

Annual Report from the Board 2023



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Norwegian Refugee Council

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Cover photo: Beate Simarud/NRC

12 years old Sadiki was displaced with his family in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is studying at a local school in Kanyarucinya in the outskirts of Goma where many newly displaced people have found shelter. During 2023, recurring attacks hit Rutshuru in North Kivu, creating a massive influx of displacement towards Goma, the main city of the province.

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NRC's mandate and organisational setup

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organisation working to protect the rights of displaced and affected people during crises. NRC provides assistance to meet immediate humanitarian needs, prevent further displacement and contribute to durable solutions. NRC is Norway's largest international humanitarian organisation and is widely recognised as a leading field-based displacement agency within the international humanitarian community. It is a rights-based organisation and is committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. NRC is registered as a foundation under Norwegian law.

In 2023, NRC worked in both new and protracted crises across 40 countries. Its main activity is the delivery of humanitarian aid through programme activities in the field. NRC specialises in six areas of expertise, also known as core competencies within the organisation: shelter and settlements; livelihoods and food security; information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA); education; protection from violence; and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH).

NRC advocates towards decision-makers in order to obtain full respect for the rights of displaced and vulnerable people. It advocates at local, national, regional and global levels, basing its messages and strategies on first-hand experience and specialised expertise.

NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) in Geneva is a global leader in monitoring, reporting on and advocating for people displaced within their own country.

NORCAP is NRC's global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors. It builds partnerships with international organisations and national actors to protect lives, rights and livelihoods. NORCAP provides expert personnel and collaborates with partners to identify needs and establish common goals and projects. It helps strengthen partner capacity and improve coordination and collaboration.

NRC's country programmes were managed and coordinated by five regional offices. The regional office for the Middle East is based in Amman, the East Africa and Yemen office in Nairobi, the Central and West Africa office in Dakar, the Asia and Latin America office in Oslo and the Central and Eastern Europe office in Warsaw.

During 2023, NRC also had representation offices in Brussels, Geneva, Berlin, London and Washington, D.C. Representation offices have been established to ensure close and ongoing dialogue with decision-makers and partners around the world.

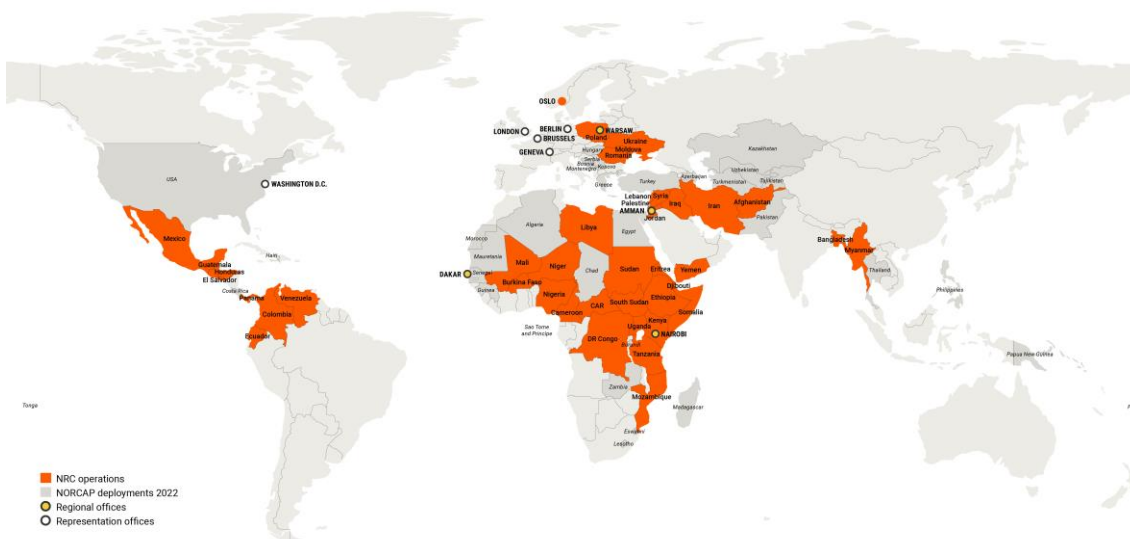
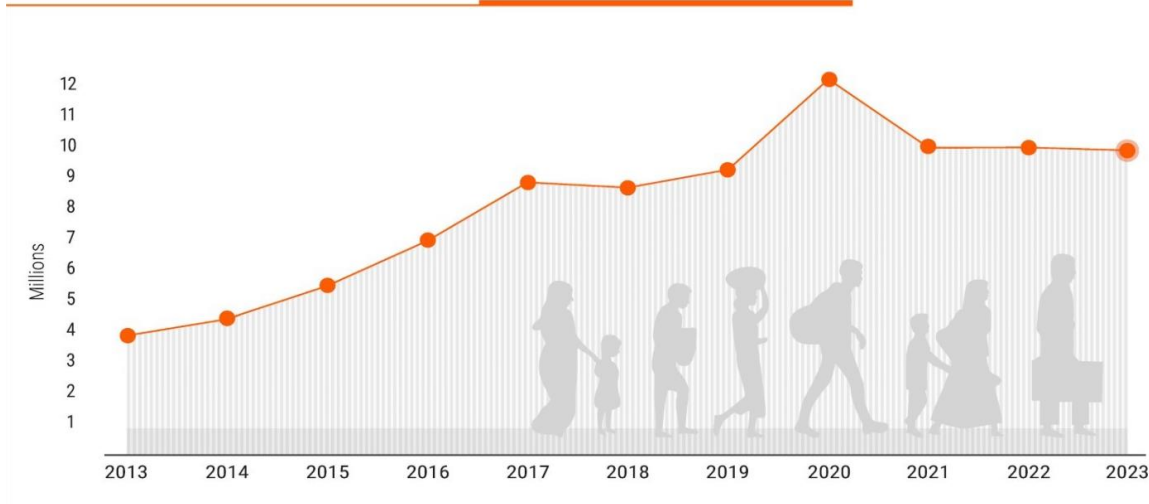
NRC's head office is located in Oslo. From here, NRC participates actively in Norwegian public discussions, engaging in a broad range of information, advocacy and fundraising efforts targeting decision-makers, civil society and the public at large.

NRC's response

Programmes

NRC reached 9.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance across 40 countries in 2023. This represents a slight decrease compared to the 2022 figure (9.8 million).

NRC worked with 9,719,630 people in need in 2023



NRC presence as of 31 December 2023.

The global humanitarian situation in 2023 was one of the most dramatic in NRC's history. It witnessed serious escalation in numerous violent conflicts and large-scale

attacks on civilians, where parties to the conflicts showed blatant disregard for the lives of civilians and their right to protection during war. Civilians bore the brunt of the suffering in the war in Palestine and Israel, where the population in Gaza was subjected to indiscriminate aerial bombardment, ground offensives and displacement. Mass violations were committed in the wars in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), yet these conflicts failed to attract sufficient attention internationally. Disasters such as the earthquakes in Türkiye, Syria and Afghanistan and Storm Daniel in Libya claimed thousands of lives and demonstrated the compounding effects of natural hazards and conflict-related vulnerabilities. The gap between available funding and global humanitarian needs continued to widen, contributing towards increasingly protracted displacement crises for displaced populations. Throughout the year, NRC's efforts to reach populations requiring assistance were challenged by administrative and bureaucratic impediments imposed by authorities and non-state armed groups across different contexts.

The war in Ukraine continued to cause immense suffering for civilians in 2023. Since the escalation of hostilities in February 2022, nearly one-third of the population in Ukraine has been forced to flee their homes. NRC's Central and Eastern Europe Regional Office continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of those displaced by the conflict, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. In Ukraine, NRC provided cash distributions to displaced people and communities affected by the war. Priority was given to hard-to-reach areas, underserved areas, and areas with high severity of needs, frequently in collaboration with local and national partners. In Poland, Moldova and Romania, NRC assisted Ukrainian refugees and host communities through local partners, providing services such as ICLA and cash distributions, and assisting with early recovery. Moreover, in Poland, NRC provided expertise and capacity to support local authorities and civil society in their response to the influx of refugees and migrants from other conflict-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Eritrea and Somalia, who were trying to reach the European Union via Belarus.

The Asia and Latin America region faces a range of complex emergencies, including new crises and protracted displacement crises caused by violent conflicts, climate-driven displacement, and patterns of irregular migration. Some of the world's largest refugee populations are concentrated in this region, particularly in countries such as Iran, Colombia and Pakistan. Additionally, this region harbours some of the world's largest populations of internally displaced people (IDPs), with Colombia alone hosting 6.7 million IDPs at the end of 2023. In Latin America, NRC programming focuses on assisting displaced populations and migrants with services connected to protection from violence. For the Asia sub-region, a notable achievement in 2023 was the return to work of female staff in Afghanistan, a result of shared efforts across the organisation. Despite growing humanitarian demands in both sub-regions, funding remains limited. Moreover, the lack of knowledge or willingness from governments and de facto authorities to adhere to humanitarian principles poses significant operating challenges for NRC in many of the countries in the region. In response to

the increasing challenges of addressing humanitarian needs in Asia and Latin America, NRC decided in 2023 to fully regionalise its Latin America response. The new Latin America Regional Office will start operating in Bogota, Colombia from April 2024.

In the Middle East, NRC programming responded to a combination of prolonged crises and numerous new emergency events in 2023. Following Hamas' brutal attacks on civilians in southern Israel on 7 October, the war in Gaza and escalation in the West Bank had devastating effects on Palestinians and on the wider region. The scale and intensity of bombardments conducted in besieged and densely populated areas took an unprecedented toll on civilians in Gaza. It was estimated that more than 20,000 people had been killed by the end of 2023, the vast majority of whom were civilians. The Israeli authorities' obstruction of aid to the population in Gaza and the destruction of health facilities made assisting victims of the war extremely challenging. Despite these obstacles, and often while experiencing displacement themselves, NRC staff in Gaza continued providing emergency relief to displaced Palestinians and cooperated closely with advocacy colleagues in efforts to urge parties to the conflict and those in a position to influence them to prioritise the protection of civilians.

The protracted nature of displacement, compounded with economic strains and shifting political priorities of donor countries, has further deteriorated the situation for many displacement-affected communities across the region. NRC's work in 2023 focused on helping communities affected by long-term displacement to achieve durable solutions. Climate-related and socio-economic factors also contributed to displacement in war-torn countries. The earthquake that struck Syria and Türkiye in early February 2023 hit a population already extremely vulnerable after years of war and the economic impact of Covid-19. NRC responded with emergency relief, as well as short and medium-term recovery to survivors in Syria. Similarly, NRC supported survivors and displaced people after the dam collapse in Derna, Libya, providing emergency distributions, educational activities, and clean water.

In the East Africa and Yemen region, NRC operates in numerous countries affected by sustained conflict, political fragility, food insecurity and climate shocks. The countries in the Horn of Africa alone are home to 30 million people requiring humanitarian assistance due to a combination of climate and weather-related issues, armed conflict and high food prices. Significantly, Sudan was the largest displacement crisis in the world at the end of 2023, after hostilities between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Army Forces in April 2023 escalated into a brutal civil war. More than 6 million people were subsequently displaced within Sudan during 2023, while 1.2 million people sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Recognising the scale of the humanitarian needs, the severity of the atrocities committed against civilians, and the lack of international attention to the conflict, NRC declared Sudan a priority crisis for 2023. NRC provided emergency response services and cash distributions in Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The organisation also authorised an emergency response mission to Chad and is assessing options for establishing a long-term presence to support the reception of Sudanese refugees.

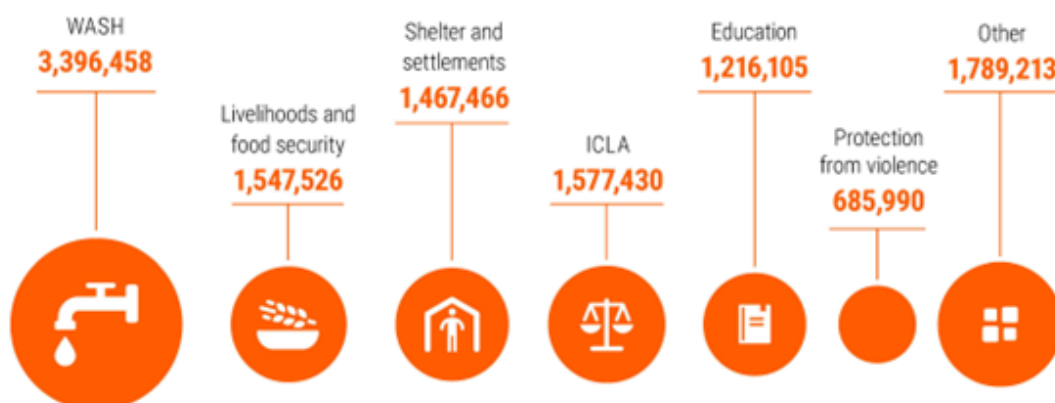
The countries where NRC operates in the Central and West Africa region are experiencing continued political insecurity and violence, significant humanitarian needs and growing displacement numbers due to armed conflict, as well as high levels of protection risks and acute levels of food insecurity. DR Congo was Africa's second-largest displacement crisis in 2023, and the scale of the crisis in the Central Sahel continues to grow. In a global context with competing crises and an overstretched humanitarian system, international attention and humanitarian financing for the region have been very low. Violence against aid workers and political instability affected NRC's operations, with bureaucratic restrictions and militarisation challenging principled humanitarian access. In 2023, NRC split the joint Niger and Burkina Faso country office into two separate country offices to allow a more effective response to the needs on the ground in both countries.

The distribution of people assisted across the different regions changed from 2022 to 2023. The East Africa and Yemen regional operation reached the most people in 2023, followed by the Middle East region. The Somalia country office alone reached almost 1.4 million people, primarily through multi-purpose cash distribution, while the number of people reached in Syria increased due to the earthquake response. In contrast, the number of people reached in the Asia and Latin America sub-regions decreased. The most significant decrease was in Afghanistan and Colombia, due to factors including a change in operating contexts and the funding landscape.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH) remains NRC's largest programme modality (core competency) in terms of people reached globally in 2023, though with a slight decrease from 2022. Programmes on psychosocial support and the Better Learning Programme (BLP) increased their reach globally and benefited 250,404 children and young people. The number of people assisted with services not linked to a specific NRC core competency continued to rise in 2023, reaching approximately 1.8 million. This was largely due to the increase in multi-purpose cash distributions, which is growing in importance for NRC's responses. Cash-based assistance can restore choice and dignity to displaced populations in crisis while stimulating local markets and economies.

Finally, livelihoods and food security, information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA), and protection from violence all showed a slight increase in reach, while there was a decrease in the number of people assisted with shelter and settlements and education services.

People reached through NRC programmes in 2023



NRC is reaching women and men approximately evenly through its programmes. Some 52 per cent of the 9.7 million people NRC worked with in 2023 were women and girls, while 48 per cent were boys and men. Approximately 36 per cent of the people NRC worked with received assistance as part of a first-line response; that is, assistance in response to a sudden event or aggravation of a context. This is an increase from 2022, where the number was 25 per cent. The increase is consistent across regions, but countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, Myanmar and Colombia represent the contexts with the most first-line response programming.

Policy and advocacy

In 2023, NRC continued to make significant progress in its advocacy and policy work on priority contexts and thematic areas. NRC finalised its Global Advocacy Strategy to support organisation-wide advocacy on two thematic priorities for the 2023–2025 strategy period: 1) Protect humanitarian access, and 2) Address the system-wide funding gap. In addition, three global priority contexts were selected for 2023: Syria, Afghanistan and Central Sahel.

In addition to long-term advocacy efforts on these ongoing crises, the year was marked by several new large-scale emergencies including the conflicts in Sudan and Palestine, which required rapidly shifting priorities. Based on learning from previous crises, the Emergency Advocacy and Media Standard Operating Procedure was launched, which aims to streamline advocacy and media work when a large-scale, globally relevant emergency occurs. This was first activated in October 2023 upon the outbreak of the crisis in Gaza.

With limited advocacy staff and a lack of dedicated resources in some key countries, the many competing crises put a strain on internal resources. Efforts are underway to strengthen fundraising for advocacy and provide additional staff support during crises and to fill gaps. An initiative to increase capacity building for staff on advocacy

and media was launched and a community of practice for advocacy, policy, media and communications was set up to enable cross-learning between colleagues.

On the three prioritised crises, NRC played a leading role in advocacy to retain principled operations with female colleagues in Afghanistan despite the authorities' ban on female aid workers. NRC advocated to ensure funding continued and highlighted the importance of development actors avoiding complete withdrawal. Two reports were published on the [barriers to Afghanistan's critical private sector recovery](#) and [the use of value transfer services by NGOs](#).

NRC supported the Syria earthquake response through advocacy related to funding allocations, as well as seeking humanitarian exemptions to sanctions. Evidence collected and shared on the impact of sanctions on NRC's operations contributed to the United Kingdom (UK), European Union (EU) and United States (US) issuing temporary humanitarian exemptions for the response.

NRC advocated for increased international support for the Central Sahel region. Burkina Faso topped [NRC's flagship list of neglected displacement crises](#), and the report was translated to French and used for engagement with stakeholders in Burkina Faso and Dakar and at the EU level. For Niger, advocacy efforts addressed liquidity and financial access challenges and lobbying related to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sanctions, as well as the impacts of donor disengagement from Niger following the coup d'état.

Following the escalation of the conflict in Gaza and the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation, NRC led a wide range of public and private advocacy efforts. This included more than 200 broadcast interviews, including many with high-profile outlets such as CNN, BBC and Sky, as well as an op-ed by Secretary General Egeland in [TIME Magazine](#) and a joint op-ed in the [New York Times](#). NRC representation offices organised and participated in briefings with a wide range of stakeholders in capitals, including the US, EU, Germany, UK, France and regional actors such as Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the Office of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and North African representatives.

With a small number of crises absorbing much of the public and political attention, as well as available funding, an increasing number of crises can be considered neglected. With funding from the Open Society Foundation, NRC led efforts to increase the focus on such crises at EU level. NRC is currently piloting the Neglected Crisis Platform, a forum for exchanges between EU Council delegates and aid operators aimed at bringing more political attention to neglected crises.

NRC worked to adapt to the changing political and economic landscape of the humanitarian sector, including by scaling up its engagement with a wider group of states and regional organisations. Meetings were held in Geneva with representatives from Russia, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye, the UAE, Morocco, Tajikistan, Oman, Sudan, Belarus and the OIC to discuss priority contexts and issues such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar, Gaza, Sudan, humanitarian access, diplomatic/multilateral efforts and the protection of civilians. The positive responses to meeting requests, the level of representation, and proactive

engagement by several interlocutors show that there is potential to further develop these relationships.

IDMC celebrated its 25th anniversary on 2 October 2023, bringing together some of the main thinkers, practitioners and policymakers who have shaped the internal displacement agenda during this period. IDMC also published new thematic reports in support of ongoing debates in the sector, including an [overview of 25 years of progress on internal displacement](#), a report on [gender dynamics in internal displacement](#), and the latest [qualitative estimates of internal displacement severity](#) across 13 countries. The annual [Global Report on Internal Displacement \(GRID\)](#), which showed that the number of internally displaced people reached an all-time high in 2022, was launched in May.

NRC continued to lead efforts to mitigate the impact of sanctions and counterterrorism measures on principled humanitarian action. A key priority was engagement with states on the implementation of [UN Security Council Resolution 2664](#) into domestic law. The Resolution, adopted in December 2022, exempts humanitarian organisations from asset freezes in UN sanctions. It has now been implemented by the US, UK, EU and other states in their domestic legislation. States have also taken measures to ensure that humanitarian exemptions exist in their non-UN sanctions regimes. This includes the EU in [10 autonomous sanctions regimes](#) and the US via new [general licences](#) for humanitarian actors and activities.

NRC worked in close collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force 3 on Preserving Humanitarian Space to raise awareness of Resolution 2664 and ensure NGOs contribute to the reporting to UN sanctions committees on the utility and impact of the Resolution. Efforts included holding webinars for the humanitarian community and providing detailed guidance on the Resolution's potential operational impact and reporting requirements.

In December, EU Member States, the Parliament and the Commission [agreed to a protective clause for humanitarians](#) in the EU "sanctions criminalisation" directive. With the cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and support from key allies at the Parliament, NRC supported with protective language in the directive, preventing, as much as possible, humanitarian actors from being unduly criminalised for carrying out humanitarian activities.

NRC continued to address [bank derisking](#) and held three expert dialogues with banks, governments, NGOs and academics to discuss solutions to the issue as part of a four-part series funded by European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The series examined [humanitarian banking channels](#), [NGOs' use of money service providers](#), [financial technology solutions](#), and [the role of tri-sector working groups](#).

NRC is contributing to several initiatives aimed at improving the humanitarian system. An option paper was developed on the simplification of the Global Protection Cluster for the IASC Protection Policy Review. Work also began on the IASC

Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement. NRC hosts the review on behalf of the IASC and serves as co-chair of its reference group.

NRC continued its engagement with the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement. As a result of NRC's efforts to promote consistency across different initiatives, OCHA issued a briefing note to outline complementarities between the IASC IDP review, the Emergency Relief Coordinator's Flagship Initiative, and the Special Adviser on Solutions initiative. All efforts currently underway still lack a proper coordinated approach and adequate leadership from the top to be able to yield the expected results; namely, to better respond to affected populations.

The Head of NRC's Humanitarian Policy Unit in Geneva completed a secondment with OCHA to support the IASC secretariat on strengthening the IASC's collective advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy efforts. The deployment aimed to help address some of the operational challenges to preserving humanitarian space in contexts such as Burkina Faso, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

In October, NRC launched the [outcome report](#) from a Swiss FDFA-funded research project that examined nexus approaches in five case study contexts: Iraq, Libya, Cameroon, Somalia and Afghanistan. The findings and recommendations from the research have been disseminated widely, and NRC has planned roundtable discussions to unpack the recommendations further in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

NRC continued to support the work of the Grand Bargain. The Grand Bargain annual meeting was held in June, and this was the last meeting led by NRC's Secretary General, Jan Egeland, who stepped down from his role as "Eminent Person". The new leadership of the Grand Bargain (a troika of ambassadors) was announced at the meeting. NRC will continue its [internal and external engagement](#) to operationalise the Grand Bargain.

NRC Global Strategy 2022–2025

NRC's Global Strategy 2022–2025 provides a blueprint for action up to the end of 2025. The strategy sets out four sub-objectives for areas that NRC will continue to strengthen and further institutionalise, namely durable solutions, assistance to hard-to-reach populations, humanitarian policy, and protection. It also points to four areas of work that will be accelerated through expanded engagement and investments: quality programming, advocacy, climate and environment in programming, and collaboration with local actors.

NRC will seek to improve its internal procedures and processes to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the organisation's mission, whilst simultaneously aiming to reduce its environmental footprint. There are 13 global objectives within the strategy that have been categorised as either ones to accelerate, ones to consolidate or ones that are enablers.

In 2023, the second year of the current strategy, NRC has made significant strides towards these goals. The dedication of NRC staff and the solidification of operational strategies have been instrumental in these advancements.

Accelerate

Quality, accountability and learning are essential components of effective humanitarian work for NRC. Quality refers to the delivery of services and assistance that meet the needs and expectations of the people that NRC works with. Accountability ensures that NRC is transparent and responsible in its actions and decisions, and that it responds to feedback and complaints. Learning involves continuous improvement and innovation based on monitoring, evaluation and analysis of programme outcomes and impact.

A key part of improving quality in NRC programming in this strategy period is the integration of safety and inclusion across all programming. In 2023 an impressive 82 per cent of country offices made progress against their safe and inclusive programming action plans, surpassing the target of 80 per cent.

A significant milestone was achieved when NRC joined the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance in 2023 and began work on conducting an independent audit. This move underscores NRC's commitment to upholding the highest standards in humanitarian response and being accountable to external quality standards. It will prepare NRC for a verification process slated for 2024.

As further evidence of its commitment to quality and accountability, NRC has also increased investment at a global level in both digital and human resources to support its community engagement and accountability approach and its complaints and feedback mechanism.

As part of being an accountable organisation, NRC must consider the environmental impact of humanitarian activities and ensure that programmes are implemented in a way that minimises harm to the environment. For many years, NRC has been using renewable energy and eco-friendly building materials in its activities, but this area must be further strengthened. In the current strategy, NRC has made it a priority to use the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+) to identify and address potential environmental risks in country operations. Since 2022, NRC has trained over 500 people across 140 local and international organisations on the application of environmental screening and NEAT+. NRC received funding from ECHO to increase capacity on the use of this tool in the wider humanitarian sector. In addition, NRC started a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support access to safe energy for displacement-affected communities. This involved supporting two regional offices, in the Middle East and East Africa, with regional energy adviser positions. NRC also endorsed a framing paper on climate in NRC responses.

Collaboration with local actors is crucial for effective humanitarian response and is a fundamental principle of ethical and responsible humanitarianism. By empowering

local communities and organisations, NRC supports sustainable and long-term solutions to the challenges faced by refugees and displaced people, in line with the Grand Bargain. In the current strategy period, NRC aims to transition from an organisation primarily focused on delivering assistance and services, to one that increasingly facilitates broader delivery of impact and higher-level outcomes through strengthened collaboration with local actors. In 2023, NRC initiated a policy on local partnership. Many of NRC's programme countries have been building local collaboration for years. In 2023, 4.8 per cent of total NRC programme expenditure occurred through partners (local and international), as compared to the 2021 baseline of 3.5 per cent. Eight country offices registered 5 per cent or more of programme expenditure as occurring through partners in 2024.

Consolidate

In 2023, NRC began implementing a grant from the IKEA Foundation to test out economic inclusion as a means to self-reliance, contributing to durable solutions for affected populations in protracted crises. At the country level across all regions, NRC continued to implement a diverse range of programming, research, advocacy and coordination initiatives that contributed to displaced people's efforts to integrate locally, return sustainably, or settle in a third location.

In 2023, NRC further consolidated its previous work in hard-to-reach areas. NRC is the leading NGO on access coordination, co-chairing nine country-based humanitarian access working groups and two regional access task forces, and is a key player in the Global Access Working Group. In addition, NRC trained over 900 humanitarian workers in 2023 on access. While NRC did not reach the ambitious goal of serving 40 per cent of its total reach in hard-to-reach areas in 2023, the improvement of NRC's access severity scoring enables better planning and modalities in line with the identified challenges and impediments. An assessment of the organisation's hard-to-reach programming was finalised in 2023 and showed that 29 per cent of those reached by NRC were in hard-to-reach areas. In 2022, at the start of the current strategy period, NRC took a significant step in its mission to protect the rights of refugees and displaced people by introducing a new core competency, "protection from violence". The primary goal of this new competency is to reduce the risk of violence and harm for the people NRC works with and to mitigate their impact when they do occur. In 2023, NRC recorded having reached over 680,000 people with different protection-oriented services.

Enablers

NRC continued its efforts to improve efficiency and programme quality through digital transformation in 2023. With the goal of maximising impact for people who are displaced and vulnerable during crisis, NRC is using digital tools to automate and streamline processes, freeing up staff to focus on providing life-saving assistance. NRC has been driving several digital initiatives in recent years that continued in

2023. These aim to bring efficiency and quality gains to the way NRC works and delivers aid.

As NRC becomes more digital, there is a need for robust data practices and standards. NRC has begun work on improving data governance and quality, ensuring that data is consistent, reliable, fit for purpose, respects the dignity of the people NRC works with, and is compliant with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In 2023, NRC addressed a critical risk around data collection and the wide use of the free “Kobo solution” (a data collection toolbox used by over 14,000 NGOs) by deploying a dedicated NRC instance called NRC Collect, which all NRC users and surveys will migrate to. This will give NRC control of the data it collects and ensure better data protection measures.

Using digital tools, NRC hopes to respond more quickly to emergencies and build sustainable solutions for use in humanitarian programming. The [Better Learning Programme \(BLP\) App](#) was piloted in five countries with 1,850 users, and is available in 11 languages. The [Better Learning Programme](#) is NRC’s flagship classroom-based, psychosocial support intervention for children in crisis-affected communities. The BLP App is a complementary app that supports children’s recovery from the trauma experienced as a result of stressful events, including during conflict and displacement, by improving conditions for learning.

Efficiency is crucial for maximising impact, and NRC has established a dedicated focus on the efficiency of its internal systems and processes. In 2023, the organisation took a deep dive into a number of internal processes to identify pain points and solutions to challenges. NRC recognises that simplifying existing processes alone will not yield the results it is looking for.

As an organisation committed to providing humanitarian assistance to those in need, NRC recognises the importance of addressing environmental concerns such as climate change and reducing its own carbon footprint. NRC aims to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent per staff member by 2030 through sustainable practices like renewable energy and efficient procurement, while ensuring its humanitarian mission does not negatively impact the communities it serves. NRC’s issued new environmental minimum standards for its programmes and new environmental considerations have been included in the NRC Logistics Handbook. In 2023 NRC created a mechanism to test the ability to solarise NRC buildings and reduce reliance on diesel generators for energy needs.

NRC cannot achieve its objectives without dedicated staff. The valuing and developing of NRC’s people is a core principle that is critical to the success of the organisation’s mission to assist and serve displaced communities around the world. NRC’s commitment to investing in staff starts with attracting and retaining top talent. The organisation strives to create a work environment that is both challenging and rewarding, where staff feel valued and supported in their professional growth. NRC recognises the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in creating a positive workplace culture and ensuring that its staff reflect the communities that NRC works with.

From a funding and partnership perspective, NRC has identified several challenges to achieving its strategic objectives for 2022–2025. For this reason, it has decided to prolong the strategy period by one year to the end of 2026, and to transition out of the strategy and institutionalise certain objectives that have achieved substantial progress by the start of 2025. In 2024 NRC will reassess its own investments in strategy to ensure a sustainable balance between the organisation’s funding, costs impact for 2025 and beyond.

Challenges and learning

While significant progress was made in several strategic areas during 2023, NRC encountered challenges that provided valuable learning opportunities.

Integrating climate and environmental considerations

The integration of climate and environmental considerations into programming requires significant capacity building and awareness-raising efforts across the organisation. This highlights the need for innovative solutions that balance immediate humanitarian needs with long-term environmental considerations.

Data protection

As NRC pushed for digital transformation to enhance efficiency and programme quality, it faced challenges in ensuring robust data protection. The widespread use of digital tools increased the risk of data breaches in NRC in 2023. This emphasises the importance of strong data security.

Sustainability of digital products

The rapid development and adoption of digital tools and platforms presented challenges in ensuring the financial sustainability of these developments, compounded by duplication of efforts. In 2024 NRC will work to improve the governance of digital developments and their financial sustainability.

Adapting to local needs and capabilities

While aiming to strengthen collaboration with local actors, NRC encountered challenges in aligning its standards and procedures with local capacities and needs, sometimes leading to local actors rejecting working with NRC. This challenge highlights the value of flexibility and adaptability in partnerships. NRC needs to ensure procedures are as simplified as possible for local partners without compromising on accountability.

NORCAP

NORCAP works to improve aid by providing targeted expertise to strengthen partners' response and achieve sustainable solutions, and by collaborating with partners to develop solutions to gaps and challenges in the aid system. During 2023, NORCAP supported the global community's responses to humanitarian crises in places including Afghanistan, Gaza, Ukraine, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan and Türkiye/Syria. In Ukraine, NORCAP worked with UN agencies, national authorities and local organisations in areas such as child protection, anti-trafficking, access to energy and the provision of shelter, education and cash assistance. In Romania, NORCAP worked with the Office of the Prime Minister, advising on the coordination and development of policies and national response plans for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

In 2023, NORCAP continued to implement the Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap) and Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), by assigning senior protection and gender experts to work as independent inter-agency resources in the UN system's field operations. These projects have strengthened protection and gender leadership and localisation strategies, supported the sharing of best practices and development of technical skills, and influenced global policies, strategies and advocacy efforts. ProCap supported 14 operations/countries and one region (Northern Central America) in 2023, while GenCap supported 19 operations/countries.

NORCAP supported national authorities in 2023 to strengthen their electoral processes by observing 19 elections in 17 countries including Nigeria, Guatemala, Türkiye and Poland. NORCAP's election observation programme invited 13 election experts from Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Puntland State of Somalia, El Salvador, Peru, Honduras and Paraguay to observe the Norwegian local election in September. This exchange culminated in recommendations for the State Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development in Norway. NORCAP celebrated the 30-year anniversary of the NORDEM election observation mechanism in 2023.

NORCAP and the African Union (AU) expanded a decade-long partnership aimed at promoting peace, prosperity and integration on the African continent. A total of 46 NORCAP staff were based in Addis Ababa and liaison offices, with a geographic reach across Ethiopia, Chad, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Madagascar.

As part of its work to mitigate the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, NORCAP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) supported the digital transformation of national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHSs) in Africa to improve data transmission and service delivery. Through this pilot in 11 countries, the NMHSs now provide current, easily understood climate and weather data via an interactive georeferenced data visualisation platform built on the East Africa Hazards Watch monitoring system.

NORCAP has made major contributions to the development and implementation of the Mukau system, a cutting-edge, comprehensive drought monitoring and advisory platform in Africa, developed in collaboration with the drought group of the Disaster Risk Management Unit at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. This initiative, implemented at the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD), is part of the Intra-ACP Climate Services Project.

In 2023, NORCAP expanded the Female Accelerator Programme for energy and climate. This has been a vital part of ongoing work towards increasing the number of female energy and climate colleagues in Africa, as well as in NORCAP missions, to enable more women in vulnerable communities to be involved in this sector.

With support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), NORCAP also prioritised working actively with partners to break climate services silos in Africa, including a climate services project for smallholder agricultural farmers in Malawi and Ethiopia. NORCAP collaborated on another project with a private sector partner, designed to increase small-scale food producers' productivity, market access and climate resilience in Mozambique and Tanzania.

In 2023, NORCAP worked with local civil society organisations (CSOs) in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria to strengthen their ability to respond to humanitarian and development needs in the region, while also boosting their ability to influence decision-making so that policies and actions are designed to meet the needs of the people affected. In 2023, NORCAP supported local CSO participation and leadership in three different events as part of the Lake Chad programme and held trainings and workshops for organisational capacity assessments and strengthening. NORCAP continues to directly support the Lake Chad Basin Secretariat, expanding the intervention to national (state) authorities in Cameroon and Nigeria and scaling up for a more targeted intervention with greater impact for the CSOs.

NORCAP concluded a partnership with the Greek authorities in 2023 to strengthen Greece's ability to provide dignified reception conditions and apply international standards to protect arriving refugees and migrants. NORCAP contributed to drafting Greece's general regulation for operating mainland hosting facilities, coordinating site planning for the temporary camp of Mavrovouni in Lesvos, improving the system for referring unaccompanied children to shelters, and establishing the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the protection of trafficking survivors.

NORCAP continued to work with partners to provide cash and voucher assistance to people in crisis. It played an instrumental role in about 40 per cent of the working groups coordinating cash assistance across the globe, including those in Yemen, Iraq and the Philippines. NORCAP also worked with the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement on two pilot projects in Ukraine and Syria that aim to enable national RCRC societies to take the lead in providing cash assistance at scale. This model, which is showing signs of replicability, is supporting the push for humanitarian assistance that is owned and led by local rather than international actors.

NRC's people

At the end of 2023, a total of 15,405 individuals worked for or with NRC to deliver humanitarian assistance. Of these, 9,405 were employees, including 7,746 national and 656 international staff, and approximately 6,000 were engaged as incentive, daily or other types of workers, typically displaced people or members of the local communities. A breakdown of regular employees by region and office is presented in the chart below.

9,405 people worked at NRC in 2023



Data per 31 December 2023. Excludes incentive, daily and other types of workers.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

NRC is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace. In 2023, NRC adopted a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) statement:

To best protect and empower people affected by displacement, we value, celebrate and promote diversity, equity and inclusion. We will build a positive working culture in which all staff feel valued, empowered, supported, safe and have a sense of belonging.

NRC's internal DEI working groups play a crucial role in unpacking this further and provide a platform for collaboration and sharing best practices. Inclusion will continue as a pre-set value-based goal in NRC's performance management process. Incorporating actions resulting from the global staff survey and gathering feedback through various channels will help gauge employee perceptions and areas of concern, enhancing the effectiveness of DEI efforts.

In 2023, the NRC Board agreed to establish a set of concrete commitments to drive DEI in the organisation. The objective is to demonstrate ownership of the

organisation's efforts on DEI, showcase how the Board will contribute to these efforts, and hold the Senior Management Group (SMG) accountable on DEI.

The [NRC Head Office Report on Equality and Non-Discrimination](#) provides further details on the measures the organisation took in 2023, and the progress made to make DEI an inherent value in NRC.

Nationality, gender and immigrant background

In 2023, the 656 NRC employees on international contracts represented 80 different nationalities. The largest groups were employees from Kenya, followed by France and Italy.

At regional and country office level, the gender distribution among international staff was 44 per cent male, 35 per cent female, and 21 per cent undisclosed. Amongst national staff, approximately 59 per cent were male, 38 per cent female, and 3 per cent undisclosed.

The gender distribution among staff at representation offices skewed towards 22 per cent male, 52 per cent female, and 26 per cent undisclosed. In NORCAP, the gender distribution among deployed experts was 50 per cent male, 48 per cent female, and 2 per cent undisclosed. In IDMC, the gender distribution was 53 per cent female, 29 per cent male, and 18 per cent undisclosed.

The gender distribution among NRC's country directors in 2023 demonstrated balanced gender representation, with 15 women, 15 men, and five opting to not disclose their gender.

Duty of care

NRC's duty of care towards its staff remains high on the organisation's agenda. NRC has continued to work on securing systems and procedures related to the health, wellbeing, safety and security of staff, particularly in high-risk contexts impacted by conflict. This has been achieved through continued strengthening of NRC's psychosocial support systems, and further development and adjustment of human resources (HR), health, safety and security (HSS) procedures, and reward packages. NRC's biannual employee engagement survey was conducted in 2023, and follow-up throughout the organisation is ongoing. Engagement in NRC is in general high, an indicator that strengthens the organisation and enables NRC to continue working across challenging contexts. Identified areas of improvement are related to workload, learning and development, and internal communications, for which targeted initiatives are prioritised in 2024.

Health, safety and security (HSS)

In 2023, the HSS section was driven by the need to balance operational criticalities, support to emergency responses such as in Sudan, and regular operational and strategic requirements. The section was restructured, and new staff were recruited to meet the growth and increasing HSS support needs of NRC globally. While understaffed, the global HSS section was able to deliver five HEAT courses, eight crisis management team trainings, and two “training of trainers” courses for staff in the Central and Eastern Europe region and Afghanistan. A total of 486 staff received HEIST training from head office-qualified trainers in the field. The section provided critical support for seven country operations through its roving HSS managers in 2023. Furthermore, the section reviewed the governing documents for crisis management and HSS training, with each finalised by the end of the year. The review of HSS governing documents will continue in 2024 and the section aims to have a full team on board within the first quarter.

HSS incidents

The top five incidents reported by NRC staff in 2023 were road traffic incidents, coercion, theft, denial of access and arrest. NRC witnessed two critical safety incidents related to programming in the Middle East. In response to these, the modalities for programme delivery are being reviewed and adjusted to promote the highest standards of safety. A distribution of essential household items in Sudan was interrupted by shots fired by an armed group. Looting of NRC warehouses and the theft of goods during the fighting in 2023 critically impacted programme activity across Sudan. Access has been denied to a programme area in Cameroon for an extended period by an armed group. Arrest and detention led to delays in programme implementation in a few countries. The situation in Palestine following the events of 7 October has significantly impacted NRC’s teams and programmes on the ground, with most of the population – including NRC’s staff – forcibly displaced, lacking access to basic needs and experiencing frequent shelling and armed conflict.

The review of incident management processes and procedures will be extended into 2024 due to staff shortages in 2023. NRC will implement software updates to Protect, NRC’s current reporting tool, designed to facilitate more granular analysis of incidents. The organisation will gain more insight into the programming types most affected by security incidents and the different levels of impact of these incidents.

In addition, the HSS risk management policy was reviewed and streamlined in 2023 to further focus its governing documents on duty of care. The new crisis management handbook replaces the crisis management plan and now takes an approach that encompasses the needs of the whole organisation rather than the specific focus of HSS.

Finance and revenue base

In 2023, NRC's total annual income was USD 767 million (NOK 8.097 billion), which represents a 5.3 per cent increase in USD (15 per cent increase in NOK) compared to 2022. The annual accounts stipulate a negative net result of USD -5 million (NOK -48 million), which is USD 9.5 million (NOK 95 million) higher than budget for 2023, and USD 33.5 million (NOK 327 million) lower than 2022.

The financial status of NRC is considered healthy, similar to previous years. The organisation has however experienced that there is a need to secure a more sustainable balance between income and expenses for the future. A broad programme titled "2025 and Beyond" was established towards the end of 2023, which will review NRC's current organisational structure and cost efficiency.

During 2023, the Norwegian Krone (NOK) saw a reduction in value compared to the United States Dollar (USD) of approximately 3.5 per cent on average, while the global inflation rate was approximately 6.6 per cent according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These factors combined have resulted in reduced purchasing power for the organisation and project participants.

The net negative result for 2023 was planned per the organisation's 2023 budget, as NRC had a record high net result in 2022 due to fundraising related to the conflict in Ukraine. Parts of the fundraising results were added to the reserves and spent as planned in 2023. The net loss is deducted from NRC's equity. The equity reserve is still strong and will enable the organisation to further invest in its strategic priorities and project implementation in the coming years. The total equity reserve is reduced by the same amount as the net result, USD 4.5 million (NOK 47 million), ending at NOK 839 million. Equity with internal restrictions increased by USD 7 million (NOK 74 million). As of 31 December 2023, USD 15 million (NOK 159 million) of restricted equity is committed for programme implementation in 2024. NRC's core equity without restrictions is USD 65 million (NOK 639 million), 8.0 per cent of the total income in 2023. By the end of 2023, total current assets amounted to USD 394 million (NOK 4.114 billion), against a short-term liability of USD 314 million (NOK 3.277 billion). The short-term debt ratio (liability over assets) is raised to 0.80, which is deemed appropriate. The organisation has no long-term debt. Although there are large variations during a year, the organisational liquidity (cash flow) is in general acceptable. Surplus liquidity is invested in the money market and bond funds.

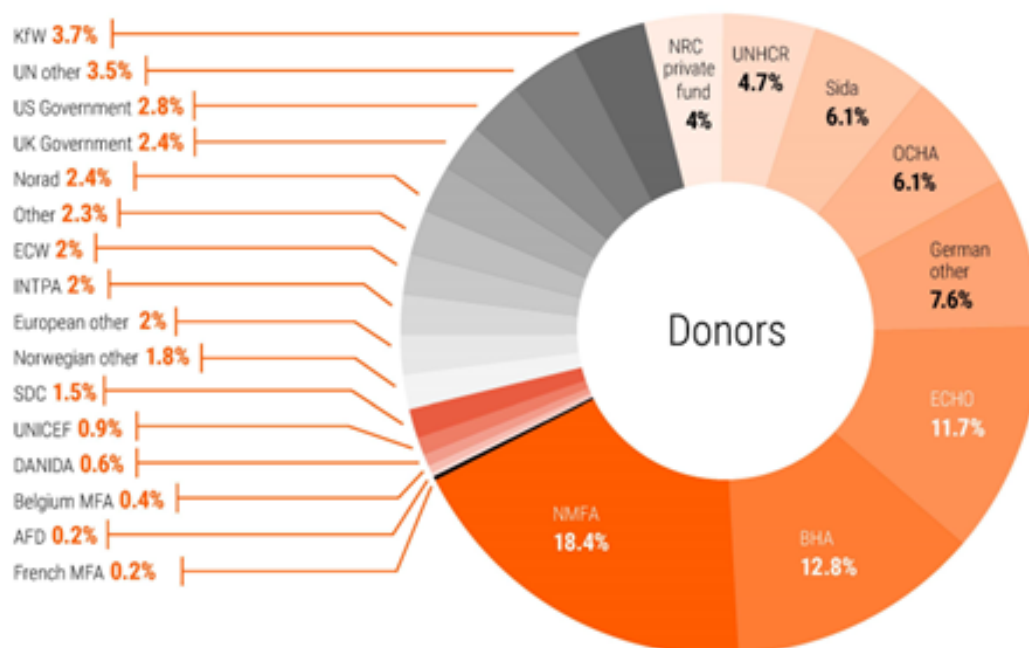
In terms of income, the volume grew from 2022 to 2023 in some parts of the organisation. The main growth came in the Central and Eastern Europe regional office, which had an income of approximately USD 94 million (NOK 951 million), a 53 per cent increase compared to 2022. The relative share of income shifted with higher growth in the Middle East Regional Office (MERO), and Central and West Africa Regional Office (CWARO), moderate growth in the East Africa and Yemen Regional Office (EA&Y) and the Asia, Europe and Latin America Regional Office (ALAR). NORCAP saw a growth of 33 per cent in 2023, also largely related to the Ukraine response.

NRC continued to receive substantial support from a variety of global institutional donors, and managed to diversify its donor base even further. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and Norad remain as NRC's largest donor, providing 22 per cent of its income. The US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) (13 per cent) has grown to be NRC's second largest donor, due in particular to its support for cash assistance in Ukraine. The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) (12 per cent) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (6 per cent) remained among NRC's largest donors and most important strategic partners. The two German institutional partners, the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and KfW Development Bank combined make up almost 11 per cent of the total implementation income forecast. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) became NRC's fifth largest donor followed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (both 5 per cent). Funding from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) further decreased to 2 per cent. Funding from US and German donors, and donors with a development focus, continued to grow in 2023.

NRC is not projecting significant reductions in the expected level of institutional donor funding for 2024, and is maintaining its budgets at the same level as in 2023. However, NRC expects that it will become even more challenging to mobilise additional institutional funding from governments due to reductions or increasing pressure on aid budgets because of the high number of humanitarian emergencies.

NRC's overall budget in NOK was positively affected by the volatility and changes in the exchange rate of NOK versus USD, EUR and other currencies. NRC receives less than 25 per cent of its income in NOK and the rest in other major currencies like USD, EUR, GBP, SEK and CHF, while major parts of its head office administration costs are tied to the NOK.

NRC donors in 2023

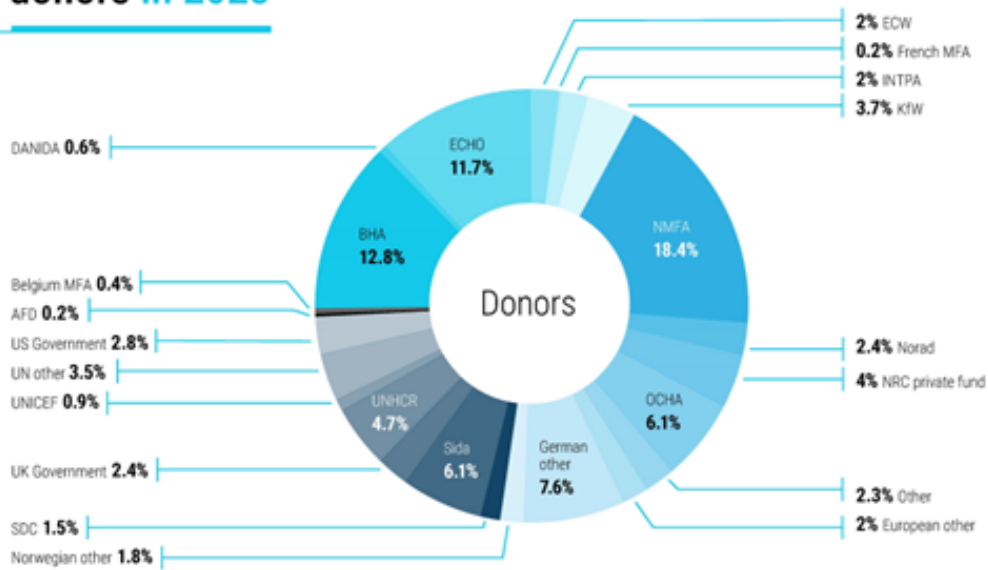


NORCAP funding

In 2023, NORCAP exceeded its initial plans, reaching an implementation of more than USD 76 million (NOK 811 million), compared to the initial budget of USD 64 million (NOK 681 million.) NORCAP's expenditures amounted to USD 67 million (NOK 711.5 million) while ACAPS's spending totalled USD 9.6 million (NOK 101.5 million.) NMFA and Norad remains the largest donor; however, the donor portfolio has diversified further and now includes the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), European Economic Area Grants (EEA), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and multi-partner trust funds, among others.

Securing funding for localisation efforts as well as obtaining development funding is a continued challenge for NORCAP.

NORCAP donors in 2023



Private sector funding

In 2023, private fundraising generated a value of NOK 462 million from cash donations, grants and pro bono resources, at a cost of NOK 155 million for fundraising as well as public engagement. Thus, for every NOK 1 spent, NRC generated NOK 3 of resources to help deliver NRC's mission. Improving profitability, especially of regular donor recruitment, continues to be a priority.

Half of the income was fundraised through partnerships with private sector organisations and foundations, and half of this was pro bono. New partnerships were built with the IKEA Foundation, Equinor, the Ford Foundation, and Oak Foundation, in addition to maintaining ongoing partnerships with organisations like the Hilton Foundation, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), CMS Kluge, Grundfos, PIWJK and others. Increased investments were made in new markets such as the UK, US and Central and Eastern Europe. NRC's private sector partnership work continues to grow rapidly, but is limited by the difficulty of recruiting experienced staff, with multiple failed recruitments in 2023.

The other half of the income was fundraised from private individuals, municipalities and civil society organisations. Most of this income came from NRC's generous regular donors who give every month. In 2023, NRC moved away from an old payment system that had caused numerous problems in the previous 24 months. A more robust payment platform that takes payments globally is now in place. Private fundraising in Sweden faced governance challenges that required significant work to correct.

NRC's outreach efforts during global crises mobilised public support for fundraising. Through public engagement and social media channels, NRC extensively addressed

crises such as the Syria/Türkiye earthquake, the Sudan war, flooding in Libya and the Gaza war. Engagement with the public and donors alike was in focus during the year, spotlighting neglected crises, education in emergencies, and shelter initiatives in Ukraine. Through digital channels, NRC reached an estimated 3.9 million people monthly.

In Norway, public outreach was increased. This included a partnership with Brann football club to promote awareness of neglected crises. NRC's Christmas campaign, advertised by JCDecaux, also had innovations including selling gingerbread houses designed by the well-known architect firm, Snøhetta and sold by the online grocery retailer, Oda.

Risk management

Throughout 2023, risk management efforts continued to focus on strengthening the organisational capacity to manage the risks affecting NRC globally. There was a particular focus on the high risks: the risk of exposing project participants to further harm, the risk of disclosing confidential information, major corruption events, threats to staff safety and security, and the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

NRC continued to provide managers with improved systems and tools to manage key organisational risks. A risk management policy was adopted which provided clarity on the objectives, principles, minimum requirements and roles and responsibilities for risk management in NRC.

NORCAP finalised its risk management framework by completing risk registers that capture all risks affecting the work of deployed experts. These registers provide managers in NORCAP with an overview of the key operational risks they need to address.

A policy called "Speak Up" was also established, aiming at improving whistleblowing in NRC, and responding to the challenges identified in receiving and responding to misconduct allegations in the organisation.

NRC Assure, the system established in 2022 to monitor compliance with key internal controls for risks affecting NRC globally, was expanded to cover a total of 15 controls. Compliance with key controls across country offices reached 61 per cent by year end, an increase from the 41 per cent recorded at the end of 2022.

Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH)

A total of 64 cases of misconduct relating to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) were reported to NRC in 2023, which is 27 per cent fewer than in 2022. Each allegation and complaint were evaluated based on set criteria and followed up per NRC procedures and Speak Up system. Of the reported allegations, 72 per cent were investigated by NRC internal investigators, while the rest of the cases were followed up and managed by human resources. A quarter of the

allegations involved sexual harassment, 36 per cent involved sexual exploitation and abuse, and 27 per cent involved child sexual abuse. Ten per cent involved verbal or gender-related abuse.

Of the investigations opened in 2023, 22 cases were closed by NRC with an added 9 referred to other organisations for investigation. 13 cases were carried forward into 2024 as open cases due to being reported late in the year. Some 47 per cent of the cases that were investigated and closed in 2023 were found to be substantiated.

More than 98 per cent of the alleged subjects of concern were male or of unknown gender, and 23 per cent were staff in a management positions. Some 96 per cent of survivors were female or of unknown gender, and 58 per cent were from the community or among the people NRC works with.

Corruption

A total of 203 corruption cases were reported to NRC in 2023, which is a decrease of 80 cases compared to 2022. Each allegation and complaint were evaluated based on set criteria and followed up per NRC procedures and Speak Up system. The most common category of cases (27 per cent) involved allegations of fraud (including procurement fraud), followed by “complex cases” (multiple allegations; 16 per cent), bribery/kickbacks (8 per cent), favouritism/nepotism (7 per cent) and aid diversion (7 per cent). Of these, 113 cases were closed in 2023 and 90 were carried forward into 2024 as open cases. All cases of alleged financial corruption or misconduct from the previous year are briefly summarised on NRC’s [website](#) in June of each year.

Transparency

NRC has started to map its supply chain in accordance with the Norwegian Transparency Act, which requires organisations to provide the general public with information on how the impact of partners and suppliers on fundamental human rights and working conditions is addressed. During 2023, no negative consequences of NRC’s partnerships were discovered.

Further information on NRC’s initiatives towards transparency can be found on NRC’s [website](#).

Environmental impact

Climate change and the environment continue to be of increasing concern to NRC and its project participants, staff and donors. Displacement-affected contexts are particularly vulnerable to climate risks and shocks. This requires the organisation to adopt greater environmental awareness in its humanitarian response, and reduce its environmental footprint. In 2023, temperatures were at least 1C warmer than

average in all NRC country offices. As a result, several countries already facing humanitarian crises experienced more severe and intense heatwaves, wildfires, floods, droughts and epidemics, further increasing the humanitarian needs of the affected populations.

NRC's climate and environment strategy set a target to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by 20 per cent by 2030. In 2023, the organisation focused on setting the direction on climate and environment for NRC's country programmes.

With the support of ECHO, NRC is strengthening the capacity of humanitarian actors to conduct environmental screenings using the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+). This capacity building project was rolled out in 28 locations across 16 country offices affected by humanitarian crisis between November 2022 and December 2023. A total of 28 technical trainings and 11 sessions for trainers have been provided to 534 humanitarian staff. The project will run until June 2024.

Through NRC's wide outreach towards other humanitarian actors, including local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the organisation's role in the NEAT+ steering committee, NRC has developed not only its internal capacities, but also an influencing position that help it to relay and address the challenges for environmental risk mitigation from humanitarian programmes.

In 2023, NRC endorsed a framing paper on climate in NRC's response, which provided further clarity on its own role and direct contribution to the climate crisis through programming. NRC's priorities are focused on operationalising the directions and guidance on climate adaptation and environmental mitigation activities with project participants. In 2023, 17 country offices had ongoing projects and programmes with integrated climate components. These mainly took the form of climate-smart agriculture activities, renewable energy access for shelters and WASH facilities, non-food item (NFI) kits and shelter assistance to displaced people affected by floods or hurricanes, research, as well as assessments of climate impacts on displacement-affected people.

NRC has advanced on its provision of safe and sustainable clean energy solutions for project participants. Several country offices are implementing clean energy interventions in their programmes, ranging from solar household systems in Libya to solar water pumps in Burkina Faso. NRC secured new positions for two regional energy advisers in East Africa and the Middle East, stemming from a two-year project funded by Sida that aimed to increase clean energy access for displaced people. This bolstered NRC's capacities and the institutionalisation of energy access for displaced people through its programmes, via direct implementation of selected clean energy pilots.

NRC leveraged evidence from its response to inform advocacy and policy initiatives on climate and energy. This involved developing key messages for both humanitarian and climate discussions, initiating research to identify climate-specific vulnerabilities of displacement-affected people, and mapping stakeholders for further engagement in the advocacy and policy influence spaces.

NRC's [first annual carbon footprint report was published in August 2023](#), marking a significant milestone in efforts to understand and reduce the organisation's carbon emissions. Internally, dashboards and carbon target calculator tools put location-specific data in the hands of stakeholders across NRC to inform reduction targets and actions. Carbon reduction initiatives are ongoing, and NRC has prioritised reducing energy emissions through the transition from diesel generators to solar power.

Energy experts from NORCAP, funded by Sida and the German Federal Foreign Office, have supported NRC teams across Africa to increase their energy efficiency and conduct assessments for the transition from diesel generators to solar power. Based on the experience of those energy experts and with support from Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a solar handbook was developed. This was launched internally with tools and guidance to empower country offices to solarise their operations. In response to the challenge of the high upfront costs associated with solar power, NRC developed its Capital Fund, an investment mechanism that enables upfront capital investment, which can be repaid by country offices at an affordable level over time.

NORCAP energy and sustainable responses

NRC continues to contribute to the greening of the humanitarian and development sectors through NORCAP, a provider of strategic development and technical expertise to both sectors.

In 2023, NORCAP continued to spearhead projects that facilitated a shift to clean energy in the sector at both the operational level and the end-user level. With support provided to over 48 missions across more than 25 countries in Africa and the Middle East, the focus was on continuing to increase renewable energy-related services, carbon offsetting, the promotion of sustainable practices, improved energy efficiency, training and advocacy initiatives associated with reducing environmental impact.

The Decarbonising Humanitarian Energy project, as part of NORCAP's partnership with the Global Platform for Action on Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings (GPA), moved into the operational phase in 2023. This project aims to bundle energy projects across countries, initially Nigeria and Niger, with an emphasis on country-wide assessment, strengthened coordination, and working with partners to set up private sector collaborations in both countries to increase decarbonisation efforts and energy access initiatives.

Another thematic area that NORCAP focused on in 2023 was support to clean energy cooking services and food security initiatives for missions primarily in Africa. NORCAP worked on a wide range of projects covering 26 African countries.

In 2023, NORCAP designed a technical facility to expedite humanitarian energy projects by providing highly specialised expertise, thereby making projects more attractive and eligible for investment from blended or innovative financing sources. The facility, set to be launched in 2024, will support all stages of the project

preparation process, including concept development, project feasibility and pilot, as well as project implementation. Additionally, NORCAP energy staff have worked on carbon offsetting and carbon credit projects with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), further contributing to the reduction of environmental impact.

In 2023, NORCAP focused on developing programmes and expertise on climate adaptation, building on its work on climate services. The aim was to co-develop adaptive programming with partners, along with a dedicated roster of adaptation staff. The overall work on climate services and adaptation focused on national and regional capacity building as well as partnership development. NORCAP's work on climate focuses on supporting communities on the ground to withstand environmental impact. Core partners for this work continued to be the regional climate centres and national meteorological and hydrological services in Africa. In total, NORCAP had 51 missions under the climate portfolio with expertise in over 17 countries.

To better support staff and partners on the ground, NORCAP has established a climate response team, with staff based in both East and West Africa. It has already proved very helpful to have a dedicated team to support work and coordination in the region and has also reduced the need for head office travel.

NRC Board

The following people constituted the Board in 2023:

- Harald Norvik (Chairman of the Board)
- Amira Malik Miller (Deputy Chair)
- Kiran Aziz
- Walter Kälin
- Jemilah Mahmood
- Sturla Stålsett
- Randi Marjamaa
- Claus Sørensen
- Anthony Nichols (Board member elected by staff)
- Pauline Ballaman (Board member elected by staff)
- Lilia Granja (Board member elected by staff)

The Board conducted five regular Board meetings, one extraordinary Board meeting, and two Board seminars, discussing 52 agenda items throughout the year.

The Board Audit and Risk Committee met four times in 2023. The Committee assists the Board and management by providing independent oversight, advice and guidance on the adequacy of the organisation's:

- risk management
- internal controls and frameworks for compliance and safeguarding
- internal audit activity, external auditors, and other providers of assurance
- financial statements and public accountability reporting

Board meetings and seminars in 2023 focused on, among other issues:

- emergency response
- diversity, equity and inclusion
- strategic direction
- advocacy and neglected crises
- innovation

The Board evaluation in 2023 confirmed that the relationship between the Board and the administration is good and constructive.

The Board confirms that the conditions for continued operations are fulfilled.

The Board thanks NRC's employees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year, which was heavily impacted by the Sudan and Gaza crises. The Board looks forward to continued cooperation in 2024.

The Board and the Secretary General's responsibilities for the governance of NRC are covered by liability insurance through If P&C Insurance Ltd. The insurance covers the insured parties' liability for pure financial loss in the capacity of directors and officers that may incur anywhere in the world according to the Norwegian Foundations Act.

10, 8 May 2024
Harald Norvik
Chairman of the Board



Jan Egeland
Secretary General



Walter Kälin
Board Member



Sturla Stålsett
Board Member



Claus Sørensen
Board Member



Kristin Skogen Lund
Board Member



Karim Irani
Board Member elected by staff



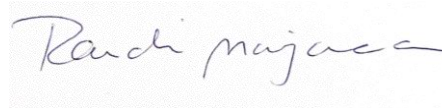
Amira Malik Miller
Deputy Chair



Kiran Aziz
Board Member



Randi Marjamaa
Board Member



Jemilah Mahmood
Board Member



Pauline Ballaman
Board Member elected by staff



Elisabeth Ånes Rydland
Board Member elected by staff

