PRINCIPLES AND VALUES
2019-2023
Solidarity in action

Norwegian People’s Aid is a members’ organisation that was established in 1939. We are the labour movement’s humanitarian solidarity organisation and represent the labour movement’s fundamental values: unity, solidarity and human worth. The values of Norwegian People’s Aid are based on equal rights for all, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and social status.

Norwegian People’s Aid must be a credible, open, fearless organisation; an organisation with opinions based on knowledge and experience from practical work and an organisation that challenges power and injustice. We are a politically independent organisation and make our views known in relation to important social issues. Awareness of equality is to be maintained throughout the organisation and in all processes and programmes. Our goal of a fairer world means that we have partners that may oppose or be in conflict with those in power.

Norwegian People’s Aid is known for its practical efforts on behalf of others. Whether we are rescuing people in difficulties in the mountains, undertaking solidarity work in local communities or clearing landmines from school routes, our work is based on solidarity rather than charity.

“Solidarity in action” is our vision and characterises our work and engagement. Norwegian People’s Aid works within two key areas: Just distribution of power and resources and protection of life and health.

Over several decades, Norwegian People’s Aid has developed its unique competence in mine- and explosives clearance and in political advocacy work to ban landmines and cluster munitions. We also use this competence to protect civilians from explosive weapons before, during and after conflict.

Norwegian People’s Aid is one of the largest contributors to our national rescue services. We provide first aid training to the population at large and aid the community when needed. Local administration and cooperation between the public and voluntary sectors ensure security and availability in the event of accident or disaster. Voluntary organisations play an important role in the social
structure of Norway and contribute to democratic development. Our members make active contributions in relation to social cohesion, political change, a significant proportion of welfare and the positive development of society.

Norwegian People's Aid has long, stable experience of partnership with a view to fair distribution of power and resources. We help enable our partners to promote their own agenda and strengthen their influence in society. For some time now, we have been witnessing the concentration of power and resources in fewer hands. The unequal distribution of power influences who is listened to and which decisions are taken. Robust popular participation and organisation are crucial to changing power relations. Women's influence must increase to enable them to participate on equal terms with men.

People who have fled their home countries in many parts of the world are running into closed borders. Growing polarisation is leading to the hardening of political positions, increasing xenophobia and marked opposition to immigration in parts of the population. Discrimination in employment and social contexts and increased inequality create problems with integration and undermine trust. Norwegian People's Aid works actively and purposefully to ensure that asylum seekers and people with an immigrant background experience inclusion and are given the opportunity to use their resources and contribute to society. Since immigrant women face a series of barriers to integration, we must actively contribute to increasing their self-confidence and strength.

Young people are a vital resource and often important agents for social change. Their participation concerns the right to involvement in changing the society in which we live. A strong, inclusive youth organisation with purposeful activities through Youth for Solidarity and First Aid and Rescue Service Youth ensures the constant regeneration of competent representatives, volunteers and crews.

Climate change and the devastation of the natural resource base influence our work both nationally and internationally. The consequences of climate change are often different for women, men and children and largely affect poor and marginalised people. Climate change has the potential to create more extreme social inequality and to contribute to political instability, increased levels of conflict and higher numbers of displaced persons. This requires well organised local and international efforts. Climate change will also influence both the type and amount of missions for our voluntary rescue crews and require an even more robust rescue service.

**Democratic development and international solidarity**

Real, functioning democracies are a precondition of just distribution. World poverty will not be reduced by increased economic growth alone. Growth too must be shared. Norwegian People's Aid shall work for democracy, rights and the distribution of resources.

An organised civil society is essential for consolidating democracy in a country. Collective organisations do not only represent members' interests but also help build and protect democracy by holding decision-makers accountable and demanding results, access to information and representation.

Through partnership, Norwegian People's Aid supports organisations fighting for political and social rights in societies where democracy is weak. In this way, we help oppressed groups get their voices heard and bring their influence to bear in the fight for democracy. Such partnership obliges Norwegian People's Aid to raise issues concerning democracy and the distribution of resources with Norwegian authorities and the Norwegian public, as well as through international work for solidarity in our own members' organisation.

Our international experience must be consolidated within the organisation at home to create increased interest and involvement among Norwegian People’s Aid members.

Broad engagement provides legitimacy in relation to the Norwegian authorities and helps develop awareness of international issues among the population at large.

Norwegian People's Aid must be a robust humanitarian agency which, acting alongside our partners, helps prevent crises and responds with humanitarian assistance in the event of emergency, disaster or conflict. In the main, our humanitarian work shall be closely tied in with long-term partnership and help to build resilience in society. Humanitarian efforts are to be effected in line with humanitarian principles and human rights, reflect that women and men are affected differently, strengthen local agencies and lay the groundwork to ensure that those affected by the crisis are able to exercise influence over their own situation.
Norwegian People's Aid will:

- Cooperate with popular organisations and civil society to promote democratisation and thus contribute to a more just distribution of power and resources.
- Support our partners' work to ensure that strategic natural resources are managed sustainably and benefit the population at large.
- Promote democracy, human rights, equality and a just distribution of power and resources between women and men.
- Lobby for an increased focus on power and the distribution of resources in Norwegian development policy.
- Strengthen resilience in communities prone to crisis by strengthening local agencies.
- Promote the role of local organisations in response to humanitarian crises and strengthen their capacity to undertake this role.
- Contribute to increased engagement and understanding of development issues in our local chapters, among members and in the population at large.
- Strengthen cooperation with the Norwegian trade union movement concerning democratisation and international solidarity.

First aid and rescue service

The Norwegian Search and Rescue Service is based on all suitable resources – public, private and voluntary – being used in publicly coordinated efforts to save life and health. Norwegian People's Aid is one of the country’s largest voluntary rescue organisations and plays a key role in the Norwegian Search and Rescue Service. We place our resources to disposition in the event of disasters, searches for missing persons, avalanches and other types of search and rescue missions. Norwegian People's Aid constantly seeks out new knowledge for developing our skills and competence, enabling our crews to provide the best possible response, year round, in all weathers.

Knowledge of first aid is crucial in the event of critical injury or illness and saves lives. First aid training provides practical skills and knowledge which allow individuals to identify problems at an early stage, alert the necessary services and perform life-saving action when the seconds count. A high level of first aid competence and skilful instructors and leaders among Norwegian People's Aid crews may be crucial when someone needs our help, whether it is on a football pitch or in the mountains in winter.

Safe activities for children and young people contribute to social cohesion, learning and personal development. While such activities have great value in themselves, the foundations are laid for becoming a Norwegian People's Aid crew member in the future.

A nationwide first aid and rescue service is a precondition of being able to live and be active in all parts of the country. In Norway, resources must be local in order to be available in the event of accident, crisis or terrorist attack. For this reason, we need to build up competent rescue resources over the entire country for Norway to be a safe society to live in.

Preventive work is important for a coherent rescue service. This involves training in first aid, awareness of risk in mountainous areas and the sensible use of nature. In this way, an individual may be able to avoid danger, save him/herself and help others in the event of accident or illness.

Norwegian People's Aid will:

- Play a visible role and set the political agenda in relation to first aid, search and rescue services and accident prevention work.
- Strengthen our position as a robust, nationwide operator within the Norwegian Search and Rescue Service.
- Develop and maintain a high professional standard in our efforts and ensure sufficient training of our crews.
- Strengthen and develop First Aid and Rescue Service Youth so that it becomes an important recruitment source and competent supplement to our voluntary search and rescue and first aid efforts.
- Work for proper financial conditions for the voluntary search and rescue service.
- Work to ensure that those engaged in voluntary rescue services avoid loss of earnings, have proper insurance arrangements and a proper financial framework.
- Work towards universal first aid knowledge within the Norwegian population and ensure high quality first aid training.
- Work towards closer collaboration, shared professional development and standardisation within the rescue service sector.
- Undertake active preventive work to avoid accidents.
- Contribute to first aid preparedness at various cultural and sporting events.
Refugees and social inclusion

The voluntary sector plays a crucial role in ensuring social inclusion. Norwegian People’s Aid is an important contributor in promoting participation in local communities and organisational life and helps ensure that more people build up their own network and become active citizens in society. Practical experience and a focus on people’s rights constitute a solid foundation for political influence.

Far too many refugees and other vulnerable groups are currently excluded from working life. These are people who would benefit greatly from working with others and who represent a considerable resource for society. Economic difficulties and increased tension between different groups within the population can undermine both desire and will in relation to inclusion in many of the majority population. Increasing xenophobia and generalisation contributes to growing discrimination at work and in society. Norwegian People’s Aid shall fight discrimination and help create an inclusive work- and social life for all.

Other groups of Norwegian society also need our solidarity. Many Norwegian People’s Aid chapters provide important local, social initiatives that the public sector does not undertake. Preventing social exclusion will be key to the society of the future.

Norwegian People’s Aid will:

- Make active contributions to encourage the integration of refugees and other vulnerable groups in Norwegian society.
- Strengthen cooperation with the labour movement in relation to fighting discrimination and creating an inclusive working life for all.
- Be a driving force and advocate of rights, equality and proper living conditions for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Strengthen local chapters to ensure good organisational knowledge, recruitment and increased impact in our political advocacy work.
- Through our local chapters, be a bridge-builder between sexes, groups, cultures and generations in local communities.
- Maintain a visible presence and set the political agenda where refugees and social inclusion are concerned.
- Counteract falsehood and prejudice.

Humanitarian disarmament

Humanitarian disarmament means reducing and preventing civil suffering from weapons and munitions. Civil society play a crucial role in this work. Helping increase national and local competence is a key element in all our work.

Millions of people are exposed to the consequences of armed conflicts, not least when the conflicts are long since over. Land mines, cluster munitions and other explosives result in death and destroyed lives and undermine opportunities for peaceful development and democratic participation. Women and men are often affected differently in the event of conflict and this demands that our response demonstrates particular awareness in this respect.

The long-term aim of Norwegian People’s Aid humanitarian disarmament work is to reduce the risk constituted by land mines, cluster munitions and other explosives to a level where civilians may live safely and where development is not hindered. Our work aims to prevent suffering related to weapons and munitions before, during and after their deployment.

Norwegian People’s Aid shall be one of the world’s most important organisations within humanitarian explosives clearance. We shall also employ our competence to the disarming and destruction of weapons and munitions. We shall strengthen our operational and political work to protect civilians from explosive weapons in densely populated areas. At the same time, it is important to secure the full and effective implementation of adopted conventions.

On the basis of our experience from the successful processes that led to the bans on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, Norwegian People’s Aid will contribute to further humanitarian disarmament agendas. We will continue to work for the strengthening of international norms and regulations for the protection of civilians. Nuclear weapons are the single largest weapons threat to humanity and the environment. Norwegian People’s Aid will continue the work to encourage more countries to sign up to the ban on nuclear weapons as well as to increase awareness and understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.
Norwegian People’s Aid will:

• Work operationally and politically towards increased protection of civilians before, during and after conflict and to strengthen international norms and regulations within humanitarian disarmament.
• Work to improve the quality, efficacy and cost-efficiency of clearing areas affected by land mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.
• Work to strengthen international regulations and norms concerning weapons in order to protect civilians.
• Work to reduce the threat constituted by land mines, cluster munitions, post-war toxic waste, explosive weapons, unsecured arms dumps and nuclear weapons.
• Work for more countries to sign up to the ban on nuclear weapons and increase awareness of the humanitarian consequences.
• Work to stop the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and contribute to civil preparedness and protection of civilians from explosive weapons.
• Contribute to increased engagement and activity in local chapters and understanding of humanitarian disarmament in the population at large.
• Reduce civilian suffering during conflict by demanding an end-user declaration on Norwegian arms exports, including to allied countries.