

COMMUNITY, CRICKET & INCLUSION

A CASE STUDY ON COLLABORATION
WEST LIMERICK RESOURCES CLG



BACKGROUND

Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre is situated on the outskirts of Foynes in County Limerick and provides residential accommodation for those who have looked for asylum in Ireland as international protection applicants. There are 97 male residents currently registered there, ranging in age from 18 to 60. They come from a wide array of geographical, cultural and religious backgrounds.

The work of engaging with Mount Trenchard residents is housed in a number of Actions within the SICAP Plan 2018 – 2022 specifically ‘SICAP Action 4 Social Inclusion & Integration’ with Asylum Seekers being listed as a primary target group under New Communities.

Link to SICAP Themes & Outcomes

This work contributes to the SICAP Goal 1 Outcome **“Local social inclusion and equality issues are addressed by LCGs”** under the SICAP **“Promote community engagement and stronger communities”** Thematic Area. The project also contributes towards the Outcome **“LCG’s work with local service providers to develop and implement initiatives addressing social exclusion and inequality”** under the **“Promote collaborative engagement”** Thematic area of Goal 1.

While the project is imbedded in SICAP Goal 1 the benefits for the participants also come under Goal 2 where this work contributes to the Outcome **“SICAP clients have improved personal skills, wellbeing and capabilities”** under the Thematic Area from Goal 2 of **“Promote personal development and wellbeing”**.

Working with the residents of Mount Trenchard it became clear that a major issue was a feeling of isolation accompanied with a sense of frustration at lack of opportunities and activities.

“I feel very bad. Back home I used to be busy always, and I was used to that. But now it’s three solid years doing nothing. I feel bad most of my days, I always have sleepless nights, I pray that God could do something fast for me,”

William Walker, from Malawi, resident at Mt Trenchard for 3 years
(Limerick Leader)



West Limerick Resources CLG (WLR) contact with Mount Trenchard was first instigated by Limerick Volunteer Centre (LVC) in 2010. The LVC is part of WLR suite of programs to support communities across county Limerick. The centre connected residents with several volunteering opportunities throughout the area and received a positive response. Following from this it was clear that residents would greatly benefit from further positive interaction, socialisation and engagement in the wider community.

A WLR SICAP Community Development Worker held consultation sessions with the residents and agreed with them a variety of activities which were organised with a view to encourage integration and positive mental health while also combating language barriers.

This included participating in further volunteering projects, a Digital Skills for Citizens IT course and joining in a sports programme which was facilitated by a previous resident of Mount Trenchard who had been supported by West Limerick Resources to access higher education opportunities.

Following on from this piece of work WLR created the Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre Focus Group which brought together all the agencies from community, voluntary and statutory agencies working with the centre including SICAP, Rural Employment Service WLR, Limerick Volunteer Centre , Social Farming Service, Doras Luminí, Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, , Health Service Executive , Churchtown Acute Mental Health Services HSE, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board, Limerick Sports Partnership , Manager of Mount Trenchard and a previous resident of Mount Trenchard.

This group's remit is to promote a more collaborative & integrated approach to working with individuals and groups in the residential centre. The project described in this case study was a direct result of this interagency cooperation.

WLR is also represented on the Limerick Integration Working Group. This consists of statutory, community, voluntary and migrant representative groups and includes representatives from Limerick City and County Council, an Garda Síochána, HSE, LDCs, Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board, Doras Luminí and Jesuit Refugee Service.

CASE STUDY

2018 has seen WLR continue to undertake extensive work with Mount Trenchard residents under SICAP. This includes delivery of Rural Employment Service, Information Clinics on Education & Training opportunities, agency referrals for mental health supports and training in manual handling and small equipment maintenance.

This case study examines one recent undertaking and demonstrates the input and impact of one event and how it can only be achieved through a collaborative effort.

In the course of its work with employers and community groups, in November 2017 the SICAP team was contacted by Adare Recreation & Community Complex CLG (operating as The Manor Fields Adare), a voluntary group who manage a community owned, 25 acre amenity for recreational & community purposes for people of all ages and all abilities. They were looking for support in creating an application for the Community Services Programme. During this process the SICAP Community Development Officer discovered that Manor Fields would benefit with assistance to upgrade and maintain its facility and that there is a very strong cricket team and full pitch attached to the amenity.

In January 2018 a consultation with the residents of Mount Trenchard looked at the coming year and the type of supports the residents thought would be beneficial. Residents identified social interaction and inclusion as a prime need of the group as well as a desire to be involved with the local community. One area they felt this could be achieved was through sports and one sport in particular stood out – Cricket.

In the same time period the Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre Focus Group convened its first meeting of the year which also looked at operational programmes and projects that could be utilised to support Mount Trenchard residents. One of the projects looked at was volunteering with local community groups as a way to help with social inclusion for residents and the wider community.

From this two principal goals were established - complete volunteering exercise and create a social event for the residents of Mount Trenchard with the wider community and it became clear that there was an opportunity for a collaborative project around community & cricket.

Through a series of meetings with the Limerick Volunteer Centre, SICAP Co-ordinator and the Manor Fields group it was established that Mount Trenchard residents would undertake a volunteer day helping to paint fences and shipping containers used as club rooms at the grounds. This would then be followed by a game of cricket with members from the cricket club.

The Mount Trenchard Focus Group put a provisional plan together as to the nature of the project, the resources needed, contacts to be notified, provisional dates etc.

Limerick Volunteer Centre then introduced a fourth stakeholder. GM Motors in Limerick were looking for an opportunity to exercise its Corporate Social Responsibility. As a growing company in Limerick they wanted to promote the concept of giving some time through the company to a suitable and worthy cause. During meetings it was discovered that several staff members belonged to the local Cricket Club in Adare.

Contact and subsequent meetings were had throughout April 2018 with all groups to formulate a plan that would be beneficial to everyone. The end result being for Mount Trenchard and GM to join forces on the volunteering project and then adjourn for an 'international friendly' game of cricket. National volunteering week in May provided an ideal time as it would tie in for promotional purposes and most importantly be held during cricket season!

INPUTS

As the plan for the day was agreed West Limerick Resources then began the task of bringing all elements together as with any event of a collaborative nature it takes extensive organising of both the participants and requirements for the day.

First, in preparation for the event, 10 Mount Trenchard residents undertook manual handling training. This was delivered by a TÚS supervisor attached to West Limerick Resources. The venue used was Bowlands Meadows which is a Tusla owned facility located between Mount Trenchard and the town of Foynes. The venue has been used on many occasions to deliver different training and RES service delivery as well as a meeting point for the multi-agency focus group. Further collaboration is in effect here as Tusla allows use of the facility with no cost involved.

Staff from the SICAP team were involved in the organising phase including the SICAP co-ordinator, Community Development Outreach worker and Employment Advocate & Project Development officer. Other WLR staff included the Co-Ordinator and Support worker from Volunteer Centre Limerick.

Seven staff were also involved on the day assisting with set up, catering and cheering on the teams.

Transport to and from the volunteering venue for the residents was organised through Local Link Limerick, a not-for-profit community transport company funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport & administered by the National Transport Authority. Local Link administers a grant aid programme which agencies such as Local Development Companies can access. The WLR SICAP team use this service as a low cost option for all trips organised through WLR.

On the volunteering day there was additional support from a Limerick Sports Partnership Development officer who helped to facilitate the game.

As a community building gesture Fitzgerald's Woodlands House Hotel also provided a culturally appropriate lunch for all.

As per manual handling requirements overalls, gloves and safety glasses were supplied to the group and refreshments on the day were supplied by West Limerick Resources through Social Inclusion & Integration strand of SICAP. All other supplies such as paint, brushes, rollers and trays and other PPE were supplied by Manor Fields.



BATTER UP!

On May 17th the sun shone and the work began. 26 people of 10 different nationalities picked up brushes and throughout the morning worked side by side painting fences, railings and containers.

On a practical level the outcome of painting the facility was achieved. The story of the day however is the conversations that took place between the volunteers while they worked.

'To see the teamwork of the General Motors employees with the residents of the direct provision centre was uplifting'

Barry O'Halloran, Director Board of Management Manor Fields

Questions & conversations on the asylum process and foreign nationals working in Ireland as well as the local context of life in West Limerick and Limerick city continued through lunch and provided the optimal opportunity to raise understanding of different cultures and circumstances.



'We thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity. Got to help improve the facility as well as interact with the lads and understand some of the difficulties faced by them' Jose Dan, General Motors Employee

Several games of cricket followed late into the day with players of all abilities taking to the pitch. It was again through the act of participation that barriers were broken down and it was simply a group of co-workers enjoying a day out.

Results of the day saw a new group of people involved in volunteering, an improved community infrastructure, a positive international exchange and a new player for Adare Cricket Club.

However the outcomes run deeper than that. Direct provision centres are a very closed environment with next to no opportunity for communities to learn about the residents. This sometimes results in an element of fear of the unknown and this day went some way towards helping grow the level of understanding as to who the residents of Mount Trenchard really are.

Another outcome of the day was the positive public relations for residents of Mount Trenchard who had been vilified by bad press over a period of time. The good press will hopefully assist in reversing some of the preconceptions about asylum seekers at a local level.

An additional important outcome has been the connections made between Limerick Sports Partnership and Mount Trenchard residents which on foot of the event have rolled out a full LSP programme with the residents. This is conducted both on and off site at Mount Trenchard providing much needed variety and stimulus for the residents.



UTLETSI SEBATA - VOLUNTEER DAY PARTICIPANT



Utletsi Sebata is a resident of the Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre. He arrived from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in September of 2017. Coming from Zimbabwe he had a good education and was very active in sport through school. He had studied classical piano and bass guitar through the church in Bulawayo. Because of racial and religious issues in his home country it was not safe to stay. Utletsi's journey took him to South Africa, through Switzerland and onto Ireland.

When he arrived in Ireland he applied for asylum and was sent to Mount Trenchard. Once there he found it difficult to adjust to the isolation and boredom.

"Transport is a big problem here. My daily routine was wake up and get some exercise, eat, talk to some people in the centre and go to bed. It was not very good for my health"

Utletsi then started to become involved in different courses offered by West Limerick Resources and other agencies.

"The courses I have done with West Limerick Resources have really helped me to get my life into a new routine and has helped with my mental health"

As part of the WLR SICAP work with Mount Trenchard, Utletsi volunteered for the painting with cricket day.

"Where I'm from in Zimbabwe I didn't know much about cricket. It's not a sport I would have played but any day away from Mount Trenchard is a good day"

"I had a great day in Adare. While we were painting we started talking with the others there. It was great to be involved in a group where I could laugh and talk about different things like music and food and other things. Some guy started teaching us phrases in Irish. The game of cricket was also great fun and it got competitive. It was nice to have new things to talk about with some of the other people staying in Mount Trenchard. It has given me a kick-start to do other things to improve myself for the future"

Since the volunteer day Utletsi has become very involved in the sports program in the University of Limerick with Limerick Sports Partnership and West Limerick Resources as well as other training in IT and employability skills and has a new outlook and a plan for his future in Ireland.



THE LEARNING

- The collaborative approach adopted when working with the individuals from Mount Trenchard & other organisations has demonstrated its value in promoting social inclusion. Our learning from this project has shown that an investment of time and understanding is imperative to nurturing and encouraging such relationships.
- One important piece of learning taken from the project is for the SICAP team to be more culturally aware. In the planning phase of setting dates etc it was not noted that the holy month of Ramadan started on the evening of Wednesday, 16 May. As some of the participants are devout Muslims they were not permitted to eat or drink during the day. While it did not deter those participating it was a significant oversight in planning. As West Limerick in general is becoming more multi-cultural it is a lesson for the future.
- As a collaborative exercise which involved a lot of moving parts, the results far outweigh the inputs which were needed to create the event. The need for positive learning for all communities to come together to break down stereotypes is more important than ever and creating opportunities to share stories with minority groups such as those in Direct Provision centres will be a focus for the future for the SICAP team in West Limerick Resources.

"This project is one example of the strong community spirit in West Limerick and one which we believe can be built on by supporting and increasing the social inclusion aspect in the community - linking individuals to community, connecting community groups to businesses through volunteering, and also, in this instance, sport,"

Dearbhla Conlon Ahern, SICAP Coordinator

'The volunteer day was a huge success on many different levels. Volunteers from General Motors (as part of the CSR initiative), Residents of the Direct Provision Centre, Volunteer Limerick, West Limerick Resources, The Manor Fields committee and Limerick Cricket Club all collaborated to ensure that the work (and play!) goals were achieved. In doing so, community integration was an integral part of the project. The SICAP team were fundamental to the initiation and success of this venture. We very much hope that similar collaboration can be a feature of the Manor Fields into the future'

Barry O'Halloran, Director Board of Management Manor Fields



COMMUNITY AND CRICKET COME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE VOLUNTEER WEEK 2018

An annual event, Volunteer Week celebrates the contribution of volunteers throughout Ireland and this year West Limerick took it to the wicket.

Adare Recreation and Community Complex, known as The Manor Fields, working in conjunction with The Limerick Volunteer Centre and West Limerick Resources (WLR) sought support to have a number of painting tasks completed at their community playground and cricket oval which resulted in a unique event built around social inclusion and integration.

Matching an eagerness to support the local community with a passion for cricket, the Limerick Volunteer Centre linked General Motors Limerick staff with residents of the Direct Provision Centre Mount Trenchard in Foynes, who are engaged with WLR through its Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

This voluntary initiative saw nine different nationalities work together to complete the painting of fences and buildings within the community development, then taking to the cricket field in an 'international friendly' match with the support of the Limerick Cricket Club players who also joined in and made available their resources and equipment

for the Volunteer Week event.

WLR SICAP Co-ordinator Dearbhla Conlon Ahern stated 'This project is one such example of the strong community spirit in West Limerick and one which we believe can be built on by supporting and increasing the social inclusion aspect in the community; linking individuals to community, connecting community groups and individuals to

businesses through volunteering and also in this instance sport'.

Sincere thanks was also given to all who supported the project with their time, energy, staff and resources and buckets of enthusiasm namely; Adare Recreation and Community Complex CLG, GM Motors, Limerick Volunteer Service, Limerick Sports Partnership, Local Link, Woodlands House Hotel, Limerick Cricket Club and

the West Limerick Resources SICAP Programme.

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.



Rabani Dawiatzai up to bat.



David Cove, Stephen Ryan, Pritpal Singh, Dumisani Banda, Ian Donchi, Alan O'Connor, Jose Dan, Innocent Aigbe Edaghehese and Zitha Mpoola doing some painting in Adare.



Rabani Dawiatzai waiting to bat, with Karthik Gajandra bowling and Declan Early acting as umpire.

BATTER UP! CRICKET AND PAINTING HELPS INCLUSION



Painting at the Manor Fields Adare: David Cove, Stephen Ryan, Pritpal Singh, Dumisani Banda, Ian Donchi, Alan O'Connor, Jose Dan, Innocent Aigbe Edaghese, Zitha Mpoola, and below, Rabani Dawiatzai, Mount Trenchard, up to bat

MARIA FLANNERY

E: maria.flannery@limerickleader.ie

A CRICKET match and a helping hand on a community project: those were the components of Volunteer Week 2018 at the Manor Fields complex in Adare.

The Limerick Volunteer Centre and West Limerick Resources joined forces to complete a number of painting tasks at the Adare community playground and cricket oval, which resulted in a unique event built around social inclusion and integration.

Residents from the Mount Trenchard direct provision centre volunteered, along with employees from General Motors, to complete the painting of fences and buildings within the community development. Nine different nationalities worked together on the project.

The volunteers then took to the cricket field for an international friendly match, with support from Limerick Cricket Club.

"This project is one example of the strong community spirit in West Limerick and one which we

believe can be built on by supporting and increasing the social inclusion aspect in the community - linking individuals to community, connecting community groups to businesses through volunteering, and also, in this instance, sport," said Dearbhla Conlon Ahern, who works on West Limerick Resources' Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

SICAP 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government and co-funded by the European Social Fund under an employability and inclusion programme.

