

SICAP Case Study for the Castlebar and Claremorris Municipal District Lot

Polytunnel Grow Project, Lough Lannagh, Castlebar, County Mayo.

LDC name: South West Mayo Development Company CLG.

LOT Number: (29-3)

Goal Number: 1

Target Groups: New Communities with particular focus on those living in Emergency Accommodation.

Case Study Theme – Collaboration - Supporting the social inclusion of Ukrainian individuals living in the Castlebar and Claremorris Municipal District Lot.

SICAP Strategic Objective 1: To support and strengthen Local Community Groups dealing with a social inclusion need throughout the Lot.



Introduction to the Project

In the summer of 2022, Lough Lannagh Volunteers (LLV) was formally established. It became clear that there was a need to provide additional cultural and community activities for the Ukrainians residing at Lough Lannagh Holiday Village, as they are living in crisis accommodation. LLV also provided support to help residents adjust to living in their new locality. LLV group members have a wealth of experience, expertise, knowledge and most importantly, exceptional enthusiasm to help support the needs of Ukrainians.

The LLV group helped establish a knitting group, a crafting group, day trips and activities for young children and adults. Through conversations with many of the Ukrainians LLV discovered that many would welcome the opportunity to work outdoors growing vegetables and plants. On foot of this realisation, LLV contacted SICAP for support.

The Role of SICAP

SICAP provided guidance and collaborated with LLV volunteers, Lough Lannagh management and Healthy Ireland. SICAP successfully sourced Healthy Ireland Funding for the Polytunnel Grow Project. The funding enabled LLV to purchase a polytunnel and the associated materials required.

From the moment the polytunnel was complete, the guests were delighted and enthusiastic to get to work. Many of the guests at Lough Lannagh Holiday Village have experience and skills in working outdoors with soil and growing vegetables and plants. Therefore, this polytunnel has given them an outlet and the opportunity to reconnect with skills that they already have. It also gives them an opportunity to socialise with each other in beautiful surroundings. SICAP has enabled this project which promotes a sense of community and

belonging for everyone and a sense of identity. There is now a thriving social network happening.



Challenges and Learning

One of the challenges experienced was the short timeline within which the Healthy Ireland Funding had to be drawn down.

Ukrainians have experienced so much grief, sadness, loss, and trauma due to the war. This short-term arrangement for emergency accommodation in Lough Lannagh is now longer term. It is envisaged that Ukrainians in Lough Lannagh Village would be here for at least two years or more living in congregated, congested living conditions. They are extremely vulnerable and their well-being and integration with the local community is essential for goodwill and to create the feeling of being 'at home' here.

Outputs and Outcomes

Effective collaboration with LLV, Lough Lannagh Management and Healthy Ireland.

This project has benefited between 70 to 80 Ukrainians living at Lough Lannagh Holiday Village, aged between 2 years to 74 years old.

SICAP successfully sourced €10,100 funding from Healthy Ireland to support the Polytunnel Grow Project.

This is a project that is inclusive of all Ukrainian guests in Lough Lannagh, of all abilities and needs, including those with additional supports needs of Parkinsons, dementia, stroke and

abuse.

It has been rewarding and fulfilling for the Voluntary Group to see this project come to completion. The LLV were awarded Mayo People of the Year 2022 in reference to their community work, with the Ukrainian refugees.

All materials and resources were sourced from local businesses and companies who welcome the fact that grant monies are fed back into the locality, and many are invested in the success of the Polytunnel project.

Conclusion

The polytunnel has had an incredibly positive impact on the entire community at Lough Lannagh Holiday Village. Most importantly, the Ukrainian guests have flourished, and this project has promoted their wellbeing as they now have a purpose in their daily lives, a place to go and work with the soil, as well as to grow vegetables, fruit and plants, which they can use in cooking their meals. They now have a social outlet, a place to meet and sit and enjoy the labours of their work. They feel more integrated into the local community, and they can offer something back to Lough Lannagh Holiday Village.