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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. 67: Anniversary of the Thrive Act, Global School Closures, the MINDS Act, & USAID Global LEAD Toolkit Launch**

Jan 17, 2022

### Quick Summary

The **Washington Post** released an [article](#) entitled “**School systems around the world debate closures as Omicron spreads**” (January 7). Citing stories from the US, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, and many other countries, [UNESCO](#) estimates that around “**300 million children worldwide live in countries with full or partial school closures.**” UNESCO and UNICEF called on governments to keep schools open, explaining that another round of school closures would be detrimental to children. Additionally, UNESCO and UNICEF released a [report](#) that warned “that the **current generation of students risks losing \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings** because of coronavirus-related school closures. Millions of students are at risk of never resuming their education, the report found. Poorer and otherwise marginalized students, whether in wealthier or poorer countries, have seen the greatest learning setbacks.” Organizations have also warned about the “shadow pandemic” of child marriage, child

labor, and mental health issues due to being home. Global education experts highlight that closing schools should be a last resort. To read the article, click [here](#).

**Alliance for Peacebuilding, CARE USA, Catholic Relief Services, InterAction, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council USA, Save the Children US, War Child USA, and World Vision US** released a [joint statement](#) on January 10 calling on the United States Government to take urgent action in Afghanistan to “address the economic drivers of this crisis.” These organizations propose that the United States and global leaders to “facilitate banking access for Afghans and find new ways to support the country’s critical services like hospitals, schools, and utilities.” This campaign also has [support](#) from the band Pearl Jam, Amanda Seyfried, Thomas Sadoski, Global Citizen, and Josh Klinghoffer. [Stone Gossard](#), Pearl Jam rhythm guitarist, explained that, “We have all witnessed how difficult it has been to wind down U.S. involvement in Afghanistan but we can’t turn a blind eye now to the millions of families who are bearing the consequences. We have an obligation to support the Afghan people and to ensure our actions don’t make it even harder for them to access food and basic necessities.” To read the statement, click [here](#).

**USAID** [announced](#) on January 11 that the United States Government will contribute “**more than \$308 million in humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan.**” The United Nations launched its Afghanistan humanitarian response plan with the largest humanitarian response funding appeal ever. USAID explained that “The new contribution from the United States will provide life-saving aid for the most vulnerable, to include women, girls, minority populations, and people with disabilities.” The United States highlights that the access to women and girls to receive aid is critical, and calls on the Taliban to “allow unhindered humanitarian access, safe conditions for humanitarians, independent provision of assistance to all vulnerable people, and freedom of movement for aid workers of all genders.” To read the announcement, click [here](#).

On the **one year anniversary of the [Global Child Thrive Act](#)**, **USAID Administrator Samantha Power** issued a statement lauding this historic law. Administrator Power stated that “this Act commits the United States to invest in early childhood development and support parents and families as they nurture, love, and protect their children by establishing a coordinated and multifaceted response at the highest levels of government.” She also thanked Congress, specifically [Representative Joaquin Castro](#), [Representative Brian Fitzpatrick](#), [Senator Roy Blunt](#), and [Senator Chris Coons](#) for their leadership on this bill. To read the statement, click [here](#).

## Legislative Update

**The Mental Health in International Development and Humanitarian Settings Act or the MINDS Act (H.R.3988)** was voted favorably out of the [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#) in December. This bill “directs the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of State to integrate mental health and psychosocial support activities across all U.S. foreign assistance programs, with a particular focus on children and other vulnerable populations.” This bill proposes organizational changes at the USAID, authorizes USAID to appoint a coordinator to oversee and direct mental health and psychosocial support activities, and the establishment of a working group composed of representatives from every USAID bureau and the Department of State to coordinate interagency efforts related to. This bill currently has bipartisan support with 32 co-sponsors. Click [here](#) to learn more about this act.

## Spotlight

**USAID launched its [Global LEAD Toolkit](#)** to provide “resources to support USAID and its partners in strengthening and expanding youth-related programs and projects that provide opportunities for young people to contribute to community development and collective action across sectors.” Global LEAD (Global Leadership and Education for Advancing Development) is “USAID’s Agency-wide initiative to partner with young people and meet development objectives and the sustainable development goals, through enhanced education, civil/political engagement, and leadership opportunities across sectors.”

To learn more about the toolkit, click [here](#). To learn about Global LEAD, visit their website [here](#).

**[Mike McCabe](#)**, the Agency Youth Coordinator at USAID, explained the importance of Global LEAD. It provides assistance in four key areas. First, Global LEAD offers technical assistance. These are “tools and support to improve activity design, learning, communications and partnerships.” Global LEAD also amplifies and builds on success. This “disseminate examples from the field and develop learning and knowledge sharing across Missions.” Next, Global LEAD connects to Youth Networks. This “fosters connections between Missions and youth networks in their countries.” Lastly, this initiative creates a shared understanding. This assists in “communicating a new narrative- young people can and should be partners in development.” The Global LEAD initiative and toolkit was also explained via video, which can be found [here](#).

The Global LEAD Initiative assists in addressing some of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the initiative assists in achieving good health and wellbeing by encouraging youth engagement on COVID prevention and response. Additionally, the initiative assists in achieving quality education through higher education scholarships and exchanges.

After watching an interview conducted by USAID Youth and Policy intern [Manuela Nivia](#) who interviewed two youth advocates Salky Roger Nakale and Asonela Kotu, participants were encouraged to find examples of program design, implementation, communication and networking through a virtual scavenger hunt.

For this body of work, USAID is collaborating with its YouthPower initiative, which uses a positive youth development approach to implement programs within and across sectors. YouthPower seeks to improve the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving institutions and engage young people, their families and communities so that youth can reach their full potential. YouthPower focuses especially on young people ages 10-29. To learn more, click [here](#).

To visit the Global LEAD website, click [here](#).

#### Virtual Events

- IntraHealth [virtual event](#) “**Activating the Urban Health System to Deliver Quality Adolescent & Youth-Friendly Health Services.**” Jan 18, 2022 at 8am ET.
- USAID & ReLAB-HS [webinar](#) “**Rehabilitation Through a Gender Lens**” Jan 19, 2022 at 9am ET.
- The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, & Security [webinar](#) “**Solutions for Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan.**” Jan 20, 2022 at 10am ET.
- **Global Disability Summit: Inclusive Education Thematic [Workshop](#).** January 20, 2022 at 9am ET.
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) [virtual event](#) “**Emergency Watch List 2022.**” Jan 20, 2022 at 12pm ET.
- UNICEF USA [virtual event](#) “**Advocating for the Most Vulnerable Children in 2022.**” Jan 20, 2022 at 8pm ET.
- [Celebration](#) of the Anniversary of the Global Child Thrive Act. Week of Jan 24, 2022 .
- Thrive Coalition [virtual](#) Hill Days 2022. Feb 28, 2022 -March 4, 2022

#### Reports, Articles & Resources

- InterAction [article](#) by Caitlin St. Amour & Kirsten Mullin “**Faith and Child Safeguarding.**”
- CARE news [article](#) “**Poverty, Hunger, Climate Change & COVID-19 Threaten Millions in Afghanistan.**”
- Voices 4 Kids [Op-Ed](#) by Bruce Lesley, President of First Focus “**The Kids Still Aren’t Alright: Putting the Health, Education, and Safety of Kids First.**”
- Global Citizen [article](#) “**Tigray’s Conflict Has Forced Schools to Close. Here’s What That Means for Ethiopia’s Children.**”
- The Center for Global Development [analysis](#) “**How Do We Improve Learning at Scale?**”
- National Public Radio (NPR) [article](#) “**Child grooms are often overlooked in the fight to stop child marriage.**”
- Girls Not Brides [thematic brief](#) “**Cash transfers and child marriage.**”

## Professional Opportunities

**The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** has opened it’s application for OECD Youthwise, it’s Youth Advisory Board. Youth Delegates will “bring your generation’s perspectives, insights, and ideas to the OECD, participate in closed-door meetings and consultations, engaging with a range of topics, themes, and people from the OECD, having direct input into OECD work, be able to speak on panels and participate in webinars, providing interventions on behalf of Youthwise, create and (co-)author documents, articles, and videos to share Youthwise views, join interactive workshops with other youth boards such as the Y20, meeting youth leaders from around the world, and network, gaining a better understanding of how international policy-making functions.” Click [here](#) to learn more about the Youth Advisory Board. To apply, click [here](#).



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