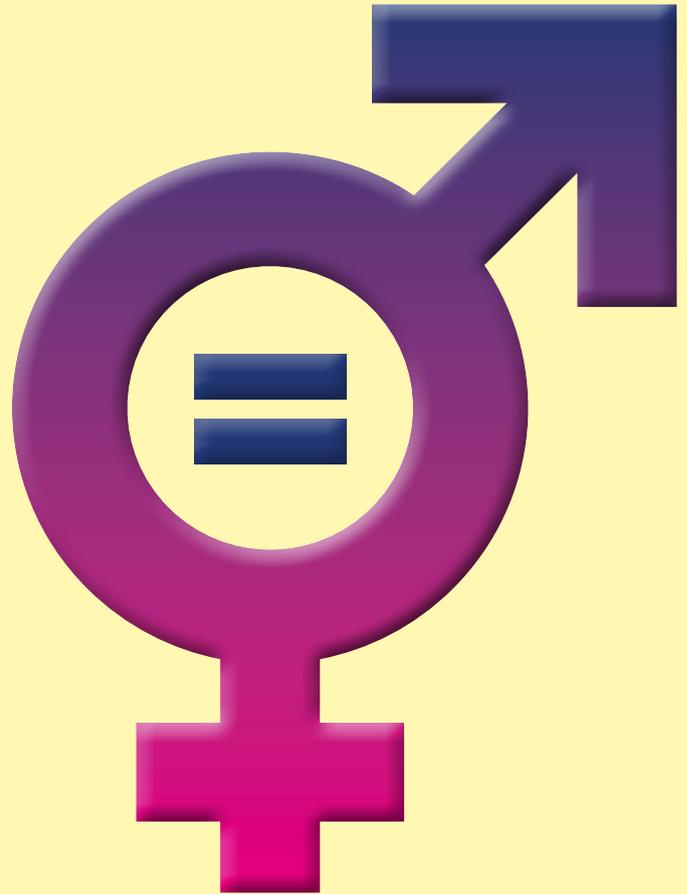




GENDER EQUALITY AT LOCAL LEVEL



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Embracing Diversity is the first of NALAS' basic values and principles. We are open, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and inclusive. We promote an equitable development of rural and urban municipalities, young and old, men and women.
- 1.2 We understand gender differences between men and women as socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Gender differences often limit women's and men's capabilities and lead to gender inequalities which are further reinforced by their location, race, class, age, culture, religion or the historical context. As such they represent an obstacle for women and men to exercise their human rights and reach their fullest potential, and for the societies to fully develop and grow.
- 1.3 To achieve gender equality, in line with international and national commitments, institutions and organisations at all levels are expected to play an active role by adopting and implementing gender policies.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of this document is to elaborate NALAS's policy and efforts to improve and promote gender equality at local level.

3. Objective

- 3.1 To engage into the implementation of international and national commitments on gender equality by promoting gender mainstreaming across NALAS's, the associations' of local authorities and local governments' work and by that contribute to closing the gender gap on the level of local governments in South East Europe.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to NALAS and its member organisations – the associations of local governments of South East Europe.

5. Policy

- 5.1 It is NALAS policy to ensure that gender awareness and gender sensitivity is included and understood in all its work within the association of local self-governments. In order to accomplish the policy,
- 5.2 NALAS will take further steps to embed gender equality in their work by making all necessary statutory changes. NALAS calls upon his members to do the same.



6. Actions

- 6.1 Promote the European Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life
- 6.2 Ensure that gender is analysed, understood, and addressed in policy design, planning, management, representation, internal and external communication.
- 6.3 Ensure that every multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary analysis has a base in gender disaggregated data and national and local gender statistics.
- 6.4 Collect, summarise and disseminate gender disaggregated data on the composition of NALAS's and member associations' secretariats, statutory bodies, working groups and statutory meetings. Where the data suggests gender disparities exist, propose measures to tackle those disparities.
- 6.5 Develop guidelines and gender indicators to facilitate the integration of a gender perspective across all policies and programs of NALAS and the member organisations.
- 6.6 Promote gender responsive budgeting as a tool enabling local authorities to assess implication of policies on women and men and achieve more equal distribution of resources, goods and services to citizens.
- 6.7 Raise awareness among local authorities on the gender differences in outcomes and opportunities in key areas of life: health, education, community safety, housing.
- 6.8 Ensure that all NALAS staff and elected representatives have adequate awareness, knowledge and skills to promote gender equality through their work.
- 6.9 Use stories, images and language that challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender sensitive discourse.
- 6.10 Ensure that all human resource and employment policies are gender responsive and based on equal opportunities principles, including the recruitment, induction and staff performance management systems of the organisation.
- 6.11 Ensure a working environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity without any discrimination, sexual or psychological harassment.
- 6.12 Collect data and advocate for measures to ensure more equal representation of women in leadership or decision making positions at local level, taking in regards that in 2016 women constituted only 6.5% of Mayors in South East Europe compared to the 8.74% level of 2011 indicating a negative general trend.
- 6.13 Undertake specific actions such as the GeniYouth award to promote good local authorities practices on integrating gender in areas of municipal competence such as: infrastructure, local economic development, urban planning, social services, etc.

7. In our work with partners:

- 7.1 Develop mechanisms to facilitate the regional exchange of experience among local authorities in promoting gender equality.
- 7.2 Encourage collaboration between neighbouring and European countries' associations of local authorities which are champions in promoting gender equality at local level.
- 7.3 Encourage partners to analyse the levels of integration of gender in their own and their work with the communities and to undertake appropriate action to improve their performance when necessary.
- 7.4 Support partner organisations to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to gender issues through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources on relevant topics.
- 7.5 Support partners to carry out advocacy initiatives for the promotion of gender equality at local level in their own countries.

8. Implementation and accountability

- 8.1 The Committee of Liaison Officers will adopt a plan for implementation of the policy to promote gender equality at local level.
- 8.2 NALAS Secretariat will annually report on progress with the implementation of the policy based on the plan and a set of indicators measuring the level of integration of gender perspective across policies, programs and operations of the organisation. The reports will also include information collected from the member organisations.
- 8.3 Periodic reviews of the policy will be carried out in compliance with NALAS Statute and Strategy and will be used to ensure the successes and lessons learned improve policy and practice.

This policy will be communicated and made known to the leadership and staff of the member associations and they will be encouraged to develop similar policies.

