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Improving the competencies of NGO educators for social inclusion

**Local workshop
of NGO educators on competencies for strengthening gender equality in Greece**

**19/11/2022, Athens, Greece
Serafion Center of Athens Municipality**

Partner organization: **Hellenic Antipoverty Network**

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was implemented with the presence of 20 representatives of NGOs active in projects supporting women in defending their rights and ensuring social inclusion. Each organisation highlighted the difficulties they face but also conveyed the positive experiences and methods which have been found to be more effective.

The following were highlighted:

The **ELIAMEP Research Institute** presented THE ATHINA PROJECT, which promotes the economic integration of migrant women from non-EU countries. It started with a survey of what migrant women need in order to start their own business, how to make an action plan and how to find their way around public institutions. Translating the guidelines into 4 languages, organising empowerment events, working with the Municipality of Athens and working with ANKA (Development Company of Karditsa) proved to be key. ANKA helped to provide micro-finance from the banking sector.

Hadjikyriakeio Foundation for Child Protection implements an independent living programme for girls 18+ who graduate from the Foundation and reside in sheltered apartments outside the Foundation. The main effort is to continue their education in vocational training centres and increase their skills in order to get out of the poverty cycle. The Foundation takes care of their food, rent and provides an allowance.

The **Network for Children's Rights** cooperates with organisations specialising in child protection and also supports refugee girls. Activities include running a lending library in the languages of the minors, a street work team, providing shelter, a mobile information unit for minors who do not live with their families but with peers. Support for women aged 18-27 includes 10 sessions to express their particular problems. Serious lack of access to mental health services was stressed out.

The **Development Company of the Municipality of Athens** promotes female entrepreneurship and operates Migrant Integration Centres. It is funded by AMIF (Asylum Migration and Integration Fund) and together with 45 other Balkan cities is

working to increase female employment. Foreign women face de facto barriers due to gender, religion and cultural issues stemming from the role of women in their countries of origin. There are also language problems, a tendency to stick to traditional professions and a lack of information about sources of funding. Greek language courses, walks around the city to sites of cultural and archaeological interest to familiarise people with the history and functions of the city are combined with seminars for those who want to acquire Greek citizenship through the naturalization process.

Women's Social Cooperative enterprise **MELANTHO** referred to the institutional barriers to the development of women's businesses and the lack of appropriate funding.

EPIKENTRON Centre of ActionAid Hellas supports vulnerable migrant and Greek families in deprived areas, women who are unemployed or with low income and with a housing deficit. Support is provided through intercultural and educational activities, including Greek, English and computer courses.

The women gain work experience through part-time employment for two months in a well-known Super Market chain: because the women have no problem with manual work, they are eventually hired permanently. But they needed to find female volunteers to keep the children busy so that they could work or participate in seminars.

The **International Olympic Truce Center- IOTC** has educational programmes and is involved in promoting peace and sports among women. There is an intensive effort to develop football for refugee and migrant women with training sessions in a football field provided by the Municipality of Athens and participation in international championships. Women who have not had the opportunity to participate in other activities report that they have received much strength and encouragement. The visibility in international media of women's football and rugby teams is impressive.

The youth organisation **Youth Action Minds** implements environmental and cultural activities promoting equal participation of men and women under the motto "MAZI-TOGETHER!" An extremely interesting video was shown to raise awareness of the mentality of men that produces abuse. This provided an opportunity to analyze the impact on women and the conditions that incubate abusive attitudes by men.

The **BABEL Day Centre** addressed the psychological dimensions of abuse, the experience of trauma and the repetition of abusive behaviors. These often lead to the internalization and perpetuation of abuse in vulnerable women, who end up taking it for granted. But this means that they do not assert their rights, negative male paradigms are reproduced and women need more therapeutic time and blended legal and social support to gain their strength back.

The suggestions of all participating organisations were recorded and will be used in the next workshops of the project.