

Special edition

GenderWorks

Putting women at the heart of Europe
International Practice Exchange Feb 2009



Welcome to this special edition of the GenderWorks newsletter, which covers the International Practice Exchange held in Asti in Piedmont, northwest Italy, at the end of February.

The event was hosted by our Italian partner Lamoro, and focused on training public bodies to incorporate a gender perspective throughout their policies, in order to tackle poverty more effectively.

In this newsletter we take a look at how each partner is working to achieve this, and provide an update on the project's analysis of policy in the European Union and plans to lobby for change on key issues.

We also describe how we are using impact chains to ensure the GenderWorks project remains focused and achieves real change for women experiencing poverty across Europe.

Enjoy it, and let us know what you think!

The GenderWorks team

What is GenderWorks?

GenderWorks is a two-year project funded by the European Commission. It aims to explore the problems faced by women living in poverty across Europe, and influence European Union member governments to tackle these problems more effectively. To find out more, visit www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks

Conference special: training public bodies to use a gender lens



Lamoro's Marco Maranzana and WAVE's Regina Webhofer at the IPE in Asti. Credit: Jane Moir/Oxfam

The picturesque town of Asti in Italy's northwest Piedmont region, home to local development organisation Lamoro, was the setting for the third GenderWorks International Practice Exchange (IPE) on 27 February.

The theme of the conference was persuading public bodies to incorporate a gender perspective throughout their policies and services, in order to tackle poverty and inequality more effectively.

Lamoro, Oxfam's Italian partner and host of the event, launched a training programme in March with two public bodies: the council of Vercelli, and the local health authority in Casale Monferrato, both in the province of Piedmont.

The training, which is being provided over four sessions in March and May, includes the use of tools such as gender budgeting: tracking the money that an organisation spends in order to find out who benefits and whether the needs of both women and men are being met.

Vercelli council and the health authority in Casale Monferrato are both involved in drawing up "zone plans", which set out policy on healthcare and education across a local region. Lamoro will be working directly with council finance officers to set up budgets in a way that enables them to track how women are affected by services.

Meanwhile Oxfam launched its "Policy into Practice" training and mentoring programme for public bodies with a course in Govanhill, Scotland, at the end of April.

The programme, which, like Lamoro's course, equips representatives of local authorities and healthcare trusts with tools such as gender budgeting, will create a number of "gender champions", who will provide examples of best practice to other public-sector bodies.

Lamoro invited Marina Porta, an expert on the job market and manager of an employment centre for the province of Asti, to speak at the IPE, where she met with representatives of Oxfam and the GenderWorks project's Austria-based partner WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe).

Afterwards she agreed to hold further meetings with the women's refuge Casa delle donne per non subire violenza, a member of the WAVE network based in Bologna, to help them lobby for services to support women facing destitution as a result of domestic violence.

The fourth and final GenderWorks IPE will be held in Glasgow at the end of June. Look out for coverage in the next edition of the newsletter, and keep up to date with the project at www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks

Analysing policy to lobby for change

The IPE in Asti also included a workshop on policy, in which each partner provided an update on its progress in mapping institutions to identify lobbying opportunities, and the GenderWorks project's commitments on policy influencing were clarified.

The policy context in each partner country was discussed, with key questions including: Does work take women out of poverty? Is childcare available and affordable? Is the sharing of unpaid work encouraged, and if so, how? And are the underlying problems of poverty being tackled?

Oxfam described the UK's National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAP), which sets out how the government intends to tackle poverty. The UK has introduced a national minimum wage, tax credits and a gender duty that obliges public bodies to promote equality, but the NAP still fails to recognise the structural disadvantages faced by women, the links between women's and children's poverty, and the role played by domestic violence in making women poorer than men.

WAVE's Regina Webhofer described how Austria's NAP includes key protective measures for women experiencing violence, such as alimony, affordable housing and a minimum security payment.

She commended the way public services such as the police and women's shelters, intervention centres, helplines etc work closely together, and the way politicians respond to lobbying by well-known feminist activists on the issue of domestic violence.

However, she also discussed the risk that women experiencing violence will face discrimination on more than one level, and stressed the need for a multi-agency approach in order to avoid the many different poverty traps.

Lamoro and Marina Porta described the challenges faced by poor women trying to



Women at a GenderWorks training session display their messages for policy makers. Credit: Ian MacNicol/Oxfam

get jobs in Italy, where part-time work is rare and there is no safety net for all, making women reliant on support from the family and leaving them vulnerable if this fails.

The work of employment centres is important, but not sufficient in tackling barriers to the labour market, particularly for migrant women and those experiencing domestic violence.

The GenderWorks project is committed to producing three policy papers analysing the NAPs in the UK, Austria and Italy respectively, including the plans themselves and the processes by which they were produced. A final joint policy paper will deliver guidance and recommendations on how to improve the NAPs of all EU Member States.

The project will also analyse and monitor key policies in the three partner countries to ensure poor women's needs are addressed, covering issues such as violence against women, child poverty and inclusive employment, and will lobby for improvements in priority areas.

Making an impact

Oxfam, WAVE and Lamoro used the time spent together at the conference in Asti to work on the impact chains which set out the aims of the GenderWorks project and the impacts it hopes to achieve.

Impact chains help organisations to design coherent programmes with a strong internal logic that makes clear the changes they intend to bring about, how they plan to effect those changes, and how they will know if they have been successful.

The aim of a project is translated into a number of objectives and inputs that are related to a series of outputs and outcomes, which describe the changes that will be effected in the lives of those involved.

For example, one objective set by Lamoro was to influence municipalities to include a gender perspective in their "zone plans" (see front page). The inputs designed to achieve this objective include staff time and experience, and one of the outputs is the training sessions Lamoro is running with local authorities.

The planned outcome of the training is that the finance officers involved will understand how to use gender mainstreaming tools, amend their budgets and change their plans, so that more money is spent on services that specifically meet the needs of women.

Resources & Publications

For useful links, toolkits, reports and other documents about gender, poverty and social inclusion, check out the Resources page on our website www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks. If you would like hard copies of any of the documents listed, please give us a call on 0161 860 2813.

We hope you've found the GenderWorks newsletter an interesting read. Please send us your comments, ideas and any information you'd like to see included in the next issue; you can call us on 01865 472137 or drop us a line at genderworks@oxfam.org.uk We look forward to hearing from you!



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