

THE COMMUNIVERSITY 2018



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Research has shown that people from Social Inclusive Community Activation Programme target groups are often risk averse when it comes to Higher Education. The Communiversity offers a low threshold entry route with low risk but high impact outcomes.

The Communiversity is a Personal and Community Development Programme aimed at confidence building and learning discovery. The aim of the Communiversity is for Social Inclusion and to allow the participant, through experiencing Higher Education in a local, familiar, and non-threatening environment, i.e. Local Libraries, the agency for them to decide whether or not to engage at a deeper level with formal education. The simplicity of the model means that it is easily replicated, we can target large numbers (25 per group).

Those who participate are now on a pathway that will allow them to access not only educational services but through our community based partners as agents for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) support services that can obviate

Dr. Derek Barter 8 Oct. 2017

the barriers of finance, child support and lack of confidence that prevent people from the target groups from considering HE as a real option.

Part-time 4 weeks x 4 modules (1 x 2.5 hours) per week in subjects such as Local History, Politics, Sociology, Philosophy (critical thinking), English, Economics, Geography, Community Development; Youth Work; Addiction Studies (the list is indicative not exhaustive); 25 students per group.

PARTNERS: LOCAL LIBRARIES. The local libraries provide a network of venues around the cluster region that can be used for delivery of the Communiversity programme. The Local Government Management Agency Libraries section and the County and City Librarians can identify suitable and accessible libraries in which the programme can take place. The pilot project Communiversity has had very positive feedback from librarians who have experienced the programme in their premises. In many cases Communiversity participants are new to library services and continue to use the library when the programme has concluded. As part of the pilot phase Communiversities have been successfully delivered in areas which have been identified as having low participation rates into HE such as Coolock; Darndale; Crumlin; Dolphin's Barn; and Ballyfermot. Libraries eager to come on board include Ballymun, Blanchardstown, Rush and Swords.

PARTNERS: LOCAL LEADER PARTNERSHIP COMPANIES (SICAP AGENTS). The benefit of having local community partners cannot be overstated. The wealth of local knowledge and on the ground interaction offers the best opportunity for engagement with the most hard to reach people that this targeted funding is aimed at. SICAP is the main social inclusion programme funded by the State and is a significant resource in each City and County area. Local Development Companies (LDC's) work with the unemployed and socially excluded target groups (aligned with those in the funding call) to improve social cohesion, build capacity in disadvantaged areas and support individuals to take up lifelong learning opportunities to progress from welfare to work. Their participation will assist with the promotion of the course among the target groups given our local knowledge and relationships on the ground. They have the ability to encourage potential participants with 1:1 assistance and local supports (e.g. access to childcare, transport, negotiating with DSP

activation services etc.). They may be in a position to supporting participation costs for individuals. They can support individuals with personal action plans and career options after the initial Communiversitv course concludes.