

Project VS2006/0322

**Taking Gender Equality
to local Communities**

Good Practices for Gender Equality

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Preamble

The document “*Good Practices for Gender Equality*” forms part of the VS2006/0322 *Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities* Project. A partnership for this Project was created and consisted of the Department for Local Government, Malta, the Research Centre for Gender Equality, Greece, the Department for Rights and Equal Opportunities, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy, the Governmental Office for Gender Equality, Croatia, and the Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género, Portugal.

This project is partly funded by the European Community Framework Programme, Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005). The Framework Strategy on Gender Equality aims to raise awareness about Gender Equality issues and overcome Gender stereotypes in and via relevant Community policies. It has promoted networking and has also ensured that results can be monitored and disseminated better.

The main researcher commissioned by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) was Dr. Suzanne Gatt B.Ed. (Hons.) MA (Sci.Educ.) (Lond.) PhD.

The aim of this research study was to identify a number of Good Practices for the promotion of Gender Equality at local level in the Partner countries. This document will highlight the findings, amongst other things, including the background and action taken to bring about these changes.

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Introduction

This publication is part of the work done within the project 'Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities'. The aims of the project are the following:

To disseminate the promotion of Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in local development through education and publicity campaigns that will be carried out at local level;

To create awareness among ordinary citizens regarding the difficulties and limitations of Gender Stereotypes in everyday activities, and instil in society the aspiration for the achievement of Gender Equality; and

To sensitize local councils, institutions and ultimately citizens to the principle of Gender Equality and promote a will to work together to create added value to the community.

In view of working towards achieving these aims, the project includes a research study as part of its activities. This research study intends to:

- seek good practices for the promotion of Gender equality in European Mediterranean States, in order to promote them widely as success stories in the fight for equality and against discrimination;
- assess different levels of commitment of different countries and their different governmental levels ranging from the national to the local;
- propose a number of recommendations regarding the problems of stereotyping and Gender discrimination to the attention of different authorities.

Five countries were involved in the project: Malta; Italy; Croatia; Hellas (Greece); and Portugal. This report presents the results of the research study.

2.0 Defining Gender Mainstreaming

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of Gender Mainstreaming as follows¹:

“Mainstreaming a Gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of Mainstreaming is to achieve Gender equality.”

The definition for Gender Mainstreaming used within the European Commission is based on the same principles and perspective:

Gender Mainstreaming is the integration of the Gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. It means assessing how policies impact on the life and position of both women and men – and taking responsibility to re-address them if necessary. This is the way to make Gender Equality a concrete reality in the lives of women and men creating space for everyone within the organisations as well as in communities - to contribute to the process of articulating a shared vision of sustainable human development and translating it into reality.²

Gender Mainstreaming can be traced back to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995³. Participants assessed how women's lives had changed over the previous decade. A mixed picture was obtained. A greater proportion of women all over the world were literate and more women had become visible in politics with more women voted into Parliament. However, it was also noted that many women were poorer, and that women's human rights were being violated on an unprecedented scale. The pursuit of Gender Equality was considered crucial in order to improve the quality of life of all citizens.

The Beijing Declaration⁴ recognises women in societies across the world and recognises the need to take action to promote a more just and equitable reality for women. A platform for action was set up. Gender Mainstreaming was established as the global strategy for promoting Gender Equality through this platform.

Developments at the European Level

The European Union has also been working to promote Gender Mainstreaming. Work on Gender Mainstreaming developed into a consistent approach following the UN 1995 Women's Conference in Beijing⁵. Gender Mainstreaming has steadily grown in importance with the European Commission's Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005, as well as the action plan for 2006-2010.

A Group of Commissioners on Equal Opportunities for women and men was set up in 1995 to achieve a cross-sectoral approach to Gender Equality. An Inter-Service Group on Gender Equality was set up with the aim of developing Gender Mainstreaming activities in all Commission services, through the formulation of work programmes, and the monitoring of their implementation.

Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming brings the experience, knowledge, and interests of both women and men on the same level of importance. Institutions and organisations may need to change goals, strategies, and actions so that both women and men participate in and benefit from development processes. The main goal of Gender Mainstreaming is that of transforming unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women, thus eradicating discrimination that may result due to one's Gender. The Commonwealth Secretariat has done a lot of work on Gender Mainstreaming. This has resulted in the development of a Gender Management Systems (GMS) toolkit designed for institutions implementing Gender Mainstreaming. Manuals focusing on different sectors have been developed. These toolkits help to guide organisations through the process of Gender Mainstreaming to overcome the existing shortcomings.⁶

3.0 Taking Gender Mainstreaming to local communities

Local communities exemplify the everyday life of citizens. Community life concerns family issues as well as activities at community level which results as a consequence of a group of people living together within a locality. Hart and Murray⁷ argue that local development involves the social and economic aspects which make up a community, and that these two aspects cannot be tackled separately due to their interdependence. They stress that local development is bottom-up, integrative, strategically driven, collaborative, interactive, multi-dimensional, reflective and assets-based⁸.

4.0 The Research Study

This research study is based on two main phases: The first phase being the preliminary study; and the second phase being the main research exercise.

- **First Phase:** The first phase involved compiling background information from each of the partner countries as well as identifying possible examples of good practice with respect to Gender Mainstreaming;
- **Second Phase:** The second phase involved the main research exercise. Two examples from the list of 10 examples presented by each of the partner countries in the first phase were chosen for in-depth research. This in-depth study was qualitative and based on interviews with individuals as well as focus group interviews. The aim was to identify good practices in Gender Mainstreaming that have been implemented at local level in the five partner countries.

The use of indicators: Indicators, adapted from those developed by the office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) of the United Nations, were used. These indicators acted as reference points to all the researchers in the different countries. Nine indicators were identified. These indicators included:

1. **Background:** providing information about the context within which change for Gender Mainstreaming has taken place.
2. **Reason for which Gender Mainstreaming was required:** to know the main causes and circumstances that brought about these changes;
3. **Objectives of the exercise:** to know what the specific targets set were and how these influenced the process adopted;
4. **Strategy adopted:** to identify the strategies used in the different initiatives of good practice implemented so as to learn which methodologies tend to work well;
5. **Outcomes achieved:** this refers to what good practices were introduced as a result of the exercise;
6. **Factors influencing success/failure:** to identify those factors which are necessary for success so as to provide a better understanding of good practices in the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming;
7. **Possible areas of improvement:** identifying what areas are needed for improvement in the process of Gender Mainstreaming;
8. **Lessons learnt:** serve to help understand the best way to implement Gender Mainstreaming;
9. **How can examples be replicated in other institutions/areas?:** This can lead to the development of models that would allow the transfer of the learning experience.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used to gain understanding of the Gender Mainstreaming exercise. The qualitative approach involved a combination of individual interviews and focus group interviews. As a general framework, the main data collected was obtained from:

- **An individual interview with the Head of institution/initiative/project and/or the person responsible for the Gender Mainstreaming exercise.** The aim was to obtain feedback on the overall view of the need as well as the purpose of the exercise, the management's perception of the objectives set as well as the outcomes achieved. It also provided insight into the overall strategy adopted.
- **A focus group interview carried out with a number of workers involved (if within an institution) or participants of a project.** The aim was to obtain insight into how the process was perceived at the beginning and after it was implemented, the degree to which they have been actively involved in the process, an evaluation of the impact of the outcomes achieved, as well as an overall assessment in terms of how far Gender Mainstreaming had really been achieved;
- **Focus group or a number of individual interviews with recipients/clients within organisation or project initiative:** These provide insight into how much the local community was aware of the thought put into the services being provided.

The case studies across the five partner countries were consequently studied in-depth.

5.0 Results: Background on the five partner countries

The five countries involved in the project were Malta, Italy, Croatia, Portugal and Hellas (Greece). These countries may have demographic differences, but share a number of problems with respect to employment as well as Gender Mainstreaming.

5.1 Demographic data

The partners' population varied in size, with Italy being the largest with a population size of 58.7million. Hellas (Greece) and Portugal have a similar population size at 10.9 and 10.3 million people respectively. Croatia is smaller at 4.4 million people followed by Malta at 404 thousand people. The gender ratio in the partner countries shows that Portugal has a slightly higher percentage of males at around 51.8% against 48.2% females. In the other partner countries there are more women at around 51% against 49% males.

5.2 Education and Employment from a gender perspective

Malta

The March 2007 Labour force survey shows that 29.3% of females aged 15 years and over were in employment compared to 65.2% of males, with the highest employment rate for females between 24-34 years of age. The female employment rate stood at 35.5% females compared to 74.5% males. The top three sectors of female employment are education, wholesale and retail, repairs and manufacturing. The main occupations of females are clerks followed by professionals. 19.2% of females are employed part-time. The Gender pay gap has gone down to 4% which is the lowest in the EU. Female literacy rates are marginally higher than those for males. There is also a trend for females to exhibit higher rates in tertiary education and educational attainment than males. However, there are fewer female graduates in science and technology than males.

Italy

Female participation in the labour market in Italy is 50% for women over the age of 15 while it is 74.4% for males. Female occupation is also characterised by part-time work with 25.6% of working women against 4.6% of men and 12.8% total. Unemployment is also higher in the Southern part of the country. During the time that this Report was being compiled, there were more women in higher education than men. Differences in unemployment rates among men and women were highest in the lowest education levels and decreased with level of education.

Croatia

The share of women entrepreneurs in the Croatian economy is about 30% against 70% men. Less women than men are employed in the private sector and often have difficulties in getting stable and well-paid jobs usually reserved for employees with university education. In the self-employed sector, i.e. craftsmen and liberal professions, the rate of employment is steadily, but still insufficiently, growing. With regard to the working status, women make 54% of a total number of persons employed at private entrepreneurs. In the health care women account for over 91% of the employees but their share as entrepreneurs is less than 36%. In tourism and catering, women account for 60% of the employees but there are only about 33% of entrepreneurs who are women.

Portugal

Education levels in Portugal show that around 50% of women follow professional courses. Areas of studies tend to be focused on Education and Healthcare, with the latter two being the most popular among females. One also finds that in employment, there is a greater concentration of women in services (mainly restaurant and food industry, healthcare and education) whereas men tend to be more concentrated in industrial production and craftwork. There is no difference, however, in the balance between men and women with respect to those who

are self-employed against 4,6% of men and 12,8% total who are employees. Unemployment rates also tend to be higher for women and more women (17%) work part-time. 18% of women and 14.1% men also work on indefinite contracts.

Hellas (Greece)

Employment participation rate in Hellas is 54.6% for women compared to 79.2% men. The unemployment rate in 2005 was 8.3% for men and 10.1% for women. In 2005, the female unemployment rate reached 15.3% while for 2006 it dropped to 13%. The percentage of self-employed women is at 21% compared to 36% for men. 76.2% of females are mainly concentrated in the service sector (clerical, sales, tourism etc.) In Hellas, female employment appears to be dominant in wholesale and retail trade sector. There are more or less the same percentage of men and women in professional and associate professionals but the nature of occupations provides women with limited perspectives of advancement. Men are dominant in the top category of legislators, senior officials and managers at 74.2%. Hellas also experiences a large gender pay gap at around 20%. Female unemployment for the first quarter of 2007 was much higher for women in all age groups.

5.3 Gender Equality legislation and tools

Malta

The Constitution of Malta prohibits discrimination on the grounds of, *inter alia*, sex⁹ The main legislative instrument promoting equality between men and women is the *Equality for Men and Women Act*¹⁰. This Act establishes the necessary machinery to address all cases of discrimination between men and women in all sectors of Maltese society. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) was set up following this Act and aims to identify, develop and update methods for the implementation of a gender perspective in all policy areas. The Employment and Industrial Relations Act, which was enacted in 2002, contains, *inter alia*, provisions on discrimination at the work place and provides for remedies to which the aggrieved individual may resort to. Other advancements have included regulations on part-timers in the form of tax credit, tax credit to women returning to the labour market, parental leave measures, urgent family leave measures, protection of maternity as well as equal treatment in occupational and social security schemes regulations.

Italy

Legislation related to Gender issues in Italy dates back to the 1970s with the enactment of Law No. 1024/71 on protecting working mothers. There has since been legislation which bans dismissal of working mothers, establishment of local authority childcare, and also promotion of equality of treatment between men and women in employment. In the 1980s, the Italian government recognised the need for positive discrimination to promote the participation of women in all the levels and sectors of work. It was however in 1991 that the law on 'positive initiatives for the realisation of equality between men and women' in employment was promulgated. This led to the setting up of the National Committee for the Implementation of the Principles of Equality of Treatment and Equality of Opportunity for Male and Female workers. In 1996, a Minister for Equal Opportunities was appointed and the Department of Equal Opportunities was set up in the Prime Minister's office. In 2000, a network of equality counsellors was set up. In 2002, the Constitution was amended to make it possible to adopt specific provisions aimed at promoting equal opportunities and reopening the debate of quotas for the creation of electoral lists.

Croatia

Changes to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia in 2000 have set Gender Equality as one of the basic provisions of the Constitution (Article 3). Croatia has established basic institutional mechanisms and introduced major legislative changes. The Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee was founded in 2001. The Law on Gender Equality which defines and establishes measures against gender discrimination and creates equal

opportunities for men and women, was promulgated in 2003. In October of the same year the first Gender Equality Ombudsperson was appointed by the Croatian Parliament in accordance with that Law. The Office for Gender Equality was founded in 2004 and has been functioning since as a professional service of the Government. Coordinators for Ministries and county offices were appointed during the same year and cooperate with the Office for Gender Equality. The Labour law forbids unequal treatment or discrimination in employment based on race, ethnicity or gender etc. As from 1999, the new Family Law introduced the term “family violence” for the first time. The Law on Protection from Family Violence was promulgated in 2003. In October 2006 Croatian Parliament drew up *The National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006- 2010*.

Portugal

The Portuguese Republic recognises and promotes equality between men and women. There are two governmental equality mechanisms: the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality and the Commission for Equality in Work and Employment. In 2007, the Council of Ministers approved the III National Plan for Equality 2007-2010 which aims at introducing structural measures to change public administration culture and implement Gender Mainstreaming; as well as to work on policy measures in four areas- balance between professional life and family; education, information and training; citizenship and social inclusion; as well as co-operation with Portuguese speaking countries. In 2007 government also approved the III National Plan against domestic violence and I National Plan against Trafficking of Human Beings to be implemented in 2007-2010, both containing several measures based upon a network of partnerships between ministries, schools, universities, municipalities and non-governmental organisations.

Hellas (Greece)

By decision of the Prime Minister, the Internal Committee for Gender Equality was established in 2000 with the tasks of making decisions regarding the advancement of the National Policy on Gender Equality aiming at Gender Mainstreaming all policies and to coordinate ministries and public sector operators in the elaboration of policies and actions for women on a central and local level. During the same year a law introducing a participation quota of 1/3 of each gender in departmental boards was promulgated. A similar law was promulgated in 2001 for participation of women as candidates in regional and municipal elections. Since 2002, the Greek Parliament operations have a Permanent Parliament Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

5.4 Political Power and decision making

Malta

Women in parliament currently¹¹ make up 9.23% (6 members) of the elected members. Within the present government 2 out of 13 ministers are women, and one parliamentary secretary out of six is also female. There are a total of 19.63% women elected on local councils and 8.82% (6 out of 68 localities) are mayors. Within the public service there are 15 Permanent Secretaries of which one is female. In terms of gender stratification in government departments and ministries, the male to female employment ratio is 60.2% to 39.8%.

Italy

Women are under-represented in politics. Only 17% of women are elected to the Italian Parliament. Currently, 21% of the government members are women. Moreover,, women are not represented at all in the highest positions within administration but make up a big proportion of clerical workers within the public administration.

Croatia

Women’s political participation has increased since 2000 but is still not enough. The number of Croatian women in parliament increased from 4.6% in 1990 through to 7.1% in 1995 growing to around 22% in 2003. Since 2000,

Croatia promulgated a number of legal instruments, which included not only the Gender Equality Act, but also the election legislation. The law on the election of the representative bodies of the local and regional self-government units contains an article stating that political parties should achieve a balanced representation of men and women in appointments to state bodies. Today, there are 31% female government members, 26.5% officials in state bodies and civil servants, 15% ambassadors, 10% mayors, and 14.5% in city councils and county assemblies.

Portugal

Participation at political level is 21.3% women and 78.7% men elected to Parliament in 2005. The government elected in 2005 has 57 members of which 8 are women, 2 of whom are ministers of Education and Culture; and the remaining 5 Secretaries of State for Industry, Trade and Services; Public Administration; Health; Social Security, Family and Children; and Arts. Within the public service there are around 63% men and 37% women in decision-making positions. Participation in positions of leadership in other organisations include: 77% men and 23% women in the Constitutional Court, 88.2% men and 11.8% women in the Higher Council of the Magistracy; 94.4% men and 5.6% women in the Council of State, 84.5% men and 15.5% women in the Economic and Social Council, 78.7% men and 21.3% women in the National Education Council and 85.7% men and 14.3% in the National Council of Ethics for Life Sciences. In 2006, the Portuguese Parliament also approved a Law for balanced representation between women and men in policy making decisions.

Hellas (Greece)

The number of women participating in politics is increasing. In 2004, 13% of Parliamentary members elected were women. Participation of women has also increased in local politics with 12% women elected members of the Municipal Board, 17% elected on Regional Boards, 2.1% elected as mayors, and 1.9% selected as Heads of Regional Boards. Hellas also has a woman as the Head of the House of Greek Parliament as well as a Greek woman who has served as a Commissioner for the European Union. Women in the diplomatic service are also increasing with a total of 130 women compared to 411 men in 2004.

6.0 Results: Examples of Good practice

The in-depth research conducted provided an insight into a number of examples of good practices in Gender Mainstreaming that were targeted at local level. The localities in which these practices took place were diverse but all the ten practices provide a richness of initiatives that can be taken in order to promote the equal treatment and participation of men and women.

The ten examples chosen are two from each country and target different types of aspects of Gender Mainstreaming issues: imbalance in participation in education, cultural activities and civil society activities; the promotion of employment and entrepreneurship among women; promoting equal treatment of men and women at the workplace; promoting a healthy work-life balance for both genders, as well as tackling gender violence. These good practices are included in the following sub-sections.

6.1 Malta - Promoting the inclusion of both genders in education, cultural activities and sport in San Lawrenz

San Lawrenz is a village situated in the west of the island of Gozo. The population is balanced in gender terms with 50.17% males and 49.83% females. The average age of males and females is 38.5 and 39.9 years respectively compared with 37.4 and 39.6 for Malta. The population is among the least dense of localities on the island.

The Local Council places a lot of emphasis on education and on educating the members of its community, as well as promoting Gender Mainstreaming. It was noted that women did not have many opportunities to do

things beyond their home responsibilities. Outings organised by the Local Council were dominated by women, particularly since these involved either visiting some particular market and/or playing Bingo. The folk group was dominated by women mainly due to the nature of the activity practised – traditional dancing. Women (mothers) as well as grandmothers had to stay at home to take care of children and did not have free time to go out. There was also lack of sports opportunities for women in the locality.

The Local Council's main objective is that of educating the members of the community and to empower them to achieve their full potential. The Local Council's strategy for understanding and catering for the community's needs is through being close to the community. It achieves this through:

- **Direct Communication:** The mayor is always open to suggestions and takes action with the consensus of the Local Council committee;
- **Good customer relations within the Local Council premises:** Due to the small size of the community, the Local Council feels that it practically knows all the members of the community. The direct personal contact provides ample opportunities for residents to share concerns, ideas etc.;
- **Feedback from Shops:** Shop owners relay to the Mayor the main topics of concern within the community;
- **Use of Surveys:** Surveys are occasionally carried out among all households to learn what the members of the community think with respect to specific issues;
- **General Meetings** are held for the members of the community about three times a year and main issues relevant to the community are discussed;
- **Effective dissemination:** The main channel of information is a leaflet published twice a month and distributed to all households in the locality.

Good practices Identified

The Local Council has taken a number of steps to reduce this imbalance with a good degree of success. The good practices identified include:

- **50% representation of both genders in all sub-committees:** The Local Council insists on gender balanced representation in all the sub-committees;
- **Promoting participation of both genders in educational courses organised:** The Local Council encourages both genders to participate in courses that it organises by providing courses to target different needs and at times when both men and women can attend. For example, in the case of parental skills courses which are organised in the evening, participation has changed from an exclusively female attendance to a gender balanced one;
- **Setting up a Folk Group:** This initiative provides an opportunity for members of the community to be involved in cultural activities. The folk group attracted mainly women but the Local Council insisted on having a mixture of men and women in the administrative council. It is now working to promote the participation of men in folk dance activities. The folk group also resulted in the promotion of entrepreneurship for women through contracts made with hotels in Gozo;
- **Sports activities for females:** The Local Council has promoted sports among women, first through setting up a volleyball team, and then a female football team. A turf pitch has been built for practising this sport by both males and females;

- **Setting up of a Child-care centre:** The Local Council has opened a child-care centre which allows some free time to both parents and allows mothers and fathers as well as grandparents who usually take care of their children's offspring to have some free time. So far this service is offered twice a week in the morning but there are plans to extend it following its success;
- **Securing EU funding to provide opportunities to local youths:** The Local Council has secured funding to provide local youths with the opportunity to go abroad. The Local Council always insists on gender balanced participation of youths;
- **Lobbying with the hotel in area to employ people from within the locality:** The Local Council works hard also to promote employment of people, particularly women within the nearby hotel from its locality.

These strategies adopted all reflect the commitment that the Local Council has towards its citizens. It shows sensitivity to the needs of the different genders and initiatives have been directed at both men and women depending on the circumstance.

6.1 MALTA - PROMOTING GENDER BALANCE IN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN ZEJTUN

The population in Zejtun is balanced in gender terms with 49.75% males and 50.25% females. The average age of males and females is 38.5 and 41.6 years respectively compared with 37.4 and 39.6 for Malta. The Local Council has an established and active role in the community, particularly for its success in integrating both genders in the community. The Local Council has dedicated part of its energy to organise activities related to leisure and education. Gender imbalance was present in various activities. Participation in sub-committees was mainly dominated by women. Women also dominated the Council's educational courses as well as the cultural activities organised. The council felt that it was catering more for women's needs and was neglecting men who may not have as much time to participate due to their work commitments.

The Local Council thus worked on the issue by promoting more gender balanced political participation at Local Council committee level, providing a role model through the vice-mayor who is a female and works for the needs of the community, encouraging a diversity of members in age and gender as well as cultural background in its sub-committees, introducing male tutors in courses that are predominantly attended by females, orienting outings more towards families rather than women through weekend breaks rather than morning outings, and focusing on including all groups of the community in all of its activities. Changes were achieved due to the Council's disposition and sensitivity to needs within the community, fostering an open policy for suggestions where all ideas were discussed at Local Council committee level, as well as organising a formal consultation exercise with key players within the community. These different approaches enabled the Local Council to understand the impact of its activities on the two genders and to work towards providing Gender Mainstreaming within its activities.

Good Practices Identified

The Local Council has managed to bring about changes in the participation rates as well as in the type of its initiatives, responding to the needs of all citizens rather than just those of a few groups. The good practices identified include:

- **A relatively gender balanced Local Council:** The Local Council now has three female council members out of a total of nine members which can be considered to represent a high female participation rate compared to other Local Councils in Malta;
- **Presence of women with responsibility:** This is reflected through the role of Vice Mayor which has been entrusted to a woman who is very active and dynamic. She provides a role model to many women in the locality as a living example of the contribution that females can give to the community;
- **Balanced gender participation in sub-committees:** The Local Council can now boast that there is gender balance in its sub-committees, together with diversity in other aspects such as age and background. This has been a great achievement with respect to the previously female dominated situation;
- **A more gender balanced participation in educational courses:** The Local Council can say that there has been an increase in the participation of men in many of the courses, even in those areas which tend to be labelled as 'for females'. There have been men attending courses in parchment, lace making, *ganutell*, as well as flower arranging, and their work has also been displayed in the showcase exhibition set up by the Local Council. The course which is still problematic is curtain making with no men participating yet. However, on the other hand, the sewing course for children was popular with both boys and girls reflecting a gender balance;
- **Outings have become a family activity rather than one for women:** The outings and social activities organised by the Local Council have become a family activity where the whole family rather than only females participate. Activities no longer involve the traditional 'coffee mornings' but include weekend breaks, travel abroad, and other cultural outings which interest both men and women, and are organised at times when both men and women can attend;
- **Setting up of a child-care centre:** The Local Council can boast that it is among one of the first Local Councils to work towards having a child care centre with European standards within the locality to serve the community's needs. This project as yet has not been completed due to some problems but the building is at an advanced stage. The Local Council is still committed to completing this initiative.

The success obtained is the result of a highly committed group of people within the Local Council who work to make the community better and to serve the needs of all its members, whatever their political and/or religious beliefs. It also harbours a good relationship with other civil society organisations (band clubs, political parties, Church etc.) within the community, promoting collaboration and dialogue within the community.

The Local Council has learnt that society has become complex and does not only consist of the traditional family units. The community now includes a variety of family structures which have different needs. This makes the work of the Local Council more difficult as the demands are greater. The Local Council has realised that the best way to work for the community is to be close to its members. This can only be achieved by continually listening to what the members of the community think and have to say about what the Local Council is doing and what it can do.

This study has shown how a Local Council can work to bring about Gender Mainstreaming within its activities and initiatives. The changes have been gradual and this is an example from which other Local Councils can learn.

6.3 Croatia - The Realisation of the Equal Opportunities Policy

During 2004 and 2005 the Office for Gender Equality, a professional body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia which carries out tasks related to the realisation of Gender Equality, and CESI (Centre for Education, Counselling and Research), a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, successfully cooperated in the implementation of the project entitled Equal Opportunities Policy through which they directly educated local officials, members of county committees for Gender Equality, and representatives of non-governmental organisations working on promotion of Gender Equality in all 21 Croatian counties.

The most important results achieved, i.e. encouraged by project activities, are the establishment of new county committees for Gender Equality and a significant improvement of the implementation of Gender Equality policy in local communities. Financial and organisational support was provided by the Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD), as a foreign donor, also provided financial support to CESI in the amount of EUR 25, 868.

Even though the Government of the Republic of Croatia remained committed to the enforcement of the equal opportunities policy by promulgating a number of Acts and documents and by establishing various institutional bodies, the heart of the problem was the lack of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the agreed strategies within the bodies of local government. Today, the current social status of women in Croatia demands the solution of numerous problems related to Gender Equality which are particularly pronounced in considerable under-representation of women in political, economic and public life, women's high unemployment rate and the frequency of violence against women. The project focused on bringing local authorities to better understand the mentioned issues but also make them aware of other discrepancies in Gender Equality and the imminent need to overcome them during the implementation process of Gender Equality policy.

Examples of Good practices Identified

The activities of the project included the educational part as well as the making and the publication of the manual entitled "Gender Perspective in Politics and Practice", while the inaugural Conference of the county committees was held as the final part of the project in order to put together the experiences of newly established and already established committees. Lectures and workshops were organised and held by the bearers of relevant institutional mechanisms for implementation of a Gender Equality policy as well as many renowned representatives of women's NGOs. The educational activities also included the distribution of documents¹² and publishing of those documents which are important for a better understanding of implementation of Gender Equality policy.

The most significant results of the seminars can be summarised as follows:

1. New committees for Gender Equality were founded thus establishing, an institutional network in all Croatian counties;
2. Provision of timely information to the members of the committees on the role, obligations and competences of those bodies as well as the bodies which implement the Gender Equality policy on national level;
3. Encouraged interest in the implementation of the legal framework in the field of Gender Equality on local level; and
4. Organised the networks of the committees' activities and established better communication with the NGO sector

The Office for Gender Equality has developed good cooperation with CESI throughout the implementation of

this project. On the other hand, in its Annual Report 2004, CESI cites that “we have established a good example of inter-sectoral co-operation through partners' relationship with the Governmental Office for Gender Equality on the project. The Office's representative has recognised the project as a good practice of implementation of the articles and regulations set in the Law on Gender Equality and National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality.”¹³

The Office for Gender Equality is continuously cooperating with CESI on this and on other projects. The final part of the project was the Conference of the county committees for Gender Equality that was held in Pula from 22nd until 24th of April 2005. The purpose of the conference was the evaluation of previous work of counties' Gender equality committees and exchange of experiences of committees' members, members of NGO's and Office for Gender Equality. In addition, at the conference, the members of counties' committees worked on the proposals for the new National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2006 -2010) in order to define the role and objectives, jurisdiction and the scope of work of county/local commissions, their founding and financing.

In the past few years, the majority of county committees for Gender Equality applied the gained knowledge, and, in cooperation with non-government organisations promoting and protecting women's human rights, pursued numerous activities including boosting of the economic empowerment of women, lobbying for changes of electoral legislation in order to increase the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels as well as in leading positions in local government and public services, and participated in campaigns to combat violence against women and trafficking in women and children. The committees successfully pursued the mentioned but also many other activities and significantly influenced the level of understanding and awareness of the public as well as the relevant institutions about women's human rights.

The new National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010 contains, for the first time, provision on the role and objectives, jurisdiction and the scope of work of county/local commissions, their founding and financing. Founded county commissions for Gender Equality are financed from county/city budgets, with the amount depending on activities these commissions undertake.

6.4 Croatia - Financial support for women in business: Women's Entrepreneurship

Since 2004 the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, in cooperation with Croatian counties and commercial banks, has been implementing programmes to strengthen and promote women's entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment of women. In 2007 the Ministry initiated the special project Women's Entrepreneurship with HRK 4.5 million allocated to project funds. The Ministry has also initiated a special project which allocates non-refundable grants to women who are owners or economic operators. The programmes are implemented in cooperation with the counties and women entrepreneurs, whose businesses are in the areas of special state concern¹⁴, have priority during funds allocation either for non-refundable grants or, indirectly, for the projects which stimulate the entrepreneurship infrastructure (facilitating the start-up and business development of economic operators, strengthening of institutional support, stimulation of establishment and construction of entrepreneurship zones)¹⁵.

The project is implemented in cooperation with the bodies of local government and targets the economic empowerment of women. Every year the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship invites public tenders to grant financial support for development of women's entrepreneurship.

Good Practices Identified

The projects are implemented mainly through credit subventions to female entrepreneurs and partly through non-refundable grants. The projects are aimed at supporting production and employment growth in the counties of the Republic of Croatia. Female entrepreneurs can raise loans from their business banks and use them to purchase, construct or expand production facilities, equipment, purchase or refinancing of existing, non-favourable-loans. The incentive measures also include consultancy services during registration and establishment of the company, part of the registration expenses, making of a business plan, investment studies and marketing plan, additional entrepreneurship education and IT education as well as the consultancy services for the first six months. The individual subvention amounts to HRK 80,000.¹⁶

According to the survey conducted by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship which included information about several women's entrepreneurship projects, it was evident that, within the survey period, companies which received non-refundable incentives realised higher total income and profit growth, average wage growth, employment growth and decrease of total expenditure.

The programmes providing credit subventions and non-refundable grants, undoubtedly, greatly stimulated the development of women's entrepreneurship in the Republic of Croatia

Even though there are many programmes which provide loans for female entrepreneurship, the obstacles for their realisation are numerous. The loans are usually mortgage loans which poses a significant problem because not many women are real estate owners in Croatia. Sometimes the problem occurs because funds prove to be insufficient.

The National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2006 - 2010 recommends a number of measures in order to empower women's entrepreneurship. Even though some of the measures are already being implemented, it is indispensable to create the development strategy for women's entrepreneurship, establish a comprehensive database, and systematically promote women's entrepreneurship through media campaigns, programmes and educational activities about entrepreneurship specially designed for women as well as providing organisational, financial, spatial and other types of assistance, especially those related to traditional craft activities.¹⁷

The models of credit subventions and non-refundable grants to female entrepreneurs provided by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship in cooperation with local government through various programmes in the past four years considerably empowered women who wanted to start their own entrepreneur projects and boosted employment growth.

The increasing number of counties, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, prepare various programmes for the promotion and development of female entrepreneurship as well as the economic empowerment of women. The data obtained from the Women's Entrepreneurship Centre ROSA, which launches education programmes for female beginners in entrepreneurship, shows the growing interest of many women to start their own businesses. About 25% of women who were educated through seminars go into business independently. Even more women decide to start their own businesses with their spouses¹⁸.

According to the data obtained from the Croatian Association of Businesswomen "Krug", there are 17,815 companies in Croatia which are either female-owned or have a female majority holding. This means that the

share of women's entrepreneurship is 33% of the total entrepreneurship activity. When compared to 2002 when the share of female entrepreneurs was only 17%, it is obvious that the increase is quite significant and is a result of improved access to information and stronger awareness of women who want to start their own businesses after completing their education. These companies employ 101,000 workers, both women and men, which is certainly a good number.

In the past few years, the expansion of women's entrepreneurship can be attributed to credit subventions and non-refundable grants provided, through various programmes, by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with Croatian counties.

6.5 Hellas (Greece) - Promoting employment among women-KETHI

The Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI) is a legal entity under private law, founded in 1994, operating throughout Hellas. It is supervised and funded by the General Secretariat for Equality and implements, not only national but also European programmes. Its head-offices are in Athens and it operates in nine major Greek cities either through its branches (in Thessaloniki, Patra, Iraklio, Volos and Preveza) or through units of counselling support services (in Alexandroupoli, Komotini, Amphissa and Kalamata). In the last few years, KETHI's actions have been intensified, which is proven by the inauguration of some new branches.

Female employment issues, their professional prospects and entrepreneurship constitute the basic aims of the National Priorities Action Plan for Equality 2004 - 2008 for Hellas and advocate the abolition of discrimination against women at the work place. The goal set (that is the increase of female employment up to 60% by the year 2010 as a means of growth in employment as a whole, a growth that is much needed by the European Union) guarantees a more representative participation of all the members of society in every sector, achieving wider social cohesion. More specifically, the promotion of equal access and the evolution of both genders in the labour market guarantees, up to a certain point, a fairer distribution of wealth and of human resources and consequently contributes to social cohesion.

Good Practices Identified

Presently, KETHI actively works for the promotion of women in all the aspects of social, political and financial life having as a prime goal the decisive contribution in the eradication of discrimination against women. To this end, it undertakes surveys and implements national and European plans of action regarding Gender Equality. At the same time, it operates and runs Counseling Centres, providing services of psychological and professional support as well as legal aid.

KETHI has set up working groups, for which all personnel received, or are still receiving, training in important issues regarding Gender Equality and mainstreaming and is working to integrate these principles in every action that it implements.

In 2003, it undertook the implementation of an innovative programme providing consultative services (psychological support, confidence boosting, and understanding of family role, understanding and management of skills) and creating networks for the promotion of employment. It is estimated that through the program entitled 'Integrated Interventions for Women', 9018 women benefited from the above-mentioned offered services. More specifically, more than 6500 have found work, 1000 founded their own business and 1000 were being trained through various training programmes.

The role of KETHI is that of a 'Scientific advisor of the General Secretariat for Equality, providing services such as information, employment counseling, social support and vocational training for women'. More specifically, it provides: a) the information and sensitization of counselors of integrated services, b) the availability of counseling tools and the training of counselors in how to use them, c) the strengthening of structures for the rendering of services in the creation of networks and d) the drafting of an innovative, by Greek standards, program of entry results in the internet.

The Unified Information System has constituted a major tool as it has provided a thousand counsellors prompt information on employment opportunities and also time tracking and processing results on line.

The Unified Information System includes:

- An internet portal which provides information about the programme to the public;
- An intranet, which technically supports the programme's coordination and facilitates internal communication and collaboration among Action Plans; and
- A "Managing Information System" that handles data regarding procedures and outcomes of the Action Plans.

All women have their own personal electronic file, which is accessible only by their employment counselor, and their progress is monitored on a monthly basis. The system enables evaluation of the implementation process nation-wide. Only staff has access to the system and is responsible for updating the system regularly with all the activities women undertake in their search for employment. They are also responsible for electronically recording all collaboration that women or the staff themselves make with other local agencies. This system enables KETHI to coordinate composite, multi-level local and national initiatives/programmes that target employment as well as record and evaluate the outcome of Integrated Interventions on national, local/prefecture and individual level.

In every prefecture of the country (there are thirteen prefectures in Hellas) a unit that provided more comprehensive services which included a range of employment and social security services to unemployed women was set up.

1. The "units" have the form of a partnership among agencies (governmental and non-governmental) that have experience in providing vocational counseling services to women. Each partnership – called Action Plan - has a "coordinating – agency", which is usually based in the larger city of the prefecture and "antenna – agencies" that are scattered in smaller towns and villages. The goal for each "Action Plan" is to secure maximum coverage of the prefecture;
2. The "Action Plans" implement Integrated Interventions, which include services such as the provision of specialized information, counseling (employment counseling, psychological and legal counseling), social support, opportunity to participate in training and pre-training programmes offered by local agencies (which are not necessarily partners of the Action Plan), job placement services to women, as well as funding opportunities for business start-ups;
3. The Action Plans are localized and only answerable to their prefecture.
4. All Action Plans are coordinated by the General Secretariat for Equality and the services they offer are monitored by KETHI. KETHI is also responsible for training staff and diffusing its methodology.

The idea of integration lies in the fact that women don't only receive counselling services, as they did so far in KETHI's units; they receive, instead, a complete set of services that also includes the "post-counselling period", when women are trying to pursue a sustainable work position. The goal is for women to use counselling to make prudent decisions about their career plans and successively get the chance to implement their plan through active policies for employment.

6.6 Hellas (Greece) - Promoting work-life balance- the Municipal Development Enterprise of Egaleo

In public and private sector businesses, working women face a series of difficulties and obstacles that reflect a wider social prejudice regarding gender. The first issue concerns working conditions: working hours, difficulty to get parental leave and limited child-minding services, counseling and so on, within the framework of large companies. Furthermore, another problem is the lack of information amongst women about their rights in policies which are friendly to family life.

The Municipal Development Enterprise of the Municipality of Egaleo (MDEME) provides actions promoting social protection and solidarity, education, culture, sports and the environment. MDEME often undertakes the implementation of programmes such as “Help at Home” or Consulting Programmes for the unemployed aiming at their integration in the labour market. One main target set was the implementation of policies and actions promoting reconciliation of family and professional life of working and unemployed women. Most of the actions undertaken incorporate Gender Mainstreaming and the promotion of equal opportunities. The specific targets were: improving integration prospects for women in the labour market; promoting equal opportunities; and encouraging the adaptability of workers and businesses. Those who benefited from the implementation were workers with family and child minding responsibilities or workers taking care of elderly or disabled family members; mostly women who were either absent from the labour market due to family responsibilities and who wished to be re-integrated to employment, or have difficulty in going in entering the labour market due to the lack of flexible integration formulas or due to the lack of support and the incompatibility of working hours.

Good practices Identified

The aim of the intervention was to improve the operation of social support units in order for women and men (who are having difficulties in accessing the labour market due to the demands of family care) to have the ability to seek work; follow training and vocational programmes; keep their job and advance in their career while the dependant members of their families receive high quality care; as well as introduce reconciliation policies in the formulation of the way various social structures operate. Within the framework of this effort, an experimental extension of opening hours of services offered was introduced to better meet the needs of working men and women so as to make it easier to balance their professional and family obligations.

The Municipality of Egaleo has an Equality Advisor who processes and implements measures for the integration of equality policies, amongst which those on reconciliation between professional and family life. The municipality worked on those social support units that operate in the municipality and which promote reconciliation between professional and family life. It developed structures that operate in most municipalities and which provided services such as: daycare centres; the “Help at Home” programme; and counseling support for the unemployed.

The Municipal Enterprise drafted an operational plan which is specified in an annual Plan of Action. Actions targeted within the Plan of action included:

- a survey in the form of a structured interview with a representative sample of the local population to identify the needs of the working and unemployed women and men who are parents or who look after other dependent family members;
- elaboration of the results of this survey and the presentation of these results; and
- charting of measures so as to cover these needs gradually.

Basic aspects of these actions include: funding and their integration within the existing legal framework.

The implementation of this Plan has resulted in:

- ***The experimental implementation of working hours of social services with the extension of opening hours of two child-minding units***, providing for a three-hour extension of operation to meet the needs of workers. Current opening hours of the child-minding units are open for so few hours that women, who are usually the main carers in the home can only work part-time. Otherwise, the family has to seek additional assistance.
- ***The experimental implementation of social working hours with the extension of opening hours of the "Help at Home" programmes***, which provide support to individuals and families regardless of their age and their financial situation, but mostly to the elderly. Priority is given to persons who are not able to help themselves, who live alone and do not have the means to improve the quality of their lives. The provided services include, amongst others, medical assistance, nursing care, physiotherapy at home, and assistance services which cover the basic everyday needs and facilitate the participation in various activities.
- ***The experimental implementation of social working hours in the Centre for the Promotion of Employment of the Municipality of Egaleo***, where professional consultation is provided as well as information on issues regarding working rights, parental leave, flexible working conditions, allowances and social benefits.
- ***The vocational training of unemployed women by certified centres of vocational training***, the provision of child care, the elderly and the disabled having as criterion the provision of services of the highest quality and the access of women in the labour market who were otherwise excluded due to their age or lack of qualifications.
- ***The study of the existing legal framework*** in relation with those who benefit from the social support services and the research of expansion possibilities of these rights to a larger number of citizens who are in need.

Sensitization measures aiming at the balanced participation of men and women in professional and family life, via the implementation of trial actions and information campaigns for the advancement of perceptions and the abolition of obstacles which impede the access of women in the labour market.

One hundred families have benefited in total. The implementation of these interventions is not only a permanent task of the Equality Consultant who deals with equality issues. The participation in these actions is also the responsibility of certain delegates. This is necessary so as to achieve a more stable and effective collaboration.

6.7 Italy - Reducing difficulties in reconciling work and family life

The EQUAL project "Agenda dei territori per la conciliazione" by Polo Scientifico Tecnologico Lombardo S.p.A. (PSTL), works to help men and women overcome difficulties in reconciling work and family life.

PSTL provides assistance and consultancy services to institutions and administrative bodies, stimulates the local manufacturing context and promotes the innovative potential of the local areas. Its main aim is that of reinforcing the entrepreneurial context by sustaining innovation and training projects, promoting enterprises' competitiveness, fostering the innovative potential of the area through its diversification and requalification,

promoting enterprises' internationalization, as well as promoting the transferral of innovation from competent sources (public and private universities, organisations, institutes and laboratories) to small and medium enterprises.

The project involved five provinces of the Lombardy region: Varese, Milano, Brescia, Como and Lecco and they are addressed to all enterprises and main stakeholders active in the programming and management of the services that improve the reconciliation between work and family (municipalities, health care service, trade unions, and so on.). The project aims to cope with the issue of reconciliation between work and family life for women. The project partnership promotes interventions for enhancing the capacity of both men and women to adopt behaviours free from Gender stereotypes, both in a family and in a professional context. Moreover, it aims to sensitise enterprises on Gender Mainstreaming, as a positive element for both women and men. Enterprises are involved through actions providing managers with indicators detecting the cost/profit relationship of interventions promoting equal opportunities in enterprises and with assistance to plan interventions supporting men's and women's parental leave.

Good practices Identified

Actions were addressed at local welfare systems and enterprises in the territories and included providing administrators with indicators on reconciliation needs at territorial level; giving operators effective tools to use in local area plans on reconciliation needs at territorial level; supporting enterprises with services for a marketing strategy able to cater for territorial needs; and making synergic choices between needs and welfare policies. In particular, the strategy implemented involved a series of interconnected actions:

- **Creating a conciliation forum** in every province directed at those involved in the programming and service management to improve reconciliation of work and family. The Forum was composed of representatives from local authorities, health area service, trade unions, and so on., including all the relevant stakeholders in order to: i) support and increase the relationships between people who, at different levels, are programming developing policies in the territory; ii) identify and share common ideas and visions related to conciliation; iii) identify and share priorities and interventions; and iv) identify common solutions to the population's needs.
- **Conciliation in work environment** This set of interventions has proposed actions to avoid that parental leave acts as a penalizing tool for both enterprises and workers. Performance indicators have been identified, so as to value the extent to which reconciliation policies affect firms productivity. These indicators have been discussed (using the technique of focus groups) with trade unions and firms in order to better understand the needs of both firms and workers in terms of reconciliation.. Once such needs are identified, specific activities are implemented within firms.
- **Promotion of service enterprises for conciliation:** This set of interventions was aimed at improving the quality of the services offered to families. "Service Managers", operating in the care service sector have both social and economical expertise. Improving social competences is considered, by the people interviewed, to be a tool that will help these Managers better understand the needs of families.

The project has reached the following important outcomes:

- With the support of the Forum among local administrators, the project has been included on local plans for local development of specific area, setting up a new organization of services and interventions taking into account women's and men's need to reconcile work and family life;
- The proposed interventions in the working environment contributed to the introduction of a gender equal culture within firms avoiding Gender stereotypes on parental and maternity leave. A new professional role, the re-entering tutor, was created with the main aim of supporting workers who are re-integrating into the

labour market after parental leave. This consultant keeps in touch with workers during parental leave informing them of developments in the firm; projecting specific training for when they re-enter; and giving advice on specific and gender sensitive work organization. This has been tried in both public and private firms.

- Interventions have been directed at 25 firms that provide services in the childcare and eldercare sector. For each, a specific marketing plan was created to support these firms in meeting their targets and to manage their business in a better way;
- A new professional profile, the Service Manager, a consultant who operates in the marketing field, but also with social expertise was created. This new profile had been tried and implemented within *Euroimpresa*, one of the partners of the project.

The project beneficiaries included workers (men and women) and enterprises that used the measures to facilitate workers' return to the labour market after parental leave; 25 service enterprises have used marketing plans; and a number of citizens working within these enterprises have benefited from the new services implemented.

The important contribution of this project is that it has worked towards finding solutions to problems while creating and reinforcing existing equality networks at a local level as well as giving suggestions on how it is possible to internalise Gender Mainstreaming in local firms by identifying which elements and strategies need to be carried out.

6.8 Italy – Promoting entrepreneurship among women through sustainable tourism

The project is promoted by Sviluppo Italia, designated as “Agenzia nazionale per l’attrazione d’investimenti e lo sviluppo d’impresa SpA.” (National Agency for Inward Investment and Business Development). The Agency’s action follows three main areas, focused in Southern Italy. These include:

- Supporting inward investments in order to boost the economic and productive development of the Country;
- Developing innovation and competitiveness in the productive sectors and in the territorial clusters; and
- Encouraging competitiveness and the Country’s attractive potentials.

The agency promotes development through supporting new ideas. It places its trust in young people’s ideas and in the unemployed who intend to start a business. This means directly assigning facilities and services such as entrepreneurial training, professional qualification and technical assistance to these sectors, like what was achieved in this project.

The project was foreseen for regions in the South of Italy, specifically for the regions of Sicily and Abruzzo, and was included in the Operational Programmes co-financed by Structural Funds. Unemployment (especially as regards young people) is higher in the Southern Regions, affecting more women than men. Female entrepreneurship represents a different way to enter the labour market and it is specifically encouraged in the South of Italy.

‘Women in sustainable tourism’ is a project promoting the development of female touristic enterprise as an activity that encourages sustainable tourism from an environmental and human impact viewpoint. It aims to launch the creation of female entrepreneurship initiatives in two pilot- regions, Abruzzo and Sicily, through the support of the digital technologies in the field of sustainable tourism.

The project is characterized by the connection between territorial resources and entrepreneurship and

contributes to the empowerment of sustainable tourism. This approach is in line with the specific characteristics of the region which include National Parks, suburbs, historical centres with high cultural-architectural value, eco-gastronomic itineraries, traditions and crafts.

The project involved a number of phases, these being:

- identification of environmental and cultural resources in the territory, in order to enforce them and create new entrepreneurial opportunities; and
- involvement of local actors in order to promote opportunities offered by this intervention and raise interest of potential female entrepreneurs;
- publication of a call for proposals which permitted the selection of the 10 best enterprise's ideas on the chosen territory of Abruzzo and the 20 best ideas in Sicily (a total of 30 ideas).

Good practices Identified

The candidates were provided with support in various ways and at various points along the path to opening a new business activity. Women were provided with the opportunity to participate in a training course for the creation of enterprises in the field of tourism initiatives, and which focused on the use of the web, business planning and sensitisation on ethical and sustainable tourism. The course also aimed at helping women to gain knowledge, methodologies and tools for the improvement of functional competences and the planning/start up of enterprise activities. After the training phase participants could ask for individual meetings to receive consulting support during the planning phase and for the elaboration of their enterprise's business plan.

The project has permitted the individuation of concrete tourism opportunities, upon which a strong activity of "territorial promotion" aiming to stimulate the potential female entrepreneurs was launched. The activity of promotion (workshops, panels, working meetings in the Local Chambers of Commerce, and so on.) involved 600 women, permitting the presentation of 226 business plans (90 in Abruzzo and 136 in Sicily). 40 business proposals were selected in order to offer them specific guidance, training and supporting programmes for the definition and elaboration of the enterprise's plan. The paths included support to entrepreneurial idea formulation and to the elaboration of the enterprise's business plan.

Twelve women from Abruzzo and 20 from Sicily completed the supporting programme, elaborating their business plan and, in some cases, activating their initiatives. The selected projects include not only the tourism animation services, but also the services agency for the recovery of the pottery tradition of Rapino, which started organizing ceramic courses within receptive structures or in the square and other public places, and the creation of an "Adventure park" in the heart of the Parco Nazionale Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga.

The most delicate phase was that of the start-up, where women have many more difficulties in accessing loans and microcredit initiatives and usually female enterprises have a higher mortality, especially in the South of Italy. The specific sector that has been chosen (tourism and valorisation of the territory) could be, on the other hand, a positive element to reinforce the possibility of these enterprises to survive. Many Regions of the South have, in fact, specific measures to support these sectors and have observed these experiments with interest.

The main lesson learnt is that women may represent a great potential for the development of local territories especially in those areas, like the South of Italy, which still have great disadvantages compared to the rest of Italy and Europe. The linkage between women and local development (that are considered to be more connected to local tradition and jobs and sustainable development) is also an element that should be promoted further. In fact, a decision has already been made to switch from the pilot initiatives to a more stable experiment including other regions in the South of Italy.

The importance of this project relates to the possibility of intervention in order to facilitate access to the labour market to females, increase entrepreneurship while at the same time contribute to local development.

6.9 Portugal – Education on issues relating to Gender Mainstreaming-Algarve

The situation both in Algarve and on a national level in Portugal on the topic of equal opportunities is characterised by the persistent difference in unemployment rates between men and women. The situation is one where there is a significantly greater concentration of women in particular sectors over others. Female dominated sectors tend to be high-intensity labour sectors with lower than average salaries. This results in a high concentration of women with very poor academic qualifications within the labour market, even though, overall, there are more women than men in higher education and consequently with better educational levels. This asymmetrical distribution in employment across genders highlights women's disadvantage. Not only are there differences in the presence of women at different job levels, but women in the same job classification suffer salary differences, even in cases where a woman may be better qualified.

The project described here aims to promote greater socio-economic integration of women through promoting greater awareness of Gender Equality opportunities among the different key players in administration of public entities, civil society organisations as well as educators in schools. The initiative is based on an innovative approach towards the business/educative community with respect to promoting Gender Equality. The target groups of the project included a range of sectors with key players coming from enterprises which employ personnel, local government authorities, and non-governmental organisations as well as citizens who work within the enterprises. The specific key players were business executives and human resources managers from Sotavento Algarvio; trainers, teachers and administrative personnel both within central and local entities (Câmara Municipal de Tavira,- Municipal Council, Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional de Vila Real de Santo António-Employment Institute, Associação Nacional Jovens Empresários-National Association of Young Business Executives).

The project promoting Gender Mainstreaming took place over two years; 2005 and 2006. The team from Fundação Irene Rolo was responsible for the implementation of the project. Methods were devised to publicise the activities that were created and disseminated with the targeted members of the public. Plans for the range of sessions were adapted in accordance with the terms of reference supplied by public organisations participating in the project and responsible for the promotion of equal opportunities. These activities were tailored to the needs and characteristics of target groups identified within the project.

The general aim of the project was to develop awareness and sensitisation on gender issues through a series of training sessions for business executives, teachers and students. These were strategic elements for the change in behaviour and the fight against all forms of discrimination and inequality between men and women.

Good practices Identified

The specific aim of the project was to promote awareness of gender issues relating to equality through a series of training sessions. The project involved the development and production of educational material relating to the theme of Equal Opportunity and Gender Equality to be distributed during training sessions. A total of five sessions, of seven hours each, consisting of modules on sensitisation to the theme of equal opportunities were developed. These sessions were directed at the target groups identified within the project. A total of 60 employers, human resource managers, local administrative personnel, teachers and trainers participated in these training sessions.

In the case of Sotavento Algarvio there was clear evidence of the presence of discrimination against women among the target groups, particularly executives, during the execution of the training sessions of the project. The executives demonstrated shortcomings and lack of awareness and sensitivity in adopting and carrying out practices which promote equal opportunities across genders. Participants demonstrated awareness of their bias in attitudes and practices during the sessions. The executives clearly demonstrated an acceptance of certain stereotypes associated with women's image and role at work and in society. These stereotypes were found to be also held by some of the female business executives.

There were a number of issues which needed to be taken into consideration with respect to the business executives participating in the project related to the issue of Gender Mainstreaming. These needs included:

- a change in the stereotypical images of the role of women in society;
- development of means for flexibility and negotiation which allow for conciliation between family life and work life for both men and women;
- the need to promote understanding of the national and EU community legislation on Equal Opportunity;
- sensitisation to the importance of lifelong training for employees, and especially for women;
- sensitisation to the issue of equal pay for work of equal value and to fight against the under representation of women in leading positions in companies;
- to foster the constitution of a friendly atmosphere in the work place for both sexes.

At the level of professional training and the formal school system: the diagnosis made about the project showed, in some cases, the absence of treatment of this theme in academic and training curricula, for which reason there is an obvious need to create tools to pedagogically develop the theme of Equal Opportunity in an attractive and motivating way for students and trainers. These tools can act as a stimulus to send a clear message not only to students and trainers, but also to families and the community.

6.10 Portugal – supporting women victims of violence-Municipal Council of Montijo

In February 2000, the Municipal Council of Montijo created the Espaço Informação Mulheres - EIM (Women's Information Space), with the aim of informing and supporting women of the municipality to take their rights as citizens into account, so as to promote equal opportunities between women and men. The opening of the EIM offices were the result of the signing of a protocol established between the Montijo Municipal Council and the Commission for Women's Rights and Equality in Portugal. This was the outcome of the project Trampolim/Reda in an international partnership. The aim of this project was to promote equal opportunities between women and men through the creation and implementation of structures for equality.

The aims of the EIM were those of creating a permanent centre for providing information and support relating to gender issues; promoting the *empowerment* of women through initiatives; contributing towards the implementation of equal opportunity between women and men; promoting training related to equal opportunities between women and men; supporting the Public Services, Collective organisations and the IPSS of the municipality to help them develop positive measures promoting Gender Mainstreaming in their operational strategies; and developing positive training sessions, targeting the prevention of domestic violence; promotion of equal opportunities at the work place; conciliation between professional and private life; and promoting real equality in access to support and cultural activities.

At the same time that the number of women that the Municipality dealt with increased, there was also an increase in those seeking help because of domestic violence. Faced with this situation, the response of the

service was to focus on these issues in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the support given to female victims of violence.

Good practices Identified

There were a number of initiatives in response to providing actions to help female victims of violence . The list of initiatives included:

- **Training:** The Municipal Council of Montijo, in collaboration with the Associação de Mulheres contra a Violência (the Women's Association against Violence) provided training sessions on Domestic Violence, targeting experts from the institutions of the municipality, who directly or indirectly deal with this reality.
- **Networking:** In March 2001, arising from the above referred sessions, Rede de Apoio a Mulheres em Situação de Violência RAMSV (Support Network for Women in Situations of Violence) proposed setting up a network. This network was initially made up of Montijo Municipal Council; through EIM and the Housing Department, the Commission for Protection of Children and Young people, the employment centre, the PISCA de Esteval (Projecto de Intervenção num Bairro Social – A support project from the social housing area, the Institute for Social Reintegration Team, the ECAE and Educação de Adultos- adult education (Montijo and Alcochete), the Centro de Saúde (Health Centre) and the CERCIMA. The network was enlarged again in 2002;

The network relies on the collaboration and dynamism of the Associação de Mulheres Contra a Violência (Women's Association Against Violence), which, together with the EIM provides various training sessions targeting experts from partner institutions. In March 2005 this partnership was made official by a Working Protocol, which defined a set of measures to be adopted by each of the partners. The aim was to improve the care given to female victims of violence, through better links between the services involved, as well as making full use of resources available.

- **Working groups set up:** In January 2006 the RAMSV set up 5 working Groups. The responsibilities of these working groups included:
 - *Methodology and Evaluation* group to define a working methodology for RAMSV and make common evaluation tools to be used by all members in the partnership;
 - *Technical Meetings* group to define a calendar and topics for seminars, work sessions and workshops, cooperation in the organisation of events and so on.;
 - *Preparation and Compilation of Articles on the subject of Domestic Violence* group to identify topics for articles, compile and distribute the articles to the Grupo de Trabalho da Rede Social (Working group of the social network);
 - *Analysis and case study* group to analyse the cases of violence which constitute crises situations or which by their characteristics are considered a case study in this area; and
 - *Manual of Procedures* group responsible for the preparation of a “Guia Orientador para o Atendimento a Mulheres em Situação de Violência” (An orientation guide for dealing with women in situations of violence).

In the last two years, a number of seminars took place: The topics targeted included:

- ‘Domestic Violence:the Aggressors’ targeting experts from RAMSV, with the support of AMCV;
- “Support to Women in Situations of Violence: Good Practices, future challenges;
- Inauguration of Exhibition “Montijo – Women of Distinction” women who over the years have stood out in the Montijo Municipality;
- Sensitisation sessions entitled “Domestic Violence” at Montijo Hospital targeting experts from the institution, with support from AMCV;

- “The Impact of Domestic Violence in Schools” – launching of “Orientation Guide for Dealing with Women in Situations of Violence”;
- Training Sessions “Domestic Violence and Legal Proceedings”. with the support of AMCV and Montijo PSP (Police), targeting experts from RAMSV;
- Sensitisation Sessions on “Domestic Violence” at Montijo Centro de Saúde (health Centre), targeting experts from the bureau for health and social action, with the support of AMCV;

Workshop entitled “Professions in the Masculine? Great Accomplishment in the Feminine” Young people from Montijo Secondary school and vocational school posed questions to female guests who carry out jobs traditionally done by men.

7.0 Conclusion

There is an evident parallel in the gender-related problems that the partner countries are experiencing, even though they have different population size, cultures and economies. The differences can mainly be noted in the degree to which certain problems exist. However, in all cases, recent years have shown a clear and steady move in favour of achieving greater Gender Mainstreaming.

The main problems identified in the partner countries include: low female participation rates in employment; lower female participation in higher and decision-making positions; lower female participation in entrepreneurship with fewer self-employed; lower-rated salaries and jobs even if females have better educational level; low female participation in politics; as well as gender issues related to the prevention of domestic violence. All five partner countries have taken action to promote equality. This is reflected in the legislation promulgated in order to promote Gender Mainstreaming. Legislation is often accompanied by action plans which aim to bring about change. A number of these actions have been taken at local community level.

The examples of good practice researched in this project have shown how effective action taken at the local level can be. The examples identified target different aspects of Gender Mainstreaming, ranging from: participation in education, cultural and leisure activities; to female entrepreneurship; promoting work-life balance for workers; training public and private enterprises on Gender Mainstreaming; promoting employment among women and youth; to tackling domestic violence. These case-studies make it possible to identify key ingredients for the effective implementation of such measures. These common key elements can be considered to include:

- **Good communication between service providers and the community:** This allows service providers implementing actions to be sensitive to and aware of the problems and needs of members of the community and can be achieved through good communications channels;
- **Good networking and collaboration between different entities within the locality:** The different examples researched show how in many cases more than one institution was involved in working towards Gender Mainstreaming. This made it possible for a more holistic and complete change to take place and for better and more complete services to be offered to target groups;
- **Belief in managing to change:** It takes courage and determination to implement actions which aim to change situations which have been existent in society for so long. Whether it is a case of changing attitudes or long-present discrimination, it is important for the key players involved to believe that they can manage to bring about change.

It is hoped that those interested in introducing practices of Gender Mainstreaming at local level can derive inspiration and ideas from the work done in relation to this project. The examples identified vary in size and action. As one of the key players in the smallest locality involved stated *being small does not prevent you from thinking big*. It is with this thought in mind that, hopefully other institutions and organisations will find this project inspirational and useful in deciding what actions to take in their own context.

- 1 Gender Mainstreaming, Extract from the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997), Chapter IV, Coordination Segment: Coordination of the Policies and activities of the specialised agencies of the United Nations System.
- 2 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/Gender_equality/Gender_Mainstreaming/general_overview_en.html
- 3 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/dpibrochure.html>
- 4 <http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/off/a—20.en>
- 5 Refer to historical perspective for further background to development of Gender Mainstreaming
- 6 http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/33896/33903/36970/the_gms_toolkit/
- 7 Hart, M. and Murray, M. (2000) Local Development in Northern Ireland—The Way Forward: A Background Paper. Northern Ireland Economic Council, Belfast.
- 8 Ibid. pg. 4
- 9 Article 45 (3)
- 10 2003
- 11 January 2008
- 12 Apart from the relevant documents, acts and research which cover the area of gender equality and translations of resolutions and recommendations of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe – Resolution 176 (2004) on Gender Mainstreaming at local and regional level: a strategy to promote equality between women and men in cities and regions; Recommendation 148 (2004) on Gender Mainstreaming at local and regional level: a strategy to promote equality between women and men in cities and regions; Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, PACE (2004): Women's Participation in Elections
- 13 www.cesi.hr
- 14 Economically underdeveloped areas of the Republic of Croatia
- 15 Source: Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship
- 16 Source: Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, 2007
- 17 National Policy for Promotion of Gender Equality 2006 - 2010
- 18 www.portal-roas.hr