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**October  
2025**

## **2025 SICAP Case Study Narrative**

### **TITLE OF CASE STUDY:**

The impact of SICAP funded work on the Just Transition and sustainability at a community level

A SICAP thematic focus area of work

### **LDC:**

Southside Partnership DLR



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



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Supporting People Supporting Communities  
Agnóim le daoine. Ag tacaíocht le daoine.

# 2025 SICAP Case Study Narrative

## **CAB NO:**

Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown (5-1)

## **TITLE OF CASE STUDY:**

The impact of SICAP funded work on the Just Transition and sustainability at community level.

## **CASE STUDY THEME:**

(3.2) Thematic Focus area

## **ASSOCIATED SUB-THEME:**

Thematic Focus 3: Climate action and the just transition

## **SYNOPSIS:**

## **INTENDED AUDIENCE:**

Pobal; LCDC; DRCD, Southside Partnership DLR Board of Management, Staff, visitors to SSP website, viewers of our Social Media posts; Stakeholders, collaborators, local agencies and organisations; the communities; attendees at information and support events; additional distribution / showing of video as relevant to our work and for peer learning.

**Supporting Video Link:** <https://youtu.be/7kfa6jp120Q>



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## Framing note

This case study is written from a whole-community perspective. In Southside Partnership DLR, SICAP-funded community development and social prescribing act as the backbone capacity that coordinates, convenes and leverages wider programmes (health & wellbeing, Integration supports, employment, CE/Tús, arts/heritage, and local grants) so that climate action is practical, inclusive and place-based.

Poverty, health and inclusion are a central part of climate justice; a *just transition* means distributing both the benefits (healthier places, green skills, lower costs) and the burdens (time, money, risk) of climate action fairly. People facing poverty, poor health, disability, migration stress or social isolation have less spare time, money and headspace, and less access to decision-making. Without targeted support, they are more exposed the consequences of extreme weather, energy and food cost shocks, and neighbourhood decline, and less able to participate in solutions.

SICAP's role is to remove those participation barriers: local hubs; low-cost, low-carbon activities (gardens, willow weaving, eco-soap, beach cleans); social prescribing to build confidence and connection; heritage and mapping to create place attachment and stewardship. This is climate justice in practice: people who are most affected are supported to shape, benefit from, and lead local climate action. This report highlights the impact of SICAP across the areas the Southside Partnership DLR supports, and includes direct quotes from participants and community members throughout.



**SSP Women's Programme International Breakfast**



## Synopsis

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SSP DLR is delivering a place-based climate action approach in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown and Furry Hill/Sandyford, that couples spatial justice (reclaiming and greening public space) with community development and group capacity-building.

Through SICAP, SSP DLR supports local groups to co-design low-carbon, inclusive uses of existing public assets (arches, an underpass, disused laneway, courtyards/green lanes), builds nature/walkability maps with residents, and strengthens the social foundations (cohesion, inclusion, safety) that make a just transition real for all members of the community.

This work aligns directly with DLR's Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 (community engagement; nature-based solutions; circular economy) and the LECP 2023–2028 Goal 1: Create a climate-resilient County.

This case study showcases how SICAP-funded staff time, community development supports, and coordination in Southside Partnership DLR (SSP) enable practical, local pathways into climate action and a just transition, particularly through social prescribing, local community group (LCG) support, and collaborative, place-based initiatives. Activities include mini-forest stewardship, community gardens, memorial and sensory gardens, beach clean-ups, recycling/circular-economy initiatives, school uniform swaps, a community library, Creative Café sustainability sessions (e.g., Willow Weaving, Eco-Soap, Planting for Wellbeing), and heritage-led engagement that strengthens place attachment and stewardship.

SICAP's contribution to this work is clear. Funding the Social Prescribing & Wellbeing leadership (3 days/week, staff in local community hubs, convening and coordinating across DLRCC Parks/Heritage, Libraries, Sports Partnership and local Community Organisations (LCGs, Networks and Social Enterprises), and practical supports to activate, host and signpost people into activities that improve wellbeing and environmental outcomes. These actions operationalise SICAP's Horizontal Principles, including Climate Justice, and align with LECP Goal 1 (climate resilience) and relevant SDGs.

In 2024, SSP supported 666 individuals one-to-one (108% of target) with 2,457 non-caseload attendances; in 2025, to 28 Mar 2025, 643 individuals (104% of target) with 1,844 non-caseloads, with a clear footprint in a disadvantaged small area. While these are programme-level figures, they demonstrate reach among priority communities where climate-linked actions are anchored.



## Context & Need

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Ballybrack & Loughlinstown contain the county's largest cluster of disadvantaged/very disadvantaged small areas within an otherwise affluent county, with fragmented public space, lower access to services and underinvestment in shared cultural/green infrastructure. Communities report isolation, early school leaving, addiction and intergenerational unemployment. Climate risks and costs land hardest where there is less money for transport, energy upgrades or leisure, and where people feel less power to influence local change. A just transition must start here.

Our local theory of change is to build trusted community hubs and low-barrier group activities, then connect people through community workers, social prescribing and heritage and place-making to visible environmental actions. As connection leads to confidence, people's contributions grow, and residents become stewards of shared spaces (gardens, memorial areas, lanes), making climate action local and social and rooting it in the culture of the communities.

At a policy level, the DLR Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 commits to a *climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, climate-neutral county*, featuring actions across Energy & Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions, Circular Economy & Resource Management, and Community Engagement. The LECP 2023–2028 sets Goal 1: climate resilience (incl. circular economy). SSP's SICAP actions provide the community-engagement engine for these goals in B&L.

SSP DLR operates place-based hubs (Ballybrack, Loughlinstown; Furry Hill Community Resource Centres) that act as anchor points for Local Community Groups (LCGs) to meet, learn, and take collective action, including “**creative and collective responses to climate action**.” These hubs are the platform for health, wellbeing and climate action, sustaining groups over time and drawing in wider membership through trusted, local access. SICAP planning and actions explicitly reference:

- **Climate action & the Just Transition** as a *Focus Area*, with support to LCGs to co-design, deliver and maintain climate-linked initiatives.
- **Social Prescribing** as a pathway to connect isolated residents into place-based, pro-environmental activities that also address mental health and social connection, aligning to LECP Goal 5 and SDG 3, and contributing to LECP Goal 1 (climate resilience) through environmental projects and stewardship.

### Local mechanisms that matter for climate justice:

- **Place attachment → stewardship:** Heritage sessions in Creative Café spark curiosity and pride, leading to clean-up participation and local environmental care

**“if you value it, you protect it”**

- **Low-cost, practical environmental skills:** sessions like Eco-Soap, Planting for Wellbeing, Willow Weaving lower barriers to sustainable practices and social connection.
- **Community ownership & safety:** Long-standing memorial garden care (no vandalism in 10 years) shows collective guardianship, dignity and mental-health sensitivity.

**Programme-level reach among disadvantaged areas:** evidence from 2024 and early 2025 shows strong KPI2 delivery (people supported one-to-one) and engagement within named disadvantaged small areas (e.g., Ballybrack; Loughlinstown/Killiney South). This reach underpins the equity dimension of climate-linked work.

## Activities

The primary target group for our work is people living in disadvantaged communities with intentional outreach to Travellers, migrants and new communities, lone parents, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+, older residents, children/young people, and people with lived experience of trauma or exclusion. Delivery is intergenerational and hosted in trusted local hubs. The activities below are a snapshot of the activities our SICAP-funded staff have coordinated or supported through our hubs and across the community.

The SICAP contribution includes funding staff time to organise, convene partners, secure rooms, tutors and facilitators, recruit and support volunteers, and connect referrals from social prescribing and other partners to local activities.

Staff use a person-centred, trauma-aware approach, creating safe, low-barrier spaces where people experiencing isolation or low self-esteem can engage at their own pace, build confidence, and choose the next step that works for them.



### How SICAP leverages a whole-system response

Our SICAP team is the backbone capacity that coordinates, convenes and unlocks wider programmes (Health & Wellbeing, PICES, Tús, arts/heritage and local grants) around community-led goals. What this means: the climate-action work described here is SICAP-enabled. SICAP funds the people and time that pull partners together, host activities in local hubs, recruit and support participants, and keep momentum. That core capacity then leverages additional funding and in-kind supports, multiplying impact without increasing barriers for residents.



## Climate-linked community activities & collaboration

### Mini forest & community gardens:

LCGs (incl. Men's Shed) support the local Ballybrack hub in maintaining the mini forest and do this through partnership with DLRCC Parks and DLRCC Community Dept. They also maintain multiple public green spaces in the community, have built spaces for a local school to create a garden to grow vegetables and have installed buddy benches for the local Gaelscoil. Activities include weeding, mulching, planting, insect hotels/bird boxes. Loughlinstown Estate Management have just won the Tidy Districts award for the second-year running.





### Memorial garden care (Glen Haven Park):



The LBS (Loughlinstown, Ballybrack, Shankill) men's shed engages in routine maintenance and upkeep of the memorial garden, which is a reflection space linked to mental health and loss in the area. The group take great pride in this work, and it is valued deeply by the community. A member of the shed highlighted to us that

**“ There has been no vandalism in 10 years of the garden”**

indicating strong community ownership. This work contributes to the biodiversity and green space in the community, while also increasing social cohesion at a community level and a deep sense of pride for the men who maintain the space.

**Sensory gardens (Dundrum/Loughlinstown)** The LBS Men's Shed maintain sensory gardens locally for the Ballybrack Project Centre and an IPAS centre locally, creating a calm, outdoor space for people to take time to be in nature in peace.





## Reopening of Community Space.



Significant work has gone into the re-opening of a local unused laneway. A local artist Laura Faichey worked with young people and the local community to sketch and paint murals along the laneway, creating an inclusive, safer, public space and ensuring a sense of pride and stewardship over the space by local young people. The lane, which had previously called Graffiti Lane locally has been renamed Park Lane.

***"The kids now have taken ownership of the lane"***





**Recycling & circular economy:** Uniform swaps in Ballybrack Project Centre, battery drop-offs and can/bottle collections that benefit the Down Syndrome Centre create low-cost, circular habits that reduce waste while keeping money in households, an essential equity dimension of climate action.

### **Activating existing public assets (low-carbon, place-based)**

With residents and partners, SSP DLR is re-using existing public spaces, including disused public arches, the Ballybrack underpass, and estate courtyards/green lanes, for creative, inclusive gatherings and micro-interventions (murals, pop-ups, noticeboards). This is infrastructure-through-use, avoiding the embodied-carbon cost of new builds while building stewardship and pride.



### **Mapping nature & walkability (evidence for greening and safer routes)**

Co-produced Biodiversity/Nature and Walkability maps (Jan–Mar 2025) created a resident-authored evidence base to target pollinator planting, courtyard greening, and safer active-travel links between estates.

### **Healthy Food Made Easy Cooking Courses (HFME)**

Ballybrack Project Centre offers the SSP HFME cooking courses tailored for adults with intellectual disabilities. The program, which includes preparing and consuming meals, has been well-received, with participants applying their new cooking skills in their daily lives. Reducing food costs from scratch cooking is a cost-of-living and sustainability win, lower waste, healthier diets, and skills that transfer to growing and garden projects.



### **Community animation & hub-based delivery**

Through the Ballybrack, Loughlinstown and Furryhill hubs SICAP staff support LCGs with barrier-light activities that connect climate action with everyday life, gardens, swaps, repair-style actions, micro-events, sewing, arts, crafts, cooking and growing vegetables and other essential life skills to promote sustainable, healthy communities, and link groups into county and national initiatives (DLR Festival of Inclusion, Age Friendly Expo, battery recycling, brown-bin distribution).

### **Social cohesion as climate resilience**

Following local tensions around an IPAS centre, SSP convened Community Conversations and Loughlinstown Estate Management and partners co-created a Memorial Village Mural + noticeboard, turning a contested frontage into inclusive civic infrastructure and a communications hub “*connection, not conflict*”. This strengthened the social foundations essential to just transition.



**Gather Fest (Feb 2024)** as part of the creative Places Research & Development Award was a 3-day intergenerational event that surfaced memory, activities, nature maps and strengthened pride and cross-group collaboration across Ballybrack and Loughlinstown communities.

**“We didn’t know what we had until we saw it all together.”**



**Hub-led climate touches:** battery recycling points, brown-bin distribution, gardens, swaps/collections and carbon-lite service delivery (e.g., moving enterprise training online reduced travel and room-hire emissions), childrens nature walks, recycling crafts and mini sensory gardens. Ballybrack Project Centre now has Solar panels on the building and is catching rainwater to reuse. The primary focus of this is to reduce energy consumption, but a secondary benefit is to be a leader on climate action locally. The centre also has a community library that is very popular, and works on digital inclusion, helping older people to complete online applications, reducing paper waste and improving access to services, this is an initiative that will be shared with other Community Organisations.



**The SSP Women’s Programme (Supporting Migrant and Irish women)** has developed a community education programme focused on inclusive climate action programmes. Classes include sewing, Create & Revive Art and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Craft. Their International Women’s Breakfast creates a safe space and opportunity for women to come together, share food and address topics such as women's leadership and voice and gender equality.

**Our Integration Team delivers ‘Taste from Home’ cooking classes for women staying in long-term** accommodation centres. Each week, a different recipe from around the world is cooked and shared, and the local Men's Shed has built mini allotments for them to grow their veg.

**‘Thank you ever so much for allowing us to have such a great time together as women. We appreciate your effort towards us.**

**‘In Zimbabwe we say, Thank you Siyabonga, Tinotenda. May God continue to bless you and keep you’**

**Arts & culture as community infrastructure** . The SICAP Team in Holly House Community Resource Centre has leveraged an Arts Council of Ireland *Creative Places* Award, bringing an investment of €300,000 over three years into arts and culture in Loughlinstown and Ballybrack. The programme embeds artist-led, community-led activity in local spaces to strengthen place-based activities, social connectedness, and address generational issues that have impacted the whole community. In practice, this makes arts and culture a platform for inclusion and a route into environmental stewardship: murals and lane reopenings build pride and safety; heritage sessions grow place attachment → care; and creative workshops flow naturally into gardening, recycling/circular actions and beach cleans. This is climate justice made tangible, participation first, then stewardship, with arts practice anchoring the social conditions that allow climate action to take root and last.



**Our early education and prevention programmes** provide a range of supports such as PEEP + DLR (Early parenting Programme for parents and babies 0-2yrs) Homework club, Afterschools, Grinds and Personal Development Programmes aim to support children, young people to stay in school and break the cycle of disadvantage. These models have helped us leverage philanthropic funding and roll out more programmes in disadvantaged areas across the county.





**Our SICAP Pre-Employment supports**, based in Ballybrack, provide guidance and training opportunities for people with low educational attainment and/or experiencing long-term unemployment. We provide a variety of free services to support people to achieve their goals including training workshops, one-to-one assistance in finding employment, information on further



education or training, assistance with job applications, CV supports and interview preparation. Our team also provide supports for those wishing to move from unemployment to self-employment. This may include help in completing an application for payments such as the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, or with help identifying appropriate training. In addition to self-employment our SICAP staff can also support individuals or groups to explore setting up a Social

Enterprise. These are businesses with a social or environmental impact objective rather than one of maximising profits for shareholders. Any surplus income generated by these groups is reinvested into achieving these social objectives. Again here both one-to-one advice and guidance is available, for individuals or groups to explore such ideas, with follow up training and mentoring as required. Some local examples of such projects include:

**The Bike Hub:** Social Good Through Bikes. Who aim to make cycling accessible to as many people as possible in local communities through accessible fleets, bike repairs, volunteering and training.

<https://thebikehub.ie/>

**Education for Sustainability:** Climate literacy education for meaningful change. A national, not-for-profit social enterprise laying the foundation for a more sustainable future for all through climate education and action.

<https://educationforsustainability.ie/>

## Social Prescribing as a route into climate action

**Project Leader (SICAP-funded 3 days/week)** provides 1:1 coaching, connects people to Creative Café sustainability/heritage sessions, beach cleans, mindful gardening, and onward into volunteering/community roles.

**Creative Café (Libraries & Community):** Takes place in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (dlr) and is run by the DLR Social Prescribing Programme for Health and Wellbeing at Southside Partnership DLR in collaboration with dlr Libraries and Creative Ireland. The programme is free and includes recurring sustainability strands (e.g., Willow Weaving – Spring & Autumn, Eco-Soap, Planting for Wellbeing), plus

**“I love coming to these workshops, they beat loneliness which is a big problem...  
 the joy of the company plus, of course, the cup of tea.”**

— Creative Café participant

Participants in the Willow Weaving Session were asked What did you enjoy most about the session?

**‘The creative activity aspect. The chance to do something I normally wouldn’t’**

**‘Learning a new craft and the social aspect and coming away with a nice willow woven piece.’**

**‘Feeling I achieved something and social interaction’**

**‘The people!’**

**‘The friendly relaxed atmosphere with a cuppa’**

**‘I love coming to these workshops, they beat loneliness which is a big problem’**

**‘The joy of learning how to weave & the joy of the company plus, of course, the cup of tea’**



**History & Heritage** was an 8-week course to discover how people lived in DLR in past times, shared historic clues to look out for in our surroundings, and where to find special local wonders. The course explored local geology, nature, archaeology, architecture, oral history and visited heritage sites. These modules build place attachment and stewardship.

**‘I enjoyed all the different courses, but what I enjoyed the most was the welcome & inclusive approach from all the people involved’**

**‘The knowledge of the facilitators was fantastic. I really enjoyed the focus on geology, history, archaeology. Thank you to the entire DLR Social Prescribing Team and the Heritage Office’.**



**Beach clean:** A practical, social beach clean where bags and gloves are provided along with coordination and guidance. This action is pro social and is visible environmental action that prompts critical discussion about waste and shared responsibility.

**“This was actually the best session you have run to date. I really enjoyed it and what a great mix of people.”**

Social Beach Clean participant (Festival of Inclusion 2025; Flossie & the Beach Cleaners)



### Mindful Garden:

An 8-week gardening, wellbeing and social connection programme. This course is a free, useful way to build skills and social connection while engaging in nature.

### Planting for Wellbeing:

This session from expert gardener Aoife Munn focused on planting herbs which are good for pollinators and good for us. Participants learned the skill of planting, gained some new knowledge around herbs and pollination and were able to

take home a window box of herbs to continue to grow and use in cooking.



### Crafting a More Sustainable Future with Sustainable Life School

Nathalie and Diane from the Sustainable Life School facilitated a fun and creative journey to craft a vision board, helping people to envision a more sustainable lifestyle and community. People engaged in climate chats and left with tips to kickstart their journey towards a greener more eco connected life. The Sustainable Life School is a social enterprise with the mission to support communities to live more sustainably.

## Collaboration & networks

The key to all of the work in this case study is collaboration, both at a community level, at a sector level, across state, council, NGO and community partners. Horizontal principles are embedded across the community, with a priority on inclusion, equality and climate justice.

- **Hub infrastructure** (Ballybrack Project Centre, Holly House) is used as low-carbon delivery bases and have deep connections with the community, enabling staff and the buildings to be connectors to a broad range of activities.
- SSP uses SICAP to leverage funding and resources from philanthropic orgs such as Changing Lives DLR and Dundrum Shopping Centre who provide us with a premises in Dundrum to support IPA's and Ukrainian's.
- **Partners regularly involved:** DLRCC (Heritage, Social Inclusion, Arts, Community, Parks), DLR Libraries, DLR Sports Partnership, AISPNI/Irish Social Prescribing Peer Network, Arts Council of Ireland Loughlinstown Estate Management, Loughlinstown Community Rooms, Community Gardai, Local Policing Forum, DLR Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, LBS Men's Shed, DLR PPN, Holly House, Healthy Ireland, schools (uniform swaps, gardens), Wicklow Willow (facilitation), Women's Collective, Crosscare, Tusla, CYPSC, Family Resource Centres, Southside Travellers, Changing Lives DLR, Katherine Howard Foundation and HSE.
- **Climate Action Network (county):** SSP are planning to develop a sharing/best-practice network with a longer-term aim of local climate action strategies.

SICAP's convening role ensures these collaborations land in the communities that need them most, with hubs used as low-carbon delivery bases and trusted access points





# Impact: Participation and Change

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## **Programme-level reach context:**

We supported people one-to-one through SICAP employment and community education programmes, social prescribing other health and wellbeing programmes and reached people through groups and community activities. Participants describe feeling welcome and included, meeting new people, building confidence, and taking visible stewardship actions in shared spaces. This combination of participation and change is what makes the work both community development and climate action.

- **2024:** KPI2 (people supported one-to-one) 666 (108% of target); non-caseload 2,457; median 3 interventions.
- **2025 YTD (to 28 Mar):** KPI2 643 (104%); non-caseload 1,844; disadvantaged SAs include Ballybrack and Loughlinstown/Killiney South among others.

## **Individual / group level**

### **Confidence, visibility, belonging:**

Many participants shared that they grew in confidence by engaging in community level activities, particularly those that contribute to an increased sense of pride across the community. A member of the Men's Shed was named as moving from extreme shyness to engaging in daily community clean-ups, receiving community wide recognition for his work in maintain the local area. There is visible pride & pro-social environmental behaviour resulting from these activities and these confidence and connection gains are preconditions for an equitable climate transition, because they determine who participates, who benefits, and who leads in local environmental action.

Participants consistently describe feeling welcome and included, meeting new people, and building confidence through simple, hands-on activities like willow weaving, eco-soap making, planting and local clean-ups. People highlight the friendly, relaxed atmosphere ("the cuppa helps"), the joy of learning something new, and the sense of achievement from making or improving something together or keeping the local area looking well. Several note that sessions "beat loneliness" and that learning about local history, geology and archaeology deepens pride in place, often leading to visible stewardship of shared spaces (gardens, memorial areas, beaches). This is the human side of a just transition: lowering social and practical barriers so that people most affected by cost, health and access pressures can participate in and benefit from local climate action.

**Mental health & place stewardship:** Mindful gardening and heritage sessions improved connection to nature and motivation to care for shared spaces; participants link learning to action. For example, while engaging in the beach clean-up, people began to really notice how much people litter which opened up discussions and a desire to engage in further clean-ups.

**Community ownership & safety:** The memorial garden unvandalised for 10 years shows a sense of stewardship and pride locally. sheds maintain small parks/laneways, fostering dignity and intergenerational use.

**Place-based, low-carbon approach:** using existing public assets (arches/underpass/courtyards) can keep costs and embodied carbon down while raising visibility and pride.

**Trusted hubs & barrier-light engagement:** Ballybrack & Loughlinstown centres made participation easy and familiar; programming interfaced with county initiatives (bins, battery recycling, inclusion festivals).

**Co-produced maps:** residents’ Nature/Walkability maps focused attention on doable, local climate actions. Young people expressed their disappointment of ‘being moved on’ through a creative mapping process and are working with a socially engaged artist to develop a local hang out alternative.

**Collaboration:** key to everything we do as an organisation, SICAP allows us the flexibility to work in partnership, use creative and innovative methodology and deliver sustainable programmes with local communities and organisations who otherwise would be left behind. DLRCC (Heritage, Social Inclusion, Arts, Community, Parks), DLR Libraries, DLR Sports Partnership, AISPNI/Irish Social Prescribing Peer Network, Arts Council of Ireland Loughlinstown Estate Management, Loughlinstown Community Rooms, Community Gardai, Local Policing Forum, DLR Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, LBS Men’s Shed, DLR PPN, Holly House, Healthy Ireland, schools (uniform swaps, gardens), Wicklow Willow (facilitation), Women’s Collective, Cross care, Tusla, CYPSC, Family Resource Centres, Southside Travellers, Changing Lives DLR, Katherine Howard Foundation and HSE. Provide reach and legitimacy.

## Impact of this Work on the SICAP Horizontal Themes of Community Development, Equality, and Climate Action

Across Ballybrack, Loughlinstown and Furry Hill/Sandyford, SICAP delivers a community development approach that starts with listening and co-design in trusted hubs, builds the capacity of Local Community Groups and Organisations, and turns everyday spaces into shared civic assets—gardens, memorial and sensory spaces, reopened laneways, mini-forests and beaches cared for together. By resourcing participation first (welcome, safety, craft and garden skills, heritage-led pride in place), SICAP reduces practical barriers and creates low-barrier entry points where people can try things, meet neighbours and succeed together; over time, this generates local stewardship and sustained collective action.

The same approach advances Equality: targeted outreach via social prescribing actively includes residents who face poverty, disability, migration stress, loneliness or poor health, people with the least time, money and headspace to engage, so they can shape and benefit from local improvements on equal terms. Participants describe the *“welcome & inclusive approach”*, the *“friendly, relaxed atmosphere with a cuppa”* and how sessions *“beat loneliness”*, changes that are pre-conditions for fair participation and leadership. In practice, this is Climate Action through equality and community development: nature-based and circular-economy activities are designed and hosted where they’re most needed, with SICAP staff coordinating partners (DLRCC Parks/Heritage, Libraries, Sports Partnership, Men’s Shed, schools and others) and animating groups so that environmental gains coincide with social connection, safety and pride of place. In short, SICAP enables the people, time and partnerships that make climate action practical, inclusive and locally led, embedding the programme’s Horizontal Themes in day-to-day work and aligning to LECP/CAP commitments on resilience, nature-based solutions and circularity.

**Alignment to LECP & SDGs:** environmental projects support LECP Goal 1; SP aligns to LECP Goal 5/SDG 3; community hubs support LECP Goal 6.



## Learning & Transferable Practice

- Start with care-based listening, people facing and co-mapping (what people value/need).
- Activate existing spaces first, infrastructure through use, before big capital asks.
- Pair artist + key worker + group; keep access barrier-light in trusted hubs.
- Track use of public space, who benefits, and small environmental wins to build the case for incremental investment.
- **Heritage as a hook:** linking local history, geology and archaeology has helped people feel a sense of connection and pride in their community which has shown positive climate behaviour.
- **Low-cost sustainability skills** (Eco-Soap, Willow Weaving, planting) work as confidence-building gateways into further volunteering/stewardship.
- **Men's Sheds & schools:** The LBS is an example of intergenerational collaborations (benches, gardens, laneways) cement community ownership and visible care.
- **Network approach:** a County Climate Action Network can share resources, reduce duplication, and support smaller LCGs to participate meaningfully.

Start with social, welcome, culture, heritage, layer in simple skills , weaving, gardening, upcycling, and end in stewardship, beach cleans, gardens, sensory/memorial spaces. This engages people who don't identify as 'environmentalists', making climate action feel local, doable and shared

## Challenges

- **While there are huge positives across all activities, a maintenance burden** for mini forest/gardens was raised, as it requires periodic volunteer mobilisations and partner coordination. While the area is very lucky with the number of volunteers and organisations, coordinating this takes work and resources.
- **Information fragmentation:** A dynamic, county-wide community directory was recommended as a way to prevent at times slow progression pathways from interest to action.
- **Transport gaps:** A community cab was raised as a potential to counteract the limits of who can access outdoor activities or hubs.
- **Funding/time intensity:** Long term climate impacts can take significant work that can often go unseen. For example, the solar/rainwater/insulation upgrades to Ballybrack Project Centre required weeks of application work and planning spanning two years.
- **Space and permissions:** securing access/maintenance for arches/underpass is ongoing work, phased activation and temporary interventions have helped maintain momentum while longer approvals process proceeds.
- **Division & misinformation :** Climate action work can elicit a strong reaction. Community hubs are a key space for accurate evidence-based information, delivered by trusted voices.
- **Lesson for climate justice:** maintenance, transport and information gaps are equity issues; resourcing these 'unseen' costs is vital so that participation is possible for those with least spare time and money.

## SICAP's Contribution

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Per guidance, we state the added value of SICAP for each strand:

- Social Prescribing leadership (3 days/week): assessment, 1:1 coaching, referrals, group animation, monitoring.
- Coordination & convening with DLRCC/PPN/Libraries/Sports Partnership/LCGs; rooms/tutors/materials where applicable; governance and grants support to LCGs.
- Monitoring/evaluation inputs; horizontal principles embedded (including Climate Justice).

**Funding leverage** : SSP leveraged approx. €3.47 for every €1 of SICAP funding in 2025 YTD, and €5.15 for every €1 in 2024.

SICAP capacity is an enabler that unlocks and aligns this wider investment behind community-led climate action.

## What's Next

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We will continue to build inclusive sustainable communities, providing SICAP supports and resources to target those most at risk of poverty and social isolation.

We will use SICAP to leverage funding from philanthropic organisations, strengthen our programmes and **extend our proven, evidence-based models** into more disadvantaged communities across DLR. SICAP funded staff will work as part of the Loughlinstown and Ballybrack Creative Places Programme: strengthening links and community connectiveness to outdoor spaces whilst promoting community leadership and stewardship of shared places through low-barrier artistic, cultural, heritage and environmental activities. Including the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Loughlinstown estate. We will place a greater emphasis on our Goal 1 work in SICAP, employing a Goal 1 worker who will deliver a range of supports aimed at providing information, education, leadership development, community and local development and embedding sustainable programmes further into the most marginalised communities.

We will use our strategic plan to ensure our SICAP programme is key to meeting people where they are at, and delivering local priorities, including the LECP and DLR Climate Action Plan, by coordinating partners, supporting Local Community Groups, and turning evidence into practical, place-based action.



Together with residents and partners, we will keep making climate action local, doable and shared, so a just transition takes root, people first, place by place.





Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
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government supporting communities



Comhairle Contae County Council

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