

20th Anniversary *of the*

Community Facilitator Programme



Foreword by WRDA Training & Development Manager, Liz Curran

One of the problems in actively engaging with women in working class communities has been the negative experiences they suffered during their formal school years. Quite often this legacy has generated resistance to further learning, and traditional formal qualifications like GCSEs and A Levels have often appeared too daunting, too irrelevant to large numbers of adult women learners. The Community Facilitator Programme was developed to counter this resistance – based as it is on lack of confidence or low self-esteem – by offering another route, another avenue that appeared more relevant. It also actively welcomed the use of life skills and experience that women already had in abundance.

The Programme was also developed, to some extent, as a reaction to the ‘wee course’ mentality that bedevils much of the community and voluntary sector. For too long many working class women have had their time wasted on ‘wee courses’ that lacked structure or real purpose. The Programme is presented professionally, with an appropriate combination of informality, competence, pace and direction. It challenges and it supports. It rewards and matches participant commitment and effort with a credible third level qualification that is useful and valuable and women deserve no less.

The Programme continues to go from strength to strength. It remains challenging and undoubtedly demands a high degree of commitment and effort from the women who participate. In fact, over the past twenty years, over 640 women have attended the Programme. Community Facilitator Programmes have been delivered right across Northern Ireland, from Belfast to Ballymena, from Antrim to Armoy and from Newtownards to Newry.

There is much to celebrate as we mark the 20th anniversary of the Community Facilitator Programme. It has undoubtedly transformed the lives of some of the women who have successfully completed it. Many participants have been enabled to consider other educational, employment and training opportunities. Communities have been empowered to work together to bring about much needed change. Sessions on health awareness have encouraged women to explore healthier lifestyles. Political processes and structures are now better understood where there may have once been lack of knowledge of the role of councillors and MLAs etc.

Finally, WRDA - as an organisation dedicated to the promotion of women’s rights - has seen its profile and relevance considerably enhanced by Community Facilitator activity throughout Northern Ireland. Its continued adherence to the preservation of professional standards in all that it does has been affirmed.





















WRDA would like to extend its thanks to all the Community Facilitators trained over the past 20 years for their hard work and commitment.

WRDA deliver the following training programmes, including:

- Breast, Cervical & Bowel Screening Awareness
- Health & Emotional Well-Being
- Counting the Cost of Alcohol
- Cardiovascular (CVD) Awareness
- Parents Promoting Healthy Habits
- Parents Promoting Sexual Health
- Money Management
- Grassroots Lobbying
- Engendering Empowerment
- Good Relations & Equality
- Community Consultation

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