



Zarin, 6 years old, attends a preschool class run by Nai Qala Association- Yakawlang district, province of Bamyan.

"My daughter attends a Nai Qala Association's preschool class. Her behavior has changed a lot, she is more aware about hygiene and self-respect. She is familiar with the alphabet and counting. She is very sociable and at ease with everybody. Compared to my other 5 children that are between 2 and 16 years old, she is very different and has self-confidence. A kind of self-confidence that myself as a mother or my husband don't have... we are proud of how our daughter even influences the entire family specially her younger and older sisters and brothers... we would like to thank Nai Qala Association for such a program."

Gol Bakhte, mother of 6 children in the district of Yakawlang, province of Bamyan

A word from the president



First of all, I would like to say how grateful I am that we are safe and healthy in spite of the shocking crisis and worry brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are all learning how to deal with such an unprecedented situation. I would like to thank our team for its strength, for staying positive and for standing by me in such difficult times. Although Afghan people already face many challenges, they were the ones who were the most encouraging and supportive for which I am grateful.

2020 challenged us to the core. The Covid pandemic made it an especially difficult year, globally and in Afghanistan. Our association already works in a very demanding and complex context, characterized by uncertainty and an unstable environment. But the thing that kept me hopeful throughout was the love and support of my family, colleagues and our donors.

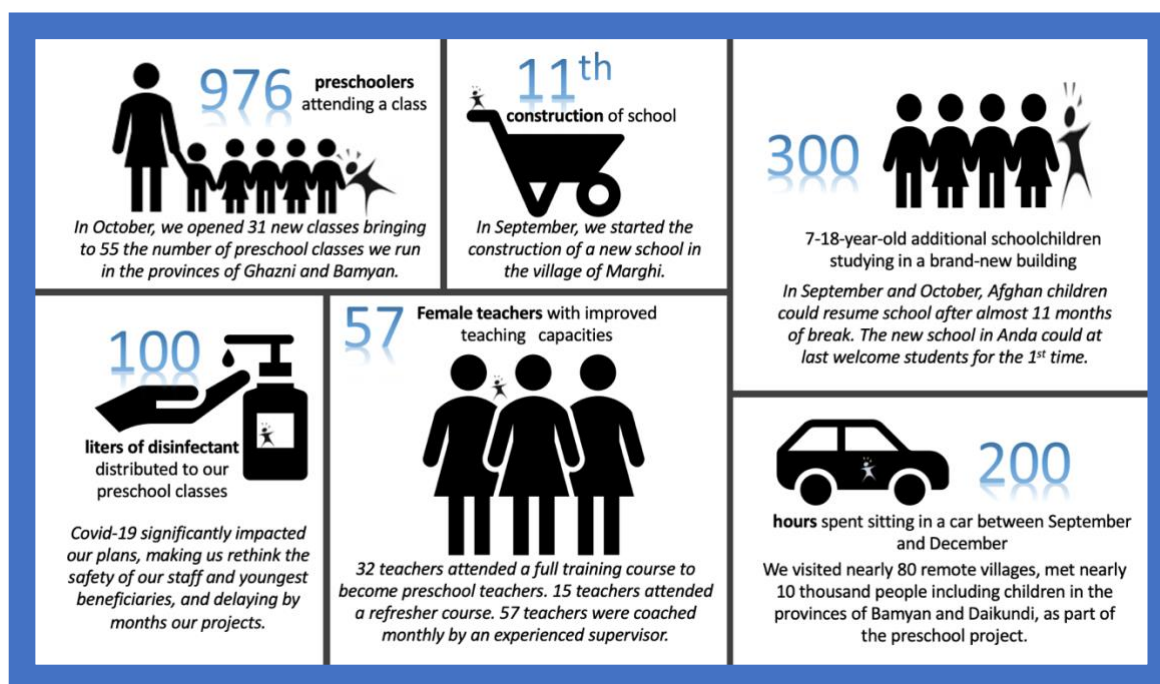
It was a time when the pandemic also raised many questions for donors. To feel their trust and generosity, and how they remained consistently supportive to our work, made such a big difference: for students, teachers, families and for us as a team. Receiving the support at such a time was a beautiful sign that humanity exists. This is how humankind survived throughout history, overcoming dark and painful times with solidarity and cooperation.

Thanks to our trusted donors, we were able to successfully continue beautiful projects in one of the most remote regions of central Afghanistan. This year Nai Qala Association has implemented one school construction project and a preschool project. We are very proud that we carried out a pre-assessment mission to prepare the expansion of our preschool project into the province of Daikundi which is one of the most underdeveloped provinces in Afghanistan.

I wish once again to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our donors, Nai Qala's team in Afghanistan and all the volunteer members who continue to put their kind efforts towards making sure all our objectives are completed as planned. I look forward to our continued accomplishments in the years ahead.

With sincere gratitude,
Taiba Rahim, President

Nai Qala Association's Highlights for 2020



Expansion of Nai Qala Association's preschool project

In 2020 we were very proud to expand our preschool program from 24 to 55 classes for nearly 1000 children aged between 4 to 6.

Ghazni - 10 preschool classes. Preschool classes in Ghazni started as a pilot scheme set up in 2017 in the region of the first Nai Qala schools. There were initially just 30 pupils. It was such a success that we have been expanding the program to other provinces. In 2020 nearly 200 children attended a preschool class in the province of Ghazni and 95 of these children went on to attend primary school. Between 2017 and 2020, 610 (of which 49% girls) attended our preschool program in the province.



Children singing in a preschool class in the district of Yakawlang, Bamyan province

Yakawlang hosted around 900 (of which 48% girls) children in 2020. We are very proud of the 140 children who attended a preschool class in 2019 and have successfully started primary school in October 2020.

Bamyan - 45 preschool classes. In 2020, Nai Qala Association recruited and trained 32 new preschool teachers and provided refresher courses for 15 preschool teachers recruited the previous year. 2 primary school teachers were also invited to attend the refresher course so that they could get ready to welcome preschool graduates. 31 new preschool classes were fully equipped, new pupils were enrolled and we inaugurated the classes in October, as soon as the government lifted the Covid restrictions. Our classes in the district of

The close future - Daikundi - 20 new preschool classes to be opened in 2021. As part of our strategic plan to expand the scope of our activities to more provinces, we travelled in the province of Daikundi. The province is especially remote and largely excluded from any external help. We visited populations made up mainly of marginalized Hazara ethnic minorities, very motivated communities that are open to education for their children. The exclusion and the motivation of the communities prompted us to work with them; during our end of year field trip in this province, we selected 20 villages for the opening of new preschool classes in 2021.

Preschool brings changes in communities

It brings immense pride to see how the children's self-confidence grows as they learn many basic but important matters from a very young age. However, Nai Qala's preschool project



Brushing teeth is part of the preschool program

does not only impact the daily life of children who attend a class but brings positive change to the life of thousands of families. Some customs are deeply anchored; they are not only the result of poverty, but also of the sensitivity of families and certain social norms. Nai Qala's preschool projects instil progressive changes thanks to its deep understanding of local communities. The ability to listen and take local realities into account in the design of its approaches allows Nai Qala to positively influence new customs.

Indeed, Nai Qala promotes good hygiene practices, feeding habits, self-confidence and ultimately hope, by teaching children who then become ambassadors for change within their families.

Since its launch in 2017, Nai Qala's preschool program has impacted more than 1500 children and their families, in the provinces of Ghazni and Bamyan, making a difference for more than 12'000 individuals.

Meeting remote communities

The preschool project allowed us to connect even more closely with the reality of rural communities and took us even further into more neglected and remote communities and into regions of extreme poverty. In 2020, as part of our preschool project we visited nearly 80 remote villages in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi; we met thousands of individuals, including children; during the last



The team visits a preschool class in one of the most remote villages of the project, without any passable roads, accessible after a few kilometers of walking.

BaBa Mountain, about 3000 meters above sea level, Bamyan province.

months of the year, we drove nearly 200 hours, and walked long hours, to meet these remote communities. This made us realize how cut off they are, not only geographically but also socially and reinforced our commitment to work for them.

Partnerships



*Signature of the partnership agreement in SDC's premises in Kabul
– March 2020*

Nai Qala Association was honored to partner with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for the preschool program. We are grateful to SDC for generously funding our early childhood education project in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi. We are proud of this partnership, which demonstrates recognition of Nai Qala Association's experience in rural development and trust in our grassroots approach.

Nai Qala Association is also honored to be included in the Early Childhood Education Technical Working Group set up by the Ministry of Education. Nai Qala is very proud to be part of these important discussions for the development of quality education in Afghanistan.

Improving inclusiveness

As one of the objectives of the preschool project is to promote equality, Nai Qala Association's preschool teachers as part of their training, attended an awareness session about children's rights and inclusion. This session exceeded expectations in its influence on many teachers some of which expressed their interest and motivation to go beyond their responsibilities and care for the children with special needs, on a voluntary basis.

Indeed, children with learning difficulties, mental disabilities or social inabilities have extremely harsh living conditions; they are heavily discriminated against, have almost no chance to access formal education and often lose all confidence.

"Since he started preschool, my son has made a lot of progress. Before he could not talk, but now he can name the first 3 letters of the alphabet. I could not imagine seeing my son talk. His behavior has also improved. He feels proud every morning to leave home. I wish to thank his teacher who is very patient and kind to my son and is encouraging me so that I also behave better with him."

Zarin

Mother of a 7-year-old son with mental disability



Five preschool teachers have integrated a child with special needs into their classes. The particular attention given to these children has been a great help to the parents whose

children are rejected by the public education system, and they have made substantial progress.

School constructions in the valley of Yakawlang

11th school construction has started

Work began in the village of Marghi, in Bamyan province, on Nai Qala Association's 11th school construction. This is the start of a project that will provide a suitable school building with space for 650 girls who currently attend classes outside exposed to the elements. By the end of the year the roof was already in place to protect the school construction over the winter months.

In 2021, work will continue on this school to achieve our objective to promote access to quality education for girls and improve their learning opportunities. The new school construction will give both teachers and students the appropriate facilities and equipment to create a working and recreational environment conducive to the study and personal development of each child.

The village of Marghi is located in the district of Yakawlang, even deeper in the valley where the schools of Sokhtagi and Anda are located. This construction will represent another important step in our ambitious efforts to provide quality education for children from preschool age up to entering university. Indeed, the current Marghi's preschoolers will have the privilege of beginning primary school in a new building at the start of the school year in 2021.



Start of the construction in Marghi, September 2020



Marghi School, December 2020

School in Anda

Although inaugurated in December 2019, the school in Anda received its first students in August, once the government lifted the Covid school-ban and allowed 11th and 12th graders to go back to school and enjoy the new facilities. The school also welcomed young beneficiaries of the preschool program who started primary school in September.



Anda School, August 2020

School in Sokhtagi



Sokhtagi School, October 2020

All the projects we have carried out in the district of Yakawlang allowed us to pay regular visits to the school of Sokhtagi we opened in 2018. We could see that the school is kept in very good condition by the community.

The school of Sokhtagi welcomed proud graduates of our preschool program in September 2020.

Sustainability of the construction projects

Nai Qala Association ensures that all chances are on its side to guarantee the sustainability of its programs. Our relationship with the communities is one of the contributing factors for sustainability. Grass roots are the key to understanding the local realities and to be able to put in place an incremental approach, sensitive to local culture.

The sustainability of the schools depends on the involvement of all the stakeholders, regional authorities, community, parents, teachers and students. The schools subsequently become integral parts of the national education plan and continue to run long term. All the visits we have paid to our former constructions allowed us to see how communities have maintained their school in good conditions.

Our projects often go above and beyond the problems they were initially conceived to solve. In accompanying the communities throughout the implementation of the projects, we are able to influence them gradually and steer them towards thinking and acting for themselves which is the key to sustainability.

Empowerment of women

Nai Qala Association promotes a strong woman and girl-centered approach in all its projects, to ensure improved opportunities, empowerment and gender-equality.



Empowerment is not just about empowering women but motivating communities as a whole to act for themselves and to develop their understanding of the importance of equality.

It includes the perspective of boys in its programming based on the belief that inclusive education has the best chance to achieve cultural change, whereby boys develop a better understanding of the role and contribution of girls in society and support the interests of women and girls.

We believe in education for all. The more educated a girl is the more she will be able to play a role in choosing her own path in life and become a contributing member of the community. Furthermore, she will educate the

future generations. The more educated a boy is the more likely he will understand the importance of education for girls too. The more likely he will accept his sister, and later his own wife and daughter going to school.

This year we have proudly seen how our female preschool teachers have gained confidence. They have learnt leadership skills and how to be sociable and gain the respect of not just the children but of the local communities as a whole. They have also gained economic empowerment as bread winners for the first time.



Nai Qala Association's 2020 new preschool teachers

"... this is the first time I ever feel cash in my hand... like a dream!

Not only from an economical point of view but most important from a pride point of view... I said I would never let myself fail even if the village would say I did not manage. My husband and father are respecting me; because I earn money, I have a respectful relation with them. It is still not perfect but it is improving"

Teacher in Ghazni



"My job helped me to get out of my little world. I have developed my self-confidence"

Teacher in Bamyān



Our Covid-19 response

2020 has been a challenging year. The Covid virus has caused upheaval throughout the world and in particular in the education sector and for those who are the most vulnerable. Children around the world have been unable to study and have missed vital time in their education. Now it is all the more important to ensure our objectives for education and in particular the

Sustainable Development Goal 4 ‘to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. We feel stronger than ever that neither education should be jeopardized, nor progress be interrupted, as a result of this pandemic. Nai Qala will continue to do its utmost to protect children’s right to learn.

Covid-19 brought further disruption to the already fragile system of education in Afghanistan. Families have suffered enormously. Children were unable to go to school and were at home with no means of online study. This is especially detrimental for those who do not have literate parents to help them at home.

As soon as the Covid restrictions were lifted, Nai Qala Association was able to launch its education programs in line with the government’s guidelines to ensure a safe start to the preschool classes, all the teacher training included extra instruction on how to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and children were taught the protective measures against its propagation. Work also began on the new school construction. After months of imposed school closures, the parents and entire community were even more convinced of the value of education and showed their remarkable support.

It was just beautiful to see how pleased the parents and children were that our program had started and to see their renewed hope and motivation. Nai Qala was so proud and privileged to be there to witness the children running towards the school with joy and happiness in their eyes.

In order to prevent any issue with Covid spread, all preschool teachers received training on the protective measures that they could implement easily in their class. Additionally, each classroom was equipped with liters of disinfectant.



Children learn to spread their wings for learning to keep a distance



Children develop the habit of washing their hands

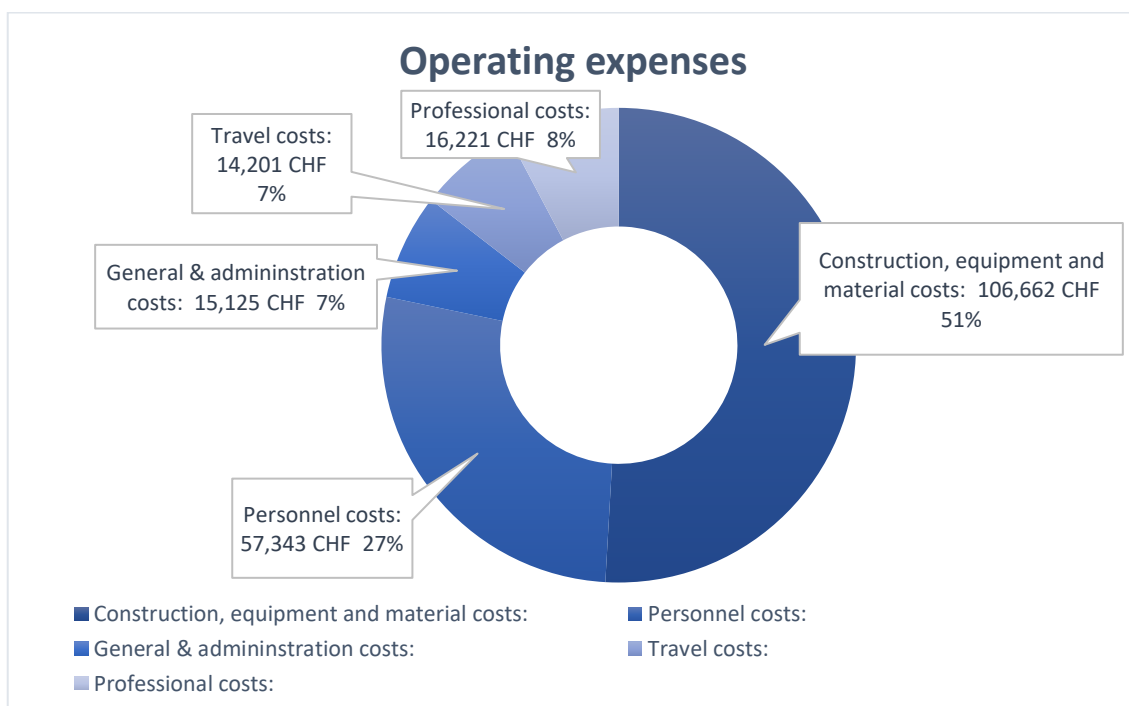
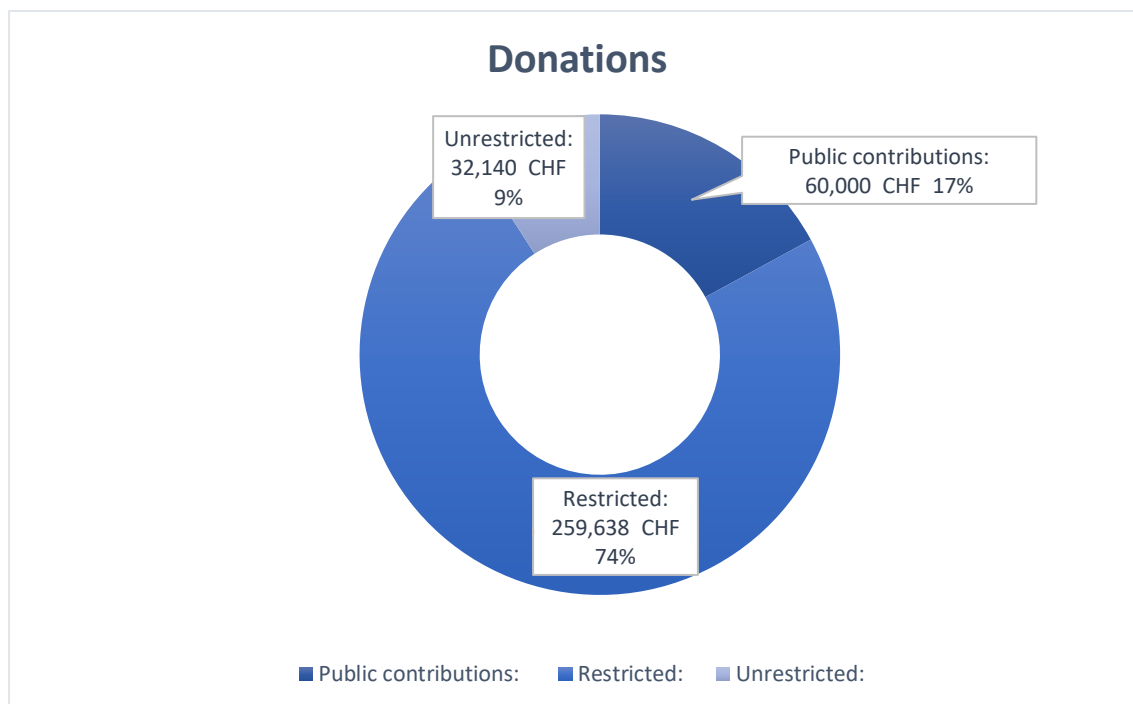


Teachers are trained on preventive measures



Children play happily despite wearing masks

Financial Report 2020



These are final figures based on accounting books. All donations are tax deductible in Switzerland.

The Team in Afghanistan

Nothing could happen without the strong support of dedicated employees in Afghanistan. Nai Qala Association has the privilege to count on a motivated team in its head office in Kabul and hardworking field officers. Despite an already demanding situation for Afghans, the Afghan team has remained determined and has persevered to ensure that activities and projects continued during these difficult times.

The team is actively led and coached by the Association's President, Mrs. Taiba Rahim. The team includes not only the staff in Kabul but some 60 teachers in the field. The President oversees the induction training and serves as a role model for the young women, through her leadership of the organization.

We are proud to share the feelings of some staff members about the past year:

"I learned how to improve my approach to monitoring our preschool classes. And how to give better advice and guide them for the improved performance and success of our program"

Samira
Field officer & coach for preschool teachers,
Province of Bamyan



"This year was tough because of Covid. This created a lot of fear and worries. But one thing kept me hopeful is to have my job. My brothers and friends lost their jobs... I was the only one who had a job, and this kept my mind busy with positive spirit."

Qasem
Administrative officer,
Kabul



"Although in 2020 Corona deprived children of their education, we are happy to provide thousands of children with an education opportunity whilst respecting the hygiene regulations through our preschool classes and by building a school as soon as the restrictions were lifted. This makes me very proud and gives me a satisfying feeling"

Qeyam
Operation Head, Kabul



"I am very proud to have been able to start the preschool as a pilot project and be able to expand it from one class to 10 classes and lead this program for 4 years... "

Khatera
Teacher & coach for preschool teachers,
Province of Ghazni



"I learned how to manage a big purchase. We bought a large quantity of materials for our preschool program. This was an opportunity for me to learn how to deal with such big volumes, to make sure everything was well distributed and placed in trucks to go to the province"

Baqir
NQA logistics assistant, Kabul








"Working with Nai Qala, I have been able to develop my personal and professional skill sets. In particular my communication and people management abilities. Furthermore, I developed an understanding of the importance of the use of both theory and practice when in the field".

Ramazan
Field officer, Province of Bamyan



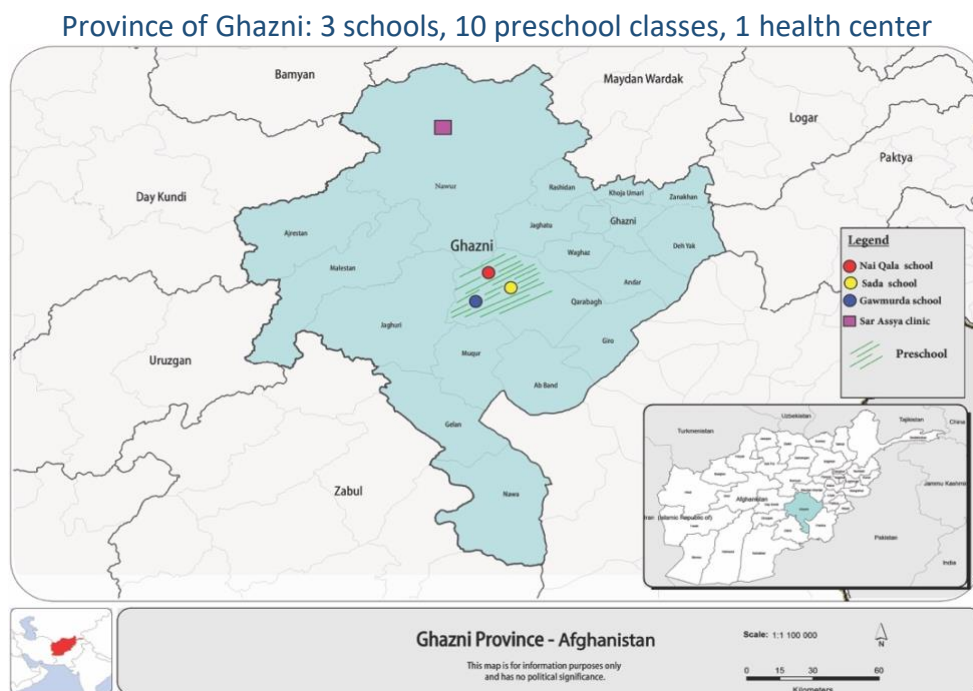
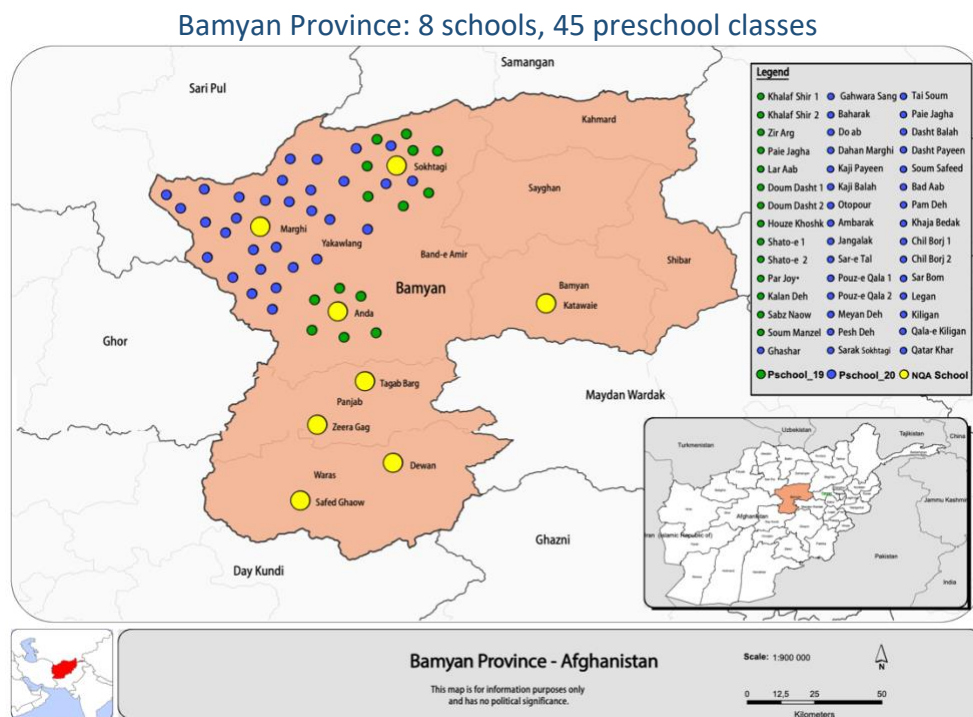
Our Actions towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Nai Qala Association's initiatives contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

	<p>SDG 4 Education: Nai Qala's school constructions increase school attendance and reduce the dropout rate in formal education.</p> <p>Additionally, attending a preschool program increases children's retention in the formal education system.</p>
	<p>SDG 1 No Poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, Nai Qala provided teaching positions to 55 young women from remote communities, as part of its preschool project. Their salary increases the economical means of hundreds of individuals in deprived communities. • The construction of a school improves the livelihood conditions for the community thanks to the generation of income, the acquisition of new skills and the business opportunities.
	<p>SDG 5 Gender Equality: While the world has made progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination in all parts of Afghanistan. The literacy rate for young women is still only 57 percent of that of young men. School attendance indices also show unequivocal gender disparities, which decrease with the level of education. In rural areas these figures are even more alarming. Improving access to education contributes to reducing the gap.</p> <p>Inclusive education has the best chance to achieve cultural change, whereby boys develop a better understanding of the role and contribution of girls in society and support the interests of women and girls.</p>
	<p>SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being: Nai Qala's preschool program has proven efficient in improving hygiene conditions of children and their families. Children learn to wash their hands, their teeth and to use latrines; their new habits drive changes in the whole community.</p>
	<p>SDG No Hunger: preschool group discussions with parents raise their awareness about the importance of feeding children and slowly change the habit of feeding children last or sending them to bed on an empty stomach.</p>

Geographical coverage

In 2020, Nai Qala Association operated in the provinces of Bamyan and Ghazni, mountainous regions of central Afghanistan.



Thanks to our Donors

We are proud of our partnership with hundreds of donors who have placed their trust in us, many of them on regular and repeated basis: we herewith express our sincere gratitude to them for the generous support and exemplary trust they have placed in the commitment and projects of our Association, and in the concrete results we have achieved in favor of the Afghan people ever since 2007. This year we are especially grateful for the generous contributions of



Fondation Gertrude
Hirzel



Régie Zimmermann



Private Foundations and
Dozens of individual private donors



We deeply appreciate the donors who have been remarkable partners in support of Nai Qala's activities over the past 15 years: the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, Fondation Gertrude Hirzel, Fondation Oak, Fondation Paradise, Fondation Philanthropique Famille Firmenich, Fondation Pluralisme, Fondation Rhône, Fondation Scintillae, Fonds de Soutien Migros, Régie Zimmermann, the République et Canton de Genève, Rotary Clubs, Soroptimist Clubs, la Table Ronde, and numerous individuals, communities, companies, schools and municipalities.

About Nai Qala

Nai Qala Association's statutes established it as a Swiss-based non-for-profit organization that is formally registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan. Nai Qala Association's board is made up of 10 volunteer members, including experts in humanitarian and development activities. The dedicated in-country team of Afghan staff with specific skills runs the organization's office in Kabul and oversees the daily activities both in Kabul and in the field. The President, Mrs. Taiba Rahim, a trained teacher has a hands-on approach and implements and monitors closely all the projects

Since 2007, Nai Qala Association has been active in the development and delivery of quality basic education to under-served remote communities in rural Afghanistan. All Nai Qala's projects focus on community participation, and together, we have worked to build eleven schools for over 10,000 children, facilitated tutoring programs (university Kankor preparation) and established NQA preschool classes for over 1000 children in the provinces of Ghazni and Bamyan.

Our Mission

Nai Qala Association's engagement is based on the determination to strengthen the dignity, self-confidence and sense of initiative of the populations in remote regions of Afghanistan and of women in particular. Improved access to education and health is a fundamental human right and crucial to move beyond poverty, exclusion, humiliation and discrimination.

Our Vision

An educated, healthy and balanced society in which women and men lead social, cultural and economic changes in an inclusive manner that enables their children – boys and girls – to thrive, focusing on neglected parts of Afghanistan.

Hope for a dignified future

Nai Qala Association is working in one of the most isolated and remote regions in order to give hope and make people feel that they have their rightful place in this world too.



A girl doing a pre-literacy exercise in a preschool class in the province of Bamyan

Let us together give children an opportunity to explore their talent, prove their capacity by becoming a teacher, a doctor, an engineer or any other function that would help to improve the situation in Afghanistan. These should be opportunities for life, not just for the short term. By building new facilities and improving access to education, we wish to give them the possibility to influence the future of their community. Investing in them means investing in their families, their communities and the future of the country.

Join us for an educated, healthy and balanced society for rural Afghanistan
Support our mission

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