

Gender and Wider Equal Opportunities Horizontal Principle Annual Reporting Template

For the period January to December 2011

**1. Name of Activity: Early School Leavers – Youthreach and Senior Traveller
Training Centres** **No.: ESF 2.5**

**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:

All actions in the two programmes are informed by the following key principles;

- ACCESS – through the provision of programmes at a variety of levels to meet the needs of early school leavers presenting on the programmes;
- RECOGNITION – through the provision of national certification
- PROGRESSION – to further levels of education and training
- SUPPORTS – to help sustain participants in the programme in order that they may derive maximum benefit from them

Since its inception the training programmes have promoted a policy of equal opportunity for learners. It is recognised that educational disadvantage results from a variety of factors and programmes are tailored to accommodate the individual needs of participants. Support services including childcare and counselling is provided.

Just under 13% of the young women participating in Youthreach in 2011 are lone parents. This has led to the demand for specialised programmes within the Youthreach setting to cater for their needs. Parenting programmes for both males and females and programmes addressing gender roles in personal development classes have also been developed in Youthreach.

The programme runs for between six and nine months depending on the needs of the group. On completion, the participants are reintegrated back into the Youthreach programme where they are supported and encouraged to go on and achieve certification at a variety of different levels including Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and FETAC Levels 1 to 5.

In the measure there is a recognition that groups such as Travellers, people with disabilities, older adults, and participants in disadvantaged areas may have distinct needs and cultural patterns which must be respected and reflected in an educational context.

Note also that Youthreach age and qualification criteria for admission to the programme may be widened in the case of the following groups –

- lone parents
- referrals from the National Rehabilitation Board
- learners who have been released from detention
- learners whose personal circumstances are such that a Foundation education and training programme is the most appropriate option for them to pursue qualifications and
- Drug Court participants

In addition, support services are provided in recognition of the practical, emotional and social problems that many of the participants have. The aim is to increase the capacity of the centres to cater for the needs of participants and to provide links with community based health and social services.

Continuing Professional Development

Staff in Youthreach and STTCs continue to have access to Continuing Professional Development through their VEC. Funding is provided to VECs directly from the Department of Education and Skills.

(b) New Actions:

i) Phasing out of the STTC programme

The 2006 *Report and Recommendation for a Traveller Education Strategy* recommended that STTC provision be reviewed. The Department then conducted a Value for Money Review of the Youthreach and STTC programmes. The Review was published in 2008 and recommended the phasing out of segregated STTC provision over the medium to long term and the mainstreaming of Traveller specific provision.

As part of Budget 2009, STTC provision was reduced by 100 places to 984 places from September 2009 and as part of Budget 2010, there was a further reduction of 300 places in September 2010.

As part of Budget 2011 it was announced that in line with the Traveller Education Strategy and the 2008 Value for Money Review of Youthreach and STTCs, integrated further education provision for Travellers will be implemented through the phasing out of STTCs by June 2012.

Some STTCs closed in 2011 and the remainder will be phased out by June 2012. Travellers are free to access a range of integrated full time and part time Further Education programmes such as – Adult Literacy, Community Education, Back To Education Initiative (BTEI), VTOS and Youthreach.

For example in 2011, 578 Travellers participated in the Youthreach programme and 733 Travellers participated in BTEI courses.

ii) Child Protection Guidelines

Training in relation to the Child Protection Guidelines was provided to Youthreach and STTC staff in 2006. Work on developing Child Protection Guidelines specifically for these centres is ongoing at present.

3. Progress against Indicators (where established):

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

Indicator	Baseline Position	Latest Position
Progression of learners who complete the programme to employment, education or training	69%	1. Youthreach 2011 – 62% 2. STTC 2011* – 43%

*Only 35 learners completed the STTC programme in 2011. Most learners remained in the programme as the centres are due to be phased out in June 2012.

Indicator	Baseline Position	Latest Position
Male : Female ration of learners	2006 – 1. Youthreach (Male 49.8% : Female 50.2%) 2. STTC (Male 14.5% : Female 85.5%)	1. Youthreach 2011 (Male 58% : Female 42%) 2. STTC 2011 (Male 19% : Female 81%)

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?

Male and female participation in the Youthreach programme has generally been approximately equal, although in recent years the number of male learners has been increasing. The measure ensures that both males and females who have left school with no qualifications have a second chance to gain access, participate in and benefit from education of sufficient quality to allow them to find employment or to progress to further education and training.

Traditionally male participation in STTCs has been low. Efforts are being made to encourage male participants to attend these centres by providing programmes that male travellers are interested in attending. The STTC programme is being phased out by June 2012, Travellers are free to access the full range of full time and part time Further Education programmes.

Education plays a key role in the provision of equality of opportunity and determines to a large extent the life chances of people. Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training are designed as part of an integrated strategy to address education disadvantage in the context of a continuum of provision.

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.

Attached please find tables showing the gender and age of learners in both programmes. Also attached is a table showing an analysis of learners.

A) Gender and ages of learners:

YOUTHREACH	Male	Female	Total
Aged 15	100	62	162 (5%)
16	401	224	625 (19%)
17	551	361	612 (27%)
18	483	345	828 (25%)
19	214	213	427 (13%)
20	125	133	258 (8%)
21-25	43	66	109 (3%)
Total	1,917	1,404	3,321

STTC	Male	Female	Total
Aged 16 – 17	0	0	0
18 – 20	20	50	70 (15%)
21 – 24	21	75	96 (21%)
25 – 34	23	99	122 (26%)
35 – 44	17	69	86 (18%)
45 – 54	3	54	57 (12%)
55 +	4	31	35 (8%)
Total	88	378	466

B) Analysis of learners:

YOUTHREACH	Male	Female	Total
Traveller	273	305	578
Person having a disability	169	86	255
Ex-offender	179	33	212
Lone Parent	33	179	212
Homeless	21	11	32
In Care	58	59	117
Migrant/Refugee	4	0	4

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.

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Analysis of learners

STTC	Male	Female	Total
Traveller	81	358	439
Person having a disability	24	44	68
Ex-offender	6	2	8
Lone Parent	2	33	35
Homeless	0	0	0
In Care	0	0	0
Migrant/Refugee	0	0	0