

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

March 18, 2024

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chair
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chair
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Chair Diaz-Balart, Chair Coons, Ranking Member Lee, and Ranking Member Graham,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to respectfully urge you to protect and increase investments in children and youth globally through a robust 2025 fiscal year (FY) State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations (SFOPS) bill and to include related Committee report language to further enhance the efficacy and transparency of these funds.

This Committee has a long-standing record of supporting critical, life-saving investments in children and youth. In the last three decades, U.S. foreign assistance has contributed to cutting maternal, infant, and child mortality rates in half globally, reducing child labor by one-third, and enabled 5.5 million babies to be born HIV-free.

Given that this generation of young people is the largest in world history, the U.S. government must prioritize children and youth as a key part of making wise and sustainable investments. These investments are essential to ensure that young people are healthy, educated and safe now and grow into engaged citizens and productive contributors to the economy as adults. The United States receives a significant return on investments to improve the lives of young people, including:

- Every \$1 invested in international education delivers as much as \$15 in economic returns.
- Every \$1 invested to scale up early childhood development programs results in as much as \$68 in improved health, social, and economic outcomes.
- Every \$1 invested in nutrition results in up to \$35 in economic returns.

As organizations working closely with Congress and the administration, we understand the challenges you face in budget decision-making. While not all endorsing organizations advocate on the funding levels or reporting recommendations outlined below, this joint effort is prompted by a desire to demonstrate the interconnected ways in which these issues impact young people's lived experiences and the acknowledgement of the difficulty in accurately tracking foreign assistance benefiting children and youth. Proposed investments in the children and youth accounts listed in this letter should not come at the expense of other poverty-focused international development and humanitarian assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations.

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

Signed,

1. ACDI/VOCA
2. Amal Alliance
3. American Academy of Pediatrics
4. Basic Education Coalition
5. ChildFund International
6. Children's Policy and Funding Initiative
7. Creative Associates International
8. Disability Rights International
9. Education Development Center
10. Education for All Coalition
11. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
12. Equal Access International
13. First Focus Campaign for Children
14. Futures Without Violence
15. Global Campaign for Education (GCE-US)
16. GreeneWorks
17. Heartland Alliance International
18. Humanity & Inclusion
19. International Rescue Committee
20. International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)
21. International Youth Foundation (IYF)
22. Just Like My Child Foundation
23. Kakenya's Dream
24. Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
25. Plan International USA
26. Sahiyo U.S.
27. Search for Common Ground
28. Seeds to Sew International
29. SPOON
30. The Borgen Project
31. The U.S. End FGM/C Network
32. Together for Girls
33. Too Young to Wed
34. UNICEF USA
35. United Nations Association of the USA
36. United States International Council on Disabilities
37. Universal Access Project
38. USA for UNFPA
39. VSO
40. Women Deliver
41. World Vision

CC:

The Honorable Kay Granger, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rober Aderholt, Chair, LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee

Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations

REPORT LANGUAGE REQUESTS: To continue the leadership and influence of the U.S. government and the protection and empowerment of children and youth globally, we request the following report language:

Development and Coordination of Youth Policies – Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the act, the Secretary of State shall develop and submit to the Committees on Appropriations a strategy that directly addresses youth needs and youth engagement and that is aligned with already existing policies and strategies such as the USAID Youth in Development Policy, as required under Diplomatic Programs in House Report 117-84.

Not later than 90 days after the enactment of the act, the USAID Administrator shall submit an updated report to the Committees on Appropriations on progress under the Youth in Development Policy. This should include efforts to address youth needs and increase youth civic and economic engagement, including progress and challenges in disaggregating the data on funding spent on youth programs, information regarding training USAID staff on the youth policy, related indicators, and attempts to improve the tracking and disaggregation of the funding for youth and youth-led organizations.

Justification: Investing in positive youth development and their leadership capacity is investing in the next generation of global security and stability. Youth today make up at least twenty-five percent of the global population, and cross-sector investments in young people pay dividends. Therefore, to maximize U.S. taxpayer dollars and invest in the next generation, all U.S. government agencies whose work aids and impacts young people abroad should have a strategy on engagement with and tracking the funding for this critical population. The State Department and USAID do not track how much money is spent on youth programming globally, hence it is impossible to know if sufficient resources are reaching youth or if programs are efficient or duplicative. A tracking system is needed to better serve this critical population and ensure accountability of funds.

Early Childhood Development. – Consistent with the Global Child Thrive Act (Subtitle I, Title XII, Public Law 116-283), beginning with Fiscal Year 2026, the Secretary of State and USAID Administrator shall report annually to Congress the amounts invested in Early Childhood Development (ECD) across all non-administrative, non-security foreign assistance accounts during the prior fiscal year, disaggregated by country, program area, and primary or secondary attribution to ECD. The report should specify by country whether funds were obligated to conflict-affected settings. The Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator shall consult with the Committee regarding the definition of ECD no later than 90 days following the enactment of this Act.

Justification: The Global Child Thrive became law on January 1, 2021, mandating the inclusion of early childhood development interventions into foreign assistance programs serving vulnerable children and their families. However, it has been difficult to track implementation of the law because there is no systematic approach being applied to track programming or funding for early childhood development. The proposed language will require USAID and the Department of State to determine which components of basic education, nutrition, water and sanitation, maternal and child health, humanitarian and other outcomes are adhering to the legislation. Since early childhood development is not its own subsector, much like gender or

Support for Children and Youth Globally Fiscal Year 2025 Community Recommendations

climate change, these measurement tools, or what the Administration is calling controls, are essential for understanding where and how much early childhood development programming is happening. This is an attribution requirement, not a reallocation of funding from one place to another, and it will help inform future appropriations.

Children with Disabilities – Of the funds to be appropriated for FY25 for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the committee recommends \$2,000,000 to establish a small grant and capacity building program to be known as the International Children with Disabilities Protection Fund to assist organizations of persons with disabilities, including families of children with disabilities, to promote policies, social supports, human rights protections, and advocacy programs that strengthen families and protect against the unnecessary institutionalization of children with disabilities.

Justification: Children with disabilities are disproportionately at risk of being institutionalized due to societal stigmas, lack of resources, inadequate family support, and access to inclusive education. In low-income countries, 95 percent of children with disabilities lack access to wheelchairs, hearing aids, glasses and other assistive technologies. There are 240 million children living with disabilities in the world, and half of them are out of school. Assistance is needed to help families and caregivers provide the care needed for their children with disabilities to remain at home and out of institutions. Despite the size of this grant program, this small investment will carry tremendous ramifications for these families and the future of children with disabilities. This, in turn, will have a knock-on effect uplifting communities around the world.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children: The Committee directs that 10% of bilateral HIV funding be invested in orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) programs and that total funding levels and proportion of funding provided for orphans and vulnerable children under 18 years of age be reported to Congress annually and displayed publicly.

Justification: As of the time of this writing PEPFAR has not been reauthorized by Congress. The 10 percent set aside for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) expired on October 1, 2023 without reauthorization. While HIV is no longer a death sentence on the African continent, the number of orphans has grown from 12.4 million when PEPFAR was created to 14.9 million in 2021. In addition, millions more vulnerable children, whose numbers have always been difficult to count, also remain just as disadvantaged. The 10% set aside for OVC protects and mitigates the impact of HIV on these children. PEPFAR is currently supporting 7.2 million orphans and vulnerable children and their caregivers with interventions that ensure affected children enjoy good nutrition, access to school and psychosocial, and that their caregivers have access to savings and livelihood support. Without the clean reauthorization of PEPFAR, a Congressional directive is needed to ensure the full 10 percent of resources continue to go to support these children. Further, the PEPFAR dashboard no longer reports on overall funding levels for OVC, and without this information it is difficult for Congress to oversee it. Congressional oversight is critical as there has been a history of OVC programs not receiving the full 10 percent of bilateral HIV resources.

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

FISCAL YEAR 2025 COMMUNITY FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS: As a key part of prioritizing investments for children and youth, we respectfully recommend the following funding levels in key accounts. This joint effort is prompted by the lack of explicit support dedicated to their needs and does not represent the total number of accounts in which funding for children and youth may appear.

Budget Line	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	FY25 Recommendation
State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs					
Global Health (USAID)					
Maternal and Child Health	\$851,000,000 (including \$290 million for Gavi and \$61 million for Polio)	\$855,500,000 (including \$290 million for Gavi and \$65 million for Polio)	\$890,000,000 (including \$290 million for Gavi and \$75 million for Polio)	\$910,000,000 (including \$290 million for Gavi and \$85 million for Polio)	\$1.15 billion (including \$340 million for Gavi and \$165 million for Polio)
Vulnerable Children	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$27,500,000	\$30,000,000	\$35,000,000
Global Programs					
International Basic Education	\$875,000,000 including bilateral funding and funding for GPE and ECW	\$950,000,000 including bilateral funding and funding GPE and ECW	\$950,000,000 including bilateral funding and \$125 million for GPE and \$25 million for ECW	\$970,000,000 including \$130 million for GPE and \$30 million for ECW	\$1.1 billion, including bilateral funding and funding for GPE and ECW

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

Budget Line	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	FY25 Recommendation
Combating Child, Early and Forced Marriage	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$17,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$30,000,000, of which no less than \$7,000,000 shall be made available for the UN Joint Program on Ending Child Marriage.
Economic Support Fund					
Women and Girls at Risk of Violent Extremism	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	N/A	\$19,000,000
International Organizations and Programs Account (IO & P)					
UNICEF	\$134,000,000, including \$5,000,000 for the UN joint program to combat FGM/C	\$134,000,000, including \$5,000,000 for the UN joint program to combat FGM/C	\$139,000,000, including \$5,000,000 for the UN joint program to combat FGM/C	\$142,000,000, including \$5,000,000 for the UN joint program to combat FGM/C	\$175,000,000 towards core resources, in addition to which \$5,000,000 for the UN joint program to combat FGM/C should be made available
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons					

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

Budget Line	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	FY25 Recommendation
Child Protection Compacts	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$12,500,000	\$15,000,000 (\$5,000,000 multi-year commitments)
U.S. Department of Agriculture					
International Food Assistance Programs					
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program	\$220,000,000	\$230,000,000	\$237,000,000	\$243,300,000	\$265,000,000
Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies					
Departmental Management					
Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)		\$67,325,000 for ILAB of which no more than \$53,825,000 shall be for programs to combat exploitative child labor internationally	\$74,525,000 for ILAB of which no less than \$30,175,000 shall be for programs to combat exploitative child labor internationally	\$81,725,000 for ILAB of which no less than \$30,175,000 shall be for programs to combat exploitative child labor internationally	\$118,000,000 to help improve working conditions and labor standards for workers around the world by carrying out its statutory mandates and international responsibilities, including in promoting the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and forced labor .

**Support for Children and Youth Globally
Fiscal Year 2025
Community Recommendations**

Budget Line	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	FY25 Recommendation
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)					
Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS)	Funding for CDC technical support for VACS varies year over year and is funded largely from PEPFAR and USAID (APCCA, CARSI) budgets.				\$10,000,000 through a budget line directed by the CDC, allowing for a consistent, reliable funding source and meet the demand for VACS technical assistance across a wider geographic range of implementation relevant to U.S. foreign assistance priorities.