

UNICEF-NGO Consultation Series

2024 UNICEF-NGO Consultations 'Partnering for Children in the Climate Crisis'

16 & 17 April 2024

Geneva, Switzerland

Concept Note Working DRAFT

1. Background: UNICEF-NGO Consultation Series

To reach results for children, Partnerships are crucial to UNICEF and civil society organisations, including national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and academic institutions. Partnerships acquire a specific significance in humanitarian settings, where the challenges faced in delivering results for children are even more critical.

Starting in 2019, UNICEF and ICVA began investing in the establishment of an ongoing dialogue between UNICEF and NGOs to improve partnership in humanitarian settings, to be held in the form of yearly consultations, webinar series, workshops, and briefings.

Following the results of a [scoping study](#) conducted by ICVA, in November 2019 UNICEF and ICVA organised the [UNICEF-NGO Consultation on 'Enhancing the Culture of Partnership'](#). The two-day consultation, held in Geneva, was a learning and revitalising moment which provided a dedicated space for dialogue between UNICEF and its partners at the global level. Through discussion and shared partnership practices from various countries and their contribution in delivering better results for children, UNICEF and its partners openly and constructively discussed both achievements and ongoing challenges.

In November 2020, UNICEF and ICVA co-convened the [UNICEF-NGO Partnership in Humanitarian Action Consultation on 'Working Together to Address Emerging Challenges'](#). This virtual consultation provided an opportunity to take stock of the progress made on recommendations stemming from the 2019 UNICEF-NGO Consultation, and to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on partnerships; the UNICEF simplified partnership procedures and their impact on NGO work on the ground; funding flexibility for NGOs; anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts and challenges in the sector; as well as decolonisation of aid and progress on the localisation agenda.

A number of technical discussions, webinars and briefings have been organised since 2020, including the 2020 NGO briefings on Humanitarian partnerships in the COVID-19 response, the 2021 online webinars on the revised Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), the 2022 workshop and consultation with local actors to review UNICEF's guidance note on institutional capacity strengthening for local actors and the 2022 UNICEF CSO procedures review.

In May 2023, a virtual consultation was organised on the impact of nutrition insecurity on the rights of children living in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa regions. The main aim of the discussion was to examine the nutrition insecurity situation in both regions and to discuss how UNICEF-NGO partnerships can be

strengthened to address the needs of children and their communities. In September 2023, the UNICEF dialogue with partners responding to the emergency in Ukraine and in refugee-hosting countries took place virtually. As the continued war in Ukraine has intensified humanitarian needs, in particular those of children, and has multiplied the challenges humanitarian actors face, the UNICEF dialogue represented an important space for exchange between UNICEF and its partners, comprised of both civil society organizations (CSOs) and government partners, on how both can jointly strengthen their partnership in order to further contribute to addressing the needs of children in Ukraine and in neighbouring refugee receiving countries.

2. Focus of the 2024 global UNICEF-NGO Consultations

Placed under the overarching theme of “Partnering for Children in the Climate Crisis”, this Consultation will be an opportunity for meaningful dialogue between UNICEF and NGO partners on a range of programmatic and policy issues in areas affected by climate change. This includes topics like the Humanitarian-Development Nexus approach, community engagement, and accountability towards crisis affected persons. Within those thematic discussions, matters including the Principles of Partnership, partnership procedures, capacity-building and strengthening opportunities, among others, will be streamlined.

Concretely, the 2-day consultation will dedicate 1½ days to focus on 3 thematic subjects of focus:

- **Humanitarian-Development Nexus and the climate crisis**
- **Accountability to affected persons and community engagement**
- **Localisation: Advancing partnership with local actors**

The last ½ day will be conducted as a technical workshop focused on the cascading of **quality funding** (multi-year flexible funding), including funding for localization and the provision of overheads, especially to local and national partners, building on work done in previous consultations as well as [research](#) carried by UNICEF on the matter.

3. Objectives: 2024 UNICEF-NGO Consultations

The 2024 UNICEF-NGO Consultation builds upon previous global UNICEF-NGO Consultations and focuses on ongoing efforts to address emerging and ongoing challenges. The event offers UNICEF and partners the opportunity to engage in discussions both on thematic and technical areas of interest. The primary objective of the 2024 Global Consultation is to gather diverse perspectives on key issues related to the delivery of humanitarian and development aid to children and safeguarding their rights. It aims to identify existing challenges and opportunities, develop recommendations for effective policies and programmes, strengthen partnerships, and promote accountability and transparency in aid delivery. The overall aim is to generate practical insights to improve children's well-being globally and generate

concrete plans and ideas capable of effecting real change in the lives of children and people around the world.

The 2023 UNICEF-Scoping Study will play a pivotal role in shaping the areas of focus and informing the agenda of the 2024 UNICEF-NGO Consultations. The study captures feedback and perspectives from NGOs regarding best practices and challenges in partnerships, as well as offers recommendations for enhancing these partnerships.

Commitments to more flexible, multi-year funding and increased financial transparency were adopted at the 2016 WHS with the aim of making aid more efficient, responsive, and equitable, in exchange for efficiency and effectiveness gains. More recently, Grand Bargain signatories have recognised that multi-year planning and funding can reduce administrative costs and enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian and development programmes, particularly in situations characterised by protracted or recurrent crises. Additionally, flexible funding enables swift responses to emergencies and investments in fragile contexts, while strengthening decision-making involving key stakeholders. Exploring these approaches helps to reveal the interconnectedness of humanitarian, development, and conflict management efforts, contributing to reducing humanitarian needs.

Humanitarian and development actors, including UNICEF and its partners, play a crucial role in providing protection services to children and their caregivers globally. To achieve meaningful results for children and ensure the effective delivery of these essential services, strong partnerships are essential for both UNICEF and partner NGOs. By identifying areas within their partnership that require strengthening, both UNICEF and NGOs can engage in purposeful dialogues. Through open communication, UNICEF can gain direct insights from its NGO partners about the strengths and challenges of their collaboration, while NGOs can better understand UNICEF's partnership policies and procedures. Together, they can establish common objectives and implement actions to improve UNICEF-NGO partnerships.

4. Expected outcomes

The main expected outcome is to identify actions that will help enhance the partnership between UNICEF and its partner NGOs in order to further contribute to the delivery of better results for children in humanitarian and development settings. Hence, the consultation outputs should be formulated as recommendations for both UNICEF and NGOs, accompanied by a timeline, clear roles and responsibilities for action on the agreed way forward and a progress measurement system to ensure that the action points are being taken forward.

5. Place, time, and duration

The 2-day Consultation will take place from 16 to 17 April 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. Venue TBC. The event will be held in English and as an in-person event only.

6. Format

The global consultation will be held over two full days as an in-person meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Each day will consist of 2 to 3 sessions maximum, depending on the length and format of each session. 1 ½ days will focus on 3 thematic subjects of focus, while the last ½ day will be dedicated to a technical workshop on quality funding.

The first sessions will serve as an introduction to the Consultations and as a presentation of the 2023 scoping study and its findings. This will be followed by thematic sessions related to the subjects of focus highlighted under section 2.

7. Participation

The UNICEF-NGO Consultations targets:

- **UNICEF NGO partners**, including international, national, and local NGOs, and community-based organizations, etc. having worked in partnership with UNICEF over the last 5 years;
- **ICVA members**;
- **Relevant UNICEF staff** at Country Office, Regional Office, and HQ levels

The expectation is to bring together between 60 and 75 NGO representatives, with priorities given to colleagues working in the field directly with UNICEF in humanitarian settings, while ensuring a balanced representation among the regions and between international and national NGO partners, where possible. As the meeting will be held in Geneva, NGO HQ colleagues will be invited to participate in-person. Several local and national NGOs will be sponsored to join as well in order to be able to participate in the discussions in-person. From UNICEF's side, different key HQ Divisions (i.e., EMOPS, DAPM, DoC, PD and OED) will actively participate and contribute to this organization-wide effort. Regional Offices will be invited to join notably through their Deputy Regional Directors, Regional Emergency Advisors (REAs), Regional Partnerships Implementation Specialists, etc. To allow for a wide diversity of attendance, participation is limited to **two participants per organization**.