

WOMEN'S ISSUES INFORMATION CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

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**Women's Issues Information Center
Vilnius 2003**

The project “Gender Mainstreaming into Lithuanian Policies” has started on the 1st of January, 2002. The project objective is to support the mainstreaming of gender perspective into legislation, policies and programmes of the Government of Lithuania. One of the primary tasks was to meet the representatives of the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor (MSSL). Strategic meeting with Project partners was organized to set the priorities and tasks of common actions. During the meetings future joint activities and close cooperation were discussed.

The representatives of the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor (MSSL) expressed the need to train civil servants of the Municipalities Social Departments and of the Regional Labour Market offices in the year 2002.

Ms. Jane Haile, independent international consultant in gender, human rights and development issues paid a visit to Lithuania in February 2002. Her task was to assess the current situation in mainstreaming a gender perspective into policies and programmes in Lithuania. The Women’s Issues Information Center (WIIC) provided her the requested information and documents during her mission. After examination her mission report, the project activities plan was updated and improved.

Activity 1:

- *To assist the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, (MSSL) in the introduction of the gender mainstreaming approach into creation and implementation of the 2nd National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women*

In the end of 2001 the MSSL stated that the new National Action Plan (called National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men) should be ready for the middle of 2002. The Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Division of the MSSL was assigned as responsible for preparing the final draft of the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Division is supported by an Interministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities that is responsible for:

- facilitating the work of the Ministry, which they represent, ensuring that Gender approach is taken into account
- the preparation of suggestions for the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in the area of responsibility of their Ministry.

The elaborated final draft also includes proposals from women NGO’s, prepared and discussed during different conferences, round-table and discussions. Those activities were initiated and organised by women’s NGOs with the support of Women’s Issues Information Center.

The WIIC strategy is cooperation, consultation and monitoring the progress of preparation of the Draft National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The WIIC is in constant contact with the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities

Division of the MSSL. On one occasion the MSSL asked the WIIC to help in the drafting the chapter on violence against women. This particular chapter is one of the most problematical in the National Programme. The issue of violence against women is, *de facto*, urgent in Lithuania unfortunately the State does not provide adequate attention to the problem. The final draft of the chapter was elaborated by the WIIC after a set of round table discussion with the members of the Interministerial Commission, representatives of Crisis centers, women's NGO's, lawyers, and politicians.

End of June, the MSSL decided to postpone the preparation of the final draft to December due to some reasons. One of them is the adoption by the Parliament of Lithuanian of several amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania. These changes allow, among other things, a possibility to resort to "positive discrimination" in order to ensure women's rights. Another reason is that there were no funds allocated from the State budget for the implementation of the National Programme. MSSL was aware of that situation and considered not to rush with the final preparation of the Draft National Programme.

The Draft of 2003-2004 National Programme For Equal Opportunities of Men and Women was prepared by Ministry of Social Security and Labour in the beginning of December 2002.

The Programme Project has been developed taking into consideration:

Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;

Recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women to the Government of Lithuania with the view to implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; (Considerations of the reports from Member States. Lithuania. The initial and the second periodic reports, New York, 12-30 June 2000);

Beijing Declaration and Beijing Action Platform adopted at the IV World Conference of Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995);

Final Document of the 23d Special Session of the United Nations' General Assembly "Women 2000: Gender equality, Development and Peace in the 21st century (Beijing + 5)" (New York, 5-9 June 2000)

United Nations Pact of International economic, social and cultural rights;

European Union *Acquis* on the issues of equal opportunities for men and women;

European Convention for the protection of Human rights and fundamental freedoms;

European Social Charter;

Recommendations of the Council of Europe for the EC Member States;

Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for the Member States;

International Reciprocal Conference "Equal possibilities for men and women in the democratic society. Reykjavik-Vilnius" Conclusions and recommendations. (15-17 June 2001, Vilnius);

Conference of the Baltic States "Beijing +5: Achievements and Challenges" Conclusions and proposals (9-11 May 2000, Vilnius)

Programme for the Advancement of Women, which has been approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in the Resolution No 1299 of 8 November 1996;

NGO proposals and recommendations from different conferences and seminars.

Women's Issues Information Center actively supported new amendments to the law of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. An awareness campaign was initiated in the Media through informal networking with Lithuanian NGO's and institutions.

WIIC was disappointed that the final deadline for the preparation of the Draft Programme was delayed several times. WIIC actively participated in preparation and initiating discussion among Lithuanian NGOs to evaluate the Draft of the Programme. On the 16th of December, 2002 WIIC organized a round table discussion where all Lithuanian NGO were invited to discuss the Draft of the Programme. There were 46 participants from various Lithuanian NGOs, two members of Inter-ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities, government officials from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The discussion was opened by MSSL State Secretary Mr. Rimantas Kairelis. Ms. Giedre Purvaneckiene MP, Ms. Virginija Sidlauskiene, Prime Minister's Adviser, Ms. Ausrine Burneikiene, Ombudsperson of the Equal Opportunities for Men and Women also participated at the discussion. The discussion was moderated by Chairwoman of WIIC.

The initiative of the participants and very constructive proposals is a sign of importance of the women issues today. Round table discussion's participants were very active although comments and proposals were received from two NGOs before the event. Discussion was organized going through every Draft Programme's section in a row. Proposals were discussed and recorded after the consensus reached.

Although the finances were not allocated, women NGO identify themselves as an implementing body of part of the Draft Programme goals and activities. This round table discussion was a top important event in the end of the year 2002 evaluating current situation of women NGOs and reflecting Lithuanian NGOs participatory activity as well. Participants were very active and declared variety of opinions and ideas as amendments to the Draft Programme. It is important that all the ideas were included to the Draft Programme and sent to the Ministries for comments and approvals.

NGOs supported and approved the Draft of 2003-2004 National Programme For Equal Opportunities of Men and Women. Evaluating the content of the Draft Programme, current situation, challenges and goals were covered perfectly in all parts and themes.

Comments received during NGO meeting:

- Weakness of the Draft Programme is that there is no funding foreseen.
- There are no any regulations or mechanisms described in the Draft Programme concerning tenders of NGOs participation implementing measures of the Programme.
- Most Women NGOs expressed concern about the State budget financing of active Lithuanian Women NGOs.
- It was proposed that a new body – subcommittee at the Inter-Ministerial Commission of Equal Opportunities for Woman and Men could be established to keep closer communication among Women NGOs and the government.

All parts were discussed thoroughly. Only the part *No. III. Securing of Women's Rights in the Context of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women; No.1. Human Rights* received no particular comments.

This event proved that Women movement in Lithuania is active and sustain constructive position in the process of decision making on different levels of participation. Presence of

Women NGOs in the process of decision making and partnership in implementation processes partly dependable on the initiative and good organization of NGOs. WIIC remains the informal coordinating body of the network of Lithuanian Women's NGOs. During this meeting government officials and members of Lithuanian NGOs expressed acknowledgements for work done and initiatives showed by the WIIC.

A number of activities scheduled in the Draft of 2003-2004 National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women would be implemented by Women NGOs. Contests would be announced. Unfortunately it is not possible while there are no funds allocated. State Secretary regretted that there were no finances allocated from the State budget for the Programme implementation in 2003. The small amount could be allocated from the Ministry's of Social Security and Labour budget.

After the suggestions at this meeting were recorded, the Draft Programme went to the Ministries for comments and evaluation. Then the Draft Programme will go to the Prime Ministers Cabinet where it can be approved or returned back for improvements. The whole process will take about two months.

Successful cooperation of the WIIC with Ministry of Social Security and Labour continues. Currently WIIC and MSSL works together on a number of training programmes for Municipalities. WIIC together with MSSL organizes "Seminar on the Role of Municipalities in Gender Equality" in the beginning of the year 2003. In this project Municipalities employees from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will be trained. WIIC strongly supports initiative to establish position of responsible person for Gender Equality in each Municipality, following Vilnius example.

Activity 2

- *To maintain the mechanism that ensures that the Government and women's NGOs have access to timely information and professional analyses based on reliable statistical data through an independent Gender Mainstreaming Focal Point*

Using IT and possibility to represent an organization in a modern ways is an essential to be visual in the professional sphere. WIIC's priority is a constant communication and information providing to its customers and other news and information networks. The Women's Issues Information Centre remains the national information service in Lithuania on the position of women and it is the main Centre for national and international exchange of information. The WIIC acts as a Focal point on the pulse of women's issues in Lithuanian society, by acting as a catalyst on the most pressing problems facing women. Hence, the WIIC plays a key role in ensuring that women's issues remain at the forefront of political, social and economical changes in which women become 'visible' and have a real 'voice'.

Another important task of the WIIC in the frames of the Gender Mainstreaming project was creation of Gender Mainstreaming database on the Internet. Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming Focal point using IT and creating Lithuanian Women Information Portal (LWIP) "Equal" where GM database is placed was a complex task for WIIC staff. Five links are placed on the Portal "Equal": WIIC homepage, GM database, Lithuanian Women NGOs database, Woman's World bulletin and Safe.

The collection, analysis and preparation of different materials on Gender Mainstreaming for the Internet database started in January. Material is collected in cooperation mainly with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and other partners of the WIIC.

GM database was created by WIIC staff, there were consultations with professional web designers, programmers etc. WIIC staff participated in a number of trainings on the Internet, new trends in web design, methods and techniques of programming.

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) database is created in Lithuanian and English but not all the content is identical, also there is no funds allocated for human resources for translation.

All major links of worldwide organizations and papers on gender issues are available through the page. The most important UN and EU documents on human rights, gender issues, women's rights are placed on the web page.

Creating database members of WIIC responded to the needs of WIIC Informational Portal users. Good examples and practices of virtual databases and women issues on-line are placed in the "Equal". WIIC improved their own knowledge on IT tools and Internet, Data collection and filling information.

Benefits for visitors of "Equal":

- All the information available through on Internet page
- Most of the information is in two languages
- Possibility of interactive communication through the discussion windows
- Easy to use and constantly updated GM database could be filled with related data under the request of a customer

Promotion of www.lygus.lt/gm GM database included several activities:

- Press conference was held in November, 2002.
- The launch of GM database was presented in Morning Programme “Ryto Garsai” on the first Programme of National Radio.
- Promotion campaign was organized in 3 most popular, commercial Lithuanian Internet portals: www.delfi.lt, www.takas.lt and www.omni.lt. The effect was substantial - in one week almost 500 visitors visited GM database. More than 600 visited *Saugi/Fragile* page and Women’s Issues Information Center’s pages. About a thousand readers visited *Moters pasaulis/ Woman’s World*.
- Leaflet promoting GM database was created published in 700 copies and is in distribution.
- GM database was presented during the Gender Mainstreaming trainings for the Government Officials.

A number of messages and comments were left in discussion windows.

GM database was presented as first of such kind in the Eastern European countries.

The Internet database on GM will be advertised through web-sites of the different Ministries and Institutions. WIIC officially proposed to all 15 Ministries to place the GM database link.

The GM data base consists of 9 major parts:

- **Official documents:**
Law of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; the Action Plan for the advancement of women in Lithuania; the Annual report of the Ombudsperson office, etc.
- **Research data:**
Latest gender based research data; Comparative material and other countries examples.
- **Women in Lithuania:**
Research and other articles in two languages.
- **Library:**
Gender related on-line available publications; UN Gender Virtual library.
- **Global best practices:**
Gender Mainstreaming in practice – world examples,
- **Gender:**
Definitions; related statements; tips for gender mainstreaming, etc.
- **Dictionary:**
Main issues; explanations; definitions.
- **Gender studies:**
Major links to the Gender studies centers in Lithuania and in the world.
- **Links:**
Women organizations; information on gender related institution.

Discussion window is open at GM database, *Woman’s World and Safe*.

Today it is very convenient to use Lithuanian Women Information Portal because information is available through one spot on the Internet. It is used widely by journalist, students, information workers, women NGO's members. Currently GM database is constantly updated. WIIC observes a possibility to hold interactive discussions which are already technically possible and need to be moderated.

Now WIIC has a possibility to monitor and control the needs of visitors of Lithuanian Women's Information Portal, follow the number of visitors at each page, read and reply to their proposals left at the discussion windows.

WIIC remains an informal umbrella organization holding an electronic network with a growing number of addressees. The progress in information exchange and virtual communication among the Lithuanian Women NGOs felt in the past year. The common goal of e-networking was to prepare an open letter to the society supporting Women running for President before the elections, prepare appeal to the government of Lithuania or discuss urgent matters. The results of common actions prove the importance of Know How in networking. WIIC in its daily duties supports the Network of Lithuanian Women NGOs.

WIIC used management approach explaining and promoting Gender Mainstreaming Issues. Part of the promotion campaign of GM database was advertising through the popular Internet commercial pages. WIIC received a very positive reaction from web page visitors and number of visitors increased a lot. WIIC considers a very successful and useful to use modern tools of communication and plans to use IT possibilities in future activities. GM database promotion is a part of the advocacy activities in the frames of "Gender Mainstreaming into Lithuanian policies" project. On the occasion of International day of Human rights Women's Issues Information center initiated interview on the National Radio. UNDP established two prizes for the two days Radio Quiz for the First national Radio Programme listeners. Prizes were T-shirts with UNDP logo and Life free from violence campaign logo and two valuable books: "Dictionary of inter-language" and photo album "Women in Lithuania". Listeners were quite active in answering quiz questions. Questions were:

- When the Human Rights charter was born?
- What does the White Ribbon mean?

GM Focal Point is established and functioning. Taking into account a number of visitors, phone calls, requests from different institutions and officials WIIC is doing a constant work providing customers with information and promoting the sources. WIIC monitors the new researches and articles produced by other organizations and professionals on Gender Issues.

The library of the Women's Issues Information Center is constantly updated with new publications, examples of good practices, laws, periodic and etc. In the year 2002 Lithuanian students are visiting WIIC library significantly more frequent. It also a sign of increasing interest of Lithuanian academic society in a subject of women human rights.

WIIC also receives calls from different institutions requesting particular information on women status in Lithuania, information on data. WIIC members are quite often invited to present women situation in the areas of politics, business, economy etc. in the country and abroad.

Activity 3

- *To advocate for gender equality and to raise awareness among women's NGOs by the means of education and information*

Currently number of Women NGO is reaching 94. In the beginning of the year 2002, 73 women organizations in Lithuania were known. WIIC as informal umbrella organization is making a strong effort informing and training members of Lithuanian Women organizations on different issue empowering Lithuanian women. The information of women human rights, Gender Mainstreaming and other women issues is available through the GM database. WIIC makes efforts organizing various seminars and informative campaigns to spread the knowledge among the women organizations. To participate in a live discussion is most effective mean today in Lithuania. This way it is possible to monitor the level of knowledge of Women Issues especially in the regions of the country. WIIC concentrates its Gender Mainstreaming activities in non central areas of Lithuania it is a strategic priority today.

Presentation of the WIIC activities and of the project "Gender Mainstreaming into Lithuanian Policies" was organized in May 2002, for representatives of Embassies, international and national institutions.

The WIIC monitors the latest news on gender issues and disseminates it to the major international informational electronic networks: AWID, Access news, INSTRAW, Qweb and others.

The Women's Issues Information Center monitors and distributes a considerable amount of information on gender issues through the WIIC electronic network. The Network connects more than 130 addressees, representing Women's NGO's, governmental institutions, and individuals interested in gender issues not only in Lithuania but all around the world. The WIIC organized questioning of members of electronic network. According to the poll analysis there were 5 different group users formed:

1. Information in English and Lithuanian;
2. Information only in Lithuanian;
3. Information on Women's health, reproductive rights etc.;
4. Information on Issues of violence against women;
5. Women/gender studies.

The web page "Equal" (in Lithuanian) was created and launched in March, 2002. Articles, related to gender issues are published twice a month in "Woman's World" – the Internet bulletin in Lithuanian. The Internet bulletin "Woman's World" is the only one among the Internet and published newsletters and magazines, where gender issues are seriously considered. It is also the only open tribune for people interested in gender issues. The bulletin offer the possibility for women's NGOs to write about critical issues, to discuss and exchange experience and opinions.

The Database of Lithuanian women's NGOs is updated constantly and is available on the WIIC's web-site in Lithuanian and in English.

Currently number of Women NGO is reaching 94. In the beginning of the year 2002 - 73 women organizations in Lithuania were known and included to the Directory. WIIC supports newly established active organizations and registers them to the informal network. Such grow is a very positive sign that Women movement in Lithuania is active and in progress. During the year 2002 WIIC members participated actively in a number of seminars, trainings and other events held by different women organizations.

Articles on Women Issues and current situation are prepared by the WIIC and published regularly on monthly basis in local and regional newspapers. Most of the editors are welcoming such an initiative and publish WIIC articles for free. Still WIIC makes a strong effort placing articles in the different local newspapers and is continuing preparing articles on Women Issues, Human Rights Issues, problems and challenges faced by women during the accession period to EU. Responds are received from readers from the Lithuanian regions through the women organizations wishing to learn and read more about women movement and issues.

Regional women organizations also are good indicators of local communities needs. During WIIC regional advocacy events we received a support and strong confirmation that our activities¹ are needed especially in the regions. Awareness campaign in the non central parts of Lithuania is a strategic priority. In the year 2003 WIIC initiates 10 Radio programmes circle² on the National Radio about the country side women. The main idea is to depict and make suggestions how to solve the problems of socially isolated and suffering from poverty rural women.

Second part of the year 2002 was full of the local advocacy events and seminars initiated and organized³ by WIIC. All activities were widely covered by regional press.

Members of WIIC are also active participants in different seminars, discussions and trainings organized by other Lithuanian NGOs. It is a good opportunity to advocate for gender equality and disseminate information on WIIC activities.

Members of the WIIC are using informal communication opportunities to promote Gender Mainstreaming project. During the informal meeting in Warsaw at 'Gender and Economic Justice in European Accession and Integration' Economic Literacy Workshop the project was presented to Zhanna V. Zhanabekova, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) member, responsible for relations with Eastern European countries, to Ms. Zina Moula from UNIFEM, USA, to Ms. Osnat Lubrani, Regional Programme Director for Central and Eastern Europe, UNIFEM. The project was presented to WIIC's partners from Nordic countries and cooperation in searching for trainers and other gender mainstreaming information exchange was confirmed.

Project assistant participated in the First Regional Women's Leadership Institute. Two weeks group of young women leaders from the CIS region were trained and worked together under the moderation of American trainers from center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey, Poland and Slovenia. Institute was also a great opportunity to present Human rights and gender equality situation in Lithuania.

WIIC expanding it's activities and looking for partners in EU countries. Currently WIIC communicates with Women Organizations and other NGOs in Germany, Spain, Great Britain and discussing possible ways of common activities.

¹ Informational campaign "Life free of violence"

² in the frames of the project "Women for Women", supported by EC

³ Most regional seminars were organised by WIIC in the frames of other Project, implemented by WIIC.

WIIC is looking forward to participate in the World Wide V-Days campaign in 2003. V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery.

V-Day supports innovative programs to stop the violence (more information www.vday.org).

In Summer Women's Issues Information Center was elected the best women organization for the fight for equal rights and opportunities. It was a virtual voting through the Internet. WIIC was proposed as one from five organizations, there were 13 nominees.

Activity 4:

- *To create and maintain a network and close partnership relations among governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations*

WIIC assists the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor (MSSL). Close cooperation with a partner governmental institution empowered WIIC to prepare strong training programme for government officials. Training Programme was created using Nordic countries documents, good practices, UNDP material on Gender Mainstreaming, EU practices, programmes and documents etc. During the GM trainings for government officials, judging from the evaluation questioner's, motivation to learn more about Gender Mainstreaming and activities of women NGO is high. WIIC is interested in continuity of such trainings and programmes on Gender Mainstreaming for government officials. Network building efforts with governmental institutions started from training seminars on Gender Mainstreaming.

In the frames of the „Gender Mainstreaming into Lithuanian policies“ project first trainings for workers of Municipalities Social Support department leaders were organized. Second two day long training seminar was held in a month for Labour Exchange employees. Those were first seminars led by National trainers on Gender Mainstreaming.

Aims of the seminar:

- support mainstreaming of gender perspective into legislation, policies and programmes of the Government of Lithuania utilising capacities of the Women's Issues Information Centre, which has created database on gender issues and has experience in providing information and training
- to educate Municipalities Social Support Department's employees in gender mainstreaming in order to facilitate preparation and implementation of The National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women 2003-2004
- to ensure the maintenance of the network between all agents involved in gender equality issues
- to introduce gender mainstreaming methodology and definition in Social sphere

There were 50 government officials trained. According to the geographical description participants were from main cities of Lithuania.

Two day long seminar was divided into 7 parts with different trainers. There were 3 workshops held. Workshops were led by trainers from Women's Issues Information Center and Social Security and Labour Ministry. There were hot discussions between participants during the workshop.

Almost everybody mentioned that Gender Mainstreaming as a subject was absolutely new for them and they would like to continue studies.

There were few wishes to see more representatives of other women organizations in Lithuania during such meetings.

Women's Issues Information Center made proposal to the Director of Social workers training center to observe the possibility to prepare two hour short course for the social workers and include it in the training programme of the Training Center.

It was planed to arrange a one day seminar for Labour Exchange employees from bigger cities and national Labour exchange employees. Women's Issues Information Center was ready to organize another one day seminar till the end of the year 2002. Due to the busy season National Labour Exchange expressed demand of such seminar and asked to arrange it in the second quarter of the year 2003.

WIIC constantly monitors the process of government decision making. Reacting to the initiative of the Chairman of the Parliament Mr. Arturas Paulauskas, in November, 2002 WIIC prepared an appeal. It was signed by 18 Women NGOs. WIIC was supporting Mr. Arturas Paulauskas initiative to discuss the Budget of the year 2003 together with a Lithuanian NGOs. In WIIC letter willingness to discuss the matter with Women NGOs was expressed. Unfortunately there was no official answer received.

During the Presidential Election campaign WIIC together with other NGOs prepared and signed a Letter of support for the only one woman (Ms. Kazimiera Prunskiene) running for President Elections. The Letter of support was published in all major Lithuanian newspapers and regional press.

WIIC is working in a close partnership with a number of NGOs and Governmental institutions. Together with Ombudspersons office of Equal opportunities for Women and Men WIIC implemented a number of activities participating in several regional seminars and National conference on the Expansion of the Mandate of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. One of the seminars was organized together in the premises of WIIC. WIIC supported a publication of English version the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania. The Ombudspersons office of Equal opportunities for Women and Men closely cooperated and participated preparing the Programme of GM trainings for governmental officials. Ombudsperson participated in the discussion and meetings with women politicians during the Election campaign.

The WIIC participated in different conferences, seminars, trainings, and round-table discussions on gender issues all around Lithuania. There were 80 major events since the beginning of the year 2002 where the WIIC took place. 31 different events were organized and initiated by the Center. The Center supported a number of activities carried by other NGO's. The WIIC initiated and supported 10 different appeals to the Prime Minister and the Parliament regarding women status in Lithuania.

Number (about 70) of interviews to national and international press and Radio were given seeking to attract society's attention to gender issues and raise society's awareness on Gender Mainstreaming policy. Among international media were correspondents from BBC/London, Danish media, journalist from Nordic countries media, American Radio correspondent.

Using PR plane, organizing Press conferences inviting media to inform about the progress of the project and particular activities in the frame of the project is very valuable

measure disseminating the positives of Gender Mainstreaming strategy. Promotional campaign of Gender Mainstreaming database thru popular commercial web pages give a great result, the number of visitors increased substantially.

Advocating for Gender Mainstreaming it is very important to approach the audience of both, men and women. Discussion initiated by both men and women naturally provokes to go deeper into the equality and equal opportunities issues. While organizing trainings on Gender Mainstreaming WIIC considered a priority to compose a training group from men and women.

The WIIC received a very high number of requests from governmental institutions and from women's NGOs regarding information on women's status in Lithuania, on current issues and problems that women or women's NGOs are facing.

Requests received in the 12 months' period:

E-mail requests: 4400

Requests, received by phone or private visits from:

Private companies - 8; Embassies - 29; requests from foreign countries - 27; Media - 44;

Requests from governmental institutions - 196; NGO's - 210; Individuals -160.

Publications of WIIC in the frames of GM project:

Leaflets promoting GM database;

The Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuanian edition;

(English version was published in cooperation with Ombudsperson office)

Publications of WIIC in the frames of other project activities:

20,000 leaflets advocating to vote for women in Lithuanian during the election Campaign period;

Leaflets with contacts of institutions which provide support to victims of domestic violence in Lithuania.

Anti-violence poster for the public transportation (inside)

A Programme Guide for Hath Care Providers and Mangers;

A meeting with Ms. Martha Burke, president of the National Council of Women's Organizations, a network of over 150 US organizations was organized on 27th of June, 2002, in the WIIC premises. Women NGO from all Lithuania were invited to the meeting. 25 women from 18 Lithuanian women's NGO's have participated.

Meeting with a member of the European Commission, responsible for the budget, Dr. Michael Schreyer was held in the WIIC on the 27th of June, 2002. It was held on the initiative of the European Commission.

A meeting with members of the German Bundestag was held at the Center on the 28th of May, 2002. 3 members of the WIIC presented Center's activities and answered questions to the delegation of 8 members of the German Bundestag. Delegation was escorted by Ms. Jolita Siriute, consultant in the Division of international relations at Lithuanian Parliament.

Zuzana Jezerska, UNIFEM Regional Project Manager visited Lithuania on September 26-29. WIIC organized special NTF meeting, Radio interview and other important meetings on the occasion.

WIIC organizes and participates in different events supporting women initiative in policy and decision making. This is an important activity maintaining a network among governmental and non-governmental institutions.

In September, 2002 Virginija Sidlauskiene was appointed Prime Minister's Adviser for child, family and women affairs. WIIC organized meeting with Mrs. V.Sidlauskiene and Lithuanian women NGOs to discuss current situation of women in Lithuania activities challenges and priorities of Lithuanian women NGOs.

In the frames of Access 2000⁴ project WIIC organized public action to encourage women to support woman running for President Elections and women running into local elections. Women MP's and Minister of Culture participated in the meeting. WIIC supported⁵ open discussion "Women and Elections" event in Kaunas where first Women Politics club was established.

Collecting and analyzing data on GM trainers and training programmes in different European institutions and gender training centers started in March, 2002. This part required an additional funding, not being among the main project activities. WIIC succeeded to get in contact with gender training centers in Netherlands and Sweden. Fundraising and training curriculum preparation started. During the searching process for trainers WIIC established new contacts in European gender training institutions, those contact are important to use in future information and practice exchange.

The Project Manager participated at the European Congress "*Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Europe – a Challenge for Politician Education*", which took place on 6 – 8 of September, 2002 in Leipzig, Germany. Financial support for participation in the European Congress was provided by the Baltic American Partnership programme.

In the "*Conference on Gender Equality in the EU Candidate Countries*" manager of the project presented a speech *Institutional mechanisms, women in the Lithuania Labour Market and Economy*. Presentation is included to the Conference's publication. Conference was held on the 14-15th of September, 2002 in Copenhagen. Travel expenses were sponsored by organizers.

Unfortunately in the project is not foreseen financial support for participation at the different international conferences or seminars, what would allow not only to receive newest information, examples of best practice in the world, but also to share own experience and provide the information about the situation in Lithuania.

Observations and current guidelines:

- According to the project document *Project Objectives and Outcomes*: 4 out of 5 project objectives are in the stage of active implementation.
- Modification of the law of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was recently adopted by the Parliament; some changes (such as separate tools of Programme implementation for women and men) in the National Programme became possible. Changes allow, among other things, a possibility to resort to "positive discrimination" in order to ensure women's rights.

The legal amendments passed by the Parliament of Lithuania provide that measures taken to speed up the real enforcement of gender equality will not be considered direct

⁴ WIIC implements project „Women for Women“ since the 1st of December, 2002.

⁵ WIIC implements project "Baltic Women's Information Centers Cooperation"

discrimination. After the equality is achieved, the discriminatory measures would have to be revoked.

- Men by far outnumber women at the Lithuanian Parliament and municipalities. The draft legislation on quotas proposes that the parties should include not less than one third of women candidates into their election lists. The Women's Issues Information Center supports the idea to establish quotas into the election lists. The WIIC participated in the round –table discussion held in Parliament on the 16th of May, “Women's political awareness raising, women's more active participation in decision making and violence against women problem solving”
- In September, 2002 Virginija Sidlauskiene was appointed Prime Minister's adviser for child, family and women affairs.
- Currently number of Women NGO is reaching 94. In the beginning of the year 2002 – 70 Women Non Governmental Organizations in Lithuania were known.