

CONTRIBUTE TO CHANGE: YOUNG WOMEN IN POLITICAL CAREERS

Gabriel Saulescu

Romanian Society for Lifelong Learning

Abstract: The participation of women in the political life of the member states of the EU is still reduced. That is why this project intends to provide young women aged 16-35 with the possibility to develop their self-esteem and their knowledge on the participatory democracy, but also to raise awareness on the importance of vote and of their involvement in the political life. In order to promote the project a website will be developed in English, Romanian and Czech, but also a DVD that will include all the products and the positive experiences in the project in order to be able to share good practices in relation to the theme and activities of the project.

Keywords: young women, website, DVD, public debate

I. Introduction

During the last years we have witnessed considerable progress in what concerns women's participation in the political and social life, many countries having adopted laws that ensure equal opportunities for men and women.

Besides all this, the mentalities and life styles do not allow an appropriate percentage of women participating in the political life.

At present the difference between the number of men and that of women members in the Parliament is considerably big. The percentage of women members of Parliament varies between 19% in UK, 15% in Czech Republic and 9,7 % in Romania.

In order to contribute to the changing of this state of art, the partnership aims at starting from changing the mentality of the target group, young women, who need to increase their self-esteem and their abilities of free expression. By means of the participatory workshops the target group will be supported in improving their knowledge on participatory democracy, the importance of their involvement in the political life at local and European level, but also the role of the vote.

The partners of the project are: Romanian Society for Lifelong Learning/Romania, Ballybeen Women's Centre Ltd/UK and AKLUB Centrum vzdělavani a poradenstvi/ Czech Republic.

The project is co-financed by the European Commission within the Europe for citizens Programme, Actions 2; Measure 3.

II. The aims

The project aims thus at increasing the participation of young women aged 16-35 in the political life and to the vote by increasing their trust in the own forces, with the help of workshops based on the scenarios and role play.

A group of 10-15 women from each country will be involved in a series of interactive workshops with the aim to prepare in the end a public debate moderated by themselves.

A DVD with the experiences gathered in the project will be produced, as well as a success stories booklet that will gather relevant stories, anecdotes, good practices that happened during the project implementation.

The project website will reflect the activities of the project.

III. The main activities

1. Needs analysis at the level of the target group (3-4 months)

In order to develop quality products that are adequate to the needs of the target group, an analysis of their needs will be carried out by involving the young women aged between 16 and 35 in the development of the educational materials that are addressed to them.

2. Preparation of participatory workshops (5-7 months)

It is one of the main workpackages of the project that sets the basis of the development of the second part of the project, the implementation part in which the target group will be directly involved on a constant basis.

The target group will be selected based on volunteering. The workshops will be organized in such way that they correspond perfectly to the needs of the target group as regards content, timing and venue.

5. Piloting of the participatory workshops with women (5 workshops in each country) (8-10 months)

The implementation of the curriculum and methodology developed by the partnership will take place at European level but will take into account the specifics of the target groups.

Five workshops will be held in each of the 3 countries in the same period.

Within these workshops the young women will learn to:

- correctly develop their self-esteem within the working group;
- improve their self-expression abilities;
- improve their knowledge on participatory democracy and the strategies of active involvement in the society as active citizens;
- be aware of the importance of the involvement in the political life and the role of vote at local level but also for the European Parliament;
- how common interests and aims can create long personal relations and how informal education can cultivate the personality and knowledge of each participant.

6. Public debate- The role of women in the national and European politics (11 months)

At the end of the workshops the young women in the 3 countries will participate to a public debate where they will make use of their knowledge and competences acquired during the participatory workshops in front of the large public. On this occasion the young women will be able to do a democratic exercise necessary for increasing the trust in the own forces.

The debate will be attended by members of other non-governmental organizations, of public administration, mass media, etc.

7. Production of project deliverables (3-12 months)

Within this workpackage the following activities will be:

- Developing a website of the project
- Developing a success stories booklet
- Elaborating and producing the DVD of the project

8. Dissemination and valorisation of the project (1-12 months)

Dissemination will take place throughout the project.

The main dissemination activities are:

- Developing the dissemination materials of the project (flyer, brochure and poster)
- Organising final dissemination conference in Romania (the last month of the project)
- Elaborating the CD for the final dissemination conference
- National and European dissemination
- developing and distribution of 2 newsletters
- distribution of the brochures, posters and flyers of the project
- Presentation of the project at 2 international conferences
- Presentation the project in local/national and European network, where the partners are members.

IV. The main results

- 1. Needs analysis report** – it will be developed after collecting the 3 reports developed on the 3 target groups. 900 copies of the analyses will be produced by the partners and distributed to the organizations that work in the field of education of young women (schools, high schools, universities, adult education centres, providers of education, etc.)
- 2. Success stories booklet** – it will contain relevant stories, anecdotes, good practices that happened during the project implementation. 500 copies will be distributed during the dissemination events, national and international conferences, but also after the end of the project, as good practices.
- 3. DVD of the project** - It will comprise the products and the positive experiences in the project in order to be able to share good practices in relation to the theme and activities of the project. The DVD will be developed in a friendly and interesting format for professionals but also by the target group.
- 4. Final conference CD** - The dissemination CD will contain all the materials presented during the final conference and it will represent itself a useful material for those interested in the themes of the conference.
- 5. The website of the project** has as target group the large public. It will contain information on: the theme of the project and the target group, objectives, products and results, but also other interesting information for the target group and large public.

V. Evaluation

The evaluation of the project will be undertaken at 2 levels: internally within the partnership and externally, by an external evaluator.

The evaluation will cover both the quality of the envisaged project products and the project process.

Process evaluation refers to the process of transnational cooperation within the partnership.

Each of the partners is responsible for the quality of the processes and the products developed.

The applicant organization will evaluate the meetings and the way in which the tasks and objectives of the project are fulfilled.

The external evaluation of the project will be made by an external evaluator who will be subcontracted by tenders. The external evaluation will reflect the progress, process and results during the project development.

VI. Conclusions

Democracy and freedom are European values that will be promoted in the project at the level of the young women who will learn what democracy is and what means they have to benefit from their rights (through the workshops): the right to speak freely (through debates) and to participate to the social and political life of the community.

The project will promote to an equal measure all the 3 languages, the main activities of the project taking place in the 3 languages of the partners: Romanian, English and Czech.

At the same time, for an appropriate valorisation of the project the main pages of the website will be developed in the 3 languages, as well as the main dissemination materials.