

Action Progress Report
MID YEAR
2018 / Longford County (9-1)



Goal 1	Action: Action 1: Outreach to People in and from Disadvantaged Communities and Marginalised Groups
---------------	---

Progress Report

Mid-Year

Between January and the end of May, regular door to door calling was carried out in a number of estates in Edgeworthstown and in and around MacEoin Park, Upper Ardnacassa area, Springlawn, and St Michael's Road in Longford Town. This was in order to inform residents of activities that LCRL were running, refer people to other appropriate services, and to listen to issues on the ground.

Each week on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons staff from LCRL worked out of the Council's community houses in Cluain Ard and MacEoin Park, in order increase awareness by residents of Longford Community Resources Clg.

The Traveller Primary Healthcare Project continued to visit Travellers in their homes - during this period primarily promoting their 'Operation Transformation' initiative around cardio vascular health. Staff also called to the Direct Provision Centre on a number of occasions to promote the Failte Isteach English conversation classes and volunteering in particular.

Staff attended the four signing on days in Intreo February, and then in April/May, and engaged with unemployed people as they were entering/leaving the building.

Two staff had a stand at the the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) event for retiring army officers in Athlone in January; and two staff had a stand at the DEASP outreach event in Ballymahon in March.

Progress Report

Mid-Year

The Traveller Men's Group continued to meet weekly for music and soccer. Also during this period, Traveller men were facilitated to explore the possibility of running a carpentry training course, the proposal for which it is hoped to further develop during the year.

The Multicultural Women's Group in Edgeworthstown met weekly during the period, organising a weekly fitness class for a number of weeks, hosting a talk by the local community Garda, running a Valentine's Day workshop and entering the Maria Edgeworth short story competition (see Action 5).

The Multicultural Women's Group in Longford Town met weekly in the house in Cluain Ard. The members took it in turn to give inputs at the group, for example, one member facilitated a knitting and crochet workshop. This group also did a couple of sessions exploring the issue of racism. Consequently one member was supported to make a report on the European Network Against Racism's Racist Incident Reporting System.

The Springlawn Parent and Toddler group was held weekly. In February the group were invited to visit Laurel Lodge Nursing Home as part of an intergenerational activity. This went so well that subsequently the group committed to visiting residents in the home once per month. The group continued to receive information on upcoming courses and services and supports. In recent weeks there was an increase in the number of Muslim women attending the group. This is seen as positive as there had not been many Muslim women engaging previously.

The Upper Ardnacassa Area residents group were supported to meet a number of times during the period (see Action 5) and look at progress on issues within their estate. Residents were particularly pleased that Longford Community Resources Clg and the Council had secured funding for new lighting and as the lighting was installed acknowledged what an improvement it was in the estate. At the end of May, residents were encouraged to come to the Council house in Cluain Ard, for the visit of Minister Michael Ring. There was a great turn out of residents and they were able to demonstrate how money which LCRL had secured from the Council had been used to paint and refurbish the building, and express their appreciation of the new lighting. The residents also used the opportunity to highlight the support which LCRL has given them over the previous years under SICAP, TUS and Rural Social Scheme.

St Michael's Road Residents' Group were supported with their regular meetings. In addition, a training session was held with them on group skills; a Neighbourhood Watch meeting facilitated; and a planting day and spring clean was held in conjunction with Cluid Housing.

Springlawn Community Development and Residents Group were supported with their monthly management meetings, open day, and Easter event. In addition, a book club was initiated in February.

Efforts were made in MacEoin Park to re-start the parent and toddler group but there was no interest. Also, a meeting was organised to look at childcare – an issue which was being raised on the doorstep. Unfortunately nobody attended the meeting and staff are now trying to rethink a strategy to engage collectively with the cohort of residents who are having issues with this. Staff continued/will continue to work in the area and encourage participation.

Progress Report

Mid Year

The Social Inclusion Network met twice during the period. Please see Action 4 below.

Staff continued to organise and run County Longford Older Persons' Network.

During the period a speaker was invited to give a presentation on behalf of Longford Sports Partnership. Preparation was made with members for Bealtine events, and staff attended two of these events. An application was made to the Community Foundation of Ireland for funding to run sessions with each of the member groups around group participation and teamwork, aimed at building greater involvement by group members in the running of their clubs.

One of the participants in the Older Persons' Network brought it to the group's attention that the Sports Partnership was having difficulty getting enough participants to take part in the Go For Life games. Subsequently enough interest was generated for a County Longford team to enter and indeed come second in the National Games held at Dublin City University.

In addition, LCRL continued to run the Friendly Phone Call Service, serving a number of isolated older people from around the County.

LCRL staff participated on the Boards of Management of Bridgeways Family Resources Centre and on the EDI Centre, attending meetings and inputting into planning and decision making.

LCRL staff supported Edgeworthstown District Development Association (EDDA) by raising awareness of their services, referring people to EDDA for administrative supports and hosting a presentation on the Maria Edgeworth Festival.

A staff member met with the Co-ordinator of Lus na Greine to offer support to their initiatives in the form of making referrals to Granard Men's Group and giving advice on linking with other men's groups in the county and beyond.

LCRL staff continued to offer support to Ballymahon Men's Group which is currently made up of a group of young men from Rehabcare. The men from the original group set up in 2012 have progressed from pre-developmental training to mainstream training and in to fulltime employment or CE Schemes.

We had planned to run an event with the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) around equality early in the year and had liaised with them on this. However, DFI were not in a position to go ahead with it at the time and hopefully we will do it later in the year.

Goal 1**Action: Action 4: Supporting Participation in Decision Making Structures****Progress Report**

Mid Year

Two members of the Social Inclusion Network were supported to participate at the monthly Board meetings of Longford Community Resources Clg. One Traveller man was supported to attend the Midlands Traveller Men's Health Network.

In February members of the Social Inclusion Network were facilitated to devise a submission to the national Commission on Policing. In relation to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's Social Inclusion Forum held in April, LCRL facilitated a workshop with the Social Inclusion Network based on the themes to be discussed at the Forum, in order to ensure that issues from Longford were brought to the national table. One member of the Network subsequently attended the Forum with two SICAP staff.

The two multicultural women's groups and a couple of the youth groups participated in the consultation for the Council's Intercultural Strategic Plan. Also, a consultant devising a walking and cycling strategy on behalf of Longford County Council was invited to attend our groups, however, as she had limited time the staff drew up responses to her questions, based on their experience with people from the target groups and knowledge of the area.

Goal 1**Action: Action 5: Promoting Collaborative Engagement****Progress Report**

Mid Year

The residents' group in the Upper Ardnacassa area were supported to meet with the County Council twice, in order to highlight what needed to be done in the estate and for Council officials to listen to the issues and update residents on the progress they were making. A meeting was also held with the Community Gardai to look at ways of improving security in the estate.

St Michaels' Road Residents' Group were supported to meet with the Gardai about their Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. In addition, a planting morning and estate clean-up with residents was organised in collaboration with Cluid.

Edgeworthstown Multicultural Women's Group were supported to apply and secure a Creative Writing tutor from Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board to give guidance to the group on creating their entry for the Maria Edgeworth Literary Short Story Competition.

In March, a bus was organised and 19 women from the groups that we work with were enabled to participate in the International Women's Day celebration hosted by Bridgeways Family Resource Centre. In addition, staff worked with the Co-ordinator of the Family Resource Centre to submit a joint application for funding for an arts project with the English conversation groups.

Staff met with officials from Intreo, on one occasion to input into the planning of their National Jobs Week in Ballymahon, and on another occasion to review mechanisms for referrals.

Contact was made early in the year with both the HSE and the County Council to invite them to avail of further training around the Public Sector Duty as part of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission funded project which we rolled out last year. To date neither organisation has taken up the offer.

Goal 2	Action: Action 10: Enterprise Support
---------------	--

Progress Report

Mid Year

Between January and the end of May:-

- 12 information sessions were held which were attended by 64 people.
- 3 Start Your Own Business courses were run (in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office), attended by 54 people.
- Consequently 27 new businesses were established in the period.

In addition, follow up and support were provided to individuals who set up in business under the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme in 2017 and 2016.

Goal 2	Action: Action 11: Preventative Supports For Young People
---------------	--

Progress Report

Mid Year

During the period, the Youth Service ran the Alternative Education Project; 6 youth groups – Lanesboro, Ballymahon, Palace Crescent, two in Edgeworthstown, and one in MacEoin Park. In addition, Healthy Ireland funding through County Council was secured to run three extra short term groups during the period. Bullying awareness was run in Cnoc Mhuire in Granard.

Goal 2	Action: Action 6: One to One Mediation
---------------	---

Progress Report

Mid Year

One to one mediation was provided to individuals referred to LCRL by the Intreo, Tus, and other agencies, and through outreach in the community. The Mediator supports participants to identify stepping stones towards employment, to develop resilience and maintain motivation when dealing with setbacks.

Goal 2	Action: Action 9: Preparing People for Employment
---------------	--

Progress Report

Mid Year

The Education and Employment Mediator provided one to one follow up with people who attended the DEASP event in Ballymahon to assist them in preparing for employment. Ongoing links with the Employer Liaison Officer with DEASP ensures that the Education and Employment Mediator is regularly notified of job vacancies and is able to support individuals she is working with to apply for these.

Goal 2**Action:** Action 12: Raising Issues Regarding Poverty, Inequality and Social Exclusion**Progress Report**

Mid Year

Staff participated on the following committees and with the following groups during the period:-

- Edgeworthstown Strategic Planning Group
- Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)
- The CYPSC Parenting Sub-group
- The CYPSC Prevention, Partnership and Family Services Sub-group
- LWETB Youth Work Committee
- LEAP Garda Youth Diversion Project Advisory Board
- School Completion Advisory Board
- County Longford Drugs Forum
- Longford Children and Family Services Network
- Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force
- Youth Work Ireland Co-ordinators Group
- Community Work Ireland Central Group

And participated in consultations held by the following:-

- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs re their Reformed Youth Funding Scheme.
- The Longford Sports Partnership.
- Iscoil.
- Longford County Council re their intercultural strategy.
- Longford County Council re their cycling and walking strategy.
- National Women's Council re rural women.

Goal 2**Action:** Action 7: Supporting Access To and Participation in Appropriate Services and Supports**Progress Report**

Mid Year

A number of people were supported to access appropriate services and supports. For example, one individual participating in the Springlawn Parent and Toddler group was referred to the Community Mothers. A young Traveller woman met in Ballymahon whose child has autism was having difficulty coping with the diagnosis, so she was introduced to an autism support group and the Family Resource Centre's women's group. From other groups, projects and outreach, individuals were referred to the LCRL Volunteer Centre, Longford Women's Link Domestic Violence Service, the Community Gardai, the local Men's Shed etc. Individuals were also assisted with applications to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection around particular payments, for example, Disability Allowance, Carer's Allowance etc.

Follow up was carried out with young people who got loans through the Lift Off Loan scheme at the start of the 2017/18 academic year.

Goal 2**Action: Action 8: Providing Lifelong Learning Opportunities****Progress Report**

Mid Year

The Failte Isteach English conversation group in Longford Town continued to be run on Thursday morning, with migrants from the Direct Provision Centre and also from in and around Longford Town attending.

In February a new Failte Isteach English conversation group was established in Edgeworthstown and has since continued to run on Monday mornings.

In April, we organised an information evening for migrants about the political system here in Ireland and voter register registration. The Immigrant Council of Ireland were invited to give a presentation at this event, to which 20 people came.