



national collective of
**community based
women's
networks**



**NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre
(ACCESS 2000 Limited)**

**2014
Annual
Report**



Weronika, Komelia, Oskar and Layla watch the launch of International Women's Day 2014 on Manor Street from the Women's Centre Preschool

Contents

Chairwoman's Address by Ann Fitzgerald.....	4
Background	5
Current work.....	6
Staff profile 2014	7
Childcare Centre.....	7
Childcare Outputs & Impacts	8
Staff Profile	9
Childcare Centre.....	9
Women's Centre	9
International Women's Day	10
1. 'Pioneering Waterford Women' photographic & written narrative exhibition	10
2. Regional meeting in Waterford with Access Wexford	10
3. International Women's Day CAFE in the Women's Centre.....	11
Mayors Health Day.....	11
Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women	12
Local Area Network opposing Violence against Women (LAN):.....	12
16 Days of Action opposing Violence against Women	13
DASS Domestic Abuse Support Service.....	13
MEND Partner Support Programme	13
Young Women's Support Group - living without limits!	14
Potential new areas of work	14
Additional support groups	14
Women's history	14
Domestic Abuse Support Work.....	14
Work completed under goal 2:	15
Increase access	15
Health & Wellbeing	
Outcomes identified	16
Mount Congreve June 2014.....	17
Health & Wellbeing.....	17
Women Exploring Options Personal Testimonies:	18
Women Exploring Options.....	20
Drop-In Café.....	20

Alternative Therapy Sessions	21
Increase people’s work readiness and employment prospects	21
Café work experience	21
Outcomes	21
Social Media	21
Second Hand Shop	21
Research Work Experience	22
Staff Training and Development in 2014	22
Facilitators Panel	22
In-service Training	22
HACCP Food Safety Training	22
First Aid Training	23
Childcare Training	23
Student Placements	23
Potential New Area of Work for 2015	23
NCCWN Women's Collective South East.....	24
Regional Networking Day.....	24
Open Day/ Coffee Morning & Sale of Work.....	25
National Letter and Lobbying Campaign.....	25
Participatory Democracy in Action Project.....	26
Induction programmes.....	26
Potential new areas of work	26
Appreciations	27

Chairwoman's Address by Ann Fitzgerald

It gives me great pleasure as Chairwoman of Waterford Women's Centre to introduce the 2014 Annual Report. 2014 was again a challenging year as we faced continued funding cuts and other challenges. The Women's Centre however stayed committed to removing barriers to participation and to maintaining an independent space for women in Waterford.

The management committee is grateful to staff, particularly our Coordinator, Breda Murphy, for continuing to ensure the smooth running of the project. The women's groups continue to grow in strength and confidence and each woman demonstrates her commitment to equality by participating fully and overcoming barriers to active participation.

The Childcare Centre also continued to grow in strength in 2014. I would like to thank Coordinator Sarah Walsh and all the childcare staff for their professional work ethic and dedication. We are as always grateful for the valuable work of providing quality childcare and maintaining the child friendly ethos of the service. The management would like to acknowledge the role of parents in the service who engage fully and work in partnership with our staff in order to ensure the best care for their children. This commitment and partnership is instrumental in making the facility such a vibrant and welcoming place for all.

As chairwoman, I would like to express my gratitude to our funders – the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government who provide core funding, through the NCCWN (National Collective of Community Women's Networks) the National Childcare Investment Programme, the Department of Social Protection, Waterford Wexford Education & Training Board, the HSE and Solidarity Trust.

Thanks to those who are involved in, and support, the work we do: voluntary board and management committee, advisors, women's groups, volunteers, community projects and statutory agencies. Thanks to the NCCWN employees whose hours have, due to reduced LCDP funding, been severely cut over the past four years and who despite these reductions continued to do the work with a minimum of disruption.

At our AGM a minutes silence was observed to remember a beautiful little two year old girl, Daenerys Crosbie, who tragically lost her life on the 18th November 2014 outside the Women's Centre. Our sincere heartfelt sympathy goes to Daenerys's parents and family.

Ann Fitzgerald Chairwoman 2014

Background

Waterford Women's Centre (Access 2000 Ltd) was established by women for women in 1995 and will, in 2015, celebrate 20 years in Waterford. Since 1995 the Centre has worked with women to remove social, economic, educational and cultural barriers to participation. With a focus on class and gender, through critical analysis it aims to raise awareness of social inequality to bring about positive change for working class women.

Recognising the impact of class/gender conditioning and cultural, political and economic structures, the Women's Centre provides;

1. A democratic space where women are facilitated to challenge multiple barriers to their development.
2. A space to collectively challenge structures that impact negatively on working class women.

By providing a space for women who are normally excluded from many areas in particular from decision making, the Women's Centre builds capacity so that voices not usually heard can participate in many aspects of society.

The Women's Centre is situated in Manor Street; a busy thoroughfare in Waterford city and occupies three terraced houses from 74 -76. It also has a 25 place purpose built Childcare Centre. The Women's Centre provides community development responses to the identified needs through outreach and engagement, using a human rights based approach and community education/community development principles, practices and methodologies. The Women's Centre has a strong group of volunteers directing, managing and steering the work.

The Women's Centre has been designing and delivering needs based community education programmes with women since 1995. There is a common approach and ethos that characterises all of the training which has been developed in response to our experience and understanding of gender and class inequality. The focus of the work is on challenging and removing barriers to participation.



Current work

- Outreach and engage women who face barriers to participating in formal programmes
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with relevant local agencies to support ease of access to relevant supports, information & services for women
- Provide a drop in facility
- Provide a space where women are facilitated to fully participate in women's groups
- Deliver Community Education programmes from entry to third level
- Facilitate women to access additional relevant information and services
- Provide on-going needs based training and support for volunteers and management
- Maintain and develop a democratic organisational structure with equality at its heart
- Engage in policy analysis and highlight issues that impact on women's lives
- Provide care for up to 35 children to support women's participation
- Facilitate issue based support groups for women
- Provide a first step Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS)
- Facilitate local agencies working with women experiencing domestic abuse to network and raise awareness of the issue
- Raise the profile of women in Waterford through the Women's History Project
- Network and work collaboratively with the other 16 NCCWN Women's Projects at a regional and national level

Staff profile 2014



Walk in the Eco Park July 2014

Childcare Centre

In 2014 the Childcare Centre cared for approximately 85 children from 50 families. This was a 4% increase on 2013. 70% of the families were one parent families headed by mothers. 10% of the parents were supported by the CETS programme, which supports parents to return to education and training in FAS and the VEC through providing childcare costs, 25% were supported by ECCE, which offers one year free preschool for every child between the age of 3 years and 3 months and 4 years and 7 months. The remaining 70% were supported by childcare subvention. 15% of the parents attended programmes in the Women's Centre, 20% gained employment, and 25% attended English classes and other supports for women from new communities. 40% of the parents attended back to education programmes in further education or third level.

Four childcare workers were funded through FAS Community Employment. One was employed through TUS Community Work Placement Initiative.

After consultation with the parents in 2014 we continued to provide full day care throughout the summer months instead of a summer programme. We still got out and about more however and spent lots of time in our outdoor play area during the beautiful summer of 2014. We also fully utilised our proximity to the playground in Railway Square and the People Park. We visited our local library and other local amenities as much as possible.

As always the Childcare Centre worked closely with the Women's Centre in order to support women to access quality childcare, training, education, information, services and employment.

We always welcome feedback from both parents and children as it helps us to develop and improve our crèche



Feedback from a parent

“My daughter has attended the crèche for two years now and really enjoys coming to see her friends every day, she has a great relationship with all staff

Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.
Fred Rogers



*“I like coming to crèche to see all my best friends I love colouring and playing with the toys”
Keeley aged 4*



Childcare Outputs & Impacts

85 children attended our service in 2014
50 families supported to access support, training, education and employment
38 families headed by mothers parenting alone
15 women supported to attend Women's Centre groups
15 women progressed to employment
20 women from new communities accessed supports, e.g. English classes
14 women accessed back to education programmes, in FAS, VEC, WIT etc.

Staff Profile

Childcare Centre

Coordinator:

Sarah Walsh

Assistant Coordinator:

Amie O'Shea

Childcare Workers:

Amy Fanning, Laura Marshall, Michelle Flynn, Cathie Shanahan, Nicola Malone, Stephanie Bible, Fiona power, Lorraine Ryan, Kristine Broka, Corinna Cullen

The work was also supported by the following students in 2014: Niamh Murphy, Jessica Frampton, Jessica Walsh, Edel O'Sullivan, Rachel Lynch and Denise Joy

Women's Centre

Coordinator: Breda Murphy

Administrator: Francesca Jordan

Outreach Development Worker: Kate Crotty

Facilitators: Alison Langford, Ann Fitzgerald, Kate Crotty, Kate Glavey, Casey O'Connor, Maeve O'Grady, Sarah Murphy, Camilla Clarke, Marie Power, Dee Jacques, Liz Heffernan, Eleanor Dalton, Marie Roche & Kat Cordeaux

Volunteers: Laura Crotty, Kate Glavey, Kat Cordeaux, Liz Heffernan, Katarzyna Frey-Kutakowka and Debbie Kiely

Social Enterprise: Marie Power & Teresa Harrington

Work completed under goal 1 of the Local and Community Development Programme:

To promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services

International Women's Day - three events were hosted throughout the week



1. 'Pioneering Waterford Women' photographic & written narrative exhibition

Aims of the project to:

raise awareness of forgotten Waterford women
celebrate and promote women's contribution to Waterford life
draw attention to the death of women in history

The exhibition was held in Waterford City Council Library. A launch was **attended by 30** and the exhibition was **viewed by 300** throughout the week. A number of presentations were made on the Pioneering Women which was exhibited at the open day in the Women's Centre. (**Attended by 50**)

2. Regional meeting in Waterford with Access Wexford

Aims:

Celebrate International Women's Day
Launch the NCCWN Women's Manifesto
Provide an networking opportunity for NCCWN Women's Collective South East
Share best practice in Community Education methodologies
Further develop the NCCWN regional structures **Attended by 50**

3. International Women's Day CAFE in the Women's Centre



Aims:

to launch our new cafe

highlight the work of the Women's Centre

share our work with local community and statutory agencies **100 attended**

Mayors Health Day:



Waterford Healthy Cities Initiative is part of a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative with over 80 other cities in Europe. The aim of the initiative is to enhance the health of the city, its environment and people through all groups and agencies working together. The

Women's Centre had an open morning to highlight our contribution to the health & wellbeing of the women of Waterford. The Centre has an ongoing 'Health & Wellbeing' programme which has continuous intake throughout the year. The city Mayor Cllr. John Cummins and representatives of community and statutory organisations attended the open morning. Up to **30** people attended throughout the morning.

Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women:

Local Area Network opposing Violence against Women (LAN):

The Women's Centre hosts the LAN meetings and plays a pivotal role in its development. Made up of local statutory and community organisations committed to raising awareness of the issue, providing seamless services and supports for women and addressing barriers or gaps in services. During 2014 the LAN sourced funding for the reprinting of the Enough is Enough Booklet, a safety & empowerment guide for women living with domestic abuse from COSC and to host an event in County Waterford from Waterford Leader. It was identified through members of the LAN working in rural County Waterford that there was a lack of information on the services available for service providers and therefore women in the County. The collaborative event that was hosted in December 2014 during the 16 Days Campaign was very successful and was the catalyst for continuing work in the county.

Throughout the year 6 network meeting were facilitated attended by 10 organisations and 15 people

In 2013 the LAN requested a space at the HSE Primary Health Teams in Waterford City and County to present the work of the LAN at each team meeting to GP's and other health professionals. This is key to highlighting the services and support available to women locally. Presentations on behalf of the LAN were made to 10 of the 13 Primary Care Teams in Waterford City & County throughout 2014 with approximately 7 practitioners at each meeting. The 13 Primary Care Teams represent 100% coverage in the City and County reaching 127,000 people approximately therefore the LAN presentations had the potential to reach 77% or 97,700 people. Information sheets with key services and the Enough is Enough Booklets were distributed at each team meeting. An electronic version of key services was also distributed to all 13 teams.

16 Days of Action opposing Violence against Women:



Conference in Dungarvan County Waterford December 2014

Aims of conference:

raise awareness of violence against women

raise awareness of services and supports available in County Waterford

This event was open to service providers and for the general public. **Attended by 80**

DASS Domestic Abuse Support Service:

Aims to:

- provide a *one stop shop* for women living with domestic abuse
- facilitate a first step one to one confidential non-judgmental meeting, to support women to identify their next steps
- support access relevant information, supports and services

The need for the DASS (Domestic Abuse Support Service) was identified through the LAN in 2012. 2014 was its second year in operation. The support was available by appointment only and facilitated by an experienced qualified volunteer. The Women's Centre coordinates, oversees and supervises this work. **9 were supported in 2014.**

MEND Partner Support Programme:

The Women's Centre supports the women partners of men attending the MEND Male Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse through the Men's Development Network, through one to one support, advocacy, information and referrals. **13 were supported in 2014.**

Young Women's Support Group - living without limits!

This group was facilitated once a fortnight and attended by 5 young women in 2014. It provides a space for young women to identify the barriers they face in their lives, in particular the internal barriers due to gender conditioning. They examine ways to challenge and address these barriers and live their lives without limits. As part of developing this group over the past three years the group were supported to identify and write up best practice on an ongoing basis in order to develop a model of facilitating support groups designed by the members themselves. We recognise the necessity of encouraging and developing the critical voices of young women for the future of the women's projects.

Potential new areas of work identified:

Additional support groups:

The need for additional support groups were identified in 2014. This is an area that is also echoed in the Childcare Centre where the need for a Parents Support group was identified.

The women's history project is ongoing since 2012 and was developed and coordinated by our chairwoman on a voluntary basis. The Women's Centre sees the potential of this work and the role, recognising women in history, has in the overall work towards women's equality. 'The Pink Plaque' campaign, initiated tentatively in 2012, which aims to have an equal number of Waterford Council Plaques (Blue) for women as there are for men. At the moment there are 45 plaques to men and only two to women. This project has the potential to develop a consciousness of past inequalities which, in retrospect, is blatantly obvious and through it, shine a light on the present. This very exciting project is as yet unfunded and will be further developed in 2015.

Domestic Abuse Support Work:

It has become evident that the need to work in the area of domestic abuse and violence against women is essential for the Women's Centre. We recognise that working in this area is pivotal to women's equality. The Centre is in a key position to facilitate this 'first step' intervention and in working closely, through the LAN, with all relevant agencies in Waterford acts as a conduit to other services. Women come to the Centre to attend the Health & Wellbeing or Women Exploring Options and through these programmes begin to identify other issues in their lives. The Centre therefore offers a neutral space for women. On entry women often identify the following reasons why they want to come to the Centre; wanting to get out of the house, feeling depressed, lack of confidence or feeling alone. It is only after they begin to feel relaxed and safe that they identify issues that have, in some cases, impacted on them for most of their lives. Many begin to address issues that took place years prior but continue to limit and effect their lives currently. In this way the DASS work is a key progression from the development work we do and offers a bridge for women dealing with issues of domestic abuse and violence who need extra support before they access external services. DASS is also well placed to offer additional support for women who come to the Centre for this particular issue and can be referred to one of our programmes. In 2014 there was substantial movement between our women's programmes and the DASS and we can see this becoming a key part of the work in the future. This work is currently not funded though we did receive a donation from the Waterford City Court Services towards the costs in 2014.

LAN members acknowledge that their membership in the LAN enhances their ability to support women experiencing violence in a more compassionate, time sensitive and holistic

manner. The LAN event in Dungarvan in December 2014 highlighted the need for further work in raising awareness, highlighting the available services and in identifying the gaps for County Waterford. Waterford Leader expressed an interest in continuing to support this work and are in the process of funding a training programme coordinated by the LAN & facilitate by Women's Aid for frontline service provider early in 2015. This was a key and important impact of the work of the LAN in 2014 along with presenting at the Primary Health Care Team Meetings. Often rural areas are overlooked and the issue of domestic abuse is largely hidden. Therefore raising awareness of the issue throughout the county is essential in tackling this still enormous barrier to women's equality.

Work completed under goal 2:

Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources

A **'Health & Wellbeing'** programme which engaged women who face barriers to participation was available for up to four mornings a week attended by approximately 30 women throughout the year.

Among the effects of marginalisation and low income are difficulties in accessing formal training and education, mainly due to lack of confidence and family circumstances which can impact more severely on women, who are predominately the main carers. The following barriers to engaging and participating were named by participants:

- **problematic family circumstances**
- **mental health issues**
- **depression**
- **fear of literacy requirements**
- **lack of confidence**
- **low self-esteem**
- **psychological barriers**
- **disability**
- **fear of attending mixed gender programmes due to cultural taboos or have experienced abuse from men**
- **feeling excluded from formal institutions due their socio economic background and tradition**
- **timetabling of more formal programmes not suiting their role as primary carer**
- **lack of childcare**

The Women's Centre focuses on collective learning which promotes cooperation rather than competitions and improves confidence. The learning is facilitated in a supportive environment where life experience is valued. We initially encourage women to engage and then gradually build to active participation. Through ongoing evaluation we recognise that stress plays a major role in women's lives, often as a result of living long term on low income and the resulting consequences, like lack of confidence or self belief, ill health etc. Our Health & Wellbeing programme therefore offers a supportive environment which encourages participation in activities that help recognise triggers of stress, how stress impacts on physical and mental health and identify ways to address it.

Outcomes identified:

Increased confidence

Manage stress better by recognising the signs and implementing coping strategies

A deeper understanding of physical & mental health issues

Less visits to the family doctor

Greater recognition of the importance of self-care

The development of groupwork skills

Increased self-awareness

Greater understanding of the importance of positive communication and assertiveness

Increased awareness on the importance of healthy eating

Developed skills in meditation & relaxation techniques to alleviate stress

Increased personal development

Developed goal setting skill

Increase access to information

While engaged in the programme many women identify other supports that they would benefit from. In 2014 we advocated and supported women to access the Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) facilitated in the Women's Centre, Waterford Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre, Oasis House women's refuge, and one to one counselling at the local Family Resource Centre. As a result of their participation in the Health & Wellbeing course, many women are encouraged to get involved in other activities for example:

- 3 progressed on to the 'Women Exploring Options' programme
- 1 went to the College of Further Education
- 2 completed an introduction to computers course
- 1 volunteered with the Samaritans
- 1 attended literacy service in Adult Education
- 5 attended a dance class in the Edmond Rice Centre
- 2 completed a Higher Certificate in 2014 having started in the Health & Wellbeing programme
- 15 attended an exhibition in the Library
- 11 visited local arboretum
- 7 took part in an outdoor community dance workshop in local park
- 9 attended a workshop with the regional guidance service REGSA
- 5 regularly attended a health & wellbeing morning in a local hotel leisure centre
- 8 attended reflexology/alternative therapy sessions
- 9 attended regional network meetings in Wexford
- 2 were elected as representatives onto the Women's Centre Management structure



Mount Congreve June 2014

Health & Wellbeing 2014 personal testimonials:

“I have nothing else but here, and I love it”

“If I didn’t come to this course I might not get to talk to anyone, it’s a lifeline for me”

“I haven’t been to the doctor as often since I started coming”

“I feel more confident and feel that I am worth something”

“My counsellor sees a big difference in me since I did this course, and she is delighted”

“My family says that I am happier since coming here”

“No matter how I feel coming in I always feel better going home”

“I feel that people care about me and how I am and I’m not as stressed”

“My family are delighted that I am coming here and want me to keep coming, and I have something to talk about to people when I tell them of all the things we do here”

“My social worker says I am doing really well since I came on this course”

These comments suggest that the Health & Wellbeing course is a lifeline for many participants and the benefits are experienced not only by the participants but by their families, friends and the wider community.

18 women participated in the 'Women Exploring Options' course in 2015.

This course provided both theoretical and practical training and education. Each participant gained skills in preparation for future more formal courses. Outcomes include the following:

- Increased confidence in own ability
- Consolidation exploration and organisation of transferable skills through completing the 'Make Your Experience Count' course and developing a portfolio of prior learning
- Enhanced writing ability regarding reflective journals and essays
- Gained knowledge and practical application skills of the Harvard referencing system
- Curriculum Vitae development and interview preparation
- Increased personal awareness
- The development of social analysis awareness through exploring class, gender, power relations and cultural awareness
- Gained knowledge and practical application of groupwork skills
- Increased communication & assertiveness skills
- Ability to identify personal learning styles
- Development of an individual progression plan
- Gained information and knowledge of further opportunities in education and training that leads to quality work or the development of a career

Women Exploring Options Personal Testimonies:

"I always believed that other people were better than me and I wasn't good enough. Only in the last year I am beginning to realise I am as good as anyone else. I have learned through the classes in the Women's Centre how to build my confidence and self-esteem."

"I can't believe how much I have come along and how much we have done over the last year, I feel that I am ready for anything now".

"I have decided that I am going back to study full time, I might even go for a degree as I feel more equipped now and I want to get a good job not just any job because I am supporting a family on my own".

"When I started in the Women's Centre it was the first time in my life that I did any kind of course and I was so scared, but I needn't have been. I had isolated myself and doing a course would mean mixing with other people which scared me, but the way the course was run took away all the fear. I often think of all the years I wasted not getting out of the house and doing something, and now thanks to this course I am already looking ahead because I have learned so much and I have already enrolled in a social care course."

“I started the WIT access summer school (lasting one week) and stopped after two days because everything we did I had already covered in the Women’s Centre, it made me realise what a valuable experience I was getting in the Centre”

“I am rearing five children on my own and I never thought I could get on well in a learning situation but my experience on Women Exploring Options has taught me so much, and the learning was made so easy. I got built up, I developed my writing skills, I can write journals and essays, I can express myself better, I can talk to a whole group of people and not feel shy. I understand better how society is set up. I have something to look forward to and I feel more able to deal with life.” I am going to keep going and get a qualification.”

“The course in the Women’s Centre helped me to deal with what is going on in my private life, as well as learning stuff, I can’t believe we have done so much. If you told me at the beginning how much we were going to do I would have thought I would not be able for it, but I was and I love it, and I am on the road to recovery and there are people now in my life who care about me, it makes me feel I am worth something and I can achieve something. My family are delighted that I am doing something positive.”

“We learned about different learning styles and that we have skills we did not know about”

“Learned to question our assumptions and prejudices of people and society,

“The Centre is a god send to me I started off so afraid, but I settled in very quickly and received support and confidence, and I learned so much, about writing, about myself and about learning in a group. I am no longer afraid to take on new challenges or try new things, the Centre has turned my life around for the better. The work experience helped me to realise all the behind the scenes stuff that goes on in a work situation and I learned a lot. My son sometimes picks up my folder and he is amazed at the stuff that I am getting through, I want to show a good example to him to get him back into school or a course.”

“I left school after my Junior Cert with no qualifications and bad memories. Now I have learned a lot of skills such as, writing skills, group work skills, reflection, social analysis

personal and interpersonal skills to name but a few. I'm now starting to see my strengths. I have learned about conditioning, power, beliefs, assumptions and generalisations and how they can hold us back also."

These comments suggest that the approach used to engage and maintain participation while keeping a focus on equality and using methodologies that cater for different learning styles, has benefited not only the participants but also their families. It also highlights the change in thinking that many of the participants experience in relation to their lives, abilities and opportunities. Many of the women commented on how they have developed a more positive outlook to life and are at the moment formulating plans for the future.

The participants had the opportunity to develop a personal progression plan

Outcomes

- 1 attended FETAC level 5 Health Care ETB
- 1 attended FETAC level 4 horticulture course ETB
- 1 applied for (CEO) Honours Degree in Criminology and Justice in Waterford Institute of Technology commencing September 2015
- 1 applied for (CEO) Hon Degree in Youth & Community Work in UCC commencing September 2015
- 1 volunteered in the local animal welfare shop
- 1 completed a night class: Introduction to Psychology
- 2 completed an Introduction to Computers class in the ETB
- 1 gained employment in a childcare facility through CE

'Women Exploring Options' participants have also become more active citizens and have become more involved in community activities such as the following:

- Attended network day in Access 2000 Wexford
- Hosted a visiting women's group and became actively involved in informing others about the Women's Centre
- 11 attended exhibition in library
- 9 visited local arboretum
- 7 women took part in dancing sessions in a local community organisation
- 9 women were involved in a social enterprise activity on an open day
- 9 women attended a career guidance workshop with Regional Guidance Service
- 2 women took on a research project to research women who made significant contributions to society

The Drop-In Café

The drop-in café has been running on a limited basis throughout the year due to shorter working hours of the core NCCWN staff. The Drop-In was visited by approximately 20 women throughout the year, some of these women have joined groups in the Women's Centre and others have gained information and advocacy and have been referred to other organisations.

Alternative Therapy Sessions

70 availed of one to one alternative therapy sessions such as reflexology in 2014. The purpose of this initiative is to improve access to alternative health options, to women who could not otherwise afford it.

Work completed under the goal 3:

Increase people's work readiness and employment prospects

11 women participated in 'Make Your Experience Count' workshops through which they were supported to build a portfolio and identify and describe their transferable skills towards the development of a Curriculum Vitae.

3 facilitators developed mentoring skills through in-service support and supervision

6 participated in setting up a social enterprise second hand shop

8 participants from the Women's Exploring Options' engaged in work experience in social enterprise initiatives within the Centre. They were joined by Tus workers and volunteers and worked as a team in the following areas: Café, Retail (shop), social media and research.

Café work experience enabled the participants to get experience in: food preparation, cooking, budgeting, menu planning, purchasing, teamwork, hygiene, health & safety, serving foods, kitchen cleaning and maintenance and dealing with the public.

Outcomes for the Café work experience involved:

- Gained valuable experience on the importance of relationships, teamwork and of creating a warm friendly environment
- Enhancing and developing practical skills such as food preparation, menu planning, stock & portion control, dealing with money, looking at profit margins and accountability
- Awareness of health, safety and hygiene issues
- Enhanced insights into the work involved and skills necessary in running a café
- Interview skills and job preparation

Social Media supported participants to gain experience in the area of social media. They were facilitated to identify the benefits for the Women's Centre in developing a range of social media accounts. The outcomes were as follows:

- The setting up a Facebook and Twitter accounts for the Women's Centre
- Updating the existing Childcare Centre Facebook page through consultation with Childcare Manager
- Enhanced communication and teamwork skills through consulting with staff and management in relation to the text and photographs to be used
- Developed policies and procedures on social media
- Increased the visibility of the Women's Centre locally, regionally and nationally

Second Hand Shop supported participants to set up a second hand shop with potential to lead to a social enterprise. This was a big project and involved a large team from the course. This group also

had an opportunity to work with volunteers and a mentor to set up and develop the shop. Outcomes included the following:

- Developed an understanding of the amount of work required behind the scenes in a retail enterprise
- Gained knowledge on the importance of positive relationships in a working environment
- Practiced applying theory to practice in effective communications, teamwork, conflict resolution and consultation
- Developed organisational and planning skills
- Developed knowledge and experience in the development of policies and procedures
- Practical skills in organising and sorting stock and making decisions were developed
- Skills in interior design, colour coordination and presentation of stock were developed
- Experience was gained in stock control, pricing and handling cash

Research Work Experience

One participant who enjoys writing and researching chose this area to do her work experience. She has taken on a project which involves researching women who were involved directly and indirectly in World War 1. Outcomes include:

- gained experience in accessing on line historical databases
- enhanced consultation and effective communication skills as she has consulted with friends and families of the people that she was researching
- gained knowledge and insights into the issues of plagiarism and referencing
- Gained consultation and research skills through liaising with the National Library of Ireland
- Sought and received written permission to use rare historical photographs and information in preparation for her presentation
- Researched written and collated historical information on the lives of Waterford Women during World War 1 etc.
- Development of presentation skills leading to the development of the skills involved in a public presentation of her work

Staff Training and Development in 2014

Facilitators Panel

15 women were recruited for the Women's Centre facilitators panel and 9 availed of continuous professional development training

In-service Training

3 workers under a Tus Scheme and 3 under Community Employment participated in induction, mentoring and ongoing in-service training.

HACCP Food Safety Training

15 Staff members including two Tus workers participated in HACCP food safety training.

First Aid Training

5 staff members completed First Aid Training

Childcare Training

10 staff members completed Aistear Training, 3 completed Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education, 3 attended Equality & Diversity Training, 2 completed Level 5 Special Needs Assistant, 3 completed Childcare Level 4.

Student Placements

5 students were supported through the provision of work placement in the Childcare Centre

Potential New Area of Work for 2015:

The continued development of the social enterprise, internal Café which opened during the year. This was a very successful development and is a great asset to the work. It provides a space where all the groups can meet. The possibility for the cafe to operate as an outreach/ drop in facility for women is seen to have huge potential. It is an income generation project, selling tea, coffee scones etc., and a lunch option is also available. A second social enterprise, in 2014, involved further developing an already existing second hand shop. This opened internally only but plans are now to open it to the public in 2015. The development of the project's use of social media was developed through the mentoring of a number of participants from the Women's Exploring Options Programme. A facebook and twitter account was set up. The promotion of our facilitators panel through this medium is also planned for 2015.

Work achieved under goal 4:

Promote engagement with policy, practice, and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities

NCCWN Women's Collective South East

Three regional meetings were held in 2014 and 12 staff, advisory members attended

Aims:

To further develop the Regional NCCWN

To develop and execute a plan for the region

To plan and coordinate a number of networking events throughout 2014

To increase representational capacity at local regional and national level within the NCCWN



■ The meeting of the South East Regional NCCWN in Access 2000 House Green Street on Wednesday morning.

Access 2000 voices funding fears

THE STAFF, volunteers and advisory committees of two women's groups from Wexford and Waterford got together in Wexford town last week to formulate their opposition to new government rules on the way their funding is secured.

The meeting took place at the Access 2000 offices in Green Street where the local group was joined by members of the Waterford-based group.

Access 2000 (Wexford) Ltd. is one of 17 projects funded through a national organisation, the National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN).

This core funding enables ACCESS to employ three part-time staff and to leverage additional funding for the delivery of accredited and non-accredited commu-

nity education programmes and to work with and support other organisations involved in social development for women in Wexford.

Marian Donegan, the project coordinator with ACCESS 2000 in Wexford said that as the only national programme specifically targeted at women experiencing disadvantage, the national community based women's networks are experienced and have been an essential part of the infrastructure for the past 20 years. Under measures announced by Minister Phil Hogan groups will now have to tender for the SICAP funding.

'This means that NCCWN cannot tender nationally to continue to fund the 17 projects as they are currently doing,' said Ms. Donegan

Regional Networking Day in Access Wexford 15 from Waterford attended. 100 in total attended the event.

Aims:

Raise awareness and gain support for the work of local NCCWN women's projects

Raise awareness of the work of the NCCWN

Engage support for lobbying campaign across the region

(See also networking day in Waterford under goal 1)

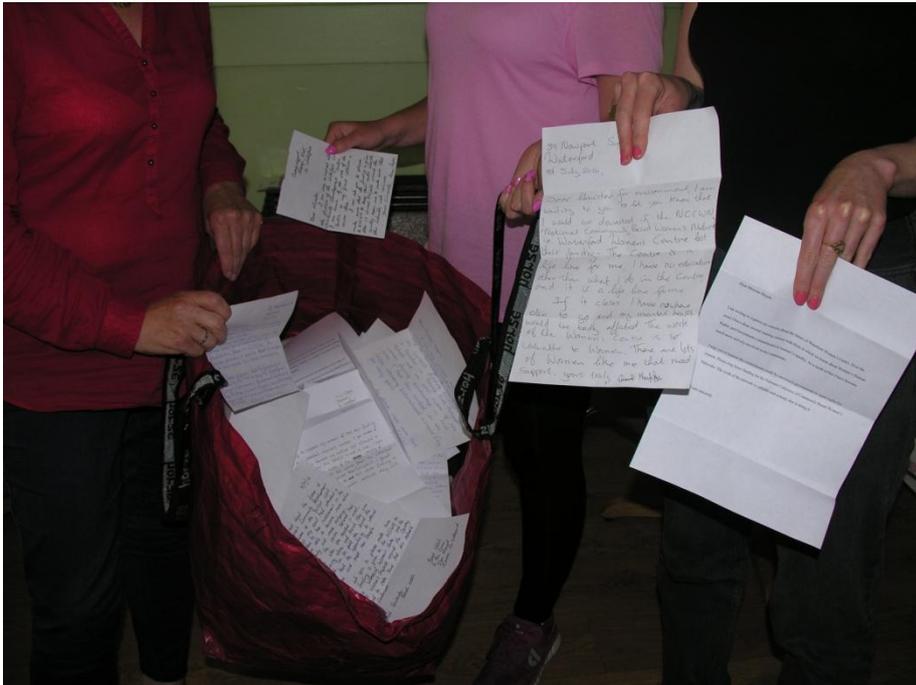
Open Day/ Coffee Morning & Sale of Work:

Aims:

- Raise awareness of the work of the NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre
- Raise awareness of the work of the NCCWN nationally
- Engage support for the lobbying campaign locally
- Fundraise for the Women's Centre

100 members of the general public visited the Women's Centre
€600 was raised to support the work

National Letter and Lobbying Campaign



Aims:

Raise awareness of the work of the NCCWN at a local and national level

Gather local to national support for the ring fencing of funding for Women's Projects under the NCCWN in supporting disadvantaged women

All local politicians were informed about the campaign in order to gain their support. The coordinator of the project went to Dublin to attend the Inter Parliamentary Party Briefing in the Dail in July.

Representatives of the NCCWN Waterford actively participated in the following fora in 2014:

- **The Local Area Network Opposing Violence Against Women**
- **NCCWN Women's Collective South East**
- **National NCCWN Board**

- **Waterford City of Sanctuary committee**
- **Family Support Network Tusla**
- **Waterford Youth Arts Management Committee**
- **Waterford City Childcare Committee**

Participatory Democracy in Action Project:

Waterford NCCWN began the redevelopment in 2014 of its organisational structure in collaboration with the NCCWN Regional Committee. Policies were developed on criteria and representation in developing a model of best practice that can be used throughout the NCCWN. This project aims to ensure that the work of the Centre truly represents and reflects the needs and issues of the women's groups we work with. It also aims to increase the representation of women on the Women's Centre Management structure and to use it as a stepping stone and learning opportunity to increase the representation of women experiencing disadvantage at regional and national levels of the NCCWN and other relevant decision making fora. **10 new members** plus **6** attended policy group meetings in 2014.

Induction programmes:

Ongoing induction took place to build capacity of new staff and new management members.

10 new members joined the remaining 6 on the management structure in 2014.

Potential new areas of work

The potential for the NCCWN Women's Collective South East to have a positive effect on the work and raise it beyond the local is clearly visible from the work completed during the past three years. This work is valuable on two levels.

Firstly working together in providing opportunities for women's groups across the region to network is a pivotal part of Women's Community Education ethos and formed an integral part of both Access Wexford and Waterford Women's Centre's beginnings. This work can assist in moving beyond the personal and takes it from the personal to political. It widens possible options for both groups as they hear each other's stories. We see a benefit in this level of networking being extended to other regions and envisage that it would greatly benefit the overall development of the NCCWN. Networking at a committee level for members of the Advisory Committees and staff works similarly. We learn from each other and can use the expertise developed in each project for the greater good. We see that the NCCWN presents with an amazing resource of 17 long established women's projects throughout the country with enormous experience and developed expertise which could be more effectively used through more regional and national development. The benefit of an annual national conference would be hugely beneficial in developing the capacity at all levels.

The second area of work identified is the ongoing development of the local and regional organisational structures. This work does need further resourcing. We recognise this work as key to developing representational capacity from the local to the national for disadvantaged women. We can also see the potential for this work to ensure that the NCCWN truly represents women who are marginalised and that their voices are the ones to be heard at local and national levels.

Appreciations

The women's groups, volunteers, directors, management committee and staff of the Women's Centre wish to thank; all who contributed and made possible the work of the Centre in 2014, though; the provision of services, funding, advise, collaboration, networking, support and use of resources.



Transforming Ireland

The NCIP 2006-2010 is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013

The EOCP 2000-2006 is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union Structural Funds under the National Development Plan 2000-2006



Funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, 2007 – 2013 (NDP) from funds made available by the National Lottery