



NIRAS supports SDG 16

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



@OSCE/Evgeniy Maloletka



NIRAS – engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals

Owned by a Foundation and its employees, the NIRAS Group is an international multidisciplinary consultancy firm with Scandinavian roots and values. For more than 45 years, NIRAS International Consulting has been committed to the development of innovative and sustainable solutions for our clients and society. In the more than 300 projects we help implement in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America annually, the SDGs and their individual targets guide our activities in development cooperation.

Our values and continued focus on delivering sustainable solutions for people, the environment and society are embraced by the UN Global Compact. We consider the Compact's ten universal principles as a natural way of doing business. These principles steer our actions in respecting fundamental human and labour rights, showing responsibility towards the environment, and resisting all forms of corruption.

NIRAS' continued efforts to ensure sustainable development are in line with the SDGs and support Agenda 2030. In every sector we ask ourselves if we can introduce new services where we – together with our partners and clients – can contribute to this global development agenda.

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Today, we deliver technical assistance to over 100 countries annually – a project portfolio managed by 350 permanent staff. Our network of external experts approaches 25,000 development professionals worldwide, and our 51 offices in 27 countries support long-term partnerships and build local capacity in the countries where we work.

In every sector we ask ourselves if we can introduce new services where, together with clients, we can contribute to the development goals.

Through our work we aim at visibly improving livelihoods and developing resilient future societies that are inclusive, stable, well governed and climate-smart.

The green growth and circular economy initiatives we work on with our partners address climate change through adaptation, mitigation and building of resilience. At the same time, they also promote job creation and generate wealth. We integrate human rights-based approaches and structured capacity-development and skills transfer into our projects and work closely with institutions to develop expertise within agricultural sector reform, private sector development, and peace, security and governance processes.

We incorporate the UN Sustainable Development Goals in all our activities and measure their impact on society and the environment. We believe that aligning our work with the SDGs enables us to identify and deliver solutions that contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world – a fundamental objective of NIRAS employees.

NIRAS' solutions are addressing the major societal challenges of our time and are directly contributing to the UN's 17 SDGs.



Building peaceful and inclusive societies as the key to sustainable development

SDG 16's focus on "promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" is at the very core of NIRAS' work in strengthening good governance and democratic processes. We understand that if we don't build societies that are open to everyone, offer just treatment to citizens, and provide effective, accountable, and participatory governing bodies, social peace may not last, violence can (re)surface, and most development achievements will be lost.

In today's world where fragile states number close to 60, fostering and maintaining peace can seem like an impossible task. Giving responsibility for such important work to an international development consulting firm may seem odd at first, but at NIRAS, we think differently. We are committed to contributing to the establishment of such peaceful, just, and inclusive societies by pursuing a broad range of approaches.

Our experience worldwide shows that societies that function without being subjected to violent conflict are much more likely to experience human well-being and growth, both economically and socially.

NIRAS has a long track record of supporting civil society in developing countries. By providing support to civil society organisations and promoting dialogue with government authorities, we facilitate the communication between authorities and citizens and enable community participation in decision-making. A strong civil society also promotes adherence to human rights and improves the performance of governments. Our contributions to reducing corruption link to this. By promoting freedom of speech initiatives and building government institutions' capacities, we ensure that citizens, academia, and decision-makers are better informed, leading to more inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance.

We encourage responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels by supporting decentralization, promoting governance, providing policy support, and strengthening



democratic institutions. Our contributions in this area include capacity development, optimizing local authorities' management processes around district and community development planning, the promotion of national achievements with regards to global development goals, and the introduction of monitoring and evaluation systems to national institutions.

To walk the talk of SDG 16, we always strive to be transparent and accountable in our work.

NIRAS helps promote the rule of law and ensure access to justice for all by training legal aid service providers. In managing a response roster, we actively work towards security, peace, and stability in states dealing with conflict and fragility. Through several global training programmes, we build capacities of stakeholders in affected countries and regions with regards to human rights, peace, and security.

As a company, we do not tolerate any forms of misconduct in business and expect the same from everyone we engage with in our projects. Actions speak louder than words. So, in every project, we consider how best to safeguard and enhance inclusivity in our approaches. We are also aware of the conflict escalation potential of development interventions and carefully assess the role we play, the change we drive, and the assumptions we make. Using methods such as the human rights-based approach in all our target sectors – e.g. agriculture, water, the environment – further enables us to base our work on international human rights standards and make our own actions accountable.

We support and implement numerous projects worldwide that directly contribute to the targets of SDG 16. In this booklet, we present six cases showcasing the diversity of our approach, from global peace responses to specific country cases in Bangladesh, Mali, Mozambique, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Tanzania. Each case demonstrates how NIRAS works towards the goal of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies in a variety of contexts and through a broad range of measures.

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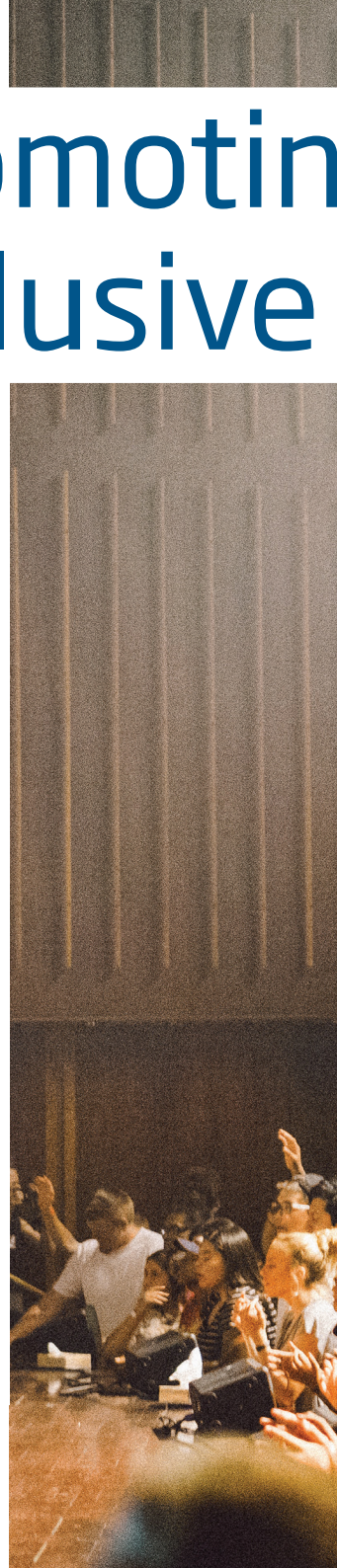
Promoting inclusive

Presenting

Six projects

Six countries

Six ways towards a more
sustainable future



g peaceful and societies





Photo credit: SENAI

Promoting justice for Tanzanian citizens

The majority of Tanzania's poor and rural population is not granted equal access to justice. Unable to afford lawyers and disregarded by authorities, millions experience regular violations of their rights and the unjust settlement of disputes.

In response to this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark initiated the Legal Services Facility (LSF) and hired NIRAS to manage the programme. Since its establishment in 2011, the LSF supported civil society organisations that assist individuals, groups and communities to claim their rights. Support from the LSF was partly delivered through funding and partly through capacity building of local legal aid providers, as well as general awareness-raising in communities about human rights and the importance of accessible legal services. By 2015, NIRAS had helped to train 4,628 paralegals who offer their services in all districts. The LSF further helped formalise legal aid provision and contributed to the Legal Aid Bill 2016, which was enacted by the Tanzanian Parliament.

The LSF gradually made a strategic shift from a singular focus on case-based legal aid towards the inclusion of awareness-building and legal empowerment. Consequently, the paralegal training was revised towards social mobilisation, advocacy, and navigating authorities, as well as legal education skills to allow knowledge to be passed on to future legal aid providers.

The LSF project specifically contributed to SDG 16 target 16.3 by promoting the rule of law at national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all. This significantly interlinks with SDG 10, which is aimed at reduced inequality. The project also pursued target 16.6 by helping develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. In addition, the LSF contributed to SDG 5 - achieving gender equality - as the protection of women's rights was emphasized. In 2015, approximately 37,000 cases were handled by LSF-trained paralegals, of which almost 20,000 were brought by women.

CLIENT

The Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Denmark

COUNTRY

Tanzania

LOCATION

Countrywide

DURATION

2011–2016



Supporting peace and stability across the world

CLIENT

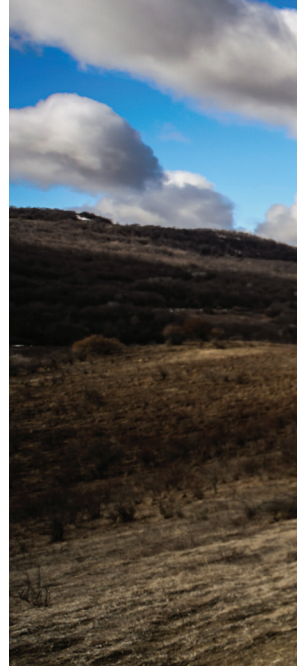
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

COUNTRIES

Worldwide (including Afghanistan, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali, Niger, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ukraine)

DURATION

Phase I: 2008-2013, Phase II: 2013-2018, Phase III: 2018-2022



Violent conflicts can arise quickly around the world, demanding immediate responses from the international community. The process of transition from conflict to post-conflict conditions demands resources and knowledge. One way of responding to acute crises and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies is by deploying civilian crisis management experts to assist.

The Peace and Stabilisation Response (PSR) is an emergency roster comprising 500 civilian experts who are deployed on international stabilisation, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and democracy building missions in conflict-affected areas worldwide. The missions are coordinated by the EU, OSCE, NATO, UN and UNDAC, and NIRAS manages the roster on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. PSR manages an average of 160 deployments per year.





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The PSR approach is mainly to support relevant national institutions in developing operational capacity at all levels, from national governments and institutions to local authorities, and supporting a wide range of tasks, all with the aim of supporting peace and building strong institutions. This goes hand in hand with SDG 16. PSR especially contributes to target 16.1 by reducing violence and 16.6 by developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. The PSR missions operate within the fields of security sector reform, civilian crisis management, peace-keeping, strengthening the rule of law, reconciliation, managing the transition to post-conflict conditions, and democratization.

On an EU monitoring mission in Georgia, PSR experts supported the monitoring and analysis of the situation pertaining to the stabilisation process, centred on full compliance with the Six-Point Agreement, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and reducing tensions through liaison, facilitation of contacts between parties, and other confidence-building measures.

In Kosovo, PSR experts on an EU rule of law mission assisted and supported the Kosovo authorities with a specific focus on the judiciary, including transitional justice and transition plans in the post-conflict context. This was done through monitoring, mentoring, and advising while retaining executive responsibilities in specific areas of competence, such as war crimes, organised crime, corruption, and terrorism.





Enabling human rights organisations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

As in most places, civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory give the people a voice, thus acting as key stakeholders in advancing justice, peace, and stability in the country. Societies can only be inclusive and function in a peaceful manner when people can access their rights and the duty bearers – such as government institutions and authorities – protect and promote these rights without discrimination. This essential to the formation of peaceful societies, but for this to happen, citizens need to know their rights and also have the resources and tools necessary to drive the inclusion process.

That was the logic behind the Secretariat to Support Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law CSOs. Operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Secretariat supported CSOs there and in Israel more broadly, using international and national laws as the path that CSOs take to protect citizens' rights and hold duty bearers accountable, including to third state obligations under international law. NIRAS managed the Secretariat to maintain the space needed for civil society to act for justice and defend human rights. In total, 61 CSOs were supported – 24 through core funding and 37 through project funding. The total support amounts to EUR23 million.

NIRAS implemented the project in collaboration with the Institute of Law at Birzeit University. The Secretariat supported civil society's efforts in three ways: 1) providing flexible funding that allowed CSOs to work efficiently and effectively, 2) providing capacity development support to organisations, and 3) supporting dialogue efforts. The combined support and collaboration contributed to the adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and has proven to be a successful and efficient addition to the process of creating more peaceful and just societies.

In promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, the Secretariat contributed to targets 16.6 and 16.10 by bolstering the enabling environments in which CSOs engage in meaningful dialogue with other organizations and stakeholders. This is also a step towards maintaining effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. The project also worked to improve access to justice by supporting CSOs in informing citizens of their rights and providing free-of-charge legal services, and contributed to SDG 5 (gender equality).

CLIENT

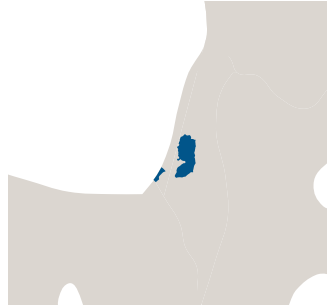
Pooled funding from Sida (Sweden), DANIDA (Denmark), SDC (Switzerland), and the Netherlands Representation Office.

LOCATION

The Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ramallah and Gaza City

DURATION

2013–2018





Strengthening the capacity of the National Assembly in Mali

CLIENTS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

COUNTRY

Mali

LOCATION

Countrywide

DURATION

2015–2017



In 2012, Mali experienced a security, political, and institutional crisis that revealed deep fractures in its society and politics and resulted in the disintegration of the state. A peace agreement was signed in 2015 after years of armed conflict between Al Qaida-supported rebel groups and national army troops supported by international forces.

Against this volatile background, Malian democratic institutions had a hard time gaining public legitimacy. An overhaul of the political culture and a tradition of democratic accountability were needed to encourage debate and the use of political checks and balances.

Following this line of thinking and building on previous Danish engagement in the sector, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark commissioned NIRAS (in consortium with the National Democratic Institute) as implementation partner for the project "Strengthening the National Assembly in Mali". The project aimed to strengthen the representational, legislative, and control capacities of the Malian National Assembly. This was done through capacity development of both deputies and staff and through formalizing operational procedures of the parliamentary work.

The project significantly contributed to SDG target 16.6 through the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, and target 16.7, by ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. Special attention was paid to strengthening dialogue with civil society and increasing the visibility and accountability of parliamentary work among the Malian public (target 16.7). This was achieved through open house arrangements and improved regular communication using national and social media. Furthermore, the project also provided technical support to the newly-established High Court of Justice as well as the Network Against Corruption, comprising CSOs and politicians, to guide government and administrative action and propose measures for improved corruption control (target 16.5). The close collaboration with parliamentary groups was a major factor in the project's success.

The project also significantly supported SDG target 5.c through sound, gender-responsive policies. It supported the Association of Female Parliamentarians to reinforce the role of female parliamentarians in legislative work, especially with regards to women's and children's rights. The latter was done in collaboration with relevant parliamentary commissions as well as CSOs. Additionally, parliamentarians were sensitized to gender and trained to apply gender-responsive budget analyses of the annual Finance Act.





Promoting good financial governance practices in Mozambique

A key feature of strong public institutions is a sound public procurement process for acquiring goods and services. Without appropriate procurement processes, money gets wasted, transparency of public spending is lost, and the risk of corruption is higher. As part of the Good Financial Governance Programme in Mozambique, NIRAS was given the responsibility of strengthening the management of procurement processes at the local level and strengthening the Audit Court.

The programme covered 18 districts and 9 municipalities in the provinces of Inhambane, Sofala, and Manica. NIRAS assisted the Ministry of Public Works, Housing, and Water Resources and the Unit for the Supervision of Acquisitions in revising and updating their national training manuals to focus on the management of procurement of public infrastructures, goods, and services.

Through a strategy of cascade training, over 400 provincial civil servants were taught to use training modules especially designed for district and municipality staff. The training covered themes such as training management (directly linked to SDG target 16.a), goods and services acquisition, and public revenues, including tax and revenue collection and efforts to reduce corruption and bribery (contributing directly to SDG target 16.5). Through trainings on construction works planification and supervision, the project also contributed to SDG target 9.1 to develop high-quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure.

Enabling fair access to land in Bangladesh

CLIENT

The EU Delegation to Bangladesh

COUNTRY

Bangladesh

LOCATION

Dhaka

DURATION

2012–2017



The issues surrounding land in Bangladesh are both complex and weighted with a long history. The majority of the rural poor in Bangladesh are landless. The lack of land ownership and inequalities of access pose clear obstacles for inclusive development, poverty alleviation, lasting peace, human rights, and good governance.

The Promote Access to Land to Bangladesh project was designed to support the Government of Bangladesh's agenda for sustainable development through accelerated poverty reduction. The project's main objective was to support the government in promoting new land policies and land reforms, and strengthening access to land and property rights for all citizens of Bangladesh. The project worked on two levels; helping to build a land ownership registration system on the policy, legislative, and institutional level; and establishing an authoritative land record on the Upazila or sub-district level.

The project contributed to SDG target 16.3 by developing land-related policies which provide Bangladeshis equal access to land and ensure the best possible utilization of land resources. This involved reviewing land policies, providing public institutions with guidelines, and making the whole land administration process more efficient (target 16.6). The project also ensured responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7) by reforming the land sector public administration through the development of business process tools, the use of land administration workflows, and the promotion of reforms.

As part of the project, studies were conducted on the rights to land of vulnerable segments of the society, including women and indigenous people. These studies focused on lessons learned in neighbouring countries and practical barriers in Bangladesh, such as weaknesses in pertinent policies and laws as well as ground-level hindrances stemming from existing cultural, traditional, and institutional practices - including the protection and recognition of indigenous peoples' right to their ancestral lands.



The project also contributed to SDG 1, poverty reduction, by implementing appropriate national social protection laws and raising the quality of public services delivered to citizens, particularly the poor and vulnerable. It also made significant progress towards achieving SDGs 15 and 17 by providing capacity building at the national level on conceptual, substantive, and process-related issues concerning land policy.



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NIRAS offices around the world

Our decentralized structure ensures we're always close to our projects. With 51 offices in 27 countries, we maintain strong local ties to clients, experts and organizations in all of our key markets. Building on our motto "we listen, we learn, we deliver", NIRAS is proud to be a long-term partner in the pursuit of growth and prosperity for the countries in which we work and is committed to building partnerships and local capacity, beyond the lifespan of individual projects, to achieve sustainable and equitable future societies.

الأبداع عنواننا



العراق في فؤادهم لا يتركوا

اجعل عمودك امام عينك وامبق
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■ Next generation consultancy

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