



Empowering People, Driving Equality: NIRAS Human Rights and Gender Expertise

At NIRAS, human rights are not an afterthought – they are the heartbeat of everything we do. We know that true sustainability is more than growth; it is justice, dignity, and progress that reaches everyone, everywhere. Through gender-sensitive, transformative, and rights-based approaches, we don't just respond to inequality – we tackle its roots. We empower people and institutions to rise, to lead, and to build societies where diversity is celebrated, inclusion is the norm, and dignity is non-negotiable.

Human Rights at the Core

Across the globe, inequalities rooted in socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability continue to deny people their fundamental rights. At NIRAS, we believe that tackling inequality requires more than policy reform – it demands transformative change driven by a Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA) that puts people at the centre of development.

Across more than 119 Gender and Human Rights projects in the past decade, we have worked with governments, civil society, and communities worldwide to:

- · Advance equality through HRBA,
- Strengthen institutions and empower marginalised groups,

- Challenge harmful norms and safeguard against exploitation,
- Promote diversity and inclusion through practical, transformative change.

Our experts apply internationally recognised human rights standards, international humanitarian law, and nexus approaches that connect humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.



Our mission is simple but urgent: to build a world where dignity, equality, and human rights are not aspirations but lived realities.

Our HRBA ensures that every intervention is guided by the principles of:



Non-discrimination – safeguarding rights for all, especially the most marginalised,



Accountability – holding governments and institutions responsible,



Participation – ensuring people are not only heard but also empowered,

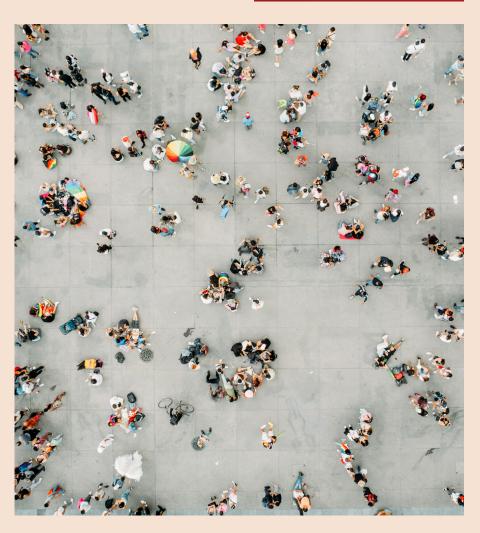


Equality – building fair systems that open opportunities to everyone.





Human rights are not abstract ideals – they are the foundation of sustainable, inclusive societies.



Fulfilment of human rights: our approach

At NIRAS, we pride ourselves on our extensive experience in human rights and our commitment to integrating these principles into all aspects of our work. Our staff are experts in using the following approaches, which complement our commitment to HRBA: We ensure that our development programmes focus on capacitating the marginalised and excluded groups, emphasising participation and fulfilling accountability and non-discrimination.

NIRAS' Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): EDI is integrated in all our projects and at the workplace where everyone feels valued and empowered. The company's EDI strategy is guided by its commitment to human rights, the UN Global Compact, the Diversity Pledge and the Women's Empowerment Principles. NIRAS has set a fiveyear EDI framework, supported by a global policy, an international reference group and a team of internal champions to drive progress and share good practices across its offices.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus: We integrate the HDP nexus approach, focussing on collaboration and integration of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts in crisis, post-crisis situations and fragile states. This ensures a comprehensive response to complex challenges, fostering sustainable development and peace.

Natural Rights and Legal

Approaches: We recognise the inherent and universal nature of human rights, while also adhering to legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to protect these rights.

International Humanitarian Law

(IHL): We adhere to IHL principles, which aim to limit the effects of armed conflict by protecting those not participating in hostilities and regulating the means and methods of warfare and fragility.

Risk Management Frameworks:

We have significant experience in the development of risk management frameworks. We understand the

importance of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to ensure the success and sustainability of rights we fulfil in our projects. Our risk management frameworks are tailored to address the unique human rights challenges of each project, unveiling opportunities, incorporating best practices, and international standards to safeguard against potential threats to human rights and programming.

Human Rights-Focussed

Education: We use education as a powerful tool to promote human rights by implementing inclusive, human rights-focussed education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. These initiatives aim to ensure that marginalised groups, especially girls and women, are not left behind.

Media Self-Regulation: At NIRAS, we actively protect freedom of expression and support media self-regulation through legal safeguards, independent oversight and ethical journalism practices. We advocate for free speech, resist censorship and work to ensure journalists can operate without fear of threats or retaliation. Through self-regulatory frameworks, such as press councils and ethical guidelines, we promote responsible reporting while maintaining independence from external influence.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): We design CSR programmes that respect labour rights,

environmental sustainability and anti-corruption measures. Conduct human rights impact assessments in

business operations and ensure fair wages, safe working conditions and no child or forced labour in supply chains.

Ensure Digital Rights and Privacy:

Ensuring digital rights and privacy requires strong data protection policies, secure technology and user transparency. At NIRAS, we implement encryption, ethical AI and clear consent mechanisms while educating individuals on cybersecurity best practices. We also use accountability through governance, independent oversight and compliance monitoring, which are essential to upholding privacy and prevent data misuse.

International Monitoring and

Enforcement: We have extensive experience in international monitoring and enforcement to protect human rights. To date, NIRAS has completed over 1,000 monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) assignments worldwide, providing actionable insights to support scaled positive impacts for people and the planet. Our expertise spans various sectors, including governance and democracy, civil society support, gender and human rights and peace and security. NIRAS employs a mixed-methods approach in MEL, combining quantitative and qualitative data sources. We utilise cutting-edge data analytics and digital technology, ensuring contextsensitive and action-oriented MEL processes. We have high ethical standards and employ a utilisationfocussed approach.

Our MEL services

Gender Equality



Despite progress, at the current rate, full gender equality remains 134 years away, according to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2024. Gender parity remains a challenge in key areas like economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. Gender disparities persist in economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. Achieving gender equality is not just a fundamental right – it is essential for building a healthier, more prosperous, and sustainable society. It drives economic growth, improves healthcare, and benefits communities and children.

At NIRAS, we are committed to tackling gender disparities across all sectors working with and not just for communities - from infrastructure to social programmes – by promoting inclusion, reducing inequality, and advancing human rights. Achieving true equality requires nuanced, transformative solutions that address the complex ways inequality intersects with factors such as LGBTQIA+ identity, disability, age, religion, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, and migration status.

By embedding gender equality into everything we do, we work to break down barriers, empower marginalised communities, and create a future free from discrimination and prejudice. Through this commitment, NIRAS strives to build a more just, inclusive, and equitable world for all.

Key Tools and Methods We Apply

- · Gender Analysis to examine how policies and programmes affect people of different genders, identifying inequalities and designing targeted responses,
- · Policy Integration embedding gender perspectives into all policies and strategies to ensure equal benefits for all,
- · Inclusive Decision-Making that guarantees equal inclusive participation in decision-making at every level,
- · Resource Allocation directing resources in ways that actively promote gender equality and reduce disparities,
- · Monitoring & Evaluation where we use sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators, and participatory approaches to track progress, assess outcomes, and adjust interventions in real time,
- · Gender Budgeting transformative public finance tool that re-orients budgets to address gender inequalities. It helps governments allocate resources more equitably and close persistent gaps in areas such as education, employment, entrepreneurship, and public life.



Two complementary work streams for gender equality

We support our clients in integrating a gender equality throughout two complementary range of projects.



Gender-specific projects

These initiatives address the unique needs and challenges faced by a specific gender, often focusing on empowering women and girls through targeted programmes in health, education, economic development, employment, peace and stability, and political participation.



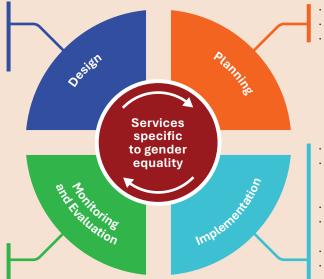
Gender mainstreaming

All our projects integrate a gender perspective into all stages of designing, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Our goal is to ensure that all regardless of sex and gender orientation have equal access to our initiatives, fostering systemic change and promoting equality across all genders.

Services

Our services cover the whole cycle of the project and programme management from design, planning, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation and learning.

- · Gender Statistics
- · Gender Analysis
- · Gender Impact assessment
- Gender Stakeholder Consultations



- · Gender Budgeting
- · Gender Procurement
- · Gender Indicators
- · Gender Capacity Development
- Gender-Responsive Change Management and Institutional Development
- · Gender Awareness Raising
- · Promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policies
- · Fund Management
- Facilitating of Gender-Focused Policy Dialogue

- Gender MonitoringGender Evaluation
- · Gender Learning events
- · Human Rights Statistics
- · Human rights Analysis
- Stakeholder Consultations and Engagement
- · Stakeholders Analysis
- · Conflict Analysis



- · Development of Action Plans
- · Human Rights Due Diligence
- · Human Right indicators
- Human Rights Strategy Development
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management Frameworks
- Remediation and Grievance Mechanisms
- $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Scoping studies on policies
- · Conflict sensitivity grants
- · Management policies and tools

- · Monitoring
- · Evaluation
- $\cdot \ Learning$
- · Reporting

- Human Rights Capacity development
- Change Management and Institutional Development
- · Capacity Building of CSOs on Human Rights and IHL
- · Grant Management
- Human Rights Awareness
 Raising
- Monitoring Human Rights Violations
- Promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies
- · Facilitating Policy Dialogue

Our Team

At NIRAS, our dedicated Gender and Human Rights Team brings together more than 67 in-house specialists. This team is reinforced by a global network of over 997 experts across 114 countries, ensuring both depth and reach in our work. This network observes disparities through diverse cultural lenses, allowing us to understand the multiple causes of injustice across different societal and economic layers. This helps us to exchange learnings and be inspired to contribute to the continuous improvement of gender equality and rights-based approaches in all our projects.

Team Expertise and Skills

- · Provide in-house experienced teams of respected professionals, highly skilled in managing complex projects and programmes,
- Inclusive development through the application of rights-based approaches, gender mainstreaming and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) across all sectors,
- Strong in-house capacity combined with long-term cooperation and easy access to thousands of relevant external gender and human rights-based approach experts,
- Extensive expertise in strengthening institutions and empowering civil society organisations by mainstreaming gender and social inclusion, promoting women's economic and political empowerment and human rights-based approach,
- · Experience in the work on prevention of violence against women (VAW),
- Global leaders on applying gender approaches to public financial management including gender-responsive budgeting and the emerging gender-responsive procurement,
- · Facilitation of training courses, workshops & seminars,
- Expertise in nexus issues and cross-cutting themes including women, peace and security, gender and the environment/climate change, equality in global health/SRHR etc.

Our team possesses essential skillsets needed to uphold human rights and IHL, including:



Across our global team, we have established a Gender and Human Rights network that spans various regions worldwide and comprises over **997** experts in **114** countries.

Research and Analytical Skills:

We conduct thorough research and data analysis to inform policies and understand human rights issues.

Intercultural Competence:

We respect and understand cultural differences, enabling us to work effectively with diverse groups.

Project Management:

Our project managers are skilled in planning, organising, and managing resources to implement effective human rights initiatives.

Empathy and Resilience:

Our team is equipped to handle traumatic situations with empathy and resilience, ensuring support for affected individuals.

Communication Skills:

Our experts excel in public speaking, writing, and interpersonal communication, crucial for advocacy and collaboration.

Selected references

Transforming Financial Inclusion for Women around the World



FUNDER KfW

DURATION 2024–2025

The Global Gender-Smart Fund – a \$500 million blended finance facility – works to close the funding gap faced by women and women-led businesses in developing markets. Its aim is to make gender equality a natural part of how financial institutions operate. Within this framework, NIRAS has supported banks and financial institutions to design and implement Gender Action Plans, improve workplace equality, and develop financial products tailored to women entrepreneurs. We have also introduced systems to collect and use sex-disaggregated data, helping partners track progress and adjust strategies. These efforts are reducing barriers to finance and creating fairer opportunities for women to grow their businesses and livelihoods.



Learn more here

Building Social Cohesion and Regional Development in Ukraine



FUNDER



DURATION 2022–2026

The Ukraine Cohesion and Regional Development (UCORD) project strengthens cooperation between citizens, businesses, and authorities to support inclusive recovery and development in Ukraine, with gender equality built into every step. Active in Khmelnytskyi, Sumy, Ternopil, and Vinnytsia, UCORD helps regional institutions apply gender-responsive budgeting, planning, and monitoring. The project has improved public services by embedding gender criteria in water, sanitation, and waste management projects, ensuring equal access for everyone. It also fosters social cohesion through culture and dialogue and creates opportunities for underrepresented citizens in the creative economy. Together with Ukrainian ministries and UN Women, UCORD is producing regional gender profiles that provide the evidence base for more inclusive governance.



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equal access for everyone.



Bringing Together Civil Society in the EU's Neighbouring Countries in the Name of Gender Equality



FUNDER



DURATION 2024–2027

Phase II of the **EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk** supports reforms in Eastern Partnership countries by embedding gender perspectives into policymaking and legislation. Building on Phase I, the Helpdesk provides **rapid**, **on-demand expertise** to governments and EU Delegations, covering sectors such as justice, labour, healthcare, education, economic development, climate, and digitalisation. The project strengthens the capacity of institutions to design and implement **gender-responsive reforms**, while enabling civil society and women's rights organisations to influence policy more effectively. It also drives **regional learning and coordination** through working groups, studies, tools, and events, ensuring reforms are inclusive and aligned with both EU acquis and Ukraine's recovery needs.

Learn more here



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Participatory Steps Towards Safe and Improved Water Supply in Rural Nepal



FUNDERMEA Finland



DURATION

2021-2027

In Nepal's Karnali Region, 200,000 people now have access to improved water supply and 296,000 benefit from better sanitation and hygiene, thanks to the **Sustainable WASH for All (SUSWA)** project. The project also introduced 150 institutional toilets and advanced menstrual dignity and women's rights by engaging women's groups, religious leaders, and disability organisations. At its core, SUSWA builds accountable municipal WASH systems that are inclusive, climate-resilient, and responsive to the needs of women, girls, and marginalised groups. Using the WSP+++ model, it combines technical sustainability with climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and gender equality. In doing so, SUSWA contributes directly to SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

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Drivers of Change in Mali





Since 2017, the Fond d'Appui aux Moteurs du Changement (FAMOC) project has supported peace, stability, and reconciliation in Mali by empowering youth-led civil society organisations as drivers of democratic transformation. In its first phase, the project deployed 2,329 election observers, trained youth groups in peacebuilding, governance, and advocacy, created the collaborative "FAMOC dynamic" platform, and channelled €10.5 million in grants to strengthen local resilience. The second phase builds on these foundations, focusing on expanding the role of youth and women in peacebuilding, reinforcing human rights advocacy, and promoting inclusive governance. It also introduces digital monitoring systems to track CSO activities and impact even in remote conflict-affected areas. Through these efforts, FAMOC continues to strengthen local leadership, democratic resilience, and inclusive development in Mali.

Learn more here



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SAGE Developmental Evaluation



FUNDERGates Foundation



DURATION 2024–2029

The **SAGE** initiative embeds gender equality expertise within partner organisations to strengthen development outcomes across sectors. NIRAS leads its multi-year **developmental evaluation**, designed not only to measure impact but also to generate real-time learning on how gender mainstreaming transforms programmes. The evaluation combines developmental, theory-based, and utilisation-focused methods, moving from co-created, adaptive learning in the early stages to a full assessment of long-term impact. A **cohort approach** allows shared trends and lessons to emerge across partners, while a **gendered evaluation lens** ensures that equity, cultural humility, and organisational change remain central. Through this process, SAGE is building a culture of **inclusive learning and sustainable impact**, offering practical insights that can guide more effective gender-responsive programming worldwide.



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Anchoring Democratic Participation at the Local Level in Tunisia



FUNDER SDC



The Participation Active des Citoyennes et Citoyens Tunisiens (PACT) programme supports Tunisia's democratic transition by strengthening human rights, gender equality, and citizen participation in six underserved governorates of the Hautes Steppes. The programme creates inclusive community forums where women, youth, and marginalised groups can voice their priorities, while also training municipal officials and CSOs to uphold transparency, accountability, and gender equality.

By promoting **rights-based local governance**, PACT fosters trust between citizens and local authorities, making institutions more responsive and accountable. Grants and technical support further empower communities to lead their own development, ensuring that Tunisia's democratic transition is rooted in fairness, participation, and social justice.





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Learn more here

Breaking the Glass Ceiling in Tanzania



FUNDER



DURATION 2023-2026

Led by the Government of Tanzania with UN Women, UONGOZI Institute, civil society, and international partners, the Breaking the Glass Ceiling gender equality programme drives systemic reform to advance women's empowerment, leadership, and participation in decision-making while embedding gender equality across national development strategies. NIRAS supports ministries on the mainland and in Zanzibar to build institutional gender capacities, develop and implement gender-responsive policies and action plans, and strengthen governance through training, organisational development, and strategic planning. We also help design and deliver a national communication campaign that promotes women's leadership and challenges social norms. Together with national partners, the programme is creating an environment where women and girls can thrive, lead, and shape Tanzania's future.





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Framework Agreement on Gender Equality



FUNDER AFD



NIRAS provided strategic expertise to the **French Development Agency (AFD) Group,** including Proparco, ensuring that gender equality is integrated across operations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and at AFD headquarters in Paris. Through this framework, we have delivered **technical assistance, gender analyses, feasibility studies, training, and strategy support, applying OECD DAC gender markers across multiple sectors including health, education, climate, infrastructure, and governance.**

Assignments ranged from developing a Gender Action Plan for electricity distribution in Niger and conducting a gender diagnosis for job creation in Guinea, to supporting mainstreaming strategies in Pakistan, and carrying out assessments in Kosovo and India. We have also advanced gender-responsive strategies in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Egypt, and Morocco, and produced toolkits on Gender & Governance alongside a study on gender and social bonds for AFD headquarters. This work has helped AFD strengthen its capacity to deliver gender-smart and inclusive development, ensuring policies and investments translate into tangible progress for women and men worldwide.



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Supporting Transformational Change to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Kenya



FUNDERMFA Finland



DURATION 2021–2024

NIRAS implemented a transformational capacity development programme jointly funded by the Government of Finland and the Kenyan Government, aimed at reducing gender-based violence (GBV) and other harmful practices in Kenya. This collaborative effort aimed to address the root causes of GBV through enhanced coordination and capacity building. Spanning three counties – Bungoma, Samburu, and Kilifi – the initiative strengthened governmental mechanisms for preventing and responding to GBV. NIRAS supported systemic change by enhancing capacities across sectors and empowering duty bearers to better serve vulnerable communities at high risk of GBV. The programme trained 5,906 legal and moral duty bearers, supporting elders and cultural leaders in developing GBV roadmaps, and empowering champions for transformative change.

Learn more here



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Empowering Women and Youth to Strengthen the Resilience of Ethiopia's WASH Sector



FUNDER

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DURATION 2021-2024

NIRAS implemented the **Strengthening Climate Resilience Systems in Water Sanitation Hygiene Technical Assistance Project (SCRS-WaSH-TAP)** in Ethiopia to bolster sustainability of the water supply and sanitation in remote areas. We successfully **promoted gender equality by establishing women and youth-led enterprises** across six regions and trained 116 members in spare parts provision and operations management. These enterprises, predominantly led by women, now support local water supply schemes and utilities, contributing to community resilience amidst climate challenges. Moreover, the programme distributed reusable menstrual hygiene products to 29,000 girls in 150 rural schools, aiming to reduce school absenteeism and improve educational outcomes.



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Learn more here

Helpdesk on Global Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)



FUNDER Sida



DURATION 2020-2023

NIRAS delivered **rapid**, **tailored support** to Sida staff at headquarters and Swedish missions engaged in bilateral and regional health strategies. With a guaranteed **two-hour response time**, we connected teams with expert advice on health systems, universal health coverage, SRHR, health equity, WASH, governance, health promotion, and emerging health issues. Our assistance ranged from **strategy reviews and analytical studies to programme design**, **training**, **and tool development**. Gender equality is systematically embedded in every service, ensuring Sida's global health portfolio remains evidence-based, inclusive, and transformative.

Economic Empowerment of Female Farmers in Burkina Faso



FUNDER

DURATION 2018-2024

In Burkina Faso's arid Sahel region, NIRAS played a pivotal role in the Sidafunded **ProValAB project** aimed at enhancing sustainable water resource management at small dams. Partnering with local communities across six regions, NIRAS focused on **empowering women and youth through farmer business schools.** These initiatives provided crucial training in crop management, marketing strategies, and financial literacy, significantly boosting agricultural productivity and income generation. NIRAS also spearheaded gender-focused initiatives, such as mapping gender roles and benefits, which highlighted disparities in land ownership and market access.

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Building Capacity and Credit History of Businesswomen in Rural Mozambique





DURATION 2014-2020

NIRAS collaborated with Socremo bank, Sida and USAID to enhance Socremo's capacity to support micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and women-owned businesses through a pioneering loan guarantee portfolio of up to US\$10 million. By easing collateral requirements and expanding service areas, the programme enabled 4,000 MSEs to access crucial credit facilities. NIRAS provided capacity building programmes for female entrepreneurs and women's business associations. We facilitated the dissemination of financial services in rural communities, crafted specialised curricula for MSEs led by women, and provided extensive training and mentoring to empower rural female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, our collaboration resulted in the creation of an innovative agricultural loan product, catering specifically to the needs of local farmers.

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Media Self-Regulation and the Path to Inclusive Journalism



FUNDER Sida



DURATION

2017-2024

Implemented by NIRAS and partners, the International Training Programme (ITP) 'Media Development in a Democratic Framework' strengthened media self-regulation, freedom of expression, and gender equality across 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and MENA. Over seven years, it trained and mentored 607 participants through tailored courses, webinars, study visits, and peer learning, equipping media professionals, regulators, and civil society to influence national reforms. The programme produced key resources such as a media ethics textbook and the Global Gender and Media Regulation Study, while alumni helped shape reforms – from establishing new media councils and self-regulation alliances to advancing freedom of information laws. With more than a third of participants integrating gender equality and human rights into their projects, the programme leaves a lasting legacy of ethical journalism, inclusive media, and stronger democratic institutions worldwide.



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Developing an Online Gender Budgeting Toolkit



FUNDER

European Institute for Gender Equality



DURATION

2014-2020

In 2019-2020, NIRAS collaborated with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to design an online gender budgeting toolkit aimed at enhancing gender equality perspectives in EU funds programming for the 2021-2027 period. This toolkit, a culmination of extensive work, provides practical guidance across all stages of the EU structural funds programming cycle. The toolkit includes 11 learning tools with case studies and videos, facilitating the integration of gender considerations into budgetary processes. It supports smarter, more equitable distribution of EU funds, aligning with EU goals for innovation, sustainable development, and enhanced social protections across urban, rural, and coastal areas. Accessible in all EU languages, the toolkit serves as a pivotal resource on EIGE's gender mainstreaming platform, fostering inclusive policymaking beyond EU borders.



The online gender budgeting toolkit includes **11 learning tools** with case studies and videos, facilitating the integration of gender considerations into budgetary processes.

Learn more here

Integrating Gender Mainstreaming into Georgia's Governance Reforms



FUNDER

EU Delegation to Georgia



DURATION 2017-2019

NIRAS led this project which aimed to empower **Georgia's executive**, **legislative**, and judicial bodies to incorporate **gender perspectives** into public administration. We trained public servants to mainstream **gender equality in policymaking** at national and local levels, conducted **gender analyses** of budget processes, and facilitated **dialogue** and **advocacy** with gender equality advocates, civil society, and academia in collaboration with **Georgia's Inter-Agency Commission** on gender equality. Our robust technical assistance advanced gendersensitive policies, improved human resources management in public administration, and strengthened institutional capacities across stakeholders.







International Development Consulting

We work across a broad spectrum of areas – such as energy, water, fund management, and rural and economic development – to build capacity and create sustainable development solutions for a better, more equal and stable world.



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