



**40**  
1974-2014 YEARS

ENRICHING LIVES  
PROMOTING HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING

## The Social and Health Education Project

# Development Plan 2018 - 2020

## Foreword

As Chairperson of the SHEP Management Committee, I am very pleased to present this new development plan which sets out the key priorities for The Social and Health Education Project for the next three years (2018-2020).

The Social and Health Education Project (SHEP) is a values-led, community-based organisation that works together with individuals and communities to develop capacities for positive change, to enhance health and well-being and to promote social justice. We are very proud of what has been achieved by our Project over more than four decades.

This new development plan has been developed at a time of considerable change in the world and continuing changes in the context in which SHEP works here in Ireland. At the same time, this new plan is informed by a confidence within SHEP that we continue to be very well positioned to contribute in a unique way to personal and social transformation. Significantly, this plan commits the Project to continuing, deepening and concluding an important discernment process (which commenced as part of this planning process) to determine the long term future direction of the Project.

This document summarises the aims and objectives. A full set of actions has also been agreed and is set out separately

This plan takes into account the many strengths of the Project. These include a strong values base; a clear commitment to supporting vulnerable or marginalised individuals and communities; committed, competent and hard-working personnel (staff, trainers, tutors, counsellors, facilitators, advocates and volunteers); a proven track record in training and development; good relationships with a wide and increasing range of partner organisations, and strong systems for governance. We also remain committed to further developing SHEP as a cohesive and progressive community of learning and practice.

SHEP recognises the key role played by our funders. Our core funder is the Health Service Executive – and we greatly appreciate their on-going and increased support for the Project. SHEP also receives significant support from the Department of Social Protection, TUSLA (for the *Coiscéim* Counselling Programme), Cork Education and Training Board, Kerry Education and Training Board and from a number of other funders.

Finally, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to the preparation of this new development plan, not least my colleagues on the SHEP Management Committee who, **in September 2017**, approved it to guide the Project for the next three years.

**Siobhan O'Connor**, Chairperson  
November 2017

## ***Vision & Mission***

### **Vision**

A socially just world, where all people live in dignity, where we cherish and celebrate each other and ourselves, and where the integrity of the earth is honoured.

### **Mission**

SHEP is a values-led organisation that works together with individuals and communities to develop capacities for positive change, to enhance health and well-being and to promote social justice.

We do this through a range of integrated personal, community, environmental and international development initiatives.

### **Core Values**

Recognising the challenge, process and opportunity of our work, we value **respect, equality, empowerment, honesty, acceptance, initiative, creativity and compassion.**

### **We value**

- the dignity of each person
- the potential of individuals and communities to grow and transform
- the intelligence, capabilities and creativity of each person
- the reality of human struggles and vulnerabilities
- the importance of building good relationships and making heart connections
- the interdependence of personal well-being and community well-being
- social justice

### **We are committed to**

- working in empowering ways
- promoting inclusiveness and opposing unjust discrimination
- facilitating reflective inclusive spaces
- working in ways which promote the integrity of the natural environment
- being flexible and responsive to emerging needs

# 1. *Developmental Goals (2017-2020)*

We have agreed five development goals for the organisation as a whole, as follows:

Key Area of Work	SHEP will:
<b>Vision and Long-Term Strategy</b>	Continue the process commenced in 2016 to develop a new Vision, Theory of Change & Strategic Plan which takes account of both the particular strengths of SHEP and the reality of the changing world we live in.
<b>Community of Practice</b>	Further develop SHEP as a cohesive, participative and progressive 'Community of Learning and Practice' through induction of new practitioners, continuing professional development, supervision and developing a new focus on research.
<b>Open and Responsive</b>	Continue to be innovative and open to emerging needs, particularly in the areas of group advocacy, self-advocacy, reflective practice, international partnership, intercultural awareness and earth awareness training.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Further improve participation by minority groups in the work and governance of the Project.
<b>Governance and Accountability</b>	Further strengthen governance and accountability in SHEP particularly through deepening participatory and democratic processes within the Project

## 2. Developmental Priorities (2017-2020)

We have identified eight specific areas which are priorities for the organisation as a whole, as follows:

Key Area of Work	SHEP will:
<b>Funding &amp; Resourcing</b>	Adopt a proactive approach to resourcing the work (including seeking additional HSE funding for existing Training & Development, Counselling and Advocacy work) and ensuring a balanced workload for the Project.
<b>Limerick &amp; Mid-West</b>	Work with Local Partners and the Mid-West HSE to formally extend the SHEP Programme to the Mid-West whilst maintaining an incremental approach to the development of the programme in the region.
<b>Development of a Tutor Panel in Mid-West</b>	Develop for the first time a small SHEP Tutor Panel in the Mid-West by training, inducting and supporting new SHEP Tutors from the region.
<b>Reflective Practice</b>	Expand our work in Reflective Practice.
<b>Programme Review – Training Programme</b>	Further develop processes of continuous improvement and quality assurance in our Training & Development Programme, (including introducing regular programme reviews).
<b>Re-engagement with QQI</b>	Complete the preparations for and apply for re-engagement with QQI.
<b>Celebration</b>	Celebrate 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cork Advocacy Service in 2019 and commence preparations in 2020 to celebrate the 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Coiscéim (in 2021).
<b>Research</b>	Further develop our capacity to present evidence of the impact of our work.

### 3. Key Focus – for each area of our work (summary)

We have set out a focus for each of the ten key areas of work in the project, including Earth Awareness, which has been formally added and which will now have its own Advisory Group. For each area of work we have an agreed set of actions which are set separately:

Key Area of Work	SHEP will:
<b>Personal Development</b>	Maintain the level of training in personal development offered in Cork, Kerry and Limerick whilst keeping within the parameters of manageable workloads for staff.
<b>Social Awareness &amp; Community Empowerment Training</b>	Provide one SHEP Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment course each year in Cork and every second year in Kerry & Limerick.
<b>Facilitator Training</b>	Continue our programme to train tutors, volunteer advocates and volunteer community development facilitators, and we will seek to offer some additional opportunities for SHEP participants in this programme to achieve QQI awards.
<b>Additional Accredited Training</b>	Maintain our links with UCC, WIT and QQI so as to continue to provide a small number of education and training pathways which provide external accreditation.
<b>Community Education</b>	Develop a strategic framework for SHEP's Community Education, whilst maintaining the number of short courses organised directly by the Project and expanding gradually those externally initiated.
<b>Coisceim Counselling</b>	Consolidate our low-cost counselling programme through supporting an appropriate number of clients per year and continuing to prioritise those most in need.
<b>Cork Advocacy Service</b>	Continue the development of Cork Advocacy Service (CAS) as a pioneering, independent advocacy project through shifting our emphasis to advocacy group facilitation and advocacy training whilst maintaining one to one advocacy support.
<b>Organisational Support</b>	Continue to respond to requests from groups and organisations (time and resources permitting).
<b>International Partnership</b>	Deepen our partnership with Sahakarmi Samaj (our partner NGO in Nepal) ideally with support from development donors
<b>Earth Awareness</b>	SHEP will continue to develop its Earth Awareness work both within the SHEP community and in the wider community, relying as much as possible on voluntary involvement and seeking to build cooperation and alliances with other groups concerned about issues such as climate change, climate justice & the protection of the environment.

## Key Area of Work 1

# Training in Personal Development

*Supporting individuals to develop capacities for positive change and to enhance health and well-being*

## Why this is important

Individual, family and community well-being are interdependent. Personal development group-work is a very effective means of supporting people in their personal growth. SHEP has a long track record of providing safe, inclusive spaces where people can learn about themselves, develop their self-confidence, communication and relationship skills, enabling them to live full, healthy and responsible lives. This increased individual well-being ripples out and leads also to healthier families and communities.

SHEP's **Certificate in Personal Development** (formerly known as the SHEP Certificate in Social and Health Education – Personal Development) is a unique programme which has been refined by the project over many years. Co-facilitated by two experienced psychotherapists drawn from our panel of trainers, it provides an opportunity for participants to develop a greater awareness of the personal dimension to human development. Participants are helped to examine the way they think about themselves and those around them. They are also helped to recognise their emotional responses to given situations and the ways in which they typically manage these responses. Participants also develop skills in assertive communication which enable them to negotiate new and constructive ways of being with those around them. No formal educational qualifications are required to participate in the course. Although the course involves limited teaching inputs, the principal methodology used is that of experiential group-work. There is no assessment, though 80% attendance is required to be awarded a certificate of completion. The course consists of weekly evening/day-time sessions of 2½ hours between September and the end of May, as well as seven weekend day-long sessions in the areas of Assertive Communication, Stress Management and Body Awareness, and two half-day workshops for orientation and evaluation.

SHEP's **Certificate in Continuing Personal Development Course** is provided for those who feel a need to consolidate the learning arising from their participation in both foundation courses. The course involves intensive exploration of personal issues using an experiential group-work approach. Similar to the Certificate in Personal Development course, this course consists of weekly evening sessions of 2½ hours between January and early December (around 28 sessions in all), as well as 6 weekend day workshops of 7 hours (Saturdays or Sundays).

SHEP's **On-going Development Programme** offers opportunities for SHEP practitioners and for participants and graduates of SHEP's training programme to engage in further personal development work, to continue to develop their social awareness and understanding of social justice, and to refresh or enhance their facilitation skills through participation in occasional short courses or workshops.

Key Area of Work 1

## Training in Personal Development

*Supporting individuals to develop capacities for positive change and to enhance health and well-being*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p><b>Maintain a sustainable level of training in personal development offered in Cork, Kerry and Limerick</b></p>	<p>Continue to organise and deliver a total of eight or nine SHEP Certificate in Personal Development courses per year in Cork, Kerry and Limerick</p> <p>Continue to seek and put in place funding to offer reduced fee and funded places to enable participation by those on low incomes.</p> <p>Increase participation of immigrants and other minority groups in the SHEP Certificate in Personal Development.</p> <p>Promote the SHEP Certificate in Personal Development more widely, especially among those involved in people-centred work roles.</p> <p>Continue to develop the SHEP Certificate in P.D. course and to enhance the integration of the course in the SHEP training programme as a whole.</p> <p>Continue to offer the SHEP Certificate in Continuing Personal Development course each year in Cork, every three years in Kerry, and on request in Limerick to those who have completed at a minimum both foundation courses.</p> <p>Continue to offer an On-going Development Programme in Spring and Autumn each year with opportunities for further personal growth and development.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At least 100 people will have completed SHEP’s Certificate in Personal Development each year.</li> <li>● At least 12 people will have completed SHEP’s Certificate in Continuing Personal Development course each year.</li> <li>● At least 80 people will have participated in SHEP’s On-going Development Programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative:</b></p> <p>(as reported by course participants on end-of-course evaluation forms and in external, independent evaluation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced self-confidence.</li> <li>● Enhanced communication skills.</li> <li>● Enhanced quality of relationships.</li> <li>● Enhanced capacity to manage stress.</li> </ul>

## Key Area of Work 2

# Training in Social Awareness & Community Empowerment

*Enhancing individuals' capacity to participate more fully in the wider community and to promote social justice.*

### Why this is important

The complexities of modern-day life have created the need for a flexible and innovative approach to developing supportive systems and groups within communities. SHEP's training in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment provides a focus and a starting point for those who aspire to be more involved in community, whether it is at a local, national or international level. SHEP's Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment (formerly known as the Foundation Course in Social and Health Education - Social Awareness and Community Empowerment) is the second SHEP Foundation course. This course provides an opportunity for participants to develop a greater awareness of the *collective* dimension of human development. Participants are helped to explore the challenge of reconciling personal needs with the needs of other people, be they in the family, the workplace, the local community or the wider world. They examine the different ways in which power operates in society and explore the extent to which people's perception of their needs and interests is shaped by social forces. They consider the meaning and the significance of the concept of social justice at all levels, from the local to the global.

The course is open access and you do not have to have completed any previous courses with the Project to apply (previous to 2011 completion of the Certificate in Personal Development (or its equivalent) had been considered an entry requirement for the Foundation Part Two course). The principal training methodology used is again that of experiential group-work. Some elements of the course are drawn from the 'Training for Transformation' programme (Hope, Timmel and Hodzi; 1992). Participants are not required to undertake any written work and there are no formal assessments or examinations. Those who complete both Foundation Courses become eligible to apply for a place on SHEP's Certificate in Facilitation. The course normally runs from September to December and consists of an evening introductory session and five weekend workshops (78 hours in total). Normally there will be around 25 participants in each group.

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<b>Provide one SHEP Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment course each year in Cork and every second year in Kerry &amp; Limerick.</b>	Continue to arrange and deliver SHEP's Social Awareness and Community Empowerment Training as part of our Foundation Programme Enhance the profiling of the course to a number of sectors	<b>Quantitative:</b>  At least 40 people will have completed SHEP's Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Training each year  <b>Qualitative:</b>  <i>(as reported by course participants on end-of-course evaluation forms)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Enhanced self-confidence.</li><li>● Improved understanding of social justice and community development</li><li>● Increased contribution by course participants to their own communities</li></ul>

### Key Area of Work 3

## Training facilitators to work in the community

*Enabling people in local communities or work settings, to better support reflection, learning and transformation*

### Why this is important

SHEP believes that facilitation is an essential approach for empowerment and transformation of individuals and communities. A key aspect of the SHEP model is the systematic training and supervised deployment of community members in response to community needs. Training people in facilitation skills enables them to support a wide range of developmental changes and transformative processes at the personal, collective and institutional levels. This can be done either through their own professional work or as resource people or volunteers working in their own communities.

SHEP's Certificate in Facilitation (formerly called the SHEP Certificate in Generic Facilitation Skills) is an intermediate level training in facilitation. This is a year-long, part-time training course in facilitation through which participants are supported to develop competencies for facilitating in a range of settings. The focus of the SHEP Certificate in Facilitation is on enabling participants to develop a capacity for engaging with others in a facilitative way, such that their personal effectiveness is enhanced. Completion of both SHEP's Foundation courses is normally a prerequisite to commence facilitation training with the Project.

The SHEP Certificate in Facilitation is an important component of the specialised practitioner training courses which SHEP offers. Completion of the SHEP Certificate in Facilitation course is a prerequisite for entry to Specialised Tutor Training courses in SHEP which prepare people to work as Community Tutors, facilitating groups through SHEP's Community Education for Health & Well-being Programme. Whilst completion of the SHEP Certificate in Facilitation course is not a prerequisite for entry to SHEP's Community Advocacy Training (Level 6, QQI), it is very helpful as a preparation for work as a volunteer independent advocate through SHEP's Cork Advocacy Service, and in particular as a facilitator of advocacy groups. The SHEP Certificate in Facilitation course is one of the cluster of SHEP courses which together constitute SHEP's Applied Facilitation in Community and Organisational Settings Training Programme. Two of these courses - Community Leadership, and Participatory Methods - lead to QQI Level 6 awards. Community Facilitator training prepares people to work as volunteer facilitators in communities and with voluntary groups. This model of facilitation and practitioner training for community health and well-being is unique in Ireland.

## Key Area of Work 3

# Training Facilitators to work in the community

*Enabling people to local communities or work settings, to better support reflection, learning and transformation*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p><b>Continue our programme to train tutors, volunteer advocates and volunteer community development facilitators, and we will seek to offer some additional opportunities for SHEP participants in this programme to achieve QQI awards.</b></p>	<p>Continue to promote and offer the intermediate level SHEP Certificate in Facilitation each year.</p> <p>Seek grant funding to subsidise the delivery of these courses</p> <p>Apply to QQI for validation in relation to Level 6 award in Group Work &amp; Facilitation and if successful offer the possibility of undertaking a QQI module to those completing the SHEP Cert in Facilitation.</p> <p>Complete the current round of Specialised Tutor Training in Cork and a round of Training in Limerick. Continue to offer the QQI Level 6 SHEP 'Introduction to Advocacy' training course, as the primary route to advocacy practice. Support SHEP participants to contribute more effectively to their own communities and/or communities of interest through delivering the 'Applied Facilitation in Community and Organisational Settings' volunteer community facilitator/community leadership training programme.</p> <p>Provide CPD opportunities for Community Tutors and Advocates.</p> <p>Engage in policy and research work on training facilitators to work in the Community.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 28+learners complete specialised tutor training with SHEP.</li> <li>● 30 +learners complete apprenticeships and become Registered Community Tutors.</li> <li>● 15+volunteer advocates trained and working with the SHEP.</li> <li>● 16+volunteer community facilitators trained and working with the SHEP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced confidence and skills among participants</li> <li>● Increased community capacity to promote community education and positive change.</li> <li>● Improved community health and well-being.</li> </ul>

#### Key Area of Work 4

## Additional Accredited Training

*Providing additional externally-accredited education & training options as a complement to SHEP's experiential Training Programme*

### Why this is important

Most courses offered by SHEP are experiential courses which are not externally accredited. This will continue to be the case. However, there continues to be interest among SHEP participants and others in having options in SHEP for accreditation. There are a number of reasons for this, including an increasing emphasis by some groups on formal accreditation. SHEP's potential to respond to this need has recently been strengthened.

Since 1999, SHEP has collaborated with Adult Continuing Education and the Departments of Applied Psychology and Applied Social Studies at UCC in the delivery of an accredited two-year undergraduate Diploma in Social and Psychological Health Studies. This Level 7 course provides a strong theoretical foundation for those who have completed training with the project as well as those working in facilitative roles in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. A significant number of people are now coming to SHEP, for the first time, through this course.

The external evaluation of SHEP's Core Training Programme (2011) recommended that both of SHEP's Foundation courses continue to be offered as they are, without accreditation, though certified by SHEP.

The collaboration with Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) regarding recognition of Prior Learning for SHEP students has been very encouraging and two cohorts of SHEP graduates - who have trained experientially with SHEP - have now gained a Level 8 Higher Diploma in Social, Personal and Health Education.

Our registration with FETAC (now part of QQI), in 2012, was another important development and has provided SHEP with the opportunity to offer FETAC/ QQI-accredited training modules. The number of QQI accredited courses offered by SHEP will always be small - and to date we have only run two courses: 'Advocacy: An Introduction' (which has been organised three times) and 'Leadership in the Community' (offered for the first time in 2016). A key task in the coming years will be to refine our quality assurance system in line with new QQI requirements and to apply to QQI to maintain our registration with them.

In introducing accreditation to SHEP two key principles apply: Firstly, any introduction of accreditation to SHEP courses should not detract from or harm the unique training offered by SHEP; and secondly, it is imperative that by introducing accreditation the project does not discourage from participating people with literacy difficulties, people with low levels of education, and people whose experience in school has not been positive.

**Key Area of Work 4**

## **Additional Accredited Training**

*Providing additional externally-accredited education & training options as a complement to SHEP’s experiential Training Programme*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p><b>Maintain our links with UCC, WIT and QQI so as to continue to provide a small number of education and training pathways which provide external accreditation.</b></p>	<p>Continue to collaborate with UCC to offer the Diploma in Social and Psychological Health Studies on a bi-annual basis.</p> <p>Continue offering a small number of relevant and complementary QQI courses and ensure a minimum of one QQI component course per year.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with Waterford Institute of Technology for Recognition of Prior Learning for SHEP participants.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At least 40 people will have completed the UCC Level 7 Dip in Social and Psychological Health Studies</li> <li>● A further 10+ SHEP graduates are awarded the WIT Higher Diploma (SPHE)</li> <li>● Approximately 36 people successfully completed Advocacy Level 6 course.</li> <li>● Approximately 18 people successful complete Leadership in the Community (Level 6)</li> <li>● At least one (and not more than two QQI level 6 courses) per year offered by SHEP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved theoretical understanding of the principles relating to Personal, Social &amp; Health Education</li> </ul>

## Key Area of Work 5

# Community Education for Health & Well-being

*Responding to the needs of individuals and groups, in their own communities, to explore and consider ways of making positive changes and enhancing health and well-being*

## Why this is important

More than ever in an increasingly individualistic, divided and technologized world, groups spaces are need for people to come together and learn to be present to each other. While the topic title can attract the headline message of what is to be achieved on a course, the group experience is as oft often attested to by participants as the significant dimension of their experience. The group experience is a fundamentally important dimension of our work to bring to the fore, given the challenges of our times. Ally this with our core pedagogic commitment to the methodology of facilitated experiential learning, the potential is optimised for groups to become unique learning spaces for both personal and group growth.

SHEP's Community Education programme aims to support participants to become pro-active in dealing with issues affecting them, their families and their communities, and is particularly relevant in these times. SHEP facilitates people to come together and develop their self-confidence, discover their strengths and learn from each other. This is done using the experiential approach which SHEP has pioneered for more than four decades. Having a panel of community tutors makes it possible for SHEP to reach out to people within their own communities and to respond to their needs in a variety of local settings and situations.

Through SHEP's Community Education Programme a wide range of introductory personal development-related courses is made locally available to groups in communities across Counties Cork and Kerry. These courses are typically of between eight and ten weeks' duration. They are tailored to the needs of learners and are facilitated by Community Tutors who are trained and capable of conducting a variety of courses in social and health education in a safe, supportive and enjoyable way. The on-going demand for the programme, testifies to the finding from the last evaluation of the programme that... ' Like its Core Training programme, SHEP in the Community Training Programme seems to have tapped into real needs and wants which individuals have at present. This ties in with SHEP original raison d'être and humanistic approach to supporting individuals.'

As well as offering some courses at SHEP's own centres, the project works in partnership with other agencies working in the community. Funding for the courses is generally sourced from statutory providers with an interest in supporting the development of the groups concerned. Community courses currently on offer include:

*Introduction to Personal Development*

*Men's Well-being*

*Managing Stress in Our Daily Lives*

*Effective Communication for Better Relationships*

*Family Communication (Supporting yourself as a Parent)*

*Caring for Our Well-being*

*Seasons for Growth - Coping with Grief, Loss and Change in Life*

*Women's Well-being*

*Growing Still – Facilitating Well-being & Empowerment in Older Adults*

*Bullying – A Course for Parents or Adults*

*Parents, Infants and Toddlers – Developing Relationships*  
*Child Abuse and Neglect*  
*Inter-Cultural Awareness*  
*Caring for a Small Blue Planet*

The courses listed above can be adapted to meet specific needs (e.g. 'Family Communication - for parents who are separated/separating'). Additional courses are offered in response to the specific needs of certain groups, including those who face especially significant challenges.

Many of SHEP’s Community Tutors bring to their work qualifications and experience gained outside of SHEP which further increases the potential scope of courses SHEP can offer (e.g. 'Introduction to Personal Development - for parents of children with autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder'). SHEP continues to develop and adapt the community education programme as a response to emerging needs.

Trainees and tutors have made significant investment of voluntary time, effort and resources over long periods in preparing for tutoring work. Payment for undertaking tutoring work will remain SHEP’s primary model, recognising the importance of this work. The programme is however dependent on resourcing to sustain it and that effort will be a high priority over the plan period.

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p><b>Develop a strategic framework for SHEP’s Community Education, whilst maintaining the number of short courses organised directly by the Project and expanding gradually those externally initiated.</b></p>	<p>Refine our approach to SHEP’s Community Education Programme            Develop and support SHEP’s panel of Tutors in line with emerging needs and agreed strategies</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 950+ people will have participated in SHEP’s Community Training courses each year.</li> <li>● 40+ tutors will have participated in SHEP’s On-going Development courses each year.</li> <li>● SHEP will have worked in partnership with over 40 groups or organisations to support community education</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced self-confidence and personal effectiveness (as reported by course participants on end-of-course evaluation forms).</li> <li>● Tutors’ positive reports of their experience of facilitating groups.</li> <li>● Partner organisations’ acknowledgement of their satisfaction with SHEP’s community education programme.</li> </ul>

## Key Area of Work 6

# Low-Cost Counselling Programme

*Making appropriate counselling or psychotherapy affordable for those who really need this type of support*

## Why this is important

'Coiscéim' is the Irish word for 'step' and, for many, SHEP's Coiscéim is a first step toward improved mental health and well-being. Established in 2001, the aim of the programme is to provide quality counselling/therapy services to individuals and, to a lesser extent, to couples, families and groups; people who, for a variety of reasons, may not be able to access the services they need in other ways. The intention is that, through counselling, Coiscéim will help clients to be better able to manage their own arising mental health issues and their relationships, thereby enhancing their own quality of life and the quality of life of those with whom the clients are closely connected. From the point of initial contact onwards, a person-centred approach is used by offering people choices with regard to the counselling process e.g. time client is available to attend counselling, location of counselling, an agreed contribution from the client to suit his/her particular financial circumstances. The availability of a limited Coiscéim subsidy fund has been critical in ensuring that people with limited financial means have had access to the supports that they need.

The programme has grown significantly in recent years. Referrals are made from a wide range of statutory agencies - mainly G.P.s, HSE social work departments and accident and emergency psychiatric nurses. Many clients referred by these departments often require immediate referral and often to experienced counsellors/therapists.

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<b>Consolidate our low-cost counselling programme through supporting an appropriate number of clients per year and continuing to prioritise those most in need.</b>	<p>Continue to sustain the service at its current level of functioning, as this reflects the what can be done realistically with the funding available, while continuing to prioritise those most in need.</p> <p>Continue to invest in on-going collaborations with other voluntary community bodies which enable access to the Coiscéim Counselling Programme to highly vulnerable people in their own communities.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least 2,000 persons will have been supported through one-to-one counselling</li><li>• (approximately 500 individuals supported per year).</li><li>• A minimum of 60 couples/families in crisis will have been supported.</li></ul> <p><b>Qualitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced capacity for a meaningful and fulfilling life by increasing self-confidence and self-esteem.</li><li>• Increased interpersonal skills resulting in enhanced personal and family relationships.</li><li>• Improved self-awareness and self-knowledge leading to enhanced personal responsibility and capacity for self-advocacy.</li><li>• Strengthened capacity among local initiatives to provide person-centred counselling.</li></ul>

## Main Area of Work 7

# Cork Advocacy Service

*Providing independent advocacy to people who through difficulties of health, disability or ageing are struggling to get their voices heard.*

## Why this is important

For SHEP, advocacy is about being beside an individual or a group, supporting them to get their voice heard and in accessing their rights and entitlements. It is what we all do for each other as friends and family at different and perhaps difficult times in our lives. It is not about making an assessment and taking decisions about what's in a person's best interests. It is about listening, supporting, sometimes questioning or challenging a decision, and sometimes speaking up for a person or group. It is not complicated but it can be difficult. For SHEP, advocacy is fundamental to our commitment as an organisation to empowering vulnerable or marginalised groups and communities. We see it as clearly linked to community development, as it plays an important role in developing civil society and bringing about social justice and social transformation.

## Background

SHEP has been involved in advocacy since 1999 and was to the forefront in the development of advocacy for vulnerable older people through a project called Cork Older People's Advocacy Service. During 2008-10, as Cork Advocacy Service (CAS) we participated very successfully in the pilot Advocacy Project for People with Disabilities which was funded by the Citizen Information Board (CIB). Since 2010 CAS has deployed volunteer advocates to provide one to one and group advocacy for vulnerable older people and people with disabilities in specific residential settings as requested. Cork Advocacy Service continues to contribute to the national development of independent advocacy through identifying advocacy needs at an individual and collective level that are not being met by the emerging national independent advocacy providers.

SHEP has also been a pioneer in the training and deployment of volunteer advocates and now offers a QQI accredited course. This course is an open access course and participants include not only those who wish to volunteer with CAS but interested professionals, service providers and interested citizens who all wish to enhance their understanding of advocacy and their advocacy skills. This provides for a diverse and inclusive learning experience for all.

Following an in-depth consultation process with the CAS Advisory Group, the team of CAS advocates, the Management Committee and SHEP staff in preparing the 2018 -2020 strategic plan, key themes have been identified:

- SHEP's financial resources for advocacy are limited (currently - one part-time advocacy development worker funded through the HSE and a team of thirteen volunteer advocates (nine of whom are currently active with some advocates also undertaking contracted advocacy work with CAS). This is a very modest resource base and we must be realistic about what can be achieved.
- The service has grown over the past fifteen years, but the resource has been reduced. (From one full time and one part time post in 2008, to one part time post since 2010).
- There continues to be a demand for one to one independent advocacy and whilst signposting is undertaken with regard to national providers, there remains a gap for many people who cannot access support through these services and CAS continues to offer a service, going beyond the quantitative targets sets down in the strategic plan 2014-2016.

- There exists a tension between continuing with providing one to one independent advocacy and/or facilitating group advocacy due to the limited resources of the project. However, the consultation process has led to a decision to continue to offer both elements and to recognise the potential for supporting representation at service development and delivery level by service providers themselves. **In doing so, CAS is unique as this offers a holistic approach and does not fragment the different models that inform advocacy practice.** Therefore additional funding or resources are essential if this innovative advocacy service is to realise its full potential.

In order to attempt to secure additional funding, it is essential to explain what it is that CAS does that offers a contribution to the emerging field of independent advocacy in Ireland.

The project is committed to working in a creative and progressive way to address advocacy needs. In the context of advocacy, our key strengths include:

- our independence;
- **our emphasis on the relational elements of advocacy**
- our commitment to **keeping advocacy person-led**;
- our experience of working with volunteers;
- our flexibility in utilising different advocacy models;
- and, our training and facilitation background.

A number of key principles underpin SHEP's advocacy work and these include: a fundamental respect for the individual; the empowerment of the person; the facilitation of informed choices; and the independence of the advocate and the advocacy service.

The ultimate goal is self-advocacy – where the individual has the personal confidence and power to represent herself/himself without support from someone else. It is also critical to consider the independent advocacy support required of those who may not be able to instruct and articulate their wishes in particular circumstances. The Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 identifies the rights of people to have supports to make decisions and whilst it does not directly refer to a right to independent advocacy, it has been argued that it is implied. The proposed Code of Practice will offer guidance on this matter.

Over the years SHEP has networked and linked with a number of other advocacy initiatives, including Sage, the Irish Advocacy Network, and the National Advocacy Service. The landscape in advocacy has changed a great deal in recent years particularly with the mainstreaming of new advocacy initiatives. There is a real opportunity for SHEP to enhance our contribution to advocacy by increasing our work in the training of independent advocates, in the development of advocacy group facilitation and in continuing to offer access to one to one advocacy. We have experience behind us and a context (SHEP) within which to illustrate and emphasise the diverse potential of independent advocacy, valuing relationships and acknowledging the inequity that exists for marginalised groups and individuals.

## Key Area of Work 7

# Cork Advocacy Service

*Providing independent advocacy to people who through difficulties of health, disability or ageing are struggling to get their voices heard.*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p>Continue the development of Cork Advocacy Service (CAS) as a pioneering, independent advocacy project through shifting our emphasis to advocacy group facilitation and advocacy training whilst maintaining one to one advocacy support.</p>	<p>Continue to deploy SHEP-trained volunteer advocates to provide advocacy support to people who through difficulties of health, disability or ageing who are struggling to get their voices heard and cannot be supported by other advocacy initiatives.</p> <p>Strengthen our formal connections with national advocacy initiatives and explore options to ensure the on-going development of independent advocacy.</p> <p>Continue to offer both accredited and non-externally accredited training in Advocacy as a core dimension of Cork Advocacy Service.</p> <p>Seek additional funding and/or resources for the maintenance of the one to one advocacy element of the project and for self-advocacy group work.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b></p> <p>Per year:            15 people supported in category 1 (Intensive)            15 people supported in category 2 (less intensive)            20 people supported through signposting and/or provision of information            2-3 organisations' enquiries addressed            2-3 organisations' advocacy supports provided            60 people supported through group advocacy facilitation            12 individuals trained in self-advocacy            15 people trained to Level 6 'Introduction to Advocacy' every two to three years.</p> <p><b>Qualitative:</b></p> <p>Inclusion in decision making –individual and collective            Improvements in rights based person led practice            Increased sense of being listened to – individual and collective            Increasing awareness of the right to self-determination            Increased sense of self-confidence and empowerment.            Increased access to entitlements and services.            Increased representation for people who may not be in a position to speak for themselves.            Increased capacity to self-advocate – individually and collectively</p>

## Key Area of Work 8

# Supporting Communities, Groups & Organisations

*Offering customised facilitation or specialist technical support to communities, organisations and groups*

## Why this is important

Over the years, a large number of groups, organisations and agencies have requested support from SHEP because of the expertise, experience and good standing of the project. The types of support offered have varied, in accordance with the need, and have included consultation support, customised training, facilitation, mentoring and organisational development. A large number of groups come to SHEP because of SHEP's particular experience in the area of providing psycho-therapeutic supports. We are often seen by groups working with vulnerable clients, or groups providing counselling or therapeutic services as an important resource and/or source of support. It can be highly resource intensive and rather invisible. However, this is an area of work to which SHEP continues to be very committed.

SHEP's commitment to promoting social awareness and community empowerment and our involvement in training of facilitators to work in the community has meant that the project is often regularly requested by community groups, voluntary organisations, networks and other organisations which have no involvement with therapeutic work for training, facilitation and organisational development. In responding to these needs, we have been able to draw on the extensive expertise and experience of staff members, trainers, tutors and a panel of SHEP-trained organisational development mentors. Our capacity to respond to requests for this type of support over the next few years will remain limited because of our commitment developing other areas of SHEP's work. When resources permit us to work in this area, we will prioritise supporting groups which have a very clear commitment to social inclusion and which would not otherwise be supported.

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<b>Continue to respond to requests from groups and organisations (time and resources permitting).</b>	Deliver specialist technical support, consultation and training services, on request, to community and voluntary organisations and relevant statutory services and practitioners whose clients include particularly vulnerable individuals.	<b>Quantitative:</b>  Directly support 10 organisations with requested organisational development, technical support  <b>Qualitative:</b>  Enhanced empowerment and effectiveness as reported through process evaluations

## Key Area of Work 9

# International Learning Partnership

*Deepening ties of mutual learning and support with our partner in Nepal, Sahakarmi Samaj.*

## Why this is important

SHEP has a shared vision for a better, more equitable and just future. Building positive relationships is a key feature of our work. Our project aims to have a truly holistic approach which acknowledges the wealth of connections that exist among individuals, families, communities and countries. By developing respectful relationships with like-minded organisations we believe we will learn from and support each other and increase our collective potential to bring about positive change. From SHEP's perspective, this solidarity firmly roots our justice-oriented community work in a global context.

SHEP's key area of interest is to develop relationships with community and voluntary groups which share a commitment to capacity building for personal and social transformation. In 2007 SHEP entered into a learning partnership with the Nepalese organisation, Sahakarmi Samaj ('Interdependent Community'), a community development organisation that has worked on community empowerment projects in Nepal since 1998. Like SHEP, Sahakarmi specialises in the training and deployment in the community of skilled facilitators. The main aim of the organisation is to strengthen and mobilise community groups and networks in order to address social, health and economic challenges. To do so, it uses the FEST (Facilitation for Empowerment and Social Transformation) approach which is based on a belief that people themselves can bring real change to their lives and that the role of a supporting NGO is to create an enabling environment. Within this approach, communities independently analyse problems, make plans, and implement responses appropriate to their situations.

With the support of Irish Aid's Civil Society Fund and ICCO Cooperation (a Dutch-based Development Agency) SHEP has supported Sahakarmi Samaj to deliver three phases of the 'South Western Nepal Community Governance Enhancement Programme'. The programme to date has been very successful with 288 communities directly benefiting. An external evaluation took place in October 2016 which affirmed that the programme is highly relevant to community needs and national priorities in Nepal. The evaluators were impressed with the in-depth community development approach used and the contribution by Sahakarmi Samaj to addressing complex social, economic, and health issues in Bardiya and Kanchanpur districts and the strong focus on the empowerment of marginalised and disadvantaged communities.

In 2017 SHEP updated and revised our International Partnership Policy to support the continuation and deepening of our international partnership work with Sahakarmi Samaj. We also commenced fund raising among the general public in Ireland in order to sustain our support to Sahakarmi Samaj into the long-term and also to help raise awareness among the general public of this important learning partnership.

In 2018, in partnership with Development Fund Norway, we hope to secure new funding from Irish Aid to support Sahakarmi's plans to work with new communities and new local government structures in South West Nepal to address poverty and marginalisation

## Key Area of Work 9

# International Learning Partnership

*Deepening ties of mutual learning and support with our partner in Nepal, Sahakarmi Samaj.*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p><b>Deepen our partnership with Sahakarmi Samaj (our partner NGO in Nepal) ideally with support from development donors</b></p>	<p>Technical and other support Sahakarmi Samaj to deliver a new three year programme of support, commencing 2018.</p> <p>Liaison with Irish Aid (and other potential funders/supporters)</p> <p>Continuation (and expansion) of SHEP local fundraising efforts.</p> <p>Organisational Development support to Sahakarmi Samaj</p> <p>Co-identification of specific projects utilising funds raised by SHEP through public fundraising</p> <p>CO-Design and hosting of Learning Visit by SS to Ireland in 2018</p> <p>Dissemination of Results and Impact, including dissemination of the Learning Partnership Model.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the region of 50 new community groups established and supported by Sahakarmi Samaj through a new Community Enhancement Programme.</li> <li>● Successful SHEP application to Irish Aid.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved quality of life for Sahakarmi Samaj programme participants in South West Nepal e.g. enhanced communication, finding a ‘voice’, conflict resolution, co-operation, skill building etc.</li> <li>● Enhanced understanding amongst the SHEP community of international development issues.</li> <li>● Improved solidarity between SHEP and likeminded organisations working to promote positive change and social justice.</li> </ul>

## Key Area of Work 10

# SHEP Earth Aware

*Helping people face, and respond to, the crisis facing the world and its people because of our current unsustainable way of life.*

### Why this is important?

“Earth Awareness Work” is a dimension of learning and of education that focuses on the fact that we humans are part of the web of life on earth, and are dependent on it. It has come to the fore especially because of the realization

- that the web of life is being seriously damaged by human beings’ unsustainable lifestyle (UN Secretary General... ‘humanity has never faced a greater challenge that climate change’)
- that this will affect us all, but is already causing enormous suffering for many of the poorest people on earth, people who have done least to bring about the problem. (Pope Francis: “*The cry of the earth is the cry of the poor.*”)
- that within a very few years it will pose a wide range of major challenges to the health and well-being of people everywhere, including Ireland, through such things as the spread of tropical diseases, extreme weather events, mass migrations, global struggles for diminishing resources, etc. (Prof. Ivan Perry, Professor of Public Health, UCC: “*...when climate change is framed as a health issue ... we face a predicament that strikes at the heart of humanity.*”)

Education about this issue involves some *knowledge* about what is happening and some *understanding of how and why* it is happening. But knowledge alone is not effective in helping people to face the reality, or to contribute to finding a constructive way forward. There is also needed a cultivation of a *deep emotional response*, of a willingness to face and express fear and grief and pain, and of an opening of the heart based on gratitude and love. “Earth Awareness Work” refers to the process that can foster and promote this fuller response of mind and heart.

### Background:

In various ways SHEP has, over the years, included in its training courses issues of global justice and inter-cultural awareness, and on a few occasions has put on workshops related to the threats to life on earth (nuclear or environmental).

Starting in 2014, it partnered with *Páirc a’ Tobair* Earth Centre and launched an *Earth Initiative*, based as much as possible on voluntary effort. This has had considerable success in raising the profile of Earth Awareness work in the SHEP community. Earth awareness work has been integrated in a new way into the Certificate on Social Awareness and Community Empowerment. Using volunteers, a number of short open courses for the general public have been put on, a regular support group has been organized, a peer-training programme is on-going, workshops have been provided for Staff, Management, Trainers, Counsellors, Advocates and other SHEP practitioners, and a range of seminars, workshops, training sessions, and DVD showings and discussion evenings have been organized.

## Key Area of Work 10

# SHEP Earth Aware

*Helping people face, and respond to, the crisis facing the world and its people because of our current unsustainable way of life.*

Objective	Actions	Indicators
<p>SHEP will continue to develop its Earth Awareness work both within the SHEP community and in the wider community. It will continue to rely as much as possible on voluntary involvement and will seek to build cooperation and alliances with other groups concerned about issues such as climate change, climate justice, and the protection of the environment.</p>	<p>Continue to provide workshops and other events for SHEP leadership and practitioners to heighten knowledge of what is happening the earth and emotional responsiveness to earth-related issues.</p> <p>Continue to provide workshops and other events for the wider SHEP community to heighten knowledge of what is happening the earth and emotional responsiveness to earth-related issues.</p> <p>Continue to explore ways to integrate earth awareness work more fully into SHEP's Training and Development Programme and other courses.</p> <p>Continue to organize earth awareness courses and workshops for the general public</p> <p>Continue and expand communication and collaboration with other groups who are involved in earth awareness work or are concerned with combatting climate change or protecting the environment.</p> <p>Seek to strengthen the volunteer base involved in earth awareness work in SHEP, and we will also explore the possibility of integrating the Earth Initiative more fully into SHEP governance structures, and to explore possible sources of funding for the on-going coordination and development of the various aspects of earth awareness work within SHEP.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3-4 one day workshops per year</li> <li>● 2-3 22 hour courses per year</li> <li>● 1-2 Walks/Expeditions per year</li> <li>● 1 Conference Organised</li> <li>● Advisory Group Established</li> <li>● Volunteer Coordinator in place</li> <li>● 8-10 volunteers involved each year</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced capacity within the Project to support Earth Awareness Work</li> <li>● Improved understanding of earth awareness among course participants</li> <li>● Increased contribution by course participants to ecology and climate justice.</li> </ul>



**SHEP**  
CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

MAIN OFFICE

a | The Village Centre, Station Rd, Ballincollig, Co. Cork  
p | (021) 46 66 180  
e | [socialandhealth@eircom.net](mailto:socialandhealth@eircom.net)  
w | [www.socialandhealth.com](http://www.socialandhealth.com)

KERRY OFFICE

a | Unit 4, Central Point, Park Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry  
p | Deirdre O'Sullivan (087) 7728089  
e | [deirdre.osullivan@socialandhealth.com](mailto:deirdre.osullivan@socialandhealth.com)

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