

Giving women more power over their lives in Montenegro

Gender equality is one of the European Union's founding values, and despite improvements, there are still many more men in high positions compared to women right across the EU, as well as in the enlargement countries. To help change this in Montenegro, the EU funded a Gender Equality Programme aimed at boosting the political and economic status of women.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S STATUS IN SOCIETY

In Montenegro, women have traditionally not been given the same opportunities as men. They have not been allowed to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development. As a result, they have been disadvantaged. The objective of the project was to improve the status of women in terms of their personal integrity, economic advancement and political representation, and the results included the development of an action plan for political empowerment of women. It ran awareness-raising campaigns to improve public understanding of gender issues, and particularly the problem of domestic violence.

Training was provided to 200 police officers and social workers on procedures in cases of family violence. 167 women politicians received training on active participation in public life and strengthened their capacities to promote gender equality. In addition, 120 women from 4 pilot municipalities were trained in entrepreneurial skills. 50 of them went on to develop business plans, 18 established Association of Entrepreneurs and 2 registered their own businesses.

ELIMINATING GENDER BIAS

In part, the project aimed at giving greater effect to gender laws and policies already adopted in Montenegro but not yet fully implemented. It also sought to trigger a transformation process that would eliminate gender bias in national development frameworks, and would incorporate gender awareness into broader policies, programmes and institutional reforms. It consciously promoted a shift in political will that would drive the necessary changes in institutional and cultural attitudes.

Three broadly representative advisory boards – for combating violence against women, for economic advancement; and for political representation – were established, to ensure a higher degree of local ownership. The membership came from the Parliament, government, local government, NGOs, business sector, media and academia. Studies provided a new basis for protecting victims of domestic violence, enhanced political participation of women and implementation of specific measures for their economic empowerment.



Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

Montenegro

IPA – AN INVESTMENT IN EUROPE. AN INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE.

Ljiljana Dragovic learnt from this training programme how to “navigate through bureaucracy and establish a real business” out of hosting foreign tourists at her small family farm close to the mountains of northern Montenegro. The training gave her – and other local women working in agriculture – information, guidance and even some money to build up their businesses. “Some of us also figured out ways to support each

other – for example, knitted souvenirs or specialty food produced by one woman being sold to the tourists staying at the property of another”, she says. Crucially, it also provided the chance to see other businesses in operation: “Women working in agriculture almost all their life are tied to their everyday work and rarely have an opportunity (or the resources) to travel and learn from experiences of others”, she says.

PROJECT DETAILS –

Gender Programme – to support the development of gender responsive policies in Montenegro and to boost implementation of national legislation and international standards related to gender equality

Partners:

Department for Gender Equality
at the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights
UNDP Montenegro

Total cost in €:
780,000

EU Contribution in €:
700,000 (90%)

Start date:
January 2011

End date:
December 2014

Results:

30% quota for women introduced in Election Law,
and action plan for political empowerment of women;
New political support for gender equality
and new procedures for dealing with domestic violence;
New businesses started by women

Techniques:

Training, campaigning, establishment of action groups

