

Introduction to using the NIDOS website members' area

What's available on the members' area of the NIDOS website and why use it?

Web forums – The forums are the main port of call for communication between NIDOS members, allowing you to exchange information, coordinate collaborative work and discuss any international development related matters. They are also a home for the agendas, minutes and discussions of the NIDOS working groups; the Small NGOS, Malawi, International Volunteering and Funding Groups are themed groups of NIDOS members who are working together on issues of shared concern and are open to all NIDOS members. See separate sheet '*Introduction to using the NIDOS website members' forums*' for more detail.

Visits Calendar – This shared calendar is a tool for pooling information on travel plans and visits from projects to help spread travel costs and reduce carbon. If you're planning to travel overseas and can offer time and capacity to other organisations, or if you have staff or speakers coming to Scotland you'd like other organisations to meet, use this section to let other members know about it.

Information and Advice – This section features a range of resources available only to NIDOS members, including a directory of international development fundraising, a database of international development expertise in Scotland as well as links to other useful sources of information and advice. You can also download template policies and procedures in this section to help you with, for example, developing finance systems or staffing policies.

NIDOS Governance and Management – This section provides comprehensive detail on NIDOS' governance and operations, allowing you to get involved in our decision making processes and the continuing development of the network. You can download NIDOS' business plan, board minutes and latest accounts and budgets in this section.

How to access the members' area of the NIDOS website

You can log in to the members' area from the home page of the website at <http://www.nidos.org.uk>. You will need a username (which is your email address) and a password. If you don't have a password please email us at info@nidos.org.uk – if you lose your password email us for a reminder at any time.

Once logged in to the members' area of the website you can access subsections of information that are only available to members. You can also visit the web forums where members can communicate with each other online. If you visit any of the web forums (General Discussion, Working Groups or Visits Calendar) you will be asked again for your username and password. See separate sheet '*Introduction to using the NIDOS website members' forums*' for more detail.

Please contact us on 0131 243 2680 or info@nidos.org.uk if you have any questions or comments, or if you receive any error messages whilst using the members' area so that we can deal with them quickly.

Remember that the more the members' area is used the more valuable it will become!

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How to access the web forums

Once in the members' area, if you click on any of the web forums - General Discussion, Working Groups or Visits Calendar – you will need to log in using the same username and password. If you are not already registered click 'register here!' and fill in the short form – this only takes a couple of minutes; the only required fields are a Username, which may be your real name or a nickname, a Password, and a valid e-mail address. Depending on its privacy settings, your browser may remember your password so that you only have to log in to the forums the first time you visit the members' area, otherwise you will have to log in each time.

What's available on the NIDOS web forums?

- **General discussion** – includes fundraising, campaigning, training, emergencies, help wanted and offered and resources.
- **Working groups** – forums for communication between the members of the Small NGOs, Malawi, International Volunteering and Funding Groups which are themed groups of NIDOS members who are working together on issues of shared concern – open to all members.
- **Visits and Events Calendar** – a tool for sharing information on travel plans and visits from projects to help spread travel costs and reduce carbon.


Why use the NIDOS web forums?

- **Decentralised communication** - Member organisations have access to all of the forums allowing them to communicate amongst each other without going through the NIDOS office. Any number of individual staff members can have access so they won't miss out on information if they are not included on particular email lists.
- **Sharing resources** - Organisations can advertise events they are planning as well as asking for practical help and advice or use the visits calendar to track when speakers are available, instead of having to contact a wide range of organisations every time they need to find a speaker or get advice.
- **Efficient use of information** - Web forums give an overview of discussion, events and information all in one place that can be checked on whenever it's needed. By contrast, relying on email distribution lists sometimes means there is a danger of getting overloaded with information that isn't needed or having to trawl through email inboxes to find minutes of meetings.



How to post messages

Once within the forums you may post messages and exchange information. Having a set of instructions may suggest that the forums are complicated but they are really straightforward once you get started - the easiest way to get into using them is to just have a go. Select the relevant subheading - for example "Small NGOs group" under "Working Groups". To post a message about something new or start a new 'conversation' select "new topic" write your message then click "post new topic". Remember you can also include links to, for example, more detailed information on your own website. Simply type the address and it should automatically be made into a link – see the 'FAQ' at the top of the forums page for more information on this.

How to reply to messages that others have posted

If you wish to reply to a topic that someone else has already started click on its name and you will be given a "reply to topic" option above their message, alternatively click on the reply icon  in the far right hand column.

How to edit/delete messages

You can edit and delete your own (but not other user's) messages at any time using the edit  or delete  icons next to the message.

The 'FAQ' at the top of the forums page has some useful guidance on a range of topics. Please contact us on 0131 243 2680 or info@nidos.org.uk if you have any questions or comments, or if you receive any error messages whilst using the forums so that we can deal with them quickly.

Remember that the more the forums are used the more valuable they will become!