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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. 59: United States Special Advisor on International Disability Rights, COVID & Afghanistan Calls to Action, & First Focus Children's Budget Book 2021.

Nov 8, 2021

Quick Summary

**President Biden [appointed Sara Minkara](#) as United States Special Advisor on International Disability Rights.** Minkara is an “an advocate, expert, and facilitator in the fields of disability, inclusion, authentic leadership, and social entrepreneurship.” She is also the “founder and a Board Member of Empowerment Through Integration (ETI), a nonprofit organization she established while still an undergraduate student. ETI’s mission is to disrupt the narrative surrounding disability through both empowering youth with disabilities individually and accelerating authentic inclusion globally.” As the Special Advisor on International Disabilities at the Department of State, Minkara will advise U.S. foreign policy and protect human rights of persons with disabilities internationally.

**UNICEF, Save the Children, the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) & the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)** published a [call to action](#) about the adverse effects of climate change on children. The signatories call on “the world leaders and delegates at COP26, governments, donors, multilaterals, the private sector, civil society, and other partners and stakeholders to place young children at the heart of the climate change discussions.” They are asking for commitment on four priorities: adoption and implementation of global and national climate-sensitive policies and national adaptation plans, increased investments which promote the nurturing care of young children, greater collection of evidence through research and evaluation, and empowerment of civil society to implement locally-led and child-sensitive actions. If your organization is interested in joining this call to action, click [here](#).

**Over 100 International NGOs sent a [letter to Jake Sullivan](#)**, the National Security Advisor for the White House National Security Council, requesting a CEO or Executive-level meeting concerning a “the Administration’s plans to evacuate and resettle at-risk Afghans who remain in Afghanistan.” These organizations expressed major concern over the estimated thousands of at-risk Afghans that remain in Afghanistan. They offer six recommendations: establish a unified U.S. Government coordinating group for overseas operations, create a humanitarian parole program, provide travel documents, diplomatic notes, letters of support or other relevant materials to allow at-risk Afghans to exit, increase surge resources and personnel to “lily pad” countries, provide virtual and expedited screening and processing, and identify additional pathways to safety for at-risk Afghans who do not qualify for the SIV or the USRAP P-2 program.

Spotlight

**First Focus held its 2021 annual Children’s Budget Summit to launch its comprehensive budget report.** Participants included Cabinet and senior officials, Senators, and Members of Congress. First Focus’s president Bruce Lesley highlighted the urgent need to increase funding and transparency for the U.S. government’s accounts benefitting children at home and abroad. This report states that the overall “share of federal spending on children increased by 3.5 percentage points, or by 55% between FY 2020-2021” but that **the international share of federal spending dedicated to children is less than 0.1%.** They underlined that “**children are shortchanged overall but, even as a share of international spending**” for which kids are estimated to receive just 7-10% of U.S. foreign assistance , which is about 0.08% of the U.S. federal budget.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary [Xavier Becerra](#) was the keynote speaker for this year's summit. He emphasized that the federal budget is a statement of our values. He echoed President Biden's build back better agenda and argued that investing in children is an investment in our future. [Senator Cory Booker](#) stated that the lack of federal funding towards children is a moral crisis and thanked the First Focus team for speaking out and tracking these accounts for years. Other speakers included [Senator Patty Murray](#), [Senator Chris Van Hollen](#), Assistant to the USAID Administrator [Michele Sumilas](#), Congresswoman [Barbara Lee](#), and Congresswoman [Rosa DeLauro](#).

[Bruce Lesley](#) and the First Focus team emphasized that children were 54.4% more likely than adults to live under the poverty line in 2018. This was exacerbated by the fact that children's share of funding dropped by 25% between FY 2016-2020. This resulted in rising uninsured rates, rising child suicide rates, high infant mortality, high child mortality, high child poverty, rising child abuse rates, increasing child homelessness, rising child hunger, and failure to priority children in the federal budget process.

[Kathy Sacco](#) spoke on the impact of these accounts on children internationally. She stated that "children make up 30% of the world's population, but only 0.8% of the international portion of the federal budget goes to children." These programs are generally renewed but are temporary and should be made permanent especially since children are facing greater risks of violence, abuse, and insecurity due to many global factors. Sacco noted that the president has said that the budget reflects the nation's priorities, which raises concerns that the budget gives little priority towards children. She also advocated for better transparency stating that "It is important to track what is being funded and what's not."

During the panel about foreign assistance to children, [Rachel Clement](#) of ChildFund and [Andrew McNamee](#) of InterAction spoke on the need for increased funding towards foreign children, greater cross-governmental coordination, and closer coordination work with the White House and USAID and its operating units to have the budget reflect more support for children and youth. They emphasized that US foreign assistance through robust initiatives like PEPFAR has reduced maternal death by half and helped 2.4 million babies to be born HIV free. . Other bold initiatives such as Feed the Future have improved agriculture opportunities for food production in various countries to reduce the impact of famine, decrease poverty, improve nutrition, and decrease poverty. They noted that eleven countries that previously received US foreign assistance through Feed the Future and are now among the top fifteen US trading partners. The Feed the Future initiative has led to positive impacts for nations, global poverty reduction, and

regional peace and stability. A similar robust approach for children internationally could have a great impact now and for future generations.

To watch the Budget Summit, click [here](#). To access the 2021 Children's Budget Report 2021, click [here](#).

#### Virtual Events

- World Health Organization COP26 virtual [event](#) **“Building Adolescents’ Resilience to Climate Change”** November 10, 2021 at 6:15am EST.
- U.S. Youth, Peace & Security Coalition virtual [event](#) **“Global Youth Exchange: Local Organizing during COVID”** November 12, 2021 at 12pm EST.
- ***[GCE Coalition Meeting to Discuss Public Input on the USAID Climate Strategy](#)***. Nov 17, 2021 *at 9:30am EST*.
- Children’s Rights Innovation Fund virtual [event](#) **“Always leading, Rarely Seen: Anti-Blackness as a ‘Root Cause’ in the Global Child Rights and Protection Movement”** Nov 18, 2021 at 12pm EST.
- The NGO Committee on Children's Rights virtual [event](#) **“IF NOT NOW, WHEN? US Ratification of the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC)”** Nov 18, 2021 at 4pm EST.
- Committee on Teaching About the United Nations (CTAUN) virtual [event](#) **“Global Competence: Teaching and Learning in an Interconnected World.”** December 7, 2021 at 7pm EST.
- UNICEF [Global Forum](#) for Children & Youth. December 7-9, 2021.
- Center for Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation virtual [event](#) **“Equity Chat on Unpacking the Revised IECMH Consultant Competencies”** Dec 8, 2021 at 12pm EST.
- U.S. Department of State [Summit](#) for Democracy. December 9-10, 2021.

#### Reports, Articles & Resources

- UNICEF [report](#) “Ensuring equal access to education in future crises: Findings of the new Remote Learning Readiness Index”
- Child & Family Data [Archive](#)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [toolkit](#) “Return to School Roadmap: Provision of Early Intervention Services:”
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [toolkit](#) “Return to School Roadmap: Child Find, Referral, and Eligibility”
- Center for Parent Information & [Resources](#) on Children with Disabilities
- Saferworld [article](#) “Preventing a case of early marriage: the community takes action”
- The BMJ [article](#) “Adolescents have not been well served by responses to the pandemic and the climate crisis”

- Together for Girls [article](#) “Back to school: COVID-19 and the opportunity to build safer learning environments”
- UNICEF [article](#) “Digital literacy for children: 10 things you need to know”
- Population Council & Adolescent Girls Investment Plan [report](#) “Adolescent Girls and COVID-19: Mapping the evidence on interventions”
- U.S. Government [Strategy](#) on International Basic Education Fiscal Years 2019-2023
- U.S. Government [Strategy](#) on International Basic Education FY 2020 Report to Congress

### Internship Opportunities

**ChildFund is looking for two Policy and Advocacy [interns](#)** who are interested in “policy proposals to reform U.S. government policies and practices for children and youth (ages 0-29) and the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse. The ideal candidate would have an interest in the health, safety, education, and empowerment of young people and some knowledge of child protection, child development, and U.S. government policies and strategies.” Interns will work on specific projects such as ChildFund’s “Whole Child, Whole Future” US Advocacy Initiative and Ending Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children US Advocacy Initiative. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume, and short writing sample to Rachel Clement, [rclement@childfund.org](mailto:rclement@childfund.org), with “Policy and Advocacy Internship” in the email subject line. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and up to two internships are available. **Priority will be given to those who apply before November 12, 2021.**



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