



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Registered office:	Mullingar E.T.I. Ctr Mullingar Business Park Mullingar Co. Westmeath N91 X012
Auditors:	BDM Financial & Accounting Limited Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm Church Avenue Mullingar Co. Westmeath
Bankers:	Allied Irish Bank Oliver Plunkett Street Mullingar Co. Westmeath
Solicitors:	Buckley & Co Solicitors 14 St. Lomans Terrace Mullingar Co. Westmeath
Company no:	215187
CHY no:	12061
RCN:	20034535

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our staff and Board of Directors who contributed to producing this Annual Report



www.westcd.ie



Westmeath Community Development CLG



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to Westmeath Community Development's Annual Report 2018.

2018 continued to be a busy and productive year for Westmeath Community Development (WCD) as many of our core programmes continued to grow in strength, reaching wider audiences in more areas throughout the county than ever before. While the funding environment has generally improved in the non-profit sector, we are conscious that funding, and changes to the external environment and policy decisions continues to present challenges.

Despite these challenges, as an organisation committed to effecting positive social change in the county, we will continue our efforts to deliver vital programmes and services to those most in need. We believe in the quality and impact of our programmes, and that's what drives and motivates us as a board.

As trustees, we recognise the importance of ensuring that our corporate governance structures and functions are robust,

transparent and accountable. As we enter a new year, we are excited to commence our journey towards compliance with the Charities Governance Code – a journey that will no doubt require some soul searching but an opportunity to ensure that our strategic vision remains fit for purpose and continues to serve our beneficiaries well. Thank you to my fellow Directors for their continued contribution and commitment to WCD. I also must acknowledge the role played by the various members of Board committees and the valuable contribution they make in shaping our work on the ground. We said good bye to Board member Donna Mulkerrins who stepped down in 2018 and we thank Donna for her contribution to the organisation.

In 2018 we said farewell to our former CEO, Joe Potter, who retired after 23 years of service to WCD. On behalf of the Board of Directors we wish Joe the very best in his retirement. We also welcomed our new CEO in September 2018, Frank Murtagh.

Frank has been with the company since 2008 with a proven track record in delivering the organisation's strategic objectives. We are excited about future plans and opportunities under Frank's leadership.

We are proud to work with and support individuals and community groups in the county. We recognise that we cannot achieve our strategic goals alone. Working collaboratively with our many partners, including Westmeath County Council; Government departments and agencies; community & voluntary organisations; local & national networks helps make our vision a reality. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships and networks so that the needs and interests of local communities in Westmeath are always to the fore. We are grateful for all the support of our funders.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff in WCD who share our vision in helping create vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities throughout Westmeath.



Dermot Leavy
Chairperson Westmeath Community Development

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Inclusiveness is at the core of WCD's work and values. We achieve this by supporting individuals and communities most in need through various initiatives and programmes that put people first. As community development practitioners we are constantly striving to designing and delivering new and innovative initiatives that best serves the people of Westmeath.

supporting local communities and individuals in the county. We continue to exceed annual targets set out under SICAP – which is testament to the demand within the county for our services as well as the ongoing commitment and dedication of our staff to this programme.

which supports Syrian families who have moved to Westmeath. Last year we supported 73 individuals with various supports and training to aid their transition and integration. We are proud to deliver services that have improved the lives of Syrian families who are fleeing very difficult and unimaginable circumstances in their home country.

We are proud of our results in 2018 and our ability to reach more community groups and individuals than ever before

We are proud of our results in 2018 and our ability to reach more community groups and individuals than ever before. Over the course of 2018, we directly worked with and supported almost 3,000 individuals and 490 groups throughout the county. We delivered 116 public training events and used various communication channels to get our message out to the people of Westmeath. In 2018, WCD successfully secured funding for SICAP programme, which will enable us to continue

Our LEADER programme continues to gain momentum with a number of large projects now being processed with commitments of over €800,000 made by the end of the year.

Our horticultural programme in Belvedere House & Gardens continues to be a top performing programme, achieving over 80% progression rates to further education or employment. A particular highlight of 2018, has been the continued success of our Resettlement programme

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their ongoing support and commitment to driving this organisation forward and for retaining the vision to serve those most in need in the county.

Finally, to the team in WCD, thank you for your continued efforts to deliver quality programmes and services that continue to improve the quality of life for the people of Westmeath.



Frank Murtagh

Chief Executive Officer, Westmeath Community Development

COMPANY OVERVIEW

We are Westmeath Community Development (WCD), the local development company for the county. We administer a range of programmes and support services to individuals and community groups. Our objective is to improve the quality of life through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports.

We support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of local community groups, and creating more sustainable communities. We are the delivery agent for the LEADER programme and SICAP in Westmeath as well as delivering employment activation schemes such as TUS, Rural Social Scheme, Community Employment, and Jobs Club.

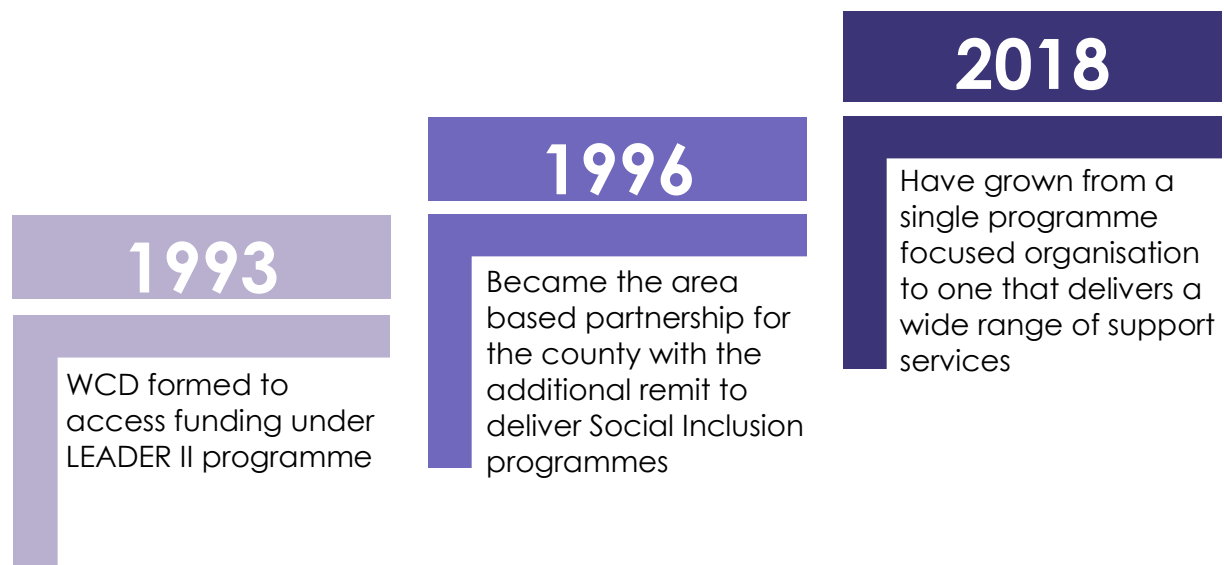
Our headquarters are located in the Enterprise & Innovation centre, Mullingar, with offices in Athlone and our horticultural training centre in Belvedere House & Gardens.

Providing support services to individuals and community groups within our county that improves the quality of lives through the provision of lifelong learning and labor market supports

Our core activities fall under the following programmes and services

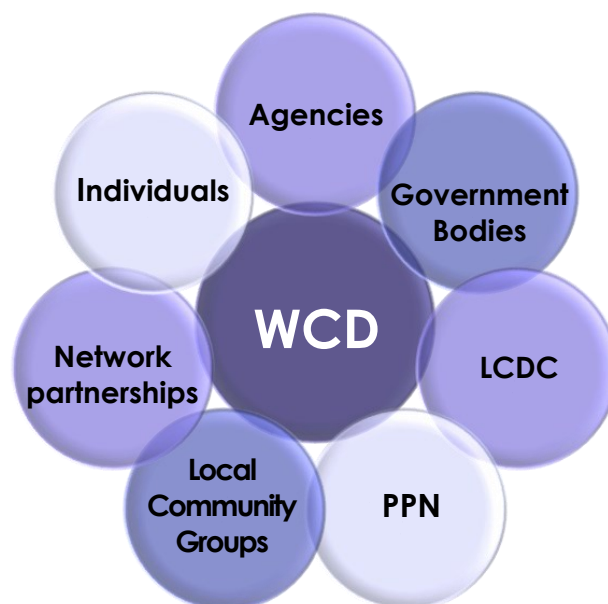


OUR HISTORY

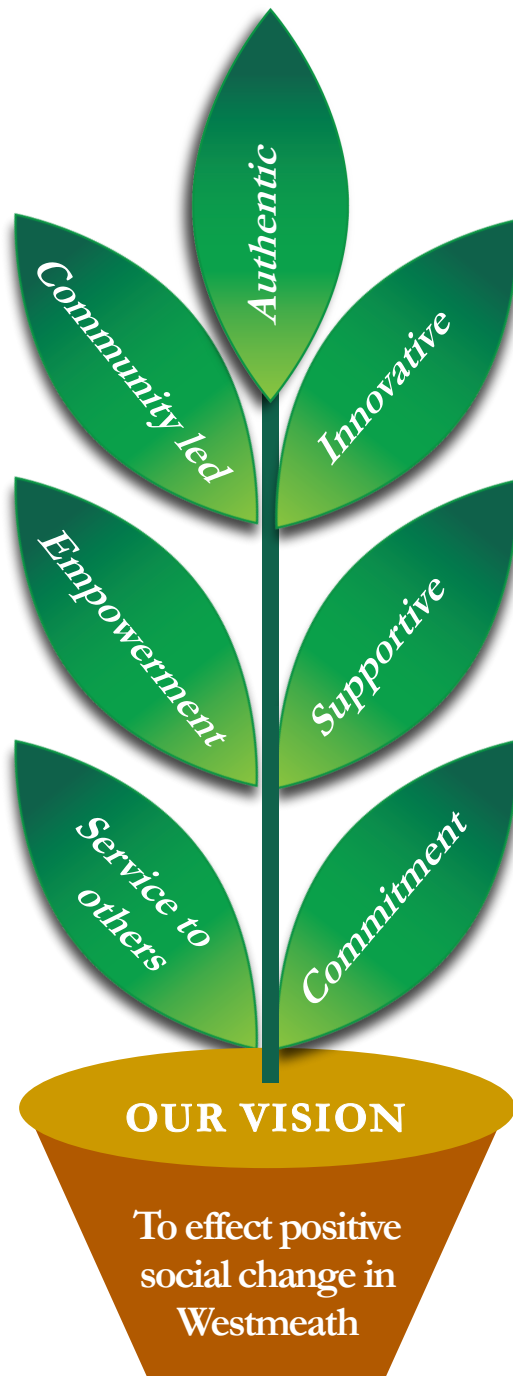


HOW WE WORK

Achieving our vision is not possible without the support of all our partners and collaborators. We use innovative partnership approaches to progress a social inclusion agenda and design programmes that address the needs of our service users. We are members of the Irish Local Development Network.



We are committed to working by the following values



OUR MISSION

**To create strong and resilient communities in Westmeath,
where everyone has equal access to opportunities that
enables a better quality of life**

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

WCD's activities and programmes are strongly aligned with and informed by various policies and strategies, local, national and international. These include:

Action Plan for Jobs

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-2018.pdf>

ESP Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020

<https://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/>

Ireland's National Skills Strategy

https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/pub_national_skills_strategy_2025.pdf

Local Economic & Community Plan [2015-2020] for County Westmeath

http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/media/LECP_20162021.pdf

National Action Plan for Social Inclusion

<https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Updated%20National%20Action%20Plan%20For%20Social%20Inclusion202015-2017.pdf>

Pathways to Work

<https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/PathwaysToWork2016-2020.pdf>

Westmeath Local Development Strategy

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/media/LocalDevStrategy20142020.pdf>

**PROGRAMME ACTIVITY
REVIEW 2018**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The primary aim of the current SICAP (2018–2022) is to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations, public sector agencies and other stakeholders. SICAP is managed locally by Westmeath Local Community Development Committees (LCDC), with the Programme Implementer (PI) for the county being Westmeath Community Development. SICAP has a two-pronged approach; supporting communities and supporting individuals.

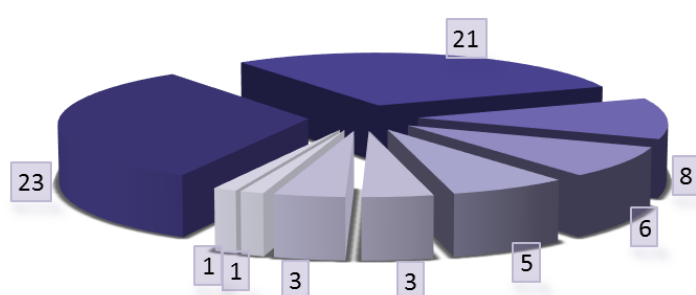
SICAP is administered by Pobal and funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, it also receives funding from the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.



Goal 1: Supporting Communities

Goal 1: Supporting Communities - support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of local community groups, and creating more sustainable communities. Number of local community groups registered with SICAP in 2018 was 69.

Breakdown of % target groups worked with in 2018



23-Disadvantaged rural areas
21-People living in Disadvantaged Communities
8-People with Disabilities
6-Disadvantaged Women
5-Disadvantaged Children and Families
3-New Communities
3-Travellers
1-Disadvantaged Young People (aged 15 – 24)
1-The Unemployed

OUTCOMES IN 2018



Supporting **11** Disadvantaged small areas in **8** rural towns.



10 areas successfully engaged to develop 'Community Support Plans' that assess local community needs and profiles. These plans will assist in targeting supports in years to come.



Westmeath continues to have a very active RAPID process with Area Implementation Teams and Community Forum's supported in Athlone and Mullingar, with **13** local community groups from disadvantaged urban areas including members of the Travelling community.



SICAP assisted Local Community Groups to participate in the PPN, and various other fora, including Community Development and Youth Working Group, Disability Working Group, Traveller Advisory Group and Age Friendly Strategy.



27 Local Community Groups were supported by SICAP to access funding of **€67,500** from local and national funding programmes.

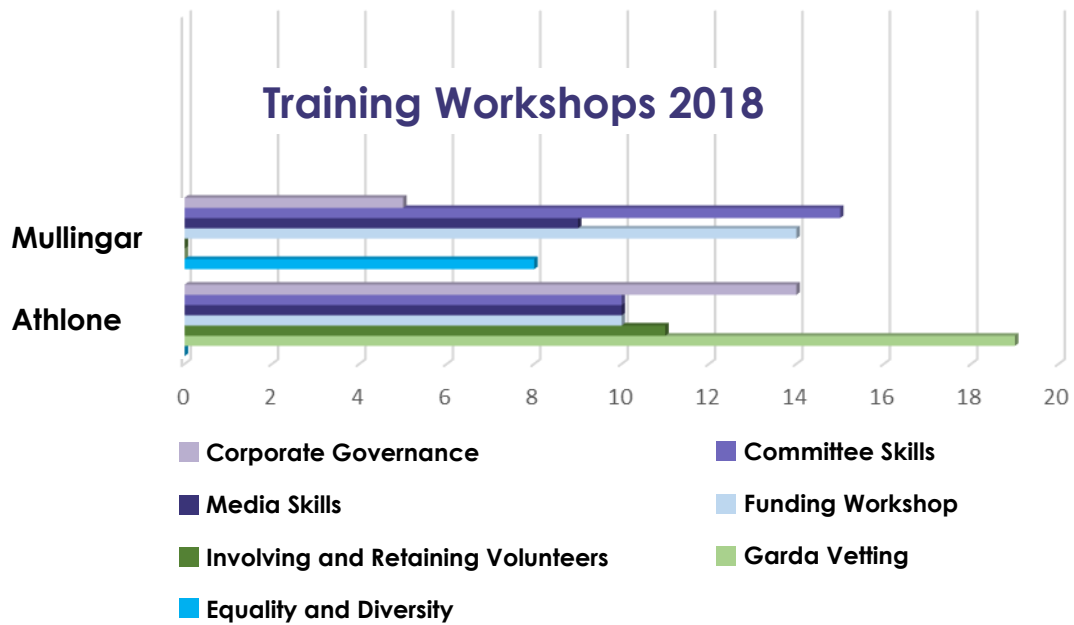
A Disability/Older peoples services and information event was organised and held in December 2018 with **40** service providers and **200** members of the public in attendance.



The Age Friendly Strategy is a Westmeath County Council Initiative. In 2018 the initiative was successful in reaching second place in the Pride of Place Competition.



An intercultural event, attended by **120** people was hosted in Bundaire, Kinnegad which was the first time an event of its kind took place.



18 training workshops on various topics with **120** groups aimed at empowering and upskilling community groups.

*"I really enjoyed the training,
I found it very informative-lots of
good information"*
(Equality Workshop)

*"This is the best training I have
attended with Westmeath
Community Development-very
helpful"*
(Funding Workshop)

*"Thank You so much I have
learned so much"*
(Media Skills Workshop)

WESTMEATH TRAVELLER PROJECT

The Westmeath Traveller Project works with and for Travellers in Westmeath. It aims to improve the quality of life of Travellers in the county. The programme is funded by the HSE with support from SICAP. WCD prides itself on being able to employ 6 members of the Travelling community to deliver this programme in Westmeath.

Outcomes in 2018

WCD supported **154** families through offering support with information, workshops and Traveller pride events.



Delivered information and training on Mental Health (**137** families), Child Safety awareness (**37** families); Cholesterol information (**89** families); Smoking cessation (**106** families); Cancer awareness (**45** families); Alcohol and Drug addiction (**60** families).



6 Cultural Awareness workshops delivered.



Locally the Traveller Project is represented on a number of structures including Traveller Women's and Men's Health Network; Public Participation Network; Domestic violence group; Traveller Advisory Group; Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee; Midwifery forum; RAPID Athlone and Mullingar.



On a regional basis WCD led the way in the establishment of the Men and Women's Network. There are currently **6** Traveller men sitting on the Men's network and **6** women on the Traveller Women's Health Network.



52 families supported with accommodation issues.

In July 2018 Traveller Pride Event saw the launch the Westmeath Traveller Cant Book, with a distribution of over **300** copies in Westmeath.

In 2018, work continued on plans to reopen a community centre in Blackberry Lane, Athlone that will give the Traveller community a greater sense of place, ownership and capacity to deliver programmes and services.



EVENTS



Intercultural event in Bundaire Kinnegad 2018



Cant Traveller Book



Disability and Older peoples event Mullingar, December 2018

EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The primary objective of WCD's employment services is to support people into work. No matter what our clients work history, educational experience or background, we support individuals to become job-ready, through working with them on a one to one basis and in a group setting. This is achieved by providing employability supports, labour market training, designing and delivering bespoke employer courses, and linking our clients with local employers.

In 2018 WCD supported over 1000 jobseekers under the following programmes:

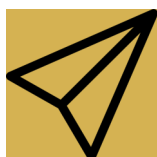
- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), funded by SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.
- Dormant Account Fund (DAF), Measure 4 – Pre-activation supports for female refugees and their female relatives.
- The Programme for Employability Inclusion and Learning (PEIL). Cofounded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund for Women Returning to the Workforce.



205 people received self employment supports.
20 people provided with assistance in accessing financial supports from SICAP to develop their businesses



248 clients secured a job



144 people progressed to self-employment with all supported to access BTWEA/STEA



510 clients achieved labour market training/qualifications

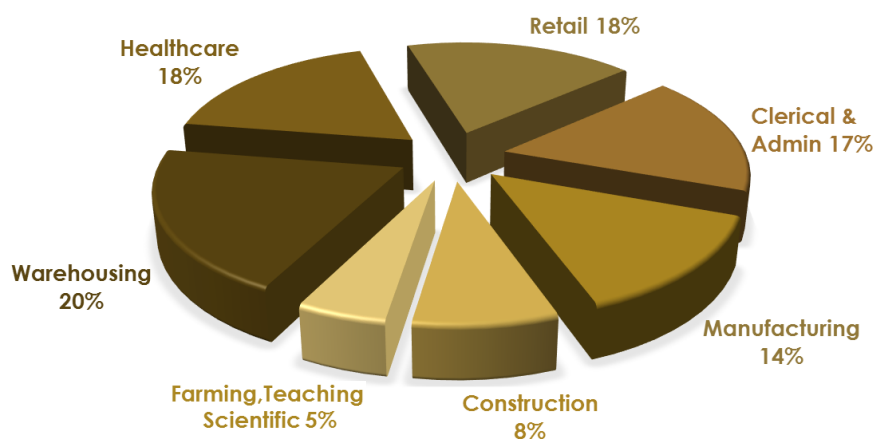


2 business development courses completed with 32 people participating



140 people referred to Local Enterprise Office and DEASP for further training

Employment sources



For the first time in the history of WCD more female clients entered employment than males in 2018. This is largely due to the work carried out under the SICAP, PEIL & DAF programmes as well as the nature of the jobs available in industries such as healthcare and retail. Another contributing factor is the constant increasing levels of employment which has seen WCD focus on supporting women working in the home, new female entrants to the workplace and women who are an adult dependent on their partners claim.

WCD delivered and funded over 60 labour market training courses

- Healthcare Major Award
- Bespoke Welding Course
- Safe Pass
- First Aid Responder
- Patient Moving & Handling
- Childhood Social Legal & Health Studies
- Accommodation Course (Center Parcs)
- Disability Awareness Course



- Supervisory Management Course
- Social Farming Course
- Manual Handling
- English Language Lessons
- MAPA
- Hoof Trimming Course
- Training Entrepreneur Course

WCD and Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, in conjunction with Europharma Concepts Ltd (EPC), offered 16 individuals a place on our Medical Device Drug and Cosmetic Manufacturing Course. This course was suitable for people interested in working in the medical or pharmaceutical industries. Over **70%** of the participants from this course have successfully secured work in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

Jobs Club

WCD's Jobs Club, funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection provides free services to the unemployed. In 2018, the Jobs Club engaged with and supported 201 clients.

Participants availed of the following Jobs Club supports:

- Drop-in service: assists jobseekers to avail of the facilities of the Job Club (e.g. internet, telephone, photocopying) at their own convenience.
- CV preparation and printing service.



- Individualised support: supports jobseekers to avail of practical and personal support on a one to one basis e.g. pre-interview support.
- Information workshops.

"Now know what to expect in retail job and more comfortable and confident".

"I secured a job because of it".

"This course built my confidence".

"Reminded me that I might just be able to do it".

"Interview prep helped me see I have a lot to give".

"I now have the qualifications to apply for jobs in hospitals, thanks".

Case study on employment supports Cloud Nine Café, Athlone

In 2018, the owner of 'Cloud Nine' Café was in the latter stages of setting up his business. He had located premises, renovated and designed the café, created menus, set up his suppliers locally, market research and was entering the last phase of recruitment and training.

The employer, motivated first and foremost by a desire to hire reliable, skilled people to work in his new café, has a background in healthcare and first-hand knowledge and evidence of the value, skills and productivity people with disabilities can offer the workplace. He recognised the multiple benefits employment can provide people with disabilities including, increased wellbeing, a sense of pride, social inclusion and was therefore determined to offer these benefits to all his staff.

WCD worked closely with the employer to develop a training programme that suited a diverse range of learning styles and educational/training backgrounds.

Outcomes: of the **14** participants who engaged in a bespoke training programme, **8** were long term unemployed; **5** on a disability payment and 1 working part time. The employer, with the support of WCD, not only removed barriers for people with disabilities but also for long term unemployed individuals wishing to return to or enter the workplace for the first time.

Outcomes for participants included:

- Successfully gaining labour market training and accreditation.
- Increase confidence in their abilities - recognising their unique skills and talents were greatly sought after and valued by their new employer.
- **12** individuals eventually secured employment with 'Cloud Nine' and 6 months later remain in employment. Through its inclusive recruitment and training policy, **35%** of Cloud Nine Café's workforce are now people with disabilities compared with the national average of **6.5%**.

Employer feedback

"As we solidified our location and realised how much training was required, the benefits to training, and the type of bespoke training needed, WCD helped us in every way."

"Overall the experience I had with WCD and what our team have said and done since the training, I would recommend any start up to seek out such training."

Adam-owner of Cloud Nine Café.



"I found the training provided to be very interesting and accessible. The whole group participated in each module and this helped us to learn about each other and work as part of a team. It was good for us to meet before starting work as we didn't have first day jitters as you usually would walking into new employment". Sarah – Waiter at Cloud Nine Café.

EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT & SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

WCD hosts a number of employment activation and employment support programmes. Each programme provides a direct benefit to both urban and rural communities throughout Westmeath by providing employment placements to community and voluntary organisations.

Community Employment Programme

The Community Employment (CE) programme is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. WCD's CE Scheme is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection. An integral component of the CE programme is to support participants to engage in training and upskilling so that they are more 'jobs ready' after the programme is complete. CE is to enhance the employability and mobility of disadvantaged and unemployed persons by providing work experience and training opportunities. WCD also supports local entrepreneurs to develop their business model and business planning skills through a variety of Start-Up and business activation programmes including the Trainee Entrepreneur Programme.

The WCD CE scheme is based between Mullingar and Athlone and has 50 places, 18 of which are dedicated to the Business Development Programme.

The remaining places are based in a variety of roles throughout the county including: Childcare roles in Afterschool projects, Administrative support in Community Development projects, Administration and Reception, Maintenance and Caretaking and Catering Assistant.

WCD places value on training for CE participants and we encourage participants to seek out and engage in quality training that is of specific interest to them and which may lead to employment opportunities. Training undertaken in 2018



Eddie Keenan, Office Administration, Westmeath Community Development:

"I started my CE Scheme with WCD in October 2017. Although I had a lot of experience in office work, having been unemployed for a few years, I wanted to readapt to the office environment. I have found the CE Scheme with WCD to be highly beneficial, allowing me to upskill in many areas through training/courses and the variety of work on offer means I am now a lot more proficient in many areas of administration. I would recommend the CE programme to anyone looking to get back into full-time employment as it provides a valuable gateway through learning and experience. An excellent working environment, with a strong emphasis on the development of CE participants. Variety in work practices allows participants to develop their skills in many areas. An overall positive environment where training is encouraged at every opportunity."

Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) provides income support for farmers who are in receipt of long-term social welfare payments. They in turn carry out services that benefit rural communities. Participants on the scheme are placed with local community groups such as GAA clubs, Tidy Towns groups, community centres and childcare groups. RSS is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection. WCD administers the scheme for Westmeath and managed 42 RSS placements in 2018.

The type of work carried out by RSS participants



Maintaining and enhancing walking routes and bog roads



Social care and care of older people, including Community Childcare facilities



Village and countryside enhancement projects as part of Tidy Towns



Projects relating to not-for-profit cultural and heritage centres



Energy conservation work for older people and those at risk of poverty



Environmental maintenance work - maintenance and care-taking of community and sporting facilities such as Streete Parish Park, Castledaly Community Centre, Moate GAA club and Athlone GAA club

Case Study Finea Tidy Towns

Finia is a picturesque village on the shores of Lough Sheelin near the Westmeath/Cavan border. It has a very good record in the Tidy Town's competition but for a number of years in the early 2000's, they were finding it hard to find new volunteers to support the groups' work. A participant on RSS was appointed in April 2005 to work with the local committee to improve its standing in the competition.

John Moore is now in his 15th year on RSS. John has a drystock farm one mile from Finia. The RSS allows John to work on his farm part-time and to give 19.5 hours weekly to Finia Tidy Towns. The progress that Finia has made in terms of aesthetics and increase in points in the National Tidy Towns' competition since John joined the scheme is apparent. This area is very popular with anglers and tourists who come to fish in the River Inny and nearby Lough Sheelin. Many local establishments value the local tourist trade so keeping the local village and surrounding area looking its best is fundamental to a repeat tourism trade. John has an excellent relationship with the local Tidy Towns committee who have input and advice on the daily and long-term work that needs to be completed in order to keep Finia Tidy Towns high in the competitions ranking.

Tús Programme

The Tús initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. WCD administers the scheme for Westmeath. Tús is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection.

WCD currently manages 120 places on Tús with 6 supervisors. The places on the scheme are allocated to community and voluntary organisations involved in the delivery of local services in urban and rural areas. The allocation is based on the numbers of eligible unemployed people in each local area. There are 80 participants based in the greater Mullingar area and 40 in Athlone. Over 75% are placed in urban settings.

Activities carried out by participants in the Tús scheme is community-based include:



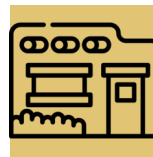
Community services e.g. Mullingar Citizens Information Centre



Caring services in childcare and care of older people services e.g. D'Alton Park Community crèche



Environmental services including conservation and maintenance of national walkways e.g. Mullingar, Athlone and Moate Tidy Towns



Heritage and Cultural services

Outcomes

Every participant receives induction training with 40 participants availing of extra training. All participants on Tús are encouraged to avail of various employment supports available through WCD and this has led to excellent progression rates to employment.



18 participants progressed into other employment and training schemes



37 participants progressed to employment

Mullingar EYE is a Garda Youth Diversion Project located in Columb Barracks. Mullingar EYE works with 12 to 18-year olds who are at risk of behaviour that may lead them into the juvenile system. YoYo Youth and community café provides facilities and activities to all young people and also to older members of the community.

Mullingar EYE has 2 full time staff and has several part time youth workers. At present they have 3 Tús members working as youth workers and one as a cleaner. Tús support offers an invaluable resource to the project and café and without their help Mullingar EYE would be unable to offer the wide range of activities and supports currently provided by them.

“Westmeath Community Development and the Tús Supervisor team are tireless in their support of our project, and I personally support their Tús part time workers in carrying out their activities and providing training needed to boost their full-time employment opportunities”.

Joan O'Connor, Co-ordinator of Mullingar EYE Project

Jobs Initiative

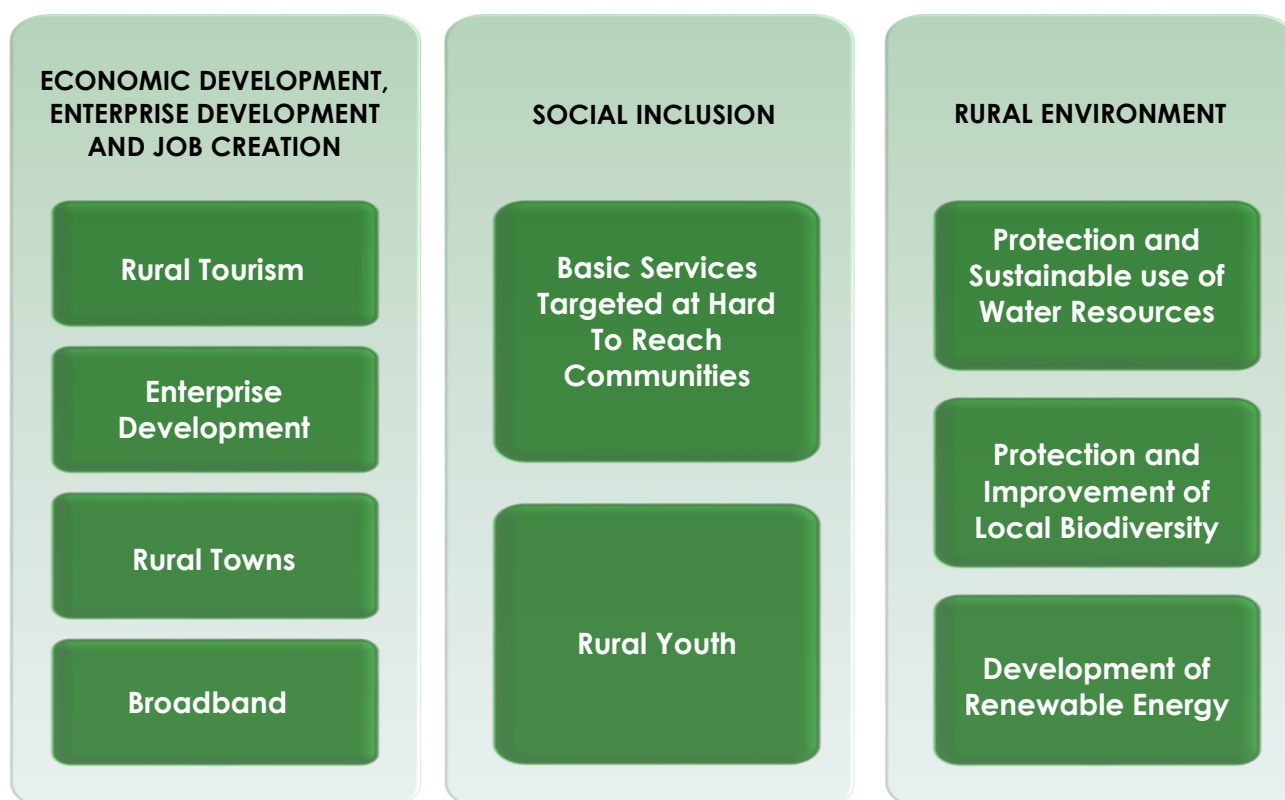
Job Initiative scheme is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection. The programme provides full time employment for people over 35 years of age who have been unemployed for 5 years or more. Since November 2004 there has been no further recruitment onto the scheme. At present we have four participants remaining on our scheme. Participants are currently placed with Dr Stevens Centre, Athlone; Marist College, Athlone; Athlone Community Radio; IPWD.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Leader 2014-2020 Programme

LEADER is a community led approach to local development, funded through Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. It supports initiatives that seek to address locally identified needs and challenges. LEADER covers the entire geographic area of Westmeath including the two main towns of Mullingar and Athlone, which had been excluded under previous LEADER Programmes. Funding of **€7,384,205** has been allocated to Westmeath for the duration of the programme. The Programme includes a number of themes and sub themes that reflect the overarching needs of rural Ireland.

LEADER themes and sub themes



Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation focuses on driving continued local economic development, including diversification of the rural economy and the creation for employment opportunities for the local community. Under this theme supports are available for projects in the following areas; Rural Tourism, Enterprise Development, Rural Towns and Broadband.

Social Inclusion focuses on reducing communities' experiences of marginalisation caused by disadvantage and rural isolation. Supports for basic services for hard to reach communities and Rural Youth projects are covered under this theme.

Rural Environment seeks to maximise the potential of environmental actions to contribute to the sustainable development of rural communities. It focuses on utilising the landscape within a local area, its features and natural resources, while simultaneously creating greater environmental awareness and improving environmental protection. Under this theme, support is available for projects under the following sub-themes; Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources, Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity and the Development of Renewable Energy.

Project Approvals and payments in 2018

In 2018, **15** projects were approved for grant aid to the value of **€333,005.61**. Since the programme began, **45** projects have been approved to a value of **€802,578.08**.

A total of **€194,889.23** in payments was made to **16** project promoters who had completed their projects in 2018 alone.



9 Information meetings were held during the year with over **300** persons representing various community groups, voluntary bodies, sporting organisations as well as individuals and businesses.

58 written expressions of interest were received, **68%** were from community groups, voluntary organisations and sporting bodies, **32%** from individuals and businesses.



Projects Approved in 2018

Project Promoter	Project	LEADER Grant Aid
Westmeath Community Development	Baseline Study – Shannon Erne Pilgrim Way	€5,537.38
Agri-Promotions Ltd. Delvin	Purchase of embroidery machine for Farm Wardrobe business	€20,000.00
Rosemount GAA	Installation of new stand at the GAA grounds	€13,513.59
Collinstown Recreation Group	Installation of new playground	€37,007.37
Milltownpass Action Community group	Installation of new playground	€37,498.69
Multy Community Centre	Upgrading of playground equipment	€8,508.57
Loughegar Community Playground	Installation of new playground	€37,497.55
Ballymore Community Centre	Installation of new playground	€37,301.88
Tubberclairie Glasson Playground Committee	Installation of new playground	€37,500.00
Rosemount GAA	Installation of new playground	€37,500.00
Ballynacargy Tidy Towns	Production of Tidy Towns Plan	€3,600.00
Durrow Mills, Kilbeggan	Expansion of Flour Milling Business	€10,995.00
Rahugh Hall Development Association	Upgrading to hall facilities in Rahugh	€22,038.99
Westmeath Community Development	Production of a Recreation Strategy for County Westmeath	€20,420.58
Ballykeeran Residents Association	Inner Lakes Survey	€4,086.00
	TOTAL	€333,005.61

Case Study: Rural Tourism - an important driver for the rural economy

Tourism Training Programme

The provision of capital supports for the development of the Rural Tourism sector in the county is an objective of the LEADER Programme in Westmeath. Taking cognisance of this, WCD designed an *Introduction to Tourism Programme* primarily with new or recent entrants to the tourism sector in mind. 12 persons participated on this programme including a number of more established operators who wished to refresh their skills. It took place over 6 evening sessions in March 2018. The Programme was delivered by experienced tutors and covered the following;

Overview of Tourism in Ireland	Sales & Marketing
Taking the First Steps & Practicalities	Finance
Know your Market & Customers	Benefits of Networking

Case Study: Action Plans launched for seven Westmeath villages



WCD was successful in securing funding through the LEADER Programme to undertake an Action Planning Initiative for towns and villages in Westmeath. As a community-led, bottom-up approach to local development, the LEADER Programme is particularly suited to revitalising rural towns and villages through a co-ordinated approach that builds on the economic strengths and infrastructure of an area whilst addressing the key challenges for business, community and recreation.

The first step taken by WCD in undertaking this initiative was to ascertain the level of interest at local level around action

planning. Two meetings were hosted by WCD inviting communities to attend and this resulted in seven areas coming forward to participate namely: Coole, Collinstown, Castletown Geoghegan, Rosemount, Streete, Multyfarnham and Milltownpass. Each area was assisted by the selected consultants, Blue Moss who provided valuable guidance and facilitated each stage of the plan. All villages followed a similar process that was inclusive and aimed at turning words into actions.

The Action Planning process involving all seven villages took place over a six-month period from January to June 2018 and included over 35 meetings with the seven communities culminating in a launch of the plans on 30th June 2018 in Mullingar. The completed plans included an audit of existing resources and services and identified projects that could be advanced for the social and economic benefit of all areas.

With the completed plans in place, the areas set about progressing actions with a number of applications for feasibility studies and capital grant aid coming forward for funding through the programme.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Volunteer Centre

WCD provides a Volunteer Centre service for the county, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. WCD supports individuals and organisations in Westmeath to achieve their individual and collective goals while making a significant contribution to their local community and society. The economic value of volunteering in Westmeath is estimated as €445,770 with an average of 387 hours of volunteer hours each week being provided.

Volunteer Centre Services

- Provide a link between people interested in volunteering and non-profit groups looking for volunteers
- Refer volunteers to organisations and support them through the process. Advertise for volunteers on behalf of non-profit groups in Westmeath and refer interested people to these groups
- Offer Volunteer information workshops to help people get started
- Run quarterly networking events for Community and Voluntary Groups
- Training & guidance on volunteer management to non-profit organisations
- Facilitate links between community and voluntary groups
- Provide resource materials to help organisations manage volunteers
- Process Garda Vetting applications on behalf of organisations
- Create awareness of volunteering in the county



Results in 2018

Westmeath Volunteer Centre (WVC)

- **118** Organisations are registered with Westmeath Volunteer Centre, including **30** new organisations in 2018
- WVC provided **172** volunteer placements
- Volunteers were placed in **62** organisations
- **134** new volunteer opportunities were created by organisations
- **218** new volunteers registered
- **505** applications for volunteer roles were made
- **29** different nationalities registered to volunteer
- **52.5%** of volunteers who applied for an opportunity were placed
- **73** new volunteers were placed in roles
- **173** new and existing volunteers were placed in roles
- **95** Garda vetting applications processed
- **48** organisations received Garda vetting training
- **100** organisations received volunteer training workshops
- Quality standards achieved



“Gateway Youth Project aims to encourage the social inclusion and educational achievement of young people in the Athlone area. We run a variety of programmes, most of which would not be possible without the input from our great team of volunteers. While the commitment of their time each week is a big undertaking, the generosity of spirit to form bonds with and create a supportive space for vulnerable young people in our community is what our volunteers should be lauded for most. That atmosphere of encouragement and community is also the factor that volunteers report as giving them the most satisfaction. A rewarding volunteer experience is far more likely to be repeated, so we want to support all of our volunteers and communicate well with them. We try to recruit volunteers in a variety of ways, but the most successful and consistent manner is through the Volunteer Centre. Our relationship with the Centre allows us to recruit suitable people for particular groups and allows us to plan ahead in the knowledge that we will have help in finding the right people. This enables us to use our limited resources in the most effective way possible to create opportunity for our young people and change in the community.”

Kieran Burke (Education and Training Officer, Gateway Youth Project Athlone)

Childcare Programme

WCD Childcare Services operates from 7 Childcare and After-school centres, 6 in Athlone and 1 in Mullingar. Our After-school Services are funded through the National Childcare Investment Programme, under the new National Childcare Scheme, from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Supports such as school meals is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection and Westmeath County Childcare Committee. Our After-School services operate from the start of the school year until July, and includes full day camps at Halloween, Easter and during the month of July when the schools are closed. After-school services are available 4 hours a day from Monday-Friday during the school year, and includes a homemade hot snack, homework supports with qualified teachers, art and cultural activities, sports, fun and games.



188 children were registered in our **7** services during 2017-2018 academic term.

168 of children registered received subvention towards childcare cost under the Community Childcare Scheme and **20** remaining paid pro-rotta.

SEA Programme

Children attending our services who are in 5th & 6th Class attend the SEA Programme (Sports and Education After School). This programme operates once a week over 5/6 weeks in Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). The programme aims to give children exposure to third level institutions and to break down barriers for many children from disadvantaged backgrounds accessing third level. Students from the Social Care Department in AIT deliver an introduction programme to the college where children get to experience the various faculties and college life.

Daniel & Lyndsey were both young parents when their children began attending the After-Schools Service in Brawny in 2009 with their first child. Since then, all their three children have attended the after-school with their youngest now in 5th Class. Both parents decided that they would return to college (AIT). Daniel received his BA Hons in Social Care and now manages a residential unit, while Lyndsey received sponsorship from AIT in the science department and is currently working towards her PhD in Animal Genetics. Daniel said “without the support of (WCD) childcare service we may have not been able to complete our studies, while adding that the After-Schools programme was “essential in preparing their children for secondary school”.

Horticulture Programme

The Horticulture FETAC Level 5 programme is delivered by WCD and funded by Longford Westmeath Educational Training Board (LWETB) as a Local Training Initiative. The course provides a 1-year course in Belvedere House and Gardens and caters for students aged between 16 and 35 years of age. Entry to the programme includes those experiencing barriers to accessing the labour market, mainstream training or education programmes.

The course offers a unique educational and practical environment in beautiful surroundings of Belvedere House for students to learn. The Level 5 in Horticulture consists of the following modules: Garden Design, Work Practice, Team Working, Plant Protection, Plant Science, Soil Science, Plant identification and Use, Plant Propagation, Fruit and Vegetable production.

We are particularly proud of the programmes' progression rates of 80%, one of the highest progression rates of similar horticultural programmes in the country. Past students are currently in management roles in various horticulture projects throughout the country including full and part time work in Garden Centres, Nurseries, Landscaping Companies, OPW, County Councils, Castle Estates and Parklands, Centre Parcs, Golf Courses, Nursery and stock plant specialists.

In 2018, our highest number of students progressed to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, with **6** students currently studying there. To date **25** students have now progressed to either Level 6 and 7 Degrees at the National Botanic Gardens.

2 of our past students are currently completing their doctorate degrees with one individual finalising her PhD in Botany in Trinity College, while another is completing their doctorate in the Belgium Botanical Gardens.

3 of our students travelled to prestigious Kew gardens in London in 2018, as part of their work experience.

1 student from 2015 is working full time in the Zoological gardens in Dublin after gaining his degree from the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, Dublin.



"This course has opened up so many new avenues of potential employment. The course was delivered by extremely experienced and professional team of tutors".

"I am now on a completely new learning path thanks to the help of all at Belvedere horticultural programme level 5 major award. Thanks for all your help".

“After working as a motorcycle courier for many years I wanted a change in direction in my career, I was encouraged to study level 5 major award Horticulture programme at Belvedere House & Gardens. I enjoyed every minute there learning and working in the walled garden, growing and cultivating plants, it opened a new world to me and I got the bug, John Smyth horticulture tutor persuaded me to pursue a dream opportunity to engage in work experience at Dublin Zoo under horticulturist Dr Stephen Butler, it was one thing I always wanted to do, it was fantastic!

Progressing from there I undertook a level 7 degree at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. On graduation I applied for a full-time position with Dublin Zoo and was successful. I would advise anyone with an interest in nature and horticulture to pursue the level 5 programme at Belvedere”.

Sean Mullins BA Hort. [Horticulture programme graduate, Belvedere]



Westmeath Resettlement Programme

The Irish Government is committed to receiving approximately 4,000 people through the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. Westmeath is selected as a Refugee Resettlement host community and in early 2017, WCD successfully secured a tender by Westmeath County Council to be the implementing agency of the Westmeath Syrian Programme Refugee Resettlement Project. The Refugee Resettlement Project is co-financed by the European Commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 and is supported by the Department of Justice and Equality.

The overall objective of the programme is to ensure that refugees can settle into the community, can access services appropriately and build lasting relationships with the local community. Part of WCD's remit is to support families with any medical and educational needs; accessing various services and integration into the local community.



73 people engaged in the programme in 2018 including **14** men, **15** women and **44** children.

At WCD we are particularly proud to be able to support Refugees to become more independent and to feel more at home in their new environment. It has given them hope and prospects for their future which they thought they may not have again. Most of the adults have engaged in various educational and training opportunities from literacy classes to Start your own Business programmes. Two of the adults have become regular volunteers with local charities, while another individual has opened their own restaurant. Some of the families rented plots in Belvedere House to grow their own vegetables and plan to do this again in 2019.

Unfortunately, most of the children have not experienced proper schooling due to the war in Syria. Therefore, supporting children to return to education has been a high priority of the Resettlement programme.



"I've really enjoyed being a part of the befriender programme, we have all become great friends and it's been a really wonderful experience! The family are very kind hearted, always greeting us with warm hospitality and going to great efforts to make us feel welcome. Bashar has immersed himself into life here in Ireland and it's been a pleasure for us all to get to know him; his attitude and the perspective he has on

life has been inspiring. I look forward to the next experiences, the new cultural insights that we both continue to have, and to the new memories that we will make".

Lisa Kenny, Family Befriender

"My name is Amar Alkhalifa, I'm from Syria, I'm twenty-nine years old, I'm married, I have three children. On behalf of my wife and children we would like to thank the Irish government, Irish people and Westmeath Community Development for their hospitality and for helping us to integrate into Irish society.

I left in Syria 2012 with my family, we moved to Lebanon, we lived there 5 years. We came to Ireland on 10th May 2017. After that we came to Mullingar on 25th July 2017 since that day Westmeath Community Development company in Mullingar organised a lot of things for us. I'm studying English for second year (level 3), my plan is to go to the college - that's a dream to me - and I will work hard for it. Also I volunteer 2 hours a week for Oxfam in Mullingar. I want to learn everything here, because I love this country and I want stay here and work for it to flourish. I really appreciate what they have done for us".

Amar Alkhalifa.



Community Mothers Programme

Community Mothers are volunteers who use their experiences as mothers as well as their local knowledge to support and encourage new parents. The programme is funded by TUSLA – the Child and Family Agency. All visits take place in the parents home and the service is free. The Community Mother Service is provided predominately in Longford, Mullingar and Athlone areas, but also includes the surrounding towns of Edgeworthstown, Newtownforbes, Kinnegad, Killucan, Castlepollard and Delvin.

Home Visiting Service

During 2018, **62** families were referred to our service with **58** families receiving a home visit during the year. Our service carried out over **1260** individual home visits. By the end of 2018 the number of Community Mothers providing a service to families between the two counties was **24** (Mullingar 13, Athlone 4 and Longford 7). During the year we welcomed two new Community Mothers to the Athlone area.



Nearly **40%** of referrals are from Irish Families and the remainder of referrals come from Nigeria, Brazil, Poland, Pakistan, India, Romania, Spain, Italy, Iran, Georgia, Zimbabwe, Slovakia, England, Afghanistan, Latvia and Lithuania.

Baby Cafe in Mullingar

During the year there was **170** individual visits by **25** parents at Baby Cafe Mullingar. Two community mothers deliver the service. The service offers a great source of support to mothers who may be new to the community, creating opportunity for sharing of experiences, beginning new friendships and reducing social isolation.



Baby massage

206 parents availed of baby massage classes in Athlone, Longford and Mullingar.

"It's great meeting other mums and realising that they are going through the same struggles as me, I don't feel so alone".

"The class is great, my baby is so relaxed afterwards, love meeting the other mums as I'm new to the area and knew no one before I came".

"The class has helped build my confidence as a mum, love it".



"I'm a young mum living in Longford with my nearly 3-year-old daughter. I felt awkward when I first met my community mother, I thought it was going to be very formal. I soon realised that her visits would make things better for me. She helped me organise my appointments, feel more confident in myself. Mary encouraged me to go to my GP and my mental health is sorted now. It has been great to chat with Mary as I feel lonely sometimes. Catriona (programme co-ordinator) has also arranged a 'meitheal' and all the people like the OT, speech and language meet in my house and help my life with Billie be better, that's the best thing being respected like an adult and not a child because I'm young. My daughter loves to see Mary coming, and Mary helps me with her exercises that she has to do every day. Life is so much better that Community Mothers is in my life".

Westmeath Care and Repair Service

The Care and Repair Programme was established to carry out minor repairs for older and vulnerable people free of charge, to give them access to reliable tradesmen for larger jobs. The Westmeath Care and Repair Service is made available throughout Westmeath to people over 60 years of age.

Repair Service

As part of the Repair Service, jobs can vary from fitting a light bulb to fitting smoke alarms; shelving; painting; installing security locks; light gardening chores; mowing lawns; and general home maintenance work. The maximum allowable time for a care and repair job is 90 minutes.



Care Service / Home Visits

Our Home Visit is a Volunteer Service for isolated older people in our community. Older people receive a weekly home visit from our volunteers.

Befriending Service

The Befriending service is where the older persons receives a call daily, weekly or as requested by person.

120 people benefitted from telephone Befriending service

2,816 calls to older persons

651 DIY jobs completed

149 Older people availed of Care and Repair

834 Home Visits completed



Food and Health

The Food and Health programme promotes healthy eating and living, aimed at individuals where cost and affordability is a consideration. The main goal is to help improve people's access to good quality information on healthy eating that can be applied to everyday lifestyle choices. This is a joint initiative between WCD and the HSE Midlands Area. All courses are delivered by local people trained as Food and Health Instructors.

The programme has 5 separate components:

Cool Dude programme introduces young people (8-14 years old) to healthy eating through fun and practical activities.

Able to Cook for Health (A2C4H) is a 6-session nutrition educational programme aimed at individuals with an intellectual disability. Each session has a practical cookery element with all participants encouraged to get involved in both the preparation and cooking of simple healthy dishes.

Healthy Food Made Easy Individuals gain hands-on experience of preparing and cooking healthy dishes that are affordable. Learning about the food pyramid, balanced diets and shopping tips is central to this programme.

Heart Health The Community Heart Health project is designed for groups who have already completed a Healthy Food Made Easy course and focuses on nutrition, stress management and physical activity.



In total **41** workshops were delivered, directly engaging **461** individuals.

Live Longer and Prosper

WCD in conjunction with Westmeath County Council and Age Friendly Council delivered the Live Longer & Prosper programme in the first quarter of 2018, funded by the Healthy Ireland Fund. The programme is aimed at promoting healthy eating and lifestyle choices amongst the older generation.

The programme consists of 4 main key elements:

The nutrition and healthy eating component focuses on our Food and Health Programme, but redesigned by an HSE dietitian so that it is age appropriate for an older age group. This element focuses on healthy eating, cooking, budgeting and food hygiene.

Health and physical exercise component of the programme was delivered by Westmeath Sport Partnership and Mental Health Midlands.

Information sessions provided from agencies such as the Gardai, Citizens Information Centre, Help Link South, MABS and many more.

Social gatherings and entertainment provided opportunities for older people to meet and help reduce isolation.

The programme was held over 5 weeks in 4 locations, Athlone, Mullingar, Devlin, and Rochfortbridge.

During the last session, all 4 groups came together in the Bloomfield Hotel for a final workshop to receive completion certificates.

In all, the programme reached **71** groups and **160** participants.

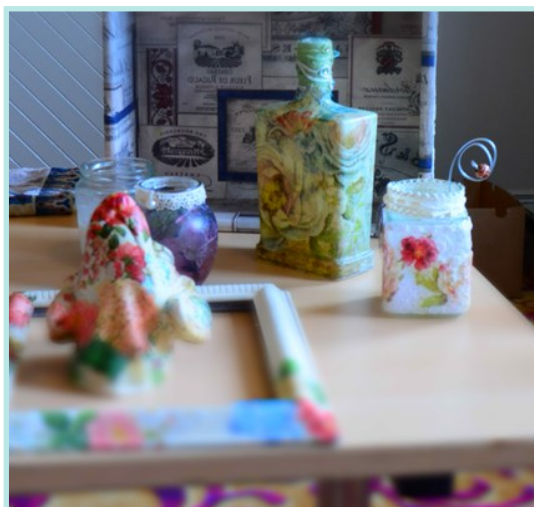


"Took in all elements of life, made me aware of eating healthy & exercising again".

"Enjoyed every part, learning new things, and getting to meet new people".

"It covered many topics and gave food for thought & wonderful demos on food, which we sampled & enjoyed".

"This course brought me alive, mentally and physically; the tutors were brilliant".



Live Longer & Prosper 2018



**GOVERNANCE & FINANCIAL
REVIEW 2018**

GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

Good governance is the cornerstone of a successful and sustainable organisation. At WCD, we strive to meet the best governance standards driven by the principles of transparency, openness and accountability. We are committed to adopting the [Principles of the Charities Governance Code](#) and are currently working towards compliance in 2020.

Board of Directors / Trustees of Westmeath Community Development in 2018

Name	Position
Dermot Leavy	Director/Chairperson
Liam Cahill	Director/Treasurer (IBEC)
Pat Boyce	Director (ICTU)
Marion Garry	Director (PPN)
Seamus Browne	Director (PPN)
Paddy Corcoran	Director (PPN)
Geraldine Lacey	Director (PPN)
Helen Donnelly	Director (PPN)
Hugh Farrell	Director (PPN)
Emily Wallace	Director (Environmental Pillar)
Augustina Adagun	Director (PPN)
Mary Lennon	Director (PPN)
Donna Mulkerrins	Director (AIT) [Retired in 2018]
Michelle Smith	Company Secretary

Our Board of Directors met 9 times in 2018 with a 70% attendance rate. AGM was hosted on April 30th 2018. The Board appoints a number of sub-committees to oversee the organisations compliance and operational obligations. Membership of the subcommittees is drawn from the board. Sub-committees include:

- Human Resource sub-committee (met 8 times)
- Finance/Audit sub-committee (met 2 times)
- Community Development sub-committee (met 8 times)
- Enterprise and Employment sub-committee (met 3 times)
- Disability Working Group (met 6 times)

WCD is a company limited by guarantee with Charitable status. We are fully compliant with annual reporting requirements to the Charities Regulator. Our Charity Regulator profile can be found [here](#).

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Schedule of Income and Expenditure for the financial year ended 31st December 2018

<u>Schedule of Income</u>	€
Department of Rural and Community Development	
Volunteer Centre & ORIS	227,066
Pobal – National Childcare Investment Programme	466,639
Longford Westmeath Education Training Board – Horticulture	109,047
Westmeath County Council	
SICAP	792,862
LEADER 2014-2020	345,684
Resettlement Programme	106,536
Various (Healthy Ireland, Traveller, Disability projects)	15,614
Tusla – Community Mothers Programme	78,912
HSE – Traveller, Food & Health projects	237,037
Department of Justice – PEIL	94,783
Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection	
RSS & TUS Programmes	182,540
Job Club	121,162
Community Employment & Jobs Initiative	772,331
School Meals & SICAP related	13,373
St Stephens Green Trust	10,612
Other Income- Admin course fees and parent's fees	<u>96,40</u>
Total Income	3,670,599
<u>Expenditure</u>	€
Staff Costs	2,603,011
Project Specific costs	584,889
Admin and overhead costs	<u>472,803</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>3,660,704</u>
Surplus for the financial year	<u>9,895</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2018

<u>Fixed Assets</u>	€	€
Tangible assets		162,483
Current Assets		
Debtors	360,714	
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>738,370</u>	
	1,099,084	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within		
One year	<u>(616,856)</u>	
Net Current Assets		<u>482,228</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u>644,711</u>
Reserves		
Income and expenditure account		<u>644,711</u>
Total Funds		<u>644,711</u>

FUNDERS

LEADER



Childcare programme



Live Longer & Prosper programme



Tus Programme



Resettlement programme/ DAF/ PEIL



Community Employment



Supported by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, which is funded by the Irish Government

Volunteer Centre



Westmeath Traveller Project



Horticulture programme



Rural Social Scheme



Community Mothers



Westmeath Care & Repair Service



Food & Health Programme



Community Development, Employment & Enterprise



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020