

EaP CSF Re-granting 2016

Success story

Project: Empowered Women for Social Integration - Working Group 2 “Economic integration and convergence with EU policies”

Implemented by **Martuni Women’s Community Council (Armenia)** with the following partners: **Migrant Families NGO (Moldova)**, **Office for European Expertise and Communications (Belarus)**

This project, implemented in Armenia, Belarus and Moldova, supported the entrepreneurial ambitions and skills of women in local communities. *“It is important that women feel more confident and see that a change to their role in society is possible. They don’t have to be just housewives or mothers, but independent earners and representatives of their communities. We help to discover new talents and encourage other women to believe in their ideas,”* says **Svetlana Simonyan**, the project manager.



In **Armenia**, two entrepreneurial ideas received funding within the project framework. Being closely linked to the development of community life, the first focused on the development of tourism by widening the scope for guesthouse services in regional communities. The second introduced a new phenomenon to the community - food delivery service. The project beneficiaries have profited from new expertise and their businesses have already started to flourish. In **Moldova**, four small businesses operated by women were opened and new jobs created. Furthermore, three existing businesses were significantly strengthened. The beneficiaries are receiving free counselling on their small businesses’ development from the project partner.



How the needs of a community empowered Oksana to start a small business



As an activist who cares about the varying problems within her local community in **Belarus**, **Oksana Bernatskaya** began her work by conducting a participatory needs assessment. She conducted a series of meetings with people of different ages. The main problem identified by the community members turned out to be how the local children can spend their free time in the village. Consequently, Oksana started to organise different festivals for people in her community, and supporters and volunteers ready to help started flocking in.

As Oksana launched new recreational activities for local children and their families, she came up with an idea for a new business. She found an empty premises that had not been used for a few years, and renovated it with the help of other activists. The new place became a space for different educational, sport and leisure activities for local children, teenagers and their families.

Oksana registered her organisation '*Ecolife Leisure Centre for Children and Adults*' and received a government subsidy to purchase its equipment. Today, more than 30 children of different ages attend activities at the centre on regular bases. The centre currently offers a wide range of courses in IT, programming, journalism, filmmaking or foreign languages, and has the potential to expand further.

Thanks to Oksana's participation in EaP CSF 2016 Regranting project **Empowered Women for Social Integration**, she has been able to show determination and commitment for turning her ideas into reality, and in doing so has managed to build a successful business and live the life of her dreams.