
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 162: International Day of Persons with Disabilities, COP28, & Human Rights Watch Report

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Call to Action

Futures Without Violence is [advocating](#) for increased congressional investments in preventing gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian settings. Highlighting the staggering number of people in crises due to conflicts and disasters worldwide, the message emphasizes the disproportionate impact on women and girls, with 1 in 3 experiencing violence in their lifetime, a number that rises to 70% during humanitarian emergencies. The call to action encourages readers to urge Congress to support the Safe From the Start Act, which focuses on programs that enhance the safety of women and girls during crises. This includes access to decision-making tables, proper lighting, safe bathrooms, equal participation in resource distribution, and access to healthcare. To sign onto this cause, click [here](#).

Quick Summary

USAID Administrator Samantha Power [commemorated](#) the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with a statement that pays tribute to Judith "Judy" Heumann, a key figure in the Disability Rights Movement, emphasizing her advocacy for viewing disability as part of the diverse human experience. She outlined USAID's commitment to inclusive global development, citing three notable initiatives over the past year. First, the agency funds research, such as the SHARE partnership which focuses on deaf experts in Malawi, Rwanda, and the Philippines to enhance their language and literacy skills. Second, USAID collaborates with diverse stakeholders to address priority issues, exemplified by a joint convening with UNICEF on improving nutrition for children with disabilities. Lastly, USAID supports programs like ENGAGE, aimed at empowering young people with disabilities to engage in democratic processes and leadership roles, expanding its impact to multiple countries. In the coming months, USAID plans to release an updated disability policy, which recognizes disability-inclusive development as a top priority across the organization. To learn more and read the full statement, click [here](#).

Human Rights Watch [released](#) its report titled “Schools are Failing Boys Too: The Taliban’s Impact on Boys’ Education in Afghanistan.” The report illustrates the impact of the Taliban's educational policies on boys in Afghanistan. Since taking control in August 2021, the Taliban has implemented regressive changes including dismissing female teachers, increasing corporal punishment, and altering the curriculum. Despite global attention on the ban on secondary and higher education for girls and women, the harm to the education system for boys has been overlooked. The report documents a decline in educational quality, limited subject offerings, and increased fears among boys about attending school. Interviews with boys and parents reveal the dismissal of qualified female teachers, leading to classrooms with unqualified or no teachers. Corporal punishment, including public beatings, has become more prevalent, and subjects such as arts, sports, English, and civic education have been eliminated. These changes have resulted in heightened anxiety, depression, and mental health issues among boys, who face increased pressure to work due to the economic and humanitarian crises. While the Taliban hasn't banned boys' education beyond sixth grade, the discriminatory policies undermine access to education for all children, violating international law. The systematic discrimination against women and girls also has broader negative effects on boys by reinforcing harmful gender norms. To read the full report, click [here](#).

Spotlight

The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC ([COP28](#)) concluded in Expo City, Dubai. During the conference, young climate advocates emphasized their demand for government policymakers to prioritize the needs of the nearly 2 billion children globally. As the conference focuses on curbing global warming and addressing the future of fossil fuels, the youth took center stage, presenting a global statement with over 750,000 inputs from 150 countries. The youth advocates emphasized the urgency of involving youth in climate discussions, as they are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. Despite a high level of youth representation at COP28, there is a call for more significant inclusion in day-to-day discussions and decision-making processes. They underscore the importance of financing Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) to empower all members of society in climate action.

The impact of climate change on education was also discussed, with UNICEF revealing that weather-related disasters have displaced 43.1 million children over a six-year period. [Yasmine Sherif](#), Executive Director of Education Cannot Wait, talked about the interconnectedness of the climate crisis and education and the need to then push for increased investment in education to address climate change effectively. She concludes with the importance of recognizing the link between education, youth, and climate action in future climate conferences, highlighting the inclusion of school meals in the Food Systems Declaration at COP28.

During the summit, there was also an expert intergenerational [dialogue](#) on Youth, Children, Education, and Skills Day focused on "From Most Vulnerable to Most Valuable: Placing Child Rights at the Heart of Climate Action." The event, hosted by the UAE COP28 Presidency and UNICEF, addresses the disproportionate impact of climate change on children and presents guidance from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The UN Committee's General [Comment No. 26](#) explicitly affirms children's rights to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, holding states accountable for foreseeable violations of their rights due to current actions or inactions. UNICEF Uganda [sponsored](#) Youth Go Green, a youth-led organization engaged in climate change activities, to participate in this event. The CEO of Youth Go Green, [Edwin Muhumuza](#), emphasized the importance of shaping the discourse around child rights in climate action and highlighted the urgency of addressing the climate crisis, acknowledging that children and young people, despite facing the worst effects, are actively raising their voices and fighting back. UNICEF Representative to Uganda, [Dr. M. Munir A. Safiaddin](#), emphasized the crucial role of young people in spearheading climate action, urging collective attention to empower them in crafting sustainable solutions.

To learn more about this event and COP28, click [here](#).

Events

- WHO, World Bank, & BMJ [webinar](#) **“Delivering quality care to everyone, everywhere, at all times.”** December 11, 2023, at 8 am ET.
- USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) [webinar](#) **“Exploring New Evidence for Safe Learning Environments Gap Maps.”** December 12, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues [webinar](#) **“Is Our Conscience Revolted? A Conversation on Children in War, Grounded in Rights and Faith.”** December 14, 2023, at 12 pm ET.
- USAID Leading Through Learning Global Platform [webinar](#) **“Launch of the LAC Learning Agenda for Education.”** December 14, 2023, at 1 pm ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- UNESCO & the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization [report](#) **“Global education monitoring report 2023, Southeast Asia: technology in education: a tool on whose terms?”**
- PMNCH [article](#) **“Climate change is an urgent threat to pregnant women and children.”**
- PMNCH [publication](#) **“Prioritizing women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health in the climate crisis.”**
- Together for Girls, Breeze of Hope, & the Lancet [publication](#) **“Prevention, healing, and justice: a survivor-centered framework for ending violence against women and children.”**
- Reuters [article](#) **“Soaring pollution in Pakistan’s Lahore fills wards with sick children.”**



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