

CENTER FOR
EQUALITY
ADVANCEMENT

Center for Equality Advancement. A Year of Solidarity.

2022: activity report

1. 2022 team



Virginija Aleksejūnė, Aurelija Auškalnytė, Margarita Jankauskaitė, Vilana Pilinkaitė Sotirovič, Monika Orechova and Greta Kraujalytė



Team Photoshoot. Photographer: Ligita Vaitkutė



Team excursion to Šilėnai Nature Trail ahead of St. John's Day.



Interns and volunteers who contributed to the implementation of our vision this year: Arūnė Lunevičiūtė, Beatričė Kukulskytė, Dovilė Keraitė, Gabija Skaudickaitė, Justina Baškytė, Milda Gaigalaitė, Neringa Tsodikov, Ramunė Kochanauskaitė, Renata Krasovskaja, Urtė Radavičiūtė.

2. The Intersection of Vulnerabilities

2.1 Project – ‘At the intersection of gender & disability: to talk, inspire & act’

Leadership can be challenging in a society riddled with obstacles, particularly when the burdens of gender and disability intersect and amplify each other. During the project:

↓ We have facilitated ten meetings where women with disabilities residing in Tauragė and Panevėžys came together to share their experiences, learn, discuss challenges and talk about leadership.



Panevėžys Initiative Group of Women with Disabilities with CEA experts



Activists of the Tauragė Initiative Group of Women with Disabilities, members of the CEA, and the Tauragė Woman's Employment & Information Centre team after a conference in Tauragė on the intersection of gender and disability

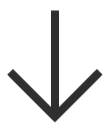


Disability and mobility measures are not always serious. Irma Zabulionytė and Aurelija Auškalnytė, during a break in a photo shoot. Photographer: Joe Wood

Our collective efforts led to the establishment of the [Municipal Council for Disability Affairs in Panevėžys](#) with Irma Zabulionytė, our project partner and the head of the Panevėžys branch of the Lithuanian agency SOS Children, assuming the role of the Council's chairperson.



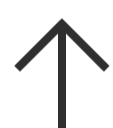
In Tauragė, proactive women with disabilities spearheaded a [campaign to evaluate the accessibility of public catering establishments for individuals with disabilities](#), and they are committed to continuing this work. ‘I don’t want to depend on others for assistance after I’ve finished my meal, to be carried to the restroom and back. I’m not a sack of potatoes to be carried around; I am capable of doing everything myself. All I require are facilities that accommodate my needs,’ - shared Kristina Liolaitė, a participant in the project.



Round table discussion of the campaign for assessing the accessibility of public catering establishments for persons with disabilities together with the representatives of Tauragė municipality, CEA experts and members of TMUIC. Photographer: Regina Genienė



The training in Kaunas for non-governmental organizations working with people with disabilities and women's rights



We have conducted workshops for women and disability-related NGOs that focused on enhancing their competencies in addressing disability and gender inequality issues as well as established foundations for future collaboration. As many as 111 women gathered to deepen their knowledge of the intersection of vulnerabilities.



We have amplified the experiences of the intersection of gender and disability by participating in multiple events and media engagements. As well as raised awareness on regional radio stations, which broadcasted five programs on the topic.



We encourage you to tune in to the [program](#), where we discuss the risks of violence experienced by women with disabilities.



Additionally, we invite you to read Aurelija Auškalnytė’s insightful [commentary](#) on the common mistakes we make in our efforts to support people with disabilities in living fulfilling lives, as well as Margarita Jankauskaitė’s thought-provoking [article](#) on the societal obsession with the notion of the ‘perfect body’.

2.2 Project: ‘SEEN: Gender Based Violence Against Women with Disabilities in Focus’

The pervasive indifference of society to the struggles of others and the social isolation contribute to an environment that fosters gender-based violence. This issue can only be eradicated by coordinating institutional responses and bolstering society’s intolerance of violence against women with disabilities. During the project:

- We have explored [international practices](#) based on the social model of disability and human rights principles that shed light on the interconnections between disability, gender, and violence.
- We have examined the experiences of municipal professionals in dealing with GBV and sought to identify measures that can help to adapt the [Coordinated Multi-Agency Response \(CMAR\) algorithm](#) to better address the needs of people with disabilities. The identified measures included both strengthening the competencies of professionals and expanding the range of services available. Moreover, we had the opportunity to present our insights at the National Human Rights Forum. More detailed insights on [lrt.lt](#).

Collaborating with partners from Ukmergė, Jonava, and Alytus, we have initiated the adaptation of the CMAR algorithm to consider the individual needs of persons with disabilities and reduce the risk of GBV against women with disabilities. The innovations introduced in the pilot municipalities have received positive feedback, and we aspire to extend the initiative to other municipalities across Lithuania.



Margarita Jankauskaitė presents a disability-sensitive CMAR algorithm to tackle GBV in Utena. Participants: The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and representatives of the Utena district institutions



The project is co-funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme of the European Union (2021) (Project No. 101049158-SEEN, JUST/CERV-2021-DAPHNE).

3. Norms of Masculinity

3.1 Project: 'Ecarom: Early Care and the Role of Men'

Gender inequalities are not limited to challenges experienced exclusively by women; they also contribute to the undervaluation of caring and interpersonal support while simultaneously promoting the competition culture. If change is to happen, the very concept of masculinity must change and expand. During the project:

→ We have conducted [analyses](#) of gender mainstreaming in early childhood education in Lithuania. The findings revealed that in early childhood education, children are often treated as genderless and the concepts of gender and sexuality are confused among each other. Furthermore, we have observed avoidance of engaging children in conversations about gender expression while simultaneously reinforcing gender-appropriate behaviors.

[Methodological](#) and [didactic](#) tools were developed for working with preschool children in order to build the perception that caring is a common human value.



We have organized training for early childhood educators, in which 93 specialists took part.



Card game "Find and Seek" is printed and will soon be on its way to preschools



Workshop in Marijampolė for education specialists, led by Margarita Jankauskaitė



The International conference was held in Vilnius, allowing us to share our insights on transforming gender and masculinity norms in early childhood education. 104 participants from 8 countries of the EU took part in the conference live and online as well as attendees from across the Atlantic.



The ECaRoM project team from 6 partner countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Slovenia) at the final conference. Photographer: Gabija Skaudickaitė



We have facilitated three National awareness raising events for educators and future teachers. 172 participants were gathered who have also received a 'Find and Seek' card game developed by us.



The project was partially funded by the European Union's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (2014-2020) (Contract No.101005885 - ECaRoM - REC-AG-2020/ REC-RGEN-WWLB-AG-2020).

3.2 Project: 'Equal Pathways to professional Success.'

Gender stereotypes interfere with career choices. Therefore, as members of the Lithuanian Women's Lobby, during the project:



We have prepared publicity articles for the project, providing information on the research, educational activities, and [training tools](#).



Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija

The project was funded by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

4. Work-Life Balance

4.1 Project: ‘Everybody’s Talking: Work-Life Balance Goes Mainstream’

Achieving a work-life balance is challenging. Many challenges are related to outdated masculine norms that need to be replaced, along with transforming the organizational culture. During the project:

- We have [analyzed](#) the opinions of women, men, trade unions and employer representatives.
- We have facilitated information seminars and consulted employees of Vilnius University, Vilnius City Municipal Administration, Tele2, Vilnius Airport, and Swedbank to assist them in developing work-life balance action plans and implementing relevant measures.
- Based on our analysis and work with companies, [recommendations](#) for policymakers were developed.
- ↓ The International conference ‘Work-Life balance: why it matters and how to ensure it’ was facilitated in the Lithuanian Parliament, which gathered 93 participants.



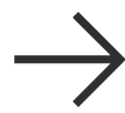
A snapshot of the conference at the Lithuanian Parliament. Photographer: Ligita Vaitkutė



The project was co-funded by the European Union’s Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (2014-2020) (Contract No. 881615 - BALANCE - REC-AG-2019 / REC-RGEN-WWLB-AG-2019).

5. Together with Ukrainian Women

We have been supporting women's rights organizations in Ukraine, who despite the challenging circumstances of brutal Russian aggression have continued to advocate for gender equality and women's rights.



A snapshot from the March 8th campaign in support of Ukrainian women near the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania



During this process, we were deeply inspired by their resilience and dedication.

We take great joy and pride in celebrating the international recognition and awards received by two of our comrades in Ukraine.

Natalia Karbowska, Director of Strategic Development at Ukrainian Women's Fund (UWF), on the 5th of December, received the [Hillary Clinton Award](#) for Leadership and Outstanding Contribution in recognizing the importance of women's role in global peace and security.





Marta Chumalo, the co-founder of the Centre for Women's Perspectives, on the 1st of February, was awarded Sweden's [Olof Palme Award](#), recognizing her outstanding contribution to the protection of women's rights.

6. Other projects

6.1 Towards Financial Sustainability

The success of an organization is determined by various factors, including financial sustainability, the willingness to address controversial topics, and the continued pursuit of innovative communication methods. To enhance the sustainability and accessibility of our organization, we have implemented several small projects:

 Our [website](#) was redesigned to ensure a simple and user-friendly interface, as well as more accessible for people with various disabilities.


 Consultation [services](#) were created to provide guidance and resources to address gender equality issues for social businesses.

6.2 Women, Peace and Security

A shadow [report](#) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 was prepared and subsequently presented at a training session organized by the Lithuanian NGDO Platform.

6.3 Motherhood Today - What Remains Silent?

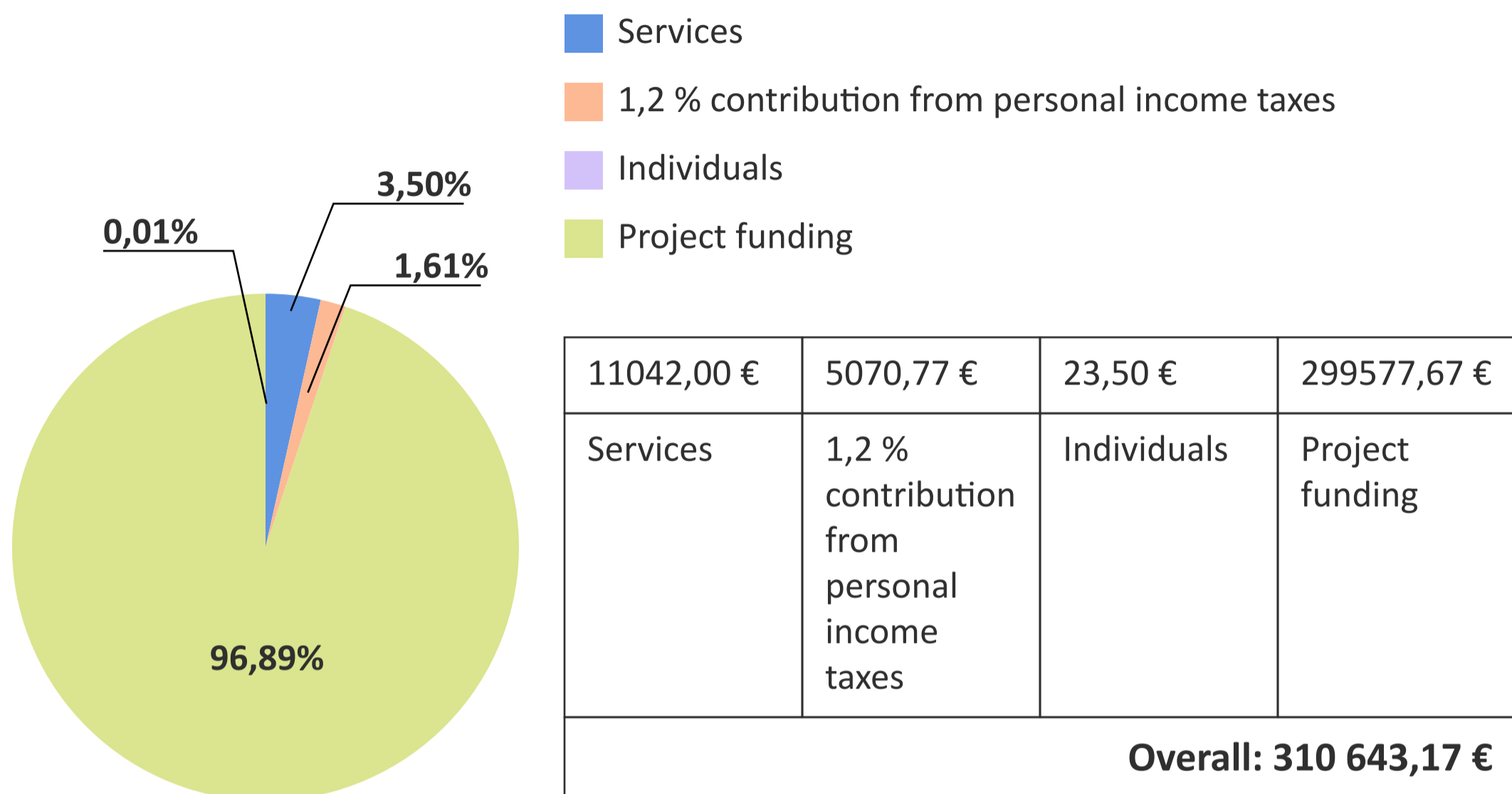
We have facilitated a discussion on silenced experiences of motherhood at the National Human Rights Forum. There is often an assumption that all mothers are: middle class, able-bodied and giving birth to non-disabled children, living with a partner which is actively involved in childcare, a self-sufficient adult that never gets tired and does not experience any setbacks. However, this inherent assumption highlights how other, differing experiences of motherhood are neglected in the public discourse. Is it really unexpected that more and more women are choosing to be childless, especially against a backdrop of economic insecurity, climate catastrophe, and the threat of war?

 [Insights](#) from the discussion. Panelists: Akvilė Giniotaitė, Lina Gabrijolavičienė, Margarita Jankauskaitė, Eglė Kačkutė and Vaida Tretjakova.

7. Sisterhood and partnerships

- The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson
- Alytus District Municipality
- Jonava District Municipality
- Ukmergė District Municipality
- Lithuanian Human Rights Center
- Social Advertising Agency "Nomoshiti"
- Mental Health Perspectives
- Tauragė Woman's Employment and Information Centre
- Panevėžys branch of the Lithuanian agency SOS Children
- Center of Women's Studies and Policies (Bulgaria)
- Dissens - Institut für Bildung und Forschung e. V (Germany)
- Istituto degli Innocenti (Italiija)
- Institute for Masculinity Research and Gender Studies (Austria)
- The Peace Institute (Slovenia)
- Ukrainian Women's Fund (Ukraine)
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- Lithuanian Women's Lobby
- Lithuanian Disability Forum
- Coalition of Human Rights Organizations (HROC)
- National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform
- Anna Lindh Foundation
- European Network Against Racism

8. Finance



Project funding:

European Commission	156,5 €	Project "PARENT: Promotion, Awareness Raising and Engagement of men in Nurture Transformations".
European Economic Area (EEA) Grants	45788,25 €	Project "At the intersection of gender & disability: to talk, inspire & act".
European Commission, Government of the Republic of Lithuania	50861,18 €	Project "Everybody's Talking: Work-Life Balance Goes Mainstream".
European Commission	46521,86 €	Project "ECaRoM: Early Care and the Role of Men"
US Government	2715,44 €	Project "Equality for Security, Phase II".
Government of the Republic of Lithuania	17740 €	Project "Gender Mainstreaming Services – A Path to Financial Sustainability".
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	1760,22 €	Project "Improving access to employment and livelihoods of Ukrainian refugees in food retail in the Baltics"
European Commission	133352,14 €	Project "SEEN: Gender Based Violence Against Women with Disabilities in Focus"
Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine	682,08 €	Project "Network of gender think tanks: capacity development for advanced policy design, impact assessment, strategic advocacy, and specialised policy communications".

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