



Leveraging Faith towards Inclusive and Just Societies 2020–2024

**PROGRESS
REPORT
TO NORAD
2020–2023**



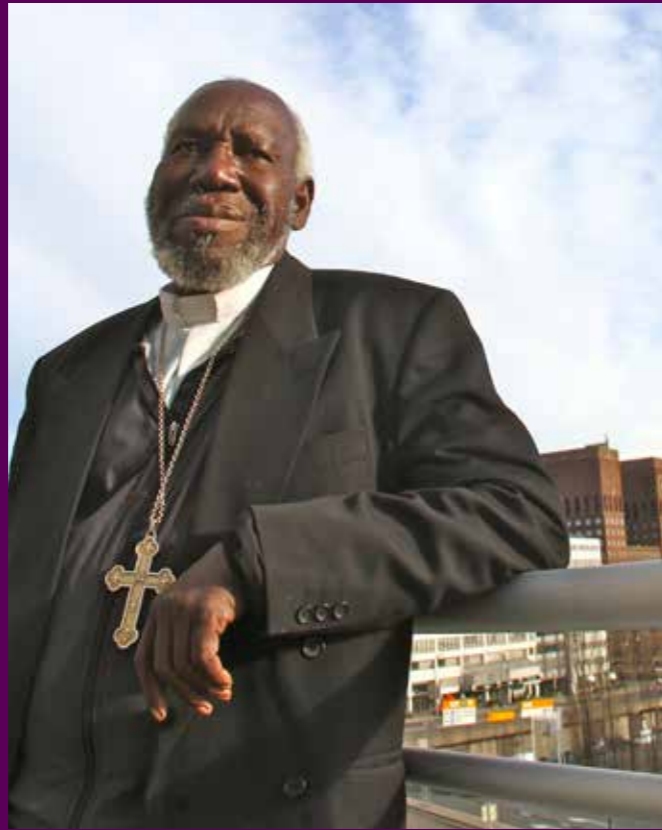
NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
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*Rose in Mchinji, Malawi cultivates the soil with the help of knowledge and water from Norwegian Church Aid.
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*



*Bishop Paride Taban on one of his visits to Norway.
Photo: Hege Opseth/Norwegian Church Aid*

BISHOP PARIDE TABAN

Bishop Paride Taban of South Sudan (1936–2023) is a good example of faith leaders who never give up and always believe in dialogue and mediation. His daily ritual of reciting 28 words for peace, is a reminder to always be focused on what really matters, such as joy, love, peace, patience, understanding, discernment, and wisdom.

REFLECTIONS

When NCA signed its new five-year agreement with Norad in 2020, little did we know about how certain global events would impact our lives so profoundly.

The past four years have been marked by unforeseen global events and increasing instability and conflicts. A global pandemic broke out as we signed our agreement, and we had to think differently about delivering programmes. As the world was recovering from COVID-19, the Russian war on Ukraine is not only devastating a European country but also affected prices and supply chains globally. Adding to climate-change impacts, food insecurity has become evident in many countries as weather patterns and supply chains have been disrupted.

Serious challenges to democracy have emerged, which strengthens the importance for NCA and our partners in upholding rights, human dignity, and sustaining civil society. NCA's partner-based approach is crucial for delivering in the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding Nexus. This approach enhances the impact and sustainability of NCA's programmes in challenging times such as these.

NCA and partners are witnessing long-term achievements being erased in Gaza. Efforts to strengthen the role of women and girls in Afghanistan are being reduced due to restrictions imposed by the Taliban. The civil war in Sudan poses tremendous challenges to upholding a civil society with increasing internally displaced populations.

Amidst all these challenges not anticipated four years ago, NCA and partners have been able to diligently deliver interventions and creatively adjust methods to reach women, men, girls and boys and bring about changes. As a result of NCA and partners interventions through the Norad Civil Society grant 2020–2023:



In 2023, NCA reviewed its programme framework 2020–2030. Some adjustments were made to incorporate needed changes in a changing world. While the programmatic pillars remain, the integrated approach will be emphasised. Into 2025 NCA moves ahead towards reaching its long-term goals to Save Lives, Build Resilience, and Seek Justice.



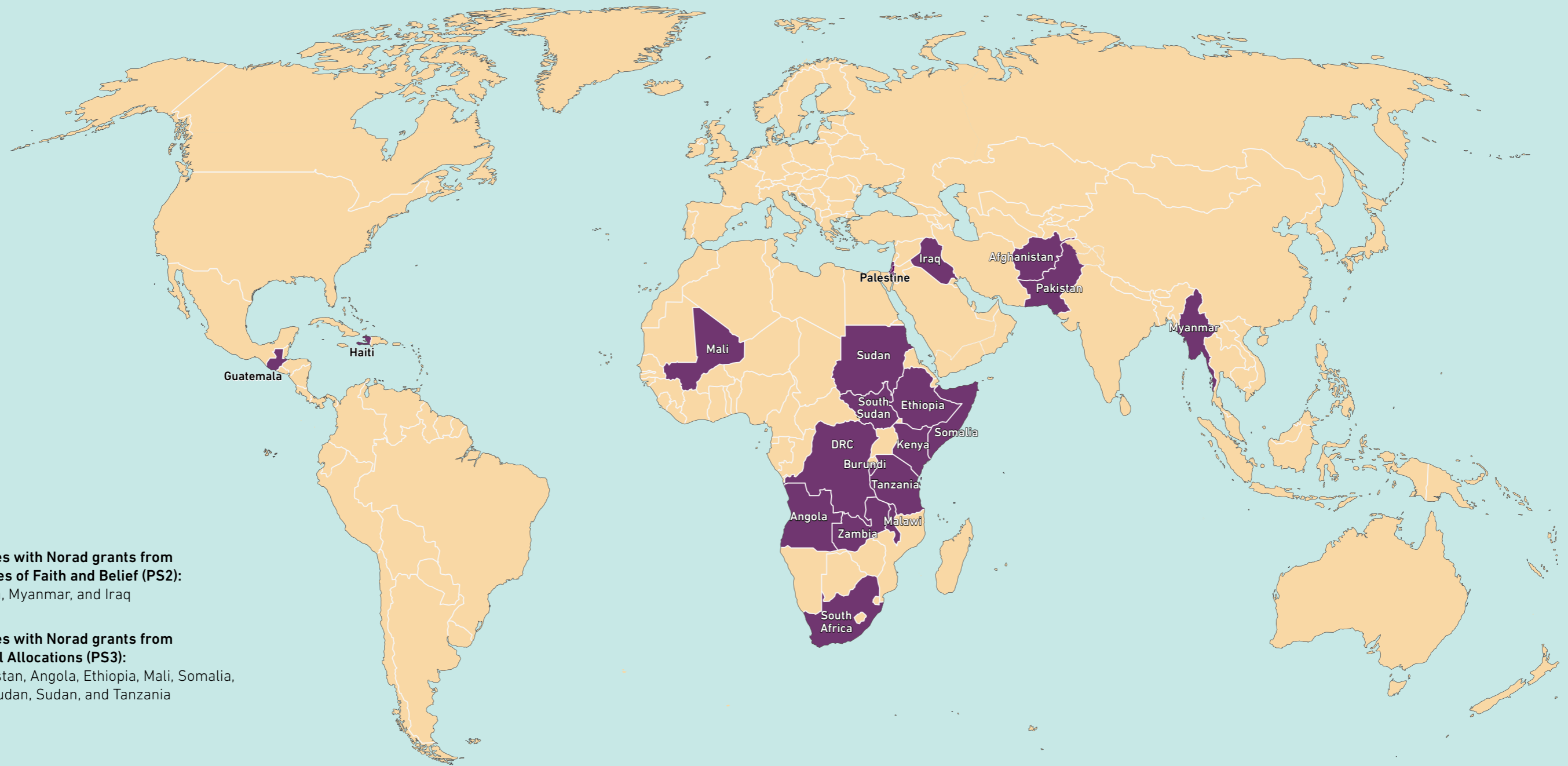
Dagfinn Høybråten
Dagfinn Høybråten

NCA's Secretary General

NCA'S NORAD PORTFOLIO COUNTRIES

COUNTRIES WITH FUNDING FROM NORAD CIVIL SOCIETY GRANT (PS1)*

* In addition to these, the civil society grant also funded the Regional Eastern Africa Peacebuilding Programme, the Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme, and the Global Ecumenical Partners.



Countries with Norad grants from Minorities of Faith and Belief (PS2):
Pakistan, Myanmar, and Iraq

Countries with Norad grants from Regional Allocations (PS3):
Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

*Members of a small-scale enterprise engaged in recyclable waste collection established in Hawassa Town, Ethiopia through the "Waste for Value" Project.
Photo: Kedjia Sefa/Norwegian Church Aid, Ethiopia*

This four-year report covering the years from 2020 through 2023 assesses how NCA's Norad civil society grant has contributed to long-term social and economic changes and lasting and life-changing improvements for rights-holders in the countries where NCA's programmes are implemented.

Each thematic chapter provides a status of progress for each outcome, assessing the progress of achievement towards the aggregated targets for the period. Each country's performance on each global outcome is categorised as either on track, above target, or below target.

An analysis of the overall trends in relation to the aggregated results compared to the targets of each outcome is presented. Examples of impact are provided on several levels, such as the individual or household level, the community level, or the provincial or national level. Significant deviations from targets are also explained.

Thematic chapters include assessments of the programmes' sustainability and lessons learned. Each chapter also includes reflections on how the programme has contributed to strengthening civil society, a prerequisite for programme sustainability.

Results cases that follow each thematic chapter capture more in-depth stories of impact.

Strengthening Civil Society is at the core of NCA's Theory of Change, and for Norad's civil society grant, Chapter Two provides examples of how cross-cutting actions have fostered change and how NCA has strengthened the capacity of its civil society partners.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF ALL GRANTS AWARDED UNDER THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN THE PERIOD 2020–2023

NCA-Norad Cooperation Agreement (QZA-19/0212) Grants	Country	Value of grants 2020–2023 (NOK)
PS 1: Civil Society Grant Chapter 170.70	Global	844,773,600
PS 2: Rights of minorities of faith and belief Chapter 170.70	Myanmar, Iraq and Pakistan	33,011,620
Total Chapter 170.70		877,785,220
PS 3: Regional Allocation for Afghanistan Chapter 159.72	Afghanistan	44,000,000
Total Chapter 159.72		44,000,000
PS 3: Regional Allocation for Africa Chapter 159.75	Angola	80,000,000
	Mali	29,200,000
	Ethiopia (with SCN)	62,513,913
	Somalia (with SCN)	65,486,087
	South Sudan	140,000,000
	Sudan	60,000,000
	Tanzania	42,800,000
Total Chapter 159.75		480,000,000
Addendum 1: COVID-19 Mali, Sudan, South Sudan	Mali, Sudan, South Sudan	15,000,000
Addendum 2: Additional grant for research in Ethiopia (FGM)	Ethiopia	1,936,700
Addendum 3: COVID-19 DRC	DRC	10,000,000
Addendum 4: SUDO Sudan	Sudan	5,000,000
Addendum 5: Panzi water supply	DRC	9,700,000
Addendum 7: Vulnerable Myanmar	Myanmar	3,000,000
Addendum 8: Food security South Sudan	South Sudan	2,500,000
Addendum 9: SUDO, Sudan	Sudan	1,000,000
Addendum 10a: Climate Smart Actions for Food Security and Sustainable Incomes	Sudan	3,000,000
Addendum 10b: Ahfad Trauma Centre - Strengthen Trauma Mental Health Services	Sudan	2,000,000
Addendum 12: Faith in farmers (Nansen)	Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia	79,608,000
Total addenda		132,744,700
TOTAL ALL GRANTS 2020–2023		1,534,529,920

THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION

All NCA Global Programmes and Strategic Initiatives of NCA's Global Programme Framework 2020–2030 are included in NCA's Civil Society grant from Norad. The Norad-supported portfolio contributes significantly to the overall progress of reaching NCA's global programme outcomes.

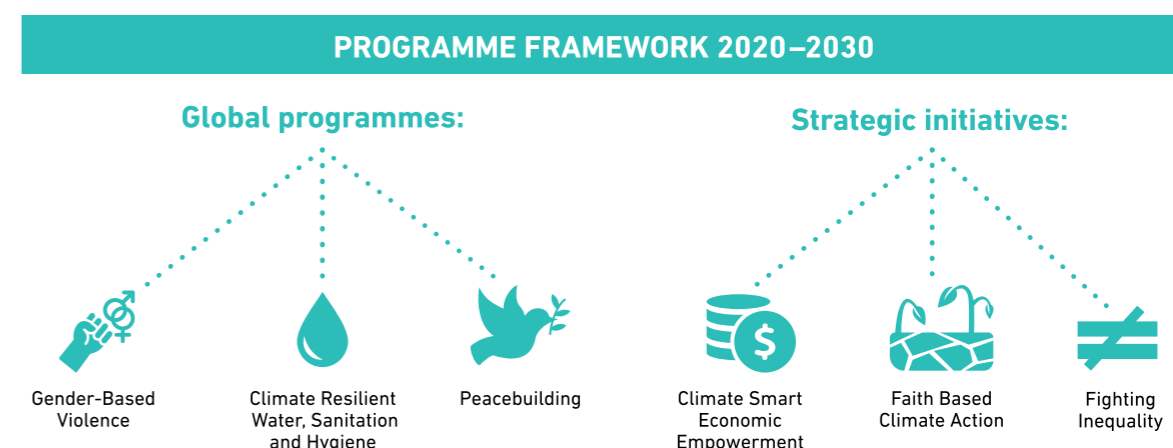
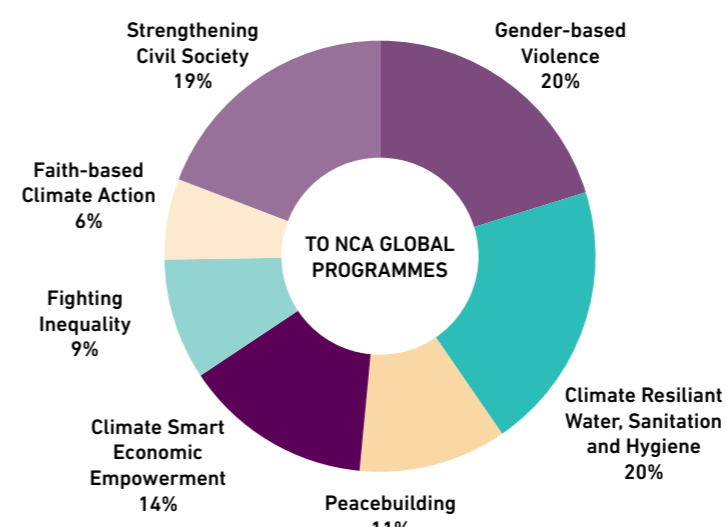


FIGURE 1: THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION OF COSTS 2020–2023, NORAD CIVIL SOCIETY GRANT



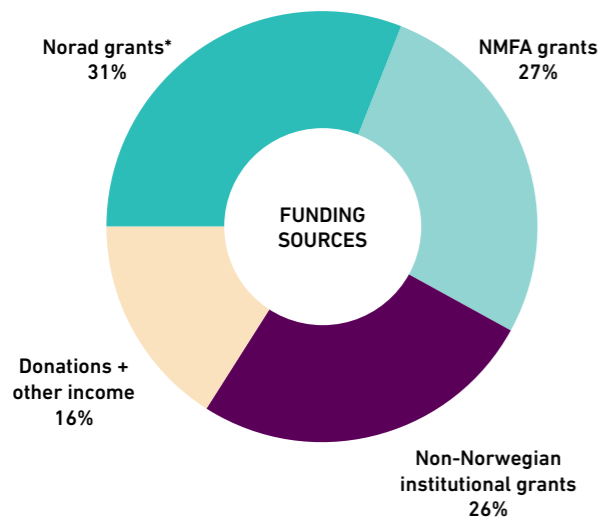
As the pie chart shows, 51% of the costs were booked on the three global programmes over the four-year period.

According to the plans made in 2019, this is with a few exceptions compared to the consolidated budget in the agreement for 2020–2024. Combined costs for the Peacebuilding programme have been lower than anticipated, mainly due to the phasing out of the Burundi programme in 2021 and changes to the implementation of the programme in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover. The implementation of the Peacebuilding programme is limited to a few countries, so costs have been absorbed in NCA's Climate Resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (CRWASH) and Gender-based Violence (GBV) programmes.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

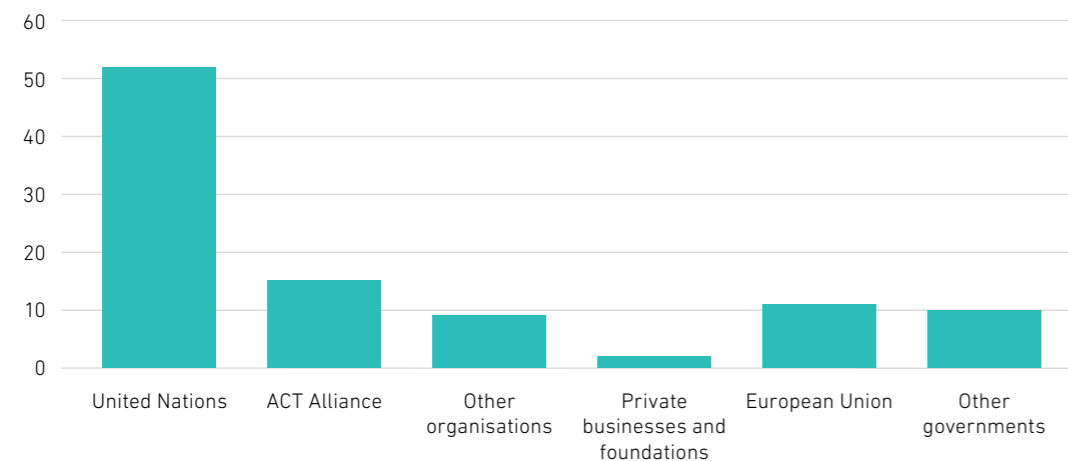
In the period 2020–2023, income from Norad through the NCA-Norad Cooperation Agreement and Individual Agreements accounted for 31% (NOK 1.5 billion) of NCA's total income. This shows that Norad has been NCA's largest donor for these four years, closely followed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and grants from non-Norwegian institutions, sharing one-third of the pie each, as Figure 2 shows.

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING SOURCES 2020–2023



As Figure 3 below shows, the combined income from non-Norwegian sources in the period 2020–2023 accounted for approximately 1.3 billion NOK, with the United Nations being the largest contributor, with 52% of the total grant funding under this category.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NON-NORWEGIAN FUNDING 2020–2023



Over the years, institutional grants and support from Norad have made vital contributions to NCA and its partners in reaching out to collaborate with the private sector, a small but growing partner of NCA. An example from Ethiopia gives evidence of the importance of paving the way for collaborations with the private sector to leverage funding for scaling innovative solutions.

NCA has developed a sustainable model for waste management called Waste 4 Value in collaboration with BEWI, Kavli Trust, and local partners. The aim of the model is to ensure that marginalised people get decent incomes, cities become clean, and valuable resources such as plastics and paper, which would otherwise cause great damage to nature, gain new value. The ambition is to replicate the model in other countries to contribute to circular economies.

Although the funding for this initiative comes from private sources, NCA's partners implementing it have received other support through the civil society grant. The partnerships with the private sector go beyond leveraging funding and, more importantly, mobilising expertise, innovative technology, and investments that can further enhance NCA's programmes.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The global civil society grant has been distributed to 17 countries, two regional programmes, and one global ecumenical partners' programme, with Afghanistan having the largest single-country portfolio. As the table below illustrates, the country expenditures are generally as stipulated in the agreement, with only minor deviations. NCA Head Office has absorbed slightly more than expected, costs mainly related to security and strengthening global programme tools and expertise.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES 2020–2023 COMPARED TO AGREEMENT

Country	As per agreement 2020–2024 (%)	Share of expenses 2020–2023 (%)
Afghanistan	10	10
Angola	3	2
Burundi*	5	2
DRC	4	5
Regional Eastern Africa Peacebuilding Programme (RPP)	2	2
Ethiopia	5	5
Guatemala	2	2
Haiti	2	2
Malawi	5	5
Mali	6	7
Myanmar	4	4
Pakistan	4	4
Palestine	5	5
Somalia	7	7
South Sudan	5	4
Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme (ROSA)	3	3
Sudan	4	5
Tanzania	5	5
Zambia	6	6
Global	8	5
Norway HO	6	9

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021.

2

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

The civil society grant from Norad is an important enabler for all NCA's programmes and for strengthening NCA's local partners and thus leveraging other institutional funding for NCA's country programmes. Having a diversified funding base is a clear strategic goal for NCA. NCA Country Offices are challenged to diversify, and as the table below shows, are quite successful at this. In some contexts, the funding environment is challenging and vulnerable to political changes.

The regional peacebuilding programme in Eastern Africa and the regional Advocacy programme in Southern Africa depend more on the Norad civil society grant. Although these programmes have smaller budgets, they are instrumental in bringing about change that contributes to achieving impact in other programmes.



A local partner showing appreciation for the partnership with NCA. Photo: Haldis Kårstad/Norwegian Church Aid

TABLE 3: NORAD CIVIL SOCIETY GRANT AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME 2020–2023

Country	Norad (%)
Afghanistan	18
Angola	14
Burundi*	60
DRC	24
Ethiopia	11
Guatemala	14
Haiti	11
Mali	34
Malawi	12
Myanmar	10
Pakistan	35
Palestine	20
Regional Eastern Africa Peacebuilding Programme	70
Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme	83
Somalia	19
South Sudan	12
Sudan	12
Tanzania	26
Zambia	27

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021.



Participatory poverty assessments inform NCA's partners' advocacy asks to the local government. In Seles, Angola, the village agreed that access to water is their greatest challenge, a message that NCA's partner conveyed to the mayor. Photo: Silje Ander/Norwegian Church Aid

IMPACT STATEMENT: Civil society actors and space are strengthened to foster human rights and dignity and empower people to participate in developing and implementing public policies, development plans and humanitarian responses.

THEORY OF CHANGE

For NCA, a robust civil society is key to achieving sustainable development, as it cultivates active citizen participation, fosters accountability, and promotes inclusivity in decision-making processes. Strengthening civil society is, therefore, the central element around which NCA's global Theory of Change (ToC) is built.

NCA's approaches to strengthening civil society fall into two interlinked categories:

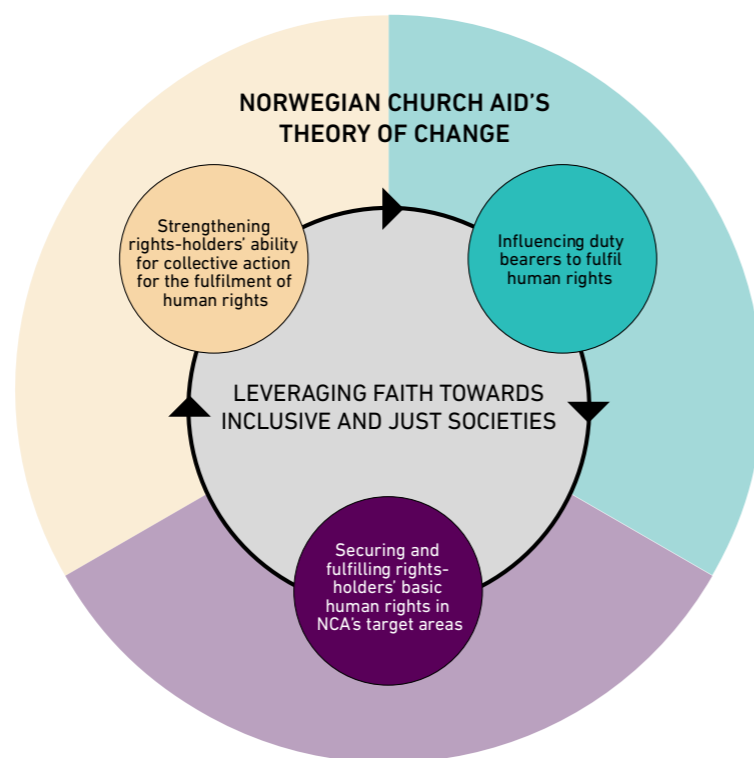
1) Applying a rights-based approach in programmes where rights-holders and communities participate and are empowered to mobilise and hold duty-bearers accountable through collective action.

2) Working with and strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations for locally-led development.

NCA places particular emphasis on leveraging the potential of faith-based actors to be a force for inclusive and just societies. Recognising that faith and religion play a significant role in people's everyday lives and are woven into the social fabric, applying a faith-based approach is a key added value to NCA's work.

To ensure the effective implementation of the global ToC, NCA has developed cross-cutting goals for strengthening civil society (SCS). These goals are integrated into all NCA's programming and are monitored through corresponding global indicators. They are also included in the grant's global results framework, which presents and analyses the results of NCA's work. The goals outline how NCA strengthens civil society and ensures the application of civil society methods through its programmes.

The subsequent thematic chapters include practical illustrations and analyses of how strengthening civil society and leveraging the potential of faith actors have contributed to achieving the results presented across the thematic programmes.



GLOBAL PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK REVIEW

Between 2022 and 2023, NCA and KPMG jointly conducted a Global Programme Framework Review. This provided an opportunity to review the relevance and application of NCA's global ToC and the cross-cutting SCS goals. The review strongly affirmed the importance of SCS and faith-based approaches in the programmes supported by NCA.

The cross-cutting SCS goals were found to be highly relevant to the entire programme portfolio. However, the review highlighted that partners and NCA country staff have room for improvement in understanding the practical application of the SCS indicators. This may account for some of the challenges related to the quality of the results data, as highlighted below. Informants generally praised NCA's efforts to foster equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with local faith- and value-based civil society organisations, though they suggested that NCA's approach to partner strengthening could be more systematic. The review also recommended a stronger emphasis on inclusion, for example by developing clear selection criteria and that NCA should lift advocacy components and expertise across country programmes. NCA considered these recommendations in revising its Global Programme Framework effective as of 2025.



IMPACT OF CROSS-CUTTING CIVIL SOCIETY GOALS

SCS 1: RIGHTS-HOLDERS ARE MOBILISED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION ON COMMON INTERESTS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
18	Angola, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Mali, Pakistan, Palestine, ROSA, South Sudan, Sudan	Afghanistan, Burundi*, RPP, Haiti, Tanzania, Zambia	DRC, Malawi, Somalia

The mobilisation of rights-holders may refer to both formal and informal collective actions. Examples include voluntary participation in WASH committees, women's groups, parents' groups, and savings- and loan groups. Participation in nonviolent demonstrations, campaigns, and petitions directly aimed at influencing duty-bearers to support and implement actions that contribute to the shared may also be counted.

This indicator has exceeded almost all annual targets since 2020. This is quite remarkable considering the restrictions COVID-19 imposed on movements and group gatherings. It shows the strength of working with local partners and existing local structures. **Zambia** and **Tanzania** are good examples, accounting for nearly 40% of all mobilised, owing to winning partnerships with local structures and interfaith committees.

In **Guatemala**, several of NCA's partners took part in the nationwide social mobilisation to defend the presidential election result and democracy. This struggle to protect Guatemala's democratic institutions lasted several months.

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021.

SCS 2: DUTY-BEARERS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
16	Angola, DRC, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, ROSA, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia	DRC	Afghanistan, Burundi*, RPP, Guatemala

Engagement to hold duty-bearers accountable includes various advocacy initiatives that lead to a change in policies, laws, norms, and practices. These initiatives range from national-level initiatives, such as securing access to universal health care in **Tanzania**, to more local ones, such as establishing an Early Warning system to mitigate the effects of climate change in **Pakistan**.

As the table shows, many countries are above target. Compared to the target, global achievement shows a high overachievement, partly explained by challenges in target-setting methods. While the indicator tracks initiatives that have led to definite changes, the processes leading up to the changes are often significant achievements in and of themselves. In several **Southern African** countries, NCA and partners have organised national and local Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) conferences where local rights-holders can directly address high-level politicians.

SCS 3: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS ARE EMPOWERED TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
15	Angola, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Pakistan, ROSA, Tanzania	Zambia	Afghanistan, Burundi*, DRC, Guatemala, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan

To stimulate participatory governance at all levels, NCA supports the active inclusion in decision-making bodies of groups defined as marginalised in any given context. These include women and youth, Indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. In several countries, like **Malawi** and **Guatemala**, empowered women and men from underrepresented groups have assumed leadership positions and are influencing decision-making in local governance structures on issues that affect them and their communities. They have also taken a step to pass on their knowledge and skills to other vulnerable groups.

SCS 4: DUTY-BEARERS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
17	Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi*, Ethiopia, Palestine, ROSA, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia	Global Ecumenical Partners, DRC, RPP, South Sudan	Guatemala, Mali, Pakistan, Somalia

Building alliances and platforms between various actors is a key strategy for NCA. In line with NCA's ToC, establishing these platforms is a goal in and of itself as a precondition for proactive civic engagement.

One example is **Ethiopia**, where NCA is a member of the steering committee of the reproductive health working group, the national alliance to end FGM and CEFM, and an active member of GBV Area

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021.

of Responsibility (AoR) and the Prevention on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network. In all these platforms, NCA provided technical and financial support.

Collaborative multi-actor spaces are, however, also vulnerable to external factors. Many NCA countries experience shrinking space for civil society, both because of conflicts and more restrictive NGO laws. Positive developments were, however, seen in 2023 as 76 collaborative spaces were established across the divides of social groups in **South Sudan, Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme, Mali** and **Somalia**.

NCA managed to reach its targets despite setbacks for civil society in several countries and will continue promoting and supporting multi-actor platforms in the years to come.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS

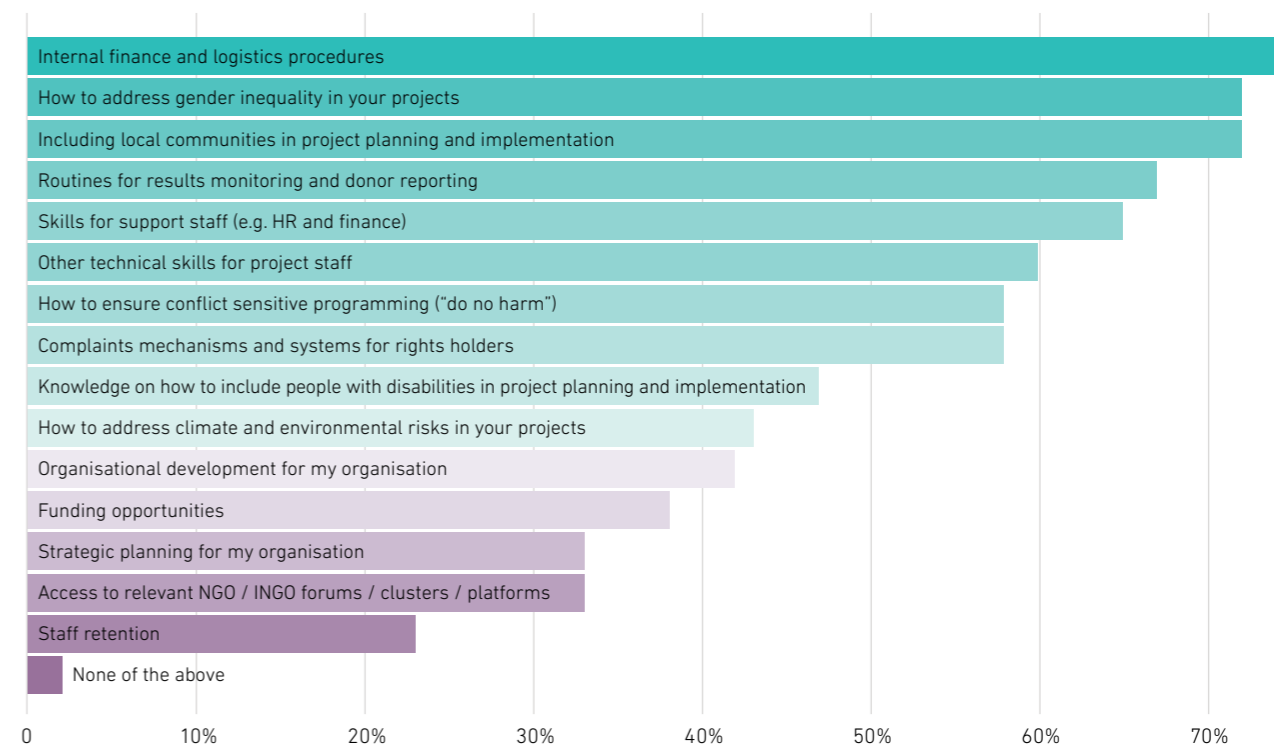
Strengthening local partners is an essential part of NCA's ToC. Therefore, it was a great inspiration when NCA received the Mali Aid Localisation Champion Award in 2022 because of NCA's systematic approach to strengthening the capacity of its local partners in **Mali**.

NCA documents the number of partners who have increased their scores in institutional capacity development areas. Two partner assessments are needed to measure improvement to measure the indicator of partner strengthening. Given that several of NCA's country offices are conducting end-line assessments in 2024, documenting the overall achievements presents a challenge. However, in the 23 cases where NCA has completed two partnership assessments, NCA finds that partners' scores have increased.

In a global partner survey carried out in April 2024, 128 out of 129 partners confirmed that the support from NCA has helped them increase capacity and knowledge in different areas (see Figure 4). Partners were asked to confirm which areas they have improved in as a result of NCA's training and support.

FIGURE 4: NCA PARTNER SURVEY 2024 – RESULTS OF NCAS TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Percentage of partners who confirmed that NCA had contributed to increasing their capacity in the following areas:





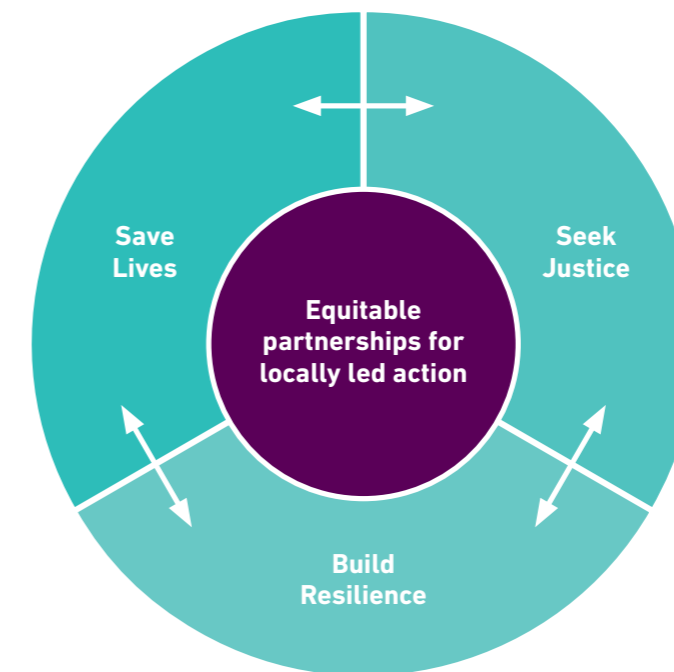
In Darfur the water is still flowing! The water committee, which was trained by Norwegian Church Aid two years ago, operates the water pumps and water tower when everything was looted and destroyed in 2023. They provide clean water to thousands of people who are now displaced. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

SUSTAINABILITY

NCA COs were asked to rate the sustainability of the Crosscutting Strengthening Civil Society goals. On a rating scale of one to three, where three is the highest, countries reported sustainability rates above two on all indicators. The “Rights-holders are mobilised for collective action on common interests” indicator scored 2.8, the highest average of all indicators.

Even in conflict areas in Sudan, collective actions are still relevant in the day-to-day lives of community members. Trained and empowered community leaders show that they will likely sustain their actions after the projects end. Civil society strengthening is pivotal for any programme to be sustainable.

NCA will further reinforce its commitment to civil society through an emphasis on strengthening Equitable Partnerships for locally-led action moving forward with the three global goals to Save Live, Build Resilience and Seek Justice.



3

NCA'S GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

TABLE 4: CAPACITY BUILDING OF NCA'S CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS (2023)

Country ¹	Partner category	No. of partners reached	No. of partners provided with capacity building
Afghanistan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	8	0
	Faith-based Organisation	0	0
Angola	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	3	3
	Faith-based Organisation	7	7
	Academia	1	1
DRC	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	8	8
	Faith-based Organisation	4	4
Ethiopia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	6	1
	Private sector	1	0
	Faith-based Organisation	4	3
Malawi	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	9	5
	Private sector	2	0
	Faith-based Organisation	10	0
Mali	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	9	9
	Faith-based Organisation	0	0
Somalia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	8	7
	Faith-based Organisation	0	0
South Sudan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	7	7
	Faith-based Organisation	1	1
Sudan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	6	6
	Faith-based Organisation	1	1
	Academia	1	1
Tanzania	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	2	2
	Faith-based Organisation	13	13
Zambia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	4	4
	Faith-based Organisation	11	11
Eastern Africa Regional	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	1	1
	Faith-based Organisation	5	5
	Academia	1	1
Southern Africa Regional	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	3	3
	Faith-based Organisation	5	5
TOTAL		141	116
TOTAL NGO or Civil Society Organisation		74	56
TOTAL Faith-based Organisation		61	57
TOTAL Other		6	3

¹ Guatemala, Haiti, Myanmar, and Palestine are joint country programmes where NCA is not the lead agency. NCA partners with sister agencies (all FBOs), responsible for following up with local implementing partners. These are not included in the overview above.



Water point in Char Asyab district, Kabul province, Afghanistan.
Photo: Zahrah Nabi/Norwegian Church Aid, Afghanistan

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)



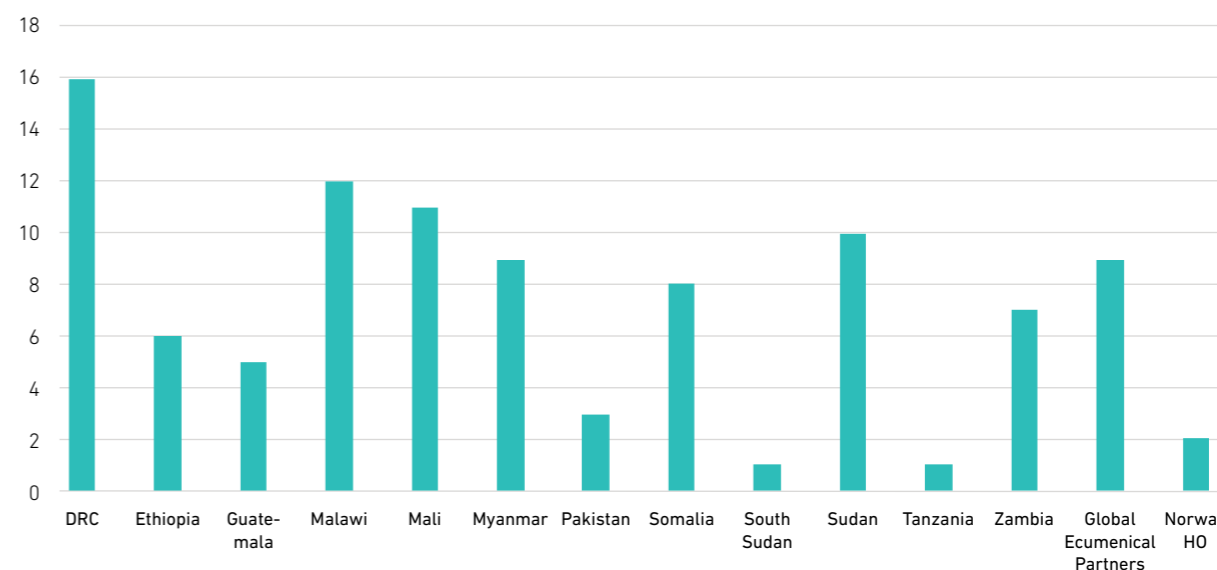
IMPACT STATEMENT: Women and girls live empowered lives free from Gender-based Violence

COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: DRC, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, and Global Ecumenical Partners



Women Self Help Group in Hyderfarm, Sindh Province, Pakistan, is meeting to raise awareness in the community by posters with images to get them to commit to increasing zero tolerance of gender-based violence. Photo: Fatima Helepoto/Norwegian Church Aid, Pakistan

FIGURE 5: GBV 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: DOMINANT NORMS TRANSFORMED TO PROTECT GIRLS AND WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE AND HARMFUL PRACTICES

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
9	Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zambia	DRC, Myanmar, and Sudan	Guatemala, Mali, and Somalia*

Norms transformation work gained momentum in 2023 after three years of COVID-19 lockdowns, as normal operations resumed. NCA and partners in Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, DRC, Myanmar, Sudan, Guatemala, Mali, and Somalia intensified efforts to regain some of the lost time. NCA engaged women and girls, men and boys, authorities at various levels, and community- and faith actors. Three countries performed better than the target, while Guatemala and Mali have regressed.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

To transform negative social norms, NCA and partners use community conversation methodologies, bringing communities together to discuss and find solutions that affect them. Norm transformation takes a long time, but NCA notes progress towards prioritising women's rights in many countries. NCA and partners continued their diligent work on GBV prevention, advocating for the enactment and implementation of gender transformative legislation through engagement with governments and authorities, community leaders, and faith actors and by raising awareness, especially among women and girls, about their rights to a life free from violence.

Actively engaging authorities and governments, NCA saw positive trends in buy-in by governments and commitment to end harmful practices. One example is **Ethiopia**, where NCA and partners were among key civil society and UN organisations that supported the government to chart the national costed roadmap to end FGM by 2025, a government-led initiative towards an end to the harmful practice. However, the global backlash against gender equality has challenged some of the pilots NCA was planning to launch, such as an increased focus on LHBTQ+ rights.

* Somalia has yet to conduct a second measurement.

IMPACT

At the start of this reporting period, there was limited or no access to communities due to lockdowns. This meant that there was a need for NCA and partners to innovate to reach communities with messaging about the negative effects of harmful practices, specifically Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child, Early and Forced Marriages (CEFM). In this regard, NCA and partners intensified GBV prevention messaging through radio and TV programmes and information on billboards.

An impressive 84,000 people annually participated in community conversations, discussing harmful norms, women's rights, and gender justice. NCA collaborated and coordinated with various stakeholders, including women and girls, men and boys, community leaders, faith actors, and governments. This has had the impact that these stakeholders are committed to extending their efforts to reach an even larger audience.

In **Malawi**, for example, NCA partners saw an increase above the target in people committing to zero tolerance towards GBV, partly due to the use of methodologies such as SASA! Together. The approach addresses unequal power relations by promoting the balancing of power for the prevention of violence. Using the approach, NCA and partners have sparked important and needed conversations on norms and cultural practices and confronted patriarchal practices that have, over the years, put women and girls at a disadvantage.

NCA's global ecumenical partners are important allies, and annual training in women's human rights has been jointly arranged over the period. To this, NCA contributed its expertise and shared methodologies and strategies on faith actors' moral and political responsibility to end GBV. Trained staff now engage in GBV advocacy and participate in various platforms, such as the civil society movement that advocates for an end to harmful practices in **Ethiopia**.

For NCA, standing up for human rights and human dignity **globally** remains central. NCA is committed to holding duty-bearers accountable, including to the agenda of sexual and reproductive health and rights. At the Commission for Population and Development in New York in 2023, NCA and ACT Alliance co-organised a side event with Norway and Argentina entitled "Between Taboos and Freedom: Religion, Rights and Reproductive Justice".

Panel at the UN side event; The state secretary Bjørg Sandkjær, the director of UNFPA Dr. Natalia Kanem, ACT Secretary General Rudelmar, the UN ambassador for Argentina, H.E Maria Del Carmen Squeff and the moderator Zanele Makombe from ACT Ubumbano.
Photo: Stephen Mallon/ACT Alliance



Thokozania Masanza using the SASA! Together methodology. Photo: Nyalifie Mtambalika/Norwegian Church Aid, Malawi



OUTCOME 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF VIOLENCE AND SURVIVORS ACCESSED LIFE-SAVING AND SPECIALISED GBV SERVICES

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
7	DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, and Myanmar	Guatemala	Malawi and Sudan

To ensure that survivors and those at risk of GBV access comprehensive and appropriate services, NCA and partners support communities and relevant authorities to establish and strengthen existing services, ensuring that health centres have the capacity, required expertise, and contextual knowledge. Services include psychosocial first aid, GBV case management, and referral for legal and medical care. More than 12,000 women and girls accessed services through referrals or at facilities supported by NCA.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

During the reporting period, NCA witnessed an increase in incidents of GBV against women and girls in many countries due to restrictions imposed by governments during COVID-19 lockdowns. It became increasingly important to ensure clear referral pathways, to ensure potential survivors could be assisted to access services.

IMPACT

In **Ethiopia**, a total of 1,600 persons have accessed medical, psycho-social support (PSS) and legal services owing to targeted awareness-raising efforts, support to various service providers and coordination with governments. NCA and partners strengthened the capacity of caseworkers in the many women's and girls' safe spaces, in one-stop centres as well as in other formal and informal service centres. Training staff members in these institutions also improved services offered in collaboration with government institutions. In Ethiopia, this support included awareness-raising on GBV in general, case management using the survivor-centred approach, and coordination.

Due to an increase in mobile court services for survivors in **Malawi**, a reduced need for GBV services became evident. The number of those who accessed GBV services was much lower than anticipated, as cases were effectively handled by these courts.

OUTCOME 3: WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS ARE EMPOWERED TO LEAD, BUILD SELF-ESTEEM AND REALISE THEIR RIGHTS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
9	Zambia	DRC, Guatemala, Malawi, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sudan	Mali and Somalia*

Women's and girls' empowerment is closely linked to transforming norms, so results take time. While some countries didn't see expected outcomes, NCA notes good progress in six out of eight countries.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Some external factors have hindered traction in the work on women's and girls' empowerment, including conflict-related displacements in Mali and Sudan and climate-related disruptions like the flooding in **Malawi** and **Pakistan**. COVID-19 also affected the kick-start of interventions, as most were designed to be in-person training and workshops. The years also saw a quite significant backlash on gender equality, affecting women and girls' advancement with respect to rights. This backlash is especially seen amongst movements opposing what they refer to as "gender ideology", including conservative religious leaders and civil society and state actors.

IMPACT

In **Mali**, despite the displacement of women and girls in the target area, an estimated 2,000 women and girls participated in awareness-raising and community dialogue activities using the Women's and Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS) model to increase access to information about their rights. They were trained and supported in income-generating activities, leading to positive changes. Women and girls were also educated about their rights to say "no" to violence and harmful practices and to participate in public discussions. Religious leaders and authorities collaborated to support women's rights, ensuring their protection. This exemplifies positive life changes, empowering women and girls to support themselves and their families in the future.

In **Pakistan**, NCA and partners reached 46 communities with various interventions for women's and girls' empowerment. Marginalised women were mobilised into self-help groups. To date, over 2,000 members,

* Data from Mali and Somalia for 2023 is not available to be able to make the accurate assessment.

mostly adolescent girls, have been trained in gender justice and the various types of GBV, including emotional violence and denial of participation and resources. They also acquired leadership skills and gained awareness about the effects of climate change and how it impacts women differently than men.

OUTCOME 4: WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS ACCESSED COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND MODERN FAMILY PLANNING

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
4	DRC, Ethiopia, and Malawi	(none)	Mali

To increase access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Family Planning (FP), NCA and its partners use various approaches and methods, such as the NCA CSE Toolkit, the Family Planning Toolkit for healthcare providers, peer-to-peer education, school clubs, mobile clinics, and norm-changing interventions with faith leaders, to increase information and acceptance of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in the communities. Approaches include community conversations and community dialogue, working with faith actors to break the taboo on sexuality education and FP.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The need for SRHR services has increased after COVID-19, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The world is also seeing a backlash against gender equality, the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, and SRHR. Several international treaties and conventions embody the right to information, yet many are denied access to CSE and FP information and education. Despite this rather negative situation, NCA and partners have successfully advanced the SRHR agenda. This shows that the efforts are needed in the communities and are well received by the target population. Mali's security situation impeded the programme's implementation as many areas were unreachable.

IMPACT

During COVID-19, NCA developed CSE and FP toolkits for healthcare providers. These toolkits were well received, with the CSE toolkit surpassing expectations, indicating that the time was right for such an intervention.

Malawi has achieved the highest success, thanks to partners who have systematically worked over a decade to improve access to SRHR. Success is attributed to the application of an integrated approach, collaborating with various government institutions, and focusing on engaging faith leaders to secure access to SRHR in communities. Faith actors demonstrated an almost unprecedented appetite for working on preventing child marriages after they were trained in using NCA's Faith Actors Motivating Empowerment (FAME) toolkit. Challenging the taboos by introducing CSE for adolescents has been an important contributing factor.

Ethiopia has also, for many years, addressed the importance of access to SRHR services. The result was attained through focused awareness campaigns and structured interventions such as youth dialogue, CSE in school groups, and peer-to-peer and girls' club discussions. These platforms empower women and girls to seek FP and SRHR services. The overachievement is also the result of the local partner TSD's capacity to mobilise adolescent girls and provide services to women through establishing its own clinic exclusively for SRH. An estimated 20,000 people live in the catchment of the clinic.

DRC has had a slower start addressing SRHR issues. However, partners have wisely used existing structures, such as Reflect and Tamar youth circles, to start working on CSE. Collaborating with the health centres, nurses were trained in CSE and led sessions. Those who wished were referred to the health centres for family planning services. DRC reports they are starting to break the taboo on CSE and FP.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

In **Ethiopia**, NCA collaborated with ACT sister agencies to strengthen the capacity of civil society partners EECMY-DASSC and EOC-DICAC in gender justice and women's leadership. As a result, human resource policies were enhanced, and women's representation in their senior management teams increased from zero to 30%.

In **Mali**, women and youth rarely speak in public, limiting their participation in public spaces and decision-making forums. To reverse this trend, NCA strengthened its partners to advocate for their active involvement, providing leadership training to women and girls. Now, they are participating in the various community committees in NCA's areas of intervention.

SUSTAINABILITY

One approach to achieving gender justice sustainably is by working consistently with faith actors to advocate for norm changes. NCA strengthened the capacity of faith actors at all levels in many countries. Other community leaders were also involved with the programme to ensure ownership to sustain the results obtained. In **DRC**, for example, community and institutional leaders participated in the *SASA! Together*, methodology training to ensure that work already started by change agents is maintained.

In **Ethiopia**, religious, clan and community leaders were mobilised, and their institutions strengthened to integrate the issue of violence and harmful practices in their bylaws. These institutions, together with community members, are equipped to continue working for zero tolerance of violence and transforming negative dominant norms. Men and boys increasingly engage in interventions that support women's and girls' empowerment and protect women and girls from violence.

NCA and partners improved staff capacity in GBV case management, PSS, and clinical management of rape, ensuring continued specialised services by providers in programme locations. Facilities for GBV survivors managed collaboratively with authorities, are expected to continue serving even after the programme ends. Women and girls from the programme can increasingly self-refer to specialised services.

LESSONS LEARNED

- CSE is fundamental for achieving sexual and reproductive justice.
- Interventions and methodologies must be adapted to the local needs.
- Providing refresher training in faith-based tools re-energises and spurs clergy and other faith actors into action.



NCA and partners at ENGAGE toolkit launch in Luuq, Gedo Region. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Somalia

RESULTS CASE

ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING REDUCES TEENAGE PREGNANCIES – KEEPING GIRLS AT SCHOOL IN MALAWI

DAC SECTOR: 130.30 Family planning

WHAT: NCA Malawi has registered an incredible increase in the number of women and adolescents accessing modern Family Planning (FP) services. With an estimated target of 17,400, results were almost quadrupled with close to 76,000 reached. As a result of the increased uptake, the rate of adolescent school drop-out due to teenage pregnancies in the targeted areas went down from 30% in 2021 to 2% in 2023.

WHY: Malawi has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the births in Malawi are delivered by a woman under 18 years.

There is a high unmet need for FP, particularly among adolescent women, where more than half lack access to FP services. A contraceptive prevalence rate of 44% suggests that many women who wish to prevent or delay pregnancy are unable to access necessary services and information. This contributes to a high fertility rate.

Talking with youth about sexuality is regarded as taboo, and access to CSE is limited, both in schools and in most communities. Lack of information and awareness contributes to risky sexual behaviours, unintended pregnancies, and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Most young people receive fragmented or inadequate information about Sexually Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), leading to misconceptions and inadequate decision-making.



A matron from MAGGA facilitates a CSE session with youth in school. Photo: Edson Kathumba

HOW: An integrated approach was key to this success. The Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA) trained 480 matrons and patrons on implementing the country's approved readmission policy, which states that girls are not allowed to remain in school while pregnant but are expected to return to school one year after giving birth. They sensitised parents, students, and communities to the possibility of second chances for girls who become pregnant. These matrons and patrons were also trained using the extensive government manual on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for those out-of-school. This manual was utilised in school clubs to further educate students.

Tailor-made Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials on reproductive health and rights were distributed to raise community members' awareness about FP. NCA facilitated the provision of SRHR services through outreach clinics operated by the district health departments; promoted the integration of family planning in community-based health care packages using the Community-Based Distribution Agents (CBDA) model; advocated for CSE coordination between education, health, youth, and gender sectors; and built the capacity of healthcare workers using its Family Planning Toolkit to promote quality counselling and modern family planning methods.

PARTNER: Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Collaboration with government structures at all stages is essential for success
- Reducing the unmet need for family planning is achievable using an integrated approach that targets the barriers to accessing FP services

SOURCES: Partner reports

RESULTS CASE

INVESTING IN SELF-HELP GROUPS INCREASES WOMEN'S SOCIAL STANDING IN SINDH, PAKISTAN

DAC SECTOR: 151.50 Democratic participation and civil society

WHAT: The impact of efforts to empower vulnerable women and girls in the traditionally conservative districts in Sindh is evidenced by women gradually taking over leadership roles and participating actively in the public arena. This is a result of investing in Women's Self-Help Groups (WSHGs). Women now participate actively in different forums and raise their voices. Incrementally, duty-bearers are more and more responsive to them. A recent assessment shows that women report marked improvements in their social standing. This is evidence that the project has had a positive impact. There are indicators that WSHGs are taking the lead in their initiatives and carrying them through, which promises well for the sustainability prospects of the results.

WHY: Women in the project intervention areas face several challenges that perpetuate gender inequality and limit rural women's access to essential services such as health, education, and employment. Patriarchy maintains power structures that prioritise men's decision-making and limit women's autonomy. Traditionally, only men participate in the public sphere and seldom consult women before making decisions, even at the household level. With a literacy rate of 25%, women's access to information is restricted. A lack of local venues for women to gather to learn about their rights and speak their minds further exacerbates their exclusion.

HOW: Thirty-eight community WSHGs were established, providing a platform for more than 2,000 women and adolescent girls to seek guidance and look for ways of exercising their rights. The women gained the confidence to hold duty-bearers accountable for their actions by gathering and discussing pressing matters of concern. Training sessions were carried out to raise awareness of gender inequality and build communication- and leadership skills. As a result of their empowerment women are actively taking part in raising funds to help 50 vulnerable households affected by flooding. A leader of one self-help group ensured that 300 women in her community obtained national identity cards, granting them access to social welfare programmes by the state.

Through training and exposure visits arranged by NCA's partner SPO, one woman gained the confidence and skills to convince parents to enrol their daughters in

secondary school, contributed to preventing early child marriages and coordinated a fundraiser among communities Christian, Hindu and Muslim faith communities for the construction of a walking path to improve the safety of pedestrians.

"We used to sit quietly in front of men. Now we actively engage in discussions, make decisions, and contribute to our village's progress. Due to our collective efforts and encouraging one another, we are able to approach relevant authorities and discuss our issues. And we get their attention!"

Member of a women's self-help group

PARTNER: Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Facilitating women to be part of a network or group provides them with much-needed peer support
- WSHGs created an enabling environment for women to vote in general elections and even serve as polling agents at polling stations in both districts

SOURCES: Partners reports and data collection and assessment report 2023



Women Self Help Group in Lakhaniabad, Sindh province organised a rally during the 16 days of activism against Gender-based Violence. Photo: Allah Bachio/SPO

CLIMATE RESILIENT WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (CRWASH)



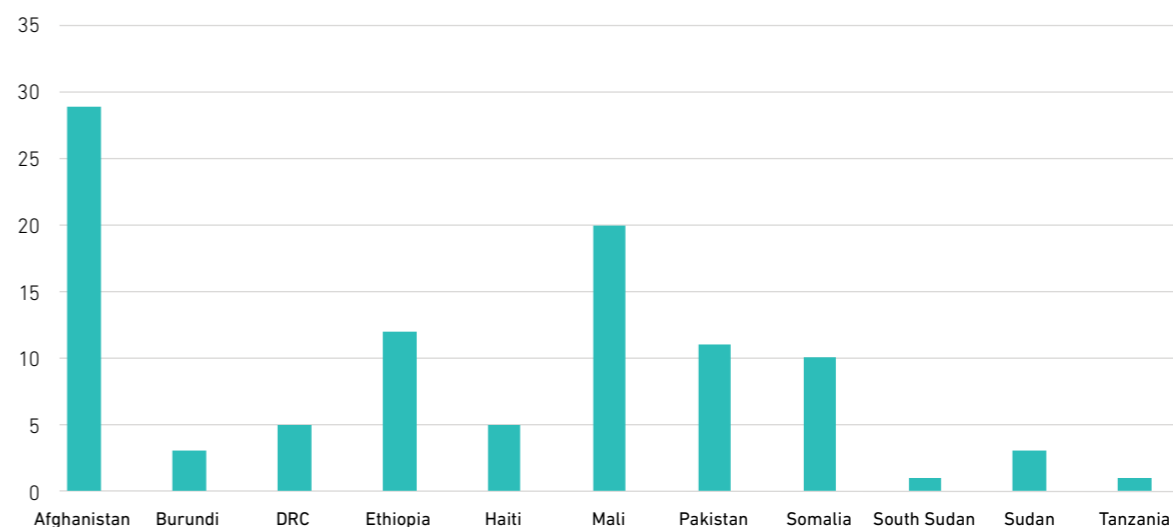
IMPACT STATEMENT: People live in healthy and resilient communities by accessing equitable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene services in an informed and sustainable manner

COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti, Mali, Pakistan, and Somalia



Gimja Kassa is leading the Water committee. Water point in Woset village, Ethiopia.
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

FIGURE 6: CRWASH 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN AND INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING ABOUT ALL WASH SERVICES THAT AFFECT THEM

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
7	DRC, Ethiopia, and Mali	Afghanistan and Haiti	Pakistan and Somalia*

NCA and partners' approach to CRWASH programming is based on communities' active participation. Participation is a prerequisite for identifying community needs, hopes, challenges, and opportunities. Thus, the focus is on building the capacity of individuals and groups to express their opinions constructively in different forums.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Initiatives such as establishing inclusive WASH committees, empowering duty-bearers and rights-holders, and facilitating communication between communities and duty-bearers have effectively facilitated a participatory approach to CRWASH service delivery. Additionally, advocacy and capacity-building efforts have strengthened communities' ability to articulate their needs and influence decision-making processes.

IMPACT

During the period 2020 – 2023, almost 300 communities in seven countries expressed their satisfaction with the way duty-bearers addressed community WASH needs. This is an indicator of existing positive dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers. The interaction between community members and authorities can lead to many results, from agreeing to share a water source for different uses to upholding by-laws banning open defecation.

NCA and partners' main contribution to achieving these results is their firm commitment to community mobilisation and empowerment.

* Somalia has not provided a baseline nor targets for the period.

OUTCOME 2: PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO PREPARE AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE-RELATED HAZARDS AND NATURAL DISASTERS AFFECTING WASH SERVICES

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
5	(none)	Ethiopia, Haiti, and Afghanistan	Mali

NCA and partners emphasise training and collaboration to increase community members' awareness and understanding of climate hazards and the need to be resilient. This heightened understanding enables them to better anticipate potential risks and vulnerabilities, which is crucial for implementing WASH interventions that are resistant to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

After years of observing changes in the local weather patterns and cycles, communities now understand how climate change affects their daily lives.

IMPACT

In **Afghanistan**, NCA and partners' efforts over the past years in facilitating climate hazard vulnerability assessments, contingency plans and water safety plans have fostered a more resilient and collaborative approach to addressing the impacts of climate-related hazards on CRWASH services.

As part of the climate-resilient component of the CRWASH programme, environmental protection works were planned and implemented at the micro catchment level to address deficits in the water cycle, for example, in **Ethiopia**. As a result, soil and water conservation has been done in dry seasons, and tree seedlings are planted in the rainy season. This has limited the speed of superficial runoff, increased rainwater infiltration into the ground, and maximised water retention, recharging the water table and contributing to the sustainability of the local water resources.

The climate resilience aspect of the WASH programme was introduced in 2020. It took time to integrate among NCA and partners and transfer to communities. Once tools and practices were mastered, results became evident from 2022 and on. **Mali** is an example of this trend, with results in the last two years almost doubling those of the first two years, although still below targets due to the nomadic lifestyles of targeted communities.

OUTCOME 3: PEOPLE PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE MEASURES TO PROTECT AGAINST KEY PUBLIC AND PERSONAL HEALTH RISKS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
6	(none)	Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, and Somalia	Mali

The critical achievement expected from hygiene promotion activities is behaviour change concerning hygiene practices. Generally, the first concern for NCA and partners is to address the lack of hand-washing with soap. This practice is a simple yet effective way to prevent spreading diseases, including respiratory and diarrheal. It is particularly important for people with precarious health status and children under five.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The use of soap for hand washing mainly depends on its availability and access to water. Soap availability in the local market is crucial and linked to demand and purchasing power. NCA and partners have emphasised the colocalisation of CRWASH and its Climate Smart Economic Empowerment (CSEE) programmes to address all aspects of the hygiene practice deficit.

The past four years have been characterised by a security crisis in all the countries of implementation, which has affected the results. Despite these difficult circumstances, NCA and its partners have managed to reach the targets in most countries.

IMPACT

In the wake of COVID-19, specific hygiene promotion strategies were adopted. Prevention and control messages were disseminated through IEC materials (billboards, posters, banners), radio and television campaigns, and social media posts and videos (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.). As a result of the increase in public hygiene campaigns during COVID-19, NCA and partners in **Ethiopia** contributed to increasing the percentage of people who wash their hands at critical times from 50% to 75% during the period. Improved hygiene practices in targeted communities in **Afghanistan** have notably seen a reduction in diarrhoea cases in children under five.

In **Mali**, where insecurity and subsequent waves of displacement brought new people to the programme areas, NCA and its partners did not have the capacity to include the Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) in hygiene promotion campaigns. However, these IDPs were among the population surveyed for behaviour change at the end of the project period, and they indirectly influenced the result.

OUTCOME 4: PEOPLE ACCESSED SUSTAINABLE, ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE BASIC SANITATION SERVICES

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
6	Ethiopia, Haiti, Mali, and Pakistan	Afghanistan and Somalia	(none)

Promoting the use of sanitation facilities in homes, schools, and health centres is the key to ensuring access to adequate and equitable sanitation services in the countries where NCA implements the programme. NCA and its partners apply the Community-Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

NCA notes that government agencies responsible for rural sanitation have chosen CLTS as the methodology. Activities implemented in most countries include triggering CLTS processes to eliminate open defecation, constructing climate-resistant sanitation facilities in schools and health centres, and carrying out climate risk assessments for sanitation planning, vector control, and solid waste management.

IMPACT

While efforts spent in different countries vary, they have collectively contributed to establishing sanitation services and infrastructure, ultimately improving the quality of life for the rights-holders. Through the provision of sanitation facilities, NCA and partners have ensured that communities have the means to dispose of excreta safely while providing a safe environment for all (see results case).

Results from **Somalia** and **Pakistan** show that CLTS has improved sanitation coverage while building the resilience and capacity of communities to understand the importance of safe waste disposal, such as garbage collection.

The **Haiti** programme reports that children and teachers are more confident visiting school toilets than before. The reasons for this are that they no longer smell, there are now separate stalls for boys and girls, and water is available for handwashing. Building on the success, other WASH actors are adapting NCA's model.

In **Somalia**, NCA saw an overachievement in the number of young men reached with sanitation activities. This is attributed to persistent drought conditions forcing young men, who usually tend to live-stock, to settle in peri-urban areas with access to water.

OUTCOME 5: PEOPLE ACCESSED SUSTAINABLE, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE BASIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY SERVICES

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
6	Ethiopia, Haiti, Mali, and Pakistan	Afghanistan and Somalia	(none)

An integral part of the water supply activities is creating a supportive environment for the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure. NCA and partners, therefore, focus on forming and training community water committees to secure the technical sustainability of the water systems. Improved water services directly enable a better quality of life and reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases in the long term.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

NCA and its partners contributed to improving the access and quality of water services in all countries during the period. Targets were exceeded due to additional needs related to climate-change-induced situations and the influx of IDPs in programme areas due to conflicts. The influx led NCA and partners to expand their outreach and maintain good water infrastructure management necessary to cope with the increased pressure on the water services created. Synergies with the peacebuilding programme were particularly relevant in these settings.

IMPACT

In addition to constructing climate-resilient water facilities and training local WASH committees, NCA and partners in **Afghanistan** have, for example, over the past four years, invested in training water-point caretakers, plumbers, and mechanics. This has successfully advanced the water supply and equipped communities to mitigate future hazards.

NCA and its partners in **Somalia** have engaged in public-private partnerships for professional infrastructure management as rapid population growth in urban and peri-urban areas increases demand for larger, more efficient water systems. In close collaboration with government water agencies, committees are established and trained, construction sites are selected, and water quality surveillance is carried out.

NCA and partners in **Pakistan** reached more rights-holders as the CRWASH programme increased in 2021 and 2022 after devastating floods.



In the village of Nawar in Pakistan's Badin district, villagers have received clean water after a flood. Mohammed Sharif (center) is trained in the use of water purification equipment. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/ Norwegian Church Aid



Water and sanitation facilities in a school in Leon, Haiti. Photo: Johan Hindal/ Norwegian Church Aid

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Rights-holders were mobilised for collective action by establishing community-based WASH committees in all countries. Members are elected in a participatory and transparent way. The committees often collect user fees and are expected to be accountable to the users and the government water authorities.

NCA and partners have engaged with duty-bearers and worked to establish a dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers in the CRWASH programme. NCA and its partners contributed to important policymaking when there were opportunities for this, for example, in **Somalia**, the development of a national water strategy in 2021.

In **Mali**, WASH committees have advocated towards the local government to construct water sources in their villages.

NCA has contributed to building partner staff technical capacity of partners, such as in **Pakistan** after the recurring floods.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the CRWASH programme relies on various interconnected aspects: technical, social, environmental, financial, and administrative. While NCA and its partners can oversee the technical and environmental aspects of projects, the social, financial, and administrative elements often require cooperation from communities and government authorities. This underscores the importance of collaboration from the outset of a project.

WASH infrastructures, mainly water supply systems, are usually transferred to the community or government water supply agency once the project is completed. While NCA and its partners strive to involve communities and authorities from the start, achieving results within the project timeframe isn't always feasible. This often requires extended monitoring and support for WASH committees over several years.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Change in hygiene practices is easier to achieve in stable conditions.
- When communities are forced to prioritise income generation, NCA and partners must adopt a more direct approach to CRWASH implementation.
- An influx of IDPs into a programme area increases the total need for services.

RESULTS CASE

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT: HOW SMALL DOABLE ACTIONS CHANGES BEHAVIOUR IN ETHIOPIA

DAC SECTOR: 122.61 Health Education

WHAT: The application of the 'Small Doable Actions' (SDA) model, developed by USAID, has led to a significant shift in the perception of menstruation in Ethiopian communities. NCA and partners have not only combated the social stigma surrounding menstruation but also advocated for the provision of girl-friendly sanitation facilities in schools and made sanitary pads readily available. This empowerment through access to proper menstrual hygiene products and facilities has not only enabled girls to attend school but has also provided them with a supportive environment to thrive academically.

WHY: Cultural norms and traditions strongly influence people's lives and behaviours. Traditional hygiene awareness campaigns with banners, loudspeakers, and public demonstrations have proved to have limited effect if used as the only tool. Talking about Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in public gatherings is difficult. Providing protected spaces for such discussions is crucial to ensure that women and girls feel comfortable and safe talking about their menstrual health. Schools often lack girl-friendly sanitation facilities, and since harmful norms undermine MHM, girls miss their education and other opportunities since they are confined to their homes during their periods.

HOW: NCA and partners are committed to ensuring the rights of all community members to WASH services, with a particular focus on women of reproductive age, especially school-age girls. After a successful pilot in 2022, NCA decided to implement the SDA approach for hygiene promotion. This tool, which assesses current practices, identifies areas for improvement and elicits commitment, has proven to be highly effective. It is similar to the community conversation method used by NCA.

Families and neighbours come together to share stories over coffee in the evenings. NCA and partners used those venues to discuss issues related to community WASH services. In collaboration with government-employed Health Extension Workers (HEW), NCA and partners met with local authorities, leaders of women's groups, youth groups, teachers, elders and religious leaders to identify a resource group of 20–30 people that could meet regularly and address

sensitive topics such as MHM. The HEWs facilitated conversations typically around personal hygiene and environmental health. Participants discussed, formulated action points, and identified people responsible for putting them into practice. Participants then shared what they learned with their neighbours, and actions taken by the community were reported back in the resource-group meetings.

PARTNERS: Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission Office of Meki (ECC-SDCOM) and Action for Development (AFD)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Any topic can be discussed in a community if the set-up is adequate and guarantees safe and respectful behaviour from participants
- Having a resource group comprised of respected community members, discussing relevant aspects of community life, and identifying and supporting practical solutions serves as a key catalyst for positive changes at the community level

SOURCES: Report from NCA CRWASH focal point, USAID document



Berekat from Jinka in Ethiopia is showing a sanitary pad she has made. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

RESULTS CASE

SANITATION SOLUTIONS UPHOLD WOMEN'S DIGNITY AND IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH IN AFGHANISTAN

DAC SECTOR: 140.32 Basic sanitation

WHAT: Efforts by NCA and partners toward behavioural change have led to 68 villages being certified as open defecation-free (ODF) between 2020 and 2023. According to an NCA survey, using hygienic latrines and handwashing facilities has halved the prevalence of waterborne diseases. Monitoring visits confirm the cleanliness of private homes and public spaces. Equally important is women's increased safety and comfort. Women confirm that access to a private latrine on their premises has reduced their anxiety.

WHY: In rural Afghanistan, only half of the population has access to basic sanitation facilities. Traditionally, men rely on open defecation, while women use a designated corner of the inner courtyard of their home. This practice has negative consequences on public health and women's dignity as they cannot access facilities at night or when they have guests in their homes. Before 2014, household sanitation facilities were constructed by INGOs without involving the local population, resulting in low levels of ownership and understanding of the importance of the infrastructure. It was common, for example, to see newly built permanent latrines used for storage.

HOW: The Afghan government adopted the community-led total sanitation (CLTS) approach in 2014, and NCA and its partners started working in that direction. Rural communities implemented the construction of sanitation facilities following NCA and partners' persistent groundwork. The prevailing public health situation and its challenges and opportunities were repeatedly addressed in conversations with community representatives. As a result, community members understood the sanitation and hygiene messages and took responsibility for household-level interventions.

NCA was the only WASH actor, as an efficient coordination system among NGOs under the supervision of provincial authorities prevents project duplication. The community-based approach was the primary tool used to boost sanitation coverage. After getting the "buy-in" from the communities about the dangers of improper sanitation practices, NCA provided training in how to construct simple latrines. Understanding hygiene principles and mastering the technical aspects of latrines' construction allowed households to build their own latrines, respecting hygiene standards while using locally available materials.



Before the latrine was completed it used to be a place for open defecation.

Nawroz Khan, a committed villager, was inspired to build a latrine in his house after actively participating in the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiatives.

Photo: COAR, Afghanistan

New sanitation facilities built at schools and health centres also contributed to the result. Users of these were exposed to the benefits and comfort of having sanitation facilities, which motivated them to build the same in their homes.

PARTNERS: Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee (CAWC) and Citizens' Organisation for Advocacy and Resilience (COAR)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- The path to improved sanitation practices involves behaviour change, which takes time. Approaching sanitation from different angles, such as community and institutional services, helped reinforce the message.
- For communication to be effective, confidence between communities, NCA and its partners is critical

SOURCES: NCA survey, project monitoring visits, narrative reports from partners

PEACEBUILDING (PB)



IMPACT STATEMENT: Societies are more inclusive, cohesive and peaceful

COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: Afghanistan, Burundi*, Eastern Africa Peacebuilding Programme, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, and South Sudan



Peacebuilding committees and community members in Bale Zone, Ethiopia.
Photo: Kidija Sefa/Norwegian Church Aid, Ethiopia

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021, due to the closing of the NCA Country Office.

FIGURE 7: PEACEBUILDING 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: RIGHTS-HOLDERS ENJOY INCREASED SOCIAL COHESION

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
5	(none)	Burundi*	Afghanistan, Mali, Palestine, and Somalia

NCA's efforts to reinforce social cohesion and to provide communities with tools to address conflicts in a non-violent manner contribute to reducing the impact of divisions and the risk of armed conflict.

NCA and partners work to counter prejudice, dehumanisation and other negative attitudes and behaviours by combining action in three spheres: promoting alternative, positive narratives anchored in belief systems, cultural values, and social norms; generating spaces for direct positive interaction; and acting for appropriate regulatory frameworks.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

In countries with security deterioration, such as **Mali** and **Afghanistan**, deviations from target results in a negative direction were observed. In 2022, constructive social interaction across groups was reported to be 92% in Mali; in 2023, this figure fell to 57%. The country has been experiencing a multidimensional crisis for several years, which has caused high levels of frustration among the population who experience scarcity of natural resources, absence of basic social services, and violations of human rights, specifically affecting women and children.

IMPACT

From 2020 to 2023, NCA has supported over 200 activities that have allowed rights-holders to improve their life skills, provided spaces for interaction and promoted tolerance and trust. Such activities include sports, cultural and educational activities in Afghanistan, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, and Burundi. NCA-supported peacebuilding activities have reached more than 60,000 people through sports events such as football matches, attracting large spectator groups. Shared cultural experiences that take place in safe, structured environments act as constructive interaction spaces where conflict

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021. Results were on track up to that point.

resolution and collective problem-solving skills are tested. In **Somalia**, a midline survey shows 48% constructive social interaction between groups, which is promising due to the short two-year run time of the programme. NCA predicts that an increase will be seen in the end-line survey.

Using digital platforms during COVID-19, the **RPP** doubled the number of rights-holders mobilised compared to its target in 2021, contributing to positive results overall.

In addition, NCA has reached 120 government officials and 300 religious leaders annually through workshops and training to promote norms and traditions that foster the inclusion of marginalised groups and peaceful coexistence across conflict divides. The positive impact of this is seen in both **Somalia** and **Afghanistan** when influential duty-bearers trained in social cohesion were able to help coordinate sports events between different social groups.

In **Afghanistan**, NCA continued to support existing groups to promote social cohesion. Mid-line reviews showed a steady increase in constructive social interaction across groups, reaching 45% in 2022 and then dropping to 22% following programme changes because of the Taliban takeover. Although levels of constructive interaction between groups have declined, the social cohesion training done throughout this period revealed positive results at the local level, as rights-holders report high levels of satisfaction with how their duty-bearers are handling disputes and addressing issues.

OUTCOME 2: PEACE STRUCTURES PREVENT AND TRANSFORM CONFLICT AFFECTING RIGHTS-HOLDERS

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
4	(none)	Afghanistan and Somalia	Mali and RPP

NCA works on strengthening formal and informal peace structures at all levels, making them inclusive and facilitating the creation of linkages among them. Central to this is enhancing non-violent local conflict management through Local Peace Structures (LPS), a crucial mechanism in NCA's Peacebuilding programme.

From 2020 to 2023, NCA provided training in conflict analysis, mediation, non-violent communication, and inclusion to more than 2,000 women, men, and youth in Afghanistan, Burundi, Mali, Somalia, and through the RPP. The training sessions emphasised the significance of including marginalised groups in conflict resolution. Those trained contributed to the establishment and strengthening of Local Peace Structures (LPS).

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The security context, approach methods and partners have impacted results over the past four years. Significantly, reporting from **Somalia** and **Mali** shows that, in the absence of a trusted traditional justice system, LPS is preferred in addressing more local conflicts. Even so, Mali remains below target in people's perception of the peace structures. In reaction to restrictions in **Afghanistan**, NCA shifted its LPS structure to be sensitive to new regulations, allowing the continued existence of a space for conflict mediation, reflected positively in midline surveys. Although overall results are 17% below target, the percentage of people with a positive view of the peace structure increased from 45 to 62 in the last year.

IMPACT

Since 2020, LPS in **Afghanistan**, **Mali**, and **Somalia** have addressed more than 250 conflicts annually, exceeding targets. The explanation lies in the fact that people rely on these structures in the absence of trusted government institutions. Typical conflicts addressed concern local and inter-ethnic disputes, issues related to natural resource management or provision of basic services. They may also include land demarcation disputes, population movement and inheritance. Even though the impact of the LPS

is at the local level, they play a significant role in communities where the government or other justice authorities are not reliable options for resolving conflicts.

In addition, such as in **Somalia**, the linking of LPS to national conflict early warning and response units has improved government responsiveness in preventing outbreaks of conflicts. While in **Afghanistan**, structures supported by NCA have continued to refer cases of local conflicts to the authorities as part of their cooperation systems put in place in 2022. In return, local authorities have trusted NCA-supported structures by referring disputes to them for resolution. A total of 123 cases have been referred.

OUTCOME 3: PEACE PROCESSES ARE MORE INCLUSIVE

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
4	(none)	Somalia	Afghanistan, South Sudan, and RPP

Peace processes that are not inclusive risk not generating the conditions for sustaining peace. Women and youth peace and security agendas are central to NCA's peacebuilding programme.

Between 2020 and 2023, NCA has supported over 3,500 women, youth, and other rights-holders from groups traditionally marginalised from peace processes with training on peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and their rights to participation in Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, and RPP.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Negative deviations from indicators were found in countries with strong clan- or community structures in place. In **South Sudan**, significantly increasing the inclusion of people living with disabilities in local or national peace processes has been challenging due to strong community stigmas. Adding to the challenge is the strong patriarchal structures which limit women's participation in local peace structures to be scaled up.

In **Afghanistan**, even though women's participation was constrained due to the ban, the changes in the security situation did not negatively affect the inclusion of youth in peacebuilding, where reports show a consistent trend since 2021.

IMPACT

For this global outcome, impact has largely been achieved on the local level, where the participation of youth and women in LPS was a priority. In **South Sudan**, the participation of women and youth played a significant role in community acceptance of dialogue outcomes despite the dominance of patriarchal structures and strong perceptions of youth as perpetrators of violence. Women and youth further mediated localised conflicts, which threatened to breach dialogue outcomes. For example, in Eastern and Warrap states, women and youth were included in mediation initiatives that contributed to reducing tensions between conflicting communities in Warrap.

NCA's Regional Peacebuilding programme in **Eastern Africa** has contributed to significant regional impacts, with increased female representation in national and regional decision-making bodies through women's participation in peace monitoring, job-shadowing opportunities and networks, and the establishment of a Youth Envoy to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Since 2018, NCA has worked closely with partners to advocate for the inclusion of women and youth in peace processes. This long-term advocacy, coupled with training and sensitisation efforts, has established the grounds for regional impact.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

The very first youth envoy, IGAD, was established through the RPP in 2023. This breakthrough would not have been possible without the systematic engagement with duty-bearers over time, in which rights-holders were able to advocate for youth inclusion in decision-making bodies.

Furthermore, NCA supported church partners in a total of 26 initiatives led by male religious actors to transform norms to protect women and girls from violence in Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, and Uganda.

In 2021, NCA **Mali** supported the alliance of Religious Leaders to create a shared advocacy paper focusing on peace, social unity, and environmental concerns. This effort demonstrated their dedication to collaborating across religious lines to combat extremism through dialogue and foster trust. At an official gathering, Muslim and Christian leaders presented the document to various authorities, including government ministries for Reconciliation and Peace, Religious Affairs, Women, and the Environment. The messages were then broadcast on television, radio, and other platforms, reaching a remarkable 10 million Malians in four different languages.

In 2022, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in **Palestine and Israel** (EAPPI) played an essential role in addressing the escalating violence in Israel and Palestine. Ecumenical Accompaniers, trusted by affected communities, gathered firsthand accounts of the conflict, which they shared internationally to advocate for policy change and promote justice and peace. These efforts have been crucial in holding duty-bearers accountable at a time of increasing violence and shrinking space for civil society.

Creating platforms for engagement between ethnic and religious groups has been an important strategy to build social cohesion in Eastern Africa. Three regional female faith mediators were involved in facilitating participation in the 3rd inter-Congolese dialogue, which aimed to resolve the violent conflict in Eastern **DRC**.

In 2023, the government of **South Sudan** reaffirmed its commitment to the 2018 peace agreement. This change would not have been possible without systematic engagement with the South Sudan Council of Churches, which facilitated the Pope's visit.



His Holiness Pope Francis visited South Sudan with an important message of hope and a impassioned plea for peace and forgiveness. Here together with NCA's Country Director in South Sudan, Bent Simonsen. Photo: The press office of the Pope



Checkpoint in Betlehem. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, reports from Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Mali and Eastern Africa point towards programme sustainability.

Reporting from Eastern Africa and Somalia points to higher degrees of sustainability achieved in the creation of LPS. In **Somalia**, NCA has supported the creation of LPS and assisted in the training of its members in conflict mediation, resolution, and inclusion of marginalised groups. As government judicial courts are absent or not functioning in many areas of Somalia, the LPS fill that gap. The increased use of the LPS shows that they are becoming trusted local institutions. This underlines the potential for sustainable peacebuilding through locally driven conflict resolution processes.

Common challenges that hinder sustainability can be observed where peacebuilding programmes operate within top-down structures. In **South Sudan**, the clan-based structure has made the inclusion of people living with disabilities challenging to pursue. In **Afghanistan**, government restrictions on women have affected NCA's ability to carry out training and workshops on the inclusion of women in peace processes. Although NCA and partners were able to adapt programming to conduct separate activities for women and by only having women educators for training, implementing these activities is vulnerable to the specific context in each area. Afghanistan demonstrates the complexities of implementing in volatile and restrictive environments where adaptability and community-specific approaches are crucial for sustainability. Fragile security conditions in Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali present continuous challenges to the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding programming.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Clan-based systems can constrain efforts to promote inclusivity and address underlying social divisions. More long-term strategies are needed to overcome these challenges effectively
- Investing in strengthening local peace structures is a valuable strategy, as it empowers and strengthens local community resilience



Nuns bring people together north of Kuajok in South Sudan to stop acts of violence. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

RESULTS CASE

RELIGIOUS LEADERS MOBILISED AGAINST RADICALISATION IN MALI

DAC SECTOR: 152.20 Civilian Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution

WHAT: NCA successfully supported the Alliance of Muslim and Christian religious leaders of Mali (ALRMC) in expanding its focus on health to include a mission to promote social cohesion, particularly religious tolerance. Over the past four years, this alliance has effectively contributed to appeasing religious intolerance and divisions in Mali.



Forum on the responsibility of religious leaders in consolidating peace and protecting the environment in the context of socio-political crises in Mali. Bamako, 22 October 2022. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Mali

WHY: Prior to 2019, NCA worked mainly on the resolution of local conflicts over resources in Mali. The country saw a dramatic increase in the influence of extremist religious groups between 2012 and 2019. Hate speech about Christians and moderate Islam became frequent in the public discourse of influential religious leaders, amplified through digital and traditional media. There was a need to mobilise national-level religious actors to promote religious tolerance.

HOW: In 2020, NCA facilitated an internal reflection in ALRMC on religious intolerance and the elaboration of a new action plan. Social cohesion and protection against violence soon became the heart of their mission. Through NCA's support, the religious leaders produced a report in 2021 highlighting Christian and Muslim theological messages for peaceful coexistence. These messages were disseminated in 2022 by Muslim and Christian leaders through joint sessions that reached more than 10,000 women and men in Koulikoro, Mopti, Gao, and Bamako.

Additionally, messages were aired on three TV channels and 18 local radio channels. In 2023, ALRMC continued its commitment by facilitating an online sensitisation campaign² about religious hate speech, aiming to contribute to critical digital literacy among youth. The campaign reached over 490,000 individuals, mainly men between 25 and 34 years.

PARTNER: Alliance of Muslim and Christian religious leaders of Mali (ALRMC)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Working with religious leaders was a strategic choice as religious leaders gained very high levels of public influence in the context of weakening state authorities
- Investing in networks and alliances through building their organisational capacities leads to greater sustainability and likelihood of success

SOURCES: Partner reports, Facebook statistics, and accounts from NCA staff



ALRMC used Facebook to broadcast videos about hate speech and responsible social media use. Screenshot from their Facebook site.

² https://www.facebook.com/people/Alliance-des-Leaders-Religieux-Musulmans-et-Chr%C3%A9tiens-du-Mali/61555526271034/?locale=fr_FR

RESULTS CASE

EAST-AFRICAN YOUTH GIVEN A VOICE IN PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES

DAC SECTOR: 152.20 Civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution

WHAT: In 2023, the first youth envoy to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was appointed, marking a significant milestone in youth representation in decision-making processes. The envoy will serve as a voice for youth in IGAD member states, advocate for their rights, and promote their participation.

WHY: Eastern Africa remains a region marked by persistent conflicts and constant risk of instability. Peace processes have been slow and fragile, with ceasefires frequently violated. Youth are typically seen as vulnerable to radicalisation and participation in violent conflicts. However, they represent a majority of the population and are significant in shaping the region's future. Although they play a pivotal role in advocating for peace, efforts remain local, with few avenues for taking part in official decision-making.

HOW: NCA and its leading partner in Eastern Africa, the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), have built the capacity of young women and men over the years to increase the inclusion of youth and other marginalised groups in peace processes. NCA regards this as an absolute necessity for sustainable peace.

The achievement of the youth envoy to IGAD is a result of advocacy efforts carried out by the youth-led organisation International Centre for Peace, Human Rights and Development in Africa (IPHRD-Africa). NCA and the partner have enhanced youth with mediation, dialogue, and negotiation skills. Space has been created for interaction between youth and decision-making bodies.

In collaboration with another partner, ACCORD, NCA provided stipends for youth to participate in a job-shadowing programme with IGAD, which exposed them to mediation in practice. By 2023, five young women and men had completed the six-month programme and were placed with various departments of IGAD. This experience has provided a foundation for them to advance to meaningful roles within their communities. It was also essential in advocacy efforts towards representation at IGAD, culminating in the establishment of a youth envoy.

PARTNERS: ACCORD, International Centre for Peace, Human Rights and Development in Africa (IPHRD-Africa), Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Systematically building the skills of young women and men will bring changes to local communities and enhance overall reach and impact over time

SOURCES: NCA and partner reports, NCA observation



Youth in Action Training in Nairobi. Photo: Kefe Innocent/Norwegian Church Aid

“Would I say that the RPP has positively impacted my life? Yes! I became an accredited member of the Network of African Women Mediators (FEMWISE-Africa) and a member of the Young Women Mediators’ network. RPP has created for me the opportunity to be part of the job-shadowing initiative with the IGAD-MSU office in Djibouti, a platform through which I strengthened my capacity for mediation and have been able to replicate knowledge and skills.”

Audrey Adhiambo, Young Women Mediators Network

CLIMATE SMART ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (CSEE)



IMPACT STATEMENT: Youth, men and women live empowered and resilient lives free from poverty

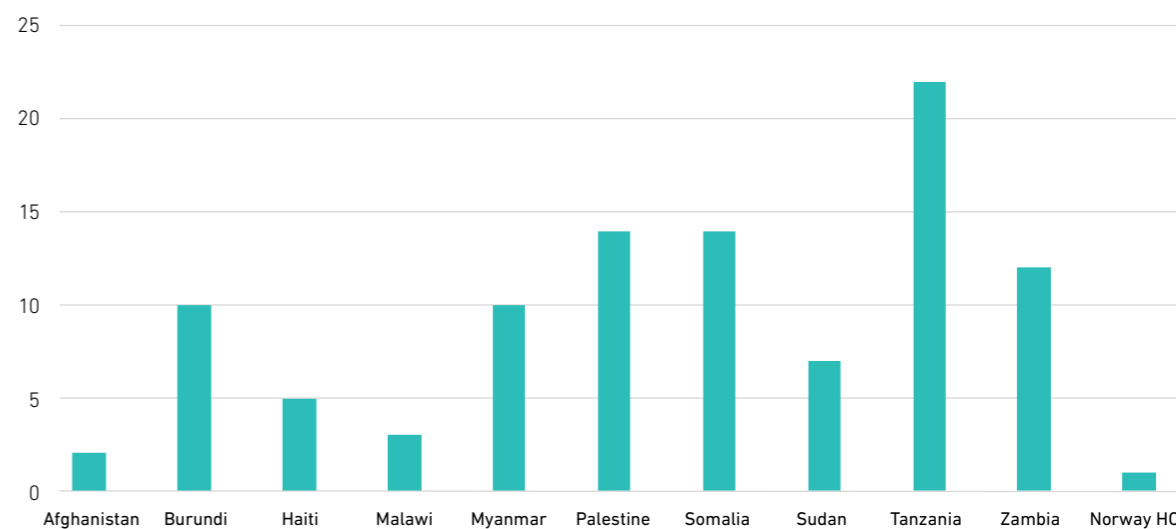
COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: Burundi*, Haiti, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia



Demonstration and training area for climate-smart agriculture in Zambia. Drip irrigation powered by solar energy. Photo: Cecilie Waldo/Norwegian Church Aid

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021. Results were on track up to that point.

FIGURE 8: CSEE 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: WOMEN, MEN AND YOUTH SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
6	Zambia	Burundi*, Haiti, Myanmar, Somalia, and Tanzania	(none)

The programme aims to empower local communities economically by enhancing entrepreneurial skills, facilitating access to markets, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. The programme's multifaceted approach highlights the critical intersection of environmental management and economic empowerment in building resilient communities. The focus on agroecological practices and sustainable agricultural methods is a direct response to the challenges posed by climate change.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

NCA's CSEE programme has been significantly impacted by global and regional challenges. Climate change poses a significant challenge, affecting agricultural productivity and resource availability. The need for resilient agricultural practices has become more critical as unpredictable weather patterns, such as prolonged droughts or excessive rainfall, threaten food security and livelihoods. To maintain crop yields and water management systems, the programme focused on sustainable, climate-smart agricultural techniques is crucial as a response to varying climate patterns.

COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine influenced the programme's operations and outcomes in various ways. While the direct impacts of the war in Ukraine may be less pronounced, the global economic repercussions, including increased food prices and supply shortages, have indirectly affected them. Many countries rely on agricultural imports such as fertilisers, whose prices have soared due to the war. This situation has made it more expensive to maintain or expand agricultural practices.

* The Burundi programme was phased out in 2021. Results were on track up to that point.



Drip irrigation in Tanzania.
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

IMPACT

The CSEE programme has been instrumental in fostering sustainable development and economic empowerment in programme areas from 2020 to 2023. It has effectively integrated climate-smart agricultural practices with economic empowerment strategies, such as linking producers to local markets and off-takers to ensure stable and decent income. More than 40,000 women, men and youth have significantly increased their income in this period. The results demonstrate resilience, sustainability, and community empowerment through focusing on capacity building, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women and single parents, and leveraging local leadership.

In **Zambia**, NCA and partners introduced simplified and effective agricultural techniques such as drip irrigation to more than 5,700 smallholder food producers, significantly increasing their resilience and food security, especially in flood-affected areas. Smallholder producers from communities that participated in the programme demonstrated higher levels of resilience from climate-induced vulnerabilities such as floods and droughts compared to their counterparts. It also successfully promoted wealth creation and women's empowerment through economic participation and involvement in decision-making. The programme was able to promote wealth creation among nearly 18,000 smallholder producers and entrepreneurs who demonstrated a significant increase in their income levels over the period. One of the major drivers of wealth creation was the savings- and loan methodology.

In **Haiti**, 220 marginalised women and men have been supported in establishing small businesses and farms. Partners have also facilitated the establishment of mutual savings- and loan organisations to support income circulation and ensure access to loans at favourable rates.

In **Tanzania**, close to 2,000 production groups with formal agreements were established in the period, demonstrating strengthened market positions. Through NCA and partners' outreach, 45,000 farmers have been enrolled in empowerment initiatives, underscoring its extensive reach and potential to transform rural economies.

OUTCOME 2: JOBS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE CREATED FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
4	Myanmar and Tanzania	(none)	Palestine and Somalia

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The economic downturn caused by COVID-19 has made it more difficult for entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses.

IMPACT

In **Somalia**, despite challenging conditions, NCA and partners trained and engaged close to 1,000 young people in technical and entrepreneurial skills in the period. Their acquired skills in trades such as tailoring, solar installations and carpentry have significantly contributed to local economic development and nation-building.

NCA and partners in **Tanzania** have doubled their target in reducing youth unemployment over the period. As a result of initiatives by NCA's partners, close to 400 young women and men are now engaged in various agribusinesses. Most of the programme initiatives offer employment opportunities replicable to various areas, increasing chances for more youth to get employed even after the programme ends.

In 2022, NCA reported good results in the high degree of employment documented among youth who graduated from vocational training centres supported by NCA in **Palestine**. The graduates had gained skills in a variety of trades. Amidst a deteriorating economic environment in the West Bank and Gaza, 77% of the graduates were able to increase their income through employment or running their own businesses. The bombing of Gaza since October 2023 has sadly ruined the vocational training centres. There is hope that the skills the young graduates gained can again be used when the time comes to rebuild.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

The strengthening of civil society, particularly through the engagement of faith-based actors, has played a pivotal role in achieving the programme's results, as seen in the way entities have contributed significantly to the empowerment of local communities.

Faith-based civil society actors have enhanced community acceptance and participation due to their unique position within communities and extensive networks. They have been instrumental in transitioning communities towards sustainable agricultural practices in, for example, **Zambia**.

Similarly, in **Haiti**, faith-based organisations have been key in setting up mutual savings- and loan organisations, which play a crucial role in providing financial services to marginalised groups. Fostering a circulating income within the community and providing loans at favourable rates, they are significantly empowering women and other vulnerable groups by boosting their economic participation and decision-making power.

NCA's faith-based actors have offered capacity-building in financial management and sustainable farming techniques, equipping community members, especially women and youth, with the skills necessary to increase their incomes sustainably. These initiatives promote resilience and long-term sustainability, ensuring lasting benefits beyond the project lifespan.

Overall, civil society's engagement, particularly faith-based actors, in the programme has not only facilitated the achievement of increased income among small-scale producers but has also ensured that these achievements echo community values and are sustainable over the long term. They exemplify a model of development that is inclusive, participatory, and responsive to the needs and potentials of local communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the programme presents a multifaceted picture of resilience, adaptability, and ongoing challenges. Country reports reveal key trends, patterns, and strategic responses aimed at overcoming sustainability barriers in diverse socio-economic and environmental contexts. The programme emphasises the role of community and faith leaders in understanding and addressing local needs, which is pivotal for long-term sustainability. Strengthening local institutions and leadership, as seen with the focus on training and empowering community leaders and entrepreneurs, helps embed the programme within local governance structures, enhancing sustainability.

A common theme in the programme's execution in all countries is the necessity of adapting to local and global crises, including political instability, economic downturns, and environmental changes. There is a clear emphasis on integrating the programme's objectives with local cultural and economic practices. In **Tanzania** and **Zambia**, the establishment of production groups and engagement in agricultural innovation hubs align with local food security and economic sustainability needs.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Dependence on external funding and global market conditions can make local enterprises vulnerable to economic downturns. This is particularly challenging in areas where programmes aim to foster independence and self-sustainability
- Applying an iterative learning approach, including monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of strategies based on ongoing assessments, helps address emerging challenges and integrate successful practices into future planning. Ensuring that rights-holders remain engaged and can sustain the initiatives once external support is phased out is a challenge, especially under adverse conditions
- Scaling successful interventions and integrating them into broader markets is a challenge, as the viability of agricultural innovation hubs depends on their ability to adapt to market demands and absorb produced goods

Through its partners, Norwegian Church Aid has empowered small-scale producers and service providers like Sacdiyo Adan Ibrahim. She is now the driving force behind the thriving mini-market in Kadasa, Somalia. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Somalia



RESULTS CASE

FISHING NETS TO GARDENS: AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION IMPROVES NUTRITION IN ZAMBIA

DAC SECTOR: 430.72 Household food security programmes

WHAT: The story of the Samfya District in Luapula is one of resilience and innovation. By embracing agricultural diversification, the community is not just addressing immediate food and economic challenges but also planting the seeds for a sustainable future. The farmers are transforming their once mono-focused economy into a thriving, diverse agricultural hub.

WHY: Samfya is traditionally known for its robust fishing industry. Yet, this community faced significant challenges. Heavily reliant on vegetable imports from other regions, residents were burdened by high commodity prices, making essential nutrients scarce. Meals were predominantly carbohydrate and protein-based, with a notable lack of vital vitamins, posing a serious threat to their food and nutritional security. Moreover, the community's economic stability was jeopardised annually during the government-enforced fish ban from December to March, which was intended to promote fish breeding. With their primary source of income curtailed, the community struggled to meet other household needs, further exacerbating their vulnerability. Additionally, fish stocks in Lake Bangweulu were dwindling due to unsustainable fishing methods, threatening the long-term viability of their traditional livelihood.

HOW: In response to these multifaceted challenges, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) introduced the Micro Investing Drip Irrigation model of farming, a novel concept in the area. Initially met with scepticism, the project gradually gained traction as a pioneering group of local women and men saw the potential for change. Through targeted training and support at ADRA's demonstration plot in Samfya, the farmers adopted advanced agricultural practices that transformed their relationship with the land. This shift bolstered local food security and created new economic opportunities. As crops flourished, the demand for locally grown vegetables increased, providing the community with an alternative source of income, especially crucial during the fish ban months.

PARTNER: Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Diversifying economic activities and not solely relying on mono-agriculture can reduce the risks associated with any single sector and enhance economic resilience and nutrition

SOURCES: Partner reports

"Thanks to this project, we grow a variety of vegetables right here. Not only do we have enough for our families, but we're also able to sell the surplus. It's uplifting to see our community thrive from the soil we once thought was only good for fishing."

Small-scale farmer



Packaging vegetables. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Zambia

FAITH-BASED CLIMATE ACTION (FBCA)



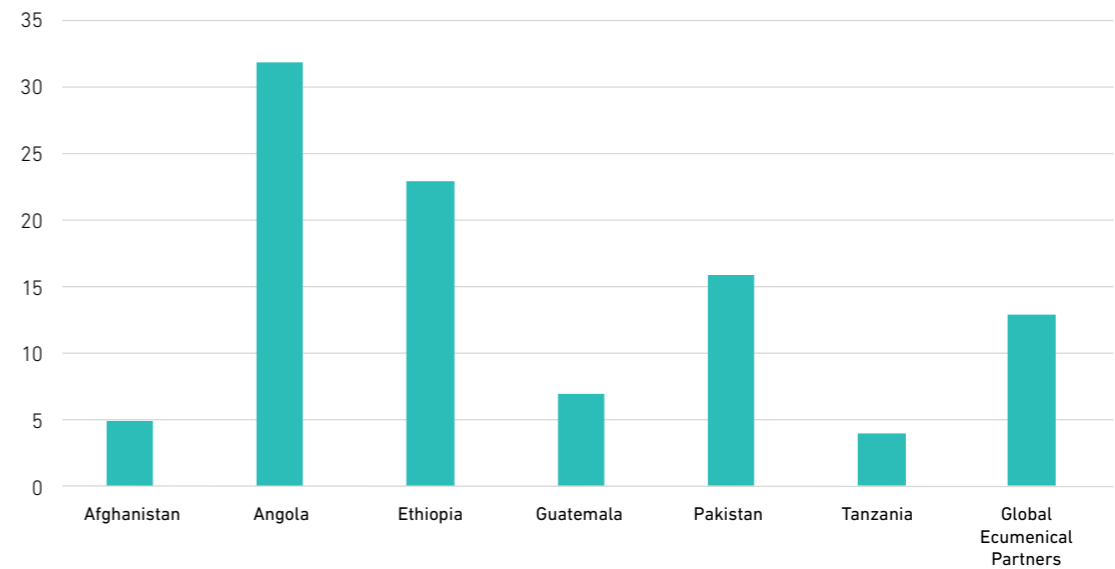
GLOBAL IMPACT STATEMENT: Communities have strengthened resilience and adaptive capacities

COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: Angola, Ethiopia, Global Ecumenical Partners, Guatemala, and Pakistan



Quranic and biblical gardens in Pakistan tackle climate change and promote social cohesion. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Pakistan

FIGURE 9: FBCA 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: COMMUNITIES INCREASE THEIR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
4	Angola and Ethiopia	Guatemala and Pakistan	(none)

The outcome covers various initiatives across the implementing countries, including awareness-raising and sensitisation campaigns on climate change issues, climate-smart food production, access to water, tree planting, rehabilitation of degraded lands and catchments, early-warning systems, and disaster risk management. Between 2020 and 2023, NCA's FBCA programme has been instrumental in supporting 137 communities in Angola, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Pakistan to increase their resilience to climate change.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The global results show all countries meeting or exceeding their targets. For example, increased funding enabled NCA and its partners in **Angola** to expand project interventions to other regions. At the same time, practical implementation strategies and substantial community interest in **Ethiopia** led to the expansion of activities to additional communities. Overall, widespread community support and buy-in were achieved when community members were actively engaged throughout the process in a participatory approach. Moreover, projects that adopted a holistic approach addressing several aspects of climate resilience were particularly successful. By combining interventions such as early-warning systems, disaster risk management, sustainable land management, land and catchment rehabilitation, climate-smart agriculture, community engagement and awareness raising, FBCA projects in **Ethiopia**, **Guatemala**, and **Pakistan** offered comprehensive solutions that resonated with the diverse needs of local communities.

However, it is important to note that the results and levels of resilience varied across project areas. Specifically, communities in Seharti Samere in **Ethiopia** faced significant challenges due to the war in Tigray from 2020 to 2022, which negatively impacted their resilience and ability to implement certain interventions effectively.

IMPACT

After four years of implementation, the impact is seen primarily at the individual/household and local/community level and occasionally at the district/provincial level. In **Angola**, the construction of 14 water cisterns has dramatically improved the lives of people in remote communities who did not previously have access to water during prolonged periods of cyclical droughts. Ensuring safe access to clean water has significantly reduced the time women and young girls spend searching for water. Similarly, households in **Ethiopia** and **Guatemala** have enhanced their resilience to climate change and extreme weather events by adopting climate-smart agriculture and agroecological practices, including crop diversification and water and soil conservation techniques. This has secured self-consumption needs and improved food security for individual farmers and households while providing additional income through surplus production.

Sustainable land management practices have been successfully introduced to communities in **Ethiopia** and **Guatemala** to address water scarcity and minimise land degradation. As a result of the promoted measures, NCA and its partners have facilitated the rehabilitation of degraded land and catchments, which has reduced soil erosion and run-off and improved soil fertility and moisture levels, vegetation cover, and infiltration rates. For example, spring discharge for small-scale agricultural irrigation and household use has doubled in Ankober woreda in **Ethiopia**. Moreover, establishing 15 early-warning systems, disaster management committees, and Community Care Coalitions in Ethiopia and community risk reduction committees in Guatemala have also significantly strengthened the resilience of local communities, as they can now take proactive measures to protect lives and livelihoods.

Linking climate-friendly actions to religious teachings has proven to be a successful strategy for motivating and mobilising communities in **Pakistan** and **Ethiopia**. Through research studies, training, and capacity building, NCA equipped 415 faith actors in **Pakistan** with the knowledge and skills to lead climate action. They delivered 142 sermons in Churches, Mosques, and Hindu temples and reached more than 25,000 people on the impact of climate change and the role of faith communities in building resilience. Creating Quranic and Biblical Gardens in Peshawar’s Muslim and Christian seminaries also helped sensitise faith communities about the importance of trees for climate resilience. This resulted in establishing tree nurseries and planting more than 12,000 trees in the target areas to combat deforestation, erosion, and landslides.

OUTCOME 2: RIGHTS-HOLDERS HOLD DUTY-BEARERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
5	(none)	Global Ecumenical Partners, Angola, and Pakistan	Ethiopia and Guatemala

Initiatives under this outcome have worked towards increasing community resilience, addressing climate-induced loss and damage, implementing early-warning systems and disaster risk reduction, securing safe access to water, engaging faith actors in climate change action, and advocating and mobilising for climate justice.

Between 2020–2023, a total of 137 advocacy actions were taken by rights-holders to hold duty-bearers accountable for climate action and protect vulnerable communities from the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events like droughts and floods.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The global results show a deviation of -36%. The underachievement is mainly due to COVID-19, security challenges, and government dynamics affecting the ability to carry out advocacy initiatives. In **Angola**, bank bureaucracy and changes in government legislation on funds from abroad led to late disbursement of funds to partners, which delayed the start of project activities. At the same time,

security issues and priority shifts in local authorities inhibited advocacy activities in **Ethiopia**. Additionally, reduced funding for faith-based climate action forced **Ethiopia** to prioritise the Ankober and Tarmaber districts over the vast Negele Arsi district, which meant that planned advocacy activities in this region were not completed. Advocacy was also affected when it did not align with government policies and agendas, which reduced openness to discuss the issues – for example, in the case of **Guatemala**, where public policies do not traditionally recognise the land ownership and rights of Indigenous communities. COVID-19 restrictions on meetings, gatherings, and project activities also contributed to deviations between targets and results. While some advocacy activities took place through digital meetings, face-to-face meetings are crucial to developing common platforms and connecting rights-holders and civil society with government authorities and other duty-bearers.

Despite these setbacks, the advocacy actions realised significantly raised awareness, fostered dialogue, and influenced decision-makers to act on climate-related issues. Notably, including government authorities in project activities and establishing platforms for constructive dialogue has proved to be a successful strategy for gaining the confidence and trust of duty-bearers.

IMPACT

Impacts for outcome two have primarily been achieved at the district/provincial level, although also at the local/community level and national level. In **Guatemala**, local and indigenous communities raised public awareness of their models for collective forest management through forums, radio programmes, and workshops with government officials. As a result of their engagement and advocacy initiatives, 14 communities have been recognised as owners of their ancestral territories and obtained official certifications after successfully demonstrating their historical and continued contribution to the sustainable management of forests – a significant achievement in the political context of Guatemala.

In **Angola**, NCA and its partners successfully influenced government authorities to respond to the impacts of cyclical droughts by supporting the construction of the water cisterns and keeping them filled during prolonged periods of drought. NCA also made significant progress in promoting climate change action in **Ethiopia**, where NCA and its faith-based partners established and strengthened one national and two regional platforms on Interreligious Climate Advocacy and Action. These platforms proved to be an effective mechanism for mobilising faith actors and communities and played a crucial role in influencing duty-bearers to act on climate change and environmental protection issues. Among other things, they mobilised entire communities to participate in tree-planting campaigns, conducted panel discussions with duty-bearers and faith leaders on nature conservation and illegal logging and contributed to several policy recommendations currently awaiting endorsement. They were also instrumental in getting communities, village leaders, and district-level government to work together to rehabilitate 4,200 hectares of land and enabled the acknowledgement of the importance of faith-based initiatives towards the protection of nature.

Coordination with government authorities on climate change has provided a conducive environment for joint climate action with civil society and faith actors. After consistent lobbying, project partners, civil society organisations, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Climate Action Network (KPCAN) and Sindh Climate Action Network (SCAN) were able to convince government authorities in **Pakistan** to develop climate change policies in the KP and Sindh provinces. The networks formed under NCA’s project played a crucial role in this and were called upon by the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environmental Protection Agency to review the policy drafts and provide feedback and recommendations for improvement – all of which were accepted. NCA and its partners were also able to influence the KP Forest Department to initiate a mass tree-planting campaign to educate local communities about the importance of trees, which resulted in the planting of 75,000 trees.



Imams Sheh Shemsu Abamecha and Sheh Aba Jebel are raising awareness about climate change adaptation, and planting trees outside the Rahima Messid mosque in Ethiopia. Photo: Håvard Bjelland, Norwegian Church Aid

NCA also strengthened the rights of poor and vulnerable people through international advocacy and cooperation with its **Global Ecumenical Partners**. Working multi-laterally in global alliances like the ACT Alliance's Climate Justice group, NCA has focused on bringing the perspective and priorities of the global South to political negotiations and decision-makers in the North through a local-to-global advocacy strategy, where churches, member organisations, and activists at national levels come together through NCA's networks to coordinate and amplify their advocacy at international events and platforms. A key achievement was the development of the Loss and Damage Fund during COP27 in 2022, which marked a significant breakthrough towards achieving global climate justice.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society and faith-based actors have been instrumental in ensuring the sustainability of FBCA project activities. For example, NCA developed and strengthened five provincial networks in **Pakistan**, including KPCAN, SCAN, Faith Actors' Climate Education Network (FACE), Climate Resilient Network Peshawar, and Climate Resilient Network Swat. The networks, which represent various stakeholders like government departments, universities, faith actors, civil society, and women activists, are now acknowledged and accepted by the authorities as essential resources for support on climate change issues. The networks played a crucial role in developing the KP and Sindh climate change policies, which provide frameworks for government action and influence decision-making and resource allocation, and now serve as strong voices for advocacy on climate change mitigation and adaptation in KP and Sindh.

NCA recognises the importance of community engagement, as the direct involvement of communities and local leaders ensures a genuine process that respects and follows the communities' forms of organisation. In **Guatemala**, communities have formed forestry committees with representation from their leaders, who monitor forest management and protection activities and demonstrate the importance of these community-led forestry management models to government authorities. Similarly, NCA and its faith-based partners in **Ethiopia** have brought together and trained local communities, civil society organisations, faith actors, and duty-bearers through the Interreligious Climate Advocacy and Action platforms and Community Care Coalitions to foster knowledge-sharing, collective decision-making, and coordinated efforts to address climate-related challenges and empower local communities. Due to these trainings, more community members, faith groups, and local governments participate in climate and nature protection initiatives.

Leveraging faith and working with faith leaders has been vital to securing community buy-in and engagement in **Pakistan** and **Ethiopia**. Acting as local resources for raising awareness about the importance of climate action and environmental protection from a religious perspective, they can sensitise local communities through their sermons and public appearances, even after project completion.

Faith-based climate change initiatives have also helped promote intra- and inter-faith dialogue in those two countries. In **Pakistan**, climate action—which is not considered a controversial topic—has served as an entry point for conversation on more sensitive issues like minority rights, peacebuilding, and cooperation across faiths. Due to the joint FBCA initiatives, NCA has observed visible improvements in the relations between different faith communities in Pakistan.

SUSTAINABILITY

Generally, a high degree of sustainability of results has been observed across the FBCA programme, mainly where communities and authorities have been directly involved in the processes. A sense of ownership and commitment has been instilled among the communities by actively involving community members and fostering a participatory approach. This heightened engagement increases the chances of sustaining the adopted practices and initiatives beyond the programme's lifespan. Similarly, adopting climate-smart agricultural practices, drought- and disease-resistant crop varieties, and sustainable land management practices have demonstrated tangible benefits such as improved crop yields, food security, and income generation. These direct positive impacts provide solid incentives for communities to continue applying these practices.

Working with partners who have a high level of acceptance by both communities and duty-bearers has also been essential for ensuring the sustainability of results, particularly for advocacy initiatives. For example, establishing the Interreligious Climate Advocacy and Action platforms in **Ethiopia** has given faith actors and communities an institutionalised mechanism to continue advocating for climate action. Moreover, successful advocacy actions that lead to tangible outcomes, such as the rehabilitation of degraded lands, tree-planting campaigns, and increased awareness among duty-bearers, can serve as motivators for sustaining and expanding these efforts. They have also established channels of communication and collaboration with duty-bearers such as local authorities and decision-makers, and these connections can be leveraged for continued dialogue and influence on climate-related issues beyond the project's lifespan.

Similarly, in **Guatemala**, drawing on the experience, technical expertise, and commitment of involved stakeholders, including agronomists, anthropologists, Indigenous leaders, small-scale farmers, academics, and lawyers, has greatly contributed to the sustainability of the community model.

Finally, the emphasis on capacity building, knowledge sharing, and dialogue has equipped rights-holders with the skills and resources to continue implementing resilience-building activities and advocacy efforts. For example, the 18 Community Groups (CGs) that NCA and its partners in **Pakistan** established in Peshawar and Umerkot now serve as joint platforms for promoting climate resilience and social cohesion. With volunteer members from different segments of society – including women, men, youth, faith actors, civil society representatives, journalists, and lawyers – the inclusive CGs act as climate change agents in their communities. Through extensive capacity building and local resource mobilisation, the CGs are now operating independently and have been enabled to train women on making energy-efficient cook stoves and start initiatives on kitchen gardening, waste recycling, and tree planting campaigns in schools and religious seminaries.

Common challenges that pose risks to sustainability include significant changes in socio-economic situations, repressive dynamics from authorities, political instability, and conflicts. All countries are also vulnerable to impacts from climate change and extreme weather events like droughts and floods. As a result, the country's programmes are increasingly integrating disaster risk management and involving communities in participatory assessments of climate risks and disasters. For example, **Ethiopia** and **Guatemala** are supporting communities by developing adaptation and preparedness plans. Finally, the availability of long-term financial resources, technical support, and continued government commitment to climate resilience initiatives may influence the degree of sustainability achieved across the programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Working interfaith has proven to be an effective approach for best results, and this model has also fostered collaboration in other programmes
- Establishing a sense of ownership is possible if you involve both communities and authorities directly in the process

The diocese of Quiche, one of Norwegian Church Aid's partners, trains farmers like Luis Zarax to adapt to climate change by introducing other vegetables such as potatoes and broccoli to their farms. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/ Norwegian Church Aid



RESULTS CASE

SEEDS OF HOPE: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES MANAGING FORESTS IN GUATEMALA

DAC SECTOR: 410.30 Biodiversity

WHAT: Indigenous communities are collectively protecting 2,000 hectares of natural forest in Guatemala. The sustainable community forestry model pioneered by NCA's long-term partner, Utz Ché, has yielded significant benefits for both the environment and communities. Local community organisations effectively manage forests, safeguard water sources, and facilitate ecosystem service regeneration. Positive impacts have been generated for more than 300 communities in the lower parts of the forests' watersheds.

Utz Che's contribution to addressing biodiversity loss and climate change was internationally recognised when the network, representing 200,000 people (90% Indigenous), received UNDP's Equatorial Prize in 2020. The state's PROBOSQUE forest incentive programme has also officially recognised 200 hectares of forest and allocated funds to support this unique collective and community-led forest management approach.

WHY: Indigenous communal lands in western Guatemala are important water recharge areas for the country and habitats for several endemic and endangered species. However, this area is under severe threat from a multitude of factors including agricultural expansion, illegal logging, forest fires, pests and diseases, mining, and land tenure disputes. These threats negatively impact the quality and amount of fertile soil, water recharge zones, and forest biodiversity and increase the vulnerability of both forests and people. The government's environmental and land regulations pose additional challenges, as they do not recognise Indigenous communities' vital contributions to the sustainable management of Guatemala's forests.

HOW: In response to these multifaceted challenges, the NCA's partner Utz Che' established a school for community forestry, training leaders from 40 Indigenous and local communities in technical forest management, political advocacy, and the importance of recovering and applying ancestral knowledge. Community forestry committees watch over and instruct communities in activities to protect the forests. They have been strengthened through extensive seed collection and management capacity building. This has led to the establishment of 12 seed banks and tree nurseries and the collection of 480,000 seeds from

different native forest species, used to regenerate 400 hectares of degraded land cleared of forest. This is helping to reduce soil erosion and protect water sources for hundreds of communities downstream.

Utz Che's has advocated and provided space for consultations between Indigenous communities, academic institutions, international organisations, and government authorities. Their initiatives have had positive impacts on all levels. A significant achievement was setting up an Indigenous technical commission that influenced municipalities for legal recognition of local ancestral land. At the national level, Utz Che' engaged with government authorities to advocate for the inclusion of their collective forest model in the national PROBOSQUE forest incentive programme. The Latin-American association ACICAFOC used Utz Che's model as an example of best practice in its international and national advocacy.

PARTNER: Utz Che' (Good Tree) Community Forestry Association

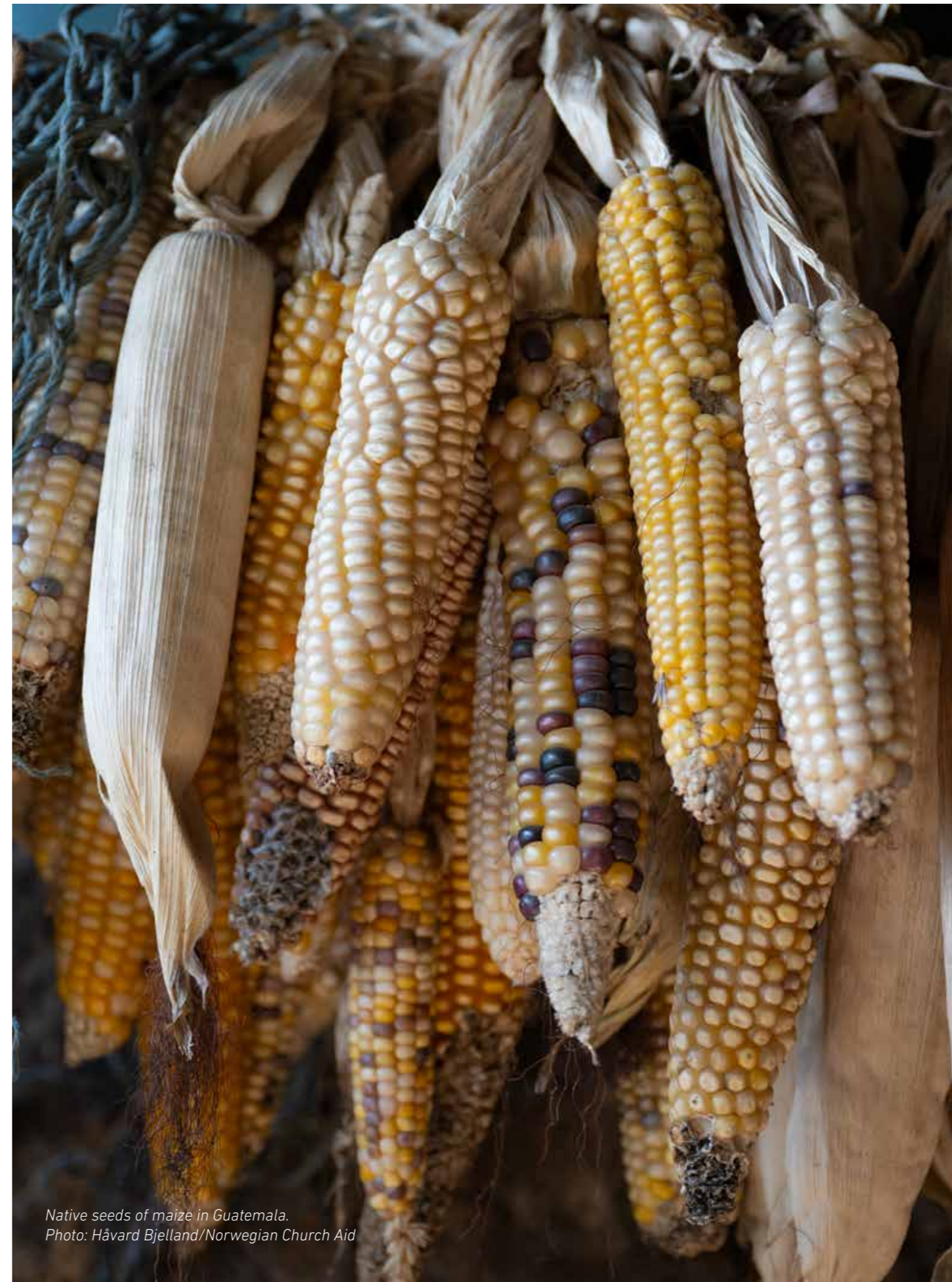
LESSONS LEARNED:

- Building community capacity to use technology such as drones and camera traps is important for improving forest biological monitoring.
- For greater recognition of Indigenous contributions to forest management, it could be beneficial to include public officials in training programmes on collective resource management. Refining strategies to engage more public officials and institutions could enhance Utz Che's social auditing and advocacy role

SOURCES: Partner annual reports, monitoring visits, and interviews



Luis Alvarado Xuruc, administrator at the seed bank, with a selection of native seeds. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid



Native seeds of maize in Guatemala. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

FIGHTING INEQUALITY (FI)



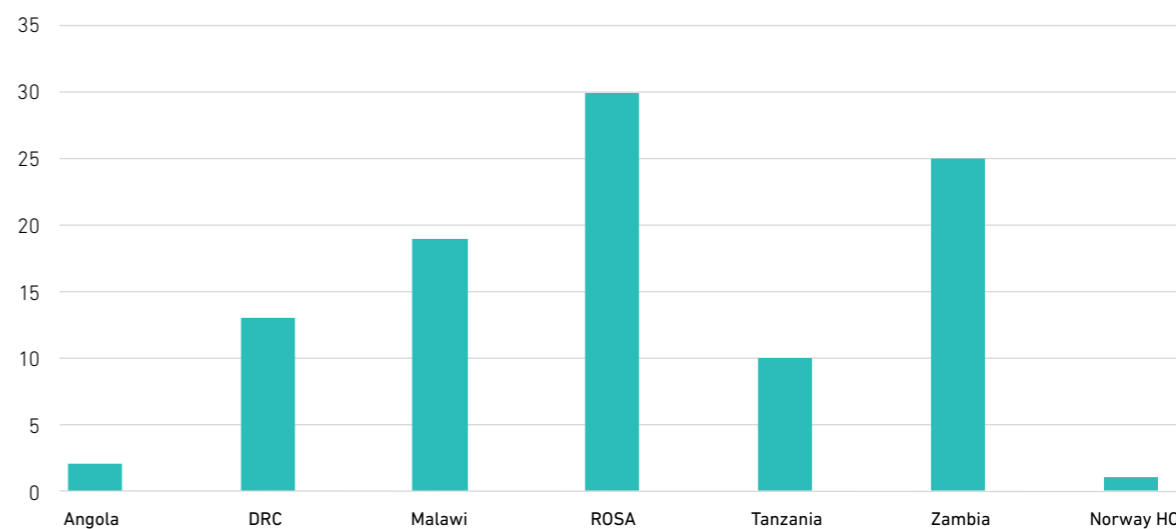
IMPACT STATEMENT: Fair and equitable financing and redistribution of resources across society

COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL OUTCOMES: DRC, Malawi, Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme, Tanzania, and Zambia



Together with partner organisations NCA works to document the effects mining has on local communities and to empower rights-holders to engage with and hold local government representatives and mining companies accountable on environmental and human rights. Mining in Karonga, Malawi. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

FIGURE 10: FIGHTING INEQUALITY 2020–2023 – PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS



Note: Some additional countries may appear in the table, as they report on programme outputs but not on the global outcomes.

PROGRAMME IMPACT ANALYSIS

OUTCOME 1: DUTY-BEARERS ARE INFLUENCED TO INCREASE FINANCE FOR AND SPENDING TO REDUCE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
5	Zambia	Malawi, ROSA, and Tanzania	DRC

This outcome has both a global and local perspective on inequality, strengthening partners to demand increased finance for development. NCA and partners address debt injustice, tax avoidance, and public spending on social services.

All countries have increased their influence on duty-bearers overall over the four-year period. DRC is slightly below the aggregated targets, but compared to where the programme was four years ago, NCA notes a very positive trajectory that demonstrates a foundation for continued engagement and potential for reaching the goals.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

All countries have shown significant progress during the project period, and most are achieving or overachieving the set goals. DRC appears below target on both subgoals and is not on track to reach its goals. The main reason for this is that DRC initiated their programme under the current strategy in 2020, and it takes time to yield advocacy results. The difficult political and security situation in DRC has also contributed to the underachievement.

IMPACT

The impact of this programme is seen on both national and global levels, where countries report that there is an increased level of influence towards duty-bearers now, compared to 2020. Advocacy interventions have reached a level where project recommendations have been adopted and passed into law, and the programme has contributed to several examples of policy change. On a national level, the advocacy initiative started by NCA and partners in 2016 finally led to the passing of the Universal

Health Coverage bill in **Tanzania** in 2023. The new law will ensure that everyone gets access to treatment, healthcare, hospitals and medicines, including the 15.8 million Tanzanians who are estimated to be poor (see results case).

As a result of NCA's partners' advocacy efforts and strategic dialogue with duty-bearers, public commitment and action in documented in **DRC**. Provincial ministers, EU deputies, and civil society are increasingly addressing challenges related to the mining sector. Initiatives that have led to this shift, include advocacy towards responsible mineral sourcing, conflict resolution, and equitable income sharing. Authorities have publicly supported reforms, defended issues, and committed resources, indicating a positive impact on political practices and resource allocation to combat poverty and inequality in targeted areas.

Over the past four years, the government in **Zambia** has increased budgetary allocations and spending to key social sectors that have the highest impact on reducing poverty and inequality. Allocations to the Education, Health, and Agricultural sectors have more than doubled. NCA and partners have directly contributed towards this change, by engaging civil society in advocacy. There is also some level of political will and commitment from the current government to continue engaging with civil society.

NCA has spearheaded efforts to orchestrate national and global mobilisation, enhance capacity and advocate for efforts for a UN Tax Convention, with a special focus on empowering faith actors and youth to engage with civil society and contribute to tax justice advocacy at both local and global levels. Nationally, NCA and its partners have contributed to strengthening civil society platforms to advocate for a UN Tax Convention effectively. For **global** outreach, NCA also mobilised its global faith-based networks, such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance. The LWF General Assembly and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) General Assembly adopted resolutions with commitments to advocate for a UN Tax convention in 2023. The potential to gain even wider attention is there, as LWF represents 77 million Christians in 99 countries, and AACC represents more than 200 million Christians in 43 African countries.

OUTCOME 2: RIGHTS-HOLDERS HOLD DUTY-BEARERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR JUST RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

TOTAL	ABOVE TARGET (> 20%)	ON TRACK	BELOW TARGET (< 20%)
5	ROSA, Tanzania, and Zambia	Malawi	DRC

NCA's commitment to just resource governance is built on more than a decade of engagement in making public resources benefit common citizens and not only enrich those who are already wealthy. NCA and partners focus on strengthening rights-holders' capacity to know about their rights and empowering them to hold private and public actors accountable. Initiatives towards this goal include social accountability monitoring (such as public budget tracking), support for communities affected by extractive industries, and facilitating dialogue arenas for citizens and duty-bearers to address human rights and development.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Three out of five countries have overachieved compared to the targets. This is partially due to the difficulties in strategically predicting and realistically setting targets within the project timeframe. However, one important trend to highlight in this programme is that in all countries, establishing safe spaces for dialogue has enabled communities to influence the development of private companies' corporate social responsibility strategies. NCA partners have also contributed to policy changes for just resource governance at national levels.

IMPACT

Through the programme, individuals and mining communities have been trained to document shortfalls of public service delivery and mining operations' impact on their communities. They have been empowered to use evidence and engage duty-bearers to foster positive change.

Despite reluctance from mining companies to create real, meaningful, and lasting change, there are several examples of community pressure leading to change for communities affected by mining. These include cleaning polluted water and ensuring economic compensation as NCA's partner in **Malawi** was successful in advocating for corporate responsibility to respect human rights and improve the livelihood of the communities surrounding the Njereza Cement Company. As a result of the advocacy efforts, the cement company has now constructed a clinic and supplied other social necessities to the neighbouring towns of their extractive activities.

As a result of efforts by NCA's partner in **Zambia** to conduct training and hold meetings with community structures to strengthen their capacity to hold duty-bearers accountable, community members were able to address duty-bearers and ensure an addition was built to their community school. Other partners have contributed to the review of the national pension scheme amendment bill, recently enacted after persistent advocacy. The bill presents a legal framework for Zambian citizens to request and obtain information from public institutions.

Partners have used both face-to-face and digital approaches to mobilise rights-holders. One example is an app developed as part of the #Take Action campaign in **Zimbabwe**, where citizens can anonymously post public financial management issues, such as abuse of public resources. Authorities can use it to get leads to cases or stories of interest.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

The programme has contributed to strengthening civil society by building platforms for collaboration between different civil society actors, bringing organisations representing different groups together for joint advocacy to reduce poverty and inequality. For example, in Zimbabwe, NCA's three faith-based and community-based partners have fostered an alliance with the Zimbabwe Coalition of Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) and the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) for natural resource governance. Strong multi-actor platforms have been established, drawing on each other's expertise and outreach. These reduced risks related to new repressive civil society legislations, and solution-oriented dialogue carried out across divides.

“When the first AMI was held in my community, critical stakeholders in environmental protection, traditional leaders and mining companies did not understand the logic behind these conversations and expected to be targeted and attacked. This was not the case, and once they realised that they could share their policies, plans, challenges, and recommendations and also gather the same information from communities, their stance softened. They began embracing the concept. The companies that attend AMIs now understand how their activities affect communities and are responsive.”

Evelyn Kutyauro, community paralegal and environmental human rights defender

NCA-supported platforms have been pivotal in enabling rights-holders to hold duty-bearers accountable, most notably the engagement that has grown from the annual Alternative Mining Indabas (AMI). To ensure that underrepresented groups are empowered to participate in decision-making NCA, and partners have promoted gender equality, youth inclusion, and disability rights through organising symposiums and dialogue sessions for people living with disabilities (PLWDs). Through participating in the Zimbabwe Council of Churches inclusion programme, a woman was empowered to run for senator in 2023. Aspiring PLWDs to hold leadership positions can contribute to more inclusive decision-making policies.



Demonstration for «Tax Justice Now». Photo: Silje Ander/Norwegian Church Aid

SUSTAINABILITY

Advocacy requires investment in time, but results are often long-lasting as they involve amending national laws, establishing international mechanisms, and building ownership of the “financing for development” agenda among key actors. NCA expects the programme’s results to be long-lasting, irrespective of whether NCA secures financing for specific projects.

NCA has contributed to building partners’ capacity to influence, which has led to policy change, which again leads to sustainable change over time. Partners’ and communities’ knowledge about how to influence duty-bearers will not diminish once NCA leaves.

Policy change is an important step towards sustainable change, but it needs to be followed up by monitoring implementation. When duty-bearers change, there are risks related to the lack of knowledge and ownership of new MPs. To hold duty-bearers accountable for sustainable change requires ongoing efforts from civil society and local communities, who have developed these skills through NCA’s support.

Since advocacy relies heavily on expertise, it’s susceptible to shifts when key individuals change roles or positions. Accumulating the experience and knowledge needed to implement the programme successfully takes time. NCA emphasises building sustainability and resilience by working through networks of many different organisations, actors, and individuals so that institutional memory and longevity are present even if people move around.

LESSONS LEARNED

- To bring about policy change, strategies must identify concrete decisions and changes needed and be adaptable to changes and new advocacy opportunities.
- Regional studies and sharing of methodologies are useful resources that contribute to national-level advocacy

RESULTS CASE

AFRICAN ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY PAVING THE WAY FOR A UN TAX CONVENTION

DAC Sector: 151.11 Public Finance Management

WHAT: NCA partnered with its African and global ecumenical allies to support key steps in 2023 towards international tax justice. After many attempts, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution from African states to start work on a transparent, inclusive and democratic global tax system to curb illicit financial flows. This should culminate in a UN tax convention with the aim of increasing national funding for health-care, education, social protection, climate adaptation and gender equality in the global south. With a long history of working for economic justice through the ecumenical New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) framework, NCA, ACT, and its African and global ecumenical partners were well-placed to mobilise support for this work.

WHY: Illicit financial flows undermine the social contract within states. Not only do they steal financial resources that could have financed development, but they are also a threat to democracy. Civil society actors working tirelessly for global tax justice for many years have made an impact. However, a broader cross-sectoral alliance was needed to request a UN tax convention and public pressure towards UN member states.

HOW: NCA and its partners in Southern Africa revitalised the 2017 faith-based campaign “Make it Happen” to stop illicit financial flows from Africa. Partners effectively educated their constituencies, civil society, Members of Parliament (MPs), and media to call for the convention. During the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) in Cape Town in 2023, NCA engaged several country offices and partners in working strategically towards the goal. This kick-started a wide range of campaign activities. Capacity-building workshops were organised in Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania. MPs and relevant government officials were trained and served as an important basis for further advocacy.

In Zambia, civil society organisations held dialogue meetings with the Zambia Revenue Authority, engaged the Addis Tax Initiative annual general meeting in Lusaka and urged 300 lawyers attending the PALU conference to play a constructive role in curbing illicit financial flows. In Tanzania, NCA facilitated the establishment of a civil society coalition to collaborate with the Tax Justice Working Group hosted by Policy Forum and the parliamentary caucus on tax issues. A joint

policy position was developed with clear expectations to the parliament to include civil society in preparing input and appoint highly qualified experts to represent Tanzania during the negotiations.

PARTNER: NCA’s partners in the Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, as well as global ecumenical partners³

LESSONS LEARNED:

- NCA was able to mobilise partners as they already owned the issue through joint campaigns to stop illicit financial flows in the past. Although engagement was high, further capacity building is needed for civil society organisations to be even more effective advocates
- Close collaboration and coordination across departments at NCA’s Head Office, Country Offices, partners, and regional and international networks was crucial for the success of the broad mobilisation

SOURCES: NCA country office reports, partner reports, and observations



A majority of the UN member states voted to start negotiations on a framework for a global convention on tax in the UN. Photo: Matilde Angeltveit/Norwegian Church Aid

³ The Benjamin Mkapa Foundation; PharmAccess Tanzania; GIZ; Christian Social Services Commission; SIKIKA; Health Promotion and Systems Strengthening (HPSS) Project Tanzania; Cardinal Rugambwa Hospital; and Haydom Lutheran Hospital

PROGRAMME QUALITY



RESULTS CASE

FAITH LEADERS PIVOTAL IN SECURING UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE FOR TANZANIANS

DAC SECTOR: 121.10 Health Policy and administrative management

WHAT: After years of strategic campaigning and lobbying, a significant political win in Tanzania was celebrated in 2023 when the new Universal Health Coverage (UHC) bill was put into law. The legislation ensures that all Tanzanians have access to health services regardless of payment ability, focusing on the poorest women and children. Faith-based organisations own 40% of the health market, and the UHC bill is critical for the sustainability of health facilities. NCA and partners targeted the health sector, the Ministry of Health, health insurance providers, parliamentary committees, the Speaker of the national assembly and the President. Strong coalitions were built with civil society organisations (CSOs). Faith leaders were instrumental at all levels in demanding change.

WHY: Tanzania publicly financed universal healthcare access in the 1980s. A co-pay system was soon introduced, leading to a massive decline in access to services. By 2017, only 23% of Tanzanians had health insurance, leaving millions behind. Affecting women and children disproportionately, it exacerbated inequalities in accessing social services. Without access to affordable healthcare and necessary medical treatment, people risk deaths that could be prevented.

HOW: NCA helped faith actors use evidence-based research to inform religious teachings and advocacy and proved that this could influence policy and decision-makers to broaden tax collection and improve the management of public resources. NCA has conducted two studies² in collaboration with its interfaith partners since 2017. These reports highlight Tanzania's potential loss in tax revenue and provide recommendations to improve taxation to finance social service delivery, including UHC. Faith leaders used these reports and public data to address the health access gap. Nationwide, faith leaders mobilised to demand UHC, resulting in an invitation to provide input on each aspect of the health reform. Faith leaders also suggested financing mechanisms, and their recommendation to tax luxury goods and ringfence mobile telecoms was adopted.

The bill initially lacked a minimum health package. This became crucial after faith leaders emphasised the need to care for poor households. As a direct result of this project, a health package and a mechanism for identifying the poor were included.

In 2023, NCA and its faith partners initiated a UHC campaign and invited other CSOs³ to join a coalition to raise voices collectively. It engaged the media through consultations and writing position papers to create demand. Journalists were frequently convened for capacity building, press briefs were released, and high-level seminars on the political economy were held. Ultimately, this led decision-makers to approve the UHC law.

PARTNERS: Interfaith Standing Committee on Economic Justice and Integrity of Creation (ISCEJIC) representing major faith communities in Tanzania. The platform is jointly owned by the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) and the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), with coordination by NCA

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Evidence generation is vital for bringing legitimacy to arguments
- Faith leaders are key to mobilising and building ownership on the issue; exposure visits and sharing build confidence
- Consistently staying on one agenda over several years increases the chances of decision-makers hearing and acting

SOURCES: Partner reports, NCA engagement, news articles



Norwegian Church Aid, along with its church network in Tanzania, has advocated for a new health law. After extensive lobbying efforts, the bill was finally approved. Dr. Jane Manyahi at Cardinal Rugambwa Hospital in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Photo: Anette Torjusen/Norwegian Church Aid



Orientation to adolescent girls about the complaint box at Government Girls School, Gharibabad, Sindh province, Pakistan. Photo: Allah Bachio/SPO

GENERAL RISK AND MITIGATION

NCA continuously refines its strategic and operational risk management systems to reduce potential harm and risks to vulnerable communities, its staff, infrastructure, and financial resources. Strategic risk management is part of NCA's corporate governance and is inspired by the internationally recognised COSO standard for enterprise risk management.

The core of this framework is the balance between assisting more people in severe need and maintaining exposure to risks at an acceptable level. To address new developments in risk patterns, NCA implemented at the beginning of 2023 a reporting system based on a risk policy endorsed by its board in late 2021. Amongst the external risks reported were changes in the security environment, space for civil society, the financial context, international regulations, and the funding environment. Internal risks included compliance with donor and NCA's rules and procedures, recruitment and retention of key staff, and secure and correct use of technology.

To strengthen accountability towards rights-holders and manage risks related to financial mismanagement, sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse in all projects supported by NCA, contextually appropriate and accessible complaints mechanisms or whistleblower channels have been established to give the local community a channel to raise issues and concerns related to NCA's work in their community or any misconduct experienced or witnessed.



*NCA staff members gain experience in security risk management during a Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) in Amman, Jordan.
Photo: Sebastian Notø/Norwegian Church Aid*

All employees sign the ACT Code of Conduct (CoC) as part of their employment contract, which outlines NCA and ACT Alliance's commitment to preventing sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, safeguarding children, and strongly focusing on anti-corruption. From 2021, all staff must sign and comply with Norwegian Church Aid's Policy on Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) and Child Safeguarding (CS). NCA staff and related personnel are personally and collectively responsible for upholding and promoting both policies during and outside regular working hours. Annual training on the CoC and PSHEA-CS is mandatory for all staff, as is regular training for local partners.

The main external risks reported across NCA's programme countries in 2020–2023 relate to political instability, violent conflicts and insecurity, shrinking space for civil society, currency exchange fluctuation, nature- and climate-related crises, and COVID-19.

The security situation has deteriorated in most of the countries NCA works (e.g., the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, the military coup in Myanmar, violent conflicts in Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Haiti, religious extremism and terrorist attacks in Pakistan). Violent conflicts put the local population at risk, hamper space for civic action and restrict access to targeted communities. Nevertheless, NCA continues implementing planned activities and responding to emerging humanitarian needs. This is largely thanks to its partners' local presence, outreach, experience and legitimacy.

With contexts becoming more volatile, unstable and restrictive, NCA continues to expand its expertise and capabilities in adaptive programming tailored to local conditions. This includes being flexible in reallocating funds to areas where interventions are most likely to achieve significant and sustainable impact and complementing regular on-site project monitoring with remote monitoring tools.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and government restrictions in 2020 and 2021, NCA adapted by using digital platforms for meetings and conferences. This helped mitigate health risks and minimise delays in programme results.

NCA's programmes must continually evolve to address the interconnected challenges of climate change, global health crises, and geopolitical instability. The cumulative impact of national and global crises highlights the importance of resilient and flexible programme designs that adjust to changing circumstances. This includes, for example, complementing on-site project monitoring with remote monitoring tools, adapting agricultural practices, and ensuring that initiatives can withstand significant shocks and provide sustainable livelihood options in the face of global disruptions.

RISKS RELATED TO THE CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Guided by its Global 2020–2023 Programme Framework, NCA has intensified efforts to ensure all programmes contribute positively to women's rights and gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights, including the rights of people living with disabilities (PLWD). Likewise, they must ensure they combat financial risks, fraud, and corruption and mitigate any negative effects interventions may have on these areas. Head Office staff have been recruited to oversee and develop necessary tools and resources for country programmes. This includes a team leader for Programme Quality, senior advisors on environmentally sustainable programming, the human rights-based approach, anti-corruption and internal control, and existing staff responsible for gender mainstreaming and PSEAH. NCA consistently engages in dialogue and conducts training for its local staff and partners to identify potential risks and formulate mitigation plans, focusing on cross-cutting issues.

FINANCIAL RISKS, FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

NCA employs a principle of zero-tolerance towards fraud and corruption. However, NCA operates in countries with poor global rankings on Transparency International's global index, where practices of corruption, nepotism and favouritism are largely ingrained in culture and social dynamics. Aid

represents a financial opportunity in resource-deprived settings, and NCA and partner staff are often pressured to favour relatives or people of the same ethnic group. This requires robust internal control and oversight mechanisms.

Measures to mitigate the risk of fraud and corruption include systematic training of partners and staff in financial management, procurement, and anti-corruption, joint project monitoring by finance and programme staff, and establishment of complaints management and procurement committees in line with NCA's established procedures.

Learning and transparency are vital to fighting corruption. To avoid repeating the same mistakes, NCA strongly emphasises learning at global and national levels. Every closed corruption case describes the lessons learned on NCA's website.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Women's rights and gender equality are part of a programme area and a cross-cutting concern for NCA. Through partnering with faith-based organisations, actors, and leaders, NCA acknowledges the significance of proactively challenging the norms and practices that these actors often represent that are harmful to women and girls. As a faith-based organisation, NCA is particularly well-positioned to address such topics without alienating the faith actors, influencing their preaching and practice. Leveraging its long-standing relations, shared faith identity, and understanding of religious scriptures and traditions, NCA has a unique entry into arenas for dialogue and transformative change.

NCA's Gender-based Violence (GBV) programme aims to advance the rights of women and promote gender equality through enhancing the capacity of male faith and traditional leaders to uphold the value of women in leadership roles, promoting positive masculinities and empowering women to engage in decision-making. Gender equality is further enhanced broadly in all programmes through systematic project-level gender assessments and training in gender-sensitive programming for partners to ensure women are represented and their rights are fulfilled. When women's duties at home became a barrier to their participation, training and events were organised closer to their villages, allowing women to bring their young children, for example.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

In its Global Programme Framework 2020–2023, NCA chose to systematically integrate a climate and environmentally-oriented approach in programmes that may pose a particular risk to climate and environment, namely Climate-Resilient WASH and Climate-Smart Economic Empowerment (CSEE). In addition, NCA strengthened its niche in Faith-Based Climate Action (FBCA). Initiatives such as tree planting, soil conservation and application of renewable technology like solar water pumping systems have been prioritised for improved watershed management and reduced carbon emissions.

Moreover, NCA's Environmental Sustainability Standard (ESS) guides programmes and operations to be risk-informed and environmentally sustainable. The ESS follows the principle of "Do No Harm" to the environment and the livelihoods of rights-holders and includes required and recommended actions that apply to all programmes. The primary tool for monitoring compliance with the ESS is the NCA's Country Office (CO) environment checklist, submitted as part of CO's annual reporting. Environmental risks are increasingly included in project risk assessments, and NCA has built its capacity to conduct environmental assessments. Partners have been trained in sustainable practices to bolster environmental resilience and foster community participation in waste management, climate-smart agriculture, and tree-planting initiatives.

Across the organisation, the increased use of digital platforms and tools for communication, collaboration, data collection, and storage minimises NCA's carbon footprint, as it reduces travel and paper use. Read more about NCA's work for environmental sustainability programmes in the Environmentally Sustainable NCA sub-chapter below.



*Despite her physical challenges, Besa has taken part in training to increase her profit margin and financial return. Now she is a leading farmer in Samfya, Zambia, and she passes on her knowledge to other farmers.
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS, INCLUDING RIGHTS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

NCA applies a rights-based approach to programming, following the PANEL principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and human rights standards. These principles are further articulated in NCA's Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) certification and commitment to put rights-holders agency and participation of communities affected by crises and injustices at the heart of NCA's programmes.

NCA and its partners emphasise capacity-building initiatives to strengthen local communities and civil society organisations' active participation and resilience. Through training in human rights, advocacy, and conflict resolution, rights-holders and their organisations have been equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for their rights and address systemic challenges in all programmes.

NCA's COs are gradually improving their efforts to ensure the full participation of PLWD in activities and projects implemented by the CO and partners. In addition to conducting relevant audits and assessments of the needs and barriers faced by PLWD, NCA provides appropriate training and resources to ensure accessible WASH infrastructure, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

services, venues for workshops, and participation in project design, implementation, and decision-making. Collaboration with specialised organisations for PLWD rights has been essential for NCA.

While NCA has a clear programmatic focus on facilitating the inclusion of vulnerable groups and leaving no one behind, the 2023 Global Programme Framework Review (GPFR) found inconsistencies and varying degrees of success in the practical application of such principles, for example, related to the inclusion of women and youth in decision-making and participation of PLWD. The review also found instances in which the inclusion of some rights-holders over others caused internal feuds among community members, owing to insufficient communication to communities on the targeting strategies deployed. This highlights the need to articulate and communicate inclusion criteria to avoid strife. Shortcomings regarding the inclusion of PLWD have also been noted in NCA's renewal audit for the CHS conducted by HQAI. Examples include Tanzania, where programme management observed inadequate involvement of PLWDs in activities implemented by NCA and partners. The issue has been addressed by collaborating closely with PLWD networks in targeted regions.

DEVIATIONS

COVID-19 has exacerbated existing economic vulnerabilities and introduced new challenges in many operational contexts. Supply chain disruptions affected resource availability, while restrictions on movement affected the implementation of training and other activities. The need for social distancing and health-related safety measures slowed down some programmes' ability to conduct in-person training sessions and group activities. However, creative digital platform solutions allowed NCA and partners to reach more people than anticipated in some programmes.

Political instability, violent conflicts and insecurity have also hampered implementation in many countries and affected the possibility of reaching the targets particularly related to global outcomes for Peacebuilding. Inflation seen in many countries since the invasion of the Ukraine brought increased volatility in income generating activities, also affecting targets in some programmes.

COST EFFICIENCY

NCA understands cost-efficiency as the means to ensure maximum operational efficiency in reaching programme targets. Over the past four years, several cost-efficiency measures have been applied through improvements to data management, communication, operations, and logistics.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Using new systems for improved collaboration, data management and analysis since 2020 is starting to yield good results. Microsoft Teams is now the standard platform for communication and document archiving. This has improved communication between COs and HO, thereby increasing efficiency. COs can now receive timely support and guidance through chat or by efficiently arranging online meetings. Online webinars have largely replaced training that previously required an in-person visit to the country. Standardised archiving of documents has ensured scanned documentation is securely stored and easily accessible, resulting in less time spent on filing and searching. NCA's Project Information Management System (PIMS), launched in 2021, is used daily by all COs for results

tracking and reporting, document and process management. In combination with Power BI, NCA can produce user-friendly dashboards that provide management with more accurate data from various databases to facilitate data-driven decision-making. Significant investments have been made in IT equipment, internet access, and staff training in using PIMS and Office365 at COs and field offices to increase and improve connectivity to NCA's global systems.

OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS

In 2023, NCA completed a series of external and internal global analyses under the heading 'The Forward Plan'. The aim was to provide the organisation with a solid basis for strategic decision-making in the following programme period and ensure that the organisational set-up could support the programmatic ambitions and secure sufficient financial resources to fulfil the objectives. The Forward Plan included an internal Global Resource and Support Analysis (GRASA), which identified current strengths and gaps in resources, expertise and capacity at each CO. This analysis formed the foundation for developing the CO Operational Roadmaps, supporting the 2025–2029 Country Programme Strategies. GRASA also led to the establishment of an internal project for more effective and efficient governance, which will include a policy for the governance of governing documents, a revised Operations Manual, a clear structure for mandatory requirements and streamlining of recurring processes. All these are essential measures to enhance NCA's cost efficiency.

An updated version of its fleet tracker has given NCA a better analysis of fuel consumption and maintenance costs. This has enabled COs to monitor expenses more closely and to reduce costs through more efficient use of vehicles and generators. In the past, NCA held emergency stocks in warehouses in Oslo and Dubai. The cost of storage and shipping from these facilities was considered too high, and the time for shipping and customs clearance could cause unwanted delays. Thus, stocks were sent to COs as contingency supplies to cut costs and improve response times. CO emergency response plans include potential local suppliers who can deliver at short notice. Using framework agreements has increased efficiency for the COs as frequently required goods and services such as fuel, stationery, hotel accommodations and venue hire can now be ordered directly from the suppliers.

COs face frequent power supply disruptions, and many rely on diesel generators, which are costly and high in CO2 emissions. Solar power alternatives replace diesel generators, when possible, significantly reducing cost, increasing environmental impact, and improving staff working environment.

NCA's Global Logistics Division has provided training in preparing procurement plans and raised awareness of their advantages. Concurrently, procurement plans have become a prerequisite for partner payment, resulting in far greater use of procurement plans. COs and partners have reported improvements in procurement processes and have welcomed the initiative to provide training and guidance on using the plans.

To ensure a fair, consistent, transparent, and efficient distribution of shared costs across all grants, NCA applied its Cost Allocation Policy (CAP) approved in 2021 to eligible operating costs incurred at NCA's COs. Time registration using Tiq Time complements CAP and is currently employed at COs.



Sustainable NCA: With an average of 3,085 hours of sunshine a year, solar is the obvious choice for electricity at NCA's Kabul office. Photo: Abdul Maqsood Shakib/Norwegian Church Aid, Afghanistan

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NCA

Between 2020 and 2023, NCA significantly increased its focus on environmental sustainability. It introduced the abovementioned tools to make reducing emissions and addressing climate and environmental risks a key strategic priority. NCA also established an inter-departmental working group on sustainability to identify priority work areas and recommend actions and mitigation measures. In 2021, NCA signed the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations.

Since then, the Sustainable NCA Working Group has led the development and implementation of NCA's climate and environment targets and action plans, with three full-time staff members joining in 2022 and 2023 to spearhead NCA's efforts to increase environmental sustainability in programming and operations. The focus has been on raising organisational awareness and understanding of climate and environmental crises. This culminated in the launch of NCA's new digital sustainability sessions and the first Sustainable NCA Month in 2023, which included a series of internal seminars, workshops, and team challenges.

In addition to tracking emissions from NCA's international air travel, NCA's greenhouse gas reduction efforts have expanded to include improved reporting tools for carbon accounting. Data gathered has been used to establish a baseline for 2023.

Learning from the 2023 pilot study on energy efficiency in **Sudan** has been integrated into NCA's Operations Manual through a step-by-step guide on how to implement cost-effective measures like improving roof insulation, replacing older air-condition units, identifying country-appropriate alternatives to diesel generators, and developing specifications to procure quality equipment.

Meanwhile, CO "greening" initiatives have multiplied. In 2023, NCA **Sahel** equipped several of its facilities with solar systems, while **Zambia** purchased a backup battery to run essential equipment

during power outages. In the cold climate of **Afghanistan**, solar water heaters have proven to be an affordable and effective solution for hot water. In-house composting has been mainstreamed in **Ethiopia**. **Tanzania** conducted an office waste audit and market survey of waste management companies in 2023 to identify a service provider. Efforts to reduce the use of single-use plastic, particularly water bottles, continue across all COs.

LESSONS LEARNED

As a result of the Global Programme Framework Review (GPFR) conducted in 2022–2023, NCA made some revisions that will come into effect in 2025. Among those, NCA refined its global theory of change to emphasise the importance of exercising equitable partnerships and strengthening community resilience to effectively contribute to sustainable change. NCA's thematic areas of economic development, food security, and climate and environmental stewardship have been further developed.

In addition to the global review, NCA conducted a global learning exercise in which each CO systematically reflected on challenges and lessons learned since the current country strategies came into effect in 2020. Issues that came up were fragmented programming, insufficient programme integration, and not enough coherence between humanitarian response, long-term development, and advocacy efforts within thematic programmes.

The HO's Methods, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team was strengthened by a global evaluation and research senior advisor and two senior data management advisors in 2020. Systematic work to develop, improve and implement methods and tools for better planning, monitoring, and follow-up has been prioritised throughout the period. For example, a global Community of Practice (CoP) for Monitoring and Evaluation was established. M&E staff at COs now have a platform to share, build capacity, and collaborate more closely for increased learning across countries and programmes.

PIMS has increasingly facilitated consolidating and analysing global results for more accurate reporting and decision-making. The M&E module has been further developed, and a PIMS team has been strengthened with an additional advisor to support CO users, conduct training, and manage data quality. In parallel, alignment with NCA financial data has been a focus. New guidelines and tools reflect topics such as log frames, Theory of Change, data quality, and indicators, contributing to better and more systematic data collection and use. This work will continue in 2024 as NCA prepares to implement its 2025–2029 programme framework, where evidence-based planning is vital.



In Ethiopia, NCA is composting organic waste from its cafeteria and office ground with the composting tumbler prototype made from local materials and partially assembled at NCA. Photo: Hilina Abebe/Norwegian Church Aid

TABLE 5: OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIONS CONCLUDED IN 2023

COUNTRY	TITLE	TYPE	Funded by Norad?
Global	Global Programme Framework Review	External, Midline	Yes
Angola	EU Pajudel endline	External	No
Angola	PARMES Endline Evaluation	External	No
Angola	Norad PS1 Midline Evaluation	External	Yes
DRC	Midline evaluation of Norad and MFA grants	Internal, Midline	Yes
DRC	Agriculture and Improved Protection of Tropical Forests in DRC "Redd + NICFI"	External, Midline	No
Ethiopia	"Towards a National Agenda for Peace and Social Cohesion in Ethiopia: a Faith Actors Response" peacebuilding programme end-line evaluation	External, Endline	No
Lebanon	GBV and WASH humanitarian needs assessment for Lebanon	External Needs Assessment	No
Malawi	Mid-Term Review - TRANSFORM	External, Midline	Yes
Malawi	Baseline survey for DANIDA Grant (CSEE)	Internal, Baseline	No
Myanmar	Strengthening the Rights of Faith Minorities in Myanmar (SRFMM)	External, Endline	Yes
Pakistan	EU Power to the Youth	External, Midline	No
Pakistan	Project End Review and Learning of Community of Hope: Intra and Inter-faith Harmony for Sustainable Pace	External, Endline	No
Tanzania	UNCDF Youth and Women Economic Empowerment	Internal, Endline	No
Tanzania	Leveraging faith for Peace and Youth Economic Empowerment	External, Endline	Yes

EVALUATIONS

NCA commissioned 15 evaluations in 2023, including the GPFR, which also served as the midterm review of the Norad Cooperation agreement. Over the past four years, 74 evaluations have been carried out. The smaller number of evaluations in 2023 compared to 2022 is explained by the fact that many projects had midline evaluations in 2022. Project evaluations are typically used to inform project design, while programme and global evaluations are critical in guiding programme development and working methods.

NCA finalised its Evaluation and Research policy in 2022 following Pre-registration, Accountability, Transformativeness, and Honesty (PATH) principles. Together with standard templates, the policy clarified evaluation processes, leading to more effortless follow-up and more streamlined information sharing within the organisation. Following NCA's participation in the impact evaluation at Norad in 2023, NCA will expand its use of counterfactual methodologies and correspondingly revise the use of pre-registration with a focus on those evaluations. NCA has built stronger research partnerships, for example, through the extensive research project on Female Genital Mutilation and Child Early and Forced Marriage (FGM-CEFM) in Ethiopia, funded by Norad.

NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID WORKS WITH PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE POVERTY AND INJUSTICE.

We provide emergency assistance in disasters and work for long-term development in local communities. In order to address the root causes of poverty, we advocate for just decisions by public authorities, businesses and religious leaders.

Norwegian Church Aid is an ecumenical, diaconal organisation for global justice. We work where needs are greatest, with no intention of changing religious affiliation of our beneficiaries.

To ensure the efficiency and quality of our work, Norwegian Church Aid is a member of ACT Alliance, one of the world's largest humanitarian alliances. The alliance consists of church-based organisations throughout the world and cooperates with organisations of other religious faiths.

Web: nca.no

Telephone: +47 22 09 27 00

Email: nca-oslo@nca.no



NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
actalliance