



SUMMARY REPORT

CRANMORE REGENERATION THROUGH SPORT INITIATIVE

JANUARY 2015



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Aitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Cranmore REGENERATION
Athghlinnua an Chrainn Mhóir



THE IRISH SPORTS COUNCIL
AN CHOMHAIRE SPÓIRT



BACKGROUND

Sport and physical activity is part of community life in Cranmore. The 'Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative' facilitates opportunities to participate in active recreation. Local community organisations including Cranmore Co-operative Society, Abbeyquarter Community Centre, Cranmore Resource House, Youth Drop in Centre, sports clubs and community groups are supported in encouraging the residents to participate in sport and physical activity.

The initiative is co-ordinated by Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) and is enabled through funding primarily from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Sligo County Council (funds administered through Cranmore Regeneration Office). Additional programme funding is received from the Health Service Executive and the Irish Sports Council.

Significantly, the Cranmore Regeneration Master Plan highlights the role of sport in community regeneration.

EVALUATION OF THE CRANMORE REGENERATION THROUGH SPORT INITIATIVE

In order to determine how effectively the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport initiative is working, an external evaluation was undertaken by Dr Carol Moran, Centre for Research in the Social Professions, Institute of Technology, Sligo. Primarily the focus was to gather information from the stakeholders to determine the impact of the initiative. Interviews and focus groups were facilitated with SSRP staff, the Cranmore Regeneration Office Manager, Cranmore Co-operative Society and the various stakeholders such as residents, volunteers, coaches and managers who are involved in co-ordinating and participating in the activities. Furthermore a class organised by the women's fitness group was attended to facilitate observation of how the sports programmes are run and to make a determination as to the quality of the provision.

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CRANMORE

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership has worked with individuals and community organisations in co-ordinating, implementing and monitoring a diverse range of sporting opportunities.

Between 2008 and 2013 a total of 1219 youth participant places have been facilitated on 50 physical activity programmes involving:

Soccer	GAA	Basketball	Boxing
Tennis	Cycling	Rowing	Summer Camps
Multi-Sport	Dance	Surfing	Sports Days
Golf	Angling	Athletics	Snorkelling

Cranmore youth have benefitted from sport club outreach programmes and linked initiatives with the Cranmore community involving St. John's GAA Club, Ballinacarrow/Innisfree Boxing Clubs, Sligo All Stars Basketball Club, Sligo Rugby Club and Strandhill Golf Club.

Between 2008 and 2013 a total of 24 adult programmes involving 354 adult participant places have been facilitated including:

Walking	Swimming	Rebounding	Circuit Training
Golf	Bootcamp	Chair Aerobics	Tai chi
Go for Life Games	Boxercise	Soccer	Angling
Fitness classes			

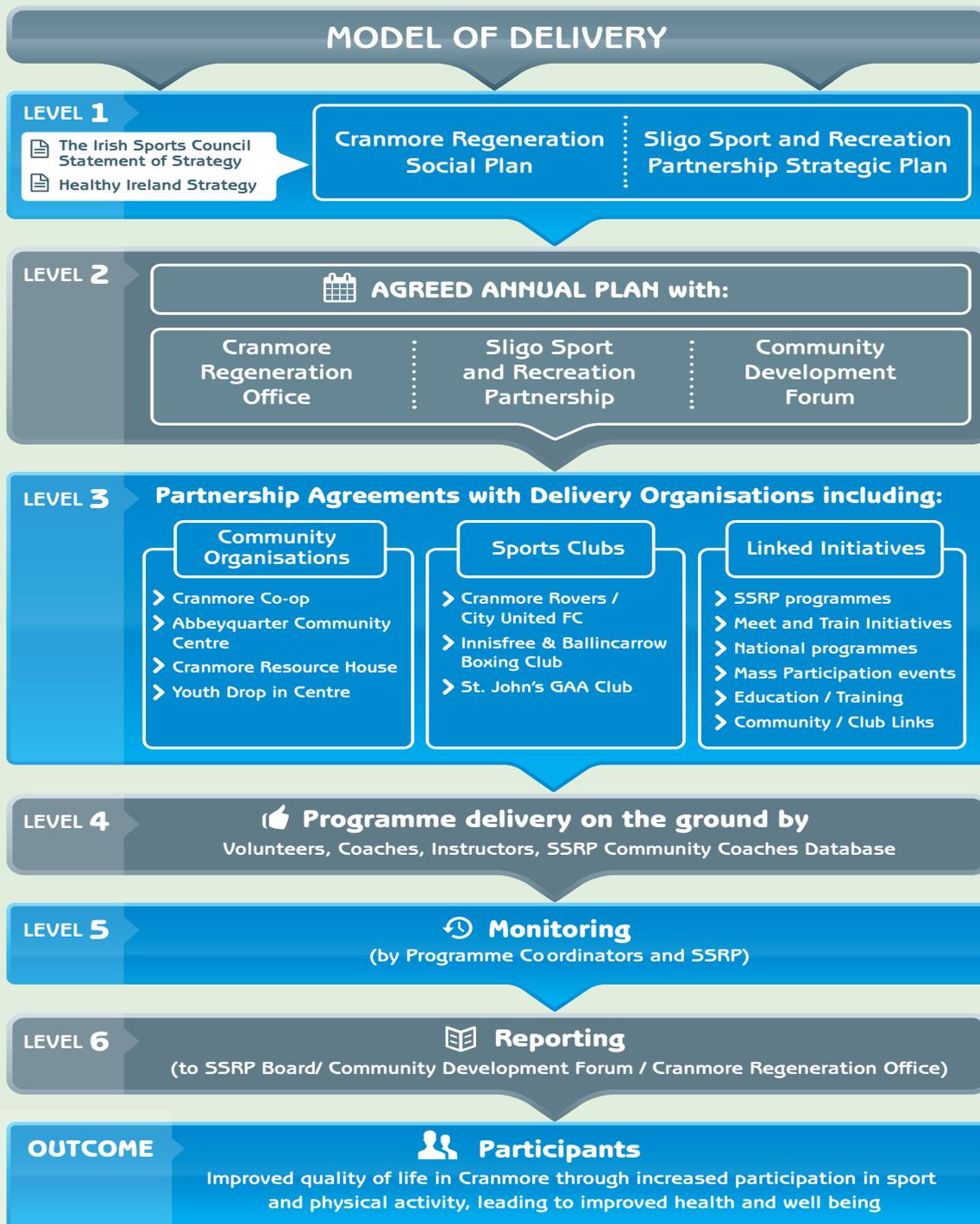
Linked initiatives with the wider community outside Cranmore involved participation by adults in Couch to 5K, Sofa to Saddle, Operation Transformation Walks, Seniors Sports Fests, Outdoor Gym programmes and Bike Week initiatives.

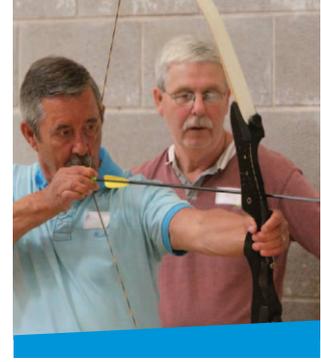
Furthermore, 31 participants have taken part in a range of SSRP training and education programmes in areas including Active Leadership, First Aid, Code of Ethics, Walking Leader, Go for Life Games and sports specific areas of Soccer and Kick Boxing.

THE MODEL OF DELIVERY

The model of delivery for the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative requires the input and co-operation from a number of sources:

Cranmore Regeneration Through Sport





KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE EVALUATION

Key themes emerged from the interviews, focus groups and observation that were undertaken to evaluate the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative. The themes emerged when phrases, comments, topics and issues that were common across a number of sources were evident in the data.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Cranmore Regeneration through Sport initiative has been successful in increasing the level of physical activity of residents.

"[SSRP] have done tremendous work in linking groups from the athletics clubs to tennis to all different sports into the community in Cranmore. I remember at one point thinking, for a child in Cranmore, whatever interest you had, there was an opportunity to actually develop it."

"It's a break, it's affordable, it goes on on their own doorstep."

HEALTH

Mental and physical health benefits and social wellbeing were noted by many of the sports programme participants.

"...they have a bit of craic and it is good, it's good for mental health and it's good for your confidence and everything else."

"It's also a great boost for the kids... their confidence comes through."

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of programmes and the participants' engagement with sport and recreation are central to the work for SSRP and their partner agencies and hence engaging with volunteers and community leaders to ensure community ownership of programmes is critical for sustainability.

"...it's only sustainable if it's going to be community led."

VOLUNTEERS

The important role that volunteers play in making the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative work was highlighted.

"...sustaining the volunteers is a challenge... the same resources are kind of being pulled on all the time..."

"Things can fall down in the community as well, so that's why you actually need mentors... to have their hand on the pulse... and someone else can take up the mantle."

FUNDING

Based on this evaluation, it would be desirable to see longer term funding being secured for this initiative which would allow lead partners to develop a more strategic focus. There is little doubt that additional funding is likely to have an increased positive impact in the area.

"...there has been massive advancement between 2011 and 2014 and in actual fact that would coincide with the increase in funding towards the sports development role..."

CAPACITY BUILDING

Evidence of the impact of capacity building at a number of levels emerged from the evaluation.

"...we would recruit volunteers... we would get sports training for them, ethics training, identify people in the community that would of value in motivating youth..."

"...it's been very empowering for the community and what I see has developed is that people are taking more responsibility..."



NETWORK CAPITAL

Network capital is being built through the activities of SSRP and their partner agencies, this is not by accident as sport was identified as being one of the ways in which residents could develop their own network initially, and the participation of SSRP then helps those who do engage to access other networks outside of the estate.

“I was the only one from Cranmore and I thought ‘Oh Jesus, I’m never going to do it’... I met people that I would never dream about meeting in my lifetime, you know, and it wasn’t about where I lived or where I was from it was just totally different.”

“[SSRP] have such a network, such contact: Australians, Maori guys coming here doing tag rugby...how would you get kids snorkelling down to Mullaghmore...”

“...not just talking about financial support, it’s what you know, it’s who you know, it’s the skills that the sports partnership have, it’s the group of people they work with, not just [SDO].”

FACILITIES

The physical regeneration that has taken place in the Cranmore estate has had a very visible impact and provides a very positive backdrop in which the social regeneration can also occur.

Cleveragh Park had been seen as a positive development and use of the facilities for GAA training has encouraged many parents to take responsibility for getting their children to the training grounds, a task that previously had to be undertaken by volunteers.

“... before we would have to pick the kids up and drop the kids to the place where now the parents are willing to bring them to that area and come back in time and pick them up.”

However, a major issue that did emerge was the lack of a suitable indoor facility.

“...you wouldn’t expect the kids to go out and play if it’s lashing rain, you wouldn’t do it yourself, you wouldn’t expect the kids to do it because they’d end up getting sick.”

INTEGRATION

The Cranmore Regeneration Through Sport Initiative has been fundamental in improving levels of integration with the estate and outside.

“...the football we have a mix of everybody, you know, Travellers, you know and kids from around the area and we don’t treat them any differently at all and you expect them to do the same.”

AFFORDABILITY

The data from the interviews and focus groups demonstrated the financial strain that many of the people who participate in the programmes are under.

“...some kids turn up and they mightn’t have the money and you just don’t say... you work with that...”

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

The programmes that are co-ordinated by SSRP focus on people of all ages in the Cranmore estate.

“...parents have engaged because their children have been engaged... and that’s been engaging the older community then to come on-board.”



OUTCOMES FROM THE INITIATIVE

- The number of physical activity programmes and participants on these programmes has increased. The programmes target a range of groups including youth, men, women and older adults and it includes people who are unemployed, Travellers, people with a disability and new communities. The research suggests that the physical and mental health of those who participate in the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative is improving. Some community stakeholders commented that the number of anti-social issues in the estate has decreased as a result of the community wardens, CCTV and the SSRP programmes.
- Morale in the community has improved as a result of the combined regeneration of the physical and social environment. Confidence has improved for participants across the various demographic profiles. Integration within the community has increased and education in relation to anti-racism and anti-bullying has been undertaken as well as educational activities related to healthy eating and healthy heart initiatives.
- Community capacity building has been undertaken through active leadership, coaching skills, first aid, child protection and ethics training being provided to members of the local community
- Local sports facilities such as Cleveragh Park and the outdoor gym at Doorly Park have been used for various activities, and the use of these facilities is likely to have increased as a result. Residents of Cranmore have expanded their social contacts in the wider community and a number of people have undertaken sporting activities in the locality that they previously would not have had the confidence or means to embark on.
- There is evidence of a strong partnership working at all levels between the various agencies and local stakeholders. The impact of the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative has been acknowledged in terms of the continued development of the estate and the surrounding area; the importance of sport has been embedded in the future strategic plans for the social regeneration of Cranmore and the East Ward of Sligo.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Planning and collaborative engagement between all of the partners is very important for the success of the project and crucially there is evidence of commitment to community development through sport in the Cranmore area which is reflected at a strategic and operational level.
- Funding made available to SSRP primarily by Sligo County Council through the Cranmore Regeneration Office and the Health Service Executive is critical in enabling SSRP to dedicate Sports Development Officer time to oversee and support the initiative.
- SSRP noted how critical the support of the community organisations in Cranmore are to the delivery of the project in that they are the link organisations for SSRP for programme delivery. Community organisations take ownership of programmes and in doing so provide insurance, facilities, volunteers and programme monitoring all of which is agreed through formal partnership agreements with SSRP. In addition SSRP noted the critical contribution the community volunteers make in terms of their capacity as the people on the ground to recruit and encourage participants to take part in programmes. The strength of the working relationship between SSRP and the community organisations is fundamental to the success of the programme.
- The collaborative approach to programme delivery that has been adopted by SSRP is one of the critical success factors for the regeneration through sport initiative. Community stakeholders are confident in the commitment that SSRP have in them both in terms of improving physical and mental health and also building capacity in the community. Education and training have been provided to local volunteers, which has empowered the community to be more actively involved in devising and running their own physical activities.
- The continuity of support from SSRP emerged as being one of the most critical success factors, as they play an important role in troubleshooting if difficulties emerge during programme delivery at a local level. The expertise that SSRP have in health promotion and improving physical activity levels are important, but also critical is their role in developing social networks. SSRP are the link between the residents of Cranmore and the other sporting clubs and societies in Sligo town and county.

CHALLENGES TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

- One of the main barriers identified in terms of successful implementation of the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative was the difficulty in securing volunteers. There appears to be an over-reliance on a number of willing individuals and there is a danger that these people will become exhausted and step down from their positions as a result.
- Furthermore the lack of a suitable indoor space is a significant restriction. Given the climate, it is important to ensure that there is a suitable location where sporting activities can be undertaken during inclement weather. This is important, particularly when trying to sustain activity among people who are transitioning from a sedentary to active lifestyle.
- Difficulty remains in activating the adolescents in the estate, but there is a strong intergenerational influence that has resulted in increased participation by adults whose children became engaged in programmes and vice versa. It is imperative that a youth worker in the community is maintained at all times, to ensure that SSRP have a link person to work with when establishing programmes for the adolescent population.
- According to SSRP, the lack of existing community structures, including sports clubs where sport can be promoted and developed, poses a challenge. Unlike other communities where guidance can be provided to existing clubs, in Cranmore there is a need to initially establish, and then develop, such clubs which is a significantly more complex undertaking.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations have been made to try to retain the elements of the model that are working well and to further enhance the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative.

- It is recommended that the current level of support that SSRP provides to the Cranmore Regeneration Programme be at least maintained and an exit strategy should not be considered in the medium term.
- The model of delivery that is currently being used for the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative is working well and should be considered for replication in other similar communities. Also, it has the potential to be of use for partner agencies, such as the HSE, wishing to provide complimentary programmes in health promotion.
- Multi-annual funding would help to ensure that a more long term strategic approach to planning sports development in Cranmore based on *actual* rather than *aspirational* funding could be undertaken.
- The setting up of a formal internal evaluation process in SSRP which would allow for self-evaluation of the initiative to be undertaken on a regular basis.
- A system for monitoring people who cease participation in sporting initiatives should ideally be implemented in the hope that feedback as to why they have disengaged can be established.
- Consideration be given to the provision of a system to allow for people who are unable to afford the financial contribution for classes to participate.
- A 'buddy system' to complement the existing online social media platforms would be useful to recruit and encourage new members to participate in physical activity, with the reassurance of someone who they can identify with.
- While the SSRP is already engaged in supporting a number of sports programmes in the local schools, additional resources should be channelled into using an approach that combines school, family and community in order to mobilise the adolescent population.

The Cranmore Regeneration Through Sport evaluation was prepared by Dr Carol Moran, Centre for Research in the Social Professions, Institute of Technology, Sligo, on behalf of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership.

The full report is available at: www.sligosportandrecreation.ie

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