

National Statement of Commitment - Norway

With the 2030 Agenda, we have a universal action plan for building a more sustainable and just world. Norway remains firmly committed to the SDGs, and if we are to progress towards building a better future we must approach the major challenges of our time as interdependent and integrated. Although Norway can demonstrate solid results and progress on many SDG 4 indicators, several challenges still remain of high priority for the government towards 2030.

Norway values a multi-stakeholder approach to the 2030 Agenda, and national education policies are developed in broad consultation with relevant stakeholders. The National Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda was developed in 2021, describing existing national policies and suggesting new policy initiatives to achieve the goals by 2030. The action plan sets the SDGs in a national context and proposes national targets for each goal to increase ownership at the local level. It received broad support when it was adopted by the Norwegian parliament in April 2022.

Norwegian priorities

Quality education for all is a priority area on both the national and international level. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the education sector in Norway, and the government is prioritizing to make up for lost learning and ensure that high quality education is accessible to all. Social inequality is one of the main challenges of our time, and education and research plays a key role in the development towards more equitable and prosperous societies.

Early intervention and qualified teachers

Norway is prioritizing early intervention and inclusive education for all, as participation in education is key to ensuring that all children and youth are provided with equitable opportunities irrespective of their socioeconomic background. Several policies have been implemented to ensure that early childhood education and care and education of high quality is accessible to all. The government has lowered the national maximum price of parental payment for kindergarten attendance, to ensure that kindergartens are available to all children regardless of their background. More qualified teachers are key to building an inclusive public school system for the future, and the government is working to increase the level of qualified teachers.

Completion in upper secondary education

Challenges remain with completion rates in upper secondary education, especially for boys within technical and vocational education. One of the main priorities of the government is to increase the completion rates within upper secondary education, through higher levels of public spending and increased cooperation between public and private sector. Several policies have been implemented to strengthen the field of

technical and vocational education and training, to ensure that we have the necessary skills and competencies of the future.

Education for Sustainable Development

In 2020, Norway integrated Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the general curriculum by including sustainable development as one of three interdisciplinary subjects. The interdisciplinary subject will contribute towards ensuring that students acquire the competence necessary to promote sustainable development. The implementation of the new curricula is an important contribution to SDG target 4.7.

National benchmarks for SDG 4

Norway has set benchmarks for the global indicators of SDG 4, as part of the process initiated by UNESCO in 2021. The benchmarks were reviewed in 2022 and benchmarks were set for the seventh indicator on gender equity. The national benchmarks are aligned with national policies and strategies, and the targets they contain. National indicators were suggested as part of the National Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda, and the government will follow up on the further development of national indicators for SDG 4 in cooperation with Statistics Norway.

Higher education and research

Higher education and research is central to addressing the main global challenges of our time, such as reducing inequalities and combating climate change. Although access to higher education is significant in Norway, as participation is supported through free public education and financial supporting schemes for students, the government is working to support increased access to higher education through more decentralised structures of education. A new long-term plan for higher education and research will be presented in October 2022. The SDGs will form an integral part of the plan, as innovative and knowledge-based solutions will be key to the successful transition towards a better world for current and future generations.

Global cooperation

Norway took a leading role in the process of reforming the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, as a strong supporter of UNESCO's key role as the global coordinator of SDG 4. In an effort towards strengthening global academic and student mobility, Norway was the first country to ratify the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in 2020. Quality education for all remain a keystone in Norway's support to education. Central Priority areas are education in emergencies and conflict situations, girls' education, including comprehensive sexuality education, technical and vocational education and training, school meals and education and climate change. Norway underlines that the right to education must be upheld in conflicts and emergencies. We call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2601 and the Safe Schools declaration to protect educational institutions from attack and military use.