

Strengthening the Capacity of Belarusian Women Movements and Organizations

Objectives

This project aimed to transfer first-hand experience gained in the building of women movements under authoritarian regimes throughout Central and Eastern Europe; to educate and train the targeted groups in areas such as project management, communication and fundraising; and to facilitate networking between Belarusian women, NGOs, and politicians with a view of enabling them to work together to better promote women's rights.

Background

The situation of Belarusian women rights' movements and organizations is relatively good comparing to other elements of civil society. Even though some women organizations face much of the same repression like other independent NGOs in Belarus there are some well-established and regularly, legally functioning women organizations. Leaders of women movements, however, often lack the time, capacity and confidence to truly make an impact on society. Information and experience in NGO management and organization aids their work and facilitates the implementation of their ideas. Improving the capacity of Belarusian women organizations has a very important indirect effect because these organizations are, whether supported, banned, or just tolerated by the Lukashenko regime, part of civil society. Developing their capacities means contributing to the overall development of Belarusian civil society. Women NGOs provide opportunities for their activists – and indirectly, the broad social group of women – for increased civil participation and are training grounds for grassroots democracy.

Project Description

With the goal of strengthening the capacity of Belarusian women movements and organizations this project enhanced the effects of the ICDT's earlier efforts in Belarus. Building on the ICDT's previous experience in providing NGO management training for Belarusian activists this project included the implementation of two training seminars for Belarusian women rights' activists as well as the production and use of training materials in Russian. The ICDT provided consultation for the activists participating in the project and facilitated the successful implementation of their project ideas by creating new opportunities for them to find financing for their initiatives. As an additional output of this project, a special book, entitled 'Democratic Change and Gender: The Foremother Exercise,' was published.



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