact Officer at Sesame Workshop; [Maha Shoaib](#), Fulbright Scholar from Pakistan; and [Francine Niyomuhiza](#), Youth Leader, Global Partnership for Education.

The READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 ([H.R.681/S.41](#)), introduced by Representatives Chris Smith ([R-NJ](#)) and Grace Meng ([D-NY](#)), along with Senators Dick Durbin and Marco Rubio ([R-FL](#)), is an extension of the 2017 READ Act. This legislation aims to renew the READ Act for an additional five years, maintaining the United States' commitment to providing quality education to children globally. The reauthorization includes provisions for updating the U.S. government's approach to enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy in basic education, emphasizing the importance of rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and annual reporting to Congress and the public. To learn more about this event and the READ Reauthorization Act, click [here](#).

Events

- USAID Leading Through Learning Global Platform and Accelerated Education Working Group [virtual event](#) **"Learn and Share: Effective Practices for Accelerated Education Programs."** September 19, 2023 at 8 am ET.
- ChildFund, PLAN International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision [hybrid event](#) **"Children as Agents of Change - A Call to Action to Enable Inclusive Child Participation to Accelerate Implementation of the SDGs."** September 19, 2023, at 8:30 am ET.
- The New Humanitarian, Start Network, The White Helmets, and NEAR Network [event](#) **"Rethinking Aid Financing: How Locally Led Organizations are Funding Their Futures."** September 19, 2023, at 10:30 am ET.
- OECD [webinar](#) **"An evidence-informed education: Empowering schools and policy institutions through a culture of research engagement."** September 20, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- GRN and Impact Network [webinar](#) **"Unlocking Literacy for Early Learners in their Local Language."** September 27, 2023, at 9 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- Alliance Magazine [article](#) **"How funders can reach and support more youth-led groups."**

- The Guardian [article](#) “Younger people more likely to doubt merits of democracy – global poll.”
- MDPI academic [article](#) “The Right to Leave: Dissolution of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions.”
- Human Trafficking: A Global Health Emergency [academic article](#) “Violence Against Women and Girls as a Systemic Global Problem.”
- Together for Girls [press release](#) “The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini launches its second Violence Against Children and Youth Survey Report.”
- Internet Watch Foundation [news article](#) “EU a ‘toxic warehouse’ of child sexual abuse, as lawmakers urged to ‘get a grip’ on spiralling problem.”



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