



# Leveraging Faith towards Inclusive and Just Societies 2020–2024

## PROGRESS REPORT TO NORAD 2021



**NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID**  
actalliance

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*With a map over the village drawn in the sand, NCA's partner facilitates discussions to identify local obstacles to development. The findings of participatory poverty assessments are used to hold the local government accountable.  
Photo: Silje Ander/Norwegian Church Aid*



At a women's centre in Wau, South Sudan, Mari Abui learns to sew and make her own reusable sanitary pads.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid



## REFLECTIONS

Despite another COVID-19 year, escalating conflicts in many countries where NCA and partners operate, and the climate crisis challenging us fundamentally, NCA delivered programmes and challenged the status quo in many contexts. Through strategic institutional partnerships and deeply rooted relations with local civil society partners, NCA has contributed to significant progress following its calling for a just world.

Through the global civil society grant, NCA and partners in 2021 ensured that:



Not only can NCA document essential steps towards achieving its goals, but we can also attest that in 2021 we took leadership and raised issues often associated with taboos and stigma. To lift the dignity of young women, NCA spoke at world toilet day 2021 about the importance of being mindful of women's needs when managing their period. As a result of NCA's straightforward message, the World Council of Churches took the challenge and, in 2022, initiated webinars to raise awareness of menstruation and how it limits women's participation, which is seldom talked about in churches and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs).

In 2021 NCA took the lead in the ACT Europe Forum, focusing on improving coordination and strengthening the emergency preparedness among ACT Europe members. The investments into that forum in 2021 proved critical to enabling a coordinated response to what culminated in an invasion of Ukraine in early 2022.

NCA continued to advocate nationally and internationally for vaccine equity related to the slow and uneven distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Locally, we participated in the vaccination mobilisation in the communities we work with. As a grantee and partner of Norad, NCA is grateful for the support and opportunities granted to NCA through this partnership - to deliver on programmes designed by NCA and our local partners. In this progress report, you will find concrete examples of social change, an analysis of progress and deviations, and stories of people and communities whose lives and outlooks have changed for the better. In its 75th year of existence, NCA is ready for the next opportunities.



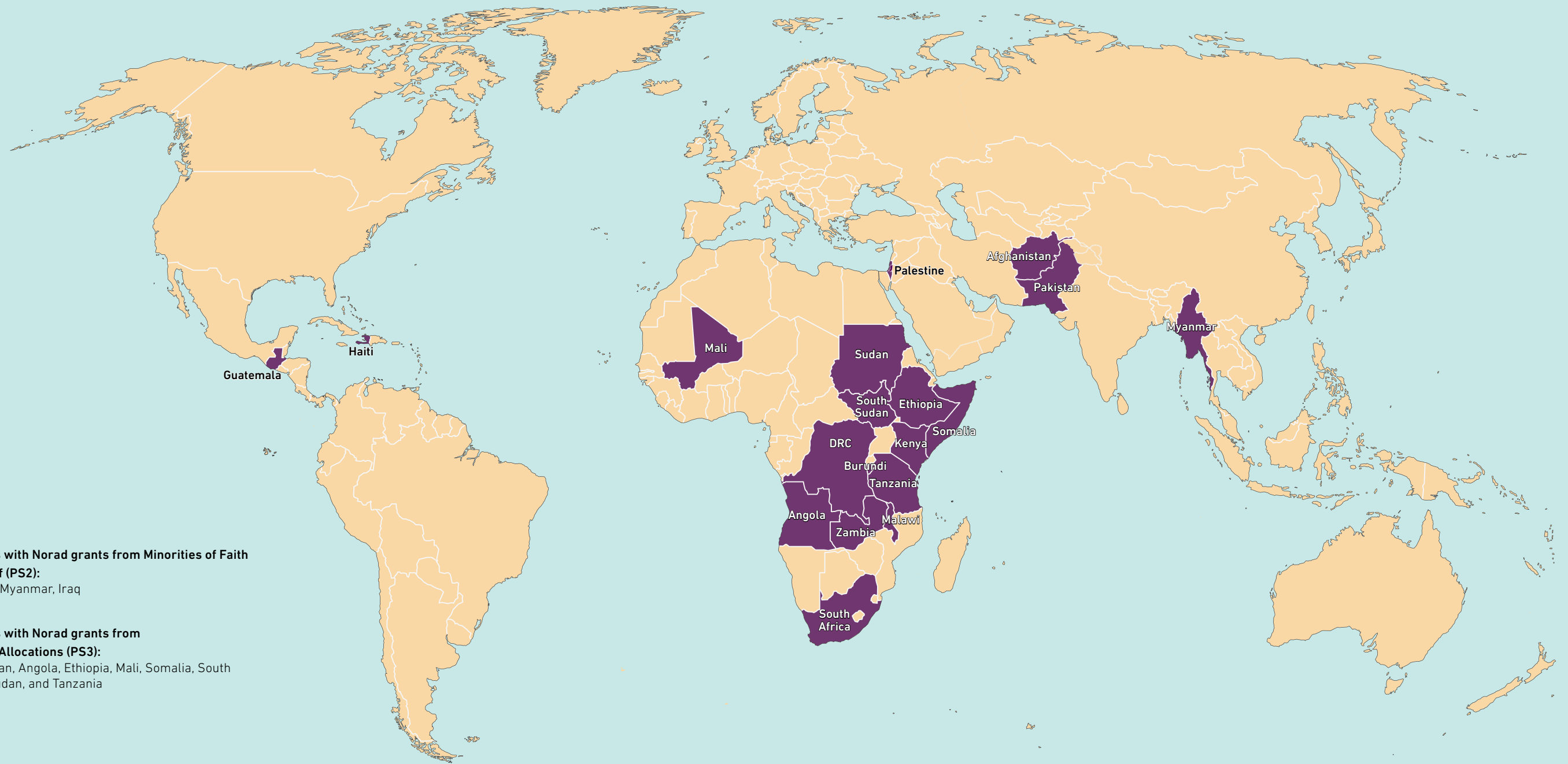
  
**Dagfinn Høybråten**  
General Secretary



# 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 Programme, and the Global Ecumenical Partners.



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

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

# INTRODUCTION



International Women's Day, Gogrial Warrap State, South Sudan.  
Photo: Kari Øyen/Norwegian Church Aid

This report captures highlights of the second year of implementation of the global civil society grant under the five-year Cooperation Agreement with Norad (2020–2024).

The following chapters feature examples of results in all six thematic programmes and strategic initiatives, provide valuable progress analysis and explain deviations compared to the initial plan. Through the thematic examples and results provided, NCA seeks to lift the efforts of NCA's local partners, who are the engines for social change in all programme countries. The report has a chapter dedicated to reflecting the crucial steps made in 2021 to strengthen and mainstream working with civil society and faith actors.

Finally, an update is provided on advances made in 2021 supporting NCA's ambitions for improving programme quality, sustainability, and mitigation of risks.

As NCA collects results data, reviews reports, and looks back at meetings, monitoring visits, and stories told by partners and individuals – there is no doubt that NCA and Norad's contributions through this grant lead to tangible results and lasting changes for the rights-holders and communities with which NCA and partners engage. This report is a testimony to that faith put into action.



TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF 2021 GRANTS AWARDED UNDER THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT (2020–2024)

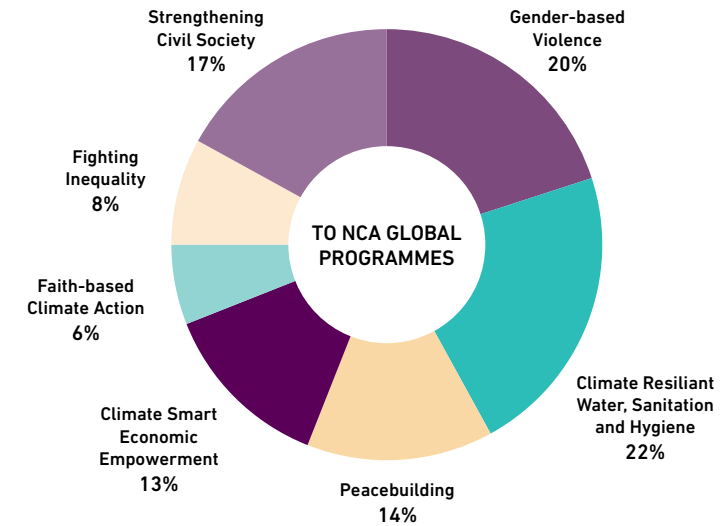
NCA-Norad Cooperation Agreement (QZA-19/0212) Grants	Country	Value of 2021 grant (NOK)
PS 1: Civil Society Grant Chapter 170.70	Global	211,010,000
PS 2: Rights of minorities of faith and belief Chapter 170.70	Myanmar, Iraq and Pakistan	10,035,188
<b>Total Chapter 170.70</b>		<b>221,045,188</b>
PS 3: Regional Allocation for Afghanistan Chapter 159.72	Afghanistan	11,000,000
<b>Total Chapter 159.72</b>		<b>11,000,000</b>
PS 3: Regional Allocation for Africa Chapter 159.75	Angola	20,000,000
	Mali	7,300,000
	Ethiopia (with SCN)	16,885,729
	Somalia (with SCN)	15,114,272
	South Sudan	35,000,000
	Sudan	15,000,000
	Tanzania	10,700,000
<b>Total Chapter 159.75</b>		<b>120,000,000</b>
Addendum 5: DRC Panzi water supply (2021–2022)	DRC	9,700,000
Addendum 7: Myanmar vulnerable populations	Myanmar	3,000,000
Addendum 8: South Sudan food security	South Sudan	2,500,000
Addendum 9: Sudan SUDO	Sudan	1,000,000
Total Addenda		16,200,000
<b>TOTAL ALL GRANT AMOUNTS GRANTED IN 2021</b>		<b>368,245,188</b>

## THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION

All the thematic programmes and strategic initiatives of NCA's Programme Framework 2020–2030 are included in NCA's global civil society grant from Norad. The Norad civil society grant portfolio contributes significantly to the overall progress of reaching the outcomes stipulated in NCA's programme framework.

As figure 1 below shows, in 2021, NCA committed most of the civil society portfolio towards NCA's three main global programmes, namely Gender-based Violence (GBV), Climate Resilient Water Sanitation and Hygiene (CRWASH) and Peacebuilding (PB). These programmes amounted to 56 per cent of the total grant. In chapter three, NCA reports on the progress of all the thematic programmes, with examples from the various countries contributing to achieving the global outcomes.

FIGURE 1: THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION OF NORAD CIVIL SOCIETY GRANT



## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The civil society global grant was distributed to 17 countries, three regional and one global programme. The region with the most significant portion of the civil society grant is Eastern Africa, followed by the Middle East and Asia region. In 2021 NCA distributed the global civil society grant among all the countries based on budgetary frames. To respond to increased need and capacity and ensure that the grant was spent most effectively, some funds were reallocated between countries and thematic programmes within the thresholds as specified in the agreement with Norad.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

NCA raised more than NOK 1 billion for NCA's international programmes in 2021, one-third of that total is funding entrusted to NCA by Norad. The Norad Civil Society grant has a significant catalytic effect on the country programmes. The funds enable NCA to deliver on its global outcomes, enhance its technical expertise, build local partners' capacity and leverage funding from other institutions.

In addition to funding granted via the Cooperation Agreement with Norad, in 2021, NCA signed a separate five-year agreement through the NICFI grant mechanism in Norad.

Funding for NCA's programmes was further reinforced through Norad grants awarded to other Norwegian NGOs and private partners with whom NCA is in consortia with a sub-grant. In cooperation with Alliance Microfinance AS (AMAS), East Africa Holding and Backen and Bæck, NCA has, for example, mobilised NOK 35 million from Norad for a financial inclusion project in Ethiopia in 2021. In this way, NCA is building up its partnership with the private sector to increase the impact of projects and mobilise additional, and over time, blended funding with private partners.

Country Offices are encouraged to diversify their funding bases beyond Norwegian sources to mitigate risks related to relying on a few institutional donors. Diversification enables the programmes to scale up activities and outreach to increase NCA's impact. As table two below shows, most of NCA's programme countries successfully secured significant funding from other sources than the Norad Civil Society grant, making NCA's programmatic portfolio less vulnerable in the long run.

TABLE 2: NORAD CIVIL SOCIETY GRANT AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME PER COUNTRY

Country	Norad %
Afghanistan	48
Angola	13
Burundi	54
DRC	17
Ethiopia	13
Guatemala	12
Haiti	9
Mali	26
Malawi	13
Myanmar	10
Pakistan	38
Palestine	12
Regional Eastern Africa Peacebuilding Programme	68
Regional Southern Africa Advocacy Programme	81
Somalia	24
South Sudan	14
Sudan	9
Tanzania	30
Zambia	29

NCA secured several new multi-year grants with agreements signed in 2021 from the Norwegian embassies, mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa. Contracts directly with Norwegian embassies secured NOK 55 million for programme implementation in 2021, while the Strategic Partnership Agreement (2020–2023) with MFA secured NOK 227 million for NCA’s humanitarian interventions.

In 2021 NCA revised its policy for private donations to raise private funds more systematically through collecting donations for specific objectives such as a climate action fund. Funds raised through this mechanism are available for country-specific initiatives through internal calls for proposals.

## INTERNATIONAL GRANTS

NCA also increased its income from international institutions, non-Norwegian government agencies and private international foundations, with the highest level of such funding, ever recorded. Not counting grants from Norad and the Norwegian MFA, other institutional grants amounted to 26% of NCA’s total income for 2021.

The figures below show the share as well as the figures for each income category.

FIGURE 2: FUNDING SOURCES FOR NCA’S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (%)

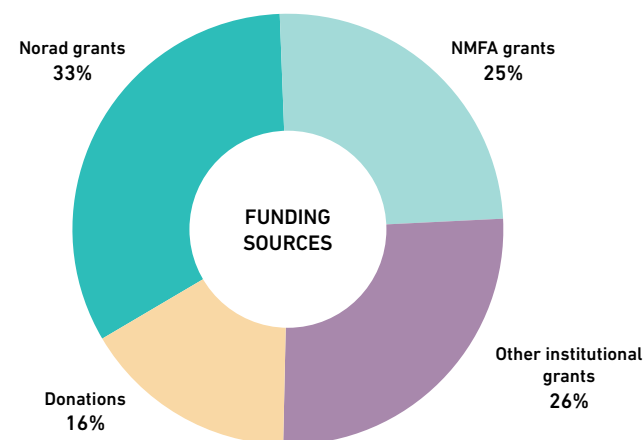
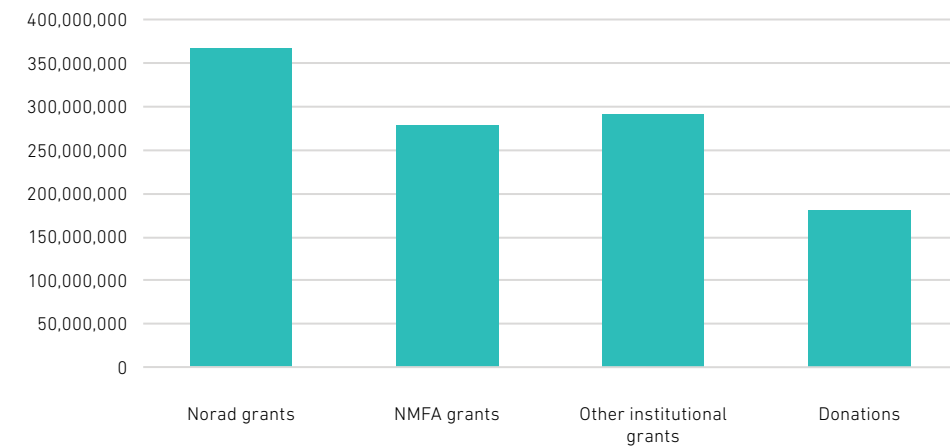
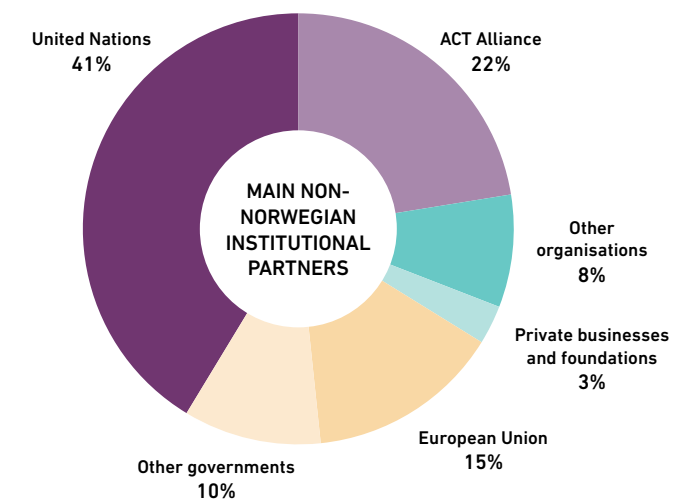


FIGURE 3: FUNDING SOURCES FOR NCA’S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (NOK)



Expertise on selected priority donors is being built internally while NCA’s country offices actively pursue such donor partnerships. Examples include several UN agencies, the European Union (INTPA and ECHO), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, USAID, and the ACT alliance. With a total value in 2021 of more than NOK 115 million, 41% of non-Norwegian grants were committed to NCA by various UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA, where considerable increases were seen compared to 2020.

FIGURE 4: MAIN NON-NORWEGIAN INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



NCA is not only securing its own funding diversification through grants but also that of its local implementing partners. Equally important is the assistance NCA provides to enable the broadening of their funding bases. This is catered for by ensuring that local partners are selected as co-applicants in larger proposals and that local partners gain the expertise to be the main applicant in competitive processes.



# STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

# 2



*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 Ader/Norwegian Church Aid*

**OVERALL GOAL:** Civil society actors and space are strengthened to foster human rights and dignity and empower people to participate in the development and implementation of public policies, development plans and humanitarian response.

**COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOAL:** Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, DRC, Eastern Africa Regional Peacebuilding Programme, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Mali, Palestine, Southern Africa Regional Programme, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, and Global Ecumenical Partners.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

NCA believes that strong civil society actors and an enabling environment for civil society are prerequisites for participatory democracy, accountable governance, and social justice. 2021 has been an unusually demanding year for NCA and its partners, as the world has seen several political crises coinciding with and fuelled by the global pandemic. The space for civic action continues to shrink globally. In the latest global monitoring report released by Civicus, 13 countries were downgraded in terms of freedom of civil society expressions, including **Haiti, Mali,** and **South Africa.**

The Taliban targeted human rights defenders in **Afghanistan,** and partners had to discontinue activities over security concerns. In **Sudan,** the end of the Bashir dictatorship allowed communities and organisations to mobilise. With the military coup in October, that space is again shrinking. In **Zambia,** however, the change in government has created hope and a chance to tap into a new environment, evidenced in the lifting of the previous ban on media and a more pro-poor budget. A common thread is that NCA has operated and responded in all contexts through its vast network of local and faith-based actors.

Faced with shrinking space for civic action, NCA is exploring innovative ways to accompany and strengthen civil society. A mapping undertaken by NCA in 2021 shows that partners seek new technological solutions to support civil society in their context, mainly using mobile monitoring tools and social media. Although the pandemic has expanded the use of technology, it also accentuated existing digital inequalities. The mapping found that only 21% of NCA's partners had adequate access to relevant technology. As the world is storming into a digital revolution, large segments of populations are at risk of being left behind. Therefore, NCA has also made digitalisation a strategic priority for the years to come in its civil society approach.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTPUTS

### GLOBAL OUTPUT 1.1: RIGHTS-HOLDERS ARE MOBILISED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION ON COMMON INTERESTS

In 2021, more than 70,000 rights-holders were mobilised for collective action within NCA's global programmes and strategic initiatives funded by the Norad Civil Society grant. Overall, the results reported against this indicator surpassed the target for 2021 by 16%.

In many cases, the mobilisation occurred in regimes hostile to civic action. In **Pakistan,** NCA's partners mobilised nearly 6,500 rights-holders who advocated and engaged with religious leaders on issues related to climate action and early warning systems for disaster risk reduction. In **South Sudan,** 14,000 rights-holders participated in collective efforts to demand delivery of services through local-level community structures such as peace committees, inter-church committees, and water management committees. Women and men actively participated in drawing up community plans. In both cases, this was possible by working through partners and faith-based actors deeply rooted in the communities.

Standard mobilisation methods include establishing committees and community-based organisations, using community conversations, alliance-building, and providing capacity building for rights-holders and their organisations. NCA drew on and expanded its vast networks of faith-based actors to reach and mobilise rights-holders. For example, In **Angola,** an alliance was forged with the Catholic church, enabling the programme to mobilise twice as many rights-holders as initially targeted, demonstrating the potential for scaling up through ecumenical collaboration.



## GLOBAL OUTPUT 2.1: DUTY-BEARERS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

NCA's programmes follow a rights-based approach, in which rights-holders engage with duty-bearers to advocate for interests, rights and services. These advocacy initiatives are defined as deliberate processes to influence duty-bearers, directly and indirectly, to support and implement actions that contribute to a specific mutual objective. They can be local or national in scale. Of 240 advocacy initiatives launched or ongoing in 2021, 32 led to changes in laws, policies, norms, or practices. As it is still early in the implementation period, the number of successful advocacy initiatives is expected to be low.

In **Guatemala**, the joint programme has been part of a broad alliance of civil society actors accompanying indigenous communities in resisting a hydroelectric dam posing a threat to their livelihoods and water resources. As a result of their resistance and realising grave human rights violations, the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) permanently withdrew its investment in a large-scale hydroelectric plant on Indigenous land, a significant achievement.

In **Zimbabwe**, a landmark ruling by the High Court ordered the Minister of Finance to publish loans contracted by the government and the conditions underlying those loans. This resulted from a case filed by a civilian trained as a Social Economic Justice Ambassador under NCA's Fighting Inequality strategic initiative. In **Mali**, the Minister of National Reconciliation adopted the recommendations from a document for social cohesion drawn up by the Alliance of Religious Leaders supported by NCA. The department has since brought these recommendations to the national level.

Some initiatives focused mainly on the inclusion of marginalised people. For example, in **Pakistan**, due to consistent lobbying by rights-holders mobilised through NCA's Faith-based Climate Action Programme, the Deputy Commissioner's Office issued a directive to establish an inclusive (including women and faith actors) Early Warning System in Sindh to mitigate the effects of climate change. In **South Africa**, NCA's partner South Africa Council of Churches, successfully advocated for the inclusion of undocumented immigrants in the government's COVID-19 vaccination scheme, while in **Zambia**, community action groups worked with the Ministry of Education to ensure the 110 young girls rescued from forced marriages were reintegrated at schools in line with the re-entry policy.

While the indicator only tracks initiatives that have led to definite changes, the processes leading up to the changes are often significant achievements in and of themselves. For example, in **DRC**, NCA and partners organised a national Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) conference. For the first time, partners were provided with an opportunity to address high-level politicians directly. Establishing this interface is an essential step toward more robust engagement in the future.

## GLOBAL OUTPUT 3.1: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS ARE EMPOWERED TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING

NCA supports targeted empowerment and active inclusion in decision-making bodies of groups defined as marginalised in any given context to stimulate participatory governance at all levels. These include women and youth, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and others. In 2021, about 2,500 rights-holders trained by NCA and partners had assumed decision-making roles in relevant groups, committees, and associations.

The active inclusion of marginalised people is a crucial pillar of the rights-based approach. NCA and partners draw on its networks on the ground to map barriers to inclusion and identify rights-holders for training to address rights deficiencies. For example, in **Malawi**, NCA and partners conducted an exercise in 2021 to map underrepresented groups affected by extractive sites. Information was gathered about the bottlenecks for them to engage in the issues around extractive industries and what support and capacity building they would need. The mapping exercise targeted community action groups, traditional leaders, village development committees, and mining company representatives of five districts. It resulted in the mobilisation and training of 1,950 rights-holders.

In Ethiopia, the WASH programme has reached 50% representation of women in WASH committee leadership positions, resulting from targeted training and awareness-raising over several years. Also, in **Ethiopia**, 15 women were trained in watershed management in the Faith-based Climate Action programme. Equipped with technical skills acquired during the training, these female members of the watershed committees embarked on managing and controlling their land resources. This is an excellent example of how technical skills can improve rights-holders ability to participate in decision-making.

## GLOBAL OUTPUT 4.1: MULTI-ACTOR PLATFORMS ARE BUILT TO WORK TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Building alliances and platforms between various actors is a key strategy for NCA. In line with NCA's theory of change, establishing these platforms is a goal in and of itself as a precondition for proactive civic engagement. Thus, in 2021, more than 300 collaborative spaces for various purposes were set up, bringing together instrumental stakeholders across divides of faith, ethnicity, and political, commercial and civil interests.

Establishing inter-religious collaboration and dialogue is a particular strength of NCA's interventions. For example, in **Mali**, working with the Alliance of Islamic-Christian Religious Leaders, NCA supported the development of an advocacy document for social cohesion and against climate change. The paper was officially submitted to the Ministry of National Reconciliation, and dissemination campaigns through workshops targeted the populations in the areas of intervention. In **Pakistan**, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians joined locally to advocate for improved municipal services. The Sindh Climate Action Network has been established at the provincial level, featuring members of faith actors, activists, media representatives, and Academia. One of the main agendas of this network is to push for the development of bylaws to include women in Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority structure at the district level. If the bylaws are approved, these will pave the way for the inclusion of thousands of women in local-level water governance in the province.

In **DRC**, faith-based actors, community-based organisations and women's rights organisations have jointly promoted the rights of communities, using Biblical and Quranic verses combined with international and national laws to promote human rights and equality. Moreover, two commissions have been set up to oversee the agreement between communities and mining companies, along with two forums for dialogue and advocacy between religious leaders and community members. These platforms have facilitated the elaboration of Codes of Conduct for the mining sites.

## GLOBAL OUTPUT 5.1: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF PARTNERS ARE STRENGTHENED

NCA implements its programmes through a vast portfolio of strategically chosen civil society partners. From 2020 to 2024, NCA will conduct assessments of all partners using NCA's partnership assessment tool (PAT). These assessments form the basis for capacity development plans. Improvements will be measured in the second round of assessments towards the end of the period, comparing initial and updated PAT scores. For this reason, official results will only be available in the final years of the agreement period.

Assessments conducted in 2021 show a need to continue strengthening local partners' expertise in financial management and procurement procedures. This is reflected in the capacity development initiatives by NCA's country offices, where half of the training sessions were conducted on those topics. For example, a whole week of training on procurements in Mali was organised with two staff from each partner taking part. A refresher session was also hosted for the partners later in the year. Extensive financial management and compliance training was also carried out for partners in **Malawi, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia**.

Several partners highlight the need for more project cycle management, monitoring, and evaluation training. In **Zambia**, this has led to establishing a community of practice on monitoring and evaluation, bringing together key staff members from partners and the country office.

In Haiti, six partners received training in emergency preparedness and response. Thus, they could respond quickly to the emergency caused by the August 14th earthquake, based on the knowledge acquired and strategies developed inside their emergency preparedness and response plans. In **Myanmar**, the political crisis has forced innovation in partner follow-up and capacity building, whereby village development committees provide and manage collective funds. This has resulted in more collective action and adaptation by the communities, building the capacity of community-based organisations and the targeted communities themselves about emergency preparedness and response (see Results Case).

**TABLE 3: LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS REACHED AND PROVIDED WITH CAPACITY BUILDING**

Country	Partner category	No. of partners reached	No. of partners provided with capacity building
Afghanistan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	7	7
Angola	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	1	1
	Faith-based Organisation	1	1
Burundi	Faith-based Organisation	7	7
DRC	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	4	3
	Faith-based Organisation	2	1
Ethiopia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	1	0
	Faith-based Organisation	3	2
Guatemala*	Faith-based Organisation	1	N/A
Haiti*	Faith-based Organisation	1	N/A
Malawi	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	3	2
	Faith-based Organisation	2	1
Mali	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	6	1
Myanmar*	Faith-based Organisation	1	N/A
Pakistan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	6	4
Palestine*	Faith-based Organisation	1	N/A
Regional Africa	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	8	2
	Faith-based Organisation	7	2
Somalia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	5	4
South Sudan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	1	0
	Faith-based Organisation	1	1
Sudan	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	6	3
Tanzania	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	2	1
	Faith-based Organisation	6	6
Zambia	NGO or Civil Society Organisation	4	4
	Faith-based Organisation	5	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>TOTAL NGO or Civil Society Organisation</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>TOTAL Faith-based Organisation</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>

\* Guatemala, Haiti, Myanmar, and Palestine are joint country programmes where NCA is not the lead agency. In these countries, NCA formally partners with sister agencies (all faith-based organisations), responsible for the follow-up of local implementing partners. These are not included in the overview above.



*Community mapping as part of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) activities in Layaba village in Afghanistan. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Afghanistan*

## DEVIATIONS

Analysing results versus targets for all strengthening civil society indicators, we find some significant deviations. Several deviations are due to reviewed and sharpened instructions for reporting on strengthening civil society indicators to ensure more consistent and comparable reporting. This has particularly affected Output 2.1 (criteria for reporting successful advocacy initiatives made clearer), Output 5.1 (emphasising initial and second round of assessments as a method for tracking change) and Output 5.2 (revised criteria for reporting). The initial targets do not take these revisions into account. Hence there is a mismatch between actuals and targets.

COVID-19 has contributed to a backlog in carrying out partnership assessments. Complete reporting on the indicator cannot be expected until the final report (2020–2024), once the second round of assessments has been conducted.

In some cases, results have been affected by shrinking space for civic action. For example, no results are reported from **Afghanistan** on most indicators, where the Taliban takeover has severely restricted opportunities to work on strengthening civil society. In **Sudan**, work to mobilise youth in resistance committees to promote democracy and counter the military regime was impossible after the coup. In **Guatemala**, the approval of a new NGO law meant that the joint country programme had to prioritise supporting partners to carry out a checklist on their legal and fiscal situation and update their data before the government agencies according to the new law requirements – rather than providing capacity building on identified weaknesses.



## NCA'S GLOBAL PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### RESULT CASE

#### LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY IN DRIVING SEAT IN MYANMAR, DESPITE IMMENSE CHALLENGES

**SECTOR:** 430.60 Disaster Risk Reduction

**WHAT:** In Myanmar, a local partner provided capacity building and assistance to village development committees on a peer-to-peer basis, without the active facilitation of the NCA/DCA joint country office. This has enabled rapid and cost-effective support to around 1,500 households at risk in 18 villages. More importantly, it has empowered community-based organisations to assume firm leadership locally, by enhancing their capacity for emergency preparedness and response. They have also been successful at delegating responsibility for assessments and decisions.

**WHY:** The military seized control in Myanmar on February 1st, 2021, which added to an already difficult situation with the COVID-19 outbreak. The coup brought a state of emergency across Myanmar with food shortages, price hikes, unemployment and escalating violence, disrupting women's and men's lives, ambitions, and livelihoods.

**HOW:** Faced with these predicaments, NCA/DCA moved to find innovative ways to support its local partners. Communities at risk were supported with cash assistance to be managed locally, and peer-to-peer training between the village development committees (VDCs) was facilitated. With the support of the local partner, collective funds mechanisms were set up, including guidelines and criteria for its distribution and use defined by the communities themselves. After receiving training on how to manage funds, accounting principles, and other relevant skills, the VDCs were empowered to provide oversight and manage the community collective funds. The impact of these contingency funds has been significant, resulting in increased joint action and adaptability of communities. In a context where it was not possible to carry out regular capacity building for these community-based organisations and committees, they have gained expertise through the experience of handling the situation.

**PARTNER:** DCA

**SOURCES:** Partner report



*Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Myanmar taking on the management of collective funds to increase community resilience and strengthen local ownership in challenging times.  
Photo: DanChurchAid, Myanmar*



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



# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)



**OVERALL GOAL:** Women and girls live empowered lives free from gender-based violence.

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



*A young son standing up for his mother's rights after husband abused her by throwing boiling water over her. Assisted by NCA's local partner, the mother received medical care and assistance bringing the case to court.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

GBV remains one of the most widespread, persistent, and grave human rights violations. There is a strong indication that COVID-19 has increased the prevalence of GBV due to lockdowns. Affecting one in three women worldwide, its immediate and long-term consequences for women and girls can be devastating, including death. GBV prevents women and girls from fully participating in society as it affects their general well-being and hurts affected families, communities, and countries.

Furthermore, the current shortage of contraception due to supply disruption is anticipated to turn the positive trend in reducing unwanted pregnancies. More than 20 million young women aged 15–19 today have an unmet need for contraception. According to UNESCO, there is also an urgent need for high-quality, curriculum-based Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Many adolescents do not receive sufficient guidance about the physical, social, and emotional development in transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services is essential for protecting their health and ability to plan their lives.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) affects many girls and women, often with alarming prevalence rates (for example, 98% in Somalia). One in five young women are married before 18, often through forced marriage, exposed to emotional risks and physical abuse. Early pregnancy can lead to fistula and hinder girls from completing their education.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

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

NCA uses the community conversations methodology as the primary method to facilitate discussions among community members (including faith actors) to identify the cultural practices, distinguish between good and harmful norms, and determine their own solutions to transform the harmful norms than perpetuate GBV. In addition, legislation plays a vital role in deterring perpetrators of GBV. Hence, NCA works to advocate for laws and policies that protect women and girls from all forms of GBV and supports authorities in budgeting for and implementing such legislation.

There was good progress toward norm transformation during the period, as community members have now started discussing issues previously deemed taboo in most contexts. For example, in **Mali** and **Somalia**, issues related to FGM and how to stop the practice are openly debated in communities, with some people starting to shift their mindsets.

In 2021, an estimated 29,000 people were reached with various messages on the negative consequences of GBV through community conversations in **DRC, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan**, and **Zambia**. Mass media was used to convey these messages further in Ethiopia, where 431,300 men and women were reached. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (**DRC**), 478 interfaith actors were engaged in dialogue on ending GBV. In **Malawi**, 17,874 duty-bearers, including faith actors, were trained on women's rights and the negative consequences of GBV and harmful practices.

Through NCA's **global ecumenical partners**, World YWCA launched an interactive toolkit for activists to access data, find ideas and take action to make the world safer for women, young women, girls, and other marginalised groups. The toolkit provides guidance and inspiration on raising awareness of GBV via online platforms. The toolkit is also a source of essential data and information on many topics. It provides intergenerational perspectives on child marriage, cyber violence, domestic violence, femicide, sexual harassment, and violence against older women. The material has also proven helpful in including a gender-sensitive approach to organising activities, how to engage through social media, and how to apply the ready-to-use and editable templates found in the toolkit.

NCA trained faith actors in **South Sudan** to use the new toolkit titled Faith Actors Motivating (women's) Empowerment (FAME). As a result of the training, partners had completed a three-month pilot with their congregations and faith communities by the end of the second year. The toolkit will be rolled out in 2022 for all NCA country offices, and NCA will monitor the impact of the application of the tool in the coming years.

With NCA's support, faith actors in **Mali** explored what religious texts say about GBV, including harmful practices and compared this to the national laws. NCA and partners have initiated a process to collaborate with like-minded actors to advocate for legislation protecting women and girls from all forms of GBV.



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

In most cases, survivors of GBV need support to deal with an otherwise precarious situation. NCA's GBV programme provides a range of services, including access to medical and psychosocial care, access to legal redress and access to empowerment, both economic and agency. NCA also ensures functioning referral mechanisms and raises awareness amongst communities on how to access available services. These services are provided at collaborating health facilities, one-stop centres, women, and girls safe spaces (WGSS), or other areas identified by the communities/local authorities.

NCA and partners reached 4,695 women and girls with GBV-services in **DRC, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, and Sudan**. In **Malawi**, survivors of GBV accessed services related to emergency physical trauma management, clinical management of rape, emergency contraceptives and psychosocial counselling. Studies have shown that economically independent women are less likely to be subjected to GBV than those depending on their partners or male relatives. Hence, NCA and partners also initiated interventions expected to economically empower survivors and women at risk of GBV.

In **Myanmar**, survivors of GBV and human trafficking can now access a 24-hour hotline, which proved particularly critical during the coup-de-état and the Pandemic. Because of the efforts of NCA's partners, 16 survivors of trafficking were reunited with their families.

Using a multi-sectoral model which promotes coordination across critical sectors, NCA in **Sudan** supported the establishment of referral mechanisms linking survivors of GBV to appropriate health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and protection services. As a result of training on the clinical management of rape (CMR), one of NCA's partners in Sudan now includes this as part of services offered in one of their clinics.

In **Guatemala**, 185 survivors of GBV were supported to access medical, legal, and psychosocial care. Some women who accessed psychosocial care requested and were provided with legal support to break free from the vicious circle of violence.

In **DRC**, the Panzi Foundation ensured survivors of GBV continued to access relevant services appropriate to their needs. For security reasons, some survivors could not return home and were provided with temporary shelter at Dorcas House while accessing medical and psychosocial care. Some survivors received vocational training to empower them to start income-generating activities. In **Somalia**, 400 women participated in empowerment activities at safe spaces for women and girls.



Workshop on rights of women for female participants in Baharak District, Afghanistan. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Afghanistan

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

NCA contributes to ensuring women's empowerment through various interventions, including support to women organising themselves into groups to be platforms for a common agenda. Women are taught basic business management skills within the groups and supported to start income-generating activities. Other interventions include strengthening women's leadership skills, literacy, numeracy, and awareness-raising on their rights and where/how to access services.

In the **DRC, Guatemala, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Zambia**, NCA reached an estimated 12,500 women and young women with various capacity-strengthening events geared toward empowering them. In **Mali**, NCA and partners supported 343 women and girls in a demonstration to denounce early marriages in their communities and demand a commitment from religious leaders to discourage the practice. This is excellent progress in a patriarchal and conservative society.

NCA and partners trained women and young women in Pakistan on rights, leadership, and advocacy. Testimonies from participants attest to the effect of this training on their self-esteem and courage.

In **Guatemala**, NCA and partners supported a women's group with training on budget monitoring to challenge legislators to budget for and implement women's development programmes. In **Malawi**, NCA worked with the judicial system to bring the courts closer to the people. Mobile courts were established and travelled to hard-to-reach villages, enabling survivors of GBV to sue perpetrators and get legal redress. This has increased the awareness among people, and women and girls are taking the opportunity to report any form of GBV to these courts.

"It was quite difficult for me to travel outside my village for training. Through the project's mobilisation, I became part of a women's self-help group and attended the training. It has given me confidence. Now I am aware of the negative impacts of GBV, and I am raising awareness on these issues with my family, friends, and community."

*Quote from a participant at training in Pakistan*

#### OUTCOME 4: WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS ACCESSED COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION (CSE) AND MODERN FAMILY PLANNING

In total, 11,404 people were reached under this outcome in 2021; two-thirds were women. NCA piloted its new global CSE toolkit in **Malawi**, ready to be implemented in 2022 in countries working on SRHR. Consisting of three teaching manuals, it is available through ACT Alliance's digital learning platform. With accurate and age-appropriate language, it teaches attitudes and skills that contribute to positive relationships, health and well-being, and respect for human rights and gender equality. A **global** family planning toolkit for healthcare providers was also finalised in 2021 and piloted in 2022. It was developed to respond to health workers' inadequate training in family planning.

**Malawi** also made essential steps in reaching adolescents with a disability, and an inspiring 2,013 young men and women accessed family planning services in 2021 against the target of 90. This was possible through NCA/DCA's continued advocacy to ensure that youth with disabilities are reached with information and demand is thus created for SRHR services. NCA and partners have worked with stakeholders and service providers to give special attention to the needs of adolescents with disabilities.

In 2021, NCA and partners used various methods to secure access to CSE and family planning training sessions, despite COVID-19 limitations on large gatherings. Examples include community groups, outreach sessions and clinics, and teaching at schools and youth clubs. Health workers, teachers, and faith leaders were also trained. Partners emphasised working closely with health facilities to ensure that SRHR services are youth-friendly so adolescents and youths can access them.

Partners in **Zambia** show good progress after using the Ministry of Education model to roll out CSE to 200 students in ten target schools and surrounding communities. In addition, 20 teachers and 100 mothers were supported to provide mentorship on SRHR and other issues affecting adolescents. As a result, 5,600 young women and men adolescents were sensitised about CSE, SRHR and how to access family planning services.

In **Ethiopia**, 1,068 women and adolescent girls got access to CSE and family planning services through a peer education programme in 2021. In **Mali**, 281 adolescents and women received comprehensive family planning services. In **DRC**, 1,727 women and men participated in community dialogues on SRHR.

#### DEVIATIONS

COVID-19 continued to affect programming in all countries and, to some degree, limited physical gatherings such as community conversations which is the primary working methodology. Due to this, the gains made, especially in initiatives related to harmful practices, either stagnated or even pushed back. In **Ethiopia**, for example, COVID-19 protocols limited the number of participants per event, posing a challenge in gathering larger groups for sexuality education sessions. Social media platforms were used to solve this, successfully reaching additional vulnerable women and girls with messages.

Several countries report challenges reaching their 2021 targets due to resistance from religious leaders and faith communities to information about family planning and services. In **Mali**, this presented a severe setback to the progress on SRHR due to fundamental Muslims disapproving of services. Despite these challenges, NCA continues to mobilise religious leaders to support family planning in 2022.

#### RESULT CASE

##### SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR HEALTH AND REDUCTION OF UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES IN RURAL MALAWI

**SECTOR:** 130.30 Family Planning

**WHAT:** Three times as many young women as initially planned received comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in 2021. Close to 10,000 young women were reached through innovative approaches, providing sessions at school clubs. Here, the girls already learn about the development of the human body, how to stay safe, understand gender, relationships, HIV and AIDS, family planning, and menstrual hygiene. The training gave the young women more confidence about accessing family planning services.

**WHY:** More than half of all births in Malawi are delivered by a woman under 18. Early childbearing is associated with poor health, low socioeconomic status, and lack of education for both the mother and the child. Young women's access to family planning services and CSE is crucial to breaking this circle. Research shows that people with disabilities are more susceptible to sexual abuse than others and face an increased risk of child marriage and human trafficking. They are less likely to access Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) due to entrenched taboos, harmful social norms, and little political will to ensure their rights. The barriers they face are reinforced by the variety and intensity of their disabilities.

**HOW:** Through providing CSE sessions through school clubs, NCA's partner successfully used an established platform to communicate with the adolescents. The sessions used both the Malawian national curriculum and the NCA/DCA-produced Christian and Muslim teaching guides on CSE. These guides and sessions aimed to empower adolescents to make life-changing decisions about their sexual and reproductive health by increasing their knowledge, including how to lessen their vulnerability to coercion, sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancies.

Led by peer educators and life skills facilitators, sessions were conducted using the participatory approach, engaging youth through buzz groups and case studies.

Young women from more conservative religious families reported that the training helped them access services they previously would shy away from due to misconceptions and myths about family planning.

**PARTNER:** Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM)

**SOURCES:** Partner reports



Youth standing up for their rights in Malawi.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/  
Norwegian Church Aid



# CLIMATE RESILIENT WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (CR WASH)



**OVERALL GOAL:** 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 GOAL:** Haiti, Mali, Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and DRC.



*Habiba notices the climate change in her village. The rainy season has gone from being reliable, to unpredictable. Darfur, Sudan.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

WASH services in programme countries are threatened by a mix of weak governance, conflicts, and climate change. NCA supports establishing critical and strategic services to promote development and build community resilience. According to a 2019 report from WHO/UNICEF's Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP)<sup>1</sup>, 50% of health facilities in least-developed countries lack access to water and 60% to sanitary facilities. This gives a rapid overview of the situation of WASH services, and it can be considered representative of the capacity of the government to provide basic services. Safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, good hygiene practices, and a clean environment are necessary for good health and a life of dignity. Life becomes more complicated when WASH services are absent, scarce, or of low quality. This situation primarily affects children, the elderly, the sick, and those caring for them.

In 2021, the context has deteriorated in **Haiti, Mali, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia** and remained critical in **Somalia and Pakistan**. This volatility affected the availability of local authorities to collaborate in reaching development objectives. NCA works with remote communities where knowledge about rights and responsibilities related to CRWASH services is limited. It is becoming more complicated to work there due to worsening security conditions.

Pastoralist communities shift locations often, bringing a challenge with equipping them with a stable infrastructure and standard water solutions that may only partially fulfil their needs. Deforestation, suboptimal farming practices, overgrazing and unplanned urbanisation often result in land degradation. Climate change and environmental degradation also threaten water availability for productive use.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

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

Despite various challenges, NCA applied an inclusive approach fostering the population's participation and supporting constructive relations between communities and local authorities. In 2021, **Pakistan** and **Ethiopia** worked extensively on this. To increase the inclusion of vulnerable women and men, NCA commissioned a consultancy firm to evaluate the inclusion of people with disabilities in the programme. Data were collected from ten country offices, and the findings will be used to improve programming.

NCA prioritises cooperation and collaboration with governmental structures such as agencies in charge of sanitation standards enforcement. A clear example is the work done in Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) campaigns, where active cooperation is a prerequisite. In **Ethiopia**, through successfully building trust between the government and the communities, NCA and partners could double the number of CLTS campaigns initially planned for 2021.

In 2021, NCA and partners facilitated dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers. As a result, five of seven programme countries reported positive progress on how duty-bearers address WASH requests raised by the communities. In **Afghanistan**, eight districts incorporated WASH proposals presented by the communities into their work plans. In **Haiti**, NCA's partner supported school representatives in requesting the construction of a concrete walkway to facilitate access to the school during the rainy season.

<sup>1</sup> <https://washdata.org/monitoring/health-care-facilities>

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

In 2021 further steps were taken to strengthen climate resilience efforts. In **Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti** and **Mali**, a total of 33 communities implemented measures to increase the resilience of their WASH services to climate change.

In **Pakistan**, NCA's partner conducted training on climate change adaptation and technical WASH programming to facilitate the identification of context-specific WASH solutions.

In **Somalia**, a field tool for a simple environmental impact screening of the most common CRWASH activities was developed in 2021. It will contribute to minimising the negative environmental impact of the activities.

In 2021, local partners in **Pakistan, Haiti** and **Mali** contributed to developing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans at the community level due to their vulnerability to recurrent natural disasters (floods, cyclones, and droughts). Such plans are crucial for communities to identify suitable local solutions. In semiarid locations where rain is concentrated over short periods, and permanent water sources are limited, rainwater harvesting tanks allow communities to stock water for the dry season. For example, in **Mali**, one of NCA's partners built a 54m<sup>3</sup> rainwater harvesting tank.

In **Ethiopia**, NCA's strategy for soil conservation is aligned with the government strategy, resulting in fruitful synergies during implementation in 2021

NCA organised a global online training on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) for its CRWASH staff to strengthen expertise and include water cycle restoration activities in the programme. More than 30 persons from all country offices, local partners and NCA's Head Office participated. The training focused on the principle of the 3Rs (Retain, Recharge, Reuse), which also has a positive effect on the conservation of topsoil through limiting erosion, supporting agriculture, and reducing the siltation of lakes.

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

Promoting and adopting good hygiene practices is crucial to any CRWASH programme. It allows community members to understand and rationalise the link between hygiene behaviour and health benefits. Knowledge of good hygiene practices increases safe water handling and waste disposal. While supplying water and latrines is relatively easy from a technical point of view, fostering change in people's behaviour is the most challenging part. People need time to change their habits. NCA and partners thus spent considerable time in the communities in 2021 despite challenging security conditions.

A survey conducted in **Ethiopia** at the end of 2021 shows that 90% of the target population now wash their hands with soap on at least three out of five critical occasions during the past 24 hours. Similarly, data from the health centres in the same area show a reduction in the incidence of diarrheal diseases. Part of this explanation lies in hygiene promotion activities being continued with high intensity due to the Pandemic. Handwashing is proven to improve hygiene and be an efficient barrier against the spread of COVID-19. For example, handwashing facilities were provided at institutions, and simple "tippy-tap" devices were set up in households.

In 2021 the programme lifted Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) as a central and essential hygiene component. Promoting MHM activities were often approached in coordination with Gender-based Violence (GBV) activities. In 2021, the demand for MHM kits greatly exceeded NCA's supply capacity. Women and girls appreciate the MHM campaign sessions and the kits. In **Afghanistan**, sessions were conducted for 5,028 women and girls in Samangan, Daikundi, Kabul, and Khost provinces.

In **Pakistan**, NCA and partners reached more than 300,000 with hygiene messages. In urban and peri-urban areas, social media enables interaction with the public through direct involvement. Hygiene messages were therefore effectively communicated through social media. However, NCA is conscious that the most vulnerable people may not have access to this technology due to weak signals and the high cost of devices. Reaching populations in more remote areas was therefore done through traditional TV and radio channels.

"Poor menstrual hygiene management can contribute to poor performance and completion rates among schoolgirls and expose them to health risks."

*Latifa Malundila, Youth Champion from BAKAIDS, Lindi, Tanzania*



*Menstrual hygiene campaign in a school in Manyara, Tanzania.  
Photo: Lucian Muntean/Norwegian Church Aid*

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

In a community, significant public health gains are possible only if there is a general improvement in sanitation coverage. Proper sanitation services are essential for preventing the transmission of diseases and avoiding contamination of water sources with waste. Household sanitation facilities increase women's dignity and protection and reduce the risk women and girls often face going to isolated places when it is dark. In 2021 NCA and partners reached a total of 84,749 people with sanitation services, 40 per cent more than anticipated. This is mainly a result of synergies with the government in Ethiopia and favourable conditions for expansion in **Pakistan**.

In 2021 NCA encountered an extensive range of situations and consequently applied different approaches to promoting sanitation. Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) was followed in all programme countries. In a development context, CLTS is the most common tool adopted by national governments to promote sanitation coverage and eradicate open defecation in rural areas.

In **Afghanistan**, sanitation marketing was also applied towards behaviour change, while in **Mali**, the cash modality was widely used.

The construction of sanitation facilities in schools in **Haiti** and **Pakistan** and health centres in **Pakistan** was also supported by NCA in 2021. Not only did this respond to users' needs for services, but it also showcased the importance of such infrastructure, exposed people to its use and advocated for its adoption at the household level.

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

In 2021 NCA and partners reached 120,702 people with basic drinking water services, positively surpassing the initial target. More than half of those reached were boys and girls. NCA and partners contributed with a plurality of solutions to cater to each location's specificity. Examples include gravity-fed water systems, boreholes with solar-powered electrical pumps, and rainwater harvesting tanks.

In **Mali**, solar-powered water tanks were connected to drinking troughs for livestock and ensured that the water overflow provided drinking water for more than 110,000 animals. A commitment to climate resilience was built by establishing or reinforcing inclusive community-based management structures. Water services were also supplied to selected schools in **Haiti** and health centres in **Pakistan**.

A trend observed in recent years is the gradual change in legislation allowing governments to open for professional management of water supply services in the form of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). However, this model applies to water supply systems of a specific size where the financial turnover can cover the costs, primarily in urban and peri-urban settings. NCA **Somalia** (in the cities of Garowe and Dollow) and DRC have entered into similar partnerships.





Kavita (16) shows her flag with the important message "Its time for action".  
Photo: Norwegian Church Aid/RDF, Pakistan

## DEVIATIONS

In the first half of 2021, several factors limited the possibility of interaction among NCA, partners, authorities, and communities. COVID-19 put restrictions on gatherings in the first part of the year, **Pakistan** being particularly affected by this.

An earthquake hit **Haiti** in August 2021. The country also faces a chronic lack of effective government, and part of Haiti is under the control of bandit groups.

With the Taliban taking over **Afghanistan** in August 2021, NCA and partners were prevented from accessing programme areas for an extended period. Thus, some activities were severely delayed at the end of the year.

All of the above situations affected the implementation of the three first outcomes, which required frequent visits to communities and project sites, which were sometimes impossible to conduct. NCA and partners have been able to find opportunities in each country to implement the projects, even if not at full scale in some circumstances. Examples include **Haiti** and **Afghanistan**.

The conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, has affected some of the implementation in those areas. However, Ethiopia also overachieved regarding water and sanitation access due to synergies with the government of Ethiopia in areas not directly affected by the conflict. Due to the great need for basic CRWASH services, an overachievement in access to water and sanitation services is observed, despite the difficult situations. **Pakistan** also reached more rights-holders in 2021 due to additional funds made available through internal regranting.

## RESULT CASE

### NCA'S VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A NATIONAL WATER STRATEGY FOR SOMALIA

**SECTOR:** 140.10 Water sector policy and administrative management

**WHAT:** The federal government of Somalia gave testimony to NCA's recognition as a WASH actor in Somalia. With the support from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD<sup>2</sup>) experts, the government requested NCA to facilitate the input from Jubaland to the draft of the first-ever National Water Resource Strategy<sup>3</sup>.

**WHY:** Somalia has progressed in many areas since the 1970s, but the existing water laws of the country date back to 1971 and 1972. There was a need for a water strategy as the federal government did not exert control over Somalia's water resources supply chain. Until now, water services have been managed by unlicensed private individuals and companies that have decided on pricing schemes. They have collected fees from users but do not pay any taxes to the government.

**HOW:** A process to draft a water strategy was initiated. Before presenting it to Parliament for debate and enactment, the government wanted input on the draft policy from various stakeholders in the federal states through a consultative process. Due to its expertise in WASH programming and the critical role NCA has played in coordinating with several stakeholders, NCA was asked to support the consultative process in the Gedo region of Jubaland. NCA rose to the occasion by facilitating a consultation in November 2021.

The Water strategy consultative forum brought together members of agencies implementing WASH projects in the region, district water officers, the regional water coordinator for Jubaland, district authorities from Dollow, and officers from the Federal Government and the Jubaland Dollow Water Company Managers (from the public-private partnership supported by NCA). Sessions were held on water resource use, special provisions on groundwater, water protection against pollution, water users' associations, dispute resolutions, and appeals. Stakeholders discussed and provided input and feedback to the draft. Through facilitating the consultation, NCA directly influenced the national strategy as well as Dollow Water Company.

NCA believes all the aspects discussed at the meeting are crucial to ensure that the water service management in Somalia is inclusive and affordable.

**PARTNERS:** NCA Somalia

**SOURCES:** NCA's records



The consultative process in Gedo gathered input to Somalia's water strategy  
Photo: Alio Abdinur Ahmed/  
Norwegian Church Aid, Somalia

<sup>2</sup> IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development is an eight-country trade bloc in Africa. It includes governments from the Horn of Africa, Nile Valley and the African Great Lakes.

<sup>3</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/federal-government-somalia-ministry-energy-and-water-resources-national-water>

# PEACEBUILDING (PB)



**OVERALL GOAL:** Societies are more inclusive, cohesive, and peaceful.

**COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOAL:** Haiti, Mali, Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and DRC.



*"We lived happily together, but then everything changed. Our friends became our enemies. We did not dare to go out for fear of being attacked. But now our enemies have become our friends", says Daniel Deng Dau. Martin Akoloth Dier and Daniel come from different communities in the shattered city of Malakal in South Sudan. Through the NCA peacebuilding programme, the two have become friends. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

Violence represents a barrier to human development at all levels. Persons confronted with violent conflict often suffer long-term physical and psychological harm. Individuals living in conflict areas cannot effectively improve their living conditions. Access to essential services, sustainable livelihoods, and justice decreases during violent conflict, as does freedom of expression and people's ability to organise and participate as active citizens.

The rise of violent conflicts, observed in 2020, was confirmed in 2021. NCA witnessed a sharp increase in intolerance in many of the targeted countries, such as **Ethiopia** and **Mali**, where hateful messages across ethnic, religious, and nationalistic lines became a daily reality and resulted in increased violence.

Furthermore, the peaceful and inclusive transformation of these conflicts becomes increasingly difficult as the institutions and structures that generally manage governmental or traditional conflicts are challenged by the expansion of oppressive regimes and radicalism. In almost every country targeted by this programme, where regime changes have not been favourable to fundamental freedoms (such as **Mali** and **Afghanistan**), the space for the inclusion of minorities, participation, and action of civil society to prevent conflict and sustain peace has been reduced. Human rights defenders and peace activists face increased risks in **Afghanistan, Burundi, Ethiopia, and the Sahel**.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

### OUTCOME 1: RIGHTS-HOLDERS ENJOY INCREASED SOCIAL COHESION

In **Afghanistan, Burundi, Mali, South Sudan** and the **Eastern Africa** region, the programme reached over 2,200 people with over 50 community awareness initiatives and educative activities promoting mutual respect and understanding. Among other actors, 481 religious leaders were mobilised to improve inter-group relations and countering violence.

In **Afghanistan**, for example, 12 groups to promote social cohesion were established with the participation of 175 NCA-trained religious and community leaders (among them 49 women). Because of their influence in the communities, religious actors and elders were able to lead the organising of sports tournaments, cultural events, and conferences where community members get together, play, discuss their issues, and even, in some cases, sign agreements to settle disputes. This was the case in the Kiti and Sangi Takht districts of Daikundi, where a football tournament drew people of both districts together to play despite their prevailing political and ethnic traditions and lifestyles. This initiative led three communities to hold meetings, identifying the root causes of conflicts and finding ways and means to resolve them. All three communities settled their disputes through mediation, agreeing on some compromises from all the sides and signing agreements to fulfil their commitments.

In **Ethiopia**, the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa supported faith women mediators to convene dialogue forums ahead of the national elections in the country. Women of faith from various regions conducted a series of dialogues bringing together different religious groups, religious leaders, and youth. A total of 415 people were reached through these.

In **Mali**, NCA supported the Alliance of Religious Leaders to develop a joint advocacy document on peace, social cohesion, and climate change. This initiative showed their commitment to work together, despite their religious differences, to fight violent extremism through social dialogue and promote mutual trust. During an official event, the document was delivered by the alliance of Muslim and Christian religious leaders of Mali to the political, religious, and customary authorities, including the Ministry for Reconciliation and Peace, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Women, and the Ministry of the Environment. These messages were later diffused on TV, radio, and other media. Using four different languages, messages reached an overwhelming 10 million people throughout Mali.

Although the level of constructive interaction across groups will only be measured again during the mid-term review in 2023, NCA observed improved social cohesion among targeted communities and individuals in 2021. For example, in **Burundi**, interview sessions reported that the tolerance level among targeted groups has increased. This improvement has been attributed to various common-interest initiatives carried out together and in solidarity with the others. An example of this was the rehabilitation of houses of vulnerable families, regardless of their creed, ethnicity, or political affiliation. Members of targeted communities in Burundi affirmed that the ethnic aspect no longer influences their daily relations. Mixed marriages now occur, meals are shared, and children have sleepovers with friends from families of another ethnicity.





Prayers for peace in Malakal, Upper Nile State, South Sudan.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

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

In 2021, NCA supported creating and strengthening 56 Local Peace Structures (LPS). NCA provided training on conflict analysis, mediation, non-violent communication, and inclusion to more than 465 LPS members. Women, men, and youth volunteer as LPS members contributing toward managing community conflicts in a non-violent way. This year, those structures contributed to the transformation of 250 conflicts in **Afghanistan, Burundi, Mali, Ethiopia, South Sudan** and through **Global Ecumenical Partners**.

NCA also supports such structures to increase the participation of marginalised groups, keep better records and coordinate with local governments. In **Afghanistan**, for example, six cases were referred to relevant government departments, while the government referred 60 cases to the LPSs.

Conflicts managed by these structures were related to religious discrimination, disputes over land, access to resources, inheritance, domestic violence, ethnic tension, and political disputes. Illustratively, in the Kidal region in **Mali**, NCA and its partners organised and facilitated a two-day dialogue session between leaders of communities affiliated with armed groups (CMA and PLATEFORME). More than 40 local government leaders, armed groups, traditional and religious leaders, women, and youth leaders participated. Following this activity, participants declared their willingness to solve misunderstandings and work together towards reconciliation. They agreed on a joint action plan for peace with initiatives where they can collaborate to benefit all communities.

Beyond the local level, in 2021, the ACT Alliance Secretariat was especially active in the NGO Working Group on the UN Security Council. They participated in meetings with the ambassadors of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member countries, notably on the situation in **Ethiopia/Tigray**.

## OUTCOME 3: PEACE PROCESSES ARE MORE INCLUSIVE

In 2021, NCA continued supporting civil society in targeted countries so that they could advocate for the meaningful inclusion of marginalised groups in peacebuilding initiatives and peace talks. NCA backed 34 women-led advocacy initiatives for peace in **Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, the Eastern Africa Region, South Sudan** and **Tanzania**. In addition, 20 youth-led advocacy initiatives were undertaken and resulted in commitments and actions by duty-bearers towards increasing the role of women and youth in peace and decision-making processes. Although the impact of such advocacy initiatives and policies of duty-bearers will not be measured until 2023, progress is observed. Duty-bearers already acknowledge the critical roles faith actors, women, and youth play in peace and decision-making. For example, young women mediators in **South Sudan** held discussions with the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) of The Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD). Following these discussions, IGAD MSU committed to collaborating with the young women from South Sudan to implement peace projects.

Finally, in all countries where NCA supports Local Peace Structures, the participation of youth and women in such structures was a priority, and it has increased compared to last year. In **Afghanistan**, for example, the percentage of women in local peace structures increased from zero to 31% and the rate of youth to 44%.

## DEVIATIONS

In 2021, some interventions were hindered by the escalation of armed clashes, such as the collapse of the Afghan government and the Tigray conflict in **Ethiopia**, as civil society organisations and media were targeted. Peacebuilding activities in **Afghanistan** were hindered during the escalation of armed clashes in 2021 and after the Taliban's takeover in August, the entire programme was halted. The peacebuilding programme in **Somalia** was also put on hold during the second half of the year, due to internal programme considerations. These situations contributed to delaying the progress towards achieving the global outcomes. However, in such contexts, the expected number of conflicts addressed by local peacebuilding structures was exceeded. In **Mali** and **Afghanistan**, LPSs addressed 192 conflicts compared to the planned 28, as people relied on these structures in the absence of government.

COVID-19 impacted the programme as well. Global and regional physical meetings were reduced due to restrictions on large gatherings. However, this ignited digital platforms allowing NCA and partners to reach more people than what would have been possible at purely physical gatherings. For example, the **Regional Peace Programme in Eastern Africa** doubled the rights-holders mobilised compared to their target.

The inclusion of underrepresented groups in peace processes has been challenged in some countries such as **South Sudan** because of patriarchal systems that favour men and perceive youth as instigators of violence.

## RESULT CASE

### INTER-COMMUNITY RECONCILIATION YIELDS IMMEDIATE RESULTS IN NORTHERN MALI

**SECTOR:** 152.20 Civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution

**WHAT:** In collaboration with the Local Peace Structure of Kidal, NCA and partner ASSADDEC organised a regional mediation and inter-community reconciliation meeting in November 2021. At the end of the session, participants committed to leaving all misunderstandings behind them and working for peace and social cohesion. Among other agreements, participants consented to establishing a permanent consultation space for exchange between all actors, co-organising a regional meeting for youth from all groups to strengthen mutual trust and cohesion, and joining efforts to restore water services in affected villages.

**WHY:** From 2012 to 2017, the Kidal region was an area of widespread instability marked by clashes between pro-government groups (PLATFORM) and pro-independence armed groups (CMA). The trust and cooperation between communities affiliated with any of these groups had deteriorated, resulting in violence.

**HOW:** The intervention had two stages. First, a series of five preparatory consultations and mediation sessions took place, led by the local Peace structure of Adiel'hoc in collaboration with the UN-supported regional mediation structure of the Kidal region. These consultations allowed for identifying the sources of tension and potential factors of unity and ensuring the commitment of all parts to the process.

The second stage was the two-day inter-community gathering. Around 200 participants joined together, representing administrative authorities of all districts, involved municipalities, traditional and customary leaders, religious leaders, armed groups, and women and youth organisations. During this gathering, all participants were sensitised through awareness-raising about the importance of trust and tolerance. The result of the preparatory mediation was presented to the communities. Finally, the declarations were given, and agreements were signed between the reconciled parties.

**PARTNER:** ASSADEC

**SOURCES:** Records from Kidal local PB and regional mediations structures; Minutes from inter-community gathering.

*"I was impressed by the inclusive organisation of the meeting, bringing together all the key actors and decision-makers in Kidal around peace issues. This meeting was for us, women, a space of expression in public in front of the great traditional and political authorities to take back our role in the management of the city. Since the meeting was held, the women of opposing armed groups have woven and strengthened the bonds of social cohesion and living together."*

President of the Women's Network for Peace / Municipal Councillor



*Thumbs up for local peace structures in Mali.  
Photo: Mohamed Ould Al-Arby/  
ASSADEC*



# CLIMATE SMART ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (CSEE)



**OVERALL GOAL:** Enable people to climb out of poverty and build communities' resilience.

**COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOAL:** Burundi, Haiti, Myanmar, Palestine, Tanzania, Zambia, and Somalia.



*Drip irrigation of fields in Kamuwe in Mchinji, Malawi.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

Increasing poverty levels in developing countries are prevalent, especially for smallholder farmers, as they are trapped in a vicious cycle of low productivity and poor market access. Smallholder farmers struggle to access the market due to poor quality of products, short shelf life, unpredictable and small scattered volume, inconsistency in supply and fluctuation of market prices. Smallholder farmers rely heavily on rainfed agriculture and with increasingly erratic weather patterns, this traditional model poses an additional risk to their food security.

As the effects of COVID-19 started impacting agricultural communities and value chains globally, many countries were confronted with a shortage of resources to cope with health and safety issues, thus increasing the risk that smallholder farmers face even more.

However, 2021 has been the most productive in realising programme objectives by many measures. The Pandemic revealed the strength of resilience, creativity, and solidarity even as it has intensified inequality and suffering. COVID-19 prompted several of NCA's offices and partners to go beyond their traditional activities and support rights-holders in responding to the crisis.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

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

Out of 6,000 targeted smallholder farmers in **Tanzania**, 8,435 women and men accessed available agro-extension and market information through the JAMBOMAISHA platform. Mobilising the farmers into groups made it easier for collective learning and monitoring to take place through digital platforms. NCA Tanzania intends to invest in mobile devices to extend access to even more farmers' groups.

A growing number of collaborative partnerships between financial service providers, agribusinesses, public funders, and civil society organisations are testing new ways of catalysing capital flow to smallholders. In **Zambia**, the number of women, men, young women, and young men selling produce to secured markets saw very positive achievements as a result of applying an innovative partnership with the private sector. Against a target of reaching 3,500 markets in 2021, they managed to sell through 5,126 venues. The producers signed agreements to sell their produce to markets such as boarding schools, hospitals, bed and breakfasts, and local shops. One of NCA's partners (CHAZ) signed an MOU with a private company to sell crops at competitive prices. This off-taker was able to buy all the produce from farmers' demonstration sites and incubation hubs to the satisfaction of the producers.

NCA and its partners contributed toward transitioning smallholder farmers from subsistence- to commercial farming. As accessibility to mobile phones is rapidly increasing in low-income countries, an opportunity to apply digital business models for smallholders is emerging. One example of such a model is from **Tanzania**, where rights-holders use mobile phones to access current market prices, weather predictions and advertising possibilities. Being in the forefront of this model, NCA Tanzania has assisted in connecting various technology providers to smallholders, creating fertile ground for innovative partnerships.

Through its locally anchored partners, NCA maintained its closeness to local communities. Offering understanding and supporting smallholders' needs and provide targeted and applicable approaches. Supporting these farmers with the adoption of sustainable farming practices is critical for untangling commodity agriculture from environmental degradation. NCA has worked deeper on synergies between its CRWASH and CSEE programmes, as predictable access to reliable water sources is crucial for the economy of the countries relying primarily on agriculture and livestock rearing. **Burundi** is one example where integration between CSEE and CRWASH has been successful.

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

In **Burundi**, with the incomes earned and loans from VICOPA, rights-holders have diversified their activities by investing in animal husbandry. In 2021 women and men in targeted communities have acquired 98 cows, 2,522 goats, 1,548 pigs, 2,434 hens, 1,407 rabbits, 65 sheep, and 1,180 guinea pigs. Two rights-holders bought motorbikes, which they used to transport people and goods against a fee, while 39 built houses. Most of the income was reinvested in agriculture through buying improved seeds and renting out land for crops.

WAC in **Palestine** successfully supported 45 unemployed young women as planned to acquire technical, freelancing, and digital communication skills. The project improved their ICT technical skills, which helped them access jobs through various global freelancing and social media platforms. In addition, four youth were able to sign short-term contracts with private companies in the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Finland. A survey revealed that 92% of participants gained new insight and developed new market skills. Local partner YMCA VTC applied permaculture techniques, technology and innovation that brought positive changes for youth and women. They created jobs and improved their





Vocational training for youth by YMCA VTC in Palestine.  
Photo: Camilla Grøtta/Norwegian Church Aid

well-being. In addition, 520 young women and 162 young men were trained to develop their vegetable gardens at home to increase their income from agriculture.

In **Somalia**, NCA's partner CeRID engaged 80 youth as trainees in production units, sustainability ventures, and demo plots. By providing them with an opportunity to work, earn money, and get on-the-job training, the young men and women have improved their technical skills and gained work experience. CeRID has equipped trainee placement centres with materials for tailoring and dressmaking, carpentry, welding, and establishing agricultural demonstration plots. Youth engaged in the production of a variety of items required locally, such as clothing and furniture (beds and school chairs). Youth helped with the marketing of these products and earned two per cent of the price of each item. Through this, they learned about market demand, selling and how to develop their business skills. Some youth trainees in the electrical installation were selected for job placements with the Somali Power Lighting Company in Luuq town. They received apprenticeships after volunteering for two months, later to be employed.

## DEVIATIONS

COVID-19 impacted the programme in **Zambia** by causing delays in the further rollout of the micro-investing concept initiated in 2020. Due to COVID-19, two of the four partners had to delay the introduction to 2021. Consequently, the rollout is delayed until 2022. It is expected that the targets for 2022 will be met since all the partners contributing to this result area will be scaling up their interventions.

## RESULT CASE

### INNOVATIVE STORAGE FOR FISH TO LIFT LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN ZAMBIA OUT OF POVERTY

**SECTOR:** 313.91 Fishery services

**WHAT:** The rural district of Gwembe boasts of great potential in the fishing industry, despite its vulnerability and remoteness. Through studying closer the fishing industry value chain, the joint country programme and local partner ADRA quickly saw the potential for the community to establish a storage facility where fish could be frozen in larger quantities as demanded by the market. This solution not only brought profit to the community but also had excellent health and environmental benefit by reducing the former practice of smoking fish for preservation. From this innovation, 3,978 inhabitants of the Namazuma fishing camp will directly benefit.

**WHY:** The 90,000 inhabitants of Gwembe depend economically on agriculture and fishing. The district is semi-arid, with perennial droughts of flash floods caused by climate change. Until now, traders have smoked the fish as the only way of preserving it to get it to the market. The primary source of energy for smoking fish is firewood. The great demand for preservation has contributed to rapid deforestation and increased people's risk of respiratory diseases.

The fishing community lacked cold storage facilities as an alternative to smoking fish. A few isolated small businesses sell ice and offer freezing services, but they could not meet the demand. Available facilities faced challenges with fish going stale as electricity is often interrupted. Traders face challenges in finding sufficient fish simultaneously, often leading them to buy small quantities over a period until they have their desired amounts.

**HOW:** Local partner ADRA assessed the challenges with the supply chain and established a solar-powered cold storage facility to serve the needs of fishers, traders, and the community. A container was built with the capacity to store 20 tonnes of fresh fish. Fish can be bundled together in larger quantities using a bulking centre. Solar panels provide electricity during the day while charging batteries for power during the night. The cold storage facility is managed by a cooperative of 130 members (50% women). Among the members are 60 fish traders and 45 fishermen. It operates as a business, whereby fishers and traders pay a fee to store their fish. The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries provides backstopping to the cooperative to ensure it operates effectively.

**PARTNER:** Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

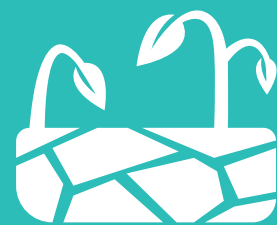
**SOURCES:** Partner reports and monitoring visits.



The opening of the cold storage facility for fish in Gwembe gives occasion to celebrate.  
Photo: Norwegian Church Aid, Zambia



# FAITH-BASED CLIMATE ACTION (FBCA)



**OVERALL GOAL:** Faith actors take action on climate change.

**COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOAL:** Angola, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Pakistan, and Global Ecumenical Partners.



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

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

The recent UN climate change reports underline that the need for climate action has never been greater than now. Climate change threatens our lives, livelihoods, and creation itself. It intensifies poverty and inequality and undermines the ability of vulnerable communities to enjoy a life with dignity. People living in poverty are disproportionately impacted by extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, meaning that those who have contributed the least to climate change are the ones who suffer the most from its effects. The UN report emphasises that climate-resilient development action is more urgent than previously assessed. Collaboration across government, civil society and the private sector is critical in this regard, and inclusion of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and ethnic minorities is essential.

The obligation to care for creation is strong across all faiths. Through its Faith-Based Climate Action programme, NCA mobilises faith-based organisations and movements for climate change action. NCA enables faith actors to respond to this shared risk and links faith actors with other key stakeholders to join forces for a more significant impact. NCA supports climate change actions that address local needs and vulnerabilities in their communities and among their constituencies. An added value to this method is that it builds on the religious-, moral- and ethical capital and the potential for community mobilisation that faith actors possess.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

### OUTCOME 1: COMMUNITIES INCREASE THEIR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In 2021, 98 communities in **Angola, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Pakistan** increased their resilience toward climate change. Forest conservation has been a significant focus in three of the four countries and will contribute to green vegetation and improved groundwater discharge. For example, in **Ethiopia**, partners planted an impressive 28,500 multipurpose tree seedlings in areas with degraded land belonging to religious institutions, schools, and farms. This was more than twice as many seedlings as initially planned. The overachievement was possible due to better mobilisation and increased community interest.

A similar experience was made in **Pakistan**, as the interest from community members was higher than anticipated. Almost 6,500 community members actively participated in activities for climate resilience, such as tree planting drives, social accountability processes, and meetings with government stakeholders. Subsequently, 596 trees were planted in public places, mosques, shrines, and temples in 2021.

In **Guatemala**, 2,500 hectares of forests in five municipalities were protected, and 27 communities increased their climate resilience. Examples of initiatives include agroecological training, micro-basins recovery, solar panel installation, promotion of natural regeneration practices, and reforestation.

Due to drought in 2021, the demand for climate-resilient water management increased, and NCA's partners reached more communities than planned. A total of 261 households gained access to sustainable water points that will not be flooded during the rainy season or run dry during drought or dry seasons. More than 2,000 women and men were reached through community actions focusing on men and women's ability to handle extreme weather events and cope with climate change. As a result, six communities indicate that they are now better prepared to deal with drought.

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

A total of 55 advocacy actions aimed at holding duty-bearers accountable for climate action were recorded in 2021. For example, religious leaders in **Angola** were not satisfied with the government's reaction to human suffering, including malnutrition, hunger, and deaths, which were consequences in the drought-affected areas. Therefore, religious leaders spoke out publicly and demanded that the government take action to ensure that human needs were met. The religious leaders published five pastoral letters and a series of press articles and met with government authorities, meeting with the National Assembly. As a result, provincial and municipal authorities mobilised resources and support from other institutions and were able to provide humanitarian food aid and other assistance to the most vulnerable families.

In **Guatemala**, deforestation is a risk, and better policies are needed to protect the forest. NCA's partners advocated for revising the Probosque law, which governs the management of Guatemalan forests. They asked for reforms to increase Indigenous peoples' access to economic incentives to protect forests and stimulate community investments. NCA supported advocacy actions aimed at influencing public officials, and although the revision is not yet approved, it has been endorsed by all actors involved. A technical committee has been formed to secure participation by the public in the policy revision process. Community leaders and Indigenous peoples have already utilised this space actively, ensuring community voices are heard.

In **Ethiopia**, the Interreligious Climate Advocacy and Action Community Task Forces counted 84 members at the end of 2021, most of whom were women. The members have strengthened their capacity and confidence in influencing local government officials to support the community resilience fund and effectively implement natural resource management activities. As a result, 2,609 women and men were registered under the two community-care coalition task forces and began contributing membership fees to their respective contingency funds.

In **Pakistan**, 78 Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Christian faith actors, among these 30 women were trained for joint climate action. These individuals increased their comprehension of climate change and learned how to mitigate and adapt to changes in their communities. They also built their capacity in disaster risk reduction and climate advocacy. Training sessions included the development of action plans, which resulted in the delivery of 60 sermons, reaching approximately 6,000 worshippers with messages about climate change, tree planting, and conservation of natural resources.

NCA also supported a research study in **Pakistan** which identified significant climate change consequences in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The findings were used to discuss solutions with duty-bearers, who, as a result, committed to acting. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency agreed to initiate a mass-awareness campaign on flood and drought mitigation by involving religious leaders. The Wildlife Department was convinced to form community groups to monitor community-level biodiversity. And the Forest Department agreed to run a campaign to educate and raise people's awareness of the importance of planting trees.

In addition to national and local advocacy initiatives, NCA supported **global advocacy** for climate justice. NCA has been a long-standing member of ACT's climate advocacy group, and in 2021 the advocacy group produced the report *"From Words to Action: Lessons from Nordic Efforts to Integrate Gender Equality in Climate Finance"*. The information was actively used by ACT Alliance members participating in the COP26 climate change negotiations in Glasgow in November and was well-received by the delegations.

## DEVIATIONS

COVID-19 restricted some programme activities, especially the first six months of 2021. In **Pakistan**, government officials were not allowed to attend public meetings due to restrictions during the first half of 2021, limiting civil society engagement and advocacy opportunities. The number of advocacy actions was thus fewer than initially planned. In **Guatemala**, social distancing reduced the number of participants allowed in training, and in **Angola**, travel restrictions hindered capacity-building on climate change. In some cases, activities were postponed. In the first half of 2021, monitoring and follow-up were done remotely, and adjustments were made to reduce the size of group activities.

In **Ethiopia**, activities planned in the Tigray region had to be cancelled due to the war. This affected the overall achievement, as climate resilience projects were only possible to implement in the Amhara region.

## RESULT CASE

### ANCIENT MAYAN KNOWLEDGE INCREASES CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN GUATEMALA

**SECTOR:** 311.30 Agricultural land resources

**WHAT:** The Indigenous community in Chuamazan in Guatemala conserved 90 hectares of forest by applying ancestral knowledge.

**WHY:** For centuries, Guatemalan forests have been vital to local communities' subsistence strategies. Guided by traditional spirituality, where water and trees are considered sacred, the local population has used natural resources while conserving the forests. The basin of three important Guatemalan rivers is found in Chuamazan, making forest conservation in this area essential. However, the National Forest Institute (INAB) only governs forestry projects by economic incentives. Local communities experience that it prioritises private companies and big landowners. The commercialisation of the forest, including unsustainable agricultural practices, extensive plantations, and cattle farms, has led to high levels of deforestation and forest degradation.

**HOW:** To stimulate sustainable natural resource management, NCA's partner Utz Che' provided accompaniment and technical advice, combining community participation with the application of ancestral knowledge. Through a traditional community-based watershed approach, community members built their capacity to recover micro-basins, protect water sources, and use native plants and natural regeneration practices. The management, administration and protection of the forest were organised with the entire population. NCA's partner actively involved women and youth, contributing to the positive result.

Combining ancestral knowledge and traditions with agroecological practices proved essential in mobilising communities for climate resilience. In this example, the Milpa cycle was applied. Milpa is a traditional cropping method used by the Mayan and other Mesoamerican peoples. Following the Milpa cycle, an area of land is cultivated for a few years before it is left to rest for a long time, allowing the natural regeneration of vegetation. Crops are grown without applying artificial pesticides or fertilisers. The bond between the group of farmers, the crops, and the land itself is highly valued. Creating the Milpa is considered a sacred act that binds the family, community, and the entire creation.

Combining such traditional knowledge with agroecological approaches was very well received in Chuamazan. Many families adopted the techniques, leading to protected forests and communities becoming more resilient to climate change. The example from Chuamazan will be used to demonstrate to surrounding communities that sustainable models for community forest management are essential to stop practices that degrade forests and natural resources.

**PARTNER:** Utz Che'

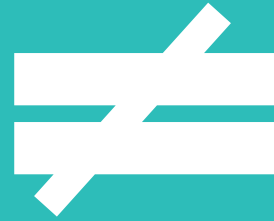
**SOURCES:** Partner reports, monitoring visits, and partner interview



*Without forests, there is no water, without water, there is no life. At the entry to the Indigenous community in Chuamazan, Guatemala.  
Photo: Ana Cristina Chaclán García*



# FIGHTING INEQUALITY (FI)



**OVERALL GOAL:** Fair and equitable finance and redistribution of resources.

**COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOAL:** DRC, Malawi, Southern Africa Regional Programme (covering Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe), Tanzania and Zambia.



*Youth sending clear message.  
Photo: Fighting Inequality Alliance Zambia*

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

NCA's Fighting Inequality (FI) programme is implemented in nine Southern African countries, a region experiencing growth and poverty reduction over the past two decades. At the same time, it has also become the world's most unequal region. Six of the ten most unequal countries in the world are found here. The wealthiest 1% have four times as much income and fifty times as much wealth as the poorest half of the population. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to deepen this divide. COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on the poor and vulnerable also in 2021, with uneven economic recovery, unequal access to vaccines and widening income losses. The pandemic has exacerbated many existing inequalities, whereby vulnerable and poor people bear the brunt of the consequences. The World Bank estimates that loss of national income, loss of jobs and low spending on social protection have pushed around 25 million people in Southern Africa into poverty. At the same time, the richest in the region have seen their incomes rise during the pandemic.

The region's abundance of natural resources could finance efforts to tackle the effects of the pandemic. But revenue from natural resources does not benefit ordinary citizens due to high levels of corruption and a lack of participatory and accountable governance. Instead, debt has risen, and national budget cuts are planned, threatening further increases in inequality. Through this programme, NCA strengthens civil society, mobilises faith actors and empowers rights-holders to advocate for equitable redistribution of resources to reduce poverty and inequality.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

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

NCA builds partners' capacity to advocate for a fair and equitable distribution of public resources. In 2021 governments were pressured to increase support to address poverty and inequality because of the effects of the pandemic. In response to COVID-19, **South Africa** introduced a temporary monthly social relief of distress grant in April 2020. NCA's partners actively advocated for extending the mechanism, engaging the government, and mobilising faith leaders and civil society leaders to speak out against ending the grant prematurely. As a result, it was extended for more than a year after pressure from civil society<sup>1</sup>. Although temporary measures, they were credited for contributing to reducing extreme suffering in the context of the pandemic.

In **Tanzania**, NCA and partners continued the advocacy campaign to further increase the enrolment of vulnerable men and women into the community health fund (iCHF). In 2021, NCA focused on strengthening faith-based partners' capacity to build strategic coalitions with broader civil society. Together with faith-based partners, NCA organised joint forums where civil society organisations were invited to review the faith actors' position paper on the Universal Health Care Policy (UHC), derived from the "Make It Possible" report from 2018. The joint position paper was then presented to the Parliamentary Budget and Social Services Committees, asking for more funds to be allocated to the iCHF. Increasing this budget will contribute to improving vulnerable people's access to healthcare. The government's 2021/22 budget statement allocated around USD 30 million more than the original budget, enabling poor households to access the community health fund under the Universal Health Care initiative. NCA's partners are well-positioned to continue influencing decision-makers. For example, parliamentarians have encouraged faith leaders to be even more vigilant in following up on developments regarding the Health Insurance Bill to ensure civil society's input is reflected. The draft bill is expected to be reviewed by the parliament in 2022.

The eastern parts of **DRC** are endowed with natural resources, but people do not benefit from this wealth. However, the 2018 revised mining code has a mechanism that is supposed to turn mineral extraction into development for mining communities, as mining companies are obliged to allocate 0.3% of their DRC turnover to community development funds. NCA facilitated 14 advocacy actions in 2021 against three planned to influence duty-bearers to enforce the law. Examples include organising advocacy visits by religious leaders to government authorities and media advocacy campaigns. Partners also trained 61 duty-bearers who, as a result, have committed to making the law known within the mining communities. This will increase the ability of rights-holders to hold duty-bearers accountable.

To achieve policy impact, NCA works to increase partners' influence on those who can shift policies and priorities towards more pro-poor. One example is Karonga in **Malawi**, where the 2020 baseline found that duty-bearers were passive and not interested in engaging with NCA's partners. NCA's partners started to strategically include different stakeholders at the district and community levels to ensure they become aware of the needs of the rights-holders. In 2021, 26 faith leaders were trained and engaged as champions, resulting in faith leaders spearheading community development meetings, taking on leadership positions in local development committees, and leading mass rallies

<sup>1</sup> <https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/extend-increase-r350-srd-grant-until-it-s-turned-into-basic-income-support>

highlighting inequalities at the district level. As a result, the district councils and local government officials have begun to respond to the inquiries and are willing to discuss further. This is a good base for holding the local government accountable for governing the increased budgets for the Community Development Fund, Social Cash Transfer and COVID-19.

In 2021 the **global** network addressing inequality was strengthened through joint projects. For example, NCA, Oxfam and Development Finance International collaborated on a joint report on inequality in Southern Africa. Being launched in 2022, it is expected to serve as a strong foundation for advocacy to reduce disparities in all Southern African countries. NCA also initiated collaboration with the global ecumenical network to engage faith-based actors in the fight against inequality. In the run-up to the "Festival to Fight Inequality" in August, NCA organised an interfaith theological reflection on inequality with the World Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, Lutheran World Federation, Christian Aid and the Interfaith Standing Committee on Economic Justice and Integrity of Creation (ISCEJIC). Faith leaders from all continents contributed to a webinar and a publication, which will be used for further faith-based mobilisation.

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

Mobilising rights-holders means informing and empowering people to claim their rights and facilitating opportunities for them to hold duty-bearers accountable for how they govern public resources. In 2021, a total of 55 concerns raised by rights-holders were addressed by duty-bearers.

For example, in **Zimbabwe**, a Social Economic Justice Ambassador (SEJA) trained by NCA's partner took the Minister of Finance to court, demanding access to information regarding loans given by international finance institutions to the government between 2017 and 2020. In a landmark ruling in favour of the SEJA's case, the High Court of Zimbabwe ordered the Minister of Finance to publish the details of the loans. In 2021 the loans were made public. This contributed to more transparency in public debt management, a prerequisite for holding governments accountable.

In **Tanzania**, interfaith committees and 349 members (50% women) of community anti-corruption groups actively engaged local communities to participate in the planning and implementation of the governments' priorities for development. This involvement prevented corruption and mismanagement and ensured local priorities were included in district plans. NCA's partner engaged the district authorities through social accountability monitoring in the remote village Mawemairo in the Manyara region. Through this exercise, the local community identified the need to construct a new health facility, but insufficient resources were available. Then the empowered community developed a plan to engage district authorities, members of parliament and the private sector to fund the project and managed to secure more than USD 80,000. Now the community oversees the tender process to find a construction company to commence the work.

Natural resource extraction could finance development and contribute to fighting inequality. However, instead of benefiting the local communities, mining more often has negative consequences such as dangerous working conditions, human rights violations, and pollution. NCA works to empower communities to claim their rights in mining areas.

In Mwinilunga in **Zambia**, NCA's partners accompanied a mining community to claim their rights and pushed for a closing of the Kasenseli mine, which extracted gold without any benefits going to the community. The community successfully met with traditional leaders, councillors, and Members of Parliament, resulting in the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development suspending operations of the mine in October 2021. It also moved the mining company to take time to secure community consultations and be more transparent and accountable in managing the Kasenseli gold resources.

In Karonga in **Malawi**, NCA supported a community's demand for compensation after a miner's death and contributed to changing the company's behaviour. After a new incident at the coal mine, the owner unprecedentedly called the District Labour Officer requesting guidance related to compensation. In a mining area in DRC, women were denied access to the mines and thus excluded from economic opportunities. Children were observed working in the mines. According to the **DRC** mining code, this is illegal. NCA's partner confronted the mine owner and set up a monitoring committee to report any breaches to the provincial mining division, which can take disciplinary action against mine owners who break the law.

## DEVIATIONS

COVID-19 continued to limit advocacy opportunities as several countries restricted face-to-face interactions. On the one hand, this led to fewer physical meetings, but on the other hand, it increased the use of social media to mobilise rights-holders and address duty-bearers. For example, the regional Alternative Mining Indaba, which had gathered civil society and mining-affected communities consecutively for 11 years, had to change its strategy for 2021. The 12th edition of this empowering arena for networking and advocacy was entirely digital, reaching more than twice as many participants as before, under the heading "AMI 2021 will not be muted". When governments opened for physical gatherings again, the number of in-person participants was often fewer to ensure social distancing. But, with a hybrid solution for such events, a wider audience was reached, and targets for social media outreach were surpassed.

## RESULT CASE

### CIVIL SOCIETY MOVES ZIMBABWE TO TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE DEATHS IN MINES

**SECTOR:** 151.50 Democratic participation and civil society

**WHAT:** Thanks to NCA's partners' relentless work and applying a wide range of advocacy tools, the government made concrete steps in 2021 towards improving the conditions for artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM) in Zimbabwe. In partnership with the Zimbabwe Miners Federation (ZMF), the Ministry of Mines has started providing safety-, health- and awareness training for miners.

**WHY:** Artisanal- and small-scale miners face many risks at work in the mines, such as blasting, rockfalls, toxic gasses, landslides, flooding and collapsing mines. Despite the danger, economic hardships and unemployment leave them with no other choice than engage in mining. In Zimbabwe, ASM provides a livelihood for more than one million. Many miners go into the shafts without adequate safety equipment and little knowledge of safe mining practices. Too often, mining accidents happen and are death traps. In the province of Midlands, for example, 61 ASM deaths were recorded within nine months in 2020.

**HOW:** NCA's partners in Zimbabwe saw a need for formalising the ASM sector to ensure that people achieve decent work in a safe and secure working environment. Multi-stakeholder platforms, initiated by NCA and its partners, would serve as a springboard for change. Partners put ASM on the agenda of dialogue meetings at all levels, including at the national Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI), provincial indabas (PAMIs), and district indabas (DAMIs) and village indabas (VAMIs). Through participating in these meetings, mining communities were empowered to claim their rights and engage with duty-bearers directly.

The Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) published studies on artisanal and small-scale mining conditions as evidence brought forth to the policy dialogue. It built the capacity of parliamentarians and engaged them to commit to formalising and improving the ASM sector. Parliament was moved to embark on a fact-finding mission into the gold industry and subsequently started safety-health- and awareness training for ASMs. NCA's partners are well-positioned to hold duty-bearers accountable on mining-related issues.

**PARTNERS:** Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) and Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC)

**SOURCES:** Partners' annual reports and newspaper articles.

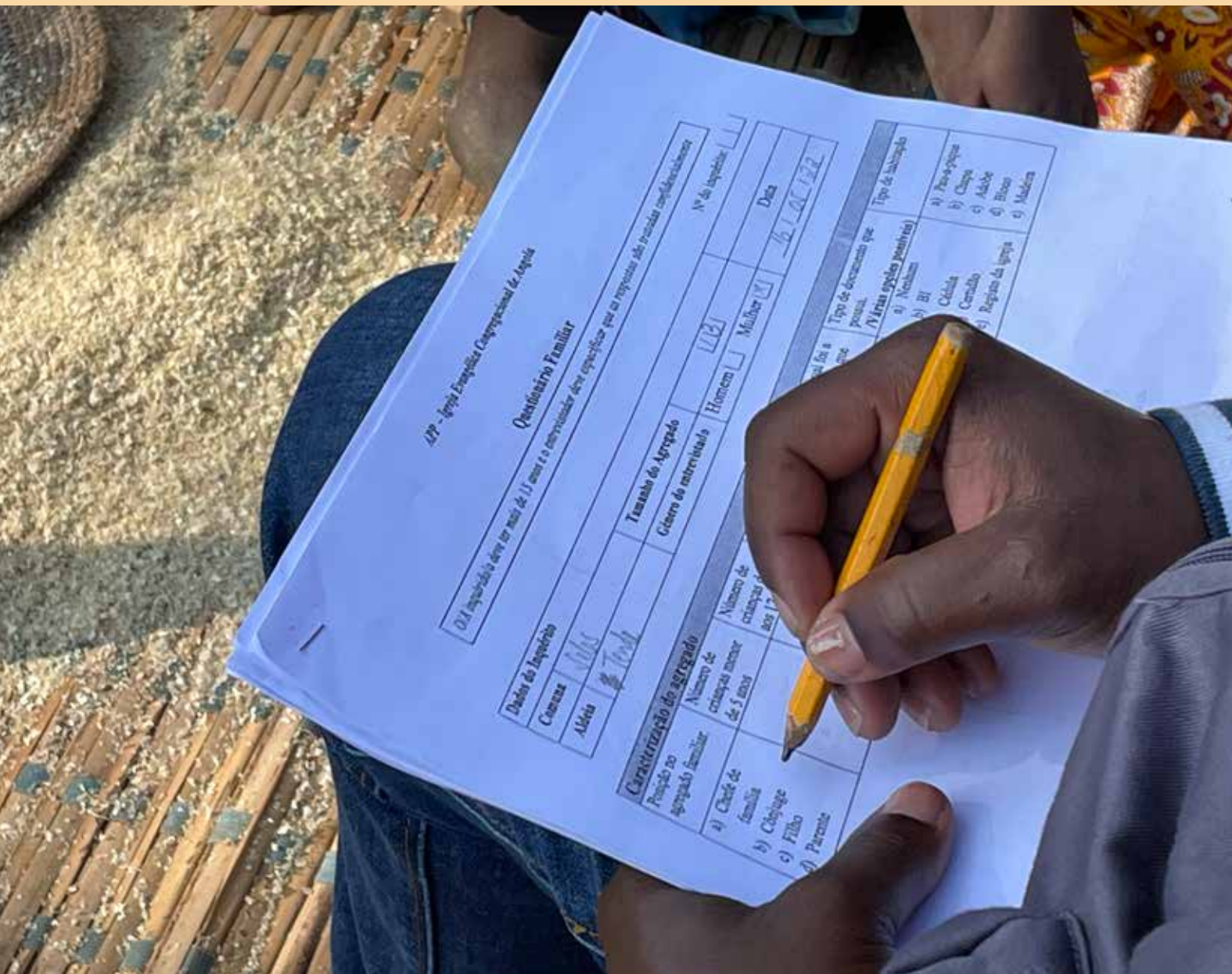


Poorly equipped, artisanal, and small-scale miners face significant risks when extracting metals and minerals. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid



# PROGRAMME QUALITY

# 4



Azer Anselmo Chnumula from NCA's partner Evangelical Church of Angola uses a questionnaire on paper. Tablets are on the way, and the digitisation process will start soon. Digital data collection methods will make the work more efficient. Photo: Silje Ander/Norwegian Church Aid

## RESULTS MANAGEMENT

2021 represented the second year of NCA's cooperation agreement, offering the first opportunity to assess progress toward longer-term targets. The results show that most programmes are well on track to achieve the targets for the agreement period. The collected data also supports NCA's ambition of gender equality and increased youth engagement, with women composing 53% of the rights-holders and youth representing 46% of the rights-holders (compared to 42% in 2020).

The 25 indicators of the global results framework for the global Civil Society grant provide an overview of NCA's programme efforts. The progress on all applicable thematic outcomes is reflected in chapters two and three of this report. Some indicators measure the long-term change that is not easily captured annually, for example, normative changes. In these cases, targets have not been set for 2021, and data will not be available for many countries before the mid-term.

Eleven indicators with targets for 2021 are on track or significantly above the target. For five indicators, results are considerably below target. For three cases, the deviation is due to under-achievements in one country. For the remaining cases (all under the Strengthening Civil Society cross-cutting area), the deviation is due to adjustments in reporting methodology following a revision of indicator instructions in 2021.

Results-based and data-driven management is a strategic priority in NCA. The roll-out in 2021 of a new Project and Information Management System (PIMS) will enable NCA Country Offices to better track the progress of projects and programmes. Over time, it will give NCA improved consolidated reports allowing for enhanced analysis. In 2021, NCA initiated a pilot project to improve the timeliness and quality of data collection, analysis, and visualisation of monitoring data at the country office level. NCA sees a need to strengthen the capacity and expertise of local staff and partners.

## EVALUATIONS, RESEARCH AND LEARNING

As a data-driven and results-based organisation, high-quality evaluations and research projects are prerequisites for constantly refining NCA's work and how the organisation evolves. An essential focus for NCA in 2021 was thus to revise and renew its global Evaluations and Research programme. The aim is to gather evidence and identify higher-level learning outcomes to be broadly implemented in NCA's future programmes and its ongoing capacity-building processes. In practice, evaluations and research now encompass those led by the country offices as well as more in-depth global evaluations utilising best-practice scientific methods.

From 2021, NCA's global Evaluations and Research programme follows a new improvement "PATH". An acronym for Preregistered, Accountable, Transformative and Honest, this framework will ensure that NCA's evaluations and research projects are as transparent, objective and scientifically rigorous as possible. The PATH framework was incorporated in the 2021 revision of NCA's Evaluation and Research Policy, pending approval in 2022.

As the table below shows, NCA conducted 15 evaluations and reviews of its programmatic interventions in nine countries/regions. In addition, one global evaluation was conducted. This shows a slight decline compared to 2020, though the quality appears to be higher with an increased focus on learning.

Twelve evaluations from 2021 were led by an external evaluation team or consultancy.

NCA remains committed to promoting learning for transformation, growth, and increased effectiveness and efficiency. NCA's Knowledge Management Strategy was approved in 2021. The strategy includes tools and methods for building a strong learning culture among staff, guidelines for improved digital collaboration and learning, and new and updated processes and routines related to planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The learning sprint methodology was piloted in 2021 and positively impacted NCA's staff expertise and learning culture.



TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF ALL EVALUATIONS AND REVIEWS CONDUCTED IN 2021 (EXCLUDING BASELINES)

NO	COUNTRY	TITLE	TYPE	Funded by Norad?
1	Angola	Pajudel: ROM evaluation (EU/INTPA)	External midline	Partially
2	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Church Forest Initiative Project (ECFIP) End Line Review (ELR)	External endline	Yes
3	Sudan	Final Evaluation DG-ECHO Funded project, Darfur	External endline	No
4	Tanzania	HLH Project Mid-term Evaluation	External midline	Yes
5	Tanzania	End Term Internal evaluation report – UNDCF project	Internal endline	No
6	Tanzania	Outcome assessment for 2020 - 2021	External	Yes
7	Pakistan	Final Evaluation of Resilient Communities for Inclusive Societies (Grant from Church of Sweden)	External endline	Yes
8	Pakistan	Promoting Gender Justice and Engaging Men and Boys to reduce GBV in Mirpur Khas, Rawalpindi & Islamabad	External endline	Yes
9	Malawi	Stop Early Marriages (STOM) project	External endline	No
10	Malawi	Strengthening the prevention of GBV: A faith-based approach project 2018–2021 endline evaluation (Grant from the Norwegian embassy)	External endline	No
11	Malawi	Goat Value Chain endline evaluation	Internal endline	No
12	Zambia	Making Agriculture A Business (MAB) Mid-Term Review	External midline	No
13	Burundi	Study on Vegetable and fruit crops management	Internal	Partially
14	Burundi	Study on Sanitation practices at community level: WASH Barrier Analysis	Internal midline	Yes
15	Guatemala	Ecumenical program for improving sustainable natural resource management in Guatemala	External midline	Yes
16	Global	When do we learn the most from our Evaluations?	Internal	Yes

## DIGITALISATION

Like most organisations, NCA has become more digitalised and relies more on online communication than before the pandemic. Overall digital literacy has increased, but continued investment in bandwidth is required in many countries. Reliance on online tools is also a vulnerability, as many governments use connectivity control as a tool.

In 2021, NCA rolled out its Project Information and Management System (PIMS) for programme staff worldwide. This platform allows NCA Country Offices to track the progress of projects and programmes and gives NCA consolidated reports to improve analysis. Facilitating day-to-day project management, PIMS enables more transparent decision-making, clearer communication, and information sharing. Using PIMS in the 2021 reporting process, NCA has significantly improved available and trackable data.

Due to the pandemic, the training and rollout had to be done online. With DCA's learning lab, NCA developed a module-based online training that staff could follow at their own pace. To facilitate and follow up the training, modules were combined with Webinars. NCA applied a country-by-country approach to best meet the needs of the offices and identified dedicated focal points at each office to ease communication.

Programme staff and managers have warmly welcomed PIMS. At the same time, it is acknowledged that implementing a new tool is a heavy lift which takes time and requires adjustments.



## TOWARDS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NCA

Environmental sustainability became a global strategic priority for NCA in 2021. After developing its Climate and Environment Policy in 2020, NCA finalised and introduced its Environmental Sustainability Standard (ESS) in 2021. NCA is held accountable for environmental sustainability in programming and operations through international humanitarian and development standards to which it is committed, including the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the Sphere Standards, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NCA's ESS aims to comply with these standards and its Climate and Environment Policy. The ESS provides guidance and the minimum requirements for all NCA's programmes and operations, as well as recommended actions on five objectives:

1. Environmental sustainability
2. Reduce carbon emissions
3. Mitigate negative impacts
4. Strengthen local response capacity and resilience to mitigate adverse environmental and climate risks
5. Raise awareness and staff competence on environmentally sustainable programming

To support these objectives, a working group for Sustainable NCA assembled and disseminated a Green Package for Country Offices in 2021. In addition to the ESS, the package contained guidelines for Mitigating Environmental Impact in Humanitarian Operations and a fuel and flight tracker tool to help manage consumption and measure CO2 emissions from NCA operations. A block grant of NOK 1 million was set aside to support COs in developing environmentally sustainable initiatives. An environmental checklist was presented to monitor compliance with the ESS. This tool will assess and improve the environmental sustainability of NCA's operations.

Somalia applied the checklist to screen all projects. Where applicable, activities were designed to promote climate resilience and improve local ecosystems through community-based reforestation projects. In Ethiopia, NCA introduced an innovative tumbler prototype for composting organic waste from its premises. The country office implemented this initiative to spearhead a greener office environment.

In 2021, NCA signed the global Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, committing to set targets and action plans to reduce its climate and environmental footprint. The target-setting process will involve an organisation-wide consultation and is expected to scale up NCA's efforts to integrate environmental sustainability in all aspects of its work. The targets will be finalised and rolled out in 2022.

## COST EFFICIENCY

### MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In 2021 NCA has implemented several tools and systems to enhance project cycle management and facilitate effective data collection and monitoring, especially introducing PIMS and implementing NCA's Cost Allocation Policy (CAP). These measures require significant investment in an initial phase. Still, they will make NCA's decision-making more efficient and data-driven in the longer term and provide the basis for conducting value for money analyses.

### JOINT COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Joining forces with sister agencies is a vital strategy for NCA to avoid duplication of work and make more efficient use of available resources. Pooling financial and human resources provide more robust platforms on which to manage, scale up and leverage additional funding for programmes. In 2021 the joint programming model was further strengthened through a refined Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the collaborating ACT Alliance sister agencies of the current Joint Country Programmes (JCPs) in **Zambia, Palestine, and Myanmar**. The JCP in **Malawi** became a reality in 2021 when NCA and DanChurchAid (DCA) merged programmes and operations. In addition to the JCPs, similar models with ACT Alliance agencies in Guatemala and Haiti continue.







*In Ethiopia, NCA is composting organic waste from its cafeteria and office ground. Yeshitela, who has served NCA for 31 years takes care of the beautiful garden. NCA's Programme Advisor, Tsegzeab Hailu has introduced the composting tumbler prototype made from local materials and partially assembled at NCA.*

## INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING AND CO-LOCALISATION

In addition to joint programming, NCA emphasises integrating its thematic programmes for increased synergy and more significant impact in targeted locations. Integrated programming enables NCA and partners to address the multifaceted needs of women, men, girls, and boys in the various contexts of operations. Another benefit is the enhanced quality and increased cost-efficiency achieved when working with the same target groups through multiple interventions. For example, in 2021, NCA in **Somalia** embarked on a drive towards programme integration to attain greater sector complementarity and effectiveness. Through integrated planning and implementation, the CRWASH, GBV, CSEE and Peacebuilding programmes all provide complementary services to rights-holders. In **Pakistan**, the FBCA strategic initiative converged with the Peacebuilding programme, based on the premise that an increased capacity of faith-based organisations (FBOs) and faith actors will enable the mobilisation of community members for appropriate and informed actions on climate change. Also integrated with the CRWASH and GBV programmes, this model leverages the influence faith actors have on communities to address climate change and jointly advocate for climate action. Partners are now better equipped to respond to complex issues effectively.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

An organisational review conducted in 2019 recommended further focus and concentration of NCA's programme portfolio. Hence, in 2020, NCA's Senior Management requested a review of the international portfolio to ensure NCA is not spread too thinly, and that capacity and resources are adequate to ensure compliance and programme quality. The review was concluded in June 2021 and resulted in the decision to phase out the **Burundi** programme by June 2022. Steps were also taken to move the line-management of the **Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme** and the **Southern Africa Regional Advocacy Programme** to Ethiopia and Tanzania respectively.

NCA recognises the need to support and strengthen its civil society actors. At the same time, NCA regularly assesses its partner portfolio to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions and NCA's capacity to follow up and accompany its partners. Over the past years, NCA has reduced the number of local partners, in line with its civil society partnership policy.

## INFLATION AND INCREASING COSTS

NCA is present in fragile states prone to hyper-inflation, currency fluctuations, and high operational costs. Several countries, like **Sudan** and **Ethiopia**, experienced significant price increases and devaluation of local currencies in 2021. To offset the scarcity and price escalation of construction materials, NCA Ethiopia encouraged community contributions, bulk purchases, early procurement of materials, and accelerating implementation to mitigate daily price rises. In Sudan, currency fluctuation and high inflation made purchasing supplies and services almost impossible, but mainly impacted humanitarian responses.

## RISK MITIGATION AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### NEW RISK FACTORS IN 2021

Significant new risk factors which emerged in 2021 were in **Afghanistan**, where the Taliban took over in August 2021, leading to a subsequent economic collapse. NCA and partners adapted their long-term programmes with a necessary degree of acceptance from the Taliban. **Sudan** experienced widespread protests and significant periods of unrest, culminating in a coup d'état in October.

NCA's Global Security Manager was heavily involved with Afghanistan and Sudan to manage the crises and ensure that security risks were effectively handled in line with Duty of Care policies. Close coordination with other international NGOs and the United Nations secured access. In Afghanistan, expatriate staff was swiftly evacuated and continued to manage operations remotely before returning to Kabul in early 2022. In Sudan, expatriate staff was also briefly evacuated. Established security protocols were reviewed and adjusted, and significant security upgrades were made in Q4 of 2021.

Security risks caused by conflicts in areas of Tigray and Amhara in **Ethiopia** disrupted some activities and limited NCA's access. During the advancement of the forces of The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the government declared a national state of emergency. NCA communicated with UN agencies and arranged for the transport of goods through the logistics cluster. Alternative modes of transferring funds to projects (through the UNHAS system) were applied when bank services were down.

As a result of the Coup in **Myanmar**, ordinary tasks such as documenting activities have become a sensitive issue. Precaution had to be exerted, for example, when taking photos, to avoid putting rights-holders and staff at unnecessary risk. Partner staff has coordinated closely with its management for updates on security situations and current risks. Digital security is safeguarded, and data is managed in a meticulously safe way.

### MATERIALISED RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Experiences from 2020 taught NCA how to operate and monitor activities during a global pandemic. However, COVID-19 continued to amplify existing challenges in 2021 caused by political instability, economic crises, and deterioration of safety and security conditions. Government-mandated lockdowns related to COVID-19 challenged access within and to programme areas, slowed implementation, and made project monitoring more difficult. Mitigation measures varied depending on the context.

Though to a lesser extent than in 2020, COVID-19 protocols in **Ethiopia** limited mass mobilisation and larger gatherings for awareness-raising events, training, workshops, and various meetings. To mitigate these risks, NCA ensured interventions were COVID-19 sensitive and arranged for virtual participation. Hybrid models were adopted to ensure the involvement in regional forums in the **Eastern Africa Regional Peacebuilding Programme**. To mitigate further delays in implementation, NCA in **Malawi** advised partners to develop acceleration plans for 2021. Women and girls' safe spaces in **Mali** were equipped with handwashing stations, sanitisers, gloves, and masks.





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

**Security risks** persisted and materialised in several areas where NCA and its partners operate. To mitigate, NCA **Mali** regularly updated its security plan and did security screening before going to the field. All NCA **DRC** staff participated in HEAT training (in Bukawu), which included hostage survival and first aid. NCA reviewed its local security rules with all staff and strengthened monitoring of movement in the field. Increased violence posed significant security risks in **Afghanistan**, mitigated through remote monitoring. In **Sudan**, political instability and the volatile political situation led to updating of security guidelines. NCA scheduled monitoring visits only on days with no demonstrations announced, to mitigate the risk. To ensure accessibility during the rainy season, NCA and partners prepositioned necessary supplies before the onset of rain and relied on remote supervision via established structures.

In **South Sudan**, insecurity and conflict in some project locations restricted the movement of staff and partners. NCA mitigated risks to insecurity through engaging faith-based actors and organising conflict mitigation training for employees. In **Pakistan**, NCA supported partners in managing their security profiles, encouraging them to maintain close contact with local stakeholders. To mitigate future risks and improve programme responses, NCA Pakistan updated its country conflict analysis to incorporate an assessment of risks that have emerged and evolved.

Programme implementation slowed down during the run-up to the elections in **Zambia** in August 2021, as NCA and partners mitigated the potential of projects being mistaken by communities as political campaigns.

To enhance accountability towards rights-holders and communities at risk, country offices and partners must establish and maintain complaints mechanisms to report any complaints about NCA's work. This is also a requirement under the CHS, to which NCA is certified. Consequently, all staff and partners in **Mali** have been trained, and local complaint mechanisms have been established in all intervention areas in 2021. In **DRC**, NCA increased communication about its complaint mechanisms, which resulted in several new complaints received and responded to.

## RISKS RELATED TO CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

**Financial risks, fraud and corruption** were managed by regular, joint project monitoring by programme and finance, assisted by NCA's systems, policies, and tools. NCA maintains a zero-tolerance policy on fraud and corruption, of which staff and partners are continually reminded.

Partner capacity assessments are regularly conducted. The most usual deficits addressed relate to financial management, procurement procedures and internal control systems. Training was thus provided for partners in all countries in 2021. In **Angola**, risks related to non-compliance with policies and procedures were mitigated through refresher courses and reminders for NCA staff and partners. To mitigate corruption, large purchases were done directly by NCA or under NCA's supervision to ensure adherence to procurement regulations in countries such as **Sudan** and **Malawi**.

In Malawi, NCA/DCA intensified its commitment to deal with fraud and corruption by hiring a senior compliance officer to strengthen mitigation measures. During a partner meeting in Mangochi, NCA/DCA engaged the ombudsman to interact with its civil society partners acknowledging the role of that office in curbing corruption and showing how partners can best utilise its services.

In **DRC**, NCA assessed all its local partners, which led NCA to phase out six of them. Some of them did not meet NCA's defined minimum standards.



Water Canal and division box for irrigation management in Khost province, Afghanistan, built by NCA in 2021.  
Photo: Afghan Development Association (ADA)

**Climate change and environmental degradation** are among the most significant and growing challenges to NCA's goals. Its impacts threaten to deepen existing problems of inequality, instability, violence, and displacement. NCA seeks to strengthen local capacities to identify and mitigate risks, cope with shocks, and increase the resilience of communities and rights-holders towards climate change and environmental degradation.

In **Burundi**, NCA supported local communities in developing their Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans. Training sessions on irrigation, mulching, short-season crops, and agroforestry were conducted with rights-holders to reduce their vulnerability to climate change. In **Afghanistan**, all CRWASH interventions incorporated environmental sustainability measures in planning, design, and implementation. NCA and partners also conducted a vulnerability assessment of the water system and included DRR measures to minimise the risks related to existing community WASH infrastructure.

Hygiene awareness campaigns were carried out in **South Sudan** to mitigate a disease outbreak due to extreme flooding in parts of the country in 2021, which damaged water points and caused a water shortage. In **Mali**, NCA took measures to alleviate pollution from generators and non-biodegradable plastics by introducing solar solutions. The war in Tigray had a damaging effect on previously protected and rehabilitated project sites in **Ethiopia**, but NCA continued to promote the use of solar energy among communities. As a result, all water-supply schemes established in 2021 use solar energy to operate.

Managing risks to **women's rights and gender equality** are continually addressed to ensure activities are inclusive, gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate and implemented in line with international standards. Globally, all NCA staff were introduced to and trained on NCA's policy on the Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) and Child Safeguarding to minimise the risk of NCA programmes negatively impacting rights-holders, particularly women and children.

In **Afghanistan**, the Taliban enforced restrictions on women's movement, participation, and engagement in most of the project areas. Their repressive policy undermines communities' fragile social- and gender balance structures. To ensure women's voices and concerns are protected and advanced, NCA focused diligently in 2021 on building partners' female staff's capacity and skills in negotiation and peaceful dialogue. A separate CRWASH committee of women was established, giving them the space to interact and share common problems affecting women in the communities.

**Human rights risks, including risks to the rights of people with disabilities**, were managed in 2021 through various measures. All CRWASH facilities designed and built by NCA and its partners are designed to facilitate access for people living with disabilities. For example, in **Haiti**, WASH facilities are gender-sensitive with specific requirements for including people living with disabilities. Disability-friendly sanitary structures have been set up in schools, promoting and contributing to the inclusion of all students. Partners have doubled their efforts to include people living with disabilities in project activities by, for example, serving them first during distributions. Integrating them into daily work schemes according to talents and skills also boosts their confidence.

Military coups and insurgencies have shrunk the space for civic action in countries such as **Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Sudan**. In **Myanmar**, NCA/DCA and partners had to take extra precautions to reduce the safety and security risks project staff and rights-holders face. Travel restrictions, internet- and phone cuts, and reduced delivery of services created additional challenges for implementation. Planned advocacy initiatives with the government were cancelled and adapted to respond to the emerging needs of the communities.



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**[www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/en](http://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/en)**

**Telephone: +47 22 09 27 00**

**Email: [nca-oslo@nca.no](mailto:nca-oslo@nca.no)**



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