



National Women's
Council of Ireland

Comhairle Náisiúnta
na mBan in Éirinn

Annual Report 2008

The National Women's Council of
Ireland

Making a Real Difference

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 FOREWARD

Maura Butler

I was extremely honoured and humbled by the trust placed in me by the members of the National Women's Council of Ireland (Women's Council) when I was elected as Chairperson at the EGM of October 16th 2008. The previous Chairperson Therese Murphy became Deputy Chairperson in June 2008, remaining as Acting Chairperson until the October EGM.

The workload of the Chairperson is enormous but extremely rewarding. The commitment and support of my colleagues on the Board and its many very active sub-committees, accommodates a diversity of experienced and new members, displaying the best qualities that this country and particularly its women, are famous for in terms of volunteerism and feminist solidarity. There is equal commitment from a very hard working and expert implementation team in the office of NWCI where 'going the extra mile' is an ever-present modus operandi as enthusiasm abounds in the achievement of agreed goals derived from the Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

Significant organisational events marked the early days of my term as Chairperson. Therese Murphy brought great honour to the NWCI when she was elected Joint Vice President of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) in Nice on 26th October 2008. On November 14th, NWCI hosted the visit of the Vice President of the European Commission, Margaret Wallström, who injected significant fire into the parity for democracy debate in support of the 50/50 EWL campaign with her presentation entitled '*No Democracy without Equality*'. In December the Director of the previous eight years, Joanna McMinn, indicated that her formal notice of her retirement would be received in January 2009.

During 2008, the discussion and networking at Member's Meetings has maintained the direction and contact that is the mainstay and strength of what makes NWCI the main representative voice of women in Ireland. The themes discussed were *Women and Disability, Pensions for Women, Marriage Equality and Budget 2009*. A meeting in February aimed to encourage NWCI members who would not generally stand for election to the Executive Board to go forward at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

Publications in 2008 included: *Pensions Research: 'What women want—a model of pensions that guarantees independence for women'* (May 2008), a new membership leaflet (June 2008), *Disability & Women in Ireland: Building Solidarity and Inclusion* (October 2008) and *'Forgotten Women: Personal stories of women experiencing discrimination of the State pension system'* (October 2008).

The Women's Council's work continues to build the capacity of women's organisations to organise, lobby and campaign for equality and social change, undertake outreach and development projects, provide tools and resources to support women and in particular women from marginalised communities to work for change and the advancement of all women, commission research on key policy areas such as social welfare reform, childcare and women's health. It also continues to develop policy submissions to government and other agencies on matters critical to the achievement of women's equality, represent women's issues on a broad range of statutory and non-statutory bodies, network, work collaboratively to build solidarity with the broad community sector in Ireland and to support and influence a wider social inclusion agenda. The National Women's Council engages in regular media activity to ensure the visibility of issues pertinent to women and to promote public dialogue on the position of women in Irish society by disseminating information to our members and to the general public on initiatives, programmes, policy and legislative developments of concern to women.

In my brief term as Chairperson since the end of October 2008, I have become familiar with its structures and many processes, which facilitate the delivery of the policies contained in the Strategic Plan 2006-2010. Its implementation is evidenced in the many activities during 2008. The principal activities carried out included: lobbying to increase the presence of women in decision-making arenas, participating in the National Women's Strategy Coordinating Committee, continuing to roll out the Social Welfare Reform campaign with a

specific focus on the area of pensions and the recognition of women's care work, joint publication and launch of *'Where are we now? New feminist perspectives on women in contemporary Ireland'* with TASC, campaigning for subsidised childcare provision, continuing the work on the Social Welfare Campaign through the organisation of focus group meetings, participating in Social Partnership talks, supporting the Violence Against Women sector in its engagement with diverse women's groups experiencing disadvantage/discrimination, and with the COSC Office, Management of the Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women, and dissemination of the 2nd National Report focusing on Pornography, continuing to develop our support and outreach services to NWCI affiliates and other marginalised women's groups, dissemination of the Women's Health Policy and designing a campaign strategy to progress the recommendations included in that policy, facilitate the work of the Women's Human Rights Alliance, collaborate with the European Commission Office in Ireland in the delivery of a series of conferences entitled *"Challenges for Women in Ireland in these difficult Economic Times"* and host annual events (Four Members Meetings, AGM, International Women's Day Event, Pension Research Launch, Evening Seminars and Pre- Budget Submission Launch).

Towards the end of 2008 it became clear that the Council's funding would be affected by the downturn in the economy, with the anticipated impact on the progression of our Business Plan. Our flexibility as women is our strength in changing times. The economic challenges that confront our society will demand the best of our innovation and positivism. We must be ever-vigilant that the very values and guiding principles that are the life blood of our organisation are guarded, nurtured and preserved. Those priorities of equality and human rights for women must be continually supported through lobbying and supportive outreach amongst our membership groups, in the context of care work, freedom from all forms of violence, access to parity in decision-making at all levels, economic independence at all levels, parity health care and realistic childcare. Our organisation must reflect those values within our operational structures as it works with its members to determine core priorities and undertake a broad range of activities at local, national and international levels, ensuring that every woman in Ireland has their voice heard and is thereby represented through the NWCI.

Maura Butler

Chairperson, NWCI



DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Joanna McMinn

In early 2008 the launch took place of the much awaited Equality for Women Measure (EWM). By late 2008 the voices of women's groups who were depending on this short term funding source for their projects were insistently asking: where is the funding? What is happening with the Equality for Women Measure? The NWCI tried, but failed, to get any clear answers from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform or from the Monitoring Committee on the National Women's Strategy, in which the EWM is a key positive action measure. By the end of the year, the suspicion grew that the funding was not going to be spent at all, and the Measure would be dropped.

What are the implications of this failure to deliver on the Measure? For many local women's groups, it not only means that they cannot undertake projects but for many it spells the end of their organisation, such is the precarious funding situation for many. This is a significant loss. It also means that the Irish government is failing to meet its commitment to implement the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In stark contrast to this row back on government commitment to women's equality, the NWCI worked harder than ever to pursue women's equality in all spheres – economic, affective, social/cultural and political. The achievements of the NWCI are substantial in a year when resources were constantly dwindling. The publication of the groundbreaking Pensions Report proposing a model of pensions that takes women into account, a joint publication on Feminism with TASC, submissions to government on a range of issues, as well as a Disability Policy for women's groups, all attest to the ability of the organisation to make a significant contribution to political and public discourse.

It was a year in which it became important to make a stand on the drastic government cuts to the equality and human rights infrastructure that emerged from the budget. The NWCI took a leadership role in mobilising a response to this development, and the Equality and

Rights Alliance emerged, quickly growing into a broad based and critical voice, with over 80 members from nongovernmental organisations, trade unions and universities.

This is my last Annual Report, and my last year as Director, for the NWCI. It has been my privilege to work for the organisation for the past eight years and to be of service to the members. I am grateful for the opportunities and challenges of my time with the NWCI, for the support of a committed staff team and successive boards, and for the opportunity to have met and worked with so many fabulous feminists over those years.

I warmly welcome my successor Susan McKay to the NWCI and wish her well in her leadership of the organisation in the difficult times ahead.

Joanna McMinn
Director, NWCI

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008

National Women's Strategy

The election for NWCI representatives on the National Women's Strategy (NWS) Coordinating Committee resulted in Frances Byrne from OPEN (One Parent Exchange and Network) and Tess Murphy from Longford Women's Centre being elected as the representatives. Elaine Dalton from Clare Women's Network and Ruth Smith from Aontas were elected as alternates. The NWCI Director was also part of the delegation. The NWS Representatives have been meeting on a regular basis and gave a feedback report to NWCI members on their experience of representing the NWCI at our Members Meeting on 22nd November. It was noted that the monitoring process is ineffective at present and that lengthy Departmental presentations at each meeting are not conducive to discussion or debate. The long delays in receiving progress reports also makes true monitoring almost impossible.

Women's Human Rights Alliance (WHRA)

The WHRA (facilitated by the NWCI) are continuing to meet and work is progressing on the development of a shadow report on the International covenant on Economic Social and

cultural Rights. The WHRA was set up in 2001 as a coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to support the capacity within women's organisations & to develop networking with regard to international commitments and women's human rights.

NWCI Submissions

- Budget 2009

The NWCI Pre Budget Submission was widely circulated to members, policy makers. The submission focused on the areas of:

- Economic Independence
- Income Adequacy
- Women and Decision Making
- Health
- Violence Against Women
- Integration and Anti- Racism

The social welfare aspects of the Budget Submission were presented to the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. at the Department's Pre-Budget Forum. The areas of social welfare and childcare were also focused on at the Community and Voluntary Pillar meeting with the Department of Finance. The NWCI Pre-Budget Submission 2009 is available on our website: www.nwci.ie.

The NWCI met with the Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan T.D on 29th September as part of the Community and Voluntary Pillar's (CV Pillar) engagement with the national budget. In particular, the NWCI reminded Government that women are very vulnerable at this time. The NWCI participates in Social Partnership through its membership of the Community & Voluntary Pillar (CV Pillar). The NWCI was invited by government to be a member of the CV Pillar.

Women's specific work patterns and profiles expose them to ever greater levels of unemployment and economic vulnerability. Their work in a-typical, part or flexi-time employment, for example in retail and services, is taken on in order to carry out household labour and unpaid work in caring for dependent adults and children. Cuts to child supports further reduce all women's capacity to deal with the emerging crisis as homemakers and forces them back into economic dependence within the household.

On Budget Day, the NWCI issued a critical press release on the Budget focusing on the cutbacks to Child Benefit and on the unfairness of the 1% levy for low paid workers. All NWCI press releases are available on our website: www.nwci.ie.

In addition, in Budget 2009 the government targeted more organisations involved in equal opportunities and social inclusion work. The Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) came to an end. Pobal (which is an intermediary that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality), saw its budget cut by 33% for 2009, rising to 50% in 2010. Women were affected in particular by many other budget cuts, which largely went unnoticed. COSC (the National Office for the prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence) was cut by 18%. Gender mainstreaming and positive action for women, including the National Women's Strategy, was cut by 45%.

- Submission to the Technical Review of the Social Welfare Code

The NWCI made a submission to the Department of Social and Family Affairs for the 'Technical Review of the Social Welfare Code'. The review, undertaken by the Department of Social and Family Affairs examined the compatibility of the Social Welfare Code with the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.

- Submission to the National Carers Strategy

The NWCI made a Submission to the Department of Social and Family Affairs Consultations on the National Carers' Strategy (NCS) 2008. This highlighted that the social organisation of caring and care work is fundamental to the unequal position of women in Ireland. For example, there are 160,917 carers of adults and persons with a disability. Women comprise 62% of such carers, with men comprising 38% (2006 Census, Carer's Section, www.cso.ie)

Disability Inclusion Policy for Women's Organisations

Our draft policy document on women and disability, written by Ursula Barry and Joan O'Connor was distributed at the February NWCI members meeting in order to provide members with an opportunity to comment and input into the document. The resulting document 'Disability and Women in Ireland: Building Solidarity and Social Inclusion' was launched in

October 2008. The purpose of the document is to support the NWCI, our affiliates and women's organisations throughout Ireland to:

- Build our understanding and analysis of the issues facing disabled women
- Challenge our own prejudices and stereotypical views of disabled women
- Proactively encourage the involvement of disabled women in women's organisation and the work that these organisations do.

The document is available from the NWCI Head Office and on-line at www.nwci.ie

Women's Health

The NWCI organised a round table discussion in February 2008 to hear the thoughts of participants with expertise on health issues and on our current health system. The focus of discussion was on how to achieve an equitable health system, identifying obstacles and possible areas of action for NWCI in helping achieve this. The discussion formed the first step in developing a three-year strategy on health that will use our limited resources most effectively, and that will contribute to the growing solidarity for change towards an equitable health system from women's perspective.

There was general welcome for the NWCI initiative as timely to achieve strategic changes based on evidence in health.

The new Women's Health Worker, Joanne Vance took up her post in September 2008. The purpose of Joanne's role will be to develop the NWCI strategy to achieve equal access to quality health care for all women in Ireland.

Pensions Research

Pensions: What women want: a model of pensions that guarantees independence for women' was launched in May 2008. The NWCI commissioned Dr Mary Murphy, NUI Maynooth and Tony McCashin, Trinity College Dublin to research a model of pensions for women in Ireland and this was adopted as the new NWCI policy on pensions.

The report was offered as a contribution to the emerging debate on pensions, and aimed to set out the views of the NWCI on the issue of pensions for women. The NWCI proposed that the recommendations made in the report were not only beneficial for women, but could also form part of an anti-poverty strategy, in that they were also beneficial for the many low income groups who experience cumulative labour market disadvantages and a subsequent high risk of poverty in old age. The report can be accessed on our website: www.nwci.ie

Hanna's House

The Hanna's House Peace building Project received funding in 2008 to recruit a Co-ordinator. The post has been filled by Shirley Graham and the job will be to organise a Summer School and 4 seminars across Ireland, north and south, for a project that aims to promote a feminist analysis of peace building and non-violence. The NWCI is on the Hanna's House steering committee and will provide office space for Shirley and manage her work.

Representation

On February 13th a meeting was held to encourage NWCI members who do not generally stand for election to the board to go forward at the next AGM. The meeting was very successful and it was proposed that meetings of this nature be held prior to each AGM where an election is being held.

Publications

- Pensions Research: 'What women want – a model of pensions that guarantees independence for women', (May 2008)
- New Membership Leaflet (June 2008)
- Disability & Women in Ireland: Building Solidarity and Inclusion (October 2008)
- 'Forgotten Women: Personal stories of women experiencing discrimination of the State pension system' (October 2008)
- 'Economics and Poverty –the Links' training and resource manual. This publication was produced by the Combat Poverty Agency and was a joint venture between the Combat Poverty Agency, the Irish Organisation for the Unemployed and the NWCI.

Equality & Rights Alliance (ERA)

The NWCI opposed the proposal by Government to amalgamate the Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission, Equality Tribunal, Data Protection Commission and the National Disability Authority. Through its involvement in the establishment of ERA the NWCI facilitated the bringing together of a wide range of organisations committed to social justice.

Women and Decision-Making

The Director wrote a contribution for an Amnesty International book on the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The contribution focused on Article 21 which addresses women's participation in decision-making from an international perspective.

Meeting with Commissioner Margot Wallstrom, Vice-President of the European Commission

The National Women's Council of Ireland and the representation of the European Commission in Ireland organised a public meeting on women and decision-making on 14th November. Commissioner Margot Wallström, the Vice-President of the European Commission addressed a public meeting on Friday 14th November hosted by the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) and the European Commission Representation in Ireland. Commissioner Wallström's address: 'No Democracy without Equality' focussed on the issue of women's participation in decision-making structures across Europe.

Commissioner Wallström addressed a broad spectrum of Irish women at the event and advocated the necessity for parity of esteem for women's access to the political process across Europe.

At the event, Maura Butler, NWCI Chairperson endorsed the importance of the 50:50 Campaign in a European and an Irish context and highlighted the poor figures for women in political decision-making in Ireland with only 13% of TDs and 19% of local councillors being women. This issue is of serious concern to the NWCI in the lead-up to the Local and European Elections in 2009."

International Women's Day – collaboration with TASC in launching book on feminism

The NWCI celebrated International Women's Day 2008 (IWD) by launching a book in collaboration with TASC (a think-tank for social change) on feminism.

ABOUT THE NWCI

Founded in 1973, The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) Comhairle Náisunta na mBan in Eirinn, is the national representative organisation for women and women's groups on Ireland promoting equality, human rights and empowerment for all women.

Our vision is of an Ireland where all women and men have equal power to shape their own lives.

The NWCI is committed to lobbying Government and political parties, as well as working with its members to bring about social change for women.

The NWCI currently has 158 affiliated members made up of women's groups, women's sections or committees of larger national organisations such as trade unions, teacher unions, political parties and organisations where women comprise a majority of members. The NWCI currently represents up to half a million women in Ireland. See page 52 for full details.

We are committed to:

- Placing women's equality at the centre of key political agendas
- Approaching our work from a global feminist perspective
- Acknowledging and respecting the diversity of women's experiences
- Supporting the development of an intercultural and anti-racist society, inclusive of all social groups
- Building solidarity with Traveller and other minority ethnic women
- Valuing and nurturing our relationships with members and others
- Making strategic use of our resources
- Being a learning organisation that reflects on and evaluates its work and processes and is prepared to change and adapt as our circumstances require
- Being innovative, creative and responsive

Structures

The NWCI is a membership organisation, whose members give their mandate for the work of the NWCI at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year. Each affiliated organisation (member organisation) has one vote at the AGM, where motions, proposed by members, are debated and voted on.

The Executive Board of the NWCI is a voluntary management committee, elected by the membership at the AGM for a two year term. The membership also elects the Chairperson of the Executive Board. The role of the Executive Board is to ensure good governance and to oversee the effective implementation of our Strategic Plan, which is accessible on our website: www.nwci.ie

The NWCI holds quarterly members meetings, providing opportunities for members to network, exchange information, as well as to receive information from the NWCI and participate in the development of NWCI policies.

STAFF

The NWCI employs a professional staff of 10 people, including a senior management team led by the Director. There are regular task group meetings and monthly support and supervision structures to ensure forward planning and accountability of each staff member, including managers, in meeting organisational objectives. All of our work is geared towards implementing the Strategic Plan.

MEMBERS OF STAFF

Director, Joanna McMinn (until March 2009)

Head of Finance & Operations, Maureen Kelly

Head of Outreach and Support, Rachel Doyle

Head of Policy, Orla O'Connor

Policy Analyst, Mary McDermott

Campaign Development Worker, Valerie O'Carroll

Communications Officer, Ciara O'Shea

PA and Administrator, Enca Gonzalez Cambil

Membership & IT Administrator, Imelda Brown

By the end of 2008, we had said goodbye to the following members of staff:

Bridget O'Sullivan and Michelle Scanlan

INTERNSHIPS IN 2008

Lisa McKinney

Rachel Sayer

Lindsey Gower

ROLE OF THE NWC

The role of the National Women's Council of Ireland is to work with its members to identify their needs and to undertake a broad range of activities at local, national and international levels. This work includes:

BUILDING THE CAPACITY of women's organisations to organise, lobby and campaign for equality and social change,

UNDERTAKING OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT projects and providing tools and resources to support women and in particular women from marginalised communities to work for change

COMMISSIONING or carrying out **RESEARCH ON KEY POLICY AREAS** such as social welfare reform, childcare and women's health, to inform and shape on-going lobbying and campaigning. . Developing policy submissions to Government and other agencies on matters critical to the achievement of women's equality,

REPRESENTING WOMEN'S ISSUES on a broad range of statutory and non-statutory bodies; networking; working collaboratively; and building solidarity with the broad community sector in Ireland to bring about social inclusion.

MEDIA WORK, participating in television and radio debate and contributing articles and press releases to print media in order to present and defend our arguments for women's rights. The NWC seeks every occasion to promote public dialogue on the position of women in Irish society

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION to our members and to the public on initiatives, programmes, policy and legislative developments of concern to women.

OUR EQUALITY GOALS

Underlying the Strategic Plan 2006-2010, is an analysis that recognises gender as a fundamental structural problem that affects different groups of women differently. This analysis seeks to achieve equality in four spheres; the affective, cultural/social, economic and political spheres.

The equality goals that inform the work of the NWCI are as follows:

- **AFFECTIVE EQUALITY** – the right to love, care, and solidarity (RESPECT)
- **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EQUALITY** – the right of everyone to autonomy and personal freedom (RECOGNITION)
- **ECONOMIC EQUALITY** – the right to a fair share of society's resources (REDISTRIBUTION)
- **POLITICAL EQUALITY** – the right to protection of human and political rights (REPRESENTATION and EMPOWERMENT)

AFFECTIVE EQUALITY

The right to love, care and solidarity

Our Strategic Goal: Care work will be recognised and supported within the social and economic systems and will be more equally shared between men and women.

'Funding and the Strings Attached'

Position Paper 'Community Sector Funding' and National Conference

The NWCI, Pavee Point, the Community Workers Co-operative, One Parent Exchange Network (OPEN), The Irish Refugee Council and The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland joined forces to commission a piece of research on the current context regarding funding for the community

sector in Ireland. The Paper 'Community Sector Funding' was prepared by Brian Harvey and provided a historical perspective with regard to funding for community activity in Ireland. It presented a description of the policy background relating funding to the prevailing context and sets out current funding strategies and trends. It made recommendations to create a funding context that allows an equal relationship between the community sector and funders, creating a more favourable régime to promote equality and social inclusion.

Is Feidir Linn

The paper was launched at the 'Funding and the Strings Attached' national conference where strong calls were made for independent community sector spaces for reflection and debate on the relationship between the state and the community sector. Arising from these calls, a new group of interested individuals and organisations including the NWCI was established. 'Is Feidir Linn' is an ad hoc grouping of individuals with a commitment to or involvement in community development, social inclusion, anti-poverty and equality issues. Is Feidir Linn seeks to be part of a sustained movement committed to bringing about a better society. Is Feidir Linn believes that there is an urgent need for an alternative political, economic and social model of development with a capacity to create a more equal Ireland and that in more equal societies everybody does better.

'Is Feidir Linn' has begun meeting regularly and is currently in the process of producing a core set of policy goals and objectives.

For further information see: www.isfeidirlinn.org

National Carers' Strategy

The NWCI made a Submission to the Department of Social and Family Affairs Consultation on the National Carers' Strategy (NCS) 2008. outlining six strands to achieving caring equality and equality for carers: (i) Recognising and Valuing Caring, (ii) Carers' Income, (iii) Employment Support, (iv) Care Support and Protection Services, (v) Education and Learning Opportunities, and (vi) Empowering Carers. The development of the NCS was a commitment in the social partnership agreement 'Towards 2016' and it was expected to have been produced in 2008, however there was no report by the end of the year. This is a matter of concern to the NWCI.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

The right to a fair share of our society's resources

Our Strategic Goal: Women's right to economic independence will be achieved.

Women & Pensions

'Pensions: What women want - a model of pensions that guarantees independence for women' by Mary Murphy and Anthony McCashin for the NWCI

The NWCI received funding from the Combat Poverty Agency under its Poverty Research Initiative to carry out research into developing a model of pensions which would work for women. There was a wide consultation process with NWCI members and the Executive Board and the report was significantly influenced by the many letters the NWCI received from women experiencing severe discrimination as a result of having had to leave work because of the Marriage Bar (introduced in 1932, this law barred women from working in state employment when they were married. It was only revoked in 1973). The report recommended the establishment of a universal pension guarantee based on residency. Its recommendations have been adopted as NWCI policy.

The Report was presented by its authors at a launch on 20th May in Dublin. Viv Rooney of the Clare Women's Action Group gave a personal account of her experience of the social welfare and pension system. A panel of speakers made up of: Orlaigh Quinn, Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA, who was responsible for the work Green Paper on Pensions and the consultation process), Fergus Whelan, Irish Congress of trade Unions, Mairead Hayes, Senior Citizens Parliament and Shane Whelan of UCD, then responded to the report and its recommendations.

Orlaigh Quinn (DSFA) outlined the consultation process that the DSFA was undertaking with regard to the Green Paper on Pensions. She stated that given her role to develop a new pensions framework, it was not appropriate to comment on the NWCI's recommendations. Orlaigh welcomed the report and stated that many of the issues being raised by the NWCI were also raised in the consultation meetings.

Mairead Hayes and Fergus Whelan concurred with the NWCI recommendation of a universal pension guarantee and called for the government to prioritise the redistribution of resources away from private pensions and into the state pension system.

Those attending the event strongly agreed with the NWCI policy to have a universal pension as this would eliminate the complexity of the current system. Women have voiced their concern that the Government's new policy on pensions would be focussed on the future and that women who are of pension age now and are dependent on their husband's pension will be ignored in the process. There was a strong call that the new policy on pensions should address the immediate discrimination that women are experiencing and put in place a long-term plan for a guaranteed pension for all. Some participants were also angry at the lack of information and the complexity of trying to calculate their pension entitlements.

Green Paper on Pensions

The Government published the Green Paper on Pensions in October 2007, and made a call for submissions by mid-2008. The NWCI submitted its policy on pensions. *Pensions, what women want, a model of pensions that guarantees independence* to the consultation process. The NWCI also encouraged and supported our members to make submissions. The final report of the consultation process explicitly highlighted the issues of concern to women in line with our recommendations.

Meeting with Minister of Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D

On the 28th May 2008 the NWCI Director and Head of Policy along with the Campaign Development Worker met with Minister Mary Hanafin at the Department of Social and Family Affairs, as part of a series of meetings with non-governmental organisations in her first months in office. The Minister did not respond to the presentation on the NWCI proposals for reform of the social welfare system. The Minister stated that the meeting was an opportunity for her to hear the NWCI social welfare priorities and she would not be responding to any of the issues raised by the NWCI.

Social Partnership

The NWCI participates in Social Partnership through its membership of the Community & Voluntary Pillar (CV Pillar). The NWCI was invited by government to be a member of the CV Pillar. The Community Platform is a network of organisations (of which the NWCI is one member) and was also invited by government.

The two main areas of work for Social Partnership during 2008 were the Review of *Towards 2016* (T16) and Pre-Budgetary preparation. The context for engaging in social partnership changed significantly given the deepening economic crisis and the government's handling of it.

Additionally, through our participation in the CV Pillar the NWCI engages with the National, Economic and Social Council and the reports it produces.

Review of Social Partnership Agreement “Towards 2016”

At a plenary meeting on 15th February, the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern T.D invited the Social Partners to participate in the scheduled Mid-Term Review of T16. The aim was to identify ‘high level goals’ to progress the implementation of T16. The Review included a series of bilateral meetings, between the C&V Pillar and individual Government Departments. The NWCI made a submission which focused on the commitments in T16 to progressing women's equality.

The NWCI prioritised the following issues for the Review of T16:

- National Women's Strategy
- Women in Decision-Making
- Dependency and individualisation of social welfare
- Affordable Childcare and the new Community Childcare Subvention Scheme

The Submission emphasised commitments made under the *National Women's Strategy* and urged the Government to prioritise the resourcing and implementation of the second phase of T16. The NWCI highlighted the issues of women and decision-making, discrimination against women in the social welfare system and childcare. The NWCI also contributed to the CV Pillar submission to the Review.

T16 Review: Bilateral Meetings

The NWCI participated in a series of between Government Departments and the Community

and Voluntary Pillar and co-ordinated the C&V Pillar meetings with the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform and the Office for the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs.

NWCI's Head of Policy and its Policy Analyst attended a series of bilaterals with government departments and presented arguments on the following issues:

Department of Enterprise and Employment (DETE)

- the gender pay gap,
- childcare
- problems for women moving from welfare to work.

Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA)

- discrimination against women in the social welfare system
- the need for a new policy on pensions..

Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)

- early child care initiatives,
- the Childcare Subvention Scheme
- the closure of Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR)

- the implementation of the National Women's Strategy
- the gender dimension to the National Action Plan against Racism (NAPAR).The overall aim of the Plan is to provide strategic direction to combat racism and to develop a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland based on a commitment to inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought and based on policies that promote interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect.

The Final Review Document

Given the absence of any substantial references to gender and the concerns of women in the T16, the NWCI argued strongly for the inclusion of a high-level policy framework within which to work for the equality of women. Following our engagement in the Review, the *National Women's Strategy* (NWS) was agreed as the policy framework of T16.

The National Economic & Social Council (NESC): Forthcoming *The Social Report*

NESC has been working on two major reports. *The Irish Economy in the Early 21st Century*, published in July 2008 is a response to the economic crisis and, forthcoming, *The Social Report*.

The NWCI has been engaging directly with NESC, and also via membership of the Community and Voluntary Pillar, the NESC in preparation of its forthcoming ***Social Report*** since 2007. The Social Report essentially seeks to examine the nature of social well-being beyond merely economic considerations. This offers the NWCI the opportunity to make visible the unpaid work and ‘invisible’ realm which women occupy in Irish Society. This invisible, or erased, realm of women’s work is a primary source of both individual and social well-being as set out in the Report.

The Report considers “well-being” in Irish society under six headings: Well-Being, Participation, Education, Relationships, Social Well-Being, Behaviours and Risks.

The NWCI welcomes the consistent references to gender and the experiences of women as case-studies in this Report. It similarly welcomes the analysis of Irish society which examines how the relationship between private and public life generates or undermines well-being. The role of the Report is to assess how public policy can support or degrade such well-being.

Social Partnership Consultation on the National Carers’ Strategy

The Government organised a social partnership consultation on the development of the National Carers’ Strategy (NCS) with the four social partners. The NWCI was concerned that the outline of the NCS presented did not take into account the gender dimension of paid and unpaid care work and did not recognise the implications for women’s equality of the unequal distribution of care work between women and men. The NWCI requested that these areas be included in the Strategy.

Community Platform

The Community Platform initiated the development of a new Strategic Plan in 2008. It also commissioned Dr Mary Murphy, NUI Maynooth and Professor Peadar Kirby, University of Limerick to compile a policy position paper to critique current economic and social developments and identify effective ways for the Platform to intervene. This work culminated in the publication of *‘A Better Ireland: towards an alternative vision for Ireland’* which was launched at a seminar in December, chaired by journalist Vincent Browne. The report was

responded to by Professor John Fitzgerald from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). NWCI participated on the steering group to oversee the research and publication. During 2008, the Community Platform also established a Steering Group to support Community Platform members and facilitate greater engagement with the T16 and CV Pillar structures. The NWCI is a member of the Steering Group.

Social Welfare Reform Campaign 2008

The NWCI has been driving a campaign to change the social welfare system. The campaign has focused on ending discrimination against women within the system, arguing for recognition of: women in their own right and not as dependents care work; and their diverse working patterns. The NWCI wants the welfare system to be overhauled and modernised so that it is equipped to address the reality of women's lives and ensure economic independence.

- Outreach work

The Campaign Development Worker set up 'outreach meetings' with women's groups and organisations affiliated to the National Women's Council around the country. The meetings began with a discussion about the inequalities within the system. The counties initially visited were Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Kildare, Galway, Donegal and Dublin.

Two focus groups were set up: one in the Mid-West which consisted of women's groups and organisations in Limerick, Galway and Clare, with meetings held in Ennis, and the second focus group was set up with groups from Cork and Kerry, with meetings held in Killarney. Overall the NWCI organised and facilitated six regional focus group meetings in 2008.

Advancing the Social Welfare Campaign

The issues which emerged within the focus groups led to three priority areas being identified for the campaign:

1. Pensions - Women's unpaid care work in the home systematically discriminates against them because they come to pension age and have no 'stamps' or credits accumulated and so cannot access full pension payments in their own right. This affects women who stayed out of paid work to care for children and also "assisting spouses" - women who work in family businesses.

2. Qualified Adults - In the current social welfare system many women who are eligible for social welfare payments are categorised as "Qualified Adults" receiving just 0.75% of the full payment, while the other partner receives 100% payment. "Qualified Adults" payments go directly to the husband/spouse unless they sign a form that allows the payment to be made directly their wives. Such a position within the Social Welfare system creates households that undermine the economic independence of women and excludes them from receiving payments in their own right. This situation keeps "Qualified Adults"/women vulnerable to violence, aggression, control and poverty. Available figures for 2008 show that there are 147,000 Qualified Adults in the Irish Social Welfare System. 95% of qualified adults are women.

3. Marriage Bar - In 1932 a law was introduced which barred women from working in state employment when they married. It was not revoked until 1973. The Marriage Bar was a very explicit form of sexism. Women could therefore not work in paid employment and subsequently were directly excluded from the Social Welfare System.

Seminars organised at regional level

Two seminars were organised. The first, 'Campaigning for Women's Pension Rights' in Cork/Kerry on 8th November was very well attended, with 110 women from all over Kerry

and Cork registering. The keynote speaker was Robin Webster CEO of Age Action Ireland.

The aim of the second seminar in Ennis on 28th November was to officially launch the publication: 'Forgotten Women: Personal stories of women experiencing discrimination of the state pension system'. The booklet was launched by the NWCI and the Clare Women's Action Group. It highlights the scale of the reform needed in order for women to experience older age with dignity and respect, by way of personal case studies. The seminar and was attended by over 60 women. Jan O'Sullivan TD, Labour spokesperson for Social Welfare officially launched the booklet.

THE MARRIAGE BAR: Legal Case

The NWCI is actively pursuing, with the Free Legal Aid Centre (FLAC), the possibility of taking a case against the state in relation to the discrimination inherent in the Marriage Bar and its unjust consequences. The NWCI file is currently with a Barrister for a definitive opinion, and we await the completion of this brief.

In 1932 a law was introduced in Ireland which barred women from working in state employment when they married. It was not revoked until 1973. Irish women therefore could not work in paid employment for the state and subsequently were directly excluded from the Social Welfare System. Consequently, many Irish women are only eligible for, and totally dependent on, a "Non-Contributory" state pension, after a lifetime of unpaid caring and household work. It will be an important success for women's equality when the cost to women of the Marriage Bar is fully acknowledged and compensated for through retrospective justice.

Submission to the Technical Review of the Social Welfare Code

The Department of Social and Family Affairs initiated a Technical Review of the Social Welfare Code to assess all social welfare schemes to establish whether they are compliant with the provisions of the Equal Status acts 2000-2004. Currently the social welfare schemes are not covered under the Equal Status Acts. After consultation with its members, The NWCI prepared an extensive submission as well as supporting members to make their own submissions.

The Review was conducted by Gerry Whyte and Mel Cousins on behalf of the Department.

The NWCI also met with the researchers to discuss the issues for women, particularly in relation to the indirect discrimination which women experience as a result of a social welfare system characterised by a male breadwinner model. The submission included many of the issues which the NWCI has been recommending as part of our ongoing campaign to reform the social welfare system. The Review was to be completed by the end of 2008; however no public report was produced by the end of the year.

POLITICAL EQUALITY

The right to the protection of human and political rights

Our Strategic Goal: An equal distribution of power and influence; women's right to political representation and decision-making at all levels will be realised; women and men will have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens: and international human rights for women will be implemented.

Women and Decision Making

- Amnesty International book celebrating UN Declaration of Human Rights

The Director contributed a chapter for a book celebrating the UN Declaration of Human Rights, to be published by Amnesty International. Her chapter addressed Article 21 on participation in government and public services, as well as equal and universal suffrage. She described what Article 21 means for women in Ireland in an international context, and their current low level of participation in decision making in this country. It also looked at what strategies are being used elsewhere, and what would work in Ireland, to redress current inequalities.

- National Women's Strategy

In the budget estimates for 2009, the funding for 'positive action measures' for women was cut by 45%; and no announcements were made by the end of the year on the first strand of the Equality for Women Measure (EWM), nor on the remaining 3 strands, that were to be rolled out in 2008. The NWCI is deeply concerned about these cuts and delays. Many of our

members were among the 155 women's groups which applied for EWM funds before a July 2008 deadline, but had heard no news by the end of the year.

NWS Outreach Work

The NWCI gave presentations on the National Women's Strategy to the Mid-Offaly Women's Development Initiative and to women's groups in Donegal.

Violence Against Women

National Observatory on Violence Against Women

The NWCI continued to play an important role during 2008 in facilitating the Observatory on Violence against Women meetings. The Observatory brings together organisations working against all forms of violence against women.

Members include Women's Aid, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, the National Network of Refuges and Support Services, Ruhama, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Pavee Point, the National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency and the Freedom from Pornography Campaign; all of whom are also members of the NWCI. Amnesty International is also a member of the Observatory.

In 2008 the European Women's Lobby (EWL) established a new structure for the European Policy Action Centre (EPAC) on Violence Against Women. It presented a proposal for an operating grant from [the EU funding measure DAPHNE 111 in order to coordinate the work of the Observatory at EU level, and to support experts in their national actions and in building coalitions. Existing experts' mandate came to an end and EWL Observatory Board members nominated new Experts. The Irish Expert over the last 3 years has been Fiona Neary of Rape Crisis Network Ireland.

The newly appointed Irish Expert is Denise Charlton of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, chosen to reflect a focus on migrant women and trafficking (Denise is also former Director of Women's Aid). The NWCI Deputy Chair Therese Murphy, who is Joint Vice President of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), liaised between the Expert, the EWL and the NWCI. The decision by the EWL to establish a stronger link between its board members and EU experts on violence against women was welcome and very significant.

Therese Murphy was asked to take a stronger role in the EWL Executive on Trafficking and she attended a meeting with EU representatives in Cyprus, looking at anti-trafficking legislation and existing supports, and exploring ways to improve mechanisms to support women.

Some of the other issues addressed during the year included the impact of the Hague Convention on women feeling violent partners; research on Pornography in Ireland and supporting individuals in their struggle against deportation.

National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women

The NWCI is represented on the National Steering Committee (NSC) by the Director. Since the NSC adopted the human rights definition of all forms of violence against women, members of the Observatory have been keen to ensure that there is proper representation at NSC meetings of all NGOs working on specific areas of violence against women, including pornography, trafficking and forced prostitution.

The Director participated in a round-table seminar organised by the Immigrant Council of Ireland on Trafficking and the Sex Industry on 9th April 2008 that set forth the Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking and the need for a new International Treaty, and also addressed shortcomings in the proposed immigration, Residence and Protection Bill.

The Department of the Environment set up a Task Group on Adult Entertainment to which the NWCI was invited to make a presentation. Subsequently a paper was submitted addressing the Terms of Reference of the Task Group, which focussed on planning issues for 'sex shops' with the assistance of the Freedom from Pornography Campaign.

Dóchas Prison & the Women in Prison Reform Alliance

The Jesuit Centre for Justice and Peace initiated the Women and Prison Reform Alliance in response to Government proposals to develop Thornton Hall prison and to move women prisoners to the complex it planned to build there. Dóchas, the women's prison, is currently housed within the larger prison complex at Mountjoy, but is a modern facility run in an enlightened way by governor, Kathleen McMahon. Dóchas's capacity is currently 85, though it is often obliged to hold 90 or more. The proposed women's facility at Thornton Hall will hold 170. Plans are also in train for a women's facility in a new prison in Cork.

The NWCI is part of the Alliance and is one of a number of groups and individuals that have been meeting to discuss the issue of women offending. The Alliance has agreed that we should lobby for a national review of what happens to women in contact with the criminal justice system.

The Alliance prepared a proposal to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to carry out an independent review into the treatment of women by the criminal justice system; focusing particularly on the use of imprisonment and its impact on women offenders.

Equality and Rights Alliance (ERA)

The Equality & Rights Alliance (ERA) was formed in August 2008 following media reports of a proposed merger of five equality and human rights bodies in Ireland; the Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission, Equality Tribunal, Data Protection Commission and the National Disability Authority. The rationale for this amalgamation was one of cost cutting, and the “simplification of the service delivery landscape”. However, the NWCI saw the move as a threat to the equality and human rights infrastructure and led opposition to it by organising meetings which brought together a wide range of organisations committed to social justice. The NWCI shared the view of the Alliance that it was wrong that children, older people, families, people with disabilities, Travellers, immigrants and low-paid workers, and others should lose a vital rights and equality support system.

In the event, the government did not proceed with this plan – however cuts of 43% to the Equality Authority and 24% to the Irish Human Rights Commission were introduced in Budget 2009, rendering them unviable as effective bodies. Staff members at The Equality Authority were also to be fast-tracked to an advance office in Roscrea at a time when decentralization was effectively halted for most public servants. Niall Crowley, CEO of the Equality Authority tendered his resignation in December. Therese Murphy, Deputy Chair of the NWCI resigned her place on the Board of the Equality Authority, followed by 5 other Board Members, in support of Crowley’s position.

The ERA Campaign has gained substantial support in a short few months, with over 80 organisations and many individuals joining the alliance.

International Women’s Day 2008

To celebrate International’s Women’s Day this year, the National Women’s Council of Ireland joined with TASC (a progressive think tank for social change) on 5th March, to launch a new and exciting book on Feminism which they had jointly commissioned.

Where are we now? New Feminist Perspectives on women in contemporary Ireland’ brings key figures from the Irish feminist movement together to ask where feminist principles stand

in Ireland today, given the widespread perception that women have 'never had it so good' and that we are in a 'post feminist' era. Edited by Ursula Barry, the book examines progress and regress across a range of areas and includes the following chapters:

- *Ursula Barry* on Changing Economic and Social Worlds of Irish Women
- *Orla O'Connor and Mary Murphy* on Women and Social Welfare
- *Sara Burke* on Women's Health – Gender and Inequality in the Irish Health System
- *Pauline Conroy and Helen O'Leary* on A Matter of Life and Debt
- *Angela O'Connell* on Very Ordinary People – Lesbian Mothers Talking
- *Monica O'Connor* on Silencing Feminism: Making Sexual Exploitation Invisible and Legitimate
- *Kathleen Lynch and Maureen Lyons* on The Gendered Order of Caring
- *Jane Pillingier* on The Changing Face of Ireland: Gender and the Feminisation of Migration
- *Niamh Reilly* on Global Norms and Local Action: Critical Approaches to Women's Human Rights in Ireland

Emerging issues of concern identified in the book include:

- The fact that Irish women are now having dual responsibilities as earners and primary carers;
- the lack of a national framework for the legal protection of migrant women;
- the extreme discrimination experienced by lesbians for not being allowed to form families; and the climate of backlash against human rights conventions and global campaigns to prevent violence against women, amongst other issues.

As the book documents, many of the issues which feminists have been discussing for the last fifty years - inequalities in the political structures, in work and in access to services and income - are still depressingly evident.

'Where are we now? New feminist perspectives on women in contemporary Ireland' was enthusiastically received with great by around 90 people who had gathered to celebrate IWD

and feminism and discuss the book and the issues it raises. The book's authors, including NWCI head of policy, Orla O'Connor addressed the audience in a plenary session.

Author and journalist Susan McKay, who wrote the Introduction to the book was the guest speaker.

Follow up Seminars

NWCI and Tasc planned to hold a series of seminars on the various topics covered in the book. The first seminar – entitled 'Life and Debt', and dealing with women and financial exclusion – was held in December 2008.

Dr. Pauline Conroy, who co-authored the 'Life and Debt' chapter in *Where Are We Now*, spoke about the pattern of poor women's borrowings and debts as a good barometer of a debt crisis. Caroline Corr, Research Officer with the Combat Poverty Agency, spoke on 'Financial Disservices: the Unbanked'. The Consumer Director of the Financial Regulator, Mary O'Dea, spoke on the issue of debt and the role of the Financial Regulator in helping consumers make informed decisions about their personal finance. Nancy Power, Coordinator of National Traveller Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) spoke about research her organization had conducted by Traveller MABS into 'Creditable Alternatives'. Through community education, Rotating Saving Credit Associations (ROSCAS), caravan loans and various community development measures, the organization is working with the Traveller community to overcome financial exclusion and open up access to mainstream financial institutions.

Papers from the seminar are available from the web sites of both the NWCI and Tasc www.nwci.ie and www.tascnet.ie

European Women's Lobby

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisations of women's associations in the European Union (EU). The EWL Secretariat is based in Brussels, but the EWL has member organizations in 27 Member States of the EU and in 3 countries.

The European Women's Lobby aims at promoting women's rights and equality between women and men in the European Union. EWL is active in different areas such as women's economic and social position, women in decision-making, violence against women, women's diversity, etc. EWL works mainly with the institutions of the European Union: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EU Council of Ministers.

The European Women's Lobby has been campaigning to ensure the equal participation of women in politics for many years.

As part of this work, the EWL launched a European-wide, cross party campaign in 2008 with its strong membership in support of parity democracy, urging all decision-makers, individuals and organisations interested in the promotion of democracy and justice to support this initiative at all levels and across the boundaries of countries and political parties. The EWL 50:50 Campaign for Democracy aims to ensure that women and men are equally represented in the 2009 European elections for a new European Parliament and European Commission.

NWCI representation at the EWL

Therese Murphy, former Chairperson of the NWCI and representing the NWCI on the board of the EWL was appointed Vice-President of the EWL in 2008.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL EQUALITY

The right of everyone to autonomy and personal freedom

Our Strategic Goal: All women will enjoy the right to respect and autonomy, irrespective of diversity and difference.

Anti-Racism

The NWCI continued to participate on the board of National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) and was also invited to join the Steering Committee for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

During the year, we supported the NCCRI in the establishment of a 'Muslim Women's Forum' and were successful in receiving funding for the production of a publication on the Voices of Muslim Women in Ireland from the Office of the Minister for Integration. The closure of the NCCRI at the end of 2008 due to Government cutbacks was a serious blow to anti-racism work in Ireland and also meant a delay in the work of the 'Muslim Women's Forum'. Further attention will be given to this work in 2009.

On 20th October, the NWCI gave a presentation to a seminar focussing on Muslim Women hosted by the Muslim Association of Ireland.

Throughout the year we continued to participate in the European Network Against Racism Ireland [ENAR] and at the launch of the ENAR Ireland Report on Racism in Ireland in 2008.

Gender Governance and Rural Development

This research was prepared for the NWCI by researcher Maureen Bassett with support from Dr. Anne Byrne, Department of Sociological and Political Science NUI Galway. This study is focused on the issue of equality for women in rural areas and in particular their participation in governance of rural development. The rationale for this focus was the evidence of ongoing inequalities experienced by women in rural areas as well as their significant under representation in governance. The report outlines some of the historical and current issues relating to equality for women in rural Ireland, examines the nature of the Irish Welfare State from a gender perspective, the approach in public policy regarding equality and gender mainstreaming and the policy context in relation to gender equality and rural development, analyses recent policy development relevant to women's equality in rural areas and identifies

key challenges to the achievement of women's equality including in governance (generally and in rural areas), in the wider welfare and policy contexts and also identifies strategic issues which need to be addressed.

Disability

Disability Inclusion Policy for Women's Organisations

The NWCI produced '*Disability and Women in Ireland – Building Solidarity and Inclusion*' in 2008 to provide a practical guide towards building the inclusion and recognition of disabled women in women's organisations. The document aimed to support NWCI, our Members and other women's organisations throughout Ireland to develop a better understanding of the problems facing disabled women. It also set out to challenge our prejudices and stereotypical views of disabled women and to encourage the involvement of disabled women in women's organisations. The publication is available from the NWCI office and on-line at www.nwci.ie

Health

NWCI Women's Health Strategy: Achieving Equal Access to Quality Healthcare for All

The NWCI Women's Health Strategy 2008-2010, is grounded in the findings of research report entitled *Women's Health: Meeting International Standards (2006)*, which situated women's health within a human rights context. It established best practice principles to ensure a gender equitable health system.

On 20th February, the NWCI brought together a number of board members, staff, health service practitioners, academics and community representatives with expertise in the Irish Health System; to participate in a health 'think-tank' meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to highlight a growing consensus that the current two-tier health system was not delivering on its vision of fairness and equality for all; and to facilitate a critical discussion about how to bring about change. The outcome of this discussion was presented in a NWCI Women's Health Strategy document (available from the NWCI Office and on-line at www.nwci.ie) which maps out a route to equal access to quality healthcare for all women.

We believe that the following changes in the health system are necessary:

- Ethos of the health service should embrace the principles of equality, respect and dignity
- The public health service needs to be re-balanced towards Primary Care infrastructure, with community-based GP-led services; free at point of access, to reduce the demand on the acute hospital services.
- Recognition of gender and women as a diverse population with specific health needs
- A one-tier universal health system for Ireland
- Encourage participation by all groups of women in decision-making at all levels
- No more subsidies to the private health sector from the public purse.

Joanne Vance, the New Women's Health worker took up her post on the 8th September, and has been working to bring the campaign to our members and to those who share our common goal.

It is anticipated that the NWCI Women's Health campaign will complement the work of the Women's Human Rights Alliance [WHRA]. The WHRA will focus on the Right to Health in their NGO Shadow Report for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). This is to critique Ireland's Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Ongoing priorities for women's health

NWCI supported the work of the National Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Steering Group. The group launched the National Action plan on the prevention of FGM on the 25th November as part of the 16 days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women. The report provides a good example of how effective alliance building can be. The National Steering Committee Members are: AkiDwa, Amnesty International (Irish Section), Barnardos, Cairde, Children's Rights Alliance, Christian Aid, Comhlamh, HSE, Integrating Ireland, Integration of African Children in Ireland, Irish Aid, Irish Family Planning Association, National Women's Council of Ireland, Refugee Information Service, Somali Community in Ireland, Somali Community Youth Group, UNICEF, Women's Health Council.

The health fall-out from Budget 2009 has provided NWCI with a number of media opportunities to put its message across in relation to health, including the need for an equitable one-tier health system, quality and continuity in cancer services, and the most recent postponement of the HPV cervical screening programme. Our members have expressed concern and anger about all of these issues.

The decision to subsume the Women's Health Council (WHC) into the Department of Health and Children, may impact negatively on the WHC's holistic gender-based approach. NWCI wrote to the Minister for Health, Mary Harney T.D. asking for assurance that the work of the Women's Health Council and the National Women's Strategy will not suffer. The NWCI representative on the Women's Health Council, Marie Hainsworth, has been nominated as the Policy Sub-Group Chairperson, WHC Board. The Board is working to ensure that the 2009 work-plan is fully achieved and that the Minister will consider an advisory committee for the WHC, once the Board steps down.

On 25th November the NWCI Director and Staff met with Minister Mary Harney T.D. to discuss our campaign to improve women's access to health services. Specifically the NWCI raised the question of when the National Cancer Screening Programme's BreastCheck would be available to the women of the North and West of Ireland. We were assured that the final roll out of BreastCheck would be completed by the end of 2009 and we will continue to monitor this.

At the Minister's request the obstacles preventing some groups of women, particularly women living in areas of disadvantage, Traveller women and women with disabilities, in taking up the BreastCheck programming, were discussed.

As a result, NWCI staff met members who have worked on raising awareness of breast cancer through community development, to plan an awareness raising activity. The whole issue of women's access to improvements in cancer services will be a key aspect of the Health Campaign in 2009.

NWCI/NDA project

NWCI in partnership with The National Disability Authority, commissioned Trinity College Dublin, School of Nursing and Midwifery, to conduct a three-part study into the experiences of disabled women in pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood in Ireland's public maternity services. Professor Cecily Begley led the research team and it is anticipated that the final part of the study will be complete by September 2009.

AN EMPOWERING PROCESS

The development of a strong, dynamic women's sector (internal organisational objective)

Members Meetings

NWCI members meetings are held four times per year, with two meetings taking place in Dublin and two outside of Dublin.

Four members meetings were held in 2008.

1: Theme: Women and Disability, February 21st 2008, Dublin

The meeting was addressed by Ursula Barry (WERRC), Marian Maloney Nolan (Women with Disabilities in the West), Dee Byrne (Irish Deaf Women's Group) and Dinah Dodrill (Fingal Centre for the Unemployed). The meeting provided those present with an opportunity to share experiences and identify key issues for disabled women in Ireland. Those which emerged included: the need to build greater solidarity between all women (challenging negative stereotyping and the invisibility of disabled women in all aspects of Irish Society), the importance of promoting disabled women into decision-making roles and the need for spaces for women with disabilities to come together in their own right, as a means of affecting change. The NWCI draft disability policy document was presented and participants were invited to respond prior to the production of the final document. The subsequent document produced by the NWCI: 'Disability and Women in Ireland: Building solidarity and

Inclusion' is available from the NWCI Head Office and on-line at www.nwci.ie

An Ceann Comhairle John O'Donoghue also addressed the meeting on the theme of 'women and the political process'. The meeting was well attended with a good discussion.

2: Theme: Pensions for Women, 12th April 2008, Dublin

The purpose of the meeting was to consult with NWCI members on our pensions policy and to discuss the research on pensions commissioned by the NWCI and undertaken on our behalf by researchers Dr. Mary Murphy and Anthony Mc Cashin. The research was presented by NWCI Head of Policy and a lively discussion ensued and there was consensus by all present on the most appropriate and just way forward.

3: Theme: Marriage Equality, 18th September 2008, Dublin

Moninne Griffith, Coordinator of the organisation *MarriageEquality* spoke at the meeting; with personal testimonies from Jessica Webbley and Angela O'Connell; who also spoke about her research on Lesbian Families. Along with the excellent speakers' inputs, Ailbhe Egan, a young woman, read a powerful testimony on her experiences being raised by her parents; a lesbian couple. The meeting provided members with an opportunity to reflect on marriage as a basic human right and to discuss the situation regarding the Civil Partnership Bill. It was noted that the NWCI needs to develop a clearer and stronger position in relation to marriage rights for gay couples. In the light of this, the NWCI has participated in seminars and symposia organised by *MarriageEquality* and the Platform for Equality to develop its position on the rights of lesbians and their children, to full marriage and parental rights and status. The proposal will be to develop a clear mandate from the NWCI which supports the rights of lesbians who wish to have a civil marriage, as a matter of human rights.

4: Theme: Budget 2009, 22nd November 2008, Tullamore

This meeting was called to provide members with the opportunity to discuss Budget 2009, its likely impact on women and its implications for equality promotion and anti-poverty work. The second and inter-connected theme was 'Women and Decision-Making'. The discussion on this was timely as it provided the opportunity not only to discuss the upcoming 2009 Local

and European elections, but also for NWCi National Women's Strategy representatives Tess Murphy (Longford Women's Link) and Frances Byrne (OPEN) to update members on progress. Last, but not least, our guest speaker Cllr Molly Buckley (Fine Gael), launched 'Economics and Poverty – the Links', a training and resource manual. This was a joint publication between the Combat Poverty Agency, the Irish Organisation for the Unemployed and the NWCi. She emphasised the importance of understanding and discussing economics when lobbying on priority issues such as childcare, education and health. She also urged women to stand as candidates at local level as a practical way of engaging in decision-making to change policies and improve practices.

Meeting of Members with regard to Executive Board Elections

On 13th February, a meeting was held to encourage NWCi members who would not generally stand for election to the Executive Board to go forward at the 2008 Annual General Meeting (AGM). The meeting was attended by a range of NWCi members (representing in particular disability, migration and poverty issues), as well as current Executive Board Members. It was proposed that meetings of this nature be held prior to each AGM at which an election is being held.

Annual General Meeting 2008

MOTIONS

For 2008 there were 7 motions: all of the motions put forward apart from motion 7 were carried and are summarized as follows:

1. ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES TO WOMEN AND GIRLS TRAFFICKED INTO IRELAND

This motion invites the NWCI to support the call for provision of adequate assistance and services to women and girls trafficked into Ireland for the purposes of sexual exploitation and for the NWCI to participate in the campaign launched by the Immigration Council of Ireland.

2. GENDER GUIDELINES FOR ASYLUM/PROTECTION DETERMINATION PROCESS

This motion calls on the NWCI to propose that gender guidelines, as outlined by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), should be implemented in Ireland and included in the Immigration, Residence and Protection (IRP) proposed legislation and such guidelines shall be adhered to by all asylum/protection officials adjudicating asylum/protection claims in Ireland.

3. ARTICLE 41.2.1 OF BUNREACT NA HEIREANN

This motion calls on the NWCI to work towards the repealing of Article 41.2.1 of the constitution which reads, "The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."

The motion was put to the floor and discussed. The Chair proposed that this motion be remitted to the new board for further discussion and reflection. This was agreed by the proposer of the motion and seconder. The proposal was put to the floor.

4. BREASTCHECK

This motion calls on the NWCI to lobby Breast Check, the National Breast Screening Programme, to extend the upper age limit for breast screening to 70 without delay, and to allow women over 70 the right to request a mammogram every two years if they ask.

5. FAMILY FRIENDLY/FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS IN ALL WORKPLACES

This motion calls on the NWCI to lobby for the early implementation of a statutory entitlement to family friendly/flexible work arrangements in all workplaces.

6. RESOURCES & SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOLS/COLLEGES CATERING FOR MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS

This motion calls on the NWCI to demand that schools/colleges catering for significant numbers of minority ethnic students, are provided with the resources and supports including interpreter services and intercultural training for teachers, to ensure that both the schools/colleges and parents can participate fully in the educational development of minority ethnic students.

7. ENSURING REPRESENTATION OF COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING SOCIAL EXCLUSION ON THE NWCI BOARD

This motion required a change to the memorandum and articles of association it could not be put to the floor. Such a change would require notice of 21 days of the intention to propose a resolution requiring a special majority (that being 2/3 of the members) and as said notice had not been sent it could not be voted on. The staff of the NWCI has been asked to work on a wording to change the memo and arts with the proposing organization. The amended motion will be put forward at the 2009 AGM. This would still allow for implementation within the desired time frame.

Communications & Media Review

NWCI communications activities are guided by Goal 1, Strategic Priority Three, of the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan which states: *'to inform and influence public debate, proactively promoting a constructive feminist analysis, and perspectives'*.

The NWCI continued to maintain a strong presence throughout the media in 2008, taking part in discussion and debate on issues relevant to the NWCI, in the print, audio and television media. Press releases were circulated in 2008 to media outlets, members of government, governmental departments, decision-makers, civil servants, NWCI members and other NGOs.

Coverage was sought across a wide range of print media, and included a range of opinion and analysis pieces written by the Director and the Head of Policy.

Radio coverage was particularly strong in the Dublin region in 2008, but NWCI representatives also contributed a feminist analysis to debates, on local and regional radio stations around the country.

The NWCI continued to promote the work of our members to national, regional and local media outlets.

Communication Highlights 2008

Formal complaint to Press Ombudsman regarding Kevin Myers Article

On July 10th a piece written by Kevin Myers, entitled: 'Africa is giving nothing to anyone, except AIDS', was printed in the Irish Independent. The NWCI made a formal complaint to the Press Ombudsman on the grounds that the article was likely to cause huge offence and potentially provoke hatred against Africans and in particular, Africans living and working in Ireland. The Council was joined by our members AkidWA and the Immigrant Council of Ireland, among others.

The Press Council upheld the complaint on the grounds that it was likely to cause grave offence, as it was in breach of Principle 8 of the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals that the Press Industry had signed up to in 2007. Many NWCI member organisations phoned and wrote emails of support for what we had done.

Media Training

The Communications Officer delivered a number of Media Training sessions throughout 2008:

- Muslim Women's Forum

Media training was delivered over 3 days to the 'Muslim Women's Forum' (10-12 women attended the training as part of the NCCRI/NWCI Group). The aim of the training was to allow the women to highlight their own issues and experiences in a 'media context', as Muslim women in Ireland and also equipped them with media skills and knowledge. The response from the group was enthusiastic.

- Social Welfare Reform Campaign

A one-day media training course was delivered to 25 women in Kerry, as part of the Social Welfare Reform Campaign. The aim of the training was to enable the women to highlight their personal experience within the social welfare system, to the media. The training also enabled the group to construct key messages for the campaign in the Kerry/Cork area. Members of the group went on to take part in media activity throughout the year as part of the Social Welfare Campaign in their region.

- Social Welfare Reform 'Letter' Campaign 2008

Coverage of the NWCI's work on the Social Welfare Reform Campaign allowed the Council to secure media coverage across the country, with print and radio coverage throughout all counties involved in the Campaign throughout 2008, from February to December. The NWCI launched a 'letter campaign' across the country in the search of the 'forgotten women' affected by the Marriage Bar. A letter was drafted by the NWCI and circulated to all regional and local papers across the country, asking women to contact the NWCI if they had been personally affected by the Marriage Bar.

Letters were printed in nearly all papers across the country and we received a phenomenal response from women all around the country. These women's contribution strengthened the NWCI campaign and our call to government to radically change the system.

PRINT COVERAGE – 2008

The NWCI's activities and statements received extensive print media coverage during 2008, nationally, regionally and locally. The list below gives an idea of the range of issues addressed:

Fathers appeal to equality watchdog on paternity leave – Irish Examiner, 12.01.08

Cork women have their say on welfare reform – Cork Independent, 17.01.08

Critical action for critical mass – Irish Examiner, 12.02.08

Taoiseach will pay women no mind in Lackawanna – Irish Examiner, 14.02.08

For what it's worth – 'You & Your Money', 01.03.08

Childcare costs on the rise – Sunday Business Post, 02.03.08

Women shaping their progress – Clare People, 04.03.08

Irish women near the bottom of EU scale for top jobs – Irish Examiner, 07.03.08

Report finds glass ceiling still unbroken – Irish Independent, 08.03.08

The F-word – Irish Independent, 09.03.08

Services for disabled mothers reviewed – Irish Examiner, 11.03.08

Women who were forced to give up work after marriage to sue the state – Sunday Tribune, 23.03.08

Do more to promote gender equality – Donegal Democrat, 17.04.08

Why women need new pension focus – Irish Times, 29.04.08

Private pensions discriminates against women, warns report – Irish Examiner, 20.05.08

What do women want? – Irish Examiner, 20.05.08

Pensions: Women seek a fairer deal – Evening Herald, 21.05.08

Women's rights neglected – Kerryman, 02.07.08

Women on the verge of a breakthrough – Sunday Times, 17.08.08

Amalgamation opposed by agencies – Irish Times, 28.8.08

Equality group resists plans – Metro, 09.09.08

Plan to merge statutory agencies – Irish Times, 16.09.08

Mergers won't make a difference – Irish Examiner, 18.09.08

Does Leitrim need a women's network? – Leitrim Leader, 23.09.08

Adding up childcare costs – Irish Times, 13.10.08

This can only hurt mothers – Irish Daily Mail, 15.10.08

Budget a setback for victims – Irish Examiner, 16.10.08

Women's Council to hold seminar in Kerry – Kerry's Eye, 06.11.08

Even Terry's prone to gender bias – Cork Evening Echo, 08.11.08

I meant to raise my profile, not start a feminist war – Sunday Times, 09.11.08

Lazy and tedious women wreck promotion chances – Irish Daily Mail, 06.11.08

Gulf between the sexes in politics and pay, finds study – Irish Examiner, 13.11.08

Wahlstrom wants more women involved in politics – Irish Times, 15.11.08

Kenmare women put networking first – Kerry's Eye, 20.11.08

For love and money – Sunday Business Post, 23.11.08

Campaign highlights domestic abuse – Irish Examiner, 25.11.08

Golf Girls challenge green ban – Irish Sun, 25.11.08

O'Sullivan to launch Forgotten Women – Clare Champion, 28.11.08

Fewer women likely to take local council seats next year – Irish Times, 29.11.08

Carers Anne and Catherine undervalued by the State – Limerick Post, 20.12.08

Equality hearing tees off – The Irish Sun, 19.12.08

Catering to men's needs is the purpose of the golf club – Irish Daily Mail, 19.12.08

Golf club defends its male-only policy in court – Irish Independent, 19.12.08

Calling all women, your county needs you – Mayo Echo, 13.12.08

Information Services

Following the departure of our information worker Michelle Scanlan in 2008, the NWCI was unable to recruit a replacement due to funding shortages. During the year we established a new weekly NWCI NewsFlash (which has replaced the NWCI E-newsletter) with information from members and friends of the NWCI on events, campaigns, petitions and news. The News Flash is circulated by email every Thursday. Queries from our members and the general public were dealt with by relevant staff members. Three editions of the NWCI E-newsletter were circulated prior to Michelle's departure

Financial Review of 2008

In 2008 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. The principal activities carried out as reflected in its statement of financial activities and Balance Sheet for the year are summarised as follows:

- Lobbying to increase the presence of women in decision-making arenas.
- Participating in the National Women's Strategy Coordinating Committee.
- Continuing to roll out the Social Welfare Reform campaign with a specific focus on the area of pensions and the recognition of women's care work.
- Publication of Research on a "Pension model for Women in Ireland" and launch of same.
- Joint Publication and launch of 'Where are we now? New feminist perspectives on women in contemporary Ireland' with TASC.
- Campaigning for subsidised childcare provision based on the research model

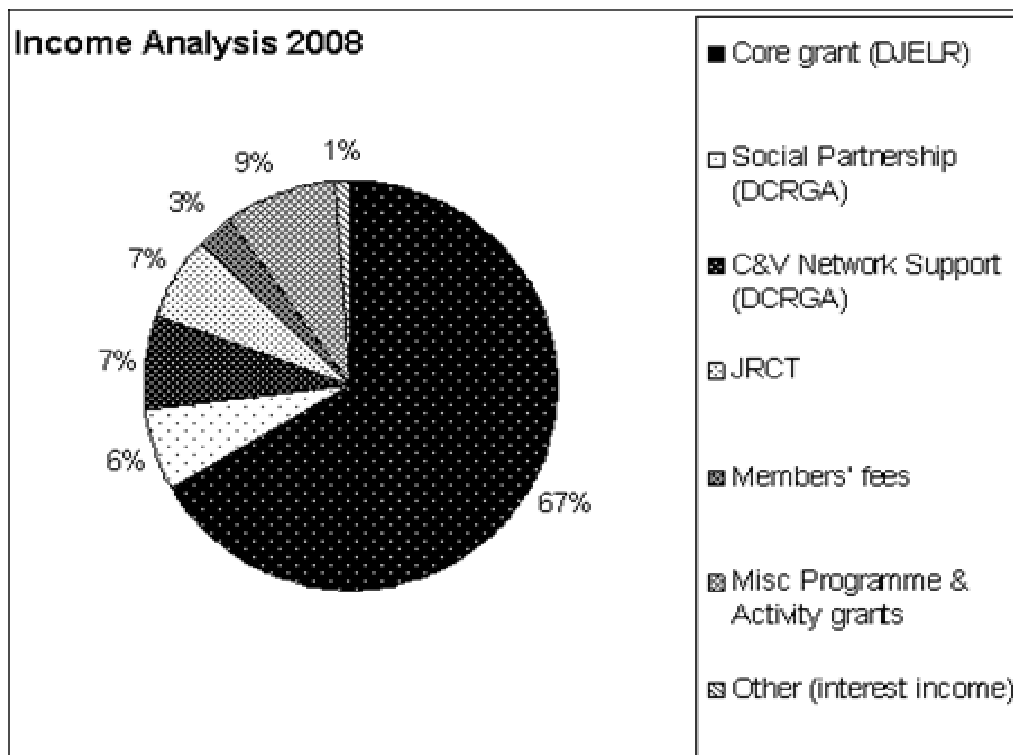
published in 2005.

- Continuing the work on the Social Welfare Campaign through the organisation of focus group meetings.
- Participating in Social Partnership talks.
- Supporting the Violence Against Women sector in its engagement with diverse women's groups experiencing disadvantage/discrimination, and with the new COSC Office
- Management of the Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women, and dissemination of the 2nd National Report focusing on Pornography.
- Representing affiliates in the media and other public fora.
- Ongoing development of the website for the organisation.
- Working with the Members through the outreach and support programme.
- Holding monthly Executive Board Meetings and attending quarterly European Women's Lobby meetings.
- Continuing to develop our support and outreach services to NWCI affiliates and other marginalised women's groups.
- Dissemination of the Women's Health Policy and designing a campaign strategy to progress the recommendations included in the Policy.
- Attending European Women's Lobby (EWL) meetings in Brussels.
- Hosting of annual events (Four Members Meetings, AGM, International Women's Day (IWD) Event, Pension Research Launch, Evening Seminars and Pre-Budget Submission Launch).

- Production and dissemination of Publications (EWM, Project Publications, Pension Research Publication, Annual Report, Pre- Budget Submission).
- Continuing to apply for new sources of funding and working on sourcing new premises.

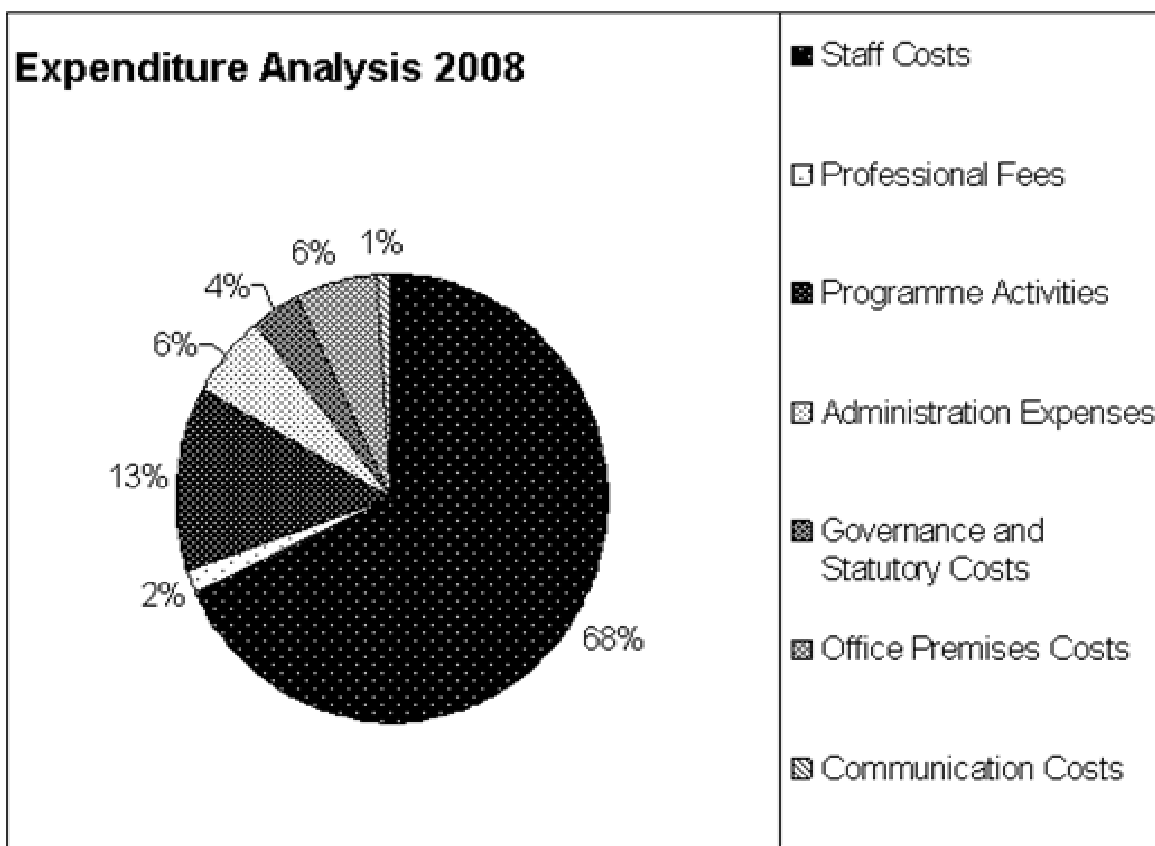
INCOME ANALYSIS 2008

Core grant (Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, DJELR)	€575,000
Social Partnership (Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, DCRGA)	€55,000
Community & Voluntary Network Support (DCRGA)	€64,620
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT)	€57,278
Members' Fees	€23,776
Misc. Programmes & Activity grants	€78,390
Other (interest income)	€8,623



EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS 2008

Staff Costs	€585,405
Professional Fees	€14,655
Programme Activities	€ 115,507
Administration Expenses	€53,077
Governance and Statutory Costs	€30,427
Office Premises Costs	€51,907
Communication Costs	€10,328



Financial Outlook for 2009

The opening position of the organisation's 2009 accounts show operating reserves balance of €56,260. But the financial outlook for 2009 is not bright. Our Core Grant from Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform has been cut by 5%, Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs programme funding has been reduced by 8% and other funding is becoming harder to source.

2008 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.

Summary Accounts for The National Women's Council Of Ireland Limited

Amalgamated Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2008

	2008	2007
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	10,038	17,370
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	26,941	25,329
Cash at bank and in hand	307,901	302,484
Total Current Assets	334,842	327,732
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	88,620	90,214
net current (liabilities)/assets	246,222	237,509
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	256,260	254,879
FUNDS		
Restricted Funds - Building Development Fund	200,000	200,000
Restricted Fund Other	55,129	14,490
Unrestricted Funds	1,131	40,389
Member's Funds	256,260	254,879

The financial statements were approved by the directors on the 31st of March, 2009 and signed on its behalf by: -
Maura Butler, Chairperson and Thérèse Murphy, Deputy Chairperson

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 (www.nwci.ie).

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 2008	Funds 2007
Grants	246,957	582,800	829,757	1,004,478
Membership Subscriptions		23,776	23,776	25,485
Other		531	531	766
Interest Income	7,744	879	8,623	1,249
Total Incoming Resources	254,701	607,986	862,687	1,031,978
Resources Expended				
Costs of Generating Income	8,213	720	8,933	8,712
Programme Activities	199,863	607,428	807,291	950,181
Governance and Professional Costs	5,986	39,096	45,082	41,122
Total Resources Expended	214,062	647,244	861,306	1,000,015
Net Income Resources	40,639	(39,258)	1,381	31,963
Total Funds at Beginning of Year	214,490	40,389	254,879	222,916
Total Funds Carried Forward	255,129	1,131	256,260	254,879

These financial statements were approved by the directors on the 31st day of March 2009 and are signed on their behalf by: Maura Butler (Chairperson) and Therese Murphy (Deputy Chairperson)

NWCI AFFILIATES 2008

Access 2000

Action Breast Cancer

AIM Family Services Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

AKIDWA

Alexandra College Guild

An Cosán

Aoibhneas Women's Refuge

Aontas

Association of Baha'i Women

Association of Secondary Teachers Association

Association of Teachers of Home Economics

Ballybane Beg Women's Group

Ballymote Family Resource Centre

Ballymun Women's Resource Centre

Banúlacht

Bodywhys

Cáirde

Centre for Gender Studies Trinity College

Childminding Ireland

Civil & Public Service Union

Clare Women's Network

Clondalkin Women's Network

Community Women's Education Initiatives

Cork City Childcare Committee

Cork Women in Focus

Cork Women's Political Association

County Carlow Women's Network

County Leitrim Partnership (Women's Development Section)

Derry Women's Centre

DES Action Ireland

Dóchas for Women

Donegal Traveller Women's Project

Donegal Women's Network

Doras Buí

56

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

Europa Donna Ireland

Federation of Business & Professional Women

Fine Gael Women's Group

Fingal Centre

Freedom from Pornography Campaign

Girls Friendly Society

Green Party Women's Group

Hanna's House

Headford Women's Group

Immigrant Council of Ireland

Impact

Inchicore Outreach Centre

Inishowen Women's Information Network

IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation

Irish Agricultural Advisers Association

Irish Association of Social Workers

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

Irish Women Lawyers Association

NWCI Annual Report 2008

NWCI AFFILIATES 2008

Kilkenny Rape Crisis Centre
Kenmare Area Women's Network
Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre

Labour Women
Letterkenny Women's Centre Ltd
Lifestart National Office
Limerick Family Planning Clinic
Limerick Women's Network
LinC
Longford Women's Centre
Louisburgh Community Project Ltd
Lourdes Youth & Community Services Ltd
Louth African Women's Support Group

Mandate

Mayo Rape Crisis Centre
Methodist Women's Association
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Mothers' Union
Mountwood Fitzgerald Community Development Centre
Moving On Project Carlow

National Association of Widows in Ireland
National Children's Nurseries Association
National Collective of Community based Women's
Networks Ltd
National Network of Women's Refuges
Network Ireland
Network Kildare
North Leitrim Women's Centre
North West Inner City Women's Network

Older Women's Network

One Family
One Parent Exchange & Network
OSS Cork

Pavee Point

Positive Action
Presbyterian Women's Association
Primary Health Care for Travellers

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

Second Chance Education Project for Women

Sexual Violence Centre Cork
Sinn Féin National Women's Forum
SIPTU National Women's Committee
Sláinte Pobal
Sonas Housing Association
Sorooptimists International
Southill Domestic Abuse Project
Southside Women's Action Network
Southwest Kerry Women's Association
Step Forward Group
Summerhill Active Retirement Group

Teachers Union of Ireland

Teach Tearmainn Women's Refuge
Tearmann Domestic Violence Service
The Sexual Health Centre
Tipperary Women's Networking Group
Tralee Women's Resource Centre
Tuam Community Development Resource Centre

UCC Women's Studies

UCD Women Graduates Association
UNIFEM Women's Committee

NWCI AFFILIATES 2008

Waterford Rape & Sexual Abuse Service
Waterford Student Mothers Group
Waterford Women's Centre
West Clare Women's Forum
Women in Agriculture
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 with Disabilities Forum
Women with Disabilities in the West
Women's Aid
Women's Aid Dundalk
Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association
Women's Education Research & Resource Centre
Women's Health Project
Women's Integrated Network
Women's Resource & Development Agency
Women's Studies Centre

YWCA

Zonta Club of Dublin

Total: 158 members

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Executive Board Members

Maura Butler (Chairperson – elected EGM October 2008)

Therese Murphy (Deputy Chairperson – elected June 2008)

Clare Treacy (Acting Deputy Chairperson Jan - June 2008)

Isobel Butler

Aileen Heverin

Kate Morgan (elected June 2008)

Kathleen O' Sullivan

Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop (elected June 2008)

Breda Raggett

Temenuzhka Yonkova (elected June 2008)

Stephanie Whyte (stepped down June 2008)

Berta Armitage (stepped down June 2008)

Tara Droog (stepped down June 2008)

Marie Hainsworth (stepped down June 2008)

2008 Attendance Executive Board

The Executive Board met 11 times during the year.

Maura Butler (6); Therese Murphy (9); Marie Hainsworth (5); Isobel Butler (11); Aileen Heverin (10); Kathleen O' Sullivan (11); Clare Treacy (7); Stephanie Whyte (2) Berta Armitage (4); Tara Droog (3); Breda Raggett (9); Kate Morgan (3); Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop (3); Temenuzhka Yonkova (5);

Company Secretary

Bridget O' Sullivan (retired June 2008), Maureen Kelly (appointed June 2008)

Registered Office and Business Address

9 Marlborough Court, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Auditors

Grant Thornton
Chartered Accountants
City Quay
Dublin 2.

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

STAFF & EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATION 2008

Organisation	Equality Sphere	NWCI Representative	Board/Staff member
Advocacy Initiative	General	Mary McDermott	Staff
Amnesty International Advisory Committee	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Community Platform	General	Orla O'Connor Mary McDermott	Staff
Community & Voluntary Pillar	General	Orla O'Connor Mary McDermott	Staff
Dublin City Council: IWD Working Group	General	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Dublin Employment Pact EQUAL at Work	Economic	Orla O'Connor	Staff
EEL Working Group : Dept of Education & Science	Social & Cultural	Aileen Heverin	Board
Equality Authority C&V Sector	General	Joanna McMinn Rachel Doyle	Staff
Eq. Authority EU Mainstreaming Initiatives, Advisory Group	General	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Equality Coalition	General	Joanna McMinn	Staff
EPAN Employment Policy Group	Economic	Orla O'Connor	Staff
European Network Against Racism	Social & Cultural	Rachel Doyle	Staff
European women's Lobby: Executive Board	General	Therese Murphy	Board

Organisation	Equality Sphere	NWCI Representative	Board/Staff Member
European Women's Lobby Board	General	Therese Murphy	Board
Forum on Europe	General	Therese Murphy	Board
FGM National Steering Committee	Social & Cultural	Joanne Vance	Staff
European Women's Lobby Board	General	Therese Murphy	Board
Forum on Europe	General	Therese Murphy	Board
FGM National Steering Committee	Social & Cultural	Joanne Vance	Staff
Freedom from Pornography Campaign	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Gender Equality Unit Management Committee	General	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Hanna's House Steering Group	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Irish Childcare Policy Network	Affective	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Irish Observatory on VAW	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Irish Organisation for the Unemployed: Exec. Board	Economic	Orla O'Connor	Staff
Marriage Equality	Affective	Mary McDermott	Staff
National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee	Affective	Orla O'Connor	Staff
National Consultative Committee on Racism & Interculturalism	Social & Cultural	Rachel Doyle	Staff

Organisation	Equality Sphere	NWCI Representative	Board/Staff Member
National Disability Authority– Research Advisory Group	Affective	Mary McDermott Joanne Vance	Staff
National Economic & Social Forum (NESF)	General	Orla O'Connor	Staff
National Steering Committee on VAW	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Perpetrators Group (of above)	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Power Partnership	Political	Joanna McMinn Rachel Doyle	Staff
Women's Human Rights Alliance	Political	Joanna McMinn	Staff
Women's Health Council Board	Social & Cultural	Marie Hainsworth	Board

The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi)

9 Marlborough Court

Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

T: (01) 87 87 248

E: info@nwci.ie

Registered Charity Number: CHY 11760