

Looking ahead to 2021

New opportunities for international development

2020 saw RESULTS campaigners take action on global health and education, and the effectiveness of the UK's aid spending and policy. But the COVID-19 pandemic slashed into progress made on poverty, health and education worldwide. With fewer children being immunised, malnutrition on the rise, and infectious diseases like TB becoming more widespread, UK aid a vital way to help the world recover from the pandemic and strengthen health and education systems in 2021. As well as ensuring international development efforts are properly funded, international donors such as the UK must remain committed to poverty alleviation and ensuring marginalised people can access the services they need.

This year, we are preparing to oppose proposed aid cuts, and with the help of our MPs, ensure the Government steps up at every opportunity to show leadership on international development. There are important new opportunities coming up in 2021. The UK will co-host a summit to fund the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) this summer, is President of the G7 this year, and will also host the UN climate change conference ('COP26'). The UK Government must also play a key part in the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit in December. But we can't take UK leadership on international development for granted. As advocates, we will need to push the Government to make the most of these opportunities for change. This month, we're asking you to plan your campaigning for 2021 and familiarise yourself with the issues you'll be working on.

UK aid

Last month, we were dismayed by the Government's unacceptable decision to [spend less money on overseas aid in 2021](#), reducing the 0.7% of national income currently allocated to development to 0.5% - a cut of around 30% or £5 billion. UK aid has helped support millions of children to gain an education, to receive a nutritious diet, and to receive essential vaccinations. This must continue, especially at a time when the need in the world is increasing, with [150 million more people](#) vulnerable to extreme poverty.

Spending 0.7% on aid or 'Official Development Assistance' (ODA) is enshrined in UK law, so cuts can only be made by repealing the existing legislation. Parliament will vote on this decision, and the vote is expected to happen in the next few months.

That's where you come in! Campaigners like you will be crucial in ensuring that as many MPs as possible show up to vote against the cuts. Thank you to everyone who has [taken action](#) on this issue so far, and we hope you'll join us in the next steps of the campaign. We recently won our campaign to [retain Parliamentary scrutiny of ODA](#), which is testament to the difference we can make together!

Nutrition

Malnutrition is currently linked to just under [half of all deaths in children under 5 years old](#), and COVID-19 has increased the problem. [Up to 80 million](#) more people could experience malnutrition as a result of lost livelihoods, increasing food prices, and lack of access to nutrition services. Nutrition is an integral part of overall health and well-nourished children are more likely to do better at school and grow up to be healthy adults.

The next global summit for [Nutrition for Growth](#) (N4G) was postponed because of COVID-19, and is now expected in Japan in December 2021. But the UK's nutrition commitments came to an end in 2020 and have not been renewed. We are asking the government to pledge renewed funding to N4G as soon as possible, promising to reach at least 50 million women and children with nutrition programmes, and committing at least £120 million per year on ODA that directly targets the reduction of malnutrition.

Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis has long been the world's most deadly infectious disease, [killing around 1.5 million people in 2019](#) (though this has now been [exceeded by COVID-19](#)). Across the world, health facilities and resources

have been diverted away from programmes tackling diseases like TB, HIV and malaria to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing diagnoses, and leaving many patients without treatment or support. It is estimated that an extra 190,000 additional people will die of TB because of this reduction in TB resources in 2020 alone.

In 2020, we asked you to campaign for the Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and Malaria to receive [additional funding for its COVID-19 response](#). However, the aid cuts announced in December this much harder. It is also feared that the aid cuts [could undermine research](#) into the world's deadliest diseases.

Immunisation

In 2020, the UK showed global leadership by hosting the Global Vaccine Summit at which \$8.8 billion was raised for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. [300 million more children](#) can now be immunised against diseases like measles and polio. The WHO African region was also [declared polio free](#) last year, a huge milestone made possible by funding for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and the tireless efforts of dedicated health workers and over [20 million volunteers](#).

However, routine immunisation has been hugely disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic, threatening to reverse years of progress. For example, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the two countries in which wild polio remains, it is estimated that [50 million children](#) missed their polio vaccines because of the pandemic. In 2021, it will be vital to ensure that the UK actually delivers on important financial pledges made to the GPEI in 2019 and to Gavi in 2020 according to their original timelines. Ensuring the money is [disbursed in a timely manner](#) will help keep disruption of services to a minimum, ensuring that every child is protected from the polio.

Education

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread, millions of children were out of school due to national lockdowns. [30 million of them](#) will probably never return to formal education, with girls and disabled children most at risk of dropping out. Even before the pandemic, global education was seriously underfunded and [we've been calling for](#) the Government to increase its allocation of funding for education to 15% of the aid budget. The UK Government made a [manifesto commitment](#) to improving girls' education worldwide, and has also agreed to host the 2021 pledging summit for the [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE), the world's largest fund dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries. This is a sign that the Government is willing to show leadership on education, and an opportunity for advocates to make sure that it does.

In 2018, the schooling of [40 million children](#) was affected by natural hazards. The climate crisis will [increase the incidence](#) of these kind of events, which affect the most marginalised children the worst. With the UK [hosting the UN's 'COP26' climate summit](#) in Glasgow this year, it must take this chance to limit the impact of climate change on access to education.

G7 summit

In 2021, the UK will host the [G7 summit](#), setting the agenda for discussions with other high-income countries. This is a unique opportunity to mobilise concerted action on pressing international development issues. The summit must focus on the need for strong health systems to aid the global pandemic recovery and to mitigate the impact of future health emergencies. Health systems must be able to vaccinate children, treat infectious diseases, provide nutritious food, and respond effectively COVID-19. The summit also provides a chance to take meaningful steps to get education systems back on track.

Take action!

- **Familiarise yourself with the campaigns we expect in 2021.** Have a group planning session on Zoom. See the [Background Sheet](#) for tips.
- **If you are active on social media, keep an eye out for International Day of Education on 24 January - we'll be sharing some resources in 'Newsflash'.**

Let us know that you've taken this month's action by emailing Campaigns Coordinator Ruthie Walters at ruthie.walters@results.org.uk