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THE EXPERIENCE OF E.N.RE.C. PROJECT - EUROPEAN NETWORK OF RESOURCE CENTERS FOR WOMEN

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E.N.RE.C. was developed to help European women to promote themselves (1998-2001).

E.N.RE.C. stands for European Network of Resource Centers for Women: it is a co-operation project between various countries, aimed at making it easier for women to find jobs, integrate into society and develop personal initiatives.

The group of partners was composed by two regions from Sweden, a region from Finland, a region from Greece and two Italian regions, Emilia Romagna and Puglia.

Intense collaboration between the partners has led to exchange of experience with reciprocal benefits: the north European countries have expertise in Equal opportunities and social affairs while the south show their specialisation obtained in promoting entrepreneurs and associations.

The experience matured was offered to women by means of the women's Resource Centres.

The E.N.RE.C. project was aimed at all the women in the regions involved. Thanks to preliminary research the most immediate needs was focused and a range of activities dedicated above all to the following themes was planned:

- women seeking employment
- female entrepreneurs or aspiring ones
- women in political activity
- women involved in social work

The E.N.RE.C. project has been mainly carried out in the women's Resource Centers, the heart of the initiative.

The Resource Centers are places where women looking for professional, personal and social fulfilment can meet and compare experience. They are places to go for information but not only this: indeed the Center organises training courses, seminars and meetings aimed at involving all the female population.

The original set up of the Resource Center makes it able to welcome and represent the needs, desires and ambitions of women.

The Resource Center for women has the following aims:

- to cover all the daily aspects of women's life
- to help women affirm themselves in economic and social life
- to become a resource for local development of the regions involved.

The Resource Centers have a unique role, are not competing against anyone else, but co-operate to fill a need and to obtain results.

The final aim was that of creating a women's Resource Center by collecting successful methodologies and tried and trusted European instruments as

- empowerment – an important instrument in the Resource Center creation process
- new technologies: making good use of the Internet and telematics in the co-operation process in order to give a better knowledge of women in this field and to improve the flow of information inside the partnership and towards the outside. In order to achieve this, the ENREC project web site was connected to the regional sites of each partner.

- Seminars, training courses, fairs and exchange visits:

- Mentorship/tutorship courses in order to determine new methodologies which can influence women in politics and in society in general.

At the end of the project the partners have created:

The ***European Association of women's Resource Centers***.

This association guarantees a character of stability and permanence to the European network of Resource Centers created during the course of the project.

The Resource Centers are continuing their transnational collaboration through the instruments of the association communicating with domestic and European governments in order to act on planning social and economic policies with general prospects.

The ***European Guide of Resource Centers*** that is a sort of handbook for other organisms, public and private entities which would like to create Resource Centers in accordance with the parameters of the European model tested and approved by the European Commission and it contains the requirements for joining the Association.