



Minister!
Will you budget
for the creation
of an affordable
society for all?

Minister!
Will you budget
to build
women's
participation
in society?



National Women's
Council of Ireland
Comhairle Náisiúnta
na mBan in Éirinn

www.nwci.ie

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWARD

As I take on the role of Chairperson of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi). I am very aware of the great honour given to me by the Affiliates to follow in the exceptional footsteps of my predecessors. I am immensely proud to undertake this role and look forward to the challenges ahead, building on the work of those who have gone before me.



2004 has been a very active year for the NWCi with many key events impacting on the progression of our Strategic Goals.

The EU Presidency in January 2004, offered opportunities to voice our concerns and participate in the debate at EU level on the progression of equality for women within the European Union.

'A Women's Manifesto: Making Women's Voices Heard' was launched on International Women's Day in March, outlining the demands of the NWCi on key equality issues for women in the local and European elections. This document has been distributed to all political parties to inform their thinking when drawing up policies. The Manifesto was also very well received by the general public who used the document to interact with election candidates in the lead-up to the elections in June.

Our most memorable achievement in 2004 was our public campaign to challenge the Bank of Ireland (BoI) on their financial support, in the form of a loan, to Remnant Media, a UK company, who wished to purchase

'Fantasy Publications'; the producers of various 'soft porn' magazines. The NWCi was joined by a number of other groups in voicing concern and disgust at BoI's association with this company. We threatened, in no uncertain terms, to close our bank account with BoI if they did not withdraw from this arrangement. The Bank subsequently withdrew its support as a direct result of the negative media publicity that they received. This was a notable success for the NWCi in raising public awareness that pornography is a violation of human rights and contributes to the perception of women as lesser citizens than men.

The Referendum on Citizenship took place in June. After a Consultation Process with our Affiliates, it was agreed that the Council should put forward a 'No Vote' in the Referendum. We embarked on an energetic public 'Vote No' campaign to highlight the negative effect that the Referendum, if passed, would have on women and children. We also produced an Information Leaflet, which was publicly distributed in its thousands around the country, to coincide with the campaign. Sadly, as we all know, the Referendum was passed. We must now work closely with vulnerable

groups to ensure that legislation to enact the change in citizenship rights is equitable and fair and does not disadvantage them unnecessarily.

The “In From the Margin” (IFM) project, funded under the Equality for Women Measure came to a conclusion during 2004, culminating in the publication: “Women Creating Change” and the launch of this publication at the NWCI National Conference in Croke Park, Dublin in October. The IFM project, which ran for three years (2002 – 2004), was a huge success reaching out to women throughout Ireland who are experiencing many forms of discrimination and disadvantage. The project was also successful in building the capacity of the NWCI to more effectively highlight and combat the inequalities that women experience. The key areas of inequality that IFM focussed on were poverty, anti-racism and health. The publication, as well as presenting an overview of IFM over its three-year duration, outlined a series of policy goals to address these inequalities.

The Pre-Budget Submission for Budget 2005, focused on reducing poverty and inequality for women in the areas of health, economic independence, participation in society and racism. It is disappointing that government priorities lie in other areas and so little advancement has been made on the areas of persistent discrimination for women. The reality is that women still predominantly carry out caring work, the gender pay gap is some 17% and violence against women is a daily occurrence. In focusing on and highlighting these issues in our pre-budget submission, the NWCI raised awareness among policy makers and society in general.

The Motions brought to the 2004 AGM emphasised the strong feelings of Affiliates on the need for proper legislative reform in the area of reproductive rights for women. This is an issue which must be urgently addressed and one which the NWCI will actively pursue.

The Council’s Membership Audit; ‘ Having Your Say’ was carried out towards the end of 2004. We wished to develop a general picture of our Affiliate base; the issues they are working on, their views of the NWCI and their interaction with us. The results of the audit have presented the

Council with many challenges and opportunities to continue to build a strong and effective women’s organisation which reflects the diversity of our Affiliate base and of Irish society as a whole.

The results of the audit and the conclusions drawn will feed into and inform the Strategic Review, which will take place in 2005. The review of the organisation will investigate the role of the Council; its functions and structure. We need you, the Affiliates, to participate in this review to help shape the future direction of the work of the Council - your Council.

The NWCI are conducting an extensive research project on the provision of a publicly funded childcare system, which will be published at the end of Summer 2005. This will provide us with a strong lobbying tool enabling us to present a strong case to government for much-needed reform in this area.

There are many challenges ahead for 2005 for the women’s sector in Ireland – the critical areas will be the development and agreement of the National Women’s Strategy and the negotiations for a new social partnership agreement.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Director and staff of the NWCI and thank them for their hard work and invaluable contribution to the advancement of the position of women in Irish Society. I would also like to thank the Executive Board for their commitment during the year. Special thanks to the Affiliates for their support in attending the Member’s Meetings and contributing to the debate on the Citizenship Referendum and other events throughout 2004. I look forward to working with you all in bringing the organisation through the challenges ahead.

Thérèse Murphy
Chairperson

DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Women's lives have changed for the better in Ireland since the establishment of the NWCI in 1973, of this there can be little doubt. Nevertheless, areas of persistent inequality remain. Men continue to dominate all our public institutions, our cultural, social, economic and legal infrastructures.



Gender remains a basic structuring principle of the labour market, placing women in a disadvantaged economic position. Women are still relatively absent from formal politics and local government decision-making structures, marginalising the concerns and interests of women as citizens; and unequal power relations across the spectrum from the public domain to the privacy of the home place women in a subordinate position to men. It remains critically important for the NWCI to work towards a feminist vision of women's equality, since the balance sheet of change for women is a story of confused, uneven, erratic and often reversible changes through which many women have gained but many have also lost. The strategic focus of our programme of work over the past twelve months is framed within four spheres of equality, which reflect our feminist analysis, and our commitment to achieving affective, political, economic, social and cultural outcomes that would make a real difference to all women's lives in Ireland.

The NWCI is a dynamic organisation that has continued through a process of growth and change to meet both internal and external challenges. Both Executive Board and staff are committed to a proper, healthy and strong working partnership as we go about the regular business of the organisation.

A professional staff team has ensured a continuity of focus on strategic outcomes through a coherent work programme over the life of our current strategic plan, as is evident in this Annual Report. Over the past year we have continued to support the development of open, participative and constructive relationships with our Affiliates, through members meetings, seminars, our national conference and working groups that encourage dialogue and a critical exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives.

There have been changes in the way we work as a staff team in the NWCI during 2004. We now organise ourselves around task groups, replacing the previous role based teams, with the intention of creating structures that are flexible and adaptive, that enable rather than constrain, and that draw on the creativity and talents of the entire staff team.

2004 has been both a challenging and rewarding year, and as Director I should like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone, the staff, members of the Executive Board and Affiliates, for their support, their encouragement and for their commitment to bringing about positive changes to women's lives in Ireland.

Joanna McMinn, Director

About the NWCI

The National Women's Council of Ireland, Comhairle Náisiúnta na mBan in Éirinn, is the national representative organisation for women and women's groups in Ireland. We are working to make Ireland a better place for women; to create a society where women participate equally in all aspects of social, cultural, economic and political life.

Founded in 1973 as the 'Council for the Status of Women', the role of the NWCI has expanded and changed over the last 30 years. The NWCI uses its role as a non-governmental organisation to address many complex, and often controversial, issues affecting women. The NWCI is committed to lobbying the government and political parties, as well as working with its Affiliates to increase their capacity to effect emancipatory social change for women.

The organisation currently has 160 Affiliated members, who comprise women's groups, women's sections or committees of larger national organisations such as trade unions, political parties and organisations where women comprise a majority of members. We represent well over 300,000 women in Ireland.

Structures

The NWCI is a membership organisation whose Affiliates give their mandate for our work at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year. Each Affiliated organisation has one vote at the AGM where motions submitted by Affiliates are debated and voted on.

The Executive Board of the NWCI is a voluntary management committee, elected by the membership at the AGM. Each voluntary member of the Board is elected to two years on the Board. The Membership also elects the Chairperson of the Board. The role of the Board is to ensure good governance and to oversee the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The NWCI holds quarterly Members meetings for its Affiliates, providing opportunities for Affiliates to network, exchange information with each other, as well as receive information from the NWCI and participate in the development of NWCI policies.

Staff

The NWCI employs a professional staff of 11 people. The senior management team, led by the Director, is responsible for leading the implementation of the Strategic Plan and ensuring coherence of the staff teams at a strategic level. There are regular team meetings and monthly support and supervision structures ensure forward planning and accountability of each staff member in meeting organisational objectives.

During 2004, we said goodbye to the following staff members:

Martha Hannan

Anne Brennan

In 2004, we were joined by:

Claire Dunne, as Affective & Economic Equality Policy and Outreach Facilitator

Ciara O'Shea as Communications and Development Officer

STRATEGIC PLAN 2002 – 2005

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Working as the national representative organisation of women in Ireland, our mission is to achieve women's equality, empowering women to work together, while recognising and mobilising difference, in order to remove structural, political, economic, social/cultural and affective inequalities.

Strategic Goals of the NWCI

Underpinning the NWCI Strategy is an inclusive equality framework, with four spheres. Affective, Social/Cultural, Economic and Political Equality – each with its own rights-based goal.

Affective Equality

The Right to love, care and solidarity

Social & Cultural Equality

The right to autonomy and respect for all women

Economic Equality

The right to economic independence for women

Political Equality

The right to the protection of political and human rights

In addition to the Equality Spheres, two priority areas included in the NWCI Strategic Plan are the Empowering Process and Building the Base – these are internal organisational objectives.

An Empowering Process

The development of a strong dynamic women's sector.

Building the Base

The regeneration of the NWCI to increase its representational capacity.

What do we hope to achieve from the Strategic Plan?

The key outcomes over the period of the Strategic Plan (2002-2005) we hope to achieve will be:

- An increase in the number of affordable and accessible childcare places at county level to meet the needs of women and an increase in childcare provision/supports for women participating in education and training
- The recognition of caring work through payment and social insurance credits
- The development of a women's health strategy and policy
- Reform of the social welfare system to ensure that women as well as men are defined as individuals
- An increase in women's incomes from social welfare and paid employment
- Significant progress to increase the percentage of women in decision making to 30% in key sites by 2005 and the empowerment of 500 women to take up decision making roles by 2005
- An increase between the number of NWCI members outside Dublin by 10% and the further extension and development of alliances related to NWCI's key areas of work
- An increase in the capacity of locally based women's groups and the representation from women's groups under all nine Equality grounds
- Delivery of Ireland's various human rights commitments and obligations as they relate to women
- A more diversified funding base for the organisation.

Social & Cultural Equality

‘The right of everyone to autonomy and personal freedom’

1. In From the Margin (IFM)

The IFM project, funded under the Equality for Women Measure, ran for three years. It aimed to:

- enable the NWCi to work more closely with local groups representing marginalised women, so as to make their needs part of our work;
- support locally-based women’s groups to make their voices heard in the policy areas of poverty, health and anti-racism; and
- promote interculturalism and the participation of women with disabilities in the project.

IFM concluded in 2004. The activities of IFM in 2004 were:

- **Anti- Racism Seminar in Westport (March 2004)**
- **‘Women Creating Change’ - IFM final publication (October 2004)**
- **In From the Margin Conference (Croke Park October 2004)**

Anti-Racism Seminar

Over 100 women came together on 4th March in Westport to share their experience of racism and to plan ways to combat racism and promote inter-culturalism in the West of Ireland. Women attending represented 39 groups based in counties Galway, Roscommon and Mayo. Lively discussions focused on the specific impact of racism on women, and how women benefit from a more intercultural society. Keynote speakers for the morning were Bernadette Comiskey, member of the Min Céir Whiding/ National Traveller Forum and Tokie Laoton, African Women’s Network Group Galway and an Independent Candidate in Galway’s local election, as well as Martha Hannan, NWCi Policy Outreach Facilitator.



IFM Anti-Racism Seminar, Westport. Credit: NWCi

‘Women Creating Change’ : IFM Publication

The final publication of IFM ‘Women Creating Change’ was launched in October 2004 by Shalini Sinha (Irish Times Journalist and Presenter of RTE’s ‘Mono TV’), at the NWCi Conference in Croke Park.

The publication presented an overview of IFM over its three-year duration. It included a presentation of the issues of Poverty, Anti-Racism and Health and a series of policy goals to address the inequalities which women experience in the three areas. The publication also included a ‘Tools and Resources’ section to assist women’s and community groups in their work at local level, for example; Guidelines for groups on drawing up an Anti-Racism Policy and a ‘How to Lobby Guide’.

2000 copies of ‘Women Creating Change’ were published and disseminated to policy makers in Government Departments, politicians, academics, research bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations. 2500 leaflets were also published summarising the full achievements and recommendations of IFM. The publication was guided by a focus group of representatives of organisations who were involved in the IFM project.

IFM Conference – Croke Park, Dublin, October 2004

The NWCi 2004 conference showcased the achievements of IFM. It was held in Croke Park in October. A total of 231 participants attended the Conference representing over 158 organisations, including participation from key target groups such as Traveller women, refugees/asylum seekers, immigrants, rural women and women with disabilities in key activities. Politicians, academics, policy makers and civil servants (who were key target groups for the dissemination of the policy recommendations arising from IFM) were also in attendance.

Kathleen O’Neill (Kilbarrack Community Development Project) acted as keynote speaker, while Ronnie Fay and Missie Collins (Pavee Point),

Benedicta Attah (Louth African Women’s Group), Mary Keogh (Forum of People with Disabilities) individually addressed the Conference. Workshops were held on the following issues;

- Community Development Approaches to Women’s Health Inequalities
- Culturally Appropriate Health Care.
- Translating Rights into Reality for All Women!
- Women Organising for Accommodation Rights.
- Campaigning for our Right to Childcare for all children.
- Building Solidarity – Women Together Towards an Anti-Racist Society.
- Participation - Enabling the participation of marginalised women at local level.
- Developing Community Based Responses to Combating Women’s Poverty.
- Women Working for Gender Sensitive Migration Policies.
- Using Arts and Community Development with Women.

The Conference and the Publication launch received broad media coverage, including television coverage on RTE.

The Conference also provided an opportunity for other organisations to attend and exhibit information on individual stands located throughout the Conference Centre in Croke Park. This proved to be an invaluable and interesting aspect to the National Conference.

2. Anti-Racism Work

This year the NWCI prioritised work on a number of initiatives required to address racism in an Irish context.

The Citizenship Referendum – June 2004

The NWCI held a consultation process with its members in the lead up to the Citizenship Referendum in order to come to a decision on what position we would take. This process identified a number of key issues, which the NWCI believed would have a profound and negative effect on women and children, if the referendum was passed. The decision, chosen by Affiliates, was that the NWCI should put forward a ‘No Vote’ in the referendum.

On June 2, 2004, the NWCI launched its ‘Vote No’ Campaign and Information Leaflet, at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin. At the launch the NWCI urged all women and men to vote no in the referendum and called on the government to introduce a fair and comprehensive immigration policy that was compassionate, anti-racist and recognised the rights and needs of women.

The NWCI felt that the government, by blaming women and children for their own failure to properly resource the Irish maternity and health services, was actually scapegoating women. This concern was raised because in the run up to the referendum there was much media hype surrounding the government’s claims that a large number of women were arriving late in the country, in the final stages of pregnancy, simply for their children to obtain Irish citizenship.

The NWCI joined with other groups, in repeatedly asking the government to back up these claims and pointed to the lack of substantive evidence being produced to clarify the matter.

The NWCI’s call for a NO VOTE was supported by a number of guest speakers at the launch:

Dr Patricia Kennedy
Aisling Reidy
Salome Mbugua
Joan Rippingale

Dept of Social Policy and Social Work, UCD
Director, Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
Chairperson, AKIDWA (African Women’s Network)
Member of the Council on Social Responsibility of
the Methodist Church in Ireland.



NWCI joins the Alliance for a NO VOTE. Credit: NWCI



The launch of the VOTE NO Campaign, Shelbourne Hotel. Credit: NWCI

‘Vote NO’ Information Leaflet

The Information Leaflet was produced to coincide with the campaign for a No Vote. The leaflet outlined the main concerns of the NWCI and our Affiliate members for the referendum. Thousands of leaflets were distributed on the streets of Dublin and around the country by Volunteers. The NWCI would like to sincerely thank all those who volunteered to help us in this way. Leaflets were also distributed to all NWCI Affiliates around the country.

‘Voices for a No Vote’

The NWCI joined more than 45 other groups; some representing scores of other organisations and individuals, as they came together to remind the public what the real issues were in the Citizenship Referendum. The ‘Voices for a No Vote’ held a Press Conference in the Shelbourne Hotel, which was attended by many NWCI Staff and officially represented by Joanna McMinn, Director, united with the many other voices of civil society calling for a No Vote.

Sadly the Referendum was passed on June 11th, 2004.

Work was also carried out by the NWCI in a number of other areas:

We participated in the board and women’s sub committee of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). The NCCRI is a partnership body, which brings together both governmental and non-governmental organisations to develop an inclusive and strategic approach to combating racism in Ireland.

We were actively involved in the Coalition Against the Deportation of Irish Born Children (CADIC). Through CADIC we made links with a number of groups working on immigration and anti-racism issues. In 2004, the Coalition was active in media and lobbying work opposing the move by the Minister for Justice to deport migrant families of Irish citizen children. We participated in media and outreach work of CADIC, and we have contributed to the strategic development of the network.

The NWCI represented Ireland on the board of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), a network of European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states. In addition, we acted as chair to ENAR Ireland and developed a successful funding proposal on their behalf to undertake a range of information, training and seminar activities in 2005.

We worked with the NGO Coalition, contributing to their shadow report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (CERD). To this end we organised a planning session with gender and race policy groups to review and amend a joint submission to the CERD Shadow Report and also to discuss the immigration bill.

The NWCI submitted a successful funding proposal to the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) to develop a leadership and capacity-building programme for minority ethnic women in the West of Ireland. The project, ‘Women and Leadership in the West’ will be developed and implemented in 2005.

3. Education & Training Project Activity

Education Equality Initiative (EEI) Programme

The Education Equality Initiative (EEI) is funded through the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 under the Educational Disadvantage Measure. At the end of 2000, the NWCI was appointed by The Department of Education & Science to provide the Support Service for EEI Phase I (December 2000 – December 2003), which comprised eighteen projects funded to pilot innovative methods to address educational disadvantage amongst adults. EEI Programme Phase I closed on December 31st 2003.

The final programme report was compiled and submitted to the Department of Education & Science in January 2004. Final closedown of the NWCI EEI Programme Support Service was completed at the end of January 2004. Mary Kelly, (Chair, June 2003 – June 2004) , continued to represent NWCI on the EEI Working Group.

For information about EEI Programme contact: Further Education Section, Dept. Education & Science, Marlborough St., Dublin 1. <http://www.education.ie>

ZEST (ZONTA Empowering Self-Development & Transformation)

ZEST programme was a funding initiative created by the NWCI and ZONTA International to support women's groups working on education and training provision. ZONTA International is a US-based worldwide organisation made up of Zonta clubs whose members are largely business and professional women. Its aim is to support education and training for women. From 2000 to 2004 NWCI received a grant from ZONTA International through their Michael J. Freeman Foundation.

Unfortunately the legacy, which funded the foundation, became exhausted and subsequently ZEST ceased in 2004.

The ZEST programme (2000–2004) provided funding for individual projects on a yearly basis, particularly those providing education and training to women living in disadvantaged circumstances. Selection criteria for projects included:

- A focus on women
- A strong learner support system with progression options
- An innovative education or training development
- A community partnership dimension

In 2003 when ZONTA realised that the fund was coming to an end it was agreed that the remaining grant should be used to enable ZEST 3 funded projects to continue their work for another year until June 2004, this extended programme was known as ZEST 3+ (The NWCI managed ZEST 3+, the ZEST 3 Extension from Autumn 2003 – Autumn 2004).

Access 2000, Waterford Women's Centre was funded under an earlier round of ZEST to develop a degree course using Community Development methods in partnership with Waterford Institute of Technology. Due to various delays with course accreditation the degree was delayed until this year. NWCI continued to support Access 2000 throughout the delay and were delighted that eight of the original twelve women completed the degree in 2004. In addition, innovative women's community based education methods were included in course delivery and assessment.

All four ZEST 3 + projects completed their work by September 2004 and a final programme report was prepared and submitted to ZONTA International in November 2004. Following the submission of the final report the ZEST Programme was regrettably closed down.

4. Women's Health & Health Policy Development

In February 2004, Annie Dillon was appointed as Policy Outreach Facilitator, with a focus on health. During 2004 NWCI work on health included:

- Planning and desk research for development of an updated NWCI Health Policy and Strategy, which is scheduled for publication in September 2005.
- Planning of focus groups to inform development of NWCI Health Policy, first group held in Dublin in December 2004 with a further 2 focus groups scheduled for January and February 2005.
- Outreach to NWCI members, and networking with key players.
- Provision of media comment in response to issues relating to women's health.
- Attendance at key events and meetings.
- Contribution to NWCI events and publications including:
In From The Margin Project through research and writing for the health section of the IFM publication: 'Women Creating Change'; Organised the health workshops for the NWCI National Conference.
Input to health sections of the NWCI Pre-Budget Submission and NWCI Post-Budget Analysis
- Working with Patricia Kennedy, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social and Policy Social Work, UCD as the representative of the NWCI on the North Eastern Health Board Task Force on Maternity Services, which was established to formulate an implementation strategy for the recommendations of the Kinder Review Group.



Group Artwork, IFM Health Seminar, Sligo. Credit: NWCI

Political Equality

‘The right to the protection of human and political rights’

Our work over the year had been directed at achieving significant progress in women’s participation in decision-making and empowering women to take up decision-making roles. We are also committed to the delivery of Ireland’s various human rights commitments and obligations as they relate to women, with a particular emphasis on all forms of violence against women.

1. Women and Decision making

A Women’s Manifesto – ‘Making Women’s Voices Heard’ & Celebrating International Women’s Day 2004

The Women’s Manifesto; ‘Making Women’s Voices Heard’, setting out the demands of the NWCI on key equality issues for women, in the local elections 2004, was launched on International Women’s Day, 8th March, 2004. At the launch, a panel of representatives from the main political parties discussed the importance of the issues contained within the Manifesto and the relevance of the document to women in the lead up to the Elections. There was also a photo opportunity for women candidates outside the Dail. Our celebration of International Women’s Day was carried in the main national newspapers in the following day’s coverage of events.

The Manifesto called on all political parties to support our demands for:

- Equal representation;
- Equal access to services;
- Freedom from violence; and

Economic independence for all women in Ireland.

A nationwide publicity drive and communications campaign promoted the Manifesto and the issues it highlighted, with meetings in Kilkenny, Cork, Dundalk, Killarney and Galway. The Manifesto was launched, discussed and distributed to as wide an audience as could be reached, at these meetings. Briefings were held with parliamentary parties, and the Manifesto was distributed to women candidates standing in the local and European elections. The nationwide drive attracted a lot of media interest, particularly with radio stations around the country.

The September 2004 Members Meeting ‘Promoting Women’s Participation in Political Decision Making’ was held in Monaghan to review the NWCI’s work on promoting women’s participation in the 2004 Local and European

Elections. We received feedback from members that the issues in the Manifesto were well researched and could be used as a tool by candidates to support their issues and inform them; and also by women's groups and individual women who could use it when candidates called to their door.

Members heard and analysed the experiences of a number of women candidates including the positive aspects of their campaigns, difficulties they encountered, lessons learnt from the campaign and ideas for moving forward.

This meeting marked the beginning of a process to develop an NWCI strategy to promote the participation of women in the 2006 General Election.



International Women's Day Celebration. Credit: NWCI

POWER Project

Because women are currently underrepresented in many decision-making fora in Ireland, the POWER project set out to address this imbalance by increasing the ability of women activists and community leaders to participate in public leadership roles thereby promoting a more egalitarian society through increased equal opportunities for women.

The POWER programme is delivered by the Women's Education, Research and Resource Centre, UCD. Through their participation on a specially designed accredited course to promote women's political development women are helped to understand the nature and principles of power and politics and provided with the information and skills necessary to engage in formal and informal politics.

POWER was run for the second round in 2004 with 22 women participating in residential workshops during the year, several of them from NWCI Affiliated groups. One of the criteria for selection of participants is that they have a commitment to working towards an equality agenda, in particular the increased political participation of women at local and national levels. POWER stands for Politically Organised Women Educating for Representation. The NWCI is a founding member of the POWER Partnership.

2. Women's Human Rights

The NWCI supported the Women's Human Rights Project, funded under the NDP Equality for Women Measure, until funding ended at the end of 2003. Following strategic planning and fundraising, the Women's Human Rights Project has become an autonomous organisation; the 'Women's Human Rights Alliance' (WHRA) of which the NWCI is a founding member.

Mary Robinson launched the WHRA's Shadow Report to CEDAW, which focuses on Political Representation, Health, Violence against Women and Barriers to Education and Employment, on 23 April 2004 in the Equality Authority in Dublin. The NWCI assisted the WHRA with all media work for the launch and attracted media attention to the event.

The NWCI also participated in a CEDAW Optional Protocol training workshop given by Beate Schopp Schilling, who is a Member of the CEDAW Committee, on the same day.

Observatory on Violence Against Women

The Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women, which is part of a Europe wide network of Observatories aiming to influence and monitor EU policy and action on violence against women is overseen by the NWCI, and includes all NGOs working on domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, prostitution, trafficking, and pornography. The first country report was written by Monica O'Connor, with an overview of the issue of violence against women in Ireland, government policy and commitments, and includes a specific focus on prostitution and trafficking in Ireland. This report was launched at the EU Presidency Conference on Violence Against Women organised by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on 24th and 25th May 2004 in Dublin. The NWCI was represented on the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, and on its Perpetrators subcommittee.

The NWCI participates in the NGO Coalition on Violence Against Women; and is also represented on the Advisory Committee of the Amnesty International Campaign on Violence Against Women.

Pornography

On March 10th 2004, the Irish Examiner uncovered a story about the Bank of Ireland's financial support (in the shape of a loan for 7 million euro) for a company called Remnant Media (a UK-based company). Remnant Media were to use this loan to purchase Fantasy Publications, who are the producers of various 'soft porn' magazines. The NWCI issued a press release following this discovery, which threatened to close the Council's account with the Bank of Ireland (BoI), and to encourage our Affiliates to do likewise, unless they cut their financial support for this company.

The NWCI put forward a clear position on pornography as a violation of human rights, and an attack on bodily integrity of the person, in particular

of women and children. The story attracted a large amount of both press and radio coverage, as the story gathered momentum.

Two days later the Bank of Ireland announced their intention to withdraw from the loan, stating; that "in light of this reaction, and as BoI values the views of its customers, the bank has informed Remnant Media that it does not wish to continue with the deal".

The discussion continued around this subject and the work of the NWCI in changing the situation, with press and radio reports, both throughout Ireland and in the UK, continuing throughout 2004.

Irish Independent
Saturday, 13 March, 2004

Bank pulls out of deal with UK porn mag group

THE Bank of Ireland last night had dropped a deal to back magazine group, which was float on the London Stock Exchange. A statement from the bank an investor in Remnant Media had, through its UK arm, agreed for the company, together

Bank of deal with

JOE HUMPHREYS

Friday 12.03.2004

Women's council threaten bank over porn group links

by **Conor Keane**
Business
Correspondent

THE National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), which represents more than 300,000 women, has threatened to close its account with Bank of Ireland (BoI) unless it cuts its financial support to a British publisher of pornographic

Last night, Dr McMinn severely criticised BoI's multi-million euro support for Remnant.

"We would urge the BoI to withdraw its support from this company.

"If they continue to provide this financial support, the NWCI will close our own account with the BoI, and will be calling on all our members to close any accounts they have with the

"There are certainly ethical issues about pornography and the production of pornography, serious ethical issues, and I would be strongly opposed to the support, to any support being provided to companies that produce pornography and I think that would very strongly be the view of religious congregations leaders as well," he said.

CORI has 125 congrega-

Ireland pulls out of pornography firm

the first pornography company to float on the London Stock on finance, Ms Joan Burton, had called on the bank's direct

EU Presidency

Mary Kelly (Chair: June 2003 – June 2004) and Frances Byrne (Deputy Chair: June 2003 – May 2004) attended the Flag Raising Ceremony to herald the Irish Presidency of EU on the 1st January 2004 at Dublin Castle. Mary Kelly also represented the NWCI on the European Women's Lobby who contributed to the following EU Presidency events:

9th January 2004:

The NWCI made an oral presentation and written submission, at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, to members of the Social Democratic Bureau of the European Parliament (largest political grouping), on NWCI priorities for the Irish EU Presidency (event hosted by Prionsias de Rossa, MEP).

30th January 2004:

The NWCI chaired a meeting of Membership Committee of Board of European Women's Lobby (Facilitating women's groups from the Accession countries to form National co-ordinations to the EWL, as well as assisting existing members to reapply under the new EWL statutes).

2nd February 2004:

The NWCI chaired a session of EU Presidency Conference on Sustainable Development at Dublin Castle (Minister Martin Cullen was the respondent for Government).

6th February 2004:

The NWCI participated in the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) supported Conference in Letterkenny: Tipping the Scales: Work/Life Balance. (National and Local Media work to highlight issues for women).

Economic Equality

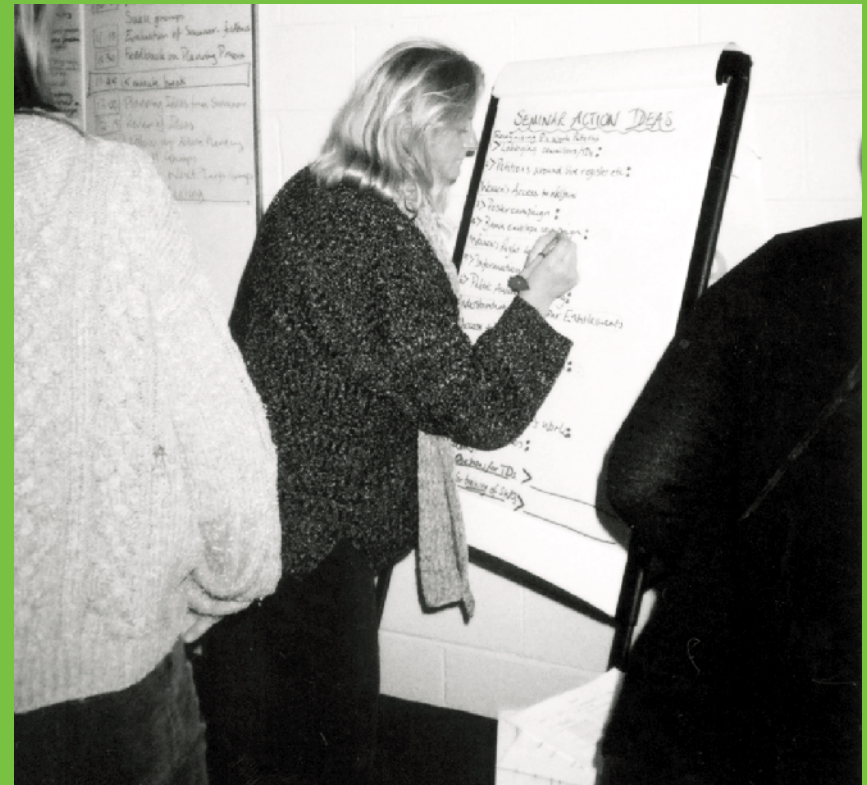
‘The right to a fair share of our society’s resources’

1. Social Welfare Reform

A Woman’s Model for Social Welfare Reform

The NWCI's campaign to bring about change to the Social Welfare System to make it more equitable and accessible for women is based on recommendations from the report: ‘A Woman’s Model for Social Welfare Reform’. This long-term campaign has been running since June 2003, and the suggested implementation of recommendations span over the next 20 years. The NWCI aims to achieve the recommended changes through meeting with women’s groups and organisations working with women, to learn from their experiences of the system and to build knowledge and support for a campaign for change.

2004 saw an increase in the outreach work aspect of the campaign. Meeting with national voluntary organisations and with the main political parties to secure their commitment to implementing change took place throughout 2004 and will continue to take priority in the campaign work of 2005.



Social Welfare Reform, Cork + Kerry Meeting. Credit: NWCI

Social Welfare Reform Campaign Activities during 2004

National Organisation Meetings

Meetings with key employers in national voluntary organisations were held through the latter half of 2004, to inform them of the NWCi's recommendations and discuss ways of working together to achieve mutual goals.

Political Party Briefings

NWCi staff briefed Fine Gael Leader Enda Kenny and the Sinn Féin Party in 2004 to highlight the work of the NWCi with a particular emphasis on the model for Social Welfare Reform.

Petition

A petition for social welfare reform began in 2004. This petition will be presented with the NWCi Pre-Budget Submission in 2005. Almost 2000 people added their names to the petition during 2004. Signatures can be signed on-line at <http://www.nwci.ie/swr.html#po>

Regional Focus Groups and Seminars

Regional seminars took place in Killarney in January and in Dundalk in May to discuss women's access to the social welfare system. The seminars highlighted many of the difficulties women face in trying to access social welfare supports. Over 90 people participated in each of the seminars representing approximately 50 groups from each of the regions. Links between groups working with women were strengthened and plans were developed to advance regional campaigns with the support of the NWCi.

All social welfare seminars were organised in conjunction with local groups and organisations that came together in the form of 'focus groups'. The focus groups planned and organised events and continued to meet throughout the year to further the campaign locally and nationally.

The third and final seminar for social welfare reform will take place in February 2005. A focus group representative of women's groups and

organisations in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal came together in the latter half of 2004 to organise this seminar.

The focus groups involved in the social welfare reform seminar have developed ideas to tackle some of the issues and to gain support for the campaign.



Social Welfare Reform, Cork + Kerry Meeting. Credit: NWCi

'Brown Envelope Campaign' for Social Welfare Reform

The idea for a 'brown envelope campaign' for social welfare reform was developed at the seminar in Killarney. In October 2004, the focus group came together and decided to develop the idea into a national campaign, with the support of the NWCi.

The Brown Envelope Campaign involves collecting signatures on a standard letter to the Minister for Finance, which lists changes necessary

to the Social Welfare system to make it more equitable and accessible to women. The signed letters will be gathered together and placed in brown envelopes, before being personally delivered by the NWCI and women's groups from around the country, to the Government in May 2005.

Other work around the campaign in 2004, involved making presentations for 'World Rural Women's Day' to women's groups in Leitrim and West Cork. Presentations have also been made to Longford and Athlone women's groups.

2. Pre-Budget Submission 2005

'Women have done the Work: It's time to share the gains'

The theme: 'Women have done the work: it's time to share the gains' was chosen for this year's Pre-Budget Submission to Government.



The submission stated how the 'Programme for Government' had outlined the Government's commitment to building a 'just and inclusive' society. Commitment to reducing women's poverty and promoting women's economic rights and independence have been shown by the Irish Government in signing up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The NWCI stated that Budget 2005 was the opportunity for the Government to fulfil these commitments. The NWCI claimed that the resources were there and what was needed was action.

The Submission outlined specific Recommendations and identified the following priorities to reduce poverty and inequality for women in Ireland:

Ensuring economic independence

- Income Adequacy
- Social Welfare Reform,
- Employment and the Gender Pay Gap
- Care Work,
- Childcare,
- Pensions,
- Community Based Education
- Accommodation

Health for all

- Medical Card
- Breast and Cervical Screening Programmes
- Travellers Health
- Maternity services
- Health care of Asylum Seekers and Migrants
- Violence Against Women

Working for an anti-racist society

- Implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism
- Task Force on Travellers
- Supporting the integration of migrant women
- Minimising poverty for refugee and asylum seeking women
- Women's human rights

Building women's participation

- Funding the Women's sector
- Women in Political decision making

The Pre-Budget Submission Launch took place outside Leinster House where we were joined by a large group of Affiliates for a photo opportunity. The group then walked to the Department of Finance on Merrion Street, where Joanna McMinn on behalf of the NWCI, formally delivered a copy of the NWCI Pre-Budget Submission, to Mr Brian Cowen TD, Minister for Finance.

The recommendations set out by the NWCI received specific press coverage in the National Papers in the lead-up to the Budget. The launch also received press coverage.

Budget 2005 – The Outcome

Overall, from an NWCI perspective, Budget 2005 represented a 'missed opportunity'. There were welcome measures in relation to social welfare increases and the removal of minimum wage earners from the tax net. However, the Budget was a missed opportunity in meeting the needs of women and children and in particular, lone parents.

The failure of the Budget to introduce supports for childcare was particularly disappointing. The Child Benefit increases were the lowest social welfare increases and failed to meet the targets set by the Government in social partnership.

The NWCI managed several high profile interviews after the Budget was announced. A formal press release was issued by the Council and an analysis piece was written by the NWCI for the Irish Independent, which was published the day after the Budget.

A 'Budget 2005 Analysis' was circulated to all Affiliates, which gave comparisons between the NWCI Recommendations and what was actually delivered in the Budget.

3. EU EQUAL Programme

The NWCI participated in the Dublin Employment Pact 'EQUAL At Work' project, which applied for a second round of funding in 2004. The NWCI will be the host for the Community and Voluntary sector site. The activities of the C&V site will be focused on the development of good practice in industrial relations within the community and voluntary sector in Dublin.

Affective Equality

‘The right to love, care and solidarity’

Childcare

The NWCI received approval from the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform to undertake research into the financing of a national publicly subsidised childcare infrastructure. The aim of the research is to propose a model of a publicly subsidised childcare infrastructure of mixed delivery that would be equitable for all children.

The Centre for Educational and Social Research (CESR) was commissioned to conduct the research. The research process will include three focus groups with NWCI members. It is intended that the final publication will be launched at a national policy seminar and used as a lobbying tool for a national childcare campaign.



IFM Midlands Meeting. Credit: NWCI

Building the Base

‘The regeneration of the NWCI to increase its representational capacity (internal organisational objective)’

1. Training

A 2-day residential media training event was delivered in Dublin to women from around the country, participating in the social welfare reform campaign.

Two 1-day training courses on the theme of ‘Violence Against Women – A Feminist Analysis’ were delivered to Affiliates and other women’s groups interested in this issue in both Dublin and Sligo.

2. Meetings with Affiliates

NWCI staff held one to one meetings with a range of Affiliates. We developed an updated presentation on the role and work of the NWCI for new NWCI Affiliates and initiated a strategy for meeting with and presenting the organisation to new and existing Affiliates.



Social Welfare Reform, Cork + Kerry Meeting. Credit: NWCI

3. NWCI AUDIT

Having Your Say! National Women's Council of Ireland Affiliate Audit 2004

Introduction

In 2004, the NWCI initiated an audit of our Affiliates. The purpose of the audit was to develop a general picture of our Affiliate base, the issues that Affiliates are working on, their views on the NWCI and their interaction with us. The audit also aimed to assist in the development of our outreach work and to contribute to the development of our work plan to the end of 2005.

2005 will see the undertaking of a strategic review of the NWCI's current strategic plan, which reaches conclusion at the end of the year. This process will also involve consulting with our Affiliates on our next strategic plan, and the setting of future priorities for the NWCI within the equality framework through which we work. The responses to the audit and conclusions drawn will also feed into and inform that process.

Methodology

The audit was based on the development and dissemination of a questionnaire with 16 questions focussing on topics such as key work areas, representation on decision making bodies, issues and difficulties facing Affiliates in their work, affiliation with other networks, Affiliates' contribution to the work of NWCI, priority support needs and views on the levels of support provided by NWCI. The questionnaire was initially piloted with 8 organisations who commented on its overall structure, layout and

the questions being asked. The questionnaire was then finalised and disseminated to our 160 Affiliates throughout the country.

61 organisations responded representing a 38% response rate. 5 organisations opted to be interviewed over the telephone with the remainder responding in writing.

Whilst feedback from all of our Affiliates would have been very much welcome, we believe that the responses received and the diversity of the organisations involved, present us with valuable information, insights and a general sense of some of the issues we need to take cognisance of in our future work.

This consultative exercise however is not the end of the process. As mentioned above, the NWCI remains committed to on-going consultation with our Affiliates in relation to developing our priorities and setting our agendas.

In this short report we set out in graph form the responses to the questions asked of our Affiliates. We highlight some of the comments made over the phone and in writing and draw some conclusions from the opinions and suggestions offered to us.

A more detailed breakdown of responses by sector will be made available on our website: www.nwci.ie

Responses to the Audit by Sector

Figure 1.1

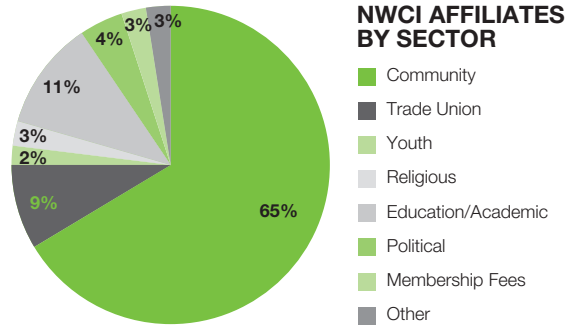
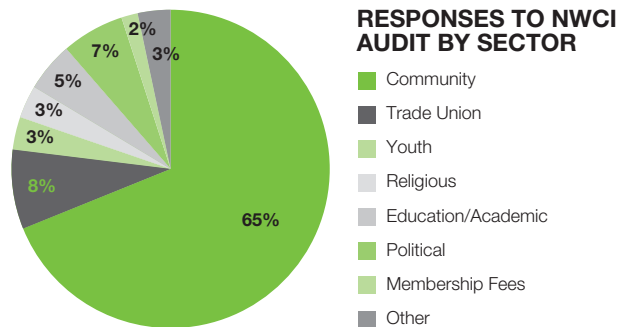


Figure 1.2



The majority (69%) of Affiliates responding to the audit identified themselves as community sector groups. This in itself is not surprising given that approximately 65% of our total Affiliate base, are community based organisations.

When comparing the response rates to the breakdown of Affiliates by sector therefore, we see that there is a strong correlation between rates of responses by sector and the number of organisations from each sector who are Nwci Affiliates.

Representing Women's Issues

Question: Does your group represent women's issues on any decision-making bodies at local, regional, national, international levels?

Groups responded to the question about representation on decision-making bodies at local, regional, national or international level, by indicating that 50% of them represent women's issues at local level, 39% at regional level, 42% at national level and 25% at an international level.'

When asked about the key difficulties facing them in participating on such structures, respondents highlighted a wide range of concerns and problems. The following sets out some of their responses;

- The stage the group is at – we have potential but can't reach it.
- We don't have enough resources or time – we can't manage the workload.
- Male domination and the male backlash is something we have to deal with.
- Childcare is not high on the political agenda.
- Trying to link women to policy work can be very difficult.
- Racism, poverty and other forms of discrimination faced by many women such as age and disability is a huge barrier.
- Prejudice and stereotyping of older women.
- Social inclusion is not on the agenda the work is very frustrating.
- Getting buy in from the statutory sector/no one wants to listen, there is a huge lack of understanding of a gender perspective

- Not enough information.
- Ineffectiveness of policy fora and lack of Government commitment to implement policies developed is a big concern.

Clearly there are many challenges and difficulties facing women’s organisations in representing their issues within decision-making arenas at all levels. Discrimination, unwillingness of agencies to engage, lack of childcare, lack of resources and the low level of priority given to addressing women’s inequality and exclusion were cited as key problems in this regard. These concerns have always acted as barriers to women’s equality and are very familiar to the women who for many years have struggled to address them. However, they do present challenges to the NWCI with regard to the nature and extent of the support that women’s organisations continue to need regardless of whether they operate at local, regional, national or international level. We address some of these challenges in the conclusion of this report.

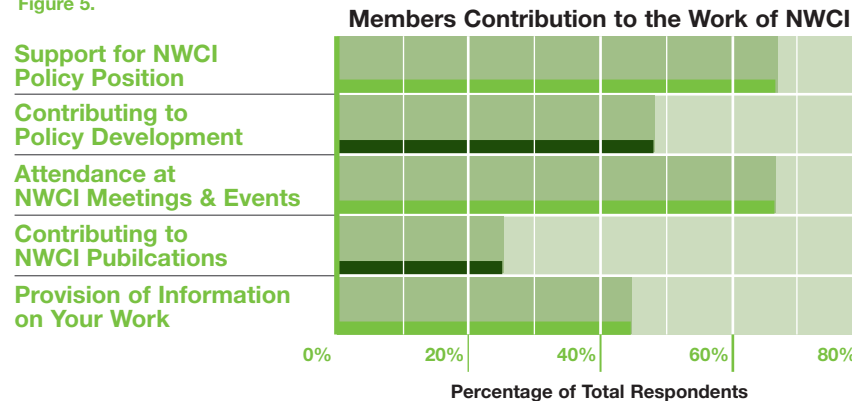
Skills knowledge and expertise of respondents

Affiliates were requested to identify the skills, knowledge and experience present in their organisation. This question was posed to help develop a picture of the capacities of our Affiliates, towards building increased cooperation and mutual support amongst Affiliates and between NWCI and our Affiliates. Whilst it is not possible here to list off all of these, suffice it to say that NWCI Affiliates have a wide range of experience of working with women from specific communities of interest, training, policy work, work on employment rights, the legal system, advocacy, counselling, campaign work, research and facilitation.

Involvement in the Work of NWCI

Question: What would you consider to be your main contribution to the work of NWCI?

Figure 5.



67% of respondents consider their main contribution to the work of the NWCI to be that of supporting NWCI policy positions and attending NWCI meetings and events. 47% contribute to policy development and 44% provide information on the work of their organisation to NWCI. 25% of respondents indicated that they contribute to NWCI publications.

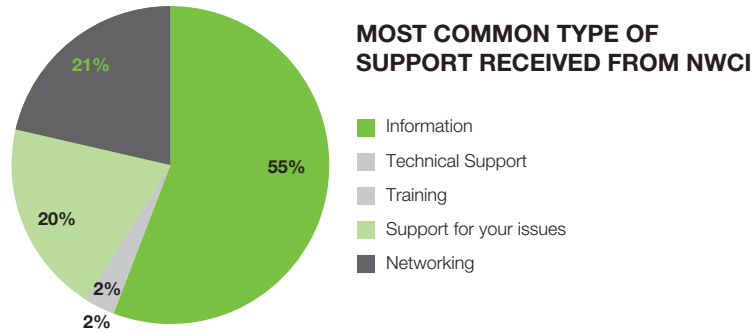
Different organisations therefore have indicated very different experiences and levels of involvement and contribution to the work of NWCI. Currently, members can participate in the activities of NWCI through a range of channels. These include attendance at quarterly members meetings and at the AGM, which help to inform and develop NWCI policy and practice. Participation in training events, NWCI campaigns (e.g. the Social Welfare Reform Campaign) and attendance at meetings in relation to specific issues (e.g. the 2004 Citizenship Referendum) are very important as are members comments on and contribution to NWCI surveys, the website and the pre-budget submission.

Participation therefore happens at many different levels and by simply being a member of NWCI, organisations and individuals are helping to build and strengthen our mandate and our right to represent women’s issues at national and international levels.

Support from NWCi

Question: What kind of support does your group currently get from NWCi?

Figure 6.

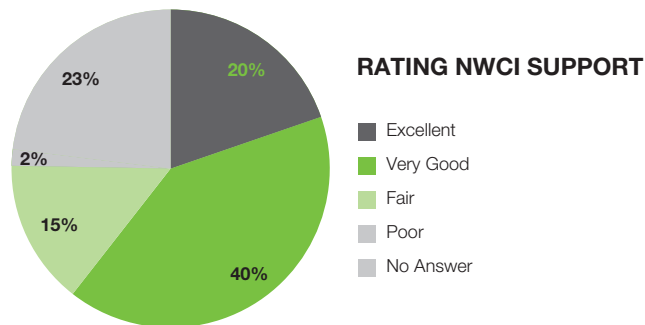


Results illustrate that information provision, networking and support at national level for the issues Affiliates are trying to address are considered to be the main kinds of support received from NWCi. Training and technical support feature to a lesser extent.

What Do You Think of Us ?

Question: How would you rate the support you receive from the NWCi?

Figure 7.

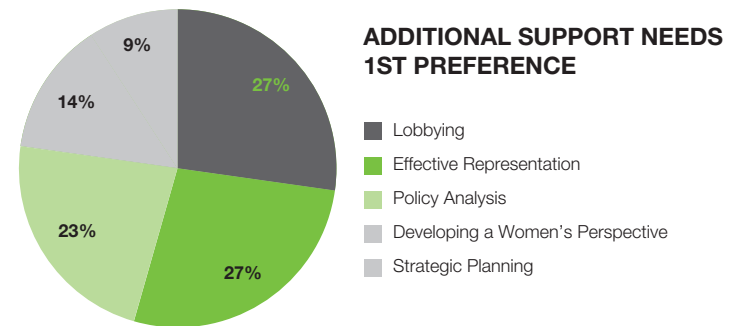


Whilst 24% did not answer this question comments from some respondents would suggest that at this stage they did not feel in a position to respond; “We are a new Affiliate so it is difficult to say,” “We have not had much contact to date.”

Other Support Needs

Question: What kind of additional support do you feel you need in order to do your work more effectively and/or enhance your contribution to the work of NWCi?

Figure 8



The primary additional supports required from NWCi include support for lobbying work, effective representation, policy analysis, developing a women’s perspective to the work of Affiliate organisations and strategic planning. Support for project or programme planning and media skills are also highlighted as 2nd and 3rd preference supports.

What Women Said

“ We need to become more active... It is hard to attend regularly but we are committed to more involvement this year. ”

“ We would like to become more involved, we are a new member. ”

“ There is a strong need to look at ways of involving people in the work that do not include travel like use of email, phone, teleconferencing etc. ”

“ NWCI is an excellent support and resource to local women’s organisations. ”

“ The NWCI mirrors itself on the Government and civil service... projects are undertaken in response to funding... not taking on the reality of the situation of women in Ireland. ”

“ There is a need to find a way of allowing for diverse views and voices to be heard without undermining the basic principles and ethos of NWCI. ”

“ The constant information updates are excellent. ”

“ We appreciate what the NWCI is doing at the national level, which has benefited us in so many ways. We wouldn’t have been able to do it alone for many years to come. ”

“ Getting women to see the importance of collective action is the key. ”

“ We would like to become more involved, we are a new member. ”

Conclusions and Recommendations

This exercise has allowed a range of views and opinions to be expressed and presents the NWCI with challenges and opportunities to continue to build a strong and effective women's organisation, reflective of the diversity of our Affiliates and of Irish society as a whole.

1. Inclusion:

The NWCI must ensure that all Affiliates in all of their diversity are included, respected and valued for their contribution and their experience. This at times may involve debating in a constructive and open way all of our attitudes, views and preconceived ideas. To this end the NWCI is challenged to create a safe space for reflection, debate and analysis without undermining our basic ethos.

2. Involvement:

Finding avenues and mechanisms to promote the active and meaningful participation of Affiliates and in particular new Affiliates in our work, must be a priority over the coming years. Responses would suggest that our particular attention in this regard should focus on the contribution of Affiliates to our policy and publications development.

3. Outreach:

Regionalising our work should continue to be a priority as well as finding creative ways of communicating with and involving our members in our activities and events.

4. Support:

The supports we provide must reflect the needs of Affiliates as expressed here. Flexibility will also be necessary as these needs change in an ever changing, ever dynamic social context. Recently established women's groups who have become Affiliates', some of whom are struggling to survive, should be given particular priority and support.

5. Harnessing:

The many skills, high levels of knowledge and experience of our Affiliates must be harnessed to greater effect for the advancement of the NWCI, our Affiliate organisations and the agenda we are pursuing. Mechanisms should be developed to allow for greater sharing of experience, knowledge and information amongst Affiliates as well as between Affiliates and the NWCI.

6. Representational work:

The local level work of our Affiliates requires greater attention and focus. Supporting our Affiliates to engage more effectively in local decision making arenas, promoting a strong women's perspective and addressing some of the many barriers identified here should be prioritised. The NWCI is challenged also to support those engaging in national and international decision making arenas and to provide opportunities for our Affiliates to build their capacity to take up such positions in the near future.

7. Networking:

Consideration should be given to providing spaces for networking between Affiliates from particular communities of interest. These spaces could be used for discussion on the role of the NWCI in supporting particular groups of Affiliates as well as providing those involved with an opportunity to discuss issues of common concern.

Continuing to build a strong organisation, reflective of our Affiliates priorities and needs with enhanced ownership by all of the work of the NWCI and of the organisation as a whole will remain a priority for NWCI into the life of our next strategic plan.

We thank those who participated in this audit and look forward to further discussion with them and with all our Affiliates during 2005.

An Empowering Process

‘The development of a strong dynamic women’s sector (internal organisational objective)’

1. Members Meetings



IFM Midlands Meeting. Credit: NWCI

Four members meetings were held in 2004 focussing on a range of themes relevant to our work. Each meeting was attended by Affiliates from around the country and two meetings took place outside Dublin to facilitate greater participation.

The purpose of the members meetings were to:

- Provide NWCI Affiliates with an opportunity to meet, network, exchange information and hold discussions on topics of relevance to them.
- Provide NWCI Affiliates with an opportunity to feed into the policy and strategic direction of the NWCI within the framework of our strategic plan. The members meetings serve as a mechanism for consultation with Affiliates in key issues which emerge from time to time, such as with the Citizenship Referendum in June 2004.
- Ensure contact and continuity between the staff and Affiliates of the NWCI, particularly in terms of meeting criteria for nomination of Affiliates to the board of the NWCI.

The first members meeting was held in Dublin in January 2004 and focussed on opportunities to raise women’s issues during the Irish presidency of the European Union and during the European and local elections.

May 2004 saw the second members meeting of the year, which took place in Limerick. The theme chosen for the meeting was 'Gender Mainstreaming'; the aim of which was to provide NWCI members with an opportunity to network and develop their capacity and knowledge of gender mainstreaming as a tool for the promotion of equality for women. Julia Long from the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform provided an in-depth overview of the concept of gender mainstreaming and the challenges involved in promoting gender mainstreaming at local and national levels.

The third members meeting was held in September in Monaghan. The theme for the meeting was 'Promoting Women's Participation in Political Decision Making' and was chosen to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the recent European and local elections and to explore the potential role of the NWCI in promoting greater participation of women in political life. Speakers on the day were, Marie Hainsworth (Independent Candidate for the European Elections (NWCI Deputy Chairperson, November 2004), Benedicta Attoh (Louth African Women's Group – Independent Candidate for Louth Co. Council), Councillor Mary Murphy (Labour Party Candidate – Dublin City Council) and Councillor

Bronwyn Maher (Green Party Candidate– Dublin City Council) who shared with us their experiences of standing for election, the challenges for women in doing so, and challenges for the NWCI in promoting women's participation in political life.

'Citizenship and Participation – Women's Perspectives' was the theme for the fourth and final members meeting of 2004, which was held in December in Dublin. Tanya Ward from the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and Clodagh Harris from the Democracy Commission spoke at the meeting. The presentations, workshops, discussion and dialogue on the day helped to increase our awareness of the concept of citizenship and our analysis of what citizenship means for all of us in our work. In addition, the meeting identified some priorities for NWCI in the promotion of active citizenship and the participation of all communities of women as agents for change in Irish society.

Promoting the NWCI & Women's Issues in Ireland:

Media Work 2004

The profile of the NWCI, our work and issues of importance for the wider women's sector were raised throughout 2004 as a result of strong engagement with print, broadcast and on-line media. We issued numerous press releases throughout the year, coinciding with our own work and the work of our Affiliates. We conducted radio, television and newspaper interviews, both nationwide and in the UK. We also provided media comment and statements in response to requests.

A selection of print articles generated nationally as a result of NWCI press releases, comment and statements given to the press

- Health high on women's political agenda – **Irish Examiner 9 March 2004**
- Make buying sex a crime, say groups – **Irish Examiner 23 March 2004**
- Articles led to bank U-turn and red-faced minister, **Irish Examiner, 11 March 2004**
- Linking home and workplace, **Longford News, 3 March 2004**
- Jobs for the Boys, The Sunday **Business Post, 21 March 2004**
- Women's Day on the way, **Mayo News, 3 March 2004**
- Support grows for gender mainstreaming, **Limerick Post, 22 June 2004**
- Women hit the trail in Kerry, **The Kerry Kingdom, 25 June 2004**
- Vulnerable women blamed for maternity cutbacks, **Irish Times, 3 June 2004**
- Independent withdraws ad for prostitutes, **Sunday Times, 20 June 2004**
- National Women's Council of Ireland urge women to vote NO in the citizenship referendum, **Irish Times, 9 June 2004**
- Election analysis shows men still dominate the chamber, **Irish Examiner, 6 August 2004**
- Gender quotas no answer to shortage of female politicians, **Irish Times, 26 August 2004**
- Women must wait 370 years for parity in Dail, **Irish Independent, 25 August 2004**
- New FAS initiative helps women return to work, **Roscommon Herald, 15 September 2004**
- The world of working women – **Irish Independent 30 September 2004**
- Let's talk about sexism, **Irish Independent, October 2004**
- Many women 'still seeking equality', **Irish Times, 20 October 2004**
- This is a man's world, **The Farmer's Journal, 16 October 2004**
- Women still more likely to fall below the poverty line than men, **Irish Independent, 20 October 2004**
- Budget must tackle childcare expense, says group, **The Cork Evening Echo, 13 October 2004**
- New publication 'Women creating change', **Donegal Democrat, 28 October 2004**
- Budget must address 'why more women than men stumble into poverty', **Irish Examiner, 3 November 2004**
- What we want: Budget 2005, **Irish Times, 1 December 2004**
- Slaps and some claps from welfare groups (Budget 2005), **2 December 2004**
- Increase in child benefit 'inadequate', **Irish Times, 2 December 2004**
- Parents counting the costs of childcare, **Irish Examiner, 3 December 2004**
- How to end second-class citizenship, **Irish Independent, 14 December 2004**
- Budget fails parents as childcare bills soar, **Irish Examiner, 5 December 2004**
- Lone parents slam 'abominable' €10 increase, **Evening Herald, 2 December 2004**
- Budget 2005 ignores the childcare crisis, **Donegal Democrat, 12 December 2004**
- Measures appalling for children of poor, **Irish Examiner, 2 December 2004**

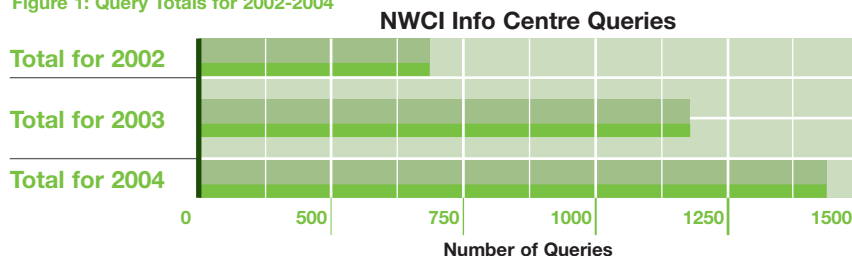
NWCI Information Centre 2004

2004 was an increasingly busy year for the NWCI Information Centre, with an overall increase of query totals of 103% on 2002 figures. There were significant increases in the numbers of NWCI staff, board and Affiliate queries in 2004.

Library & Information Services

- Provision of e-mail newsletter (3 times per week) to staff, board, Affiliates, organisations, individuals and supporting members – containing information on the work of the NWCI and events, lectures, funding, vacancies etc. in the women’s sector. During 2004 there were circa 300+ people and organisations receiving this service.
- Daily media-monitoring and information dissemination for staff and board on relevant issues.
- Managed and responded to 1404 information queries during 2004 (see figure 1 for totals) by fax, phone, email, post and in person. This compares with a query total of 691 for 2002.
- Organised and staffed information tables at various NWCI and non-NWCI events during 2004. Ordered publications from other organisations also, for information tables at NWCI events.

Figure 1: Query Totals for 2002-2004



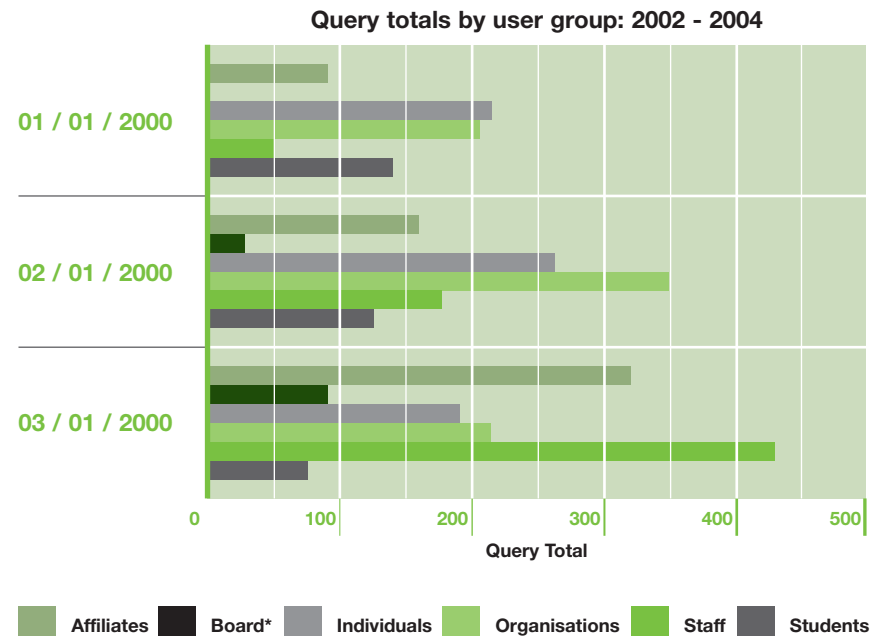
- Wrote and published “Women and Abortion” and “Women and Human Rights” **factsheets**, available in hard copy or on the website.

- **Outreach & support** to NWCI Affiliate groups, on topics such as website development and library management.

- Analysed data from local elections for “Women in Politics & Decision-making” **webpage**.

Website Development

The NWCI website is an important promotional and information tool for our organisation. The website is regularly updated, improved and monitored throughout the year.



By the end of the year, our pages on Affiliate groups, “What’s Up” page, and “Who We Are” were the most popular for visitors to the website. Webpages were designed and developed for ‘Women in Politics and Decision-Making’ and ‘International Women’s Day’, for the NWCI website.

Financial Report

Financial Review of the Year

In 2004 the NWCI continued to closely monitor its financial situation. Highlights of the year were as follows:

- Two three-year funding grants received from Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs enabled the NWCI to start its outreach programme and continue with its ongoing activities.
- The 2003 vacancy of Communications and Development Officer was filled in 2004 and no further staff positions were lost during the year.
- Relocation to a lower cost office space. However a six-month rent penalty had to be paid to the landlord so cost savings will not be seen until 2005.
- Responded to external events, e.g: The Citizenship Referendum Campaign.
- Held a very successful National Conference in October to celebrate the end of the In from the Margin (IFM) Conference

Income Analysis 2004

EURO

Core grant (Government Funding)	524,740
Income for projects and activities	217,926
Atlantic Philanthropies	179,803
Affiliated Members' fees	28,228

Expenditure Analysis 2004

EURO

Staff Costs	316,922
Programme and Activities	407,725
Administration Expenses	15,262
Office Building Costs	129,416
Professional fees	22,215
Organisation Expenses	42,957
Publication and Events	15,409

End of Year Position

At the end of the year, the accounts show a net deficit position of €19,021, which represents a small reduction of €791 on the 2003 deficit.

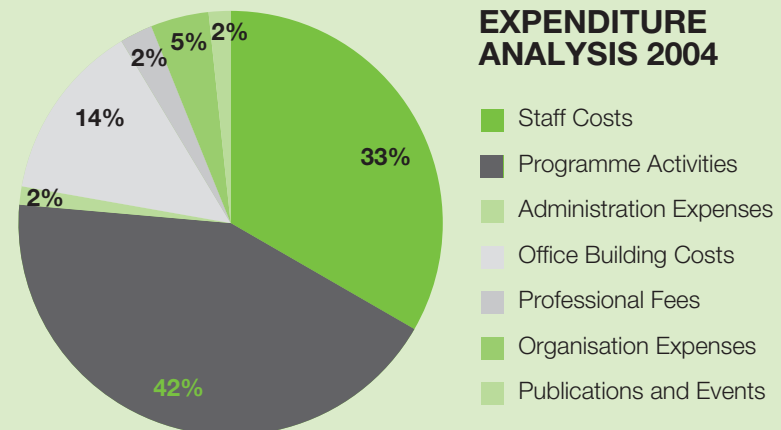
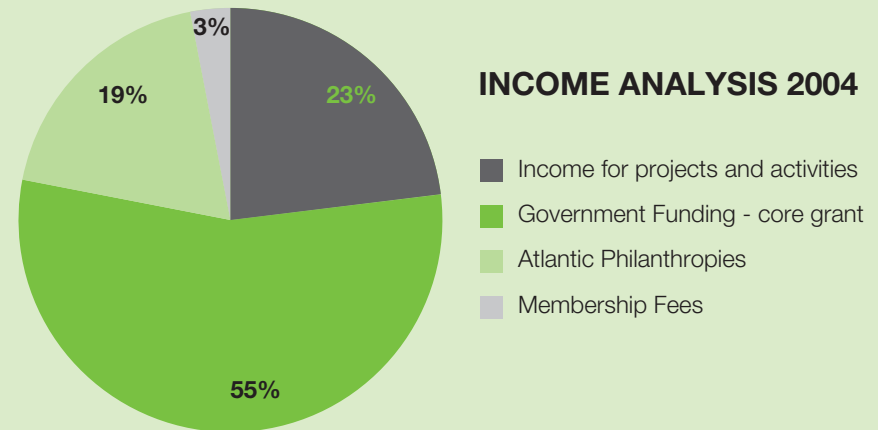
Financial Outlook for 2005

The financial outlook for the NWCI for 2005 is more encouraging than the previous two years. The core grant from the Government has been increased by 2% and the funding received from Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will continue into 2006.

The move to a lower cost office during 2004 will ensure that the operational costs for 2005 are less than in the previous two years. It is expected that by the end of 2005 the current deficit will be substantially reduced or eliminated.

Financial Priorities for 2005 are as follows:

- Elimination of the brought forward 2004 deficit.
- Purchase of a new office premises.
- Achievement of funding targets for 2005.
- Continuing to increase the NWCI Affiliate and individual membership base.
- Maintain current staff levels.
- Ongoing development of the internal financial management systems and procedures.



Summary Accounts for the National Women's Council of Ireland Limited

Amalgamated Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 2004

DESCRIPTION	2004	2003	DESCRIPTION	2004	2003
INCOME			FIXED ASSETS		
Income for projects and activities	217,926	338,415	Tangible Assets	19,721	25,936
Government Funding - core grant	524,740	549,400	CURRENT ASSETS		
Atlantic Philanthropies	179,803	42,000	Debtors	43,941	8,198
Membership Fees	28,228	16,425	Cash at bank and in hand	213,245	311,175
Total Income	950,697	946,240	Total Current Assets	257,186	319,373
EXPENDITURE			CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	295,928	365,121
Staff Costs	316,922	373,291	NET CURRENT (LIABILITIES)/ASSETS	(38,742)	(45,748)
Programme Activities	407,725	272,128	TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES (19,021) (19,812)		
Administration Expenses	15,262	21,516	RESERVES		
Office Building Costs	129,416	139,088	Income and Expenditure Account	(19,021)	(19,812)
Professional Fees	22,215	22,898	(Deficit)/Surplus	(19,021)	(19,812)
Organisation Expenses	42,957	43,667			
Publications and Events	15,409	43,273			
Total Expenditure	949,906	915,861			
(Deficit)/Surplus of Income over expenditure	791	30,379			
Income and Expenditure account balance brought forward	(19,812)	(50,191)			
Income and Expenditure account balance carried forward	(19,021)	(19,812)			

Auditors: Grant Thornton, 24-26 City Quay, Dublin 2.

Bankers: Bank of Ireland, P.O. Box 3131, Baggot Street, Dublin 2.

Solicitors: O' Donnell Sweeney, The Earlsfort Centre, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

The financial statements were approved by the directors on the 11th of May 2005 and signed on its behalf by:

Thérèse Murphy - Chairwoman & Director

Marie Hainsworth - Deputy Chairwoman & Director

These summary accounts have been extracted from the statutory financial statements of the National Women's Council of Ireland Limited and the National Women's Council of Ireland Education & Training Ltd. Those statutory financial statements, on which the Auditors (Grant Thornton) expressed an unqualified audit opinion will be filed with the Registrar of Companies following the Annual General Meeting. Copies of the full audited financial statements are available on request or on the NWCi Website (www.nwci.ie).

List of Affiliates

Access 2000
Action Breast Cancer
AIM Family Services
AKIDWA
Alexandra College Guild
Alliance Centre for Sexual Health
An Cosán
Aoibhneas Women's Refuge
Aontas
Association of Baha'I Women
Association of Secondary Teachers Association
Association of Teachers of Home Economics

Ballymote Family Resource Centre
Ballymun Women's Resource Centre
Baltinglass Women's Group
Banúlacht
Bodywhys
Business & Professional Women's Club

Cáirde
Catherine McAuley Centre
Cavan Monaghan Rural Development Women's Group
Centre for Women's Studies Trinity College
Cherish
Childminding Ireland
Civil & Public Service Union
Clare Women's Network
Clondalkin Women's Network
Community Women's Education Initiatives

Connaught Rural Women's Group Ltd
Cork Rape Crisis Centre
Cork Women's Poetry Circle
Cork Women's Political Association
County Carlow Women's Network

DES Action Ireland
Disabled Women's Working Group
Dóchas for Women
Donegal Traveller Women's Project
Donegal Women's Network
Doras Buí
Drogheda Area Women's Centre
Dublin 12 Women's Action Group
Dublin Adult Learning Centre
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
Dublin University Women
 Graduates Association
Dublin Wellwoman Centre
Duhallow Women's Forum

Electricity Supply Board Officers Association
Endometriosis Association of Ireland
Europa Donna Ireland

Fianna Fáil Women's Equality Forum
Fine Gael Women's Group
Fingal Centre for the Unemployed

Girls Friendly Society
Graphical, Paper & Media Union

Greater Kenmare Area Women's Network
Green Party Women's Group

Home Birth Association of Ireland

Impact
Inishowen Women's Information Network
IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation
Irish Agricultural Advisers Association
Irish Association of Social Workers
Irish Childbirth Trust
Irish Countrywomen's Association
Irish Deaf Women's Group
Irish Family Planning Association
Irish Farmers Association
Irish Federation of University Teachers
Irish Federation of University Women
Irish Girl Guides
Irish National Teachers Organisation
Irish Nurses Organisation
Irish Stillbirth & Neo Natal Deaths Society

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre
Kerry Women Together
Kilkenny Rape Crisis Centre

Labour Women
Leitrim Women's Network
Letterkenny Women's Centre Ltd
Limerick Family Planning Clinic
LinC

List of Affiliates

Longford Women's Centre
Lourdes Youth &
Community Services Ltd

Mandate
Manufacturing Science & Finance Union
Mayo Rape Crisis Centre
Methodist Women's Association
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Mothers' Union
Mountwood Fitzgerald Community
Development Centre

NASC Ban
National Association of Widows in Ireland
National Children's Nurseries Association
National Network of Women's Refuges
Network Kildare
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
North Leitrim Women's Centre
North West Inner City Women's Network

Older Women's Network
One Parent Exchange & Network
OSS Cork

Parlaimint na mBan
Pavee Point
Positive Action
Presbyterian Women's Association
Public Service Executive Union

Rathcoole Women's Development Group
Rape Crisis Network Ireland
Reach to Recovery
Rehab Women's Group
Retrieve Foundation
Rowlagh Women's Group Ltd
Ruhama Women's Project
Rural Community Care Network

Second Chance Education Project for Women
Sinn Féin National Women's Forum
SIPTU National Women's Committee
Sláinte Pobal
Sonas Housing Association
Soroptimists International
Southwest Kerry Women's Association
Summerhill Active Retirement Group

Teachers Union of Ireland
Teach Tearmainn Women's Refuge
Tearmann Domestic Violence Service
Tipperary Women's Networking Group
Tralee Women's Resource Centre
Triskele Community Training & Development
Tuam Community Development Resource Centre
Tuam Women's Group
Tullamore Women's Network

UCC Women's Studies
UCD Women Graduates Association
UNIFEM Women's Committee

Vital Voices

Waterford Rape & Sexual Abuse Service
Waterford Student Mothers Group
Waterford Women's Centre
West Clare Women's Forum
Western Women's Link
Women Educating for Transformation
Women in Technology & Science
Women in Media & Entertainment
Women Managers Network for the Civil Service
Women of the North East Galway
Women of the North West
Women Together Tallaght Network
Women's Aid
Women's Community Projects
(Mullingar) Association
Women's Education Research & Resource Centre
Women's Health Project for Prostitutes
Women's Human Rights Project
Women's International League
for Peace & Freedom
Women's Studies Centre

Zonta Club of Dublin

List of Executive Board, Staff & Auditors

Outgoing Executive Board Members

Mary Kelly (Chair) – retired June 2004
Frances Byrne (Deputy Chair) - resigned May 2004
Mary Allen - retired June 2004
Philomena Harrington - retired June 2004
Deirdre Healy - retired June 2004
Tess Murphy - retired June 2004

Incoming Executive Board Members

Thérèse Murphy
(Chair - elected to the Board June 2004 and to the Chair November 2004)
Marie Hainsworth
(Deputy Chair - elected November 2004)
Isobel Butler
Noirín Clancy
Ellen Dillon
Aileen Heverin
Maureen McGovern
Rhona McSweeney
Kathleen O' Sullivan
Clare Treacy
Stephanie Whyte

Attendance Record Outgoing Board

The Outgoing Executive Board met 6 times during 2004.

Mary Kelly (6); Frances Byrne (4); Mary Allen (6); Phil Harrington(1); Deirdre Healy (6); Tess Murphy (6); Rhona McSweeney (3);

Attendance Record Incoming Board

The Executive Board met 3 times 2004.

Thérèse Murphy (3) ; Marie Hainsworth (1); Isobel Butler (3); Noirin Clancy (3); Ellen Dillon (3); Aileen Heverin (2); Maureen McGovern (0); Rhona McSweeney (1); Kathleen O' Sullivan (1); Clare Treacy (3); Stephanie Whyte (3);

Secretary

Bridget O' Sullivan

Registered Office

9 Marlborough Court, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Business Address

9 Marlborough Court, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Registered Charity Number :

CHY 11760

Auditors

Grant Thornton
Chartered Accountants
24-26 City Quay, Dublin 2.

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
P.O. Box 3131
Baggot Street, Dublin 2

Staff

Director

Joanna McMinn

Head of Finance & Operations

Bridget O' Sullivan

Head of Policy

Orla O' Connor

Head of Outreach & Practice

Rachel Doyle

IFM Project Coordinato

Anne Brennan

Policy & Outreach Facilitator

Claire Dunne

Policy & Outreach Facilitator

Annie Dillon

Communications & Development Officer

Ciara O' Shea

Information Officer

Helen Farrell

Membership & IT Administrator

Imelda Brown

PA & Administrator

Enca Gonzalez Cambil

Receptionist

Gertrude Hoey

NWCI Board/Staff Representation 2004

ADM Community Development & Equality Advisory Group	European Movement	National Rural Development Forum
ADM Management Local Development Social Inclusion Programme	European Network Against Racism – Ireland	National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women
Amnesty International Advisory Committee (VAW)	European Women's Lobby Board	NGO Coalition on Violence Against Women
Carers Advisory Group for the Equality Authority	Expert Consultancy Group to NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland)	Outhouse (LGBT Community and Resource Centre)
City of Dublin VEC Adult Education Committee	Forum on Europe	Pavee Point Information Service Steering Committee
Community Platform	Freedom from Pornography Campaign	Power Partnership
Development Information Group for Librarians	Gender Equality Unit – DJELR	Public Health Alliance of Ireland
Eastern Health Board	Gender Equality Unit – DES	Rights Make the Difference Campaign
EEL Working Group – Department of Education & Science	ICCL Immigration Sub-Committee	University of Limerick Governing Body
Employment Policy Group	InMagic Users Group (group of librarians who use InMagic cataloguing software)	Women's Human Rights Alliance
Equality Authority Board	Irish Childcare Policy Network	Women's Health Council Board
Equality Coalition	Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women	Women's Health Council National Planning Forum
Equality for Women Measure (EWM) Technical Advisory Group	National Adult Learning Council (NALC)	Perpetrators Subgroup – National Steering Committee on VAW
Equality Investigations User Group	National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee	
Equality Tribunal Users Forum	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism	
	National Economic and Social Forum (NESF)	