Gorge Walking MOST GYDP Outdoor Education Group
Welcome to the 5th issue of the ESF for the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCI-OP) 2007-2013.

The Newsletter highlights some of the achievements of the ESF in Ireland in 2012. The articles in this issue show the variety of projects that benefit from the ESF in both the BMW Region and the South and East Region. The cover photo shows the participants from the MOST Garda Youth Diversion Project’s Outdoor Education Group (located in Dublin City) taking part in a “Gorge Walk” in Co. Wicklow.

In 2012, a new Skills programme (Momentum) and degree course in Game Development at Athlone Institute of Technology commenced as well as the launch of DACT – the new Disability Activation Project.

Game Development

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) has introduced an honours degree course for game development in response to the demand for highly qualified software engineering graduates for the gaming industry in Ireland.

Disability Activation Project (DACT)

The new Disability Activation Project (DACT) was launched in October by the Minister for Social Protection with the objective of increasing the capacity and potential of people with disabilities to participate in the labour market.

Momentum Skills Programme

The new Labour Market Education and Training Fund (LMETF) was launched in December by the Ministers for Education & Skills, Training and Skills and the Tánaiste (see page 36) entitled Momentum Skills Programme with the aim of providing free training and education for up to 6,500 unemployed people, including in particular, the under 25’s. On-the-job training will form part of the modules being offered. See further details at page 36 below.

Willie Mcintosh
Head of ESF Managing Authority

“On-the-job training will form part of the modules being offered…”
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PRIORITY 1: INCREASING ACTIVATION OF THE LABOUR FORCE

Skills Training – FAS - (ESF 1.1) | FAS – Local Training Initiative (LTI)

FÁS co-operates with local community organisations to provide flexible Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) for unemployed persons. The LTI programme is designed to provide opportunities for unemployed people aged 18-35 years who are experiencing difficulty in gaining entry to the labour market due to personal, social economic or geographic disadvantage.

LTIs provide vocational training opportunities and learning supports to assist participants achieve awards on the National Framework of Qualifications at levels 3, 4 and 5, and to develop capacity to progress to further training, education and work.

In 2012, over 150 LTI supported organisations engaged in a wide range of initiatives, including environment, genealogy, heritage, tourism, theatre, sports and coaching.

In 2012, over 150 LTI supported organisations engaged in a wide range of initiatives...."}

Local Training Initiative (LTI) Access Programme Wexford

This is a local Training Initiative in which twenty young men and women aged between 18 and 25 years completed a year long FAS sponsored Employment Skills Training Programme.
Traineeship

The FÁS National Traineeship programme is a system of market led training tailored to the needs of Irish industry, enterprise and local businesses. Traineeships are occupational specific and industry endorsed training programmes which combine Training Centre and on-the-job elements leading to FETAC major awards, mostly at levels 5 and 6 and/or industry recognised certification providing access to specific occupations in designated sectors. These programmes are targeted at occupations which are not designated as apprenticeships but entail significant skill requirements which are best acquired through a combination of alternating periods of on and off-the-job training.

2,823 people completed traineeship programmes in 2012.

Specific Skills Training

FÁS under the Specific Skills Training Programme provides a large range of employment led training courses of an industrial and commercial nature such as E-Commerce, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Engineering, Logistics, Services, Marketing and Sales, for the unemployed, redundant workers, persons wishing to update their skills, for school leavers and others entering the labour market. These courses are available to applicants who are above the statutory school leaving age and are out of full time education, unemployed persons or redundant workers and those seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market.

15,101 people completed Skills Training programmes in 2012.

“These courses are available to applicants who are above the statutory school leaving age and are out of full time education, unemployed persons or redundant workers and those seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market.”
BTEI – Back to Education Initiative (Part-time) (ESF 1.3)

**Athlone VTOS (Westmeath VEC)**

Maria Ryan Co-ordinator of Athlone VTOS discusses the BTEI programmes and the success stories of students who availed of the program.

“Often students enjoy the part time programme so much that it encourages them to progress to the full time programme. We run BTEI and VTOS in the same building so the students become comfortable with the tutors and other full time students and this often provides a great progression route for them. We have definitely found that the BTEI students who progress on to the full time are very good students who benefit hugely from having done the full FETAC level 4 certificate.”

It is fantastic to see how the part time BTEI programme has worked so well and indeed has changed students lives!

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**Adeline Revins**

Adeline Revins initially participated in a morning BTEI General Studies class. She then progressed to the Art/Craft/Design course on VTOS and is now in her second year at AIT studying Graphic design. She is pictured here receiving her certificate from the then Mayor of Athlone, Mark Cooney.
Angela Coyle also participated in a morning BTEI class and progressed to the VTOS course where she is studying for a FETAC L5 Business Administration cert. She is pictured here at a recent presentation of certificates where she spoke to the audience of her experiences on both the part time and full time course.

She urged anyone in the audience who was thinking of doing a course to contact us at Athlone VTOS and start doing a part time course - that it was a great way to start to build new skills, grow in confidence and meet new friends!

“She urged anyone in the audience who was thinking of doing a course to contact us at Athlone VTOS and start doing a part time course”

Esther Oke studied in the BTEI morning and subsequently afternoon class. She was one of our first part time students to successfully pass all her modules and receive a full L5 certificate in Business Studies. She has now progressed to a childcare course at another college. She is pictured here with the former Chairman of Westmeath VEC Committee Mr Dan McCarthy.

“She was one of our first part time students to successfully pass all her modules and receive a full L5 certificate in Business Studies.”
The downturn in the construction sector left Dermot with little option but to re-skill or to emigrate again...

Hazel Heaton is one of our current part time students. She was a very motivated and enthusiastic student when she started the part time level 4 class in General Studies. She left school at 15 with no exams and was delighted to receive her full L4 certificate gaining 3 Merits and 5 Distinctions. She came back to study in the afternoon class and is working towards the L5 Business Administration certificate. She hopes to progress on to the Access Foundation course at Athlone Institute of Technology next year. She is pictured here receiving her full L4 FETAC certificate from the current Mayor of Athlone, Mr Jim Henson.

Hazel Heaton

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“She left school at 15 with no exams and was delighted to receive her full L4 certificate gaining 3 Merits and 5 Distinctions.”
South Tipperary VEC – Project Futsal

South Tipperary VEC and the FAI are running a Project Futsal hub in Clonmel through the Back to Education Initiative. There are 28 participants on the course who will achieve a full FETAC Award in Sports and Recreation in May 2013.

The course was advertised through the Back to Education Initiative in April 2012 and through the FAI Website throughout the summer months. In all, fifty applicants were interviewed for a place on the course. Subject areas being delivered and funded by the BTEI Programme are: Sports and Recreation, Exercise and Fitness, Occupational First Aid, Communications, Work Experience and IT.

The FAI is delivering the following subjects: FUTSAL Coaching Certificate, Video Match Analysis, Intercultural Awareness Workshop, Goalkeeping Coaching Certificate, and Child Protection Training. The group have been assisting in carrying out work experience in community clubs and schools throughout the county to develop primary age children’s interest in soccer.

Six of the participants who excel in the course are to be offered internships with the FAI for the duration of a year. Many more of the participants have applied to Third Level to pursue further education and training and have been supported by the South Tipperary VEC Adult Guidance Service to do this.

John Delaney, CEO of FAI plans to visit the group in the near future.
ESF-funded engineering courses hit the right mark

From Super Mario to Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty, the global gaming industry has proven incredibly resilient to the economic downturn. In a national context, employment in the Irish-based video games industry has increased 91 per cent since 2009 to a current estimated total of some 3,000 workers, and has generated revenues of 2bn since 2001.

Recognising the need for highly qualified software engineering graduates with expertise in game development, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) developed an honours degree, which has been highly recognised by employers.

Award-winning game designer and former CEO/co-founder of Open Emotion, Paddy Murphy, described the AIT degree as having an ‘absolutely fantastic curriculum’, saying that it hits all the right marks that they’d need in a graduate.

Professional endorsement for other AIT engineering qualifications funded by the Undergraduate Skills Programme was recently obtained from Engineers Ireland. The professional body for engineers and engineering in Ireland accredited nine programmes at higher certificate and ordinary degree level, deeming them to meet the educational standard for the titles, ‘Engineering Technician’ and ‘Associate Engineer’ respectively.

The programmes funded as part of Ireland’s EU Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013 were BEng programmes (Level 7) in computer engineering and mechatronics, as well as a higher certificate (Level 6) in electronics and computer engineering.

Head of the School of Engineering, Dr Austin Hanley, said that: ‘This is an excellent result and a real endorsement by the engineering professional body of our programmes. It underscores the measures we have taken to ensure that our graduates possess the requisite skills and knowledge sought by employers, as well as the flexibility to progress in their chosen careers.’

‘These measures include our new Engineering and Informatics Building,’ Dr Hanley continued, ‘which is a landmark on campus and enables our students, faculty and researchers to work and learn in a world-class environment.’
Mr. Padraig Cooke, lecturer in mechatronics discussing the latest technological developments with students from the bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics programme.

The students, Brian Murphy and Cathal Buckley (pictured below) working on the FMS200 - the latest in automation training equipment which allows the user to develop the professional skills required by today’s automated industry.
PRIORITY 2: INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND REDUCING INEQUALITY IN THE LABOUR FORCE

DACT – Disability Activation Project (ESF 2.2)

The Disability Activation Project (DACT) aims to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market.

This Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Social Protection and is targeted at the Border, Midlands and Western region. The target group for this funding is people with a disability, 16 to 65 years of age, in receipt of disability/illness welfare payments who reside in the BMW region.

Following a call for applications from organisations that had experience of working with people with a disability, a total of over €7 million has been committed to 14 projects under four key strands as follows:

- Strand 1 – Improving Access to Employment
- Strand 2 – Progression Programmes for Young People
- Strand 3 – Support for Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability
- Strand 4 – Innovative Employer Initiatives

Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection and President Michael D Higgins supporting the launch of the Disability Activation Project
Pobal manages the administration of the DACT Project on behalf of the Department of Social Protection and the 14 approved projects listed below are now in contact and fully operational. One of the successful applicants, Drumlin House, has set up the “Step Right to Work Programme”. This project, based in Cootehill Co Cavan, aims to create linkages between employers and people with disabilities.

Step Right to Work will seek to address gaps in work opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities attending the training centre, by developing their knowledge, skills and attributes through person centered training and support.

The programme will use the existing experience and achievements of participants to improve their ability to work in their own locality. It aims to raise awareness of the capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities to participate in work with local employers as well as support each participant in the job search, interview preparation, job induction and work supervision.

Drumlin House launched their new programme in December 2012 and already has a number of participants and employers engaged in the project.
The list of projects selected for funding are set out below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant &amp; Project Title</th>
<th>Project Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICTU – Options programme</td>
<td>Individual progression plan mentoring – FETAC training and work placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Learning Network</td>
<td>Comprehensive Transition Plan for adolescents with autism/learning disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walkinstown Assoc for people with an Intellectual Disability – Providing Equal Progression routes (PEER)</td>
<td>Building capacity, competence and potential through person centred planning for 16-24 year olds, using local community networks and trained volunteers (buddy system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. – Ability Activation North East</td>
<td>Awareness raising with employers (training w/shops, engagement with local authorities, business sector identification etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Bradley Foundation/Acquired Brain Injury Ireland – Work4You</td>
<td>Establish 3 vocational assessment to support people with acquired brain injuries to remain in or re-enter the workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Limerick/Arthritis Ireland – Working with Arthritis – Solutions &amp; Strategies</td>
<td>Developing individualised occupational therapy programmes to overcome barriers faced by people with arthritis in accessing, remaining in or returning to work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Learning Network – Linking In</td>
<td>Developing early supportive interventions for people on Illness Benefit to promote reintegration specifically in the SME sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brothers of Charity Roscommon – Open to Work Opportunities</td>
<td>Building relationships between (rural) employers and people with disabilities to ensure appropriate job placements which match needs of both</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Learning Network – Personal Employment Pathway</td>
<td>Develop personalised integration strategy for participants below FETAC 3 level – case managed, community based, job tasters etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Association of Supported Employment – Open Door</td>
<td>Awareness raising with employers – targeted employer events, supports to ‘new’ employers, develop online support materials etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumlin House - Step Right to Work</td>
<td>Providing enhanced personalised service to people with disability who currently receive personal development and work-skills training in Drumlin House &amp; develop relationships with local employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo LEADER partnership – SEED</td>
<td>Community based mentoring and employment supports service (personalised progression plans and case management) for and by people with disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers of Charity Galway – Access to Work, Let’s Get to Work, Supported Employment Intensive</td>
<td>Targeting people with disability with very high support needs with person-centred planning, securing employment or developing business enterprise with local business people as mentors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. Roscommon Disability Support group - Disability Activation for Work Nutrition (DAWN)</td>
<td>One-stop shop for training and business incubation – case managed approach with groups of 15, personal development plans, education, work-placement, self-employment supports</td>
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Adult Literacy – (ESF 2.3)

Jackie Finney is a mother of eight children and a grandmother of four. She came to the Adult Literacy Service in Co. Meath VEC to do a computer course. She then went on to complete a full FETAC level 3 major award with the literacy service. When this was completed Jackie had the confidence to apply for and get a job in childcare. She also appeared in the RTE television programme “Stuck for Words”. She then came to the Back to Education Initiative in Meath VEC and started studying for a FETAC level 5 Major award in Childcare. Jackie stood up and gave a speech to a packed room on the night she was presented with her FETAC level 5 certificate.

Jackie has now also completed a FETAC level 6 award in Advanced Supervision and Management and is delighted with how far she has come in the four years since she started studying. She is a terrific inspiration to any learner who is an early school leaver and can show just how far you can go with the right support and your own determination.

Speech by Jackie Finney – BTEI Awards Night Wednesday 28th November 2012

“As I stand here before you it has been the culmination of four years studying. I started off tentatively learning basic computer skills with the Adult Literacy Service and progressed onto a FETAC Level 3 Major Award. From that I successfully applied and got a job working in childcare and completed my Level 5 Childcare Major Award on which I’m being bestowed this great honour tonight.

This is proof that anybody can return to education and there is no better place than the VEC in Navan. It has given me the courage and belief in myself that nothing is impossible. I have gone from a 17 year old girl with not a great junior cert to eight distinctions in FETAC Level 5. This would not have been possible without the guidance and encouragement I received from the Tutors, Miriam, Helen and Deirdre and staff of Meath VEC. They coaxed and listened and made me believe in myself. They stripped away years of fear and worthlessness. I worked hard because the education I received was 100% and the more I learned the stronger I became.

The barriers I had placed in my own head about learning slowly began to come down. I made a TV programme for NALA called ‘Stuck for Words’ and I was inundated with people inspired to make the first step. I’m glad I took the first step and I’m proud of the VEC and forever they will have a special place in my heart.

I have met many wonderful people and have so many new friends. I have now completed FETAC Level 6 in Advanced Supervision and Management gaining another 4 Distinctions.

Knowledge is power and qualifications count. I’m the mother of eight beautiful children and four grandchildren so if I can do it anyone can.

Thank you so much.”
NUI Maynooth Disability Service

Recognising that the transition to higher education is a significant challenge for students with disabilities, the Disability Office at NUI Maynooth developed a unique and innovative academic skills module known as Student+. The module is supported by the ESF co-financed Fund for Students with Disabilities.

Student+ blends learning strategies with educational technology to help students acquire the necessary skills to become independent learners. Combing group classroom sessions, online activities and tutor support, Student+ is a structured programme of academic support that is delivered over a full academic year. Students learn about academic principles, study skills, writing techniques, using technology in learning, exam techniques, different learning styles and more.

Student+ continues to evolve and this year the Disability Office introduced webinars to promote online collaboration and to remove the barriers of time and place. The use of online communication tools promotes interaction amongst the group, encouraging students to discuss their understanding of new materials and to flag topics that need further explanation in the face-to-face environment. Student+ is a move away from the traditional model of ‘transmitting’ information, and promotes peer based learning that is guided by a trained tutor.

Students who complete Student+ learn to study smarter not harder. They become more confident academically, learn how to manage a challenging academic workload, perform well in assessments and feel more comfortable in the University learning environment. Below are just some of the feedback comments from students with disabilities using Student+:

“Overwhelmed at first, but by the end of the first semester I’m settled, more organised and loving Maynooth!”

“I felt that the class atmosphere was excellent, and as the class numbers were small it was very intimate. All the class got on really well and were extremely supportive to each other.”

“It’s a great help! Go to Student+. Take all the help you can get. Student+ is a great service!”

“If you feel you are struggling with the basic aspects of college life I would recommend going along to Student+.”

“Because of the help I received I’ve got through 1st year and am looking forward to 2nd year.”

“Overwhelmed at first, but by the end of the first semester I’m settled, more organised and loving Maynooth!”
‘My story’: Leanne McDonagh, Member of the Travelling Community

**HDip for Art & Design Teachers**  
**BA (Honours) in Fine Art & Design Graduate**

I am a member of the Travelling Community and I am currently a student of the Higher Diploma in Art Teaching at Crawford College of Art and Design, a college of Cork Institute of Technology.

When I was in secondary school I did not have any interest in going to college. However, I was good at Art and the teachers from my secondary school encouraged me to fulfil my potential in this area. I agreed after much persuasion to at least fill out the CAO form thinking nothing ventured nothing gained. When the results and college places came out I actually got offers for the two courses I had applied for, Graphic Design, and Art and Design in CIT Crawford College of Art and Design.

Although I was very apprehensive and still not sure if I really wanted to go to college I decided to give it a try. The first few weeks were great and I was surprised how much I enjoyed it. It was not a chore as I had expected. I loved what I was doing and I was excited to learn as much as I could about Art. In the first year of college I was introduced to Deirdre Creedon in the Access Office at CIT. This contact enabled me to avail of financial supports through the ESF co-financed Student Assistance Fund. These funds contributed to the costs of my course materials and took the pressure off financially.

Through my contact with Deirdre, I became involved as a guest speaker for the CIT/UCC Partnership Programme for Travellers. I spoke to many traveller students attending different schools around the city. It was interesting to see the reactions of these students when I mentioned I was a member of the traveller community. It was as if they did not expect a guest speaker representing third level colleges to be a traveller. I was looked upon by the different schools as a role model for these students. The idea behind the programme was to ignite a spark in these students and to show them there is access for all in education.

In relation to society, the general perception that travellers who become educated are then ostracised from their communities could not be further from the truth. I am now doing the Higher Diploma for Art & Design Teachers and doing my practice in my old school, Loreto Secondary School, in Fermoy. I am glad I took the advice and encouragement from my secondary school teachers to do the best I could to fulfil my potential.

“In relation to society, the general perception that travellers who become educated are then ostracised from their communities could not be further from the truth.”
Luke Savage – Student at I.T. Sligo. RIP

Luke had no sensitivity in relation to his disability while most of the students funded under the Access Measure would be sensitive about the support that they receive. Unfortunately Luke passed away peacefully and suddenly in June 2012. A number of former class colleagues graduated and posthumously Luke was awarded the Corn Sheain Mhic Mhagnuis which is awarded annually to recognise exceptional achievements or contributions to the Institute by individuals or groups.

This was the citation in relation to Luke:

Luke Savage was an active member of the Students’ Union and the student body throughout his time at IT Sligo. He was the embodiment of positivity and he truly touched the hearts of everyone he knew. Luke personified the student experience at the Institute and was the life and soul of the campus community. His larger than life personality and attitude were an inspiration to all those who knew him.

Luke was the human face of our funds!

“Luke Savage was an active member of the Students’ Union and the student body throughout his time at IT Sligo”
Operation Rainwater is part of a project based approach to teaching and learning that is central to the programme on offer at Clara Youthreach. This award winning project developed from another community based project called ‘Community Tree’ where the trainees from the centre created links with other local organisations from the area such as the Clara Tidy Towns Committee, the Tullamore Agricultural Show, IarnrodEireann, Clara Library and the Clara Community and Family Resource Centre and set about sowing and nurturing flowers and plants in the glasshouse and horticultural tunnel at the Youthreach centre and planting and maintaining them at specific areas around the town, at the local train station and for the Tullamore Agricultural Show.

As part of this project (Community Tree) the trainees did an internal energy audit which revealed that water charges were high due to the nature of the project which included watering seedlings, flowers and vegetables. The trainees then started to do some research on ways to collect and use rainwater instead of tap water and a new project was born which was called ‘Operation Rainwater’.

The research led to the drawing up of plans for the development of a rainwater harvesting system that would collect the rainwater that fell on the roof of the centre into a large tank and to use that instead of tap water for nurturing their seedlings and plants. They discovered that they could use a gravity flow system that would use no energy to carry the water from the tank to the garden and also to carry the water to a self-watering table and drip-feeding system in the tunnel again saving on energy and costs to the centre budget. They brought their plans to Eco-unesco and Toyota and secured a small grant to cover the cost of some of the equipment needed and then set about putting the system in place.

Eco-Unesco award ceremony May 2012 when Clara Youthreach’s project Operation Rainwater won the National Senior Water Category.
Once the system was in place and working successfully the trainees set about creating awareness in the community about the project and the potential benefits it could have for local people such as reducing the proposed water charges, reducing our carbon footprint, healthier flowers, plants and vegetables and also making people aware of environmental issues local and global and in particular the value of water.

The trainees created a model from recycled material around the centre of their rainwater harvesting system, and invited members of the community to view it giving a presentation on how the project was progressing and how anyone could do it whether at home or in their work place. They then held a two week exhibition of the project at Clara Library which included a PowerPoint presentation on the overall project, a scale model of the Rainwater Harvesting System at the centre and a working model of the gravity flow system, the self watering table and the drip feed system. They also had workshops and worksheets for primary school children to help them become more aware of environmental issues and the value of water.

“The trainees created a model from recycled material around the centre of their rainwater harvesting system, and invited members of the community to view it giving a presentation on how the project was progressing and how anyone could do it whether at home or in their work place“
Students at Castleblayney Youthreach held a Cheerios Breakfast morning in aid of Childline on 10th October 2012 and raised a total of €207.00. Congratulations to the designated FETAC Cookery group who prepared and served the breakfasts under the influence of Cookery Tutor Ann Mc Mahon.

This event was supported by student family members, local residents and businesses. Castleblayney Youthreach would like to thank everyone who supported the breakfast morning and thank Supervalu Castleblayney for their support on the day.
Six young people (three males and three females) were involved in this programme, aged between 16 & 17. The group participated in a number of activities over the six sessions. The activity in the picture is known as Gorge Walking. [see also front cover]

**JAY Project – Jobstown - Tallaght - Dublin 24.**

The following Q & A session relates to a 3rd year student aged 15 who was involved with the Build a Bike project 2012 at the JAY project in Dublin.

**European Social Fund Programme, Build A Bike 2012.**

**JAY Project, Staff: Yvonne Anderson and Mary Lalor.**

**Q.** What skills have you learned from being in the Build A Bike Programme?

**A.** I have learned how to fix a bike and make repairs. I learned how to work as part of a team and I learned that it is good for helping others because since I helped some of the other lads with their bikes I got a work placement in the Build A Bike Workshop.

**Q.** Do you know what ESF (European Social Fund) is?

**A.** No.

This young person was not aware of ESF Funding but did notice the posters around the project. As a result of the programme, this young person has an increased knowledge in relation to the logos and the purpose of its funding. He is aware of how the funding has improved his chances of employment.

This young person’s reply to this knowledge was ‘I love the ESF’.
Q. Has anything changed in your life (school and home) as a result of being involved in the ESF Build A Bike programme?

A. I am not getting in as much trouble in school anymore now that I have a job. My ma and da said I have matured a lot since Christmas. I haven’t been grounded or suspended since I went back to school after Christmas.

This young person’s engagement with the Project has increased since the Build A Bike programme. The ESF programme has guided this young person and has put him on a positive path, whereas before the programme he was at a cross roads. He has definitely matured and is speaking positively towards adults, I would put this down to a result of working with adults and relating to them more.

Q. Are you enjoying your work experience?

A. I love it! I have completed my four weeks probation and I passed. I am now getting paid for working Saturday’s and they said I will get more hours in the Summer. I have made new friends, they are older than me but they are teaching me a lot. Before I did the programme I thought fixing a bike was easy but there are so many different parts and things to remember. The boys in the workshop are so fast at fixing the bikes, but I will keep practising to get it done as fast.

Q. So what’s going to happen now?

A. Now that I am getting paid and getting to do more things in the workshop I want to do the Junior mechanics course. I want to wait till I know more about the different bikes and stuff and then I will ask can I do it. I’m gonna just keep going to work on Saturday’s and I can’t wait for the Summer to be getting more hours and more money. Its great not having to ask me ma for money all the time.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. Yeh I wanna thank the Project for letting me do the programme and getting me the job. And I think I am more confident now when I’m talking to people I don’t know.

It was explained to this young person that he got himself the job because of his input in the group, his good behaviour, excellent attendance and his eagerness to help others. When he heard all the positive things we had to say about him, he was chuffed. His confidence has definitely increased.
The Junction Project, a Garda Youth Diversion Project in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway is in the town since 1999. Following from a conversation with a group of young people the idea for a Fly Tying programme was conceived and thanks to the European Social Fund, they began their first Fly Tying and Fly Fishing Programme in July 2011.

Six young males, referred to in the project became involved in the programme as they all expressed an interest in the sport of fishing but had not had the opportunity to advance on their existing skills or to learn a new method of fishing.

Edel and Paul (Project coordinator and Youth Justice Worker) felt that fishing was a successful activity to run with the young people for many reasons; namely the participants expressed an interest in the activity, it is an inexpensive activity to run once you have the basics, it’s an activity that can be done individually or as part of a team, on a competitive level or as a simple hobby. Project staff also felt that fishing whether it be as part of an organised programme or in a young person’s spare time provides a certain tranquil environment that provides time to relax and also to think and reflect.

Paul Riddell Youth Justice Worker states: In doing both fly fishing and fly tying, we hoped to provide a huge learning experience that we hoped young people would continue to engage in after the programme. Such learning included – river/lake safety, respect for river and lake habitats as well as the overall environment, education on life cycles of the fly and the fish, seasonal fishing, seasonal flies and seasonal techniques. We hoped that our outcomes would include the lads developing a hobby that would be practical throughout the year.

The Project adopted two aspects to the programme: **Theory and Practice**

The young people really enjoyed the tying and gave 100 percent attention and effort; they enjoyed learning about and creating the specific breeds but also enjoyed the opportunity to be creative in inventing their own patterns and lures.

The Theory part of the programme ran every Tuesday for six weeks for two hours. As part of setting up and organising the room for the programme each young person learned about the importance and the benefits of shadow boards and other various aspects of workplace organisation such as planning ahead, being prepared for future sessions, maintaining and organising their tools and materials and much more.

The early sessions focused on learning around the different species and breeds of flies used to fish and the life cycles and habitats of the various flies and also on the fish which feed upon them. All teaching was done verbally or through demonstration with visual aids such as sample crafts and pictures rather than with literacy and worksheets as the young people were more comfortable with this. Sessions were structured that there was a balanced amount of theory to craft to ensure optimum attention.

When creating the flies young people were also given education on cost effectiveness and how materials could be altered or replaced using every day materials that could be found around the household for example animal hair, wool, sewing thread, tin foil, birds feathers, tinsel, nail varnish etc therefore encouraging young people to be inventive and to maintain their new hobby without expense.

The young people really enjoyed the tying and gave 100 percent attention and effort; they enjoyed learning about and creating the specific breeds but also enjoyed the opportunity to be creative in inventing their own patterns and lures. This gave a great sense of achievement as every session ended with two finished products from each young person in the early sessions and up to five in the later weeks when skills were developing. Young people could not wait to now put their new found knowledge and new creations to the test at the shore........
The second part of the programme involved applying the practical skills and utilising the participants' flies at the waters edge. Every Thursday the group went to the local lake Lough ACalla. Before each session began facilitator Paul Hickey helped young people to find the ideal fishing spot teaching the young people about the various aspects which effect a fisherman's performance for example wind speed and direction, weather conditions, light and shade, ripples on the water, cloud cover, time of day etc. As part of these sessions learning included preparation of equipment – rods, lines, flies etc. As the majority of the young people had little or no experience in fly fishing the biggest challenge was practicing and getting the hang of the casting techniques.

Every week before the casting began when a location on the lake was selected the group would observe feeding patterns of the fish on the lake and learn to identify the whereabouts of the fish on the lake, what they were feeding on and the direction in which a shoal was travelling all of which is a skill of its own. The water was observed, rocks were turned, debris and specimens were collected and habitats were explored all of which contributed to the learning around lake life. When young people had identified what they felt the fish were feeding on they then chose a fly of their own which represented what the fish were eating that day and the fishing began.

Throughout the whole programme water safety and respect for the environment were a strongly encouraged theme. Their new found skills and knowledge proved to be very effective as every week fish were caught. Part of the learning included having respect for the water life and not exploiting the lake. Further from the already outlined learning young people were also given the opportunity to develop skills on preparing and cooking a fish on the lake shore.
The following skills were employed by the facilitator in the running of the course which certainly served to enhance the participants in developing skills for employability by:

- Creating an informal approach to developing Work Space Organisation.
- Encouraging Lean Manufacturing Practice (shadow boards, ensuring everything has its place.): no waste, using all your materials, do nothing unless you’re adding value to the product.
- Employing the 5 S’s:
  - Sort: All unneeded tools, parts and supplies are removed from the area
  - Set in Order: A place for everything and everything in its place (preparation of shadow boards)
  - Shine: The work area is cleaned and prepared for next use.
  - Standardize: Cleaning and identification methods are consistently improved
  - Sustain: 5 S is a habit and is continually improved.
- Timekeeping, respect, attention and teamwork were all key aspects of this programme and these key skills support the preparation of the participants for future employability.

Once the participants completed this programme, they completed an evaluation of what they had learned and progress they had made. All participants felt that they had gained a huge understanding of the craft and sport and advanced significantly in their fishing and casting skills as well as learning completely new skills. The programme advanced their skills and to quote…

“I found it very interesting as I learned a lot of new information about fishing, rivers, and lakes”

“I’ve found a new interest and I am going to keep it up”

“Can we do the programme again? I’d love to learn even more”.

“All I do in my spare time now is fish and practice tying and casting.”

Edel and Paul also spoke about further benefits gained by the participants from their involvement in the programme: the lads were always prompt in their timekeeping and behaved very well in the programme; they showed huge interest, concentration, respect and dedication. This was considerable progress for these boys as attendance and participation were poor in the school environment and two of which are not in structured education due to their coping skills within a classroom setting. The learning was huge. Edel states that: The most immediate impact that this programme has had, is that the participants realise that they do have skills, they do have the ability to focus and engage in a structured intensive piece of work and that there are alternatives to engaging in anti-social behaviours that are fun! They realise having being part of something that they enjoyed AND learnt from, that they do possess the potential to pursue an activity that is viewed as being pro-social and that they can achieve in.

Thanks to the success of this programme, Edel and Paul secured funding to engage the participants in a Coarse Fishing programme over the summer months in 2012 and as they headed into winter 2012/2013, they have recommenced the fly tying programme until the weather improves so that the lads will be fully equipped for the fishing season in 2013. These six young people are working toward forming a club, with a structure as in chairperson, treasurer, secretary into 2013, to ensure that they can continue to come together and continue a sport that they love… The Junction project will continue to engage and support the lads as they pave the path for up and coming fly fishers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department for providing this funding. It has helped create opportunities for these young people who in turn have gained so much from their involvement in the programme and who are still benefiting as a result.
At the beginning of 2012 a new Crime Awareness Film programme, funded by the European Social Fund, came to light which was developed and initiating for and by young people participating in Connect 7. Connect 7 Garda Youth Diversion Project is a partnership project between the KDYS and An Garda Síochána, funded by the Irish Youth Justice Service, with a focus on deterring young people away from anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

The overall aim of the programme was to examine the attitudes and beliefs of young people concerning criminal and anti-social behaviour through the media of film making. It offered an opportunity for the young people involved to discuss the local context of age-inappropriate peer groups and the culture of non-participation, and the associated risks for young people involved in anti-social behaviour. The young people were involved in the pre-production work which included developing the characters and writing the script. During a 3 day intensive filming schedule participants, staff and members of An Garda Síochána brought the characters to life in various locations around Tralee including the Garda station, Finnegan’s Hostel, Denny St. Connect 7, Spa Road. All of which was supported by the professional expertise of Feenish Productions, Castlegregory.

The Drug Awareness DVD titled ‘Raggsy the Runner’ was entered into festivals, such as Fresh Film Festival, Dingle Film Festival, and Kerry Film Festival and was nominated for a screening during the Kerry Film Festival. A premier hosted by the KDYS recognised and commended the great work of the young people involved, co-ordinator of Connect 7, Kevin Murphy, Neal Moran, KDYS, Feenish Productions and An Garda Síochána.
YAPS Garda Youth Diversion Project works with young people aged 12 to 18 in Sligo County receiving referrals from the Sligo District and Ballymote District. The total population of the catchment area is approximately 65,270 and it is estimated that there are between 4,568 and 5,874 young people.

YAPS received funding through the European Social Fund. The focus of this funding is aimed at enhancing the employability and educational skills of young people by delivering personal development programmes.

Young people had an opportunity to prepare for the driver theory test in a safe, secure and helpful environment. Young people were encouraged to practice for the driver theory test using the disc and book. Once a young person felt confident they would pass the test they completed the online application form and booked an appointment for their test.

Throughout 2012 four males and one female successfully completed the driver theory test. Project staff supported these young people through all the stages required to apply for their Learner Permit such as completing forms, booking an eye test, passport pictures and ID requirements.

As a result of the European Social Fund, these young people were rewarded for actively and positively engaging in the programme and received three driving lessons. As a result of participating in this programme young people have gained a valuable skill for their future. They have gained knowledge to drive safely, consequences of dangerous driving, driving under the influence of drugs/alcohol, increased awareness of road signs, judgement and perception on the road.

“Throughout 2012 primary and secondary referrals in YAPS have been participating in the ESF funded Learn to Drive Programme. Through participating in this programme”
Open Ert—Education, Research 
& Training Limited Project Aims to
provide up to 150 unemployed 
lone parents with a personal career
plan so that they can enter/re-enter
the labour market.

As part of its training and
development strategy, Open
developed the Shaping Your
Future programme, aimed at lone
mothers, which received funding
under Strand 1 of the Equality for
Women Measure 2010-2013. The
Equality for Women Measure
is funded by the European Social
Fund through the Human Capital
Investment Operational Programme
and the Department of Justice and
Equality.

‘Shaping Your Future’: is a short
career planning programme for
lone mothers living in the Dublin
region.

The programme combines: provision
of information on Social Welfare
and Childcare; confidence and
self-esteem building; learning stress
management, balancing family
life, time and money management;
exploring education and work
options, and planning ‘next steps’
for the future.

An innovative element of the
programme relates to the use of
newly developed software to
provide e-guidance on careers
to programme participants.
Participants are introduced to the
career e-guidance tools developed
by and made available to OPEN
by the Ballymun Job Centre.

The tools are part of the Quality
Assurance Framework for career
guidance. At the end of the
programme unemployed lone
mothers have a ‘SMART’ career
path plan and are supported by
project staff to take their first step
through the ‘aftercare’ programme.

The programme runs for 7 morning
sessions over a 2-week period and
will be delivered to four different
groups of lone mothers: twice in the
OPEN Training Centre in Smithfield,
Dublin 7, once in St Michael’s Estate
FRC in Inchicore and once in the
STAR Project Ballymun. Local lone
parent groups, other community
groups, Local Employment Services
(LES), FAS and Jobs Facilitators from
the Department of Social Protection
are key stakeholders in the project.

“Participants are
introduced to the
career e-guidance
tools developed by
and made available
to OPEN by the
Ballymun Job Centre.”
PROGRAMME THEMES INCLUDE:

- confidence and self-esteem building
- relaxation and stress management
- managing change
- achieving personal, family, work balance
- family communication
- time and money management
- nutrition and developing a healthy lifestyle
- provision of information on Social Welfare
- exploring education, training and work options
- assembling a ‘Job-seeker’s Toolkit’
- strengthening communication skills
- career planning and activation

Overall, participants found the training supportive and useful for their personal and career development. Shaping YOUR Future’ opened up the possibility of thinking in terms of a career / opportunities and planning how to improve skills.
Impact

Social workers, counsellors and other professionals have welcomed the SYF programme as responding to a vital need for lone mothers. It has helped lone mothers consider a working future and build the personal and work-related skills to enable them make the leap from home to workplace, while maintaining a balance between the demands of work and family. Participants have indicated that the programme has a major impact on their potential and sense of self.

Key Learning

The findings indicate that lone mothers are highly motivated to enter or return to the labour market, but that they require timely supports, including childcare and tailored programmes matched to their needs as sole parents.

“It helped me see that I have a future”
The Equality Authority’s annual conference on promoting equality and accommodating diversity in vocational education and training was held in the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham on 25 October 2012. It was officially opened by Mr Dinny McGinley T.D. Minister of State for the Gaeltacht at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This conference is a joint event of the Equality Mainstreaming Unit of the Equality Authority and the Department of Education and Skills. Each year this conference focuses on key issues that need to be addressed when building equality into the design and delivery of further education and training programmes.

The conference theme this year was Positive Duty: An Opportunity for Equality Mainstreaming. The Equality Authority will soon be merged with the Irish Human Rights Commission. The draft legislation relating to the establishment of the new body refers to the introduction of a positive duty on the public sector to pay due regard to equality and human rights. If introduced, a public sector positive duty would have implications for providers of further education and training.

Over the years the Equality Mainstreaming Unit has supported the further education and training sector to apply equality mainstreaming strategies. Much of the focus on this work has been on building equality competency within education and training institutions by enabling providers to design and deliver education and training programmes that can accommodate the needs of diverse learners. This work has supported providers to become proactive and committed to promoting equality across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation. The work that the sector has pioneered in this area would support organisation with regard to the implementation of a positive duty on equality and human rights.

The conference addressed a number of key questions such as –

• What is a positive duty?
• Do we need one?
• What do experiences in other jurisdictions tell us?
• How do we ensure the participation of people experiencing inequality in the process?

Conference speakers included Helen Mountfield, who is a leading QC specialising in public law and human rights. She is recognised as a leading specialist in equality law, with particular expertise in the operation of the public sector equality duties. She represented the successful claimant in the first litigated case on public sector equality duties. Helen’s presentation focused on the public sector equality duties in the UK and their implications for public authorities.

Eileen Lavery, Head of Advice and Compliance in the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland shared the Northern Ireland perspective on equality mainstreaming.

Facilitated workshops were held to provide participants an opportunity to discuss and debate the practical implications of the introduction of a public sector positive duty. Conference proceedings will be issued in 2013.

“The work that the sector has pioneered in this area would support organisation with regard to the implementation of a positive duty on equality and human rights”
Migrant Integration – (ESF 2.10)

EPIC – Employment for People from Immigrant Communities

Epic Client - Bertin Kodjo – a Personal Journey

Bertin is now working as a Customer Service Representative for the French Market with ‘ebay’, he tells his personal journey from when he left the Ivory Coast in 2010.

I’ve been living in Ireland for 2 years now since 2010 when I moved from the Ivory Coast. It was a bit difficult leaving my home country and moving to another country so far away from home and my family. The reason why I decided to move was because it was so hard to get work in Ivory Coast, even with my university degree. My brother was already living here and he spoke very positively about Ireland and his experience here. Also, we were close, so if I was going to leave my family and my home country I thought it would be good to come to the country where my brother and his family live.

I arrived in Ireland in November 2010…my first impression…’the weather was so cold’! Because, French is the official language of my home country, I was lucky enough to get a short term 3 month contract with Xerox in a French customer service role.

When my contract with Xerox ended and I was again looking for work, a friend told me about the EPIC (Employment for People from Immigrant Communities) programme. My friend had completed the EPIC programme and said that it was brilliant. I started by doing an English language assessment, which showed that my level of English was good enough for me to secure a place on the EPIC programme and I started the EPIC programme in June 2011.

The EPIC programme was a turning point for me….my friend was right, it is a brilliant programme. Breda, the EPIC Pre-Employment English Language Trainer and Olga, my Training and Employment Officer worked with me to improve and present my CV and to write cover letters, they taught me interview skills for the Irish jobs market and taught me how to prepare for an interview. The EPIC programme also includes IT skills training, mock interview with feedback and social media training, and also really useful information in relation to living and working in Ireland.

“My friend had completed the EPIC programme and said that it was brilliant. I started by doing an English language assessment, which showed that my level of English was good enough for me to secure a place on the EPIC programme”
When I was attending the EPIC programme, I applied for a job as a Transactional Specialist with Microsoft. In the last week of the 6 weeks of the EPIC programme, I did a telephone interview for the job; I was called for a ‘face to face’ interview… and I GOT THE JOB. I worked there for 3 months and then saw a job for a Customer Service Representative for the French Market with ‘ebay’. I did my CV, and wrote my cover letter to apply for the job and I was called for interview. I was a bit nervous and a bit stressed about the interview, but I did a ‘mock interview’ with EPIC, which was really helpful, giving me a good idea of what to expect. I did the interview and I GOT THE JOB.

I started working in ebay in June 2012 and I am really enjoying the work…I can honestly say that it is my dream job…it enables me to use what I studied when I was still living in Ivory Coast and my work experience here in Ireland.

When I look back, I realise that I took quite a jump… in my mind I had limited myself as to the jobs which I felt I could do in Ireland. However my Training and Employment Officer supported me in taking things ‘step by step’ and helped me to follow what I wished for, but linking it with the reality of living and working in Ireland.

I came to Ireland, with an open mind, thinking ‘I will try it out’, but now I plan to spend several years here, and now I am very happy here. It is home for now. My advice to anybody who is looking for employment in Ireland…….take a look at the EPIC Programme, it is open to all immigrants who are EU citizens or have STAMP 4…it could influence your life like it influenced mine.

.B. K. - Sept 2012

ESF IN THE MEDIA – OTHER PROGRAMMES

MOMENTUM LAUNCH

Today (18th December, 2012), An Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore TD, together with the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD, and the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon TD, announced an innovative Government initiative which will provide free education and training projects for up to 6,500 long-term jobseekers.

This initiative, MOMENTUM, will assist 6,500 long term unemployed jobseekers to gain in-demand skills and to access work in sectors of the economy where there are job opportunities. The programmes will include on-the job training in the form of work experience modules as well as the development of the workplace skills required to obtain and retain employment.

36 education and training providers from both the private and public sector will be offering 62 individual MOMENTUM programmes in 87 locations across the country. These projects will be in the expanding employment areas of ICT, digital media, healthcare and social services, the green economy, food processing and sales and marketing.
Specific projects will also be available for those under 25 to assist them to enter or return to employment including, ‘Train To Work Opportunities’, ‘Green Pathways’ and a Graduate Activation Programme.

MOMENTUM is an outcomes-based model of education and training that sees best international practice adapted to an Irish context. The courses are tailored to both the needs of the long-term job-seeker, but also employers who are experiencing skills shortages.

Courses are free, full and part-time and are aligned to levels 3 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or to an industry required certification within the sector. The projects range in duration from 11 weeks – 45 weeks.

An Tánaiste said: “The Government’s priority is to get our people back to work. We are spending more than €20 million in order to assist thousands of long-term jobseekers in getting new skills and returning to employment in areas where there are currently opportunities.”

Announcing the 6,500 places today, Minister Quinn said “We all know that budgets are tight, in households and in the Government Departments. But, we are committed to ensuring that our limited resources are targeted and allow unemployed people to access high quality and relevant education and training. The MOMENTUM model, which sees skills provision married with on the job experience, is a significant innovation in how we spend public money on further education and training.”

Minister Cannon said, “Momentum is part of the major reform of the further education and training sector. I am spearheading the creation of Solas and it will facilitate a coherent integrated strategic national response across the further education and training sectors.”

Speaking at Windmill Lane Recording Studios where the launch took place, Paul O’Toole, Director General, FÁS said “This programme provides a real opportunity to long term jobseekers to develop the skills that employers are looking for. We believe that the training, education and real experience provided through the projects will significantly enhance participants’ capacity to compete for jobs”.

MOMENTUM is administered by FÁS and funded by the Department of Education & Skills through the ESF supported Labour Market Education & Training Fund (LMETF). The payment system to providers is outcomes based with part payment reserved for key stages of the programme, including challenging certification, progression and employment outcomes at the end of the programme.

Further information on MOMENTUM, its projects and providers and eligibility criteria can be found on the website: www.momentumskills.ie or from any Employment Services Office.
Minister Burton announces expansion of Disability Activation Project to assist people with disabilities to access employment

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD, today (25th October, 2012) announced funding of just over €7 million for a range of 14 projects under the Disability Activation Project (DACT). Speaking about the successful projects, Minister Burton said: “These funds of €7 million will be used to create linkages between employers and people with disabilities – this is crucial to ensuring that the untapped potential of people with disabilities is allowed to flourish and that they are enabled to participate fully in the labour market.”

The Minister made the announcement at the employer road show event being held in Sligo, where she outlined the extensive range of services and supports available to assist employers in growing their businesses and supporting their workforce through engagement with the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The extensive range of supports embraces specific measures to assist people with disabilities to avail of employment opportunities and includes the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Workplace Adaptation Grant Scheme.

The DACT Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Social Protection and it is targeted at the Borders, Midlands and Western regions. There are four strands to the Project as follows:

- **Strand 1** – Improving Access to Employment
- **Strand 2** – Progression Programmes for Young People
- **Strand 3** – Support for Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability
- **Strand 4** – Innovative Employer Initiatives

Following a call for proposals inviting organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability to submit projects for funding, 35 applications underwent a rigorous appraisal process carried out by Pobal who are managing the DACT project on behalf of the Department of Social Protection. Ultimately, 14 proposals were selected for funding.

Referring to Strand 4 of the DACT, the Minister stated: “Three of the selected projects - to be run by the National Learning Network, the Irish Association of Supported Employment and Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. - will focus specifically on how best to establish links between employers and people with disabilities. The projects will continue until early 2015 and will be most helpful in learning how best to ensure that people with disabilities can avail of progression, education and development opportunities.”

Under Strand 3, the University of Limerick and Arthritis Ireland will seek to develop individualised occupational therapy programmes to enable people with arthritis to overcome the barriers they face in accessing, remaining in or returning to work. Similarly, the Peter Bradley Foundation and Acquired Brain Injury Ireland will use vocational assessment teams to support people with acquired brain injuries to remain in or re-enter the workforce.

Minister Burton continued: “My Department is committed to supporting people with disability to participate more fully in society and to become more self-sufficient by providing supports that address barriers that they may face. The range of innovative projects which we are financing with the support of the European Social Fund will enable us to learn how best to address these barriers.”

The Minister concluded by thanking all of the applicants for their efforts and wished the selected applicants every success with the projects.