

Women Changing Their Communities

Successful Projects: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova

Women Changing Their Communities
Successful Projects: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova
2006



Ukrainian Women's Fund

Published under support of Women's Funding Network



Dear friends,

The Ukrainian Women's Fund is celebrating its 6th year of activity. We believe that this new Millennium will prove to be the beginning of a thousand years of harmonious relations in society since more and more people on this planet strive to that.

Over a six-year period, step by step, project by project, we have been working to reach our common goal, to achieve gender democracy, where men and women develop freely and human rights, women's rights are the highest value.

Annually the Fund announces competitions for grants for projects that non-governmental women's organizations from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova want to implement. Each year we see that the quality of the submitted projects is improving, the number of women's initiatives is growing, and the energy of the women's civic movement is increasing.

We are very proud of the 2006 successful projects featured in this booklet. But also, and this is the most essential, we want to present our system of assessment of impact and efficiency of the Fund's projects in the local community and in the country in general. For we deeply believe (and the experience of our colleagues from other women's foundations around the world confirms our belief) that each of our grants has a systematic effect and either directly or indirectly affects the development of the entire community and impacts social changes.

Project support is an important mission of the Fund. Our experience demonstrates that it is very important to be trusted to receive investments in the initiatives. Our grant program proves the effectiveness and importance of such investment both for the women's movement and for all of society.

Social changes that our projects strive to achieve are aimed at enforcing the rights and freedoms of women, developing their individual potential, strengthening their influence on social and political processes and building equal relations among people regardless of their sex, nationality or religion.

The positive energy of women promotes rebirth, further development and consolidation of local communities, and the creation of an atmosphere of freedom, which is the foundation for the development of each person in society.

Wishing you success,
The board and staff of the Ukrainian Women's Fund

Priorities of the 2006 Grant Program

In 2006, the Fund announced a tender for projects aimed at the protection of women's rights and lobbying of women's interests. Projects were submitted by women's organizations from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

The projects submitted make provisions for involvement of women in decision-making and implementation of the institutional mechanisms to ensure gender equality on the national and local level; for combining efforts of women's non-governmental organizations to solve issues that are timely for women, on the national and local levels; and for establishing partner relations between the women's unions and the state authority.

Projects were supported in the following priority areas:

Improving women's economic opportunities

Support was provided to projects aimed at eliminating discrimination of women in the labor market and providing legal assistance to women-entrepreneurs in micro, small and medium business.

Sustainable development of women's NGOs

Support was provided to projects aimed at the development and strengthening women's organizations in the regions of Ukraine, improvement of their professional level and provision of opportunities for self-improvement.

Practices of implementation of institutional mechanisms to ensure gender equality

Support was provided to projects aimed at implementing and improving existing and initiating new, institutional mechanisms to ensure gender equality in order to make systemic changes on the national and local levels.

Visualization of issues timely for women and girls

Support was provided to innovative and creative projects aimed at uncovering and visualizing issues, timely for women and girls, through art, fiction and journalism.

Women and environment

Support was provided to projects aimed at promoting activities of women and women's organizations in the area of environmental protection.

However, women's organizations were not limited to these areas and had a right to submit original projects in other areas. Three projects were the winners in other subject matter.



In general, in 2006, the Fund supported 39 projects to be implemented in 2006 and in the first half of 2007.

Measuring Effectiveness of Implementation of UWF Supported Projects

To measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects, the Fund utilizes the MTC, or 'Making The Case' Method to evaluate and measure social changes.

This method was developed by the Women's Funding Network (USA) to assist the funds in measuring the social impact of the projects they supported. Primarily, the method provides for assessment of the project's final result through deep analysis and interviews with the grantees.

Making The Case is a 5-section form to be filled out that includes a number of questions, the answers to which make it possible to measure impact of the project in a community:

- section I general information about the project/organization
- section II social changes achieved through the project
- section III facts confirming the social shift in actual practice
- section IV factors assisting or preventing achievement of the goals
- section V success story of the project.

The method also makes it possible to analyze the intermediate results of the project implementation and to make the corresponding changes in the process of implementation.

MTC can also be used at the work planning stage, to develop new proposals, to assess other activities of the organization as well as to present the projects to other donors.

Assessing "Social Change"

When we say "social changes", we imply various changes happening during a certain period of time inside of social systems and in interrelations between them and in society in general.

Social changes are structural and cultural transformations in organizations and in the function of society. Structural changes emerge in social and public institutions while cultural changes characterize shifts in the attitudes of people towards some issue of importance to society.

Social changes indicate that social problems are in the process of resolution. How can such changes be fixed on paper? It is complicated to present social changes because:

- They are a result of a range of actions
- Changes are both structural and cultural
- Generally they do not happen instantly
- Often it is hard to relate changes with specific actions
- It is difficult to identify changes.

To identify, measure and present social changes caused by a project the following social change indicators are used:



Shift in Definitions
(the issues covered by the project are known and understood by the community)



Shift in Behavior
(attitude towards the issue in the community has changed)



Shift in Engagement (the number of people supporting the organization in solving the problem on the local or national level is growing)



Shift in Policy (changes are taking place at the decision-making level and, as a result, local and national policies)



Maintaining Past Gains
(positive practices existed or achieved earlier are maintained)



Shift in Organization
(professional level of the organization has improved)

It was the Ukrainian Women's Fund that suggested including the latter indicator in MTC in order to evaluate development of NGOs in the project implementation process.

Using MTC in the Fund's Activities

The UWF began using the MTC method to assess projects supported in the grant program framework in 2005. The original method, developed by the WFN, was adapted taking into consideration specific needs and specific characteristic of the projects in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

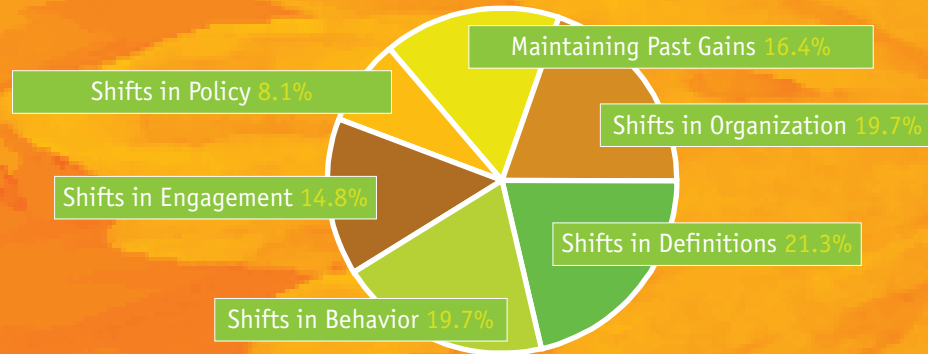
Positive outcomes of use of MTC became clear immediately. A survey conducted among the grantees demonstrated that the method not only helps them evaluate their projects but also improves the quality of the activity planning, assists in development of new projects, and deepens analytical assessment of possible social changes that organizations strive to achieve through the project implementation.

All organizations supported by the Fund go through the training, which helps them understand the social change concept better and to use the method for evaluation of shifts. During the project implementation period, organizations carry out evaluations based on the MTC method twice. Intermediary evaluation makes it possible to analyze their work at a certain stage and, when necessary, adjust the follow up activities. The final evaluation results support both organizations involved and the Fund in their analysis of achieved social changes and in setting future objectives.

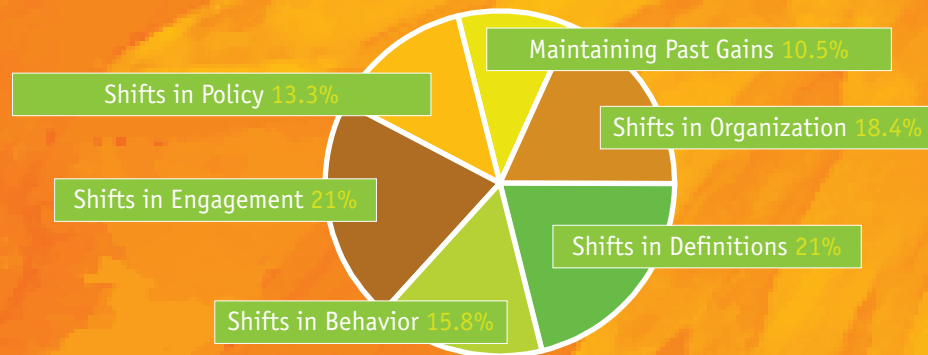
For instance, having received the results of the 2005 projects, the Fund noticed a low rate for "Shift in Institutions/Policy" indicator. That is why the target of the 2006 projects was the protection of women's rights and lobbying of their interests at the national and local level as well as establishment of partner ties between the women's organizations and public authorities.

The tendency of changes in the rates for each indicator is presented in the following graphs:

2005 Projects



2006 Projects



How Do Projects Change Communities?

The emergence of social changes in a community as a result of the Fund's project activities is identified on the basis of six MTC method indicators. No changes are of higher or lower priority, inasmuch as all changes are important for society.

The Fund's grant program supports diverse projects targeted at various social transformations. In 2005 and 2006 the project distribution according to the six indicators was about equal, with all the rates in the range of 10 - 20%. This shows that the Fund strives to build a harmonious model of cooperation with women's organizations, which foresees balanced support of all key reforms in a society or community.

At the same time, the Fund does not look to achieve mathematic equality of rates for all indicators since the decision by the grant program to support a certain social transformation depends on the quality of the submitted projects. If an application is not convincing or if there are doubts as to the ability of an organization to achieve the goal, the Fund cannot approve such a project, even if it addresses the social changes that the Fund supports.

By comparing the rates of 2005 and 2006 indicators, it is also possible to track certain tendencies.

21.3% of projects in 2005 and 21% in 2006 worked to raise issues of social importance, to actualize "women's issues", to inform the community about necessary changes; in other words, they acted in the area described by the "Shift in Definitions" indicator. This indicator has had the highest rates in the past two years. This can be explained by the fact that implementers of the Fund's projects are non-governmental organizations and one of the key functions of the third sector is to for-

multate socially important issues and consolidate the community in order to solve them. The important outcome for the Fund is the fact that the issues tackled by women gain importance for the whole community, not only for a narrow circle of women.

Another key area of project activities was work towards strengthening women's organizations. The "Shift in Organization" indicator has steady high rates, or 19.7% in 2005 and 18.4% in 2006. The Fund supports the strengthening and consolidation of the women's movement as a force capable of impacting social processes. Strengthened women's NGOs work more efficiently, implement projects of larger scale, are more influential and involve a larger number of women in their activities. The Fund aims at promoting the sustainability of women's unions in the long-term.

The third indicator that demonstrated the highest rate in 2005 was the "Shift in Behavior" (19.7%). However, in 2006 this indicator dropped; instead "Shift in Engagement" rose sharply, up to 21% in 2006. This is a step forward; now women's organizations are not only striving for the individual support of their community members, but are gaining the support of big groups, the "critical mass" that is able of turning the tide in society in favor of women's NGOs.

Redistribution of the rates of other indicators also suggests that the social impact of the Fund's projects is increasing. The Fund has deliberately increased the number of projects working on "Shift in Policy", up to 13.3% from 8.1%, at the expense of projects aimed at "Maintaining Past Gains", down to 10.5% from 16.4%. Increasingly, the Fund's projects adopt a forward strategy when it comes to social transformations; they act more decisively and cover a wider target audience. This is the result of the Fund's previous activities to strengthen women's NGOs and society's gradual consolidation of respect towards women's initiatives.

Along with the social shifts achieved by the projects, the Fund itself has been changing. The successes of the grantees strengthen not only local women's unions but the Fund as a whole. The Fund and women's NGOs work as partners in achieving systemic social changes and complement each other's work. The results of the work can be seen not only at the local level, but also at the national and international level. The level of the goals set by the donors is increasing, and the Fund sees that it can rely on a stronger women's movement than at the time of the organization's founding. This inspires the Fund to develop new proposals that take into consideration the growing needs of women's NGOs and their communities.

2006 Successful Stories

Shift in Policy

A Woman Is Not a Commodity

Ukraine is one of the main providers of cheap labor for European countries. Naturally, Ukrainians didn't seek such "popularity", but, nevertheless, found it a long time ago. According to unofficial estimates, approximately one tenth of the population - or more than 4 million citizens - works abroad; only 50 to 60 thousand of them work legally.

Ukraine is increasingly mentioned in the context of modern human trafficking, the victims of which, first and foremost, are women. The "typical" victim of human trafficking is a single woman from a rural area who is seeking a job in a city abroad. These women are most often threatened with forced labor, work in households, the industrial or agrarian sector, and forced marriage. Among the goals of trafficking women may also be the birth of a child, either forced or under order, use in the sex-industry or for organ removal and transplantation.

Since 1997, the international human rights center "La Strada-Ukraine" has been working in the area of prevention of human trafficking, in particular, that of women and children, elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence in society, promotion of human rights, gender equality and protection of children's rights.

At the time that the center started its activities, human trafficking had already become the most profitable criminal business in the world, equal to contraband and drug trafficking. However, at that time it was not punishable in Ukraine; in 1998 only two criminal cases were opened for trafficking of women, but neither of them went to trial. The situation has changed only due to the activities of civic and international organizations. Today the statistics are quite different: from

1998 to 2006, 1,563 criminal cases were opened and 317 sentences were passed (of them, 180 were passed last year).

However, it is too early to celebrate victory. The volumes of human trafficking are not dropping. Criminals are adjusting to social changes and countermeasures. At the same time, according to human rights activists, attempts by the state to block human trafficking channels are very weak. Ukraine does not have a clear action plan for preventing human "business". The 2002-2005 the State Program to Counteract Human Trafficking ended, and the new one for 2006-2010 waited a long time for approval. The battle against modern human trafficking was once again put on the shoulders of solely the non-governmental sector.

In 2006, with the support of the Ukrainian Women's Fund, "La Strada-Ukraine" organized a regional NGO forum. This forum, which included representatives of twenty countries, fostered the development of a public sector strategy in two areas: to draw society's attention to the problem of human trafficking and to lobby for the adoption of the 2006-2010 State Program to Counteract Human Trafficking in Ukraine.

Twenty-two Ukrainian participating organizations signed an appeal to top state officials with a request to approve the State Program to Counteract Human Trafficking. The women succeeded in getting the support of journalists. The resulting press conference made it possible for the Ukrainian mass media to provide wide coverage on issues related to human trafficking, the need to adopt the State Program, to support NGOs in lobbying for this important document, and to draw society's attention to these problems. The simple fact that nearly one in ten Ukrainians knows someone who fell victim to human trafficking testifies to the importance of this issue. If this problem is neglected, Ukrainians will continue to be turned into a cheap "commodity".

Under the pressure of NGOs, the State Program to Counteract Human Trafficking was adopted by the Ukrainian Government in March 2007. The third sector plays an important role in this program, and it foresees cooperation between governmental and non-governmental institutions on the national level as well as the development of regional programs to counteract human trafficking with the involvement of local NGOs.

Without the clear position of the public sector, joint efforts by Ukrainian organizations and powerful support from society, approval of the program could have been postponed for an indefinite period of time.

Shift in Behavior

An Alternative to the Streets

How do you protect your life and health under conditions of increased radiation levels, at a rally under the wheels of tanks or in economically difficult situations? Belarussian girls received answers to all these questions thanks to the trainings and guidebooks provided by the Homel Dukhovnist (Spirituality) Regional Center of Social and Psychological Support.

Some issues covered by the trainings might seem “exotic” were it not for the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant catastrophe, which affected Belarus. Had teenagers in the distant 1980s had knowledge of such “exotic” (so it seemed at the time) issues as survival during a technological disaster, the first actions of the population after the catastrophe would have been different.

“We do not want to scare you or to force you to behave overly cautiously”, state the authors of the course, “We simply want to see you alive and healthy whatever is going on around you.”

For many of the girls, this is the first time they’re heard something of the kind. They are not used to attention and care from adults. Trainings are organized for girls from 9 to 15 years old whose behavior is considered to be “risky”. Half of them were involved in delinquency, have had run-ins with the law, troubles at home and in school. As a rule, girls with deviant behavior do not receive the necessary attention from adults and their behavior often leads to sad consequences, such as alcoholism, prostitution, drug abuse, and criminality.

The project, which was supported by the Ukrainian Women’s Fund in Homel, made it possible to run trainings on life safety and protection of reproductive health for almost 250 girls, and to involve them in active

creative and public activities. More than two thousand other girls received general information related to safe behavior. The project also focused on teaching teenagers how to resist adult temptations that result in unwanted pregnancies, infections, alcoholic and drug addiction, and smoking.

In 2006 the project received a diploma at the International Fair of Social Projects, in the Law Infringement Prevention section, for reducing teenager criminal recidivism and effectively organizing after school activities for girls.

Instead of unwanted sermons, adults showed teenagers that there is an alternative to the street and that this alternative is not just interesting, but safer for them. In addition to workshops and training (which were mainly organized as games and educational “emergency situations”), girls visited museums and exhibitions, played sports, did wood-painting and even carried out humanitarian missions, specifically at the local Children’s House.

Today the Dukhovnist Center continues to run a program on homelessness and delinquency prevention among teenagers and monitors the decreased in teenager criminal recidivism. Such a decrease is totally anticipated: hundreds of girls have now been given a better alternative to the street; they’ve learned how to take care of themselves, to communicate, and to take care of their health; they have also seen how they can have fun and at the same time learn something interesting.

Not so long ago these girls, who were in the teenager registers, spent hours at the railroad station drinking behind the trains. Today they’ve switched to other activities. During a roundtable organized within the framework of the project, a teacher from a local school noticed, “Our children have waited for those trainers that are working with them now. And girls have begun asking teachers questions that never interested them before, such as health, safety and the meaning of life.”

Shift in Definitions

A Woman's Era in Vinnytsia's Museums

Touring the museums of the Vinnytsia region, one might get the impression that the region is inhabited only by men. More than 70 percent of the museum exhibits are dedicated to men and men are referred to twice as often as women in the texts describing the exhibits. The museums of the Vinnytsia region were organized mainly during the Soviet period and support traditionally accepted gender stereotypes despite the fact that 80 percent of all museum employees are women.

With the support of the Ukrainian Women's Fund, the Podillia Center for Social Technologies implemented a project "Women's Week in Museums," which was aimed at changing the attitudes of museum employees who work in the 20 museums of the Vinnytsia region, recognizing the role of women in history and in the contemporary life of the land.

The center succeeded in winning over skeptics among the museum personnel.

"At first, I doubted that we needed a joint project with non-governmental organizations regarding women's issues," said Kateryna Vysotska, the deputy director for academic activities at the Vinnytsia regional museum of local history. "I thought everything was clear, what did we need to research?" But after the first question: What is the sex of your mammoth, which Ms. Vysotsky failed to answer, she began to analyze all of the exhibit items in the museum and was shocked by the results.

It turns out that the mammoth's bones, a calling card for the museum, are the bones of a female mammoth. Although this discovery has not been 100 percent proven, it has made quite an impression on museum goers.

And the centuries old unfairness toward the ancient women who settled the Vinnytsia region has been righted. Archeologists have found women's burial grounds on the territory and a number of historic sources indicate that the cult of the woman existed in these ancient times. Nevertheless, labels describing each artifact mention burials of sexless humans. Now these texts have been changed to read "burial of a woman."

Exhibits regarding modern history have also raised a number of questions. Men are perceived as those who are masters of history; they were the heroes and led the nation or they were repressed by evil powers who ruled the land. Women are depicted only as wives and mothers; at times they are actresses on playbills. The impression was that during Stalinist times, educated men were the only ones who were unjustly persecuted. In contrast, a woman, who lived through the famine, is depicted on museum stands as an uneducated peasant who killed and ate her daughter.

To balance how men and women were depicted in the museum, a new show, titled "The Woman's Face of Vinnytsia," was prepared by the museum employees and local NGOs. They researched the archives of the museum and found interesting materials about women freedom fighters, teachers, doctors, charity workers, sportswomen and artists. Among those featured were both women who received the state's highest honors as well as those who were repressed by the state. An exhibit featuring the labors of women during Soviet times was also displayed, which highlights the primitive tools – hoes and shovels – they used to reap record-breaking harvests. Unfortunately, the life of contemporary women is not much easier than the life of their predecessors. According to a recent poll carried out by the project, the most pressing problem for the women of the region is employment, decent wages and social/financial benefits for their families.

This project raised awareness of gender equality; it is important because for the first time, the museum, a conservative state cultural institution, agreed to spread gender information and public education on the topic for the citizens of the Vinnytsia region. Over 5,000 visitors have already seen the show "The Woman's Face of Vinnytsia" and over one thousand of them are schoolchildren from various villages in the Vinnytsia region who have never heard of gender equality issues before.

Shift in Engagement

Blue Screen Warning Girls of Danger

If you want your message heard in Ukraine, you must have access to television. According to polls, 85 percent of Ukrainians get all of their news from TV and only 20 percent of the population reads newspapers.

Members of the girls' club "Yunka" (Young Girl, Lviv region) decided to use television to draw attention of young people to serious social problems. With the support of the Ukrainian Women's Fund, they have implemented a project titled: "A Series of TV plays: A Girl's World in Regional TV Studios in Ukraine."

Yunka is a young women's organization, which since 1997, has worked in public education and prevention programs. One form of work that the organization has introduced is an interactive social youth theater, which uses simple and easy to understand allegories to highlight such issues as women's rights' violations, violence in society, drug abuse, AIDS, alcoholism and human trafficking. The plays are staged on city streets, during international forums and on the air.

Within the framework of this new project, the girls wrote scenarios for three 15-minute teleplays dedicated to various themes: "Instead of Whirling, a play about human trafficking; "Flowers of Life," a play about the prevention of abortions; and "Angels of Light and Dark," about the spread of HIV/AIDS infection and drug abuse. These scenarios were later used by other alternative social youth theaters. School No. 18 in Lviv particularly liked the visualization of girls' issues and used the plays in their classes. Over 2,000 people have already seen the plays.

The series of teleplays has already been included in a 45-minute movie "Youth Changing the World," presented in front of a large viewing audience during a festival in Lviv in the movie theater Kino in October 2006. A strong interest in the movie was expressed by school children, students, representatives of the NGO sector and representatives from state bodies.

The presentation was so successful that it was later repeated; in December 2006, it was aired at the same movie theater for a thousand viewers during the Lviv regional event: "16 Days against Gender Violence."

Later the movie was aired by 23 regional channels, in nearly all regions of Ukraine and in the autonomous republic of Crimea. The total audience who viewed the filled reaches over 19 million people; 44 percent of them are ages 16-22 and 30 percent are young adults ages 23-35.

After the plays were staged in Ternopil, a sociological opinion poll was carried out among young people to 35 years of age. Results showed that 87 percent of those surveyed saw the play on their local TV channel. Forty-two percent said they saw the movie "Youth Changing the World." Interest in this cycle was very high; 32 percent watched it with interest and found useful information in the series; 47 percent watched it as an educational program and only 21 percent were not interested in the issues that were raised.

The success achieved by this project inspired the young ladies of Yunka to create plays about homeless children, domestic violence, the destructive influence of alcoholism in families and the abuse of child workers.

We have already proven that through creative thinking, young people can change the world and help develop a civil society," said the activists of the Lviv NGO Yunka.

Shift in Behavior

Crimean Craftswomen Find Jobs through the Internet

In the autumn of 2006, a new online project was launched in Crimea, with the mission of reviving local Crimean art and crafts at www.women.crimeancraft.com.

The key word in this project is women; the word “crafts” takes a back seat and this is deliberate. Without the initiative of self-motivated women who work together at the Resource and Information Center “Koz Aydyn,” which means happiness, there would be no embroidery, weaving, ceramics, painting or batik....all the crafts that have been an integral part of the Crimean fabric for many centuries.

Crimean embroidery reflects the artwork of many different peoples, which settled the Crimean peninsula. The poet Maximilian Voloshyn wrote that “in Crimean ritual cloths, burn the evening gild of Byzantium mosaics and the autumn trees of Italian ornaments shed their leaves.” In the 18th and 19th centuries, women used high quality fabric and threads of gold and silver for their embroideries. Ornaments were often of floral design and often reminiscent of flowery carpets.

After the revolution and Stalinist repressions, war and the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, crafts became practically extinct. Now the Crimean Tatars are returning to their homeland and restoring the art of embroidery.

With the support of the Ukrainian Women’s Fund, “Koz Aydyn” women have implemented a project that brings together the few expert Crimean craftswomen to teach their craft and give a shot in the

arm to their ancient art by encouraging home entrepreneurial activities. A webpage was created, which presents information about well-known Crimean craftswomen. They offer beginners the opportunity to master Crimean embroidery techniques and give their students the opportunity to take part in exhibitions and to organize “home businesses.” This proposal is especially important for the rural population who receives a portion of their income during the summer season from the tourism business and agriculture, but suffers from lack of money in the winter months and between the seasons.

According to the project participants, this is the first time that a large number of Crimean women feel needed. Some were even surprised to learn that there were other women like them in Crimea working on the same crafts. Women who embroider began meeting and discussing professional issues, learning about positive experiences of working from home and ridding themselves of fears of the unknown. Women began working because they were inspired by orders they received via the Internet. Some craftswomen even sent their first souvenirs to Turkey.

The site features information about seven creative unions in five regions of Crimea, including “Marama,” “Orynek,” “Chatyh-Daha” working in the villages. These are the creative centers uniting women from villages who want to make embroidery their profession and a means of income.

Presentations of works by Crimean craftswomen in the Crimean Ethnographic Museum have significantly stimulated them to continue their creative activities. According to the local mass media, not all the unique works can be exhibited since the museum does not have enough resources to organize adequate displays and protection of exhibits with precious stones. But even the exhibits open to the public are impressive. The exhibits are visited daily by five or six groups, with about 30-40 people in each group. The craftswomen used to see their embroidery as a hobby, but now as a revival of an ancient art.

Women are now confident; they have self esteem as they feel they are needed in their historic homeland and do what they love best. The project is only the first step in solving the problem of unemployment of the Crimean Tatar population in rural areas. The center has already received 30 applications from nine Crimean villages where women want to open their own private business and to embroider their own beautiful souvenirs for tourists who annually visit Crimea during their summer vacations.

Shift in Definitions

Rural Women Overcoming Poverty and Helping Community **Leave It Behind**

There is a funny story about cats that wanted to jump over a barrier but did not dare because they believed it was too high. Only one of them succeeded in jumping over it. It turned out that the cat did not hear it was not possible.

This story is told during the trainings for women with low income from rural areas in the Vinnytsia region. It turned out that practically all of them have too little self-esteem to begin a struggle against poverty and to launch their own micro-business.

“In the beginning of the project we dealt with women who were rather skeptical and did not believe in their success”, Hanna Tarasuik, head of the Board of the Association to Promote Women’s Entrepreneurship, told. “But after the first training they already strove to change their life, took active part in establishment of their businesses and search for business ideas”.

“You showed me the opportunities and I am sure I will succeed since I really can do a lot and am not afraid of working”, one of the training participants told.

In general, 145 women took part in seven trainings. Some of them have already opened businesses. One of women began growing spicy herbs in mini-greenhouses, which she later sells at the Vinnytsia markets. Another training participant first produced dishes and souvenirs from osier, later she began making furniture. Also, a studio to produce clothing and a hairdressing studio were opened.

Of course, not every woman found strength to dive into the problems of a young businesswoman. But the triumph of the project, supported by the Ukrainian Women’s Fund, is that women changed the attitude toward their problems, as if they escaped from a vicious circle. Active women-entrepreneurs became the role models for the training participants. Practically all women pointed out that their family relations improved, they are respected now and families listen to their opinion. During one of the trainings women began discussing that they should take a more active part in the public life of their village, nominate themselves to the post of local MPs, heads of villages, organize study groups, initiate ideas to develop villages and draw in investments. These ideas were readily supported by women and, they are sure, will be implemented during the next elections.

Later the training participants shared their proposal on active participation of women in the life of their villages and solution of the problems that men do not see with the journalists from raion newspapers. The greater involvement of women in the decision-making process in their communities was also discussed during the roundtable in which representative of public authorities, women’s NGOs and mass media took part. Homefolk pointed out changes that occurred with Vinnytsia women involved in the project: just a few weeks ago those women did not understand what these trainings are aimed at and in what way they are related to improving their everyday life and now they are thinking not only of their family interest but of the local community.

The Vinnytsia women understood that they should take responsibility for their life and financial capacity. Even though it is extremely hard to do in “a male world”. According to official statistics, in Ukraine, out of 100 working women, 18 received higher education in comparison to 12 men. At the same time, the average salary of men is 35 percent higher. Even though in Ukraine women traditionally work more than men because they undertake all household work in their rural community.

Alleviation of women’s poverty and unemployment directly depends on the self-assessment of women and efforts of those who want to support such women. This is the reason why the Association to Promote Women’s Entrepreneurship is creating a system of assistance to businesswomen: a hotline on taxation, business management and accounting works, a possibility to provide startup mini-grants is discussed, trainings and consultations are carried out. So, when you are facing troubles, don’t give up. Believe in your success and it will knock on your door.

Shift in Engagement

Moldovan School Kids Oppose Domestic Violence against Their Mothers

Domestic violence is a very acute problem for Moldovan families. According to the results of the public opinion poll, over 80% of the population believes this is a burning issue. Psychologists also say that an atmosphere of intolerance to violence has not been developed in Moldovan society: most people tolerate family violence against women and do not even recognize economic and psychological abuse as such.

It is difficult even for experts to clearly explain to people why tolerance towards violence and discrimination against women is harmful. The Rural Social Initiative NGO in Moldova decided to not merely explain but rather visually demonstrate the effect of violent acts that take place in real life situations. That was how the project of the visualization of the issues related to violence and discrimination against women and girls in their family, school and social life started. The project was supported by the Ukrainian Women's Fund.

First, a summer school was held for NGOs in Moldova, during which issues of violence and discrimination prevention were examined. A participant of the summer school stated, "I always knew that the problem of violence against women was embarrassing to discuss, hence I avoided working in that area. I was aware that I lacked the arguments and knowledge necessary to convince others. After the summer school I feel much more self-confident and I know that through our joint efforts we will achieve equality of women and men."


Those NGOs that had sent representatives to participate in the summer school obtained more than trained personnel, new materials and knowledge; they also consolidated their efforts in their combat against violence and gender discrimination. Using the obtained knowledge, these NGOs later on introduced the topics discussed at the summer school to over seven thousand kids and teenagers.

The importance of the issues was also understood by local media involved in the cooperation. Journalists have published resonating articles about gender violence and methods to be applied to combat it. Media and NGO representatives worked together during the entire project, as the effectiveness of fighting discrimination and domestic violence directly depends on public interest towards these issues.

The next step in implementing the project was the marathon that was organized for young people. The marathon events included five theatrical productions and picture and essay competitions.

A 13-year old participant of the marathon stated, "In our society we face inequality and a lack of respect, domestic abuse and discrimination against women. I do not want my mother and sister to suffer from this, and I believe that due to the knowledge that I gained I will be able to teach others to recognize inequality and to fight it effectively."

Students were the target audience of the marathon. More than 4.5 thousand children watched the social theater performances and participated in the competitions. The children also became actors in the staged plays. Such an active role by young people holds out hope that problems of violence and discrimination that formed in Moldovan society during totalitarian times will become less acute and pressing as the new generation grows up. Today's Moldovan teenagers are not as burdened by stereotypes regarding the relations between women and men as their parents were. Hence, any young boy understands that any girl who he goes to school with is as free as he is, and it would be a crime to restrict her freedom.



In this booklet we have presented only a few examples of interesting and successful projects, important for society, that were supported by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in 2006.

If you want to learn more about other women's organizations in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, we will be happy to assist you.

If you have your own projects, want to be involved in the process of social changes in society and know that your proposals will be useful for the community, send us your letters.

If you want to support the Fund and women's projects as a donor, we are open for cooperation.

If you want to take part in the activities of the Fund as a public activist, please contact us.

We are open to work together with everybody who is interested and active!

Ukrainian Women's Fund

79 Artema St., Office 38, Kyiv 04053, Ukraine

tel.: +38 044 568 53 89

fax: +38 044 484 62 05

e-mail: uwf@uwf.kiev.ua

www.uwf.kiev.ua