
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 66: Human Trafficking Prevention Month, New UNICEF Executive Director, & Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Civil Society Convening

Jan 10, 2022

Quick Summary

The White House and the Department of State [declared](#) January to be Human Trafficking Prevention Month. To kick off this month, the administration released its [National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking](#). The report describes the impact of child human trafficking, explaining that “After cultivating a relationship with the child and engendering a false sense of trust, the trafficker will begin engaging the child in commercial sex, and use physical, emotional, and psychological abuse to keep the child trapped in these circumstances.” To combat human trafficking, especially child human trafficking, the administration will continue to implement its prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships efforts. Additionally, the administration will start to implement responses to predatory behavior by addressing the needs of underserved individuals, families, and communities with an emphasis on gender and racial equality.

The administration also updated its [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). To learn more about ways you can help fight human trafficking, click [here](#).

Bloomberg published an [article](#) titled “The Lost Girls of COVID.” This piece highlights the progress that is being lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the lives of two girls from Kenya, who fled their homes due to forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), but returned to their abusive households after the closing of shelters. Kenya has been spared the worst of COVID, but the government closed schools, imposed strict curfews, declared international travel bans, and issued county-specific lockdowns to keep infection rates low. Those actions, however, “brought their own perils, including widespread food insecurity, rampant domestic violence, and surging unemployment. The disruptions hit women harder than men, and girls harder than boys.” The pandemic has hit women and girls in low income countries disproportionately, including “pushing girls out of school, decreasing their earning potential, putting them at greater risk of violence, and potentially shortening their lives and those of their children.” To address this impact, it is critical to keep girls in school and to provide basic services, including preventing and responding to sexual and mental health services, to girls in need.

The United Nations [announced](#) that Ambassador Catherine Russell has been appointed as the new executive director of UNICEF. She has a record of leadership roles addressing gender equality and gender-based violence, including sexual violence against children. Russell’s most recent position is within the Biden Administration where Russell has served as Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel. During the Obama Administration, Russell served as Deputy Assistant to the President at the White House and as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues at the U.S. Department of State. In this capacity she “integrated women’s issues across all elements of U.S. foreign policy, represented the United States in more than 45 countries, and worked with foreign governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society.” Additionally, she contributed to constructing the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence, and the U.S. national action plan for Women, Peace and Security. Russell previously served as Senior Advisor on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Associate Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice, and Staff Director of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Russell’s roles in civil society include Board Co-chair of the Women’s Foreign Policy Group, Board member of Women for Women International, Member of the Sesame Street Advisory Board, Member of the KIVA Advisory Council, and Member of the Thomson Reuters Foundation’s Trust Women initiative. To read more about her, click [here](#).

The New York Times [highlighted](#) the impact of COVID-19 on American children in its morning newsletter. It emphasized the toll on children, including education, mental health, gun violence, and behavioral issues. The New York Times reported that “among third through eighth graders, math and reading levels were all lower than normal this fall” and that “the shortfalls were largest for Black and Hispanic students, as well as students in schools with high poverty rates.” On the mental health front, it was reported that “Suicide attempts have risen, slightly among adolescent boys and sharply among adolescent girls. The number of E.R. visits for suspected suicide attempts by 12- to 17-year-old girls rose by 51 percent from early 2019 to early 2021.” Many advocates note that the data on the impact of COVID on children domestically, is a strong indicator of even more severe impact for children internationally. To read more of the newsletter, click [here](#).

Spotlight

USAID held its annual event “Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Civil Society Convening 2021.” This meeting highlighted progress made by the U.S. government throughout 2021 and included presentations from civil society coalitions focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on children, and featured breakout sessions on specific topics with facilitators.

[Rebecca Levy](#), the Acting USG Special Advisor on Children in Adversity, highlighted the progress that was gained in 2021. The APCCA strategy responds to Public Law 109-95 with a whole-of-government commitment and approach to investing in development, care, and safety of the world’s most-vulnerable children and families. USAID is advancing this agenda by partnering with the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, State, and the Peace Corps. Additionally, the passage of the Global Child Thrive Act (Thrive Act) affirms USG commitment to early childhood development (ECD) worldwide. The Act highlights the importance of cross-sector coordination in designing and implementing ECD programs and supports engaging relevant agencies.

The APCCA strategy consists of three major objectives. The first objective is to build strong beginnings. Levy explained that nurturing care is a key component of USAID’s global flagship multi-sectoral nutrition program and that there is a continued emphasis on responsive caregiving practices and positive parenting support in the implementation of the Thrive Act to support this objective.

The second objective is to put family first. This objective launched the international Care Leaders Council with 16 members from 11 countries. It also prioritized strengthening the

social services workforce. USAID is also working with civil society organizations with support to the Better Care Network and the Transforming Children's Care Global Collaborative Platform.

The last objective is to protect children from violence (including gender-based violence, sexual violence, and online exploitation). To address digital violence, USAID created the International Digital Youth Council, which includes 12 young digital changemakers aged 16-24 from 10 countries. This Council informs USAID's work in Protecting Children & Youth from Digital Harm. Additionally, USAID is working on child safeguarding. They created a USG interagency working group to strengthen Child Safeguarding across the USG.

There were multiple presentations from civil society coalitions as well. The [Thrive Coalition](#) presentation described how they are advancing their work through multiple different workstreams, including outreach to Congress and in particular appropriators, dissemination of research and technical resources, and information sessions with the Administration to strengthen political will for early childhood development. The [Early Childhood Development Network \(ECDAN\)](#) presented its work to connect global and regional partners in response to growing demand for a global network and increasing concerns about strained capacities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Changing the Way We Care](#) described the activities of its working groups on Coalition-Building, Transitioning Residential Care, Evidence for Impact, and Global Policy and Advocacy. They also shared their Communities of Practice (COP) including the ReThink Orphanages Global COP, Child's Right to Identity COP, Disability and Care Reform COP, and Public Expenditure COP. The [End Violence Against Children Task Force](#) emphasized that "Globally, 426M children— nearly 1 in 5— live in conflict zones. Women and girls are at the highest risk of conflict-related sexual violence." They also continue to focus on online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC) and mental health of vulnerable children and caregivers. Lastly, the [Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children](#) described their focus on creating a global platform to tackle abuse and violence against children in all spaces.

Representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) presented data on COVID-19 and its impact on children. They highlighted that, as of October 31, 2021, **3.3 million children globally have experienced orphanhood, 3.5 million children have lost a primary caregiver, and 5.2 million children have lost a primary or secondary caregiver. This means that over the past 6 months, 1 child has been affected every 6 seconds.** They also explained that "Our updated estimates, using new available data, show that a minimum of **5.2M children have experienced death of a mother, a father, or a grandparent caregiver.** As big as these numbers

are, they are only global minimum estimates.” In order to tackle this major issue, they recommended the ‘3 P’s’ Logic Model; Prevent Death, Prepare Families, and Protect Children.

To rewatch this convening, click [here](#). To visit the Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity, click [here](#).

Virtual Events

- USAID [virtual event](#) “**The Global LEAD Toolkit Launch**” Jan 12, 2022 at 12pm EST.
- The Pennsylvania State University Child Study Center [virtual event](#) “**Leveraging Systems to Improve and Expand Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.**” January 14, 2022 at 8:30am EST.
- United Nations Human Rights Council [Convention](#) on the Rights of the Child **89th Session**. January 17-February 11, 2022.
- United Nations & Search for Common Ground [virtual conference](#) “**High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes**” January 20-21, 2022.
- The United Nations [event](#) “**International Day of Education.**” Jan 24, 2022
- Alliance for Peacebuilding & United States Institute of Peace (USIP) [event](#) “**PeaceCon@10**” January 26-28, 2022.
- USAID & Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Secretariat [virtual event](#) “**APCCA Storytelling Workshop.**” Jan 27, 2022 at 12:00pm EST.
- The Government of Norway, the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the Atlas Alliance, & IDA's Youth Committee and Youth Mental Health Norway [virtual summit](#) “**Global Disability Youth Summit.**” February 14, 2022.
- Governments of Norway and Ghana and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) [virtual summit](#) “**Global Disability Summit**” February 16-17, 2022. If your organization is interested in becoming an organizing co-sponsor, sign up [here](#).
- United Nations Association of the United States of America [virtual summit](#) “**2022 Global Engagement Summit**” February 24, 2022 at 1pm EST.
- United Nations Human Rights Council [Convention](#) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities **26th Session**. March 7-25, 2022.
- United Nations Human Rights Council [Convention](#) on the Rights of the Child **90th Session**. May 9-27, 2022.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- USAID’s updated **Education Reporting Toolkit**

- Save the Children [report](#) **“Born into the Climate Crisis: Why we must act now to secure children’s rights”**
- WeWorld [Index](#) 2021 **“Women and Children in a Changing World: Focus on Climate Change”**
- The Bernard van Leer Foundation [article](#) **“Early Childhood Matters 2021”**
- [COFEM Guide to Grantmaking](#)- **“Applying a Feminist Lens to Grantmaking for Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls: Funding for Transformative Change”**.
- Adolescent Girls Investment Plan & Population Council [report](#) **“Adolescent Girls and COVID-19: Mapping the evidence on interventions.”**
- Newsweek [Op-Ed](#) by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Ford **“The Wars Across the Globe, Grave Children’s Rights Violence Are Increasing.”**
- The New York Times [article](#) **“How ‘Shadow’ Foster Care is Tearing Families Apart.”**
- National Public Radio (NPR) [article](#) **“The Facts Of, The Myths About, And The Solutions For Child Trafficking.”**
- The Jurist [article](#) **“UNICEF warns grave violations against children’s rights are on the rise”**
- End Violence Against Children [article](#) **“Meet a Digital Groundbreaker” Deafkidz International”**
- The New Humanitarian [Q&A](#) **“How can a global treaty end violence against women succeed?”**
- Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) [article](#) **“Mental Health Wellness in GBV Prevention and Response: From the Individual to the Systems Level”**
- Days for Girls [article](#) **“Building Bridges to End Gender-Based Violence: How Prevention and Menstrual Equity Go Hand in Hand”**
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN) [article](#) **“Understanding and addressing gender-based violence as part of the climate emergency”**



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