Capacity Statement
Introduction

Founded in 2004, by a US citizen of Cameroon origin, Nascent Solutions (aka Nascent) is an Africa focused women-led humanitarian and development organizations dedicated to building the capacity of less privileged people in rural Africa to attain self-sufficiency. The Vision of the organization is a self-reliant, poverty free Africa. Nascent’s major areas of focus are education, basic health food and nutrition security, gender equity and Good governance.

Foundational Principles

The foundational principles and Values of the organization include: Stretching donor dollars, hiring and training qualified local staff to leverage their knowledge to build ownership, recruiting female professional to better address the needs of women and children and integrating processes of accountability and transparency, to ensure efficient utilization of project resources.
Our Core Values

- Respect for beneficiary opinion and participation
- Seeking and cultivating Real Partnerships, that have the beneficiary at heart.
- Promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making

Strategic Approach

Africa’s development challenges are complex and interconnected, consequently, isolated or piece-meal interventions would not bring sustainable change for an aspiring self-reliant continent. To contribute to a transformative African continent Nascent believes that the holistic, integrated approach to the challenges of poverty could facilitate the change process.

System Thinking, refers to approaches and tools that enhance the understanding of how existing structures interact with their environment and influence each other. This approach is a shift from conventional development paradigms, which is to a large extent, are fragmented in their response to problem. Traditional development approaches are driven by pre-conceived ideas that fail to adequately consider the local context. The systems approach, on the other hand, looks at the big picture and allows implementers and their local partners to analyze the interrelatedness of the ever-changing and unique challenges in a particular spatial and temporal setting. Nascent appreciate that fact that this approach thrives on locally driven initiatives which are iterative and adaptive, informed by continuous learning and feedback loops. The ideas are context-specific with integrated perspectives that are in tandem with the local dynamic. This approach is reflected Nascent’s education, food security, gender, maternal and child health programs, which are designed to build sustainable and resilient communities. The design taps on Africa’s hidden talent which engineers locally creativity and entrepreneurial skills for transformed and sustainable communities.
Focus and Practice Areas

Education

Teacher Training
Vocational Education
Adult Literacy
ICT Training
Early Grade Reading
Girls Education

Gender Equity

Women’s Empowerment
Youth Empowerment
Child Safety
Prevention of SGBV
SGBV Victims and Survivor Support
Food Security and Nutrition

Climate Smart Agriculture
Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture
Soil Health
Crop Care
Post-Harvest Management

Basic Health

Maternal and Child Health
Reproductive Health
Water Sanitation and Hygiene
Organizational Competencies

Nascent’s accomplishments over the last fourteen years, especially in Cameroon have been the result of a combination of the rigorous prequalification of staff that enables us to identify professionals with relevant technical expertise and the experience in development and program management. Our strategic planning and risk management skills enable us to respond with agility to unforeseen circumstances.

Leadership and Managerial Skills

Nascent has built a sterling and jealously maintained reputation for integrity, a strong belief in its mission and the values that guide its thinking. These attributes have strengthened the organization’s ability to persuade others to join in its efforts to bring long lasting relief to the easily forgotten communities of rural Africa. Nascent Solutions sees effective communication not only as a process of informing others, but the ability to seek information and build consensus. Nascent Solutions’ leadership believes that trust and respect engender a positive team spirit and fosters the emergence of real partners. Its flexibility and adaptability enable it to incorporate multiple perspectives into its development programming.

Resource Mobilization and Management

Nascent Solutions’ staff have learned to leverage their experience, research, consulting and program development skills to write proposals and organize other fundraising activities that have generated over $80 million in cash and kind resources over these years. These include 13 US Government grants, one sub-award grant, and donations from US foundations and
charities. These resources have been complemented by in-kind materials and services contributed by local government agencies, traditional leaders, as well as technical services and unskilled labor donated by our partner organizations, volunteers, and target communities.

Nascent has demonstrated the capability to manage both human and materials resources through properly identifying the technical and social skills of the staff and aligning them with the needs of target communities and ensuring effective communication and flow of information optimizes personnel output. Proper budgeting ensures effective and efficient handling of the organization’s financial resources, commodities and the use and maintenance of equipment and supplies. Developing accurate activity schedules and sequencing of activities enable Nascent to track project activities and ensures that donors and stakeholders are updated in a timely manner.

Grant Management

Nascent Solutions has managed grants from diverse donors. Our grant management processes are open and transparent to set standards for staff and local partners in best practices of managing grant resources, making sure they go to the intended beneficiaries. Our grant management staff undergo rigorous and continued professional development trainings.

Financial Management

Nascent’s management of donor funds is characterized by stretching every dollar as far as it can go while remaining effective. Within the first 15 years of operations, Nascent was able to leverage its strong partnerships in the US and in the field to raise and manage over $80 million in cash and kind to support its operations. The organization’s accounting system is consistent with federal standards that require rigorous book-keeping and accountability.

Networking and Partnership Building

Nascent Solutions strives to address development challenges from a holistic and multi-dimensional perspective. Collaboration and linkage with governments and partners enhances synergies and eliminates duplication and waste.
Workforce

Through a transparent merit-based recruitment process and tools, Nascent has put together a 54-person workforce. This includes 8 full-time employees in the home office of senior and mid-level professionals, with technical knowledge and development experience in Agriculture, Public Health, Nutrition, Gender, Education, Grant Management, Finance and Monitoring and Evaluation. These HQ staff backstop field staff and operations in the target countries and support field and partner staff.

Capacity Building

Informed by in-depth learning needs analysis, Nascent’s capacity building and training team develops user-friendly adult and children’s curricula and materials that are scalable and adaptable to various delivery platforms, including the traditional face-to-face instruction, technology supported learning, hands-on farmer field and cooking demonstrations, Positive Deviance/Hearth (PD/ Hearth) and building beneficiaries’ resilience to future shocks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Nascent considers monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of organizational development and instruments of quality control. Its M & E team builds simple and ready to-use tools and procedures into its programs, and trains Nascent and partner staff to use the tools to monitor and collect program information. The team develops a system that facilitates the use of M&E information to enhance implementation and inform decision-making.
Risk Management Planning

Implementing programs in poor, remote areas in Africa that often lack basic infrastructure is a daunting challenge. Research and in-depth knowledge of the target regions has enabled us to stock up strategies and mechanisms that strengthen its resilience and adaptive programing skills which are handy when unanticipated circumstances emerge. Nascent maintains up to date Risk management tools to support its risk identification, assessment, response planning, and risk monitoring and control throughout the phases of the project. A case in point is the Cameroon teacher’s strike that resulted in the closure of schools for a greater part of the 2016-2017 school years in the English-speaking parts of the country. The timely consultation with USDA enabled Nascent to develop and implement an adaptive mobile reading program that ensured that children did not fall back in their literacy learning. Other decisions such as the expansion of the take home rations ensured that donated program commodities were all consumed within the use-by dates.

Stakeholder Management

Recognizing that influencing change requires active engagement of the target beneficiaries, Nascent invests significant resources in cultivating and growing local ownership for all its interventions. This requires effective identification and understanding of, and engaging beneficiaries and stakeholders at all levels, from design to evaluations. This competence has strengthened Nascent’s rapport with various agencies of the United States Government (USG) and enabled the organization to raise and manage over $80 million in cash and in-kind resources to support its operations in close to 15 years. Nascent maintains constant communications with the USG and its regional and local agencies in its target countries. It consults regularly, forging partnerships with the relevant key agencies of its host governments, which has yielded support and facilitated program implementation. Nascent considers the target beneficiary communities as its strongest allies. Their participation in program needs analysis, the indigenous qualitative information and practical strategies they contribute towards program design gives a unique slant to Nascent’s proposals.

Gender Mainstreaming

Nascent’s approach to gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Its programming ensures equitable distribution of opportunity, resources and benefits to both men and women. Gender is integrated into all aspects of development programming -- from project design to implementation and evaluation, and data is gender desegregated.
Governance

Over the last 15 years Nascent has appreciated the understanding that effective use of donor resources is enhanced when beneficiaries understand the concept and benefits of good governance practices and processes in management. Beneficiary participation, together with transparent and accountable management, engenders ownership and broader community support. The absence of these factors results in loss of trust and conflict. It is against this backdrop that Nascent mainstreams governance in all its humanitarian and development interventions.
Our Achievements and Impact

With the continual support from the United States Government through agencies such as United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) Nascent has in the last 15 years developed and successfully implemented numerous programs that have benefited over 10 million less-privileged people in Cameroon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. Through competitive grants, Nascent has raised over $60 million in cash and in-kind and collaborated with government and partners in its target countries to impact the lives of over 30 Million vulnerable people in rural Africa. Some of our specific milestones are:

- Served over 60,000,000 hot meals to school-age children
- Supported over 56,000 food insecure households
- Provided medical equipment and supplies worth $185,000 worth to local health clinics
- Supported over 250,000 orphans, widows and disable persons supported
- Trained over 10,000 women in small-business development
- Trained over 10,000 boys and girls of survival skills
- Supported over 250,000 internally displaced persons and refugee families
- Reached over 400,000 households with malaria-control interventions
- Reached over 100,000 heads of household with education human trafficking and child enslavement
- Supported the nutrition of over 20,000 people living with HIV/AIDS
- Trained over 15,000 teachers trained on improved teachings methods
- Trained over 50,000 parents on improved farming and pastoral practices
- Trained over 20,000 women on safe food handling and good dietary practices
- Constructed over 50 boreholes and more than 400 hand-washing stations
- Strengthened the capacity of over 800 government officials and community leaders on good governance
- Supported 40,000+ children in a warzone to continue to read at home in via a mobile reading program