

## **Initial explorative study into the transferability of a Mobile teaching kitchen (MTK) initiative to a Northern Ireland context**

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The MTK international is an initiative developed by the NNEdPro Global Institute that aims to address malnutrition and food insecurity through nutritional education and community engagement whilst empowering marginalised women to become micro-entrepreneurs and culinary health educators.

In Northern Ireland 16% of all adults (or their households) have experienced food insecurity in 2022, that is an estimated 354,000 people (The Trussel Trust, 2023 and DoHNI, 2023.) Over the past five years the need for food banks has been greater in Northern Ireland than other parts of the United Kingdom. Almost half the people referred to food banks in Northern Ireland have had no advice from other services and more than 79% are destitute. The Department of Health NI (2023) reported less than half of all NI adults are consuming their recommended 5 a day of fruits and vegetables whilst the Northern Ireland Assembly (2011) reported 59% of NI adults as obese or overweight.

This project aimed to gain an initial insight into the transferability of a Mobile teaching Initiative into Northern Ireland.

Conducted at Footprints Women's Centre, Belfast this qualitative research study involved semi-structured focus group interviews with 11 female participants from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Using Braun and Clarke analysis the key themes identified in this study included the demand for greater nutritional education, the inclusion of men in nutritional initiatives, the influence of social media on food habits, and the perceived loss of Northern Ireland's food identity. Participants expressed a strong desire for enhanced nutritional knowledge to improve family health and revive traditional cooking skills.

The findings highlight the potential of the MTK International framework to address these needs by fostering community-based nutritional education and micro-enterprises, thereby promoting sustainable health improvements and economic opportunities in Northern Ireland.

## References

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