



2018 CWP SICAP CASE STUDY

**Engagement strategies with Target
Groups/Communities through 'Hear my Voice'
workshops.**

ABSTRACT

"The thematic workshops and 'Hear my Voice' model are good examples of ways in which CWP engages the voice of local people whilst also ensuring that wider state agencies engage with community groups".

Dr. Crean, Margaret, "Qualitative evaluation of the Social and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) implemented by County Wicklow Partnership." UCD, 2017, Page 12.

2018 CWP SICAP Case Study

Case Study Theme as selected by the Wicklow LCDC: Engagement Strategies with SICAP Target Groups/Communities.

Case Study focus as identified by County Wicklow Partnership SICAP Programme: Engagement strategies with Target Groups/Communities through ‘Hear my Voice’ workshops.

Goal 1 Action 3 ‘Hear my Voice’

Thematic Area: G1:2 - Capacity build local community groups

Outcomes: G1-2:2 Local Community Groups have a greater capacity to address the social inclusion needs of the communities they serve or represent

Action target area: Baltinglass & Wicklow Municipal Districts

The purpose of the ‘Hear my Voice’ workshops was to support communities to self-identify and collaboratively address community needs through social inclusion focused community consultation events using a proven model of good practice. The ‘Hear my Voice’ mechanism was developed by CWP in 2009 and delivered as part of SICAP 2015-2017. It was then endorsed by UCD in the County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) evaluation of SICAP undertaken in 2017 which stated *“The thematic workshops and ‘Hear my Voice’ model are good examples of ways in which CWP engages the voice of local people whilst also ensuring that wider state agencies engage with community groups”¹*. It also found that *“... specific areas, including disadvantaged estates in West Wicklow, were found to be lacking in community facilities and community development work”*. The report concluded with a recommendation regarding the spatial issues connected to social inclusion in Wicklow and *“... the need for greater collaboration to address social inclusion issues in the South and West of the county.”*

The ‘Hear my Voice’ platform promotes the ability of disadvantaged communities to articulate their concerns and to interface with service providers and statutory bodies. This work addresses the challenge of ensuring an effective and comprehensive understanding of a local community’s strengths and needs. There is evidence that the engagement of local people in determining their community priorities leads to better and more sustainable outcomes, with members of the community being more open to take up leadership roles and to engage in voluntary activity.

¹ Dr. Crean, Margaret, “Qualitative evaluation of the Social and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) implemented by County Wicklow Partnership”, UCD, 2017, Page 12.

The initiatives highlighted in this case study were designed to target disadvantaged areas in the Baltinglass and Wicklow Municipal Districts (MD) with local targeting of pockets of disadvantage based on the socio economic profile from the CWP SICAP 2018-2022 tender submission:

- Carnew – The Electoral District (ED) of Carnew is the only ED in Lot 15-2 classified as disadvantaged. Within the ED there are three small areas classified as being ‘disadvantaged’ and one small area as ‘very disadvantaged’.
- Dunlavin – Two small areas classified as being ‘disadvantaged’.
- Rathnew – One small area is classified as ‘disadvantaged’ and three are ‘very disadvantaged’.

Build up to ‘Hear my Voice’ Events

The ‘Hear my Voice’ consultations ensure accessibility to people who feel they are not welcome or have no voice in their community and are excluded from county-wide consultations. CWP SICAP aims to support them to engage through the provision of transport, children’s activities and bring the consultation to the heart of extremely disadvantaged communities.

The preparatory work for the 2018 ‘Hear my Voice’ events leads back to the 2017 SICAP Evaluation Report as referenced earlier and the outcomes from the 2017 Glending ‘Hear my Voice’ where a request was received on the day from Carnew Hub. This group was present through invitation from CWP for their group of young people in the Chillax group to attend the children and youth drumming workshop held as part of the event. The chair of the Chillax group then expressed an interest in having such an event in Carnew. The need for two other events were identified as follow ups to the first ‘Hear my Voice’ event which was originally held in Dunlavin in a local public house in 2016 and to the ‘Hear my Voice’ Rathnew Gender specific event held in Rathnew in 2017. Therefore SICAP identified a ‘Voice of the West’ event to be held in Dunlavin, a ‘Voice of the South’ in Carnew and a ‘Hear my Voice’ Gender Specific event in Rathnew.

In order to encourage local participation in the development of the ‘Hear my Voice’ programme for all events, approximately ten working days during May and June 2018 were absorbed through consultations and phone calls between CWP SICAP community development officer and community representatives. The individuals involved supporting SICAP staff to reach the

furthest left behind in both areas were community leaders and community activists already engaged in their local community.

Decisions were made on matters such as the dates and venues of all events. It was agreed to hold both the Carnew and Dunlavin events on the second week of July so as to ensure as much availability of parents as possible. This would be the second week of the summer holidays and the children would have settled into childcare arrangements and summer camp schedules.

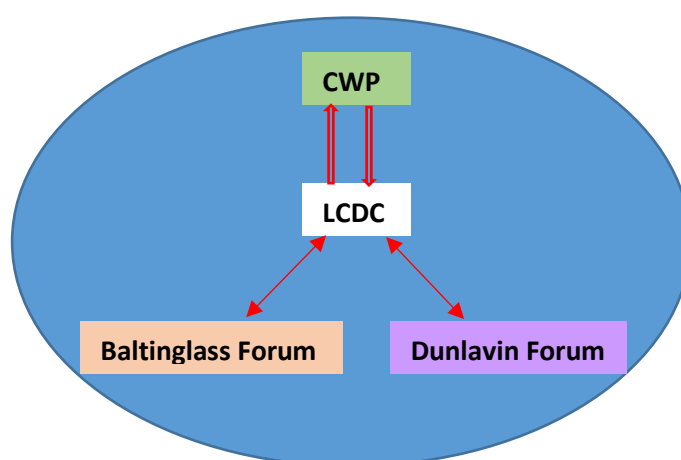
The 'Voice of the West' event was held in Dunlavin on Dunlavin Green in the centre of the village on Tuesday, 10th July and the 'Voice of the South' event was held in the Carnew Hub in Carnew on Tuesday, 12th July with the final 'Hear my Voice' Gender specific consultation on domestic violence to be held in December 2018 in Croí Rath Naoí, Rathnew.

CWP has a unique strategic position within local communities across County Wicklow with a proven record across previous social inclusion programmes in engaging with the hardest to reach communities and 'drilling' down to hear their concerns through the 'Hear my Voice' mechanism. This was demonstrated in a 'Hear my Voice' event held in Rathnew in 2017 which had a specific focus on gender related matters for women across topics such as accommodation. This was the first multiagency collaboration for the 'Social Inclusion Women of Wicklow Network' which facilitated discussion on topics such as gender equality in areas such as housing and homelessness directly relating to women and included organisations such as the HSE, PPN, Non-government organisations, Youth organisations and services as well as local community groups and community leaders.

In order to get 'buy in' from the relevant organisations for the 2018 'Hear my Voice' events the SICAP Development Officer worked with the LCDC, the PPN, West Wicklow Interagency Group, Túsla, HSE, East Coast Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (ECD&ATF) and the South East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (SERD&ATF), Kildare Wicklow Education & Training Board (KWETB), Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection (DEASP), Wicklow Childcare Committee, Kildare Youth Service and various local community and voluntary groups such as the Dara Project Kildare, Crosscare and Women of Wicklow Network. This interagency approach brought together the relevant organisations to support both events while having the thought process at all times underpinned by the LECP goals 2 & 3 relevant to this format. Goal 2 is to 'Promote active citizenship and public participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making' and Goal 3 is to 'Develop high

quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups’.

In the case of the Dunlavin event, the LCDC vice chairperson played a pivotal role at the request of SICAP by contacting the chairperson of the Baltinglass Forum and the Dunlavin Forum and encouraging them to meet with the SICAP development officer to discuss their engagement for this event. The SICAP Development Officer met with both chairpersons in the Dunlavin Café and from this meeting agreement was achieved to support the event and to proceed with the Dunlavin ‘Hear my Voice’. The SICAP Development Officer agreed to MC on the day. Below is an illustration of the LCDC’s pivotal role in ensuring the planning for this event was supported by pivotal local forums.



Discussion topics for both events

A panel of four community activists were selected to identify discussion topics using a bottom up approach which were relevant to both ‘Hear my Voice’ events. The activists are individuals living locally in Carnew who originally engaged with SICAP in 2016 through a community unaccredited course in Rathnew. This course was fully sponsored by the KWETB through community education facilitation and they have since been involved with various initiatives since this initial engagement.

The focus of the discussion items was to ensure they would create topical discussions to help identify social exclusion concerns and the needs of disadvantaged people and communities in each of the areas targeted.

Discussion topics identified from the consultations were:

- **‘Voice of the South’ Carnew** - Discussions on Community involvement, Community Services and Men’s Sheds.

- **‘Voice of the West’ Dunlavin** - Discussions on Community Gardens, Community Services and Community Involvement. These topics were endorsed by the Dunlavin Forum Chairperson.

‘Hear my Voice’ Event Expectations:

Prior to the opening of the events all representatives involved in the planning process discussed a set of objectives underpinning these events:

1. Communities experiencing social exclusion are supported to interface with service providers such as the PPN and LCDC.
2. Local community social inclusion needs are heard by service providers vested with the responsibility to deliver under their social inclusion remit.
3. Community and service providers have a shared understanding of the social inclusion issues.
4. Disadvantaged individuals and in particular disadvantaged women are supported to articulate issues relating to them and their families.
5. Women are supported in voicing their concerns and share experiences in a supportive, safe and non-judgmental environment.
6. Traveller women get to share their expertise on issues within the settled community in relation to equality.
7. A budget of €5,000 is assigned to Goal 1 Action 3 to provide funding for all three ‘Hear my Voice’ events.

Engagement Strategies:

The development of the engagement strategy for both events was led by SICAP and was tailored for each event to attempt to engage with the hardest to reach individuals and families who are rurally socially excluded and to encourage attendance and participation.

Voice of the West Engagement Strategies:

1. Leaflets distributed in public halls and community centres in Baltinglass, Killeally, Grangecon, Donard, Dunlavin, Blessington, Hollywood, local churches, libraries, garages and shops.
2. Leaflet drops in community used cafes and socially disadvantaged housing estates in Carnew.
3. Social media promotion through the following Facebook and Tweeter platforms – CWP, PPN, West Wicklow Interagency Network, CYPSE, County Childcare Committee, South East Regional Drugs Task force, Kildare Youth Service,

Baltinglass and Dunlavin Forums, the GAA clubs, FAI clubs and members of same through a multiplier effect.

4. Event was co-hosted by the Chairpersons of the Baltinglass and Dunlavin Forums which encouraged promotion of the event through their forums across the communities.
5. The PPN joined with CWP in promoting the event using their network.

Challenges which were encountered in enacting this engagement strategy were:

- a) It was originally anticipated that the event would be held in the socially disadvantaged housing estate in Dunlavin. However it was requested by the Dunlavin Forum that the public consultation take place on the public green as it is in the centre of the town and they were hoping to attract new members to the forum. The event therefore was moved to this location.
- b) Access to toilets were needed so the local church kindly provided toilet access at the request of the forum.
- c) Due to the lack of an existing formal communications protocol for the town the Dunlavin Forum used their facebook page to promote events and a local network of word of mouth.
- d) There was a heatwave during the week of the event leading to distractions for families and children from the 'Hear my Voice' event.

Voice of the South Engagement Strategy:

1. Leaflets distributed at a public community day (Sunday) through the Chillax Youth Group stand along with a face painting activity for children.
2. Distribution of leaflets in identified social housing estates such as the very disadvantaged estates of Emmett Place & Mountain View along with the disadvantaged estates of Valley Heights, Coolattin Row, Brookfield, Beech Mount, Highfield, Wool Green, Main Street, Mill Lane, Coves Brook and The Terrace on the week of the event conducting door to door engagements to inform and encourage engagement.
3. Leaflet distributed and displayed in Carnew Hub building.
4. Social media promotion through the CWP Facebook and Twitter platforms, the Foroige Twitter page and the PPN social media platforms while also being promoted through the PPN network.

5. Conducted an East Coast FM interview on the morning of the event with the Chairperson of the Chillax Youth Group which came about from the promotion of the event through the CWP facebook page.

Challenges which were encountered in enacting this engagement strategy were:

- a) Difficulty in engaging with families on the identified social housing estates at the door step. However meaningful engagement was achieved through the CWP support work with Chillax young people from the estates and rural areas.
- b) There was a heatwave during the week of the event leading to distractions for families and children from the 'Hear my Voice' event.

'Hear my Voice' Actual Outcomes Achieved:

Those who attended took part in a robust engagement with solid outcomes identified. From a budget of €5,000, expenditure to date is €3,637 with €1,363 available for the final event in December. Event costs account for €2,400 for items such as tent hire, facilitation and refreshments with the remainder providing for outreach staff travel and overhead costs.

'Voice of the West' actual outcomes achieved:

1. In total 28 individuals attended the event. A breakdown of this is as follows:

- 2 Service providers
- 3 Statutory body representatives
- 14 Community individuals (3 of which were from Blessington)
- 2 Community & Voluntary representatives
- 7 Children (1 of which was from Blessington)

- Organisations represented on the day

were:

- Hope cottage which supports families in Kildare and Wicklow with a loved one in addiction through drugs or alcohol.
- County Wicklow Partnership, PPN, Baltinglass Forum, Dunlavin Forum, LCDC, Túsla, Wicklow Childcare Committee, Baltinglass Gardaí, Glending Residence Association Chairperson.



2. Private conversations with two residents were held prior to the event workshop at the side of the green at their request as they did not feel comfortable talking in front of others.
3. 7 children attended the diversity workshop where entertainment was provided and an art competition was held.
4. The most pressing issue raised by one participant, who was not a member of either forum, was the lack of transparent public communications to the general public from either the Dunlavin or Baltinglass forums.



5. The lack of a formal communications protocol in Dunlavin forum was raised with a discussion around addressing this matter. The Forum felt an informal approach was



very effective for their needs and they were reaching the community people who wished to be involved. When teased out through questions if administrative help would ease the burden they empathically resisted this suggestion.

6. The Dunlavin Forum requested more public engagement workshops from the PPN and felt their public workshop in the West was hugely effective for public consultation and very informative.

'Voice of the South' actual outcomes achieved:

1. In total 35 individuals attended the event. A breakdown of this is as follows:
 - 2 Service providers
 - 2 Statutory body representatives
 - 9 Community individuals
 - 3 Community & Voluntary representatives
 - 19 Children
 - Organisations represented on the day were:





➤ ECRD&ATF, County Wicklow Partnership, Healthy Food Made Easy Programme, PPN, Carnew Training & Development Centre, Chillax & Foróige.

2. People who attended the event were in the main connected to the service providers in the area.
3. There was a large turnout of children for the diversity workshop where an art competition was held.
4. The most pressing issue for one participant was that they couldn't engage with the services and courses offered by the Carnew Training and Development Centre as the promotional information was inaccessible to them. Deep facilitated discussion took place with the manager of centre involved around community communications methods.
5. There was a large emphasis on youth who would not engage and had no wish to engage with standard training and education courses but wanted a drop in centre with access to the internet.
6. There was an in-depth discussion by the youths present on mental health issues and the stress caused by the over use of social media and no down time and escape from same. It was requested on the day and agreed not to post images on social media platforms which would identify youths present due to the fear of peer pressure which may arise therefore avoiding stress and anxiety for those in attendance.
7. Requests were made for 'Out Of School' programmes during the week in the Hub. An 'Out Of Schools' programme is now being rolled out in collaboration with the hub in the next school term as a pilot.



8. Requests were made for more appropriate community identified training for the purpose of their development rather than imposed available training which they felt wasn't always relevant to their needs.
9. Request was made for the Hub to be opened in the late afternoons, evenings and weekends as a social youth café space led by youths for youths.

Learnings from both 'Hear my Voice' events:

- In order for CWP to engage with and support appropriate training courses under Lifelong Learning (LLL), Enterprise and Employment in the South and West of the County a stronger relationship needs to be developed with the residents on the social housing estates to ensure their needs are being identified and met.
- Follow through is needed by the SICAP Development Officers following the 'Hear my Voice' events with the residents of the identified estates through leafleting in relation to CWP services to better inform individuals of the services provided and available through the partnership and the SICAP programme.
- Meaningful and engaging courses are needed for young people furthest left behind who will not engage with existing local provision and should be done so through collaboration with existing local facilities and services such as the Hub in Carnew. Youths (all males) expressed their wish to self-determine the types of courses they would like.

Follow up event:

The 3rd 'Hear my Voice' event of 2018 is scheduled to take place in Rathnew in December as a follow up to the 2017 'Hear my Voice' in this area. To date approximately 4 working days have been assigned to this event in preparation. This will be a gender specific forum focused on women's issues. A preliminary engagement event was held on the 18th September by SICAP Development Officers with the Rathnew & Rathdrum Women's Group and Ceart Wicklow Travellers Group to start the preparatory work where it was identified the focus should be on accommodation.