

## DEEP DIVES

### topics



### Norway's education ODA

#### Education is a top focus of Norway's development policy, particularly for girls

Norway is the sixth-largest government donor to global education, spending US\$408 million on education ODA in 2016, according to OECD data. This represents 9% of Norway's total ODA, above the DAC average of 8% and makes it the 10th-largest donor to education as a proportion of its total ODA. Unlike other donors, Norway spends almost all education ODA on education programs abroad: It reports almost no scholarships and other costs of students from developing countries studying in Norway as education ODA.

The successive governments of Prime Minister (PM) Erna Solberg have made education Norway's top development policy priority since 2013. This focus was reiterated in Norway's April 2017 white paper on development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 'Common responsibility for the common future – the SDGs and Norwegian development policy'. In line with this political priority, funding to education has grown and will continue to do so. In 2013, PM Solberg pledged to double the education ODA budget between 2013 and 2017. According to the government, the budget went from NOK1.7 billion (US\$202 million, or 7% of total ODA) to NOK3.4 billion (US\$405 million, or 13% of total ODA) by 2017. OECD data confirms this trajectory. Education ODA as reported to the OECD DAC increased by 78% between 2013 and 2016, going from US\$229 million to US\$408 million in the time-period. The increase is driven by greater spending on primary education, which grew from US\$123 million in 2013 to US\$249 million in 2016. This is in line with Norway's focus on achieving universal primary education as a fundamental human right and key driver of development.

In addition to increasing its own financial support, Norway has assumed international leadership in bringing global education, and particularly girls' education, higher on the development agenda: Solberg co-initiated the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity and hosted the Oslo Summit on Education for Development in 2015. The Commission aims to set the course on how to promote and find innovative financing solutions for education in order to achieve the SDGs. Norway has also championed improving education services in humanitarian crises: Norway is one of five founding donors of the initiative 'Education Cannot Wait', a special fund launched in 2016 that aims to improve access to education services in humanitarian emergencies and crises.

Norway reports the vast majority of its education ODA as bilateral funding. It represented US\$379 million in 2016, up from US\$294 million in 2015. Bilateral investments focus on 'basic education' (69% of bilateral education ODA in 2016), which mostly consists of support for primary education. Other funding priorities include 'general education' (18% in 2016), which primarily consists of support for system strengthening, facilities, and training. Funding to both of these sub-sectors (basic education and general education) has grown substantially between 2013 and 2015: 103% and 71% respectively.

These funding priorities align with Norway's stated emphasis on primary education, system-level improvements, facilities, and teacher training, as detailed in its 2013-2014 'Education for Development' strategy. The strategy was published in June 2014 but is still an accurate statement of the current government's priorities. The strategy outlines three overarching goals: First, ensuring all children have the same opportunities to complete schooling; second, ensuring all people acquire basic skills; and third, ensuring that as many kids as possible acquire skills that contribute to transitioning into the labor market. Around these three main goals, the strategy outlines specific prioritized actions, including:

- Working toward free, high-quality primary education for all, including for girls and marginalized populations, such as those with disabilities
- Ensuring literacy and other basic skills
- Working to ensure that girls start and complete secondary education
- Working to provide safe and secure school facilities
- Ensuring continuity of education during humanitarian crises, including increasing funding for education as a component of humanitarian assistance
- Helping improve national education systems and teacher training
- Building up opportunities for high-quality vocational training

Norway helps meet its priority of girls' education through multilateral commitments, such as to UNICEF, which received NOK1 billion (US\$119 million) between 2015 and 2017, directed toward ensuring girls' access to education, and through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Bilaterally, it also requires civil society organizations (CSOs) that receive financial support to ensure gender equality as an integral part of their programs.

The government focuses bilateral support on areas where Norway has the most in-depth knowledge and expertise, and prefers multilateral channels overall: More than half of Norway's bilateral ODA to education is actually channeled as earmarked funding to multilateral organizations (60% in 2016). Key recipients of these earmarked funds are UNICEF, UNESCO, GPE, and the World Bank. Additionally, around a quarter of bilateral funding is channeled through NGOs and other CSOs (24% in 2016), commonly to reach children and young people in fragile situations. Such organizations include Save the Children, Norwegian People's Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Because so much of its bilateral education ODA goes through multilaterals, much of Norway's education ODA is not allocated by income group (51% on average between 2014 and 2016) or region (49%). Nevertheless, 31% of Norway's bilateral education ODA went to low-income countries (LICs). Counting only the funding allocated to specific countries, 63% of Norway's bilateral education ODA goes to LICs.

Geographically, sub-Saharan Africa is the focus. Slightly less than a quarter (24% of Norway's bilateral education ODA between 2014 and 2016) went to the region. Counting only funding allocated to specific countries, this share rises to 47%. Lebanon, Nepal, and Malawi were the top three recipients of Norway's education ODA between 2014 and 2016, reflecting both the country's growing emphasis in education in crisis context, and its geographic focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Other top partner countries included Ethiopia, Syria, South Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Palestine, and Jordan.

In addition to channeling earmarked funds to multilateral organizations, Norway supports the multilateral system through its core contributions. Core contributions to multilateral organizations with education programs amounted to US\$29 million in 2016, or 7% of Norway's total education ODA. Key recipients were the World Bank's International Development Association (US\$12 million) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (US\$8 million). Adding the bilateral ODA channeled through multilaterals to these figures, 63% of all Norway's education ODA went through multilateral organizations in 2016, GPE being a key partner in this regard. Norway is the third-largest donor to the GPE, having contributed US\$489 million (as of December 2017) since 2002. It has committed NOK2.07 billion to GPE for 2018 to 2020 (US\$276.1 million), a NOK600 million increase compared to its previous 2015-2017 pledge.

Norway is one of few countries globally which regards education as an explicit component of its humanitarian assistance policy and shows international leadership. Norway is one of five founding donors to the Education Cannot Wait initiative, committing US\$10 million in 2016. The budget for 2018 mentions increases in funding

to the organization, but does not quote numbers. Norway also works with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). In 2015, Norway hosted the May 2015 conference 'Safe Schools: Protecting Education from Attack'. The Safe Schools Declaration was endorsed by 50 countries during the conference.

According to the government, Norway spent 9% of its humanitarian assistance budget on education in 2016, and 12% is set aside for this purpose in the 2018 budget. Due to differences in reporting practices, data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) for 2016 shows that 2% of Norway's funding for humanitarian assistance was allocated to the education sector (US\$16 million). For reference, the UN Global Education First Initiative has established a target of 4% of global humanitarian assistance.

### Norad leads on education policy development

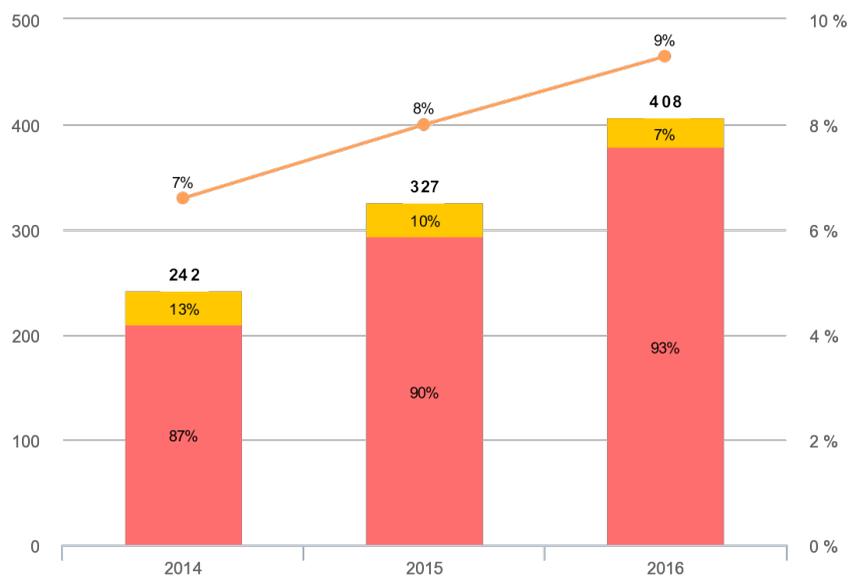
In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), State Secretary Laila Bokhari is responsible for Norway's global education portfolio and sets strategic priorities. In January 2017, the MFA's appropriation letter to Norad articulated that Norad was to take responsibility for global health and education. These issues had previously been managed by the MFA's Department of Regional Affairs, which includes individual regional departments and embassies. The implications of this change are as yet unclear. As a result, however, Norad's budget has increased for 2017. Traditionally, Norad's Department for Global Education and Health advises MOFA on development assistance for education and carries out evaluation processes. Norad's Department for Global Health in Education also plays a key role in evaluating progress around Norway's education priorities.

#### Further information: 'basic' and 'general' education

In this profile, 'basic education' refers to the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) sector code 'basic education' (112), which includes primary education, basic skills for youths and adults, and early childhood education. 'General education' refers to the OECD CRS sector code 'education, level unspecified', which includes education policy and administrative management, education facilities and training, teacher training, and educational research.

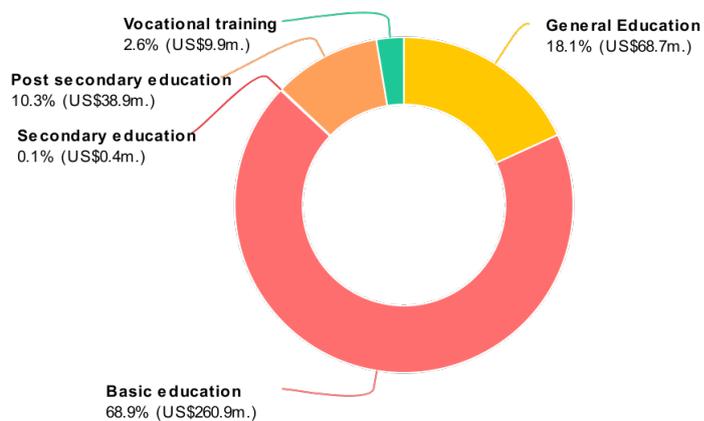
### NORWAY'S ODA TO EDUCATION

US\$ millions



### NORWAY'S BILATERAL ODA TO EDUCATION ACROSS SUB-SECTORS, 2016

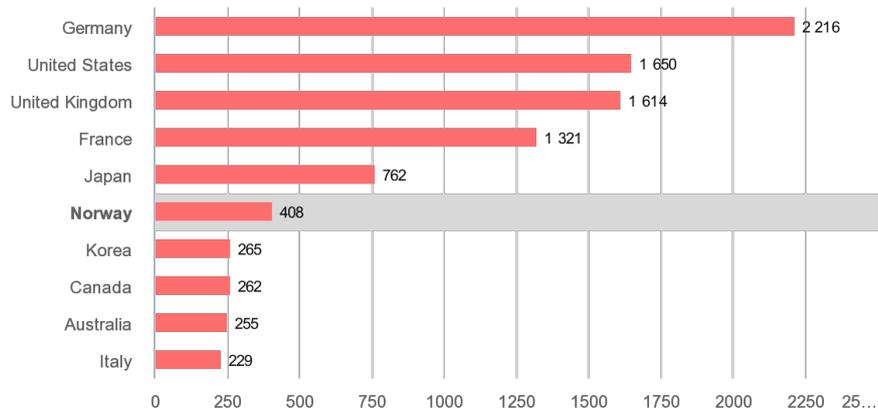
Total: US\$379 million



OECD CRS. In 2016 prices.

### TOP 10 DAC DONORS TO EDUCATION, 2016

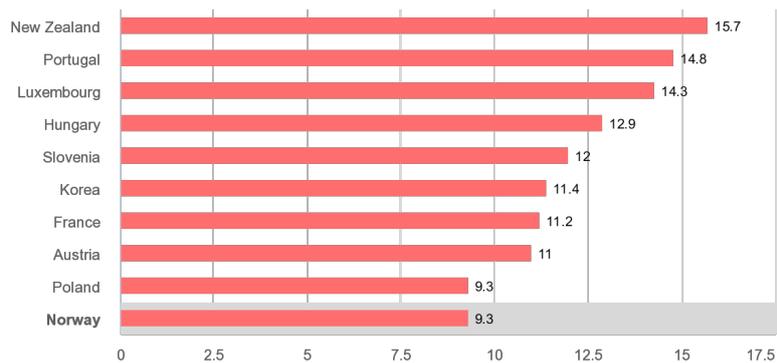
Total education ODA; US\$ millions; in 2016 prices;  
incl. bilateral and multilateral funding



OECD CRS and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector (DAC Secretariate estimates)

### TOP 10 DAC DONORS TO EDUCATION, 2016

Education ODA as % of total ODA



OECD CRS and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector (DAC Secretariate estimates)