



Contribute to change
Young women in political careers



Education and Culture DG

'Europe for Citizens' Programme



Contribute to change:
Young women in political careers

Success stories booklet

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The Project is co-financed by the European Union within the Europe for Citizens Programme
(Ref. no. CSP-2009-156279)

“The project is co-financed by the European Commission within the **Europe for citizens Programme**, Actions 2; Measure 3. This booklet reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

Published by:

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Introduction

Dear reader,

This booklet is destined firstly to practitioners working with young people, be they teachers, trainers, tutors, but also to the large public.

The booklet is realized in such a manner that it is meant to offer both the experience gathered by the partners within the project, in an accesible and user-friendly manner, but also the opinions of the young women directly involved in the project.

Starting from the objectives of the project, the booklet represents step by step the way in which the partners worked in organizing and implementing the workshops and the public debates.

A special attention was dedicated within the booklet to the implementation of the workshops, bringing forth real examples regarding the manner in which it was implemented in the 3 partner countries.

The last chapter is dedicated to the opinions of the young women involved from the 3 partner countries, regarding their participation in the project.

1. What did we aim to achieve?

Active involvement of women in political life is discussed more during the last years. It is also seen that interest of women in politics has increased.

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.

Within these workshops the young women learned 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 citizenship
- Involvement in the society as active citizens
- Be aware of the importance of the involvement in the political life and the role of voting

- How common interests and aims can create long personal relations
- How informal education can cultivate the personality and knowledge of each participant.

The participatory workshops were done with groups of 15-17 women from each partner country, and resulted in 3 public debates organized and moderated by the participants themselves. The target group was selected based on volunteering.

In total, there were 48 young women who attended the workshops from all 3 countries.

The topics of the workshops were:

- 1st: Gateway to the Project, EU citizenship
- 2nd: Institutions of the EU
- 3rd: European Parliament
- 4th: Women in political career
- 5th: Your voice in the EU

At the end of the workshops the young women from the 3 countries participated in a public debate, in front of a large public.

2. How did we start?

Step 1: Needs Analysis

The first step in this project was to undertake a needs analysis. The aim of the needs analysis was to ascertain how much knowledge and experience participants had of the EU, its Institutions and the role of MEP's. Participants were also asked about the role of local MPs, what issues affect them and what participation they would like to have as European Citizens regarding impacting on European politics from a local level. The needs analysis also wanted to find out how participants learn best i.e. individual learning styles.

How to Locate and Collect Information from the Target Groups

As we have agreed previously, information was gathered to inform our preparation through a questionnaire.

As participants may have limited understanding of the concept of "European Citizenship" we thought it's

important to take time to introduce the purpose of the questionnaire to the target group.

The following steps are useful for locating a target group:

- a) Contact local organisations, schools and youth centres who may have contact with women in the younger age bracket.
- b) Contact parent/toddler groups, women centres, community organisations and colleges and universities who may have contact with the upper age bracket.
- c) Prepare and implement one workshop where you can collect all the information you need from the women. The workshop groups should exceed no more than 15 women. The questionnaire should be distributed and collected in at the end of the workshop.
- d) Within the workshop it is important to:
 - Take time to explain why you are asking participants to complete the questionnaires and the benefits they may find from doing so
 - Give participants the personal support they need to fill in the questionnaires

- Ask if they would be interested in participating in the programme
- Collect the questionnaires and deal with any other important questions from the target group beyond the questionnaires. It may also be useful to explain, after completion of the questionnaire, what issues the European Parliament deal with e.g. unemployment, social issues, sustainable development etc and highlight how the programme aims to promote sharing of opinions and dialogue. This may help persuade the women to participate in the full programme and find out more.

67 young women from Romania, UK and Czech Republic participated in the needs analysis workshop.

Overall, the needs analysis has revealed that the programme designed should reflect the needs of both age brackets surveyed: 16-20 and 21-35, as in most countries there was an even spread of both age groups eager to participate.

It should be noted that the Czech Republic partner may wish to increase the amount of women in the younger

age bracket who participate in the programme to provide a greater range of results and impact younger women too.

The Romanian participants' knowledge of their own MEPs, their enthusiasm, passion and also their expectations from the programme suggested that the programme should foster and nurture the enthusiasm Romanian women had shown in becoming more active citizens in their constituencies and indeed in their country.

By contrast, this enthusiasm may need to be stimulated in the Northern Irish and Czech countries, and the programme should seek to promote a more active role for these women.

Step 2: Preparation of Workshops – Dates, Venue, timing, speakers, visits, etc.

The content and delivery of the workshops reflected the results of the needs analysis in terms of topics covered, teaching style, venue, timing and provision of appropriate support to participants.

It was agreed in advance that 5 workshops and a public debate would be organized in each partner county.

It was important to realize before starting the preparation and implementation of workshops what will the target group of the relevant workshop be, who will be its participants. In our case, they were young women aged 16 - 35 years.

While preparing workshop, their authors and lecturers had to take into account the fact that every target group has its specific features, requirements and needs. Basic starting point was represented by correct acting on our participants. The lecturer should have initiated and supported mainly their positive motivation as, for example, interest in the topic being discussed, aspiration

and self-actualization of participants, confidence in their own abilities. While preparing workshops, we did not omit one important factor - selection of right rooms for teaching. The classroom was arranged by special seating of participants and means of visualization (blackboard, data projector, video). Refreshments were available for participants and they received small gifts.

In the view of realizing the workshops, a common working methodology was realized: manual workshop and common curricula of the workshops, at the level of the 3 countries involved.

These were translated from English into the languages of the partnership and used as a common basis at the level of the three countries, each country adapting it according to the own needs of the target group.

Workshops were based on scenarios and role play.

For workshops, it was very important to create an informal atmosphere.

- User-friendly form for all the participants to take part.
- Informal meeting.

- Movie projection.
- Entertaining form.
- Interactive games.

BWC, UK

The workshops took place in the morning as this suited the young women. Free childcare was provided by BWC to enable a number of the young women to participate. The venue of the workshops was the Women's Support Network (WSN) in Belfast. The WSN is an umbrella organization providing support services to and representing over 55 community based women's centre's, women's projects and women's infrastructure groups. Two of the workshops were facilitated by a member of staff from WSN.

AKLUB, CZ

The workshops took place between 29.04.2010 – 27.05.2010, within the headquarters of AKLUB, situated in Krnov, Czech Republic.

The organization AKLUB - Centre for Education and Consultancy obtained a lot of practical experience in the past mainly regarding preparation and implementation of

various educational courses. They were usually several-day courses the goal of which was to assist participants in the course in obtaining knowledge in a certain specialized area and to obtain practical new skills which may be used in professional or personal life.

SREP, RO

The workshops took place between 14.03.2010-25.04.2010 within the “Mihail Kogălniceanu” High School, Miroslava, Iasi

During the implementation phase, the principal of the high school and the teachers offered the necessary support.

The workshop was conducted by one of the teachers of SREP.

The young women involved in the project were mostly high school girls, but also young women that did not learn within that high school, but were interested to take part in the project.

Step 3: Project Promotion, Advertising, Recruitment

BWC, UK

They used various methods to promote and advertise the project – leaflets, brochures, posters etc, as well as their outreach and support programme which enabled them to target those women disadvantaged within the community. 17 young women aged between 16 – 35 years were recruited.

AKLUB, CZ

The target group was informed about the option to get involved in the project and participate in scheduled workshops via leaflets, which were created, sent out and published for this occasion. Another way to address and attract participants was via group presentations which took place in selected secondary schools in the city of Krnov.

15 young women aged between 16 – 35 years were recruited.

SREP, RO

The target group for the participation in the project was selected with the help of the teachers within the “Mihail Kogălniceanu” High School, but also with the help of flyers and brochures printed within the community, so that, within the target group, other women from the community could get involved.

16 young women aged between 16 – 35 years were recruited.

Step 4: Implementation of Workshops

Pedagogical and organizational approaches within the national workshops

Motivation of participants is an important part of all educational courses and it is also a significant factor for the organization of workshops. If a participant in the course does not have the right motivation or if he/she is even de-motivated, his/her total approach to learning, education or work is affected by that.

We have indicated some factors which may contribute to motivation of participants: informal ambient, content, delivery style, gifts for active participants, attractive and arresting advertisement, leaflets or presentations of the project, refreshment within the course of workshops, experienced lecturers, interesting topics, entertaining and arresting form of teaching., support available i.e. free childcare, one-to-one support, etc.

Providing the opportunity for participants to determine the content and delivery of the project was a key motivational factor. Ensuring the workshops were tailored to their needs ensured that the women completed them all.

The workshops were planned in response to the results of the needs analysis. Contact was made with relevant individuals and organizations to facilitate study visits, workshops etc. Practical arrangements in terms of transport, childcare, hospitality were made to enable participants to attend.

Undertaking the needs analysis was a very important factor in the this project as it ensured that the workshops

were developed and delivered in a relevant, timely and appropriate manner, reflecting the needs of the target group.

The needs of the group determined the organizations needs. The partners had to design and deliver a programme of workshops and a debate that was relevant and appropriate to the individuals taking part and also one that reflected the aim of the CTC project.

Needs included:

- Practical Needs: timing, venue, transport to venues, provision of lunch and refreshments
- Learning Needs: teaching style had to reflect the needs of the participants. As a result, different teaching methods were used e.g. role play, scenarios methods, study visits, quizzes, games, facilitated group discussions etc
- Language Needs: Language had to be “jargon free” and easily understood by participants
- Support Needs: Provision of quality, affordable childcare to those women requiring it. One-to-one

support and mentoring was also available to support women throughout the project

While implementing the workshops, we proceeded in harmony with the determined goals of the project and on the basis of the result of the analysis of needs, created in the individual partnership countries and focused on target groups.

We did not choose the classical explanatory style of teaching in course of workshops where participants become passive recipients of information and they thus do not have any space for active and independent work.

We used methods and techniques which assume active involvement of participants and which represent an amusing and interesting form of acquiring new information.

Participants in workshops acquired adequate ways of behaviour and acting, they eliminated initial shyness and they acquired new experience thanks to the methods of role playing.

The workshops were tailored to the needs of the participants as much as possible.

In Northern Ireland, UK the following workshops took place:

Workshop 1

“Introduction to Project & Study Visit to Castlereagh Borough Council”

Seminar & Study Visit

Workshop 1 introduced the participants to the project.



This was then followed by a study visit to Castlereagh Borough Council, where participants were given a guided

tour and told about the work and role of locally elected councillors. They also had an opportunity to meet with a councillor and talk about issues of concern to him.

Workshop 2

“How Do I Get My Voice Heard”

Study Visit to Northern Ireland Assembly @ Stormont & Meeting with MLA Sir Reg Empey

Workshop 2 was another study visit – this time to Northern Ireland’s Assembly.

This trip was sponsored by an elected MLA Sir Reg Empey, who explained his role as an elected MLA.



The group also had a guided tour around Stormont and were given information on its history and how it operates as an assembly in terms of decision making, policy and legislation.

Workshop 3

“Local Politicians @ Work”

Study Visit to Belfast City Hall

The group were given a guided tour and told about the make up of the Council and how it operates in terms of the type and scope of work Belfast City Council is involved in.



Workshop 4

“Dialogue Across the Border”

Visit to Dáil Éireann & Meeting with TD Noel Treacy

The workshop involved a trip to Dublin to visit the Irish Parliament Dáil Éireann.

This was an extremely interesting trip for the participants, as some had never even been to Dublin before. Whilst at the Dáil, the group was very fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with the TD Noel Treacy, who is also the Chairperson of the Good Friday Agreement group.



The Good Friday Agreement led to the initiation of the peace process in Northern Ireland. The group also

questioned TD Treacy on issues concerning Ireland's participation in the EU and the benefits this has brought to the country.

Workshop 5

“How to be an Active EU Citizen....Meet the EU”

Seminar @ Women's Support Network Belfast

The 5th workshop took place in the Women's Support Network in Belfast. This is an umbrella organisation that represents the needs of women and women's organisations across Northern Ireland. It was a very user friendly and non-intimidating venue for the women.



The content of the workshop included:

- Who is the European Union
- Why it was set up
- EU Institutions
- Your Rights as an EU Citizen

The workshops were very interactive and a number of teaching methods were employed e.g. Quizzes, games, presentations etc. Again, this reflected the learning needs of the group as defined in the needs analysis.



The policy officer from the WSN facilitated the workshops.

In Romania the following workshops took place:

1st Workshop: EU – Symbols, Charter of Fundamental Rights

Within the first workshop the young women got the chance to introduce themselves and to know each other better.

They were grouped in pairs of two and for 5 minutes they talked about themselves (name, age, passions and hobbies, favourite movie and books, what others don't know about them, etc), after which in 1 minute they presented themselves.

After that, they discussed about the way in which they knew to listen and to present what was the most important things about them.

They were then presented materials regarding the EU and they listened to the hymn of the EU and they received maps of it.

When the trainer said “Hello” in one of the languages of the EU, they had to recognize the respective country and to mark it on the map. After all the countries were marked, they completed the map and they stated the order in which the countries joined the EU.



The young women debated regarding the rights within the EU and they solved a true-and-false exercise regarding these rights.

In the end, each chose a state member of the EU which they would present in the next workshop and to propose a resolution (sustained by 3 arguments), following that the one who gets the most votes from her colleagues would receive a prize.

2nd Workshop: EU Institutions

The workshop started with the homework, each girl presenting a member state of the EU and proposing a resolution which was sustained in front of her colleagues; then the best resolution was voted, the one stating that a

driver should be revoked the right to drive after being caught drunk while driving. She received the highest number of votes, being awarded for her idea.



From this subject, the young women discussed about the institutions within the EU that might help regarding the proposed resolution.

The young women found out about the main institutions of the EU (the Parliament, the Council and the European Commission).

Then, an exercise meant to improve their ability to communicate followed:

1. The trainer drew on a sheet of paper some symbols, after which 3 volunteers left the room.
2. A fourth volunteer looked at the drawing for 45 seconds.
3. One by one, the 3 volunteers joined the classroom and for 3 minutes they listened to the description given by the previous person.
4. The last of the volunteers had to draw a drawing on the flipchart, according to the description given.
5. Then, the two drawings were compared (the initial one and the final one) and the mistakes regarding the communication within the volunteers were discussed (at each level) and ways to improve communication were offered.

3rd Workshop: European Parliament, Romanian MEPs

The workshop started as an exercise type "*The Clinique of Rumor*"

1. 3 volunteers left the room
2. From the newspaper, news regarding the declaration of a politician was read (about ½ page)
3. One of the young girls told the first volunteer who entered the room the respective news

4. The first volunteer told the news to the second volunteer entering the room

5. In the end the last volunteer had to tell the news to the whole class.

6. After analyzing the differences, they discussed about the disturbing factors which interfered within the transmission of information.

The conclusion of the young girls was that they won't listen anymore to everything they hear in different environments.



A discussion regarding the European Parliament followed, with a focus on the Romanian ones and then the girls looked over some websites (blogs of the local parliamentary), settling together on a theme linked to local parliamentarians.

4th Workshop: Women in politics

Homework: each young woman said some words about a local parliamentarian.

Following these discussions, the girls noticed that there are more male parliamentarians than women.

Debate exercise

Two groups of young women: male vs. Female in politics. 30 minutes of debate, the trainer encouraging the young women to present their opinion and stand by it with arguments.

The trainer proposed some themes, like:

1. Women should not have smaller wages than men
2. More women should take up a career in politics, etc.



Some examples with successful women from the Romanian political life followed.

Trust exercise

1. Each participant wrote on a sheet of paper 3 qualities, 3 skills, 3 things that make her different than other girls, 3 things that others appreciate in her.

In the end, the young participants noticed that this was the hardest text they ever had because in the environment in which they live, people focus on their flaws and not on their qualities.

5th Workshop: Preparation of the public debate

The young women started this workshop with a presentation of forums online (ex. www.europarl.europa.eu/agora), platforms (www.europa.eu, ec.europa.eu/europedirect, ec.europa.eu/yourvoice, europarl.europa.eu,) and discussions regarding these.

The young women entered the website www.europepentrucetateni.eu.am and discussed about the general and specific objectives of this programme and its aim.

The group was divided into 2 smaller groups (pro and con) and the themes and the program of the debate was presented- they then chose their opinion leaders for each theme.

The young women received invitations for the persons they wished to invite in their final debate.

In Czech Republic the following workshops took place:

1st WORKSHOP: Introduction to the Project, Rights of EU citizens

Workshop 1 introduced the participants to the project. Within this workshop the young women got the chance to introduce themselves. There was used a simple game to warm up and get to know each other.



Then they were divided into small groups. Each group was working with a European map which did not have the names of each country printed on it. Each group got flags of member states of the EU. They had to assign the flag

of the country to the right place.

After that, they were presented materials regarding the EU. The young women debated about rights within the EU and they discussed about “fact and false” that the citizens of the EU have.

2nd WORKSHOP: Institutions of the EU

Within this workshop the young women found out about the main institutions of the EU (the Council, the European Commission and the Parliament). The participants got a worksheet with some information. They had to fill in appropriate information during the presentation. Then they discussed about the worksheet and about the institutions.



3rd WORKSHOP: European Parliament, Czech MEPs

The workshop started with a short movie projection from the European Parliament.

Then the young women got to know more information about the EP and about local MEPs (their names and number, what they do, what they are involved in).

A discussion regarding the European Parliament followed, with a focus on the Czech MEPs.



4th WORKSHOP: Women vs. Men in Politics

This workshop started with splitting the women into small groups. Each group had to prepare a list with their opinions about men/women in politics – e.g. how is the

situation, employment, salary. After completing the list, they presented their opinions and they debated on this theme.

During this workshop there were used election campaign's materials, voting paper and other support materials from election campaign in the Czech Republic.



5th WORKSHOP: Your voice in the EU

The 5th workshop started with a presentation of online forums, blogs, platforms and opinion polls, e.g. http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/index_cs.htm, http://europa.eu/take-part/index_cs.htm,

http://ec.europa.eu/archives/debateeurope/index_cs.htm.

The young women discussed about this theme.

The participants received invitations for the persons they wished to invite in their final debate.

What was the biggest achievement of the workshops?

AKLUB, CZ

The biggest achievement was represented by smooth course of workshops and by positive feedback from participants. Workshops took place in a very friendly atmosphere. Lecturers had professional knowledge and, using interesting methods, they involved participants in the programme, while all their worries and uncertainty were gradually eliminated. All participants were given space to express their own opinions, observations and ideas.

BWC, UK

The biggest achievement of the workshops was that all 15 women completed the project.

- The project was also successful in breaking down barriers for young women wishing to engage in politics – from the very local to national and EU levels.
- Another major achievement was the increase in self confidence amongst participants. All of them said they would like to proceed to further training and 2 of the young women have agreed to talk about their experiences of the project at a national conference in Belfast in June 2010. An MEP will also speak at this conference. This is a major achievement and a step forward for these young women.
- Another indicator of achievement is the fact that the women now have the knowledge and confidence to engage with local politicians on issues of concern to them. For example, one young woman had a problem relating to her housing situation. Following her visit to the local council she was able to identify the relevant individual and department that could help her and has since had her problem addressed.

This project was very timely, as it took place just prior to the UK General Election. Most of the young women who took part had never voted before, however following participation in the project all of the women voted in the election.

SREP, RO

The self esteem of each participant raised, they learned how to listen to others, to find arguments in order to communicate more efficiently, to understand more the participative democracy, to use means of communication with the authorities within the EU institutions, to trust their abilities in the future.

The strong points were:

- Use of interactive learning methods
- Use of scenarios, role plays and exercises as means of learning
- Use of simple and clear material support
- Use of previous life experience of the target group
- Creation of new skills: public speaking, creating new team-working abilities, a better understanding of their personality

- Gaining more knowledge about citizenship, voting and politics in a more pleasant way
- Correctly develop their self-esteem within the working group.

Step 5: Evaluation

Structures for evaluation were built in from the beginning of the project.

The evaluation of the workshops took place at the end of the workshops.

In the last workshops the *results of the workshops from the point of view of the participants and trainers* were evaluated:

- A. Achievements evaluation for participants
- B. Achievements evaluation for trainers

Aspects of the evaluation

For participants

- General satisfaction
- Improvement

- Trainer
- Content

According to the evaluation realized, we can say that the workshops realized within the 3 countries were a success; all young women appreciated positively and very good the indicators taken into account.

The general satisfaction of the young women from the 3 countries was good and very good.

For trainers

- Statistical information on the target group
- General satisfaction
- Improvements offered by the course, from the point of view of the trainer
- The greatest achievement of the workshops
- The weakest point of the workshops
- Lessons learnt as a trainer
- Pedagogical approach applied

All trainers from the 3 countries were completely satisfied with the workshops, and with the motivation of the young

women and their gain of knowledge and skills.

Regarding the improvement of the competence of young women after the workshops, all trainers are satisfied with the results they obtained, considering that the young women greatly improved their abilities of expression, but also their knowledge regarding participatory democracy and its values, the role of voting and the importance of getting involved in political life.

Step 6: The debate, a means of putting into practice the acquired knowledge

SREP, RO

The public debate took place on the 5th of May 2010 in the Museum of Agriculture within “Mihail Kogalniceanu” high school between 10.00-13.00 hours.

The public debate was held by 14 young women who were divided in 2 groups: PRO group and CON group. To each of them folders and name tags were given.

The 25 attendees at the public debate were persons from different areas of activities: political life, educational domain, local institutions etc.



At the beginning of the public debate, Professor Constantin Timu, who was the trainer of the workshops, offered a presentation on famous Romanian women throughout the history.

The discussion topics of the debate were:

1. Women in Romanian politics - changes and perspectives

2. Importance of voting

3. Women MEPs

Before the debate, one of the participants offered a presentation relevant to the topic of the discussions. Therefore, before the first topic, a presentation of famous women and their work was offered to the public. Before the second topic of discussions, one participant presented the role of voting, the beginning of women's vote, status of voting regarding gender and equality of gender. The third topic of discussion was introduced by a presentation about important women in the European Parliament.



During the public debate, the women put into discussion:

- The image of women: housewives or politicians?
- The role of women: mothers or employees?
- Women in Romanian politics: number of women vs. men; bad image of women politicians caused by the media and its effects on the other women politicians;
- Role of voting at a local level
- The importance of raising the number of female voters
- The importance of the involvement in the political life
- The important female figures from the European Parliament and their work.

At the end of the debate, the public was invited to share their opinion on the involvement of women in the political life.

Some of the attendees offered their views on how we can improve the image of women politicians by creating a good image in the media.

The attendees were satisfied with the organization of the debate, the high involvement of the young women and their interest in the political life.

BWC, UK

The debate/discussion took place on 17th May 2010 in Women's Support Network in Belfast. Individuals from the community, voluntary and statutory sector were invited and 30 people attended.

The themes of the debate were:

- The Importance of Women in Politics
- Engaging with the EU
- Equality, Justice and Citizenship

Each of the young women gave a short presentation on the themes which were then discussed openly.



There was a very lively debate and discussion on the issues and themes presented by the young women. This was a very successful event that everyone enjoyed.

Feedback from guests suggested that it was an informative and interesting event. When asked what they liked best, comments from the debate evaluation included:

“Listening to each others opinions”

“Listening to other people’s views of the different topics”

“The chat and discussion.... Learning more about women’s place in society”

“Learning more about your EU”

AKLUB, CZ

The public debate took place on the 22nd of June 2010 in “Steiger” conference room between 16.00-19.00 hours in Krnov.

The public debate was held by 15 young women.

The 27 attendees at the public debate were persons from different areas of activities: political life, educational domain, local institutions etc.

The discussion topics of the debate were:

- ✚ Actual political situation in the Czech Republic;
- ✚ Women in Czech politics;
- ✚ Importance of being involved in politics.



During the public debate, the women put into discussion:

- How do you see the situation in your country?
- How can gender equality be improved at the European, national, regional and local level?
- Is there a difference of style between men and women in the political decision-making?
- Are women under-represented in European and national politics?



The attendees were satisfied with the organization of the debate.

3. Opinion of the young participants

United Kingdom

CASE STUDY 1

“My name is Alison and I recently took part in the Contribute to Change: Young Women in Political Careers project at Ballybeen Women’s Centre. I found the project really interesting and informative as it helped me gain a better understanding of my rights as a European Citizen and how to voice my opinion on issues that could affect me. On a personal level the project helped build my self-confidence. I really enjoyed the study visits which included trips to our local Council Offices, the Assembly at Stormont, Belfast City Hall and the Dáil in Dublin. I found that the visits were more important to me than what I was expecting as I gained information on who my local representatives are and how they deal with issues regarding the public. When I first entered the project I had no idea about the European Union but now I have a good knowledge of the EU and what being an EU citizen means. After taking part in the workshops I felt confident enough to make a presentation at the debate and took

part in the discussions afterwards. Before this project I would not have done this. Overall I really enjoyed the project and benefited from it. I would like to do more projects like this.”

CASE STUDY 2

“My name is Karen and this is my experience of taking part in the *Contribute to Change: Young Women in Political Careers* project at Ballybeen Women’s Centre: *The study visits gave me a chance to see where our Councilors, MLA’s and MP’s carry out the business they were elected to do. We also visited the Dáil in Dublin where we were able to speak with and question a TD on how Ireland has benefited from being part of the EU and also talk about the Peace Process in Northern Ireland. This gave us an opportunity to find out how another government operates. These visits were followed by workshops on the European Union. The facilitator shared a lot of information on what the EU actually does, why and how it was set up. We also found out who our representatives are in the EU, how to contact them and how to make our voices heard at an EU level. I enjoyed the session on ‘your rights as an EU citizen’ as we found*

out about entitlements and the impact the EU has on our everyday lives.

Most importantly I learnt that I have a right to question politicians both at home and in Europe on issues that affect my life. Taking part in this project opened my eyes to politics and gave me the confidence to vote in the recent General elections. I can now say that I know about the EU and what a European citizen means. It has also given me a thirst to learn more about politics and Europe.”

Romania

Victoria Condrea: *“By frequenting the workshops offered by the project “Contribute to change: young women in political careers” I have learned many things. I learned to trust myself, which allowed me to become a better organizer and leader in my class. I knew other young girls and because of this, I became friendlier. I was impressed the most by our good relation with the trainer. The public debate in which I participated convinced me that we are important in our society. Right now I am sad that the activity is reaching to an end and I would like to keep in*

touch.”

Nadejda Juc: *“The impact the project had on me was firstly the fact that I have learned to trust myself more, to overcome my timidity, to have the courage to express my opinions and ideas, to respect the persons around me but mostly to respect myself. Started as a game, through the workshops I attended, the project offered me a range of information and new knowledge. Besides the accumulation of knowledge, there were also fun activities: I knew and socialized with other young girls from the project. I learned about the European Union, its institutions and values and the importance of women getting involved in the political life, subjects we debated with our trainer within our weekly meetings. To conclude, the project “Contribute to change: young women in political careers” was very helpful for our becoming more involved citizens.”*

Cristina Ivancu: *“This project means a lot to me. It made me look at life with different eyes, to think more maturely, to acquire more trust in myself and my own forces; in this respect, knowing my rights and obligations as a citizen*

contributed a lot. The knowledge I gained during this project will prove useful to me and, indirectly, to those who will ask advice and support from my part. Working in a team made me realize the importance of listening and respecting the ideas of others, no matter their ethnicity, religion orientation, age or other differences, since we all have the same rights.

I learned that it is important to participate in the voting process and to get involved in any way in the life of the community you take part in. I hope that life offers me the opportunity to apply everything that I have learned, since I would like to get involved in the political domain.”

Czech Republic

Mrs. Květa

What is your total assessment of workshops?

“I liked the workshops, they even exceeded my expectations.”

How did you like topics of the workshops? Do you think this information will be useful for you? If so, in which areas?

“I liked the topics, this was something new for me. I learnt a lot of new information and I hope I will use it sometime.”

What did you like most in particular?

“I was impressed most by the lecturer's approach. It was not a classical explanation as in school but we were involved in various activities via different tasks together with the other participants.”

Do you think your attitude towards your participation in political life has been changed after you participated in the workshops?

“Yes, I think it is important for women to get involved more in politics and not only at local and regional level but mainly at the level of the Czech Republic (House of Commons and Senate...).”

Mrs. Zdeňka

What is your total assessment of workshops?

“In my opinion, workshops were very well prepared.”

How did you like topics of the workshops? Do you think this information will be useful for you? If so, in which areas?

"I was interested in some topics, I was interested less in other ones. This information was definitely beneficial and will surely be useful sometime in future."

What did you like most in particular?

"I liked most the option of active involvement in the issues - work in groups, test, response to particular questions."

Do you think your attitude towards your participation in political life has been changed after you participated in the workshops?

"Definitely yes. I perceive this area much more intensively after the workshops."

Miss. Petra

What is your total assessment of workshops?

"I liked the workshops and I was pleasantly surprised."

How did you like topics of the workshops? Do you think this information will be useful for you? If so, in which areas?

“Workshops gave me a lot of new information. I am glad to have participated.”

What did you like most in particular?

“Pleasant atmosphere, empathic lecturers, interesting course of workshops.”

Do you think your attitude towards your participation in political life has been changed after you participated in the workshops?

“Probably yes, I was not interested very much in this area before.”

Mrs. Martina

What is your total assessment of workshops?

“I liked the workshops very much, there was a pleasant atmosphere and a good team.”

How did you like topics of the workshops? Do you think this information will be useful for you? If so, in which areas?

“The topics were convenient for me. There was a lot of information which was certainly useful. I am mainly glad to have learnt something more about our members of the European Parliament.”

What did you like most in particular?

“I liked most the workshop with the topic men versus women. I hope the highest possible number of women will be elected in our House of Commons in the expected elections.”

Do you think your attitude towards your participation in political life has been changed after you participated in the workshops?

“Definitely yes. I will be more brave and I will be more interested in developments in our country.”

Mrs. Veronika

What is your total assessment of workshops?

“My assessment of the workshops is positive - they were interesting, they took place in a pleasant ambient.”

How did you like topics of the workshops? Do you think this information will be useful for you? If so, in which areas?

“The topics were interesting. Yes, new information will certainly be useful for me.”

What did you like most in particular?

“I liked a lot of things - approach of the lecturer, involvement in the discussion, ambient, refreshment....”

Do you think your attitude towards your participation in political life has been changed after you participated in the workshops?

“Yes. The topic dealing with men versus women in politics was very interesting and topical for me in connection with the forthcoming elections in our country.”

Partners:

1. Romania Society for Lifelong Learning, Romania



<http://www.srep.ro/>

2. Ballybeen Women's Centre Ltd, UK



www.ballybeenwomenscentre.org

3. AKLUB Centrum vzdelavani a poradenstvi, Czech Republic



www.aklub.org