
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 75: UNICEF Executive Director Interviewed on MSNBC, USAID's \$2.6B requests for Gender Equality and Equity, & Annual Day of the Right of the Child.

Mar 14, 2022

Sign-On Letter

The first-ever Children and Youth Community Appropriations [Letter](#) for FY23 have been finalized and they are **asking organizations to [sign on](#) by Mar 15, 2022 COB**. This appropriations letter is an opportunity for the children and youth community to collectively advocate for an increase of funding to multiple accounts. To read the Children's and Youth Community Appropriations Letter for FY23, click [here](#). To sign your organization on, fill out the form [here](#).

In the News

UNICEF Executive Director [Catherine Russell](#) appeared on MSNBC this week to highlight the urgent needs of children in the Ukrainian and Afghanistan crises. While being interviewed by Andrea Mitchell, Russell described her meetings with

Ukrainian women and children who fled to Romania and the devastation they face.. According to Russell, UNICEF is **“First and foremost trying to help children here in Ukraine – really everywhere around the world – but in Ukraine, it’s a desperate situation for children.”** UNICEF is seeking to raise \$360 million dollars to help Ukrainian children and their families. She also discussed her recent trip to Afghanistan, stating **“I’ve seen a lot of things. But seeing those children [in Afghanistan] acutely malnourished was one of the worst things I’ve seen in my life.”** According to UNICEF, 95% of the population of Afghanistan is below the poverty level. To watch this interview, click [here](#). If you learn more about UNICEF’s activities on these topics, click [here](#).

The Keeping Girls in School Act (H.R. 4134/ S.2276) was the topic of Teen Vogue’s article “How the Keeping Girls in School Act Can Help Girls in Ukraine and Across the Globe.” In the article, they cite that “Across the globe, 129 million girls are not in school, according to UNICEF. In areas of [conflict](#), like Ukraine, girls are [2.5](#) times more likely to be out of school than boys, according to Save the Children. And for refugee girls, education can be particularly out of reach. According to a [2019 report](#) from UNHCR, half of the world’s refugee children were out of school, and refugee girls were half as likely as boys to be enrolled in school by the time they reach the secondary level.” **The Keeping Girls in School Act, will require dedicated government funding to assist access to education for girls globally.** This would include leveraging “resources to remove [barriers](#) that keep girls from attending school, [including](#) cost, discrimination, early marriage and childbirth, [lack of access](#) to menstrual products, gender norms that keep girls in the home, gender-based violence, and more.” Additionally, the Keeping Girls in School Act would require the development of a U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. To read the Teen Vogue article, click [here](#). To learn more about the Keeping Girls in School Act, click [here](#).

Quick Summary

The President’s budget request includes \$2.6 billion to advance gender equality around the world, the largest budget request on this topic in history. This request was [announced](#) at an International Women’s Day event by USAID Administrator Samantha Power, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Acting Director Shalanda Young. In the press release, USAID stated that **“these investments are critical as significant challenges continue to disproportionately impact women and girls, including climate change, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts and humanitarian emergencies in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Yemen and many other places, including the significant curtailment of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.** The request also

includes \$200 million for the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund, which advances the economic security of women and girls globally.” With this additional funding, “USAID will support the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality by **advancing programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; supporting the political, economic and social empowerment of women and girls, recognizing their intersecting identities; and addressing the gender norms and inequities impacting women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities.**” To read USAID’s press release, click [here](#).

The InterAction Children and Youth [Working Group](#) hosted the Tide’s Children Policy and Funding [Initiative](#). The Initiative secretariat shared the Initiative’s goals, described progress, and sought input on draft advocacy proposals to the US government. During the presentation, Tide’s Children Policy and Funding Initiative facilitated a discussion about how to make children and youth globally a top priority in U.S. policy, programming and funding, and specific approaches that could elevate and institutionalize this topic as a U.S. government top priority. The group also agreed on the importance of consultations and engagement of youth, especially those from frequently marginalized communities, in design and decision-making to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of US foreign policy, programming, and funding. Click [here](#) to learn more about the InterAction Children and Youth Working Group.

On the Annual Day of the Right of the Child, several youth activists spoke to the UN Human Rights Council about the harmful effects of family separation.

Eduardo, a youth activist from South Africa representing Save the Children, [stated](#) that **“Family separation hinders a lot of children from the opportunity of experiencing their basic rights to education, protection, love and the right to belonging.** For example, I grew up struggling to speak to anyone about things that affect me because I thought I did not fit into the society I was growing up in. Most of my peers moved to South Africa as well for different reasons which included seeking better opportunities, running away from poverty or abuse, family conflict, violence, and rebel groups.” Eduardo explained that the main challenges children face when separated from their families are lack of documentation, proper shelter, limited educational opportunities, and love and parental guidance. He further called on “the United Nations and different governments to facilitate the process of voluntary reunification, have programs that assist with positive parenting that will foster reconciliation, build relationships, provide counseling or therapy to the affected families. This will help a lot of children deal with their mental health issues as most of us grow up angry and unable to understand why our parents left us behind, why our governments are not addressing the social and

political issues that often lead us to migrate to other countries as a means to seek better living conditions.” Several grantees under the **Children’s Policy and Funding Initiative** have highlighted the harmful effects of family separation through multiple Call-to-Actions and reports, emphasizing that **“Every child has the right – and should have the opportunity – to live and grow up with a family, not an orphanage or group home.”** In September 2021, Disability Rights International (DRI), the US International Council on Disabilities (USICD) and other leading organizations spearheaded a call-to-action to protect the right to family, which garnered **over 200 endorsements** from organizations around the world. . Children with disabilities are particularly more susceptible to family separation and then to severe forms of violence against children. A DRI [report](#) titled “Residential Care Controversy: The Promise of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Protect All Children” highlighted conflicting interpretations in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) around group homes. To learn more about Disability Rights International (DRI), click [here](#). To watch Eduardo's address to the UN, click [here](#).

Spotlight

Plan International USA hosted a virtual event “Will USAID localization advance gender equality and youth participation?” to discuss USAID’s focus on aid localization and how to include marginalized groups in those discussions. As part of this effort, Plan International USA launched two new tools, the **Equality Accelerator** and **Generation Change!** To learn more about USAID’s localized development, click [here](#). To learn more about PLAN International, click [here](#).

Equality Accelerator and **Generation Change!** aim to support efforts that enable meaningful inclusion of marginalized communities in critical conversations. The Equality Accelerator is an “online platform created by Plan alongside 30 girl activists -- to provide direct flexible funding opportunities, share leadership resources, and create a global community of youth activists.” So far, over 2,800 youth-led organizations and 3,800 individuals have registered and over €400,000 has been distributed. Generation Change! is a “€70M Plan program funded by Sida that strengthens local COs working on SRHR, violence protection, and youth engagement in democracy.” Generation Change! Works in 21 countries with over 140 local CSOs, including 16 youth-led organizations in Latin America.

The panel of speakers included [Jamille Bigio](#), USAID Gender Equality Lead; [Awa Faly Ba](#), Country Director, Plan International Togo; **Danha**, Guatemalan youth activist Red Municipal Las Niñas Lideran; [Danielle Pearl](#), USAID Localization Evidence and

Learning Lead; and [Anupama Rajaraman](#), USAID Mission Director in Guatemala. Jamille Bigio highlighted USAID's shift towards locally-led development, emphasizing that "We're very conscious as we do that, of the need to include and give attention to new and non-traditional partners from marginalized and underserved communities – that must be intentional [and of] **the steps that USAID takes to ensure that the local organizations that we're partnering with and that are helping to implement and lead and shape organizations represent the full spectrum of the communities in which we are working.**" She also explained that locally-led inclusive development is important because "problems are often global in scope, the causes and effects are unique to each context and we need the local expertise, assets, knowledge, experience to be able to shape the most effective solutions in a given country." In particular, she noted that **if you're excluding women and youth – which means you're tapping maybe a quarter of the population – then you are missing out on assets, knowledge, experience, and leadership in shaping those solutions.**"

To rewatch the event, click [here](#). To learn more about USAID's shift towards localized development, click [here](#).

Virtual Events

- The Center for Global Development [webinar](#) "**Living Conditions in Afghanistan: New Evidence from a Welfare Monitoring Survey.**" March 15, 2022, at 9 am ET.
- The Malala Fund [virtual event](#) "**Girls Voices: Taking Gender-Transformative Climate Action.**" Mar 15, 2022 at 10 am ET.
- Commission on the Status of Women 2022 [virtual event](#) "**Renewing Democracy: A Global Partnership to end Online Harassment and Abuse.**" March 16, 2022, at 8:30 am ET.
- ECPAT USA [virtual event](#) "**Climate Change and Human Trafficking: Protecting Newly Vulnerable Populations.**" March 17, 2022, at 8 am ET.
- The European Commission [forum](#) "**European Humanitarian Forum**" March 21-23, 2022.
- The International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA) and the WHO [virtual event](#) "**Early Care and Education SIG @ISBNPA & WHO Joint Webinar**" March 23, 2022, at 4 pm ET.
- Girl Up [virtual event](#) "**How Girl Up's Community Drives Gender Equality and Social Change.**" March 24, 2022, at 11 am ET.
- Action on Disability and Development (ADD) [virtual event](#) "**ADD International Young Leaders from the Global Disability Movement.**" March 24, 2022, at 8:30 am ET.

- U.S. Congress, House of Foreign Affairs Committee [hearing](#) **“Learning Loss in Latin America and the Caribbean: How to Build Better Education Systems in the Wake of the Pandemic.”** March 29, 2022, at 10 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- The Independent [article](#) **“Millions with disabilities ‘abandoned’ in Ukraine, charities fear.”**
- UNICEF [press release](#) **“Unaccompanied and separated children fleeing escalating conflict in Ukraine must be protected.”**
- Save the Children [article](#) **“Afghanistan: Save the Children Welcomes Announcement that Girls Will be Returning to Secondary School.”**
- The United Nations Girl’s Education Initiative [blog post](#) **“How Will Data Help Us Break the Cycle of Intersectional Discrimination for Girls and Women with Disabilities?”**
- The WHO [publication](#) **“Working for a brighter, healthier future: How WHO improves health and promotes well-being for the world’s adolescents.”**
- Girls at the Margin National Alliance [publication](#) **“National Policy Platform: Centering Girls, Young Women, and Gender-Expansive Young People.”**



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