



On the way to preschool – Bamyan

*A local proverb says “Even if a mountain is very high there is a path to the top”*

Nai Qala Association is involved precisely because things are difficult and for people whose fates have been marked for so long by the cruelty of war and injustice.

Children deserve access to education at all times. Nai Qala association is very proud to provide this access and the opportunity for children to live their lives more fully!

## A word from the president



A year full of challenges and uncertainties has just come to an end in Afghanistan. It was a dynamic and active year for Nai Qala Association, a year of courage, solidarity, and unity.

The Association is proud to have achieved all the goals it set for itself. We built a new school and renovated another one, for 600 girls and provided quality education for 1300 children through our preschool program in the remote provinces of central Afghanistan.

We are involved in the regions where the communities are convinced of the importance of education. This collaboration is the reason why our programs were able to continue without interruption.

It is with great satisfaction that we have been able to expand our projects into the province of Daikundi, one of the least developed regions in the country. To work together with communities that are so committed to the education of their girls and boys is a source of great motivation.

Last summer's political events in Afghanistan have left their mark on – and worried - the world. I am even more grateful to our donors for their continued support and trust. It took courage and conviction to stand by the people of Afghanistan during this unstable time. This is what our partners have shown.

It also took leadership as our team showed. I personally travelled to the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi several times to meet our teachers and coordinators, the thousands of pupils and parents, the local authorities, and municipal councils. Our visits brought reassurance and encouragement for the communities. They also gave us extra motivation.

We were especially touched to see the extraordinary measures taken by some to protect the project materials. During last year's political changes, they concealed, hid, and sometimes even buried the materials, as the uncertainty was so great. They wanted to make sure that all that Nai Qala's donors had provided would be protected. I have seen that everything is still in place.

It is this spirit that maintains the programs continuity and we are proud to have been among the small number of organizations that were able to carry on their activities. The pupils continued to have quality teaching and the teachers received their salaries. *"I am proud to be part of Nai Qala"*, one of them told me.

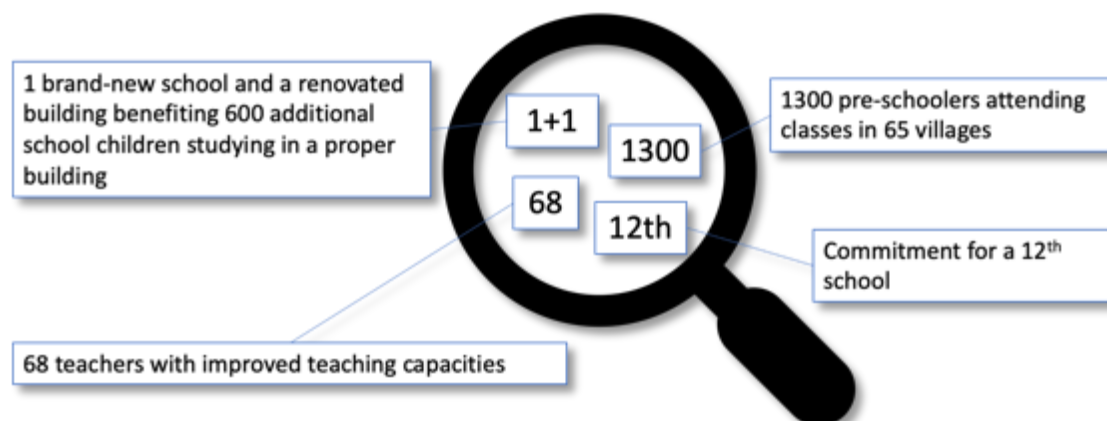
These testimonies touch me deeply and they strengthen my determination and commitment each time. I am very grateful to the team in Kabul for their perseverance and courage. I am very happy to share these achievements with you and encourage you to read the details of our activities.

It is the strong bond between the teams in Afghanistan and Switzerland that is at the heart of the identity and energy of our Association.

With all my gratitude,

Taiba Rahim, President

## Key achievements 2021



## School constructions in Yakawlang valley



*End of construction work – August 2021*

### Construction work in Marghi resulted in a double inauguration

One of the main objectives to build a school in the village of Marghi was to facilitate the access of girls to quality education. This is now a reality: over 600 girls, who until now have been studying under a blazing sun, will be able to benefit from dignified learning conditions in a new school building as well as in an old building that has been completely renovated.

The new building has 6 classrooms equipped according to government standards. As for the old building, it benefits from refreshed walls and a brand-new roof which will allow an optimal

protection against the vagaries of the weather.

A hundred local workers have been hired as laborers on the construction sites, providing their families with a welcome source of income in a region where economic opportunities are scarce. In addition, the women of the community were able to sell their agricultural production (vegetables, eggs, etc.) and bread to the permanent workers of the construction company.

Several celebrations marked the end of the construction work: the first one for the end of construction work of the new building, in mid-August in the presence of schoolgirls and the second for the official inauguration of both the new and renovated school in mid-November, in the presence of the authorities and the local community. Bamyan province is classified as a "cold" region by the Ministry of Education. Cold regions are characterized by a very long winter break. The students of Marghi will officially enter their new and renovated schools in the spring of 2022.





*Proud and happy Marghi girls*



*New (front) and renovated (back) buildings*

It is a privilege to respond to the Marghi community's schooling needs. The community has shown continued commitment to girls' education and has a strong sense of responsibility and ownership. It is a pleasure to reward such commitment and engagement with 12 fully functioning school rooms for girls from 1st to 12th grade.

For the inauguration, the girls sang, made speeches, and recited poetry to express their gratitude in front of an audience of local and provincial authorities, the community, the teachers, and their classmates.

#### **Commitment for a 12<sup>th</sup> school construction**



*The ceremony for the breaking of the ground to start Construction of Dou Aab school – November 2021*

The association has committed to the community of Dou Aab to build a school. This 12<sup>th</sup> construction will provide a suitable building for 400 girls and boys from 6-18 years old. We marked the event with a small ceremony with the local authorities.

As for the village of Marghi, Dou Aab is in the Yakawlang district of Bamyan province. Yakawlang is one of the mountainous districts situated in the Western part of Bamyan Province, which is at the foot of the Koh-e-Baba Mountain (part of the Hindu Kush). A school building is taken for granted in most countries, but currently the school students of Dou Aab study outside in very poor conditions

on an open piece of land in the sun, rain, wind, or even snow. One of the key and basic elements of quality education is a proper permanent building.

Over the last 16 years in remote rural regions of central Afghanistan, Nai Qala Association has seen the transformative effect of constructing dignified schools. It mobilizes entire communities and their authorities. It creates empowerment and pride. It keeps trained teachers in the region. It allows more boys and especially girls to complete their studies. It opens new horizons. It also contributes to the important national education system, gradually reinforcing the network of learning institutions that are so much needed for a stable Afghanistan.

## Preschool program

The preschool program continues to expand and in 2021 the Nai Qala Association successfully trained the teachers and ran 65 classes benefitting 1300 children in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi.



*Preschool class in Daikundi*

The success of the preschool program strongly relies on its deep anchorage in the communities. The people of Daikundi are resilient and strongly motivated in favour of education for boys and girls.

### Daikundi preschool

As part of the Association's strategy to expand its activities geographically, Nai Qala is now present in the province of Daikundi. In May, we officially opened 20 preschool classes in the surroundings of Nili, the provincial capital. All classes are in a recruitment zone of the local government primary schools, to ensure that pre-schoolers can pursue their education.

Our young beneficiaries are mostly from internally displaced families or returned

### Fostering change in the communities

Teachers not only teach children but also involve parents for discussions and awareness on child development, education and nutrition, health, and hygiene topics. This results in lasting changes in the communities and children who are more ready to move on to formal education and more likely to stay in education for longer. Parents now regularly ask all their children at home "How was school? What have you learned?". The parents have an increased awareness of their role to support and accompany their children.



*Learning and thriving together*

*"Since my daughter attends the preschool class, her personality has really developed. When she comes home, she greets us, she behaves well when eating, she practices what she has learned, she is more curious and asks many questions, she loves painting, she has changed a lot" – A parent Bamyan*

*"These children attend the village events with good manners. They are now part of society whereas before they were excluded from community life. This is a big change. Even other children older and younger, see our preschool children as role models and are inspired and learn from them." - Teacher Daikundi*

*"Afghanistan is not very developed. It is our responsibility as teachers, despite the current challenges to help children to get an education." - Teacher Bamyan*

### Women's empowerment

Nai Qala Association fosters changes at the individual, community, and regional level. Through its projects, it supports inclusive gender-equal approaches and believes that access to education for both

girls and boys from these marginalized communities will promote long-term inclusivity. Nai Qala Association strongly believes that men and women can live together in harmony as equals.

Hiring local women is a first step towards Women's empowerment and gender equality. The communities continue to learn about the importance of women in society and they see for themselves the capabilities of girls and are committed to education for all.



*Induction training for the preschool teachers in the province of Daikundi – April 2021*

Nai Qala's preschool classes are for girls and boys between the ages of 5 and 6. At this age the children play together. Both the girls and the boys play at construction and at cooking together. It is at this young age that children's learning experiences have a strong impact on their development, and it is at this time that both girls and boys learn that they are equally capable of doing certain things. It is this learning together and from each other that lays the foundations for a more gender balanced future.

Following preschool, the children go to formal school better prepared and with an understanding of each other's abilities. At school the girls and boys are taught separately but they have already developed their sense of equality. Boys are more likely to see the girls as equals and girls will have more belief in themselves.



*Women and girls grow more confident*

Nai Qala is convinced that change should come from Afghans and, through the leadership role of its president it shows the importance of the role of women in building the country.

In a male-dominated society, it can be a challenge to convince and obtain respect, but the success of Nai Qala Association's projects has increased the engagement of the local populations and this process has had a positive impact on how they look at the role of women in society.



## Sustainability

From the beginning, Nai Qala developed an approach based on community involvement. Local authorities and the population are always included in the project development, which encourages them to feel recognized, respected and involved. The pride of the population to participate in the elaboration and implementation of the projects explains why the dozen schools and the dispensary that we built are still functioning and are maintained in good conditions. The local authorities and the population have taken ownership of the projects and are protecting what Nai Qala has achieved and



Winter class in Daikundi – December 2021

built with donor support. The local people will continue to protect the buildings and projects in this new phase as well.

Many of the communities want the preschool classes to even continue during the winter months and have taken the initiative to independently organize to do this. This thinking and acting for themselves is key to sustainability. Although extremely poor and often illiterate, these communities are deeply committed to the education of their daughters and sons.

## Child protection

As part of Nai Qala Association's preschool program, the Nai Qala Association builds the communities' capacity to provide stable, protective, nurturing environments for their children. Children's right is a new concept for these remote communities and Nai Qala has integrated awareness of these rights into the teachers' preschool curriculum. Whether at home or at school, physical punishment is often seen as an immediate solution when a child is bothersome or disobedient. It takes time, patience, and training to change this mindset. Through the Nai Qala Association's teacher training courses both teachers and parents have started to learn the skills and tips used to avoid resorting to violence.

Teaching the community about the rights of children has a far-reaching impact on the children's overall well-being and development.

## Partnerships

This year Nai Qala Association was very honoured to have the first ever field visit from a donor. In June the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency came to visit our preschool classes in Bamyan province and were able to see the impact with their own eyes. They had the opportunity to see the changes brought about by the preschool program both in the children and in the communities.

*"When we visited the pre-primary classes run by the Nai Qala Association [...] we were impressed to see the social skills the children had developed. One proud father told us that his daughter was doing better than her older brother, who is already in primary school. All the parents told us that their children are more focused, more respectful of their elders, and have better personal hygiene and table manners since they started attending the classes. This program gives them a much better chance of succeeding in school, and coming from communities that are often neglected, these children need every advantage they can get."*

This field visit was a wonderful opportunity for Nai Qala Association not only to demonstrate how a donor's funding is being spent efficiently and effectively, but also to highlight the conditions under which Nai Qala Association works and the level of commitment required to ensure that we reach every child to provide them with a basic education.

Nai Qala Association has regular contact with other NGOs working in the same sector and in the same region and exchanges information and advice to ensure projects are not duplicated as well as explore potential joint opportunities. Nai Qala Association continued to play its role in the Early Childhood technical Working Group set up by the former Ministry of Education.

## Continuity and stability during both Covid and political upheaval



*Preschool class in Daikundi*

This year Nai Qala Association has continued its project without interruption and strongly believes that neither Covid nor political events should jeopardize the education these children deserve.

Covid continued to bring disruption around the world in 2021, however Nai Qala Association's schools and preschools were able to continue with the new hygiene measures in place.

In 2021 Afghanistan was faced with political upheaval and a new political reality. Afghanistan became an even more fragile conflict affected state with a government that is not recognized internationally.

The Nai Qala Association is well positioned to get help to where it is needed for these remote communities. Many of the international organizations left or paused their operations. Nai Qala Association is still functioning with local staff. Nai Qala Association's teachers continued to work and be paid, Nai Qala Association's education projects for both girls and boys in these remote regions continued uninterrupted.

We have seen how over the last 20 years the international efforts to help have met with failure. Nai Qala Association believes diplomacy and gentle persuasion are the way ahead. This recent political change can be seen as an opportunity for more grassroots NGOs such as the Nai Qala Association to make an impact. Our organization provides a vital link between NGO and traditional Afghan communities and institutions.

It is better to work with the traditional cultural and indigenous networks than against them. This is the way forward to an Afghan-owned solution.

The Nai Qala Association continues to have the authorization from the new education authorities to run its projects. There is strong support within the communities for schools for both girls and boys.

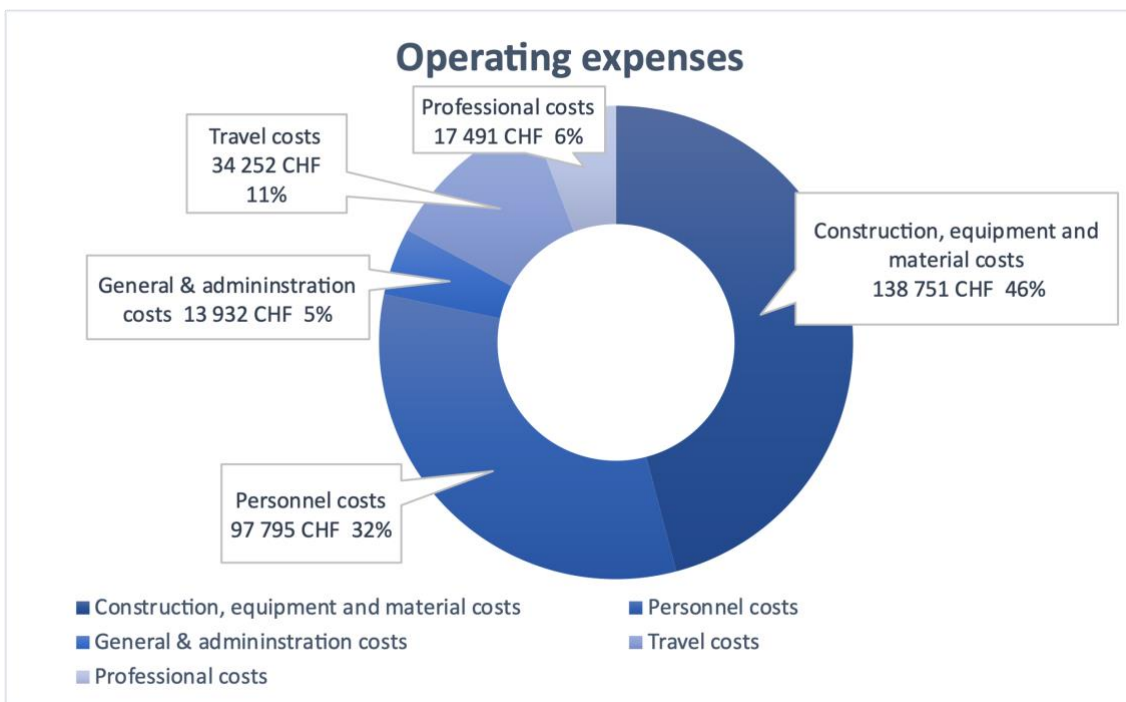
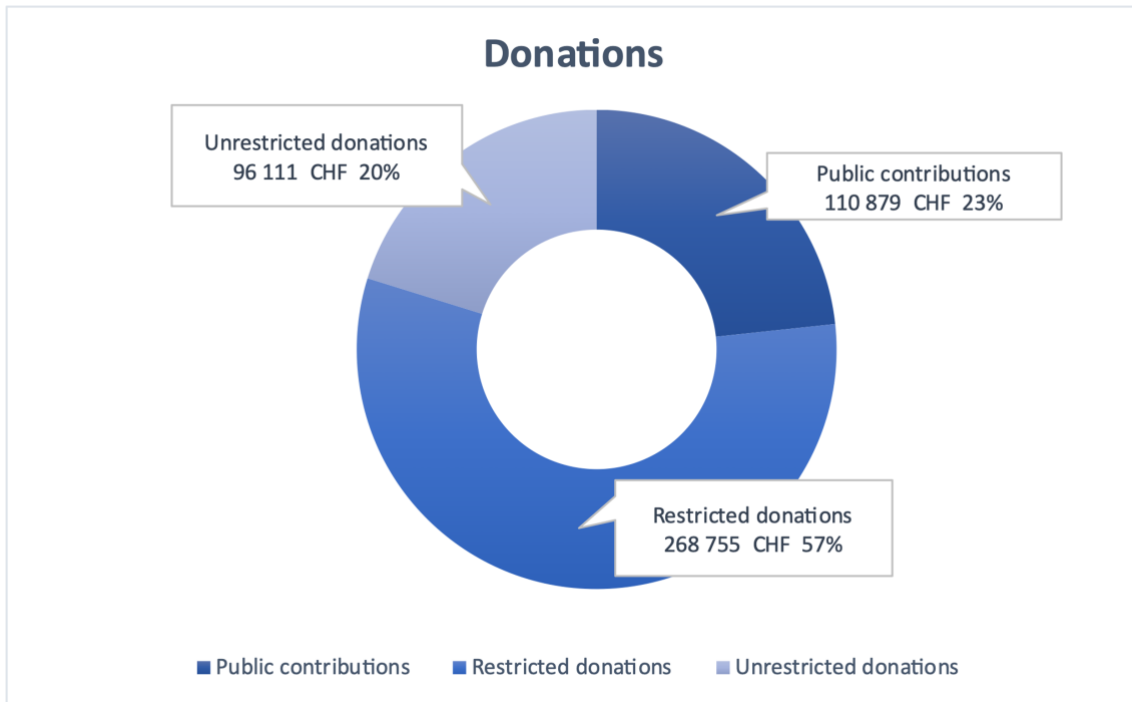
The Nai Qala Association has risen to meet the challenges it faces and remains committed to the remote communities and the children it serves.



*Former Nai Qala preschoolers attending primary school in Bamyán*



## Financial Report 2021



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

## Looking ahead...

In 2022, our preschool program will continue to provide education opportunities to 1300 children in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi. The experience of the past years shows that teachers and communities need more awareness on children's right, health, and nutrition matters. Nai Qala preschool teachers will receive training to address these needs and pass the messages to the communities.

Our ambition to leave no children behind remains unchanged and we have committed with the remote community of Dou Aab to build a school. The construction will start in spring, allowing 400 children to study in a decent learning environment.

Nai Qala Association is proud to continue to pursue its vision and commitment not only in its field activities that impact tens of thousands of beneficiaries, but also to continue to build its organizational capacity, to strengthen its staff capacity as well as enrich its series of policies, plans, strategies, and manuals to work even more as a professional organization with an increasing impact on an increasing number of beneficiaries.

The period of intense difficulty in Afghanistan is not over but through each crisis Nai Qala Association remains committed to the communities it serves. Communities that are resilient, determined and motivated to rise above all obstacles to improve education and create a better future. Nai Qala Association is flexible and able to adapt to new and changing circumstances without deviating from its core values.

## The Team in Afghanistan



*Nai Qala Association's field team, in Kabul December 2021*

### Loyalty and commitment

The strong support of the employees is an essential part of Nai Qala Association. More than ever this year the team in Kabul and in the field showed their strong commitment towards our projects and to the communities we are helping. The political situation in August was a particularly difficult and worrying time. The Nai Qala Association team remained focused and concentrated on their work.






*"Thank you for giving us hope. Right now, our office is the only place full of hope, energy, and action."* Najeeb, September 2021

### Capacity building for the Nai Qala team

We believe in strengthening the capabilities of our staff. 2021 has been an important year for building the capacities of the team. A full review was carried out of Nai Qala Association's internal procedures and from this, the Nai Qala Association team gained an increased awareness of the need for structured processes and management procedures and was able to develop its own policies and processes accordingly.

## Our Actions towards the Sustainable Development Goals agenda

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"> <li>• In 2021, Nai Qala provided teaching positions to 68 young women from remote communities, as part of its preschool project. Their salary increases the economical means of hundreds of individuals in deprived communities.</li> <li>• Nai Qala hires local employees only and works with local companies and service providers.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
	<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 2 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>



## Thanks to our Donors

We are immensely grateful to our donors for their support. We give them our heartfelt thanks for placing their trust in us. Each donation makes a difference and helps these neglected communities in Afghanistan. Together we remain actively engaged to bring hope to these remote regions.

This year we are especially grateful for the generous contributions of



Private Foundations and the 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 Pierre-Henri Ducret, Fondation Philanthropique Famille Firmenich, Stiftung Irene M. Staehlin, Fondation Pluralisme, Fondation Rhône, Fondation Scintillae, Fonds de Soutien Migros, MOST Association, Régie Zimmermann, the République et Canton de Genève, Rotary Clubs in Nyon and Geneva, 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 Nai Qala Association preschool classes for over 2000 children in the provinces of Ghazni, Bamyan and Daikundi.

### 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.

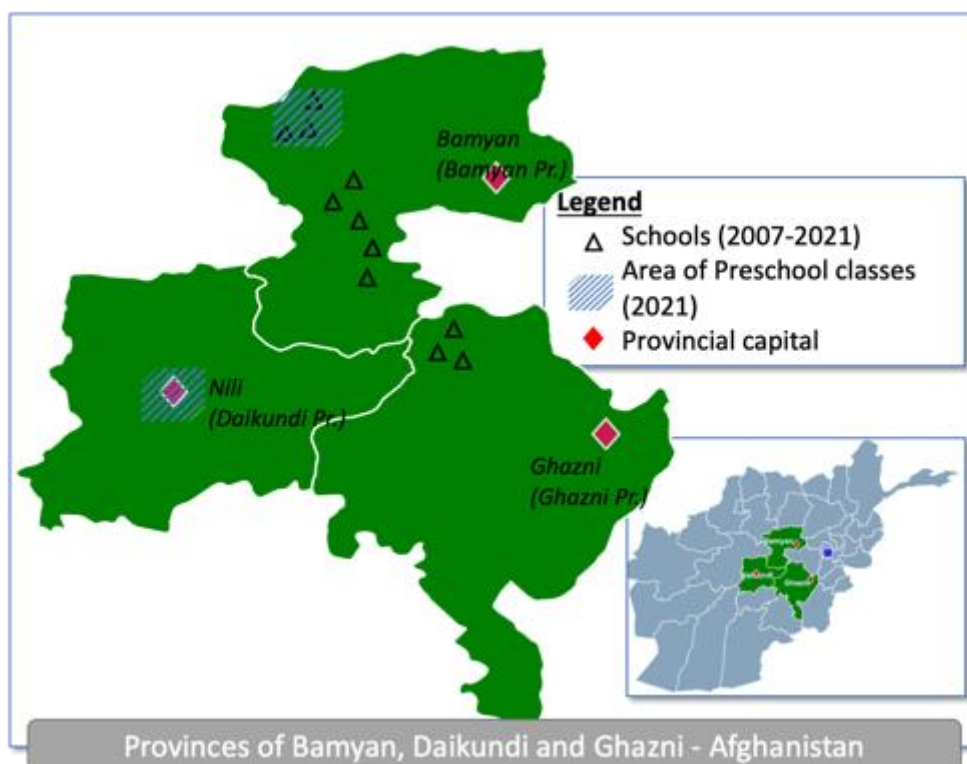
## Our Vision

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.

## Geographical coverage

In 2021, the Nai Qala Association operated in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi, mountainous regions of central Afghanistan.

All active education projects in the provinces of Bamyan, Daikundi and Ghazni:  
11 school building, 65 preschool classes



In addition to the education projects, the clinic built by Nai Qala in the province of Ghazni is still active and functional.

## Hope for a dignified future

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



*Happy girl in a preschool class  
Province of Bamyan – Summer 2021*

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

[info@nai-qala.org](mailto:info@nai-qala.org) [www.nai-qala.org](http://www.nai-qala.org)

