

# Annual Report 2024



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## Outlook from the Secretary General

# Resilience and Resolve: Our Mission in Motion

The year 2024 marked the beginning of a new strategic period for Strømme Foundation – one shaped by renewed ambition and grounded in our enduring values of human dignity, respect, justice, and solidarity. As we look ahead, we do so with clear resolve to continue advancing our mission, even as the global context grows increasingly complex.

Several of the countries where we operate continue to face instability, conflict, and mass displacement. Four of our ten programme countries appear on the Norwegian Refugee Council’s list of the world’s most neglected crises – underscoring the urgent need for sustained presence and attention in areas often overlooked.

In the face of these challenges, Strømme Foundation remains committed to reaching those furthest behind. We believe in amplifying the voices of people living in poverty and ensuring that they are at the centre of solutions that affect their lives.

Despite the difficult environment, 2024 was a year of meaningful progress. Our programmes reached 497,245 individuals, 77% of whom were women. Among them are countless adolescent girls gaining access to education, learning about their rights, and becoming change agents in their communities.

Women also played a central role in building economic resilience through savings groups, vocational training, and climate-resilient livelihoods. Across several countries, families were trained in sustainable farming techniques that improved food security and enabled them to adapt to changing climate conditions. These efforts not only helped communities withstand shocks but also opened new opportunities for income generation and environmental restoration.

These achievements would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors and partners. Whether through regular contributions, one-time gifts, or corporate partnerships, their commitment enables us to deliver impact – especially as aid budgets tighten and global needs continue to rise. Recent dramatic reductions in development assistance, particularly from USAID, serve as a stark reminder of what is at stake.

As we move forward, we do so with both resilience and resolve. Together with our partners, staff, and supporters, we will continue to uphold our values, adapt to changing realities, and create meaningful opportunities for individuals and communities to break the cycle of poverty. Our mission remains in motion – stronger and more determined than ever.



Erik Lunde  
Secretary General

*Erik Lunde*

## ACRONYMS

- AMU – Arbeidsmiljøutvalg (Working Environment Committee)
  - ARP – Aktivitets- og redegjørelsesplikt (reporting duty for employers on gender equality)
  - CBO = Community-Based Organisation
  - CMSG = Community-Managed Savings Group
  - ECD = Early Childhood Development
  - ECCE = Early Childhood Care and Education
  - ELCAP = Enhanced Livelihoods through Commercial Agricultural Production
  - HEAT = Hostile Environment Awareness Training
  - HR = Human Resources
  - ICT = Information and Communication Technology
- INSO = International NGO Safety Organisation
  - Medco din HMS = Occupational health services provider (company name)
  - MNOK – Million Norwegian Kroner (Millioner Norske Kroner)
  - NGO = Non-Governmental Organisation
  - Norad = Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
  - PSEAH = Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
  - SDG = Sustainable Development Goal
  - SF = Strømme Foundation
  - SPG = Savings and Producers Groups
  - TG1 and TG2 = Strømme Foundation’s Thematic Goals 1 and 2
  - USAID = United States Agency for International Development
  - UK = United Kingdom



## Programmes Department

# Implementing the Strategy: 2024 Programme Update

In 2024, Strømme Foundation began implementing its Global Strategy 2030 and new framework agreements with Norad and the AKO Foundation.

The year focused on laying a solid foundation for long-term impact through strategic adaptation, partner engagement, and renewed commitment to cross-cutting issues. Despite a difficult operating context – characterised by political instability, economic shocks, and ongoing humanitarian crises – programme implementation advanced across all countries.

Education remained at the heart of SF's mission. Across Asia and Africa, we worked to expand access to inclusive, quality education, especially for marginalised children and youth. In West Africa, our Speed School model continued to reach out-of-school children with accelerated education. Since its inception, the programme has provided a second chance at education to more than 315,000 children in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. In 2024, collaboration with national education authorities ensured continuity, even in fragile regions affected by conflict and displacement.

In East Africa, SF supported early childhood and primary education with strong community engagement,

teacher training, and child-friendly school environments. In Asia, education interventions combined early learning, parental involvement, and school improvement planning, helping to reduce dropout and strengthen school governance. Floating boat schools in Bangladesh and multilingual education efforts in hard-to-reach areas underscored our commitment to inclusion.

Adolescent empowerment programmes continued in all regions, providing life skills, literacy, and vocational training to young people, particularly girls. Participants also led awareness activities to prevent early marriage and promote gender equality. Mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and psychosocial support were integrated into literacy and empowerment initiatives – especially in conflict-affected areas.

On the livelihoods side, thousands of women joined community-managed savings groups, building economic resilience and social cohesion. Vocational training programmes enabled youth to start micro-enterprises or access employment. Programmes also advanced sustainable livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, value chain development, and green job creation. These efforts helped families adapt to climate risks, improve food security, and generate income through environmentally responsible means.

Cross-cutting issues were strengthened across all operations. Disability

inclusion was promoted through community sensitisation and consistent use of the Washington Group Questions. Safeguarding and PSEAH standards were reviewed and updated, including measures against workplace harassment. Anti-corruption was addressed through partner assessments, capacity-building, and financial oversight mechanisms.

Together, these efforts reinforce SF's commitment to sustainable impact and strengthen programme implementation for the years ahead.



Families have adapted to climate risks, improved food security, and generated income.

### 56,375

children supported in primary schools (50% girls)

### 10,935

adolescents and youth participated in life skills training (79% girls)

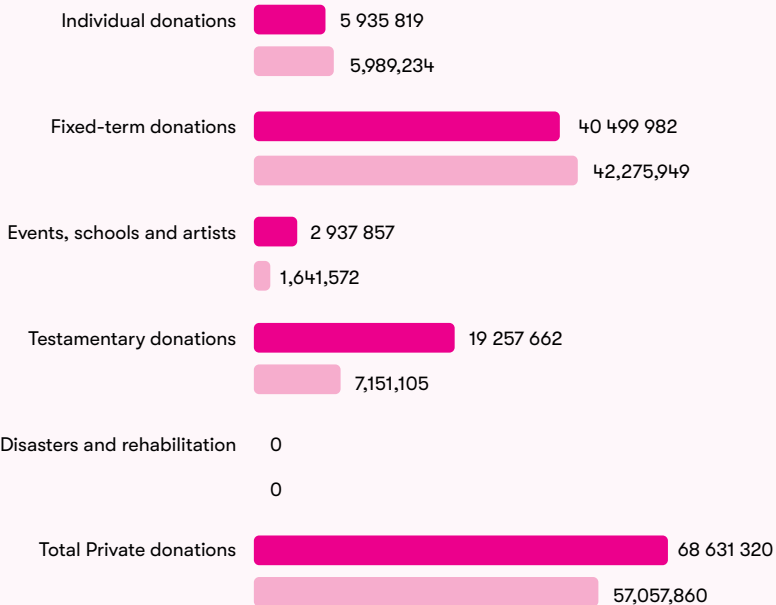
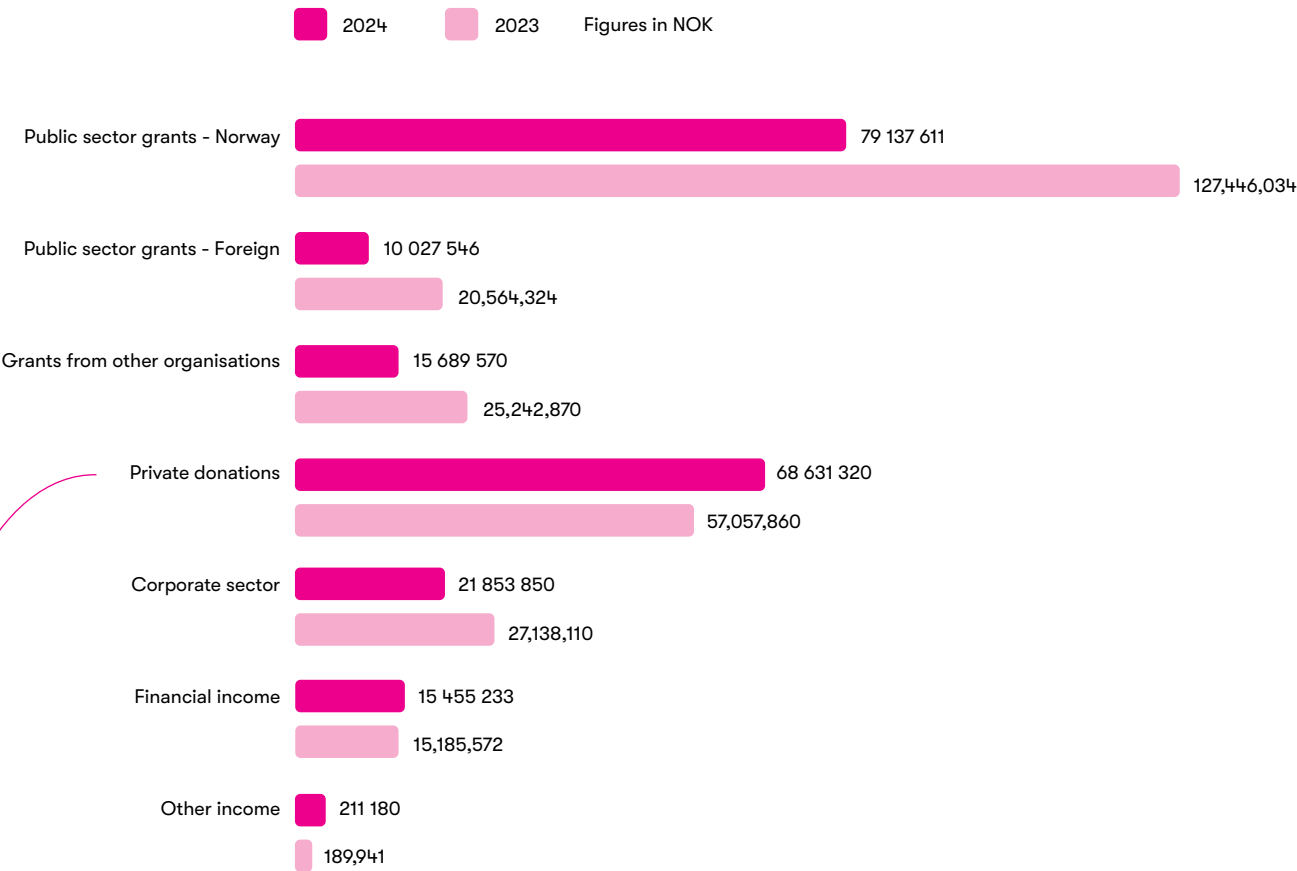
### 36,136

members of savings groups (92% women)

→ Mother and daughter from Nepal, working in the field.



Funds Received



Private Donor Story

Unni's Commitment: Thirty Years of Giving from the Heart



Unni Kaupang is more than a Friend at Heart sponsor – she supports nine different organisations.

TEXT AND PHOTO: KAREN KILANE  
TRANSLATED BY JOVIA CATHERINE, ANNE BREIVIK AND CELESTE DE LA HUERTA

For three decades, Unni Kaupang has been one of Strømme Foundation's most loyal private donors.

Every month, Unni has quietly contributed around 300 Norwegian kroner to support children through our programmes – adding up to nearly 100,000 kroner (about 9,000 USD). "It feels good to know that my donation adds to the support from Norad. As I understand it, for every krone I give, Norad adds nine. That means my contribution has grown into nearly one million kroner. I'm truly impressed by how efficiently you use the funds – and how far they go," she says.

Supporting the entire local community is what truly resonates with me!

Unni speaks with passion, just as she did throughout her career as a teacher, principal, and staff member of the Norwegian Rural Women's Association.

She spent six years working at the organization's headquarters, but one trip stands out as a defining memory: a visit to a women's group in Senegal.

"We travelled with support from Norad and received a per diem for food and accommodation. But we chose to stay in the women's homes – and gave our per diem to their communal loan fund instead," she recalls. "The women were so strong. I learned more, and laughed more, in those few days than any other time in my life."

When Unni first became a Friend at Heart donor, each supporter was assigned an individual child to sponsor. But something shifted after she read about Strømme Foundation's work in Peru – and a partnership with the Norwegian ethnologist and adventurer Thor Heyerdahl.

"He argued that it wasn't enough to support just one child – that we need to lift the whole community. That really resonated with me. As a former principal, I know how important it is to work holistically – to reach everyone, not just a few."

FACTS – FRIEND AT HEART

Friend at Heart (Hjertevenn) is a private donor programme in Norway that supports children's education through Strømme Foundation's programmes.

# Asia

Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal

## Our focus

- **Empowering families** as cohesive units to strengthen resilience, solidarity, and shared decision-making.
- **Strengthening community structures** to foster collective action and sustainable local development.
- **Ensuring equitable access** to inclusive, quality education for marginalised children and adolescents.
- **Supporting livelihood diversification** and community adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

## How we work

- **Implementing Family Development Plans** to support shared decision-making and income generation at the household level.
- **Providing inclusive education** support and creating child-friendly, gender-sensitive learning environments.
- **Delivering life skills and vocational training** for adolescents and youth to build confidence and support their transition to adulthood.
- **Promoting climate-smart agriculture**, home gardens, and sustainable practices to improve food security and strengthen resilience to climate change.

# 186,018

individuals reached across Asia

- 59 % are women
- 49,660 were under 18 years old, 55% of whom were girls

## Key Results

# 28,367

families created Family Development Plans

# 6,276

adolescents participated in adolescent empowerment centres

# 31,746

children supported in primary schools with improved classrooms and locally developed teaching and learning materials

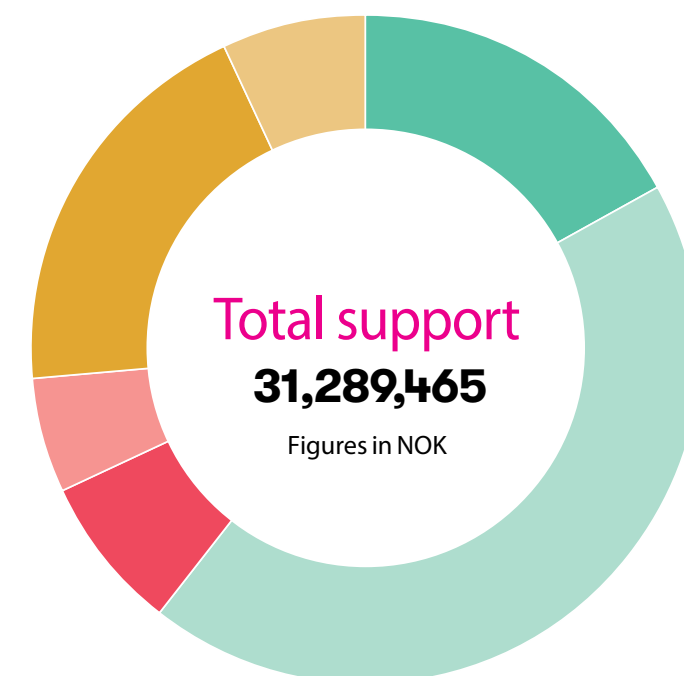
# 481

youth received vocational training



## Support to partners/ projects 2024

By country and thematic goal, including programme follow-up disbursed in the countries.



**Bangladesh**  
**7,794,747**

2,095,799  
Education

5,698,947  
Income and  
Job Creation

**Myanmar**  
**3,832,616**

1,647,534  
Education

2,185,082  
Income and  
Job Creation

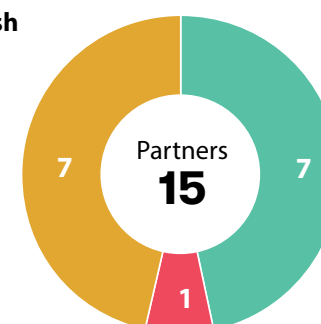
**Nepal**  
**17,752,020**

12,786,896  
Education

4,965,124  
Income and  
Job Creation

## Number of partner organisations

- Bangladesh
- Myanmar
- Nepal



## Distribution of support by thematic goal

Education **18,440,312**

Income and  
Job Creation **12,849,154**

# East Africa

Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

## Our focus

- **Expanding access** to Early Childhood Development and improving the quality of primary education.
- **Providing adolescents and youth** with life skills and vocational training to support empowerment, income generation, and entrepreneurship.
- **Promoting community-managed savings groups** to strengthen financial inclusion, economic resilience and social cohesion.
- **Strengthening climate-resilient value chains** to improve livelihoods and promote sustainable rural development.

## How we work

- **Improving infrastructure and enhancing the capacity** of caregivers and teachers in supported ECD centres and primary schools to boost retention and learning outcomes.
- **Delivering life skills and vocational training** programmes tailored to out-of-school adolescents and youth.
- **Facilitating the creation of savings groups** to improve access to savings, loans, and financial literacy.
- **Scaling climate-smart agriculture** and value chain integration to build resilience and improve food security.

# 132,814

individuals reached across East Africa

- 75% are women
- 95,712 were under 18 years old, 76% of whom were girls

## Key Results

# 32,360

children supported in ECD centres and primary schools with learning materials and improved infrastructure

# 4,234

adolescents participated in adolescent empowerment centres

# 14,584

individuals organised in community-managed savings groups

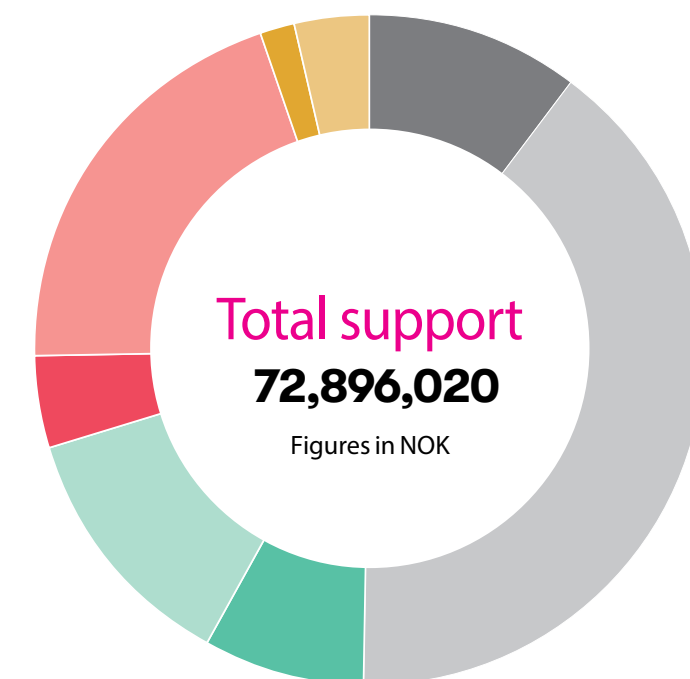
# 418

youth received vocational training in various trades



## Support to partners/ projects 2024

By country and thematic goal, including programme follow-up disbursed in the countries.



**Kenya**  
**3,897,643**

2,671,349  
Education

1,226,294  
Income and  
Job Creation

**South Sudan**  
**17,799,624**

14,723,686  
Education

3,075,938  
Income and  
Job Creation

**Tanzania**  
**14,737,601**

8,960,501  
Education

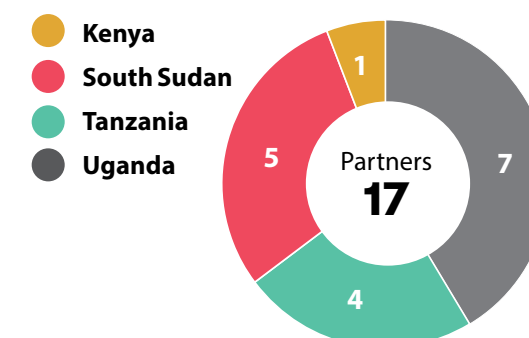
5,777,100  
Income and  
Job Creation

**Uganda**  
**36,461,151**

29,047,168  
Education

7,413,984  
Income and  
Job Creation

## Number of partner organisations



## Distribution of support by thematic goal

Education **55,402,704**

Income and Job Creation **17,493,316**

# West Africa

Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

## Our focus

- **Expanding access** to education through accelerated learning programmes for out-of-school children and adolescents.
- **Empowering women** via community-managed savings groups that strengthen women's economic resilience and decision-making power.
- **Enhancing livelihoods** by equipping youth with vocational skills for employment and income generation.
- **Improving food security** through sustainable agricultural practices and climate-resilient farming.

## How we work

- **Implementing the Speed School programme** to help out-of-school children re-enter the formal education system through accelerated learning.
- **Providing women with training** in literacy, life skills, and financial inclusion to strengthen their agency and socio-economic participation.
- **Delivering vocational and entrepreneurship training** to youth to promote employment and income generation.
- **Building local capacity** in climate-smart agriculture to strengthen household food security and environmental resilience.

# 178,379

individuals reached across West Africa

- 97% are women
- 13,112 were under 18 years old, 65% of whom were girls

## Key Resu

# 7,700

out-of-school children enrolled in Speed Schools in 2024

# 2,713

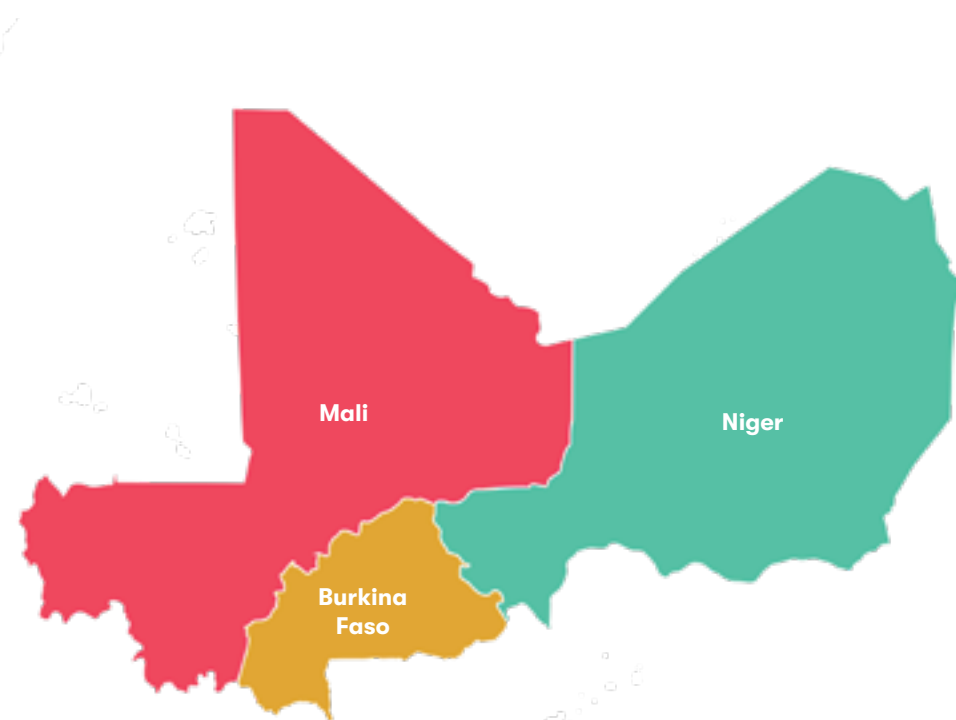
women participated in the Active Literacy programme

# 21,552

women were newly organised in savings groups

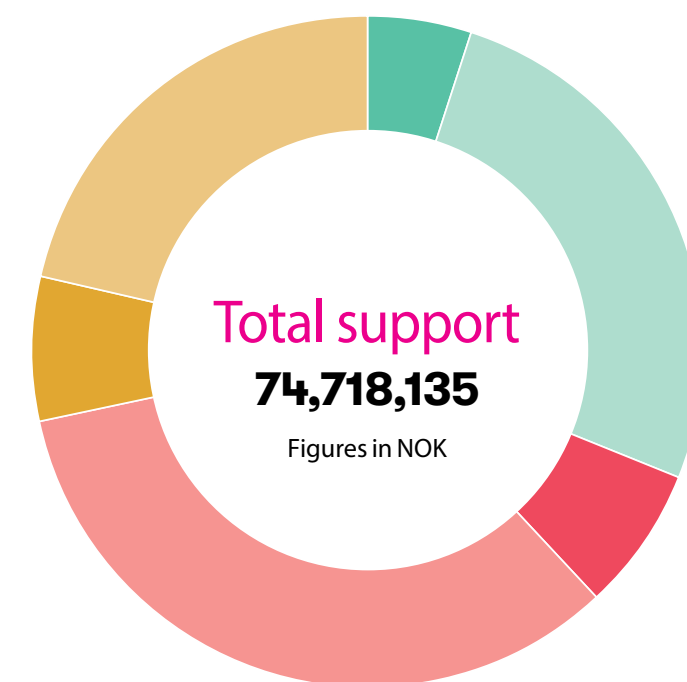
# 105

youth took part in vocational training



## Support to partners/ projects 2024

By country and thematic goal, including programme follow-up disbursed in the countries.



**Burkina Faso**  
**16,164,521**

16,019,856  
Education

5,261,554  
Income and  
Job Creation

**Mali**  
**33,297,863**

25,019,853  
Education

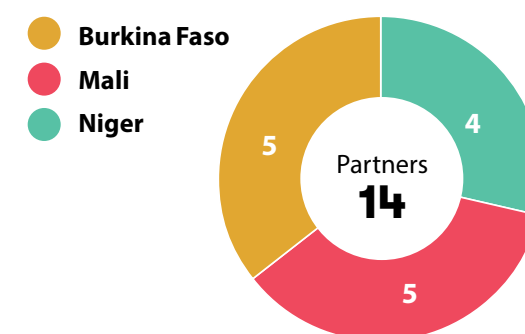
5,185,661  
Income and  
Job Creation

**Niger**  
**18,562,656**

19,509,491  
Education

3,721,720  
Income and  
Job Creation

## Number of partner organisations



## Distribution of support by thematic goal

Education **60,549,201**

Income and Job Creation **14,168,934**



# Norway

## Our focus

- **Ensuring** that all programmes meet or exceed donor expectations through rigorous quality assurance processes.
- **Facilitating** consistent and impactful programme delivery across all countries, promoting coherence and shared learning.
- **Aggregating** and analysing data from various countries to inform strategic decisions and enhance programme effectiveness.
- **Strengthening** the skills and systems of country offices and implementing partners to ensure sustainable and effective programme execution.

## How we work

- **Grounding** our work in a rights-based approach that promotes local ownership, participation, and sustainability.
- **Enhancing** digital monitoring systems to collect timely, and reliable programme data.
- **Developing** and maintaining strong financial control systems to detect and prevent corruption.
- **Building** organisation-wide capacity to mainstream cross-cutting issues and drive innovation in programmes and field operations.

## Achievements

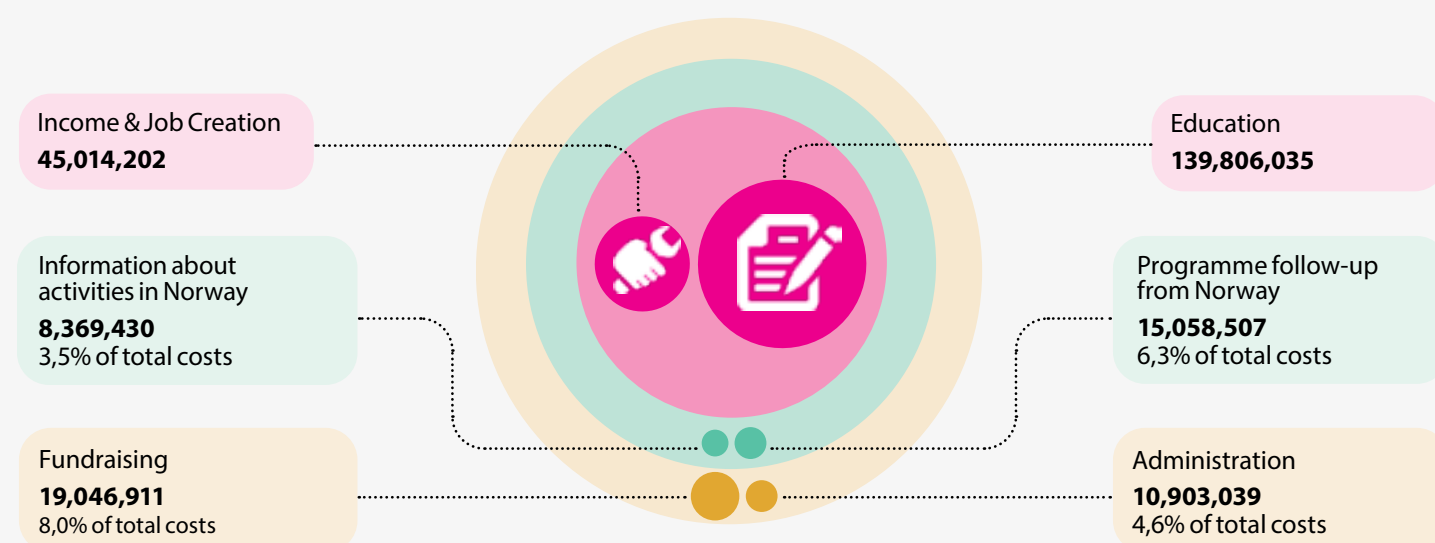
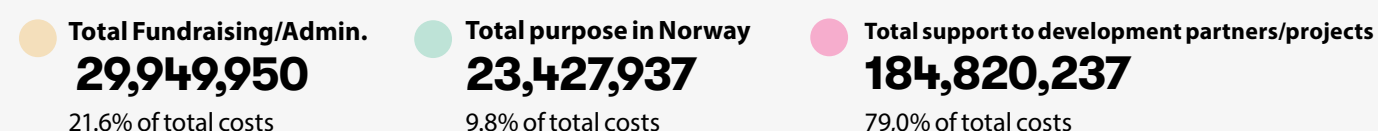
- **Launched** programme implementation under the new strategy, aligning activities and priorities across all countries.
- **Partnered** with research institutions to strengthen evidence-based learning and innovation.
- **Rolled out** a cross-country risk management system to improve monitoring, documentation, and response to emerging risks.
- **Adapted** to evolving challenges related to insecurity, climate change, and shifting donor landscapes.

## Global programmes

- **Act Now:**  
Total 3,833,146 NOK  
Youth exchange programme
- **Digitalisation:**  
Total 1,245,020 NOK  
Development of systems
- **Other global programmes**  
Total 838,450 NOK  
Cross-cutting issues, anti-corruption, innovation

## Use of Funds in 2024

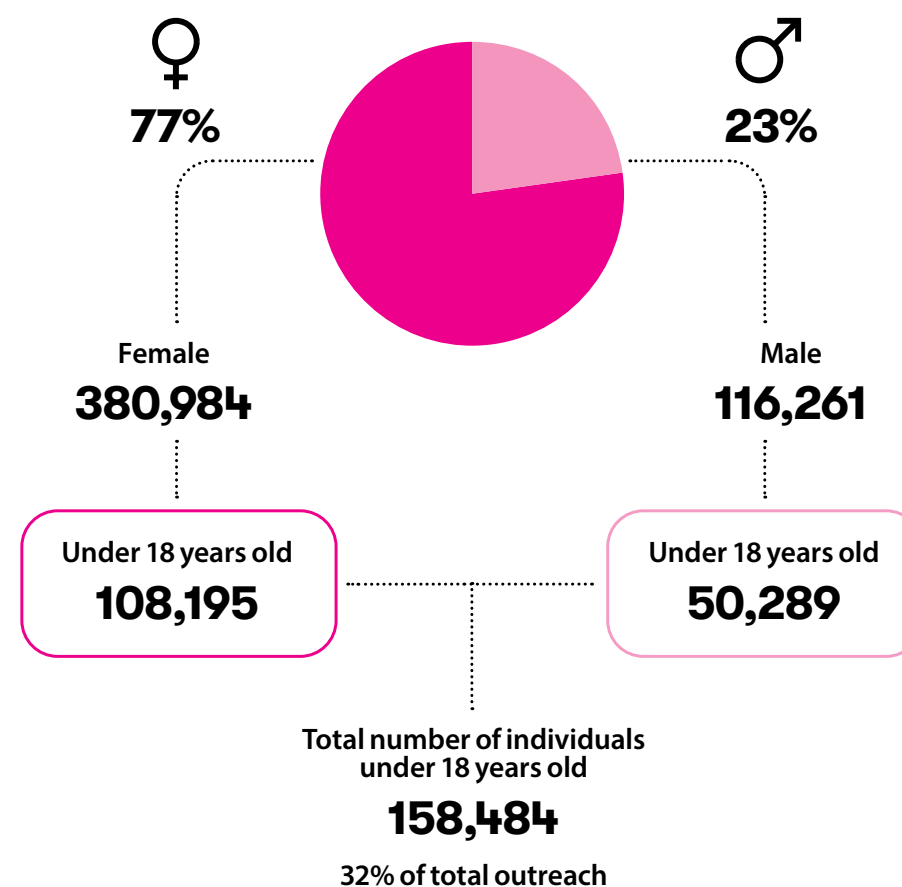
All figures in NOK



## Total number of individuals reached

# 497,245

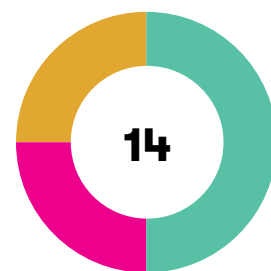
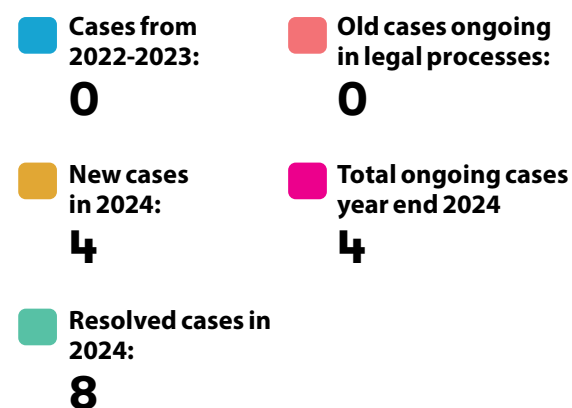
Through Strømme Foundation's education and income-generating programmes in 2024. This was made possible through collaboration with 46 local partner organisations.





## Anti-corruption

### Deviation Cases



## Fighting Corruption and Promoting Integrity

Strømme Foundation recognises corruption as a major driver of poverty and inequality.

Our commitment to preventing and eliminating corruption is integrated across all aspects of our work. We promote a culture of integrity and transparency within our organisation, among our partners, and in the communities we serve.

We apply a zero-tolerance approach to corruption and actively empower target communities to recognise, resist, and report corrupt practices. Awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives help reinforce ethical behaviour and strengthen accountability at every level.

To support this, SF adheres to strict anti-corruption procedures. Our whistle-blower system is accessible online to all, offering a secure and confidential channel to report financial misconduct or any form of harassment. All reports are handled promptly and appropriately.

In 2024, SF reinforced its focus on good

governance and anti-corruption across programme delivery and partner engagement. Anti-corruption was addressed as a cross-cutting issue through regular financial monitoring, strengthened procurement procedures, and partner capacity development. Tools such as the Partner Assessment Tool and Risk Assessment Tool were used to identify institutional vulnerabilities and inform mitigation efforts.

All existing partners were assessed based on their anti-corruption systems and practices, achieving an average score of 83%. These results provide a baseline for the new strategic period, with tailored capacity-building plans developed to improve partner performance over time.

Country teams reinforced compliance through awareness activities and training, embedding anti-corruption measures within broader risk management and safeguarding frameworks. These efforts contribute to building a culture of integrity and strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of SF's programmes.

We actively empower target communities to recognise, resist, and report corrupt practices.



Street sweeper cleans the streets in the morning light. Photo: Strømmestiftelsen, Oddvar Paulsen



## Education

## 20 Years of Speed School

TEXT AND PHOTO: KAREN KILANE  
TRANSLATED BY JOVIA CATHERINE, ANNE BREVIK AND CELESTE DE LA HUERTA

In 2024, Strømme Foundation celebrated 20 years of Speed School – an innovative programme that gives out-of-school children a second chance at education, helping them re-enter the formal school system and build a foundation for a better future.

Developed by Malian education experts, Speed School is a nine-month accelerated education programme covering the first three years of primary education. Upon completion, children can enrol in public schools.

For more than two decades, the programme has given over 315,000 children in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger a second chance at education. Its success has led to integration into national systems and adoption by organisations like Save the Children, UNICEF, and Plan International, benefiting over one million children globally.

Speed School has a 90% transition rate, confirmed by evaluations in 2018 and 2023. Despite challenges like political instability, local partners have ensured successful implementation. The programme's flexibility was shown through radio-based education during COVID-19 and provision of school meals to combat food insecurity.

Community involvement is key, with parents supporting centres and a focus on gender equality – 50% of students and 40% of teachers are female.

By addressing financial barriers and promoting education, Speed School has improved school attendance and academic outcomes. Ongoing collaboration with public schools aims to ease the transition for graduates.

# 90%

of learners who completed the Speed School programme since 2014 were transferred to public school.



→ In 2017, Ramata Boubacar from Niger enrolled in Speed School. Photo: Torleif Svensson

“Owing to its success, Speed School has been integrated into national education systems and has benefited more than one million children globally.”

## Education &amp; Food Security

## How School Meals Are Transforming Education in Mali

TEXT: KAREN KILANE, ROKIATOU DEMBÉLÉ  
TRANSLATED BY AI AND CELESTE DE LA HUERTA  
PHOTO: SEKOU DOUCOURE/MAEFILMS

In several villages across Mali, women from community-managed savings groups have joined forces to establish school gardens and ensure children are fed at school.

Together with other parents, they contribute food items and firewood to provide daily meals. Their efforts are strengthened by training in child nutrition and food safety.

“The children are playing, laughing, and learning more,” says Rokiadou Dembélé, Strømme Foundation’s Country Director in Mali. “Over the past weeks, I’ve visited schools in ten villages. Providing school meals has led to 100 percent school attendance – and improved learning outcomes.”

In recent years, food shortages in the Segou region have worsened. Most students come to school hungry, and the few who bring food must throw it away by lunchtime, spoiled by the intense heat. Those who go home for lunch rarely return to school in the afternoon. Hunger makes it nearly impossible to concentrate in class.

“Children need food – not just to survive, but to learn,” says Rokiadou. “For many, the school meal is their only

## FACTS – Canteens

All school canteens are managed by the communities themselves. Women cooks are organised into groups that prepare and serve hot lunches for the children. Parents contribute firewood and, when possible, small financial donations to support the meals.

safe and reliable meal of the day.”

School meals are allowing parents to send their children to school, instead of relying on them to help support the family during the day. Studies show that access to nutritious food significantly improves children’s learning outcomes.

“Students tell us how much they appreciate the meals. For many, rice is their favourite food, but something they may only eat a couple of times a month. Some say they get meat just once or twice a year. Now, they’re receiving meals at school that are both healthy and filling,” Rokiadou says.

Even small changes are making a big difference. Schools, with encouragement from local authorities, have made a simple but unusual shift: children now eat from individual plates and with spoons instead of their hands.

“It may feel unfamiliar to some of us,” Rokiadou reflects, “but we have less water than before, and many students suffer from stomach infections. We hope that using plates and spoons will help.”



→ Speed School students from Dionasso, Mali, enjoying a nutritious lunch at school.



→ Rokiadou Dembélé, Strømme Foundation’s Country Director in Mali.

# 35%

of the children received daily school meals as part of the programme.

# 96%

of the students qualified to transition into primary school.



Job Creation & Food Security

# Miriam’s Harvest of Hope

TEXT: MARIA ØYGARD AND KAREN KILANE, EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY AI AND CELESTE DE LA HUERTA  
PHOTO: MOHAMED MFURA ABDU

Miriam walks steadily along the neat rows of maize – taller than ever this season. These crops aren’t scattered like before. Now, seeds are planted with intention: in straight lines, with just the right amount of space between them.

She brushes aside the maize leaves and steps into the sun, where rows of sunflowers bow their heavy heads, ready to be harvested and turned into oil. Spaced well and thriving, the flowers are good for the soil, good for the harvest – and good for Miriam’s confidence and income.

“At first, the neighbours thought I was doing witchcraft,” Miriam laughs. “But then they saw that everyone in my savings and producer group was getting the same results.”

A Home of Her Own

Miriam leads us to her tomato plants; then proudly points to the new house she paid for herself. We chat with her children and share a few laughs. A quiet sense of relief hangs in the air – after years of barely staying afloat, she’s finally breathing easier.

Not long ago, her family was among the millions in Tanzania at risk of hunger. Miriam, her husband, and their three daughters faced a future filled with uncertainty. That changed when Miriam joined an SPG group that saves together, buys seeds, and sells vegetables and value-added products like soap and shoeshine. They also receive training in climate smart agricultural practices.

Adapting to a New Climate

“The weather and the seasons have changed,” Miriam explains. “The old seeds we used couldn’t handle the heavy rains or the long droughts. We can’t predict the seasons like we used to. But in the group, we’ve learned when to plant based on the new climate. We also receive organic fertilizer and seeds that are

adapted to our soil and weather conditions.”

Miriam’s group includes more women than men – intentionally so. It’s an opportunity for women close the gap and build something of their own.

This morning, she’s prepared rice and sardines for her two youngest. Her eldest is at school – where all three girls will stay, thanks to their mother’s income. Miriam had to leave school early. She’s determined her daughters won’t face the same fate.

The Black Gold

We walk under the blazing African sun – hotter now than in years past. She stretches her arms wide, smiling as she points to two maize fields. One stands taller, greener, and lusher than the other.

“That’s the biochar,” she explains. “The maize in that field is planted in soil enriched with what we call ‘black gold.’ It holds water better during drought and prevents erosion during heavy rains.”

To prove her point, Miriam lifts two ears of maize: one large and full, the other small and stunted. The difference

is unmistakable.

She began testing biochar on her plot this year. It costs her nothing – she makes it by burning organic waste, enriching her soil naturally and without chemicals.

“My story isn’t unique,” she says. “I’m just one woman in our group. But do you see what simple changes like these can mean for us – and for our children?”

4,981

farmers have received training in climate-smart agricultural practices, including the use of improved farm inputs, proper spacing, and herbicide applications, through the ELCAP programme.

FACTS – ELCAP (Enhanced Livelihoods through Commercial Agriculture Production)

- Partner: Amani Girls Organization
- Close to 5,000 farmers have received training in climate-smart agricultural practices, including the use of improved farm inputs, proper spacing, and herbicide applications, through the ELCAP programme.
- In 2024, farmers engaged in ELCAP produced a total of 585 bags of biochar.
- By the end of the 2024 planting season, average yields per acre increased significantly across all ELCAP-supported value chains:



One large and one small ear of maize. The secret to strong growth is ‘black gold’ – biochar mixed into the soil.



Miriam (29) stands in front of the sunflower fields with her husband, Emanuel Mkuwi Domonko (37), and their two youngest daughters, Matilda (2) and Macrina (5).

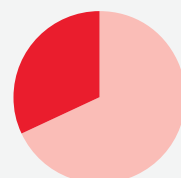


# Our contribution to the SDG-goals



By 2024,  
Strømme Foundation and  
partners reached

**497,245**  
individuals.



32% of total outreach  
are participants under  
18 years of age



77% of participants are  
female

## SF's Outreach 2024

	Total	Male	Female
Under 18	158,484	50,289	108,195
Adults	338,761	65,972	272,789
Total outreach	497,245	116,261	380,984



Achieve gender  
equality and empower  
all women and girls

**21,552**

Women participated in  
sessions on mental health,  
sexual and reproductive  
health and family planning

**8,189**

Adolescent girls took part  
in sessions covering rights  
awareness, gender-based violence  
prevention, and life skills

**53**

early marriages stopped  
through community action  
in Asia



Ensure inclusive and  
equitable quality  
education and promote  
lifelong learning  
opportunities for all

**10,413**

Children, adolescents,  
and adults accessed  
second-chance education  
in learning centres

**56,375**

Children enrolled in  
supported primary  
schools

**10,486**

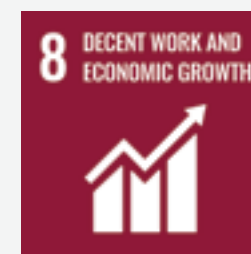
Adolescents participated in  
Adolescent Empowerment  
Centres

**1,242**

Education staff  
received training

**938**

School Management  
Committees trained  
to strengthen school  
governance



Promote inclusive and  
sustainable economic growth

**10,971**

Families received training in  
climate-smart agriculture

**36,136**

Individuals participated in  
savings groups

**1,004**

Young people participated  
in vocational training

# Message from the Board of Directors – Annual Report 2024

Strømme Foundation (SF) is a rights-based development organisation founded in 1976 in Kristiansand by Chaplain Olav Kristian Strømme. Guided by the vision of a world without poverty, SF aligns its work with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 1 – to end poverty in all its forms everywhere – and contribute to its achievement by 2030.

Our mission is rooted in a strong commitment to human dignity, justice and solidarity.

Rooted in Christian values, SF understands this commitment as a call to uphold the dignity of every human being, stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalised, and actively combat injustice. These values inspire people from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds to join our work. SF fights poverty irrespective of religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation, and promotes inclusive development through equal partner- ships with local communities in an effective way.

Today, SF is a professional development organisation with a framework agreement with Norad, investing over NOK 200 million annually in poverty alleviation programmes. As a rights- based NGO, we empower individuals and communities with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to lift themselves out of poverty with dignity and respect. SF operates in some of the world’s most marginalised societies, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, nationality and political affiliation.

As of 2024, SF’s head office remains in Kristiansand, Norway, with nine country offices in Mali (Bamako), Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou), Niger (Niamey), South Sudan (Juba), Uganda (Kampala), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Nepal (Kathmandu), Bangladesh (Dhaka), and Myanmar (Yangon). We also have field offices in Moyo (Northern Uganda) and Singida (Tanzania), and our Kenya programme is managed through the Tanzania office.

## BOARD ACTIVITIES IN 2024

The Board held four meetings in 2024, addressing a total of 40 agenda items.

### Board Members in 2024:

- Arvid Grundekjøn (Chair)
- Kristin Tofte Andresen (Deputy Chair)
- Vidar Haukeland
- Adelheid Firing Hvambdal
- Arild Hestås
- Arnhild Leer-Helgesen
- Celeste de la Huerta (Employee Representative)

### Deputy Member:

- Tore Martin Herland (Deputy for the Employee Representative)

### Board Insurance:

A liability insurance policy has been secured for the Board members and the Secretary General to protect them against potential personal liability arising from their roles in the organisation. The policy provides coverage worldwide, except for the USA and Canada.

### Board election:

The Board is composed of seven members and two deputy members, elected as follows:

- Six members and one deputy member are elected by the Council, with at least one board member representing one of SF’s partner countries in the Global South.
- One member and one deputy member are elected by SF employees.
- The Chair is appointed by the Council, while the Deputy Chair is elected by the Board.

A nominations committee is responsible for preparing the elec- tions.

## PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

As the first year of the five-year strategic period, 2024 focused on laying a solid groundwork for effective programme delivery across all countries. All the country offices engaged in the essential – and often time-consuming – process of securing permits and approvals from government authorities. Despite some delays, particularly in Nepal, programme start-up activities largely progressed as planned.

Capacity building for selected partner organisations was a key priority in 2024. These efforts supported good governance and addressed important areas such as mental health, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), and cross-cutting issues with a strong focus on inclusion. Partners also received refresher training on the MERL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning) system and were introduced to the baseline survey procedure to ensure sound MERL practices. The MERL system is currently being digitalised, which is expected to improve data collection and analysis.

In addition, SF’s staff and partners in East and West Africa were introduced to the family/household development approach – a successful model previously implemented in Asia that empowers families and fosters community resilience. The approach was well received, and pilot activities began in most countries. However, due to security concerns, the orientation could not be conducted in South Sudan.

Flooding and internal conflicts in West Africa led to the displacement of communities and worsened food insecurity, directly affecting programme participants. In East Africa, implementation of the Bonga programme was delayed due to substantial curriculum revisions recommended by an impact assessment.

Meanwhile, the Grieg Foundation launched an important initiative in Tanzania in 2024, aimed at empowering adolescent girls to complete primary and secondary education.

Overall, 2024 was a strong start to the new strategic period, with significant progress made in laying the foundations for successful programme delivery.

	MNOK		
	2024	2023	Change
Public sector Norway	79.1	127.4	-48.3
Public grants from abroad	10.0	20.6	-10.5
Grants from other organisations	15.7	25.2	-9.6
Private donors	68.6	57.1	11.6
Corporate sector	21.9	27.1	-5.3
Other	15.7	15.4	0.3
Total Revenue	211.0	272.8	-61.8

Result Microfinance (MF)	19.4	-	19.4
Cost for purpose activities	-208.2	-232.8	24.5

Annual results	-4.3	11.9	-16.2
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## KEY FINANCIAL FIGURES

### Public sector Grants:

In 2024, income from public sector grants was significantly lower than in 2023. The main reason for this reduction is that microfinance funds totalling NOK 33.4 million, which were reported as income in earlier years, could not be recognised as income once again in 2024. These funds are now included as programme costs under the Norad agreement for 2024. Additionally, the closure of a major project funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2023 contributed to the higher income that year.

### Public sector Grants from abroad:

The reduction in income from foreign public sector grants is due to the completion of two major projects at the end of 2023.

### Grants from Other Organisations:

There was a decrease in income from other organisations, primarily due to the completion of a major project and a shortfall in securing new funding.

### Private Donors

Revenue from private donors increased notably in 2024, mainly driven by legacy contributions.

### Result Micro Finance:

The extraordinary result from microfinance at NOK 19 million reflects the net value from the dissolution of Strømme Micro Finance A/S, which was completed in 2024.

### Cost for Purpose Activities:

Costs related to purpose activities decreased by NOK 24.5 million compared to 2023. This reduction reflects lower programme activity and expenses, in line with decreased income after closure of several projects in 2023.

### Annual Result:

The annual result for 2024 shows a deficit of NOK 4.3 million, compared to a surplus of NOK 11.9 million in 2023. This shift is primarily attributed to the microfinance transactions concluded in 2024.

Key figures for SF’s percentage share of total costs for 2024 are as follows:

Key figures	2024	2023
Administration	4,6%	3,3%
Fundraising	8,0%	8,6%
Purpose	87,4%	88,1%

In addition, the Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising has introduced a benchmark for the proportion of private funds used for the organisation’s purpose. In 2024, 81.9% of income from private donors was allocated to programme activities, compared to 75.4% in 2023.

## WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND STAFF

SF’s overarching goal for its organisational and HR policy is to build *One Organisation* – a unified structure and culture across organisational levels, regions, and countries while respecting and valuing the diversity of our countries. Staff collaborate and learn across the Head Office and Country Offices, guided by our shared values and purpose.

In SF’s Global Strategy 2030, it is stated that the organisation shall “maintain and improve a positive working environment and a values- and trust-based leadership, where employees feel recognised, respected and cared for.” SF is committed to promoting equality and inclusion and to increasing diversity across the organisation.

A healthy working environment forms the foundation of a strong professional community. As an employer, SF has set ambitious goals for the working environment and has clear expectations that both leaders and staff actively contribute to a positive workplace culture.

An employee survey conducted in autumn 2024 showed that, while progress has been made, further efforts are needed to reach our goals. Follow-up action plans were developed for both the Head Office and Country Offices, in close collaboration with staff. At the Head Office, the plan is monitored by SF’s Working Environment Committee (*Arbeidsmiljøutvalg, AMU*). A new employee survey is scheduled for autumn 2025.

The sick leave rate at the Head Office was 5.49% in 2024, compared to 5.2% in 2023 and 5.63% in 2022. The Kristiansand office maintains an occupational health agreement with Medco din HMS. No serious workplace accidents resulting in material damage or personal injury were reported at the Kristiansand office in 2024.

A dedicated Staff Welfare Committee was established with a clear mandate and budget to coordinate social and wellbeing activities throughout the year.

A dedicated Staff Welfare Committee was established with a clear mandate and budget to coordinate social and wellbeing activities throughout the year.

As of December 31st, 2024, SF has 37 permanent staff at the Head Office, and 98 staff members in our Country Offices.

	2022	2023	2024
Positons at the Head Office	35,00	35,00	37,00
Full-Time Equivalents HO	32,52	32,52	32,05
Permanent positions at Country Offices	109,00	113,00	98,00
Full-Time Equivalents CO	109,55	111,49	98,42
Total SF	144,00	148,00	135,00
Total Full-Time Equivalents	142,07	144,01	130,47

SF promotes gender equality and equal opportunity at every level of the organisation, from entry-level positions to senior leadership. As of the end of 2024, the leadership team, including department directors in Kristiansand and country directors, consisted of 8 women and 7 men.

W= Women M=Men

	2022		2023		2024	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
Head Office	18	17	21	14	21	16
Head Office Percentage	51%	49%	60%	40%	57%	43%
Country Office	36	73	33	80	29	69
Country Office Percentage	33%	67%	29%	71%	30%	70%
Overall	54	90	54	94	60	85
Overall Percentage	38%	62%	36%	64%	44%	56%

Since 2018, SF has been certified as an *Equal Opportunity Workplace* under the *Likestillt arbeidsliv* scheme. The organisation has established robust routines and practices to actively promote gender equality, inclusion, and diversity across the workplace. More detailed reporting on SF’s efforts related to gender equality, inclusion, and diversity (ARP) is available on our website.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board continuously monitors SF’s operational risk landscape through quarterly reporting. In 2024, particular attention was given to the cumu-

lative impact of the lingering impacts of the pandemic, global economic instability, emerging crises and conflicts, ongoing wars, and shifting geopolitical alliances. These factors contributed to rising inflation, civil unrest, and heightened uncertainty in many of the countries where SF operates.

SF has established robust systems and internal controls to prevent and mitigate fraud and corruption and maintains a transparent, proactive dialogue with donors whenever concerns arise. The ongoing digitalisation of reporting through new tools has significantly strengthened the organisation’s ability to oversee and manage its programme portfolio.

The security situation remained particularly challenging in Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and South Sudan throughout 2024. South Sudan continues to be the most dangerous country in the world for development aid workers, with more fatalities reported than in conflict zones such as Syria and Afghanistan. Contributing factors include violent crime, armed conflict, intercommunal tensions, and road accidents. Political instability and insecurity are also persistent concerns across the Sahel region.

SF has implemented a range of mitigation measures to enhance staff safety and ensure programme continuity. These include more rigorous travel planning and increased information sharing with other NGOs. The country offices in West Africa maintain close oversight of the security situation in all three countries and have comprehensive security protocols in place.

In 2024, several staff members from SF’s Kristiansand office participated in a three-day Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) course to further strengthen the organisation’s security preparedness.

Most of SF’s costs are incurred in currencies linked to the US dollar or the Euro, while most of the income is received in Norwegian kroner. As such, exchange rate fluctuations have a significant impact on what SF can deliver to its implementing partners in the Global South. However, the terms of SF’s partnership agreements specify that obligations are limited to the budget approved in Norwegian kroner. To manage this risk, SF enters forward exchange contracts to secure parts of the exchange rate between the Norwegian kroner and the US dollar or Euro.

SF has no external loans, and therefore an increase in interest rates would not have a material financial impact on the organisation.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

SF’s vision is a world without poverty. Our aim is aligned with sustainable goal No. 1: to eradicate poverty in all its forms, and to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. SF continues its commitment to empower marginalised groups to enable them getting out of poverty. Since the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals; the world has experienced profound shifts. The 2020s were intended to be a decade of progress, but the pandemic, armed conflicts, and economic instability have significantly reversed global development gains. For the first time in decades, the number of people living in extreme poverty has risen, with current projections suggesting that nearly 600 million people will remain in extreme poverty by 2030.

Several donor countries have reduced their commitments to poverty alleviation and social development. Key donors – including the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark – have cut their aid budgets. Entering 2025, the new US administration announced an 87% reduction in its aid budget, despite that the United States historically accounting for nearly 30% of global aid. This drastic shift is expected to severely impact efforts to save lives and fight poverty. Similarly, Norway has redirected aid funding from long-term development in the Global South to address crises in Ukraine and Gaza. While

these shifts are understandable in the context of global emergencies, they result in an increasingly limited share of aid reaching the world’s poorest countries.

In SF’s operational areas, political instability and deteriorating security conditions have become the norm. NGOs are facing increasing restrictions in several countries. At the same time, new geopolitical actors – such as China, Russia, and Middle Eastern states – are asserting influence, often driven by their own strategic interests.

SF is actively aligning its efforts with emerging global priorities, such as climate resilience and inclusive economic development. By integrating sustainability and equity into our programming, SF seeks to contribute to a green economy that is socially inclusive, low-carbon, and resource-efficient.

SF will continue to prioritise education and job creation to combat poverty, with a strong focus on reaching marginalised communities, strengthening local partnerships, and building decentralised operations. With the growing overlap between humanitarian response and long-term development, the organisation is prepared to navigate this increasingly

complex landscape.

In 2024, significant steps were taken to implement a new organisational model, featuring a decentralised head office and stronger country office leadership. Looking ahead, SF intends to expand its strategic alliances – particularly with private-sector actors at both national and international levels. The rising demand for green jobs as a solution to both extreme poverty and climate change will remain a key driver of SF’s programmatic focus.

The Board believes that SF’s programmes and international operations are well-positioned for continued impact. The organisation is well-prepared to adapt to global and national shifts, as well as changes in both institutional and private donor landscapes.

USE OF THE ANNUAL RESULT

To cover SF’s net deficit of NOK 4.3 million in 2024, NOK 0.6 million is allocated from purpose capital designated for programme activities, and NOK 3.7 million from other purpose capital.

Kristiansand, 12 June 2025



Kristin Tofte Andresen  
Chairperson



Arild Hestås  
Vice chairperson



Adelheid Firing Hvambdal  
Board member



Vidar Haukeland  
Board member



Erik Lunde  
Secretary General



Celeste De la Huerta  
Board Member



Arnhild Leer-Helgesen  
Board member



## Strømme Foundation Activity Accounts

FIGURES IN NOK

	2024	2023
<b>Funds acquired</b>		
Public sector grants - Norway	79,137,611	127,446,034
Public sector grants - Foreign	10,027,546	20,564,324
Grants from other organisations	15,689,570	25,242,870
Private donations	68,631,320	57,057,860
Corporate sector	21,853,850	27,138,110
Financial income	15,455,233	15,185,572
Other income	211,180	189,941
<b>Total funds acquired</b>	<b>211,006,309</b>	<b>272,824,712</b>
<b>Funds spent</b>		
<b>Cost of fund acquisition</b>		
Fundraising cost	-16,340,253	-20,740,845
Other acquisition cost	-2,706,658	-1,898,512
<b>Total cost of fund acquisition</b>	<b>-19,046,911</b>	<b>-22,639,357</b>
<b>Programme cost</b>		
Support to development partners/projects	-136,196,588	-164,918,871
Programme follow-up at regional offices	-48,623,649	-43,729,026
Programme follow-up from Norway	-15,058,507	-14,807,673
Information activities in Norway	-8,369,430	-9,310,271
<b>Total programme cost</b>	<b>-208,248,174</b>	<b>-232,765,840</b>
<b>Administration cost</b>	<b>-10,903,039</b>	<b>-8,801,950</b>
<b>Total funds spent</b>	<b>-238,198,124</b>	<b>-264,207,148</b>
VAT compensation	3,456,997	3,264,099
Result from dissolution of microfinance	19,410,181	
<b>The year's activity result</b>	<b>-4,324,638</b>	<b>11,881,663</b>
<b>Additions/reductions in purpose capital</b>		
Change in purpose capital for programme activities	-3,579,914	4,835,646
Change in purpose capital for microfinance	-37,329,847	-8,000,000
Transferred to / (from) other purpose capital	36,585,124	15,046,017
<b>Total additions/reductions in purpose capital</b>	<b>-4,324,637</b>	<b>11,881,663</b>

## Strømme Foundation Balance Sheet as of 31.12.24

Assets	2024	2023
<b>Long-term assets</b>		
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Property	249,764	291,394
Office furniture and equipment	219,721	236,544
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	<b>469,485</b>	<b>527,938</b>
<b>Financial assets</b>		
Investments in subsidiaries	-	37,329,847
Investments in other companies	210,000	200,000
Loan to Strømme Foundation Kenya	3,354,645	-
Overfinanced pension schemes	1,428,376	2,462,671
Long-term receivables	-	-
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>4,993,021</b>	<b>39,992,518</b>
<b>Total long-term assets</b>	<b>5,462,506</b>	<b>40,520,456</b>
<b>Inventory</b>	<b>21,601</b>	<b>30,277</b>
<b>Receivables</b>		
Trade Debtors	684,551	1,685,631
Inter-company receivables	-	252,957
Other short-term receivables	25,108,606	24,144,598
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>25,793,157</b>	<b>26,083,186</b>
<b>Investments in current financial assets</b>	<b>71,470,442</b>	<b>98,080,999</b>
<b>Bank and cash</b>	<b>165,281,202</b>	<b>78,245,928</b>
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>262,566,402</b>	<b>202,440,389</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>268,028,907</b>	<b>242,960,845</b>

Purpose capital and liability	2024	2023
<b>Purpose capital (PC)</b>		
<b>Founding capital</b>	<b>3,326,092</b>	<b>3,326,092</b>
<b>Acquired purpose capital</b>		
PC with restrictions (SF programmes)	37,972,123	41,552,038
PC with restrictions (Microfinance)	-	37,329,847
Other purpose capital	152,672,917	116,087,793
<b>Total acquired purpose capital</b>	<b>190,645,040</b>	<b>194,969,678</b>
<b>Total purpose capital</b>	<b>193,971,132</b>	<b>198,295,770</b>
<b>Liability</b>		
<b>Long-term debt</b>		
Staff gratuities at country offices	5,480,874	4,157,921
Legacy obligations	150,000	150,000
<b>Total long-term debt</b>	<b>5,630,874</b>	<b>4,307,921</b>
<b>Short-term debt</b>		
Creditors	4,096,556	4,443,009
Public duties and taxes	3,284,491	2,439,874
Owed to employees	2,675,596	2,545,631
Inter-company debt	-	236,016
Deferred programme income	57,928,258	29,998,957
Other account payable	442,000	693,666
<b>Total current liability</b>	<b>68,426,901</b>	<b>40,357,154</b>
<b>Total liability</b>	<b>74,057,775</b>	<b>44,665,075</b>
<b>Total purpose capital and liability</b>	<b>268,028,907</b>	<b>242,960,845</b>

Kristiansand, 12 June 2025

  
 Kristin Tofte Andresen  
 Chairperson

  
 Arild Hestås  
 Vice chairperson

  
 Adelheid Firing Hvambdal  
 Board member

  
 Vidar Haukeland  
 Board member

  
 Erik Lunde  
 Secretary General

  
 Celeste De la Huerta  
 Board Member

  
 Arnhild Leer-Helgesen  
 Board member

Board of Directors and  
Advisory Board Members

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 31 DECEMBER 2024

Arvid Grundekjøn, Chairperson  
Kristin Tofte Andresen, Deputy Chairperson  
Vidar Haukeland, Member  
Arild Hestås, Member  
Celeste De la Huerta, Member  
Adelheid Firing Hvambdal, Member  
Arnhild Leer-Helgesen, Member

SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS

Tore Martin Herland, Substitute

ADVISORY BOARD – 31 DECEMBER 2024

Lars Erik Lyngdal, Chairperson  
Arne Bang  
Synnøve Bjørke  
Live Fanavoll/Nora Wiersdalen (Re:Act Leader)  
Vigdis Anita Gåskjenn  
Vidar L. Haanes  
Per Kristian Lunden  
Anne Helen Høyland Mork  
Solveig Omland  
Jørgen Reme  
Aud Sunde Smemo  
Steffen Syvertsen  
Jostein Sæth  
Dag Tynes  
Line Alice Ytrehus

ELECTION COMMITTEE

Ingunn Folkestad Breistein  
Svein Haanes  
Lars Erik Lyngdal

PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted the external financial audit for 2024.

For the Auditors’ report and the complete Strømme Foundation financial statements, including cash flow, accounting principles and notes, see: <https://strommefoundation.org/en/about-us/publications>



Cover Image: Schoolgirl from Nepal with blocks and puzzles.  
Local partner organisation: KIRDARC  
Photo: Strømme Foundation / Geir Ove Pedersen



Strømme Foundation is a member of the Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising (Innsamlingskontrollen) and is certified by Eco Lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn).

The organisation is also a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.

Editors: Kirsten Falch and Celeste De la Huerta  
Graphic design: Innoventi  
Printed by Aksell  
Photo: © Strømme Foundation



“Our actions have helped reduce child marriage.”

→ Girls use posters to raise awareness about the risks of child marriage during a community event.

Adolescent Girls Take a Stand Against Child Marriage

TEXT AND PHOTO: STRØMME FOUNDATION NEPAL

In Nepal, child marriage is illegal yet remains a harsh reality for many girls in rural communities. Deep-rooted traditions, poverty, and limited access to education continue to drive this harmful practice. In Sunilsmriti Rural Municipality, a group of adolescent girls decided to take a stand and demand change. Through the adolescent empowerment programme, Samvad, the girls learned about life

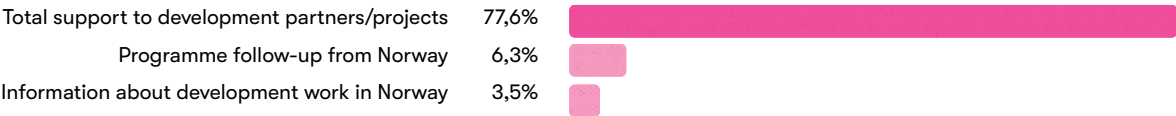
skills, child rights and advocacy. Motivated by what they learned, they formed a Samvad network and launched a local campaign to end child marriage in their community. They organised community dialogues, school activities, and door-to-door visits to challenge the practice. They also collected data on child marriage in their area. Using this evidence, they presented their findings at a community meeting with local leaders and called for concrete action. The municipality adopted a formal plan to end child marriage. The Samvad network is now working closely with local authorities to implement activities, including improving access to education, creating economic opportunities for vulnerable families and promoting gender equality.

How We Use Our Funds

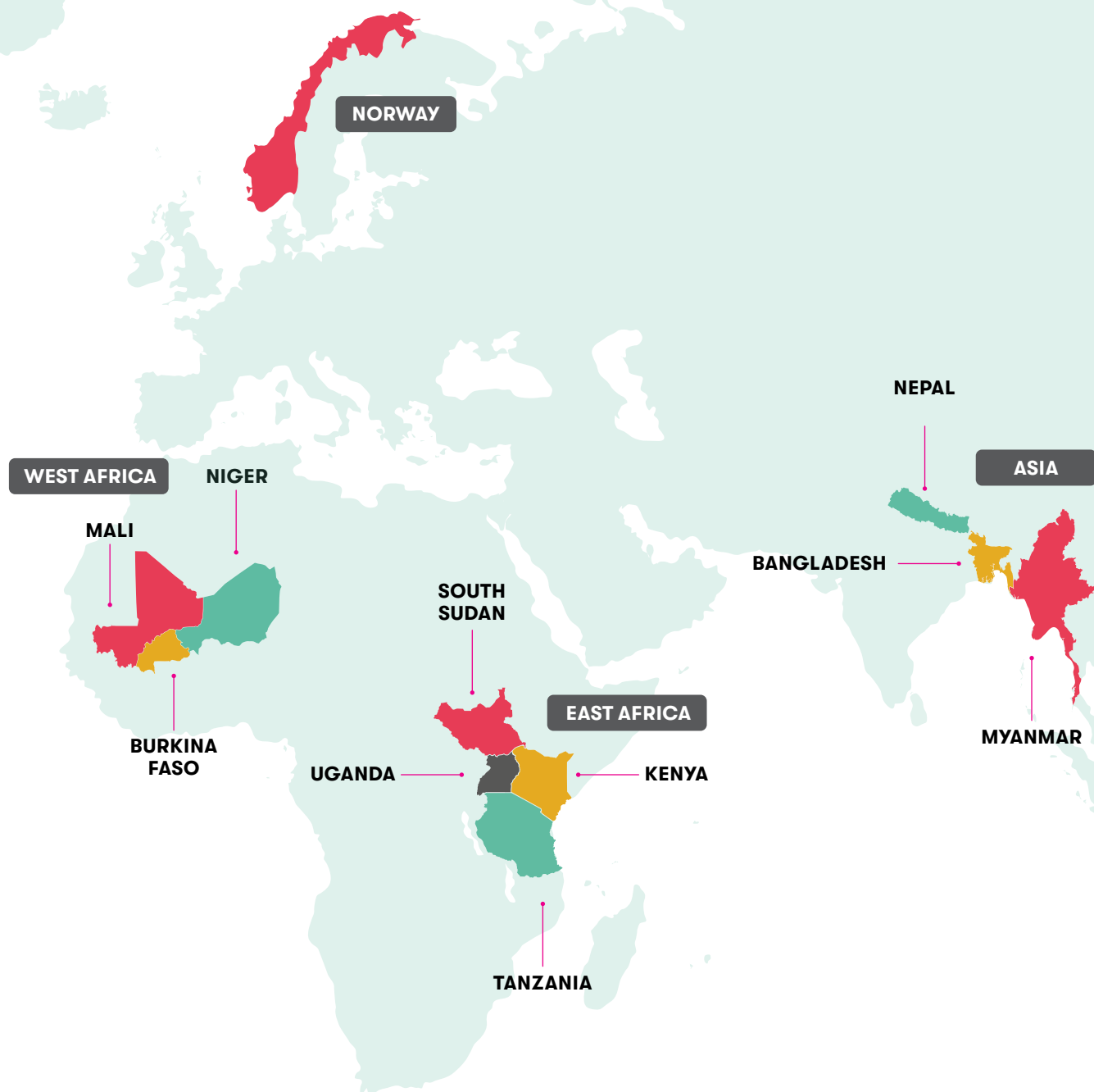
How we used the money in 2024



Distribution of the purpose cost in 2024



# Our Programme Countries



Strømmestiftelsen / Strømme Foundation  
 Tangen 8, N-4608 Kristiansand, Norway  
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 post@strommestiftelsen.no  
 Org.no 952 002 139  
 Strommestiftelsen.no / stromme.org



**StrømmeFoundation**  
 FIGHTING POVERTY