

SICAP Case Study 2022 - Lot: Wexford 14-1

Humans of SICAP

Valuing what Matters in SICAP Goal Two



Everything depends on the individual human being, regardless of how small a number of like-minded people there are, and everything depends on each person, through action and not mere words, creatively making the meaning of life a reality in his or her own being.

Viktor Frankl (1946)

Primary Theme:	Goal 2 project
Target Group:	People who are long term unemployed
Strategic Priority Group:	People who are long term unemployed
Thematic Area:	G2:4 - Preparing people for employment and to remain in work
Outcome:	G2-4:1 SICAP clients are better prepared to enter the labour market.
Presentation:	Video case study with written supporting document

Overview

Wexford Local Development’s case study for 2022 focuses on the **Job Skills programme**, one of a suite of thematic pathway programmes designed, delivered and funded in its entirety by SICAP in Co. Wexford. This Goal Two programme, which has been running since 2018, has evolved in response to changing needs and contexts. It consists of small group workshops which take place over three days and are co-facilitated by Fran Gleeson, one of a team of eight SICAP Client Support Officers, and an experienced WLD tutor. SICAP Client Support Officers are the ‘frontline’ of Goal Two supports and specialise in one to one and small group engagement. Their work is organised on a geographic or target group basis across the county and involves close collaboration with their colleagues on the SICAP Community Development and Training teams.

The SICAP Job Skills programme combines group work and experiential learning with one to one coaching, mentoring and skills development in order to **respond to the barriers facing people who are long term unemployed who are trying to enter the labour market.**

Participants are initially guided through the process of preparing and ‘taking ownership’ of their CV. They also receive advice and tips on preparing for a job interview. Each participant then undergoes a mock interview conducted by the SICAP Client Support Officer and tutor with occasional inputs from employers who volunteer their time. These interviews are video recorded and played back to each person individually on the final day of the workshop. This allows for further self-discovery, often revealing challenges and barriers, as well as reinforcing strengths, of which participants may not previously have been aware.

Follow on coaching and mentoring with the SICAP Client Support Officer enables participants to reflect on and integrate the learning from this experience into their self-presentation and ongoing career planning in a supportive but appropriately challenging manner.

Key themes and lessons emerging from the research

- Establishing a **relationship based on trust and positive regard** with each individual is key to the success of this programme. The emphasis placed on ‘common humanity’ by the SICAP Client Support Officer **empowers** and **puts people at ease**, enabling them to realise that they are the true experts on their own situation and career. A relationship of trust also allows for **appropriate levels of challenge** on the part of the Client Support Officer, helping people to identify and overcome unhelpful thinking patterns or beliefs about themselves and their own abilities and to work on their ‘blind spots’.
- Isolation, stigma and embarrassment are common experiences amongst people who find themselves unemployed and were referenced directly by participants in this case study. The value of the **reassurance** provided by the SICAP Client Support Officer, who has seen many others experience and work through these difficult emotions, was noted by several participants.
- The one to one **coaching and mentoring** which takes place before and after participation in the SICAP Job Skills programme enables each person to identify and build on their strengths, and deepen their self-awareness, leading to greater clarity and resilience. Sometimes this can mean that it is necessary to take **two steps back in order to take one step forward** however the stories of participants depicted in the case study demonstrate that the resulting change is more significant and sustainable as a result.
- The **flexibility afforded by SICAP** has enabled the content and structure of the workshop to be adapted and calibrated to meet evolving needs over the years. **Additional issues** which have emerged through successive workshops have also given rise to **further initiatives** such as workshops focused on **confidence** building and **workplace English** skills.

Overall, this case study clearly demonstrates the need to **situate SICAP Goal Two activities within a broader context of other services as well as the complex and varied challenges of each individual’s life.** It illuminates the vital **importance of process** as opposed to the more often acknowledged ‘tasks’ of supporting individuals in their search for work, underscoring the fact that there is in effect **no ‘wall’ between SICAP Goal One and Goal Two work** – the process of facilitation of personal development that takes place with individuals echoes and provides the basis for the work that SICAP does with local community groups. Finally, it demonstrates that although we can be **consistent** in valuing and seeking to improve and build on **how we ‘show up’** for our clients, we **cannot predict exactly what impact** this work will have in each individual life. This case study shows that **success** in our work is **ultimately determined by the meaning given by each person to their experience of SICAP and how they believe it has benefited them.**

Data collection and analysis

This case study draws on **in depth interviews** conducted in July 2022 with four Job Skills participants, the SICAP Client Support Officer and the tutor who co-facilitates the Job Skills programme. Participants on a Job Skills programme which was running at the time of filming also gave their permission for footage of the workshop and mock interviews to be obtained and used in the case study.

Interview questions were formulated in advance, taking into account the requirement for the case study research to identify specific pieces of learning about how SICAP can contribute to individual development. The questions were refined in consultation with the SICAP Client Support Officer and the team engaged to film and produce the video.

Further discussion about emerging themes took place once the SICAP Evaluation Coordinator and the film crew had reviewed the raw interview footage. Through this process, key themes were identified and used to structure the final edit. These themes are threaded through the video and are set out in more detail above.

The **primary audience** for this case study are funders, other local development companies involved in the implementation of SICAP and agencies who refer individuals to the programme. The one to one coaching/facilitation and development work which takes place in SICAP Goal Two is usually hidden from view due to its personal and confidential nature. It is therefore anticipated that this 'up close' look at Goal Two work will help to address this gap, explaining and demonstrating the unique role and contribution of SICAP in a crowded and sometimes confusing training and employment support space. A shorter version of the case study has also been produced for use on social media channels. This will be used to showcase the benefits of the programme to a wider audience including potential beneficiaries of the programme.

Wexford Local Development SICAP Job Skills Programme in Numbers April 2018 – August 2022

- **37 SICAP Job Skills workshops delivered, including 12 adapted for online delivery during the pandemic, to a total of 203 participants.**
- **4 Workplace English and 2 Confidence Building workshops delivered to a total of 25 participants.**

For more information on the SICAP Job Skills Programme contact Fran Gleeson (fgleeson@wld.ie) or Maeve O'Byrne (mobyrne@wld.ie) at 053 9155800.

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