

## Training for civil society organisations aims to enhance operational skills and improve performance

NIRAS contributes to the Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) with the development and implementation of innovative and interactive trainings for Ugandan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

**#4** Quality education

**#8** Decent work and economic growth

**#16** Peace, justice and strong institutions

**#17** Partnerships for the goals



The team is preparing educational interviews for the e-Learning courses. The interviews are professionally recorded and included at the beginning of each learning session.



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During the last two decades, civil society organisations (CSOs) have experienced exponential growth in Uganda. Despite their increasing number, CSOs' influence and participation in political processes are often restricted and instead their role is often limited to service delivery. In many cases, limitations on CSO outreach is compounded by insufficient capacity. In 2018, the Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) was launched to address this.

CUSP focuses on three action areas:

- Strengthening an enabling environment for civil society,
- Improving civil society participation, and
- Strengthening service delivery and advocacy of CSOs.

To achieve these goals, CUSP supports both state and non-state actors at national and sub-national level to promote a productive dialogue on the role of civil society and integrate civil society perspectives more effectively into policy processes. The programme has a strong focus on technical assistance and capacity development both of CSOs and relevant state institutions.

"The EU believes in the strong role CSOs play for any country's development. The CUSP programme will leverage CSOs' contributions and their complementarity to Government and private sector-led interventions towards the objective of 'contributing to reduced poverty through better governance,'" said European Union Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Attilio Pacifici.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: [kampala.diplo.de/ug-en/aktuelles/-/2100904](http://kampala.diplo.de/ug-en/aktuelles/-/2100904)

### Training to strengthen operating skills

NIRAS was contracted in March 2019 to support GIZ in the implementation of CUSP's training component to increase the capacity of Ugandan CSOs in eight pre-defined topics:

- Resource mobilisation;
- Internal governance;
- Lobbying and advocacy;
- Leadership;
- Mainstreaming;
- Result-based management;
- Financial management; and
- Computer skills.

While initially standardised in-classroom trainings for nation-wide implementation were developed, NIRAS switched to a blended learning approach during COVID-19 to facilitate continuous learning progress even during nationwide restrictions.

The blended learning approach combines interactive e-learning sessions (6 hours/week), which include educational interviews, diverse explanations, tools and tests. The e-learning sessions are hosted on the GIZ digital learning platform atingi ([www.atingi.org](http://www.atingi.org)). In addition to working through the online content, participants are asked to submit weekly practical tasks that must be done offline to apply the new theoretical knowledge. In addition, the NIRAS team of-



In total, at least 1.200 people should be trained by NIRAS by 12/2021

**Donor**  
EU and BMZ

**Client**  
GIZ

**Location**  
Uganda

**Contract value**  
€ 2,404,226

**Duration**  
March 2019-Dec 2021



“This has been one of my most enriching and practical courses I have done in recent years. It’s very relevant, challenging and empowering. [...] it has enriched my work as a chief executive of a growing organization, accredited trainer and a mentor.”

**Feedback from e-learning course participant**

fers offline/in-person 1-on-1 coaching and feedback to the weekly tasks from training professionals and weekly consulting hours for participants to discuss individual or organisational challenges.

one-on-one mentoring with an experienced trainer who they can contact to ask questions about whatever issue their own CSO is currently facing and get immediate feedback;



The team comprises 24 team members: 3 international long-term experts, 2 Ugandan communication experts, 4 Ugandan team assistants, 6 Ugandan trainers, 1 Ugandan proof-reader, 6 international short-term experts and 2 national short-term experts

**Advantages of blended learning**

While NIRAS is aware, that the online-trainings are not the best solution for everyone - especially for CSOs in rural areas with little or no access to IT equipment and a rather weak internet connection - the offering of online trainings is the only feasible and COVID-safe solution in the meantime. It has several advantages for the participants.



Overall, 47% of the course finishers are female.

- 1. **Practice-oriented trainings:** experimental learning where participants have the chance to learn by doing;
- 2. **Real-life coaching:** participants receive

- 3. **Learn how to learn:** Introduction of learning diary and professional self-reflection on learning styles and personal time management through online coaching and telephone service;



On average, the e-learning courses have a completion rate of 71.7%

- 4. **Uganda-specific customised content:** Case studies and exercises are taken from the Ugandan context;
- 5. **Peer to peer learning:** Participants have the chance to learn from each other. They can connect with each other, share ideas and discuss solutions to challenges.