

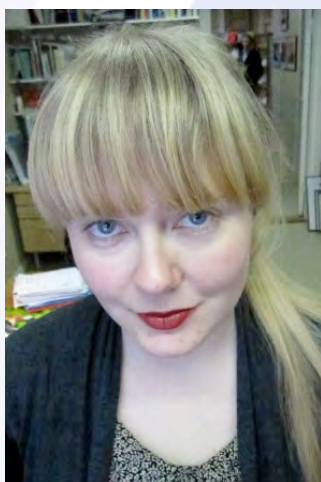


**Challenging Gender Roles  
for Prevention of Trafficking  
NEWSLETTER**

September - December, 2010

The 4<sup>th</sup> phase (September — December, 2010) of the project "Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking" dealt with launching of the girl and boy groups in both partner countries as well as recruitment and welcoming of new members to our team. We have also provided a broad communication with opinion makers and experts, as well as promoted discussions in the civil society on gender roles and risks for trafficking in human beings. In order to guarantee a successful research within the project, a detailed research implementation plan was also developed.

The project "Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking" managed by the Åland Island Peace Institute in Finland and Resource Center for Women Marta in Latvia, is now entering in its final year and can account for 48 educated leaders and 21 new girl and boy groups in Åland and Latvia. In total, over 100 youngsters are involved in group activities. We can also present a new project manager, a new project economist and two new Steering Group members.



**Jenny Jonstoj** (left) is the new Project Manager, stationed at ÅIPI. Jenny was born on Åland and has previously worked within gender projects in Sweden, among others as National Manager for the Swedish Save the Children's Boy group project allan. **Gunilla Björkman-Bobb** (right) started working as the financial manager at ÅIPI. Gunilla is originally from Finland but has for the last thirty years worked as administrator within

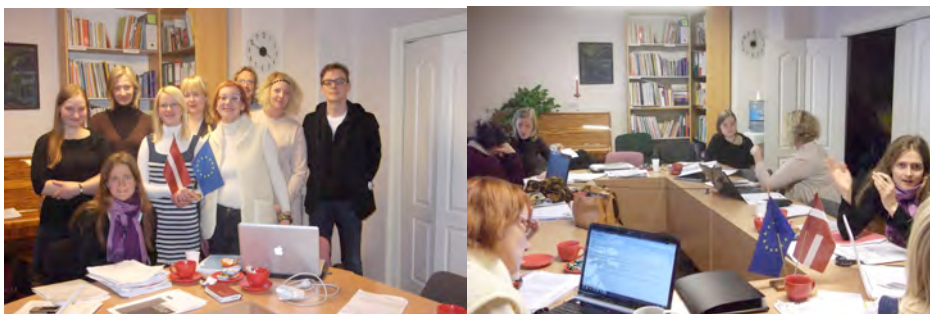


the non-profit sector in USA.

Two new Steering group members of the Project: Peter Söderström, masculinity expert from Sweden and Gun-Mari Lindholm, second deputy speaker of the Parliament of Åland and a member of the parliamentary working group on civil security and anti-trafficking in BSPC (Baltic Sea Parliament Conference).

The 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the Project provided several platforms for constructive meetings of the partners and joint discussion — participation at the Showcase conference 2010 (Riga), a working group meeting in Riga (September) and a Steering group meeting in Riga (December) where future Project strategies were planned.

Project meetings between the teams gave the opportunity to evaluate the first project year, plan for the second and last project year as well as discuss ideas for the second information campaign.



## Publicity

The ÅIPI launched a new website for the project featuring extensive information on the different parts of the project as well as news and upcoming events: <http://peace.ax/en/challenginggenderroles>. Networking between ÅIPI and stakeholders as well as civil society was conducted by participation in the Central Baltic Showcase Conference in Riga, a masculinity seminar in Sweden, in meetings with representatives from the Åland Government and local NGO:s. In addition the project was promoted through the webpage, facebook and events. It can also be mentioned that 20 participants in the Diplomatic course of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, Kavaku, visited the ÅIPI and showed interest in the project implementation and theoretical framework.

To acknowledge the problem of violence against women, the Peace Institute organised, on the 25th of November, the International day for the elimination of violence against women, a manifestation in the centre of Mariehamn.

The Nordic-Baltic conference “STOP Trafficking and Stand for Health!” provided a platform for communication with opinion and policy makers in Latvia as well as international experts and professionals from the Nordic countries, giving an opportunity to lobby the criminalisation of buyers of sexual services in Latvia.

Two informative flyers were prepared and published - one about the project and one about the girl and boy group method.

Resource Centre for Women “Marta” initiated a communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the U.S. Embassy in Latvia and the U.S. Department of State in Washington on the social campaign “Save the State!” for elimination of trafficking in human beings, which promoted a discussion with the State Police of Latvia, resulting in several meetings with officials from the State Police.

Partnership and a Latvian campaign within the global campaign “Stop Selling of Sex!” was organized, calling out to inhabitants of Latvia to sign a petition for criminalisation of buyers of sexual services. Responding to the global campaign “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People”, which was organized by “The Body Shop”, an opening event of the campaign took place on October 12 at the Riga Central Railway Station. On November 24 a regional event in trade centre “Kurzeme” in Liepāja was organized. The events were widely displayed in the mass media.



Up to December 10, the international Human Rights Day, 8826 signatures of Latvian inhabitants were gathered and on December 10 handed in to the *Saeima* Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee. The campaign and gathering of signatures in Latvia will continue until spring.



During the 4<sup>th</sup> Project phase functioning of the website [www.izglabvalsti.lv](http://www.izglabvalsti.lv) was maintained, as well as an active communication on social networks [www.draugiem.lv](http://www.draugiem.lv) and [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), as well as the *Twitter* was ensured. Boy and girl group members were given an informative material “Do You Know What a Girl and Boy Group Is? Participate!”.



## **Girl Groups and Boy Groups - over 100 youngsters involved**

During autumn one of the most important parts of the project started, namely the girl and boy group activities. The girl/boy group method takes its vantage point in gender equality and is used as a tool for empowerment work among young people. In girl and boy groups members are encouraged to question gender norms, to enhance self-respect and respect for others, to express their opinions but also to listen to others.

In the first weekend of September 15 boy and girl group leaders were educated on Åland. Thereafter the project could encounter approximately 48 trained leaders in Latvia and Åland. After a successful recruitment process 2 boy groups and 3 girl groups started on Åland and at the same time two more girl group was in the planning stage. On Åland and in Latvia there are now 21 new girl and boy groups running. In total over 100 youngsters are involved in group activities. The group leaders have, in addition to the basic training, also received support in meetings and a deepening training. The preparation of the educational material, by the Finnish Trainer Mia Hanström, has also proceeded during this time. Opportunity has been provided for leaders and project staff to comment on the manual.



In October a support meeting was organised in Latvia, in which leaders received more detailed information on the problems with regard to trafficking in human beings and prostitution. Leaders were introduced to the documentation, remuneration system and virtual fora – social network for communication and support from the trainer and the Project team. Informative materials for the recruitment of group members were distributed to the leaders.

Altogether 14 groups have been started in all regions of Latvia within the Project. Group activities are organised weekly (with exceptions in case of school holidays and alike). Group members are aged 13—16, and groups consist of 5—12 members.

On Åland 2 boy groups and 3 girl groups have started during the MS4 and 2 more girl groups were in the planning stage to start in MS5.

### **Research activities**

Latvian and Swedish versions of quantitative questionnaires were finalized. The Åland researcher was instructed on how to gather the data best, using quantitative questionnaires. The Latvian researcher visited 5 boy and 6 girl groups, spreading questionnaires for group members to fill out. First observations of the same groups were also carried out. An interview guide for conducting qualitative interviews was finalized by the Åland researcher in co-operation with the Latvian researcher. A schedule for interviews in January 2011 was prepared with the leaders of the groups in Latvia.

Detailed research plan, providing common guidelines for assessment of boy and girl group method's effectiveness, was created during an intense cooperation between the junior and the senior researchers. It was presented and discussed within the Steering group of the Project in Riga, on December 14, giving examples from open ended questions and unfinished sentences from the questionnaire. Regular *Skype* meetings were held once in two weeks between the senior and the junior researchers.

NB. The material in the newsletter reflects the authors views. The Managing Authority cannot be held liable for the information published by the project partners.