

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018-2022 (SICAP)

LDC Annual Progress Report 2020
LOT – 26-1



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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.

Purpose of the 2020 Annual Progress Report

The purpose of the 2020 Annual Progress Report is to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of SICAP in your Lot. This is an opportunity to document the changes you have observed since the outbreak of the pandemic. In particular, this report will capture changes in beneficiaries' needs, the approaches used by the programme to respond to these needs, changes to your ways of working, alongside challenges faced during the year. Please include examples to support your answers, where possible.

A question has also been included at the end of the report, to give LDCs the opportunity to highlight any non-COVID related actions or projects that took place during the year.

Report size guide: 7-10 pages, excluding Annex 1. A page number guide is provided for each question. This can be adapted slightly to suit your reporting needs.

Two-three photographs can be included (optional), with the understanding that relevant permissions have been received and captions describing the photographs are provided.

1. Please describe how COVID-19 has impacted the needs of SICAP beneficiaries.

Individual clients, availing of **employment supports**, are normally met in person. One to one in person meetings proved difficult due to the Covid-19 restrictions, so it required a new way of communicating through text, email and particularly on the phone. Initially there were a considerable number of requests from clients regarding the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (See Q.3 for specific response by Employment Supports Officer to this).

The closure of **schools** from the 12th March 2020 and other disruptions during Covid 19 affected all sectors of society but it has been felt most acutely by disadvantaged children and their families. Challenges with distance learning, access to technology, re-engagement with learning, health and well-being have been reported from a range of agencies including Home School Liaison Teachers, Galway Traveller Movement and the Schools Completion Programme.

67 individuals have been supported to access **accredited education**. With the onset of Covid19 in March 2020, there were limited numbers in terms of course participants, closure of venues due to government lockdowns and a general sense of anxiety which all contributed to an adverse effect on course completion. Telephone contact was prioritised and maintained throughout the year. As a result of this telephone contact, it became apparent that there was a general lack of adequate computer equipment and/ or knowledge to complete online accredited courses. We refocused budgets to enable the purchase of IT equipment to go to disadvantaged and isolated individuals in the community.

Through **community education** we have supported a total of 145 individuals in 2020 through information and participation in unaccredited courses. Difficulties identified with the efficient delivery of online/virtual courses include not all individuals having the skills to use technology or not having access and / or training on technology. The pandemic has highlighted extreme social isolation in some cases, identified through conversations over the phone.

SICAP beneficiaries registered to **study English** as a Second Language have, in many cases, struggled with maintaining their studies online. They have, in many cases, lacked adequate access to laptops and other devices on which to continue their studies. Their devices when available are often shared. In addition, learners in Direct Provision or homeless accommodation have struggled to find access to appropriate learning spaces. Many learners have struggled to maintain motivation and focus. A number of students in Direct Provision were provided with laptops and tablets to assist them with their studies. Tutors have continued to support students who were able to access online courses by providing phone and email mentoring and feedback.

BTWEA client support requirements were somewhat varied especially at the beginning of the pandemic as there was no template on how to respond.

Covid has **impacted on all LCGs** across the city. Groups tend to be established in the first instance as a result of the identification of a common need whereby people then choose to come together to address that need. Groups this year were faced with the huge challenge of somehow continuing their work without being allowed to 'come together'. The Community Development staff team contacted LCGs across the city to find out what emerging needs each group had. They did this both over the phone or via email. GCP also liaised with GRETB Community Education staff who developed a survey for all community groups on their database. The survey asked detailed questions about the group's needs, their level of IT competence, training needs as well as hardware needs. While GDPR did not allow for the specific sharing of responses from individual groups we were provided with a report outlining the overall responses. These figures showed us that of the 69 groups who responded 25 said they would be interested in engaging in on-line learning, 16 said no and 27 said maybe. 57 LCGs stated they needed IT training which included basic skills, using tablets and app such as Zoom, Seesaw,

and MS Teams. 49 LCGs said they would require appropriate equipment to allow them to engage in online learning/meetings. 51 of the groups who responded had no experience of online learning/meetings in the past.

Clients of **the Galway Migrant Service (GMS)** have been severely affected by the COVID 19 crisis and issues GMS are dealing with have become more complex due to the uncertainty and confusion around migrants' rights and entitlements during the unprecedented pandemic situation. The COVID 19 pandemic related challenges have a worrying effect on GMS clients' lives and wellbeing and their access to employment, education, training and housing and welfare supports.

The Immigration Services Delivery, a part of the Department of Justice that covers all areas of immigration into the State, has suspended most of its services back in March and has still not resumed their work to 100 percent capacity. The Department of Social Protection has suspended issuing Public Services Cards and, in some cases, migrants find getting PPS Numbers very slow and difficult. The Galway Local Garda Immigration Headquarters, that have been closed for Non-EU migrants' registrations and residency renewals between March and the end of July, has re-opened but has a backlog of over 5000 individuals awaiting appointments; therefore, the average waiting time for an appointment to get an Irish Residence Permit in Galway GNIB office is currently between 3 and 6 months, depending on the case. The migrant related Departmental guidelines continue to change and being updated frequently. Evidently, these changes and updates are very difficult for the migrant service users to locate and follow, especially when they have poor knowledge of English or/and knowledge of and access to the necessary technology and devices.

There has also been a noticeable rise in domestic abuse and homeless cases among migrant populations since the pandemic measures have been put in place.

2. How did SICAP respond to these needs, what approaches were used?

SICAP was represented in **collaborations with local schools**, the Schools Completion Programme and Galway Traveller Movement, to respond initially during Covid 19 to gaps emerging with *Distance Learning*. The immediate gap was the limited access of families to digital devices other than smart phones. Moreover, limited or poor-quality internet access, and parental concerns related to their academic capacity for distance learning were additional needs that emerged. Therefore, the transition to online learning was more challenging for many children and families from disadvantaged areas. When schools did not re-open during the summer period, continued collaboration took place to ensure targeted summer programmes to promote education and personal development took place within Covid restrictions. As schools returned in late August issues with distance learning continued as schools made plans for short- or long-term future closures. The collaboration outlined continued with the objective of conducting technology needs analysis and responding where possible to gaps in digital literacy and technology.

In community education our beneficiaries were provided with not only **online** accredited course options but also received online unaccredited supports such as practical videos in Yoga and Cookery. These could be practiced in their own homes and at their own pace and proved very popular. Collaboration with GRETB, which developed a YouTube channel, proved successful. We provided lifelong learning opportunities in Healthcare and HACCP. Individuals were referred to GRETB's [fetch.ie](https://www.fetch.ie) which organised online training in Infection Prevention and Control. In order to provide a **classroom- based learning** opportunity, a HACCP course started in the Maldron Hotel in Galway city. Unfortunately, it was forced to postpone due to restrictions and the two-day course finally finished in the Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre three weeks later. Furthermore, a system of referrals was established between Galway City Partnership and VTOS

(Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme) which provides several accredited full-time courses in disciplines of Healthcare, IT, Business, Media and Art. The VTOS services remained open for most of the year.

In promoting unaccredited education we **organised one to one short meetings** in GCP premises when safe to do so. At other times we **called to peoples' homes for a short chat**, to deliver of Acorn Tablets – at all times keeping a safe distance and remaining outdoors when possible. Supporting people who are socially isolated and giving them time to chat and supporting them in any way possible through online classes or referrals or just a chat to check in on them or do a follow up. Discussions with individuals and colleagues highlighted the need for Basic IT classes for individuals in the Community. In conjunction with the Galway Adult Basic Education Service (GABES), we **coordinated several Basic IT Skills courses** in Ballybane with a focus on parents of children attending DEIS schools. We then rolled out more IT classes in Ballinfoile and offered classes to individuals within the community and surrounding area. As a result of the need for IT classes we then set up classes in the Westside We provided IT support for users of the new Acorn tablets to support older people. This class commenced just before Christmas and is already proving a huge success. Telephone contact was prioritised and maintained throughout.

SICAP staff developed new, and further enhanced existing, collaborations across the city in their response to COVID. One example of this is the **collaborative work between GCP and the Galway Adult Basic Education Service within GRETB**. Once the level 3 restrictions were introduced, groups were supported to meet with reduced numbers in large spaces. Once level 5 was introduced we no longer brought groups together in an indoor setting and we worked very hard to enable all groups to continue via zoom. This has entailed getting support from the Galway Adult Basic Education Service (GABES) of GRETB. GABES have provided tutors to our outreach centres for the past 12 weeks. One morning a week the support is aimed at adult learners who need to be able to use IT to assist them in accessing online learning, support their children's online learning i.e. by becoming familiar with emails, MS Teams, Zoom, Seesaw, Google classroom. On another morning each week the tutors provide members of community groups support with zoom and MS Teams which then allows the group to continue to meet using an online platform.

We successfully **accessed funds via the LCDC Emergency Funding stream** to purchase laptops for the use of community groups. Group members can bring along their own devices or else are using these laptops.

BTWEA client support - Some clients needed reassurance and hope but one had to be careful not to give a false hope to clients. Every client without exception required financial assistance during this period. Some clients were in a position to change the direction of their business and may have been forced into this change before they expected. This was illustrated by some clients moving their entire business on line during the most severe restrictions and then were able to provide both a very cleverly planned on line platform and a standard platform for their business when restrictions eased. A Yoga client was one of these particular businesses that managed such a change very successfully.

Galway City partnership are largely restricted to offering support to those within the city boundaries but within Enterprise Development in Galway City Partnership we did work closely with agencies that worked on a county wide scale, most particularly the Local Enterprise Office and a number of TD's and Councillors.

This collaboration took the form of assisting clients with grant support applications and direction toward the most appropriate supports that were available.

Since the COVID-19 restrictions have been put in place, **the Galway Migrant Service** has continued to remain a vital front line support service for the migrant population of Galway. Throughout the lockdown, GMS has continued to support its individual service users via email, phone and Skype. Most of the cases GMS has been

working with throughout the pandemic, have been very complex and require much higher levels of individual support, advocacy and interagency work. The migrant support project officer has been working closely with the other local and national service providers to ensure the best possible service delivery under such unprecedented circumstances. The service has continued to successfully operate its well-established referral system. Our service users have been assured that all the usual supports and advocacy continues to be available to them and the Galway Migrant Service is fully accessible and operational.

During the Level 5 restrictions periods, the services and supports that have previously been provided by meeting the service users in person, had to be delivered via email, phone and Skype and Zoom meetings and appointments. Providing efficient support in the pandemic environment has been very challenging for the Service because it has been difficult for those service users who do not have enough knowledge of or access to a laptop, computer or android type of phone to fully benefit from the supports GMS has been able to offer during this difficult time.

Our **community development work** focussed particularly on interagency work and sought an integrated community response to the issues that arose as a result of Covid-19. This is reflected in more detail in the next section.

2.1. Cross-programme, integrated approach that SICAP utilised during the COVID-19 response.

GCP actively participated in the Galway City Community Response Forum alongside Galway City Council, Galway City Community Network and other local organisations. We responded to needs as they were presented at this forum.

In the education sphere SICAP participated in collaboration outlined through face-to-face meetings, zoom and visits to local DEIS schools. Funding through SICAP was used to **purchase re-furbished laptops and new tablets** which were distributed to families identified through collaboration with local schools and agencies.

GCP and GCC funded the purchase of computer equipment for those most isolated in the community.

GCP staff volunteered on the Community Call Helpline - responded to queries and had a listening ear for worries expressed.

Our English Language Support worker referred students to **online supports and autonomous language learning** courses.

The Galway Migrant Service continues to actively represent its service users and GCP at a local and national level. It provides regular consultations and updates to the local NGOs and other services on rapidly changing Governmental policies and guidelines and participates at the national meetings of the Immigration Information Network and Migrant Stakeholder Group for the Migrant Consultative Forum with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Some examples of GCPs community development work specifically responding to COVID are detailed below;

Flower Window boxes for older and vulnerable people cocooning in Galway city.

Galway City Partnership in collaboration with local community groups such as Ballybane Community Resource Centre, Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre, Community Resource Centre, Ballybane Community Garden, Ballinfoile Mór Community Garden and Westside Community Garden and Resource Centre prepared 400 summer flower window boxes for older and vulnerable people living in our communities. The first 180

boxes were prepared by GCP staff and delivered by the GCP Tús team the beginning of June. The main objective was to cheer people up, to help combat isolation and loneliness and to foster old and new relationships with older and vulnerable people living in our communities.



In August 2020 another 200 window boxes were prepared by members and volunteers of the Ballinfoile Mór Community Garden and 12 members of the Foróige Youth Project and their youth workers. This was a great success and the window boxes were delivered to 200 older people across the city by the Galway City Community guards. It was a great example of working collaboratively in difficult times and was also an opportunity to further develop relationships between members of the community garden and some of the youth in the area. The recipients of the boxes were delighted to receive them and GCP now has a database of older people from right across the city. It is envisaged that a befriending phone system will be put in place by GCP over the winter months to reach out to these people. Galway City Partnership provided funding for this initiative. Referrals came from key agencies in the city working with older people such as Cope, St Vincent de Paul, Galway Contact, The Community Guards, Age Action, Croí na Gaillimhe, various community groups across the city and from the Galway City COVID Response Community Call Helpline.

Care Box Initiative

GCP developed Care Packs which were distributed to older people who were identified as a result of calls made into the Community Response Forum Helpline and also based on local knowledge within the communities, by PHN's, Cope and St Vincent de Paul. The packs contained instant porridge, pen & notebook, liquid soap, tea bags, playing cards, Magazines or Multi-activity books, water, mindful colouring book & colours, disinfectant spray, shampoo, hairbrush, toothbrush, toothpaste, Vaseline, facecloth, tissues, jigsaw, knitting needles and wool, Galway Age friendly Programme board and marker, subway vouchers and information resources such as Healthy Galway exercise leaflet for older adults, Community Response Helpline number and booklet, HSE COVID booklet in plain English, Minding your Mental Health leaflets, SICAP supports across the city and other relevant local resources depending on the need of the older person.

In total GCP staff delivered 100 bags to older people across the city. The feedback from recipients has been positive in the extreme. People were really, really delighted to receive the bags and commented on the

thoughtful contents and useful information provided. The connections made by GCP staff and a large number of older people across the city has been fantastic and we hope to be able to build on this in the future.



Alliance of organisations working with older people in Galway

This group was established by COPE Galway in July 2020. The main focus of this collaborative structure is to create a way for organisations working with older people in Galway to come together and share and discuss ideas for activities and projects that can be worked on together that will support older people across Galway City. There are representatives from St Vincent de Paul, Age Action, Westside Age Inclusion, Galway Contact, Cope Galway, Galway City Community Guards and Galway City Partnership and Croi Na Gaillimhe.

GCP are currently working on two initiatives with this alliance, a digital support community project for older people and a befriending winter phone initiative. All of the organisations worked closely together for Positive Aging week in September 2020.

2.2.What type of work did LCGs and SEs (supported by SICAP) undertake in the community in response to COVID-19?

Digital Support for Older People

With funding received from the LCDC Emergency Fund and GCP we have purchased 24 smart tablets which are being configured to support digital needs of older people. Digital adoption is a significant challenge for many older adults and SICAP staff identified this resource as a means of easing this transition. Loneliness and isolation are unfortunately very prevalent in our communities due to COVID- 19 and it is hoped that this initiative will enable older people to stay more connected with their families, friends and communities. Three SICAP staff have completed training and we are currently in the process of preparing the tablets and working closely with members of the Alliance of organisations working with older people in Galway and other community groups to identify and support suitable older people for the tablets.



Community Digital support.

Funding was secured from GRETB and the CEP grant to improve IT supports in the Ballinfoile Centre. This digital learning hub will be available to people within the community, including the schools and all community groups. It is envisaged that an IT support tutor will be available from mid November to support individuals from local community groups and parents from the local schools.

Similar IT supports are being provided in the **Ballybane Community Centre** with a tutor attending every Tuesday morning (funded by GABES) from 10am to 12.30pm. These Basic IT support sessions are open to all.

GCP staff have also established an IT training initiative utilising **Croi na Gaillimhe** and also the **Westside Resource Centre**. Participants of the Direct Provision Centres, parents struggling with online learning for their children and members of community groups will all be targeted under this initiative.

€5000 was granted under the **COVID Emergency Fund Phase 2** for the purchasing of laptops for the use of community groups. We have recently purchased 13 laptops and these are already in use by group members in the east of the city.

3. How did your ways of working change, following the outbreak of COVID-19?

Working from home brought challenges for staff – particularly as we originally had a lack of available technology and/or poor internet access at home. As we had no history of working from home, some homes were not suitable for office adaptation. Staff positively responded to the challenges as they emerged and services were maintained in line with Government guidelines.

Ways of working changed dramatically during this crisis wherein the number of physical **client contacts was dramatically reduced but did successfully transfer to phone and email contacts**. Clients, in view of their own health safety concerns were quite happy with this transition and it would appear from continuing contact with clients that they were and continue to be happy with such communication.

We hosted very successful Start Your Own Business courses in a classroom format prior to the crisis and these courses have transferred amazingly well to a live on-line format and the last course of the year is finishing up on 18th December. These courses are obligatory should someone wish to apply for BTWEA support so it was essential that the facility was available to candidates.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 restrictions **2 videos were produced by Employment Supports Officer** to:

1) inform people of the measures the GCP was taking during the shutdown 2) on the process of applying for the Covid-19 payment. This was to support DEASP on getting the message out to the public, it was produced quickly and put up on GCP social media including Facebook & YouTube, they have been viewed hundreds of times and were deemed to be helpful by clients for pointing them in the right direction.

All Labour Market Training Courses were facilitated in the Maldron Hotel in Galway City. This was the first time the course has taken place outside of the main Galway City Partnership offices. The decision to do so was made because of the social distancing requirements that are in place due to Covid-19 safety measures. An inspection was carried out at The Maldron facilities by the Employment Supports Officer and the Covid-19 procedures and protocols representative. On the day Galway City Partnership provided Facemasks and Hand Gloves that were available to all the participants & tutor.

There were two significant initiatives within Goal 2 planned and implemented in a direct response to Covid-19 challenges. The projects were audio visual in content.

The first project was a series of **Video Tutorials illustrating how to operate various aspects of everyday technology.** The initial idea was recognised because the challenges with 'Distance Learning' which was identified across the board by all local schools, the GTM (Galway Traveller Movement) and SCP (Schools Completion Programme) projects in Galway City. After a considerable amount of coordinating by both GCP Officers and feedback from the other organisations involved the following Video Tutorials were created and made available to them.

- 1) Explaining basic technology terms
- 2) How to create an email account
- 3) How to send an email
- 4) How to send an attachment with an email
- 5) Installing WhatsApp on to your phone
- 6) How to install Microsoft teams on to a laptop/computer
- 7) How to use your phone as an Internet Hotspot

The feedback for the tutorial series was very positive and as a result it was decided to make them widely available. This would enable the Employment Supports Officer and all GCP staff to guide clients to the videos which are now on the GCP website (www.gcp.ie) and the YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZCFa1Hygzy4jSKFIhUBFw/videos>) Currently the tutorials have been viewed collectively over 300 times, with one client stating, "the videos were extremely well presented, easy and clear to follow".

The second project was a direct response to a need that developed due to Covid-19 restrictions. The **Dina in the Classroom programme was recorded as a resource** after being suspended in March due to school closure, a programme that supports children's social and emotional wellbeing. Although schools re-opened the zoning system prevented the programme returning. The Education Officer approached Radharc na Mara as the lead Incredible years school in the city with the idea of recording several sessions. The Principal supported this idea and made the school and a staff member available. After several weeks of preparation and planning with all the relevant parties, including the SCP releasing a staff member to record the sessions. The sessions were then recorded and edited over 5 weeks and are now in circulation to 5 further schools in the city. The ability and foresight to implement this initiative by GCP has been a crucial benefit to the schools and has led to further initiatives.

The primary change in community education was that we went from meeting with individuals in person to **predominately working by telephone and/ or email**. SICAP registrations were all conducted over the phone. Referrals to online courses was relied on to provide accredited supports to our beneficiaries.

With the onset of Covid19 pandemic in March 2020, the planned classroom-based courses and registration days were forced to cancel even though some of them had already started in the classroom. Our focus switched to the online platform where we were able to provide tuition through video in Cookery, Yoga and Art. The Art class happened over WhatsApp and culminated in an online Art exhibition. The Cookery encouraged the use of seasonal ingredients and the Yoga classes gradually increased in intensity. Furthermore, an online GRETb YouTube channel proved very successful amongst our learners during the first national lockdown, providing video tutorials in several areas from Beginners Irish to Hairstyling. Telephone contact was maintained throughout.

Immediately upon the suspension of our English Language classes in March all students were contacted and offered ongoing assistance with free **online courses** provided by ESOL Ireland. Students and their families were also offered help with understanding the Governments Covid-19 health advice, and assistance was given with applications for Covid payments etc. Students have been contacted regularly to appraise them of changes to this advice as we have moved through the stages of the Restrictive Measures Framework. Students have been receiving 'comfort and wellbeing' calls from tutors to ensure they are supported as much as possible during this hiatus. The current Public Health Emergency has highlighted the inequalities experienced by many of our students in regard to their access to appropriate Digital Technologies. This will be something we must address in the future, and explore opportunities for students to partake of Blended Learning/ Autonomous Learning models.

4. Please outline the challenges faced this year, as a result of COVID-19. Were you able to overcome any of these challenges?

- Challenges during the period were severe and intense. Many clients are in a very precarious position financially when they avail of BTWEA/STEA/JA SEMP support and even one week without the required income can create numerous other obstacles such as homelessness or the repossession of a vehicle. It was essential to ensure that the short-term availability of PUP was taken. Unexpected stress levels of clients also required intervention and every client was contacted to ensure they knew

advice was readily on hand and many hours work were completed well into the night and at weekends to facilitate this service.

- Even clients whose files were closed were reactivated to ensure they were aware of the supports that were available.
- Several Labour Market Training Courses had to be postponed and all these courses had full registration, most were facilitated at other dates when restrictions were lifted.
- The closure of schools due to Covid in March led to the immediate cancellation of several programmes for children and targeted young people. The Incredible Years Dina in the Classroom Programme, School Readiness Programmes for new parents, a 'Pilot Transfer Programme' for 6th class parents and targeted revision supports for exam students did not take place from 12th March onwards.
- Resources identified for revision supports such as Easter revision classes were re-directed to providing equipment for exam students to access online learning platforms.
- Video recordings were made of an adapted Dina in the Classroom Programme during September/October (see Q3) which were shown in lieu of live programme. Limited delivery of the programme has taken place in some schools but is dependent on the zoning/pod system in place. Practical issues such as quarantining puppets used for the programme for 72 hours were overcome by increasing number of puppets and splitting delivery to Monday for some pupils, followed by Thursday for other classes.
- In addition, SICAP supports the Music Generation Galway City to deliver violin and drum lessons to a local school and Direct Provision Centre. These classes were also suspended during Covid, but sessions were pre-recorded on You Tube for the students to continue.
- GCP planned to run two HACCP courses (30-36 participants) and one Healthcare module for QQI Level 5 Healthcare qualification (15-18 participants). We were able to run one HACCP course (10 participants started and 6 successfully completed) and referred all other beneficiaries to online courses and VTOS. The HACCP course was postponed for three weeks between start and finish.
- Unaccredited courses, in conjunction with GRETB, were run in the second half of the year and these were delivered through Zoom. Recruitment for the Zoom classes highlighted a shortage of necessary IT equipment amongst our learners and consequently, funding was secured to purchase tablets and laptops for those most in need. Funding was secured for 24 Acorn Tablets which were subsequently distributed amongst older people and a specially designed IT course co-ordinated and run.
- Funding was secured for 24 Acorn Tablets which were subsequently distributed amongst older people and a specially designed IT course co-ordinated and run.
- Some organisations interpreted the Covid guidelines differently to other organisations and because we work so collaboratively this occasionally caused a difficulty.
- Many people we support, and work with, experienced heightened anxiety throughout the pandemic- leading to a dual focus in our work supporting groups to achieve the original aims as set out in their annual support plans and also supporting people's mental health by constant promotion of mental health support information, online support and signposting support agencies.

5. Has your experience of implementing SICAP in the context of COVID-19 highlighted any gaps in programme design that need to be reflected on? If so, please briefly describe.

Need to continue registering people in a crisis was difficult - registrations have been difficult to conduct over the phone, for worker and also the beneficiary – particularly for those whose first language may not be English. If the forms could be available online and the individual could access them through an online forum, we could then support them in completing the form.

It has also highlighted the challenges with online/virtual courses as not all individuals have the skills to use technology and may not have access and / or training on technology.

The programme flexibility shown gave us the ability to acquire the laptops and other technology to enable staff respond to home working and this flexibility is to be noted and commended.

6. Please suggest potential programme supports that DRCD and/or Pobal could deliver to LDCs in 2021.

Advanced Zoom/Teams training. Canva, Mailchimp training.

7. Please describe any non-COVID related actions or projects that took place in 2020. How has this work contributed to improved social inclusion and equality in your Lot?

We have **actively supported the implementation of the Galway City Local Economic And Community Plan** and in 2020 agreed to be a partner /lead on 11 LECP actions.

In particular we highlight that we:

- Initiated the reconvening of the Traveller Interagency Group.
- Progressed work on the roll out of the Public Sector Duty.
- Continued to convene the Social Inclusion Group of the LCDC

This work maintains a citywide focus on the marginalised/excluded and seeks to develop multi agency approaches to issues that arise for our target groups.

We were fortunate to have hosted an Art Exhibition in the Hardiman Hotel in Eyre Square prior to the virus breaking out. This offered artists on our BTWEA the experience of displaying at an exhibition, which, for many, would have been financially impossible. Local media, politicians and TD's attended and over €7500 of business was transacted during the four day exhibition and after.

SICAP supported the delivery of the Incredible Years Dina in the Classroom programme in 5 Galway city schools from January to 12th March 2020. Dina in the Classroom is an evidenced based prevention programme which is proven to strengthen children's social, emotional and academic competencies. This non-Covid project supported children and families in education and personal development.

The collaboration between GCP and the LESN continued. Links were developed between GCP and the Westside Modular Hub, a new housing development for the homeless in Galway city. Going forward, we will

continue to identify gaps in the employment market and broaden our links with other educational institutions.

Students from the English Classes are currently collaborating with The Blue Teapot Theatre company to produce and perform a Theatre piece around sharing stories across cultures.

Galway City Partnership was involved in coordinating an Independent Living Programme for people with disabilities in conjunction with Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), Parents group, Brothers of Charity, Ability West and GRETB. This course focused on nutrition and cooking skills for disabled people about to embark on living alone within the community.



A lot of the work we carried out during the year was not specifically Covid related- although we had to engage new ways of working- such as hosting projects online, or meeting in an outdoor setting. The Ballinfoile Cookery Project is a lovely example of adapting our work to reflect Covid requirements while continuing to focus on improved social inclusion.

Ballinfoile Community Cookery Project

A 'virtual' community cookery project was set up in June 2020 between GCP, GRETB, GTM and Foróige Ballinfoile. The project evolved from a multi-agency network meeting led by GCP involving local agencies working together to ensure the needs of the community were being met. 'Ballinfoile' Cooking Summer Programme' was a collaborative project between Foróige Ballinfoile Youth Development Project UBU, Galway City Partnership, and Healthy Ireland, as part of the Safefood Community Food Initiative. This project aimed to support families to cook and eat healthy meals together during the COVID-19 outbreak. "Ballinfoile' Cooking Summer Programme" was the second programme during the Lockdown, due to the success of the first

programme developed in May. This programme enabled Foróige Youth Workers and GCP to remain in contact with families and young people during a difficult time and helped GCP to link with the parents of these families with a view to engaging them in existing or establishing new community groups.

During the initial stages of COVID-19 restrictions, there were concerns about families and young people presenting with low motivation, altered sleeping routines and increased tension in the home. Cooking was identified as a positive way to engage and support families during the outbreak, to promote a healthy lifestyle and to help alleviate some of the difficulties being experienced. The 'Ballinfoile' Cooking Summer Programme' programme was delivered over 4 weeks in July.

In total, **26 families** participated in the project from Ballinfoyle Area. We also had new families who requested to be included in future programmes. The 26 families that started the project, completed it, and overall there was a 90% return rate on feedback and photos over the four weeks. . It allowed us to keep in contact and hear first-hand how families were coping during the crisis. One of the major successes observed by everyone was the level of improved communication within the families.

The collaborative approach to the project was central to its success. Galway City Partnership played a key role in terms of creating links and supporting the work with local agencies and families on the ground, Foróige Youth Workers in terms of planning the programme delivery, recruiting families and providing ongoing support to the families throughout the project, and the local shops, in terms of preparing the ingredient packs. This initiative has impacted positively on the families and we now have developed a platform from which we can develop and increase our presence in the community and support families and potentially new community groups in area.



The Community Response to Domestic Abuse Network, of which we are an active member, also continued to work towards improving social inclusion and reducing inequalities. This year they created an awareness video highlighting the supports across the communities that are provided for women experiencing domestic abuse. The video was then launched using the zoom platform with over 80 people attending this launch.

Other initiatives undertaken throughout the year range from on-going work supporting community groups e.g. facilitating meetings, accessing funding, support of local community newsletters, Community Christmas Tree projects in association with the city council and Creative Ireland.

The Galway Migrant Service was invited to participate in the development of the Equality Action Plan for the Health Service Executive. The work on this project has begun in November 2020 and it is currently at its foundation stage. The aim of the project is to develop a model for the professional interpreting services for the Irish healthcare system. When developed and implemented, this model will be highly beneficial for the migrant service users with poor or no knowledge of English when accessing healthcare and GP services. The HSE Equality Action Plan is going to improve social inclusion and will assist migrants to fully access health care services without any fears of being misunderstood or misdiagnosed due to the poor, unprofessional interpreting or a complete lack of it.

Annex 1 – Updates to the IRIS database

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

✓	A narrative for each of the 2020 Actions has been input in the Update on Progress field under the End of Year report section of the action record. The <i>Action Progress Report</i> can be generated to view the updates for each action.
✓	2020 financial and beneficiary data input is complete.
✓	2020 data quality issues identified on system dashboards and views have been rectified.
✓	Potential duplicate records have been reviewed and deactivated if appropriate.
✓	2020 data follow-up has been carried out, as appropriate (e.g. LLL activity outcomes, still in employment/self-employment).
✓	ESF exit data has been recorded for Individuals who exited SICAP in 2020.
✓	ESF 6 month follow-up has been recorded for Individuals who exited SICAP up to end May 2020.
✓	LDC contact information and staff member listing are up-to-date.
✓	2020 End of Year Financial and Monitoring report (including the signed costs charged report, Lot Summary Report and goal outcome reports) has been uploaded to IRIS.