



STRATEGY OF **THE DEVELOPMENT FUND** 2017–2020



*Our vision is a sustainable and
just world without hunger and poverty*



UTVIKLINGSFONDET

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Front page illustration: Water management in Tigray, Ethiopia.

Photo: Julie Lunde Lillesæter, Differ Media



➔ HUNGER AND POVERTY CAN BE FOUGHT

Hunger and poverty can be fought. In the UN's sustainable development goals the world's leaders have expressed a common ambition of ending poverty, fighting hunger, and tackling climate change by 2030. These goals may be attained if the international community pulls together. But we do not have much time.

795 million people suffer from hunger in today's world, and about 2 billion from malnourishment – so-called “hidden hunger”. Many of these live in the countryside in developing countries and weak states, and are themselves food producers. Hunger and malnutrition lead to disease and death, undermine normal development in children and weaken their learning capacities. Adult participation in the labor market and care for their families both suffer when there is not enough, or not healthy enough food.

Food production is threatened by climate change and overexploitation of natural resources. The links between food, environment and development are clear. Poor people, who are dependent on the food they grow themselves, are vulnerable when flood and drought strike more often and harder than they used to. In many areas affected by conflict and migration, hunger and lack of food are both a cause and an effect of the difficult situation.



Selling the surplus from the farm at local markets in Ethiopia.

Photo: Julie Lunde Lillesæter, Differ Media



OUR CONTRIBUTION

The goal of Norwegian development aid is to eliminate poverty. The Development Fund contributes to the achievement of this goal by working to give poor people in rural areas sufficient and healthy food, improved finances, skills and resources to cope with climate change and crises, and increased power and influence over their own lives.

In the strategy period we will concentrate on the following four thematic priorities:

- ➔ Food security and nutrition
- ➔ Climate and the environment
- ➔ Economy and market access
- ➔ Participation and equal rights

An emphasis on climate adaptation and climate smart¹ food production puts poor people in a better position when confronted by climate change. In addition to increasing food production and access to healthy food, we must develop markets, so it becomes possible to make money and break out of poverty. Natural disasters and climate crises are threats to social development. When crises arise in the areas where we work, we contribute with effective emergency aid within our areas of expertise. However, our humanitarian assistance must always be seen in the context of a long-term need for sustainable development.

Local challenges encountered by poor people are influenced by global and social factors. The poor often lack influence and effective participation in local, national and international political processes. The Development Fund works to change the political and economic frameworks that create and maintain poverty and serious environmental problems. Our advocacy work aims to strengthen the efforts of civil society organizations to participate actively in processes of concern for the rural poor. In addition, we seek to be a driving force for foreign and development policies that reduce hunger, extreme poverty and serious environmental problems.

In order to achieve the goals embodied in our main thematic priorities, we need to strengthen the economic basis of the Development Fund, enhance our competence within our priority fields, and increase our impact.

¹ Norad defines climate smart agriculture as follows: "Climate smart agriculture emphasizes long-term increases in productivity and income. At the same time, greater resistance to the consequences of climate change is built up." In the present document we use the terms climate smart, climate robust and climate adapted agriculture more or less interchangeably. See also the Development Fund's Agricultural and Food Policy for further information on how we work with agricultural development.



VISION AND VALUES

The Development Fund is an independent Norwegian environmental and development organization, established in 1978. We support poor people in their fight to feed themselves and escape from poverty in a sustainable way, without degrading the environment.



OUR VISION IS
A SUSTAINABLE AND JUST WORLD
WITHOUT HUNGER OR POVERTY

The core values of the Development Fund – *sustainability, solidarity, justice and participation* – are reflected in our work.

SUSTAINABILITY: The Development Fund's work is based on the principle of sustainable development and aims to improve the livelihood of present and future generations – environmentally, economically and socially.

SOLIDARITY: The Development Fund's work is based on a fundamental principle of solidarity with poor people in developing countries.

JUSTICE: The Development Fund works to create a just world based on human rights, equal opportunities and democratic principles.

PARTICIPATION: The Development Fund works to stimulate greater participation of poor people in developing countries in processes that affect their lives.



THE RURAL POOR

In many of the world's poorest countries most of the poor live in the countryside. Our main target group is therefore poor people in rural areas of developing nations, who are mainly dependent on natural resources and the primary sector economy to maintain their livelihood. For many of these it is difficult to produce enough food to feed their families. They experience hunger, malnutrition and income loss, as a result of crop failures, extreme weather and natural disasters. Lack of access to money, land, extension services, technology and markets, along with limited influence on decision making, frustrate the efforts of the rural poor to get enough out of their resources.

The Development Fund works to increase the yields of poor small-scale farmers' fields, open up additional sources of income for them, and increase their influence when decisions are taken. We work to conserve biodiversity and manage natural resources sustainably, since it is nature, in the long run, that maintains life. Our goal is to secure the livelihoods of poor people and increase opportunities for them to change their life conditions. Below, we describe the groups within our target group, to which we give particular attention.

WOMEN

Within our main target group it is of particular importance to include women, who constitute a large part of the workforce but lag behind in many areas that impede development. According to UN estimates, there would be 100-150 million fewer people starving if women achieved equal rights and opportunities with men in the agricultural sector. Women take part in all phases of agricultural production. They also bear primary responsibility for the household and childcare. Equal rights for women at home and in agriculture will lead to improvements in the health and future opportunities of children, since mothers tend to invest agricultural and income surpluses in ways that benefit their children and family: in more and better food, health and schooling.

In the course of the strategy period, the Development Fund will contribute to the fight against gender-based poverty, injustice and discrimination. Our vision is that women and men must have equal rights in order to fully utilize the potential of agriculture. Women must participate when decisions are made and acquire additional sources of income. Women's needs and rights must be reflected in relevant local and national plans and laws, as well as in international frameworks.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people form a large part of the population in the countries we work in. Young people need employment and income to build stable societies and establish their own families, but the prospects for a future in the countryside are poor. Agriculture creates few attractive and income-generating employment options, and many move to the cities or to other countries because of the lack of jobs. Young people, particularly young women, have fewer democratic outlets than adults and are more rarely heard. The Development Fund works to strengthen the rights of young people and create attractive opportunities for them in their local settings, so they can contribute to value creation in their local communities.



During the strategy period, the Development Fund will work to achieve higher employment rates among young people, so they see opportunities for a good future. We will also seek to get more young people to participate in society, be conscious of their rights and influence decision making – in local grassroots organizations as well as in local, national and international forums.

THE MARGINALIZED

Marginalized groups, such as indigenous people, untouchables and people with disabilities, are often socially excluded and discriminated against. They are among the poorest in their communities, with weak health, minimal access to resources, and defenseless in case of natural disasters. They are often barred from political, social and economic participation. As a result, they have limited influence on the structural conditions that contribute to maintaining exclusion and poverty.

During the strategy period, the Development Fund will work to improve conditions for marginalized groups. They will participate in decision-making processes; their rights will be safeguarded in local, national and international laws and guidelines. People with disabilities will be integrated in our projects, which will be designed to allow them to strengthen their livelihoods and influence decisions.



Photo: Julie Lunde Lillesøter, Differ Media

From farmer to farmer. Lead farmers training farmers in climate smart agriculture in Malawi.



➔ WHERE WE WORK

During the 2017–2020 strategy period, the Development Fund will maintain programs in Ethiopia, Somalia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Guatemala and Nicaragua. New to this period is that we will expand our work in Malawi to a neighboring region in Mozambique, strengthen our efforts in Ethiopia, Somalia and Nepal, and concentrate our work in Central America by phasing out our activities in Nicaragua. We will continuously assess which areas we have sufficient knowledge and experience to make a difference in.

The Development Fund works mainly in the countryside, in areas where we can help to strengthen existing Norwegian initiatives and contribute to the achievement of the global sustainability goals by combating poverty and hunger. In order to effect lasting change, it is essential for us to have access to local knowledge, strong partners and good networks in the areas we work in. In the long run we hope to see our programs up-scaled, to increase their effect as far as possible. In order to achieve the best possible results, we will cooperate with diasporic groups in Norway with ties to the countries we work in, with local and international networks, with research institutions and with other relevant actors.

➔ OUR PRIORITIES

The main goals of the Development Fund are to strengthen the livelihoods of poor people in the countryside. This implies goals of increased food and nutritional security, improved economic opportunities, better climate adaptation, strengthened civil society, and equal rights for the rural poor. These goals will be achieved through activities linked to our four thematic priority areas:

- ➔ Food security and nutrition
- ➔ Climate and the environment
- ➔ Economy and market access
- ➔ Participation and equal rights

Working at the local mill and producing flour in Ethiopia.



Photo: Julie Lunde Lillesøter, Difter Media



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

During the strategy period, the Development Fund will:

-  Contribute to increased food and nutritional security and better health for rural poor people.
-  Contribute to increased production through climate smart agricultural techniques and improved extension services.
-  Contribute to influence policy frameworks, so the right to food is safeguarded and the rights of the rural poor are strengthened.

In order to reduce hunger and malnutrition among poor small-scale farmers, the productivity of agriculture must be increased. Climate smart agricultural techniques have proven efficient at improving food production among the poorest. Nevertheless, even when solutions are known, small-scale farmers often lack access to technology and knowledge of cultivation methods, animal husbandry and nutrition. We therefore work to strengthen extension services and stimulate knowledge transmission from farmer to farmer. Through training in nutrition and sustainable agriculture we establish a basis for sufficient, varied and nutritious food for the family throughout the year. It has been documented that child nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life has a heavy influence on later development. A healthy and full child learns faster, and efficient and profitable agriculture reduces the need for children to work on the farm instead of going to school.

Many farmers are dependent on unpredictable seasonal rainfall for watering their crops. In rural areas, women and young girls must often walk long distances to fetch water. This is heavy, time-consuming and at times dangerous work. We will give farmers easier access to water and irrigation, so they can increase production and have enough food and water for the family.

The areas in which the Development Fund works are particularly vulnerable to natural disaster and climate change, such as flooding and drought. In a crisis situation, the Development Fund will contribute to life-saving operations. However, we will also act quickly to reestablish food production and animal herds, so the crisis does not carry on into the next season.

When working with food security and nutrition, it is important that national laws and international agreements take account of the interest of poor farmers. Work must be done to secure the right of small-scale farmers to land and ensure that investments in agriculture benefit small-scale farmers to a greater extent than at present.



The Development Fund will reach these goals, by:

- Increasing food production by strengthening extension services within the field of climate adapted and climate robust / climate smart agriculture.
- Strengthening knowledge transmission from farmer to farmer, by means of 'lead farmer concepts'.
- Increasing knowledge of mother and child health through training in food production, nutrition and sanitation.
- Achieving better nutrition by diversification of production.
- Improving access to water and irrigation.
- Saving lives and restoring food production and cattle herds in crisis situations.
- Influencing political frameworks by affirming the right of countries to implement measures to ensure that the right to food and poor people's rights in general are met, in keeping with the food sovereignty principle.
- Influencing political frameworks so climate robust / climate smart agriculture and climate adaptation are included in national action plans, and agricultural investments directed at small-scale farmers are increased.



Photo: LiBird

Over 18,000 households received seeds after the Nepal earthquake in 2015. The packets contained several types of vegetable seed, so the farmers could start planting as soon as possible.



CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

During the strategy period, the Development Fund will:

-  Contribute to increased resilience and preparedness in local communities, in the face of climate change and natural disasters.
-  Contribute to sustainable management of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity.
-  Contribute to ensure that local, national and international frameworks address the needs and rights of the rural poor.

The Development Fund has a holistic approach to climate change, in as much as we address economic, social and natural conditions in local communities in order to increase adaptive capacity. To avoid further degradation of natural resources, it is crucial to limit the consequences of climate change. Rehabilitation of degraded lands and sustainable forest management are important measures. Climate services, systems for weather reporting and crisis management will reduce the reach of disasters when they occur.

Access to a broad selection of high-quality seed is a crucial necessity if poor families are to acquire a more robust basis for food production. Local seed banks can secure access for farmers to quality seed that is suitable for local conditions, and will be designed so farmers themselves can maintain and further develop traditional crop varieties with resistance to shifting weather conditions and plant diseases. A precondition for this is that national laws and international frameworks safeguard farmers' rights to seed.

The climate challenges must be solved through a combination of local initiatives and international goals. National laws and international frameworks must take account of the needs and vulnerabilities of the rural poor. Funding for climate adaptation and management of biodiversity must be increased and directed so the poor people who manage the resources receive their part of the funds.

The Development Fund will achieve these goals by:

-  Increasing and diversifying food production through training in and implementation of climate robust / climate smart agricultural techniques.
-  Increasing the climate adaptation of villages, by having local communities plan and implement climate initiatives.
-  Building and organizing local seed banks.
-  Organizing participatory forest management and rehabilitation of degraded lands.



- ➔ Increasing access to renewable energy sources.
- ➔ Influencing political processes to ensure that climate services benefit local communities.
- ➔ Influencing national and international political processes to strengthen farmers' rights to seed.
- ➔ Strengthening the participation and influence of vulnerable groups in the formulation of local, national and international climate-related measures.
- ➔ Influencing political processes to reduce climate change.

Photo: Harald Herland, Applaus!



Adapting to climate change by inter-cropping, digging wells and planting trees in Guatemala.

ECONOMY AND MARKET ACCESS

During the strategy period, the Development Fund will:

-  Stimulate income increases for poor rural families.
-  Increase entrepreneurship and development of business opportunities in the countryside.
-  Ensure that investments and business development benefit the rural poor.

For many poor people in the countryside the only mode of livelihood is work-intensive and risk-prone agriculture. In order to create sustainable local communities for future generations, processing of raw materials must be developed, the income basis must be expanded, farmers must be assured more stable access to markets and more investments must benefit small-scale farmers.

Through cooperation with private actors and financial institutions, farmers can negotiate better prices for their goods, reach out to new and larger markets outside the village, and avoid costly intermediaries. When farmers are organized into cooperatives or savings and loan groups, they gain access to economic resources and acquire new opportunities for investment. In this way, they can more easily process their crops and thus increase their income and create work places.

The agricultural sector in poor countries needs to attract more investments that benefit small-scale farmers. In addition, arrangements for trade must enhance poor farmers' access to markets.

The Development Fund will achieve these goals by:

-  Organizing farmers in cooperatives and other organizations.
-  Supporting initiatives for raw materials processing and development of new sources of income.
-  Increasing access to the funding needed to start one's own small-scale businesses, through microcredit, investment opportunities and financial services.
-  Strengthening farmers' knowledge of marketing, sales and markets.
-  Offering relevant vocational training, particularly to young people.
-  Creating meeting places for investors and small-scale farmers.
-  Influencing political processes to change the frameworks that limit the access of poor people to markets.
-  Document and support good examples of business development that benefits poor farmers.
-  Influence political processes to ensure that guidelines for responsible investments are followed.



➔ PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL RIGHTS

During the strategy period, the Development Fund will:

- ➔ Contribute to increase the impact and influence of civil society and farmers' organizations.
- ➔ Contribute to a strong and democratic civil society, where poor people participate in decision-making processes.
- ➔ Contribute to strengthening the political, economic and social rights of poor farmers, especially of women, marginalized groups and young people.

An organized and robust civil society is of vital importance to ensure that social change takes place democratically and the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups are safeguarded. In countries with limited room for participation in democratic processes on a national level, it is essential to strengthen local democracy through interaction between officials and local populations. It is also important that poor farmers, women, young people and marginalized groups participate in international processes to influence frameworks with impact on their livelihoods.

The Development Fund will achieve these goals by:

- ➔ Engaging in advocacy to influence opinions and attitudes as an integral part of the practical program work.
- ➔ Building capacities in farmers' and civil society organizations, with a focus on themes such as operation of organizations, advocacy work and equal rights.
- ➔ Integrating gender perspectives and measures, particularly taking into account the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups in program realization and advocacy work.
- ➔ Strengthening the participation of vulnerable groups in local, national and international political processes.
- ➔ Influencing policies to change frameworks in order to secure access of marginalized groups to resources and to safeguard their rights.



Photo: Operation Day's Work.

Young women can do it! Organizing young women to ensure equal rights in Malawi.



OUR ADDED VALUE

Our priority areas are consistent with central priorities of Norwegian development policy, as well as with international goals, such as the sustainable development goals to eliminate poverty and hunger and end climate change. Our work thus contributes to strengthen Norway's efforts toward climate and environmentally aware development work, committed to natural resource management, climate adaptation, climate robust / climate smart agriculture, food security and nutrition. Our work with food security and nutrition strengthens the Norwegian efforts in health and education. We contribute to the goal of increasing employment opportunities by stimulating economic development in the countryside. The Development Fund further supports Norway's efforts to integrate equal rights and democracy in development aid, through our work to strengthen women's rights and local civil society organizations.

The Development Fund has particular competences in the following fields:

- ➔ Strengthening local civil society and local partners.
- ➔ Anchoring of programs and advocacy work in local communities.
- ➔ Developing programs and methods in cooperation with our partners.
- ➔ Building competence through interactive learning among national and international partners.
- ➔ Coordination among partners and cooperation between aid actors.
- ➔ Working for equal rights for men and women and inclusion of marginalized groups.
- ➔ Cost-efficient operations.
- ➔ Strong anti-corruption work.
- ➔ Long-term engagement.
- ➔ High quality management of programs and results.
- ➔ Good systems for follow-up of projects.

The Development Fund has peak competence in:

- ➔ Food security and nutrition.
- ➔ Climate adaptation and sustainable management of natural resources.
- ➔ Linkages between food production, nutrition and health.
- ➔ Biodiversity.
- ➔ Cooperation with diasporas in Norway.

The Development Fund promotes programs along with local partner organizations with close contacts to the target group. In this way we ensure that the people we work for have influence on and ownership of the projects, while also contributing to more participatory and active local communities. Thus, we lay the groundwork for effective initiatives that may be up-scaled and included in national action plans.





Photo: Espen Røst

Enjoying a school meal at boarding school built up by Somalian diaspora.

In and across our programs, we systematically build up knowledge and exchange experience among partners. We seek to strengthen the administrative and managerial capacities of local organizations, enhance consciousness of integrating gender and equal rights perspectives, of new and innovative methods, and of larger networks. By including partners with differing kinds of expertise, we contribute to more holistic thinking among all partners.

It is important that aid work is coordinated. The Development Fund has initiated and leads several networks, both in Norway and in the countries in which we work. For us, it is of great value that actors working within the same field meet and learn from each other. Coordinated efforts increase the efficiency of aid and development work.

The Development Fund draws on relevant international policy frameworks down to the grassroots level, and actively involves our target group and local partners in our endeavors to formulate solutions based on the challenges faced by local communities and their practical experience. In this way the target group is directly and indirectly included in local, national and international political processes, which helps to ensure that the frameworks safeguard the interests and rights of poor people in the countryside.

The Development Fund seeks to make greater use of diasporas as a resource in the development and implementation of Norwegian aid and development policy. We make use of the experience and competence possessed by diasporic groups in Norway, within the areas and programs in which we work.



Our cooperation with Spire, the Development Fund's youth organization, strengthens the youth perspective in our work. It also increases our impact in Norway and internationally. Through Spire, new target groups in Norway acquire knowledge of the challenges faced by the rural poor and of the solutions needed to change their situation.

As a civil society actor, the Development Fund and our cooperation partners play important roles, both as advisors and watchdogs vis-à-vis Norwegian and local authorities. We explore alternative solutions and have first-hand knowledge of local conditions in developing countries, and are thus able to provide input and experience that strengthens Norwegian initiatives. At the same time, we can – and shall – involve ourselves in tasks that Norwegian authorities cannot or do not wish to engage in. In this way, we complement Norway's bilateral and multilateral development initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

The Development Fund seeks to be a leading environmental and development organization within the fields of food security, nutrition, agriculture, climate adaptation and economic development in rural areas in developing countries. The organization must have a strong economic backbone. To achieve this, we have formulated the following goals:

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

There is increasing pressure on aid budgets, both nationally and internationally. A large part of the Development Fund's assets come from Norad or the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which makes us vulnerable to political changes and shifting economic priorities in Norwegian aid work. In order to maintain a robust economic basis for our work we must enforce cost-efficient operation and generate stable incomes from a variety of sources. It is important to secure responsible follow-up and administration of our programs, while making sure that our funding reaches the target group.

During the strategy period, the Development Fund aims to increase its economic sustainability by enlarging our donor base, so Norwegian government funds are reduced to a smaller proportion of our total income, while the proportion of income raised from collections is increased, and our equity is strengthened.

The Development Fund will achieve these goals by:

-  Implementing an action plan for the organization's finances with a focus on enlarging our donor base and strengthening our equity.
-  Formulating and implementing a market and communications strategy focused on enhancing visibility, increasing the number of donors, and forming partnerships with private enterprise.
-  Using a maximum of 20% of the total budget of country programs on follow-up, administration and operations.
-  Expanding and strengthening our anti-corruption work.



A GOOD AND EFFICIENT PARTNER

We have a long tradition of basing our development work on strong partnerships. We cooperate with local organizations and experts in our advocacy activities, both locally, nationally and internationally. This gives us local advantage and closeness to our target group. We seek to strengthen our position as an attractive, efficient and competent cooperation partner.

The Development Fund will reach this goal by:

- ➔ Formulating and implementing a partner strategy.
- ➔ Strengthening experience sharing, learning and communication among the Development Fund's partners.
- ➔ Supporting and strengthening the participation of local partners in international processes.
- ➔ Supporting and strengthening the advocacy work and organizational capacity of local civil society.

COMPETENCE-BASED ORGANIZATION

In the strategy period, the Development Fund aims to be a recognized competence-based organization within the fields of food security, nutrition, agriculture, climate adaptation, biodiversity and economic and political development for our target group. Our work in developing countries demands professional updating, local and global understanding and an ability to communicate the results of our work. The Development Fund must document our results and methods, while simultaneously developing new work methods. We must be up-to-date in our professional fields and be a strong professional partner for our target group and our partner organizations, as well as for decision makers, the media, researchers and donors.

The Development Fund will achieve these goals, by:

- ➔ Basing our work on new knowledge, research and experience from program work.
- ➔ Producing our own knowledge-based materials.
- ➔ Conducting information work about conditions in the South and North-South relationships.
- ➔ Strengthening our coordinating role in relevant networks.
- ➔ Establishing internal routines for coordination of knowledge and experience sharing.



AN ACTOR WITH CLOUT

The Development Fund seeks to influence development and aid policy in our target group's favor. To achieve increased impact for our thematic priorities and our target group's needs on the national and international stage, we have as a goal to strengthen our position as an organization that gets listened to.

The Development Fund will reach this goal by:

- ➔ Participating in debates and spreading information to the public.
- ➔ Formulating and implementing a Market and Communication Strategy.
- ➔ Linking our advocacy and information work closely to our program work and our target group.
- ➔ Strengthening our cooperation with Spire, both nationally and internationally.



Photo: Julie Lunde Lillesæter, Differ Media.

Orchard in Ethiopia.



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