

STRATEGY

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Redd Barna

Siding with the children



PHOTOS: KATE STANWORTH/CLAIRE THOMAS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

The world has made incredible progress in the last few decades. In record time, the global community managed to halve poverty and child mortality before the age of five and double the number of children attending school. Then the coronavirus pandemic started, bringing many setbacks and ushering us into a historic period of major transition.

If the pandemic was a crisis for us in Norway, it was a disaster for poor countries. Poor families with no safety net lost their livelihoods overnight. For the first time in many decades, world economic growth has stagnated, or even declined in many places. Never before has the world seen an educational crisis of this magnitude, or such a dramatic increase in child marriage and child labour. Girls are particularly hard-hit. We have also seen a dramatic increase in violence against children during the pandemic, all over the world, including in Norway.

Another result of the pandemic is how it has highlighted the inequalities between developed and developing countries. No less than 86 per cent of the very richest people in the world are wealthier today than before the pandemic. Conversely, at least 150 million additional children have slipped into poverty. The consequences have been particularly severe for those children that experience the highest levels of discrimination, violence, and rights violations; the most marginalised and vulnerable children. Poverty is increasing in Norway too. The number of children growing up in low-income families has increased dramatically in recent years. In fact, that number has tripled since 2001.

A huge effort is required if we are to turn things around. Aid has perhaps never been more important.

The coronavirus pandemic brought its own challenges. However, climate change will be even tougher. Children are hit hard when schools are destroyed by typhoons, health clinics are flooded, crops dry out, and houses and infrastructure are flooded. Children have contributed the least to the climate crisis, yet they are the ones who will have to live with the consequences. Again, girls and children with disabilities are particularly affected. The climate fight is a fight for children's right to survive, learn, and be safe. It is a fight for their future. Children are using the biggest global popular movement in our time to try to tell us that time is running out.

Children who live in areas experiencing war and conflict are unable to benefit from the progress that we have achieved so far. The number of severe child abuse cases in conflict areas has never been higher since the UN began keeping records in 2005. Kidnapping, recruitment by armed groups, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, murder, and mutilation are all on the rise. This abuse does not only bring enormous suffering to the child victims, violating their rights, but also affects their families, their societies, and our shared future.

We also see that the world knowingly and deliberately accords different value to different children. Countries stow migrant children and their families, who are in deep crisis, away in the Greek islands, and Rohingya refugees on an island off the coast of Bangladesh. Children are interned in camps because

their parents sympathise with the so-called IS. At home, Norway has repeatedly come under criticism from the UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child for its discriminatory treatment of refugee children and children with disabilities.

Although the world faces great challenges, there are also many reasons to be hopeful. We are emerging from the pandemic with a new frame of reference and the opportunity to start fresh. We have a shared plan in the form of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and there is strong motivation to rebuild and improve. We have witnessed the power of popular movements that are gaining ground. These movements include the fight for abortion rights in Ecuador, Black Lives Matter, #metoo, the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar, and the climate strikes. Many of these movements are led by young people and will be central and important drivers for change.

The progress that we have contributed to over recent decades tells us that it is possible to bring about significant change in a short space of time. In just 20 years, the lives of 280 million children have improved. Since 2000, we have witnessed progress in the area of children's rights in 173 out of 176 countries. Great strides will be needed in the years to come. This will require greater political willingness and strong collaborative spirit. We will do everything we can to make this happen!

Save the Children is the world's largest child rights organisation. Together with donors, supporters, and partners, we have played an important role in the world's progress up to this point. We have a huge task ahead of us.

What do we need to do?

We are on the children's side, and our most important tool is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Listening to children and young people is not only smart, but also the duty of all adults and politicians. Children and young people have a right to be heard. We will fight to ensure the focus on the rights and involvement of children remains central, in particular the rights and involvement of those who most often experience discrimination and inequality. Together with local civil society and children themselves, we need to make noise whenever children's rights are violated, and when our shared future is threatened by climate change. We will work to ensure that countries do everything in their power to get all children back to school and ensure that they receive a high-quality education. We must do whatever we can to protect children affected by war and make sure that war criminals are held to account. We will stand up for the children who live in poverty in Norway, and we will ensure that a larger number of families with children living in poverty around the world receive financial support.

We must do what we can to make sure that Norway remains a world leader when it comes to aid, and we must work to change the system so that power and funds are increasingly shifted to local stakeholders. This will result in a more effective and sustainable distribution of aid. If we manage to create a good society for children, we will be creating a society that serves everyone well.



PHOTO: JORDI MATAS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Strategic priorities

**Get children back
to school and secure
quality education**

**Protect children
against violence
and abuse**

**Protect children against the
effects of climate change and
environmental destruction
and support their fight against
climate change**

**Fight poverty
and increase
investments
in children**

Get children back to school and secure quality education

Save the Children Norway's goal is not only that all children should attend school, but also that they should learn while there. Despite increased investment into education in the last decades, children across the world are currently experiencing an educational crisis, with far too many lacking basic reading and math skills even after four or more years of primary school. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated this situation.

Together with children, teachers, local communities, and public authorities we will, work to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education. We will advocate/ lobby and work with the authorities to ensure that education systems and legislative frameworks give all children access to a safe, high-quality education. We will work to ensure that Norway continues to lead the way when it comes to global education, including combating attacks on schools. In order to make all this a reality, we need donors and countries themselves to invest more in education.



Protect children against violence and abuse

Save the Children Norway's aim is that no child, regardless of who they are or where they live, should have to suffer violence, abuse, or neglect. We will fight to ensure a safe upbringing for all children.

We will prioritise the protection of children affected by war and child refugees and ensure that they are able to attend school safely. We will build more expertise on child abuse and promote further research and documentation of this topic. We will advocate for increased funding for the protection of children, and for perpetrators to be held to account for severe crimes against children during war and conflict. In addition, we will work systematically to strengthen local and national authorities, to protect children from violence and abuse. Discrimination on the basis of gender and disability, harmful practices, and violence must be prevented and combated everywhere.



Protect children against the effects of climate change and environmental destruction and support their fight against climate change

Save the Children's aim is for the world to recognise the climate crisis and environmental destruction as a child rights crisis. World leaders must take immediate and drastic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental destruction. Moreover, we need to make sure that children are protected from climate related and natural disasters.

We will support children's climate activism and legal actions. Through digital learning materials, events, and various platforms, we will equip children and young people in Norway and elsewhere with knowledge and tools for action, so that they can become active citizens for the climate and the environment. Together with the global Save the Children movement we will advocate for Norway and other countries to take more ambitious and immediate action to prevent the worst climate and environmental damage. We will collaborate with local authorities and societies that are particularly affected by climate change to make them better equipped to tackle and minimise its impact on children. We will also ensure a 30 per cent reduction in Save the Children Norway's own emissions.



PHOTO: SACHA MYERS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Fight poverty and increase investments in children

Save the Children Norway has a clear goal of reducing poverty globally and nationally, and of significantly increasing the involvement of children in politics and children's ability to influence decision-makers.

We will advocate for authorities to increase their financial investments in and for children, fight exclusion, and ensure good living conditions for all children. We will focus especially on those children who most frequently experience discrimination and inequality. We will, , hold authorities accountable with regard to their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child through the use of strategic lawsuits when necessary. The voices of children will shape our work, and we will fight to give children real power to influence their own lives and society.



Overarching themes

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is our most important tool when it comes to holding authorities accountable to their legal obligations.

Child participation

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasises that children are people in their own right, with their own thoughts and opinions and the right to be involved and exercise influence over their own lives and over the societies in which they live. This principle guides everything that we do, both when it comes to shaping our programmes and policies, and in terms of the demands we make of authorities.

Increase recruitment of members and strengthen volunteerism

Save the Children Norway will continue to exercise a strong member democracy and work to recruit more members and volunteers in Norway. Volunteers play an extremely important role when it comes to disseminating knowledge locally and generating engagement, raising funds and, not least, making tangible contributions for children living in vulnerable circumstances. We shall continue to develop our volunteer offering.

Gender equality, inclusion and non discrimination

Save the Children Norway shall work to ensure the systematic safeguarding of equality, including for children with disabilities, and the rights of all children regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.



PHOTO: TONE KRAKENES

<p>Our strategic ambitions</p>	<p>Get children back to school and secure quality education</p>	<p>Protect children against violence and abuse</p>	<p>Protect children against the effects of climate change and environmental destruction and support their fight against climate change</p>	<p>Fight poverty and increase investments in children</p>
				
<p>What we want to achieve for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Access to education → Learning foundational skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Prevent and protect against violence, abuse and neglect → Protect children in crisis situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Support for children's climate and environmental action → Protect children from the effects of climate and environmental crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Improve living conditions and inclusion → Strengthen children's rights
<p>Overarching themes</p>	<p>Child participation</p>			
	<p>Increase recruitment of members and strengthen volunteerism</p>			
	<p>Gender equality, inclusion and non discrimination</p>			