

# Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

End of programme report 2015-2017

Executive Summary

September 2018



**Social Inclusion &  
Community Activation  
Programme**



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. This report presents the summary of programme achievements and outlines the experiences related to programme implementation over its lifecycle (2015-2017).

The first round of the programme, which ran from 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2017, was funded and overseen by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)<sup>1</sup>. The total programme budget (2015-2017) was €100,117,865. SICAP was delivered by 46 Programme Implementers (PIs) covering 51 Lots across the country and administered locally by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs).

Over the lifetime of the programme, SICAP supported 110,044 individuals on a one-to-one basis and 5,028 Local Community Groups (LCGs).

Over the programme lifecycle, the targets for the majority of indicators were met, with some significantly surpassed. The targets set for the two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were exceeded in the last two years of the programme, i.e. the total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged under SICAP and the number of Local Community Groups assisted under SICAP.

### *Local Community Groups (Goal 1)*

- 5,028 Local Community Groups were supported under SICAP between 2015 and 2017. The majority of LCGs supported by the programme (63%) worked to address the needs of specific geographical communities as well as issue-based target groups. Almost two thirds of LCGs (64%) worked with people living in disadvantaged communities as the main target group.
- 1,999 LCGs were supported to participate in local, regional and national decision making structures.
- Three quarters of LCGs supported by SICAP were in the early stages of their development and 734 LCGs progressed along the community development matrix (15% of all groups supported under SICAP).
- 452 social enterprises were assisted under SICAP and 26 new social enterprises were established over the programme duration.

### *Collaborative frameworks*

- Over the lifetime of the programme, 286 new joint programmes, strategies or partnerships were put in place between SICAP implementers and education providers, designed to meet the educational needs of SICAP target groups.
- 109 new strategies, partnerships and joint programmes were put in place between PIs and employment focused agencies in order to improve access to employment supports and 54 new initiatives/partnerships were formed between SICAP implementers and employers.

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<sup>1</sup> The responsibility for SICAP was moved to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) in July 2017. Previously, responsibility for the programme was with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG).

### *Profile of individuals (Goals 2 & 3)*

- 110,044 individuals were supported under SICAP over the lifetime of the programme. Three out of ten of these individuals lived in areas designated as being disadvantaged, very disadvantaged or extremely disadvantaged. Almost half of all beneficiaries (47%) were long-term unemployed and 40% were from a jobless household. The highest educational achievement for 69% of individuals was Leaving Certificate level or below.
- The majority of individuals accessing the programme over the three years were men (55%) and 53% of individuals were aged between 25 and 45.
- The main target group supported were the unemployed (78% of the caseload) and the second largest target group were people living in disadvantaged communities (29%). There were 12,473 young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) supported by the programme.
- Almost three quarters of individuals supported under SICAP (80,675) were Irish nationals. Polish nationals were the second largest nationality, representing 4% of the caseload.
- Almost half of SICAP participants (50,614 or 46%) were referred to the programme by a government body, state agency or other relevant organisation. Over the lifetime of the programme, the share of referrals from government bodies/state agencies increased from 40% in 2015 to 47% in 2017. One in five beneficiaries were referred to SICAP by an LCG (20%) and a further 18% learned about the programme from their family or friends.

### *Individual educational supports and outputs (Goal 2)*

- Over the programme duration, 52,068 people received supports related to Life-long Learning (LLL). Of these, 11,365 were young people (aged 15-24). The share of people on the SICAP caseload receiving educational supports increased from 45% in 2015 to 48% in 2017.
- 77% of individuals accessing Goal 2 supports had an educational attainment of Leaving Certificate level or lower. The proportion of females accessing Goal 2 supports increased over the programme period from 55% in 2015 to 57% in 2017. Goal 2 had a higher proportion of young people and older people accessing supports compared to the overall programme caseload and those accessing Goal 3 supports (22% of Goal 2 participants were aged 15-24 and 14% were over 55 years).
- In total, 9,721 individuals have progressed along the education continuum after registering with SICAP, 22% of whom were young people (aged 15-24).
- On average, over 53,600 children (under 18 years) received Goal 2 educational supports each year.

### *Individual employment and self-employment supports and outputs (Goal 3)*

- A total of 73,374 individuals, including 9,964 young people (aged 15-24), received employment supports under Goal 3.
- 57% of people accessing Goal 3 supports were aged between 25 and 45 years and 62% were men.
- Over the lifetime of the programme, an average of 41% of individuals on the Goal 3 caseload received career advice and guidance supports, 38% availed of self-employment supports and 32% participated in labour market training. Between 2015 and 2017, the share of individuals on Goal 3 caseload availing of both labour market training and career advice and guidance support increased, while the share of people availing of the self-employment supports decreased year on year.

- Over the lifetime of the programme, 5,801 people progressed to full-time or part-time employment. Of these, 1,519 were young people aged 15-24 and they represented 26% of those who got jobs.
- 15,923 people who received self-employment supports set up a new business, which led to the creation of 1,695 full time jobs. Only 459 young people (aged 15-24 years) progressed to self-employment – they represented 3% of all people who set up their own businesses. The progression of young people to self-employment was cited by many PIs as a significant challenge throughout the programme.

### *Challenges and learning*

- Over the lifetime of the programme, LCDCs and PIs identified a number of key challenges they faced when implementing the programme. Some challenges related to programme design – namely the registration process and associated data requirements, the focus on quantitative targets and the lack of funding supports for LCGs and individuals. The lack of flexibility in relation to setting targets at a local level was also raised.
- In relation to the operation and delivery of the programme, PIs outlined a number of challenges, including engagement with some of the hard to reach target groups, such as NEETs, engagement with LCGs, difficulties with progression into self-employment, the impact of the JobPath programme, and barriers to access to services, such as childcare and transport, particularly in rural areas.
- At the start of the programme, many PIs and LCDCs experienced issues with the IRIS reporting system, many of which were related to learning the new system. The issues had been addressed over the lifetime of the programme, both through making changes to the system as well as providing training supports. By 2017, the number reporting this as a challenge reduced significantly.
- Many of the challenges relating to programme design and requirements were addressed as the programme progressed and training delivered over the programme period supported LCDCs and PIs in their roles.
- Key areas of learning highlighted the importance of the following: communication and effective working relationships between PIs and LCDCs; collaborative approaches with external agencies and bodies to ensure the needs of the most marginalised people are met; a bottom up community development approach in order to address social exclusion; and the value of regular staff up-skilling and training in line with programme requirements.
- The feedback from LCDCs and PIs was taken into account and used to address the key challenges identified under SICAP 2015-2017 as well as in the design of the new programme (SICAP 2018-2022). The new programme has been designed to address local needs in a more streamlined, simplified and flexible manner.

### *Going forward – changes to the new programme (SICAP 2018-2022)*

The design of the new programme has been based on feedback from PIs and LCDCs, with the following key changes made:

- Longer funding commitment – the programme cycle has been extended to five years.
- Reduction to two Goals (Goal 1: Supporting communities and Goal 2: Supporting individuals).
- A simplified registration process.
- More target groups to ensure better coverage and greater access for marginalised people.
- Grants to support local community groups and individuals.
- Greater focus on quality community development and more intensive engagement.

- Fewer headline indicators and targets.
- Measurement of the barriers that SICAP clients face.
- The age limit has been removed to allow people of all ages to avail of SICAP supports.
- A new specialised SICAP tool to measure personal progression is currently being designed.

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