

# WINDOW project supporting women to access education, employment and training opportunities

**'WHAT'S LIFE CAN CHANGE OVERNIGHT AND WE ARE ALL VULNERABLE AND WANT SOMETHING THEM WHO CAN REACH OUT A HAND AND SAY COME ON, IT'll BE OK.'**



**BY MARIAD O'SHEA**  
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[www.roscommonherald.com](http://www.roscommonherald.com)

through the Equality for Women Measure 2007-2013 to deliver the WINDOW Project, involving the Non-Domesticated Operators for Women Project as part of the women's needs unit and employment initiative.

The WINDOW Project is an innovative capacity building and education initiative. The outcomes for this County Roscommon project include: 31 women return to employment and 123 gain education.

This report was recently launched by Mayor Martin Connaughton in the WINDOW Centre, Castlebar. Guest speakers included Roscommon County Manager Frank Dawson and Dr Anne Byrne, senior lecturer in NUI, Galway, who is also a board member of RWN, highlighting the success of the WINDOW project, which were revealed as part of a new report produced to evaluate the programme.

Roscommon Women's Network Project received funding over time and funds from the gender specific measure of the Equality for Women Measure (EFWM) funded WINDOW project had a positive impact on the lives of women who participated in the project between December 2010 and November 2012 and of those 123 went on to further education while 31 went

employment and three had set up their own business.

Speaking on the launch of the report, Cllr Leyden said that the project aimed to empower women to access mainstream education and training opportunities, as well as creating official access.

"There is a proven demand for educational and training opportunities for women, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds and those from rural areas of domestic violence, redundancy or recent loss of employment.

Many of the participating women were from marginalised backgrounds and many have been survivors of domestic violence, redundancy or recent loss of employment. The project was built around the needs of the participants and it is the RWN WINDOW project," said Cllr Leyden. She noted that RWN provided a safe and non-judgmental space for women to explore personal and

emotional needs and that the report recommends that gender neutral and the gender specific measure of the EFWM funding for projects like the RWN should be available to voluntary organisations.

The report concluded that gender neutral and the gender specific measure of the EFWM funded WINDOW project had made a positive impact on the lives of women who participated in the project between December 2010 and November 2012 and of those 123 went on to further education while 31 went

## Participants get a real self-confidence boost

from Athlone IT but when she downturn struck she found it incredibly difficult to find work. Fiona said that the WINDOW Project Development Worker Maria Harris had instilled a great sense of confidence in her and armed her with the skills to do an internship with Gleeson's in Roscommon. "We saw a 'happier and more confident enough as women,' said Fiona. She is now working as a manager in a four-year business and computing course under the

guidance of a tutor. Fiona said that the help of RWN I'd still be living in Castlerea and not going to college. I'm in

### WINDOW project has transformed women's lives

DR ANNE BYRNE of NUI Galway has arrived in Roscommon to present a new report on the Roscommon Women's Network Project.

Cllr Orla Leyden, from the School of Political Science and Sociology at NUI, Galway, said that the project had resulted in improvements for women with 12% of the 159 participants becoming qualified in either a craft or in a paid occupation.

Cllr Leyden called for the Department of Education and Skills to provide a separate budget for training specific projects. She also called for support for the continuation of the WINDOW project via further Equality for Women measures or similar initiatives.

Cllr Leyden said: "Women can change overnight and we are all vulnerable and some situations have you just one hand and they come to us. We need all the skills management, communication, self-confidence and our own skills or qualifications, which are important to us as individuals. This is what we are trying to do with this project. We are trying to give people the skills and the confidence to manage their own lives. That's what we are trying to do with this project."

PICTURED ABOVE: Dr Anne Byrne (NUIG); Nora Fahy, RWN Director; Roscommon County Manager Frank Dawson; Mayor Martin Connaughton; Pic: Liam Reynolds



PICTURED ABOVE: The Roscommon Women's Network Board



PICTURED RIGHT:  
Jean Kennedy and Jennifer Torrance at the launch of a new report on the WINDOW project in County Roscommon.  
Pic: Liam Reynolds

### Manager urges RWN to 'keep preparing plans'

ROSCOMMON COUNTY Manager Frank Dawson has urged members of Roscommon Women's Network to continue to work on their development plans.

Dr Margaret Burke, Roscommon Support Services for People with Disabilities, Ann McNamee, Tara Farrell (Chairperson), Una Groatie, Paula Liddy, Mairead O'Shea and Lorraine Campbell, Front Lr: Dr Anne Byrne (NUIG), Frank Dawson, Roscommon County Manager; Maria Harris, WINDOW Development Worker; Mayor Martin Connaughton and Aoife Fahy, RWN Manager.

PICTURED LEFT: Dr Margaret Burke, Roscommon Support Services for People with Disabilities, Ann McNamee, Tara Farrell (Chairperson), Una Groatie, Paula Liddy, Mairead O'Shea and Lorraine Campbell, Front Lr: Dr Anne Byrne (NUIG), Frank Dawson, Roscommon County Manager; Maria Harris, WINDOW Development Worker; Mayor Martin Connaughton and Aoife Fahy, RWN Manager.



PICTURED ABOVE: The Roscommon Women's Network Board

at the launch of a new report on the WINDOW project in County Roscommon.

Back Lr: Cllr Orla Leyden, Margaret Burke, Roscommon Support Services for People with Disabilities, Ann McNamee, Tara Farrell (Chairperson), Una Groatie, Paula Liddy, Mairead O'Shea and Lorraine Campbell, Front Lr: Dr Anne Byrne (NUIG), Frank Dawson, Roscommon County Manager; Maria Harris, WINDOW Development Worker; Mayor Martin Connaughton and Aoife Fahy, RWN Manager.

PICTURED LEFT: Dr Margaret Burke, Roscommon Support Services for People with Disabilities, Ann McNamee, Tara Farrell (Chairperson), Una Groatie, Paula Liddy, Mairead O'Shea and Lorraine Campbell, Front Lr: Dr Anne Byrne (NUIG), Frank Dawson, Roscommon County Manager; Maria Harris, WINDOW Development Worker; Mayor Martin Connaughton and Aoife Fahy, RWN Manager.

Mary Kelly, Alice Cahill, Jackie Dempsey, Philomena Hourigan, Cllr Orla Leyden, Maria Harris and Lorraine Campbell at the launch of a new report on the WINDOW project in County Roscommon.  
Pic: Liam Reynolds

