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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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Agenda Item 8. Evaluation Update

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The SICAP programme has developed a tailored distance travelled tool (My Journey) to measure soft skills relevant to employment, education and personal development for service beneficiaries. It aims to support service users and staff to work together to identify personal goals for the client and show progress over time. My Journey measures five soft skill areas: (i) literacy and numeracy confidence; (ii) confidence, goal setting and self-efficacy; (iii) communication skills, (iv) connection with others, and (v) general work readiness. In 2019, the tool was piloted in 15 LDCs. It will be introduced to all Local Community Development Companies and LDCs in 2020

An evaluation of SICAP pre-employment supports was published in September 2020. The evaluation's key objectives are to:

- examine the role played by SICAP in assisting those who are further away from the labour market;
- provide a detailed profile of individuals participating in pre-employment programmes/initiatives;
- provide a counterfactual assessment of the impact of the pre-employment programmes/initiatives in assisting individuals who are further from the labour market to progress into employment or study/training;
- analyse the routes through which individuals access the pre-employment programmes/initiatives; and
- assess the learning experiences of programme participants.

The evaluation found a positive counterfactual impact on employment for both employment and self-employment interventions. The evaluation also emphasised the importance of (1) the one-to-one supports provided by the programme to supporting clients in engaging with and remaining on courses or finding and staying in employment and (2) role played by PIs in providing a connection to local services and stakeholders.

Specific Skills Training (part of ETB Training for the Unemployed)

SOLAS appointed Indecon International Economic Consultants in 2018 to undertake an evaluation of Specific Skills Training (part of ETB Training for the Unemployed). The evaluation is ongoing and the final report is due to be published in 2020.

Back to Education Initiative

SOLAS has appointed Indecon International Economic Consultants to undertake an evaluation of further education and training provision at Levels 3 and 4 of the National Framework of

Qualifications, incorporating the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). The purpose of the evaluation, in the first instance, is to generate policy-relevant knowledge on the delivery of Level 3 and 4 and BTEI FET provision, including the overall quality and the impact for participants. The evaluation is ongoing and the final report is due in 2020.

Disability Project (Ability Programme)

Pobal appointed Quality Matters in 2018 to undertake an external evaluation of the Ability Programme. The evaluation is assessing the achievement of the programme's original aims and key objectives. The evaluation is also exploring the effectiveness of different approaches and measures applied in bringing young people with disabilities who are not work-ready, closer to the labour market in addition to examining the range of impacts on the participants of the programme. As part of the evaluation a baseline report was produced in April 2020, which provides a profile of the service users enrolled in the Ability programme, a summary of the types of services being provided by services funded under the programme, and the baseline scores on a soft outcome tool for a sample of service users. It also includes a thematic analysis of the challenges that providers and their clients have been experiencing as well as what they have found to be good practice during the first year of the programme. The evaluation is being conducted over the duration of the programme and it will conclude in June 2021.

Garda Youth Diversion Projects

A two-year Action Research Project which commenced in 2018 is ongoing, and is due to conclude in Q4 2020. It is a partnership project with the Department of Justice and Equality, a research team from the University of Limerick's School of Law and a select group of 16 GYDPs, who volunteered to engage in a programme of change. The objectives of the Action Research Project are to identify and disseminate best practice in working with young people at risk. By building purposeful relationships with young people, specialist Youth Justice Workers in GYDPs aim to reduce the likelihood of offending and encourage young people to take up pro-social opportunities and transform their prospects for the better. The Project will feed into the GYDP Change Programme in 2020/2021, which aims to ensure that the service is more widely available to a greater cohort of all young people who could benefit from participating.