



DESSA

DISABILITY EQUALITY
SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCY

DESSA Overview

National community development organisation

Who we work with -

- Local Development Companies - SICAP (Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme)
- Family Resource Centres - Family Resource & Community Services Resource Centre Programme, TUSLA
- Children's Services Committees, Childcare Committees, Youth Services, Advocacy Organisations.....

Where we work

- Mainstream community venues

DESSA Values.....

We believe

Community development

The DESSA LAC Vision

To support disabled people and their families to move beyond being recipients of supports and services to determine their own needs & requirements and goals

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become leaders, decision makers and advocates and live meaningful and happy lives in inclusive communities

DESSA LAC Project Partners

- HSE Disability Services Sligo/Leitrim
- North Connaught Youth Services
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Down Syndrome Leitrim
- Leitrim Local Development Company
- NLN Manorhamilton
- NLN Carrick-on-Shannon
- Breffni Family Resource Centre Leitrim
- Leitrim Disability Network

52 individuals identify and achieve personal goals

40 community development organisations trained in disability competency and inclusion

Achievements

9 parents trained advocacy skills

8 individuals mentored

Mainstreaming embedded in local and community development agencies in Leitrim

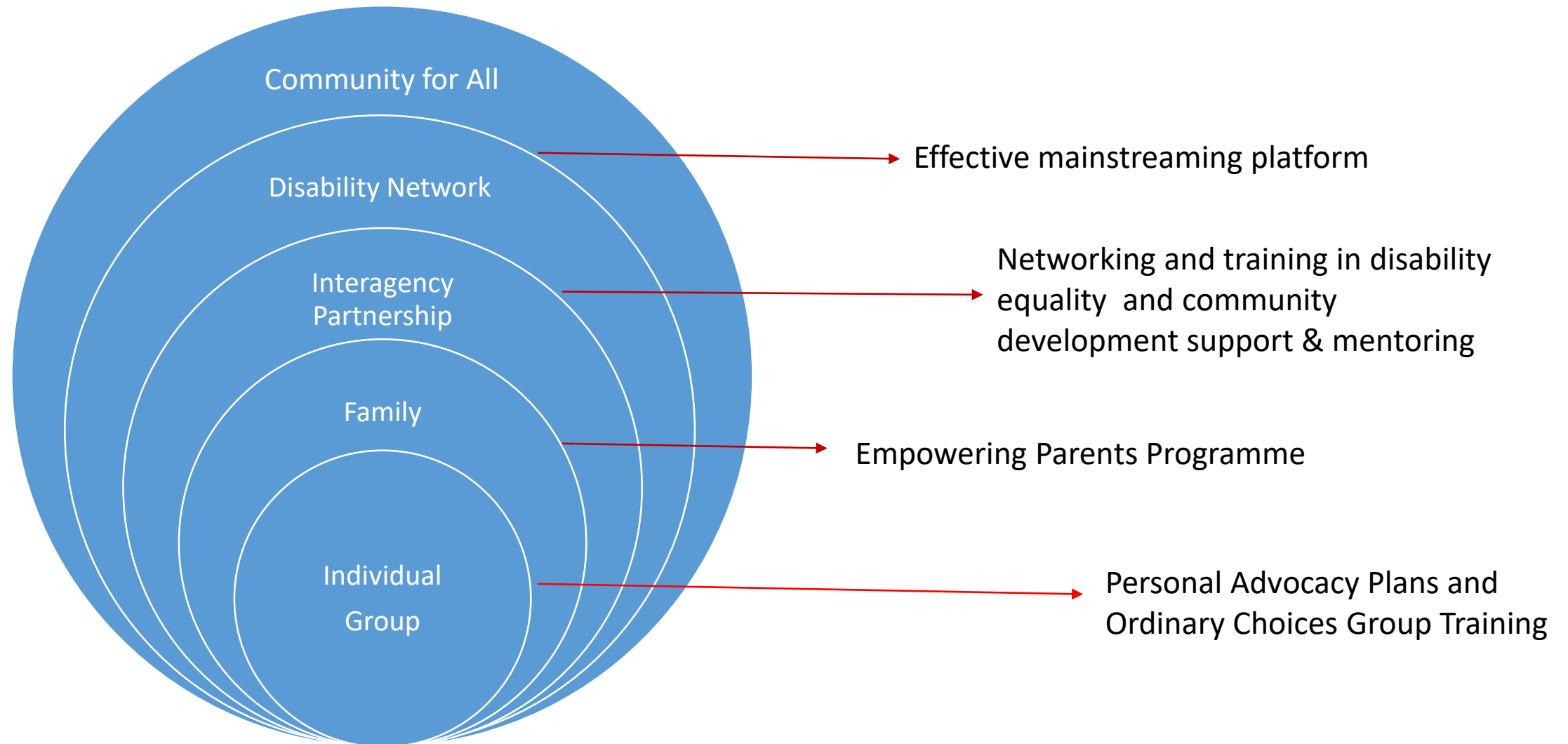
Examples of Impact

- Participants informing access issues with Local-Link rural transport and using it as a resource
- Leitrim youth organisations are identifying and training disabled adults as youth leaders Education
- 4 participants have enrolled with St. Angela's NUIG Access & Foundation Course
- Increase in networking and collaboration between disability service providers and local community structures —————> increase in the number of disabled adults participating in mainstream activities.
- Establishment of a relationship support group by one participant

- Mainstreaming of services in Leitrim County - Leitrim LDC, youth clubs and groups, women's groups and Leitrim community networks seeking disabled adults as volunteers and leaders.
- Leitrim life skills trainers identifying disabled adults as future and current mainstream course and workshop participants.
- Establishment of HSE Decongregated-settings connection with Leitrim communities.
- Participants elected to local Disability Network and Leitrim PPN
- *Re imagining Disability* seminar in May showcasing work of project. Participants on planning committee.
- Participants giving mainstreaming support to other disabled adults.

The Model

A community development approach to LAC, involving key agencies across community and disability services is the most effective and sustainable way of enabling people who experience a disabling a society to live ordinary lives.



Key Messages

- Effective implementation of Government disability policy cannot happen in isolation.
- A process of collaboration between disability services providers and community development organisations that represent mainstream community is essential.
- Driven by community development organisations who are an effective role model for mainstreaming, realisation of rights and the animators for social inclusion.
- Partnership in everyway including a reallocation of resources. Entails a symbiotic relationship.
- Requires a whole organisation commitment