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National Women's Council of Ireland

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Comhairle Náisiúnta na mBan in Éirinn

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ANNUAL REPORT 1996

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

**T**he National Women's Council of Ireland, *Comhairle Náisiúnta na mBan*, a non-governmental organisation, is the national representative organisation for women and women's groups in Ireland.

The National Women's Council of Ireland was founded in 1973 as the Council for the Status of Women. Its foundation was preceded by the formation of an ad hoc network of women's organisations which had successfully lobbied for the establishment of a national Commission on the Status of Women in 1970.

The Commission, appointed by Government, reviewed the position of women in Ireland and made recommendations on action needed to achieve women's rights. Following the publication of the Commission's report in 1972, the Council for the Status of Women was set up, by the members of the ad hoc network, to monitor the implementation of the report, and to act as a co-ordinating body for women's organisations in Ireland.

Over two decades, the role of the Council has expanded and changed. Maintaining its role as a non-governmental organisation, it has addressed many complex and sometimes controversial issues affecting women. In 1995 the Council completed an internal review which led to the adoption of a strategic plan, new organisational structures and a new name - the National Women's Council of Ireland.

Today the National Women's Council of Ireland, a company limited by guarantee, works to achieve change through a range of actions and activity, maintaining its independent voice and a commitment to inclusiveness reflecting its broad membership.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The National Women's Council of Ireland share a common vision, working together to transform society into a just and equitable community, a community in which all women and men can participate with equal effectiveness as full citizens, in which the independence of women is determined by right.

As the collective voice of Irish women's organisations the NWC work is aimed at:

- Shaping society so that all women can achieve their true potential;
- Ensuring that the law advances equality and places no barriers in its way;
- Changing attitudes to ensure the recognition of the individual dignity of each woman;
- Removing all threats of violence to women and children both inside and outside the home;
- Monitoring social, economic and legislative change to ensure that the effects of poverty on women and their children are highlighted and removed;
- Achieving access to appropriate, affordable and quality health care for all women and protecting and promoting reproductive health rights;
- Creating an education system in which women and young girls can participate fully and which fosters equality and respect.

## MEMBERSHIP

The National Women's Council of Ireland has always been committed to bringing together women and women's organisations which reflect the rich and diverse life experience of women in Ireland today.

Through its affiliate organisations, urban and rural, local, regional and national, the NWC represents an estimated 300,000 women. The membership includes major national organisations, community based groups, service and support providers, professional bodies and women in business, trade unions, politics and farming.

## STRUCTURE

The new structure adopted by the NWC in 1995 aims to meet the needs of members and to ensure that the NWC represents women's priorities effectively.

Policy making remains the responsibility of the overall membership with representatives from every member organisation meeting biannually. At an Annual General Meeting the member organisations, each of which has one vote, elect the Executive Board to a two year term of office.

To harness the expertise of member organisations there are four expert panels - Health; Social Affairs; Work; and Education. Each member organisation can nominate a representative to each of the four panels. Each of the panels is responsible for the development of a programme of work on priority issues.

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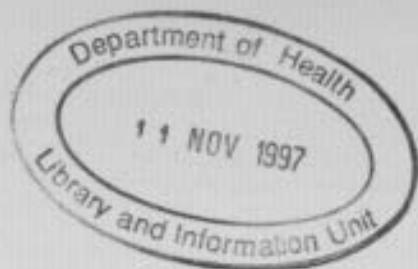
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# SECTION 1:

## 1996 – the Irish and European Scene

**I**n many respects 1996 reflects how the women's rights agenda has changed and at the same time remained the same. The third decade of the women's movement in Ireland sees hundreds of groups and organisations working to achieve change, to support women's rights and to provide the extensive advice, education and information services which are now commonplace throughout the country. The backdrop to this work has changed from a time when women's organisations were very much outside the mainstream or circle of power and decision making.

The change has been slow but consistently the role and value of women and the organisations which represent them is accepted in the national framework and at European and global level.

Throughout 1996 women around the world were engaging in the task of ensuring that the promises made in Beijing, at the 4th World Conference on Women in September 1995, would be honoured. The task involves women working in partnership with Government, the social partners and others committed to the advancement of women, as well as maintaining a watching brief.

In Ireland in addition to its national role, the NWCI worked within the European Women's Lobby (EWL) to ensure that on every front - with national Governments and with the European Union (EU) - the task of implementing the Beijing Forward Looking Strategies was prioritised.

The principles and commitments from Beijing are of course one framework promoting women's rights and responsibilities and offer a global approach to work which must be fine-tuned at a regional and then national level. In that context the review of the EU Treaties through the Intergovernmental Conference provided a more explicitly European context to progress the issues. Again the NWCI worked with the EWL to engage women in the debate about the revised treaty proposals and to ensure that the commitment to women's rights was reflected in any new Treaty taking the EU into the third millennium.

In 1996 focus was placed on two issues in particular; violence against women and children, and the continuing tragedy and mishandling of the Hepatitis C scandal. It is with these two issues that the unchanging nature of the women's rights agenda can be seen.

As murders of women were reported virtually every month during 1996, including the assassination of Veronica Guerin, women in particular became increasingly angry. During the year, an EU survey reported that 44% of women, as against 19% of men

were afraid walking in their own neighbourhood after dark. In Ireland, the Department of Justice issued figures which showed that one quarter of all women murdered since 1970 had been murdered by their husbands. And a survey in the Midwest showed that over a three month period one third of all children at risk suffered some form of violence.

Despite the years of lobbying, the work of rape crisis centres and refuges, the explosion of facts about violence in the past ten years, the kind of intensive and determined action necessary to interrupt the appalling pattern has not happened. The NWCI published its own report on violence in 1996 and welcomed the establishment of a Government working group as the year drew to a close. Violence against women demands a complex and rigorous programme of action, a long term commitment to make the country, the community and the home a safe place for women and children.

The second image of 1996 was of the continuing struggle of women to make their voices heard and get to the truth. Hepatitis C had become an issue in 1994 yet by 1996 the situation, if anything, was becoming increasingly confused and unsatisfactory. Indications in a court case that vital information known to the Blood Transfusions Services Board had not been made available to an earlier investigation into the issues proved to be a catalyst. Accusations were made of bullying of victims of Hepatitis C as they attempted to take their cases through the Courts, compensation awards were considered to be inadequate when set against the impact of the infection, and the Government continued to refuse to accept the arguments for a statutory tribunal to protect the rights of victims in the long term.

The work of Positive Action, the self help group set up by the victims themselves, proved essential in ensuring that the worst health scandal in the history of the State was not swept under the carpet. Women everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to them for their tenacity and for ensuring that the lessons which must be learned are learned.

In parallel to the Hepatitis C case there was a beacon of hope. The development of the national health consultation with women, carried on by the NWCI with the Department of Health suggests that a sea change in the relationship between policy makers, professionals and women is possible. In the area of health where the top down approach is not simply the norm but has been inculcated into those who control the resources, services and most vitally the information, change is not easy. But in every region the process of listening to women began and the meeting of different experiences produced some innovative, often simple ideas, about how the health service could change for the better. The NWCI is committed to this work believing that in addition to making health care for the individual woman more satisfactory it will also create the culture change necessary to ensure that another Hepatitis C scandal can never occur.

As 1996 drew to a close there was reinforcement of the new partnership involving women and women's organisations in the negotiation of the policies and programmes which are at the core of this society. *Partnership 2000* emerged, the first national agreement to take direct account of the views of women represented by women's organisations. The proof of the partnership lies however in the implementation of the commitments which the agreement contains.

## SECTION 2:

# NWCI internal changes

## 1996 – A Time of Transition and Development

**I**n 1996, four years before the third millennium, we as Irish women have become much more confident about ourselves. We are embracing new, complex roles and challenging ourselves, our families, our relationships and society in general. The changes which have taken place within the National Women's Council itself are a reflection of this confidence. These changes have come about as a result of a strategic review of the organisation which began in September 1994 when it celebrated its twenty-first anniversary. This proved to be a catalyst for reflecting on past achievements and for looking forward to what the future might hold.

It was clear the organisation had grown and flourished from its founding days in 1973, when it comprised seventeen organisations and was committed to ensuring the implementation of the recommendations contained in the First Commission on the Status of Women.

By 1994 the Council for the Status of Women, as we were then called, had one hundred and thirty affiliate organisations, representing a wide and diverse range of groups. This growth has inevitably broadened the organisation's own agenda and areas of activity. The constitution which had served it well in the past was perceived to need review to ensure that we were ready to face the future. Most importantly, it was clear that Irish society was in a period of intense, profound and rapid change. The Council needed to take a more proactive and planned approach to managing its own future.

In the early nineties, the Council gained a high public profile which put a huge strain on its human and financial resources. While in its early years it was both necessary and normal practice for the Council's Executive Board to have a strong "hands on" and detailed involvement in day to day business, this role began to alter in line with changes occurring in many similar organisations and instead became focused on policy and strategy formulation. Increasing demands for high quality information, participation in many national initiatives and the growth in the number of women's groups throughout the country, meant that ever greater demands were being made of this organisation.

It was essential for the Council to take stock, to ask itself many difficult questions about its relevance to women, the effectiveness of its representation of member groups and its capacity to meet newly emerging needs evident in many such groups.

The Executive Board spent almost a year carrying out this onerous and time-consuming task, consulting with affiliate groups at four points during the process. The decision was driven by a strong commitment to strengthen the Council as the national representative body of women's organisations.

### The Process

The review began with a survey of all affiliates to ascertain their views on a number of issues. The results of this initial survey indicated a gap between the expectations of affiliates and the benefits they actually got from membership of the Council. A series of meetings were then held with Chairpersons, to get their reaction to the very early findings of the review. The formal responses to those meetings again influenced much of the thinking of the Executive Board in addressing key strategic matters.

A further element in the process included consultations with a range of experts to develop a better understanding of likely changes in the external environment in the coming years. Lastly, they examined a number of other national

organisations - both Irish and international, looking for models of best practice. National women's organisations in a number of countries were examined, including some from the UK, USA, Australia, Denmark and Germany.

In examining the changing environment in which the National Women's Council now operates, a world in which change is the only constant, the Executive Board was anxious to acknowledge the contribution, past and future, of the feminist principles of equality, inclusion, social justice and diversity.

Other issues for examination included the future political, economic and social environment and potential legal developments affecting the lives of women. It was recognised that information technology and developments in telecommunications will drive change in most areas of life - work, leisure, lifestyle. These changes offer opportunities and benefits for women, greater possibilities in the labour market and less drudgery. However, they also represent threats ranging from increased isolation of women to the onslaught of the availability of computerised pornography.

Key issues facing the Council addressed in the review included:

- Should the Council continue to represent all women's groups?
- Should there be certain key values to which all members would subscribe?
- Should the Council be limited to developing policy on a narrow range of issues or should it seek to represent women on all issues relevant to them?
- What sort of structural changes are necessary to ensure adequate representation?
- How can effective communication be ensured?

The Executive Board identified the key forces affecting the future organisation of the Council, as:

- **Increasing diversity in the views, values and activities of women's groups:** making it essential, if the Council is to be effective, to have an agreed common vision to which all members must subscribe;
- **Increasing professionalisation of voluntary sector organisations and lobby groups,** thus requiring the Council to professionalise further its own operations as member organisations and

women generally come to expect high quality service and support;

- **The growth across the world of religious and moral fundamentalism, possibly resulting in the setting of a conservative agenda by forces seeking to unravel the gains made by Irish women over the past twenty five years, leading to the necessity for the Council to be strong enough to determine the agenda so as to counter the encroachment of such forces.**

The key competencies necessary for a national representative body of women's organisations were identified as:

- **Having a well established public image as the authoritative voice of Irish women;**
- **Ensuring excellent communication with affiliates and target groups;**
- **Developing excellent relations with key policy makers and government Ministers;**
- **Having the ability to campaign successfully for change;**
- **Producing high quality, independent, women-focused research on key issues;**

The practical implications of this review led to the formation of a Strategic Plan which was adopted by the membership in mid 1995. A new vision and mission was defined, core objectives and strategies were developed, policy making was devolved to members through changes in decision making structures, the Council was incorporated as a Company limited by Guarantee and improvements were made in the internal systems and structures. At the end of the process the organisation's name, the Council for the Status of Women, was changed to the National Women's Council of Ireland - Comhairle Náisiúnach mBan in Éirinn.

The new vision for the Council is that our affiliates share a common vision of working together to transform society into a just and equitable community, in which all women and men can participate with equal effectiveness as full citizens, in which the independence of women is determined by right.

The mission of the National Women's Council as the national network of women's organisations in Ireland is to be an effective co-ordinating body to represent women and lobby for the changes outlined in the Council's vision and to provide supports and services that nurture and strengthen each and every woman.

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

## CORE OBJECTIVES

- (i) To develop the organisation as a dynamic and effective representing body of women's organisations subscribing to our vision;
- (ii) To represent the interests of affiliates to government, the Irish public, the European Union and the United Nations;
- (iii) To be a source of strength to our affiliates, providing them with valued and quality supports and services - particularly information, research and training;
- (iv) To foster communication and co-operation with women's groups in Northern Ireland;
- (v) To act as a voice and catalyst for change, encouraging Irish women to organise and work together to realise our common vision, while preserving the richness of our diversity.

## CORE STRATEGIES

- (i) Broaden the range of groups represented within the Council - targeting in particular smaller community groups, environmental groups, sports groups and groups for women with disabilities;
- (ii) Deepen the expertise of the Council by (a) investing in information and research and (b) utilising and sharing the expertise of our affiliates;
- (iii) Strengthen the voice of the Council by ensuring that policy, represented and developed in close consultation with affiliates, is based on the most up to date knowledge and thinking;
- (iv) Ensure tangible and valued benefits for members - particularly for the smaller groups.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan began in earnest in 1996 with the Executive Board forming Sub-Committees dealing with Membership and Services and Staffing and Systems. Also four issue based panels were established, on Health, Social Affairs, Education and Work (paid and unpaid). Affiliate groups are encouraged to assign one member to each of the four panels. The role of the panels is to shadow the work of Oireachtas committees and the European Parliament, develop expertise in relevant subjects and act as a resource to members, develop policy proposals for consideration by the Executive Board and for approval at annual general meetings and to exchange information on initiatives and developments in the work of affiliates. The panels meet four times a year.

Each panel elects its own chairwoman and deputy and a Minutes Secretary to form the core of a working group for a two year period. Panel chairwomen sit on the Executive Board, providing an important link which facilitates communication within the organisation.

Internally, structures and operations have been re-organised into units as follows: Information, Membership and Services, Policy and Research and the Secretariat, all of which are managed by the Chief Executive.

The Council's main activities include:

- lobbying for effective change
- monitoring legislation affecting women
- highlighting women's issues in the media and the public in general
- representing women's interests on various public and private bodies
- liaising with European and international organisations including the Equal Opportunities Unit of DGV
- providing a support structure to the EU Community Initiative NOW (New Opportunities for Women)
- providing information and research services
- making detailed submissions on key issues
- developing detailed research papers
- networking with women's groups in Northern Ireland
- acting as the Irish Co-ordination for the European Women's Lobby
- providing information/support to affiliates
- organising seminars and training courses for affiliates
- developing the Council as a dynamic and effective representative body of women's organisations committed to our vision.

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- providing information/support to affiliates
- organising seminars and training courses for affiliates
- developing the Council as a dynamic and effective representative body of women's organisations committed to our vision.

The result of this strategic planning exercise has been very positive for the National Women's Council. Twenty seven new affiliates joined in 1996, participation by members in the policy making function, events and other initiatives has increased, the internal systems are now more efficient and staffing levels have also increased. However, carrying out the Council's hugely expanded policy agenda in a professional and organised manner requires a level of human and financial resources which we still have not acquired. Although the Council received an increase in this year's grant from the Department of Equality & Law Reform, it fell far short of the recommendation in the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women that our grant should be doubled.

Adequate funding is fundamental to the success or otherwise of the Council's ability to act as an effective voice on behalf of Irish women. A huge amount of the time of the Executive Board and the Chief Executive is spent sourcing additional grants to fund core activities.

Nowadays the phrase 'value for money' is regularly heard from representatives of government departments and public bodies providing funding for voluntary and community organisations. While it is reasonable for voluntary bodies receiving grants from the public purse to be asked to demonstrate sound accounting controls and value for money in their work, the criteria by which 'value for money' assessments are made should be in the public domain.

There is no doubt that 1996 was a big year in the development of the NWC - already, part of the proposed work for 1997 is set by the determination of the Executive Board to continue towards the completion of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, with a proposed internal evaluation of that plan and process due to take place late next year. Building the capacity of an organisation in the 1990s, so that it will be a leader in its sector into the new millennium, is the agreed task of the current Executive Board who will work through until Autumn 1997 to deliver on their promise of a strong, robust internal dynamic for the NWC.

internal  
changes

## SECTION 3:

# Highlights of Actions and Activities of 1996

## NWCI at the NESF

The past year has witnessed the increased participation of the National Women's Council of Ireland in the third strand of the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), designed to develop and monitor social and political initiatives, particularly in the area of unemployment.

Under a Management Committee and two Standing Committees, the NESF had its term renewed in June 1995, to run until December 1997. During 1996, the Forum prepared and published a number of reports pertinent to the Council's 1996/97 work plan and overall policy objectives.

The National Women's Council has, as part of its agenda, the brief to have policies and actions of government departments and all organisations and agencies involved in the public, private and voluntary/community sector gender proofed, for their different impacts on women. The NWCI views equality as the objective and believes that proofing implies a mechanism or set of procedures with which to achieve it. The NESF Report on Equality Proofing, published in February, contained important contributions from the Council, as we succeeded in including a specific reference to the unpaid work of women in the home and to indirect discrimination and other important recommendations regarding employment legislation.

The Reports on Work Sharing and Long Term Unemployment Initiatives, published in February and April respectively, while not providing a panacea for the problems associated with women's experience of the labour market, did help to place the search for workable and equitable solutions firmly on the political agenda.

In June, the NWCI prepared a short submission in response to the Government's call for proposals regarding the new national agreement and the future of social partnership, highlighting the under-representation of women in the partnership process and the lack of representation in the negotiation of national agreements to date. The issues for a new agreement prioritised by the NWCI included equal status legislation, child care services, individualisation of social welfare payments and a minimum wage.

Another strong contribution by the Council was that made to the Forum's Opinion in December 1996 on the Employment Equality Bill. The NWCI representatives played a central role in arguing for an Opinion on this crucial piece of legislation, and in shaping the content of that Opinion. The use of these Forum Opinions as a means to respond to specific and immediate policy and legislative developments is a very welcome departure by the NESF.

The December plenary session focusing on the compilation and use of unemployment statistics was timely in the context of the Council's earlier involvement in the *Partnership 2000* negotiations and the NWCI-INOUE Live Register Campaign. The politics of unemployment statistics has frequently operated to women's disadvantage and the Forum's recommendations on the way in which unemployment statistics are gathered will, in particular, contribute to the NWCI's objective of achieving equality in the labour market.

1997 will see the National Women's Council of Ireland continue to play a full role at the NESF, using the opportunities the Forum presents to put forward new policies aimed at achieving greater equality and social justice in our society.

## Partnership 2000

The 1990s has been a time of growth and evolution for the National Women's Council of Ireland. In 1995, when the Council embarked on a strategic plan to clarify its mission and set objectives to take it into the next century, the issue of women's economic independence, as a right, emerged as a critical issue. This fact has led the National Women's Council to adopt a more focused approach on issues of gender inequality.

In October 1996 the Council was invited, alongside seven other community and voluntary organisations, to join with the traditional social partners in the negotiations on the new National Programme: *Partnership 2000*.

*Partnership 2000* is a key forum for the Council in its objective of ensuring that women's economic independence remains high on the political agenda. The Council's involvement is an important mechanism with which to address the issue of equality in both the formal and informal economy.

The National Women's Council view is that social and economic policies must be based on the values of social inclusion, equality and economic justice. There is no doubt that from the standpoint of women, the main problem with economic statistics is the invisibility of women's unpaid labour in households, communities and in both formal and informal enterprise, including agriculture.

The exclusion of women's unpaid labour from all statistics distorts the contribution of women to economic development and the well-being of the country as a whole. This is a fundamental issue for women. Policies driven by narrow definitions of employment and unemployment bypass huge numbers of women and therefore key aspects of our lives.

Rather than bring a large shopping list of issues to the negotiating table, the NWC Executive Board adopted a strategic approach putting forward three main issues as its bottom line:

- **Development of statistical methods to evaluate the full extent of the contribution of unpaid work and its contribution to the national economy;**
- **Formation of an Expert Working Group to devise a National Framework for the Development of the Child Care Sector;**
- **Implementation of the National Economic & Social Forum's report on Equality Proofing.**

All three issues have been included in *Partnership 2000*.

The National Women's Council's involvement in the negotiations on the new national programme is reflective of both the organisation's evolution and its use of a more focused approach on issues of gender inequality. The next stage is to ensure that these promises translate into reality. This will happen through our participation in the monitoring structures currently being put in place.

## Health Options: the Council in Consultation

The NWCi has been proud to be involved in the consultation process, during 1996, for a policy on women's health. This Government policy is a first for two reasons: Ireland is the first country in Europe to have a draft women's health strategy and, for the first time, the National Women's Council has garnered a consultative role in the feedback of the process and content of a document to the Department of Health.

Launched in early 1996, the consultation process took place at regional level and was coordinated by each of the Health Boards with a regional NWCi-appointed project manager, in response to the 1995 paper, *Developing a Policy for Women's Health - A Discussion Document*.

Apart from promoting the health and welfare of women, the Women's Health Policy aims to:

- ensure that women receive the health and welfare they need at the right time and in a way which respects their dignity and individuality;
- promote greater consultation with women about their health and welfare needs, at national, regional and local level;
- promote within the health services a greater participation by women both in the more senior service positions and at the representative levels.

The eight Health Boards provided a range of consultation options including written submissions, oral submissions and workshops, organised in conjunction with key women's groups. Workshop venues included crèches, sign language interpreters and access for wheelchair users, so the broadest range of women could be reached.

Some of the issues emerging from the consultation included: the need for information and counselling; the need for a change in attitudes of service providers as well as the demand for community-based services and most importantly, continued consultation.

By the middle of 1996, the initial phase of consultation was completed and each health board had produced a report based on its consultation. Of all the health boards involved in the consultation, the Southern Health Board was particularly co-operative and committed and provided a model of what health boards can achieve and what the NWCi should expect in such a process.

The Council looks forward to the publication of the Government's *Plan for Women's Health* in April 1997 which will give guidelines on going forward to the next stage of the process. We hope in particular to maintain our strong role as partner to the health boards and to maintain our "grass-roots" links at regional level where Council affiliates will be appointed to the health boards as counterparts, to ensure the ongoing participation of women and the inclusion of women's views in all decisions being taken on women's health.

# NWCI and the Intergovernmental Conference - a process of education

Over the course of 1996, the NWCI participated actively in the response to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). Begun in Turin, Italy in March 1996, the IGC brought together representatives from the European Union who sought to revise the Treaty of Maastricht. The principal aim of revision had been to prepare both for the Union's enlargement, via the fifteen countries which are poised to join in the coming years, and the onset of a single currency in 1999.

However, while those at ministerial level debated and discussed the future of Europe, citizens, and women in particular, were largely left in the dark as to the importance of the IGC. Lack of information bred a sense of distance and isolation between people and their representatives, which frequently led to disillusionment and negative responses to the prospect of a new Treaty on the European Union.

The NWCI considered the revision of the Treaty an important occasion to review the status and rights of women in Europe, in the context of increased female participation in education, career building and employment. Although the existing Treaty addressed the position of women in relation to pay and employment through Article 119, it failed to provide guidelines on the equal treatment of women in relation to civil transactions, political decision-making or their status in society in general.

To raise awareness and encourage discussion of these issues with the delegates to the Intergovernmental Conference, the National Women's Council made a submission to the Irish Government and organised and attended a range of meetings and seminars throughout the year.

The NWCI delegates attended an IGC workshop at the European Women's Lobby (EWL) General Assembly, in May 1996. From this, it became clear that there was a need for the Irish delegation to emphasise its role as European, but remain constantly critical and watchful of all European development, especially in relation to issues of

neutrality and armaments.

Irish EWL Board member Gráinne Healy invited the EWL to hold its Board meeting in Dublin during the Irish Presidency of the IGC. The NWCI followed this with the establishment of an EWL working group which organised the NWCI/Green Party seminar on Women and the IGC process for September in the Dublin EU offices, to coincide with the arrival of the EWL Board members.

Speakers at this seminar included Patricia McKenna, MEP, the Minister for Equality and Law Reform, Mervyn Taylor, TD, who replaced Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dick Spring, TD, on the panel; Niamh Hyland, Information Officer in the Dublin office of the European Commission; Ursula Barry, feminist and economist and Dr Pauline Conroy, technical editor of the European Commission's Equal Opportunities Annual Report and Salamaari Muhonen, vice president of the EWL.

**The seminar made a number of key conclusions:**

- greater access should be given for individuals wishing to challenge Community measures, a point already endorsed by the NWCI in its submission to the Irish Government;
- women should be perceived as equal European citizens during the course of the negotiations;
- a high level of scepticism and negative voting existed amongst women in the EU, evidenced by the results of an EWL survey on attitudes to the IGC, circulated in August 1996.

At the European Women's Lobby Board meeting of September 1996, the NWCI agreed to co-present a workshop in Dublin on the IGC and Women, as part of The Other Europe Conference, held at the same time as the summit of the European Heads of Government on 12-13 December, which brought the Irish presidency of the IGC to a close.

The Other Europe, a conglomeration of local, national and international non-governmental organisations active in social, political and economic life, came together to ensure the inclusion of the democratic voice of citizens, including the poor and socially excluded, in debates on the Intergovernmental Conference.

For the National Women's Council, the most important element of the two-day event was a session on the Position of Women within the European Union, chaired by Nuala Ryan and Gráinne Healy.

The two day seminar was preceded by a series of events including a meeting between The Other Europe Organising Committee and President Mary Robinson in Áras an Uachtaráin, to brief the President on their objectives and the events taking place.

In 1997, both the NWC and the EWL aim to continue monitoring the progress of the negotiations. Lobbying and awareness-raising activities will include an EWL newsletter and petition campaign which the National Women's Council will distribute to its affiliates, to encourage informed campaigning. The NWC delegates will be present at the close of the IGC negotiations in Amsterdam in June.

## International Women's Day Celebration 1996



Meeting the President

*Photographs by  
Kate Horgan*

# Judicial Review Report

**I**n March 1995 the Irish public reacted with widespread anger and disbelief to the reduction in the sentence of the man at the centre of the "X" case. This case involved a young Irish girl who was prevented by injunction from travelling to Britain having been impregnated by the father of a family friend. The National Women's Council and a coalition of its affiliates met with the Minister for Justice to express their concern and outrage. The Council proposed that a working party be established to formally investigate the legal and judicial process as it applies to victims of sexual violence and other crimes of violence against women and children with a view to making recommendations for positive change.

The Working Party solicited submissions from a wide range of groups and individuals, by advertising in the national press and radio. Consultation was key throughout the work of the Working Party, with victims' experience of violence taking central place in the process. There was a high degree of co-operation from both voluntary and statutory services, An Garda Síochána, and some members of the judiciary. This co-operation from the judiciary was a welcome departure, signalling a willingness among some to dialogue, recognising how such dialogue contributes to rather than compromises the independence of our law makers. In fact it heightens public confidence in the justice system.

The report of the Working Party on the Legal and Judicial Process for Victims of Sexual and Other Crimes of Violence Against Women and Children was presented to the Government in November 1996 and made stark reading. In the five years from 1986 to 1991 only 7% of rape cases reported to the police resulted in a conviction. In 1995, only 11% of reported cases of domestic violence ended in a conviction. More women were murdered in the first five months of 1996 than in either 1995 or 1994.

The Report's comprehensive statistics clearly demonstrate that men's violence against women and children has reached crisis levels in Ireland. It also examined the legal and judicial system and its response to crimes against women and children. The Report emphasised the structural links between different forms of violence and the striking patterns of failure and inadequacy in the system's response. The Working Party made recommendations relating to the legal framework, law enforcement, court procedures and sentencing practices, as well as court facilities, treatment and rehabilitation of offenders and victim support services.

The Minister for Justice was urged by the Working Party to act immediately to ensure implementation of the Report's recommendations. Women and child victims of sexual and other crimes of violence are entitled to be treated justly by the system entrusted to provide justice for all Irish citizens.



Chairwoman of the NCWI, Noreen Byrne and Chairwoman of the Working party Ailbhe Smyth, present the report to the Minister for Justice, Nora Owen, TD.

# Live Register Campaign

**T**he Live Register is the list of those considered by the State to be unemployed. The social welfare system is based on the assumption that once women get married or co-habit that they are no longer active economic agents and become 'adult dependents' of their spouses. Thus, very many women are not registered as unemployed and are not entitled to access state education and employment schemes. Questions are being asked as to why the Live Register is the gateway to the majority of state provided training, education and employment schemes. The National Women's Council joined forces with the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU) to demand action on this issue which both bodies believe has its roots in gender discrimination.

The Live Register Campaign's aims were to raise awareness among women and policy makers of the issues and concerns of women who encounter obstacles to economic independence, to develop proposals and recommendations to change current labour market practice and to highlight the discrimination experienced by women in relation to their right to participate in the labour market.

The campaign took place over two months culminating in a Day of Action on December 13th 1996. In the run up to the National Sign On Day, both the NWC and the INOU organised country-wide seminars and distributed a campaign pack. The anger evinced by the women who attended these information seminars translated into action when they took to the streets to symbolically 'Sign On' the Live Register. This anger was caused by the lack of information available to women regarding their right to 'split' unemployment claims with their partners, their invisibility in the social welfare system and their lack of access to training which in many cases would facilitate their return to paid employment.

The campaign received excellent coverage on national and local media which resulted in many women becoming aware of the issue for the first time. The Department of Social Welfare responded by producing an explanatory leaflet which coincided with the Sign On Day. The Government responded by agreeing to set up a Working Group on the Live Register which was welcomed by the NWC Chairwoman who warned that she would not allow this group to become 'a talking shop'.

Many women's groups reported on-going interest and enquiries as a result of the campaign. The successful alliance of the NWC and INOU has led to a rise in women accessing the Live Register and an increased awareness of women's social welfare entitlements.



Dublin women protest at their lack of access to the Live Register.



Ciara Murray and Anne Maria Reynolds of the INOU



Margaret Erraught, honorary NWC member, Noreen Byrne, NWC Chairwoman, Mags O'Brien NWC Executive and Caroline McCamley, former Council chair.

*Photo credit: Maria Mollohan*

# Women and the National Anti Poverty Strategy

**S**ince the late eighties women's poverty has been firmly on the Council's agenda. However, acceptance of the National Women's Council as a partner to be consulted by government departments and agencies with particular responsibility for policy and provision in relation to poverty and social exclusion had been slow to develop. The Council's 1996 involvement, together with other national networks, in the National Anti Poverty Strategy (NAPS) saw a marked shift in attitudes.

In the previous September, a detailed submission outlining our policy objectives in relation to the need for an anti poverty strategy, women's place within such a strategy, the main themes and issues which affect poverty among women and the Council's main policy priorities in relation to the strategy was made to government.

With support from the Combat Poverty Agency, the Council held a consultative seminar, in April 1996, aimed at member organisations based in local communities and other non affiliated women's groups active in community development. The objective of the seminar was to explore and identify policy issues which create and reinforce women's poverty and to inform the NWC's strategies on issues of poverty and social exclusion, in particular, its participation in the NAPS consultation process.

The National Women's Council is represented on each of the working groups set up, over the Summer of 1996, to progress the consultative process in relation to the five themes identified through the wider consultation process:

- Educational disadvantage
- Unemployment
- Income adequacy
- Regenerating urban disadvantaged communities
- Tackling poverty in rural areas.

The NWGI representatives worked intensely within the working groups to ensure that the Council's key objectives influenced the make up of each of

the consultation documents which were debated at thematic consultative seminars held in the Autumn. The final report of each working group was submitted to government in November and will form the basis of the Irish report to the United Nations at the end of this year.

The time frame for the process has been very tight and not all of the departments have been able to respond adequately. It has created a situation where non governmental organisations, already under staffed and resourced, are committing to an intense period of consultation well aware that it may simply produce another set of recommendations never to be implemented.

On a positive note it is being seen as one of the most radical initiatives undertaken in this State and as an opportunity to illustrate the benefits of further broadening the concept of social partnership.

As to the process itself, there have been very diverse interpretations of the concept of consultation. With some Chairs facilitating full and productive consultation and others simply seeing the process as a rubber stamping exercise to endorse past and present policies and measures.

1997 will tell if the National Anti Poverty Strategy will be used to its full advantage. Either way the Council will ensure that women's voices continue to be heard and that women's experience shape future policies that aim to tackle poverty and disadvantage.



Members of lesbian organisations meet Mary Robinson  
Photo credit: Kate Horgan

# Employment NOW

## Diversity in action

Promoting organisations, having submitted a Final Action Plan to the NOW National Support Structure (NSS) in late 1995, received formal approval from the Minister for Enterprise and Employment in early 1996. Throughout 1996 forty-five organisations promoting thirty-nine projects under Employment NOW embarked on putting operating structures in place which would resource the overall aim of their project alongside meeting the specific Initiative criteria. By the fourth quarter many projects were well into implementing and evaluating defined action plans with each project manager taking on the challenges of meeting criteria such as innovation, transnationality, local partnership and mainstreaming. These projects will be in operation until December 1997.

### PROJECTS BY TYPE OF ORGANISATION



The diverse focus, bottom-up approach and geographic and organisational spread of the projects with a clear transnational emphasis encapsulates the vision of Employment NOW.

### EMPLOYMENT NOW PROJECTS

The thirty-nine projects under Employment NOW have completed their first year of activity which involved the planning and initial implementation phases. It is now clear to all promoting organisations that the process of delivering on a project involves a number of different stages. These include the implementation of pilot/model actions, working at local, national and transnational levels, evaluation of that experience, protracted negotiations with mainstreaming organisations and influencing/campaigning activities with regard to the future sustainability of pilot actions.

The NOW National Support Structure (NSS) has taken a developmental approach in the support to project managers. Through support mechanisms such as project visits, qualitative reporting, feedback, facilitated networking, joint thematic work and evaluation guidelines, the NSS is challenging project managers to address mainstreaming at their level and to put in place a strategy for life after the ESF support through NOW.

# Employment NOW

## Actions supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

**P**rojects were approved under one of three measures determined by the Employment Initiatives Operational Programme.

### DELIVERY OF TRAINING

Of the NOW projects 41% are approved under this measure. The greatest concentration, i.e. 56% are projects promoted by locally based or non-governmental organisations with the remainder spread across the statutory, social partnership, private and educational organisations.

Action under this measure is concerned with the development of new methodologies, new certification and professional qualifications to meet the needs of women and the changing work environment in the labour market. Promoting organisations are targeting groups who experience marginalisation and access difficulties, in relation to existing mainstream services.



Dublin Committee for Travelling People NOW Project trainees and tutor.

### SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

This measure has 36% of the NOW projects with 43% of these promoted by educational/training organisations. The remainder are spread across locally based, statutory, social partnership and private organisations. This particular measure aims to change attitudes as well as systems which have been well rooted in the respective promoting organisations.

Under the measure for Systems Development, projects are piloting actions that integrate gender equality practices and procedures into existing operational systems in vocational training institutions, social partners organisations and employer organisations.

### EMPLOYMENT/ENTERPRISE CREATION

There are nine projects approved under this measure which represents 23% of NOW projects. They are promoted by locally based organisations and two urban partnership companies which reflects an identifiable need for the "bottom-up" approach in enterprise creation and support.

The focus of Employment NOW Enterprise Creation is to promote women's access to existing business creation services and to establish new models of service provision which have the potential to be supported through local and regional mainstream services

### EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Six projects were approved in 1996 for an ERDF allocation for capital purchases within the employment creation and systems development measures. Specifically, the allocation is being used to establish childcare facilities to facilitate women's access to training and employment and to create an infrastructure to facilitate women in the area of enterprise creation.

## More of the same will no longer do



Childcare on wheels - West Limerick Resources Ltd/Now Playbus

Photo credit: West Limerick Resource Ltd.

Employment NOW Projects are **innovative** in introducing new ways of thinking and responding to issues of inequality, and devising new ways of responding to the training needs of women to enable greater participation in the labour market. Innovation refers to approach, participation, process and structures, and indeed output. Their actions are providing women with a flexible and relevant set of programmes that guarantees their inclusion, and is in turn raising women's expectations in terms of labour market participation on their own terms, while at the same time enabling them to make a valuable contribution to both social and economic development. Mainstream labour market providers are invited to respond positively to these innovations.

All projects have two **transnational partners** in other member States. It includes joint actions in relation to the development of new approaches to particular inequalities, the sharing of expertise, exchange of information, trainers, trainees, project team, conferences, joint module development and comparative studies across member States.

At this stage most project promoters strongly emphasise the added value of the transnational co-operation. All projects intend that this European-wide sharing and dissemination of experience will help to inform policy at a European level, in addition to helping shape national policies and programmes within the individual member States.

The process of **mainstreaming** means that actions successfully piloted under NOW have the potential to become part of the wider provision of labour

market services. Promoting organisations are all familiar with the potential multiplier effect, dissemination, thematic clusters, evaluation and added value. In practice it can be measured by establishing how and where the project is having the greatest impact, how well the project succeeds in gaining on-going support from mainstream sources for the continuation of actions; how the ideas generated go on to influence broader policy; whether the idea/model is replicated in other "mainstream" organisations and transferred to other regions.

This process of challenging the existing mainstream provision with regard to gender equality and women's total inclusion in the labour market will gather momentum during 1997. Promoting organisations fully committed to a bottom-up and client centred approach to development can demonstrate successful models of training, education and intervention.



Graduation of South west Kerry Women's Association Keywomen, University College Cork, July 1996

Photo credit: SKWA

# SECTION 4:

## Towards 1997

**T**he final month of 1996 provided the National Women's Council of Ireland with an opportunity to flex its newly formed strategic strength in the national arena. The intensive work of the Council's strategic review in 1995, placed the Council in a dynamic position to join with the traditional social partners (employers, trade unions, and farmers) in the negotiations on the new National Programme, *Partnership 2000*. Rather than bring a large shopping list of issues to the table, the NWC Executive Board adopted a strategic approach putting forward three main issues as its bottom line. The development of statistical methods to evaluate the full extent of the contribution of unpaid work, mainly done by women, and its contribution to the national economy; the formation of an Expert Working Group to devise a National Framework for the Development of the Childcare Sector; the implementation of the National Economic and Social Forum's report on Equality proofing.

All three issues were included in *Partnership 2000*. It represented tremendous success for the Council, and in many ways consolidated the comprehensive and lengthy efforts of the Executive Board to re-position the Council for the third millennium.

Little did Irish people anticipate then that this national wage agreement, alongside the government's fiscal management and its ability to substantially increase foreign direct investment, would result in this now almost taken-for-granted phenomena which has been named the Celtic Tiger. However, the Council did have an increasing awareness that its agenda for 1997 (and beyond) would be more and more determined by the social implications of a world driven by global economic interests. It also had a growing sense that the landscape of feminism and feminist language was changing; indeed it appeared that varied traditions of feminist analyses were being more and more excluded from the ways in which women "should" think about what is wrong and what needs to change.

In light of these changes to the external environment, the Council began to consider a series of fundamental questions, the answers to which would direct the design of its actions for 1997. Some of these questions included:

- How can we maintain integrity and a critical perspective as we enter ongoing monitoring and negotiating around all the issues raised within the Partnership 2000 arena?
- How can we ensure technically sophisticated as well as feminist-oriented participation in the working groups emerging from Partnership 2000?
- How can the Council create a safe and creative space for its affiliates to raise the deeper questions regarding our fundamental values as a society?
- Will there be room for the values of care and compassion alongside the much heralded values of efficiency and effectiveness?

If the Council is to be "a source of strength to our delegates" it will need to consider new ways of providing information, research and training to its delegates. 1997 will see the formulation of an information strategy for the Council, resulting in improved information products and services. The Council will hire a Policy Analyst in 1997, thereby increasing the Council's ability to provide a high quality response to the plethora of social and economic research which influences directly the changes in public policy. The Policy Analyst will design innovative mechanisms to link the analysis of diverse women's experience with critical analysis of current social and economic policy.

If the Council is to "act as a voice and catalyst for change, encouraging Irish women to work together while preserving the richness of our diversity" it will need to find ongoing ways to demonstrate that the national voice of women is a voice of extraordinary diversity. It will need to find ways to consult with significantly varied interests (with differing degrees of social and economic power) in order to develop a common agenda that does not cede itself to the "LCD" phenomena, that is, the "lowest common denominator" which just maintains the stasis of the status quo. 1997 will see the Council designing a political campaign to demand the genuine development of an infrastructure of childcare services for all women - all parents - throughout Ireland.

These are just some of the ways in which the Council looks towards 1997.

Its agenda and its actions will be more and more determined by a fresh opening of the language of women and its consequent potential to create something genuinely new.

# SECTION 5:

## Appendices



NWCI Executive Board, 1996

Photo credit: Margaret O'Brien Moran

### (i) STAFF & EXECUTIVE 1996

#### Executive

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Noreen Byrne     | Chairwoman  |
| Carol Fawsitt    | Vice-Chairwoman   |
| Grace O'Malley   | Treasurer   |
| Mags O'Brien     | Ordinary Members  |
| Gráinne Healy    |   |
| Maura Murray     |   |
| Monica O'Connor  |   |
| Mary O'Hara      |   |
| Eileen Wetherall | (not shown in photograph)                                   |
| Anne Taylor      | Ex-officio - stepped down from her position in October 1996 |
| Anne-Marie Gill  | Chief Executive - resigned in September 1996                |

The Executive members have remained the same throughout the year.

#### Staff Members

##### National Women's Council of Ireland

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Jill Young     | Office Co-ordinator - retired July 1996  |
| Imelda Brown   | Reception  |
| Audry Deane    | Working on projects until May 1996 when she became Membership & Services Officer |
| Cathy Purcell  | Reception - resigned September 1996  |
| Ciara McKenna  | Reception  |
| Kerry Lawless  | Information Officer - joined in May 1996   |
| Caroline Hulme | P.A. to Chief Executive - joined August 1996                                     |

### NOW Support Structure

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mary Donnelly   | Programme Manager - resigned September 1996 |
| Patricia Golden | Financial Administrator                     |
| Josephine Lally | Project Officer                             |
| Martina Conlon  | Administration & Information                |
| Rose Brennan    |   |

### (ii) EXECUTIVE AT WORK

#### January 1996

- Staff & Systems sub-group meets
- Membership & Services sub-group meets
- Computerisation of NWCI offices begins
- Pre-budget written and oral submissions made to Minister for Finance
- Meetings with women in Northern Ireland to strengthen links
- Meeting with Department of Health
- European Year of Lifelong Learning Steering Group meets
- Meeting with President Robinson
- Meeting re. Mountjoy Prison
- Judicial Review working group meets
- NOW Steering Group meets
- Launch by Minister of Education of the Second Commission Report on the Status of Women, for Secondary Schools
- Executive meeting

#### February 1996

- Attend Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights
- Attend NESF meetings
- Produce newsletter *In Focus*

- Join with Campaign for Equality to seek support for equality legislation
- Continue work on Newspaper Commission
- Preparatory Panel Chair's meeting
- Panel meeting in Teacher's Club
- TEASTAS meeting
- Judicial Review working group meets
- Executive meeting

#### March 1996

- Equal Status Legislation lobbying activities
- NOW Steering Group meetings
- Judicial Review Working Group meeting
- Membership & Services sub-group meets
- International Women's Day celebration at the Rotunda Hospital with special guest President Robinson
- European Year of Life Long Learning steering committee meeting
- North/South political education project development & networking
- Meeting with the EU Commission offices
- NWCI counterparts meeting on Health Strategy Consultation Process
- Executive meeting

#### April 1996

- Staff & Systems sub-group meets
- Membership & Services sub-group meets
- Meeting with Department of the Environment to prepare for UN HABITAT II Conference
- European Year of Life Long learning steering committee meeting
- Meeting with Positive Action
- NWCI's National Anti-Poverty Seminar
- Monitoring Committee meeting of the Second Commission of the Status of Women
- Rural Development Advisory Group meets
- NOW Steering Group meets
- Childminders Association Annual Conference
- *In Focus*, Issue 2 produced
- Executive meeting

#### May 1996

- Submission made to the Commission on the Family
- Submission drafted on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)
- Review of the Maastricht Treaty
- NWCI counterparts meet on Health Strategy Consultation
- Joint Reception for Kathleen Kennedy Townsend at US Ambassadors' Residence
- Judicial Review Group meets
- General Election Strategy meeting
- NOW Steering Group Meeting
- Executive Meeting

#### June 1996

- European Anti-Poverty Network Conference on the IGC
- UN HABITAT II Conference
- TEASTAS European Year of Life Long Learning Conference

- NOW Steering meets
- Panel meeting
- Reception for elected NI Coalition women
- *In Focus*, Issue 3, produced
- Executive meeting

#### July 1996

- Rwandan Minister's visit to the Council
- TEASTAS Committee meeting
- Judicial Review Working Group meeting
- Executive meeting

#### August 1996

- Equality Campaign meetings
- Judicial Review Working Group meetings
- EWL working group meeting
- Panel Chairs' meeting
- Funding applications
- Executive meeting

#### September 1996

- Equality Campaign meetings
- Panel Meeting
- IGC Seminar
- EWL Board meeting in Dublin
- Planning the Live Register Campaign
- EU programme applications
- *In Focus*, Issue 4, produced
- AGM preparations
- North/South project development meetings
- Executive meeting

#### October 1996

- Departmental meetings
- Equality Campaign meetings
- NAPS representative meetings
- INOU/NWCI seminar in Buswells on Women and the Live Register
- North/South project development meetings
- Preparations for NWCI AGM

#### November 1996

- Launch of Report of the Working Party on the Legal and Judicial Process for Victims of Sexual and Other Crimes of Violence against Women and Children
- Employment Conference on Equality and Access to Life Long Learning
- Launch of The Other Europe
- North/South project development meetings
- Participation in *Partnership 2000* discussions
- Executive meeting

#### December 1996

- National Sign On Day
- Executive meeting
- North/ South project development meetings
- Dáil 84 group meeting
- Meeting with Neziwa Jordan, of Just Exchange - South Africa
- Working group on Pornography meets
- Participation in *Partnership 2000*
- Executive meeting

### (iii) NWCi PUBLICATIONS & SUBMISSIONS 1996

- Pre Budget submission to the Minister of Finance
- Presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Women's Rights
- NWCi Guide & Directory
- NWCi newsletter *In Focus*, Issues 2, 3, 4
- NWCi Health Panel Submission to Teastas - the Irish National Certification Authority
- Report of a Seminar held by the NWCi on Gender Proofing the National Anti Poverty Strategy submitted to the Inter-Departmental Committee on the National Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Submission to the Commission on the Family
- Submission to the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) on Broadening the Social Partnership Process
- Report on the Equality Campaign
- Submission to the Working Group on a National Sport Strategy on Women & Sport: Creating a gender level playing field
- Submission to the Irish government on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)
- Report of the Working Party on the Legal and Judicial Process for Victims of Sexual and Other Crimes of Violence Against Women and Children
- Submissions to the National Programme for Social Partnership:  
*Partnership 2000:*
  - Presentation at the Opening Discussion
  - Proposals on Gender Equality Issues
  - Submission on Women and Enterprise
- Submission to Department of Equality & Law Reform, as part of the Equality Campaign, on the Employment Equality Bill 1996
- Information leaflet *Breaking Down the Barriers* which outlines how to overcome administrative obstacles relating to the live register, signing on for credits, and eligibility for labour market measures
- Campaign Pack on the Live Register Campaign and the National Sign On Day on December 13th 1996

### (iv) EMPLOYMENT NOW BUDGETS 1995-1997

| PROMOTER                       | ESF              | Total†           |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Aontas                         | 247,500          | 330,000          |
| Community Radio Castlebar      | 77,500           | 103,333          |
| Cork Women's Initiative        | 107,500          | 143,333          |
| Construction Industry Fed      | 147,500          | 196,667          |
| Contract Cleaning Social Parts | 87,500           | 250,000          |
| Co Enterprise Boards*          | 7,500            | 10,000           |
| DIT Arts                       | 177,500          | 236,667          |
| DIT Childcare                  | 257,500          | 343,333          |
| EEA/IPD                        | 157,500          | 210,000          |
| FAS Local Action               | 247,500          | 330,000          |
| Galway Community Dev           | 102,500          | 136,667          |
| Garda Síochána                 | 157,500          | 210,000          |
| ICA Longford                   | 142,500          | 190,000          |
| IRTC/UCG/Forum                 | 222,500          | 296,667          |
| IQA                            | 157,500          | 210,000          |
| LOT                            | 117,500          | 156,667          |
| Mid South Roscommon Group      | 07,500           | 143,333          |
| North East Galway Devt         | 137,500          | 183,333          |
| Northside Partnership          | 157,500          | 210,000          |
| North West Inner City          | 106,985          | 142,647          |
| Paul Partnership               | 177,500          | 236,667          |
| Pavee Point                    | 207,500          | 276,667          |
| Rape Crisis Network            | 207,500          | 276,667          |
| Ronanstown Women's Group       | 76,825           | 102,433          |
| RTC Network                    | 395,000          | 526,667          |
| Ruhama Women's Project         | 82,500           | 110,000          |
| SIPTU/ UCG                     | 207,500          | 276,667          |
| South West Kerry Women         | 177,500          | 236,667          |
| St Joseph's Training Centre    | 167,500          | 223,333          |
| Tallaght RTC Women & Elec.     | 197,500          | 263,333          |
| Tallaght NOW                   | 7,500            | 10,000           |
| Tallaght WEB                   | 267,500          | 356,667          |
| Teagasc, FÁS, Cert             | 162,500          | 216,667          |
| UCG Social Care                | 102,500          | 136,667          |
| Waterford Crystal *            | 87,500           | 116,667          |
| Waterford /Wexford Women       | 177,500          | 236,667          |
| WEAVE Donegal                  | 127,500          | 170,000          |
| West Limerick Resources Ltd    | 87,500           | 116,667          |
| WITS                           | 297,500          | 396,667          |
| Women's Aid                    | 197,500          | 263,333          |
| Women in Film & TV             | 102,500          | 136,667          |
| <b>Overall Total</b>           | <b>6,538,810</b> | <b>8,718,413</b> |

\* Employment NOW is funded by the European Commission in partnership with each Member State. The overall responsibility for the Employment Initiative in Ireland lies with the Department of Enterprise and Employment with a National Co-ordinator for the NOW. The National Women's Council of Ireland provide the national Support Structure (NSS) for the Employment NOW Strand.

† Total— 25% matching finance (eligible source) plus the ESF allocation.

## (v) ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED TO THE NWCI

Organisations in **BOLD** joined in 1996

AIM GROUP FOR FAMILY LAW REFORM  
ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB  
ALEXANDRA COLLEGE GUILD  
AN POST WOMEN'S NETWORK  
AOIBHNEAS WOMEN'S REFUGE  
ACONTAS  
ATHLONE WOMEN'S GROUP  
ASSOCIATION FOR PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF  
SEPARATED SPOUSES  
ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY TEACHERS OF  
IRELAND  
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF HOME ECONOMICS

BAHA'IS WOMEN'S COMMITTEE  
BALLYBODEN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE  
**BALLYBOFEY & STRANORLAR WOMEN'S GROUP**  
BALLYMUN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE  
BANLACHT  
BLESSINGTON WOMEN'S COMMUNITY GROUP  
**BODYWHYS**  
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUBS

**CARLOW/KILKENNY RAPE CRISIS CENTRE**  
CATHOLIC WOMEN'S FEDERATION  
CHALLENGE  
CHERISH  
CHRISTIAN FEMINIST MOVEMENT  
**CLARE WOMEN'S NETWORK**  
CLONDALKIN WOMEN'S NETWORK  
CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVICE UNION  
CLONMEL RAPE CRISIS CENTRE  
**CONNAUGHT RURAL WOMEN'S GROUP**  
CORK FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS  
CORK LESBIAN LINE COLLECTIVE  
CORK RAPE CRISIS SERVICE  
CORK WOMEN'S POETRY CIRCLE  
CORK WOMEN'S POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

DES ACTION IRELAND  
DISABLED WOMEN'S WORKING GROUP  
**DROGHEDA AREA WOMEN'S NETWORK**  
DUBLIN LESBIAN LINE COLLECTIVE  
DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTRE  
DUBLIN UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S GRADUATES  
ASSOCIATION  
DUBLIN WELL WOMAN CENTRE

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD OFFICERS'  
ASSOCIATION

FINGAL CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED  
**FORUM WOMEN'S WORKING GROUP CONNEMARA**

GALWAY ASSOCIATION WOMEN GRADUATES  
GALWAY RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS WIVES ASSOCIATION  
GINGERBREAD  
GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY  
GRAPHICAL PAPER & MEDIA UNION (IRISH REGION)  
**GREEN PARTY WOMEN'S GROUP**

HOME BIRTH ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

**INISHOWEN WOMEN'S NETWORK**  
IRISH AGRICULTURAL ADVISORS' ORGANISATION  
IRISH ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL SURGERY  
AUXILIARIES  
IRISH ASSOCIATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE  
MATERNITY SERVICES  
IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
IRISH CHILDBIRTH TRUST  
IRISH COUNTRYWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
**IRISH DEAF WOMEN'S GROUP**  
IRISH FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION  
IRISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION  
IRISH FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS  
IRISH FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
IRISH FEMINIST INFORMATION  
IRISH GIRL GUIDES  
IRISH NATIONAL TEACHER'S ORGANISATION  
IRISH NURSES ORGANISATION  
**IRISH NUTRITION & DIETETIC INSTITUTE**  
IRISH PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUPS ASSOCIATION  
IRISH STILLBIRTH AND NEO-NATAL DEATH SOCIETY  
IRISH WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

KERRY RAPE CRISIS CENTRE  
KILKENNY WOMEN'S GROUP

LETTERKENNY WOMEN'S CENTRE LTD  
**LIMERICK FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC**  
LIMERICK FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS  
LIMERICK RAPE CRISIS CENTRE  
LESBIANS ORGANISING TOGETHER  
LONE PARENT NETWORK  
**LONE PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP LAOIS**

MANDATE  
MANUFACTURING, SCIENCE AND FINANCE UNION  
METHODIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
MOTHER'S UNION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WIDOWS IN IRELAND  
NATIONAL CHILDREN'S NURSERIES ASSOCIATION  
**NETWORK NATIONAL**  
**NORTH WEST INNER CITY WOMEN'S NETWORK**

OFFALY WOMEN'S NETWORK  
ONE PARENT EXCHANGE NETWORK  
OMEP WORLD ORGANISATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION

PARENTS ALONE RESOURCE CENTRE  
PARLIAMINT na mBAN  
PAVEE POINT  
**POSITIVE ACTION**  
POST-NATAL DISTRESS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND  
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
PUBLIC SERVICE EXECUTIVE UNION

**REACH TO RECOVERY**  
**ROWLAGH WOMEN'S GROUP LTD**

SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT  
SOROPTIMISTS  
SOFT

TEACHERS UNION OF IRELAND  
**TRALEE WOMEN'S FORUM**

UNION OF STUDENTS IN IRELAND  
UCD WOMEN'S GRADUATES ASSOCIATION

WATERFORD RAPE CRISIS CENTRE  
WESTERN WOMEN'S LINK  
WOMEN'S AID  
**WOMEN FOR SOBRIETY**  
**WOMEN MANAGERS NETWORK CIVIL SERVICE**  
**WOMEN'S HEALTH ACTION GOUP DUNDALK**  
**WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINIC LIMERICK**  
**WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT FOR PROSTITUTES**  
**WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE &  
FREEDOM**  
WOMEN OF THE NORTH WEST LTD  
WOMEN IN LEARNING  
WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE  
**WOMEN TOGETHER TALLAGHT**  
WOMEN IN THE MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT  
WOMEN'S EDUCATION RESEARCH & RESOURCE  
CENTRE  
WOMEN'S POLITICAL ASSOCIATION  
WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE, UCG  
  
YWCA OF IRELAND

## SECTION 6:

# AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1996

We have audited the financial statements on page 30 which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 31.

#### *Respective responsibilities of the Executive of the Council*

The members of the Executive are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

#### *Basis of opinion*

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Executive in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Council's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

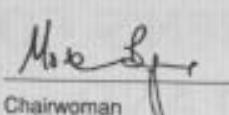
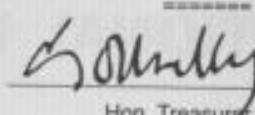
#### *Opinion*

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Council's affairs as at 31st December 1996 and of its deficit for the year then ended.

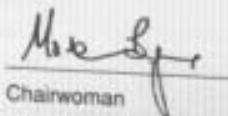
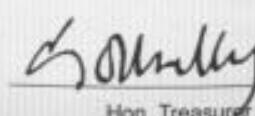
We have obtained all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the Council. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

Murray Murphy and Co  
Chartered Accountants and  
Registered Auditor  
Clifton House  
Fitzwilliam Street Lower  
Dublin 2.

## Accumulated Fund Statement year ended 31 December 1996

| 1995                       |   | 1996   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| IRE                        |   | IRE  |
| (17,899)                   | Balance 1st January 1996  | (17,654)   |
| 245                        | (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year  | (1,319)  |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   | <hr style="width: 100%;"/>   |
| (17,654)                   | Balance at 31st December 1996   | (18,973)   |
| -----                      |   | -----  |
|                            | <br>Chairwoman | <br>Hon. Treasurer |

### Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1996

| 1995                       |   | Notes  | 1996                       |
|----------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|
| IRE                        |   |  | IRE                        |
|                            | <b>ASSETS EMPLOYED</b>  |  |                            |
|                            | <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>   |  |                            |
| 14,225                     | Debtors and Prepayments   |  | 22,642                     |
| 98                         | Cash at Bank and on Hand  |  | 164                        |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| 14,323                     |   |  | 22,806                     |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
|                            | <b>CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year</b>   |  |                            |
| 12,238                     | Creditors and Accruals  |  | 10,398                     |
| 3,536                      | Deferred Income   | 2  | 31,186                     |
| 16,203                     | Bank Overdraft  |  | 195                        |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| 31,977                     |   |  | 41,779                     |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| (17,654)                   | <b>NET CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>  |  | (18,973)                   |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| (17,654)                   | <b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>  |  | (18,973)                   |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| -----                      |   |  | -----                      |
|                            | <b>FINANCED BY</b>  |  |                            |
| (17,654)                   | Accumulated (Deficit)   |  | (18,973)                   |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| (17,654)                   |   |  | (18,973)                   |
| <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |   |  | <hr style="width: 100%;"/> |
| -----                      |   |  | -----                      |
|                            | <br>Chairwoman | <br>Hon. Treasurer |                            |

## NOTE 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention

### Subscription Income

Annual and AGM subscriptions are accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

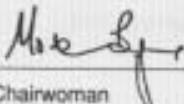
| 1995<br>IR£ | NOTE 2. DEFERRED INCOME               | 1996<br>IR£ |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
|             | <b>Training grants</b>                |             |
| 12,498      | Balance at 1st January 1996           | 2,340       |
| (10,158)    | Expenditure during year               | (2,340)     |
| <hr/>       |                                       | <hr/>       |
| 2,340       | Balance at 31st December 1996         | —           |
| -----       |                                       | -----       |
|             | <b>Computer Grant</b>                 |             |
| 3,166       | Balance at 1st January 1996           | 1,196       |
| 1,970       | Expenditure during year               | (1,196)     |
| <hr/>       |                                       | <hr/>       |
| 1,196       | Balance at 31st December 1996         | —           |
| -----       |                                       | -----       |
|             | <b>Combat Poverty Grant</b>           |             |
| —           | Income Received during year           | 5,100       |
| —           | Expenditure during year               | (3,914)     |
| <hr/>       |                                       | <hr/>       |
| —           | Balance at 31st December 1996         | 1,186       |
| -----       |                                       | -----       |
|             | <b>Anonymous Donation</b>             |             |
| —           | Income received during year           | 30,000      |
| —           | Expenditure during year               | —           |
| <hr/>       |                                       | <hr/>       |
| —           | Balance at 31st December 1996         | 30,000      |
| <hr/>       |                                       | <hr/>       |
| 3,536       | Deferred Income at 31st December 1996 | 31,186      |
| -----       |                                       | -----       |

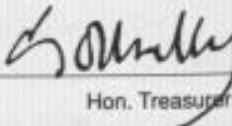
## NOTE 3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS APPROVAL

The Financial Statements were approved by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Council on 15th September, 1997

## Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31 December 1996

| 1995               |                                     | 1996    |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| IR£                | INCOME                              | IR£     |
| 140,000            | Department of Equality & Law Reform | 170,000 |
| 8,920              | Programme Grants & Income           | 14,752  |
| 2,375              | Annual Subscriptions                | 5,831   |
| 1,264              | AGM Subscriptions                   | —       |
| 1,180              | Rent Received                       | 50      |
| 3,503              | Sundry Income                       | 442     |
| —                  | Joseph Roantree Trust               | 7,274   |
| 157,242            |                                     | 198,349 |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b> |                                     |         |
| 63,789             | Salaries                            | 64,981  |
| 27,240             | Programme Expenses                  | 49,951  |
| 23,515             | Office Expenses                     | 23,134  |
| 18,165             | Establishment Expenses              | 22,814  |
| 5,878              | Professional Fees                   | 4,518   |
| —                  | Staff Training & Recruitment        | 11,535  |
| 18,410             | Communication Expenses              | 22,735  |
| 156,997            |                                     | 199,668 |
| 245                |                                     | (1,319) |
| -----              |                                     | -----   |

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chairwoman

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hon. Treasurer

## **Acknowledgements**

*The NWCi wishes to acknowledge the work and support of all the following without whom this Annual Report for 1996 would not have been possible:*

### **NWCi Staff**

*Katherine Zappone, Patricia Lee, Audry Deane, Patricia Golden,  
Josephine Lally, Imelda Brown, Rose Brennan, Mary Daly,  
Clara McKenna and Martina Conlon.*

*With particular thanks to the project co-ordinators  
Caroline Hulme and Kerry Lawless*

### **NWCi Executive Board**

*Noreen Byrne and Gráinne Healy*

*Special thanks to Caroline McCamley and Clodagh McCarty  
and to all at Dundalgan Press.*



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