



**Social Inclusion &  
Community Activation  
Programme**

**LDC Annual Progress  
Report 2024**  
CAB – Kildare County (6-1)



**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 Union through the European Social Fund Plus

## Purpose of the 2024 Annual Progress Report

The Annual Progress Report (APR) is an opportunity to critically reflect on SICAP work carried out in your CAB/Lot during 2024. It should provide high-level information on trends, emerging issues, challenges, and good practice within SICAP. **It should *not* contain the same detail as the action progress reports on IRIS.**

The purpose of the 2024 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 CAB/Lot in 2024 and the approaches used by you to respond to these needs, alongside challenges faced and lessons learned during the year.

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 CAB/Lot.

Space is also provided for you to reflect on the supports provided by DRCD and/or Pobal in 2024.

*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 may be included, 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.

Infographics are also encouraged.

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

**GUIDANCE:** Please complete the below table. **Please do not include details on Ukrainians/International Protection applicants in this section** as there is a dedicated New Arrivals section within this report. The following points may be useful to reflect on to inform your response:

- What types of supports did beneficiaries require during the year? What did these supports look like? Please consider **individuals, Local Community Groups (LCGs), Networks, Social Enterprises (SEs), children and families, and non-caseload individuals**, when providing your answer. Note that Community Organisations is used as an umbrella term for LCGs, SEs and Networks. If needs and responses were different for SEs, LCGs, Networks, please indicate this within your response below.
- Please bear in mind the programme’s horizontal principles when providing your answer.

Beneficiary type	Identified needs in 2024	LDC Responses to needs
<p><b>Individuals</b></p>  	<p><u>Jobseekers Needs</u></p> <p>As of the third quarter of 2024, the employment rate of the Republic of Ireland for those aged between 15 and 64 was 74.4 percent. This is the highest rate ever recorded. Life skills , basic training and lack of confidence have been challenges for some of the remaining people seeking employment and are Long Term unemployed. Although people may be registered as ‘unemployed and seeking work’ many of them are far from attaining this and have lots of other challenges ranging from lack of training, lack of confidence, mental health issues to not having a basic C.V.</p> <p>During 2024 in Kildare, 553 people were registered as Unemployed Seeking work. Of these 169 people have Junior cert level of education or lower. Of those with higher than Junior cert level 215 people were identified as having other barriers to gaining employment, from English language to criminal history. 96 people have a disability.</p> <p>People reaching out for supports from other economic statuses included those engaged in government schemes, in family duties, retired, Self-employed and employed part-time. While there were 120 people inactive for other reasons.</p>	<p><u>Jobseekers Responses</u></p> <p>Responding to these challenges, support workers have engaged people in the first instance creating a plan for each of them. This one-to-one meeting is a vital first step for relationship building between the person and staff member. Providing ‘soft skills’ and personal development courses where people can engage and be encouraged. Referring clients to mental health support services. One of these being HeadsUp Kildare. SICAP also fund a project worker for this programme.</p> <p>SICAP have engaged closely with DSP support workers, meeting their teams twice throughout the year. This engagement has been a key element to courses and services that SICAP has provided in 2024 with 187 people being referred by them for services. 88 courses were delivered throughout the year with 186 people getting a C.V.</p> <p>A strong and collaborative relationship between Tús supervisors and SICAP staff proved to be a significant advantage in addressing the needs of long-term unemployed (LTU) participants. This partnership was particularly impactful, with 92 individuals from our caseload actively participating in a government scheme. Support workers played a crucial role throughout the process, assisting participants from the initial interview stage through to providing tailored planning supports and access to relevant courses.</p>



### Self-Employment needs

- Training in setting up a business
- Support with writing Business Plans
- Support with Back To Work Enterprise Allowance applications – compliance with their criteria
- Exploring alternatives if not eligible or selected
- Mentoring support and advice
- Follow up after set-up of business



### Self-employment Responses

In the past year, 33% of individuals who were supported in exploring the possibility of starting their own business successfully transitioned into self-employment. Others moved into mainstream employment, while some took a step back to reassess whether self-employment was the right path for them and to refine their business ideas.

SICAP provided comprehensive support to these participants, including:

- **Ongoing mentoring** on essential business basics, such as accurate bookkeeping, particularly in preparation for successfully passing the Department of Social Protection's (DSP) 3- and 9-month monitoring meetings required for the Back to Work Enterprise Scheme.
- **Enhanced internal mentoring**, an area identified for greater focus in 2025.
- **An updated version of the ROSE (Realities of Self-Employment) workshops**, designed to give participants a clear understanding of what self-employment entails as a career option.
- **More frequent, certified Start Your Own Business courses**, covering foundational business principles and meeting DSP requirements for enterprise support scheme applications. These courses will be a key focus area in 2025.
- **External mentoring** from the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) mentoring panel, offering specialized guidance on issues like rebranding and developing effective marketing strategies.

This multifaceted approach aimed to equip participants with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their entrepreneurial journey.



People living in disadvantaged communities needs

In 2024, Getting people out of their houses continues to be a challenge. Some people would not attend unless a friend called for them. A lack of confidence in attending alone is evident.

Issues range from:

- Apathy, comfort zone, being in a rut
- Low expectations of themselves often due to lack of educational achievement
- Issues between neighbours, some will engage meaning others might choose not to
- Low level of trust of ‘outsiders’



Heads of One Parent Families (HOPF) needs:

- Clear information on options – how many hours can they work without affecting payment, etc.
- Support in accessing training/education/employment
- Getting more socially active, involved in activities outside of the home to build up confidence

People living in disadvantaged communities Responses

Information/coffee mornings were held in disadvantaged/marginal areas – Anne St (Prosperous), Ashgrove (Derrinturn), Castlefen (Sallins). Linked with KCC to inform people in these communities of training that could be made available to them in their community centres. Offered a variety of soft skills courses to attract interest.

The Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) programme has been a great form of engagement for Individuals living in disadvantaged communities. This programme provides people with 1. Skills to cook healthy food for them and their families and 2. Be part of a group where chat and engagement takes place. 3. In two disadvantaged areas, the ingredients were given to the participants to cook the dish of the day. There were 10 HFME programmes run for SICAP individuals during 2024

First Aid, chair yoga, winter crafts were all successful in these areas

Heads of One Parent Families (HOPF) responses:

In 2024, nearly 11% of those included in the SICAP caseload were heads of one-parent families (HOPFs), with 80% of them being female. Of these, 27% resided in disadvantaged areas, and many others were likely in receipt of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Additionally, 30% had attained a Junior Certificate or lower level of education, 61% were unemployed and actively seeking work, 12% were participating in government schemes, and 6% were employed part-time. Over half (58%) of this group were under the age of 45.

This demographic analysis highlighted that 73% of the HOPFs could benefit significantly from targeted interventions, including training, educational supports, and confidence-building activities to prepare for employment, participation in employment schemes, or further training. Tailored programs such as soft skills training—including chair yoga and first aid—proved particularly impactful.



Older people needs:

- Reducing social isolation
- Digital skills improvement
- Addressing food poverty

Efforts were also made to address social isolation, with many HOPFs engaging in activities through community groups and centres. Responding to widespread demand, SICAP facilitated workshops and courses focused on digital technology, driver theory lessons, enabling over 100 participants to enhance their understanding and use of smartphones for everyday tasks, such as booking transportation, ordering tickets, and accessing information.

Older people responses:

"Healthy Food Made Easy" programmes were conducted for older people's groups, introducing participants to affordable, healthy meal options they might not have considered previously. These initiatives demonstrated SICAP's commitment to empowering individuals and fostering community connections through practical, inclusive supports.

Addiction responses

To address some of these needs, SICAP funded a project worker and implemented several programmes and activities for clients participating on the projects. Supports included providing materials for a candle-making enterprise and funding a trainer to promote fitness among clients.

Additionally, our Education Support Worker organised a trip to Maynooth University for individuals who had expressed an interest in pursuing further education as part of their Personal Action Plans.

Addiction needs:

People with addiction issues have many barriers engaging in society. The DARA project provides a day programme for people that have been through a recovery programme and need extra support to keep up their sobriety.

The two programmes based in Athy and Kildare Town. SICAP has been asked to support their service users and bridge gaps in training and development needs.





Youth Needs:

- Basic training
- Need for some certification
- Prepare CV's
- Preparing for summer jobs

Youth Responses

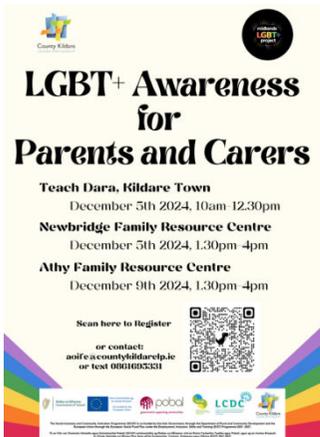
SICAP launched a comprehensive job preparation programme tailored for 5th and 6th-year students who were completing their school year and preparing for the summer. The programme offered a combination of practical and essential skills training, including Manual Handling certification, CV writing, and interview preparation workshops.

The initiative was met with enthusiasm from both students and educators, as it provided valuable support for young people entering the workforce for the first time. Based on the positive feedback, there was a strong request to schedule the program earlier in the academic year for 2025 to allow students more time to prepare and fully benefit from the training.

LGBTQI+ Responses

In 2024, an LGBTQI+ worker was engaged to lead initiatives aimed at addressing the discrimination faced by the LGBTQI+ community. This engagement resulted in the delivery of five LGBTQI+ Awareness Training sessions across the county, facilitated by the Midlands LGBT+ Project. These included two "ABCs of LGBT" workshops, and three additional sessions focused on allyship and in-depth information.

One of these workshops was specifically tailored for the SICAP team. While all support workers in the organisation were already committed to compassionate and understanding engagement methods, this training was implemented as part of their ongoing professional development. It aimed to deepen their awareness of the challenges and needs of the LGBTQI+ community, equipping them with the tools to provide even more effective and inclusive support. The initiative underscored SICAP's dedication to fostering a culture of inclusion and equality, both within the organisation and in the wider community.



LGBTQI+ Needs:

LGBTQI+ people can be prone to mental health risks because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Like many other minorities in society, they face many forms of prejudice, harassment, and discrimination, which can have a negative impact on mental health and fulfilling their potential.

**Community Organisations**  
(please include details for LCGs, SEs and Networks as appropriate)



Community Organisations (CO) needs:

- Building capacity to keep the group going and to encourage group participation and engagement
- Building on their assets
- Fostering solidarity and commitment

Social Enterprise's needs:



The needs of social enterprises were identified through various engagements, including the Social Enterprise Network Meeting, one-to-one consultations, and discussions held during the development of the social enterprise strategy. Key needs that emerged included strategies and resources for futureproofing to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability. Employment cost support was highlighted as a priority, addressing the financial challenges associated with hiring and retaining staff.

Community Organisations (CO) resources:

SICAP community support workers conducted needs analyses in a number of disadvantaged areas. Collaborative approaches were used to connect with hard-to-reach groups, linking with Home School Community Liaison Officers and offering a range of workshops to promote inclusion, offer support and understanding of the lived experience and dynamics causing the lack of engagement with the community. SICAP Community Workers met with the KCC equivalents to liaise on collaborative approaches to issues in the community.

Assisted with the development of groups and individuals applying the principles of the Asset Based Community Development approach. Key players and partners in communities were identified on an area-by-area basis and relationships were established with Home School Community Liaison officers in North and South Kildare, family resource centres, local libraries, disability day services and community leaders with the aim of progressing work and reaching identified individuals and families in 2025, in all target groups.

Key collaborative events –

- Social Inclusion week, with events arranged all over the county.
- Tea dance in Coill Dubh with Older Voices Kildare.

Social Enterprises responses:

Emerging Social Enterprise Programme was delivered between August and November 2024 including the following:

- Facilitated workshops on Grant Writing Funding, Employer Opportunities, Climate Action, and ESG for Social Enterprises.
- Feasibility Studies for emerging social enterprises to determine the next steps in Scaling up. The studies, developed by 2into3, were provided to 4 emerging social enterprises within the county.

	<p>The need for governance training was also identified, emphasising the importance of capacity-building initiatives to strengthen governance practices. A shared service model was proposed to facilitate collaboration and provide centralised services for compliance, human resources, and governance. Additionally, access to funding support was recognised as essential to help social enterprises meet both operational and strategic goals. These insights provided a foundation for tailoring supports to meet the specific challenges faced by social enterprises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Social Enterprise Network was reestablished. The total number of network meetings throughout the year was two – one in February (Theme of the meeting: Climate Action) and one in October (Theme of the meeting: Employer Opportunities). Organisations attended the network meetings from Ballitore, Leixlip, Moone, Narraghmore, Kilcullen, Clane, Coill Dubh and Monasterevin.</li> <li>• One to one meeting with existing and new social enterprises covering issues such as capacity building, governance, employment, financial support, and future planning and development. One to One meeting was held with the organisations in Allenwood, Leixlip, Lullymore, Clane, Coill Dubh and Moone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children and families</b></p>	<p><b><u>Children &amp; Family's needs:</u></b></p> <p><b>School Completion Programme –</b></p> <p>During the year, School Completion Programme (SCP) coordinators and Home School Community Liaison Officers (HSCLs) identified several critical issues affecting children and young people, including food poverty, the cost of living crisis, school refusal, non-attendance, and non-participation in education. A significant concern was the impact of hunger on students, as many relied on the provision of breakfast and/or lunch during the school day. Without these meals, many children and young people would attend school hungry, which negatively affected their ability to concentrate, participate in class, and maintain overall well-being.</p> <p>The summer holidays posed additional challenges for families, exacerbating issues such as food poverty and the rising cost of living. For many, the absence of school meals during this period created further strain, leaving children at risk of hunger.</p>	<p><b><u>Children &amp; Families responses:</u></b></p> <p>In response to the needs identified by School Completion Programme (SCP) coordinators, SICAP provided funding to primary and post-primary schools across four SCP clusters: Athy, Canals, Curragh/Kildare, and Newbridge. This funding supported a range of initiatives, including breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, after-school, and homework clubs, as well as summer camps, outings, and activities.</p> <p>Through this support, 140 children and young people in Athy, 175 in the Canals Cluster, 215 in the Curragh/Kildare area, and 205 in Newbridge benefited from these programmes. The summer camps, trips, and activities were particularly vital in maintaining relationships between students and schools, helping to ensure a smoother transition back to school in the autumn. These activities also addressed food poverty in a discreet and respectful manner, preserving the dignity of families and individuals.</p> <p>In addition to these efforts, SICAP funded several other school attendance and participation initiatives, coordinated by Home School</p>

 <p><b>KILDARE DAD'S FEST</b> Celebrating Dads Across Kildare Saturday 19th October 2024 - 11am to 3pm</p> <p>SENSORY PLAY, DRUMMING, WOOD CRAFT, INDOOR SPORTS, FACE PAINTING, REPTILE ZOO, REFRESHMENTS</p> <p>SCAN HERE!</p> <p>OPEN TO DADS AND CHILDREN 0-12 YRS</p> <p>www.kildare.com/events/dadsfest2024</p> <p>Athy Town FC, Aldridge Park, Townparks, R14 ET78</p>	<p>Moreover, the break in regular contact between schools and families during the summer disrupted the support systems that helped address these challenges throughout the academic year. These findings highlighted the urgent need for continued and expanded support to ensure the well-being and engagement of children and young people, both during the school term and throughout the holiday periods</p> <p><b><u>Dads Fest:</u></b></p> <p>Needs initially identified in 2023 by the KWW Parenting Forum led to the establishment of a sub-committee, Engaging Dads. From this, the first Kildare Dad's Fest took place in autumn 2023.</p>	<p>community Liaison Officers and School Attendance Officers. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "12 Days of Christmas" school attendance initiative.</li> <li>• Educational outings to SISK and Inchicore College of Further Education in Dublin.</li> <li>• Bus transfers to Maynooth University and the provision of lunch vouchers.</li> <li>• A cinema outing featuring a film from the Leaving Certificate Applied syllabus.</li> <li>• Two sustainability workshops titled "My Sustainable Journey."</li> </ul> <p>The SICAP Education Worker took on coordination of Dad's Fest 2024, with support from a planning group. Two Dad's Fest events were held in October 2024, one in Leixlip (N Kildare) and one in Athy (S Kildare). Funding for the two events came from a number of sources, including SICAP, Healthy Ireland, TÚSLA Parental Participation Fund, KCC Arts Department and Empowering Communities in Athy.</p>
<p><b>Non-caseload individuals</b></p>  <p><b>SAFEPASS COURSE</b> SLÁINTECARE HUB MOUNT HAWKINS ATHY R14XY60 MONDAY 19TH OF AUGUST 8.00AM (SHARP)</p> <p>SOLAS</p> <p>Spaces are subject to eligibility and places are limited Contact: breda@countykildarelp.ie or Call him on 086-7916933</p>	<p>In 2024, CKLP identified several sectors of the community that were more likely to experience isolation due to social exclusion, including Heads of One-Parent Families, older people, and young people. Individuals living in direct accommodation centres were identified as needing Manual Handling and Safe Pass training. Many of these residents were eager to complete the necessary training before leaving the accommodation centres (within 90 days of their arrival) to better equip themselves for the job search. In response to the shortage of childcare workers and spaces across Kildare, the County Childcare Committee requested support to raise awareness of the available resources for those considering childminding as a career. This initiative aimed to address the pressing demand for childcare services in the region.</p>	<p>To encourage and build engagement among the groups identified, CKLP supported the development of new initiatives. CKLP worked in collaboration with Kildare Sports Partnership to deliver a series of activator pole workshops for older people in Suncroft with over 100 participants attending. Know your community events were delivered to more than 80 people in Suncroft and 100 people in Newbridge. The know your community events were designed to support the dissemination of information to older members of the community.</p> <p>2 Manual Handling training courses and 1 Safe pass course was provided to meet this need.</p> <p>SICAP organised and promoted an information morning where the County Childcare Committee provided an overview of supports and contacts for people attending.</p>

## 2. Please provide an overview of SICAP supports that you provided to the New Arrivals. (1-2 pages)

**Guidance:** *What types of supports did New Arrivals 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?*

By the end of 2024, four New Arrivals staff members represented CKLP/SICAP at the quarterly Community Integration Forum meetings, as well as on various sub-groups, steering groups, and networks associated with their roles. Both SICAP and New Arrivals staff collaborated with LAIT Integration workers throughout the year to provide support to people living in BOTP (Beneficiaries of Temporary protection) and IPA (International Protection Applicant) Centres.

In March 2024, welcome packs were purchased and delivered to new residents in Punchestown DAC, with support provided directly to residents in most of the centres that staff had access to. Two new Designated Accommodation Centres (DACs), in Newhall and Punchestown, opened in Co. Kildare to accommodate Ukrainians. By the end of the year, the Kill Equestrian Centre was also included as a DAC, as well as a BOTP Centre. In total, 762 Ukrainians were living in accommodation centres across Co. Kildare, with 210 of them being under the age of 18. According to CSO figures for October 2024, 2,360 Ukrainians had been living in BOTP centres in Co. Kildare since 2022.

By the end of 2024, three International Protection Accommodation (IPA) Centres for families with children were operational in Monasterevin, Newbridge, and Athy, housing up to 100 children. There were also six IPA Centres for adults only located throughout the county. In total, 663 people seeking asylum were residing in IPA Accommodation Centres in Co. Kildare. Links with residents of the Waterways IPA Centre in Sallins were established in the fourth quarter, with further supports set to commence there in early 2025.

**English Language Supports:** Eight Conversational English classes were held in the following areas, on a weekly basis: Athy, Ballymore Eustace, Kill GAA & Kill Scouts Den, Monasterevin, Newbridge FRC, Punchestown DAC, and Straffan. These classes were coordinated by New Arrivals staff and volunteers trained by Fáilte Isteach. By the end of the fourth quarter, New Arrivals staff had organised seasonal craft workshops for both tutors and students in these classes. Over 16 workshops, 209 students and tutors participated, learning English through craftwork. Additionally, two Intensive English classes for potential TÚS/CE participants were organised, with 30 participants completing the classes.

**Referrals, Translation, TÚS & CE Programmes Supports:** New Arrivals staff provided translation and support for people new to Co. Kildare, assisting with practical needs such as form filling, applying for medical cards, and interpreting services. They also facilitated access to the Samanta App. Interpreting support was provided in various locations, including Athy, Ballymore Eustace, Monasterevin, Straffan, and Kill for BOTP residents. New Arrivals staff supported referrals to Red Cross and Helping Irish Hosts for emergency accommodation situations and helped individuals access TSG (Training Support) grants from DSP, for Safe Pass and other training, as well as arranging appointments with caseworkers.

Staff also provided translation support for TÚS and CE interviews, assisting 21 people onto both schemes. Four individuals are currently volunteering in charity shops across four separate areas of the county. Sourcing volunteer tutors for Conversational English classes and charity shops was another key role undertaken by New Arrivals staff.

**Integration through Socialising:** Day trips for both IPA and BOTP Centres were organized, providing buses, entry fees, and lunch for the families attending. These trips, which took place in July and August, included visits to Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park, with up to 300 IPA and BOTP residents participating. Additionally, transport costs for one of the local Family Resource Centre summer camps were covered.

The Refugee Day held at Newhall DAC on June 20th supported residents of both Kill and Punchestown Centres. Summer and mid-term camps registered 45–50 children for summer camps, all of which were supported by New Arrivals staff. Yoga classes in Newbridge FRC, with 10 classes completed by November, had a total of 57 participants.

The International Food Fair in Naas saw New Arrivals staff coordinating Ukrainian residents from BOTP Centres to participate. The same staff attended the Ukraine Civil Society Forum, engaging in discussions with government representatives.

**Sessions for Potential University Students:** In November, New Arrivals staff organised information sessions for potential university students in the two DAC Centres: one session in Punchestown DAC with 30 attendees and one session in Newhall DAC with another 30 participants.

**Pre-employment Course & Supports:** The New Arrivals team managed a caseload of 186 IPA residents and 128 BOTP residents. Manual Handling courses were organised and funded for 152 participants, while three Safe Pass courses were held for 60 participants living in 90-day DACs. Successful participants in Punchestown and Newhall DACs received Manual Handling Certificates and Safe Pass Cards.

Additional support was provided for Tús applications for four clients in Monasterevin and Kill, and one individual received full support for a 5-day Forklift training course. A total of 70 people were supported and registered on IRIS since January 2024, including those who participated in courses, classes, and individual supports.

3. Please outline the challenges faced and lessons learned in relation to the overall delivery of SICAP during 2024. Were you able to overcome any of the challenges? If so, please describe. (half a page - 1 page)

The challenge of meeting the 26% target continued to persist throughout 2024, with SICAP achieving 19%.

Through engagement across various areas, a range of issues emerged, including educational disadvantage, generational unemployment, poverty, isolation, the effects of trauma, substance misuse, and disability. These challenges manifested in family and neighbour disputes, mistrust, apathy, isolation, substance misuse, lack of self-confidence, unhealthy lifestyles, and various forms of abuse.

A key lesson learned was the significant time and involvement required from individual support workers to build trust and establish relationships with participants. As a result, having adequate resources to allow support workers to spend sufficient time with individuals while still meeting targets was found to be essential. When events were organized for groups, particularly those that ran over a period of weeks, it became clear that the presence of the individual support worker was crucial for breaking down barriers between SICAP and the participants, as well as those within the participants themselves.

Heads of One-Parent Families (HOPF) remained consistently difficult to engage due to the multiple barriers they faced, which often prevented them from participating. Support workers also observed an increase in the number of children with additional needs, particularly those being parented by lone parents. In response, SICAP took the following steps:

- A dedicated support worker was appointed to focus on this target group.
- SICAP worked closely with Home School Community Liaison Officers (HSCL) using a collaborative, bottom-up approach to engage lone parents identified by the HSCL officers who were eager to participate in courses and workshops.

4. Please describe an approach or project that worked well in 2024 that you think would be useful to share with other SICAP implementers. Why do you think this would be useful to share with others? (half a page)

**Guidance:** Please do not use the same project or approach that you used for your 2024 case study. This should be a different project.

jumpAgrade is a not-for-profit targeted education service for second-level students from under-represented communities to help them fulfil their potential. All students whom jumpAgrade works with are from communities under-represented at third level, with their aim being to tackle the inequity caused by grinds and increase progression to third level and skilled work. These under-represented students are defined by the Higher Education Authority through The National Access Plan as those who attend a DEIS school, live in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, have a disability, are members of the Irish Travelling Community, a lone parent family or belong to an ethnic minority.

**How jumpAgrade works:** Using a purpose-built platform, jumpAgrade combines digital innovation with research-based frameworks to support students by allocating a tutor (Teacher Mentor) who provides regular one-to-one tuition online over the course of the academic year, at a time that suits the student. Tuition supports are all conducted to a plan developed by the student in partnership with their Teacher Mentor. This plan is based on a needs analysis, which shows the student's individual learning style, their aspirations, and areas they would like to improve in. Students also get access to a host of other supports such as on-demand classes, revision material, study skills and a wellbeing curriculum.

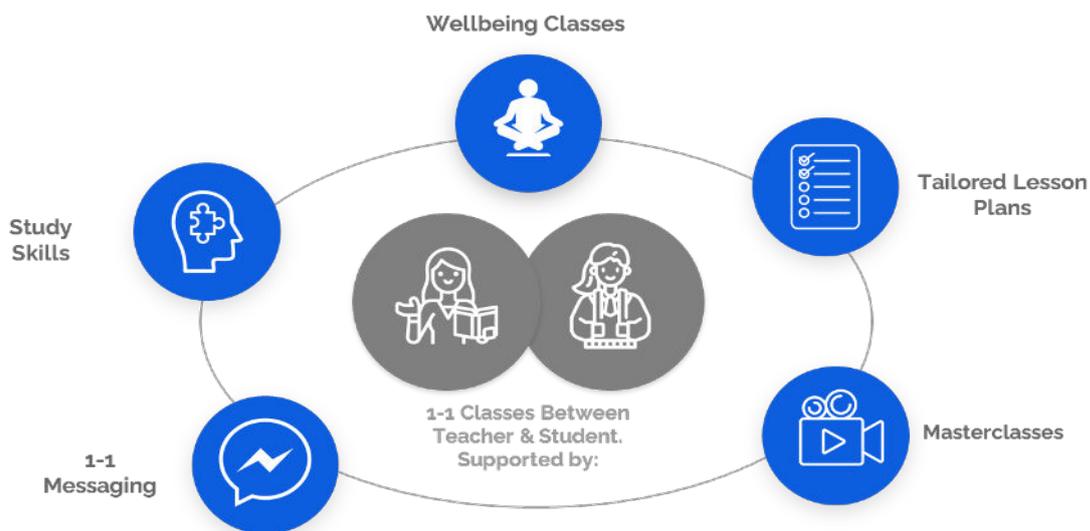
jumpAgrade provides monthly reports on each student to SICAP, with feedback from their tutors. These reports show the level of engagement, both with tutors and in accessing online notes and supports. This facilitates early identification of any issues should they arise, which the teacher mentors can flag to the schools, who can then follow up with students in person where needed. These reports also measure student confidence, grade improvement and progression to Higher and Further Education, so that funding can be shown to have a direct correlation with impact.

**The jumpAgrade SICAP Kildare story so far:** In Kildare, SICAP funding has enabled jumpAgrade to support students across all the post-primary schools in the four School Completion Programme clusters since 2021. In 2023, talks began around forming a Regional Partnership between SICAP (CKLP), Maynooth University and jumpAgrade. This model has already proved remarkably successful in attracting philanthropic funding and allowing partners to greatly extend their reach to students. Already, the Partnership has seen Maynooth University match SICAP funding for the 2024/2205 academic year, meaning that 36 students are in receipt of one-to-one tuition in a subject of their choosing. In addition to the 36 students receiving individual tuition, a further 360 students are provided with access to online revision notes in one subject, study tips and wellness supports. These 360 places are provided free of charge by jumpAgrade.

The immediate aims of the Regional Partnership, in addition to increasing the number of funded places available to students, include working closely with DEIS and non-DEIS schools (*where relevant*) to identify under-represented students with aspirations to progress to third level and skilled work in order to meet the needs of the county, for Co Kildare and Maynooth University to be recognised and showcased nationally as a **Centre of Excellence for Education Equality**, and for Maynooth University to be seen as the University of Opportunity.

**What's next for the Regional Partnership?** For 2025, the Partnership is looking to integrate Maynooth University's college readiness programmes into their Kildare offering, to ensure that students are not only prepared academically but are also equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in their future educational endeavours. As part of this, the partners will be meeting to discuss the possibility of hosting a recurring event at Maynooth University to foster a sense of community among regional schools, ambassadors, and students.

In the long term, the Partnership seeks to end educational disadvantage.



5. Please outline how you incorporated SICAP’s horizontal principles into your work?

**Guidance:** Use this space to describe how your work is shaped and underpinned by SICAP horizontal principles (i.e., promoting a human rights and equality framework, applying quality community development approaches, developing collaborative approaches with stakeholders and promoting climate justice).

All work under SICAP 2024-2028 was underpinned by four key horizontal principles:

1. **Promoting a human rights and equality framework**, - SICAP promoted Voter Registration in collaboration with Kildare County Council. A pilot programme in collaboration with KWETB addressed the needs of women who were not engaging with the school community and/or older women who were not entering the labour market.
2. **Applying quality community development approaches** - this included addressing poverty as a barrier to social inclusion and economic advancement. SICAP supported the Family Resource Centres through funding vouchers to combat poverty of those most in need in those four areas. Asset Based Community Development was a focus for the Goal 1 support team when conducting needs analysis with the community organisations, The team also focused on supporting group members to take on roles within the committee.
3. **Developing collaborative approaches** - as well as working closely with other organisations to address gaps in services, SICAP also collaborates with services providers who are restricted in their funding to provide additional training supports for their clients, from soft skills to industry certification (e.g. Platinum Clubhouse, KARE).

The Dad’s Fest events are a collaboration between SICAP, CYPSC, Kildare Library Service, Empowering Communities, InSync, FRCs, LYCC, HeadsUp ,Kildare Sports Partnership, Kildare County Childcare Committee and Kildare County Council, and are a direct response to a need identified by the KWW Parenting Forum.

Writer in Residence programme: To mark 10 years of the Better Basics reading support programme in schools, which is a collaboration between SICAP and the Kildare library service, five primary schools were supported to take part in the Writer in Residence programme. The Writer in Residence programme was aimed at children from second to fifth class. who were struggling with reading/writing but were not deemed to need extra support hours in school

4. **Promoting Climate Justice**, - the SICAP Goal 1 team rolled out horticulture workshops to help COs with growing vegetables within small spaces and in the upkeep of their communities. Several workshops on food sustainability were rolled out to COs across the county. Tendering, procurement, and promotion were implemented using an environmental focus. SICAP encourages green practices with all our community groups and promotes sustainable solutions where possible.

These horizontal principles were incorporated into SICAP's strategic and annual planning processes, as well as in how we engaged with SICAP beneficiaries. These principles guided the ethos of SICAP planning and implementation. Additionally, they applied to the internal practices and procedures of SICAP administration. While the principles were described separately for guidance, they were understood as interdependent and primarily focused on empowering the most marginalised groups in County Kildare.

6. Please reflect on the programme supports that DRCD and/or Pobal provided to LDCs in 2024. Were they helpful? Would you recommend any changes in approach or content? (quarter of a page)

**Guidance:** Please consider the SICAP regional and local support events, guidance provided etc.

While significant improvements were made to IRIS in the current program, particularly in terms of user-friendliness, there were still several bugs and improvements that remained on the to-do list. Although training sessions were provided throughout the year, there was a clear need for additional SICAP Programme Requirements workshops for non-superusers, as well as basic IRIS training for those unfamiliar with the system.

The responsiveness of the IRIS support team was exceptional and much appreciated, as they were always helpful in addressing issues. However, a recurring challenge was the inability to deactivate records, which, while understandable due to ESF guidelines requiring all records to be tracked appropriately, proved to be frustrating. This limitation meant that gathering information to pass on to the IRIS team was time-consuming, and often, important details were missed in the process.

Finding duplicates within the system was also a tedious task. The process involved sorting the full active list by date of birth and manually scanning for duplicates, then cross-referencing those without dates of birth (a larger issue for records pre-2024). It would have been extremely helpful if Pobal had provided a more accurate view for this purpose, making the process of identifying and addressing duplicates more efficient.

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

Timing of inspections and audits proved to be a significant challenge, as we faced an audit, end-of-year accounting, year-end reporting, and next-year planning all demanding our resources simultaneously. Had we not already met our caseload requirements, we would have been under immense pressure to successfully manage and achieve everything on time.

The delay in finalising the budgets only compounded this issue, with everything converging in November and December of 2024. The increased KPI targets for 2024 also presented a challenge, as they placed additional strain on the ability to conduct in-depth, quality work with individuals.

On a positive note, improvements to the beneficiary forms and action plans had made life easier for Individual Support Workers, streamlining the process and reducing administrative burdens.

However, a suggestion was made regarding the disability section—could the psychological and emotional aspects of long-lasting conditions be separated from the physical issues? This adjustment could help to address and support the varied needs of individuals facing these challenges more accurately.

## Annex 1 – Updates to the IRIS database

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	A narrative for each of the 2024 Actions has been input in the 'End of year update' field on the <b>Progress Report tab</b> of the action record and updates provided on LDC collaboration records. The <i>Action Progress Report</i> can be generated to view the updates for each action as well as the updates on LDC collaborations. Please note that for CABs which contain offshore Island communities, but are not Island specific CABs/Lots, LDCs are required to provide details of work carried out with Islands in their action progress narrative.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2024 financial and beneficiary data input is complete.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2024 data quality issues identified on system dashboards and views have been rectified.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential duplicate records have been reviewed and deactivated if appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2024 data follow-up has been carried out, as appropriate (e.g., LLL activity outcomes, still in employment/self-employment).
<input type="checkbox"/>	ESF exit data has been recorded promptly for relevant Individual records (as per the LDC's caseload management policy and EIST requirements).
<input type="checkbox"/>	ESF 6-month follow-up data has been recorded for Individuals who have been selected for the representative sample. The 'EIST LT result sample follow up due' system view should be blank.
<input type="checkbox"/>	LDC contact information and the list of LDC staff members are up to date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2024 End of Year Financial and Monitoring report has been submitted on IRIS (including upload of the signed Lot Cost Charged report and Monitoring report to the SICAP SharePoint library).