

# Making an Inclusive Case for Ending Global Poverty

## Applying our anti-oppression values in congressional advocacy

Our work as a movement of passionate, committed everyday people is clear: To influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. This ambitious task requires building a broad coalition of support for our issues, engaging an ever-changing group of members of Congress and their staff from across the political spectrum. From our steadfast champions to brand new members, each may have varying knowledge of, engagement with, and support for our issues.

No matter the party or politician we are engaging, we hold fast to our belief that poverty cannot end as long as oppression exists. And we remain committed to opposing all forms of oppression, including ableism, ageism, classism, colonialism, homophobia, racism, religious discrimination, sexism, transphobia, white saviorism, and xenophobia. Below are general tips for building an inclusive, bipartisan case for the end of global poverty. We have applied these tips with specific examples to RESULTS' global education.

### General Best Practices

1. ***Don't focus on helpless suffering.*** Avoid the use of pitying, colonial, or objectifying language like "poor people" or the "third world". Instead, focus on emphasizing our common humanity and common values. Every mother and father, no matter where they live, want to provide for their family and see their kids grow up healthy, receive a quality education, and reach their potential.
2. ***Emphasize local leadership.*** Teachers, nurses and doctors, health workers, community leaders, local governments, parents are working together in communities around the world to provide health, education, and opportunity. The U.S. government can help provide resources to help make more of this transformative work, led by local community leaders, possible.

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3. **Remember poverty doesn't live in a vacuum.** We know that global poverty and inequality is rooted in longstanding systems of oppression. Colonialism, resource extraction, militarism, and unjust global lending policies have all affected the availability of resources and opportunity globally.
4. **Outline how progress is possible.** We don't want to focus on suffering without addressing the root causes of that suffering. And we want to ensure the solutions are clear — outline the very specific and simple steps each policy maker can personally make and draw the line to how those steps will contribute to progress.
5. **Go beyond economics and security.** Don't minimize people down to just their economic or security contributions — we are all humans with rights and dreams. Evidence shows that a moral, values-based argument is at least as strong, if not stronger, than an economic or security based one. While investments in health, education and other areas have incredible benefits for the world, including the U.S., this shouldn't be our main argument.

## Tips if you meet resistance from a congressional office:

6. **Emphasize the foundation of bipartisanship on global poverty.** Two polls last year showed that the majority of voters — across party lines — think it's important for the U.S. to work with other countries to respond to the pandemic. And many of our issue areas have received bipartisan support over the decades: RESULTS volunteers wouldn't have secured billions of dollars in new funding without it!
7. **Focus on impact, not dollar amount.** As Senator Marco Rubio has said, if we were to zero out foreign aid, it would do nothing for the deficit but would have devastating consequences for millions. These are some of the highest impact parts of the federal budget: focus your meeting on the difference it makes.

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8. **Emphasize why you care.** Congressional Management Foundation research shows that congressional offices say a “constituent’s reasons for supporting/opposing” an issue are as influential as data showing the impact of the issue.
9. **Look for shared values or a shared experience.** While we might adapt our message for different congressional offices, we never compromise on our values. Rather than trying to mimic what you think the values of your member of Congress are, emphasize values that you think you *share* and talk about your own. Don’t try to imitate values you don’t hold: instead emphasize the values you think you *share*. Can’t figure out how? Start by talking about a shared experience – going to school yourself, being a parent, seeing a doctor, etc., and how that experience shaped you.

## Examples: Education and GPE replenishment

1. **Focus on rights and opportunity, not helpless suffering.**  
**Don’t:** Poor children around the world can’t even go to school.  
**Do:** Every child has the right to a quality education. When children can learn, and learn well, they have keys to a more just, prosperous, and equal future. As activist, Malala Yousafzai famously said “one child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world.”
2. **Emphasize partnership.**  
**Don’t:** The U.S. should save these children and give them education.  
**Do:** Teachers around the world are working to help every child achieve their dreams, and we can help stand behind them. A bold pledge to GPE will show that the U.S. is committed to working hand-in-hand with the global community.

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## 3. *Outline how progress is possible.*

**Don't:** With the COVID-19 pandemic putting more than a billion kids out of school, education around the globe is in a total crisis that we might not come back from.

**Do:** Will the White House make a \$1 billion five-year commitment at the GPE replenishment conference in July to enable 175 million more children to learn?

## 4. *Go beyond economics and security.*

**Don't:** With better education, poor people around the world will get better jobs and contribute more to the economy— which will mean more economic growth for everyone.

**Do:** Education is a human right that is about so much more just learning. Schools offer protection, nutrition, play, and a springboard for children to reach their potential. Evidence also shows that quality education is linked to broader social benefits — from [poverty reduction](#) to [health improvements](#) to [gender equality](#) and more.

## 5. *Emphasize the foundation of bipartisanship.*

**Do:** A national poll last year showed that [96% of voters](#) – across party lines – think it's important for the U.S. to work with other countries to respond to the pandemic. And I'm proud that global health has had deep bipartisan support for decades.

## 6. *Emphasize why you care.*

**Don't:** I know you aren't interested in foreign aid but let me tell you about the security benefits for the U.S. if we invest in education overseas.

**Do:** As the first woman in my family to graduate from college, I know how important it is for a girl to be able to learn, and learn well, so she can achieve her dreams.