
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 164: U.S. APCCA Government Strategy, Keeping Girls in School Act, & UN Children's Rights Event.

January 8, 2024

Quick Summary

The public comment period for the [draft](#) U.S. Government Strategy for Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) (2024-2028) has been announced. Partners, stakeholders, and thought leaders worldwide are invited to review and offer feedback on the updated APCCA Strategy. The [existing](#) APCCA Strategy (2019–2023) focuses on U.S. government investments in early childhood development, aiding vulnerable children at risk of living outside family care, and protecting children from various forms of harm. The revised strategy for the next five-year period is currently in progress, and the APCCA Secretariat encourages individuals to contribute their perspectives and expertise through reviewing and commenting on the updated Strategy by the specified deadline. Feedback can be submitted using the provided dialogue boxes, and the draft strategy and feedback form are accessible via a provided link. Questions can be directed to Nicole Calvert at

ncalvert@usaid.gov. The deadline to provide feedback is **5:00 p.m. ET, January 19, 2024**. Click [here](#) to read the draft strategy and provide feedback.

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), a senior member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has reintroduced the bipartisan Keeping Girls in School Act (S.3535) alongside U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in an effort to address the barriers hindering young girls in developing countries from accessing a complete education. The legislation aims to combat the significant challenges faced by girls, particularly those in crisis and conflict settings, where they are nearly 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than those in stable countries. The Keeping Girls in School Act, backed by data from the Malala Fund that shows 120 million girls globally are not in school, seeks to mobilize U.S. government resources and partnerships to create solutions that address the obstacles faced by adolescent girls. The bill outlines 15 barriers to girls' secondary education including forced marriages and unsafe environments, authorizes USAID to engage in various grant programs, and mandates the review and update of the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls every five years. In a [statement](#), Senator Shaheen emphasized the fundamental importance of keeping girls in school for their growth and empowerment and for contributing to gender equality and economic development. Senator Murkowski underscored the critical role education plays in the development and health of nations. To read more about the Keeping Girls in School Act, click [here](#).

The 2023 UN Trust Fund Call for Proposals (Cycle 27) is open, as announced by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The call invites civil society organizations with expertise in ending violence against women and girls to submit project concepts, prioritizing applications from women's rights, women-led, constituent-led, and small organizations. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2024, with grant amounts ranging from \$150,000 to \$1,000,000 over four years. There are two funding windows: one addressing violence against marginalized women and girls, and the other focusing on those affected by crises. A dedicated small grants funding modality is available for smaller, local organizations, and partnerships with grassroots women's and girls' rights organizations are encouraged. Multi-country proposals and live information and grant writing sessions in English, French, and Spanish are also part of the initiative. Click [here](#) to learn more and to apply by February 1, 2024.

Spotlight

In December, the UN held a Child Rights High-Level parallel event titled "Pledging with and for children" on the sidelines of the 2nd Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in

Geneva, Switzerland. Four child refugees, Sedra, Sofia, Naya, and Maksim, highlighted the reality for children living in conflict. Facilitated by Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, the children shared their experiences, needs, and hopes. The event, attended by representatives from Colombia, Greece, Norway, Switzerland, Thailand, and Turkey, [launched](#) "Our Call for Answers: the Children Manifesto to the GRF 2023," which consolidates the voices of 434 children refugees globally.

The primary objective of these consultations was to acquaint children with the GRF and gather their perspectives on crucial matters, ensuring that GRF organizers, governments, and participants could heed their voices. The children emphasized the fundamental need for all children, regardless of their origin or location, to feel safe and protected. Their explicit request was for children to be treated with care, respect, and dignity in all circumstances. Expressing feelings of unsafety and worry, the children disclosed fears for their lives and recounted experiences of violence—ranging from physical and xenophobic to gender-based—in their communities, schools, camps, and homes. They expressed concerns about the potential separation from their families and loved ones and highlighted the challenges in finding safe spaces where they could feel comfortable, protected, and have someone to talk to.

After their impactful testimonies,, Mr. Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, acknowledged the insufficient efforts of states in addressing these challenges, urging them to enhance accountability to children. Dr. Maalla M'jid commended policymakers for commitments on children's rights in migratory situations but emphasized the need to prioritize child refugees' voices in all GRF decisions due to their vulnerability and disproportionate impact.

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

Event

- USAID [virtual event](#) **"2024 Protecting Children and Youth from Digital Harm Virtual Symposium."** February 6, 2024.
- International Society for Child Indicators [event](#) **"9th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators: Global Childhoods - Critical Perspectives Promoting Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Understandings."** February 14, 2024.
- World Without Orphans [event](#) **"Global Forum for a World Without Orphans."** February 29, 2024.

- Center for Universal Education at Brookings event **“Global Symposium on Family, School, and Community Engagement: Building Stronger Partnerships.”** June 4, 2024, at 9 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- Human Rights Watch [article](#) **“10 Good News Stories for Kids in 2023: Despite a Difficult Year, Children’s Rights Made Progress.”**
- Borgen Magazine & Global Campaign for Education - US [article](#) **“Girl Power: Q&A with Global Campaign for Education – US.”**
- Global Child & Brave Movement [report](#) **“Justice Unleashed: Ending Limitations, Protecting Children.”**
- Eurochild [report](#) **“Children’s Rights: Political Will or Won’t? Eurochild 2023 Report on Children in Need Across Europe.”**
- U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services [policy statement](#) **“Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (Nov. 28, 2023).”**
- UNICEF [report](#) **“Designing a Youth-centred Journey to the Future: A youth foresight playbook.”**
- UN Youth & UNFPA [guidelines](#) **“Checklist to ensure the meaningful engagement of young persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.”**
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) [article](#) **“Hotline reports ‘shocking’ rise in the sextortion of boys.”**



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