Working always against the ‘current’ – but succeeding to better women’s lives

Małgorzata Tarasiewicz, from Poland, was always amongst the very first, who were active in breaking gender stereotypes; both in the democratic opposition in Poland and in Solidarność, as the Chair of the Women’s Commission. Małgorzata is also active in the Polish and international women's movements: since 1999, she is Chair of the Network of East-West Women [NEWW-Polska], and member of the international board of the European Women's Lobby.

Her many years of hard work affecting changes to traditional gender models, and adopting gender equality by institutions and political structures, have resulted in benefits, impacting both on her local community in Gdansk, as well as on the situation of women generally in Poland. She is one of the few, who despite negative attitudes and constant critics, always managed to find a way to implement gender equality within institutions. After many years of working ‘against the current’ of attitudes towards mainstreaming gender equality issues, Małgorzata’s sterling efforts have affected positive changes at both the local, and the international levels.

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One central function of the NEWW is to support women's aims to achieve better lives, and aid their equitable participation in civil society. One way of creating such opportunities is via training them in ICTs (Information Communications Technology, the internet and other such media). In a recent interview on ICT Małgorzata said: “Women should not only be users of ICT but really have an impact on the way they operate so that it is not women who adapt to the ICTs but the way ICTs are used is adapted to the needs of women.” She further added: “When in 1999 I became a director of the Polish Chapter of NEWW one of the most important things for me was to have a website which would represent our activities and really serve its readers with information and contacts. We have reached now ca. 60 000 visits a month to our website! I was interested in the use of Internet as a tool for informing women in these countries in Europe which were to join the EU regarding the costs and benefits of accession and on ways they could- at least to a small extent – use the process for their own goals.”

Relevant Information:
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NEWW-Polska:

- coordinates international and regional projects, organizes meetings and conferences supporting women's participation in social and political life
- organises training sessions for women
- provides free legal and psychological counselling
- publishes information on women's health, women in business, and violence towards women
- runs a library, reading room and a computer station with free access to the internet.

Polish lawmakers decided on the first day of Polish Presidency of the EU Council to press ahead with work on draft legislation banning abortions altogether in Poland, even for women who were raped, are carrying deformed foetuses, or face health risks [read more].

Metadata

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GENDER AREAS: gender stereotypes