QED Momentum participants
Alan Rogers, Ruth Power, Taoufik Hammami
Foreword

Welcome to the 7th issue of the ESF Newsletter. This will be the last Newsletter for the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCI-OP) 2007-2013 given that PEIL 2014-2020 was agreed by the European Commission on February 24th and launched on April 23rd with a total fund of €1.15bn covering some 20 plus Activities. Thanks to contributors for inputs and looking forward to publicising activities under PEIL 2014-2020.

The Newsletter highlights some of the achievements of the ESF in Ireland in 2014. 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.

Willie Mcintosh
Head of ESF Managing Authority
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Minister Jimmy Deenihan Opens State-of-the-Art National Digital Skills Centre in Tralee

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan, T.D., today (2nd December 2013) officially opened a new National Digital Skills Centre at Tralee Training Centre, Kerry. The building of this state-of-the-art training facility is the result of a €1.5 million Government investment.

The facility has been designed to provide training for those seeking employment in the audio visual content production sector. This sector in Ireland is estimated to be worth in excess of €550 million, employing over 6,000 individuals with over 560 small and medium enterprises operating within it.

Digital Skills Training has been delivered by SOLAS (and formerly FÁS) across three training units in its Tralee Training Centre since 1987. Courses are available in TV & Video production, Interactive Media and Radio Broadcasting. Together the programmes are considered the market leader in practical digital skills based training, utilising the latest and most up to date technology.

Launching the facility Minister Deenihan said: 'I am delighted to be opening this facility today. The ‘Training through Production’ approach that is adopted by this SOLAS Training Centre means that learners are gaining unique experience which equips them with the skills to compete for jobs in this sector. This is a prime example of what the Government is striving to achieve within the restructured Further Education and Training Sector in Ireland.'
The new Centre brings together all of the human and physical resources of the three training units, providing a Centre of Excellence for digital skills training in Ireland. A suite of new animation/gaming training courses are also planned for the facility in 2014.

Speaking at the launch, Paul O’Toole, CEO, SOLAS recognised the importance of working to deliver the skills that employers want. 'The staff here in Tralee have developed strong links with employers and have been able to recognise what skills the industry needs. The success of the programmes is evidenced by the positive outcomes that have been achieved to date. Many past participants are now placed in a variety of well-known companies such as RTE, TV3, TG4, BBC, Open Eye, Another Avenue and Coco TV'.

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan T.D., Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Bill O’Herlihy (RIP), Paul Dolan and Eoghan Harris at the launch of the National Digital Skills Centre at the SOLAS Training Centre, Tralee, Kerry
ADELINE REVINS, DAVE BANNON AND JOLITA GORODECKIENE.

The three successful students came right through the BTEI sector, the full time Athlone VTOS programme and ultimately on to the Athlone Institute of Technology where they all received their degrees in Graphic Design. Two of the students Adeline and Dave chose to stay on the extra year to achieve their honours degree for which they are now studying.

All three students had worked in various jobs before things changed in their lives. They decided they needed to upskill and give themselves a chance to gain new employment but felt perhaps they didn’t have many computer skills.

Dave Bannon had studied FETAC L4 in 2008/2009 at the local South Westmeath Literacy scheme under BTEI and with the help of our Guidance officer decided to join a full time Athlone VTOS course.

Both Adeline Revins and Jolita Gorodeckiene joined the part time BTEI class at Athlone VTOS also in 2008/9 working on such modules as FETAC L4 Computer Applications, I.T. Skills, Personal Effectiveness and even Stained Glass.

All three students joined the full time Athlone VTOS programme in September 2009. They all studied the Art/Craft/Design FETAC Level 5 course and were very successful. They all were in complete agreement that the BTEI programme had given them the core skills and confidence to progress. These students knew how to study and felt able to take on new challenges. Working with computers at level 4 gave them huge confidence when tackling such subjects as L5 Communications as well as Adobe Photoshop for Graphic design. The tutors involved at Athlone VTOS always agree that the part time programme under BTEI is excellent preparation for the necessary skill set to return to work or indeed, to progress to a full time course.

All three students finished Athlone VTOS in June 2012 achieving their full certificate in Art/Craft/Design and more. To achieve a full level 5 eight modules must be completed. These three students put in so much extra work that they all finished with an astounding 12 modules each - with a majority of distinctions!

The three students were firm friends at this stage and continued on their learning journey by all joining the Athlone Institute of Technology in September 2011 and studying Graphic Design. Three years later the hard work paid off when they gained their degrees.
That journey still continues and all three agree that this path began with the first small step they took by joining a part time BTEI programme. The part time BTEI programme gives students the time and the tools to upskill, to achieve new things and tackle new subjects. It gave them the inspiration and courage to progress and to strive to reach their full potential.

Adeline, Dave and Jolita are fine examples of how adult education can turn a person’s life around and how ‘with hard work’ it seems that anything is possible!
GMIT HACKATHON - A MASSIVE SUCCESS

GMIT’s Maths & Computing Department held its third annual hackathon in November (2014) with students collaborating over two intensive days to create software programs. Over 100 students from ESF programmes in Software Development and Digital Media as well as Business disciplines took part in the event which was sponsored by Microsoft and HP. It was a huge success resulting in over 80 apps published on the Windows Store over the two days. The word ‘hacker’ in computer subculture describes someone who ‘enjoys the intellectual challenge of creatively overcoming and circumventing limitations of computer systems and tries to extend their capabilities’.

In 2012, GMIT took part in the Microsoft ‘Wowzapp’ Worldwide hackathon. Software coders from all over the world participated in an online software coding extravaganza and was its success, GMIT decided to run its own event with the assistance of Microsoft Ireland.

Stephen Howell from Microsoft Ireland describes the GMIT hackathon as “the biggest hackathon of any Institute of Technology in Ireland”. Microsoft and HP provided raffle prizes which include tablets, phones, Xbox Live ‘Day One’ 12 month subscriptions, pens and t-shirts, and free pizza to the students to keep them going – over 600 slices per day!

Damien Costello, lecturer in Computing at GMIT, says he was delighted with the success of the event. “It just keeps getting better every year, the buzz and excitement of students working together and building real software products is fantastic”.

The student co-ordinator was third year Software Development student Ronan Connolly who says: “It’s so important that the companies are here supporting the event. The Digital Media students were taking video and still images of the event and these were screened on Microsoft’s Intranet to all their employees across Europe – that’s thousands of people. There are also people here from HP and local Galway Company, OpenJaw Technologies, supporting the students which is so important to us.”

GMIT’s Software Development and Digital Media degrees are funded through the ESF programme
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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 35 & 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

GMIT students taking part in the annual Hackathon in the Galway campus.
Based in Dunboyne, Co Meath, Ian Hayes worked in construction until late 2008. When the recession came things took a turn for the worse. “I was finding it hard to secure full time work,” says Ian. “A lot of people I knew were emigrating. But I never considered it myself. I wanted to stay.”

Having come across the MOMENTUM website, Ian found a Server Administrator course he was interested in. “The course was in Ballyfermot IT Centre. Once I discovered that I qualified for the programme I didn’t hesitate to apply.”

The course curriculum was set by Microsoft and broken up into three modules. Each module had a separate exam at the end. There was also a 13-week work experience placement at the end of the course.” Ian, who did his work placement with SISK, says that he really enjoyed the course.

“I got great experience from it. The work experience was brilliant because we were able to apply some of the stuff that we had learned in the course.”

“Gradually, during the work placement, I was given more and more responsibility. At the end of the 13 weeks I was offered a position.”

It is clear that Ian’s career has gone from strength to strength. Within his first year he was promoted. “I was delighted with the promotion. When I look back over the last year a new chapter of my life has opened up for me. I am much happier now that I am working in IT. I always had an interest in computers. I really like the work. I find it really interesting.”

Ian describes his MOMENTUM experience as “100 per cent positive”.

“The course I chose was very good but there was also a wide range of choices available. Courses like this are very good. Not only are you getting theory but you are also getting work experience. From the time I started the course I was kept really motivated by the staff in the IT centre as well. They really kept your confidence up and showed you that there are a lot of opportunities at the end of these courses. “Doing the course is probably one of the best decisions I have ever made. I would definitely recommend MOMENTUM to others. It wasn’t just learning it was basically preparing you for the work place.”
Reaping the reward
Participants share their stories

Robin Powell
Having completed a BA Honours in Art in June 2012 Robin Powell spent a year finding his feet, deciding on a career direction whilst looking for work. Noticing an advert in the paper for a Sales & Digital Marketing course with Irish Times Training he didn’t delay in signing up.

“I was having a very tough time,” says Robin. “It was impossible to find work. I had a brief experience in telesales so I decided to give the course a go.”

Robin says that taking the course enhanced his skill set dramatically. “The term ‘digital marketing’ had never crossed my path prior to the advertisement in the paper.

“Entering the course I met some great people, students, staff and lecturers alike. We were given in-depth knowledge on how sales work across different forms of media.”

Upon completion of the course Robin started work placement for a period of 18 weeks. He later secured an interview, and full time employment, with Electric Media Sales (EMS).

“MOMENTUM opened a door that I didn’t even know was there. I feel very lucky that I came across this course and that I found an area that I am genuinely interested in and have a passion for. When I took the role at EMS it was a new adventure for me. I am earning a salary, saving my money and trying to get on the property ladder. Life has come full circle for me.”

MOMENTUM opened a door that I didn’t even know was there

Willie McIntosh
Head of ESF Managing Authority
Priority 2:
Increasing Participation and Reducing Inequality in The Labour Force

DACT – Disability Activation Project (ESF 2.2)

DISABILITY ACTIVATION SEED PROJECT

The SEED project has been led by the Sligo LEADER partnership, in conjunction with their partners from Deafhearing, Disability Access Consultancy, Model Arts and Niland Gallery and the HSE. This project has sought to develop the provision of a community based mentoring and employment support service for and by people with a disability. The model is based on Personal Progression Plans and a case management approach. The project is a person-centred, confidence building training programme which allows members to establish their own career plan. The project aims to develop the skills of individuals so that they will become job/entrepreneurial ready and be in a position to access mainstream employment supports, further education and direct employment. The project’s objectives are as follows:

1. In conjunction with the project stakeholder establish an appropriate steering committee to oversee the planning, implementation and delivery of the SEED project and the recruitment of participants.

2. In conjunction with the steering committee and the participants a programme of activity will be developed to meet the group needs, personal plans and themed programme activity.

3. To establish a baseline for the individual participants and provide continuous mentoring support to enable participants to become job ready.

4. To sustain the work of the project post funding a community based support structure will be established and participants will be trained to become local community based mentors, who can participate in the Disability Network, mainstream employment and education structures.

Funding for the SEED project was provided under Strand 1 of the DACT project: Improving Access to Employment. To date the SEED project has engaged with some 244 participants with 112 participants progressing into employment or further education.
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<td>Individual progression plan mentoring – FETAC training and work placement</td>
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<td>National Learning Network</td>
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<td>Walkinstown Assoc for people with an Intellectual Disability – Providing Equal Progression routes (PEER)</td>
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<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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<td>Peter Bradley Foundation/Acquired Brain Injury Ireland – Work4You</td>
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<td>University of Limerick/Arthritis Ireland – Working with Arthritis – Solutions &amp; Strategies</td>
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<td>National Learning Network – Linking In</td>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Association of Supported Employment – Open Door</td>
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<td>Brothers of Charity Galway – Access to Work, Let’s Get to Work, Supported Employment Intensive</td>
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<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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Students of Level 3 Nutrition and Healthy Options approached the practical session of the course with great enthusiasm and gusto. Their brief was to demonstrate the versatility of vegetables as an accompaniment to meat and fish dishes or as a well-balanced stand-alone meal. Both teams of students devised and prepared delicious starters, main courses and desserts which demonstrated a good knowledge of aspects of the course covered in previous weeks. For example, safe and correct food preparation skills, the correct constituents of a balanced diet and correct portions.

Nutrition and Healthy Options has proved to be a very interesting course for our students for many reasons including the following:

- It has motivated them to extend their use of language and vocabulary in the context of the subject.
- Provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their own food and lifestyle choices.
- Encourages awareness of healthier options by understanding food symbols and labels.
- Students gain a greater understanding of the human body and how it is directly affected by the food and lifestyle choices we make.
- They will become familiar with the concept of a balanced diet and the Food Pyramid and correct portions.
- Using and developing different intelligences including logical-mathematical intelligence, visual intelligence, bodily and kinaesthetic intelligence, auditory intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.
Our practical session ended with everyone sitting down to sample the dishes. It has to be said that this definitely went down as the highlight of the course for many!

Compliments to all the chefs involved!
As part of the health promotion programme that is timetabled in the Lifford Youthreach centre each year, we try to motivate the learners to become more active in their communities by taking part in local 5k fun runs and walks. When the opportunity arose to take part in the “Run with Ray” 5k in Letterkenny on 15 September 2014, learners and staff jumped at the opportunity.

As part of the health promotion programme in the centre, learners take part in a range of sports and exercises throughout the year, including soccer, swimming, badminton and kickboxing. Learners also attend the local gym regularly.

In addition to these, healthy eating programmes and eating awareness workshops are also held during the year, where learners are provided with opportunities to try out new foods that they wouldn’t normally eat at home, or make new meals with foods they currently enjoy eating. Workshops are also set up to provide them with information on the types of foods they are eating and the effects these foods can have on their health and well-being.
Garda Youth Diversion Project

(ESF 2.6/2.7)

ENNIS YOUTH PROJECT - INTRODUCTION TO MECHANICS

Ennis Youth Project is a Garda Youth Diversion Project that has been working with young people at risk of becoming involved in crime/anti-social behaviour in the Ennis Garda District. The project has been operating for thirteen years and during that time a number of programmes have been piloted with education and training of the young people as one of their key objectives. One such programme has been an introduction to mechanics programme that has been supported by ESF funding.

The background: Since the Ennis Youth Project began young people referred to the programme have always shown an interest in car modification in terms of making the car look good and while the majority could point out what was needed to make the car visually attractive and dare we say noisy, only a very small number had any knowledge of what the various components of the cars engines and electrics did that made the car perform to a safe standard. The project began looking at how we could develop a course that would show the basics and so give young people that were interested in pursuing mechanics as a trade an insight into not just the inner workings of a car but the work that goes on the garage floor. After emails to other projects and discussions with local garages the first course was piloted in 2013 with four young men completing.

In 2014 there were a further ten participants. The course is facilitated by a local garage owner and begins with health and safety over the ten weeks of the course the young people do not just take instruction but also get hands on experience everything from oil to wheel changes is covered in the course.

The course is aimed at young people aged 16/17 in transition year or leaving certificate cycle particularly those that are seeking apprenticeships. As well as the hands on opportunities of working on cars, the sessions would also have career elements such as preparing a CV all information regarding apprenticeships. One of the highlights for many of the young people is the use of computerised diagnostics particularly on the more advanced built cars of the last few years. The course also has modules on road safety and car modification which are delivered by members of the Garda Traffic Corp.
On successful completion the young people do not just receive a certificate but get a full road safety related pack which contains the theory test study materials printed materials on apprenticeships covering course contents and the application process. A number of course participants have completed work experience programmes with the course provider. The course continues to develop and the next phase will see questionnaires to accompany the different modules to test the participants’ knowledge of the material being covered.

Ennis youth project is committed to the ongoing development of programmes which improve the employability of participants and acknowledges the assistance of the European Social Fund in this endeavour.
2014 Christmas Art Project

“Giving back to the Community”

26 young people aged 12-17 from the Kilrush Garda District engaged in a seasonal Art Project over a period of 6 weeks supported by the ESF funded Youth Justice Worker and Project Co-ordinator. The young people were divided into 6 separate groups and each one did a piece for their chosen voluntary agency in the Community.

Some of those chosen to receive pieces included, Clare Cancer Support Centre, West Clare Family Resource Centre, Clare Care and the local Fire Service.

The young people involved really got behind the concept of giving back to the Community, and the process of deciding what designs would be most appropriate for each service.

The Project received positive feedback from all those involved:

“It really shows that there must be some very talented young people in West Clare. We will be opening an outreach centre in Kilrush in the coming months and this beautiful artwork will take pride of place in bringing vibrant colour and life to the building.”

Clare Cancer Support

“I really enjoyed doing art in the big groups and having something to do on a Saturday. At first I was disappointed that we wouldn’t be taking the board’s home but now I am glad we are giving them away, especially because it is Christmas.”

Young Person aged 14

“I did not expect the boards to turn out as well as they did. I am not really good at art but I love painting. I would love to do something like this again”

Young Person aged 13
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Head of ESF Managing Authority
MONAGHAN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT’S ‘YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAMME’ A GREAT SUCCESS

The Four Seasons Hotel in Monaghan was the venue for the presentation of certificates to 10 young women who recently completed the Monaghan Employability Skills Programme, which was organised by Monaghan Integrated Development. The event represented a significant achievement for the women who completed the 4 month Programme.

This project was funded under the Equality for Women Measure, Strand 1 Access to Employment with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme and the Department of Justice and Equality.

Attending on the evening were the project participants along with many family and friends. MC for the event was project co-ordinator, Gerard Callan while there were a number of guest speakers including Mayor of County Monaghan Sean Conlon, Marie Sherlock a previous Employability Skills Programme participant and Francis McCarron who is Development Team Leader with Monaghan Integrated Development.

This was the fourth year of the Programme which has proved to be a fantastic model in terms of making people more employable. While this particular Programme focused on supporting young women under 25, the overall aim of the initiative is to provide a mentoring and training support programme for women distanced from the labour market, to give them the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and self-confidence to enter or return to the workforce. It is envisaged that on completion of the programme, participants will move into further education, formal training programmes or employment.

The training was delivered on a part time basis, three mornings per week in Monaghan Town. Within the Programme, the women completed modules in both group and one to one Life Coaching, which was delivered by Mary Anna Wright. The Employability Skills elements of the course were delivered by Elaine Wylie, who has worked on previous Employability Programmes. The women also completed Manual Handling and Occupational First Aid Training, which was delivered by NB Training. To maximise progression from the programme the women also undertook workshops in Interview Preparation and Job Seeking Skills delivered by Teresa McCahey, Jobs Club Facilitator with Monaghan Integrated Development.
In addition, they also visited Monaghan Institute and DkIT in which they spoke to course tutors about the various courses that are currently available. These proved to be extremely worthwhile visits as they allowed the participants to map out a possible way forward in terms of further up-skilling. The participants also received presentations from Una Coyle from Monaghan Local Employment Service and Anne Malone from Department of Social Protection on the various schemes and services that they offer people to gain employment. Another highlight of the Programme was the delivery of the Moodwatchers programme by Shane Martin, which proved to be extremely popular amongst the participants.

The first speaker of the evening was Marie Sherlock, who was a participant on the first Employability Skills Programme. She provided an inspiring speech outlining the positive effect that her participation on the Programme had on her life. She told the participants how the Employability course gave her confidence to pursue further educational courses, something she would not have dreamt of before the Programme. Marie is now working in Boots Pharmacy in Monaghan having completed a Pharmacy course in Monaghan Institute. Marie’s story really struck a chord with the women who were receiving their certificates as it highlighted how they can use the Employability Programme to enhance their educational and employment prospects.

Francis McCarron, Development Team Leader with Monaghan Integrated Development congratulated all the women who were receiving their certificates. He thanked them for their commitment to the Programme and told them how Monaghan Integrated Development will work with them in the coming weeks and months to help them achieve their individual goals. Indeed, he remarked how this work had already begun through their engagement with Monaghan Local Employment Service (LES), which is another branch of Monaghan Integrated Development. He thanked LES Co-Ordinator Una Coyle and her Mediator team for their work to date with the participants since the completion of the Programme saying: “Your engagement with Una and the LES Mediators is a key component to ensuring that you reap the real benefits of the course by getting a placement in either a course or employment. I would encourage all the girls to continue this engagement with the LES as they have a great track record in placing people into suitable education and employment”.

The final speaker of the evening was the Mayor of County Monaghan, Sean Conlon. Again, he congratulated all the women on their completion of the Programme and he encouraged them to continue to engage with Monaghan Integrated Development to pursue further education options and employment.
He also thanked the family members and friends of the participants for their support throughout the Programme which allowed the women to make the most out of the course. Sean, who is also a board member of Monaghan Integrated Development, encouraged the participants to use the course as a springboard to achieve further things in terms of education and employment. Following his words of encouragement, he went on to present the young women with their well-earned Certificates.

This Employability Programme highlights the success of Monaghan Integrated Development in providing a range of specialist supports to people in search of employment. To date, the young women have engaged the supports of three services within Monaghan Integrated Development including their Education Co-ordinator, Local Employment Service and Jobs Club. At a time when there are proposed changes to the delivery of these local programmes, it is worth noting the real and significant positive changes that Monaghan Integrated Development is making to the lives of many people across County Monaghan.
The theme of the 2014 Equality Mainstreaming conference was Think Equality, Act Equality. The conference took place on 14th October and showcased good practice examples in equality mainstreaming approaches: one was from the Further Education and Training sector (Embedding Equality at Cavan Institute) and two others were from equality mainstreaming approaches in workplaces (Towards an Inclusive Public Transport Service in Ireland, led by the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Promoting LGBT equality in workplaces: Say no to Homophobia and Transphobia in the Workplace, led by BeLongTo and ICTU).

The conference was aimed at public sector staff and policy makers and at all those who work in educational settings, policy, advocacy or NGOs with an interest in equality and diversity and human rights. Over 250 delegates attended.

The conference took place right before the establishment of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) which replaced the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission. Its purpose is to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland and to encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding in Ireland.

Equality mainstreaming enables organisations to move from avoiding discrimination to promoting equality and human rights. It encourages organisations to think about potential discrimination in advance, and potential adverse impacts of policies and practices towards groups protected by the equality and human rights legislation.

The new legislation (IHREC act 2014) on the establishment of the new body has introduced a duty on public sector bodies to have regard to equality and human rights.

The 2014 conference included presentations on the experience and lessons learned on applying a public sector duty on equality and human rights in a Scottish local authority setting. International speakers included a representative of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK (Alistair Pringle, Scotland Director) and the Senior Manager for Policy from the Fife Council in Scotland (Paul Vaughan).
During the conference, Emily Logan also launched a publication called “Equality in Action”, which documents the programme of work supported from 2009 to 2013 by the Equality Mainstreaming Unit in the Further Education and Training Sector. This body of work involved approximately 1,800 staff and learners and highlighted the sector commitment to equality.

Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Minister of State for Equality, New Communities and Culture at the Equality Mainstreaming Conference in Dublin Castle 2014.
The EPIC Programme contributes to the National and EU Integration policy by supporting immigrants to become financially independent and socially integrated in Ireland. It provides pre-employment training, opportunities for work experience placements and tailored individual supports to access education and employment.

In 2014, 110 immigrants who participated in the EPIC Programme got jobs, 16 immigrants completed work experience placements and a further 77 participants took up training/education courses. Below, happy EPIC participants on Graduation Day in 2014.
Sharing the learning: The EPIC Programme was presented to a Cross Departmental Review Group meeting on Ireland’s Integration Policy under the theme of ‘Employment and Pathways to Work’.

The event included attendance by Aodhán Ó Riordáin TD Minister of State for Equality, New Communities and Culture, and from the EPIC Programme, Co-ordinators Caítriona MáicAonghusa, and Catherine Headon, together with former EPIC participants Razieh Nikoomansh and Eva Aguado Díaz.
What our EPIC Programme participants say

93% of participants who completed our evaluation of the EPIC Programme during 2014 rated it as ‘GOOD OR EXCELLENT’!

Before the EPIC training, 10% of EPIC participants rated their level of preparation for interview as ‘GOOD OR EXCELLENT’. This increased to 65% after participation in the EPIC Programme.

Before the EPIC training, 36% of EPIC participants said they were able to prepare a CV & COVER LETTER. This increased to 100% after the EPIC training.

Very significant increase in AWARENESS by EPIC participants of support services in Ireland after completion of the EPIC Programme.

Business in the Community (BITC) is a Business Network, with many of Ireland’s largest companies amongst its membership. A key element of management of the EPIC Programme by BITC is that it facilitates dissemination of information in relation to a successful ‘EU/Irish Government’ funded Programme whilst also facilitating networking with and successful input by Business in Ireland, into the Programme.