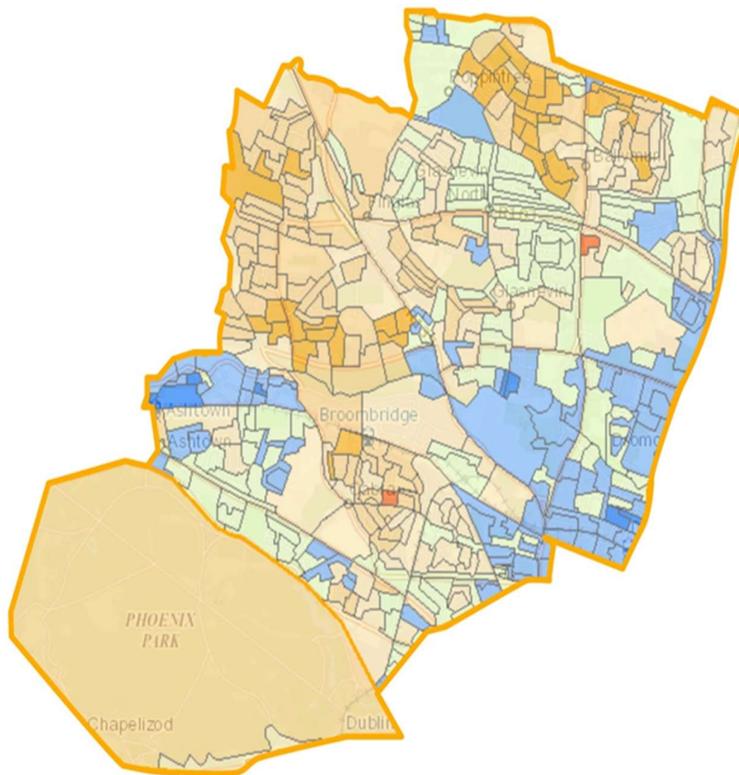


## SICAP End of Year Narrative Report 2020



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# DNP 2020 End of Year SICAP Action Narrative Report

## GOAL 1

### 1.01 Strengthening Community Capacity

DNP launched this action plan for LCGS at the annual Social Inclusion Seminar which took place at The Crowne Plaza Hotel Northwood on January 31st, 2020. One hundred and three individuals attended the seminar, representing thirty-six local community groups. Senator Lynn Ruane delivered an inspiring keynote speech on 'The Potential of Community Development and Community Activism for Promotion of Social Inclusion'. DNP's Community Grant programme for 2020 was also launched at the seminar and the application process was outlined. Four LCGS who were awarded Social Inclusion supports in 2019 presented on their work.

Over the years, DNP has noted that the Community Grant application process provides opportunity to gain insight into the support needs of LCGs, particularly those at the early stage of development. DNP delivered two training sessions on completion of the Community Grant application form. Twenty-three individuals attended representing eleven LCGs. Five had not previously engaged with DNP.

The COVID-19 Pandemic required significant adaptation from Community Development staff and from LCGs. Nevertheless, following a brief adjustment period staff and LCG representatives upskilled, and a full and varied training schedule was delivered during 2020. Details as follows:

Restorative Practice: Feb 10th and 11th- 14 individuals attended representing 9 LCGs.

#I am Remarkable: a Google initiative empowering women and underrepresented groups to celebrate their achievements in the workplace and in wider society. This initiative aims to improve self-promotion and to challenge negative social perceptions in relation to self-promotion. This training was held on 2 occasions March 6th (in celebration of international Women's Day) and May 29th. In total 19 individuals attended, representing 7 LCGs.

Understanding the Urban Planning system: May 7th-13 individuals attended representing 7 LCGs.

Project Management: June 3rd - 9 individuals attended representing 6 LCGs.

'Telling Your Story': June 11th and 18th- This training supports LCGs to develop a strong profile for their group by developing capacity to creatively tell the group's story, resulting in enhanced ability to make a strong pitch for funding and other supports. 7 individuals attended representing 4 LCGs.

Conflict Resolution: June 30th and July 7th (2-part training)- 10 individuals attended representing 9 LCGs.

Stress Management for LCG representatives: July 21st- 11 individuals attended representing 9 LCGs.

Grant Writing Workshop: August 12th-7 individuals attended representing 3 LCGs.

'Leveraging your Online Presence Using Social Media': September 16th- 10 individuals attended representing 8 LCGs.

Grant Writing Workshop: September 30th-11 individuals attended representing 10 LCGs.

Supervision Skills: October 7th- 13 individuals attended representing 11 LCGs.

Human Resource Training (Recruitment and Selection): October 21st-10 individuals attended representing 7 LCGs.

Restrictions necessitated by COVID-19 have resulted in a need for capacity building in relation to use of technology for remote working, communication, and delivery of services to LCG members. This has required team members to upskill and in turn increase time allocated to mentoring of LCGs to enhance their capacity to use technology effectively. This investment has proven highly effective with many LCGs developing strong capacity to maintain some level of activity using Zoom and other software programmes.

DNP continued with its support for Community Networks, with increased demand on these supports during the COVID-19 pandemic. DNP Community Development staff participated on the Cabra Child and Family Support Network (see under 2.02A for response to COVID-19), Cabra Policing Forum, the Saol Club House Advisory Group, The Ballymun Network for Assisting Children and Young People (See under 1.03A for response to COVID 19) and the Finglas Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force. In addition, DNP convened a network of LCGs working in Ballymun, to develop a coordinated response to needs resulting from COVID-19 (see 1.03A).

DNP has delivered several Restorative Practice training sessions in recent years. This has contributed to a growing interest in the application of Restorative Practice in community development settings. DNP is now supporting the Cabra Policing Forum on development of a Restorative Practice working group with a view to developing a Restorative Practice practitioner's network. Progress on this initiative has been slower than anticipated due to restrictions on LCGs meeting up. DNP will continue to support this work in 2021.

DNP continues to complement LCG training with individual LCG bespoke mentoring. Initial engagement through group training can highlight areas for more intensive support. In addition to capacity building supports provided by DNP staff, mentoring assignments are also allocated to the members of DNP mentoring panel. These mentors are subject matter experts and can be assigned to LCGs following assessment by DNP staff. During 2020 11 LCGs received specialised mentoring supports. Beneficiary LCGs were as follows: University of the 3rd Age Ballymun, Befrienders, Mellow Spring Childcare Development Centre, Cabra for Youth, The Plough Youth Club, Poppintree Youth Project, Ballymun Men's Centre Group, Ballymun Photography Group, The Loft, Greenfield Park Resident's Association and Finglas Community Play Groups. There were 27 mentoring sessions with external mentors during 2020. Mentoring supports were provided in relation to governance, taxation, presentation/public speaking, legal issues in relation to lease of premises, use of social media and Human Resource Management.

The Community Development Team also noted a need for support for LCGs to maximise their engagement with volunteers. Many LCGs do not employ staff and are entirely dependent on volunteers. Volunteering offers a valuable opportunity to LCGs enabling them to organise activities and/or deliver services in the community. Volunteering can also support development of a range of

skills which can enhance quality of life and employability for the volunteer. With this in mind and to optimise the effectiveness of volunteer engagement, DNP worked in collaboration with The Dublin City Volunteer Centre. DNP provided bursaries for representatives of 4 LCGs to participate in Volunteer Management training. Participating LCGs were as follows: The Meeting Place Club, Dyspraxia Ireland, National Council for the Blind Ireland, and Ballymun Tidy Towns. This training was comprised of 4 modules covering the following areas: Planning for Volunteering, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Dealing with Challenging Situations and Volunteer Policy Development.

The following groups moved from stage 1 (Pre-Development and Group Formation) to Stage 2 (Capacity Building and Empowerment) of the Community Development Matrix: Friends of Finglas, Greenview Allotments, Ballymun Boxing Club, TC Growers and Wadelai/Hillcrest Resident's Association. This development is evident in terms of committee formation, enhanced skill set on existing committees, ability to organise and engage members in group activities, report writing skills, social media skills and ability to source funding.

During 2020 Community Development staff attended governance training. The focus of the training was on best practice in relation to development of LCG constitutions and use of Standing Orders. Our experience indicates that many LCGs evolve to provide services and peer support in the community. In some cases, the process of constitution development is overlooked leading to challenges later on as members are unclear as to the core business of the group and rules governing operation. Support with constitution development is particularly important for LCGs at pre-development stage but also for long established LCGs needing support with strategic review.

During 2020 there were 352 interventions for action 1.01.

## 1.02 Evolving for Equality (Community Grant)

There was strong interest in the Community Grant strand launched at DNP's annual Social Inclusion Seminar on January 31st. The launch of the Community Grant was followed by 2 training sessions on completion of the grant application form. 44 LCGs submitted applications. Each application was assessed against a defined set of criteria and 38 were approved. A total of €47,056 was allocated (additional allocations were made possible by carry over from 2019 SICAP budget).

Approved groups were as follows: The Plough Youth Club, The Drop in Well (Intercultural Group), Greenview Men's Group, Ballymun Active Disability Interest Group (B.A.D.I.G), Ballymun Men's Centre Group, Poppintree Youth Project, University of the 3rd Age Ballymun, Crosscare Finglas Youth Services, The Meeting Place Club, Finglas Tidy Towns, Mellow Spring Childcare Development Centre, Ballymun Adult Read and Write, St. Margaret's Community Traveller Association, Ballymun Photography Group, Ballymun Boxing Club, Social Therapeutic Gardening Association, Christ the King Day Centre, Friends of Finglas, St. Margaret's Pre-School, Finglas Community Training Centre, The Irish Deaf Society, Rivermount Boys FC, Setanta Strings, Daughters of Charity, Finglas Support and Suicide Prevention Network, Better Finglas, Greenview Allotment Committee, National Learning Network, Care After Prison, Glór na Gael, TC Growers, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Ireland, Finglas West Active Retirement Group, St. Vincent's Basketball Club, Finglas Cricket Club, Ja Ja Studios, Finglas

Addiction Support Team (FAST) and Fairlawn Community Gardens. 15 of these LCGs had not previously received grant aid through SICAP. Grants were provided for a range of actions including supports in the following areas: children with special needs, disadvantaged young people, people with disabilities, migrants, people experiencing mental health difficulties, literacy and leadership supports for members of the Travelling community, pre-school supports for Traveller families, supports for environmental programmes, educational supports for people with intellectual disabilities and support for those affected by addiction.

The Action Appraisal committee met on 3 occasions during 2020.

Development work in 2020 has been characterised by the need to adapt provision of supports to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally successful grant applicants attend training in DNP administration and reporting processes before their grant is awarded. Administration training due to take place on March 18th was cancelled due to social distancing requirements. Instead training presentations and grant contracts were e-mailed to all grant recipients. Support was provided by phone and Zoom for those requiring assistance with understanding reporting/administration requirements.

LCGs have demonstrated significant creativity in adapting to changed circumstances. Several LCGs adapted actions for remote delivery. The Plough, a local youth club delivered craft materials weekly to young people's home and a tutor delivered craft classes via Zoom. This was very popular with parents and siblings also getting involved. Similarly, Setanta Strings a community orchestra delivered music lessons online. University of the 3rd Age received a grant for creative writing workshops which were to culminate in a theatre performance. The creative writing workshops took place using Zoom and the performance has been postponed due to public health restrictions. This group have captured their action in the form of a booklet of creative writing.

In some cases, LCGs remained hopeful that restrictions would be lifted enabling them to implement their actions. This was particularly the case for groups who wished to visit historical and cultural venues or attend seminars. In some of these cases LCGs requested and were approved to change use of the grant to purchase IT equipment which would facilitate remote working, for example lap-tops and printers. Some LCGs needed to use the grant or a portion of their allocation to purchase Personal Protective Equipment. Community Development staff were in regular contact with LCG representatives to support them to identify alternative options where the initial proposal was not feasible. Interim visits over the summer months provided structured space for consideration of alternative options. Some LCGs were not impacted by COVID-19 restrictions as their original proposals were for capital items and in some cases for activities that were taking place out-doors. In 2020 5 LCGs received grants for community gardening initiatives or development of garden space attached to a community-based service. The Meeting Place Club (MPC) was particularly innovative in delivery of their Equine Therapy Programme for children with special needs. This programme is delivered in collaboration with ChildVision who provide the expertise of an Equine Therapy instructor and an Occupational Therapist. Child Vision were unable to open their premises due to restrictions. The MPC have an allotment in Finglas and instead of having the sessions in ChildVision, ChildVision staff brought the horses to the allotment each week. The children could then engage with the horses outdoors

under the supervision of MPC volunteers and ChildVision staff. The MPC worked in partnership with 2 other grantees i.e. The Social Therapeutic Gardening Group (facilitating horticulture therapy sessions for the MPC children) and the Fairlawn Community Gardens. This collaboration was facilitated by the location of the 3 allotments on the same site.

Development work with grant beneficiaries in 2020 was as follows:

- Support with development of technology skills particularly skills to facilitate participation in virtual training and for general remote communication.
- Project management and work planning to allow for flexible responses to changing circumstances.
- Administration and committee skills support.
- Support with preparing funding applications.

The Social Inclusion Network met on 3 occasions in 2020. The Social Inclusion Network provides opportunities for peer support and for learning about effective practice in social inclusion work. Each network meeting is followed by a training/developmental input. In 2020 the latter were Project Management (June), a demonstration of the An Cosán Digital Steppingstone tool (see <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/content/cosans-digital-stepping-stones> ) (September) and a session on Stress Management for LCGs (December).

There were 289 interventions for action 1.02 during 2020.

### 1.03 Innovating for Inclusion

In 2020 DNP identified a need for support to those experiencing homelessness. Based on existing relationships with LCGs, DNP collaborated with Pavee Point on an initiative which would support homeless members of the Traveling Community to articulate their experience of homelessness and of discrimination. This initiative supported participants to 'tell their story' i.e., their journey into homelessness, their experiences of discrimination in relation to housing and the impact of these experiences on their mental health. The initiative consisted of creative writing sessions facilitated by a spoken word poet. Participants were facilitated to write about their youth, their aspirations as young people, their journey into and their experiences of homelessness. These writings have been compiled into a booklet of creative writings. A video of interviews with the participants has also been produced. A core element of this initiative is that of giving voice to a group that experiences discrimination in Irish society. The intention is that this initiative will empower participants to articulate their experiences and in turn engage constructively with state agencies. The products of this initiative i.e., video and collection of writings will provide material enabling participants to highlight their experiences to state agencies particularly in relation to housing policy. Five male Travellers participated on the programme.

There were 30 interventions for action 1.03 (including 1.03 A- see below) during 2020.

### 1.03A Response to COVID-19

DNP conducted needs assessment in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and as a result reallocated resources from the SICAP budget towards provision of a variety of supports. The amount ringfenced was €8,000 from Goal 1 (allocated to 1.03 – Innovation for Social Inclusion) and €14,000 from Goal 2 actions. In addition, a further €10,000 was allocated from the 2019 SICAP carry over (€5,000 to 1.03A and €5,000 to 2.02A).

Using Community Development approaches DNP worked through networks and built on existing relationships with LCGs and stakeholders to deliver responses to priority needs. In addition to work with existing networks DNP also convened a group of LCGs in Ballymun to develop a co-ordinated response across the Ballymun area. Participants on this Network were: Poppintree Youth Project, The Aisling Project, The Plough Youth Club, Young Ballymun, St. Margaret’s Community Traveller Association, Ballymun Network for Assisting Children and Young People, Crosscare, and Ballymun Child and Family Resource Centre. This network met on four occasions and as a result of needs identified, DNP provided supports to LCGs as follows:

- Crosscare- €10,000 for provision of food supplies to vulnerable families.
- St. Margaret’s Community Traveller Association- €460 for tablet devices for primary health care workers to facilitate remote working.
- The Aisling Project- €1,000 towards essential food supplies for vulnerable children and families.

These meetings of Ballymun Groups allowed for broader needs assessment and as a result additional financial and practical supports were provided under Goal 2 (see 2.02A for details).

€1,000 was also provided from SICAP to An Síol (Cabra Community Development Project) for food hampers and wellness packs for socially isolated vulnerable members of the local community.

DNP resourced Crosscare to provide food supplies to vulnerable individuals and families and where appropriate to LCGs working with vulnerable families. Crosscare has a strong track record in assessment of need, food provision and distribution and this collaboration was deemed the most effective means for DNP to reach those most in need of food aid.

LCGs participating on this working group (response to COVID-19 in Ballymun) also expressed a desire for support in relation to return to work. LCG representatives were particularly concerned about Health and Safety requirements. DNP agreed to continue meeting with these LCGs to clarify need in relation to return to work and to provide necessary capacity building supports where appropriate. This ‘Return to Work Working Group’ met on five occasions. Valuable information was shared regarding practical measures some LCGs had put in place and information regarding training opportunities in relation to Health and Safety. This forum also facilitated circulation of information e.g., sample checklists and protocols. This group expanded beyond Ballymun and included representatives from Saol Clubhouse, Finglas Support and Suicide Prevention Network, Friends of Finglas, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Ireland (ADHD Ireland) St. Vincent’s Basketball Club, Greenfield Residents Association, Túsla and The Loft.





greatest need identified by the social enterprises across the consortium's area include monetisation, marketing (both digital and traditional) and strategic leadership mentoring.

Details of Mentoring assignments are as follows:

1. Eco Mattress: in response to the pressures caused by COVID-19 a mentor was assigned to assist with e-tendering. To the end of quarter 4 2020, 30 hours of mentoring has been allocated by the consortium implementation group. To the end of 2020, 15 hours have been used.
2. Rediscovery Fashion: Assigned 2 mentors to cover both marketing and brand development. To the end of quarter 4 Rediscovery Fashion have availed of 9 hours of mentoring with one mentor which was the maximum number of hours allocated to this mentor. They have not engaged with the second mentor and the social enterprise coordinator will encourage engagement in quarter 1 of 2021.
3. Finglas Childcare: Assigned 1 mentor to review both the current marketing approach and to provide one to one training on different forms of digital marketing. To the end of 2020, 30 hours have been allocated with 9.5 hours being used to date. The remaining hours will be used in quarter 1 of 2021 with a focus on rebranding their website.
4. Crosscare (The Den): Assigned 2 mentors to develop a business plan for the planned youth café on Finglas main street and a mentor to assist with the management of the café. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the café opening has been delayed, hence mentoring has not commenced.
5. Outhouse: Assigned 1 mentor to review Outhouse's business plan to increase traded income. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Outhouse had to suspend its activities and so did not engage with mentoring.
6. City Farm Ballymun: Assigned 2 mentors to develop a business case for the farm. 4 hours with a mentor were used in quarter 3 2020 with a request for 10 hours with another mentor approved by the implementation group in December 2020.
7. Greenview Garden: Assigned 1 mentor to investigate potential revenue streams. 1 hour was used in 2020. The Social Enterprise Coordinator will work with the garden in quarter 1 2021 to encourage engagement.
8. Community Care and Repair: Assigned 1 mentor to develop strong business processes. 15 hours have been approved by the implementation group for use during quarter 4 2020 and quarter 1 2021. To date 7 hours have been used.

Based on poor uptake of mentoring hours across the 6 Lots, the consortium ran online workshops for Social Enterprises in Quarter 4 to promote the pilot and to encourage engagement with mentors. The topics covered were: Procurement, Fundraising and How to Recruit an Effective Board of Management. Attendance at these events was positive initially, though the feedback from attendees was that some were experiencing "Zoom fatigue" due to the number of online events that were held for social enterprises in December. Following a planning meeting in mid-December, the implementation group intend to run a further 4 workshops in quarter 1 2021 on the following topics: Goal Setting, Story Telling, Building Resilience and Use of Smart Phones for Creation of Digital Content.

The COVID-19 epidemic has affected social enterprises in the Lot negatively, with many expressing concerns about business sustainability. As many of our social enterprise business models are focussed on direct contact with customers/service users, many have had to close their premises at times when the county was subject to Level 5 restrictions. Fortunately, none of the social enterprises in the Lot have ceased trading in 2020, though those who were looking to start trading found their progress halted.

There were 24 interventions for Action 1.04 in 2020.

### 1.04A Community Care and Repair

The Community Care and Repair Team provides a range of services which enhance quality of life for older and vulnerable people living in disadvantaged communities in DNP's catchment area. These services include garden maintenance, grass cutting, home repairs, painting/decorating and installation of grab and stair rails. DNP also administers the Senior Alert Scheme on behalf of Pobal. In addition to providing services to individual households, DNP also provides repair, maintenance, and painting/decorating services to community organisations.

Community Care and Repair provides quality work placements for Tús and Community Employment participants, thus enhancing the employability of long-term unemployed people living in disadvantaged communities.

COVID 19 has had a particularly strong impact on delivery of the DNP Care and Repair service. All services were suspended on March 25th as a result of concerns about infection spread to older and vulnerable members of the community. The nature of this service is such that it can involve staff spending extended periods of time in the homes of clients who are medically vulnerable. DNP did however make provision for emergency repairs and a team of volunteers was formed comprised of past clients of DNP Enterprise Service. These past clients were qualified trades people offering their services for a nominal charge (see under 2.05). The Community Care and Repair Manager conducted initial assessment of need for emergency repairs where appropriate.

The Community Care and Repair Manager was redeployed to provide much needed assistance in delivery of food for schools and 'Meals on Wheels' and educational supplies across the Dublin North West area. Having previous experience in logistics and distribution, this member of staff made an invaluable contribution to DNP's response to COVID-19 (see under 2.02A).

The grass cutting service resumed on May 18th and successfully ran throughout the summer. The Care and Repair service (for community groups) resumed on July 18th. It was necessary to suspend the grass cutting service on September 18th and the Care and Repair Service in late September in compliance with public health advice. Team members did however continue to install grab and stair rails to ensure safety in the home and to facilitate discharge from hospital.

Administration of the SAS alarm scheme continued throughout 2020. With reduction in work load it was possible to invest time in planning for work in 2021, particularly in promotion of the service to LCGs. This has resulted in initial assessment of work which will take place early in 2021 (subject to

public health advice). The Community Care and Repair Manager also availed of mentoring supports through the 'SECOP Training and Mentoring Pilot' (see 1.04). In the first quarter of 2021 there will be an emphasis on recruitment to the team, on developing promotional material and on identification of potential additional business opportunities.

## Goal 2

### 2.01 Supporting Educational Success in School Going Children

2020 began like other years with the DNP Regional Education Network reviewing the methodology of the collaborative process followed by cluster meetings in Ballymun, Cabra and Finglas. A range of supports were then planned by network members for children and families in the three clusters.

In Ballymun, BITE (Ballymun Initiative for Third Level Education), BCFRC (Ballymun Child and Family Resource Centre) and Ballymun Anseo SCP all ran homework clubs/ study groups with the support of SICAP. During summer, BCFRC and Ballymun Anseo SCP offered supports for children (BCFRC also ran their Schools Out programme at Halloween). SCIAP also enabled a high achievers programme with BITE and partly supported the universal attendance initiative through the Ballymun Principals Network.

The Cabra focus was on summer provision with both Cabra SCP and Gaelscoil Bharra (DEIS, but not part of Cabra SCP) providing supports for targeted students. In autumn there was also Special Education Need supports and a participation programme.

Attention was on therapeutic supports in Finglas, with Finglas BEO SCP and Finglas C SCP concentrating on wellness. Finglas A SCP provided nurture and restorative practice training, SICAP also partly supported their attendance programme.

From March 12th when the schools closed, DNP's education partners continued to support their targeted children, some moved their programmes online while others offered practical supports and moved to creating and delivering resource packs. DNP responded by swiftly engaging with all our partners and offering support and connecting in with the Tusla led Child and Family Support Networks in Ballymun, Cabra and Finglas.

All DEIS schools in the catchment were contacted directly following the lockdown, and resource/food packs were delivered by DNP staff to at risk children and families in Ballymun, Cabra and Finglas, beginning in March and continuing through to the summer.

There were three Regional Education Network meetings in 2020: 10th March, 27th May (Zoom) and September 10th (Zoom). In particular, the May meeting enabled valuable support and connection at a very uncertain time. In the context of planned programmes having to change, professional peer led discussion, and sharing of ideas proved the value of the network in supporting each other. Partners were encouraged to amend their programmes plans around this time and an amended application was introduced to refocus activities and to create a new paper trail. Despite variations e.g., changing to resource packs/moving online, all planned activities did take place, a commendable result demonstrating the flexibility and creativity of DNP Regional Education Network members.

SCIAP programmes in 2020 supported 680 children and families. Attendance initiative programmes were not included in this figure.

Short training undertaken individually was offered to network members as group training for the network was challenging in 2020, contributing to the underspend in budget for this action.

In addition to Regional Education Network activities, collaborations with DCC (Dublin City Council) library service continued with the Storytime project. 2020 enabled DNP to develop stronger links with Child and Family Support Networks (Tusla), Trauma Informed Learning Network led by Better Finglas (ABC (Area Based Child) Programme) and support the Ballymun Principals' Network. Links have been maintained with Erin's Isle education programme as it is hoped that this will recommence in 2021.



Resource pack preparation by BCFRC staff



Pictures of their children's work shared by parents (BCFRC Halloween Schools Out)

## 2.02 Pre-Development and Promoting Wellbeing

Dublin Northwest Partnership continued to prioritise predevelopment and wellbeing approaches to engage those who are most marginalised. In the first quarter of 2020 DNP in conjunction with local groups and organisations and using the wealth of knowledge of the local communities, developed bespoke programmes to meet identified needs and gaps in provision of the most basic entry level of education programmes.

Following the onset of the pandemic and in line with COVID-19 guidelines, DNP developed outreach predevelopment and wellbeing programmes using public park facilities, at Greenview Community Gardens and online using social media platforms. These included meditation, mindfulness, mental wellness through physical exercise, arts and craft workshops, gardening workshops and personal development. As government guidelines changed throughout 2020, planned initiatives and courses were postponed, cancelled, and rescheduled. At year end, 40 local people participated in the

meditation, mindfulness, and garden workshops and approximately 60 participants took part in the outdoor mental wellness through physical exercises classes.

Some of these classes took place for vulnerable families alongside HSE and Safefood Ireland Community Food Initiative funded programmes leveraging SICAP supports further. As one participant wrote in her feedback “I enjoyed getting out to meet people after being so long stuck in the house so much. The course gave me the skills and built my confidence up again”.

Ballymun Book Exchange held on the first Thursday of every month, has on average 300 local people attending. The book exchange is an opportunity for DNP and local groups and organisations to promote our services, training opportunities and initiatives. Nine hundred local people attended in the first quarter of this year. Personal development programmes ran in Baleskin Reception Centre with ten asylum seekers. Due to Covid-19, both these initiatives have been postponed since April.

Fáilte Isteach free English conversation classes began in Cabra library and are continuing online with a smaller number of students.

Greenview Community Garden is a hidden gem in the heart of Finglas where twenty local people have availed of the opportunity of doing Tús and CE (Community Employment) work placements. With SICAP support these people had the opportunity to participate in level 3 and 4 vocational horticultural training opportunities on site.

In 2020 the DNP Men’s Group programme continued to provide support and opportunities for personal and social development. The group have become more self-sufficient and are organising activities themselves. The men took part in an adult education information session at the beginning of the year and several educational trips were organised but due to Covid-19 restrictions these plans were postponed. The group were a huge support for each other during the lockdown as a few of the men were self-isolating and experienced social isolation.

In the first quarter of 2020 nine DNP clients received counselling supports with DNPs (Dublin Northwest Partnership) contracted counsellor, while the service continued to be provided on an online basis, uptake was lower when it moved online.

## 2.02A Response to COVID-19

In March of 2020, in response to COVID – 19, DNP developed a strategy to deal with emergent needs. Allocated budgets were revisited, and monies were ringfenced to provide an agile response to COVID -19 challenges to support identified gaps and needs on the ground. Utilising DNP’s existing contacts and networks, several needs became apparent. Monies were distributed through the following partners:

- Crosscare- provision of food supplies to LCGs for distribution to vulnerable families living in Dublin North West.
- St. Margaret’s Traveller Community Association- tablet devices for Primary Health Care workers to facilitate remote working on St. Margaret’s site.

- Young Ballymun- activity resources for 56 homeless families living in the Travelodge.
- Ballymun Child & Family Resource Centre - food hampers for vulnerable families.
- Aisling Project- food hampers for vulnerable families.
- St Margaret’s Pre School - resources for vulnerable children.
- Cabra Community Development Project- food hampers and wellness packs for residents.
- Cabra Child and Family Network- resources for vulnerable children.
- Finglas SCP- resources for vulnerable children.

DNP also supported special projects delivering food aid to vulnerable families, educational and recreational packs for children, tablets to enable families reconnect with elderly relatives in care homes and hospitals and van drivers, van hire and insurance to support these initiatives. At Christmas, care package supports for 150 older and vulnerable people were supported in the Cabra area.

Early in the lockdown, it came to DNP’s attention that local Meals on Wheels services were struggling to meet demand. DNP was approached by the manager of Odin’s Wood Day Care Centre. Odin’s Wood had taken on delivery of Meals on Wheels in the Finglas area as the existing set up was not COVID -19 compliant. They were struggling with servicing all the routes involved. DNP staff across both goals delivered meals to this isolated and vulnerable group, directly combatting food poverty and social isolation. In Cabra, DNP delivered Meals on Wheels for Sancta Maria Day Care Centre.

DNP collaborated with DCC in administering the DCC COVID-19 Emergency Grant strand. DNP was able to draw on its relationships with LCGs and DNP Regional Education Network members to promote this grant stream and support LCGs to apply. This resulted in supports to several LCGs:

- Cabra for Youth - IT tablet devices for vulnerable children to enable remote learning
- St. Margaret’s Traveller Community Association - sanitation supplies for Traveller families
- Ballymun Network for Assisting Children and Young People - mobile phones and credit to enable families to access supports
- Cabra School Completion Programme - IT supports for vulnerable children
- Emergency Repair Service – for local older/vulnerable people (co-funded by SICAP)

In response to growing concern from residents about the welfare of their older family members in nursing homes, DNP led a Dublin wide initiative ‘Connected in Care’ to provide groups of older people in nursing homes and other care settings with tablets to facilitate Skype/Zoom conversations with their families. A total of 86 tablet devices were provided potentially benefitting 860 older people and their families. These were custom designed by DNP Social Enterprises Coordinator and delivered to nursing homes/care facilities across Dublin. The programme was subsequently extended to include other neighbouring partnership areas. This was co-funded through the DCC Covid -19 Emergency Grant Strand and SICAP.

## 2.03 Supporting Access to Education

In 2020 DNP continued to support students with travel and resources through the Education Access Fund. The Education Access Fund offers supports to low-income, full-time students who live in the DNP catchment area. Following lockdown there was a focus on soft supports for students who were recipients. Contact was made and emotional and practical supports were provided ranging from therapeutic to food to technology. Not all supports were delivered under this Goal, the strong networks that DNP has established enabled referrals and signposting where appropriate.

All students were contacted in the summer to offer support with job search following graduation or if they were going into the next year of their course, details of the application process. Regrettably, DNP were not able to host a graduation lunch for the class of 2020.

Despite not visiting local school leavers in the last term before exams (as in previous years), there has been strong interest and application to DNP's Education Access Fund in the 20/21 academic year, with 191 students receiving support. The IRIS figure of 295 reflects a combination of students from the 19/20 and 20/21 academic years. All students were linked with the DNP Guidance Service to provide another layer of support.

As expected, with substantial numbers of students studying at home, interest in resource supports has increased substantially with 63% opting to be supported in this way. Ordinarily about two thirds of students opt for help with travel.

A short video is about the Education Access Fund will be available in early January 2021 on DNP website.

Support for Leaving Cert students with guidance in this uncertain year was advertised and flyers were circulated to schools when the Leaving Cert results were released. DNP linked in with schools through career guidance networks to remind them of the DNP guidance service should they have school leavers who need support.

At the time of college awareness week when the education coordinator ordinarily linked in with schools about apprenticeships, some schools opted to have a talk through zoom and a video presentation was created to overcome the technical challenges. Plans for 2020 include apprenticeship workshops for local students who are interested in pursuing apprenticeships after school.

Education options talks with FAST (Finglas Addiction Support Team), Better Finglas, and local parents with DCU Access took place in early 2020. Plans for 2021 include talks with Better Finglas and DCU Access. Links have been maintained with Erin's Isle education programme as it is hoped that this will recommence in 2021.

## 2.04 Supporting Access to Employment

A significant cohort of the 505 individuals supported under this action are experiencing huge personal challenges, including homelessness / risk of homelessness, mental health and undiagnosed psychiatric

illness, addiction, disability, and social isolation. The bespoke supports offered by SICAP continues to be invaluable in developing innovative and creative ways of engaging those most isolated and distanced from the labour market. In many cases there can be very little in terms of tangible ‘progressions’ for these clients, however the difference engaging in one to one, and group supports makes in terms of their wellbeing is immeasurable.

Internal referrals following one to one guidance supports have included pre-employment and personal development programmes, labour market programmes and job search workshops. Collaboration between the Employment Services, Education, and Local Development teams is proving invaluable in piloting and developing new initiatives outlined below and connecting with diverse groups.

Two Connect programmes were delivered in Finglas and Cabra in January and February respectively. The programmes aim to provide foundation digital skills for adult learners in both introducing basic skills and illustrating the capabilities of getting online. In total, fourteen participants took part on the two programmes.

An online foundation programme, for adults wishing to develop their core digital skills in connecting online has been developed and piloted in Q4 2020. The workshops are aimed at those with the most basic digital skills who are at risk of isolation and offer high support on a small group basis. The programme built on the identified needs of participants on the Try It Out programme in summer 2020 and caters primarily for adult returners to education and LES (Local Employment Service) clients. The experience with these learners identifies how essential the necessity for digital devices to assist most distanced learners to engage in lifelong learning opportunities. Two groups with six participants learned the IT skills to use and take part in zoom sessions. After building up the confidence and skills the groups joined Dublin City Councils National Neighbourhood weekly sessions and using Zoom went to the National Gallery, National Museum and had a guided tour of Dublin Street Art

The Your Time to Shine programme was delivered twice in 2020 on both a blended and online basis in February and October, respectively. The Your Time to Shine programme is delivered in partnership with the Ballymun Jobs Centre and DNP Local Employment Services and aims to provide information, support and guidance for women wishing to explore their options before returning to employment, education, and training. Outreach was delivered through DSP (Department of Social Protection) mailshots with twenty-two participants availing of the opportunity in 2020.

DNP have contributed to the development testing and piloting of the My Journey tool. DNP are due to attend Train the Trainer workshops in January 2021 and will be rolling out the tool both externally in training trainers and internally across departments in DNP.

The Education Practitioners Network met five times in 2020 which gave contributors the opportunity to share information on the available options locally as well as experience and discussing shared solutions to the unique challenges presented in programme delivery due to COVID-19.

The unprecedented impact of COVID 19, and subsequent Government response to curtail its spread, brought direct programme activity to a temporary standstill from March onwards. Plans are in progress to deliver an extensive schedule of digital skills workshops and primers for blended STEPS programmes across the community in Q1 2021. This will provide an option to pilot online provision

and diversify delivery options for the future, especially for clients impacted by childcare and caring restraints as well as those underemployed who wish to upskill around their existing work commitments.

In addition, a comprehensive outreach strategy in collaboration with community partners and service providers is in development which will inform programme delivery throughout 2021.

## 2.05 Enterprise and Economic Development

In the period January to December 2020, 123 new clients (69 males and 54 females) registered with the service and were provided with information and advice on self-employment. In the same period 19 Group Information Workshops were held providing information on self-employment and were attended by 106 clients.

Between January and December 16 Introduction to Business Courses were held and were attended by 97 clients. Since April these courses have been delivered remotely via Zoom. In addition, 14 Introduction to Book-keeping Courses were held and attended by 89 clients, these were also delivered remotely since April.

3 Tax Return Workshops were held to assist clients who were more than 12 months in business to complete their tax returns and these were attended by 24 clients. Since April 46 clients have been assisted remotely with the completion of their income tax returns.

One 6-week evening Start Your Own Business Course was held and attended by 17 clients. Since March it has not been possible to run these courses due to COVID restrictions.

In the period January to December 40 clients progressed into self-employment, 21 males and 19 females. All these clients availed of the BTWEA (Back to Work Enterprise Allowance) or STEA (Short Term Enterprise Allowance) schemes. Due to COVID restrictions a large number of clients have been forced to put their business plans on hold.

## 2.06 Employer Engagement

In 2020, DNP built on the positive partnerships which have been established to date with local employers and created new connections which will lead to employment opportunities for DNP clients. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, many employers were forced to prioritise their existing internal structures which resulted in minimised engagement with DNP. 62 employers engaged with DNP regarding recruitment, programme, and event participation throughout the year. Employers were engaged with through one-to-one sessions, workshops, and careers events and by phone and email.

Under this action, DNP provided appropriate training with their cohort of job ready clients, ensuring their applications were of the highest standard and they were ready for interview, with a view to

