

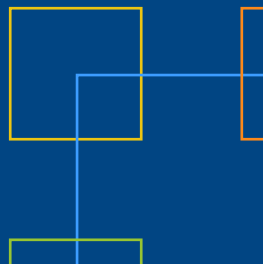


County Kildare
LEADER PARTNERSHIP



Annual Report

2020







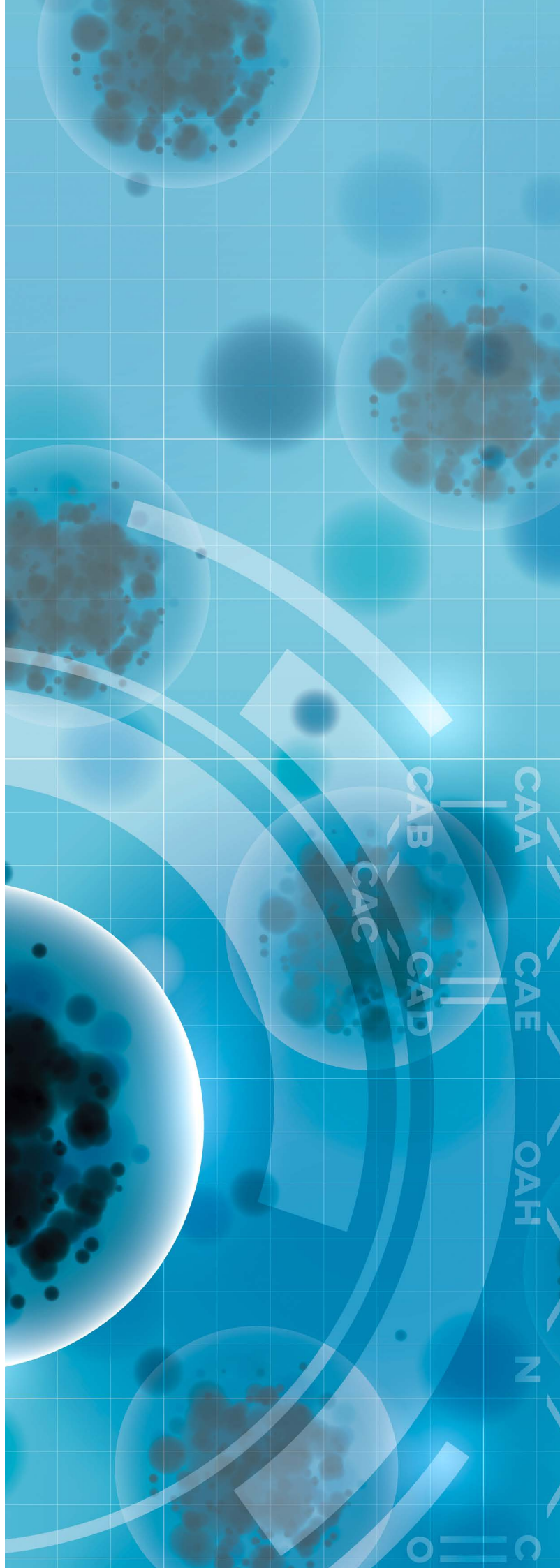
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INTRODUCTION

2020

A year of
Challenge
and Resilience



2020 has been a year that will not be forgotten by everyone who has endured the impact that the COVID 19 pandemic has made on the lives of individuals and communities across the world. The full impact of the Coronavirus will take much longer to assess, but as we move into its second year in Ireland it is important to firstly acknowledge the number of people who have died in County Kildare, and the families who have lost their loved ones, as well as the communities who have been unable to pay their respects to their neighbours and friends. To all in our company who have been bereaved, and to the wider community in the county we offer our sincere condolences.

Having marked the tenth anniversary of County Kildare LEADER Partnership in 2019 with a number of public events, last year was most notable for the challenges that the pandemic presented and the necessity to engage with individuals and communities remotely in line with public health guidelines. As a Company with over 300 employees, across a number of Government funded programmes County Kildare LEADER Partnership moved to remote working in March 2020 and has followed Government guidelines fully throughout the year. This required significant contribution by staff and funders to adapt to a constantly changing environment, while at all times maintaining a focus on the individuals and communities that we engage with on a daily basis. In doing so, creative ways had to be found to reach out to those most impacted by the pandemic, to provide them with support and to enable them to stay connected with some social contact. I especially want to thank all our employees who volunteered to deliver shopping and medicines, helped to prepare and deliver food parcels, checked in on older people in isolated areas and made phone calls on a weekly basis to older people around the county. I am also mindful that at various stages employees on our programmes also volunteered to continue working with their local voluntary group to maintain facilities and provide local services. For all of this and on behalf of the Board and Staff I wish to thank you sincerely.

This year's annual report demonstrates the resilience of the programmes managed by the company. Despite the challenges of 2020 the targets and key performance indicators for various programmes

were met. New ways of working were introduced with training programmes converted to online delivery, tablets and laptops provided to address digital poverty needs, and cookery and activity programmes introduced with ingredients and materials delivered and YouTube videos produced to provide instructions. Community groups also rallied to the call with face masks produced and distributed to frontline workers and vulnerable groups. A new vocabulary emerged around Covid-19 and resilience was a key word often mentioned, which best describes the reaction of communities in County Kildare to the pandemic during the year. County Kildare LEADER Partnership provided assistance where possible to support these efforts and, in the year ahead we are committed to supporting individuals and local community groups to return to social, economic and cultural activity as soon as it is safe to do so.

During the past year we welcomed new staff and said farewell to a number of colleagues. Five of our Board of Directors also resigned in the past year. All of these events occurred during the COVID 19 restrictions and limited the opportunity to offer thanks and gratitude for the voluntary and professional contributions that each of these individuals had made to our Company. I specifically wish to mention our former Chairperson Patricia O'Brien who stepped down from the Board in June 2020 and who on taking on the role of Chairperson had led the Company through periods of transition and uncertainty. To Patricia, the former Board members and staff who departed during 2020 we look forward to acknowledging your contribution in person when safe to do so.

In conclusion I wish to thank the agencies and Government Departments who contract our Company to provide the services that we offer, and I wish to acknowledge the individuals from a wide range of public and voluntary organisations whom we engage with to undertake these activities.



General / Social Inclusion Manager

Who We Are

MAIN OBJECTIVE

"The main objective of the Company is to promote, support, assist and engage in (a) social development, (b) enterprise development to facilitate rural and urban regeneration or (c) community development, designed to benefit and promote the welfare of local communities or to deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty." Memorandum and Articles of Association of County Kildare LEADER Partnership CLG.

County Kildare LEADER Partnership is the Local Development Company (LDC) for County Kildare. LDCs are not-for-profit organizations that deliver community and rural development, through locally based initiatives. Their ethos is bottom-up, taking a holistic view of development, both of the individual and of the community. The Company was established on 30th November 2007 and commenced trading in 1st January 2009.

MISSION

The mission statement of the Company is:

"To support community groups and individuals to participate fully in social, economic, and cultural activity by contributing to the development of a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable society in Co. Kildare".

VALUES STATEMENT

The work of County Kildare LEADER Partnership is underpinned by the following values:

- › People Centred Approach
- › Inclusivity
- › Empowerment
- › Caring
- › Collaboration

To support community groups and individuals to participate fully in social, economic, and cultural activity by contributing to the development of a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable society in Co. Kildare

Company Information

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020

At the Annual General Meeting in June 2020 the following Directors resigned from the Board of Directors: Patricia O'Brien, Paul Croghan, Leo Mather and Tom Cross. Tom Malone resigned from the Board of Directors and was replaced as IFA representative by Dan O'Loughlin

Paul Croghan continued to act as Company Secretary during 2020 as the Company commenced a process to appoint a volunteer Company Secretary who will not be a member of the Board of Directors.

The Board held a total of seven meetings during 2020.

GOVERNANCE CODE

During 2020 the Company undertook a Governance Review with the assistance of Senan Turnbull, a Consultant engaged through Carmichael Ireland. In addition to this work the Board of Directors also commissioned a review of the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company was held on 16th June 2020 to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The effect of these changes was to reduce the membership of the Board of Directors to a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve Directors and to change the rotation policy and the process for the nomination of Board members. Membership of the Board of Directors will continue to reflect a partnership approach with a minimum of one Board member to be appointed from the community and voluntary, local authority, private sector and state agency sectors.

The Governance Review was completed during 2020 and implementation of the recommendations from the report commenced with a view to achieving full compliance with the Charities Governance Code by the end of 2021.

| Board of Directors | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Colm O'Gógáin | Chairperson | Private Sector |
| Syl Merrins | Vice Chairperson | Community Sector |
| Evie Sammon | Treasurer | Kildare County Council |
| Anne Breen | | Kildare County Council |
| Anne Connolly | | Kildare County Council |
| Derek Barter | | Maynooth University |
| Dan O'Loughlin | | IFA |
| Fiona McLoughlin Healy | | Kildare County Council |
| Noel Dempsey | | County Kildare Chamber of Commerce |
| Zoryana Pshyk | | Community Sector |

A Team Approach Staff Supports

The focus of the work of County Kildare LEADER Partnership is on supporting individuals and communities all over Kildare to reach their full potential. However, we are conscious that this work should always begin “at home” and it also applies to ourselves as a Company – the environment we create, how we work and develop the relationships which are key to the success of our mission.

This has never been so evident as in this year when we were faced with the changes caused by the pandemic and the challenges it posed for delivering our services and programmes to the community of Kildare. Encouraging each other at this stressful time was a key aspect of the life of CKLP in 2020 and a number of activities and initiatives were put in place to support staff as they adjusted to working from home and socially distanced work.

At the start of the first lockdown, to allow a smooth transition to working from home, the Co-Ordinators of each programme maintained a daily telephone contact with team members. Weekly team meetings over Zoom were also established and a number of Zoom team meetings for the whole Company were organized throughout the year.



Catherine Connolly, Communications Officer, began a weekly newsletter called “Da News” which was very successful at maintaining morale and keeping all members of the Company aware of ongoing developments. A companywide quiz was successfully organized by Jackie Delaney and in September, when restrictions were easily briefly, a very successful Canal walk took place, which had the extra value of allowing those who had recently started in the Company to meet other members of CKLP. A weekly coffee morning on Wednesdays was also set up after the first Company-wide Zoom to allow staff drop in when free and this continued for the whole of the year.

In response to the mental health challenges brought on by the Pandemic, a series of

Mental Health Support sheets was produced weekly for most of 2020. These gave practical tips for working with stress and advice as to how to deal with the anxieties caused by these new circumstances.

Another mental health support was the establishment of a mindfulness meditation group which met every Tuesday and Friday for the whole of 2020, and which had a regular attendance of about 16 staff members. This group learned meditation and mindfulness skills to work with anxiety as well as being a place to support and share each week.

Communications in a Covid World

Effective communication has always been the key to all healthy relationships, both personal and with work colleagues.

During the mandatory quarantine, many individuals are working from home with little to no face-to-face interactions, except with their families, and as an organisation it was a challenge to overcome. Communication has undoubtedly been put to the test in recent months as Covid-19 forced teams to disperse, working from home and being separated from colleagues and teams.

We had to maintain both internal and external communications for the company alongside sharing information from the HSE and Government on daily and weekly changes during the pandemic lockdowns.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Accurate updating of information was imperative for staff and our social media followers, building trust and keeping the communications wheel turning.

In March 2020, we had intended to relaunch our website, which became a matter of urgency. This was our mode of daily updates, with our Facebook Page and Twitter Feed. The #InThisTogether campaign was launched immediately in April 2020, with infographics and advice being shared across all platforms. Mental Health Awareness, Supports, and Mindfulness sessions were offered to the public, through Zoom.

As the year progressed Instagram was launched, and our YouTube Channel, and finally our profile on LinkedIn. The communications range had expanded, and the followers and interactions increased, culminating at the year end of an all-time high reach of 39,000 across the County of Kildare. Our posts were, relevant, informative, fun, engaging and relatable. Our programmes and Courses, our changes to service and our support for clients and participants was widely shared. We continued government campaigns #HoldFirm and #StaySafe.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communications moved quickly also, with everyone coming up to speed with the use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Daily check-ins, staff meetings, team meetings, project meetings and Co-Ordinator meetings were all organised over Zoom and Microsoft Teams. A weekly newsletter for Staff each Friday was organised and activities for staff interaction throughout the week were organised, coffee mornings, mindfulness and team get togethers.

2020 may have been a tumultuous year, but in a time of emerging updates, HSE and Government announcements, information, and press releases, launches and new projects County Kildare LEADER Partnership were able to keep up with the curve.

#HoldFirm, #StaySafe, #InThisTogether

Covid-19 impact on SICAP 2020



The SICAP Programme, Which Is Funded By The Department Of Rural And Community Development, the aim To Reduce Poverty And Promote Social Inclusion Through Local, Regional, And National Engagement And Partnership.

The Key Performance Indicators for SICAP in County Kildare were exceeded for Goal One (Supporting Communities), with 67 Local Community Groups engaged with during the year. The Key Performance Indicator for Goal Two (Supporting Individuals) was amended by agreement with Kildare LCDC with a reduction of 10% of the original target. The revised target was exceeded by year end with 703 individuals registered on the SICAP caseload.

The main challenge faced during 2020 was the difficulty in engaging with SICAP beneficiary groups in the most disadvantaged areas due to COVID 19 restrictions. The Key Performance Indicator for working with individuals in disadvantaged areas was not fully achieved. This challenge was overcome to some degree by innovative approaches to engaging with individuals and groups online and outdoors when COVID 19 restrictions were relaxed during the summer months. However, a number of actions had to be cancelled at various stages as the programmes involved facilitation of the group and support for the participants to engage and deal with personal challenges.

COVID 19 has impacted on SICAP beneficiaries most significantly in the most disadvantaged areas where face to face interaction has not been possible and where access to online facilities has inhibited individuals and groups in availing of SICAP supports. The strategic approach of SICAP in



County Kildare since 2018 has been to focus on outreach community development work, and this approach contributed significantly to the identification of needs and responses to SICAP beneficiaries during 2020.

As soon as COVID 19 restrictions were put in place in March 2020, SICAP staff moved to remote working and began to contact Local Community Groups and existing SICAP beneficiaries to identify needs and put in place supports. This engagement took place primarily through phone conversations and individuals and groups appreciated and acknowledged the support. It is important to note that SICAP also responded to a significant number of enquiries from groups and individuals looking for assistance as they became unemployed, or where local groups were trying to assist SICAP beneficiary groups.

How SICAP responded to the identified needs of SICAP beneficiaries during 2020...

Supporting Communities (Goal 1)

SICAP Outreach Community Development Workers assisted local community groups across North and South Kildare in planning activities and used the social media platforms of CKLP to publicize local initiatives and good news stories during COVID 19 last year. A number of groups were also encouraged to apply for grant assistance for COVID 19 initiatives and to source health and safety materials to enable community services to operate safely and in line with public health guidelines. While outreach community development work was impacted by a lack of face-to-face contact with community groups, food and medicine deliveries continued throughout COVID 19 in some areas as well as supporting older farmers in isolated rural areas.

COMMUNITY FACE MASK INITIATIVE

One of the most significant initiatives undertaken by Local Community Groups in County Kildare was the Community Face Mask Initiative. Local community activists identified the need for face masks through engagement with the Outreach Community Development Workers and identified vulnerable groups in their community including older people and nursing home visitors and residents of direct provision centres. It was also identified that cost of masks was an issue for some groups and would also encourage individuals and families to use masks even though at that stage the use of masks was not obligatory.



An additional initiative in some areas also included aprons for older people to hold mobile phones and panic devices for those who were cocooning.

SICAP purchased the materials for the face masks, printed an instruction leaflet and assembled approximately 400 face mask packs initially. These packs were distributed to Local Community Groups and social enterprises in disadvantaged areas and the volunteers involved in the groups sewed the masks and distributed within their local communities to older people and front-line workers. Through this initiative over 3,000 face masks have been produced and distributed within disadvantaged areas of County Kildare.

Local Community Groups ceased operating to a large extent and were supported in a number of areas to produce face masks and access grants from the Community Response Fund in due course.

OLDER PERSONS WINTER INITIATIVE

An inter-agency group came together in October 2020, to look at directing additional supports to vulnerable older people across the County during Level 5 restrictions. The initial idea was to compile 1,000 resource packs with information on a range of supports based around the themes of the Keeping Well Campaign. This collaborative effort included An Garda Síochána, Older Voices Kildare, County Kildare LEADER Partnership (SICAP and Tús), Kildare PPN, HSE Suicide Prevention Office, Kildare Age Friendly Alliance, and Kildare Sports Partnership.

As part of this initiative SICAP collaborated with Kildare PPN to provide the funding for 150 food hampers for the most vulnerable older people living alone across the county. Three and a half tonnes of food were sourced and stored in the CKLP offices at Jigginstown in Naas where staff across all programmes volunteered to package into 150 hampers for those older people most at risk, who were identified by the frontline staff in Older Voices Kildare, HSE Older Person's Services, and the Older Person's Council.

In addition to providing materials for the resource packs funding was received from the Age Friendly Programme and Newbridge Silverware donated 150 decorations to include in the food hampers.

The food hampers were distributed by CKLP staff led by the Tús Programme Team Leaders with the assistance of SICAP staff and Older Voices Kildare.

SUPPORTING VOLUNTARY GROUPS

In supporting established groups SICAP organised a range of thematic workshops in conjunction with Social Inclusion Week including Intercultural and Anti-Racism, Gender Equality, Disability Awareness, Understanding Cultural Adaptation, and Intercultural Communications.

GDPR Workshops were also organised in February 2020 and June 2020 for local community groups.

Non COVID 19 related activities also included continued support for the Strengthening Families Programme with a SICAP staff member seconded to assist with the delivery of the project and funding provided for food.

SICAP also collaborated with Kildare PPN to fund an advertising campaign on local radio encouraging the general public in County Kildare to support local community and voluntary groups. This campaign highlighted the role that Local Community Groups were playing in the COVID 19 Community Response and given their lack of fundraising capacity, the general public was asked to contribute / fundraise for local voluntary groups. This campaign was supported by Kildare FM who featured community efforts throughout their regular programme schedule.

As part of the Kildare Social Inclusion Week activities CKLP hosted an event to highlight the community efforts during COVID 19. This online event featured a number of speakers from community organisations who were engaged in various activities to support the most vulnerable. As well as recording the efforts of local community activists the event also allowed a sharing of information and opportunity to reflect on some of the learning gained from the experiences to date.

As the pandemic continued, SICAP engaged with a wide range of local partners to address food poverty. Support provided by SICAP ranged from funding of food packs for students of a post primary school to bringing together organisations in Newbridge to address a local need. SICAP engaged with a number of organisations including Naas Point, a local voluntary group and DSP, HSE, Kildare County Council, Citizens Information and Pavee Point to address health and safety concerns for Roma living in a disused factory site in Naas. Funding was provided by the Department of Justice to assist with the provision of food, medicines, and other essential items over an extended period while efforts were made to repatriate the individuals or enable them to avail of homeless accommodation.

SICAP LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Despite the restrictions of COVID 19 SICAP funded Maynooth University Level 7 Certificate courses for the 2019/2020 academic year adapted to online delivery from March 2020 with the Community Development & Leadership course and Youth Studies course completed online.

Due to demand for online courses a total of three Level 7 Certificate courses commenced in October and November 2020 online, for the 2020 / 2021 academic year with inductions taking place in person on Maynooth University Campus for Equality Studies and for Youth Work Studies, before COVID restrictions meant all three courses moved fully online.

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

SICAP supported the implementation of the 2019 – 2023 Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy through:

- › Co funding of the Co-Ordinator role to oversee the implementation of the Strategy
- › Co funding of the Traveller Community Development role seconded to Kildare Traveller Action
- › Co funding for Kildare Traveller Action as the Traveller community development organisation in County Kildare

The Co-Ordinator worked with the Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group which met on a number of occasions during the year to monitor implementation of the actions. The Community Development Worker role was finalised, and a recruitment process completed by September 2020 when the position was filled. Funding for Kildare Traveller Action has enabled KTA to implement actions in the Strategy where the organisation is the lead implementer.

The Co-Ordinator is also responsible for supporting the development of the Kildare Integration Strategy 2020 – 2024. During the last twelve months a tender

process was completed for a consultancy to assist with the development of the new Strategy. The Integration Strategy Steering Group led by Kildare County Council and supported by the Co-Ordinator worked with the consultant to develop a consultative process which was undertaken in the final quarter of 2020. Despite the limitations of COVID 19 significant progress was made and it is expected that the new Strategy will be completed by July 2021.

NORTH WEST KILDARE

Arising from a review of the data analysis provided by Pobal in 2019 it was agreed that the North West Kildare area should be prioritised in 2020 on a cross programme basis. Substantial work was carried out during the early part of 2020 through outreach community development work to establish contact on the ground with local community groups and service providers. It was agreed that a briefing would be held for agencies and service providers and that separately three community engagement events would be organised. Before COVID 19 intervened, a briefing session was held in February 2020 with service providers in Allenwood and a community engagement event was held in Rathangan also in February 2020.

While further community engagement events have not been possible, the contacts established with service providers has been of assistance in maintaining contact with local community groups and strengthening plans for 2021 when the opportunity arises. Additional work during this time consisted of liaising with the most vulnerable members of the local community including elderly farmers, older community members and people living with underlying health conditions in need of supports during the cocooning period. Concerns for rural dwellers living alone on small holdings emerged again during COVID 19 and the Outreach Community Development Worker enlisted support locally to help with livestock, picking up groceries, fuel, and prescriptions. Engagement also took place with Social Farming Ireland to prepare for placements on local farms when COVID 19 restrictions permitted.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

During 2020 SICAP continued to support the development of family support services for families affected by drug and alcohol addiction through the ongoing secondment of a SICAP staff member to the Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force as Regional Family Support Co-Ordinator. SICAP funded a five week Art & Mindfulness Programme from February to March for family members at Hope Cottage. The Family Support group moved to online meetings and a weekly drop in service via Zoom commenced in May on Friday mornings. Both groups have been well attended. All one to one supports were offered by phone and older people within the group were especially supported with weekly check-in calls and texts. Family members linked in with mental health online supports offered by CKLP & HSE during Covid 19 and Hope Cottage service users participated in the community face mask initiative with over 200 masks assembled and given to the local community.

Social Enterprise

DORMANT ACCOUNTS FUND – TRAINING AND MENTORING SUPPORTS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

- › Workshops delivered to date includes: Governance Code Training for Social Enterprises, Social Media Marketing, Maximising the Social Impact of Social Enterprises in County Kildare and a special COVID-19 workshop on the HR and Health and Safety aspects of returning to work.
- › There are seven social enterprises who are currently engaging with the special Social Enterprise Mentoring support with Gateway Consulting. A number of Social Enterprises have also availed of one-to-one support in relation to maximising social impact.

- › The delivery of the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) Training and Mentoring Programme for Social Enterprises was continued up to the end of the 2020. Specialised Social Enterprise mentoring support with Gateway Consulting was continued with five Social Enterprises.
- › Hosted two online workshops in Digital/Online Marketing for Social Enterprises and ran an eight-week online Retail Skills Programme for Social Enterprises which was delivered by Barrow Training from October to December. Members from 16 groups attended our organised events, training and mentoring.
- › The DAF Training and Mentoring Programme for Social Enterprises has been extended into 2021 due to COVID-19 and we have requested an extension to the end of May 2021. Plans for 2021 include further mentoring work, workshops in Online/Digital Marketing, the delivery of a Business Planning and Financial Management Programme for Social Enterprises and further Health and Safety training.
- › Plan to run a Social Enterprise event celebrating the work of Social Enterprises in Kildare, we plan to host this event during quarter one of 2021.

SOUTH KILDARE SMALL JOBS ENTERPRISE

- › South Kildare Small Jobs was approved by the CKLP board. The CE Supervisor has just started an action plan has been created to progress to the next stages.



SICAP and other CKLP programmes providing information at Jobs Week event in the Intreo Office Newbridge, March 2020

Supporting Individuals (Goal 2)

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Employment support actions were significantly impacted by COVID 19 in 2020 but despite the lack of new referrals SICAP staff continued to engage with clients originally referred in previous years and collaborated with other CKLP managed programmes to assist unemployed and disadvantaged individuals and groups. An example of collaboration was the cooperation developed between the Enterprise Skills Programme, a CE start your own business course and the SICAP enterprise and employment support services. Through close working relationships

the two programmes were able to ensure that participants on the CE scheme were supported to prepare for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme, thus ensuring that there was improved progression from the CE scheme into self-employment. Where participants chose to take up employment instead of self-employment or to defer self-employment due to COVID 19 SICAP staff were able to assist with other employment supports.

SICAP and other CKLP programmes providing information at Jobs Week event in the Intreo Office Newbridge, March 2020

Prior to the commencement of COVID 19, SICAP collaborated with DSP and participated along with other CKLP managed programmes at an information fair organised as part of National Jobs Week. From this event and other smaller information events a total of 530 individuals availed of information provision (292 male and 238 female). A further 130 individuals were referred by DSP and other agencies for CV preparation



during 2020, and 521 individuals availed of training courses. This consisted of 392 individuals attending courses for progression to employment as well as 68 attending courses for self-employment and 61 attending lifelong learning courses.

For unemployed individuals, industry certified courses delivered online included HACCP, Manual Handling, First Aid, and Infection Control. Safe Pass courses were allowed to recommence on a classroom basis when restrictions were relaxed but with tight restrictions on numbers. Some courses required significant additional administration to deal with accreditation requirements e.g., issue of licences to potential participants and subsequent follow up work.

The Kickstart programme is a work placement programme which is suitable for clients who have skills and experience but are having difficulty in securing employment. During 2020, two Kickstart programmes were run with a total of 25 participants. SICAP collaborated with DSP employer liaison services to identify employers who were recruiting and placement opportunities. The main challenge during COVID 19 was the difficulty in placing clients at a time when unemployment is growing, and employers are having difficulty in retaining their existing staff. Despite the difficulties experienced nine participants gained employment and a further six participants engaged in further education and training.

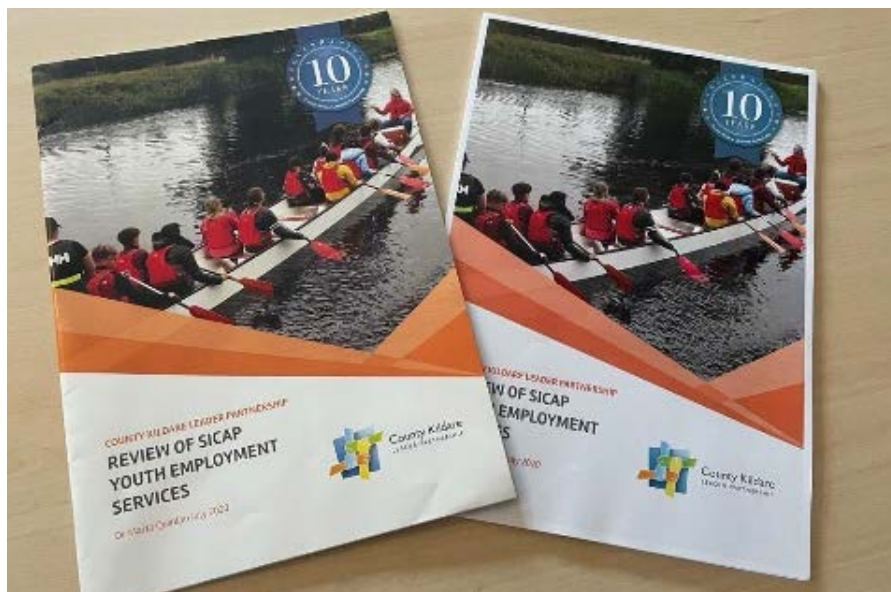
During the first weeks of the pandemic the main support required by individuals centered around accessing the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). For the self-employed alone over 300 individuals were engaged with many unaware that they were entitled to avail of the payment.

The Youth Employment Service delivered food parcels and checked in with young people engaged with the service. Similarly, funding provided by SICAP to School Completion Programme projects in the county for breakfast clubs and homework clubs was reallocated to provide food packs and activity packs. One school that does not have DEIS status was assisted with the provision of food parcels where food poverty had been identified as an issue.

The onset of COVID 19 coincided during the year with the launch of the new CKLP website and established the social media platforms as very important communication tools, as remote working became established. The SICAP Monitoring and Communications Officer coordinates the website and social media platforms and ensures that all information from Government agencies and other sources is disseminated through our communication channels to SICAP beneficiary groups and other stakeholders. This proved to be an invaluable resource during COVID 19.

SICAP YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

A key action for 2020 was an external review of the SICAP Youth Employment Service which has grown over the last three years and now employs two Employment Support Workers. During 2020 an external review was commissioned. A total of 13 young people participated in the research which was carried out through focus groups and 1:1 engagement. All the young people had engaged with the Service either through group engagement or on a 1:1 basis. A total of ten local stakeholders (service providers) also participated in the research which found that a total of 394 young people had engaged with SICAP over a two year period. The research found that the average length of engagement



was between five and seven months and that the average number of interventions was five interventions per young person. The recommendations from the Review included a proposal that a Youth Employment Strategy should be developed at a county level to ensure that youth unemployment is prioritised on an inter-agency basis and that the lessons from the SICAP Youth Employment Service experience should be disseminated to all employment support agencies. The report was launched online by Minister of State Martin Heydon T.D. on 15th July 2020. A video was also produced about the Youth Employment Service and involved some of the young people who are clients of the service. A follow up event was held on 15th September 2020 to disseminate the findings from the report and to discuss the recommendations with key stakeholders including a number of young people who had progressed through the Youth Employment Service. A presentation was also made to

Kildare LCDC on 30th September 2020 and a follow up meeting was held with DSP and KWETB to discuss how a strategy for improved collaboration around youth unemployment could be implemented.

SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS

While education supports during COVID 19 were reallocated to assist schools and families with food and activities other preventative actions continued to be implemented prior to and during COVID 19. The Better Basics reading programme ran from January to March 2020 until COVID 19 intervened. A series of videos for parents around Cybersafety were developed in conjunction with CYPSC and other agencies. The five videos on separate topics were hosted on YouTube and launched on social media in May 2020.

Considerable work was carried out with a school interested in trialling the Non Violent Response approach to improve inter student relations within the school. SICAP collaborated with the school and Kildare Youth Services to issue questionnaires to students and staff regarding their attitudes around their safety and sense of belonging within the school. SICAP and KYS subsequently data entered over 400 responses.

SICAP supported young people with disabilities aged 16 – 19 years of age and their families engaged through the Ability Programme. SICAP support enabled the provision of activity packs to supplement the provision of food parcels for a cookery programme similar to the Youth Employment Service. Funding was also sourced from Tusla through the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) to allow additional activity packs to be provided. SICAP also collaborated with the Ability Programme to identify support for parents and the families of young people with disabilities and an Autism Awareness workshop was organised in November 2020.

During 2020 a total of 4,456 children availed of SICAP supports with 2,234 female and 2,222 male participants.

MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

SICAP reviewed its support for disadvantaged men during 2020 and developed a new approach which was implemented by the end of the year. In previous years SICAP had collaborated with the Heads Up programme to support men who had engaged in the 12 week Heads Up Programme. Separately SICAP had also been supporting men's outreach work in disadvantaged estates in Newbridge in collaboration with Newbridge Family Resource Centre.

During the past year concerns had been expressed around mental health issues in the North West Kildare area and the need for a rural mental health initiative. SICAP engaged with Newbridge FRC and the Heads Up Programme to establish a new full time position of Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience Co-Ordinator co funded by SICAP. And HSE. This new position strengthens the wellbeing and resilience work with men and will enable the development of a new initiative in the North West Kildare area. Following recruitment, the new Mental Health Wellbeing and Resilience Co-Ordinator took up employment in October 2020 and has been working with the SICAP Outreach Community Development Worker to implement the North West Kildare Initiative in 2021.



Ingredients and recipes were supplied to participants on the Youth Employment Programme



SICAP Community Development Support Worker, Nicola Hogarty Shopping for Older People during lockdown.

The Rural Development Programme (LEADER)



The LEADER Programme is committed to improving the lives of those living and working in rural communities in County Kildare. It was

established by the European Commission in 1991 as a method of mobilizing and stimulating rural development in local rural communities. It is based on an EU philosophy called “Community Led Local Development”, understanding that Kildare consists of strong communities with ideas for their futures, and these local communities are often best placed to respond to the challenges that face them.

2020 Progress

2020 marked the final year of the LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 and 32 projects or initiatives were supported, investing €1, 628,095 in the county. 20 of these projects were under the Economic, Enterprise and Job Creation Theme, 6 under Social Inclusion, and 6 under Rural Environment,

Some of these projects were in response to the energy and creativity of individuals around the county. This strongly aligns with one key aspect of the LEADER approach, namely the emergence of initiatives identified by individuals. An example of this, a farm diversification project, under the Economic, Enterprise and Job Creation Theme, was the brainchild of Stephen Morrison, a full-time farmer with a busy family farm at Hartwell, outside Kill. He is not fully organic but is transitioning away from inputs and has worked hard in recent years to ensure that he farms in a balanced way, with increasing biodiversity and with low impact on the wildlife that shares the land there. He has planted native woodland and a forest garden and links in with local schools to spread awareness of ecological issues. His wife, Heidi, is a Visual Artist and Art Psychotherapist, and this combination of creativity, therapy, mental wellbeing and nature have all come together in their project to support creativity and mental health. LEADER supported the project with a grant of € 167, 787.62.



Creative Retreat Centre



Scouts Den, Oldbridge

Their **CREATIVE RETREAT CENTRE** is a place close to nature for holistic and creative retreats. This idea was made even more timely with the onset of COVID, as being in nature has been shown to have significant beneficial effects on wellness, health, and overall mood. It is an excellent example as to how rural areas offer real opportunities for growth into new business sectors as well as their role as a reservoir of natural resources.

Communities and group also identified potential projects, mainly under the Social Inclusion Community Facilities or Rural Youth Theme.

One example, which proceeded despite the challenges of COVID was the building of the new **SCOUTS DEN in Oldbridge**, by the 23rd Kildare Scouts Group in Sallins. They have been in existence since 2006 and go from strength to

strength, with over 100 members now across Beaver, Cub, Scout and Venture sections. They aim to encourage physical, intellectual, emotional social spiritual and character development of young people so that they achieve their full potential and engage as responsible citizens in society. Up to now they used Sallins National School as their Den. Their vision for the new space is a resource for all the community, including groups such as girl guides, dance, martial arts and fitness groups, and well as a canoe club.

The construction work continued in 2020 despite the setbacks caused by COVID. The LEADER Programme supported the fit out of the DEN with a grant of €65,396 Euro, supplementing the considerable fundraising carried out by the group.

Strategic and Collaborative Initiatives

A key part of LEADER work is animation and training in support of the themes of the Programme.

Consequently, we continued in 2020 to identify in-house areas that needed capacity building or animation around the county. This allowed the development of skills in different communities to support them to respond to areas identified in the Rural Development Strategy for the county. This also develops social capital in the form of networks, allowing local strategies to be linked and coordinated as a coherent whole.

One example of such an initiative was the development of **BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS** for 10 towns and villages around the county. This training, animation and capacity building initiative started with a well-attended launch in early 2020, just before the idea of lockdowns and social distancing began. However, before any meeting with groups could happen the pandemic restrictions were imposed. After a pause to become familiar with the new landscape, training moved to on-line, delivered directed to the 10 communities registered. The "walk about" each local area was achieved through a mixture of video and photographic means. This led to the launch 10 impressive Biodiversity Action Plans for each area, clearly marking out steps for the next years. The launch of these plans, again online, was a celebration of diversity in the county and in Ireland, featuring the work of to nature photographers and was a huge success. This initiative was a strong collaboration with the Heritage Department of Kildare County Council who are seeking to replicate it in 10 more communities. A great example of capacity building, networking and strategic implementation of the themes of the LEADER programme.

Working during the pandemic

The overall impact of the COVID pandemic was to slow down in a general sense the processing of projects. It took community groups some months into the first lockdown to continue with normal functioning and a number of projects, particularly in capital projects were set back by months or did not move on from ideas stage. The tourism sector was beset by uncertainty, and two large projects (value 320,000 Euro) which were considered certain at the start of the year did not proceed, which had a not as significant impact on planning and closing out the Programme.

Support to promoters moved to online and telephone support. Evaluation meetings moved to online over Zoom and there was no drop in quality or professionalism. LAG meetings moved to conference call and then to online and functioned well with no impact on making the decisions required to approve projects and progress the programme.

Monasterevin

Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-25



The Tús Programme



Tús

Getting you working

The objective of the Tús programme is twofold: to improve the employability and work readiness of participants by providing them with work opportunities to put their skills into practice and to learn or up-skill to enable them to progress to mainstream work, while at the same time as supporting local not-for-profit organisations to deliver services in our communities.

Voluntary and Community groups commit to offer a quality work experience to the participant and a working week of a minimum of 19.5 hours per week for a period of 12 Months. All groups also have a duty to provide some supervisory time to the client.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All participants must be at least 1 year on a Jobseekers Payment, and any participant previously on Tús must be off the scheme for a minimum of 3 years before becoming eligible again. Selection is on a random basis carried out by DSP with names furnished to the implementation body. An initial one-to-one interview is carried out by CKLP to assess the skill level, suitability of the participant and to match them with a position that best suited their career path. We are then able to offer a participant a placement in one of the 125 host groups we service across Kildare.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

Participants are allowed to carry out additional work outside of placement hours while not affecting their payment. There is also no requirement to attend DSP office during placement. Furthermore, participants are able to avail of the added benefit of the services of County Kildare LEADER Partnership during and after placement. We also offer a limited amount of in-house training to all our participants. All participants will be given assistance to progress to full time employment, education, or business start-up at the end of their contract. To date one in four starters on Tús move into full time employment before their finish date on Tús: 25% of starters on Tús progress to full time employment.

TÚS AND WORKING WITH COVID-19 IN 2020:

Over the last year Tús did not just go away, Participants engaged in frontline care, have continued at their placements. Yes, it is true to say that some programs were on hold but now with the easing of restrictions things will open up again and following all government guidelines we hope to have a full crew back at work by mid-summer 2021.

Over the last twelve months Tús supervisors have been engaged in additional programmes, delivering, packing and sourcing food hampers for Christmas with Older Voices Kildare, collecting from food cloud for deliveries to Teach Dara Family & Community Centre and Bishopsland community centre in Kildare town. The delivery of food packs on a weekly basis for training on the Ability program, this ten-week course was much appreciated by the participants giving them the cooking skills and a good diet balancing programme to follow.

Looking at numbers going forward, we have a reserve of 75 names waiting to start on Tús in 2021, and once we are back to full strength, we are looking to increase our numbers for 21/22 to a total of 250, this will require the hiring of additional supervisors later in 2021. With numbers on the live register at an all-time high we must take this opportunity to expand and develop the Tús programme for the benefit of the people of Kildare and to give those on payments the opportunity to gain valued work experience and in the future so they can move on to full time employment.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

In County Kildare many groups benefit from participant's knowledge, expertise, and involvement. Groups such as Moore Abbey, Cill Dara Housing, Sporting organisations, charity shops, Tidy Town Committees, and many more offer up to date employment opportunities and valuable work experience to participants. Over the last year Tús has supported and indirectly funded communities with almost €2,000,000 in labour; without this funding many community-based organisations would not survive or would have to look for additional state funding.



Communities and groups supported – Project Locations

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Naas Sports Centre | TEA Lane Historic Graveyard Celbridge |
| Clane United | Solas Bhríde Kildare |
| NCBI charity Naas | Sensational Kids Kildare |
| NCBI charity Sallins | NCBI Kildare |
| NCBI charity Clane | SVDP Kildare |
| Clane GAA | Plains Residents Assoc |
| Clane Lawn tennis | Rehab Care |
| Green IT | Cill Dara Housing Kildare |
| Suncroft Graveyards | |
| Jack and Jill Crookstown | Suncroft GAA |
| Moone Shop | Citizen Advice Newbridge |
| Moone Parish Church | Rathangan Graveyard |
| Ottomy Residents Association | Convent Kildare Town |
| Kilkea Residents | Andrew Meadows Athy |
| Naas Tidy Town | Athy Tidy Towns |
| Kill Tidy Towns | Athy Enterprise Centre |
| Brannockstown Tidy Towns | Bridge United Ballymore Ball alley |
| Athy Community Resource Centre | |
| Naas Scout Den | Happy Days Creche |
| McAuley Place Naas | Passlands Cemetery |

Communities and groups supported – Project Locations

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Naas Parish Centre | Monasterevin Scouts Den |
| Acre Project Celbridge | Woodview Res |
| Ashgrove Residents Carbury | Moore Abbey |
| Ballynafagh Lake project | SVDP Monasterevin |
| Breaking Through Maynooth | St Evans Park |
| Celbridge GAA | Monasterevin AFC |
| Straffan GAA | Athy Sports Hub |
| Celbridge Church of Ireland | Athy Rugby Club |
| Celbridge Community Council | Naas Care of the Aged |
| Citizens Information Maynooth | Flinters Close Creche |
| Coill Dubh AFC | Kingdom Life House |
| Coill Dubh residents | Self Help Africa |
| Leixlip Tennis Club | SVDP Athy |
| Leixlip YCC | St Michaels Graveyard |
| NCBI Celbridge | Tús In It to Bin It, Athy |
| NCBI Leixlip | Sarsfield's GAA Newbridge |
| NCBI Maynooth | SVDP Newbridge |
| St Bridget's Hospice Leixlip | Rosconnell Residents Association |
| SVDP Celbridge | Red Cross Charity shop |
| SVDP Kilcock | Kilcullen Boxing Club |
| Kildare Animal Shelter | Open Arms Retail Newbridge |
| NCBI Newbridge | Jack and Jill Newbridge |
| SVDP Kilcullen | Newbridge Day Care Centre |
| Age Action Retail Newbridge | Ryston Sports Newbridge |

THE RURAL SOCIAL SCHEME (RSS)

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

The Rural Social Scheme was set up in 2004 to provide income support for low-income farmers in return for part time work in the community. It is based on a 19.5-hour flexible week to ensure that participation does not affect the participants farming activities. To qualify for the scheme, one must be in receipt of a means tested social welfare payment and provide proof that they are actively farming. If a person is eligible and does not wish to participate on the RSS, his or her dependent spouse/civil partner/cohabitant can apply in their place. They can also allow a sibling or child to use their Herd Number to participate, once they satisfy the other criteria.

By Participating on the Rural Social Scheme, local communities' benefit from your skills and talents by providing additional resources to maintain and improve local amenities and facilities.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

You must provide a copy of your application for the EU Basic payment for the current year, including a valid active herd number. You must be in receipt of Farm Assist or one of the following qualifying Social Welfare/ Means Tested Payments:

- › Job Seekers Allowance
- › One-Parent Family Payment
- › Jobseekers Transitional Payment
- › Widow(er)'s Pension (Contributory or Non-Contributory)
- › Adult Dependents of Non-Contributory Old Age Pensioners who themselves are under 66.



RATES OF PAYMENT

Rates of payment depend on qualifying Social Welfare Payment. Your Local Supervisor/ Co-Ordinator will advise you of your rates at time of application. A PRSI contribution (Class A) is paid in respect of each participant. Those earning less than €352 per week will not be subject to PRSI. Participants are exempt from USC.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK IS CARRIED OUT?

- › Maintaining and enhancing way marked ways, agreed walks and bog roads
- › Energy Conservation for the elderly and less well off
- › Village and Countryside enhancement projects
- › Social Care and Care of the Older Person
- › Community Care for pre-school and after school groups
- › Environmental Maintenance work- maintenance and caretaking of community and sporting facilities
- › Projects relating to not-for-profit cultural and heritage centres
- › Community Administration or clerical Work



Carbury pitch being maintained by RSS participant

2020 PROGRESS

The Rural Social Scheme in County Kildare currently employs 26 participants and one Coordinating Supervisor employed by County Kildare LEADER Partnership. With the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic, the Rural Social Scheme had to temporarily cease activity for a number of months in line with government guidelines and advice. The Co-Ordinator would have engaged with all participants on a weekly basis to check in with them and to ensure that they were ok and if they needed any assistance. A number of the participants live and work on the farm alone and are living in isolated parts of the County.

However, many of our participants continued to support and work alongside their various host groups by offering supporting and assistance to those who are most at risk.

This type of support involved assisting with the Older Voice programme delivering food hampers. Distribution and sorting out food hampers through the Food Cloud and in conjunction with the Curragh Family Resource Centre. Maintenance and upkeep of a number of sporting facilities was also carried out on a voluntary basis. This ensured that not only was the pitch maintained to a high standard, but it also facilitated people who lived within a close proximity to their local sporting facility and within their 5km radius that they had a safe and well-maintained area to exercise.

Worked also continued in the Irish Wheelchair Association on their garden and construction of the raised beds was completed to ensure that clients would have an open outdoor space to enjoy outside of the main centre.

The RSS continues to support twenty-eight Community Groups throughout the county, from Johnstown Bridge in the north of the county to Athy in the South. Potential participants are identified through local agencies, direct media marketing, talks at different events, farmers meetings and through community groups in the County.

The majority of participants on the RSS scheme in Kildare are involved in environmental maintenance-type work with sports clubs and local community groups.

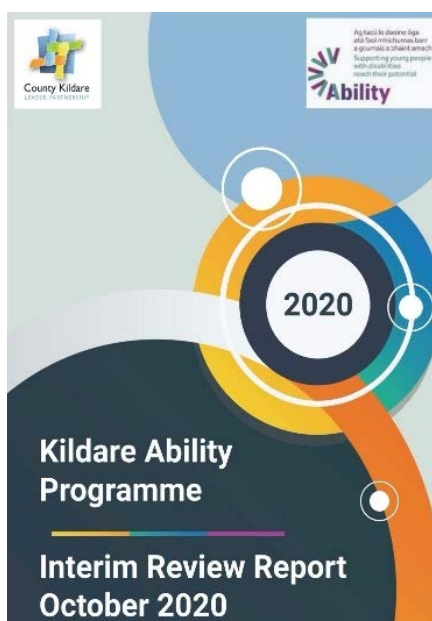


The Ability Programme

The Kildare Ability Programme (KAP) is one of 27 such programmes nationwide that focus on assist young people with disabilities to develop the confidence and independence required to participate in education, training, and employment, while building the capacity of mainstream employment services, training providers, and employers to support the progression of young people with disabilities. The Ability Programme is funded by the European Social Fund and Department of Social Protection and has been extended to run until 31st August, 2021.

County Kildare LEADER Partnership established a steering committee to oversee the implementation of the Ability Programme. It includes representatives from:

- › St John of God Services
- › Kildare Supported Employment
- › HSE Disability Services
- › National Learning Network
- › Newbridge Youth Training Development Centre
- › KARE
- › Department of Social Protection
- › Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board
- › County Kildare LEADER Partnership
- › Kildare Local Employment Service



The referrals for the programme have come from a range of agencies across the county, including: HSE Training and Guidance, Youth Workers, Juvenile Liaison Officers, Tusla, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), The HALO Project, County Kildare LEADER Partnership, schools, Network Disability Teams, Local Employment Service and parents of young people. Each referral meets the Co-Ordinator and engages in a process to identify suitability and needs. Any young person who is not eligible or feels the programme does not meet their needs can avail of a sign posting service. Every effort is made to help the young person and their family advocate for themselves and access appropriate support. A number of families have been supported to access other more appropriate services. To date there have been 83 referrals to the programme.

The programme capacity is 40 young people, there is a waitlist

in operation with 11 people at present. Each young person is given an appropriate person-centred support to assist them in achieving their goals. A number of young people have progressed back into education or training as a result of their participation in the programme. Many of the other participants are currently exploring areas of interest and opportunities for training or education in their locality. At present there are nine participants are back in full time education and seven others are taking part in accredited training. Three participants are in part time employment while 38 participants engaged in work preparation activities.

ABILITY PROGRAMME REVIEW

A review of the Ability Programme took place in 2020 to identify the impact, progression, and key learnings to date. The conclusions and recommendations from the review will contribute to the implementation and continuous improvement of the Ability programme in the future. Business Improvement Solutions (BIS) were successful in the procurement process for this review and commenced the assignment in July 2020.

The review found that the Kildare Ability Programme has been effective in engaging young people who are hard to reach and have disengaged from services. Using a person-centred

approach the Programme has engaged with the young person at the point in life at which they are at. Recommendations included that participants have a transitional plan developed that includes a pathway for their next stage of progression. It also recommended raising awareness of the programme throughout the county and utilising the expertise of the steering committee to lobby for funding to ensure support is available for this vulnerable and at-risk cohort.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Covid-19 was a significant challenge throughout 2020 as the participants needed to adapt to working and engaging with the Programme remotely. The Ability Programme was in a position to support participants with use of Tablets to ensure communication and engagement continued. Cookery sessions took place for participants online, while one to one intervention continued online and via phone also.

The Ability Programme currently has 20 active participants. The programme capacity is 40 young people, however with the current Programme funding coming to a close in the coming months new referrals are currently not being taken. A new funding round has been applied for with a view to continuing the work of the Kildare Ability Programme into 2022.

Enterprise Skills Programme (ESP)

The Enterprise Skills Programme (ESP) is a specialized Community Employment (CE) scheme, primarily funded by the Department of Social Protection; there are three main areas of work – The Enterprise Skills Programme (ESP) Course, South Kildare Small Jobs Service and general Community Employment job placements.

The Enterprise Skills Programme (ESP) course is a 14-week start your own business course in Kildare for unemployed individuals in receipt of a welfare payment. It is funded by the Department of Social Protection.

Following a review, the programme was restructured in 2019, from the 26-week Business Development Programme and renamed the Enterprise Skills Programme, to accommodate more potential entrepreneurs in each 12-month period. The Programme supports individuals to explore self-employment, in order to ascertain if they have a viable business and if self-employment is the correct option for them

During 2020, the ESP course was delivered twice, adapted to be delivered online, which ran successfully from May to August 2020 with 14 participants.

As Covid-19 restrictions had eased somewhat, a graduation ceremony was organized for the group – in the garden of CKLP in Kildare town in keeping with social distancing requirements. This was welcomed by the participants, as it emphasized their achievements and also gave them the opportunity to meet in person for the first time (see picture).



Graduates from the Enterprise Skills Programme

A second ESP course was conducted from September to December 2020 with 14 participants; thus, a total of 28 participants took part in the training during 2020. Group training was delivered in core modules of business planning, such as Accounts, Book-keeping, Financial Planning, Marketing, Sales, Market Research, Social Media, Customer Service, GDPR & exploring the realities of self-employment.

The training was delivered in an online adult learning environment and support was given to improve knowledge and confidence around becoming an entrepreneur. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to undertake additional individual training which increased their skills and made them better prepared for running their own business. An integral part of the programme was the regular one-to-one support from the ESP Co-ordinator. Eligible participants were supported by the SICAP Enterprise Support Worker to apply for the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA).

Those who decided against self-employment were supported by the Co-Ordinator and the SICAP Employment Support Worker to plan their next career step.

Many of the participants also undertook additional pieces of training through the programme, relevant to both their specific industry and advancing their general employment options, for example: First Aid, Manual Handling, Infectious Control, Barbecue, Exercise & Fitness QQI Level 5, Advanced Electrolysis, Train the Trainer, QQI Level 6 and CV preparation.



SOUTH KILDARE SMALL JOBS (SKSJ) SERVICE

Having identified a need within the area, during 2020, CKLP set about establishing the South Kildare Small Jobs Service. The aim of the service is to provide a maintenance service for small household jobs for people 65 and over living in the South Kildare area; the type of jobs which will be offered will include: small gardening jobs such as weeding, cutting small areas of grass, potting plants, sweeping a yard etc. The launch of the service in 2020 was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions; however, a lot of planning & development work for the service did take place behind the scenes, along with the recruitment process for staff. The service will be operational as soon as possible under Covid-19 restrictions during 2021.

GENERAL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

During 2020, the Enterprise Skills Programme also hosted 6 general Community Employment (CE) placements; the placements included: Receptionists, Caretakers and an Administrator.

While some of these work duties were limited or postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions, where possible remote working and/or limited duties took place. All participants undertook additional training and enhanced their skills, in various areas.

County Kildare Integration Project (AMIF)



BACKGROUND

Under the 2014-2019 Kildare Integration Strategy County Kildare LEADER Partnership has been the lead agency for assisting individuals and families leaving Direct Provision in Newbridge. In 2016 CKLP received part-funding for 3 years from St Stephens Green Trust to provide integration supports to residents of the Direct Provision Centre in Newbridge from 2017 to 2019. This funding was matched by funding from KCC and SICAP to employ a part-time Integration Worker in conjunction with the Kildare Integration Strategy Steering Group. The Integration Worker commenced in late January 2017 on a part-time basis to work on a one-to-one basis with individuals and families prior to and during their transition from the Eyre Powell Direct Provision (DP) Centre in Newbridge, County Kildare.

In 2019, CKLP received funding from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for 3 years with co-funding from KCC to continue and expand the Integration Project on a full-time basis to provide supports to the residents of the Eyre Powell (Newbridge) and Hazel (Monasterevin) DP centres in County Kildare.

In the final quarter of 2020, the Integration Worker actively supported people to engage in the consultation process of the new Kildare Integration Strategy.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

During 2020 the Integration Project Workers continued to support people seeking asylum to find out about life in Ireland, specifically with regard to the welfare system, housing and employment, and advocacy. People are provided with the information they need to integrate into the local community,

both officially and culturally. Prior to the outbreak of Covid 19, the Integration Worker accompanied people on those first daunting visits to the local Social Welfare office and the Housing Department in KCC, as well as banks, GP's and even on one occasion the dentist. For some there is a language barrier; for all, it is a new and strange culture. Even when the individual has a sufficient level of English, it can be hard to understand the processes involved. The institutionalisation of people in DP can disempower an individual to such a degree that they have lost all ability to advocate for themselves. When the long-awaited letter granting immigration status arrives, there is joy, but also fear and confusion; how do you find a new home when you do not even know where to start. The Integration Worker steps in to fill the gap, to give guidance on their next steps and options, and support them through the processes.

In 2020, the Integration Worker supported 50 individuals/families in 982 interventions including registering with the Garda Immigration Office to obtain their GNIB/IPO card, Naturalisation, Social Welfare and Housing through form filling, gathering relevant documents, accompanying individuals to appointments, liaising with the Immigration Officer, the Department of Justice & Equality, Kildare County Council Housing Section and the Department of Social Protection to overcome obstacles as well as providing support on various other issues. During the current Covid 19 crisis the Integration Worker has continued to support individuals/families through various mediums to keep residents updated on the crisis, education and employment and educational opportunities, as well as using Zoom to have one to one sessions on next steps and form filling. Weekly Conversational English classes commenced in July 2020 online and an Independent Living Skills course was also successfully held online in 2020.

Kildare Roma Employment Support



BACKGROUND

Based on the Consultation findings from County Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy back in 2019, Kildare Roma Employment Support Programme continued in 2020 to provide support and assistance in relation to the highlighted barriers expressed by the Roma participants in the Strategy Consultation process. Supported by funding from the Department of Justice and Equality and more recently the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration & Youth. Kildare Roma Employment Support Programme addressed issues in the field of Covid-19 emergency responses, Employment, Social Welfare and Community Development-based approach with individuals and groups within the Kildare Roma community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The key achievements in 2020 were: the successful engagement with the Roma community re employment-related supports, obtaining membership of the National Roma Network, and developing strong collaborations with several statutory agencies, NGOs and charities including NaasPoint. Intensive planning and adjustment to the roll-out of Programme Actions in 2020 was necessary due to the pandemic, moving from face to face to virtual engagement. This has been challenging but effective with the program supporting almost 50 Roma individuals and their families.

OUTREACH TO ROMA COMMUNITY

During the first quarter of 2020, outreach support to members of the Roma community commenced with drop-in services in Athy, Celbridge, Naas and Newbridge, with 121 visits in Sallins, Monasterevin and Kilcock. Once pandemic restrictions were implemented, the entire support has been provided via telephone communication, and virtual platforms like Zoom, e-mail, WhatsApp, any means necessary to outreach the Roma service users. The Roma Women's Group was developed pre-pandemic with a gathering for International Women's Day 2020 and continuing virtually through the WhatsApp group for the remainder of the year.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

The Roma Employment Support Programme has assisted service users in pre-employment and employment supports. Individuals have completed Personal Action Plans, engaged in Manual Handling, Safe Pass and Interview skills training and have received supports with CV development. In addition, referrals to Tús have been continued whenever pandemic restrictions allowed it, with three Roma participants currently in employment placements. Weekly vacancies were analyzed from several jobs sites and sent to jobseekers based on individual career planning carried out by the Roma Employment Support Worker.



Roma Employment Support Worker Presenting at the National Roma Network in January 2020

COVID 10 SUPPORTS & EMERGENCY RESPONSES

The major impact on Roma community has been the Covid 19 pandemic, and the Programme provided continuous remote support through emergency responses and collaboration with Department of Social Protection, Citizen Information Centers, HSE, SafetyNet, and local charities including NaasPoint for support in relation to homelessness, unemployment, food and digital poverty. In particular CKLP collaborated with NaasPoint and SafetyNet for local Covid-19 testing and medical assessments, translation of medical advice and medical prescriptions translation provided by the Roma Employment Support Worker.

Ongoing collaboration has been carried out with Kildare Traveller and Roma Implementation group and the Covid-19 subgroup, domestic Violence group and an education group. At National level, Programme staff were involved in the Roma National Network and close collaboration has been carried out for best results in terms of support towards the Roma community throughout Ireland. Overall, considering the challenges of 2020 at all levels of society, Roma Employment Support Programme has successfully transitioned to supporting the Roma community through any virtual means possible, and we will continue to improve our services in 2021.



Heads Up Kildare

The programme sits on four main pillars:

- › Wellbeing and Resilience
- › Physical Activity:
- › Life Planning:
- › Social Connection

2020 marked the 5-year anniversary of HEADSUP Kildare and proved to be one of its toughest yet, due to COVID 19, while at the same time providing a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate its strength and resilience.

HEADSUP is an evidence-based mental health education and training programme for men who are finding life stressful, have issues with unemployment, feel isolated or lonely and wish to explore ways of improving their wellbeing and resilience.

In Kildare, the Programme is hosted and managed by CKLP and is supported by an Interagency Group comprising of statutory and voluntary organisations working across health, education, employment, welfare and social inclusion. Core funding for the HEADSUP Programme comes from HSE Mental Health Division CHO 7.

OUR WORK IN 2020

At the beginning of 2020 we completed Programme 13 which was ran in the north of the county based in Maynooth. We began this programme with 15 participants expecting some fallout however were delighted with 100% retention of all the participants.

Programme 14 commenced February 12th with 12 men in the southwest of the county in Athy. We managed to run 4 group sessions before COVID 19 put a stop to meeting face to face meetings and HEADSUP had to adapt.

It was agreed by the team that continuing to offer support to participants in programme 14 was the priority, however given the impact of the pandemic this support was extended to participants from programme 13 as well. They received a weekly 'check in' call offering emotional support where needed.

A 'Be Well' pack was compiled on a weekly basis commencing the end of March 2020 and posted out to participants. Between March 2020 and June 2020, a total of 204 packs was sent out. The packs were made up of a range of activities from physical fitness routines, wellness worksheets, mindfulness exercises, uplifting poetry, word searches and picture quizzes. In fact, one of the participants from Programme 13 provided a number of the poems which were sent to the men, he recognising it as one of his wellness tools and wishing to share it with others. These packs were used as a talking point in the biweekly calls that were made to the men with the team clocking up 652 calls to 83 men between the months of April to September. As the weeks passed the packs included simple recipes which the men tried out and proudly posted photos on the What's App Support Group which was established to help keep the men connected and supported. The What's app was also a forum for checking in and sharing tips on what and who was helping to keep participants feeling well. As well as the men sharing photos of pets which helped to keep them balanced and well.

Recognising that Programme 14 was interrupted on week 5, support to these men continued beyond the usual 12 weeks with them continuing to be supported through to the end of July. Once it was safe to do so these men were met in 2 smaller groups, socially distanced, in order to complete the programme thus ensuring as full of a HEADSUP experience as possible. These remaining sessions included a pottery workshop introducing the participants to a new creative activity they could engage in supporting their wellbeing. These proved to be very successful with the men getting in touch with their creative sides.

In addition, our work included a mix of online provision as well as face to face work (all strictly COVID compliant) depending on the level of restriction which was in place.

1. Four 4-week mini programmes – which gives participants a taste of the full programme as well as providing them with some tips and strategies for managing their mental health. This had 35 referrals and 19 participants. (Newbridge and Kildare).
2. In co-operation with CKLP we hosted a 4 week online 'Mindfulness' course for a number of participants who expressed an interest in using this form of meditation to support their wellbeing to help relax the body and mind reducing stress in uncertain times.
3. In collaboration with Treoir, which supports unmarried parents, a webinar exploring options for Dads and informing them of their rights during COVID 19.
4. In partnership with the CKLP Tús programme we supported a number of past participants in accessing food support during the initial lockdown.
5. Recognising the restrictions which COVID 19 placed on peoples movement the HEADSUP team recorded 19 videos for our Facebook page covering a variety of topics from the importance of routine, setting goals, grounding exercises, stress and coping in the here and now and tips on self-care.

The videos reached 10, 869 people's Facebook newsfeed with 826 engagements. (Engagement is when people perform actions on our page, i.e., like a post, share a post or click on an image. In addition, the HEADSUP team created a number of videos for The Hive Youth Hub social media sites supporting the younger people in the county.

6. Our Peer supporters (a number of trained past participants who continue their involvement and association with HEADSUP) facilitated a number of socially distanced “Walk and Talk”s across the Curragh plains. These walks were a lifeline to some of the men who were otherwise completely isolated during restrictions with little or no contact with the outside world. The Peer Supports all completed a Walking Leader programme run by Kildare Sports Partnership thus ensuring that everyone was safe and following best practice guidelines.

HEADSUP

Mini Programme

KILDARE
supporting U and
your mental health

Are you?

- Male + over 18
- Motivated to change
- Able to participate in a 4 week programme, 1 morning a week

Next Programme:
Kildare Town
September 2020

For more information, please contact:
Lorna@countykildarelp.ie 085 8421347
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Haringey Council
Supporting You
to Thrive



Building a
Better Health
Services



Cransky Kildare



Kildare County Council



kwetb
Kildare and Wicklow
Athletics and Triathlon Club



Peter the Very
Small

Heads Up Kildare had an 88% retention rate on our programmes during 2020. This is significant as the men themselves choose to attend the programmes. They do not receive any payment for participation. The impact of the programme for participants is wide ranging from better understanding of their own mental health, positive coping strategies, greater ability to advocate for support to increased confidence, improved fitness levels, motivation, and clear progression plans.

Over 75% of men progress onto further education, training, or volunteer opportunities or re-enter the workforce.

Our success during 2020 is in no small way down to our collaborative working with organisations and services across the county. To all we are extremely grateful. Collaboration occurs in a number of different ways with a broad range of services, key staff, community leaders through their knowledge, experience, and expertise. Most of our participants come from referrals from a broad range of services who identify men who might benefit from our programmes. Many services give directly to our programme through the provision of staff inputs, these include, Kildare Adult Mental Health Services, HSE Addiction Outreach, DSP, KWETB, LESN, CKLP, IASIO etc.

Kildare Sports Partnership ensure that the physical fitness element of our programme is appropriate to the varied needs of every group, enabling men to recognise how being active positively impacts on their mental health. The Newbridge Family Resource Centres, CMWS Hall Kildare town, Towns Park Community House, and Church of Ireland, Athy all gave us access to their premises to deliver our programmes or meet participants in accessible and welcoming spaces.

Rural Intervention Programme - recognising the need for further support in the more rural parts of the county where isolation and loneliness can contribute to poor mental health, a new staff member was employed at the end of October 2020. Sinead's job is to employ a social prescribing approach which accepts referrals for men with non-medical needs to supports being offered in the community in order to improve their health and wellbeing. During the number of weeks employed in 2020 Sinead set about creating a network of what is available, which supports are available to provide support as well as consulting with a number of men as to what they would like to see in their community.

Older Voices Kildare



Older Voices Kildare (OVK) is a Social Inclusion Initiative which specifically targets isolated categories of older persons, including Older LGBTQI persons, Travellers, People with Disability, and Individuals who are experiencing social exclusion through lack of or limited social capital. Our mission -- to build the confidence and capacity of older people in Kildare -- works towards creating a county where older people are included and empowered within a vibrant community.

Older Voices Kildare (OVK) has a proven record of success in working with older people in the county. We have been successfully offering programming to older persons in the Kildare area for 10 years, providing them with an opportunity to meet, express their issues and ideas, and find their voices, both individually and collectively. We do this through a variety of programs, including Voices Through Art, Aging with Confidence, yearly seminars on issues of interest to the community, and community and outreach programs. With older people reasonably expecting to live into their 80s, the challenge is to enhance the quality of their lives and their participation in social and civil life. Involving older people in projects in their communities increases their self-confidence skills and social networking ability, which in turn impacts positively on their mental health and on the social capital of the community.

ORIGIN AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Loneliness is a serious health issue, and one in 10 older people in Ireland identify as chronically lonely. Loneliness is particularly identified as a primary concern of an aging demographic, contributing to negative impacts on physical and emotional well-being.

The risk factors of loneliness are:

- › Poor psychological and physical health
- › Adverse Feelings (Separateness, alienation, distress and isolation)
- › Failure to satisfy the need for intimacy, conceptualised as the discrepancy between desired and achieved levels of social relations.

Higher levels of loneliness are associated with living alone, adverse physical health symptoms, lack of spousal confidante, marital or family conflict, and a generally poor quality of social relationships.

The Befriending Project relates directly to enhancing mental and physical health and supporting vulnerable members of society. Indirectly, the service can impact on the need for homecare packages, and hospital discharge.

Social prescription and befriending services give an older person a more varied choice of options for them to explore, and identify for themselves where possible, what suits them rather than what a health professional or family thinks they need. It also allows for the targeted inclusion of people with dementia and their carers, where a social prescription such as Yoga, can be tailored to individual cognitive needs. This will allow either an hour of respite for the carer, or an opportunity to engage in an activity with their loved one that is not related to their condition.

Social Prescription allows the individual to take an active role in their own health and well-being.

OUR COVID RESPONSE:

- › During Covid 19 Restrictions on a weekly basis since 16th March 2020, OVK has contacted between 80 individuals (week 1) and 170
- › 280 Hours of phone support are currently provided every week along with 14 "goodnight" and "good morning" texts per week to vulnerable/lonely older people.
- › 8 Hours of support calls to volunteers are made every week.
- › Referrals to higher support services constitute 4 hours per week.
- › This is facilitated by 28 volunteers – some community and some CKLP Staff.
- › In total we have provided in excess of 4,596 hours of phone support and 251 hours of follow up supports – HSE referrals, call logs, admin / research etc.
- › 150 Food hampers were distributed to people identified as having issues with food poverty.
- › 1,000 activity/ resource packs were distributed to isolated older people across the County as part of the Winter Initiative.



The DARA Project



The DARA Project is a drug & alcohol rehabilitation programme for those in recovery from addiction. Our main support is delivered through an abstinent community employment structured day programme. It was first established in September 2013 under the Innovation Community Employment. This Project was identified through Service User Involvement as a need for Co. Kildare. The project first operated in Kildare town and is now located in Athy, Co. Kildare. It is approved for 30 CE participants.

The Dara Project is funded by the DSP and hosted/sponsored by County Kildare LEADER Partnership. We provide a range of supports to people who have become drug free and empower them to reach their full potential. We believe that every person can recover from addiction. We seek to support, empower, and equip each person to live a substance free life.

OUR SERVICES

Abstinence Day Programme – this structured day programme is for people who are drug & alcohol free and are in recovery from substance misuse. We deliver a wide range of supports to those in recovery, including group therapy, 121 Keyworking, counselling, training & education & life skills development.

Peter McVerry Trust – The DARA Project also collaborates with the Peter McVerry Trust, who also are our project patron. We currently have capacity for 10 CE drug referred places for participants who are resident within PMVT Kerdiffstown House, Naas, Co. Kildare. These participants are not yet drug & alcohol free. We currently deliver two weekly therapeutic support groups along with a variety of training to these participants.

Supporting Local Services – The DARA Project also seeks to support other local addiction services within the community by having community employment mainstream participants working within their service. This gives each service staffing supports while giving the participant an opportunity to professionally develop in their career. These mainstream CE places are for people who are not in recovery from substance misuse.

COLLABORATION

We recognize that the important work of recovery is not achieved by one service alone but is rather through an interagency approach of professional services coming together to reach a similar goal. We continue to build strong working relationships with other services in the wider community including but not limited to, Peter McVerry Trust, KWETB, Hope Cottage Family Support Centre, Cuan Mhuire, Kildare Sports Partnership and Merchants Quay.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

The DARA Project continues to source, facilitate, and promote training & education for the benefit of participants engaged in its community employment programme. We do this through the support of local training providers. Participants of The DARA Project have engaged and completed a wide range of training & education programmes within the current CE year. Below is a sample of completed training.

| INDUSTRY STANDARD & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT | QQI ACCREDITED |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| First Aid | Hard Landscaping QQI |
| Manual Handling | Woodcraft QQI 4 |
| Recovery in Mental Health | Painting & Decorating QQI 3 |
| Hidden Harm | Health Care Support QQI 5 |
| HSE Mental Health Wellbeing | Community Addiction QQI 5 |
| Tango Fitness | Care of the Elderly QQI 6 |
| Self-Care | Counselling & Psychotherapy QQI 6 |
| Effective Communications | |
| Anger Management | |
| Forklift Novice Training | |
| Dignity in the Workplace | |

RECOVERY & THERAPY

The DARA project seeks to assist those referred to become independent, socially integrated, emotionally-balanced, and personally productive through person-centered, rehabilitation, community employment, educational and vocational interventions. As part of our recovery & therapy programme, our project delivers:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Structured Day Program | Afternoon Relapse Program |
| Randomized Drug & Alcohol Testing | Life Skills Development |
| Counselling | SMART Goals |
| Group Therapy | Career Guidance |
| 121 Keyworking | Reflection & Reviews |
| Language of Letting Go | Horticulture & Bike Restoration |
| Relapse Prevention Program | |



Individual Placement Support (IPS)

For further information on Individual Placement Support (IPS) please log into <https://www.countykildarelp.ie/programmes/hse-individual-placement-specialist/>

Individual Placement Support (IPS) is the most effective evidenced-based employment approach based on over 30 years of research supporting people with mental health conditions to find and maintain the right employment of their choosing. It has a unique approach by integrating our Employment Specialists (ES) David Doran into the Community Mental Health Team. We use a person-centred strength-based approach with a prime focus on building relationships with clients and employers.

IPS has successfully established itself within the CMHT in Kildare. We start accepting referrals in early September 2020 from the CMHT. As of December 2020, we have 13 clients registered with IPS service. IPS offices is based in Kilcock Primary Health Care while working across two Community Mental Health Teams Dr Deirdre Jackson in North Kildare and Dr Paul Matthews in North Mid-West Kildare.

It is important to remember getting back into employment can be a vital part of the journey to recovery. We have 3 clients return to employment and continue to maintain their employment with the support of IPS. We have 6 clients taking part on various courses and workshops provided by County Kildare LEADER Partnership (CKLP). People experiencing mental health issue who gain mainstream paid employment show reduced symptoms, gain financial independence, improved



social networking, improved self-esteem and have improved quality of life. When you hire people from diverse backgrounds you set a good example for others in your company and in the community.

Started Employment Specialist (IPS) role 04/08/20.

- › Covering North West / North Mid-West Kildare.
- › Established Individual Placement Support (IPS) service across two Community Mental Health Services.
- › 13 clients on caseload as of 15/12/20.
- › 3 clients in Employment.
- › 6 clients referred to CKLP services.

New business relations: SAP Landscapes, Irish Defence Forces, Aldi Supermarket, K Club, CPL Recruitment, Glen Royal Hotel and Donovan's Printing etc.

New community services relations: Intreo Newbridge Office, INOU, Housing Associations, Peter McVerry Trust, EVE Services, Heads UP, Ability Programme etc.

Kildare Sports Partnership



CKLP is the host organisation for the employment of staff on behalf of Kildare Sports Partnership. The hosted staff report to the KSP Board, who are responsible for oversight of its work programmes and finances. The relationship between the organisations is covered by a Service Level Agreement.

providing advice and training and education, the Hub is now linked with this club and a great level of knowledge and experience has been passed on by the Athy Rowing & Canoeing Club, along with providing gear and up-skilling sessions to members, the two clubs now travel along the River Barrow on evenings and weekends.

ATHY SPORTS HUB

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of programmes at the Athy Sports Hub. However, prior to the public health restrictions and when reduced during the year there was still plenty to report about.

STRATEGIC PLAN

During 2020 the Sports Hub collaborated with the Rural Development / LEADER Programme to secure funding for the development of a five-year strategic plan. This plan for the Shackleton Outdoor Education Centre will be delivered during 2021 and will provide a blueprint for the development of water based sports hub in the Athy area.



PROGRAMMES

Before the first Level 5 lock down came into effect nationally, the Sports Hub was able to facilitate some of the programmes that have been operated from its inception. These included: Kayaking Sessions for Traveller Boys, The Athy Rowing & Canoe Club Marathon Race, Taster Sessions for Service Providers, Training & Education for water-based clubs and Club sessions for water-based clubs. The Athy Sports Hub Co-Ordinator was in constant contact and communication with the newly founded Monasterevin Blueway Kayaking Club. By

“It has been a game changer in my life. Anna [Programme Co-Ordinator] put in a huge effort to put together the programme and to keep me going - trust me when I say it has made a huge difference.”

—John, 56.

Women in Sport Programme

Programme Lead: Anna Deegan

MINDING ME – PERINATAL PROGRAMME

Minding me was a week-long programme of online events for women in the Perinatal period, it was a national event run as a collaboration between the HSE, CYPSC, The Coombe Hospital, Kildare SP and Wicklow SP. It was held from Oct 19th - 23rd with yoga classes on Oct 19th & 20th. The Pre and post-natal yoga sessions had 25 participants taking part in each session. Following on from this the Minding Me online resource was launched on playitsafe.ie and is populated with information from a collaboration with the HSE Physiotherapy department and Kildare Sports Partnership.

BUGGY BUDDIES

Buggy Buddies was launched during the 'Minding Me' event which took place in October 2020. This programme was designed to go through a whole-body exercise routine while pregnant and/or with a baby. This programme was immensely successful with the first sessions being oversubscribed with 40 participants. However, due to the increased restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this programme was moved into a virtual space with 15 participants per session. Kildare Sports Partnership continue to host sessions via zoom with a KSP tutor delivering the sessions. The feedback remains to be extremely positive from all participants.

SCHOOLS WELLNESS PROGRAMME

One programme of the School Sport & Wellness Leader Programme was delivered during the month of October in Ardscoil Athy, including Community



Cardiac First Response Training with Maltings Training. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions we had to cancel the rest of the programmes that were scheduled for this year. In lieu of this, KSP started a series of online wellbeing talks in collaboration with the library service, so far, a Managing Anxiety talk with Dr. Mary O'Kane has been delivered to 2nd year students in 4 schools with 427 students engaged. This talk has been extremely well received and all schools are very keen for KSP to deliver this talk to more of their students and also are interested in facilitating future talks in the same format. The Women in Sports Officer continues to liaise with the library about expanding this programme to have 3 speakers from Jan to June next year.

ACTIVATOR SESSIONS

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been significantly less Activator sessions facilitated throughout Kildare than other years. In January and February, the Women in Sport Officer delivered 2 sessions Monastervin and Rathangan. There was a combined total of 45 older adults participating in the programmes.

COMMUNITY OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP AWARD PROGRAMME

The “Community Outdoor Leadership Award” (COLA) course was established to encourage safe outdoor activity during COVID 19 and also to promote the use of the Greenway and Blueway amenity developments in the county.

The course provides participants with the knowledge and skills required to confidently and competently organize and lead outdoor initiatives for recreation-based activity groups in their community.

Training has been provided through a blended learning approach with participants engaged in a range of Online Workshops, Zoom Conference Meetings and Face to Face outdoor sessions working strictly within the parameters of the Government’s re- opening

Ireland Roadmap. Walking Leader training covers the theory and practical aspects of establishing and leading Nordic Pole, Urban, Hill and Trail Trekking walks

To complement the development of the Blueway and Greenway infrastructure in County Kildare, practical walking leader sessions are held along our Canal Towpath Trails.

It is also planned to provide additional accredited training to enable participants to gain further experience and employment in the tourism and recreational activity sectors. This course has been received very well during COVID 19 and is developing a pool of trained walking leaders as a very useful resource in the county.



CKLP PROGRAMME SUPPORT

The Community Sports Development Officer links with a number of CKLP managed programmes and initiatives including Finding Your Feet and Better Together (SICAP funded personal development programmes), Heads Up and the DARA Project.



Nordic Poles Training Programme

The Kildare Public Participation Network

CKLP is the host organisation for the employment of staff on behalf of the Kildare PPN / Kildare County Council.

The hosted staff report to PPN Secretariat, who are responsible for oversight of its work programmes and finances. The relationship between the organisations is covered by a Service Level Agreement.

The Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in 2014 as the representative voice for all Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion groups across Ireland.

The Public Participation Networks role is to identify the issues that matter and try to influence policy in a way that improves the quality of life and opportunities for people within the Local Authority area. The Kildare PPN was established in 2016, it is over seen by a Secretariat, elected by full member groups of the network and consists of 1,073 member groups across three pillars; community and voluntary, environment, and social inclusion.

The Public Participation Network is the main link through which the Local Authority and other decision-making bodies connect with the community and voluntary sectors.

The Public Participation Network is committed to working in an open, inclusive, and transparent manner on behalf of all member groups.



**Kildare
Public
Participation
Network**

COVID-19

2020 was a challenging year for all organisation and one that was unprecedented in most of our lifetimes. Organisations supporting communities and organisations needed to re-evaluate what that support would look like and adapt to ensure minimum impact so that maximum support would continue.

Kildare PPN took several decisions and immediately moved to implement initiatives, jointly and in collaboration with colleagues in our sector.

KEY INITIATIVE

Covid-19 Community Response Interactive Map:

Kildare PPN was the first to initiated/launch a Covid 19 interactive map, through are network. The map contained a list of all the community groups that were offering assistance and supports to the vulnerable members of the community. On our website community and voluntary groups in County Kildare could submit their services and supports which in turn acted as a support for the community call when it was launched. All information and services which we gathered were forwarded on to Kildare County Council for inclusion in the Kildare Community Call. Forty-two (42) groups registered to our map. A total of 112 groups throughout Kildare registered their services and supports.

Other Covid 19 initiatives and collaborations included:


- › Re-opening the Community & Voluntary Sector post Covid-19 Webinar
- › Keep Kildare Talking campaign
- › Access to Technology Survey
- › Community Fundraising Support Campaign

BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY


- › 2020 saw a number of events take place which increased community capacity.
- › 2 funding information session in conjunction with Kildare County Council
- › Social Inclusion Week was held in collaboration with SICAP in September which saw 9 events held throughout the week from educational workshops to panel discussions on Covid-19 response in Kildare.

Climate Action Weekend was held in November which saw 6 events throughout the weekend in a number of different formats, from podcast to webinars. The weekend focused on igniting the conversation on climate action and capacity building within our communities.

The Kildare PPN website was developed and improved to include a Grant section, Useful resources, toolkits, advise and guides.



Kildare County Council
Omhaoiríocht Contae Chill Dara



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Let's Keep Kildare Talking

Kildare COVID-19 Community Response Forum are calling on neighbours, friends and community groups to "Keep Kildare Talking" and together, reduce the feeling of loneliness.

What can you do?

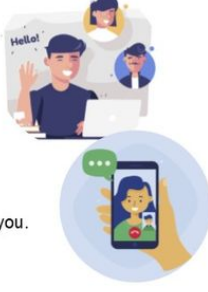
Keep Kildare Talking by reaching out to a neighbour. Smile, chat at a safe distance, make a friendly phone call or let them know your contact details. Family members, neighbours and friends can all play their part by recognising that even though we have to stay apart, we can still take the time to talk to each other and this can really reduce loneliness.

What can Community Groups do?

Keep Kildare Talking by asking your members to make regular 'comfort calls' to vulnerable citizens by telephone or video call. Help people stay connected and get online. Remember some people may be reluctant to ask for help and thus we need to offer them a friendly chat as well as practical supports.

Let's **Keep Kildare Talking**

T - Take the time to stop and chat. Together, we can get through.
A - Ask your neighbour how they're doing
L - Let your neighbours have your contact details
K - Keep in regular contact by telephone and video call.
I - Initiate conversations with a friendly wave or smile.
N - Never feel alone - Kildare Community Call Helpline is here to help you.
G - Get Talking, it's good for you and your community



Kildare Covid-19 Community Response Forum is reminding people that anyone who needs help or is experiencing loneliness can call the Kildare Community Call Helpline at 1800 300 174, 8am-8pm, seven days a week or the national ALONE Helpline 0818 222 024. Other supports are also available at YourMentalHealth.ie


Two Kildare befriending services are also available, Good Morning Kildare 045 859037 or goodmorningkildare@yahoo.ie and Older Voices Kildare (OVK), Denise Croke, 087-1411669 and Susan Higgins, Befriending Support Worker, 087-1149175.

The national, "In this together" campaign, aims to promote wellbeing during the current pandemic. It offers a range of activities and supports, for mental health, staying fit and active, and staying connected which can be found on gov.ie/together or on the dedicated wellbeing section of Kildare County Council website here: kildarecoco.ie/coronavirusinformation/Wellbeing/.


Protection from coronavirus – It's in our hands

#ItsInOurHands #InThisTogether

#KeepKildareTalking



Coronavirus
COVID-19
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Advice



Kildare Town Project

During 2020, the Company made significant progress towards the development of the former Presentation Convent in Kildare Town as a Community Development Centre.

Since 2018 County Kildare LEADER Partnership has been collaborating with the Irish Social Finance Centre (ISFC) to acquire the convent and former school buildings, which form the complex at Meadow Lane in Kildare Town. The Presentation Convent building in Kildare Town has been a pivotal part of the local community since 1830. Since its establishment until its closure in 2017, the convent developed a significant role in the education of the local community. The plans are to continue to focus on education and training and to support community development initiatives. In conjunction with providing facilities for community based education and training, the facility will provide accommodation for ancillary CKLP staff and other not for profit organisations in County Kildare.

The complementary aims and values of County Kildare LEADER Partnership and the Irish Social Finance Centre around social inclusion and community development offer a partnership that brings together local knowledge and resources with experience, skills, and access to complementary resources at a national level.

The initial scoping of this proposal identified the potential for this project to have a strong community education and training element which would offer a range of supports across the life cycle primarily for the local community in Kildare Town but also to the unemployed and disadvantaged groups from a wider geographical area. Kildare Town is positioned between areas of significant disadvantage in North West and South Kildare including Robertstown, Kilmeague, Monasterevin, Kildare Town, Newbridge, Kilberry and Athy and is well served by public and



community transport services. The facilities at the Presentation Convent complex include good training rooms and other attributes including a significant kitchen area and walled garden.

One of the potential hubs that are being considered for the Convent is around support for local social enterprises. The development and use of the kitchen and walled garden have been identified as potential social enterprise projects as well as the use of the facilities in the Convent complex to support training and mentoring for new and existing social enterprises.

Since 2018, County Kildare LEADER Partnership has used the existing facilities to accommodate Tús and the Rural Social Scheme and, until COVID 19 intervened, had run a number of industry certified training courses. The complex also includes the former primary school which is a base for the Kildare Town Scouts group.

Progress with the development project to date has included a full conservation report, confirmation of planning permission and grant approval under the Rural Development / LEADER Programme as well as loan approval for the project which is estimated to cost €1.4 million to complete over two phases.

The first phase of the project to develop the lower ground floor and ground floor is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The development of the Convent project is overseen by a Convent Task Group who report to the Board of Directors.



County Kildare

LEADER PARTNERSHIP

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EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
European Social Fund



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020