

CENTER FOR EQUALITY ADVANCEMENT REPORT FOR 2003¹

The Open Society Foundation's Women's Program in Lithuania had been active 1997 - 2002. At the end of 2002 the OSF-L Board made a decision to discontinue its Women's Programme with year 2003. Inspired by the NY Women's Program, the Open Society Fund Women's programme coordinator in Vilnius working together with field specialists started an initiative for creating an organisation to take over the NWP projects and to create a strategic vision of gender equality advancement in Lithuania.

Initiators spent the first months of 2003, conducting research in Lithuania as well as the other Baltic countries with a goal to clarify anew the necessary areas of involvement, develop cooperation on national and Baltic level and search for new ways of contributing to advancing gender equality.

Soon the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ombudsman's Office and Klaipeda University emerged as founding parties, showing great enthusiasm and interest in the establishment of the organisation and development of its initiatives. During the first part of 2003 a team of supporters has worked on creating the new institution - Centre for Equality Advancement (CEA).

CEA was officially registered in Vilnius, July 2003 with the status of Public institution. Its founders are NGO Kaunas Women's Employment Information Center, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania and Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

Being not officially registered yet the initiating team has prepared and submitted two projects - to the Baltic American Partnership Programme and the Nordic Council of Ministers. In accordance with the organisation's goal to strengthen the organisation at the beginning stages, the projects were written to launch a local fundraising campaign, inclusive of learning from the extensive fundraising experience of the Baltic communities in the United States and to expand knowledge and share experience by learning Scandinavian models of advancing gender equality. Unfortunately, regardless of being selected among the best in fierce competition, neither of the projects has received support.

At the end of 2003 updated project was submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers and has been partly supported receiving fellowship for the study visit to three Scandinavian countries. Implementation of this project is going to be at the beginning of 2004.

An application of Director of CEA was approved by SIDA (Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency) and granted with the fellowship for the ***Regional Programme on the Equal Status and Human Rights of Women*** at Raoul Wallenberg Institute, which took place in Lund, Sweden, from the 3rd to 21st of November, 2003. Program provided an introduction to the International Human Rights Law, International Monitoring procedures, UN system on Civil and Political Rights, also possibility to visit main Sweden organisations active in a field of Women Rights.

The Center for Equality Advancement continued its participation on the projects under the OSI Network Women Program and actively was involved in to other activities related to it's strategy.

¹ In this report are not included activities of 2003 (rollover from 2002), which there done at the OSF-L as Women program

Mass Media and gender Policy

The project ***Gender Montage: Post-soviet Paradigms. Mini Film Festival in Regions***. This project was continuation of the project “Gender Montage: Post-soviet Paradigms”. 7 movies review and round-table discussions on issues related to gender equality was arranged in 5 regions. (Partners: Klaipeda, Siauliai and Kaunas Universities, Panevezys Educational Center, Women NGO in Shirvintai). A special event was organised at Women Correction House in Panevezys for 170 imprisoned women with the show of two documentary movies from the collection, discussion, books charity campaign and consultations of Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

The international interdisciplinary seminar under the project ***(Re)Marking Gender, Gender and Cinema: Images, Focuses, Spectatorship*** accompanied by a special film programme and video art contest, was held from 4 to 6 December, 2003 in Vilnius (partners: Equal Opportunities Ombudsman’s Office; Cinema Center *Skalvija*; Goethe Institute Vilnius; Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts). Papers of participants of the seminar are lauded on the CEA website www.gap.lt This seminar was an example of cross-fertilisation of two programs – MMGP and Gender Studies.

Preparatory work is done on the project ***Gender Dimension and Ethno-cultural Environment: Images, Problems, and Solutions***. It is cycle of the seminars for journalist which goal is to amplify gender sensitivity of regional mass media and reduce its xenophobia. The project prefigure workshops for journalists as well as radio broadcasts on the basis of the oral histories of women refugees/ethnic minorities/migrants. Project proposal was submitted to the European Commission, call for small grants. An answer should arrive for the end of March.

Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the EU Accession Process

CEA was administrating research ***Women and Politic***, financed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Full text of research is loaded on CEA website. Launch of Research is going to be at the conference ***Improve Women Participation in Politic***, organised by Kaunas Women’s Information Center in cooperation with CEA.

Three round table discussions ***Gender Equality Implementation: Changes, Obstacles and Perspectives of Practice*** (Partner The Social Innovation Fund) were organised for NGO workers, teachers, social workers in the regions.

Gender and Education

Preparatory work is done on website for ***IT data base*** on gender issues of academic/NGO/journalist experts. The data base will be developed and will include personal CV, syllabus of lectures and related bibliography, texts of articles, research’s, project’s descriptions. It will be loaded on website www.gap.lt. It will impel academic/NGO/journalists network formation and promote gender mainstreaming in Lithuania education domain.

Preparatory work is done on round table ***Is Lithuanian Education System Open for Gender Dialog?*** Prospective participants: representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, academics and NGOs activists. The main goal is discussion concerning development of the national strategy of gender mainstreaming in primary, secondary and tertiary educational systems.

Center for Equality Advancement participate as partner in preparatory work of the conference ***Empowering Dialogue between Feminist Scholars and Community through Building Network of Scholars in Gender Studies in Lithuania***. The purpose is to develop academic network of lecturers, researches and promote gender studies in universities schedule.

Oral History

The main partner at this program was Vilnius University Gender Studies Center. Unfortunately, book *Socialism in Women's memories* was not published as originally planned. No impersonal explanations were received from the director of the Center and CEA can't have any influence since and money for this job were allocated from rollover in 2002 and contract was signed by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania and is under their responsibility.

Despite this Vilnius University Gender Studies Centre managed to collect archive of more than 50 oral history interviews, to document and use them as teaching supplements at the lectures.

Empowering Education

For the implementation of EE strategy-2003-2004 supplemented by enduring partner in this program -Youth Career Center – grant of 5877 USD was allocated.

Planned means and activities:

To continue and broaden EE pilot project for young offenders, orphans and children from special care institutions all over the country.

To develop a national educational gender empowering program for high schools.

To provide trainings of the program for teachers and students (future teachers) of colleges and universities. The future teachers will gain knowledge and will be ready to initiate EE classes in schools.

To introduce the program to regional in-service teacher training institutions.

To publish a second edition of EE manual.

To participate in international advanced trainings for trainers, a summer camp, conferences, meetings.

To increase EE library resources with the latest publications on gender, conflict management, human rights and other related materials.

To establish contacts with mass media for dissemination of the EE program.

Violence Against Women

Participated in the Program for Women's NGOs 16-Day Media Campaign Against Violence Against Women. A special discussion and show of documentary films was organised by the staff of CEA.

Preparatory work was done on the publication *Legal Guidance for Women Violence Survivors*. This project is part of activities of National Program for Gender Equality, supported by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL). Guidance will be published at the beginning of 2004 and distributed to the social workers, Women Crisis Centers, NGO's working with the victims of violence.

Donor Partnerships

As the first step of CEA philanthropic activities the project ***Charity Action: Books and Magazines for Women Correction Institution in Panevėžys*** has been implemented.. Over twenty book publishing houses, editorial offices and private people donated books and magazines which were presented for Women Correction Institution in Panevėžys.

Other projects

CEA is working on the project ***Combat homophobia: Lesbian life stories***. The main goal is to reduce lesbian parent (as well as whole society) homophobia by publishing lesbian life stories collection with the stress on their relationships with parent accompanied by analytical articles.