

Women's Policy
at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation

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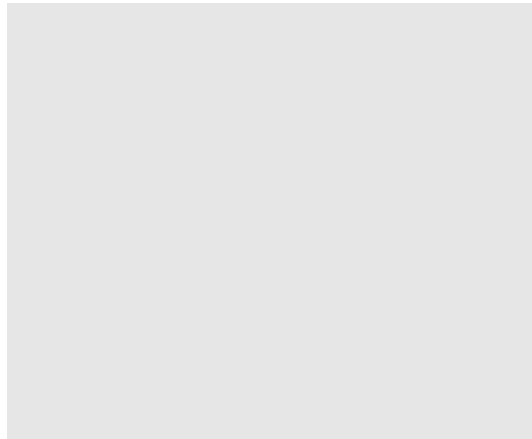
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In Lieu of a Foreword

Christel Nickel-Mayer, member of the executive board, Friedrich Ebert Foundation



Question: One of the priority goals of your Foundation is that of political and social education for people from all walks of life. Within this overall activity, what importance does the Foundation attribute to the education of women in particular?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: Working for women to me stands for a commitment to society as a whole. And for as long as equity between women and men has not been firmly established, our Foundation has an important job to fulfil. We must encourage women to acquire knowledge and skills in all fields and assert their right to taking over their share of political responsibility.

40 % of the people participating in our 2,000 courses and seminars every year are women. We also grant scholarships to women. 39 % of our undergraduate scholarships are for women which means that we assist 25 % more women with their studies than other comparable organisations. Looking at post graduate students, we have a women's share of 38 % which is considerably higher than the percentage of post graduate women students in German universities.

It is our goal to see these highly qualified women in decisionmaking positions one day.

Question: Do you perceive your work today, to some extent, as a continuation of the women's liberation movement's tradition?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: Of course. Last year, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation organised a memorial conference in Stuttgart to commemorate the first international convention of Socialist women, which was held in the same place in 1907. It was this and following conferences that started important political action such as the introduction of women's voting rights or peace policy. Many topics dealt with at that conference appear very modern: The right to abortion, child crèches, nursery facilities, and equal pay for equal work.

Another issue with a long tradition is the effort to upgrade the worth attributed to women's work and to understand this as a politically relevant issue. It was August Bebel, after all, who demanded that unions have the women factory workers join the political struggle.

Question: As part of its activities in the five new federal states, the Foundation also offers quite a number of seminars and other events especially for women. What made you get so deeply engaged in the eastern part of Germany and what are some of the highlights of your work there?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: The process of German unification is a challenge to the Foundation's women's policy department. It is the women in particular who bear the load of the unification process. They are hit by a disproportionately high degree of unemployment. Very often their reaction is discouragement and complete withdrawal from economic life, which is perhaps understandable but at the same time dangerous. This is why our policy for women in the new states must be to provide them with the necessary knowledge and strength for political action. Our courses must raise their confidence and assist them in taking care of their own interest in the process of social change. They must boost women's morale and give them a "breather" at the same time to strengthen them for their return to the political arena.

The women's input is essential at this stage of the ongoing democratic change. It is the only way to ensure more rights for women in a future constitution.

Question: What, according to your opinion, are the main dangers in this present atmosphere of political disenchantment?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: Women must keep up their presence, and must under no circumstances withdraw from their present positions. The achievements of women's lib since the beginning of this century have always been endangered, women have never been permitted to sit back and rest on what they had achieved. Increasing individualisation and retreat into a private life to me is a serious danger to the liberation of women. What now needs to be addressed is the generation of our daughters, the generation of young women who tend to think that there is nothing left to fight for.

Question: To the Friedrich Ebert Foundation the promotion of international understanding and the development of partnerships with developing countries has always been an important issue. What were your reasons to get so deeply involved in this field, and how did this work develop into a women's issue?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: In our development policy the promotion of economic activities and of the securing of people's elementary social existence, stood at the very beginning. People at the Foundation soon began to realise that those who were feeding their families working as small time entrepreneurs or farmers, and who were innovative in their minds and looking for new options, were mainly women. We decided at a very early stage to consider the promotion of women a political priority for these countries. This took us to the next step which was to qualify these women for political action, and to assist them in getting social recognition.

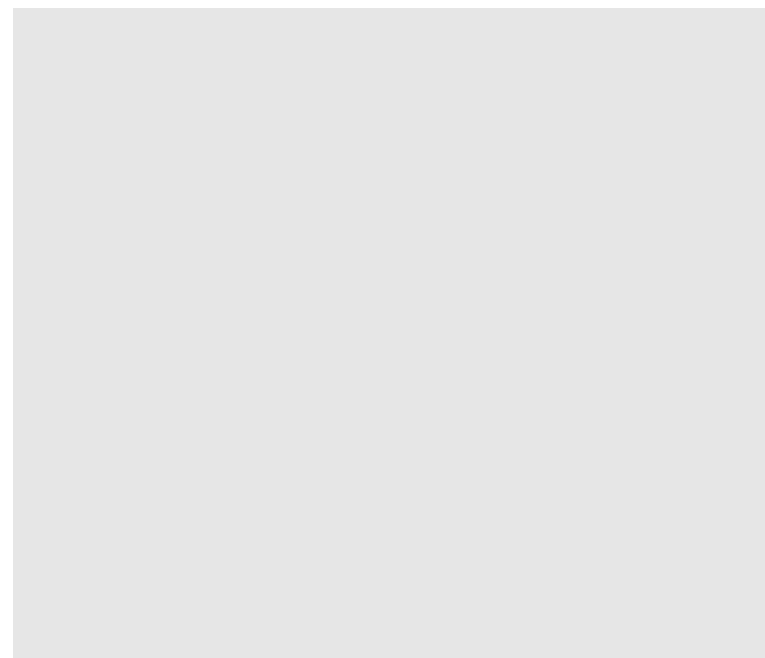
Question: And how do you avoid development policy continuing as a one way street from what is called the First World to the so-called Third World?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: I vividly remember the visit of an Indian women's delegation. When they came back to see me after a tour of the old and new German federal states they told me: "We don't understand why so many women are so discouraged here. You live in the rich west, you have all these opportunities. Why do you not seize them?" I think that we women of the "First" world have a lot to learn from the courage and the solidarity of women in developing countries. This is why I consider international exchange programs to be so essential. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation everywhere in the world sponsors conferences especially on the situation of women and their role in the process of democratisation. I think it is very important to create a public for these issues. To hold meetings and exchange views is a valuable instrument of networking and entering a dialogue, as well as emphasizing the significance of women's issues at an international level.

Question: What is the target group you want to reach with your activities?

Christel Nickel-Mayer: Our Foundation is open for all parts of society. There are women's seminars held in educational institutes, there are expert conferences for particular professional groups etc. We are open for all, but with a primary commitment to our original target group, i.e. the socially underprivileged. Women's affairs is a high priority element of our activities. And, clearly, it is an integral part of the Foundation's self image, regardless of whether women's affairs is a popular thing to talk about or not. Working for women is not a fad that may disappear any moment but a permanent task of tremendous consequence for the future.

Women's Political Caucus



**Renate Schmidt, MP,
Deputy Speaker of the
German Bundetag,
headed the Women's
Political Caucus from
1987 until 1990**

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation founded its Women's Political Caucus in 1986 as a response to a growing interest in women's issues and to many women's request to have their own caucus for these issues.

The goal has remained the same over all these years. The Caucus is intended to give men and women from trade unions, politics, science, the media and many other societal areas an opportunity to get in touch and discuss equal rights issues. Its purpose is to assist in the formation of a network for better mutual information and for a more effective way of safeguarding women's interests. A glance at the past years' activities shows how wide a spectrum of issues it has covered:

- As far back as 1986, the Caucus dealt with the advantages of flexible working times and looked at the results of practical trials, checking on the pros and cons from a women's point of view.
- In 1988, the daily humiliation of women by violent pornography was a much discussed issue, initiating major discussion across party boundaries.

■ In 1989, women and technology was the key issue, as well as a discussion of the impact of gene technology on women's self determination. Many of these issues have stayed on the agenda ever since the Caucus has been in existence and have been regularly examined for their current importance. Take the subject of affirmative action. Whether we are dealing with women in leadership positions, better job opportunities through company based equal opportunity plans, or women's career schemes in the public services, the development of equal opportunity policies, their achievements as well as their deficits, are a regular part of the Caucus's agenda.

At the Women's Political Caucus

- women discuss current political issues and develop their own concepts,
- women initiate a public debate on new women's issues,
- women politicians, trade unionists, scholars, and women from many other backgrounds are brought together to further the cause of women,
- women work on solutions and strategies to overcome present political problems and to elaborate perspectives for their political implementation.

The world of work, too, has continued to be a matter of interest. Women employment initiatives, women on the works councils, employment without social security protection and women's labour market perspectives have been the subject of many discussions.

The speed with which the Caucus can respond to new hot issues was shown in the following case which occurred last year:

In January 1992, the Federal Constitutional Court lifted the ban on night work for women which had been in place since 1938. The law had been found to be in contravention to the principle of equality laid down in the constitution. As early as two months after that, the

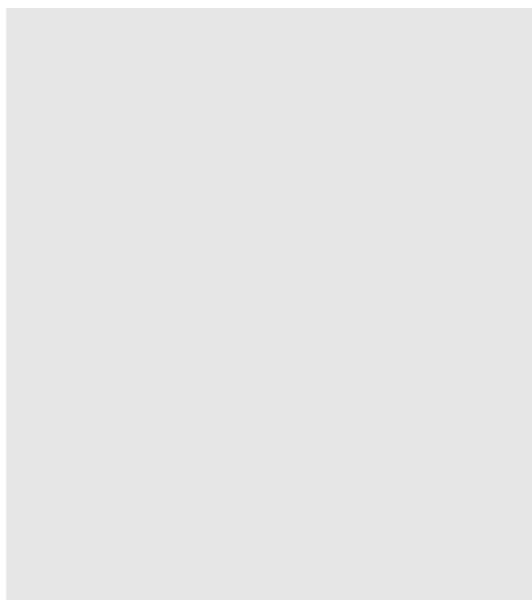
Caucus brought together women experts and other interested women to analyse the consequences of this court sentence. The result was that the SPD member of parliament Ulla Schmidt, and the Minister for Women, Labour and Social Research of the State of Hesse, Heide Pfarr, and other Caucus members developed proposals for legal and collective bargaining provisions regulating the conditions for women workers affected by night work.

There are no limits to the selection of topics to be dealt with at the Caucus, themes relevant to women exist in all fields of politics, economic and employment policy, social welfare policy. The Caucus understands its activities as a task cutting right through existing societal structures, and as a commitment to society as a whole.

One example for this was a conference entitled "A room of my Own?" which dealt with construction and urban planning from a women's point of view.

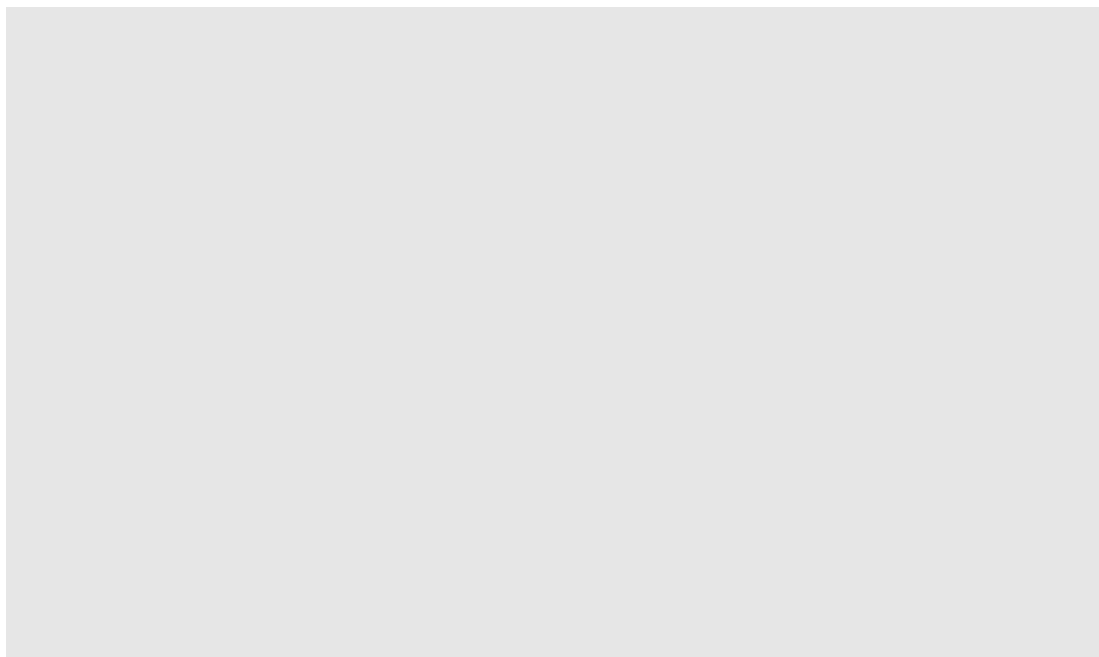
In June 1992 women planners, women architects and the North Rhine Westphalian Minister for Construction and Housing, Ilse Brusis, got together to discuss with other participants the impact of a growing housing shortage, and the question whether the needs of women and children are properly met by housing programmes, as well as ways of giving special assistance to low income and underprivileged groups such as single mothers and pregnant women.

The Caucus also meets whenever important decisions affecting women are pending, to share information in advance and to take an early influence on the outcome.



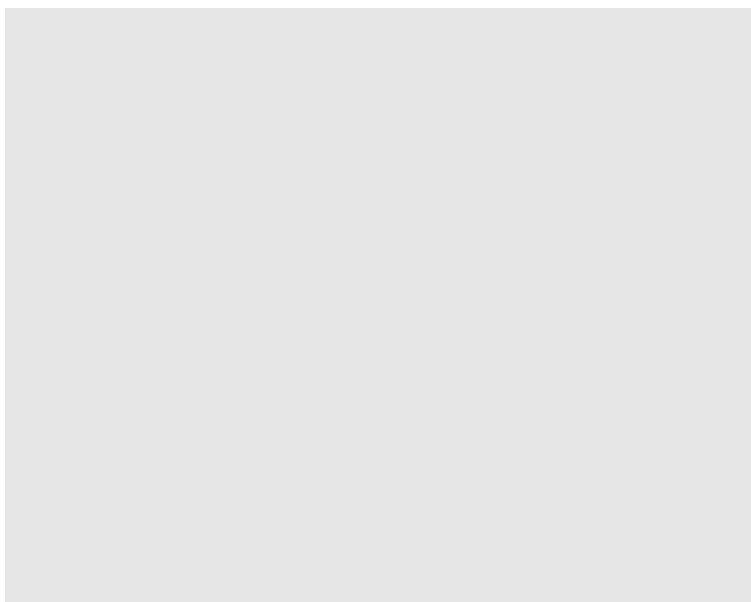
**Ilse Brusis, Minister
for Construction and
Housing, State of
North Rhine Westphalia**

In the autumn of 1992, more than one hundred Caucus women met to evaluate a number of proposals for a new equal rights bill. Ilse Janz, chair of the ad hoc working group on an equal rights bill in the Social Democratic group in parliament, and women representatives of the trade unions and the employers' federation presented their thoughts on the matter. In this meeting the Caucus managed to bring about a dialogue of a novel quality in political circles, down-to-earth and beyond any image neurosis. Its result, both unanimous and encouraging, was that the promotion of women and equal rights programmes must not be seen as pure human kindness on the part of some particularly generous corporate or administrative management but constitute an opportunity to sign up women talent and competence.



**Ulla Schmidt MP,
Chairperson of the
inter-party group on
equal rights for
women and men,
took over the chair
of the Women's
Policy Caucus in
1992**

Women's Policy in the New Federal States



Dr. Regine Hildebrandt, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Women of the State of Brandenburg, has from the very beginning shown a high level of commitment for women in the new Federal States

Immediately in 1990 the Foundation began its political work for women in the new federal states by setting up regional women's caucuses and by offering a wide range of events, conferences and seminars. The background for these activities has unfortunately remained the same to this date:

■ Women are bearing the brunt of the ongoing social, economic and political change.

■ The catastrophic economic impact of the reunification process, high mass unemployment and short time working is hitting them particularly hard.

■ As it often happens in times of economic recession and high unemployment, conservative concepts regarding the role of women gain a lot of support and people begin to argue that a woman's place is in her home.

What makes matters worse is that

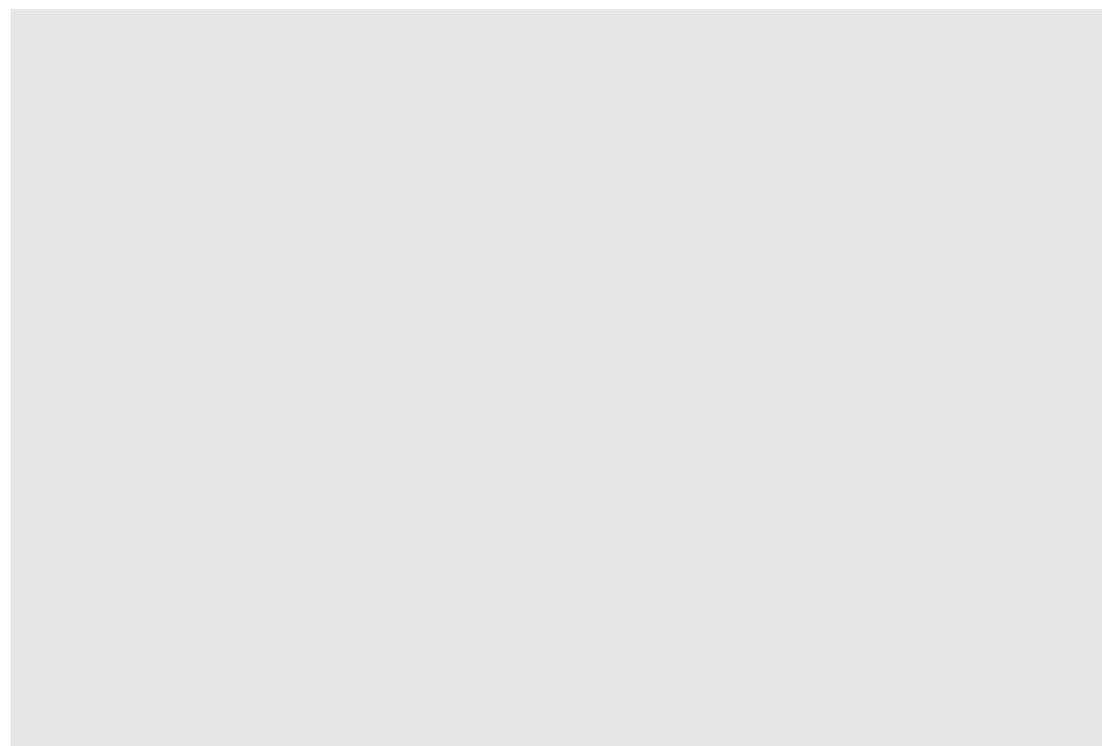
■ many child care institutions were closed down as part of a low-budget policy,

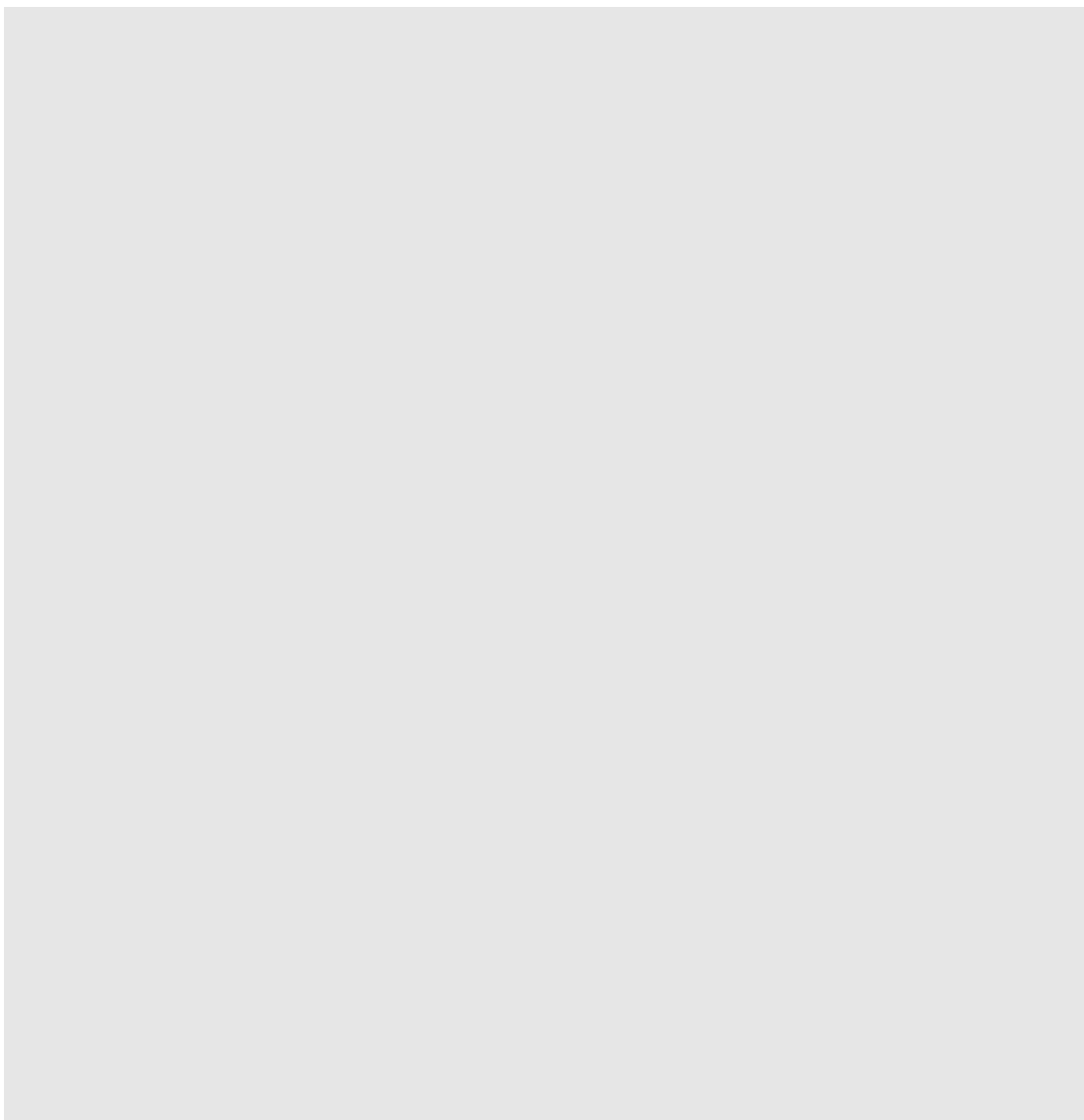
■ the unification process has dismantled many women's rights,

■ especially single mothers find it increasingly difficult to find adequate accommodation in view of skyrocketing rents.

Against this background, the Foundation has made it a priority issue to organise women's courses which provide basic knowledge on economy, society and state as well as permitting a public discussion of current women's affairs.

Ulla Schmidt MP, talking to participants at the Women's Policy Caucus meeting on the subject of "A New All-German Social Contract" in Leipzig, 1992





1992 – A Women’s meeting in Schwerin. Gerlinde Schell (right), Member of the State Parliament for Greifswald, was a much contacted person. This photograph shows her in a conversation with Karla Stazak (centre) and Birgitta Pless (left) from Rostock

The range of themes is from economic and employment policies, people oriented cities and housing programmes, constitutional and equal rights issues, all the way down to social security, European policy and the amendment of the abortion law.

Examples

Thanks to its former contacts with the new Federal States the Foundation is in a position to serve a number of women’s goals. As early as 1990 the Foundation began to cooperate with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Women of the State of Brandenburg. This cooperation was continued in the framework of symposiums on local authority equal rights policies, and women’s job opportunity programmes in the private and rural sectors. More than 120 equal rights officers from local authorities as well as women politicians, trade unionists, representatives of women’s action groups and the media took part in a conference

on “Local Equal Rights Policies” organised jointly by Brandenburg’s Minister of Labour, Regine Hildebrandt, and the North Rhine Westphalian Women’s Minister Ilse Ridder-Melchers. Based on the work of equal rights commissioners in Brandenburg, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation had carried out an investigation specifically for this conference. It thus became possible to bring this important women’s issue out into an informed public, to point out its problems and to develop solutions for the future.

The Foundation also considers itself as a forum on which East meets West. In Schwerin and Leipzig, meetings were held in 1992 which bore the title: “The Women’s Movement in the East, the Women’s Movement in the West: What makes them differ and what do they have in common?” Women shared their experiences on forty years of everyday women’s lives and political issues in east and west, comparing notes on likenesses and differences. And especially talking about the future.

**Ilse Ridder-Melchers,
Minister for Equal
Rights of Men and
Women in the State
of North Rhine
Westphalia**

In 1993, representatives of local groups, women's shelters, women politicians and scientists from all parts of Germany met to discuss the situation of women's aid organisations in the new Federal States.

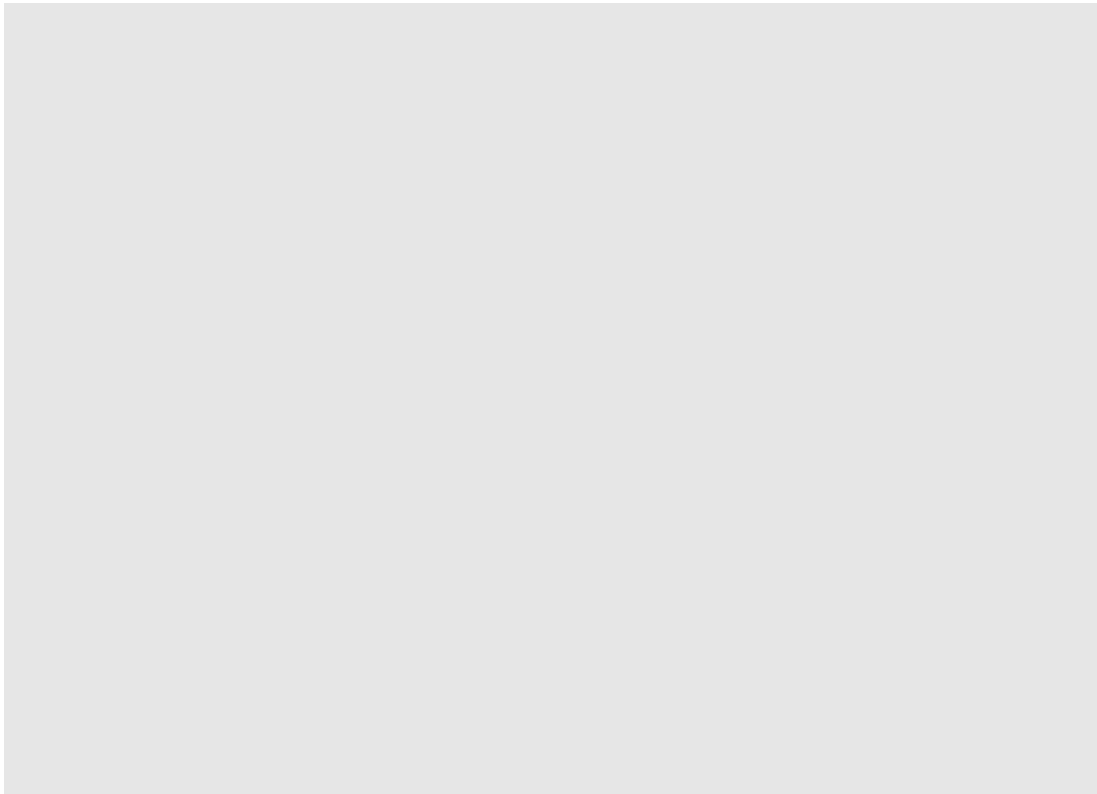
The question on the agenda: What is the situation of institutions like women's shelters in times of empty treasuries but burning problems? Is violence against women still considered an issue at all?

The result of the meeting: It is not a lack of initiative or personal commitment but a lack of financial and logistic support that led to the end of many activities. Positive signs: The sensitivity for the subject of violent assault has increased. And, the State Government of Brandenburg is preparing a bill to guarantee the institution and upkeep of women's shelters. The participants' résumé: A fruitful exchange of experience, involving the sharing of many ideas, getting advice and making friends.

Regarding women's affairs in the new Federal States, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation promotes and supports

- the participation of women in all fields of policymaking,
- the establishment of local equal rights authorities, by helping draft concepts and recommendations for by-laws and local constitutions,
- women's activities in trade unions and at shop floor level,
- women's employment initiatives,
- the dialogue between women in east and west,
- more personal initiative and a deeper involvement in all decisionmaking processes,
- the building of women networks,
- the participation of women in the democratic renewal process,
- the presence of women in social leadership positions,
- a change in political culture.

International Meetings



International participants attending a memorial conference at the Neue Schloß in Stuttgart

International conferences are an essential part of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's activities for women. They act as a meeting place for women from all parts of the world and offer a public forum to ensure their participation and their say in all politically relevant matters.

One main conference theme is the support of reform movements in central and eastern Europe and the enhancement of a peace dialogue in the Middle East.

Examples

In October 1991, the Foundation, under the auspices of the Speaker of the German Bundestag, Professor Rita Süßmuth, and Deputy Speaker Renate Schmidt initiated the first Euro-Arab conference for women parliamentarians in Brussels, dealing with possible approaches to an overall peace solution for the middle east. Against the background of the dramatic situation of world politics, the devastating effect of the Gulf War, and in view of the problems of the

middle eastern region that are still unsolved, women parliamentarians from 12 countries of the Arab League and 10 European countries joined together for a discussion. They also addressed matters of general Euro-Arab relations, so that in addition to some important input for a women-made peace in the Middle East, talks and contacts made at the conference also helped overcome a lot of general prejudice.

"The Role of Women in Social and Political Movements in Present-Day Czechoslovakia" was the subject of a conference held in September 1991 in Prague. One month later the talks were continued in Warsaw. The Conference theme: "Poland – a Society on the Move – New Roadways for Women". Both conferences furthered the dialogue between women from eastern and western Europe on current economic and political questions. They encouraged women to take a more active part in all political decision-making processes and helped to start women networks.

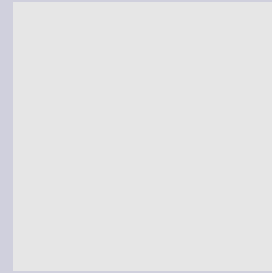
Euro-Arab meeting of women parliamentarians, Brussels, October 1991

The resolution of the Euro-Arab meeting demanded

- an adequate participation of women in all delegations,
- self-determination for the Palestinians as well as a right of existence for the State of Israel,
- a move to overcome disparities in the access to the regional resources oil, water and land,
- the institution of a Middle East Development Funds,
- withdrawal from the occupied territories and a termination of any form of foreign-determined settlement policy,
- lifting of the non-military part of the UN embargo against Iraq, for humanitarian reasons,
- a move to outlaw the production, sale, procurement and storage of weapons, as well as active disarmament in the region of the crisis.

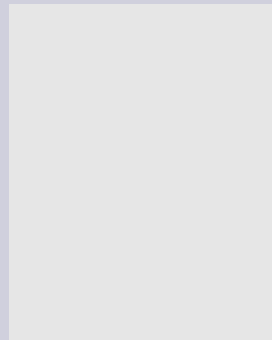
On August 17th, 1907, 58 delegates from all over the world met for the first International Women's Conference. They adopted a resolution on women's voting rights which became the starting point of a relentless battle for the political rights of women.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation, in commemoration of this event, organised an anniversary conference, again held in Stuttgart, and placed it under the motto "Power to the Women – Survival through Solidarity". Women from all parts of the world came to review what has happened since the days of the foundation of the Socialist International, what setbacks there have been, how recent political change in east and west might affect the further development, and what women should be looking for in future.



**Eva Rühmkorf,
Former Minister**

"Decisions of vital importance, whether it is Maastricht or the Economic Summit, the Environmental Summit in Rio or the Geneva Conferences on Yugoslavia, are always taken by male politicians. This means that in all the brainwork, all the planning and decisionmaking affecting the future development of our world, the experience and knowledge of half of humanity is not even considered, let alone utilised."



**Portia Simpson,
Minister for
Labour, Social
Affairs and
Sports in Jamaica,
Vice President
of the People's
National Party**

"The Socialist Women's International (SWI) is a great movement. The same spirit of discipline, passion and perseverance has characterised the struggle of women in the Caribbean and in Latin America in the past 20 years, in their struggle for political rights, social equity, and participation in the decisionmaking processes. With the support of our sisters in the SWI we women in Jamaica will continue to struggle for the status of women and the improvement of their living conditions back home and elsewhere in the world."

Portia Simpson
in a conversation
with former MP
Hedwig Meermann

Christina K. Valte,
staff member,
Harnessing Self-
Reliant Initiatives
and Knowledge,
the Philippines

"It is a sad irony that the presidency of a woman, Corazon Aquino, led the world to the erroneous belief that women in the Philippines already had equal rights."

Hana Navarowa,
Social Scientist, Academy
of Sciences, Prague

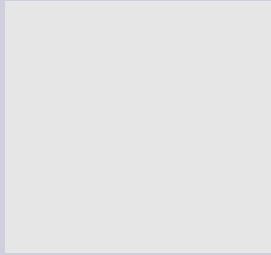
"Under forty years of Communism, women have acquired the privilege to occupy two full-time jobs – one at work and one at home."

Alexandra Berkova, Prague

"I am a writer and a feminist. Probably the only one in town."

Anita Gradin,
President of SWI

"We thank the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for commemorating our anniversary in such a dignified and festive manner. Like our political grandmothers we feel that democracy can only work if women enjoy equal rights. And we assume that a democratic society has the duty of removing all obstacles which prevent women from accessing equal rights and opportunities."



**Ani Widyani
Soetjipto**

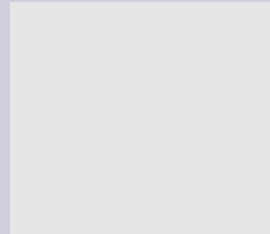
"The unique potential of women, the role they might play in society, has never yet been recognised in the post colonial days. In the current understanding of development, women are automatically assumed to have the same interests as men. As women were also economically dependent from men, their specific requirements and aspirations were not even taken into consideration in the planning of our development."

**Anna Popowicz,
Women's Commissioner of the
Polish Government, Warsaw**

"Women are elbowed around, not only at work but also in politics. Our young democracy is distinctly male."

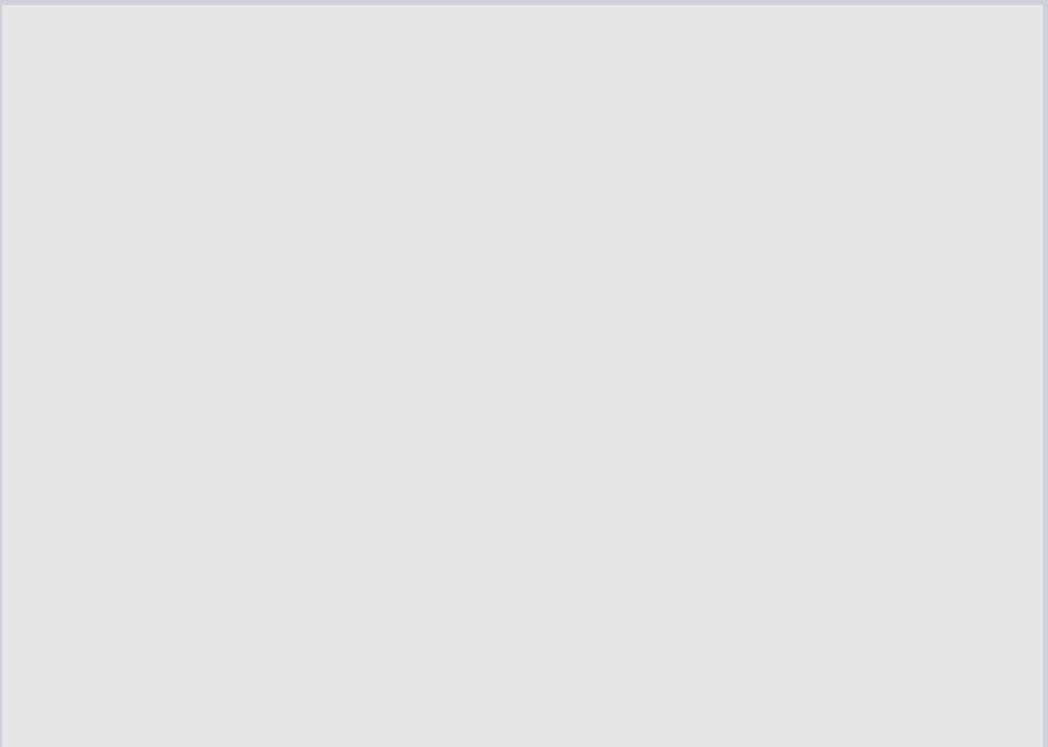
**Jirina Vrabkova,
Lawyer, Prague**

"We often experience how women's policy has been discredited by the memory of the former Communist Party's unitary women's organisation."



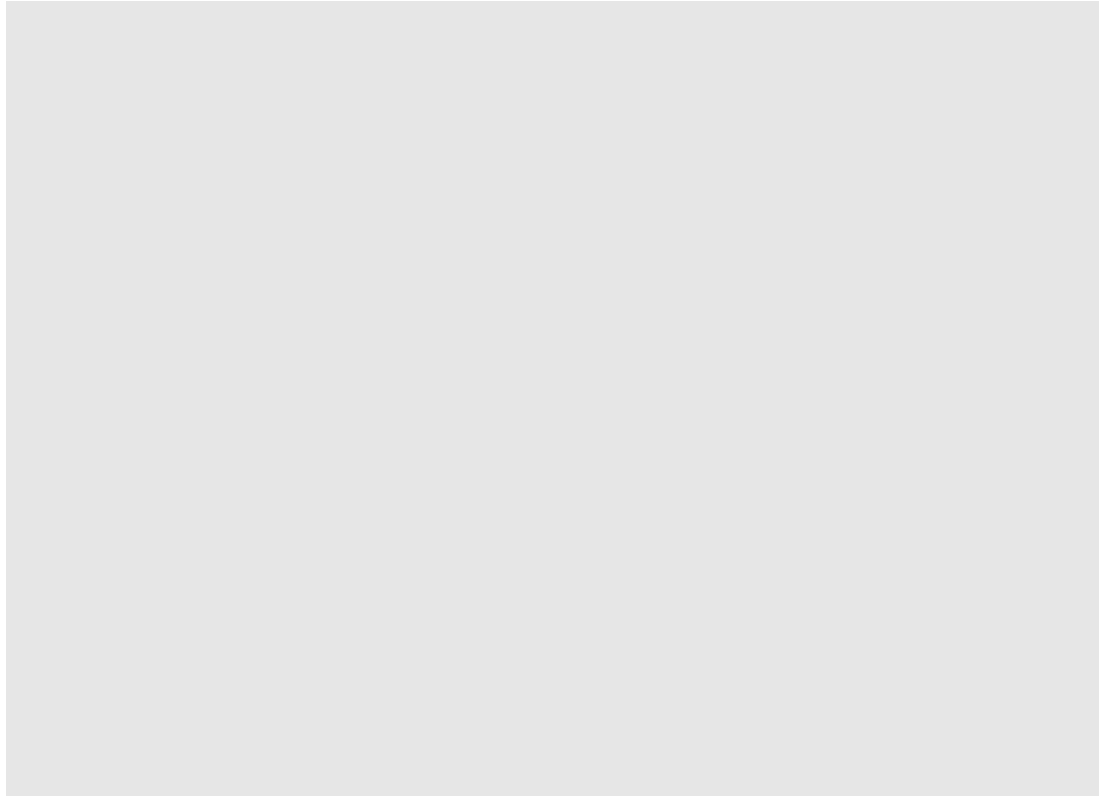
**Frene Ginwala,
President of
the Women's
Coalition, South
Africa**

"Women from the west sometimes ask me: Why are you working with the ANC (African National Congress) and not with the women's movement? I usually answer: Should women really fight just to be oppressed to the same extent as men? What do I mean by this? Women in South Africa have similar problems as women in the rest of the world regarding their economic and legal standing which is generally lower. But the special factor is that racism and exploitation, or Apartheid, are dominating their lives."



Even after the end of the conference there was still much to be discussed. From left to right: Anita Gradin, SWI President, in a conversation with Brigitte Unger-Soyka, Minister for Family, Women, Vocational training and Arts in the State of Baden-Württemberg, Christel Nickel-Mayer, FES, and Gisela Marx, moderator of the conference

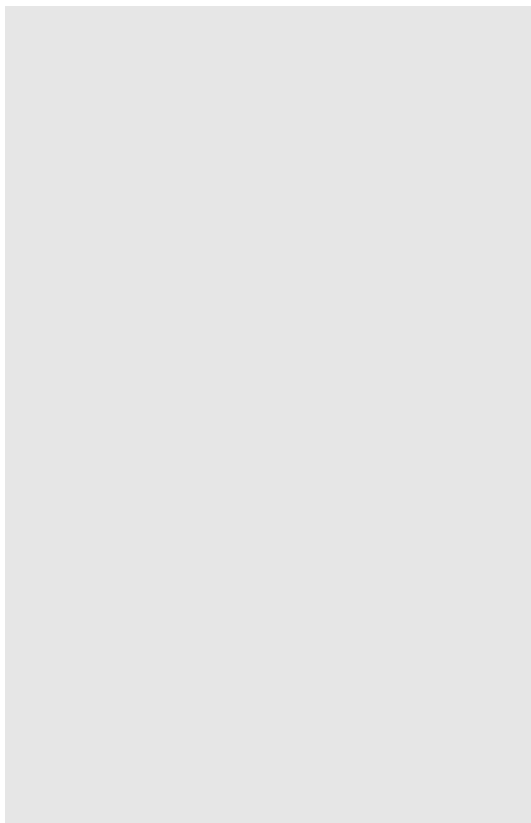
Women Shaping Democratic Change



Democratic change and social reform processes have become a global issue. They offer women new opportunities to claim new scope of action and to take over political positions. This was the result of an international workshop for which the Friedrich Ebert Foundation had invited experts from Africa, Asia and Latin America in October 1992.

All delegates described in illustrative terms how in many countries the face of society is shaped by women's organising capabilities, solidarity and social commitment. How women have come together in innumerable local and regional groups on a voluntary and democratic basis, mostly without government support. How women's self-help organisations have taken over important functions in meeting the basic needs of families and in the field of education and social welfare. And how these networks of mutual assistance have developed into social movements and how women have become the bearers of hope in the entire democratisation process.

A short break during the international conference "Women Shaping Democratic Change" – women made use of every minute to share their thoughts or study conference documents

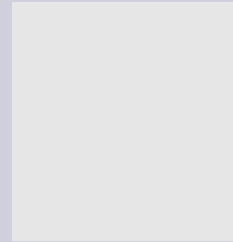


Results of an international conference

■ Women must continue in their efforts to be involved in decisionmaking at all levels. Only like this can they make and active contribution to the designing of a better and fairer world

■ Women have a different understanding of power. They understand the democratisation of a society in a wider sense than men do. Democracy must not be limited to politics but must include social and economic life as well as changing authority structures in the family

■ Exchanges of opinion among women from all over the world have shown over and over again that women's problems are not limited to a single country. It is therefore necessary to set up international women's networks, to exchange views on a continuous basis and to co-operate intensively.



**Dr. Maria Nzomo,
President of the
National Committee
for Women's Rights
in Kenya**

"During the International Women's Decade of the UN (1975 - 1985) Kenya's policy on women changed from total blindness to the recognition of the possibility that women might be an important factor in the country's development process. But after the end of the decade even that left behind only empty rhetoric and vague promises. This goes to show that, like at the time of the struggle for independence, women will yet again be forgotten about in the ongoing process of democratisation, unless they seize this opportunity and force people to change their minds completely. They must penetrate all institutions holding power and decision making authority."

Participants of the
conference "Women
Shaping Democratic
Change"

Example: Women's Policy in International Development Cooperation

Within the Foundation's international development cooperation activities, women's promotion schemes are intended as a contribution to improving the situation of women and strengthening their political position in the development process of their respective countries.

The International Women's Decade proclaimed by the United Nations 1975 - 1985 and the UN Women's conferences in Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi stirred up major public concern about the living conditions of women in Africa, Asia and Latin America and about their economic and social deprivation. Thanks to these initiatives the promotion of women is now seen as an important component of development policy. The idea is beginning to gain ground that an implementation of human rights and social justice is impossible without improving the situation of women.

Meanwhile much criticism has been heard with regard to past women's promotion policies. One such criticism was with regard to the fact that many programmes have focussed on a promotion of women in economic terms but forgot about changing the underlying structures which saddle women with major burdens but do not allow them a say in the political organisation of their societies.

Women are already contributing two-thirds of the work done in the entire world, they bear the main responsibility for food production and the upkeep of their families, and yet women incomes are only one-tenth of the total.

In its worldwide activities the Foundation tries to meet this criticism. It helps to improve not only the economic situation of women but also to strengthen their political power. Poor women, of course, wish to and have to satisfy their family's immediate need to eat first. In doing so, they lack the time and the knowledge needed for politics. In its wide range of consulting activities and training courses the Friedrich Ebert Foundation teaches women to organise themselves.

The goal of this assistance for self-help is to make women independent and to give them a greater influence. Women receive help in verbalising their own needs and improving their own situation.

Promotion of small business, an FES project in Lusaka, Zambia

Women participating
in a conference held
by the FES and the
Marie Schlei Asso-
ciation: "We Carry a
Heavy Burden"

What are the goals of women's promotion policies within the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's international development cooperation activities?

Political goals

- Improvement of public sensitivity for the specific situation of women in society,
- Promotion of the women's ability to organise and defend their own interest,
- Improvement of the legal position of women,
- Promotion of technical and leadership skills for political organisations.

Economic and social development

- Improvement of incomes and employment,
- Promotion of small businesses run by women,
- Promotion of technical and business skills,
- Strengthening of self-help organisations.

Trade unions

- Strengthening of women's organising skills,
- Improvement of qualification and career opportunities,
- Strengthening of regional cooperation between women in different trade unions.

Media

- Positive coverage of women's issues,
- Training and career development schemes for women in the media,
- Promotion of association structures for women in the media.

Example: Women's Projects in India

In India the Foundation has been operating a women's project ever since 1989 in cooperation with a number of non-governmental organisations and women's associations that are particularly involved in working for women in deprived parts of society. The situation of these women is marked by exploitation and deprivation, a lack of educational facilities and an insecure legal status. The Foundation's project tries to tackle the problem at several levels:

n The concept is to improve the living conditions of women working outside the recognised wage earning and employment areas, such as in agriculture, on markets or as house servants, by granting assistance for self-help.

enter "regular" banks which are reserved for the higher income brackets. Exorbitant interest rates charged by private money-lenders cast women into lifelong dependence. As a model for other women's organisations, the Foundation has set up a revolving funds based at one of its partner organisations in the Indian federal state of Bihar. This funds supports women not only with the establishment of income-earning economic activities, but also introduces them into the world of savings and credit business at the same time.

n Women in India so far have been only scarcely represented in the various societal institutions and therefore have very little influence on the

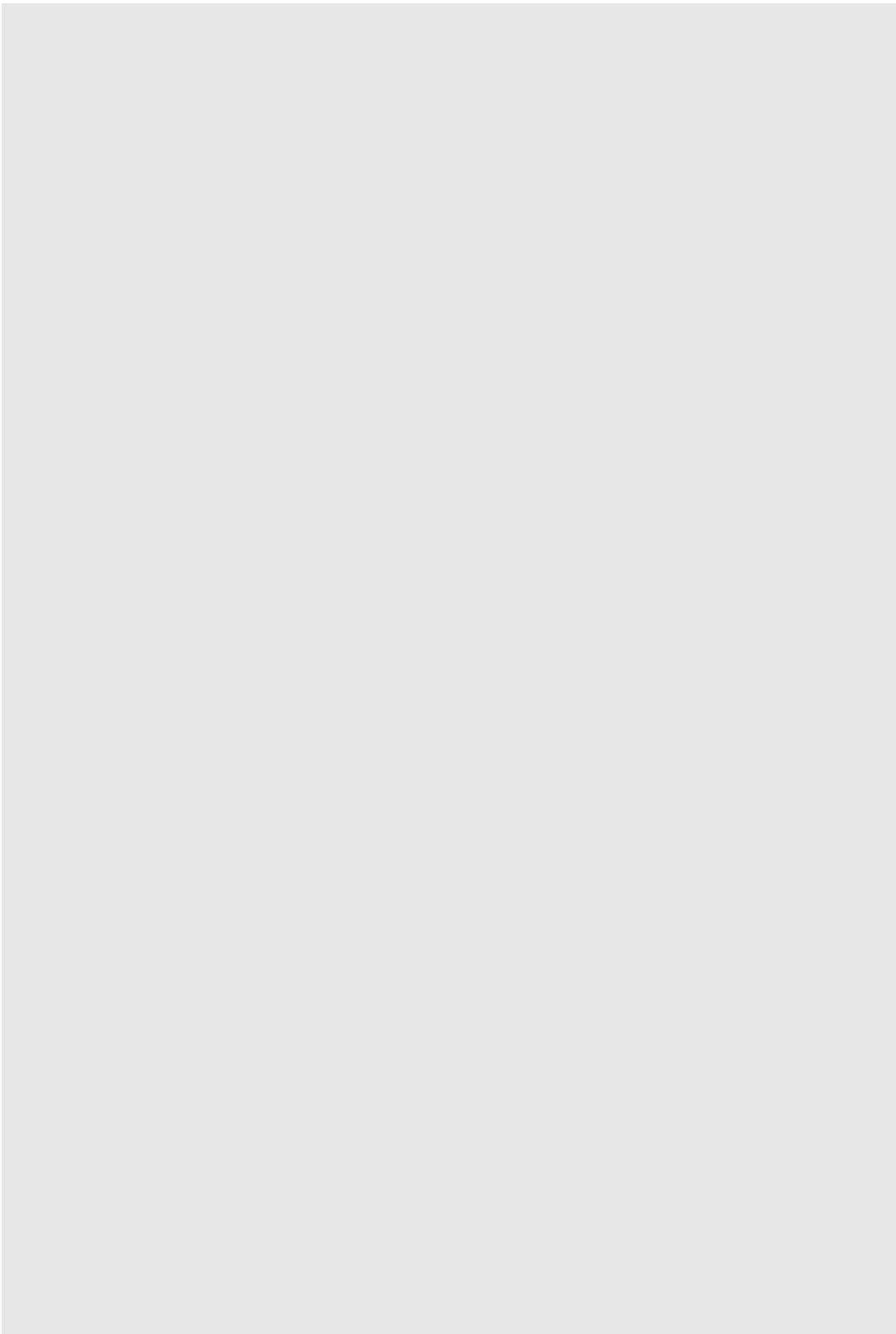
Regional and national caucuses improve the exchange of information and experience between women in India

This assistance is given in the form of technical and business advisory services granted by the Foundation's local women's organisation partners.

A further part of the plan is to open up credit facilities for women. Women who work as burden carriers, waste paper collectors, market vendors or cottage industry workers, and wish to start a small business of their own, usually have no capital to start with. They dare not

economic and political decisions that affect their lives. For this reason the Foundation provides funds for its partner organisations' training and career development schemes which may result in getting more women into political offices.

n Regional and national caucuses bringing together representatives of different women's organisations improve the exchange of information and experience and thus help strength-



**A Round-Table
on "The role of
women in politics"
organised by
the Centre for
Social Research
and the FES**

en the women's lobby. The project also includes the fostering of international contacts. In the framework of visiting programmes, representatives of Indian women's organisations are given an opportunity to speak to German women members of parliament, women's organisations, equal rights commissioners, and women de-

velopment specialists, they can visit women's workplaces, inform themselves on women's career development schemes, on topics like environmental and consumer protection, or formulate their interest in effective support at a European level.

Legal Assistance for Women – An Example from Ecuador

Ever since 1988 the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has been supporting CEPAM (Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer) in Ecuador. CEPAM is an independent women's organisation which has been operating for more than ten years in the field of giving legal advice to women in an urban environment. Its goal is to strengthen women's legal awareness and self esteem. The main headquarters of

CEPAM is located in Quito. A second advisory office started to operate two years ago in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city. It is planned to extend these activities to other cities, too.

Examples

The members of the CEPAM legal advisor's team offer assistance for many individuals turning to the law. Their main fields of activity:

**"Barefoot lawyers"
in Ecuador advising
women in everyday
conflict situations**

Alimony, divorce, child custody, and bodily assault against women and girls.

Male violence is a sad reality for many women and children in Ecuador as, in fact, in other places in the world, too. In most cases women seek to avoid the violence or to put up with it. There is no way to report their husbands to the police. There is no law to protect married women from domestic violence. Many women have undergone humiliating experiences with police and legal authorities. The experience of not being taken seriously with their problems in a conflict situation leads them into a defensive attitude. They offer no resistance and react with complete withdrawal. To counteract this, CEPAM has introduced its counselling scheme called "Your rights in your hands" with which it intends to restore women's self confidence. A refuge for battered women was set up where women can find safe shelter, assistance and care for their children. The shelter has its own fruit orchards and vegetable gardens to make women self sufficient. There are plans for building a bakery to provide bread not only for the resident women's needs but also supplying bread for school breakfasts. A concept supporting women in organising their own lives. Also, CEPAM trains its own legal advisers, who pass on their knowledge in their city neighbourhoods and who can assist women or girls seeking help and advice in bringing a charge against men, in cases of alimony and custody claims, in cases of divorce, sexual abuse or simply with the formal necessities regarding the making out of personal documents. They accompany their clients to local authorities, courts or the police, and they act as mediators in conflict situations.

The range of services offered by CEPAM has grown in proportion to women's needs. CEPAM also advises women who wish to open a village shop, plan to take out a loan or wish to organise a child day care centre.

In addition, a health advisory service was set up. It comprises preventive screening of women and children, advising pregnant women and mothers, and it includes courses in sexual education and family planning. There is also a dietary information service on the basis of cheap local products. On the Quito wholesale market, CEPAM operates a purchasing centre which buys in bulk staple foods, hardware and school stationery for the village shops and sells these to the shops on credit.

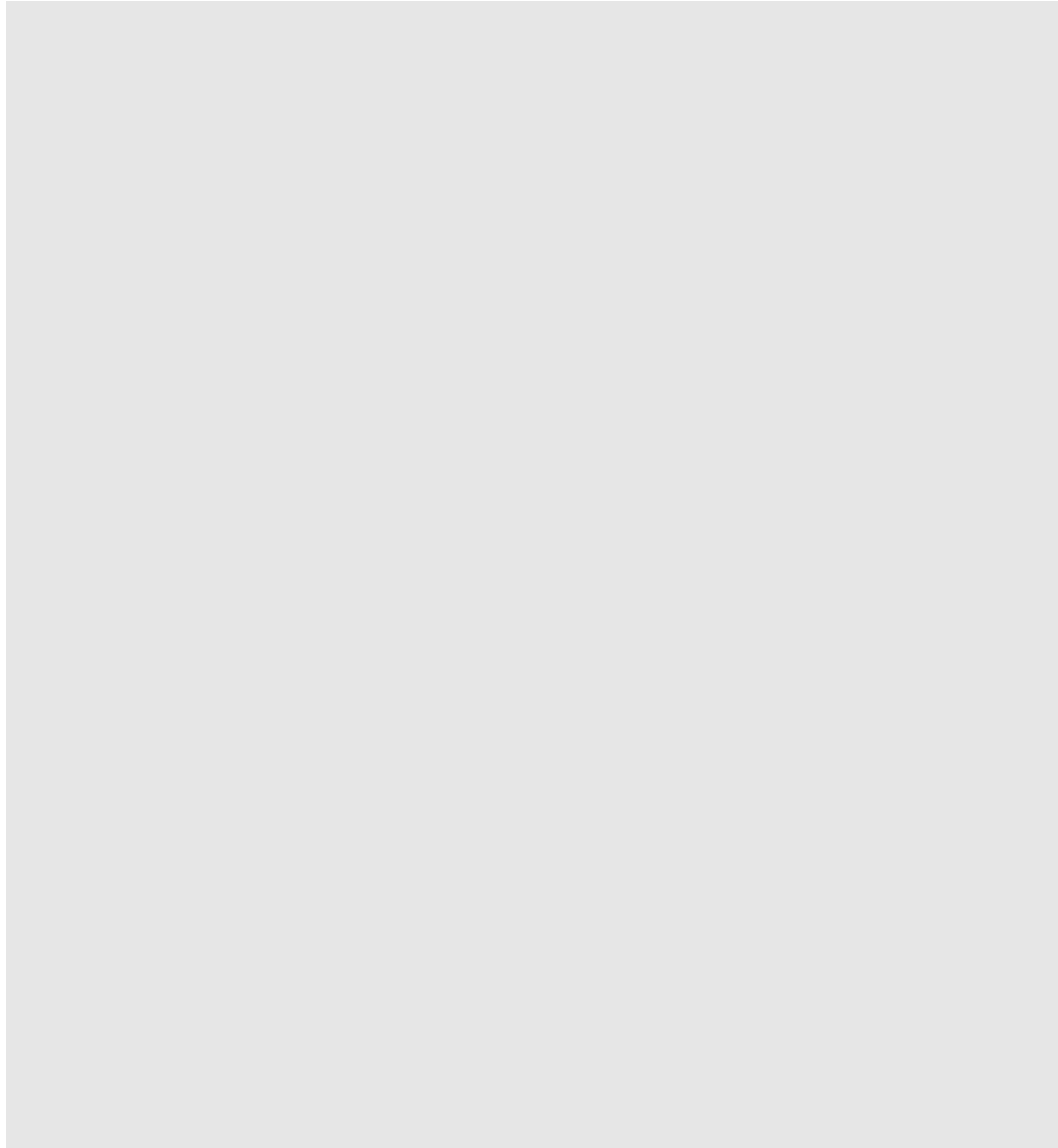
In order to reach as many people as possible, CEPAM runs an intensive information and education campaign.

CEPAM, for instance, produces its own radio programme and has a regular half page article in the Sunday supplement of the most widespread daily paper "El Comercio" which reaches about 700,000 readers throughout the country.

Advising and supporting women and women's groups and country wide education programmes run by CEPAM are of great importance. Often these programmes initiate a new awareness in women, as they begin to realise that they have rights of their own and know how to use them.

They strengthen women's self esteem, give hands-on assistance in difficult spells in life, and encourage women to continue to assert their rights in future.

Example: Women and Trade Unions in Latin America



Supporting women's interests through strong and competent trade unions is one of the principles of a democratic development. For this reason to cooperate with trade unions, to strengthen their economic and socio-political role is the oldest and most traditional activity of the Foundation. In the trade union movements of developing countries such as Latin America and the Caribbean, men hold all the key positions. Women find little support for their interests. Often action for women is seen as an

unnecessary duty, or, at best, as a fad. In many countries there is a lack of legal provisions that secure women's jobs for the duration of holding a union office, which is an obstacle to the active union commitment of women.

For this reason the Foundation enhances women participation both in terms of union membership and at all leadership levels. This is an effective way to strengthen the political influence of women and to foster a new self perception of women and their role and their rights in society.

In southern Latin America the Foundation, for several years now, has supported the establishment of an international women's forum for women trade unionists. Regular meetings are held for women from the executive boards of federations and individual trade unions from Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. They consult on problems of women membership in trade unions, their low presence at the leadership level and the lack of a proper representation of women's interests in collective bargaining. Furthermore, they offered a first overall analysis of the role of women in their countries' trade unions for which more than a thousand women were interviewed. Moreover, the Foundation cooperates directly with national women's organisations in many individual countries.

Argentina

- Support of women from different trade unions who have joined together and set up their own forum in 1989;
- Educational activities for women trade unionists;
- Support of women's departments within the trade unions.

Barbados

- Seminars for women trade unionists in the public service and in the postal union,
- Funding a first publication of women's union activities called „The Caribbean Women's Voice“.

Brasil

- Support of women in the trade union federation CUT and in the PT (Labour Party) by helping with the introduction of the 30 % women's quota.

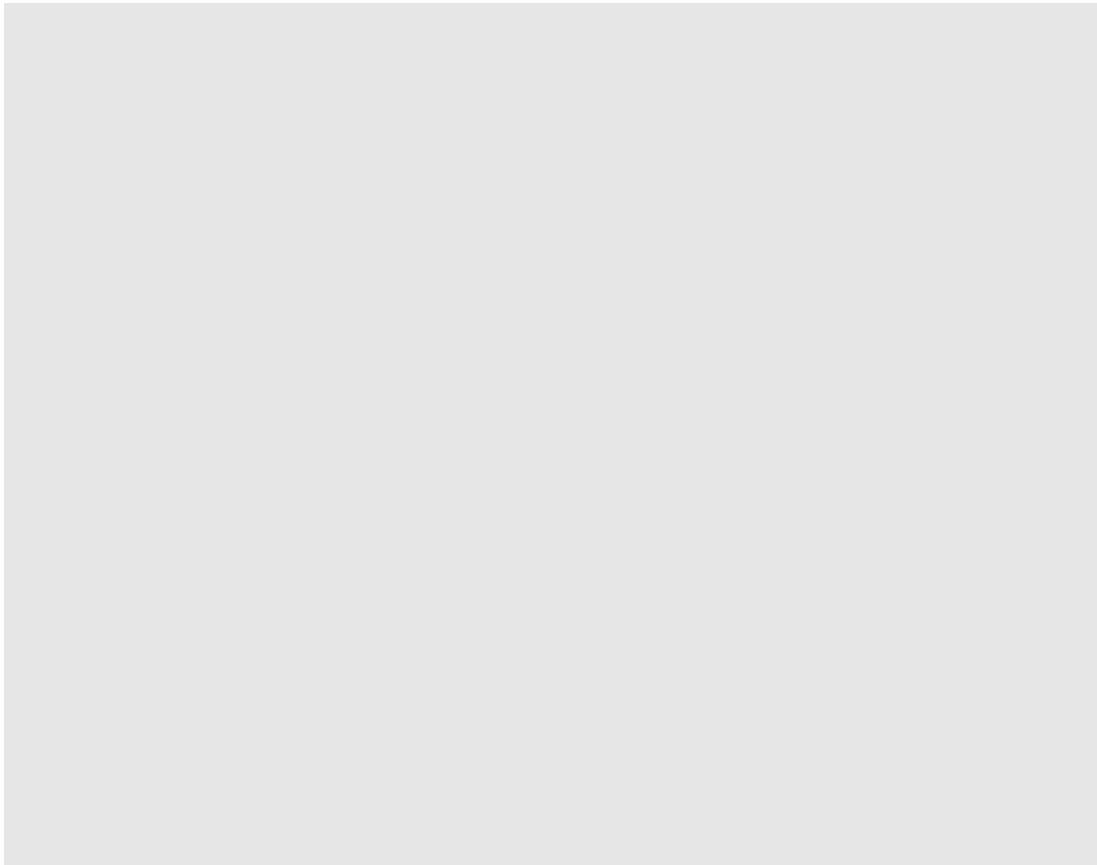
Mexico

- Support of women's groups in the formulation of their demands in view of the signing of a free trade agreement between the US, Canada and Mexico.

Uruguay

- Enhancement of the "Coordinadora", a group of women from trade unions and parties engaged in political and social educational work in poor areas in the cities and in rural areas.

Example: Media Projects in Africa



**African women
are to get a voice
of their own in
their media**

For more than two decades the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, through its international activities, has been contributing to the building of democratic and professional media structures in developing countries. Women participation in these projects is receiving special support.

Zimbabwe

The over sixty radio "Listeners' Clubs" in Zimbabwe are nearly all run by women. They produce their own radio programme in the rural region which is then broadcast centrally by "Radio 4", a channel run under the roof of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation which is on the air from Monday to Friday from morning till late at night. The station broadcasts information and educational programmes in English and in the seven most important national languages. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation equipped four studios for Radio 4, bought mobile transmission units, made rooms and

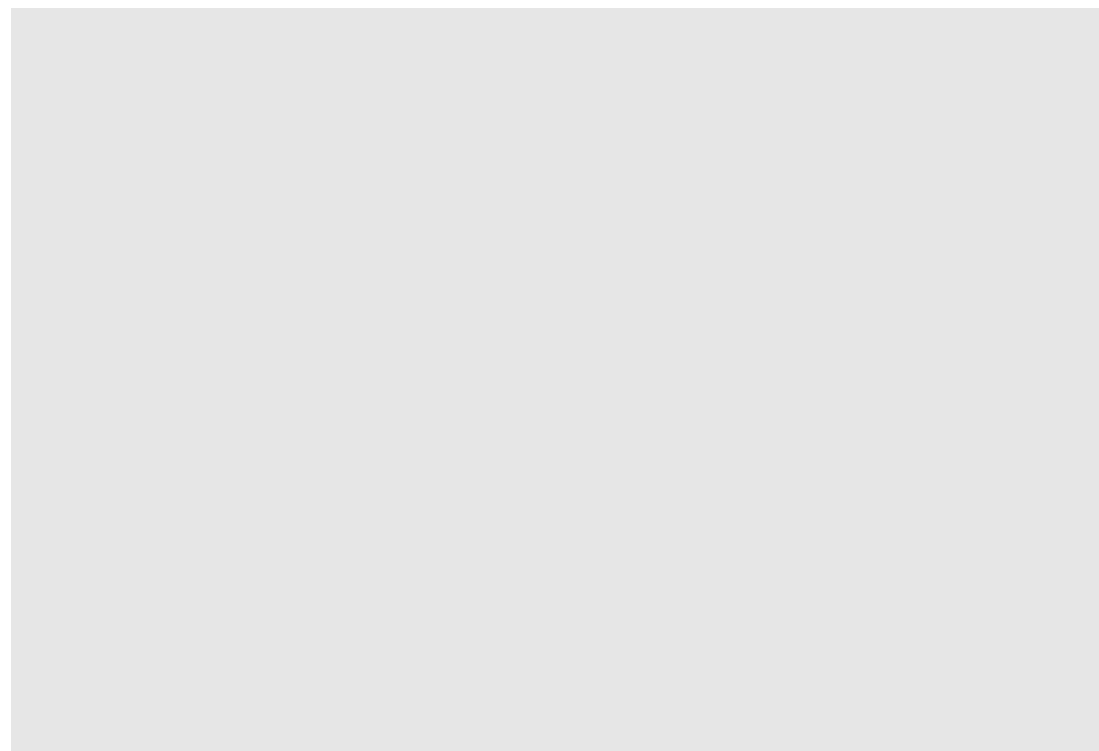
experts available, took over the wage bill and trained the people.

The women in the "Listeners' Clubs" were given radio recorders and were trained to produce their own broadcastings.

Mozambique

In Mozambique the Foundation funds a daily radio programme for the rural population which is heard primarily by women listeners. It is broadcast by the Mozambiquan state broadcasting station in the framework of the CODER project (Comunicação para o Desenvolvimento Rural – Communication for Rural Development). The programme is a great success. One of the reasons is certainly the fact that this programme so far has not been broadcast in Portuguese but in the four main national languages. This means that for the majority of women in rural areas who are non-Portuguese speaking, a facility has been created to inform the public about their

**Radio recordings for
CODER in a village
in Mozambique**



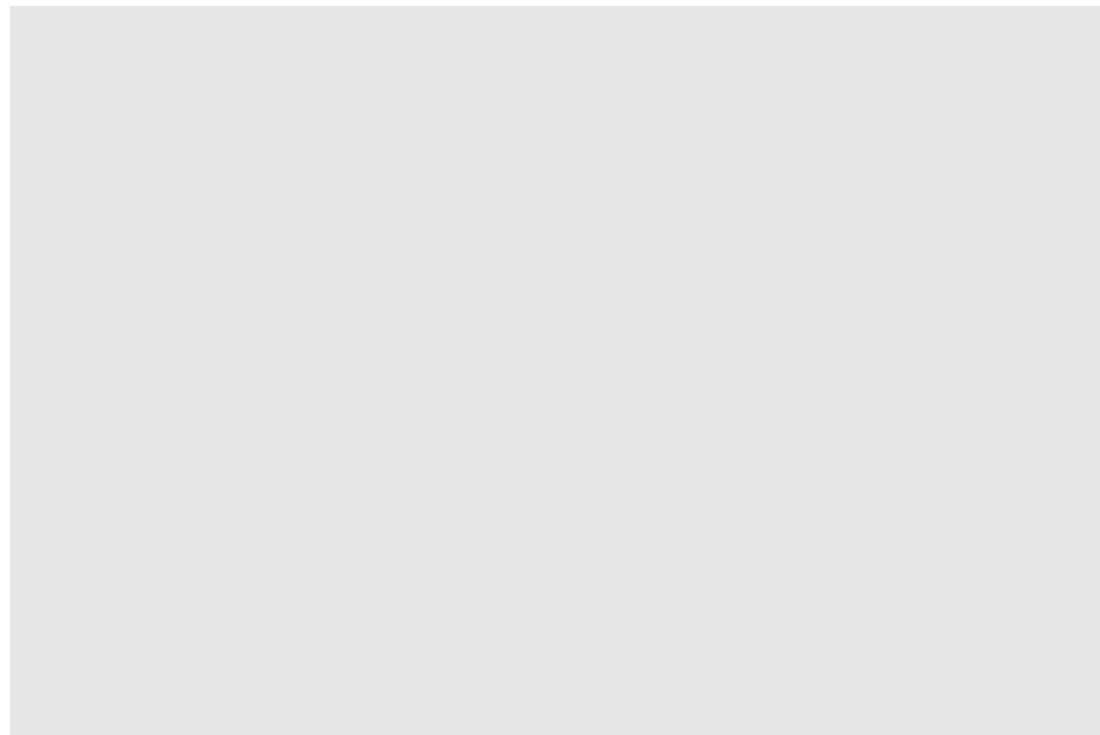
needs and problems. Moreover, radio broadcasts are the only possibility for many people in this war-torn country to speak a message into a microphone to tell their families where they are. The Foundation, in the framework of this project, offers technical assistance and trains radio broadcasting specialists for rural programmes.

African Media Cooperation

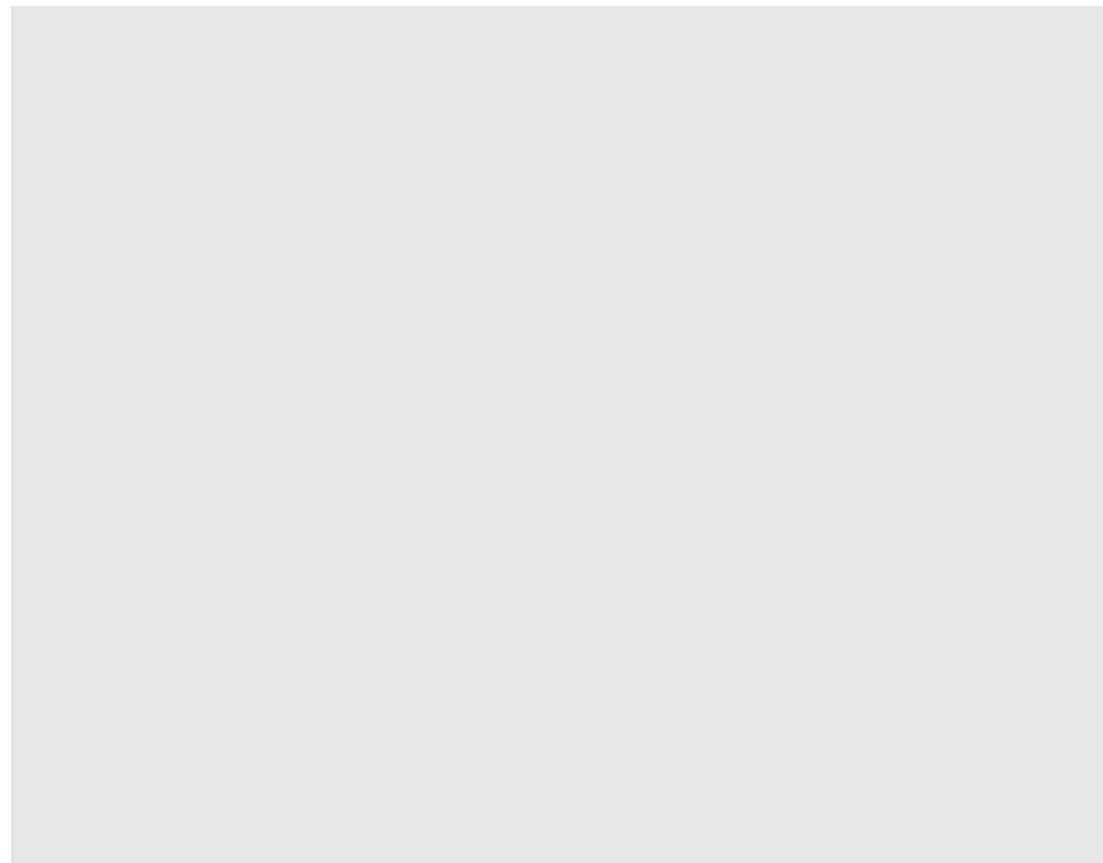
Together with the African Council on Communication Education (ACCE), the regional African research and documentation centre for media

affairs, the Foundation holds seminars in a variety of African states such as Cameroon, Zimbabwe and Kenya. These workshops and seminars are to strengthen women participation in the media and media education programmes. In Ghana, consulting programmes were carried out to improve career opportunities of women in the media. In this case the Foundation cooperated with the African women media association ASWIM (African Society of Women in Media).

**A Listeners' Club:
Rural women
practising the
"Two-way-
communication"**



Women's Studies at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation



Since 1989 the department Labour and Social Studies of our Foundation has dedicated a substantial part of its work to women's studies. But research into women's issues has a much longer tradition at the Foundation.

Some research done in past decades was on

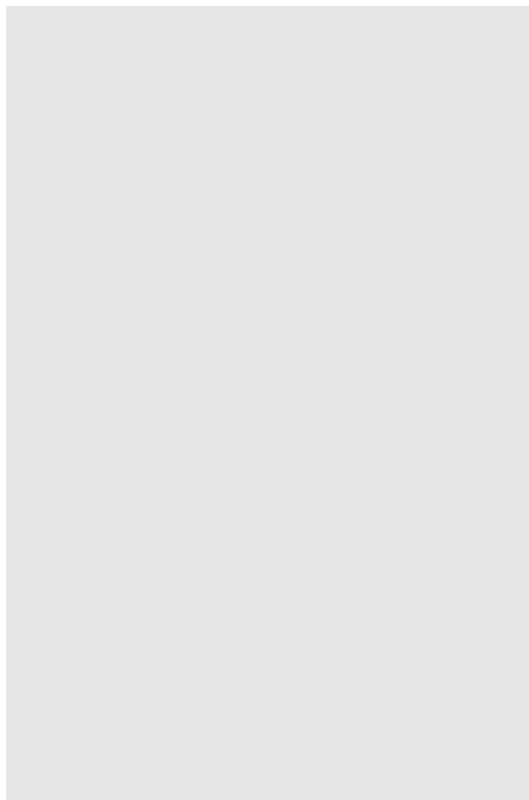
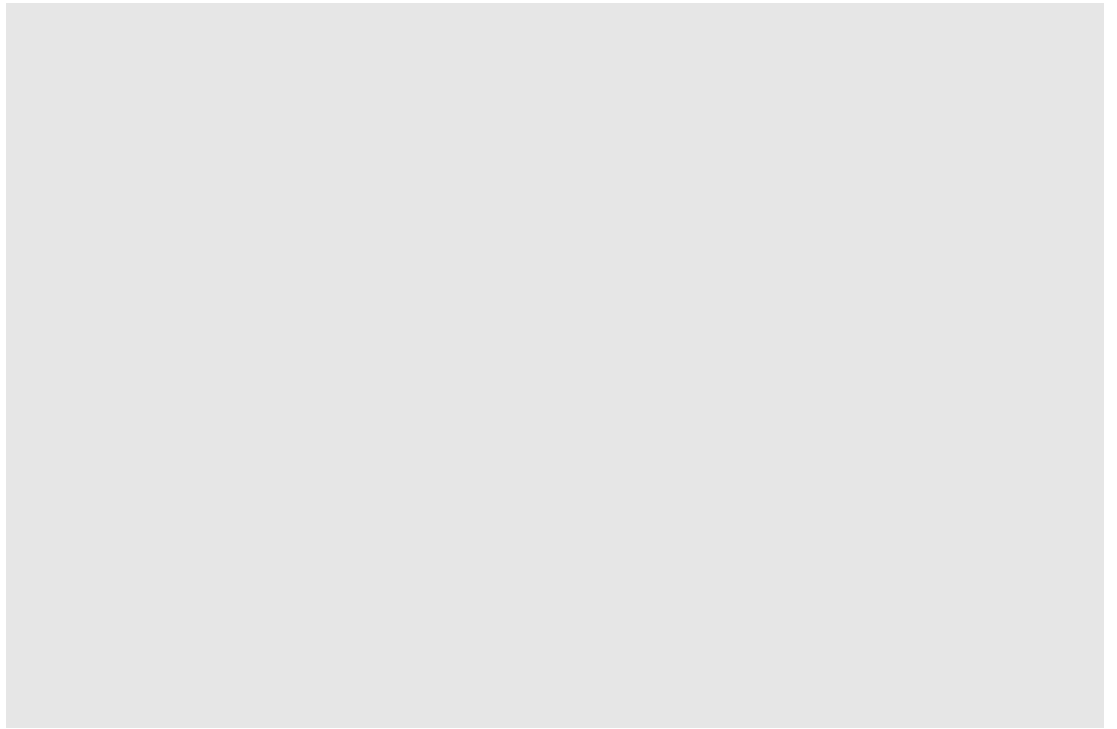
- Women and vocational training in manual industrial and technical skills,
- Women's career promotion in the private sector,
- Changes in women's office workplaces,
- Women in unpaid social work,
- The situation of women in cooperatives and alternative business,
- The impact of new technology on the lives and work of women.

Example: Re-entering a career

An important research issue today is the conditions for a re-entry of women into a career, either following their family phase, or following a period of unemployment, or after any other interruption. A special study group has been dealing with this issue for 13 years now. Experts from politics, administration and academic research meet on a regular basis to exchange views on the theory and practice of specific qualification measures. Thanks to this continuous work it was possible to take an influence on the legal framework such as the Act on Work Promotion.

Example: Reconciling a job and a family

Why is it still the women who are more tied down than men once the first child has been born? Why is it the women who adjust to circumstances and take over child care responsibilities, even happily or so it seems? And this although working in a job was the normal thing



for them, and although they were well trained and their jobs were similarly interesting as those of their male partners.

A research project of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation tried to study this over a period of more than two years, based on parent interviews. The results show that while the traditional distribution of responsibilities is questioned by many, parents who wish to implement a fairer way of sharing the workload run into considerable problems. The study gives some important proposals for concrete political demands for a new, different and better family model.

Women's studies in the Friedrich Ebert Foundation focus on

- down-to-earth research,
- quick reaction to current women's issues,
- cooperation with women from trade unions and politics,
- working out proposals for action and perspectives.

Scholarship Fund

Former Scholarship Holders Remember

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation understands its scholarship programme as a form of individual support given to students with extraordinary gifts and a high level of commitment to social matters, who regard their university education not only as a way to start a successful career but also as an obligation to state and society.

The share of women scholarship holders has clearly risen over the past few years. It now amounts to

■ 39.1 % of undergraduate scholarships, which roughly corresponds to the proportion of women in German universities,

■ 37.6 % of post-graduate scholarships, which is above the proportion of women candidates for a doctorate in German universities,

■ 30 % of scholarships for foreign students.

Dr. Sabine Rollberg

ARD Correspondent in Paris

What would have become of my life without the Friedrich Ebert Foundation?

I would not, perhaps, have ended up in the gutter, but perhaps at the theatre where I spent my childhood, dreaming away in the wings, as my parents earned their living on stage. A stage career which was more than the obvious thing for me to opt for was successfully prevented by the Foundation in the shape of two of its scholars who took the actors' child along to a barbecue at the Schöenberg where the Foundation's eloquent contact professor, Horst Ehmke, was roasting an ox with his Freiburg students some time in the sixties.

I received my political socialisation not at the stage of nursing at my mother's breast but much later, drinking wine from the Baden region. At any rate it seemed very attractive to become a scholar of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. So what was more logical than to apply?

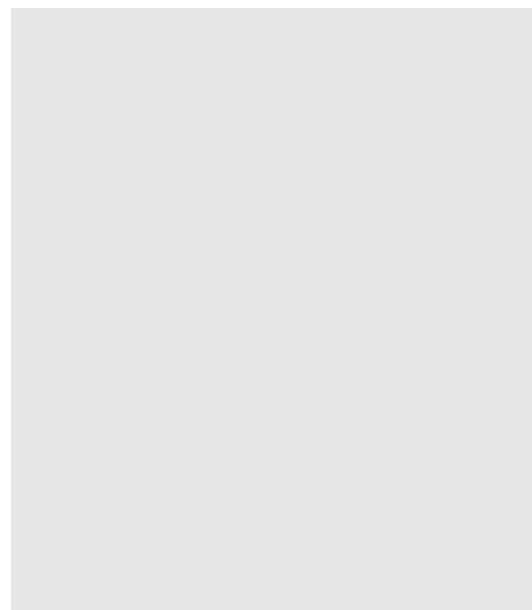
On my way to the selection seminar I had been feverishly reading Susanne Miller's "Concise

History of the SPD" to make sure I was ready for any questions regarding the life of Friedrich Ebert. But none of the terrifying distinguished members of the Foundation had any interest in the past, but rather wanted to find out what kind of a future I had in mind for myself. And didn't I see a sign of relief in their eyes when I said: I'd like to be a journalist.

I recollect not so much the subjects of the seminar but the company of my fellow scholars, walks in the surrounding hills, and some heavy nocturnal discussion between Palestinians and Israelis, Greeks and Turks. These talks aroused my interest for matters of the Third World. Later, when I became a foreign affairs editor at the WDR, I tried to turn this interest into programmes.

Last year, after I had become ARD's correspondent in Paris, I joined Danielle Mitterrand on her trip to the Kurd part of Iraq. One of her hosts flung his arms around my neck as he recognised me as his former fellow scholar.

Having been born on a Sunday I have always been a lucky person so far. One such stroke of luck was the privilege to be accepted by the Foundation. In fact, I was accepted twice, because the Foundation decided to give me a scholarship for my doctorate as well. I found a lot of friends and received a lot of education. To me, Friedrich Ebert was a lucky number, and it all started with an ox at the Schönberg.



Annerose Steinke

Head of Administration,
Sony Berlin GmbH

"Can women do as many things as men? All you need to do is think of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Fred Astaire is celebrated as a great dancer, but Ginger Rogers could do all the things he did. Only she could do them backwards and in high heeled shoes."

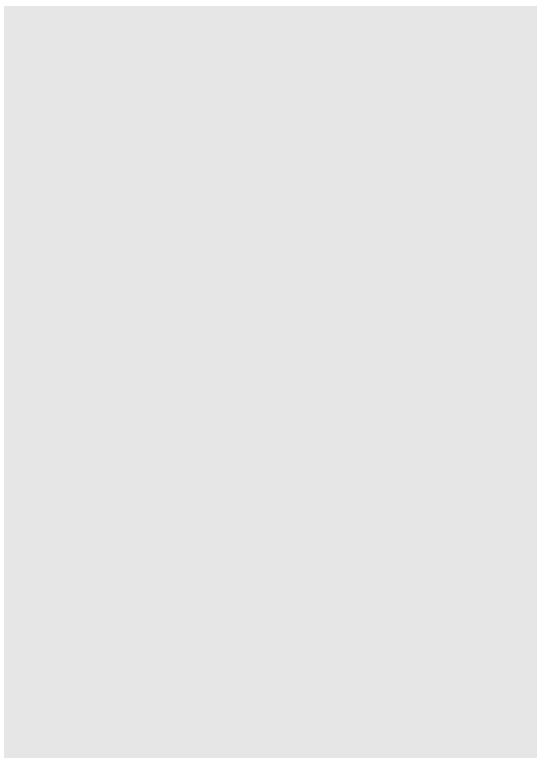
This is taken from my favourite book by Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer. It to some extent describes my experience in life so far. I had to fight hard for my confidence into my own abilities, and I learnt that swimming in cold water can be quite a turn-on.

At 16 I was politicised like many others of my generation by the vote of no confidence against Willy Brandt. It was clear at the time what I wanted to be in life: a teacher for history and English. I went to Berlin for my studies, joined a university group of the Young Socialists and began to get engaged in the University's self-government bodies. It was via this political work that I came to know my husband.

With this large bulk of different activities my courses might have gone down the drain. But maybe I learnt sooner than others how to structure my time and how to distinguish between important things and unimportant ones. The fact that I was financially independent is due to my scholarship with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation which I held at the time. Without this scholarship I would hardly have managed to finish my studies let alone get involved in any political activities.

The fact that I had not "only" followed my courses but also gained a hard and fast belief in my own capabilities through my political work helped me a great deal when, at the end of my final year, I found that history teachers were not needed at that time. I re-oriented myself and immediately found a post in adult education. From 1983 to 1986, I worked as an academic staff member at the August Bebel Institute in Berlin. After this I changed over to the economic department of the American Embassy in Berlin. In 1990, I became junior executive assistant and later on branch head of the Berlin Chamber of Architecture.

Since 1992, I have been the head of administration of Sony Berlin, a company that will carry out the construction of the German and European headquarters on Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. In an international team I am in charge of personnel, all internal management, as well as press and public relations.



Then, all of a sudden, German unification came on the agenda. This meant contributing to many meaningful presidential speeches. The invaluable experience I had gained, however, inspired my wish to not merely think about the growing together of east and west but to participate personally in its implementation. This wish was soon to be fulfilled. Since 1991 I have been working as the press spokeswoman of the new Federal State of Brandenburg in Bonn.

Roswitha Bourguignon

Press spokeswoman
of the State of Brandenburg in Bonn

It was Susanne Miller, the author of the “History of German Social Democracy” who, in 1979, after I had majored in the subjects of political science and modern history at Bonn University, asked me what kind of a professional career I had in mind. Of course I was hoping for a job in academic research. I had not envisaged a long career ladder.

As a scholarship holder of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation I started off with a two-year research project on European integration. I was able to use its results in 1982 when I joined the scientific staff of the Institute of European Policy in Bonn. After four year’s research I received the surprising offer to become a speech writer for the Federal President, Richard von Weizsäcker. Although this meant leaving the world of academic research, the opportunity to work for a personality who has built such a convincing image of the Federal Republic of Germany at home and abroad was too attractive to miss. In addition there was my curiosity as to what it might be like to work in a team to which, so far, only men had been given access. What followed was four years full of learning.

Publications

(Selection):

■ **Nach der Vereinigung Deutschlands: Frauen fordern ihr Recht**
(January 1991)

■ **Frauen in den neuen Bundesländern – Rückzug in die Familie oder Aufbruch zur Gleichstellung in Beruf und Familie?**
(March 1991)

■ **Kommunale Gleichstellungspolitik in den neuen Bundesländern: Das Beispiel des Landes Brandenburg**
(July 1991)

■ **Mehr Rechte für Frauen in einer neuen Verfassung**
(December 1991)

■ **Frauen in der Privatwirtschaft im Land Brandenburg**
(August 1992)

■ **Frauen im Lebensraum Stadt: Wohnungs- und Städtebau aus Frauenperspektive**
(December 1992)

■ **Frauen in der Landwirtschaft und im ländlichen Raum in Brandenburg**
(November 1992)

■ **Frauenpolitik und aktuelle verfassungspolitische Fragen**
(August 1992)

■ **Für eine humane Gestaltung der Nachtarbeit für Frauen und Männer**
(July 1992)

■ **Alleinerziehende in den neuen Bundesländern. Immer noch eine Lebensform wie jede andere?**
(1993)

International

■ **Textilarbeiterinnen fordern Gerechtigkeit: Zur Lage der Textil- und Bekleidungsindustrie in Ländern des Südens, Series "Entwicklungspolitik"**
(1992)

■ **Women Shaping Democratic Change Documentation of a Workshop in the Friedrich Ebert Foundation**
(1992)

■ **Brigitte Deja-Löhlhöffel: Frauen in Europa: Chancen und Defizite in einem sich vergrößernden Europa, Series "Eurokolleg"**
(1992)

Research

■ **Vom gesellschaftlichen Umgang mit den Qualifikationen von Frauen, Series "Arbeit und Soziales"**
(1992)

■ **Zur Aufhebung des Eheprivilegs im Grundgesetz, Series "Arbeit und Soziales"**
(1992)

■ **Gisela Notz: Du bist als Frau um einiges mehr gebunden als der Mann. Die Auswirkungen der Geburt des ersten Kindes auf die Lebensplanung von Müttern und Vätern**
(1991)

■ **Zur Zukunft der Hausarbeit, Series "Arbeit und Soziales"**
March 1993