

**1. Upskilling the Workforce (ESF 1.3)
Back to Education Initiative (Part-time)**

2. What actions have taken place over the last year to incorporate the principle of social inclusion into the Activity?

2.1 Ongoing Actions

The overall aim of the Back to Education Initiative (Part-time) is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in range of flexible learning options. A high priority is to target individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and the Guidelines for the BTEI (Part-time) identify a number of specific target groups including disadvantaged men and women, lone parents, homeless people, substance misusers, ex-offenders. The Guidelines also set out principles to underpin planning and provision at local level which include innovation, learner centredness, equality, accessibility and inclusiveness, the recognition and accommodation of diversity, quality assurance, local consultation and an area based approach. Provision and delivery (e.g. timing, location, duration, methodologies and learner supports) are adapted to meet a wide range of learner needs.

With regard to social inclusion a number of actions are particularly of note:

- Providers engage in a wide local consultation process on an annual basis to identify priorities for course provision. This consultation process involves the target groups of the BTEI (Part-time), the local community, groups and organisations representative of particular interest groups.
- Outreach and predevelopment strategies are used to recruit and encourage participation by those least likely to take part in educational programmes.
- Guidance and mentoring are integrated into programmes to support completion and progression.
- Training allowances (including meal and travel allowances) are available to those who meet specific eligibility criteria e.g. participants between 16-20 years of age who would be eligible for such allowances if participating in a full-time programme under Youthreach.
- Childcare support is provided to enable participation by those with childcare needs and courses are often organised at times when children are at school.
- Flexible budget management enables providers to consider specific strategies to meet special needs e.g. building in extra tuition, use of artistic and other creative elements to encourage and support participation.
- 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.

2.2 New Actions

(a) The comments in the report of the **Combat Poverty Agency** in relation to the BTEI (Part-time) Social Inclusion Report for 2008 were noted.

(b) **Five development projects** designed to address some of the recommendations outlined in the BTEI Discussion Document circulated in October 2006 by the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science were completed and disseminated during 2009. These guidelines reflect on social inclusion issues and it is intended that they will support providers in working with learners from a broad range of target groups.

In each case the intention was to produce practical guidelines of relevance to practitioners. The projects are 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.*

The guidelines on outreach have particular relevance to social inclusion. They highlight 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 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.

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

A further project has developed **curriculum guidelines to support providers to implement a foundation programme at NFQ Level 3**, leading to a full award at this level. Further work on this project will take place during 2010.

(c) The new awards at Levels 1 and 2 on the National Framework of Qualifications have relevance for a key target group within BTEI, people with disabilities. In some cases the validation of the new programmes at these levels has been delayed because of industrial relations issues.

3. Progress against Indicators

In total there were **28,194** participants in courses under the BTEI (Part-time) in 2009, of which **71% were women and 29% were men**. This reflects an increase of 1,090 on the position in 2008 (27,104 participants).

Indicator: Number participating with less than upper second level education <i>and dependent on social welfare support</i>	Male	Female	Total	% of participants
Baseline Position 2007			15,054	58%
2008	4,115	10,784	14,899	55%
2009	4,764	9,540	14,304	51%

For 2009, a further 3,811 participants were reported as having less than upper second level education but not dependent on social welfare support. Therefore, **65% (18,115) of all participants in BTEI in 2009 had less than upper second level education on entry**.

The table below shows the **education level and social welfare / economic status** of participants in 2009 as expressed through the BTEI (Part-time) funding categories:

BTEI (Part-time) Funding Category	Total	Gender	
		Male	Female
Category 2A: Persons in receipt of jobseeker payments or means tested social welfare payments and holders of medical cards and their dependents with less than upper second level education	14304 51%	4764	9540
Category 2B: Persons in receipt of jobseeker payments or means tested social welfare payments and holders of medical cards and their dependents with upper second level education	8498 30%	2061	6437
Category 3: Persons in employment or not in the labour market with less than upper second level education	3811 14%	987	2824
Category 4: All others with upper second level education	1581 5%	273	1308
Total	28,194 100%	8,085	20,109

*Funding Categories presented as a % of Total Participants National **28,194***

A total of 81% (22,802) of all participants in 2009 (Categories 2A and 2B above) were reported as dependent on social welfare support of whom 14,304 had less than upper second level education on entry to BTEI.

4. Taking account of the material presented under 2 and 3 above, what contribution is the Activity making to the promotion of social inclusion

4.1 A significant contribution is the provision of opportunities to learn through part-time mode in a wide range of locations and settings and at a variety of times. This accommodates provision for those who find full-time programmes inaccessible and are least likely to take part in courses in formal education settings. A high priority is to target individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and the Guidelines for the BTEI (Part-time) identify a number of specific target groups. The following presents a summary of participants classified by gender and the BTEI (Part-time) target groups for 2009:

Target Group	Total	Gender	
		Male	Female
Person with Disability	4018 14.3%	1782	2236
Substance Misuser	731 2.6%	316	415
Ex-offender	147 0.5%	113	34
Early School Leaver	9650 34.2%	3077	6573
One-Parent Family	3610 12.8%	101	3509
Traveller	857 3%	176	681
Homeless	120 0.4%	86	34
ESOL Participant	1740 6.2%	635	1105
Refugee	327 1.2%	147	180
Asylum Seeker	847 3%	323	524
Migrant Worker	440 1.6%	202	238
Other	10823 38.4%	2663	8160

Target Groups presented as a % of Total Participants National **28,194**

The table below shows the **education level and social welfare / economic status** of the designated target groups as expressed through the BTEI (Part-time) funding categories:

Target Group	BTEI (Part-time) Funding Category			
	C2a	C2b	C3	C4
Person with Disability	73%	22%	5%	0.2%
Substance Misuser	59%	28%	12%	0%
Ex-offender	71%	12%	17%	0%
Early School Leaver	73%	4%	22%	0.3%
One-Parent Family	51%	44%	4%	1%
Traveller	83%	6%	11%	0%
Homeless	76%	22%	2%	0%
ESOL Participant	42%	29%	23%	6%
Refugee	52%	41%	6%	1%
Asylum Seeker	58%	36%	4%	2%
Migrant Worker	36%	34%	21%	9%
Other	31%	45%	11%	14%

The data identifies that 94% of Traveller participants and 79% of those reported under Person with a Disability have less than upper second level education.

4.3 The data for 2009 demonstrates that a high priority is the provision of courses for those who are unemployed (31%) or not in the labour market (49%). The table hereunder shows the economic/employment status classified by gender of BTEI (Part-time) participants in 2009.

Economic / Employment Status BTEI (Part-time) 2009: Profile of Economic / Employment Status	Participants		
	Male	Female	Total
Unemployed Job Seekers Benefit / Allowance	3351	5306	8657 31%
Employed Fulltime	562	1285	1847 6.5%
Employed Part-time	564	3264	3828 13.6%
Not in the Labour Market	3477	10180	13657 49%
Total	7,954	20,035	27,989

*As a % of Total Participants for whom Economic/Employment Status Data provided: **27,989***

Note: Economic / Employment Status data not provided for 205 participants

This data shows **an increase in the participation of those who are unemployed** from 24.5% in 2008 to 31% in 2009. The decrease in the participation of those classified as not in the labour market, from 54% in 2008 to 49% in 2009 **reflects providers' response to increasing demand for further education and training from the newly unemployed.**

5. Identify any issues arising that need to be drawn to the attention of the Managing Authority, the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee or other Departments.¹

Nil.

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

Nil.

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.