



# STRATEGY 2022-25



Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

## INTRODUCTION

For more than 40 years the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) has worked adjacent to changing regimes and powerholders in Afghanistan. NAC has built its strategy on evidence-based best practice gained from its long experience and shaped by the achievements and expertise of NAC's employees and volunteers.

The strategy is developed at a point of time where the current government is not recognized by any international actor. Due to international sanctions, funding restrictions, the core service delivery systems of the Afghan state are not operating, and parallel structures is in the making by the international community to provide basic services to the people. The space for women, civil society, free media, and human rights are dramatically reduced. It is extremely difficult to predict how the situation will evolve. This requires that the organization plan for different scenarios to safeguard the employees, assets, and values of the organization. The strategy continues to build on the space existing for positive change, and aims to provide a way forward, whilst remaining responsive to changing needs and demands.



## VISION AND GOALS

NAC shall contribute to a peaceful Afghanistan, free from poverty, where rural communities are empowered and resilient, valuing equality and diversity.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

NAC shall support the Afghan people in the development of a peaceful, just, and egalitarian society where universal human rights are respected.

NAC shall be a nexus for knowledge of, interest in, and engagement with Afghanistan in Norway, promoting Afghan voices and perspectives in Norwegian public debate and advocating for informed and responsible policies towards Afghanistan.

## THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF NAC

NAC is a **membership-based solidarity organization** working with long-term development programs and humanitarian support in rural Afghan communities. For NAC, solidarity embodies the **values of equality, inclusivity, friendship, and respect**. NAC remains committed to the Afghan people, regardless of which government is in place. Voluntarism is promoted at all levels within the organization, by actively involving members and communities.

### Independence

NAC's work shall not be dictated by political, religious, or commercial actors or interests.

### Integrity

NAC has zero tolerance for corruption. Anti-corruption efforts are an important component within all of NAC's programs and initiatives.

### Accountability

NAC is accountable towards its members, donors, project partners and communities. It acts to enable access to information and ensure transparency and active participation in the processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

### Alignment with human rights and international development agendas

All NAC programs, projects, and initiatives are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, UN conventions and resolutions, and considering Afghan national strategies and priority plans.



## THE CONTRIBUTION OF NAC

Despite barriers to development in Afghanistan, NAC contributes to positive change, building on opportunities and the resilience of the people. The trust NAC has established in local communities, our understanding of local contexts, and the experience and capacity to respond to local needs and challenges using innovative and cost-effective approaches, positions NAC as a relevant development and humanitarian partner to local communities, civil society actors, public institutions, and international development partners.

NAC has an organizational culture that is well adapted to work in conflict-affected, fragile, and insecure environments. NAC strives to apply our values through concrete actions and our work with the partners and communities we support, and in all aspects of the organization itself ensuring gender and ethnic diversity within our workforce.

NAC applies a contextualized, dialogue-based approach to promote our values, aiming to find common ground with room for action and local solutions.

## THE ORGANIZATION

NAC is a knowledge-based and innovative organization, adapted to meet changing needs and contexts through difficult times. The organization is characterized by continuity and resilience, and an ability to merge the involvement of members based on solidarity with operating a highly professional development/humanitarian organization.

### Members

The members, through the Annual Congress, constitute NAC's highest decision-making authority. Membership in NAC is an important expression of interest in and engagement with Afghanistan. Members' initiatives and activism contributes to information about Afghanistan in Norway, as well as to fundraising.



### Volunteers

Volunteers with a strong interest in Afghanistan, and with relevant expertise and experience, add value to operations and programs. This provides NAC with capacities extending well beyond the organizations own human and financial resources.

## Leadership and management

NAC's governing bodies are responsible for developing strategic directions and organizational guidelines, based on the ethical guidelines, values and principles of the organization. The Board and senior management are responsible for exercising financial control, including implementing effective anti-corruption, environment, health, and safety measures.

## Employees

NAC is an equal opportunity employer, promoting diversity within its workforce. Employees are trained to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and to act in accordance with the ethical guidelines, values, and principles of the organization. Employees at all levels within the organization are empowered to make independent decisions in accordance with their job descriptions, to reduce bureaucracy, and increase effectiveness and efficiency as a part of the NAC decentralized structure and management system. NAC improves the quality of its project implementation and support services through competence building measures, including opportunities for life-long learning. NAC aims to provide all the necessary support and precautions within its means to protect the physical and mental health of its employees, interns and volunteers while working and living in a challenging and complex social, political and security environment.



## DONOR FINANCING AND FUNDRAISING

NAC's leadership is responsible for securing financing for programs and operations, and receives funding from national governments, UN agencies, and other international organizations. In addition to larger institutional donors, NAC raises funds from members, supporters, smaller organizations, universities, research institutes, and private corporations.

NAC has diversified its donor base and will continue its resource mobilization strategy to reduce the dependency on single donors. However, the need for financing must never compromise NAC's strategic goals, values, and principles. The growth of NAC's financial resources and increase in staff over the past few years calls for increased decentralization and continuous organizational change to ensure optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

## OUR APPROACH

NAC is guided by the principle of do no harm. We promote our values and principles towards powerholders consistently and gradually to ensure long-term and sustainable social change, with the realization that change requires dialogue based on mutual respect, trust, and contextual understanding.

In relation to our program activities, NAC has defined the key areas for conditionality to be corruption and human rights, particularly women's rights.

### CORRUPTION

NAC has zero tolerance for corruption. Corruption is a crime, and there is no room for compromise.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

The right to education, health, work, freedom of movement, and freedom of speech is essential to NAC's work.

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS

NAC views women as partners and agents for change. NAC aims to challenge the traditional norms which cause restrictions, discrimination, and violence against women. Women's rights must be ensured equally in both urban and rural areas. Our values and working principles are applied in the complex and everchanging political and normative setting in Afghanistan. Rather than establishing strict conditions we strive to establish a principled and pragmatic approach, ensuring broad community acceptance, without losing sight of the goal of equal rights and opportunities for all, regardless of gender, age, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances.

NAC works in rural and hard-to-reach areas with a conflict-sensitive, integrated, and triple nexus approach to empower communities to improve their resilience and livelihoods. In its selection of partner communities, NAC equally considers needs and access, as well as balanced coverage of the different ethnic, social, and religious groups in the country.

### Sustainable development impact

The people of Afghanistan are affected by protracted economic crisis, conflict, insecurity, drought, climate change and severe poverty causing food insecurity, lack of education, poor access to quality healthcare, and increased unemployment. In response to the needs of the people NAC will expand both its long-term development and shorter-term humanitarian programs.

The ambition of sustainable development impact of interventions continues to be at the core of our programs within the sectors of Education, Health, Food Security and Natural Resource Management. This imply that we will support, and work with public institutions at national, provincial and district levels critical for the long-term survival of public service in the country and preservation of the human capital within these institutions.

Communities, represented by Community Development Councils, Shuras, School-Shuras, Water Management Committees, and other relevant community-based organization's will be involved in all parts of the program implementation and evaluation trough the community contracting and group model building approaches.

NAC targets the income-poorest part of the population, and smallholder farmers with a strong focus on supporting women, girls, youth, persons with disabilities, and other groups vulnerable to exclusion from development processes. The main focus-areas for the development programs remain Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni, and Paktia, while other provinces can be targeted through humanitarian, shorter-term, single program components, within the fields of education, health, and/or food security. The office structure is established based operational and programmatic needs.



## OUR PROGRAM

### Long-term development programs

NAC's main development program areas are support to education, education of health care professionals, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource management.

NAC rebuilds trust and solidarity within and between communities by providing safe spaces for dialogue to build resilience and to contribute to peacebuilding from the grass root level.

Dialogue, Human Rights, Gender, and Disaster Risk Reduction are integrated in all programs as cross cutting themes. The integration is reflected by concrete activities included in the log-frame and the monitoring and reporting framework.

## **Education**

NAC will continue its efforts for inclusivity and quality in the education system, with upgrading of teachers and teacher trainings as a core element. The communities are involved in constructing classrooms and other school-based infrastructure, and the operations of schools, including hiring teachers, and paying salaries, provision of learning materials, including schoolbooks, stationery, and other learning materials may be expanded in case no solution is found for the public schools.

## **Health**

Education of healthcare professionals at Institutes of Health Sciences are the main component of the health program. The collapse of the BPHS/EPHS programs in many provinces imply an urgent need for health services. Graduated healthcare professionals from the IHSs are unemployed while there is an urgent need for qualified health assistance, and NAC may expand the Women-owned health facilities to particularly underserved areas based the available human resources.

## **Agriculture and Natural Resource Management**

NAC works to involve communities in promoting sustainable agriculture, and addresses risk mitigation associated with climate change, natural disasters, and deforestation. The organization addresses male and female smallholder farmers and landless people with the aim to improve food and nutrition security, increase income and employment opportunities.



## **Humanitarian support**

Because of the funding gap and restrictions on support to the current government, NAC expands its humanitarian support in the critical areas of 1) Education-in-Emergencies; 2) Health; and 3) Food Security; with Job Creation within the communities as a key element of all three areas of support. When creating jobs NAC focuses on providing job opportunities for women, persons with disabilities and social, ethnic, and religious minorities.

Our humanitarian work is linked to our development work through the continuity of long-term engagement with national, provincial, district and community actors and institutions.

The expansion of the humanitarian response is not limited to the geographical areas covered by the long-term development program but can be expanded to provinces that can be covered from the regional, provincial, and project offices, or where NAC has local knowledge and historic presence.

## **Partnerships**

NAC are not sub-contracting grants to partners, but in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals NAC seeks partnerships to ensure ownership, active participation in the development process and sustainability of the interventions. Our partnerships build on the core value of NAC.

As a development partner NAC collaborate with all relevant actors and stakeholders to avoid duplication, parallel structures, promote learning and best practices. NAC partners with public institutions critical for the long-term survival of public services and knowledge in the country, and the preservation of the human capital within these institutions.

NAC partners with community-based organisations and institutions. The purpose of the partnership is to mobilize communities to take part in inclusive development processes and implementation of development initiatives. The years of conflict has led to mistrust in the community, and mutual accountability mechanisms are essential. Sustainability requires that communities make investments in their own development.

## **Sustainability and program exit strategy**

To ensure local ownership, and that communities, civil society and relevant authorities can sustain joint programs, we aim to build institutional capacities at local, district, provincial and national levels.

NAC ensures exit strategies as part of program/project cycle management to ensure that progress toward program objectives and goals will continue after NAC withdrawal.

Exit strategy is planned with partners in advance, to avoid tension that may arise between NAC and its partners/stakeholders,. In addition, partners should sign a commitment letter clarifying and defining roles and responsibilities of NAC and local partners to reduce the potential misunderstandings and future dependency.

## **Knowledge management, monitoring, and evaluation**

NAC ensures that monitoring and evaluation findings feed into the organization's learning in a coherent way to improve program quality and impact.



## INFORMATION AND INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

NAC has a distinct and coherent voice in communication, advocacy, and fundraising. It aims to set the agenda and inform and influence policy development in Afghanistan and amongst international development partners beyond the impact at program level.

NAC collects information, lessons learned, success stories and failures for learning purposes. To influence policy NAC will increase communication, publishing, and dissemination of research briefs, and use multi-media to show NAC's comparative advantage and added value.

NAC's identity and programmatic approach defines its positioning, branding, imagery, and storytelling.

Within Norway, NAC serves as a meeting place for those with an interest in Afghanistan. NAC seeks to promote Afghan voices and perspectives within the Norwegian public debate, with the aim to link information on Afghanistan to the broader development agenda.

NAC builds networks and cooperates with like-minded organizations and institutions in Norway, and Europe.

