

THE DYNAMIC CHANGE UPDATE

JUNE TO JULY 2023

CHANGE
for gender equality



Winner of 2023 OSCE
Gender Champions
Award for Projects

Dear Supporters of **CHANGE**,

We are delighted to share an exciting update with our CHANGE community. On 13 July 2023, the CHANGE project was honoured with the esteemed 2023 OSCE Gender Equality Champion Award in the distinguished Project/Initiative category.

The CHANGE project was recognized as an innovative and catalytic initiative in support of gender equality across the OSCE region.

This honour serves as a testament to the project's unwavering dedication that has left an indelible mark on advancing gender equality across the OSCE region.

INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW CHANGE PROJECT WEB PAGE

We invite you to explore our newly launched web page, created to provide easy access to comprehensive project information

[HTTPS://WWW.OSCE.ORG/ODIHR.CHANGE](https://www.osce.org/odihr.change)



Caption: Kateryna Ryabiko, ODIHR's First Deputy Director receiving the Gender Champions Award

IGNITING AWARENESS: CHANGE PRE-AWARD BRIEFING

“CHANGE’s collaborative essence and its focus on action driven by data and breakthrough leadership is its biggest strength,” said Kateryna Ryabiko, the First Deputy Director of ODIHR, during the pre-Award briefing with the representatives of OSCE participating States, on 13 July in Vienna.

Representing the OSCE North Macedonia’s Chair in Office, Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska not only recounted the inception of the CHANGE project but also highlighted how over a short time became clear how North Macedonia’s participation in the project activities is bringing direct benefit. “The project is creating opportunities to identify national-level best practices, thereby advancing gender equality fulfilment.”

In a brief presentation by Sanja Nikolin, the CHANGE project Officer, the project’s approach was introduced. This was succeeded by a vibrant Q&A session with participating States’ delegates and OSCE institutions representatives. Their active engagement showcased a profound interest in the project’s pioneering approach and its far-reaching impact.

FOSTERING “MALE ALLYSHIP” TO PROPEL GENDER EQUALITY PROGRESS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

In an endeavour to strengthen the foundations of gender equality, CHANGE organized a specialized consultation in Skopje, North Macedonia. This dynamic meeting was held to facilitate a constructive exchange of ideas and establish fresh alliances involving male stakeholders.

Converging representatives from religious and traditional communities alongside leaders of women’s movements, the event marked a significant milestone.

After three impactful days of intense deliberations, a unanimous consensus emerged. It was resoundingly agreed that collaboration between religious and traditional communities, and women’s movements in North



Caption: Kateryna Ryabiko, Sanja Nikolin and Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska at the Pre-Award briefing on the CHANGE project

Macedonia, holds immense potential. This synergy aims to address the pressing issues of violence against women and children in North Macedonia, resonating with the shared understanding that gender equality bears universal benefits beyond gender lines.

An inherent focal point was the recognition that gender equality is an inclusive endeavour, beneficial not only for women but for society as a whole. Importance of engaging men in initiatives aimed at enhancing women’s safety and mitigating violence against women and children.

The participants are committed to usher in new initiatives aimed at preventing and effectively addressing violence against women and children, born from the vibrant discourse that unfolded during the meeting. They are eager to engage in dialogue with the state, civil society, and faith-based communities alike.

At the heart of this collaborative endeavour lies gender-based violence, a pivotal focal point for engagement with fellow stakeholders. An innovative notion emerged – collaborative campaigns led by religious leaders to combat violence against women. Women in ecclesial life are poised as potential bridges connecting women’s movements and religious communities

The participants shared their main takeaways after the three-day event, exemplifying the transformative impact:

1. Recognizing that there are many cases of violence against women within a country.
2. Recognizing the pressing need for men to carve out space for women within society
3. Acknowledging the equal capacity of women to hold decision-making positions alongside men.
4. Consensus on the imperative to address gender-based violence with religious communities positioned as influential agents.
5. Forging connections with like-minded individuals, fostering collaborations on this paramount issue.
6. Applauding the impeccable organization of the event.
7. The participants called for follow-up support in this area. ODIHR is actively assessing how best to meet to these request and needs within the view of the CHANGE project.

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I-CHANGE: EMPOWERING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

The I-CHANGE training course represents a fresh approach to driving stronger transformation. Designed to empower individuals from underrepresented groups, predominantly women (and possibly men based on the audience), this training initiative ignites the spark of self-assurance, enhancing skills and amplifying voices as potent self-advocates.



Caption 1: Kateryna Ryabiko with Facilitators of the Consultation meeting: Kosana Beker, Gender Expert, and Wojciech Brzozowski, Deputy Ombudsman, Poland



Caption 2: A moment from the Consultation meeting

After two successful applications of the methodology with young Roma women in North Macedonia and Poland, the I-CHANGE methodology was tested for application to other groups of women (and potentially men), within a different context.

To prove the solidity of the I-CHANGE methodology, the training was piloted within ODIHR.

Participants of the I-CHANGE training embarked on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment, equipping themselves with the art of self-advocacy.

GIVING VOICE TO UNSEEN ISSUES: SELF-ADVOCACY

The term self-advocacy is understood as a woman's ability to speak up for herself and other women facing similar issues. Women who are not visible enough or not urgent enough for policy and decision-making.

Together, the participants of the I-CHANGE training unite to accomplish the following goals:

- 1.** Promote, expand and protect civic space, to support the efforts of women to dismantle obstacles obstructing diverse feminist actions.
- 2.** Increase the meaningful participation, leadership and decision-making authority for girls, women and feminist activists by cultivating self-advocacy skills. This is reinforced by deepening awareness of their individual and group needs, ensuring equal engagement in public life and decision-making;
- 3.** Enhance the capacities of women from under-represented groups to engage in dialogue with governments. To share effective and innovative strategies to address gender stereotypes effectively;
- 4.** Empower women from marginalized backgrounds and at risk of discrimination on multiple grounds by mainstreaming gender equality in their community and beyond.

After the I-CHANGE training, the participating ODIHR team members are now equipped with:

- 1)** A comprehensive understanding of self-advocacy, along with the ability to navigate the spectrum of self-advocacy, whether big or small, all the while prioritizing effective planning.
- 2)** A grasp of the concept of power and its potential for positive transformation – constructive change, both for themselves and within their respective communities.
- 3)** Self-advocates' leadership characteristics, coupled with the proficiency to leverage these qualities to achieve the utmost impact.
- 4)** The ways to foster collaboration within allies and engage with individuals who may initially be passive opponents of the self-advocacy initiatives, thereby paving the way for smoother progress.



Caption: I-CHANGE training for ODIHR staff

