



MORE WOMEN – CHANGING THE FACE OF POLITICS

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF RUNNING
FOR ELECTION IN IRELAND

Dr. Fiona Buckley and Dr. Lisa Keenan
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What we know about gendered barriers

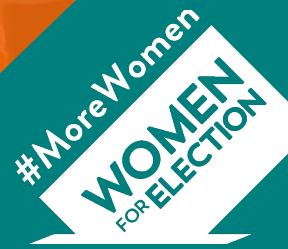


At election time, male candidates outnumber women

- The 5 Cs (see Bacik Report, 2009*):
 - cash
 - care
 - confidence
 - culture
 - candidate selection
- A 6th C
 - cyberspace

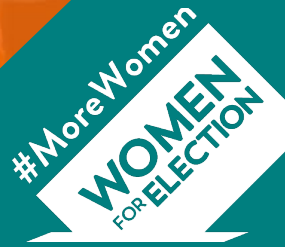
*https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_justice_and_equality/reports/2009/2009-11-05_women-s-participation-in-politics_en.pdf

Research Synopsis: The 4 Rs



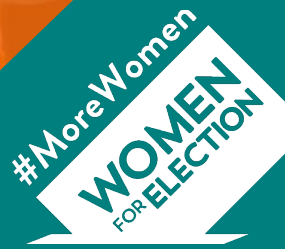
- Recruitment
- Resources
- Resistance
- Resilience

Recruitment



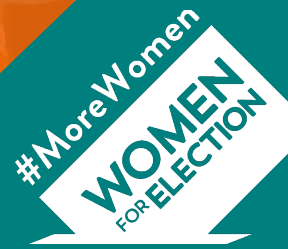
- Parties
- Family and friends
- Motivating factors (personal, community, social, global)
 - A desire to engender change
- Capacity training

Resources



- Party supports
- The support of family and friends
- Practical assistance with care responsibilities
- Job flexibility
- Personal networks
- Campaign team (campaign manager)
- Finances
- Capacity training and mentoring

Resistance

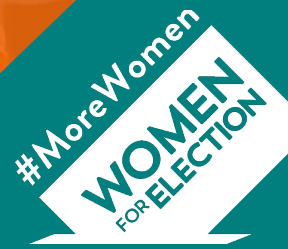


- Party-based
 - Internal tribal politics within political parties
 - Selection to unwinnable seats
- Online
 - Personalised, abusive and racist messages via social media
 - Sexist comments
- In public
 - Verbally abused in public areas such as on the street, while campaigning

Go for it!

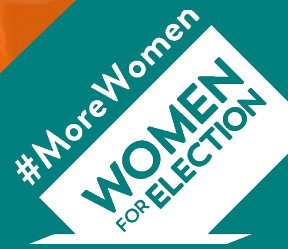
- Canvassing and campaign launches can be very exciting
- Interacting with people is very enjoyable
- Be prepared for long hours
- Difficult interactions
- The support of family, friends and the party is essential when such incidences arise.

Election Day & Count Day



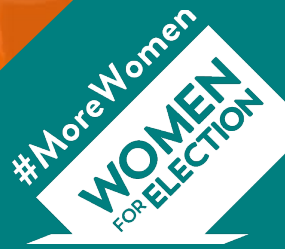
- The evening before the vote feels:
'a bit like Christmas Eve, where you can't really sleep and you're kind of excited to get up and go vote'.
- Election day is spent with family and voting can be quite an emotional experience:
'It was overwhelming; it really was, to go in and see myself on that ballot paper'.
- Count day is very much about the party and the campaign team:
'It's not just me, there's a team...[I'm the]...campaign front'.
- There are winners and losers
'I think people underestimate just how gutting it is to lose an election'.

Getting elected



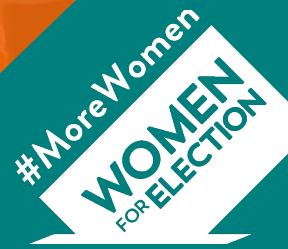
- Being elected is a huge honour and women speak of it in humbling terms.
- Women are hugely respectful of the faith that voters have entrusted in them and are privileged to serve and represent their constituents.

Systemic change



- Provision of party resources
- Feedback
- Winnable seats
- Extend legislative gender quotas to local elections
- Paid maternity leave
- Childcare costs during an election campaign

Conclusion



- Achieving gender parity and diversity in Irish political decision-making, is an ongoing process.
 - Demands a continuing focus and resources to achieve it.
- The vast majority of the women we interviewed, would do it all again and would encourage other women to run

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An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



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