



Education, Training & Work



Quarterly Zine
Quarter 2
2023



INTRODUCING OUR QUARTERLY ZINE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EDITION

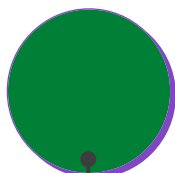
By Megan McClure Botha | WRDA

The Secretary of State's 2023-24 budget for Northern Ireland along with the cuts many women's organisations are having to make following the latest round of Shared Prosperity Funding will have a deleterious impact on women's ability to participate in education, training, and work.

Our first piece looks at the threat the Stormont cuts pose to women and girls participation. In particular, looking at the impact of the loss of the Holiday Hunger Payment and the failure to roll out "All Age Apprenticeships". We then look at what is needed for women to succeed in accessing education, training and work before finally looking at what is on offer in the new Women Breaking Barriers programme. This ambitious venture funded by the UK Government aims to reach 600 "economically inactive" women.

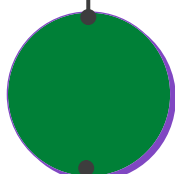
We hope you find the information contained in this edition useful as we continue to ensure a voice for women from disadvantaged and rural areas.

IN THIS EDITION



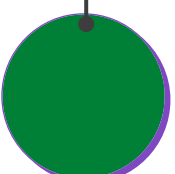
Women's Budget Group

Stormont cuts pose a serious threat to women's and girls' abilities to participate fully in the areas of education, training, and work



Women's Centre Derry

Women and Education: we cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.



Women's Resource and Development Agency

WRDA led coalition of women's sector organizations launch Women Breaking Barriers programme



NI
WOMEN'S
BUDGET
GROUP

STORMONT CUTS POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' ABILITIES TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORK

By Alexandra Brennan | WBG NI

We are currently facing unprecedented cuts to each Executive Department which will result in incredibly harmful impacts, disproportionately impacting on the equality of women and other protected groups. **Women's place in education, training and work has not always been guaranteed, and there are still great inequalities that persist in these areas.** The proposed cuts pose a serious threat to women's and girls' abilities to participate fully in the areas of education, training, and work.

While girls tend to perform better than boys in primary and secondary education, they are still at risk of worsening the equality of disabled girls and girls from low-income families. The Department of Education's decision to cut SEN funding by 50% will disproportionately impact disabled girls and boys who face an upcoming school year where necessary support services may not be provided, leading to greater inequalities between them and children with no additional needs. The Department's decision to cut schemes like the Holiday Hunger Payment will have a serious impact on girls and boys from low-income families, many of whom rely on that scheme for food during the school holidays. This will also have a knock-on effect on the mothers, as we know that mothers will go without food before their children do.

What losing the Holiday Hunger Payment means:

- **96,000 eligible children (30% of the entire school population) lose £27 fortnightly payment**
- **Easter holiday hunger for many families**
- **Foodbanks put under strain**
- **Women will go into debt to feed their children**

A 2021 research paper from Professor Ann-Marie Gray, Professor Joan Ballantine and Dr. Michelle Rouse from Ulster University highlighted the gender inequalities and gender imbalances present in Apprenticeships and HLAs. The Department for the Economy has decided not to launch the 'All Age Apprenticeships' provision, which would have removed age restrictions on Apprenticeships and allowed for an additional 1,600 apprentices per year over the age of 25. This has a particular gendered impact as the Ulster University working paper found that women are more likely to do an apprenticeship when they are older (25+). However, this clear gendered impact was not identified in the Department's EQIA.

We must push back against these cuts to protect further degradation to gender equality.

Ultimately, the budget crisis will have a significant impact on women's involvement in the labour force. The complete lack of resources attached to new policies like the Gender Equality Strategy and the Childcare Strategy will stifle efforts to remove barriers to women entering work. The proposed cuts are a serious rollback on women's and girls' full and equal participation in education, training, and work. We must push back against these cuts to protect further degradation to gender equality.



WOMEN AND EDUCATION: WE CANNOT ALL SUCCEED WHEN HALF OF US ARE HELD BACK

By Rayna Downey | Women's Centre Derry

Women are a hard demographic of learners to access for a reason, because they have very little free time to do anything for themselves and gaining access to mainstream Education & Training has never been easy for women. Courses offered without childcare provision, lack of financial support, and the threat of benefit deductions are just some of the massive barriers women face in accessing education.

These barriers left Women stuck at home feeling isolated, frustrated and at unworthy. The community & voluntary sector saw this and decided that every woman has a right to learn. We fundraised, we formed partnerships with local colleges, we engaged with councils and we started providing FREE accredited courses and training with FREE onsite childcare.

This structure transformed women's lives. **All it took to see women succeed is a building, a safe space, a creche and a tutor.** A woman given the right opportunities will only enrich and multiply what has been provided to her. These women went on to gain employment, some went on to further education, some even went on to university degrees. No matter what the outcome these women would never have had these opportunities without the Community & Voluntary sectors support.

In the words of Malala Yousafzai: "we cannot all succeed when half of us are held back"



Funded by
UK Government



WRDA LED COALITION OF WOMEN'S SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS LAUNCH WOMEN BREAKING BARRIERS PROGRAMME

By Megan McClure Botha | WRDA

A coalition of women's sector organizations led by WRDA have been awarded funding through the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund to launch the Women Breaking Barriers (WBB) programme. **WRDA will be in partnership with Reclaim the Agenda, Women's Support Network, Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network, and several women's centres.**

The Women Breaking Barriers programme aims to target over 600 economically inactive women across Northern Ireland to provide wrap around support for the women who need it most. The Women Breaking Barriers programme seeks to provide the women in our community with the support and opportunity to seek further education and training, employment including self-employment, gain qualifications and skills, and improve their maths and English skills.



3 MAIN STRANDS

RESILIENCY & MOTIVATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



3 MINOR STRANDS

ESOL

LEVEL 2 SAGE, OR
BOOKKEEPING,
XERO ACCOUNTING

SOCIAL MEDIA & METRICS



Women joining the programme will have their choice between three main strands of participation: resiliency and motivation via the Goals UK course, customer service skills via the World Host course, or a bespoke Health and Social care course. In addition to the main strand, there are several other activities for participants to engage in. Women will get holistic support along the entirety of the programme; including a pre training needs assessment, one to one and group mentoring sessions, and signposting and referrals. There will be job search activities including job fairs, motivational talks, CV workshops, and industry events available as part of the participant journey. Women will also engage in numeracy skills activities, potentially including money management courses, cost of living workshops, benefits calculator workshops, and other potential activities to help women improve their maths skills in a practical manner.

You can find out more about the programme here www.womenbreakingbarriersni.com or contact Sarah Stack, Project Coordinator, on sarah.stack@wrda.net

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