

CASE STUDY REPORT

Getting Engaged: Women in Local Development

European Project Co-funded by the EU

1st Peer Review Workshop Report

Puszczkowo (Poznan) 16th – 19th May 2007

CASE STUDY REPORT

The following report includes the case studies presented at the workshop and additional case studies and reports that further exemplify the main themes and issues raised at the workshop.

During the two day workshop in Poznan a diverse range of work was presented by representatives from each of the Local Action Groups and invited individuals. The case studies illustrated the scope and depth of work being done by women and with women in an effort to increase their participation in social, economic and political life. The case studies also highlighted some of the major barriers that contribute to the ongoing exclusion of women in areas such as employment, training and development activities.

Each case study presented an innovative approach to addressing the needs of marginalised women and it was evident from the subsequent discussion amongst participants that the strength of their organisations lay in their ability to accommodate diversity, including working across communities, working with minority ethnic women, women with disability and with older and younger women. They not only reached socially excluded and disadvantaged groups, they also sought to contribute to the development of more effective decision-making at policy level by adopting approaches based on empowerment, inclusion, equity, partnership and collective action.

CASE STUDY	THEME
<p>1. Business and Professional Women - Poznan Club</p> <p>2. Women's Support Network - Belfast</p>	Network Organisations
<p>3. Getting Engaged: Women in Local development – Budapest</p> <p>4. Women's Participation – Enna</p> <p>5. Women's Vocational Development Program – Poznan</p> <p>6. Women, Inclusion and Work – Turin</p>	Partnership Approaches
<p>7. Women's Participation in Banyoles</p>	Work with Migrant Women
<p>8. Rotterdam Ambassador Network</p>	Mentoring
<p>9. Ballybeen Women's Centre – Belfast</p> <p>10. Shankill Women's Centre – Belfast</p>	Grassroots Integrated Service Delivery Model
<p>11. Derry Women's Centre – N.Ireland</p> <p>12. South Yorkshire Women's Development Trust</p>	Gender Specific Education and Training
<p>13. Women and Entrepreneurship - Turin</p>	Entrepreneurship
<p>14. Shankill Women's Centre's Young Women's Project</p>	Young Women
<p>15. Promoting the Participation of Women in Local Governance and Development in Ghana</p> <p>16. Women into Politics – Belfast</p>	Women Politics and Decision-making

**17. WADE INITIATIVE: Gender balance
on air
Ireland**

Women in the Media

Case studies 1 &2 are examples of network organisations that represent women and aim to make their voices heard and impact on policy and decision making processes:

CASE STUDY 1

POLISH PERSPECTIVE: BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN - POZNAN CLUB

PRESENTER: JOLANTA PLAKWICS

INTRODUCTION

The Polish Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) have 5 Clubs in Poland and 117 members. There are two BPW Clubs in Poznan, the city of approximately 750,000 inhabitants.

BPW's overall aims are to:

- promote activity of professional women and support their initiatives,
- achieve high level of professionalism and promote women's involvement and equal opportunities in political, social and economic life, especially at local and national level,
- encourage women and girls to improve their education through academic studies and vocational training and to share their professional experience with the society and among themselves
- promote friendship, cooperation and understanding among women-in-business and professions.

In 2003 - a year before an EU accession referendum in Poland - BPW Poznan Club organised an open debate on the situation of women in the city and the neighbouring areas, with participation of 4 local women's groups and representatives of Poznan regional and local town authorities plus representatives of Poznan European Funds Office.

The debate concerned most important aspects of social policy in the context of gender equality at local and regional levels. Special emphasis is put on the absence of women and representatives of women's organisations at the local decision-making level as regards social policy, labour market and the functioning of women's businesses. The discussion is further reflected in the local media.

In 2004, the European Funds Office and BPW Poznan Club start working on a common policy framework on women's empowerment at the local level. A network and a working group consisting of town authorities and women's groups was established. As a result a programme on Women's Professional Activisation is created.

In 2006-2007 - the Program, financed by the European Social Fund, is run by the Town Hall and BPW Poznan Club together.

The Program's Council consisting of representatives of local administration, labour market institutions, employers' organisations and BPW Poznan Club serves as a platform for exchange of information, opinion and advice on gender equality questions arising in the institutions involved - for instance, the local labour office adjusts its re-training policy by better addressing it to women's needs.

Basing on the experience of cooperation within the Program's Council, the Poznan Town Hall, European Funds Office and Department of Social Policy are now drafting a new social policy programme including gender perspective in, among others, programmes concerning new jobs for teachers and people with disabilities.

WHAT ARE THE KEY OBSTACLES/PROBLEMS TO THE ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT?

1. Low awareness of gender equality issues and their impact on local development policies among authorities

Gender equality policy is still at its starting point in Poland. Local development reflects the general tendency to avoid gender dimension wherever possible. Local authorities (policy and decision-makers as well as the staff) need to be educated on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in order to be ready to engage more women in local development.

2. Few women's organisations

In spite of clear achievements of the women's movement, there is hardly any increase in the number of women's groups. Recent research on women's organisations shows that their percentage does not exceed 1.5 of all registered organisations (Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University). In Poznan region this percentage does not exceed 1. Only 9 Poznan women's organisations are active in the field of women's advancement. Only 3 of them (including BPW Poznan Club) aim at promoting gender equality in local development.

3. Low representation of women in decision-making

Local authorities and programmes financed by local budget are headed mainly by men (analysis of 15 programmes implemented by Poznan Regional Office concerning improvement of environment and infrastructure) and tailored to meet mainly male needs. (Approximately 70% of unemployment re-training programme budget goes to technical courses attended mainly by men).

POLICY MEASURES

- Education on gender equality issues

- Promotion of women's groups
- Introducing women as experts and consultants

ACTIONS TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

1. Actions and activities:

- Street actions to promote gender equality at the local level: posters, banners, happenings
- Seminars and conferences to promote women's involvement in economic life of the region:
 - Presentation of good practice examples,
 - Series of debates with women (and men) politicians - candidates in local elections - presenting women's political needs and expectations as to political agenda,
 - Presentation of women's specific needs in the labour market

2. Implementation of the Programme of Women's Professional Activisation:

- Promotion and information action addressed to women,
- Presentation of principles and opportunities to support women's engagement in local business,
- Competition for equal opportunities employers - 4 companies were awarded equal opportunity employer prize

3. Training:

- Training on gender mainstreaming issues for representatives of technical schools representing top labour market technical professions

RESOURCES (FINANCIAL AND HUMAN)

Available resources: Gender and gender mainstreaming specialists, staff, networks.

Required resources: Time, space and funding for local gender equality policy development.

RESULTS

- Actions and activities addressed directly to women as well as networking and consultations between women's organisations and local authorities prove to be effective in getting more women involved in the local development.
- As a result, more women are now involved in the work of various local committees.
- Women's organisations are consulted on gender aspects of local social policy in the process of planning.

LESSONS LEARNED

- i. Difficulties in promoting women and gender equality perspective and insufficient number of its promoters plus gender blind planning and distribution of resources constitute serious barriers to women's involvement in local development in Poland.
- ii. Building ad hoc partnerships with local authorities for better involvement of women in the local development, although a good practice is only a partial solution to the problem and does not provide for sustainability. Local administration needs to create an overall gender mainstreaming strategy in order to be able to develop adequate policies at the local level.
- iii. Systematic work on gender equality issues and building partnerships with local authorities bring positive results but are merely small (and often isolated) steps towards achieving a more gender balanced local development in Poland. If women are to be engaged in local development in greater numbers, gender equality approach should constitute an integral part of policy development at this level.

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CASE STUDY 2:

WOMEN'S SUPPORT NETWORK

**BELFAST
NORTHERN IRELAND**

WRITER:

**LYNN CARVIL
PATRICIA HARREN
SIOBHANN MCKEATING**

BACKGROUND

The Women's Support Network, established in 1989, is an umbrella organisation for community-based women's centres, women's projects and women's infrastructure groups in Northern Ireland. The WSN vision is of 'a society where women's experiences are fully recognized and valued and where women enjoy full and equal participation in all sphere's of life.' Our mission is:

'To support the development of women's organisations, enable collective action and positively impact on policy and decision-making processes'.

We currently have:

- 30 full members
- 5 associate members, and
- 150 information recipients

WSN services include information provision, networking, signposting, support, policy consultation, campaigning, and promotion of the community-based women's sector.

BARRIERS TO ENGAGING WOMEN

As well as working with our member organisation's to support their work locally, WSN also works at a regional and national level. The work of the Women's Support Network occurs in the context of a society where structural gender inequality continues to exist. Examples of persisting inequalities experienced by women in Northern Ireland are shown below and WSN will continue to lobby Government Departments and Statutory bodies on these issues.

Women and political representation

Women are notably underrepresented in political life in Northern Ireland. They are also underrepresented in terms of public appointments.

- Currently less than 17% of Members of Local Assembly in the Northern Ireland Assembly are women.

Women and Work

Gender inequality continues to persist in a segregated labour market. Women are disproportionately found in the lower tiers of the labour market; holding the majority of part-time and low-paid jobs and are much less likely to be in managerial positions.

- 37% of female employees in NI work part-time, compared with 8% of male employeesⁱ
- Over nine out of ten female employees work in the service sector, compared with two-thirds of male employees.ⁱⁱ

There has persistently been a gap between the earnings of men and women, with women earning less than men.

- In April 2005 the median gross weekly earnings for full-time females in Northern Ireland was £355.80 compared with £409.50 for full-time males.ⁱⁱⁱ

Childcare Provision

While, in theory, 'childcare' could be viewed as a 'parental' responsibility, reality dictates that 'caring' responsibilities, including childcare, is much more likely to fall to females and mothers. For WSN, childcare is therefore an equality issue and we continually advocate for high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare provision.

- In (mid-year) June 2004 – the number of day nursery places per 1000 children aged 0-4 was 84.3 in NI. This compares with 181.3 in England in 2005.^{iv}
- A survey undertaken for the Equality Commission NI in 2003 found that nearly a quarter of employed mothers were constrained in the hours they worked by childcare problems. A further 20% said they were constrained in their choice of job by childcare needs.^v (Women and men in NI – Equality Commission pg. 40)
- While the working age economic activity rate for women without dependent children is 73%, the corresponding rate for women with 3 or more dependent children is 45%.^{vi} (Women in Northern Ireland Sept 06 – pg 5)

POLICY MEASURES ADDRESSING THESE BARRIERS

Regionally, there are numerous government policies that have the potential to impact positively on women's equality. The most significant ones are the recently produced Gender Equality Strategy and 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998'. WSN are represented on the Gender Advisory Panel which was set up to advise on the content of the Gender Strategy and subsequent Action Plans. The Gender Strategy builds on the 12 critical areas of concern detailed within the Beijing Platform for Action.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act deals with Equality of Opportunity and requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between various groups of people including 'men and women'. Government departments and public bodies are therefore obliged to consult with community and voluntary sector organisations during the policy formulation process to ensure that policies will not have a negative or detrimental impact on section 75 groups including women.

Currently WSN is working on a project identifying women's needs in terms of community based education and training provision and linking this need with current government objectives and policies. Other key areas where we will be undertaking work to support the services provided by our members are childcare and the provision of specialist advice services to women. Reports will be produced on these three key areas of service provision and used to lobby government with a view to sustaining and in some cases enhancing services.

ROLE OF WSN IN BOOSTING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

WSN continually strive to ensure that the voices of women are heard by the decision-makers in Northern Ireland. We host consultation events and feed back the views of women to relevant agencies. We regularly facilitate networking and information events on issues that are pertinent to our members.

We meet with decision makers and submit responses to high level strategic policy consultations in an effort to address the structural discriminations faced by women and enhance women's equality.

FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Human: Director, Policy & Research Co-coordinator, Outreach & Development Officer and Office Manager

Financial: Annual Budget – £170,000 (250Euro)

RESULTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED

Examples of results that have been achieved during the year 2005/2006 include:

- Through protracted negotiations secured funding and support for the Community Based Women's sector. This resulted in securing funding for an infrastructural partnership, including the WSN and core funding for the 14 women's centres in Northern Ireland.
- After a concentrated lobbying campaign with the women's ad hoc policy group successfully argued for substantial changes to the proposed Gender Equality Strategy.
- Hosted a series of four 'working-lunch' seminars on a range of topics including 'From N.I. to the UN – Where do women figure?' This seminar provided information on the UN Committee on the Status of Women.
- Developed relationships with other EU funded projects, locally and in other European countries. WSN held an exchange visit with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation.
- Produced an audit of women's projects working in Europe - 'Shaping and Sharing in Europe'
- Held an event entitled 'Shankill Women Having Your Say' producing a report detailing the barriers local women face in terms of accessing employment, education, health and childcare provision.
- Recruited 32 women from member groups and setting up consultation workshops as part of the
- 'Get Heard Project' in partnership with the NI Anti-poverty Network.

LESSONS LEARNED

Examples of lessons we have learned through this work include;

- Our success in terms of lobbying for funding has shown us that the maxim, 'Strength in Numbers' is true. Having a coherent and loud voice certainly assisted in getting our message across to government.

- The usefulness of networking and information events, for example, the lunchtime discussion series. Holding such events allows the women to meet with their counterparts, discuss issues they may be facing and gain other views in terms of potential resolutions. The topics discussed at these events also enables WSN members think more strategically about their work locally.

i 'Women in Northern Ireland – Labour Market Statistics Bulletin', DETI/NISRA, (September 2006) pg.7

ii 'Women in Northern Ireland – Labour Market Statistics Bulletin', DETI/NISRA, (September 2006) pg.8

iii 'Women and Men in Northern Ireland', Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, (April 2006), pg. 38

iv 'Women in Northern Ireland – Labour Market Statistics Bulletin', DETI/NISRA, (September 2006) pg.18

v 'Women and Men in Northern Ireland', Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, (April 2006), pg. 40

vi 'Women in Northern Ireland – Labour Market Statistics Bulletin', DETI/NISRA, (September 2006) pg. 5

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Case studies 3, 4, 5 & 6 describe partnership approaches to engaging women in local development and gender equality:

CASE STUDY 3

HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIVE: GETTING ENGAGED: WOMEN IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
LAG BUDAPEST

PRESENTERS: **FRUZSINA ALBERT**
ROZSA SAJGAL

OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The presenter described two types of barriers facing women:

1. Society

- Political heritage
- Rights V's Obligations
- Roles

2. Family

- Political Influence
- Roles

The presenters felt that although EU policy has adopted rights based approach to gender equality this does not always translate into practice at a national level - in Hungary the approach to gender equality could be described as obligation based.

Within Hungary there has always been an underrepresentation of women in politics. There has never been more than 12% women representation in government and it currently stands at 10%. In an effort to address this imbalance the presenters said that at least one political party- the Freedom Alliance Party – has put forward a proposal to raise women's representation to 50%.

POLICY MEASURES

LEGISLATION: 1982 – Hungary subscribed to CEDAW
2004 – Introduction of Equal Opportunities Act
2006 – Introduction of Equal Opportunities Authority

POLICY MEASURES – SUPPORT & ALLOCATIONS:

- Family care grants and benefits
- Family allowance
- Child care assistance
- Maternity benefit
- Child rearing support
- Day care services for children
 - Crèche
 - Pre school/kindergarten
 - Day care
- Day care services for the elderly
 - Day care
 - Catering

HOW POLICY MEASURES ARE IMPLEMENTED

- At a National Level: Women in Parliament
- At a local level: Women in local government
- Debate
- Critical mass

RESOURCES

Available Resources

Financial: Funding on a European and National level

European commission calls for proposal
National calls for proposal

Human: NGO's
Non governmental networks

Required Resources

- Establishment of Women's Centre's/Women's Houses (Cultural Centres)
- Lobbying activities
- Civil initiatives
- Awareness raising
- Leisure activities

RESULTS

Key results have included the establishment of working groups to facilitate the exchange of skills, knowledge and practice in the field of gender equality and women's issues and the development of a promotion channel that promotes cooperation between local government and organisations working with women. It also enabled discussion and debate on issues such as policy measures and confronting EU expectations around gender equality.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Hungarian presenters emphasised the importance of gaining support and approval from politicians and decision makers. They thought that it would be beneficial for future work to gain the support and cooperation of the media and to raise awareness women's issues amongst men also.

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CASE STUDY 4

ITALIAN PERSPECTIVE:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ENNA

PRESENTER:

**LAG ENNA
ROSARIA LEONARDI**

INTRODUCTION

The presenter began by highlighting the extent of gender inequalities in the Enna region of Italy. She stated that substantial inequality between men and women continues to exist and is a serious problem. Due to women's unequal position in society she said their contribution to local development is not recognised. The presenter went on to say that compared to other regions of Italy in Enna and its surrounding province employment rates for women are very low. At 36% it is below the average rate for Sicily as a whole. Enna has the lowest female employment rates in Sicily with the gap between men and women standing at 44.7%. The rate of women in the labour market is 13.7%.

The Presenter explained that by analysing the labour market the Enna Local Action Group (LAG) has gained a good insight into the employment conditions of women in the Enna territory and as a result has identified strategies aimed at promoting women's participation.

OBSTACLES AND PROBLEMS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The Enna LAG identified several obstacles hindering women's participation in local development:

- Lack of information about activities and actions useful for women's involvement
- Mistrust in training courses or other instruments that could give more chance to access to the labour market
- Low self confidence, lack of confidence in their own capabilities and mistrust in the possibility to be successful and get important roles in social and political life
- Weak empowerment and self-confidence, low self-awareness necessary to analyse and decision making abilities to develop strategies
- High unemployment amongst women (36%)
- Lack of social services and public facilities able to help and facilitate the conciliation between life and job
- Strong presence of off-the-book employment (many women work in the black labour market with low wages, heavy timetables and turns, without any insurances, providence, safety conditions).

POLITICAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS TO BOOST PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Local institutions, associations, social forces, trade unions, the few bodies for equality in the province of Enna, schools, and training centres started actions to promote Gender Equalities and to boost woman active participation in the different sectors of life.

Direct actions of information and training and indirect actions in the sector of service, empowerment and innovation have been carried out.

ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN

The presenter described several initiatives aimed at improving the participation of women in Enna. These ranged from entrepreneurship programmes for women, seminars and conferences, research projects to cultural events.

(Further details available from <http://www.aceran.org/projects/womenlocaldevprew.htm>).

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

FINANCIAL: common balance sheets of Municipalities and Province, Region, EU Funds, Funds of the Ministry of Work and Welfare, Fund of Equality Council, contributions of Associations, Public Health, Chamber of Commerce, Public Schools.

HUMAN: councillors of local bodies, association staff, doctors, school headmasters, Equal Opportunities Commission, Equal Opportunities Councillor, University, Voluntary organizations, Associations, Employment Centres staff and Training centres staff.

RESULTS

- More information on current regulation
- Diffusion of entrepreneurship
- Strengthening of existing enterprises
- Creation and strengthening of n.16 information services, guidance and counselling on woman entrepreneurship on the territory of the province of Enna
- Access to micro-contribution for n.7 entrepreneurial projects
- Approval of projects thanks to diffused information
- Increased awareness of the national and EU financial instruments
- Development of competences, connected with the gender differences and specific culture in the respect of gender differences
- Strengthening of personal identity women/mothers
- Creation of anti-violence service and welcome centres.

CONTACT DETAILS

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CASE STUDY 5

WOMEN'S VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME POZNAN

The Women's Vocational Development Program is part of the "Comprehensive consultancy and training program- a chance for women from Poznań and Poznań District". Through a partnership approach the project has been able to offer a comprehensive range of training and development programmes and support to enable women to enter the labour market or establish their own businesses.

PARTNERSHIP

The partnership is made up of the following organisations:

- **Poznań Town Hall - project promoter**
- **Polish Federation of Business & Professional**
- **Women's Clubs – project implementing unit**
- **District Labour Office in Poznań**
- **Democratic Union of Women in Poznań**
- **Vocational Consultancy Center for Youth in Poznań**
- **Poznań „Amazonki” Society**
- **Polish Economic Chamber of Importers, Exporters and Cooperation**

PROJECT

The objective of the Program is to increase the level of women's involvement in social and vocational life by means of:

- acquiring new vocational skills
- acquiring the skill of orientation on the labour market
- increasing the number of women running their own business
- increasing employers awareness in favour of employment of women

The main beneficiaries of the project are:

- women returning to the labour market after long absence
- women from rural areas
- unemployed women searching for a job
- women running business or willing to
- working women with outdated qualifications
- women vocationally passive

In an effort to support women's participation the project offers the following:

1. 3 month vocational apprenticeships
2. Subsidies to establish their own business
3. Reimbursement of travel costs for women from the district (250 PLN/1m) attending training
4. Support during training for women with care responsibilities (250 PLN/1m)
5. Psychological support groups

The project offers a comprehensive range of training in the following areas

1. Computer skills
2. Computer accounting
3. Computer graphics i photography
4. Information broker, telework, sales representative
5. Security guard, first and second level license
6. Cleaning team employee working on high quality cleaning equipment
7. Hotel services
8. Caretaker and housekeeper for dependants
9. Secretaries
10. Setting up and running own business
11. Labour law and social insurance
12. Public procurement law
13. Other – adjusted to labor market needs
14. Individual training
15. English language for 200 beneficiaries who complete vocational training

The project has also developed good links with employers and has developed a number of incentives for employers employing women:

- Employers who are planning to create new jobs for women are offered their charge free training
- Employers who are willing to improve professional qualifications their female employees are offered their charge free training (even for one person)
- Employers who employ more than 10 persons and equally treat women and men in their work organisation may take part in competition: WOMAN-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER

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CASE STUDY 6

ITALIAN PERSPECTIVE:

**WOMEN, INCLUSION AND WORK
LAG TURIN**

PRESENTERS:

CLAUDIA GILLI

INTRODUCTION

Before talking about the Women Inclusion and Work project Claudia described a range of initiatives developed by the Work, training and ESF Department of the Turin Municipality aimed at increasing women's participation in employment.

Actions Included:

- Information about work
- Specific projects for unemployed adult and young people
- Support to workers outplacement
- Support to the development of enterprises
- European projects

She also gave an over view of unemployment rates for males and females in 2006

AREA	MALE	FEMALE
ITALY	5.4	8.8
PIEDMONT	3.2	5.1
TURIN PROVINCE	3.4	5.0

PROJECT: WOMEN INCLUSION AND WORK

This is an 18 month project that targets 2 neighbourhoods in the City of Turin and has worked with 250 Italian and foreign unemployed women (residents or with residence permits) who have experienced difficulties accessing employment opportunities due to low levels of education attainment, family and social responsibilities.

The Project is led by a partnership of made up of training agencies, enterprises and handicrafts

associations, social cooperatives and associations of women.

PROJECT AIMS

The aims of the project are:

- To promote women inclusion in the labour market
- To strengthen skills
- To support women in finding ways of reconciling work and family life
- To develop cultural integration in the enterprises
- Employment

ACTIONS

Actions taken to achieve the aims include:

- mapping services in the neighbourhoods
- information about the neighbourhoods
- selection, counselling and training
- personalized project
- social accompanying and cultural mediation to the use of local services
- choice of the enterprises
- stages in the enterprises
- economic support
- tutoring and individual support to problematic situation

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

- integrated intervention model – social and work aspects
- activation of the local network in supporting women for children, elderly and handicapped care, home, transports
- flexible and individual education
- intranet system with local services description:
 - social support services (children, elderly, handicap)
 - work services (local desks)
 - education and training (training agencies)
 - cultural and volunteer associations

RESOURCES

- 6.000.000,00 euro – Piedmont Region - Women and Labour Market Measure – European Social Fund
- 70 approved projects
- 36 approved in Turin and Province
- 195.000,00 euro “Women Inclusion and Work” project

WORK PROGRESS

Progress has made in the following stages:

- enterprises (industrial cleaning services, logistic)
- business area (restaurants, beauty, gardening)
- evaluation of critical points
- monitoring

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Case study 7 is an example of work with migrant women in the Banyoles region of North Eastern Spain:

CASE STUDY 7

SPANISH PERSPECTIVE:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN BANYOLES

LAG BARCELONA

PRESENTER:

ROSER SOLA-MORALES

INTRODUCTION

Roser presented a case study on work with migrant women within migrant communities in Banyoles. Roser explained that the project being presented works at a municipal level. Within Banyoles there are four women's organisations, two of which work specifically with migrant women.

Roser began by giving an overview of the area. Banyoles is the capital of the Pla de l'Estany region in North West Spain. It has a population of almost 28,000. 60% of the region's population is concentrated in Banyoles - 50.2% men and 49.8% women. The number of people in unemployment registered in 2006 was 486, of which 260 were women and 226 men. Therefore the percentage of women in unemployment on the total of the stopped population was 53.6% (Catalonia 57.9%)

Three organisations of women formally constituted exist:

1. Ateneu Obert of Dona (1994)
2. Nur, Moroccans (2005)
3. Legki Yakaru, sub-Saharan (2005)

18% of the presidencies of the organisations of the municipality are occupied by women.

The composition of the team of local government is 50% men and 50% women. The women occupy the councils of social action, culture, education, participation and public thoroughfare.

In the city of Banyoles there is a 19.4% of immigration. By sexes, 57% are men and 43% are women.

Roser referred to a feminization of immigration as having taken place, but explained that it was not the case in all the groups (it varies based on the countries of origin and the different migratory processes).

Roser went on to give an overview of some of the main developments regarding the promotion of equality within the municipality:

2000/01- Establishment of a local government team within the municipality to promote the participation of women

2003 – Municipal Equality Plan

2006 – Implementation of the Equality Plan, promoting equality of opportunities between municipal men and women within Banyoles and Pla of l' Estany

Roser said that the main aim of the plan was to ensure that equality issues were addressed at all levels of government and in all departments and where appropriate Structures should be modified to bring about inequality and discrimination with respect to the women. Equal opportunity programmes were introduced and structures put in place to promote gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming committees were set up and workers trained on equality issues. The

measures were aimed at addressing equality at all levels. Brainstorming sessions were organised to identify issues and problems a record made of these.

Roser explained that as a result of this process a number of problems were identified:

- Low participation of women
- Not enough measure in place to facilitate women's participation
- Unequal distribution of the domestic tasks
- Local administration does not consider work/life balance
- Discrimination of them women at both labor and professional level
- The existence of male dominated approach

As a result of this a number of proposals for improvement were generated Roser outlined them.

Proposals or Improvement I – To address Domestic Violence

- To increase and to improve the information systems on the existing services and resources
- To carry out sensitization campaigns on the problematic one of the sort violence
- To promote action of prevention and education
- To promote the coordination between the different agents who take part in cases of sort violence (consolidation and dinamización of the protocol)
- To train the social agents who take part in cases of sort violence
To try to guarantee the basic needs (house, day-care centers, etc.) of the women who separate from partners due to violence
- To promote the participation of the women in all the scopes, especially in those where the participation of the women is minority

Proposals for improvement II – To promote equal opportunities

- To promote the information and the formation of women through courses, to chart them (making special incidence in the rural scope)
- To incorporate the perspective of women in the design of the city
- To generally raise awareness about prejudices and the chauvinistic values that exist
- To raise awareness of the importance of work/life balance within the enterprise sector

Roser went on describe the Territorial plan of Citizenship and Immigration: promotion of the participation of the women immigrants. This plan aims to support underdeveloped migrant communities by providing economic and social programmes. He said that much work had been done trying to engage migrant women in identifying and addressing their needs. Roser said that this had been difficult process. Although meetings had been set up migrant women did not attend. Roser believed this was mainly due to the fact that many of the women targeted came from male dominated culture and did not feel at ease stepping outside this.

BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUALITY

- Difficulties applying the transversality
- At political level: mainstreaming is not a priority
- At technical level: there is a resistance to change working habits, methods
- Change is slow – changing very deep values
- Difficult to break the inertia that has developed

LESSONS LEARNED

- It is fundamental a work of sensitization and education to guarantee deep changes.
- The results are achieved long term making them difficult to measure e.g. changes of attitudes in men and women
- In the case of the women immigrants, the work is still slower. A false step can ruin the work of confidence creation of a whole year.
- It is necessary to consider the points of view and needs of the women in the design of the methodology and the instruments of participation (hour, subjects of interest, etc.)
- There is a need to adopt both a practical and strategic approach to addressing women's needs

The full PowerPoint presentation is available on QEC Eran website in Spanish.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Case study 8 is an example of a mentoring programme that promotes women as positive role models and utilises their skills and experiences to engage marginalised and socially excluded women from Rotterdam:

CASE STUDY 8

DUTCH PERSPECTIVE:

ROTTERDAM AMBASSADOR NETWORK

LAG ROTTERDAM

PRESENTER:

PINAR COSKUN

INTRODUCTION

Pinar began by giving some information about Rotterdam. She described it as a typical European urban city in many ways. However, one of the distinguishing characteristics is the fact that 50% of the population are immigrants. Pinar explained that due to the high numbers of immigrants issues such as social and economic exclusion of immigrant women are taken very seriously.

POLICY MEASURES

Pinar described policy measures as being inclusive. She said that they tended to focus on promoting maximum participation by addressing issues such as education and employment.

THE PROJECT

The Rotterdam Ambassador Network (RAN) aims to promote the participation and engagement of women through the use of ambassadors – women helping other women.

An independent network of Ambassadors exists in several districts of Rotterdam. Ambassadors are women who have been professionally trained and coached in the field of social inclusion and integration and who target isolated and marginalised women in an effort to share their training and knowledge with them, in an effort to promote their participation. According to Pinar they are important agents for local development and as many are from ethnic minority backgrounds they are familiar with the issues and concerns of the women.

RAN provides training to enable women to become Ambassadors. Training programmes last 15-19 weeks and teach participants about local, national and European policies on social inclusion and integration.

RESULTS

Pinar described the results at three levels:

1. Results for the Ambassadors

- Increased career opportunities
- Increased career expectations
- Making local women visible and valued
- Recognition of their role as intercultural intermediaries
- Introduction to business world
- Imaging through media

2. Results for targeted women

- First step to integration into Dutch society through language training and integration
- Personal capacity building to enable them to cope with urban life
- Enhanced education, training and employment opportunities

3. Results for Policy makers

- Integration of urban and local policies
- Integration of urban and local networks
- District approach to gender issues
- Instrument to reach women in isolated position and to facilitate their participation

LESSONS LEARNED

Pinar described several lessons that Europe could learn from this approach;

- Good example of a method for engaging 'hard to reach' women e.g. isolated women from ethnic minority backgrounds
- It shows highlights the importance of using intercultural intermediaries for building trust and motivation
- The project has dual emancipation benefits
- The method of work involves recycling success and method

CONTACT DETAILS
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DEPART OF YOUTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

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Case studies 9 & 10 are examples of grassroots women's organisations who have developed an integrated service delivery model based on the principles and practice of community development to address gender inequality and promote the participation and inclusion of women:

CASE STUDY 9 **BALLYBEEN WOMEN'S CENTRE**
BELFAST
NORTHERN IRELAND

PRESENTER: **TANYA HUGHES**

BALLYBEEN WOMEN'S CENTRE – AN EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

MISSION STATEMENT

Ballybeen Women's Centre is an integrated service provider committed to enabling women, young people and children to realise their potential and fulfill their aspirations through personal and socio-economic development and health promotion.

Socio-economic background

- Population exceeding 9,500.
- Made up of 3 electoral wards: Enler, Carrowreagh and Grahamsbridge.
- Ranks low in health (high rates of teen pregnancy, reliance in prescription drugs), education and employment domains – Noble and NISRA
- The area is poorly serviced in terms of facilities and statutory provision.
- It is also an area that has suffered as a consequence of the conflict and economic decline.
- It is an area with a strong protestant identity
- The triple assault of the conflict, educational underachievement and economic decline have had a negative impact on Ballybeen in terms of social, economic, educational, physical and psychological development.
- The type of environment that has evolved has engendered a sense of apathy and isolation.
- Many women and young people in particular do not think beyond the confines of their own community and therefore limit their (and their families) experiences and opportunities.

Ballybeen Women's Centre

For over twenty years Ballybeen Women's Centre (BWC) has been developing and delivering quality services in an area of low and weak community infrastructure. The Centre has developed a service delivery model that enables individuals and families to access a range of services and support in one location. The Centre provides support to other community groups in the area and has been a catalyst for community development and capacity building. The principles and practice of community development underpin all the work of the Centre.

BWC promotes social inclusion by involving the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups in the community in the development and management of programmes to address their needs. The Centre has operated an open door policy for all women and their families, thus avoiding stigmatising them as prisoner families, social service referrals, single mothers etc. The Centre has also worked to diffuse tensions, break down sectarian and racist prejudice and raise awareness of equality issues.

The Centre utilises a community development approach, based on principles such as empowerment, user involvement and participation in order to meet the needs of all users. Young people and women are encouraged to become involved in the thinking, deciding, planning and playing an active role in the Centre's development and operation.

BWC has developed a number of core areas of work:

- Education and Training
- Childcare and Family Support
- Health Promotion and Education
- Peer Education Project
- Culture and Diversity
- Community development and capacity building

Key Objectives

- To provide services and programmes of activity that promote active citizenship and seek to improve the quality of life for women and families in the area
- To provide early years care for children aged 0-5 years
- To promote and provide education and training opportunities for women and encourage their participation in such programmes; their progression on to further education and their return to the labour market
- To promote health and health awareness amongst women, young people and pre school children and their families
- To ensure that mechanisms and structures are in place to facilitate consultation with individuals and groups regarding identification of their needs and their participation in the design and delivery of services to meet such needs
- To ensure all services and activities are inclusive
- To respond to policy consultations and where possible influence policy developments
- To ensure that everything we do is based on excellence and all services are integrated

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S PARTICIPTION

Community Development

By their very role and remit women's organisations contribute first and foremost to community development by providing life changing opportunities to women across the full range of ethnic and religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, ages, abilities and educational levels.

The Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland defined community development as:

"Empowering individuals and groups to tackle issues affecting their lives and the communities in which they live"

Women's organisation's by their very role and remit contribute first and foremost to community development by providing life changing opportunities to women across a full range of ethnic and religious backgrounds, ages, sexual orientation, abilities and educational levels.

Support

Support is offered at different levels depending on need. It is recognised that women need high levels of support to move from the 'comfort zone' of their own group.

BWC operates an outreach and support programme to promote its services and target those most disadvantaged and vulnerable in the community. We work in partnership with a range of statutory agencies and when a referral is made the outreach and support worker will meet with the individual concerned and arrange an introductory visit to the Centre. That woman will be supported to participate in an appropriate programme/activity within the Centre. Taking the first step is the most the difficult.

Women are supported to move from roles within the Women's Centre to other fora, including the management committee.

Other supports include: travel expenses, care costs, timing of meetings and training

Personal Development

Women in communities like Ballybeen suffer from multiple forms disadvantage all of which can have a devastating effect on their self confidence and self esteem. Creating programmes that recognise this and are tailored and to meet the needs of women at their level and pace of development is crucial to engaging women and moving them forward.

BWC offers a range of activities aimed at increasing women's personal development. Such programmes have been effective mechanisms in engaging hard to reach women and facilitating their progression onto other types of training courses.

Education and Training

BWC'S education and training programme has created flexible, vibrant and cohesive educational programmes that meet the needs of women that are so often neglected by a culturally inappropriate statutory provision.

The education and training project also makes a significant contribution to core elements of government policy, particularly, the N.I Skills Strategy, European Employment Strategy, the UK National Action Plan for Employment and New TSN as it promotes social inclusion of vulnerable groups within the community through the development of training and education courses that enhance self-confidence and self-esteem and encourage the acquisition of essential skills, ICT skills and formal qualifications thus enhancing employability and opportunities for entry into the labour market therefore addressing the gender gap in employment.

Ballybeen Women's Centre makes a valuable contribution to achieving adult learning and employment targets and to ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged women and communities. It promotes and enriches the scope of lifelong learning by making inclusive, creative learning choices more freely available.

Education and training is key to empowering people to challenge inequalities and play their role in shaping a new, more just and diverse society. Ballybeen Women's Centre integrates education and skills development and reconciliation activities for women and young people. By developing skills, confidence and knowledge participants are able to input into the regeneration and development of their own community and in so doing impart their vision of a new society at a local level.

In order to increase women's participation in decision making the main focus has been on women themselves and on offering training in personal development, awareness raising and in leadership.

Childcare

Childcare is a fundamental issue for engaging women and for their access to equal opportunities. As stated earlier it is one of the greatest barriers to women's participation.

The provision of childcare has of course not only benefited women by enabling them to participate in various activities but has also benefited the child in that they are being exposed to a stimulating, caring and learning environment.

The childcare and family Support programmes within the Women's Centre have also enabled BWC to target women who we would otherwise not have had contact with and as a result many of the mothers have enrolled on courses within the Centre.

Needs Assessment

At a personal level women are facilitated and supported to identify their needs and identify relevant progression routes.

At a community level women are encouraged to become involved in the processes identifying needs and gaps in service provision – surveys, focus groups, and public meetings

Partnerships

Working in partnership is inherent in community development – in order to achieve people/women need to work together in partnership with other groups and statutory agencies

Working in partnership with the University of Ulster local women encouraged to carry out major piece of research into need within the area

Peer Education

BWC aims to harness the skills and knowledge and experience of women by adopting a peer education model. Women are natural peer educators - they do it without thinking – imparting their skills, knowledge and experience to others. Listening to a woman recount her experience of a particular event (whether it be an illness or her story of how she progressed through education and training) in her life can be a very powerful and moving experience.

Women Only Space

Important for providing:

- Support
- Sharing - experiences and learning
- Comfort factor – Women do not feel intimidated

RESULTS

Personal Development and Progression

Personal Development:

- Increased confidence and self esteem – feeling good about themselves
- Increase in skills and knowledge amongst participants – communication skills
- Empowered participation of women in different spheres of life
- Enhanced employability of participants
- Employment – within the Women's Centre e.g. Gillian
- Raised expectations
- Increased understanding and respect for cultural diversity

Progression:

- Third level education and employment
- Women on management committee of Women's Centre
- Women representing the Centre on various for a and working groups
- Women involved in the planning and regeneration activities within the community
- Participation in local decision making bodies

Building Social Capital

The work of the Women's Centre is “building social capital”. The Centre is at the heart of community development working with and supporting other local groups and individuals to improve, regenerate, renew and empower the community.

Local Knowledge and Targeting

Using local knowledge has enabled us to identify particular target groups and ensure that general orientation of the programmes and courses is as relevant as possible BWC uses local knowledge to respond to consultations to ensure women's voices are heard

Partnerships

Partnerships have emerged as a result of the process of engaging women in the identification of their need. In seeking solutions to problems women have identified key stakeholders and established a number of alliances and partnerships.

Benefits of partnerships:

- Input into local planning and regeneration
- Increased accessibility of services locally
- Raised profile of area and needs within it – Belfast Healthy Cities – health impact assessment
- Opportunities to share good practice
- Ensured representation of women on advisory bodies

Local Ownership and Control

- Women feel sense of belonging and ownership
- Representation of local women on management committee steering groups
- Input into community planning and regeneration strategies

Social Fabric

Women use their skills and knowledge in a social context:

- They share their knowledge and skills within social and family setting. One area in particular is health.
- Increased volunteering within the community
- Lifelong learning – In their role as primary carers for children women are central to life long learning - goes back to the old adage of education a man and you educate a person.... Educate a woman and you educate a community
- Peer Education – sharing skills and knowledge both in a formal and informal way
- Sharing experiences and knowledge has given other women the impetus to enrol in courses to become active within the centre etc

Increased Resources

Through the lobbying and campaigning efforts of women there is increased recognition of the contribution they make to local communities and this has led to increased resources being put into the sector In March 2006 local women from Ballybeen along with women from other communities throughout Belfast marched to government offices to demand funding for the women's sector. They were successful and money was ring fenced for the sector at least for the next three years!

Women not only identify problems they seek to find solutions to them. A good example of this is the survey of need carried out by local women from Ballybeen in 1989.

Ballybeen is a pocket of deprivation surrounded by areas of affluence. In 1989 no statistical data was available specifically for Ballybeen which meant that the true picture for the area was being skewed. The disadvantage being experienced by many people in the area was being hidden.

The 1989 survey of need carried out by local women identified key areas of need within the area, e.g.:

- Lack of community facilities and lack of access to services such as health
- Poor health
- Low academic achievement – 80% of adult population had little or no formal qualifications in
- particular areas of the estate

The report made a number of recommendations – one of which was to increase resources into the area. Probably the biggest impact or achievement was that a government department extended their funding boundaries to include Ballybeen

Social Economy

In an effort to support women into employment and facilitate them to move out of the catch 22 situation of benefits V's work - where it does not pay a women to take up paid employment due to cost of childcare – BWC have created a social economy project that provides childcare at a greatly reduced rate to enable women to go back to work.

Employment

- A major outcome of engagement with women is their ability to find employment and in some cases progress from their current job in to a better one.
- Women begin to realise their potential and are actively seeking to improve their economic potential.
- Women in Ballybeen have been major catalysts for change within their local community.

LESSONS LEARNED

Policy and Practice

Translating policy into practice takes time, effort and most importantly resources. Unfortunately women's centre's like Ballybeen have had to spend far too much time dealing with one funding crises after another which has detracted them from other aspects of their work e.g. documenting work etc.

Process

Engaging women is a process that takes time and resources such as childcare, gender specific training, support etc.

Beyond the Local

The actions around education and training particularly in leadership, personal development and awareness raising have without doubt enabled many women to participate especially at local development levels. Unfortunately this cannot be said about women progressing onto decision making bodies outside their local community. We need to provide more mentoring and support to enable women to participate in

decision making in more high level bodies, This support needs to be continuous and not a one off – there needs to be more support for women already in decision.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Sustainability

Unfortunately the most important issue continuing to face organisations such as ours is the development of a secure framework for sustainability.

The outputs of increased funding over the past number of years are apparent in the “professionalisation” of many women’s organisations and the impact of their activities. Built on a legacy of short-termism in the absence of a coherent approach, the issue of sustainability has inevitably focused on funding. There has never been a breathing space or conditions for the sector to move from a ‘survival’ ethos to one based on consolidation, mainstreaming and value for money.

Within a Northern Ireland context although the publication of a Gender Equality Strategy is welcomed it does not have a timetable or resources and some have questioned whether there was sufficient support and commitment across government departments. If the Gender Equality Strategy is to achieve its aims it must have at least the same priority as other strategies such as the good Relations and Race Equality and it must be adequately resourced.

The Gender Equality Unit in OFM/DFM needs to cost the Gender Equality Strategy and prioritise actions. Departments need to allocate resources to support their plans to implement this strategy. Each department needs to ring fence resources for funding women’s services.

RESOURCES

FINANCIAL:

Annual Budget: £400,000.00 (580,000 Euro)

HUMAN: 19 Employees
20 Volunteers

CONTACT DETAILS

Ballybeen Women’s Centre

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CASE STUDY 10**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE
BELFAST
NORTHERN IRELAND****WRITER:****BETTY CARISLE****INTRODUCTION****Shankill Women's Centre**

Formed in 1987 The Shankill Women's Centre is a significant and well-respected organisation which has grown and developed into a thriving and vibrant community resource for women in the Greater Shankill area and beyond.

Shankill Women's Centre (SWC) was formed by a small group of women interested in running women only education classes.

The SWC currently provides:

- Education Project
- Childcare Unit
- Young Women's Project
- Health Awareness Programme
- Mental Health Awareness Programme

SWC main aims are to:

- Provide a woman friendly accessible resource to all in the Greater Shankill area
- Provide education, training and support services to assist the inclusion of women and enhance future employability
- Liaise with relevant bodies to improve and enhance the status of women and promote avenues for change
- Co operate with other local interests to assess need and provide quality services in response

SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The predominantly Protestant Shankill area has suffered dramatically over the past number of years. The area geographically straddles the electoral boundaries of North and West Belfast. Economic decline, redevelopment and the Troubles have had a dramatic detrimental effect on the social fabric of the area.

The decline in shipbuilding, engineering and linen industries created structural unemployment in one generation. Government led redevelopment of the area

resulted in a reduction of the population from 76,000 to 26,000. The area has been at the epicentre of the violence and conflict of the past 35 years.

Educational achievement is particularly poor, with 85% of the economically active population having no formal qualifications, and only 20% of 16-year-olds remaining in further education. The health statistics are also poor, with high levels of poverty-related illness and mortality rates for all ages well above the Northern Ireland average.

Throughout its existence, Shankill Women's Centre has had to address a wide range of social, economic and political problems specific to the women in the Greater Shankill. The Centre acts as an advice, women's information and resource centre for individual women and women's groups and maintains strong links through representation and networking both locally and across the city on a cross-community basis.

OBSTACLES TO ENGAGING WOMEN

The key obstacles /problems to the engagement of women in local development are: (among others)

- Childcare
- Confidence
- Lack of Knowledge
- Sense of Hopelessness

Childcare

The Centre provides good affordable quality childcare on site or will look after child/children while women attend 'outside' meetings or classes.

Confidence

SWC operates a peer group mentoring programme whereby women are encouraged and supported to become involved in the centre's activities'. They are gradually lead through the process until they are confident enough to 'do it themselves'. For example one woman who was interested in joining the management committee was 'linked up' with another committee member who met with her before and in between meetings encouraging her to express her views and opinions. As the women gained confidence the level of support from her mentor was reduced until she finally felt confident enough to join the committee and play a full and active part in it.

Lack of Knowledge

The Centre strives to get women's voices heard in a wider arena. Therefore, we try to ensure that women are equipped with all the information they need to make informed decisions and choices.

For example when a government department publishes a policy document for consultation SWC will facilitate women to respond by breaking down the document

and workshops will be held to explain contents, have discussion and disseminate information.

Sense of Hopelessness

Feeling a sense of hopelessness is something that is very evident when speaking to women. Many feel that this is a result of issues associated with the 'conflict' in Northern Ireland. A lot of women still feel that they are powerless to improve their community as the paramilitaries still have a very strong presence.

Also, another factor is the external environment around them which consists of derelict buildings, graffiti on walls, paramilitary murals and the general 'run down' surroundings all of which lead to feelings of hopelessness.

SWC is involved in the overall regeneration of the area and takes great steps to keep the women informed. This is done by taking women to meetings, holding meetings/workshops in the centre, posters, flyers and newspapers and through talking to women on a one to one basis to help spread information.

We also take women on study visits so they can see regeneration in progress and have their questions or queries answered.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned is that it is crucial to have people involved when trying to initiate any change. When people are involved from the beginning of an activity they will have a sense of ownership which will in turn create motivation and action.

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Case studies 11 and 12 illustrate how gender specific education and training can have a major impact on women's ability to participate and progress socially and economically.

CASE STUDY 11

DERRY WOMEN'S CENTRE NORTHERN IRELAND

WRITERS:

MAUREEN FOX

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Centre, Derry

MISSION:

Promote **equality** of **access** for women by providing **resources** so that women can meet, learn and **support** each other to make **choices** and **develop** common strategies for the **empowerment** of women.

In its twenty-one years, the Women's Centre has captured the collaborative and enjoyable aspects of learning, enabling generations of women, not only to construct new learning identities but also to develop and improve many other aspects of their lives as well.

The Women's centre continues in its role as a key community development organisation in the North West region, providing and participating in a wide range of programmes, services and activities for women and women's groups in the area.

The Women's Centre participated on behalf of the North West as part of the Women's Sector Review. Through this initiative frontline services in the sector were maintained and plans were developed for future sustainability. Along with WRDA, WSN and the Rural Women's Network, the centre is working with organisations throughout Northern Ireland to develop and sustain the sector.

The Centre works closely with North West Institute of Further and Higher Education and Limavady College of Further and Higher Education to provide a wide range of courses and qualifications for individual women.

The Women's Centre operates an in house crèche facility, furnishing women with a crucial element to the learning process. The crèche has a fully nutritional programme built into their curriculum and are now pleased to offer up to 200 free childcare places per week.

BARRIERS FACING WOMEN IN OUR AREA

- Living in disadvantaged communities
- High unemployment levels

- Women who have low confidence
- Low self-esteem
- Low skills base
- Pressure of conforming to specific outcomes
- Having time to themselves due to child/ caring responsibilities
- Worry about being 'thick' in a group situation, due to negative learning experiences in the past
- Transport

CURRENT PROJECTS

- MUM project
- The Equality Project
- Multi-cultural Project
- Works Programme (Essential Skills)
- Arts programmes (Access and non-accredited)

ACTIVITIES

- We provide training and educational opportunities for women from the local communities.
- We provide information on a range of community and individual issues.
- We support, help and encourage other groups wishing to use our facilities.
- We offer free on-site childcare for those using the centre.
- We offer a Drop In facility encouraging women to meet their peers in an informal manner.
- We work in partnership with local training organisations and statutory organisations and network with other women's groups local, regional and cross border on a number of related issues.

The Women's Centre continues to encourage and enable approx 150 women on a weekly basis from a variety of communities and differing ways of life. The Centre aims to continue this work and more over the coming years through group work, one to one tutorials, policy participation, seminars, workshops and networking.

How We Do It – Women's Perspective

Funding

An overwhelming majority of women completers felt that funding was the main challenge that had faced the Women's Centre over the years, whether this meant funding for the new premises, or funding to continue to offer the widest range of courses, and to support the salaries associated with that provision. One woman described this as "the daily struggle to keep things ticking over".

Stigma and Recognition

Some women felt that getting recognition in Derry was a key challenge, while a number of others felt that the Women's Centre suffered from an ongoing "stigma"

around what they were really about. One woman felt sure that the Centre was “seen as anti-men”. She added that “people who don’t know about it confuse it with Women’s Aid”. As one woman put it: “lots of women still don’t know what it’s about - more publicity is needed.” This view was echoed by a number of women. One woman suggested bringing in men, as a way to address this image issue. She observed: “at last year’s AGM there were two men – an accountant and a husband – they were terrified! Bringing in men would mean that word of mouth would reduce stigma”. Another woman felt that getting courses recognised at academic level remained a problem.

Taking Women Further

One woman summed up the view of many in suggesting that the Centre needed to consider how it could “take women further”. Another felt that women left the “safe, well-provided Women’s Centre and go out into [other mainstream local educational provider] to have the door slammed in their faces”. This woman had progressed from the Centre to another establishment, only to be refused a place at the crèche, which she perceived to be “full of staff’s children and outside people paying”. She added: “the timetable wasn’t out in time to book a place at the crèche. I nearly left twice - the greatest difficulty being around childcare”. She also found the timing of courses difficult: “eventually the timing of the course clashed with school letting out time, although the after-school club in Rosemount came to the rescue. I think the Women’s Centre should make government more aware of problems facing women regarding childcare, doing courses and getting back into work”.

RESULTS

Difference to women’s development in Derry

Women were asked for their perceptions of the extent to which the Women’s Centre had made a difference to women’s development in Derry over the years. Half of the women asked felt that they did not know enough to comment. One woman rated the Centre’s contribution through the lens of her own experience: “it has made a difference to women like me. I learned how to socialise and mix again. I don’t feel isolated. The main difference the Women’s Centre makes is to women who come through the doors”. One woman felt that the Women’s Centre had added to the range of classes on offer to women, and had offered an alternative, and more suitable, learning environment. It had also offered the social dimension of learning to women: “even if it’s only flower arranging or dressmaking with no qualifications, it has a pay-off.” Another woman felt that it was significant that the Women’s Centre had attracted women from Limavady and even Coleraine, and she considered that the Centre brought people from different communities together. She also felt that it added to Derry’s international profile, with American students dropping in and volunteering on the Arts course.

In the main, women seemed to quantify the Women’s Centre’s contribution to women’s development in terms of what it added to what had been previously available. Women were not asked to comment on other educational establishments,

yet most women independently contrasted other educational provision with the Women's Centre, as a way of highlighting what they perceived to be the unsuitability of other provision to their needs, and as a way of showing the ways in which the Women's Centre had enabled them to take up opportunities that they would otherwise have missed out on. One woman commented: "The Women's Centre encourages women to go back into education. Women have low confidence and self-esteem. [Other mainstream local educational establishments] are very intimidating". Another felt that having been at home looking after twins, she wouldn't have had the confidence to go to [other mainstream local educational establishment]. Speaking about the same institution, another woman said that she had applied to do an NVQ 4 in Journalism, but had desisted as "the timing was wrong and there was no childcare". The on-site childcare was a deciding factor in her choice to come to the Women's Centre. She is currently completing the two-year Women's Studies Foundation Course, and added that without the Women's Centre, she would have had to delay taking the course. Another woman described other educational provision as "too classroomy". According to her, "women want a relaxed atmosphere, a bit of crack and a supportive environment". One woman felt that the Women's Centre was now respected as an educational establishment and was not considered "anti-men" any more.

Women-Only Environment

Three of the participants interviewed stated that the "women-only" nature of the Women's Centre had not figured in their choice to attend classes there. However, one of these found that "no-one else was offering what they were offering: a GCSE at a time that suited me (they set their times to suit women), and being women only, it was a little easier." However, for the majority of women, the single sex environment was crucial to their attendance, and a range of comments were made to this effect:

"I wouldn't have gone if it wasn't women-only"

"Women-only was important and the availability of the crèche. I am more confident with women than with men. I can be myself and be more open."

"I would have been more intimidated if there had been men around, I would have asked fewer questions, especially in computers and woodwork."

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CASE STUDY 12

ENGLAND: SOUTH YORKSHIRE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT TRUST

SOURCE: www.sywdt.org

The South Yorkshire Women's Development Trust was launched in April 2002 provides mutual support, resources and funding opportunities for women's organisations across South Yorkshire. It is an organisation run by Women for Women and groups that work with or for women in the South Yorkshire area.

The Trust works with a diverse range of organisations across South Yorkshire and has developed a range of projects that actively promote networking and training opportunities for women:

Women in Front (WIF)

A South Yorkshire wide women into leadership programme funded through the Academy for Community Leadership. The course aims to increase women skills in assertiveness and confidence building and working with regeneration. OCN Accredited Training in: Self Presentation, Interview techniques and Leadership skills

Women into Public Life (WIPL)

Supporting women through taster & training courses to give them the skills to help them enter public life e.g.

- Governors
- Councillors/Magistrates
- Directors/Trustees
- Health Workers

Women's Education & Learning Partnership (WELP)

A group of training providers in South Yorkshire who aim to provide free high quality training for women.

Free Childcare

Classes are held whenever possible in family friendly times.

Courses are accredited through the Open College Network. & ASDAN

Women in Non-Traditional Trades (WINTT)

Supporting women who wish to learn skills not traditionally associated with women such as:

- Tiling
- Plastering
- Carpentry
- Plumbing
- Construction Skills
- Car Maintenance

Case study 13 describes an innovative approach to engaging women in entrepreneurship. The project represents a shift away from a gender specific training approach to what it calls a 'gender relations' strategy involving both men and women.

**CASE STUDY 13
ITALY**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP
LAG TURIN**

PRESENTER:

ISABELLA DE VECCHI

INTRODUCTION

The presenter began by giving an over view of the area within which the programme operates – Mirafiori Sud.

Mirafiori sud, once an industrial area is located in the southern outskirts of Turin with about 40,000 inhabitants. In an effort to improve the area a number of regeneration programmes have been implemented. From a gender perspective Mirafiori is typical of many traditional industrial areas, men go out to work and women stay at home and take care of the family.

BARRIERS FACING WOMEN IN MIRAFIORI

- Low education level – less qualified work force
- Women engaged in informal economy or in less paid jobs
- Increasing of single-parent families, in particular of mothers alone
- Increase in female immigration, mostly women alone (especially East Europe and Latin America)
- Women with family responsibilities (elderly, children, etc.)

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Levels of women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship has been difficult to assess due to the fact that many women are involved in the 'black market' and therefore do not show up on official statistics – this has resulted in the emergence of a "Hidden" entrepreneurship.

Women have found it difficult to engage in entrepreneurship opportunities due to their caring responsibilities and informal work.

GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

- Framing in the City policies

- Commitment of the District toward women condition (“Spazio donne” – “Women place”): attention to exclusion and social difficulties
- Associations network with great attention to gender themes and to social integration
- Project for self-entrepreneurship – Young Enterprises Incubator (Incubatore Giovani Imprese - MIGI)

YOUNG ENTERPRISES INCUBATOR PROJECT

The project was established in 2005

Project Aims:

- To provide opportunities for professional training
- To increasing the number of initiatives targeted at vulnerable people
- To provide opportunities of work and development of self-entrepreneurship
- To facilitating access to micro-credit

Actions:

- Research of available places in the neighbourhood
- Professional training
- Training about entrepreneurship
- Support to the definition of the idea and support to enterprises constitution
- Tutoring for three years

Selection Criteria

- Social relevance
- Creation of local networks
- Attention to environment
- Attention to gender

RESULTS

- Every year 20 ideas presented (about 32 people)
- 8 ideas selected (about 15 people)
- Women who get to the end: 9

RESOURCES

- Every year, funds for € 40.000,00
- City of Turin € 20.000,00
- Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo € 20.000,00
- 6 associations and cooperatives

LESSONS LEARNED

It's important:

- To promote the attention, by the new enterprise, to social and environmental impact of the activities

- To change gender policy promoting the relationship between gender rather than taken measures for only one gender
- To intervene in critical contests for gender equality or female participation stimulating creative capacities of person

CONTACT DETAILS

Isabella De Vecchi

Mentelocale, Via Fratelli Garrone 39/90

10127 Torino Italia

At the workshop participants talked about the importance of engaging women at a younger age in the debate about gender and gender equality. This case study gives an overview of an initiative that aims to improve the self confidence and self esteem of young women from a disadvantaged area of Belfast.

CASE STUDY 14

SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE'S YOUNG WOMEN'S PROJECT

WRITERS:

YOUNG WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

Case Study

Shankill Women's Centre's Young Women's Project was established in 1995 to meet the needs of young women within the Greater Shankill area. It is now an integral part of the main Women's Centre and has grown and developed into a vibrant community resource.

Over the years the Young Women's Project has received many short term funding contributions and at present is funded by Peace II through Y.E.S.I.P. with programme costs provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs. A Project Manager oversees the running of the Project and manages three part time members of staff.

The Project aims to improve the confidence and self esteem of young women within the Greater Shankill area and beyond as a lot of the work that takes place is cross community or cross border. The Project takes a two fold approach to achieving this aim. Firstly by delivering Life Skills Programmes within the local Post Primary Schools covering youth related issues such as relationships, contraception, HIV & AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Secondly, the Project organises activities and programmes at evenings and weekends to work with young women in smaller groups.

It is hoped that involvement in the programme will in turn have a positive impact on the young women's education and health. Many of the young women involved in the programmes achieve accredited certificates in Drugs Awareness, Peer Education, Active Citizenship, Conflict Resolution and Community Relations. The needs of the young women are central to the Project. By creating opportunities whereby young women feel empowered it is hoped that this in turn will benefit the development of the local community.

The Young Women's Project has been a huge success, however, many obstacles exist. Long term funding is a major barrier although extreme gratitude is given to present funders that allow the work of the Young Women's Project to continue. The Young Women's Project is situated in an area where there is lack of value placed on

education hence a high rate of unemployment. Many of the young women that attend the Project come from working class backgrounds with many parents relying on Government benefits as income. Therefore money is often tight. To overcome this, the Project offers programmes and activities at minimal cost, often free so that there is no financial pressure for parents.

At times the participants display lack of motivation and the attendance rate falls. This may be for numerous reasons such as family or friendship problems. Staff at the Young Women's Project are aware of this and understand that external influences play a major part in the level of participation. Encouragement is always given to young women and individual progression charts completed so that young women are working towards their own individual goals.

Over the years, the Young Women's Project has learnt and understands the need and importance of working in partnership with other organisations. (statutory, voluntary and community) It is this that makes the Young Women's Project unique and has helped to improve the services that the Young Women's Project offer and as always the young people remain the most important part of the project.

CONTACT DETAILS

www.shankillwomenscentre.org.uk

During the two day workshop participants discussed the issue of underrepresentation of women in decision making positions, particularly politics. The following case study describes a positive action initiative in Ghana that aims to promote the participation of women in local governance and also raise the social and economic status of women in the country. The Ghana experience reflects many of the issues and themes raised by participants at the workshop particularly in terms of the barriers facing women and the need for gender sensitive policies and strategies. The following are extracts from a paper written by Esther Ofei-Aboagye for a Seminar on "European Support for Democratic Decentralisation and Municipal Development - A Contribution to Local Development and Poverty Reduction," held in Maastricht, 14-15 June 2000. The seminar was organised by ECDPM and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

CASE STUDY: 15

GHANA:

PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

SOURCE:

[www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/docs/promotingtheparticipationofwomeninlocalgovernanceanddevelopment\(ghana2002\).pdf](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/docs/promotingtheparticipationofwomeninlocalgovernanceanddevelopment(ghana2002).pdf)

The paper focuses on efforts to increase women's participation as councilors and as well as initiatives to enhance the involvement of women and women groups in decision-making, requiring accountability and accessing support from local governments. It also presents interventions promoted through local governments to reduce poverty and promote socio-economic development targeted at women and seeking to bridge gender gaps and the European support in these efforts. Beyond this general support, it also looks at the work of the Institute of Local Government Studies in

this area and European involvement in this capacity-building and coordinating institution.

Background

Since independence, Ghana has gone through a number of efforts to decentralise political and administrative authority from the centre to the local level. The latest and most comprehensive effort began in 1988, when extensive powers and competencies were transferred to districts. One hundred and ten (110) district assemblies were created as legislative, executive, planning and rating authorities.

The decentralisation effort was undertaken with certain key aspirations in mind:

- to provide more responsive, equitable and participatory development;
- to bring government and decision-making nearer to the people and quicken the processes;
- and to serve as a training ground in political activity.

Two critical aspects of the decentralisation process have not been achieved: fiscal decentralisation and the creation of a local government service. The completion of these aspects would give the district assemblies more control over local economic development.

Women's Situation in Ghana

Women's lower economic and social status, multiple roles and lack of time all limit their access to formal social services and general advancement. With comparatively little education, poorer state of health and greater food insecurity, women (and young people) especially in the northern parts of the country are particularly vulnerable. Widows, aged, childless and disabled women whose access to labour is limited are also at risk.

Women, Gender and Decentralisation

Various provisions in the design of the decentralisation process should have made the participation of women in public decision-making easier. These provisions include those for a non-partisan local government system, the freedom to use the local language for the business of the assembly and the discretion in creating additional sub-committees. The latter could have provided a sharper focus on responding to the concerns of various sections of the population, including women.

But it did not. The initial participation of women in local government was low and has remained so. In

1994, women made up about 3% of elected members. In 1998, this proportion rose to 5%. This was very interesting given that women constitute just about half of all registered voters.

In 1998, the Government of Ghana gave a directive that reserved 30% of the appointed membership of assemblies for women. Examination of the proportions of appointed members suggests that assemblies selected just around 30%, even though that was supposed to be the minimum. Only 3 of the 110

Presiding Members are women.

Women have been constrained from entering local level politics by the lack of finances for campaigning and time constraints needed to manage domestic responsibilities, income-generation activities and political work. The widely-held perception that

political activity is “dirty” and not for decent women is also a barrier. Women have also not been voted for because politics is often viewed as belonging to an arena which is best managed by men. Husbands and families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye. Women lack public arena skills and some complain of intimidation by male opponents.

Inside the assembly, women have yet to make their presence felt. In spite of the increases in their numbers provided for by the government directive, their performance has been muted. This has been attributed to lack of self-confidence, a limited capacity to communicate in English and a lack of understanding of assembly procedures. Other problems include being shouted at in assembly proceedings or being ignored by presiding members when they (women members) want to make interventions. The short notices for meetings and transportation costs incurred during assembly work have also been indicated as constraints for them. Women members employed in the formal sector also identify difficulties in combining assembly responsibilities with their jobs such as getting time off to attend to assembly and community business. Elected women also worry about being able to undertake development activities to justify their selection.

Perhaps part of the difficulty of making women's presence felt at the district assembly level is the general paucity of women in government administration itself, both as politically appointed heads of districts (mayors) and as administrators and civil servants. Out of 110 district chief executives, only twelve are women (10.9%). The situation is similar for women as civil servants and administrators.

Women constitute 32% of the entire civil service and 24% of those in local government with most being in the secretarial and clerical classes. Only 12% of the decision-influencing category – the administrative class – is female. In 1999, there were only 3 women amongst the 110 district coordinating directors (3.6%). This low representation is disturbing given that the district coordinating directors provide technical guidance to the assemblies. They are therefore responsible for providing inputs for planning, ensuring equity in implementation, monitoring for efficiency and effectiveness, and evaluating for impacts.

In summary, while the visibility of women in local government has increased, the numbers are still very low – both as administrators and as assembly members/counselors/representatives. The issue is not the numbers of women alone, but their self-knowledge, confidence, clarity of purpose, priorities, commitment and ability to skillfully present their perspectives. Their multiple roles as wives, mothers, daughters, community workers and income-generators severely limit their time for community interaction and mobilisation.

Promoting Gender Sensitivity in Local Governance

Two main approaches have been adopted to try and make local government more responsive to women and gender concerns and to help enhance women's participation in governance. The first category has focused on building the capacity of women to aspire to, attain and perform in local government office; and on women's groups to engage local governments. The second has sought to encourage stakeholder institutions such as the district assemblies, training institutions, and agencies providing services and implementing development initiatives to provide appropriate support to women's concerns by targeting, positive action, creating an enabling environment for their participation, advocacy, education and the provision of resources. In both approaches, there has been extensive European support, materially,

financial and in the form of technical assistance. Other strategies adopted by European development organisations have aimed to mainstream gender by recognising and providing for gender differences in the design and implementation of programmes and activities.

Directions for the Future

Ghana's decentralisation arrangements can promote gender equitable local level economic development and reduce poverty. There are opportunities to be exploited in enhancing women's participation in local governance and their access to benefits from local development initiatives. There are also constraints to be managed and addressed. The opportunities include:

- Government's affirmative action policy to reserve 30% of the appointed membership at the district level for women. While this has increased their numbers, they must be assisted to use the opportunity effectively.
- Ghana's development policy framework Vision 2020 requires district assemblies to protect and promote the interests of women, children and the vulnerable, especially in the areas of income generation, education, nutrition and access to health care. This gives women a legitimate basis to require support from assemblies. It also puts the onus on assemblies to plan how to achieve this in a sustainable manner.
- The presence of many development and non-governmental organisations as well as community based groups interested in assisting women and active at the district level is valuable for creating rights awareness, undertaking needs identification and implementing development interventions.

District assemblies and women's groups in the districts must regard these bodies as potential allies.

- The sub-committee system in the assembly facilitates the identification of critical issues. The concerns of women Vis Vis men can be carefully identified and channeled through these subcommittees.

However, this requires the capacity to undertake careful analysis of facts and figures, presentation,

negotiating and advocacy skills.

- There are clear statements in policies for district assembly income-generation and poverty alleviation/credit funds on targeting women's enterprises. These provisions are a basis for advocacy.

- Various gender strategy documents in sectors such as health, education and agriculture have been prepared with the assistance of European partners. Also, legislation in such areas as education and health ensures that in the composition of district oversight committees, provision is made for women's representation. Women, disadvantaged groups and their allies need to examine how to use these commitments to their advantage.

On the other hand, there are constraints that limit the system's ability to respond to gender concerns.

The Government of Ghana and its partners, local and European need to address these hindrances to ensure that local governance and economic development includes and benefits women alongside men.

These constraints include:

- Lack of sufficient gender-sensitivity of both assembly members and administrators.

- Lack of expertise on how to do gender analysis and to assess the differential impacts of programmes and policies on men and women (even where there is awareness and acceptance of gender differences). There is also a need for expertise to undertake gender differentiated data collection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.
- Persisting gender stereotypes and social limitations about what women can do and cannot do.
- The inability of women's groups and individual women to engage the assemblies and call them to account on their responsibilities towards women. This to a large extent has been attributed to lack of awareness about the responsibilities of the assemblies, lack of information about opportunities available and not recognising that assemblies are accountable to them as women.

Assisting assemblies to work purposefully towards bridging the gap between men and women is a high priority for the ILGS. The Institute intends to collaborate with development organisations and women's groups to this end. It also intends to contribute to building the capacity of women functionaries in assemblies as well as to undertake the identified research. The latter is critical to identify training and education needs, develop case studies to facilitate training, and generally to identify ways of effective intervention.

The Institute is currently having discussions with various European partners on possible gender training initiatives including the training of trainers in gender planning and capacity-building for female assembly members. In particular, the accessibility of ongoing initiatives such as the DSDA II

Project allows the Institute to follow developments in promoting gender sensitivity at the local level.

In all of this, it is hoped that the Institute's work and European support for local level development and democratic decentralisation will contribute to addressing women's concerns both as political and economic actors.

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To read the full paper by Esther Ofei-Aboagye click on the following link: www.cities-

[localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/docs/promotingtheparticipationofwomeninlocalgovernanceanddevelopment\(ghana2002\).pdf](http://localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/docs/promotingtheparticipationofwomeninlocalgovernanceanddevelopment(ghana2002).pdf)

CASE STUDY 16
NORTHERN IRELAND: WOMEN INTO POLITICS
BELFAST

SOURCE: www.womenintopolitics.org

BACKGROUND

Women into Politics was set up in Belfast in 1994 as a political education, training and discussion project for women to break the silence about political difference and to begin to harness, for the developing new political dispensation, some of the energy, skills and networks which women community activists had developed during the period of 'the troubles'.

WiP took the initiative during the first ceasefire period to encourage discussion and dialogue between women about how they felt about entering male dominated arena of politics and public life. Since then we have brought women together to talk about issues of concern and have created a space to explore our political difference and similarities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To educate and raise awareness of the principles of community relations and strategies for building peace and promoting reconciliation.
- To contribute to the development of new methods of decision-making at local, regional, national and global levels so as to ensure that equal opportunities are part of decision-making at all levels.
- To enable women to acquire political knowledge and skills necessary and support them as they enter into or progress in public and political life.
- To establish and foster partnership amongst organisations and individuals from all sectors in a cross-community context.
- To work in co-operation with elected representatives and policy makers - locally, regionally, nationally and globally - for the advancement of women and to the benefit of the women's sector and the voluntary and community sector.

ACTIONS

Women into Politics (WiP) delivers programmes throughout Northern Ireland - Belfast , Derry, Portadown, Lisburn, Omagh, Newry and Enniskillan.

The following programmes are designed to encourage women to become involved at various levels. The course structures takes into account experience and time commitments. Child and dependent care and transport are subsidised. All courses are open to both employed and unemployed women.

Courses include:

Talking & Taking Part

Community Relations skills and discussion workshops

These four workshops are designed to combine practical skills training with group discussion. The purpose of the workshops is to aid each participant to develop a personal sense of empowerment through political discussion and then to transform it into effectiveness in the exercise of citizenship in a community relations context. Participants will share political ideas and their own experiences of politics, explore political differences and areas of common concern, and discuss the shape of the political, social, economic and cultural future of Northern Ireland. The workshops are held in different locations across Northern Ireland and a summary of the discussion is produced afterwards.

Let's Talk Politics - OCN (Open College Network) accredited Level 1, 3 credits

Series of tailor-made discussion groups

Groups are usually at different states of development and activism so these discussion sessions are geared to the needs and interests of the group. The aim of the sessions is to enable women to become more comfortable when talking about constitutional politics, to explore the similarities, differences and experiences within their own communities and broaden the scope of political discussion by introducing new information and ideas.

Ways of Talking Politics - Diploma Level III in delivering Learning as of September 2006, accredited by City & Guilds training for trainers

This course is aimed at women who would like to be tutors on the WiP programmes or who want to deliver WiP training in their local areas. The training course can either be a weekend residential or a series of classes arranged to suit the participants. WiP's Ways of Talking Politics training manual is given to participants to use once the training is completed.

Making the Leap - OCN accredited Levels 2 and 3, 3-7 credits

Skills based workshops

Designed for women already active in their community, or women's organisations who wish to become more involved in decision making through community partnerships,

trade unions, electoral politics or alternative politics. The course covers topics like dealing with the media, negotiation skills and campaigning and lobbying and is accredited by the Open College Network (Level 2 or 3). Tutors on the course will provide information about opportunities for women to become politically or socially active.

From Conflict to Resolution - OCN accredited Level 3, 6-9 credits

Workshop series

This is a series of workshops combining group discussion with skills-based exercises employing conflict resolution techniques across a variety of scenarios. This is a stand-alone programme of six 4-hour workshops.

Global Feminism Series

Discussion workshops

This is an ever-evolving series of workshops that explore local and global issues and how they impact on women's lives. These are some of the topics we have covered:

- Women leading communities
- Issues across Borders
- Peace-building women warriors
- Creating a fair and equal world

Consultation:

Consultation is another very important activity of Women into Politics

In the developing climate of public consultation and a shift to transparency and accountability in government, Dialogue Across the City, WiP's monthly political discussion event - attended by representatives from women's groups, women from the wider, voluntary and community sector, trade unions and political parties – has developed to become an effective vehicle for consultation within the women's sector.

On the basis of such events WiP have; made submissions to the Committee on Policing for Northern Ireland and to the Committee with responsibility for the Civic Forum at the Assembly. We also organized a consultation in partnership with the Central Secretariat for the Central Appointment Unit aimed at addressing the underrepresentation of women, young people, disabled people, members of ethnic minorities and gays and lesbians on public bodies.

In carrying out this and subsequent consultative work, it has been the aim of WiP to raise awareness, build capacity, and provide education, training and knowledge of options as a pre-requisite to effective consultation. WiP believe that consultation without such capacity building is of much less value, and if consultation is to reach to marginalised and under-represented groupings, it is a necessity. WiP has taken every opportunity to disseminate this message in all of its submissions, response documents and personal attendances at consultations, detailing its consultation method, developed out of its own efforts to reach to groups which we wished to involve. To date, WiP's views on a methodology and process for consultation are most fully developed in its work relating to Section 75 of the NI Act (1998), the new duties to good relations and to equality.

In the first stage of consultation WiP responded to the following public bodies, giving extended specific responses to the first three:

- Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Education and Library Board

- Community Relations Council
- Arts Council
- Museum Council
- Human Rights Commission

RESULTS

As a result of WiP's work on the Equality Schemes, they have been invited to work, with consultants employed by the Equality Commission, to ensure guidelines for the second phase of the Equality work; the Equality Impact Assessments are more user-friendly for public bodies. In particular WiP has contributed in the area of drafting the guidelines so as to educate public bodies in good practice in the area of consultation and coalition-building with the voluntary sector.

Women into Politics is a member of the Equality Coalition which includes groups representing people with disabilities, children and young people, the aged, people of different gender, sexual orientations, political opinion, religious belief and ethnic minority groups.

WiP, as partners in Making Women Seen and Heard, has received funding from the Equality Commission, under its Advisory Support funding to provide capacity building training among the constituency of women in six locations throughout Northern Ireland. They are currently involved, with other members of the Equality Coalition, in developing programmes for training statutory bodies in not only the issues relevant to their sectors but in effective means of communicating with those sectors for the purposes of consultation and coalition-building.

Participants discussed the under representation of women in range of areas including media. The following case study illustrates a project in Ireland that aimed to boost the profile of women and increase their participation in television and radio

CASE STUDY 17

IRELAND: WADE INITIATIVE: GENDER BALANCE ON AIR

SOURCE: www.ewm.ie/dwl/genderbalance.pdf

Equal participation by women in society is one of the major issues of our time. It has drawn increasing attention at national and global levels. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) identified the media as one of the twelve 'critical areas of concern' in which priority action was needed for the advancement and empowerment of women. It made recommendations to increase women's participation in the media and to promote a balanced media portrayal of women. At European level, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), recognising that gender equality is far from achieved, drew up a Charter for Equal Opportunities for Women in Broadcasting (1995). RTÉ was among 50 signatories to the Charter. It committed broadcasters to promote greater equality for women in their organisations both in employment practices and on-air portrayal. In 2000 many of the original signatories to the Charter, including RTÉ, recommitted their organisations to continue working for gender equality.

PROJECT

Gender Balance On-Air forms part of the Women Active in Diversity Equality (WADE) programme and was set up to increase the visibility of women on television and radio programmes and to enable more women attain positions of influence within RTÉ (Ireland's national television network)

The objective of the WADE project, therefore, was to help secure gender balance and eliminate gender stereotyping on-air. There were two strands to the project

1. Diversity Database - New Faces, New Voices of Women

A major part of the rationale behind the creation of the diversity database is the substantial under-representation of women in broadcast media. This state of affairs was graphically illustrated in a report entitled Screening Gender (1997-2000) produced by public service broadcasters of six northern European countries: YLE (Finland), ZDF (Germany), NOS (Netherlands), NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden), DR (Denmark).

2. Career Development Strategy

The aim of this element of the WADE project is to provide a strategy for women's career progression.

Limitations in media content have often been linked to women's underrepresentation and lack of power within the media industry. Increasing women's numerical and decision-making presence by providing strategies for women's career development is important (Gallagher 2001). The strands of the WADE project are inter-related and synergistic i.e. the diversity database with the objective of gender balancing programmes which call on expert input from women, the strategy for women's career progression based on a series of recommendations; arising from the recommendations a pilot mentoring programme, is currently in operation.

ACTIONS

The team worked towards its objective in two ways:

1. By creating a diversity database which identifies a new group of women with specialist knowledge who are 'broadcast ready'.
2. By providing a set of recommendations for women's career development to enable women employees attain positions of influence in RTÉ.

RESULTS

DATABASE

In order to increase the visibility of women on-air a diversity database was created which contains entries for over seven hundred and fifty women, outlining their particular areas of expertise and interest. The contributors come from a variety of social classes, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, ages and religions. The women are from a multiplicity of backgrounds ranging from professional, academic and business to some very articulate women with little formal education. It is hoped that the use of a database with such

diverse contents will lead to better gender-balance and more inclusive programmes. The database is by no means exhaustive as any work of this kind is always a work in-progress. RTÉ, recognising the value of the diversity database, has taken on responsibility for keeping it updated. This valuable asset will continue to be expanded over the years thus ensuring its relevance for broadcasting in the future. This database is available via the RTÉ intranet to programme makers, along with a set of guidelines on the use of inclusive language and terminology.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The second strand of the objective i.e. the organisation review, gave rise to a series of recommendations for progressing women's careers internally. RTÉ is incorporating a number of these recommendations into the Policy and Procedures manual. Arising out of the recommendations a mentoring intervention has been set up to assist women in advancing their careers. The mentoring programme, currently being piloted in the Television IBD, is being monitored and evaluated as a prototype for future mentoring programmes.

The WADE project, funded under the Equality for Women Measure, has provided a resource for programme makers to increase the visibility of women on television and radio programmes. The diversity database of women and guidelines on gender inclusive language, the strategy for women's career development including the mentoring programme, will promote the advancement of women and help reduce the barriers experienced by women seeking a more equitable role in Irish society.

LESSONS

The defined scope of the WADE project was exclusively on gender. However, the suggested Equality and Diversity Strategy outlined in the recommendations provides a framework for addressing the wider issues of equality and diversity within the workplace. It is recommended that consideration be given to extending its use, beyond gender, to include the other characteristics of diversity such as race and disability.
