

Local & Community Development Programme 2012 Annual Report



Comhshool, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



pobal
government supporting communities

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PART A

1. Overview of 2012

Our challenge in 2012 has continued to be to manage change and development in a sustainable way which improves the quality of the life of Roscommon LEADER Partnership's target communities and individuals. Community involvement is a crucial component in this development, whereby communities feel their concerns are being listened to and addressed. Roscommon LEADER Partnership seeks as an organisation to positively impact on the lives of individuals and communities; we effect this change through the Local Community Development Programme. In 2012 we achieved all our Local Community Development Programme goals and objectives which we set for our organisation in 2012. Our achievements under the Local Community Development Programme in 2011 can be summarised as follows:

- Completion of an evaluation process and report relating to the delivery of the LCDP strategic plan 2011 -13 in the last quarter of 2012 the results and recommendations of this review will now be addressed and adopted into LCDP programme of activities for 2013.
- We secured additional funding from the HSE to deliver a Traveller Health Promotion programme in the County. This funding allowed for our company to have an enhanced role in the delivery of services to meet the needs of this vulnerable target group and helps our company address the recommendation of Pobal which were identified under the technical assessment of our LCDP strategic plan 2011-13. The additional funding also secured the continuation of funding for front line service delivery roles and minimised redundancies.
- We continued to deliver a comprehensive programme of staff training in the year which resulted in further developments in relation to our bespoke performance monitoring system which meets the requirements of the Local Community Development Programme.
- Board training programme relating to business planning and Human Resource management was delivered in 2012.

In 2012 we had closer co-operation with Roscommon County Development Board and we went through the CDB approval process well. We worked with Womens Network CDP in relation to this process. In the first half of the year we managed to get the County Manager of Roscommon County Council to sign up to and lead the development of the Age Friendly strategy for the County. The progression of the development of this strategy by Roscommon CDB has been hampered by staff changes in the HSE.

The following table outlines our Organisation’s contribution to the National Beneficiary Participation Rates under the Local Community Development Programme 2012, which shows that we have exceeded our targets.

BPR	Target	Actuals
Numbers of Individuals supported	651	652
Number of young people/children engaged with the programme	1170	2857
Number of local community groups supported	39	48
Beneficiaries participating in education - accredited	31	51
Beneficiaries participating in education – unaccredited	49	193
Beneficiaries participating in the labour market training – accredited	60	80
Beneficiaries participating in the labour market training – Unaccredited	161	237
Individuals supported into employment	25	20
Individuals supported into self – employment	50	58

We addressed a number of **Challenges** in 2012, we had to deal with a budget cut of 13%, and this budget deficit necessitated a voluntary redundancy which represented a challenge which the company overcame in 2012. One staff member who ran the Befriending service and action retires in mid 2012.

In 2012 the IRIS system still represented a challenge which we plan on overcoming by participating in all further Pobal training programmes. In February 2012 senior staff from Pobal delivered an Iris training workshop to all our LCDP staff in house. This workshop was of enormous benefit to all our staff. We would welcome other such sessions throughout the year ahead from Pobal.

We have grown our **Organisational capacity** in 2012 by continuing to implement a comprehensive development programme for staff and Board. In 2012 RLP continued our commitment to achieving excellence by continuing to develop its internal systems and continuing to delivering a training programme at Board and staff level. We had an external trainer deliver a comprehensive staff development programme which facilitated the up skilling of staff to ensure that staff are fully equipped to meet all the challenges associated with delivering the LCDP programme. This training delivered a performance management system which all staff have signed up to adhering to. This system assists all concerned with delivering the

programme and meeting all the programme's targets. RIDC is committed to fostering a learning organisation and culture. RIDC completed and implemented a training and development plan and invested the financial resources allocated to the implementation of this training and development plan in 2012.

RIDC under its employee hand book have policies and procedures in relation to developing the skills of its staff and we are committed to fostering staff training and we have a two way appraisal system which encourages staff to put forward their ideas and request for further training and development. This system ensures that we as an organisation enhance the skills and competencies of our staff; in 2012 the staff adopted new job descriptions to comprehensively address the enhanced remit and scope of the current LCDP programme.

We have in place mechanisms and on-going opportunities for staff and Board members to reflect on the strategic learning deriving from the work with a view of enabling the whole organisation to understand and be informed about social inclusion issues. This resulted in enhanced levels of Board involvement in the overall work of the company.

RIDC adhered to a customer charter and we over the life time of this LCDP programme establish procedures to improve stakeholder consultation and customer satisfaction, this will result in increased levels of user satisfaction with the supports and services of our organisation. In regard to meeting **the budgeting and finance commitments** of the Local Community Development Programme in 2012, all budget commitments were met. The money allocated to RLP to deliver the programme in 2011 was **€815,955** we delivered the programme on budget. The Board were happy to recommend that the project action budget in 2012 was agreed at €64,000 which was in line with the project budget allocation in 2011 which was €73,634.07.

1 (b) Community Groups Supported in 2012

2012 / Roscommon Integrated Development Company Limited

G1.2 Information, Dissemination & Referral

Fairymount Parish	Stage 1
Tibohine Parish	Stage 1
Lisacul Parish	Stage 1
Loughlynn Parish	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Parish	Stage 1
Monesteraden Parish	Stage 1
Brosna Parish	Stage 1
Derrinacartha Parish	Stage 1
Carracastle Parish	Stage 1
Kilmovee Parish	Stage 1
Frenchpark Parish	Stage 1

G1.6 Resource Centre Supports

Northwest Roscommon CDP Ltd	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Mental Health Association	Stage 1
Co Roscommon Living Links	Stage 1
Lisacul Community Development	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Soccer Club	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Rugby Club	Stage 1
Woodlands Evergreen Club	Stage 1
Fairymount Development Association	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Primary Health Care Community Group	Stage 1

G2.13 Development of Youth Space in Rural Areas

Frenchpark Voluntary Management Committee	Stage 1
Arigna Youth Cafe Management Committee	Stage 1
Curraghboy Youth Café Management Committee	Stage 1

G2.5 Increased Recreation and Social Outlets for Disadvantaged Young People

Project Match Castlereagh	Stage 2
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G4.2 Older Person's Network

Ballaghaderreen Active Retirement Group	Stage 1
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Ballaghaderreen Active Retirement Group	Stage 1
Frenchpark Active Age Group[Stage 1
Kilkeevan Men's Group	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Day Care Centre	Stage 1
Castlerea Active Age	Stage 1
Drum Active Age	Stage 1
Gortaganny Active Age	Stage 1
Aughrim/Kilmore Active Age	Stage 1
Kiltoom Active Age	Stage 1
Lisacul Active Age Group	Stage 1
Fairymount Active Age Group	Stage 1
Monksland Active Age	Stage 1
Breedogue Active Age	Stage 1
St Asicus Active Age Group	Stage 1
Elphin Active Age	Stage 1
Friendly Call Committee	Stage 1
County Roscommon Older People Network	Stage 1
Older Person's Network	Stage 1
Woodlands Evergreen Club	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Men's Group 07-10	Stage 3
Dysart Rural Men's Group 07-10	Stage 3

G4.3 Pre-Development Supports for Groups

Young Mums group Ballaghaderreen	Stage 1
Ballaghaderreen Primary Health Care Community Group	Stage 3
Castlehill Residents & Development Association Ltd	Stage 2

G4.4 Targeted Intervention in Local Authority Estates

Shannon valley Residents	Stage 1
The Meadows	Stage 1

1 (c) Funding Received on Collaborative Actions

Goal	Action	From	Annual Plan Target	Actual Amount Received (€)	Reason for Difference
2	Playbus	HSE	65,737.00	65,737.00	N/A
2	Jigsaw	HSE/Headstrong	76,377.77	76,377.77	N/A
1	Roscommon Age Friendly Strategy & Social Car Scheme	Fundraising	2,000.00	3,102.78	Higher than expected fundraising income
1	Roscommon Age Friendly Strategy & Social Car Scheme	Fees & Lodgements	500.00	634.35	Higher uptake of service
2	Traveller Health Initiative	HSE	114,000.00	114,000.00	N/A
2	Peer Support	Dormant Accounts	10,470.00	10,470.00	N/A

2. Volunteering Ring-fenced Budget 2012: report on activity

In 2012, there was €18,772 spent on volunteering initiatives by RIDC under the LCDP programme. The following actions were those which focused on volunteering under this specific fund:

- Befriending for people with mental health difficulties
- Peer Listening Service
- Roscommon Friendly Call Service
- Social Car Scheme
- Roscommon volunteering

Features and Outcomes

All of the above named initiatives had active volunteers involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the activities of the projects. All volunteers under the initiative received training during the course of 2012 and supports to acknowledge their input and ensure that they felt valued. Debriefing and other supports were available where necessary for any volunteer that needed extra support as a result of their involvement in the action or as result of an issue that was presented to them in their course of volunteering. All relevant policies and procedures and volunteer handbooks were reviewed and amended during the year.

Befriending for people with mental health difficulties

Volunteers on the Befriending service met their match at least once per month and committed to arranging an activity with their befriender monthly, they also participated in the photo exhibition raising awareness of positive mental health. Volunteers also participated on training. There were 5 befriending matches in 2010. These volunteers who themselves are in recovery from a mental health issue supported 5 others to develop plans and set goals to support their own integration back into the community.

Peer Listening Service

Six young people volunteered on the Peer Listening Service named My Line and completed training on helpline skills, Suicide Alert for Everyone and Child Protection policies. The volunteers operate the helpline service on Friday evenings and have a strong input in terms of public relations relating to this service. This helpline is for young people experiencing mental health difficulties or need a listening service or signposting on where to go for help in County Roscommon.

Roscommon Friendly Call Service

Roscommon Friendly Call Service had 204 clients in 2012 with 14 volunteers operating the service. All volunteers availed of signposting training in early 2012. This training provided information on how best to signpost clients to services such as HSE, County Council etc. and how best to manage needs.

Development of Youth Spaces in Rural Areas

Between the three areas in 2012 there are currently 26 volunteers committed to the Youth Spaces at management level, who are involved in service planning and day to day running of the facilities. Training and up skilling of the volunteers is on-going to suit the ever changing demands and needs of the role. The involvement of volunteers demonstrates community endorsement and investment in the project and what it is trying to achieve. This continued support leads to a better chance of sustaining the Youth Spaces into the future. Involving volunteers is also a way to tap into the viewpoints of people who may feel freer to be critical and express themselves than paid staff, new ideas and fresh insight is vital to sustainability and growth of the service. Volunteering in the youth spaces offers a rewarding experience, a sense of belonging and helps members to contribute in a positive way to their community. In the current economic climate community projects need volunteers to survive and also with so much uncertainty and insecurities promoting community spirit, involvement and well-being should be a priority.

Social Car Scheme

In 2012 Roscommon Social Car scheme had 8 volunteers who gave of their time to take passengers to non-emergency medical appointments. This scheme is operated

solely by volunteers with the support of 2 local community groups. All volunteers received induction training and most of them completed manual handling training, to support them in their volunteering role. Ongoing support was provided to all volunteers and there were volunteer representatives present at all committee meetings. When conducting an evaluation of the service volunteers were consulted and they all indicated their contentment with the service.

Roscommon Volunteering

The ultimate aim of this project is establish a volunteer centre & hubs and service which would reach all the target groups in the Rural County of Roscommon. It is anticipated that the project will involve volunteers and not for profit organisations. This project will establish a network of over 250 people who will be directly or indirectly involved in Roscommon volunteering. This project will provide a blueprint of how volunteering in Roscommon will evolve and develop in county Roscommon over the next 10-15 years based on an extensive social partnership framework. Funding was leverage from Roscommon LEADER Partnership to promote and develop this project.

3. Local Objective Statements & Case Studies

Goal 1

LOS G1.2: To increased and improve joint planning and delivery between local service providers to support greater social inclusion of older people, including Rural Men in County Roscommon

- **The progress which has been made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

Under this statement there was one action

G1.7; Roscommon Age Friendly County Strategy & Action Plan and the Development of a Social Car Scheme Model for County Roscommon. There were two complimentary parts to the action;

1. The drafting of an Age Friendly County Strategy for County Roscommon, &
2. The Development of a Social Car Scheme Model for County Roscommon

The aim of the Age Friendly strategy is firstly the establishment of a Network of Service Providers and the development of a strategy for older people in the County in 2013. In 2012 little progress has been made towards the realisation of increased and improved joint planning and delivery between local service providers through the development of a Strategy for the County as this process was not operationalised in 2012 owing to the requirements on the part of Ageing Well Network, Umbrella group for Age Friendly Strategies that the lead partner for the strategy needs to be Roscommon County Council. In January 2013 after meetings between RLP and Roscommon County Council, this action is now back on track for 2013 and is being led by Roscommon County Council, without the involvement of Ageing Well Network. This was a decision of Roscommon County Council, resulting from the element of the action pertaining to the social car scheme an active, participative and representative committee has been formed and 37 disadvantaged older people from North and North West Roscommon have benefited from increased access to local health services.

- **Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement.**

The targets for the Social Car Scheme element were that 30 older persons would have accessed services through the use of the scheme; the actual numbers that

have accessed local services as a result of using the social car scheme is 37 disadvantaged older people.

In respect of the Age Friendly Strategy, we had intended that the strategy would be complete and that the actions associated with the strategy would have begun to be rolled out, however as there is a policy issue that the Strategy needs to be led by the local authority there has been a delay in the rolling out of this action. It must be noted that Roscommon LEADER Partnership was not aware of this policy issue at the time of writing the strategic plan.

- **The methodologies which we are using to measure progress.**

We are recording data on all trips that are made by the social car scheme and in turn the destination of the trip. This will help us identify what particular services are accessed by the older person, be it GP, Pharmacy, physiotherapist, hospital etc. We also conducted an end of year review of the service seeking input from both the service users and also the volunteers. This provided us with a wealth of data which can be used to improve and expand the service going forward.

- **The critical success factors which we have identified in the actions we have implemented that have supported the outputs and outcomes that we have achieved are as follows:**

Interagency Co-operation

It is clear that the degree of interagency co-operation, support and commitment not solely through presence on the steering committee but also external to the committee has undoubtedly impacted on the service, through referrals, publicity, fundraising and attendance at meetings. This increased communication has ensured that many clients who would have in the past found it difficult or have not attended appointments are now regularly using the service to make their appointments.

Local Knowledge

As the roll out of the service is overseen by two local community groups there is a great deal of trust and respect for the service by the clients. Local knowledge is a

two way process as the knowledge of the local area ensures that the location of the clients is certain and there is no ambiguity as to where the client lives. Quality of the volunteers and their experience of working with older people in the past has also impacted greatly on the service. The drivers in the main all know the clients as they are by and large living in the locality and this also reassures the clients.

Involvement & ownership by local Communities

Together with the importance of local knowledge is the importance of community involvement and ownership. The Quality and experience of host communities has contributed greatly to ensuring we have been successful in achieving our outputs and also the outcomes as envisaged at the planning stage.

Key individuals from both local areas are on the committee and they can ensure the needs of their communities are heard. It is also critical when we want to publicise the service better, recruit volunteers and the willingness on the part of the local groups to support the fundraising efforts of the social car scheme. The involvement and ownership locally gives the service credibility and will be a key factor in the future of the service.

Expertise Of The Rural Transport Programme

The involvement of the rural transport manager has been crucial in the roll out of the service, he is aware of the logistical issues and has advised the project on models of best practice.

Actual Need

Another critical success factor is that the project is meeting an actual need in both pilot areas. There is a demand for the service and this has also been reflected in the evaluation of the service to date.

Beginning Small and Getting It Right

Finally starting the service small in two pilot areas and learning from these areas has also been very beneficial. We have been able to provide a high quality service to the beneficiaries in these areas, without stretching the service too much. The learning from these two pilot areas together with a review of expenditure and levels of funding

will give a clear indication of the extent to which we can provide the service going forward.

- **The following factors have hindered our ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of our local objective statement.**

Roscommon LEADER Partnership was advised by Ageing Well Network, the Umbrella group for Age Friendly Strategies that the lead partner for the strategy needs to be Roscommon County Council. Roscommon LEADER Partnership brokered this role with the County Manager and a presentation was made to the CDB by Catherine Mc Guignan of the Ageing Well Network. Roscommon LEADER Partnership will remain actively involved in this initiative, however Roscommon CDB are now the lead. They have indicated that they are currently forming the alliance group required for the roll out of the strategy and this is to include representation from Roscommon LEADER Partnership and likely to include a representative from the Older Person's Network recently established by Roscommon LEADER Partnership. In January 2013, Roscommon County Council communicated to us that they now want to continue the drafting and delivery of the strategy using local vehicles such as ourselves. We will provide for these plans in our LCDP programme of Activities when we know more.

- **There has been the following unintended outcomes (both positive and negative) that were not anticipated at the outset:**

The need for the Local Authority to lead the roll out of the Age Friendly Strategy was something that only came to light in mid-2012 and has in turn delayed the development of the strategy, however, we are now on course to work as a collective on the development of this strategy.

On a positive note all volunteers have received manual handling training so they will benefit from this in other aspects of their lives and also one person has pursued training in care of the elderly as a result of their experience with the scheme.

- **The experience of the stakeholders is as follows:**

The perspective of the Users of the Service

When asked to rate the service, of the 15 respondents to this question, 8 rated it as excellent, 5 as very good, one as good, and only one person felt that the service offered was poor. This is a clear indication that the service being offered is of good standing and in the opinion of the users is that the social car scheme is a very good service.

10 of the respondents felt that they could not identify any specific improvements to the service, 2 did not answer the question and 3 indicated that in their opinion there were improvements which could be made. 2 of the respondents felt that there was a greater need to advertise the service and ensure all potential beneficiaries were aware of the service and furthermore the 3 respondents who indicated that there was room for improvement were united in seeing the need to improve time management of the service, in particular the drivers, there was an uncertainty with regard to the drivers remembering about the pick-up or being on time. All expressed the need to be on time for their appointments and the fear of missing appointments. This issue needs to be given due consideration going forward to ensure there is confidence in the operations and logistics of the service.

When asked how they would attend appointments if the service was not available to them, of the 14 respondents to this question, 2 indicated they would/ could not go, one person would hope that a family member would take her, and the other 11 indicated that they would need to hire a taxi, to which the vast majority also noted that this would be of huge cost, and would put them under financial pressure.

The perspective of the Volunteers

In terms of an evaluation and advancing the service, the volunteers were asked what from their perspective the main challenges for the service were. The following were noted as challenges for the service:

- Time Management
- Making more people aware of the service

- Having drivers 'better and more strategically' positioned within the catchment area, so they do not need to drive a long distance to pick up the passenger before starting the journey

In relation to improvements to the service, 3 volunteers were of the opinion that improvements could be made, with one driver feeling there was no scope to improve on the current service. The improvements that were identified were:

1. Two of the volunteers felt that there was a huge need to publicise the service more, that there were a large number of potential clients in the area who would have a need for the service but were unaware of the service
2. One volunteer has seen a definite need to broaden the service to include low income families, ensuring that there was strict parameters around accessing of the service

Case Study

Social Car Scheme

Goal 1: *Local objective statement 2.*

“To increased and improve joint planning and delivery between local service providers to support greater social inclusion of older people including rural men in county Roscommon.”

Background

The needs of older people are diverse and multifaceted; they range from accessing of information and services, to transport, social contact and reducing isolation.

Roscommon is the 11th largest county in Ireland. It has a very high age dependency rate and dispersed population and most services are located in the main towns. A study by Roscommon County Development Board found that transport for many rural older people was problematic. Half of those surveyed did not have a car and relied primarily on family members or the Rural Transport Programme, services such as public transport services were either not available or were not accessible by those with impaired mobility. “Lack of adequate public transport for a substantial number of the county’s population is, therefore, a critical quality of life issue and is a major factor in rural social exclusion as well as being an important factor in determining health and wellbeing. “ (Roscommon County Development Board (2007) Survey of the Needs of Older People.)

55% of older people surveyed as part of the consultation for the LCDP strategic plan 2011- 2013, indicated that transport was one of the biggest challenges they faced. The Development of a social car scheme aims improve access to local services, by bringing the key stakeholders together ensuring a better & more accessible transport service in two pilot areas in the County.

Action

The social car scheme is an organised form of transport where volunteer drivers give their time and use their own vehicles to provide door to door transport for older people living in the community, and people with disabilities who do not have their own transport and find the accessing of public transport problematic. Currently the

main aim of the service is to increase access to health services, namely pre-arranged non-emergency medical appointments such as doctor's clinics, hospital appointments and other non-ambulance/non-emergency HSE service within County Roscommon.

Volunteer drivers collect Service Users and deliver them to the relevant HSE facilities in the County or to the nearest public transport for HSE services outside the county and return the Service Users to their home. The project currently serves; Roscommon town, Ballaghaderreen, Castlerea, Boyle, Elphin, Carrick-on-Shannon, Drumshanbo and Sligo. For longer distances, the project will drop to and collect passengers from the nearest public transport service, where feasible and practicable. The service also facilitates the collection of medical prescriptions.

The service is overseen by a steering committee which consists of representatives of Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Ardcarne Kilmore Roscommon Rural Transport, An Garda Síochana, St. Asicus Centre, Roscommon Support Group for people with disabilities, local community activists, and volunteers.

In order to develop the service it was deemed necessary to explore what other areas had developed and links were made with SITT in Donegal. In order to avoid any conflict and the potential sense of displacement, contact was made with the local taxi suppliers to inform them of the scheme and to invite them to participate. A number have volunteered for the service. The scheme was officially launched for the pilot area of Frenchpark/Ballaghaderreen in November 2011. All calls were to be logged in the Resource Centre in Ballaghaderreen at least 2 days prior to appointments and the volunteers were notified of their journey. It was agreed that any passenger with mobility issues would be referred to Roscommon Support Group for people with Disabilities who would meet their transport needs.

The initial phase lasted until December 2011; all volunteers received induction, training, & support throughout the lifetime of the pilot. Out of pocket expenses were paid to cover their cost of fuel and insurance policies were extended to include this element of driving on their policies, any additional cost associated with extending their insurance was covered by the project.

In 2012 Funding of €2500 was secured from LCDP budget to expand on the initial phase. The steering committee agreed to extend the pilot to include the parish of Kilronan/Arigna. The St Asicus day centre volunteered to manage the project from their base, with their bus being available to bring people with a disability to medical appointment. The scheme was activated in February 2012 including both areas; Frenchpark/Ballaghaderreen and Kilronan/Arigna. It was at this point that passengers were asked for a voluntary contribution. Fundraising is an on-going challenge for the initiative to counter this challenge, Kilronan Parish arranged a family fun day in Arigna to fundraise for the scheme; €2455 was raised on this day. With support from the committee members a permit was secured and a church gate collection was held on 1st/2nd December 2012 in the Kilronan Parish and one is to be held on 9th/10th February 2013 in the Ballaghaderreen area. This was deemed necessary to ensure sufficient funds were in place to cover the running costs of the project. €647.78 was raised from the Church Gate Collect in Kilronan Parish, which highlights the value placed on the scheme by this particular community.

Outputs and Outcomes

There are currently 37 beneficiaries listed as having used/ using this service across the 2 locations. 12 of these were male and 25 female. This action has supported 37 disadvantaged older people from small areas of disadvantage¹ to have improved access to local health services. Of those surveyed in the end of year evaluation of the social car scheme 2012, 14%, indicated they would/ could not go to the appointment, and almost another 79% indicated that they would need to hire a taxi to attend appointments, to which the vast majority also noted that this would be a huge cost, and would put them under financial pressure. It is evident that the scheme is meeting the needs of a very disadvantaged group of people.

Challenges

One of the main challenges to the continued success and expansion of this service is the cost of running the service in a context of ever declining funding and the opportunities for fundraising also minimising. The trips are subsidised by the project as it is a social car scheme and not a hackney/ taxi service, there is no fee, but the

¹ Based on the POBAL HP Deprivation Indices

passengers do contribute a small token. The need to subsidise the cost of the trips presents the project with an on-going issue of funding, one which the committee are currently looking to address through the possibility of shared trips generating more revenue for the project through voluntary contributions from the clients without the same outgoings of multiple trips, it will however require considerable attention to logistics and detail to maintain the current level of passenger satisfaction.

There is the constant need to recruit new suitable volunteers and to provide them with training and support; this also costs the project money. All of the volunteers have to extend their insurance to include the carrying of passengers, there is a fee for many of these extensions to policies and this is also met by the project. The very nature of volunteering is that it often happens for one reason or another that the volunteer cannot or is no longer interested in volunteering, this has knock on effects in terms of the daily operation of the service, demands on trips and also the loss associated with training and paying for extended insurance for this person. This however, is rare, but it has happened.

We are currently operating in two locations however there is real demand from other areas with high concentrations of older people to extend the service to their area, and also it has been noted that other beneficiaries of the LCDP may also have need for the service, such as people parenting alone and low income families. Given the size of the county, its rurality coupled with lack of accessible integrated public transport, the limited number of volunteers, and the already heavy draw on funds this seems a very real challenge for the initiative moving forward.

Evaluation

In order to ensure the project was meeting the needs of the community and that access to services had increased for disadvantaged individuals an evaluation of the service was conducted between October and December 2012. The purpose of the evaluation was to establish what was working well with the social car scheme and what changes were necessary to enhance the service and improve access to local services for Older People in County Roscommon; through the provision of the service. The evaluation aimed to gain an insight into the views of the users of the service; establishing how they rate the service, the extent to which they use the

service and would use an extended service and what improvements they feel the steering committee need to offer a more robust service.

Given the pivotal role played by volunteers it was deemed necessary to engage them in the evaluation also, ensuring their insights and knowledge of the operational and logistical elements of the service and together with their views on how the clients perceive the service are taken into account in shaping the project going forward.

The main recommendations for service going forward included the following:

- * It is noteworthy that word of mouth was the main mechanism by which the current users heard of the service. It is clear that we need to advertise the service more to ensure more older people are aware of it, and in turn ensuring that we improve access to local services for older people in these local areas.

“We need to do more PR, and user friendly PR; spell it out for older people It’s a local service, 2. Reasonably priced, 3. Our volunteers are patient and enjoy working with older people – All advertising needs to be big and visible for older people to see” (Volunteer)

- * The current focus of the service is with respect to medical appointments, which is critical and a number of users indicated that they would/ could not have attended their appointments without the service, and many of the others indicated that if they did attend they would have to hire a taxi at exorbitant rates. However, it is clear from the evaluation that many of the existing users would avail of the service for other reasons beyond that of appointments. It is thereby suggested that the service be expanded to encompass the other needs of the individual users. If it were possible to cater for multiple passengers on the one journey to whatever destination, where one person was attending a medical appointment and the others needed to go to the town for shopping, the post office, appointment with CIC, County Council etc., then they could also travel on the same trip. The benefits would be twofold, that we could cater for a large volume of users, meeting a range of needs whilst also generating more revenue for the service. It would be suggested that the rates would not be increased to the individual but that each person be charged for the journey. Priority would be given to the person attending the medical appointment in the first instance. Consideration could also be given

to organising collective runs to local GPs on specific days for more routine appointments.

“It would cost me €25 to get a taxi to my appointment; I live alone and have no neighbours to help out” (Passenger)

- * Due consideration also needs to be given to the potential to broaden the client base for the service, e.g. low income families.
- * It must be noted that in terms of success one of the biggest factors associated with the success in Roscommon is the support received from local groups, with local knowledge and at no cost to the project. This level of support from St. Asicus Day Centre, Keadue and Northwest Roscommon CDP, Ballaghaderreen is invaluable.

“The CDP is essential to run the service; they are professional and ensure anonymity” (Volunteer)

“Staff (St. Asicus) are very helpful and courteous, passengers are a pleasure for the most part” (Volunteer)

- * One final comment from a user of the service

“Delighted to have ye, thrilled with yer support” (Passenger)

Goal 1 Roscommon Friendly Call Service

LOS G1.1: *To increase awareness, knowledge and uptake of financial, advocacy and Family Support services by Low Income Families, Older People and Lone Parents*

Background

To aim of this action and service is to support vulnerable, lonely, socially and or rurally isolated older people in their own homes by providing them with a call a number of times per week. The project also encourages volunteerism from the local active age and other older people to participate in this project.

Roscommon Friendly Call Service aims to provide a telephone service to older people who are living in isolation, who may feel lonely or vulnerable in County Roscommon. The service offers a free and confidential telephone call at a time which is convenient for the client to chat or if they need information on a service. The project is operated by volunteers who make the calls five days per week. The project operates within the principles of community development, participation, representation, collective action, social justice, equality, self help and empowerment.

Need for the Project

In October 2008, the project started making telephone calls to 8 people each week. At the beginning of 2012 there were 200 clients registered with Roscommon Friendly Call Service, and is expected to continue to increase with further plans to promote the service.

This project is not only a much needed lifeline to the older people living alone in County Roscommon receiving the call each week, but it is also needed by and helping to support all the older volunteers who are getting involved in the project.

Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement.

The target for the Friendly Call Service was 240 older persons would have accessed the service in 2012; of these 240, 14 volunteers were trained in signposting clients to

other service for assistance, 60 attended the social gathering, 180 clients availing of the service.

The methodologies which we are using to measure progress

Progress is measured against quarterly milestones and programme evaluations.

Volunteerism

The volunteers benefit greatly from the project also such as:

- The feeling of giving something back to those less fortunate than themselves
- Being made to feel included by being involved in the decision making process for the project,
- Meeting and speaking to new people and making new friends;
- Getting out of their own homes
- Being active within their own communities
- Becoming involved in social activities
- Learning new skills and information through the training
- This project indirectly provides supports to family members caring for older people.

Service operation

- The day to day service is operated by the community development support worker on a part time basis.
- There are 14 older volunteers who are very dedicated and committed to the project and its aims, along with one part time worker. The trained volunteers make the calls to the clients on a rotational basis.
- The service operates Monday to Friday.
- The expansion of the service is mainly due to clients requesting a further call from the FCS up to a five day basis because of the efficient service and friendly manner of the volunteers as well as the promotion of the service.
- The service is widely known through the health services with referrals from Public Health Nurses and Occupational Therapists.

Outcomes

- 14 volunteers attended signposting training in February 2012, this was beneficial to volunteers.
- Two social gatherings were held in Frenchpark in April, a Christmas party in Cuisle, Donamon in December. On average 70 clients and volunteers attended. Transport was provided for all clients that required same to and from the events. There has been very positive feedback on these events with some clients reporting that the December event was the only time they socialized in that month due to the weather conditions.
- Fundraising was carried out by the staff and volunteers. Church gate collections and a bag pack in a local supermarket were held to raise funds for the project.
- Increased public awareness of the service with the Friendly Call Service being now widely known throughout the County within the general public and service providers.
- Internal evaluation of the needs of the clients and their level of satisfaction provided invaluable information on the high satisfaction on the part of the clients with the service and the further needs of the clients and recommendations

Challenges

- High cost of the running the service
- Geographical spread of clients in relation to social gatherings
- Slow uptake of new clients to service

Goal 2

Increase awareness and support access to opportunities for educational, recreational and cultural development

Local Objective Statement 3 - To increase awareness and uptake of informal (to include youth work and non-accredited post compulsory education or training) educational opportunities for disadvantaged young people and older people.

Name of Action: Development of Youth Spaces in Rural Areas

- **The progress made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

To date young people across three rural areas in County Roscommon have an outlet in their local environs which will assist in promoting social, educational and recreational opportunities for those aged 10 to 25 years.

Volunteers are supported to oversee and run the youth spaces, these volunteers are trained to a high level and also benefit personally and professionally from the experience of volunteering.

A very positive outcome is that young people are involved in their community this in itself promotes a more positive community spirit. Through working with the adult volunteers the young people gain from the establishment of positive partnerships between adults and young people. It is anticipated that in the long term the activities and supports implemented will positively impact on the personal, social and educational life experiences of young people in the area. And also it will enhance the well-being of young people by providing access to meaningful social and recreational outlets.

- **Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement, with attention on progress against the indicators that are and are not recorded on IRIS at action level.**

Under this particular action the expected targets set for the National Programme indicator were set at seventy five young people and three local community groups.

Between the three youth spaces there are 108 registered members, and the three voluntary management committees are being supported to manage and run these community based facilities in Arigna, Curraghboy and Frenchpark.

In addition a total of twenty six volunteers have been recruited in the three areas and they are vetted and trained to ensure the facilities are adequately staffed and supervised at all times.

- **The methodologies that are being used to measure this progress.**

The methodologies that are used to measure this progress are through the use of the logic model, this lists the inputs and outputs and the linkage to the final outcomes. Monitoring and evaluating through continuous consultation and focus groups with the young people and volunteers involved in the service is also a good method to use in this setting. Measuring and gauging the participation and involvement in the Youth Space based on numbers attending and the overall level of engagement also aids in the measuring the progress of the Youth Spaces.

- **The critical success factors in the actions implemented that have supported the outputs and outcomes being achieved.**

The most critical success factor in achieving the outcomes is the involvement and consultation with young people and their local communities from the onset. The need has to be identified within the community as being a “need”, this ensures the commitment and interest in seeing the project through which in turn ensures the sustainability once the project is set up. The community development workers role is one of support and guidance, the community and young people are given the platform to shape the service. Everyone is encouraged to actively participate. Another success factor is being aware that what worked well in one area may not work as well in another area; this I feel has allowed the service to fit into the community and their identified needs.

- **The factors that have hindered ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of our local objective statement.**

The main hindrance under this action is the sustaining and securing of suitable premises in rural locations for the Youth Spaces. The lack of viable options that would be low cost for the community to sustain is a problem , currently the youth

spaces operate from youth centres and offices but the ideal would be to have a youth space specifically for the young people of the locality.

- **The unintended outcomes (both positive and negative) which were not anticipated at the outset.**

Volunteers and young people develop a keen interest in doing more in their own communities. One young person through face painting at a Youth Space event has now develop her own weekend business by face painting at birthday parties and events. Volunteers see the importance of allowing young people the time to build up relationships with them as a way to alleviate behaviour problems. These community led projects are in turn being approached by other communities to set up similar projects in their areas.

- **The experience of the stakeholders is as follows:**

In the evaluation process when the young people were asked if they felt that the Youth Space was working well there was a unanimous response of “yes”. This indicated that they enjoyed meeting their friends there that it was fun, and that everybody seemed to go. They would like more activities, more outings, wifi and internet and new DVDs. Activities and these ranged from canoeing and walk to volleyball, football and swimming. They felt the youth advisory committee was working well and all of the young people rated the facilities as excellent or good. Other comments included ‘its good fun’.

Volunteers have had mostly a positive experience; it takes some longer than others to take on a supervisory as opposed to a parental role in the youth spaces.

Collaborative partners such as Youth Work Ireland, VEC and Foroige all feel the services are working well and have good attendance.

Group that has benefitted from actions under this Local Objective Statement;-

Kilronan Youth Space Arigna, Co Roscommon



Kilronan Youth Space has been established in Arigna. The primary function of the Youth Space is to act as a venue for young people to hang out and socialise with peers in a comfortable and safe environment. The Youth Space offers young people an alternative to loitering on streets or hanging out in public houses. Above all the Youth Space is a recreational outlet for the young people of Arigna and the surrounding areas. Approximately 53 young people are currently registered in the facility with attendance of between 17 -25 young people using it on a Friday night. The facility offers games, DVD nights, pool, Nintendo Wii, playstation and arts and crafts weekly. In 2012 the young people also participated in two youth fun walks and a family fun day organised by Roscommon Leader Partnership.

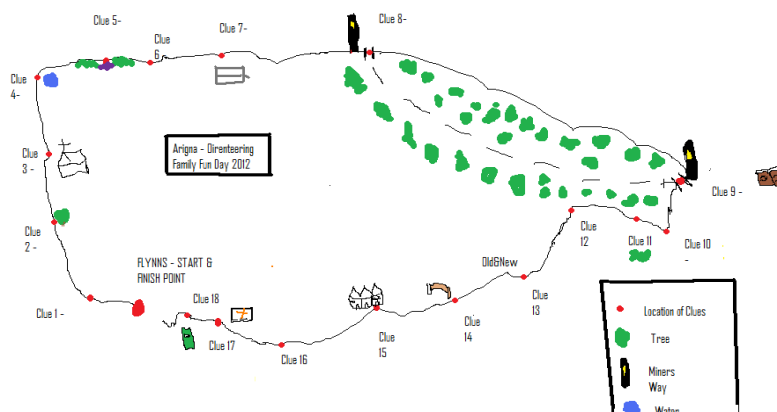
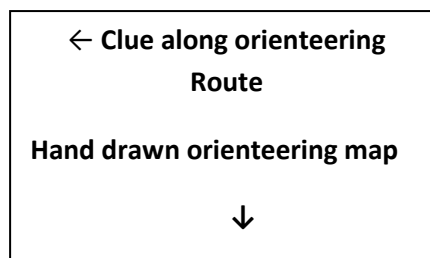
The first walk was to celebrate International Youth Day and took place from Castlecoote to Donamon. A group of 40 young people and leaders took part from Elphin, Castlerea, Roscommon Town, Ballygar, Arigna, Ballaghadereen and Boyle areas. Groups that participated and assisted included Youth Work Ireland, Comhairle Na Nog, Jigsaw Youth Panel. Our collaborative partnership with rural transport allowed us use of their buses to transport the youth to and from the walk.



On the 5th April, a group of young people from Kilronan Youth Space and members from the local community embarked upon another Youth Fun Walk this time in Arigna. This route took young people along the miner's route and finished up back at Kilronan Youth Space. The walk took approximately 2.5 hours, and we stopped for food on route at Arigna Museum.



The Family fun day took place in Arigna and young people from the Youth Space took part in an orienteering trail around the locality. Activities and food was provided for all on the day.



Management Structure

Kilronan Youth Space is ran by a Voluntary Management Committee and staffed by a panel of volunteers. Roscommon LEADER Partnership provides a supportive role, advising and guiding the management committee on everything to do with the Youth Space to aid in this group's development and progress them through the development stages. This local community group is the Kilronan Voluntary Management Committee and they are currently in the development stage between 1 and 2. This voluntary management committee will be responsible for the day to day running of the Youth Space and related activities and for the future development of the Youth Space.

Volunteers

Kilronan Youth Space is staffed by a panel of 13 volunteers. Recruitment of the volunteers was the responsibility of Roscommon Leader Partnership with assistance from this provided for within the locality. In a collaborative approach the Youth Spaces are advised to affiliate to a National Youth Organisation for sustainability, in this instance Kilronan Youth Space have affiliated Youth Work Ireland. Youth Work

Ireland has responsibility to provide the relevant training and Garda vetting affordable insurance for the year. The Youth Work Ireland training as mentioned above has covered:

- Introduction to Youth Work Ireland
- Defining Youth Work
- Defining Youth Club
- Considerations in setting up a youth club
- Participation
- Club Management
- Programme Planning
- Child Protection
- Best Practice
- Insurance
- Projects

The course usually takes place once a week for an hour and half, per session, for 6 weeks. The Child Protection module is separate to this.

Following this - each club is its own entity and Youth Work Ireland will be there to support them on request. Insurance and affiliation must be renewed each year.

The project Officer is also available to staff the premises and to organise activities for the Young People, to ensure the Management Committee and Volunteers are fully supported and until all are comfortable in their roles.

Youth Advisory Committee

Once the Youth Space is opened it is beneficial to have a Youth Advisory Committee in place, with the members aged between 12 – 18 years of mixed gender. In Kilronan Youth Space there are currently 5 members on the committee, 3 females and 2 males. The idea is that the Youth Advisory Committee will take an active role in ensuring that the Youth Space is providing for the needs of the Young people. On joining the Youth Advisory Committee the members were provided with a Youth Advisory Committee Pack, this included their vision as discussed at initial meeting a meeting schedule and a record sheet for recording meetings. To date the Youth

Advisory committee have set up a face book page , helped organise events , designed posters and distributed posters, took photographs of the walks and helped out with church gate collections. Having a youth led recreational space is one of the main aims of the initiative, providing support to empower the young people to voice their opinions thus ensuring that the service is catering for the ever changing needs of young people.

Policies/Procedures

Policies/Procedures/Registration forms/Parental Consent forms / volunteer contracts / Incident Report forms are all provided by Roscommon LEADER Partnership.

Premises

One of the first steps was to find and secure a suitable venue for the Youth Space in Arigna. Through consultation with the local development group, two rooms were secure in the local enterprise centre rent free. Renovations were carried out through securing a grant from LEADER funding.

Action – Traveller Health Programme

Local Objective Statement

LOS G2.2: To increase awareness and uptake of formal (to include pre-school, compulsory and post compulsory accredited education or training) educational opportunities for disadvantaged young people and disadvantaged men

- **The progress made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

Under this action the development of Traveller Health Programme was defined as development of Primary Healthcare Training for Traveller Women and development of Traveller Men Programme.

Traveller Men Programme:

The Traveller Men's programme is based on developing the Health and Wellbeing of small team of Traveller Men County Roscommon. The programme has a focus on practical/ physical activities to provide an outlet for Traveller Men to access information and support on all health matters. From the All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010, Traveller Men can expect to live 15.1 years less than settled a man, are 3.4 times more Travellers Men died due to Heart Disease and 6.6 times more likely to die by suicide than a settled Man. Due to the traditional nature of the Traveller Community Traveller Men often have difficulties accessing health information and health messages therefore the programme is aimed to provide a point of contact for Men for support.

While the overall programme started in late April 2012, the Men's programme started in June of that year. Initially focus for the programme was on Ballyforan Group Housing Scheme (isolated rural area with nine Traveller families). Consultation with the Men and their families was carried out throughout the summer, however due to a lack of interest by the Men and lack of suitable venue for the initial Men's Shed programme focus was switched to Roscommon Town.

Throughout the autumn work was carried out with Traveller Men from Roscommon Town on development of Men's Shed in collaboration with redevelopment of the Four

Corners Boxing Club in the Town. Support was provided to Traveller Men in sourcing appropriate venue for both programmes however due to the lack of sustainable funding this was not possible. In November of that year consultation was carried out with Traveller Families in the County and interest in health and fitness activities were identified. Throughout the end of 2012 work has been carried out in sourcing venue and tutor with work carried out on securing of resources for needed equipment. Date for start of programme has been set for start for eight week Health and Fitness programme for Traveller Men from the start of February 2013.

Primary Healthcare Programme:

In this a team of Traveller Women were recruited, selected and supported onto the Primary Healthcare Programme. The aim of the this training is the development of the capacity of twelve women in Health and Community Development matters with the recruitment of a skilled team of Community Health Workers at the end of the training period.

The role of the Community Health Worker includes:

- Provide health promotion information to Traveller families
- Sign post families and individuals to local health and other services
- Build good relationship with families to encourage better utilisation of health services
- Speak up for Travellers on health and encourage them to speak up for themselves
- Represent Travellers issues on various forums/ committees
- Work alongside the Public Health Nurse to ensure better health outcomes for Traveller families

The programme has three defined stages:

- Consultation and recruitment
- Training (pre development and accredited training)
- Employment

At the end of 2012 the programme was in the training stage, with the twelve participants starting the accredited programme at the start of January 2013. Tutors and other training supports (equipment and supplies) are provided through Roscommon VEC. Traveller Health staff provide support in tutoring, support to participants and the overall management of the programme in consultation with the VEC.

Since the start of the programme in first quarter of 2012, work was carried out on recruitment of staff and planning with the Traveller Health Unit (HSE). In late April the coordinator started the project was in Consultation and Recruitment stage until the end of September with the training officially starting in October.

Throughout the Consultation and Recruitment stage staff worked on consultation with the Traveller families throughout County Roscommon (approximately four hundred individuals) through a number of mechanisms (visits to families, work with the Playbus, work with Senior Traveller Training Centre, Family Support, Public Health Nurses, Women Network and other community supports). During this time staff developed links with support services for input into the Primary Healthcare Programme. Development of policies and procedures for the programme were supported by work with other Primary Healthcare Programmes within the Western Regional Traveller Health Network and with the Traveller Health Unit.

Advisory mechanisms were developed through creation of Steering Group which agencies/ groups working directly with Traveller families recruited who include Roscommon VEC, Western Regional Drugs Taskforce, Roscommon County Council, HSE Health Promotion, Roscommon Women's Network, Child and Family Services HSE. The steering group is also made up of four representatives from training participants. The representatives are supported through the programme staff to have a genuine role on the group and have been provided with committee skills training with pre and post supports in place.

- **Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement, with attention on progress against the indicators that are and are not recorded on IRIS at action level.**

The targets set under this action were for twelve Women to participate on the programme. While a much larger number of Women applied and were interviewed for the positions due to funding restrictions only twelve spaces could be accommodated. The target for Traveller Men involved in the programme is six there is currently three Traveller Men involved in planning and preparation for the start of the programme. However we envisage that more than six Traveller Men will be involved in the programme in the long run.

- **The methodologies used to measure this progress.**

Progress is measured against quarterly milestones and programme evaluations. Also mechanisms to measure progress include submission of quarterly reports and Key Performance Indicators reports measuring outputs in relation to National Screening Programmes such as Breast Check and Cervical Check and Awareness Raising programmes for cardiovascular disease/assist those who need further assessment to be referred to Primary Care Teams/Acute Services. All of which are provided to the Traveller Health Unit under the Social Inclusion Unit of HSE.

Throughout Primary Healthcare Programme support and supervision is provided to all participants and regular checks in on experience on the programme. The representatives on the programme steering group have a major impact on the measurement of success of the programme.

When the Health and Fitness sessions start the Men's Worker will provide informal check in with participants on the programme and provide a pre and post evaluation.

- **The critical success factors in the actions implemented that have supported the outputs and outcomes being achieved.**

Outputs

In the Predevelopment stage the Primary Healthcare Programme training ran two mornings per week from 9.45am to 1pm. With the start of the accredited programme the training has been expanded to three days per week in total nine and three quarter hours. Support is provided through the programme by staff outside of this time through support in accessing various services for the Women, their families, extended families and neighbours. The Primary Healthcare group acts as a contact to the Traveller Community and provides a link for workers to support individuals throughout the community on all issues connected to health including Accommodation, Domestic Violence, Mental health, Education and Employment.

Support provided to Traveller Men has been developed through the start of Health and Fitness programme but also by work Men's Worker has carried out one to one with the Men.

- **The factors that have hindered ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of our local objective statement.**

Staff Provision

Due to the nature of staff provision with some staff only on the project for one year – the consistency which we originally had in 2012 has been jeopardised with three staff finishing up due to the end of their schemes (Community Employment and TUS). While new staff have been recruited to fill two of the spaces providing the service for five days per week is impossible.

Nature of Vehicle

As the Play bus is a mobile service the outputs can often be hindered due to bad weather (frost/ snow / high winds). To ensure the safety of all those who use the service the bus cannot go out onto the roads in snow or ice due to risk of an

accident. Also due to the height of the bus the bus cannot be used in high winds. Therefore the services can be hampered in the winter.

Mechanical

Mechanical difficulties on the bus can occur periodically; therefore the service cannot be operated in these times. To ensure there is lessening of breaks in service all maintenance is carried out when the bus is not scheduled for service (Thursday and Friday). To ensure the overall upkeep of the bus and health and safety for those using the service Bus Driver carries out weekly maintenance and safety checks.

Critical success factors include:

- **The Traveller Community in County Roscommon**

A number of Traveller Women and Men supported the programme from its infancy and were a key success factor in particular their role in promotion of the programme to Women throughout the county, support in planning for the overall programme, providing opportunities for staff to meet with Traveller families in an informal manner. Key members of the community in Roscommon Town, Ballyforan, Ballaghaderreen and Castlerea provided links for staff with families in their area. Due to the tight knit nature of the community these personal connections were vital to the successful recruitment of women for both programmes.

- **Health and Fitness Instructor**

As the Men's programme was proving difficult to get started contact made with a Young Traveller Man with a background in personal training was vital to the connecting with Young Traveller Men in Roscommon Town. This Young Man and his father are respected in the Traveller and whole community. His involvement as a trainer on the programme has opened up the blockages to accessing Traveller Men.

- **Interagency Work**

The involvement of the Roscommon VEC has been vital in the roll out of the whole programme in particular the Primary Healthcare Training through provision of support through two tutors and equipment for the programme. The good working

relationship developed with the VEC means that planning and roll out of the programme has been overall very positive.

- **Traveller Health Network**

The Western Regional Traveller Health Network (through Primary Healthcare Programmes throughout Galway City & County and Mayo) has been very helpful in the overall development of the programme. As all the projects in the region are now in the Employment Phase support and guidance has been provided in developing policies and procedures within best practice. Close links have been made with all programme and already inter county pieces of work have been planned. Vital support has also been provided through the Traveller Health Unit Coordinator in development of programme and link with Health Services throughout the County.

- **The factors that have hindered ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of our local objective statement.**

- **Removal of Back to Education Allowance and changes within FAS**

Majority of Primary Healthcare programmes were supported through FAS Local Training Schemes or Department of Education Back to Education Initiative. However in 2012 there was a change in FAS programmes and removal of BTEI allowances for Travel specific programmes. Due to the nature of the programme there needed to be a training allowance provided therefore the work plan of the programme had to be redeveloped to accommodate this.

- **Change in some fetac modules**

Primary Healthcare programmes ran through the FAS programme had a set modules for the course, of which all programmes followed however in 2011/2012 there was a change in some accredited modules. Therefore we needed to adapt our training programme to work within this.

- **Access to Traveller Men**

Due to the removal of BTEI training allowance, it was difficult to encourage me to engage in the programme without training allowance. Many similar programmes in the region which engaged with Men provided support through BTEI and other schemes.

- **The unintended outcomes (both positive and negative) which were not anticipated at the outset.**

Through the Primary Healthcare Programme there has been a number of intended outcomes – provision of health promotion messages to traveller families through the PHP participants and links with Traveller families throughout the county and support in accessing health and other services. However there have been other outcomes including the accessing of Traveller families into mainstream youth services and other recreational activities. Along with increased referral of Traveller families in numerous support services provided through Roscommon LEADER Partnership.

- **The experience of the stakeholders is as follows:**

The feedback to date is very positive from members of the Travelling Community; this is demonstrated in the numbers participating and their membership of the Management Committee. The business plan and programme of work for 2013 is currently being actively planned for with the committee and participants and will be robust and innovative.

The funders have also demonstrated their satisfaction with the programme of work which was implemented in 2012.

Action – Playbus

Local Objective Statement

LOS G2.3: To increase awareness and uptake of informal (to include youth work and non-accredited post compulsory education or training) educational opportunities for disadvantaged young people and older people

- **The progress made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

To date the bus provides access to informal educational and family supports for Children within Toddler/ Preschool and Primary School age. The basic aim of the project is to deliver play sessions for children who are socially disadvantaged with a specific focus on Travellers and Foreign Nationals in isolated rural areas based on the High/Scope curriculum. The service emphasises the importance of Early Childhood Development, supporting the family and creating a positive experience of education.

The service is provided in four areas through County Roscommon three being urban and one rural (Ballyforan, Boyle, Monksland, Roscommon Town). Within those three areas the bus provides such services to two Group Housing Scheme for the Traveller Community (Ballyforan and Cluan Airne). While Cluan Airne is located on the outskirts of Roscommon Town both display similar characteristics of isolation.

The Playbus is coordinated through the Traveller Health Programme and is supported by staff from Community Employment (FAS), Rural Social Scheme and TUS.

Currently 34 Children and their families are accessing educational supports through Homework Clubs based in three areas (Ballyforan, Boyle and Cluan Airne).

A further 44 Children and their Families are accessing Family Support through holistic play sessions and Parent and Toddler Groups. To compliment this Play bus provides a space for Adult Education through the provision of English Language Supports and Driver Theory.

The Play bus also provides supports to a number of community events and activities with the overall aim to increase an interest by Children/ Young People and Families in Early Childhood Development, making education fun and encourage the importance of play (and the positive impact of which has on the whole family). Events over the past year have included the Brideswell Pattern Festival, Roscommon Lamb Festival, Arigna Community Day, Four Roads and All Stars Crèche Summer Camps.

A positive outcome of the bus has been the increased involvement of parents in the bus through accessing Adult Education supports. Furthermore the overall aim of the bus is to encourage a positive experience of Education both for Children/ Young People and their whole family. The active engagement of Children and Young People on the bus in selection and organising of activities (Holistic Play and Homework Club sessions) have provided an opportunities for self –development (skills development, confidence building, problem solving).

- **Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement, with attention on progress against the indicators that are and are not recorded on IRIS at action level.**

All targets which were set for 2012 have been surpassed and the service has been extended to provide for the specific needs of the Travelling Community in County Roscommon.

- **The methodologies used to measure this progress.**

Progress is measured against quarterly milestones and programme evaluations.

All Children/ Young People and Families who use the service are registered therefore all those using the service are signed in for each activity. From this data quarter reports are developed of numbers accessing the service.

On-going evaluation is facilitated by consultation with Children/ Young People about the activities on the bus. With the Homework Club groups the primary focus is on supporting each Child/ Young Person to complete their homework and provide a safe and encouraging environment for learning. An allotted time is always provided for free play which includes Arts and Crafts, Jigsaws, Board games, Group Games, Reading time and Puzzles/ Quizzes. During this time staff has an opportunity to check in with each Child/ Young Person on their enjoyment of the project.

While staff also use this method to check in with Play Session groups (pre school and Toddler's) staff check in with parents to check the overall enjoyment of each Child. This also gives an opportunity to identify with the parents/ guardians any support needs the Child may have.

Staff makes regular contact with parents/ guardians of Homework Club Children/ Young People to identify support needs. This is done when Children/ Young People are brought to the bus by parents. In both group housing schemes the Traveller Health Coordinator links with families on all Children.

- **The critical success factors in the actions implemented that have supported the outputs and outcomes being achieved are as follows:**

Critical success factor in achieving the overall outcome (increased access to educational opportunities for target group).

Outputs

The Playbus operates on a three day service due to the nature of the service a team of four staff are required on the bus each day. As the programme has a focus on providing very personalised support to Children/ Young People using the service for Homework Supports a group of ten Children/Young People are supported by four staff to ensure those in need of one to one support can be accommodated. Throughout these three days a total of eleven separate sessions are provided.

Staff

The Playbus has a dedicated team of five staff members unfortunately this number went down to four as there was not a TUS candidate with suitable driving licence. Three of these staff have been on the bus since its development and have built up an extremely positive relationship with families. Particularly with Traveller families in both Group Housing Schemes, essentially as the bus is providing the service on their doorstep therefore it took considerable time to build up trust with families. This positive relationship has led to increased involvement of parents and adult family members in services on the bus. In Ballyforan Group Housing Scheme there was a big uptake of Adult Education services particularly Driver Theory.

Interagency Work

As the bus was development in an interagency module with involvement from Roscommon VEC, Roscommon Traveller Development Group, Roscommon County Council, Brothers of Charity, Roscommon Childcare Committee, HSE Children and Family Services. The bus is supported by a strong steering group which helps to expand the services to area of needs and ensure that isolated families are being supported. In particular support from Roscommon County Council – County Library through provision of a well-stocked library providing an opportunity to encourage reading to the whole family. Also through Roscommon VEC support with a suite of laptops for Adult Education supports and opportunities to develop more courses to be provided on the bus.

Involvement of parents in the project

Through increased involvement of parents on the bus through interaction with staff through Adult Education and ‘check in’s’ parents have become champions of the service within the community. Particularly with Parent and Toddler group’s parents have encouraged other parents to access the service.

- **The factors that have hindered ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of our local objective statement.**

Staff Provision

Due to the nature of staff provision with some staff only on the project for one year – the consistency which we originally had in 2012 has been jeopardised with three staff finishing up due to the end of their schemes (Community Employment and TUS). While new staff have been recruited to fill two of the spaces providing the service for five days per week is impossible.

Nature of Vehicle

As the Playbus is a mobile service the outputs can often be hindered due to bad weather (frost/ snow / high winds). To ensure the safety of all those who use the service the bus cannot go out onto the roads in snow or ice due to risk of an accident. Also due to the height of the bus the bus cannot be used in high winds. Therefore the services can be hampered in the winter.

Mechanical

Mechanical difficulties on the bus can occur periodically; therefore the service cannot be operated in these times. To ensure there is lessening of breaks in service all maintenance is carried out when the bus is not scheduled for service (Thursday and Friday). To ensure the overall upkeep of the bus and health and safety for those using the service Bus Driver carries out weekly maintenance and safety checks.

- **The unintended outcomes (both positive and negative) which were not anticipated at the outset.**

Parents have begun to access the bus to access information and support from staff on health and welfare matters. In particular with the Traveller Health Programme the Playbus was used as a consultation point for the development of the Primary Healthcare Programme and development of Men's Health Programme.

Through interaction with the Playbus some parents have identified that their Children using Play and Parent and Toddler sessions are excited about starting school. With

Children and Young People from Homework clubs being linked in with local Youth Services.

The Roscommon Young Carers Group

Case Study 2012

Name of Project

Roscommon Young Carers Group.

Aim

The Young Carers group were formed with the aims of providing support, advocacy and respite to the ever growing number of young family carers. This project aims to support Young carers to develop a plan of activities /actions meeting the needs of these young people, ensure greater awareness of the public in relation to issues surrounding young carers, also to increase the confidence on the part of the young carers group, through their involvement in the initiative. At present 26 Young Carers attending the monthly group, we hope to increase this number through assessment of need in 2013.

Target Group Disadvantaged Young People

Description of the project

The project was initiated by the combined efforts of The Roscommon Leader Partnership Company and The Roscommon Carers Association.

A meeting was held in The Roscommon Partnership offices, Roscommon in March 2011 where this idea was discussed. It was decided that a site visit to Newry Carers Offices to view the work being carried out there and to view their project. On the site visit a great lot of ideas were shared and it was from that the now The Roscommon Young Carers has been established.

The Young Cares group meet on monthly bases; we provide supports to Young carers and their advocates to develop a plan of activities and actions to meet the needs of these young people. We jointly in partnership with the y-carers establishing a list of activities based on good practice, identifying potential funding sources, to increased confidence on the part of the young carers group, through their involvement in the initiative, also facilitating the young carers to share their experiences with other young carers living in within areas of County Roscommon.

Needs of the Project

The Group meet monthly we support them to establish /develop a plan of activities based on good practice, identifying funding sources meeting the needs of the group, Increasing confidence of young carers, through involvement in the initiative, facilitates them to share experiences with other young carers in Roscommon.

A young carer is under the age of 18 and provides care for a family or household member who has an illness, disability, addiction or other care need. The young carer may be the main carer in the home or else helps the main carer. The tasks a young carer may have to complete vary, from household chores, to medical care, helping with toileting and bathing or emotional support. They may need to carryout tasks on a regular basis or only occasionally. The effects of being a young carer can be both positive and negative. Caring may bring people closer, and the young person may become more understanding, compassionate and more mature. On the other hand being a young carer can have negative impacts from missing school, or being distracted at school, to feeling lonely and isolated as they have little time to socialise, play sports or meet friends, they can also suffer physically from back pain, and emotionally due to stress, anxiety and worry. (A study of young carers in the Irish Population, Child and Family Research Centre, NUI, Galway)

There is no question in the census of 2006 which related to young carers. 2.5% of all young people 0-17 in North are young carers, if we extrapolate figures for the Republic based on that we would estimate that there would be 25,901 young carers in the Republic (2.5% of 1,036,034 young people aged 0-17 year in the state). There were 14,503 young people between the ages of 0-17 years at the time of the census in 2006. If we base our figures on 2.5% of that figure we have in the region of 362 young carers in the Roscommon County.

Expected Outcomes

- To Increased confidence on the part of the young carers group, through their involvement in the project.
- The initiative aims to achieve a greater awareness on the part of the public in relation to issues surrounding the target group in question.

- Young carer's key stakeholders have signed up to the delivery of the plan to meet the needs of the young People and there needs are on the agenda and issues addressed ensure a better quality of life for young carers.
- Young carers will be represented by The Roscommon Carers Association on issues that impact on their wellbeing, 26 young carers where registered in 2012 and attended the monthly group, we hope to increase this number through assessment of need in 2013.

The RLP Co-ordinator will continue to work in partnership with the Roscommon Carers association Co-ordinator in relation to Assessments of young carers who may wish to join the Roscommon Young Carers group. In conjunction with the Newry Northern Ireland Young Carers Co-ordinator we have established a North to South Border initiative in 2012 and we hope to continue these joint cross boarder meetings / activity for the 2 groups to meet and exchange ideas on going forward, sharing ideas based on good practice identified

Volunteers are as follows:

- Betty Coyne, Castlerea
- Tracey Mulrennan, Boyle
- Thelma Reynolds, Boyle
- Rose McTiernan, Boyle

Progress / Outcome



- **MARCH**

Tour of Donamon Castle with lunch and sports activities and flower arranging.

This was a North to South visit from the Young Carers group from Newry Northern Ireland.

- **APRIL**

Puppeteer Show held in the Kilbride Centre Co. Roscommon with a visit to Supermac's restaurant in Roscommon Town.

- **MAY**

New Young Carers Assessment/ Parents Consent Forms completed

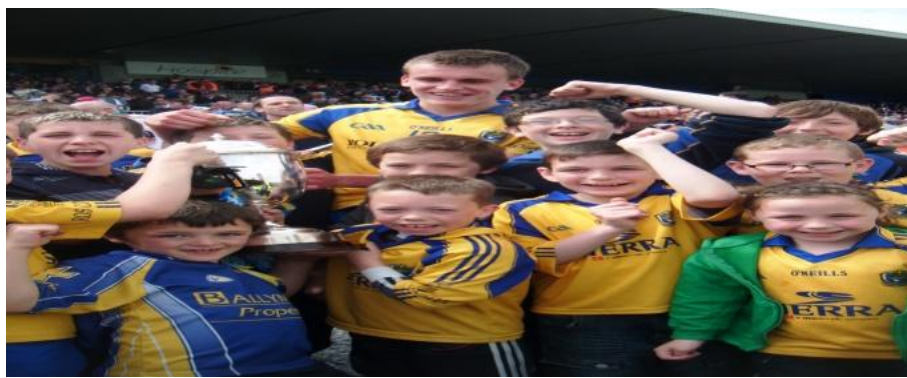
Regarding: new Carers joining the group, this is ongoing work through out 2012.

- **JUNE**



The young Carer's visited the North West Activity Centre Ballinacree Co. Sligo and partook in Kayaking/ Canadian Cannoning & Fun Activity Park. The kids played basketball, football and enjoyed the zip slide and much more.

- **JULY**



The group attended the Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship 2012 Final & Visit to Supermac's for Lunch



- **AUGUST**

The Young Carers visited the Bay Sports Activity Centre & enjoy Lunch @ the Hudson Bay Hotel



- **SEPTEMBER**

The Young Carer's visit Roscommon Flix Cinema, enjoy bowling & Fun have fun @ the Activity Centre, experience the X Factor Rooms and also enjoy hot food provided @ the cinema



- **OCTOBER**

The young Carers enjoyed an outing to the Roscommon equestrian centre to experience a fun day of horse riding activities & enjoy lunch @ the centre.



- **DECEMBER**

A Joint Christmas Party is held with Newry Northern Ireland Y-Carers & Roscommon Young Carers. The Party was hosted by the Newry Northern Ireland Young Carers Group, who hosted a Christmas Dinner / Santa Gifts & a Disco. We will facilitate the Free Raffle for all the kids.

Funding Applications

- Church Gate Collection €528 Collected in Sept 2012.
- Lottery Funding Received €2,000 in Jan 2013

We have a permit to participate in a second Church Gate Collection Sept 2013.
We also have a Bag Packing Day being organized for Feb/March 2013 in Athlone

Overall Challenges

This project has proven to be a much needed service, since the establishment of the group in August 2011, the project started with 8 children referred.

During 2012 this number has risen to 29 children registered. At present there are 29 children attending the monthly fun group outings.

(See Monthly Chart Above), there are also 4 children awaiting referral.

The Roscommon Young Carers Group benefit from Sponsorship and funding applications to various organizations, the local businesses have been very supportive in their donations in relation to the group outing however the budget restraints could possible have a knock on effect to this very needed service to continue going forward.

Family/Visitors Centre

Case study

2012

Aim

The aim of the Outreach Roscommon Family Resource Centre is to establish a Program of supports with and for prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families, by working together to deliver an independent, inclusive, and non-judgmental service.

Target Group Disadvantaged Women / Disadvantaged Young people & Ex-Prisoners

Description of the project

The family Resource Centre is a project established and managed by the Roscommon Leader Partnership, Citizen Information Service and The Irish Prison Service.

The aim of this centre is to provide a safe pleasant environment for adults and children visiting relatives or friends in prison. All visitors are met in a friendly manner and treated with dignity and respect. Visitors are offered a full range of information on other services such as, accommodation, social welfare entitlements, travel, counselling and rehabilitation. The centre continues to develop a network with other support groups. Staff encourage, and provide visitors with the opportunity to communicate any difficulties that they may have and wish to discuss in confidence. The centre will provide equal opportunity to everyone irrespective of their circumstance, race, gender, disability, religion and sexual orientation.

Mission of the project

To explore the possible activities which meet the needs of families of prisoners. To realise the aim of expanding the Resource Centre in terms of the range service provision.



Needs of the project

Research conducted into the needs of the families of prisoners in Castlerea indicated that there is a need for; a support group/ self help group, counselling support, information on rights and entitlements, advocacy work, and support for children to make their visit to the prison as positive an experience as possible.

There are a number of services currently on offer to the families, such as outreach services provided by the Citizen Information Service, Money Advice/ Budgeting Service, Confidential Counselling service, Nurse Service; all these services are provided in the resource centre, at no cost to the project.

The ethos of the project is to ensure that the families of prisoners have a safe, friendly, warm environment where they, and their children can meet prior to, and after visiting their family member. In addition to providing these services the project also provides complimentary refreshments to the families.

The families of prisoners are a very isolated, marginalized and excluded group of individuals Castlerea Prison is the only rurally based Prison in the Country, therefore this creates problems of travel, distance, access to transport, rural isolation, Loneliness, dependency, and stigmatization are more pronounced in its committal area. Therefore social inclusion and equality is a priority to the staff at the centre.

Under NAPS (National Anti-Poverty Strategy) ex-prisoners and their families have been clearly identified as needing support, and there is no agency with sole remit for this target group. Research conducted by the National Economic and social forum (NESF), has also outlined the need to support families, and that there is a need to

ensure a holistic approach to the resettlement of ex-prisoners and support to the families, using community based responses.

Service operation

The centre operates from the core principals of Community Development Participation, Representation, Collective Action, Social Justice, Equality, and Empowerment & Self-Help. Outreach Roscommon constitutes partnerships between statutory bodies, Community voluntary sector, supporting and strengthening families through the delivery of high quality services for families visiting Castlerea Prison.

The project is undoubtedly meeting specific needs of individuals and families, who are not directly receiving support specific to their needs from any other agency, as no agency has a direct remit to support this target group.

The centre provides a service of 2 Community Employment Workers acquired by the C.I.C. The C.I.C. also provides 1 Volunteers who is a Qualified Citizen Information provider and is managed by Roscommon C.I.C R.L.P. provides a Part-Time Co-ordinator role, through funding support from the I.P.S.

Service Implementation in 2012

- Ensure clients are aware of their rights/ entitlements.
- The deliver the C.I.C. service within the centre and provide a weekly qualified information provision.
- Provision of workshops and courses to meet the needs of the women using the centre
- Provision of workshops in relation to Social Activities
- Expansion and resourcing of the child-friendly area within the resource centre.
- Outside playground developed, to enable children to see their visit, as a good experience
- The establishment of a monthly Nurse Service to provided access to health Care/Information to Mothers attending the centre.
- The establishment of a Counselling Service provided on a weekly & needs basis

- Organize/Facilitate the D.V.D. Dads project; this is an ongoing project between the RLP Staff members & members of the Prison Service Staff.
- Organize/Participate in house staff training, to ensure the staff are trained in all aspects of the following:
 - Community Development
 - Confidentiality
 - Communication Skills
 - Health / Safety
 - Child First Protection Training

Weekly organizes workshops

Children's Activities

We offer a variety of workshops relating to the needs of children such as;
 Arts & Crafts – Face Painting— Card making for special occasions and holidays.
 Back to school packs (Copy book, pencil, Lunch boxes) Be Seen Be Safe (Provision of Safety Jackets for Kids) Halloween Parties & Christmas Party Fun



Mother Activities

We also offer a variety of Social / Information workshops for Mother including:
 Beautician --Yoga/Hand Massage --Flower Arranging ---Jewellery making---MABS
 101 Square Meals (Recipes Books Provision)---MABS workshop---C.I.C. workshops
 (All aspects of Social Welfare) –Nurse Service. (Healthy Issues)



The main purpose of the workshops is to promote and encourage positive inclusion amongst those using the service, and also to provide activities that are enjoyable for young people and their parents, which is an important factor

The service has received great feedback from those who have visited the Family Resource Centre; visitors have expressed sincere gratitude and praise for the

service and the work that has been done in the centre. The Staff have received correspondence in relation to the gratitude of the families visiting the centre.

Progress / Outcome

The Family Resource Centre is a much required service which in recent months is being accessed by between 150 - 175 families per week over a five day period in the past twelve months Jan-Dec 2012 we recorded 9,122 who visited the centre. This service is in need of secure funding and support in order to stay in operation and provide for the needs of this vulnerable group in our society.

Courses Provided 2012

- 1) We facilitated 4 courses in relation to Self-Esteem, The Tutor addressed issues relating to the guidelines of the course content, discussing with the individuals, thought processes in relation to changing negative thinking into positive actions ensuring the group made changes to there life style and enhancing there individual self esteem
- 2) 4 courses on Nutrition Courses where held in the FRC ,The Tutor worked with individuals to address issues they maybe experiencing within their family in coping with Healthy Eating Issues. The participants completed a questioner on healthy eating issues. The participants where given a Square Meals easy plan cook book
- 3) 4 courses on Conflict resolution took place in the FRC. The Tutor discussed and agreed the content with the participants in relation to enable the parents to be more skilled to overcome conflict within their family.

The Nurse Service was established April 2009 this service continues to be provided on the first Saturday of each month basis throughout 2012, this was due to secured funding provided by Community Foundation Ireland Trust Funding, this service enables Mothers to access health information relating to themselves, their children and the prisoner whom they are visiting, this could be a Father, Brother, Husband, Partner or Friend. 60 + have used the service during 2012.

We have received Lottery funding in Jan 2013 to continue this much needed service.

The D.V.D. Dads project was established to ensure that the children of men in the prison have a visual contact with their father when at home, D.V.D.'s were completed for Father's Day (10 Dads Participated). The Story Book and the DVD's were posted directly to the children, this is an ongoing project between the RLP Staff & Prison Service Staff.

The project took place in December 2012 (9 Dads Participated). The books needed for this project has been partly donated to the project from a local store, and were secured by RLP Staff. The IPS provides the DVD costs.

The Counselling Service was established Feb 2009 and is provided on a weekly & need based. This service continued throughout 2012 at no cost to the project. We have gained new counsellors who will work on a Rotas bases per week at the centre. The service is delivered in a professional and confidential manner.

The Adopt a Doll/Action Man Project was established June 2009 and is provided on weekly basis, this is an ongoing project throughout 2012. The children choose and name a doll, and on each visit play with their doll to encourage the child to enjoy their visit to the prison. When their father is released the child then takes the doll home.

During the month of Oct 2012, Appropriate workshops with activates in relation to the Halloween season, the workshops took place in the centre for all children & parents to participate the activities and Halloween party food/drinks where provided.

During Christmas Week December 2012 The children had the opportunity to meet Father & Mother Christmas have there photo taken and receive a small Christmas gift, Parents/family members Mothers/Grandmothers also received a small gift, the kids appeared to enjoyed the Hats Balloons & Party Food Provided.



This year has been successful in relation to the Sponsorship/Funding support for the FRC from various local businesses and funders

Sponsorship- Local Businesses

All Provisions @ FRC sponsored on a weekly bases

- 1) Pascal Fruit Shop Sponsored Weekly Fruit (Apples/Oranges/Banana's est. ;
- 2) Molloy's Bakery Sponsored 4 Loafs Bread Weekly for 12 Months
- 3) Finola Foods Sponsored 40 Slices Ham Weekly for 12 Months
- 4) The Castlerea Credit Union Donated €40 Funding.

RLP Funding

- 1) Supplied a New Printer/Photo Copier
- 2) Stationary
- 3) M.C. Work Mobile
- 4) Tea/Coffee/Sugar

C.I.C. Funding

- 1) FRC 2011 - 2012 Volunteer Costs
- 2) Staff Fire Training Costs
- 3) FRC 2012 Internet/Telephone Costs

IPP FRC Funding

- 1) AMP Alarm system
- 2) Electric & Heating Costs
- 3) Co-ordinator Salary

Funding Applications

Lottery Funding Received €2,000 in Jan 2013

Grassroots Equipment Fund Closing Date 31st Jan 2013) Await Reply

Request Letter Re; Poor Box Funding forwarded to The Roscommon Criminal Court

Work Shops:

The VEC work shops @ the FRC where Facilitated Free during 2012, and are agreed going Forward into 2013.

Family Resource Centre

29/01/2013 Balance €4,267.86

Overall Challenges

The establishment of a self-help / women support group, has been a difficult challenge due to the system of booked visits at the prison, the visitors tend to arrive to the time schedule relating to the booked visit. We continue to work with the visitors to establish ongoing support and the support courses.

The nurse service continues to be very supportive to the families visiting the centre; however the need for financial support through funding applications to continue this service has been difficult in process and slow in being forthcoming. However €2,000 Funding has been received in Jan 2013.

At present the Family Resource Centre benefits from sponsorship & funding as stated above however budget restraints, could possibly have a knock on effect of this very much needed service. Funding applications are usually very slow being approved and gaps therefore occur in terms of service provision, the economy has slowed down funding applications, and approval of funds.

Goal 3

Local Objective Statement “ The long term unemployed and the underemployed are better prepared to enter labour market, through training work experience and job placements in Boyle, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Roscommon/ South Roscommon & East Roscommon areas before end 2013”.

Action – Future Options Training Programme

- **The progress made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

This action is directly connected to the action ‘Supported into Employment’ and complements the ongoing work with employers. (See case study on employers) In 2012, three ‘Future Options Programme’ (FOP) was delivered for individuals who are Long Term Unemployed (LTU) in emerging areas of employment namely;

- Advanced Chainsaw Training – (Forestry Sector)
- Food & Catering
- Basic Chef Skills Training

The programme aims to;

- a) Provide Long Term Unemployed (LTU) individuals with recognised accreditation in areas of potential employment
- b) Engage and design accredited training programmes in consultation with employers
- c) Provide work experience and career progression opportunities for participants
- d) Support and match individuals to employment (see article on ‘Supported into Employment’)
- e) Assist course participants in the setting up of small businesses related to up-skilled areas as necessary on the BTWEA Schemes

A lot of on the ground consultations was conducted with perspective employers in the proposed training areas identifying and obtaining key information such as;

- a) What & where are the employment opportunities locally
- b) What level of skill is required for participants to secure employment in this area

- c) What experience/backgrounds would be most desirable for the job
- d) What other transferable skills could be included to enhance participants competitiveness in the employment arena

The method of delivery on the FOP varied from programme to programme depending on the nature of training required and the resources available. Programmes were targeted and delivered in areas of greatest disadvantage in the county on an outreach basis where possible. The intended outcome of the action was to up-skill individuals that were LTU to a level where it was possible for them to secure employment in potential growth areas. With this in mind it was necessary to ensure all participants on training programmes were highly motivated and in order to glean this information interviews were held with those who expressed an interest. The purpose being to establish levels of motivation, job readiness and interest levels. All programmes were co-ordinated by Roscommon LEADER Partnership.

Advanced Chainsaw Training:

In 2011, 11 participants successfully completed training and received NPTC City & Guilds certification in chainsaw operation at level's CS30, CS30.1 & CS31 and FETAC Level 5 certification in Health & Safety, and Occupational First Aid.

In 2012, 8 out of the 11 participants progressed on to an advanced training programme on chainsaw operation, (levels CS35 & CS36). This greatly enhanced participant's chances of gaining employment as it allowed operators/trainees to work on all harvesting sites. Furthermore, it allowed trainees access to cheaper insurance costs if self-employment was an option. This qualification generated increased interest among employers seeking part time or seasonal employment during peak time once brashing and harvesting begins. 2 participants secured employment in this sector.

Food and Catering:

11 individuals participated and completed in food and catering training delivered in Strokestown. The programme was delivered over 10 weeks. On completion participants received certified accreditation in Food Hygiene, Computers, Manual Handling and Occupational First Aid. Other aspects of training included; communication skills, computers, business planning, marketing, funding, field trips and two weeks work experience.

Basic Chef Training Programme:

14 participants commenced this training programme with 11 completing. Programme was delivered 2 days per week over an 8 week period. Due to the practical nature of this training programme and the availability of day time facilities locally, the kitchen and canteen of Roscommon Mart was utilised for training. On completion, participants certification in HAACP and Occupational first aid. Training in other areas included basic cooking, cooking methods, kitchen skills, food identification, communication skills and two weeks work experience.

- **Progress made against the targets set for the National Programme indicators of this local objective statement, with attention on progress against the indicators that are and are not recorded on IRIS at action level.**

Targets vs. Outputs:**Targets:**

- 60 LTU individual will have participated in Labour Market Accredited Training

Outputs:

- 45 individuals participated in 'Labour Market Accredited Training' under Future Options (remaining 15 coming from Farm Diversification Training Programme (FDTP) which is non LCDP funded)
- 42 successfully completed training
- 18 individuals progressed on to full/part/casual employment or further education/training
- 3 full time employment
- 1 in part time employment
- 5 in casual/seasonal employment
- 9 further education

Case Study - Future Options Programme

Note * Target of 60 LTU individuals participating in Labour Market Accredited Training was achieved as reflected in IRIS.

- **The methodologies used to measure this progress.**

Progress is measured against quarterly milestones and programme evaluations. Pre course consultations with employers to establish sectorial employment needs, inform programme content and employer expectations. Progress was also greatly improved through pre training assessment for eligibility and suitability of participants. We had ongoing evaluation through the Employment Inter-Agency Group through out.

- **The critical success factors in the actions implemented that have supported the outputs and outcomes that you have achieved.**

Three key outcomes to this initiative was firstly, the involvement of engaging with relevant employers and obtaining their input in the design and content of the programme, secondly, two full working weeks (70hrs) of onsite work experience for participants in the programme, thirdly, the availability and the simplicity of both the 'employer incentive pack' and the 'job vacancy pack'. This approach ensured that employers were aware that such a programme was taking place and the recruitment incentives available. Whilst, participants were equally aware of the standards required by employers in securing employment in advance of training and what employment opportunities existed locally and regionally.

The programme was designed to provide participants with the following outcomes:

- a) Obtain accredited training in a variety of areas to meet the needs of mainstream employment
- b) Obtain the knowledge and skills to consider self-employment/alternative enterprise as an option
- c) Obtain soft support skills i.e. communication, dealing with change, interview skills, personal effectiveness etc.
- d) Engage in work experience

The in house development of 'participant profiling' of LTU jobseekers across all programmes proved very beneficial as it provided increased access to a bank of jobseekers category by category i.e. food & catering, admin, construction etc.

- **The factors that have hindered ability to deliver on outputs and outcomes of your local objective statement.**

Many of the challenges encountered related to the economic state of our economy and lack of jobs. This was reinforced by the complete lack of knowledge or awareness of the employer incentives programmes. This in many instances required the need to discuss and identify job creation opportunities with employers along with filling the information deficit gap and later be in a position to provide a matching service between the jobseeker and the employer with the vacancy.

Another real challenge identified was the motivational levels of LTU jobseekers attending training. All too many had issues about dealing with change, being unemployed and finding themselves 'in a place where they hadn't planned on been in'.

The identification of suitable training venues posed a real difficulty due to the nature of facilities required for the training provided. Both the lack of and accessing affordable transport proved a real challenge for participants attending training venues; for example, the only available training base to deliver 'Chef Training Course' was situated in Roscommon Town. However, while course participants were targeted from geographical disadvantaged areas the majority of them resided a considerable distance away such as, Boyle, Castlerea and Ballaghaderreen.

The in house database of 'participant profiling' of jobseekers needs to be completed and fully operational for 2013

- **The experience of the stakeholders is as follows:**

As previously mentioned the Future Options Programme is an initiative of the LCDP and supported by the Employment Inter Agency Group. Through this collaboration, each partner can contribute where possible to the single objective of providing holistic up skilling of LTU individuals. This also ensures that no duplication of services exists. Collaborative partners are regularly updated with feedback and evaluations related to the project.

LCDP staff have collectively worked together to ensure all stands of work relating to Goal 3 are achieved to obtain measurable outcomes for our target group.

Midterm and final evaluation of training programme is conducted with participants.

Case Study – Future Option Training Programme

Background:

The main focus of this case study is to highlight the fact that this training programme was initiated as a direct response to tackling the number of long term unemployed people in the county. An Employment Inter Agency Group, consisting of the Department of Social Protection including Employment Services, VEC, County Development Board, County Enterprise Board and RLP was established with a view to develop labour activation programmes based on research findings. Clearly, a need to up-skill and re-skill the long term unemployed in potential employment sectors was a priority. Areas already covered through existing training provision such as; healthcare, childcare and retail was not considered under the Inter Agency Group.

In January 2011 there were 6,498 on the Unemployment Live Register from County Roscommon. The economic recession has had a very negative effect on businesses throughout the county resulting in high levels of unemployment. Loss of employment due to the collapse of the construction industry and downsizing in manufacturing is forcing the unemployed to up skill and re-skill into the new growth areas. Castlerea is identified in the RLP Strategic Plan (2011-2013) as being one of areas of highest disadvantage in the County under a number of indices.

The Western Development Commission published document 'Work in the West (December 2009)' highlighted that County Roscommon's employment base is heavily dependent on the traditional sectors which are not forecast to grow over the next few years. In 2007 – 1 in 4 men in the Western region of Ireland were employed in construction, 16,400 jobs were lost in this sector in the last two years. The future growth areas for employment creation in the Western Region as identified by the report include: medical devices, software, financial & international services, creative economy, green economy (renewable energy, energy efficiency), caring sector, food and tourism.

A detailed Employment Trends Survey Employment Trends Survey was commissioned by Roscommon Partnership Company in late 2008. It highlighted that self-employment is a viable option for rural economies. The research concluded that

new employment opportunities could lead to small scale enterprise development and job creation in areas like Tourism, Leisure Industry, Information Technology, Further Education Targeted at Employment, Forestry, Agriculture & Food, Organic Horticulture, Environment, Energy, Eco Building , Construction, Creative Industries, Crafts and Services.

The future options programme under the guidance of the Inter Agency Group of RLP will consist of organised training programmes for the long term unemployed who will seek to offer work placements, training and self-employment options.

The programme will provide participants with recognised accredited training in areas of potential growth in the County that have been identified both by documented research and 'on the ground' meeting and liaison with employers.

Future Options Training Programme Summary Report

Course	Venue	No. Participants Started	Participants Completed	Progress	Full-time Employment	Part-time Employment	Casual Employment	Further Education/ Training
Chainsaw Operation	Castlerea	13	13	9			2	7
Advanced Chainsaw Operation	Castlerea	7	7	3	1		1	1
Food & Catering	Roscommon	11	11	5	2	1	1	1
Basic Chef Skills Course	Roscommon	14	11	1			1	
Total		45	42	18	3	1	5	9

***Note:** The basic Chef Training Programme wasn't completed until December 2012 and it is envisaged that progression from this will not be realised until later in 2013.

Case Study: Employers

Introduction

The main focus of this case study has been the greater engagement of employers in the progression of long term unemployed into employment. During the consultations and preparation of our Strategic Plan ('11-'13) the need to engage with employers was identified. The Employment Inter Agency Group and the Enterprise & Employment Planning Group of Roscommon Leader Partnership have continued to support this strategic approach. The Employment Inter Agency Group, made up of the County Development Board, the Department of Social Protection including Employment Services, VEC, the County Enterprise Board & Roscommon Leader Partnership (RLP), have been very supported of the actions undertaken to engage with employers.

In 2012 a number of actions have further progressed engagement with employers further which include the launch of the Employers Recruitment Incentive Pack, the Jobs Vacancy Pack and the development of an in house database of employers. Furthermore a key action has been supporting the linkage between LTU's participating in our training courses with employers and employment opportunities.

A detailed Employment Trends Survey Employment Trends Survey was commissioned by Roscommon Partnership Company in late 2008. The research concluded that new employment opportunities could lead to small scale enterprise development and job creation in areas like Tourism, Leisure Industry, Information Technology, Further Education Targeted at Employment, Forestry, Agriculture & Food, Organic Horticulture, Environment, Energy, Eco Building , Construction, Creative Industries, Crafts and Services.

In December 2009 the Western Development Commission (WDC) completed a research paper entitled: 'Work in the West', which researched the Western Region's Employment and Unemployment Challenge. This profiled the Western Region which showed that County Roscommon's employment base is vastly dependent on the traditional sectors which are not forecast to grow over the next few years. The future

growth areas for employment creation the Western Region as identified by the WDC report are:

- Medical devices
- Software, financial & international services
- Creative economy
- Green economy (Forestry, renewable energy, energy efficiency)
- Caring sector
- Food
- Tourism
- Marine & inland waterways

Actions & Progress

The key action under Goal 3 Local Objective 2 is to develop and sustain strategies with local businesses to increase employment opportunities for the long term unemployed. This is being achieved through the roll out of an Employer Recruitment Incentive Programme in Boyle, Castlerea, Ballaghderreen, Roscommon and South Roscommon Social Welfare Catchment areas before 2013 (Strategic Plan '11-'13)

In 2012 one of the main events held was the launch of the Recruitment Incentive Information Pack by the Mayor of County Roscommon in June. He stated that 'the Information Pack would be greatly welcomed by the business community as recruitment incentives and user friendly information about them were badly needed in difficult economic times'. The secretary of the Roscommon Chamber of Commerce pointed out at the launch that their organisations were happy to support the dissemination of the pack among their members as it provided a one stop shop of information on a range of recruitment incentives. The incentives included are JobBridge the national internship scheme, Employer Job Incentive (PRSI) Scheme & Revenue Job Assist. A seminar followed the launch where a number of speakers make presentations on the various incentive schemes. A number of businesses from the Roscommon area attended the event. Another recruitment incentive

seminar was held in Boyle in October. The format of presentations by the agencies was similar to the Roscommon event. The key presentations were made by Revenue & the Department of Social Protection including Employment Services. The organisation of the event was facilitated by both RLP with Boyle Enterprise Centre and Boyle Chamber of Commerce.

The dissemination of the Pack to businesses is ongoing and has been achieved with the co-operation of Chambers of Commerce, business groups, the County Enterprise Board & the Department of Social Protection including Employment Services. Packs have also been provided to businesses who are actively recruiting personnel.

As a result of the recruitment incentive seminars employer databases have been developed. RLP staff engage directly in supporting the recruitment process between employers and long term unemployed (LTU) jobseekers with the assistance of the Information Pack emphasising the incentives available.

Another innovation introduced by RLP staff in 2012 was the Jobs Vacancy Pack. The purpose of the Pack is to simplify access to job vacancies. It consists of fortnightly updates highlighting a wide range of jobs available in the region as opposed to looking at possibly one local paper with very work opportunities. Recruitment websites, local & regional press and other media formats are researched to identify the jobs that are currently available. A Tus worker under the guidance of an RLP staff member produces the Job Vacancy Pack. This is then circulated to our database of LTUs & to other Tus workers who will soon be leaving their work placements. It is also circulated to Tús supervisors who are well placed to support Tús workers in their search for employment.

RLP staff makes direct contact with employers who are recruiting and inform them of the incentives available from the recruitment incentive pack as well as awareness of LTU jobseekers who have up skilled in employment growth areas as identified both regionally and locally.

Outputs and Outcomes

- Number of Information Packs produced: 700
- Packs circulated to businesses: 200
- Number of seminars: 2
- Number of businesses who attended seminars: Roscommon ; 16, Boyle ;11
- Jobs Vacancy Packs produced: 12
- LTUs placed in employment: 20
- Accredited Training Courses: 4 courses held & 60 LTUs received accreditation (See Future Options Case Study)

Challenges

A number of challenges arise from the activities above:

- Branding & marketing of the Recruitment Incentive Information Pack
- Creating awareness among employers around the recruitment incentives
- Monitoring & follow up in regard to the uptake of the incentives
- Capturing the work that is undertaken with employers through KPPs
- Need for greater linkages between the service providers of incentive schemes. For example RLP has identified the need for an incentive package approach where an internship through JobBridge can be a building block to full time employment using other incentives like the revenue job assist & PRSI exemption schemes
- Lack of awareness among LTU job seekers of their eligibility for the incentive schemes
- LTUs not pro-active themselves in informing employers of their eligibility to participate in the incentive schemes

- Matching suitable LTU job seekers to vacancies
- Ineligibility of sole trader owner managers with no current employees to take on interns through JobBridge

Policy

RLP has endeavoured to add value & compliment where possible existing work by agencies & departments with employers. At the launch of Intreo in Nov '12, the new one stop shop for the unemployed by the Department of Social Protection, acknowledgment and recognition was given by Minister Joan Burton for our Employer Recruitment Incentive Pack. Feedback was provided directly to the Minister in regard to the issues surrounding the incentive schemes. These included the need to consider allowing sole trader owner managers with no current employees to take on interns through Jobbridge. This changes could very likely lead to full time employment for the interns and other incentive schemes could then be used as a building block towards permanent employment. The current recession militates against recruitment for many businesses with limited resources. Another matter raised with the Minister was the importance of linkages between scheme service providers who deliver the incentives and the need to offer a broad package approach to employers.

Recognition was given to RLPs recruitment incentive pack by the 2nd Quarter '12 Report on the Action Plan for Jobs. The Progress Report extracts states:

“Working in conjunction with local community and business development organisations to promote awareness and take-up of the scheme. For example, representatives from the Department have made presentations at Employer Recruitment Incentive Seminars hosted by the Roscommon Leader Partnership Group and developed an information pack on the scheme for dissemination at these events”. (Department of Enterprise, Jobs & Innovation)

The Budget in 2012 has indicated that a new co-ordinated approach entitled “Plus One” will look at the greater co-ordination of existing incentives & schemes. This would be launched early in 2013. RLP is well placed to add value and assist in the promotion of this new initiative. Where necessary RLP will upgrade its recruitment

pack to progress to accommodate and accurately reflect changing Government policy.

Recommendations

- Adopt a brand name which RLP has developed under the Recruitment Incentive Programme and entitled **SER U**:

Supporting Employers Recruiting Unemployed (SER U) has been developed by RLP as a response to the high levels of long term unemployment in Roscommon. Our aim is to assist long term unemployed (LTU's) in the transition to employment. We meet this aim by supporting employers with recruitment needs, to provide employment, work experience and internship opportunities. We also provide support directly to jobseekers by providing courses developed in consultation with employers needs and by supporting jobseekers to utilise activation programmes, internship schemes and other training programmes designed to assist the transition towards employment

- The development of further strategic alliances among employer representative groups
- Develop a new Key Planning & Policy Structure in 2013 to capture the work with employers and their input into RLP & government policy. This KPPs will act as a forum for employers to articulate their needs , what supports they require & what policies would best assist in the recruitment of the unemployed
- Work in conjunction with and add value to the newly proposed Plus One programme that intends to streamline the existing incentive schemes.
- Upgrade the Employers Recruitment Incentive Pack where appropriate to take account of the Plus One Programme
- Pobal should consider creating a BPR category under individuals supported into internships as this is a progression route to full time employment

- Due to the high proportion of sole traders/owner managers with no full time employees in rural areas policy needs to change to allow their eligibility for internships
- Promote awareness among LTUs & those on labour market schemes like Tús about their eligibility to participate in the recruitment incentives along with their personal additional entitlements

Case Study: Unemployed Youth Engagement

Introduction

The focus of this case study is to provide a model of good practice for engagement with unemployed young people and our action in 2012 set out to build on the learning of an unemployed youth information event we held in 2011. The action in 2012 involved, holding another Employment Information and Support Seminar for unemployed 18 to 25 year olds. It was decided to hold the event in the Boyle catchment area.

The area chosen is a high priority area for delivering Roscommon Leader Partnership's LCDP programme and has 149 unemployed young people under the age of 25 out of a total unemployment figure of 1,068 (source persons on the live register Boyle Social Welfare Office December 2012 CSO). Pobal Maps Deprivation Index by small area 2011 identified six areas of disadvantage in the Boyle area and three of the areas are described as very disadvantaged with very high levels of unemployment. Locally there are few new job opportunities available.

Actions & Progress

Local objective statement one aligned to goal three of Roscommon Leader Partnership LCDP Strategic Plan (2011 to 2013) refers to: **Supporting LTU's and underemployed to be better prepared to enter the labour market through training, work experience and job placement.** One of the actions under this Local objective statement is to **"provide employment Information and Supports for disadvantaged young people"**

Action Description/ aim

This action involved bringing unemployed young people between 18yrs and 25yrs together for the purpose of greater access to information on training and employment matters.

Expected outcomes

25 young unemployed attend the event and receive information and advice on a variety of training and work placement/employment/self employment options

Learning from previous event

The case study of 2011 identified a number of challenges/ key learning points from the youth employment information event held in Castlerea and it is worth recalling them here.

- 1. Young people need to see a link between engaging in training and at least some hope of progression to work experience/employment before they will engage much more actively in information events.(did engage in medical devices course)**
- 2. Better targeting of audience for events to cater for employment/training areas of interest and to try and make the event more client focussed.**
- 3. Need to develop programme to counter disillusionment and improve motivation.**
- 4. Need to research with employers work experience opportunities so as to further develop learning point 1.**

The organising and holding of the event in Boyle was informed by the above points and turned out to be a major success as the young people engaged much more with the presentations than at the Castlerea event. This was achieved by having a different format for the event. We set about to have a mix of presentations from agencies as with the Castlerea event but also added in a number of presentations from local employers and also a testimonial from a young person who had struggled to find employment and having decided to undertake a course was now preparing for an Internship. To improve the motivation of the group we decided to have an informal start to the event as some of the employers and education providers had a number of information stands for the participants to engage with over a cup of tea/coffee before the main presentations. This proved very successful as the young people had now engaged with the personal delivering the presentations and asked a wide range of questions during the Q&A session. The event was held in The Family Life Centre which has a high profile of community activity and the agenda was as follows :-

YOUNG ADULTS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES EVENT

FAMILY LIFE CENTRE BOYLE 29TH MAY 2012 TIME 10.30 to 1pm

AGENDA

- 10.30-11.30** Registration
- Browse information stands
- Tea/Coffee
- 11.30- 1.00** Presentations, Q&A and close
-
- 11.30-12.30** Presentations (5 mins each)
- 11.30-11.35** Opening Address and Welcome
- 11.35-11.40** Employer – Ansamed
- 11.40-11.45** Employer- Supervalu
- 11.45-11.50** Employer - Connacht Gold
- 11.50-11.55** Roscommon Learning Links
- 11.55-12.00** SP Employment Services
- 12.00-12.05** Testimonial My path to employment
- 12.05-12.10** Employer - Farm Relief Service (FRS)
- 12.10-12.15** St Angela's College (Access Course)
- 12.15-12.20** Roscommon VEC
- 12.20-12.25** Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- 12.25-12.30** Employer- Abbey Haven Nursing Home
- 12.30-12.35** Closing Address (Family Life Centre)
- 12.35-1.00** Questions & answers

Presentation Stands:

1. Roscommon Leader Partnership
2. Roscommon Learning Links
3. Employers- Abbey Haven and Connacht Gold
4. Employer -Local Supermarket
5. Jobs Club and SP Employment Services
6. VEC

In organising the event Roscommon Leader Partnership were supported by a committee of personal close to and working with young people in the Boyle area. Represented on the committee were Boyle FRC, Roscommon Learning Links, Boyle NYP, HSE and Dept SP.

Outputs

- Twenty eight young people attended the event which surpassed our target of twenty five.
- A number of other LTUs also attended bringing the total number of participants at the event to forty.
- Young people engaged much better with information providers and employers
- Organising committee open to participation in further events
- Good verbal feedback from participants on quality of the event

Challenges

While the event was successful in achieving greater engagement with the participants, a number of challenges emerged. Participants spoke of their frustration with the poor job and work experience opportunities available. Employers speaking at the event suggested that job seekers should send in their cv and follow up with phone call even though they may not have current vacancies. This idea surprised many participants and some felt they would need a lot of courage to do this. Lack and cost of transport was also an issue for a number of participants.

Challenges summarized as follows

- Very little job opportunities locally

- Work experience opportunities hampered because of the large number of sole traders ineligible to participate in JobBridge (no employees)
- Need for self confidence building measures
- Transport issues

Recommendations

Based on some evaluation of this and previous events and the challenges identified the following recommendations would seem appropriate.

- Develop a bridging course to improve confidence and link to follow on accredited course in area where work experience opportunities exist.
- Deliver courses as local as possible to the target group.
- Link with other RLP case studies (employers) to add voice to the need for changes to employer eligibility for JobBridge participation.

In developing confidence building course activity while it's overall aim would be personal development it would be important to deliver it through courses such as social media. In deciding on accredited course activity this should be informed by research mentioned in last year's case study which highlighted opportunities for work experience in the area of marketing.

Case Study

Older People Network

Goal 4: *Local objective statement 1.*

“To establish effective structures and processes to promote dialogue between policy makers, providers and local communities.”

Background

The needs of older people are diverse and multifaceted; they range from accessing of information and services, to transport, social contact and reducing isolation.

Roscommon is the 11th largest county in Ireland. It has a very high age dependency rate and dispersed population and most services are located in the main towns. At present there is no Structure/ network which are representative of all older people. County Roscommon has 16 active age groups and a County executive for Active Age. This network will engage a large representative grouping of older people and would ensure that the more disadvantaged older people would be represented through the rural men's group representation, nursing home representation and friendly call service representation. The census of 2006 shows Roscommon to have a population of 58,768, which is an increase of 9.2% from 2002.

Action

Two meetings were held in 2011 to discuss and tease out the idea of having one group representing older people in the County. The purpose of this group would lobby for and on behalf of older people within the county on agreed subject pertaining to older people.

In 2012 this idea has been progressed slowly. Contact was made with other older people network in the Country we sourced and linked with Anne Fitzpatrick, Wicklow Older People Network, Waterford Older People Network and Louth Older People Network.

We had the following stakeholders involved: key people from the rural men's Group and Friendly Call service, Day care Centre in Elphin, Ballaghaderreen, Roscommon meal on wheels, Roscommon Active Age groups and relevant Community Service

Programmes attended the first few monthly meeting. By May it was agreed to hold focus meetings to progress the idea of the Network and to be as inclusive of all areas as possible. Advertising was done to all local groups and to the general public. These strategic meetings were held in Elphin, Ballaghaderreen and Roscommon. The feedback from Ballaghaderreen and Roscommon was very positive and new elected representatives from both group joined the committee. However unexpectedly Elphin was not a success and we will revisit same in February 2013.

The Network felt that the Statutory agencies should be invited to attend these meetings, this was done and we have received confirmation from RCC, Garda, CIC, Muintir naTire, Rural Transport, that their organisation will be involved and work with the Roscommon Older People Network.

In November the group visited Wicklow Older People Network in Delganey to meet their committee and our group got an insight into how the Wicklow group has evolved and examined the work they do as a network. After the meeting the Roscommon group joined the Wicklow group in a presentation on elder abuse. This visit was really worth while and the group learned a lot from it.

In the December the meeting adopted the constitution which the group had been working on and they discussed this document with the Wicklow Group also before agreement was reached. The group are working on launching the network at an event in May 2013 with the publication of a newsletters and the hosting of a guest speaker. The group are also looking at fund raising.

Outputs and Outcomes

There are currently 20 groups participating in the Older People Network, It is evident from the groups involved that there is a need for a voice for older people in the county. As this group is still in its infancy the outcomes are difficult to quantified

Challenges

The biggest challenges facing the network are funding. In order for the group to develop and to be heard it required funding. The group intend to hold a Launch of

the Network in 2013; this will give it much needed recognition. From this it is envisaged holding other events twice yearly, e.g. information evening, workshops or training.

This group while still in its infancy will need to be bedded in before it is in a position to establish effective structures and processes to promote dialogue between policy makers, providers and local communities

Evaluation recommendations

Work of this nature can be slow to progress, but it is hoped to launch the Network in May as well as to launch a news letter. The group needs to establish how best the network can ensure an adequate flow of information from the executive to the member groupings. The executive may consider a topic that they would 'champion' for 2013 that impacts on the daily lives of older people and hold an information event, inviting key stakeholders and speakers thereby attempting to influence/lobbying policy and decision makers. The network should also engage in training be it for the executive or actively promote the training on offer by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to its members as appropriate and from the outset seek representation on key structures, and liaise with the Community Fora.



County Roscommon Older People Network visit to
Wicklow 1/11/2012



Elder Abuse workshop in Delgany Co.
Wicklow 1/11/2012

Goal 4: Local objective statement 1

LOS G4.2 “To establish effective structures and processes to promote dialogue between policy makers, providers and local communities.”

- **Progress made in meeting the outcomes of this local objective statement.**

While this is a slow process, the Older People network is coming together having met nine times in 2012 and has adapted a constitution and a terms of reference and they also secured a small budget and they are currently planning to have a launch of the Network and producing a newsletter in May 2013.

The Network also has engaged with local agencies who will connect with the group as required. These are Roscommon County Council, HSE, Gardai, VEC, Roscommon Sports Partnership. It is hoped by the end of 2013 that one or two can be champion the ongoing work of the network.

4. Local Employment Service Network

The **Employment Inter Agency Group** held a series of meetings throughout 2012. These were vital in terms of contributing to our operational & strategic planning process. The members of this Group are the Department of Social Protection, FÁS, VEC, the County Development Board, the County Enterprise Board & Roscommon Leader Partnership. The Group supported a number of initiatives that included the launch of the Employer Recruitment Incentive Pack & the Jobs Pack, Employer recruitment incentive seminars, Future Options Training Programme, Inter Agency Information sessions for unemployed youth & Tús workers, business training & mentoring for community groups in the areas of corporate governance, income generation & fundraising, the education & training fair for disadvantaged school going young people. A planning session was held with the Inter Agency group in Nov '12 and all of the above priorities will have the continued support for 2013.

5. Partnership at a local level

Roscommon Leader Partnership is the delivery agency on behalf of the Department of Social Protection for both the Tús Scheme and the Back to Work & Short Term Enterprise Allowance Schemes in County Roscommon. 76 long term unemployed were placed on the Tús Scheme while 58 participated on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Schemes in 2012. At the end of 2012 forty eight Back to Work Enterprise Allowance participants are still trading after 12 months while 27 are still trading after 24 months. The operation of the TUS scheme in County Roscommon provides a good example of partnership working at a local level.

The Employment Inter agency group steers the delivery of the TUS programme and individual TUS caseload on a collective basis. This group provides a collective holistic added value response to the needs of TUS participants, Roscommon VEC provides career and a further education planning service and the Department of Social Protection adds value in terms of guidance for added training provision and a signposting service for the TUS participants. Collectively this Inter Agency group lobbies the Department of Social Protection for changes and added funding for the TUS programme. This group's member Roscommon VEC is currently developing a training database for County Roscommon where all the members will promote and co-ordinate their training provision and in turn assist with access and knowledge for the end user.

6. Impact of the Rural Economy

It is envisaged this action will have a positive impact on the rural community as it paves the way for up-skilling individuals to fill employment opportunities as they arise. The improvement in income through employment or the creation of a new enterprise will contribute to the local economy in the form of increased spending power and possibly the creation of additional employment. Roscommon by nature is a rural county and many employers are still very dependent on opportunities stemming from the agricultural sector. By upskilling and re-training job seekers, they have a greater chance of obtaining employment or developing an alternative enterprise. This in turn provides increased household income thus generates more money in the local economy while adding to the sustainability of rural areas. The farm diversification training programme as an example has provided participants with a more positive outlook on future prospects, where without this type intervention much of this group may have immigrated.

Farm Diversification Training Programme (FDTP)

Advanced Traditional Craft Training:

This 'Advanced Training Programme' is a follow up to a previous programme entitled 'Farm Diversification Training Programme' that was delivered in the last quarter of 2011. The key objectives were to; *(a) Ensure that the age old traditional skill in craft works is revived and maintained. (b) Encourage small farm holders and rural dwellers to explore the possibility of diversifying into craft related enterprises to support their household income.*

Due to the interest and popularity of the previous programme, this advanced training programme was designed to take participants on to a much higher level of skill attainment in the craft sector. Last year was the 'Year of the Crafts' and this alone created greater interest into the craft industry. This project focused primarily on two core skills; Woodturning and Blacksmithing while also steering participants towards self-employment opportunities in the sector.

It was envisaged that on completion a networking and support system among the group will be in place for participants to network to share skills, contacts and support each other leading to increased sustainability

Aims & Objectives:

- To afford rural dwellers the opportunity to up skill in a variety of innovative disciplines thus enhancing the possibility of increasing overall household income.
- To foster traditional skills that are at risk of being lost
- To promote the development of the agri- tourism sector in the county through the channels of traditional crafts
- To stimulate and change the mind of individuals in identifying and progressing their business idea for possible funding under the capital measure of the Rural Development Programme
- To add value to existing outlets i.e. farmers market
- To stimulate job creation

This initiative arose as a result of broad range of consultations with the long term unemployed, employment service providers, employers and training bodies. An 'Employment Trends Survey' was commissioned by Roscommon Partnership Company in late 2008 when the downturn in the economy began to take effect. It highlighted that self-employment is a viable option for rural economies. The research concluded that new employment opportunities could lead to small scale enterprise development and job creation in areas like Tourism, Leisure Industry, Information Technology, Further Education Targeted Employment, Forestry, Agriculture & Food, Organic Horticulture, Environment, Energy, Eco Building , Construction, Creative Industries, Crafts and Services.

The project was delivered through a tailored animation/training programme delivered over a total of 155 hours to a maximum of 10 selected participants. This was supplemented with individual project support for the duration of training delivery.

The modules delivered were as follows:

Course Content:

- Induction & Participant Development Needs
- Motivation for Change
- Idea generation Workshop
- Advanced Woodturning Craft
- Advanced Blacksmithing
- Business Planning and Regulatory Issues
- Enterprise / Field trip
- One on One Business Mentoring
- Programme evaluation

Identifiable impact of the action on the rural economy:

A networking and support system among the group was established for participants to share skills, contacts and support for each other. 5 participants are already developing plans towards establishing a self-employment enterprise. While 4 the participants have affiliated with the Mayo branch of the 'Wood turners Association of Ireland' as there is no branch in Roscommon. It is envisaged that progressions like this will have a positive impact on the rural economy.

The **Rural Men's Group** (see case study) is another example of an initiative that has an impact on the rural economy. The rural Men's Group engages with approximately 100 older men in the county many who either live alone or with an elderly relative. The nature of the work being done with older on this project through information sharing, advice and contacts is in some way ensuring that older men have an improved health status and quality of life. The economic impact element of the programme is contributing to the fact that older men, particularly men living alone, are better placed to remain in their own homes longer as opposed to requiring residential care. Furthermore, this initiative has greatly contributed to addressing the negativities of rural isolation such as depression, loneliness, substance abuse to mention but a few.

Roscommon LEADER Partnership in conjunction with other agencies and support groups in the county recognises that work like this needs to continue. In 2012 a FETAC level 5 'Engagement for Men Programme' in collaboration with the VEC was initiated. The aim being, to provide course participants with the skills and know to engage with younger men in the county in identifying and applying preventative measures so to avoid the negative impacts of rural isolation for future generations.

7. Impact on Gender

The work of Roscommon LEADER Partnership has always placed emphasis on inclusion of the most marginalised in our community. Gender mainstreaming is about recognising and addressing the policies, processes and practices that bring about inequalities between women and men. The Irish Government in the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 acknowledges gender mainstreaming as a key objective in achieving gender equality. In County Roscommon we work closely with the Roscommon Women's Network who are also funded under the Local Community Development Programme.

In terms of our company's **policy and planning**, our Board is committed to having a gender balance on our Board. The Board have demonstrated this commitment as in July 2012, Miriam Hennessy and Christine Sheehy joined the Board of our company and therefore we have achieved the required 40% female representation on our Board. The Board will continue to pursue the recruitment of females to sit on our Board of Directors as we rotate Directorships.

We have under taken the following **specific actions out during 2012 under the LCDP**, these actions have had an identified impact on Gender. These actions are outlined as follows:

- **RosWIN**

RosWIN was established to foster entrepreneurship among women in County Roscommon by providing a forum/network where they can make contacts, promote their business, develop their knowledge through training, business mentoring, network together and meet other women in business or who are considering starting a business. Since its inception, RosWIN has worked in conjunction with RLP and RCEB to increase the numbers of female entrepreneurs in Co. Roscommon through exploiting their existing supports for the small business sector. RLP provided development fund grant aid while RCEB provided financial support for some of the running costs of the network.

RosWIn has been very active throughout 2012. It has developed a website where they market their products and services. The website is an excellent source of information, promotional space for member and links to other business supports. RosWIn also produces a newsletter for network members to keep them up to date with events and activities. A business information night & best practices seminar were hosted by RosWIn at which enterprise support agencies and the general public attended. Monthly meetings are held at which a broad range of interesting speakers address the meetings.

- **Rural Men's Group**

The Mission Statement of Roscommon Rural Men's Project is:

“to improve the quality of life for Marginalised Rural Men, and their communities, throughout the county by providing opportunities for increased social interaction and tackling isolation, loneliness, awareness, mental and physical health issues among this target group”

The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide social opportunities for marginalised men to reduce isolation (both physical and social)
- To Provide educational opportunities for the men
- To provide information on rights and entitlements
- To provide advocacy for the men in certain situations

Roscommon County has the highest age dependency ratio in the Country, and there are a significant number of men living alone in the County. RLP recognised the need to develop their capacity to shape their future in a similar way to which women's groups are structured. There are approximately 100 rural men engaged with 3 groups across the County and over the last number of years it has been evident that the support and encouragement they receive through the group has enhanced their self-esteem, improved their quality of life. This action has an impact on gender equality.

8. RAPID

Roscommon LEADER Partnership does not currently work within a RAPID area.

9. Board And Staff Working Together

Developmental Work

The Board of RIDC had facilitated sessions on the LCDP through-out the year, key staff members were invited to make presentations to the Board on a regular basis. Children First – HSE child protection training was completed by key staff. In 2013 we hope to deliver a comprehensive child protection procedures manual and training programme so that we will be in compliance with new legislative requirements which are anticipated to come into effect in March 2013.

Advisory Councils of RIDC

The sub structure of RIDC allows for information to be communicated to the Board following each of the planning meetings. The following are the groups that relate to the LCDP:

- Community Development, Youth and Families Planning Group
- Employment & Enterprise Planning Group
- Rural Sustainability Planning Group
- Strategic planning and policy Group

The chair of each of the sub committees is a board member who in turn provides feedback reports to the Board from each meeting.

These planning groups remain well briefed on the goals and objectives of the programme by relevant staff. A number of staff participated in professional development training throughout the year.

- There were 12 Board meetings held in 2012.
- The AGM took place on the 4th October 2012.

Co-operation, Collaboration Linkages:

The information required on Roscommon LEADER Partnerships involvement on networks and key planning/policy bodies has been captured through IRIS. Please reference hyperlink Iris system - Key Planning and Policy Structures.

PART B

Leverage Funds

Source of Funding	Amount (€)	Purpose
Wageningen University	2,200.00	Student Exchange
Church Gate Collection	526.00	Young Carers
Bag Packing , church gate collection & Donations	5,270.97	Friendly Call Service
Irish Prison Service	16,967.40	Outreach Roscommon
Leader Funding	17,400.00	Labour Training Accredited
Leader Funding	29,300.00	Animator for Establishment of Volunteer Centre
Leader Funding	16,500.00	Training and Mentoring for Community Groups