

# Leitrim Gaelic4Mothers&Others Inclusion Programme Evaluation February 2021

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# **Leitrim Gaelic4Mothers&Others Inclusion Programme Evaluation**

**Report compiled by Michelle Hackett**

## **Evaluation Acknowledgements:**

The Leitrim Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme is led by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and Leitrim Sports Partnership. It is funded by the dormant accounts funding through Sport Ireland Sports Inclusion Fund. The programme aims to increase participation rates in ladies football, increase number of volunteers in clubs, help women reach the recommended physical activity levels and educate with a wide range of courses provided.

## **Gaelic4Mothers&Others Initiative Background**

The Gaelic4Mothers&Others initiative is an innovative way to introduce mothers and other women to playing Ladies Gaelic football. Mothers often drop their kids to training and call back to collect them, but the Ladies Gaelic Football Association has changed that. The Gaelic4Mothers&Others initiative sees women playing Ladies Gaelic Football in a fun, non-competitive, and social environment.

Gaelic4Mothers&Others provides an opportunity for women to get their recommended weekly exercise in a fun way while socialising with other women in the area. With 296 Gaelic4Mothers&Others club teams registered nationally across the 32 counties, the initiative has proven to be hugely popular.

In Leitrim, ten clubs were identified to participate in the inclusion programme to bring this initiative to a new level providing volunteer education to assist clubs to increase their capacity of volunteers and enhance the life skills of the women involved.

## **Report Background**

As part of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme, a two-timepoint pre- and post-data collection qualitative research questionnaire was undertaken with participants from the ten participating clubs in Leitrim between September 2020 and February 2021.

In the report that follows, qualitative data regarding the Leitrim Gaelic4Mothers&Others team members participation in this online inclusion programme will be examined from an online structural delivery context due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An examination of the previous volunteer experience, social interaction, and levels of previous volunteer experience in their club. A thematic qualitative analysis of the participants voices for the Leitrim Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme will be presented.

The mode of data collection comprised of online questionnaires distributed to the participants through their Gaelic4Mothers&Others club coordinators. The questionnaires were used as a strategic means of understanding the participants engagement within the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme, their level of previous engagement with volunteerism in their club, previous courses attended, and qualifications attained.

It is important to note that these online participant questionnaires were each collected on two occasions:

- 1. At the beginning of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme (September 2020)**
- 2. At the end of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme (February 2021)**

The reason that all measurements were collected on two occasions was to evaluate the impact of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme over time. Specifically, was there any volunteer, social and confidence level changes from participating in this mode of Gaelic4Mothers&Others online delivery.

**Table 1. Planned targets/outcomes for the programme**

<b>Inputs (Resources)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personnel- from LGFA and Leitrim Sports Partnership</li> <li>- Financial inputs</li> <li>- Course materials</li> <li>- Promotional posters/ E-posters</li> <li>- Online support</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs (activities/key performance indicators)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target of 10 clubs involved</li> <li>- Target of 2 coaches per club</li> <li>- Safeguarding awareness delivered</li> <li>- Basic First Aid delivered</li> <li>- Ladies football coaches</li> <li>- Increased rate of participation</li> <li>- Increased numbers in club volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes (Short term – immediately following)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change immediate coaching styles to create more positive environment for female recreational players</li> <li>- Increase number of women participating in Ladies Football within areas of economic or social disadvantage both in playing and volunteering capacity</li> <li>- Increased levels of fitness for women participating I the programme</li> <li>- Increased social interaction with participants in the programme</li> <li>- Increased number of women participating in sport and recreational physical activity</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes (Medium/Long term)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Volunteer strategy in place for local clubs</li> <li>- Change in participation ethos within clubs</li> <li>- Reduce rate of dropout in older adults in local communities</li> <li>- Lengthened player pathway in club incorporating lifelong participation</li> <li>- Increased reach in the community for players and volunteers</li> <li>- Develop programmes to address transitions and drop out from physical activity and sport</li> <li>- Increase female club membership in local LGFA clubs</li> <li>- Increased trained volunteers within clubs locally</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leitrim Sports Partnership</li> <li>- Sports Promotion Units</li> <li>- Local Ladies Football clubs</li> <li>- Local post primary schools</li> <li>- Local secondary schools</li> <li>- Local adult community groups</li> <li>- Educational training boards</li> </ul>

With the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdowns in place, the original design and content of the inclusion programme had to be altered for it to continue with as much value as originally planned. This meant that the programme was changed to be primarily based as a delivery of online courses to the Gaelic4Mothers&Others participants.

### **Descriptive information of the participants**

The participants in this evaluation were from 10 different participating clubs in the Gaelic4Mothers&Others programme in Leitrim, and they took part in both the pre- and post-online questionnaires. They were asked for details on their levels of previous volunteer positions, if any. If they had been involved as a volunteer in any organisation, not just the LGFA and GAA. If they had a particular reason if they have no prior volunteer experience. What they hoped and wanted to get out of the inclusion project. What they enjoyed most from the over-all inclusion programme and what they hoped for the programme in the future.

**Table 2. List of clubs involved in the Leitrim G4M&O inclusion programme**

<b>Participating Club names</b>	<b>No. of G4M&amp;O Players</b>
Dromahair	25
Annaduff	20
Cloone	20
Fenagh	15
Glencar Manorhamilton	17
Kiltubrid Ladies	20
Melvin Gaels	18
Mohill	15
*St. Marys	35
*Bornacoola	42

\*Clubs marked with asterisks are to be established as part of the programme.

## **Key themes from questionnaires**

5 key themes emerged from the questionnaire data that were relevant to the long-term investment of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme, from both a player and volunteer development perspective. These themes were:

- 1. Previous volunteer experiences**
- 2. Programme experience takeaways**
- 3. Learning approaches**
- 4. Networking**
- 5. Future volunteering**

Under some of these 5 themes were a set of identified sub-themes, which specifically emerged from the data.

In terms of theme one regarding the 'Previous volunteer experiences', the following sub-themes prevailed:

- *Previous experience in LGFA specific volunteering*
- *Reasons for not volunteering before*

In terms of theme two regarding the 'Programme experience takeaways', the following sub-theme prevailed:

- *Increased levels of physical activity*
- *Increased knowledge of Ladies Gaelic Football*

In terms of theme three regarding the 'Learning approaches', the following sub-theme prevailed:

- *Adaption to online learning*
- *Timing of programme*

In terms of theme four regarding the 'Networking', the following sub-theme prevailed:

- *Meeting new people in the area*
- *Learning other people's experiences*

In terms of theme five regarding the 'Future volunteering', the following sub-theme prevailed:

- *Confidence in putting name forward for volunteering*

### **Thematic Analysis Questionnaires**

The following pages provide a descriptive overview and a brief synopsis of the emergent themes and sub-themes from the questionnaires data with the participants following the completion of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme. Italicised lines are direct quotes from participants.

#### **Theme 1: Previous volunteer experiences**

##### **Sub-theme 1: Previous experience in LGFA specific volunteering**

Majority of Gaelic4Mothers&Others players had some level of experience in volunteering before starting the inclusion programme. As depicted in figure 1, 64% of participants who completed the first questionnaire said they had previous volunteer roles in a LGFA club while 36% had said they had not volunteered for an LGFA Club.

One of the goals of the G4M&O inclusion programme was to educate the players with courses that would benefit them and aid them in taking on volunteer roles within their club. Now with the programme completed, it is hoped that all participants will have confidence in taking on a role in volunteering at the local LGFA club when football resumes play.

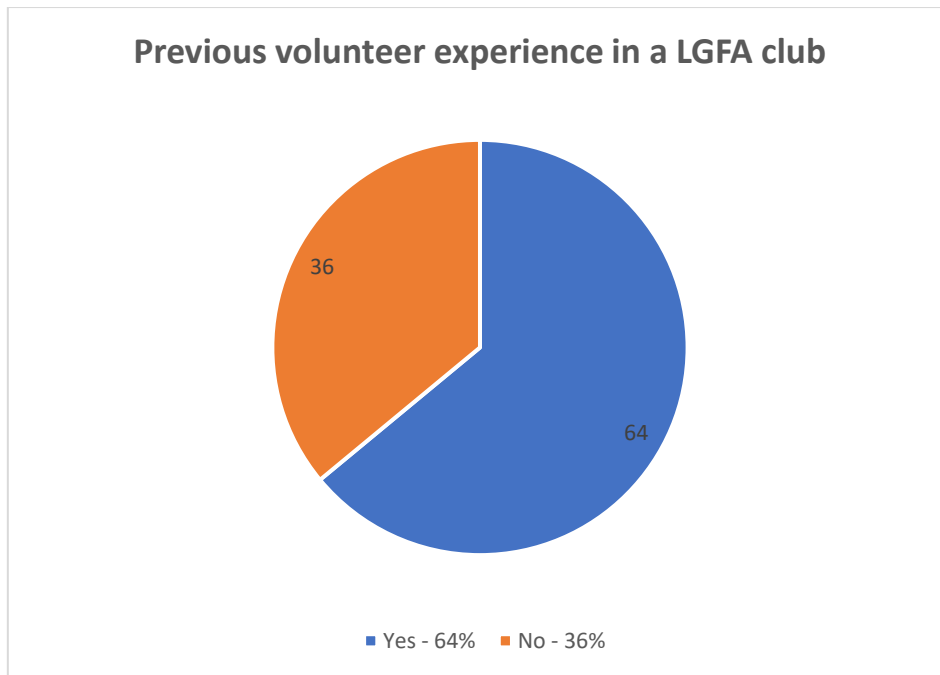


Figure 1. Previous volunteer experience in a LGFA club

### **Sub-theme 2: Reasons for not volunteering before**

To get a better understanding for no previous volunteering experiences, it was asked if there was a particular reason why they have not.

*'I didn't have the time to volunteer'*

*'I had other commitments'*

*'I didn't have any family involved in playing football'*

The above three quotes resonated in many responses that came back. On a positive note, over 72% responded that they had volunteered in some sort of capacity before in some organisation, not just the LGFA. So this inclusion programme served as a great way of upskilling many people to begin volunteering or progress onto volunteer roles with more leadership and responsibility.



## **Theme 2: What they wanted to take away from the programme experience**

### **Sub-theme 1: Increased levels of physical activity**

In line with the Get Ireland Active! The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, it is recommended that adults aged 18-64 years of age should be active for at least 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity on 5 days of the week.

*'I hope to improve my fitness levels and have a group of people to help motivate me along'*

The Gaelic4Mothers&Others programme would help women to achieve these recommended physical activity levels by attending trainings and events provided by their club, county and LGFA by means of organised blitzes.

### **Sub-theme 2: Increased knowledge of Ladies Gaelic Football**

Many responses received back included that the participants wanted to learn new skills and ideas to bring back to contribute to their clubs.

*'To learn how things work in an LGFA club and where I can be useful'*

*'Improve my skills in dealing with people'*

The inclusion programme provided a wide array of courses to suit all the needs of a volunteer in an LGFA club. The participants spoke highly of the facilitators and guest speakers at each of the webinars delivered.

*'All the webinars I attended were extremely well delivered and very informative'*

*'Webinars were easy to follow and I gained a lot of new knowledge'*

*'I now have confidence in my own skillset'*

### **Theme 3: Learning approaches**

#### **Sub-theme 1: Adaption to online learning**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of the programme had to be delivered online as apposed to the traditional face-to-face learning. This was an adaption that many had to learn to adjust to but all participants managed very well with the online delivery.

*'The instruction provided of how to access the webinars was very helpful'*

*'It was great to log on to a webinar from home instead of having the added time of travelling'*

Ideally, the full aspects of the programme would be of more benefit to be delivered in a face-to-face capacity but the circumstances at the time of delivery of the programme provided to work out very well.

#### **Sub-theme 2: Timing of programme**

As the Gaelic4Mothers&Others programme is geared towards women over the age of 25, they lead very busy lives with family, work and other commitments. Some responses received back from participants voiced that they would love if some of the webinars were provided at a later time or if there could be an access portal to go through the courses in their own time.

*'Webinars at 7pm-8pm didn't suit a few mums with young children'*

*'A possibility of accessing and navigating courses in your own time in the future if possible?'*

A possible delivery of courses provided on the e-learning portal would benefit people with busy lifestyles.

## **Theme 4: Networking**

### **Sub-theme 1: Meeting new people in the area**

The Gaelic4Mothers&Others programme has been a great way of having women meet new people in their area that they might not have crossed paths with outside the programme. It brings together women with similar interests from different backgrounds.

*'New ways of training and meeting up, as it's not just about football'*

*'It's about all women of different ages coming together that have never played before'*

*'Community connections is important for clubs in rural areas'*

*'Skills and friendship. A time for me every week'*

The programme also provides an outlet to women to help develop themselves with skills and knowledge of the Ladies game. A time to take for themselves every week that they would look forward to attending and catching up with the other women.

### **Sub-Theme 2: Learning other people's experiences**

Another unique aspect of the programme is the blending of experiences of different levels of involvement in Ladies football. You have people who played football their whole life competitively and people who have never had any engagement with Ladies football that are all collectively looking to have fun and give back to the community.

*'Just to continue playing as a much older player on the team and hope to get involved with coaching when I hang up the boots'*

*'I'm new to the game and was looking to develop new skills while meeting new people'*

## **Theme 5: Future Volunteering**

### **Sub-theme 1: Confidence in putting name forward for volunteering**

One of the main projected outcomes of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme was to increase the numbers of volunteers in clubs and to progress women already in volunteer roles to progress to leadership roles with more responsibility.

The feedback from the participants is that they have more confidence in getting involved and putting their name in to help out at their local LGFA clubs now that they have the knowledge and skillset provided by the courses on the inclusion programme. Results from the questionnaire after completion of the inclusion programme came back at being 100% confident in taking on more volunteer roles in their club.

*'I've done a lot of reading about coaching since this particular lockdown began and I found the peer-to-peer webinar very useful'*

*'Having completed courses and gained qualifications to volunteer and give back to the club + game, after all the years I have got out of playing the game'*

### ***Adapting the Programme***

In originally planning and devising this programme it was not envisaged that a pandemic would have such a profound effect on how this project was delivered. Quick adaptation was required from the project delivery team. All stakeholders worked towards a strategy to reimagine how to best deliver the programme. What seemed at first to be a negative impact provided the foundations of new perspectives, new methods, and a new vision of how the programme could be delivered. All courses migrated to an online platform allowing participants to attend from their own home and facilitators were now able to reach a larger audience than first projected.

### ***Supporting our participants***

As the programme progressed it was evident that the pandemic was having a negative effect on society as a whole in many ways. As part of Suite 2 it was established that the programme would provide participants with the tools to be able to support each other both on and off the pitch. Peer to peer support is one of the main themes of the G4M&O programme and with this as a factor our programme reached its crescendo with a webinar from a psychologist in how participants can offer each other support and feedback and how to stay positive during adversity. Some of the most positive feedback received was in relation to the delivery of this peer-to-peer support webinar and the projected positive impact that it would have within the groups going forward.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the participants were incredibly happy with the programme and spoke very highly of the content and facilitators. Participants appreciated the ease of access to the online content and webinars. Participants intend to begin volunteering in their club if they have not done so already while others are looking to progress onto volunteering roles with more leadership and responsibility now that they have the courses completed that were provided by the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme.

*'It's great to see how Ladies football has grown over the last few years and to just continue on with that great work being achieved'*

## **Future Recommendations**

While the programme was extremely positive, there are some recommendations that emerged following the pre and post questionnaires which include as follows:

- Provide more availability and access to webinars. Possible recordings or guided courses through means of the e-learning portal to be accessed in peoples own time. To help accommodate people with busy schedules.
- Organise more events for the Gaelic4Mothers&Others teams to attend and participate in.
- For a LGFA coach to visit the clubs and bring them through a training session and provide more ideas for what they can do in their sessions.

To conclude the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme received high praise from the participating Gaelic4Mothers&Others teams in Leitrim. With some of the recommendations mentioned above, the programme has the potential to be even more beneficial and successful to other counties that participate in the Gaelic4Mothers&Others inclusion programme.

## LEITRIM GAELIC 4 MOTHERS & OTHERS INCLUSION PROGRAMME



**PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION  
TO PROGRAMME - VOLUNTEER  
INTRODUCTION**  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> - 7PM

**BOOK NOW >**

**G4M60 WEBINAR- EFFECTIVE  
COACHING PRACTICES FOR G4M60**  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> - 7PM  
No Booking Necessary  
Open to all participants

**ONE GOOD COACH**  
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> - 7PM  
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OCTOBER 19<sup>TH</sup>-23<sup>RD</sup>  
Booking: Contact Project Coordinator  
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FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> - 7PM

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TUESDAY OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup> 7PM  
Booking: Contact Project Coordinator  
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**SAFEGUARDING 1 COURSE**  
OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup>

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## LEITRIM GAELIC 4 MOTHERS & OTHERS INCLUSION PROGRAMME



**SAFEGUARDING 1 COURSE**  
TUESDAY JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> - 7PM

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**SAFEGUARDING 2 COURSE**  
FRIDAY JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> - 7PM

**BOOK NOW >**

**CARA INCLUSION COURSE**  
TUESDAY JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>  
6.30 - 8PM

**BOOK NOW >**

**COACHING THE TEENAGE PLAYER**  
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup>  
8 - 9PM

**BOOK NOW >**



**MANAGING A  
PARENTS EXPECTATIONS**  
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2<sup>ND</sup> 7 - 8 PM

**BOOK NOW >**

**PEER TO PEER SUPPORT FOR  
G4M60 PARTICIPANTS**  
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup> 7 - 8 PM

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