

THE CHANGE UPDATE



MID-OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2023

Dear CHANGE Community Members,

We are happy to reach out and bring you up to date with the CHANGE project highlights for the end of 2023. In this issue, we present four key events:

1

POLITICAL PARTIES IN GEORGIA DEVELOP THEIR FIRST CODES OF ETHICS

2

FIRST NATIONAL EDITION OF YOUNG WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACADEMY IN GEORGIA

3

OSCE CONFERENCE "WOMEN AND MEN: TOGETHER FOR EQUAL RIGHTS"

4

EXPLORING NEW STRATEGIES TO REVERSE GENDER BACKLASH IN NORTH MACEDONIA

POLITICAL PARTIES IN GEORGIA DEVELOP THEIR FIRST CODES OF ETHICS

30 - 31 October and 27 – 28 November 2023

Following six months of desk review, interviews and analysis of political party rules, ODIHR organized four one-day workshops for leadership and membership of the following political parties: Georgian Dream, United National Movement, For Georgia and Lelo for Georgia. Each workshop was tailored to the specific circumstances of the political party and it was an opportunity to work in a participatory manner on the finalization of respective party's Code of Ethics. These key policy documents respond to the necessity and commitment of democratically minded political parties in the OSCE participating states to strengthen themselves internally by introducing codes of ethics and establishing and maintaining their own, internal rules of ethical conduct by their members, and preventing and punishing unethical behaviour. A strong emphasis

was placed on integration of the gender perspective in the respective Codes, including ways to address violence against women in politics and in society and to support diversity and inclusion.

This breakthrough development is a direct result of previous engagement of young women from respective parties in the Young Women's Political Academy training. ODIHR then extended the opportunity to support the development of the Codes of Ethics to all parliamentary political parties and four joined. Prior to the CHANGE project's work, there were no political parties in Georgia with a Code of Ethics. The four workshops brought a total of 122 participants (79 women and 43 men), including political party leadership, youth and women's wing representatives from different regions in Georgia.

EXCERPT FROM WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS

BOX 1

The workshop was highly **useful** as the participants' average grade on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest grade awarded **4.85**. For **relevance** to the political party, the average grade was **4.75**. **Integration of a gender perspective** in political party functioning is very important for the party's success according to the average grade of **4.8**. Participants **own interest in supporting gender mainstreaming** in respective political party is very high with an average grade of **4.85**.



Yulia Netesova, Chief ODIHR's Democratic Governance and Gender Unit during one of the four workshops.

FIRST NATIONAL EDITION OF YOUNG WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACADEMY

21-25 November, Tbilisi, Georgia

The first national Young Women Political Academy (YWPA) welcomed 25 participants from a range of political parties, as well as non-party members/civil society activists from different regions in Georgia, including rural women and women from ethnic/religious minority communities. The participants were selected from a pool of 90 applications. During the five YWPA days, the participants learned about the political structure in Georgia and the status of women's political participation. They understood the notion of 'gender responsive leadership' and the importance of issue-based coalitions in advancing gender equality. They studied impact of electoral system and special measures on women's representation in elected bodies and they looked into the issue of violence against women in politics (VAWIP) is and how to protect themselves and each other from online violence, and

create specific plans to increase own safety online. For most participants, this was the first opportunity to spend time with political opponents.

Gender equality is a proxy for sustainable peace¹, security and democracy and advances in this area are strongest when women across political parties push for a specific change united in issue-based coalitions. Five among the previous years' YWPA Alumnae joined for an evening discussion on how they integrated knowledge and skills gained in YWPA and what obstacles they encountered in applying them and moving their way up in politics. The participants rated the YWPA with the highest grade, including individual contributions by the five YWPA trainers.

YWPA STRENGTHENS GENDER RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP

BOX 2

Participants' willingness to take part in elections after the YWPA was as high as 79% and 88% are highly interested in actively contributing to advancing gender equality after YWPA, while 100% are highly or quite interested in removing the specific barriers for young women in politics.

¹World Peace and Gender Equality: Addressing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325's Weaknesses, 27 Michigan Journal of Gender & Law 247 (2021), BYU Law Research Paper No. 21-04



Participants' three main takeaways included:

- Importance of interparty work, cooperation and collaboration; supporting women notwithstanding our political views; conducting of pre-election campaigns.
- *Ways to eradicate discrimination against women; election campaign on women's financial means; live interviews, what needs to be taken into account when giving interviews.*
- *The gender-related information I received during the training was the most important for me; getting practical experience of how to work with media was also very interesting and important; networking and the relationships that I generated through this training.*
- *Necessity of achieving gender equality; uniting for common goals with individuals who follow different political ideologies; tricks and rules of giving interviews.*

The impact of YWPA was strong and the long-term benefits will be assessed in the forthcoming parliamentary elections on 26 October 2024. The participants' quotes regarding the immediate internalized results include the following:

1. During the simulation game, I played the role of the prime-minister. I thought I wouldn't be able to do it, but I discovered strength in me and thank you for that strength. The experience I got from the training helped me with that.
2. I got to know many people. We had a lady from a mountainous Adjara region in our group and sharing her experiences was interesting. The simulation game gave me a motivation to perform this type of activities more. Gender equality issues are a challenge and very much relevant in Georgia.
3. The training gave me more knowledge, it motivated me to protect women's rights, fight for and defend them even more. The training was about the issues that exist not only in our country, but all over the world.
4. The simulation game was quite close to the situation in our country. Nowadays, violence against women in politics is quite frequent, therefore, this training gives me an even bigger motivation for fighting against these problems and destroying existing stereotypes.
5. My will to fight as well as my motivation to protect other women grew during the training, also I gained new skills and knowledge required for that.
6. I think this training gave me the opportunity to grow both professionally and personally; it also gave me the confidence to take more daring steps such as participation in elections.



YWPA 2023 participants from Georgia



Salome Kurasbediani, MP and Gender Equality Council Member, Sanja Nikolin, CHANGE Project Officer and Sonja Lokar, YWPA Trainer



Marking 16 Days of Activism Together at YWPA 2023

OSCE CONFERENCE „WOMEN AND MEN: WORKING TOGETHER FOR EQUAL RIGHTS”

5 – 6 December 2023, Warsaw, Poland

Last December, OSCE Conference “Women and Men: Working Together for Equal Rights” brought together 74 participants (49 women and 25 men) from across the OSCE region with the following objectives:

- To bring together formal and informal networks working with men for gender equality for an exchange on good practices and lesson learned on what are the drivers and bottlenecks in engaging with men for gender equality;
- To identify opportunities for advances in institutional structures, including OSCE internal structures and policies that reinforce the engagement of male allies; and
- To prepare a series of recommendations on how to progress across the OSCE work with regards to engaging men across the OSCE’s three dimensions.

The participants, including the Chair in Office represented by Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska, individuals and organizations working on engaging men, representatives of security sector, political party, religious community, national gender equality mechanisms, human rights defenders and civil society organizations working on gender equality, academics and practitioners, as well as staff of OSCE executive structures. Lara Scarpitta, OSCE Senior Advisor on Gender Issues provided opening remarks and Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director, ODIHR provided the closing remarks. In the spirit of leading by example, the CHANGE and WIN projects co-hosted the conference.

ODIHR presented its’ approaches to engaging men from religious and traditional communities, and to working with men in politics, security sector, the public sector, and civil society.

Overall, the respondents rated the event with the highest grade. The participants liked most ‘an excellent organization and thematic conceptualization’, ‘selection of speakers and participants’, ‘the platform for interaction and networking during and after the event’, and ‘the conference vibe and positive energy’. A poster exhibition by Marija Masha Milankovic titled Change is beautiful complemented the event by provoking thoughts around the changing role of men in society.

A news item was published on the OSCE website: **Engaging men in promotion of gender equality in focus of OSCE-organized conference | OSCE** and the report with recommendations is forthcoming.

One respondent stated: “This is my first conference in such field in my life, and those two days totally changed my mind about gender equality at all. I was enlightened. Thank you.”

Youth perspectives were carefully integrated, both from experienced young professionals and new entrants to the human rights work: “I was truly impressed by how well organized this event was, with such an attention for details and heart-warming attentions for participants. The art exhibition was a real added value, and I am so proud to have this beautiful poster hanging in my living room. The speakers and moderators you selected were all truly brilliant and inspiring, and I was really impressed by how diverse the audience was. I heard from various participants that the choice of venue and the room setting made them feel more at ease to network and exchange with other participants, which is also how I felt. I also really appreciated how engaging and interactive the sessions were. As a young human rights professional, this is the kind of events that motivate me to grow in this field and strive towards meaningful change.”



Beqa Liluashvili, MP presenting at OSCE Conference “Women and Men: Together for Equal Rights”



Participants of the OSCE Conference “Women and Men: Together for Equal Rights” in Warsaw

EXPLORING NEW STRATEGIES TO REVERSE GENDER BACKLASH.

5 – 6 December 2023, Warsaw, Poland

Women in politics in North Macedonia, like women in politics across the OSCE region, encounter malware attacks, distributed denial of service (DDoS), mob attacks, smear campaigns, mass reporting, impersonation, ridiculing, intersectional harassment, non-consensual intimate image sharing, deepfakes, doxing (publicly providing personally identifiable information about an individual), shadow banning, sexual harassment and rape threats, trolling, sealioning (type of trolling or harassment that consists of pursuing people with relentless requests for evidence with intent to exhaust and discourage), or zoombombing (hijacking of Zoom virtual conference meetings).

These are all part of online strategies to trigger gender backlash and push women out of

public space. The CHANGE project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy brought together 28 participants (25 women and 3 men) to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on ways to confront and online and offline is an attack on the gains in gender equality and to discourage women from taking part in decision making, and organized sharing of European good practice. The participants reached a consensus about the importance of concerted efforts in this area, and a need for further sharing of good practice that can trigger breakthrough leadership and innovation in this area in North Macedonia. The CHANGE project plans to organize a follow up event in 2024.



*Jovanka Trenevskva, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, North Macedonia,
Sanja Nikolin, CHANGE Project Officer and
Neda Chalovska Dimovska, Gender Expert from North Macedonia*



YWPA 2023 closing and certification