



WCI- Liffey Valley Needs Analysis and Strategic Response 2023

Introduction

Women's Collective Ireland is a national women's community development organisation underpinned by feminist ideology, human rights and social justice-led practices. Its mission is to support grassroots women to achieve their full human rights and true equality locally through its 17 community development projects and nationally to ensure women's visibility in the policy process.

Healthy Ireland strategy plan 2021- 2025 aims to reduce inequalities for all and create a healthy Ireland . "where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility" (p31).

Women's Collective Ireland Liffey Valley is one of 17 Women's Collective Ireland women's projects. This project prioritises women's health and wellbeing. It aims to promote, support and provide positive health and wellbeing services through community education and development praxis. It recognises the importance of intercultural and intersectional approaches via tailored and targeted support .

It aims to promote , support and provide positive health and wellbeing services facilitating **participation** and **engagement** supporting individuals in their journey to better health and wellbeing ensuring both **personal** and **community advancement** through **active citizenship and collective action**.

Objectives

This survey was performed by the Liffey Valley project to identify the needs of local women ensuring appropriate response and the strategic planning ensuring the voices of grassroots women are heard.

Methodology

A needs analysis was performed from November- December 2022. This involved a qualitative and quantitative survey with a blended online and a random in-person. The qualitative data aimed to capture statistical information providing statistical data on demographic to. The qualitative response gave space for women to express their vision and wishes for the project, ensuring it was community-focused, recognising the salience of capacity building, participation and engagement promoting active citizenship, participation and social inclusion.

197 women 18-66+ years of age responded to the survey.

"A lot of stuff has a come up for women since covid and there is a need for the right space to process it and how to deal with the staff on our brains"

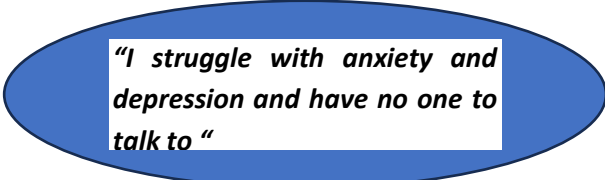
Analysis

This survey highlighted the negative impacts of the current socioeconomic climate on women's mental and physical health. The increased cost of living, the national housing crisis, the cost of childcare and the barriers accessing health services which has negatively impacted on those most vulnerable and marginalised in society. The increasing gap between the rich and poor has negatively impacted women especially those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.

Health and wellbeing


Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental health illness in Europe with **18.5%** of the Irish population recorded as **having a mental health illness** such as anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression, or alcohol/drug use (Mental Health Ireland, 2016). Women have been identified as a higher risk of experiencing negative mental health illness.

67% of women in this survey **experience negative mental health impacts in their daily lives**. They identify the need for support as a priority in their community.



"I struggle with anxiety and depression and have no one to talk to"

42% identified the need for counselling services and the difficulty accessing through lack of services available and the inequality as financial stability prevented them from seeking private care. This barrier impinging on their personal and social development preventing them from reaching their full potential and enjoying life.



"More mental health and counselling supports are badly needed"

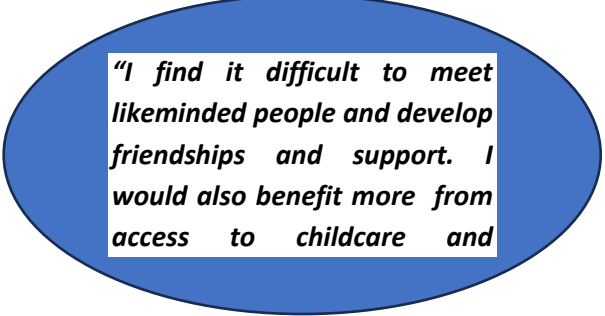
Mental Health Ireland (2023) five ways to wellbeing recognise the importance of physical activity, learning and making connections as an integral part to positive mental health and wellbeing.

100% of women identified the importance of having a space for health and wellbeing programmes and workshops. **31%** expressed interest in **physical activity** with a **mindfulness** component. **39%** recognised the importance of **creativity and mindfulness**. These requests have been implanted into the project planning.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is multifaceted and requires a targeted response to address its negative impacts on individuals and communities. The correlation between poverty, social exclusion and negative mental health and wellbeing has been well documented identifying the need for and benefit of local community supports and services.

39% of women highlighted **carrying responsibilities and the challenges accessing childcare** as a barrier that prevents them participating and engaging in community programmes and further education thus increasing isolation.



"I find it difficult to meet likeminded people and develop friendships and support. I would also benefit more from access to childcare and"

43% of women expressed interest in **active citizenship and engaging with their community** once their own health and wellbeing was supported.

60% valued **community education and its importance in self-development**

"I think that community- based courses are a vital part in our community especially for someone who might struggle socially"

33% identified **women's equality** and the importance of **visibility for women** in the community with **10%** demonstrating an interest in **participating in campaigns and activism**. These results indicate that women wish to become active and engaged in their communities. Community education provides the space for positive engagement and personal growth to occur facilitating collective action.

"I'm a quiet person who likes to keep to myself but if I had the power and knowledge I would support and help my community"

Summary of concern identified

Health and wellbeing	Access to health services Access to counselling services Management of daily challenges and stress
Social Exclusion	Access to education Information regarding women's health Isolation and loneliness Lack self esteem and confidence
Environment	Safety Antisocial behaviour Drugs in the community and addiction
Barriers	Childcare access Financial Access to technology Lack of confidence

WCI Liffey Valley Strategic Planning Response

Health and wellbeing	Provide an open and welcoming service Provide counselling service Promote women's health and wellbeing educational programmes and initiatives Provide information on additional services Liaison with health and wellbeing services in the area
Social Inclusion	Increase visibility in the community, focusing on capacity building and outreach. Provide programmes and workshops on areas of concern e.g. mindfulness, self-development, stress management
Environment	Provide a safe and supportive space for women. Campaigning Focus on sustainability practices
Economic	Source funding to support the aims and objectives of the project To be creative and adaptable in services provision

" A safe space to share knowledge , drink tea and breathe"

Conclusion

WCI Liffey Valley survey provided researched evidence-based information to ensure the voices and needs of women are met. Its results highlighted the increasing need of health and wellbeing support in this community and the prioritisation of these issues for WCI Liffey Valley in its strategy planning, funding applications and the implementation of support services, programmes and workshops.

Counselling and health and wellbeing workshops were identifying as a priority focusing on personal development, confidence building, education and stress management.

Capacity building ensure engagement and participation resulting in the empowerment of women in their personal and social development This is essential for active citizenship and collective action to occur ensuring equality of access and opportunity. The WCI Liffey Valley project recognise the barriers facing women reaching their full potential and aims to meet their community needs

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