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# PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES 2021



NAZARENE  
COMPASSIONATE  
MINISTRIES

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# INTRODUCTION

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As Christians, we believe that all congregations have both the **ability** and **responsibility** to reach out in compassion to those around them. This is an outworking of our love for God and love for others. Every church, no matter how big or small, can come alongside those who are in need and be a source of hope, love, and transformation.

The purpose of this document is to provide an introduction to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) and a foundation for engaging in ministries of compassion through the local church. It outlines NCM's:

- i) **Principles** – through the sharing of our mission, approach, and theology, as well as the standards and values that underpin our approach to church-led community development and humanitarian relief.
- ii) **Practices** – in the different ways in which NCM partners with churches, including policies, procedures, and resources that will help you design compassionate ministry efforts.

The document contains many links to resources, policy documents, and forms. You can always find the most current version of these resources by clicking on these links.

If you require more support, please contact the relevant NCM Coordinator on your Region. If you do not know who the Regional NCM Coordinator is, please contact [info@ncm.org](mailto:info@ncm.org).

# MISSION

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NCM exists in and through the Church of the Nazarene to help raise up compassionate disciples who proclaim the Gospel to all people in word and deed.

As a ministry within the international Church of the Nazarene, NCM shares the overall mission of **“Making Christlike Disciples in the Nations.”**

More specifically, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries partners with local Nazarene congregations around the world to clothe, shelter, feed, heal, educate, and live in solidarity with those who suffer under oppression, injustice, violence, poverty, hunger, and disease.

While NCM is a ministry within the denomination, the theological emphasis and ethos of the local church already encapsulate the priority for offering Good News to the world through ministries of compassion. Therefore, even as NCM reflects our denomination’s heritage and history, it does not replace nor could it entirely encompass local effort and initiative in compassion. Compassion is part of the DNA of the Church of the Nazarene, and NCM comes alongside local expressions of compassion to compliment, support, and strengthen efforts on behalf of the Church of the Nazarene.

*“Compassion is  
part of the DNA  
of the Church  
of the Nazarene.”*



# APPROACH

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*In keeping with the spirit of the compassionate efforts in and through local Nazarene congregations, as well as best practices in ministries of compassion, NCM endeavors to be led through the following five values:*

## **Church-Led**

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries exists in and through the church. NCM partners with local congregations, supporting them in their efforts to serve others, create change in their communities, and point people toward the love of God through Christ. Because local churches are engaged in their communities, they understand the needs of their neighbors, and because local churches are not leaving after a specific program or project is started, the work they do through the support of NCM becomes sustainable.

## **Holistic**

Poverty is complex. It includes the lack of material or financial resources, but it's far more than that. To get at the root causes of poverty, we have to address the spiritual, relational, and systemic aspects that keep people trapped in poverty. A holistic approach to community development works toward physical, relational, and spiritual wholeness for individuals and communities.

## **Child-Focused**

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries recognizes the importance of children as individuals who have value and dignity because they are each created in God's image. NCM works to enable children to become the people God created them to be. In order to accomplish this, we address children's specific needs, such as stability, education, food, and clean water. Because we recognize that the children are part of a larger context, we also address their overall situations, including the condition of their families and communities.

## **Community-Based**

As people who are made in God's image, community members have dignity, value, and capacity to create change themselves. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries equips churches to work alongside community members to develop their own communities and address their own situations and challenges.

## **Transformational**

The goal of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries' work goes beyond community development projects and humanitarian assistance. Our goal is to see individual and communal transformation in and through Christ. Our faith is the heart of who we are, what we do, and how we work. We affirm the work of God as the cornerstone of transformation.

# THEOLOGY OF COMPASSION

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Our perspective on living out compassion is rooted in the Church of the Nazarene's Wesleyan understanding of holistic mission. We are sent by God the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into the world to love and serve the Lord. We believe that the Father is already working by the power of the Spirit in each person's life, and we are called to come alongside this good work. True evangelism brings the call and commitment of entering into and getting involved in the lives of those around us. In the name of Jesus, we draw near to suffering and brokenness, and we seek to bring healing, hope, peace, and love to persons who are in need, marginalized, and vulnerable.

As a ministry within the Church of the Nazarene, we "affirm that churches should faithfully respond to the impulse of God's holy love by working for God's reign to be ever more visible" (The *Manual*, Section 920). Therefore, as the body of Christ we are compelled to see, hear, and respond to broken and hurting humanity in the same way God does. We seek to invest all of the resources available to us to alleviate human suffering and seek God's plans of restoration, wholeness, salvation, and peace in and for the world. We seek in all we do to help fulfill the Lord's mission and bring glory to God (Micah 6:8).

Compassion is part of our DNA; it is who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ.

For more on the Church of the Nazarene's understanding of compassion, see the section on [Purposeful Compassion](#) in Nazarene Essentials. For more on the history of NCM, see [History](#).

*"As the body of Christ we are compelled to see, hear, and respond to broken and hurting humanity in the same way God does."*



# GUIDELINES FOR COMPASSIONATE MINISTRY INITIATIVES

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Our aim is to see churches living out compassion in ways that bring lasting change in the lives of individuals and that of the wider community. Every church, no matter how small, has the ability to live compassionately and extend love and hope to those around them. Below are guidelines that we see as important for designing compassionate ministry initiatives that will address the causes of human suffering and bring about lasting change.

## **Guideline 1: Address the causes, not the symptoms**

Recognizing that human need has many forms, every project should promote meaningful, long-term improvement in human well-being.

Different forms of human need:

- Hope, joy and purpose in life; connection with others and with God; community (spiritual)
- Freedom from gender inequality, racism, sectarianism (equality)
- Income or savings to meet daily needs (financial)
- Educational opportunities (educational)
- Mental health, trauma-care (psychological)
- Basic healthcare, sanitation, nutrition, clean water, shelter (physical)
- [Basic human rights](#)
- Emergency relief and disaster preparedness
- Care for creation (environment/nature)

For more on some of these needs, see the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#), which NCM fully supports.

Guiding questions to help you:

- Which type(s) of human need is this project aimed at addressing?
- Does this project target the symptoms of the need identified or the causes of that need?
- What are the underlying causes of the human need that you hope to address?

- Will addressing the causes meet (or mitigate) the need(s) both now and in the future?
- Will the project have a positive and visible outcome for your community?

## Guideline 2: Understand the strengths and the needs of the local church and community

Every community and individual has an existing base of strengths, competencies and coping mechanisms. For any community assessment it is key to understand the existing strengths within the community. This will become particularly important when it comes to designing interventions that will be built on these strengths.

When researching needs within a community, it is important to approach a diverse group of people, ensuring different perspectives on the problem in the community and ways it could be addressed.

Guiding questions to help you:

- What strengths, skills, and competencies exist in your church?
- What strengths, skills, and competencies already exist in the community?
- What have you learned about the community need and the existing strengths and resources that could help address the problem?
- How will this project build on the strengths, skills, and competencies of the community?
- What sources of information did you use to learn these things?
- What are other agencies, organizations, or community groups already doing? Is partnering with others a possibility that will strengthen the work?

Resources: [Understanding Strengths and Needs](#) (Basic), [Participatory Assessment Summary](#) (Advanced)



### **Guideline 3: Work together *with* the community to bring about change**

Healthy and sustainable community development work is dependent on genuine participation from those benefiting from the initiative. Community members with diverse perspectives should be actively involved in identifying the need, choosing strategies to address the need, and reviewing how well the project improves the situation.

Guiding questions to help you:

- How have you engaged the surrounding community and local church in identifying local needs and choosing a strategy to address those needs?
- How will the local church and local community be involved in implementing the initiative?
- How will the local church and local community be involved in reviewing the project impact?

Resources: [Church/Community Participation](#) (Basic),  
[Church and Community Mobilization Resource](#) (Advanced)

### **Guideline 4: Ensure the mission and vision is in line with mission and vision of the church**

Vision and mission are the essence of the organization's beliefs and values that defines its place in the world and long-term direction.

Guiding questions to help you:

What is the vision and mission of...

- The local church? District? Field? Region?
- How does the project align with the vision and mission of the global Church of the Nazarene?

Resources: [NCM's Mission](#), [Church of the Nazarene's Mission](#)

***“Every church, no matter how small, has the ability to live compassionately and extend love and hope to those around them.”***

## Guideline 5: Clearly define the transformation that is needed to achieve your vision for a better future

Setting good objectives is essential for effective compassionate ministry initiatives—this is how you will ensure the project is designed to bring about transformation and how you will measure the success of the project.

Imagine the ideal future for your community, including vulnerable people in the community, and the local church.

- What will life look like if everyone works together to address the gaps and needs that you have identified?
- What changes are represented within this vision for the future?

*Note: Material items may help to bring about changes, but they are not changes in themselves. Many different strategies can lead to the same change. If your vision for the future is described in terms of material items, ask yourself what changes in condition or situation you hope these items will bring.*

- Which of these changes will you pursue through this project?

Rewrite your selected changes or transformations as SMART Objectives to ensure that the intended changes can easily be recognized and measured.

*“Imagine the ideal future for your community, including vulnerable people in the community and the local church.”*



S	Specific	Simply written and clearly defines what will be done. Describes who, what, where, how, and why of the intended change. Who is involved? What will be accomplished? Where, how, why?
M	Measurable	Gives measures for providing tangible evidence of completion. Describes how much or how many. How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached?
A	Attainable	Challenging, but realistic given available knowledge, skills, and abilities. Motivates by challenging without being defeating. Is this change possible? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the skills, abilities, and resources needed to accomplish it?
R	Relevant	Measure worthwhile results and effects of effort. Measures transformation and change, not just activities and action. What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing this goal? What is the result of the goal?
T	Time-bound	Linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency. Outlines deadlines and timeframes for completion. What is the planned completion date?

Resources: [SMART Objectives](#), [Activity—Envisioning a Future](#)

### **Guideline 6: Research best practices and make sure they are relevant to your context**

To have lasting impact, compassionate ministry initiatives should abide by best practices. In other words, the initiative should use techniques and approaches that are proven to be successful.

Guiding questions to help you:

- What are the current best practices in this program area?
- How have others successfully addressed the problem your initiative intends to address?
- How will this project improve upon approaches that have previously been utilized?  
Why are these adaptations expected to improve the effectiveness of the approach?

## Guideline 7: Make a plan for monitoring the work and measuring its impact

Measuring changes and tracking activities provide valuable information for learning how to improve projects and demonstrating their effectiveness. To do this successfully, it is critical to outline a clear plan for what information is needed, how it will be collected, and how it will be used.

1. Begin by outlining the activities that will be done to achieve each SMART Objective (see [Guideline 5](#)).

### ***Example:***

***SMART Objective 1:*** 75% of the most vulnerable families (homeless, orphans, widows, disabled) in Community X will have enough food for each person in the household to consume three meals per day and a diverse diet at all times within one year of home gardening training.

*Activity 1* Train 100 vulnerable families in home gardening techniques.

*Activity 2* Provide home garden start up inputs (seeds and tools) to 100 vulnerable families.

*Activity 3* Home gardens are established by 90 vulnerable families that received training and inputs.

*Activity 4* Provide monthly coaching visits to 90 vulnerable families that established home gardens.



2. Define an indicator for *each* SMART Objective and *every* activity. An indicator defines “what” will be measured in a way that can be standardized and compared to show changes in status over time.

**Examples:**

*Percent of targeted vulnerable families that consume three meals per day*

*Percent of targeted vulnerable families that consume a diverse diet*

*Number of vulnerable families that complete the full training course on home gardening techniques*

*Number of vulnerable families that received the home garden start up inputs package*

*Number of targeted vulnerable families that established home gardens*

*Number of vulnerable families with home gardens who are visited to provide monthly coaching*

3. Choose a method or tool for “how” to gather information needed to calculate the value of each indicator.

**Examples:**

*Household food consumption questionnaires*

*Home gardening training attendance records*

*Home gardening inputs distribution records*

*Agricultural coach home visit checklist*

4. Decide “when” the information will be collected, “who” will gather it, and how it will be used.
  - Indicators that evaluate whether SMART Objectives have been achieved should be measured at least twice: (a) before the project begins to establish the baseline, or current status of the identified community need, (b) at the end of the project to show the status of the need after the project has been implemented. Comparing measurements from the beginning and end of a project shows the change that has occurred while the project was being implemented.
  - Indicators that monitor activities should be tracked regularly (examples include monthly or quarterly) to show progress against the project plan in time for project team meetings and quarterly reports.

Guiding questions to help you:

1. Have you established a baseline for measuring the impact of your project?
2. How will you know you have reached your goals? What indicators will you use to measure this?
3. How will you collect information to verify these indicators? Who will collect this information?
4. How will you record and measure your project's progress along the way?
5. How will you use regularly collected information to improve the project?

**Guideline 8: Develop a realistic and accurate budget that includes contributions from the local church and community**

NCM recognizes the need for the local church and community to take ownership of the initiative. As such, NCM will only supplement the local church/community's financial and in-kind support of the project. Local contributions can be financial or in-kind. Examples of in-kind contributions include material items, seeds, livestock, use of assets, volunteering time or expertise. Local contributions should be significant and in line with the local church's and community's ability to support the project.

Guiding questions to help you:

- What financial and in-kind contributions will be made by the local church or local community?
- Is this project the most cost-effective way to address community needs?
- Are we creating dependency on external funds?



*“Examples of in-kind contributions include material items, seeds, livestock, use of assets, volunteering time or expertise.”*

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR NCM FUNDING

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## 1. General Project Proposals

To apply for NCM funding for an initiative in your area, you will need to follow the guidelines below and submit a project proposal, budget, and work plan using the following templates:

[Proposal](#)

[Budget/Work plan](#)

## 2. Project Approvals

In order for a project to receive NCM funding, there must be approvals from the local Church Board, District Superintendent and Field Strategy Coordinator before a Regional NCM Coordinator can submit to NCM International. Regional NCM Coordinators must do this in conjunction with relevant Regional protocol.

## 3. Project Agreement Letter

Once a project is approved, the person responsible for the project must sign a [Project Agreement Letter](#) on behalf of the project. The Project Agreement Letter outlines the time-frame, project budget, reporting schedule, as well as commitments to abide by [NCM Fund Usage Policy](#), [Media Consent Policy](#), and [Child Protection Policy](#) (where applicable).

## 4. Child Protection

NCM is child-focused in its approach and is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children. Any project that serves children, or involves children in any capacity, must abide by NCM's [Child Protection Policy](#). This requires all those working with children to receive training on the Child Protection Policy and sign the commitment form, which should be kept on file.

## 5. Fund Usage

As stewards of church finances, we are committed to handling funds with utmost care. The [Fund Usage Policy](#) was established to protect the human, goodwill, and tangible resources of the Church of the Nazarene, as well as the dignity of our beneficiaries and the integrity of donations to the church. The objective is to ensure that our financial resources provide maximum effectiveness in mobilizing the church and meeting the objectives of our ministry—as well as ensuring that individuals and ministries handling NCM funds have clear guidance on appropriate fund usage.

*“Let the Church of the Nazarene be true to its commission; not great and elegant buildings; but to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and wipe away the tears of sorrowing...”*

— *Phineas Bresee* —

## 6. Media Consent Policy

We are committed to protecting the dignity and privacy of all those involved in NCM projects and strive to have adequate consent for any story, video, or image used in our communications. Everyone is entitled to privacy and the right to be informed and give consent for their story or image to be used in promotion or story-telling. As such, we require all projects to abide by NCM’s [Media Consent Policy](#).

## 7. Project Reporting

Reporting is an essential part of understanding the impact of projects. It has value for those implementing projects and is critical for NCM International to demonstrate that funds are spent in accordance with the agreed plans. There are two types of reporting required for any project:

[Narrative Reports](#)

[Financial Reports](#) – Requirements for financial reports are found in [NCM Fund Usage Policy](#)

Reports should be sent according to the agreement made when project is approved.

# OTHER PROGRAM TYPES

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## 1. Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response

NCM walks alongside churches in responding to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, and drought, as well as disasters caused by humans, such as conflict. Our aim is to help churches respond quickly and efficiently in serving the most vulnerable—as well as promoting effective disaster preparedness and mitigation. See [NCM's Guidelines for Disaster Management](#).

To apply for funding for Emergency Response you will need to complete the following template:

[Emergency Response Proposal](#)

[Emergency Response Budget](#)

NCM values the humanitarian principles and guidelines put forth in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent [Code of Conduct](#) and the internationally recognized SPHERE Standards [handbook](#) for delivery of humanitarian relief. Where possible, we encourage church-led humanitarian relief to abide by these principles and standards.

## 2. Holistic Child Development

As a child-focused ministry, one of our main program areas is Holistic Child Development (HCD), asserting that churches can play a key role in the healthy development of children in their communities. NCM's Holistic Child Development model offers church leadership a guide for simultaneously addressing key aspects of a child's life—spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, and relational. We also recognize the value of the families and communities surrounding the children, and support the health and empowerment of both for sustainable impact and stability for the children as they grow. For more on HCD, see the [Child Development Manual](#).



Should a church need assistance beyond the resources of the local church and community for their child development ministry to meet the needs of the children, churches can apply for Child Sponsorship support by completing the following templates:

[Child Protection Policy](#)

[CDC Proposal Template](#)

[CDC Budget Template](#)

All HCD proposals should be submitted to your Regional HCD Coordinator.

### 3. Water Sanitation and Hygiene

NCM's Water supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Program centers on behavior change and sustainability through equipping and empowering local communities and congregations. NCM focuses on mobilizing congregations, individuals and institutions toward collective actions to improve WASH practices. The program adopts both need-based and demand-led approaches, including provision of safe water through practical methods relevant to the context, services focused on environmental sanitation, and public health and hygiene promotion to reduce the occurrence of water-related diseases. General Proposal templates are used to communicate ideas and projects for support.

[Sphere Handbook for WASH](#)

[WASH in Emergencies Assessment Tool](#)



# OTHER KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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## 1. Evangelism

NCM exists within the Church of the Nazarene and shares the mission of “Making Christlike Disciples in the Nations.” However, NCM projects should practice great sensitivity and respect when serving people from other faiths or people who do not hold religious beliefs. As Nazarenes, we believe in prevenient grace and that God is at work in all people, drawing them to God. We participate in God’s mission of restoring the world through acts of compassion, justice, and love. We recognize that compassionate ministry initiatives serve some of the most vulnerable populations in our world and we should never exploit people’s vulnerability through insensitive proclamation of the Christian message of hope.

## 2. Gender

Women and men are equal in God’s sight. However, we live in a world in which women and girls are disproportionately affected by injustice and poverty. NCM emphasizes the importance of working specifically to support women and girl’s empowerment, recognizing that the church has a role to play in challenging gender inequality. At times this means deliberately focusing on women and girls, both as leaders and as people who will be served through a project.

## 3. Environment

As Christians we believe we are to be good stewards of creation, recognizing God’s intention to restore all things. We encourage all compassionate ministry initiatives to give serious consideration to the environment in their planning. This includes mitigating any negative environmental impacts of projects and working with populations to adapt to and mitigate effects of climate change, as well cutting down on carbon emissions and reducing the use of non-recyclable items, harmful pesticides and fertilizers, etc.

*“We participate in God’s mission of restoring the world through acts of compassion, justice, and love.”*

#### 4. Vulnerable Groups

Our aim is to care for people regardless of religion, worldview, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation. We seek to care for all people, not only Nazarenes. Our decisions should be based on human need alone. We place special emphasis on caring for those who are most vulnerable—including children, differently-abled (people living with disabilities) and the elderly.

#### 5. Advocacy and Communications

By partnering with local churches as they live out their calling to be the hands and feet of Christ to a world in need, NCM is well positioned to hear stories of holistic transformation and share them with the global church. These stories are tangible examples of what it looks like to make Christlike disciples in the nations. It is important that we all work together in gathering these transformational stories that may be shared as both an encouragement and a calling to the church around the world to engage in ministries of compassion.

#### 6. Gifts-in-Kind (Shipments of Material Goods)

The use of Gifts-In-Kind (GIKs) can be a very effective way of supporting church-based compassionate ministry efforts around the world. It can also be an excellent way to mobilize local congregations—either through the sending of GIKs or the implementation of projects on the ground. However, the effectiveness of GIKs is determined by a number of factors and [NCM's Gifts-in-Kind Policy](#) aims to set out NCM's understanding of best practices when it comes to shipping of relief/development items both domestically and internationally.

#### 7. Laity and Clergy Involvement

NCM strongly encourages the involvement of both laity and clergy in the design, implementation and evaluation of NCM projects. NCM responsibilities should be determined based on gifting and competency. We encourage the involvement and empowerment of gifted lay people, recognizing that God often works through laypeople in serving the most vulnerable populations of the world.

***“NCM strongly encourages the involvement of both laity and clergy in the design, implementation and evaluation of NCM projects.”***

## 8. Integrity

NCM values integrity in all decision-making and strongly discourages all forms of nepotism. Nepotism is the practice of rewarding family and friends with benefits of projects, such as jobs, project services, business contracts etc. There are times when personal connections (Related Party Transactions) can benefit the church, but great care must be taken to ensure this is done with transparency. See [NCM Fund Usage Policy](#).

## 9. Partnerships

NCM values partnerships and recommends working with others with shared interests to achieve our goals. We are stronger when we work together with others and NCM recommends researching who is already active in your area and whether partnering would be helpful. NCM International partners with several other organizations and networks that can also benefit local churches. For more on NCM's partners see [here](#).

# QUICK GUIDE: NCM STANDARDS

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NCM aims to:

- Support local churches—NCM does not initiate projects, we respond to the initiatives of the local churches and our partners
- Support Nazarenes *and* non-Nazarenes—our aim is to care for people regardless of religion, worldview, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation. Selection of beneficiaries should be based on human need alone and beneficiaries should never be expected to attend church or Bible studies in order to receive support
- Encourage local churches and districts to meet individual medical needs. NCM does **not** fund such things as surgeries and medication for individual cases
- Encourage churches to support activities that encourage healthy development of children including orphans in their communities, however NCM does **not** fund orphanages
- Support relief distributions (food, clothes, hygiene items) **only** in emergency situations
- Support churches assisting people in tangible ways to meet their food, water, health, and education needs. NCM's priority is **not** in the funding of buildings or construction repairs.

# SELECTED RESOURCES

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For more resources from NCM, see the *resources* tab on NCM's [website](#).

In addition, here is a list of [Selected Resources](#) in the areas of community development and humanitarian response, including websites, books, journals, and courses at Nazarene educational institutions.

