



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



unicef  for every child

KEY ASKS FOR 2020 SDG VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

SDG 10: ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES TO LEAVE 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.

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:



KEY ASKS

- **End child poverty.** Child poverty, monetary and multidimensional, is a universal problem with lifelong consequences that perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality. In almost every country in the world – rich and poor – children are more likely than adults to live in poverty, and their young age makes them more vulnerable to its effects. With children constituting half of the global poor, an explicit child focus is essential to ending poverty for good. (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).



MONITOR -- THE IMPORTANCE OF DISAGGREGATED DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE

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) and social transfer (social protection).



INVEST -- SOCIAL SPENDING AND PROGRESS ON RESULTS FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS & 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 have relatively low financial costs compared to their 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.



ACTIVATE -- AWARENESS BUILDING & MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS & 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 of children, adolescents and youth should be part of a continuum of raising awareness, inspiring action, facilitating consultation and strengthening accountability:

- **The process for preparing the 2020 national review should directly involve children and adolescent girls and boys, especially the most marginalized or excluded.** For example, through consultations (on and/or offline), surveys or polls, focus group discussions, etc. UNICEF together with civil society, child-focused organizations and other partners could support the government in that process. The results of these efforts as well as the methods employed should be described in the VNR report, including the number of young people involved in the process.
- **Actively involve children, adolescents and youth, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, in local and national planning processes in development and humanitarian contexts** through consultation and other participatory means, and as part of ongoing efforts to make children, adolescents and youth aware of these issues, inspire their positive action and expand the space for their participation in accountability mechanisms and activities. This should be part of a continuum to regularly, meaningfully and consistently engage children, adolescents and youth as agents of change to influence behaviors and social norms amongst themselves, their households and their communities. It goes beyond engagement just for the purposes of reporting periods, but rather systematizing the engagement of young people in a variety of ways and across media and communications channels, including for example: digital platforms (including U-Report), participatory theatre, intergenerational community dialogues, community & children's radio, participatory video, school clubs, TV Entertainment and child-participatory research.
- **Provide spaces for children, adolescents and youth to learn about, discuss and take action on the SDGs, including Addressing Inequalities.** UNICEF can support this effort due to our existing work in this space and creating child-friendly education and entertainment materials through our foundational partnerships on the [World's Largest Lesson](#) and [Comics Uniting Nations](#). Two comics that specifically teach inclusion and addressing inequalities are: [Ali Finds a Way](#) and [Goats of Anarchy](#). UNICEF's [Youth Activate Talk Methodology](#) is also a platform from children to express their ideas on the SDGs through a variety of mediums.