



**Cork City Partnership Clg.**

**Lot Number: Cork City (17-1)**

**Link to Case Study Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2YxksD0NaA>

**Sub-Title:** Stages of need experienced by individuals living in Direct Provision and accommodation centres and the role of SICAP in creating a village like response within Cork - a city of diversity.

**Case Study Format: Video Case Study with narrative**

**Thematic area:** Goal 2 Project

**Target Groups:** New Communities, Disadvantaged Children and Families

Thematic Area	Outcome
G2:1: Promote Personal Development and Wellbeing	G2 - 1:1 SICAP clients have improved personal skills, wellbeing and capabilities.
G2:2: Provide Lifelong Learning Opportunities	G2 - 2:1 SICAP clients receive information about opportunities for lifelong learning.
G2:3: Provide Preventative Supports for Children and Young People	G2 - 3:2 Children and their families are supported in education and personal development
G2:4: Prepare People for Employment and to Remain in Work.	G2 - 4:1 SICAP clients are better prepared to enter the labour market.

### **Background**

Ireland's international protection system continues to come under extreme pressure last year and to date this year. There has been a surge in the number of people arriving in Ireland to seek protection. Up to the end of August 2023 the International Protection Office had received 7,657 applications for International Protection. In 2022, there were 13,651 applications, the highest annual number on record. These figures are in addition to the over 91,000 Ukrainians who have moved to Ireland since the Russian invasion in February 2022. LDC's all over the country are responding through the SICAP programme to meet needs and provide supports to IPA's and Ukrainian Refugees.

Diversity, migration and integration have never before been such high-profile issues in Irish society. Internationally, migration is an often controversial topic. How we in Ireland respond to immigration and welcome diversity is critical to the achievement of integration and social inclusion across our communities.

This SICAP case study aims to provide an insight into needs of International Protection Seekers living in direct provision and accommodation centres during the early, middle and post-exit stages of their



process within the Irish IP process. It will describe the SICAP responses to these needs in the context of Cork City based direct provision centres and accommodation. Ultimately the learning from this might help to inform other LDCs of the needs experienced at particular stages of an individual's IPO process and shed light on how SICAP could best respond to these.

### **The Programme**

CCP has been working with IPA's for several decades. In the last four years the amount of referrals to SICAP from IPA's seeking support has increased significantly. Support to the Ukrainian Community and IPA's is an action of our 2023 Annual Plan. From the beginning of 2023, CCP SICAP appointed a Ukrainian/New Communities Development Team which includes a Coordinator, a Training and Employment Officer and two Development Support Workers. CCP SICAP has opted to present a Video Case Study with accompanying narrative to demonstrate its work.

### **The role of SICAP - The needs and gaps being addressed.**

CCP SICAP support to IPA's is a huge area of work for our CCP SICAP team. IPA's have high needs and few resources. From our work we estimate that there are at least 830 IPAs living in the following facilities in the Cork city area at present; the Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre, Glenvera Hotel, Blarney Stone, Travelodge Cork Airport, George's Quay, Watercourse Road, Summerhill South and South Terrace. In addition to these facilities, many individuals are known to be living in households across the city area. It is difficult to access this data and qualify numbers.

SICAP Training and Employment Supports are in high demand. When IPA's arrive in Cork, their main focus is to ready themselves to get a job. A person can apply for permission to work if they have not had a decision on their International Protection Application within six months of making their application. The supports that we provide include:

- One to one mentoring, CV preparation, Job search
- Organising English language classes focusing on day to day and workplace English
- Support with technical skills training in applying for jobs online
- Organising Specialised Employment Training– Safepass, HACCP, Manual Handling, Security, Special Needs Assisting etc.
- Referral to education & training courses
- Provide access to IT facilities including computer and printer at our Outreach Offices
- Start your own business supports, help to apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- Social Enterprise Supports
- Information on volunteering opportunities

Our SICAP Team also focuses on:

- Personal development of individuals, developing capabilities and potential and enhancing their quality of life
- Expanding CCP's range of community education provision to IPA's
- Hosting regular pop-up Conversation Cafés for New Communities
- Recreational and social activity provision such as organising bus trips to the beach and bowling events for IPA's in Cork city



- Linkages to sporting and other local/community activities which support opportunities for integration outside of the centres




**SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN/NEW COMMUNITIES**  
**WE ARE HERE TO HELP**  
**ALL OUR SERVICES ARE WITHOUT CHARGE**

**JOB SUPPORTS**

- ▶ Providing employment supports and training courses to members of the Ukrainian community and New Communities
- ▶ One to one mentoring, CV preparation, job search
- ▶ Referral to education & training courses
- ▶ Technical skills training in applying for jobs online
- ▶ Bilingual training courses in English with Ukrainian Language/other Languages supports
- ▶ Industry focussed English language supports

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- ▶ Community Education Courses to members of the Ukrainian community and New Communities
- ▶ Pathways to education - accredited and bespoke
- ▶ Help with IT skills and digital skills
- ▶ Access to IT facilities including computer and printer at our Outreach Offices

**START YOUR OWN BUSINESS/ SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

- ▶ Supports to develop a business idea and business plan
- ▶ Business advice and guidance
- ▶ Help to apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- ▶ Information on volunteering opportunities

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS**

Focus on personal development of individuals; develop capabilities and potential, build human capital, facilitate employability, and enhance quality of life

**INTEGRATION EVENTS**

We host opportunities for integration and developing English skills informally for Ukrainian and New Communities.

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2023 provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Cork City Partnership is delivering the SICAP programme in Cork city and is providing targeted interventions to support the integration of Ukrainian/New Communities in Ireland. We are working closely to support Refugees, Asylum Seekers and other vulnerable immigrants.

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Tá an tionscadal seo comhaoinithe ag Rialtas na hÉireann agus an tAontas Eorpach.

### Rationale for Video

CCP SICAP have chosen a Video Case Study format to illustrate the stages of need experienced by those in Direct Provision and accommodation centres and the role of SICAP in creating a village like response within Cork - a city of diversity.

### Target Audience and Potential Future Use

Our target audience for this particular video case study includes Pobal and Cork LCDC. We also plan to use this video to promote our SICAP supports to IPA's, direct provision centres, local community



groups and agencies who work with IPA's. We will host this video on our CCP website and social media platforms.

**Link to Case Study Video** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X-AYQCAPaY>

### **Case Study Video features interviews**

#### **Gloria Abuike - SICAP New Communities/Ukrainian Coordinator**

Gloria has worked with Cork City Partnership since 2013 as a Tús Team Leader/Tús Coordinator and now as Coordinator of our SICAP Ukrainian/New Communities Supports. Gloria's qualifications are in Management and she has many years of experience in working with communities. Having a migrant background herself, Gloria brings an understanding of issues affecting IPA's to the coordination role, ensuring effective and targeted delivery of SICAP supports to New Communities in Cork.

#### **Susan Long - SICAP New Communities/Ukrainian Training and Employment Officer**

Susan has worked with Cork City Partnership since 1996 in various programmes including the Local Employment Service and more recently with SICAP. She is a qualified Psychotherapist and is passionate about working to support IPA's and refugees. She brings decades of experiences in the training and employment field to the role.

#### **Jean Louis -SICAP individual beneficiary**

Jean Louis is a 52-year-old man from DR Congo who came to Ireland in 2017. His native languages are Lingala and French and he arrived in Ireland with Intermediate English. Jean Louis moved out of his IPAS accommodation centre in 2020, having attained Refugee Status and currently resides in Cork City Centre in his own home. He was supported by a worker from the Peter McVerry Trust (at the request of BRIJ) to acquire HAP while residing in Glenvera Hostel. Jean-Louis has a wife and child still living in Kinshasa and is engaging in the process of family reunification to enable them to join him in Ireland. The main challenges he faces currently are that his income is low and he is living in an inhospitable neighbourhood.

Jean-Louis works full-time as a corporate security guard for a large facilities management company. The job is located 21km from his home and he often needs to cycle to work as public transport is not operational during the early or late hours of his rotating work shifts. His job is exhausting but it is the best job he can get at present, and it allows him to study during quiet times at work. He accessed this job via the SICAP Employment and Training worker, having previously undertaken a QQI 4 in Guarding Skills and acquired a PSA licence via the Mediator Training Fund of CCLES. Through SICAP, he has completed two level 5 courses over the past 3 years. SICAP is working with Jean-Louis on a long-term plan to help him eventually become a drugs counsellor. This was his profession in Kinshasa. He will need to undertake a NFQ Level 6 programme in a relevant discipline order to qualify to do this type of work in Ireland.

During this stage of an International Protection Applicants process, the person is usually living independently, holding down a job and undertaking courses to develop themselves. However, many like Jean Louis are living in challenging neighbourhoods where drug dealing, drug taking and ensuing violence are commonplace. SICAP support will assist Jean Louis to continue to believe in the vision



of his ideal job, draw strength from this vision and continue to work towards achieving it. SICAP will continue to work with Jean-Louis until he reaches his ultimate career goal.

#### **Torkia Mekhtiche - SICAP individual beneficiary**

Torkia is a 33-year-old journalist from Algeria. She is bilingual in French and Arabic and speaks English at Intermediate Level. At the time of filming, Torkia has been in Ireland for 3 months and resides at South Terrace, a Direct Provision IPAS centre in Cork City. She awaits permission to work and has at least 3 more months to wait until she can obtain labour market access. In the past 3 months, BRIJ volunteers have supported her to access English classes near her accommodation provided by Cork ETB and voluntary work via the Cork Volunteer Centre. This has provided an opportunity for Torkia to volunteer and gain work experience in Penny Dinners, the Oxfam Shop and Together Community Garden Project. Torkia is also a Sanctuary Runner.

She was referred to SICAP by BRIJ who briefed the SICAP Employment and Training Worker on what they believed Torkia needed in order to progress towards work. Torkia does not want to waste time and wishes to undertake training programmes discerningly with guidance from the SICAP Employment & Training Worker. She has applied for a number of free SICAP and ETB courses. She calculates that she will be close to finishing these when permission for work is granted to her by the Department of Justice. Torkia's long-term aim is to work as an international journalist via Arabic, English or French.

She understands that she may need to work for a number of years in a profession that will allow her to integrate more substantially into Irish society while her English improves and that she will be putting journalism on hold while this process is on-going. She has decided to pursue health care as a profession because she has a penchant for this work, having taken care of family members with illness back home. The CCP SICAP Employment and Training Worker has put a plan in place for Torkia to achieve this goal. A course has been identified that will allow Torkia to study while working. Torkia has also availed of outings to the beach and conversation cafes organised by the SICAP New Communities Team which have helped her to settle into the community and integrate socially.

The main issues facing Torkia currently are anxiety and exhaustion. She shares a room with two other people (initially strangers from different countries) and finds this environment difficult to relax in. She has no private space to retreat to for rest. She is hoping that she will come to accept this and just relax in these circumstances, as it is unlikely that her living situation will change in the short-term.

#### **Muhammed - SICAP individual beneficiary (not his real name; he wishes to remain anonymous)**

Muhammed is a 28-year-old male student from Nigeria (with a life-threatening heart condition). His native languages are English and Yoruba. He has been living in Ireland for two years and is currently residing in a Cork City Centre IPAS accommodation centre. Last April he was turned down for subsidiary protection by the Department of Justice on the grounds that his stay in Ireland was preceded by a short stay in Scotland. Muhammed left Nigeria in 2021 and went initially to Scotland to study a BSc in Computer Science in Aberdeen University. He had to leave after one month as his sponsor died and consequently he no longer had funding to support his studies. With no money and having lost the prospect of studying in the UK, Muhammed came to Ireland and entered the



protection process. He is under the care of a Cork University Hospital Cardiology team and attends a clinic fortnightly for monitoring.

In February 2022, a volunteer from BRIJ who was visiting Glenvera Hostel put Muhammed in contact with the SICAP Employment and Training Worker. With the support of this worker over the course 2022/2023, Muhammed completed a NFQ Level 5 Cyber Security programme; obtained a full-time job in a fast-food restaurant, completed a Safe Pass course and a NFQ Level 4 Guarding Skills course funded by SICAP. He travels to work via an electric bike, procured for him by a BRIJ volunteer who also procured a reconditioned laptop for him to use for the duration of his course.

The refusal of Muhammed's application was a major setback for him and caused him extreme anxiety for a number of weeks. SICAP and BRIJ were able to provide him with practical advice and emotional support during this time. This allowed him to remain functional enough to continue his training and maintain his job while appealing the decision of the Department of Justice.

This stage in a person's life in direct provision is a time when IPA's aim where possible to save money and put in place strategies and measures to build their future life in Ireland. It requires the person to be in some form of study and preparing for independent living where possible. This requires securing a means of earning money in preparation for personal progression and moving out of DP. The shock of denial of refugee status and the need to appeal has a devastating effect on International Protection Applicants. In the case of Muhammed (given his condition) the refusal exacted a particularly cruel blow. His anxiety was heightened for several weeks, and his clinicians were concerned for his health.

#### **Fahmeda Naheed - SICAP Collaborator, New Communities advocate**

Fahmeda is originally from Pakistan and has been living in Ireland for last fifteen years. She is an Irish citizen and has always lived in Cork. She came here for postgraduate studies at UCC. Fahmeda is extremely happy as a Corkonian and a Northsider. Cork is her home and her children were born here. She loves the sense of community and belonging as a Cork resident. Cork has introduced her to new ideas and has welcomed her at all times.

Fahmeda has collaborated with CCP on various events and projects. She is a tutor of Fusion Cooking which is blend of Irish/ Pakistani food as part of CCP community education programme. Fahmeda has been involved in integration events hosted by CCP SICAP. These events help to bring migrant and indigenous communities together through celebrating and welcoming activities.

Fahmeda also hosts a Radio Show at Cork City Community Radio and programme called 'Let's Integreat'. Fahmeda is a founding member of the Irish Pakistani Community of Cork, who were awarded winners of the Social Inclusion, Advocacy & Integration category at the CCC Lord Mayor's Civic, Community and Voluntary Awards ceremony in May 2023.

#### **BRIJ – Volunteer Support group working with people living in Direct Provision centres in Cork.**

BRIJ connects directly with people living in Direct Provision centres in Cork to support their access to resources, integration and justice. It was formed in 2016 to establish links between the people of Cork and those living in the three Direct Provision Centres in the city at the time. The name "**BRIJ**" represents a **Bridge to Resources, Integration and Justice**. BRIJ volunteers provide an "in-reach"



service to residents of IPAS direct provision centres in Cork City. They carry out preliminary needs assessments and harness the resources of state agencies and other services to respond to the needs of DP residents. BRIJ volunteers get to know the residents in centres by making themselves available to them on a regular weekly basis. This way a trust is built up with both management and residents.

In 2018, BRIJ commenced weekly visits to Glenvera, Wellington Road, which also coincided with IPA's being allowed to work. This created a huge demand for CV's training and employment support. It was then that CCP SICAP met with the BRIJ group and the strong collaboration and linkage began.

BRIJ now visit seven centres in Cork city and surrounds with more centres/accommodation coming on stream all the time. BRIJ has 42 active volunteers as of October 2023 who share a common goal of wanting to help and support people living in Direct Provision.

#### **Gary Delaney -Volunteer with BRIJ**

Gary got involved with BRIJ in 2019. He had previously worked in Africa and the Middle East and was conscious of IPA's in Ireland from these countries and wanted to give something back. Gary saw a post on Facebook looking for laptops for IPA's, so he made contact and subsequently started volunteering with BRIJ.

#### **Marie Collins - Volunteer with BRIJ**

Marie is a founding member of BRIJ which was set up in 2016. The Department of Justice had requested that management of the centres set up 'Friends of Centre' groups to help residents to integrate so the timing was perfect. At that time, IPA's received €19 /week for living expenses and were not allowed to work. The only people visiting the centre at that point were three nuns and a community worker from the HSE. BRIJ organised art classes run by volunteers. They also arranged for local sports clubs and groups to visit the centre. Volunteers visited to take people to doctor and hospital appointments.

#### **Challenges and roadblocks**

One of the biggest challenges to IPA's arriving in Ireland is accommodation capacity. Numerous studies have shown that Direct Provision Accommodation centres are not fit for purpose. The national housing crisis makes it difficult to move out of Direct Provision even when people have been granted permission to remain. IPA's in Cork are finding it difficult to access child care. The growth of the right-wing rhetoric and activism has led to increased racism outside accommodation centres and across media channels. IPA's without English are at a particular disadvantage and many are under-employed. A lack of access to technology i.e. laptops and broadband is a distinct disadvantage. SICAP can help to address some of these challenges, but not all.

#### **Learning**

People fleeing from conflict and persecution around the world do not take the decision to leave their homes and country lightly. Arriving in a new country where you do not have the language, supports of friends and family, poor accommodation standards and uncertain employment prospects is a daunting task. It is important that SICAP continues to support and grow our resources in order to assist this very disadvantaged target group. It is also important to work on integration projects in local areas. The work of BRIJ is a great example of linking needs and integration to supports.



CCP SICAP believes more emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of English language classes focusing on day to day and workplace English. We recognise the enormous value in linking in and collaborating with local community groups and agencies who support migrant groups. It creates more opportunities for IPA's. Best practice projects and successful pilots should be shared and implemented, where appropriate.

Our SICAP Team have built up links and relationships with direct provision centres. Working with IPA's is often about provision of long term one to one supports over months or even years, as has been highlighted in the examples in our Video Case Study. Migration and diversity bring many benefits, but there are no quick solutions or fixes to the concurrent challenges. Supporting integration is a responsibility that brings benefit to society as a whole. Community Response Forums have value and are needed. More focus and resources need to be diverted towards IPA's who experience significantly greater levels of disadvantage than other migrant groups.

Community work is key to positive outcomes in engaging local communities, accommodation centres, voluntary groups and agencies and communities in delivering best practice supports for IPA's in Cork city. SICAP joins the dots to make this happen.

CCP SICAP wish to thank all those who participated in our Case Study 2023.

- Jean Louis -SICAP individual beneficiary
- Torkia Mekhtiche - SICAP individual beneficiary
- Muhammed - SICAP individual beneficiary
- Fahmeda Naheed - SICAP Collaborator, New Communities advocate
- Gary Delaney -Volunteer with BRIJ
- Marie Collins - Volunteer with BRIJ
- Our SICAP Team especially Gloria Abuike and Susan Long



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



Cómhainithe ag an  
Aontas Eorpach

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European Union

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

Tá an Clár um Chuimsiú Sóisialta agus Gníomhachtú Pobail (SICAP) cómhainithe ag Rialtas na hÉireann, tríd an Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail, agus Ciste Sóisialta na hEorpa Plus faoin





gClár Fostaíochta, Cuimsiú, Scileanna agus Oiliúna (EIST) 2021 -2027.