

Women Leadership in the Non-Governmental Sector: A comparative study - Romania and the Republic of Moldova

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Abstract: Starting from the idea that active involvement of women in addressing public issues is essential, representing an underutilized resource, including in terms of initiatives and leadership of measures, in this work, we aim to create two snapshots regarding the presence of women in the leadership of non-governmental organizations in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. We selected these two countries not only due to cultural similarities, but also taking into account their proximity to the conflict in Ukraine and the importance of the NGO sector in providing support for refugees.

In the case of the public sector, international organizations such as the European Institute for Gender Equality have succeeded in compiling and periodically updating databases on the presence of women in political and leadership positions in European Union member states. However, regarding the non-governmental sector, there is still a deficiency in understanding the gender characteristics of the organizations. Therefore, through this research, we outline a portrait of women's involvement in community development through NGOs.

When it comes to challenges related to women's involvement in the community, the non-governmental sector may offer an easier gateway than the political and administrative sphere. During the research, we collected data about the existing NGOs in the two target states and their characteristics. The empirical research was conducted using a semi-structured interview as a qualitative method and a data collection form/survey sheet for quantitative data regarding the features of the NGOs. The data collected allowed us to identify the sectors and regions where measures to stimulate women's involvement in the non-governmental sector may be deemed necessary. To formulate potential measures and policy recommendations for women's involvement, we conducted interviews with women holding leadership positions in non-governmental organizations in the two states. This process helped identify challenges, barriers, and potential methods for improvement and encouraging higher female involvement.

KEYWORDS: NGO, women participation, local development, current challenges, leadership