



Ceannaire Compháirtíochta Lú
Louth Leader Partnership

Building Community & Enterprise



2018 SICAP CASE STUDIES OCTOBER 5th



Name of Case Study: Louth LEADER Partnership SICAP programme in partnership with the Healthy Ireland Project

Goal and Action: Goal 2; Lifelong Learning

Background:

The background to this Mental Health and Fitness programme arose in January 2018 through the availability of funding from the national framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing. The focus of the Healthy Ireland framework is to support innovative, cross-sectoral, evidence-based projects and initiatives that support the implementation of key national policies in areas such as obesity, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and sexual health.

In the northeast Louth County Council sought applications for funding. In response to this call for projects, the LLP project co-ordinator compiled and submitted a project proposal titled Kickstart Fitness and Mental Wellbeing. Our application focussed specifically on unemployed people, homeless people, people in recovery from addiction, those in receipt of a social welfare payment and the elderly. The outcome of the proposal submission was the attainment of €15,000 in funding.

Target group:

The target group were:

- Unemployed people.
- Homeless people.
- People in recovery from addiction.
- Those in receipt of a social welfare payment.
- The elderly.

Outline of the initiative:

An outline of the aims of the Kickstart Mental Health and Well Being initiative were to:

- Improve the fitness level and mental well being of participants who signed up for the programme.
- Liaise with local organisations who work closely with the most vulnerable.
- Raise participants' awareness of the importance of having a healthy diet.
- Introduce participants to new ways of practicing mindfulness in their daily living.
- Introduce participants to the benefits of daily meditation.
- Raise participants' awareness of their mental health and the mental health of others.
- Impact positively on participants overall quality of life.
- Increase participants' longevity.
- Educate participants on the services that Louth LEADER Partnership offers to them in terms of lifelong learning programmes, education supports, self-employment and enterprise, returning to work or education and the Local Employment Service all of who can facilitate personal progression.



THE IMPACT From 4th January 2018 to 23rd April 2018, ninety seven unemployed individuals engaged with the initiative. The following activities were implemented.

	Referral Source	Programme Dates	Training Location	Sessions	Participants
1	Red Door Project	08.01.2018 – 12.02.2018	Aura Gym Drogheda	11 x 2.5 hrs	11
2	Homeless Aid Project	16.01.2018 – 13.02.2018	Aura Gym Drogheda	11 x 2.5 hrs	10
3	Dee Hub Ardee	25.01.2018 – 22.02.2018	Ardee Boxing Club	09 x 2.5 hrs	11
4	Muirhevnamore	13.02.2018 – 15.03.2018	Muirhevnamore Boxing Club Dundalk	10 x 2 hrs	11
5	Red Door/Womens Refuge Projects	19.02.2018 – 26.03.2018	Aura Gym Drogheda	11 x 2.5 hrs	15
6	Drogheda Elderly	05.03.2018 – 23.04.2018	Irish Wheelchair Association Room	4 x 2 hrs	39
Total Number of Participants					97
The gender breakdown ratio of Male to Female equates to 30 Males / 67 Females					

The successful attainment of Sponsorship: Homeless people rarely possess gym wear or gym bags. Understandably operating within their financial and housing constraints such possessions are not a priority. To address this factor, the Project Co-ordinator contacted various Sports companies to seek sponsorship to purchase gym gear and bags for the Homeless training group. After numerous endeavours Sports Direct provided a €500 clothing voucher which enabled each homeless participant to have their own gym outfit and gym bag. Adding to this gesture, the Project Co-ordinator organised that the initials of each homeless man would be printed on their individual gym bag. The provision of this appropriate clothing and the personalised gym bag generated a sense of pride and ownership and was also essential for future use when they activated their three-month gym membership. This gesture was very much appreciated by the Homeless Aid organisation in general and the homeless men in particular.

The provision of incentives for the most vulnerable to encourage engagement: To encourage the most vulnerable to participate in the Kickstart Fitness and Mental Wellbeing programme an incentive of free gym membership for a three-month period was offered. Following negotiations with the Gym a reduced cost of €99 for the three-month membership was agreed. Three of the six training groups were offered this incentive. The condition of this offer was a mandatory full attendance record at every fitness session. To miss one session negated the offer. This incentive proved very motivating among the individuals, the majority of whom had never been inside a gym. The groups that were offered this incentive were: The Red Door Project – (Addiction Recovery Project), The Homeless Aid and The Women’s Refuge Centre.

The Formulation of a successful recruitment and publicity strategy: To promote participation onto this programme a cohesive recruitment strategy was activated. The recruitment strategy encompassed locating fitness facilities where the training could be conducted, agreeing fitness plans, formulating contracts of engagement. In addition, live radio interviews were conducted which resulted in many calls from listeners. Information leaflets were circulated across the county. Local community groups were approached to actively promote the benefits of engagement. In addition, transport was provided to collect participants from The Homeless Aid Hostel, the Women’s Refuge Centre and The Red Door addiction centre.

The consistency of programme content throughout the entire programme: The following structures were devised and implemented:

- Each of the six groups received a structured training programme devised specifically by Louth Leader Partnership.
- Each training session included fitness instruction followed by a series of talks on healthy diet, mental wellbeing, meditation and mindfulness.
- Each participant was weighed in before commencement and their personal goals were set.
- Each individual’s progress was monitored by the fitness facilitator.

The formation of consistent training protocols: To ensure a successful implementation the following protocols were implemented:

- Participation in all six groups was free of charge.
- All the contracted facilitators were experts in their field.
- Contracts for Services were drawn up and signed by both parties before any programme was activated.
- Daily attendance was recorded and class size in sheets completed.



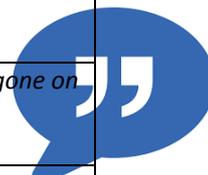
- Some of the participants from new communities experienced challenges in terms of completing course work as English is their second language. Additional supports were provided to address this barrier.



- The many learnings from the implementation of this action are as follows: Marginalised members of society are interested in participating in fitness and wellbeing programmes of learning.
- Improving mental health and levels of fitness can change the life perspective of unemployed individuals.
- The provision of transport to collect the homeless men, the ladies from the women refuge, the clients from the Red Door Addiction programme proved to be a successful recruitment strategy.
- Elderly people want to be included in community activities and want their exercise routines to include music and dance.
- There was a remarkable improvement in the fitness level and mental wellbeing of participants who participated in the programme.
- The implementation of fitness and well-being programmes provide an opportunity to partner with local organisations who work with the most vulnerable. As a result of the programme there was an increased awareness among the target group of the importance of having a healthy diet.
- The most vulnerable in our society enjoyed incorporating the practice of meditation and mindfulness in their daily living.
- The participants from the Red Door project continued with this practice and incorporated a module on same in their recovery programme.
- The programme raised the awareness among the participants of their own mental health and the mental health of others.
- Changes in behaviour and altered life perspectives became evident among members of the groups.

The programme facilitated a forum to educate unemployed participants on the services of Louth LEADER Partnership in terms of lifelong learning programmes, education supports, self-employment, enterprise, returning to work or education and the Local Employment Service. This became evident in the immediate personal progressions that were attained and continue to be attained.

Participant Number	Comment on Evaluation Sheet
Participant #1	<i>"I enjoyed my time here, first time to do this, it was really beneficial. The training was excellent"</i>
Participant #2	<i>"My first time ever in a gym and I really enjoyed it."</i>
Participant #3	<i>"Hard work but so rewarding."</i>
Participant #4	<i>"This course gave me the confidence to put myself out there and I have now gone on and joined the Healthcare Course in Dundalk."</i>
Participant #5	<i>"This life is full of hard steps, from this course I have learnt that there is a way to maintain yourself and take control of your life. Thanks."</i>
Participant #6	<i>"After this training I feel that I have a more positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle both mentally and physically. I can see now that this can help me greatly to achieve my goals."</i>
Participant #7	<i>"I feel I have an improved health, mind-set and a better fitness level. In this training I have learnt lifelong lessons."</i>
Participant #8	<i>"From the workshops I now believe that keeping a positive mindset is key to achieving any goals in life."</i>
Participant #9	<i>"I learnt for the first time how to relax my mind and body. I now see it's important to take time out for myself."</i>
Participant #10	<i>"A really great course, I feel so lucky to have heard about it. Great trainers."</i>





Sports Direct: Photograph of Gym Gear for Homeless Participants attained



