

SICAP Case Study 2021

Waterford Area Partnership

Waterford City & County (24-1)

Utilising Business & Social Business Methodologies to Support Social Enterprise Sustainability & Development in Waterford

Thematic Area; Goal 1/Goal 2 Project

Target Group; Social Enterprise in a Disadvantaged Area



"The staff of WAP have been actively supporting us to develop both a strategic plan and a marketing plan over the past year. They have been so helpful and encouraging. They were always available when needed, nothing was too much for them. Without the SICAP programme, we wouldn't have completed this much-needed analysis." WLEDC Board member

SICAP Programme Goal (1): To support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of Local Community Groups, and creating more sustainable communities.

SICAP Thematic Area: Increase the level and/or type of services delivered by Social Enterprises to SICAP target groups and increase the sustainability of the enterprise and its ability to contribute to the social and economic development of disadvantaged areas.

SICAP Target Outcome: G1-5:2 Social enterprises supported by SICAP are stronger and more able to contribute to local economic and community development.

Case Study Introduction

The Case Study focuses on work undertaken by WAP/SICAP with Waterford Local Economic Development Company (WLEDC) and its Social Enterprise, Cill Barra (Community Sports and Leisure Centre), during 2021.

The Case Study explores the value of WAP/SICAP social enterprise focused interventions with WLEDC/Cill Barra to;

1. Review and re-develop a Strategic Business Plan for Social Enterprise
2. Review brand identity and
3. Undertake a digital marketing audit and short digital campaign to demonstrate the social and economic value of improved customer engagement methodologies with social enterprise.

Engagement with the LEDC and Cill Barra was undertaken by the WAP/SICAP Social Enterprise Mentor who primarily works under Goal 1, and the SICAP Education, Employment & Enterprise Team Lead who established the Waterford Social Enterprise Network (WSEN) under SICAP 2015-18 and has an interest in supporting social economy players to utilise marketing methodologies to build an awareness of social enterprise¹.

The Case Study will also reference the value of Irish social enterprise network engagement with key policy makers in Europe.

“Given the emphasis underway at an EU level in relation to social enterprise and the wider social economy, there is also an opportunity for social enterprises to benefit from Ireland engaging more closely with EU policy developments at Governmental level”²

Background to Waterford LEDC CLG

Waterford Local Economic Development Company (LEDC) CLG, was established in 2001 as a joint venture between Waterford Crystal and the Community and Voluntary Sector. The company has charitable status and aims to address unemployment and poverty through social economic development.

The first of 4 intended WLEDC flagship projects, **Cill Barra Community Sports Centre** was completed in 2006 with funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

In January 2009 Waterford Crystal went into receivership and the other 3 flagship projects were put on hold. Since then, the Board has struggled to attract and retain Board members. Coupled with the economic downturn and restricted government funding, existing members of WLEDC have, for a long while, recognised the need to re-focus its brand identity and purpose. Recent funding under Sports Capital to expand the facilities at the sports centre has led to a renewed vitality to explore the original WLEDC plans for development and undergo a root and branch review of the organisation and the sustainability of Cill Barra as a social enterprise.

¹ National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland. Policy Objective One; Building Awareness of Social Enterprise

² National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland. P.22

Cill Barra Community Sports Centre

Cill Barra Community Sports Centre trades as a social enterprise under the governance of WLEDC. It provides health & fitness programmes at affordable rates to the local community and other community groups. The Centre is part funded under the Community Services Programme (CSP) administered by Pobal with profit from the business making up the remainder of income generated by the rent of the hall, and health & fitness programmes.

Cill Barra was successful in the last 2 rounds of the Sports Capital funding to build an extension to the premises which will include a 'dance studio' or smaller fitness room as well as storage and office space.

WLEDC/Cill Barra Target Group; primary target group is residents & sports groups of the Ballybeg & Kilbarry geographical area and secondary target group is residents & sports groups of Waterford City experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

Previous SICAP Supports to WLEDC & Cill Barra

In 2017 WAP/SICAP provided supports to WLEDC/Cill Barra to facilitate strategic business planning whilst the social enterprise struggled with funding, attracting new Board members and how to refocus energy on the capital development of the Sports Centre. This work provided a foundation on which to build the new business strategy.

WLEDC/Cill Barra board members and staff have been active in WSEN since its establishment during the 2015-17 SICAP cycle. WSEN has had considerable contact with Social Economy Europe and the European Research Centre on the developing Social Business Model Canvas Tool.

2021 SICAP Supports to WLEDC & Cill Barra

In 2021 the Board of WLEDC approached WAP/SICAP to support the development of a post Covid closure Strategic Business Plan to;

- Enhance the performance of WLEDC and Cill Barra in achieving its strategic objectives by undertaking a review of brand identity and development plans
- Assist the Board and staff of WLEDC/Cill Barra in identifying measures to increase business sustainability

It was agreed that the development of a post Covid Strategic Business Plan supported by SICAP would involve:

1. Revisiting WLEDC foundational principles and governance following Covid changes to the economic environment.
2. A review of the operation of Cill Barra and the development of a 3-year action plan.
3. A digital marketing audit for Cill Barra, involving a series of workshops with Board and staff, and including a short test campaign on the company website and Facebook page to demonstrate the business benefit of a digital marketing strategy for social enterprise.

WLEDC and SICAP - What Worked Well and Why

Experienced and skilled SICAP staff; A key benefit to the work was the capacity of WAP/SICAP to provide staff with both a previous understanding of the work of WLEDC/Cill Barra, its place within the Social Enterprise Ecosystem and having a combination of skills.

Utilising marketing strategies within the social enterprise sector; WLEDC Board members and Cill Barra staff had never had the opportunity to undertake a digital marketing and brand audit. The process provided by WAP/SICAP enabled a review of Cill Barra's overall digital presence, and engagement in a short digital marketing campaign which provided evidence to support the social and economic benefit of further work in this area to the company.

S	W	O	T
Community Focused	Understaffed	Awareness of S/E	Funding & restrictions on use
Friendly atmosphere	Traded income & business operation	Extension	Displacement
Good customer relations	Brand identity	New housing developments in the area	Building costs
Welcoming staff	Equipment	Offline and online marketing	Competition
Non judgemental	Space	Use of the hall for alternative activities	Location prejudice
Average Joe's gym	Not up to date	Closure of Crystal	Online Vs live classes
Pay as you go	Cost structure	Income Innovation	Music licenses
Hall bookings			

Digital Audit Outcomes	S/M Audit Outcomes
Website - Areas for Development	Social Media - Areas for Development
Images & Video Use - Consistent Quality	Increase engagement
Testimonials including O/Transformation	Regular review of analytics & competitors
Story - Difference & Impacts	Videos that link to the user community
Clear Offering - Accessible & Affordable	Encourage the sharing of recipes, tips, sports and activities
Community / social enterprise clarity	Video links with BBG
Backlinks & Blogs	Video links with Access IT re fitness apps reviews
Community Leaders - Become a brand ambassador	Video links with FSC parents re children's play and exercise
Sponsor us	Gather likes for workouts.
Campus Collaborations	Use your FB community & Twitter

What Has Been Achieved

- Strategic planning.** Waterford LEDC has set an objective to have strategic and operational plans in place for Cill Barra Fitness. These plans will cover the development and running of Cill Barra. A master strategic plan is currently being planned for the Ballybeg Campus (in which Cill Barra is sited) this will develop an overall brand identity. The separate strategic and operational plan for Cill Barra will compliment this work. The strategic plan will cover the three years from 2021 with the operational plan being drafted annually.
- Outputs will include;**
 - A Cill Barra Strategic Plan that includes:
 - A revised 3-year vision including health, fitness, nutrition and wellness
 - A short section detailing the vision of Cill Barra at the end of the three years
 - A clear set of goals for Cill Barra fitness broken down into the four focus areas from the vision
 - The foundations of a digital marketing strategy
 - Success criteria for the organisation
 - These will include measurable key performance indicators and assessment criteria
 - A Cill Barra Operational Plan that includes:

- a. SMART objectives for the year with a clear timeframe, required resources, linked to the new priorities and with measurable impacts
 - b. A job description for a full time Manager to drive social enterprise development
4. Structure: The establishment of Board/staff teams to build the key elements of the Cill Barra strategic plan (marketing, finance, community engagement, operations) and present for WLEDC adoption.

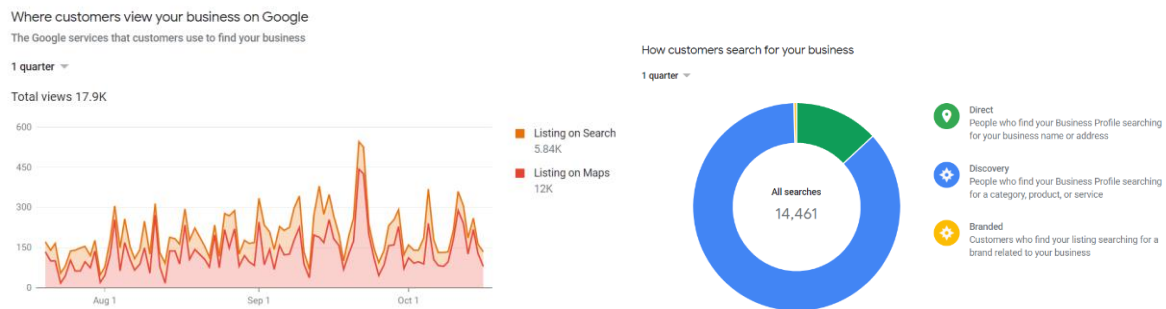


3. **Increased Board engagement with the strategic development of WLEDC & Cill Barra** and increased company confidence in attracting new Board members and managing a phase 2 build. The Board contacted the Waterford Volunteer Centre <https://volunteerwaterford.ie/> to seek new Board members. This has led to the successful registration of two additional Board members who have brought a renewed vitality to the Board and have considerable business expertise.
4. **Improved digital marketing awareness** and its benefit to customer discovery amongst Board and staff.
5. **An updated Cill Barra website** following workshops on key marketing fundamentals <https://cillbarrafitness.ie/> and research into competitor websites.



Addition to website after workshop on differentiation & parity and research into other local brand offerings.

6. **A high level of customer discovery** by online search for Cill Barra post covid closure and following a short Facebook campaign and website upgrade.



Issues & Challenges

- Agreement on the overall vision for the LEDC and Cill Barra was required to develop the strategic plan for the next three years. The current economic situation due to Covid 19 has hindered a vision of the future. Work on this is ongoing and challenging.
- The employment of a Full Time Manager to promote the development of the Social Enterprise was explored through Pobal funding but unfortunately this was not successful. If social enterprises are to be supported as an economic model that supports disadvantage community engagement, a joined-up policy approach is required as per The National Social Enterprise Strategy for Ireland Policy Objective 3.
- The reluctance of Cill Barra staff, who live and work locally, to utilise video format for marketing due to their concerns regarding trolling and personal exposure.

Following exploration and discussion a compromise was arrived at that would acknowledge the staff as brand ambassadors so increasing the potential for local customer engagement.

<https://www.facebook.com/cillbarragym/videos/2845523828993459>

- The importance of both digital advancements such as the rise in video and building brand loyalty by promoting familiarity and differentiation are examples of key business fundamentals that can be a challenge for the social enterprise sector. Market enterprise strategies need to be adopted by social enterprises in order to compete locally for customers with market-based products that have much larger budgets.
- Board volunteer time to engage in extended training or business development is always a challenge for the social economy sector. WLEDC Board members shared out their engagement between the Company Strategic Planning and the Marketing workshops. Increasing the numbers on the Board of Directors has eased the pressure on long-standing volunteers.

Type of supports needed as evidenced by the above.

Like any other enterprises, social enterprises require, and can benefit from, the provision of business supports to help them start-up, become self-sustaining and to grow. Supports are needed in areas such as business planning, mentoring, capacity building, leadership and governance, impact measurement, financial planning, digital innovation as well as access to business incubation space.³

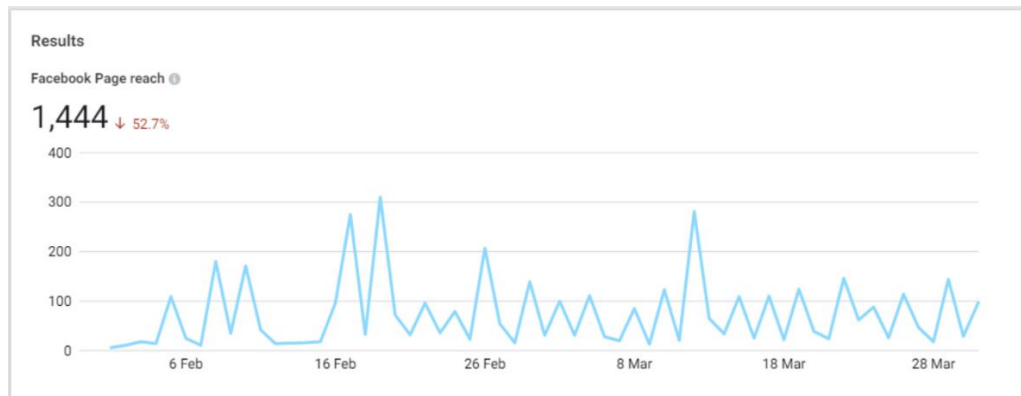
³ National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland p.18

Supports needed Include the adequate resourcing of social enterprises within relevant Government programmes to support business development based on updated strategic planning, with a specific focus on the enablement of increased to staff to fully support business growth.

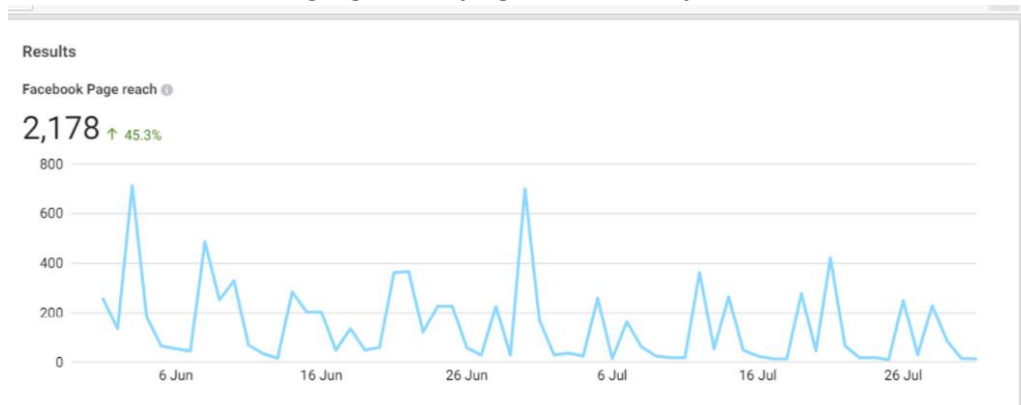
Quantitative Evidence

Facebook Analytics

Facebook reach prior to digital campaign



Facebook reach following digital campaign; Increased by 45.3%



Pre-campaign data; Facebook engagement
with Cill Barra Posts

Reach	Likes and reactions	Comments	Shares
417	417	4	4
404	404	13	13
335	335	6	6
272	272	1	1
226	226	4	4
226	226	2	2
225	225	5	5
192	192	7	7
187	187	5	5
186	186	1	1

Post-campaign data; Facebook engagements
with Cill Barra Posts increase

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Reach	Likes and reactions	Comments	Shares
1031	1031	35	35
969	969	10	10
580	580	13	13
509	509	4	4
486	486	5	5
445	445	6	6
433	433	4	4
400	400	2	2
395	395	1	1
373	373	4	4

Website Analytics

Website engagement data pre campaign

Page	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	87 % of Total: 100.00% (87)	55 % of Total: 100.00% (55)	00:02:42 Avg for View: 00:02:42 (0.00%)	29 % of Total: 100.00% (29)	34.48% Avg for View: 34.48% (0.00%)	33.33% Avg for View: 33.33% (0.00%)	€0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (€0.00)
1. /	39 (44.83%)	25 (45.45%)	00:01:39	24 (82.76%)	33.33% (82.76%)	28.21% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
2. /contact/	17 (19.54%)	10 (18.18%)	00:03:15	2 (6.90%)	50.00% (6.90%)	41.18% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
3. /gym/	14 (16.09%)	8 (14.55%)	00:03:23	1 (3.45%)	100.00% (3.45%)	35.71% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
4. /about-2/	10 (11.49%)	6 (10.91%)	00:06:31	1 (3.45%)	0.00% (3.45%)	30.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
5. /happening-now/	6 (6.90%)	5 (9.09%)	00:00:28	1 (3.45%)	0.00% (3.45%)	33.33% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
6. /contact/?contact-form-id=7&contact-form-sent=411&contact-form-hash=80d93023857c08e8235ac58c80a14ebdb29144a6&_wpnonce=013cffb97e	1 (1.15%)	1 (1.82%)	00:00:00	0 (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)	100.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
Rows 1 - 6 of 6							

Website engagement data post campaign

Page	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	499 % of Total: 100.00% (499)	376 % of Total: 100.00% (376)	00:01:05 Avg for View: 00:01:05 (0.00%)	169 % of Total: 100.00% (169)	27.81% Avg for View: 27.81% (0.00%)	33.87% Avg for View: 33.87% (0.00%)	€0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (€0.00)
1. /	194 (38.88%)	131 (34.84%)	00:00:33	126 (74.56%)	11.11% (74.56%)	23.71% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
2. /gym/	148 (29.66%)	115 (30.59%)	00:01:41	25 (14.79%)	88.00% (14.79%)	47.30% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
3. /contact/	62 (12.42%)	48 (12.77%)	00:01:59	9 (5.33%)	44.44% (5.33%)	40.32% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
4. /happening-now/	38 (7.62%)	34 (9.04%)	00:00:30	1 (0.59%)	100.00% (0.59%)	21.05% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
5. /about/	23 (4.61%)	20 (5.32%)	00:01:18	2 (1.18%)	100.00% (1.18%)	39.13% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
6. /our-policies/	11 (2.20%)	10 (2.66%)	00:00:56	2 (1.18%)	50.00% (1.18%)	36.36% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
7. /our-funding-bodies/	10 (2.00%)	6 (1.60%)	00:00:45	0 (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)	10.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
8. /covid-policy/	4 (0.80%)	4 (1.06%)	00:00:27	0 (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)	25.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
9. /?fbclid=IwAR1nOtO_ymAlFcOBHOECcpdRU_76VbQmIfy4E9_UlpV8n_1uIRStYASv0	2 (0.40%)	1 (0.27%)	00:01:02	1 (0.59%)	0.00% (0.59%)	0.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
10. /contact/?contact-form-id=7&contact-form-sent=569&contact-form-hash=f56c1e8cd7c3a79d92b436f81d5a50844d9bae89&_wpnonce=59b3bf72d2	2 (0.40%)	2 (0.53%)	00:00:00	1 (0.59%)	100.00% (0.59%)	100.00% (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)

Highlighted figures indicate; an increase in page views and a reduction in bounce rate (the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page. "a rising bounce rate is a sure sign that your homepage is boring or off-putting").

Increased Customer Discovery & Purchase; “There have been 14 new gym memberships since June (online campaign month). Pay As You Go gym usage increased in June and July. Usage is steady since re-opening” Cill Barra Staff member

*It (the workshops) was such a great way to get us all on the same page and for us all to know what we need to do to promote Cill Barra. It was informative and helpful. It made us all think a little more about all that's needed to promote the gym and the sports hall***Board Member**

*The engagement (from WAP) was great, (they were) very helpful and kept in touch to see if I needed support to move forward with the work that was to be done by me***Staff Member**

*Strategic planning has allowed us to identify what work's for our business and what does not in relation to our target audience. By using market analysis tools such as S.W.O.T and S.M.A.R.T we have been able to acknowledge our many strengths and opportunities as a social enterprise within our local area. The training provided has given us an overall greater understanding of the marketplace and what we can do to enhance our business whilst also maintaining our fair and affordable reputation***Staff member**



*It was fantastic to get the help and support with both the strategic planning and the digital marketing planning***Board Member**

*The digital audit was very useful as it showed what we did well but also what we needed to do to improve how we communicated with our clientele***Staff member**

*The marketing report we received at the end of the marketing workshops is a document which we can return to in the future if/when we need to visit this area again. It was a very visual and useful piece of work as it brought together in one place all the work we had done throughout the workshops. It demonstrated the process as well as the progress we made***Board Member**

It was fantastic to be able to avail of the expert help and support from WAP with developing our marketing plan and all free of charge which is very important when funding is limited.

*Couldn't believe what details go into marketing***Board Member**

*It gave us the space to look at what we are doing and why we are doing it. It might seem obvious, but this was the most challenging bit. We don't tend to measure and analyse what we do, we just continue to do what we have always done, and this gave us the space to examine in depth, the why and what***Board Member**

The Ripple Effect - Mapping a Local Social Economy Ecosystem

A future SICAP facilitated meeting is planned to explore the potential developments for the Ballybeg campus which is made up of several social enterprises and social economy projects; Brill FRC, Access IT (CSP funded social enterprise), First Steps Creche (community childcare social enterprise), Ballybeg Greens (social enterprise) and Cill Barra Sports & Leisure Centre (social enterprise). This will include the potential for its future development as a Social Enterprise Hub for Waterford City.

The European Social Business Model Canvas is a visual tool that explores the systemic relationships between stakeholders in the social economy landscape. The use of this tool will provide an opportunity for the campus to highlight key features and deficits within its ecosystem and plan for future synergies that will benefit those experiencing social and economic exclusion.⁴

An explanation of the European social economy canvas and its application can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3gFfxeVdlo&t=22s>

Conclusions

Key learning from work with WLEDC and Cill Barra include;

1. The importance of in-depth engagement by SICAP staff with a Social Enterprise to understand the developmental process of a community-based business and the challenges that it faces at different points of development on a non-linear path.
2. The value of voluntary board and staff training in business fundamentals to support work towards financial sustainability as well as having a social impact focus.
3. The value of board and staff understanding of (digital) marketing approaches to understand and build customer discovery, engagement, and brand loyalty.

⁴ WAP/SICAP staff and WSEN members previously worked with the European Research Centre to pilot the use of the tool by one local social enterprise in Waterford during its initial development phase

4. The importance of networked local, national, and European eco-systems for the development of the social enterprise sector as a valued part of economic development and sustainability.
5. The importance of business planning review post Covid closure to ensure brand vitality and sustainability
6. The importance of policy alignment across Government departments and agencies to ensure a structured and equitable approach to social enterprise development and resourcing.

ENDS