



County Wicklow Partnership




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# A Case Study of County Wicklow Partnerships SICAP supports to New Community International Protection Applicants 2023

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*“The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021 -2027.”*

# County Wicklow Partnership SICAP Case Study 2023

## LDC Name

County Wicklow Partnership Lot 15-2

## Title

A Case Study of County Wicklow Partnerships SICAP supports to New Community International Protection Applicants 2023

## Theme

Goal 1 Action 2 'Promote community engagement for New Communities in Wicklow' with a focus on indicator 'G2:1: Promoting personal development and wellbeing' achieving a target outcome of 'G2:2: Providing Lifelong Learning opportunities' under Goal 2 Action 6.

## Target Group

New Communities

## Overview of Case Study

County Wicklow Partnerships 2023 Case Study is a showcase of how CWP SICAP Programme is supporting New Communities to avail of guidance and advice on day-to-day essential services as well as accessing Lifelong Learning courses and integrating into Irish society and culture.

The Case Study submission comprises of a written case study focused on the experiences of one SICAP Support Worker and his experience in working with International Protection Applicant Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants based in County Wicklow.

This Case Study aims to:

- Highlight the extensive work undertaken with New Community International Protection Applicants with a focus on Djamal Rouibet, a SICAP Support Worker in Lot 15-2.
- Display the effect those supports are having on the day-to-day lives of these beneficiaries.
- Promote the benefit of SICAP to individuals, partner organisations and funders.



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## Djamal Rouibet, CWP SICAP Support Worker



*"As far as I'm concerned, it's my responsibility to give the greatest service possible for everyone, while also attempting to evenly divide my time in the direct provision centres throughout each visit."*

Djamal Rouibet

Djamal Rouibet is the CWP SICAP Support Worker assigned to supporting International Protection Applicant (IPA) individuals in Lot 15-2 in County Wicklow and this case study focuses on the supports he provides to them as well as outcomes achieved for this target group under SICAP 2018-2023.

Originally from Algeria, Djamal is a father of two who first came to Ireland as a tourist for two weeks and *"fell in love with the country."* Following this trip, he decided to come and settle down here in April 1996.

Djamal has unique skills as he has fluency in English, Arabic, French and Italian which greatly facilitate his role. While working in Galway Djamal undertook various courses including Translation/Interpreting support. After completing his studies Djamal worked as an Interpreter/Translator with various companies as a freelancer as well as an Intercultural worker providing translating/interpreter support in Sligo 'Resettlement Program for Syrian Refugees' in 2017-2018.

*"I then got the opportunity to move to Wicklow to work in the 'Resettlement Program of Syrian Refugees' in 2019-2020 as an Intercultural worker as well as a Translator/Interpreter."*

The period working as a Resettlement Program worker provided excellent experience for Djamal to then apply for the SICAP Support Worker role in SICAP in 2021 after seeing the job advertised on County Wicklow Partnerships website.

## Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The CWP SICAP programme receives funding from the Irish Government *through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training (EIST) Programme 2021 -2027*. This funding is used specifically to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Since 2018 this iteration of SICAP addresses high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted, innovative, and locally led approaches. It supports disadvantaged communities and individuals including unemployed people, people living in deprived areas, people with disabilities, single parent families, people on a low income, members of the Traveller and Roma community and other disadvantaged groups such as New Communities.

SICAP's core funding and collaborative focus ensures that CWP SICAP is central to providing support to the rising needs of the new community population in our Lot. The type of supports offered by SICAP to New Community Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Economic Migrants consists of:

- Conversational English language courses through our Failte Isteach programme which is crucial to the integration and assimilation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers into Irish society. This allows new communities to avail of opportunities such as courses and education, employment and general societal engagement and integration.

Once a basic level of English is attained other opportunities can be availed of through SICAP such as:

- Access to Lifelong Learning both in-house with SICAP staff and externally through third party providers.
- Support employment through in-house CV support and interview preparation.
- Making connections with local employers, providing transport to interviews if needed or guidance on accessing transport routes.
- Support into self-employment through the provision of advice and guidance to access the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) scheme through the Department of Social Protection (DSP) as well as Start Your Own Business workshops and Bookkeeping & Taxation courses delivered by SICAP.
- Advice and guidance in everyday life matters, which is crucial to refugees in areas such as:
  - Translation support
  - Financial support to overcome barriers in accessing opportunities such as education, transport costs, course fees, material costs for courses, and so on.
- Youth and family supports e.g., SICAP financial supports for children and young people to attend summer camps and out of school activities which promotes integration and wellbeing, the delivery of SICAP's PEEP parenting sessions and SICAP's Kickboxing to Inspire and Challenge Kids (KICK) programme to teenagers.

### *SICAP Collaborative Partners*

Collaboration between SICAP and third-party organisations such as voluntary and statutory authorities is crucial in achieving the level of supports required by new community refugees and asylum seekers. These collaborations are possible due to the years of close working relationships nurtured by SICAP both on a local, regional, and national level. They have become invaluable resources in achieving the volume of supports required. Some of the collaborators supporting SICAP services to new community beneficiaries are:

- Wicklow County Council Local Authority
- International Protection Office (IPO)
- International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)
- Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)
- Local Community Group's
- Third party Course providers such as Glenealy IT, Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board (KWETB), Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) as examples.
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- National Childcare Scheme (NCS) - Ray of Sunshine Camps
- Schools – both primary and secondary
- Local GP services
- Wicklow Child & Family Project (a project within County Wicklow Partnership based in Wicklow town) which hosts a Support Worker, funded by Tusla, who supports residents within the Grand hotel and Rathmore.

### National & County Wicklow Statistics

SICAP supports in County Wicklow are provided by two Local Development Companies across two LOT areas. Lot 15-1 is supported by the Bray Area Partnership and supports Bray and Greystones Municipal Districts (MD). Lot 15-2 is supported by County Wicklow Partnership and encompasses the Wicklow, Arklow & Baltinglass MDs. For the purpose of this case study, we are focusing on LOT 15-2.

As per 2022 Census the population of all three MDs in LOT 15-2 was 88,500 (Office, 2023) which was an increase of 9.8% since 2016. This was above the national population increase of 8.1% (EMN, 2023) which seen the population exceed five million for the first time since 1851. In the 171 years, Wicklow is one of only five counties that has seen an increase in their population (publication, 2023). When looked at

across the MDs Baltinglass seen a 7% (1,874) increase in population while Arklow seen a 6.6% (1,703) increase and Wicklow seen the largest MD population increase of 15.5% (4,374) (Office, 2023).

This correlates to the largest population of residents with 'Rest of World' listed as their birthplace which is in the Wicklow MD's (1646) seeing an increase in this category since 2016 of 71%, with Arklow seeing 36% and Baltinglass 53% increases also (Office, 2023).

Wicklow MD seen a 30% increase in the number of individuals whose first language is a foreign language and who cannot speak English well or at all while Baltinglass seen an increase of 12.6%. However, Arklow seen a decrease of 2.4% since 2016 of those who class themselves as not being able to speak English well or at all. (Office, 2023)

The biggest non-Irish groups nationally were Polish and UK citizens followed by Indian, Romanian, and Lithuanian with Brazilian, Italian, Latvian, and Spanish citizens among the larger non-Irish groups also (EMN, 2023). Across the three MDs in Lot 15-2 there was a correlation with the largest non-Irish groups being Other EU272020 (Excluding Ireland & Poland), Rest of World, UK, and Poland. (Office, 2023)

CWP SICAP supports new community beneficiaries usually from their place of residence which tends to be direct provision centres and emergency accommodations as well as one off housing across the three municipal districts located in:

- The Grand Hotel, Wicklow town
- Kippure Estate, Blessington
- Kilbride Army Barracks, Kilbride
- Apartment block Arklow
- Slaney Court, Baltinglass
- Rathmore Country Holiday Village, Ashford



Nationally there is a housing crisis and this, in tandem with the expiry of contracts between the IPAS and accommodation providers, is resulting in reduced accommodation options for rising Direct Provision demands. Since June 2021 nationally the number of Asylum Seekers had risen from 1,360 to 11,414 as of January 2023 (Council, 2023). By March 2023, this number had risen to 20,001 with 5,064 been awarded international protection in Ireland (Fletcher, 2023) and by June 2023 a total of 21,387 (Deegan, 2023) International Protection Applicants were being accommodated.

Wicklow is one of three counties with the largest number of International Protection Applicants outside of Dublin. To facilitate the quick expansion of International Protection Applicants nationally 13 emergency accommodation centres were opened between September 2022 and March 2023 with four located in Wicklow (Brennan, 2023). In March 2023 the occupancy of International Protection Applicants across Lot 15-2 was 1,061 adults and 249 children with the highest occupancy in The Grand Hotel Wicklow of 283 adults and 16 children, followed by Kippure Estate with 192 adults and 85 children and Rathmore Country Holiday Village with 105 Adults and 48 children. September 2023 seen increases in Slaney Court from 58 adults and 36 children in March to 72 adults and 42 children along with Kippure Estate increased to 317 adults and 97 children resulting in a rise in occupancy in this location of 49.5% over 6 months.

## New Community Target Group

CWP SICAP supports all new community individuals and families once they are resident in Lot 15-2 and register with SICAP through County Wicklow Partnership. New community individuals tend to be classified as Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Migrants. Amnesty International (Amnesty International, n.d.) defines Refugees, Asylum Seekers & Migrants as:

**A refugee** “... is a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there.”

Programme refugees have their claims evaluated in refugee camps abroad and are brought to countries, such as Ireland, under specific resettlement programmes. In Ireland Refugees are entitled to apply for ‘family reunification’ to bring their immediate family members (within certain criteria) to Ireland under the International Protection Act 2015.

Once granted refugee status in Ireland, a refugee has the right to reside in Ireland for at least three years, which is renewable, and they have the same rights and responsibilities as an Irish citizen. They can also apply for citizenship after 3 years.

**An Asylum Seeker** “... is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn’t yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum.”

Once an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, they are no longer deemed an asylum seeker and they cannot be deported.

In Ireland, Asylum seekers live in direct provision accommodation centres meaning they are provided with accommodation and food. They receive €38.80 per week per adult and €29.80 per child to cover essentials items. Once they are over 6 months in Ireland, they can apply for permission to enter the labour market.

**A Migrant** - While there is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant Amnesty International understands migrants to be “people staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum seekers or refugees.” “Some migrants leave their country because they want to work, study, or join family. Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there.”

Migrants can apply for a work permit where there are no Irish or EU candidates available to fill the position.

## SICAP Supports

For the year 2023, SICAP support is provided to New Community beneficiaries through Goal 1 Action 2 and Goal 2 Action 6.

**Goal 1 Action 2** is an action aimed at liaising with groups of individuals who are International Protection Applicants and are resident in Direct Provision, Emergency accommodation and those in private residence. Its focus is to provide non-caseload support to individuals and families of all nationalities and inform them of SICAP and non-SICAP related supports in the County. The aim is to develop a rapport, facilitate their integration into Irish society, explore their needs and how SICAP and/or third-party organisations can respond to these needs.

This action involves hosting information sessions to inform them of the services available and the supports that can be engaged with, the distribution of information about SICAP supports, speaking with individuals one-to-one about potential supports and how to engage with them and to increase community engagement, participation, and integration within local communities.

Djamal Rouibet, as SICAP Support Worker for International Protection Applicants, along with other SICAP colleagues collaborate and cooperate with stakeholders, attending committee meetings to work collaboratively to address the needs of this target group.

**Goal 2 Action 6** supports all SICAP individuals on a one-to-one basis to assess their existing skills and knowledge, identify lifelong learning priorities, set short- and long-term goals and develop a personal action plan to enable them to move towards achieving their goals to improve their economic and career opportunities.

Specifically for International Protection Applicants once they have been informed of the supports SICAP offers through Goal 1 Action 2 and identify what supports meet their requirements they then register with SICAP through Goal 2 Action 6 and engage with SICAP Support Workers to discuss and devise a pathway.

In most new community cases the development of the English language is critical to their progression through supports. The Failte Isteach English Language programme engages with individuals to start them on their journey to learning the English language. They are also encouraged and supported to engage with the KWETB for English language classes. While they progress their English language skills SICAP support them with their day-to-day requirements by way of translation and interpretation for medical, psychological, and family services appointments as well as with school communications, with paperwork for the International Protection Office (IPO) and International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) applications and communications, and any other day to day requirements needing support.

Once those with sufficient English are ready to engage in other supports and services SICAP progresses them on that pathway through applications for course admittance and grant applications, writing of CV's and job applications as well as interview preparation and for those seeking self-employment SICAP supports them through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) process.

## Working as a SICAP New Communities Support Worker

While CWP SICAP has numerous support workers working across the broad spectrum of SICAP beneficiaries, this case study focuses on Djamal Rouibet and his approach to supporting International Protection Applicants in County Wicklow.

Djamal's typical day varies depending on the demands of those in need. *"No day is ever the same when supporting SICAP new community individuals."* Phone calls are made to schedule appointments to meet at Direct Provision Centres for support, assist individuals with English Language support at an appointment or meeting, or simply to obtain information.

*"I frequently get sidetracked and end up doing something completely unrelated to the plan for the day; an emergency call like interpreting for a GP or a Hospital appointment is always a priority."*

Contacting individuals or families can sometimes be difficult as many people are working or studying. *"This can make it difficult to locate them to complete paperwork."* Each visit to one of the Direct Provision Centres can take a lot of time as once Djamal enters the premises everyone congregates to ask him questions, *"which I always attempt to answer."*

*"I've learned a lot through interpreting French and Arabic for large numbers of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Economic Migrants. I am enjoying my work as a Support Worker allowing me to help people while learning more about the process of migrating to a better life in a safer world."*

*"Despite the ups and downs of working with new communities, I can't deny that most people in Wicklow town, Arklow Direct provision centres, Kippur Manor Estate Centre as well as Kilbride Army Camp and Slaney Court are making remarkable progress."*

To demonstrate the extensive support required and Djamel's commitment to support IPA individuals through SICAP, we have some examples of SICAP individuals supported since 2021.

## *Hocine Rahem*



Hocine Rahem is an asylum seeker based in the Grand Hotel in Wicklow Town. Hocine needed support with interpreting for GP appointments as he has a critical health condition, other medical care appointments, the allocation of a PPS number, social welfare appointments and IPO & IPAS appointments and paperwork support.

*"When Djamel walks in everyone comes and he is surrounded very quickly. Everyone likes him and he gives us lots of time to answer questions, we can call him with problems and if he is busy, he always calls back."*

Thankfully Hocine's medical issues are now stable, and he is in full time employment as head barman for a hotel in Co. Wicklow achieved by him with support from Djamel both in referring him to the KWETB for English language classes and for CV and Interview preparation. Hocine was also supported by Djamel in an application for SICAP's €500 education grant to support him to pay for an online course in the Amadeus System to work in the travel reservations industry, which is what he worked in before having to leave Algeria.

*"In Algeria I worked as a travel agent, but I noticed irregularities in how large amounts of money was travelling through the company and spoke to my supervisor about this. I received death threats for doing this and my life was in danger. I left Algeria for Paris but still felt unsafe with death threats still being made against me and ended up coming to Ireland in 2022 for protection".*

*"I feel safe here, and I am settled here and want to return to the work I did before, and this course will allow me to do this."*

Hocine has already spoken to the Hotel where he works and informed them that he is undertaking the course and that he would like to be considered for a move into reservations upon completion of the course. They have promised him an interview for a reservation's role upon completion.



## *Mohamad Almasri & Nour Alezzo*

Mohamad Almasri and Nour Alezzo, a Syrian couple with five children aged 11, 9, 8, 4 and 2.5 years old, were supported by SICAP and Djamel since arriving in Carnew in 2021. They came to Ireland in December 2019 as refugees under the resettlement programme located in Mosney in Co. Meath for 16 months. Eventually, in March 2021, they moved to Carnew in the Baltinglass MD where Djamel engaged with them and provided support. *"When I first met this family, I understood that there would be a lot to do because of their unique and pressing requirements."*

This family's journey to Ireland was fraught with danger over many years with harrowing details of Mohamad being held captive by the army and their family receiving death threats, a bomb landing on their home and the building collapsing around their son in his cot which he thankfully survived and was unhurt physically, but to this day has had a psychological impact on him.





Further trauma was evident in Nour's telling of the loss of four children both through still birth from trauma and stress and from ill health from poor living conditions. Their telling of their journey from Syria to Lebanon with people smugglers arguing over money and using their other son as a human shield with a gun to his head and Nour pleading for his release. Then while living in Lebanon, they spent years living from day to day and not know where they would end up. They are incredibly grateful to be in Ireland where they "feel safe."

Since arriving in Carnew, the parents were engaged with the KWETB for English language classes when Djamel first registered them with SICAP, and the children were assigned to schools and childcare facilities in Carnew. The most pressing support Djamel could provide was to assist the family with access to a local GP for ongoing health issues for Nour and to support Mohamad with his mental health issues, arising from the war. Djamel arranged weekly Psychotherapy sessions provided by a fund through the resettlement programme in Co. Wicklow which Djamel was aware of through his time working on this programme.

*"I also had to assist with the support required for housing reallocation as well as translations and interpreting for an ongoing legal issue that Mohamad had. I had a lot of work to do with English language assistance at GP appointments, Hospital appointments, County Council, School, Childcare, and with the Solicitor."*

Djamel's colleagues supported him in seeking SICAP supports for this family by registering Nour for a PEEP Play & Learn course for new community individuals where she got to meet other people in a similar situation, discuss parental challenges, and learn how to enhance her relationship with her children through play and engagement to support learning, emotional development, as well as health and physical development. Mohammad was supported on to Safe Pass and Manual Handling courses which he successfully completed. Since 2021 there have been 91 interventions provided to this family.



SICAP support provided by Djamel does not always go as expected. On one occasion at their home, while Djamel was providing SICAP support to the family, Nour took ill and collapsed. Djamel had to ring the ambulance, talk to them regarding Nour's medical issues while also trying to keep Mohamad and the kids calm and explain what was happening once the ambulance team arrived and was working on Nour. Nour was taken to hospital where, following treatment, she made a good recovery. Djamel continued to support the family at home in Nour's absence and to provide translation support between Mohamad and the doctors during this period.

While Mohamad and Nour were grateful to leave Mosney and move to Carnew they felt very isolated there with no English and 12 minutes' walk outside of the village. Due to health complications, they were unable to attend the KWETB English languages classes regularly and found there was no real opportunity to integrate into the community. They found life quite hard during this period. They have since moved to an apartment in Greystones which is outside of Lot 15-2. However, due to the relationship Djamel has forged with this family he has continued to support them with critical issues while they await local support. Djamel has registered them for local KWETB English language course in Bray but due to such large volumes seeking this course there is a waiting list before they can start.

Djamel supported the children in accessing primary school places both in Greystones and Kilcoole as there was not room for all four to attend one school, so they had to be split. They are hopeful Greystones school will be able to accommodate all four children soon. Djamel is point of contact with both schools due to the parent's lack of English and are therefore unable to converse with the staff at the schools.

Mohamad's mental state has improved and Nour will shortly have surgery, and it is hoped this will bring the long line of hospital appointments to an end.

## *Bassema Al Hussien*



Bassema Al Hussien is a refugee who left the Syrian war to travel to Lebanon before coming to Ireland. Bassema arrived in Ireland in 2018 to Clonea in Co. Waterford where she was resident for 14 months. She then moved to a house in Rathnew, Co. Wicklow in 2020 before relocating to an apartment in Bray in 2023 for health concerns.

While she was resident in Rathnew, Djamel registered Bassema for a SICAP online English language skills course (due to Covid) specifically for Syrian individuals. However, due to Bassema's extensive health issues, both physical and psychological, her attendance was not regular. Therefore, Bassema's English, while improving, is still very limited.

Djamel has provided extensive support to Bassema through translation and interpreting for medical appointments at her visits to her GP and hospital appointments on a weekly basis. Due to the number of appointments the support required to attend these appointments was "... enormous, particularly the interpreting portion, which requires more than one visit per day and sometimes four out of five days per week."

*"Every single appointment required English assistance. During the period I was supporting her, she had four separate surgeries, was hospitalised for more than three weeks twice, and still has ongoing appointments. She also suffers from significant trauma because of her experiences throughout the Syrian war."*

Bassema's health has improved in some areas while other areas have a poor diagnosis such as reducing eyesight with the possibility of losing her sight in the future. Bassema is also attending SPIRAZI and Psychotherapy sessions, and she is currently engaged with KWETB in Bray for English language classes.

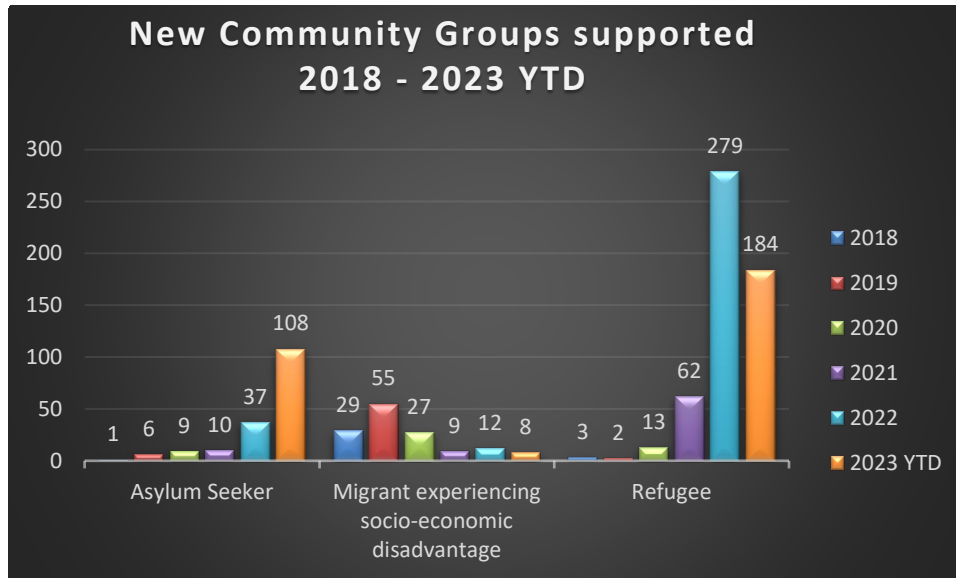


While Bassema does have an extensive family with siblings, children, and grandchildren, she is currently alone in Ireland. Her siblings are spread across Europe in a similar situation and her daughter and grandchildren are in Lebanon hoping to be settled in Ireland in the future. This family support would be vital to Bassema, especially with her deteriorating eyesight. Friendships were made in Rathnew during her time living there however it was not feasible to stay as she lived in a house with a front and back door which caused trauma to Bassema based on past experiences in Syria. Djamel supported Bassema in her move to Bray to live in an apartment which is very secure and on the second floor. This provides comfort to Bassema psychologically however this means that she is away from friends and a support network now and she feels quite lonely. The attendance at her English language class gives her interaction and company for which she is grateful. While Bassema feels that she "*couldn't be safer in Ireland*" if she had her family near, she would be happy and settled.

## New Community Outputs achieved through SICAP

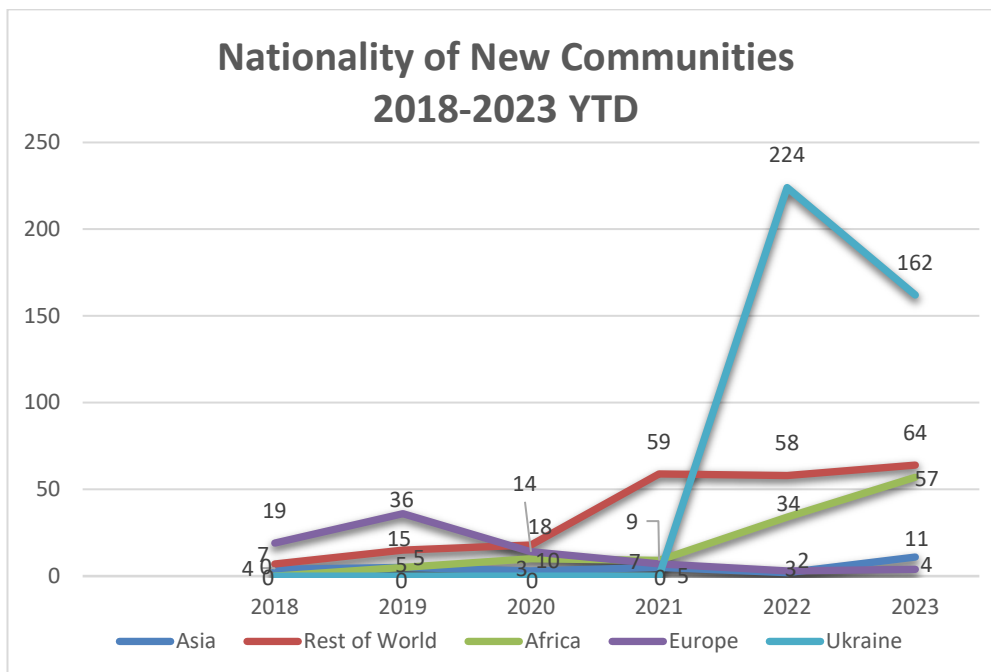
Since the start of this iteration of SICAP in 2018, CWP SICAP Programme has supported 666 New Community individuals across the new community groups supporting 157 Asylum Seekers, 89 Migrants and 420 Refugees with 58% being female, 41% being male and one individual identifying as other gender.

Figure 1 - New Community Groups supported 2018 - 2023 YTD



The nationalities supported are wide ranging with individuals classed by Europe, Rest of World, Africa, Asia, and Ukraine.

Figure 2 - Nationality of New Communities 2018 - 2023 YTD



As is known, the war on Ukraine began in 2021. Prior to this year there were no Ukrainian nationals supported by CWP SICAP. Post war outbreak the increase is visible in figure 2. What is also demonstrated in this chart is the extensive increase in the number of African and Rest of World nationals supported by CWP SICAP in Lot 15-2 since 2018 with big increases experienced since 2021 and still increasing in 2023. Refugees saw the biggest increase seeking support in 2022 and 2023 and there was also a sharp rise in Asylum Seekers in 2023.

Most International Protection Applicants became aware of SICAP through other organisations such as the Local Authority, Schools, DSP and the HSE to name a few.

With most International Protection individuals in Ireland in the 30 to 55 age range and the second largest age cohort in the 18-29 age range.

Figure 3 - How New Communities heard about SICAP?

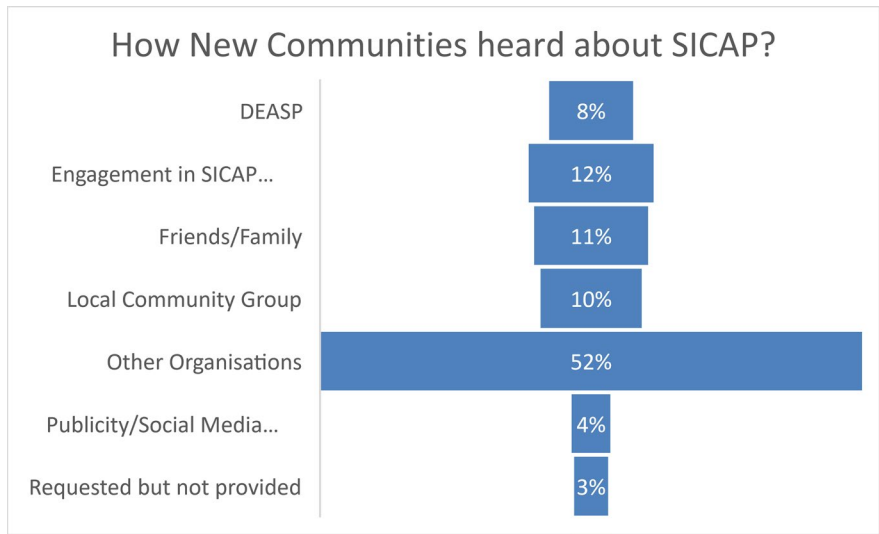
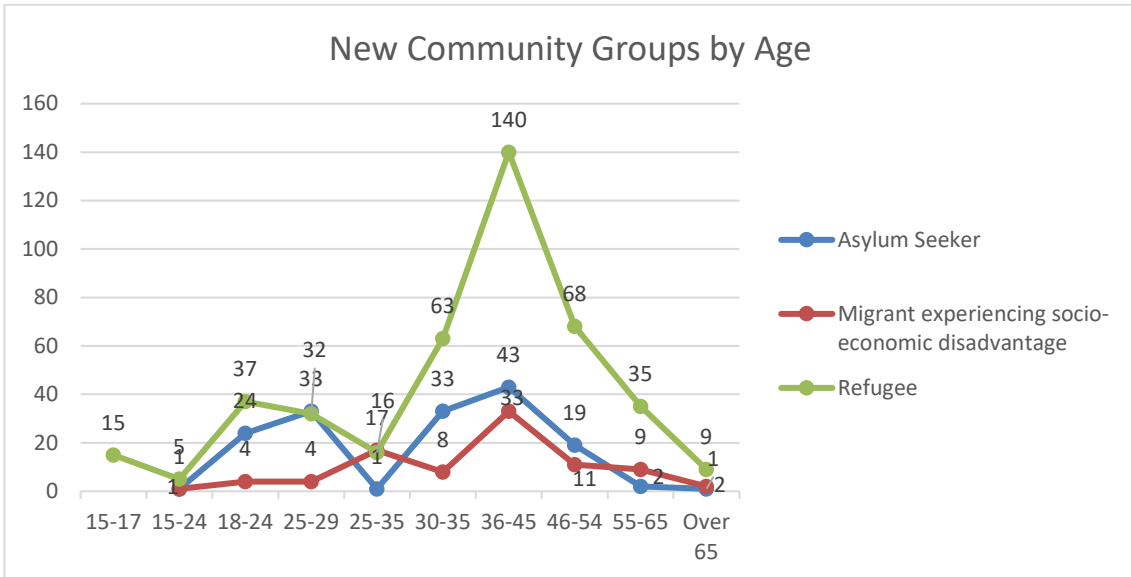


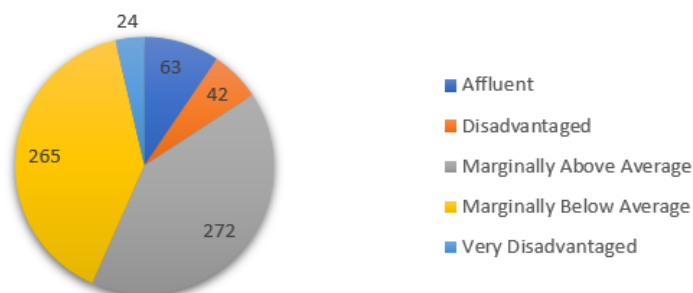
Figure 4 - New Community Groups by Age



International Protection Applicants are placed in Direct Provision and Emergency accommodation while some longer-term refugees are moved to one off accommodation in the community. The spread of these locations around the county does not fall into the more traditional HP Deprivation classifications for this demographic with disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas having the least number of individuals living in that area (6%) while 81% are in marginally below and marginally above average areas and 10% live in affluent areas.

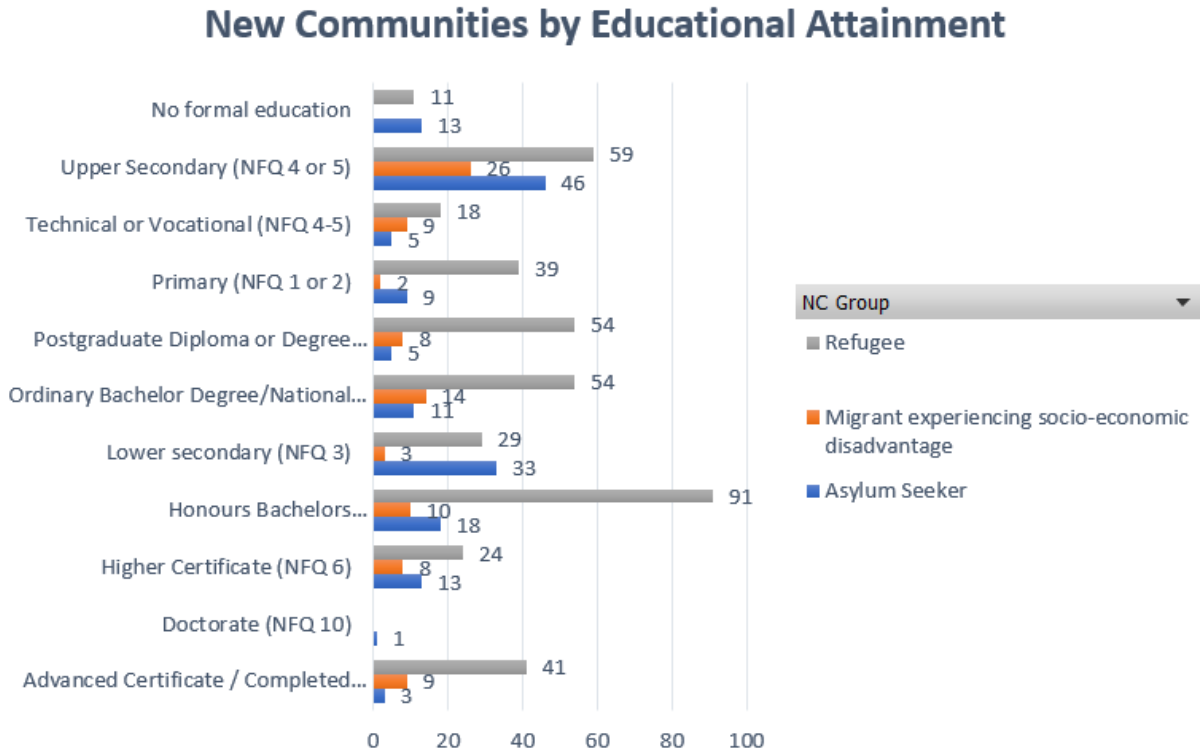
Figure 5 - New Communities by HP Deprivation range

**New communities by HP Deprivation range**



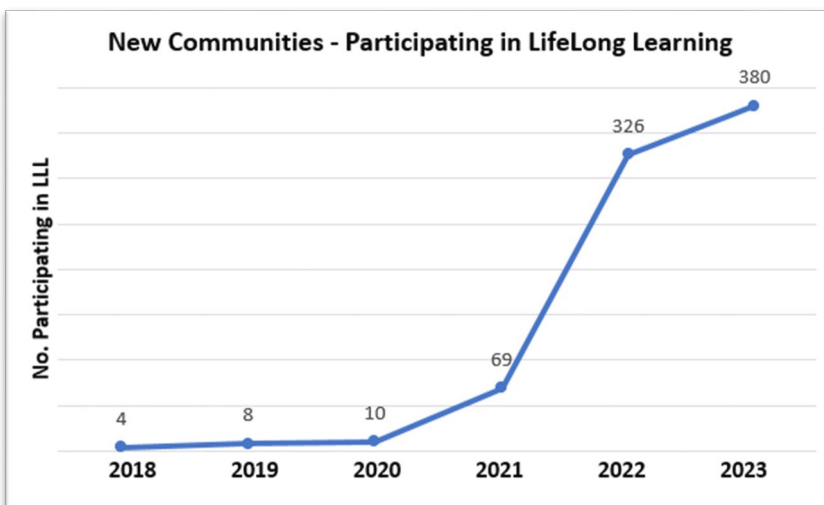
Of the 666 individuals registered with SICAP in Lot 15-2 4% have no formal education, 8% have the equivalent of primary educational attainment and 30% have the equivalent of secondary educational attainment while 20% achieved Certificate/Technical attainment with the remaining 40% having achieved educational attainment ranging from Ordinary Bachelor’s Degrees to Doctorates.

Figure 6 - New Communities by Educational Attainment



As would be expected, the majority (55%) of those registered with SICAP are unemployed less than 6 months as they engage with SICAP shortly after arriving in Co. Wicklow which tends to be recent to arriving in Ireland in most cases. 16% are unemployed between more than 6 months to 2 years with 11% unemployed over 2 years. 14% are economically inactive meaning that they are either on Illness/Disability, engaged in family duties, full time student, Retired or no longer seeking work.

Figure 7 - New Communities - Participating in Lifelong Learning



CWP SICAP has worked tirelessly with this target group of individuals since their arrival on our shores and gradually as their English improves through partaking in English language courses, they can then avail of further SICAP supports such as courses and employment and self-employment support. To facilitate their progression individuals have been referred to other organisations for courses and further support outside of SICAPs remit. In-

house SICAP has supported individuals through 797 course placements since 2018 with drastic rises in placements for this target group taking place since 2021 as illustrated in figure 7.

As individuals English improves, and once they are more than 6 months resident in Ireland, individuals can avail of employment and self-employment supports. To date 40 new community individuals have been supported into part-time and full-time employment in Lot 15-2. SICAP has also supported 22 individuals into self-employment.

Figure 8 - New Communities Progression to Employment

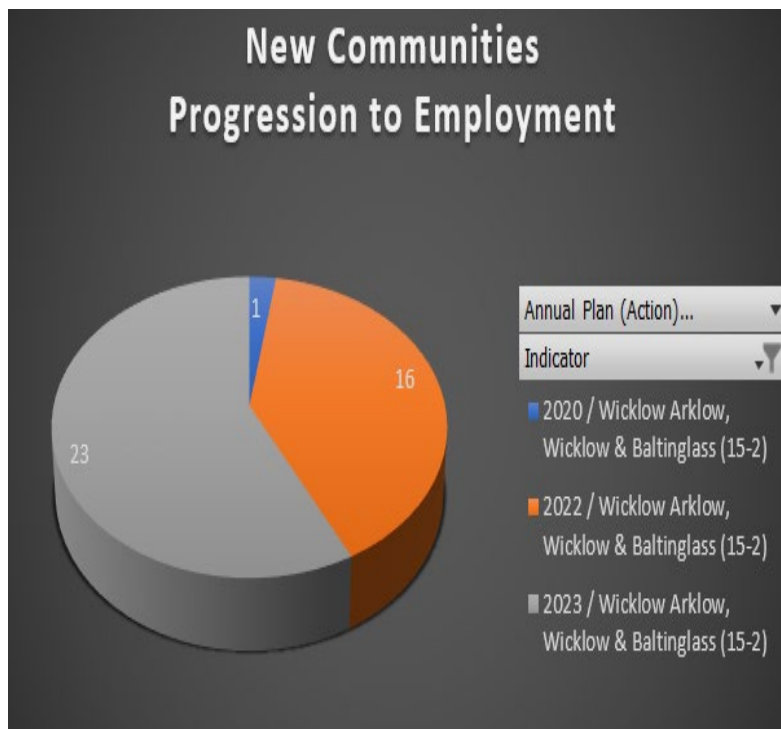
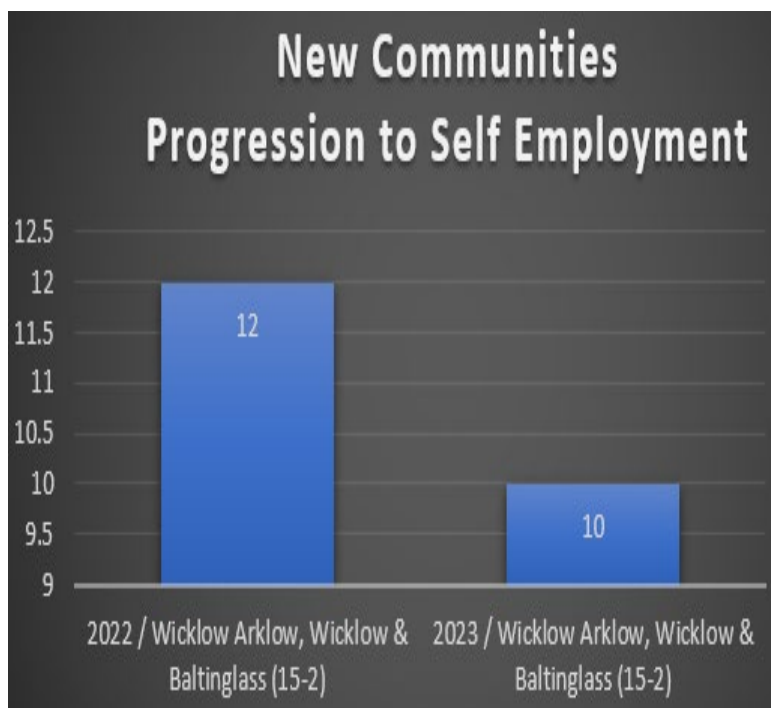


Figure 9 - New Communities Progression to Self-Employment



## Challenges and Learnings

- Asylum seekers and refugees are typically at an elevated risk of social and economic disadvantage and experience multiple barriers to social inclusion. This is particularly relevant to this target group population in Lot 15-2 with 71.5% living in a jobless household, 33% at risk of homelessness and 53% experiencing transport barriers.
- Djamal, even though he speaks numerous languages, cannot converse with all nationalities in their native languages. In those instances, he uses Google Translator where required. This can lead to some miscommunication, however both parties understand its necessity and appreciate that they are not alone. The alternative is they will feel marginalised and isolated. Where possible Djamal links in with individuals of the same nationality who has a level of English who can provide translation if they find the technology is not supporting their communication needs.
- It can be challenging for Direct Provision individuals to find work due to limited transport options from isolated locations or inflexible transport times to facilitate shift work options. Where possible Djamal links in with local transport companies to discuss this issue and seeks to find a solution.
- The location of Direct Provision centres is often in rural settings, leaving asylum seekers disconnected from towns resulting in a feeling of isolation and minimising the opportunity to integrate into the community.
- CWP SICAP found that most of the Direct Provision and Emergency Accommodation facilities are in Marginally Above Average and Marginally Below Average locations (81%) around the county. In Lot 15-2 The least amount of IP applicants are in disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas (6%).
- Mental health and trauma issues experienced by asylum seekers and refugees are difficult to address due to gaps in the availability of mainstream mental health services in Ireland.
- Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants receive diverse types of supports from SICAP tailored to their specific needs such as translation and interpretation supports, support through the International Protection system, support in understanding cultural differences to name a few. A lot of supports are soft supports helping families and individuals navigate day to day life in a new country and completely unfamiliar environment. What is considered progression for this target group is completely different to other target groups. Progression can be to speak their first few words of English or go to a shop on their own and ask for something in English. It can be to have the courage to attend an event of different nationalities for the first time.
- Due to the barriers facing this target group, progressing to employment, self-employment or education can for some be an unattainable expectation. For those that do progress minimum wage, part-time or shift work roles are typically achieved.
- Trust can be a huge issue for Direct Provision individuals due to language barriers as well as cultural differences. Djamal works tirelessly with individuals by continually showing up and offering assistance consistently and in so doing building trust over time.
- Cultural differences exist across all nationalities. It can be difficult for International Protection individuals to understand these differences and assimilate into Irish culture. Djamal holds information events for groups of new families and individuals to discuss important aspects of Irish life and takes time to explain Irish culture, societal norms, and Irish law to facilitate understanding. An example includes explaining child welfare laws here, explaining that any form of physical punishment of women or children is not tolerated here, what the role of Tusla is and the duty of care responsibilities Irish people have to protect children and vulnerable people.
- Acceptance in local communities is not always easy to attain and for new community individuals this can be very difficult and can take some time to achieve. When possible SICAP events are held to encourage socialisation and exposure for local people to new community individuals. New community individuals are also supported by SICAP staff to join Local Community Groups and local activities and events to support integration, socialisation, and a sense of belonging in their new home and community.

## Recommendations

- SICAP can support new communities and, in the context of this case study, international protection applicants going forward through enhanced collaborative relationships for referral options, creating greater access to services tailored to the needs of these individuals and improved social connections in communities.
  - To achieve greater referral options SICAP will continue to work closely with existing collaborative partners and seek to expand these partnerships to grow a network of collaborations ensuring enhanced referral options.
  - Through the growth of collaborative relationships additional services and support options will grow and be available to offer to this target group.
  - To facilitate integration of non-Irish individuals into Irish communities, SICAP will seek to avail of opportunities to bring together new community individuals of all nationalities together with Irish people. Through consistent and interactive immersive events combining nationalities and availing opportunities to communicate through various forms, SICAP can enhance relationships and break down barriers between these groups.
- CWP SICAP will endeavour to work with course and training providers to enhance training options tailored to the needs of this target group.

Through this Case Study CWP SICAP hope we have given you a flavour of the challenges faced in supporting International Protection Applicants, while demonstrating the efforts and commitment by SICAP staff in meeting these challenges and improving the experience of new community beneficiaries in County Wicklow.

CWP SICAP would like to thank our funders for their continued support to the dedicated work being conducted by our committed SICAP Support Workers and administration team. We look forward to the next iteration of SICAP and your continued support in the work that is ongoing.



Riailas na hÉireann  
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