



— SLIGO —
SPORT & RECREATION
 — PARTNERSHIP —

Active Communities Project Report 2006-2008

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Forward



Diane Middleton,
Community Sports
Development Officer

As Community Sports Development Officer with Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership I am delighted to introduce this report which highlights the many sports and recreational opportunities facilitated jointly by sporting, community and statutory organisations in Sligo over the last two years as part of the Active Communities project.

This project was primarily funded under the European Union through the Peace II programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the Sligo County Council Led Task Force. The project took place from August 2006 to July 2008 and involved RAPID and Clár areas including West Sligo, South Sligo and Cranmore.

At the outset, a series of local consultations were held in each of the three targeted communities to identify local needs for community sport and this resulted in the planning and subsequent delivery of many successful sport and recreational programmes which were inclusive of all age groups and all ability levels. The number of inactive people who took up physical activity for the first time was particularly encouraging and their involvement was largely due to the diverse range of activities available. This project also recognised the important role that community sport plays in promoting peace and reconciliation through a number of successful cross border events. Central to the project's success has been the dedication of local volunteers, sports clubs and community organisations from West Sligo, South Sligo and Cranmore and the ongoing commitment and enthusiasm from volunteers was greatly appreciated. I wish to acknowledge the investment support from our local partner agencies for the Active Communities project, including Sligo County Council, County Sligo VEC, Sligo Borough Council and the Health Service Executive, which has been a critical factor in enabling the project to reach its targets, and achieve its goal of increased participation in sport and recreation.

Diane Middleton
Community Sports Development Officer

Message from Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership

I welcome the progress made through the Active Communities project in delivering our goal of 'More People, More Active, More Often'. The report highlights some of the inspirational work delivered by sports volunteers across a wide range of projects, targeting a sustained increase in participation in sport and physical recreation amongst under-represented groups in targeted communities throughout County Sligo. On reading the report you will see the positive impact that investment in this community sports project has made to improving the health and well being, of participants and the overall quality of life in communities.

I acknowledge, and am encouraged by the significant investment from our partner agencies, which has enabled us to deliver this project. I wish to express my appreciation to Sligo County Council, and in particular Community and Enterprise, for the key role they played in supporting Active Communities. Also, I wish to thank County Sligo VEC, Sligo Borough Council, Sligo Leader Partnership Company, the Health Service Executive and the Irish Sports Council for their support and commitment to the project.

The collective effort of partner organisations and the continued drive, passion and commitment from our Community Sports Development Officer, local sports clubs and community organisations has resulted in the delivery of a successful community sports project, and Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership looks forward to continuing to work with all partners to deliver an enhanced quality of life through the medium of sport and recreation.

Deirdre Lavin
Sports Co-ordinator

Active Communities Project Report 2006-2008

Active Communities Project Description

The Active Communities project was developed in 2006 with the aim of enhancing community sport and recreation programming in three identified RAPID and Clár areas of County Sligo including Cranmore, West Sligo and South Sligo. The project was established by Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership to address the challenge of limited opportunities for sport and recreational programming in the identified areas. The project involved a joined up approach to community sports provision (programming and education/ training), involving community groups, local authorities and the education, sporting and health sectors. A successful funding application was made to the Sligo County Council Led Task Force and additional funding support was received for the project locally from Sligo County Council, Sligo Borough Council, Sligo VEC, the Health Service Executive and at national level from the Irish Sports Council. A Community Sports Development Officer was appointed for a two year period to manage the project.

At the outset the project objectives set out included:

- **To employ a Community Sports Development Officer with the purpose of increasing participation in sport and recreation in targeted Clár and RAPID areas in County Sligo.**
- **To develop and implement sports plans in three identified disadvantaged communities over a two year period.**
- **To ensure that targeted communities in both RAPID and Clár regions enjoy equality of opportunity in sport, access to appropriate forms of sport and active recreation, and experience positive social experiences through the implementation of a comprehensive community sport and recreation programme.**
- **To promote more equitable participation in sport and physical activity through increased participation amongst priority groups (people of different religious backgrounds, ethnic communities, people with disabilities, women/ girls and disadvantaged people).**
- **To ensure local ownership of the community sport project by maximising opportunities for local groups and agencies to have a greater say in the planning, implementation and evaluation process.**
- **To build community capacity through investment in a comprehensive programme of education and training for sports leaders, coaches and administrators.**

Targets and Achievements

Active Communities has seen the progressive delivery of the project objectives and targets. It is very encouraging to see that many of the targets established at the outset of this two year project have been surpassed, and this is a reflection of the collective effort of all involved.

Performance Indicators	2 Year Target	Achievement
Development of Community Action Plans	3	3
Number of community participant facilitated in local sport and recreational programmes	1500	2942
Number of new and additional sport and recreational programmes in disadvantaged communities	15	146
Number of participant places with a disability facilitated in integrated sport and recreational programmes	6	88
Number of ethnic minority participants facilitated in inclusive programmes	10	61
Number of volunteers/coaches /parents involved in capacity building /education and training initiatives	120	136
Number of high profile cross border festivals	2	4
Number of participants involved in club/community cross border twinning initiatives	120	166
Number of participants in cross border coach education seminars	60	60

Active Communities in West Sligo

Supported 26 sport and recreational programmes thereby facilitating 1,154 participant places.

Skreen Dromard Community Centre - 'Spring into Action' Programme



In 2006 Skreen Dromard Community Centre linked with SSRP with a view to addressing under usage at the centre. At the outset the centre committee undertook an Indoor Facility Management training programme at the Institute of Technology, Sligo. Having gained lots of ideas on effective management and programming, the committee proceeded to put together an extensive 'Spring into Action' sports programme of activities for the centre in early 2007.

Following widespread distribution of information brochures and promotion in the local community, the centre was rewarded on enrolment night for their hard work when 150 people signed up to the various programmes. The centre was transformed from a hall which was greatly under used to a centre buzzing with action with a wide variety of activities on offer including Aerobics, Salsa Dancing, Circuit Training, Multi Sport, Soccer, Basketball, Badminton and Hip Hop Dance. Eamonn Burke, Chairperson of Skreen Dromard Centre remarked, "This is the first time that we have had a programme like this going, they are all new people participating in this programme, that would not have participated previously in the parish. On enrolment night, we had 150 people signing up to take part in the programme. From our point of view, it was a huge success". Reflecting on the programme Diane Middleton, Community Sports Development Officer commented, "This has been a great example of how to increase usage of a centre and due to the ongoing commitment from the committee the programmes have been successfully sustained".

New Club Developments

With the support of the Active Communities project there have been a number of new club developments in West Sligo since 2006. In the sport of Basketball, 2 new clubs have been established. The Red Hawks Basketball Club in Skreen Dromard area involves 35 girls while the West Sligo Panthers Basketball Club caters for

80 young people in Easkey and the surrounding areas. Both clubs facilitated coaching sessions, school/ club links and inter club events. In addition, a club development initiative supported Kilglass Enniscrone Soccer club to develop a girls section involving 19 girls. Hugh Cunningham, Kilglass Enniscrone Soccer Club commented that the club has greatly benefited from their relationship with the SSRP, "The major developments included the introduction of a youth development committee, Under 12 and Under 14 girls teams, the involvement of the club in the Sligo Leitrim leagues, and the development of Under 8s and Under 10s training sessions".

Recreational Activity at Easkey Community Centre

Following the recent opening of the new Easkey Community Centre, the Community Sports Development Officer supported the centre in launching a new weekly sport and recreational programme for the local community including Aerobics, Circuit Training, Multi Sport, Martial Arts and Tennis. The centre hosted their first Summer Camp in 2007 with sporting activities for the local youth including Multi Sport, Kickboxing and Coastal Walks, which led to a second successful camp in 2008.



Margaret Conlon, Easkey Community Centre stated " the difference it has made locally is that our children are more active and want more summer camps run next year, this is great because it brings communities together with their children, getting more people interested in sporting activities, and gives them an interest away from T.V and video games. We here in Easkey had a wonderful programme for the 5yrs to 12 yrs age group. It was wonderful to see them coming into the centre full of joy and laughter".

Women in Sport

Through the Active Communities project a number of recreational sporting initiatives were initiated in West Sligo with the aim of encouraging inactive women to take up physical activity. A Womens Come and Try Festival was held at the Skreen Dromard Community Centre in 2007 with taster sessions offered in the sports

of Aerobics, Salsa Dancing, T'ai Chi, Pilates and Circuit Training. Based on feedback from the 40 enthusiastic women who took part, a very successful Aerobics and Salsa Dancing weekly programme emerged.

A further Womens Come and Try Festival was held at Dromore West Community Centre,



linked with the local ICA group, and 40 women participated in Body Sculpt, Aerobics, Salsa Dancing, T'ai Chi, and Yoga. Throughout 2007/ 2008 the ICA group organised follow up programmes including Tai Chi and Aerobics at the Dromore West Community Centre and a Yoga programme at the Easkey Community Centre. Mari Cummins, Dromore West/ Templeboy ICA, stated "All participants were delighted and very appreciative to avail of activity programmes out here in Dromore West, which was always a problem in the past. T'ai Chi has been a life changing experience, and the aerobics was a really successful programme. Over 50 women had the opportunity to try these activities, the interest and enthusiasm shown was amazing".

Supporting local coaches and volunteers

Throughout 2008 Active Communities linked with local sports clubs and organisations in West Sligo to facilitate a variety of education and training courses for local volunteers and coaches. Courses delivered locally included Sports First Aid, Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and a Badminton Coaching Course. Many local coaches and volunteers welcomed the fact that courses were delivered in their locality as prior to this, courses were centralised in Sligo town. A local coach stated "Having a Community Sports Development Officer available to link with has many benefits, one of which is being able to have access to localised courses and this means a lot to local volunteers".



Active Communities in South Sligo

Supported 44 sport and recreational programmes thereby facilitating 826 participant places.

Local Youth take to the Outdoors

Active Communities supported a range of new and exciting opportunities for young people to participate in outdoor recreation. Tubbercurry Family Resource Centre developed a fun-packed summer programme for the youth in South Sligo in 2007/2008. Canoeing on Lough Talt proved particularly popular with over 30 participants availing of the opportunity to try the sport while a further 35 participants tried Surfing lessons at Strandhill. The youth from the area have also participated in 3 Orienteering events organised by Sligo Orienteering Club while a group of local teenage girls took part in a Girls Outside project involving Hill-Walking, Climbing and a trip to an outdoor education centre.



A local youth leader remarked "Prior to our involvement on the Active Communities project there were very few opportunities for young people to experience water sports and the out-doors, for many it exposed them in a very positive way to the beauty of the local environment in South Sligo".

St. Brigid's Hall 'Spring into Action' Project

To coincide with the re opening of St. Brigid's Hall following refurbishment, a 'Spring into Action' project aimed at increasing participation and usage at the hall through the provision of an enhanced quality recreation sports service, was put in place in 2007.

St. Brigid's Hall committee members attended training workshops at the Institute of Technology Sligo, to build the capacity of local volunteers to develop a community sports programme and improve the usage of the centre. A new programme was launched in January 2007, promoting a 12 week schedule of activities including Aerobics, Circuit Training, Tang Soo Do, Multi Sport, and Basketball involving 70 participants. The centre also hosted 2 very successful youth summer camps in 2007 and 2008 involving 65 young participants.



Sport for All at Gallagher House

Gallagher House, Tubbercurry provides a range of sport and recreational programmes for people with a disability and in conjunction with the Community Sports Development Officer a number of new initiatives were established. A 'Come and Try' Boules Fest was held in 2007 with 20 participants with a disability and staff taking part, and since then, the game of Boules continues to be played at the centre. A new weekly Multi Sport programme for people with a disability was held at St. Brigid's Hall involving 12 participants. Gallagher House participants expressed a keen interest in Golf, and hence Active Communities linked with Tubbercurry Golf Club to develop an inclusive programme at the club, who then provided a 'buddy system' supported by a group of local volunteers, and ran a successful programme in 2007 and 2008 for 16 participants with a disability.

Tubbercurry Golf Club Community Projects



In 2007/2008 Tubbercurry Golf Club became proactive in establishing a number of community linked Golf programmes with support from the Active Communities CSDO. The club linked with Holy Family NS to support a weekly after school programme for young people, and developed a 'buddy-system' for an inclusive weekly programme linked with Gallagher House. Sr. Mary, Principal of the school warmly welcomed the programme and commented "We have a number of children who would not be interested in the team sports and to see them enjoying themselves so much through this golf programme, they really had a fantastic time.

Also, it is wonderful to see the youth using our local facilities". A pupil from Holy Family NS, Muireann Ni Bhaioighill, speaking about her experience in the after school Golf programme stated "I learned a lot, how to grip the club, how to chip, how to put, and how to swing".

The club also hosted a range of innovative community linked events in 2007/ 2008 including a Cross Border Fun Golf Tournament in 2007 for people with a disability, and a Fun Golf Event linked to the local primary school in 2008. Joe Quinn Club Captain 2007, noted "We have established new links with the local Holy Family National School and Gallagher House and Tubbercurry Golf Club is delighted to be associated with these worthwhile projects".

Additional Sporting Initiatives



The local PTAA Club, Cloonacool, ran an 8 week Aerobics programme and an ongoing Hip Hop Dance programme in 2007/2008 for 35 teenagers. The Tubbercurry Foroige Club leaders attended a J4 Volleyball coaching course and delivered a programme locally. The Holy Family NS ran a busy after school activity club, including Basketball and Golf programmes involving 40 participants. The recently established Banada Activity Club delivered a fun Multi Sport programme in 2008. Active Communities linked with local sports clubs and organisations to recruit participants for 3 Sports First Aid courses held at the Teach Laigne Tubbercurry, St. Brigid's Hall Tubbercurry, and Banada Abbey Hall. Active Communities also linked with Tubbercurry Golf Club and Special Olympics to deliver a Special Olympics Golf induction programme for 8 volunteers.

Sport Unites

A 'Sport Unites' day held at the Holy Family NS, promoting cultural diversity, embraced 80 young people including non-nationals and young people with a disability to participate in Fun Golf, Hip Hop Dancing, Tang Soo Do, Gaelic Games, Athletics and Basketball. All sessions were delivered and supported by local clubs, thereby developing strong school/club links, and creating a direct pathway to local club sport.

Active Communities in Cranmore

Supported 46 sport and recreational programmes thereby facilitating 946 participant places.

Sports Clubs providing local sporting opportunities

City United Soccer Club plays a major role in providing local children in the Cranmore area with an opportunity to play Soccer and the Active Communities project worked closely with the club committee to support club activities. Opportunities were afforded to support the education and training of local coaches in Kickstart 1 and 2 Soccer coaching courses. The club received support to promote a new project in Fun Soccer for 8-10 year olds in conjunction with the RAPID programme in Sligo, and involved players from Sligo Rovers FC in delivering the coaching alongside local coaches.



The programme was delivered over a 6 week period involving 15 enthusiastic local youths and culminated in June 2008 with a fun blitz day at the Sligo Rovers pitch with a friendly match against Glenview Stars FC. City United Football Club Chairperson, Michael Mc Tiernan stated "Our underage players were really chuffed and had an absolutely brilliant time, it was a huge lift and inspiration for the club having the Sligo Rovers players coaching. We are very grateful to Diane and the Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership, without the support we wouldn't be able to do what we do, the project was a huge benefit to us".

St. John's GAA Club, which is based in Carraroe, organised an outreach programme at the Cemetary Pitch Cleveragh in an endeavour to involve more children from the Cranmore area in the club. A very successful Under 8s and Under 10s Gaelic Football programme involving 30 girls and boys from Cranmore was delivered. In addition, the Ladies GAA and St. John's



Ladies GAA Club developed a 'Gaelic 4 Girls' outreach programme involving 10 girls from Cranmore.

Niall Gordon, St. John's GAA coach stated "The participation of boys and girls from the St. Anne's/ Carraroe area is critical to the development and future success of St. John's GAA Club. This is a work in progress, and it is with great satisfaction that we note that players are already beginning to come through our coaching initiatives over the last few years. Michael O'Hehir from Garavogue scored 2-8 for the Sligo U16 team in the recent Fr. Manning Cup Final against Roscommon, and Hayden Cawley, Cranmore, is a member of the Sligo Under 15 development team, hopefully with the aid of the SSRP, our coaching development will continue".

An outreach Gymnastics programme for 10 girls with DyNamo Gym Club was held at the Mercy Primary School Hall, and 5 girls are now attending DyNamo's weekly programme at the mainstream club.

Women in Sport

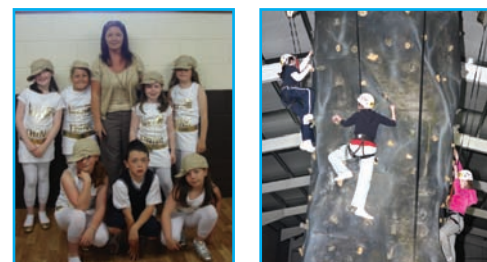
Girls and women in the Cranmore area availed of a number of opportunities to get active through a variety of programmes supported by Active Communities. In 2006 a womens 'Come and Try' sport and recreational fest was hosted at the Abbeyquarter Community Centre, involving free taster sessions of Aerobics, Martial Arts, Yoga and T'ai Chi. In a follow up, Active Communities linked with the Cranmore Regeneration programme to support a weekly Salsa Dancing programme at the Abbeyquarter Community Centre.



In Spring 2008 10 participants from the Cranmore Women's Group at the Cranmore Resource House attended an 8 week gym and fitness programme at the local Mercy College Gym. For many of the ladies it was their first chance to try out a fitness centre and many noted the benefits of the programme which included the close proximity of the gym, the affordable cost and the appropriate timing of the morning programme. Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's 'Girls Outside' programme afforded 7 teenage girls from the Cranmore area, an opportunity to partake in Walking and Climbing activities.

Cranmore Organisations supporting Community Sport

Active Communities linked with the Cranmore Community Co-operative Society to support 3 weekly Dance classes for all age categories involving 30 young people.



Links were established with Cranmore Resource House to support a wide range of new sport and recreational opportunities for young people, involving Summer Camps, Sports Activity days, Surfing lessons, Kayaking, a community Swimming programme and a Multi Sport programme. Paula Gorman, Project Manager with Sligo Springboard Company Limited, stated "Working with the Community Sports Development Officer over the past two years has greatly enhanced the esteem of many children in attendance at the programmes, and we are delighted with the ensuing reduction in unsociable behaviour amongst the groups. Furthermore, many of our children have joined with other Soccer, Gaelic, Cycling and Outdoor Pursuits clubs and activities".

Diversity in Sport promoted with Globe House

Active Communities linked with many local sporting organisations to promote diversity in sport. 12 Asylum Seekers from Globe House availed of a gym membership scheme at local gymnasiums and in doing so, participated on a regular basis in active recreation.

13 Asylum Seekers in Globe House attended a weekly Soccer programme at the Sligo Rovers Pitch, kindly sponsored by the Sligo Rovers Football Club, an activity which proved very popular with the participants.

The Community Sports Development Officer linked with the Cranmore Resource House, Globe House and Sligo All Stars Basketball Club to develop an integrated Basketball programme, involving 30 young people, hosted at the Mercy College Gym. Globe House Family Support Worker, Paddy Crampsey stated that "all categories of people in Globe House, men, women and children, have availed of services from Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership", while a young Globe House participant stated "My favourite part of the day is when we have to shoot the balls into the hoop".

Active Communities Cross Border Events

4 cross border events were facilitated with a focus on Fun Golf, Dance and Multi Sport

Active Communities Cross Border Events

The cross border element of Active Communities has been a key priority of the overall project. Resulting from this, there has been increased cross community sporting interaction between sports clubs/organisations and community groups, which has strengthened cross border links and fostered friendships. The promotion of peace and reconciliation was a focus at each event and mutual understanding was fostered at every opportunity. The cross border events documented, clearly highlight the value of sport and its potential in nurturing positive cross border links and cross community relations.

Cross Border Teen Active Day

Active Communities linked with Cranmore Community Platform, Sligo Leader Partnership Company and Omagh District Council to organise a cross border taster day for teenagers to try out a range of sport and recreational activities, which may not be currently available in their local area. 70 teenagers attended a Teen Active Day in July 2007 in Sligo and the attendants included Sligo Youth Groups, Cranmore Community Groups, Easkey Family Resource Centre, Tubbercurry Family Resource Centre, Community Lough Arrow Social Project and Omagh Youth Groups including CKS Residents Group, Hospital Road Community Group and Hunters Crescent Community Group. Participants took part in an action packed programme of activities including taster sessions in Basketball, Soccer, Hip Hop Dancing, Break Dancing, Gym Fitness and Martial Arts. All participants received a T-Shirt and a certificate of participation.

Omagh District Council's Sport Development Officer, Billie Jo Armstrong stated "As Community Sports Officer in Omagh the cross border experience enabled me to see what different activities interested our group and how they interacted with their friends in Sligo, the group thoroughly enjoyed their experiences in Sligo".



Cross Border Golf Programme

The Community Sports Development Officer linked with a Sports Inclusion Officer in Fermanagh and Special Olympics volunteers to organise a Cross Border Fun Golf Programme for people with a disability at Tubbercurry Golf Club. 35 participants from Tubbercurry and Enniskillen enjoyed a day of fun golf challenges and many friendships were forged.



Cross Border Dance Project

The Community Sports Development Officer worked closely with 4 students from the Institute of Technology Sligo to develop Sligo's first Cross Border Dance Fest. The fest was aimed at promoting the positive benefits of Hip Hop Dance as a physical activity and the event was also used to promote cross border understanding. Local Hip Hop choreographers from Sligo delivered an hour-long workshop each to 60 dance enthusiasts, consisting of warm-up routines, Hip Hop skills and techniques, an introduction to break dancing, freestyle moves, and finally a cooling off period. Whilst this proved to be an intense workout, it was noted through evaluation forms

that the event was referred to as a 'fun and exciting' way of getting fit. This Cross Border Dance Fest took place in the Mercy College, attracting young participants from St. Anne's Centre, Northside Centre, Omagh's Rising Stars, Tubbercurry PTAA Club, Easkey Youth Club, Cranmore and Strandhill's Beat IT Dance Company. Omagh's Community Sports Officer, Billie Jo Armstrong reflecting on the event stated "We were invited to attend a Hip Hop Dance Festival, which was something they all jumped at the chance of doing, this is something that the group loved".



Following the fest, Active Communities organised a Hip Hop Dance Leader Award, which equipped participants with the appropriate skills and knowledge to lead a safe and efficient dance session. 13 participants completed the course from Sligo and Omagh.

Reflecting on the training workshop the Community Sports Development Officer noted that "Resulting from the dance workshop it is hoped that a number of local dancers from areas including Cranmore, Northside, Tubbercurry, West Sligo and East Sligo will have acquired the necessary skills and competencies to deliver classes to young people in their local communities".



Project Conclusion

The Active Communities project has helped to establish and strengthen links between a wide range of partners, who are working to build communities. Good linkage with networks, and partnerships formed, has assisted in developing positive and vibrant communities through the medium of sport. A key impact of the Active Communities project has been the increased levels of participation in sport and physical activity among under represented groups in targeted communities throughout County Sligo. In addition, the project has contributed significantly to the building of community capacity at local level, and through a number of successful cross border events, the project has made a positive contribution to peace and reconciliation.

Going forward, the provision of equality of opportunity in accessing quality sporting opportunities remains an important consideration for all and in achieving this there is a need to sustain and build upon the success of the Active Communities project.



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