



Submission to SICAP 2018-2020 Survey

By

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

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Introducing County Wicklow Public Participation Network

County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 under the directive of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and in accordance with legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46). Public Participation Networks were established to be an independent structure that would become the main link through which local authorities connect with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in a process to facilitate communities to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system. Co Wicklow PPN has 149 diverse member groups including sports groups, women's groups, older people's groups, tidy towns, LGBT groups, Travellers groups, community councils, resident's associations, youth groups and more. Member groups span the 5 Municipal Areas of Co Wicklow and the 3 PPN colleges which are Social Inclusion, Community & Voluntary and Environment. Some of these groups are networks in their own right.

PPN representatives serve as a voice for the community on structures including: the Local Community Development Committee; Housing & Corporate Estate Strategic Policy Committee; Planning & Development Strategic Policy Committee; Transport, Water & Environment Strategic Policy Committee; Community, Cultural & Social Development Strategic Policy Committee; Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee; Wicklow County Childcare Committee; Co Wicklow Children & Young People's Services Committee; Co Wicklow Local Sports Partnership; Wicklow County Tourism Board; Co Wicklow Volunteer Centre and Co Wicklow Joint Policing Committee.

PPN Representatives strive to ensure that the needs of the community sector are prioritised within local policy processes.

Purpose

An invitation was issued by the Office of Community, Enterprise and Social Development for LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) members to consult with their nominating organisations in order to participate in a Pabal survey regarding SICAP 2018-2020.

This submission is based on the experiences of our Co Wicklow PPN Secretariat and Representatives, our Social Inclusion Representatives in particular.

Emerging Needs and Social Inclusion Priorities

- In a submission to the LCDC in October 2016, Co Wicklow PPN in collaboration with Co Wicklow Citizen's Information Service highlighted the needs of relocated Somali families in Arklow and raised concerns in relation to the needs of any future relocated ethnic groups and new communities. The needs included: information on and access to service provision (including social welfare, education, and health services), information and access to financial entitlements, support with language issues, support with legal and family reunification issues amongst others. It raised the suggestion that a dedicated support worker is required to address the needs of refugees in the County.
- Co Wicklow Children & Young People's Services Committee has identified the urgent need to support children who are "out of school" and their families. They have noted a number of risk factors which need relevant supports including the social and economic status of the family as well as social anxiety, behavioural and learning issues for the child. The Children & Young People's Services Committee identified that most drop outs are young boys in their second year of secondary school.
- Youth mental health and wellbeing is an escalating concern. It has recently been reported that young people with Mental Health Problems can wait up to 18 months to access health services.

Suggested Changes to Address the Needs and Priorities

- Dedicated and ongoing research is needed to identify all the services i.e. statutory, community and voluntary that deliver social inclusion supports/work in the whole county. This information needs to be held in a central place and updated on a regular basis. The information should also be articulated to key services so that where a client presents with a specific issue it is easy to locate the service which would be the most beneficial for the client. It will also identify any gaps in service delivery. Research is also needed to collect and collate information on specific issues such as “out of school children” so that initiatives and supports can be targeted and efficient in addressing problems. Research should be an ongoing priority for SICAP.
- SICAP appears to focus on specific geographical areas that have been designated disadvantaged. It does not take into consideration that a “community” can be dispersed. For example in the case of social housing policy, many local authorities own and let houses that could be in what is considered an affluent area. This can result in excluding families accessing necessary supports. Geographical constraints in the programme should be changed.
- The definition of disadvantaged should be broadened to encompass issue groups. An example of this could be young people with mental health issues.
- Children and Young People can miss out on vital supports if they are not enrolled in schools that come under the DEIS Programme. They may be harder to target but can be doubly disadvantaged as they cannot participate in these programmes. Their families also miss out on supports necessary to help them address their children’s issues. SICAP should be able to extend and outreach the expertise in the DEIS system to those who are not receiving them
- The new programme needs to be cognisant of real engagement. It should be about ensuring people’s needs are addressed and service provision is allowed for at a pace or level suited to individual needs,

Refining the SICAP Goals

- To date too much focus has been placed on labour market supports and this has been to the detriment of community development, capacity building and social inclusion work. There is a great deal of cross-over between goals 2 & 3 and the roles of statutory bodies such as ETBs and Solas,
- SICAP goals were unrealistic and expectations regarding communities did not allow for people to access the programme at their own pace
- Goal one could be refined to allow for more capacity building and engagement through soft supports such as developing an interest/social group e.g. choir, women’s groups. It is important that time is allowed to build relationships and trust as this will ultimately support and encourage progression.
- Goal two could be refined to allow for soft skills e.g. flower arranging that would promote group development, relationship building and trust so that clients might eventually grow in confidence to progress to more structured learning and more sustainable community development.

Horizontal Themes

- While all the horizontal themes are valid, “Applying community development approaches to achieve the participation of disadvantaged and marginalised communities in the wider local development context” is thought to be the most important. However it is considered that this theme has been lost as there appears to be neither the time nor the resources to focus on the development of quality bottom up community development and engagement.

- Where some groups/organisations have put a little of their time into capacity building, engagement and trust development there has been nowhere to record the work and a feeling that this vital piece of work is not valued as it should be.
- The definition of citizen engagement needs to be re-defined & broadened to include all forms of participation. For example the recent 1916 celebrations engaged many communities and groups across the country to participate in some form of activity to mark the event. This type of engagement is beneficial and should be recorded as a social inclusion outcome for some groups.
- More clarity and understanding needs to be given between the definitions and differences of Community Development (i.e. social inclusion/capacity building work) and Local Development
- Community groups are uniquely positioned to work with hard to reach people because they are based in the community, independent from formal structures and the philosophies and principles underpinning community development allow for flexibility in addressing the complex needs and issues affecting communities

SICAP Targets, Outcomes and Indicators

- Targets, Outcomes and Indicators need to take into consideration that progression and sustainable change can take time and sometimes it can be years, possibly a generation before a quantifiable measured outcome becomes apparent. This should not negate the persistency of interventions
- Very few headline indicators relate to community engagement and whilst children and families are a target group there are no headline indicators measuring that type of engagement
- While monitoring and evaluation is important, recording targets; outcomes; and indicators should not be so vast and onerous that it interferes with the community development work on the ground.
- The current registration and recording process for SICAP is reportedly becoming a barrier to engaging people with the programme. It is seen to be too intrusive for the client. It is also unclear why the extent of information required is needed, what it is used for and to what/whose benefit.

Engaging Hard to Reach Groups

- Roma, and Travellers are the most socially and economically excluded groups in the country yet according to Pavee Point less than 2% of the SICAP caseload nationally and less than 3% of local community groups were from the Irish Traveller and Roma communities. It is clear that to date these groups have been under-represented in SICAP. Wicklow Travellers Group and Bray Travellers Group have a long standing and trusting relationship with Traveller families in Co Wicklow. These groups work towards empowering Travellers to reach their full potential and to participate in all aspects of society with the aim of achieving fulfilment of Travellers' social, economic and human rights. Their work mirrors the ethos, themes and goals in the SICAP Programme. Given Traveller under-representation in the current SICAP, stronger, respectful and equal inclusion of them should be a priority for SICAP 2018-2020. Greater collaboration with Wicklow Travellers Group and Bray Travellers Group will address this obvious gap in service delivery.
- At least 1 in 10 adults of working age have a disability. Whilst disability spans all sectors of the community and all ages, it is age related in that it increases with age and 3 out of every 5 people aged over sixty years old has at least one chronic condition. People with hidden disabilities are particularly disadvantaged. According to Disability Federation Ireland "People with disabilities are one of the groups in Ireland at highest risk of poverty with an "at risk of poverty" rate of 22.8%, a deprivation rate of 51.3% and a consistent

poverty rate of 13.2%". It has been estimated that in 2017 56,000 people will be diagnosed with a disability or disabling condition for the first time. The Co Wicklow Local Authority Access Group should be resourced to develop their capacity and then extend their remit to include participation in developing actions for people with disabilities in SICAP.

- SICAP did not allow for flexibility in the provision of different levels and paces of programmes and services which resulted in the exclusion of those most hard to reach and causing barriers to full engagement. Having effective relationships with hard to reach communities is more important than the current SICAP required outcomes

Extending the Target Groups

- Carers should be included as a target group in SICAP, particularly young carers. The lack of respite services means that they are often excluded from education and the workforce through no fault of their own. According to Census 2011, there are 17,616 people with a disability in the county and 5,131 carers.
- Older People should be included as a target group in SICAP. Between 1991 and 2011 the number of people in the county aged between 45-64 increased by 93.49% and the population aged 65 years and older increased by 52.82%. The Co Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 2016-2020 reports that "there will be a requirement for an increasing level of older persons related social services in coming years"
- Young people experiencing mental health issues should be included in the target groups. Currently youth mental health is a priority area for the entire county that does not receive adequate funding

Innovation in SICAP 2018-2020

All programmes and innovations receiving SICAP supports should meet the priorities identified in local plans e.g. LECP, CYPSC. Any interventions should be evidence based, targeted at identified disadvantaged groups, and delivered by agencies who have the trust in the target community.

Annual Planning Process

Adequate consultation with groups such as the Children & Young People's Services Committee, Comhairle na Nog, Disability groups, Traveller organisations etc. should take place to agree established and emerging needs of the various target groups and formulate the responses that could be delivered under SICAP