

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

E-NEWSLETTER

December 2005

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“Season’s Greetings from all the staff and Board of the National Women’s Council of Ireland”

NWCI POLICY NEWS

The Highs and Lows of Budget 2006

Budget 2006 was a critical opportunity for the Government to address the structural inequalities that continue to discriminate against women, but there was little evidence that the budget will change women’s disadvantaged position in Irish society.

The highs of Budget 2006

- Paid Maternity Benefit has been extended by four weeks in 2006, and another four weeks in 2007, bringing the total to 26 weeks. However, the government has also introduced unpaid maternity benefit, extended by 4 weeks in 2006, and the same in 2007 (bringing it up to 16 weeks), in addition to the 14 weeks unpaid parental leave that is already in place.
- An additional 50,000 new childcare places by the end of 2010,
- Supports for training in childcare
- Childminding allowance based on notification
- Increases in supports for Carers, including respite grant and earnings disregard and extension of Carers Benefit
- Increasing the upper income threshold for the One Parent family payment which will enable lone parents to earn more income
- Increases in all social welfare adult rates, as they put the government on course for meeting the targets set in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The lows

- The Minister claimed in his Budget speech that parents would be facilitated to spend more time with their children in their first year of life. However, in addition to the 26 weeks Maternity Benefit, the government have extended unpaid maternity benefit, by 4 weeks in 2006, and the same in 2007 (bringing it up to 16 weeks), in addition to the 14 weeks unpaid parental leave that is already in place. This continues to place the responsibility for childcare on women, and for low-income families it will make no difference, because they won’t be able to afford to take it up. Women make up 80% of part time workers, are half of those on the minimum

wage, and still earn on average 17.5% less than men. Why didn't the minister introduce paid paternity leave, or any measure that would encourage greater sharing of childcare between both women and men?

- The introduction of a new Early Childcare Supplement provides €1,000 per child, regardless of parental income. This will mean €19 per week towards childcare, which will only meet 10% of average childcare costs. In addition for lone parent families, €19 a week towards childcare costs will do little to allow them to take up employment, education or training if they wish to do so. It must be remembered that one-parent families are three and a half times more likely to be in poverty and supporting these families to leave poverty will not happen with a childcare package that tries to appease everyone.
- The NWCi has been campaigning vigorously for changes in the social welfare system to increase women's economic independence and recognise women's unpaid care work. As recently as November 2005, Minister Brennan stated on record that the social welfare system is 'unfair to women'. He also stated that he is 'determined to reverse the situation for women'. Minister Brennan's comments throughout the year raised the expectations of women that the Government would deliver a more equal social welfare system in Budget 2006. Yet again women's expectations have not been met.

For detailed information on how Budget 2006 effects women, refer to our information grid which has been circulated to all members and is available on our website www.nwci.ie

An Accessible childcare Model

The NWCi launched its childcare in June 2005. The model for childcare in Ireland comes from a children's and women's rights perspective and is based on strong international evidence. The NWCi also intends the model to increase and promote women's economic independence through a greater sharing of care responsibilities between women and men and through providing choices for women as to how and when they wish to participate in employment and education and training, particularly for women dependant on low incomes.

The model is aimed to complement the NWCi's [A Woman's Model For Social Welfare Reform](#). It is critical that both models are implemented

simultaneously so that care work is recognised both inside and outside of the home.

Proposed Subsidised Model of Childcare

Care Provision for Children aged 0 – 12 months:	Implementation Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Paid maternity leave to increase to 26 weeks. •5 days paid paternity leave (to be taken within 1 month of birth). <p>26 weeks paid parental leave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To be extended from 18 weeks to 26 weeks by 2008: 2 weeks in 2006, 3 weeks in 2007 and 2008. •3 days in 2006, 1 day in 2007 and 1 day in 2008. •Commencing in 2007 with an increase of 4 weeks per annum through to 2012 and 2 weeks in 2013.
Subsidised Early Childhood Care and Education: (ECCE)	Implementation Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal ECCE for all 3 and 4 year olds. • Subsidised Extended Care for 3 and 4 year olds. • Subsidised Full Day Care for 1 and 2 year olds. • Subsidised Extended Care for 5 to 14 year olds. 	<p>Introduce on an incremental basis between 2006 and 2007, with places provided for all 4 year olds not attending primary school in 2006 and extended to all three year olds in 2007. Each child would be entitled to attend for 3.5 hours per day 5 days a week for 48 weeks of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Places to be provided for all eligible 4 year olds in 2006 and extended to all eligible 3 year olds in 2007. •Places to be provided for all eligible 2 year olds in 2009 and extended to all eligible 1 year olds in 2010. •Places to be provided for all eligible 5 and 6 year olds in 2009 and extended by each age group per annum up to 10 year olds in 2013. In 2014 places will be provided for all eligible 11 and 12 year olds and all eligible 13 and 14 year olds in 2015.
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Social Welfare Reform Campaign

The NWCi is running a campaign for social welfare reform. The campaign is based on the research report 'A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform' (June, 2003) that highlights inequalities in the Irish social welfare system. These inequalities exist because the system is designed on a male breadwinner model. Recommendations in the report form the basis of the NWCi's social welfare reform campaign, which calls for specific changes in the system to increase women's equal access to it.

Currently work is being done with women's groups and organisations working with women to inform people about findings and

recommendations in the report 'A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform'. NWCI staff members have been learning from people's experiences and supporting groups in local and regional actions that they wish to pursue to make changes to modernise the social welfare system.

Throughout 2005, work was carried out with groups in the counties of Cork and Kerry; Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan; Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. The focus groups are representative of organisations working with women from each of the counties. The third regional social welfare seminar took place on 8th February 2005 in Bundoran, Co. Donegal. Over 90 people attended the seminar representing 40 organisations in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal.

The Brown Envelope Campaign

Meetings with the focus groups during the month of April 2005 took place specifically to organise the **brown envelope campaign** for social welfare reform. The three social welfare focus groups led the brown envelope campaign and worked on it in their own areas. The idea for the campaign came from the social welfare seminar in Killarney (January 2004). The brown envelope campaign involved collecting signatures on a standard letter to the Minister for Finance that listed changes necessary in the social welfare system, as detailed in 'A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform'. The signed letters were gathered together and put in brown envelopes before being personally delivered by women from all over Ireland to the government in May 2005. This national campaign and women's groups around the country were asked to get involved. The target number of signed letters was 10,000.

NWCI affiliate groups, family resource centres, citizen's information centres, centres for the unemployed, area-based partnerships, RAPID groups, community partnerships and national voluntary childcare organisations were contacted by mail and phone (over 500 in total) to gain their support in gathering signatures on letters.

The 'brown envelope campaign' for social welfare reform successfully saw the delivery of over 12,000 individually signed letters to Minister Cowen. The launch of the campaign in May 2005 involved individuals, local, regional and national organisations. National organisations such as the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE), the Irish Countrywoman's Association (ICA), National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN), One Parent Exchange and Network (OPEN), the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) and Age Action joined the NWCI at the launch and spoke of their support of the campaign outside the Department of Finance. The **media campaign** for the brown envelope campaign began in April and continued into May 2005 and resulted in articles in all of the main national papers and both national and local radio coverage.

An evaluation of the 'Brown Envelope Campaign' planning and launch took place internally in NWCI and also with the focus group in Cork/Kerry in June 2005. Evaluation forms were sent to all participants who were on the focus groups for the campaign. Learning from the campaign will be taken on board for organising other NWCI campaigns.

Names were gathered on the social welfare reform **petition** that will be presented around Budget 2006 in November 2005.

Staff members met with **national community and voluntary organisations** to gain their support for social welfare reform. This work is ongoing.

Meetings with Politicians and Political Parties

NWCI staff have had policy briefings with political parties and made presentations to Oireachtas Committees on the social welfare reform report. The following outlines this work over the last 7 months:

A meeting with Minister Seamus Brennan and officials from the Department of Social and Family Affairs took place on 20th April to discuss the NWCI's social welfare reform model. The Minister responded positively to the presentation, acknowledged that the system is discriminatory to women and asked the NWCI to submit our priorities for Budget 2006 to him, which was completed in May.

A Labour Party briefing on the NWCI's social welfare reform recommendations took place on 26th April. The Labour party have adopted the model in their manifesto for Government.

A meeting with Deputy David Stanton T.D., Fine Gaels spokesperson for Social and Family Affairs took place on 22nd September. Orla O'Connor and Claire Dunne had the opportunity to discuss the Social Welfare Reform Model and Childcare research with him.

Joanna McMinn, Orla O'Connor and Claire Dunne made presentations to the Joint Oireachtas Committees on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, Health and Children and Social and Family Affairs in October and November 2005. The presentations were on the NWCI's Social Welfare Reform and Childcare policy positions as outlined in 'A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform' and 'An Accessible Childcare Model'. Click on the following to view transcripts of the meetings:

Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=JUI20051012.xml&Ex=All>

Health and Children:

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=HEJ20051013.xml&Ex=All&Page=1>

Social and Family Affairs:

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=FAJ20051102.xml&Node=H2#H2>

Motion by Senator Sheila Terry

Following the NWCI's meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs, Senator Sheila Terry put forward a private members motion in the Seanad on reforming the social welfare system. In her presentation she spoke about many of the issues in the Social Welfare Reform campaign and in the NWCI's Pre-budget submission. Many Senators from all political parties entered into the debate at which Minister Sèamus Brennan was present. The Minister formally replied to the Senator saying: 'I believe the social welfare system is not fair to women. It has gone some distance with some improvements but in matters such as pensions, including those for former civil servants, child care, qualified adult status, men have done far better from the system than women. I am determined to reverse this situation in my time in office. The first step is to acknowledge it and then resolve it.'

Click on the following link to view the transcript of the debate: <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=SEN20051109.xml&Dail=29&Ex=All&Page=1>)

Support for groups wishing to meet with local representatives

Affiliate members and members of the social welfare reform focus groups were encouraged to set up meetings with local councillors or T.D's before the general election next year. The more people that are raising the issues such as social welfare reform, childcare, valuing care work etc. before the election, the more seriously politicians will take them. NWCI staff have offered support to prepare for or organise these meetings in the form of information and advice. The aim of these meetings could be to progress the members issues along with recommendations in the social welfare reform report that are particularly relevant to them. A database of politicians has been set up internally in NWCI, which can be used as a resource to staff and members. Lists of members local politicians can be extracted for their information.

Explanatory information leaflets outlining details to go with each recommendation in the Social Welfare Reform report are currently being completed in-house.

Pre-Budget 2006 Submission

The Pre-Budget 2006 Submission was launched on Wednesday 7th September in the National Library of Ireland. Orla O'Connor presented the Submission, which focuses on Social Welfare, Childcare, Decision Making, Health and Violence. Speakers on the experience of these issues included: Kitty Warnock, Dundalk Resource Centre for the Unemployed; Anne Keating, Ballymun Women's Resource Centre; Theresa Gyoh, Leadership Training Participant, Elva O Callaghan, National Collective of Locally Based Women's Networks; and Tess Murphy, Longford Women's Link. The launch was well attended and

people engaged with the issues in the submission at a questions and answers session at the launch.

Pre-Budget Forum

The submission was presented to the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Seamus Brennan at the Department's Pre-Budget Forum in October. Orla O'Connor, NWCI and Finola Brennan of the Donegal Women's Network gave the NWCI presentation to the Forum jointly. The Pre-Budget Submission was also presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs.

Seminar focusing on Human Rights

In October 2005, the NWCI successfully applied for funding to the Combat Poverty Agency to hold a seminar that will examine the inequalities in the social welfare system from a human rights perspective. The seminar will highlight problems that the male breadwinner social welfare system presents for women. It will look at rights based approaches to changing it along with legal ways of challenging the current system to make it fairer for women. We hope to invite policy makers and politicians to this seminar so for those members who are particularly interested in social welfare reform we encourage you to come along and engage in the discussion with them.

For further information or if you are interested in getting involved in the campaign for social welfare reform, contact Claire Dunne, claired@nwci.ie

THE NWCI & HEALTH POLICY

Health And Budget 2006

On Dec. 8th following the Budget the Tánaiste & Minister for Health announced increased funding to initiatives for services for older people in need of care to be introduced, including home care package, expanded home help service, development of nursing home subvention scheme and improvements to palliative care services and day/respite care.

Health Priorities in Estimates for Budget 2006

The main budget allocations to health were announced in the Budget Estimates in Nov. Spending on health will be increased by 9% with increases to Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability Services, Traveller Health and the National Cancer Strategy. NWCI welcome any increase to areas under funded in the past and hope that the increased

resources for the cancer strategy will finally ensure full availability of cervical screening services, earmarked since the 1980's. NWCI were disappointed that A&E charges are to increase from €55–€60.

Recent increase in Medical and GP Card guidelines

In October the income guidelines for medical and GP only cards was increased by 20% and the means test modified to take account of income after Tax, PRSI and other expenses. NWCI has been calling for an increase for a number of years. (See: <http://www.dohc.ie/press/releases/2005/20051013.html>)

FORTHCOMING

NWCI Policy Position on Women's Health

NWCI are currently completing an updated policy position paper on women's health. This paper draws on learning from previous NWCI work including In From The Margin (IFM) project and various reports.

Members also contributed throughout the year through focus groups, members meeting (May) and individual interviews. Women's health will be located within a social model of health and amongst others the effects of poverty, gender, education, diversity and how these determine women's health in Ireland will be examined.

This paper will provide the basis for future strategic policy work by NWCI on women's health.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Each month we will bring you news of information and resources, which may be of use in your work.

New Website: Irish Coalition Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

<http://irlcoalitionagainstfgm.homestead.com/>

NWCI are a member of the coalition, which 'exists to work for the eradication of the practice of FGM, which we understand to be a fundamental violation of the human rights of women'

Women's Health Council (WHC) www.whc.ie

WHC was set up to advise the Minister for Health and Children on women's health. The website contains information and reports and you can subscribe to a free monthly e-newsletter.

Women & Health Protection (WHP) <http://www.whp-apsf.ca>

A Canadian site, WHP is a coalition of community groups, researchers, journalists and activists concerned about the safety of pharmaceutical drugs.

Publications on the website include 'The Marketization of Depression: Prescribing SSRI Antidepressants to Women', which examines the impact of SSRI antidepressants on women and why proven non-drug alternatives such as counselling and support are not used more to address the emotional distress of women.

For websites and contact details of NWCI affiliate members involved in work on women's health see the NWCI website: www.nwci.ie and click membership

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Joanna McMinn, Director formally launched WAVES, the women's domestic violence service for Sligo, Leitrim and west Cavan on 5th December. This launch took place during the International 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women Campaign ran from November 25th (International Day Against Violence Against Women) to December 10th (International Human Rights Day), in over 90 countries with over 800 participating organisations.

The NWCI strongly promotes the value and importance of community based front line services for women, which include support, information and advocacy through one to one support. In Ireland, where many women are living in rural isolation, compounded by lack of transport and often also lack of money, outreach services are vital. Frontline services have responded to these realities, and understanding the increased risk to women of leaving their home or local community for any length of time, they have endeavoured to bring the service to women whenever possible. Women's groups in towns all over Ireland have developed front line services in response to the clear need that exists, with services that are women centred and cognisant of the abuse of power that is involved, advocate women's right to freedom from violence.

Front line services are engaged in work grounded in an unshakeable commitment to women's right to live free from violence. Freedom from violence is a human right, but women's experience within intimate relationships with a male partner, reveal that this right is abused all too frequently and often with fatal consequences.

It is important that we acknowledge violence against women is not being addressed adequately at a political level and as a consequence frontline services are seriously under funded. Funding for services for women who are victims of violence has not been increased since 2002, despite increases in running costs. A recent survey found that frontline services dedicated to female victims of violence are all experiencing funding

difficulties, with many having to cut back on services. This cutback in funding comes at a time when more and more women are attempting to access services. The Women's Aid national free phone helpline has recorded a significant increase in calls over the past couple of years that could not be answered due to a lack of resources.

The Irish Government this summer appeared before the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). When questioned on the critical issue of violence against women, Minister Fahey conceded that the government has not responded adequately to this issue. The Committee criticised the Irish government on their lack of resources to frontline services in this country. The Committee commented that it was 'concerned about the prevalence of violence against women and girls, low prosecution and conviction rates of perpetrators, high withdrawal rates of complaints and inadequate funding to organisations that provide support services to victims'. It is now critical that the Irish government redistribute resources that will guarantee women's safety, ensure women are treated with dignity in our courts, and give women the economic independence they need to make real choices. Only then will women be in a position to live in simple human dignity.

The NWCI & the Media

Budget 2006 Media Coverage

The NWCI's Budget work received much media coverage (childcare in particular). Orla O'Connor was our key spokesperson for Budget 2006. Joanna McMinn and Marie Hainsworth acted in supporting roles.

The week before the Budget (on December 1st) we were the focus of a feature piece on the 6.1 news on RTE 1.

We were invited to be part of the 'Prime Time' panel on RTE 1 (Television) immediately after the Budget Speech and then also to be part of the panel for the night-time discussion and analysis. We were the only voluntary organisation to be part of the afternoon discussion on Prime Time. Our reaction was also carried on the RTE 1 News at 6pm (6.1 News).

Several regional radio interviews and discussions took place around Budget Day. Radio stations and news bulletins throughout Dublin and around the country discussed the outcome of the Budget and gave our reaction to the same.

Newspaper coverage was also successful with several interviews taking place with Orla – we received a front–page mention in the Irish Examiner on December 8th. Our reaction to the Budget was carried on all the broadsheet papers and in the Irish Star and the Evening Herald. Joanna McMinn wrote a reactionary piece for the Irish Independent the following day.

The Sunday Business Post also carried our reaction on December 11th.

Overall, we were incredibly pleased with the coverage, particularly with Prime Time and we have received very positive feedback of our presence in the Media over the last few months in the lead up to Budget 2006.

Pre–Budget Submission and Forum

There was great media interest from press and radio, with several media persons in attendance at the launch of our **Pre–Budget Submission** . The document itself was very well– received by members and the public alike. Coverage received included local and national radio, national broadsheets, tabloids and local/regional newspapers. All interviews were carried out by Orla O’Connor.

The **Pre–Budget Forum** took place in Dublin on Monday, October 17th. It was the first year that the Communications Officer (Ciara O’Shea) attended the Forum alongside Orla O’Connor. This worked well as we were the only group with a specific person to interact with media persons in attendance. As a result we received radio coverage with Today FM, Q102 and Independent Network News (INN). We also received coverage the following day in the Irish Times and interviews were also conducted with university campus and local radio stations around the country following the forum.

Childcare

Throughout the summer of 2005, there has been extensive interest in and coverage of the childcare debate in the national media. Radio, television, newspapers & magazines have all given ample space to cover the issue. It has become a hot topic and more recently a day has not gone by without some reference to the debate in the media.

We launched our report: ‘An Accessible Childcare Model’ on September 14th in The Holiday Inn in Dublin. On the morning of the launch, Orla O’Connor took part in a lengthy interview on Morning Ireland on RTE Radio1 and also appeared on TV3 on the morning programme ‘Ireland AM’.

The launch itself was very well attended by all media: Television – Sky News, TV3 and RTE, Print Media – Irish Times, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, The Star, Village Magazine and The Irish Sun and Radio – INN, Today FM, 98fm, RTE News, Q102 and Newstalk 106. Coverage was received extensively throughout the four corners of the country on local and regional radio and also throughout the print press in all counties.

The media interest in the research since the launch has been enormous. We have been sought for comment and interview once again by all media. The Irish Examiner conducted a national opinion poll through Lansdowne Market Research into Childcare, which was published over the course of a week in the paper (Nov 7th to 11th). This sparked much debate and the NWCI featured each day in various articles within the paper in reaction to the findings of the poll.

The Sunday Business Post also ran a special feature on childcare on Sunday 13th Nov and the NWCI featured heavily throughout the piece.

Orla O'Connor has conducted all interviews and comment over the last number of months, providing over 80 interviews specifically over the last three months, which has resulted in the same amount of direct coverage.

Other areas of interest for which comment was sought and coverage of the NWCI was received in the media over the last number of months are: gender quotas and women's participation in decision-making, the constitution and definition of the family, CEDAW and human rights, prostitution and trafficking, lap-dancing clubs and the opening of 'Stringfellows' nightclub in Dublin, VAW, breast and cervical cancer (screening), national women's strategy and maternity leave.

For a full list of all media coverage, please contact Ciara O'Shea at ciaraos@nwci.ie.

News From Members

The Advent Journey is a course running at the **Catherine Mc Auley** Centre on December 20th 2005. The course will run from 2pm until 4pm and will focus on the meaning of advent. The cost of the course is €12. If you are interested in attending please phone the Catherine Mc Auley Centre, Herbert Street Dublin 2 on 01-6387500.

'Minister Frank Fahey launched the **Rape Crisis Network Ireland's** 'Agenda for Change: Towards ending injustice for sexual

violence survivors' on the 21st of November 2005. This paper is the culmination of 25 years of expertise gained from survivors, staff and volunteers of 16 Rape Crisis Centre across Ireland. The three priority points for the RCNI are to establish a definition of consent, to end the DPP practice of 'no reasons' and to ensure practices of training and education to ensure specialist professionals in the Gardai, prosecutors and the judiciary. The 19 points of reform detailed in this paper are all within the gift of the various institutions of the criminal justice system. Please contact rcni@eircom.net for a hard copy or go to our website www.rcni.ie/public.htm .

From 13th to 18th December 2005, 148 world governments will meet in Hong Kong for a Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organisation. In preparation for this event, **Banúlacht** has prepared a Gender Breifing Paper. Click on this link for further information. <http://www.banulacht.ie/docs/briefing-genderandtrade-nov05.htm>

Bodywhys have produced an e-briefing document for Policy makers on Eating Disorders and Young People. Click on the following link to view the briefing document <http://www.news/news.htm>. You will also find information on this link about a new CD-ROM resource developed by Bodywhys aimed at secondary school students. The CD-ROM looks at the This educational resource looks at main risk factors associated with eating disorders and aims to provide appropriate information for the target audience.

Comhlámh Volunteering Options Programme

Are you thinking about....

- volunteering overseas in a developing country?
- working towards a more just and sustainable world?

If you are, then [Comhlámh's Volunteering Options](#) new guidebook is for you.

Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Development Workers, through its Volunteering Options Programme has launched a resource book and companion website for people interested in volunteering with overseas agencies.

Working for a Better World: A Guide to Volunteering in Global Development is the first comprehensive guide to overseas volunteering opportunities for Irish people. It provides invaluable information for anyone who is considering a voluntary work placement in a developing

country. Drawing on Comhlámh's thirty years of experience of working with overseas volunteers, the guide will help you:

- Choose the best volunteering placement through a **detailed directory**, which includes **information on over 110 organisations** that arrange international volunteer placements;
- Place international volunteering within the **wider context of development**, so that your volunteering experience will have more impact;
- Benefit from the experiences of people who have volunteered in developing countries, through their **testimonials and advice**; and
- Plan the **practical details** of your overseas trip with lists of useful travel resources.

Unlike many guides, **Working for a Better World** also provides advice on what to do when you come home, to help ensure that your volunteering placement is a rewarding lifetime experience that does not end when you touch down in Ireland. Overseas volunteering overseas is a growing sector in Ireland, and **Working for a Better World** will set the standard for guides to come.

A companion website, www.volunteeringoptions.org, allows the user to research the sending organisations that send volunteers abroad, as well as search a database of organisations by the continent they work in, the type of development work they undertake and the activities their volunteers engage in.

A central component of the Volunteering Options Programme is the development of a **Code of Practice** for sending organisations and a **Volunteer Charter** for volunteers. Organisations are currently signing up to this initiative which has the support of Dóchas and Development Co-Operation Ireland.

The main purpose of the **Code of Practice** and **Volunteer Charter** is to set a standard for short-term volunteering in the development world, for the use of sending organisations, volunteers and hosting organisations. In the more medium term we hope to increase information sharing and networking among the agencies in the sector; to make that sector more aware of the issues raised in the **Code of Practice** and **Charter**.

Ultimately, the intention is to contribute to the improvement of the volunteering experience of future Irish international volunteers and the quality of life for the communities hosting volunteer programmes.

If you would like to order a copy of **Working For a Better World** (€12 inc. postage if ordered from Comhlámh direct, €15 in bookshops, ST£10 inc.

postage to UK), email: Richard@comhlamh.org, or go to www.volunteeringoptions.org.

Alternatively, you can call the office at 01 – 478 3490 for credit card sales.