

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

Country

Serbia and Montenegro

Implementation period

2002-2003

Funding

€45,500

Results

Training schemes on gender equality issues, economic and political empowerment of women, monitor women's rights

Coordinator

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Partners

The League of Women Voters of
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Training in gender equality

Women's Forum


Montenegro is a traditional and rather male-dominated society. The role of women in politics and in the workplace is marginal, with only 2% reaching managerial positions and 1% owning property in their own right.

Education is seen as critical to advancing women's rights and participation in society, but Montenegrin women – especially in Albanian families in the north – struggle to remain in school, as they are not seen as an “economic benefit” to society.

In the five years since the Women's Forum (W Forum) was launched, the organisation has successfully put women's issues on the table in this small republic. The Forum successfully applied for EU micro-project funding in 2001, and already the results are clear to see. Three years ago, women made up only 5% of members of parliament. Today, that number has doubled, and the aim is to push it up to 30% – in line with neighbouring Croatia.

Empowering women

Through a series of workshops and training sessions between 1998 and October 2003, the Forum, managed by Kaća Djuričković and Andrijana Radoman, has managed to raise the glass ceiling in Montenegro. It brought together workers – men and women – from all 21 municipalities to learn more about gender issues.



The interactive training programme helped participants understand how discrimination and equality manifests itself. As the organisers stressed, it was important to get a good mix of both genders in the sessions, as well as the right ethnic balance.

First hurdle

Ironically, the trainers' first task during the workshops was to create an environment where men would not dominate the proceedings. Here, they empowered women to participate more actively in the discussions.

The two-day workshops – with around 20 to 25 people in each – examined such issues as equality and legislation, politics and political activism, advocacy and networking, and how to deal with the media.

“This was basically the ABC of gender issues,” notes the programme co-ordinator Kaća Djuričković. It was the first of its kind in Montenegro and the success provides a “good template for further developing the training programme”, she concludes.