



LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS

S P E A K R E P O R T 2 0 1 2



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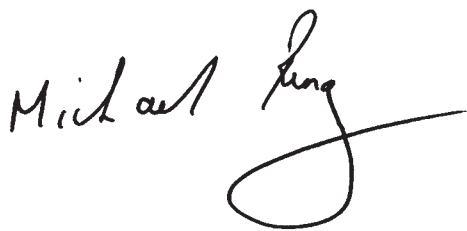
Message from the Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

I am pleased to launch the sixth report of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network. The SPEAK Report provides an overview of the work of the 31 Sports Partnerships across the country in 2012. It also highlights innovative good practice projects and programmes that are being operated locally.

I am delighted to note that the network continues to meet the 50% matched funding recommendation of the Fitzpatrick Report (2005). In 2012, 57% of the network's funding was generated from local sources. This is a strong endorsement of the quality of the work and the positive impact that Sports Partnerships have within their local counties and communities.

It is particularly important to recognise the efforts of the Local Sports Partnership network in delivering opportunities for participation to groups who traditionally have had low levels of involvement in sport e.g. people with a disability and those from migrant communities. The LSPs will continue to provide support and advice to clubs and groups to ensure that people have the opportunity to become active in their own communities. I commend the work of the network in this regard and also acknowledge the commitment of their boards and committees across the country.

I am again delighted to be associated with the continued achievements of the LSP initiative and continue to endorse their contribution to the health and well being of Irish people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Ring". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the last name.

Michael Ring, T.D.

Foreword

On behalf of the Irish Sports Council, we are delighted to welcome the sixth SPEAK Report, which provides an overview of the operations of the national network of 31 Local Sports Partnerships in 2012.

This report assists the Council in assessing the impact of the LSP network and provides vital information with regard to the network's reach into local communities. In 2012, over a quarter of a million people were involved in participation opportunities delivered by Local Sports Partnerships.

Again this year we have highlighted a small sample of case studies to demonstrate the good practice in sports development around the country. This year we have focused on examples where the Sports Partnerships used local partners and links to drive activity i.e. workplace and community based physical activity initiatives. In this manner the Council hopes to build on the very successful mass participation events that are run each year such as the An Post Cycle Series and the Operation Transformation Nationwide Walks and Dublin and Cork 5km fun-runs.

As in previous years the Council warmly welcomes the support and contributions given to the LSP network by statutory, community and voluntary groups across the country. In the current climate it is a testament to the value of the network that this local support continues to increase.

Finally, on behalf of the Council we extend our thanks to all those agencies, groups and individuals who have contributed to this report and also to those who were involved in the delivery of the programmes and projects at local level.



Kieran Mulvey
Chairperson
Irish Sports Council



John Treacy
Chief Executive
Irish Sports Council

Key Findings

This report is the sixth annual report of the Local Sports Partnerships (LSP) initiative. It reflects the work of the full national network of 31 LSPs for 2012.

Funding and Resources

Below is an outline of the LSP Network's level of funding, management and staff in 2012.

- Almost €13m was invested in the network in 2012. This includes benefit in kind (BIK) funding.
- Funding from the Irish Sports Council accounts for 43% of the total LSP funding in 2012, the remaining 57% is raised from other sources.
- A total of 460 people served on LSP boards in 2012, representing an average of 15 people per board.
- In 2012, 120 people worked full-time on behalf of the LSPs. 63 were directly core funded by the ISC. A further 27 people worked part-time within the LSP structure, 4 of which were core funded by the ISC.

Achievements of the LSP Network in 2012

Development of Local Sports Infrastructure

- 3,458 groups have been supported in the delivery of their activities.
- 841 groups have been supported with regard to developing their organisational or management structures.
- LSPs planned and delivered 193 training and education courses, workshops and seminars with their partner agencies.
- 9,136 people participated on these training courses.
- In 2012, LSPs have provided 9,975 sports clubs, groups and organisations throughout the country with important information and advice in the area of funding.

Delivering Irish Sports Council Programmes

- 1,027 primary school teachers in 93 schools received Buntús Generic training
- 1,241 childcare practitioners in 300 childcare centres received Buntús Start training
- 5,889 participants completed 404 Code of Ethics Basic Awareness courses
- 616 participants completed 52 Club Children's Officer Courses

Programme Delivery

- 255,225 people participated in 838 locally delivered participation programmes
- 256 of these 838 programmes were started in 2012 leading to 64,576 people participating
- An additional 29,543 female participants took part in 172 local Women in Sport programmes
- 37 of these Women in Sport programmes were started in 2012 leading to 4,000 people participating

Building and Sustaining Partnerships

- In 2012 LSPs played an important role in facilitating 154 networks and forums.
- LSPs were also actively participating on 256 local committees and networks.

Information Provision

Over 157,000 individuals contacted the LSP network in order to access general or specific sport-related information.

Next Steps for the LSP Network

- There is a wide range of sports and physical activity programmes available throughout the LSP Network; Programmes that had not previously been provided on such a comprehensive basis and would not have been undertaken were it not for the LSPs. LSPs continue to meet demand for high quality events through mass participation events such as the An Post Cycle Series which involved over 15,000 participants in 2012.
- LSPs must take a strategic approach with regard to programme delivery and continue to explore ways to develop and deliver programmes and participation opportunities in a sustainable manner.
- The LSP network must ensure that partner buy-in is maintained to enable LSPs to better achieve the goal of increased participation in sport and physical activity.
- A Performance Evaluation process is currently being developed to help the LSP network to become stronger and more effective with the aim of all LSPs performing at the optimum level. A stronger network will lead to more strategic planning for sport at local level and better opportunities for participants in the future.
- Progress has and will continue to be made with regard to the merging of LSPs in counties with two Local Authorities to better deliver on the needs of sport at local level. The process of mergers will continue in line with the Local Government Reform agenda.

1

Background, Funding And Resources



1.1 Background to LSP Network

This report is the sixth annual report of the LSP initiative. It reflects the work of the full national network of 31 LSPs for 2012. Information provided through the SPEAK system is collated into a national programme database. A selection of programmes from this database are highlighted as case studies of good practice later in this report.

During 2012, the Council oversaw the agreement on the merger of the Galway City and Galway County Sports Partnerships into one Galway Sports Partnership. From 2013 Galway Sports Partnership will receive one allocation under the Local Sports Partnership funding stream.

1.2 Project Funding Sources

Funding from the Irish Sports Council accounts for 43% of the total LSP funding in 2012, the remaining 57% is raised from other sources. These figures include benefit-in-kind (BIK) funding.

	Total €	
Monetary Funding (Locally Leveraged)	3,420,397	26.3%
BIK (Locally Leveraged)	3,957,880	30.5%
ISC Core/Programme & Disability Grant	5,492,525	42.3%
ISC Women in Sport Grant	120,120	0.9%
Total Investment	12,990,922	100%

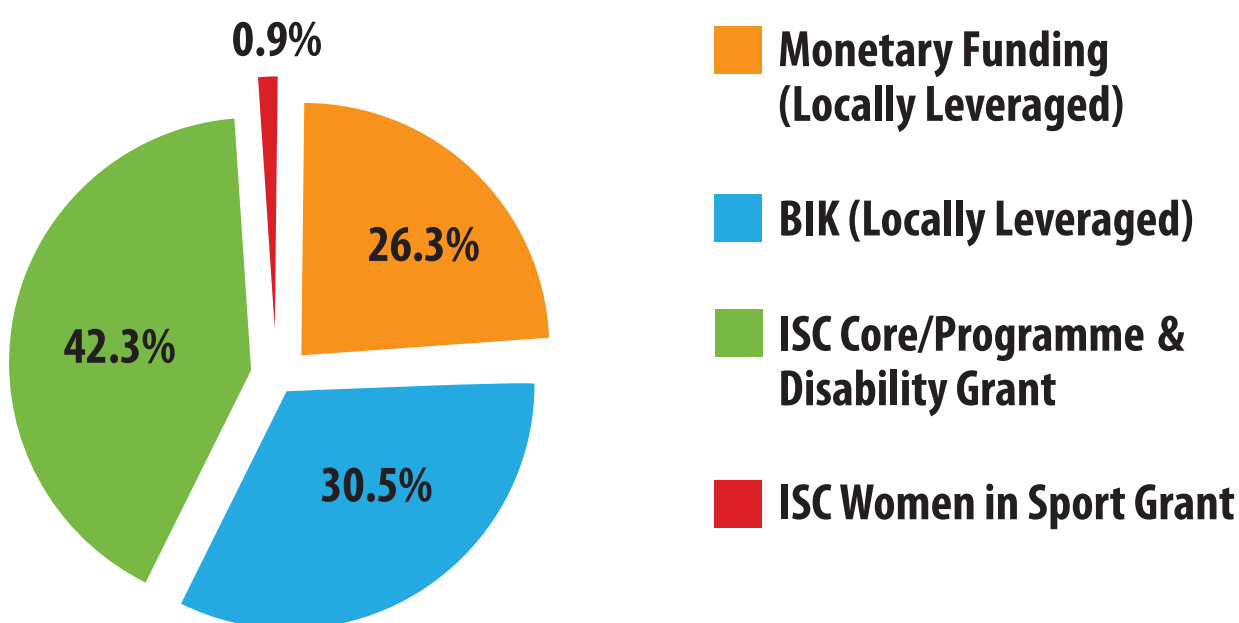


Figure A – Total funding received by LSPs in 2012

After core funding from the ISC, the Local Authorities were the next most significant source of monetary funding and in-kind support for the LSP network in 2012. Other significant funders of the network were the HSE and the VECs.

Irish Sports Council funding to the LSP network reduced by over €75,000 or 1.3% from €5.68m in 2011 to €5.61m in 2012 reflecting the reduction of €2.3m in the Council's own budget.

LSP monetary funding leveraged locally has also reduced by over €450,000. However, in-kind support for the LSP Network has increased by over €790,000 and now accounts for just under a third of overall LSP support.

Total LSP investment has increased by €257,085 or 2% (net) in 2012. This reflects the increase of benefit-in-kind of nearly 25%. This is due to a number of factors including improved recording of BIK such as office accommodation and the value of work activation programmes such as TÚS and JobBridge to the network.

The Council is once again pleased to note that over 50% of network costs are being provided locally. This follows a recommendation from the 2005 Fitzpatrick & Associates Review of the Local Sports Partnership programme.

1.3 LSP Management and Staff

Boards of Management Participation and Representation

- A total of 460 people served on LSP boards in 2012, representing an average of 15 people per board.
- On average 19 hours were committed by each management committee, including the work undertaken by board sub-committees in 2012.

The Local Authority, VEC and HSE continue to be the three biggest participants on LSP Boards of Management.

LSP Staff

The moratorium on recruitment in the public service continues to raise practical difficulties for LSPs under the aegis of Local Authorities, particularly in relation to LSP staff on fixed term contracts. In common with previous years, this remains a significant challenge to the Network and is one which will need to be managed for the foreseeable future.

LSPs have core staff which are funded by the ISC and personnel funded through other sources. Along with Coordinators and Administrators, many LSPs employ Sports Development Officers and/or Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs). In 2012, LSPs also provided placements for interns and jobseekers seeking work experience and an opportunity to develop skills on Government schemes such as JobBridge and TÚS.

In 2012, 120 people worked full-time on behalf of the LSPs. 63 were directly core funded by the ISC. A further 27 people worked part-time within the LSP structure, 4 of whom were funded by the ISC.

	Male	Female	Total
Full time staff, funded by ISC, other programmes and agencies	50	70	120
Part time staff, funded by ISC, other programmes and agencies	13	14	27
Total	63	84	147

Figure B - LSP personnel across the network¹

The LSPs also contracted a further 316 tutors to deliver programmes, courses and initiatives within the LSP structure.

¹ Figures include people working with LSPs on work placement and internship schemes

2

Achievements of the LSP Network in 2012



2.1 Introduction

LSPs engage in a wide range of working methods to increase participation levels and get their core message out. These include:

- Promoting a sustainable local sporting infrastructure through support for clubs, coaches and volunteers;
- Working to increase levels of local participation, especially amongst specific target groups;
- Building sustainable partnerships across local sports clubs, agencies and working partners to influence and support sports and physical activity provision;
- Providing information about sport and physical activity to create awareness and drive opportunities.

2.2 Development of Local Sports Infrastructure

A key priority for LSPs is that there is a sustainable level of development within the local sports environment. Across the network, LSPs endeavour to work with clubs and groups to ensure that structures are in place to enable people from across all LSP target groups to participate in a wide range of sport or physical activity options. This sustainability is further achieved through supporting volunteers and coaches in opportunities to enhance their skills to improve the quality of sports participation in their communities.

Funding Work

In 2012, LSPs have provided 9,975 sports clubs, groups and organisations throughout the country with important information and advice in the area of funding. This represents an increase of 1,001 clubs receiving support in 2012. LSPs have worked directly with 2,489 of these clubs to assist them in developing funding applications.

Club Development Work

In encouraging individuals to become and remain more active, LSPs work to ensure that there are sustainable pathways for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity. The LSPs support existing providers of sports and physical activity across the country and work with sports clubs, communities and individuals in order to introduce new sports opportunities. To this end, in 2012:

- Some 3,458 groups have been supported in the delivery of their activities
- Some 841 groups have been supported with regard to developing their organisational or management structures
- A further 1,234 groups were assisted in tackling development or policy issues.

This support work assists clubs to improve and develop and better assists them to attract and retain members. LSPs also play a key role in advising clubs in the areas of club planning and in the development of inclusive policies. For example, Carlow LSP has continued to invest time and energy in working towards the integration of migrant communities into mainstream local sporting opportunities. Examples in this regard include the establishment of new clubs being headed up by immigrants and the linking of immigrant children / families to mainstream clubs. Further information can be found in section 3 on Carlow LSP's work in this area.

Training and Education Courses

LSPs provide a range of important up-skilling and training opportunities at local level for volunteers, coaches and administrators.

- LSPs planned and delivered 193 training and education courses, workshops and seminars with their partner agencies
- 9,136 people participated on these training courses.

The most popular courses and programmes offered by LSPs continue to be in the areas of Club Development, Disability Awareness/Inclusive Games Training, Go for Life Physical Activity Leader (PALs) Training and Walking Leader Training.

2.3 Delivering Irish Sports Council Programmes

There are two flagship national Irish Sports Council programmes: Buntús and Code of Ethics.

Buntús

The Buntús Start and Buntús Generic programmes provide an important opportunity for LSPs to engage with pre-school and primary school children and their teachers. Since their introduction, almost 404,000 children have been beneficiaries of both programmes.

During 2012, nearly 14,000 children in 93 primary schools benefited from receiving the Buntús Generic programme. Nearly 8,000 pre-school children in 300 childcare centres were introduced to active play with the Buntús Start programme.

The Buntús Generic programme is in its tenth year and has been offered to all primary schools across the country and its roll-out will be complete in 2013. The Buntús Start programme will continue to be available to pre-schools across Ireland.

	Buntús Generic	Buntús Start
Total number of schools/centres that received training (since introduction of Buntús Generic/Start)	2,663	2,456
Total number of teachers/practitioners trained	18,542	9,055
Total number of children in trained schools/centres (since introduction of Buntús Generic/Start)	347,948	56,036

Figure C - Buntús Generic and Buntús Start outputs since the inception of the programmes

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics training programme targets sports leaders and adults involved in the organisation of sport for young people to promote child welfare and protection policies and procedures.

The Code of Ethics programme consists of two workshops:

- A 3-hour basic awareness training module for leaders within sports clubs and
- A further 6-hour club children's officer workshop to support club children's officers in the implementation of the code in their clubs.

In 2012, 5,889 sports leaders and volunteers completed Basic Awareness training on 404 courses run by the LSPs. Some 616 volunteers attended the follow-on Children's Officer training courses, representing an increase of 26% compared to 2011.

	Basic Awareness			Club Children's Officer		
	(2010)	(2011)	2012	(2010)	(2011)	2012
No. of courses delivered	(384)	(448)	404	(29)	(45)	52
No. of participants	(5,580)	(6,505)	5,889	(313)	(489)	616

Figure D - Summary of Code of Ethics outputs for 2010-2012. Figures in brackets are for 2010 and 2011.

2.4 Programme Delivery

The embedded nature of each LSP in its local sports and community environment allows it to identify specific local need, and thus to plan, develop and implement targeted programmes to directly increase the levels of local participation particularly amongst the harder to reach social groups. In 2012, LSPs continued to develop and deliver a range of responsive and innovative participation programmes:

- 255,225 people participated in 838 locally delivered participation programmes
- 256 of these 838 programmes were started in 2012 leading to 64,576 people participating
- An additional 29,543 female participants took part in 172 local Women in Sport programmes
- 37 of these Women in Sport programmes were started in 2012 leading to 4,000 people participating.

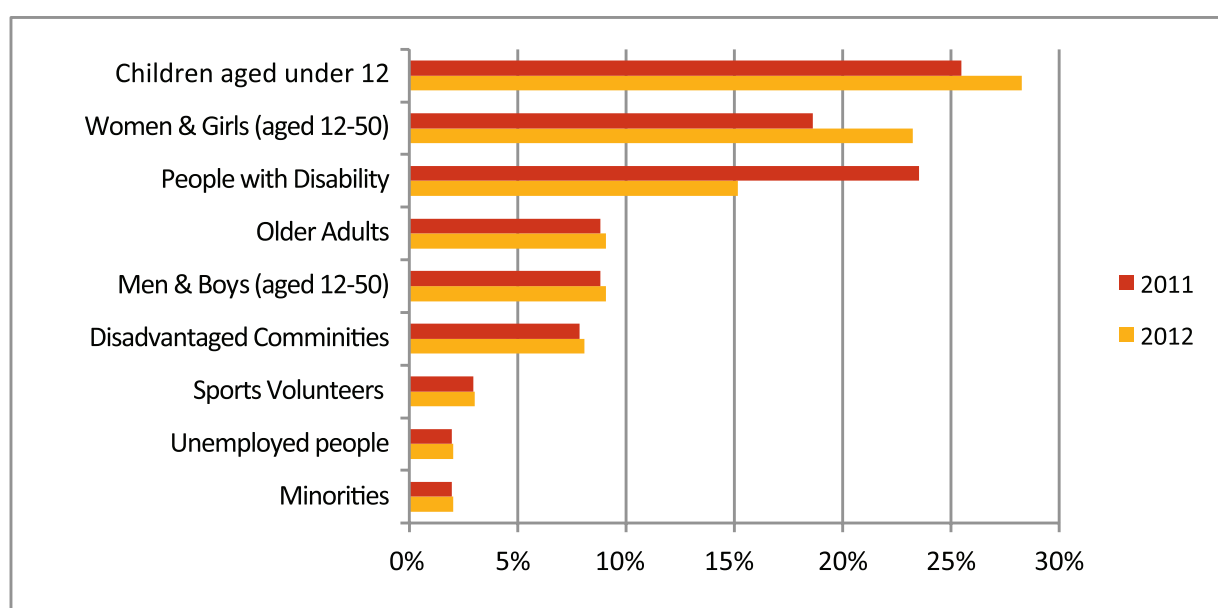


Figure E - Breakdown of primary target groups in LSP local programmes in 2011 and 2012

The LSP Network strives to deliver programmes that reach both the general public and the hard-to-reach groups and minorities to ensure that everyone has a chance to take part in some form of physical activity. Delivering over 1,000 quality programmes across the network requires proper planning and evaluation to ensure that the recipients are getting the best experience possible. LSPs are constantly learning from the outcomes and feedback from participants. This type of feedback is very important to ensure that programmes are running effectively. Programme evaluation is a key element of the LSP's work and it will be referenced again in section 4.

The LSPs play a key role in providing opportunities for those people who may not have direct access to organised sport or physical activity. The LSPs create programmes that will help break down these barriers for the minority groups that might be affected e.g. people with disabilities. Further details on how the LSPs target these groups are available in section 3 of this report.

The LSP Network continues to answer the demand for organised events which appeal to the general public. From the growth of the An Post Cycle Series and the popularity of the Operation Transformation national walks and runs, the LSPs continue to provide high quality events for those new to physical activity, and to those already participating. These mass participation events allow the LSPs to reach a much greater audience and LSPs can continue to direct participants to other programmes to ensure they stay active.

2.5 Building and Sustaining Partnerships

Networks and Forums

LSPs have continued to actively engage and promote a wide range of networks and forums at local and national level. LSPs have played an important role in facilitating 154 networks and forums.

These Forums bring together sports clubs, statutory and non-statutory agencies, volunteers and other working partners across the LSP network. They provide a framework to influence and resource sports and physical activity across the country. They promote the profile and work of the LSP, but more importantly increase the reach of the LSPs. Networks and forums act as a conduit to communicate the message of the importance of sport and physical activity to the community and are also a sounding board for advice and recommendations as to what the LSP can do to assist sports clubs and partners.

LSPs have also established and participated actively in networks and forums with a specific target group focus.

- Northside Older Persons Advisory Group brings together service providers with an interest in contributing to the well-being of older people in Limerick City North in an active support network. Limerick City LSP (LCLSP) worked within this network to promote physical activity with the older adults in the area. Three co-ordinators took part in Community Physical Activity Leader training rolled out by LCLSP in 2012 and also took part in their local sports festival. The network has been beneficial through increasing the profile of the LSP with this target group and created links to local groups.
- Mayo LSP is active within the Men on the Move County Network. This network has overseen the sustainable establishment of five Men on the Move groups in the county in 2012. The network was also involved in the organisation of two 5km fun-runs / walks. With the extension of the programme as a key goal, Mayo LSP will work to ensure that the group continues to grow in 2013.

Awareness Raising and Committee Work

LSPs engage in a range of local activities in order to promote the key messages of the Local Sports Partnership initiative. This may involve membership of relevant committees or structured involvement in awareness raising events.

LSPs monitor the number of awareness raising events in which they have played an active role. In 2012, LSPs participated in 437 such events, an increase of 28%.

Examples of these events include National Bike Week, National Trails Day, World Heart Day, information seminars to third level and second level schools and institutes, as well as presentations and talks to community-based groups. Participation in such events highlights the manner in which LSPs are embedded in the local community infrastructure throughout each county. It provides significant platforms in which the work of the Partnerships and their key message of the importance of sport in community life can be highlighted.

A further example of the extent to which LSPs are an important part of the fabric of the community relates to the ongoing demand for their time and expertise in committee work. In 2012, LSPs actively participated on 256 local committees and networks.

2.6 Information Provision

A core function of each LSP relates to its role in acting as information hubs and points of contact. Through their extended presence in each county, they enable sharing of information and resources and offer a common meeting ground, along with specific access and sign-posting information.

LSPs sustain a series of linkages between those who wish to participate and those who provide opportunities for participation. Clubs and sports volunteers recognise that the LSP network can channel participants and interested parties to their doors. The relationship with their LSP furthermore links them into a meaningful sport and physical activity network and a source of expertise.

In 2012, almost 157,000 individuals contacted the LSP network in order to access general or specific sport-related information. Almost 10,000 individuals from all target groups have dropped into a LSP in person in 2012, representing a 6% increase in direct contact between LSP teams and their local communities.

All LSPs are utilising their web presence and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to promote their activities, network and create publicity. The potential for information sharing is also being harnessed as LSPs target partner agencies to share new information resources.

3

LSP Programme Case Studies



3.1 Introduction

LSPs plan, deliver and evaluate a range of innovative and locally driven programmes within the following four outcome areas:

1. Increased participation levels among target groups, whereby new people from primary and secondary target groups are engaged, leading to demand for further initiatives
2. More sustainable sporting infrastructure, whereby new clubs or sections of clubs are in place, funding has been secured for future activities and there is an increased capacity to deliver projects
3. Increased access to a wider range of sporting and physical activity options, through making activities more widely available and greater visibility of activities
4. More co-ordinated local sporting infrastructure, whereby working partners are more knowledgeable and committed to future actions, with new and improved relationships between local stakeholders

The LSP network has, again in 2012, expanded the range and extent of programmes working with local partners and as a result continued to deliver participation opportunities to their communities. As a result, each LSP is acutely aware of the current and emerging needs of the communities in which they serve. The network now stands as a vital delivery vehicle of opportunities for sport and physical activity to the population and in particular to hard-to-reach groups who are not engaged in mainstream sports.

Section 2 has described the range of working methods employed by LSPs across the network and the results of this work.

Section 3 now examines how LSP programmes have contributed to these four outcome areas. A series of case studies and examples are presented to give an insight into the level and extent of work that is being delivered across communities to ensure greater levels of capacity building, increased interaction with key target groups and partners, as well as higher levels of volunteer commitment and sustainable participation.

3.2 People with a Disability

The Irish Sports Council has played an important role in the development of sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities, through its investment in the development of the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme. Since its inception in 2007, the programme has contributed directly to increasing levels of recorded participation in sport and physical activity among people with a disability.

The funding of this programme in 2012 has enabled the continuation of the work of 17 Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs) in 20 LSPs, with an additional fund available to 11 non-SIDO LSPs to develop sport for people with a disability within their county.

Through raising awareness about the role that sport can play in the lives of people with disabilities, the programme has created a wide range of new opportunities for access to different levels of engagement in sports and physical activities across the country.

The work of the network of SIDOs has been premised on the ethical framework of LSPs in terms of promoting collaborative practices, sharing of expertise and resources and a clear focus on promoting sustainable opportunities for integration and participation.

In 2012, the “Xcessible Outdoors” programme was rolled out across the LSP network. The overall aim of “Xcessible Outdoors” was to heighten the awareness of the benefits of an active healthy lifestyle and participation opportunities for people with disabilities within the outdoor environment.

The initiative, funded by the CARA Centre and the Department of Justice and Equality, operated as a partnership between the Institute of Technology Tralee, Irish Sports Council, the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme, National Trails Office, Mountaineering Ireland and Outdoor Education Ireland.

The programme was run to coincide with International Disability Awareness Day on the 3rd of December. Local Sports Partnerships linked in with Outdoor Centres and Walking Clubs to provide access to outdoor activities, such as Trail Walking, Canoeing, Orienteering, Climbing, Archery, and Outdoor Gym demonstration.

The following flyer was produced by the CARA Centre to raise awareness of the focus for the day.

Xcessible
Inclusive **OUTDOORS**
Initiative

**OUTDOORS ACTIVITY DAY
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL
DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY
3rd DECEMBER 2012**

**"ONE WAY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE IS TO
LOOK UPON IT AS AN ADVENTURE..."**

GET OUT, GET ACTIVE!!

WHAT: THE XCESSIBLE
OUTDOORS INITIATIVE AIMS
TO HEIGHTEN THE
AWARENESS OF THE
BENEFITS OF AN ACTIVE
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
AND PARTICIPATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
WITHIN THE OUTDOOR
ENVIRONMENT

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ENHANCES BOTH
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING.

DATES:
**26TH NOV TO
10TH DEC 2012**

**CONTACT: YOUR
LOCAL SPORTS
PARTNERSHIP
OR THE CARA
APA CENTRE
Tel: 0667145646**

Organised by CARA National Adapted Physical Activity Centre
T: 0667145646
W: www.caraapacentre.ie

Funded by
Department
of Justice
& Equality

In partnership with:
TRALEE
Institute of Technology
Irish Sports Council
National Trails Office
Mountaineering Ireland
Outdoor Education Ireland

CARA
National Adapted Physical Activity Centre
Inclusive Outdoors Initiative

Inclusive Programmes Case Study: Xcessible Outdoors (Laois LSP)

Introduction

Laois LSP worked alongside the CARA Adapted Physical Activity Centre to run an inclusive outdoors initiative for local people with disabilities. The message of the day was “Get up, wrap up and get out!” despite the early December weather. The event is a one day experience to mark “Disability Awareness Day”.

Laois Sports Partnership delivered the programme with support from Portlaoise Leisure Centre and Portlaoise Walking and Social Club.

Programme Outline

The aims of the Xcessible Outdoors programme are to:

- heighten the awareness of the benefits of an active healthy lifestyle
- provide participation opportunities for people with a disability within the outdoor environment
- promote positive mental health among people with disabilities through inclusive outdoor activities.

The programme entailed a guided walk with leaders from Portlaoise Walking and Social Club, which included a demonstration with Nordic walking poles and instruction on using the outdoor gym equipment.

Laois Sports Partnership enlisted volunteers from the Portlaoise Walking and Social Club and used the gym instructors from Portlaoise Leisure Centre for the outdoor gym and a tutor from the Fittlesticks programme which was co-ordinated by Laois Sports Partnership’s Sports Inclusion Disability Officer.

Outputs

60 people turned up for the Xcessible Outdoors day to take part in the Nordic walking and outdoor gym demonstrations. Participants were encouraged to try the activities themselves to get a feel for outdoor activity. The outdoor gym is available to use at no cost to the general public so the participants were encouraged to come back to use it regularly. The Fittlesticks instructor explained the benefits of walking, not only as a part of a healthier lifestyle but also as a social outlet.

Even though the event was weather dependent, the participants were encouraged to wrap up well and brave the elements of the December weather. The feedback from the participants was very positive and it was clear that they enjoyed the day.

Following the programme, a number of centres for people with a disability have increased their visits to Portlaoise Leisure Centre to avail of the indoor gym and also the outside facilities. For example, Dove House, Abbeyleix and Oak House, Portarlinton now attend the centre on a weekly basis, with over 20 clients coming from the Xcessible Outdoors initiative. The clients vary their activities from taking a walk outside around the perimeter of the grounds, playing soccer on the astro-turf pitches or doing a workout in either the indoor or outdoor gym.

Sustainability

By working in partnership with Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Laois LSP were able to promote the disability programmes that are already available and link people with disabilities to the Leisure Centre. Not all participants were aware that Portlaoise Leisure Centre provides programmes which were tailored for people with disabilities. This event renewed enthusiasm for the inclusive gym programmes such as the spin classes that are held within the Leisure Centre.

Next Steps

Laois LSP are continually expanding their programmes for people with disabilities. The Xcessible Outdoors event has been a great success from the point of view of helping to increase numbers of participants for the other disability inclusion programmes that the LSP offers. Spinning class and tandem cycling programmes in Portlaoise Leisure Centre are now being attended by clients who were not involved previous to this event.

Since the Xcessible Outdoors day was held there has been an increase in usage of the outdoor gym and Laois Sports Partnership are now hoping to devise a “Green Gym” development plan for the county.



A participant on the Xcessible Outdoors Day using the outdoor gym equipment at the Portlaoise Leisure Centre

3.3 Club Development and Community Partnership

Through their work in supporting club development and sustaining the voluntary commitment that underpins local sports infrastructure across the country, the LSP network plays a crucial role in aiding the growth of sport-related voluntary activity in over 12,000 sports clubs across Ireland.

LSPs assist clubs and sporting organisations on the ground to attract, retain and up-skill people to give of their time. LSPs provide a range of training programmes, resources and supports for volunteers to grow and sustain their involvement, and to maximise the effectiveness of their voluntary time.

The following example from the North West displays the manner in which LSPs are actively seeking to support club development and volunteer engagement.

Leitrim Sports Partnership worked with local sports clubs to organise a community fitness programme in order to recruit local members or community volunteers to participate. Funding and support was made available to four clubs and this led to 320 participants becoming involved in the programme.

Community Partnerships/ Club Development Case Study: Operation Transformation Community Club Fitness Programme (Leitrim LSP)

Introduction

Leitrim Sports Partnership in association with four local GAA clubs (Carrigallen, Eslin, Glencar/Manorhamilton and Sean O'Heslin's) organised a community fitness programme based on the popular RTÉ programme – Operation Transformation. The main aim of participants was to lose weight and get fitter or for some people, to just get involved in physical activity again. The participants got the opportunity to participate in four or five different activities throughout the week, including aerobics, core training, dancing, walking and boot camps over a six week period. The clubs used this programme as a fundraiser for the development of their own clubs and the Sports Partnership funded some of the tutor costs for three sessions per week.



Members of the local GAA clubs taking part in a fitness session as part of the Operation Transformation Community Club Fitness Programme

The primary target groups were the inactive members of the 4 GAA clubs and their family members and friends. A lot of participants were retired GAA players that had not been involved in any physical activity for a long time.

Programme Outline

Each club selected 10 team leaders and they in turn selected nine other local people to join their team. There were up to 100 people from each club involved in this programme over the six weeks. The LSP liaised with each club, a fitness tutor and a nutritionist and designed a health and fitness programme for each club. The programme format was to have four fitness sessions per week, and a team weigh-in once a week. The fitness tutor coordinated and monitored each club programme. This programme also acted as a fundraiser for each club, with each team having to get club sponsorship for the programme.

This programme was a perfect initiative for Leitrim Sports Partnership. They provided the clubs with the programme information, support and initial funding and the club volunteers were instilled with the competence to deliver this community project on the ground.

Leitrim Sports Partnership's role on the community fitness programme was to:

- Advise club delegates and tutors on suitable activities, health and safety issues and committee roles and responsibilities
- Provide funding to cover some of the tutor costs for the programme
- Assist with marketing and promotion for each programme

Along with Leitrim Sports Partnership, the other partners involved in this programme were the GAA clubs, Leitrim County Council, local community centres and the LSP tutors.

Outputs

On the evidence of the programme, the four clubs did an excellent job delivering this innovative club initiative in their local community. In the process, they recruited new club members and encouraged 320 participants in the four communities to get more active. Some individuals lost three to four stone in weight over the six weeks, with one club losing 74 stone in weight collectively between all of the participants over the six weeks. Another club fundraised nearly €20,000 from this programme which will be utilised to further develop the club. Two of the local GAA clubs have introduced a walking programme for all club members and extended family members on a Sunday morning. This walking programme is still on-going with an average of 15-20 participants meeting every week. Four men completed the "Try-a-Tri" triathlon event in Carrick on Shannon in May and have joined the local Triathlon Club in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Sustainability

This was an excellent initiative for both the Leitrim Sports Partnership and the clubs involved. The LSP can only make a temporary impact on a specific target group and so the clubs played a vital follow-on role. The clubs demonstrated the capacity and the drive to roll out the programme once the LSP had planned, organised and delivered the initial work programme within each club. This allowed the LSP to step away from the club once the programme had been successfully rolled out.

The programme can be time consuming for the club and each club needs to have a strong and committed executive board with support from club members/volunteers to continue to deliver the programme. The four clubs involved in this programme have recorded an increase in their club family membership and club volunteers. This was mainly attributed to the feel good factor of the community club fitness programme. It is hoped that the increased membership will lead to available volunteers willing to help deliver the programme into the future when the LSP steps away.

Some quotes from the participants:

“I have lost three stone in weight in six weeks, my life has been transformed, I have more energy, my overall fitness/health has improved and my life expectancy has increased. This programme is only the start of the new me.”

“My children so look forward to Sunday morning, when we all go for a family walk together.”

“We had so much fun together for the six weeks, just catching up with old team mates and old friends and in the process getting physically active in a fun environment.

Next Steps

This is an excellent example of partnership-working with local communities with a view to clubs becoming more self-sufficient while realising broader goals of health and fitness of the membership.

There is a challenge for some clubs to facilitate this initiative as they need to have a large indoor facility close to their grounds to deliver the activity sessions. Some of the activities can take place outside, like the outdoor bootcamp style programme and Sunday Family walking programme but bad weather could have a negative impact on the numbers attending. Fundraising initiatives like this can only help to improve facilities for the members. It is hoped that fundraising can help with providing a budget for promotion.

Leitrim Sports Partnership met up with all of the clubs after the programme was completed to get some feedback and to evaluate the programme from the clubs perspective. The response was hugely positive. All of the clubs were interested in continuing this initiative into 2013, regardless as to whether funding could be made available from the LSP or not.

Due to the success of the programme, the LSP plans to expand the programme to more clubs in 2013 and hopefully encourage new clubs and club members to engage in physical activity within their local club structure. Leitrim LSP will try to secure extra funding from partner agencies to fund this initiative to new sports and recreational clubs in 2013.

3.4 Workplaces

The average adult spends a large portion of their day at work, be it in an office, working outdoors, on a factory floor, etc. With leisure time being so precious nowadays with family and other commitments, many people's active leisure has reduced. Tying physical activity into the working day is not only a way of counteracting this; it has been proven to improve productivity in the workplace.

The Sports Council Challenge is an initiative being run by the Irish Sports Council to encourage workplaces to get more active during and outside the working day. Companies set challenges for themselves to complete over the month of May – challenges with specific targets to motivate staff to take part and achieve something together as a team.

In 2012, the Local Sports Partnerships helped to promote the Sports Council Challenge among local companies. Clare LSP found the initiative really helped them to make new connections with neighbouring companies with the employees gaining huge benefits from the programme. The benefits were went above and beyond this however, with the employees gaining huge benefits from the programme too.

Workplace Activity Case Study – Clare Moonwalk Challenge (Clare LSP)

Introduction

The Clare Moonwalk Challenge originated from an initiative being run by the Irish Sports Council called the Sports Council Challenge. The Sports Council Challenge asks companies around the country to get employees more active and set physical activity targets during the month of May. Clare Sports Partnership ran with the idea, seeing the benefits for local companies and developed it into a more extensive healthy workplace initiative.

Programme Outline

The main challenge was to get the staff of Clare Local Development Company, the Clare Volunteer Centre and the Clare Sports Partnership more active during their working day. They set about to achieve a target that was challenging but fun for those involved. An overall goal was set to walk, run or cycle the circumference of the moon, this being 10,971km as notified from Astronomy Ireland.

- To achieve this, staff were given a chart to track their kilometres covered during the weekand. This was recorded every Monday morning and presented on a chart which documented how far they had travelled around the moon.
- The staff created a 'buddy' system that encouraged them to bring along family members or friends to keep them motivated and to include others in getting active.

The tasks that were set were left to the individual to decide on, but in order for the 10,971km to be reached, an average distance of 46km per week had to be achieved by all those participating. This then roughly broke down to an individual weekly target of:

- Week 1 Walkers / Runners 15km & Cyclists 50km
- Week 2 Walkers / Runners 20km & Cyclists 75km
- Week 3 Walkers / Runners 25km & Cyclists 100km
- Week 4 & 5 Walkers / Runners 30km & Cyclists 125km

Outputs

A total of 47 staff members participated in the Moonwalk challenge. The Clare Moonwalk Challenge was nominated for a Sports Council Challenge award which demonstrates that the partnership of the three companies in the scheme was worthwhile. The motivation it brought to the staff was unprecedented.

Clare Sports Partnership used the following methods to keep motivation high among staff participants:

- The Sports Partnership let the participants know of various events around the county that they could take part in such as 10km runs or sponsored walks, etc.
- Three group walks were organised by the Clare Local Development Company and on one day a lunchtime walk was held where other companies in Clare were invited to join in.
- On one Friday during May the Clare Sports Partnership initiated a 'Trading Spaces' concept. They partnered with other firms in the Ennis area and employees were encouraged to swap parking spaces and walk or cycle to work from another company's car park. The pilot was well received and it was decided to continue this on each last Friday of June, July, August and September.
- In order to keep a 'live track' of what was going on, a facebook group called 'Clare Moonwalk Challenge' was set up. This allowed the participants to follow the progress of each other online. This was very successful as the members posted their routes and successes, photos of scenery and injuries and stories of successes and failures.
- Members were also invited to use the 'Mapmyride' app on their smart phones and to allow for 'live tracking'. This proved to be great fun and encouraged friendly competition.
- A target graph and photo board were set up in the main reception of the office and this proved to be quite motivational for the participants and clients alike.

Sustainability

Several individuals that were perhaps not as active within the companies have become more visibly active at lunchtime. As they have been connected to the social media, they are also still posting their achievements there. This programme did not require any investment financially and the time and human resources involved were minimal. A programme like this could be replicated in any company with a bit of tailoring and imagination.

Next Steps

The companies hope to once again enter the Sports Council Challenge in 2013. After the challenge, they ran the “Trading Spaces” initiative which operated on the last Friday of every month and their goal is now to incorporate this every Friday by 2014.



3.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

The LSPs have continually sought to make sport and physical activity accessible for all. Targeting the groups that might not necessarily have ready access to mainstream facilities or programmes is a key objective of the LSP Network. The recent increase in immigrant communities in Ireland has encouraged the LSPs to study the make-up of the local community to see where there are gaps in participation. The LSPs have identified a need to provide suitable activities which will help integrate ethnic communities into the locality.

Working with social integration bodies at a local level, the LSPs get assistance to reach the target groups and gain a better understanding of their needs. Each community is different and programmes can be created or adapted to complement cultural differences.

Below is an example of how Carlow LSP worked with the Carlow Interagency Resettlement Committee to help provide an outlet for young Burmese refugees to take up cricket again.

Social Integration Case Study: Carlow Cricket Club (Carlow LSP)

Introduction

The Carlow Cricket Club was originally established in 1831 on the grounds of Carlow Rugby Club. In recent years there had been little or no activity in Carlow with regard to the sport of cricket. Local interest was shown to restart the club and get cricket played in Carlow town. One factor behind the interest has been the success of the Irish cricket team on the international stage. The club's rebirth however, was mainly spurred on from the demand for cricket in the area from members of the Rohingya community and individuals in Carlow who were interested in playing cricket.

Carlow Interagency Resettlement Committee was faced with the question of how best to provide access to facilities to a sizeable group of largely young Rohingya refugees from Burma/Bangladesh who were keen on playing cricket. The Carlow County Development Board Rohingya Resettlement Programme were charged with the resettlement of 16 families into Carlow under the UNCHR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Programme. The Rohingya are an ethnic group originating from Burma. Victims of ethnic cleansing, two million Rohingya have been living in refugee camps in Bangladesh for over twenty years.

Under the Carlow Interagency Resettlement programme and with the support of the Carlow Rugby Club, the process of re-introducing cricket to Carlow town was started. Partners involved in the design and delivery of this programme were Carlow County Development Board, Rohingya Resettlement programme, Carlow Rugby Club, County Carlow Sports Partnership, St. Catherine's Community Services Centre, Carlow County Council and Carlow Youth Services.

Programme Outline

Working with the partners listed above an Open Day was organised for May in the grounds of the Carlow Rugby Club. This was supported by training provided by two members of Bagenalstown Cricket Club.

There was an objective to create sustainable participation opportunities in the sport of cricket for the entire local community including the Rohingya. The aim therefore was to gather sufficient interest to re-establish the club itself and to have regular training sessions and participate in matches at both senior and junior level.

The Open Day was very well attended with 64 participants, both adults and children including 17 members of the Rohingya community. Based on this, support was provided to ensure that a club committee was put in place, training was organised and matches at junior level were organised with established clubs such as Portlaoise Cricket Club and Sandyford Cricket Club.

Committee members were recruited from interested parents and the club has been hosted by Carlow Rugby Club.

Outputs

- Two members of the Rohingya community are sitting on the club committee
- Two members of the Rohingya community have trained as Level one Cricket Coaches
- Younger members of the Rohingya community are actively involved in volunteering with the club
- A number of junior and senior matches have been played against Bagenalstown, Portlaoise and Sandyford Cricket Clubs.
- The current membership is growing steadily, particularly among children. There are currently 32 junior members, including four female members. There are 26 senior members also registered.

The re-establishment of the Cricket Club was regarded by many respondents as an effective way for many of the Rohingya community to preserve a valuable part of their cultural identity, as well as promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. The Rohingya community has successfully engaged with the club as both members and coaches. Such has been the success of this endeavour, that Carlow Rugby Club was awarded first prize in the sports category of the 'Diverse Ireland Awards' organised by the National Integration Centre.

The membership of the club includes people from various ethnic backgrounds including Irish, Australian, Pakistani, Indian and Rohingya and the re-establishment of cricket has been a huge benefit for integration and social inclusion.

Sustainability

Training began in June 2012 in Carlow Rugby Club facilitated by Bagenalstown Cricket Club. Over the course of the season, which ended in September 2012, 11 training sessions took place. The club agreed that volunteers needed to be trained as coaches (including members of Rohingya community) to keep the club moving forward and to become sustainable, so seven club members consisting of parents did the Cricket Coaching Level 1 course.

As part of the club's drive for members and profile, Irish international star Kevin O'Brien made a celebrity appearance at the Fairgreen Shopping Centre in Carlow Town to meet locals, sign autographs and help in raising the profile of Cricket in the area. He later gave professional training sessions for both adult and junior players with a coach from Railway Union Cricket Club. Both junior and adult sessions were booked out, and were attended by people not only from the club, but from neighbouring clubs in Kildare and Laois as well.

The club's activities have caught the imagination of local and national media, with coverage in the Carlow Nationalist, the Carlow People, the Irish Independent online and KCLR local radio.



Irish Cricket International, Kevin O'Brien giving an introductory coaching session to some local children at the Carlow Cricket Club

Next Steps

The current playing facilities are not compliant with Cricket Ireland regulations for competitive cricket. The club intends to upgrade the facilities and are currently involved in fundraising. It is proposed to replace the current match pitch with a synthetic pitch and to develop a two bay practice pitch/nets for batting and bowling practice. This will allow for growing membership and also allow the club to take part in Cricket Ireland leagues.

3.6 Urban Areas

Like all major international sporting events, the Olympic and Paralympic Games usually generate a spike in interest in sport. 2012 was special with the Games taking place so close to Ireland. The enhanced television coverage of the Games captivated attention and brought various Olympic and Paralympic sports into the homes of Ireland.

There was a fantastic opportunity to capture the imagination of the Irish people while the Games were taking place. Dublin City LSP were quick to move on this before the Games commenced and in 2011, they ran a pilot event to test the waters and realised that there was huge potential to build on this while the 2012 Games were taking place.

Urban areas like Dublin City have large populations of young people, some of whom come from disadvantaged areas with little access to mainstream sports or recreational facilities. There are young people of many different nationalities living in the Dublin City catchment area who may not have a clear pathway to sports clubs.

The Dublin City LSP utilise Development Officers across the city to reach out to these populations who may not have any access to organised sport outside of the school structure. Working in partnership with National Governing Bodies of Sport, the Dublin City LSP was able to provide a pathway to children to join a local club.

Urban Areas Case Study: Dublin City Street Olympics (Dublin City LSP)

Introduction

The Dublin City Street Olympics was established to tap into the increased profile of sport generated by the London 2012 Olympics. Consultation with Sports Officers and Youth Workers highlighted a heightened awareness amongst young people surrounding Olympic sports and high profile Irish and International Olympic Athletes. It was agreed to host a sporting event aimed at providing young people in Dublin City with the opportunity to participate in multiple Olympic Sports in a fun and creative environment. Various National Governing Bodies of Sport were contacted to discuss the event format. Following a successful pilot held in Merrion Square in 2011, the Dublin Street Olympics was rolled out in five locations of Dublin City on five separate evenings in 2012.

Programme Outline

The Dublin City Street Olympics provided young people with the opportunity to participate in multiple Olympic Sports under the supervision and direction of top quality coaches. Sports included traditional and innovative versions of six Olympic sports - Athletics, Soccer (street striker), Rowing, Volleyball (spike ball), Olympic Handball and Boxing.

The aims of the Dublin Street Olympics were:

- To offer young people the opportunity to try new sports under the direction of top class coaches
- To provide a pathway for young people aged 12-18 to take up new sports
- To raise the profile of the chosen sports, the local Sports Officers and local Clubs.

Young participants were recruited by Dublin City Council Sports Officers and the City of Dublin Youth Service Board. Individuals were then combined together into larger groups of 20-30 participants.

On arrival at the specific venue, these groups were given a team colour and a timetable of events. Each group were allocated 30 minutes per sport and rotated around all sports over a three hour duration.

All participants received a commemorative medal and wrist band at the conclusion of each evening and each registered youth group received a trophy. Entertainment was provided at each event by local youth bands, DJs and dance groups.

Outputs

- Over 600 young people from 58 youth groups attended the 5 evenings. Numbers were consistently high for each of the five venues with 80 to 170 young people participating each night.
- Feedback from all coaches was extremely positive with all stating that enquiries had been made as to how to join a local team.
- Evaluation with youth leaders following the event revealed that the young people had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and for many it had sparked an interest in pursuing a particular sport that they had previously not tried.
- Sports Officers stated that young people who had attended the Dublin City Street Olympics were now more willing to attempt new sports.
- The event lead to an increase in enquiries from young people regarding joining sports clubs.



Sustainability

While the Dublin City Street Olympics was delivered in 2012 as a once-off event to coincide with the London Olympics in 2012, it had a knock-on effect in on other events.

- Family Fun days that are run regularly around Dublin City now have an increased emphasis on sport and a wider variety of sports.
- The networks formed between Sports Officers and National Governing Bodies continue and many local partnership projects have since been established.
- All young people who expressed an interest to coaches, sports officers or youth leaders regarding pursuing a particular sport were guided towards appropriate avenues.
- Soccer and Boxing are mainstream sports running in the majority of catchment areas of the Dublin City LSP on an ongoing basis. The Soccer Sisters programme, Late Nite Leagues and various soccer blitzes have benefitted from the participants being directed from the Dublin City Street Olympics. The Development Officers generally encourage young people to join a club if they enjoy a sport they experience at a taster day but the Street Olympics initiative gave the participants the confidence to take that step in joining a follow-on programme or a club.
- A number of Olympic handball taster sessions were run in Dublin 8 following the Street Olympics as this was a sport the young people in this area have not engaged in previously. The feedback from this subsequently led to a six week programme being run in the area.
- Indoor rowing taster sessions were also offered in other areas following the Street Olympics. Rowing has since been introduced into the “Teen Gym” programmes.

Next Steps

The 2012 Dublin City Street Olympics was the first event of its kind to be held in Dublin City. The event provided the opportunity for over 600 young people to participate in Olympics Sports many of which they had not previously engaged in. The event created the opportunity for the Dublin City LSP, Dublin City Council, National Governing Bodies of Sport, local clubs and the City of Dublin Youth Service Board to work together to provide five evenings of sport and entertainment to young people in Dublin City.

This was a unique event bringing together people from multiple a range of backgrounds to create a celebration of sport in Dublin City. Participants included young people from both affluent and disadvantaged areas, both boys and girls, and young people with intellectual disabilities. Young people participated in the sports and also provided the evening’s entertainment. Additionally, sports officers, coaches, youth workers and communities came together to ensure each event achieved its full potential.

It is intended that this event will provide a blueprint for similar events in the future. It has also created a pathway for young people to find a sport which they enjoy and can continue playing by opening the door to local sports clubs.

4

Next Steps for the LSP Network



4.1 Introduction

The Irish Sports Monitor is a telephone survey conducted with Irish people across all spectrums of life. The first survey was published in 2007 and the most recent in 2011. Research of this nature is critical in meeting the core objective of the Irish Sports Council in planning, leading and co-ordinating the sustainable development of competitive and recreational sport in Ireland. It ensures the effective allocation of resources to maximise participation in sport which is paramount to developing a healthy population into the future. It also identifies emerging trends in sport that require attention, and facilitates sporting organisations in developing their respective sports and maximising the potential for participation in and enjoyment of those sports. Local Sports Partnerships can also use the information to plan and prioritise their work among target groups and the general population.

Some trends in sports participation in Ireland in 2011 included:

- Participation in sports has risen considerably from 34% to 46%
- While participation in team sports has remained steady, participation in individual sports such as personal exercise, running, cycling and swimming have risen considerably
- Increases in sports participation are strongest amongst the younger (aged under 25) and the older (aged 55 or older) age groups
- Notable increase in participation amongst the unemployed
- A strong correlation between sports participation and socio-economic status and income with those in lower socio-economic and income groups less likely to participate
- Individual sports show stronger rises in participation than team sports, most notably running and cycling

One notable trend is that running and cycling have now become the third and fifth most popular sports respectively. Initiatives such as the Meet and Train running programmes through the Local Sports Partnership network and the An Post Cycle Series have made a contribution to these increases.

Another factor that the Local Sports Partnerships may have contributed to, is the increase in participation amongst the unemployed. The Link2BActive programme which has been rolled out nationally offers reduced rates in sports and leisure facilities for the unemployed.

Female sport is dominated by individual activities, with only 5% claiming to be involved in a team activity. The Local Sports Partnerships are aware of this and tailor their Women in Sport programmes to what women want, for example, the continued popularity of the Meet and Train groups and Mini-Marathon type of events.

Importantly, the research is showing that participation is growing for the population groups that the LSP network has engaged with and also that the network is responsive to the research by offering the types of activities that people express preferences for.

This is to be welcomed and it is hoped that through the developments and examples highlighted throughout this report, the LSP network will continue to ensure the positive trends in participation continue.

4.2 Access to, Availability and Visibility of Sporting Options

An important outcome area for the LSP network involves ensuring that there are new and innovative options for people to engage with their local sports and physical activity environment. LSPs have worked hard to build partnerships to support the delivery of such new options. They have developed expertise in the marketing and outreach work to ensure that there is strong take up of programmes. LSPs have also ensured that they can use social and traditional media to build their profile.

Maximising Mass Participation Events: An Post Cycle Series

The An Post Cycle Series, supported by An Post, the Irish Sports Council and Cycling Ireland, encourages communities around the country to “get on their bikes”. It has been running since 2009 and over 40,000 participants have taken part to date. Routes have been developed to cater for a range of cycling profiles from the serious amateur to the enthusiastic beginner. The Series has been promoted effectively and professionally through the LSP network as a family day out, a work event, or for the serious rider, as a challenging route.

Family routes are approximately 10kms, while short, medium and long distance routes are approximately 60km, 100km and 160km.

Over 15,500 people took part in the An Post Cycle Series in 2012 through the Tour of Sligo, Tour De Burren, Meath Heritage Cycle Tour, the Sean Kelly Tour of Waterford and the Rebel Tour of Cork.

As the profile of the series has increased from year to year, the levels of engagement have increased in parallel. Minister Michael Ring, T.D. launched the 2012 series with the following statement: “The An Post Cycle Series has been a great success and underlines the potential of events to boost participation and bring visitors to beautiful parts of Ireland. The Series is a great example of a governing body and Local Sports Partnerships working with the Irish Sports Council and sponsors in providing exciting new participation opportunities in sport”.

The An Post Cycle Series also provides a valuable boost to local businesses such as hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. As a result, a number of other LSPs have run their own cycling events based on the Cycle Series model. Additionally, each year the LSPs play a vital role in the operation of Bike Week within their counties promoting the benefits of cycling.

4.3 Better Planning and Evaluation of Programmes

Local Sports Partnerships are acutely aware of the importance of accountability for public spending. With local funding levels reducing in recent years, LSPs have had to demonstrate more effectively how they utilise the funding they receive year on year. Programmes have always been planned prior to execution; however there is a much greater need for prioritisation due to diminishing funds across the network. Synergies are created with several LSPs working together on programmes and pooling monetary and human resources to enhance programme returns and outputs.

LSPs carry out evaluations of local programmes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the participants and providing a quality service which will encourage client retention. The aim of all LSP programmes is to leave a sustainable legacy behind when the Partnership steps away and ensure with confidence that the programme can run without the direct support of the LSP into the future. It is imperative that a programme can continue with minimal support in an area once the LSP steps away.

Feedback from the participants on a programme is also crucial to ensure that the LSP is providing a quality experience for the end-user. Programme evaluations are performed to seek the opinions of the participants before the LSP steps away. This feedback will determine if the programme has worked and if there are any improvements which the LSP can make in the future. If the LSP gets positive feedback, they can be confident that the programme will work and be duplicated or replicated in another area. The evaluations also feed into planning for certain target groups – what may work for some, may not work for others. This type of information is key when tailoring programmes to suit different groups.

Below is an example of how Wexford LSP utilised research undertaken locally to study the catchment area and target group in order to tailor a programme to suit young girls. They also carried out an evaluation to seek feedback from the school girls and the teachers to ascertain if the programme worked and how it could be improved to continue to meet the needs of the participants.

Planning Programmes through Monitoring & Evaluation Case Study - Girls Living for Sport (Wexford LSP)

Wexford LSP delivered a Girls Living for Sport programme which aimed to create a positive future for girls' participation in Physical Education (PE), sport and physical activity. The delivery of the Girls Living for Sport programme encourages collaboration between practitioners at a local level. This initiative encourages less active girls to come together and try out new activities.

Wexford LSP was conscious that the girls would need a mix of attractive ideas to get them on board. It was decided to conduct a survey amongst teenage girls in County Wexford. This was to identify the levels of participation in both physical activity and sport inside and outside of school among girls aged between 12 and 18. This survey was conducted by Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT).

The survey found that although there is a high level of participation in P.E. classes among the groups surveyed, the enjoyment levels are not as high as expected so this is an element that needs to be addressed in order to keep participation increasing.

The aims of the Girls Living for Sport Programme were:

- To encourage less active girls to come together and try out new activities
- To encourage a good group ethos, improve self-esteem, boost self-confidence and help the participants to meet new friends
- To develop school to club links.

Initially schools were asked to identify a group of girls within the school who were not interested in participating in PE and physical activity, and a grant was given to the school so they could develop an activity they wished to pursue, in consultation with the girls. This project is developing the active participation of girls in activities such as rugby, basketball, aerobics, pilates, soccer skills, boxercise, orienteering, dance and i-dance programmes, outdoor activity days and leadership programmes.

Wexford LSP also offered:

- A week-long programme in schools with positive gaming dance-mats.
- Six sports taster days and one dance workshop day
- A Gaelic for Girls programme and camogie coaching
- Six week Leadership Programmes in seven schools

Wexford LSP ran the Girls Living for Sport programme in conjunction with Leinster Rugby, FAI Coaches and Development Officers, WIT students, dance tutors, Gaelic football coaches, camogie coaches and Shielbaeggan Outdoor Education Centre staff.

To date, 1,543 girls have taken part in the programme. From evaluations carried out following the programme, it was found that there was 100% participation in the programme from the identified groups, coupled with an increase in attendance at academic lessons. There was also a demand to extend the opportunities by further requests from schools.

A new all-girls basketball school team was developed and a new club has now been started - New Ross Sparks Basketball Club. Dance Like Me dance club has also been established.

According to the evaluation, there has been a 25% increase in girls taking part in Rugby outside of school in clubs, with four new under-18 girls club teams being introduced in:

- Wexford Wanders Rugby Club
- New Ross Rugby Club
- Gorey Rugby Club
- Enniscorthy Rugby Club.

The leadership programmes have enabled clubs and schools to expand their programmes with new youth volunteers.

Teacher Quote:

“Each week the students were fully engaged and were encouraged to take part to the best of their ability. The selection and wide variation of activities were conducive to this. A testament to how much the students enjoyed this course was that there was full participation each week.”

Student Quotes:

“I really learnt a lot and want to go on to work with my local club as a leader”

“It’s been fun and exhausting.”

The real challenge is motivating inactive girls in schools to take part in physical activity who do not want to take part. By listening to what girls want and tailoring programmes to suit them, it is hoped that Sports Partnerships can continue to engage teenage girls in physical activity for longer and counter-act the drop-out statistics.



Participants on the Girls Living for Sport programme testing out their skills on the climbing wall

4.4 Evaluation of Performance Across the Network of Local Sports Partnerships

With the full network of Sports Partnerships in situ for the last number of years it is important that their operation is continually assessed. The Irish Sports Council has developed a Performance Evaluation process which will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of LSPs against an ideal model. Areas that will be reviewed as part of this process will include governance, management, planning, monitoring & evaluation and impact. It is intended that each LSP will receive individual feedback including recommendations for areas of improvement following the process. LSPs will then work with the ISC to further develop their own capacity to deliver against the strategic aims for participation. It is also intended that LSPs that are strong in a particular area will support LSPs which need to develop greater competence in that area.

The Performance Evaluation process will help the LSP network to become stronger and more effective with the aim of performing at the optimum level. A stronger network will lead to more strategic planning for sport at local level, more efficient use of resources and better opportunities for participants in the future.

4.5 Responding to Local Government Reform

As the majority of LSPs operate within Local Authorities it remains essential that the Council and the Network support and engage with change in Local Government structures. During 2012 the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government published Putting People First, a document that outlined the process of Local Government Reform over the next number of years. The role of the LSP network was referenced positively in this report and the Council welcomes the ongoing support of the Local Authorities and the Department in this regard.

It has been identified that a number of Local Authorities throughout the country will be merged as part of Local Government Reform. The process in Limerick is already advanced and the Council is engaging in this with the respective parties. During 2014 the Limerick Local Authority and the Tipperary Local Authority mergers will be completed. The Council is committed to supporting these in line with Government policy.

4.6 Summary

The continued effective operation and ongoing development of the LSP network remains a strategic priority for the ISC. The developments outlined above show that the network remains ready to adapt to and address the relevant trends and issues that arise. The process of continuous improvement will now be more structured through the implementation of the Performance Evaluation process but the most important role of the LSPs will remain providing pathways for people at local level to become involved in lifelong participation in physical activity.

Appendices

Appendix A – List of Local Sports Partnerships

Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

Appendix C – Images



Appendix A

List of Local Sports Partnerships

LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP NETWORK	YEAR ESTABLISHED
North Tipperary Sports Partnership	2001
Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership	2001
Roscommon Sports Partnership	2001
Clare Sports Partnership	2001
Donegal Sports Partnership	2001
Kildare Sports Partnership	2001
Laois Sports Partnership	2001
Fingal Sports Partnership	2001
Cork Sports Partnership	2002
Meath Sports Partnership	2002
Waterford Sports Partnership	2002
Limerick City Sports Partnership	2002
Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership	2004
Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership	2004
Mayo Sports Partnership	2004
Westmeath Sports Partnership	2004
Carlow Sports Partnership	2006
Offaly Sports Partnership	2006
Monaghan Sports Partnership	2006
County Limerick Sports Partnership	2007
South Tipperary Sports Partnership	2007
Galway Sports Partnership ²	2007
Cavan Sports Partnership	2008
Louth Sports Partnership	2008
Dun Laoghaire Sports Partnership	2008
South Dublin Sports Partnership	2008
Wexford Sports Partnership	2008
Longford Sports Partnership	2008
Leitrim Sports Partnership	2008
Dublin City Sports Partnership	2008
Wicklow Sports Partnership	2008

2 In 2012, Galway City LSP (est. 2007) and County Galway LSP (est. 2008) agreed to merge to form one new Galway Sports Partnership

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Buntús – An Irish Sports Council programme developed to support primary school teachers and childcare practitioners in introducing young people to sport and physical activity.

Cara Adapted Physical Activity Centre - aims to provide leadership, information and training in relation to sport and physical activity for people with disabilities in Ireland.

Code of Ethics – a code of practice to safeguard the participation of children in sport.

ESRI - Economic and Social Research Institute. The ESRI produces research that contributes to understanding economic and social change in the new international context and that informs public policymaking and civil society in Ireland.

FAI – Football Association of Ireland. The FAI is the governing body of football in Ireland.

Fitzpatrick & Associates Review of Local Sports Partnerships - The Fitzpatrick & Associates Review of Local Sports Partnerships is a report published by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in 2005. The report evaluates the progress of the LSPs with reference to the key aims and objectives, and makes a number of recommendations for the LSP initiative.

GAA – Gaelic Athletic Association. The GAA is the governing body of Gaelic games in Ireland.

Go For Life - The Go for Life Programme aims to increase participation among older people in recreational sport activities, and is supported by the Irish Sports Council.

HSE – Health Service Executive. The HSE is a statutory authority responsible for providing Health and Personal Social Services for those living in the Republic of Ireland.

IRFU – Irish Rugby Football Union. The IRFU is the governing body for the sport of rugby union in Ireland.

ISM - Irish Sports Monitor. The Irish Sports Monitor is an ongoing telephone survey of adults in Ireland, which records sport and exercise activities undertaken in the 7 days prior to interview. In 2011, the Irish Sports Monitor interviewed 8,749 adults. The survey is primarily designed to track levels of participation in sport, both for the population as a whole and various sub-populations of interest. The 2011 report is the latest in a series of collaborations between the Irish Sports Council and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) on sport and physical activity.

ISC - Irish Sports Council. The Irish Sports Council is a statutory authority that aims to plan, lead and co-ordinate the sustainable development of competitive and recreational sport in Ireland.

JobBridge - is a National Internship Scheme that will provide work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period.

LEADER - LEADER is the EU Community Initiative for Rural Development that provides approved Local Action Groups with public funding (EU and National) to implement multi-sectoral business plans for the development of their own areas.

Link2bActive - Link2bActive is a programme that was developed by South Dublin Sports Partnership to create an opportunity for unemployed people to access sports facilities at a reduced rate, encouraging them to participate in recreational activities.

LSP – Local Sports Partnership. Local Sports Partnerships are an initiative of the Irish Sports Council to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport at local level. The key aims of the LSPs are to increase participation in sport, and to ensure that local resources are used to best effect. The LSP initiative lies at the heart of the Irish Sports Council's

participation strategy.

Meet and Train groups - Meet and Train are weekly walking/running groups, set up and supported by LSPs often in conjunction with local athletics clubs. The objective of the Meet and Train group is to provide an opportunity for participants (in particular women) of all ages and levels of fitness to get together to exercise with like-minded people, in a non-competitive environment initially under the guidance of a qualified coach.

NGB – National Governing Body. An organisation, recognised by the Irish Sports Council, that coordinates the development of a particular sport or sports through constituent clubs.

Older People – As used throughout this report, the term older people refers to those over 50 years of age.

PALs – Physical Activity Leaders. A Physical Activity Leader is someone who can lead members of their own groups or communities in short exercise routines, straightforward dances and recreational sports.

PE - Physical Education.

SDO – Sports Development Officer. SDOs aim to provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for all sections of the community.

SIDO – Sports Inclusion Disability Officer. SIDOs aim to provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for people with a disability. See Sports Inclusion Disability Programme.

SPEAK – Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Knowledge system. The SPEAK system is a product of NEXUS Research (a not-for-profit research co-operative based in Dublin) which offers organisations the capacity to self-evaluate, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the work of the organisation and the impacts of that work.

Sports Council Challenge- The Sports Council Challenge is an initiative which asks companies to set themselves physical activity challenges during the month of May.

Sports Inclusion Disability Programme – A programme to encourage and facilitate more people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity, developing sustainable clubs and programmes in all settings.

Sustainability (with regard to LSP participation programmes) – A sustainable programme is one which leads to lasting participation in sport and/or physical activity which is capable of being self-maintained (without direct LSP support).

TÚS – The Tús initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people since 2011. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas.

UNHCR - UNHCR Ireland works to safeguard the rights and well being of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people in Ireland through the provision of guidance, training and support to the authorities and the promotion of best international standards in legislation, policy and procedures.

VEC – Vocational Education Committee. VECs are local statutory education and training authorities. Their service encompasses Second Level Schools, Further Education Colleges, Adult and Community Education, Literacy Support and Youth Support Services.

WIS – Women in Sport. An initiative of the Irish Sports Council to increase participation of women in sport, through providing alternative opportunities and developing specific programmes.

WIT- Waterford Institute of Technology.

Xcessible Outdoors- The overall aim of “Xcessible Outdoors” is to heighten the awareness of the benefits of an active healthy lifestyle and participation opportunities for people with disabilities within the outdoor environment.

Appendix C

Images

Images on inside cover: Courtesy of Meath LSP, Mayo LSP, Cork LSP, Clare LSP, North Tipperary LSP, Laois LSP and South Dublin LSP

Section 1: Children taking part in the family-friendly Operation Transformation 5km fun-run in Cork – Courtesy of Cork LSP.

Section 2: Girls taking part in the Combat Fitness Come and Try It Day held at the Waterford Regional Sports Centre – Courtesy of Waterford LSP.

Section 3: A young cyclist happy to be enjoying a spin in the Kerry weather at the Pedal in the Park in Killarney – Courtesy of Kerry LSP.

Section 4: A balancing act – a father and daughter helping each other up a hill on the family spin on the Meath Heritage Tour – Courtesy of Meath LSP.

Appendices: Some young girls trying out kayaking in the Kilkenny Inclusive Summer Camp – Courtesy of Kilkenny LSP.



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