

“A living church across the earth”

NMS STRATEGY 2018-2023



“A living church across the earth”

1) WHO WE ARE

NMS is an independent mission organization within the Church of Norway and a part of God's worldwide church. Our vision is “A living church across the earth.” Our faith is expressed when the message of hope – that Jesus Christ is the saviour of the world – is shared with others, and in work to give people dignified life through our fight against poverty and injustice.

2) WHAT WE WANT TO DO

SHARE OUR FAITH IN JESUS

We want to share our faith in Jesus through words and deeds, with new generations and in areas where the Christian faith is not widely known, and we wish to stimulate congregations to do likewise. NMS also wants to further develop networks for missional churches and to strengthen the theological competence at various levels of our collaborative partner churches. We want to challenge all our partners to increase their focus on global mission.

ELIMINATE POVERTY

We want to fight poverty, and we wish to stimulate congregations to use their resources to do likewise. NMS will prioritize preventative work related to the environment and climate in order to improve food security in rural areas. We will continue our engagement in advocating for primary healthcare and women's rights.

FIGHT INJUSTICE

We want to fight injustice by working for equal treatment and inclusion of under-privileged groups, and we wish to stimulate congregations to do likewise. NMS will fight against practices that oppress women; strengthen the work for human rights; and improve the situation of religious minorities and the disabled. We will increase our competency on migration and fight corruption.

3) THE TASKS TO BE SOLVED

NMS will work in a goal-oriented way and will maintain a strategic focus on problem-solving. Activities and initiatives are not goals in themselves, but are meant to contribute to achieving agreed upon objectives. In order to share our faith in Jesus; eliminate poverty; and fight against injustice, we will focus on the following tasks:

Share the gospel

NMS wants the gospel of Jesus Christ to be proclaimed to people who have not been reached by the Christian faith; to people in countries and cultures where churches are on a decline; and to new generations of children and youth. NMS's task is to challenge and equip all Christians to further the gospel.

Develop congregations

NMS will continue to focus on planting and developing missional congregations. We will

*) Basic document on mission «Worldwide joy», NMS 2004

develop congregations, equipping them to reach a healthy, biblical understanding of what a congregation is; what contributes to growth; and the tasks a congregation has. Important components of this are leadership development and board training.

The work of NMS is based on the call to love our neighbours and the opportunity for all people to live a dignified life. Our diaconal work springs out of our encounter with the message about God's goodwill, care and love for people and creation. NMS focuses on increasing theological competency at all levels: Training for lay people, Bible schools, and theological education.

Develop leaders

One goal is for NMS and our partners to have paid and unpaid co-workers with the necessary expertise to manage and to further develop their organizations. NMS will encourage ongoing leadership development programs. We will emphasize relational leadership and cooperation through participatory processes. Themes within the leadership development programs will vary based on need. NMS contributes to increased knowledge and insight into organizational theory and change management.

Build sustainable organizations

NMS will work for efficient, adaptable and flexible organizations that achieve their goals. As a step in this direction we will prioritize increasing the competency related to organization and leadership, and focus on administrative capacity and financial independence among all our partners.

Through organizational development projects NMS will contribute to processes of learning and change. This is carried out through critical reflection and assessments of the organization's competency, structures, as well as the values and norms on which it is based. Change processes in one part of an organization will affect the whole and the relationships between the parts, and therefore need to be anchored at the highest level of leadership.

Combating corruption will be a priority focus area, which includes work pertaining to attitudes. Financial resources can be taken care of through good accounting routines, appropriate software, and improved systems for internal control. Stewardship of human resources will also be given a special focus.

NMS will contribute to awareness-raising about the role of the church in civil society, including socio-ethical challenges and human rights. It is especially important to focus on including disadvantaged groups. NMS will increase awareness pertaining to conflict prevention while planning and carrying out projects, for example by organizing "Do no harm" courses.

Develop local communities

NMS will work to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of the poor. This is done through mobilization of volunteers, organizing and capacity building of civil society. Civil society has great potential contributing to improved living conditions, increased income, increased food production, strengthened rights, and equal opportunities for women and men, children and youth. We view local congregations as important agents of change in civil society.

Equally important to meeting basic local needs for food, water, health, education and infrastructure, is the aim of strengthening people's ability to contribute to development themselves, in interaction with government and civil society. This applies both to those who live in rural areas and those in urban areas.

Climate change is a major challenge for poor countries. In order to support good living con-

ditions locally, NMS will contribute to good interaction between professional groups, civil society and government in working towards sustainable stewardship of creation. This includes investment in climate-smart agriculture, as well as rehabilitation of forest and agricultural soil.

Investments in health must be viewed as complementary to the government's public health system. NMS's work will be within primary health and will focus mainly on mothers and children in remote areas who have access to very limited provisions. This includes support to some diaconal institutions.

Promote justice

The aim of NMS's work on inclusion and human rights is that disadvantaged groups will have genuine opportunities to participate in society and experience that they are valued and included equally with others. This work encompasses inclusion of all people regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, or ability. NMS is dealing with issues relating to the situation of religious minorities, children, youth, and women, and will pursue an attitude-building work at all levels, breaking down barriers preventing a dignified life. We will strengthen our collaboration with organizations working with human rights issues.

Women's rights are defined as human rights, which is a key in combating poverty. NMS's work aims to give women recognition and dignity equal to men. NMS also participates in the fight against traditional practices that oppress women, such as genital mutilation, forced marriages, child marriages, premature births, lack of help at births, and polygamy.

NMS will increase the focus on fighting against corruption, since it contributes to oppressing the poor and maintains inequality between the poor and the rich.

Meet migration

The stream of refugees and migrants is increasing. It is a global phenomenon, and NMS encounters its reality both in Norway and through the work carried out by many of NMS's collaborative partners internationally. NMS wishes to motivate societies to meet refugees and migrants with love, hospitality, and inclusion in local communities. It is still a challenge to integrate refugees and migrants and the resources they represent at all levels in our own work in Norway. We will aim to increase our expertise in this area, among other things, by considering the relevant experience of our partners, developing a plan for further engagement.

Promote dialogue

NMS will contribute to promote dialogue between people of different cultures, status, and religion. In this work NMS will learn from the experience of our partners, and we will draw up a plan for further engagement.

We want to pay attention to many new and emerging churches and congregations, Norwegian and international, in order to promote dialogue and understanding between various Christian communities and congregations.

4) HOW WE WORK

NMS emphasizes professionalism, sustainability, and accountability with high ethical standards for work. This involves investing in competence development. Our work is long-term and strategic. NMS expects openness and transparency from ourselves and our partners, and we have zero tolerance for corruption.

Partnership

NMS cooperates in a partnership model where equality is a foundational principle. Collaboration should be characterized by mutual respect and understanding for each other's differences, both culturally and materially. NMS concludes partnership agreements to create security and predictability in relation to roles and expectations. In addition to ongoing dialogue regarding development and progress between NMS and its partners, reports on completed work are submitted annually. As far as possible we aim to articulate objectives for what we wish to achieve through the collaboration.

Volunteering

NMS is a voluntary organization with democratic structure. Involvement and engagement is the largest motivational factor for volunteering. NMS will continue to develop concepts for charity shop management, for agreements concerning volunteers both in Norway and for shorter or longer tasks in mission projects in other countries.

Use your talents

NMS will also work to further develop the concept "Use your talents", as a tool for mobilizing voluntary engagement in congregations, groups and projects. NMS will motivate congregations to utilize "Use your talents" as an approach to diaconal practice in their local community. This creates development, both at an individual level and in churches and local communities. In many countries, strong local organizations will be a goal, as this provides a civil society more capable of controlling and adjusting the authorities' distribution of resources.

Participation

NMS is a democratically built organization, and we work on democratization processes in collaboration with partners. We aim for broad participation in our work to reach the approved goals and in implementing strategies. NMS desires to promote as high a degree of involvement as possible from those who are engaged in the organization's work. NMS is also working on the leadership culture and participatory processes at an organizational level. We will continue our work to further develop our understanding of democracy. We have chosen a resource-focused approach, and will strengthen our own and our partners' ability to work in ways that further this approach.

5) OUR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

NMS has some cross-cutting themes that we wish to focus on in all our work. These themes must be accounted for in all project applications and reports. We will raise awareness around these themes across the organization. The themes are:

- Gender roles and equality – NMS wishes to focus on gender roles and gender equality in such a way that men and women will increasingly be equally represented in the work, including decision-making processes.
- Climate threats and environmental stewardship – NMS wishes to focus on the consequences our work has for our stewardship of creation for the benefit of future generations.
- Conflict awareness – NMS wishes to focus on the consequences our work has for the distribution of power between people and groups so that conflicts can be prevented.

6) WHO WE COLLABORATE WITH

NMS collaborates with independent churches and organizations across the world. Most of the churches are Lutheran, and some are interdenominational. Several of the organizations are ecumenical. In recent years NMS has increased its participation in ecumenical collaborative projects.

We are actively working to further develop our externally-focused work, also in Norway. Much of this work is carried out in cooperation with the Church of Norway, but we also wish to remain open to other collaborative partners who would like to carry out mission work in Norway. NMS cooperates closely with NMS U regarding ministering to children, youth, and young adults. Student exchange is organized through Hald International Centre.

NMS offers student exchange and internships through Competency and Cultural Centers that have been established together with partners. NMS is co-owner of two university colleges (VID and NLA) and three high schools (KG, KVT, and KVN). NMS collaborates with the high schools on projects in other countries and collaborates academically with the NLA University College and VID Specialized University.

NMS participates in various church networks (WCC and LWF) and missional networks (including NORME, Digni) domestically and internationally. Through such networks, which are often ecumenical, NMS can exchange experiences, as well as receive inspiration and professional impulses. In addition, NMS participates in professional development projects with Digni.

7) WHAT WE NEED TO SUCCEED

Passion for and interest in mission

NMS is wholly dependent on engagement in the form of prayer, voluntary work, and the joy of giving. This engagement springs out of God's call to mission, Jesus' prayer to let God's kingdom come, and the activity of the Holy Spirit. NMS's financial foundation is based on voluntary efforts: people pray for the work, raise funds, work without pay in one of NMS's projects, at a campsite, in a charity shop, and/or donate money to the work. The passion for mission that these people represent must be valued and nurtured so that more people want to join in. Associations, groups and teams are still very important. NMS will continue its work with various concepts for voluntary engagement.

Mission competency

NMS wishes to be a learning organization that respects the experience that can be gleaned from the past. At the same time we will look for new solutions to the challenges we face both internally and in our encounters with partners in different countries. One enduring point is our holistic approach to mission, in which we focus on both spreading the gospel and supporting diaconal work, in addition to giving high priority to organizational development. We need missional congregations able to take on the challenge of Jesus' great commission.

Fundraising and information

Fundraising is a collective term for all work that aims at gathering support for NMS's mission work. Through preaching we stimulate action and commitment in the form of prayer, voluntary service and donations. We will provide information about what is happening in churches, societies, and with individuals. The information should provide assurance that the monetary donations are being managed in a good way. NMS wishes to stand out more clearly in the media. We aim to increase our efforts in all these areas so that we can achieve our goals.

NMS Gjenbruk (NMS Reuse, our charity shops) will play a vital role in maintaining the activity level of the organization. Our aim is to further increase the income from the shops.

We are also aiming to establish a network of companies that will be given the opportunity to contribute to missions.

Arenas for engaged people

NMS needs arenas where people can meet to be inspired, receive information, and be challenged to participate in mission work. Small mission groups, charity shops, and camp sites provide such arenas. We will also explore the possibilities inherent in digital/social media. NMS wishes to further strengthen the arena for mission that is opening as we collaborate with congregations in Norway. In addition to various local mission meetings and gatherings, NMS will consider the need for an annual summer gathering at a national level.

Collaboration with the Church of Norway

NMS will work to expand our collaboration with the Church of Norway as we further develop our externally-oriented work in Norway. The work will encompass diaconal congregational development, faith education, and leadership development. To secure the financial base of the organization we need more congregations to invest in agreements with NMS and to carry out good profiling and fundraising work locally. It will be a high priority for us to follow up with these congregations in a good and appropriate way.

NMS will give priority to “Cooperation Congregation and mission” (SMM) in the cooperation with the Church of Norway.

Mutual collaboration between NMS and NMS U

NMS is wholly dependent on a good and close collaborative relationship with NMS U in order to reach children, youth, and young families with the gospel and to spark mission engagement among them. NMS U has primary responsibility for camp activities in the organization, and for fellowship-promoting work among children and youth both nationally and internationally. NMS U also plays a central role in our collaboration with the Church of Norway.

We will increase the focus on working with youth in the preparatory period for confirmation.

Active personnel management

NMS focuses on valuing and attending to our employees. We will carry out active and systematic personnel development, providing opportunities for various training and professional development initiatives, personal and spiritual guidance, as well as staff and leadership development. NMS depends on co-workers who know the organization and its work. In this regard, staff gatherings and study trips to and between our mission-fields are important.

NMS will further develop positions in which employees are responsible for tasks both in Norway and in other countries, parallel to further developing frameworks for voluntary service. The aim of our personnel management must be an impactful and united organization in which co-workers at all levels are working towards common goals.

Sound financial stewardship

The values guiding our financial work are transparency, accountability, and good stewardship. These are put into practice through orderly routines, frugal use of monetary resources, and trustworthy internal controls. In order for this to work it is important to maintain a good overview and balance in our finances, which is achieved through good financial routines. These aim to provide a sense of security among our donors, co-workers, and collaborative partners, and ensure that the donations we receive are channelled to the right place. One of our aims is for a larger portion of the organization’s income to be used for our purpose, and this will receive increased attention. In order to reduce costs in the organization we will work on improved efficiency and awareness around attitudes regarding work patterns and financial stewardship.

Good property stewardship

NMS's property management is organized in several stock-based limited companies. NMS Eiendommer AS (NMS Properties Ltd.) is the parent-company and its board is responsible for managing the properties in the best interest of NMS's main purpose. Management of the companies is carried out within the legal framework for limited companies. The bylaws for NMS Eiendommer AS are approved by its general assembly, which is the NMS Board. The general assembly also appoints the board of the parent company. It is vitally important that the properties are managed, maintained, and developed in the best interest of NMS' purpose with a good and mutual cooperation, and following sound financial principles.

8) WHERE WE WORK

NMS will continue to work in Africa, Asia, and Europe (including Norway), in addition to our engagement in Brazil. Strengthening European churches' initiatives for reaching new generations and groups with the Christian message has been a priority over the last two strategy-periods, and will continue. The same is true for our aim to support churches and organizations that are strongly engaged in supporting vulnerable Christian groups as well as reaching new people in the Middle East and North Africa. Other criteria for prolonged or renewed effort from NMS will be our focus on areas where Christianity is less predominant, as well as the need for continued engagement in the fight against poverty and injustice. Our focus on these areas will result in a downsizing of the work where some of our goals have been achieved, or where our goals for various reasons cannot be achieved. Any major change regarding where NMS will work must be decided by a holistic assessment of our existing work.

9) WHAT WILL WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN 2023?

In order to assess whether we have successfully tackled the tasks we have set ourselves, we will use the following indicators:

- Our faith in Jesus has been shared with new groups and our collaborative partner churches are growing
- More people have been baptized into the world-wide church and have been trained in the Christian faith.
- New missional congregations with a focus on diaconal practice have been established
- An increased awareness of our stewardship responsibility for the earth and creation
- NMS and our partner churches have organizational development plans and leadership development plans that are being used
- More partners have gained increased financial independence
- More people have improved living conditions and livelihoods in the areas we are engaged
- Our partner churches are mobilizing civil society and are actively taking part in the fight against poverty
- The issues of inclusion and human rights have gained increased attention within NMS and among our collaborative partners
- NMS has strategies for engaging with the issue of migration in different countries

We have the following indicators for our own organization:

- Expanded collaboration with the Church of Norway
- Further development of NMS as a learning organization, and use of participatory processes in all our work
- More members in NMS and increased donations for our work