

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

International Women's Day Event in Toome	1
Funding Information	2
'Beating the Drum for Rural Women'	3
Travel Voucher Scheme for Community Groups	4

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS IN TOOME

'Celebrating Extraordinary Women'

International Women's Day Event in Toome	1
Funding Information	2
'Beating the Drum for Rural Women'	3
Travel Voucher Scheme for Community Groups	4

Over 140 rural women gathered in the village of Toomebridge on Friday 13th March to help celebrate International Women's Day 2009. The event was organised by Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network, Rural Community Network and the Latinoamerica Unida Association. Putting aside all fears of the dreaded Friday 13th, participants were welcomed to the event and the Borough by Mayor Oran Keenan.

Setting the scene, Mary Duggan, Chair of Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network, talked about the history of International Womens Day. Mary said,

"This is a day that has been celebrated by women for over 100 years. We were delighted to see such a fantastic turn out to celebrate the many extraordinary women living in Northern Ireland. We were delighted also to see the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development speaking to participants on the day as she has been doing an extraordinary job as a young mother from an isolated rural community"



I-r Una Johnston, Michelle Gildernew MP MLA and Mary Duggan

Minister Gildernew MP MLA said: **"The vital contribution that rural women make to society can often go unnoticed and I am continually inspired by the extraordinary women I meet in my role as Agriculture and Rural Development Minister. International Women's Day gives us the opportunity to stop and think about the crucial role that women play in rural life. It allows us to recognise and to show our support for the multiple roles played by rural women, as family members and as farmers and entrepreneurs."**

During the morning, participants were given the opportunity to look at the how they are involved in community, public and private life. In a round table discussion they explored how they could "take the leap" from private to public life. A panel

of guest speakers provided insight and personal reflection on their own experiences and the support that is out there to help women take on a more active role in their community. A number of questions were asked which gave a real insight into the barriers facing women in entering public life. Bebhinn McKinley of RCN said "It was amazing to see the outcome of the discussions. We asked participants where they had a role in private, community and public life and their answers were put around the room where it was clear very quickly that only a very small percentage of women have any sort of a role in public life – of course this did not come as a great shock to anyone in the room – but to see it so clearly really was very revealing."



Enjoying International Women's Day in Toome

As this is a day that is celebrated across the world so following the international theme; groups from across NI also explored the similarities and differences experienced in every day life by women in rural Northern Ireland and women in rural Latin America.

NEW FUNDING FROM CARDI WILL BOOST RESEARCH ON OLDER PEOPLE

CARDI

Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland

with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies. It is inviting applications for grants to fund cross-border research or to create networks of academics and the public, private and voluntary sectors that will examine issues that arise out of an ageing society in Ireland, north and south.

The grants will encourage ground-breaking studies that bring together different perspectives and academic subjects. Projects that are funded will involve older people themselves and will aim to promote better policies and improved services for them. CARDI will be allocating €200,000 to the first call and will be following up with two further allocations of money over the next year.

“Ireland’s population is ageing,” said CARDI director, Dr Roger O’Sullivan. “One million people aged 60 and above now live on the island of Ireland and the largest increase in coming years will be in the older generation eg the number aged 80+ is expected to triple by 2031. “But while life expectancy has increased, it is not clear that life without disability and ill health has increased to the same extent. A growing number of older people may be facing the combined effects of a decline in physical and mental function, isolation and poverty.

“The CARDI grants programme will stimulate research into the urgent and complicated issues of ageing. It plans to promote co-operation among medical specialists, technologists, social scientists, psychologists and many others to create a society in which older people can lead long, healthy, active lives,” Dr O’Sullivan added.

More information about the grants, including an application form that can be completed on-line, is on the website www.cardi.ie/grantprogramme or email info@cardi.ie.

For further information on CARDI please contact Paul McGill at our Belfast office, tel 028 9069 0066 or mobile 00353 867 904 158.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007-2013

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 is now open for business. The Programme aims to protect and enhance our rural environment and contribute to the development of competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities. Consisting of a wide range of funding schemes the RDP also provides opportunities for advice, mentoring and training for farmers, farm families, rural dwellers and community groups.

The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

If you would like further information on what support is available, details of who can apply, how to apply and when to apply, please visit www.rdpni.info email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk or telephone: **0845 30 44 509** to request a free information pack.

HANDYVAN SCHEME - SECURE YOUR HOME

HandyVan is a unique home support service from Help the Aged to help you feel safer in your home. Trained HandyVan fitters can install security equipment, change locks on doors and windows, and fit smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

The HandyVan Service

A fleet of 3 HandyVans are based in key areas around Northern Ireland and deliver a free service to those who meet the criteria below:

- Applicants are 60 years of age or over.
- Applicants' disposable savings/assets do not exceed £10,000 (not including the value of their home).
- HandyVans operate in their area.



Everyone is vulnerable to burglary, and the HandyVan service enables people to feel safer in their homes. Prevention is always the key to a safe, secure home and HandyVan fitters will work to help you ensure that your home is free from the risk of burglary, fitting security equipment such as door chains and viewers, window locks and installing safety features such as smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Minor repairs can also be included.

If you would benefit from the HandyVan service, or you know someone who would, then please call the team on 0845 026 1055 or email handyvan@helptheaged.org.uk

'BEATING THE DRUM FOR RURAL WOMEN'

Over 100 rural women attended an information event organised by NIRWN on Monday 30th March in Loughry College, Cookstown. The event focussed on the potential opportunities for funding under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013. Those in attendance were given an overview of the funding themes, and the various options open to them.

Opening the conference Michelle Gildernew MP MLA said: **"In my role as Agriculture and Rural Development Minister, I am continually inspired by the vital contribution that rural women make to society which is seldom recognised.**

Today's conference provides a valuable opportunity at an ideal time, the outset of the Rural Development Programme, to encourage women to make the most of the openings available. The new Programme offers opportunities for women at a range of levels whether starting a business or looking for ways to provide and improve much needed services in their local communities. Whatever the chosen role, we can contribute to improving the quality of life for all rural dwellers."



I-r Mary Duggan NIRWN, Michelle Gildernew MP MLA, Siobhan Doherty NIRWN, Aileen Donnelly RDC, Sinead Farrell Tumble Tots Day Care and Barbara Ferguson Armagh Guided Tours

Over 100 million pounds has been allocated under RDP specifically to strengthen local economies and communities for rural dwellers. The funding is delivered through the 7 Local Action Groups (LAGS), made up of representatives from businesses, public agencies, local community bodies and local Councillors. Each of the 7 LAGs were represented at the event.

Mary Duggan Chairperson of NIRWN and LAG member with South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD) commented: **'We very much hope that today's event will provide women and women's groups with information and contacts, to empower them to access the funding under RDP. Traditionally rural women have not accessed RDP funding in the past. We are delighted with the interest and turn out, and hope that rural women can take advantage of the funding available'**.

Speakers also included rural women who have established local businesses, Invest NI and Rural Network for Northern Ireland. The event included Information stands from Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (DARD), the 7 LAGS, Invest NI, Ulster Community Investment Trust, as well as a number of others. Feedback from the participants was very positive. On leaving the event one rural woman commented: **"This is exactly the type of event we need as rural women. I have had a business idea for using some of our old farm buildings for a lifetime and up until today I really had no idea that there was so much support out there. I really feel very excited by the prospect of delving deeper into the Rural Development Programme to see exactly how I can benefit from this funding and in turn benefit my family by generating a little more income to the household."**



One of the many information stands at the 'Beating the Drum' Event in Loughry

Nora Smith, Policy Officer with NIRWN said: **"It is fantastic to see so much interest by rural women in the Rural Development Programme. We, as an organisation set up to support the voices of rural women, felt that this was an opportunity for women to hear about this programme, to hear how other women have benefited from the previous funding and to share with them all the possible support mechanisms already in place to make the RDP more accessible to them. It was a great success and hopefully it will lead to more rural women making applications to their Local Action Group for funding."**



Wise Woman Weekend

May 8th -10th, 2009
Dromahair, Co Leitrim

A weekend of learning, discovery, celebration and fun for women of all ages to celebrate the Celtic festival of Bealtaine

The 5th annual Wise Woman Weekend takes place May 8th-10th, 2009 in Dromahair, Co Leitrim. This is a weekend of learning, discovery, celebration, and fun for women of all ages. Leave behind the ordinary and come learn of the traditional wisdoms, remember our heritage as women and celebrate all things feminine.

Friday evening begins in the Wise Woman Mandala at Ard Nahoo Eco Retreat with music, dance and ceremony. There are 15 life enhancing workshops on offer and the ever popular Wild Woman Banquet and Open mic Social on Saturday night. The weekend ends with a Bealtaine Ritual on Sunday afternoon.

The Wise Woman Weekend was conceived as an event to gather in one place the amazing women in the region, who were often living in rural isolation, and to share their knowledge. It is a fun time for everyone and many friendships are made during the weekend.

A weekend pass is £130 and all the details are on the website at www.wisewomanireland.com. The Wise Woman Weekend is organised with sustainable principles in mind by a group of volunteers.

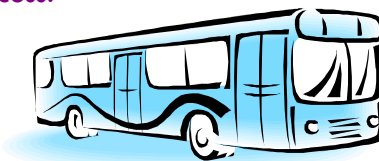
TRAVEL VOUCHER SCHEME FOR RURAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Department for Regional Development wish to announce the new Rural Transport Fund Voucher Scheme. This scheme is aimed at rural community groups and organisations wishing to transport 17 or more passengers. The scheme will provide a voucher towards the cost of transport for successful applicants.

This Scheme was initially piloted by Newry & Mourne Community Transport and the Department for Regional Development has decided to roll it out across Northern Ireland for the benefit of large groups in rural areas. Supported by the Rural Transport Fund the scheme will work in partnership with private transport operators who will deliver transport for the scheme.

The scheme will be rolled out in a phased approach for the first year. The first area to be covered incorporates the rural areas in and around the Ards Peninsula, Downpatrick, Newcastle, Newry & Mourne, Lurgan and Lisburn, the second area is Strabane, rural Derry, Omagh and Fermanagh, the third area is Dungannon, Armagh, Cookstown and Magherafelt and the fourth area is Coleraine, Limavady and Antrim. Applications from non-profit making community groups from areas 1&2 planning on travelling during July, August and September 2009 are now available and will close on 29th May. Any group wishing to travel after these dates may complete an application form now however the selection process for later dates will not take place until September for October, November and December Voucher dates.

There is a limit to the number of vouchers available in each area. To ensure those community organisations that help or support the most vulnerable in society there will be a selection process.



To receive an application pack please contact 028 9040 3535 or e-mail sylvia@ctauk.org.

NORTHERN IRELAND RURAL WOMEN'S NETWORK www.nirwn.org.uk

Cookstown Office
15 Molesworth Street
Cookstown
BT80 8NX
T: 028 8676 9191
F: 028 8676 5644
E: info@nirwn.org.uk

Larne Office
Unit 18 Stylux Business Park
Lower Waterloo Road
Larne
BT40 1NP
T: 028 2826 7552
E: edna@nirwn.org.uk

Armagh Office
Unit 1 Forkhill Business Ctr
29 Main Street
Forkhill
BT35 9SQ
T: 028 30889784
E: majella@nirwn.org.uk

