



## NGB Case Study - Mountaineering Ireland – Women With Altitude

### What was the programme?

Women With Altitude is a Mountaineering Ireland weekend initiative to encourage women to take on greater challenges in mountaineering, be they personal challenges, technical or leadership challenges.

### How did you implement it?

The programme runs on an annual basis over a weekend with inputs and commitments from participants to develop or progress the skills they have learned. It was organised by a staff member of Mountaineering Ireland and a working group. The location varies annually to reach more women and instructors are employed to run courses, impart knowledge and act as role models during the event.

### What were your outcomes?

Since the inception of Women With Altitude event, female participation has steadily grown with 50% of the total membership currently made up of females. Research and feedback showed that a disproportionately low percentage of our female members took on leadership roles on the hills, walked and climbed independently or progressed to complete our awards. The event aimed to change this.

### Did you achieve your outcomes?

A lot of the outcomes from the initiative were accomplished but more work is needed particularly to develop skills and ensure there are no barriers for women who wish to progress through the higher level awards and work in the industry. The weekend event supported the development of women's skills to a high level and provided a platform for role models to increase the visibility of women at all levels of mountaineering and impart their skills to new participants to increase confidence. The event also encouraged new participants to stay in the sport by moving from beginners to developing leadership roles within mountaineering, which in turn has put more women at the forefront of mountaineering and continues to retain female participants.

### What would you change if you ran the programme again?

The programme would benefit from monitoring and evaluation strategies to understand the level of continued participation. With further investment it could be used as a spring board for other female programmes to develop the skills learnt over the event and continue to provide opportunities to the new participants to increase their confidence, encouraging them to stay in our sport.