



Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

2015 End of Year Report

Executive Summary



Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme



An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. The programme, which commenced on 1 April 2015, is a programme funded and overseen by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (the Department was renamed as the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government with effect from 23 July 2016) and had a total budget of €26.8 million for 2015. SICAP was delivered in all areas of the country with the exception of one, which was the subject of a deliberative process in 2015. It is led locally by Local and Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and delivered by 45 Programme Implementers (PIs) across 50 Lots.

In the nine months up to the end of 2015, SICAP supported 2,506 Local Community Groups and 36,854 individuals on a one-to-one basis. These overall figures were somewhat below the programme targets (96% & 90% respectively).

Targets for six headline indicators were achieved, several of which were significantly exceeded. Four headline indicators fell short of their targets by more than 20%, including the number of people supported under Goal 2.

Local Community Groups (Goal 1)

- Almost two thirds (64%) of the Local Community Groups (LCGs) supported by the programme worked to address the needs of specific geographical communities as well as issue based target groups. The type of target groups whose needs were represented by the LCGs varied between Lots but across the whole programme the needs of all SICAP target groups were represented, with the majority of LCGs representing people living in disadvantaged communities.
- PIs assisted 2,322 LCGs either in formation, development or progression and these groups in turn supported over 125,000 people. The majority of groups (72%) were assisted during the early stages of development and 200 progressed along the community development matrix.
- 867 LCGs were supported to participate in local, regional or national decision-making structures and 213 were assisted to leverage additional funding, securing a total of €3.2 million.
- 143 LCGs were assisted in the development of new or existing social enterprises, leading to the establishment of 11 new social enterprises.

Profile of individuals

- 31% of individuals supported under SICAP lived in areas designated as being disadvantaged, very disadvantaged or extremely disadvantaged, which represents approximately a 29% increase in targeting¹ compared to the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) in 2014.
- As with LCDP, men accounted for the majority of individuals (55%) accessing the programme, however the gender gap was narrower in SICAP. 53% of individuals were aged between 25 and 45 and a significant majority of beneficiaries (81%) were unemployed. The combined number of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), lone parents and new communities accounted for 30% of the caseload.
- Just over half of the case load (51%) were long-term unemployed (both on the Live Register and not on the Live Register) and the highest educational achievement for 72% of

¹ A year on year increase from 24% to 31%.

individuals was Leaving Certificate or below. Irish nationals made up 77% of the SICAP caseload, with Polish being the second most prevalent nationality (3%).

- Most participants (40%) became aware of the programme through a government body, a state agency or other relevant organisation, with Intreo being the single agency with the highest number of referrals. 20% of individuals were referred to SICAP by an LCG – in comparison, the rate of LCG referrals under LCDP in 2014 was 8%.

Goal 2: educational supports and outputs (individuals)

- In total, 16,705 individuals, including 4,038 young people (aged 15-24), received an educational support under Goal 2. A total of 13,434 individuals participated in Life Long Learning (LLL) courses, with half the course placements being delivered directly and funded fully by SICAP Programme Implementers.
- 21% of course placements were on National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) accredited courses, with the largest number of placements being on Level 5 courses (38%). In comparison to LCDP, more SICAP course placements were in lower level courses. The majority of course placements (65%²) were completed successfully, with placements on unaccredited courses having a significantly higher successful completion rate than on accredited courses. 23% of course placements were in the area of personal development and course placements in the field of education (18%) were the second most popular. The majority of Goal 2 course placements (66%) were of relatively low intensity, requiring individuals to attend between one and four hours a week.
- A total of 8,646 individuals were supported to access LLL, 2,420 individuals received supports to remain in a LLL course and 255 were assisted with accessing community childcare.
- In total, 3,102 individuals progressed along the education continuum, 24% of whom were young people. People with higher educational attainment were somewhat more likely to progress along the education continuum.

Goal 3: employment supports and outputs (individuals)

- A total of 23,546 individuals, including 2,975 young people (aged 15-24), received employment supports under Goal 3. The majority of supports focussed on self-employment (19,357 support interventions were provided to 9,640 individuals) and career advice and guidance (14,887 interventions provided to 8,914 individuals).
- 6,319 individuals participated in labour market training under Goal 3, which was primarily delivered by SICAP PIs and private providers (79%). The majority of course placements (77%) were completed successfully. In comparison to Goal 2 courses, more labour market training course placements were accredited, but the overall level of accreditation was lower. The course intensity for labour market training was higher than for Goal 2 course placements with the majority (62%) requiring attendance of more than five hours a week.
- A total of 1,337 individuals progressed into employment, with more people moving into full-time (55%) than part-time jobs (45%). The three occupation categories with the highest rates of progression were sales related occupations (14%), building and construction workers (12%) and clerical and office workers (10%). The average hourly rate of pay for those who progressed to employment was €10.91.
- A total of 4,687 individuals progressed to self-employment, the vast majority of which (94%) set up as a sole trader with the most popular sector of activity being construction (22%). In total these businesses created 715 full-time and 85 part-time jobs. The majority of individuals who progressed into self-employment availed of Department of Social

² It should be noted that the course outcome for 26% of course placements was not specified. The rate of unsuccessful completion and non-completion combined was just 3%.

Protection (DSP) supports in the form of Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) or Short-Term Enterprise Allowance (STEA).

- Only three individuals were supported into apprenticeships, however, 227 individuals were placed on work experience or work placement programmes, such as Tús or the Community Employment (CE) scheme.

Non-caseload children and adults

- SICAP provided supports to people who were not registered on the individual caseload. 49,988 children (under 18 years of age) received educational or developmental support under Goal 2 and the majority of supports (49%) were in relation to youth work and engagement in Further Education and Training (FET), career guidance and counselling (8%). Additionally, 25,093 people participated in social, cultural and civic activities provided by LCGs and 14,854 non-caseload adults and 4,354 children attended SICAP information events.

Structures and networks

- Programme Implementers engaged with 391 decision-making structures, the majority of which supported people living in disadvantaged communities. A total of 230 joint strategies or partnerships were established, most of which (144) were put in place by SICAP PIs and education providers in order to meet the educational needs of SICAP target groups.
- 97 of the PI initiatives were established to promote, develop or sustain social enterprises. The most common supports provided through these initiatives were in developing social enterprise networks and providing advice on operational issues.

Horizontal themes and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

- PIs promoted an equality framework through the development and implementation of measures addressing discrimination against particular target groups, tackling gender inequality, targeting groups considered to be at risk or addressing isolated communities. Activities included bias proofing of PIs' policies, procedures and information tools, awareness training and enabling access to services or removal of barriers to participation.
- Programme Implementers applied four types of approaches to engage with disadvantaged communities: supporting clients within their local communities, developing local skills and capacity, assisting communities to identify their own needs and targets, and empowering communities to achieve greater levels of participation and collective action.
- To develop collaborative approaches with local, regional and national stakeholders, several PIs established formal networks or forums between community groups, activists and stakeholders, used local outreach offices for classes and offered information sessions promoting SICAP. They also held community meetings and information sessions for local people.
- As part of YEI, SICAP supported 3,958 young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs). NEETs were given one-to-one supports or participated in workshops, courses and outreach and information sessions, with the aim of increasing their employability skills or education level. Many PIs successfully engaged with NEETs, by collaborating with multiple agencies already working directly with young people. PIs emphasised the complexity of issues faced by this group, and the resource intensive nature of one-to-one work required to achieve successful outcomes.

Supports provided

- Pobal provided a range of supports to LCDCs and PIs involved in the implementation of SICAP. Nine programme training sessions and 11 ICT training events were delivered. A

phone support service provided answers to 897 queries, which were related to either the programme itself or the Integrated Reporting and Information System (IRIS).

Challenges

- 2015 marked a significant adjustment period for all key stakeholders involved in implementing SICAP due to a new operational structure which embedded the recently established Local and Community Development Committees as the managing agents in each Local Authority area. A period of time was required to embed these structures and significantly to build the network of relationships. While this impacted the delivery of targets under some headline indicators, many targets were achieved and others were significantly exceeded.
- In their end of year reports, PIs highlighted a number of issues which they saw as impacting on the delivery of the programme. These issues related to programme design and requirements, operational and delivery issues, operating context and collaboration with other agencies.
- The majority of PIs were not able to meet the programme requirement for 50% of supported individuals to be living in disadvantaged areas and as a result of discussions this target has been changed to reflect local deprivation levels for 2016.
- Many found that occasional changes to programme requirements, although necessary in the early stages, were frustrating and sometimes confusing, especially those related to the use of the IRIS system.
- Several reported being hindered in their ability to meet targets for Goal 2 supports due to the programme starting in April, as activities under Goal 2 are particularly linked to and affected by the academic year.
- Many PIs, especially in rural areas, struggled with removing the significant barriers faced by potential clients in accessing the supports on offer and in identifying suitable progression routes for their clients.

Lessons

- Due to the significant challenge of, inter alia, a new programme framework, a new governance and operating structure, DECLG recognised the need for the Programme to be flexible and responsive, where possible, in response to stakeholder feedback, and to apply a number of reasonable programme adjustments to support programme impact for the client base.
- In regard to learnings, many PIs emphasised the importance of collaborative work with local groups, service agencies, organisations representing interests of specific target groups, and other stakeholders in the delivery of the programme. This approach of interagency collaboration was particularly important for engagement with NEETs.
- A strong message emerged on the importance of supporting clients within their own communities and in working to remove barriers to participation.
- Many PIs developed qualitative methods to record the impact of their supports and services and applied them in terms of evaluating their activities.
- Some PIs commented on a change in emphasis from LCDP, which had a strong focus on grant aid, to SICAP which had more of a focus on staff delivering the programme. In response, many PIs had changed their ways of working and/or upskilled staff.

Programme developments

- SICAP was developed as a successor to LCDP and 2015 was in effect a continuation of the changeover process. Inevitably in its first few months, the need to make some changes to requirements emerged and changes were introduced as a response to identified need.

- Changes included the expansion of Headline Indicator 4 to allow for supports in accessing LLL; agreement of a new operational protocol with DSP, introduction of a SICAP registration training guide and the addition of two SICAP 'focus' groups: marginalised and socio-economically disadvantaged women and people who are homeless or experiencing housing exclusion.

Conclusion

- Notwithstanding the challenge of a new programme with a more targeted focus and a new governance and operating environment, SICAP is showing promising improvements in the delivery of social inclusion interventions when compared to its predecessor LCDP. In its first year, SICAP supported a higher percentage of people living in disadvantaged areas, people who had lower levels of educational attainment and a higher percentage of long-term unemployed clients. There is strong collaboration and engagement of PIs with local stakeholders as a larger number of referrals came from government bodies, state agencies and Local Community Groups. Also, there is evidence of Programme Implementers adapting to accommodate the shift of emphasis from grant aid towards expertise driven supports.