

Gender and Wider Equal Opportunities Horizontal Principle Annual Reporting Template

For the period Jan. to Dec. 2011

1. Upskilling the Workforce (ESF 1.3) Back To Education Initiative

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

a) Ongoing Actions

The BTEI (Part-time) provides opportunities to a wide range of adults to gain general qualifications and specific skills that enable progression to further education and training and increase participation and mobility within the labour market. The Guidelines for the BTEI (Part-time) advocate strategies to promote innovation, learner centeredness, equality, accessibility and inclusiveness, the recognition and accommodation of diversity, quality assurance, local consultation and an area based approach.

The design and delivery of programmes (content, format, timing, location, duration, methodologies and learner supports) are adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.

In the context of gender a number of actions are of note:

- Specific strategies continue to be developed by providers to encourage a higher level of male participation. These include **outreach and pre-development work** and the provision of courses that have an outdoor or craft orientation e.g. woodcraft, horticulture but which also include general basic education elements such as Communications and ICT.
- **Inter-agency work** with other statutory and voluntary organizations aims to increase the participation of long-term unemployed men.
- **Childcare support** is provided to enable participation by those with childcare needs and courses are often organised at times when children are at school.
- BTEI eligibility criteria allows for **free tuition for any adult with less than upper second level education**. This encompasses those persons with a social welfare entitlement or medical card, those not in the labour market and those in employment who have less than upper second level education. The eligibility criteria includes access to free tuition for women in the home and for persons in low paid employment who have less than upper second level education.
- The payment of a **training allowance** (including meal and travel allowances) is important to encourage the participation of some learners e.g. Traveller men and women and lone parents aged 16-20 years of age who would be eligible for such an allowance if on a full-time programme.

With reference to the groups named under the wider equality grounds i.e. Travellers, older people, people with a disability and people within minority ethnic groups, the BTEI (Part-time) Guidelines notes these as high priority target groups. A number of specific actions include:

- Outreach and predevelopment work are common strategies when working with these four groups.
- Inter-agency work with other statutory and voluntary organizations is also a feature to address the participation of these groups.
- Programmes are provided for people with disabilities in collaboration with their support agencies. On-going integration into mainstream provision for those for whom this is appropriate is also a feature of provision.
- In some cases specialist equipment and individual support is provided for persons with a disability e.g. individual laptops, extra tuition, and transport.
- A training allowance (including meal and travel allowances) is provided for Travellers where they would have entitlement to this if participating on full-time programmes. This can be a significant element in attracting Travellers into the formal learning process.
- ESOL provision in outreach settings including accommodation centres was provided in 2010 as well as programmes for ethnic minority status participants.

b) New Actions

The reports from five development projects were disseminated during 2009 and reflected guidelines on issues concerning gender and wider equal opportunities as follows:

- ***Certification Matters: Guidelines to Support Certification Outcomes through Back to Education Initiative Funded Programmes.***
- ***Delivering Accredited Programmes to Learners with Disabilities: Guidelines for Facilitating the Successful Delivery of Back to Education Initiative Funded Programmes to Learners with Disabilities.***
- ***Widening Participation in Adult Learning: Guidelines for Effective Planning and Delivery of Back to Education Initiative Outreach Provision.***
- ***Promoting Access and Progression in Adult Learning: Guidelines to Enhance Cooperation between Back to Education Initiative and Adult Literacy Service Programmes.***
- ***Increasing Men's Participation in Adult Learning: Guidelines to Enhance Men's Engagement with Back to Education Initiative Funded Programmes.***

Copies of the guidelines may be accessed under the Back to Education Initiative at www.education.ie

The guidelines reflect Irish national policy priorities as well as current EU policy, as articulated in the Commission's Communication on Adult Learning, which

emphasises the need for measures to bring provision closer to adult learners in their communities and workplaces.

Curriculum guidelines to support providers to implement a foundation programme at NFQ Level 3, leading to a full award at this level were completed and disseminated in 2010. Supports to providers focused on the development of Level 3 integrated programmes, with particular reference to the core skills of Communications and Mathematics, as part of integrated programme development.

At an overall level, these reports and guidelines have helped to focus attention on the key objectives of BTEI (Part-time) and have **supported providers in the planning and delivery of programmes leading to accredited outcomes for groups named under the wider equality grounds.** In particular, it is of note that the guidelines on men's engagement have contributed to **an increase in the overall male participation rate to 32%. Of those who achieved certification in 2010, 29% were men and this is an increase from the position at end 2010** which showed that of those who achieved certification 27% were men (in 2008, 18% of those who achieved certification were men).

The guidelines on delivering accredited programmes to learners with disabilities have helped to promote the need to match learners to appropriate programmes in order to optimize positive outcomes.

3. Progress against Indicators (where established):

3.1 Data collected on BTEI (Part-time) **target groups** is based on participant self-selection.

- Rates of participation by early school leavers (39%) are high when compared to other target groups as the general focus of the BTEI (Part-time) is on those with low education levels.
- The participation rate of persons with a disability (10.5%) remains high relative to other target groups.
- The 2.3% participation rate among Travellers is in addition to the places reserved for full-time provision in Senior Traveller Training Centres.
- 10% of all participants in 2011 reported under Ethnic Minorities (Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant Workers)
- There was a decrease in the participation rate of those aged over 55 from 20% in 2008 to 17% in 2009 and this had correlated with an increased level of participation in those aged under 35, which was a result of the priority on provision for the newly unemployed seeking to upskill. The participation rate of those aged over 55 remained at 17% for 2011.

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- Data on the **participation of unemployed people showed an increase from 34% of participants in 2010 to 40% in 2011.**

The following presents a profile of participants classified by gender and BTEI (Part-time) target groups for 2011:

Target Group	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
Person with Disability	1,540	1,827	3,367 10.5%
Substance Misuser	227	96	323 1.0%
Ex-offender	84	26	110 0.3%
Early School Leaver	4,549	7,836	12,385 38.7%
One-Parent Family	164	3,960	4,124 12.9%
Traveller	135	598	733 2.3%
Homeless	103	43	146 0.5%
ESOL Participant	525	951	1,476 4.6%
Refugee	152	211	363 1.1%
Asylum Seeker	210	259	469 1.5%
Migrant Worker	327	480	807 2.5%
Other	4,166	9,983	14,149 44.2%

*Target Groups presented as a % of Total Participants National **32,030***

3.2 The following presents data for 2010 in relation to the 2007 baseline position of the progress indicators:

(1) Indicator: Number of Males		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	6,016	23%
2008	6,457	24%
2009	8,085	29%
2010	8,591	31%
2011	10,269	32%

(2) Indicator: Number of Females		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	19,844	77%
2008	20,647	76%
2009	20,109	71%
2010	19,368	69%
2011	21,761	68%

(3) Indicator: Number of Persons with a Disability		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	3,745	14.5%
2008	3,932	14.5%
2009	4,018	14.3%
2010	3,639	13%
2011	3,367	10.5%

(4) Indicator: Number of Travellers		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	844	3.3%
2008	1,171	4.3%
2009	857	3%
2010	703	2.5%
2011	733	2.3%

(5) Indicator: Number from Ethnic Minorities (ESOL, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant Workers)		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	2,625	10%
2008	2,785	10%
2009	3,354	12%
2010	2,839	10%
2011	3,115	10%

(6) Indicator: Number of Older People (aged over 55)		% of participants
Baseline Position 2007	5,336	21%
2008	5,305	20%
2009	4,778	17%
2010	4,863	17%
2011	5,324	17%

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?

4.1 In total there were 32,030 participants in courses under the BTEI (Part-time) in 2011, of which 68% were women and 32% were men. **This reflects an increase in the participation rate of men from 31% in 2010, 29% in 2009 and 24% in 2008.**

This higher proportion of male participants may reflect the increasing demand for further education and training provision by newly unemployed men. It is also likely that it reflects providers' specific efforts to address the previously low rate of male participation, drawing on the guidelines published in 2009, ***Increasing Men's Participation in Adult Learning: Guidelines to Enhance Men's Engagement with Back to Education Initiative Funded Programmes***

An aim of the guidelines was to support providers work with men that would lead to positive outcomes in terms of certification and progression opportunities. **Of those who achieved certification in 2011, 29% (3,196) were men and this is an increase from the position at end 2010 which showed that of those who achieved certification 27% were men.** (In 2008, 18% of those who achieved certification were men).

4.2 As part of the annual application process providers indicate that they consult widely at local level when determining priorities for provision. These include organisations such as the National Training Development Institute, Rehab Care, Headway Ireland, Special Schools, and the Brothers of Charity all of which provide services to persons with a disability, Local Traveller Support Groups, organisations providing support and services to ethnic minorities and Age Action Ireland.

4.3 The guidelines outlined in section 2.b have particular relevance to gender and wider equal opportunities. The report ***Widening Participation in Adult Learning*** highlights key issues in outreach work, the primary purpose of which is to widen access for new and non-traditional adult learners, particularly those who do not usually avail of educational provision. The report ***Delivering Accredited Programmes to Learners with Disabilities*** identifies key elements of planning and provision of relevance to work with this target group.

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.¹

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

¹ 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.