

# Sligo LEADER Partnership SICAP Case Study 2019



## KickStart

Discover the skills you have and put them to work



**A RANGE OF SUPPORTS TO  
HELP TOWARDS NEW TRAINING OR  
DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR YOU**



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Ireland's European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020

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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

## Case Study

### Primary Theme:

Goal 2 KickStart

### Thematic Area

G2 - 4:1 SICAP clients are better prepared to enter the labour market.

### Relevant Outcomes

G2 - 4:1 SICAP clients are better prepared to enter the labour market.

### Relevant Output Indicators

G2 – 4:1.1 Individuals (caseload) in receipt of labour market supports.

G2 – 4:1.2 Participants (non-caseload) in SICAP labour market / enterprise information events.

G2 – 4:1.3 The extent to which Individuals are prepared for the labour market as a result of the SICAP supports.

### Project Name:

KickStart Programme

### Target Groups

Unemployed Persons, Lone Parents, Substance Misusers, Disadvantaged Communities, Underemployed

### Reason for Case Study

This KickStart programmes has come around as a result of two years engagement with unemployed persons by SICAP personnel and from the result of a joint collaboration approach with DEASP. It has been an organic project based on the changing needs of our SICAP clients, and the realisation that we need to be more proactive to ensure long term engagement with experiencing most barriers to their participation in the labour market and lifelong learning. It is innovative in terms of design, delivery and engagement.

## Background/Context

Sligo LEADER Partnership have for many years delivered a range of supports for unemployed persons through the SICAP Programme. A main priority has been to develop a strong collaboration partnership with DEASP and Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board in developing a targeted engagement strategy, facilitating the promoting the range of supports SICAP can offer.

One of the areas of achievement that we feel has been of particular success throughout early SICAP 2015-2017 has been our continued of this joint targeting and engagement strategy for Job Seekers. It is an organic engagement that changes and moves with the changing needs and profile of SICAP clients. For each event over 1,500 clients were mail shot, with DEASP assisting targeting in those most disadvantaged groups such as 15-25 year olds, lone parents or those living in most disadvantaged areas etc.. SICAP would then tailor supports depending on the needs expressed at these events.

In 2018, while nationally we are almost at full employment we very much recognize that many of those still on the Live Register have significant and/or multiple barriers to their participation in any schemes or programmes. Many of our clients displayed issues with substance misuse, low self-confidence, depression, mental health issues etc.. and this lead us to reassess our how we designed our pre-employment supports through SICAP. Traditionally these supports were job search skills, personal action planning, one to one career advice and guidance and provision of Lifelong learning supports etc..

While these actions remained important, we took some time out to strategically design supports that were aimed at engaging those most disenfranchised and most hard to reach. We designed promotional events designed at helping clients realize their hidden skills and talents, one examples was an event called 'Hobbies Showcase' promoting the benefits of participating in hobbies, to broaden your skills base, make contacts, promote health and wellbeing, to identify hidden strengths and talents. Again this was a multi-agency activity with DEASP, Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership, MSLETB etc. We have identified a strong need for confidence building, stress control, English conversation classes, basic communications (i.e. hygiene, personal presentation etc..) basic job seeking skills, as well as linking with employers, such as the SICAP designed Barista Training using local employers etc.

All workshops were designed to be one to four workshops maximum, taking into account that many clients still had a 'fear' or bad experience with formal education in the past.

In late 2018 we concentrated on soft supports such as Skills to Success – Skills based programme aimed at those on live register who do not know what direction to take, taking time to explore their skills and talents to identify possible routes for lifelong learning; A range of Stress Control Training and Mindfulness Workshops; A variety of community arts programme delivered in Cranmore and other venues as a means to engaging with people living in Disadvantaged Communities and Exploring New Opportunities programme for Lone Parents – provision of stress control, confidence building, money management and exploration of lifelong learning opportunities for lone parents delivered in Disadvantaged communities.

## **General Lesson Learnt about Types of activities and delivery**

While all of these SICAP interventions were working, we found that it was proving to be difficult to encourage a client to continue from one support to another and that some clients slipped through the cracks. Re-engaging these clients took a long time and significant effort on the part of the SICAP Development Worker. We believed that there had to be a better way of encouraging longer term engagement with SICAP and a way of encouraging commitment to a more intensive support programme.

Feedback from clients was positive in the main, with the most common feedback being that it was nice to get information in an informal setting, which didn't feel like a class room and that it was positive that workshops were delivered in different locations, it made it easier to attend.

## **SICAP Staff Contribution and SICAP Staff Skills**

### **1. Staff Analysis informed design and delivery of work**

- There were sometimes gaps in between workshops while we waited to fill places and some clients slipped through cracks
- We acknowledged that while many clients had gaps in their employment history through unemployment, mental health issues, family issues etc.. all had something to offer, but found it hard to identify and/or express their strengths
- Also while some had basic education levels that there are 9 types of intelligence, 'academic' is only 1, so a need to explore other talents clients have to offer.
- We also realised that while our joint engagement days were very productive that we needed to continue to think of better collaborative ways that we collectively support job seekers who are experiencing many barriers to entering the labor market and/or availing of DEASP supports.

### **2. SICAP contribution, staff skills**

- This initiative was developed by the Sligo LEADER SICAP team based on the needs identified
- SICAP Staff had developed very good working relationships with DEASP and other service providers and had a good knowledge of the professionals in the area who could collaborate on this project
- SICAP Staff had developed a range of skills in organising 'engaging' events, aimed at attracting the most marginalised, and finding an innovative way of getting SICAP's message across to the most disadvantaged.
- We learned from mistakes on different projects from 2018-2019 and experimented with location of delivery, methods of delivery, mixed media delivery etc. ensuring that workshops were as accessible as possible.
- SICAP Staff had extensive experience of working with unemployed persons on pre-employment and self-employment supports, and had gained great knowledge of evidence based programmes available

## Genesis of KickStart

In late 2018 SICAP Staff began to design KickStart which is a focused programmes aimed at helping clients to identify their natural skills and talents, with a view to supporting clients to be better prepared for entering the labour market.



### SICAP Development Officer Introducing KickStart

## Step 1: Engagement – ‘Change for the Better Workshop’

We built on our strong working relationships with local DEASP Office and designed a Collaborative Engagement Event - called ‘Change for the Better Workshop’ with the aim of promoting KickStart and providing an opportunity for unemployed persons to hear about how exploring positive life changes, can help you to identify and develop your own natural talents.

We had a number of local and National speakers who shared their stories of how they completely changed the direction of their lives.

### Keith Richardson - StormBodyFitness, Sligo



Keith spoke about his move from Architectural Technician, when in 2008 he found himself unemployed to owning his own Gym in Sligo. He described the successes of a high powered job in Dublin, to being unemployed. The turning point for Keith came when he was offered manual labour painting walls and insulating roofs. He decided then and there he was going to work for himself, doing something he loved, and moved to Sligo.

Keith went out on his own, founding Storm Fitness in 2014 with the help of the SICAP/DEASP Back to Work Allowance. "With the support of SICAP, what I thought was brilliant was you had an infrastructure behind you. I would always have preferred not to ask for help, but to know that they were in the background and there was a go-to if I was having problems was massive.'

## **Blaithin Sweeney – Rennafix, Sligo**

Blaithin spoke about growing up in Sligo, where it became a natural tendency to spend time outdoors when in need of fun, or relaxation or social time or just about anything, outdoors, fresh air and activities were the common denominator through all of life's highs and lows.

After completing a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in N.U.I., Galway, I gained employment in TopChem Pharmaceuticals in 2007, and began a very successful career in Pharmaceuticals. Blaithin spoke about how life changed direction for her in 2011, as a result of being in a bad personal place following a bereavement due to suicide.



She knew she had to make a change and following training in 2012, she established a non-profit organisation that was to become the Havin' a Laugh charity, promoting positive mental health through life-enhancing activities. She said that 'any activity that brings you joy in a sustainable and healthy manner can be described as a life-enhancing activity'.

## **Simon Delaney – Actor**



Simon is an Irish actor, director and television presenter. He is known for appearances in a range of films and television series such as RTE's comedy-drama *Bachelors Walk* and CBS' legal drama *The Good Wife*, and in the films *Zonad* (2009), *Delivery Man* (2013), and *The Conjuring 2* (2016). Simon hosts the Virgin Media One morning show Weekend AM. Simon spoke very humorously about this journey from part time delivery man to developing his natural talents to become a successful actor and talented chef. He spoke about how he found his natural talent in his twenties, and has had to reinvent himself a number of times, but stressed the importance of doing what you are good at, what you enjoy and giving it a go.



## **Change for the Better Workshop**

### **Step 2: Design and Delivery of KickStart**

KickStart is structured around:

- Two mandatory workshops
  - Skills Connect
  - Personal Effectiveness
- A selection of work based training workshops that can be chosen based on personal career planning.
- Continuous One to ones with clients along programme.

## Skills Connect

The Skills Connect workshop demonstrates that we all have different types of intelligences and many of us do not pay enough attention to our strengths. There will be guidance on how to leave the comfort zone in order to open up exciting new career or learning opportunities. It is designed to help you explore your skills with a view to using this to help you identify possible new opportunities we might have available. It was a practical workshop where you got to experience practical exercises in each of the areas of intelligence such as Linguistic (Enjoy writing, reading, telling stories or doing crossword puzzles); Logical-Mathematical. (Interested in patterns, categories and relationships); Spatial (Thinking in images and pictures etc.. Music etc..

### Sample testimonials

'I really enjoyed it and I was motivated'

'It helped me Identify my talents'

'This course makes me motivated in whatever thing I am doing and makes me courageous to do it the best way I can'

'It helped me be positive and keep going on'

## Personal effectiveness

This was aimed at helping you to maximise your potential, to develop an awareness of the importance of assessing your own effectiveness and also developing skills in the areas of basic communications, self-motivation, self-awareness, time management, goal setting and teamwork.

### Samples testimonials

'The workshop showed me how to function better in mornings e.g. going to bed earlier, physical exercise etc..')

'I learned how to better communicate'

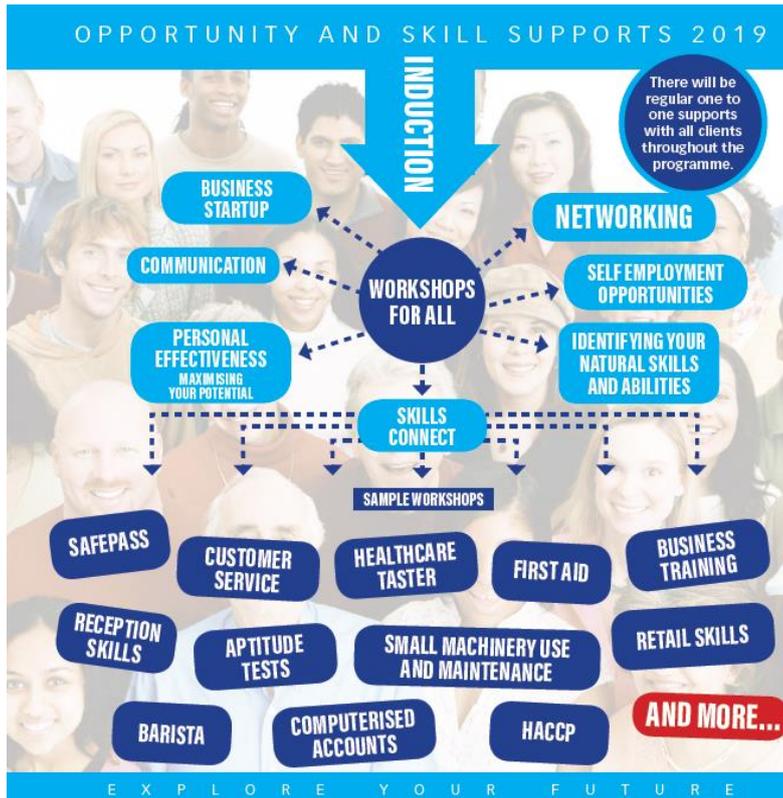
'It is a really important course and helpful, I really enjoyed every bit of it'

'I am very happy to around in this workshop because I learnt a lot on how to manage time and stay focused in whatever I am doing'

'The course is educational and motivating and I really enjoyed it'

## Work Based Training

Once a number of clients identified what they were interested in we provided taster workshops or sign-posted clients to other courses in areas that they expressed an interest in. For example those interested in the hospitality business did a Barista or entry level Reception Skills workshop. Samples of other tasters or introductory workshops are Healthcare, Small Machinery Use & Maintenance or Exploring Entrepreneurship, Safepass etc.. If clients identified a specialized area that they were interested in we helped refer them to the appropriate agency. A sample of SICAP offerings are detailed below:



**CO. SLIGO LEADER PARTNERSHIP CO. LTD.**

# LEARN TO BE A BARISTA

**Are you currently working part time or unemployed?**

**FREE COURSE**

**MORNINGS DURING NOVEMBER DEPENDING ON DEMAND**

THIS BARISTA COURSE STARTS AT THE BEGINNING AND COVERS EVERYTHING FROM A BRIEF HISTORY AND APPRECIATION OF COFFEE, OPERATING THE COFFEE MACHINE AND GRINDER, ALL THE TECHNIQUES TO EXTRACT THE PERFECT ESPRESSO AND PREPARE THE FULL COFFEE MENU. ONCE YOU HAVE LEARNED ALL OF THE BASICS WE END THE SESSION WITH CLEANING AND MAINTAINING THE COFFEE MACHINE. THIS COURSE WILL BE DELIVERED BY PROFESSIONAL BARISTAS FROM LOCAL CAFES.

THIS IS A HALF DAY COURSE, HELD IN THE MORNING 10am - 12.30pm

**TO REGISTER OR GET FURTHER INFORMATION**

Phone Sligo Leader: 071 91 41138  
Email: kgabbidon@sligoleader.com

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## One to Ones

Throughout this process we continued to meet with clients on a one to one to help guide you through the programme.



## KickStart Client Testimonials

## Key Achievements

- Over 300 people attended the Change for the Better Workshop, with over 80% signing up for the KickStart programme.
- Feedback was incredibly positive, with the Speakers giving their own personal stories of how and why they made a change in direction, resonating with the audience.
- We had over 10 collaborating partners on the day, namely DEASP; MSLETB; St Angela's College, Sligo; Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership; Sligo Library; Healthy Ireland; Tus Activation Programme; Sligo LCDC Members etc..
- Proof that our Themed Joint Engagement Strategy with DEASP and MSLETB gets the attention of unemployed persons, and focuses is on design and delivery of SICAP activities.
- Skills Connect, helped us build trust with clients, who then engaged more openly when working on their personal action plans.
- Over 60% of clients 145, to date completed KickStart from mandatory workshops to Taster workshop. See attached Video Testimonials.

## Challenges and Barriers

As many of our clients experience multiple barriers, this has meant that SICAP staff have experience a number of challenges in promotion and delivery of programme. A sample of some of these are:

- Need for constant hand holding to ensure continued attendance of the individuals for the workshops
- Timekeeping issues, a need for reminder texts and phone calls pre attendance at workshops and one to ones
- Trust issues for clients with agencies, need to build relationships
- Many clients present with a number of mental health issues
- Some Literacy & Numeracy problems
- Registration process – many of the clients that we are targeting from the most hard to reach target groups and communities do not want to fill in such a detailed registration form. We have consolidated the information to make it easier, but some of target groups who are in the most need of our support are still unwilling to provide us with some of the information necessary for 'IRIS'.

## Recommendations for future delivery

- The majority of the feedback so far, has been very positive.
- The most significant learning for us SICAP Staff has been the timing of interventions. There is a need to keep consistent and regular but at the same time giving people the time to process what they have learned.
- There is a need for constant hand holding to ensure continued attendance at workshops, especially for those with most barriers
- Need to support SICAP Staff with the skills to deal with people with Mental health issues, while we have undertaken 'Listening Skills' delivered by the Samaritans and 'Motivational Interviewing', national support needs to be provided for SICAP staff, who are encountering some very difficult situations.
- Need to build on collaborative relationships with MSLETB and other learning institutions.