

Review of the 2013 Social Inclusion Reports for the Human Capital Investment OP 2007-2013 Monitoring Committee

Prepared by the Social Inclusion Division, Department of Social Protection

Introduction

The focus of the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007 – 2013 (HCI OP) is on two specific areas: Up skilling the Workforce and Activation of groups outside the workforce. Funding is to be directed to niche interventions delivered to groups such as older people, migrants and ethnic minorities, women, young people and people with a disability. Bodies are required to report on principles and targets and satisfy the Monitoring Committee that a contribution to, or fulfilment of, social inclusion objectives is being achieved. The HCI OP requires intermediate bodies to use key priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of interventions under the two priority levels.

- Thirteen social inclusion reports have been submitted for consideration. A further project, ESF 12 In-Company Training is no longer funded under HCIOP and is not subject to a report on this occasion.

The D/Education & Skills' ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020 contains a description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Poverty and Social Exclusion is outlined in Ireland's needs in the context of the EU2020 objectives for ESF with our active inclusion strategy a key policy component for activation and inclusive labour markets along with labour market policies to address employment needs and capacities of jobless households.

Overall Comments

- Reports describe clear connections between activities and social inclusion.
- Ten of projects/programmes reported progress against indicators while 3 did not. In the Disability Activation Project, indicators have not been established and are not available in the Momentum report.
- Reporting would be significantly improved if based on robust and evidence-based indicators showing outputs, results and impact, as outlined in the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme.
- Reports should provide more details of pre and post intervention situations of participants and progress expected vs. progress achieved.
- The use of jargon, acronyms, etc. should be avoided in reports.
- Consider amending Question 4 of the reporting template to read"What outcomes is the activity delivering to the promotion of social inclusion"
- Overall, reports could be improved with more detailed analysis of baseline figures and comment on progress from a social inclusion perspective.

Specific Comments

ESF 1.1 Skills Training for Unemployed and Jobseekers

- This report details numbers of lone parents who completed training programmes in 2012 with some age profiles. The number of People with a Disability who completed FÁS and Specialist Training programmes is outlined.
- Details of age profiles with gender breakdown of participants on training programmes is included for young people and over 50s
- There are no comparative figures with 2012 and statistics are reported in a different format so it is not possible to assess progress.
- Transfer of training programmes including the Community Training Centres (CTC) and Local Training Initiative (LTI) programme to the Education and Training Boards was scheduled for June 2014.
- Progress on an Innovation strategy for CTCs continued in 2013 as did training for CTC managers. SOLAS implemented the Business Planning and Budget Bidding model for CTCs in 2013.
- Details of LTIs are provided along with development of project review process and operating guidelines.
- There is no progress against indicators included to measure interventions or outcomes as was the case in 2012. However, there are clear connections between activities and social inclusion objectives.

ESF 1.2 In-Company Training

- It is understood that this project is no longer funded under HCIOP and was not reported on in 2011 or 2012.
- This measure provided funding to help enable employed persons to receive training and development.
- In the past FÁS actions in respect of training the employed focused on reaching low-qualified and low skilled employees.

ESF 1.3 Up skilling the Workforce – Back to Education Initiative (Part-time)

- The Back to Education Initiative (Part-time) continues to provide courses and flexible learning options for young people and adults with less than upper second level education.
- The report details a number of good actions and activities with regard to social inclusion. This intermediary body has produced a range of guidelines on social inclusion issues for target groups. Guidelines are available on the Department of Education website.
- A key Priority Indicator outlining the numbers participating and dependent on a social welfare payment has been developed. It shows the numbers over the period of the programme from baseline 2007 to 2013 inclusive broken down by gender.
- This Initiative clearly promotes Social Inclusion as is demonstrated by the tables supplied outlining participants education level /social welfare status broken down by gender and profile of participants

ESF 1.4 Undergraduate Skills Programme

- The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 has concluded.

- A summary table of progress on targets shows progress on baseline participant percentages from 2006 to 2013 with 2013 outcomes specified.
- With the exception of National Participant Rates and Students with Disabilities none of the 2013 targets were met.
- The next National Access Plan for 2014 and onwards will incorporate recommendations from the review of the fund for Students with a Disability
- Details of Springboard Funding and courses in 2013 are supplied
- This programme clearly promotes Social Inclusion and details of progress under indicators for Undergraduate Skills participants show considerable progress from baseline positions.

ESF 1.7 Momentum

- This is a government initiative under Pathways to work administered by FÁS on behalf of D/Education & Skills
- This activity was not reported on in 2012.
- Final data is reported as not available but indications are supplied.
- This initiative clearly promotes social inclusion.

ESF 2.2 Disability Activation Project

- The function of the Disability Activation project (DACT), as stated, is to develop effective routes to promote and support the progression of Department of Social Protection illness/disability payment recipients who are at risk of exclusion.
- Key Priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of interventions under the two priority levels have not been established in this project. As a result, no evidence of impact on social inclusion is presented but the principle of social inclusion is embedded in the DACT target group.

ESF 2.3 Adult Literacy

- The Adult Literacy Programme continues to be provided free of charge to disadvantaged adults with low levels of literacy.
- The report demonstrates the social inclusion horizontal principal and provides details of numbers of participants broken down by gender together with project details, aimed at up-skilling the workforce.
- All programmes show increased participant levels and funding
- A key priority level indicator to measure effectiveness of interventions has been established and reported on. Other useful analysis is provided on the contribution the programme makes to social inclusion.
- New actions include a strategy that promotes develops and encourages literacy and numeracy prepared by SOLAS and launched by Minister for Education and Skills in May 2014

ESF 2.4 Third Level Access

- The Higher Education Authority (HEA) provides a valuable information resource on its website www.studentfinance.ie identifying the various sources of financial support available to fulltime students. This is of benefit to disadvantaged students in particular.
- The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 has concluded.

- A summary table of progress on targets shows progress on baseline participant percentages from 2006 to 2013 with 2013 outcomes specified.
- With the exception of National Participant Rates and Students with Disabilities none of the 2013 targets were met.
- Two Key Priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of interventions under the two priority levels have been established in this project. Results, which are broken down by gender, helpfully show the number of students benefitting from the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities.
- The Student Assistance Fund showed a significant increase in both funding and beneficiaries in 2013 over 2012.
- There was a significant increase in numbers of beneficiaries of the Fund for Students with Disabilities with marginally reduced funding.
- This initiative clearly promotes social inclusion through its support for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds including mature students in further and higher education.

ESF 2.5 Early School Leavers – Youthreach

- Youthreach is designed as part of an integrated strategy to address educational disadvantage, giving young people and Travellers of all ages who have left school without qualifications a second chance.
- The report outlines 13 supports and actions designed to incorporate the social inclusion principle in the Youthreach Programme.
- The Senior Travelling Training Centre Programmes (STTC) were closed in June 2012 in favour of integrated further education for Travellers. Issues arising, if any, as a consequence of such closures should have been reported on under Section 5 of the report template. Numbers of Traveller participants in 2013, have not been reported on.
- A key priority level indicator to measure effectiveness of interventions has been established and reported on. Other useful statistics are provided on the level of education attainment at entry and the economic status of learners broken down by gender.
- Key indicator would be improved if evidence of types of employment (adequate/satisfactory/permanent/etc.), education or training secured on completion of programme was captured and shown.

ESF 2.6 Garda Youth Diversion Projects – IT/Personal Development

- Garda Youth Diversion Projects operate in disadvantaged areas where there is a high degree of diversity in relation to the breadth and intensity of risks faced by young people (generally aged 12 – 17 years).
- All participants were from disadvantaged areas along with details of participants from ethnic minorities.
- Key Priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of interventions under this programme have been established showing the baseline and latest position with limited statistics given. It is not possible to assess from the report what impact has been made, as the indicators are not adequately measurable.
- Social Inclusion is a primary goal for this project and to enhance the employability of participants

ESF 2.7 Garda Youth Diversion Projects – Additional Workers

- The work undertaken by the additional youth justice worker promotes social inclusion by providing support to young people referred to the Youth Diversion Projects in accessing further education and training by working with them, relevant agencies and employers.
- The youth justice worker is additional to the existing project worker.
- Four Key Priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of additional youth justice workers have been established. The latest position regarding programmes delivered, employments of youth justice workers and numbers of participants in education have been outlined. Indicators could be improved if developed to be measurable.
- The Strengthening Families Programme is successful in helping families to understand how their behaviour/actions impact the family and future generations.

ESF 2.8 Positive Action to Promote Gender Equality

- The Equality for Women Measure provides opportunities for women who are experiencing social exclusion.
- It is a very important initiative for women that fosters gender equality and complements the National Women's Strategy.
- There was one strand under this measure in 2013: Access to Employment comprising of 29 projects.
- Numbers and categories of participants who benefitted under this measure in 2013 are outlined.
- Details of an evaluation study carried out by D/Justice and Equality are reported showing positive outcomes from a social inclusion perspective.
- The report demonstrates the objectives of the measure including social inclusion and links its work to EU policy in this area. However, there are no benchmark figures, outcomes or indicators included in the report.

ESF 2.9 Equality Mainstreaming Unit

- This initiative promotes social inclusion by putting measures in place to improve labour market access and participation of groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds covered by equality legislation.
- During 2013 applications for funding were invited to develop equality mainstreaming projects focused on access to employment or workplace equality.
- Details of the six projects initiated in 2013 are outlined as follows: The Immigrant Council of Ireland; Cavan Co Co and Cavan Community Forum; BelongTo and ICTU: See Change – The National Stigma Reduction Partnership; Irish University Association equality Network; Galway Traveller Movement;
- In 2013 Equality Supports to providers of further education and training providers were supplied by the Equality Mainstreaming Unit to 13 organisations.
- A Key Priority level indicator to measure effectiveness of interventions under this measure has been established showing the latest position.

ESF 2.10 Integration of Migrants

- The Employment for People from Immigrant Communities (EPIC) Programme works to empower and motivate adults to seek employments and/or training to help integration into Irish society and clearly promotes social inclusion. Participants come from a variety of cultural, social and educational backgrounds. The programme includes psychosocial support linking into organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, Free Legal Aid and Focus Ireland.

- In 2013, 98 presentations on information and training on services in Ireland were delivered. The programme has four training and employment officers to assist participants and contains initiatives to increase the levels of employability of its target group.
- The programme clearly demonstrates social inclusion principles by monitoring outcomes, levels of participation and gender proofing.
- Key priority level indicators to measure effectiveness of interventions under this programme have been established showing the baseline and latest position with statistics given. There was a 6% reduction in placements in training or employment over 2012 figures.
- Indicator shows uptake vs. targets. Outlining the types of training or employment secured would also be useful (adequate/satisfactory/permanent/etc.).

Maeve O'Sullivan
Social Inclusion Division
November 2014