

CycleUp initiative powering ahead

Two groups have been nominated from county Roscommon for the LAMA awards, taking place in the Royal Convention Centre, Dublin on Saturday, February 28th.

The Roscommon nominees are CycleUp, led by Roscommon Women's Network, and the Roscommon County Council led Community Resilience Toolkit. The awards recognise communities and local authorities working together on a wide range of collaborative projects, highlighting work done within communities as well as rewarding unsung heroes and the contribution they have made to the lives of others.

LAMA, the Local Authority Members Association, organises the annual Community and Council Awards, which have an All-Ireland focus, on behalf of local authority members.

CycleUp is a flagship initiative set up by Roscommon Women's Network (RWN). The project is a social enterprise rooted in community empowerment and environmental responsibility, which is run from the Riverside Centre in Athleague.

CycleUp enjoys a strong and collaborative relationship with Roscommon County Council, particularly in the areas of environmental education and raising public awareness about the link between textile waste and biodiversity loss.

The local authority actively supports CycleUp's work both by engaging the enterprise as a supplier, where possible, and by championing its efforts through initiatives such as the Pride of Place Awards, where CycleUp was recently successful in representing the county at the national finals.

Currently, six individuals are supported through a Com-



Alena Gurn, production team leader, with Olena Piankova, product creator bringing CycleUp products to the market place.

munity Employment Scheme, giving them access to skills training, confidence-building, and pathways to future employment in the circular economy sector.

The CycleUp initiative also partners with Athleague Tidy Towns, whose volunteers actively participated in RWN's Empowering Communities in Circular Opportunities (ECCO) programme, learning practical ways to combat climate change at the community level.

At the heart of CycleUp initiative is an environmental awareness by upcycling discarded textiles into marketable products. This directly supports climate action, reducing the volume of textiles going to landfill. Eight tonnes of textiles have been diverted from landfill since the ini-

tiative began in 2019.

The programme also follows best biodiversity practices by lowering demand for resource-intensive textile production. CycleUp Textiles also contributes to the local economy in several impactful ways – generating 12 new local job opportunities to date, with four of the ten women who started the initiative now employed in the CycleUp social enterprise.

Through the Community Employment Scheme, the initiative has created six dedicated positions, offering practical, paid work experience and upskilling opportunities in the wider circular economy sector.

Many of the women supported by the CycleUp social enterprise have faced barriers to employment. The



Nora Fahy, RWN manager pictured with some of the CycleUp team including volunteers.

initiative offers a pathway to independence, confidence-building, and future entrepreneurship as well as upskilling opportunities for new job prospects in the circular economy.

Speaking ahead of the awards, Nora Fahy manager, Roscommon Women's Network (RWN) said the nomination was "a tribute to the many women who have participated to date; the roll-out of the initiative has grown to become a major educational, social and business opportunity for local women.

"We here at RWN are humbled to be nominated for yet another prestigious award. The success of our initiative is proof that any scheme that empowers, encourages and supports women to be an even better version of

themselves, will always be a success.

"This CycleUp initiative not only supports and educates women, but it also exhorts us all to make changes in the way we use and manage our waste, particularly used garments, bags and other waste material," said Ms. Fahy.

Director of services with Roscommon County Council, Chis Flynn said the CycleUp initiative was "a major asset to Roscommon's circular economy, affording women the opportunity to learn, grow and develop their business, social and technical skills in an environmental aware and sustainable fashion.

"Working with the Roscommon Women's Network, Roscommon County Council has supported the CycleUp initiative since its inception

and looks forward to continuing that strong and enduring relationship," Mr Flynn said.

The second of the county's nominees is the innovative Roscommon County Council led Community Resilience Toolkit, which is a collaboration between Roscommon County Council's Community and Enterprise Department and Public Participation Network (PPN), the county's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Healthy Ireland, and local communities.

A total of 533 entries were received for this year's awards. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Awards, 40 years of the LAMA executive and 100 years of the awards main sponsor, IPB Insurance.