



# WOMEN'S EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP IN KYIV

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On March 1, one week before International Women's Day, 22 women from 9 different countries across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Former Soviet Union (FSU) gathered at the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration in Kyiv. The women came from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Russia, Romania and Georgia as well as from various parts of Ukraine to take part in an intensive 3-day Workshop. Many made long and onerous journeys and had to overcome difficulties along the way, but all arrived eager to participate in the first event of its kind in the region.

The Workshop was opened by the Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine, Christopher Westdal, who thanked the funding bodies (Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Open Society Institute), the executing agency (Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)), the organizers (Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD)) and the host (Ukrainian Academy for Public Administration). The Ambassador also gave a television interview about the event and later reported that, "the seminar was considered to be highly successful".

The aim of the Workshop was to identify ways of improving the contribution of women public servants to the reform processes in their countries. As a starting point, each team of women presented a country report setting out the current status of women, particularly in respect of decision-making positions within their public service. Their reports also examined those factors both aiding and hindering full involvement, and considered the role education and training could play in improving the situation. A similar report was presented by the Canadian team.

In small groups the women worked together to identify common themes across all of the countries and to highlight those they considered most important. This led later to the formulation of country strategies

being trained to deliver it to Kyiv. The first delivery took place at the Academy in February 1995, and following the training of another group of trainers, a second delivery took place in Dnipropetrovsk in September 1995. A further delivery is planned for Poltava in June 1996.

At the Workshop, the women not only heard about the UWEDP, but were also able to participate in sessions on conflict resolution, strategic planning and stress management. They heard too from Ukraine's Woman of the Year. Mrs. Olena Krandakova, who heads the State Committee on the Status of Women, Maternity and Childhood, spoke frankly about her experience as a woman leader and about her attendance at the UN conference in Beijing.

The event was rated as highly successful by the participants. Closing comments included:

"During a very short time, we came to know not only about Canada and Ukraine, but about all participating countries...which helped us to analyze and compare their

situation with our own and to realize where we are now."

"These three intensive days I think will be very helpful for me... Group discussions helped me to understand better the perspectives of other countries' representatives, and they also helped me to be more assertive in decision-making. Now I know what I should do in my country to improve the life of women."

"I broke my own glass ceiling. I received a strong impetus of energy."

All of the women left the Workshop committed to take action on their return to their own country. Some women decided to publish articles about the event, others would report to their institutes or to women's organizations, and many indicated their interest in adapting UWEDP to their countries' needs. The event also created quite a stir in the Ukrainian media, to the extent that it was the subject of a feature on national television.

As for the future, the Open Society has already committed 50% of the funding required to develop a woman's program for three other countries in transition, and CBIE is currently finalizing a proposal to CIDA for the remainder of the money. If that application is successful, the Workshop will be the first step towards a major new initiative for women in CEE and the FSU.

