

## NCCWN – Clare Women’s Network – To PPN Submission for RSE Plan

March 2019

- There is a need for ongoing detailed gender analysis and disaggregated/aggregated data to inform decision making to ensure resources are targeted to where they are most needed and are better value for money.
- The development of gender budgeting in resourcing, targeting and addressing issues of concern, economically, politically and socially for women is an essential aspect of addressing the issues and barriers to women’s full participation adequately.
- Ensuring the development of essential primary health/medical/maternity care at local level through a variety of services including Doula/Midwifery Services will assist in ensuring women and children are safe in geographically rural areas. Ensuring this and other services are available at local level will increase safety for women and children and avoid long arduous journeys and overcoming childcare and transport barriers for pregnant women.
- There is an urgent need to address poverty among women and have targeted approaches to providing supports necessary to reduce significantly. Currently those parenting alone are at the highest risk of poverty in Clare. There are 5053 people parenting alone in Clare, 84% are women. There has been an increase from 1 in 11 lone parents in 2011 to 1 in 5 in 2017 living in poverty and experiencing the lowest level of living standards in Europe and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of income poverty. 18% are in mortgage or rent arrears. Measures must be taken to ensure no more women and children end up homeless and putting supports in place which will assist towards economic independence and quality of life, through childcare supports, social spaces, recreational spaces and extracurricular activities will support women working fulltime and assist in creating social activities and wellbeing for children and parents.
- Development of a cohesive strategy to eradicate violence against women in Clare through development of education programmes in schools and businesses is essential in creating safe communities throughout Ireland. Training on new legislation relating to coercive control, forced marriages and how the media reports is essential in order to enact legislation. Ensuring agencies are resourced to provide training in identifying new aspects of legislation is essential for it to become effective and create changes in attitude within society. The development of panels of counsellors and interpreters to assist migrant women in addressing trauma which they have experienced, legal matters, court accompaniment will assist in ensuring certain groups of women are not excluded and benefitting from the enactment of the legislation.
- The necessity of the development of long term affordable and adequate social housing is at a critical point in Ireland with 10,000 people now homeless. There is an urgent need for an in depth analysis of accommodation necessary which will meet the needs of people. Location, services, employment opportunities, access to educational facilities, mobility/ability are all necessary considerations when housing people. Members of the traveller community, women exiting violent relationships and other specific marginalised women of Clare should be given particular priority as their

accommodation needs are almost always overlooked or ignored. There is a need to for the development of a women's/children's permanent homeless unit in Clare.

- There are approximately 200 women and children living in Direct Provision Centres in Clare, whose lives are in limbo and are living on 21 euros per week. This system is deeply flawed creating many unnecessary barriers to full participation economically and socially and preventing women from settling into a new life based on good quality living standards and freedom of movement. The system is archaic and reminiscent of institutions of the past and does not reflect the global crisis of refugees and the undiscovered benefits of a fully functioning multi-cultural society where all people are valued equally and make a contribution to sustainable communities and economies. Developing strategies to provide training to front line staff is essential in meeting the needs of women from other countries and should include anti-racism training, understandings of cultural differences, addressing stereotyping and stigma.
- Developing LGBTQ+ communities, celebrations, networks and supports in rural areas is an essential part of inclusion and measure in addressing isolation. Lack of visibility of LGBTQ+ friendly spaces and lack of supports, particularly for some young people can lead to social isolation.
- Recognition and valuing of the artistic/creative skills within the community, with a particular focus on women in the arts is necessary in promoting the arts in Clare and rural areas. Investment in encouraging young artists/musicians/poets to participate, network and ensuring they are paid for the creative talents which they draw people to the region with. Celebration of the wealth of artists should be acknowledged through remuneration, promotion and active engagement. Creating social hubs for local talent could benefit artists. The under representation of women in the arts should be actively discouraged and addressed through quotas as adopted in parts of the UK.
- Resource local women's organisations with a gender equality remit to work with women locally in building networks and solidarity. Volunteers working in communities 68% of whom are female should not incur out of pocket expenses and should have childcare and travel expenses reimbursed.
- Strategies are necessary to include women who are non-Irish and create opportunities for participatory learning across issues, experiences and culture. Identification of skills locally within communities and resourcing learning and sharing of skills will create supports and connection for women in communities. Sharing of cultural exchanges and learning through investment in developing Clare as a multi-cultural centre of diversity and creativity could benefit and enhance communities.
- Development of local networks could be beneficial to addressing local social care/childcare throughout Clare. This would assist in building innovative community collaboration whilst impacting on isolation issues and creating much needed supports for vulnerable members of the community. Resources to create working groups across varying issues has the capacity to create better community connections and relationships and sustainability.
- Transport is by far one of the greatest barriers for women in rural Ireland and considered 'poor' by 70% of those living in rural areas throughout Ireland. Initiatives

are essential to addressing this ongoing issue which creates much isolation and acts as a barrier to employment education and social interaction. Developing transport initiatives which are well functioning and less carbon intensive is an essential aspect of resolving the crisis in public transport in rural areas. Investment and development of adequate/frequent public transport is essential for those living in isolated areas far away from essential services such as hospitals and basic medical care.

- Development of high speed broad band in rural and urban areas of Clare will assist women by facilitating entrepreneurship/working from home/ access to third level education. It will assist in addressing the lack of meaningful well paid employment/access to transport/geographical locations/lack of affordable child and social care responsibilities and structures.
- Investments in small and local towns and development of a full range of local services is a necessary prerequisite to increasing rural population, addressing rural decline and developing economic activity and social engagement in isolated rural locations.