

LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

Community Hub Project- Sligo Centre for Independent Living

Summary

Sligo Centre for Independent Living (SCIL) was set up in 1996 by a group of individuals with disabilities. The aim of SCIL is to promote maximum independence for all with physical disabilities, and to support their inclusion and empowerment within their communities. Today, SCIL continues to have a significant representation of individuals with a disability on their board. Over the years SCIL noticed that many of its members were finding it very difficult to integrate to their community, despite a desire to do so. SCIL established this community hub project to address this issue directly by creating a space for all members of the community to meet and engage.

Context

Today, SCIL provides Personal Assistant (PA) services to individuals with a range of disabilities including physical and sensory disabilities (sight loss or hearing loss), intellectual disabilities, enduring mental illness and other hidden disabilities (e.g. autism, epilepsy or acquired brain injury). SCIL recruit, train and manage this PA service for their service users. SCIL also run a very successful Community Employment (CE) scheme to induct newcomers into the caring profession, and they also support their service users by offering individual support, signposting, and advocating with other agencies on their behalf.

Project name: Community Hub Project

Date: January 2018- July 2019

Local Action Group: Sligo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Implementing Partner: Sligo LEADER Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Non-Profit Organisation

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 2: Social Inclusion
Subtheme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Sligo Centre for Independent Living

Address: 45 High Street, Co. Sligo

Further information: <http://sligocil.ie/>
<https://www.facebook.com/SligoCIL/>
www.number45.ie



People making use of the facilities at Number 45- Source: SCIL



The SCIL noted that their members, along with many other marginalised groups, often find it very difficult to integrate to their community. This gives rise to increased marginalisation and isolation and furthermore leads to a disconnect and a diminished sense of belonging among marginalised groups to their communities. Therefore, the SCIL established this community hub project to address this issue directly.

“We want[ed] to create a space that allows every user to feel comfortable and know they belong”- Maria Mulligan, CEO, SCIL

LEADER funding was used to help create a space to connect all members of the community. The SCIL had the vision that this space would be a space for everyone, including the bereaved, the lonely, those with disabilities, able people, cool people, older people, young people and for those who feel they have no labels at all, to meet each other and engage. The aim of this hub is to break down barriers between different sectors of the community and make it a place for all.



People using arts and crafts facilities at the hub -
Source: SCIL

- To strengthen current community ties and establish new ones through easy fun interactions and communal projects
- To provide an opportunity for people with a disability to showcase their ability and to educate the rest of the community about living with a disability in a relaxed easy manner
- To create a space that showcases universal design and its capacity to be functional, attractive and inclusive - equally valuing and welcoming all guests



Facilitators with the SCIL helping people to engage in activities in Number 45- Source: SCIL

Objectives

- To create a central space to facilitate integration and assimilation of marginalised groups into their community

Activities

While SCIL had some core funding to support the project, they realised that they did not have the sufficient funds to deliver it to the standard required. They, first and foremost, made enquiries with the Sligo LEADER Partnership about the potential of gaining financial support through LEADER to help complete the capital works required to develop their Community Hub. Sligo LEADER Partnership guided the SCIL through the LEADER application process and the different aspects including the procurement process. This





was successfully completed and the LEADER funding was granted.

“Ultimately this project is about seeing community members as resourceful and worthwhile individuals who can contribute to the overall fabric of their community in a wide variety of different ways” Maria Mulligan, CEO, SCIL

In designing the hub, SCIL invited third-year Interior Architecture and Design students from the local Sligo Institute of Technology to pitch their designs for the community hub. This aimed to encourage the students to understand the importance of universal design in all their work. In consultation with a professional interior architect and accessibility consultant many elements of their designs were used to create a warm, welcoming, fully-accessible, place for all members of the community.

Results

This project resulted in the creation of Ireland's first of its kind community hub which provides a space where all members of the community can meet and engage. The hub has been named Number 45 and is located on High Street in the heart of Sligo town.



Guests dropping in to Number 45 to make use of their facilities - Source: SCIL

The building is fully accessible and has a number of different spaces and resources which allow people to engage in different activities. These include comfortable seating

areas, where users can engage with each other through board games or puzzles, should they wish to do so, and a crafting area where users can design and create amazing original creations, including arts, crafts and models.



People getting creative at Number 45- Source: SCIL

A 38m² soundproof space has the capacity to accommodate noisier activities such as drama, music or other such projects. There is also a small outside space which may be developed for horticultural projects.

Importantly the building is fully wheelchair accessible and has both a step-down changing space (with hoist and hydraulic changing table) and an accessible toilet to cater for everyone. All workspaces are designed with wheelchair users in mind so they can use the space equally. A dynamic team of workers are there to facilitate projects daily and encourage interactions between guests. In addition, an outreach worker is available to accompany individuals from transport centers or their homes (if local) to the building. Activities at the hub are planned so that everyone can participate and are structured in such a way to facilitate easy interactions. A noticeboard in the hub also provides information about different services, activities and volunteering opportunities in the area as well as information on any ongoing projects or workshops that are due to take place at the centre.



While Number 45 is still relatively new, this exciting project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of its guests in a number of ways, notably by increasing opportunities for physical and social interactions for all.



Communal projects underway at Number 45- Source: SCIL

In time, this will hopefully lead to stronger and safer communities whereby individuals can connect with all members of their community including those with disabilities, the elderly, those with mental health issues, and other traditionally marginalised groups. Crucially, this space provides marginalised groups with an opportunity to tell their story and reflect their strengths, which will hopefully lead to reduced marginalisation and a greater appreciation of these groups in the local community.

“Number 45 has come together through hard work, huge commitment from our team, generous and wholehearted support from the board, significant support from government agencies together with an overarching belief by everyone in Sligo CIL that we can be the change we wish to see in our community” *Maria Mulligan, CEO SCIL*

Lessons

Capital Build Projects - Contracting

SCIL advise that contracts for capital build projects, in particular, should be signed off within a 6-month period of being granted. After this period, contractors can change

their prices, and this was an issue that SCIL experienced as part of developing the community hub project.

Application Process

The LEADER application process itself can be quite demanding, especially for smaller organisation’s. SCIL advise that there is a need to be rigid with documentation in supporting your application and in using the public procurement process. For example, they suggest keeping hard copies of all contracts, invoices, payments and submissions. SCIL were guided and supported through the LEADER application process by the local LEADER officer at Sligo LEADER Partnership.

“We found the local LEADER programme coordinator very helpful – she stepped us through the process one step at a time – it can feel daunting at first” – *Maria Mulligan, CEO, SCIL*

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€157, 061.18
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€100,061.18
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€62,838.42
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€37,222.76
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€57,000.00
+ (iii) Other funding sources	€n/a

Contact details

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