

# We Can Make a Difference Questionnaire Results

Of the total number of *We Can Make a Difference* Questionnaires that were sent out, 3,109 were returned, or a return rate of 21 per cent, which is considered an excellent response.

## Questions:

1. Most of the information on what Women's Institute Area members belonged to was not appropriately indicated.

2. What the survey revealed about the age of members is not surprising. Nearly 85 per cent of the respondents are over the age of fifty, with 66.8% of the membership falling in the sixty plus age group.

3. From a list of six choices, members were to indicate two in which the Women's Institute has had the greatest impact.

From a summary of question 3, 32.5% of the respondents indicated they were more informed than if they had stayed at home and 24.0% indicated they made more friends than they would have otherwise. Another 19.3% noted they had stretched into new areas they wouldn't normally have tried, and 18.2% said they were more community-oriented.

4. Respondents were asked to pick three from a list of eleven choices when answering what kept them coming back to WI meetings when they first joined.

Respondents - 26.0% and 23.6% respectively - noted friendship and being part of something worthwhile as their reasons. Others, responding in a range from 6 to 13 per cent, noted they kept coming back to meetings because the WI was involved in various activities, dealt with community issues, enabled them to expand their outlook, and learn life skills.

5. Question 5 asked members to compare their current feelings about the WI in comparison to earlier years.

Responding in a range from 52 to 64 per cent, members said that their love for, support of, satisfaction with, and enjoyment of the WI was the same as in earlier years. However, others (responding in a range from 22 to 36 per cent) noted these feelings were greater than in their earlier experiences. At the opposite end of the scale, 11 to 17 per cent of the members said they experienced a loss of these feelings.

Nearly 62 per cent of the members noted they have never been frustrated with the organization, while 22 per cent reported a greater frustration at present. And, given the average age of a Women's Institute member, it is not surprising that 55.4% of the respondents are more involved now than when they first joined.

6. When asked which one of the nine reasons listed kept them from doing more in WI, 60.6% of all respondents said they were involved as much as one could be. Other reasons noted (5 to 9 per cent of the time)

included: not interested in what the WI is doing; attend meetings when my schedule permits; prefer to participate in specific events; not prepared to be more committed; and, not outgoing enough to become more involved.

7. From a list of twelve items, respondents checked off which one best described the impression people in their community have of the Women's Institute. Of the members who responded, 38.5% believed the general impression is that the WI is a group of women who spearhead a number of worthwhile community activities. Another 19.5% believed that people know the WI as a ladies group in name only.

A variety of other impressions of the WI (falling in a range from 5 to 7 per cent) included: quilting and/or baking ladies; a family life education group; no familiarity at all; a catering service for community dinners; a support force for local issues; a ladies social club; and, a group who supports youth programs.

8. Members - 23.8% - reported financial commitments as the biggest stress facing families in their communities today. Others, responding in a range from 5 to 17 per cent, noted disciplining teenagers, time management, workload, lifestyle, and lack of work as significant stresses.

9. Respondents noted that their communities are struggling with a number of issues. Fourteen per cent reported a lack of activity for children as a concern, and another 14 per cent felt that poor attendance at local events was an issue. Others, responding in a range from 5 to 10 per cent, reported their communities struggled with the following areas: the quality of life; morals and responsibility; life skills, budgeting and disciplining; a lack of a sense of community; and, apathy.

10. Members were asked to identify three items from a list of twelve that best described the most positive contribution their WI group had made in their community.

Of the total number of respondents - 22.1% and 20.3% respectively - reported their WI group made the most positive contribution with 4-H Clubs and the preservation of historical records. Another 14.6% noted the most positive contribution of the WI was amongst its membership. Other areas, falling in a range from 7 to 10 per cent, included health care, fund raising events, community courses and fair activities.

11. Members were asked to rate their WI as a team in responding to needs in their community.

In a range from 46 to 66 per cent, members said their WIs were very prompt and organized, and have a take-action attitude, a united team effort, a tackle anything mentality and the talent and resources to meet the need. At the other end of the scale, 10

to 20 per cent of the respondents felt their groups were slow off the mark, poorly organized, more talk than action, and they lacked membership support and had an it can't be done mentality. Others rated their groups as average in their response to meeting needs in the community.

12. Question 12 asked members to identify, from a list of twelve items, the three most prominent attitudes that their group displayed.

Of the total number of responses, 27% noted friendly. Another 15.1% and 14.2%, respectively, noted helpful and supportive. In a range from 6 to 11 per cent, other members described their groups as enthusiastic, committed, organized and sociable.

13. Respondents were asked, from a list of ten items, what they considered to be the three most important areas where the WI would be most effective.

As a percentage of the total number of responses, members felt the WI would be most effective in the area of the environment (18.5%), the local community (18.5%) and education (16.8%). Falling in a range from 5 to 11 per cent, members also felt they would be effective in the areas of lifestyles, consumerism, health care, personal growth and family issues.

14. Question 14 asked members to rate the impact of WI resolutions at various government levels.

Members felt WI resolutions have the most impact at the provincial (51.3%) and municipal (37.9%) levels. Others, responding in a range from 45 to 60 per cent, reported the following about the impact of resolutions: very effective in influencing or originating legislation; what could be expected given the political and economic climate; could be better in our presentation of the material; feel too many issues are represented; and, the WI should be more aggressive. It was also revealed that a large number of people were not really clear of the impact of WI resolutions.

15. Taking into consideration all the activities their group has been involved in, Question 15 asked the members to rate WI performance in their area in the past year concerning the four objectives of the organization as listed on page 6 of the *FWIO Handbook*.

Also, responding in a range from 7 to 17 per cent, members noted a number of other comments, including: did not take part in anything related to this so I can't judge; subjects or activities we planned didn't meet this objective; good attempt, but could have been better organized; best attempt we've had to date; we were focused on other objectives; and, experienced personal growth regarding this objective.