



## Newsletter ~ March 2021

### Brexit and the Impact on Women: Rights at Risk

With women's voices being largely absent from negotiations, at a local, national and EU level, it is necessary to analyse the unique and disproportionate impact Brexit will have on women in Northern Ireland. We note the UK Government's commitment to 'no diminution' of certain rights, including equality rights, under Article 2 of the NI Protocol. It has also committed to keeping pace with any EU changes to certain equality laws including particular gender equality laws. However, there are a number of issues regarding women's rights which have yet to be addressed.

#### Women's Rights Achieved Through EU Membership

Many of the rights we enjoy today have come through membership of the EU over the past four decades; particularly in areas of economic activity and employment law. For women, there are great concerns that Brexit will erode many of these protections.

#### EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

One of the most concerning decisions by the UK government has been to remove the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights from all applications in UK law and judiciary systems. Whilst the UK government would still be required to abide by the European Convention of Human Rights, the removal of the EU Charter is deeply worrying as it has a much broader level of protection for human rights

#### Existing EU Law – Court of Justice of the European Union

Future case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) will no longer be binding in UK courts post-Brexit. Any existing CJEU laws from before Brexit will still be binding, however, these can now be overturned in future cases in UK courts and a departure from current jurisprudence may lead to a divergence on human rights standards on either side of the border in Northern Ireland.

This is an extract from the Feminist Recovery Plan: Women's Workers' Rights. You can read the complete briefing and many others on our website ([wrda.net/feminist-recovery-plan/](http://wrda.net/feminist-recovery-plan/))

### In This Issue

Brexit and the Impact on Women

Supporting the Next Generation of NI Feminists

Why is Climate Justice a Feminist Issue?

Community Facilitators Reflect on Online Delivery

Out and About

A Visible Force for Change



@WRDA\_team



@WomensResourceandDevelopmentAgency

# Supporting the Next Generation of NI Feminists - A Placement Student's Experience



Eva Martin (FR) holding the WRDA banner at International Women's Day 2020

I first heard of WRDA in 2019 when researching possible organizations to do my placement with in 2020. My teacher suggested they would be an ideal organization to complete my placement with if I aspired to work in the field of social justice. **Upon arriving at WRDA, I knew immediately that this was a workplace different from any other I had experienced. I have never worked in an environment as rewarding, encouraging, and informative before my time with WRDA.**

I had the privilege of completing my placement with WRDA in both my second year and final year. During both placements my experience was catered to suit my specific need and inform me on the different aspects of working in the nonprofit sector.

During my time with WRDA in 2020, I engaged in an array of activities and shadowing roles so that I could receive a well-rounded perspective of the different roles each member played within the organisation.

I attended various debates and discussions ranging from a council committee meeting discussing the implementation of a motion supported by Raise Your Voice, the hate crime conference on the recognition of misogyny as a hate crime, to rallies held in advocacy for suicide awareness and mental health funding. This is one of the most amazing qualities to working with WRDA as I gained an extremely well-rounded insight into every aspect of activism, starting from the grassroots work to political engagement.

The community campaigning course, which equips women with the necessary skills for establishing and overseeing a campaign, was an immensely educational and rewarding experience. I left the course feeling confident and empowered in my ability to take the necessary actions for the changes I wanted to see in our society.

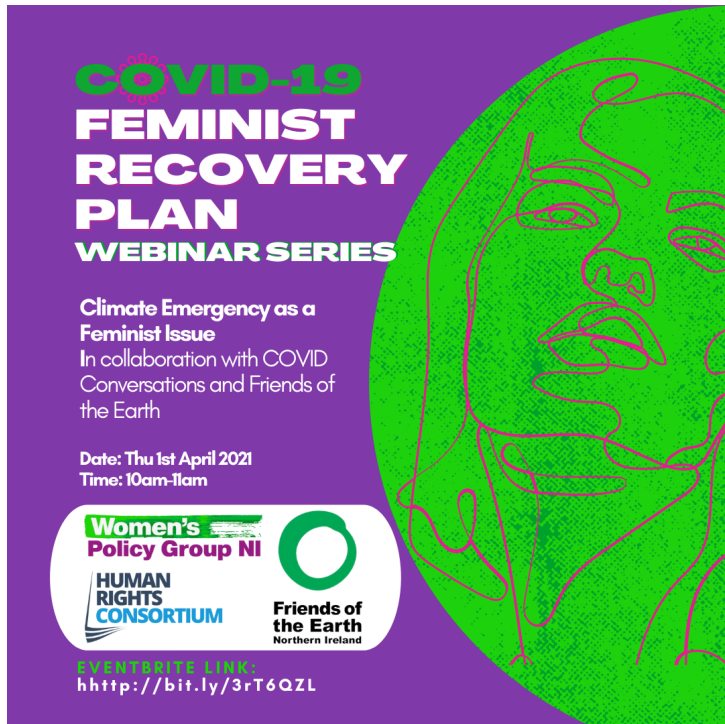
In returning to WRDA in 2021 in the new world of online work, my placement remained as engaging and interesting as ever before. I attended an array of events hosted in celebration of International Women's Day where I learnt of the fascinating history of feminism in N.I., the realities of the struggle's women making change still face today, and the countless areas in need of progress to achieve the new phenomenal!

In conclusion, my time with WRDA ticked all the boxes a good placement should. My personal learning development has been exceptional, my self confidence in my own abilities has benefited greatly because of the encouraging environment that WRDA provides.

**WRDA would like to thank Eva Martin for her diligence and hard work during her placement with us. We wish her all the best for the future.**



## Explore Feminist Responses to Climate Change



Join the Women's Policy Group, Friends of the Earth and the Human Rights Consortium on the 1st of April from 10-11am for a discussion looking at the Climate Emergency as a feminist issue.

You can register for this event on Eventbrite.



Join the WRDA and Trócaire on the 22nd of April from 12.30-1.30pm for a talk on how women are taking the lead in defending human rights and the environment.

You can register for this event on Eventbrite.

## Why is Climate Justice a Feminist Issue?

Gender equality must be at the heart of plans to tackle the climate crisis. The climate crisis requires urgent action to transform the economy and society. Some key statistics on women's current situation in the UK include:

- 85% of care jobs are done by women
- 32% of MPs in the House of Commons are women
- 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.

Women are disproportionately represented in the care work sector, both in paid and unpaid roles. As WEN argue: "Paid and unpaid care work are an integral part of a transition to a green economy, and are, for the most part, already low carbon. The systemic lack of recognition and investment in social infrastructure has created industries in which small amounts of investment can create significant returns in both employment opportunities and service improvement.

From a feminist perspective, it is essential to balance the emphasis on decarbonising the economy with the stated commitment to redressing social injustice, and this requires both awareness of and strategies for changing gender norms and stereotypes.

Central to feminist ecological economics is the normative claim that gender equality should not be achieved at the expense of ecological degradation or the exploitation of nature and other species, and that environmental sustainability must not be achieved by exploiting feminised labour."

This is an extract from the *Feminist Recovery Plan: Key Briefing on Climate Change*. You can read the complete briefing and many others on our website ([wrda.net/feminist-recovery-plan/](http://wrda.net/feminist-recovery-plan/))

# Reflections on Facilitating the Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness Sessions Online Due to Covid Restrictions

We developed a number of resources to support online delivery including, webinars, storyboards and Zoom delivery. Our Community Facilitators have risen to the challenge of delivering the sessions online and these are some of the things they had to say...

## What have you learned since delivering sessions during Covid?

"The importance of women connecting with other women either online or face to face"

"We have all had to adapt to participating in different ways to keep in touch, work and learn and it's been less daunting than I thought."

"That people are hungry for connection"

"It feels good when participants say how much they have got out of a session and were able to have a chat with their other friends in these difficult times"

## What were the things you learned in order to be able to deliver the BCB Sessions?

"The Zoom Polls which everyone found very challenging at first but everyone has had a great sense of satisfaction at achieving them"

"Although the first time delivering a zoom session was daunting as you are worried of a technology failure, the delivery of zoom sessions has been good"

"It is important to address everyone by their name and make them feel included and let them know that their opinion is listened to and also relevant."



## What have you missed about delivering face to face?

"Getting to know the individuals and chats over tea in the break"

"While we used the breast beads on line the participants missed being able to touch them which helped get the message across"

"Interaction with the groups in real time"

"After the session is generally when women approach you with concerns or worries and this does not always happen on Zoom. You just need to be aware of this and provide support and encouragement if anyone has a concern."

## Is there anything you enjoy about delivering on Zoom?

"The participants are so happy to get together and getting to know the facilitator"

"Using Zoom in the comfort of my own home"

"I have come across women I would never have met because of distance – location is no longer a barrier"

"Delighted to have Zoom and get the message to groups that are struggling to maintain some normality as Covid-19 has caused a lot of anxiety, loneliness and mental health issues".



## **Reflections on Facilitating ... Continued**

**Has running the Community Facilitators Forums on Zoom been positive?**

“Zoom is brilliant for the Community Facilitators forum and training for the Community facilitators – updating our skills”

“The advantage of Zoom for Community Facilitator Forums overcomes location problems for meetings”

“It would be good to have a mix of Zoom and some Face to Face for Community Facilitator Forums in the future”

In the year since we went into lockdown and began training the Community Facilitators to deliver on line sessions we have always had the proviso that delivering using Zoom is not for everyone. A number of Community Facilitators have stepped back from delivery until face to face is possible and we look forward to working with them again.

### **Final Thoughts**

“It’s great seeing the BCB Programme adapted for online delivery and continuing to be delivered in very challenging times”

“At the beginning of lockdown I thought there is no way we can connect with community groups to deliver the programme but we have all had to adapt and learn new skills which is a really positive thing”

“Zoom is an excellent way to keep the screening programmes alive”

**Thank you to the Community Facilitators who took part in this chat: Marian, Marie, Esther, Lyndsay, Sarah, Julia, Karen and Pamela**

## **Out and About Virtually Zoom Deliveries**

**Women’s Centre Derry**

**Hillcrest Trust Waterside Derry**

**Ard’s Sure Start**

**Fall’s Women’s Centre**

**University of the 3rd Age Down Branch**

**Groups supported by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council**

**Glow Belfast (for “Giving Life Opportunities to Women”)**

**Community Family Support Programme Lisburn**

**WRDA Members**

**Galbally Women’s Group (Near Dungannon)**

**University of the 3rd Age Belfast Branch**

**Sally Gardens Community Centre Polglass**

**Waterside Women’s Centre**

**Old Library Trust Carers Group**

**Inspire Wellbeing Dungannon**

**Inspire Wellbeing Hope House (Belfast)**

**Larne Base**

**UR Health Matters (SHSCT World Cancer Day Event)**

**Hollybank Hostel (Supported Living)**

**Hope 4ME Fibro NI**

**Glenshane Care**

If you would like to find out more about our Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness Programme or if you would like to arrange a delivery for your community group over Zoom please email [katherine.robertson@wrda.net](mailto:katherine.robertson@wrda.net). If your group is for people with additional needs such as hearing impairment or learning difficulties please email [paula.murray@wrda.net](mailto:paula.murray@wrda.net).