Visit to Northern Ireland

Participants arrived from Poland, Hungary, Cyprus, Germany, Spain and Turkey on Wednesday 4 June 2014 to participate in a four day programme of visits to Northern Ireland.

The 28 participants were met by Heather McLaughlin, Manager The Rural Centre, the UK partner in Belfast.

The group stayed in Belfast on the first night and enjoyed the opportunity to see the city and taste local food in a traditional Irish pub.
ENWRA Meeting
Thursday 5 June 2014

The first day of business began with a meeting in the EU Commission Representative Offices, Belfast with a presentation from Louise Wallace, Enterprise Europe.

This EU wide network helps small business to make the most of the European market place. Link to your local Enterprise Europe Network. Louise explained the services available and showed where each partner had an Enterprise Europe Contact in their region. http://een.ec.europa.eu/about/branches

Teresa O’Loughlin, Network for Enterprising Women then gave an overview of the difficulties women face in this region and the support available through networks and business organisations. Teresa outlined her own personal story and how she came to set up her own marketing consultancy business before providing an outline of the visits that would take place the following day to women in rural areas.
First Steps Women’s Centre

After a business meeting to discuss the project workplan, aims and objectives the group ended with lunch in the EU Commission before travelling by coach to Dungannon, Co Tyrone.

The group were welcomed to the First Steps Women’s Centre by the Mayor, Councillor Sean McGuigan, Dungannon District Council. The Mayor was delighted to see so many participants visiting Northern Ireland to share their experiences and stressed how important it is for women to sustain rural communities.

The group then heard from CEO Michael McGoldrick who explained that the Centre was set up in 1998 as a place for women from both sides of the community to come together to socialise, talk and take part in various activities.

Co-ordinators, Joan McCool Life Skills & Yvonne Corbett IT to give a brief overview of their work and showed a DVD of their work in the Centre with views and comments from women who had been supported through training and education.

Karolina (polish) and Katalin (Hungarian) explained how the Centre had helped them when they arrived in this region.

Majella Murphy From NI Rural Women’s Network supports women in Rural Areas.
http://www.nirwn.org.uk

‘To improve the quality of life for women through education and personal development, supporting women to make choices for the future’
Sharing Cultural Traditions in Rural Areas

After the visit in Dungannon the group travelled to County Fermanagh to stay in Bed & Breakfast accommodation run by local women Anne and Bridie in their rural areas.

Tudor Farm B&B: [http://www.tudorfarm.com](http://www.tudorfarm.com)

Dulrush Fishing Lodge: [www.dulrushfishinglodge.com](http://www.dulrushfishinglodge.com)

The first full day ended with dinner and an evening of cultural entertainment. The group were given a demonstration of Scottish Country Dancing before learning some of the dances themselves!

Dungannon to Enniskillen, Fermanagh

The ENWRA participants sang some traditional songs before everyone shared an international supper with foods from each of the regions.
Friday 6 June 2014: Sharing Innovation: Study Visits to Women in Business in Rural Areas

A number of visits took place throughout the day to women running businesses from their homes in rural areas. The idea was to show how rural and isolated they were and how it was possible to develop and run a business to generate income that would fit around family life and responsibilities.

Linda Harron: Swicks Candles  
http://swicks.strikingly.com

After retiring as a chemistry teacher Linda set up ‘Swicks’ in 2013 because she loved working with natural ingredients. She began working with rapeseed wax and hand makes her candles to create environmentally and nature friendly candles. ‘Swicks’ comes from the old Ulster work meaning a small candle. She produces everything from her kitchen and sells online or from her home.
Friday 6 June 2014: Sharing Innovation: Study Visits to Women in Business in Rural Areas

Teresa O’Haire: Orchard Acre Farm  
http://www.orchardacrefarm.co.uk

Teresa runs the only Eco Tourism farm in Fermanagh. She produces organic, artisan foods such as jams and chutneys and organic vegetables. The farm also has an award winning Eco Designed Barn which caters for hen parties, weddings and conferences.

Fiona Kerr: Fiona Kerry Jeweler  
http://www.fionakerrjewellery.co.uk

Fiona Kerr's unique jewellery designs are inspired by the beauty of her surroundings in the Lakelands of Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. She says that nature provides the inspiration for her jewellery which is made from silver and precious stones. Fiona designs and makes her jewellery from a converted chow shed on her farm and sells from her website.
Friday 6 June 2014: Sharing Innovation: Study Visits to Women in Business in Rural Areas

Shauna Gallagher: Nature’s Inspiration  http://www.naturesinspiration.co.uk

Shauna has always had extremely sensitive skin and even when she studied Beauty Therapy she could not find a cream that solved her problem. After learning how to make natural beauty products she set up ‘Natures Inspiration’ in 2008. Shauna specializes in hand crafted natural skincare using plant-derived or oxidised minerals where possible and biodegradable with no artificial colouring and not tested in animals.

Fermanagh District Council: Welcome by Ruth Lynch Vice Chair and Lunch

Ruth Lynch, Vice Chair welcomed the ENWRA group to Fermanagh. She was delighted to host them for lunch in the Town Hall and spoke about the importance of women developing businesses to support themselves and the rural economy. Anita Mukherjee, Women of the World explained the role of this network in supporting international women.