

**Longford Community  
Resources clg**

**SICAP Case Study 2022**

**Lot: Longford County (9-1)**

**An Overview of Engagement Strategies and Relationship  
Building with the Displaced Ukrainian community  
in County Longford.**

**Thematic Area: Engagement Strategies with SICAP Target Groups/Communities**

**Target Group: Ukrainians displaced by war.**

**Goal 1.1: Support Community Engagement and Stronger Communities.**



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020

## Introduction:

In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, beginning a war that continues throughout 2022. This invasion quickly led to large numbers of civilians fleeing Ukraine to escape from the war. On 4<sup>th</sup> March the European Union issued a **Temporary Protection Directive** to 'provide immediate protection in EU countries for people displaced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine'. Initially most of these fled to neighbouring countries such as Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, etc. However, over the following weeks more and more made their way to Ireland, including to County Longford. While some individuals made their way independently to Ireland and found accommodation with friends or family, most displaced Ukrainians arrived in Ireland (mostly to Dublin Airport and Rosslare ferry port). These were processed and allocated accommodation by **IPAS** (International Protection Accommodation Services) under the auspices of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

## Context of County Longford:

Longford Community Resources clg delivers the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in county Longford – as well as several other Social Inclusion programmes. Longford is a small rural county in the centre of Ireland. Preliminary results from the 2022 Census show the population of the county to be 46,634. This is an increase of 14% from the previous census in 2016 – the highest percentage increase in the country. (The national population increase was 7.6%). The largest urban centre is Longford Town with a population of approximately 11,000 (Census 2022 data is not yet available), with other smaller towns of Ballymahon, Granard and Edgeworthstown. The population is very diverse, with SICAP working with Roma, Brazilian, Syrian, Polish, Pakistani, Libyan, African, Traveller and disadvantaged settled Irish communities. Housing and accommodation is a serious issue in the county, with many disadvantaged families living in poor, overcrowded conditions. Employment opportunities are also poor in the county.

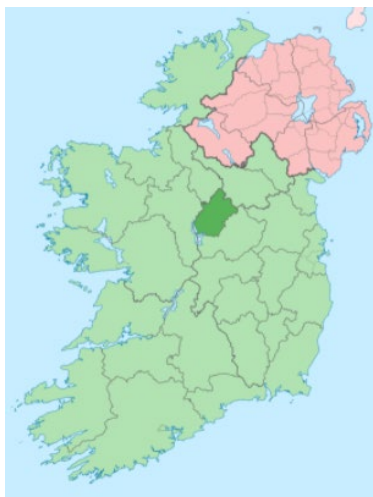


Figure 1: Location of County Longford

## Initial contact with Displaced Ukrainians:

The first Ukrainians displaced by the war, and processed by IPAS, arrived in Longford late on the night of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March. (Other individual families may have arrived independently earlier and found their own accommodation).

On the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> March LCRL staff heard that Ukrainian refugees had arrived to the local hotel the previous weekend. The SICAP manager and the Youth Service Co-ordinator went to the hotel – bringing a Russian interpreter living in Longford.

In the hotel they met with about 30 Ukrainians. With the help of the Russian interpreter they explained who they were and that they were there to listen to their concerns. They explained that, while LCRL might not be able to solve any issues themselves, they would be able to get them communicated to other agencies. It transpired that SICAP and the Youth Service were the first agencies to meet with the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians had arrived in Dublin airport on

Saturday evening. The reception desk had closed at 5pm, so they were told they would be processed, get PPS numbers, etc. in Longford. (The hotel informed us that they got a phone call late on Saturday night informing them that 40 Ukrainians were on their way). No other agency had been in touch with the Ukrainians since they had arrived.

The main concerns of the group were:

- Many wanted to know how they could continue their education. Third level students wanted to continue medicine, dentistry, music, psychology). They wanted to know where the nearest universities were.
- Secondary students wanted to know how soon they could find a school and begin classes. Some were particularly interested in music.
- Many wanted to begin English classes.
- What Kindergarten/crèche facilities were available? What ages were catered for?
- Information on after school activities for children. Music classes for children. Sports activities for children – access to sports pitches?
- Health Issues – including accessing GPs; a pregnant woman was due an ultra sound scan; a number of people needed prescriptions renewed; a baby with hydrocephaly needs regular access to doctor. Also – location of the nearest hospital? Queries re children’s vaccination scheme in Ireland.
- Opening bank accounts was an immediate concern. LCRL staff took some Ukrainians to local banks/Credit Union. People were told that a letter from the hotel was not sufficient ‘proof of address’ for opening bank accounts. (This remains a problem to this day). Problems with changing US dollars. LCRL determined that some cards did work in ATM machines, and ‘Revolut’ cards worked. Money appeared not to be a problem for most – just access to it.
- Employment: People had not yet been contacted by the DPS re Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers. There were queries re recognition of Ukrainian qualifications in Ireland.
- People sought confirmation that Ukrainian driving licenses were valid.
- The group expressed appreciation for the Russian interpreter – but some people didn’t understand Russian. Also, it was the language of the aggressor.

SICAP and the Youth Service outlined the services available from LCRL and explained that we would get in touch with the various agencies who could address the issues raised. These services available from SICAP and other LCRL programmes are outlined later in this document. SICAP staff also got the agreement of a number of English speaking Ukrainians that we could use their phone numbers to contact them and pass on information to the community.

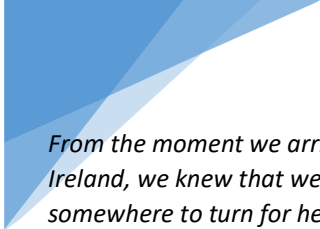
### **Immediate Follow-up:**

The Department of Social Protection (DPS) met the Ukrainians the same afternoon and began the process of getting the Ukrainians PPS numbers. Longford Westmeath ETB also met them on the same afternoon and began registering them for English classes.

LCRL staff passed on all the concerns raised to the relevant agencies. Where possible we responded with information as required. Specific actions carried out are outlined in more detail in the remainder of this report.

### **On-going contact with new arrivals:**

In the following weeks approximately a further 30 displaced Ukrainians were brought to the hotel in Longford town. It seems no local agency was informed about these in advance. The English speaking Ukrainians who had contact with LCRL informed us when new people arrived and assisted SICAP engage with these. In some cases the English speaking Ukrainians accompanied new arrivals to LCRL offices.



*From the moment we arrived in Ireland, we knew that we had somewhere to turn for help in solving all the problems that arose. LCRL was always in touch and offered a solution, support and help.*

*We are immensely grateful to them for all their efforts in organising the educational process, English language courses, other opportunities for integration into the local society, for their constant attention to our problems.*

Over the months of March and April a further 70 displaced Ukrainians were accommodated in two hotels in Ballymahon. The local Family Resource Centre (Bridgeways) took the lead in supporting these. LCRL had all of our services available to support the FRC when required. SICAP did hold a career guidance information session there in collaboration with LWETB.

Approximately 50 displaced Ukrainians were brought to the community hall in Edgeworthstown early on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April for short term emergency accommodation. SICAP staff were on hand when they arrived to support Longford County Council and the Civil Defence welcome them. To date this was the only such short-term accommodation required – despite many notices to expect more.

A further 22 Ukrainians arrived in a small hotel in Ballinamuck in early June. SICAP worked very closely with the staff in this hotel and the one English speaking Ukrainian to support this group. Ballinamuck is a very small village approximately 20km from Longford town.

Throughout this time there were also small numbers of displaced Ukrainians arriving to individual houses. Some were placed by IPAS and some arrived independently. As SICAP staff became aware of these they were added to our contact list and all of our services and information was made available to them.

As this report is being prepared a number of Ukrainian refugees are being accommodated in Granard and a local hotel (the Greville Arms) is being prepared to accommodate up to another 50 people. As always there is a lack of clarity about when these refugees might arrive.

### **Communications:**

The first displaced Ukrainians who arrived in Longford (through the IPAS process) were all based in the Longford Arms Hotel. LCRL established early relationships the hotel manager and with all of those Ukrainians who spoke good English. They themselves set up a 'Telegram' network amongst themselves. So, when LCRL/SICAP had updates, information, etc. they were sent to the English speaking Ukrainians who then passed them on to the others.

Also, as new Ukrainians arrived, or as we heard about individuals who had made their own way to Ireland from Ukraine, SICAP ensured that they were linked in to all the other Ukrainians in Longford.

The English speaking Ukrainians in the Longford Arms Hotel took it on themselves to contact LCRL regarding any concerns they had. When new people arrived in the hotel they would let us know and frequently accompany them to our offices.

SICAP translated a flyer with the various services provided by SICAP and related LCRL programmes into Ukrainian and disseminated to the Ukrainian community (Appendix I).

With the engagement of the Ukrainian Community Outreach Worker in July 2022, SICAP established Local Community Groups in each of the three population centres where displaced Ukrainians are housed (Longford, Ballinamuck and Ballymahon). We bring representatives from these centres together every month to engage collectively with the community, to discuss shared issues, organise common events, etc. The Ukrainian Community Outreach Worker is in continual contact with the people in these accommodation centres.

Before the 'Community Response Forum' began to reconvene SICAP acted as a hub sharing the most up-to-date information with agencies including Longford-Westmeath ETB, Bridgeways FRC, Lus na Gréine FRC, Longford Women's Link, Midlands Polish Community and Longford County Childcare Committee. Once the 'Community Response Forum'

was reconvened LCRL participated in all of the meetings. SICAP also supported the participation of a representative of the Ukrainian community on the Community Response Forum.

In the early days of the crisis Community Work Ireland began to convene a national on-line discussion group on the Ukrainian crisis. This included the Irish Refugee Council, the Irish Red Cross, Ukrainian Action Ireland and various local organisations working with displaced Ukrainians. LCRL participated on this group and found it the most useful source of information available regarding the Irish response to the crisis.

### **Collaboration:**

The Midlands Polish Community were eager to support their Ukrainian neighbours. SICAP worked with them to hold an information session on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March in Longford Library. This provided some basic information for Ukrainian community particularly relating to getting access to schools. We also worked with them to organise an Easter celebration for Ukrainian children.

SICAP in Longford convenes the 'Services to the Unemployed Committee' and have well established working relationships with the organisations in this committee. Organisations on this committee are Longford-Westmeath Education and Training Board; Department of Social Protection; Intreo; Local Enterprise Office; Employability Midlands; National Learning Network; Employment Development and Information (EDI) Centre; TÚS programme; Rural Social Scheme. These relationships were of immense value in working together to support the Ukrainian community.

SICAP collaborated effectively with several other agencies, in particular: Home School Liaison Officers; Longford County Childcare Committee; HSE (Enhanced Community Care Network Manager); Longford Civil Defence; Longford County Council Director of Housing; Micheal Nevin Assistant Director of Services in Longford County Council, responsible for Ukrainian Humanitarian Response; Longford Library; the various accommodation centres.

### **Health:**

The health concerns as raised by the Ukrainian community at our initial contact are listed above.

SICAP staff organised for the pregnant woman to get her scan and accompanied the woman and her husband to Mullingar Hospital for this.

In early April the HSE appointed an Enhanced Community Care Network Manager to support Ukrainian refugees in the Midlands. Through this person SICAP were able to get prescriptions sorted and began to help people complete Medical Card application forms. SICAP also disseminated information about the new shorter Medical Card application form for Ukrainians to other organisations in County Longford. SICAP also liaised with the Enhanced community Care Network Manager on a range of health issues – including accessing GPs.

According to the HSE, displaced Ukrainians with medical needs should have been triaged by IPAS and located close to hospitals. Despite this, a number of individuals were located in County Longford with medical needs, requiring frequent hospital visits. The Department of Rural and Community Development allowed flexibility for SICAP to meet these needs in the early months of the crisis. Later specific funds were allocated to SICAP for Ukrainian supports. When displaced Ukrainians needed to attend hospital, SICAP, where possible, liaised with Longford Civil Defence to get access to their ambulance for this. When this was not possible SICAP covered the cost of taxis for visits to hospital, and also to access Covid 19 vaccination clinics.

Given that all the displaced people were fleeing from a war zone and many had family members still in that war zone, mental health was expected to be a major concern. In the early days of the crisis SICAP staff supported two women to access counselling from Longford Women's Link. Once specific funds for supporting displaced Ukrainians were allocated, LCRL earmarked funds for mental health, trauma supports, and well-being. To date, there has been little request for mental health supports, other than general well-being events – such attending events, outings etc. SICAP

and the Ukrainian Community Outreach Worker are currently exploring various approaches to group work - particularly with parents on supporting their children and supporting teenagers.

## **Employment:**

As outlined elsewhere in this document, a key issue for the displaced Ukrainians was having something to do, or boredom. Many were interested in obtaining employment. A number of employers in Longford approached SICAP either directly, or via local politicians, to enquire if any of the Ukrainian community might be interested in employment with them.

LCRL/SICAP and Longford Westmeath ETB organised a Career Guidance information session on the 29<sup>th</sup> March for the Ukrainian community in the Longford Arms Hotel. This involved meeting all of those interested in employment or further training, providing them with information on employment and training opportunities that were available, and supporting them prepare their Curriculum Vitae. Follow-up sessions were arranged with SICAP staff, in particular with the Employment and Training Mediator and the Enterprise Officer.

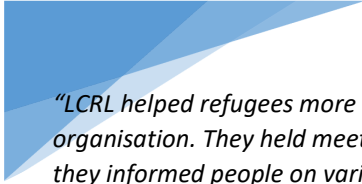
SICAP also organised a two-day CV and Information workshop in August for the Ukrainian community. This involved collaboration with LWETB and the Local Enterprise Office. A recruitment company was also invited to hold 1-1 sessions with individuals.

Over the following months, as more displaced Ukrainians arrived in the county SICAP provided on-going support and advice for them in relation to employment and training. SICAP held a careers day with the LWETB in Ballymahon. We assisted with three days of information provision with Intreo and the Department of Social Protection on the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> May in the Longford Arms Hotel. The DPS agreed to circulate information on behalf of SICAP to all their clients who were being invited to these information sessions. This allowed SICAP to make contact with individual Ukrainians living in the county outside of the main accommodation centres who we might have otherwise missed.

SICAP hosted separate employment information afternoons in LCRL offices for the Ukrainian community with 'Center Parcs' and with 'Laurel Lodge' Nursing home, and in the Longford Arms Hotel for 'Esquires café'. SICAP also informed the Ukrainian community about a range of other employment opportunities such as: 'Fresh Today' caterers, DPD couriers, 'Mr. Price', Department of Social Protection (temporary clerical officers), 'Panelto Foods', etc. (Note: while the employers requested to contact members of the Ukrainian community SICAP ensured that others within our target groups such as the Roma community, Traveller community, Syrian community, etc. were also invited or informed about the employment opportunities). To date SICAP staff are aware of 15 members of the Ukrainian community who obtained employment as a result of these interventions.

## **Self-Employment:**

Individuals who were interested in self-employment or setting up their own business, while not being eligible yet for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme were supported by the Enterprise Officer in progressing their business. (They will be eligible once they have been in receipt of social welfare for nine months). One person, who had a successful 'doll-making' enterprise in Ukraine was referred to the Local Enterprise Office where she obtained support in setting up her business in Ireland. Another was referred to Longford Library for support in publishing a book. Four more people are receiving on-going support in: establishing a separate 'doll-making' enterprise; setting up a dance school; and establishing a building materials distribution business.



*"LCRL helped refugees more than any other organisation. They held meetings where they informed people on various issues, such as employment, Irish medicine, and life in Ireland in general. LCRL organised some clubs and charity shop to keep people involved in public life and help them adapt. Also, a lot of people were able to get help with resolving their problems individually. Thanks to the amazing team of LCRL, all Ukrainians were able to adapt and receive the necessary medical care. I'm grateful, as well as, I'm sure, all other Ukrainian refugees from Longford are, for the excellent work of local LCRL."*

Anastasia

## Barriers to Employment:

While many of the displaced Ukrainian community were eager to get employment, many faced a number of barriers. These included:

- In the early weeks of their arrival, many regarded themselves as simply waiting until they could go back home.
- By the time some opportunities outside of Longford town became available, parents already had children in school and did not want to take them out of school. They were also concerned about moving out of the accommodation they already had.
- For those staying in the accommodation centres, their basic needs of shelter and food were being met. So, moving away for low paid employment was not very attractive.
- The lack of transport facilities made it difficult to take up employment away from the towns in which they were staying. For example, people living in Longford town could take up employment in Longford town, but found it difficult to take up employment in Ballymahon.
- For those living outside of the main towns, lack of transport made it impossible to take up employment, unless they had access to a car.
- Perhaps the biggest barrier is the fact that so many of the community have little English. The single largest need expressed was for English language classes – as discussed in the next section.

## Education and Training:

Education and training was one of the largest need expressed by the displaced Ukrainian community – once immediate needs of shelter, food and health were dealt with. It was striking how many people raised education the first time LCRL staff met them.

(For families who arrived later the Regional Education and Education Team (REALT) Co-ordinator in LWETB provides support accessing education places.)

- Pre-school aged children: There were three pre-school aged children in the first group of Ukrainians to arrive. SICAP staff organised a meeting with them and Longford County Childcare Committee who helped them find child-care place. SICAP also invited them to join the Parent and Toddler group run under the SICAP programme. One parent and her toddler became a regular member of the group.
- Primary School aged children: LCRL and the Midland Polish Community organised an information session for the first Ukrainians to arrive in Longford Library where one of the Home School Liaison Officers from St. Joseph's Primary school provided a lot of information. Over the following days all of the thirteen Primary school aged children get places in local primary schools. As well as attending school in Ireland, most also continued attending the Ukrainian education system on-line. The time difference between Ukraine and Ireland allowed this. However, as children now begin their next term parents are beginning to ask themselves if they should make a decision on which system to concentrate on.  
  
LCRL also contacted 'Longford Music Generation' to organise Ukelele music sessions for primary school aged children. This continued until the summer break.
- Secondary school aged children: SICAP staff contacted the local secondary school and got the two secondary school aged children places within two weeks of arrival. These young people also joined County Longford Youth Service youth groups.



Similar to the case with primary school children, most secondary school children continue to attend their Ukrainian schools on-line.

Music seemed very important to a number of the Ukrainian young people. LCRL gave some of the young people access to Youth Service musical instruments and a space where they could continue their music lessons – provided on-line from Ukraine.

- **Third-level Education:** Third level students were eager to continue their education, however it took some time for this to be resolved nationally. This September four Ukrainians students have advanced to third level education: Technological University of the Shannon; Trinity College Dublin; Cavan Institute; and University of Galway. Eight people are attending the College of Further Education in Longford, and three are attending Athlone Training Centre. Eight people are completing level 5 courses with the National Learning Network in Longford (in addition to English classes).
- **Adult Education:** As already noted, learning English was regarded as important by the displaced Ukrainian community. Some spoke good English, but the majority had little or no English and were eager for as much English training as possible. SICAP referred all to the LWETB for their English classes. Some were also referred to the National Learning Network.

SICAP has been running conversational 'Fáilte Isteach' English classes for migrants in Longford for several years. These are volunteer led conversational classes. In this way the participants both improve their conversational English, and get to know members of the host community and learn more about that community. The programme was developed by and run under the auspices of 'Third Age'. Many of the Ukrainians in Longford joined SICAP Longford town Fáilte Isteach classes already running with other migrants. There are varying levels of these classes, depending on the level of English of the participants.

When the displaced Ukrainians arrived in Balinamuck in June, LCRL recruited volunteer tutors to run Fáilte Isteach classes there. (All volunteers are registered and vetted by Longford Volunteer Centre). In Ballymahon the local FRC plans to run Fáilte Isteach classes for the Ukrainians accommodated there.

As more Ukrainians arrive in the county the demand for these classes is increasing. SICAP is supporting the FRC in Granard to start classes for the community there. There is a particular challenge in supporting individuals or individual families living in dispersed accommodation throughout the county access English language classes due to lack of transport.



*"LCRL came to us as soon as we arrived. We can always ask them our questions. We had a problem with money, none of the banks in town were willing to exchange hryvnias for euros. Sara Jane helped us solve this issue, found us a bank. She also helped us with a baby, helped us get registered at Mullingar Hospital. They brought us a stroller. They helped us with our medical cards."*

### **Volunteering and the Pop-Up shop:**

The Ukrainians who arrived in Longford in March quickly became bored in the hotel and approached LCRL about volunteering. The Volunteering Centre in LCRL registered and vetted them and put them in touch with Longford Tidy Towns, Hungry Horse Outside and other local groups. Karim

Also, at the start of the Ukrainian crisis, various sources, including local politicians, were receiving donations of clothes for displaced Ukrainians. Rather than have the community sorting through bags of clothes of varying degrees of quality LCRL/SICAP decided to explore the possibility of setting up a 'pop-up' charity shop. SICAP staff approached members of the Ukrainian community, the EDI Centre and Longford Volunteer Centre to collaborate in setting up such a 'pop-up' shop. As a result the 'pop-up' shop was set up in the EDI Centre – which is close to the Longford Arms Hotel (where the Ukrainians are accommodated). The Ukrainian Volunteers sorted through the bags of clothes, discarding poor quality clothes, and used EDI facilities to launder and iron the remaining clothes and put them on clothes racks. They



then staffed the shop from 10am-12pm on Mondays and Fridays. Ukrainians were informed about the shop and its opening hours. They could then visit the 'shop' and have a more dignified experience than searching through bags of donations. As the community become more settled in Longford, the shop now opens only when new displaced people arrive.

### **Community Support and Integration:**

Once the displaced Ukrainian community began to arrive in County Longford many organisations and agencies responded to help in whatever way they could. This included groups such as Longford Town Soccer Club providing free tickets to some home matches; Backstage Theatre providing free tickets to some of their events and Longford Library making facilities and various supports available to the Ukrainian community. SICAP staff liaised with all of these organisations in supporting engagement by the Ukrainian community. When SICAP staff approached organisations such Longford Sports Partnership and Music Generation they were very happy to organise events or programmes for the Ukrainian community – both in the hotel where they are accommodated, or in LCRL offices.

In addition to the various information events and individual 1-1 supports already outlined. SICAP staff provided the following supports:

- Two information days for the Ukrainian community in LCRL offices on the 11<sup>th</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June. The 11<sup>th</sup> May session was an opportunity to invite Ukrainians into LCRL offices, give them more information on our various programmes and services and get to know the staff.  
On the 6<sup>th</sup> June we made an effort to contact those people who had remained in the background, particularly older people. SICAP provided transport for the older people to attend. The occasion was planned as a social gathering with food provided where the Ukrainian community could meet SICAP and other LCRL staff again. Staff from other key agencies such as LWETB, Department of Social Protection and Longford Library were also invited.
- SICAP organised a summer event in LCRL office for all of the local community groups supported by SICAP on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The Ukrainian community was also invited where they had an opportunity to meet with other groups involved with the SICAP programme.
- As a result of these and other events with the Ukrainian community many began to participate in the following SICAP groups: Parent and Toddler Group; Craft Group; Youth Service LGBT group; Fáilte Isteach English language conversational classes; Longford Town Health and Wellbeing Group.
- SICAP supported the Ukrainian community (from Longford, Ballymahon and Ballinamuck) attend community and networking events such as Longford Show; Cruthú Arts Festival; Ukrainain Independence Day Parade in Dublin; and a Ukrainian Festival in Howth Castle. SICAP also organised them to go on occasional group trips to the coast.
- Individual people had different interests – such as getting involved in volleyball, soccer, etc. SICAP staff helped put these individuals in touch with the relevant clubs or organisations.
- Over the summer there were various summer camps available for children and young people. SICAP compiled a list of all of these summer camps and made them available to the Ukrainian community. This included all of the summer activities organised by County Longford youth Service.
- SICAP provided support for Ukrainian children living in more remote locations attend summer camps run by Lus na Gréine Family Resource Centre in Granard.

## Older People:

From an early stage SICAP noticed that, while we had good engagement with much of the Ukrainian community accommodated in Longford town, we were meeting very few of the older Ukrainian community. Through discussion with others in the community we found that many of the older people were *'just very sad'* – missing their homeland and not really motivated to get involved. As a result SICAP made a focused effort to reach out to the older Ukrainian community. As already outlined many older Ukrainians accepted an invitation to an evening of food and conversation in the LCRL offices in June.

In September SICAP invited older Ukrainians to participate in an outing with the Older Persons network to County Leitrim. Despite the language barriers, seven older Ukrainians participated in the outing and all had a good time.

Figure 3: Older Ukrainians visiting Co. Leitrim



## Lessons learnt to date:

The key lessons learnt can be broken into two categories: what Worked Well and What didn't work so well.

### What Worked Well:

- The flexibility of the SICAP programme, and its community work ethos. SICAP staff were able to go to meet the Ukrainians as soon as they became aware of their presence in Longford. Our approach of listening to what their concerns were and being clear about what we could and could not do, helped build trust from an early stage. Later, some of the Ukrainians mentioned to us that their first instinct was to wonder *'why are they doing this?'* However, as we continued to work with them in an open and transparent way they quickly began to trust us.
- The strong relationships SICAP staff had built up over the years with other agencies was of immense benefit in collaborating with these agencies during the Ukrainian crisis (as it had been during the Covid 19 crisis also). In particular the history of information sharing, collaboration and mutual respect amongst organisations on the 'Services to the Unemployed Committee' meant that we worked effectively in supporting the Ukrainian community.
- The willingness of the English speaking Ukrainians to work with SICAP and to support their fellow Ukrainians was particularly important – especially prior to SICAP engaging the Ukrainian Community Outreach Worker. However, these same people continue to work closely with her. LCRL would like to thank all of these volunteers for their support and commitment.
- The 'pop-up' charity shop, which was a collaboration between Ukrainian volunteers, the EDI Centre, Longford Volunteer Centre and SICAP provided an outlet for the volunteers and a dignified way for the community to access donated clothes.
- The Ukrainian information events held in LCRL offices, in particular the evening of food and chat was very effective in reaching the older members of the Ukrainian community. This was followed up by several of the older Ukrainians joining a trip with the Older Persons Network.
- The one occasion where short term emergency accommodation was required (weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> April in Edgeworthstown) was very efficiently run by Longford Civil Defence and Longford County Council. While the situation itself was far from ideal, every effort was made to make the displaced people feel welcome, safe and secure.
- Participation on the Community Work Ireland Ukrainian group discussions was a very effective way of hearing about how the Ukrainian community was being supported elsewhere, about shared challenges and approaches to overcoming them, getting the most up-to-date information, and generating a sense of solidarity and support between the various groups and organisations.

- The Fáilte Isteach language classes are working very well – and all of the Ukrainian community are seeking more of them.
- The employment of the Ukrainian Community Outreach Worker – who speaks Ukrainian has been vital in helping SICAP engage fully with the community.

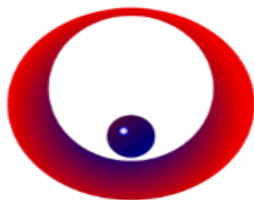
**What didn't work so well:**

- The lack of communication from IPAS has been an ongoing problem for all agencies trying to support the displaced Ukrainian community. While there may be very valid reasons for this, it has made planning and preparing for arrivals difficult.
- Locating people in remote areas is not working well. While there are, again, reasons for this it is difficult for these individuals and families to access services, attend community events, attend English classes, etc. unless they own a car.
- The staff in SICAP feel that we should have reached out to the older Ukrainian community earlier.
- Some of the information events held were too basic. Most of the Ukrainian community are well educated and computer literate. They had already googled some of the information and required more in-depth analysis and targeted information at these events rather than repeating information that they had already found out for themselves.
- The pledging of accommodation via the Red Cross caused a lot of frustration – especially amongst those people who pledged rooms. There was such a long delay in these offers being assessed and taken up that some people changed their minds. There are also problems arising where people are placed in households. For example mothers who arrive with one child and then gets another child arriving from Ukraine and wants the second child to be accommodated in the same house.



**APPENDIX I**  
**SICAP UKRAINIAN FLYER**

Усі послуги  
надаються  
безкоштовно



Усі послуги  
надаються  
безкоштовно

## Longford Community Resources clg

/Лонгфорд Ком'юніті Ресорсіз Компанія з  
відповідальністю, обмеженою гарантіями її членів/

**Потрібна допомога з роботою, навчанням, освітою чи виплатами?**

**Цікавить створення власного бізнесу?**

**Хочете приєднатися до групи або створити спільноту, наприклад,**

Фізична активність та оздоровлення  
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