



Celebrating Women

“As long as there is passion and courage, anything is possible.”

Amal Azzudin, Glasgow Girl

Celebrating women is about more than congratulating each other and highlighting the achievements women have in traditionally male areas of society.

Going online, we can now easily find information on women such as Ada Lovelace, the first female computer scientist, or Boudica, known for her military prowess. Although it is important that women can contribute to all areas of society, celebrating their achievements should also bring value to the contributions that have been neglected by society.

Women provide most of our care, informal support in our communities and 50% of women volunteer their time to a variety of services and activities. It is essential that the fullness of women's contributions to society is recognised rather than only those that reflect men's experience. This lack of recognition would suggest we are trying to catch up, rather than having pride in our positive impacts on society.

The future of our girls and young women relies not only on role models to encourage them to enter into traditional male areas, such as science, but also a celebration of contributions of their mothers, grandmothers and other women in their communities.

The Girl Guiding Report of 2018 found that only 25% of girls and young women, 7 – 21 years, compared to 41% in 2009, said they were very happy. Our girls are getting more unhappy. This was alongside 73%, as compared to 57% in 2009, believing that “women have to work much harder than men to succeed”.

Having access to knowledge about the variety of contributions women have made to society will offer girls and young women positive role models that are often focussed on the health and wellbeing of their communities. This is in contrast to careers that contribute to the building of weapons of mass destruction and the reinforcement of an economy based on profit rather than people, both systems that negatively impact on women's lives locally and globally. Embracing the positive contribution women make would not only improve confidence and self-esteem in women, but would also influence how we measure success as a society, and in turn encouraging an economy based on the health and wellbeing of all.

International Women's Day (IWD) on 8th March every year is a celebration of women's contributions to society. This is an opportunity to highlight women's positive impact in all its glory. From women sharing their experiences, to information stalls, to academic research discussing women's achievements, IWD is a time of celebration and acknowledgement. As Alison O'Hagan of Scottish Women's Budget Group highlights “In fixing a broken economic system we need to develop a caring economy that nurtures individuals, recognises the value of care and rewards the provision of care”. Only by celebrating and valuing women's contribution will we transform our society. However as Marilyn Waring highlighted, “... no liberal minded male is waiting onstage to change the institutionalized value of women's work. That becomes the task for each of us in all that we do.”

EVENT RESULTS

THEME: In Celebration of Women: Our strengths, our struggles, our achievements and our aspirations.

PARTICIPANTS: Total of 41 women from local communities, representing a wide range of backgrounds, convened 10 break-out groups on issues with 30 proposed actions. **(Mar 2013)**

TOP FIVE PRIORITIES VOTED BY PARTICIPANTS (NUMBER OF VOTES)

- Recognise when people try to pull you down – it's their issue, not yours. **20 votes**
- To claim power for themselves and their children. **19 votes**
- Showing that women have achieved globally across all cultures. **17 votes**
- Incorporating women's roles in history into school curriculums. **16 votes**
- Trust your intuition – you know what's best for your own life. **14 votes**
- Finding the goddess inside you by trusting your intuition...believe in yourself and relish your inner beauty as a woman (14 votes)

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

- Individual action/mindset change. **166 votes**
- Education/Awareness raising. **83 votes**
- Government or legislative change. **9 votes**

DETAILED RESULTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

- Recognise when people try to pull you down – it's their issue, not yours. **20 votes**
- To claim power for themselves and their children. **19 votes**
- Incorporating women's roles in history into school curriculums. **16 votes**
- Showing that women have achieved globally across all cultures. **17 votes**
- Finding the goddess inside you by trusting your intuition...believe in yourself and relish your inner beauty as a woman. **14 votes**
- Trust your intuition – you know what's best for your own life. **14 votes**
- Outdoor activities. **13 votes**
- Take responsibility, control and the right to our own health...regardless of age, background or ability. **12 votes**
- Encourage women to come into positions of leadership within religious traditions and organisations. **12 votes**
- Recognition that scripture and tradition have often been mistranslated or misrepresented to perpetrate the subordination of women. **11 votes**
- Celebrate women. **11 votes**