



Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking

NEWSLETTER

January - April, 2011

The 5th phase of the project “Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking” (January — April, 2011) was very intense and productive, revealing good results in the work of both partners The Åland Islands Peace Institute (Finland) and Resource Centre for Women “Marta” (Latvia). Results in all of the project implementation areas — policy lobbying process, work with youth groups, research and publicity — can be measured both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Policy advocacy

During the particular period, experts of Resource Centre for Women “Marta” professionally communicated with opinion makers and politicians by bringing the issue of criminalizing buyers of sexual services forward (meeting with I. Circene, chairperson of the *Saeima* Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee).

On March 7, just before the International Women's Day, a debate about how to prevent sexual violence was organized by the Åland Islands Peace Institute in the auditorium of the Åland Parliament. The debate was organized in response to the current debate on rape and sexual crimes legislation on Åland. The Åland debate has centered on sexual crime laws, but not as much on society's perception of sexual violence, the norms associated with gender, on gender equality and on how to prevent sexual violence. During the debate the Åland Islands Peace Institute was offering a forum to "talk about it", and follow up the debate on sexual crimes legislation and, above all, to broaden the debate in order to discuss sexual violence as a social phenomenon, as well as to discuss how sexual violence can be prevented. Six experts participated in the panel and the debate was covered in local media.

Project staff held lectures in one of the upper secondary schools on Åland about equality and gender norms.

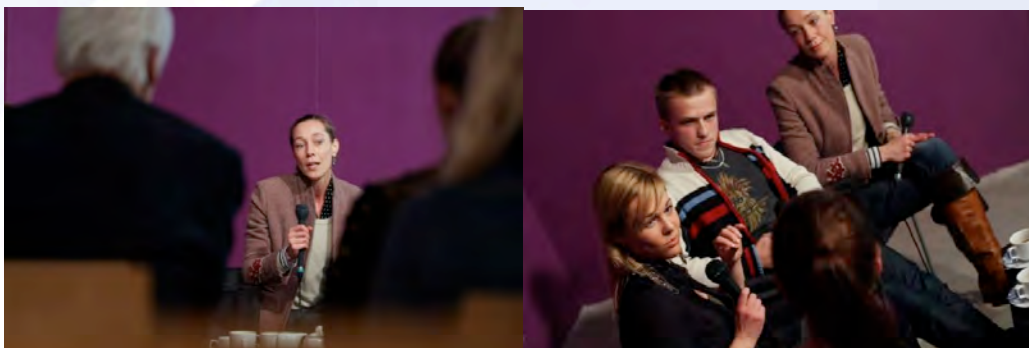
Publicity

In cooperation with the European Parliament Information Office in Riga a broad discussion within the context of the 100th anniversary of the International Women's Solidarity Day (March 7 <http://www.europarl.lv/view/lv/press-release/jaunumi-2011/Jaunumi-2011-March/press-release-2011-March-1.html>) was initiated, managed and moderated. High rank politicians, including MEPs, *Saeima* deputies, politologists, representatives of ministries, local governments and public organizations, as well as journalists took part in the discussion. The focus was put on the issue of overcoming traditional concepts and thus changing the public thinking and behaviour, thereby

achieving observance of gender equality and implementation of this principle on all levels of politics. The discussion presented also the tendencies observed within the research of Project “Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking”. The discussion was transmitted online via internet and thus everybody could interactively take part in it. The media, too, showed great interest in the discussion.



Another interactive and well-attended discussion was held on February 26; this discussion was held via portal “Diena” — biggest newspaper in Latvia — and focused on the youth’s understanding of gender roles “Which is the tough gender today?” (<http://www.diena.lv/diena-tv/dzivesstils/video-kurs-musdienas-ir-stiprais-dzimums-768851>)



Within the global campaign “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People” the issue of trafficking in human beings was made topical in wider society and cooperation with the State Border Guard was developed for holding informative events in schools in Latvia. Within the campaign more than 14 000 signatures of people in Latvia were gathered, calling for criminalization of buyers of sexual services.

The second information campaign of the project took its vantage point in “empowerment” and aimed at youth in each country.

In Latvia, in order to challenge the traditional gender roles amongst the youth and to reduce the risk for them to become victims of human trafficking, an informative campaign for the youth was



initiated and carried out “KĀDA ŠĶIRBA? LIELA ŠĶIRBA” (What’s the Difference? Great Difference!).

For the purposes of the campaign a web site www.lielaskirba.lv was used.

Information materials were prepared — stickers, posters, badges — and distributed to schools and youth gathering places in Latvia.



Within the campaign discussions with school principals and teachers were initiated to look for the best ways to talk to young people, in order for them to develop a self-assured behaviour. The campaign materials will be distributed in schools again as soon as the school year resumes in autumn.

On Åland, the information campaign was called FAIR SEX. The aim of the campaign was to encourage young people to talk about issues related to sexuality, such as: What do I want? How can I express what I want? How can I know what my partner wants? How should I relate to what other people think? To talk and think about such issues can enhance the possibilities of experiencing positive sexual relationships and reduce the risk of being exposed to or commit sexual violence. The campaign includes drawings and questions concerning sexual situations and relationships. The material can be found on Facebook, the web page www.peace.ax and was also displayed in a radio commercial in a local radio station. Posters were displayed in schools on Åland and post cards, stickers and cloth bags were handed out to Ålandic youth. An event was organized where the campaign content was discussed together with young people at a youth center in Mariehamn, in cooperation with the Youth bureau of the city of Mariehamn. A joint debate article was published in local newspapers. In connection to the campaign one of the newspapers on Åland made an extensive reportage about the campaign, including interviews with the project manager as well as two youths (discussing their thoughts about sexuality, gender norms and expectations). Some of the campaign material was also displayed in the spread. Also two radio interviews were conducted, one aiming at youths and the other at adults.

In the beginning of the year the ÅIPI arranged a press conference to tell about the achievements so far in the project. The event resulted in one article in one of the local papers and in radio news. The project manager participated in a panel debate in local tv. Two blog posts related to the themes of the project have been published on the ÅIPI website www.peace.ax.

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Här är kvinnorna som genom att få ungdomar att utmana könsrollerna vill få ett slut på sexslaveriet. Sittande från vänster nya stynggruppsledaren Gun-Mari Lindholm, projektkoordiner Gunilla Björkman Bobb, informanter Susann Simola och nya projektledaren Jenny Jernstog. Bakom dem står från vänster projektassistent Ulrika Nasier och volontären Jeanette Klaustrin. FOTO: JESSE PERSSON

De jobbar mot sexslaveriet

Fredsaktivitetens projekt för att motverka sexslaveri är nu halvslut. Över hundra ungdomar deltar i 21 nystartade kill- och tjejgrupper. Projektet visar på sambandet mellan könsroller och våld, framför allt i form av sexslaveri. För de unga är tänka till, stärka in- och utvärdering och skapa respekt mellan könen – allt för att bryta ned sexslaveri, prostitution och människoförhandling. Resultatet av forskningen presenteras i december 2011 när projektet avslutas. Projektet mot sexslaveri har en

VEM HÄR VILL LIGGA?



SVAR: DET ÄR VÄLDIGT SVårt ATT SE PÅ KLÄDERNA

Research activities

Research conducted within the project “Challenging Gender Roles for Prevention of Trafficking” has its main focus on the issue: *Do the Scandinavian Boy and Girl Group Method Help to Reduce Gender Roles and Stereotypes Effectively?*

Approximately 100 member’s — girls and boys — participated in the research. Interviews with the youth were conducted in Dobeles, Jēkabpils, Birži, Cēsis, Olaine, Talsi and Rīga in Latvia as well as on Åland. Partially structured interviews were made with group leaders in both countries.

The first results will be summarized in June 2011 and presented at the beginning of July in Istanbul at the 12th European Congress of Psychology.

The conducted interviews prove that young people do experience some changes. They say that their self-confidence has grown; that they are not scared to express their point of view, even if it is different from those of others; they are able to accept the fact that there are different viewpoints; they have become aware of what gender equality means.

Girl Groups and Boy Groups

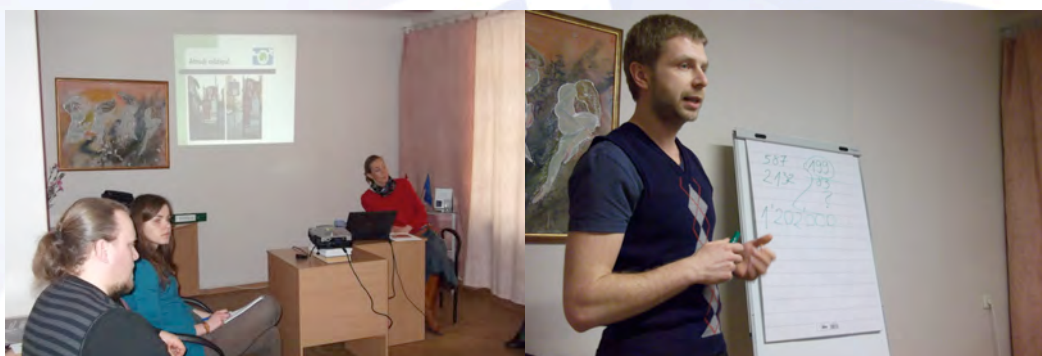
Entering in its final year the project could account for about 33 active leaders and 26 new girl and boy groups in Åland and Latvia. In total, over 100 youngsters are involved in group activities. The boy and girl groups are a free time activity where boys or girls regularly meet in their group. Under the guidance of one or two adult youth leaders they discuss matters important in their everyday lives. Group work aims at empowering participants and to provide input for questioning restricting gender norms .



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During January — April 2011 the activities of youth groups were successfully continued and concluded in some cases. In the beginning of 2011 altogether 15 youth groups were active in all regions of Latvia, out of those 10 girl groups and 5 boy groups. In the beginning of 2011 there were 19 group leaders, out of which 12 girl group leaders and 8 boy group leaders (2 people had both a boy and a girl group). Seven leaders worked with their groups individually, while 12 — had a partner to cooperate with. Altogether in the beginning of 2011 group activities took place in Talsi (1 girl group), Dobele (2 boy groups), Jelgava (1 girl group), Olaine (1 girl group), Rīga (1 boy and 1 girl group), Cēsis (1 boy and 1 girl group), Ogre (1 girl group), Jēkabpils (3 girl groups) and Birži (Jēkabpils region: 1 boy and 1 girl group).

In February one more girl group was started, in March — one more boy group, and in April — 3 more boy groups and 1 girl group. Thus, two more group leaders were involved in organization of the youth groups, while 2 existent group leaders started another boy group. One girl group concluded its activities in March. Thus altogether there were 20 youth groups in May 2011 (11 girl groups and 9 boy groups). Several groups concluded their activities at the end of May already.



In order to give group leaders better knowledge and support in organizing group work, as well as to become aware of the existing problems and exchange good-practise experience, a support training for group leaders was organized on March 11. During the training the prevailing gender stereotypes were discussed, an insight into the second Project campaign was given (the campaign “Liela šķirba” was started at the end of April), as well as information on domestic violence and possibilities for women to get help, was given (statistics and causes).

On Åland, 12 leaders have started two boy groups and four girl groups, in the municipalities of Mariehamn, Hammarland and Lemland.

The educational material/method manual on the boy- and girl group method was prepared and finalized by the Finnish trainer, project assistant and project manager. Extensive work was put into finalizing the manual and to incorporate the girl and boy group leaders comments och input concerning the manual. The manual was there after sent to Latvia for translation, layout and print.

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

