

# KARAT COALITION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2010

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes activities and initiatives implemented by KARAT Coalition in 2010. It refers to both project based as well as non project based (statutory) activities and positions them in the broader context of the strategy, goals objectives and achievements of the Coalition.

KARAT Coalition is a regional network of 60 NGOs and 12 individuals from 26 **countries of Central, Eastern & Southern Europe, and Central Asia (in this document referred to as “the Region”)**. Full list of Karat members is available at KARAT’s website [www.karat.org](http://www.karat.org) . The Coalition has been established in 1997 as a response to the **need for cooperation of Region’s women aimed at ensuring the advancement of their rights as well as social & economic justice**. The General Assembly, International Board, Executive Director, Advisory Body and the Registered Board are governing bodies of KARAT. KARAT’ s International Board consists of 7 representatives elected by the Coalition Members. The Secretariat of the Coalition is based in Warsaw. The work of the KARAT governing bodies in 2010 is described further in this document. Additionally, a detailed information about the KARAT’s governance structure is provided in the Statute available also available on KARAT’s website: [www.karat.org](http://www.karat.org).

In 2010 as in the previous **15 years of its existence KARAT** has focused on promoting a holistic gendered view of economic and social development and on ensuring that women's rights and achievements in the Region are recognized and not jeopardized by the processes of liberalization, transformation, and aspects of EU integration undermining solidarity of Region’s women. In order to respond quickly to the latest changes in the socio-economic environment, in 2010 KARAT also focused on the impact of current economic crises on the socio-economic position of women. KARAT addressed the above issues through implementing project based, as well as non project based (statutory) activities grouped into three programs: Women’s Rights, Economic Justice and Gender and Development. In 2010 six large projects and seven smaller projects were implemented. All of the projects implemented in 2010 had major education component and were either focusing specifically on education and awareness raising of general public or increasing knowledge and capacity of specific target groups.

Year 2010 as far as development of the organisation is concerned was a devoted to stabilisation and building on the achievements and lessons learned during the previous years.

## 2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010

2010 was an important year for KARAT. After very demanding transformation period the organization reached stability both in content work as well as its organization structure, management and functioning. KARAT finalized activities within a number of important projects and became actively involved in a few initiatives crucial for the implementation of KARAT long term Program. The network also managed to develop and strengthen the relations and cooperation among its members.

A number of specific achievements can be listed:

### 1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF KARAT COALITION

The first General Assembly in 7 years took place in Bucharest in June 2010. It was a great success to finally bring together KARAT members in order to discuss network's mission, program and activities as well as share the views, experience, expertise of diverse KARAT membership. GA was also a wonderful occasion for networking and strengthening relations between member organizations. The interest in joining the GA was incredibly high, the financial resources secured by KARAT allowed for the participation of almost 50% of KARAT members. The meeting was highly appreciated by the participants and resulted in a number of important decisions and plans. The details are described below in a chapter on Organizational and Strategic Empowerment.

### 2. GENDER & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In 2010 KARAT's engagement within the Gender and Development Program were significantly strengthened. KARAT became very active and more recognized organization in gender and development area, both at international and national level. Particularly successful was KARAT involvement in advocacy in EU NMS undertaken within Connect! Project and aimed at introducing gender perspective into the development cooperation of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. KARAT managed to initiate the discussion among decision makers and CSOs on gender aspects of development cooperation in NMS, in some cases these discussions were followed by initiated cooperation between CSOs, Women Organizations and Policy makers aimed to include gender equality and women's rights perspective in national policies and activities of CSOs working on development. Details of these activities are described in the chapter: Gender and Development.

### 3. 'THROUGH THEIR EYES THROUGH OURS' – PROJECT ACTIVITIES FINALIZED

In 2010 KARAT finalized the main activities of the project 'Through their eyes through ours'. It was the first EC funded project in which KARAT was a lead organization coordinating work of partners in Germany, Belgium, Slovakia, Macedonia and Georgia. This development education initiative was aimed at awareness raising on women's economic and social situation in developing countries of our Region. This aim was definitely achieved, especially thanks to the success of the photo exhibition produced by the project and displayed in 6 countries, including CSW meeting in UN headquarters in Geneva. The attractive education tools produced within the project are among the first such tools in NMS. Project events and products gained interest of diverse groups: CSOs incl. Women Organizations, Policy Makers, journalists and general public in project countries and beyond. The details on project implementation are described in the chapter on Gender and Development.

## 3. ACTIVITIES IN 2010

The annual report is structured around the four thematic programs currently implemented by KARAT: economic justice, women's rights, gender and development, and organizational & strategic empowerment. Each section reports on the project based but also non project based activities. It is important to highlight here that most of the project could fall under more than one program but for clarity of this report each project or activity is mentioned only under one of the programs.

It needs to be mentioned that although in all the cases implementation of activities requires time consuming tasks such as partnership building, fundraising, project development etc., and while each project and activity involves ongoing coordination tasks as well as preparatory activities the report focuses predominantly on the outcomes of such tasks: concrete actions and events carried out in 2010. Detail accounts of tasks associated with coordination of and preparation can be found in project reports prepared for specific donors.

### 3.1. WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Women's Rights Program focuses on monitoring the implementation of international government commitments (e.g. CEDAW Convention, Beijing Platform for Action, and EU gender equality legal standards and policies). In 2010 KARAT continued to strengthen the implementation of this program priority.

The two-year project focused on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW implemented by KARAT Coalition in cooperation with organizations in 9 Eastern European and Central Asian countries came to the end in December 2009. Work on CEDAW in the region is continued however within new initiatives.

#### KARAT FOR CEDAW IN CAUCASUS & CENTRAL ASIA

With the beginning of 2010 KARAT has started the three-year project: **Women's NGOs Coalition on CEDAW & women's access to justice** supported by OXFAM Novib which builds on the experience gained by KARAT during the project implemented in 2008-2009. The new project aims at developing and implementing the strategies for effective use of CEDAW mechanisms in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan through:

- **Increasing the capacity of women's NGOs** in partners countries to use CEDAW mechanisms to counteract discrimination against women including:
  - reporting process and CEDAW Concluding Observations;
  - OP CEDAW and its procedures.
- **Raising social awareness of the importance of CEDAW** as a tool to advance women's rights;
- **Improving women's access to justice** at national and international level

The project includes activities on regional and national level, among others advocacy & lobbying for CEDAW and concluding observations, actions aimed at improving access to OP CEDAW procedures (campaigns for ratification, capacity building, support in complaints preparation, etc), participation in related events at regional & international level.

The partners organizations coordinating project activities on national level are: Gender Association "Symmetry" (Azerbaijan), Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Public Foundation "Panorama" (Tajikistan), "Generation of the Future" (Uzbekistan).

In 2010 first activities of the project were implemented:

**Establishing the partnership.** The cooperation with partners was established and the rules of this cooperation as well as division of tasks and the plans for project implementation in terms of activities and budget were agreed at two strategic meetings which were held in Warsaw on April 29-30 and November 24<sup>th</sup>.

**CEDAW at WIDE Annual Conference.** On June 4-5<sup>th</sup> KARAT and project partners from Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan took part in *WIDE Annual Conference 2010: "Migration in the Context of Globalization: Women's Human Rights at Risk"* and organized a workshop on *How to use CEDAW for protecting women's (migrant) rights*. The workshop was aimed at promoting CEDAW as a treaty addressing the rights of migrant women (General Recommendation 26), discussing and exploring the ways it can be used to protect migrant women's rights and bringing the migration issues important for women from Caucasus and Central Asia to the attention of conference participants. ??

**Regional Consultation on Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee.** On July 1-3<sup>rd</sup> KARAT hosted the European Consultation on Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee organised by IRAW Asia Pacific in cooperation with KARAT and WIDE. During this 3-day meeting women's rights advocates from EU member states, CEE countries and Central Asia shared their strategies on using Concluding Observations (issued by the CEDAW Committee after the reviewing session of the given state), to keep the governments accountable for complying with the obligation to fully implement CEDAW Convention at the national level. The meeting was attended by 32 women from 17 countries, including KARAT's members. The event was attended by partners in present OXFAM Novib project from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and partners in former CEDAW project from Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine. Previous member of the CEDAW Committee – Shanthi Dairiam from Malaysia – was also present at the Regional Consultation, sharing her expertise and experience. Participants carried out follow up activities for the implementation of CEDAW COs on national level.

**Training of Trainers.** On November 17-23<sup>rd</sup> IRAW AP and KARAT has organized a Training of Trainers on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It took place in Warsaw and gathered 16 participants from 4 countries: Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as resource persons and trainers from IRAW, KARAT and partners.

The event was a part of KARAT's strategy aimed at strengthening the capacity of women's NGOs in Central and Eastern European and Central Asian countries to apply CEDAW in the local context and to promote it as tool for the advancement of women.

The training aimed at expanding the pool of Russian speaking resource persons based in the CEE/CIS countries who can conduct the trainings on the CEDAW Convention at local, national and regional level in cooperation with KARAT Coalition, its partner organizations and possibly with IRAW Asia Pacific.

The participants left the training with skills to:

- raise awareness among women, NGOs, governments and other bodies about the significance of the CEDAW convention and its principles, obligations of the state related to implementation of women's rights and the need for women to claim, exercise and work to sustain their rights;
- provide others with conceptual understanding of the barriers to establishing women's rights as human rights;
- understand law of the law in promoting or hindering women's rights;
- raise awareness of the significance of engaging in international advocacy to advance women's and to create an understanding of UN mechanisms and processes and entry points for women's activism;
- use and teach others to use CEDAW Convention to identify sites of discrimination and use the Convention and other international human rights standards to reform discriminatory aspects of laws, legal systems, policies and practices, with the goal of developing a holistic rights approach to women's development.

**Implementation of the project activities at national level.** National activities in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were implemented by KARAT's Coalition strategic partners in the frameworks of the project Women's Coalition on CEDAW and Women's access to justice 2010-2012. Country strategies differed depending on the political situation in particular countries and on the capacity and profile of the organizations involved.

Strategy used by partners in Azerbaijan, Organization Symmetry, based on organization of roundtables on CEDAW and implementation of CEDAW Concluding Comments addressed to representatives of regional NGOs. Similar strategy was used in Uzbekistan where our partner organization Istiqbolli Avlod, has built the capacity of its local branches, by conducting 10 seminars on CEDAW and Concluding Observations to CEDAW Committee.

In Kyrgyzstan, special attention was given to CEDAW as a tool of empowering women's political participation and to feminist based approach towards law. It is worth to mention that partner organization (Forum of Women NGOs of Kyrgyzstan) has organized trainings and workshop on this theme not only in the capitol, but also in Osh oblast- place of recent eruption of violence, where the political atmosphere is especially tense .

In Tajikistan, political factor played very important role as well.

Since OP CEDAW has not been ratified by the country yet, our partner organization PF 'Panorama' continued activities aimed at having it ratified as soon as possible.

### KARAT FOR CEDAW IN POLAND

In 2010 KARAT widened its activities within Women's Human Rights program priority. Apart from the continuation of the activities related to CEDAW at regional level, in 2010 KARAT started to work more intensively on this issue also in Poland. It is possible thanks to the support of Open Society Institute for the new Project titled 'Advocacy for CEDAW implementation in Poland 2010-2012'. The Project is related to the CEDAW reporting process in Poland as the government is due to be reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in 2012. The Project focuses on advocacy for the critical women's rights issues in Poland (e.g. adoption of parity and anti-discrimination act, reproductive rights) through monitoring of the implementation of CEDAW Concluding Observations (COs) and production of the Shadow Report in coalition with women's rights advocates. The Project aims also at assessing women's access to justice and eliminating existing barriers that hamper litigation of rights under the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.

In 2010 the project was initiated with networking activities aimed at building the coalition which will take up the task of preparation of Polish alternative report for CEDAW Committee in 2012. In particular KARAT was involved in work of the Coalition for Equal Chances in Poland - an unofficial platform of a number of Polish well-known NGOs promoting human rights and equality which has been created in response to the fact Polish government's work on the project of equality law is of substandard quality, disappointing and not always transparent. As a member of the Coalition KARAT has been involved in monitoring of the preparation of the project of equality law and the process of its adoption which was finalized in December.

Apart from networking, coalition building and participation in processes which aim at enforcement of women's human rights in Poland, KARAT is also trying to initiate the dialog with the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment on the concluding comments of CEDAW Committee and KARAT's participation in civil society consultations on Polish report to CEDAW Committee's reviewing session in 2012.

Finally a concept of the research on Access to Justice of women In Poland Has been worked out and the research will be conducted in 2011.

### KARAT FOR CEDAW IN INTERNATIONAL PROCESS

In order to link its activities on CEDAW with the international context, develop partnerships with women's human rights groups in other regions as well as strengthen the capacity and take part in common strategies KARAT takes part in a number of events/processes related to the various aspects of the implementation of CEDAW. In 2010 these were among others:

**Consultation on the CEDAW Framework and Women's Rights meeting.** The representatives of KARAT took part in the Consultation on the CEDAW Framework and Women's Rights organized in Sri Lanka in October 2010 by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific in cooperation with Women and Media Collective. The meeting brought together women and women's rights advocates from all around the world. The impact of the war and conflicts on women was discussed and the role of the international human rights mechanisms in strengthening the protection of women's rights in the conflict and post-conflict settings was analysed. The participants focused particularly on the CEDAW convention, its applicability to girls and women

affected by a conflict and the process of supporting the creation of the CEDAW General Recommendation that would address their rights.

**Workshop on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.** *Claiming Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* was the title of the workshop organized by IRAW Asia-Pacific and ESCR-Net on 3-6 December 2010 in Penang, Malaysia. The workshop brought together practitioners on women's economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) and those interested in applying the international human rights mechanisms to claim these rights. It aimed at creating a forum for discussing the opportunities and obstacles that are related to using these mechanisms. The meeting was attended by Aleksandra Solik from KARAT's Secretariat and it provided KARAT with the opportunity to develop new contacts, strengthen the partnership relations and gain inspiration for future activities within KARAT's Women's Human Rights program priority.

### 3.2. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Despite not sufficient capacity and funds to implement program priority: Gendered Economic and Social Justice in 2010 and the fact that this program priority still needs to be more coherently planned with the network members, KARAT has managed to undertake a number of activities and join various initiatives aimed at strengthening gendered economic and social justice:

#### POLISH SOCIAL WATCH COALITION EVALUATES SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

In February 2010 the second year of the project *Promoting Social Development: building capacities of Social Watch Coalitions* came to the end. At the same time the coordination of the project was taken over from KARAT by Campaign Against Homophobia. This change was a result of the development of the Coalition and the need to reformulation of its structures as well as exhausting of KARAT's capacity to coordinate. The new coordinator was chosen by the Coalition members. KARAT remains active member and continuously takes part in the activities of the project in the third (last) year of its duration.

The last activities of the project coordinated by KARAT at the beginning of 2010 were as follows:

**Polish SW Report 2009.** The production process of 2009 Report of Polish Social Watch Coalition (PSWC) on Social Development was successfully finalized in February 2010. It consists of theoretical introduction to the theme of social development and 7 case studies illustrating this issue in Poland: on housing (commissioned from independent expert), refugees (Association for Legal Intervention), access to housing for young people leaving care facilities (SOS Kinderdorf), participation of people living in poverty in public and political life (ATD Fourth World), reproductive rights (Amnesty International), situation of gay and lesbians on labour market (Campaign Against Homophobia) and socio-economic situation of elderly.

**Debate launching the Report.** On February, 26th Polish Social Watch Coalition (PSWC) launched its 2009 Report at the panel debate that took place in the premises of Political Critique in Warsaw, Poland. The discussion focused on the different perspectives regarding goals of social development: the one PSWC outlined and presented in its Report, as well as the vision elaborated in the governmental green paper "Poland 2030". Among the speakers were Coalition members, academics and co-author of "Poland 2030". This year Report is a product of Coalition's debates on definition and understanding of social development. It consists of theoretical introduction as well as case studies illustrating interconnections between different dimension of development, including: access to housing, education and employment.

**SW publication on economic crisis.** At the beginning of 2010 PSWC also produced campaigning material on global systemic crisis with the objective to introduce SW perspective on the issue in Poland and to link activities of Polish Coalition with advocacy of the international SW network. The booklet is a translation of the Overview of the Social Watch Report 2009, but also full texts of selected thematic articles were added to this publication to make it more comprehensive for Polish readers.

#### WOMEN'S LABOUR RIGHTS – KARAT IN CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN

In 2010 KARAT continued its involvement in Clean Clothes Campaign(CCC) a network of CSOs, Trade Unions and individuals campaigning for the improvement the working conditions in garment industry and implementation of labour rights of garment workers who are mostly women. KARAT is actively involved in CCC both at national and international level.

**Clean Clothes Polska – Fair play always in fashion.** In March 2010 KARAT has finalized the project: ‘Fair play always in fashion’ supported by Women’s World Day of Prayer German Committee (WWDP GC). In its final phase January – March 2010 project’s activities focused on ‘formalization’ of Clean Clothes Polska which was established in December 2009 by a few Polish NGOs: Polish Humanitarian Organization, Polish Green Network, Grupa eFTe Warszawa and KARAT, who is also the coordinator of Clean Clothes Poland (CCP).

This process involved working out the Coalition’s founding documents, its structure, communication methods and its strategy. As a result of strategy meetings, participation in capacity building workshops and development of effective communication channels the Coalition built the foundations for its work.

Despite its continues efforts CCP has not been successful in securing financial stability for the rest of 2010. Nevertheless due to the active engagement of its members CCP managed to carry out its work on awareness raising, education and on-line campaign for the improvement of working conditions of garment industry workers. Here are some examples:

- **Urgent Appeals.** CCP is promoting urgent appeals actions and builds the UA network in Poland. Urgent appeals are letters prepared by CCC on the request of workers whose rights are violated in cases when there is no other way to solve the situation except by putting consumers’ pressure on actors (companies, governments, institutions) responsible for the violation of workers’ rights in given case. CCP translates Urgent Appeals published by CCC and circulates them to Polish UA supporters, through CCP’s mailing lists, website and Facebook profile. This is a continuously implemented campaign.
- **She deserves a living wage’** . An on-line action on women’s workers’ rights was organized on March 8<sup>th</sup> – World Women’s Day . It involved translation of a film made by CCC on women’s problems in garment industry and living wage. CCP’s supporters contributed to this film with photos. Film and on-line appeal posted on CCP’s website and Facebook profile, supported by a large number of consumers.
- **Art & Fashion Festival.** KARAT as a member of Clean Clothes Poland (CCP) took part in the Art and Fashion Festival (AFF), annual event gathering hundreds of participants involved in fashion industry. We have conducted a workshop: „Ethical, sustainable or responsible fashion? The participants had a chance to become familiar with the other side of the fashion industry: working conditions of mainly women workers of garment industry, social responsibility of the companies and the consumers. CCP has also provided the young designers with examples of good practices of responsible fashion designing and clothes production. The consumers participating in the meeting were invited to join the campaign for the improvement of the working conditions of women who sew their clothes. The CCP’s workshop met with great interest of the audience and we have gained new supporters of our campaign.
- **Networking and mobilizing support among consumers.** KARAT takes part in various events covering the issues like the labour rights, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and consumers awareness. Campaign and education materials produced by KARAT are widely used by various NGOs, schools in their training programs and publications. KARAT develops the cooperation with Polish trade unions which are more and more interested in the global activities for the improvement of the situation of workers in garment industry as well as CSR. CCP has also created and is continuously developing supporters group in the internet through its website ([www.cleanclothes.pl](http://www.cleanclothes.pl)) and facebook profile Various on-line actions are carried out through facebook and many information and resources distributed, including urgent appeals which are also distributed this way.

**Clean Clothes International – KARAT’s involvemnet.** As a coordinator of Polish CCC platform, KARAT is representing CCP and promotes Polish (Eastern European) perspective at CCC Euromeetings, where the strategies and activities of CCC in Europe are decided. Additionally in 2010 KARAT was also actively involved in other initiatives of CCC at international level:

- **Gender Working Group & CCC workshop at WIDE Annual Conference.** In 2010 Gender Working Group of CCC focused on promotion of CCC Gender Policy in the network as well as on preparation of CCC Gender Strategy to be implemented in following years. KARAT contributed to this work with its expertise. It also contributed to developing links between CCC and women's movement by organizing a CCC workshop at WIDE Annual Conference - *Migration in the Context of Globalisation: Women's Human Rights at Risk?* - in June 2010. CCC representatives presented the problems of migrant workers in global garment industry identified in CCC research and discussion paper *'False Promises'*. The presentation was followed by the discussion and experience exchange on the ways of addressing migrant workers rights in different regions.
- **CCC International Campaign Forum.** KARAT representative took part in CCC International Campaign Forum in November 2010. The event gathered garment workers and activists campaigning for their rights from around the world. For KARAT and CCP the Forum was unique opportunity for establishing or strengthening cooperation with workers from producing countries, widening knowledge on the current situation of garment workers (especially gender specific problems), CSR processes as well as knowledge on up to date resources. One of the main outcomes of the Forum was strengthened cooperation with Polish garment industry trade union, thanks to the fact that its representative was invited by KARAT to join the event. This participation was also extremely valuable due to the fact that a number of gender focused workshops/discussions, which are a rarity in Poland, allowed the trade union representative to build her capacity on gender equality and women's workers rights issues. Initiated cooperation is an important step in development of CCP.

#### KARAT AT FIRST POLISH SOCIAL FORUM

On 5-6<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 KARAT took part in the First Polish Social Forum in Warsaw. KARAT representatives, together with STARFISH - the Leftist Feminist Network, organized and conducted a debate on violations of female workers rights including repression and new trends at the labour market such as precarious forms of employment, intensification of work, growing role of Temporary Job Agencies and their impact on economic insecurity of women. The debate was based on the presented experience of trade unions (nurses) and NGOs (KARAT) in addressing women's working conditions in supermarkets through different activities such as strikes or research and advocacy. The movie presenting the case of the violation of the rights of nurses and repressions contributed considerably to the heated discussion. The debate came to the conclusion that similarity of experience of different groups of women workers (nurses, supermarket employees, seamstresses) was evident in terms of new trends such as recent mechanisms/structures of substantial intensification of their work without increased remuneration, and also in terms of more sophisticated methods (e.g. intimidation) of undermining their working rights.

The first Polish Social Forum gathered more than hundred representatives of civil society organizations, trade unions and individuals participating in 19 debates, workshops, seminars. The feminist perspective was quite well presented at the Forum. Three consecutive workshops (on women's poverty, new trends on the labour market and macroeconomic policies and feminist critical approach to neo-liberal economy) organized by STARFISH aroused a great interest and gathered quite important number of participants.

Another form of KARAT's presence at the Forum was a display of the exhibition 'Through their eyes, through ours' presenting economic and social situation of women from the Southern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

#### KARAT IN MEMBERS' INITIATIVES

In 2010 KARAT got involved in two projects initiated by its members:

- **Gender Studies, Czech Republic:** *Reconciliation of private and family life in international context: transfer of know-how and thematic network.*
- **Org AUR, Romania:** *Creating and promoting social economy instruments for the inclusion of marginalized groups on the labour market.*



Although both projects started this year, activities in which KARAT is going to participate are planned for the following years. KARAT's role in these projects is sharing experience, contributing to research and workshops, promoting the initiatives through the network.

### 3.3. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

2010 was a breakthrough year for KARAT's Gender & Development program priority. The organization managed to significantly strengthen and expand the strategy, activities and plans in this area. KARAT continued its activities related to awareness raising development education as well as extensively developed its engagement in advocacy on gender and development issues at national and international levels. Finally, the interest and involvement of KARAT members in this program priority implementation is growing and the Secretariat managed to undertake initial needs assessment of women in developing countries of KARAT's region and possible common activities of various KARAT members under this program priority were discussed on a few meetings in 2010. Working on gender and development KARAT wants to link women from South, West and East in order to learn from each other's experience, share the strategies and undertake common activities for women in developing countries. Through its advocacy activities in EU New Member States KARAT aims to contribute to the elaboration and implementation of development policies, strategies and programs of these countries in order to make them gender sensitive and effective in addressing real problems of women in developing countries. Simultaneously, through its awareness raising and education work KARAT aims to build the understanding of gender related development problems and support for the activities to address them among national and international CSOs, authorities, institutions and general public. Finally being a network of gender focused organizations from both donor and developing countries KARAT wishes to use this opportunity to foster direct cooperation between its members on gender & development issues.

Here are the highlights of KARAT's work on Gender & Development in 2010:

#### 'THROUGH THEIR EYES, THROUGH OURS' – EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING.

Since 2007 KARAT has been implementing a large number of development education and awareness raising projects which have been addressing various development problems of women, particularly related to their economic and social situation. The most important KARAT's initiative in this area has been three years project: *'Through their eyes through ours. Raising public awareness about development problems faced by women from developing countries in the EU Eastern Neighbourhood, Balkans and Central Asia'* which is also the first EC co-funded project where KARAT is a lead organization. Among project partners are WIDE (Belgium), Gender Media Caucasus Association (Georgia), WOMNET (Germany), as well as two KARAT members: Permaculture and Peacebuilding Centre PPC Shtip (Macedonia) and Slovak Center for Communication and Development. The goal of the project is to raise public awareness in the EU, and particularly in New Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, about the development problems faced by women in the developing neighbouring countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Balkans. In 2010 the final activities of this project and additional initiatives around it were successfully implemented. Significant outputs of the project are various education and audiovisual materials which present economic and social situation of women in developing countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia as well as gender aspects of development cooperation in general such as photo exhibition, films, postcards, education and information publications which are widely distributed and used. These products will also be valuable for the future work of KARAT in the area of gender and development. In 2010 final project activities were supported by European Commission, OAK Foundation and Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main project activities of 2010 were:

#### Data Gathering Tours

Between January and April 2010, six young women from New Member States (NMS) including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia have visited Georgia, Macedonia and Serbia with an aim to collect data for awareness raising materials that could serve as educational tools addressing development problems of women in Eastern Europe & Caucasus in accessible, convincing not fragmented or sensationalized manner. The awareness raising tools developed as result of the tours include: movies, blogs, toolkits designed to reach different target groups. The materials have been produced in languages of their authors, however the movie *Her Story* and Toolkit "Gender Mainstreaming in Development Cooperation" have been translated into

English and included in the education pack available for wider use. During the data gathering tours the participants were supported by our local project partners: Gender Media Caucasus Association from Georgia and Permaculture&Peacebuilding Center Shtip from Macedonia.

**Educational publication** Educational Pack *Her Story - Women in Development* gathering the education and awareness raising materials produced during the project was published in 2010. The pack contains the scenario of a workshop on *Women and Development* that can be used by trainers and teachers during development education classes. The scenario is based on the movie *Her Story* produced by Paulina Jędrzejewska after the DGT and illustrating the life of women migrants on the border of Georgia and Abkhazia. In the pack one can also find the toolkit *Gender Mainstreaming in Development Cooperation* by Mila O'Sullivan (also the output of DGT), the exhibition pictures on CDs, printed photos. The pack has been widely distributed among NGOs, schools, institutions involved in development education in Poland, Belgium and Slovakia.

**Exhibitions and movies screenings.** In 2010 the KARAT has organized a number of shows of the exhibition *Through their eyes* consisting of 39 large and impressive images aimed to undermine the existing stereotypes associated with socioeconomic problems experienced by women from the EU Eastern Neighbourhood, Balkans and Central Asia and mobilise EU public support for gender-sensitive strategies and policies for development. It was presented during different events at national and international levels, among others: Mandragon Festival and Polish Social Forum in Warsaw, WIDE Annual Conference in Bucharest, in schools and a few smaller events. The movie *Her Story* had its premiere in Warsaw Kupa Cafe on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Then it was screened on a number of occasions i.e. at Open Gender University in Łódź, Gender Mainstreaming Studies at Polish Academy of Science in Poland, at seminars and workshops for journalists and NGOs in Georgia & Kazakhstan, etc.

**Photo Bank.** KARAT Coalition would like to announce that the Photo Bank, created as a part of the project "Through Their Eyes, Through Ours", is now available. It includes photos depicting women from developing countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The idea of its creation has raised from the fact that the access to photos presenting women from this region in non-stereotypical way is limited. There is a need for a bank of photos which NGO-s and other institutions could use for their publications, presentations, websites and other tools, in the purpose of awareness raising, sharing the knowledge, promotion of human rights and development issues.

More information

You can still share your photos with us if you want to make them recognized and contribute to the promotion of human rights and development activities. If you are interested in adding your photos to the Bank, please write to Ewa Pintera at: [ewa.pintera@karat.org.pl](mailto:ewa.pintera@karat.org.pl)

**Final event in Brussels.** The final event of the project took place on November 17<sup>th</sup> in Brussels and it was hosted by project partner organization – WIDE. It involve open exhibition "Through Their Eyes" has been presented to a Belgian audience, and additional international audiences. One of the guests for this evening was Olga Ciskariszwili-Soselia, the second prize winner of the photo competition.

Apart from the exhibition, the audience could see also other final products of the projects, such as tools from data gathering tours included in the educational pack "Her Story - Women and Development". This includes: the movie "Her Story" by Paulina Jędrzejewska and the toolkit "Gender Mainstreaming in Development Cooperation" by Mila O'Sullivan and others.

The exhibition will be available for visitors in Brussels in Mundo B (26 rue d'Edimbourg) till the end of December.

## CONNECT: CAPACITY BUILDING AND ADVOCACY FOR GENDER SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

One of the main KARAT's initiative under the Gender & development program priority is the project *Connect ! South East West Women for Development. Building Support in New Member States for Gender-sensitive and -responsive European Development Co-operation*. This initiative, pioneering in the Region, aims to contribute NMS women's voice to development cooperation debates. The primary objectives of the project is to build the capacities of women's rights NGOs to advocate for the full implementation of the EU gender equality policy in the government's development assistance and initiation of the South- East -North cooperation on women's rights in development. The project leading organization is One World Action based in UK. Activities are implemented in partnership with KARAT and in collaboration with four KARAT members from Gender Studies, O.P.S.,

Information and Advocacy Center for Women's Rights from Czech Rep., Gender Education Research and Technologies from Bulgaria, ORG. 'AUR' - National Organization of Human Resources Specialists from Romania and Slovak Center for Communication and Development (SCCD). Connect is a three year project co-funded by European Commission since 2008. In 2010 some of activities related to the project was also supported by Filia and Batory Foundation. The activities within the Connect project in 2010 were very successful and at many points exceeded project plans. Here are some examples:

- **Regional Dialogue on gender sensitive EU Development cooperation**

The main project event in 2010 was a Regional Dialogue on gender sensitive and responsive EU Development cooperation in New Member States (NMS) organized by KARAT in cooperation with OWA on 12-13 May, 2010 in Warsaw. The aim of the Dialogue was to increase the capacity of women's organizations in NMS on effective addressing gender issues in development cooperation, as well as to generate stronger collaboration between women from East, South and West on gender equality in development policy and practices. 35 participants mostly from NMS (Bulgaria, Czech Rep., Poland, Romania and Slovakia) as well as from UK discussed the challenges of the NMS development cooperation from gender perspective. The meeting was also attended by several representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and representative of MFA from UK. The important contribution to the Dialogue by women from Zambia, Georgia and Ukraine clearly demonstrated the similarity of the problems women face in the Global South and in the Eastern Europe, and a need to launch the South-East cooperation.

- **Public event on women in the South and East**

The Regional Dialogue was completed with a public event 'East and South: Through their eyes, through ours' which took place in a famous vanguard public space in Warsaw (Nowy Wspanialy Swiat) on 13 May, 2010. Our guests: Lumba Siyanga from Women for Change (Zambia), Jilda Ebanoidze from Caucasus Development Group (Georgia), Carolina Gottardo from One World Action (UK/Colombia) and Beata Bublewicz (the Polish Parliamentarian), participated in the debate on gender and development.

The debate aimed to raise public awareness on challenges faced by women in the South and the East, and possibilities of answering those challenges by development cooperation. One of the main topics discussed was women's responses to the displacement being a result of war and conflicts it was enriched by the illustrative examples from Tanzania, Zambia and Georgia. The event was a great opportunity to inquire the Polish Parliamentarian about gender perspective in Polish Development Aid. The event was accompanied by an exhibition of photos presenting situation of displaced women in Tanzania and Georgia as well as economic situation of women from Eastern European countries.

- **KARAT and OWA meet the Polish Development Departments in MFA**

Following the Regional Dialogue, on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2010, KARAT and One Word Action arranged a meeting with officials from two departments of Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA): Department of Implementation of Development Program and Department of Development Cooperation. The meeting was attended by KARAT and OWA representatives and their partners: Lumba Siyanga from Women for Change (Zambia) and Simon Williams, Policy Adviser from Department for International Development (UK). The discussion focused on gender equality in the development cooperation and reviled an opportunity to introduce the gender strategy in the Polish development cooperation thanks to rising interest of the Ministry in this area. One of the outcomes of the meeting was concrete commitment of Polish government representatives to include gender related issues in MFA's activities, starting with mapping of gender experts in Poland and establishing cooperation with them on development issues, as well as building the capacity of the staff of the Development Departments in the area of gender equality.

- **Sharing knowledge on gender& development: briefing and leaflet**

Another outcome of the Connect project in 2010 are newly produced materials n gender and development in EU NMS. These publications are: project leaflet and briefing. While the leaflet presents the project aims and context and introduces the reader to the main activities undertaken for the promotion of gender sensitive development policies and practice in EU NMS, the other publication: an action brief on *Development cooperation and gender equality in EU New Member* goes more into details and analyses current situation in EU NMS as far as gender equality in their the development policies and cooperation is concerned. The authors of the briefing emphasized

that the EU NMS, like Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia are facing many challenges regarding development cooperation, but the most important issue is that the development policies of NMS are gender blind. The analysis of the situation and recommendations presented in the briefing can be useful not only for the members from NMS – donor countries, but also for the members from Eastern developing countries – recipients of Official Development Assistance. The materials were produced in six languages and in consultation with project partners (KARAT members) from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia and have been widely distributed in those countries as well as internationally.

#### KARAT AT EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

The 5th edition of the European Development Days (EDD) took place in Brussels on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December. Organized by the European Commission and the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, EDD is the leading European forum for discussions and networking in the area of international development cooperation. KARAT Coalition, together with One World Action, Arci, UN CDF, Solidar and UN Women, contributed to the block of panels focused on gender equality in development cooperation. KARAT representatives were panelists in two of them: *Decent work and women's rights* and *Development cooperation in EU New Member States*. Being visible participant of this large scale event KARAT used the opportunity to underline the importance of gender and regional issues in the context of development cooperation among various actors such as representatives of governments, CSOs, Global South partners, European and international officials. During the EDD KARAT Coalition was represented by Secretariat staff and members from EU New Members States (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia). The next edition of the EDD will take place in Poland, 14-18 December 2011 and KARAT is already involved in the process of the preparation of this event.

#### KARAT JOINS ZAGRANICA GROUP, POLISH NGDOS PLATFORM

KARAT members working on development in different NMS are involved in their national NDGOs platforms. Given the fact that KARAT Secretariat activities on gender& development also in Poland are expanding thanks to a number of projects in this area, the KARAT Board decided that the organization should join the Polish NDGO platform: Zagrancia Group. KARAT became its member in November 2010 and it is actively involved in two Working Groups of the platform:

- **Working group on global education.** KARAT takes part in multi-stakeholders' process of developing global education in Poland which involves working out an agreement on common definition of global education, standards, mapping of actors in global education, strategic plan for formal education and vision of development of global education in Poland in order to achieve common strategy and standards of global education. The process involves 29 representatives of organizations and institutions.
- **Working group on monitoring of Polish development assistance (AidWatch).** KARAT has joined the group and was actively involved in preparation of the strategy of cooperation with Polish officials before the Polish presidency in EU and IV High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea. KARAT also participated in strategizing before the consultation process about long-term plan of Polish development cooperation which will be prepared by Polish MFA in 2011.

#### GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN KARAT'S REGION: NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY PLANNING

Since KARAT is expanding its activities under the Gender& development program priority as well as more and more KARAT members is working or interested to work on development issues, there is a need to build a coherent strategy of the organization in this area. A strategy which would answer the needs of women from developing countries of KARAT region, which would lead to gender sensitive development policies and programs of EU NMS and which would finally build on the experience, resources and advantages of KARAT network. The initial discussion on this topic took part at KARAT's General Assembly by KARAT members who joined the Working Group on Gender & development. It was agreed that KARAT should continue its education and awareness raising activities in various countries as well as addressing gender issues in development cooperation. KARAT should also use the advantage of its membership from developing countries in Eastern Europe, Balkans and Central Asia as well as EU countries in order to implement common development assistance projects. The latter should be done after careful research and needs assessment among members from developing countries.

As a response for the recommendations of this GA Working Group KARAT Secretariat organized a needs assessment meeting which took place on 13-14 October 2010 in Warsaw, Poland. Five representatives of developing countries from Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Balkans and Caucasus discussed their understanding of development issues, identified needs of women from developing countries covered by KARAT and developed ideas for possible joint activities of KARAT members on gender and development. During the meeting future cooperation within Gender and Development Program was also discussed. As a consequence of the meeting all of the participants had better understanding of development processes, related terms and were informed about the international debate on development issues. Participants also agreed that members from developing countries covered by KARAT have to build their capacity to push gender onto development agendas and to discuss their problems and ideas on the international level.

*Note: It is important to remember that a number of KARAT's activities focusing on gender economic and social justice described in the previous section of the report (namely those related to working conditions in production of garments) are in large part development education activities and contribute to the implementation of KARAT's Gender & development program priority.*

### 3.4. ORGANIZATIONAL AND STRATEGIC EMPOWERMENT

#### KARAT'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND BOARD MEETINGS

The first KARAT's General Assembly since 2003 and the third in the history took place on the 6th of June 2010 in Bucharest, Romania. Three new Board members were elected, KARAT's international Statute was amended and updated (including the most important paragraphs concerning KARAT's mission and objectives). The members gathered in Bucharest also discussed KARAT's past activities and its plan for the future, focusing on common implementation of KARAT's Program. For those of KARAT members who were not involved in joint projects so far, the General Assembly was a fantastic opportunity to finally meet face to face. The KARAT's Members participated actively in the discussions; it has been visible that they identify with the Coalition and are willing to contribute to its work and implement common projects aiming at improving of women's situation. The General Assembly was attended by 37 representatives of member organizations, KARTA Secretariat and 2 researchers interested in the functioning of the Coalition. What is crucial, the majority of the countries where KARAT's members operate were represented (15 out of 24) – the CIS countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan), the Balkan countries (Albania, Macedonia, Serbia), and the EU New Members States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia). The results of the evaluation carried out during the GA indicated that the opportunity to make new contacts was highly appreciated by the members, as well as the positive and energizing atmosphere and the participatory character of the event. Unfortunately, many participants regret that the General Assembly lasted only one day; according to them we should have had more time to tackle more topics and get to know each other better. The day before the GA KARAT's Board meeting took place.

#### Highlights of the GA and Board Meeting in June:

##### - New mission and objectives adopted

Thirteen years ago, when KARAT was established, its mission and objectives were formulated in the context of the Beijing Conference (1995) and of the challenges of the period of the 90's. Since then, the CEE/CIS Region underwent significant changes, including accession of some countries to EU which to some extent created a divisions within the Region. KARAT has also extended its membership to organizations from Central Asia. Moreover, KARAT itself has changed as well: it has grown and strengthened. It became indispensable to rethink and discuss our mission and objectives. They needed to be revised and updated to reflect in a more precise way what KARAT and its members are working on in 2010. According to the newly amended Statute, KARAT Coalition has the following mission:

KARAT is a regional coalition of organizations and individuals focusing its action on observance of women's human rights, and ensuring gendered economic and social justice in the Region.

The list of our objectives became longer. From now on KARAT Coalition has the following objectives:

1. Advocate for gender-responsive policy, decision-making and alignment of national policy and legislation in all countries in the Region with international standards and agreements.

2. Lobby for the needs and concerns of women in the Region at all levels of decision-making fora.
3. Contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic position of women of the Region.
4. Contribute to the actions related to gender aspects of development.
5. Respond to the threats associated with fundamentalist, conservative, and anti-democratic forces as well as the peril of military conflict.
6. Strengthen Karat's capacity to deliver its mission.

#### - New Board Members

After the General Assembly we are happy to welcome two new Board Members – Mirela Arqimandriti from Gender Alliance for Development Center (Albania) and Olga Sirbu from Women Political Club 50/50 (Moldova). The third elected person, Raluca Manaila from "AUR" - The National Association of Human Resources Specialists (Romania) is continuing her work at the KARAT's Board as it is her second term of office. Another important amendment to the Statute adopted by the General Assembly refers to the period of the term of office of the Board members. From now on the Board is elected for a three-years term of office with one year-and-half alternation.

#### - Highlights from Working Groups - Directions for further development of KARAT's Programs

At the GA, KARAT members discussed the common implementation of KARAT Program. They worked in groups according to Program thematic priorities (Gendered Economic & Social Justice; Women's Human Rights; and Gender & Development) in order to elaborate directions for their implementation:

**Gendered Economic and Social Justice** - based on the expertise and experiences of member organizations (e.g. women in informal economy, decent work, social security including advocacy for the amnesty insurance payment for pension for women, cooperation with Trade Unions) the working group proposed to establish an advocacy group for gendered economic and social justice. This group would consist of members who have expertise as well as those who are interested in the issue. It would aim at identifying the main economic and social challenges that women face in the Region by conducting comparative studies. The results of the studies will be included in the advocacy campaign. The other important reason of creating advocacy group is to build capacity of KARAT members by experience and best practices sharing of those member organizations who have already a great knowledge and achievements in this area. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen the KARAT network's gendered economic and social justice's profile as well as members' ownership of this expertise. It has been concluded that active participation KARAT representatives should be secured at the important events on economics and social issues. And finally, the group is meant to respond to the financial challenges that many women's organizations face. Participants concluded that KARAT should be involved in the activities on resources mobilization for women's organizations in the Region.

**Gender and Development** – this working group agreed that KARAT should continue its education and awareness raising activities in various countries as well as addressing gender issues in development cooperation. KARAT should also use its advantage of its membership from developing countries in Eastern Europe, Balkans and Central Asia as well as EU countries in order to implement common development assistance projects. The latter should be done after careful research and needs assessment among members from developing countries.

**Women's Human Rights** – this working group reflected on the joint activities that have been implemented so far, mainly around CEDAW provisions and promotion of Optional Protocol in 9 countries of the Region. It has been concluded that KARAT should continue its Projects aiming at promotion of this mechanisms in the Region. However, as many KARAT's members work on eliminating violence against women (VAW), the focus on this issue should be strengthened (e.g. through organizing conference, in cooperation with KARAT's partners having relevant expertise, aiming at building capacity on how to advocate for elimination of VAW within the framework and the use of CEDAW mechanisms). Members also concluded that there is a need for scaling up information sharing, especially through KARAT's website and communication channels (e.g. listserves) on developments in women's rights issues. The issue of monitoring women's human rights was also brought up and it was stated that KARAT should play an active role in building capacity of its membership, as well as providing tools for this kind of monitoring activities.

### BOARD MEETING IN OCTOBER

The second KARAT Board meeting in 2010 took place on 15th of October in Warsaw. It was agreed that the Board members present at the meeting would make the proposals on the various issues and request other Board members for opinion. The Board addressed the concerns and suggestions raised by KARAT members during the General Assembly in Bucharest in June 2010. As a response to the one of the members' proposal the Board has decided to establish a pilot working group focusing on Gendered Economic and Social Justice.

The other issue which was also debated was a question of KARAT's approach towards membership enlargement. The previous KARAT's strategies have focused on pro-active approach to have geographical coverage and on inviting organizations with expertise on social and economic justice. The Board has concluded that at the current stage, there is a need to be more inclusive of the problems faced by different groups of women: lesbians, young women, minority women, migrant women, refugees, women with disabilities etc. This will refresh the KARAT's perspectives and approaches. The issue of the proactive strategy towards members' diversity will be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

### NEW MEMBERS IN KARAT

In 2010 four new organizations joined KARAT. Two applications recommended by members of KARAT were positively reviewed by the Board in June 2010 when The Legal Center for Women's Initiatives „Sana Zezim” (Kazakhstan) and Center „Women and Modern World” (Azerbaijan) were accepted as new organizational members of KARAT. Two other applications were positively reviewed at the October Board meeting: Women's Center (Georgia) and –Nas|| (Tajikistan - this is the first KARAT member in this country!).

At the end of 2010 KARAT Coalition has expanded to 60 organizations from 25 countries.

#### 3.4.2. KARAT teaches at the “Gender Mainstreaming School”

The KARAT Secretariat staff is currently conducting a course –From Theory to Practice which is a part of –Gender Mainstreaming School|| at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The course covers KARAT's history, activities and projects, CEDAW Convention, gender and development, women's rights, gendered economy. It shows how the feminist perspective can be applied in practice while working in NGOs within the existing socio-institutional structures.

#### 3.4.3. Communication

In 2010 KARAT continued development of its communication tools. KARAT News were released every month, send to the growing number of subscribers and published on KARAT website in English and Russian. Answering the directly expressed needs of KARAT members the News are presenting the current activities of KARTA Secretariat and members, provide important information from the region and beyond relevant for KARAT's area of work and inform about coming events and funding opportunities.

In 2010 KARAT website was maintained and the project subpages were developed and regularly updated. In particular this year KARAT created a thematic website: <http://kobietyrozwoj.pl/> focusing on gender and development issues.

KARAT Coalition has also created its own Facebook profile, which is used for more informal communication (as compared to KARAT's webpage) with members, friends and supporters of KARAT. For example the facebook profile provides easy to use facilities for placing photos, films, and disseminating event invitations. KARAT Facebook profile is available at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Karat-Coalition/101262886598399?ref=ts>

#### 3.4.4. Management of the Secretariat

The number of staff has been diminishing since the end of 2009 (related to accomplishment of a few important projects). At the end of 2010, there were 8 full time employees and 2 part time employees. The number of the projects was also diminished. On 2010 KARAT was implementing six large projects and seven smaller projects (in 2009: 7 big and 8 complementary ones).

## 4. FINANCIAL REPORT (Attached)

## **Acknowledgements**

*KARAT Coalition would like to thank following institutions and organisations for their financial support in 2010:*

*European Commission, Oxfam Novib, Sigrid Rausing Trust, World Women's Day of Prayer – German Committee IWRAP-Asia Pacific, Open Society Institute, Education for Democracy Foundation, OAK Foundation, Global Fund for Women, FILIA, Batory Foundation.*

*KARAT would also like to thank all the partners involved in its initiatives.*