

Where are the Women? Capturing the Gender Dividend in Cyprus for Peace and Beyond

Duration: September 2013 – July 2014

Location: Cyprus

Aims of the Project:

“Where are the Women? Capturing the Gender Dividend in Cyprus for Peace and Beyond” aims to get more women substantively involved and participating in the Cyprus peace building and reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level. Through media skills trainings for Cypriot women, innovative and unique media related awareness raising techniques, the project engages women from across Cyprus into active dialogue with community leaders to highlight the importance of the role of women in a lasting peace settlement.

Objectives:

Increase opportunities for dialogue between women’s groups and decision-makers

Empower women and women’s groups in the use of media tools through a comprehensive set of media skills trainings

Innovate the use of media tools to raise awareness about the role of women in the Cyprus peace and reconciliation processes

Background:

While existing efforts in Cyprus are being made by the bi-communal Gender Advisory Team (GAT) with the support of USAID Cyprus and the United Nations Good Office Mission to bring Cyprus in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325 addresses not only the inordinate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace), there is still a need on the grass roots level for women to have opportunities for empowerment and to learn new skills in order to raise the awareness of the general public and the political leadership about gender equality and the peace building process in Cyprus.

Moreover, there is a gap in the media skills knowledge of women in Cyprus. As we are now in the information age and much of the way people communicate is based on technologies utilising media tools, it is imperative that women be educated in the use of such tools. Citizen engagement is the most direct method of closing the vertical communication gap, and improving the quality of governance. Citizen journalism such as “social networking” and “blogging” along with increased media skills in areas such as podcasts and short audio/visual documentaries can generate more inclusive, more representative and better informed public dialogue. The success of public discourse in Cyprus depends on its nature as a moderated medium for communication and information dissemination. Community generated media by women has the potential to bridge the gap between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots by giving women a chance to have their voices be heard as well as inform the two different media systems about women and their importance in the peace process.

Study after study concludes that societies, economies, communities, neighbourhoods, families and men all stand to gain if women are empowered. These gains are numerous and varied and include increased household income; better-performing economies; more-stable political structures and improved health and education levels across populations. Additionally and perhaps most importantly for the case of Cyprus, tapping the talent, perspective and experience of women on both sides of the dividing Green Line can result in lasting peace and prosperity on the island and in the wider region. Women are intrinsically linked to peace and security; their participation in peace and post-conflict processes helps overcome intractability and can address the underlying causes of conflict more effectively. The absence of women in political life and at the negotiating table is currently a stumbling block to peace on this long-divided island.

Programme Activities

- Create a web portal and accompanying social media sites will be created to chronicle and

highlight all of the outputs. It will also serve as a network building tool for all people engaged by the project to connect and share their ideas on gender and peace building issues.

- 4 Roundtable Discussions to be held across Cyprus with the theme “Inserting Gender Perspectives into the Peace Process”

- Conduct 12 Capacity Building Media Skills Workshops aiming to empower Cypriot women by designing and delivering a set of media skills trainings in video production, editing, and the use of online platforms for women and girls from all walks of life in Cyprus.

- Create Online Video Diary ‘Wall’ which will feature women speaking about their perspectives on their roles in society, perceptions of themselves, and document their efforts to instil positive gender equity values in their children and the wider community.

- Mothers and Sons”/“Sisters and Brothers” Photo Competition – Visual media campaign to engage men and boys around the issues of gender equality.

- A series of posters featuring the 6 most popular and dynamic submissions of the photo competition, voted on by members of the general public with short messages aimed at encouraging dialogue about gender and peace related issues.

- A mobile public poster display that will be used for public viewing at highly visible and strategic locations across the island.

- Mapping Gender Online through Crowdsourcing. Submissions from participants will come from their mobile phones, laptops and other technologies to solicit facts, news items, photos and video clips that illustrate or highlight gender and peace related issues.

Funding

The project is funded by the [U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Women's Issues](#) .

Project Advisory Board

[Gender Advisory Team](#)

[Hands Across the Divide](#)

[United Nations Development Programme – Action for Cooperation and Trust \(UNDP-ACT\)](#)

[United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus \(UNFICYP\)](#)

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