



Save the Children

SAVE THE CHILDREN DENMARK

International Report 2019

Foreword

Save the Children is the world's largest child rights movement. We believe that every single child is of infinite worth; deserving of compassion, dignity and a fair chance in life – regardless of where they come from, what they look like, their parents' wealth, who they worship and whom they love. Our vision of a world in which children **survive, learn, and are protected** does not merely stem from solidarity; it is a recognition of our universal human rights. The rights of every child. And it is based on the evidence that realising these basic rights makes great socio-economic sense for all of us.

In 2019 Save the Children Denmark further developed our strong focus on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). The consequences of ignoring the traumas from war, sudden natural disaster, or being on the move without any safety, are grave - for the individual, their future and local economies. To support resilient children and societies, we believe that it is crucial to understand and address not only the physical but also the psychological wounds of children and their families who have been exposed to violence, conflict, and distress.

In 2019 it also became evident that the synergies between our thematic focus areas deliver great results. Links are increasingly being made between our Education in Emergencies work and our work on MHPSS. By way of example, this has been demonstrated through advocacy and partnership with the Education Cannot Wait fund, with whom we collaborated to integrate MHPSS within education programming in humanitarian contexts. We have been well placed to lead this area of work due to our specialised, technical expertise and our dual focus on Education in Emergencies and MHPSS. Based on our Strategic Partnership Agreement, we continued to collaborate with Danida and the Danish embassies in the countries where we work. Most of our international efforts takes place in so-called fragile states or fragile situations. It is essential for us to operate with a child-centred focus and to address barriers to realising children's rights at all levels – the household, community, and beyond. Our close collaboration with Danish embassies and local civil society organisations is important in our advocacy with national governments and regional bodies for children's right to **survival, learning, and protection**.



Maria Kristensen

International Programme Director

This is

SAVE THE CHILDREN DENMARK

With operations in more than 110 countries, Save the Children has a truly global presence, and we work within almost all thematic areas of relevance to ensure that children's rights materialise. At Save the Children Denmark, we concentrate our resources on children in fragile situations and humanitarian crises. This is where the world's most vulnerable children live – children who are at risk of being left behind if we are not purposefully directing our efforts towards them. Over the past few years, Save the Children Denmark has changed its country prioritisation from a 50-50 division between so-called “stable but poor countries” (Danida classification) and humanitarian emergency responses, to channelling 88% of our international portfolio to fragile contexts. We do so because all children have a right to education, health and protection and all children means all children. And because we believe that inclusion – **leaving no one behind** – is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

No child should be excluded from the opportunity to survive and learn, yet millions of children globally are being left behind simply because of who they are and where they live. An unprecedented 70.8 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide in 2019 and 37,000 people are forced to flee their homes every day due to conflict, disasters, or persecution¹. More than half of them are children. Driven by the principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, we apply a **Child Rights Programming Approach** and design solutions locally together with the specific target groups and with local actors. Partnering with **civil society** is a cornerstone of how we work, and we are engaging, strengthening, and complementing the capacity of local partners and networks.

Save the Children Denmark takes our responsibility and accountability to our target group seriously. Therefore we strive to always follow established best practice and we have a strong focus on **applied research** to contribute to a better understanding of the engagement in fragile states and the challenges and opportunities of working across the humanitarian-development nexus.

A KEY RESULT IN 2019 IN OUR APPLIED RESEARCH FOCUS

was signing a partnership agreement with the global leaders at the Feinstein Center at Tufts University, outside Boston in the US. The partnership with the Feinstein Center resulted in a joint research report on localisation in the Horn of Africa and winning an EU Marie Curie grant to further research on Leaving No One Behind and ending child marriage.

ANOTHER KEY RESULT was the signing of a strategic partnership agreement with Roskilde University, one of the leading universities in Denmark. Save the Children Denmark has thus made significant advances to strengthen the evidence base behind our strategic objectives.

¹ www.unhcr.org/ph/figures-at-a-glance



OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

Save the Children Denmark transferred project funds to 30 country programmes during 2019. Being part of the Save the Children Alliance provides us the opportunity to be part of larger programmes where we can work holistically, approach various stakeholders and duty-bearers and thus ensure a multiplicity approach to ensure children's rights are fulfilled.

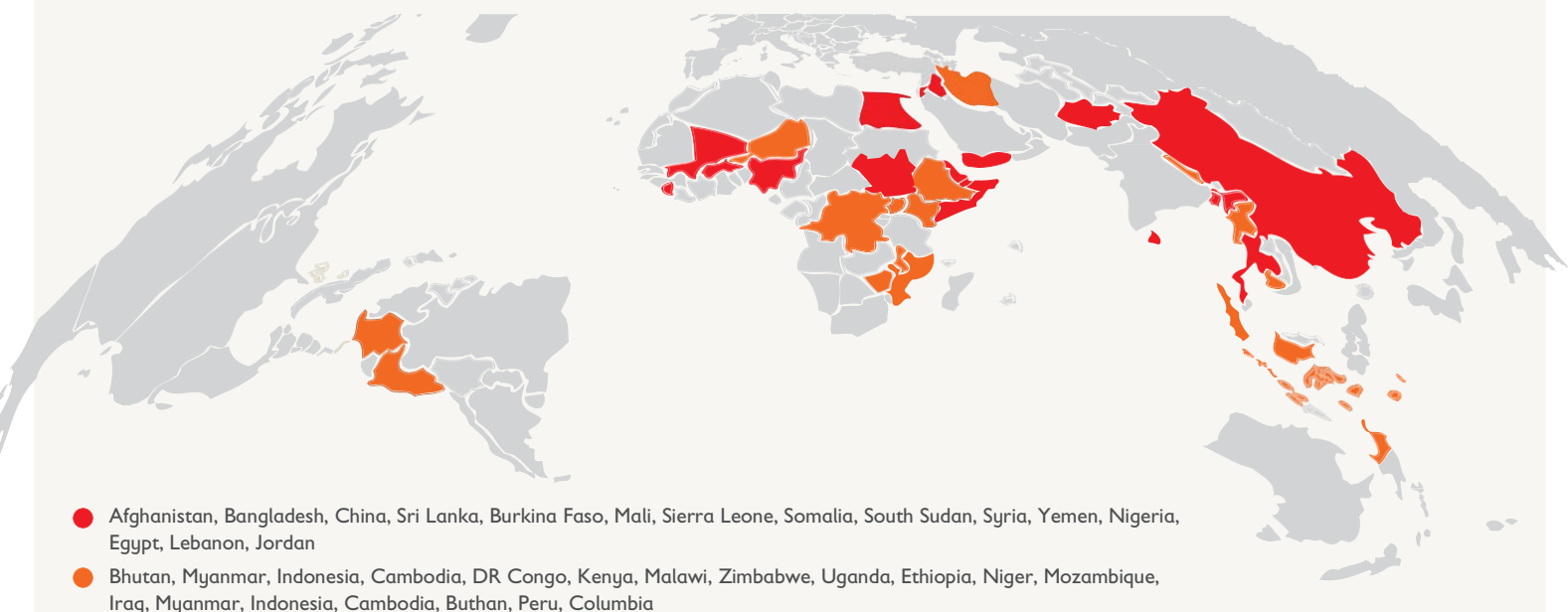
The countries marked in red are our multiple-project countries, with larger interventions and long-term commitment, of three to four-year programmes, often with several donors involved. The countries highlighted in orange received funds of USD 300,000 or less in 2019, and the majority of this funding was directed towards mitigating the effects of emergencies such as the cyclones that hit the coast of East Africa and the drought and flooding in the Horn of Africa.

Additionally, we have regional programmes covering the **Sahel**, **Horn of Africa**, and the **Middle East**, respectively. Working through regional programmes gives us an outstanding opportunity to put our priorities on the agenda across countries as we lobby inter-governmental authorities and networks with evidence-based information on children left behind. One of our focus areas is ending child marriage, and our participation in the 33rd African Union Head of States session held in Niger led to the adoption of Child Protection Committees to fight child marriage in Niger – the country with the highest rates of child marriage in the world (76.3%). The regional programmes further provide us an opportunity to work with youth empowerment – a key focus area in our International Strategy – where we strengthen youth participation mechanisms to facilitate young people's engagement in policies for enhanced sustainable development efforts. Finally, the regional programmes are a huge advantage when we are working with children, youth, and families on the move, as it allows us to assist them on their routes.

Save the Children Denmark is part of the Save the Children Alliance who operates in 110 countries.

As an international network, we reached 38.7 million children (50.3% girls, 49.7% boys) directly, through our own programmes and advocacy work and our work together with partners.

The Alliance also reached 29.1 million adults – adults who will impact children's lives.





ALL CHILDREN **MUST SURVIVE**

No child should die from preventable causes. In 2019, climate change amplified the intensity and scale of humanitarian crises around the world and across our priority programme countries. In particular, untraditional weather patterns caused large scale emergencies in Africa, affecting millions of children and their families. Climate change has exacerbated, and deepened humanitarian needs everywhere. Two cyclones hit southern Africa causing one of the largest climate-related humanitarian crises witnessed on the African continent. In the Horn of Africa, severe drought over the summer months has once again been followed by more extreme weather and heavy rains, causing significant episodes of flash flooding and landslides, leading to large-scale loss of human life, damage to property and livelihoods. Save the Children Denmark responds both to sudden emergencies and programming for long-term resilience building. Resilience programmes encourage actions that build preparedness and promote strong disaster risk reduction systems.

At Save the Children Denmark, we utilise our flexible emergency funds to support the Save the Children Alliance's joint presence in humanitarian responses, ensuring that children around the world can get much-needed, life-saving support during hardships and crises, and enable children and their families to recover and re-establish their lives. This global collaboration has enabled us to address the most acute humanitarian needs and to respond before the crisis occurs or escalates even further. By way of example, we worked with the government of **Sierra Leone** to establish and train the country's first national First Responders team.

Save the Children Denmark, Danish Refugee Council, CARE and five local actors signed a contract with the European Union Trust Fund in October 2019 aiming to improve the living conditions to food security, conflict and social cohesion amongst the vulnerable populations in the most fragile sub-region of Liptako-Gourma in **Mali, Burkina Faso** and **Niger**. With a strong focus on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as well on youth and gender, the programme covers 768,519 beneficiaries in 12 communes and intervenes in several thematic areas.



KEY RESULTS IN 2019

The cyclones Idai and Kenneth struck the eastern coast of Africa; along its destructive path was **Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe**. All countries were heavily affected by the extensive rainfall, resulting in flooding throughout affected regions, crippling critical infrastructure, and severely hampering emergency response. Save the Children Denmark responded by providing protection, health and education services in addition to food security measures and food deliveries.

Since 2015, a climate crisis has been engulfing **Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia** in a dry spell, with seven out of the last eight rain seasons producing little to no rain. When rain eventually arrived, it brought flooding and erosion, further pressuring communities. Save the Children Denmark and partners provided immediate support to local communities mitigating the worst outcomes and responding to acute needs.

In 2019, Save the Children Alliance responded to 82 humanitarian crises across 52 countries, with a total reach of 14,881,089 people, including 7,951,765 children.

KEY ADVOCACY RESULTS

Save the Children Alliance publicly launched the Stop the War on Children campaign across the world with the key objective to influence decision-makers to take practical steps to protect children affected by war and support their recovery for them to survive. Additionally, we have persistently brought attention to forgotten crisis such as the continuing deterioration of the conditions for children in **Yemen** and Rohingya children in the refugee camps in **Bangladesh**, which are at heightened risk of becoming long-term realities for children and their families.





Photo: Save the Children

ALL CHILDREN MUST **LEARN**

Since 2000, the world has experienced great progress around education, with higher enrolment rates of both girls and boys as well as an increase in literacy rates². Despite these achievements, the number of children out of school has grown since 2008. Today, there are 6 million more children out of school than in 2008 and these are mainly children in fragile states, in humanitarian crises and conflict settings. The need for quality education for crisis-affected children and young people is a central focus of Save the Children Denmark. When children and caregivers are asked what their humanitarian assistance priorities are, education is very often their highest priority.

A large body of evidence shows that education provides stability and a sense of normality for children and youth, it protects them from harm, and it can help them to cope with the impact of crisis and stress. It is also the key to a prosperous future and a fundamental right. We are fully aware that realising the universal human right to be educated is not merely about access to a school. Materialising meaningful education requires not only attendance and non-discriminatory access but also qualified and motivated teachers, and conditions that enable children to learn, including being in good mental health, free from trauma.

Young children are at risk of not reaching their full potential and may face lifelong consequences if they are not stimulated or cared for when caregivers lack skills, motivation, or ability. Therefore, Save the Children Denmark also focuses on early childhood development with our Learning through Play programmes.

² www.undp.org



KEY RESULTS IN 2019

Save the Children Denmark is fighting to improve access to schools, especially for girls. In **South Sudan** for instance, 667 girls were enrolled for the first time in 10 schools in Maban, which was an increase of 28% compared to 2018. In **Somalia**, we worked with increased access to schools in areas with many internally displaced persons and here we saw an increased enrolment rate of 11% from 2018 to 2019.

We also fight to enhance quality education by supporting accelerated learning programme methods and saw an increase in learning outcomes and children's wellbeing in **Indonesia, Mali** and **Uganda**. We supported learning programmes for **Syrian** refugees in several countries in the MENA region. A programme to increase access to Information Technology (IT) to improve girls' education piloted in **Bangladesh**, where it has been tested how IT education and mentorship for girls can improve academic results, decrease school drop-out and prevent early marriage. In **Bhutan**, a playful parenting initiative rolled out countrywide, with a regional advocacy component in Asia. In **China**, kindergartens in Yunnan province were starting to integrate play into the curriculum and make the spaces more child-friendly.

KEY ADVOCACY RESULTS

Through our role as a civil society representative on the executive committee of the Education Cannot Wait fund, we successfully advocated for MHPSS to be integrated into the full programme cycle of any Education Cannot Wait funded project. Furthermore, the MHPSS Collaborative's donor lobbying efforts led to furthered financial commitment and contributions to the Education Cannot Wait fund at the United Nations General Assembly. Finally, we successfully advocated at the G7 summit for support on basic education in the Sahel and established together with the UNHCR a global framework for refugee education in preparation for the Global Refugee Forum. These results underline our role and responsibility as a key player in identifying and supporting synergies between MHPSS and education.





Photo: Save the Children

YOUTH AND LEARNING

In the poorest and most fragile states, the youth population is expected to increase. An unacceptably high number of young people still receives poor education and lacks employment opportunities, and many live below the poverty line, despite being employed. Despite their numbers, young people are largely excluded from decision-making and are often marginalised politically and culturally, especially in fragile settings. There is a clear need to strengthen youth participation mechanisms to facilitate young people's engagement in policies and activities that enhance sustainable development efforts.

Youth empowerment is an important and evolving component of our International Strategy. We take a holistic approach, including the full spectrum of transition from childhood to adulthood and in ensuring that young people have the capacity to address the challenges they face, and to become the next generation of active citizens. During 2019, we heard from several child- and youth-representing groups and organisations that it is essential to put children and youth at the centre of SDGs implementation and monitoring. This has led to our engagement in- and support to- several activities that advocate for the greater inclusion of children and youth in the fight for equity and right for quality education.



KEY RESULTS IN 2019

In **Bangladesh**, Save the Children Denmark supported excluded adolescents and youth to gain employability skills and employment by ensuring that 1,427 youth (780 girls and 647 boys) completed vocational skills training based on labour market needs - out of which 85% have accessed decent work and self-employment in 2019. Moreover, 1,653 adolescents and youth completed life skills training, which contributed to a reduction in risky behaviour, an increase in protective behaviour and supported positive reproductive health behaviour. In **Sri Lanka**, 3,323 rural and estate youth have entered the job market after vocational training and job fairs. In **Afghanistan**, 500 youth were trained in 13 types of vocational skills and 817 vulnerable families got support to start income-generating activities.

Governments do not always welcome youth voices and empowerment as they do not want young people to turn into political opponents. Our regional programmes in the **Sahel Region, Horn of Africa** and **Middle East** have thus focused on building trust and facilitating dialogue between regional institutions and youth, and on strengthening capacities, coaching and mentoring youth groups and network in evidence-based advocacy to make their voices credible and authentic. By showing robust evidence and being confident, young people have made an impact in convincing authorities of their added value. A key result in 2019 was the adoption of a strategic framework on child protection by the Economic Community of West African States after pressure from youth organisations.

KEY ADVOCACY RESULTS

Save the Children Denmark has made several efforts to engage with stakeholders to promote children and youth inclusiveness. At the annual High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, we were instrumental in developing recommendations on Goals 4 and 8, designed to tackle the obstacles faced by the most deprived and marginalised groups of children, including girls and children affected by conflict.

Furthermore, we played a role in the African Union Commission's celebration of the Africa Youth Month in November 2019 with the theme of 1 Million by 2021: Count me in. The purpose of the celebration was to equip young people to build a movement to put youth at the centre of sustainable solutions, policies, and lasting change. We trained 150 youth from different African countries and built their skills for effective decision-making, strategy development and advocacy campaigning to enable them to influence stakeholders.



ALL CHILDREN ARE **PROTECTED**

Children bear a disproportionate burden in conflict. Grave violations against children in armed conflict have progressively increased. Over the past three decades, the number of children living in conflict zones has nearly doubled, reaching 415 million in 2018 (up from 385 million in 2016). On the African continent, one in four children is living in a situation of armed conflict and in the Middle East – the region with the highest proportion of children living in conflict zones – the proportion is one in three children.

While armed conflicts and crises affect people of all ages, children are particularly susceptible to the effects of war since, at that age, they are not merely developing physically but also mentally, i.e. developing their cognitive abilities, establishing values. Conflict therefore impacts the child's ability to grow, learn, have healthy relationships and develop to their full potential.

Child protection, mental health and wellbeing are therefore core components of Save the Children Denmark's programming in terms of both prevention of- and response to various forms to various forms of violence against children. We have furthermore invested in building a global network and technical expertise for improving the integration and operationalisation of MHPSS services across health, education, and protection sectors.



KEY RESULTS IN 2019

Save the Children Denmark and our partners are piloting a project in **Sri Lanka** which includes applied research and development of a national action plan to protect children and youth from online violence. The project has strengthened the national hotline service and case management system, and a cyber watch unit has been established in the government. An app has been developed and launched to provide victim support services for victimised children and their families, which has already been downloaded over five thousand times. The project has benefitted from collaboration with and technical support from our domestic programme, and both staff and government representatives in Sri Lanka received in-country guidance from our experts.

Children's mental health is closely linked to education, as good physical and mental health are prerequisites to learning. One example of our work with the Education Cannot Wait fund is the integration of mental health within education in humanitarian and post-conflict settings in **Uganda** and **South Sudan**, by improving referral systems, and building safe and nurturing learning spaces that reduce physical punishment and sexual violence against children. In **Mali**, MHPSS Child Resilience sessions benefitted 1,000 host community and displaced children in Northern and Central Mali, while separated children were reunified with their families through the Save the Children Denmark supported family tracing and reunification networks in **South Sudan**.

KEY ADVOCACY RESULTS

Save the Children's 2019 Stop the War on Children campaign brought serious attention to the importance of practical action for children's protection and recovery, as it raised attention to the widespread disregard for international legal and normative frameworks to protect children in conflict. Our MHPSS Collaborative underlined the importance of this component of the campaign in advocacy briefs and reports and by leading discussion panels during Save the Children's 100-year anniversary events in London and the Hague. Finally, through the Mental Health Innovation Network, we promoted the active participation of organisations at local and regional levels in international mechanisms and forums, contributing to broadening and strengthening participation of developing countries in global institutions.



Photo: Save the Children

ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups is adolescent girls. Despite recent declines in the prevalence of child marriage globally, an estimated 12 million girls are still married each year. Child marriage rates are especially high among those affected by conflict or natural disaster where underlying drivers such as gender inequality, social norms, and lack of opportunities for girls are exacerbated, and new drivers related to protection concerns and extreme poverty arise. Consequently, girls who are married young experience a violation of their human rights and suffer negative impacts on their education, economic prospects, social lives, mental and physical health, and the health and nutrition of their children. Child marriage does not only impact the individual girl or boy, but also have been found to have negative social, economic, and political consequences for the community and the country.



KEY RESULTS IN 2019

Religious leaders play an important role in determining acceptable behaviours and their engagement is critical to fulfil desires to change social and gender norms. In **Mali**, social and cultural constraints meant that many gender based violence cases were managed by community and religious leaders and therefore not reported. In 2019, Save the Children Denmark started to see the results of the involvement of these religious leaders as their engagement was crucial to acceptance and success in the implementation of gender-based violence awareness activities. The aim is to have these religious leaders talk openly about gender issues in religious ceremonies. In **Burkina Faso**, a strong relationship with religious authorities has resulted in an increase in referrals to Village Development Committees by religious leaders when they discovered children being married under the legal age of 18. Finally, one of the partners in the Sahel Regional Programme gathered religious and traditional leaders from **Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, Senegal** and **Togo** to debate social and genders norms.

Another success is related to how young people in **Bangladesh** took the initiative to fight child marriage. In early 2019, youth groups in the Satkhira District started a school-based campaign and later formed an online platform through social media. With 7,464 followers in less than a year, they got direct access to local government officials, as the officials also became members of the Facebook group. The size and variety of members of the platform enables actions to be taken immediately and thus proved to be a very efficient tool.

KEY ADVOCACY RESULTS

Save the Children Denmark participated in several high-level international summits and events to increase the focus on the severe consequences of child marriage. We ensured the participation of local organisations in these events, as they are the driving force in holding governments and communities accountable to the commitments made under international law.

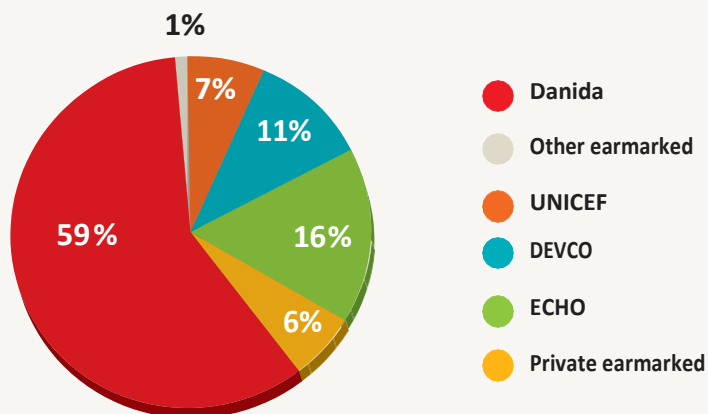
Our Danida-financed **Sahel** programme focuses on ending child marriage. A big achievement in 2019 was the public commitment to have the Code of Persons and Families law revised in **Burkina Faso** to prohibit forced marriage for children under 18. Save the Children Denmark mobilised local organisations, religious leaders, and customary leaders to demand and lobby the law to be revised and thereby setting the legal age for marriage at 18 for both sexes. We supplemented the effort by engaging the general public through social media campaigns.

Save the Children Denmark

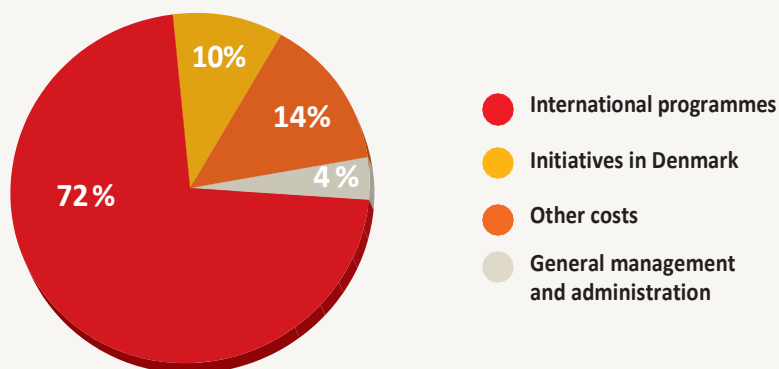
IN NUMBERS

In 2019, Save the Children Denmark's total turnover reached **DKK 443 million** which was a slight increase from 2018. Our work was financed by donations from private persons, companies, national and international foundations, Danida, UNICEF, the European Union's Department for International Cooperation and Development (DECVO) and the European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Department (ECHO). Danida was the largest donor contributing about 36% of our income while private donations and collections accounted for almost 30% of our income. 72% was directed to international programmes and 10% to national programmes.

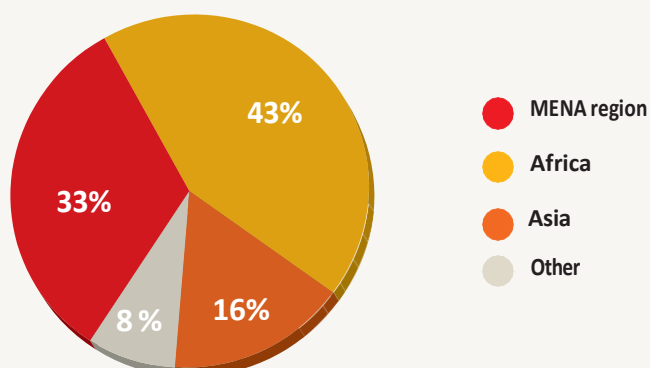
Earmarked expenditure on INTERNATIONAL projects in 2019



Distribution of Save the Children's expenditure



In 2019, the entire Save the Children Alliance saw a financial turnover of USD 1,169,262,000



Africa, primarily East Africa, continued to be our main focus area. 43% of the international funds were allocated to African countries closely followed by the (MENA) region and Asia at 16%.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We have a strong cooperation with a variety of donors as we strive to reach the most marginalised children around the world. We would therefore link to thank the following partners:



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The LEGO Foundation