
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 89: U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary Hearing, Together to #ENDviolence Leaders Event, & Children's Week 2022.

June 20, 2022

Quick Summary

End Violence Against Children held its “Together to #ENDviolence Leaders” event. This event hosted powerful, diverse voices from across countries and expertise – all united by a shared vision of a world without violence against children, including sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Key speakers included [Catherine Russell](#), UNICEF Executive Director; [Ashton Kutcher](#), Actor, Producer & Co-founder of Thorn;

[Gitanjali Rao](#), Young inventor & TIME Kid of the Year; [Andrew Morley](#), President & CEO, World Vision International, and many more. Ambassador Russell emphasized that **“we need to keep up the pressure to integrate child protection measures in all COVID-19 prevention and response plans.”** She also added that **“all schools should be able to provide psychosocial support to help children overcome trauma, especially in humanitarian emergencies and other crisis situations.”** [Jeffrey D. Sachs](#), Director at the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University explained that the world needs to **“shift at least \$1 trillion in Gross World Product (GWP) towards investments in the SDGs in developing countries. This amounts to less than 1% of GWP and less than 4% of world-saving. The role of Public Development Banks, including Multilateral Development Banks, and Specialized Funds, such as UNICEF, will be critical.”** Click here to watch a recording of this [event](#).

UNICEF released their [report](#) titled **“On My Mind: How adolescents experience and perceive mental health around the world.”** This report highlights the extensive mental health challenges they have and are currently facing. The report, which conducted focus groups with adolescents from around the world, addressed mental health issues that are caused by their community and national environments, school, peers, social media and the internet, family, coping, and help-seeking. Some of their key findings include that **“Both boys and girls pay a price for entrenched gender norms: boys are expected to be tough and never express their feelings, and girls are subject to inequitable standards that devalue their lives, curtail their freedoms and pressure them towards damaging ideals of beauty,”** **“The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted many adolescents’ well-being, particularly by isolating them from their social networks,”** and **“Violence, both experienced and threatened, is commonplace for adolescents in many countries, with severe impacts on mental health.”** The report gave 5 key recommendations, which are to listen to their voices; support families, parents, and caregivers; ensure schools support mental health; promote access to mental health services; and address the social determinants of mental health. To read the full report, click [here](#).

The U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary held a hearing on “Protecting America’s Children from Gun Violence.” The hearing addressed the rapid increase in gun violence in the U.S., and also drew attention to other issues affecting children domestically and around the world.

- In Ranking Member [U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley’s](#) (R-IA) [opening statement](#), he expressed the impact of COVID on children in classrooms. He stated that “Mental health has taken a toll on Americans across the country, more so in recent years due to COVID19 lockdowns. Students were forced to stay home

and kept out of the classroom, and uncertainty about the future overwhelmed households and businesses.”

- **The rise in mental health issues in children and youth is not just a U.S. issue. According to [UNICEF USA](#), “1 in 7 children ages 6 to 18 have a diagnosable mental health condition. Most go unrecognized and untreated.”**
- At the hearing, Moira A. Szilagyi, MD, Ph.D., FAAP, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), emphasized that **“We do have a severe mental health crisis among our children and youth at the moment, but we need to understand that most gun violence is not perpetrated by individuals with diagnosable mental health conditions. In fact, these individuals are far more likely to be victims of gun violence than perpetrators of it.** We still need Congress to act on childhood trauma to prevent poor mental health outcomes. And we need Congress to help keep schools safe from would-be shooters by improving security—but this is not a substitute for taking broader action on guns. Comprehensive multi-pronged solutions are needed.” Along with her testimony, more than 300 pediatricians submitted their own [personal testimonies](#) to the committee, illustrating how gun violence has impacted their patients, communities, and lives.

To watch the hearing, click [here](#).

Spotlight

First Focus on Children held their annual Children’s Week this past week. The week was filled with events, social media engagement, and multiple letters to key members of Congress and to the President of the United States. [Bruce Lesley](#), President of First Focus, sent a letter to both Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi. The letters highlighted that **“Our kids desperately need our attention and support. We must be steadfast in advocating for child health, education, child nutrition, gun safety, child abuse prevention, early childhood development, child care, and systemic change for kids in order to create progress for the now and the future of children.”** In addition, First Focus along with many other organizations sent a letter to President Biden requesting a **“Presidential Proclamation marking the second Sunday of June as Children’s Day and the subsequent week of June as Children’s Week; June 12-18 this year.”** The letter also emphasized that “the past two years of the pandemic deepened these challenges and have shown that children are one of the most vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, in politics, their needs have often been considered an afterthought or overlooked completely by even the most well-meaning elected officials. Even worse, **children are frequently invoked as**

political pawns to generate support for policies that do not actually serve their needs, but rather seek to create more division. Children’s Week is a great opportunity to correct these narratives. Through conversations, events, and other actions, we hope to use Children’s Week to uplift the needs of children and promote a positive children’s agenda.”



One of the key events that were was “Trailblazers of Today: U.S. Foreign Assistance & the Impact of Youth Engagement.” Multiple grantees of the Children’s Policy and Funding Initiative hosted and took part in this event, including ChildFund and InterAction who co-hosted the event, First Focus and Search for Common Ground. This event on Capitol Hill featured remarks from Congresswoman [Grace Meng](#) and former USAID Special Advisor on Children in Adversity [Sarah Gesiriech](#). [Kathy Sacco](#) of First Focus on Children moderated an all-youth panel featuring [Mena Ayazi](#) from Search for Common Ground, Arthi from the American Red Cross, Whytiny from World Vision, and Susan from the Uganda National Association of Cerebral Palsy. The interactive panel asked Congresswoman Meng what young Americans can do to ensure their voices are reflected in foreign policy. She responded, **“Leaders listen better when there are more people speaking up about an issue – and I guarantee you, if they see a swell of young people speaking up, they will start to pay attention.”** Panelist Mena agreed: **“This is the largest youth generation in human history. This is a generation that is dealing with complex issues and conflicts like no other generation has faced...so, listen to young people and just look at the demographic opportunity before us.”** Each of the young people on the panel demonstrated how young people are already actively affecting positive change in their communities—and how much stronger all communities would be if youth voices were

included in decision-making and policy solutions. To learn more about what was discussed during Children's Week, click [here](#).

Events

- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [virtual event](#) **“The Youth side of productivity.”** June 21, 2022, at 8:30 am ET.
- ONE [virtual summit](#) **“The GenerAction Summit: Young leaders share their bold ideas on how to tackle the converging crises of Covid, Conflict, and Climate and rewrite the future.”** June 21, 2022, at 9 am ET.
- UNICEF 2022 World Refugee Day [webinar](#). June 22, 2022, at 7 pm ET.
- USAID and YP2LE Learning Network [virtual event](#) **“Building Sustainable Youth Networks.”** June 28, 2022, at 10 am ET.
- USAID and YP2LE Learning Network [webinar](#) **“Engaging Youth and Higher Education for Climate Change Response.”** June 30, 2022, at 9 am ET.
- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [virtual event](#) **“Steering child well-being policies with good data.”** July 5, 2022, at 8 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- World Vision [report](#) **“Hungry and unprotected children: The forgotten refugees.”**
- Changing the Way We Care and Lumos [manual](#) **“Putting Child and Youth Participation at the Heart of Care Reform: An Introductory Manual for Practitioners.”**
- UNICEF, WHO, and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children [policy recommendation](#) **“Universal parenting support to prevent abuse and neglect: A policy call for national governments.”**
- Sesame Workshop [advocacy brief](#) **“Early Childhood in Crisis and Conflict: A crucial window to secure a brighter future.”**
- PLAN USA [article](#) **“5 reasons all children’s organizations should promote gender equity.”**
- UNICEF [virtual toolkit](#) **“UNICEF Parenting: Helping parents give children the best start in life.”**
- The Lancet [report](#) **“Prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine and globally.”**

Professional Opportunity

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking to hire a Senior Technical Advisor in Early Childhood Development. The senior technical advisor “will provide technical direction and leadership to IRC’s early childhood programs during a 6-month period from August 2022 – February 2023. The short-term STA will support IRC’s Early Childhood Development programming globally, with a particular focus on some of the larger strategic ECD-related initiatives including Ahlan Simsim (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria), Play to Learn (Bangladesh, and in collaboration with Ahlan Simsim in Jordan and Lebanon), PlayMatters (Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda), ECD programming in Latin America, as well as new strategic ECD initiatives that may arise. The short-term STA will also provide technical guidance to a small team of technical advisors and program coordinators and will be responsible for ensuring that IRC’s ECD programs are technically sound and of the highest quality.” Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.



Copyright © 2021 Tides Center, All rights reserved.