

# Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

2018 - 2022 Evaluation

## Foreword

On behalf of Northside Partnership we are delighted to present the findings of this independent review of our implementation of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 -2022. This report outlines the findings gleaned by Dr. Maria Quinlan through consultation and quantitative research.

In commissioning this research we sought to capture the valuable perspectives of all stakeholders, and to do so in a way that elevates the voice of communities who have benefited from SICAP supports while also hearing from our teams and external stakeholders.

We would like to thank Dr. Maria Quinlan for the dedication and rigor in which she undertook the research and for her use of creative methodologies such as photovoice to capture a diverse range of experiences in an accessible and participatory way.

We would also like to thank the SICAP participants, Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and our SICAP staff teams who gave of their time and energy in participating in the research.

This report represents the authentic voice of all stakeholders and coupled with the quantitative analysis gives us a well-rounded overview of the impact of SICAP in NSP's catchment area. This report gives important insight into the efficacy of our delivery and will impact on future implementation of the programme. This is particularly important in the context whereby the SICAP Programme 2024-2028 is subject to public procurement in late 2023.

We look forward to working in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure that people living in our catchment continue to benefit from NSP's SICAP supports and continue to build on the capabilities within the individuals, Social Enterprise and Local Community Groups in our area.

**Paul Rogers**  
CEO, Northside Partnership.



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Social exclusion is multi-dimensional in nature - the data to measure outcomes from SICAP-funded actions comes from a variety of sources and includes both quantitative and qualitative elements. It is widely acknowledged that it is difficult to demonstrate impact, particularly when applying community development approaches. ‘Hard’ outcomes can be more readily demonstrated, for example if someone is assisted to find work or completes a lifelong learning course this outcome and change is clear to see and can be reported as such. Often, however, engaging with people, communities and groups results in ‘soft’ change which is more challenging to establish and to provide supporting evidence. These types of outcomes lend themselves to being demonstrated and evaluated through qualitative research.

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Pobal [1]



# 1. Introduction

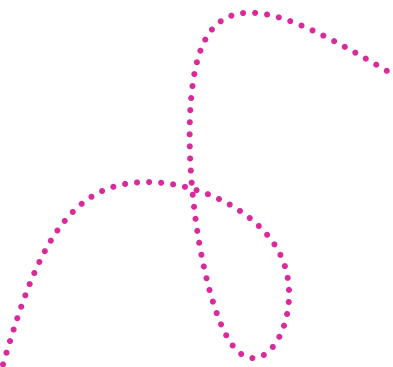
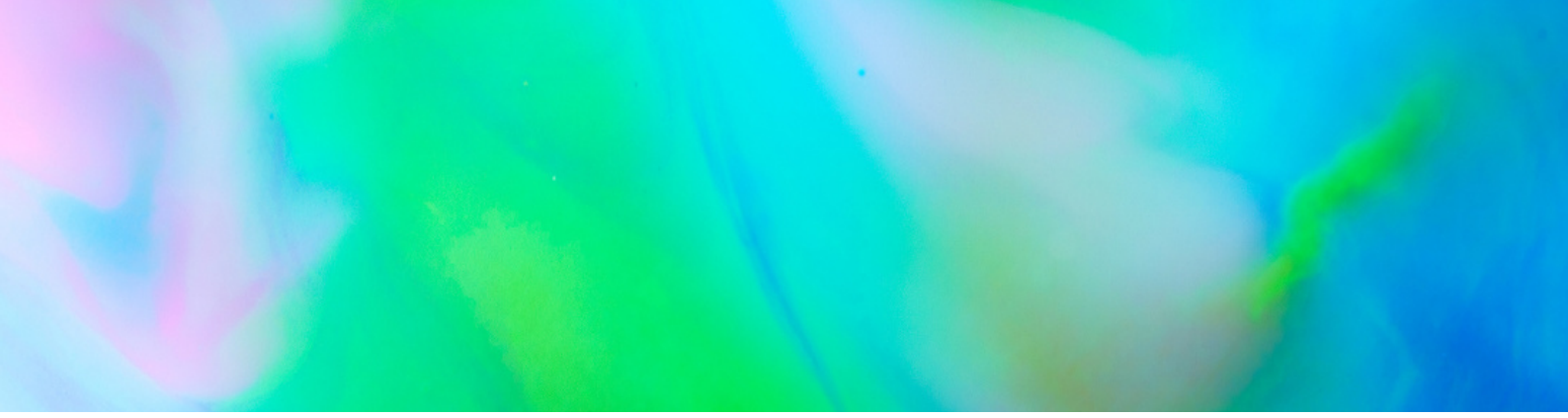
## Aim & Objectives

- The aim of this project is to evaluate the Northside Partnerships' (NSP) delivery of SICAP between 2018 and 2022 - with a particular focus on adding a qualitative element to existing SICAP quantitative data.
- The evaluation aims to assess to what extent SICAP goals and objectives were achieved, and to evaluate the NSP SICAP management, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

## Methodology

- Triangulation of evaluation design was achieved by using a variety of both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches, and including both service users and service providers within the consultation process.
- This type of triangulation of both methods and sample aims to decrease bias and increase validity of the evaluation findings.
- Photovoice, which is a participatory visual method, was used to capture the lived experience of both service users and service providers. [2] Photovoice is a method rooted in community activism which aims to facilitate people to tell their own stories directly. In this case, we wished to amplify and centralise the lived experience of SICAP impact in a way which was meaningful and inclusive for participants.





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## Limitations

This project provides a relatively light-touch evaluation of a body of SICAP activity which spans five years. During those five years the NSP have supported thousands of people within the community via a significant amount of initiatives and have pivoted their services in response to both the COVID pandemic and the war in the Ukraine. Given the size and scale of the evaluation, the scope has had to sacrifice some depth to adequately capture and review the required breath of both time and service-provision.



# 2. Key Findings

- As outlined in Section 3, 'SICAP in Numbers', the NSP has met or exceeded all but one of its annual SICAP quantitative targets from 2018 to 2022. Over the five-year period under study, the NSP's SICAP funded actions have covered 11 of the 12 SICAP themes and 20 of the 29 potential outcomes.
- It has done this by providing a range and depth of programme actions and interventions, and in a way which clearly aligns with both the values, aims and intention of the SICAP programme, and which aligns with the values and vision of its own organisation.
- The detailed findings of both the quantitative and the qualitative elements of this evaluation are outlined in Section 3 and Section 4. When taken together and viewed holistically, the following key take-aways emerge with regard to the fundamental components of NSP's success in delivering on its SICAP-funded aims and objectives from 2018-2022.

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## Integration & Collaboration

### Integral community connector

- Through its work with the 50+ Local Community Groups (LCG) and 15 Social Enterprises which it supports via the SICAP programme, and through its wider network of inter-agency partnerships, NSP leverages and integrates the funding opportunities, the services provided, and the opportunities available to both Goal 1 and Goal 2 beneficiaries. This has an empowering effect on beneficiaries across the board, providing them with a 'seat at the table'.
- Across the board this focus on integration, collaboration, and building meaningful trusted relationships is fed back from all beneficiaries who participated in this evaluation, and aligns with how NSP service providers believe that they deliver the SICAP-funded programmes.

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## Creatively Joining the Dots

### Innovative, creative, collaborative

- Through this focus on integration, collaboration and relationship-building, NSP creatively joins the dots when it comes to providing the right service, to the right person at the right time in a way which is both meaningful to the end-beneficiary, and which provides significant impact in line with the SICAP programme's aims and objectives.
- The repeated refrain of 'any door will do' heard from both NSP service providers, and SICAP beneficiaries alike during this consultation, exemplifies this commitment to providing a joined-up, person-centred service to people who seek help from the NSP.
- This commitment to creatively responding to community needs was particularly evident and effective when providing responses during both the COVID pandemic and the needs of people affected by the Ukraine War. In both cases, NSP were able to pivot in a way which was responsive to the dynamically changing needs of their community.

- NSP works through an Integrated Service approach which brings together all funded programmes delivered by NSP. This includes programmes such as SICAP, the Local Area Employment Services, Tús, Preparing for Life, the Supporting Travellers and Roma (STAR) education pilot, Empowering Communities, Careers in Mind, Money Made Sense and a range of Health and Wellbeing programmes funded by the HSE - to provide coordinated support and opportunities to people within the community. [3]
- SICAP funds the core of the NSP organisation and therefore enables NSP to manage existing programmes, bring on new programmes and to effectively integrate them for the benefit of the communities.

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## Expansion

### Life-changing support & opportunities

- The qualitative findings from this evaluation bring to life the impact behind the numbers. Beneficiaries report receiving hugely life-enhancing, and in many cases life-changing, supports via NSP SICAP-funded interventions.
- In a recent survey of individual beneficiaries, over 96% reported that they would recommend NSP services and supports to a friend or family member.
- Building confidence amongst individual beneficiaries and providing the practical supports which can make a key difference in the operational running of a LCG or Social Enterprise, combine to affect meaningful change in line with the SICAP-programme objectives across Goals 1 and 2.

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## Non-linear

### Truly Person-Centred

- Another key way in which the qualitative findings from this evaluation bring to life the impact behind the numbers is in relation to the person-centred approach which NSP adopts across its programmes.
- In keeping with their 'any door will do' philosophy, NSP meets beneficiaries where they are, providing supports which are meaningful and supportive and which are fit-for-purpose. These supports recognise the non-linearity of many people's lives and the need for increased support at different times.
- Again this commitment to responding to community needs in a person-centred way was particularly evident and effective when providing responses during both the COVID pandemic and the needs of people affected by the Ukraine War.

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[3] For more details on these services and more which NSP provide please see: <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/employment/>; <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/local-development/empowering-communities/>; <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/employment/tus/>; <https://www.preparingforlife.ie/>; <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/health/money-made-sense/>; <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/health/>



# 3. SICAP in Numbers

## Key Findings

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### SICAP 2018-2022 Monitoring Framework

- As outlined on pages 7 & 8, Pobal's SICAP Programme Requirements 2018 – 2022 Version 1:1 outlines a monitoring framework which Programme Implementor's (PIs) report against annually. [4]
- These include two overall SICAP goals, 12 thematic areas, 29 possible outcomes, and two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Allied to this, all beneficiaries of SICAP supports must belong to one of 13 SICAP target groups, and must be one of six types of beneficiaries.
- PIs do not need to cover all thematic areas, possible outcomes, target groups or specific types of beneficiaries each year, but they must outline annually their planned approach, targets and performance against same.
- NSP has produced annual progress reports for each of the years' under study, and these, along with a series of annual and mid-year action progress reports have been reviewed as part of this evaluation (n=24 reports in total).



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### NSP Performance vs Target

- NSP has met or exceeded both KPI 1 and KPI 2 overall targets each year from 2018 to 2022.
- As outlined in Figure 2, the NSP annual target for total number of LCGs supported was 50. This target was met each year, with a five year average of 52 LCGs supported.
- As outlined in Figure 5, the NSP annual target for total number of individuals (over the age of 15) supported ranged from 842-860 between 2018 and 2022. This target was met each year, with a five year average of 871 individuals supported.
- As outlined in Figure 1 and Figure 6, the only NSP annual target which has not been met consistently over the five-year period under study, is the KPI 2 sub-target - percentage of individuals supported who live in an area defined by Pobal as Disadvantaged. With an annual target of 41%, NSP's five yearly average was 36%. The NSP SICAP team however believe that this blunt measurement hides the work it has done with beneficiaries who may be living in rental or temporary homeless accommodation located in areas which do not meet the Pobal criteria for 'Disadvantaged'. Perhaps a more meaningful and reflective measurement of the characteristics of individuals who have worked with NSP during this period is the percentage of individuals identified in KPI 2, who experience multiple social inclusion barriers.[5] As outlined in Figure 1 and Figure 7, this averages at 56% for the five-year period under study.

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[4] Pobal (2018) SICAP Programme Requirements 2018 – 2022 Version 1:1

[5] % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier. In the NSP case, multiple barriers include principal economic status; living in a jobless household and current economic status.



- Table 1 and Table 2 provide more detail on NSPs SICAP beneficiaries - outlining the number of beneficiaries supported via each theme and potential outcome from 2018-2022. As stated earlier, while it is not obligatory to cover all 12 themes or 29 potential outcomes, over the five year period NSP has covered 11 of the 12 themes and 20 of the 29 potential outcomes.

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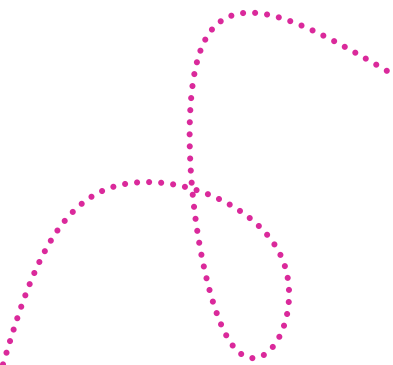
## Total Number of Interventions

- NSP delivered on average 560 interventions for LCGs yearly from 2018 to 2022. This ranged from 434 in 2018 to a height to 700 in 2020.
- NSP delivered on average 3,201 interventions for individuals yearly from 2018 to 2022. This ranged from 3,100 in 2018 to a height of 3,762 in 2019.

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## Social Enterprises Supported

- As outlined in Figure 4, beginning with two in 2018, and finishing 2022 with 15, NSP has achieved significant yearly growth in the number of Social Enterprises which it supports.





# SICAP 2018-2022 Monitoring Framework [6]

## 2

### Goals

- 1.To support communities and target groups in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of Local Community Groups (LCGs) and creating more sustainable communities. The type of supports that can be provided to LCGs include helping to prepare community action plans, helping LCGs provide supports to disadvantaged members of the community, training in key areas such as governance and applying for grants, identifying skill gaps and training for board / committee members and support in setting up a social enterprise.
- 2.To support disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives through the provision of personal development, lifelong learning and labour market supports. The type of supports that can be provided to individuals include personal development programmes (such as confidence building and mindfulness workshops), job and upskilling supports (such as CV development and mock interview sessions), access to education and training, assistance in starting a business or social enterprise.

## 12

### Thematic Areas

- |                                             |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.Promote community engagement              | 8. Preventative supports for children/youth                         |
| 2.Build capacity of LCGs                    | 9. Preparing people for employment                                  |
| 3.Support participation in decision-making  | 10. Promoting better quality & sustainable employment               |
| 4.Promote collaborative engagement          | 11. Providing a pathway to self-employment/ social entrepreneurship |
| 5.Support relevant social enterprises       | 12. Addressing barriers in lifelong learning & employment           |
| 6.Promote personal development & wellbeing  |                                                                     |
| 7.Providing lifelong learning opportunities |                                                                     |

## 29

### Possible Outcomes

- Each SICAP thematic area has a series of possible outcomes - there are a total of 29 possible outcomes overall.
- Organisations identify which of these outcomes will be achieved for each action in the annual plan.
- Outcomes are measured annually and also cumulatively over the lifetime of the programme.

## 2

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- KPI 1: Total number of LCGs supported
- KPI 2: Total number of individuals (15 years upwards) engaged under SICAP on a one-to-one basis
  - % of KPI 2 living in a disadvantaged area (as per Pobal definition).
  - % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier



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## 13

### Target Groups

All beneficiaries of SICAP supports must belong to one of the 13 SICAP target groups which are:

1. Disadvantaged Children and Families
2. People living in Disadvantaged Communities
3. Disadvantaged Young People (aged 15 – 24)
4. People with Disabilities
5. Disadvantaged Women
6. Roma
7. Emerging Needs Group
8. Travellers
9. Lone Parents
10. The Disengaged from the Labour Market (Economically Inactive)
11. Low Income Workers/ Households
12. The Unemployed
13. New Communities

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## 2

### Beneficiaries

There are six SICAP beneficiary types.

1. Local Community Groups
2. Children and Families
3. Social Enterprises
4. Non-Caseload Individuals
5. Individual Beneficiaries
6. Programme Implementor (PI) Collaborations



# Figure 1: SICAP 2018–2022

## Northside Partnership FIVE YEAR AVERAGES

KPI 1 ahead  
of target of  
50

52

LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS  
(LCG) SUPPORTED

560

LCG INTERVENTIONS

9

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES  
SUPPORTED

KPI 2 ahead  
of target of  
846

871

INDIVIDUALS  
SUPPORTED

3201

INDIVIDUAL  
INTERVENTIONS

267

LIFELONG LEARNING  
COURSES DELIVERED

KPI 2 behind  
target of 41%

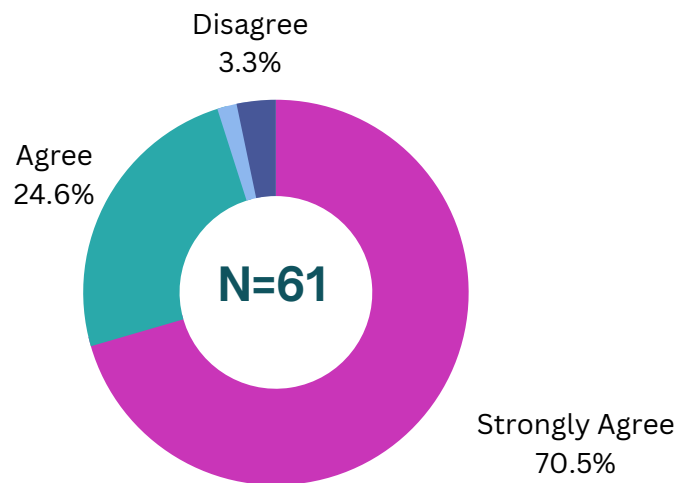
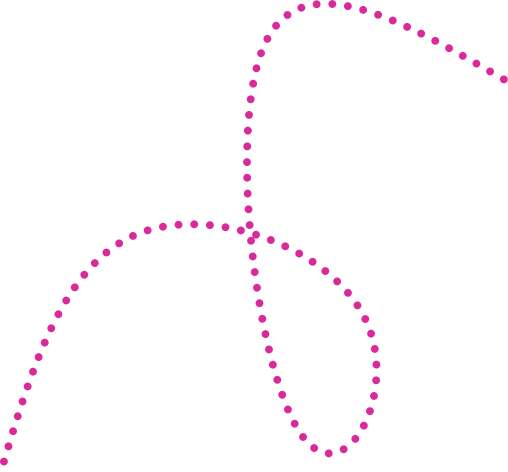
36%

% of Individuals  
supported who are  
living in a  
Disadvantaged Area

56%

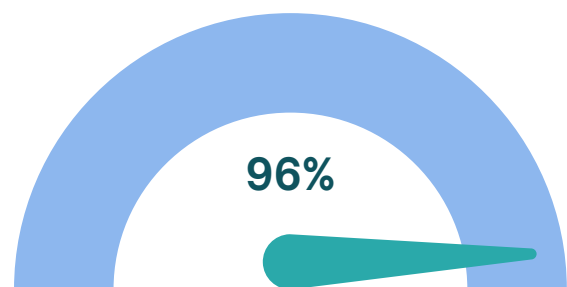
% of Individuals  
supported who have  
experienced Social  
Inclusion barriers\*

\* % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier. % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier. In the NSP case, multiple barriers include principal economic status; living in a jobless household and current economic status.



### "I would recommend Northside Partnership service(s) or support(s) to a friend or family member"

- This one statement forms part of the Net Promoter Score, a metric used by many organisations to assess customer/client satisfaction and to predict future use of services. It was used as part of a wider survey of SICAP beneficiaries conducted by NSP - overall 96% of respondents (n=61) indicated that they either strongly agreed (70.5%) or agreed (24.6%) with this statement.
- This was a relatively small sample, and as with any scale assessment, it is not a perfect measurement, however research has shown the Net Promoter Score to be an effective tool for assessing people's experiences of social care services (for example Koladycz et al, 2018 and Noremberg Bitencourt et al, 2022) [7]



96% of individual beneficiaries surveyed (n=61) would recommend NSP's services or supports to a friend or family member.

**Table 1: NSP Goal 1 - Number of Beneficiaries Per Year**

<b>GOAL 1 # OF BENEFICIARIES PER YEAR</b>		<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Promote community engagement &amp; stronger communities</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>
	Needs of local communities and groups are identified, represented and integrated through local planning and service delivery	35	42	66	13	11
	Local social inclusion and equality issues are addressed by Local Community Groups	6	4	-	10	30
	There is increased participation in social, cultural and civic activities among SICAP target groups due to the support of community groups	9	-	-	-	-
	A strengthened sense of community	-	-	-	-	-
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Build capacity of Local Community Groups (LCG)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>
	LCGs progress along the community development matrix	-	-	-	-	-
	LCGs have a greater capacity to address the social inclusion needs of the communities they serve or represent	38	54	57	73	68
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Support participation in decision-making structures</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>
	SICAP target groups and community groups are represented and actively participate in decision-making structures	35	34	22	22	26
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Promote collaborative engagement</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
	LCGs work with local service providers to develop and implement initiatives addressing social exclusion and inequality	12	2	2	5	1
	Collaboration and co-operation between relevant stakeholders in addressing social exclusion and inequality is increased	-	-	-	3	4
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Support social enterprises which contribute to SICAP outcomes</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>
	Contribute to a social enterprise sector locally and support social enterprises contributing to achieving SICAP outcomes	4	4	9	14	15
	Social enterprises supported by SICAP are stronger and more able to contribute to local economic and community development				2	8
	Social enterprises supported by SICAP provide training, volunteering and employment opportunities for SICAP target groups	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF GOAL 1 BENEFICIARIES PER YEAR</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>163</b>



Figure 2: KPI 1, Total Number of Local Community Groups (LCGs) Supported

Year	Target	Actual
2018	50	52
2019	50	51
2020	50	50
2021	50	55
2022	50	54

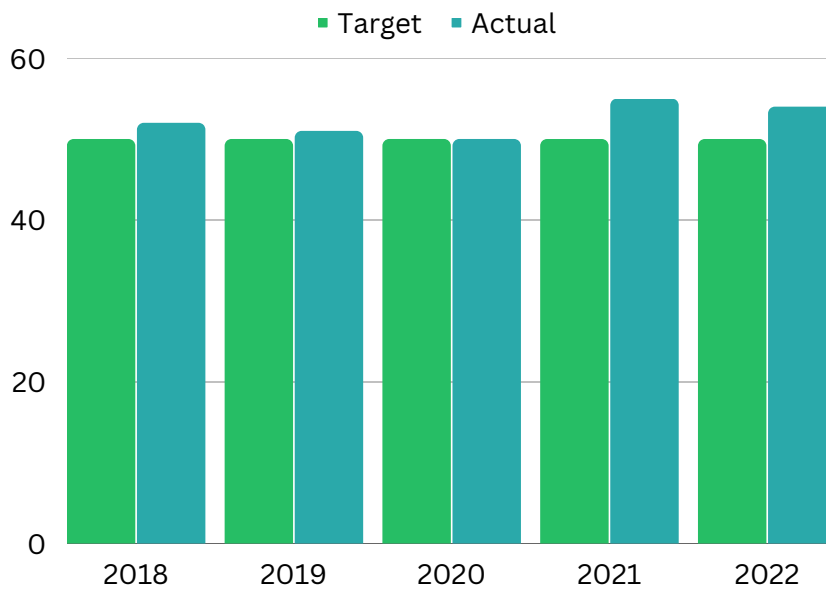


Figure 3: Total Number of LCG Interventions

Year	Number
2018	434
2019	581
2020	700
2021	640
2022	445

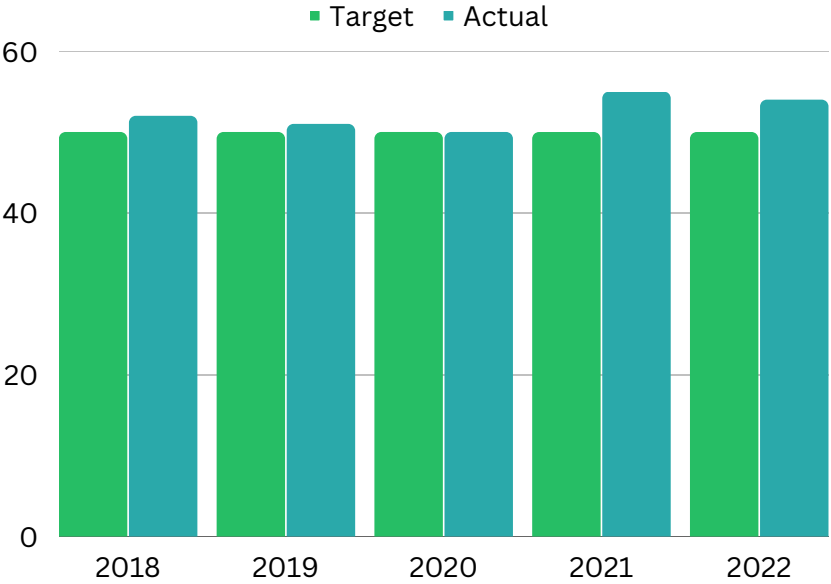
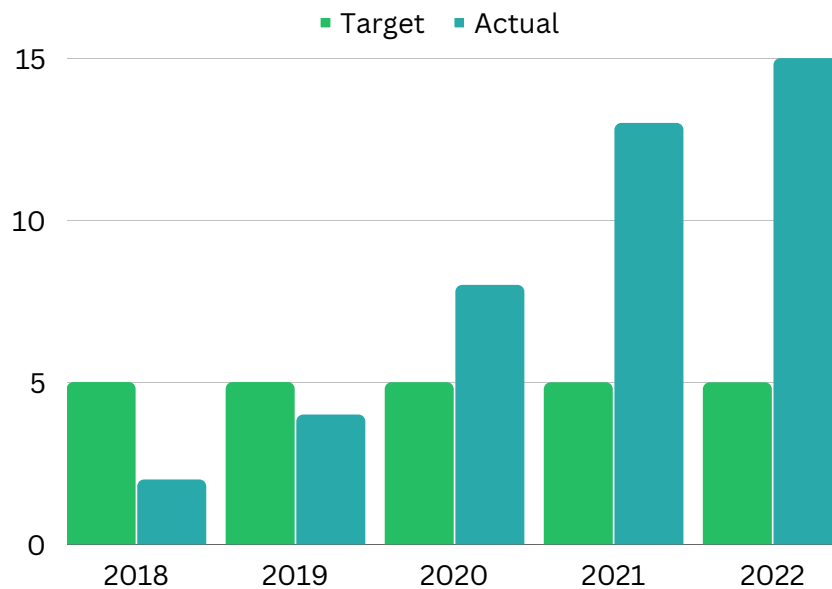


Figure 4: Total Number of Social Enterprises Supported

Year	Target	Actual
2018	5	2
2019	5	4
2020	10	9
2021	10	13
2022	12	15



**Table 2: NSP Goal 2 - Number of Beneficiaries Per Year**

GOAL 2 # OF BENEFICIARIES PER YEAR		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Promoting personal development &amp; wellbeing</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>255</b>
	SICAP clients have improved personal skills, wellbeing and capabilities	111	236	216	297	255
	SICAP clients increase their participation in civic life, education and/or employment	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Providing lifelong learning opportunities</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>623</b>
	SICAP clients receive information about opportunities for lifelong learning	394	522	442	497	421
	SICAP clients participate in lifelong learning	135	102	205	138	202
	SICAP clients achieve higher levels of qualifications as a result of participating in lifelong learning	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Preventative supports for children &amp; young people</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>78</b>
	Local communities and statutory stakeholders develop holistic approaches to address early school leaving	-	-	-	-	1
	Children and their families are supported in education & personal development	-	-	-	1	-
	Young people at risk of early school leaving remain within the education system	35	88	62	58	77
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Preparing people for employment &amp; to remain in work</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>50</b>
	SICAP clients are better prepared to enter the labour market	47	30	5	2	35
	SICAP clients are supported to remain in work through receipt of ongoing in-work supports	26	66	26	20	15
	Local employers are supported to have a more inclusive approach to recruitment	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Promoting better quality &amp; sustainable employment</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	SICAP clients, the unemployed and those on low incomes, move into more sustainable and better quality employment	-	-	-	-	-
	Local employers are supported to create better quality and sustainable jobs	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Providing a pathway to self-employment/social entrepreneurship</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>253</b>
	Individuals are supported into self-employment (including social entrepreneurship)	312	225	184	187	180
	SICAP clients who have progressed into self-employment (including social entrepreneurship) are supported to ensure the sustainability of their businesses	108	169	136	98	73
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Addressing barriers &amp; gaps in lifelong learning &amp; employment</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
	Gaps in labour market and education provision are identified and addressed through joint planning and service delivery	-	-	-	1	1
	More joined-up referral systems are developed to help individuals access the right services	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF GOAL 2 BENEFICIARIES PER YEAR</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>1276</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>1260</b>



**Figure 5: KPI 2, Total Number of Individuals  
(aged 15 years or over) engaged under SICAP  
on a one-to-one basis**

Year	Target	Actual
2018	860	862
2019	842	888
2020	842	847
2021	842	862
2022	842	895

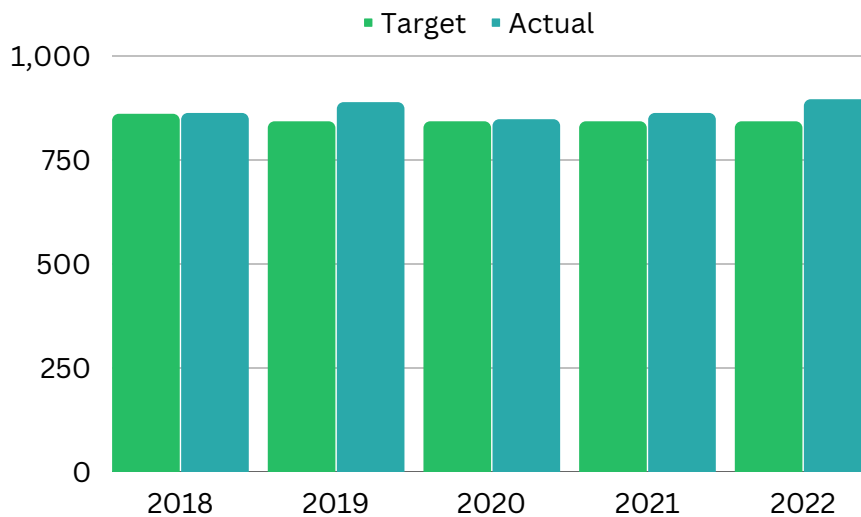
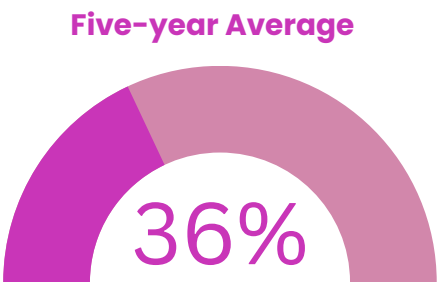
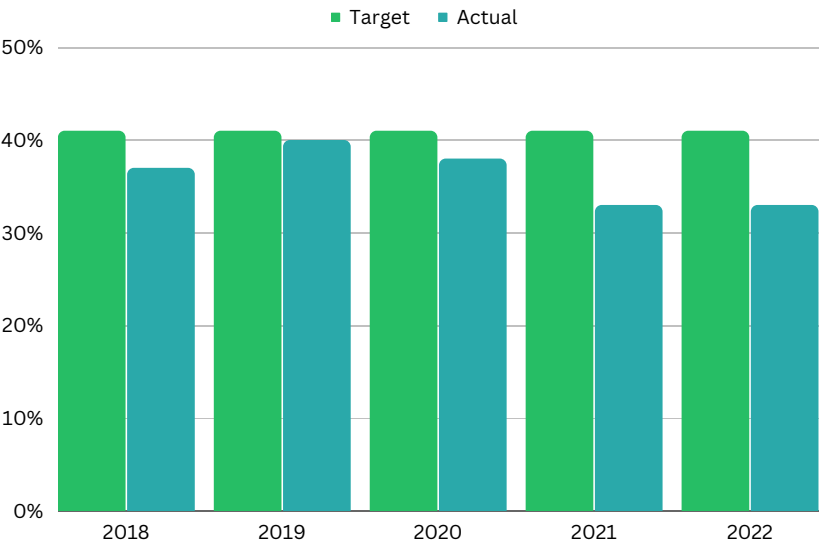


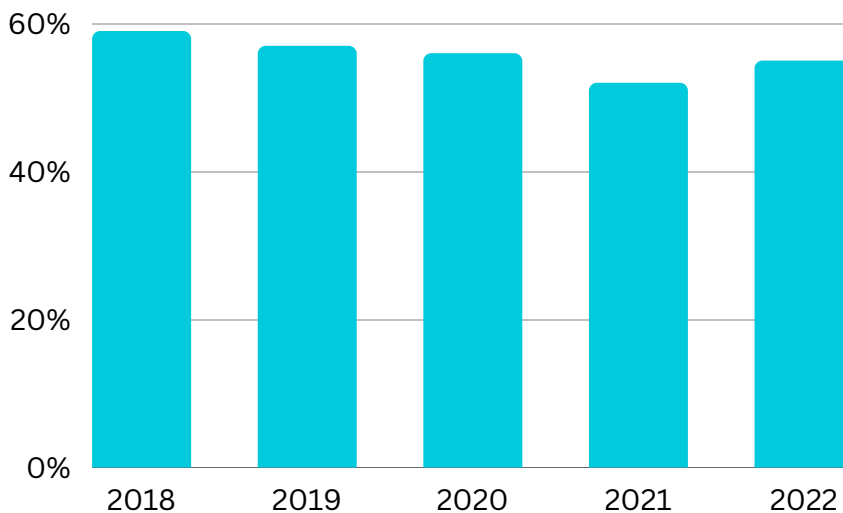
Figure 6: Percentage of KPI 2 Individuals Living in a Disadvantaged Area

Year	Target	Actual
2018	41%	37%
2019	41%	40%
2020	41%	38%
2021	41%	33%
2022	41%	33%

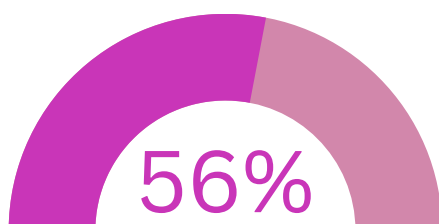


**Figure 7: Percentage of KPI 2 Individuals Experiencing Social Inclusion Barriers\***

Year	Percentage
2018	59%
2019	57%
2020	56%
2021	52%
2022	55%



**Five-year Average**



\* % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier. % of KPI 2 who are experiencing multiple barriers - this is based on six indicators selected from individual's profile information: Disability; Ethnic Minority; Homelessness; Jobless Household; Lone Parent; Transport Barrier. In the NSP case, multiple barriers include principal economic status; living in a jobless household and current economic status.

Figure 8: Total Number of Individual Interventions

Year	Number
2018	3100
2019	3762
2020	2796
2021	3221
2022	3124

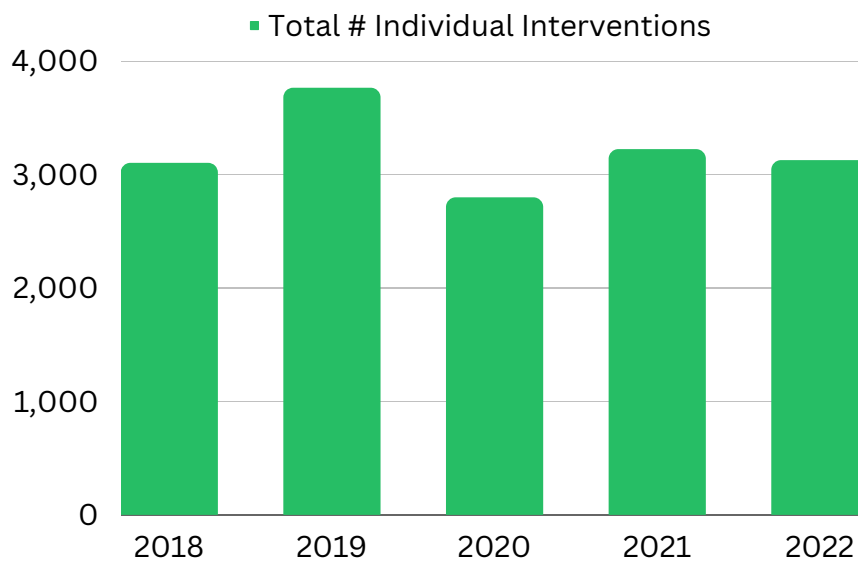
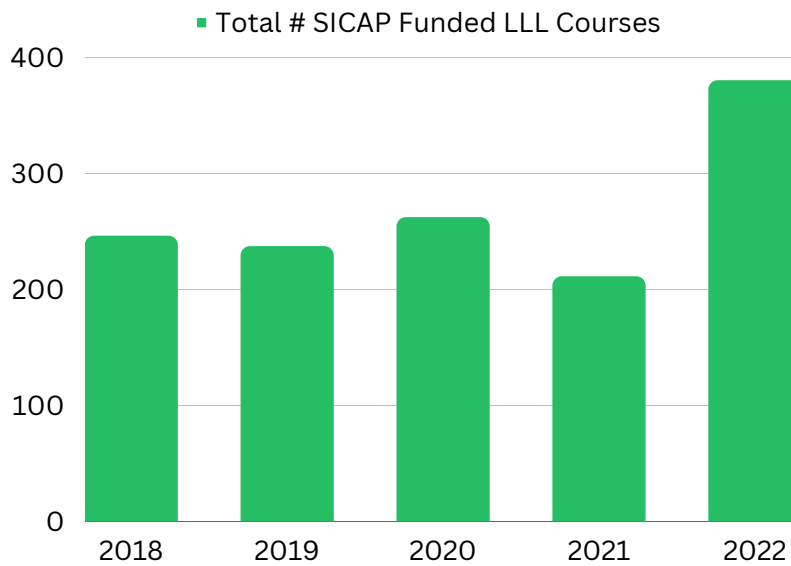




Figure 9: Total Number of beneficiaries participating in SICAP-Funded Lifelong Learning Courses

Year	Number
2018	246
2019	237
2020	262
2021	211
2022	380



# 4. SICAP the Lived Experience

As part of the evaluation process four consultation workshops were held with key NSP SICAP stakeholders. These included workshops with SICAP service providers; Local Community Groups and Social Enterprises; participants in the Young Community Leaders programmes; and parents of young people participating in the Challenger Programme. These parents participate in the STEPs programme. [8]

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## Service Providers

- A consultation workshop was held with a group of people involved in the delivery of SICAP - these were predominantly NSP staff who deliver SICAP-funded programmes, with representatives from PI Collaborator's Doras Buí and Speedpak.
- Allied to a facilitated focus group discussion, the photovoice methodology was used to capture the service providers lived-experience of working with the SICAP funding model, and providing services to beneficiaries under both SICAP goals.

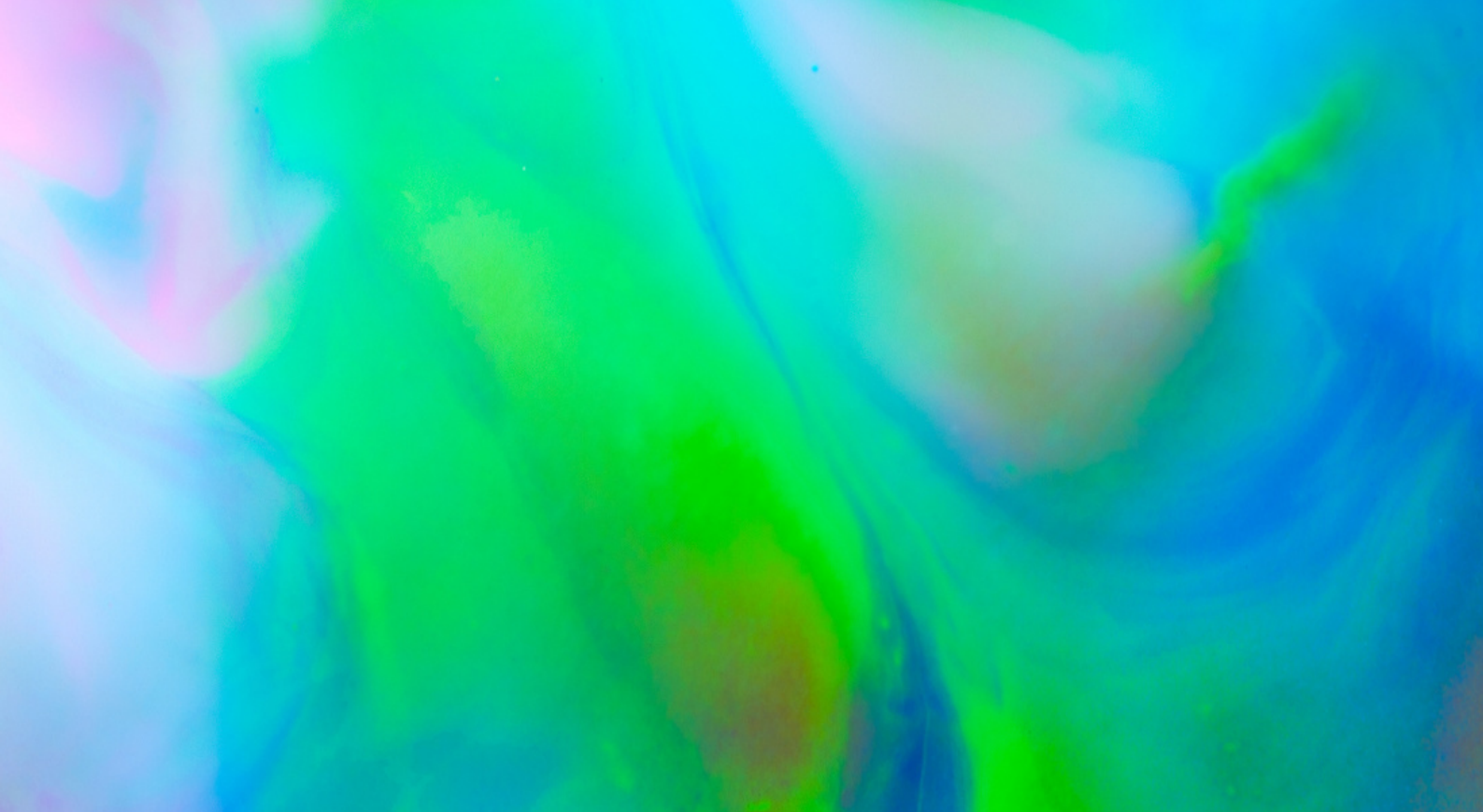
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## Local Community Groups & Social Enterprises

- A second workshop was then held with a mixed group of people who either work within Local Community Groups (LCGs) which NSP support via the SICAP programme; or who have started Social Enterprises and have received support from NSP via SICAP.
- Again, allied to a facilitated focus group discussion, the photovoice methodology was used to capture the LCG and SE beneficiaries' lived-experience of receiving support from NSP via SICAP funding initiatives and interventions.

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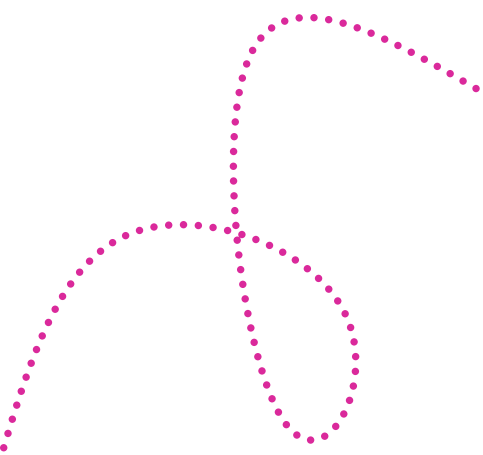
[8] Please see Appendix A for further detail on these programmes



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## Young Community Leaders & Challenger Parents

- Two final workshops were held with two groups of individual NSP SICAP beneficiaries. These included a group of young people who are participating in the SICAP-funded Young Community Leaders (YCL) programme, and a group of parents who have participated in the STEPs programme as part of their children's participation in the Challenger programme.
- Again, allied to a facilitated focus group discussion, the photovoice methodology was used to capture the YCL beneficiaries' lived-experience of receiving support from NSP via SICAP funding initiatives and interventions.
- A facilitated focus group methodology was used to capture the parents' lived-experience of receiving support from NSP via SICAP funding initiatives and interventions.



# SICAP Service Providers

## Key Findings

The following pages outline the photovoice output from the workshop held with SICAP service providers. Overall the team's reflections on their own lived-experience of providing support to beneficiaries via SICAP coalesce around the following key themes:

### Living their Values

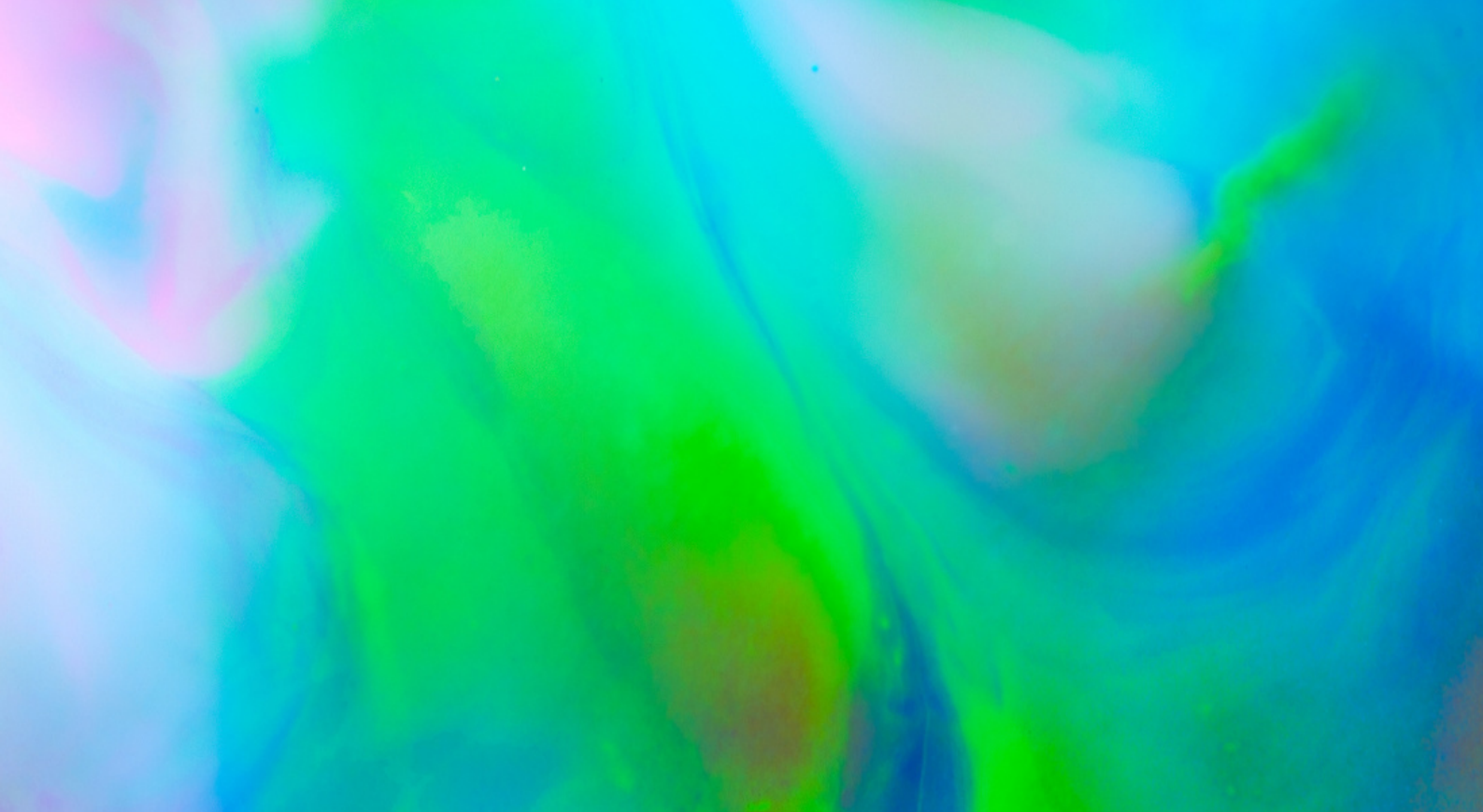
- The team feel that they are enabled to live-their values, providing a service which is imbued with empathy, respect and where the core components of Advantaged Thinking are effectively operationalised. [9] This is perhaps enabled further by the fact that many of the service providers have also been beneficiaries of SICAP-funded supports at previous times in their lives.
- They provide a holistic, person-centred suite of services which aim to meet people where they are, and a true sense that people are 'more than just a number'.
- This is reflected in their approach to integration across community services, and their commitment to providing support in a way which can be non-linear, matching beneficiaries' lived-experience of need and support-requirements.
- There is a consistent message from SICAP service providers that they provide a safe, open, comfortable space for beneficiaries to receive multi-dimensional support. While these specific terms may not be called out directly, the behaviour outlined by the NSP SICAP team echoes the key components of both trauma-aware practice and organisational psychological safety [10].

[9] <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/about-us/advantaged-thinking/>; for more on Advantaged Thinking please see <https://www.foyer.net/pages/advantaged-thinking-> and Colin Falconer's Adventures in Advantaged Thinking, Foyer Federation, UK. <https://www.foyer.net/resources/adventures-in-advantaged-thinking->

[10] <https://hbr.org/2023/02/what-is-psychological-safety>;

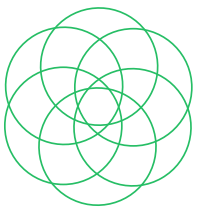
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice>





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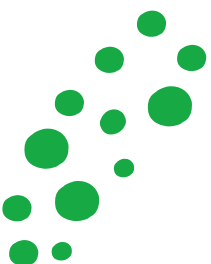
## Creativity



- There is broad agreement that the SICAP funding model allows for a relatively good degree of flexibility in terms of providing space for service providers to be creative and innovative in their approach. The NSP team leverage that space and flexibility to use the SICAP funds in a way which allows them to integrate various community initiatives, amplifying overall impact and providing more integration in terms of a beneficiary's ability to receive a seamless service across their needs.
- This creativity also extends to what the NSP SICAP service providers' feel their impact to be on beneficiaries. The photographs herein contain many images of trees, plants, and flowers which symbolise the creative movement from seed to expansive growth which they experience within their work. They feel empowered to enable people they work with to reach their full potential within society.

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## Integration



- A phrase repeated throughout the workshop with SICAP service providers, and which is represented in the photographs herein, is the idea that the NSP door is always open, and that 'any door will do' in terms of how a beneficiary might enter and/or work with the service.
- Through this lens of integration, the NSP SICAP team help to provide people who have often been stuck in loops in terms of services and supports, to find a workable direction where they can access meaningful support. There is a particular focus on providing support which is joined-up from a service-provider perspective and which is impactful in ways that are meaningful to the beneficiary.



I took that one because sometimes when people come into us, they're on a loop, they keep going around and around and they're telling the same story that they tell different institutions, that they have to, like, say A, B, C or D. So it's about trying to take them out of that story and help them find direction which way they want to go. That there should be more to life.



I took that one because in Challenger, you sew the seed in 5th Class, to, you know, take them out of their comfort zone, you know, and get them to believe in themselves. And a seed turns into a plant and it grows and grows, and they stop growing when they finish college.



....it's all about ideas, we're ideas people as much as anything else, I know we work within very defined structures but you know, we have enough room for creativity and, probably need more room for it...Lightbulb moments, having lightbulb moments.

There are barriers, the funding models don't always support your ideas. So, it's just working around those.



I just like the word. It's about giving people a fair shake, and just, you know, making sure you're respected here.....sometimes you have programmes [where young people feel that] they are just tolerated, but, you know, you're more than that here.....it comes back to equality, and that you're not just one of the numbers, you're not just here to be herded, you're here to be listened to, and given a fair hearing, basically, everyone deserves a fair hearing.



I've been using this a lot lately...I'm a teacher...it's a binder. it's something that we use to put together booklets and create resources and things like that and I've been finding myself I've been doing a lot of that lately, so, it's just a reflection of resourcefulness.



That's just a reminder that we're always under the auspices of the funders.





That was just to say that when [young people] come in, they're coming into a safe satisfying space. So a safe space, yes. for all their needs, whatever their needs may be.



Homemade jam....there was something very comforting about it, and it was, again, it was prompting something.....it's about care, you know, the self-care as well.



That's reception, that's our, our front office. Because we were saying that, the most important thing for somebody first going somewhere, to know how the person got there, how did they get there, and the first person they meet, it's very important to have a welcoming feeling and a smile.... and often people won't forget the first person they met. And I suppose it's usually the first person that they'll trust as well, so it's important



We were talking earlier on about an open door and that's an open door, and the plant was like, that's your growth, you can go through the door and you can grow, that's what it means.

Walk in my shoes. Or walk in someone else's shoes, through the door.....  
[reflecting on] my own journey, it's like coming in and just walking in someone else's shoes, going on a journey, and stepping forward, just going forward, what NSP has meant to me, you know.



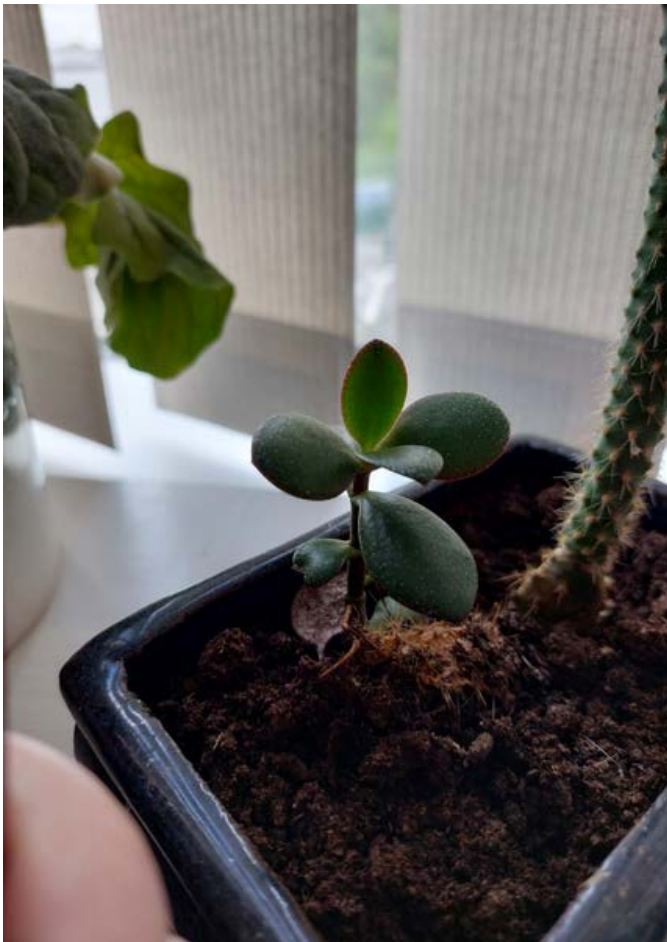


That was just that we'd always give everybody a really warm welcome and make them feel, you know, a sense of belonging and that we care and, we'll do our very best for them. And if we can't do our very best for them, we'll pass them to somebody who can. I think that's safe space as well.



...I was just trying to get the buds of a tree, like, renewal, regrowth, you know, change of direction, people would come into us for that. And also there's a lot of people come in to try and start something new, start afresh, and the opportunities that are available to them, there are multiple facets, multiple branches basically, that they can vein off. I used to focus on a thing called a career tree, and I suppose maybe the trunk would be us, and then whatever they can actually achieve would be the branches of it. So we can offer all of that, and if we can't do it we'll find someone who can.





In my role as receptionist, this is how I view the change is someone entering the door for the first and the last time through their interventions with our SICAP programmes etc.

The seedling represents the person walking in for the first time. Unsure and nervous as to what to expect or whether they will get the help they need. At the end of their time with us – they have grown and developed much like my plant – they have the strength and the skills to cope with what comes next.





I've taken about, I'd say, 50 cuttings off that plant, it grows and grows, it never stops growing. If I left that for a month or two it would be a bush on the window. And I suppose what I was trying to get across there is that, when the people come through the doors, some people have absolutely no, they feel that they've no hope. And it's how they grow as a person by, by using all of the different supports and services that are available to them. So that's kind of what I was really trying to capture with that.





We talked there about weeds and growth and sometimes what you think is a weed isn't a weed. So it is like looking at something and, you know, dandelions are usually pulled up and say, that's a weed, get rid of it, but actually it looks so gorgeous, and the colour of it is so lovely, so it's looking at things maybe, just from a little, a different perspective and calling it something different to appreciate it. I think a lot of the time, despite our best efforts, we judge people, and often the programmes that we're doing are, you know, for long-term unemployed, for ex-offenders, for drug misusers, it used to be for lone parents, and there's a whole lot of titles under which people get benefits. We wouldn't be doing some of the work if it wasn't that people needed support. And I think, what you realise after working with lots of people, is people are people, you know? And, and some of the great people are those giving the help, and some of the worst people are those giving the help, and vice versa, you know? It's just people. And what can seem like a troublesome person, can be just so marvelous, you know, and contribute hugely, so it's kind of, which eyes you look at something with.





“....we are one of the most integrated companies of all the local development companies....in many other companies, the SICAP team would be in a separate office, and wouldn't work with the LAES team etc, so it's not a given, .... the model itself, it really is up to you how you implement it and so, our approach has been that **one door, any door, will work, will do in terms of someone coming in to us....**as much as we can, try and deliver an integrated service that you know will work, the full capability of the organisation is available to anybody that comes in .”



I think that we, we have absolutely done a lot to work as a team, that comes from different funders and different funding criteria and different reporting methods etc...but our main aim is to help our participants, that's what, that's what we're here to do. And that's what this symbolises, from our leadership team down to people at reception or whatever, any door will do.



Just basically Northside Partnership, the core values, what it stands for. 25 years where opportunity meets the community. ....They actually... help you, put you up, I don't know what the word is but it's just like, put you on your, push you up on...on your journey, you know? Push you on. Yes.



Quality. That's what Northside Partnership is, they've got the mark of quality.



Advantaged Thinking, this is the mainstay of our organisation. It puts words on how we work. This is an integrated services team, and it's how we, we always worked together, but now we know why [it's important]...and if you're having a bad day, you look at this, and you know why you're here.....that's personally what it means to me.

Community Development | Employment Services | Education & Training | Health & Well-being

# Northside Partnership

where community meets opportunity



respect - equality - empowerment - inclusion

04/04/2023

[www.northsidepartnership.ie](http://www.northsidepartnership.ie) for more information

I thought that was a really good one, because I thought it was diverse, people, and inclusiveness. And then I looked at it and I said, well what about where opportunity meets community, as well, you know like? I remember when we were brainstorming on that tag line years ago for the, the 25 years. I thought now, I said, where opportunity meets community is probably something that is a circle, it's not the same now...it's not just where community meets the opportunity, it's also opportunity meets community.....I think now, there's opportunities that meets the community, you know, that there, there seems to be more opportunity, like, I'm involved in the health and wellbeing and, before that, opportunity wasn't there, and now there's an opportunity there that will meet the community, and vice versa. So, there's things in the community that will, that, you know, the health and wellbeing can, can meet, but also, there's that opportunity you can bring in ..... the personal development side of it as well. So I thought it was twofold.



Sometimes it just starts with just picking up a leaflet, you might be just browsing, and then you might just come across something and yes, that's for me, or definitely a family member that I know definitely needs that help, and we have an array of services to choose from.



I actually took it because we recently done trauma informed training, and just something I took away from it was that they're basically saying that when someone's heightened, or they could be going through a crisis ....one of the really important things you can do is get their temperature down. And it could be something as simple as get them to take off their top, or go outside for a bit of air, because there's stuff around, that it actually works, it helps them just cool down so I just took that.





I put that chair because my first point of contact with a person is the phone, and you could kind of feel that there's a bit of nervousness of who are you, and can we just do this over the phone. Where I feel the process doesn't really start until we're engaged and they're in, and you can give them the full picture. And, you know, meet face to face and make that human connection. And then if they've any fears or anything, I just think it's much better when they come in, and I always feel it gets off to a good start. So I say, just get them in, into the chair and we'll be fine. And it was a real struggle, in COVID, because I knew they weren't getting the service they deserved, and they were just looking for an end product, but I always feel that they didn't, like the kids in school, they didn't get the full education....because they didn't benefit from that connection.

“The theme there we saw was connection....you could bring it to an individual level and the connection and the relationship that you have on a one-to-one level with somebody. But also then the connection...between community organisations within the community that is particularly important. ....from a connection point of view, not only for the participants that we help, but also ourselves here, we’re all connected...and that sense of connection we pass on to the participants, you know, if we can’t help them in one service, we’ll always signpost them to another service, and that kind of thing, so... they may come in for one thing, and we can connect them with something else. .”





So it's a sticker for a lovely local enterprise, and I actually know the guy who runs it and he just lives around the corner, the reference is, like, scarlet for your ma's, we all know that one, it's real Dublin, and also it's enterprising, you know, a new idea.



that's talking about putting out fires, and firefighting. A lot of the time you're trying to...rather than being proactive sometimes you have to be reactive, so a fire extinguisher to put out the fires.



That was literally, you know, because sometimes people are going around and around and around trying to find a direction, and part of the role we have is to point people in the right direction, which exit to use, and they can always come back on and go around again if they don't like it, so it's a kind of continuum of choices and options.



it's the get the message out poster, but it had all the community group logos on it, and it's just about the collaboration that we do with other groups in the area, and it's about working together, getting the best policies out there, so everybody is part of the solution.





The pharmacy sign [represents] it's just a holistic approach that we take here, you know, I think we really do it well. I suppose it's healing, like, emotional healing for people when they come in here a lot of the time, and even for us as, you know, working in the organisation, you could come in and have such a bad day and then you realise that you've helped somebody out or made a massive difference and it just, you know, perks you back up again, so.



Well, sometimes people fall through [the net], and maybe you just have to sometimes stitch up the net. And sometimes it's good for them to fall through, actually, they bounce back. Loads of metaphors around that.



I think it's just having fun. I think there's two, two things that struck me about that; the idea of having fun, and I think certainly for me in the work, a lot of the work that I do is actually a lot of fun. But I also think it's that the playground, is that, the kind of services that are offered here are from very young to relatively old. And it is that kind of life cycle.



So, from one point of view for me it was like, you know, the wheels are always turning in here, but a wheel can also take you somewhere you thought you could never go, which I think a lot of our participants in here would come in with maybe low expectations, and especially through the Advantaged Thinking approach, realise, oh my god, I can do so much more, or I can make much more of an impact, that gets you to your destination.



Every time we do IRIS training...we give people a photograph of an iris flower. So this represents, you have a bulb, you have the funders....and we are the [stem] conduit, and this is our participants, flowering.....and there's loads of different irises, and everybody around the country, in either leadership or, or what we're doing, has to report to IRIS, but all in different ways. So we all kind of, it's the same system, but we can all report in different ways, and we're all trying to develop our field of irises, which is our participants.



# Local Community Groups & Social Enterprises

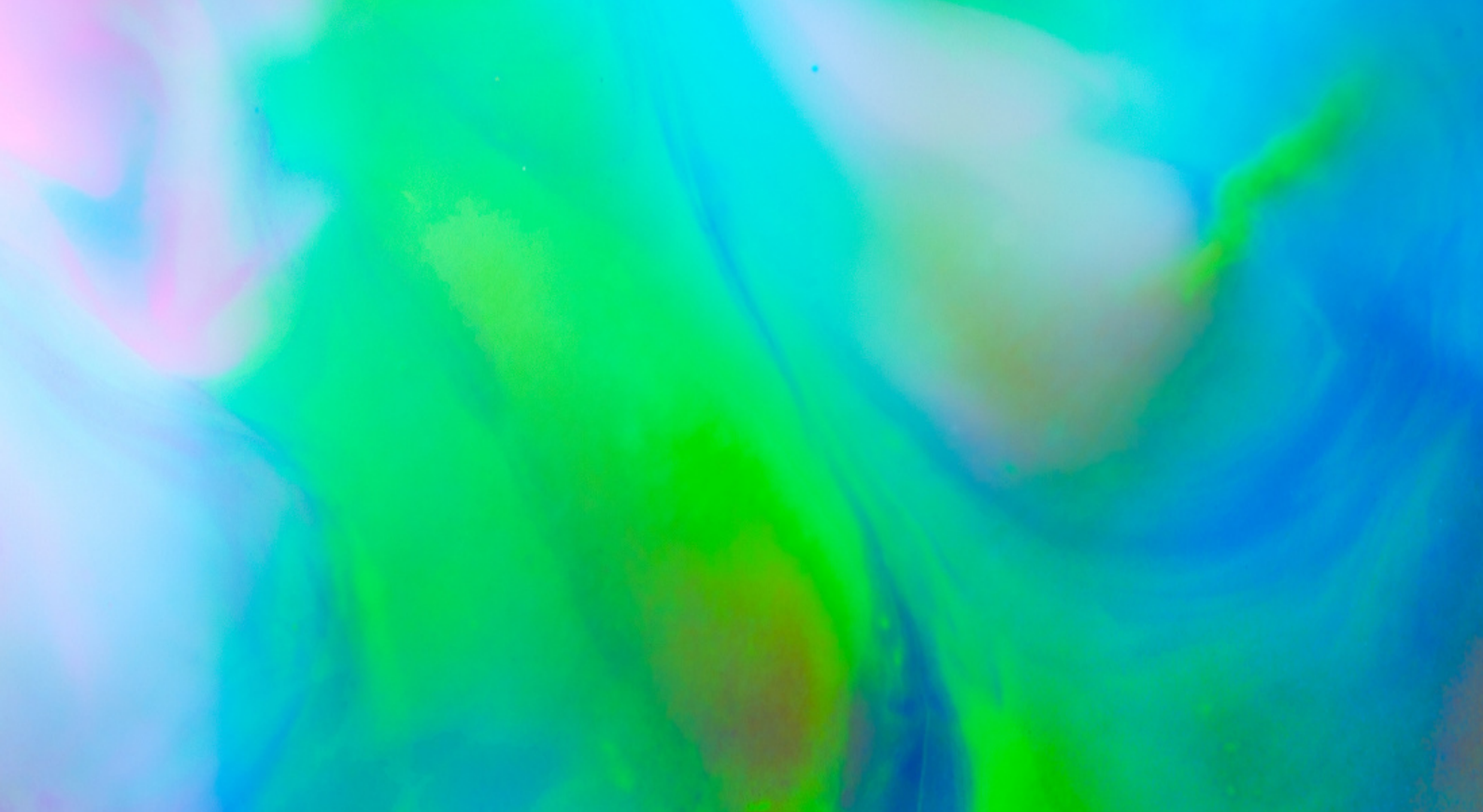
## Key Findings

The following pages outline the photovoice output from the workshop held with SICAP supported Local Community Groups (LCGs) and Social Enterprises. Overall the groups' reflections on their own lived-experience of receiving support from NSP via SICAP coalesce around the following key themes:

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### Meaningful Support - Reaching Full Potential

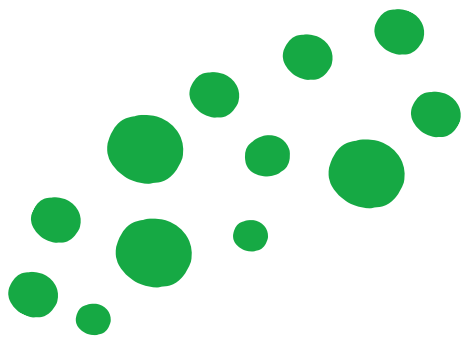
- Both LCG representatives and Social Enterprise (SE) beneficiaries feel that they receive truly meaningful and timely supports from NSP via the SICAP initiative. Echoing NSP Service Providers, both LCG and SE beneficiaries experience NSP to be an organisation whose door is always open to them, and who provide them with person-centred supports in a way which meets them where they are.
- LCGs and SE's believe that this support from NSP allows them in turn to provide the same kind of open-door, meaningful person-centred support to their service users in a way that has real impact on their lives. LCG's feel that the support from NSP enables them to reach the most vulnerable members of their community, especially members of groups who are traditionally labelled as 'hard-to-reach'. Again echoing what the NSP Service Providers reflected in their workshop, the LCG's feel that they are enabled via NSP's support to help members of the community to bloom, and to reach their full potential.



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## Integration, Collaboration & Empowerment

- LCG's and SE's experience NSP as a hugely important community integrator. NSP provides them with opportunities to connect and network with other LCG's and SE's within their community, both on an informal basis as well as through formal initiatives such as the Northside Community Forum. [11]
- This networking helps support more integration and collaboration in terms of the services which they can provide to their service-users. As outlined in the photovoice element herein, NSP helps to empower LCG's to have a 'seat at the table' in terms of participation in community decision-making, and having their voices heard. LCG's believe that this in turn enables them to ensure that their service-users are heard and empowered.
- In this way the NSP SICAP-funded support aligns with many of the stated SICAP thematic areas, including promoting community engagement and stronger communities, building capacity of LCGs, supporting participation in decision-making structures, promoting collaborative engagement, and supporting Social Enterprises which contribute to SICAP outcomes



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[11] For more information on the Northside Community Forum please see: <https://www.northsidepartnership.ie/local-development/northside-community-forum/>





...this has sort of represented networking, and that, you know we go to different training events, whatever, Northside Community Forum meetings, yes, that we have space to network.....coming out of COVID, the impact was, I suppose for me, was trying to get back out there, and actually it took a little bit longer, because also you were thinking I could do that on Zoom and it would be one hour, as opposed to a half day out of the office. And then it was like no, you have to change your mindset. Because we were losing the reach of the community and just being out there, so yes, so now it's even more important, you know, to get back out there.



....the thought behind it is, give everyone a seat at the table, so obviously from an organisation for Northside Partnership to support the organisations, it gives us all a seat at the table, kind of, the link down, I suppose, top down, and that again supports my service and me as a kind of service manager, to have a seat at certain tables as well, do you know what I mean? That you wouldn't necessarily have without Northside Partnership. And then for our service users, there's like that empowering piece as well for them, and for the service providers as well, of course, the people who are working in them. Kind of an empowerment piece, that we can offer support and we're all different kind of types of support, and that you come in behind the service providers to give them that voice, and that seat at the table.



It's representing the time that's given to organisations and that it's, the time is limitless, that we have the opportunities to keep coming back, and that the supports are readily available. I think, as an organisation, we would give the time to our service users, it's about giving the time to the children to develop and to, like, and I suppose develop at their own level and ability as well, that's really important, and that's a, a really key aspect of the way we work. That everything that is done with adults coming into the service, children coming into the service, it's all at what they're ready for and what their ability.



.....it's the open door, kind of similar to the time, that you always feel you can go back with that open door, and then for your service users, a lot of them, that they have that open door, and kind of that's just the sense within Northside Partnership, and then the sense within all the services that are linked to Northside Partnership. So I think that that's kind of huge.



So, food, so what I said is that you're feeding the service, services, and they're, we're feeding the community, and fuel is necessary for growth.



So that's a window, to represent reflection and connection. So kind of to have the time to kind of reflect on myself and my own role within the organisation, but also the organisation's position and what we stand for, like, what we do, giving training in media skills and media literacy, for new radio makers, staff who present on air, and also for the...connection then to other community groups, to our audience, to give voice to people who are under-represented, or misrepresented, and to connect also actively when people in other community groups in the area ask us. To report on something to be available and to, to, kind of step back and to see, okay, which way can we, can we improve our services, and improve some of the training, and reach other groups, yes.



So, the coat, we were looking for a blanket, like a comfort blanket, and the coat represents, I suppose, protection, really, from bad weather and protection for most of our services, from Northside Partnership and then that protection that we offer our service users as well. And that safe place.



I suppose it's just the trajectory of the journey, of being part, in the support and through Northside Partnership, always through there, but you can get projects like the, for me personally, the, the Social Enterprises mentorship, and traineeship as well. So the, like being on a journey, and like upskilling, again myself, but then also for my team, bringing back skills and also to the broader organisation itself.

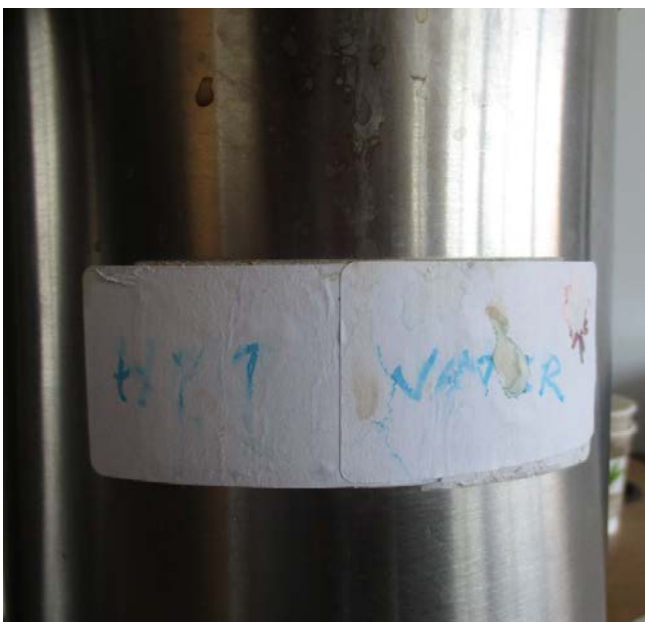


....my chair, pink of course. It's actually interesting because I was thinking it's kind of out of context, and I felt that if I sat in that chair, I'd probably blend in with it. And it kind of occurred to me then that that so often happens with our organisations, that we're just there, and people only come to us when they need something. So it's, it, just gives that kind of opportunity to be able to, the space for you to say, okay, I don't want to blend in any more, I want to be different, I want to have a voice, and how can I work on that, in terms of a voice for the, for the work that we do, we do so much. And I think it's reflected in all the organisations here. I mean, I'm blown away by what the ladies here are involved in, I had no idea, and I think it's important that we all get a voice, to be able to talk about what we do, and how we can all network and support each other from our own contacts and experiences.

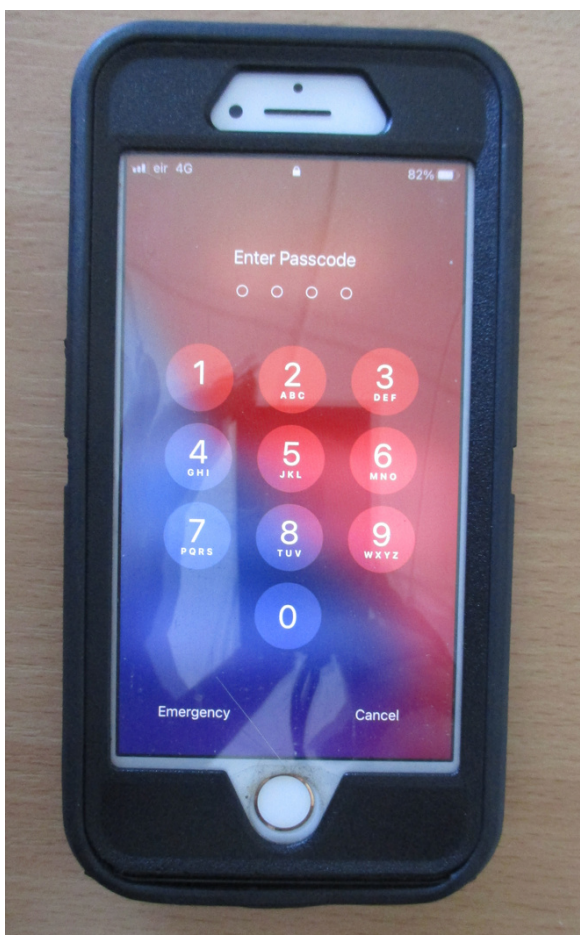




.....the blank sheet of paper, is just presenting opportunity, all the time, and I think that, through working with organisations that are here and with, through the Northside Community Forum, which is facilitated by the Partnership, it allows us to be able to address issues as groups. So we as a group, the steering group of the Northside Community Forum, some of us are here, actually I think most of us, we will discuss among ourselves the issues that we feel are arising, and sometimes we put it out to the members to see, you know, what would you like addressed? So the blank sheet gives that opportunity and that can be facilitated through the work of Northside Partnership.



....it's hot water. So, it's just a representation of, a lot of the families we work with are experiencing, particularly homelessness and the threat of homelessness hanging over them with the eviction ban being lifted, and staff are impacted by it as well, so as a manager, you're trying to help them from not drowning in the hot water, try to navigate their way through with whatever supports you can put in place, in the last two years there's been a big rise in youth homelessness in the country, which is disproportionate to other age groups, even though there's a huge crisis, so... it's just trying to hold a hand while they think they're drowning, and try to throw them a lifebuoy or something. It's about that.



...it's about, when they come into the organisation and we do one-to-one's with them, or even over the phone, we hear them rather than listen. So we're hearing what their needs are and we're trying to meet them. Often they don't, they don't know what their needs are, they'll spill everything out. Or sometimes they'll come in and say the spiel that they give to the Social Welfare or that and I'll say look, we're not here for that, we're here to try and support you and to build supports in place, and we provide a wrap-around service, the Early Years service; we've a rainbow service now, we just started that this week, so we're trying to do it from the cradle to the grave, so meet them where they are and where their needs are. So, it's about hearing them rather than just listening.



...it's a stack of chairs, stacked very neatly together, it's just really, like, collaboration, about how different organisations can work really well together, and call out the services and organisations here. ....the support that we get from Northside Partnership to run the Northside Community Forum, because their secretariat is invaluable, because it keeps it alive. Because we're all so busy, I'm with other boards, I'm on other committees, whatever, and then I have my own job to do as well. So, collaborations like this open up opportunities. And we can begin to link people in here with their sources of funding that we've been successful in getting, or are aware of, that's more relevant to you, or whatever. And we can learn so much from each other.



This kind of has twofold, the importance of getting the invitation out and putting it in the diary, and remembering that you actually have to do something, and the benefits you have when you're here. But also in my own role, when we're putting in appointments from clients, and looking at it in the morning, because very often, if you don't do that and the client rocks up, and they've gone out of their way to give you that hour, and you're not prepared for them, like, it says so much, you don't respect their time, you know? You don't, you don't even know what you're going to offer them in that time, so I think your diary is really, really important, in that sense.



....that was kind of just representing our community café, and what it offers to the community, we are a disadvantaged area, and we do try and offer an affordable home from home for community users.....we're open to anybody in the community. Then also, within our service, all our projects would also use it. So, then we have it open to our healthy eating programmes, so it could be just, somebody just wanting to pop in just for a cup of tea and a chat, it's kind of like a safe place as well, for people to come.





So, initially [this photograph] was to show stability, but also when our residents come into the office, to immediately offer a chair, so it's like, come in, how are you, take a seat. So they know that the minute they're in the seat, your time is theirs. And they also know they're going to get support, be it negative or positive, so you're there to encourage and empower. And also, if another resident comes to the office, they're just told that, we're with somebody, can you come back? So the resident knows that once they're sitting in the seat, all our time is just for them, until we resolve what the issue is.



So I think just from the service that we provide, ..... you're meeting people on the street who are really hard to engage, who aren't engaging in services, and it's something as simple as offering a cup of tea, or having that warm welcome, and I think even coming into this building, or any other that I've had with Northside Partnership, it's always warm, it's always welcoming, it's kind of a safe space, there's, there's support there for the clients we work with, and for the service providers.



So, our representation of a clock was more that there is time for change, in that there's no stopping the clock.....but when people come into our services that, you know, hope is not all lost, there is time.....plenty of time to change, plenty of time to work with us.



.... it's a power supply and it's just to remind you that our role, at all times, is to empower the families and the service users that we work with, you know? Support them with anything they need, but they're all capable of doing things for themselves, whether it's on their own or they need support, that's always about empowerment.





.....it's one of safety, when you'd be in the room whether with a client or with a group like this, you know, you're safe, there's always someone outside going to be able to see in and make sure everything is okay, or vice versa.



.....there is an airplane there.....it's really just about, I suppose, the journeys that the families are on with us, you know, I suppose they're heading off to a better place, hopefully, than when they arrived to us. But the progression that they're making while they're with us, until they move on, to a better life, hopefully.



....so this is, for me, is...we have to remember the reason why we're here, so we provide training and employment opportunities for local people, so that they can participate fully in society, whether that's in the social economy, or further employment in the private sector. And we do that through the provision of buildings. So, when I'm working with my board, I have to keep drilling home to them, we're here for the people in the community, not just for the buildings. Buildings aren't communities, people are communities. So it's kind of a shift in thinking. And unless you come from the background that we all come from, sometimes working with boards, and people from the private sector, it's very difficult for them to understand that, you know? That the buildings facilitate us to do our community development work, not the other way around.



I took a picture of the light, it's kind of more to represent hope, and sometimes the stigma around, sometimes, the community groups that can be a bit disadvantaged, that we're underprivileged, but I wanted to represent that that's not the case, that there is hope for, for community groups, and really it is a driving force of, of keeping things going, especially within the community.





That was just a blossom tree  
in full bloom and I suppose it's  
just about seeing people we  
work with flourish, and reach  
their full potential.





...when you come into the farm, you do get a very different perspective of Dublin and of being in a city centre. It's not always peaceful because there's donkeys and roosters and all of that, but there's a few things that I thought represented that well. So the first is school, which is, for us, the education piece, so whether that's us learning from yourselves, from everyone in this room, but also for us to be able to educate through Easter camps, through school tours, through the two-scheme, but then for, for us to also engage with other parts of St. Anne's Park, so a good relationship with, with other, because there's plenty going on in St. Anne's, as you've rightly said.

So, how do we work with the environmental initiatives that are going around, you know, whether it's working with Olive's Rooms, whether it's working with the allotments, whether it's working with the parks, DCC, all of that, and then obviously schools should be safe, so we also have a safe space for the animals.

# Young Community Leaders

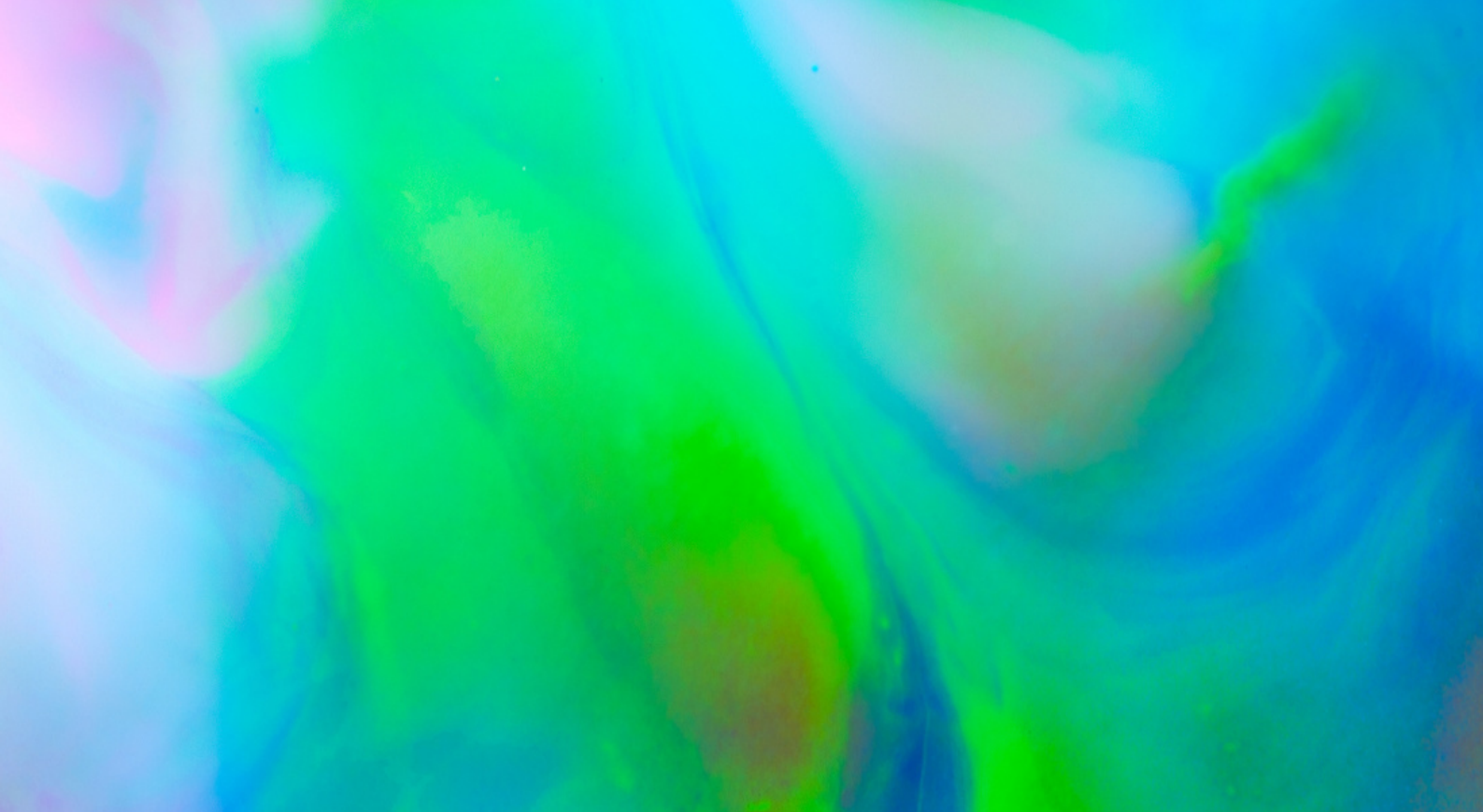
## Key Findings

The following pages outline the photovoice output from the workshop held with young people who participate within the NSP SICAP-funded Young Community Leaders (YCL) programme. Overall the groups' reflections on their own lived-experience of receiving support from NSP via SICAP coalesce around the following key themes:

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### Belonging & Connection

- Echoing what both NSP Service Providers and other beneficiary groups have outlined in terms of their experience of the NSP SICAP-funded actions, the participants in the YCL programme feel respected, welcome and that their voice truly matters.
- As outlined in their photovoice contributions, the participants view the YCL programme as a peaceful, safe space, which can often be a strong antidote to the stressors experienced in other areas of their life.
- The programme provides a place and space to connect with each other, to build friendships, work as a team and build confidence.



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## Expanding Horizons

- For participants in the YCL programme, the programme has had a significant impact on their confidence and their sense of what they could possibly achieve in life. They talk of having a renewed sense of possibility in terms of the options and pathways that are available to them in terms of education and employment.
- The programme pushes them out of their comfort zone, but in a way which is both supported and supportive, and therefore sustainable. They report feeling that they are encouraged to grow on their own terms, and empowered to live their best lives. In turn this builds their confidence, with one group of participant's describing the programme as having breathed 'new life into them', expanding their horizons and creating new possibilities.
- All of this aligns closely with the aims of SICAP Goal 2 thematic areas, particularly in terms of promoting personal development and wellbeing, providing preventative supports for young people, and preparing people for employment.





...so we took a picture of the first aid kit because it was kind of like giving life and we just kind of see it as like we make friends here and we're living our lives as well. So it's just kind of a life metaphor there. Yes, like, breathing new life into something



That's the iconic couch where we all just sit, before [the session starts] and they're the comfiest couches ever. And we just have a chat, like, without, not that like, we don't like Roisin or anyone, but it's just kind of like, before we start, and there's no people here from the course....we're doing work, it's just like literally having a chat before we go in, and catching up with each other.





This is possibly a bit of a stretch, I mean I'm glad we're not the only group that had this idea, because, it represents a sort of, medicine in, in YCL I guess, how it may mean a lot more to some people than you think, being such a, a small yet significant part of our lives. I think that's important in leading to personal success and success with other people.





So we took this photo....some biscuits, and there's the coffee and the sugar and the tea kind of space, it's like having a cup of tea and having a chat and that kind of like is what this programme means to me in particular. Because it's somewhere you can kind of talk and you're doing work but it's also a place where everyone's friends and we do like our little ratings at the start, of how we are, it's like having a cup of tea with your friends and having a chat.



....we took that picture kind of to represent how peaceful it is here, and that Roisin and Maria and all, and Dar and all that, they're so welcoming and it's a nice place to kind of go to when life outside it feels really stressful, so...



Well this is just like the one main rule that we were always told is just respect each other, because I feel like if you don't respect everyone in the group, the group isn't going to get very far, because there's always going to be that sort of tension and some people might not listen to others, and you need to listen to everyone to get the work done and become successful. And then obviously, like, Northside Partnership, that's where we come every Tuesday, so that's kind of like just where we come and see all the friends that we get on with, so you kind of want to include that as well, just to show where we go.



So we chose to take a picture of the kitchen, because it kind of goes in with respect too. We were given the respect from Roisin, from Maria, to go to the kitchen, if we wanted a cup of coffee we could make it ourselves. There wasn't any like hand holding. Yes, it's just like, there's trust, there's trust behind it all, like, we're trusted to go and do our own thing, make our own cup of coffee, and we're trusted and there's enough respect for everybody to have.....it's kind of a little bit more freedom than we're used to anyway.

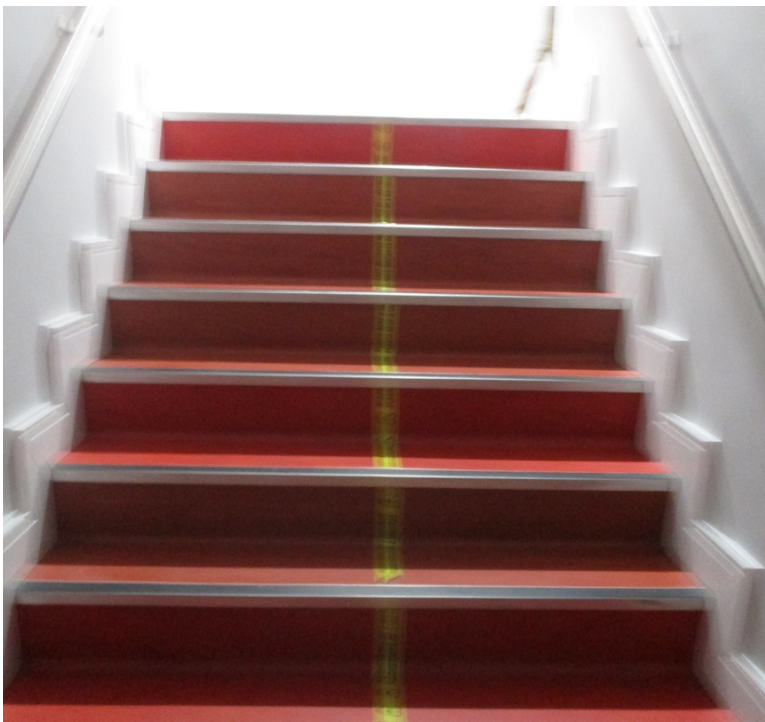


Well that's just kind of like everyone is heard in this group. So if you have an idea, you should be allowed to say it out. No idea is a stupid idea, so if you don't input, you're not going to get the results that you wanted because you're not putting your own opinion in it. So, it's good to speak up about your ideas and be heard as well. The fact that that's displayed here, within the building as well, I think, is important.





So we took a picture of the elevator because it's like life's ups and downs, and you can go up and you can go down, but you know, that's kind of just what it is, ups and downs..... sometimes we're having a good day and sometimes we're having a bad day, and sometimes there's an up and sometimes there's a down, but we still go all over to the same place and still see the same people. And we still have a good time once we're there.

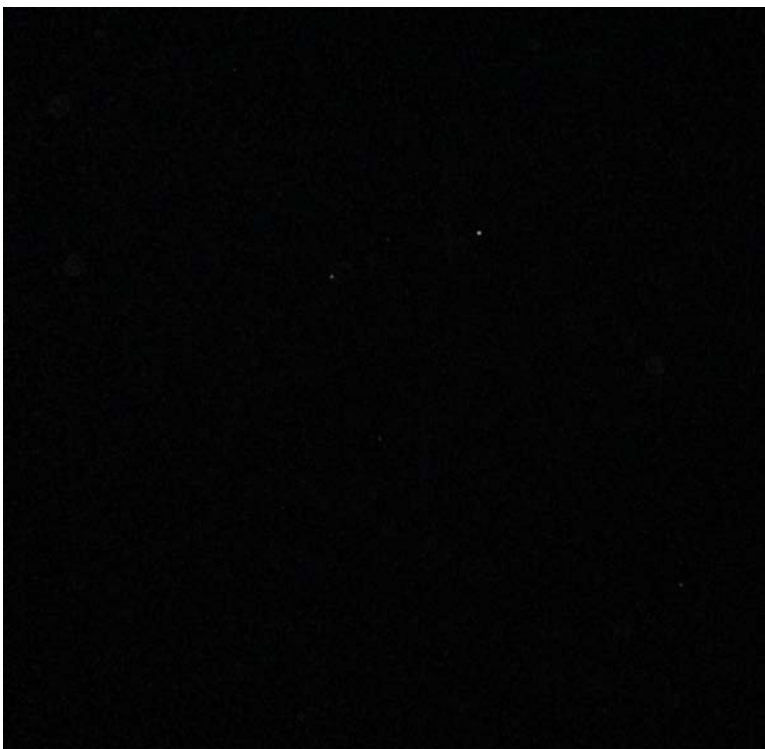


And then the stairs is kind of like, you can make your own path, you can go where you want, it's two-foot steps as well, and I guess you could do the up and down kind of metaphor for that as well.





Well, we took a picture of Domino's, because whenever we do, like, a long day, like we did a full, from 10.00 to 3.30 or something, over the last mid-term, or if it's before our holiday or something, and we get Domino's, and we all just kind of like sit and eat and that's nice for us, because it's like having a meal with each other.



That's a picture of the sky, but it didn't come out very well.....you can maybe see the stars and all.....yes, you can see the stars. I thought that was... just like looking up at things, like looking at what you want, or what you want to succeed at.



.....that's kind of just, like, footsteps again, you can go where you want, so it's just kind of you can go where you want, you can work toward it.



I took that one, because I like sunsets in general, they happen all the time, but you don't really get to see them that often, so it's like that idea of finding comfort in the little things, and finding comfort in something that happens all the time, even though you don't think about it, and that's kind of what YCL represents to me, that idea of having something that has, granted it doesn't happen all the time, but having something that has been consistently happening that I can go to and say, this is actually nice to be here, this is nice to be around.



I took a picture of the potted plant, because it's supposed to be, again, like, that idea of just being here, it's comforting, it's nice, and the whole thing of just kind of growing on your own terms, type of thing. Because here, they don't like force you to do anything you don't want to do, even if you wanted to just sit out for a day, they'd still be here, you could. And it's kind of like that idea of growing as a person, growing on your own without needing, without having restrictions, without having anyone kind of control you, to just be where you want to be.



.....you all to me are what YCL is, my friends.....and, because I remember the first, the first day I got here, I was like, oh god, how am I going to talk to anyone. But then, just the fact that we all just hit it off right away, it's like that connection of just finding where you want to be and who you want to be around. And it was nice.





.....the tiles all fit together, and they all, we aim to create one big thing, and they're all successful in their job, being tiles. I wasn't really thinking that one through a lot, and then I looked at it after, and I was like, oh that's kind of a nice picture. Yes, it's sort of a, they're all just successful in their own little job, of being tiles, and they're working together to do it. At YCL, well we all work together to get to the same common goal of getting the diploma at the end. Because if one of us fails, then I assume, like, since there's a group project and all, you kind of let everyone down if you don't do your job right, so, we all have to work together to be successful.

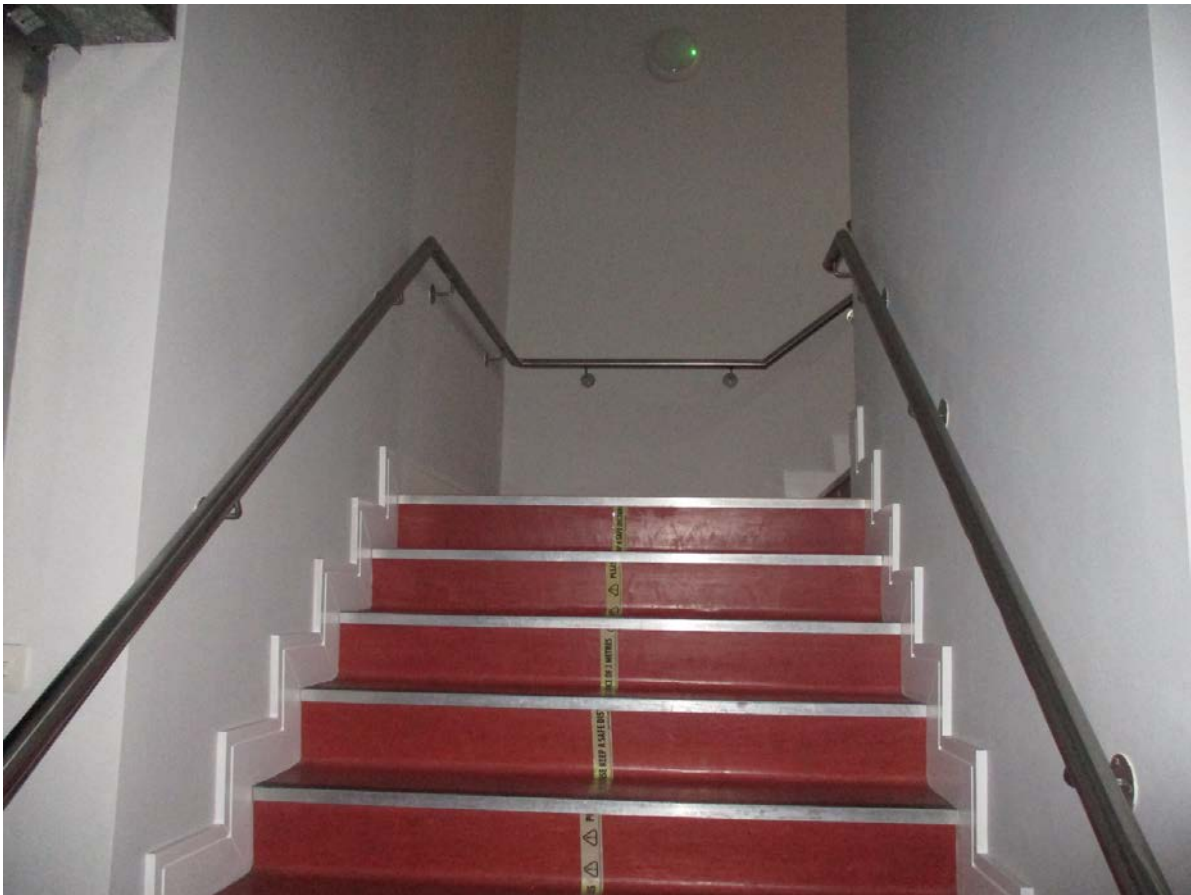


.... my thought behind this, obviously, for popcorn to be successful, it's got to pop, right? And putting it in plants, that'll look strange, it's like oh, it's in a strange place, so being successful in a strange place, because that's what the YCL, first thing that came up for me, it was trying to be successful in a strange place. ....I didn't do anything like this before, and so, once I came up here it was strange, and plus of all I'm not up at Kilbarrack every other week, so being up here as well is strange. So, you know, it's like, so, plants, for popcorn obviously, it's completely strange, or, completely the way just opposite skills of each other, so that's what I was thinking. I'd never think I'd be successful, like, up here and then, you know...I've got the YCL so, there you go, like. Being successful up in YCL.



I actually didn't realise that they were all so symmetrical, but I thought we were successful in the whole thing of everyone doing the exact same thing on opposite sides. And when I looked at it after, I was like, we're all standing the exact same way around her...this is the togetherness...  
success in my circle.

....that's, the friends that we've made along the way, we've been successful in making friends and just, you know, being, being silly, being goofy, just being...



That was, once again, the same as the other group, the path that we take to get up to YCL, to be successful in YCL. For some reason when we're all together, we decide to take the stairs. When I'm on my own I take the elevator, but as soon as, like, I have to go up with everyone, it's the path that we all take together and always the same. And we're a successful group, so to get to success we all take the same path here.





The plant is growing even though, like, it kind of looks like it's dying a bit, but it's...it's still growing, it's got like, green shoots, it's doing it's best to grow and to thrive and...in an environment that it probably isn't used to, plants aren't supposed to be in houses, they're supposed to be outside. But it's still doing a good job, still thriving. Like, we're not used to being here and yet we're still doing our best to grow and thrive and be successful in YCL.



.....they're all clustering together, even though it's a fire exit sign, but I mean like, the success will be in the group together, that means everybody got out. We have made friends, we were being successful in our endeavour to be friends with each other. I'm friends with them outside of YCL and I've, like, the way I made friends with people here, I can apply that to other situations.....because, I only knew one person before coming here, and so when I showed up and we did like, started talking to people and I was pushed to talk to people during the projects, and just go up to someone and ask them questions about themselves, that really helped with like...I think the next day when I went into school, I went up and spoke to someone that I had never spoken to before.



...the togetherness of YCL and how  
we've all, like, I think it's just succeeding  
at being friends.



What this represents is something that is, I mean, death metal to most people would be to do with something intimidating or dangerous, or something they don't really want to be involved with. Whereas, in contrast with this very innocent, funny, image, I think it coincided with what I think with YCL because, like death metal, it's not until you actually, you know, try it and get involved, that you can realise that there is success in it, and it's not what it seems on the surface, I suppose.





What I was thinking was that the plant, it grows in the company of a filing cabinet, which I suppose reflects on work. So, they kind of coincide with each other, you know, without doing hard work there won't be much growth. And yes, I suppose it reflects on YCL because, although it's such a fun place to be, and it's something we all enjoy, it does require work and that's what allows us to grow and be successful.

# Challenger Parents

## Key Findings

A facilitated focus group was held with a group of parents whose children participate within the NSP Challenger Programme. As part of the Challenger Programme, parents must complete the NSP STEPs programme. Overall the groups' reflections on their own lived-experience of receiving support for both themselves and their children from NSP via SICAP coalesce around the following key themes:

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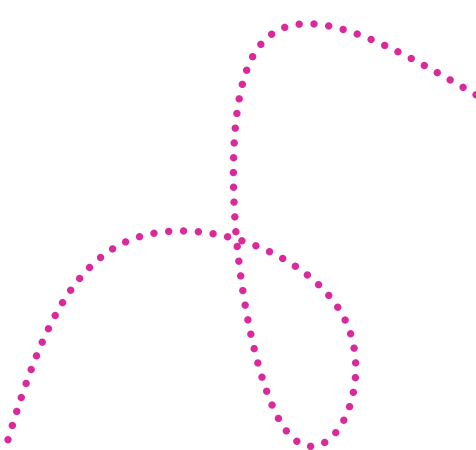
### Building Skill & Confidence

- As outlined in the selected quotations included in the following pages, the parents who participated in this workshop outline significant positive impacts on their own personal development and wellbeing from completing the STEPs programme.
- From building confidence, to building social networks and connections with other parents, the STEPs programme has delivered positive outcomes across a range of SICAP Goal 2 thematic areas - including providing lifelong learning opportunities, and addressing barriers and gaps in lifelong learning in addition to promoting personal development and wellbeing.

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### Expanding Horizons

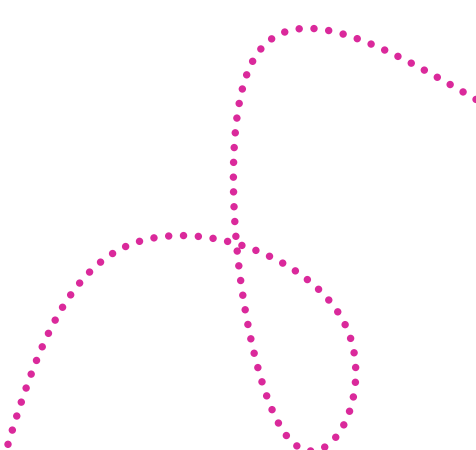
- The parents who participated in this workshop were all in agreement that the Challenger programme has had a transformational impact on their children. From building confidence to providing the practical support needed to prepare for third-level, the Challenger programme has also delivered significant positive outcomes across a range of SICAP Goal 2 thematic areas.
- These include providing preventative supports for children & young people, and preparing people for employment in addition to promoting personal development and wellbeing.
- The Challenger programme is seen as providing hope and opportunity to people who may not have access to the expansive opportunities which education can provide.



This is actually my second time doing the STEPs programme, and I suppose this time, what I kind of figured out was the tools that were taught in the STEPs programme, you use them without even realising you're using them. So, it's amazing how much the course actually makes you grow as a person.

it got me into a classroom, talking to other people, and realising do you know what, the worries I have and the anxiety I have over my kids, everybody else has them as well.

.....there was an interview for my daughter to be part of the Challenger programme, and I was told I had to do a course on a Wednesday night for ten weeks, I hung up the phone and I thought, oh you are having a laugh. I really did, I just thought, you know, ten weeks, I'm thinking, I'm not supposed to be the student. And I did, I'll be honest. But I have absolutely loved it, I have, every minute of it, it was great, the stuff that we've learned has been fantastic. There are things that you do use every day without even realising it after a while, and also, even the course and all aside, I think the social aspect of it has been fantastic. I mean, for the next six years, all of our kids are going to be connected through the Challenger programme.



I think everyone should be taught STEPs, like, really, it really helps your children develop, but it also reminds you that you are a person as well, and your children are going to grow up. So, it makes you instil that you can actually be anything you want to be, and it just gives you the confidence to try new things.

I've loved it, and I have to say it's given me a more positive look on my life, as well as with what way I am with the kids. ....I just found the course now has given me a more positive look on life, and actually more confidence in myself to go out and do other things.

My wife did the online STEPs course, and this one came up with our second daughter, and I said I'd do it, to show that I was taking an interest in what she was doing as well, and saying, well if it's for her, then, I'll do it. But then, as it turned out, STEPs was more for us, and I have to say it was absolutely fantastic.....there's a lot of things that we would use on a daily basis, that you wouldn't even think of that you're using, but it was brilliant, I have to say, and there was new skills that we learned as well. I found that I'm more calm at home. ....I'm more calm at home, I've a bit more of a level head with the kids as well.....honestly it's made me a little bit better in myself as well.....it's given us skills to, that we can achieve what we want as well, and not just the kids, so I was really, really impressed with it and I really enjoyed it.



[my daughter] is 12. And I just think that she has come along in leaps and bounds as well, in terms of social aspect, and I loved doing the STEPs programme, I'm sorry it's over now.

[My son] was always very quiet, shy, stayed in the background, and I was actually shocked that he actually wanted to do the Challenger. So, I have to say, the difference in the child is unbelievable. He's not on the X-Box any more..... he's not hiding in the bedroom, he's down with us, he's actually going out more....He's even missed his football training to go to the Challenger programme.

....it's giving them that focus, that end goal, is to go to college. And it's consistent, and it's something that will be consistently there while they're in school.

It kind of makes them realise that their goal can be achieved, and that they have the extra support, not just from their parents, but they have the extra supports from the Challenger programme.

....the [STEPS] programme that we did links into us setting the goals for them and us setting our goals, do you know what I mean? So, that's why I think the two programmes are extremely important, because we goal-set and we're taught to goal-set in the course that we do, and we're taught to use certain language with the children, so wording things, the way we word things...

# Appendix A

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## Challenger & STEPs Programmes

- The Challenger Programme was set up by Northside Partnership in 1995. It provides structured supports for students and their parents from 6th class to 6th year to help students:
  - Transfer from 6th class into secondary school
  - Prepare for their Junior Certificate
  - Complete their Leaving Certificate
- Every year NSP provide support to a total of 200 students from our five partner schools. As students complete their secondary education we are able to offer 40 new students a place on the programme each year. Challenger parents are offered a further education programme (STEPs) together with the supports provided to their children.

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## Young Community Leaders

- Young Community Leaders (YCL) is a 10-month programme running from September to June for young people aged 16 – 25 from the Northside Partnership catchment area. YCL aims to:
  - Enable young people to develop practical skills for personal, work or student life
  - Give young people the opportunity to use their energy and talents in the community
  - Offer support from other young leaders
- YCL helps young people to develop the following skills: communication and organisation; critical thinking and problem-solving; personal effectiveness and goal setting; restorative practice and conflict resolution.
- On completion, YCL participants are awarded the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action. Accredited by NUI Galway, this is equivalent to Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework and is worth 15 ECTS (European credit transfer system) credits.
- Since NSP ran their first Young Community Leaders programme in 2011/2012, more than 140 young people have completed the programme.

## Acknowledgments

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Maria has pioneered the use of visual methods such as photovoice in Ireland - adapting and innovating with the method across a variety of contexts. Her work focuses on issues related to equity and inclusion, and aims to provide an innovative lens on social challenges.

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