Darmody, Merike; Smyth, Emer

Book

The goals and governance of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017 : a mixed methods study

Provided in Cooperation with:
ZBW OAS

Reference: Darmody, Merike/Smyth, Emer (2018). The goals and governance of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017 : a mixed methods study. Dublin : Economic and Social Research Institute.
doi:10.26504/rs68.

This Version is available at:
http://hdl.handle.net/11159/2265

THE GOALS AND GOVERNANCE OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME (SICAP) 2015–2017

A MIXED METHODS STUDY

MERIKE DARMODY AND EMER SMYTH

EVIDENCE FOR POLICY

ESRI ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

THE GOALS AND GOVERNANCE OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME (SICAP) 2015-2017: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

Merike Darmody

Emer Smyth

ABOUT THE ESRI

The mission of the Economic and Social Research Institute is to advance evidence-based policymaking that supports economic sustainability and social progress in Ireland. ESRI researchers apply the highest standards of academic excellence to challenges facing policymakers, focusing on 12 areas of critical importance to 21st Century Ireland.

The Institute was founded in 1960 by a group of senior civil servants led by Dr T.K. Whitaker, who identified the need for independent and in-depth research analysis to provide a robust evidence base for policymaking in Ireland.

Since then, the Institute has remained committed to independent research and its work is free of any expressed ideology or political position. The Institute publishes all research reaching the appropriate academic standard, irrespective of its findings or who funds the research.

The quality of its research output is guaranteed by a rigorous peer review process. ESRI researchers are experts in their fields and are committed to producing work that meets the highest academic standards and practices.

The work of the Institute is disseminated widely in books, journal articles and reports. ESRI publications are available to download, free of charge, from its website. Additionally, ESRI staff communicate research findings at regular conferences and seminars.

The ESRI is a company limited by guarantee, answerable to its members and governed by a Council, comprising 14 members who represent a cross-section of ESRI members from academia, civil services, state agencies, businesses and civil society. The Institute receives an annual grant-in-aid from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to support the scientific and public interest elements of the Institute's activities; the grant accounted for an average of 30 per cent of the Institute's income over the lifetime of the last Research Strategy. The remaining funding comes from research programmes supported by government departments and agencies, public bodies and competitive research programmes.

Further information is available at www.esri.ie

THE AUTHORS

Merike Darmody is a Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). Emer Smyth is a Research Professor at the ESRI and an Adjunct Professor at TCD.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BTEI	The Back to Education Initiative
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committees
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (previously known as Department of Social Protection DSP)
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
ESF	The European Social Fund
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HSE	The Health Service Executive
ILDN	Irish Local Development Network
IRIS	Integrated Reporting and Information System
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LDC	Local Development Company
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCDP	Local and Community Development Programme
LCG	Local Community Group
LDSIP	Local Development Social Inclusion Programme
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale
LECP	Local Enterprise and Community Plan
LEOS	Local Enterprise Offices
LES	The Local Employment Service
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LLL	Life-Long Learning
NEETS	Young People aged 15-24 years who are Not In Employment, Education or Training
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PI	Programme Implementer
PIAAC	The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PEIL	Programme For Employability, Inclusion and Learning
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate programme
PPN	Public Participation Network
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SOLAS	The Further Education and Training Authority (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna)
VTOS	The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY AIMS

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) (2015-2017) aims at reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. The three goals of the programme are; strengthening local communities, promoting lifelong learning, and helping people become more job ready. SICAP is funded and overseen by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with Pobal nominated to act as an agent of the Department with respect to national management and oversight of the programme. The Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) are the contracting authorities that manage and administer SICAP at a local level and direct the funding to 45 Programme Implementers (PIs) covering 51 local areas or lots to implement the programme. This report is part of a broader research programme entitled 'A Programme of Evaluation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme' aimed at informing the Department of Rural and Community Development's overarching strategic goals and objectives in relation to SICAP and evaluating projects, actions and activities conducted as part of the programme.

This study aims to inform policy on two levels by looking at the overarching strategic goals and objectives of SICAP, and by assessing the operation of the SICAP governance structure. The main research questions to be addressed in the study are:

1. How does SICAP provision fit within the overall policy landscape of social inclusion provision by different government departments and agencies? More specifically, what is the extent of overlap with other provision and what 'value added' does SICAP offer in terms of type of provision and/or target groups catered for?

2. How appropriate are the current goals of SICAP in addressing social exclusion? Do they provide sufficient flexibility in a changing labour market and demographic context? Are there other goals and target groups that should be considered?

3. How appropriate are current governance structures in helping to meet SICAP goals? How is the potential trade-off between consistency and transparency across areas and the flexibility to respond to local conditions and needs handled? What mechanisms are available for the exchange of good practice between areas and programmes?

The study adopts a mixed methods approach, combining in-depth interviews with key policy stakeholders; a postal survey (carried out in early 2017) of PIs; case studies of ten PIs (including CEOs, programme co-ordinators, community workers, people delivering the programme and individuals participating in it); as well as interviews with LCDC and Education and Training Board (ETB) representatives at local level and analysis of administrative (IRIS) data.

VALUE ADDED OF SICAP

SICAP provision occurs in a context where various government organisations and other groups provide supports in relation to education, employment and community development, although the extent of local provision varies significantly across areas. One of the aims of the study was to explore whether in this context SICAP is seen as providing a duplication of provision or whether there is value added offered by the programme. The policy stakeholders, LCDC personnel, PI staff and participants interviewed point to distinctive features of SICAP provision. The programme is seen as allowing PIs to respond to local need, and PIs report that their presence at local level facilitates the identification of needs that are not being met by existing provision. Interviewees emphasise the way in which SICAP involves working with the most marginalised individuals and groups, providing additional support for particularly hard to reach groups. Success in engaging with these hard to reach groups is seen as reflecting the relationship of trust established with the local community. Respondents emphasise the importance of adopting a holistic approach to working with the local community, taking account of the multiple barriers faced by vulnerable groups.

A small number of interviewees highlighted potential overlap between SICAP and other provision, such as that offered by the local ETB. In many cases, this reflected the fact that a PI is offering courses for different groups of participants, especially those who are most marginalised, and is using short courses to engage people in broader community development. In most instances, PIs are seen to play a strong role in securing local collaboration around the identification of needs and service provision and in leveraging other funding streams to meet local needs. However, in many cases, co-operation around provision is seen as dependent on the goodwill and effort of one or two key individuals, with potential for greater inter-agency collaboration in some areas.

CHALLENGES IN SICAP IMPLEMENTATION

The majority of PI CEOs are largely happy with the programme goals and see SICAP as having been effective in addressing needs under these three goals. A number of common themes emerge from the survey responses and interviews with PI staff and policy stakeholders. The programme was designed in the context of high unemployment levels but respondents feel that it is not sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing circumstances and excludes some groups of people (such as

those over 65 years of age). The requirement to balance activity fairly evenly across the three goals is also viewed as a constraint. The latter requirement is seen as ignoring the very different landscapes within which PIs work, with some operating in areas with many existing providers of education and employment supports, while others are a more or less stand-alone provider in more remote areas. More importantly, the programme is seen as adopting a relatively narrow conception of community development, emphasising the transition to employment and measuring community activity in terms of interactions with community groups.

Fifteen headline indicators are used as measures of SICAP delivery and progress, with an annual target set against each headline indicator for each lot. The two key performance indicators relate to the number of individuals (15 years and older) engaged in SICAP on a one-to-one basis and the number of local community groups assisted under SICAP. Ongoing receipt of SICAP funding by the Programme Implementer is directly linked to performance against the agreed targets for these two key performance indicators. The study findings point to a tension between the targets specified in terms of throughput numbers and the ability to provide the prolonged, intensive supports needed by vulnerable individuals and groups. This issue is seen as increasingly important given that the group now outside employment often face multiple challenges. PI staff are highly critical of the administrative burden involved in delivering SICAP, especially in a context where the majority of organisations receive the bulk of their funding from other sources, thus dealing with different reporting requirements. The budget for SICAP is much lower than for its predecessor programme (the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme). PIs are highly dissatisfied with the level of funding for SICAP and with the lack of transparency in the allocation of resources.

GOVERNANCE

Overall, the current governance structures were seen as appropriate in helping to meet SICAP goals. Programme Implementers have a clear idea of their own role and see their board of management as an important resource. They are generally clear about the role of the Local Community Development Committee but point to a lack of clarity concerning the appropriate lines of communication between themselves, the LCDC and Pobal, with a good deal of variation in the frequency of contact between PIs and LCDCs. LCDCs largely see themselves as adopting a high-level role, focusing on planning, reporting and budgets, and consider that they would benefit from greater decision-making power, especially in relation to target groups and targeting.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The study findings in this report relate to the operation of the SICAP programme which ended in December 2017. A call for tender, which contained a broad

outline of the new programme, was issued in August 2017. The programme now has two goals which focus on community supports and individual supports respectively. The new framework introduces greater flexibility regarding target groups and the allocation of resources across goals, thus enhancing the capacity to respond to local needs. LCDCs now also have local level input in setting targets and in selecting an additional target group over and above those specified in the programme guidelines. At the same time, levels of funding are increasing only marginally and only for some PIs, which may act as a constraint on full flexibility. Furthermore, flexibility will have to be negotiated at local level between the PI and the LCDC so the approach to implementation will be crucial.

In the new framework, community development principles continue to be highlighted as a cross-cutting theme but there is an argument for instead regarding community development as *the* overarching framework which includes work with individuals as well as groups. In this context, it is crucial that the new programme facilitates ways of documenting the variety of community development work carried out by PIs, an issue which is the subject of ongoing research. In addition, there is a need to provide a way of valuing and capturing the work of PIs in promoting interagency co-operation.

The new framework reduces the numbers of individuals and local community groups specified under the key performance indicators, and removes the headline indicators across a range of areas. While this development addresses many of the concerns raised in the study, there is potential to give even greater recognition to the intensity of interventions required by some individuals and groups based on an assessment of their needs, perhaps by having a combined weighting of numbers of people and numbers of interventions. The idea of piloting and subsequently mainstreaming a 'distance travelled' tool as a way of documenting progression outlined in the new framework should provide a way of better reflecting the complex needs of programme participants.

The Programme Implementers point to a lack of transparency in the distribution of funding and there are significant differences in resources between lot areas. In addition, several Programme Implementers expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of funding they receive. A common theme was the need to leverage additional funding to keep the support programmes running. From a broader policy perspective, there is considerable potential for the LCDCs to adopt a strong role in bringing about greater integration of approaches to social exclusion at local level. However, the integration of local services to tackle social exclusion is unlikely to be successful in the absence of joined-up thinking across the variety of stakeholders at national level who impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Across the European Union there is an increasing focus on social cohesion through inclusion. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination is one of the 11 priorities of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 (European Commission, 2014), alongside investing in education, training and lifelong learning and other areas. Social inclusion can be seen as a process which ensures that vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups have access to the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the society in which they live (European Commission, 2010). Social inclusion aims to ensure improved participation in decision-making in areas that affect the lives of disadvantaged people. Ensuring social inclusion is important, as exclusion from these processes is likely to affect the quality of life of individuals as well as societal cohesion in general (ibid.).

Similar to other EU states, social inclusion is firmly on the policy agenda in Ireland. The responsibility for reporting on the implementation of social inclusion policies falls under the remit of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, though the work of most government departments and state agencies impacts on social inclusion. The role of the Social Inclusion Division, in collaboration with other stakeholders and agencies, is to develop and implement strategies for combating social exclusion, while promoting social inclusion and cohesion. In order to achieve the objective of reducing poverty and social exclusion, the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2015-2017* identifies a number of targeted initiatives and actions (Department of Social Protection, 2016). The outlined strategy of active inclusion includes the following policy components; adequate minimum income, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services. The Government has outlined 14 high-level aims, focussing on early childhood development, youth exclusion, access to the labour market, migrant integration, social housing and affordable energy (ibid.).

The government's approach to addressing social exclusion and disadvantage has evolved over time. Until 2010 there were two national programmes operating side by side at local or community level: the Local Development Programme (LDP) and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP). These programmes provided core funding or the anchor funding for the local development companies, which were originally set up as partnerships under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP, 1991-1994). These were

country-wide initiatives tasked with tackling the unemployment black spot areas. Provision operated through two sets of parallel structures; 50 local development companies or partnerships implementing the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and over 180 community development projects that implemented the Community Development Programme (CDP). In 2002, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was set up with the aim of streamlining the programmes and structures. The Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) was established in 2009 as a successor to the two previous programmes – the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Community Development Programme. All 50 Local Development Companies throughout Ireland delivered the programme on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The programme had four overarching goals: promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services; increase access to formal and informal education, recreational and cultural development activities and resources; increase people's work readiness and employment prospects; and promote active engagement with policy, practice and decision-making processes on matters affecting local communities.

Changes have also taken place in the area of local government. As a result of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the city and county development boards (CDBs) were abolished and the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) were established. The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The main function of an LCDC is to prepare, implement and monitor the community elements of the six-year local economic and community plan (LECP).

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), established in 2015, is the successor programme to the previous Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP). The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration (Pobal, 2017). Following a tendering process covering 51 local areas or lots (which cover the whole population of Ireland), 45 Programme Implementers (PIs) were tasked with delivering the programme according to nationally specified requirements. The programme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-funding from the European Social Fund under the Youth Employment Initiative. The work of the PIs is overseen by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) at local level, with Pobal taking a national oversight role regarding programme and operational requirements on behalf of the recently established Department of Rural and Community Development. In 2016, the programme had a total budget of €35.8 million.

SICAP goals are as follows:

- Strengthening local communities (Goal 1): 'Support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues.'

- Promoting lifelong learning (Goal 2): 'Support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage so they can participate fully, engage with and progress through life-long learning opportunities through the use of community development approaches.'

- Helping people become more job ready (Goal 3): 'Engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision, or who are referred to SICAP, to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities' (Pobal, 2017).

Each of the three SICAP goals has four objectives, 12 in total (see Appendix 1). Fifteen headline indicators are used as measures of SICAP delivery and progress, with an annual target set against each headline indicator for each lot (see Appendix 2). The two key performance indicators relate to the number of individuals (15 years and older) engaged in SICAP on a one-to-one basis and the number of local community groups assisted under SICAP. For individuals, at least two interventions are required for the individuals to 'count' in terms of caseload targets. Ongoing receipt of SICAP funding by the Programme Implementer is directly linked to performance against the agreed targets for these two key performance indicators (Pobal, 2017). SICAP outcomes and headline indicators are measured quantitatively on an ongoing basis using the Pobal Integrated Reporting and Information System (IRIS), with additional qualitative measurements (including case studies) through end of year narrative reports by PIs.

The programme targets both communities of need (area-based) and individuals of need (issue-based) as well as assisting communities on an issues basis and individuals on an area basis. Each lot has a specific target for the proportion of the caseload (individuals and community groups) living in disadvantaged areas, as identified by the Pobal HP Deprivation Index.[1] Thus, SICAP services should be

---

[1] The Pobal Haase and Pratschke (HP) Deprivation Index is a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from the Census of Population. A scoring is given to the area based on a national average of zero and ranging from approximately -35 (being the most disadvantaged)

targeted on areas identified as 'disadvantaged', 'very disadvantaged' and 'extremely disadvantaged'. Issue-based target groups include: children and families from disadvantaged areas, lone parents, new communities (including refugees and asylum seekers), people with disabilities, Roma, the unemployed (including those not on the Live Register), low income workers/householders, Travellers and young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

SICAP's horizontal themes include: the promotion of an equality framework, particularly focusing on gender equality and anti-discrimination; using community development as an approach to achieve participation in marginalised communities; and developing collaborative approaches so that mainstream policies and programmes have a more positive impact on the socially excluded.

1.2   RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

This report comprises part of a broader research programme designed to inform policy development regarding social inclusion provision at community level. Previous research has looked at the distribution and nature of education/training provision under SICAP (McGuinness et al., 2016). This study aims to inform policy on two levels by looking at the overarching strategic goals and objectives of SICAP; and by assessing the operation of the SICAP governance structure. The main research questions to be addressed in the study are:

1. How does SICAP provision fit within the overall policy landscape of social inclusion provision by different government departments and agencies? More specifically, what is the extent of overlap with other provision and what 'value added' does SICAP offer in terms of type of provision and/or target groups catered for?

2. How appropriate are the current goals of SICAP in addressing social exclusion? Do they provide sufficient flexibility in a changing labour market and demographic context? Are there other goals and target groups that should be considered?

3. How appropriate are current governance structures in helping to meet SICAP goals? How is the potential trade-off between consistency and transparency across areas and the flexibility to respond to local conditions and needs handled? What mechanisms are available for the exchange of good practice between areas and programmes?

---

to +35 (being the most affluent). In addition to this, data for the area are given under the following categories: population change; age dependency ratio; lone parent ratio; primary education only; third-level education; unemployment rate (male and female); and proportion living in local authority rented housing.

In answering these questions, the study adopts a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods; the methodology used is discussed in the following section.

1.3   DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Programme evaluation had traditionally focused on a more quantitative approach, assessing the impact of measures on the basis of 'objective' measures (Alkin, 2004; Campbell and Stanley, 1966; Patton, 2011). However, from the late 1970s onwards, it became evident that such measures did not reflect the processes at play in assessing policy intervention and its impact (Scriven, 1967). It was increasingly recognised that knowledge about social interventions can be generated through in-depth open-ended interviews and case studies. Increasingly, programme evaluation has drawn on a mixed methods approach, using survey data to generate information about the prevalence of particular practices and case-study information to unpack the processes influencing these patterns.

The current study comprised three interrelated stages to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the operation of the SICAP programme.

1.3.1   Desk-based research and interviews with key stakeholders

This phase of the study has involved a mapping of SICAP activities within the Irish public policy spectrum. This research has relied on examining existing administrative data (IRIS datasets) and grey literature to assess the key features of provision in areas of policy interest offered by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills, and others (see Table 1.3). This information has been supplemented with interviews with stakeholders in key departments and agencies operating in the field of social inclusion (see Table 1.1). Using in-depth expert interviews has previously proved successful in unpacking the rationale for certain forms of provision, the relationship between goals and implementation, the potential trade-off between the need for national consistency and local flexibility and the day-to-day operation of governance practices (see, for example, Smyth et al., 2015, on the School Completion Programme; and McGuinness et al., 2014, on further education and training provision). Interviews have been conducted with 13 representatives of a variety of departments and agencies. These interviews have focused on the mapping of current SICAP provision within the broader policy landscape and explored perceptions of the goals of SICAP, the nature of current and potential future provision, and its governance structure. This phase also placed SICAP provision in the context of broader European policies on combating social disadvantage as well as looking at similar programmes in other jurisdictions.

TABLE 1.1   INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders	Stakeholders
Department of Education and Skills (DES)	Department of Rural and Community Development
Barnardos	Pobal
Pavee Point	Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)	Tusla
Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)	Youthreach
Solas	Community Work Ireland (CWI)
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)	

1.3.2   Data collection on PIs and LCDCs

Baseline information on current approaches to how provision is allocated across the three SICAP goals and on the operation of governance structures at local level was collected through a postal questionnaire (see Appendix 3) to the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of all Programme Implementers (PIs) and to the Chairs of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs).[2] These questionnaires focused on the following topics:

- Perceptions of SICAP programme goals;

- Perceptions of target groups and their needs;

- The kinds of supports provided under the three goals and the approaches adopted;

- Perceived effectiveness of the SICAP programme;

- Perceived degree of co-ordination in initiatives to tackle social exclusion at the national and local levels;

- Perceptions of governance structures and funding;

- Involvement of PIs in other service provision;

- Current staffing, access to CPD and exchange of good practice.

A copy of this questionnaire is included in Appendix 3.

The response rate to the survey (carried out in early 2017) was 81 per cent for the PIs (N=38). Data from this survey are presented in Chapters 2 to 4 of the report. In spite of multiple contacts, only 35 per cent of the LCDCs (N=12) responded to the

---

[2]   The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. LCDCs include members from local government and agencies and members from local development and community interests. For background information regarding the establishing of LCDCs, see: www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Community/DublinCityLocalCommunityDevelopmentCommittee/Documents/h_background_to_lcdc.pdf.

survey. As a result, it was not possible to use these data for systematic analysis. Instead, interviews were conducted with the Chief Officers of the LCDCs relevant to the case-study PIs (see below). This provided a useful way of incorporating the LCDC perspective into the study findings. While the lack of quantitative data on LCDCs could be seen as a limitation to the study, the in-depth interviews with LCDC Chief Officers yield useful insights into organisations whose aim is to co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

1.3.3 Case-studies of PIs

On the basis of the postal survey information and existing administrative data, ten local areas were selected to capture key dimensions of variation in:

- The demographic profile (Pobal HP index, age, gender) of participants from the IRIS database;

- The relative size of the budget, using information collected for an earlier study (McGuinness et al., 2016);[3]

- Satisfaction with the SICAP goals (survey responses);

- Satisfaction with the SICAP target groups (survey responses);

- Perceived effectiveness of SICAP in relation to the three goals (survey responses);

- Perceptions of other provision locally and the extent of inter-agency co-operation at local level (survey responses);

- Whether multiple PIs are covered by one LCDC;

- Regional variation.

Within each of these case-study areas, interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- The CEO;

- Staff working in each of the three goals;

- The chair or representative of the PI board of management/directors;

- Participants/beneficiaries either on an individual or focus group basis (see Table 1.2).

The interviews allowed for a more detailed discussion of the issues emerging from the postal survey, tapping into different perspectives from those managing,

---

[3]   The funding figures were based on LCDP data but, in the absence of more up-to-date figures, were taken to represent a good indicator of the relative size of funding allocations across PIs.

working on and experiencing the programme. These interviews were supplemented, where possible, with interviews with local ETB representatives to capture their perspective on inter-agency co-operation in the local area. All interviews were recorded (with the permission of the interviewee) and transcribed. The transcripts were then analysed in terms of emerging themes.

TABLE 1.2   INTERVIEWS IN THE CASE-STUDY AREAS

	Total
Programme Implementer (PI) CEO/ Deputy	11
Programme Implementer, Staff	34
Programme Implementer, Board/Chair	6
Beneficiaries[4]	31
Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Chief Officer	7
Education and Training Boards	6
Total number	90

1.4   APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

The study involved the collection of a range of data, both quantitative and qualitative, from a number of sources, including PI CEOs, PI Chairpersons, LCDC Chief Officers, providers of courses and other support services, service users and the broader stakeholder community. The analytical approach utilised in this report sought to integrate insights from different data sources and relate these to the central aims of the research and research questions. The central themes were identified as follows:

- the perceived appropriateness of SICAP programme goals and target groups;

- the perceived effectiveness, benefits and value added of SICAP programme;

- design limits of the programme, challenges relating to implementation and other challenges;

- perceived satisfaction with the governance structure and funding;

- the way in which individuals and groups have benefitted from SICAP-related support.

The analysis attempts to combine information from the survey and in-depth interviews to provide a more complete picture of the operation of SICAP. For anonymity, the case-study areas are labelled using pseudonyms based on Scottish rivers. Quotes from the interviews are used to illustrate the main themes

---

[4]   This is in accordance with the terminology used by Pobal in referring to SICAP activities.

emerging. The aim is to capture the perspectives of respondents and different groups may hold different, if not conflicting, views of the reality on the ground.

Before presenting the main findings, we place this study in the context of previous research on social exclusion and policies designed to address it.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW: UNDERLYING POLICY CONCEPTS: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The terms 'social exclusion' and 'social inclusion' are frequently used in policy documents as key concepts. There is now an extensive, and growing, literature on these terms. It is beyond the scope of this report to provide an exhaustive discussion of these concepts; rather, the aim of this section is to provide a context for discussing the findings of the study.

1.5.1 Social exclusion and inclusion

The term 'social exclusion' was first used in French policy discourse to describe those who were unable to participate in society (Gordon, 2007). In the 1980s and 1990s, the term became more widely adopted, especially by European policymakers. The concept emerged as a critique of more traditional perspectives which focused on income poverty and material deprivation. Social exclusion is a much broader concept which is multi-dimensional, referring to the processes of being excluded from key systems and institutions, and taking account of different domains of people's lives such as education and training, cultural participation, democratic participation, healthcare, social care, and adequate housing (Walker and Walker, 1997; Evans et al., 1995; Room, 1995). The notion of social exclusion points to both institutional factors (e.g. access to services and service provision) and social factors (e.g. civic activities and social opportunities) (Walsh et al., 2012). Sen (2000) differentiates between 'active exclusion' and 'passive exclusion'. Active exclusion case applies to minorities where there may actually be a deliberate attempt to exclude (e.g. through discrimination against ethnic minorities). Passive exclusion instead reflects broader social processes such as the prevalence of unemployment and the nature and adequacy of services. Authors have also argued for a life-course approach to understanding exclusion (Walsh et al., 2012), with risk factors resulting in cumulative disadvantage (Rutter, 1993). While many studies highlight the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage (Kleinman, 1998), it is also recognised that social exclusion is a dynamic process whereby individuals and families may find themselves experiencing exclusion at specific time-points or over longer periods (Atkinson, 1998; Room, 1995).

A large body of research points to the way in which processes of social exclusion are spatially structured, with where one lives shaping access to resources and

opportunities. Thus, 'place-specific institutional configurations influence beliefs, offer or deny opportunities, and constrain or enable behavior' (Silver, 2015, p.144). Social exclusion is therefore not just about individual living standards but about collective resources (such as facilities and services) in the local neighbourhood (Room, 1995).

As with 'social exclusion', 'social inclusion' has become an influential concept in policy discourse (Gingrich and Lightman, 2015). Sometimes seen as the counter-part of social exclusion, 'social inclusion' policy can be viewed as a means to provide 'access to' assets, capabilities and opportunity (Silver, 2015). The European Commission sees social inclusion as a process which ensures that disadvantaged individuals can gain the opportunities and resources necessary for full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the societies in which they live (European Commission, 2010). Social inclusion also means that these groups and individuals have greater participation in the decision-making which affects their lives and that they can access their fundamental rights.

There has been a good deal of debate about the extent to which social inclusion can (only) be achieved through paid employment (Lightman, 2003), with 'active inclusion', the idea that having a job is fundamental to enabling people to fully participate in society, the dominant model promoted by the European Commission (2008, 2013). Yet several commentators have argued that labour market structures can be fundamentally unequal, thus posing challenges for meaningful inclusion for everyone through participation in employment (Good Gingrich, 2008; Gingrich and Lightman, 2015).

1.5.2   Measures for promoting social inclusion in Europe

In 2010, the European Council adopted *Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, outlining a ten-year vision for Europe. It identifies five headline targets on employment; research and development; climate change and energy efficiency; education; and poverty reduction. The aim of the strategy is to significantly alleviate social exclusion across Europe by 2020, with Member States required to set and monitor national poverty targets. At European level, being at risk of poverty or social exclusion involves falling into at least one of the following categories; at risk of income poverty, being severely materially deprived, or living in a household with very low work intensity (i.e. low or no hours in paid employment). In 2015 approximately one in four or 23.7 per cent of the EU population were defined as at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat, 2015). Compared with the EU average, some groups of the population are at a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. The most affected are women, children, young people, the unemployed, single-parent households and those living alone, people with lower educational attainment, people born in a different

country than the one they reside in, people out of work, and in a majority of Member States those living in rural areas.

While measures to combat social exclusion are generally adopted at the EU member country level, the European Social Fund (ESF) has a social inclusion remit by providing financial support to help the transition to employment through investment in education, training and employment support. These measures can be classified into two categories; individuals, and systems and structures. Interventions under the first heading aim to open up comprehensive pathways to integration for disadvantaged individuals; focussing on activities such as guidance and counselling, providing training and education, and offering employment supports. Interventions under the second heading aim to create more effective responses to people at risk of exclusion by removing societal barriers, by improving services or by changing attitudes and raising awareness. Among the groups most frequently targeted with ESF support have been migrants and minorities (with a focus on Roma), people with disabilities and older workers. Significantly, most measures targeting specific vulnerable groups customised their intervention to match and fulfil the particular needs and personal characteristics of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and discriminated against target groups (European Commission, 2010).

Across individual European countries, there has been a good deal of variation in the approaches taken to combating poverty and social exclusion (see Halvorsen and Hvinden, 2016). Across Europe, there seem to be two main models: either focussing on disadvantaged individuals or groups; or targeting disadvantaged families. Different groups of disadvantaged individuals are targeted under these programmes: young people; older people; the unemployed; drug and substance abusers; vulnerable communities (e.g. migrants); and people with disabilities. In general, in contrast to SICAP, there seem to be fewer national programmes designed to combat disadvantage with the majority operating at regional level. Of the initiatives reviewed, few seem to have such a broad scope in terms of target groups as SICAP. Some programmes have focussed on the family, with, for example, the 'Troubled Families Programme'[5] in the UK aimed at families with multiple and complex problems, adults who face various challenges including entry to the labour market, as well as children who are at risk of continuing disadvantage. This approach is supported by a strong emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, aiming to overcome operational and cultural barriers in supporting the most disadvantaged families within the communities. Initial outcomes appeared to be positive, with reported improvements in the retention of children in school, reduced youth crime and anti-social behaviour, and for some families,

---

[5] For more information see: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611991/Supporting_disadvantaged_families.pdf.

adults in work. The evaluation found evidence of positive change in the way local authorities addressed the needs of families with complex problems, with improved partnership working between different local services (Day et al., 2016). Similarly, Finland's 'Effective Child and Family Programme' (EC&F)[6] has emphasised inter-agency work and a holistic approach to addressing needs (Solantaus and Toikka, 2006).

While different types of intervention may have their merits in addressing disadvantage, it is worth acknowledging the importance of considering the national context within which interventions have been introduced since specific measures may not be easily transferable to other jurisdictions.

1.5.3   Addressing social exclusion and promoting inclusion in Ireland

There has been a relatively long history of strategies designed to counter poverty and promote inclusion in the Irish context. In 1997, the government adopted its first National Anti-Poverty Strategy, which aimed to reduce levels of consistent poverty (relative income and deprivation measures combined) and also set targets in relation to income adequacy, unemployment, educational disadvantage, rural poverty, and the concentration of disadvantage in urban areas. The most recent *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* was updated in 2015 to reflect a changed context (Department of Social Protection, 2016). The Plan adopts an 'active inclusion' approach, emphasising adequate minimum income, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services. It sets targets for consistent poverty for the whole population and for children as well as specifying high-level goals which take account of wider dimensions of wellbeing and access to services. As with previous plans, implementation of the plan has been actively monitored over its duration via the annual Social Inclusion Report.

It is worth noting that in Ireland the system of government is highly centralised and policy design takes place mainly at the national level. At the same time, policy and practice is often targeted and delivered at the local or community level (Lynam, 2006). Policymaking in Ireland has increasingly acknowledged the importance of community development in combating poverty and social exclusion (Motherway, 2006). According to the definition put forward by the Combat Poverty Agency (2000), community development is

> *about people working collectively for social change which will improve the quality of their lives, the communities in which they live and/or the society of which they are a part (p.4).*

---

[6]   For more information see: https://fampod.org/file.php/1/collaborations/Finland_The_Effective_Child_and_Family_Programme.pdf.

Community development is seen as a multi-dimensional concept, including dimensions such as personal, community and public policy and attaching equal importance to the process (how something is achieved) and outcome (what is achieved) (ibid.). In addition, at its core, community development is about participation, empowerment and collective action for social change (Motherway, 2006). This approach is argued to have many potential benefits, including empowerment and improved participation, better programmes and outcomes through the involvement of communities, and a community-specific, flexible focus (ibid.). Several social inclusion programmes (e.g. the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme) incorporate a community development perspective. An area-based approach to combating disadvantage is evident across a range of initiatives including the Childhood (ABC) Programme, among others.

A review by the OECD (2016) notes that while Ireland has made significant progress in the area of social inclusion,[7] there is a need to pay greater attention to the interplay of national policies at the local level as well as for greater co-operation among agencies and organisations working at local level.

1.5.4 Organisations with a social inclusion agenda in Ireland with remit in the areas of education, employment and community development

The social inclusion agenda crosscuts various government agencies and other organisations. Table 1.3 shows the diversity of government departments and agencies whose work is relevant to social inclusion while Table 1.4 highlights some of the initiatives other than SICAP in the domains of education and employment.[8] The extent to which there is co-ordination and complementarity in the provision of these services will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter 2.

In addition, it is worth noting that the European Social Fund, as applied through the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020,[9] is used to fund some of the measures described in Table 1.4. The key areas chosen for investment in Ireland revolve around activation of the unemployed, social and labour market inclusion, education and youth employment.

---

[7] The report includes reference to SICAP but the country visits upon which the analysis draws took place prior to the roll-out of the programme.

[8] For a more detailed description of the different categories of employment supports, see DPER (2017).

[9] The Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) (2014-2020) is the vehicle through which the European Social Fund operates. The key areas chosen for investment in Ireland centre on activation of the unemployed, social and labour market inclusion, education and youth employment.

TABLE 1.3   ORGANISATIONS WITH A SOCIAL INCLUSION AGENDA IN IRELAND WITH A FOCUS ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

	Income support and employment services	Enterprise services	Education and training services	Children and young people's services	Housing, development, local government and community services	Rural and agricultural services
National	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation; Enterprise Ireland	Department of Education and Skills; Higher Education Authority; SOLAS (Further Education and Training Authority)	Department of Children and Youth Affairs; Tusla (Child and Family Agency)	Department of Rural and Community Development; Pobal, Department of Justice and Equality	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Regional / County	DEASP Divisional offices	Local Authorities; Local Enterprise Offices	Universities, Institutes of Technology, Colleges of Education; Education and Training Boards	County Childcare Committees; Children's and Young People's Services Committees	City and County Councils; Local Community Development Committees	
Local	DEASP Intreo[10] offices and branch offices; Community, voluntary and private sector		Youthreach and Community Training Centres; Training Centres and Outreach Services; Schools	Family Resource Centres; Early Education and Childcare Programmes; Area-Based Childhood (ABC) Programme; Youth Services	Local Development Companies; RAPID; Community programmes; LEADER; Voluntary and Co-Operative housing bodies	Teagasc (Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority)

Source: Adapted from OECD (2016).

---

[10]   It is a service provided by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection aiming to provide an integrated system covering social welfare income benefits, community welfare services and employment supports.

TABLE 1.4   INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Initiatives for employment	Initiatives for education and training
JobsPlus is a recruitment subsidy which encourages employers to recruit long-term unemployed people.	The SOLAS Specific Skills Training Programme.
The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance encourages people on a social welfare payment to become self-employed.	The **Springboard programme** provides free, part-time higher education courses for people who are unemployed.
Gateway is a local authority labour activation scheme that provides short-term work and training opportunities for people who have been unemployed for more than two years.	The **Momentum initiative**, delivered by Solas, provides education and training to assist long-term unemployed people to gain the skills they need to access work in sectors of the economy where there are job opportunities. Momentum education and training projects are free, with full and part-time projects available.
Temporary Employment: the Department of Social Protection manages a number of schemes which provide temporary employment for the long-term unemployed on works and services of value to the community. These include Community Employment and Tús.	The **Back to Education Initiative** (BTEI) provides opportunities for second chance education to adult learners and early school-leavers who want to upgrade their skills. The initiative allows learners to combine education with family, caring or work responsibilities and is aimed mainly at those who have completed the Leaving Certificate (or equivalent qualification).
Intreo, run by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, operates as a single point of contact for income and employment supports. Case officers offer group information sessions and one-to-one advisory sessions with jobseekers.	
The Local Employment Service (LES) is contracted out to 22 organisations by DEASP. The aim is to help unemployed people re-enter employment and involves group information sessions and one-to-one activation interviews with a LES mediator. Clients may be referred by the DEASP or engage directly with the service.	There are also education and training opportunities available through Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) places, higher education access courses, ICT graduate skills conversion courses, Youthreach, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS),[11] adult literacy programmes and community education.
Jobs Clubs: people may be referred by LES or Intreo offices to this service which involves individualised support and formal workshops in order to enhance job-seeking skills.	
JobPath is a new labour market activation service that was rolled out in 2015, aimed specifically at the long-term unemployed and those most at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. Service delivery has been contracted out to two private organisations: SEETEC and Turas Nua. It aims at providing intensive support around job search.	At school level, the Department of Education and Skills has a range of programmes in place to address educational disadvantage, collectively referred to as DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools: An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion.
Youth guarantee: The EU-wide Youth Guarantee is aimed at providing young people under the age of 25 with an offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or traineeship within a short period of becoming unemployed.	

Source: Adapted from OECD (2016); information is also derived from www.welfare.ie and DPER (2017).

---

[11]   The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a second-chance education and training programme targeted at unemployed or non-employed adults who can retain their social welfare payments while studying full-time.

1.6   OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This chapter has placed the study in the context of research on social exclusion internationally and has outlined the approach taken to conducting the current study. The remainder of the report takes the following format. Chapter 2 discusses SICAP in the policy landscape. It explores the perceptions of the interviewees across areas such as; perceived success in combating social exclusion, drivers of social exclusion, agencies providing services, and perceived effectiveness of the SICAP programme. Chapter 3 outlines perceptions of the SICAP programme goals and target groups. Chapter 4 looks at respondent views on SICAP governance structures and funding. It explores issues such as the role of different organisations and individuals within them, reporting, funding and professional development. Chapter 5 discusses the perceived benefits of SICAP, while Chapter 6 focusses on the perceived challenges in delivering SICAP. The final chapter provides an overview of the study findings and highlights the implications of the research for the future development of the SICAP programme.

CHAPTER 2

SICAP in the policy landscape

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined Ireland's approach to promoting social inclusion, placing it in a comparative European context. This chapter explores Ireland's perceived success in addressing social exclusion drawing on in-depth interviews with policy stakeholders at national and local level, with PI staff, LCDC Chief Officers and ETB representatives in the case-study areas along with survey results to yield a more complete picture of the position of SICAP in the policy landscape. In the following section, the chapter moves on to explore the extent to which there is inter-agency co-operation at national and local levels, as well as whether there is complementarity or duplication in providing services in the case-study areas.

2.2   PERCEPTIONS OF DRIVERS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

As discussed in Chapter 1, social exclusion can be understood as being excluded from the prevailing social system with its rights and privileges. Individuals can become socially excluded as a result of poverty or by belonging to a minority social group. Ireland's approach is in line with the European Union's social policy focussing on the reduction of poverty and social exclusion. SICAP is the successor to a number of earlier social inclusion programmes. From 1990, the Community Development Programme provided support to a number of community development projects around the country. Most of these earlier projects became integrated into the new Local Development Companies formed by the merger of the LEADER[12] and Area Based/Community Partnership companies. The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) (2000-2006) focused on three action areas: services for the unemployed, community development and community-based youth initiatives (ADM, 2000). A value for money review of the programme pointed to potential variation in focus and quality across partnership companies with challenges in providing a distinct niche in an increasingly complex landscape (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2007). LDSIP was replaced by the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) (2009-2014), which placed a much greater emphasis on supporting people into employment than LDSIP, reflecting the then high levels of unemployment (Pobal, 2016). SICAP (2015-2017) retained a strong focus on enabling people to become job ready but allowed a greater amount of funding to be allocated to working with local community groups than

---

[12]   The LEADER programme (2014-2020) is aimed at facilitating community-led local development in rural areas. Its themes centre on: economic development, enterprise development and job creation; social inclusion; and the rural environment.

LCDP. It also had more defined specifications around target groups and reporting (Pobal, 2015). At present there are 45 Programme Implementers delivering SICAP in 51 contract areas (Lots) across the whole country.

2.2.1 Perceptions of social inclusion programmes in Ireland

The interviewees in this study,[13] policy stakeholders and staff of the Programme Implementers, discussed their views on social inclusion programmes in Ireland, the causes of social exclusion in their communities and their perceived satisfaction with how social exclusion is addressed in Ireland. There was a consensus among the participants regarding the importance of social inclusion programmes: 'it keeps social inclusion in your mind, it keeps it up there…. you have the social inclusion glasses on when you're looking' (Staff, Fasney).

The interviewees noted that the focus in the policy landscape on local or community development in Ireland in addressing social exclusion has been recognised internationally as an innovative approach.

> *Ireland is recognised, we do a lot of work now ... on local development, with OECD and it's recognised both by OECD and the EU as the basis of a model that has now been, you know, significantly copied. Now, of course, I'm sure we're not the only basis, there were other things too but Ireland was very early on ... a major architect of this kind of local development approach (national policy stakeholder).*

> *That was '94, '94/'95. That we would have one strategic plan and that the other clients would follow after that. We brought it to Brussels and the Commission took it on with both arms and came up with the idea. I was asked to go to about three different conferences to talk about what we were doing and how we were doing it. /…/ One of our board members /…/ came up with whole idea of community and local development with all the funds (Staff, Fasney).*

The staff in Fasney commented on the broader scope of previous social inclusion programmes with regards to funding local initiatives and businesses:

> *Under the previous programme the Partnership had more scope to fund local businesses. /…/ in the old LCDP, we had money there for start-up business grants. That unfortunately has pretty much gone by the wayside now (Staff, Fasney).*

---

[13] The case-study areas are labelled with pseudonyms based on Scottish rivers.

Elsewhere, the interviewees noted that previously the Programme Implementers had more control over the initiatives and supports provided, enabling more individuals to benefit from these. However, due to a significant cut in funding some support has now been dropped:

The LDSIP was a better programme. I think LCDP was limited enough, it was better than SICAP, but was limited enough. But if you want to go back to one that was more broad based and had better input at local level to the actions... (Staff, Ettrick).

Some also felt that it had been better value for money as they were able to undertake more tasks. In order to continue supporting individuals and communities in the area that benefitted from the previous social inclusion programme, PIs tried to fill in the funding gap from other sources:

For a long time we kept delivering a lot of the actions by supporting it through other programmes and in the end, we had to stop and say, 'If they keep cutting, we can't keep delivering all these things, we have to basically tell the people around sorry, but we can no longer' (Staff, Fasney).

The programme implementers were asked to indicate what they saw as driving social exclusion in their local area. Overall, the interviews reflected the idea discussed in Chapter 1 that social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept and that people who are socially excluded are likely to have multiple needs (see Figure 2.1 for a visual representation of the themes emerging from the interviews with PIs).

FIGURE 2.1   MAIN DRIVERS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION
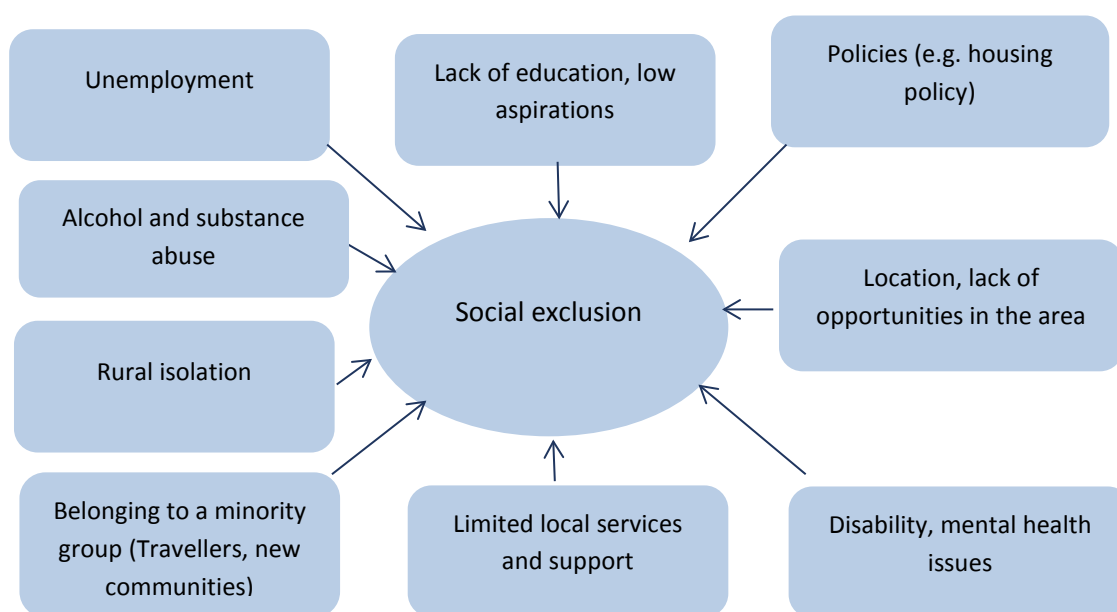
Source: PI interviews.

One interviewee observed that despite the fact that social exclusion has been high on the policy agenda in Ireland for some time, the same issues seem to prevail today (Staff, Linhope). He noted that:

> *if people … have a barrier, have some sort of obstacle to them having access to what generally is accepted as the norm, like, then I think they are excluded. So, whether that's on the basis that they don't have enough money, that they don't have the capacity, that they don't have an educational attainment level, whatever that is.*

The interviewee also observed that some individuals also tend to self-exclude, further reinforcing their disadvantage: 'people self-exclude because if people feel that … something else is not available to them and I think … it's a serious sort of situation to some extent'. He also commented on the cyclical nature of disadvantage in some cases:

> *Obviously we have serious pockets of disadvantage and so there is, in some of those areas, there is a continuing cycle of just disadvantage, you know, from one generation to the next (Staff, Linhope).*

Figure 2.1 has presented the main drivers of social exclusion in the case-study areas. The figure shows the multi-dimensional character of social exclusion; depending on the area or individuals or groups, these factors interact in complex ways to the detriment of the individual. The following sections present participants' views on the different dimensions of social exclusion.

2.2.1.1   Unemployment

There was a consensus among participants regarding the central role of unemployment in driving social exclusion. However, it is important to note that unemployment is often closely associated with a range of other issues that can also result in social exclusion. According to the staff in Avon, unemployment was the main driver but there were also other significant factors such as out-migration of younger people and a subsequently unbalanced age profile in the area along with low education levels and rural isolation:

> *Unemployment would have been the big most obvious driver but it's not quite so simple as that I think in rural areas because behind unemployment in these areas in particular I think is out-migration, especially of younger people. So the unemployment figures are even worse or were even worse than the stats because of this out-migration. So the consequence of that out-migration then is the unbalanced age profile in this community where you've got lower numbers of people of working age and higher numbers of people consequently of younger people and older people (Staff, Avon).*

In order to improve their life chances many individuals tend to move out of areas characterised by low employment opportunities. Many interviewees noted that unemployed individuals left in those areas may have multiple issues, including poor mental health and literacy difficulties. In some cases individuals were seen to internalise their exclusion; interviewees commented on the lack of drive among some marginalised groups, due to a combination of factors including low levels of education and low expectations:

> *People are very internalised, it's the combination of factors. Some factors are internal to individuals, where they've internalised their own exclusion, so even though there's full employment, there's a belief, 'There's no employment for me' (Staff, Breamish).*

The staff in Breamish further noted that people who have low expectations about their future were not in employment even when the economy was booming. Males were seen as more likely than females to exhibit internalised hopelessness and exclusion. The factors pertaining to this attitude were seen to include historical and educational factors, including low expectations of young people held by schools. One staff member observed that:

> *it's the whole coalescence of all of these factors coming together where people believe certain things about themselves and they also believe it about themselves now because they're into the third generation of that (Staff, Breamish).*

Some groups in particular – such as the Traveller community – were seen to have difficulties in entering the labour market due to the discriminatory attitudes of some employers:

If you look at working with the Traveller community and you're assessed on your ability to move the Traveller community into employment without ever addressing the fact that there is huge discrimination and racism on the part of employers. Even if …a Traveller person is well trained or well educated, their only way of getting a job – and they will tell you – the only way of getting a job is to deny their identity (national policy stakeholder).

2.2.1.2   Education

Next to employment, education was seen as an important factor in combating social exclusion. Without sufficient educational attainment individuals were seen to have limited opportunities in terms of their future life-chances:

I think another huge thing in defining or in identifying social inclusion is, you know, I suppose the lack of education or the opportunities that weren't there maybe for education because again, and this isn't everywhere but in some areas you have relatively low education attainment or educational achievement (Staff, Avon).

Low levels of educational attainment coupled with limited opportunities in certain local areas were seen as driving a gap between advantaged and disadvantaged communities:

I think it's education. That's my own feeling that there's such a gap between disadvantaged communities and advantaged or more advantaged communities that the inequalities that exist for families or for community at a starting point are, you know, as you go through the education system are increased. … The fact that there's no employment here… industries are all gone. And nothing has replaced them, therefore there is nowhere for people who are low skilled to go to work (Staff, Harthope).

2.2.1.3   Alcohol and substance abuse, crime

Unemployment is viewed by many interviewees as fuelling alcohol and substance abuse, the combination of which is seen to have adversely impacted on individuals' quality of life. The combination of substance abuse and unemployment was linked by staff in Byrns to high suicide rate and inter-generational deprivation:

I'd say unemployment and drugs are the two biggest problems we have at the moment and the drugs thing is nearly outstripping the unemployment thing. … But in some of the real disadvantaged pockets, we're finding drugs leading to the high suicide rate in the country with young men, inter-generational unemployment and deprivation, you know, and it just goes on and on and on, and what we're finding now is that nearly all of the crime, I won't say all of it, but nearly all of the crime is linked back somewhere to drugs. So the core issue we have is drugs (Staff, Byrns).

Some respondents spoke vividly about generations of disadvantage with addiction, anti-social behaviour and crime prevalent in the local area:

The community sense up there and how people look after each other is absolutely brilliant, but there's young people in there that think there's no other way of life except the criminal way of life (Staff, Breamish).

The staff noted that generational substance abuse and crime may lead to family breakdown and being ostracised from the wider community.

The staff in Teviot argued that it is also important to consider health inequalities (especially in relation to access to mental health services) and housing quality when looking at the drivers of disadvantage and exclusion. These factors reflect broader institutional inequality.

2.2.1.4 Rural isolation and limited resources and support in the area

Rural isolation was seen as a significant factor in driving social exclusion in two out of the ten case-study areas. The dispersed nature of the population with a lack of employment opportunities, support and local services in more remote areas was seen as limiting the opportunities available to local communities.

Rural isolation then is a big factor in a county like [this]. You know, you've got large wide tracts of country where there aren't a lot of people. So that means that you're distant from jobs, you're distant from opportunities for training and education, you're distant from social circles, distant from even cultural or, you know, recreational activities are a problem. Transport is a problem. So all these are factors I think in an area like this that kind of contribute to that poverty (Staff, Avon).

Limited opportunities, resources and support in the area were seen to contribute to social exclusion:

There's a lack of employment, there's a lack of entrepreneurship, there's no third-level college in the county. So, all young people are going and not coming back. The communities, the age profile is that bit older maybe (Staff, Tyne).

Furthermore, weak inter-agency collaboration was seen as further reinforcing social exclusion, an issue that is discussed in greater detail below; this was particularly evident in a context where poor experience of education/training in the past led to reluctance to become involved in initiatives:

There would be a disconnect between, I suppose, statutory bodies and agencies and some of those typical groups and the disconnect is a variety of reasons; it's lack of coherent information that can be simulated by the individual and again, I suppose, lack of trust in some cases, particularly, you know, when you're talking about education and someone has had bad experiences of education and that's reasonably common among some of the people who have left school early and who haven't progressed to third level and find themselves sitting maybe between the two and not progressing (Staff, Heriot).

In addition, it was argued that special attention needs to be paid to island communities as they are different in many respects from mainland communities, in that island community development programmes need to be a combination of service delivery and enablers of their local communities, as noted by Avon PI. The interviewee also argued that location makes island communities particularly disadvantaged: 'the people living on the offshore islands are probably the most disadvantaged among the most disadvantaged people in the area just because of location'. Provision of services to off-shore communities presents particular logistical challenges, which are not always acknowledged. Further complications can arise when sparsely populated inner island communities are combined with mainland neighbourhoods to form a lot:

The problem that we had with that was that the targets were based on the 750 whereas we were trying to work with the 250. I mean, for example, there are more children in the targets per the lot than there are children on the Islands simply because of this mainland distortion. So, that's an unsatisfactory situation to say the least (Staff, Avon).

2.2.1.5   Policies impacting on social inclusion

Social segregation resulting from planning and housing policy was seen as reinforcing disadvantage in certain areas:

They build vast estates of all the one socio-economic level and then they expect those people to behave the same as everybody else and they've

nearly cocooned them, they've nearly ghettoised them into unemployment states and then they wonder why it doesn't work (Staff, Byrns).

The staff noted that many of the individuals who present themselves to the PIs tend to be long-term unemployed. Inter-generational unemployment is seen as linked to low levels of educational attainment, low levels of self-esteem, and low levels of confidence.

In the same vein, the interviewees in another case-study area highlighted the issue of community-based disadvantage whereby the location where people live is likely to have an impact on their outcomes and life chances: 'a community based disadvantage or you had a multiple cumulative disadvantage by virtue of living in that community you were disadvantaged' (Staff, Ettrick). This interviewee noted that in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion, one needs to consider the, often countervailing, impact of various government policies:

In the urban areas, I suppose the social inclusion policies and the work, or kind of other policies impact on them, you know, like housing policy impacts, education policy impacts and what you're trying to do in term of social inclusion can be counteracted by, say, housing policy that puts all the disadvantaged people in the same place and there's no services. Or if you go back to the establishment of … the criminal communities (Staff, Ettrick).

Some interviewees commented on the concentration of disadvantage in certain areas: 'Because I think what's unique in [the area], and this might be a little bit that's different, there is no middle-class hubs within this area' (Staff, Breamish). Elsewhere it was argued that the concentration of disadvantage can contribute to inter-generational disadvantage.

2.3   PERCEIVED SUCCESS IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN IRELAND

Over the course of the interviews, the respondents generally expressed the view that Ireland has not been successful in addressing social exclusion. Taken together, the interviewees commented on system-level inadequacies in tackling youth unemployment, as illustrated by an extract from an interview with a stakeholder:

Interviewer: How successful do you think Ireland has been in recent years in addressing issues such as social exclusion and trying to improve inclusion of young people?

I think it's been dreadful. I think it's been terrible. It's been depressing; I have to say, as somebody working in the area. /…/ The crisis should have been an opportunity to reform how we deal with youth unemployment and my fear is that effectively the system hasn't been reformed at all. /…/ I think in general there has been a lot of regressive policies that have really hammered young people and yes, and I think … there is such a danger of an inter-generational [disadvantage] (national policy stakeholder).

It was also argued by many that the current approach to tackling social exclusion is too narrow and tends to focus primarily on labour market activation:

There seems to be no social inclusion policy, really, at a national level, other than activation at the moment. Now, I mean, I suppose there is certain logic in that because of the way the economy fell apart. And, I mean, if you talk about activation, you know, it fits comfortably into activation except it's duplication somewhat across there already but, in terms of a broader social inclusion policy, it's really missing. There used to be [a] national action plan for social inclusion (Staff, Ettrick).

The staff in this PI area felt that Ireland needs a programme that takes a more holistic approach to social inclusion:

We have no programme that looks at social inclusion in the context of quality of life of individuals who are experiencing exclusion at any age group and the perception at national level is that if you're currently involved in some sort of activation where you're either improving your education or you're becoming more job ready that that will be sufficient to address your needs (Staff, Ettrick).

Furthermore, the staff expressed their doubt about the effectiveness of the current social inclusion programme in terms of people entering the labour market:

I think it [addressing social exclusion] looks better than it is, because it has got, you know, it has got the numbers right, it has got the numbers and the headline KPIs suggest that it's very effective, because it records good numbers. But maybe if you work through that into, you know, the actual percentages that are progressing into employment, it's probably less good (Ettrick, LCDC).

Talking about SICAP, one group of co-ordinators noted that the programme in fact excludes some people and groups, an issue which is explored further in Chapter 3:

Well, it's [SICAP] a social inclusion and community activation programme. And it's socially excluding people at this stage, really, I suppose, isn't it? It could nearly be called SECAP. It's awful to see from a programme that you had as LDSIP, they could have grown it -- they could have grown it to match the needs of the country and instead, they went down this path and they ruined the programme really. It was a great programme, we had a good budget, we did great projects back in the day (Staff, Fasney).

This reflects a general acknowledgement that there have been notable cuts to social inclusion programmes over the years. The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) comprised of a series of measures that were aimed at countering disadvantage and promoting equality and social and economic inclusion. In 2009 the Programme supported 53 Local Development companies with a budget of €51 million.[14,15] In addition, in the same year, the Community Development Programme (CDP) supported around 180 projects/groups and organisations at a cost of €21 million. As a comparison, the SICAP budget for 2017 was €37.5 million. While one cannot claim that more funding resulted in better social inclusion work, it can be argued that adequate funding gives local areas more options in supporting disadvantaged groups and individuals.

On the other hand, an LCDC representative noted that the previous programme might have been too broad in interpreting social inclusion:

I wouldn't be in favour of going back to this thing of, kind of, anything goes if you go out to, kind of, a social activity you're socially included. I think that's not where we would want to go with that, but for some people, you do have to kind of work off a different framework, you know, to actually work towards social inclusion and then economic inclusion, if appropriate (Fasney, LCDC).

There was also a feeling that the current SICAP programme has not reflected the changes that have taken place in society in terms of the improved economy. In addition, the current programme was considered to focus too much on employment at the expense of other areas such as community development. It was also noted that the programme needs to acknowledge the root causes of disadvantage that impact on some groups in particular (especially the Traveller community).

---

[14] Source: http://ildn.ie/files/page_files/ILDN_SICAP_Successor_Position_Paper_May_5th_2017.pdf.
[15] http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Department-of-Community-Rural-and-Gaeltacht-Affairs.pdf.

Despite the perceived weaknesses of SICAP, it was generally argued that the current programme nevertheless provides a focussed approach to supporting vulnerable individuals and groups:

> *I think there have been successes under SICAP. I think it has given a focus, you know, to a very important area, which, you know, it does raise the whole issue, you know, that we do need to get people who are long-term unemployed and have difficulties; we do need to make a very serious effort to bring them back into employment. I think that's a really good thing, but I think it's not only about that. /…/ You do have to kind of work off a different framework, you know, to actually work towards social inclusion and then economic inclusion, if appropriate (Ettrick, LCDC).*

One national policy stakeholder noted that the programme provides a necessary service utilising personal development plans:

> *I think there's a danger that it presents itself as sort of a 'one size fits all' approach and just in relation to the personal action plans for people coming in who are motivated and clear where they're going and what they're doing, that can be a very useful tool.*

When asked about the best ways to combat social exclusion, the interviewees mentioned the need to take a more comprehensive look at the prevailing issues; rather than focussing on the individual alone, support should be provided for families and communities:

> *They say now /…/ it's not individual support it's a family support; it's community support. … Like early school leaving is only part of the problem really. … Early school leaving is a kind of part of something but it's the broader supports are needed for the community you know. Yes, the housing, whole location of, you know, people who are kind of disadvantaged. They're kind of out of sight out of mind, do you know. There's a lot of negativity about the community. So … while there's kind of disadvantage there and while there is lack of proper housing, lack of facilities, lack of supports there for the community, you'll always get early school leaving. So the whole kind of culture within the community needs to be supported, you know. Not just early school leaving. It goes in supporting, do you know, young people, an adult and their parents in terms of what their needs are, you know. So you're meeting all the needs together, not [just] the individual needs (national policy stakeholder).*

Another area of importance in combating social exclusion is education and early intervention to help the children get the best start in life. It was considered crucial

to be supporting both learners as well as their families to ensure that they stay in education, as those with low qualifications have limited opportunities in the labour market:

I think education is the key. I think it's about educational inclusion and it's about getting in early and doing the prevention, early intervention work so that children get the best start and that we prevent kids dropping out of school and that we offer alternatives so that if young people do not want to stay within the mainstream education structure, there are viable, valid alternatives available to them to continue their education in another setting (national policy stakeholder).

Another policy stakeholder at local level argued that support interventions need to focus on early childhood as well as the general family context in order to break the cycle of disadvantage:

I think myself the first step is actually early childhood education. You know, about going to the root of the problem. … We know actually from research all over the world for many, many, many years that if we want to do something worthwhile in terms of the community we have to start with kids at the earliest of years. It's not just a matter of starting with the kids. We have to work with their parents as well (local policy stakeholder).

Several interviewees argued for the need for a national framework to address the root causes of poverty and exclusion and to explore a broader approach to social inclusion than labour market activation as some individuals may be some distance away from entering the labour market and would need sustained support before this can happen:

I think that there needs to be a national framework. Ireland obviously has national goals; it's tied into Europe 2020. It's tied into a range of things. That needs to be your starting point. Okay, what is our framework, how many people are experiencing poverty and how many people do we need to lift out of poverty, to use the European term. Then the question becomes how do we best do that. [Some] would argue very strongly that the way to lift people out of poverty is a job. But the reality is, in many marginalised communities, in many disadvantaged communities, the route from where they are now to a job is huge, absolutely huge. So what you need to put in place is to go back to first principles and say, 'Well, what do those people need in order to improve their quality of life?' When perhaps it is a job, even though that might be a long-term route, perhaps it is training. For some, perhaps it is just involvement in their community, getting more involved in things outside of their own four walls. So, I think that it needs to be built into …a

national framework. It needs to be built into national targets, but it also needs to take full reality, or … acknowledge what is the reality on the ground and I think where long-term investment in people is required through community work, that should be done (national policy stakeholder).

In the same vein, another policy stakeholder at national level argued that social inclusion requires more than a job. Rather, the concept was seen to link with health, literacy and other spheres. They felt that at present the Irish government does not have a strong national policy relating to social inclusion and anti-poverty work, despite some departments having a social inclusion unit. It was evident from the interview that different agencies and departments address specific aspects of social inclusion without necessarily having a joined-up approach:

Myopia I suppose is the word I'd use really in terms of how the programmes are viewed and the absence of a national approach or a sufficient prioritisation of social inclusion as an issue which is multi-faceted and requires a genuinely multi-faceted approach, a sufficient kind of drive behind that. I don't really get that sense that there is. I think it's lacking momentum (national policy stakeholder).

Speaking of SICAP, one stakeholder felt that while the programme has the potential to take innovative approaches in supporting young people outside mainstream provision, it is currently not fulfilling this potential:

It's not identifying as it should the gaps that are there, because really SICAP should be looking to see where is statutory provision missing, where are families or where are people not getting a service and that SICAP would be stepping in to provide services in those areas. I don't think that's happening to the degree that it should be happening./…/ It would be a valid role for SICAP to be providing alternative possibilities for the young people, you know, if nothing is happening for them in the mainstream. I don't think see that kind of innovation happening at the moment and I think there's a real possibility for SICAP to do really innovative work in that space (national policy stakeholder).

While this observation was made by a national policy stakeholder, interviews with some Programme Implementers highlighted the way in which they were trying to introduce innovative practice at local level (see Chapter 3).

Current structures were also seen to de-motivate individuals providing support for disadvantaged groups. This was seen to lead to high turnover among staff:

It needs to start with, okay, what are we trying to do? We're trying to address poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage. How do we do that and how do we do that in partnership with the infrastructure we have left and not to regard them as people who are not professionals and people who are there just to implement the contract. This should go back to being a partnership. These people are really passionate. The work that we have done that looked at the UK has shown when you make these types of changes and de-professionalise and de-partner people who are all -- they leave. The rate of turnaround in terms of people becomes enormous (national policy stakeholder).

It was not possible to objectively measure the turnover of staff across different PI areas but some CEOs expressed concern about having an insufficient number of staff, mainly in the context of limited funding (see, for example, the interview with Teviot CEO). It was also felt that the current approach to social inclusion has moved away from the original thinking in the area that highlighted the importance of community work and community development, an approach that had received international recognition:

I think it is the most current step in a series of changes that have had negative impacts on social inclusion and community development work. Over the years, what has happened is that infrastructure that Ireland had built up was very much admired internationally and which meant local people in marginalised communities had access to decision-making. … They had a say in what went on in their community. That has been eroded, initially by the cohesion process, then by the fact that the project funded under the CDP had merged with their local development company and the introduction of the last local community development programme. /…/ I think SICAP has been the next step in a series of things and what SICAP has done is it has removed decision-making and that right to have a say even further from communities. I think it's very much centralised now within the local government structure and I think, ideologically, that is wrong because I think it is always the part of civil society and civil society should live side by side with a local authority, with local government and not be governed or owned by it (national policy stakeholder).

This echoes the OECD (2003) report findings that detailed how a partnership approach can benefit local communities. It was felt by several interviewees that currently deeper issues are not tackled in a comprehensive way: 'And the issues that I would see is that social is wider than labour activations, issues of structural inequality' (Staff, Tyne). While most interviewees expressed negative views on Ireland's success in addressing social inclusion, one participant felt that compared to some other countries Ireland has a good social protection system:

I suppose what we have in Ireland is a fairly good social protection system. You know, if you're unemployed you get a better level of payment than you do in lots of countries for a longer period of time. Of course, it's not just simply money. From that just simply supportive perspective I suppose you could say that we're not too bad but at the moment I have the view that Ireland, and has been for the last maybe ten to 15 years, is quite right wing in its view of social inclusion, that there's the view of that a job solves everything, that there isn't the level of sympathy maybe for the background and underlying problems that might have given rise to social exclusion and that therefore from that perspective I don't suppose we're doing as well as we should, you know (Staff, Avon).

It was felt that the current programme makes a difference only to some individuals but it does not necessarily break the cycle:

You're stopping a cycle for some, but the biggest problem is to try and break the cycle for all. And, you know, I think that is a challenge that I don't think has been met yet (Staff, Teviot).

The staff in Teviot also argued that SICAP does not address social exclusion in the area because the targets are set at national level and are not linked to the needs of local communities. In the same vein, in Heriot the staff felt that while nationally and locally there are examples of good work, in broader terms Ireland's approach to combating social exclusion has not been successful; in addition to a lack of coherent policy, the focus is too narrow, excluding some groups.

2.4 COMPLEMENTARITY VERSUS DUPLICATION: SICAP AND OTHER SERVICE PROVISION

Duplication and complementarity of services emerged as one of the themes from the interviews with PIs and policy stakeholders. One stakeholder commented on the potential overlap in services provided by various organisations:

What we've certainly found in the DEIS review is that SCP [the School Completion Programme] are similar activities to CYPSCs who are doing similar stuff to LCDCs (national policy stakeholder).

A similar sentiment was expressed by another policy stakeholder:

To be frank there's quite a bit of crossover between what they're [LEADER] doing and what the ETBs are doing./…/ There is quite a bit of overlap as to who's doing what and you'd sort of wonder about that.

Overall, the PI interviewees in the case-study areas indicated that actual duplication of services was not an issue. This could relate to the fact that Programme Implementers set out their annual plan, which is subsequently approved by the LCDCs who have an oversight role in the area. The process should, at least in principle, identify cases of similar service provision in the area and provide opportunities to address the issue before any new interventions are provided. One interviewer noted, however, that efforts in this regard were not being acknowledged: 'We're very cautious here... not to duplicate. But the system doesn't give you any rewards for that; this is a problem, for doing the right thing' (Staff, Breamish). Some interviewees noted that duplication is not likely to occur if there are few other agencies operating in the area, or if the services these agencies provide differ from what is on offer by the PI as the latter's interventions and courses tend to be more person-centred and needs-led:

> The way we would see it here is that the type of services that we're providing are not being provided, you know, and if it wasn't us or somebody like us, then I don't know how they would be provided and perhaps what we're doing is we're providing more person-centred and needs-led type sort of situation that maybe the ETB are either not equipped to do or just are not into at the moment … but yet they will work with us because they see it as a need and it's a nice fit. So I don't believe we're necessarily duplicating and sometimes duplication is not necessarily that bad either, you know, but I don't believe that we do actually duplicate (Staff, Linhope).

One group saw themselves as offering a skill set that was not available through other services offered by DEASP:

> The DSP usually value what we do because it's the bit that they can't do, and you know…. They don't have the same experiences that we do. … You want somebody that has the business bit of it, that has the business acumen. But you also want somebody that has the empathy …. You want somebody that's really going to be empathetic and really try to move things forward and be as understanding as they possibly can (Staff, Harthope).

Even when there are other providers of similar services in the area, need tends to outweigh provision so the Programme Implementer helps to fill gaps in existing provision:

> There are a lot [of providers] but I think if you were to measure it all they're still nowhere near enough. So, there are certainly issues about, yes, cohesion between them but I think that's used as an excuse to not give more resources because if you looked in an area like this there aren't enough preschool places. There aren't enough afterschool places. So

even if you were arguing there's a number of providers, there's still not enough and that's the same with adult education. But we need to be able to do the development work to get people into the adult education programmes because people don't just come in. People in these communities do not just come into education (Staff, Harthope).

In order to avoid duplication, provision by PIs tends to be tailored to address gaps in local services. For example, if there are already counselling services, IT or FETAC courses offered in the area, the PI does not provide these:

We don't offer counselling. There's counselling services here. We don't do any computer programmes. There's enough services around providing that kind of thing. We don't, you know, run any FETAC. There's enough services in the area providing services like that. So, it's where there's a gap (Staff, Harthope).

Staff in Teviot also noted that they make sure that their services and those provided by the ETB do not cover the same ground:

They [the ETB] recognise that the service that they're funding under us is something … they can't do, if you like. /…/ I mean actually [the ETB] is a very good example where it still works extremely well, because they contract us to do certain work and we provide supports to some of their services, but it's all with agreement. So, for instance, our community workers provide a community recruitment base for a lot of the community education courses that [the ETB] provide in the city. They … don't have either the connection at the ground level to be able to get people out nor do they have the resources to support those people anyway (Staff, Teviot).

Instead, the PIs tend to provide supports that are not otherwise available, such as supporting local communities in relation to urban planning (for example, helping local communities to lobby for social housing or establish local parks or community gardens). Another project by the same PI started outreach activities to people in direct provision providing activities for the children and providing advice to those who had been awarded legal status but were struggling to obtain accommodation.

It was also evident from the interviews that some individuals prefer to approach the Programme Implementer rather than an official service provider regarding issues such as social welfare:

We have a throughput of about 200 individuals where we give one-to-one advice and information on access to government service, in

particular social welfare, where people want to go back to work or they have -- but are wondering whether it's viable. And they're not going to go to the social welfare. So, to get independent advice. Or we get people who have done something that may be inappropriate with social welfare and they need to figure a way out (Staff, Harthope).

A similar sentiment was expressed by another PI talking about English language classes that are also provided by the ETB:

In the way that our classes are delivered, people are more prepared to come on board with, I don't know, to see it more maybe as a voluntary group than as a State run [service] and it's easier for people to engage with a group like that (Staff, Heriot).

Elsewhere the interviewees viewed the approach taken by the PIs as more holistic rather than focusing on the provision of a specific service: 'I suppose that's one difference that we're kind of trying to run a more holistic service rather than just get them in [to afterschool]' (Staff, Harthope).

One interviewee argued that it is important to see overlap of services and supports as distinct from duplication. He argued that by addressing clients' needs they work in a collaborative way, rather than duplicating existing services:

So where things overlap, like I'm saying, so we have a worker in the community doing X and they have got a worker doing Y, where the needs of both are meeting the clients' needs then I think as long as you agree that this is what you're doing, that's not a problem. That's not real duplication. That's actually a co-operative, collaborative model of support to the client. … There's no duplication of service. … The needs of that person or that community is being met in a way that's collaborative by different organisations and I don't think there's any problem. Now, people might say, 'Well, it's a waste of resources. You've two workers doing what looks like similar things', but they're not, because one has responsibility for literally organising courses and the other has responsibility for community development and building people and building communities (Staff, Teviot).

Elsewhere, an interviewee noted that the type of integrated approach the PI adopts makes them different from other providers:

There would be nobody else providing the whole integrated approach that we do. You know, where we can work with people, say, on the various programmes, you know with our LES, our jobs club et cetera. You know, you can take people from a very low base and work them up

through the system; they could go on maybe to back-to-work enterprise or, you know, start your own business, all those different kind of programmes, starting to do maybe a very basic course with us (Staff, Heriot).

The interviewees felt that the best way to avoid duplication is to share information with other service providers in the area about the types of services each organisation provides:

Because we're a partnership and a Local Development Company we would be very aware of not duplicating what any other service is doing. So we would talk all the time to our counterparts. If somebody is doing something, we won't do it. Not unless what we are doing is very different. So, on the outside you might look at … a language class for foreigners and say, 'They're the same.' But, actually when you look at them closer they're totally different because the language class is giving them a FETAC level in the English language and the conversation classes are giving them no qualification but they're helping build confidence in speaking the language and they're teaching them things about the county and about the services in it. So, in the language classes for example they may use a map of the town as the basis for the conversation or they may use the Irish culture as a basis for a conversation. And it's all depending and inclined to teach the migrant a little more about the community, about the cultural norms, about what happens here. Whereas the English language classes are about being able to speak the language (Staff, Heriot).

While admitting that there is certain 'additionality' with regard to service provision, PIs endeavoured to reach out to individuals that are not already engaged in various activities:

We'd be very conscious, you know, to engage people that are not already engaged yet, …but also to maybe engage other groups and organisations and services to have that flow of communication, so that we're not duplicating that, you know, there is additionality there (staff, Heriot).

The importance of sharing information was also expressed by the representative of a local ETB, who noted that close collaboration is key whereby the roles of each organisation are clear. For example, in the provision of services the PI supports the groups while the ETB provides training; also, the types of services each organisation delivers vary:

I suppose we work so closely here that the development workers know the types of programmes that the ETB can fund. So they more so support

the work. You know, they support the groups and we deliver the training. No, I wouldn't agree with that [that duplication exists], to be honest. As I say, there are certain things that, you know, I know for example that they would, you know, maybe fund the likes of Safe Pass that we wouldn't necessarily fund and … I know they did some driving lessons, for example, and, you know, that wouldn't be under our remit, we couldn't fund that. But, where possible, anything we can fund we do fund and then they spend money on the other aspects. /…/ I mean, as I said, you know, we have a good working relationship. I think, you know there's good synergy there and … we do complement the work of one another (local policy stakeholder).

In order to avoid duplication, a clear definition of respective roles was seen as important:

We have done a lot of work, myself and the manager that's on the LES side, around being clear that there will be crossover, there might be some duplication, but the majority of the time we manage the duplication as well as possible by ensuring that our staff and the LES staff, the SICAP staff and the LES staff have a clear understanding on the difference between them (Staff, Ettrick).

Another measure to help to avoid duplication was collaboration between service providers:

You see that is my biggest challenge around SICAP is that while it is providing a service to a significant number of people, I think that … there is the danger of duplication, if you're not very careful, between it and the Local Employment Service and the Jobs Club. Now, we would had been very, very cautious here around that because we had a long-established large Local Employment Service … and we would not knowingly allow any duplication to happen (Staff, Ettrick).

In the same vein, communication between different agencies was highlighted by one LCDC representative:

I suppose in the early days of SICAP, it was an issue but … the three main training providers which are the Department of Social Protection, Education and Training Board and the partnership company who are implementing SICAP for us, they meet on a regular basis. They have kind of an informal agreement about how they're going to develop training and try and avoid duplication, so I don't think it's a huge issue anymore. But it's something that has developed from the SICAP programme, is that

> *you know, they have sat down together and, in as much as they can, they try to avoid duplication of training initiatives in particular (Tyne, LCDC).*

Avoiding duplication is also seen as one of the roles of the LCDCs. The involvement of the LCDCs was seen as providing a structure for the co-ordination of services at local level. Of the LCDC representatives interviewed, only one (Ettrick) indicated that duplication of services may be an issue due to different local groups applying for the same funding streams:

> *I would say that the LCDC itself, one of its primary aims is to reduce the incidences of duplication in the delivery of services and I would say that is working and I think that the LECP has helped in that respect. /…/ Like, there's the local development company that we have built up a good working relationship with that are also involved and … the LCDC oversight of that and the input that that's received, allows other agencies not only be aware of what's going on, but to maybe foster a feeling of collaboration and co-operation with each other to our mutual benefit and to the benefit of the clients at the end of the day. So, yes, it does allow oversight and reduction in duplication (Heriot, LCDC).*

At the same time, the lack of a more joined-up approach at national level (see above) meant that LCDCs felt they sometimes did not have sufficient information on the services being put in place in their local area:

> *So the Department of Education probably don't know what's coming through housing or what they're getting back from SICAP, you know what I mean? Or there's drugs money gone in, maybe the drugs money is doing training and education for a whole cohort of people who are recovering from drug use, but we don't know that, so then we look at SICAP and go, 'What about ex-prisoners and drug users?' You know? But we don't know they're being catered for somewhere else (LCDC, Harthope).*

While one local PI noted that they are very careful not to duplicate existing services, the ETB in this area held a diverging view on the topic and argued that there is considerable duplication of services locally:

> *I would argue that SICAP has been a huge inconvenience to us, on the basis that it has caused huge duplication. …Now, inconvenience is probably too strong a word, but you have the same cohort of people, hard to reach learners and at this stage, if I was a hard to reach learner in [this area] I'd nearly be demented trying to work out how many people are going to help me. Because the Community Education section of the [ETB] is running programmes, you know, basic literacy, basic numeracy,*

> *cookery programmes, personal skills, skills development and it has a full guidance service. And SICAP is coming along doing exactly the same thing with personal development, education plans, working with individuals to try and make them job ready, et cetera. So you have two agencies, so to speak, or two groups, whichever way you want to look at it, vying for the same cohort of people /…/ We have offices and rooms in all sort of matters of, you know, small premises, big premises, family resource centres, community centres, education centres. So, you know, people say, 'Well, the ETB doesn't go into the community and SICAP does', but we are in the community. We're very definitely in communities. Now … you will have groups that will sometimes say, 'Well, you know, you can't do non-accredited work', but we do lots of non-accredited work (local policy stakeholder).*

The policy stakeholder was not sure about the best way to avoid duplication considering that the terms of reference between the two organisations are very similar:

> *because you are working with socially, you know, groups who are hard to reach, away from the labour market and socially excluded. So, the target market is quite similar and you're both charged with the task to go in and work with those groups (local policy stakeholder).*

The issue of cross-over was also mentioned by another local policy stakeholder in a different area:

> *We do link … in relation to the SICAP programme and to the partnerships. We were a bit concerned because there's a lot of cross-over between what we do and what SICAP is looking at. /…/ I suppose really … all the target groups are the same. You know, and the interventions and … one of their goals is education and lifelong learning. And … that's our brief, you know, in relation to statutory organisation, the adult and further education, and lifelong learning. So, I suppose in a way, we have a good relationship with the partnerships here but we have to sit down now and look at how … there isn't duplication because that's the problem with a lot of these programmes, there is duplication. But we'd see them coming in is as a support …and then everything should be done in consultation to support the communities and the individuals. And if it doesn't happen that way, there's a lot of cross-over and people are confused as to what they should be doing (local policy stakeholder).*

When asked how they would see the work of their organisation as differing from other support programmes in this area offered by other organisations, an interviewee from one PI noted that they undertake on the ground work, working

with the less well heard, most marginalised and most distant from the centre; they also deliver the LECP priority actions on an interagency basis. The education staff member sees their education provision as complementary to that offered by the ETB:

We would sit down and we would complement one another's courses. So, for example, I'd get a lot of referrals for the English language classes from the ETB because their waiting list is so long. They don't have the capacity to meet the need (local policy stakeholder).

Differing opinions were also evident in Avon. The PI CEO in the area argued that:

In our area of operations then the only other organisations or entities that are in that, say, social inclusion sphere would be the family resource centres in the towns. So, there's a family resource centre in [naming four towns], all of which are in our area of operations for SICAP.

However, the representative of ETB in the area felt that it is an issue in some cases:

Well, it is in some cases. There are not too many, but it's limited. I wouldn't say it's a big issue, to be honest.

Interviewer: Okay, but there is slight competition for the people that they provide services for?

There is, but most of the competition … wouldn't be offering services free of charge. On occasion, you would have a community organising something and they would get funding through SICAP or a funding resource … and they might put on a course in computers or in English based, or other languages to help them. But no, it's not as big of an issue as it would be in other populated areas. But having that also, they have struggled to fill some of their courses too and they would contact us to say, 'Listen, if there's anything we can do in this area or that area that we could…' -- you know and we would try and work together with them. It's easier to do it that way than to be challenging all the time (local policy stakeholder).

When asked about possible duplication, some interviewees noted competition locally between ETBs and PIs:

It's the first time we've been put into the situation where other agencies or other services could see us as being competing with them, which we would never have had before. Do you know, that the ETB could be looking and saying, 'Well, why do you have a go-to information around education when that's our remit and previously you worked with us

around delivering these things, whereas now you're engaging and you're looking, do you know, not at the social inclusion piece, but the activation piece.' And do you know, and that's the thing that can be challenging for the partners in the community (Staff, Ettrick).

There was the director of the company and one other employee, and they were doing their best to generate work for themselves and provide a service. Obviously, they were charging for it, but SICAP, for example, were offering, from memory, it was a forklift programme for somebody who was out of work and they were willing to train them up in the use of a forklift, or whatever they wanted, free of charge. So, they were quite concerned that that was happening, because that was taken right off their plate and … the threat there was that one or two of them could end up back on the Live Register because of the intervention that SICAP was providing (local policy stakeholder).

One national policy stakeholder felt that clarity of roles and taking ownership are important in addressing the issue:

I would say that the real issue is there isn't ownership of the situation; that everybody does their little bit and passes it on and nobody really takes ownership and responsibility.

However, another national policy stakeholder felt that caution is needed when talking about duplication: although services look similar, the provision may have a different purpose:

Collaboration between those groups and what was being supported there and the ETBs. I noticed that but they were doing quite similar activities. So, for example, horticulture type of thing. You could see under this funded structure and community development the horticultural programme and they have their plots there and all the rest of it. And I've seen that on the ETB side of it as well, almost identical, do you know what I mean. But one is using it to help foster community development and the other one is using it to help put people in to try and get them interested in their own transversal skills and abilities, you know. So, they're using similar things for different purposes (national policy stakeholder).

The interviewee argued for working together through a mechanism provided by Pobal: 'I think that's how I think it should be approached because no matter what you do you're going to have that crossover'. Another national stakeholder argued

that considering the need in the communities for support services it may be unhelpful to talk about duplication of services:

I would be very dubious about talking about duplication of services because the need is so great that it's like they're two buses, but the two buses might be full. So, I think you have to be very careful, I think this is something that people, looking externally, always ask about duplication of services.

It is expected that the remit of LCDCs is going to address any issue of overlap, having a central role in the area.

2.5   INTER-AGENCY   CO-OPERATION   AT   NATIONAL   AND LOCAL LEVELS

In the survey of PIs, respondents were asked more specifically about the perceived strength of inter-agency collaboration in combating social exclusion in the local area and at national level in areas such as education, employment and community development. PIs were most positive about local collaboration in relation to education and lifelong learning, with two-thirds agreeing that such collaboration was strong (Figure 2.2). PIs with a high caseload were somewhat less positive about such local collaboration as were those serving more deprived individuals. PIs were somewhat less positive about the strength of collaboration in relation to employment and community development supports, with 30-31 per cent disagreeing that such collaboration was strong. In relation to employment supports, PIs with a lower caseload and those working with less deprived communities were more positive about local collaboration. Those operating in more deprived areas were more critical of local collaboration in relation to community development.

FIGURE 2.2 **PROPORTION OF PI CEOS WHO AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THERE IS STRONG INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION IN COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE LOCAL AREA IN THE SPHERES OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (%)**
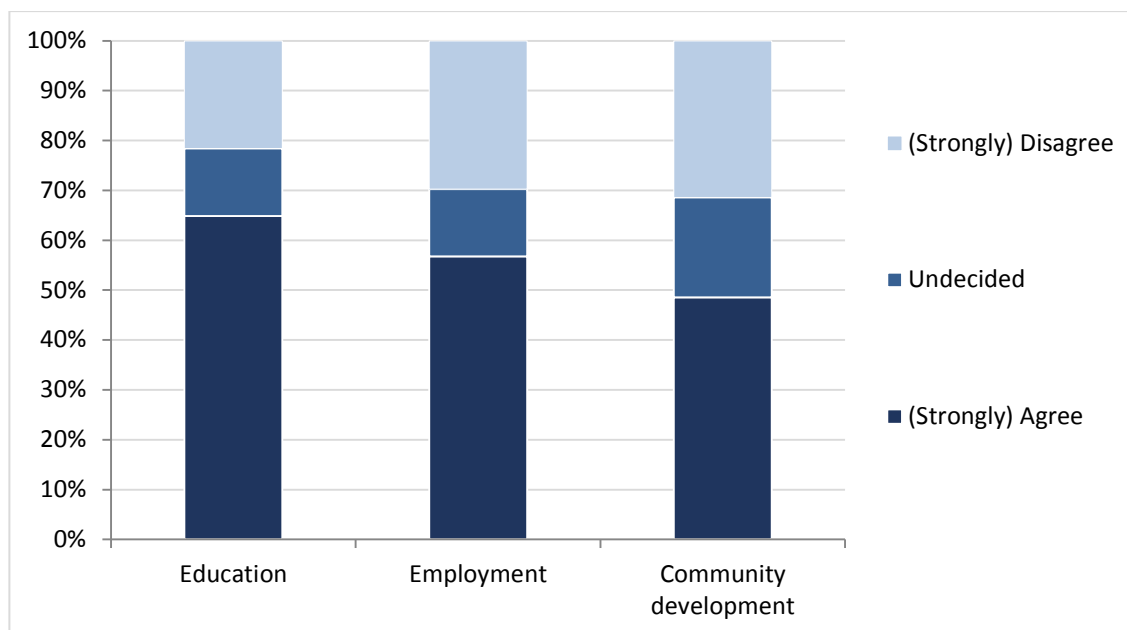
Source: PI CEO Survey.

FIGURE 2.3 **PROPORTION OF PI CEOS WHO AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THERE IS STRONG INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION IN COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION AT NATIONAL LEVEL IN THE SPHERES OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (%)**
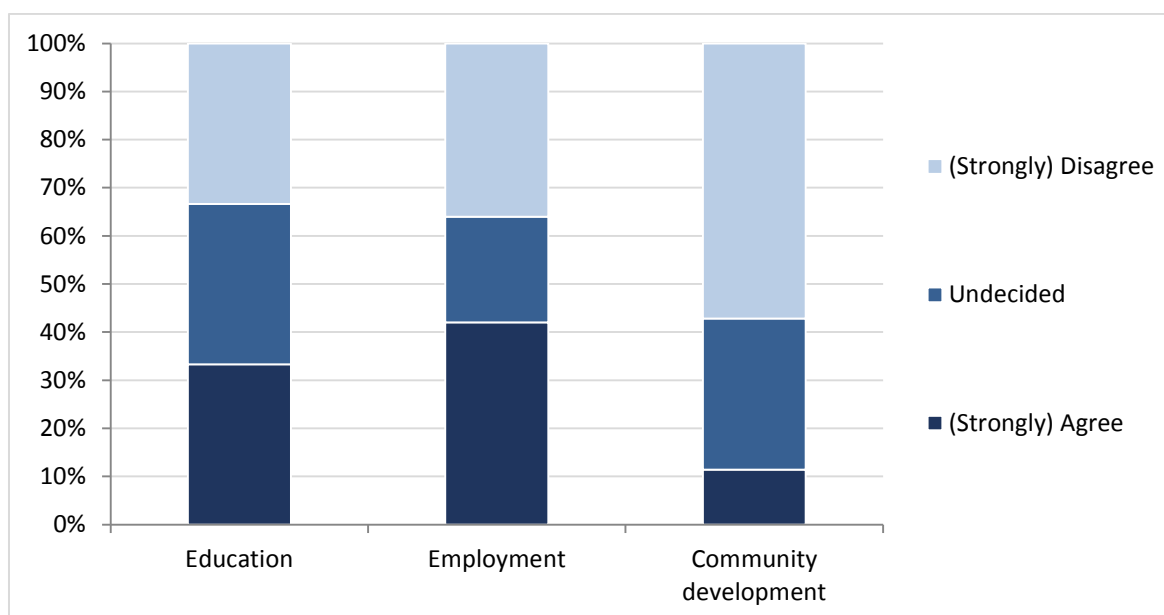
Source: PI CEO Survey.

In keeping with the views of policy stakeholders discussed above, a somewhat different perspective was evident in relation to collaboration at the national level, where PIs were less likely to feel there was strong collaboration, especially in relation to community development (Figure 2.3). In addition, a significant

proportion was undecided about the strength of national collaboration. PIs with a smaller caseload were more positive about national collaboration in relation to education and employment as were those who had a somewhat higher budget-caseload ratio.

Overall there seemed to be reasonably good but variable inter-agency collaboration in the case-study areas. In Breamish, PI staff felt that they had very good working relationships with other providers locally and the PI had been proactive in establishing networks of services. This is seen as especially important given there are a lot of services and groups locally so as to avoid duplication of services. They describe having a good working relationship with DEASP around referrals to education/training courses and in terms of working with those interested in setting up their own businesses:

> About every six weeks now, we'd have a meeting with the staff from the DSP around how the referrals are working, who's coming through and who's not. … It's really productive (Staff, Breamish).

The quality of relationships with different agencies was seen to vary within as well as across PIs, an issue that was evident in Harthope. Enterprise workers highlighted very good working relationships with local DEASP case officers in the provision of self-employment supports. There were also good relationships with local schools for some activities but not all. One initiative reported difficulties in obtaining support from Tusla regarding concerns about child welfare. This latter co-ordinator also described inter-agency co-operation as 'pretty poor' in the local area, with some competition for numbers between groups (Staff, Harthope).

In Heriot, the Programme Implementer is seen as having a good working relationship with organisations such as Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Education and Training Boards, Local Employment Services, the local authority, and, to a lesser extent, Health Service Executive, with the DEASP considered to be particularly proactive compared to other agencies: 'We have a very, very strong relationship with them, lots of referrals. We put a lot of notices and things through the DSP' (Staff, Heriot). The PI plays a role in referring people on to ETB courses run locally. The company collaborates closely with the LES in organising group training. The PI CEO also noted that they have had a 'fairly healthy model' of statutory body involvement and community involvement on the Board for quite some time. Collaboration is also evident between the Company and the ETB regarding ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages). Under Goal 1 – helping the integration process – the PI has set up conversation groups for migrants and the ETB registers participants for the language classes from among the participants in the conversation classes. It was evident that the area had a long history of collaboration and links which helps the inter-agency

work in implementing SICAP: 'I'm a long time working in the sector, so I've built up relationships with services over the years.' (Staff, Heriot).

Elsewhere (Byrns), interagency co-operation at local level is described by the CEO as 'excellent'. The education staff member similarly describes good working relationships with the DEASP and the ETB locally:

We would work very closely with the DSP, Social Protection, and get a lot of referrals that way. From time to time, we'd send out mass letters to people who are on DSP waiting lists and then we'd also go and present to the social welfare officers, tell them about what we have on offer and they would be meeting with people one-to-one and, if [there is] somebody that might be interested, they'd give their contact details and refer them on to us. And then, on the ground, in resource centres, in the likes of the ETB, lots of collaborative work in that way (Staff, Byrns).

Equally strong collaboration between local agencies and groups was evident in Tyne. In order to enhance inter-agency collaboration, a social inclusion group was set up with Tusla and other agencies:

Tusla and the new joint committee. So, we have agreed that Tusla and ourselves will join forces and will have one social inclusion measures group for the county and combine forces. So, now we're going to have a joint social inclusion group serving both our company SICAP and serving children and CYPSC with a joint plan and action (Staff, Tyne).

Together with CYPSC, the PI is involved in a joint youth consultation, focussing on the economic situation, wellbeing and young people's views about Ireland and their future. The results of the consultation will be reflected back up into their SICAP planning and targets. The PI also has a new interagency group involving the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Foróige, the County Council, the Town Teens, the ETB, the Health Service, the Drugs Task Force, Jobs Club[16] and a local higher education institution. All these agencies and groups have come together and in the current year new programmes will be organised between all the members of the group. The social inclusion group was set up through SICAP and has grown into a multi-agency task force. A Goal 3 worker noted that it is a very significant issue that the interagency group (developed by SICAP under Goal 3) has grown into a much broader group. Good collaboration was also evident under other goals in the area: 'All of our work is pretty much collaborative; I can't imagine anything that isn't.' (Staff, Tyne). Initiatives include a local learning network and an educational and training fair. Work is also

---

[16]   Jobs Clubs are designed to assist jobseekers to gain employment through the provision of individualised supports, formal workshops and a drop-in service with facilities such as internet access and photocopying.

conducted with local NGOs and statutory services around older people and people with disabilities.

The interviewees highlighted the importance of inter-agency collaboration:

> *It's essential, because we might be able to do so much, but we can't do everything. And for sustainability, as well. So that if we're doing something and we're building capacity and support, if it's not our role to continue to do certain elements, then others can maybe fill the gap or can bring resources to the table. My take is that it's always been about partnership and collaboration and networking and making the best of the resources in [this] county. I think that's the beauty of [this county] compared to other counties, that we have no choice but to work together (Staff, Tyne).*

Interviews with LCDC representatives indicated that collaboration happens through the representatives of different organisations on the Board of the LCDC. In addition, many Chief Officers commented on positive interaction with, and support from, Pobal:

> *I have a dedicated contact there and I ring him and if he's not able to talk to me, he does get back to me fairly quickly and if he doesn't know the answer to the question that I put to him, he does enquire and he gets back to me again fairly quickly on it. So, I'm happy with the level of contact and service that Pobal are providing to me in particular in relation to this (LCDC, Heriot).*

One policymaker noted that under the SICAP, collaboration is one of the core horizontal principles and that the programme framework should ensure collaboration. However, the interviewee noted that the extent and quality of collaboration varies across the lots.

Another national policy stakeholder observed that while there are procedures put in place for inter-agency collaboration at national level, there needs to be trust between different organisations for this to work well:

> *I would say there's a lot of policies and procedures around how to enhance inter-agency co-operation at national level and structures being put in place. But, I think the kernel of the problem is not enough relationships being built and not acknowledging that inter-agency working is only successful when professionals respect and trust and share information. Otherwise the structures are meaningless and I do think that that is an ongoing issue and there's no one silver bullet solution to*

it. And it's prevalent not just at a national level but also at a regional and local level too (national policy stakeholder).

According to the interviewee, lack of joined up thinking between agencies may result in a situation whereby disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals may feel that their issues are not receiving adequate attention.

One national policy stakeholder also noted that collaboration is often dependent on inter-personal relationships: 'as ever of course it's down to, you know, who's in the job at the time and personalities and culture and all the rest of it' and structural changes in some areas may result in departments becoming 'independent republics' or that continuity is lost when people move or the structure of organisation changes. Lack of communication may result in organisations working in the same area getting 'some information by accident almost' (national policy stakeholder).

Some government agencies were criticised for not engaging sufficiently with SICAP:

Some of our other members, HSE in particular … they would never mention SICAP at all or they don't get involved with it, as far as we can see. Now, maybe they don't have a role, I don't know. I'm sure they do under Healthy Ireland and that … I would imagine some of the bodies at national level are well aware of what SICAP is about and integrate well and others don't, but just on our local experience would be, you know, that the Department of Social Protection and Education and Training Board are well aware of what SICAP is about and how they can work with SICAP (LCDC representative).

In all areas, links with other agencies and organisations had been established before SICAP came into existence, as the result of previous social inclusion programmes:

We have SICAP and before that we had the predecessor inclusion programme and whatever, right back to when we started first. /…/ I mean, what we try to do is integrate what we do. So obviously, we have a Local Employment Service here, and so we would try and make sure that there is some sort of coherence about what we're doing, you know, so if somebody working in our Local Employment Service has a particular need that cannot be provided for through our Local Employment Service, then we will look to see can we do that through SICAP, can the support be given, or through whatever else that we might be doing (Staff, Linhope).

A staff member in Teviot argued that inter-agency work needs to work both ways and that it is easier to forge good collaboration in an area that is not too big:

we have a good track record I think of inter-agency work across sectors, not just us working with people but other people working with us. And I think … it's a small enough [area] that people have that relationship (Staff, Teviot).

Inter-agency collaboration is seen as easier when there are several agencies and groups in the area and where these agencies have a history of working collaboratively. The situation may be different in large rural areas with few organisations in the immediate vicinity. This could be seen in one area, where collaboration could be characterised as medium-level:

In our area of operations then the only other organisations or entities that are in that, say, social inclusion sphere would be the family resource centres in the towns (Staff member, Avon).

However, the PI has engaged with the ETB and local council as well as with the Youthreach programme. The PI CEO noted that

there's a lot of synergies between us in all cases in the social inclusion sphere and I think, you know, they have great value in those local areas too … simply because of their localness (Staff, Avon).

When there are very few other service providers or national agencies in the area, it often falls upon the PI to try to cover all bases. This poses challenges, given that the link with agencies further afield can be relatively weak:

Families have to travel for services there and agencies like the HSE and other agencies don't provide services like that up here. So we're kind of working a lot trying to get Tusla and ourselves, trying to deliver something and like, I suppose we're the base. … You've got nothing there, you're got nothing here, there's nothing here and you're kind of thinking, 'Well, you know, there's a lot here, but only because we're doing it,' because no other agency is coming into it and we're doing it with very limited funds and we could really do with you coming on board and helping us through all these because there is a need for it. So we're doing a lot of work trying to develop services for youths and families because again, SICAP's been cut so much, we've had to cut a lot of the programmes (Staff, Fasney).

And there's no interest from national organisations to try and come and support us. … I think we still are the only kind of organisation in the

country that delivers a service in relation to domestic abuse that's for men and women. A lot of them would be just women-focused only because that's the mentality they go down like, just go down but we've kind of said, 'Well, we're covering this area or we're setting up something for this area, we're not excluding men, they're all victims of domestic abuse, we're going to support them (Staff, Fasney).

Despite not having many other agencies to provide support, the PI endeavours to provide as holistic support to individuals as they can:

You could have someone that will come up for the jobs centre, they need help with a CV and then you realise, 'Do you know something, they need a bit of counselling, there's a problem there,' or there could be abuse or it could be that... it's such a daunting thing for them and they need to go on a personal development course before they go for a job, or we run an emotional support service, kind of a counselling service here free of charge and through the meeting with them, they might disclose that they are really struggling with something and we'd offer that service to them. They all run alongside each other, all these services (Staff, Fasney).

Strategic collaborations were also evident in Ettrick PI where they have written strategic collaboration actions into each goal in SICAP, thus enabling them to legitimately take this approach with staff funded by SICAP. However, the CEO argued that strategic collaborations should have a much more central role in SICAP:

I think that SICAP should have a strategic collaboration objective and there should be metrics for assessing, you know, that should be like, the capacity to lever other programmes and to support strategic collaboration should be a performance indicator for SICAP and I think that's the lost opportunity. I think the department cannot see this, that it would be stronger if they actually said, 'This is a programme which is a core funding programme for the companies,' and to lever us all of this other work and we are enabling all this work to happen for other government departments (Staff, Ettrick).

Similarly to many other case-study areas, the Breamish PI has been very proactive in forging local alliances and seems to have been very successful in this. Their work has focused on initiating a network of education and training providers, ensuring co-operation among locally based agencies. The interviewees here argued that they hold a neutral space among the services and are not competing with them:

The Partnership does great work within the community just to facilitate meetings, pushing development and, you know, and that needs to happen. There is conflict where one group will … look at another group as a competitor (Staff, Breamish).

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has looked at the position of SICAP in the Irish policy landscape. In doing so, it has drawn on the perspectives of PI staff and policy stakeholders at national and local level. Several interviewees noted that while Ireland has a long tradition in addressing poverty and disadvantage at policy level through various government programmes, at present there does not seem to be a joined-up approach to combating social exclusion. According to the PI staff, the previous governmental social inclusion programmes had much broader scope that enabled them to address the needs of various groups at local level. In so doing, they, through their history as local development companies, had built up a profile and became known for their role in delivering specific services and interventions for the communities. The interviewees argued that a national social inclusion programme needs to be flexible in order to respond to the different needs across areas. While certain drivers of social exclusion were common across the case-study areas, such as unemployment, low educational attainment, facilities and opportunities available in the area, it was apparent that very significant differences were evident between urban and rural areas in the main drivers and consequences of social exclusion (see also McGuinness et al., forthcoming). For example, rural areas could be characterised by an ageing population, peripherality, dispersed population, and lack of services and agencies providing support. On the other hand, in urban areas individuals could have easier access to services and interventions, but can experience challenges brought about by the concentration of disadvantage and social barriers in specific neighbourhoods.

There seemed to be a general consensus among the interviewees participating in the study that Ireland has not been successful in addressing social exclusion as similar issues in terms of drivers of social exclusion and disadvantage have stayed broadly the same over time. This is in line with Frazer and Devlin (2011) who note that while there has been some improvement, the levels of child poverty and social exclusion[17] remain higher compared to several other EU Member States. The interviewees argued that in order to tackle social exclusion effectively, joined-up thinking and policymaking that addresses structural inequality and the interplay of different policy domains is necessary. Furthermore, a lifecycle approach is needed to effectively address the issue, supporting families to give young children the best start in life. The interviewees argued that current policymaking regarding the promotion of social inclusion needs to take a broader

---

[17] Either measured by relative income poverty measures or by consistent poverty measures.

approach to combating social exclusion that is not just rooted in labour market, but that is more person-centred, acknowledging the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and disadvantage.

In order to support disadvantaged individuals and groups, various interventions have been put in place across the case-study areas by a variety of providers. As different government organisations provide support in education, employment and enterprise, the interviewees were asked their views on potential overlap and duplication. A small number of interviewees highlighted potential overlap between SICAP and other provision, such as that offered by the local ETB. In many cases, this reflected the fact that a PI is offering courses for different groups of participants, especially those who are most marginalised, and is using short courses to engage people in broader community development. Furthermore, others argued that this was increasingly not the case, especially under the management of local LCDCs. In more remote areas, the PIs were often one of the few providers of services locally and aimed to provide a range of interventions to address local needs.

Previous research has referred to inter-agency co-operation between government departments, State agencies and NGOs as the gold standard in developing public policy and services (Duggan and Corrigan, 2009). Inter-agency collaboration to promote a socially inclusive approach to service planning and delivery is also one of the goals of local government strategy (see, for example, Dublin City Council, 2015). In many cases the Programme Implementers had good links with other agencies and tried to avoid duplication of provision through collaboration and co-ordination. However, inter-agency collaboration tended to vary across the case-study areas, often depending on the goodwill and commitment of one or two key individuals. There would appear to be greater scope to improve inter-agency collaboration. It could also be enhanced by the LCDCs, the Boards of which consist of the representatives of a number of interest groups in the area. Overall, the results of the study appear to show that inter-agency collaboration works better at local rather than national level, at least according to the survey and interview responses from Programme Implementers. More specific views on different aspects of SICAP, including its goals, target groups and governance structures are addressed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

# Programme goals and target groups

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, SICAP has three goals focussing on strengthening communities, education and training, and employment. In particular, these goals aim to:

- support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues;

- support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage so they can participate fully, engage with and progress through life-long learning opportunities through the use of community development approaches; and

- engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision; to help move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness; to support access to employment and self-employment and to create social enterprise opportunities (Pobal, 2017).

This chapter presents the findings from the PI CEO survey and interviews from ten case-study areas on the appropriateness of the programme goals. The chapter then moves on to discuss the target groups, the perceived appropriateness of these and how PIs seek to establish connections with marginalised individuals.

3.2 PROGRAMME GOALS

In the survey, PI CEOs were asked a number of questions about their perceptions of current SICAP goals. Figure 3.1 shows the extent to which they saw SICAP goals as appropriate in relation to the overall aim of tackling 'poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies'. The majority, around three-quarters, saw the education/lifelong learning and employment support goals as very or fairly appropriate. However, views were more mixed in relation to strengthening communities where almost half felt that some changes were needed. PIs with a higher caseload were more critical of the appropriateness of the goals, especially in relation to strengthening communities.

FIGURE 3.1   PERCEPTIONS OF THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SICAP GOALS IN RELATION TO THE OVERALL AIM OF SICAP (%)
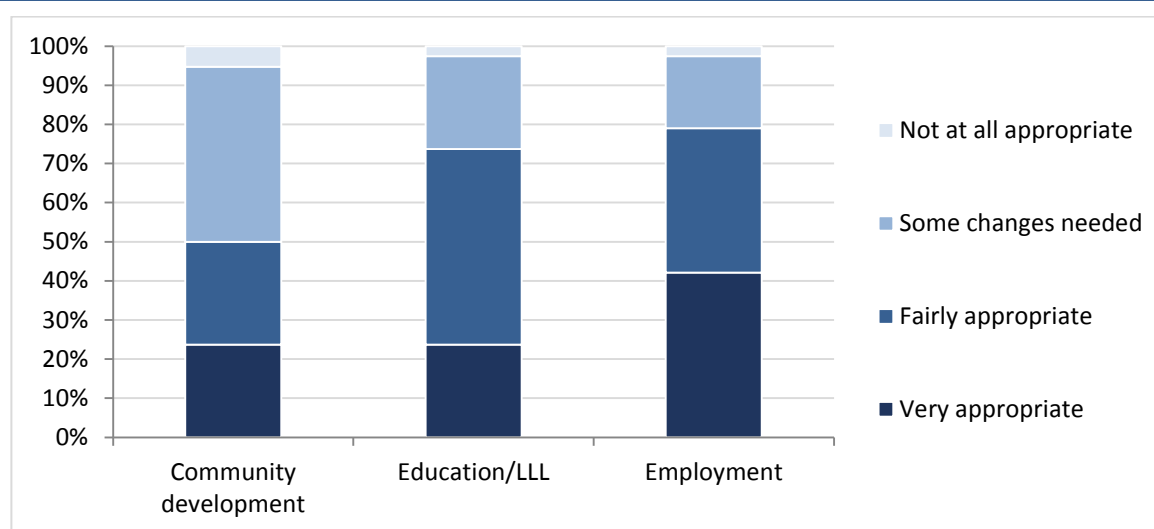
Source: Survey of PI CEOs.

The changes suggested in relation to community development focused on adopting a broader approach to reflect the needs of the local community, with comments indicating that criticism centred not on the goal itself but rather in how it was implemented, especially in relation to the targets set under the key performance indicators (see Chapter 1 and Appendix 2):

Given the caseload targets attached to the national programme, there is not sufficient scope, budget or input time allowed to foster sustainable community development process at local level (PI survey response).

The role of community development has become very narrow in the current SICAP programme – focusing mainly on supporting individuals into decision-making structures. The focus of Goal 1 in SICAP 2 needs to change from supporting groups to engage with stakeholders towards a much simpler statement of capacity building to address key social inclusion affecting the area. A more nuanced progression path for groups should be developed to capture this work, with recognition that for some groups, 'progression' is not a necessary objective. There are far more stages of capacity and support needs than is reflected within the current model. Furthermore, scope for grant allocations to local community groups should be re-introduced (PI survey response).

Another respondent focused on the interconnectedness of the goals and the need to recognise this synergy in service provision:

There could be better synergy across the three goals so that they complement each other to support individuals and communities. For

example, Goal 1 supports tend to focus on supporting groups in managing regulatory compliance and governance, potentially missing opportunities to help groups develop better services and supports across Goals 2 and 3 in education/training and potential employment/social enterprise. … General comment: the importance of engagement in civil and communal/social activities purely for the purpose of strengthening social cohesion does not appear to be valued in the programme. In many ways, such initiatives support and promote Civil Society Activation and create opportunities to promote participation in other developmental activities such as personal development, education and training and place-making (PI survey response).

The perceived interconnectedness of the goals was reflected in the fact that only one in six PIs reported difficulty in addressing all three goals in their local area.

Three-quarters of respondents saw the SICAP goals as different from those of the earlier Local Community Development Programme. Six in ten agreed or strongly agreed that 'the current SICAP goals are too narrow'[18] while two-thirds felt that the goals were not sufficient in addressing social exclusion in their local area.[19] Those PIs with a higher caseload (in terms of the number of clients) were more likely to view the goals as too narrow and not sufficient while PIs in less deprived areas[20] were less critical of this aspect of the programme.[21] Just over half felt the current goals were not sufficient to address social exclusion at the national level. Only a quarter felt that the goals were 'sufficiently flexible to reflect a changing societal context', an important finding in a context where 63 per cent reported that needs in the local areas had changed to a great or some extent in the past three years. As with other aspects of programme goals, PIs with a higher caseload were more critical of SICAP's flexibility.

In the survey responses, PIs pointed to a contrast between the context in which SICAP was originally established and recent trends, where falling unemployment levels have resulted in a client group that has multiple disadvantages and require more intensive supports, a pattern that was echoed in the local case-studies:

As the Live Register fall[s], our client group becomes more distanced from the labour/education activity. The educational attainment is on

---

[18] In contrast, only 5 per cent of respondents felt that the goals were too broad.
[19] It should be noted that PI responses tend to reflect their views on goal implementation as well as on the goals in themselves. The two aspects are disentangled to a greater extent in the case-study analysis.
[20] The classification into three groups of PIs ranging from those serving more deprived to those serving less deprived areas is based on the Pobal HP index for each individual in their caseload aggregated to the Lot level.
[21] There is a tendency for PIs serving a more deprived client group to have a higher caseload but this relationship is by no means perfect so there are some PIs with small but highly deprived caseloads and some with large caseloads but a more socio-economically mixed client group.

average lower, the individual has little or no work experience and the majority of clients have multiple issue[s] impacting on their lives and therefore inhibiting progress towards improvements (PI survey response).

The decrease in the Live Register figures has meant that those who are looking for support have higher needs and require more intensive support to enable them to overcome barriers to employment and education. … The profile of employment [locally] remains low and unstable with a great reliance on retail and service industries. This means that SICAP target groups are in a precarious position with the bulk of employment opportunities concentrated in uncertain and unstable sectors with few prospects for personal or career development (PI survey response).

The analysis of interviews with PI staff showed similar patterns. An overall majority of the interviewees across the ten case-study areas expressed their satisfaction with the general nature of these goals and what these aim to achieve:

We have Goal 2, we have Goal 3, we work across goals, but each one of our goals, we're fairly clear about what we're doing and that's good, and leaves it easy for me to work on (Staff, Tyne).

The implementation difficulties were also expressed by interviewees from Teviot:

I think the overall goals, you know, when you're looking at the kind of the broad headings of doing community development and empowerment under Goal 1, when you're looking at trying to look at education and training in its broadest sense under Goal 2 and employment and supports under Goal 3, we wouldn't have any problem with the aspirations of those goals. It's … when you come down underneath it then and you have to meet all the targets under each of those subheadings, because then all of a sudden there's a whole load of subheadings which we don't create, somebody else gives them to us, which aren't local, they're national targets and there's no flexibility. And, as I said then, so we have a Local Employment Service, but yet we have a target on employment. That doesn't make sense to me. We should be able to concentrate somewhere else (Staff, Teviot).

In the same vein, interviewees in Linhope felt that while the goals as such were fine, the issues arose in relation to delivery under the three goals. For example, the co-ordinators argued that there was too much emphasis on some target groups. They felt that targeting the under 25s for self-employment is not

appropriate as these young people do not have sufficient experience and may not be ready for this option:

They're so young at that stage that they haven't really thought about self-employment as an option a lot of the time. So, they are very, very few and far between. I mean, our targets are usually about three and we really do have difficulty [meeting the targets] (Staff, Linhope).

However, one interviewee argued that having three separate goals is unnecessary and these need to be re-structured to approach disadvantage in a more holistic way:

I don't see really the reason for there to be three goals. At the moment we have the community, the training and education and we have the employment and unemployment or self-employment. The community side needs to be protected and I think it's maybe a little bit disadvantaged in the current programme, and I want to come back to that. The individual side then between the training, education, employment, self-employment, it's really if you talk about a socially excluded person, their individual progression, whether it's into education or further education or back to education or into a job or to make them more job ready or into self-employment, it's back to the point about their own progress through their life or the distance that they travel. So, I think that the supports for individuals ... should not be or need not be divided into, oh, education and training on the one hand and employment on the other hand. Except in the case of young people (Staff, Avon).

The staff members in the area felt that the goals need to allow for the 'distance travelled' concept, whereby individuals get recognition also for personal development not just for labour market activation. The need to enhance community development was also highlighted by the CEO of another PI:

I would increase the allocation for community development and I would allow quite significant variation between the goals depending on local needs (Staff, Ettrick).

According to some participants, the community development focus had been much stronger under the earlier social inclusion programmes; changing the focus of the SICAP has resulted in a perceived negative impact on local communities in some cases:

And the communities have suffered, like the social inclusion focus has been taken away and therefore communities have suffered, because in the past we would have been doing way more community meetings, we

would have been going out meeting them, /…/, whereas we've been pulled away from all of that in order to focus on targets and unemployment. I think you see, because the activation has really taken over, that even though [it's] the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme… the community element has really dropped (Staff, Fasney).

It was argued that the programme failed to recognise 'that there is synergy between the three goals' (Staff, Heriot), with work on developing communities under Goal 1 seen as enhancing engagement in provision under the education and employment goals.

It was also argued by some participants that, in SICAP, community development has been reduced to working with community groups:

Community development is one of the goals of the programme but it's completely tacked on. It's got no influence throughout. And even then it's very much sort of minimised to Goal 1 and I don't know why that would be. Community development applies to individuals as much as it applies to groups (Staff, Harthope).

This view indicates a degree of ambiguity among some PI staff about the meaning of community development and action generally referred to as a developmental approach with individuals. Under SICAP, community development is an underlying principle across all of the work but Goal 1 is focused on community action, that is, supports to LCGs rather than individuals.

Under SICAP, broad parameters and rules are set nationally, with plans developed and implemented at local level by PIs in conjunction with LCDCs, with the intention that this approach would allow for flexibility to meet local needs. However, some respondents argued that the programme guidelines operated as a constraint in meeting the needs of local communities:

SICAP's a blunt instrument because … it was written centrally in Dublin and just applied to every county as if every county had the exact same situation on the ground. But, in a county like [X] there's no Local Employment Service Network. So, in SICAP Goal 3.1 makes perfect sense in [X] to have something to encourage people into employment. In [this county] the Local Development Company has a Local Employment Service Network up and running for a long number of years and very successfully and there's also a Jobs Club. So, when it came to SICAP on Goal 3.1 we were put in a very bad situation in that we didn't want to be tendering against ourselves you know in saying we would do all sorts of stuff in Goal 3.1 and at the same time we had to put something in because we

were told there were other tenders out there and that you could lose your tender if you didn't meet the needs of SICAP. So, as a result a lot of the stuff that we do in Goal 3.1 really that stuff it's not necessary because there is a Local Employment Service Network. So, what we have done really is worked with the Local Employment Service Network to manage how we could get training to people. So, we could do group training for people that they couldn't and that's where we've sort of worked our way around it (Staff, Heriot).

It was also argued that while the Department and Pobal have allowed for community development under Goal 1, the emphasis is not currently sufficient:

Go back and strengthen Goal 1, you know, work on the ground. Every time we say that there isn't a community development focus, you know, Pobal and the Department say, 'Oh, but there is. You know, there is a lot of work in Goal 1.' But if you look at that … that's not kind of robust enough (LCDC, Ettrick).

The interviewee notes that in order to have a real community development focus, programmes need to take account of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and inequality.

Another area that was seen as a gap in current programme provision was social enterprise: 'the social enterprise and social economy area [are] hugely underdeveloped in Ireland compared to other countries' (Staff, Heriot).

In Breamish PI, the community development officer felt that good interagency co-operation had been established in the local area but that there needed to be better integration internally to work co-operatively across the goals:

What needs to happen internally here is I suppose each of the goals and departments working more strategically together knowing each other's work and lot more and how we can support each other. So we need to, what we're doing out there we need to mirror in here (Staff, Breamish).

The interviewees argued for various changes in the future iteration of SICAP. First, they felt that the employment targets need to be reduced under Goal 3 to take into account changes in the economy. It was also felt that self-employment targets are disproportionately high. Overall, greater flexibility around programme delivery was recommended, allowing for greater variation between the goals depending on local needs. Several interviewees argued for greater flexibility in community capacity building. Respondents also indicate that future provision

needs to acknowledge the fact that while unemployment numbers are falling, the individuals left behind are particularly disadvantaged and may need more intensive and long-term support.

3.3 TARGET GROUPS

The SICAP target groups include a variety of categories: children and families from disadvantaged areas; lone parents; new communities (including refugees and asylum seekers); people living in disadvantaged communities; people with disabilities; Roma; the unemployed (including those not on the Live Register); low income workers/households; Travellers; young unemployed people from disadvantaged areas, and young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (Pobal, 2017).

In the survey, PIs were asked about the extent to which they found the SICAP target groups appropriate and sufficient to cover the groups experiencing social exclusion. Only one in six agreed or strongly agreed that the target groups were sufficient. Just under a third considered the SICAP target groups appropriate 'to a great extent' while 61 per cent saw them as appropriate 'to some extent' and 8 per cent felt they were not appropriate to any great extent.

Almost all PIs indicated other groups which they felt should be targeted. A range of different groups were mentioned in the survey responses but there were some clear patterns, with four-fifths mentioning disadvantaged older people as a target group. Similarly, in the case-study interviews, many respondents were critical of the fact that older disadvantaged people were not included as a target group, given that community development should adopt a lifelong perspective.

> *SICAP has not included retired/older people. A number of participants whom we meet are in their 50s and 60s and may have left school at 13 or 14. These people are very interested in returning to learning and can be very influential positive role models for their families and communities, in terms of breaking the cycle of education disadvantage. They need to be recognised within the realm of Lifelong Learning under SICAP (PI survey response).*

Over half of the PIs also mentioned groups experiencing isolation in rural areas, including small farmers. Over a quarter suggested the need to name the LGBT community as a target group. Other responses centred on those experiencing homelessness or other housing difficulties,[22] children and young people, including

---

[22] It should be noted that the SICAP Guidelines make explicit reference to homeless people as a potential target within the overall group of 'people living in disadvantaged communities'.

those at pre-school and school stages, and other groups such as those with mental health or addiction difficulties.

3.3.1   Appropriateness of targets under SICAP

While acknowledging the number of different target categories, the interviewees from several PIs argued that the current SICAP target groups need to be revised, as demonstrated by the views of staff from Fasney:

> *You need to look at it from a holistic point of view, whereas the SICAP programme just looks at getting people into jobs and even has targets, really unrealistic targets, in terms of self-employment, but the self-employment isn't always a viable or realistic option or good option for the target groups that we are coming into contact with. …I think we as a team would kind of say that the SICAP programme needs to be changed and probably maybe needs to look at where it came from /…/ it doesn't reflect the current climate, it may reflect the climate five years ago, but it doesn't reflect the climate we're in now. I even feel some of the other funding programmes, they're dropping unemployment targets (Staff, Fasney).*

Most interviewees noted that while SICAP allows for a number of different target groups, there are currently additional groups that could benefit from inclusion in the programme-related activities. Inflexibility in the SICAP programme structure emerged as one of the biggest issues in the case-study areas, particularly in relation to the specification of targets. Unrealistic targets under a specific category were highlighted by staff from Tyne PI who argued that young people may not be ready for the pathway outlined under Goal 3:

> *I would say under Goal 3 one of the probably things that isn't very realistic I think is that we'll say there's a kind of a target there for –… the 18 and 25 to progressing the long-term unemployed, you know, into enterprise and self-employment and the segment is, the target segment is between 18 and 25 and again it's not kind of maybe that realistic, you know, setting targets for that because you could set targets all right but it's just the whole thing of the fact that people that are young people in that age category, … I'd be tending to progress them more to education at that age (Staff, Tyne).*

Several interviewees across the PIs highlighted the need to include older people in the social inclusion programme. The interviewees in Breamish noted that the programme should include older people because the concept of SICAP is lifelong learning. In the same vein, the Partnership companies in Harthope and Ettrick noted that 'over 65s' is a group that needs to be catered for in a broader sense than as part of an activation programme. It was argued by staff at Harthope that

older people can also experience disadvantage. Like in Breamish, the staff felt that social inclusion programmes should apply to all age groups:

I mean there's nine or so target groups. Obviously they're totally legitimate like. We fully support that, all of them.... I think we've made some suggestions in relation to broadening that target group like. One example -- well, the over 65s, this is an absolute disgrace like. … You just simply cannot have a social inclusion programme that excludes regardless of circumstance over 65s /…/ and this idea that you know it's a lifelong, it's the lifecycle from cradle to grave. That's what you would presume a social inclusion programme is about and here you go boom, boom, boom. So, it's an activation programme driven that way throwing in words like social inclusion (Staff, Harthope).

Older people have been excluded from this programme, I think it's a poor decision because older people, from a society point of view, you want them engaged in things be able to offer support to them, whether it is in information supports or training -- soft training supports or engagement supports is actually, financially, if you did a cost benefit analysis of it, it's financially beneficial for the State for them to be engaged, rather than sitting in their houses or in nursing homes, do you know what I mean, which is where they end up if they get too disengaged (Staff, Ettrick).

One area in particular was characterised by an ageing population and the staff of the Programme Implementer felt that older people in this rural community are a legitimate target group as many experience various dimensions of disadvantage;

If we say women's groups that aren't included as a target group, or older people. Like [this area] has an older population than average, but yet older people aren't seen as a, okay, they can be taken in under some of the other target groups, but they're not seen as a target group in their own right. Like [this area], it's 70 per cent rural and there's a significant element of that live in, you know, they're older people living either alone or, you know, they're just a couple. …I suppose that that might be seen as a shortfall in SICAP, that maybe some of the targets and setting of the targets, they're not based on … specifically local needs (LCDC, Heriot).

Previous social inclusion programmes had included older people as a target group but the roots of SICAP in the recession years led to a greater emphasis on the working-age population who were seen by policymakers as requiring greater priority. It was argued by some staff that older people have a contribution to make and should be seen as an asset in the community. In addition, it was felt that being active and engaged helps them to improve their quality of life:

Older people have so much to give on a community level and they can really activate and, you know, it's good for them, it's good for their communities, it's good for everything and then suddenly they're no longer a target group and they're constantly being supported to get involved in these things like retirement programmes and, you know, advocacy and all that and then suddenly they were dropped /…/ Like some of these people, particularly the carers now and the older carers that might be sitting at home with someone with Alzheimer's. They'll see no one for the rest of the day, you know (Staff, Fasney).

Interviewees in Breamish argued that the specification of the target groups can be restrictive since people rarely fall into only one category and in some areas disadvantage is tangible:

People very rarely, in communities of particular disadvantage, fall into exclusively one target group. /…/ So, but again, in areas like this, if you walk into [name] as an area … disadvantage permeates the community. It's palpable. So, this thing about well, they have to fit into this box. So, you know, you'll always find a box to put somebody in in the system and I suppose the negotiation of that space as well is a difficult one (Staff, Breamish).

Interviewees in Byrns PI felt that there is a difficulty in fitting some work, especially with families and children and in relation to wellbeing, within the SICAP framework:

The five kind of work areas, if that's the right way of describing them, also include children and families and health and wellbeing, both of which are, in our view, key to tackling poverty and disadvantage, but they don't find an easy space within SICAP. In fact, we've struggled to kind of make some of that happen and have been more or less successful at times to kind of it give it a place within SICAP and are fortunate that we have additional funders (Staff, Byrns).

Other interviewees working for this PI also argued that social inclusion interventions should start early, as young as pre-school in order to produce more substantial effects. They also felt that a holistic programme should place a greater emphasis on health and wellbeing.

In Harthope, some interviewees expressed concern about not being able to work with those in full-time education:

Like we come across people technically who wouldn't qualify as individuals because they're in school or even maybe who have gone to

college. But they're first generation going to college and coming from very difficult areas. They probably have supportive families and backgrounds to manage to get to that but they're very vulnerable still and they often need continuous assistance to make sure they don't fall off the horse basically like (Staff, Harthope).

The staff in this area also argued that they need to be able to work with young people at risk of becoming NEETs:

We need to be able to work with young people who are not already NEETs but who are at risk at becoming NEETs because at the moment when we're working with young they have to be actually NEETs unless they fit another target (Staff, Harthope).[23]

In addition, while one of the target groups under SICAP are people with disabilities, the staff were concerned that the current programme does not cater for mental health and addiction support which are fundamental aspects of a community development programme. As before, there seems to be some lack of information about the specifics of the SICAP guidelines among some PI staff.

The staff from the PI in Teviot argued that a bottom-up approach in identifying targets is currently not evident:

We just feel that there would be a number of groups, target groups, that aren't named. So, you know, there are some kinds of broad sweeping target groups kind of named, but I think there's value in naming target groups because it gives us more power (Staff, Teviot).

Additional groups identified by Programme Implementers included the LGBT community, people with mental health difficulties, smallholders and farm families reflective of the rurality of some counties, and disadvantaged women. Staff from several PIs argued that there should be greater flexibility to identify target groups at the local level:

There are certain areas we'd feel that would be valuable if we could work in them, but we can't because they don't fall under the issue based target groups and they're not disadvantaged areas, so we can't work with these people (Tyne, LCDC).

---

[23] It should be noted, however, that it is possible for PIs to engage with young people at risk of early school leaving, i.e. 'pre-NEETs'.

3.3.2 Identifying target groups and establishing contact

All PIs used a variety of means in identifying target groups and establishing contact with marginalised individuals and groups. In Heriot, staff had carried out a socio-economic analysis, based on the Census and some local data, and so identified the key priorities to be addressed in the area:

> *We looked at the key data for the county in relation to unemployment, early school leaving, things like that. And, indeed, you know, that shaped to a fairly large extent the type of target groups that we identified with during the three-year period (Staff, Heriot).*

In the same vein, in Byrns, groups are identified on the basis of need locally which takes account of Census data and knowledge on the ground. An extensive consultation process to identify targets was also carried out in Tyne:

> *As part of devising the SICAP programme tender submission, we undertook an extensive consultation process with the target groups, communities, agencies and stakeholders in the county. The tender submitted was based on the results of this consultative process (Staff, Tyne).*

A staff member in Heriot argued that it is important to understand the target groups. Acknowledging this, the PI is using a profiling tool 'for digging into the issues'. The interviewee noted that individuals often have multiple needs and gaining more information about these needs helps them to understand which interventions would benefit the individual the most:

> *So, there's a little board almost like an abacus you know with a little sliding marker that goes from one side of the board to the other and the board is numbered from nought to 10 across the top and down the side there is a list of ten questions. So, for example one of the questions would be, 'How happy are you with your current work situation?' And you can give yourself zero if you're very unhappy or 10 if you're very happy. Now, most of the people will be saying, 'I'm not working. I'm unemployed.' And then we will say to them, 'Was it ever higher than that? Was there a time you were ever happier?' And they'll go, 'I did have job once. I was an eight.' 'And what was life like then? How did you feel about that?' So, they open up a little on that but then it also moves on down through their education, their family relationships, their drug, alcohol dependency, their housing situation (Staff, Heriot).*

Some interviewees indicated strong involvement of the local LCDC in discussing target groups:

> *The LCDC would definitely have an opinion on that, you know, and we would ask questions, you know, linked to -- because Pobal would pick up on that, you know, 'Are you working with Roma, are you working with Travellers?' So, we would have those discussions inside the LCDC and we would discuss those kind of issues, you know, particularly around hard to reach groups (LCDC, Ettrick).*

All case-study areas mentioned a combination of approaches in establishing contact with target groups. While some individuals are referred to the company, others are self-referrals or identified and contacted by the PI staff.

> *A lot of it would be through referrals. So, the Department of Social Protection would send us, you know, they would meet the people and they would either send them directly to us, or they would hear about it through an information session. A lot of the various different organisations who we work with in the area, /.../, we would obviously try to provide an integrated service and we may have them perhaps and then citizens information. Any of the local organisations. /.../ Yes, people who would have been in years ago and they're -- you know, we would have developed a fair reputation over the years. So, if you are with a friend and they say, 'I'm thinking of doing this.' 'Well, then go and talk to [name] about it, you know, they would be able to give you a hand.' So, there is a certain element of self-referral. Generations of the same family actually would often enough come into us. So, you see the same issues running through families. So, say a dad might have come in a couple of years ago and found that he had a certain amount of success on the scheme and a couple of years later, the son may come in and set up a business as well. /.../ We would get a lot of referrals as well from [the ETB] from the adult guiding service, in terms of Goal 2 and continuing education work and indeed, the other work, as well as the DSP case officers, would refer into us (Staff, Linhope).*

Staff across the PIs noted that establishing contact with individuals is not always easy; one PI saw difficulties in engaging new communities as relating to their lack of English language proficiency:

> *The Eastern European, by and large, single men that are working they are living in a very strange parallel universe. They're not integrating to any large extent /.../ Here, I've tried the Polish centre thing, it doesn't work. Why? Because they're talking on the Skype (Staff, Fasney).*

PI staff saw their presence locally as giving them additional insights into the needs of local groups than more centrally-based statutory organisations might have:

They [professionals from a statutory organisation] felt that there wasn't a need, that those types of women weren't there anymore and I just kind of looked and thought, 'This is the problem, ye are not on the ground seeing this clientele.' They actually are there, there are women at home who've been out of work for so long because they couldn't afford childcare and so it was easier to take a career break or just give up whatever job they had and now their kids are reared and to try and get back into the workforce is quite hard and there's a whole personal development side of things there as well, it might take them a long time before they're ready to come back sometimes, or it could the likes of old mothers, who've been out for however many years and they want to maybe get back into part time, or whatever it might be and statutory agencies, they were just looking at me, they didn't really think there was an issue with that age group of women /.../ they wouldn't be coming into contact with people like that, so they didn't see that issue arising in the area of work, so they didn't think there was a need (Staff, Fasney).

3.3.3   Quantitative targets and support from other programmes

Most case-study areas expressed criticism about the emphasis on quantitative as opposed to qualitative reporting and the focus on numbers and targets*:*

That would be kind of the big issue for us, is the qualitative versus quantitative reporting, you know, the number games and that we're trying to kind of push people through a door and tick box, you know, get the numbers, those high numbers to be achieved. So, sometimes that you want to be able to give the people, individuals a lot more attention than you actually physically can because you need to kind of get the next person in to get -- you know, to be reaching your targets (Staff, Fasney).

It's because of the level of focus that's on numbers and targets, it's purely about numbers. You rarely actually hear a mention of a target group member. It's about 700 here and 200 there and why haven't you -- and then the Sword of Damocles hanging over the local development company financially is just one of the most ridiculous things ever, because this is a social programme, it's not a commercial programme (Staff, Heriot).

As SICAP is seen as providing only limited funding, Programme Implementers that have historically established service provision to disadvantaged communities have sought help from other programmes in meeting SICAP targets. Some PI staff do not see SICAP as a standalone programme for tackling disadvantage, but, instead, view it in the context of other activities undertaken by the Programme Implementer:

SICAP is not a standalone programme, it doesn't pay for itself. Like if it wasn't for, like, the second programme that I would manage would be an enterprise training programme called Skillnet. And with that training programme, we can deliver an awful lot of business training, so it's all related to progressing a business and getting it up and going and your marketing and your strategies and all that kind of thing. And that allows them to be sustainable, but through SICAP, we've none of those options to give them. So, without the supplementary programmes, we've had to lever in additional programmes in order to make SICAP sustainable. SICAP is being carried by other programmes and it has for years. And if we didn't have those other programmes, we wouldn't be able to hit the targets (Staff, Fasney).

Having established a network of support programmes and interventions, funding from various sources was seen to enable assisting disadvantaged individuals and groups. Most Programme Implementers highlighted the important role leverage funding plays in providing services in local communities. An interviewee in Teviot argued that clarity is needed regarding the funding approach:

If you're looking for a plan for the future I would say the government needs to go back to a core funding model, not an implementing model in the sense of this. Or if it is an implementing model, part of what we're contracted to do is to leverage money from elsewhere.

3.4   CONCLUSIONS

The chapter has explored the results from the survey of PI CEOs and interviews with participants in ten case-study areas focussing on their perceptions on SICAP goals and target groups. The analysis of the data has shown that while there was broad satisfaction with the three goals, views were mixed regarding the extent to which addressing each goal was feasible in the case-study areas. Furthermore, while the views were more positive regarding education and employment, the participants criticised the narrow approach taken regarding community development in the current SICAP programme. Caseload seemed to matter, with PIs with higher caseload being more critical of the current goals, especially in relation to strengthening communities. In addition, the results show that there is a need for the programme to reflect recent changes in Irish economy whereby the number of unemployed has fallen; at the same time, the individuals not engaged with the labour market tend to present multiple needs and are likely to require more intensive interventions. It was also suggested by some interviewees that rather than having separate goals, the programme should approach goals in a more holistic way, focussing on broader community development and addressing the needs of individuals across different spheres such as education, employment and so on within this framework. There was consensus among the interviewees regarding the need for flexibility around programme delivery to reflect local needs

and area characteristics. The need for flexibility was also highlighted in the context of the existing target groups. While the current target groups include a number of different categories, some interviewees noted that these do not necessarily cover the groups in need of support in their local areas, such as disadvantaged older people and those in remote rural areas. Unrealistic targets set without consultation were mentioned by several interviewees, in particular regarding self-employment of the under 25s. Furthermore, it was argued that individuals rarely fall into discrete categories; hence greater flexibility is needed as well as more decision-making capacity regarding identifying target groups and target setting at local level.

CHAPTER 4

## Governance and funding

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Aimed at promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) operates through links between local, regional and national engagement. At national level, the programme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with Pobal acting as its nominated representative in overseeing programme and operational requirements. At local level, the programme is led by Local and Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and delivered by 45 Programme Implementers (PIs) across 51 Lots. This chapter draws on the survey of PIs as well as in-depth interviews with PI staff, LCDC representatives and policy stakeholders to explore perceptions of SICAP governance and funding structures. The chapter begins by looking at the roles of the different players in the system before looking at views on current funding levels.

4.2   GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING STRUCTURE

4.2.1   Programme implementers – negotiating a new role under SICAP

In general terms, the role of Programme Implementers is co-ordination and implementation of programmes, interventions and projects and management of their activities. With regard to SICAP, the PIs have oversight of any issues arising from managing the programme. In order to be awarded a contract, the PIs need to demonstrate that they have staff and expertise in place in order to fulfil the programme requirements. PIs report directly to the LCDC on actions, targets and financial reporting. SICAP is often one of many programmes in which the Programme Implementers are involved. The PI Board of Management ensures that the company is effectively run ensuring that all major decisions, policies and procedures that affect the company are discussed at Board meetings and approved by the Board.

FIGURE 4.1   PROPORTION OF PI CEOS WHO AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT 'I AM CLEAR ABOUT THE PURPOSE, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS (PIS)' (%)
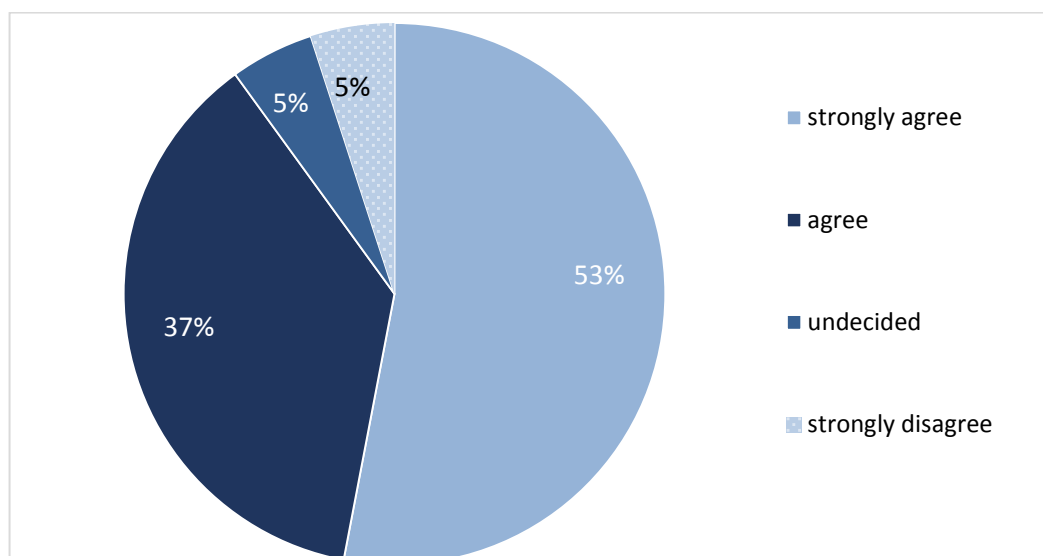
Source: PI CEO questionnaire.

The survey of PI CEOs indicated that an overall majority felt that they were clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Programme Implementers (53 per cent strongly agreed; 37 per cent agreed), as shown in Figure 4.1. However, a small number of respondents were undecided or disagreed with the statement. Although a contract governs the relationship between the LCDCs and PIs, stating what is expected of the PIs, the findings seem to indicate that further clarification of the role may be needed in the Guidelines.

The topic was later followed up in face-to-face interviews with PI CEOs. Taken together, the responses indicated that while the PIs fulfilled their co-ordinating role, many endeavoured to maintain the operating structure that they had developed previously in the local areas. The interviews conducted in the case-study areas indicated that some PIs have difficulties around negotiating the new role of Local Development Companies within the framework of SICAP with their previous role. Over time the companies had developed a specific profile and had set up a structure to support local individuals and groups. Under SICAP their role is perceived to be narrower, that of a co-ordinator. In one case-study area that is characterised by a general lack of other providers, this was seen to complicate provision of services to disadvantaged individuals and communities:

> *For a long time, Pobal would say, 'But you're not there to do things, you're becoming a service provider, you shouldn't be service provider, you're there to co-ordinate the other services. You need to, you know, talk to the others, see what they have, but how can you bring…' -- and I said, 'Right, we don't have an LES, we don't have a jobs club, so I've no-one to co-ordinate anything with.' /…/ But not looking at rural areas*

where you don't have things to go on yet. /…/ You have to create the
services (Staff, Fasney).

In the same vein, a staff member in Teviot observed that the transition from providing various support services to programme implementers whose main role is the co-ordination of existing services had been difficult, arguing that there is little recognition of the additional work done by the PIs in meeting the needs of the local population:

The responsibility of the board of [Teviot] Partnership is still as great as it
ever was in trying to employ staff to deliver a whole range of
programmes and still meeting its original mission statement /…/ We
were companies established to do a certain role. It was to really
concentrate on local areas and trying to meet local needs and use a
particular budget to springboard the meeting of that need. Now, we've
got a function of being the implementers of that particular programme.
And the departments only ever look at [this side of] us. 'So, I'm giving you
this money to do that piece. I don't want to know what else you're doing.
And I'm giving you that money to do this.' Whereas originally the board
always approached it in a holistic [way] (Staff, Teviot).

4.2.2   Role of the CEO and PI Board

In order to explore issues pertaining to governance and operating structures, interviews were conducted with PI CEOs, PI Chairpersons, and LCDC Chief Officers. The interviews indicated that the role of a PI CEO is varied, including overseeing the day-to-day operation of the organisation and engagement with the PI Board. The role of the PI Board is seen as setting policy in combating disadvantage in the area as well as having an overall oversight of finances and administration and engagement with the representatives from various agencies in the area:

My role is to work and carry out the sort of the day-to-day operations of
the company or lead on that on behalf of the board. The board's job is to
set policy, to have oversight of all the finance and admin at a particular
level and also as a forum to bring together, based on how the board is
constituted, based on the representation from various sectors (Staff
member, Breamish).

In most cases, the PI CEOs are also on the boards of LCDCs.

The Boards aim to ensure that the programmes introduced under SICAP are meaningful and reflect local needs:

The board obviously is to oversee, you know, the aim and objectives of
what we're about and try and ensure that, you know, the programmes

that we're putting on, that they're meaningful and they're responsive to local needs (Staff, Breamish).

A staff member in Teviot observed that the remit of the Board is broader than just delivering SICAP:

[The area] partnership is not just about SICAP or it's not just about one programme, it's about a whole range of different things that come in and give added value to it.

He felt that the biggest loss under the new framework is the loss of statutory agencies on the PI Board that had real decision-making capacity:

In the old days, having the Department of Social Protection sitting at the table, … an example I would give is someone brought a case to us of a girl who was disabled and she wanted to get to college but there was a problem with access and all of that. And the person from DSP said, 'We have a fund, I'll sort that out.' So we suddenly had a decision-maker who was there to say, 'Right, that's sorted', and we had no input financially. The key decision-maker was able to say, 'We'll sort that for that girl to go to college.' We don't have that now. SICAP is the only thing out there (Staff, Teviot).

In some areas, the Programme Implementers have a very broad representation on the Board. The Boards are structured so that the Board members are nominated by various stakeholders such as state agencies, social partners, community and voluntary sector representatives. Having a broad representation on the Board was generally seen as an asset: 'that there is a broad sense of a broad church of opinion because it's very, very important, and particularly with SICAP' (Staff, Tyne).

The CEO of Avon observed that while they have a broad representation on the Board, it is proving increasingly difficult to engage members from the agencies due to limited capacity:

We have a bit of a deficiency on the agency side. It's proving more and more difficult over time to keep people from the agencies on the Board. /…/ I think the reason is two-fold. One, they are genuinely stretched in terms of being asked to sit on bodies like this all the time, and two, the advent of the Local Community Development Committees has been the chosen avenue by the State for agencies to be represented in these kinds of forums. So, that means that they … don't consider it as important as it was to be on boards like ours (Staff, Avon).

The PI Boards meet regularly (mostly monthly), although the number of times tends to vary somewhat between PIs. Most CEOs in the case-study areas were positive about the support they received from the PI Board, while acknowledging that some Board members are more involved than others. It was argued that it is difficult at times to ensure good attendance at Board meetings.

The PIs have also set up Board sub-committees with a remit to address specific issues (e.g. finance). It was felt that in this way the companies operate more efficiently:

We have working groups, so we have community development working group, youth and education, employment and training, enterprise and we kind of look and go, 'Look, this is how much money we have this year.' We'll try and see if we can pull money in from somewhere else, that's what we're trying to do stuff now with Tusla and things down the line (Staff, Fasney).

In Byrns the Board has four sub-committees: internal audit; steering group; community development advisory group; and a committee dealing with Tús.[24] The sub-committees are seen as more hands on, dealing with the minutiae of the finances, for example, while the focus of the board is on overall policy. In case of another Programme Implementer the structure of the organisation, including SICAP, is modelled around themes. Each of these has regular team meetings and their own line management structures. The managers of each thematic area constitute the senior management team who meet weekly. As with the issue of lot size, this makes it difficult for the CEO to know all the staff and the issues arising.

---

[24] The Tús initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people throughout Ireland. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas. The Tús initiative is managed by local development companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, which has overall responsibility for the scheme.

FIGURE 4.2   EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN DECIDING WHICH SUPPORTS OR INITIATIVES ARE OFFERED UNDER SICAP IN THE LOCAL AREA (%)
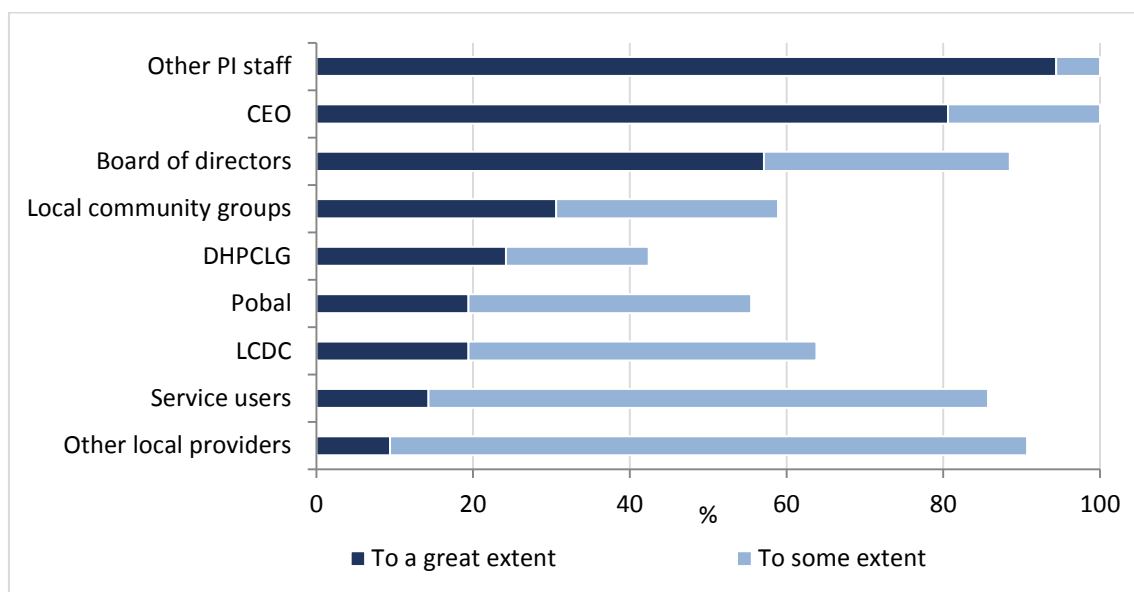
Source: PI CEO questionnaire.
Note: The respondents could select more than one option.

In the survey, PIs were asked about the relative involvement of different groups and individuals (i.e. PI CEO, PI staff, Board of Directors of PI, LCDC, Pobal, the Department, local community groups, service users and other local providers) in deciding on the supports or initiatives to be offered under SICAP in their area. Figure 4.2 indicates that multiple groups were involved in such decisions, at least to some extent. The involvement of the Department of Rural and Community Development (at the time of the survey, the DHPLG) – the funders of the SICAP programme – was acknowledged by just above 40 per cent of the PIs. In comparison, Pobal was perceived to be more involved by the respondents, a finding that is somewhat surprising considering the limited direct contact Pobal has with the Programme Implementers. The CEO and staff were seen as playing the most significant role in such decision-making but the Board of Directors of the Programme Implementers was seen as involved to a great extent in over half of cases. Boards had somewhat greater involvement in larger PIs, that is, those with larger caseloads. There appeared to be variation in the extent to which the LCDC was seen as involved in such decision-making, with a fifth of PIs stating they were involved to a great extent while over a third reported they were involved 'not to any great extent' or 'not at all'. Overall, LCDCs were perceived to have less decision-making capacity compared to the Department or Pobal. The vast majority of PIs reported some involvement in decision-making by service users and other local providers, with over half describing local community groups as involved in this process.

One staff member felt that since the introduction of LCDCs and the resulting reduction of decision-making capacity at local level, the PI Boards have lost their identity:

And I think what has happened is there's an erosion of the boards at the local community development level. And if you think of what happened with the CDPs were merged in, the structures were not allowed to absorb the members of those, so there was a disenfranchisement of close communities in that process. And now everything has moved out to the LCDC (Staff member, Teviot).

Loss of identity and decision-making power was associated with increasing difficulties in engaging people:

I mean, the introduction of the LCDCs and the additional layer at county level in terms of the contract with the SICAP being with the LCDC … the LCDC is the local action group and we are the implementers under that. So, the decision-making capacity that the Board had in the past has diminished and that means that the interest of the members is also diminished (Staff, Avon).

While the PI CEO generally makes the executive decisions, these are in line with the recommendations given by the Board:

So if it comes here to me I make executive decisions, but it's my board has already given me the parameters to make calls. And if it starts to deviate outside of those parameters I go back (Staff member, Linhope).

Several staff members argued that the PIs are limited in their decision-making capacity regarding the best approach at local level to combat disadvantage and social exclusion. They felt that more decision-making power should be given to local organisations:

So for instance I should be able to go and the LCDC should be able to turn around say, 'SICAP should be able to meet these needs in [area] because we don't want you to concentrate on youth or activation. We want you to concentrate on community, older people, LGBT' whatever it is. And that scope, if you like, the overall breadth of the target groups is fine and the overall focus is fine. It's how you tweak. It's how you get that balance between what the national can hold accountable and what the local can say is the real need. Now, there is a problem then about who decides what all that is, but I think the scope is in it to be able to do that (Staff, Teviot).

4.2.3 Interaction with LCDC and Pobal

Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) have now been established on a statutory basis in all 31 local authorities with an aim to establishing a more co-ordinated and joined-up approach to local/community development at local level. In the survey, around two-thirds of PIs felt they were clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the LCDC. Four in ten felt that there were strong links between SICAP and other LCDC initiatives under the Local Economic and Community Plan.[25] Variation was evident in the frequency with which the PI CEO met with the LCDC, with two-thirds having six or more meetings in the last year, including over a fifth that had ten or more such meetings. Four in ten PIs were very satisfied with the number of meetings while another four in ten described themselves as satisfied. Those who had more meetings tended to be more satisfied with meeting frequency, though the small number who described themselves as 'not sure' tended to have a significant number of meetings. Meetings were more frequent where there was a single PI in the LCDC (an average of 7.2 compared with 5 where an LCDC worked with multiple PIs). No clear-cut relationship was found between the number of meetings and perceptions of the purpose of the LCDC and the links with other LCDC initiatives.

FIGURE 4.3   SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS IN MANAGING SICAP DELIVERY (%)
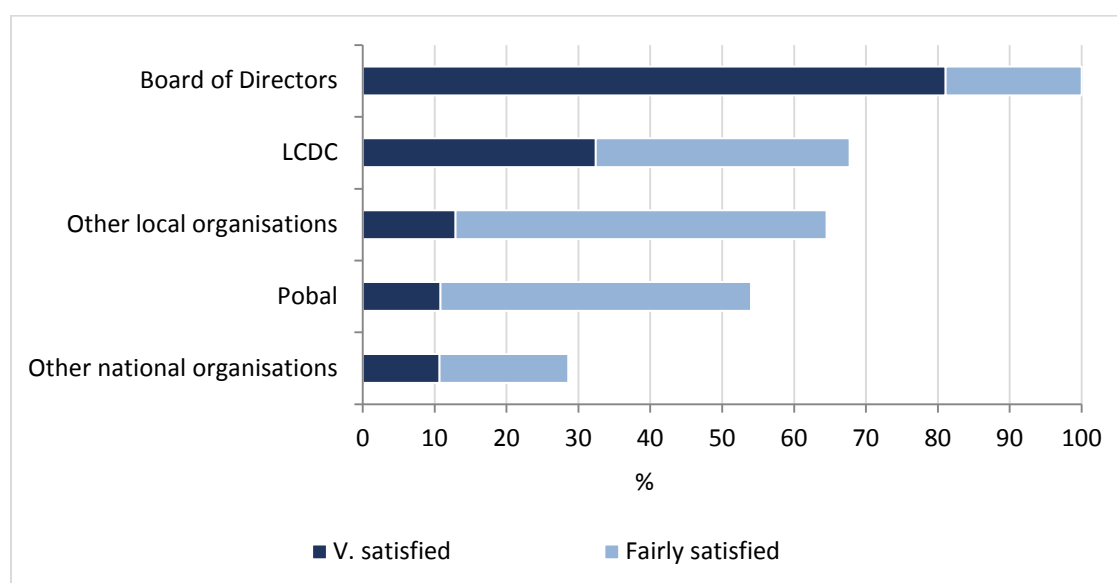
Source: PI CEO questionnaire.

PIs were asked about their satisfaction with the support from different groups in overseeing or managing SICAP delivery (Figure 4.3). All were very or fairly satisfied

---

[25]   The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

with the PI Board of Directors. Over half were very or fairly satisfied with the LCDC and other local organisations while around half were satisfied with Pobal. The latter pattern reflects reduced contact between Pobal and the PIs under SICAP, with Pobal no longer a contract holder but this role moving to the LCDCs. Perceived satisfaction with the contribution of other national organisations was much lower, but it should be noted that over half reported they were 'not sure' about their satisfaction with this support. This response therefore appears to echo stakeholder views on the lack of integration at national level of policies to counter social exclusion.

Considering the role LCDCs play in the provision of SICAP, interviews were conducted with Chief Officers (CO) in the case-study areas. The CO of LCDCs holds a senior management role in the organisation which involves management across multiple areas under the broad umbrella of community development. This covers areas such as social inclusion, sports partnership, the LEADER programme, youth development, and the local economic and community plan to name but a few. The role of the CO is to ensure that the LCDC meets its function. According to one LCDC CO, the role does not carry decision-making capacity as only members of the board can make decisions:

> *I'm the Chief Officer, but I'm not a member of the LCDC and the members make the decisions. Having said that, obviously I would produce papers, draft policies or, you know, deal with stuff that comes to me.*

The participants representing LCDCs noted that SICAP is a regular item on the agenda of their meetings. One LCDC Chief Officer noted that SICAP makes up about 15-20 per cent of LCDC activities in the area. Some LCDC Boards have entrusted most SICAP-related issues to a sub-committee that includes people with expertise in the social inclusion area. The sub-committees meet as required, especially at the time when interim reports or tenders from PIs are to be considered:

> *We had a sub-committee then who looked at the tenders and worked through all of that process with us and then obviously, SICAP is regularly on the agenda for updates from ourselves, from the kind of the running -- the overseeing of the programme and from the implementing partners as well, who do updates on various programmes and various updates on what they're about, through the programme, you know. Then we had the midterm review and the end of year review and the work plan for the following year and all of that. So, it is a fairly regular item on our agendas throughout the year, you know (LCDC, Avon).*

> *We have set up an equality subgroup of the LCDC. It used to be called the social inclusion measures group in other areas, but we've reignited that.*

> /…/ [While] it doesn't have any particular oversight or role in the delivery
> of SICAP, it does bring the work of SICAP to a wider audience and it does
> help with that improved perception of what is being delivered, not just by
> SICAP but by what others around the table are delivering as well (LCDC,
> Heriot).

The membership of LCDCs is varied, consisting of local authority elected members
and officials; State and non-State local development agencies; community and
voluntary organisations; and other representatives of civil society, including
business interests, farming interests, etc. The representative of one LCDC also
noted that at times it is challenging to maintain the commitment of a large group
of members:

> I suppose, in terms of the LCDC itself and not just in SICAP, but you know,
> it can be challenging at times to maintain the commitment of some of
> the 17 members, we have a 17 member committee on an ongoing basis,
> to its level of meetings. Maybe some people have said to me that
> monthly meetings are too much, but that remains to be seen and
> especially now with the LEADER local action group meetings also taking
> place almost on a monthly basis, maybe it's time to revisit that (LCDC,
> Heriot).

It was evident from the interviews that some LCDCs endeavoured to keep
themselves informed of the broader work undertaken by the PIs. While the LCDCs
get various reports from the Programme Implementers, one LCDC representative
argued that having a presentation from a PI gives the Board a better
understanding what the issues on the ground are:

> We would have got our implementer to do a full presentation on SICAP
> and what it was about and what they were delivering last year and the
> members found that very useful. In terms of, you know, what's
> happening practically on the ground, it's all very well looking at the KPIs
> and looking at the report and we have a sub-committee who does that.
> So you wouldn't have the full LCDC looking at all the stuff that comes in,
> in terms of the annual and midterm reviews, but the fact that the
> programme implementer gave a full presentation on what they're doing
> and what the results are on the ground was very useful (LCDC, Tyne).

In general, LCDC boards were seen as having a high-level view of SICAP activity
rather than having a detailed knowledge of the minutiae of its operation:

> They'd know the bigger, broader kind of stuff, like the budgets. The
> targets. The numbers, the numbers. The KPIs, the main drivers. They'd

kind of be aware of the target groups they should be going after, but the day-to-day detail of it, no (LCDC, Byrns).

It was evident that time is needed for PIs to get used to the new reporting structure. One PI staff member felt that the LCDCs may not have the same level of investment in addressing the needs of local population as the PIs:

I think as well it's the members don't feel the same way invested in the same way as they would have maybe say if they were on our Board. There isn't the same level of personal commitment I think. I think that it's looked upon maybe tokenism is too strong but it's a little bit in that direction (Staff, Avon).

In general, the PIs were aware of the rationale behind setting up the LCDCs in order to increase the role of the local authority in identifying and meeting needs at a local level. Contact with the LCDC is generally through the Chief Officer. However, it was also acknowledged that for this to work, the LCDCs should have greater decision-making power:

So, I would agree with that in principle and that's why then the SICAP, the control of SICAP, control with a very small C, was given out to LCDCs in each area. However, our experience is and I think this is pretty much replicated around the country is -- and we'd have a good relationship with our LCDC and we'd meet and we'd talk about the issues /…/ But the LCDC don't have the authority to make those changes because they are just almost like an administrator, another administrator on behalf of Pobal. They go back to Pobal who say, 'In [area] we want to do, and this and this, can we change it?' And Pobal will quote the rule book and go, 'No, you can't,' and then LCDC [gets back to us] (Staff, Ettrick).

Interestingly, in Ettrick another staff member felt that in order to avoid a conflict of interest, determining objectives for the programme should not rest with the Programme Implementer. At the same time, it is essential to consider the needs of the local community:

I think it's perfectly legitimate that we wouldn't determine the objectives. There would be a clear potential for conflict. I would welcome the LCDC doing that, with all the worries that I would have about it. /…/ But I think, in developing the priorities and you weren't seeing them locally, I would think there should be a much stronger local goal and I can't see anywhere else that they would be other than the LCDC. I think that we should obviously have a contribution to it. But I think it's perfectly reasonable that we wouldn't determine it; that that wouldn't, I think, be acceptable at all, that we would be -- giving us a blank cheque

so we could go off and indulge ourselves. So, I can't see where else it would be (Staff, Ettrick).

Having LCDCs determining objectives for the programme potentially has both advantages and disadvantages. The LCDCs are in a good position, through the members on the Board, to have a good overview of local needs and agencies in the field who are implementing interventions. On the other hand, LCDCs may also be too far removed from the local communities to see where the actual needs lie. Indeed, it was clear from the interviews with LCDCs that they were heavily reliant on PI CEOs as a conduit of information on how SICAP was operating on the ground and any challenges arising. In determining programme objectives at LCDC level, good communication between Programme Implementers and the LCDC is therefore seen as essential. Thus, the LCDC representative in Fasney felt that:

Although, you know, SICAP is a national programme, they all do things slightly differently, so they all have their own established types of programmes which will deliver the targets, but will deliver them in slightly different ways. So they all have their own approach. So I'd say designing the programme, on the ground, it would be the development companies who would be best placed to do that.

In Breamish a staff member commented on increasing knowledge and capacity on the part of LCDC staff. She is in favour of decentralisation to the local level. However, she highlights an inconsistency regarding whether the LCDC or Pobal are responsible for issuing instructions/guidelines. The role of the LCDC is seen as emergent, as it is at an early stage of development: 'It's a bit like a baby, can't walk. You know, it needs to learn its way in life' (Staff member, Breamish). According to her, there is considerable potential for a more joined-up approach and lack of duplication at local level. However, more clarity is needed: 'So more clarity about the systems and procedures from each of them' (Staff, Breamish).

Across the PIs there seemed to be dissatisfaction with losing a direct link with Pobal:

The feedback from Pobal really no longer exists because that's all channelled through the LCDC which is another particular problem. You know, for 20 odd years we lifted the phone to Pobal and we got technical advice or we had interaction. We could share case studies, et cetera. That's gone completely now (Staff member, Heriot).

These statements seem to reflect the ambiguity associated with the 'transition period' from one reporting structure to another, with some PI staff feeling unsure of the role of LCDCs. Under the new governance structure, Pobal is intended to

have limited direct contact with the Programme Implementers. These contacts are mostly to do with IRIS-related issues, registration for events or setting up verification visits.

In the same vein, a staff member in Byrns felt there was a lack of clarity in the role of the LCDC and its role vis-à-vis Pobal:

> *The communications gap is enormous. So what happens is, Pobal will write to us when they want to, right. It's not fair. I don't mean to be blaming Pobal on this, but the way the system is … That some individual will write to me and say, '[Name] We're doing a seminar on such and such and such, would you contribute with that seminar?' Or they wrote to us about the audit, right. On another occasion they won't write to me, they'll write to the LCDC and they'll tell the LCDC to contact me to let me know the contents of the letter. I'm sort of sitting there and I'm part of the LCDC as well, so sometimes I'm getting information that I wouldn't get if I was a standalone CEO. … So we have an arrangement with LCDC. Every piece of correspondence on SICAP that I get from Pobal, I copy them straight away and they copy us, so we're in the picture (Staff, Byrns).*

The main problem with the new reporting structure is seen by some Programme Implementers to lie in a lack of clarity about the appropriate line of communication, resulting in 'too many layers to be gone through' (Staff member, Heriot). Another staff member in Heriot noted that he does not 'really know who we're supposed to go through you know to tell you the truth'. He argued that previously the operating system was simpler with PIs having a direct link with POBAL who 'were on hand to give training and advice and all that and that was the way it worked'. A staff member from Byrns noted that the company was 'not supposed to' have direct contact with Pobal, given their contract was with the LCDC, but reported a good deal of direct contact over issues relating to IRIS.

The LCDCs seem to be aware of the frustration Programme Implementers feel with the introduction of a new layer of reporting, but felt that information needs to be shared at local level:

> *So, I'm happy with the level of contact and service that Pobal are providing to me in particular in relation to this. I suppose sometimes the programme implementer feels a bit frustrated that they need to come through me with any of their queries. I understand why that is so, because I need to be kept in the loop on it as well. I need to be kept informed and advised on any queries that are going through, but sometimes they can feel a little bit frustrated by that (LCDC, Monoghan).*

LCDCs themselves would like to have more decision-making power:

I definitely think now, with the experience we've had today, that we would feel that we should have more autonomy and that doesn't mean that we want to operate with no reference to what happens at central governance; that's not true at all. It's good to be part of, you know, the bigger picture (LCDC, Ettrick).

Another Chief Officer reported frustration on the part of board members regarding the fact that SICAP targets had already been put in place: 'So they did often say, like, 'What are we here for?' They just had to sign off. The targets were set, money was set. Basically rubber stamp everything like' (LCDC, Breamish).

This respondent also argued that they would not like to be seen only as programme enforcers:

I think the issue with the remedies has highlighted that effectively, you're there kind of with the whip to implement the contract and have all of the responsibility around that, but you actually have no independent decision-making autonomy, you know, around the contract, you know, implementation, I suppose. /.../ about the remedies and the fact that they were applied and now it's left a sour taste in the mouth -- sorry. It's left a sour taste in the mouth of the people that we're dealing with ... the PIs, because they realise that we have no way of sorting this out for them (LCDC, Breamish).

As noted before, the LCDCs were established on a statutory basis under the Local Government Act and the aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement an integrated approach to local and community development by the means of the six-year local economic and community plan. It oversees a number of local interventions and initiatives, including SICAP. In some cases LCDCs felt that they should have more involvement in various areas including target setting:

I mean I've said this at meetings with Pobal and the Department that in a sense, each LCDC for its own area should set targets, within certain parameters obviously, and then the national targets should be the sum of those, rather than setting a national target and subdividing it per LCDC (LCDC, Ettrick).

This interviewee argued that the approach 'should be more bottom up than top down', at the same time giving recognition to the aims of the national programme.

In the same vein, another LCDC representative argued for more involvement:

> *I would, well, I suppose locally, I think we should be doing more on the ground audits and meeting SICAP recipients and, you know, getting their views in terms of how will that programme -- how is the programme working for them. So, I think we should... have more of an auditing role on the programme, I suppose, and maybe if we're told we have to do it, we might be better at doing it (Tyne, LCDC).*

Some LCDCs were also criticised for not providing sufficient feedback to the Partnership companies: 'All of that comes directly through the LCDC, or more precisely, through the Chief Officer. So, that's the first point. I suppose, in terms of any other feedback, no, we don't get any other feedback from our LCDC. The only feedback we get is, 'How are you doing against your targets?' when we report and are you going to have a financial penalty or not.' Another challenge was identified by a staff member who reported that there was a problematic shift in relationships between PIs and LCDCs in other areas:

> *The partnership companies have raised the fact that the LCDCs are made up of people who used to be their partners in developing work and now they're their overseers in the developing work. Now, that's a big problem (Staff, Harthope).*

LCDCs engage with PIs mostly through discussion of proposed programmes and interventions, but can sometimes also provide advice on specific matters:

> *We would question sometimes the validity of some programmes or, you know, what's that programme going to achieve and that, you know, as part of our reviews (LCDC, Tyne).*

> *Sometimes, you know, with Travellers, we have a small number of Travellers and it can be difficult to get them to engage. But we have suggested some different approaches for working with the Travellers and they have taken them on board and tried to use them. Because we would be working closely with some Traveller groups here in the Council as well (LCDC, Tyne).*

In some of the case-study interviews, PIs commented on the number of iterations of the SICAP guideline document over a short period of time. The staff in Byrns were critical of the number of iterations of the guidelines issued by Pobal:

> *We were submitting our annual plan and I can't remember the date. It could have been the 10th December, right, which was a Monday, at close*

of business. Monday morning at 11 o'clock, a new set of guidelines comes out that has an impact on your annual plan. I mean, what sort of nonsense is this? (Staff, Byrns).

Satisfaction with the guidelines was somewhat higher among PIs in the most deprived areas and among those with the smallest caseload and the highest budget-to-caseload ratio.

4.2.4 Reporting structures

The vast majority (92 per cent) of PIs reported that regular monitoring and assessment of programme implementation was taking place. However, only a quarter felt they had a say in deciding the targets set under SICAP. Furthermore, only a small minority – one in six – felt that these targets were flexible enough to reflect changing circumstances. PIs serving less deprived communities were somewhat more positive about flexibility in targeting while those with the highest caseload were least positive. In total, 71 per cent of PIs reported difficulty in meeting targets around education and lifelong learning participation. Those serving a less deprived client group tended to report fewer difficulties in meeting these targets. Sixty-one per cent of PIs reported difficulty in meeting employment support targets, while a similar proportion (58 per cent) reported difficulty in meeting the targets set under the goal of strengthening local communities.

Reporting emerged as a major theme from the interviews with participants in the case-study areas. In some cases the reporting system was criticised in terms of the removal of the direct link with Pobal as the company previously had been supportive:

In the way SICAP has been set up, like, I don't know it's conducive to an effective sort of reporting type system. I mean, the very fact that, like, Pobal, and we have had many tos and fros with Pobal, but our relationship with Pobal would be a good working relationship. It's unfortunate, I think, that they have been removed from the direct contact /.../ obviously as we did in the past, like I presume the department were always the governing sort of entity. But on a technical and day-to-day basis, clearly it seems to me to make more sense that if there are issues, then you need to be dealing directly with how those issues are being interpreted, or being identified in the first instance, rather than having this sort of scenic route to that, you know? So ... I think there's something that needs to be looked at (Staff, Linhope).

This quote seems to indicate that the Programme Implementers are undergoing a transition period and getting used to the new reporting structure. While the company sees the need for oversight and accountability, there is an issue of what

is being measured and how, with a focus on quantitative rather than qualitative measures:

> *We have no problem reporting, I mean, and we have no problem in the fact that there should be oversight of a programme. Like, you know, it's money that's being spent, it's public money that's being spent, so absolutely, and we also would accept that, to some extent, it's the security if the programme is being measured. I mean, that's a good thing, because there's too many people out there that would probably say that programmes like this are only a waste of money. So, it's good that there is some level of measurement (Staff, Linhope).*

Most interviewees commented on an overreliance on quantitative measures in reporting:

> *That would be kind of the big issue for us, is the qualitative versus quantitative reporting, you know, the number games and that we're trying to kind of push people through a door and tick box, you know, get the numbers, those high numbers to be achieved. So, sometimes that you want to be able to give the people, individuals a lot more attention than you actually physically can because you need to kind of get the next person in to get -- you know, to be reaching your targets (Staff, Fasney).*

The interviewees argued that quantitative reporting is not conveying the whole picture of various initiatives and supports that are provided and not giving the evaluators the overall picture.

Reporting and paperwork are seen as too onerous and diverting time from core activities:

> *Like you couldn't possibly have designed a system that's more poor value for money. I even said to them, 'Why don't you add up all the time everyone spends inputting stuff on IRIS, writing the forms, making a hard copy file and a soft on IRIS, tracking that, us reporting, time we spent meeting about IRIS targets?'. … More and more time is being taken away from front line services and it's the freedom to do it and the freedom to think, just to engage, to encourage, support, to analyse because you haven't got time to say, 'Ah Jaysus like how many reports to do? (Staff, Harthope).*

They argued that the information required to be recorded under the IRIS registration system is excessive. PI staff noted that it is not clear what the data will be used for, feeling that collecting such detailed information might therefore go 'against any principles of data protection'. Additional concerns were expressed

by the respondents in relation to computer security, passwords, safe data storage and so on. On a practical level, one interviewee noted that when using IRIS system part of the computer security system needed to be disabled, leaving the organisation's PC exposed. In addition, concerns were expressed regarding not having a log-off from IRIS and passwords not being regularly changed.

In Breamish, the interviewees noted that the reporting system was not seen as taking account of the amount of time involved in inter-agency work:

> *A lot of the work that partnerships do is the leverage of the resources for the community, for example, by this partnership here engaging with [named county council] there's a project officer now appointed for [a named area], there's going to be a plan for [that area], the partnership in [named county council) have agreed co-leadership on, there is nowhere on IRIS I can report that (Staff members, Breamish).*

Also, additional information is collected to record the work that is actually been carried out by PI staff:

> *The system of reporting doesn't facilitate or even kind of encourage [us] to report. Yes, of course we should all be reporting everything, but if we're under pressure, then we're putting the client -- the next client with two interventions and not intervention five and six with another (Staff, Breamish).*

Many respondents are highly critical of the need to maintain and update both paper and electronic files. In some cases, PIs have developed their own management information system to cover all interactions with clients, but report difficulties in integrating IRIS information into this system, leading to duplication of effort.

Just under a half of PI CEOs were dissatisfied with the support they had received in using the IRIS database and other administrative/reporting tools while just over half (54 per cent) were satisfied with the way reporting worked in their local area. PIs were asked in greater detail about their experience of using the IRIS database in terms of whether the information required on different dimensions was 'too much', 'about right' or 'too little'. The majority felt that too much information was required on the profile of individuals registering for education/lifelong learning and employment supports (78 per cent and 70 per cent respectively). Some respondents described the registration form as 'too intrusive' and a potential 'barrier' in dealing with clients and argued that they should not collect 'information that SICAP cannot respond to'. In terms of specific suggestions, some

argued that information on financial difficulty, perceived discrimination and 'sensitive information could be dropped'.

> *The purpose of some of the questions is sometimes difficult to comprehend, for example, 'Has the individual experienced discrimination in accessing/ participating in mainstream services.' If the answer to this question is yes, should there be room for an explanation? Under present circumstances there is no such facility and it is difficult to see how this answer informs policy (PI survey response).*

In contrast, the majority felt the information was about right in relation to the nature of education and employment interventions and on the profile of local community groups and type of LCG interventions (72-80 per cent). Around six in ten reported that the information was 'about right' on the intensity of interventions across the three goals. This latter perspective was more nuanced in the case-study interventions where many interviewees pointed to the difficulty in capturing the intensity of involvement with some individuals and groups.

Collecting data via IRIS was seen as beneficial by one staff member in Byrns:

> *I think it gives us the opportunity to capture really useful information that helps us as a management team in terms of monitoring the programme and the programme performance. … We would use it … to track programme activity (Staff member, Byrns).*

However, she noted that the PI staff have had no training to take advantage of its potential reporting functionality. Inadequate training regarding IRIS was reported by many other interviewees.

> *To an extent under IRIS there's an IT support … but even at that the level of training was laughable that people were given, you know, and here we do it on the basis of the majority of staff do their own inputting (Staff, Teviot).*

Despite the fact that PI staff generally complete the registration form on behalf of the participant, the registration process has been found to be challenging for some individuals, such as those with a poor command of English, people with literacy difficulties or who have mental health issues.

> *A person may have particular mental health difficulties or they have all sorts of difficulties and might make it challenging then to sort of spend that time asking questions that are very probing (Staff, Linhope).*

Literacy can be difficult and signing a name and I don't want in any way to, you know, make people feel any way awkward. So, I think that stipulation that you always have an attendance sheet, you know, sometimes it can cause maybe, you know, people to, if they have literacy difficulties and I am very into explaining that, you know, 'It's an attendance sheet an if you want to initial or sign', you know, and that all the support is tailored, so that, you know, that other approaches are used in engagement and other approaches are used, you know, visual approaches are used (Staff, Heriot).

Considering the sensitive nature of some questions asked, a staff member in Avon argued that having skilled personnel undertaking the registration process is essential:

We'd have situations where people would have been resistant to answering particular questions and, you know, given that we're working under pressure to attain say numbers as well, you can't and not just for that reason you can't frighten people away. /…/ The way it was constructed and if people weren't, you know, skilled and sensitive in dealing with clients, and I consider myself very lucky in that we have very skilled and experienced staff here, but without that, you know, you're without that you are in an area where it becomes a little bit interrogative (Staff, Avon).

While some interviewees saw the positive side of the IRIS data collection and recording system, an overall majority of interviewees argued that the process is time consuming, rigid and it is not clear what the benefits of the process are, a sentiment illustrated by an extract from a staff member in Avon:

I think that there's too much emphasis placed on ticking all the boxes and getting all of … that side of it dealt with. I think it's been constructed from the wrong end, that the perspective of the deliverer is the last thing that's been thought of. I think it's been thought of as a national mechanism to show the activity within the programme and that we are, as implementers, slaves to it in the sense of feeding this electric box daily. If you don't feed the electric box daily you're in trouble (Staff, Avon).

4.2.5   Perceptions of SICAP governance

According to the survey, almost all PIs were clear about their purpose, duties and functions. Overall, just over a quarter of the PIs agreed that 'the current SICAP governance model is effective', with 31 per cent being undecided and 42 per cent disagreeing with the statement indicating relatively low levels of outright satisfaction with the current governance model. Similarly, only a quarter reported

that they were 'satisfied with the current governance structures regarding SICAP'. PIs operating in more deprived areas and those with the highest caseloads were more critical of current governance structures. Views were similarly mixed on whether 'there is a lot of autonomy in designing service provision at local level', with 38 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. As with the other perceptions of governance, PIs serving more deprived client groups and those with the largest caseload had more negative views.

The interview responses regarding the governance of SICAP reflected the survey results, with most interviewees highlighting a number of challenging areas ranging from reporting structures to funding and resources. Too rigid structures under LCDCs were not seen as conducive to the overall aim of the programme:

> *The governance model with the LCDC gives them space to ask you about every single cent you spend and we know that in some areas that is what happens, which becomes entirely unworkable (Staff, Byrns).*

It was also found that the LCDC does not have an overview of all the activities in which the PIs are engaged, placing a limit on their capacity to co-ordinate local service delivery.

4.3   PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The survey indicated that four in ten CEOs reported that they had received training or professional development in their role. The majority of these (72 per cent) were very or fairly satisfied with the training they had received. The vast majority (85 per cent) said that their staff members had received training in their role but only around a fifth of PIs felt that sufficient training was provided for their organisation.

Training did not emerge as a major issue from the interviews across the ten case-study areas. The staff noted that the employees of the PIs are already sufficiently qualified and if some training is needed then this can be provided through specific training courses or on-the-job training:

> *We do on-the-job training, yes. But we expect a certain amount of … knowledge and basic information and then when you come in we'll tell you, 'By the way, here's what you have to do in relation to IRIS. Here's what you have to do in relation to numbers. But … I expect that people have the experience to deliver (Staff, Teviot).*

However, one staff member in Harthope argued that she had 'never been trained properly', whereas in Breamish, an employee noted that the training she had received had involved running charts and graphs using IRIS, but no additional training.

In terms of PI Board members, it was argued in some cases that providing training for this group can be challenging, considering their lack of free capacity:

> *There wouldn't be a lot of training available to the board members. …*
> *They tend to be all very busy. … Like if you were giving training, you'd*
> *nearly have to have it on the night of a board meeting. It'd have to be of*
> *a duration of an hour to an hour-and-a-half, I don't know what the value*
> *of that [would be] (Staff, Breamish).*

In one case-study area a staff member indicated some areas where the Board could benefit from professional development:

> *I suppose maybe something … else that should be done is that maybe*
> *boards should be given more training.*
>
> *Interviewer: In what areas in particular?*
>
> *Governance and, you know, we implement or oversee a pretty significant*
> *budget every year and …you cannot really get money, you could probably*
> *get small bits of money but nothing significant, like, to do any training*
> *with (Staff, Heriot).*

In one case some criticism was conveyed about the LCDC in terms of being clear about their role:

> *I think there needs to be more resources put in to really solidifying what*
> *the process of … so basically training. Bring the people together and train*
> *them in what they're supposed to be doing and getting a shared*
> *understanding about what it is to be a member of an LCDC and what do I*
> *bring to the table (Staff, Teviot).*

In terms of information exchange, the vast majority of PI CEOs had been to events designed to share experiences organised by the Irish Local Development Network while three-quarters had been to such an event organised by Pobal. However, only a minority – just over a quarter – considered there to be opportunities to exchange good practice between programmes and areas. Two-thirds would be interested in increasing such opportunities 'to a great extent' with the remainder saying 'to some extent'. Over half said that ILDN was best placed to promote such co-operation.

The interviews showed that there are very few opportunities for exchanging good practice outside the local development network. One respondent noted that it would be useful to have a formal mechanism in place to facilitate information exchange:

Yes, well, through our network, ILDN, Irish Local Development Network, we meet nationally once a quarter and we meet at a regional level once a quarter. So we do get opportunities to share experiences and different approaches there and informally, as well, through the CEOs of the local development companies. We do share, you know, success stories, case studies, et cetera.

Interviewer: So there is – there are some opportunities there?

Yes, actually, it does maybe more so than we might formally recognise, because you know, we do meet, but having said that, you know, if there was a formal mechanism for doing it ... it might be useful (Staff, Heriot).

4.4 FUNDING

According to the survey, only a third of PIs considered the allocation of resources and their prioritisation to be transparent, with 22 per cent undecided and 44 per cent disagreeing, indicating high levels of dissatisfaction with transparency. Those with a smaller caseload and those with a higher ratio of budget to caseload were more likely to see the allocation of resources as transparent. When asked about satisfaction with the level of funding allocated to their organisation under SICAP, only 5 per cent were very satisfied, 24 per cent fairly satisfied while the majority (71 per cent) described themselves as 'not satisfied'. Not surprisingly, satisfaction with funding varied by the budget-to-caseload ratio, with 42 per cent of the top third group expressing satisfaction compared to 15 per cent of the lowest third. Satisfaction with funding was also lower among those in areas where LCDCs had multiple PIs.

Dissatisfaction with funding for delivering services emerged as one of the main themes from the interviews with members of the PIs. The interviewees felt that the reduction of funding across programmes in recent years has limited the services the companies can deliver in their areas. With regard to SICAP, it was felt that the programme is too inflexible and some discretion is needed to address the needs of local communities, as indicated by Heriot staff. Although there is a certain degree of flexibility in goal spend under SICAP, they found the programme parameters too restrictive:

So, for example SICAP is really prescriptive in the amount of groups we have to work /.../ and all that and how we spend the money and it won't allow us if we have a surplus in Goal 3 to transfer that to Goal 2. You know it's all within parameters of percentages that it has to be spent.

And I understand why that is you know because you could have a situation where you'd have a company would spend its entire budget on Goal 3 putting people into employment and nothing on Goal 1 or 2. You know so that's understandable. But, I think that SICAP should be structured so that the Local Development Company has discretion over 30 per cent of the budget or whatever to spend as it sees fit and to target the groups that it feels will benefit most from this funding (Staff, Heriot).

Allocating a third of funding to each strand was considered to be too rigid:

The third, third, third is too rigid. So, in certain areas I would think here we should have much more on Goals 1 and 2 and less on 3. There are local employment services and other activation based programmes around that could be taking up or should be doing that work and we should be doing the areas of work that are more appropriate (Staff, Harthope).

It was also felt that having fixed costs is not recognised. One PI felt at as a smaller lot area, there is a lack of recognition that they have certain fixed costs, such as the CEO, 'to have their door open for business' (Staff member, Breamish). At the same time, some recognised that SICAP has been an improvement over LCDP in allowing a greater percentage of funding to community development (1/3 versus 10 per cent).

The participants argue that SICAP funding does not cover the needs of the PIs:

And SICAP funds, I don't know what SICAP funds now staffing-wise, but for the amount of work we have to do for the small budget that we have … it doesn't match up, we've had such a cut, admin and for our salaries but they're expecting to hit all these targets, with the amount of staffing that they've funded (Staff, Fasney).

FIGURE 4.4   PROPORTION OF PIS PROVIDING SERVICES OTHER THAN SICAP AND IN RECEIPT OF OTHER FUNDING
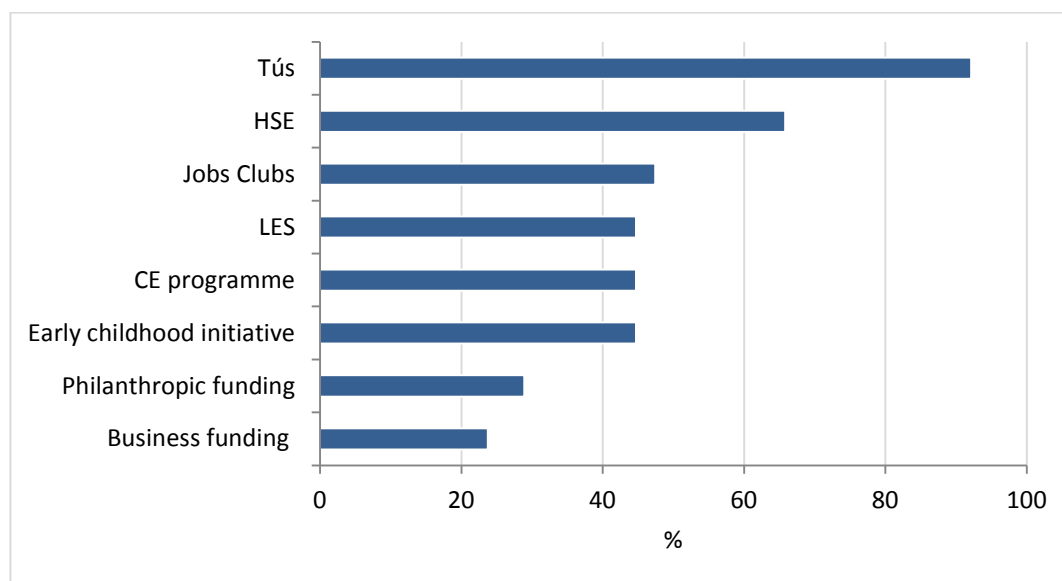
Source: PI CEO questionnaire.

Figure 4.4 shows which services beside the ones implemented under SICAP are provided by the PIs. The figure also indicates other funding that the PIs receive. Almost all of the PIs received funding for services other than SICAP, with almost half having four or more such sources of funding. The vast majority received funding under the Tús scheme while around half received funding for Jobs Clubs, LES or the Community Employment programme. Other sources of funding included the HSE (around six in ten), the DCYA early childhood initiative and business or other philanthropic funding. As a result, for the vast majority of PIs, most of their staff were paid for through non-SICAP funding. PIs with a higher budget-to-caseload ratio had somewhat more of their staff employed under SICAP while those with a lower SICAP caseload employed a small proportion of their staff through SICAP.

The PIs thus tend to rely on multiple sources of funding. This approach is seen as having many advantages in being able to provide services to the local community that are not readily possible under SICAP. However, a reliance on multiple sources of funding is seen as administratively onerous, requiring different reporting systems and having different terms and conditions. In addition, PI staff report that a considerable amount of time and effort is involved in pursuing funding streams.

FIGURE 4.5   REPORTS BY PI CEOS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH DIFFERENT SUPPORTS WOULD BE FACILITATED BY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (% 'TO A GREAT EXTENT')
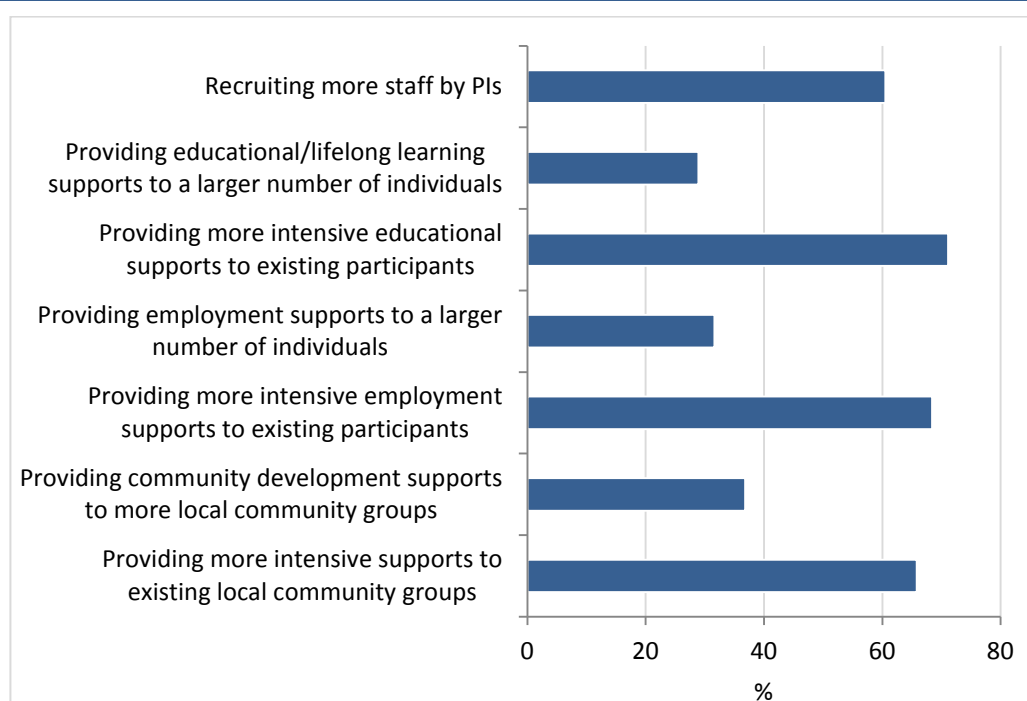
Source: PI CEO questionnaire.

When asked what additional resources would facilitate, PIs tended to emphasise providing more intensive supports to existing individual and groups rather than widening the scope to cover more participants (Figure 4.5). The interviewees in the case-study areas were asked what additional funding would enable them to do. The answers varied across the PIs but most highlighted the need to enhance community development. In Breamish, a staff member argued for the need to support local community groups:

I'd be really clear around not duplicating work and putting resources where it's most needed and there is a restriction I suppose under SICAP in doing that because you can only give so -- you know you can only support a group up to so far and sometimes you can't go that other mile so you have to look for support. … they go through a path of development which I think nearly takes five years with some groups. And I would, I suppose I would like more resources for each stage of development for a group rather than kind of a limit (Staff, Breamish).

Across all areas, staff favoured having time/resources to offer more intensive supports:

If I had more time I would be doing outreach to all the homeless shelters … to help children remain in school and give them supports. Then I would be trying to link the parents into services and start self-support groups is one thing (Staff, Harthope).

I suppose as I say more, deeper levels of intervention with the hardest to reach people, the very hardest to reach (Staff, Heriot).

In Teviot, a staff member noted that ideally there should be a flexible budget managed by the LCDC to be used when need arises:

So if you give 650,000 to [area] Partnership for three years or per year for the next three years, there should be 50 or more given to the LCDC as a budget that it holds and can carry over that period of time. So that when the need arises that they see, or that we see and tell them, whichever way it happens, that they can respond. But it may not actually be to us. So I go back to that youth work example I was giving. /.../ It may mean that somebody turns around and says a youth worker is needed in some place. The LCDC turns around to [the ETB] and says, 'Listen will you contract that.' Now, if they for some reason can't do it, then they could come back to us, because we have the ability to do all those kind of things. And that's where companies like ours are useful, because we can respond. But the more we're pushed into being implementers the less our ability to respond is, because we're not being asked to think outside the box (Staff, Teviot).

A staff member in Heriot noted that additional funding would enable them to place greater emphasis on areas such as social economy, community development and innovation:

Well, the social economy is one that I feel very strongly on that we could certainly lever much more jobs in certain areas. Jobs that are created through social economy tend to stay locally, tend to have a local impact and have an impact on, you know, low skilled types of jobs roles, in local healthcare and in areas around basic skills, you know, so something like that, I think, could have a real deliverable. And I suppose in the community development things, I suppose generally around innovation. I think, you know, working with unemployed people and particularly the long-term unemployed that are left there, we need to be upping the game in terms of idea generation. /.../ A whole broad area looking at that, so I think that's an area we see as quite exciting and opening up a little bit more, as opposed to just saying, 'Right, you're unemployed let's try and move you along,' you know (Staff, Heriot).

A community worker in the same PI felt that while more resources are always welcome in order to increase services; sometimes it is better to have greater control over the existing resources:

You'd be able to afford to do more with the things you do. Or to take more stuff out to people or not tied also to targets because one of the things I would -- you know everyone will always want more funding. You know that's a given with any group you talk to. But, a lot of the time it's not more money that a group needs, it's better control over the resources they have and an ability to tap into some additional funds as and when they need it (Staff, Heriot).

In the same vein, the staff in Ettrick Partnership and Tyne felt that there is not necessarily need for more money but for greater flexibility in how it is spent:

It's not so much more money, it's more flexibility around the money, I think. Because we would certainly like to give the communities the opportunity to develop initiatives themselves that we could fund from SICAP, because we would have done that in the past, like we would have had an environmental strand to some of the previous programmes, we would have had a family support strand (Staff, Ettrick).

Other areas mentioned included additional support in relation to educational progression; paid tutors for English language courses as a lot of them are dependent on volunteers; a broader range of training courses (Byrns); and support for special educational needs (Avon).

Several interviewees highlighted the importance of acknowledging leverage funding. This means the PIs can attract additional resources, both public and private. In 2016, 263 LCGs, who were assisted to leverage additional funding, secured a total of €1,345,685 (Pobal, 2016).[26] Considering the needs on the ground and limited funding under SICAP, additional funding needs to be found:

The whole leverage funding, you know, leverage funding that whilst you identify somebody in SICAP and you can't do it in SICAP, that you, you know, you have to the capacity and the, I suppose, the time for someone to identify where else you can get this sort of funding from, you know. So, while SICAP does X and all of these others bits are add-ons that facilitate this a little bit /.../ SICAP as a programme doesn't actually allow you to record your leverage funding, you would have always, under the previous programmes, had an opportunity to record where you would have had magic funding coming in. So, it's almost like it doesn't recognise its role, which it should (Staff, Linhope).

---

[26]   www.pobal.ie/Publications/Documents/SICAP%202016%20End%20of%20Year%20Report%20-%20Full%20Version.pdf.

For a rural county I suppose all of this work that we do we lever funding is key. So SICAP is core, without these they wouldn't have levered Erasmus or they wouldn't be levering LEADER. So, I think … the recognition that SICAP is core is good and then for a rural county I suppose it's not an effective tool for dealing with rural stagnation and the bigger issues (Staff, Tyne).

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

The chapter has drawn from the PI CEO survey and interviews with PI CEOs and other PI staff as well as interviews with LCDC Chief Officers. The results show that PIs are clear about their role under the SICAP programme. The role is broadly similar to the one the organisations had during the previous social inclusion programme and which included an element of collaboration with other service providers in the area in addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups. However, it was evident that adopting the role of programme implementer has not been without challenges. The PIs seemed to consider SICAP as part of the wider range of programmes they implement. In particular, having developed a specific profile in their local areas in terms of service provision, the perceived greater focus of their role as co-ordinator of services is seen to be too narrow.

One of the main themes emerging from the study is criticism of the current governance structure. The PI staff see their decision-making capacity reduced under the new structure in terms of meeting the needs of disadvantaged individuals in their areas. There was also some dissatisfaction with the new reporting arrangements and a perceived lack of clarity in the relative roles of the LCDC and Pobal in the process. This dissatisfaction could relate to the fact that a transition time is needed for PIs to get used to the new reporting structure and LCDCs to their new role. It was also evident that the degree of contact between PIs and LCDCs varied considerably across areas, at least partly reflecting the fact that some LCDCs covered multiple lots. LCDCs themselves would like to have more power at local level to collaborate with the PIs and other agencies. In order to ensure a more effective approach to SICAP provision, many LCDCs have formed sub-committees that exclusively focus on SICAP.

Several PI staff members expressed their dissatisfaction with the reporting system, finding it too onerous and feeling there was insufficient support available under SICAP for administration. The amount of information gathered was considered to be too excessive, especially as the records need to be kept in electronic as well as in a hard copy form. The type of information collected was, at times, seen as too intrusive, especially in dealing with vulnerable people. The

interviewees were critical of the focus on quantitative reporting that is not seen as capturing the broad spectrum of services and interventions provided by the PIs.

While the PIs were broadly satisfied with the support they get from LCDCs in delivering SICAP, the satisfaction with support from national agencies was considerably lower. The interviews indicated that the inter-agency collaboration varies across the case-study areas and often depends on the links already in place with various agencies prior to the introduction of SICAP.

Almost all PI survey respondents and interviewees were dissatisfied with the funding available for SICAP. As a result, PIs sought additional funding SICAP in order to meet local needs. Leveraging of funding was seen as increasingly important in providing various services for local groups and individuals. The PIs were particularly critical of the insufficient funding available for administration. They felt that additional resources would enable the provision of more intensive supports to existing individual and groups.

Interviews in the ten case-study areas indicated that lack of training was not seen as a major issue. The staff hired by PIs were seen to be already sufficiently qualified for their roles and if some training is needed then this can be provided through specific training courses or on-the-job training. This being said, a few interviewees indicated that they would have liked to receive more general training, with most training being limited to the use of the IRIS data system.

CHAPTER 5

The perceived benefits of SICAP

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 to 4 have looked at the operation of SICAP from the perspective of goals, target groups and governance. The in-depth interviews with CEOs, staff, participants and policy stakeholders also offered the opportunity for respondents to reflect on SICAP in more general terms, highlighting its benefits and value as well as the challenges arising in delivering the programme. This chapter brings together interviewee comments on four main aspects of the specific contribution of SICAP: the responsiveness to local need; working with the most marginalised individuals and groups; taking a holistic approach to working with the local community; and promoting local collaboration and developing synergies in service delivery. The chapter begins by examining the survey responses of PI CEOs on the overall effectiveness of SICAP before elaborating upon the main themes in the remainder of the chapter.

5.2   PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SICAP

In the survey, PIs were asked about the effectiveness of SICAP service provision in meeting the overall aims of SICAP. The majority of PIs saw SICAP as being effective or very effective in meeting each of the three goals (Figure 5.1). PIs were somewhat less positive about the effectiveness of the strengthening local communities strand than about the education and employment support strands.

FIGURE 5.1   PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SICAP SERVICE PROVISION AMONG PIS (%)
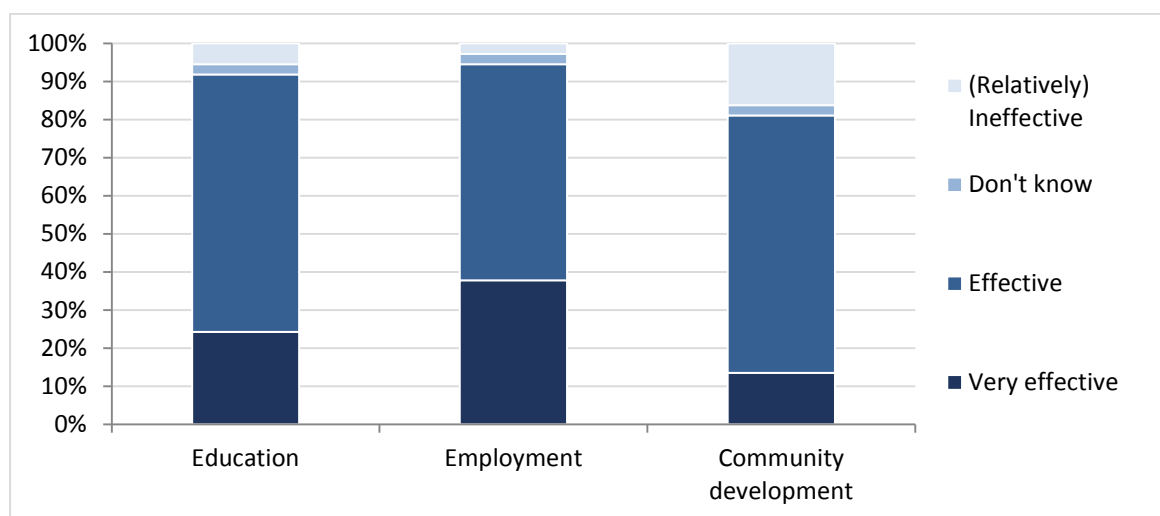
Source: ESRI Survey of PI CEOs.

PIs were also asked about the effectiveness of SICAP at the national level in relation to the four cross-cutting themes. Here views were much more mixed, with only a third of PIs seeing SICAP as effective or very effective in relation to gender equality (Figure 5.2). The proportions seeing it as effective were under or around half for the three other themes. A significant minority – more than four in ten – felt that SICAP had not been effective in promoting community development approaches. It is worth noting that a significant minority felt they could not say how effective SICAP had been, particularly in relation to promoting gender equality and countering discrimination. PIs whose client profile was somewhat less deprived were more positive about inter-agency collaboration in the local area. The remainder of the chapter draws on the in-depth interviews with PI staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders to examine the importance of a community development perspective and interagency collaboration in greater detail.

FIGURE 5.2   PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SICAP IN RELATION TO THE CROSS-CUTTING THEMES (%)
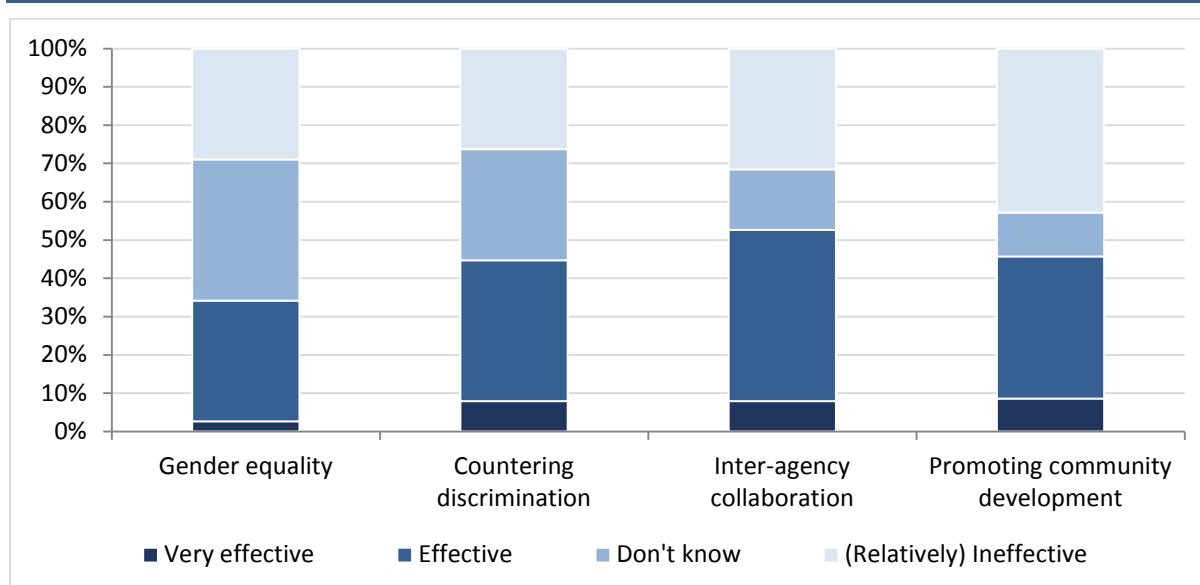
Source: ESRI Survey of PI CEOs.

LCDC representatives did not complete a survey on their perceptions of SICAP. However, the in-depth interviews with Chief Officers provided useful insights into the perceived benefits of SICAP from their perspective. In general, LCDC views on the benefits and challenges relating to SICAP were broadly similar to those expressed by PIs, reflecting the importance of PIs as a conduit of information to LCDCs on the operation of the programme on the ground (see above). When talking about the provision of SICAP, the representative of Fasney LCDC acknowledged the role played by PIs in developing local services:

> *I think the strengths of SICAP really come from the development companies, as I said to you, and their knowledge locally because, you*

know, they've been doing this for 25 years, so they're well practiced in designing their own activities to generate the sort of requirements for SICAP. So I'd say that's a big thing.

The interviewee from Heriot LCDC noted that across the three areas, education, employment and community development:

I like the community element of the SICAP and it does work, it does seem to be working well, from what I can see of it.

The interviews with LCDC representatives in the ten case-study areas indicated that the programme needs to reconsider the changing labour market situation in Ireland. For example, the representative of Teviot LCDC saw the potential, under the new iteration of SICAP, to have greater emphasis on the empowerment of communities:

One of the things that I think we need to do is we need to go back to the basics of the community development role. I think that what happened under the existing … SICAP programme is that its activation role overshone all other aspects of it. And I know we were trying to react to a society where there was … high unemployment and we needed to get people back working, we needed to get them moving, but I think now that because our unemployment levels have reached a more acceptable level, that we probably now will be able to work more directly with the people and hopefully empower them stronger.

The challenges involved in adapting SICAP to reflect a changed context are further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3 RESPONSIVENESS TO LOCAL NEED

A common theme across very different groups of respondents was the potential capacity through SICAP to respond to needs as identified in, and with, the local community. In this way, PIs were seen as serving as a valuable resource for the local community:

Our goal here is to be a resource in the community. … This building here … as a physical resource and also … the programmes that we run are a resource for people in the community to come and participate in, whether that's in terms of community or group activity, or individual, know, educational or for family or for job supports (Staff, Harthope).

People come in here for all sorts of things. Now, to an outsider, they'd say, 'There's loads that has nothing to do with you', there's people who

> *come in here with all sorts of problems and they try to address every*
> *problem for everybody. And they nearly always are able to, if they can't*
> *do it here they'll say, 'Go around to Citizens Information,' or they'd ring*
> *around the Citizens Information, they'll ring around to MABS, you know,*
> *they'll get a CV done up for somebody. Now on paper, a lot of the things*
> *they do, those small interventions, they're not their core work but you*
> *know what, that can be the difference for a lot of people in a vulnerable*
> *time and a vulnerable situation (Staff, Breamish).*

Information from the IRIS database provides a good way of examining the degree of flexibility actually possible to meet the different needs of local communities in terms of the socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries. Significant variation is found in the profile of participants in terms of age group, gender and ethnicity across areas, reflecting differences in the socio-demographic profile of the local area as well as the perceived needs of the community. In 2016, women made up 45 per cent of individual beneficiaries receiving educational or employment supports under SICAP. However, marked variation is found across PIs in the gender breakdown of individuals receiving support (Figure 5.3). Women formed more than half of participants in eight areas, most notably, Dublin Inner City and the area covered by IRD Duhallow. On the other hand, women made up only around a third of beneficiaries in Monaghan, Roscommon and Longford as well as Dublin North West.

Significant variation is also found in the age profile of beneficiaries of education and employment supports. Figure 5.4 highlights the representation of young people aged 15 to 24 among participants; this group makes up 16 per cent of all beneficiaries of individual supports nationally. The proportion of young participants is particularly high in Ballyfermot/Chapelizod, where they make up 44 per cent of beneficiaries. The focus on providing supports for young people is also relatively high in Waterford, Limerick and Dublin Northside. In contrast, young people make up very few of the participants in the West Cork islands but also in Blanchardstown.

The profile of participants varies markedly by nationality and ethnicity[27] across the PI lots. Figure 5.5 highlights the proportion of beneficiaries who are from the new communities (migrants experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, refugees or asylum seekers) or who are Travellers. The new communities target group makes up a very sizeable proportion – four in ten – of beneficiaries in the Blanchardstown area, with significant representation also found in Carlow and

---

[27] In the interviews with PIs, staff reported a reluctance on the part of some groups, such as Travellers, to self-identify as such in the registration process. Challenges are also reported in terms of reconciling ethnic and nationality descriptors.

West Cork. Across all PIs, members of the new communities make up around a tenth of all beneficiaries. Travellers make up 1.9 per cent of beneficiaries across all PIs. Again, the pattern varies significantly, with Travellers accounting for around 6 per cent of beneficiaries in Galway, Leitrim, Longford and West Limerick.

FIGURE 5.3   PROPORTION OF INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARIES OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS WHO ARE FEMALE BY PI (%)
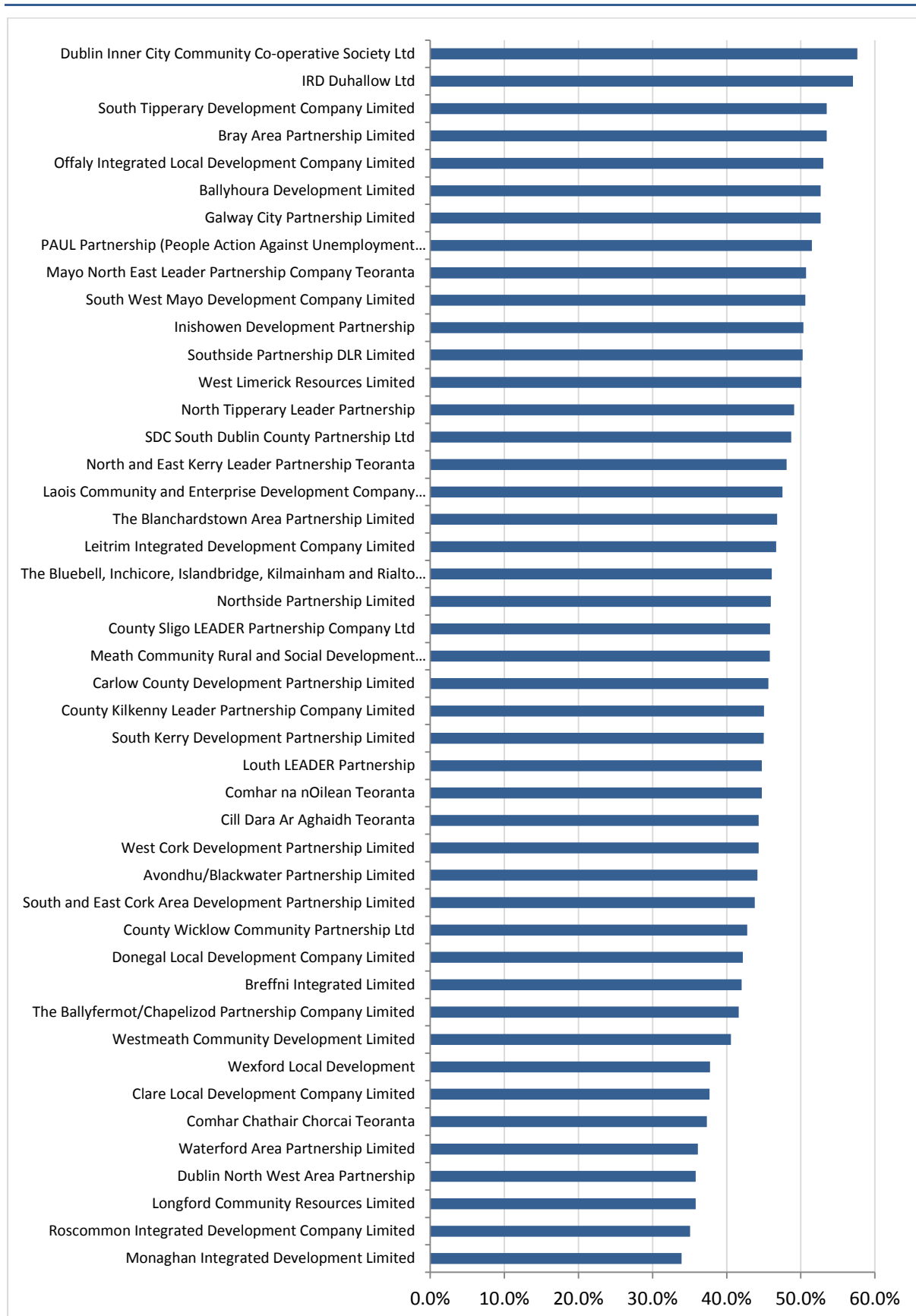
FIGURE 5.4 **PROPORTION OF INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARIES OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS WHO ARE 15-24 YEARS OF AGE BY PI (%)**
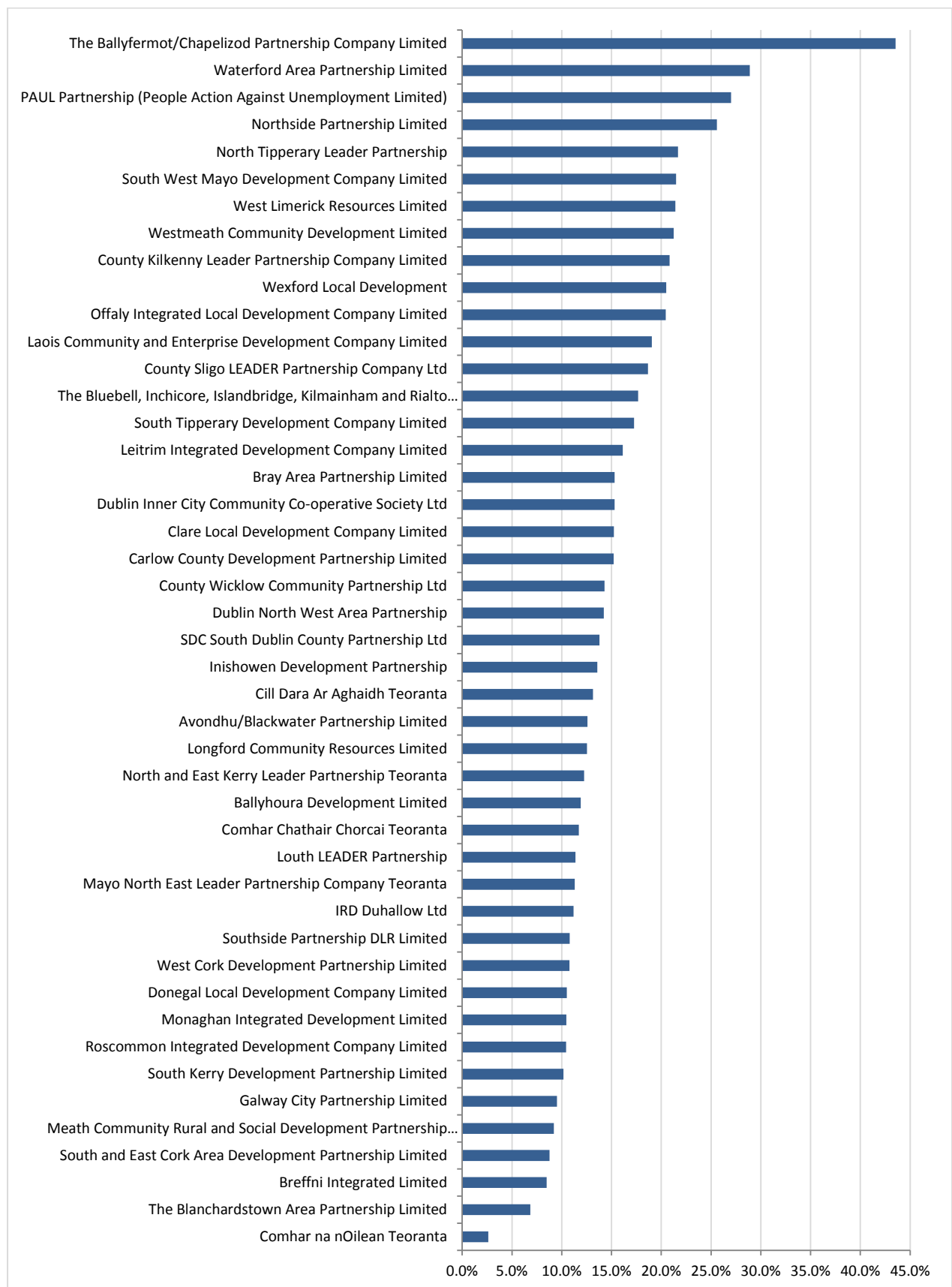
FIGURE 5.5 PROPORTION OF INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARIES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE NEW COMMUNITIES OR TRAVELLERS BY PI (%)

Source: IRIS Database 2016.
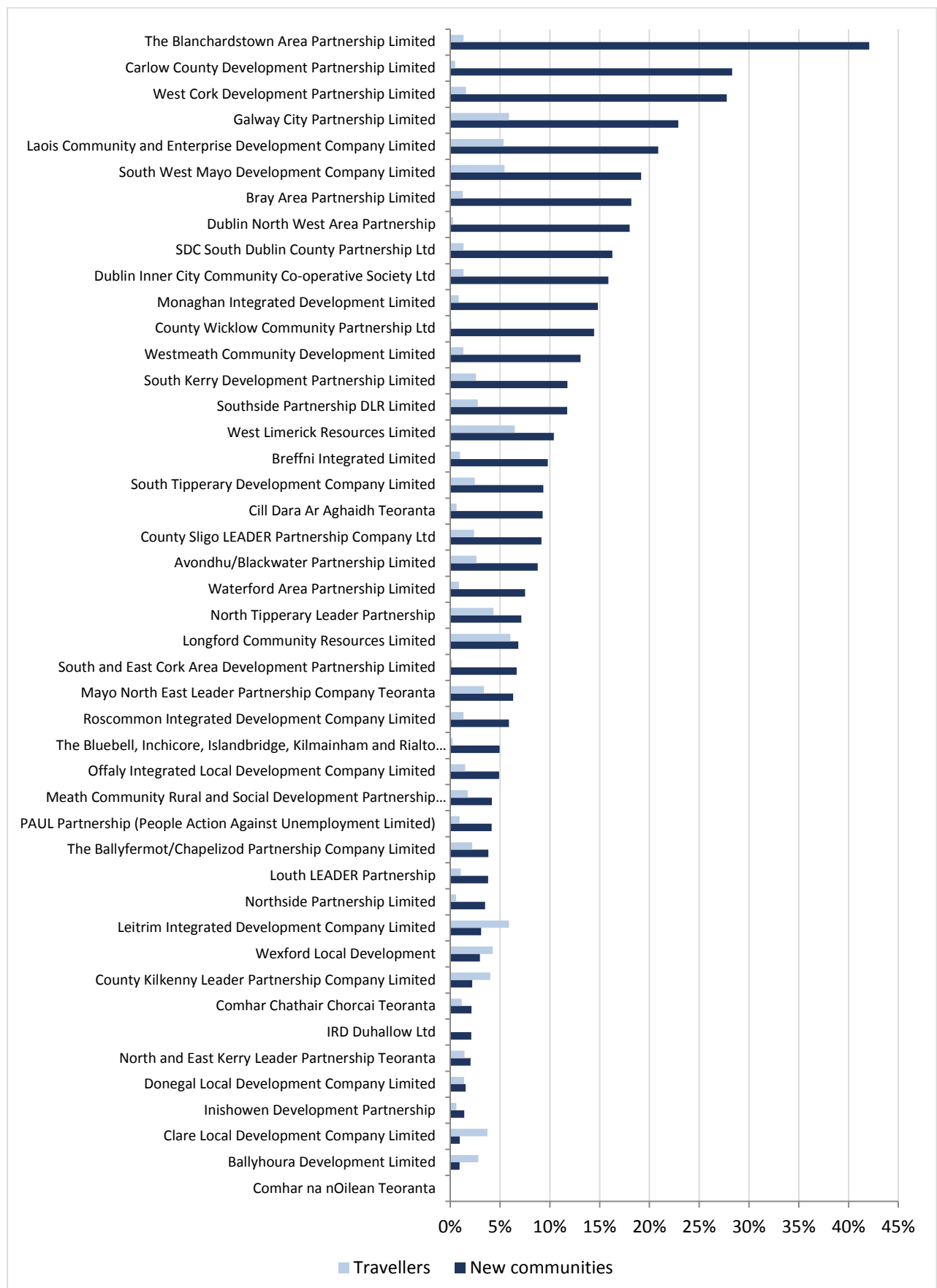
While PIs are working with specified target groups under the SICAP programme (see Chapter 3), administrative data indicate a good deal of variation in the profile of beneficiaries, reflecting socio-demographic patterns as well as local need. Flexibility is also evident in relation to the type of provision offered. The survey data showed variation in PI perceptions of the nature and adequacy of existing provision in relation to education, employment and self-employment supports in the local area. Many PIs reported other providers offering education and employment supports but pointed to gaps in existing provision, particularly in relation to community development support (see Chapter 2).

In the interviews, PIs elaborated on how they saw their role as identifying gaps in local provision and developing appropriate ways of responding to these gaps. They reported that they sought to avoid duplication of provision, instead focusing on offering services not already available (see also Chapter 2).

We don't offer counselling. There's counselling services here. We don't do any computer programmes. There's enough services around providing that kind of thing. We don't, you know, run any FETAC. There's enough services in the area providing services like that. So it's where there's a gap (Staff, Harthope).

The partnership never runs something that somebody else is either willing or able to run (Staff, Ettrick).

Many PIs actively sought to build collaborative links with other local providers in order to ensure that provision was complementary.

We have a good relationship with all of the other service providers. So, we do look at, kind of, doing stuff that might not be available otherwise and because we have such a good working relationship with ETB, social welfare, JobPath, those kind of organisations; the Local Employment Service is part of our organisation as well. So we can put on stuff that's complementary to those programmes to make sure that, you know, there's no duplication and things like that. I think it works quite as well because those organisations would refer plenty of clients into us because we're offering something … that their clients would need and is not being offered somewhere else (Staff, Heriot).

Even where provision could look like it had similarities with other services locally, it was felt that the focus was different, thus providing value added to beneficiaries.

So on the outside you might look at … a language class for foreigners and say, 'They're the same.' But actually when you look at them closer,

they're totally different because the [ETB] language class is giving them a FETAC level in the English language and the conversation classes are giving them no qualification but they're helping build confidence in speaking the language and they're teaching them things about the county and about the services in it. So in the language classes, for example, they may use a map of the town as the basis for the conversation or they may use the Irish culture as a basis for a conversation. And it's all depending and inclined to teach the migrant a little more about the community, about the cultural norms, about what happens here (Staff, Heriot).

Many PIs felt that their role was more in co-ordinating local services, a theme discussed in greater detail below, rather than necessarily offering courses or classes themselves.

Where are the local gaps? Where are the local deficits? What will, by us doing it, make a difference? … We have an extensively resourced youth service provision in this area. Where is there a gap? There's a gap in co-ordinating and providing space for those groups; that's our space, our space is not to employ and deliver youth work (Staff, Breamish).

Identifying needs in the disadvantaged area and identifying gaps in services to the disadvantaged and filling those gaps as best we can, or having them filled. And it's important that it's not necessary for us to do all of this, but it is necessary for us to use whatever influence we have to make sure the services are available (Staff, Byrns).

In one area, there had been difficulty in engaging some groups, especially young Traveller men, in education supports. On the basis of a needs analysis in the specific local area, they found there was interest in support around the driving theory test and organised a facilitator and laptops. This served as an important gateway to further engagement with this group:

Then we come in and then all of a sudden we're sharing that load then with them and we're getting visibility and then we have connections then where there's men coming to me talking around, 'Well what can I do around education and training and that stuff?' (Staff, Breamish).

A similar approach to engaging young people was described in a more geographically dispersed area:

One thing we're doing at the moment is driving lessons; so, working to get a group of young people from a particularly disadvantaged estate, getting them to do their driving theory and their driving tests. So, at least

then they have, you know, a method of leaving the estate and going and seeking jobs and training elsewhere (Staff, Heriot).

Two of the PIs described starting outreach activities for people in direct provision, providing activities for the children and providing advice to those who had been awarded legal status but were struggling to obtain accommodation.

Because they've got no communal space so they would be in quite cramped conditions. There's no play area, there's no outside space. So, you know, just being here for a few hours in the evenings meant a lot and they responded very well (Staff, Harthope).

There's a direct provision accommodation centre … I also go out there and do some things with the people, because a lot of people are kind of still stuck in a place where they won't come out even though the place is miserable. So I go out there and I meet some of the men and the women and we've done things like wood craft and we're starting a relaxation, a level 2 relaxation course next week (Staff, Heriot).

Because staff were embedded in the local community, they reported consulting with local people in deciding which courses and initiatives to offer. While a strong emphasis was placed on being responsive to local need, many interviewees highlighted constraints on their flexibility to fully react to local need, a theme that is further explored in Chapter 6.

5.4   WORKING WITH THE MOST MARGINALISED

Respondents placed a strong emphasis on the role of SICAP in providing for the most marginalised individuals and groups.

I think the strength of the SICAP programme [is] that it does require you to focus on groups of people that would be easy to pass over if the programme wasn't there. If your programme didn't force you to do some work with those people, it would be much easier to say, 'Ahh sod them. They're too hard to get. We'll just work with the unemployed in general (Staff, Heriot).

The areas covered by the PIs varied significantly in the level of local deprivation.[28] Figure 5.6 shows the average Pobal HP index value based on small area figures in the 2011 Census by lot area. There is considerable variation in the profile of the

---

[28]   A negative value on the Pobal HP index means a highly disadvantaged area and a positive value means an affluent area.

lot areas, with the highest levels of deprivation found in Ballyfermot/Chapelizod and in Donegal. In contrast, some of the urban areas, including Dublin and Galway, have much lower levels of deprivation overall. It should be noted, however, that there is very marked variation within urban areas in, for example, the level of unemployment (CSO, 2017), which is not captured by looking at average levels alone.

Analyses of the participant data indicate that individual beneficiaries tend to have a much more disadvantaged profile than those living in the area as a whole (Figure 5.7). However, there is variation across PIs in the level of deprivation found among those receiving education and employment supports. Similarly, in looking at work with people from different risk groups, analyses indicate a good deal of targeting of the most marginalised even in areas with lower levels of deprivation (see McGuinness et al., forthcoming). It is worth noting that beneficiaries living in urban areas are more likely to be living in very deprived neighbourhoods and are more likely to face multiple social barriers (see McGuinness et al., forthcoming). Given available data, it is not possible to gauge the extent to which PIs work with more marginalised groups than other local providers. However, the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) study findings (see Barrett et al., 2017) indicate that participation in education and training among adults nationally is more prevalent among those from more advantaged backgrounds (own analysis), suggesting that SICAP is effectively targeting more marginalised groups in relation to education and lifelong learning supports.

FIGURE 5.6   POBAL HP DEPRIVATION INDEX BASED ON 2011 SMALL AREA FIGURES BY SICAP LOT, 2016
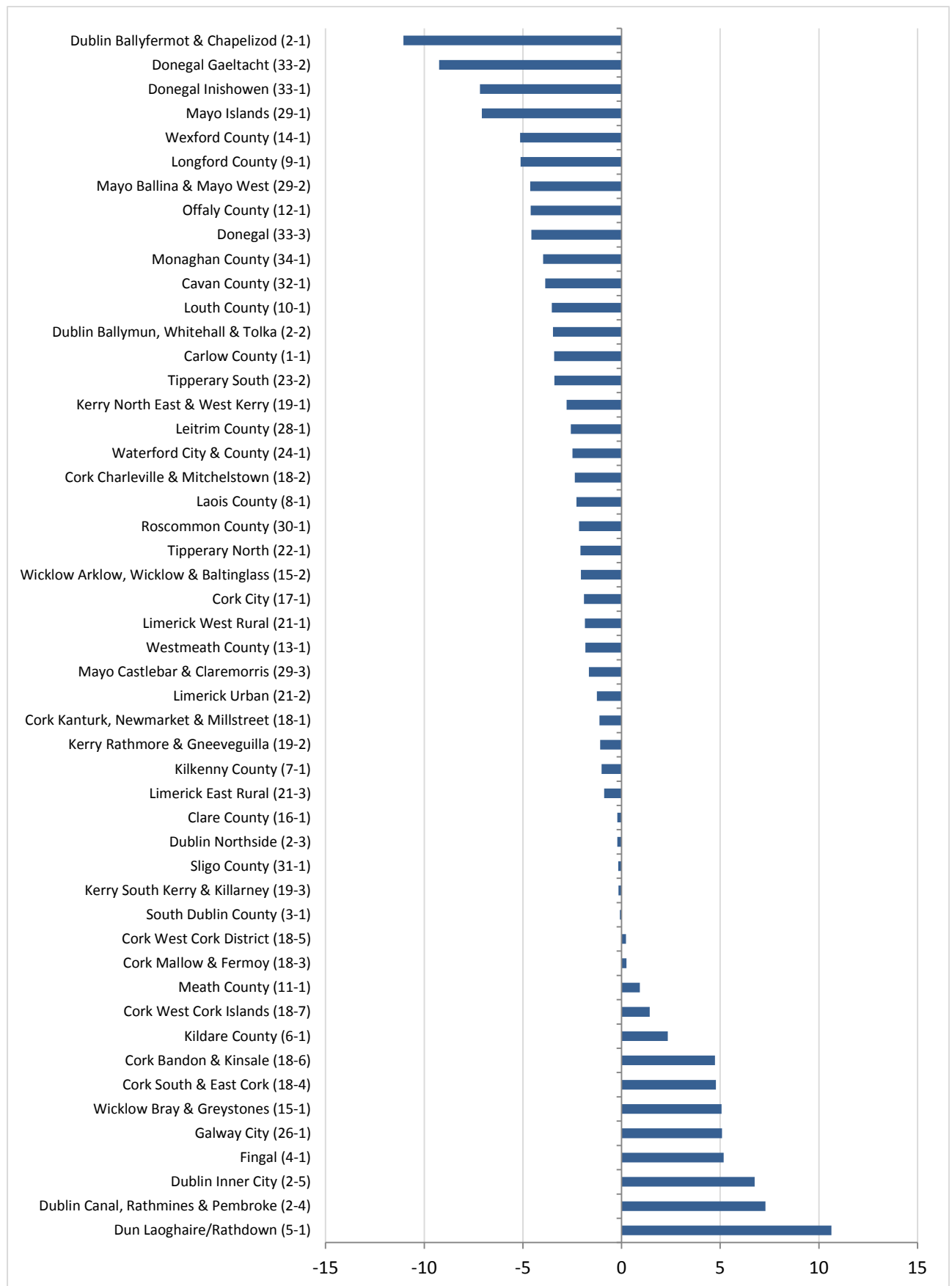
FIGURE 5.7   AVERAGE POBAL HP DEPRIVATION INDEX AMONG BENEFICIARIES OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS, 2016
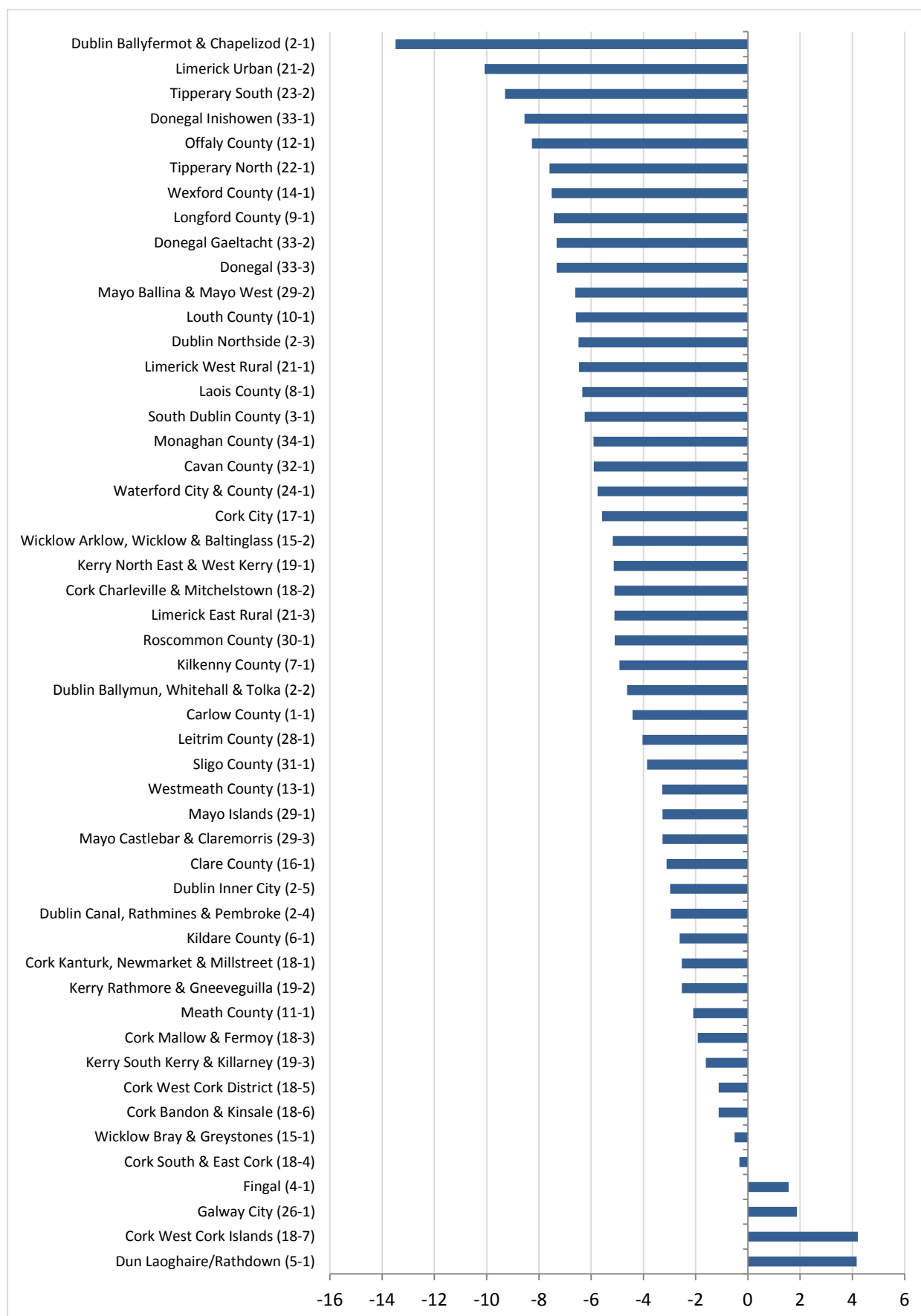
Source: IRIS Database 2016.

PI staff described the way in which the individuals with whom they worked were often 'far' from the labour market and needed a good deal of support to make the transition to a course, let alone employment. The recent fall in unemployment meant that those without employment often had multiple difficulties.

> *If you're in your 50s and you're unemployed, I can guarantee you, unemployment is the smallest of your troubles. You have a mental health issue, depression or you left school early or you've literacy problems, because if you were literate, motivated, activated, you were picked up and gone (Staff, Fasney).*

> *The work that we're doing at the moment, a lot of the work, the one-to-one work, the people that are coming to us are further away from, you know, their ability to really engage with the education programmes that they're looking for. … Like about two or three years ago … unemployment figures were much more, people were upskilling and ready to go back to college and it would take a couple of sessions; 'This is the right course for you', they'd have their place and they'd move on. Now we're working with a lot of young adults as well that … require a lot of contact around motivating and require just a different quality of work around trying to engage them. It's no longer about getting them into the room and, you know, 'This is how you go about interview skills, this is how…'. It's around … even building up their own aspirations (Staff, Breamish).*

In many areas, this pattern was seen as reflecting cumulative and intergenerational disadvantage, with some neighbourhoods not having gained from the economic boom (see Chapter 2).

> *The people we're talking about here didn't even work … when we were at 4.9 per cent or whatever [unemployment] … they weren't working then. There was still 30 to 40 per cent male unemployment up in [a specific area]. And that's about other factors. That's about historical factors, educational factors, low expectations internal to individuals and, more crucially I think, low expectations of young people in schools by the educational [system]. You know, it's the whole coalescence of all of these factors coming together where people believe certain things about themselves and they also believe it about themselves now because they're into the third generation of that (Staff, Breamish).*

Outreach work was a core component of the PIs' work, with the embedding of provision locally seen as facilitating engagement by more marginalised groups.

The relationship that we've built up on the ground as well is really important. So engaging with key players that have an influence and that would, do you know, encourage their peers to get involved. So being out and about and having so many outreach centres around [the area] really helps that, because people know that we're there on the ground and you build up relationships through even just being in the local area, do you know, in the resource centre. People know your face, they're a lot more willing to come along to you (Staff, Byrns).

Being able to engage usually hard to reach groups was seen as predicated on the relationship of trust that built up from working in the local area over a long period of time. This trust was built up gradually and often required frequent engagement with participants – 'spending time, walking the journey alongside people' (Staff, Breamish).

We've done door to door in … areas of high deprivation … but not always get the result that you think that warrants. So you knock at every door. You tell people there's an education course on next week, but that won't get them out, not necessarily. What will get them out is longer-term interventions of where you do that, but people know that you're up there, that you're in the community, that they can come up and talk to you, that they can meet you. They might call in for something totally different and then see the education course or the support for or local employment service or whatever it is, or around it. It's about creating the environments I think that where people can engage (Staff, Teviot).

There's a lot of talk about this pre-activation, you know. We often say it's like it's pre, pre, pre-activation. You know, people, you know, they might link with us a couple of years, years at maybe a very local level where we might, because we've gotten to know somebody, build that relationship, one individual, say, that they might then come in to a craft class and they might come sporadically, they might not come all the time and then the next season we might run another one and they might come for the bulk and then eventually, the following year, they might actually do an intermediate level unaccredited, relaxed, casual. … They're in no way ready to start work, or the work word … you'd frighten them, you know, so it could be a couple of years … this is a huge number of people that we work with are not ready to move into that employment stage (Staff, Teviot).

The relationship of trust built up with the local community was seen as vital in facilitating people engaging with the PI for longer-term support or even casual advice. Respondents were quick to emphasise that the reputation of the PI was

crucially dependent on a small number of individuals who were recognised locally; thus, beneficiaries were not necessarily aware of the partnership company or SICAP per se but rather of 'Mary' or 'John' in a specific local centre who 'would help'.

> *Our perceived reputation in the community is very good. And it is that word of mouth. If somebody is a little bit stuck or they know they need some information around college return or the education … what their son and daughter needs around grants or anything, the word out there is kind of, 'Drop down to the Partnership and you'll meet…' you know, whether it's myself or whoever else involved. … The staff at our front desk, I think, are kind of lauded in the area, in terms of the atmosphere and the respect that they give everybody that walks in the door and then we will try and follow it. We'd make sure that we'd follow on with that (Staff, Breamish).*

> *It's about community workers who are in communities, known by communities in different guises, doing a bit of support here, engaging people somewhere else, doing different things, setting up clubs, setting up groups that meet people's needs as they see them that day. And then it's being resourced to when somebody turns around and says, 'Well my child has just left school and I don't know what to do with him or', you know, 'Here's the referral'. And it's a referral from somebody they trust at that stage. But you're not talking about something that happens in even three years sometimes (Staff, Teviot).*

The emphasis on local presence and outreach as a way of involving the local community was reflected in the patterns of referral found in the IRIS data. As part of the registration process, individuals receiving educational or employment supports were asked how they first heard of SICAP services. A very significant group (45 per cent) had heard about the services from a government department or State agency. Word of mouth through family and friends was an important source of information (mentioned by 20 per cent). Almost a fifth (18 per cent) had heard through a local community group or being involved in another Goal 1 activity. One in six had heard through publicity or information campaigns, including social media or websites. What is worth noting is that the different sources of information are used by distinct groups of people in terms of the deprivation level of their neighbourhood (Figure 5.8). Involvement through local community groups or Goal 1 activities appears to attract the most deprived individuals. Individuals who hear through a government body or State agency have lower levels of deprivation, most likely reflecting the less disadvantaged profile of those availing of self-employment supports (see McGuinness et al., 2016). Similarly, those who use social media or websites as a source of information are less deprived than other groups. These patterns highlight the role

of community development work in engaging very deprived individuals in educational and employment supports. Local community groups also emerged as a point of contact for a range of vulnerable groups, including Travellers, those experiencing homelessness, lone parents and young people. In addition, family and friends were an important source of referral for those from the new communities, highlighting the importance of word of mouth in access to services.

FIGURE 5.8   AVERAGE POBAL HD DEPRIVATION LEVEL OF NEIGHBOURHOOD BY HOW BENEFICIARIES HEARD ABOUT SICAP SERVICES
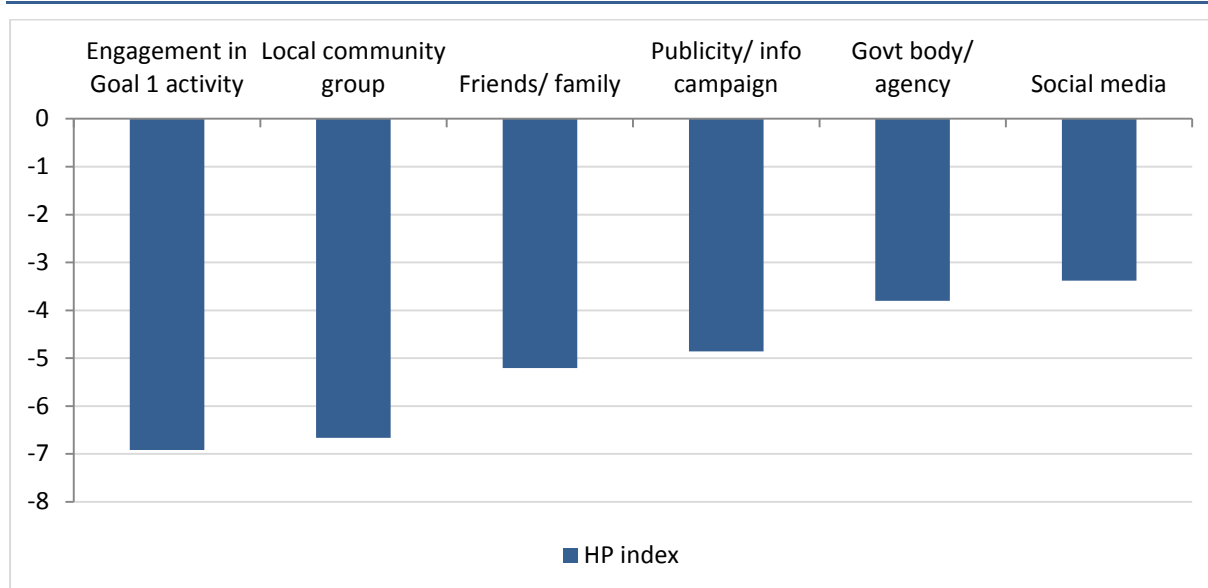
Source: IRIS Database 2016.

Offering courses on a flexible basis in terms of time of day was also seen as facilitating community involvement.

> *It's how we set up … what we offer as well is so important in trying to reduce the barriers, so we're trying to run programmes where there's childcare on site or run the programmes between school hours, so maybe starting at ten and finishing at one, so they can do the drop off and the collection. And trying to reduce as much barriers as you can (Staff, Byrns).*

Other stakeholders recognised that the PIs had an advantage in being able to link into harder to reach groups.

> *The partnership … will be able to pull in communities of people and … that community development piece is also attractive to people. … And it's like, you know, 'We're with you in the community and we want to support you (Policy stakeholder).*

I think the great advantage of SICAP has been their experience and their ability to put courses on for people, their ability to network and link us in with other people in the community which we don't have (Beneficiary, Tyne).

The representative of Fasney LCDC acknowledged the fact that PIs often deal with the most disadvantaged individuals as a certain 'creaming-off' takes place by other service providers in the area:

And then other national programmes are actually creaming off the ones that they can help and it leaves the harder to reach and the harder to help people for SICAP to deal with. Which obviously takes longer to bring someone through the programme./…/ The people who are left unemployed are the ones with the even worse educational background or no employment record at all. And, you know, to get them to the employment market is harder, whereas if someone's only short-term unemployed, they go on another national programme through DSP and they quickly find employment. Obviously, it's good that they got employment, but the ones that SICAP have to deal with are the harder to reach ones.

A similar view was expressed by Teviot LCDC who saw SICAP as addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged:

The most deserving or, you know, the least likely to be able to assist themselves people. So I think there's definitely a place for it [the programme] (LCDC, Teviot).

These perspectives were echoed in the individual and group interviews with beneficiaries. One man living in direct provision reported that:

Mostly I come here because, you know, I trust these people. So … you come and tell your whole real story because this [the local centre] is here (Beneficiary, Harthope).

The participants interviewed often reported how they viewed the PIs as more approachable and that they would have lacked the confidence to engage with statutory services.

It kind of gave me the confidence to say, well, you can go in and do that (Beneficiary, Harthope).

I wouldn't have gone for the course. … Without the kind of Tús scheme that I was on, I probably wouldn't have even have left the house, you

know. It was like, one of the women, she pushed me towards going for the course. … It wasn't that I didn't want to, I just didn't have the confidence and they were, like, 'No, we think you should' and printed out all the leaflets and everything. And they were like, 'We're just going to leave them here on your desk, you know, and have a look', like. But it was good, yeah, they all kind of encouraged me to do it (Beneficiary, Byrns).

Many participants emphasised the way in which they were made to feel at ease, with staff aware of their anxiety and lack of confidence.

They make you feel at ease. Even when I went in on my first day there was an older woman … on reception and like that, I was really nervous, … I had to bring my mam with me, like, I was that nervous, but she was instantly talking to me and my mam. And it was just the sense of, like, comfort, you know, it's kind of like you're going into a friendly place, not, kind of, you know, so formal (Beneficiary, Byrns).

I started with the CV course, which was very, very good because it was something that I was struggling with for quite a long time and I thought, I suppose they were the same people who delivered both courses, but they were very sensitive to people's anxiety and insecurity about it and very much dealing on a one-to-one basis, dealing with the individual (Beneficiary, Teviot).

The PIs thus played an important role in engaging more hard to reach groups but also in acting as a gateway for moving on to other education and training provision. Staff reported that they tended to offer short 'taster' courses as a way of encouraging people to engage in longer-term learning.

We have adult education programmes, you know, cooking, sewing, those low threshold activities to introduce people then to other programmes that might be happening… further afield (Staff, Harthope).

We run a range of different taster courses here ourselves and those courses are to give people a feel for different career areas and then with the view to them progressing on to further training full modules. So here we offer a few minor awards, so we do a care skills QQI, care skills module, we do work experience modules, we do a health-related fitness module, and then other taster courses, for example, beauty therapy taster courses, trade tasters. So those courses are like short, snappy, maybe eight to ten weeks long and it gives people a feel for if that's an area they want to commit to or go down. And then we just follow up on

their personal action plan towards the end of the course and if it is an area they want to go down, we help them to apply for courses, let them know what grants are available to them and then, if they decide 'this isn't for me', then we kind of will discuss then what they might like to do instead (Staff, Byrns).

These courses could provide a non-threatening environment in which participants could start to re-engage with learning but the courses were also intended as a means of facilitating participants' personal development and involvement in the local community.

There's a high population of young people under 25 [in this area] who've never worked, right, and there's drugs. I mean, we have one of the highest suicide levels … in the country. It's just not real. And there's a hard to reach group there. So we've initiated kickboxing. So we bring them in through kickboxing, so as they're learning kickboxing from the leading professional in the country, by the way, in kickboxing, there's also a whole load of personal development stuff to do and they've accepted both sides of that. They don't see it as a curriculum, but they accepted both sides of it. So, there's control, there's self-discipline, there's learning about themselves, there's learning about their abilities and talents and the whole idea is that some of those kickboxing will end up with [a staff member] on the taster courses, you know. These kids couldn't be reached in any other way (Staff, Byrns).

It's been a long time since they engaged in any form of lifelong learning and they need to change career paths or whatever, you know, it can be a very traumatic thing and as I said earlier, you know, they won't automatically embrace the formal educational system automatically. So actually getting them into, you know, taster courses, different types of things, that they get used to coming back into a room, working together and the group dynamic going again (Staff, Heriot).

The beneficiaries interviewed emphasised the importance of involvement with the PI in boosting their self-confidence and helping them re-engage with formal learning.

That was, I think, the most amazing thing I did because I met people in the same circumstances as myself. But the help for me was really growing as a person. Thanks to that course, I went back to university (Beneficiary, Teviot).

The Partnership are great, you know. They've been very good to me, they've helped me out, fairly, when they can and if they can in printing stuff and stuff like that, getting the college, the funding and that has helped me scrape by, you know what I mean. … I really found a great power in education, I really did. Because I left school at 14, I couldn't write a sentence. Two years ago when I went in to the return to learning, I really found a new life in education (Beneficiary, Breamish).

A woman living in direct provision reported that:

When I came here, I didn't know what to do. I was so bored … I've done a few courses with them and that's how I got to know about them and it was through the volunteer centre, which sent me to the conversation classes, which in turn… started putting me through the courses, the integration courses, diversity courses, you know, getting ready for work; fit for life courses. And I'm actually progressing and continuing with other things … which these courses have actually led me, you know, to get into contact with some more organisations (Beneficiary, Heriot).

Respondents reported that the PIs operated in a different way to statutory services and thus individuals who may have been wary of statutory services were more likely to approach the local partnership companies for assistance.

We have a throughput of … individuals where we give one-to-one advice and information on access to government services, in particular social welfare, where people want to go back to work or … are wondering whether it's viable. And they're not going to go to the social welfare. So to get independent advice. Or we get people who have done something that may be inappropriate with social welfare and they need to figure a way out (Staff, Harthope).

I think for the residents and for the people that walk through the door … we're independent to an extent in terms of how we work with the individuals that come in and we're a confidential space as well. So no matter what's going on for them, they know that they can tell us, they can tell us in good faith and we can find a pathway for them and I think that's key for the relationship that we have with the wider community (Staff, Breamish).

They're not doing a sort of the authority and the threatening thing or there's none of that, do you know? They listen to you, you know, they actually they come across as if they genuinely want to help you, as opposed to get this number off the books ASAP, do you know what I

mean? … It's very nice to be treated like that. So, it's a completely different feel to, say, the welfare office (Beneficiary, Teviot).

5.5   USING A HOLISTIC APPROACH

CEOs and PI staff emphasised the way in which their work was guided by community development principles, providing a more holistic way of working with marginalised individuals, families and groups. This involved a person-centred approach:

We take the time really to work with an individual around their goals, around where they see themselves and what their educational goals and opportunities they want to take advantage of (Staff, Breamish).

You could have someone that will come up for the jobs centre, they need help with a CV and then you realise, 'Do you know something, they need a bit of counselling, there's a problem there,' or there could be abuse … it's such a daunting thing for them and they need to go on a personal development course before they go for a job, or we run an emotional support service, kind of a counselling service here free of charge and through the meeting with them, they might disclose that they are really struggling with something and we'd offer that service to them. They all run alongside each other, all these services (Staff, Fasney).

From this perspective, PIs saw SICAP, along with other sources of funding, as a means of addressing these broader goals. For them, the starting point was thus the needs of the individual or group rather than the programme structures. The organisations thus emphasised continuity in their overall mission, while recognising changes in the funding and reporting structures over time.

Each of the organisations are largely doing what they did themselves before, like you know. So, and the reality is most of what they do or large chunks of what they do fits into what SICAP says, if you know what I mean. So, I would suggest that there's probably not a lot of them, and this would be the same for the partnership companies broadly speaking in my view anyway, you know when we're doing this, this and this what does SICAP say? 'That's okay, we can still do this, this and this with the SICAP' (Staff, Harthope).

In terms of the approach here and the management style is about saying the client is at the centre, the groups are at the centre. … Our job then is manage the resources that become available to the organisation to the benefit of those. However, if you listen to funders they're, 'Ah, they're

only LES clients, oh, they're only SICAP,' … If you use the [term] SICAP to [participants], they haven't a clue (Staff, Breamish).

Thus, involving people in community education courses, for example, was seen not only as a way of improving skills but as a way of strengthening local communities by building networks (see above).

The fact that the PIs often provided a range of other employment and education support services meant that they could often secure a seamless transition between services for beneficiaries.

Long-term unemployment, as I said, it's our LES does the most of the interaction and … and they cross refer into us then if there's CV clinics and interview skills that they're not doing, that we can do (Staff, Teviot).

There would be nobody else providing the whole integrated approach that we do. You know, where we can work with people, say, on the various programmes, you know with our LES, our jobs club et cetera. You know, you can take people from a very low base and work them up through the system (Staff, Heriot).

The emphasis on one-to-one work with participants was seen as facilitating a more holistic approach and providing the opportunity for people to open up about potential difficulties.

One of the advantages of SICAP that we do get that very, I suppose, early on contact with the client through the registration and through the personal action plan to have those really deep conversations about, you know, what your journey could look like in the future (Staff, Byrns).

At the same time, respondents described challenges in adopting a holistic approach given the need to report work under the three goals separately, the exclusion of specific groups from coverage, and constraints on the time to work with beneficiaries on an intensive one-to-one basis – themes that are further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.6   PROMOTING LOCAL COLLABORATION

While the PIs were engaged in direct service delivery, they saw themselves as playing a crucial role in promoting local collaboration among statutory and community agencies and organisations, thus developing synergies at local level (see also Chapter 2). Staff in the case-study areas pointed to a number of

instances where structures had been put in place, often at the initiative of the PI, to co-ordinate activity relating to employment supports, education provision and community care.

> *The work involves connecting really with the entire community … We'd connect with the community of residents and potential students from a full lifecycle approach to it, we'd work with early years and child care services practitioners, all the way through to the primary schools. Then following up with the secondary schools with supports in and around there, alternative education settings, youth and community groups and then on to adult learning and mature students (Staff, Breamish).*

> *And now another very important fora as well is the interagency, employment interagency, which has evolved and … that was set up by SICAP. … It has grown into a multiagency task force now … made up of … the Department of Social Protection, the [Named] County Council, the Education and Training Board, the national learning network would be part of it as well. … We thrash out a lot of issues in regard to training and education and enterprise (Staff, Tyne).*

> *We've set up a new community care committee as well because we have identified a need in the area through the public health nurses and the local Gardaí (Staff, Fasney).*

The perceived neutrality of the PIs was seen as facilitating their playing the role of 'honest broker' in forging alliances among locally based organisations.

> *We still hold a neutral space even among the services, we're not competing with them (Staff, Breamish).*

Respondents also reported that the PIs were uniquely placed to have an overview of local provision:

> *A big part of my work and I suppose that's where my strengths were, would be inter-agency work, looking at the whole spectrum, if it's youth or drugs or families or whatever and trying to bring those services together to work in a much more integrated way. … That's a big part of my work. But also having the, I suppose, an overview and an analysis of what's going on and where the gaps are, rather than trying to duplicate (Staff, Inishmurry).*

In some instances, PIs acted to help provide a voice for local communities in responding to issues which affected them, such as planning or physical access.

> *It's very much community development principles and enabling people to develop their own journey and their own path and to become involved and engaged and connected into decision-makers, where decision-makers are making decisions, so that the voice is heard around the table (Staff, Heriot).*

Having the local development company in place, with SICAP funding as a base, was seen as enhancing the ability to leverage money for other services to be provided locally:

> *The existence brought an additional childcare initiative to the area … but if the partnership wasn't there to play that role, that money would not come to this area (Staff, Breamish).*

> *It's critical to the maintenance of an organisation like this, you know, as a core anchor. It can make lots of other things possible (Staff, Ettrick).*

> *I think SICAP was very much an enabler for us because it allows us to fund important parts of the core of the organisation, which enabled us to take on all those other programmes to run two large LES services, the … Tús scheme … All those kind of large kind of programmes, they are stuck on to basically the trunk of the tree, which SICAP, not entirely on its own, but that kind of enables that kind of work and having certain offices, et cetera (Staff, Byrns).*

The role of SICAP was seen as particularly important in a context where disadvantaged neighbourhoods had not benefited from economic recovery and these areas were still dealing with the erosion of locally-based services over the course of the recession.

> *The impact of the recession is still being hugely felt in an awful lot of very disadvantaged communities around the country. So, those issues have grown, and issues such as mental health have really, really increased. And then what you have at the same time is a reduction in infrastructure and particularly autonomous infrastructure where you had at one stage a range of funded projects to address these issues, on the ground, in these communities. That has gone now. So, on the one hand, you have an entrenching and issues being far more difficult, and increasing levels of these issues emerging, and, on the other hand, … a reduced infrastructure with which to address the issues (Policy stakeholder).*

In addition, PIs had developed a niche by working with DEASP in providing support for those embarking on self-employment. Here the specific expertise of local workers was seen as crucial in providing support for participants.

> *The DSP usually value what we do because it's the bit that they can't do... They don't have the same experiences that we do. … You want somebody that has the business bit of it, that has the business acumen. But you also want somebody that has the empathy and, you know, not to say, 'You fucking eejit, you'll never survive, you know. Get out'. You want somebody that's really going to be empathetic and really try to move things forward and be as understanding as they possibly can (Staff, Harthope).*

In many local areas, co-operation with the ETB in relation to referral to courses and even course provision was evident:

> *[The ETB] is a very good example where it still works extremely well, because they contract us to do certain work and we provide supports to some of their services, but it's all with agreement. So for instance our community workers provide a community recruitment base for a lot of the community education courses that [they] provide in the city. … They don't have either the connection at the ground level to be able to get people out nor do they have the resources to support those people anyway (Staff, Teviot).*

> *To give an example the ETB … have ETOL classes, they're English language classes for foreigners and the people who do those classes need an opportunity to practice their English. So, in SICAP in Goal 1 to help integration we've set up … conversation groups for migrants and whenever we do that we recruit some of our people for the conversation classes from the ETB language classes. And the ETB come to us every now and again and register people for the language classes from among the participants for the conversation classes (Staff, Heriot).*

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has looked at the benefits of SICAP from the perspective of PI staff, beneficiaries and policy stakeholders at national and local level. The majority of PI CEOs feel that SICAP provision has largely been effective in addressing needs under the three goals of strengthening local communities, education and lifelong learning, and employment. In the interviews, respondents highlighted the value added provided by SICAP. Firstly, the programme was seen as allowing PIs to respond to local need. The areas covered by the programme differ significantly in their demographic profile, employment structures and level of deprivation. This

diversity is reflected in the variation in the gender, age and ethnic profile of those receiving individual education and employment supports. PIs emphasise the way in which their presence at local level facilitates the identification of needs that are not being met by existing provision and their role in providing or prompting provision to meet these needs. Secondly, respondents emphasise the way in which SICAP involves working with the most marginalised individuals, groups and communities. Despite significant variation between lots in their deprivation profile, beneficiaries tend to have disadvantaged profiles, highlighting the targeting of the most marginalised at local level (see also McGuinness et al., forthcoming). Success in engaging with hard to reach groups is seen as being predicated on an evolving relationship of trust and openness with the local community based on local presence and outreach activities. Analysis of administrative data indicates the importance of local community groups in engaging the most disadvantaged individuals in education and employment supports. Thirdly, respondents emphasise the importance of taking a holistic approach to working with the local community, with, for example, taster courses offered at local level providing a way of creating community bonds as well as a gateway into further education and employment opportunities. The involvement of PIs in the provision of other employment and community services is seen as reinforcing their role as a 'one-stop shop' resource in the local area. Fourthly, PIs see themselves as uniquely placed to act as a broker in securing local collaboration around the identification of needs and service provision.

CHAPTER 6

The challenges in implementing SICAP

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws on in-depth interviews with CEOs, staff, participants and policy stakeholders to examine the challenges involved in implementing SICAP. It draws together five main themes identified in previous chapters: lack of flexibility in responding to local needs; the adoption of a narrow conception of community development; the trade-off between targets and intensity of interventions; the perceived inadequacy and lack of transparency in funding; and the administrative burden involved in the programme.

6.2 LACK OF FLEXIBILITY

A dominant theme emerging from the interviews was the perceived lack of flexibility in the programme. This lack of flexibility centred on two main aspects: the specification of the target groups; and the difficulties in adapting provision to address local need.

Chapter 3 has examined PI perceptions of the SICAP target groups and their suggestions for potential adjustment to the specified groups. In the interviews, respondents highlighted the need for a 'cradle to grave' approach to community development, which encompassed all age groups and lifecycle stages. For this reason, many were highly critical of the exclusion of older people from among the groups mentioned in the programme guidelines, although they had been part of the previous social inclusion programme. The involvement of older people was seen by many PI staff as crucial to broader community engagement and thus a greater sense of social cohesion in the local area.

> *Older people have so much to give on a community level and they can really activate and, you know, it's good for them, it's good for their communities, it's good for everything and then suddenly they're no longer a target group. … Like some of these people, particularly the carers now and the older carers that might be sitting at home with someone with Alzheimer's, they'll see no one for the rest of the day (Staff, Fasney).*

> *Older people have been excluded from this programme, I think it's a poor decision because older people, from a society point of view, you want them engaged in things be able to offer support to them, whether it is in information supports or training. Soft training supports or engagement*

supports is actually, financially, if you did a cost benefit analysis of it, it's financially beneficial for the State for them to be engaged, rather than sitting in their houses or in nursing homes, do you know what I mean, which is where they end up if they get too disengaged (Staff, Ettrick).

The specification of an age cut-off was seen as drawing somewhat arbitrary boundaries in addressing the needs of individuals:

You just simply cannot have a social inclusion programme that excludes regardless of circumstance over 65s and this idea, 'Ah no but you can deal with it through groups.' That's great if there's a group and it's the senior citizens group in [area X] or whatever. But, if Johnny comes in or Mary comes in and there's a whole series of issues. … I'm 64 so I come in here and I'm, yes, flavour of the month. I'm 66 and I come in here and I've the exact same issues and it's like, 'Sorry we can't deal with you' (Staff, Harthope).

This exclusion posed particular challenges for PIs working in areas with an older age profile, where they felt they could not be responsive to local need.

In some of our areas like where one of our member organisations is in [name of area] I mean that would have no flexibility for local need. That is a much more mature area and the issues around senior citizens is huge (Staff, Harthope).

There's a lot, especially in a rural county like [this], you have a lot of elderly living in very rural areas with no access to public transport and, you know, no means of doing anything (Staff, Heriot).

At the other end of the age spectrum, PIs reported constraints in addressing the needs of children and young people (see also Chapter 3). Some of this activity was counted as non-caseload work, but this was not seen as adequately reflecting the importance of early intervention in order to prevent disengagement from school and longer-term disadvantage.

Like we come across people technically who wouldn't qualify as individuals because they're in school or even maybe who have gone to college. But they're first generation going to college and coming from very difficult areas. They probably have supportive families and backgrounds to manage to get to that but they're very vulnerable still and they often need continuous assistance to make sure they don't fall off the horse (Staff, Harthope).

In several instances, PIs sought out other sources of funding in order to address local needs in a holistic way.

> *The five kind of work areas, if that's the right way of describing them, also include children and families and health and wellbeing, both of which are, in our view, key to tackling poverty and disadvantage, but they don't find an easy space within SICAP. In fact, we've struggled to kind of make some of that happen and have been more or less successful at times to kind of it give it a place within SICAP and are fortunate that we have additional funders (Staff, Byrns).*

In general, respondents highlighted the need to have greater flexibility in developing ways of responding to local need, given the diversity in the socio-demographic profile of the community across areas.

> *While we have some common national needs, the dynamics in each area are very, very different, depending on if there are new populations in the area, depending on the number of Travellers, depending on unemployment. So I think the plan should be customised to the target area rather than trying to get everything grafted onto the national plan. … For example, there are emerging needs … we've a lot of new populations, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors coming into the country during the course of this year. Partnership companies are going to have to respond to them but under their current SICAPs are really probably going to struggle to figure where exactly there's going to be that support in. I'm not talking about flexibility to the point of people just doing what they like, but I think people should be allowed to create a plan based on the local demographics and then to be fitted into the SICAP plan. But allowed, yes, some more flexibility, not autonomy, but that people [will] make a valid case when they look at the local demographics for some flexibility to do things that are slightly different or slightly outside the SICAP brief (Policy stakeholder).*

> *The fact that it's a national programme that has no differentiation between priorities in rural communities and urban communities … and the needs within a rural community are different. Do you know? The needs might be the same, but the challenges to address those needs is probably different (Staff, Ettrick).*

A second theme emerged in relation to the need for PIs to achieve a balance of activity across the three goals. For many respondents, this lack of flexibility revealed what they saw as the narrow conception of community development embedded in the programme, an issue discussed in greater detail in the following section. PIs emphasised the differences across areas in the scope and nature of

existing education and employment supports. As a result, they occupied a very different position depending on the local landscape (see Chapters 2 and 5). The requirement to have a balance across the three goals was seen as hindering their flexibility to address local need, especially in the changing unemployment situation. Many respondents, for example, felt that employment supports were offered by a range of other providers locally (and in some cases, the PI itself offered LES and/or Jobs Club) so being required to spend a specified amount of money on employment supports was seen as unnecessary.

> *SICAP's a blunt instrument because … it was written centrally in Dublin and just applied to every county as if every county had the exact same situation on the ground (Staff, Heriot).*

> *We have a Local Employment Service, but yet we have a target on employment. That doesn't make sense to me. We should be able to concentrate somewhere else (Staff, Teviot).*

> *The third, third, third is too rigid. So in certain areas I would think here we should have much more on Goals 1 and 2 and less on 3. There are Local Employment Services and other activation-based programmes around that could be taking up or should be doing that work and we should be doing the areas of work that are more appropriate (Staff, Harthope).*

As a result, respondents suggested that PIs should have more discretion over the allocation of funds between the three goals:

> *I think that SICAP should be structured so that the Local Development Company has discretion over 30 per cent of the budget or whatever to spend as it sees fit and to target the groups that it feels will benefit most from this funding (Staff, Heriot).*

More fundamentally, it was generally felt that the focus had been moved away from community development and the requirements failed to recognise the interconnectedness of the three sets of activities in addressing local need.

> *I would like to see Goal 1 more resourced, to be honest, because I think, you know, that's the important piece. Because … Goal 1 can be a referral mechanism into Goal 2, Goal 3, so … there is synergy between the three goals. So I would like to see Goal 1 better resourced and I would like to see Goal 1 better resourced for the horizontal principles to break down the barriers for engagement (Staff, Heriot).*

Community development is one of the goals of the programme but it's completely tacked on. It's got no influence throughout. And even then it's very much sort of minimised to Goal 1 and I don't know why would that be. Community development applies to individuals as much as it applies to groups (Staff, Harthope).

In addition, the majority of respondents viewed the programme as overly prescriptive and thus as counter to the underlying philosophy of community development.

Community development is not social engineering. It is about local people identifying local issues and finding collective solutions for the betterment of their communities. If you prescribe what local groups should do, it is not community development, it is a service and that is not what community projects are about (Staff, Harthope).

LCDCs have been tasked as the funders and managers of SICAP (see Chapter 4) but many representatives argued that they had had little input into how the programme was used to address needs at local level. Concern was also expressed about the potential imposition of financial penalties for failure to reach targets.

It would be also good, I think, if the local LCDC … are able to input more so into the targets, the identification of targets, the setting of the targets. There is a concern, not just at the local development company level or the programme implementer level, but around the table at the LCDC, about the imposition of financial penalties on the local development company or the programme implementer if they fail to reach particular targets and that's sort of fairly much set out in black and white. There's a hard and fast formula there for the level of penalty to be imposed and there is a bit of a concern there that that is probably very, shall we say, black and white, that there's no flexibility or seems to be little flexibility in how that is implemented and delivered (LCDC representative).

6.3   NARROW CONCEPTION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A recurring theme in the interviews was that SICAP had adopted a narrow conception of community development. A number of respondents argued that the programme was more focused on activation than on community development:

It's not a social inclusion programme, it's an activation programme and everything on IRIS is indicative of that. … They're either in education or in employment or trying to get into education or trying to get into employment. There's nothing say around personal development to get to

the point where they could get into education. So, it's just very rigid and it doesn't fit the needs of the communities that we work with. … Like in a community like this if people are at the point where they can work, they can work. They don't need us, you know really. … It's really the communities that are not work or education ready that we need to be working with and the system is not designed to see them, which is a big issue (Staff, Harthope).

This focus was seen as too narrow to address the needs of many disadvantaged individuals and groups who were not 'work ready' (see Chapter 3):

There's a simplistic approach to what social inclusion is about, which is about getting people into jobs. There's only so many people who are at a stage when they're ready to be put into jobs and they're assuming that is the social problem that exists (Staff, Ettrick).

It's created a culture of individualised casework approach which isn't really very community development in approach (Staff, Harthope).

The interviewees highlighted the importance for community development to adopt a bottom-up approach to identifying and addressing local need. However, many PIs reported that the move towards a top-down approach under SICAP had fundamentally changed the dynamic away from one of partnership towards one of service delivery.

SICAP … referred to partnerships … as programme implementers and didn't, in my view, give adequate recognition to the history, the knowledge, the insight, the experiences of the partnership in delivering social inclusion-based work over many years. … Creating this sense that you're implementing a programme, you are not a partner in any way in social inclusion, you are an implementer of a programme (Staff, Breamish).

More importantly, when were they going to sit down with us and say, 'You're the programme implementers, this is what we'd like to implement. What do you think?' … We had a struggle over PPS numbers that went on for months and all of sudden, they've just done a complete U turn on it. And really, the way that's communicated to us is, 'Dear programme implementer, we are going to make extra fields on IRIS because you now are going to be recording PPS numbers for back to work enterprise allowance clients.' That's how we find out about all things like this. Not great (Staff, Byrns).

It went too far into prescribing and describing what should literally happen on the ground. … I think not to underestimate people's commitment to doing it as well. Sometimes it's like, 'Oh, they'd go mad if we didn't control them.' I think that's a very parent/child approach as opposed to a parity of esteem approach (Staff, Breamish).

As discussed in the previous section and chapter, programme and reporting requirements were seen as reducing the capacity to engage in innovative practice to engage hard to reach groups:

I do think that to engage certain groups, so to engage your communities, to engage Travellers, we need to be allowed to be a lot more creative and innovative. We need to be allowed to do the cultural piece of work that maybe brings them in in the first instance and engage with them and do that piece of work then thereafter, about their education, their training, their employment opportunities. Then you can always link them into social enterprise, whatever it might be. But there has to be a bigger scope under Goal 1, in my opinion, to allow [us] to engage the group in whatever way (Staff, Tyne).

If some of that space and time could be strategically engaging with other organisations to build innovative programmes, to plan, to think, to develop, to engage. Whereas now, if you can't fit that meeting into some category that has been set out as SICAP in either community development or one-to-one activation, there's very limited opportunity for you to just sit down with another community organisation and say, 'We have a social inclusion issue here. Is there an opportunity to build something? Who else can we bring in, what else can we do here?' Like, the timeframe is very limited around that because you're thinking all the time, I can give an hour to this, I have no other time because for the rest of the week, I have clients in the door (Staff, Ettrick).

The conception of community development adopted in the programme was seen as being embedded in the reporting requirements. As a result, many staff, particularly those working on Goal 1 activities, found it difficult to adequately capture the range of work they carried out with local groups and communities.

I've done interventions … that are incredibly valuable to community groups, but because there aren't enough interventions they can't be [adequately] recorded. It's a problem with SICAP, is that the programme, in reviewing and monitoring, it doesn't actually capture the breadth of the work (Staff, Linhope).

Similarly, the need to record the progress of local community groups in terms of their participation in decision-making structures was not seen as reflecting the reality and diversity of the purpose of group activities.

> *Their Goal 1 objective is around supporting participation within decision-making structures. … Most of the groups that we're working with, that's not where their need is right now, you know, their need could be, 'Well, actually, we need someone to … to help to us pay for the insurance to hold this event, or to pay for the lighting in our community centre so we can keep it open, so we can bring in the young people at night time.' (Staff, Ettrick).*

> *The model in SICAP that you are, you know, starting with a group and progressing them on and then letting them… It doesn't happen in reality. … If you are going to be asking that you have, you know, area-based community groups and issue-based community groups that really are local community groups representing their communities, that needs a whole piece of work and each worker is dedicated to that. None of that is captured in IRIS (Policy stakeholder).*

Many groups, it was felt, served a specific and important purpose, but were not necessarily interested in becoming representatives for the community.

> *It's all about sort of the stage development of a group. Sure that's not the only work we do in groups. Groups do work. That's what we support them with. … But the only thing they want to hear is their stage development so it's ludicrous. It's ludicrous. There's nothing to refer to advocacy. There's nothing to refer to predevelopment work. …. Like a lot of our organisations and throughout the country you would support tenants groups. You would be supporting the same tenants group for 25 years. That doesn't mean there's a lack of progression. It means there are tenant issues (Staff, Harthope).*

> *The ultimate outcome for a group in the programme is that they are strategically tiered at national level. Now, most of the community groups in this city have no interest in being a strategic player at a national level, they want to run a crèche, or they want to run the field, or they want to provide adult education classes for the people in the community … So even that, do you know what I mean, the fundamentals of community development aren't really applied in the design of the programme (Staff, Ettrick).*

> *You're going to have certain groups that are always going to be at that stage but … it's vital in a community in a well-functioning community setting, you know, that there's civic minded people that can come and they meet … from 10 to 12 every Thursday morning for, you know, 'til the end of time. Rather than you're building people up so that they then are happy to stand outside the Dáil campaigning and sort of thing (Staff, Harthope).*

Current metrics for capturing work with local groups were seen as narrow, focusing on the number of groups and contacts, rather than the potential societal impact, while recognising the challenges in assessing these broader outcomes (see Chapter 4).

> *When we write … we had a training [event] and we did that or whatever. But, I mean as regards whether that's having an impact or how that group is having an impact and what that group is doing. And then the health benefits and the social benefits and the example that these people are. And people are engaged in a civic manner socially all these have huge benefits. It's an example to their kids and the kids are going to school and they see you have to get back to society. I mean I don't know how you capture that. I mean it's a daunting task (Staff, Harthope).*

> *The Goal 1 at the moment, the only thing we're measured on is how many groups that we have met with at least two times and how many groups have we supported … to represent themselves or the target group on a higher decision-making structure … and that doesn't capture what we should be doing. I mean, granted, it is important for community representatives to have a capacity and skills to represent [themselves] … but that may be not where they're at, or that might not be where they need support and actually, you know, there's a whole other way that we are working with community groups that isn't being valued or recognised (Staff, Ettrick).*

As well as community development, interagency co-operation is named as a cross-cutting theme within SICAP. Chapters 2 and 5 have described the role of the PIs in facilitating networks of local agencies and providers and in leveraging additional services for the local community. However, PIs felt that this work was not easily recorded within SICAP reporting structures and thus was not as visible as was warranted.

> *There should be metrics for assessing … the capacity to lever other programmes and to support strategic collaboration should be a performance indicator for SICAP and I think that's the lost opportunity. … It doesn't mean that you don't have specific outcomes or outputs from*

that programme, as well. But the leverage is a legitimate activity. And strategic collaboration is (Staff, Ettrick).

Community development was seen as a long-term process, reflecting relationships of trust built up with the local community over a protracted period of time (see Chapter 5). However, the timeframe of the programme was seen as very short:

I think two and three quarter year, two years, eight months programme is as daft as a brush. You change nothing in the community. If you use the Trutz Haase deprivation index, and you look at changes that might occur from Census to Census, unless there's a demolition and rebuild, there's virtually no change and the type of work we're involved in takes much longer than two years, nine months (Staff, Byrns).

Real change takes time and there are many setbacks. The programme is set up to get easy wins. This won't make the type of change that Irish society needs (Staff, Harthope).

The focus of SICAP is to work with the most disadvantaged individuals and groups in our community. This requires quality long-term interventions that produce meaningful and lasting outcomes. Given the national employment rate and the multiple disadvantages faced by our clients, a reduction in the targets is required to achieve qualitative long lasting outcomes. Additional interventions are required over a longer period of time to work with disadvantaged individuals and communities. Dedicated staff resources are required to work with the harder to reach individuals, i.e. Travellers, NEETS in order to achieve meaningful outcomes (PI survey response).

6.4 TRADE-OFF BETWEEN TARGETS AND INTENSITY OF INTERVENTIONS

The programme specifies a minimum of two interventions to be counted for key performance indicator and target purposes but individuals who require, for example, five interventions 'count' the same as those who require two. Targets are therefore based on throughput (that is, the number of individuals supported under Goals 2 and 3, for example) rather than reflecting the intensity of interventions. A recurring theme among respondents across all ten case-study areas was that this approach had led to an emphasis on throughput with a resulting neglect of the intensive work needed to support vulnerable individuals and groups. There is therefore a tension between an individual requiring more intensive support, though not having 'countable value', and the potential for

penalties to accrue when targets in terms of throughput are not met. Staff reported that many individuals required multiple meetings in order to provide them with the necessary support.

> *When you have someone that's really that far from the labour market, it is hard with the way the SICAP is, that two interventions and … they're counted. Where I could have a client like, for example, last year I'd a Traveller man, I think I had 19 interventions. So, and that's me literally helping him set up his bank account. It's everything, you know, it's very much a hand holding exercise. But he's self-employed now (Staff, Breamish).*

> *I'd say we probably hit eight to ten interventions with each group. It's not two. Like to me that's not what it's about (Staff, Breamish).*

> *It's very unlikely that a client after two interventions would be in a position to progress (Staff, Byrns).*

As a result, respondents suggested there should be a shift in future programmes towards emphasising the qualitative aspects of their work and weighting targets in terms of the numbers of interventions.

> *And I think that we … need to look at quality work now. … If we could broaden it now … weight the interventions that we do and the type of people that we're working with. If a kind of a fairer kind of way of weighing up the work we do. … It's not just numbers … there's a lot of qualitative work (Staff, Breamish).*

> *I think that that combination of targets of people and groups on the one hand and what you do with them and if you want to quantify that, then quantify it. But where you say we set a minimum for the number of people in groups that we want you to work with and we set a minimum of the number of interventions and a distribution is then up to you. That actually would facilitate and recognise the in-depth work (Staff, Byrns).*

The issue of the intensity of supports required was coming increasingly to the fore in a context of declining unemployment rates where those not in employment were increasingly marginalised and often faced multiple challenges.

> *I think we've seen a change maybe in the client profile from when we started back in 2015. We're now supporting individuals who are more and more distant from the labour market. And we're finding that, I suppose, the prescribed two interventions under SICAP isn't always*

sufficient to move them forward into employment and that we're finding that more and more and more. So it's a combination of different interventions and some employment training tailored to their needs of course, but also, you know, the one-to-one support is really invaluable as well (Staff, Byrns).

As numbers of unemployed decrease, you find you're dealing with the people that are way more distant from the labour market and they are people that need an awful lot more intervention than the people you would have been dealing with three, four years ago (Staff, Heriot).

Additional issues such as mental health difficulties were apparent among the client group and this group require very intensive supports (see Chapter 3).

One of the things that's coming up constantly for us was a number of referrals for adults who had mental difficulties into our services and we find that really difficult. That was a huge, huge challenge for us under SICAP because we're so numbers focused. The focus on high numbers of targets under SICAP actually makes it extremely difficult to focus really fully on the target groups because, for example, adults with mental health difficulties, they may require, for example, two tutors as opposed to one tutor in a group, or if you're trying to keep low numbers, to try and support their integration (Staff, Linhope).

Overall, SICAP is seen as setting targets which require a significant throughput of individuals with a resulting mismatch with the needs of a client group who often require very intensive levels of engagement. This is viewed as producing perverse incentives regarding engaging the hard to reach groups, thus potentially undermining the value added of the programme.

SICAP in fact is a complete disincentive to deal with the hard to reach. … Even though it says that's what it's supposed to be about but it's completely the opposite like because … there is no value or credit attached under SICAP to deal with the hard to reach, it means you have to engage with them intensively for ever and ever. … Once I deal with you twice … you're counted as one on the system. If I deal with you 102 times it's still one. [Then] … you're faced with financial penalties for failure to meet your targets (Staff, Harthope).

SICAP is too target driven. As a result, there is an imbalance between what the programme wants to do and the high target numbers it sets. The reality of setting high targets is that meaningful work with target groups with low numbers, e.g. Travellers or Roma, will not be undertaken

as they will not yield the targets the programme wishes to see achieved. Therefore the groups who will be targeted to receive support first will be those with the greatest numbers as penalties will be imposed if targets are not reached. In essence, the target numbers end up driving who the target clients are rather than the programme targeting the clients most in need (PI survey response).

The inflexibility of SICAP has resulted in all of the work we were doing in schools with prospective early school leavers, right, being taken out of the caseload and put into non-caseload. Right? And what's not realised, is caseload is our bread and butter. If we don't meet our caseload, we don't have a budget next year. So you're concentrating on that all of the time (Staff, Byrns).

6.5 FUNDING

Chapter 4 highlighted dissatisfaction among PIs regarding the level of funding, with most wanting additional funding to provide more intensive supports to beneficiaries (see Section 4.4). In the case-study visits, many PIs indicated that lack of funding was negatively impacting on staff morale, with frontline staff covering administrative functions and many staff on four day weeks, in several cases working an additional day without pay. A number of PIs highlighted their reliance on fundraising and volunteers to be able to run specific activities. The survey findings also reported a lack of transparency in funding allocation. Analyses of 2015 funding patterns for the previous LCDP programme indicated significant variation across lots in the level of funding and a lack of relationship between funding and deprivation levels (McGuinness et al., 2016). Figure 6.1 shows the average budget per individual receiving education or employment supports under SICAP by lot area in 2016. Marked variation is found in the level of funding, with lower ratios found in parts of Cork, Dublin and Kerry. In contrast, relatively higher per capita funding is found in Limerick, Waterford and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. These figures should be interpreted with some caution as they do not reflect differences in course type and duration across lots (see McGuinness et al., 2016). At the same time, they do point to disparities in the resources available at local level.

Lots vary significantly in size and geographical coverage, leading to different challenges. Smaller lot areas reported lacking the economies of scale to be able to support the necessary management and administrative infrastructure.

We're being funded under a different model that says your administration has to be 25 per cent. And SICAP administration doesn't pay the salary of the CEO and the administrator, full stop. So if you have a big enough budget it will [be possible], but once it gets down it doesn't.

> *And my board are always treading water to try and see what other monies can be brought in that'll match fund the CEO and the administration (Staff, Teviot).*

In another small lot area, staff felt that there was a lack of recognition that they had certain fixed costs such as the CEO 'to have their door open for business' (Staff, Breamish). On the other hand, challenges were also evident for larger lots in having a largescale organisation with many staff while trying to keep a presence in the local community:

> *You could become a mini-Pobal very easy. And by that I mean an administrator of funds coming in and out and nothing much more than that. And how do you stay grounded? So one of the things we are looking at is area bases, for sure. But that's a long-term project. But we also need to stay very grounded. As much as we possibly can, stay within our communities. … Because that's what needed, to get people to kind of use your services, you often need to provide the service close to where people are (Staff, Byrns).*

FIGURE 6.1   ANNUAL AVERAGE BUDGET PER INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT BY LOT, 2016
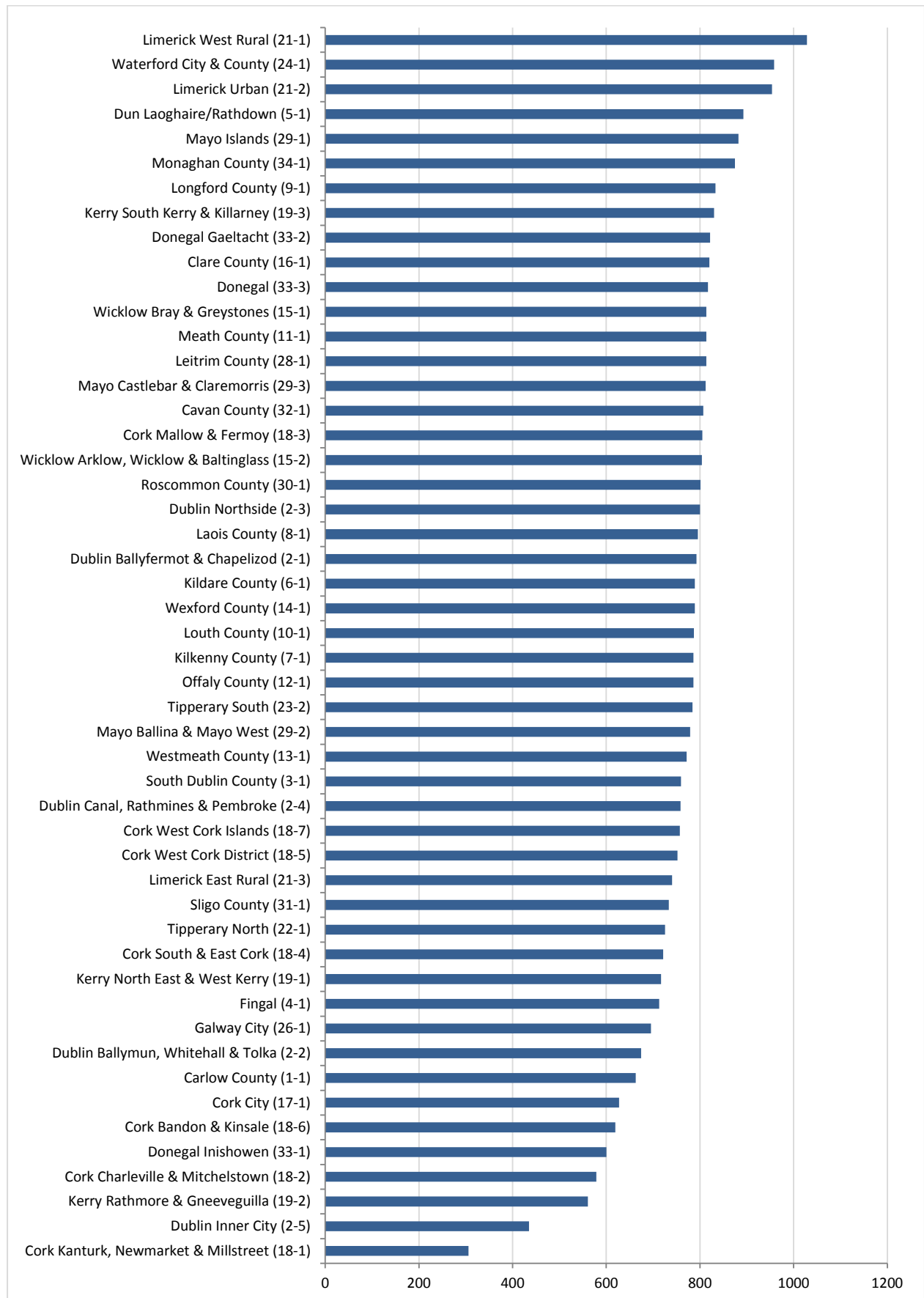
6.6   ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

A final theme emerging from the interviews related to the administrative requirements of SICAP which were seen as burdensome by most of those interviewed. In particular, PIs emphasised the time involved in collecting the information required for the IRIS registration process and maintaining and updating both electronic and paper records (see Chapter 4).

> *One of the big issues for us would be why we have to record on paper as well as on to the IRIS system. You know is there a trust issue there? Because that is just duplication of the work, when we're extremely pressured (Staff, Linhope).*

> *The problem with IRIS as well is that they're requiring us to keep paperwork copies of everything that's on IRIS. And I mean that's just mad duplicity. ... You record it on paper and then you input it which is fine for your first stage. I'd understand that. But, then if you continue to work with that person you have to update the paper version and the IRIS version and just it's a huge amount of work. And then like we worked out there once that [name] who'd be the fastest at inputting would take ten to 15 minutes per individual (Staff, Harthope).*

While this was an issue for PI staff, they were more concerned about the potential impact on their relationship with the local community, with beneficiaries often finding the form overly intrusive and potentially stigmatising.

> *Can we not deal with people a little bit in how they present? I suppose, something I often wonder about, why do we have to, and I mean mine poor communities … time and time again for their information? How many times do they have to tell their story? And how many times do they have to prove they're deserving? (Staff, Breamish).*

> *They're very intrusive. … We get clients who rip them up, clients rip them up (Staff, Linhope).*

> *You're building the trust and a relationship and the form can sometimes - - I find it quite stigmatising. … It's somebody coming in the door and all of a sudden, it's the same questions and the same categories that are associated with … an area that experiences a lot of the same … disadvantage … It's things being classified again, about homelessness, financial circumstances. We're quite selective about when is the right time for this (Staff, Breamish).*

Some staff felt that the registration process often raised issues for individuals which they were not trained to deal with, or in a position to address, through SICAP.

> *What I would take out is some of the stuff that's been gathered in the registration forms around people's financial circumstances and, I think housing, whether they were ever discriminated against, some of those -- there are sensitive questions in it. … My objection to it is that we're not in a position to provide any support around those issues, so I don't know why we're gathering the data. I think it's disrespectful to people to go exploring the ins and outs of their lives, if you're not in a position to do something about it that would be my objection really (Staff, Ettrick).*

> *A person may have particular mental health difficulties or they have all sorts of difficulties and might make it challenging then to sort of spend that time asking questions that are very probing (Staff, Linhope).*

Because of the time and level of information required to complete the registration process, many staff reported that they did not formally record casual queries or specific requests that were likely to result in a short engagement.

> *If somebody comes here and they just want the citizen's advice or, you know, 'My son's in trouble and what'll I do? I don't want to, I couldn't be bothered filling a form.' I'll be honest with you, it's too much trouble for me. It took half, three quarters of an hour. I'm not going to put it on the system (Staff, Harthope).*

> *I suppose we don't record half of what we do, which is a problem (Staff, Byrns).*

Many of these encounters were recorded for their own purposes but not as part of IRIS requirements.

> *A lot of the work that we have is people will come in, you know, a parent may come in to us to talk about, you know, what they need to do and stuff and … we don't record, we can't record that because it's usually just going to be the one conversation.*
>
> *Q. And would you record it for your own purposes?*
>
> *Oh, we'd record it for our own purposes, yeah. You'd have a lot of school students as well would come in and … all they'd need is that one meeting around SUSI, you know (Staff, Breamish).*

The issue of the perceived burden involved in administering SICAP was reinforced by the fact that, for most PIs, SICAP was just one of multiple funding streams. Analyses of financial reports for 2015 mean that it is possible to determine the proportion of funding received from SICAP as opposed to other sources for 32 PIs.[29] Of these, only four received at least half of their funding through SICAP while 14 received a fifth or less of their funding through the programme. A reliance on multiple sources of funding was seen by PIs as administratively onerous, as each required different reporting systems and had different terms and conditions. Many organisations were moving to an integrated registration process internally so they would not have to ask for the same information if, for example, a client is referred from SICAP to LES. There was also a broader issue of needing a management information system that could be used at the PI level:

> There is no one system that gives you all the information and all the businesses and programmes of your organisation, so you can plan a cross-programme process. Most partnership companies are now moving towards one (Staff, Breamish).

However, several PIs reported difficulties in integrating SICAP requirements with other recording tools being used by the organisation as a whole.

6.7   CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has drawn on the in-depth interviews with CEOs, staff, participants and policy stakeholders to highlight some of the main challenges involved in implementing SICAP. Firstly, respondents pointed to a lack of flexibility in the programme as currently conceived. This reflected the lack of a 'cradle to grave' approach, by explicitly excluding older people as a target group and not adequately taking account of the value of early intervention with children and families. PIs functioned in the context of very different policy landscapes, with some working as the sole provider of education and employment supports in more remote rural areas while others were operating in cities or neighbourhoods with multiple local providers. Given this diversity, the requirement to balance activity fairly evenly across the three goals was seen as constraining PI flexibility to respond to local need. Secondly, and perhaps more fundamentally, the programme was seen as adopting a relatively narrow conception of community development. SICAP was seen by many as overly emphasising 'activation' with measures of community activity more narrowly framed in terms of number of interactions with community groups. This approach was seen as failing to recognise the interconnectedness of the three goals and as inadequately capturing important work around long-term community engagement and interagency collaboration.

---

[29]   Information was not recorded in sufficient detail to permit the estimation of this proportion for the remaining PIs.

The third theme identified related to the tension between the targets specified and the intensity of supports required to address the needs of vulnerable groups. Reporting and targeting requirements were seen as driving an emphasis on numbers, in terms of throughput, without recognising the need for prolonged, intensive intervention with particular groups. This issue was seen as increasingly important given that the group now outside employment often face multiple challenges. Staff were also dissatisfied with the way in which community development work is captured using current metrics, an issue which is the subject of ongoing research. Fourthly, PIs were highly dissatisfied with the level of funding for SICAP but also reported a lack of transparency in the allocation of resources. McGuinness et al. (2016) report a higher level of resources per participant in less deprived areas, highlighting the case for a greater allocation of funds towards more deprived areas where participants are more likely to face multiple disadvantages. Finally, PIs were critical of the administrative burden involved in SICAP, feeling that too much information was being collected on individuals availing of education and employment supports. This was all the more pertinent in a context where the majority of PIs were receiving the bulk of their funding from other sources, thus dealing with different reporting requirements and terms and conditions.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions and implications for policy

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) (2015-2017) was the successor to previous national programmes to promote social inclusion, including the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) 2009-2014 and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) 2000-2006. The overarching aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration (Pobal, 2017). The three goals of the programme are: strengthening local communities; promoting lifelong learning; and helping people become more job ready. The core principles, or horizontal themes, underlying the programme are community development methodologies, equality and collaborative approaches. Following a tendering process covering 51 local areas or lots, 45 Programme Implementers (PIs) were tasked with delivering the programme according to nationally specified requirements. SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-funding from the European Social Fund under the Youth Employment Initiative. The work of the PIs is overseen by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) at local level, with Pobal taking a national oversight role regarding programme and operational requirements on behalf of the Department.

This report comprises part of a broader research programme designed to inform policy development regarding social inclusion provision at community level. It adopts a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, to examine perceptions of the goals and governance of SICAP as well as its value added in promoting social inclusion and the challenges arising in the implementation of the programme. In doing so, the report draws on a rich body of information, including in-depth interviews with key policy stakeholders, a postal survey of Programme Implementers (PIs), case-studies of ten PIs, involving in-depth interviews with CEOs, staff and beneficiaries, as well as interviews with LCDC and Education and Training Board (ETB) representatives at local level and analysis of administrative (IRIS) data. This chapter highlights the main themes emerging from the research before discussing the implications of the findings for the future development of SICAP.

7.2 BENEFITS OF SICAP

The study findings point to a number of benefits of the programme and to its value added relative to other provision. PIs and policy stakeholders are broadly

happy with the goals of SICAP as currently conceived, although they suggest the need for a broader conception of community development to be embedded in the programme and highlight some challenges arising in the implementation of these goals (see Section 7.3). The programme is seen to have the flexibility within certain parameters to respond to local needs; thus beneficiaries receiving education and employment supports vary in their age group, gender and ethnicity, and the local community groups supported through the programme differ in their purposes and composition. Different kinds of supports and interventions are offered across areas reflecting the nature of existing service provision by the PIs and the needs of the local communities. Furthermore, PIs have been responsive to emerging needs, such as those of individuals living in direct provision. PIs across the case-study areas tend to adopt a holistic approach which focuses on the interconnectedness of needs for individuals and for communities in general. Respondents point to the multiple challenges faced by disadvantaged individuals and families and the need to take an integrated approach to addressing their needs.

Under SICAP, PIs work with the most marginalised individuals and groups. PI staff had generally been working with local communities for many years and had built up relationships of trust over a protracted period of time. This trust and openness were seen as enabling the engagement of hard to reach groups in a non-threatening way, with activities such as taster courses often offered by PIs as a 'gateway' into broader involvement and referral to other supports. Analysis of IRIS data indicates that work with local community groups has proved a more effective way of attracting the most disadvantaged individuals to avail of education and employment supports, rather than referral through other means. Although the lot areas vary significantly in their socio-demographic profile and level of deprivation, there is evidence of effective targeting in reaching individuals with multiple challenges, even in more advantaged areas (see McGuinness et al., forthcoming).

A key feature of PIs' work relates to their role in promoting local collaboration and in bringing about synergies in service provision. In many areas, PIs occupied a relatively neutral space so could act as 'honest brokers' in bringing together other agencies and organisations. This position also reflects the fact that they had mostly established a good working relationship with other agencies operating in the local area, making it easier to collaborate under the SICAP framework. In many instances this collaboration, in conjunction with the role of the LCDC, served to avoid potential duplication in service provision, with PIs therefore focusing on identifying and filling (or seeking to have filled) gaps in local provision. PIs also played a role in leveraging other sources of funding to provide services (such as health initiatives or early years provision) which were complementary to those being offered through SICAP.

7.3   CHALLENGES IN SICAP PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The study findings also highlighted a number of challenges in implementing the programme. While flexibility to adapt support to local need was apparent, respondents felt that this was insufficient to address the issues arising in their local areas. Firstly, interviewees highlighted the importance of a 'cradle to grave' approach to community development (see NESC, 2005) and argued against the use of an age cut-off to confine supports to those aged under 65. Furthermore, PI staff pointed to constraints in work with children and young people, given that school-based work was treated as 'non-caseload', and highlighted the importance of early intervention in countering early school leaving and longer-term disadvantage. Secondly, the programme requirement to allocate around a third of funding to each of the three goals was seen as a significant constraint. In areas where there were, for example, already a number of existing employment supports, PIs felt that the necessity to spend a third of their funding on the employment goal risked duplication of provision. It was also argued by the PI staff and LCDC representatives that the programme should be more flexible in reflecting the changing economic situation in Ireland with falling numbers of unemployed individuals.

A more fundamental issue raised by respondents related to what was seen as the narrow conception of community development embedded in the programme. Many felt that the programme, given the high unemployment context of its inception, had focused more on 'activation' rather than broader community development and social inclusion. Allied to this perception was the feeling that the interconnectedness of the programme goals was not fully recognised. PIs saw themselves as addressing the needs of individuals and communities in a holistic way, with SICAP seen as one funding stream, alongside others, to help them meet these needs. Furthermore, PI staff did not see the richness and intensity of their work as being well captured through current programme metrics, an issue that is the subject of a complementary research study.

Under SICAP, two key performance indicators, relating to number of individual supports and number of local community groups receiving support, were specified for each PI, with headline indicators also specified for the numbers in specific groups progressing to education or employment. A minimum of two interventions was required to be able to count the intervention towards these KPIs and indicators, with financial penalties for those failing to meet the specified targets. The study findings point to a tension for PIs in reaching targets based on throughput numbers, especially given the intensity of interventions required to support individuals and groups facing multiple challenges. This is seen as an increasingly important issue in a context where unemployment levels are dropping, leaving the most marginalised groups in need of support. The approach to targeting is seen as creating perverse incentives in engaging hard to reach

groups. The imposition of financial penalties was also seen as problematic, as PIs are non-profit organisations without the funds to cover such penalties.

Current recording and reporting requirements are seen as providing a significant administrative burden for PIs. Registration on the IRIS system is viewed as time-consuming and potentially off-putting to vulnerable people engaging with the programme for the first time, given the requirement to provide often highly sensitive information. This issue is all the more pertinent in a context where most PIs receive less than half of their overall funding from SICAP and are thus faced with different reporting requirements across different funding streams.

In terms of funding more generally, PIs are highly dissatisfied with the level of current funding and point to a lack of transparency in funding allocation. Analysis of administrative data indicates significant variation in the ratio of budget allocation to individual throughput across lot areas, with many highly deprived areas receiving lower ratios. PIs in more deprived area and with higher caseloads are more critical of funding levels and are more likely to highlight challenges in implementing SICAP. The PIs highlighted the importance of their role in leveraging funding for services which are complementary to those offered under SICAP and noted that this should be acknowledged under the SICAP programme.

7.4   GOVERNANCE

In the survey of, and interviews with, Programme Implementers, they were found to have a clear idea of their own role and were mostly clear about the role of the Local Community Development Committee. However, many pointed to a lack of clarity concerning the appropriate lines of communication between themselves, the LCDC and Pobal, possibly due to the relatively recent nature of the new governance structure. There was a good deal of variation in the level of contact between PIs and LCDCs, partly but not entirely reflecting the fact that some LCDCs were overseeing the work of multiple PIs.

Interviewees reported a steep learning curve for LCDCs in coming to grips with SICAP and their role as overseers. LCDCs largely saw themselves as adopting a high-level role, focusing on planning, reporting and budgets, given the time constraints for a body that depends on voluntary committee membership. LCDCs were largely dependent on the PIs as a conduit for information on how SICAP was operating on the ground. In order to ensure greater efficiency, LCDCs often established sub-committees to focus on SICAP and/or social inclusion-related issues. Furthermore, LCDC representatives raised the issue that while SICAP work fits under their remit, they remain largely unaware of other related activities carried out by PIs which are funded through other channels. Overall, the LCDC

representatives felt that they would benefit from greater decision-making power, expressing frustration that programme requirements and especially targets had been set nationally prior to their establishment.

7.5   SICAP IN A BROADER POLICY CONTEXT

The study findings point to a considerable but variable level of interagency co-operation at local level, with PIs taking a proactive role in building synergies around service provision. Some ETB representatives have pointed to potential duplication between the courses they offer and those provided by the PIs. However, the purpose of the two sets of provision appears to be quite distinct, with taster courses offered by PIs acting as a way of engaging hard to reach groups and evidence of referral to other education and training once participant self-confidence had been enhanced. In relation to employment supports, PIs often 'managed' potential duplication by trying to ensure a seamless transition between SICAP and other services they offer such as the Local Employment Service and Jobs Club. PIs have also established a specific niche in relation to self-employment supports, drawing on expertise not necessarily available elsewhere and working closely with DEASP case officers around supporting clients. It was evident from the interviews that PIs had often established strong working relationship with other agencies operating in the local area, which assisted in developing a more integrated approach and in avoiding potential duplication of services. At the same time, such collaboration was often dependent on the commitment and goodwill of one or two key people so there is potential for greater and more sustainable co-operation at local level.

Overall, there appears to be a good deal of potential for the LCDC role to lead to a greater integration of approaches to social exclusion at local level through the Local Economic and Community Plan and other fora. At the same time, the centralised nature of much policy formulation and service provision in the Irish system places constraints on this potential, given that local authority jurisdiction is confined to specific services. In contrast to the existence of examples of good practice in interagency co-operation at local level, policy stakeholders and PIs are almost universally critical of the lack of joined-up thinking regarding social inclusion policy at national level. Evidence points to the strong redistributive role played by the Irish social welfare system (Callan et al., 2017). However, there is little evidence on the way in which broader service provision across the varying domains of health, housing, environment, education and crime complements or counters this redistributive role.

7.6   IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The study findings in this report relate to the operation of the version of the SICAP programme which ended in December 2017. In August 2017, a call for tender for a

new programme was issued by LCDCs. This call included a document describing the broad outline of the new programme for SICAP 2018-2022. The remainder of this chapter assesses the extent to which the programme outline addresses some of the issues raised by the study findings and points to areas for further development.

The new framework introduces greater flexibility regarding target groups, with the removal of the exclusion of the over 65 age group and the capacity for LCDCs to specify an emerging group which should be targeted in their own area. The three goals (strengthening local communities; education/lifelong learning supports; and employment supports) have been replaced by two goals which focus on community supports and individual supports respectively. The framework allows for up to a 60 per cent versus 40 per cent funding split regarding allocation across goals, with some flexibility around these figures. The new framework therefore addresses the main criticisms regarding lack of flexibility to respond to local needs, by allowing for specific target groups to be adopted in particular contexts and an increased capacity to allocate funding across the two goals depending on existing services and local need. In addition, it is more open to PI staff to address the holistic needs of beneficiaries by referring them to, or themselves providing, a suite of education and employment-related supports, as required. At the same time, levels of funding are increasing only marginally and only for some PIs, which may act as a constraint on full flexibility to address local issues. In addition, flexibility will have to be negotiated at local level between the PI and the LCDC so, as with all programmes, the approach to implementation will be crucial. The issue of recognising the importance of leverage funding seems to remain unresolved.

A dominant issue raised by the research was the need for a broader conception of community development to be embedded in the programme. The new framework could still be subject to the criticism that it equates 'community development' to working with community groups. Community development principles are highlighted as a cross-cutting theme but there is an argument for instead regarding community development as *the* overarching framework which includes work with individuals as well as groups. In this context, it is crucial that the new programme facilitates ways of documenting the variety of community development work carried out by PIs. Ongoing research is looking at how best to capture the richness and intensity of this work. Related to this issue is the role of PIs in fostering interagency collaboration. Again the reporting of this work is not seen as doing justice to the time and resources devoted to this activity and new, more qualitative, ways of recording this activity should be developed.

The new framework reduces the numbers of individuals and local community groups required to meet targets under the key performance indicators and

removes the headline indicators. While this development addresses many of the concerns raised in the study, there is potential to give even greater recognition to the intensity of interventions required by some individuals and groups, perhaps by using a combined weighting of numbers of people and numbers of interventions. This is all the more important in a context where PIs are dealing with an increasingly marginalised group of people as more advantaged individuals take up employment opportunities. It is also important that the intensity of interventions is adequately captured so that knowledge can be derived on which groups need additional supports and in what circumstances. The new iteration of the programme is expected to address this issue. The administrative burden highlighted in relation to IRIS registration and record updating means that currently PIs appear not to record multiple interventions which means that valuable information is lost. The idea of piloting and subsequently mainstreaming a 'distance travelled' tool as a way of documenting progression outlined in the new framework should provide a way of capturing the complex needs of programme participants.

There is an argument for revisiting the scale and distribution of funding, given differences in resources between lot areas and the small amount of budget spent on SICAP relative to other social inclusion supports, especially income maintenance. From a broader policy perspective, there is considerable potential for the LCDCs to adopt a strong role in bringing about greater integration of approaches to social exclusion at local level. However, there is little scope currently for LCDCs and individual PIs to propose and develop innovative approaches and to have a forum to exchange this good practice. Finally, the integration of local services to tackle social exclusion is unlikely to be successful in the absence of joined-up thinking across the variety of stakeholders who impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities, with much greater scope for inter-agency and interdepartmental co-operation in this regard.

REFERENCES

ADM [Area Development Management] (2000). *Local Development Social Inclusion Programme Guidelines 2000-2006*. Dublin: ADM.

Alkin, M.C. (Ed.). (2004). *Evaluation roots: tracing theorists' views and influences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Armstrong, P. (2000). 'Include Me Out: Critique and Contradiction in Thinking About Social Exclusion and Lifelong Learning', Paper presented at SCUTERA, 30th Annual Conference, 3-5 July University of Nottingham.

Atkinson, A.B. (1998). 'Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity', in Atkinson, A. B. and J. Hills (1998). *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity*. CASEpaper 4, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics.

Barret, A., F. McGinnity and E. Quinn (2017). *Monitoring report on integration 2016*. Dublin: ESRI. Available online: www.esri.ie/pubs/BKMNEXT330.pdf.

Callan, T., M. Regan, M. Savage, J.R. Walsh (2017). *Income distribution in Ireland: through recession, toward recovery*. Dublin: ESRI.

Campbell, D.T. and J.C. Stanley (1966). 'Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research'. *Handbook of research on teaching* (NL Gage, Ed.), 171-246.

Combat Poverty Agency (2000). *The Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty*. Dublin: CPA.

CSO (2017). *Census 2016 Summary Results – Part 2*. Dublin: CSO.

Day, L., C. Bryson and C. White (2016). *National evaluation of the troubled families programme: final synthesis report*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

Department of Social Protection (2016). *Updated national action plan for social inclusion 2015-2017*. Dublin: DSP. Available online: www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/2016-02-12_UpdatedNAP_English_Final.pdf.

Dublin City Council (2009). 'Social inclusion strategy'. Available online: www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/DublinCityCouncilstrategyenglishversion.pdf

DPER (2017). 'Further education and training & employment supports overview paper'. Dublin: Department for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Duggan, C. and C. Corrigan (2009). 'Literature review of inter-agency work with a particular focus on children's services'. CAAB RESEARCH: REPORT NO. 4. Available online: www.ypar.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Interagency-work-2009-IAC-Literature-Review.pdf.

European Commission (2008). 'Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market'. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Commission (2010). *The European social fund and social inclusion*. Brussels: European Commission. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/docs/sf_social_inclusion_en.pdf.

European Commission (2013). 'Assessment of the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on active inclusion: A study of national policies'. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Commission (2014). *An introduction to EU cohesion policy 2014-2020*. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic_2014_en.pdf.

European Union (2016). *Integrated approaches to combating poverty and social exclusion. Best practices from EU member states*. Available online: www.effectiefarmoedebeleid.nl/files/3614/6668/9668/WEB_93954_EUNL_Brochure_A4.pdf.

Eurostat (2015). *Main statistical findings*. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion

Evans, M., S. Paugam and J. Prelis (1995). *Chunnel Vision: Poverty, social exclusion and debate on social welfare in France and Britain*. LSE STICERD Discussion Paper 115.

Fitzpatrick Associates (2007). *Value for money review of LDSIP 2000 to 2006*. Dublin: Fitzpatrick Associates.

Francis, E. (2006). 'Poverty: causes, responses and consequences in rural South Africa', CPRC Working Paper No.60. Available at: www.chronicpoverty.org.

Frazer, H. and M. Devlin (2011). 'Assessment of Ireland's Approach to Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion among Children from European and Local Perspectives'. Department of Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth. Available online: www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/workingpapers/2011-03_WP_AnAssessmentOfIrelandsApproachToCombatingPovertyAndSocialExclusionAmongChildrenFromEuropeanAndLocalPerspectives.pdf.

Gallacher, J., B. Crossan, B. Merrill, J. Leahy and J. Field (2000). *Education for All? Further Education, Social Inclusion and Widening Access*. Glasgow: Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning.

Geddes, M. and J. Bennington (2001). *Local Partnership and Social Exclusion in the European Union: New Forms of social governance*. Routledge.

Gingrich, L.G. and N. Lightman (2015). 'The empirical measurement of a theoretical concept: Tracing social exclusion among racial minority and migrant groups in Canada'. *Social Inclusion*, 3(4), 98-111.

Good Gingrich, L. (2008). 'Social exclusion and double jeopardy – The management of lone mothers in the market-state social field'. *Social Policy and Administration*, 42, 379-395.

Gordon, D. (2007). 'History and development of social exclusion and policy', in Abrams, D., J. Christian and D. Gordon (eds.), *Multidisciplinary Handbook of Social Exclusion Research*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Halvorsen, R. and B. Hvinden (eds.) (2016). *Combating Poverty in Europe: Active Inclusion in a Multi-Level and Multi-Actor Context*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hickey, S. and A. du Toit (2007). *Adverse incorporation, social exclusion and chronic poverty*. CPRC Working Paper 81. Available online: www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/WP81_Hickey_duToit.pdf.

Johnston, R. (2000). 'Education for Inclusion or Imprisoned in the Global Classroom?' Paper presented at SCUTERA, 30th Annual Conference, 3-5 July.

Klasen, S. (2000). *Social Exclusion and Children – Creating Identity Capital: Some Conceptual Issues and Practical Solutions*. www.cbs/article2.pdf.

Kleinman, M. (1998). *Include me out? The new politics of place and poverty*. CASEpaper 11, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics. Available online: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/6519/1/Include_Me_Out_The_New_Politics_of_Place_and_Poverty.pdf

Lee, A. (2006). *Community development: Current issues and Challenges.* Dublin: CPA. Available online: www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/CommunityDevelopmentCurrentIssuesAndChallenges_2006.pdf

Lightman, E. (2003). *Social policy in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Lynam, S. (2006). *Community development and public policy.* Dublin: 2006.

McGuinness, S., A. Bergin and A. Whelan (2016). *An Exploration of (Area-Based) Social Inclusion and Community Development Training Programmes in Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI.

McGuinness, S., A. Whelan, A. Bergin and J. Delaney (forthcoming). *Who is Targeted by Community Development Bodies: A Spatial Analysis using Irish Data*. Dublin: ESRI.

McGuinness, S., A. Bergin, E. Kelly, S. McCoy, E. Smyth, A. Whelan and J. Banks, 2014. *Further Education and Training in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*. Dublin: SOLAS/Economic and Social Research Institute.

Moffat, S. and N. Glasgow (2009). 'How useful is the concept of social exclusion when applied to rural older people in the United Kingdom and the United States'. *Regional Studies*, 40-10; pp. 1291-1303.

Motherway, B. (2006). *The Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty in Ireland. Dublin*: CPA.

NESC (2005). *The Developmental Welfare State.* Dublin: NESC.

OECD (2003). *Local Economic and Employment Development Managing Decentralisation A new role for labour market policy*. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2016). *Weaving Together Policies for Social Inclusion in Ireland*. Paris: OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252677-en.

Patton, M.Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: Guildford.

Pobal (2015). *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015 End of Year Report*. Dublin: Pobal.

Pobal (2016). *SICAP: Programme Requirements 2016*. Dublin: Pobal.

Pobal (2017). *SICAP Programme Requirements*. Dublin: Pobal.

Powell, F. and M. Geoghegan (2004). *The Politics of Community Development*. Dublin: A&A Farmar.

Room, G. (1995). 'Poverty and social exclusion: the new European agenda for policy and research'. In Room, G. (ed.) *Beyond the threshold. The measurement and analysis of social exclusion*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Room, G. (1998). *Social Exclusion, Solidarity and the Challenge of Globalisation*, Bath Social Policy Papers, No.27, University of Bath.

Rossi, P.H., M.W. Lipsey and H.E. Freeman (2004). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. Seventh Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ruggeri Laderchi, C., R. Saith and F. Stewart (2003). 'Does it matter that we don't agree on the definition of poverty? A comparison of four approaches', Queen Elizabeth House Working Paper 107. Available at: www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/qehwp/qehwps107.pdf.

Rutter, M. (1993). 'Developmental Psychopathology as Research Perspective', in Magnusson, D. and P. Casaer (eds.) (1993) *Longitudinal Research on Individual Development: Present Status and Future Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sabel, C. (1996). *Ireland: Local Partnerships and Social Innovation*. Paris: OECD.

Scharf, T., C. Phillipson, A. Smith and P. Kingston (2002). *Growing older in socially deprived areas*, London: Help the Aged.

Scriven, M. (1967). 'The methodology of evaluation'. In Stake, R.E. (Ed.), *Curriculum evaluation* (American Educational Research Association Monograph Series on Evaluation No. 1). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Sen, A. (1992). *Poverty Re-examined*. Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press.

Sen, A. (2000). *Social Exclusion, Concept, Application and Scrutiny*, Social Development Papers No. 1. Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank, Manila: Asian Development Bank.

Silver, H. (2015). *The contexts of social inclusion*, DESA Working Paper No. 144. Available online: www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp144_2015.pdf.

Smyth, E., J. Banks, A. Whelan, M. Darmody and S. McCoy, 2015. *Review of the School Completion Programme*. ESRI Research Series, 44.

Solantaus, T. and S. Toikka (2006). 'The effective family programme: Preventative services for the children of mentally ill parents in Finland'. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 8(3), 37-44.

Teague, P. and M. Murphy (2004). 'Social partnership and local development in Ireland: The limits to deliberation'. Discussion paper, International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva.

Tsakloglou, P. and F. Papadopoulos (2002). 'Aggregate level and determining factors of social exclusion in twelve European countries', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 12 (3), 211-226.

Walker, A. and C. Walker (1997). *Britain divided: the growth of social exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, London: Child Poverty Action Group.

Walsh, J., S. Craig and D. McCafferty (1998). 'Local Partnerships for Social Inclusion?', Dublin: Oaktree Press.

Walsh, K., E. O'Shea and T. Scharf (2012). *Social exclusion and aging in diverse rural communities: findings of cross-border study in Ireland and Northern Ireland*. Galway: NUI Galway.

APPENDIX 1   SICAP GOALS AND INDICATORS

SICAP goals are to:

Goal 1:

Support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues.

Goal 2:

Support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage so they can participate fully, engage with and progress through life-long learning opportunities through the use of community development approaches.

Goal 3:

Engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision, or who are referred to SICAP, to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities.

Each of the three SICAP goals has four objectives, 12 in total. These 12 objectives have specific SICAP outcomes, key performance headline indicators and programme indicators.

Goal 1 Objectives

Objective G1.1:

To support and promote the community engagement of disadvantaged target groups across the lifecycle;

Objective G1.2:

To support the development of local community groups which promote equality and social inclusion in a local, regional or national context;

Objective G1.3:

To support disadvantaged communities and individuals to enhance their participation in local, regional and national decision-making structures;

Objective G1.4:

To develop and facilitate strategic collaborative frameworks and networks as part of a dialogue for developing solutions to social exclusion.

Goal 2 Objectives

Objective G2.1:

To identify and provide information on learning supports available to individuals experiencing educational disadvantage;

Objective G2.2:

To support individuals from target groups experiencing educational disadvantage to participate in life-long learning opportunities;

Objective G2.3:

To provide supports to children and young people from target groups who are at risk of early school leaving and/or not in employment, education or training (NEETs);

Objective G2.4:

To influence the development of local decision-making structures and networks so that they better address barriers to learning and enhance local learning systems for people experiencing educational disadvantage.

Goal 3 Objectives

Objective G3.1:

To engage with SICAP target groups and youth to move them closer to the labour market and progress them into employment;

Objective G3.2:

To support SICAP target groups and youth in becoming self-employed and sustaining this;

Objective G3.3:

To support social enterprises operating in disadvantaged communities in providing services to these communities, and linking people from SICAP target groups to employment opportunities within the sector;

Objective G3.4:

To influence the development of local decision-making structures and networks to ensure more collaborative approaches to tackling labour market barriers and addressing unemployment. Source:

www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/Social%20Inclusion%20and%20Community%20Activation%20Programme%20%28SICAP%29/Documents/SICAP%20Programme%20Requirements%202016%20V1.5%20FINAL%20%28clean%29.pdf

APPENDIX 2   SICAP HEADLINE INDICATORS

No	Goals	Headline Indicator
1	2 & 3	Total number of disadvantaged individuals (15 years upwards) engaged under SICAP on a one-to-one basis *(Key Performance Indicator)*
2	1	Number of local community groups assisted under SICAP *(Key Performance Indicator)*
3	1	Number of local community groups whose members have been assisted by SICAP to participate in local, regional or national decision-making structures
4	2	Number of individuals (15 years upwards) in receipt of a Goal 2 educational support • *70% of those targeted should have educational attainment of Leaving Certificate or lower*
5	2	Number of individuals who have progressed (along the education continuum) after registering with SICAP
6	2	Number of young people (aged 15-24) in receipt of a SICAP, ESF and YEI Goal 2 educational support • *80% of those targeted should have educational attainment of Leaving Certificate or lower*
7	2	Number of young people (aged 15-24) who have progressed (along the education continuum) after registering with SICAP
8	2	Number of children (under 15 years) in receipt of a Goal 2 educational or developmental support
9	3	Number of individuals (15 years upwards) in receipt of Goal 3 employment supports: • *60% of those targeted should have educational attainment of Leaving Certificate or lower*
10	3	Number of individuals (15 years upwards) progressing to part-time or full-time employment up to six months after receiving a Goal 3 employment support
11	3	Number of individuals (15 years upwards) progressing to self-employment up to six months after receiving a Goal 3 employment support
12	3	Number of young people (aged 15-24) in receipt of a SICAP, ESF and YEI Goal 3 employment support • *70% of those targeted should have educational attainment of Leaving Certificate or lower*
13	3	Number of young people (aged 15-24) progressing to part-time or full-time employment up to six months after receiving a Goal 3 employment support
14	3	Number of young people (aged 15-24) progressing to self-employment up to six months after receiving a Goal 3 employment support
15	3	Number of social enterprises assisted under SICAP

APPENDIX 3   QUESTIONNAIRE

ESRI ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
Programme Implementer
CEO QUESTIONNAIRE

ID: xxx

A. SICAP PROGRAMME GOALS AND PROVISION

1. **SICAP 'aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies'. How appropriate do you feel the SICAP goals are in relation to this overall aim?**

	Very appropriate	Fairly appropriate	Some changes needed	Not at all appropriate	Not sure
Strengthening community development	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Providing education and lifelong learning	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Preparing people for employment	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

2. **If you feel that some changes to the goals are needed or that the goals are not at all appropriate, please explain what changes you would like to see.**

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. **Thinking of SICAP goals and service provision, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by ticking one box on each line.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
SICAP goals differ from those of the earlier Local Community and Development Programme (LCDP)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Current SICAP goals are too narrow	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
SICAP goals are sufficiently flexible to reflect a changing societal context	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Current SICAP goals are not sufficient in addressing social exclusion in the local area covered by my organisation	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Other organisations provide a lot of support for education and lifelong learning to SICAP target groups and areas in the local area in which I work	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Other organisations provide a lot of employment and self-employment support to SICAP target groups and areas in the local area	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Current SICAP goals are too broad	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Other organisations provide a lot of support for community development in the local area	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Current SICAP target groups are sufficient to cover all the relevant groups experiencing social exclusion	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Current SICAP goals are not sufficient in addressing social exclusion at the national level	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
It is difficult to address all three of the SICAP goals in working with people in my local area	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
In my local area, disadvantage is concentrated in particular neighbourhoods or streets	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

4.   **When your organisation is planning service provision for SICAP target groups and areas, how are the <u>needs of the local area</u> assessed? Please describe as fully as possible.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5.   **When planning service provision, how are the <u>needs of individuals who approach the service</u> assessed? Please describe as fully as possible.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6.   **(a) In your personal view, to what extent have the needs of SICAP target groups and areas in your locality changed in the last three years?**

To a great extent	To some extent	Not to any great extent	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

   (b)   What have been the main changes?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

7.   **To what extent do you think the target groups for SICAP are appropriate?**

To a great extent	To some extent	Not to any great extent	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

8.   **(a) Are there any other groups that you think should be targeted?**

   Yes ☐₁   No ☐₂

 (b) If yes, which ones?
_____
_____
_____

B. EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

9.   **What are the main education/lifelong learning initiatives and supports you provide through SICAP?**
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. **What target groups do you mostly cater for?**
_____
_____

11. (a) To what extent have the education and life-long learning services you provide changed since the introduction of SICAP?

Significant change	Some change	No change	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

(b) What have been the main changes?

_____
_____
_____

12. What proportion of education and lifelong activities offered under SICAP involve:

	%
One-to-one educational support	_____
Group educational initiatives	_____
Advice and guidance	_____
Other (please specify)	_____
Total	**100%**

13. To what extent do you agree with these statements regarding current provision within the SICAP framework and other providers in the area of education and lifelong learning?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In addition to SICAP, other organisations provide education and lifelong learning initiatives in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are gaps in the provision of education support for young people in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Our organisation works with local schools to target young people at risk of disengagement and early school leaving	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are gaps in the provision of education support for adults in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Current education support in the local area reaches all who need such support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are formal mechanisms in place to co-ordinate provision between SICAP and other providers in the area of education	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There is a good informal working relationship between our organisation and other education providers locally	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
It is difficult to meet the targets regarding education and lifelong participation in this area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in reducing barriers to availing of educational support in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in addressing access to education for disadvantaged groups at the national level	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in addressing the needs of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds at the national level	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

14. **To what extent do you think that education/lifelong learning provided under SICAP differs from that offered by other education providers locally?**

Very different	Quite different	Not very different	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

(b) What are the main differences from your perspective?

_____
_____
_____

15. **What would you see as the main barriers to people engaging with education and lifelong learning in your area?**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

16. **In your view, what is the most effective way to encourage the participation in education and lifelong learning of individuals in the target groups and areas? Please describe as fully as possible.**

Through SICAP:
_____
_____

Through other local or national services:
_____
_____

C. PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

17. **(a) What are the main employment initiatives and supports you provide through SICAP?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(b) What are the main self-employment initiatives and supports you provide through SICAP?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. **What target groups do you mostly cater for?**

a) Employment_____
_____
_____

b) Self-employment
_____
_____

19. (a) To what extent have the employment supports you provide changed since the introduction of SICAP?

Significant change	Some change	No change	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

(b) What have been the main changes?

_____
_____
_____

20. What proportion of employment activities offered under SICAP involve:

	%
One-to-one support	_____
Group initiatives	_____
Guidance and referral to other initiatives/agencies	_____
Other (please specify) _____	_____
Total	**100%**

21. To what extent do you agree with these statements regarding current provision within the SICAP framework and other providers in the area of employment and self-employment support?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In addition to SICAP, other organisations provide *employment* support initiatives in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
In addition to SICAP, other organisations provide *self-employment* support initiatives in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are gaps in the provision of employment support for young people in the area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are gaps in provision of employment support for adults in the area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Current employment support in the local area reaches all who need such support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are formal mechanisms in place to co-ordinate provision between SICAP and other providers in employment support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There is a good informal working relationship between our organisation and other employment support providers locally	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
It is difficult to meet the targets regarding participation in employment supports in this area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in reducing the barriers to availing of *employment* support in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in reducing the barriers to availing of *self-employment* support in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in promoting the employment of disadvantaged groups at the national level	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

22. To what extent do you think that the employment/self-employment support provided under SICAP differs from that offered by other providers locally?

Very different	Quite different	Not very different	Not sure
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

(b) What are the main differences from your perspective?

_____
_____
_____

23. What would you see as the main barriers to people engaging with employment supports in your area?

1. _____
2. _____
_____

24. In your view, what is the most effective way to encourage the participation in employment supports of individuals in the target groups and areas? Please describe as fully as possible.

Through SICAP:

_____
_____

Through other local or national services:

_____
_____
_____

D. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

25. To what extent do you agree with these statements regarding current provision within the SICAP framework and other providers in the area of community development?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In addition to SICAP, other organisations provide support for community development in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are gaps in the provision of support in community development in the local area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Current community development support in the local area reaches all who need such support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There are mechanisms in place to co-ordinate provision between SICAP and other providers in the area of community development	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
There is a good informal working relationship between the SICAP PI and other community development support providers locally	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
It is difficult to meet the support targets with local community groups (LCGs) in this area	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in reducing the barriers for LCGs to engage with decision makers at a local and regional level	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
SICAP has been successful in supporting LCGs to engage with decision makers at the national level	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

26. What would you see as the main barriers to people becoming involved in community groups in your area?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

27. In your view, what is the most effective way to promote community development approaches at a local level? Please describe as fully as possible.

Through SICAP:

_____
_____

Through other local or national services:

_____
_____

E. ALIGNMENT OF GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

28. To what extent do you agree with the statement: there is strong inter-agency collaboration in combating social exclusion <u>in the local area</u> in the following spheres:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Educational/lifelong learning support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Employment support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Community development support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

29. To what extent do you agree with the statement: there is strong inter-agency collaboration in combating social exclusion <u>at national level</u> in the following spheres:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Educational/lifelong learning support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Employment support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Community development support	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

30. Please provide a list of organisations/agencies in your local area with which your organisation collaborated in 2016.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

F. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

31. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on governance by ticking one box on each line.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The guidelines for SICAP are clear	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The current SICAP governance model is effective	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The availability of resources to provide activities has increased over time	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The allocation of resources and how they are prioritised is transparent	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The procedures in place for targeting groups are effective	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Programme implementation is regularly monitored and assessed	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
There are opportunities to exchange good practice between programmes and areas	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The representatives of various disadvantaged groups are involved in developing the goals, aims and nature of activities and/or programmes	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
There is a lot of autonomy in designing service provision at local level	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Programme Implementers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
There is sufficient training provided for my organisation	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
As a PI, we have a say in the targets set under SICAP	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Adequate support is provided in using the IRIS database and other administrative/reporting tools	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I'm satisfied with the current governance structures regarding SICAP	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I'm satisfied with the funding and resources to provide SICAP services	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I'm satisfied with the way reporting works in my local area	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
The SICAP targets are flexible enough to reflect changing circumstances	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Focusing on particular local areas is a more effective way of addressing social exclusion	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
There are strong links between SICAP and other LCDC initiatives under the Local Economic and Community Plan	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

32. We would like to ask you about your experience of using the IRIS database.

(a) How would you assess the quality of the information you are required to record when registering people for SICAP supports? Please tick one box on each line.

Information on:	The information required is:			
	Too much	About right	Too little	Not sure
The profile of individuals registering for education/ lifelong learning support				
The profile of individuals registering for employment/self-employment support				
The profile of local community groups				
The nature/type of education interventions				
The intensity of education interventions (e.g. number of hours or days)				
The nature/type of employment interventions				
The intensity of employment interventions (e.g. number of hours or days)				
The nature/type of LCG interventions				
The intensity of LCG interventions (e.g. number of hours or days)				

(b) In your opinion, what information, if any, could be dropped from the registration form?

_____
_____

(c) In your opinion, what information, if any, could be added to the registration form?

_____
_____

33. Over the last year, how many meetings have you had with [Please provide a number]:

The Board of Directors of the PI	
The LCDC	
Representatives of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	
Other, please specify:	

34. How satisfied are you with the frequency of meetings with the LCDC?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not sure
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

35. To what extent are the following involved in deciding which supports or initiatives are to be offered under SICAP in your local area?

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not to any great extent	Not at all
You as PI CEO	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other PI staff	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Board of Directors of the PI	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
LCDC	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Pobal	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
DHPCLG	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Local community groups	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Service users	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other providers locally	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other (please specify)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

36. How satisfied are you with the support from different groups in overseeing/managing the delivery of SICAP?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not sure
Board of Directors of the PI	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
LCDC	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Pobal	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other local organisations	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other national organisations	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

37. What proportion of the funding you receive under SICAP in your area is currently (in 2016) spent on:

	%
Community development	_____
Education and lifelong learning	_____
Promoting employment	_____
Administration	_____
Other	_____
Total	**100%**

38. In your opinion, what would the IDEAL funding balance be across the different activities:

	%
Community development	_____
Education and lifelong learning	_____
Promoting employment	_____
Administration	_____
Total	**100%**

39. Does your organisation receive any funding for service provision other than through SICAP? Please tick one box on each line.

	Yes	No
DSP Jobs Clubs		
DSP Local Employment Service (LES)		
DSP Tús		
DSP Community Employment programme		
DCYA Early childhood initiative		
HSE (please specify)		
Philanthropic funding		
Funding from local or national businesses		
Other (please specify)		

40. How many staff (full-time equivalents), including yourself, work in your organisation?

Paid for through SICAP _____

Paid for through other sources of funding _____

41. How satisfied are you with the level of funding allocated to your organisation under SICAP?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not sure
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

42. What would additional resources facilitate?

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not to any great extent	Not at all
Recruiting more staff by PIs	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing educational/lifelong learning supports to a larger number of individuals	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing more intensive educational supports to existing participants	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing employment supports to a larger number of individuals	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing more intensive employment supports to existing participants	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing community development supports to more local community groups	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Providing more intensive supports to existing local community groups	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Other (please specify)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

43. Has being involved in SICAP led to changes in your organisational structures? Please tick all that apply.

Employment of more staff	
Employment of fewer staff	
Different management structures	
Different recording practices	
Different reporting structures	
Other (please specify)	
None of the above	

G. PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVENESS

44. In your view, how effective are the services provided within the SICAP framework in meeting the overall aim of SICAP (which is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration)?

	Ineffective	Relatively ineffective	Effective	Very effective	Don't know
Education and lifelong learning supports	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Employment and self-employment supports	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Community development/ empowerment supports	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

45. In your view, how effective has SICAP been at the national level in the following areas?

	Ineffective	Relatively ineffective	Effective	Very effective	Don't know
Promoting gender equality	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Countering discrimination	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Supporting inter-agency collaboration in combating social exclusion	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Promoting community development approaches	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

46. In your view, what contributes most to the effectiveness of SICAP services? (Rank answers on a scale of 1-5, 1 for least important factor and 5 for most important)

	1 (Least important)	2	3	4	5 (Most important)
a. Sufficient personnel to deliver programmes and services					
b. Sufficient financial resources to deliver programmes					
c. Close match between target population and services					
d. Understanding the needs of disadvantaged groups					
e. Leadership of the SICAP county council LCDC					
f. Leadership of the local PI					
g. Skills and expertise of staff delivering programmes					
h. Other, please specify					

47. What are the main challenges in delivering programmes and services for disadvantaged groups/ individuals?

_____
_____
_____
_____

H. BACKGROUND AND TRAINING

48. How long have you been CEO of the PI?

<1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5 or more years
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

49. (a) Since SICAP started, have you received any training or professional development in your role?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2

(b) What areas did the training cover?

_____
_____
_____
_____

(c) How satisfied are you with the training you received?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not sure
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

50. Are there any areas in which you would personally like training?

_____
_____
_____

51. Since SICAP started, have your staff members received any training or professional development in their role?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2

52. Are there any areas in which the staff providing services require training?

_____
_____

53. Have you attended any events designed to share experience across PIs? Please tick all that apply.

Yes, run by Pobal	
Yes, run by the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)	
Yes, run by someone else (please specify who)	
No	

54. Would you be interested in increasing the opportunities for contact and co-operation between PIs?

Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	Not really
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃

55. Who would be best placed to promote such contact and co-operation between PIs?

ILDN	Pobal	DHPCLG	Someone else (please specify)
☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

Are there any further comments you would like to make about the provision of services within SICAP? Please continue on the next page, if necessary.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for participating in the study!
Please post the questionnaire to: **Merike.Darmody@esri.ie**

The Economic and Social Research Institute, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2.

In case of any queries, please phone Merike at: 01-8632057

ESRI | ECONOMIC & SOCIAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE