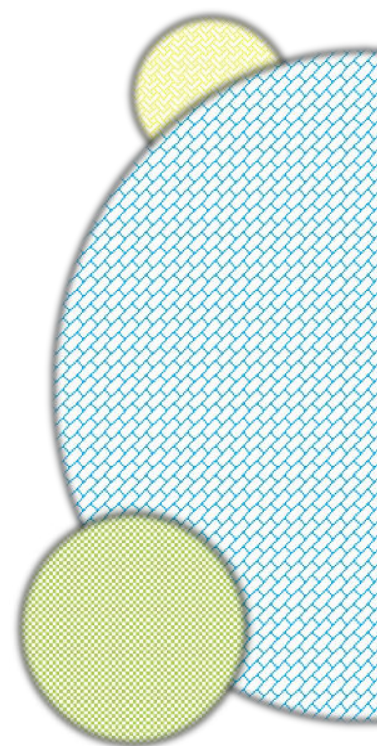


Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018-2023 (SICAP)

LDC Annual Progress Report 2023
LOT – Kildare County (6-1)



**Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme**



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union



pobal

government supporting communities

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027

Purpose of the 2023 Annual Progress Report

The purpose of the 2023 Annual Progress Report is to capture the role that SICAP played in responding to the needs of SICAP target groups during the year. In doing so, this report will capture beneficiaries' needs in your Lot in 2023, the approaches used by the programme to respond to these needs, alongside challenges faced and lessons learned during the year. As this is the final year of SICAP 2018-2023, where appropriate, please include examples that illustrate the long-term, developmental approaches taken to support target groups as well as the cross-programme, integrated approach utilised.

There is a dedicated section within this year's Annual Progress Report where you can outline the details of the supports that you have provided to the Ukrainian arrivals and/or people seeking International Protection in your Lot.

There is a dedicated section to allow you to describe your work in responding to your chosen Lot priority groups within the National Programme Priorities.

Space is also provided for you to reflect on the supports provided by DRCD and/or Pobal in 2023.


Report size guide: 8-11 pages, excluding Annex 1. A page number guide is provided for each question. This can be adapted slightly to suit your reporting needs.

Two-three photographs can be included (optional), with the understanding that relevant permissions have been received and captions describing the photographs are provided. We would strongly encourage you to include photos and/or links to short videos if possible.

1. Please describe the needs of SICAP beneficiaries in 2023 and, where applicable, your responses to these needs. (3-5 pages)

Guidance: Please consider individuals, LCGs, SEs, children and families, and non-caseload individuals, and complete the below table. **Please do not include details on Ukrainians/International Protection applicants in this section** as there is a dedicated Ukrainian section within this report. The following questions may be useful to reflect on:

- What types of support did beneficiaries require during the year? What did these supports look like? Please consider **individuals, LCGs, SEs, children and families, and non-caseload individuals**, when providing your answer.
- Please bear in mind the programme’s horizontal principles (i.e., promoting an equality framework, applying community development approaches, and developing collaborative approaches) when providing your answer.

Beneficiary type	Identified needs in 2023	LDC Responses to needs
<p>INDIVIDUALS</p>	<p>Jobseeker Skill Gaps</p>  	<p>Skills gaps ranging from basic life skills to industry related skills to increase employability were evident across many cohorts of jobseekers in 2023.</p> <p>Employment Support Workers actively engaged unemployed individuals through local contacts, networks, internal programmes and social media promotion. SICAP Community Development Outreach workers, engaging with disadvantaged communities and groups, also referred individuals for one-to-one supports and group training initiatives.</p> <p>Over 1000 clients were registered in 2023, with career coaching the initial support offered, exploring training needs and options, supporting CV preparation, and identifying job opportunities, both scheme placements and mainstream employment. SICAP collaborated with DSP (receiving referrals for CV, Manual Handling training and Back to Work Enterprise supports) and with the Local Area Employment Service Network (LAESN). Clients received information on education and training options and were referred to KWETB and other training organisations relevant to their identified interests. Clients were also referred to TUS and CE schemes for positions where they could build confidence and skills. In collaboration with DSP, a group of unemployed people visited the Tallaght Training Centre with SICAP providing transport and lunch.</p> <p>A successful network meeting of CE Supervisors and Sponsors in the county was organised in 2023. During this event, difficulty in encouraging participants engagement on training was raised. In response, SICAP organised a workshop on Dealing with Resistance in November for all Supervisors, which was very well attended, and further collaboration with Supervisors has been agreed for 2024.</p> <p>In response to the varied needs of long-term unemployed people (and other client groups), SICAP organised over 90 programmes with 882 people participating in County Kildare over the course of 2023.</p>



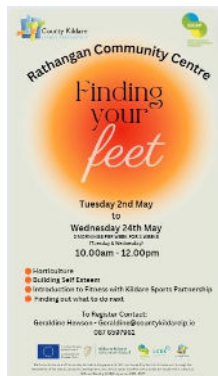
These spanned a wide range of interests and needs reflecting those of disadvantaged individuals and groups who are the priority focus of SICAP's work. Programmes ranged from uncertified programmes such as Personal Development, Healthy Food Made Easy, Resilience Through Arts, First Aid, Smart Tech and Craft courses to multiple industry certified courses including Manual Handling, Safe Pass, HACCP, Operating Small Engines, Plant Propagation, Small Engine Maintenance, Social Media Skills training in addition to Enterprise Skills Workshops and modules.

Reflecting the growing need for soft skills, life skills and improved mental health and wellbeing as essential foundations for both quality of life and progression towards the labour market, SICAP introduced two new initiatives: "Living Life Better" and "Believe in Yourself", focusing on self-esteem, confidence building, and personal development, in addition to the established "Finding Your Feet" programmes.

Soft skills programmes also reflected a practical orientation, covering essential tasks such as registering for mygov.ie, revenue website, downloading email apps, creating and sending emails, and accessing information online, enhancing digital literacy, an increasingly vital skill for life functioning without which many services and opportunities cannot be accessed. The real-life, real-time scenarios incorporated into the programmes add a practical dimension, ensuring that participants can apply their skills to everyday situations.

Participants' progression from initial personal development modules onto Digital Smart Tech Programmes and QQI Level Courses demonstrated the effectiveness of the programmes in preparing individuals for more advanced educational and employment opportunities, acting as a pathway to further education and skill development.

Youth Resilience and Capacity Building



Lack of resilience, confidence, and life skills, often leading to mental health problems, non-attendance at school and risk of early school leaving were consistent issues emerging in 2023.

Regular contact with individuals to build trust, develop relationships and encourage further engagement in group activities proved essential. Personal development was key, first delivered through one-to-one engagement and subsequently through participation in resilience programmes, 'Finding your Feet' and 'Believe in Yourself'.

These programmes were tailored to the needs of individuals within each group encompassing elements such as personal development, confidence building and self-esteem, soft skills, citizenship, communications, personality types, learning styles, goal setting, active listening skills, teamwork and networking in a digitally driven world. A customised, blended learning approach was adopted in some



instances in response to continued hesitancy linked to Covid restrictions, challenging transport issues and intense social anxiety levels.

In response to issues of isolation, a number of experiential, in-person activities were also developed to address rising anxiety levels among this cohort. These included social and developmental outings such as native tree planting in Lullymore Heritage Park, visits to Tallaght Training Centre, activities with Kildare Sports Partnership and Dragonboat exercises in Athy.

To support individuals' readiness to join the labour market, assistance was provided with work preparation, cover letters, writing techniques, updating C.V.'s, completing job applications forms, (hardcopy and online) and practice interview techniques. Outcomes among the caseload cohort included 54 progressed to employment, 40 to education and training and a number also progressed to supported employment schemes.

Easy access to illegal substances and the negative effects this is having on people, plus the use of e-cigarettes and their effects, further compounded problems with this age cohort. Healthy lifestyle programmes for youth were delivered alongside workshops on drug and alcohol awareness to address this.

Isolation among Older People




Continued disengagement and isolation of Older People was a challenge to be addressed in 2023.


Responding to the unique needs, issues and challenges which continued to impact older people post-Covid, required innovative and collaborative approaches both internally across programmes and externally in conjunction with other agencies and community-based organisations.


Promoting and providing opportunities for networking with services available within their communities had a dual benefit in assisting older people to have their practical needs met, while also providing opportunities for social engagement and interaction.


These services included Kildare Small Jobs offering low-cost home repairs and maintenance supports, TFI Kildare South Dublin Local Link Transport providing helping to overcome transport barriers, social and developmental opportunities through Older Voices Kildare, mental health supports through the Heads-Up Programme, HSE supports and services, and healthy lifestyle initiatives such as Sláintecare Healthy Food Made Easy programmes. Hampers for older vulnerable people were funded by SICAP and delivered in collaboration with Older Voices Kildare and the Small Jobs Service.

Further addressing specific needs identified, SICAP delivered a range of workshops and initiatives including First Aid as an essential life skill, Smart Tech Digital Skills fostering connectivity and independence in an increasingly technology-driven world, and Wellbeing/Mindfulness Workshops in recognition of the mental health and wellbeing challenges many of this age cohort experienced. Collaboration with the Kildare Age-

		<p>Friendly Network and partnership with Older Voices Kildare to deliver personal development programmes in Coill Dubh and Naas, proved an effective approach offering long term benefits for participants.</p>
<p>LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS</p>	<p>Re-igniting Communities</p> 	<p>The North-West Kildare ‘Know Your Community’ event was organised as a collaborative piece of work to link communities in NWK and signpost them to relevant services and opportunities to encourage re-engagement post-pandemic. Featuring agencies as TFI Kildare South Dublin Local Link Transport, Kildare Sports Partnership, Credit Unions, MABS, Garda Services, First Responders, KWETB, Citizens Information, and local community groups, this event resulted in greatly enhanced community engagement and awareness.</p> <p>Over 200 local people attended from a wide range of groups in the area including Coill Dubh Residents Association, NWK Women’s Group, Prosperous Community Association, Newtown Community Group, Allen Area Historical Group, Na Fianna Men’s Shed, Naas Men’s Shed, Cooleragh & Staplestown Men’s Shed, Johnstownbridge Men’s Shed, Timahoe AC, Allen and Surrounding areas group, Enfield Skate, Clane Men’s Shed, Maynooth Men’s Shed, Maynooth ICA, Timahoe Community Council, Timahoe Active Age, Timahoe Senior Citizens, St Mochua’s Historical Society, and Tir Na Mona Group. Events such as this, support networking between groups, raise awareness and provide opportunities for linkage between groups.</p> <p>The County Kildare LEADER Partnership (CKLP) 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan was launched in December by Martin Heydon T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Taking place at the new Kildare Community Development Centre in Kildare Town where CKLP is now located, the launch was organised to coincide with an Open Day welcoming the local community and offering an opportunity for local people to view the former Presentation Convent and the work that CKLP undertakes with individuals and groups with the assistance of funding from various Government departments and other sources.</p> <p>Lack of transport remains a challenge, particularly in rural communities in the west of the county. In response to this need and in order to encourage groups to become active again, a Social Transport Fund was established in collaboration with Kildare South Dublin Local Link. €10,000 was allocated to support once-off transport trips, with a range of groups availing of the Fund, including Naas Scouts, Newbridge Women’s Shed, Kildare Active Retired, BREDA Centre, Athy Womens Shed, Carbury Ladies Group, InSync Nass, Monasterevin Day Centre, Athy Breakout Art Group, Monasterevin Mens Shed, Rathangan Ladies Club, McAuley Place Residents, Rathangan Womens Shed, Kill Active Retired, Residents of Castle Park Athy and Balyna Active Retired. A further outcome of a local area planning process supported in Johnstownbridge, was the decision to fundraise for and purchase a community car following on from a transport survey conducted in 2022.</p>

		<p>Many community groups spoke of heightened concern around mental health and wellbeing for community members including older people, particularly in rural communities and with a particular emphasis in rural Northwest Kildare. In response to this, Local Community Groups were supported with a number of soft skills programmes and workshops. Cooking tutorial classes, six Healthy Food Made Easy programmes, Craft Classes including Christmas wreath making, Chair Yoga, Winter Wellness & Mindfulness, Digital Skills, and First Aid took place and a Mental Health programme has been organised for local men in the Northwest Kildare area in early January.</p> <p>Digital poverty and online access remained a challenge for many local community groups, limiting their ability to engage with and avail of online support. The needs varied from lack of knowledge and access to technology (equipment and broadband/Wi-Fi) to an inability to use online platforms like MS Teams and Zoom. Collaboration with Goal 2 staff saw the delivery of Smart-Tech training for groups while collaboration with KWETB resulted in the provision of digital skills courses for community groups. Three further Groups were supported in the last quarter to apply for tutor hours for Digital Skills to be rolled out in 2024.</p> <p>Grant application processes had also been identified as challenges, with Groups being supported during the year in applying for grants, particularly in the online submission process. These supports also included the later submission of evidence of spending and project reports from grant approvals.</p>
<p>SOCIAL ENTERPRISES</p>	<p>Strategy for Social Enterprise Development</p> 	<p>SICAP commissioned a three-year strategic Social Enterprise Strategy for the county with consultations commencing in the third quarter of 2023. These consultations will continue into Jan 2024 with implementation of actions arising due to start in 2024. The strategy focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the gaps/needs and challenges that face new social enterprises and deter them from getting started. • Identifying the supports and funding streams available to new and existing social enterprises. • Identifying areas (geographic or sectoral) where there is greatest potential for establishment of new social enterprises in Kildare. • Identifying the needs/gaps in support of existing social enterprise, including their training needs for their evolvment and sustainability. • Recommending a pathway for the development of a strong social enterprise sector within County Kildare, cross referencing with other action plans for the county, e.g. LEADER Local Development Plan, SICAP local area plans, Local Economic and Community Plan. <p>Further needs identified through site visits and networking events included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for mentoring in financial management and good governance. • need for funding around small capital items • ongoing need to be aware of funding opportunities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peer support/access to experts around everyday operational issues such as HR issues. <p>Responses included two Introduction to good governance workshops delivered to a group of newly established social enterprises, followed by one to ones to offer a more bespoke service on specific needs of each social enterprise. Three financial management mentoring sessions offering bespoke plans to individual social enterprises were also delivered.</p> <p>A small Capital grant scheme was offered, with five social enterprises awarded small grants to support their enterprises as follows: Allen Eye, Leixlip Youth and Community Centre, Piers Café Moone, Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association and the Local Market Hub. Items purchased through the scheme included laptop and printer, external digital sign, baked goods display, gardening equipment, catering kitchen equipment and food storage units.</p> <p>Networking remained an ongoing need for existing / new social enterprises as a channel for information on the sector / for peer support and information on possible funding opportunities. In 2023 two networking events took place online. The first was focused on capturing the needs/wants of existing social enterprises as part of a consultation process for the new LEADER programme starting in 2024. The second networking event again addressed needs/gaps for the SICAP social enterprise strategy and also discussed funding through the IMPACT funding awards through ILDN. Two more social enterprises joined the network.</p>
<p>CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p>	<p>Equalising opportunity in Education</p> 	<p>SICAP has been providing support to DEIS School Completion Programme clusters for activities which support young people who are at risk of early school leaving over the past number of years. Activities include Breakfast and Lunch Clubs, Homework Clubs and Summer Camps. In 2023, SICAP continued to respond to these issues through provision of funding, but the amounts requested have in some cases increased substantially, a reflection of the rising cost of living and increased demand for breakfast clubs and lunch clubs by families struggling to meet basic needs. The SCPs are of fundamental importance not only in dealing with food poverty but also in encouraging school attendance and better participation.</p> <p>In terms of racism and social exclusion, SICAP also supported the Yellow Flag Programme, which is aligned with the Kildare Traveller Roma Strategy and aims to achieve greater awareness, understanding and acceptance of Travellers and Roma. Schools participating in 2023 included Curragh Community College, St Mary's Naas which achieved all 8 Steps of the programme and was awarded Yellow Flag status in May 2023, and Pipers Hill College Naas which is in its' second year of the Yellow Flag Programme. The SICAP Education Support Worker is also joining the Equality Committee at Curragh Community College in 2024.</p> <p>Supports around literacy and promoting reading were also highlighted as key needs and priorities during 2023. A new project "Writer in Residence" was developed in late 2023 and will take place over a twelve-week period in five schools in the county, commencing early 2024. This is a joint initiative with Kildare Library Service, the volunteers from Better Basics and SICAP. The volunteers and the WiR will read with the children in small groups, and then support the children to write their own stories. At the end of the project,</p>

		<p>the Library Service will print the stories and present them to the children. The age range will be the same as for Better Basics, (from 2nd to 5th class), and the main aims of the project are to build confidence around reading and creative writing, to help promote inclusion and further develop social skills, as well as helping increase individual levels of self-confidence.</p> <p>SICAP further supported the JumpAGrade initiative rolled out in seven secondary schools around the county (priority given to DEIS schools) as a further initiative designed to address inequality in education, providing 12 funded one-to-one tuition places and 120 online revision places to those who would not traditionally be able to afford individual grinds / revision supports.</p>
<p>NON-CASELOAD INDIVIDUALS</p>	<p>Information Gaps</p>  	<p>Knowing where and how to access information relevant to a wide range of issues consistently arose in work with individuals and communities. In terms of communities, initiatives such as 'Know Your Community' as outlined earlier served to address this gap.</p> <p>In terms of needs of individuals, primary among these were knowledge around education, training and employment options. To this end, SICAP attended Information Fairs organised by DSP in Newbridge and Maynooth, providing SICAP information to over 100 people in each venue and signposting them to relevant options wherever possible.</p> <p>SICAP workers along with other relevant agencies, also attended the end of programme information event for every Heads-up mental health programme in the county and provided information on services available. Through outreach work with women's groups, the need for more information around menopause was highlighted. While there are many menopause coaches now providing support, cost is a barrier to many SICAP client groups. SICAP arranged a menopause seminar and question and answer session with a top Health and Mind coach with expertise in Menopause which was attended by 60 women and very highly rated.</p> <p>An Ageing Matters Programme was also supported by SICAP and delivered by Older Voices Kildare to engage older people, providing them with information around essential supports and opportunities while also helping them work through all aspects of ageing, explore health impacts, and empower them to see their strengths, abilities and learning and the potential benefits of these to their families and communities.</p>

2. Please provide an overview of SICAP support provided to the Ukrainian arrivals/International Protection Applicants in your Lot. (1-2 pages)

Guidance: What types of support did Ukrainians/International Protection Applicants require during the year? What did these supports look like? What challenges or barriers have you experienced? What has helped you overcome these barriers/challenges?

During 2023, Kildare experienced a continual increase in the number of Ukrainian Refugees and International Protection Applicants arriving into the county. The level of support needed was vast and varied.

In order to quickly ascertain the primary needs of Ukrainian refugees, SICAP produced an information and support checklist which was distributed in the various accommodation centres. Upon arrival, primary concerns were sourcing school places for children, and gaining access to social welfare payments and medical cards. Subsequently, the focus turned to English classes for non-English speakers and assistance with acquiring work permits. Access to laptops was also a priority to ensure children could attend online school and undertake schoolwork. When these initial needs were met and in progress, people's attention turned to job applications and seeking pledged accommodation to exit the centres.

In response to these needs, SICAP along with many other agencies, organised weekly information mornings in accommodation centres where staff shared information with residents and organised for relevant agencies to attend. Staff also consulted with the temporary accommodation providers through local contacts, community group members and pledged accommodation providers. SICAP, in collaboration with Helping Irish Hosts welcomed 80+ Ukrainian people and pledged accommodation hosts in the Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge for an information session on becoming a host for displaced Ukrainians.

The KWETB REALT coordinator provided support to source and place children in schools. SICAP supported this on many occasions and in one instance were required to source and fund transport to ensure primary school children could attend a school outside of their area, as local school places were not available and mainstream transport was not immediately accessible to this location.

Transport was also arranged to ensure people could attend the local social welfare office to organise payments. SICAP support staff on some occasions organised appointments and attended with people to assist with translation. SICAP staff also provided support in applying for medical cards and registering with a local doctor, which proved exceedingly difficult in 2023, due to the limited number of GP's taking on new patients.

The number of Ukrainian people with little or no English proved a substantial challenge and a primary barrier to many elements of setting up a new life in Ireland. The challenges affect their ability not only to secure work or engage in training but to access services and payments for which they are eligible. SICAP responded to these language challenges in a number of ways.

- Providing interpreting where necessary and assisting individuals with their particular needs by way of phone calls and accompanying them to appointments.
- Consulting with KWETB to enrol people on to ESOL classes
- Starting up Conversational English classes within easy access of learners.
- Collaborating with DSP to secure the Training Support Grant for residents to complete Safepass in Russian and also paying for manual handling to be delivered in the Ukrainian language.

Living in accommodation centres was challenging for residents and as part of the SICAP response to this, many family trips were organised in May, June July and August. These included:

- 288 Ukrainians taking part in a trip to Dublin Zoo
- 265 attending Lullymore Heritage Park
- Up to 200 attending the Kildare County Council and Kildare Sports Partnership Family Fun Day in the Curragh.
- A trip to the ploughing championship was also arranged with over 100 adults attending with SICAP staff.
- In recognition of Ukrainian Independence day on 24th August, SICAP organised a Family fun day in Newbridge with 250 people attending.

SICAP staff also collaborated with Kildare Sports Partnership to organise, run and fund two Halloween Camps in Athy Community College and Maynooth University for Ukrainian and IPA children from both areas. This ensured that it was an integrated event for the children. These trips were co-funded with Healthy Ireland funding.

For International Protection Applicants (IPAs), the waiting time to be granted a work permit can be up to 12 months. While waiting on this, SICAP provided a number of services for people including upskilling with Manual Handling and First Aid and signposting to other courses.

At the beginning of 2023, a group of twenty-four IPAs were moved into the Abbey Hotel in Athy. SICAP staff linked with local DSP staff to support residents in accessing information for PPS numbers and Medical Cards. Links were also made with Kildare Sports Partnership Staff for the residents to attend various sports and walks and access to swimming and play areas in Athy.

In October 2023, 88 individuals were moved into the Gables Guesthouse in Newbridge. They have access to the 'shop' in the Eyre Powell Direct Provision Centre also in Newbridge to purchase supplies and have cooking facilities in the Gables facility. There are 11 different languages spoken by residents in the accommodation. The residents are attending a local venue in Newbridge for Conversational English and a number have signed up for formal English Classes in Kildare Town with KWETB. SICAP funded the transport for the initial registration and assessment.

There are also International Protection Applicants in Celbridge Manor, Ryevale and Cluan Lara Emergency Accommodations Centres, in addition to the two Direct provision Centres in Newbridge and Monasterevin. All residents are supported by SICAP and AMIF Staff.



3. Please provide a brief update on your progress with your Lot Priority groups which you selected in 2021 as part of the mid-programme review. (1 page)

Guidance: Please tell us the agreed priority groups that you are working with and describe the challenges and successes that you have with this work in 2023.

Older People:

Supporting older people to fully re-engage and re-connect within their local communities and reduce isolation, loss of confidence and independence as lingering effects of the pandemic, were primary challenges, further compounded by their inability to keep pace with increasing digitalisation over that time period.

56 Older people were registered during 2023 receiving one-to-one support with individual needs with many others supported through a range of 'non-caseload' activities. Among the most successful in addressing these primary challenges, were a series of Ageing Matters programmes delivered in conjunction with Older Voices Kildare. These programmes supported Older People to engage, reduce isolation, and embrace ageing with confidence and pride. 32 people participated in three dedicated programmes.

Another highly successful initiative was Smart Tech programmes delivered during the year, with mostly older people attending. Over 60 people participated in seven such programmes. Referrals came through the SICAP Community Development team and through the Kildare County Council Active Aging Coordinator. The participants were very enthusiastic and eager to learn. The classes were adapted to the learning needs of each group, and everyone learned on their own devices (primarily smartphones as chosen by the participants). The primary challenge related to retention of information and four weeks was sometimes seen by participants as not sufficient.

Long Term Unemployed (LTU):

Each Individual who registers with SICAP has an action plan drawn up capturing their needs and barriers to returning to work. Among the challenges identified with long term unemployed people were literacy issues, ageing and being physically unable for the work they used to do (particularly construction), and confidence in their ability to get a job.

In addition to one-to-one career coaching, and life coaching where needed, by SICAP staff, and referral to mainstream services for specific supports, several new courses were introduced during 2023 to assist people who may have worked in sectors no longer suitable for them. These proved successful in assisting people to acquire new skills relevant to opportunities and rebuild confidence in ability to access the labour market. These included Horticulture, Small Machine Maintenance and Operating Small Machinery, all of which were QQI-certified courses. This success was strengthened by cross-programme collaboration with TUS and CE schemes both in identification of candidates who could benefit from supports and as avenues for re-engaging in labour market activities upon completion. Weekly jobs information and soft skills supports were also key elements to tackling the barriers experienced.

In 2023, SICAP registered 300 clients who were Long Term Unemployed. Overall, 150 people progressed into employment, 43 of whom were long-term unemployed. 26 long-term unemployed people also progressed onto schemes such as Community Employment or TUS.



Small Engines Maintenance Course

County Kildare

Servicing, maintaining and diagnosing issues in small engines such as lawnmowers, leaf blowers and strimmer's

Kildare Town Community Development Centre
Meadow Road, Kildare Town, R51 RF88
29th and 30th June 2023 (Thur & Fri)
9.30am to 4.30pm

Register with Geraldine
geraldine@countykildarelp.ie
087 6597961



Home Repair Care & Maintenance

Kildare Community Development Centre
5 weeks
Wednesday 28th June / 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th July.

Basic Plumbing
Painting & Decorating
Tiling
Basic Electrical
Health & Safety

To Register:
Contact
geraldine@countykildarelp.ie
087 6597961



Operating Small Engines

County Kildare

Operating a Ride on /Push Lawn Mower, Hedge trimmer and Strimmer, Leaf Blower to the required safety standard.

Kildare Town Community Development Centre
Meadow Road, Kildare Town, R51 RF88
Thursday, 8th June 2023
9.30am to 4.30pm

Register with Geraldine
geraldine@countykildarelp.ie
087 6597961

New Communities:

SICAP registered 283 Individuals representing new communities. 65 were from Ukraine and 218 from other countries, including 125 from Africa, 15 from Poland, 14 from Asia, and 1 from the UK.

A major challenge for this group was English Language skills and fluency. Most continue to access some English language training through the KWETB and engage in the SICAP-run conversational English sessions that take place in various venues each week. While progression can be slow, a definite improvement has been noticed in those participating.

A further challenge is the lack of recognition of skills and learning from their home countries here in Ireland. Many people with university qualifications progress in the short term to work in local factories, where many from their communities' work and where English language skills are not necessarily impacting on their ability to do the job.

Travellers & Roma:

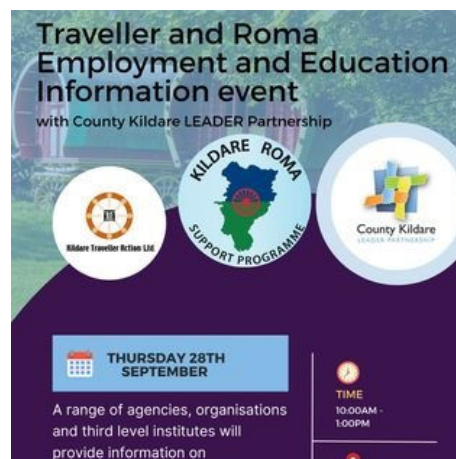
21 people identifying as Irish Travellers were registered in 2023. The Traveller Community Outreach Worker worked to identify CE placements for individuals and supported a number when they were placed. The engagement of Travellers on the CKLP CE scheme involved matching participants with voluntary organisations willing to act as placement providers. This strategy had mixed results with some organisations unwilling to take Traveller placements. In other cases, the placement was difficult to maintain without day-to-day support for the participant in a new environment and no prior training or work experience.

Ongoing support and capacity building was provided by the SICAP worker with potential CE participants with regard to training opportunities, mental health supports and information sharing, as well as liaison with managers/projects to secure CE placements and attendance at introductory meetings.

Building on this experience, a new approach to Traveller engagement on CE will be piloted in 2024 with the support of Kildare Traveller Action.

SICAP also funded a Traveller Education peer research project which involved the contracting of a research consultant and support for the training of peer researchers to ascertain the barriers to preschool, primary, and post-primary school education, with a view to formulation of recommendations for the removal of those barriers.

The Roma community faces distinct challenges, including literacy difficulties and barriers in using I.T. making it difficult for them to engage. The Roma Employment Support Worker funded by DCEDYI plays a crucial role in addressing the various needs of individuals within the Roma community, ranging from social integration to employment opportunities. A new initiative to engage Roma on Community Employment will commence in 2024 with the support of SICAP. Work on this initiative commenced in December 2023 with an information session for Roma and also agreement with DSP for a number of Roma positions on the CKLP CE Scheme.



Mental Health (including Youth):

202 disadvantaged young people have been supported by SICAP in 2023. Lack of resilience, confidence and life skills, often leading to mental health challenges such as social anxiety, were consistent issues experienced by SICAP staff in their work with young people. Consequently, addressing mental health and wellbeing issues as a primary barrier to further progression in life and work, has been at the centre of responses developed. Primary among these were the delivery of Confidence and Resilience programmes, along with healthy lifestyle programmes and experiential outings to places of interest or relevance to future opportunities.

SICAP staff also continued to support the expansion of the Social Farming initiative in County Kildare. Social Farming provides rural interaction with farm animals, horticultural activities and social interaction with farming families and the farming community. These interactions contribute significantly to improve mental health and wellbeing for the participants.

20 participants have experienced and completed Social Farming placements on social farms in Co Kildare in 2023. The placements varied in duration from 6 week to 12 week placements depending on the participants needs. Participants from KARE, Kildare Down Syndrome, Muiríosa and Stewart's Care have all completed placements in Co Kildare in 2023.

The impact of the wellbeing workshops and programmes for the groups and individuals as outlined above is substantial. These initiatives facilitate people in having new experiences, making new friends, encourage others to engage with groups, improve and enhance choices, promotes mental and physical wellbeing and health, improves communication and helps alleviate isolation. For some people, their weekly attendance at their group is the only interaction they have with peers.

Other groups are supported in their mental health through initiatives tailored to their needs as outlined earlier in relation to the different target groups.

4. Please outline the challenges faced and lessons learned in relation to the overall delivery of SICAP during 2023. Were you able to overcome any of the challenges? If so, please describe. (half a page - 1 page)

A consistent challenge for SICAP each year has been engaging and registering 26% of clients from disadvantaged areas. SICAP's ability to meet this target in 2023 was the result of substantial additional work and engagement in areas such as Athy, and through collaboration with the Slaintecare programmes such as Social Prescribing, Healthy Food Made Easy as well as the Empowering Communities Project and SICAP Support Workers presence in the area over the previous years. Knowledge gained of the areas and the people and relationships established and referrals from network organisations all helped to engage these disadvantaged area clients in SICAP supports.

Developing responses to meet the many and varied needs presenting, requires substantial funding and inter-agency collaboration, all of which takes time to negotiate and realise especially when overall resources in the county are limited. In terms of individual needs, this was somewhat overcome by directing clients to DSP to access training grants and also sourcing and directing clients to other courses delivered by agencies in the county. In terms of communities, building their capacity to lobby for enhanced provision is likely the most effective and sustainable solution.

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees and IPA's, sometimes at very short notice, proved a substantial challenge during the year. The dedication and flexibility of SICAP staff, along with strong collaborative relationships with other support agencies, were key factors in meeting this challenge. A quick response time and a good working relationship with other agencies in Kildare, assisted in meeting the varied needs of each new arrival.

The language barrier is one of the primary challenges for Ukrainians and New Communities. Access to formal English classes has proven difficult as the numbers of requests increase often at short notice. SICAP organised Conversational English classes in six areas of the county to help with this need and funded transport for some to travel to other towns in the county for classes where availability existed.

5. Please describe an approach or project that worked well in 2023 that you think would be useful to share with other SICAP implementers. (half a page)

Guidance: Please do not use the same project or approach that you used for your 2023 case study. This should be a different project.

Over the past few years, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) encountered challenges in engaging with individuals in disadvantaged areas. Several factors contributed to this difficulty, including the perception that available courses and opportunities were beyond their capabilities, a lack of established relationships with support workers, and a general fear of the unknown.

The two socio-economically disadvantaged areas identified for intervention were Castlefen in Sallins and Rosconnell in Newbridge. The initial phase in both regions involved engaging with residents at their respective Community Centres, exploring the currently available offerings and subsequently soliciting feedback on priority issues and the most pressing needs within their current circumstances.

In both localities, the "Healthy Food Made Easy" programme emerged as the preferred starting point for residents to assess their interest in further participation. This course was very positively received with unanimous satisfaction among participants.

The subsequent stages differed between Castlefen and Rosconnell. In Castlefen, residents expressed a preference for certified courses over programmes focusing on Confidence, Resilience, and Self-Belief Building. Consequently, courses on Manual Handling, First Aid, Operating Small Engines, and Maintenance of Small Engines were delivered to meet their specific requests.

Rosconnell residents identified a need for softer skills, emphasising a desire to rebuild confidence and belief in their abilities to navigate life's challenges. The "Living Life Better" programme was introduced initially, encompassing general guidance on exercise, and awareness of the impacts of smoking, alcohol, and substance misuse on their lives. It provided insights into adopting healthier lifestyles, intending to contribute positively to their confidence levels. Discussions on volunteering in community settings were incorporated as a means to establish new routines and reasons for leaving their homes.

Following on from this, the "Believe in Yourself" programme was also implemented in Rosconnell. This initiative focused on confidence and self-esteem building, emphasizing strengths rather than weaknesses and imparting techniques to boost overall confidence. The goal was to empower residents with the skills and mindset necessary to face life's challenges with renewed self-assurance.

In terms of learning, the emphasis on building relationships and trust was essential to overcome the initial scepticism or hesitation. Establishing these relationships involved active listening, open communication, and a genuine effort to understand the concerns and aspirations of the individuals in the disadvantaged areas.

The positive outcome of this approach is evident in the engagement of 20 people from two specific disadvantaged estates and also in their continued engagement in many cases in other programmes and services offered by SICAP. This success highlights the effectiveness of the dual strategy employed by SICAP – building relationships to create a supportive environment and fostering confidence to enable sustained participation.

The continued engagement of individuals from these disadvantaged areas indicates that the life skills programme served as a catalyst for ongoing involvement. Participants directly experienced the tangible benefits of the programme, leading to increased trust in SICAP, a heightened sense of self-efficacy, and a willingness to progress with further supports and opportunities.

6. Please reflect on the programme supports that DRCD and/or Pobal provided to LDCs in 2023. Were they helpful? Would you recommend any changes in approach or content? (quarter of a page)

Guidance: Please consider the SICAP thematic workshops, guidance provided etc.

1. **IRIS Workshop for Staff:** The provision of one IRIS workshop attended by staff served well to keep the team informed and up-to-date. However, with the introduction of a new programme and the recruitment of new staff, there is a recognised need for basic courses or refresher courses on IRIS.
2. **Thematic Workshops and Staff Engagement:** The positive feedback about thematic workshops and the acknowledgement of the content being greatly beneficial indicate the value of the workshops in the ongoing professional development for staff. Thematic workshops focused on specific topics relevant to the goals and objectives of the programme. The interest and benefit derived by attending staff members suggest that these workshops were not only informative but also aligned with the practical needs of their roles.
3. **Quick Response Time to Queries:** Queries have consistently been responded to swiftly and this is greatly appreciated by staff, with concerns addressed promptly.

7. Please provide any more comments or information that you think DRCD/Pobal should be aware of around SICAP (quarter of a page)

1. **Challenges with the "Distance Travelled Tool":**

Completing the "Distance Travelled Tool" can pose difficulties for some individuals within the context of SICAP. This tool is often designed to measure progress or development over a specific period, reflecting the distance travelled by an individual in terms of personal or community achievements. The challenges may arise due to varying levels of self-awareness, literacy, or articulation skills among participants. Some individuals may find it challenging to express their journey effectively, hindering the accurate assessment of their progress. Addressing this challenge may require a more personalised and supportive approach, such as providing additional guidance, using alternative assessment methods, or offering supplementary resources to facilitate self-reflection.

2. **Limitations of Funding:** The needs of individuals and communities are substantial and require solutions beyond the scope of SICAP alone. Most effective responses require inter agency collaboration. Negotiating matching resources takes time and due to limited resources in a county like Kildare it can be difficult to realise. There is a lack of adequate public services in the county and many of the needs identified by the SICAP target groups cannot be met by the programme. In such cases the support provided by SICAP is to enable local communities to lobby local and national Government.
3. **Lack of Appropriate Level of English Language Classes:** The lack of or limited availability of suitable English language classes, presents a significant hurdle for non-English speakers arriving in Ireland. Language proficiency is a fundamental aspect of successful integration and social inclusion, affecting individuals' abilities to communicate, access services, and engage in various aspects of community life. The challenge here may stem from insufficient resources, a high demand for language programmes, recruitment issues or barriers to participation such as scheduling conflicts or geographic constraints. Addressing this challenge requires a multi-faceted approach, including advocacy for increased language class availability, collaboration with language education providers, and exploring innovative solutions such as online or community-based language learning options. Recognising the critical role language plays in facilitating integration, efforts should be directed toward making language education more accessible and tailored to the diverse needs of non-English speakers in the community.

Annex 1 – Updates to the IRIS database

Please confirm that you have completed the following end-of-year requirements:

✓	A narrative for each of the 2023 Actions has been input in the Update on Progress field under the End of Year report section of the action record. The <i>Action Progress Report</i> can be generated to view the updates for each action. Please note that for Lots which contain offshore Island communities, but are not Island specific Lots, LDCs are required to provide details of work carried out with Islands in their action narrative.
✓	2023 financial and beneficiary data input is complete.
✓	2023 data quality issues identified on system dashboards and views have been rectified.
✓	Potential duplicate records have been reviewed and deactivated if appropriate.
✓	2023 data follow-up has been carried out, as appropriate (e.g., LLL activity outcomes, still in employment/self-employment).
✓	ESF exit data has been recorded for ALL Individuals supported to date.
✓	ESF 6 month follow-up has been recorded for Individuals who exited SICAP up to end May 2023.
✓	LDC contact information and staff member listing are up to date.
✓	2023 End of Year Financial and Monitoring report (including the signed costs charged report, Lot Summary Report, and goal outcome reports) has been uploaded to IRIS.