

## Gender and Wider Equal Opportunities<sup>1</sup> Horizontal Principle Annual Reporting Template

For the period Jan. to Dec. 2013

**1. Name of Activity: Adult Literacy**

**No.: ESF 2.3**

### **2. What actions have taken place over the last year to incorporate the principle of gender and wider equal opportunities into the Activity?**

*(Examples: new objective created; new indicator developed; altered project selection criteria; collecting and/or reporting new data or collecting it in different ways; pursuing case studies; carrying out equality impact assessments; interpreting existing data in a different way; equality proofing exercises, promoting awareness and/or visibility of equality principle within activities, consultation with representatives of the wider equality grounds).*

Please note that in this context the wider equal opportunities principle refers to the nine grounds as set out in the equality legislation. These are gender; civil status; family status; age; disability; race; sexual orientation; religious belief; and membership of the Traveller Community.

### **A. Gender**

#### **(a) Ongoing Actions:**

The adult literacy programme provides basic education, including reading, writing and numeracy skills, and ICT for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies to enhance their participation in personal, social and economic life. The priority target cohort for adult literacy programmes are those adults with primary education or less and whose literacy and numeracy skills do not match Level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The gender split for learners attending literacy classes within the ETB sector has been in the ratio of 60% women and 40% men for a number of years. This ratio saw an improvement in the participation rates of men since 2010 to 43%. The participation rate of men was maintained in 2013 at almost 44%.

Separate Men's and Women's literacy groups have been developed and supported to reduce specific barriers that the two genders may experience.

Family literacy activities have been encouraged through the family literacy initiative. There is a higher level of female parents engaging in family literacy projects than men. In 2011/12, approximately 2,000 parents engaged in activities under the family literacy initiative. Participant numbers in 2012/13 were in excess of 2800. These groups are aimed at educationally disadvantaged parents in an attempt to break the cycle of educational disadvantage and to enhance their involvement in their children's education.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds. These are gender; civil status; family status; age; disability; race; sexual orientation; religious belief; and membership of the Traveller Community.

(b) New Actions:

Section 9 of the Further Education and Training Act 2013 provides that SOLAS, once established, will prepare and submit to the Minister for Education and Skills, a strategy in respect of further education and training with Subsection 6 requiring a strategy for the provision of further education and training programmes in the State aimed at promoting, developing and encouraging literacy and numeracy. This Strategy was launched on 12 May 2014 by the Minister for Education and Skills and identifies literacy and numeracy as one of five high level strategic goals and which provides a specific implementation strategy over the period 2015 to 2019 including ensuring increased participation with regard to priority target groups and broadening access routes and the range of provision.

Outreach programmes will be made available to engage those learners for whom the primary barrier to access is the location of provision which includes specific target groups such as disadvantaged women and men living in rural isolation.

## **B. Wider Equal Opportunities (excluding gender)**

(a) Ongoing Actions:

Adult Literacy programmes are targeted at those adults whose literacy and numeracy do not match those at level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Amongst this cohort of adults are individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and which have been identified in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2007 – 2016):

- Adults with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels, especially those with less than upper second level education or NFQ Levels 1-3, or equivalent
- The unemployed and in particular, the long term unemployed
- Lone Parents
- Travellers
- Migrants
- Older people
- People with a disability
- Disadvantaged women and men, particularly those living in rural isolation
- The homeless
- Ex-offenders
- Substance misusers

Adult Literacy Operational Guidelines (2012) were devised in conjunction with stakeholders to assist in the administration and management of the Adult Literacy programme. These guidelines identify those groups at whom adult literacy programmes are targeted, in particular those individuals and groups that experience

particular and acute barriers to participation as outlined in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion.

(b) New Actions:

A review of the Adult Literacy programme was carried out in 2013 which resulted in revised Adult Literacy Operational Guidelines issuing to ETB's in December 2013. The priority target cohort for adult literacy programmes are those adults with primary education or less and whose literacy and numeracy skills do not match Level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The establishment of referral protocols with key agencies will complement the existing referral systems in place in order to reach the priority target groups.

Outreach programmes will be made available to engage those learners for whom the primary barrier to access is the location of provision. Integration of basic skills support into the wider available further education and training programmes in order to target a wider cohort of adults.

**3. Progress against Indicators (where established):**

*(This should be presented if possible in the tabular form laid out below)*

Indicator	Baseline Position	Latest Position
Participants in Adult Literacy	35,0000	60,000

**4. Taking account of the material presented under 2 and 3 above, what contribution is the measure making to the promotion of gender and wider equal opportunities?**

*Examples:*

*Gender:*

*Are participation levels of women or men increasing? Are different needs of women and men being addressed? Are different levels of access for women and men being addressed? Are differential outcomes for women and men being measured?*

*Wider Equal Opportunities:*

*Are participation levels of wider equality grounds increasing? Are needs of wider equality grounds being more systematically identified and addressed by programme providers? By policymakers? Are differential outcomes for the wider equality grounds being measured?*

In total there were 60,822 participants availing of Adult Literacy provision in 2013, of which 56% were women and 44% were men.

The numbers of men availing of literacy tuition has increased at a higher rate than women in recent years. In the period 2000 to 2013, the numbers of men has almost quadrupled whereas the increase in the number of female participants has almost

trebled. In 2013, the gender breakdown on the ITABE programme was 53% men and 47% women.

Despite efforts to encourage increased male participation and address men's specific needs, there continues to be a higher level of females amongst Adult Literacy clients with the ratio of female learners to male learners continuing to be in the region of 60:40 for a number of years. In 2010, there was a slight improvement in the female to male ratio of 57% to 43% and in 2013 the ratio is 56% to 44%.

**5. Identify any issues arising that need to be drawn to the attention of the Managing Authority, the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Representatives or other Departments.<sup>2</sup>**

---

<sup>2</sup> The issues could relate to specific implementation concerns e.g. collection of data, or could relate to more general findings concerning the principle in question e.g. a particular policy in another department is obstructing your Activity from promoting the principle.

**6. Please feel free to attach any relevant additional material to this reporting template.**