



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



unicef  for every child

KEY ASKS FOR 2019 SDG VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

SDG 10: LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

At the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the overarching theme will be *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*. Additionally, [Sustainable Development Goal 10](#), *Reduce inequality within and among countries*, is one of the six goals being examined in depth. The issue of equality will therefore be central to 2019 HLPF discussions and outcomes. As governments align national plans, budgets, and monitoring efforts to the SDGs, UNICEF encourages countries to specifically strengthen efforts to leave no one, including no child, behind.

Inequality starts with the lottery of birth – who your parents are and where you are born – accounting for the vast majority of variation in the resources and opportunities available to human beings. The social and economic inequalities and disadvantages in early life increase the risk of having lower earnings, lower standards of health and lower skills in adulthood. Studies suggest that nationality and economic class can predict about 80% of an individual's likely income throughout their lifetime, thus one's chances in life are essentially determined at birth.

Discrimination based on age, gender, ethnic or racial group, age, disability category, sexual orientation or other factors serve to disadvantage some individuals in many different and often invisible ways, throughout their lives. These patterns of inequality get passed on to generation after generation. Therefore early interventions and investing in all children, especially the poorest and most marginalized, is central to breaking intergenerational poverty and inequality.



KEY ASKS

Achieving SDG 10 and the SDGs more broadly requires a deliberate strategy to reach the furthest behind, first. UNICEF encourages governments to monitor, report on and respond to the following issues:

End child poverty. Children make up nearly half of the people living in extreme poverty and child poverty in all its dimensions, monetary and multidimensional, which is a universal problem with lifelong consequences that perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality (Goal 1: No Poverty indicator 1.2.2 and Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities indicator 10.2.1). A [UNICEF and Global Coalition to End Child Poverty Guide](#) harnesses the expertise and knowledge to support national processes to achieve the SDG poverty targets.

Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poorest and most vulnerable children and families (Goal 1: No Poverty indicator 1.3.1 and Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities target 10.4).

Eliminate laws, policies and practices that discriminate against children, including because of their gender, ethnic or racial group, age, migration status, disability, sexual orientation or other factors (Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities target 10.3).

Ensure children with disabilities have access to services. One in ten children globally are children with disabilities. Accessibility is a precondition for children with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. The SDGs and the Habitat III commitments require schools, materials, transport and public places to be made accessible for children with disabilities (Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities target 10.2 and Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, with special attention to families, women, children and those with disabilities, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters (Goal 13: Climate Action).

Strengthen civil registration systems that register every child immediately after birth. Birth registration often unlocks access to essential services throughout a child's lifetime (Goal 16: Peace and Justice indicator 16.9.1).

Include children in decision-making and promote the meaningful participation of children in society by providing an environment that enables children to exercise their rights including to be heard without discrimination (Goal 16: Peace and Justice indicator 16.7.2).

Achieve universal access to education including for children in vulnerable situations and emergency settings. A child's access to education unlocks critical knowledge and opportunity often necessary to fully participate in society (Goal 4: Quality Education).



MONITORING THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

An essential component towards combatting inequality begins with knowing where and why it exists. Disaggregated data that identifies most excluded and vulnerable groups of children and shows the different dimensions of inequality is vital for decision-makers to use in policy and program implementation and legislation. Member States are encouraged to:

Carry out a data mapping exercise to identify data gaps, identify existing data sources, identify indicators based on national priorities, set national targets, and develop a data strategy to monitor progress towards the SDGs.

Collect and analyse data from different sources to generate baseline estimates for SDG indicators. Improve capacity to collect and disaggregate data for disadvantaged children - to ensure no child is left behind (e.g. by age, sex, education, wealth quintile, migration or displacement status, ethnicity, disability status etc.)

Implement new MICS household survey modules including on child functioning (disabilities).



INVESTING IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

Investing in children yields positive benefits to economies and societies. Since the foundation of an individual's health and well-being is laid in early childhood, the most opportune time to break the cycle of poverty, or prevent it from beginning, is during that time. Child-related interventions yield relatively low financial costs and high returns – in terms of human lives as well as economic productivity – this makes a strong case for paying particular attention to children in economic policy and fiscal budgets in times of economic hardship, as well as in times of growth. Both the SDGs and the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda \(AAAA\)](#) recognize the link between child and youth focused investments and growth. UNICEF works to support data and evidence generation for better and greater public investment in children, and encourages Governments to:

Improve reporting on expenditures and programmes that have direct and indirect impacts on child and adolescent well-being. Indicator 1.a.2. specifically calls to measure spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) as a percentage of total government spending. Relevant approaches include analysis of public expenditure that focuses on children and child-focused areas, child-spending markers and taxonomies, as well as established reporting practices on child-focused allocations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Increase visibility and coherence of investments on new child and adolescent focused SDG priorities that are of a cross-cutting nature but sit less easily within traditional sectoral budgets. Interventions in areas like child protection, gender equality, adolescent development, nutrition and early childhood development cut across sectors and are not always classified under sectoral budgets, which can result in gaps, duplication, poor coordination or omission.

Adopt principles of results-based reporting to spending on children and adolescents, with a particular focus on equity and effectiveness, including gender equality. Examples include tracking of spending that explicitly address geographic disparities of services for children and adolescents (quality and access) and inequities among different population groups in service provision or other matters.

This type of budget data, along with other targeted analysis of the costs and returns of investing in children, can be used to support decision making by Government Ministries, Ministries of Finance and parliamentary committees to influence allocation decisions and improve spending performance. Additional information on how UNICEF works with governments to achieve the best results for children from national budgets is set out in the [Public Finance for Children Framework](#), including the use of sector and cross-cutting expenditure analysis, costing and planning tools for evidence generation and engagement in the national budget process.



INCLUDING CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

To foster inclusion as well as ownership of the principles in the SDGs, UNICEF encourages national partners to involve children in the development of Voluntary National Review (VNRs) but also more broadly in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Effective and meaningful participation with children, adolescents and youth is a continuum of raising awareness, inspiring action, facilitating consultation and strengthening accountability:

Build awareness to inspire action: The SDGs rely on perception and behavior changes. Children and youth are often some of the most effective behavior and norm changers when they are engaged on issues such as ending stigma and discrimination. Children and young people should be educated and engaged on issues in the SDGs with the aim of deepening their understanding of how the goals relate to their communities and what actions they can take to help make a difference. Tools such as the [World's Largest Lesson](#) provide free and translated materials for bringing the messages of the SDGs to the classroom through lesson plans and to the public through animations and posters. [Comics Uniting Nations](#) also provides free and translated comic books. Two comics that specifically teach inclusion are: [Ali Finds a Way](#) and [Goats of Anarchy](#).

Enable Accountability: People's feedback and perception data collected through participatory monitoring activities can assist in identifying left behind groups, barriers, and bottlenecks. Acting on these perspectives strengthens policy response and service delivery. Children and young people should be periodically consulted through on and offline means on the SDGs. Governments can utilize consultative tools such as mobile polling (see [U-Report](#)) and child and youth councils that help gather and act on the perspectives of young citizens.

Voluntary National Review Reports should feature the perspectives of children and youth on the status of the SDGs in their country, for instance by including child and youth written sections throughout the report and/or through a dedicated chapter. Some previous VNR presentations by Member States have also invited a child or youth representative to present a section at the High Level Political Forum.