

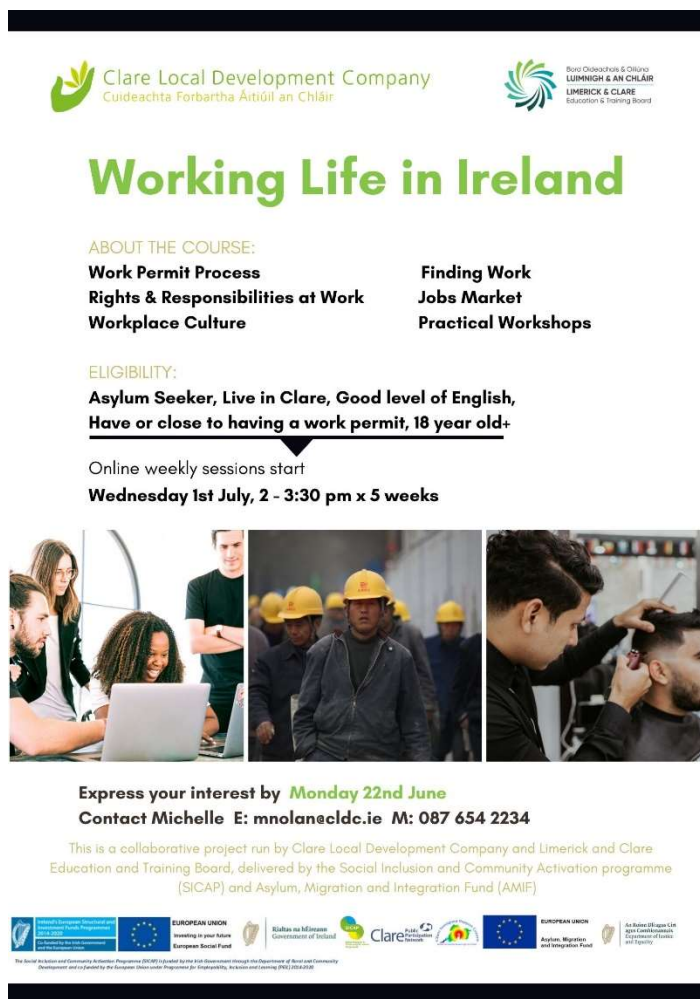
LDC Name: Clare Local Development Company

Lot no.: 16-1

Title of Case study: Working life in Ireland Programme

Thematic Area: Collaboration

Target Group: Asylum seekers



The flyer features the logos of Clare Local Development Company and the Education & Training Board (Limerick & Clare). The main title is 'Working Life in Ireland'. Under 'ABOUT THE COURSE', it lists 'Work Permit Process', 'Rights & Responsibilities at Work', 'Workplace Culture', 'Finding Work', 'Jobs Market', and 'Practical Workshops'. The 'ELIGIBILITY' section states: 'Asylum Seeker, Live in Clare, Good level of English, Have or close to having a work permit, 18 year old+'. It also mentions 'Online weekly sessions start Wednesday 1st July, 2 - 3:30 pm x 5 weeks'. A row of three images shows people working at a laptop, construction workers in hard hats, and a barber cutting hair. Contact information for Michelle is provided, along with a note that the project is collaborative and funded by SICAP and AMIF. Logos for the European Union, Clare Local Development Company, and the Education & Training Board are at the bottom.

Clare Local Development Company
Cuideachta Forbartha Aitiúil an Chláir

Board Oideachais & Oiliúna
LIMERICK & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

Working Life in Ireland

ABOUT THE COURSE:

Work Permit Process **Finding Work**
Rights & Responsibilities at Work **Jobs Market**
Workplace Culture **Practical Workshops**

ELIGIBILITY:
Asylum Seeker, Live in Clare, Good level of English,
Have or close to having a work permit, 18 year old+

Online weekly sessions start
Wednesday 1st July, 2 - 3:30 pm x 5 weeks

Express your interest by **Monday 22nd June**
Contact Michelle E: mnolan@cldc.ie M: 087 654 2234

This is a collaborative project run by Clare Local Development Company and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, delivered by the Social Inclusion and Community Activation programme (SICAP) and Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

EUROPEAN UNION Investing in your future European Social Fund
Clare Local Development Company
EUROPEAN UNION Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

Introduction

This year we are submitting our case study on the Working Life in Ireland programme devised and delivered by Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) in collaboration with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) and aimed at asylum seekers living in Clare.

The case study is presented in a written format supported by a short video to bring to life the collaborative aspect of the work. The short video is a recorded zoom session between Michelle Nolan, SICAP development worker and Mary Cantwell, guidance counsellor with LCETB discussing the Working Life in Ireland programme.

This programme was also presented by SICAP staff in an AONTAS webinar in August this year as an innovative response to working with target groups during Covid restrictions. The link to the AONTAS webinar blog is also included to highlight the impact of this case study.

Background

There are currently three direct provision centres in Co. Clare. An emergency accommodation centre was open during the period of this case study (March – July 2020) but since closed in August 2020. Knockalisheen Direct Provision Centre is also located in south Clare bordering Limerick City, and residents there are directly supported by SICAP staff in Limerick city.

This programme was focused on the residents of the three centres in central, north and west Clare:

- Clare Lodge Direct Provision Centre, Ennis – 64 male residents (reduced to 32 males during lockdown)
- King Thomond Direct Provision Centre, Lisdoonvarna – approximately 80 adults, plus additional children (reduced to 75 during lockdown)
- Miltown Malbay Emergency Accommodation Centre – 22 male residents (reduced to 12 males during lockdown)

The three centres above all opened in Co. Clare between March 2018 and December 2019. There has been strong SICAP engagement with residents living in the centres since they opened. When lockdown was introduced in March this year face to face engagement with SICAP development workers ceased but we have continued to engage with residents remotely, this programme is an example of that engagement.

Development of Collaboration

Since these three new centres opened, services across the county have been working hard to provide a wide range of supports to the residents. The SICAP team in CLDC host a New Communities Interagency Network which meets quarterly since 2015 to engage and collaborate around supports for Roma, New Communities and Asylum Seekers across Clare and to respond to any gaps in provision. This is well attended by representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies and also has target group representation.

As a result of the opening of the King Thomond Direct Provision Centre in 2018 it was agreed amongst members of the New Communities Interagency network that a separate North Clare Interagency network would be valuable to bring organisations and groups together that specifically support residents in King Thomond (Lisdoonvarna) direct provision centre. SICAP staff took responsibility for organising and liaising with the King Thomond DP centre and the first meeting was held in 2019. SICAP staff continue to host this collaborative meeting on a quarterly basis. One of the SICAP development team has also initiated a residents committee at the King Thomond, some of whom attend the interagency on behalf of other residents.

Requests for employment supports regularly come in through interagency meetings, residents themselves and other support staff. The Clare Immigrant Support Centre (CISC) historically provide a wider programme to support asylum seekers navigate the Irish system as a whole. SICAP staff and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) contribute to this programme providing information on education, training and enterprise supports for their programme.

Earlier this year SICAP and LCETB came together with the specific aim to create a programme that solely focused on getting asylum seekers work ready. SICAP staff work with those most vulnerable and distanced from the labour market. The pandemic has made these individuals more vulnerable, more distant from the labour market and the competition for employment is now greater. SICAP development workers felt an urgent need to get this programme rolled out, but because of restrictions it had to be done remotely.

Development of Working Life in Ireland programme

Working life in Ireland was a programme run in collaboration with LCETB. The design and rollout of the programme involved collaboration with a number of different stakeholders. The SICAP development worker set up a focus group with relevant stakeholders, to look at re-designing a broader programme, to bring it online, make it more interactive and focus it solely on getting participants work ready. The group consisted of the Clare Public Participation Network (Clare PPN), LCETB and CISC. Each of the stakeholders had engaged with the target audience and had previous experience of delivering elements of the wider programme. The SICAP development worker hosted two planning meetings over zoom and engaged with stakeholders over the phone and email to schedule sessions, organise resources and presentations.

Target Group

This programme was designed specifically for residents across the three centres outlined above. SICAP staff were not able to attend the centre in person during lockdown so had to depend on other avenues to promote this programme. Between the various stakeholders we had a big reach. SICAP staff promoted it directly to clients, members of interagency groups and direct provision staff promoted it. It was also promoted through social media platforms and on residents WhatsApp groups in each centre.

We limited the number on the course to 20 participants. Other requirements were that participants needed to have, or be close to having, a work permit and a good level of English.

22 participants were recruited to start the programme; 17 males and 5 females, aged between 19 – 40 years.

Engagement Process and approaches used

The SICAP development team normally engage with residents across all three centres through face to face meetings; during lockdown this has been replaced with WhatsApp video calls, phone calls and emails. Weekly check in zoom group calls were also hosted with residents in all three centres during lockdown.

The following approaches were used to keep participants engaged and safeguarded throughout the programme:

- Online training etiquette document sent to each participants prior to the course commencing
- Zoom training during the first session
- To protect identity of participants, no recordings or photographs were permitted
- WhatsApp group set up for participants
- Email/print/post presentation in advance
- Sessions were kept to 90 minutes with a break midway through
- Q&A time were scheduled throughout presentations and at the end
- SICAP development worker was available for one: one support or to support with referrals
- We celebrated their achievements at the end of the programme and participants were sent out certificates. Unfortunately lockdown did not allow for a group celebration
- Wrap-around supports e.g. relevant enterprise, mentoring and career guidance supports were offered to participants from the agencies involved and many of the participants availed of these additional supports.

Working Life in Ireland programme breakdown

This pilot was run over six sessions on Wednesday afternoons. It was delivered using Zoom.

Each of the agencies involved are listed. Each organisation brought to it a shared understanding and desire to collaborate well and achieve the overall objective of the programme.

The SICAP development worker was responsible for hosting planning meetings with stakeholders; coordinating the programme with LCETB; liaising with presenters to organise times/dates for programme; promotion and recruitment; assessing eligibility and registering participants; communicating programmes times/dates, zoom meeting details, online etiquette and presentations to all prior to programme starting; circulating resources and presentations to participants; setting up participants WhatsApp group; chairing zoom session

throughout the programmes; gathering continuous feedback from participants and end of programme evaluation; referring participants to relevant services when requested.

Outline of Working Life in Ireland

Sessions:	Topic:	Presenter(s):
1	Introductions, Zoom training, <i>Work Permit Process and Revenue</i>	SICAP & Clare PPN
2	<i>Finding Work in Ireland</i> covering Job Searching, Recognition of Qualifications, Upskilling, Training Providers, Volunteering & Self-Employment	LCETB
3	<i>Employment Rights & Responsibilities</i> covering Tax, Tax credits, Employment Contracts, Minimum Wage, Payslips, Public Holidays etc. and their service.	Citizen Information Service
4	Employability Workshop covering CV, Cover Letter, Interview Process & Interview Tips	LCETB
5	<i>Mock Interviews and Jobs Market in Ireland</i> covering Current Jobs Landscape, Unemployment Situation, Employment Trends & Benefits of Networking	LCETB
6	<i>Workplace Culture</i> covering Cultural Norms, Dress Code, Icebreaker Conversations, Job Readiness, Pathways to Employment, Job Searching Plan, Supports in Local Community & EmployAbility Service.	EmployAbility Clare & SICAP

Outcomes and Learning

- 19 participants out of 22 completed the programme.
- The SICAP development worker and LCETB staff found the programme easier to deliver than had expected. Most participants were already familiar with using Zoom and had a necessary amount of IT skills.
- Regardless of location, asylum seekers were able to connect to the programme. Two participants who had temporarily been relocated to Galway, due to Covid, could engage in the programme.
- The 90 minute zoom sessions were focused, and allowed for greater engagement.
- We ran the six sessions over a 4 weeks period. This short time frame helped participants stay motivated to complete all sessions. When running it again however we would condense it into three weeks, running two sessions per week.
- The delivery of the entire programme by one key facilitator (SICAP Development worker) meant that relationships could be established and a level of trust built between her and the participants.
- Normally group sizes would be a maximum of twelve, we were able to increase it to twenty-two because we delivered it over zoom and didn't have to consider room size, location of participants, transport issues etc.

- Participants used their smart phones, tablets or laptop to engage through Zoom. However connectivity in the direct provision centres was sometimes an issue.
- Creating a learning space was sometimes an issue. Participants used their bedrooms, sometimes they were cramped, messy, noisy and not conducive to a learning environment.
- The course itself highlighted the challenges that some of the males encountered during the mock interviews. They found it extremely difficult to make eye contact as this would be seen as disrespectful in their culture. More coaching and practice time was needed for these individuals.
- Certain sessions, e.g. Mock Interviews could be given a full session to ensure that participants have enough time to explore the areas at a deeper level. This could also include having a few interviewers on the panel.
- Some participants progressed to employment at the latter end of the programme.
- When rolling out this programme again, we will do so in a more condensed timeframe.
- We received very positive feedback from the participants about the programme. See quotes below from participants in italics.

Participant feedback

- Participants found it useful, informative and practical:

“The course was very helpful and important for me and I got many benefits from the course”
(Male, Miltown Malbay emergency accommodation centre)

“The course was so engaging and interesting that I most times don’t want it to end”.
(Female, Lisdoonvarna direct provision centre)

- Participants linked with services and progressed into employment and training:

“I’m delighted that I got my CV done. I’ve now got a job as a warehouse operative in Shannon”. (Male, Clare Lodge direct provision centre)

- The relaxed nature of each session was effective for encouraging the participants to engage in conversation with presenters and SICAP Development Worker. Participants appreciated the time allocated to ask questions.

“I can say the complete course worked well but I enjoyed more when the tutors gave opportunities to speak and make questions”. (Male, Miltown Malway emergency accommodation centre)

“I liked that I could talk and was listened to”. (Female, Lisdoonvarna direct provision centre)

Going Forward

Following the success of the Working Life in Ireland pilot a second programme with twenty participants will be rolled out in November. There has been much positivity surrounding the

programme and the SICAP team believe that the Working Life in Ireland programme can benefit wider SICAP target groups and can be used as an effective engagement strategy with hard-to-reach individuals in a range of other services beyond SICAP.

We have since organised further online zoom workshops for asylum seekers:

- Volunteering session: to discuss benefits of volunteering, opportunities in Clare and how to get involved. Inviting Clare Volunteer Centre, Clare Youth Services, Tidy Towns and St. Vincent de Paul to present.
- Education system in Ireland, presented by LCETB.

In Conclusion:

This is a good example of a collaborative programme which meets the needs of the hardest to reach by listening to and engaging both with those target groups, and the other services which also support them. Developing strong working relationships with other organisations may take time and energy but we have found that it is always worth the effort in order to provide consistency of services and to minimise gaps in provision to target groups.

Appendix 1- Recorded zoom discussion between SICAP and LCETB staff.

Topic: Working Life in Ireland overview

Date: Sep 16, 2020

Meeting Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/A9KrA2BqQ7eVS2-1GDWCLdBQi612pm0vrZiVFDCwJ38nOZxVfO4Krg-dN_kyvKs0.3DbU7k1DEzWC8Oza

Access Passcode required: 7m&5RTbx

Appendix 2 - AONTAS link to webinar blog:

<https://www.aontas.com/knowledge/blog/aontas-members-lead-the-way-in-tackling-poverty-and-social-exclusion-via-partnership-and-collaboration>