

# THE CHANGE UPDATE

MID-AUGUST – MID-OCTOBER 2023



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ODIHR

Dear Supporters of CHANGE,

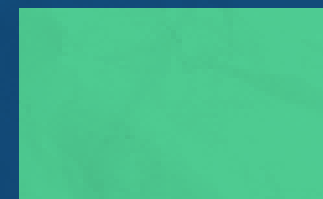
Thank you for your interest in the CHANGE project highlights!

We are resuming with the events covering the period from mid-August through mid-October 2023.

## CONSULTATION MEETING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN GEORGIA

August 31 to September 1, 2023

The civil society is vibrant and diverse in Georgia, nevertheless more can be done to further an enabling environment for human rights defenders and civil society organizations. To discuss the current situation and, in particular, the key pressing challenges and protection gaps in relation to the situation of diverse human rights defenders and women's civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities in Georgia ODIHR organized a consultation meeting with 21 human rights defenders and civil society representatives (15 women, 6 men, including 2 persons with disabilities).



As a next step, ODIHR will submit a memo to the Georgian authorities reporting on the meeting. The letter will contain recommendations and reference to ODIHR's earlier findings about the situation of HRDs in Georgia. To propose a way forward in the sustainable improvement of the situation of diverse human rights defenders and women's civil society organizations, in a

gender-sensitive and inclusive manner. ODIHR will continue to prioritize safety and security of human rights defenders in future project specific activity implementation. The information gathered will also inform the upcoming revision of ODIHR's Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

## TRAINING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING OF THE SECURITY SECTOR OVERSIGHT IN NORTH MACEDONIA

September 13 and 14, 2023

As a result of the training, the participants' (13, 11 women, 2 men) capacities for gender mainstreaming of the external and internal oversight of the security sector were strengthened. The training further contributed to institutional-level changes conducive to a more human rights compliant and gender-responsive delivery of security. In close collaboration with the OSCE Mission to Skopje, MAARI and relevant national stakeholders in North Macedonia, ODIHR will engage in follow up work contributing to effective, inclusive, gender-sensitive and resilient institutions and legislation.

The training started off with a refresher on basic terms in gender equality work, and moved to entry points for gender mainstreaming in the security sector, roles of internal and external oversight bodies in gender mainstreaming, including use of different tools: due diligence, trauma-informed interviewing techniques, gender analy-

ses of past cases, gender-sensitive risk analysis in the monitoring and oversight of law enforcement. Finally, the participants discussed border and migration management-specific gender issues and gender-sensitive detention monitoring.

This two-day training gathered representatives of the Parliament and various government bodies: parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Gender Advisor to the Parliament, Ministry of Internal Affairs, including Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards, Department for Disciplinary and Court Procedures, Analytical Unit at the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards, Regional organization for Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MAARI), and OSCE Mission to Skopje.





*Most of the participants of the Training on gender mainstreaming of the security sector oversight in North Macedonia were captured in a group photo*

## **EVENT ON SELF-ADVOCACY BY WOMEN FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS FOR ACHIEVING JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY**

**September 13 and 14, 2023**

After three successful applications of its' hallmark I-CHANGE training methodology for capacity building of women from under-represented groups in self-advocacy, ODIHR presented the approach at an event during the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 2023.

The CHANGE project places a strong emphasis on women from underrepresented groups and their self-representation at individual, collective, and institutional levels. Self-advocacy, as an approach practiced under the CHANGE project, helps to turn the experience of discrimination, often on multiple grounds, into a strong voice that effectively advocates for human rights and social justice.

Self-advocacy is a tool for achieving justice and gender equality by women from under-represented groups and the CHANGE project's approach to self-advocacy is delivering results. The side event highlighted the importance of individual level change initiatives and their contribution to nurturing pluralism and inclusivity within civil society. A need to develop mechanisms for uptake of self-advocates' inputs by the state actors was flagged. The panelists included Tea Jaliashvili, ODIHR's First Deputy Director, Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska from the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia, Olena Vaydalovych, Towards Dialogue Foundation, and Agnieszka Caban, President of the Home of the Borderland Foundation



*“I always dreamt of running my own social organization, but I was not confident enough to try,” said Agnieszka Caban, President of the Home of the Borderland Foundation. “After taking part in an I-CHANGE self-advocacy training, I set my sights higher and finally saw myself as a leader. I have now founded an NGO. And I see many other women who also believe in themselves and manage to fulfill their plans. I always wanted to work with women who think like me, and now I know that this is possible.”*



*Agnieszka Caban, President of the Home of the Borderland Foundation and I-CHANGE training participant*



*Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska from the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia*

*“Making a difference on the ground is what ODIHR’s CHANGE project, with its hallmark methodology, is achieving,” said Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska from the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia. “This is fully in line with the approach of the Chair, whose motto – “It is about people” – reflects the drive to deliver real change for all people in the OSCE region. At first, my eyebrows were raised at the news that North Macedonia was selected as a country directly benefiting from the CHANGE project – you think that you have done something wrong to be selected. Then, I understood that there are many benefits from participation in the CHANGE project.”*



The participants watched together the video [Speaking out for yourself is key to achieving justice and equality](#) and they discussed the merits of the I-CHANGE approach that can be summarized as follows:

## THE I-CHANGE APPROACH SUMMARIZED

- 1.** Helps young women to the transition from community management and care to community politics and decision making through taking a very personal interest in an issue. Quickly, they become direct experts and source confidence from it.
- 2.** Tools include narrative reframing and value based framing strategies. Personal stories are shared to acknowledge that gender is personal, interpersonal and structural. Because it involves unequal relations of power, I-CHANGE is about power deconstruction and mobilising using 'power within' and 'power to' do together.
- 3.** Participants develop micro-projects as a practical attempt to reverse the backlash by preparing for what will inevitably come when you take action (denial, disavoval, inaction, appeasement, appropriation, co-option, repression and backlash).
- 4.** Women's safety and solidarity emphasized with resilience and coping mechanisms built in.
- 5.** Through this individualized and intersectional approach, women from under-represented groups are becoming leaders by taking up space, asking questions, demanding information, breaking the pattern, addressing shame and guilt, requesting and giving respect. This process contributes to nurturing pluralism within the women's movements.

ODIHR posted about the side event on [X](#).

The ODIHR promotes effective institutions, policies, and programmes that reflect both women's and men's interests.

**Get in touch**

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