

2009

# ANNUAL REPORT



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

**Support our NO GOING  
BACK campaign**

Our **VISION** is of an Ireland where all women and men have equal power to shape society and their own lives. We work to promote equality and empower women





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## CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD - MAURA BUTLER



*Maura Butler, Chairperson, NWCI*

With the national economy in crisis, the impact on women has been profound, and 2009 has been a very busy year for the NWCI. This publication details how we used our collective energies to work on behalf of the membership.

On the retirement of our former CEO we engaged in a recruitment process and appointed our current CEO, Susan McKay in May 2009. Her commitment and that of all the staff to the implementation of our strategic plan and policies, has significantly increased the profile and membership of NWCI. The development of a new website has been instrumental in this.

Through our popular Members Meetings and events arranged in conjunction with the Ireland office of the European Commission, we maximised crucial networking space.

The NWCI continued to represent its members with relevant stakeholders in Government and elsewhere, and dedicated many hours to lobbying against the inequalities that women continue to face in many spheres. We lobbied on: the lack of parity democracy, as Ireland languishes at 85th in the world; the violence against women that is increasing; the budgetary cuts to services and social welfare for women and families; the cuts to the funding of our member organisations; reproductive health rights for women and health provision rights in general; UN work on resolution 1325 and work with the Women's Human Rights Alliance.

Our submissions and publications during the past year, in support of our policies and in compiling necessary research to inform our work for women in Ireland, are accessible on our website. We continued to be represented in the European Women's Lobby. We made plans for me to attend and represent the views of our members at the UN CSW 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in New York.

All of this work has been made possible because of the commitment of the volunteers on our Board, our CEO and staff and the input of our active and increasing membership. It has been a challenging year organisationally, as we engaged in an organisational restructuring which meant that some staff members moved on. We continued to review and amend our internal policies to ensure that we operated within the best governance practice.

It has been a privilege for me as Chairperson to have been involved with NWCI as it met its mandate with an enthusiasm and commitment that was strengthened rather than daunted by a recession presided over by largely male decision makers.



## CEO STATEMENT, SUSAN McKAY

I was appointed as the new director of the National Women's Council in May 2009. Having worked for many years as a journalist and writer, I was immediately struck by the wealth of stories to be told about the work my new organization was doing. Given that it is the voice of women in Ireland, the organization was not well enough known.

I was also, inevitably struck by the fact that we were facing into hard, hard times, and that many of our members were potentially facing cuts that could seriously damage them or even lead to their closure. Years of hard, good work were at risk of being lost. The McCarthy Report, soon afterwards, made for a true baptism of fire.



*Susan McKay, CEO NWCI*

I'd worked in the women's movement in the North in the 1980's. Now, I found, there was little talk of a women's movement, little talk about feminism. There was talk instead of gender - gender based violence, gender equality. I resolved that I would push for the NWCI to become known as the Women's Council, rather than the Council, as it was often called, even by our own staff, and for it to be clearly a feminist organization, campaigning for women's rights. That's what we are, that's what we do, and despite everything, we achieved a lot in 2009.

The *No Going Back* campaign was so called because it was about refusing to give up what feminists had struggled to win for us.

I urge you to read this report and if you like what we do, and you want to be involved in helping us to grow and develop, please join us.

We have a lot to do before we achieve our aim of equality for all women and men in Ireland.



**YEAR in**  
**REVIEW**



## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

### FORMER CEO'S DEPARTURE

We had a great International Women's Day 2009, as co-hosts with Banulacht of a conference in Croke Park. Soon afterwards, the NWCI's director of 8 years, Joanna McMinn, left the NWCI to concentrate on her work for the Equality Rights Alliance, (ERA) Hanna's House and other interests. Joanna was to the fore in establishing the ERA, and our vice chairperson, Therese Murphy, took a lead in resigning from the board of the Equality Authority in protest over cuts which had made it unviable.

### NO GOING BACK

Following staff losses due to lack of sufficient funding, the remaining staff had to work incredibly hard throughout 2009 as the workload did not substantially decrease. A significant restructuring of staffing was begun in 2009 by the CEO and the Board.

That summer sense of reaching a quiet time was rudely interrupted by the McCarthy Report, which, if implemented, would have devastating consequences for the NWCI, our member groups, and the women of Ireland in general. Our '*No Going Back*' campaign began immediately.

We were particularly worried by the rise in demand for frontline services on Violence Against Women (VAW). Some of this is undoubtedly linked to the recession, with violent men under stress. In addition, Rape Crisis Centres have been inundated with calls since the publication of reports into clerical child sex abuse. In response, overloaded and historically underfunded services were warned by the government to expect funding cuts.

We took part along with members on the government's consultative group towards a national strategy on gender based violence, and we continued to chair the Irish Observatory on VAW.

We worked with our European sisters in the European Women's Lobby, whose vice president is our vice chairperson, Therese Murphy, to provide feminist analysis of the economic crisis.



*Susan McKay, CEO, NWCI*



*Galway poet, Rita Anne Higgins*

In September, 2009 we launched '*No Going Back*' with a public meeting in Dublin at which our friend, the Galway poet Rita Anne Higgins, read her new poem, 'The Darkness'. You can read it at the end of this annual report.

[see, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) *Rita Ann Higgins Reads the Darkness* ]

I spoke at the 15,000 strong SIPTU march against cuts through Dublin. See my speech on our website at [www.nwci.ie/news/speeches](http://www.nwci.ie/news/speeches)



Head of policy, Orla O'Connor and Head of Outreach, Rachel Doyle spoke at other meetings and protests around the country. We also met politicians from all the parties including the then Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin, and Labour's finance spokesperson, Joan Burton. Chairperson Maura Butler and I met the Minister for Equality, Disability and Mental Health, John Moloney, who promised to proceed with a sub-committee on women in decision making.

The end of the year saw us focussing on the campaign against cuts to services and social welfare for women and families in the budget. Our policy work focussed in particular on proposed cuts to child benefit. We suffered cuts to our funding, but our core grant was left intact. Some of our members were badly hit and we began working with them in an attempt to salvage their organisations.

### **CELEBRATION OF MARY ROBINSON**

The highlight of 2009 for the National Women's Council was our celebration of Mary Robinson, to mark the fact that she had been awarded the US Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

We organized the event in December 2009 in conjunction with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Emer Costello, and invited 400 of her family, her friends and her allies from many spheres, members of the NWCI, its friends, colleagues, public figures, city councillors and dignitaries to join us in the beautiful atrium of City Hall.



*Mary Robinson & Susan McKay CEO NWCI*



President Obama had said of those he honoured with the Medal of Freedom that they had blazed trails and broken down barriers. We recognised Mary Robinson in that. He spoke of her as an advocate for the hungry, the hunted, the forgotten and the ignored. He described her as a crusader for women and those without a voice in Ireland.



*Maura Butler NWCi Chairperson, Mary Robinson, Emer Costello, Mayor of Dublin, & Susan McKay CEO NWCi*

He said, “She has not only shone a light on human suffering, she has illuminated a better future for the world.”

In her acceptance speech in Washington, Mary Robinson told the world that we must not allow ourselves to become over familiar with or lose sight of the intolerable. She told us that we must all accept the challenge posed by President Obama and act as agents of change.



*Maura Butler NWCi Chairperson, Mary Robinson, & Susan McKay CEO NWCi*

That night in City Hall, she thanked us, and we thanked her for inspiring us and making us believe that with courage and integrity, change is possible, even in the bad times. After the speeches, Marie Mulholland raised the dome of City Hall with two magnificent songs.



## WORKING WITH OUR MEMBERS



*Susan McKay, NWCI Michelle O'Donovan & Claire O'Callaghan of Network Ireland*

As the new CEO, I was delighted to meet many of our members, through visits and speaking engagements all over the country, from Mental Health Week with the Clare Women's Network, to 'Telling Our Stories' with women in Ballymun, to Network Ireland's conference for women in business in Westport, to seminars on women in Armed Conflict Situations organised by AkiDwA & Hanna's House.



*Speakers at the Armed Conflict Seminar*

*Salome Mbugua, National Director of AkiDwA, Nura Hajji, Tendai Madondo of Christian Aid, Caroline Munyi & Susan McKay of NWCI.*



I launched a great cross border initiative on racism and sectarianism run by the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) in Cavan and the Women's Institute in Fermanagh with the involvement of the Polish women's group and the network of Afro-Caribbean women.

I took part in many events, including one organised by the Department of the Taoiseach to launch an initiative on North- south co-operation. I spoke at many others including an Irish Family Planning Association ( IFPA) conference on reproductive rights, and the Labour Party women's conference in the Mansion House. I also spoke at a summer school on human and civil rights, and at an event organised by the Irish Human Rights Commission on International Human Rights Day.

We supported the IFPA in its work, nationally and internationally on reproductive health rights for women, including the right to choose abortion. We took part in a number of debates with EU commissioners in the run up to the Lisbon Treaty, including a meeting with President José Manuel Durão Barroso in Limerick. [See [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) - Drogheda: Margot Wallstrom - Environment, Lisbon , Gender Equality.]

In one of the most unusual events I've taken part in, I shared a platform in UCD with 2 of the Guerrilla Girls - these are American artists who campaign in gorilla masks, subversive humour and hard research to expose sexism in art and the media. They promote art by women and do surveys showing how few women artists make it into the big galleries



*The Guerrilla Girls and Susan McKay*

See their website for their Irish and other research. [www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)



## NEW WEBSITE, NEW IMAGE

Our website was awkward and out of date, as was our logo. After a lot of work and training, we were delighted to have blogger extraordinaire Suzy Byrne and Emma O’Kelly, education and science correspondent of RTE, launch our new site, complete with our new logo. We did a lot of work to make it interactive and useful to our members. We got a new banner which was immediately put into action.

## THE ABSENCE OF WOMEN

The absence of women from decision making was glaring as the country plunged into downturn. We highlighted this. Following the June EU and local elections, our communications officer, Ciara O’Shea, did a survey of women who stood in the local elections to find out what it had been like for them. There had been some truly awful media coverage during the elections, with one newspaper running a ‘best babe’ contest. Some of the candidates reported some fairly difficult experiences. I endlessly debated quotas with Senator Mary O’Rourke on local and national radio. We think they are necessary - she is against them.



We made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution on the Review of the Electoral System for Dail Eireann.

This submission followed an oral presentation which Orla and I wrote and which I presented to the Committee in November. [<http://www.nwci.ie/publications/fulllist.html>]

## WOMEN OF THE WORLD

We responded to a Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) request to take part in a consultative group on the preparation of Ireland’s long delayed National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Resolution 1325, on women peace and security. We appointed an excellent expert delegation from among our members, but the DFA had not,

Situations of Women in Armed Conflict

The Invisible Role of Women in Armed Conflict

by the end of the year, called a meeting. Also on Resolution 1325, I attended a cross learning trip to Timor Leste with DFA officials, special envoy, Nuala O’Loan, and a delegation of women from the North. The event was interesting, but disappointing, in that it was poorly organised and thought out. We worked closely with our migrant women members on their national and international campaigns.



## REPORT FROM THE HEAD OF POLICY



*Orla O'Connor, Head of Policy*

### NATIONAL SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

The NWCI continued to work in national social partnership along with the other members of the Community & Voluntary Pillar (CVP). At the beginning of the year, the CVP called on government to develop comprehensive measures to foster sustainable economic recovery, and to ensure that the most vulnerable were protected from cutbacks. In particular, we stressed that social services, relied on in particular by women, should be maintained.

The NWCI stressed the economic vulnerabilities faced by women, through loss of work and cuts to childcare.

We participated in the review of social partnership, contributing to the development of indicators to monitor progress on the social policy goals identified in the Towards 2016 agreement. We met with the Minister for Finance in November, and put forward our proposals for Budget 2011.

I gave a presentation to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Women's Committee on women and the recession, and we discussed how the NWCI and ICTU could work in solidarity, particularly in the areas of pensions and the recognition of atypical work. We organised a series of joint seminars with TASC on women, migration and recession and women and the economy.

### THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL (NESC)

I was selected to fill a vacancy in the NESC, and was able to ensure that its report, *Well Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland* had a strong gender analysis. [see [www.nesc.ie](http://www.nesc.ie) ]

### NWCI WORK ON BUDGETS IN 2009

In our submission on the Supplementary Budget in April we urged government to take a strategic approach to securing recovery, rather than 'cutting' its way through the crisis. Recommendations were included on childcare; health; protecting social welfare payments and reforming the pension system; the National Women's Strategy, taxation reform and protecting the National Minimum Wage

[see <http://www.nwci.ie/publications/fulllist/nwci-prebudget-submission-2009-supplementary-budget/> ]



We worked on a framework which urged a holistic approach to the position of women in work, in the social welfare system, in education and training programmes and in childcare provision. In this model, work life balance is incorporated into social and labour market policy.

We launched documents to influence the budgetary decision making process and to support our No Going Back campaign:

- Child Benefit Briefing Paper “All Our Children”,
- NWCI Response to the McCarthy Report,
- NWCI Pre Budget Submission 2010.

We met the Minister for Social & Family Affairs, and presented at the Department’s Pre-Budget Forum. The NWCI and the National Women’s Collective met jointly with Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs in relation to cuts to women’s community based organisations. We also met with relevant spokespersons in the various political parties.



*Valerie O'Carroll, social welfare campaign worker with Orla O'Connor, head of policy speaking at a seminar in Limerick,*

The NWCI also worked with other organisations:

- The Poor Can't Pay campaign is a broad alliance of trade union and community organisations with three key demands: protect social welfare payments from cuts; reinstate the social welfare, Christmas Bonus; and no cuts to the minimum wage. [see [www.thepoorcantpay.ie](http://www.thepoorcantpay.ie) ]





- The NWCI contributed to the development of the Community Platform Budget submission, representing the Platform’s member organisations.

## CHILD BENEFIT



The NWCI and the Children’s Rights Alliance (CRA) met with the Commission on Taxation to argue against taxing Child Benefit. We developed an online survey to capture the importance of Child Benefit to parents and children.



A conference on Child Benefit - including NWCI, One Parent Exchange Network (OPEN), One Family, Children's Rights Alliance, and PACUB [Protest Against Child Unfriendly Budget] got media attention for the issue and the Labour Party placed a Private Members Bill.

It did not pass but the Dáil debate clarified the support of both Labour and Fine Gael for the NWCI position.

## **SOCIAL WELFARE REFORM CAMPAIGN**

In 2009, the campaign focus was to bring issues identified at the regional focus groups to national level. The key issues identified were:

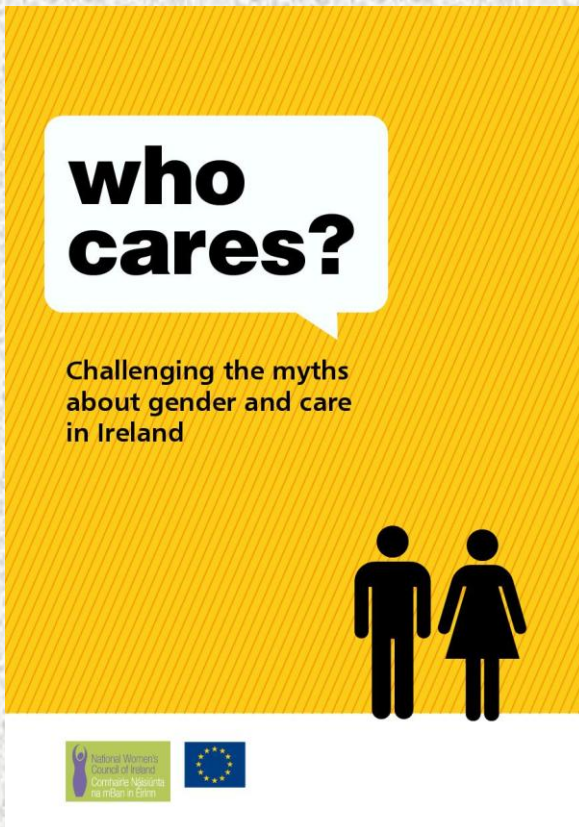
- Valuing care work;
- Qualified adults;
- Reduced pension entitlements as a result of the marriage bar.

We gathered hundreds of testimonies from women who had suffered as a result of the marriage bar. We organised regional meetings in Kerry and Ennis in March, and in Limerick in May when representatives from the Green Party, Sinn Fein, Labour and Fine Gael attended. The meetings discussed the marriage bar, and how the recession was impacting on women. Funding for the campaign ended in June but we continued to work on the issues in a scaled down way.

The NWCI liaised with Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) to explore the options on taking a legal case for discrimination arising from the marriage bar.

## WHO CARES? CHALLENGING THE MYTHS ABOUT CARE AND GENDER IN IRELAND

In October, the NWCI launched a new pamphlet. *Who Cares?* explodes the myths and reveals the truth about caring in Irish society – women do 86% of the supervision of children and 82% of caring for adults – and highlights the impact of providing care on women's lives, health, employment, and pensions. The pamphlet calls for change in society to realise more balanced sharing of care work between the sexes.



*Who Cares?* Was funded by the Equality Authority as part of the EU Year of Equal Opportunities (2008). [[www.nwci.ie/](http://www.nwci.ie/)]

### THE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

The NWCI is on the Steering Group of the 'Advocacy Initiative' (AdIn). The initiative recognises that advocacy is essential to the role of civil society organisations (CSO) but that this is under threat in this country at this time. The purpose of AdIn is to generate an informed debate and enhance capacity in exercising advocacy within the sector.

### PENSIONS POLICY

The NWCI met with Fine Gael while the party was drawing up its pension policy. We stressed the need to have a women friendly pension policy and to develop a universal pension.



*Queue's at the post office grew significantly in 2009*



## REPORT FROM THE HEAD OF OUTREACH



*Rachel Doyle, Head Of Outreach*

On the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 - the National Women's Council of Ireland and the National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks invited 24 locally based women's networks funded under the Community Development Programme (CDP) to an urgent meeting in Dublin, after the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs announced that 4 networks were to close immediately.

The rest, along with all other CDPs (156) in the country, were to wind down their voluntary Boards of management, hand over their assets to their Local Partnership Company and cease operating as independent entities. The new Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP - bringing Partnerships and CDPs together) was announced on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

The women expressed deep dissatisfaction with the process. They believed the independent women's and community development infrastructure which has grown throughout Ireland over the past 20 years as a result of the hard work of volunteers and staff is being wiped away with no respect, no consultation and no acknowledgement of the excellent work that has been done.



*"We need to generate alternatives," women said. "Passion has brought us here. What is the future for community development and for grass roots women's groups? Our autonomy is crucial to the way we work. How can we hold onto it? Who will represent women now? Women and children are always hit first - what can we do to stop this? Why is this happening? Our groups give confidence to women and an important role in decision making - will we lose everything? We need collective action."*

The Women's Council and the Collective agreed to develop a strategy to keep the women's networks and so ensure that women's needs at local level continue to be represented.



## NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY

The government made disastrous cuts to funding for the National Women's Strategy, claiming that the money was needed for Garda overtime, and for FAS programmes. Funds for the Equality for Women Measure, to which many of our members had applied, were slashed. We protested about this at monitoring committee meetings. We instigated meetings of the social partners on the Committee to identify ways of working in solidarity to support the implementation of the strategy.



### 'NO GOING BACK'

Local women's groups and networks, Community Development Projects (CDPs) and groups providing services to women experiencing violence all bore the brunt

of cuts or dramatic changes.

After consulting with members, we launched our 'No Going Back' campaign, highlighting the facts about inequality and insisting that equality for women is not a luxury but a necessity.

We pointed out that the European Commission had urged governments to be mindful of the impact of recession on women, and that the Irish government had not done so.

With the help of policy experts from our membership, and following a survey of members, we wrote a detailed response to the McCarthy report, and our public meeting in September was addressed by community and trade union leaders



## WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ALLIANCE

We continued to convene the Women's Human Rights Alliance (WHRA) and appointed a researcher to produce a shadow report on the Irish Government's Report on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with a focus on the right to health. We organised 12 discussion groups around the country. Despite assurances from the Department of Foreign Affairs Human Rights Unit that the Government report would be produced in 2009 this did not materialise.



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2009

250 women attended our International Women's Day event in Croke Park this year. The conference theme was celebrating 30 years of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Speakers, discussion workshops, drama and music all added to a great and inspiring day.



## MEMBERS MEETINGS

Our first members meeting of 2009 is discussed in the health section of this report. We held our second members meeting *“Why Quotas? Exploring the debate behind quotas as a mechanism to build women’s participation in decision making”* in April. This discussion informed our work later in the year on this central subject.

*“The Lisbon II Referendum - What does the treaty mean for women?”*

In September we held our 3<sup>rd</sup> members meeting. Our membership was divided on the referendum, so we did not take a position, but instead provided an opportunity to debate and discuss the core elements of the Treaty. We invited Proinsias de Rossa (Labour MEP) and Brigitte Triems [President European Women’s Lobby (EWL)] to argue for a ‘YES’ vote, while Mary Lou McDonald (Former MEP, and Sinn Fein Vice- President) and Ailbhe Smyth (People Before Profit Alliance) urged a ‘NO’ vote.



*Proinsias De Rossa & Brigitte Triems*

*Mary Lou McDonald & Ailbhe Smyth*







## REPORT FROM WOMEN'S HEALTH WORKER

### THE NWCI WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY 2008-2010



Having gathered insights from our members about their work on women's health and inequalities in the public health system; the NWCI "Women's Right to Health" Campaign for a one-tier universal health system was launched at our February 2009 Member's Meeting, "Short-Changed on Health Spending?"

Members welcomed the fact that all of the opposition parties sought an end to the two tier system, and agreed that in addition the system must deliver significant improvements in access to women friendly primary care, and ensure greater transparency and accountability. The meeting concluded with member's calling for an end to the creeping privatization of the Public Health Service. [ See: <http://www.nwci.ie/publications/fulllist/nwci-enevs-june-2009/>]

*Women's Health Worker, Joanne Vance*

## RIGHT TO HEALTH CAMPAIGN

In partnership with our members and other key organisations, we organised 6 workshops, sharing and developing our "Women's Right to Health" campaign. Two were held in Cork, supported by Cork City Partnership and Cork Women's Political Association.



*Donegal workshop hosted by Donegal Women's Network & National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks*



Two workshops were held in Co Donegal, in June and November, hosted by the Donegal Women's Network and the National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks. As a result, a Donegal women's health forum is being established to facilitate discussion and local action.

The Galway "Women's right to Health workshop was organised in conjunction with the National Travellers Women's Forum and the Waterford workshop was hosted by the Waterford Women's Centre.

Arising from the workshops, we produced a local women's health manifesto, to lobby politicians, in advance of the local and European elections.



*Donegal workshop hosted by Donegal Women's Network & National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks*

Concerns discussed included: the availability of Breast Cancer Services, Violence against women and access to sexual and reproductive health services for young women and disabled, the stress involved in carrying the burden of care and mental health awareness.

The findings of the workshops are being compiled by the Women's Human Rights Alliance into a national consultation document.



## SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN AND CANCER SERVICES



### *Pearl of Wisdom*

The final roll out of Breast Check, to the West, North - West and South was completed in 2009. From Donegal to North Leitrim to Waterford and Tipperary, our members have been working with the National Cancer Screening Services to ensure that breast and cervical cancer services are available and physically accessible in their region for all women.

Members lobbied government to increase the upper age limit for BreastCheck to 70years and have fought for the introduction of the National HPV Vaccination Programme to protect girls against cervical cancer.

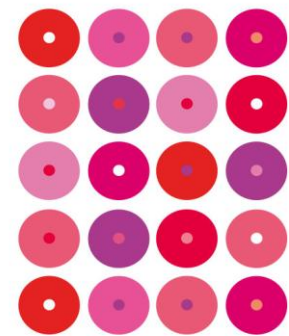
The Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) launched the Pearl of Wisdom campaign, and Cervical Check and the Health Council produced three reports on Breast, Cervical and Ovarian Cancer, outlining treatments available and survival rates for women.

In February we held a workshop “What Women Need to Know about breast cancer services” with Europa Donna, the National Collective of Community-based Women’s Network, Action Breast Cancer, National Breast Check and Dessa to investigate the reasons why there was such a low take up of screening in disadvantaged areas.

Europa Donna agreed to produce a leaflet, and “9 things women should know about breast cancer” was launched by Minister Mary Harney in October, with 750,000 leaflets distributed throughout the country.

The National Steering Committee for Ireland’s Plan of Action to Address FGM monitored the National Action Plan (NAP)’s progress and supported the activities of our lead partners AkiDwA and IFPA. It urged the government to introduce legislation to outlaw the practice of FGM in Ireland and on Irish born children abroad.

9 things you should know about breast cancer





## HSE MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN HEALTH SERVICE POLICY AND PROVISION

The HSE invited us to participate on an inter-sectoral project team set up by the Population Health Directorate, to develop a study on this. The study will fit the health objectives outlined in the National Women's Strategy 2006-2013. We hope it will address many of the issues raised by our members; specifically the lack of opportunity for women to participate in the design and delivery of services.

### NDA/NWCI PREGNANCY RESEARCH STEERING COMMITTEE

The National Disability Authority (NDA) commissioned this three part project in a joint initiative with the NWCI. Trinity College Dublin, School of Midwifery began work on the study in 2008. The first two parts were finalised by the NDA in September and are available on the NDA website [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie). A first draft of the final report, addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the publicly funded health services in Ireland for women with disabilities in relation to pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood; will be published in 2010.

For a list of and copies of our submissions on health see <http://www.nwci.ie/publications/fulllist.html>

We worked positively with state agencies, and had a number of important meetings, including one with Professor Brendan Drumm, CEO of the HSE, to discuss the issue of Service User involvement. We also met with Maeve Cussack Manager of BreastCheck and Cervical Check, to discuss the low uptake in screening services in disadvantaged communities.

We also met HSE Women's Health Promotion Officers to discuss women's health initiatives in the HSE regions; the NWCI Health Strategy and the progress on the health objectives of the National Women's Strategy.

Our health officer spoke at the TCD Centre for Health Management and Policy's Annual Seminar, on the subject of health financing. We were invited to join the Centre for Cross Border Studies/ Institute of Public Health Advisory Group for their Intereg project "Exploring the potential for cross border hospital services in the border region". This will be completed by December 2010.



*Elva O'Callaghan, National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks, Kathleen Sheridan, Donegal Women's Network, L Joanne Vance, Women's Health Worker NWCI*





*Company Secretary and Head  
of Finance & Ops, Maureen  
Kelly*

## REPORT BY COMPANY SECRETARY AND HEAD OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

### REPORT FROM COMPANY SECRETARY

At our AGM in 2009 a motion was agreed to introduce quotas to the Executive Board of the NWCI.

As a result the Articles of Association of the NWCI Ltd were altered to include the following clause:

*At least four of the Executive Members at (ii) above shall be elected from Member organisations who specifically target and work with the following;*

- Older women/Young women
- Traveller women
- Women from religious minorities
- Disabled women
- Women from minority ethnic groups
- Lone parent women
- Lesbian women
- Women living in poverty
- Women experiencing violence

At our AGM in June 2010 we will see the first impact of this clause which is intended to make our Board more representative of our total membership. It is hoped that this example of how quotas should and can work may be taken up by our political leaders to make Ireland a more inclusive and equal society in which our political leaders are representative of the makeup of the population.



## **Financial Review of the Year**

In 2009 the organisation continued to work on the implementation of its strategic plan 2006-2010. It carried out a range of activities, maintaining a high standard of service within its budget and resources.

## **End of Year Position**

At the end of the year, the accounts show operating reserves of €88,292 and an infrastructural fund of €200,000. These reserves will be used to fund the ongoing operational and infrastructural needs of the organisation in 2010.

## **Financial Outlook for 2010**

At the end of 2009 and into early 2010 the NWCI undertook a restructuring programme designed to make the organisation better able to cope with the restricted funding environment in which many NGO's now find themselves. As a result it is envisioned that the NWCI will operate within budget for 2010. This new structure will also assist the NWCI in dealing with the as yet unknown challenges into the future.

## **Financial Priorities for 2010 are as follows:**

- Continuing to look for new funding opportunities to ensure achievement of the Strategic Plan objectives.
- Sourcing of a new Office Premises.
- Efficient and effective financial management of its resources (financial and staff).
- Ongoing development of the internal financial management systems and procedures.
- Ongoing restructuring of staff.

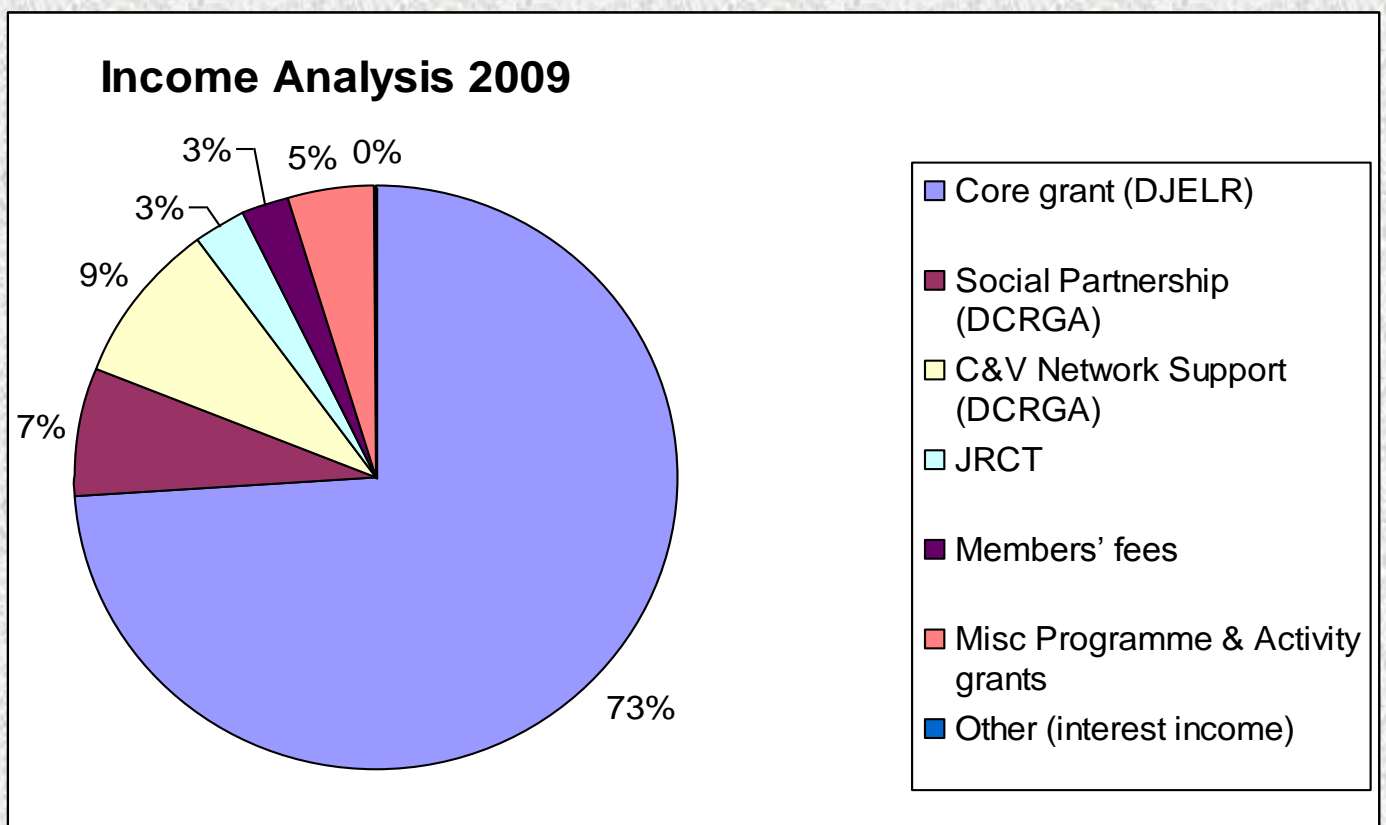
## **2009 Financial Statements**

As in previous years the NWCI has continued to prepare its financial statements in accordance with the format recommended by the UK SORP 2005.



## Income Analysis 2009

Core grant (DJELR)	€548,000
Social Partnership (DCRGA)	€52,800
C&V Network Support (DCRGA)	€67,502
JRCT	€19,175
Members' fees	€20,262
Misc Programme & Activity grants	€33,528
Other (interest income)	€678
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>€741,945</b>

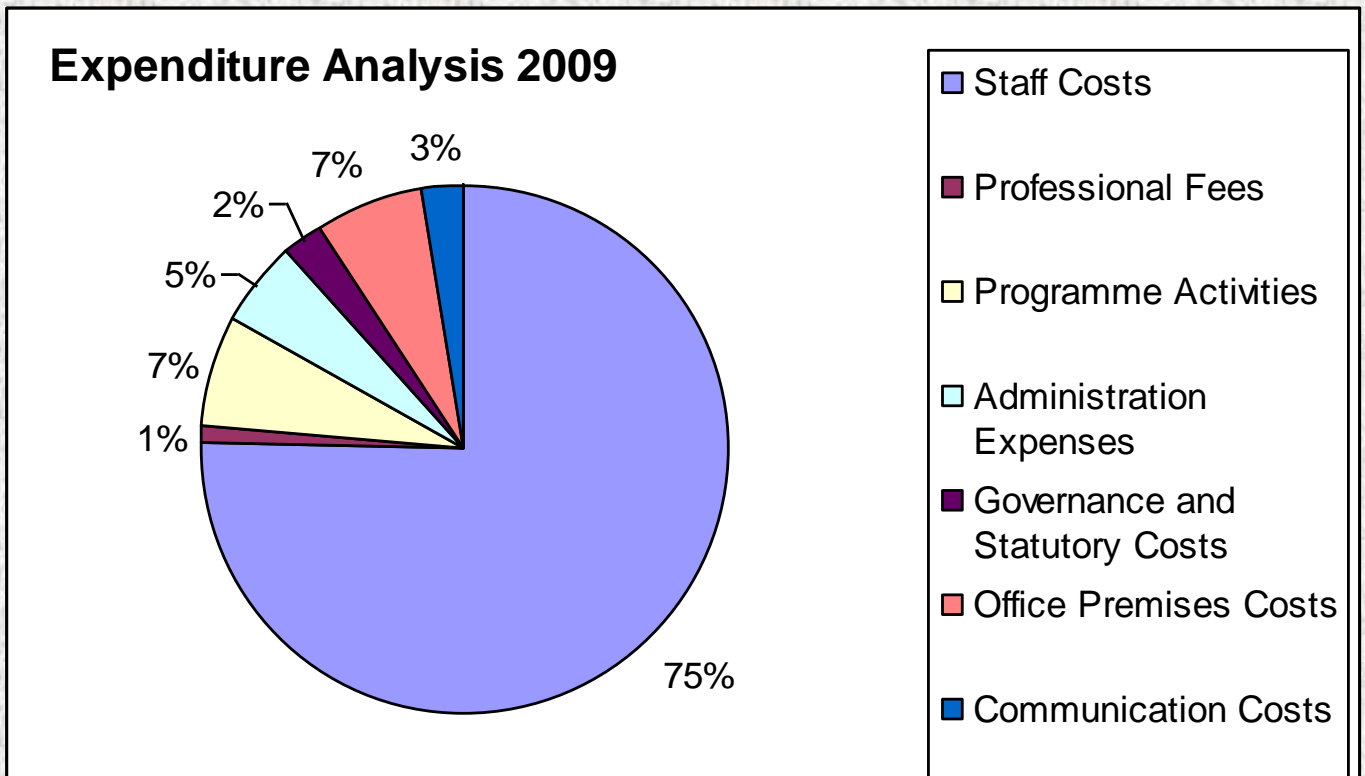


DJELR - Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform  
 DCRGA - Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs  
 JRCT - Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust



## Expenditure Analysis 2009

Staff Costs	€533,447
Professional Fees	€8,134
Programme Activities	€47,757
Administration Expenses	€38,690
Governance and Statutory Costs	€16,160
Office Premises Costs	€47,958
Communication Costs	€17,767
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>€709,913</b>



**Summary Accounts For The National Women's Council Of Ireland Limited  
Amalgamated Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2009**

	2009	2008
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible Assets	2,289	10,038
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	7,548	26,941
Cash at bank and in hand	331,898	307,901
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>339,446</b>	<b>334,842</b>
<b>CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>53,443</b>	<b>88,620</b>
net current (liabilities)/assets	286,003	246,222
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>288,292</b>	<b>256,260</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Restricted Funds - Building Development Fund	200,000	200,000
Restricted Fund Other	55,420	55,129
Unrestricted Funds	32,872	1,131
<b>Member's Funds</b>	<b>288,292</b>	<b>256,260</b>

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 have been sent to members and are available on the NWCI Website (see : <http://www.nwci.ie/publications/fulllist/category/auditedaccounts/>)



**Summary Accounts for The National Women's Council Of Ireland Limited**  
**Amalgamated Statement of Financial Activities**

			Total	Total
Incoming Resources	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Funds 2009	Funds 2008
<b>Incoming Resources from Generated Funds</b>				
Voluntary Income - Grants	167,502	548,000	715,502	829,757
Membership Subscriptions		20,262	20,262	23,776
Other		5,503	5,503	531
Interest Income	632	46	678	8,623
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>168,134</b>	<b>573,811</b>	<b>741,945</b>	<b>862,687</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>				
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income	8,883	672	9,555	8,933
Programme Activities	156,633	519,431	676,064	807,291
Governance and Professional Costs	2,327	21,967	24,294	45,082
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>167,843</b>	<b>542,070</b>	<b>709,913</b>	<b>861,306</b>
Net Income Resources	291	31,741	32,032	1,381
<b>Total Funds at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>255,129</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>256,260</b>	<b>254,879</b>
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>	<b>255,420</b>	<b>32,872</b>	<b>288,292</b>	<b>256,260</b>

The financial statements were approved by the directors on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2010 and signed on its behalf by: - Maura Butler, Chairperson and Therese Murphy, Deputy Chairperson

## The Darkness by Rita Anne Higgins

It was early Christmases  
it was perjury lights  
it was lets organize the masses  
it was death by devotion  
it was googleability talk  
it was doctor only cards  
it was hailstones  
it was gallstones  
it was clamping  
it was glamping  
it was jackstones  
it was January sales  
it was complex stuffing  
it was the dishcloth dreams  
it was back on the dole queues  
it was Fás schemes  
it was refuse charges  
it was Fás expenses  
it was soap operas  
it was pope operas  
it was Spiddal in the middle  
it was rain rain rain  
it was kidney stones  
it was Neven Henaff  
it was tribunals  
it was lost receipts  
it was a limo here a limo there  
it was SSIA's  
it was Irish Nazis  
it was grey days  
it was boy racers  
it was MRSA days  
it was Namaphobia  
it was mimicry Sunday  
it was how are u texts  
it was ex, it was pect  
it was ations  
it was swine flu  
it was birdie flu  
it was real male  
it was single male  
it was jingle mail  
it was Biffo's budget  
it was Robo cop direct/ not  
it was bale-out or pale out  
it was paper profit

it was cranks, it was foreign  
owned banks  
it was inside information  
it was an act of contrition  
it was nasty it was undo-  
plasty  
with your family who had  
affluenza.  
We adore thee o Lend-A hand  
we bless thee  
because by bailouts thou hast  
saved our deposits, not.  
it was Lesbos, besbos, no to  
Lisbos.  
it was Aer Lingus  
it was Michael Cunny O Leary.  
it was broken teeth  
it was singleton mail  
it was Fingleton mail  
broken storage heaters  
a season for grieving  
a season for thieving  
it was cryptosporidium  
it was Mama, it was Nama  
it was all Hail Obama  
it was cancer centres of  
excellence (my eye)  
it was never the HSE  
it was centres of chaos  
it was lead in your water  
lead in your tea  
overcrowding in hospitals  
it was never the HSE  
it was sore heels  
it was cold sores  
it was credit crunch  
it was balefulls, bailouts  
it was stag nites  
it was stag nation  
it was stag flation  
it was a new four letter word  
starts with an F and ends with  
with a T  
financially untouchable \*funt  
you funting funt, or you dirty  
rotten funting funt  
it was homophobia

it was nomophobia  
it was home alonia, single male  
jingle mail  
it was six banks full  
we adore thee o cash we non-  
ebrities  
it was high cholesterol  
the weight of your sins  
the weight of your bins  
it was doomers, pooffers,  
mooffers,  
it was out of work roofers  
it was good bye Polish cleaners  
we're back on the dolers.  
It was momnesia  
it was sly tox, boytox, my  
socks  
it was 900 euro a night hotels  
in Venice  
it was chauffeurs to  
Cheltenham  
it was take me from terminal  
one to terminal three  
but don't put me in with the  
plebs  
it was take me to Kerry but  
put me in a plane  
it was Dublin to Cannes  
Cannes to Kerry  
Kerry to Cardiff  
Cardiff to Cannes  
Cannes to Northolt  
Northolt to Dublin  
it was a conference on women  
in poverty in China  
but make my hotel five star  
it was I can and I will  
and I'll do it again  
it was more green tea, fat free  
it was on your knee economy  
it was never the HSE  
the worst has yet to come  
said George Grimm Reaper  
deeper Lee  
it was never the Government  
it was an Tuatha nua, an bua  
an bord snip nua



## LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

[www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie)

### NWCI BOARD MEMBERS

Maura Butler - Chairperson  
Therese Murphy – Deputy Chairperson  
Nusha Yonkova  
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop  
Clare Treacy  
Isobel Butler  
Kate Morgan  
Aileen Heverin  
Kathleen O'Sullivan  
Breda Raggett

### Company Secretary

Maureen Kelly

### Auditors

Grant Thornton  
Chartered Accountants

City Quay

Dublin 2

### Bankers

Bank Of Ireland  
Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

### Registered Office & Business Address

National Women's Council of Ireland  
9 Marlborough Court  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
Ireland

Tel : +353 1 878 7248

Fax : +353 1 878 7301

Email : [info@nwci.ie](mailto:info@nwci.ie)

Registered in Ireland Nos. 241868 and 255063. Registered Charity  
No. CHY 11760

## STAFF & EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATION 2009

Organisation	NWCI Representative	Board/Staff member
Community Platform	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Community & Voluntary Pillar	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Dublin City Council: IWD Working Group	Joanna McMinn / Susan McKay	Staff
Community Sector Employment Forum	Maureen Kelly	Staff
Equality Authority C&V Sector	Rachel Doyle	Staff
Eq. Authority EU Mainstreaming Initiatives, Advisory Group	Orla O'Connor	Staff
EPAN Employment Policy Group	Orla O'Connor	Staff
European Network Against Racism	Rachel Doyle	Staff
European Women's Lobby Board	Therese Murphy	Board
Forum on Europe	Therese Murphy	Board
FGM National Steering Committee	Joanne Vance	Staff
Hanna's House Board	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Irish Childcare Policy Network	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women(VAW)	Joanna McMinn / Susan McKay	Staff
Irish Organisation for the Unemployed : Exec Board	Orla O'Connor	Staff
National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee	Orla O'Connor	Staff
National Disability Authority—Research Advisory Group	Joanne Vance	Staff
National Economic & Social Forum (NESF)	Orla O'Connor	Staff
National Steering Committee on VAW	Joanna McMinn / Susan McKay	Staff
National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee	Joanne McMinn / Susan McKay, Tess Murphy, Frances Byrne	Staff & Members
Women's Human Rights Alliance	Rachel Doyle & Joanne Vance	Staff



