



Promoting Women's participation in the Alpine Space Sustainable Development

A NETWORK OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS
AND RESOURCE CENTRES FOR WOMEN



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INTRODUCTION

We welcomed with particular pleasure the opportunity to present, on behalf of all the partners, the brochure of the WOMEN-ALPnet project, in which the Province of Lecco has participated with enthusiasm since 2003.

The reason for the participation of our Local Administration and the determination to involve other local institutions, associations and citizens in the implementation of this action resides in the nature of the territory of the Province of Lecco. This area is characterised by a big number of active mountain towns where the issue of sustainable development touches a growing number of people.

The difficulties that arise in traditional activities on international markets, the lack of infrastructures, the changes that have occurred in the past few years both in the social fabric and in the life of many citizens lead elected officials to rethink their role and to reconsider, in a framework of dialogue and collaboration with institutions of other countries and Europe as a whole, all the instruments that can contribute to reducing disparities in living conditions, promoting access to information and resources, offering the opportunity for new human and professional growth. In its conception the project, that has the merit of adapting to society and its needs, set out objectives that are especially interesting for women, who will be able, through cooperation, training and the availability of new tools, to become the main actors in the development of their territory and actively promote true integration among mountain areas.

The careful and targeted use of resources offered by EU Structural Funds is, in these difficult times for our economy, a concrete support that is essential to achieve the foreseen objectives. The attention of European institutions towards Equal Opportunities, that this

Provincial Administration supports and promotes as a means to implement actions that cut through all its different competences, must be considered an opportunity to increase the value of the different elements of society, harmonizing and exalting their different characteristics to achieve the common goals of growth and development.

While thanking all those who have contributed to carrying out this project, we hope that networking will become a common tool for action in wider sectors of society and that dialogue and collaboration will favour the integration and common development that are the bases of European institutions and international cooperation.

The Vice-President of the Province of Lecco
Alfredo Marelli

The President of the Province of Lecco
Virginio Brivio

CHAPTER 1

1.1 THE WOMEN-ALPNET PROJECT: CONTEXT, STRUCTURE AND GENERAL AIMS

The basic assumption of the WOMEN-ALPnet project, co-financed by the Interreg III B “Alpine Space” Community Initiative programme, is that women’s active participation in local economic development processes depends at least on four essential conditions: the possibility of accessing information, the possibility of accessing resources, the opportunity to create a real individual professional development (thus broadening personal career choices and overcoming stereotypes and discrimination factors) and the pursuit of strong cooperation and gender mainstreaming actions at institutional and socio-economic level.

The condition of women living in the Alpine Space area is influenced by the economic and spatial disparities that characterize the territory, which become more marked and more evident on a smaller scale. This is especially true in the rural peri-Alpine and in the disadvantaged mountain areas, which are poorly connected to urban centres, risk depopulation, suffer from a lack of services, have a restricted labour market - often linked to seasonal job offers - and where the population’s economic power is weak. Women living in these areas suffer from a lower employment rate compared to men and are less integrated in the traditional economic sectors and, when employed, carry out either part-time or poorly paid jobs. To counter face the situation and in order to promote a full development of women’s skills and potential, many Alpine Space regions have developed, in the last few years, an important community acquis: the «Women Resource Centre». The WOMEN-ALPnet project promoted cooperation between «Women Resource Centres» of the Alpine Space, in order to develop common approaches, test services, and implement innovative

initiatives aimed at promoting rural women’s full participation in economic and social life. The final goal was to offer women technical assistance and a quality support, thus providing them equal access to local and regional resources. At the same time the project aimed at promoting a gender-based cooperation among public and private local development actors.

In order to implement an active participation of women in local development and to strengthen the cooperation between public and private local development actors, the partnership of WOMEN-ALPnet engaged in several activities and developed a number of tools, i.e.:

- Regional operational study: “Women in the Alpine Space. A Regional Comparative Report”
- Developing a service network among « Women Resource Centres » (WRCs)
- Territorial Pilot Actions:
 - France “Edelweiss - Local economic development women experimentation on Specific international space”
 - Austria - “Train the Trainer: development of a training module devoted to local operators (advisors, counsellors)”
 - Italy-Lecco - “Development of a Network to Promote Employment and Female Entrepreneurship”
 - Italy-Trento - “A model of «virtual resource» to promote the participation of women in local development”
- Gender mainstreaming actions at horizontal and vertical level

Dissemination activities - with the implementation of the project website www.womenalpnet.org, the publication of a leaflet and the present booklet in 5 languages, and the issue of press releases aimed at promoting project activities - played a crucial and transversal role throughout the project at transnational and local level.

The activities mentioned above are described in detail in the following pages.

INTERREG III is a Community initiative which aims at stimulating interregional cooperation in the European Union between 2000-2006. It is financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The INTERREG III initiative is designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion throughout the EU, by fostering the balanced development of the continent through cross-border (Strand A), transnational (Strand B) and interregional (Strand C) cooperation. Special emphasis has been placed, in particular within Strand B, on promoting transnational cooperation that involves national, regional and local authorities for a better integration in the EU through the identification of large groups of European regions.

The new cohesion policy for 2007-2013 will mostly focus on regional development programmes. The new ERDF will strengthen regional competitiveness and attractiveness, by anticipating economic and social change and supporting innovation, the knowledge society, entrepreneurship, environment protection and risk prevention.

1.2 THE PARTNERSHIP: BRIEF DESCRIPTION

PROVINCIA DI LECCO (Italy) lead partner is the intermediate local institution between the Lecco municipal administration and the Regione Lombardia (Regional Authority for Lombardy). Provincia di Lecco employment policies aim at strengthening the role and function of employment services, not only to improve its positive and proven experience but also to overcome the weaknesses that affect its territory, for instance a low women's employment rate. The Women Resource Centre of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello" was specifically designed to provide women living in the Province with welcoming, information and guidance services, help them find a job or improve their work situation.

FRAU UND ARBEIT (Austria) is an NGO established in Salzburg in 1995. Its five local offices offer coaching, consulting, training, and networking for women who are seeking changes in their professional life. The main target groups are women who are unemployed, are re-entering the labour market after a maternity leave or other family-related breaks, wish to change their job/career or start their own business. Frau & Arbeit also develops, designs and co-ordinates women-oriented EU projects.

CENTRO DI INIZIATIVA EUROPEA - CdIE soc. coop. (Italy) is a limited no-profit cooperative with offices in Milan and Brussels. Since 1990 CdIE has been promoting and managing innovative actions in the field of local development and the promotion of human resources at European level. Designing and participating in projects focused on equal opportunities, specifically gender issues, represent a core activity of CdIE, which is a founding member of WIN -Women in Net, a European association of Women Resource Centres.

PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO (Italy) The Gender Equality Unit of the Province of Trento promotes and co-ordinates local actions to foster gender equality. Its main activities consist in promoting gender mainstreaming through the analysis of public policies from a gender perspective; supplying services for local actors and women in particular (collecting legislation, best practices, job and training opportunities, statistical data, organisation of a documentation centre); managing the Equal Opportunities website; dissemination activities.

PROVINCIA DI TORINO (Italy) **Assessorato Pari Opportunità e Relazioni Internazionali - Servizio Pari Opportunità e Politiche dei Tempi** is the inter-mediate local institution between the Turin municipal administration and the Regione Piemonte (Regional Authority for Piedmont). Its policies in the social sphere take into account a complex series of national and regional regulations. In particular it has been promoting equal opportunities for years at local level, with projects and initiatives to support women's participation at political, economic and social level.

REGIONE LOMBARDIA (Italy) - The Regional Government of Lombardy, through its Unit for Equal Opportunities, promotes affirmative action in favour of women in order to strengthen their presence in the labour market, as well as in the decision-making process to allow them to participate in full in public, economic and social life. Through the Regional Resource Centres (CRR) Regione Lombardia supports local authorities engaged in the implementation of equal opportunities and gender equality. CRR's developed the network of Local Resource Centres for Women.

S.&T. soc.coop. (Italy) - S.&T. is a cooperative structure specialized in project management activities for local development, equal opportunities and the diffusion of CSR (corporate social responsibility). Since 1986 it has been offering technical advisory and consulting services to public administrations, local institutions, social partnership organisations, enterprises

and equal opportunities institutions, through European, national and regional programs and funds in the field of local development, European Union policies, equal opportunities, corporate social responsibility, and productive areas.

URACIFF Union des Associations Centre d'Information pour les Femmes et les Familles (France) gathers and represents 8 Centres of Information and Documentation for Women and Families of Rhone-Alpes Region. It encourages action and promotes national or European projects with regard to: training, information, spreading awareness to promote Equal Opportunities between men and women. It acts within the national network of the Centres of Information and Documentation for Women and Families.

REGIONALNI RAZVOJNI CENTER KOPER (Slovenia) - The Regional Development Centre Koper (hereafter RRC Koper) acts as an institution at regional level with the aim of promoting the development of business and the economy in its area of competence. It functions as a regional coordinator of interests on local as well as national level in the fields of regional development, economy, human resources and environmental protection.

Laboratorio di Ingegneria della Formazione e Innovazione (LIFI) Università della Svizzera Italiana, Istituto Comunicazione e Formazione (Switzerland) - The Training, Education and Innovation Engineering Laboratory (LIFI) is intended as a space for reflection and research, design and implementation of formative and innovative practices. The laboratory is engaged in projects that represent, on the one hand, a link between research and implementation in the fields of didactics, technology, institutional organisation and politics; on the other, a connection between education, training and communication, particularly by making use of Communication and Information Technologies.

CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL OPERATIONAL STUDY AND BEST PRACTICES

Responsible partner:

Centro di Iniziativa Europea (CdIE) soc. coop. (Italy) devised the study and was responsible for the general coordination of the activities and the drawing up of the research. CdIE, with the support of Follow up srl, was in charge of gathering and analysing the data relating to Italian regions.

Partners involved:

Laboratorio di Ingegneria della Formazione e Innovazione (LIFI) - Università della Svizzera Italiana, collaborated with CdIE in the research preparation phase and provided the data relating to its area of competence; Frau & Arbeit; RRC Koper and Uraciff provided the data relating to their territory.

Aims:

The aim of the research was to offer the partnership a comparative base of data, collected on a gender-basis, on the condition of the female population at regional and local level, in some of the regions of the Alpine Space. The research takes into consideration the strong disparities present, on a small scale, in the area addressed by the project, which are not visible from the data at the NUTS II level, so as to encourage the benchmarking of the measures that are implemented in the areas under consideration, in order to support gender mainstreaming in local development processes.

Implemented Activities:

The data, collected through an ad-hoc questionnaire distributed in spring 2004 to the partners in the project, aimed at outlining the characteristics of the territory and the composition of the population by age group; the level of female presence in the labour

market and the legislative measures adopted to increase their participation; the legal framework and support facilities available to families for parental leave and family work, for the direct assistance to women; the presence of women in positions of power and in decision-making processes; the good practices available at policy and intervention level.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

The study highlights the complexity of the Alpine context and the multifaceted resources available in an area where the female condition seems to be characterized by a “mountainous” peculiarity for women who live in what the research defines as disadvantaged areas. It proved to be an operational tool that can help reinforce the transnational network and strengthen cooperation, providing expertise and benchmarking reference as well as indications on innovative actions to be undertaken. It is addressed to public and private actors working at local level, as a contribution to improving the quality of life of the Alpine population in a gender perspective.

Products:

The publication “Women in the Alpine Space. A regional comparative report”, is available in English, in electronic format, and the presentation abstract (press release) in English and Italian.

CHAPTER 3

“TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING A SERVICE NETWORK AMONG «RESOURCE CENTRES FOR WOMEN» IN THE ALPINE SPACE: TRANSNATIONAL SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND VISITS”

Responsible partner:

Frau & Arbeit, in cooperation with CdIE Soc. Coop.

Partners involved:

All project partners and their local partners and stakeholders such as Women Resource Centres (WRCs), local bodies involved in equal opportunities, employment organisations and institutions for local development (about 350 people in all).

Aims:

- To strengthen cooperation among the Women Resource Centres of the Alpine Space
- To promote the transfer of consolidated practices and tools for the integration of women in the labour market, especially those living in rural and disadvantaged mountain areas.

Implemented Activities:

Multilateral study visits to:

- Resource Centres and Institutions (e.g. Lombardy Region, Salzburg Region, Maggia Valley, Annecy in High Savoy, Obalno-Kraška Region and Province of Lecco)

Transnational Seminars linked to the Territorial Pilot Actions that were developed in the project:

- Local networks and training modules for counsellors (Salzburg, Austria)
- Methodologies and experiences for the integration of women in the local economic development of mountainous areas (Vals-les-Bains, France)
- Women and Employment: results of the pilot action (Lecco, Italy)

- A tangible tool for local development strategies: a virtual Resource Centre for Women (Trento, Italy)

Transnational Workshops:

- Resources, Policies and Services for Women: Comparing European Regions (Milan, Italy)
- Women and New Technologies: “Percorso Arianna” - an innovative project targeted at women living in the Swiss Alpine Area (Maggia Valley)

Follow-up activities:

- Interviews to decision makers and staff of the partnership on the prospects and tools in order to continue cooperating, after project closure.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

The transnational network helped the partners to investigate solutions, tools and practices to adopt in their own contexts. Some counselling tools have been transferred immediately, some complex solutions need further time and preparation, as the partners involved are working at very different levels (regional/local, public body/NGO/private company, working with final beneficiaries/public bodies). For some partners the project WOMEN-ALPnet was the first step towards a more intensive cooperation (e.g. exchange between local networks, final beneficiaries) to be carried on after project closure.

CHAPTER 4

TERRITORIAL PILOT ACTIONS:

4.1 EDELWEISS - ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT LOCAL WOMEN EXPERIMENTATION ON INTERNATIONAL SPECIFIC SPACE - FRANCE

Responsible Partner: URACIFF (Union Rhône Alpes des Centres d'Information des Femmes et des Familles).

Partners involved with specific responsibilities: 4 CIDF in Rhône Alpes: CIDF Ardèche - CIDF Isère - CIDF Savoie - CIDF Haute Savoie.

External subjects involved:

Financial support: Région Rhône Alpes, Délégation Régionale aux Droits des Femmes de Rhône Alpes, Délégation Régionale de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt Rhône Alpes, Conseil Général de l'Isère, Conseil Général de la Haute Savoie, Conseil Général de l'Ardèche

Technical support and collaboration: Local development operators of the 4 provinces (*départments*) - Parc Naturel Régional des Monts d'Ardèche - Syndicat de la Montagne Ardéchoise - Comité de Bassin d'Emploi de l'Ardèche Méridionale - Site de Proximité AMESUD - Chambre des Métiers de l'Ardèche - Chambre d'Agriculture de l'Ardèche - Association of women of the Ardéchois Plate (GEFER), Maison de l'économie et du développement Annemasse 74, la Communauté de Communes du Genevois, Mairie de Saint Julien en Genevois, Mairie d'Annemasse, CRTH.

Aims:

- To identify a typology of the mountain territories based on the role of women in local development (situation of the territory, women's historical and

cultural place in local economy, women's place in present development, strategy of local elected officials).

- To identify specific tools to support the creation of female entrepreneurship in selected areas (to contribute to develop cooperatives, groups of employers, employment cooperatives, to promote a specific approach for the traditional multi-activities of women, to create local saving groups, to organise women's training aimed at fostering female entrepreneurship)
- To spread awareness among local development actors and offer training (counsellors' equal opportunities network), to definite a gender approach and to make local actors aware of gender-based issues.
- To take part in the creation of a transnational information centre in the Alpine Space, with the support of the local resource centres, taking into account experiences and specific actions that are useful to identify mountain and rural specificities.

Implemented Activities:

- Diagnosis level NUTS 4, Study involving women and other actors of the mountain areas aimed at identifying a gender-based typology: statistical analyses, meetings to examine the territories, development of a final document.
- Setting up of permanent welcoming services for women living in the mountain areas who wish to start a business activity and/or find a job. Individual guidance to assist women in achieving their goals.
- Organisation of groups of women living in the mountain areas who wish to start their own business: project identification, contacts with elected officials, mobilization of the tools that are absent from the territory (CLEFE www.racines-clefe.com, local saving groups for female entrepreneurs...)
- Meetings with local actors and presentation of

diagnosis at NUTS 4 level.

- Acknowledging existing peripheral problems to female employment: motherhood, child care, development and conciliation of professional and personal life, legal counselling, etc. through the organisation of meetings on the various issues.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference

- Mobilisation of women living in mountainous areas in a global approach to the territory
- Local programmes allowing for taking into better consideration women's role and need, eg. a project of a service platform is planned for 2006 in Ardèche
- Creation of a web site as a resource for women living in isolated places. Local programmes contribute to integrating the original project to develop facilities giving women local access to Internet and ICT.

Products:

- A document and a power point presentation on the diagnosis at NUTS 4 level.
- A document outlining what a good WRC should be like in mountain areas
- A document about specific difficulties for women starting a business, especially in rural territories
- A contribution about specific difficulties for women in rural areas
- Promoting communication by translating available tools in English (Best Practices Guide, etc...)
- Websites

4.2 TRAIN THE TRAINER - DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING MODULE AIMED AT LOCAL OPERATORS (ADVISORS, COUNSELLORS) - AUSTRIA

Responsible partner: Frau & Arbeit

Partners involved: All project partners were involved in the development and evaluation of the training module.

External subjects involved:

About 70 male and female experts and final beneficiaries at local/regional level were involved in the development of the training module (research on specific frameworks and needs). 28 counsellors and project managers participated in the training modules. About 60 members of the three networks in the mountain areas of Salzburg were regularly updated on the activities.

Aim:

To provide ongoing training for counsellors and project managers involved in the issue of women and careers in the mountainous regions of Salzburg

Implemented Activities:

- Creation and maintenance of a regional network of women working in the field of women-related issues in rural areas (meetings, common activities, exchange of information)
- Interviews and round-tables with male and female experts and final beneficiaries in the various mountain areas
- Definition and drawing up of a training module for counsellors/project managers

- 6 one-day workshops on the following issues:
 - The politics of women's issues as a background to counselling
 - Motivational work in rural areas
 - Burned out? How can I, as a counsellor, look after myself?
 - Negotiation - How do sceptics become allies?
 - Secure livelihood - Self-determination
 - Final reflections and ideas for the future
- Evaluation and discussion with transnational partners
- Supplementary workshop with an expert on social and economic connections of women-related issues (open to all participants of the training modules and to other network partners)

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

The networks of actors in women-related issues increased the knowledge of operators about resources in the local/regional context. Personal contacts improve cooperation and services for the final beneficiaries and the network strengthens the identity of the operators towards internal and external sceptics.

The training module enhanced the identity of the operators at a regional level and raised awareness on the socio-political value of their work. They received background information on legal, political and economic issues. They exchanged methods and tools and - thanks to the wide range of trainers involved - got new impulses for their work.

The main criteria for successful counselling of women in mountain areas that resulted from discussions with the international project partners are:

- Very good knowledge of the legal and financial framework
- Knowledge of the specific situation of the area (labour market, childcare, transport, vocational

training, etc.)

- Communicative and psychological skills
- Cooperation with local institutions
- Awareness of political issues affecting women
- Coming to terms with own roles and goals as a counsellor
- Empowerment of women in Alpine areas (but not acting in their stead)
- Regional networking of important actors
- Continuity and perseverance

4.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A NETWORK TO PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP – ITALY-LECCO

Responsible partner: Province of Lecco

Partners with specific responsibilities and external subjects involved:

The implementation of WP9 Pilot Action Italy-Lecco was strictly connected with the other transnational Work Packages and with the pilot actions carried out in the other partners' territories. The following organisational structure was adopted: the Project Manager Barbara Funghini and her staff co-operated with a workgroup consisting of the Employment and Professional Training Department and the Tourism and Economic Activities Departments of the Province of Lecco, the Women Resource Centre of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello", as well as with a Technical Committee of social partners, Mountain Communities, the Chamber of Commerce, the Foundation of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello", the President of the Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Provincial Councillor for Equal Opportunities. OmniaLanguage s.r.l. managed the information and consulting activities offered to women in the Women Resource Centre on behalf of the Province of Lecco.

Aims:

Socio-economic background: the Province of Lecco has a population of about 310,000 inhabitants (of which 158,000 are women) living in 90 small and very small towns. The Province of Lecco is characterised by economic dynamism that is based on the small industrial businesses. Despite its dynamism in facing

economic challenges, the provincial territory of Lecco encounters some difficulties in improving women's resources.

Gender Equality and Local Development: the main factors concerning the area of Lecco are low female participation in the labour market (especially women without qualification, looking for their first job or looking for a job after maternity leave) and a social and economic weakness of the alpine area due to a restricted labour market, lack of services and depopulation risk.

Main Goal of local pilot action: to combine the promotion of Gender Equality with socio-economic local development, by increasing the female employment rate and promoting new job opportunities, especially in the Alpine Space. In particular:

- to further implement the development of a local network for employment and to focus on women's occupational needs through the involvement of women's local representatives in the decision-making process;
- to increase women's employment rate in the mountain area by planning and managing the start-up of new businesses in new employment fields (particularly in the tourism sector);
- to promote and support women's active participation in local economic development, especially through the Women Resource Centre of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello".

Implemented activities:

The Pilot Action is divided into two separate actions, namely *Organisation of a territorial system aiming at developing employment services within a gender perspective* and *Promotion of female employment in the Alpine area*.

Action 1 - Organisation of a territorial system aiming at developing employment services within a gender perspective

This action was implemented through two different activities, i.e. *Equal Opportunities territorial action* and *Development of the Women Resource Centre of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello"*, in order to distinguish the two specific targets of the action (i.e. social partners and local bodies on the one hand, women living in the province of Lecco on the other).

Action 1a - Equal Opportunities territorial action

The Equal Opportunities territorial action was carried out by activating several subjects of the provincial territory and by taking into consideration a number of aspects strictly connected to the labour market and to the welcoming and information services addressed to women already existing in this area. After the identification of a few Equal Opportunities macro-topics during the meetings with local Women's Associations and Resource Centres, interviews aiming at surveying women's needs as regards the Women Resource Centres services were carried out by using the questionnaire drawn up within WP11. Thanks to the co-operation of the Women Resource Centre two specific training and guidance courses were held addressed to women looking for a job after maternity leave or turnover due to the business's financial difficulties. This action was concluded by planning and developing an information portal, e.g. a specific tool for women acting as a channel for gender equality.

Action 1b - Development of the Women Resource Centre of the Monastery of "S. Maria del Lavello"

Thanks to the definition of specific tools for promoting the Women Resource Centre and an information card

to collect personal records to be used by WRC operators, the Women Resource Centre of Lavello was able to offer welcoming, information and guidance services that further strengthened its main concern, i.e. networking activity, which aims at making such resources as information, contact data, competences and communication strategies available to women and to women's organisations as the final beneficiaries. From September 2004 to December 2005 over 200 women were involved in information activities and about 100 in guidance activities.

Action 2 - Promotion of female employment in the Alpine area

Local institutions (especially the Mountain Community of Valsassina) were involved in specific activities aimed at promoting female entrepreneurship in the tourism sector and its integration in the tourist operators network, thus favouring local development. Activities focused on the specific fields where female initiative is regarded as a factor of development, i.e. the tourism sector in the Alpine area, through the professional enhancement of specific professional profiles (tourist guide) and the promotion of accommodation activities (Bed&Breakfast). In particular, 6 training meetings were carried out involving about 50 women interested in opening a B&B activity, followed by specific guidance and technical support for 10 women, and the strengthening of the network of 14 tourist guides operating in the Province of Lecco, aimed at creating a connection with the local tourist system.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

The following results concern local economic development:

- Defining criteria, guidelines, specific tools for the adoption of a strategy shared by the different subjects involved in the project;
- Strengthening and developing tools and resources to favour women's participation in the local development processes, through training actions and knowledge exchange with the territories involved in the project;
- Implementing in the Provincial Administration of Lecco a gender mainstreaming action that involved different departments;
- Setting the bases for the continuation of activities after project closure.

The following results were obtained thanks to the direct involvement of women living in the provincial territory:

- Planning and development of an information portal, a specific tool for women acting as a channel for gender equality;
- Implementation of information activities (involving about 200 women) and guidance activities (involving more than 100 unemployed women);
- Planning and activation of two specific training and guidance courses addressed to 20 women looking for a job after maternity leave or turnover;
- Promotion of female entrepreneurship in the mountain area of the Province of Lecco, through the active participation of 64 women in tourist experimental actions.

In the alpine area the activities for the development of female entrepreneurship allowed the setting up of 7 Bed&Breakfasts and the networking of 9 local tourist guides with the environmental and cultural tourist sector.

4.4 A MODEL OF «VIRTUAL RESOURCE CENTRE» TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT - ITALY - TRENTO

Responsible Partner: Provincia Autonoma di Trento

Partners with specific responsibilities and external subjects involved:

The implementation of the pilot action was possible thanks to the pilot group, an interactive working group consisting of the local operators of the Province of Trento. The group was actively involved in the building up of the virtual Women Resource Centre ("Centro Risorse Pari Opportunità") as a monitoring actor and supervisor of the project.

Aims:

1. To plan, create and experiment a model of a virtual resource centre (an intelligent website);
2. To set up a working group with transnational partners for "brainstorming" on the idea of what a Women Resource Centre should be like (based on their experience);
3. To make a statistics data bank ("Observatory") on women's conditions available;
4. To offer on-line training modules;
5. To offer information, dissemination and assessment of the first results of the pilot action, in order to verify the transferability of the model;
6. To disseminate the model of Centro Risorse Pari Opportunità, by publishing guidelines.

Implemented activities:

1. Opening of Centro Risorse Pari Opportunità;
2. Setting up of the pilot group;

3. Brainstorming on implementation ideas: all project partners and pilot group members were requested to fill in a grid, called “ideal services record”, pointing out the features of the services that an ideal Women Resource Centre should provide, as compared to: the usefulness of the services in their own experience, the ideal beneficiaries of the services (women and/or local actors) and the strengths and weaknesses of the services in their own experience;
4. Making the data bank on women’s conditions available;
5. Setting up of the on-line training modules;
6. Publication of the guidelines.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

Creation of a permanent network among and within local and regional institutions, with the aim of promoting women’s participation in the local development processes.

Products:

- The intelligent web portal “Centro Risorse Pari Opportunità” (www.pariopportunita.provincia.tn.it);
- The Guidelines of the pilot action (in Italian and in English);
- The Proceedings of the first transnational seminar concerning the pilot action (Rovereto: public presentation of the project).

CHAPTER 5

GENDER MAINSTREAMING MODELS

The activity of this work package is divided into two main activities. The first, which is described in this page, relates to the *"Collection and transfer of gender mainstreaming models"*. The second, described in the following pages, relates to *"Qualitative recording: female population and Women Resource Centres"*.

Responsible partner:

Provincia Autonoma di Trento, responsible for overall coordination.

5.1 COLLECTION AND TRANSFER OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING MODELS

Partners involved:

Centro di Iniziativa Europea (CdIE) soc. coop., was the lead partner in this activity, with the support of the Province of Turin and S.& T. in the preparation and implementation phases. All the partners contributed to the description of good practices.

Aims:

- To propose gender mainstreaming models to be implemented at the same level of intervention as that of the project partners (horizontal mainstreaming), with a view to transferring practices within the Alpine Space area.
- To promote the active participation of all partners in identifying the factors contributing to the success and failure of gender mainstreaming initiatives, starting with the analysis of the good practices that have already been experimented.
- To capitalise on the results of this activity, and on the opinions expressed by the female population by means of direct qualitative surveys (as described in the

following pages), in order to promote changes, on a gender basis, in the decision-making process at local and regional level (vertical mainstreaming).

Implemented Activities:

- Selection, analysis and benchmarking of some gender mainstreaming practices carried out in the Province of Turin with the drawing up of a working document.
- Collection among the project partners of good practices and drawing up of a commented catalogue
- Transnational seminars: training and benchmarking seminar held in Turin (December 2004) and transnational dissemination and transferring seminar held in Trento (November 2005)

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

From the analysis of the good practices referring to the issue of gender mainstreaming arises the need to create a synergic relationship between implemented projects and gender mainstreaming in decision-making processes and in local development planning. Gender mainstreaming processes become crucially important at a time when the regulations for the planning of Structural Funds are being revised, with the consequent reduction/change of European resources devoted to the development of equal opportunities and the need to take on responsibilities and policies at local level.

Products:

The toolkit and good practices catalogue "Gender mainstreaming. Transferability tools and success indicators", available in English and Italian, in electronic format.

5.2 QUALITATIVE RECORDING: FEMALE POPULATION AND WOMEN RESOURCE CENTRES.

A. THE CASES OF LOMBARDY, TRENTINO, SALZBURG AND OBALNO-KRAŠKA

Responsible partner of activity A: Regione Lombardia

Partners involved:

Regione Lombardia - UOC Pari Opportunità (Equal Opportunities Unit) in cooperation with IReR (Regional Research Institute) coordinated a transnational workgroup with the aim of developing actions that contribute to identify the needs and expectations of women with reference to the activities of Women Resource Centres in the territories involved (Regione Lombardia, Provincia di Trento, Slovenia, Austria). This was achieved by carrying out a survey entitled "Services and resources to promote female employment" that analysing the data referring to a female population sample, by means of a questionnaire that required the active participation of the partners involved: Frau und Arbeit, RRC Koper, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Regione Lombardia.

External subjects involved:

The following Local Centres present on the territory of Regione Lombardia participated in the project: Lecco, San Donato Milanese, Peschiera Borromeo, Voghera, Varzi, Vimercate, Concesio

Aims :

- To outline the sociological profile of women resident in the area: behaviour, opinions, expectations and needs;
- To investigate women's demand for services, especially with regard to Resource Centres (for specific service targeting) in each area;
- To involve local centres operators and provide them with a tool (the questionnaire) that is essential in order to understand women's demands;
- To contribute to the design of transferable patterns of gender mainstreaming.

Implemented activities

- Definition of the sample
- Design, testing, revision and translation of the questionnaire
- Instructions for interviewers
- Training and supervision of interviewers
- Filling-in of 337 questionnaires in four different areas (Lombardy, Trento, Austria, Slovenia)
- Data input and data management
- Data analysis

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference

- involvement of local centres operators in designing the questionnaire and making interviews, as a means to become more fully aware of women's specific needs and expectations in the territorial area;
- supplying operators with a very simple questionnaire for women, together with the necessary guidelines so to be able to use it in the future by themselves;
- the research outlined the significant cultural differentiation that characterises the different areas involved; this differentiation can be found both in the perception of the contexts and in the values relating to family, work, gender equality, and the role of women in society. As regards the outcome of the research, i.e. female needs and expectations towards services for women, the response to the survey was decidedly positive and provided information that is useful to shape targeted policies. Women were not always aware of the existence of the Centres, but a reiterated, markedly positive opinion emerged; suggestions were also provided as to the type of offer to develop and/or consolidate.

Products:

- Questionnaire and filling-in instructions
- Training presentations
- Statistical data
- Draft Country reports
- Research report (in Italian and in English)

B. THE CASE OF THE MAGGIA VALLEY IN THE CANTON TICINO”

Responsible partner of activity B:

Laboratorio di Ingegneria della Formazione e Innovazione (LIFI).

Partners involved:

Laboratorio di Ingegneria della Formazione e Innovazione (LIFI)- Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI). The research carried out by LIFI is an in-depth qualitative study on the theme “Facilities and resources to boost female occupation. Needs and expectations on the territory”.

The research was carried out by LIFI, with the contribution of MovingAlps (Identity and Development of Villages and Areas of the Southern Alpine Arc), the team of Percorso Arianna, and the Cantonal Office of Statistic (USTAT).

Aims:

The research objectives were:

- first to supply some indications about the condition of women with children in an area of the Swiss Southern Alpine Arc (Maggia Valley), with special attention to the theme of reconciling work and family and to a possible demand of specific services or facilities for women;
- secondly to evaluate aspects relating to the willingness of women to use Information and Communication Technologies and Computer-mediated Communication, as far as access to formative and instructive materials is concerned.

Implemented activities:

Individual qualitative interviews were carried out with 24 women residing in different areas of Vallemaggia, aged between 20 and 55 and mothers of children in pre-school or school age. This phase was preceded by the gathering of information on the situation in the area (documents, meetings, and interviews with people considered to be key interlocutors). The interviews were integrally transcribed and then a transversal contents analysis was carried out.

Results and impact on the territorial area of reference:

In terms of professional and social conditions of women, the study confirmed the existence of typical “mountainous” factors, with differences referable to being located near or far from urban centres, lack of jobs in the valley, difficulty in moving about, and lack of facilities for pre-school-aged children. These problems have a negative effect on women’s opportunities to get a job, as they are faced with reconciling family and work.

Furthermore several cultural elements, tending to emphasize the value of upbringing and educational work, have surfaced in the study. The consequences often result in women giving up the search for a paid job in the absence of urgent economic needs, and turning instead to engaging actively in voluntary work. At present in Vallemaggia no specific services and facilities are available that could be compared to the Women Resource Centres of other countries partners of WOMEN-ALPnet. The attitude of the women interviewed varied, both in terms of functions and characteristics of the centres and of possible personal benefits.

Products:

The following items should be taken into account for future measures and projects aimed at facilitating women’s access to work:

- Research report (in Italian)
- Outline of the most relevant themes of the interviews (survey instrument potentially transferable to other realities)
- Paper: training for qualitative interviews in Maggia Valley.
- Presentations: Lugano April ‘05; Koper March ‘05; Caveragno September ‘05; Trento November ‘05.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

WOMEN-ALPnet, the transnational cooperation project among regions of the Alpine Space financed by the Interreg IIIB programme, of which the main products and results were outlined in this leaflet, is about to end.

These were two years (2004-2005) of intense collaboration, preceded by several months of preparation, that witnessed the involvement of 10 different subjects - local and regional public institutions, private organisations and NGO's, universities and development agencies - from 5 European countries, working towards one common goal: promoting the participation of the female population in the processes of local economic development, to contribute to a more balanced and sustainable development of the areas of the Alpine Space, even the most remote ones.

Have the initial objectives been achieved? Certainly all the actions and the products initially identified in the project were accomplished: data collection and analysis, creation of transferability indicators and tools, transnational thematic seminars and conferences, multilateral study visits, implementation of communication tools between partners, innovative territorial actions to promote the participation of women in economic and social life, of surveys aimed at women. This contributed significantly to deepen the network of knowledge and develop expertise exchange among those who plan (policy makers) and manage (operators) the Women Resource Centres in the Alpine Space, another project's main objectives.

From this point of view, the experience of preparing, managing and participating in a transnational network

project co-financed by EU funds represented, also in the case of WOMEN-ALPnet, a great opportunity to learn and change. But also an on-going challenge, in terms of organisation, administration, relations and language.

We are aware that it is not easy for us, at the moment, to measure the effects and to forecast the impact over time of the WOMEN-ALPnet project on the territorial areas and on the people involved. It is just as difficult, in view of the reprogramming and reduction of national and European funds, to understand how to best keep developing and supporting, in the next few years, actions to promote female participation in local economic life.

For this reason we believe that the Women Resource Centres in the Alpine Space will need to invest in networking and follow a firm gender mainstreaming approach, both at local and regional level, and at transnational level.

Because, as WOMEN-ALPnet has proven, a good collaboration network at local and regional level can be all the more effective and sustainable when it connects with transnational initiatives that operate in similar contexts. Beside the fact that, as one of us said, «the exchange with other Alpine regions allowed us to widen our views and open new perspectives, across and beyond the mountains ».

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