

EMPOWERING Female Graduates Win Azeri Municipal Elections

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Twelve young women who took part in an 18-month long EC-funded rural leadership project in Azerbaijan were elected to municipal posts during the 2010 municipal elections.

The Leadership School for Young Women was established in five rural areas of Azerbaijan and 125 young women selected for training in the theory and practical skills of leadership. All participants were local residents and had to be involved in various types of social and political activity to qualify, willing to put the knowledge and skills acquired into practice to create better conditions in their local community.

Among them were representatives of local women groups, youth and human rights organizations and other NGOs, youth sections of political parties, local authorities, municipalities, employees of state entities, trade-unions, teachers, national and cultural associations, and journalists.

With the aim of promoting their roles in public and civic life at local, regional and national levels, the women had access to an experienced team of trainers, experts and consultants as well as training materials and equipment.

As well as being taught to problem solve and be able to deal with a broad range of development and management activities, the women left the Leadership School prepared to make a practical contribution to democratic reform. They're also likely to become active advocates of women's rights within a strong regional network of young political and public female leaders.

The Leadership School is expected to develop into a permanent autonomous educational institution with branches in different regions of Azerbaijan.