020522 - Results.org-Webinar Series

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[Live captioning beginning at 1 PM ET.]

[Waiting for meeting to begin.]

>>KEN PATTERSON: I have 1 ET now. I'm going to not allow people to unmute. I'm going to mute everyone. Meredith, you'll have to unmute yourself when ready to start. I'll hit record in a second. We're recording.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: My computer was freezing. Apologies. Hi. This is Meredith Dodson, on staff with Results. I she she/her/hers pronouns. I'm director of Results United States poverty policy work. I join you from Washington DC excited about the lineup we have for today's webinar. I always think it's helpful to ground us in our anti-oppression values.

As a reminder, there are plenty of resources to support our work to become a more anti-oppressive organization on our website. You can see the link there at the bottom in the volunteers section.

We're working together to oppose all forms of oppression, including ableism, ageism, biphobia, classicism . . . [Reading from slide.]

There are no saviors. I know many of you were on a conversation we had with a group called no white saviors on one of our policy forums. There are no saviors, only partners, advocates and allies. We agree to make the RESULTS movement an inclusive, respectful place. I'm glad we have Professor Dorothy Brown in the first segment. I want to check your audio.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: OK.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: Sounds great. I know many of us at RESULTS are big fans of your work. We appreciate you joining us. Dorothy A. Brown is professor of law at Emory University School of Law. I put a link in the chat to more on the whiteness of wealth. I have a link to your bio, too. In particular, I appreciate the way that Professor Brown connects the dots with a lot of things that to some of us seem separate and random happenstance. Instead, tax policy and racism impact policy and is behind so much. Thrilled that you can join us. Thanks for making this work on a Saturday. Hopefully, we have time for questions. Let's start with opening thoughts.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: How long do you want me to talk?

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: I think folks would love time to dialogue. Feel free to go longer, but something like 10 - 15 minutes. Facts and current debates are at the front of minds. Hundreds of folks on the line are doing work around Build Back Better.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: I prepared remarks about how we got here with the child tax credit. Let's kick it open. That will get me to 10 - 15 minutes.

Before The Whiteness of Wealth was published, I wrote articles that nobody read. The first article, The Tax Treatment of Children, was published in 2005. The second, Race and Class Policy, was published in 2007. The American rescue plan increased the tax credit for more than 65 United States children representing roughly 95% of children, enabling parents to pay for food, clothing and housing, lowering the number of children experiencing policy by 40%. Why did it take the American rescue plan for children to be deemed worthy of not going to bed hungry, parents worthy of not worrying about providing for their children? Why did we need a law change to ensure that children living with grandparents could benefit? Why didn't the tax credit apply to those children when enacted in 1997?

In 1997, the child tax credit provided for every child except children of low income tax payers. Newt Gingrich said giving additional tax credit to those who pay no taxes is welfare. Politicians know they are racing beneficiaries as Black and offering the program to whites. Welfare has become the dog whistle for race. Government aid not viewed as welfare is for whites viewed as the primary beneficiaries. You see this with statements of the EITC with those made about farmers.

 [References available at <https://dorothyabrown.com/research/>]

The reason why we needed the law changed last year was because when the child tax credit was put into place it was designed to discriminate and exclude the lowest American families. Thank you.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: That's incredibly helpful. We work on hunger and nutrition policy, working with Representative and then Sen. Roberts. I imagine our Kansas advocates' ears perked up. I urge putting questions in the chat. I'd love to spend time with that.

Building on the last point with the expanded child tax credit in place for the first time with 27 million lowest income families got the same CTC as everyone else; there are conditions in continuing the child tax credit. Unlike now where families where 9/10 families were eligible, there's a proposal to reduce the other higher income tax families. You might not continue to get it under that proposal.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: The other requirement Sen. Mansion was talking about was a requirement that perked my ears was you might have to work if you're lower income. For higher income Americans, there's no work requirement for CTC. He'd put it in for higher income Americans. If living with your grandparent, the law doesn't recognize gross income, and you're a low income family. You don't get the CTC. You want to put a work requirement for people who worked all their lives and are caring for their grandchildren?

It's messaging about having to work for children to not go to bed hungry. We need to care about the children and make sure they're able to begin their life on a trajectory to make them feel included in American society. A lot of politicians are reticent in talking about race. Let's hear from the 2+ million white kids going to bed hungry.

I think the opposition has been able to shape their message much better than the Biden administration has pushed back against it.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: You jumped to my second question. Racism behind the work requirement rhetoric is important. I'm glad you got to that. I'm going to check the chat. There's lots of interesting conversation in the chat.

I think we'll come back to tax. We'll pivot to Michael, who leads our housing policy work. Are you game to ask your question?

>>SPEAKER: Big fan, Professor Brown. Read the book. I'm a senior policy associate in DC with RESULTS. In your chapter Black House/White Market, you proposed subsidies tied to neighborhood wealth, facing serious constitutional challenges. Can you unpack what that looks like and what the federal government needs to do? Can you comment on constitutional limitations and race-based remedies?

>>DOROTHY BROWN: I'll start with the last first. With black Americans paying higher taxes than white peers, I suggest a reparation tax credit. The Supreme Court says you can't have race-based programs if there are lesser alternatives that could get you to a similar result. If we say all Black Americans get a tax credit, we'd be saying low wealth white Americans wouldn't get a tax credit. There would be an equal protection challenge. They'd win.

Wait, that tax credit given to the Obamas but the white family in Appalachia doesn't have nearly the wealth. The Supreme Court would strike it down because it's not fair. My second recommendation is a tax credit for all households with below median wealth, which is $100,000 or less, benefiting white and all tax payers but disproportionately Black tax payers because 83% of Black Americans live in below $100k wealth households.

The Supreme Court would respect that because there's a Supreme Court decision, San Antonio v Rodriguez setting back funding in education, but it helps here because it says you can discriminate on the basis of wealth. It's like how we fund public school systems.

My argument for wealth-based tax subsidies is based on Supreme Court precedent that is of long standing that says you can discriminate against people visa vi wealth versus race. Given residential housing segregation and targeting subsidies to neighborhoods would disproportionately Black Americans who live in low wealth neighborhoods.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: I love that we got to that aspect. There's a question from Jim in SC. Is there a common theme as to who we allow to have agency over choices, whose lives are engineered to control?

>>DOROTHY BROWN: We know who is marginalized, left out and gets the benefit of everything. White wealthy Americans have done more to mold tax laws than previously known. We got the joint return because of a rich white couple, the Seaborns, and income tax from stock from Brewster, a rich guy. They were like the Rockefellers, the sixth richest man in America.

How are other government policies disadvantaging those of us who are people of color and low wealth white Americans? There's a common theme as to who is pushing the levers. You see this whether talking about democrats or republicans. Who has access to members of congress tend to have the most resources.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: Great. Next question is from kit in Columbus, OH. $8.4 trillion are lost due to inheritance tax policies. How would the CTC change some of these provisions?

>>DOROTHY BROWN: We could more than make permanent the expansion of the CTC if we just cut back on the exclusion for state taxes. Right now, a married couple can leave heirs approximately $23M without taxes paid. The richest Americans find ways to leave lots of wealth not subject to three state taxes. If we had a real estate tax, we'd be able to fully fund lots of programs. Just like if we had an income tax system applied to the billionaires not paying their share of taxes, we could fully fund Build Back Better forever.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: People are excited about the thinking you're doing around reparations and tax policy targeting low wealth households. Wouldn't a tax benefit to low wealth people discourage formation of wealth? How is it supporting wealth building? It may intersect with the way government eligibility is determined for other policies.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: Like with the expanded child tax credit giving families agency over what to do with resources, so would a wealth tax credit. Poor people are better money managers than not poor people. Being poor is expensive. Giving a wealth tax credit to low income households allows having agency and saving money. It's hard to save when everything costs more. You have to go to some check cashing place to cash your paycheck. The wealth tax credit, just like the expanded child tax credit, is built on the premise that poverty is a policy choice and that when you give poor Americans the same options as non poor Americans, we see really good decisions being made for their family.

I'm not really worried about a wealth tax credit in the hands of low wealth Americans not leading to good decisions. As my book showed, our system of building wealth is designed to strip wealth from Black Americans and put it into white hands. Part of what you'd have to do - home ownership doesn't build the same level of wealth for Black Americans as it does for white Americans. Don't be house poor and take out a home equity loan. Be a defensive player.

I imagine low wealth households would take lessons like those I talk about in my book that are applicable for Black Americans and anyone left out of the wealth game.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: Great. I'm sorry because I wish we had all afternoon. I want to be respectful of your time. We have one question. Would there be benefit in removing this effort from the tax policy discussion? How do other folks talk about it rather than a monthly child allowance?

>>DOROTHY BROWN: That's the age old question. Do we put it in tax code or budget so it's annually voted on? One thing of putting it in the budget is you might get it this year. Then it's voted out next year. In tax code, it's harder to take it out. I'm a tax attorney. The plumber sees the problem is a hammer and you need a nail. If you get it in the tax code, it's staying. We don't have conversation about repelling the child tax credit.

If we had it as direct subsidy, we'd have to get a level of support for it the way we do social security or things like that. We'd have to work at the grassroots getting support such that any attempt to take it away would be futile.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: Thank you so much for joining the conversation and for the work you're doing writing, speaking, testifying, etc. so policymakers understand these issues. I appreciate your time today and the way you're helping the broader public in decision makers to understand how important these issues are.

>>DOROTHY BROWN: My pleasure. Have a great rest of your conference.

>>MEREDEITH DODSON: I'm turning it over to Jos Linn.

>>JOS LINN: Not lamenting putting myself after Dr. Brown. A tough act to follow. There's good and bad news on our update from the United States poverty side. Tax season has begun. Families can file for the second half of their 2021 CTC. Remember, monthly payments last year covered half. Now they get the other half as a refund when they file taxes.

Low income workers without children finally get the increased EITC when they file taxes this year. These changes expired in December. Gains made in reducing poverty for children and workers will disappear unless credits are extended beyond the 2021 tax year. We won't get it passed from Build Back Better in November. We hope the senators agree.

In talking about the CTC, those things are in the mix. There's no guarantee they're part of a final deal. Leaders are talking about a new version of Build Back Better, but they're keeping cards close to their checks. No news doesn't mean nothing is going on. We have to remind folks what's at stake.

In December, 3.7M children were lifted above the poverty line from the CTC payments. However, payments have stopped, so the rate jumped by 5% just after losing one payment, putting millions of kids at risk of poverty. Congress must not sit and do nothing.

What can we do? Call, write and get media to pass the CTC and make revisions permanent. Dr. Brown talked about the lowest income folks always getting the credit. Expand housing choice vouchers. Try a letter to the editor, urge action networks to email, and don't let lawmakers forget what is at stake and what they can do.

February action is in the slide with talking points to take action. Tax season is the hook this month because people are filing, a good time to remind people about the EITC and tax credit.

If you were contacted by RESULTS about getting democratic senators to prioritize the CTC in negations, follow up if you haven't heard back.

Finally, we're looking ahead to what's next on our housing campaign and want feedback. Take our housing survey to share your opinion of what you think we should be working on. The link is in the slides and weekly update. The survey will be open until Friday, February 11. Take it when you can.

I'll turn it over to Executive Director Joanne Carter.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Hi I’m Joanne Carter, ED of RESULTS. And I am so glad we can be together to hear Dorothy Brown and to strategize and push for more equitable tax policies. If anyone needed a reminder of the incredible importance of your work on tax policy, and the need for structural change, I think we’ve gotten it today. The history and cumulative consequences of racist policies, the forces of inertia we’re fighting against. And the tremendous urgency of RIGHT NOW in this work.

The setbacks on Capitol Hill are real, and they’re ***massively*** disappointing. We are ***absolutely*** not backing down. And even when – and I say ***when, not if*** - we extend these provisions of the Child Tax Credit, our work still won’t be done, as Dorothy Brown just made so clear.

I’m sure many of you saw the striking new research, showing a single year of cash stipends for an infant's family can have a measurable positive effect on a baby’s brain development. ***Think about that***. Cash infusions like the Child Tax Credit – and we've heard again and again about the flexibility for parents in how to use them -- make sure families have heat in the winter, better nutrition and less stress at home. And they also have LIFELONG fundamental positive effects on how young children grow and develop.

I was inspired and moved by this research, but also ***incensed.*** To think that our policymakers would consider not extending something so transformational. The literal immediate consequences on babies’ brains of taking this basic modest, support away now. To let it disappear because of inaction is just unacceptable.

Some of you may have seen this. A few days after that new data appeared, Clara Moore, a researcher and advocate with RESULTS Experts on Poverty, published a piece citing these new findings and explaining in powerful detail what the Child Tax Credit has meant for families around the country. She wrote “This is the sort of lifeline that changes children’s lives. So why are we taking a torch to it? Why would we lift children out of poverty only to slam them back into it a few months later?”

After finishing reading Clara’s piece myself, I emailed it to Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who is arguably the Senate’s biggest champion for the Child Tax Credit. I don’t exaggerate, that he wrote back **19 minutes later** having read it, thanking Clara. It reminded me just how important it is to shore up our champions and each other.

When the political situation seems so precarious – the answer isn’t that we shrink or settle for less. We need to come at it with a bigger vision, and more united than ever. And we need each other to do that. Reminding each other that none of us are in this alone, why it matters, what’s still possible and still needed. Rallying each other, rallying the White House, rallying our members of Congress.

At this moment when action is so overdue on Capitol Hill, I think it can be easy to despair. And that’s makes this community even more essential.

Last year you moved more than 80% of the Senate Democratic Caucus onto the record supporting extending these child tax credit provisions, making them fully refundable. We are not going to let them give up now, and I am so grateful that you’re building on that work—with continued intensive outreach and media to the Child Tax Credit last year, and hardly a day has gone by in 2022 without one of your letters or op eds showing up in the media. Thank you for refusing to let up or accept Congressional inaction.

And I’m reminded once again that our work this year is about going from the emergency response to the pandemic, to locking in real structural change. This is true – and so overdue on our country’s tax policies – to cut poverty, to protect babies brains, to move us toward tackling the massive racial wealth divide. And it’s true in our global work as well.

None of you need me to remind you of the gravity of the global situation on health and poverty right now, and its consequences for millions of people.

But we have a potentially historic year in front of us – facing the tremendous need in the world amidst COVID, and progress against AIDS TB and malaria having tumbled backwards. But if we’re ambitious and focused –we have the opportunity to mobilize historic levels of resources and to reshape not just how the world responds to AIDS, TB, and malaria – but our ability to build the health systems that reach everyone in the future.

We’ll hear more on this shortly from an amazing leader driving global advocacy. Before we get to that, we’re going to take some time to think about our work together over the next year – how we organize, build power, build influence and relationships with our members of Congress. And as we do that, I hope you’ll hold tight to the opportunity and the need in front of us, and the community that’s around us. Thanks for being together. To set this next section up, I'm handing it to Ken.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Thanks, Joanne. I appreciate your comments and inspiring words to keep us going. Happy Saturday. I'm director of grassroots impact with RESULTS. We have a special activity focused on leadership roles. In addition to support to leaders, coordinators and action network, staff will provide intensive training and support to set up - [Reading from slide.]

Our goal is to build leadership throughout the organization in all of these roles that our advocates take on. We believe the extra training and support that we'll provide and camaraderie of people in the same role will lead more leaders and greater impact on our issues.

We'll open 5 breakout rooms to have conversation by leadership role. Select what you want to join by name of the breakout. For point people for members of congress, you'll stay with me. Here's guidance on making your choice. Which room do you go to?

If you're taking on one of these leadership roles in your group, join that breakout. If you have multiple roles, choose the one you know the least about. If you're not in a leadership role, go to the breakout room that sounds most interesting. Listen and ask questions.

I'll open breakout rooms now or give the opportunity to join. Scroll to the bottom of the list. Find the breakout on the lower right of your window. Scroll to the breakout rooms. Then hit the join button for the breakout room you want to join. Scroll to the bottom. Then see the join buttons to join different groups. Look at that. Join those things. We'll talk for 12ish minutes or so about this. Then we'll bring everyone back.

Those folks who are point people for members of congress, stay with me. Don't stay here by default. Look at the others. We have new advocate mentors.

[Participants joining groups.]

Keep joining rooms. We'll give one more minute to do that. Then we'll chat. Can you pull down the slide? Still a lot of people in this room. Find some other rooms.

[Host troubleshooting.]

There's a place that says breakout in the lower right. You see people's names. You have to scroll past names to the group. Does anyone want to go to a particular place that they can't see?

[Participants joining groups.]

We're going to talk about working with members of congress in this group. It's a brief conversation. Stay with me on this. We're supporting point people for members of congress with special support. I plan to share best practice and communicate with you. We'll provide essential trainings and online resources for point people for members of congress on how to build relationships, move members of congress up the champion scale, and I'll teach what that is.

We'll organize smaller groups for folks who are point people for key committee assignments to talk to each other. Feel free to share what you've found helpful as point people for members of congress and what support would be helpful this year. Keep points concise. What has been effective for you? What support would be helpful in the coming year?

>>PARTICIPANT: Going to town hall meetings and in the front row and visible. Also introducing myself prior to town hall meetings. With COVID-19, we went to Zoom meetings and were present there. Using her computer system to set up questions was helpful in the past.

Due to gerrymandering, I'm about to have a different kind of congress representative on the opposite side of most RESULTS issues. I'm looking for help in that respect.

>>KEN PATTERSON: That's helpful. Good points for current members of congress and as we come to election candidates who may eventually be representatives. Who else has tips for what makes things work for being a point person or things you want to see us do to support you in the coming year.

>>PARTICIPANT: Andy Clark. Emails with staff that you develop a relationship with, thanking them for action by a member, happy new year, etc. Also having a complete list of the staff. Is it voto voice? I don't have access but did to get an updated list without asking for help from the regional coordinator. When staff change, you need to reintroduce yourself and have an elevator speech in case the person doesn't know about RESULTS. Thanks.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Great. Thanks for those. Other folks?

>>PARTICIPANT: I'd like to be on the outreach partnership one but don't know how to get in it.

[Assignment participants to room.]

>>KEN PATTERSON: Share your thought.

>>PARTICIPANT: I've been point person to 2 different members of congress with different ideologies. One was against RESULTS issues. I would look for anything I could thank her for, unrelated to RESULTS issues. I had to be involved in charitable efforts she was doing in congress so I could say Thank you so much for doing this. I was able to build a good relationship through that.

Right now, I'm with a member of congress more in tune with RESULTS issues. He's more in favor of what we want to do in congress and also more in tune with Medicaid, college enrollment and better financial aid access. I'm going on now. I'm a college access coach with Americorp. I can thank him for work with financial aid.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Look at the full complement of your member of congress. What else are they doing and saying? How can you connect them to issues and other things that builds a relationship with him or staff? Have a broader understanding of member of congress.

>>PARTICIPANT: It's Lucinda. With a point about the offices, I found when there's a change and we don't have it on our RESULTS list that I call the office in congress, got the new person and chatted. Do they know about RESULTS? No. I directed them to congressional districts that someone else in the group does. It was casual but informal and friendly, a good way rather than going in with the elevator speech to say you're the new guy. What have you done before? Do you know about RESULTS?

>>KEN PATTERSON: Great. Call offices and ask for staff names. We can always access that information, as can regional coordinators. That's excellent. We have about 2 minutes.

>>PARTICIPANT: I passed my role as liaison to our member of congress to a person who has been with our organization with RESULTS for a couple years, a bright guy but who has a lot to learn. It's a complicated and very intense role in my experience. Having some training for brand new point persons would be good.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Great, Beth. We'll definitely do that.

>>PARTICIPANT: This is Mary Albertson in Detroit. Find out what they're doing. Go to their website for a list for their newsletter and what they're doing that month. Go on their Facebook page. They talk about things they've done. You can thank them right on Facebook and say RESULTS appreciates you doing this or whatever. Just make sure you go to the events or on Zoom. Once we get to going back to events, it's helpful to go to anything and talk to some specific aid every time you go.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Great, Mary. Sign up for their newsletters, follow them on social media and get to know them. That's important to building those relationships. This is helpful in terms of what we're planning. I'm looking for forward to supporting the member of congress point people.

Folks are coming back to the room from breakouts. Thanks for your patience in not being able to get where you want but hanging with us for point people for member of congress.

I'm going to hand this over to Caryn for quick announcements before the global part of the national webinar with Rosemary Emburu.

>>KARYNE BURY: I'll put my information in the chat. We're having our first diversity and inclusion workshop this afternoon led by Dr. Christina Günther. It's a 90 minute foundational workshop covering implement bias . . . [Reading from slide.] The goal is to have our grassroots network participate and have foundational understanding and training about how microaggressions affect our work as advocates and allow us to become better advocates. Our session today is full. We'll open a new calendar of offerings for the spring and fall.

We're having an open forum meeting February 23rd that's open to all volunteers. I want to highlight this opportunity to continue the discussion around anti-oppression efforts.

Last, I'd like to invite you to register for the inaugural back to our roots conference open to the entire grassroots network taking place at the end of February on the 26th to learn about historical context on issues we advocate on and how public policy has affected African American, Asian American and Native communities to learn to build community where everyone can thrive. Registration is open for that and upcoming events. I'll drop that in the chat.

* + - Last, we have made changes to our website. To become a more inclusive space including online, we have an accessibility button on the slide. It makes it more inclusive for those with visual or hearing impairments. By adding an accessibility button this pulls up a menu of options that enhances the content for screen readers, assists visibility by adjusting contrasts, text spacing, pausing animations, and much more.

I'll turn it back to Joanne Carter.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Thanks for sharing that and the key work. Last month on this webinar we did a preview of our work on AIDS, TB and Malaria this year – focused on ending these longstanding pandemics and diseases of poverty, and helping stop the pandemics of the future by building health services that reach everyone. This September, the Biden Administration will bring world leaders together to invest in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – which is the world’s biggest and most powerful tool against these three diseases, and for channeling global resources to community-led work

That campaign really kicks off in earnest this month. In three weeks, the Global Fund will launch its investment case – a plan for how partners around the world are prepared to respond to these pandemics, IF world leaders step up with the funding.

Many of you are working now on a sign on letter from Congress to the White House calling for a major and NEEDED increase in U.S. funding for the Global Fund next year. this is such a critical message calling for bold SU leadership. The US is heading up this global effort and our action will set the tone and the ambition for other donors all around the world as well. That’s what you’re leveraging!

This is a global campaign we’re a part of. And so I’m excited and honored to introduce our guest speaker, who is both a friend and colleague of many years, and one of the world’s leaders in this campaign.

Rosemary Emburu is the Executive Director of WACI Health, which is a member of the global ACTION partnership with RESULTS. With staff in Nairobi, Addis, and Cape Town, Rosemary and her team are leading regional advocacy on health with national governments, the African Union, and global partners. She oversees the Civil Society Platform on Health in Africa; the Global Fund Advocates Network - Africa hub; and the Africa free of New HIV Infections Network, among many other roles and Board seats she’s held. For years, she and her team have been out front on health equity, on increasing domestic health budgets, human rights and gender equity in health, and more.

I don't know how you're going to sleep in leading this effort for 5 countries. Can I ask you to start talking. You've been an advocate with and for to strengthen the Global Fund for decides. Can you talk about why building community and health systems is important and how the Global Fund is important to reaching those systems for everyone?

>>ROSEMARY EMBURU: Good afternoon there. Thank you for being allies. You help in pushing the policy end there. We see us as partners with you pushing on these other ends. I think COVID-19 is one of the moments in our life which has helped us to really understand and see firsthand the need to invest and strengthen in health systems.

From my end, what we saw with COVID-19 was an institution invested in the process and an opportunity to show how investments such as that from the Global Fund can help a continent like Africa to respond to COVID-19. One thing for us in the region was the Global Fund had been investing here for the last 20 years. Just around the world in countries and communities where the Global Fund had been investing, you could actually say that those communities were going one way or the other. The Global Fund has strengthened health systems.

As the institution gets here in the region and in some places around the world, one thing clear in our mind is we need to really invest now in HIV, TB and malaria and for future pandemics. Global Fund was the first multinational agency to put money on the table for COVID-19. That helped having other agencies step but. The Global Fund did that first. It's courageous but typical of the Global Fund to lead these processes. That allowed action in other agencies that helped mobilize and fight.

I'm drawing the lesson from COVID-19 because there's no doubt in the minds of policymakers and government around the world that health system strengthening is critical and not just for low income countries. Mostly for lower and middle income countries but everywhere. Disease knows no border. As long as one country is affected, the rest of the country is affected. I think the Global Fund will continue to play a role. The Global Fund should be supported to continue to do that.

We couldn't be happier and more grateful to the United States administration. I think this year for the Global Fund will be the biggest. One, the United States is leading this. We expect what's typical of the US, such as with the HIV response. With the Global Fund management and United States at the steering wheel, we're looking at possibly the biggest arrangement ever.

The second reason is because of what COVID-19 has done there's a lot to build in terms of responding. Also, there's a lot to do to prepare for future pandemics. In terms of investing in HIV, TB and malaria now, we know there will be other pandemics for sure. How prepared we'll be depends on how the world arises and the type of leadership we'll see. We have a historic moment with the Global Fund and US hosting. The 5 African countries are stepping up and saying we can do this based on the value we see on our end as far as Global Fund investments are concerned.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Thank you so much. That's really clear and powerful. It's been terrible in many ways, but we have to make sure it gives opportunity.

Next question - Last month, many of our grassroots joined a webinar with “No White Saviors,” based in Kampala – focused toward ending colonialism in global health. Several advocates asked about the Global Fund in that conversation. Can you reflect on work with the Global Fund in the context of work to decolonize global health – anything you would say about the Global Fund’s role in supporting civil society and communities, why you support it as a model, how its governance at global level and country level, and also where you think the Global Fund can and needs to do more?

>>ROSEMARY EMBURU: We used to say the Global Fund has saved so many lives. Now we say the Global Fund partnership has saved so many lives. The Global Fund is all the stakeholders and has such strategy. We courageously brought everyone to the partnership. One thing that's striking is the Global Fund has been living decolonizing global health from the start. It's country-driven and has communities at the center of the Global Fund partnership. Those are the elements and principles that we are asking for of all the other global health institutions and all stakeholders. We're talking about national and country leadership, communities at the center, working with the locals in terms of responding to global health responses.

The nature of the global health partnership is that the Global Fund is a learning, adapting institution on what needs to improve based on previous work. The model has a lot that we can offer the world and when it comes to decolonizing global health. The government structure is formulated so you have people directly affected. They have a seat at the Global Fund board. People from countries receive investments, High burden countries. It's pointing to where we need to go when decolonizing global health and deciding the priorities for their countries. The Global Fund does not appoint that. The Global Fund puts funds where it's needed in the country. A lot more can be done, but the Global Fund has the right frame in terms of what contribution processes, what leadership looks like, and what community and society engagement looks like. We're providing leadership in other processes and systems.

We see other global health institutions coming up and struggling with models that put people and countries at the center. The Global Fund can help with the leadership. It's a dramatic advantage to get other agencies to think about those models.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Thanks. Very helpful perspective. Including Global Fund shaping mechanisms and partnerships, as well. One last question. Then we'll open for questions in the chat.

1. One of the things we talked about on the webinar with No White Saviors was what it means not to advocate FOR people, but to advocate for ***justice*** WITH people. And I think WACI Health is really leading the way in that regard. With the kick-off meeting for the whole Global Fund replenishment hosted by the 5 country presidents this month, WACI Health and GFAN Africa are really leading the advocacy movement, setting us up globally for a successful replenishment campaign this year. Can you share some of the exciting mobilizations and advocacy you have planned, across the 5 host countries and the region, and how it fits into the strategy around replenishment? How are you planning to support leadership in the US, and how can we support your work?

>>ROSEMARY EMBURU: We're excited to have Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, the democratic republic of the Congo and south Africa. We're excited with the United States hosting later in terms of working together and championing that leadership. This is the first time African government are hosting this preparatory meeting and supporting us as champions. It's exciting to see that leadership from our region. We see it as a key movement.

To strengthen further, we're doing mobilization with different constituents. There are communities and civil society people receiving medication funded by the Global Fund, people living in high malaria regions whose mosquito nets are funded by Global Fund, people whose drugs or interventions are funded by Global Fund, etc. It's having civil society understand how the Global Fund's work has impacted us and what this moment means. That means we can get the Global Fund replenished and fully resourced so people see TB drugs, etc.

Our health systems are fragile right now because of COVID-19. They can be strengthened to mobilize in civil society and communities through webinars and meetings similar like you're having today. We've had meetings with the 5 countries at a regional level. A lot of webinars are going on. We also leverage on the partnership with members of parliament, just knowing that we are also champions. They love to partner with civil society and communities that are champions. We've had webinars to brief them about why this particular movement is important when it comes to global health, HIV, TB and malaria.

There are ministers of health, finance and other areas of state. It's not just the 5 countries. We've done mobilization in 20 countries starting in June through a church caravan. We passed from Cape Town to Cairo to light the torch for everyone here. Look! 20 years of Global Fund saving millions of lives. Imagine if we got status for replenishment. That's the kind of mobilization and the impact of the Global Fund. We must make replenishments.

Looking to the United States, we have worked collaborative with United States advocates at RESULTS and the global fight, brainstorming and strategizing about how the Africa/United States partnership can look. How can we tap into the work you're doing at the grassroots representatives and on the Hill, us bringing stories and evidence of what the Global Fund has done for our lives. You've told these stories to congresspeople and built support.

We're happy to partner and bring videos, letters, etc. We are open and listening to see what can work from that end and coming from Africa that can help the United States administration see how big of a movement it is. We want to bring everything - more stories, etc. - and commitments. There are front exchange activities. We're very much open to that and working collaboratively with media, writing open editorials between policymakers here and in the United States.

Also, we want to partner with grassroots advocates to write letters, blogs or editorials. There are many ways to partner with Africa and the United States.

>>JOANNE CARTER: I saw a lot of heads nodding. It's really exciting. I think the idea of partnering on media with videos and - if COVID-19 allows - in person visits from leaders and colleagues from Africa to DC and around the country, thinking about linking parliamentarians and members of congress. That's exciting, powerful and collectively in our hands to make as big a replenishment as possible.

Rosemary is based in Nairobi but working across Africa. There's a question of whether she's sleeping at any point in the next month. [Laughing.] Or the whole year. We're almost at time. Anything you want to end with? Brainstorming together is exciting. I look forward to it. Anything else you want to share in closing?

>>ROSEMARY EMBURU: Answering about how Global Fund impacts the national health systems, the Global Fund invests in commodities for HIV, TB and malaria that help our health system and relieve that burden from the government. It also helps healthcare workers and community health workers, the backbone of our health system. It also helps with supplies, procurement, etc. It's a real big boost to our procurement and supply chain systems. This is how we are paying salaries for some key people that the health system cannot. Also investing in the 3 diseases helps unload the health system targets, indicators and health outcomes. I wanted to speak to that.

Other than that, I'm really excited from where I sit. The work ahead can be daunting. The advocates here, including us here, look forward to working together and partnering. I can't imagine how excited we'll be once we deliver a successful Global Fund. It's usually such a moment. We look forward to that.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Likewise. I think we're saying together and to Peter Sanz, head of the Global Fund, that this will be a challenge that we asked for. Give us the challenge to raise more money than ever, not just ending diseases but defining health preparedness as equity. I look forward to working with you on that. It's an honor and pleasure. Thank you so much for joining us tonight. We look forward to the year together.

>>ROSEMARY EMBURU: Thank you.

>>JOANNE CARTER: Thank you so much. Now over to John Fawcett to close more with the action that can drive this from the United States side. Thanks.

>>JOHN FAWCETT: Thanks, Joanne and Rosemary. If you're excited about the Global Fund replenishment, I have good news. We have great and important action to get everyone to get their members of congress to voice support for an ambitious Global Fund replenishment that takes advantage of the United States taking the lead and not just covering lost ground on HIV, TB and malaria. We're excited and proud to be working with Rosemary and advocates across the world on this campaign.

We have one of the most important actions we can take on the Global Fund replenishment. It may seem counterintuitive because we heard about activities happening in 3 weeks to kick off with the 5 African countries for the replenishment process. The pledging conference will probably happen in the fall hosted by the United States. We're focused on this now because this is a bipartisan letter to the president.

It's bipartisanship. With some actions when it comes to a big spending bill where the Global Fund is a tiny part, it's more difficult to fund bipartisan support and not just on paper, but the leaders leading the letter are the head of the appropriations committee that decide funding for the Global Fund and lead on the committee for foreign policy, including global health. You're talking about party leaders for each issue asking colleagues to join us, a strong bipartisan statement.

Also timing. The conference is likely in fall. We want to take advantage of this moment, where the Biden administration is putting together the budget request. There are other events between now and then where we want United States leadership to be strong. In late March, we'll host a followup summit to highlight the role of global preparedness.

We have a number of resources to support you in taking this action.

[On screen.] [Reading from slide.]

We have a link for current signers.

[230 PM ET.]

The deadline is Friday. If you've worked on a letter, we can sometimes extend that will and try. There are no guarantees. Now is the time to reach out to congress to support this letter. Thank you for your advocacy. We're excited about this campaign and will have opportunities later this year, especially an opportunity to build champions in the House and Senate across the spectrum to build the Global Fund.

Back to Ken to close us out.

>>KEN PATTERSON: We're excited about the Global Fund. You see Rosemary was. We have great work to do. We look forward to working with you on that. I want to give a shout out to West Coast folks working on the massive fundraiser out there. You changed the date once. We're hearing great things about your work. Thank you for your support with RESULTS and for organizing everyone on the West Coast.

Tomorrow is Jos Linn's 16th anniversary for working with RESULTS as staff. Thank you for the support you've provided advocates over the years.

Put in the chat the name of your group, how many are in the room, and then we'll close and wish each other a happy valentine's day. I'll let you unmute. You should be able to unmute.

[Crosstalk.]

>>SPEAKER: Happy ending of COVID-19 year.

>>SPEAKER: Stay safe.

>>SPEAKER: Have a great day.

>>SPEAKER: Thank you, ken.

>>SPEAKER: See you next month.

[Participants signing off.]

>>SPEAKER: Great session.

[Goodbyes and thank you.]

>>SPEAKER: Look at you all together.

[Goodbyes and thank you.]

>>SPEAKER: They have a real group.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Drinking fizzy water.

>>SPEAKER: Thanks, Elizabeth and Sarah. Bye, guys.

>>SPEAKER: Be well.

>>SPEAKER: Haven't seen you in forever.

[End of meeting.] [235 PM ET.]