

UNICEF AUSTRALIA – Directly Supported Programs Policy

1. Policy Statement

Directly Supported Programs (DSPs) are projects for which UNICEF Australia (UA) remits specific earmarked funds, and where it has ongoing engagement in support, monitoring and management. All DSPs are developed with UNICEF Country Office partners, to support their work with respective Governments and institutions to make systemic changes in policy and capacity to fulfil children’s rights.

UA has set a target to contribute up to 30% of its annual program expenditure from private sector fundraising income to DSPs¹. Based on the target UA pre-commits multi-year funding to DSPs in alignment with the Board approved International Programs Strategy.

The primary source of DSP funding is earmarked donations from private sector donors. Donors who designate their donation for specific earmarked projects will have those monies recognised as Other Resources – Regular (OR-R), and have those funds directed as per their intentions. The secondary source of funding will be UA’s regular resources (RR) which will be converted to meet the balance of DSP commitments, ensuring that projects achieve the intended impact for children and that UA can maintain its Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) and therefore Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) grant funding levels. UA will liaise with UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) where conversion of RR occurs, as per the Cooperation Agreement².

ANCP funding allocation which is leveraged by private sector contribution to UNICEF Australia will also contribute to DSP funding.

UNICEF Australia is committed to maximising the impact of its resources in the lives of children by supporting quality projects that provide good value for money. UNICEF Australia aims to demonstrate project effectiveness through all its partnerships and at all stages of the project cycle including project identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF Australia’s work is driven by its commitment to human rights for all children and adults, and is underpinned by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which inform its primary focus - to effectively promote, protect and fulfil the universal rights of all children. UNICEF Australia also abides by relevant codes including the ACFID Code of Conduct, SPHERE Standards and Red Cross Code of Conduct.

UNICEF Australia ensures its projects are effective by applying the Guiding Principles below, actively promoting and supporting these and verifying good practice of Country Office partners.

¹ Accepting that there may be large, unplanned earmarked donations for additional projects, beyond the committed DSP plan, that causes UA to exceed this target.

²Cooperation Agreement 11 e: “Conversions of Regular Resources to Other Resources projects should only be made in accordance with National Committee Board Approved Policy. The National Committee will ensure that a Board Policy is implemented and maintained; the policy will include provisions for consulting UNICEF when conversions to Other Resources of greater than US\$50,000 are planned.”

Funds shall not be utilised for non-development activities including welfare assistance, approaches which maintain beneficiaries in a state of dependency long term, or in ways which promote religious adherence or political interests.

2. Purpose

UNICEF Australia program funds are remitted for global programs (regular resources), emergencies, and DSPs, whereby funds are earmarked for specific projects aligned to UA's priorities thematic and geographic priorities and where UA has ongoing engagement in the monitoring and management of the project.

UNICEF Australia, along with other UNICEF National Committees, accept a commitment to strive to remit at least 75 per cent of funds raised in support of UNICEF's global development work. A majority of the funds raised from private sources in Australia are remitted as un-earmarked funding to UNICEF headquarters (as 'Regular Resources') to be used where needed most. Targets for Regular Resource contribution are negotiated and included in the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).

UNICEF Australia allocates funds to particular Directly Supported Programs (DSPs) implemented by Partner Country Offices, in line with its International Programs Strategy. The allocation of resources for DSPs, and ongoing engagement throughout the project cycle, is an important concern for UNICEF Australia. UNICEF Australia's funding for, and broader engagement with, DSPs provides opportunities to:

- engage with UNICEF in countries and sectors of particular importance to Australia;
- enhance the quality of projects through technical assistance as appropriate;
- maintain a distinctly Australian identity within UNICEF;
- better articulate and measure the impact of its funds on children rights;
- earmark donor funding and receive regular detailed reporting;
- create stronger linkages between UA and its Partner Country Offices.

This policy seeks to maximise UNICEF Australia's positive impact for children and donors by ensuring project relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability in its DSPs. These are important in achieving better outcomes in realising the rights of every child, and better value for money for donors.

This policy provides a basis for shared understanding of what 'program effectiveness' means, why it is important, and how it can be achieved. It outlines quality requirements for all DSPs in order to inform decision-making and establish a consistent and coordinated approach to program and partner management. This policy also identifies and articulates clear guidelines as to the specific kinds of activities and approaches for which UNICEF Australia does not accept or use funds.

3. Guiding Principles:

- **Accountability and transparency** – UA and Partner Country Offices are accountable for the progress of DSPs, including accounting for finances, activities, effectiveness, and impact. This accountability requires transparency on behalf of both partners. Transparency is encouraged through open regular communication and sharing of information in order to enable informed and open decision making.

- **Active and meaningful participation** – DSPs are designed to ensure active and meaningful participation of beneficiaries, including children and young people and other marginalised groups. Involvement throughout the project cycle in design, program activities, monitoring and evaluation is critical to project effectiveness.
- **Do no harm** – The do-no-harm principle requires organisations to strive to minimise the harm they may inadvertently cause in the process of their development activities. The CRC and a human rights-based approach require that children and other project beneficiaries are protected from harm, and all domains of abuse and exploitation. This includes adequate protection and reduction of risk when participating in UNICEF programs. UNICEF Australia’s Child Safeguarding policy details specific measures to safeguard children.
- **Human Rights-Based Approach** – DSPs take a human rights-based approach and seek the realisation of children’s rights as well as respecting the rights of the women and men in their communities in the implementation of projects. The pillars of the CRC (survival and development, participation, protection and best interest) guide program design and seek to increase accountability of duty bearers to fulfil rights while building the capacity of rights holders to claim rights.
- **Impact for Children** – According to our mandate all DSPs are designed to impact positively on children’s rights and have a clearly articulated Results Framework. Accountability and measurement of results is a key feature of project management and monitoring and evaluation practice.
- **Ownership and Relevance** - All DSPs align at a country level with the UNICEF Country Program Document, ensuring consistency and complementarity of DSPs with other UNICEF activities and contribution to higher level goals. DSPs take a strengths-based approach, improving the country’s institutions and using local systems where possible.
- **Risk Mitigation** - At both partnerships and project level the potential risks to beneficiaries, project outcomes and UNICEF reputation are identified and monitored. In cases of high risk these are mitigated or the project adapted to reduce risk to an acceptable level during the project planning phases and reassessed throughout the life of the project.
- **Supporting Equity and Non-Discrimination**—In line with UNICEF’s human-rights-based approach to development programming, UNICEF Australia is committed to supporting development projects which realise human rights without restriction or bias on the basis of sex, sexual identity gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, age, religion, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, caste, class, citizenship, sexual identity, ability/disability, displacement and urban/rural locality. DSPs address inequality and inequity through targeting and supporting the most vulnerable and ensuring they participate in all stages of the project cycle.
- **Sustainability** - The design of DSPs ensures that project outcomes are sustainable and can be maintained once the project finishes. For UNICEF programs a systems strengthening approach, including capacity building of government and its institutions, ensures that countries have the foundations for maintaining improvements in child rights. Capacity building ensures not only improved knowledge but the likelihood of multi-level behaviour change.

- **Value for Money** - The value for money principle is aimed at achieving the best possible outcome for the money invested. It is a measure of the extent of benefits in relation to the cost of achieving that benefit. UNICEF Australia maximises value for money through establishing efficient systems and processes, restricting the number of priority countries, and focusing on our region in order to control management and monitoring costs. At a project level UNICEF Australia supports evidence-based approaches which have a high likelihood of achieving results, and preference strategic investment in pilot projects designed to model, trial and document good practice / lessons learned in order to leverage government funding for scale up (pilot to policy approach).
- **Whole of organisation, strategic decision making** - Decisions on project funding are guided by a clear and comprehensive International Programs Strategy. This ensures that the portfolio of Directly Supported Programs does not become fragmented and is consolidated so that UNICEF Australia has sufficient human and financial resources for effective and efficient project management and monitoring.

4. Application

This policy applies to the activities of UNICEF Australia, to all Directly Supported Programs, and partnerships with UNICEF Country Offices. It stipulates acceptable approaches and requirements for the programs and projects UNICEF Australia supports, as well as clearly articulating the types of programs and projects UNICEF Australia does not support.

5. Responsibilities

UNICEF Australia Board is accountable for insuring that the International Programs Strategy is aligned with the UNICEF Australia Corporate Strategy and overall funding directed to DSPs. The board is to remain informed about the implementation of the DSPs against goals, and major risks.

UNICEF Australia Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board to ensure that DSPs are value for money, aligned to the International Programs Strategy, and that UNICEF Australia has the financial and technical capability to implement the project. Further the CEO is authorised to terminate a DSP where it becomes: poor value, misaligned or outside the capacities of UNICEF Australia to manage.

UNICEF Australia Director of International Programs is responsible for ensuring that approved projects have been subject to a thorough review process which critically analyses proposal information against a set of criteria aligning to the guiding principles outlined in this policy, the International Programs Strategy and the relevant standards to which UNICEF Australia is subject. In addition, they are responsible for compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct and DFAT Accreditation criteria.

UNICEF Australia Director of Fundraising and Communications is responsible for the promotion of DSPs among Australian donors and to maximise earmarked funding for the DSPs, up to the 30% target. They must ensure that communications regarding the use of funds is truthful and transparent and that funds raised are earmarked for the purposes for which they have been donated.

UNICEF Australia Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ensuring that financial information from the program is materially accurate, that earmarked funding is properly directed, and that external (e.g. Recognised Development Expenditure -RDE), Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) Division etc.) and internal financial reporting is accurate.

UNICEF Australia International Programs staff are responsible for ensuring that Partner Country Offices are aware of the requirements for project design and the criteria against which proposals are reviewed. They are responsible for the completion of the Project Design Review and any relevant checklists, and following up Country Offices for further information and clarification where necessary, or to request modifications, where they are unable to satisfy all project design criteria. Programs staff monitor implementation to ensure activities occur in ways consistent with the principles outlined in this policy and address issues in implementation as they arise. Programs staff undertake Partner Capacity Assessments of Partner Country Offices and update these regularly.

UNICEF Partner Country Offices are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of projects and play a key role in ensuring funds are used for child-rights focused development projects. They are responsible for utilising the funds received according to the purpose outlined in the approved proposal and the agreed budget. UNICEF Partner Country Offices are also responsible for identification, screening and monitoring of appropriate downstream implementing partners according to the protocols of UNICEF Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT).

6. Implementation

UNICEF Australia's contribution to quality and effectiveness

- 5.1 UNICEF Australia ensures that decision-making about international projects is consistent with its International Programs Strategy and its capacity to effectively manage and add value to Partner Country Offices and DSPs. The **International Programs Strategy** is reviewed every three years to ensure it remains relevant and has ownership across the organisation.
- 5.2 Throughout the project selection process, UNICEF Australia demonstrates a commitment to good development practice, rights-based approaches, and addressing cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability and environmental sustainability. Partner Country Offices are made aware of the standards and requirements for project design through the **Request for Proposal** and **Proposal Template** that inform UNICEF Australia's review. The review considers project impact and results, the evidence base for project design, project risks, as well as monitoring and evaluation plans.
- 5.3 All funding for Directly Supported Programs is allocated to Partner Country Offices whose relationship with UNICEF Australia is framed by an agreement (**Letter of Acknowledgement**) ensuring mutual accountability for the success of projects.
- 5.4 UNICEF Australia contributes to project design and all stages of the project cycle by providing recommendations and expertise on the application of the **Guiding Principles** outlined in this policy. This ensures a high quality project both during the design and approval phase and throughout the project cycle.

- 5.5 Through regular **monitoring visits** and the **reporting feedback process**, UNICEF Australia program staff strive to promote good practice, assess the effectiveness of outcomes, and provide recommendations where they see potential for improved practice.
- 5.6 UNICEF Australia contributes to program **evaluations or reviews** to measure results and contribute to learning and continuous improvement. Evaluations or reviews are required after three years of project operation and are designed according to **OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria**, addressing impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability.
- 5.7 Subject to financial and human resources, UNICEF Australia provides technical support to address any shortfalls identified in the **capacity and compliance assessment** of Partner Country Offices and meet any needs identified by Partner Country Offices.

Verification of good practice on the part of delivery partners

- 5.8 UNICEF Australia programs staff use the **Project Design Review tool** to assess all requested proposals against standard criteria to ensure alignment with: **UNICEF Australia's International Program Strategy**; good development practice; the **Guiding Principles** of this policy; and the requirements of **other relevant policies** (see supporting documents for related policies).
- 5.9 UNICEF Australia has regular formal and informal contact with Partner Country Offices to remain informed of project implementation and any changes. Programs staff use six monthly **Progress Updates, Financial Reports, and Annual Narrative Reports** to verify project progress, good practice, effectiveness, and adequate utilisation of funds. Where necessary, programs staff work with partners to address issues or withhold funds where progress is not sufficient.
- 5.10 Programs staff conduct **annual monitoring visits** to verify good development principles are being converted into good practice, progress is on track, program activities are effective, and funds are being used solely for child rights and development purposes. They also seek opportunities for mutual learning and identify areas where UA might contribute to improved effectiveness through non-financial support.
- 5.11 UNICEF Australia completes a **Partner Capacity Assessment** to assess the technical capacity of Partner Country Offices. The assessment includes an analysis of the **Situation Assessment, Country Program Document, Mid-term reviews, and Program Evaluations**.
- 5.12 UNICEF Australia requires Partner Country Offices (COs) to identify any downstream implementing partners involved in the delivery of project activities that are sub-recipients of UA funds. COs verify that the relevant screening of partners has been undertaken and ongoing assurance activities are taking place in accordance with the protocols of UNICEF's **Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)**.

Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) criteria and the effectiveness of Directly Supported Programs (DSPs)

- 5.13 For a project to be selected/approved as a Directly Supported Program and be included in the RDE calculation, UA must have the capacity to manage the project in line with the UA Directly Supported Programs Policy. This includes but is not limited to; **management and**

oversight of the project; assessment of technical and operational **capacity** of the Partner Country Office; a **Partnership Agreement**; and the ability to **add value** to the partnership.

5.14 Directly Supported Programs must meet the general principles for RDE eligibility outlined in the **Recognised Development Expenditure Explanatory Notes**, including:

- UNICEF Australia has knowledge of the activity or overall project and receives relevant information from the Partner Country Office which enables it to engage in a meaningful way with the activity;
- UNICEF Australia influences the activity or project's direction; and
- UNICEF Australia has the ability to withdraw funding or initiate action where an activity or project is not aligned with its priorities or Australian Government policy requirements.

Non-Development Activities

Projects are considered ineligible for funding if they include any activities and approaches which are considered non-development activities as outlined in this policy, or which are not eligible as RDE according to DFAT guidelines including:

- (a) Assistance provided on the basis of religion or the acceptance of any particular religious belief or membership of a particular religious group;
- (b) Evangelical activity or missionary outreach work;
- (c) Projects that are designed to convert people from one religious faith to another, or, from one political persuasion to another;
- (d) Building church, ecclesiastical or political structures;
- (e) Welfare purposes;
- (f) Domestic projects (other than community education).

Promoting visibility of Australian contributions

Wherever possible UA staff collect and disseminate case studies and information on DSPs where there is clear attribution of achievements to Australian donor funds.

7. Review

Version	Approval Date	Comments	Author/s	Approved By	Review Date
V1	June 2014		International Programs Team	EMT & Board	June 2017
V2	February 2018		International Programs Team	EMT & Board	February 2020
V3	November 2019		International Programs Team	Audit & Risk Committee	November 2022
V4	March 2022	Update to definitions	International Programs Team	Programs Committee	November 2022

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Annex 1: Definitions

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

Directly Supported Programs: Any project or suite of projects for which UNICEF Australia remits earmarked funds and where UNICEF Australia has ongoing engagement in the monitoring and management. Directly Supported Programs only include projects which are eligible to be included in RDE.

Effectiveness: Effectiveness is the extent to which an activity fulfils its intended purpose or function.

Impact: Long-term effects on identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types and, where positive, should have some relationship to agreed international and national development goals.

Downstream Implementing Partners: Any organisations which are responsible for collaborative implementation of project activities in relation to the Directly Supported Programs. This includes, but is not limited to, local and international NGOs, CSOs, and government. Downstream Implementing Partners are any organisation with which UNICEF has a Program Cooperation Agreement, Small-Scale Funding Agreement or Rolling Workplan with respect to or including the Directly Supported Program. This does not include collaborative arrangements under an MOU where the organisation utilises its existing resources and there is no transfer of cash or supplies.

NGO: Non-Government Organisation

Non-Development Activity: Includes welfare assistance and approaches which maintain beneficiaries in a state of dependency long term, as well as any activity undertaken to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

Normative principles: Constitute a starting point and guide for the analysis of all stages of a UNICEF program. Characteristics includes: universality, applying equally to all people in all countries; based in law, internationally agreed development goals and treaties as well as national laws and commitments; and relevant to Government-UN cooperation. The principles are: human rights-based approach to cooperation, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Partner Country Office: A UNICEF Country Office with whom UNICEF Australia holds a signed Letter of Acknowledgement and a minimum of one active Directly Supported Program. These are UNICEF Australia's primary implementing partners.

Program: Programs are overarching development approaches and initiatives that set priorities and guide project outcomes, results and activities. Programs constitute a coherent set of development activities (projects) that pursue a single focus, which may be regional, thematic or country based. At UNICEF Australia, programs are predominantly focused around thematic areas.

Project: Projects are the practical implementation of UNICEF Australia's overarching development approach or program. Projects are discrete investments in particular countries, contexts and/or sectors, with a specific start and end date and identified funding.

Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE): Recognised Development Expenditure is the total eligible contribution that each NGO receives from the Australian community for the organisation's

development assistance, emergency relief or rehabilitation activities overseas, and development education in Australia. Eligible contributions include donations of cash, gifts in kind and volunteer services. Up to half of the RDE can be eligible gifts in kind and/or eligible volunteer services.

Human Rights-Based Approach: A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.³

Sustainability: “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴ Sustainability in programming involves ensuring that long term outcomes can be maintained once the program finishes and where active steps are taken as part of the program to enable continuation upon completion of support. Multi-level capacity building, participation and systems building are key elements of sustainable programming.

Value for Money: measures the utility of the program in proportion to the funds that were spent on it. Value for money is based not only on economy or the minimum purchase price, but also on the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the program designed using the allocated funds.

Welfare: Assistance to maintain individuals in a particular condition on a long term basis, such as institutionalised care programs provided by orphanages, child sponsorship (that is, funds given directly to children or their families, and not funds drawn from child sponsorship and used for development purposes), hospital care programs, hospices, and costs for the maintenance of structures for institutionalised care programs (for example, schools or orphanages).

Welfare is implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities:

- Welfare includes no strategy for integration into a broader, community development program.
- Welfare is provided on an individual or family basis, rather than on a community basis, and is unconnected to emergency needs.
- Welfare activities are implemented on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy.

Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analysing, and using information to answer questions about projects, policies and programs, particularly about their effectiveness and efficiency

Annex 2: Supporting Documents

Australian Council for International Development, *Code of Conduct*, ACFID: Revised 1 January 2019; Effective from 1 June 2017.

Australian Council for International Development, *Code of Conduct Good Practice Toolkit*, <https://acfid.asn.au/use-the-code>, accessed 3 May 2016

DAC Criteria for Evaluation Development Assistance, <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/39119068.pdf>, accessed 4 August 2014.

³ http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/index_62012.html

⁴ Brundtland Report

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Recognised Development Expenditure Explanatory Notes, Updated January 2017, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/recognised-development-expenditure-worksheet-explanatory-notes.aspx>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ANCP Manual, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.aspx>

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>, accessed 4 July 2019.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the ACCRA Agenda for Action, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>, access 4 August 2014.

UNICEF Mission Statement, Adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board in 1996, [https://www4.intranet.unicef.org/docny/branding.nsf/0/62222e40c01ab59585256d4f00553363/\\$FILE/UNICEF's%20Mission%20Statement%20Poster.pdf](https://www4.intranet.unicef.org/docny/branding.nsf/0/62222e40c01ab59585256d4f00553363/$FILE/UNICEF's%20Mission%20Statement%20Poster.pdf), accessed 19 March 2014.

UNICEF Procedure for Country and Regional Office transfer of resources to civil society organisations (FRG/PROCEDURE/2015/001, Effective 01 April 2015), https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/UNICEF_CS0_Procedure_Final_April2015_web.pdf

UNICEF, Program Policy and Procedures Manual, 2017

United Nations Development Group, Results-Based Management Handbook, <http://www.un.org/files/UNDG%20RBM%20Handbook.pdf>

Internal Policies and Guidelines:

UNICEF Australia, Disability and Development Policy

UNICEF Australia, Environment and Development Policy

UNICEF Australia, Gender and Development Policy

UNICEF Australia, International Programs Strategy 2017-2020

UNICEF Australia, Partnership Policy

UNICEF Australia, Program Design Review tool

UNICEF Australia, Partner Capacity Assessment