Results

Monthly National Webinar

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Michael: Good afternoon, good morning. Thank you for joining us today. Welcome to the Results national webinar. Happy May to everyone.

Just as a reminder before we kick things off to ground ourselves with Results' anti-oppression values. I won't go over all of them, but there are resources available on our website. We commit to opposing all forms of oppression, etc. [On screen.] There are no saviors, only partners, advocates, and allies. We agree to make Results a respectful and inclusive space.

Before we move to the next slide, I want to remind people that last month was the fair housing month. This month is the Asian and Pacific Islander Month. I wanted to point that out. I also wrote a blog about how housing justice is racial justice that ties nicely into our anti-oppression values. I'll put that link in the chat when I get a chance.

And as another reminder, we're also asking folks to take our anti-oppression survey. The survey is on the slide and will be made available on the chat. The deadline to complete it has now been extended to May 11. It will be very helpful to inform our work moving forward in this anti-oppression space.

And a couple of housekeeping things. I will try to answer all the questions. I will keep track of the chat. In the case that we run out of time on the US poverty side, I will leave my contact information and stay on after my section is done and answer questions. But if we're unable to get to your question, please reach out directly to me and I'll do a followup separately.

Just to recap, President Biden gave a speech to a joint session of Congress earlier this week outlining his plan for lifting children out of poverty, affordable housing, preventing evictions. We'll touch on all of these today. On the tax side, Biden may only be going to 2025 on EITC and CTC, but members of congress are pushing for permanent. And we encourage folks to reach out to their members to push for permanence.

On the housing side, it's going to be a long battle to get vouchers, but we still want to make that push for rental assistance for anyone and everyone who qualifies, including multi-year guaranteed funding. We also want to support efforts to address racial inequities.

So today we actually have a great opportunity to dive into housing with a fabulous guest speaker. But before we do that, I want to start by reminding us why we're having this conversation. Unfortunately housing unavailability and instability continue to persist. People are still struggling to make ends meet. You can see here a chart with renters who are unable to catch up after the pandemic. And also tracking the rate of evictions across the country. Landlords have filed for hundreds of thousands of evictions. So again, housing unaffordability and instability exists, and it's important to push for these because preventing evictions prevents homelessness.

We still have a long way to go with vouchers, keeping in mind that only one in four renters are eligible for support.

Without further ado, I'm going to introduce our guest speaker, Zach Tilley. He is working on housing and poverty issues with the Children's Defense Fund. He joined as a legal fellow and then joined the policy team full time in 2018.

Zach: Hi, everybody. My name is Zach Tilley. I work with the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, DC. Today I'm going to be talking about housing insecurity and why housing is so important for kids and how federal rental assistance is crucial for the fight against child poverty.

That was a weird slide transition, sorry about that.

So the Children's Defense Fund was founded in 1973 as an offshoot of our founder's work with Dr. Martin Luther King in the late '60s. Our federal work is broadly focused on children. We work on child poverty and also child welfare system on health care, education, etc. I specifically am on our child poverty team, so lately I've been doing a lot of work on things like refundable tax credits. I also have our budget in housing work.

Just to say what we do as an organization on housing, we are part of the steering committee of the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign, which is put together by the National Housing Coalition. So our big federal policy asks are based on that campaign's big asks. We are calling for universal vouchers, so every family who is eligible under the law should get the vouchers. That's not even close now. We're calling for big investment in affordable housing and a robust program for families experiencing financial shock.

Just to talk about the prevalence of housing insecurity among children, 1 in 3 children in the country live in households that are "burdened" by housing cost. That means families are devoting more than 1/3 of their income to rent. Even worse, there are somewhere around 5 million kids in 2.6 million households experiencing what the Department of Housing and Urban Development call worst case housing needs. These are families with pretty low income, typically around or below the federal poverty line, that are spending more than half of their income on the rent, which is a huge amount of money. Just a little more perspective, more than 1.5 million children experienced homelessness during the 2017-18 school year. The expectation is that the next year's numbers will have risen a bit. It's a very high prevalence of families with children having to find a whole lot of money each month to make rent.

This is important because we know children need affordable housing to thrive. I often say that safe, stable, affordable housing is an aspect of every outcome in a child's life. We know that when kids have affordable. Housing, they're healthier, they do better in school, and they have better educational and job outcomes. They make more money later in life.

So we know that when families don't have to spend a huge portion of their income every month on the rent, that leads to better health outcomes and families spending more on educational development of their kids. Unaffordable housing means children move more frequently, experiences the likelihood of experiencing eviction or even family homelessness, all of which are pretty highly correlated with poor outcomes for children.

One thing we know for sure is that federal housing assistance helps children. It's really, really effective. Federal rental assistance lifts about a million children out of poverty every year. It's really effective at fighting back against housing instability and unaffordable housing because of course the federal programs are set up so that the amount of money a family makes every month is capped at 30% of their income.

But the problem is that only 1 in 4 households with children that are eligible for rental assistance actually receive it because these programs are massively underfunded. For a few years, the number of vouchers year to year was actually going down because funding was flatlined during the Trump administration. Now the Biden administration is trying to plus up the appropriation for housing vouchers, which will hopefully mean more vouchers coming. Which is great, but we know we need to get to universal vouchers.

Just a note on the poverty-fighting effects of a universal voucher program. We have some good modeling on that. If you fully fund the program, it would cut child poverty by about 36%, which is really big.

So now I'm going to turn to the fight against child poverty more broadly. Just a note on what President Biden is doing to fight child poverty. The American Rescue Plan that passed in March included a lot of provisions that are going to make some substantial headway in ending child poverty. The big centerpiece of that package is a massive expansion of the Child Tax Credit, which I talk about all the time. Basically what it means is that every family with children will be receiving a check monthly starting in July. The value of the credit is now $3,000 per kid aged 6 to 17, $3,600 per kid under 6, and the children most in need previously did not get anything from the CTC because it was tied to work and learning. It left out 23 million kids. So that's been massively expanded. And that coupled with things like stimulus checks, an expansion of SNAP benefits, etc., will lead to a one-year child poverty reduction of something like 56% if everything works out well.

One issue is that a lot of the improvements made in the Plan are just one-year things. Everything needs to be extended into the future. We've seen a few subsequent proposals from the Biden administration to do that. Last month, the administration introduced the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan, which makes many of the provisions of the American Rescue Plan permanent, with the exception of the CTC. That plan calls for an extension of four years. We're fighting hard to make that permanent.

This is just a little more detail about the CTC that I already mentioned. I don't need to go through it again. It's now fully available to families with little or no income. Monthly payments are increased.

One thing I wanted to say is that one thing that hasn't been proposed in President Biden's relief packages yet is universal vouchers. We know from his campaign that President Biden is supportive of housing vouchers for everyone who qualifies. But they haven't found a legislative vehicle yet. It's politically difficult in congress. But we know it needs to be done.

One thing I would say is that you can do all the American Rescue Plan things and get to about a 50% reduction in child poverty, but we know if you do those things and couple it with universal housing vouchers, suddenly you're looking at cutting child poverty by 2/3, which is already a big deal made into a much bigger deal in terms of poverty fighting.

So I think we can go. Yeah, okay. I'll just close my sort of monologue by saying we need to fully fund the voucher program and do it in conjunction with all of these other important poverty-fighting things to maximize effectiveness of everything. I feel like I've been monologuing for a while, and I'm sure there are questions.

Michael: Thanks so much for that great information. It's always appreciated having children's advocates at the table. We do have a couple of questions that have come through the chat. One is, does anyone track how many children end up in foster care due to lack of clean housing, which includes not attending school?

Zach: This is an issue that comes up a lot in our child welfare work. I'm not on our child welfare team, so I can talk about it and get back to you with a more specific answer. But yea, we do know that's an issue. Housing quality is effective to child welfare placements, but I don't have much in the way of specifics.

Michael: Okay. The other question is that AP ran a story today about AP expansions in 2025. What are your reactions to Biden's calculation?

Zach: There's so much that we don't know about what the political world will be like in 2025. Think about what it was like four years. Paul Ryan was the Speaker of the House, Mitch McConnell was the majority leader, and Trump was president. The idea was that the CTC will be so popular that no one in their right mind would want to take it away in four years. But if the levers of power shift back to more conservative members, who knows what you might have to trade away to get a permanent CTC? You might be looking at a situation where you might have to do something like the 2017 tax cuts and give a big windfall to the rich to secure that. We're in a situation where we don't have to cut a deal like that. You might in the future even if people still want to make the CTC permanent.

So I would say that I understand where they're coming from, but I think it's too risky. They should just find a way to get it done now, and that's what champions in congress are saying too.

Michael: It's a gamble. That's what I was hearing.

The next question is, can you talk a bit more about what universal vouchers entail? I know we talked about rental assistance, and the word vouchers gets thrown around a lot, but can you elaborate?

Zach: Sure. When we talk about universal vouchers, we're talking specifically about the Housing Choice Program by which the government subsidizes rent for people living in private apartment units. So it's not public housing and units otherwise subsidized by the government. The family gets the voucher, and the family is required to contribute a certain amount of their income up to 30% to the rent every month, and the voucher covers everything in excess of that amount. Obviously there are a lot more arcane rules and income issues that we don't need to get into now, but that's the long and short of it. And we know that type of assistance is really effective and cuts poverty a lot. But the problem is, this isn't a mandatory entitlement program like social security where no matter how much money needs to go into the program to fully fund it, it goes. Through the appropriations process, a set amount goes into the program every year, and that cap is way lower than where it needs to be. Basically right now, about 77% of families with children who should be eligible for this program don't get anything because there's not enough money.

Michael: I know we're running out of time, so I'm going to ask a question that I think hopefully hits some others I saw in the chat. Do you have any advice for grassroots advocates who are in the process of talking to members of congress or prepping for a lobbying meeting with their member? Do you have any tips you want to share, especially from a children's advocate's perspective?

Zach: Sure. I would say that on all these issues, often we go in with the sort high-level modeling. If you do these two things together, you can cut child poverty by 2/3. But it's really important to frame all these issues in terms of what it means for a specific child somewhere, a specific family. How is this going to help not just cut stats on paper and society, probably, but how is this going to help kids in particular? I think that's really important. I know that there are a lot of questions in the chat also. I'll do my best to stay on for a few minutes and try to respond to a few of these as well.

Michael: Thanks so much, Zach. I'll do the same. Why don't we go to the next slide.

So as Zach said, we outlined what Biden's proposals and visions are. But these are mere proposals. Now is the time to be bold. We have to take the opportunity to talk to members of congress to reduce child poverty, reduce racial inequities, and why is it key for you to talk to your members of congress and ask them to speak to their leadership? The short answer is that conversations are happening now. There's a lot of movement on the Hill, behind the door discussions. It's important to get these issues on members of congress' radar so they can address our priorities. And as congress moves large-scale legislation, it's really important that they care about poverty inequity.

There are other slides available. This is additional information for all of you to consider. They'll be made available after the webinar. I'm going to hand it over now to Joanne.

Joanne: Thanks so much, Michael and Zach, for that really critical session about the links between housing and child poverty. It's great to be with everyone. As I think you know, this week marked the end of the administration's first 100 days in office, and it also marked the end of our own Results first 100 days campaign. I want to start by acknowledging the amazing work you all have done. We set out to meet with as much of the Senate and House as we could because we knew there are urgent needs to address now and because this period is so critical. I'm not sure we actually knew how agenda-setting this moment would be.

I've been so inspired by you all. You have managed to secure meetings with all 100 Senate offices in the first 100 days. Most of those meetings have happened already and some are scheduled for the next week. I know that has already had an impact on the agenda.

We've seen so much work and evidence of the relationships you all are building. A new advocate in Nebraska who sent meeting requests to both offices and got confirmation from both within minutes. A senator who said they expected to meet with us again in 30 days. Senator Schumer's office sending a staff of five to meet with New York advocates. We set out on this campaign because we saw the potential in this moment to help set a new baseline and to play a key part in raising the level of ambition and expectation in Washington.

We've seen some key breakthroughs that we played a huge part in. The once in a lifetime legislation this spring that will cut child poverty in half. The work you did with Senate champions to get Senate democrats to use their influence and make the expansions on the CTC permanent. You all were instrumental in taking that from 17 to 41 Senate signers. The president has proposed making the new EITC expansions permanent, and also to make permanent that the lowest income families can get the CTC. So still more work to be done but already impacts.

In terms of resetting the baseline internationally, we have called for more than tripling the budget for vaccines. And we had 109 bipartisan signers. We had over 120 signers on a letter for nutrition funding, for education globally. And I would add that those global funding letters are not just going to the key decision makers on appropriations. We've also shared them with folks on the national development agencies, and these letters show the kind of support there is for bolder action.

I feel like in real time, we are really playing a big part in raising the expectation of what Washington needs to do. And from now on, we organize and advocate from this new baseline. Making sure that no one who's eligible gets denied rental assistance. You'll hear later about a campaign for global education.

Just to end, this is clearly a time of huge opportunity. But we also know that the continued enormous challenges and traumas in this moment, in the wake of the conviction of the murderer of George Floyd, violence against black communities still continues. We know that despite the breakthroughs of the last two months, million of people in this country are suffering. And we're seeing the enormous impact of the pandemic in India right now. And the impact of failing to come together fully as the global community against poverty and the pandemic.

That's why the relationships you've helped build this spring are so crucial. It's a start, not a conclusion. It's urgent action now and setting up work needed for lasting change. And for the policies that are grounded in equity, we'll do what it takes to support everyone. So huge thanks for what you've done and the collective work ahead. I'll turn over the call now.

Sarah: Thank you so much for that, Joanne. Can everyone hear me okay? Perfect. Good afternoon, good morning to our West Coast friends. For this section, we'll be talking about all things first 100 days. I wanted to start off by saying congratulations on all of your fantastic advocacy the past few months. Your ability to mobilize and create change is truly inspiring.

Going off some of those amazing accomplishments Joanne already listed. Women's rights advocates reached their goal to meet with 20 members of congress within 60 meetings. We were really proud of this goal and of the advocates that joined in, meeting their members of congress for the first time. Fantastic job.

I wanted to talk about media that's been produced as well by new advocates. Peter Kim recently had his first LTE published. It's fantastic. Anne Child posted that in the listserv.

Next advocate that comes to mind is a fellow who just had her first LTE published before the first 100 days campaign ended. Both LTEs were powerful calls to action, so I would encourage you to read them both. Kazmine [sp?] if you're on the line, we'll make sure we'll post that one too. I remember getting my first LTE published, and it's a fantastic feeling that you remember, so congratulations to you both.

Another shoutout to the newly reformed Buffalo group. The group leader is a Results veteran. So the group is a fabulous blend of new energy and insights and veteran advocacy and know-how. So feel free to congratulate those folks as well. I'm excited to see what new calls to action come out of that.

We've had an awesome development of relationships during this campaign. We've had a mix of offices whose relationships have developed. Some people who come to mind are Representative Ted Cruz, etc. So congratulations to Indiana, Texas, and North Carolina on those. I know there were additional meetings that were fantastic, so feel free to put it in the chat if you've had great meetings.

I just wanted to do a shoutout and do some highlights on those accomplishments from you all. To continue on, you all met, like Joanne mentioned, with 100% of your senators, which is just outstanding. It really was down to the wire. We had a meeting set with senator Moran at the last minute. We were at 99 senators. It was a first 100 days campaign miracle, if you will. So congratulations to all of you on that goal.

The second goal we had was to meet with 3/4 of House offices. We are at close to 40%. I know we didn't hit our goal, but that is still a fantastic accomplishment. That was over 200+ meetings that you all did combining Senate and House offices.

Another goal we had was building new Results leaders within the fight to end poverty. On my end of things growing the action networks, I've seen a lot of new leaders come into play who have stepped up to showcase their skills. So congratulations to all of you who have stepped up during this time, taking on a new roll. Free agents continuing to advocate. It can be difficult to advocate on your own, but it's a testament to the skill level you all have.

We had 300+ meetings with members of congress. Every single state on this map is filled in and met with at least one member of congress. So good work, everyone. You all should be insanely proud of yourselves. It was just such a highlight to see this map fill up week after week. Every week there would be more meetings and states being added. So again, great job on these meetings.

And then I wanted to do some special shoutouts. First off, congratulations to everybody again, but the states you're seeing on the screen actually met with every single congressional district that they cover during the first 100 day campaign. Congratulations to you all. [On screen.] And I know that we had additional states that came down through the wire as well, so feel free to put those in the chat. We did this based on roadmaps and lobby report forms. I know there are additional states that met with all of those districts. So please let everybody know. Colorado, Connecticut, and New Mexico did. I know at least half of the states were really close to meeting with all of their districts. There would have been more names on this list for sure, and there are still meetings happening. So I thought I would frame this in a way that you all could see the hard work you've been doing.

This is another screen of the map. We wanted to put in pictures of where meetings have taken place. If you haven't sent in pictures of your meeting, please feel free to do so. We want to see all of your faces meeting with aides and members of congress. 300+ meetings and counting. We're still counting the meetings coming in. So be sure to send in those pictures and submit your lobby report forms so we can get an accurate representation of what's been done.

Don't forget to submit a lobby report for any last-minute meetings that have occurred. We want to get an accurate representation of every meeting that's happened.

This is a video that the communications team put together for us that shows all your accomplishments over the last couple of months. Let's take a look.

[Video]

Ken: Thank you so much, Sarah. Let's go to Karyne to talk a bit about the international conference.

Karyne: Hi, everyone. What an exhilarating video to watch as the map was populated. We're not stopping there, and we're gearing up with the international conference. The virtual conference last year allowed many attendees to log in from home, so we encourage you to attend. We have a roster of great speakers. Former Australian prime minister Julia Gallard, and a youth leader at the Global Partnership of Education. We'll be kicking off with staff writer for the Atlantic and poet Clint Smith. We'll be giving away copies of his new book. 50 attendees of today's webinar will be chosen at random for that.

The conference will also be offering plenty of workshops and skill building opportunities. We'll have sessions focused on housing and on nutrition, the TB response in the era of COVID-19, and addressing inequity. We'll be empowering new advocates and encouraging leadership. The IC is a great way to introduce Results to anyone you know who might be interested in learning more. It's a great way to see our work in action and how our missions direct change.

Some of you may be asking why, after meeting with your members of congress in the first 100 days, we neet to meet with them so soon. We encourage you to deepen your relationships with their offices and request a face to face meeting. We'll also have a new set of deadlines for education and affordable housing. We have 200 enrollees as of today. We encourage everyone to register by today's deadline to set up lobby prep meetings and make sure you have everything you need.

Now to Lisa with some more announcements.

Ken: I think it's going to go to me. Just a couple things on highlighting the actions.

Thanks, everybody. What an incredible start to the year. Your advocacy and welcoming new advocates has been outstanding. I know it's been a very busy start to the year. A lot of things have changed, and it's really required our attention and time. I want to let you know that every moment you've spent thinking about or acting on what we do at Results has helped us move the needle on income inequality and poverty around the world. Every minute has been useful. If you had not been doing what you've been doing over the past couple of months, we would not have gotten this far on these issues. So I want you to thank you, and then take a quick look ahead.

We want you to continue to speak to leaders, calling on them to make the EITC and CTC changes permanent and then expand rental assistance to all those who need it. But we also want to take this message to the media now. Let's make it clear that what we want House and Senate leaders to do through op eds and editorials. You can use our template letter to do this. Let's hit the media hard and generate public and political will on these fronts.

On our global campaigns, we have some time-sensitive work to do on Senate appropriations right now. We're asking you to contact your foreign policy aide and ask them for the deadline for constituents to submit appropriations requests, and if they need those on a particular form, send them the same sheets you found the House. Those can be found on our website under Lobbying. You can send them to our staff with the deadline, and they'll fill them out and send them back to you or submit them directly.

Some of the deadlines may have come and gone. Don't worry about that. You can move on to speaking with the foreign policy aide and asking that the senator sign on to the letters on child health and nutrition and global education. There will be a third letter on TB that's not out yet. All of these are on our website under Issues and then Appropriations. Deadlines are coming up in mid-May for those, so it's a good time to act now.

On that same page, you'll find a link to a Google spreadsheet with a current list of Senate signers.

The other thing is, today is kind of a soft launch for our media push around the global partnership for education replenishment campaign. We want to generate 100 pieces of media by early July and send those to the administration, encouraging the administration to make a pledge. We'll send that to the administration around July 6. And we have some great resources in the online action sheet, and there's a great background piece. I'll put that link in the chat.

We have a great opportunity to generate media. Let's do some writing. I'll hand this over to Lisa.

Lisa: Hi, everyone. Hope you're doing well. If you're not jazzed up by now, I'm not sure what we can do because your success is fantastic, and you should be so excited. Just a reminder again of what Michael said at the top of the webinar, that the anti-oppression survey that's been circulating has been extended to May 11. And your voice is so critical. We need to hear from group leaders and advocates in groups. We need to hear your perspective on this critical piece of who we are and who we're trying to be. We want to acknowledge that this survey takes about 40 minutes to fill out. We recognize it may be a little emotional for you. You can move right on past any section you don't want to fill out. We do have a goal of 291 surveys because that will give us a statistically meaningful sample. So your voice matters.

This is one way for all of us to participate together in the values we hold so dear. Thank you so much if you've already filled it out and if you're going to fill it out.

We are really excited to have our traditional spring peer to peer fundraising campaign happening between May 10-24. It's an opportunity to tell the story of what you've been doing and what's possible in the world. We'll build on the successes of the first 100 days campaign and use it as a way to talk about our important campaigns. We're very excited to share that in recognition of Results' work around tuberculosis, a generous donor has offered to match the first $5,000 raised in the campaign. You can get in touch with us with any questions. We'll bundle this with our work to make CTC permanent, to end tuberculosis, and to get global education funding happening in the next year. So thank you for your support of that.

Mark your calendars. Thursday, May 20. Two policy forums. At 8:00 is the US policy campaign's forum. 9:00 is the global campaign's forum. Registration for that is available up to an hour before the webinar.

We have new advocate orientations. Folks are finding us and are excited to join us. We have two orientations coming up. [On screen.] You can go to results.org/volunteer to register. If you are a free agent, we have a couple webinars for you on May 18 and May 24. So all of these items, if you didn't catch them, are listed in your weekly update. I'll give you a teaser for something coming up at the end of May. We'll be going over the basics of motivational interviewing. If you're curious about what that's about and how it can help you in your lobbying efforts, watch your weekly update and take advantage of that at the end of May.

I believe that is all the news I have for you, and it's my pleasure to turn it back over to Joanne.

Joanne: Thanks a lot, Lisa, and thanks to the whole team. Thank you in advance for what you'll do on the peer to peer fundraising. Unrestricted resources in this time of flux have never been more important. And to reinforce as well the media work. We are planning to bundle all that and make sure it gets to the administration so it has a double impact.

Today in global advocacy, our focus is on education. I think we're all aware that the stakes have never been higher for education globally and in the US. We're launching our campaign for the United States to make a commitment for global education. That will happen in late July.

You'll hear more from a guest, but the global partnership for education is the only one of its kind. We really need the US to do its part.

The thing I've been thinking about is, I was on a call Monday with the former president of Malawi as part of a board we're both on. She spoke on how education has been made more equitable and how the impact of the pandemic has led to so many out of school girls becoming pregnant and forced into early marriage, some as young as 11 or 12. And deeply reinforcing the cycle of poverty that we know education for girls can help break. So this is critical work.

It's both a pleasure and an honor to have Alex Palacios from the global partnership for education with us today. I'll do a quick introduction. Alex serves as the director for America and has been such a key partner for us. Alex's deep commitment to these issues and our close partnership go way back. Alex was the special representative for GAVI and we worked with him to create access to vaccines in low income countries. Alex played a long-time key senior role in UNICEF and its affiliate the US Fund. So Alex, it's really wonderful to have you with us in this key moment. Can you share with us some of what you all are seeing and how COVID has impacted education, why this replenishment is so key right now, and why this grassroots advocacy is so key?

Alex: Thank you. Your campaign couldn't be better timed. I was taking notes on the discussion a few minutes ago, 300+ congressional meetings and all the work you've done. Those notes are extraordinary. When I think back on the engagement I've had with Results, I think of course I'm aware of those numbers. I think of lives saved as a result of the child survival initiatives that you've helped support and lead the charge for. I think of poor women who have had access to credit and would not have without your support and people's lives being improved.

In the case of global education, it is really a key moment. I think of this as a best of times, worst of times for us to have this campaign. Because we have been in existence for almost 20 years now, and I think it does play a critical role in global education, bringing all the partners together at a global and country level to ensure a more joined up and efficient impact at systems level. Resources in global education have never been what they've been for global health. You have to make the best use of money you're able to pull together. It's incredibly important to make sure partners are aligned, that we're facilitating countries being able to identify their priorities and how they'll use their own resources and resources from the outside.

So I think we've been able to increase the number of countries in which we've had an impact to 76 now. 90 are eligible. We've mobilized around $7 billion. And we've seen the gains in access and quality of education. And then COVID hit. To answer Joanne's question more directly, the real challenge is that the gains we have all worked together to secure were fairly newfound in most cases. COVID came along in a very rapid way and shut things down, created immediate lack of access to education, and as Joanne has noted, a particular impact on that population of girls we've worked very hard to get into school. They're the population that is least likely to return. So it's had a devastating impact.

GPE, as I mentioned a few weeks ago, has mobilized over $500 million in response to the pandemic and its impact on education. It was an accelerated funding mechanism that made it possible for us to respond to applications coming in and get the money out the door within 6-8 weeks. Very rapid, accelerated mechanism.

There have been really interesting examples of how countries have used those monies. A country like Niger, it received $11 million. It's not a huge amount. But they were able to use that money to develop some distance learning efforts and deliver printed materials to the most marginalized. Several countries used the resources we provided to expand access and make possible delivery of online content as well as what we call the low-tech options, radio and television. In some cases, countries of leapfrogged as a result of the support. About 25% of the grants have accompanied some long-term distance learning efforts, arrangements made between the ministries of education and ministries of ACT and internet providing companies to expand internet access for populations that just didn't have it and had no plan to have it in the immediate future. So in some cases, there has been the opportunity for advancing in ways that would not have been possible.

But it remains dicey. I mentioned Kenya. It's one of the countries I tend to follow more closely. Schools open and then have to reclose because the pandemic numbers go up. Access to the vaccines is a very different story in many of these countries. It will likely be many months before some of those countries are able to reach their populations, including the marginalized, with the COVID vaccine. So it's the most fundamental crisis with education that we've seen, extraordinary and far-reaching since GPE itself was created.

Joanne: Alex, could you frame for us the opportunity of this replenishment? Talk about replenishment being a key moment, and what that could mean for education and the impact it could have if GPE is fully funded?

Alex: I think first of all one of the most important things about this replenishment is that it happens at a point where because of the work of partners like Results, we have seen education rise as a priority item on the global agenda. We've seen education highlighted at several G7 meetings. We've all worked hard to push the rock up the hill, and it seems to be up there at a level we have not seen before. We've reached a level of visibility and priority, and COVID has helped us in some way to ensure that sovereign donor governments understand the impact of education. They've seen what happens in their own countries. It wouldn't be a big leak to understand it in developing countries.

I think we have a track record to bring to the table. You see progress in countries after 20 years, even countries experiencing fragility and conflict. Domestic financing for education has gone up over the last 20 years. The government of Kenya is a co-lead on the upcoming global education financing summit. Their education 2030 goals are very significant. I'm convinced this is a country that will be in a very different position a generation from now than it is today in terms of education.

We have a new administration that understands the importance of working with multilateral partners and understands the impact that improved access to quality education will have for the generations of young people that are coming. We know that from a national security point of view, I think they also understand that we have the largest generation of young people in the developing world who currently lack the skills for a gainful employment and that there is a very high risk associated with those young people not having the benefit of a quality education.

I think we have a good chance, but I think it will take some work. One of the biggest challenges we might have. The COVID piece provides the opportunity. On one hand, it's a crisis. On the other hand, it provided an opportunity for us to be able to communicate to leaders in wealthy countries what the impact of that crisis has been on poor people and on education. They see it and understand it in their own countries. On the other hand, it's been a fiscal challenge in many countries. That doesn't mean we diminish our goals. We just realize it will take more work.

I do think this administration will be open to a multi-year commitment. It has never happened in global education, but we've had very good engagement. Even before the year, we had some good engagement. In the transition process, we had some good exchanges. And the signals we are getting right now from the interactions the US has already had with our co-chairs has been fairly positive. The Hill itself seems to have a positive view of the importance of a multiyear commitment. They understand why it would be very special for us to be able to do that now.

Joanne: I see some questions in the chat. Combining the first two, one is, how does GPE not only maybe help countries but also other bilateral assistance be more effective? The other question being, why is GPE particularly. . . . What are some of the reasons that GPE funding is particularly effective, leveraged at country level and with other donors?

Alex: I think the GPE is not just about the fund and the money made available, it's about the partnership. There is a place where all the key partners in education come together to confirm what approaches are most effective, to look at the education challenge on a systems level and figure out how we move forward the goals we have at the highest possible levels. What is most transformational, and have the countries at the center of that conversation to ensure we don't have a top-down approach that we think makes sense from our countries, but makes sense because the countries themselves have identified their major systems challenges. And we're able to bring all partners together to agree on those and then have it come together through a dialogue that needs to happen and everyone agreeing, yes, you're a bilateral partner, you have a particular set of goals, let's work together to make sure we're aligned behind the priorities the country itself has identified.

But it's about aligning resources so you're able to achieve more. And also thinking long term being able to work with partners to develop a multiyear compact around how the GPE resources will align behind that plan and support the objectives. Have those partners at country level serve as a monitoring mechanism as you're going forward, not just coming together at the outset but to stay in place as different challenges might arise.

I really think that what the new GPE strategy is all about is wanting to take that history of doing that in so many countries and saying, now let's see if we can move things forward more rapidly and work more tightly together to make sure we are supporting the main challenges in scores of countries.

Joanne: Thanks, Alex. A lot of interesting, good questions. One about the first lady being such an education champions. Somebody asked if you're still working with Rihanna and other champions.

There was a question about GPE and for-profit schools, and if there are restrictions or guidelines in terms of support on that.

Alex: I'll answer that very briefly. It was my team that helped develop GPE's private sector engagement strategy. 90% of that was about engaging with the community broadly speaking to engage their support and capacity for innovation. A small piece of it dealt with the growing reality of low-cost private schools in developing countries. The board made the decision that GPE resources were to be used to support public education. There might be some exceptions that would be reviewed by the board. Countries where, either because of their particular circumstance or an exigent circumstance, they would consider. But on the whole, GPE resources are intended to support public education, and there might be other resources to be used to support low-cost private schools.

Joanne: Thank you. One question is, is there anything you would say to policymakers or others, if you have favorite ways of articulating education being so fundamental?

Alex: There is a. I'm sure you've seen our case for investment. I would have put up a slide if I'd thought of it. We call it the snowcone slide that shows how investments in education lead to so many results. And obviously the important impact of children learning and reading and having maths and advancing, and what that does to economic growth in the long run. There it is. But you keep going. You're saving lives. Children being vaccinated because their mothers are educated. More sustainable, peaceful societies. This is an argument I think most leaders and donor governments certainly understand. I certainly have seen myself the evidence that developing country leaders are understanding that at a much greater scale than in the past. I actually think it's not a hard case to make. You just sometimes have to grab people by the lapels and make sure they're hearing it and that they see the evidence of success.

One of the most important thing we can do together is to provide you the examples where we've seen the progress. Nita would always ask that question. She always wanted to know, where have you traveled recently and where is the progress, and what is inhibiting progress? Providing those examples I think is important. I go back to Kenya because I've spent so much time there. There's certainly a case to be made for these investments just based on what I've seen in a country with a difficult political history and a difficult history with donors because of some difficult period around misuse of funds. And it has just moved so well beyond that, and it is so prioritized at the top levels. I think the GPE helps to ensure that there isn't just the obvious technical support for education but also political leadership support, and some recognition for that as well.

That's one of the lessons I've taken with me. If you want to move the needle in global development, it's because political leaders recognize the benefit.

Joanne: I think that's a really powerful place to close. Thank you for sharing that bigger perspective because I think we all need to keep coming back to that.

We will be staying in very close touch with you, working to deliver on this and to really deliver on the US leadership that can then help deliver on this $5 billion plan. Anything you want to close with?

Alex: Samantha Power has been confirmed in her role with USAID. We hope she'll be able to get to London for a foreign development ministers meeting. Alice will be virtually in the room observing. But I think there is a pathway ahead for us to succeed. And your efforts are going to help make sure that we are able to get there. So anything you need from us, please let us know. My best to everyone.

Joanne: Thanks so much, Alex. And now we'll turn it over to Crickett Nikovich.

Crickett: Hi, everyone. Thank you again for joining us, Alex. As we all know, COVID-19 hit schoolkids everywhere, but what that meant for kids in the global south and folks who are less resource poor in school systems has been absolutely uneven.

I do want to go back to those slides. Again, we can skip through these and go back to the cone. The global partnership investment case is out, and as Alex said, we are trying to get as much support from congress and from this administration as possible as we are walking towards that July moment and the big summit.

Our work right now is string with a GPE resolution on the House that we want to make sure we're talking to our House members about. We also have all those congressional sign-on letters. When we were talking about appropriations, we were talking about our first increase for funding for GPE. We got over 120 signers for the GPE and global funding education letter. We had a high watermark for the TB letter and the nutrition letter. Our TB letter is calling for a billion dollars and smashed last year's record to get 109 signers. That was fantastic work.

On our global nutrition letter, it was the first time we worked on just nutrition and had a letter calling for an actual funding number. I am really proud of the work we did on this getting 122 signers. There was still a nutrition robust funding letter circulating, and members of congress had the opportunity to sign on to that. But the one we signed on to had more signers than that traditional letter with robust funding. It's just fantastic to see the effort here.

Now taking that fight up to the Senate, we want to make sure we're supporting our next appropriations push in making sure that we're getting the final letters circulating and getting members of congress on those. We fully expect a tuberculosis letter to come through next week. Currently we have the robust funding letter for robust funding in nutrition. We really do need to have a few more Republican members stepping up on global education. We want to hear more if you've had conversations with them. And we want to make sure to push for GPE this year. We do have a resolution that we'll be building toward, and we expect to also have a Senate-side resolution. We'll share the links to those and the resolution numbers as they come out in our weekly updates and other information.

I think this is it. The bonus ask. H.Res. 225 on GPE again. And just more of our resources. This is something that I think Ken can go through really quickly.

Ken: These will show up in the weekly update and in the slides as well, so definitely tap into those once they're posted.

Crickett: Thanks so much for being part of our webinar. I'm really looking forward to working with you on GPE. I'm excited to say that we have a letter in support of that issue. That's another tool we'll have in our toolbox as we move towards focusing on getting that big media and all the members of congress signed up and in support of GPE.

Ken: Thank you very much for that, Crickett, and thanks everybody for joining today. You can unmute your lines now and say goodbye. We should wish an early happy Mother's Day to all the mothers out there. Don't forget to buy your cards.

[End of webinar]