



ANNUAL REPORT 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes activities and initiatives implemented by KARAT Coalition in 2011. It refers to both project based as well as non project based (statutory) activities and positions them in a broader context of the strategy, goals, objectives and achievements of the Coalition.

KARAT Coalition is a regional network of 61 organizations and 12 individuals from 26 countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia (**in this document referred to as “the Region”**). A full list of Karat members is available at KARAT’s website 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. 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 members of the Coalition. The Secretariat of the Coalition is based in Warsaw. The work of the KARAT governing bodies in 2011 is described further in the section of this document titled “Organisational and Strategic Development”. Additionally, a detailed information about KARAT’s governance structures is provided in the Statute also available on KARAT’s website: www.karat.org.

In 2011 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 economic liberalization, systemic transformation, and calls for the return to conservative value systems (usually connected to religion related beliefs and traditions). KARAT has also focused its effort on ensuring that specific aspects of EU integration are not undermining solidarity of Region’s women. During the report period 5 large projects and 3 smaller projects were implemented.

2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2011

A striking characteristic of KARAT’s 2011 achievements was that they were not limited to one area or project on which the Coalition focused throughout the year, but were distributed throughout four thematic programmes implemented by KARAT. This suggests an evident strengthening of the organisation and shows that investing of resources in management and organisational development over an extensive period of time can produce very good results. The achievements are listed below, each of them followed by a brief explanation of its importance. The detailed description of the projects and activities related to each achievement are provided in further parts of this report.

The first group of achievements of KARAT in 2011 is related to gender in development and includes :

1. Effective combining of successes on the national and international level in the project *“Connect! South East West Women for Development Building Support in New Member States for Gender-sensitive and -responsive European Development Co-operation”* through:
 - i. Strengthening of advocacy on Polish level, particularly focused on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and very effective co-operation with Grupa Zagranica (Polish arm of CONCORDE) as far as inclusion of gender equality in lobbying, advocacy and other activities are/is concerned.
 - ii. Significant enhancement of competences of partners in the Region and the dialogue with stakeholders on gender perspective in development cooperation (for example through participation of decision makers from partner countries in project events).
 - iii. KARAT strengthening its position as a well recognised participant of the development discourse both on the national (Polish) and international levels.
2. Active participation and involvement in the Aid Effectiveness process through regional consultations for The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), where KARAT gathered information and recommendations on gender in development .

The significance of the above achievements. “Connect!” is an innovative project, as it is the first initiative focusing on gender and development implemented by organisations from new donor states (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Poland) of the EU and immediately it had evident outcomes as far as lobbying, co-operation and inclusion of the Region’s perspective in the development discourse, both on the national and international levels are concerned. It also resulted in establishing working partnerships with relevant decision makers and CSOs on the national level. Partner organisations involved in the project have been strongly involved in advocating for inclusion of gender equality and women’s rights aspects in currently designed national development policies and programs. Further, the new donor countries became actively involved in the international process related to gender and development both through lobbying and cooperation. In 2011 the project used all identified opportunities and entry points. On the international level it was active and effective participation in The Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea through lobbying, and co-operation with other organisations focusing on development at the CSO Open Forum for development effectiveness.

The second group of achievements is related to Women’s Rights and includes:

3. Recognisable impact of Access to Justice activities -increased competences of KARAT and its partners in Central Asia strengthened by extensive cooperation.
4. Ability to combine activities related to CEDAW on international level with those on Polish level. As a consequence KARAT is once more recognisable in Poland.

The significance of the above achievements. The above achievements are related to Women’s Rights Programme of KARAT, which in 2011 focused predominantly on CEDAW, OP CEDAW and women’s access to justice. Their importance lies in the fact that KARAT showed how those issues are interconnected. It also illustrates that innovative approaches (combining of regional approach with activities on the national level, as well

as showing the CEDAW Committee that in some cases legal provisions are not a sufficient measure to protect rights of women) can lead to excellent results. Further, achievement no. 3 is particularly important for KARAT because it reflects its long standing commitment to cooperation with members and partners from Central Asia. Additionally, the important aspect of the above achievement is that it illustrates how continuation strengthens the impact of activities of KARAT - the CEDAW, OP CEDAW and Access to Justice activities implemented in 2011 are a direct continuation of projects implemented in the previous years. And finally, strengthening of KARAT's visibility in Poland is important as it helps it to become involved in relevant national and international processes.

The final achievement is related to organisational and strategic development.

5. Institutional and financial stability of KARAT Coalition.

The significance of the above achievement. After a number of difficult and unstable years KARAT has finally developed very effective methods of management on the level of the Secretariat. The 2011 was also very financially stable for the organisation. This gave KARAT very needed space for reflection which in turn led to more effective planning of the strategy and activities for the following years, which is crucial for the Coalition to fulfil its statutory obligations. This also allows KARAT to prepare itself for the upcoming period which from the middle of 2012, at least as far as finances are concerned, will be very challenging.

3. PROGRAMMES, STRATEGY, AND ACTIVITIES

This section of the report is structured around the four thematic programmes currently implemented by KARAT: Women's Rights, Social & Economic Justice, Gender & Development, and Organizational and Strategic Empowerment. Each section reports on the project based as well as non project based activities. It is important to highlight here that most of the project activities could fall under more than one programme but for clarity reasons each activity is mentioned only under one of the programmes.

3.1 WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The main focus of the programme in 2011 was women's human rights and specifically CEDAW, OP CEDAW, and women's access to justice. The implemented activities included those on the regional and national level, such as advocacy and lobbying for the implementation of CEDAW and Concluding Observations, actions aimed at improving access to OP CEDAW procedures (campaigns for ratification, capacity building, etc), participation in related events at regional and international level. The key aspect of the activities focused on CEDAW, OP CEDAW and women's access to justice was showing the links between those issues as well as stressing the importance of combining of the activities on the national, international, and regional level in order to ensure observance of women's human rights. Therefore the activities on those three levels were implemented simultaneously. This led to very good results including strengthening of the visibility of KARAT as an important actor (on the international but also national-Polish level) as far as women's human rights are concerned. This is particularly important as this visibility and recognition assist in participation in the relevant national and international processes.

The activities implemented within this programme were predominantly (but not exclusively) part of the two projects: *Women's NGOs Coalition on CEDAW & Women's Access to Justice 2010 – 2012* supported by OXFAM Novib and *Advocacy for the Implementation of CEDAW in Poland 2010 – 2012* supported by Open Society Institute.

3.1.1 CEDAW and WOMEN ACCESS to JUSTICE

The project *Women's NGOs Coalition on CEDAW & Women's Access to Justice 2010 – 2012* builds on the experience gained by KARAT during the CEDAW focused project implemented in 2008-2009 and aims at developing and implementing the strategies for effective use of CEDAW mechanisms in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. Through the previous as well as the current project KARAT wants learn more about the reasons for which the mechanisms provided by the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention are underused by the victims of discrimination and women's NGOs in the Region. The object also aims at sharing gained knowledge with the women's human rights advocates at international and national level, including the members of the CEDAW Committees. The current project is based on co-operation with partner organisations from the above countries. It is important to mention here that the project contains innovative component of the pilot research of the barriers to access to justice which focused not only on legal barriers but also on those related to culture, tradition and religion.

3.1.1.1 Activities at the regional level.

Activities on the regional level involved participation of partners from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The activities built on the achievements from the previous project and added new content to it. They were aimed at increasing of the capacity of the partner organisations through gathering and sharing of information, strengthening knowledge of CEDAW and OP CEDAW mechanisms, and sharing of knowledge and experience. This capacity was then used (multiplied) on the national level. Further, the regional activities also led to strengthening of an informal regional coalition (consisting of project partners) working on women's rights.

Access to justice training.

The training and strategic development: Optional Protocol to CEDAW and Women's Access to Justice, held on 18-21 May in Warsaw, Poland was organised in cooperation with IWRAW Asia Pacific. It was attended by 16 women's rights advocates. It aimed at increasing participants' understanding of the OP CEDAW and to contribute to improving women's access to justice through promoting the procedures available under the treaty as well as through developing and agreeing on the strategy aimed at identifying the barriers (especially those on the national level) hampering their use and proposing the possible solutions to eliminate them.

The training was joined by several participants from Poland involved in a work on women's human rights. The training was based on the input from experts: prof. Eleonora Zielińska (UN Working group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice), Ann Campbell (IWRAW Asia Pacific), Eleanor Solo (UN Women), Jacqueline Hunt (Equality Now), Aleksandra Solik and Magdalena Pocheć, (KARAT).

Research on women's access to justice

The innovative element of the project was a pilot study where each partner organization conducted a research on women's access to justice in their individual country, according to the list of critical areas/issues identified during the strategic development meeting in May. The methodology of this research was developed by KARAT Secretariat in consultation with project partners, who then did the research through interviews with women, lawyers, NGOs representatives. Azerbaijan and Tajikistan focused on domestic violence, Kirgizstan on Bride kidnapping, Poland on reproductive rights, and Uzbekistan on trafficking in women. Regional recommendations were developed for the use in lobbying activities related to CEDAW Committee which is working on the General Recommendations on Access to Justice

Each country produced a report (5 in total). On the basis of findings from the reports a regional fact sheet has been drafted. It is due to be published on in KARAT's website in 2012.

The fact sheet was particularly relevant in the context of CEDAW Committee's work on the General Recommendation on women's access to justice, with KARAT planning to present it to the Committee.

Strategic Meeting of partners.

The 2nd Strategic Meeting of the Project Partners involved in the Project *Women's NGOs Coalition on CEDAW and Women's Access to Justice* took place on 29-30 November 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. The objectives of the meeting were: sharing the findings and conclusions of the research on access to justice in the project countries; elaborating a set of recommendations for joint advocacy at the international level; defining the strategy for this advocacy, and setting rules for the further cooperation. Five members of International KARAT Board joined as the observers the second day of the meeting and had an opportunity to receive first-hand information about the project.

Central Asia women fall victims to tradition.

This regional event was organised by KARAT in a form of a public event in the popular Warsaw venue „Krytyka Polityczna” (Political Critique). The representatives of NGOs from Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shared the stories about acts of violence against women such as bride kidnapping and women trafficking. Screening of a film from Azerbaijan addressing selective abortion of female foetuses and Kyrgyzstani film focusing on bride kidnappings followed. The event was a great success and was attended by approximately 50 persons.

3.1.1.2 Activities in Central Asia.

The national level activities transferred the knowledge and skills gained by project partners through the regional level trainings and activities to relevant stakeholders in their countries. This was done in order to raise awareness and improve knowledge among the society and the decision makers in the project countries of the international mechanisms protecting women's rights- CEDAW and OP CEDAW and gender dimension of access to justice. Activities also aimed at building support of the society and decision makers for introducing the comprehensive policies and solutions that would empower women to better protect themselves against gender discrimination and human rights violations and at ratifying OP CEDAW in the countries which have not yet done so. It is important to highlight here, that the project partners from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan pointed out that the CEDAW related cooperation with KARAT, not only allowed them to conduct effectively events listed below but also provided them with skills and tools which assist them in other gender focused activities they conduct. It also made them more attractive to donors. They also appreciated that it helped them to become more engaged in the international gender rights movement.

Azerbaijan.

The activities undertaken by the project partner **Gender Association “Symmetry”** in 2011 in Azerbaijan covered the theme of violence against women, legal system, and women's health. The activities included three, two day trainings in different regions of the country. The events aimed at: raising awareness of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol as well as their role in protecting women's rights, presenting the tools for monitoring the implementation of Convention.

The participants were provided with tools that would allow them to work directly with specified target groups and they will use the knowledge gained in their further work. The project led to establishing a basis for monitoring of women's access to justice in the future.

Kyrgyzstan

Six trainings targeting employees of judicial institutions (including prosecutors), lawyers cooperating with NGOs, activists and local authorities were conducted by “**Forum of Kyrgyz Women’s NGOs**”. The trainings focused on protection of women from gender based violence. The participants improved their knowledge and understanding of international and national legal tools protecting women’s rights, CEDAW and OP CEDAW. The trainings were attended by a total of: 24 law enforcement officers, 36 members of local authorities and decision makers, and 31 women’s rights activists and NGOs’ lawyers. The trainings resulted in increased gender sensitivity among the participants, a better understanding of women’s issues, and establishing foundations for better cooperation in the future. Following conclusions were drawn: education on the CEDAW Convention and other international laws on women’s rights should be intensified; the national plan of action for women should be implemented in Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan

A national round table “*Results of the Implementation of the CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations to Tajikistan for the years 2007-2010*” was organized in May 2011 by **Public Organization “Panorama”**. . Fifty persons took part in the event: members of the government, human rights ombudsman, representatives of the general prosecutor office, NGOs and international organizations, mass media, and law enforcement bodies. It also attracted the attention of mass media with an article “The Law Will Ask for Broken Nose and Rib” that referred to the Convention and pointed to the urgent need for adopting of Law on the prevention of domestic violence, being published in the newspaper “Vechernii Dushanbe”. The event also resulted in setting a plan for the preparations of the alternative report.

Apart from the event a brochure including the text of CEDAW Convention, its Optional Protocol and CEDAW Committee Concluding observations was published by the Project partner.

Uzbekistan.

A two-day training “Building NGO capacity on CEDAW application” was organized by **Istiqbolli Avlod**. It was addressed to lawyers, social workers and leaders of the partner organizations from eight regions of Uzbekistan focusing on trafficking in women and domestic violence. Twenty lawyers, social workers and leaders of partner NGOs participated in the training and were provided with relevant knowledge which they now use in their everyday work. The knowledge was further disseminated during the follow-up events organized by participating organizations, including seminars held at schools, universities and law enforcement bodies/institutions. After the event Istiqbolli Avlod was asked to prepare another information kit on international documents on combating the trafficking in women.

3.1.2 CEDAW in POLAND

The activities related to the project titled ‘*Advocacy for CEDAW Implementation in Poland 2010-2012*’ focus on the CEDAW reporting process in Poland, with the government due to be reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in 2012. The Project includes 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 Alternative Report in coalition with women’s rights advocates. The Project aims at assessing women’s access to justice and eliminating existing barriers that hamper litigation of rights under the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The project activities implemented in 2011 led to strengthening of capacity of KARAT related to CEDAW, which in turn had a very positive impact on all its CEDAW related initiatives. This in turn contributed to KARAT becoming a very well known participant of national discourse related to CEDAW, strengthening further its position as far as CEDAW related lobbying and co-operation are concerned.

Mobilization of CSOs

KARAT took a lead in mobilizing civil society groups around CEDAW reporting process in Poland. For the first time such a significant number of civil society organizations got involved in the national CEDAW reporting process. The alternative report has been elaborated by 13 NGOs, including groups of minority women (e.g. women with disabilities, LBT). The informal CEDAW coalition established and coordinated by KARAT has regular strategic meetings, at which joint advocacy activities are planned. In 2011 the coalition undertook a number of joint actions, including engaging in the constructive dialogue with the office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment (GPET), MPs and media. The main thematic focus of the advocacy was the need to elaborate long-term National Programme of Action for Women.

Lobbying activities

KARAT initiated a constructive dialogue with the Government and decision makers on the implementation of CEDAW and Concluding Observations.

The dialogue has two main components: (i) Advocacy and lobbying targeting the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and (ii) Advocacy and lobbying on the level of the Parliament.

In 2011 the Plenipotentiary has changed, with the current Plenipotentiary being more inclined to cooperate with CSOs. She has for example met with KARAT formally, while the previous Plenipotentiary could be approached only informally. While KARAT was not the only organization lobbying the Plenipotentiary, KARAT's action contributed strongly to former Plenipotentiary being forced to report on her achievements (or rather lack of such) during her 4 years of office. The second outcome in which KARAT played even a more significant role was the fact that Polish government finally produced its report on the implementation of CEDAW and importantly presented this report to the consultation by CSOs.

3.1.3 STATUTORY WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

Women's Human Rights in Poland.

The Alternative Information on Women's Human Rights in Poland was submitted in November to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). KARAT's chapter included the information focuses on women who are 'working poor', a growing problem rarely discussed in the framework of human rights.

"Yes for Women" Pro-Choice initiative.

Since summer 2010 KARAT was involved in „TAK DLA KOBIEC” a new civic project in Poland. TAK DLA KOBIEC (Yes For Women) was promoting a new draft bill “Law on responsible parenthood and other reproductive rights” which would make abortion on demand up to 12th week legal and would change current provisions regulating access to sexual and reproductive health services. KARAT was involved in all aspects of the initiative including planning, activities aimed at collecting 100 000 signatures in three months, dissemination of the information and evaluation. While the initiative did not lead to the bill being discussed by Parliament, the initiative re-ignited the debate about the women's reproductive rights in Poland.

KARAT and Arab Spring's women

On 27th – 28th October 2011 KARAT members from Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Poland participated in the WIDE Annual Conference “Women's Rights and Gender Equality amidst the 'Arab Springs': Challenges and Lessons Learnt across Regions”. The conference was a good opportunity to learn from the witnesses and women directly involved about the women's engagement in the “revolutions” and the social change movements in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Region. It also provided a forum for comparison, mutual learning and discussion based on experience of the post- communist states (KARAT members) gained

during the similar processes of political transformation. The conferences' participants discussed also the risks, possible joint efforts and ways forward to secure a transition that will include women's rights perspective in the current political processes in the Arab countries.

3.2 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

In 2011 KARAT continued the implementation of Gender Economic and Social Justice program both by addressing one of the main issues of KARAT's work: decent work for women as well as by introducing a new topic - social economy. The latter is in line with KARAT's strategy of analyzing and promoting different mechanisms, instruments and good practices which may contribute to the improvement of the situation of women, in this case their economic and social situation.

Activities undertaken by KARAT on decent work issues were mostly related to KARAT's involvement in Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and Clean Clothes Polska (CCP). CCC is a network of CSOs, Trade Unions and individuals campaigning for the improvement of the working conditions in garment industry and implementation of labour rights of garment workers who are mostly women. CCP is a national (Polish) platform of CCC.

Another important element of the programme is a project "*Creating and promoting social economy instruments for the inclusion of marginalized groups on the labour market (2010 - 2013)*" which is coordinated by KARAT member organisation from Romania AUR – A.N.S.U.R.

3.2.1. Clean Clothes Polska (CCP)

As a part of its involvement in CCP KARAT has co-ordinated communication between CCC and organisations involved in CCP. It also has been involved in moderation of facebook profile of CCC which with over 1000 'likes' proves to be a very effective communication tool for general public and other CSO organisations interested in the issue of decent work. KARAT has also made a number of presentations about CCC, CCP and issues of working conditions in the context of gender justice at the diverse meetings and debates. The issues addressed through KARAT's involvement in CCC and CCP were also presented at a lecture given by KARAT as a part of Gender Studies post graduate course at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

3.2.2. Clean Clothes International

As a coordinator of Polish CCC platform, KARAT represents CCP and promotes Polish and Central and Eastern European perspective at CCC Euromeetings, where the strategies and activities of CCC in Europe are decided. KARAT is also a member of CCC gender working group. In 2011 this group focused on the development of the CCC gender strategy, priorities and fundraising plan. KARAT participated in this work.

3.2.3. Social economy

In 2011 KARAT Secretariat became active in the implementation of the project: *Creating and promoting social economy instruments for the inclusion of marginalized groups on the labour market (2010 - 2013)*.

This project is coordinated by KARAT member organization from Romania AUR - A.N.S.U.R. The aim of the project is to design, test and develop a set of social economy instruments in order to encourage and sustain labour market inclusion of four of the most vulnerable groups in Romania: Roma people, unemployed women over 45, young people who at the age of 18 are leaving foster care, and single parents. KARAT's role in the project includes sharing experience of Poland and other countries of the Region related to social economy with AUR - A.N.S.U.R by providing information on social economy laws and development in the Region and in particular the examples of good practices. KARAT is also responsible for liaising with Polish experts, who will support AUR - A.N.S.U.R.

In 2011 the main task performed by KARAT was conducting of an extensive research on social economy in Poland as well as the Region which was then passed to the AUR - A.N.S.U.R to be used in their activities of

developing social economy brand, guides for good practices and curricula for trainings in Romania. KARAT was also preparing for the trainings which will take place in Romania in 2012.

3.2.4. Debate on priorities for Polish Presidency

KARAT participated in a public debate on priorities for EU Polish Presidency organized on the 28th of January 2011 in Warsaw by the Heinrich BoellStiftung Warsaw Office. The debate focused on the inclusion of policy of equality and counteraction of discrimination in the program of Polish Presidency. KARAT's representatives took active part in the debate: Aleksandra Jachanova-Dolezelova from Czech Gender Studies (KARAT member) shared the experience of Czech Presidency. The Czech CSOs working for equality were disappointed in the governmental program. They prepared an alternative program on human rights for Czech Presidency. Elaboration of the alternative program significantly contributed to the media debate during the Presidency. Kinga Lohmann (KARAT Secretariat) highlighted the fact that the organizer included the development cooperation in the public debate which is very rare in the Polish discussions on gender equality.

3.3. GENDER & DEVELOPMENT

In 2011 KARAT's Gender & Development program has been significantly developed and strengthened. KARAT carried out a number of the awareness raising and advocacy activities on gender equality and women's rights in development cooperation and education. This resulted in strengthening the debate on the issue in NMS, development of the capacity on gender and development issues among the civil society of the new donor countries, especially: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Poland. KARAT has also been strongly involved in advocating for inclusion of gender equality and women's rights aspects in currently designed development policies and programs in these countries. These activities have been largely related to a three year project "*Connect! South East West Women for Development Building Support in New Member States for Gender-sensitive and -responsive European Development Co-operation*". In 2011 KARAT has also finalized another project on women's economic and social rights in development: "*Through their eyes through ours*" which resulted in a number of education and awareness raising tools to be used within other activities of KARAT's Gender & Development program.

At the same time KARAT has been involved in international processes, related to aid and development effectiveness, contributing with Region's perspective and involving KARAT members, both from donor and recipient countries in international debates, consultations and advocacy actions. These activities were associated with The Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea (Nov. 29th - Dec. 1st 2011) as well as simultaneous process of CSO Open Forum for development effectiveness.

It needs to be highlighted here, that a number of KARAT's activities focusing on decent work in developing countries described under the gender economic and social justice program section of the report are in large part of development education activities and contribute to the implementation of KARAT's Gender & Development program priority.

3.3.1. Third year of "Connect!"

The project *Connect!* is a pioneering initiative in the Region, aiming at the inclusion of gender equality and women's rights in development policies and practices of NMS, which are now new donor states. In 2011 the project managed to effectively combine successes on the national and the international level. This was done through strengthening of advocacy on national levels for example through participation of decision makers from partner countries in project events, as well as by involvement of project partners from different NMS in international debates and advocacy activities. In 2011 advocating for gender equality and women's rights in development policies and practices was particularly significant in Poland due to the opportunity for CSOs to be involved in consultations on multi-year program on Polish Development Cooperation for 2012-2016 as well as Polish Presidency in EU.

National Dialogues on gender and development

As a part of “Connect!” project four National Dialogues on gender and development were organised by KARAT’s member organisations. In February the Dialogues took place in Sofia, (Bulgaria) organized by Gender, Education, Research and Technologies Foundation (GERT) and Bucharest (Romania) organized by AUR - A.N.S.U.R. In November the National Dialogues were held in Prague (Czech Republic) organised by Gender Studies and Bratislava (Slovakia) organised by Slovak Centre for Communication. Each Dialogue was attended by between 30 and 60 participants: representatives of women and development organizations as well as decision makers: parliamentarians, representatives of governments as well as officials working in the field of development cooperation. The aim of the events was to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of gender aspects of development among these groups as well as to initiate dialogue between them in order to include gender equality and women’s rights in the policies and practices of NMS. It was done through presenting the international obligations made by the new donor countries related to the development cooperation and highlighting the importance of including gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in their policy as well as practice. The events contributed to building bridges between the women’s movement, non-governmental development organizations and decision makers. Further, project partners from Sub-Saharan Africa exchanged their experience with EU NMS activists and officials.

In each country the National Dialogues were followed by the public events addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment in a development cooperation. The format of the events varied in different countries from exhibition, through film screening, university lectures to theatre performance addressing the topic of gender in development. All events involved debates and discussion with the public with the special focus on experience sharing by the Global South partners. In each country events attracted around 30 representatives of general public.

Briefings on climate change and decent work from gender perspective

KARAT has published two briefings about gender and climate change, and gender and decent work in the context of women’s rights in development. The briefings are based on the international research and statistical data showing that both of these issues are strongly connected to gender inequalities and gender stereotypes. The briefings are available in English and Polish and soon will be also available in Bulgarian, Czech, Romanian and Slovak. They are due to be available on KARAT’s website in 2012.

Final event of “Connect!”

The conference, which was a final event of the Connect! project was organized by KARAT on December 13-14, 2011 in Warsaw. It was titled: *Practicing the Promises: Post-Busan development agenda from gender perspective. Opportunity or challenge for EU NMS?*. The conference was an associated event to the European Development Days 2011 held in Warsaw, Poland.

The conference was joined by: representatives of women’s and development NGOs from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Austria, experts on gender and effectiveness issues, representatives of partners from developing countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan) as well as Africa (Kenya and Malawi), representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) from Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia as well as Czech Development Agency. In total, around 35 participants representing donors and beneficiaries of development aid.

The conference was organized two weeks after 4th High Level Forum on aid effectiveness in Busan (HLF4) and it was aimed at: increasing awareness and understanding of aid effectiveness process and Busan Outcome Document on aid effectiveness from gender perspective; mapping and analysis of donors (especially from EU NMS) and Global South partners’ engagement in ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment in development policies and programs; identification of possibilities for CSOs lobbying and advocacy work on European, regional and national level using new aid effectiveness agenda towards gender –sensitive and – responsive development cooperation; development of common advocacy strategy of CSOs from EU NMS for gender sensitive implementation of aid effectiveness agenda after HLF4 in Busan.

3.3.2. KARAT and CONCORD

In 2011 KARAT continued its active involvement in Zagranica Group Polish platform of CONCORD. As part of this involvement in 2011 KARAT has been very active in two working groups:

Working group on global education. KARAT has been taking part in a 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 has been 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 2012. This close cooperation of KARAT with MFA has significantly increased the visibility of the Coalition.

In 2011 another important opportunity for KARAT's involvement in Zagranica Group advocacy work appeared. On the 8th of February 2011 the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the consultations with civil society organizations (CSOs) on the frame of the first multi-year program on Polish development cooperation for 2012-2016. KARAT as a member of Grupa Zagranica - was actively engaged in this process with the aim to contribute to elaboration of gender sensitive program of Polish development cooperation. As a part of the process the representative of KARAT Secretariat joined two working groups: strategic group on mission and vision of Polish development cooperation and thematic group focusing on democracy and human rights based approach. Moreover, KARAT took part in shaping the chapter about gender equality and women's empowerment within the human rights and democracy thematic priority and consulted the global education chapter. The draft version of the multi-year program on Polish Development Cooperation prepared with wide consultations of CSOs has been submitted to MFA Undersecretary of State responsible for development issues. The plan is due to be accepted in 2012

Although KARAT members working on development issues in other EU NMS had less capacity and opportunities to be actively involved in Concord's national platforms in 2011, still they contributed to national level advocacy by being active members in different working groups in the platforms in their respective countries (for example AUR - A.N.S.U.R is active in the board of Romanian platform -FOND and Gender Studies is involved in gender working group of Czech platform – FORS) . KARAT members from Romania, Bulgaria and Czech Republic also ensured the participation of platforms members in KARAT events on gender and development both at national level (National Dialogues) and regional level (final conference of Connect!).

3.3.3. KARAT and CSO Open Forum

In 2011 KARAT Coalition coordinated *Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness Thematic Consultation on CSOs working in Gender Equality and Women's Rights* in CEE and CIS countries. This region includes both donor countries – the EU New Member States, as well as developing countries of Eastern Europe, and Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia. The consultations were conducted based on the electronic questionnaire, prepared by Open Forum and adopted to the region's context by KARAT, as well as a few face to face interviews. Forty one organizations from 17 countries of the region took part in the consultations. The main conclusion was that the development cooperation and its effectiveness is still relatively new issue in both groups of countries of KARAT's region. Everywhere there is a burning need to raise the awareness and advocate for the inclusion of gender equality and women's rights in development policies and practices, counteracting the gender stereotypes and strengthening the political will to work on these issues. Support for women's organizations and development organizations working on gender issues is necessary in terms of finances and capacity building. The reports from the consultation is available on the website of CSO Open Forum for development effectiveness.

As a follow up of the consultations, the representative of KARAT took part as a speaker in the workshop on gender equality and women's rights in the context of CSO development effectiveness during the second General Assembly of Open Forum in June 2011.

3.3.4. HLF4 in Busan

The Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea (Nov. 29th - Dec.1st 2011) was attended by the KARAT members from the Forum of Women NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation (Bulgaria) and representatives of KARAT Secretariat. KARAT members joined the Women's Forum as a part of Busan Civil Society Forum organized prior to the official event. Women's Forum agreed on the civil society demands regarding the gender equality and women's rights in aid and development effectiveness process. It was the finalization of the process of developing demands through a number of gender consultations organized within Better Aid platform in which KARAT took part during 2011. This common voice of women called on all governments and other development actors involved in the HLF4 to include the women's rights and gender equality perspective in a new development cooperation framework.

KARAT Secretariat's representative also took part in the official session of High Level Forum on aid effectiveness in Busan as a member of Polish Government official delegation. She joined the advocacy actions promoting Women's Forum demands especially related to the sessions and initiatives on gender equality.

3.3.5. Conclusion of "Through Their Eyes, Through Ours"

The project *"Through Their Eyes, Through Ours. Raising public awareness about development problems faced by women from developing countries in the EU Eastern Neighborhood, Balkans and Central Asia"* was finalised at the end of March 2011. The project has resulted in a great number of important and useful tools and materials presenting the socio-economic situation of women from the countries of Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Balkans and Caucasia (movie, photos, blogs, printed publications etc.).

The photos are used by KARAT in its publications and activities, KARAT members and other stakeholders are encouraged to use them for non-commercial purposes. KARAT is still collecting the photos for the Photo Bank presenting women from this region in non-stereotypical way and will continue to do so.

4. ORGANISATIONAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

2011 was a very successful year for KARAT as far as organisational and strategic empowerment was concerned. After a number of difficult and unstable years KARAT has finally developed very effective methods of management on the level of the Secretariat. The 2011 was also very financially stable for the organisation. Unfortunately while stability on the managerial level can be maintained as it is linked to knowledge and experience of the Secretariat Staff and the Board, the financial stability of the organisation is not something which the Coalition can take for granted, especially since the funding environment of CSO continues to deteriorate.

Membership of KARAT

In 2011 the Board of KARAT has accepted a new member The Public Fund of DIA (Business, Initiative Women) from Kyrgyzstan. The DIA lobbies for and protects the women's human and economic rights and interests, especially in the south Kyrgyzstan. Now KARAT Coalition consists of 61 member organizations. While the number of KARAT members has not been growing very rapidly this is also a sign of stability of the Coalition. KARAT is perceived as a stable organisation, participation in which is linked with actual involvement, hence organisations which do not have interest in being involved in the work of KARAT or which strongly do not identify with the Coalition do not join. Further, the current KARAT projects provide an opportunity for the involvement of its members. It is linked also to KARAT being in position to employ (in the second half of 2011) a *Networking Officer* which had a very positive impact on the co-operation with members.

KARAT Board meeting

The Board meeting took place on November 30th – December 2nd in Warsaw. The Board discussed the coming elections for KARAT Board, preliminary evaluation of the KARAT Programme 2009 – 2012 and a development of direction and strategy for KARAT's new programme 2013 – 2016. The preliminary evaluation was preceded by presenting the content and outcomes of KARAT project *Coalition on CEDAW as a Tool to Improve Women's Access to Justice*. The project partners and the Board Members discussed the project's results from a perspective of NGOs' cooperation within KARAT Coalition. All eight project partners admitted that the project had good results in their countries and hoped for its continuation. They stressed that although KARAT does not work directly on the problems addressed on the national level it provided the relevant tools (e.g. trainings in CEDAW Convention and CEDAW OP) needed for addressing the women rights' violations. The Board has also accepted one new member of the Coalition.

Communication Tools

In 2011 KARAT has continue to maintain number of communication email groups including an email group to communicate with its members, email group to communicate with Board Members as well as a group to communicate with KARAT's members and friends. In 2010 KARAT has also developed its Facebook profile which currently has over 300 'likes' and the number continues to grow steadily.

Website.

In 2011 KARAT has put a lot of effort into completing re-development of its website. The aim of it was to answer more to the needs of users of the website, reflect more effectively work done by KARAT presently and in the past, as well as to make updating of the website more efficient. The launching of the website was planned for early 2012.

ECOSOC Status for KARAT

In August KARAT Coalition has joined the organizations holding Special Consultative Status of ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of United Nations). The status is a chance for further development of KARAT's work at UN level, especially within our Women's Rights program.

Management of the Secretariat

They were two key elements related to the management of the Secretariat that took place in 2011.

Firstly, two managers, and one project coordinator participated in a professional coaching related to management and development in the context of NGOs. This had a very good impact on the secretariat as a whole.

Second element was changing of the structure and the role of the weekly meeting of the managers, as well as of the weekly meeting of the entire Secretariat staff. As far as meeting of the managers is concerned in 2011 financial officer started to participate in them. This made decision making as well as planning much more effective.

The weekly staff meetings have also been changed. They are not longer a forum for informing what each employee is currently working on, but are used as a platform of joint discussions about the vision and strategy of KARAT, as well as joint decisions about day to day issues. This led to a much greater involvement of all the workers, and greater sense of ownership and joint responsibility for KARAT as well as KARAT Secretariat.

In 2011 evaluation of staff of the Secretariat which was begun at the end of 2010 was completed. It used so called "360" method and provided very useful information as far as the management of Secretariat staff and positioning work of the Secretariat in the broader context of the coalition are concerned.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report is attached

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Executive Director