

# HARC Project Overview

## Healthy Active Rural Communities

A cross-border initiative to support rural communities in the Inishowen Peninsula, Co. Donegal & Faughan, Sperrin & Derg areas of Derry City & Strabane

### Our Aim



Improve health & wellbeing in rural areas



Use & protect natural rural assets for community benefit



Build long-term capacity in local social enterprises

### Our Three Solutions

#### ① Rural Family Support Programme

Support for children, parents, older people, carers & those with health conditions through:

- Parenting programmes
- Early years activities
- Social events for older people
- Seasonal activities & peer support

#### ② Nature-Based Wellbeing

Activities for the whole community:

- Community gardening
- Hiking & walking groups
- Sea swimming
- Outdoor art therapy
- Eco-initiatives

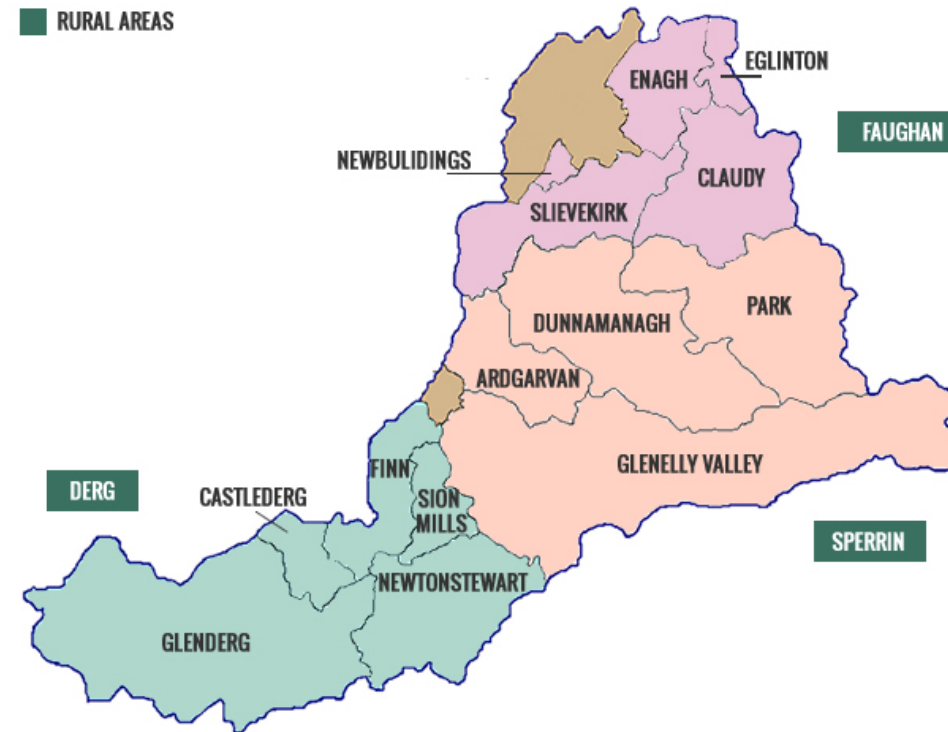
#### ③ Social Enterprise Development

Helping rural communities sustain local services through:

- 1:1 mentoring
- Capacity-building courses
- Shared services support
- Social impact training



 RURAL AREAS





# HARC Family Support Programme

The HARC Family Support Programme offers a range of tailored initiatives designed to support children, parents, and families across rural communities. From child development and parental wellness to engaging summer activities, our programmes aim to enhance physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

## 1. Child Development Programme

This programme provides support and knowledge to parents in key child development areas, proven to result in better long-term outcomes.

It includes baby massage, early years music, baby sensory play, universal play programmes, stay and play sessions, family nutrition, behavioural programmes, breastfeeding support, weaning & Solid Start programmes, toilet readiness guidance, and sleep support for parents and carers.



## 2. Parent Wellness & Support Programme

Designed to optimise parental mental and physical health, this programme offers pregnancy yoga, pregnancy fitness, Pilates, parent fitness classes, social cafés for new parents, and courses on key parenting skills and family routines.

Special emphasis is placed on developing peer support among rural parents, who face unique challenges raising children in remote areas.

## 3. Summer Activity Programmes

These weeklong land and water adventure camps provide children and young people with opportunities to interact with peers during school holidays, often a time of social isolation in rural communities.

Activities like kayaking, hiking, and team-building challenges focus on physical wellness and social engagement, including cross-border connections, supporting mental health and emotional development during critical growth stages."



## 4. Older People’s Programme

This programme has been designed to ensure older people from rural areas who generally experience much higher levels of social isolation have the opportunity to engage within their communities.

Weekly sessions will encompass 5 hours of social contact centred around meaningful health & wellbeing activities, including arts & crafts, exercise, baking etc. The programme will also provide respite to carers across rural communities. 960 sessions will be delivered to 800 participants.

## 5. Carers’ Support Programme

This programme has been designed to support carers of all ages in rural areas, who experience higher levels of social isolation & less peer support than their urban counterparts.

Delivered monthly, sessions will be designed around health & wellbeing themed activities intended to increase social contact & support amongst carers. The programme will encompass a social prescribing model. 384 sessions will be delivered to 400 participants.



# HARC Rural Social Enterprise Development Programme

A situation compounding the disparities across key service provision between urban & rural areas, is a lack of capacity within the Community & Voluntary / Social Enterprise Sector in the latter.

The Partners wish to ensure the innovative Health & Wellbeing programmes introduced by the HARC Project are sustained and expanded beyond the PEACEPLUS Programme period.

Accordingly, they have jointly developed the HARC Social Enterprise Development Programme to build sectoral capacity across the target rural areas. Delivered to 15 social enterprises, this has been designed to enable rural communities to sustain & further expand key services locally. It will incorporate 4 individual elements: (i) a 1:2:1 specialist mentoring programme; (ii) capacity building short courses; (iii) shared services support; & (iv) social impact training.

## 1. Specialist Social Enterprise Mentoring Programme

Each of the 15 participating social enterprises will be provided with 24 specialist mentoring sessions. These tailored sessions will be designed to support key staff members and volunteers to identify organisational development opportunities and strengthen their skills.

Through this support, participants will also develop practical plans to achieve these opportunities within clearly defined timeframes, helping to build long-term sustainability and impact for their organisations.

## 2. Social Enterprise Shared Resources Programme

The Partners will develop a shared resources framework for access by the 15 enterprises. This will enable these organisations to benefit from specialist support in areas such as budgeting, strategic planning, application development, evaluation, report presentation, human resources etc.

Each organisation will be provided with 30 days of specialist support via this framework (450 in total). This will be a very cost-effective way of providing specialist input, which would otherwise be unobtainable by these organisations.

## 3. Accredited Social Enterprise Development Modules

3 accredited social enterprise development modules will be delivered to 15 social enterprises. The content of these will be determined by the participating organisations. However, it is envisaged they may include: Business Development; Governance; & Financial Management.

## 4. Social Impact Return Training Programme

Key representatives from each of the 15 social enterprises will undertake a social impact return training programme.

This will be designed to enable organisations to evidence the social, economic & environmental impact of their activities in order to sustain or secure additional external funding.

# HARC Health & Wellbeing Through Nature Programme

Adopting a strengths-based approach to enable the target rural areas to reach their full potential, this Programme has been designed to capitalise upon the abundance of natural assets in these locations, to deliver health & wellbeing from nature across the general rural population.

The HARC Health & Wellbeing Through Nature Programme will deliver cross border benefits by merging the local specialisms of ‘Blue Care’ (Inishowen) & ‘Green Care’ (Faughan, Sperrin & Derg). This will include the following component programmes:

## 1. Green Care Therapy Programme

This programme has been designed to optimise the health & wellbeing of rural citizens through participation in a series of 6-week block facilitated activities designed to capitalise upon ‘Green’ assets in the target rural communities e.g. mountains & forests.

This will incorporate: outdoor art classes; forest bathing; mindfulness; sound bathing; mountain climbing; cycling etc. Where appropriate a gender specific approach will be adopted & a cross border dimension incorporated.

## 2. Blue Care Therapy Programme

This intergenerational programme has been designed to optimise the health & wellbeing of rural citizens through participation in a series of 6-week block facilitated activities designed to capitalise upon ‘Blue’ assets in the target rural communities e.g. lakes & the coastline.

This will incorporate: paddleboarding, kayaking & sea swimming etc. Where appropriate, a gender specific approach will be adopted & a cross border dimension incorporated.



## 3. Cross Border Community Hiking/ Walking Programme

This intergenerational programme has been designed to enable families to participate inhealth & wellbeing based hiking / walking. Delivered monthly, it will rotate around trails located across Inishowen, Faughan, Sperrin & Derg.

This approach will build better cross border connections & facilitate increased knowledge of the natural assets & amenities across the combined area.

## 4. Eco-Environmental Activity Programme

This intergenerational programme has been designed to enable rural citizens to improve their health & wellbeing, whilst protecting the natural assets within their communities. Delivered monthly, it will rotate around the target communities of Inishowen, Faughan, Sperrin & Derg.

Activities will include; beach & forest cleansing; water protection; planting; community gardening etc.

