



UNICEF CONTRIBUTION

Norway's Prosjekt Vendepunkt White Paper

Placing children's rights at the center of principled, effective and future-fit humanitarian and development cooperation, with a strategic focus on fragility, conflict and resilience

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Executive Summary

Norway and UNICEF's partnership: for every child

Norway and UNICEF share a partnership of more than 75 years, grounded in a common commitment to children's rights, principled humanitarian action, gender equality, inclusion and a strong multilateral system. Across generations, Norway has been a sincere champion for children, using its diplomatic voice, development policy and predictable investments to translate global commitments into practical gains for children and young people (see Annex 2 and 3). UNICEF's new Strategic Plan 2026-2029 emphasizes scale, impact and being a cost-effective partner for combining humanitarian, development and peace outcomes in the most complex operating environments. This aligns well with Norway's Prosjekt Vendepunkt priorities of cost-effectiveness, results and principled action, and UNICEF appreciates Norway's continued commitment to children, whose rights and well-being are often the first to be compromised when international cooperation weakens.

Global context for children

In 2026, there are 412 million children who live in extreme monetary poverty, surviving on less than \$3 per day. Over 200 million children across 133 countries and territories require humanitarian assistance, driven by protracted conflict, climate shocks, economic strain, and declining global development financing. These pressures are compounded by weakening respect for international humanitarian law and long-term megatrends such as demographic shifts, environmental crises, and rapid technological change.

By the 2050s, the global child population will stabilize at 2.3 billion, concentrated largely in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa—regions facing acute challenges in basic services, climate vulnerability, and digital access. Nearly 1 billion children already live in countries at high risk of climate and environmental hazards, and children in developing countries face worsening poverty due to slow growth and high debt burden. Currently, only 17% of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are on track, and progress on more than one third of the targets has either stalled or regressed.

The stakes for children, in numbers

200 million children across 133 countries and territories need humanitarian assistance in 2026	450 million children live in fragile, conflict, and violence affected settings, up to 57 percent of the population there	1 billion children already live in countries at high risk of climate and environmental hazards
41,000+ grave violations against children verified in 2024, up from over 30,000 in 2023	16,482 children formerly associated with armed groups supported to reintegrate in 2024, a 51 per cent rise	1 in 3 children aged 6–23 months receives the minimum dietary diversity required for healthy brain development and growth
273 million primary and secondary age children are out of school worldwide	6 million more children are at risk of leaving school by the end of 2026 due to aid cuts	US\$4 trillion annual financing gap stands between current investment and the Sustainable Development Goals for children

A renewed and reinforced commitment to child-focused ODA

ODA investments are effective, especially when it comes to child-focused investments: One of the biggest success stories of ODA has been the halving of the global under-five mortality rate since the start of the 21st century. More specific child-sensitive interventions have been assessed based on their economic returns:

Intervention	Return on investment
Child immunization	\$54 return for every \$1 invested
Each additional year of schooling	increases annual earning by 10%
Early Childhood Development investments	return \$6 to \$17 per \$1 spent (context specific)
Child Nutrition investments	can return \$23 for every \$1 spent

The evidence is clear, every Krone Norway invests in children generates a tenfold social value; by prioritizing children, Norway not only upholds its values but also maximizes the impact and sustainability of its development cooperation.

Furthermore, ODA closely aligns with Norway's national interests of peace and prosperity: Robust evidence shows that ODA delivers tangible economic returns for donor countries themselves. As security concerns intensify across Europe and beyond, defense and military investments alone are insufficient to address the root causes of instability and conflict. True security and sustainable peace require comprehensive, forward-looking actions and investments to be made, often far beyond our borders.

Investing in children is one of the most effective strategies for promoting stability and preventing conflict and community violence. By prioritizing the youngest generations through equitable access to basic social protection services, fostering child participation, advancing peacebuilding through education, addressing psychosocial needs, and supporting the reintegration of children affected by conflict, ODA strengthens the very foundations of resilient and productive societies.

Focusing on the most vulnerable but also the most promising generation

A renewed development cooperation strategy should prioritize fragile, conflict- and violence-affected (FCV) settings, which are home to 450 million children and some of the world's youngest populations, with children accounting for 42–57 per cent of all residents. These contexts are home to more than 60 per cent of the world's out-of-school children and the vast majority of preventable child deaths. Without an explicit focus on FCV settings in Norway's new development cooperation approach, investments risk failing to reach those with the greatest needs. The consequences are immediate: aid cuts could disrupt nutrition services for 14 million children, healthcare for more than 20 million, and water and sanitation services for 11.5 million. Education and child protection systems are also under severe strain, with an additional 6 million children at risk of leaving school by the end of 2026.

A child-focused financing structure

UNICEF advocates for a child-centred, rights-based, and reform-oriented approach to ODA. This includes predictable and flexible multilateral financing; sustained investment in humanitarian action, child protection, and education in emergencies; support for the child survival agenda; development cooperation that

strategically advances the humanitarian-development-peace nexus by strengthening national systems and localization; and catalytic investments in innovation, girls' empowerment, disability inclusion, digital public goods, and anticipatory action.

Norway can build on its strong financing toolbox by maintaining a balanced mix of grants, loans, guarantees, and blended finance, while increasingly leveraging private capital to advance children's rights. The challenge is not simply to mobilize more resources, but to create a financing architecture that matches the realities of children's lives. Children require support across the continuum—from emergency assistance to education, health, social protection, clean water, protection services, and pathways to opportunity. No single financing instrument can meet these diverse needs. Norway's comparative advantage lies in its ability to combine values-based leadership with innovative and diversified financing. Preserving and strengthening this approach will be essential to delivering on the ambitions of the Global Financing Compact.

The Way Forward

Through Prosjekt Vendepunkt, Norway has an opportunity to define a forward-looking model of principled and cost-effective development policy. UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 provides a unique opportunity to align closely with this vision. It advances priorities such as human development, gender equality, climate resilience, and support to fragile contexts through an approach that emphasizes prevention, country ownership, and impact at scale. As a multilateral partner with a presence in 190 countries and territories, and significant procurement and operational reach, UNICEF offers strong value for money. By leveraging its catalytic role, convening power, and country presence, UNICEF helps drive nationally owned, outcome-level results for children and young people.

A child-centred approach offers Norway a clear strategic compass for a new era of development cooperation. By investing in children's survival, learning, protection, and empowerment, Norway advances the foundations of peace, stability, human capital, and long-term prosperity. Children and young people are not peripheral to development—they are the development agenda. Prioritizing high-impact investments in girls, adolescents, and children with disabilities delivers some of the highest social and economic returns available while building more resilient and inclusive societies - in the shared interest of Norway and the wider international community.

CALL TO ACTION

UNICEF calls on Norway to enshrine five specific commitments in its 2027-2030 ODA White Paper:

1. Maintain ODA at 1% GNI with a minimum 25% child-focused allocation;
2. Direct at least 50% of development cooperation to fragile and conflict-affected settings;
3. Name the CAAC mandate and protection of civilians as explicit White Paper priorities;
4. Insert a child marker in all ODA funding and require gender-transformative and disability-inclusive programming standards across all ODA;
5. Provide multi-year, flexible financing to UNICEF spanning humanitarian and development cycles for reduced fragmentation and greater effectiveness and efficiency.

These five commitments would contribute to making Norway's 2027-2030 strategy the most child-centred, effective and efficient in Norwegian history, a legacy that would define Norway's global development identity for a generation.

Annex 1: UNICEF's Suggestions on Norway's Humanitarian and Development Cooperation Approach

Suggestions for Norway's Humanitarian Strategy

- **Continue to champion principled humanitarian action and access**, the protection of civilians and efforts to uphold international law. We are witnessing times in which the rules-based order is fundamentally questioned, grave violations are committed against children on an unprecedented scale, and attacks on civilian infrastructure are normalized. More than ever Norway's Humanitarian Strategy should retain its strong focus on supporting principled humanitarian action, the protection of civilians - including children- and ensuring safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access and reasserting international law. Norway is seen as a credible and competent actor in this space and should leverage that essential role at a time when it is most needed. For instance, Norway's advocacy and programmatic leadership on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), and their humanitarian consequences on civilians, is critical to promote the implementation of the Political Declaration on EWIPA.
- **Safeguard the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Mandate.** The CAAC mandate is a unique tool created by the Security Council to deliver tangible gains for children, such as reintegration services for children previously associated with armed groups and forces, and to elevate the situation of children in conflict to the Security Council. As the mandate is under strain, Norway should continue to play a key role in advocating for and supporting the mandate. In addition to lending its political support, the monitoring and reporting mechanism that underpins advocacy efforts globally requires sustainable resources to continue ensuring that grave violations perpetrated against children are brought to the attention of decision-makers and inform programming.
- **Continue strong and consistent leadership on gender-based violence (GBV).** Given the current political climate with attacks on gender equality and financial cuts to areas of humanitarian programming that disproportionately impact women and girls, Norway's support on gender-based violence interventions are, arguably, more crucial than ever. We need continued advocacy that response services survivors must be a non-negotiable component of humanitarian response; that all sectors must take proactive measures to ensure their programming is as safe and accessible as possible for women and girls; and that achieving both requires the right staffing/expertise. Innovative models such as digital platforms and embedding GBV response services within other sectors offer promising potential to deliver and are especially relevant given the restricted funding environment.
- **Invest in the Centrality of Protection (CoP).** Norway should preserve and increase its role as a champion of protection in humanitarian action. In addition to its thematic focus areas, Norway could catalyze efforts to integrate the Centrality of Protection approach into both policy and practice of humanitarian organizations. This shift would allow the humanitarian sector to make use of its limited resources to prevent and address severe protection risks and threats affecting civilians in conflict through collective advocacy and multisectoral programming, underpinned by a humanitarian leadership that places protection at the center of all humanitarian action.
- **Support a more ambitious approach to localization.** In line with the Humanitarian Reset, Norway should support a more ambitious approach to localization, complementing the current focus on partnerships with local civil society and NGOs to also prioritize support to national and local authorities as the first line of emergency response. This is grounded in the primary responsibility of States, with humanitarian action increasingly focused on strengthening national service delivery systems for both preparedness and response, leveraging domestic financing for humanitarian outcomes, and supporting shock-responsive social protection. This should be complemented by sustained investment in community

systems, in local civil society and private sector actors, and by empowering regional organizations as a critical second line of response, leveraging their proximity, contextual knowledge, and political relationships. Together, these shifts can foster national and regional ownership, improve relevance and timeliness, and reduce dependency on international deployments.

- **Promote Humanitarian Diplomacy:** Norway should preserve and strengthen its commitment to humanitarian diplomacy, with an increased focus on strengthening the protection of children and young people in crisis and conflict. This aligns with Norway's overarching humanitarian commitments, including to international law, and humanitarian diplomacy efforts should include proactive diplomatic efforts to address the impact on children of:
 - i. the use of explosive weapons in populated areas;
 - ii. the use of emerging technologies in conflict, including drones and AI;
 - iii. the damage and destruction of the infrastructure children rely on for their survival and wellbeing – including schools, hospitals, water and sanitation infrastructure, and energy infrastructure;
 - iv. the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence on conflict and crisis;
 - v. humanitarian access constraints and attacks on humanitarian personnel; and the
 - vi. lack of accountability for perpetrators of violations, and those who support them.

Where possible, Norway could support coordinated humanitarian diplomacy efforts of UN partners, including those emerging from UN80 and the Humanitarian Reset, such as the Collaborative Initiative on Humanitarian Diplomacy.

- **Education in Emergencies:** World Bank evidence shows that every year of quality education increases individual earnings by approximately 10%. In fragile settings, educated youth are significantly less likely to be recruited into armed groups, making education simultaneously a humanitarian intervention, a development investment and a conflict prevention tool. The return on Norway's education in emergencies investment is therefore measurable across multiple policy objectives simultaneously.
- **Promote Education as lifesaving.** Norway should sustain its leadership on education in emergencies, in line with its humanitarian vision of saving lives, alleviating suffering and upholding human dignity. As recognized in the Strategy, education is both humanitarian assistance and a critical protection measure, providing children and adolescents with safety, psychosocial support and a sense of normalcy, while serving as an entry point to other essential services. The Strategy would be strengthened by a clearer people-focused approach that recognizes education as an investment in children's learning, skills and agency, supporting system strengthening, recovery and resilience in protracted crises. This is particularly important amid prolonged displacement, repeated shocks and widening funding gaps, where education remains underfunded despite its central role in protection and recovery. Education also reflects the priorities of crisis-affected populations. Consultations with more than 1,600 girls and boys in Gaza identified it as one of their most urgent needs, with children calling for "real schools" that provide safety, play, skill-building and psychosocial support. Norway should therefore reaffirm its commitment to predictable financing, continued advocacy for education in emergencies, and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, including support for States to operationalize commitments, strengthen monitoring and expand global endorsement.
- **Girls' Education in Emergencies:** Girls' education is among Norway's single highest-return investments in gender equality, stability and human capital. Educated girls marry later, have fewer and healthier children, earn more, and are more likely to educate their own children, creating intergenerational multiplier effects. In conflict settings, keeping girls in school is simultaneously a protection intervention, a GBV prevention measure, and a long-term peacebuilding investment. Norway could champion a dedicated girls' education in emergencies financing track, with explicit targets for girls' enrolment,

retention and learning outcomes in fragile, conflict and vulnerable settings, and should condition Safe Schools Declaration support on gender-disaggregated reporting.

- **Elevate Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.** We encourage Norway to further elevate protection from a cross-cutting theme to a central operational priority. In many crises, protection remains underfunded relative to life-saving sectors, despite being foundational to survival and recovery. Norway plays a critical role in advocating for humanitarian actors to prioritize strengthening inclusive, resilient and sustainable national child protection systems from the outset of responses, including through sustained investment in government and civil society social service workforces, deployed at scale in affected and underserved areas. Norway should continue to reaffirm the importance of the Nexus approach, recognizing the central role of national authorities in preventing and responding to violence against children through coordination, planning, oversight and service delivery, while accounting for complexities in conflict affected contexts. National governments should be engaged across central and sub national levels and relevant ministries.
- **Prevent hunger, malnutrition and famine.** We welcome Norway's commitment to tackling the global hunger crisis through a comprehensive approach, and to actively work to prevent hunger in areas of armed conflict. Norway should continue and expand this effort to include a deliberate focus on nutrition crises, recognizing that conflict remains a leading driver of hunger and malnutrition. In 2025, famine was declared in both Gaza Strip and Sudan, a stark reminder of the consequences when parties to conflict fail to ensure civilians' safe, unimpeded access to food, health care, nutrition services, and safe water. In its strategy, we encourage Norway to maintain a focus on humanitarian access and protection of the infrastructure children rely on. Children facing acute malnutrition are particularly dependent on facilities providing nutrition, clean water, and health care. In addition, in its humanitarian assistance, Norway should support a multisectoral response to malnutrition and famine that includes nutrition, health, water, sanitation, and protection programmes, with a focus on children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers, who face the greatest risks. Norway can also champion data collection for famine prevention and response and catalyze early warning systems to enable timely action, which saves lives and reduces costs of a delayed response.
- **Prioritize Anticipatory Action.** For children, anticipatory action is especially critical because developmental windows for nutrition, cognitive development and education are irreversible, and a child who misses the first 1,000 days or is out of school for two years cannot simply catch up. While Norway's Humanitarian Strategy prioritizes preparedness and anticipatory action, greater emphasis could be given to scaling predictable, trigger-based financing and embedding Anticipatory Action systematically across sectors and country responses. Acting early is critical to reduce humanitarian needs, protect children, and deliver higher value for money, particularly as climate-related and protracted crises intensify. Support to this agenda includes championing the institutionalization of Anticipatory Action within the humanitarian system (e.g., CERF, pooled funds, national systems), engaging on the climate agenda and investing in data, triggers, and local capacity. Anticipatory action can also play a critical role for famine prevention and to protect children from preventable death from malnutrition. By supporting such actions, Norway can play a key role in accelerating the shift from a reactive response to a proactive, risk-informed humanitarian action at scale.
- **Humanitarian Financing:** In line with Norway's current support to good humanitarian donorship, Norway can further increase predictable, flexible, multi-year financing, including in protracted crises, to avoid repeated stop-start programming cycles that undermine strengthening national service delivery systems. UNICEF also recognizes the importance of other funding modalities, including support to pooled funds, such as the CERF and CBPFs, which have enabled UNICEF to respond to key crises as they emerge, including many that are away from the media spotlight. UNICEF emphasizes the value of diverse funding modalities for the system – including core funding for mandated agencies, such as UNICEF, softly

earmarked support to bolster certain sectors or issues (e.g. on nutrition) and pooled funding that facilitate collective action under the leadership of the ERC at the global level and HCs and HCTs at the country level.

Humanitarian action and financing

- Humanitarian needs are rising as resources are tightening, making the quality of financing as important as its volume. In 2026, UNICEF is appealing for US\$7.66 billion to reach 73 million children across 133 countries and territories, while overall income has declined and public-sector core resources have fallen to their lowest level in nearly two decades. This gap cannot be filled through project-by-project funding alone. A balanced mix of core resources, flexible humanitarian thematic funding, softly earmarked funding, country-specific support and pooled funds is therefore essential. Together, they allow the system to respond rapidly, sustain technical capacity, support coordination, invest in preparedness, maintain services in neglected crises and protect children when crises fall out of the headlines. More specifically:
- UNICEF welcomes Norway's strong support to pooled funds such as CERF and country-based pooled funds, which remain vital to collective humanitarian response. At the same time, pooled funding cannot replace predictable support to mandated agencies with operational presence, technical expertise and coordination responsibilities. UNICEF leads or co-leads global clusters for WASH, nutrition, education and child protection, requiring sustained capacity before, during and after crises. UNICEF's 2024 humanitarian results show what principled flexible financing delivers: 41 million people reached with clean water and sanitation, 24.7 million children vaccinated against measles, 9.2 million children supported with education, 22.3 million children reached with mental health and psychosocial support, and 17.7 million children and women reached with gender-based violence prevention and response services.
- Flexible and multi-year funding is especially critical for children, whose needs cannot wait for short-term funding cycles to restart. Predictable financing helps retain trained staff, sustain local partnerships, procure supplies efficiently, strengthen national systems and adapt as crises evolve. Norway's Humanitarian Innovation Programme and collaboration with Innovation Norway also offer an important opportunity to scale practical solutions for children and families in crisis. Laaha, UNICEF's virtual safe space designed by and for women and girls in humanitarian settings, has reached nearly 2 million users across 20 countries in 14 languages, with 76 per cent of users reporting that they feel safer and better informed. It shows how catalytic innovation funding can expand safe, survivor-centred access to GBV information and support, including in low-connectivity and crisis-affected settings.
- **Overcoming fragmentation - Support for the revised Cluster Coordination System.** The Cluster System plays a crucial normative, standard setting and quality assurance role due to its sector-specific leadership, coordination and technical expertise and its broad participation and acceptance among international and national actors. As per the recent simplification of the Cluster System, emanating from the Humanitarian Reset, UNICEF will continue to lead the Nutrition and WASH clusters and to co-lead the Education cluster. Further, UNICEF retains accountability in its role as the Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) on Child Protection. In the Strategy, Norway should support the revised Cluster System, including locally led coordination and area-based coordination models, as well the integration of protection accountability frameworks across sectors (health, education, WASH, food security), including clear indicators for the prevention of harm. Within the Protection Cluster, Norway can also promote the need to retain technical depth and dedicated coordination to address the range of protection concerns, including those related to children, ensure effective engagement with government counterparts, and maintain strong provider of last resort capacity, particularly at the field level.

UNICEF Suggestions on Norway's Development Cooperation Approach

1. A systems-focused, child-centered development approach

Norway's partnership with UNICEF can help advance a development agenda that both saves lives and builds long-term capabilities. This requires an applied Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach: delivering essential services when children face crisis, while strengthening the national systems that prevent future shocks, reduce vulnerability and enable children to thrive.

A continued focus on children's rights would give Norway's future development cooperation a clear strategic anchor. Children and young people are not a sectoral concern; they are central to Norway's priorities on peace and reconciliation, rule of law, human rights, education, gender equality, climate resilience, health, food security, inclusion and humanitarian protection. When children survive, learn, are protected from violence and exclusion, and grow into healthy adults, societies are more stable, more productive and better equipped to manage shocks. When these foundations are denied, the costs—in displacement, fragility, conflict and lost human capital—extend well beyond national borders.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

Predictable and flexible funding with focus on:

- Integrated delivery across humanitarian, development and peace contexts
- System strengthening for sustained access to essential services for children

2. Addressing the global learning crisis through system strengthening

Education should remain a central pillar of Norway's development cooperation. The scale of the global learning crisis remains staggering. Twenty-nine million five-year-olds are missing out on organized early learning; 273 million primary and secondary school-age children are out of school; and one in five young people aged 15–24 are not in education, employment or training.

Even where children are in school, learning is often delayed: 70 per cent of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a simple sentence. Learning is also increasingly disrupted by crisis and climate shocks, with 234 million children living in crisis-affected contexts and nearly a quarter of a billion children facing learning disruptions due to climate change in 2024 alone.

Norway's continued leadership should therefore focus not only on access, but also on learning outcomes, skills, inclusion and system resilience, with particular attention to girls, children with disabilities and children in fragile and climate-affected settings.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Contribute to reaching 350 million children and adolescents with improved learning and skills
- Prioritize girls, children with disabilities and crisis-affected populations in education investments
- Support to reach 160 million more young people, of whom 80 million are adolescent girls and young women, acquiring skills for work and life

3. Strengthening child protection systems as a foundation for stability

Child protection is essential to sustainable development. Violence, exploitation, harmful practices, lack of legal identity and weak social welfare systems undermine both children's rights and long-term stability. Scaled investment is needed in social service workforces, justice systems, birth registration, parenting support, online protection and community-based services.

These are not stand-alone interventions; they are core components of resilient national systems. Strengthening child protection systems contributes directly to broader development outcomes by reducing violence, strengthening social cohesion and enabling children to safely access education, health and other essential services.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Support efforts to protect 350 million children from violence
- Scale investments in birth registration, social services, justice and community-based protection systems

4. Advancing gender equality as a development accelerator

Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women should be embedded across Norway's development cooperation. Investments in girls' education, ending child marriage, adolescent girls' health and protection from gender-based violence are among the highest-return investments in stability and human capital.

These investments generate intergenerational benefits, improving health, education, income and resilience outcomes for families and communities. A gender-transformative approach should therefore be applied across sectors, addressing the structural barriers and social norms that limit girls' opportunities and access to services.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Embed gender-transformative programming across sectors
- Deliver measurable outcomes for adolescent girls across education, health and protection
- Reach 33 million young people, of whom 18 million are women, securing livelihoods

5. Building climate resilience and protecting child-critical systems

Children today face growing risks from climate change, environmental degradation and unsafe environments. Development cooperation should support governments to strengthen the resilience, adaptive capacity and continuity of child-critical systems, including health, education, water, sanitation, nutrition, social protection and protection services.

This requires integrated, systems-level approaches that strengthen planning, resilient infrastructure, preparedness, local response capacity and disaster risk reduction, ensuring that essential services remain functional during crises and shocks.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Strengthening resilience of child-critical systems for 300 million children who will benefit from climate-resilient water and/or sanitation, health and education
- Scale climate adaptation and risk reduction efforts targeting 200 million children who will be reached by solutions that reduce the risks of climate disasters and environmental hazards

6. Embedding disability inclusion across development cooperation

Disability inclusion should be treated as a core feature of effective development cooperation. Children with disabilities are disproportionately excluded from services, particularly in fragile and crisis contexts, yet their inclusion is both a rights imperative and a development efficiency gain.

Norway has built a strong legacy on inclusion and protection. Its support to disability-inclusive humanitarian action has helped ensure that children with disabilities are not left invisible in emergencies. Investments in

birth registration, inclusive education, social protection and assistive technology have enabled more children to access services, identity, protection and participation.

Looking ahead, Norway can further strengthen this leadership by making disability inclusion a consistent feature across both humanitarian and development financing, rather than a stand-alone priority. Embedding inclusion across sectors will be essential to reaching the most marginalized children and improving overall effectiveness.

Norway can continue to lead by supporting a twin-track approach: strengthening the inclusiveness of mainstream systems while investing in targeted services such as assistive technology, early identification, disability support services and caregiver support.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Mainstream disability inclusion across all sectors
- Contribute to 90 million children screened and accessing disability support services and assistive technology, when needed, for their development and participation
- Expand access to assistive technologies and inclusive services

7. Advancing digital transformation and innovation

Digital transformation and innovation should be central to Norway's next generation of development cooperation. Norway and UNICEF have been key partners in advancing Digital Public Goods and open-source solutions that support governments in expanding access to health, education and social services. As countries increasingly rely on digital systems for service delivery, identity, data and public finance, it is critical that child rights are embedded from the outset.

UNICEF can support Norway in advancing digital cooperation that is inclusive, rights-based and safe—ensuring that new technologies expand access, reduce inequities and reach the most underserved children and communities.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- Build on the previous success and further scale Digital Public Goods and open-source solutions to expand equitable access to essential services
- Ensure digital systems are safe, inclusive and rights-based, including data protection and child safeguarding
- Use digital platforms to expand access to education, social protection and birth registration systems at scale

8. Strengthening public finance for children and leveraging innovative financing

As development financing gaps continue to widen, Norway has an opportunity to maximize impact by investing in stronger public finance systems for children and scaling innovative financing solutions together with UNICEF. UNICEF helps governments mobilize, allocate, and spend domestic resources more effectively for children through tax policy support, public expenditure reviews, and child-responsive budgeting. Today, UNICEF supports child-responsive budgeting in more than 100 countries, helping governments identify financing gaps, protect essential social spending during periods of fiscal pressure, and improve the efficiency, equity, and transparency of public expenditure.

In Kenya, just US\$62,500 in UNICEF core resources helped protect US\$65 million in government funding for health, education, and child protection—more than a 1,000-fold leverage effect.

UNICEF also supports governments to strengthen social protection systems, expand child benefits, and improve targeting mechanisms so that the most vulnerable children and families are reached. In highly indebted and fiscally constrained countries, UNICEF works directly with ministries of finance to ensure that efforts to reduce public spending do not come at the expense of investments critical to children's wellbeing and future prosperity.

At the same time, innovative financing offers substantial opportunities to unlock additional resources for children. Partnerships with development banks, international financial institutions, and private-sector partners should be strengthened to deploy child-focused blended finance, guarantees, results-based financing, and other instruments that attract capital toward measurable outcomes for children. These approaches help bridge financing gaps while strengthening country ownership and sustainability.

Strategies and Targets Norway Can Support and Contribute To:

- **Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII):** Supported by Nordic partners among others, the VII enables governments to procure vaccines and essential supplies without delays caused by temporary liquidity constraints. Since 2020, the mechanism has accelerated the delivery of more than US\$1.7 billion worth of vaccines and supplies across over 100 countries, ensuring that children receive lifesaving interventions on time.
- **Child-focused bonds and debt swaps:** UNICEF is helping develop standards that connect capital market investments directly to results for children. UNICEF has also advanced debt-swap initiatives, including in Egypt, where more than US\$14 million has been mobilized for investments in education, health, and nutrition.
- **Today & Tomorrow Initiative (TTI):** UNICEF's pioneering climate and disaster risk financing mechanism integrates preparedness, risk transfer, and resilience-building for children. The initiative has already delivered rapid cyclone-response payouts, reached hundreds of thousands of children, and financed resilience measures across multiple countries. UNICEF and its partners are now working to scale TTI into a broader multi-hazard platform capable of protecting children from an increasing range of climate and disaster risks.

By combining stronger domestic resource mobilization with innovative financing solutions, Norway and UNICEF can help countries build more resilient financing systems, safeguard investments in children, and unlock new resources at a scale commensurate with today's development challenges.

Annex 2: Examples of Results and Impact — UNICEF–Norway Partnership Portfolio

Select examples of results and achievements:

Driving Innovation with Norway's Humanitarian Innovation Programme

UNICEF's partnership with Innovation Norway, through the Humanitarian Innovation Programme (HIP), has become an important driver of innovation in humanitarian action. Since 2022, Innovation Norway has provided more than USD 4 million to UNICEF for humanitarian innovation, supporting ten innovation grants, of which three have successfully scaled beyond pilot stage. The partnership focuses on developing practical solutions that make humanitarian response more effective, accountable and cost-efficient, including customized emergency kits, inclusive services for children with disabilities, digital tools to identify child malnutrition, clean energy solutions, and innovative nutrition approaches.

The partnership is already delivering results on a scale. UNICEF-supported innovations financed through Innovation Norway have reached more than 3 million people globally. One flagship example is Laaha ("For Her"), the first digital platform designed by and for women and girls in humanitarian settings to address gender-based violence. Available across 20 countries and in 14 languages, Laaha has reached nearly 2 million users, with 76 per cent of users reporting that they feel safer and better informed after using the platform. Another successful innovation, Kits that Fit, allows affected families to choose the humanitarian items most relevant to their needs and has reached approximately 1.5 million people. Together, these projects demonstrate how Norwegian support is helping UNICEF take promising innovations from pilot stage to large-scale impact for vulnerable children, women and communities.

Accelerating child-focused disability inclusion across the UN system

Norway has already built a strong legacy on inclusion and protection. Its support to disability-inclusive humanitarian action has helped ensure that children with disabilities are not invisible in emergencies. Its investments in birth registration, inclusive education, social protection and assistive technology have helped children access services, identity, protection and participation. Norway's disability inclusion leadership has enabled UNICEF to develop its organization-wide Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy — DIPAS. Launched in 2023, DIPAS is accelerating disability inclusion across UNICEF programmes and operations. It includes concrete commitments to allocate more resources to disability inclusion and to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in UNICEF's workforce.

Between 2020 and 2025, UNICEF increased its annual reach of children with disabilities from 2.5 million to 6.5 million, across both development and humanitarian contexts. In Ukraine, flexible humanitarian funding has enabled UNICEF to support children with disabilities through accessible learning materials, assistive devices, and inclusive education support in both formal schools and temporary learning spaces. It has also helped expand community-based psychosocial support for children with disabilities affected by displacement and trauma.

UNICEF is advancing this agenda in close partnership with the UN system and global partners, in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. This includes collaboration with the UN Global Disability Fund, OHCHR, UN Women and UNDP on gender-responsive, disability-inclusive care and support; with ILO and the World Bank on disability-inclusive social protection; and with WHO and at scale on assistive technology and early identification. In humanitarian action, UNICEF continues to lead the Disability Reference Group.

Future ODA allocations should deepen this leadership by making disability inclusion a consistent feature across humanitarian and development financing, not a stand-alone concern. UNICEF encourages Norway to explicitly prioritize support to children with disabilities in its White Paper and new development cooperation approach.

Digital transformation and innovation

Norway and UNICEF have built a pioneering partnership on Digital Public Goods (DPGs), helping position open-source, interoperable and rights-based digital solutions at the center of sustainable development. Together, UNICEF and the Government of Norway co-founded the Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA), creating a global platform that accelerates the discovery, adoption and scaling of digital solutions that can be reused across countries and sectors. Through this partnership 25+ DPGs have been scaled to 128 million people globally; countries have gained access to proven digital tools for service delivery, education, health, social protection and child protection, while strengthening national ownership, digital sovereignty and local innovation ecosystems.

One powerful example is RapidPro, an open-source Digital Public Good supported and scaled by UNICEF. RapidPro is now used in more than 100 countries to enable governments and partners to communicate directly with citizens, collect real-time data, and improve delivery of services such as immunization, health, education and social protection. In Pakistan alone, RapidPro helped reach the families of 37 million children (one third of Pakistan's child population) across 163 districts in 2018 with information designed to increase demand for routine immunization and polio vaccination. Globally, the platform exchanged around 1 billion messages in 2022, demonstrating its scale and cost-effectiveness as a public digital infrastructure.

The significance of this work extends far beyond technology. Digital Public Goods provide a practical blueprint for a more effective and efficient multilateral system—one that shares solutions across agencies, avoids duplication, promotes interoperability and delivers better value for money. As the UN system advances reform efforts focused on greater collaboration, efficiency and country ownership, DPGs offer a concrete example of how common digital assets can serve multiple organizations and governments while reducing fragmentation. Continued Norwegian investment will be critical to ensuring that countries, especially in the Global South, can build and own the digital infrastructure that underpins public services for future generations. At a time when demands on development financing are growing, sustained support for Digital Public Goods is one of the smartest investments available: it creates global public value, strengthens national capacity, and helps build a more innovative, efficient and future-fit multilateral system. That's why UNICEF is one of the leading agencies on the UN80 reform's UN Global Digital Compact.

Achievements in Children and Armed Conflict: Protecting Children and Supporting Reintegration

Norway has long been a global leader in advancing the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda, combining sustained political leadership with predictable support to protect children affected by war. Through its partnership with UNICEF, Norway has helped strengthen monitoring, advocacy and direct protection for children experiencing grave violations of their rights in conflict. Since 2023, UNICEF has continued to implement the CAAC mandate, verifying and reporting more than 30,000 grave violations in 2023 and over 41,000 grave violations in 2024, affecting more than 22,000 children annually across 26 conflict situations. Beyond documenting violations, UNICEF has supported sustained engagement with parties to conflict, contributing to landmark agreements to better protect children. These include Action Plans signed with national authorities in Iraq (2023) and the Syrian National Army (2024) to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, a prevention plan with the Government of Ukraine (2023), and Handover Protocols in

Haiti (2024) and the Central African Republic (2024) to ensure the safe transfer of children associated with armed groups to civilian protection systems.

A central pillar of UNICEF's work under the CAAC mandate is supporting the protection, release and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. In 2023, UNICEF and its partners provided reintegration and protection services to 10,941 children across 20 countries. Building on sustained engagement with governments, UNICEF's community presence and continued donor support, this increased to 16,482 children in 2024—a 51 per cent increase compared with the previous year. These services include family tracing and reunification, psychosocial support, education, vocational training and community-based reintegration, helping children rebuild their lives and reducing the risk of re-recruitment.

Recognizing that sustainable reintegration is essential to lasting peace, UNICEF is also leading efforts to strengthen global policy and practice. At the Oslo Conference on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict in 2023, the Global Initiative for Child Reintegration was launched to establish a more coherent and evidence-based approach to supporting children exiting armed groups and forces. UNICEF is now operationalizing this framework, with field testing planned in two countries by the end of 2027 before its global rollout. This partnership demonstrates how sustained political leadership and predictable investment can translate into tangible protection outcomes for children while strengthening international norms and national systems for the future.

Annex 3: Partnership Portfolio Brochure



NORWAY AND UNICEF: A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE

For over 75 years, Norway has stood by UNICEF as a trusted and strategic partner – a champion of human rights, the multilateral system and humanitarian action, helping to shape a fairer, more peaceful world for generations to come.

Norway is more than a donor. It is a driving force for change – using bold diplomacy, principled leadership and steadfast commitment to turn global promises into real-world progress for children. In conflict zones, in the aftermath of disasters, and in the daily fight against inequality, Norway's support has helped protect lives, restore hope and build stronger systems.



56 million fewer children with stunted growth than in 2000.

Return on investment: Every dollar invested in preventing stunting in early childhood can generate a return of up to \$48.



25 million child marriages averted in the last decade.

Return on investment: Investments in adolescent girls, including cash transfers, sexual and reproductive health, and parenting support, deliver a 4:1 return in low- and middle-income countries.



Since 2000, the rate of out of school primary school-aged children has been halved, and 5 million more children are attending primary schooling today.

Return on investment: Every additional year of schooling for a girl increases her future earnings by up to 20 per cent.

In 2025, we mark the 60th anniversary of UNICEF's Nobel Peace Prize – awarded for its “promotion of brotherhood among nations” and “relief of suffering among children”. Norway's continued investment honours that vision, ensuring every child's rights are protected, everywhere, and that future generations inherit a more just and peaceful world.

This is Norway's legacy: results today, and systems built for tomorrow – proof that principled action and long-term commitment can change the course of millions of young lives.



NORWAY'S STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS DELIVER SYSTEMIC AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Norway's cohesive, long-term funding model supports systemic change and interconnected results. Core resources underpin this approach, helping UNICEF reduce inequality, strengthen systems and deliver lasting impact.

Norway's Strategic Investments: One Purpose, Three Powerful Streams

Norway's smart and balanced funding approach empowers UNICEF to deliver results at scale, through a strategic mix of core resources, thematic funding and restricted contributions.

- **Core resources:** UNICEF's foundation. Enables global reach, and system strengthening. Norway meets the 30% Funding Compact target for Core Resources contributions.
- **Thematic funding:** Flexible, pooled resources for key areas such as education, nutrition, child protection and emergencies. Norway does not meet the 15% Funding Compact target for Thematic Funding contributions.
- **Restricted funding:** Targeted support for flagship programmes, catalytic innovation, and priority countries.

Norway's portfolio with UNICEF (2024, share by funding type)



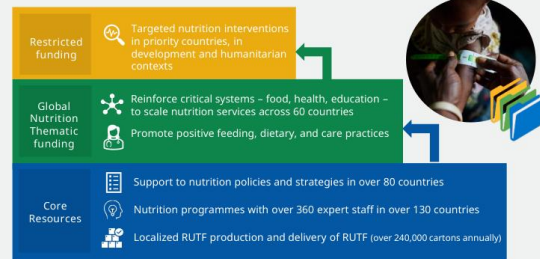
Norway's funding model allows UNICEF to:



3 PARTNERING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD: NORWAY'S STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO WITH UNICEF



Example: Norway's strategic investments leading to reduced undernutrition



Investing in a strong core resources funding base is the foundation that amplifies all other Norwegian investments.

CORE RESOURCES: THE ENGINE BEHIND THE IMPACT

Norway's long-standing support to core resources reflects a commitment to equity, efficiency and long-term impact, ensuring UNICEF can deliver for every child, especially in the most vulnerable contexts.



59% of RR is spent in sub-Saharan Africa

58% of RR is spent in least developed countries

28% of RR is spent on humanitarian programmes

Moldova: Paved the way for \$68 million of government and other investment in the RESTART social protection reform, mitigating a 3.4 per cent rise in child poverty

Ethiopia: Nearly 600,000 children supported with critical child protection services by the social service workers deployed with UNICEF's support

Zambia: 100,000 adolescent boys and girls (including adolescent mothers) gained access to sexual and reproductive health services, referrals to other social services and peer support, contributing to HIV prevention and the return of 2,500 back to school

Madagascar and Mozambique: Provided the seed funding for UNICEF's Today and Tomorrow Initiative, supporting more than 120,000 people with life-saving services in the aftermath of cyclones

India: Supported the scale up of the government's flagship water and sanitation programmes, providing safely managed water for 59.3 million people and sanitation for 17.9 million people

Bangladesh: Contributed to an increase in annual government investments in nutrition services from 1.83\$ to 18\$ per child

Horn of Africa: Scaled up a breakthrough WASH solutions in drought-affected regions using satellite data to detect groundwater, mapping nearly a million sqkm of territory, with the potential to benefit 10 million people in need

Vietnam: Embedded disability inclusion into national teacher training, and scaled up the Inclusive Education Resource Centres across 14 provinces to prepare children with disabilities to enter mainstream classrooms

Myanmar: 768,000 people gained access to safe and confidential sexual exploitation and abuse reporting channels in communities and IDP camps



Norway's Core Resources contribution enabled the scaling of UNICEF's global Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (SCAP), helping governments build low-carbon, resilient essential services for children. Core Resources also funded the Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), transforming how children's climate risk is understood and addressed, equipping governments, private sector and humanitarian actors with data to protect children most at risk.

4 PARTNERING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD: NORWAY'S STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO WITH UNICEF

THEMATIC FUNDING IN ACTION: SAVING LIVES AND BUILDING STRONGER SYSTEMS

Norway's contributions to global thematic funds have strengthened the essential systems children depend on for quality nutrition and education.

Global Thematic Fund for Education

- Resilient school infrastructure and introduction of environmental education in 91 countries, up from 65 in 2023.
- Inclusive education systems in 102 countries, with 58 per cent reporting an enabling environment, up from 55 per cent in 2023.

More than
120
countries
supported
since 2022

State of Palestine: 5,660 children in the Gaza Strip returned to learning, through 12 safe temporary learning spaces.

Kenya: more than 1.8 million caregivers were reached with IYCF counselling thanks to strengthened nutrition workforce and capacity building of more than 1,880 health workers

Malawi: successfully advocated for the listing of Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) in the national essential medicines list setting the foundation for allocating domestic resources for MMS procurement.

Global Thematic Fund for Nutrition

- 50 countries implemented gender-sensitive anemia prevention programmes, nearly doubling from 28 countries in 2021.
- 80 countries included the early detection and treatment of severe wasting in community worker training packages, up from 73 in 2021.

More than
60
countries
supported
since 2022

Ukraine: 12 youth spaces benefited 500,000 young people, fostering mental well-being, social inclusion, and career readiness.

Myanmar: 277,580 children including 470 children with disabilities accessed education through temporary learning centers established in internally displaced persons camps;

Indonesia: tailored education programmes prevented 176,000 children from dropping out and 71,300 children to return to school.

United Republic of Tanzania: 3.2 million caregivers benefited from IYCF scale-up in counselling, improving exclusive breastfeeding rates, which helped the country surpass the 2025 World Health Assembly target of 50 per cent.

Core Resources
Global Thematic Fund for Nutrition
Global Thematic Fund for Education

5 PARTNERING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD: NORWAY'S STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO WITH UNICEF

HOW TARGETED INVESTMENTS AND FLEXIBLE FUNDING WORK TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN

Norway's targeted investments are scaling proven models and pioneering new ways to accelerate impact for children across sectors and settings.

Digital Public Goods for sustainable development

To bridge the digital divide, Norway and UNICEF pioneer free, open-source tools that can help countries accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Through cost-effective solutions to expand health, education and other social services, DPGs are helping close the access gaps for the most vulnerable children and families.

- Prototyped new marketplace supporting DPGs to tap into multiple sources of funding for their solutions for children
- Registered 25 DPGs which reached 128 million people, leveraging UNICEF's Venture Fund



Serbia: Over 19,500 children and young people have improved awareness on air pollution and health and 891,000 people received information through the media and public events.

Nigeria: Nearly 61,750 out-of-school children (almost half girls) gained access to education across two states, improving the gender parity index from 0.90 in 2023 to 0.96 in 2024.

Strengthening Birth Registration Systems to ensure every child has a legal identity

Norway's global investments in birth registration protect every child's right to health, education, protection.

- Côte d'Ivoire: Birth registrations rate for children (U1) increased to 58% in 2024, from 56% in 2023.
- Mozambique: 828,949 children (U1) registered in 2024; a 13 percent increase compared to 2023.
- Nigeria: 10.1 million children (U5) registered, almost double compared to 2023 (5.7 million).

Norway's investments have also helped expand critical evidence on birth registration for policy making.

Lebanon: Over 7,050 children gained access to quality learning through the Makani programme, with Basic Literacy and Numeracy pre and post-test results showing a 2.6-times improvement.

Syria: Over 6,100 adolescents and youth (over half females) in remote areas, received life skills and citizenship education helping them communicate, integrate and participate in their communities.

Ethiopia: 191,390 children, (almost 94,270 girls and 4,750 children with disabilities), in emergency affected areas gained access to integrated education and child protection with a 94 per cent average attendance rate.

Malawi: UNICEF advocacy led to the Government committing 1.5 billion Kwacha (approx. \$865,400) to expand learning resource centres, scaling up inclusive education for children with disabilities.

Mozambique: 5 multi-purpose centres in remote areas were established, providing protection to 8,500 children, including mental health support and family reunification, ensuring no child is left behind.

Sudan: 538,200 children and caregivers (368,800 children) received case management services, including MHPSS, helping survivors get the support they need.

6 PARTNERING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD: NORWAY'S STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO WITH UNICEF

PROTECTING LIVES IN CRISIS: NORWAY'S IMPACT IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

Norway's support to humanitarian funds is strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, helping communities recover and rebuild with lasting results.

Delivering timely and effective Humanitarian Action for Children

Norway is playing an instrumental role in helping children living through humanitarian crises with both immediate life-saving services and investments for their longer-term development

- Since 2022, 19 countries, including Ukraine, have received direct humanitarian support from Norway
- Norway's support to Ukraine has secured stronger protection of displaced and returning Ukrainian children and improved well-being.

Mauritania: Data collected on more than 36,500 children with disabilities secured their inclusion in humanitarian response and social protection.

Burkina Faso: Distance Learning Programmes, enabled 635,000 children to remain engaged in learning activities, despite school closures.

Ukraine: 61,000 people (18,620 households) affected by mandatory evacuation received cash assistance helping them to meet minimum living standards during a period of major upheaval.

State of Palestine: 1.4 million people in Gaza received nutrition services, including 36,250 children with acute malnutrition. Nearly 4,000 children with disabilities received multi-purpose cash assistance as a result of improved use of social registries to ensure inclusion.

Somalia: 1.8 million people accessed primary health care services including children under five years, and pregnant and lactating mothers, in hard-to-reach areas.

Championing disability-inclusive emergency response

Norway was UNICEF's first donor with dedicated funding for disability inclusive humanitarian action. This vital support has enabled:

- disability inclusive preparedness and disaster risk reduction
- addressed needs of displaced children with disabilities
- improved systems for provision of Assistive Technology in emergencies
- disability inclusive social protection

Syria: Nearly 3,350 children with disabilities (1,664 girls) received medical consultations and access to physiotherapy, assistive devices and rehabilitation.

Afghanistan: 323,000 children and caregivers received child protection and GBV services, including 3,220 people with disabilities.



Myanmar: 636,000 people (204,000 children) affected by conflict received life-saving WASH supplies. Nearly 16,000 children with disabilities living in poverty gained access to cash assistance. More than 2,200 children with disabilities gained access to assistive technology and services.

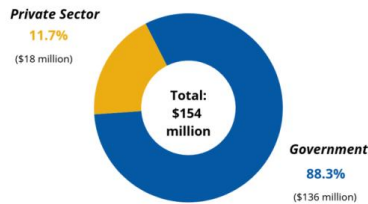
Yemen: More than 38,000 children with disabilities and their families benefited from Humanitarian Cash Transfers, securing their access to food, healthcare, and debt repayment and nearly 14,470 persons with disabilities gained access to essential services, including health, nutrition, and education.

NORWAY'S PARTNERSHIP MODEL: A NATIONWIDE COMMITMENT TO CHILD RIGHTS

From individuals to corporations and philanthropic foundations, Norway unites public and private sectors in a shared commitment to deliver lasting change for children.

The partnership with UNICEF enjoys strong support from Norway's public, with 80,493 individual supporters - a powerful sign of national solidarity with children worldwide.

Norway's contributions by resource partner (2024)



Norway's model of public-private partnership amplifies impact, unlocks innovation, and inspires others to follow suit.

Norway's private sector is an emerging partner in ensuring critical supplies reach children in need. UNICEF's procurements from Norwegian suppliers has seen 3.6-fold increase since 2020.



UNICEF's partners in Norway

Public partners



Private partners



We value the trust that Norway has placed in us to lead in aid transparency and translate it into unparalleled accountability and impact.

We have:

- An industry-leading 99% data publishing rate
- Real-time financial and result insights for flexible funding



For more information, you can visit our Transparency Portal.

Annex 4: Reforming for Less Fragmentation, Greater Effectiveness and Efficiency

UNICEF's Future Focus Initiative and the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative

The Secretary-General's UN80 initiative and the humanitarian reset are central to sustaining results for children in a tighter financing environment. For Norway, the test of reform should be whether the multilateral system can deliver faster, more coherently and with greater impact for the children most at risk. UNICEF is actively supporting this agenda while ensuring that efficiency gains strengthen children's rights, protection and access to essential services.

UNICEF brings a strong operational advantage to this effort: presence in more than 190 countries and territories, a dual humanitarian and development mandate, cluster leadership responsibilities, technical expertise, and one of the UN system's largest supply operations. In 2025, UNICEF procured over \$5.6 billion in supplies (\$3.8b) and services (\$1.8b) in 164 countries. Through UN80 and the humanitarian reset, UNICEF is helping advance integrated humanitarian supply chains, simplified coordination, clearer roles on nutrition, shared services, common data systems and stronger humanitarian diplomacy. This reduces fragmentation and ensures coordinated and cost-effective work across the humanitarian-development nexus. For a more detailed overview of UNICEF's UN80 reform work, [please see here](#).

These reforms are intended to move resources from duplication to delivery. UNICEF's own organizational efficiency efforts have already generated more than US\$100 million in cumulative savings since 2019 through Business Operations Strategy implementation, including US\$18.9 million in 2025. UNICEF has a deep and longstanding commitment to reform toward increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness. UNICEF's current internal reform aims at further reducing operational costs, relocating 70% of HQ and regional functions to lower-cost duty stations, investing in innovative technologies including AI, and establishing global COEs- all while protecting frontline delivery for children before, during, and after crises. UNICEF's internal reform is projected to generate approximately \$563 million in savings over 2026–2029. Such savings can help protect frontline capacity, programmes and essential services for children, in times of funding shortages.

Continued investment in UNICEF therefore offers Norway a practical way to support a reform agenda that links efficiency with impact: faster delivery, stronger systems, better preparedness and more resources reaching children and communities.

Annex 5: Good Practices in Child-Focused Development

#1 Development cooperation strategies, policies and guidelines that:

- Recognize children, adolescents and young people as rights holders and agents of change. This should include explicit references to child rights within the context of a rights-based approach.
- Acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities children, adolescents and young people experience over their lifecycle.
- Include meaningful action to support children, adolescents, and young people to access their rights and meet their needs, and
- Support children, adolescents, and young people's participation in decisions that affect them.

#2 Investing in the systems that support children (health, education, protection, nutrition and water), and incorporate child rights across all development plans, including geographic and thematic plans to ensure children's specific needs are met:

- Design programmes that support children within an intersectional lifecycle approach that tailors interventions to age, gender, (dis)ability, and degree of marginalization.
- Support multilaterals that support children

#3 Advancing accountability: A binding child marker in Norway's new Development Cooperation approach

To maximize the impact, transparency, and accountability of Norway's external action for children, UNICEF strongly recommends the integration of a binding child marker in the White Paper. This child marker should be systematically embedded across all relevant funding instruments and ensure that child-focused investments are tracked, prioritized, and safeguarded at every stage of the project cycle. This will enable Norway to:

- Systematically identify, monitor, and report on child-related outcomes and expenditures,
- Ensure that child rights and well-being are mainstreamed across all external action portfolios,
- Guarantee that no child is left behind, especially in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.
- Integrate indicators like child poverty, infant and child mortality, incidence of acute malnutrition and education rates as key criteria for priority country selection.

#4 Creating and resourcing child rights units within development cooperation entities to ensure children's specific and diverse needs are addressed across sectors and geographies.

- Support organizational capacity building on child rights
- Establish the necessary mechanisms to monitor impacts on children, adolescents and young people
- Improve the collection of age and gender disaggregated data

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