



# Annual Report 2016 from the Board

MAY 2017

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*Cover photo: Friends Ibrahim, Mustafa and Ibrahim sit against a background of smoke, after ISIS set fire to oil wells south of Mosul. The boys lived under ISIS for two years in Qayyarah, Iraq. Qayyarah was retaken from ISIS by Iraqi forces in August 2016 and was declared as the base for operations to retake the city of Mosul. NRC has operated in Iraq since 2010, and provides emergency aid to those in need of humanitarian assistance. Photo: Wolfgang Gressman/NRC*

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## Table of contents

A year of hotspots and deadlocks	5
Shrinking humanitarian space	5
NRC's mandate and organisational set-up	5
Programme activities	6
Accessing hard-to-reach and high-risk areas	7
Security and risk management	8
Innovation	8
People assisted in 2016: statistics	8
Programme development and strengthening quality	10
Internal reviews	10
Learning review on NRC's reorganisation	10
Annual Learning Review	11
Access evaluation	11
Areas under development	11
Improvement area: the One Million Initiative	11
Compliance	11
Strengthening systems	12
Expert deployment	12
Our 2016 response	13
Key areas of development	14
Information and advocacy	14
Alternative procedures	14
World Humanitarian Summit	15
Disaster and climate change	15
Influx to Europe	15
International public presence	16
Finance and revenue base	16
Strengthening strategic partnerships	17
Private sector fundraising	18
NORCAP	18
Ensuring a cost-conscious culture	18
Human resources and duty of care	18
Nationality, gender distribution and immigrant backgrounds	19
Duty of care	20

Global staff survey	20
Sick leave	20
Securing and retaining high quality staff	20
Board of Directors	21

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## A year of hotspots and deadlocks

In 2016, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) continued to serve as a main humanitarian responder to both crises and protracted situations globally.

The need to balance our efforts in high profile emergencies vis-à-vis those less profiled was more pressing than before, as many crises competed for funding and attention throughout the year.

### Shrinking humanitarian space

At the beginning of 2016, over 65 million people were displaced by conflict. Although the war in Syria continued to be a large driver of displacement, there were new emergency situations in Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq and Yemen. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, there were serious security constraints, limiting the humanitarian community's ability to reach affected communities. The drought in the Horn of Africa, meanwhile, affected several countries and will likely continue to influence displacement in 2017.

Across our areas of operation, we observed an increasing tendency toward the closure of borders and return of people without proper procedures and protection measures in place. This was a concern that particularly affected Syrians, Afghans, Somalis in Dadaab and people entering Europe. NRC addressed this issue through local, regional and global advocacy.

In 2016, NRC prioritised reaching high-risk and hard-to-reach areas, and improved our ability to stay and deliver in such contexts. We continued to enhance our emergency response and surge capacity, and endeavoured to strengthen our policy and advocacy work at the country level, in order to uphold the rights of displaced people and improve their living conditions. We also strove to create a framework to foster more innovation within the organisation.

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## NRC's mandate and organisational set-up

The Norwegian Refugee Council is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee conflict, crisis and disaster. NRC is Norway's largest international humanitarian organisation and is widely recognised as a leading field-based displacement agency within the international humanitarian community.

When we started our relief efforts after World War Two, humanitarian needs were critical. They still are – and we're still there, protecting people and supporting them as they build a new future. In 2016, we worked in both new and protracted crises across 31 countries.

NRC's main activity is the delivery of humanitarian aid through programme activities in the field.

NRC specialises in six programme areas, or core competences: shelter; food security; information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA); education; camp management; and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH). The core competences are adaptive to different contexts and are mutually reinforcing.

NRC is a determined advocate for displaced people. When we witness injustices, we alert the world. We promote and defend displaced people's rights and dignity in local communities, with national governments and in the international arena. NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre in Geneva is a global leader in monitoring, reporting on and advocating for people displaced within their own country.

We respond quickly to emergencies. Our expert deployment capacity NORCAP boasts around 900 experts from all over the world. Our experts stand ready to deploy at a moment's notice to support the UN and local authorities in humanitarian crises.

At the end of 2016, 12,576 people worked with and for displaced people on behalf of NRC. Of these, NRC employed a total of 5,999 staff members. Most of our staff are hired locally to work in the field, and a small number are based at our head office in Oslo.

NRC's country programmes are managed and coordinated by four regional offices. The regional office for the Middle East is based in Amman and the Horn of Africa region in Nairobi. Both the Asia/Europe region and the Central and West Africa/South America region are based in Oslo. In addition, NRC has representation offices in Brussels, Geneva, Dubai, Washington, DC and Addis Ababa (liaison to the African Union). These 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, and the organisation participates actively in Norwegian public discussions, engaging in a broad range of information and advocacy efforts on displacement issues targeting decision-makers, civil society and the public at large.

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## Programme activities

In 2016, NRC reached **over 6.8 million** individual people, a substantial increase from 2015. We managed operations in 31 countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, DRC, Djibouti, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Greece, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen. The organisation's operations did not result in any significant environmental pollution.

In 2016, we established new emergency programmes in Tanzania as a response to the crisis in Burundi, and we officially established Greece as a new country programme. In Europe, NRC stopped our programmes in Serbia, where influxes had reduced after the EU/Turkey deal and border closures, to devote those resources to the greater needs in Greece. In Côte d'Ivoire, NRC finished our activities by the end of 2015 and exited fully by the end of March 2016.

NRC continued to strengthen our emergency response capacity in 2016. In response to

renewed fighting in South Sudan, NRC scaled up our operations, both inside the country and in several locations in Uganda. In Iraq, NRC responded to the emergencies related to Fallujah and Mosul. In Afghanistan, new internal conflicts coupled with the high numbers of Afghans returning from Pakistan led to a significant scale up in NRC's emergency response. In Yemen, NRC provided emergency assistance across the country. The drought in the Horn of Africa affected several countries, and NRC responded with emergency programmes in Ethiopia and Somalia.

## Accessing hard-to-reach and high-risk areas

A key factor in providing assistance and protection to the most vulnerable is our ability to reach people in high-risk areas. Humanitarian agencies often struggle to reach populations in volatile and insecure areas. In 2016, we improved our ability to stay and deliver in such contexts.

The ongoing process of strengthening our emergency response teams allowed us to conduct assessments, establish operations in new countries, and provide surge capacity within existing country programmes. As detailed below, additional achievements in our access work included a greater integration of security and access through the introduction of systematic conflict analysis and security risk assessments. We also trained a large number of staff in access strategies and access negotiations.

After negotiations with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), NRC obtained approval to enact "alternative procedures" aimed at ensuring the best possible programmatic compliance when operating in high-risk areas.

At the country level, our Syria Response Office successfully adapted the NRC Partnership toolkit to high-risk environments, and by working with local partners we increased access to assistance in western and northern Syria. This helped NRC expand our response operated from Damascus as well. In Iraq, we also increased our engagement with local partner organisations to secure access to people we could otherwise not have reached.

The pilot of an internal NRC Innovation Fund, meanwhile, supported seven innovative projects implemented in or in support of these types of operations. For instance, we piloted a series of technology-based initiatives aimed at strengthening our ability to support people in high-risk areas.

Despite these success, NRC experienced challenges in several contexts, ranging from administrative hurdles to increasingly challenging security contexts. This in turn limited NRC's ability to reach affected communities. Another overarching challenge was to balance the need to reach large numbers of people fleeing conflict areas while also reaching populations in high-risk areas – often amongst the most vulnerable and underserved in a crisis.

### **Cash-based programming**

Throughout the year, NRC programmes increasingly integrated cash into all our core activities in the field. This gave more flexibility to displaced people and helped stimulate local economies and trade. Through our innovation fund, we established a niche expertise in delivering cash-based interventions in high-risk areas. In 2016, ten per cent of NRC's total programme volume was cash or vouchers.

NRC will carry on prioritising cash programming, beneficiary involvement and increased humanitarian access to populations in need in 2017.

## Security and risk management

In 2016, we further strengthened the quality of our security management systems through the recruitment of additional regional and roving security advisers, as well as increased management attention and close monitoring by Head Office's security section.

The security section and its roving team trained over 2,000 employees in 18 countries throughout the year and opened a new hostile environment awareness training (HEAT) programme in the Middle East. We conducted comprehensive security risk assessments in 12 high- and medium-risk countries, providing an unprecedented level of risk management information. All regional and country crisis teams in medium- and high- risk country offices received scenario-based crisis management training.

For the NORCAP rosters we implemented a new security monitoring scheme, administered automatically through the NORCAP database. Two weeks into their assignment, deployees report the extent to which their host agency was meeting the minimum security standards. The new scheme gives a better understanding of how NRC upholds our duty of care in relation to our deployees. Routines for follow up will be further developed in 2017.

While the review of existing frameworks and methodology for strategy and risk management was initiated in 2016, the finalisation of an overall framework will take place in 2017.

## Innovation

In 2016, NRC strove to create an organisational framework to foster more innovation, while country programmes remained the main source of innovative project approaches.

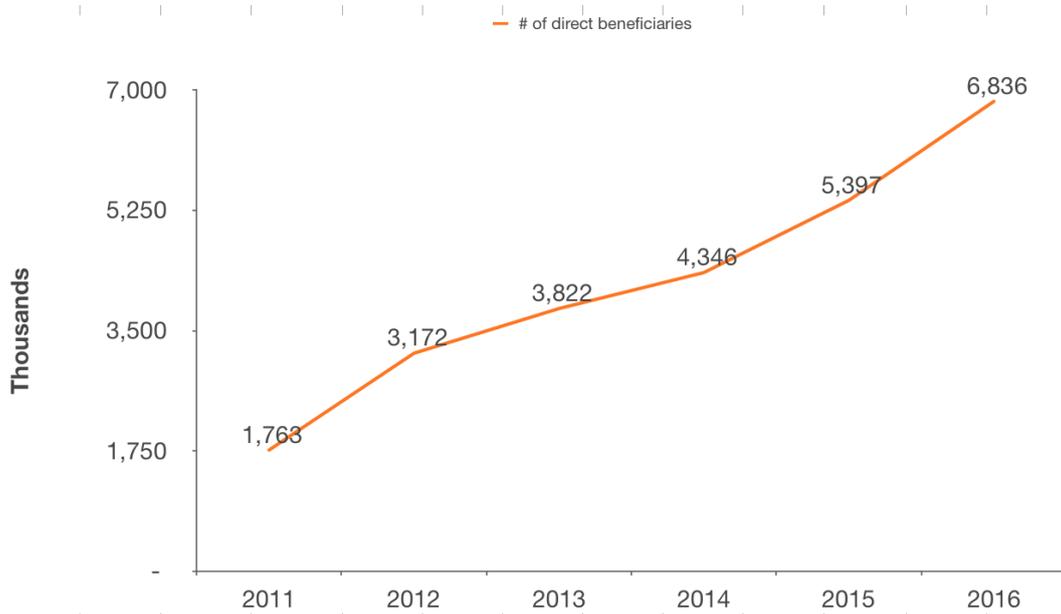
With funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), we set up an NRC Innovation Fund. The seven projects testing new methodologies and technology for improving response in high-risk areas mentioned above were financed through the fund.

We also launched the Education Scale up and Quality Innovation Fund in August 2016, to support the One Million Initiative. Five countries received support to develop innovative education approaches, including the use of e-learning.

## People assisted in 2016: statistics

There was a **26.7 per cent** increase in the total number of people NRC assisted compared to 2015. NRC provided **7.8 million services**.

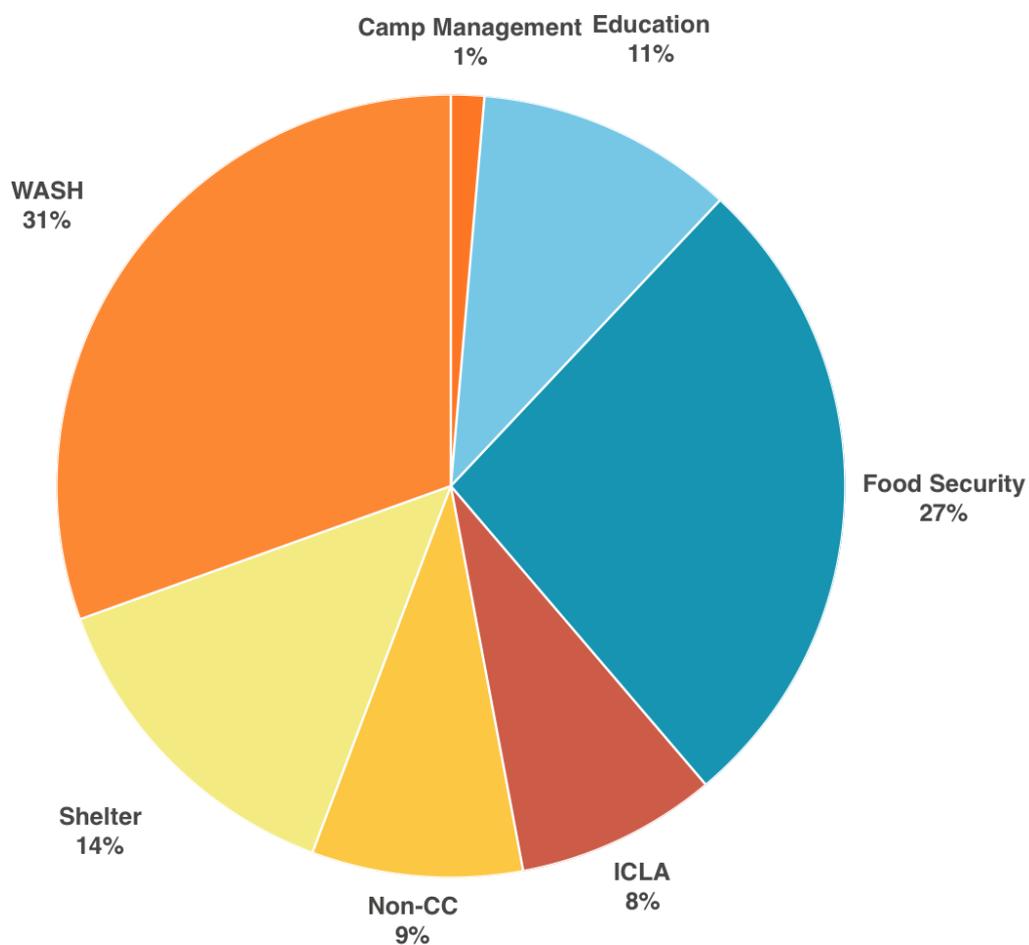
## Number of people directly receiving assistance



Looking at our different core competencies, we see that the biggest increases from 2015 to 2016 were within the food security and WASH sectors. Out of the total number of people who directly benefitted from NRC projects, 32 per cent received food security assistance; 31 per cent received WASH assistance; and 14 per cent received shelter assistance. Nine per cent were recipients of our education assistance; eight per cent from our emergency and mobile assistance; and five per cent received ICLA assistance. Less than one per cent received assistance from our camp management programming, which can be attributed in part to the fact that we began these activities in 2015. The category *Non-CC* included programmes related to, for instance, emergency and cash.

### Number of direct beneficiaries as share of core competencies

*See next page for graph.*




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## Programme development and strengthening quality

Over the last several years, NRC has taken steps to ensure greater programme quality. The process is supported by our internal monitoring and evaluations systems, learning reviews and internal audits.

### Internal reviews

#### Learning review on NRC's reorganisation

The learning review on NRC's reorganisation, conducted in autumn 2016, found that

NRC has succeeded in managing a transformational change process while not just sustaining, but expanding, our in-country work. This is a considerable achievement.

### **Annual Learning Review**

Our Annual Learning Review found that there are gaps regarding:

- identifying the most vulnerable among displaced populations
- adapting programmes to ensure that the most vulnerable displaced have access to them
- tracking whether access is equal for various target groups

A debate emerged around the question of how to balance our ambition to reach the most vulnerable and our ambition to reach more people, which are not always compatible. While tools for targeting have been developed and vulnerability criteria established, balancing these to ambitions will continue to be a challenge.

### **Access evaluation**

NRC's organisational evaluation on access recommended an increased focus on access negotiations, strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in high-risk areas, and the better use of e-learning to share experiences. Another priority is programmatic adaptation to high-risk contexts, where each core competency is to develop a portfolio for response in high-risk environments.

## **Areas under development**

In many of NRC's country operations, emergency preparedness and contingency planning are not as strong as they could be. In 2017, providing smart tools – and building a culture around them – will be a priority. We will also continue to develop our involvement in country-based, interagency rapid response systems at the global and country levels.

Moreover, we must sufficiently resource issues related to gender and the environment, and better integrate them into our field projects. The protection mainstreaming project, which aims to integrate measures into our everyday work that better protect individuals and their rights, will form a key strategic project over the next two years. Gender and gender-based violence will be important components in the project.

### **Improvement area: the One Million Initiative**

We continued to scale up our education programmes in 2016, working towards a four-fold increase in recipients over the 2014-2017 period. Although we launched education-related pilot projects in six countries through the NRC Innovation Fund, NRC has not secured substantial new funding for the One Million Initiative. This may hamper the project's objective of reaching one million youth with our education programmes by the end of 2017. Internally, NRC has struggled to translate this global ambition to each country operation. Coordination of the initiative at HO has been strengthened, but the project will need continued organisational attention in order to succeed.

### **Compliance**

In 2015, ECHO's audit of NRC revealed inconsistencies in our compliance with reporting documents, as well as weaknesses in our archives housing these documents. The audit

found that we needed to strengthen our systems to ensure better systematised compliance at the field level. We perceived this as an immediate risk to address. So in 2016 NRC initiated a compliance project, which led to the clarification of roles as well as the development of control mechanisms and tools. Our work on “alternative procedures”, meanwhile, took steps to ensure compliance in high-risk areas.

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## Strengthening systems

Efficient humanitarian programming is dependent on support systems that enable easy-to-use and reliable tools for planning, administration and control. In 2016, NRC continued to improve ICT infrastructure and financial management tools, positioning the organisation with a strategy to digitise the way we work. NRC took important steps toward building our digital abilities with the introduction of a bandwidth management tool to increase connectivity in approximately 90 per cent of all offices and successfully rolled out a “single sign on” solution for all staff.

We trained 24 country offices on project cycle management and value for money. The roll out of this global data management system was the largest M&E investment in 2016. Most NRC country offices are now using the global reporting system, which will significantly increase the accuracy and quality of data from NRC’s programme implementation.

A new system in the NORCAP database improved management’s ability to distinguish between planned and committed costs, which in turn improved budget control. In addition, NORCAP piloted Workplace by Facebook as an internal communication tool, connecting NORCAP staff with roster members and roster members with each other. Workplace enables easier sharing of knowledge, tools and experiences, as well as collaboration within and between different areas of expertise, host agencies and countries. The rest of NRC joined the platform in February 2017.

Despite these improvements, we continued to face major challenges when it came to providing consistent ICT connectivity, financial management tools and administrative support in countries and in areas with extremely weak infrastructure. ICT infrastructure, especially connectivity, remains a main priority for 2017. In addition, we are developing digital tools, such as a document management system and a project management information system, to support project management.

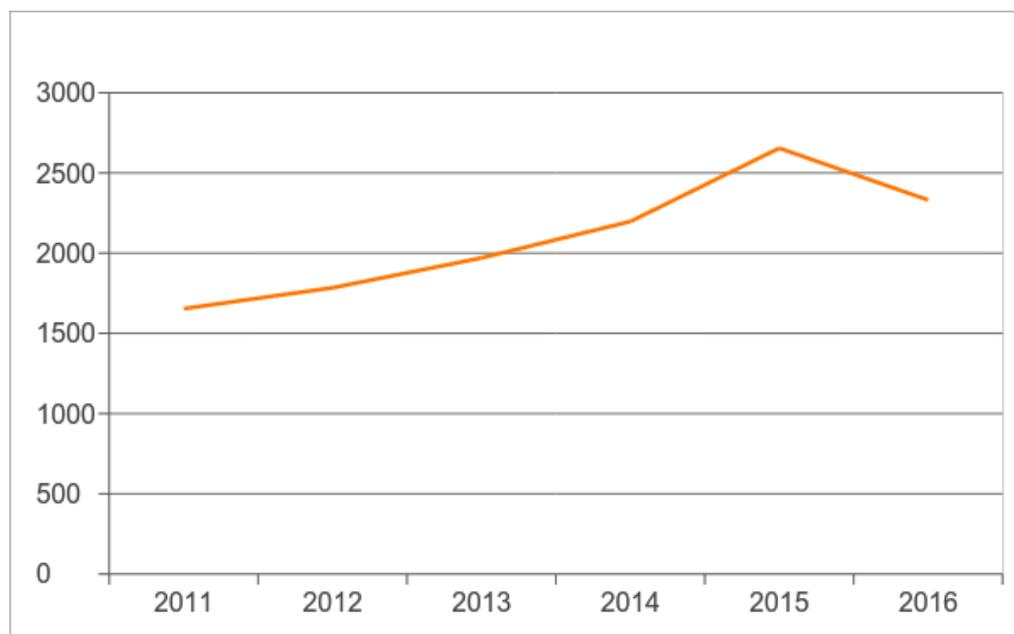
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## Expert deployment

By delivering the right expertise, building strategic partnerships and advocating for more effective action, NORCAP aims to improve international and local capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from crises. The NORCAP operated rosters provided the UN, international organisations and national stakeholder with more than 500 expert missions in 2016, who altogether contributed with over 2,300 months of work.

Evaluations and reviews demonstrated the value of deployees' knowledge, expertise and language skills, and expressed the appreciation of the roster's diversity, flexibility and timeliness of services delivered. Eighty-four per cent of partners reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the deployees who joined them.

### Expert deployments



## Our 2016 response

In 2016, NORCAP stepped up deployments to the UN to ensure an integrated response to immediate humanitarian needs for internally displaced people in Iraq and for displaced people affected by the Syria crisis. NORCAP also responded effectively to the earthquake in Ecuador and Hurricane Matthew in Haiti. A high volume of support to the UN and national partners in Greece also continued. At the same time, we maintained a focus on the protracted and deepening crises in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lake Chad basin region and South Sudan.

In 2016, NRC added the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM) to our expert rosters. NORDEM's mandate forms a natural extension of our activities, and will in particular strengthen the areas of peacebuilding, governance support and democratisation. An efficient integration process ensured that the roster was operational on 1 January 2017.

In 2016, NRC also successfully rolled out the inter-agency Cash and Markets Capacity Building Roster (CashCap) under the NORCAP umbrella. Disaster risk reduction and strengthening resilience have been key areas for NORCAP in the Sahel and greater Horn of Africa Region, including through the partnership with the World Meteorological Organization under the Global Framework for Climate Services.

## Key areas of development

NORCAP's proactive approach and open dialogue with the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) was key for our partnership in Greece. In rapidly evolving emergencies, our approach has been to work closely with partners and to pre-position expertise in anticipation of new requests, so that we can immediately deploy experts as they're needed. This has proven successful.

However, NRC did not fully meet targets for response time. An insecure funding situation, increased activity towards the end of the year, and particularly an increase in demand for French and Spanish speaking experts were the main factors. We will focus on strategic crisis forecasting and roster analysis in 2017, to better fill requests of experts with certain language skills. Mitigation measures are also underway to understand and meet the profile gaps: additional recruitments and improved budget overviews.

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## Information and advocacy

In many of the contexts where NRC works, we see that the lack of protection is greater than the lack of assistance. International humanitarian and human rights law are increasingly being violated. NRC has therefore focused much of our global advocacy work around three pillars, what we call *the three Ps: proximity, principles and protection*. *Proximity* encompasses access to and presence near populations in need of humanitarian assistance. *Principles* refer to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. *Protection* alludes to obtaining full respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the letter and spirit of relevant bodies of law – namely, human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law. Protection can be seen as an objective, a legal responsibility and an activity. These pillars were a key priority during our participation at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), where we worked systematically to ensure that protection issues were included in all key discussions.

## Alternative procedures

Perhaps our most important advocacy achievement was the donor approval of “alternative procedures” for operating in high-risk areas.

NRC has an organisational ambition to better assist vulnerable people in high-risk areas. However, operating in such contexts challenges NRC's programme and support system, particularly as many of the standard procedures and donor requirements are impossible for NRC teams on the ground to follow.

For example, in some areas in Syria our local partners cannot follow standard operating procedures without putting their lives at risk. Obtaining signed beneficiary lists are also impossible in many places – people are afraid that writing their names on a list may place them in harm's way. Recognising the potential risks in terms of accountability and donor compliance deriving from not following procedures over an extended period of time, NRC took the initiative to discuss alternative procedures for high-risk areas with ECHO, with the objective of ensuring the best possible programmatic compliance in extreme circumstances. Alternative procedures, which are only used as a last resort, will allow

NRC teams on the ground to navigate extremely difficult situations that might not change for years.

This successful negotiation had a direct impact in the lives of tens of thousands displaced people in Syria, who would not have received NRC assistance in 2016 without this breakthrough. The resulting agreement may also be extended beyond Syria and applied to other organisations. This could have major, long-term positive consequences for people trapped in conflict zones.

## World Humanitarian Summit

NRC positively influenced the WHS, one of the most important humanitarian policy events over the last several years. NRC's *three Ps*, *principles*, *protection* and *proximity*, became important reference points at the summit. Although the outcomes of the WHS were mixed, there were two very clear "winners": the launch of the Education Cannot Wait fund, which aims to raise almost USD four billion in four years for education in emergencies; and the Grand Bargain on aid efficiency, which aims to produce annual savings of USD one billion within five years. Both were priorities for NRC.

As part of NRC's work in following up on the Grand Bargain, the chief initiative to result from the WHS, we have taken on key roles in four areas: a) harmonisation of reporting; b) reduced duplication of management costs; c) multi-year financing; and d) less earmarking (designating funds for a certain purpose). NRC's leading role was reinforced by positive feedback received from donors. The governments of Canada, Germany and Norway, for instance, all publicly praised our efforts.

## Disaster and climate change

In 2016, NRC continued efforts to include climate and disaster displacement in key global policies, and we were able to influence global processes and policies relevant to disaster displacement. We continued to play a central role in the set-up of the Platform on Disaster Displacement – the implementation of the Nansen Initiative's Protection Agenda – as we have since its inception. The Nansen Initiative works to build consensus among states about how best to address cross-border displacement in the context of sudden- and slow-onset disasters.

NORCAP was key in securing that climate services were on the agenda during the 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference's (COP22). Together with the European Commission, NORCAP organised and chaired a side event on the use of climate services in Africa. At COP22, which intended to take steps to implement the legally-binding Paris Agreement, NORCAP brought attention to the role of climate services in reducing loss and damage often brought on by adverse weather effects.

## Influx to Europe

NRC organised and took part in advocacy work encouraging the EU to review its refugee and migration containment policy, share responsibility, uphold its commitments and improve reception conditions in Europe. NORCAP, partnering with Greek migration authorities, continued to provide capacity building on dignified reception, access to asylum procedures and principles of human rights and humanity among Greek authority

staff involved in reception of migrants. In 2017, NRC will continue our extensive work across the Syria region and continually assess how we best can contribute towards protection and assistance for refugees in Europe.

NRC has also become a visible and leading voice on displacement issues in the Norwegian public debate. In 2016, there was a general political wish in Norway to avoid domestic refugee debates, given there were few asylum seekers arriving to the country. Through facts, analysis and recommendations, presented in the media, lectures and private meetings, NRC served as a reminder of the critical international displacement situation. We also strove to visualise the link between global refugee trends, European displacement policies and Norwegian responses.

We continued to advocate the need for Norway to practise international refugee work domestically, warning against government arguments and policies contrary to the policies that we request from countries hosting large numbers of refugees (such as Syria's neighbours, Iran and Kenya). We lobbied for Norway to respect and follow UNHCR recommendations on domestic Norwegian issues: on forced returns from Norway back to Afghanistan and on the withdrawal of refugee status for Somalis. We continuously informed and lobbied political parties privately and publicly – and believe we have influenced decisions such as easier access to universities for refugee students and new policies on temporary work permits for asylum seekers. Despite differences in policy, our dialogue with the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security kept increasing in scope and frequency.

## International public presence

NRC strengthened our position in international media substantially in 2016. More proactive and systematic media work in some NRC countries of operation showed good results. For example, when the Fallujah offensive started in Iraq, cooperation between the media department and programme staff ensured that NRC dominated international media for weeks.

This jump in NRC's media presence helped build our reputation as an authoritative voice on displacement not just in the public sphere, but also with donors and policymakers. As a result, we have been able increase our leverage on advocacy and funding efforts.

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## Finance and revenue base

The trend of steady increase in NRC's financial income continued in 2016, although at a lower rate than in the preceding years. Total income in 2016 was NOK 3.09 billion, an increase of 11 per cent from the year before. The increase was seven per cent when measured in USD. Most of NRC's operational costs are in dollars or currencies linked to the dollar, so exchange rates significantly affect our ability to deliver aid.

All regions received increased funding, but the Middle East continued to have the largest growth. We received substantial increases from almost all institutional donors and continued to expand our donor base. The growth came mainly as a response to the large emergencies around the world, but also reflected NRC's long-term engagement with

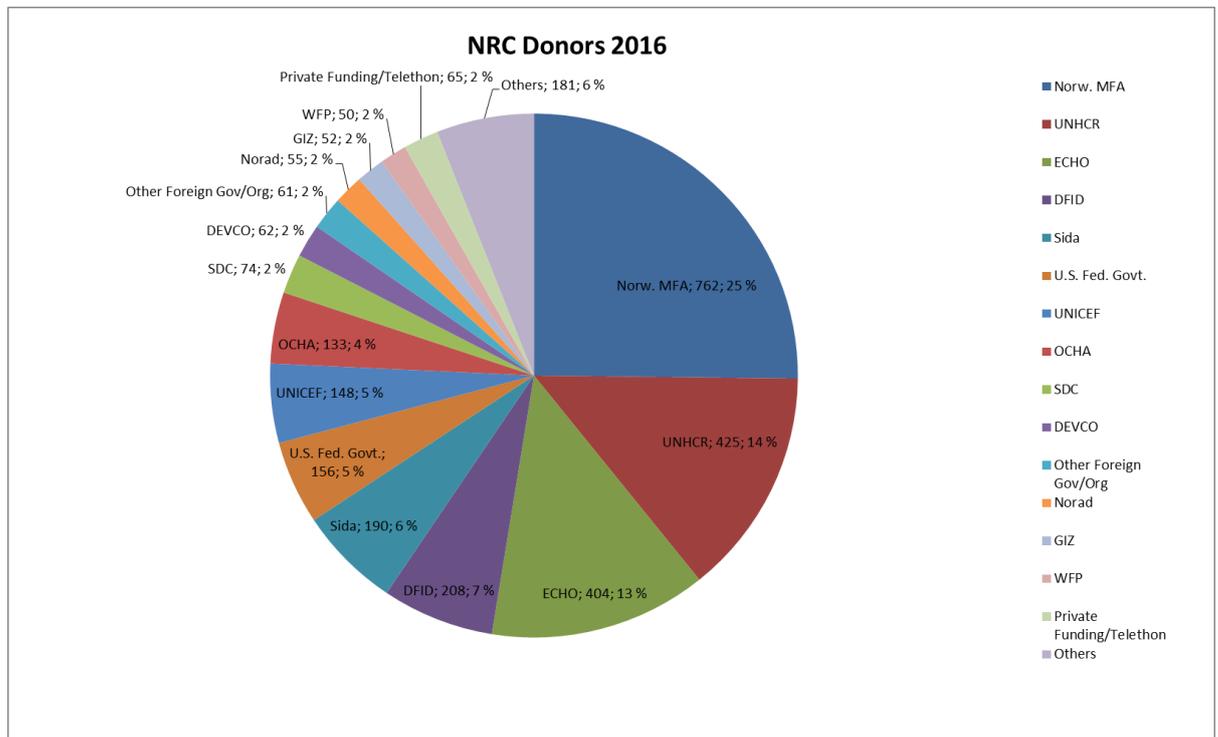
strategic donors.

The annual results showed a positive result of NOK 21 million. In 2016, the equity with external restrictions was reduced by NOK 11 million, to NOK 34 million; whereas equity with internal restrictions was reduced by NOK 10 million and other equity was strengthened by NOK 43 million. By the end of the year, current assets amounted to NOK 1.433 billion, against a short-term debt of NOK 1.025 billion – a ratio of 1.40, which is satisfactory. The organisation has no long-term debt and although there are large variations during a year, liquidity is good. Surplus liquidity is invested in money market and bond funds, not in the stock market.

## Strengthening strategic partnerships

NRC maintained a robust and broad donor base. This remained a strategic priority, as it provides the organisation with a higher level of financial security and predictability. Through proactive engagement with our main donors, particularly through the follow-up of the Grand Bargain initiative from the World Humanitarian Summit, NRC endeavoured to improve the collaboration between ways donors and humanitarian organisations to increase efficiency in humanitarian financing.

NRC's top five donors continued to be the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), UNHCR, ECHO, DFID and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). NRC continued to strengthen relations with our institutional donors. Important progress was made with Canadian, German and Dutch donors, and we secured several new strategic partnerships, including with the European Economic Area (EEA), which had no prior experience working with humanitarian organisations, and the Eid Foundation in Qatar.



## Private sector fundraising

At the end of the year, NRC had 28,000 regular donors who have signed up to donate on a monthly basis – an all-time high. The average monthly donation per donor was NOK 232, and the age bracket of the largest donor group was 60 years and above.

The four main acquisition platforms were field marketing (a new initiative), direct mail, web and SMS. The *Artistgalla* telethon on the Norwegian television channel TV2 in December 2016 was successful, generating more than 5,000 new regular donors.

## NORCAP

The donor base for NORCAP increased with new funding from EEA and the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Extensive partner collaboration and donor outreach was done for strategic growth areas like cash, humanitarian communication, gender-based violence and climate change. Dialogue continued to ensure a new framework agreement with NMFA for the 2017-2019 period.

## Ensuring a cost-conscious culture

As an organisation, NRC is dedicated to a cost-conscious culture, channelling as much available funding as possible into humanitarian programming. Our organisational restructuring toward a regional set-up is part of our efforts to deliver humanitarian services as efficiently as possible.

Over the last two years, we have observed that, while the organisation has grown, the level of costs related to running Head Office and regional offices has decreased. The sector review carried out by the UK charities Mango and Bond in 2016 confirmed that NRC is among the organisations with the lowest spending of overhead costs.<sup>1</sup>

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## Human resources and duty of care

NRC's Human Resources (HR) policy is to ensure equal opportunities and rights, and prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin, nationality, language, gender, religion or beliefs.

At the end of 2016, 12,576 people worked with and for displaced people on behalf of NRC. Of these, NRC employed a total of 5,999 staff members:

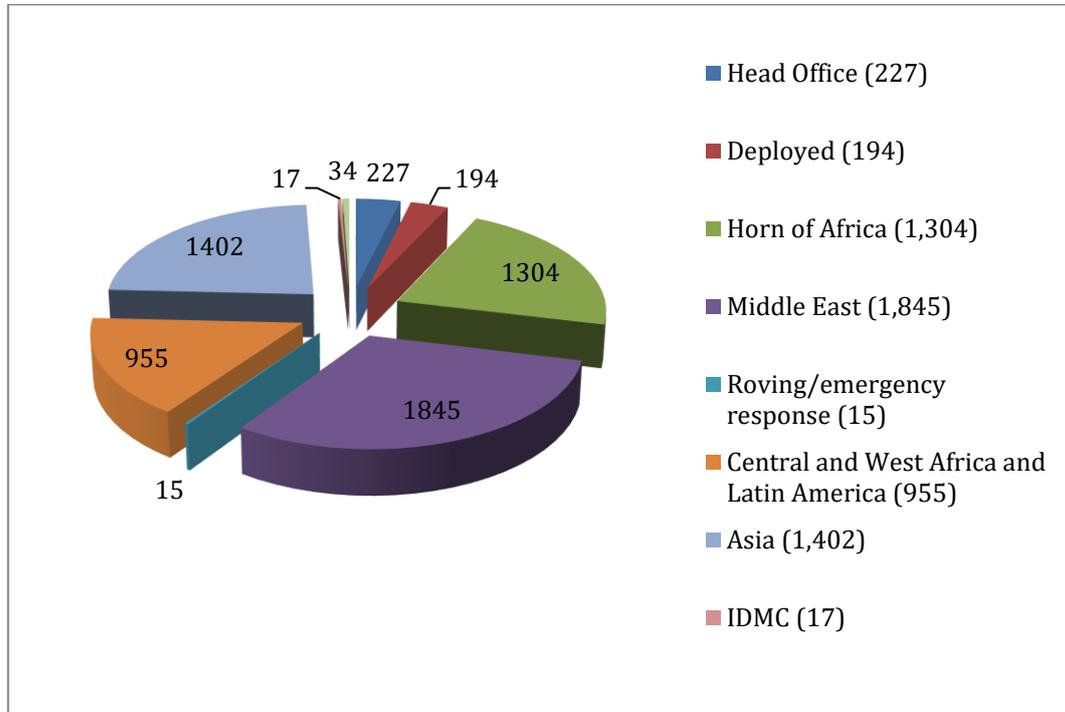
- 5,143 national staff (of whom 37 were working at regional offices)
- 376 were international employees working at the regional and country levels (of whom 15 were roving/emergency response)
- 227 people worked at Head Office in Oslo
- 34 in NRC's representation offices (of whom two were international, not included in the international figure above)
- 17 people worked at IDMC
- Deployments worth 194 full time employee's work

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<sup>1</sup> Mango and Bond. "Phase 2 Cost Recovery Report" Oxford/London. 2016.

Approximately 6,605 incentive/daily workers, typically displaced people or members of the local community, were engaged in specific projects in camps.

Breakdown of NRC employees per office/area, as of 31 December 2016:



*Excludes incentive/daily workers*

## Nationality, gender distribution and immigrant backgrounds

NRC's 378 employees on international contracts represented 66 different nationalities. The two largest groups were employees from France and the UK, followed by nationals from Italy, Kenya, the US, Norway, Australia, Canada, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. Twenty-five per cent of employees at Head Office in Oslo had an immigrant background, defined as having immigrated to Norway or having parents who were both born outside of Norway. Among staff in advisory roles and line managers, men and women at Head Office were at approximately even salary levels.

The distribution of gender at Head Office in Oslo was 65 per cent women and 35 per cent men at the end of 2016; management at Head Office comprised 54 per cent women and 46 per cent men. Gender distribution among senior management at Head Office was equal at 50/50, and on the Board there were eight men and three women.

At the regional and country office level, gender distribution was 58 per cent men, 42 per cent female among international staff. There were 69 per cent men and 31 per cent women working as national staff.

At representation offices, there were two international staff members, and they were both female. The national staff gender distribution at representation offices was 28 per cent male and 72 per cent female.

Within expert deployments, the gender distribution among experts deployed was 54 per cent male and 46 per cent female. At IDMC, the gender distribution was 41 per cent male and 59 per cent female.

## Duty of care

NRC actively works to maintain a good working environment in all offices.

At Head Office, HR management worked closely with NRC's Working Environment Committee (AMU). Meetings were held regularly throughout the year, in which the status of the working environment and specific improvement measures were discussed.

NRC mainly operates in conflict areas and has larger operations in more complex environments than ever before. Ensuring security for staff and the people we assist is therefore a priority concern. In 2016, NRC further strengthened our security risk management system to ensure that the organisation and our field teams continued to have the skills and resilience required to access, stay, and deliver effective assistance without taking unnecessary risks.

In total, NRC recorded 404 incidents linked to our field operations in 2016. There were 41 instances of injury to person, mainly related to traffic accidents and physical assault during robberies. There were six security incidents that resulted in severe injury, death or very high stress to our employees resulting from: kidnapping (one incident in DRC), vehicle accident (one incident in Afghanistan), office robberies (two incidents in Mali and DRC, respectively), civil unrest and armed conflict (one in South Sudan), and proximity to explosion (one incident in Syria).

### **Global staff survey**

For the first time, NRC conducted a global staff survey. Approximately 5,000 staff members were invited to participate in the survey. The findings show clear tendencies on strengths and weaknesses at a global level, as well as at each office/department.

NRC started the implementation of different leadership development programmes in cooperation with the Administrative Research Institute (AFF) at the Norwegian School of Economics and the Norwegian Business School (BI). A handful of mentoring pilots has been initiated, and will be evaluated in 2017.

### **Sick leave**

In 2016, the sick leave rate at Head Office was 4.8 per cent, compared to 3.97 per cent in 2015, 2.21 per cent in 2014, 3.27 in 2013, 4.83 per cent in 2012 and 4.3 per cent in 2011. This was lower than the national average of 6.5 per cent.<sup>2</sup> We upheld opportunities and commitments within the Norwegian government's Letter of Intent regarding a more inclusive working life (the IA Agreement) to facilitate an inclusive work environment for our staff.

## Securing and retaining high quality staff

Efficient delivery of aid in complex contexts demands skilled and experienced staff. NRC successfully recruits a high number of staff, but some key positions have proved difficult

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<sup>2</sup> Excluding academic working environment figures, which were not available at the time of this report's production.

to fill, creating gaps that negatively affect programmes. Moreover, the high number of crises globally has resulted in an increased demand for experienced aid workers, placing further strain on our ability to fill positions. In 2016, NRC saw a global tendency that the demand for talented and experienced humanitarian workers is bigger than the numbers of potential candidates.

In 2016, we developed our salary and benefits system and terms of employment to support better mobility within the organisation, improve our position in the employment market, and better align our systems with national laws and regulations. In 2017, we will expand our efforts to strengthen management teams and the competence of our managers to enable them to effectively manage and develop humanitarian programmes in crisis contexts.

Within expert deployments in 2016, we struggled to fill requests that demanded experts with certain language skills. To mitigate this, we will focus on strategic crisis forecasting and roster analysis in 2017.

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## Board of Directors

The following people constituted the Board in 2016:

- Idar Kreutzer (Chairman of the Board)
- Cecilie Hellestveit (Deputy Chairman)
- Per Byman
- Lisa Cooper
- Ahmed A. Madar
- David Sanderson
- Hege Marie Norheim
- Simon Giverin (elected by staff)
- Petr Kostohryz (elected by staff)
- Robert Inzikoa (substitute – elected by staff)
- Einar Wengen (substitute – elected by staff)

The Board conducted five ordinary Board meetings and two Board seminars. The Board discussed 58 agenda items throughout the year.

The Board of Directors and the administration had a close and productive collaboration. Board meetings and seminars were characterised by comprehensive discussions focusing on continued organisational development, accountability and programme delivery.

The Board thanks NRC's employees for their dedication and hard work, and looks forward to continued cooperation in 2017.

Oslo, 8 May 2017



Vidar Kreutzer  
Chairman of the Board



Hege Marie Norheim  
Board member



Per Bym  
Board member



David Sanderson  
Board member



Kiran Aziz  
Board member



Lisa Ann Cooper  
Board member



Simon Giverin  
Board member elected by staff



Jeremy Francis  
Board member elected by staff



Jan Egeland  
Secretary General



NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

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