

WRC Social and Economic Consultants

Integrate Ireland Language and Training Measure 17 of the EHRDOP

Implemented by Department of Education and
Science in conjunction with Integrate Ireland
Language and Training Ltd

WIDER EQUALITY MEASURE STUDY

Supported by

Equality Studies Unit, Measure 33A of the EHRDOP



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1. Introduction

In the context of the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2000-2006 (EHRDOP), the Equality Authority is implementing Measure 33a: Technical Assistance - Equality Studies Unit (ESU). The ESU is mandated to examine labour market inequalities and their implications for labour market policy. Its focus is exclusion and discrimination in the labour market as covered by equality legislation and for four groups named in the EHRDOP (i.e., older workers, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups in particular refugees, and, members of the Traveller community). These four groups are also the reference groups for the Wider Equal Opportunities Principle (WEOP). The WEOP is concerned with understanding, monitoring and supporting the participation of people from the four groups covered by the principle in the measures of the EHRDOP. Following on from the mid-term review of the EHRDOP, 10 measures are now required to identify and report on the actions they are taking to apply the WEOP.

In this capacity the Equality Authority is implementing a rolling programme of Measure Studies. These studies seek to identify and promote changes required in the planning, design and delivery of the measures comprising the EHRDOP to enhance their capacity to accommodate diversity and to promote equality. In order to accomplish this, measure studies are designed to a standard that challenges.

Measure studies draw on the analysis developed in the ESU publication *Accommodating Diversity in Labour Market Programmes*. Specifically, the programme of measure studies seeks:

- to support new learning on the promotion of equality and the accommodation of diversity in labour market measures. It achieves this by seeking out good practice while also examining gaps, deficiencies and other issues;
- through the manner in which it is implemented, to build the capacity of implementing agencies to identify and engage in actions to effectively promote equality and accommodate diversity; and,
- to agree recommendations for priority actions for promoting equality and accommodating diversity in the measures examined and in the broader work of the implementing agencies.

In seeking to support a process of change the measure studies require the full engagement of those responsible for the design and delivery of the measure concerned. To this end, the measure studies are undertaken in a way that achieves ownership of the process by the relevant implementing agency. The measure studies are, therefore, pursued on the basis of a partnership approach between the Equality Authority and the organisation responsible for the measure. Within the partnership:

- The Equality Authority leads in relation to standards for the study. Terms of reference need to be established and then agreed within the partnership. These must ensure measure studies are challenging, stimulate change and extract learning;
- The Equality Authority leads in relation to quality control for the measure study. In particular, ensuring the terms of reference are applied and convening a meeting of the partnership to discuss the action plan arising out of the measure study;

- The organisation responsible for the measure leads in relation to implementation of the measure study. The final outputs of the study are subject to the decision of the implementing agency. This includes actions to enhance the capacity of the measure to promote equality and accommodate diversity. The study is therefore owned by that organisation.
- The Equality Authority will lead in relation to assessing the progress made in implementing agreed recommendations.
- The Equality Authority will lead in relation to dissemination of learning, in particular through the framework of the EHRDOP. This will require electronic publication of the studies, development of synthesis reports that draw from a number of measure studies, and other activities.

This report presents the findings of the measure study of Integrate Ireland Language and Training (previously the Refugee Language Support Unit). Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) was originally established as the Refugee Language Support Unit by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in March 1999. In September 2001, following completion of a two year pilot period, the Refugee Language Support Unit became IILT Ltd, a not-for-profit company campus company of Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

As defined in its Programme Complement the aim of this measure is “To facilitate the integration of refugees into the education system and labour market through the provision of, and support for, English Language tuition, and to support English language training provided for asylum seekers”. The intended beneficiaries of the measure include adult refugees experiencing barriers to accessing education, training and employment due to their limited proficiency in the English language and children of refugees and asylum seekers of school-going age experiencing barriers to participation in the education system for the same reason.

In budgetary terms, IILT was initially allocated just under €8 million for the period 2000 to 2006. Expenditure to end of 2005 was €8 million, reflecting a higher than anticipated number of participants availing of the English language courses. Technically, the implementing body for the measure is the DES in conjunction with IILT. Operationally, the measure is implemented by IILT and it reports to the DES in respect of progress under the measure.

2. Methodology

The methodology for this measure study involved:

- collecting and reviewing documentation on programme design (e.g., eligibility criteria, recruitment processes, supports to participants etc) and implementation procedures (e.g., roles and responsibilities of various personnel);
- collecting and reviewing previous studies / reports on the measure;
- obtaining and analysing data on programme participants;
- reviewing data collection and programme monitoring procedures;
- obtaining and reviewing documentation on policies, practices and initiatives in the area of equality and promoting diversity; and,
- meeting with personnel responsible for programme delivery to discuss and obtain their views on issues related to the provision of education and training to refugees and more generally to members of minority ethnic groups.

3. Context and Policy

3.1 Policy Context

The context within which Measure 17 of the EHRDOP operates is the increasing ethnic diversity of Irish society over the past 10 years and within this the English language needs of adult refugees and the school-going children of refugees and asylum seekers. The policy response to meeting the language needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland is thus relatively recent but despite its recent origin there has been considerable development in policy thinking and in provision.¹

3.2 Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Overview of Recent Figures

During the years prior to the establishment of the IILT there was a substantial increase in the number of persons seeking asylum in Ireland: rising from less than 100 per year prior to 1993 to almost 11,000 in 2000. Also, during this period approximately 2,400 persons were admitted to Ireland under Government Decision as programme refugees (from Bosnia and Kosovo). While the number of asylum applications has decreased substantially over the past four years from a peak of over 11,500 in 2002, there is now a substantial number of persons seeking asylum in Ireland as well as a substantial number who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain. In respect of the latter, figures compiled by the Irish Refugee Council for the six year period from 2000 to 2005 show that 6,814 asylum seekers were granted refugee status and 617 were granted leave to remain. In addition, 16,693 persons were granted residency on the basis of parentage of an Irish child under the Irish Born Child (IBC) procedure introduced by the government in 2005.

The trend in the number of asylum seekers is but one component of the wider phenomenon of the growth in immigration over the past decade. To illustrate this, “net migration to Ireland increased from 8,000 in 1996 to over 41,000 in 2002 and remained high at 32,000 in 2004 (all years ending in April). Most of the recent flow in immigration has been driven by a rapid increase in the inflow of non-Irish migrants, especially from outside the pre-enlarged European Union (p. x).² Migration from the 10 new EU Member States, particularly from Poland, has added to this over the past two years.

3.3 Identifying and Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Recognition of the importance of responding to the language needs of refugees and asylum seekers was quickly established. Factors pushing this recognition derived from the absolute numbers requiring support to acquire even a basic level of proficiency in English and a policy orientation toward integration of refugees within which proficiency in English was identified as central (see Report of the *Interdepartmental Working Group on Integration of Refugees – Integration a Two-Way Process*, p. 28)

¹ Details of this are provided in a number of publications: notably Tanya Ward's report on *Asylum Seekers in Adult Education* published by the City of Dublin and County Dublin VECs in 2002, the section dealing with Education/Training in *Integrating Ireland's report A Guide to Published Research on Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Immigrants in Ireland* published in 2004, and the *Draft Recommendations Towards a Nation Action Plan* prepared by the DES as an input to the development of Planning for Diversity - *The National Action Plan Against Racism* published in 2005.

² Ruhs, M. (2005) *Managing the Immigration and Employment of Non-EU Nationals in Ireland*. Dublin: The Policy Institute.

Box 3.1: The Language Rights of Refugees

The language rights of refugees are of two kinds. On the one hand, they share with all ethnic minorities the right to preserve their own language as a central element of the individual and group identity they have brought with them to Ireland.On the other hand, refugees have language rights in relation to the community of which they have become temporary or permanent members. Specifically, if they are to be integrated into Irish Society, every reasonable effort must be made to help them develop an appropriate level of proficiency in English; for without such proficiency, they cannot enjoy free access to Irish society in general and to education, training and employment in particular. (p. 1)

From Little, D (2000) Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees in Ireland. Publication of the original report by the Refugee Language Support Unit.

Box 3.2: Communicative Approach to Language Teaching

The communicative approach is concerned first and foremost not with the mastery of linguistic forms but with the development of a communicative repertoire designed to meet the learner's behaviour needs. ...In its weak (and most widespread) version the communicative approach is concerned to develop in learners a communicative repertoire that will enable them to cope with life in the target language community, either in general or certain aspects. Usually the repertoire has a strong bias towards oral communication, and dialogues and role-play figure prominently in course books. There is also an emphasis on the use of authentic materials – not only discursive texts, but train tickets, bus timetables, public notices, reference works and so on – as a means of bringing aspects of the target language culture and elements of the communicative situation into the classroom. Most communicative course books offer some explicit treatment of target language grammar. In its strong version, the communicative approach appeals to the fact that communication is not only the end but the means of naturalistic language acquisition: children acquire their mother tongue as a result of their attempts to use it. The strong version thus emphasises the use of target language in the classroom not simply as the focus of practice but as the main medium of teaching and learning. This version of the approach assigns central importance to authentic texts not only for their cultural value but because they are themselves communicative events and as such can stimulate and feed the communicative process of language learning. (pp. 5-6).

From Little, D (2000) Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees in Ireland. Publication of the original report by the Refugee Language Support Unit.

Important milestones in setting the policy agenda for responding to the language needs of refugees and asylum seekers were: the report titled *Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees in Ireland* prepared by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies of Trinity College Dublin at the request of the Refugee Agency in 1996 which opened by defining the language rights of refugees (see Box 3.1) and advocated a pedagogical practice based on the communicative approach (see Box 3.2); the Report of the Interdepartmental Group on Integration of Refugees titled *Integration: A Two-Way Process* in 2000 which showed that the vast majority of applicants for asylum were not from English speaking countries with up to one fifth coming from Francophone Africa and which pointed to the centrality of meeting the English language needs of refugees if refugees were to effectively access services and participate in Irish society; the *White Paper on Adult Education – Learning for Life* published in 2002 which provided for free access to adult literacy, English language and mother culture supports for asylum seekers, and, Ward's Study of *Asylum Seekers in Education – A Study of Language and Literacy Needs* published by the City and County of Dublin VECs in 2002 which showed that "over 7% of respondents had no literacy skills in

their mother tongue or another language” (p. 22) and that just 4% spoke English as a mother tongue with as many as 50% having no / very limited English language skills (p.33).

3.4 Wider Aspects of Policy Response

In very general terms, the policy response has evolved from dealing with the English language needs of specific groups of people to mainstreaming anti-racism and interculturalism into educational policy and provision. Alongside of this there has been significant growth in the number of providers and forms of English language tuition available to adult refugees and asylum seekers and the provision of English language support in primary and post-primary education.

Recently, an important feature of the policy response is *Planning for Diversity - The National Action Plan Against Racism (2005)*. The key priority stated under the heading of education is “to develop an intercultural education framework at all levels within education, which seeks to build on existing initiatives, which seeks to remove existing barriers to access and which makes reference to statutory equality policy (p. 105). The Plan sets out 10 objectives and associated measures in respect of education. Of specific relevance here is the objective to “Enhance Provision of English as a Second Language”. The three specific measures associated with this are:

- 4.8.1 As resources permit, provide teaching and non-pay resources to schools to cater for the needs of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue.
- 4.8.2 Enhance support programmes for teaching staff through Integrate Ireland Language and Training.
- 4.8.3 Continue to provide and enhance ESOL supports to adult refugees, asylum seekers through the VECs. (p. 113)

The Plan also makes important commitments in respect of enhancing the participation of refugees and persons granted leave to remain in further and higher education, and to develop disaggregated statistics on cultural diversity at all levels of the educational system.

4. History, Role and Operations of Integrate Ireland Language and Training

4.1 Integrate Ireland Language and Training: A Brief History

The origins of IILT lie in a request made by the Refugee Agency³ in 1995 to the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS) of TCD for assistance in responding to the language needs of refugees. At the time, the Refugee Agency was a partner in an Integra project titled the *Bosnian Community Development Project* supported by the EU's EMPLOYMENT Initiative. The request resulted in a report titled *Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees in Ireland*. The principles and approach presented in the report have guided the ethos and subsequent general development of English language courses for adult refugees provided by IILT.

During 1998-1999 a second Integra funded project titled the *Interact Ireland* in which the Refugee Agency and the CLCS were also involved sought to develop systems to provide refugees with supports in the areas of learning English and accessing vocational training and employment. Building on the work of the previous project it focussed on the development of a quality language training system, pre-vocational language training and skills testing, and in-service training for personnel working in the mainstream vocational training system (notably FÁS). In March of 1998, the DES established Refugee Language Support Unit (RLSU) as a two year pilot project under the aegis of the CLCS and subsequently, in 1999, Interact Ireland merged with the RSLU. In 2001, the DES provided continued funding for the RLSU and later in the year the RSLU was incorporated as IILT Ltd.

IILT's mission statement is "Through education and training, to empower people of other cultures to achieve a place in Irish society". In line with this, its main activities are:

1. To co-ordinate the provision of English language training for adult refugees and to support English language training provided for adult asylum seekers by the VEC and other agencies.
2. To provide a programme of support for teachers in primary and post-primary schools responsible for the English language development of non-English-speaking immigrant pupils.
3. To participate in consortia locally and internationally that bring IILTs core functions into interaction with closely related domains of activity.

In addition to implementing Measure 17 of the EHRDOP over the course of 2000-2006, IILT has also been involved in an EQUAL funded Development Partnership - *Interact2*: www.interact2.com. As part of its involvement in this it has devised and delivered courses on *Promoting an Intercultural Training Environment / Promoting an Intercultural Workplace* and developed guidelines for the provision of induction and training for migrant employees.

4.2 Organisational Structure

IILT has seven members on its Board of Directors (four from Trinity College Dublin, two from the Department of Education and Science, and one from FÁS). For the purpose of implementing Measure 17 the General Manager is responsible for the actions under the measure and reports directly to two of the Board members, both from TCD. The latter in turn report to the Board and to the DES.

³The Refugee Agency was established by the Irish Government in 1991 and, up until 2001 when it ceased operations, it was responsible for co-ordinating arrangements for the admission, reception and resettlement of programme refugees in Ireland. Over the 1990s the main group of programme refugees being catered for by the Refugee Agency were persons from the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia). Between 1992 and 2000 over 1,300 persons were admitted to Ireland as programme refugees from Bosnia and over 1,000 from Kosovo. In 2001, the Refugee Agency and the Directorate for Asylum Services were merged to form the Reception and Integration Agency which is now responsible for coordinating the provision of services to both asylum seekers and refugees.

4.3 Equality Policies and Practices

As will be seen below, participants in IILT come from a very diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. This reflects the operation of a number of policies and practices aimed at ensuring that its English language training courses are open to all requiring them regardless of ethnic, religious, national or cultural background. Also, it can be noted that while initial difficulties were experienced in respect of ensuring gender equality, this issue has been addressed recently as a result of specific efforts to accommodate women refugees (details below).

For IILT, particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that its operations and programmes are open to refugees regardless of their backgrounds and in this regard there is a strong anti-racism ethos and corresponding set of practices in operation. Central to this is the integration of anti-racism into the process of English language learning and the formal referencing of “respect for the beliefs, customs and cultures of all students and staff” in its student handbook. Supporting this is an annual programme of in-service training for its personnel that includes sessions on equality and anti-racism. In addition, IILT trainers participated in a course titled *Anti-Racism and Intercultural Training for Trainers* organised by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in 2005. The IILT also actively participated in *Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week in 2005* by providing inputs to students on legislation concerning racism and discrimination and the measures available to them to counter such practices.

Up until 2004 the number of women refugees participating in IILT’s General English language courses was less than the number of men (see Table 6.1 below). This gender imbalance in part reflected the gender composition of the refugee population but also barriers to participation experienced by women due to both cultural factors prohibiting participation in mixed gender provision and caring responsibilities. In response to this IILT organised specific provision for women by providing courses located in mosques in Dublin beginning in 2004. The courses are delivered by a female teacher and provided on a modular basis (see page 14). Also, to encourage the participation of women IILT arranges for partners to take classes on an alternate morning / afternoon basis to facilitate meeting childcare commitments. Reflecting these measures the number of women participants in 2005 reached a par with that of men. It should be noted that childcare is neither provided by IILT nor are childcare costs covered within the funding arrangements for Measure 17.

IILT is currently preparing an Equality Action Plan as part of its registration requirements for FETAC recognition as an accredited education and training provider. The Plan is being compiled based on submissions from learners, staff and an equality audit of current provision.

5. Measure 17: Integrate Ireland Language and Training

IILT falls within the Employability pillar of the EHRDOP. There are three specific objectives associated with the 22 measures included in this pillar: mobilisation of labour supply, preventive approach to unemployment, and social inclusion. IILT is one of six measures seeking to promote social inclusion and as such it is also falls under the Social Inclusion Horizontal Principle of the NDP/CSF. However, its report on progress on the Social Inclusion Horizontal Principle to the 2006 Spring Meeting of the EHRDOP Monitoring Committee is limited in terms of the information provided. It notes that the measure is “*by its very nature, entirely focused on social inclusion*” and points to the main contribution of the measure in this regard as arising from approaches that are designed “*not only to empower learners, but to ensure that they are helped to develop language and skills necessary for integration into Irish society and progression into sustainable employment.*”

5.1 Aim of Integrate Ireland Language and Training

The overall aim of IILT is “*To facilitate the integration of refugees into the education system and labour market through the provision of, and support for, English Language tuition, and to support English language training provided for asylum seekers*” (Revised Programme Complement, p. 1).

5.2 Target Groups and Eligibility Criteria

The primary target group of IILT are adult refugees. Eligibility for the English language courses provided by IILT is based on possessing a Stamp 4 on the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) card. For persons meeting the eligibility criteria, courses are provided free of charge.

Also, benefiting from the work of IILT are children of school-going age whose parents are either refugees or asylum seekers. In practice, the teacher support programme at primary and post primary levels provided by IILT is operating to address the English language needs of students whose mother tongue is not English. This activity is funded by the DES outside of Measure 17.

5.3 Description of Actions under Integrate Ireland Language and Training

The main actions comprising the measure are:

- providing English language classes for adult refugees (including assessment of all adults presenting for English language tuition);
- developing benchmarks for English language proficiency of refugees and asylum seekers;
- providing training for teachers providing English language tuition to adult refugees and for teachers providing English language classes to non-English-speaking pupils in primary and second level education; and,
- maintaining a database of adult refugees receiving English language tuition from IILT.

English Courses for Adult Refugees

Providing English language courses for adult refugees is the main action implemented with support from Measure 17 of the EHRDOP. Currently, the three main courses provided are *English for Working and Living in Ireland* (also referred to as *General English Courses*), *English for Academic Purposes* and *Fast Track English Language Training*. Up until this year IILT also provided Pre-vocational English language classes in collaboration with FÁS, though the provision of these falls outside the scope of activities funded under Measure 17. In terms of participant numbers, the main form of provision is the course in General English provided at IILT in Dublin. For example, in 2005, almost three quarters (72.5%) of all participants in IILT took this course.

General English / English for Working and Living in Ireland (Location Dublin)

The courses provided under the heading of General English focus on the acquisition of English for living and working in Ireland. Classes are typically organised on the basis of 20 contact hours per week with a further 10 hours of assigned work or IT. Classes are held in the mornings and afternoons and participants can select which option best suits them. Courses are typically of four months duration. Topics covered include learning to learn, Ireland, health, education, accommodation, dealing with state personnel, CV preparation, planning your future in Ireland, telephoning, money, travel and transport, and computers.

Courses are provided during three four month terms per year with a full assessment of all learners being undertaken at the end of each term as a basis for making decisions about progression to different or higher levels. In 2004, a regular process of appraisal was introduced. This is undertaken with each participant in the fifth week of each term and again two weeks before the end of term. The format of the appraisal process is an interview with each participant that results in a written agreement for the next phase of learning. This process provides for participants to be actively involved in making decisions about their own course, direction and speed of learning.

Since IILT acquired recognition from FETAC as an accredited education and training provider in 2005, participants are provided with the option of undertaking FETAC accredited modules on Preparation for Work (Level 3), Personal Effectiveness (Level 3), Computer Literacy (Level 3) and ESOL (Levels 3 and 4).

General English (Other Locations)

Since 2003, English classes have been provided at a number of locations outside of Dublin. In a number of instances these classes were instigated at the request of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA): for example, in 2005, an English language training course was provided in Carrick on Shannon for adult members of five Kurdish families located there. The course was organised by IILT in co-operation with RIA, County Leitrim VEC and County Leitrim Partnership Company. In other instances, for example in Galway 2003, classes were provided by IILT with the support of the Refugee Council, the Galway Refugee Support Group and the Refugee Information Service. Over the years 2003 to 2005, classes have been provided in the following locations, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cork, Ennis, Galway, Limerick, Roscommon and Tralee.

General English (Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre Ireland)

In 2004, IILT began providing courses for women at the Mosque (South Circular Road) and in 2005 at the Islamic Cultural Centre (Clonskeagh). The initial impetus for providing a course at the Mosque was to address the English language needs of women not permitted to attend mixed-gender classes. Classes were provided on a weekly basis (i.e., three four hour classes each week) and the course content / themes were decided in agreement with participants. A modular format was used and the themes covered included doctor / hospital, dealing with schools, shopping, using the telephone, and accommodation. Anseo⁴ and other materials developed by IILT were used to supplement learning activities based on authentic texts.

The 2004 Annual Activities Report of IILT comments on the classes provided at the Mosque as follows:

“For the women attending these classes, learning basic ‘survival’ English is a priority. However, it should be noted that for many of them the language class provides their only regular contact with a native Irish person. As a consequence, the class is of great importance in giving participants an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the culture and social

⁴ Anseo: *English for Living in Ireland* was produced by IILT in 2003 and contains 10 thematic modules on the everyday language needs of migrants at levels A1, A2 and B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (see below for description). The publication was awarded the European Language Label 2003 for Innovative Language Teaching and Learning

environment in which they live. In turn, this greater understanding and awareness equip the mothers in the group to deal with the issues that arise as their children interact and integrate with the host society. The ethos of the class is one of sharing and freedom to explore views, ideas and uncertainties in a supportive environment.” (p. 6).

English for Academic Purposes

Classes in English for Academic Purposes were a response to the needs of students who possessed professional qualifications or who wished to enter third level education who approached IILT from late 2001 forward. In 2002, three courses were offered, each of three months duration. Courses have also been provided in 2003 (2), 2004 (2) and 2005 (3). The courses in 2004 and 2005 were of four months duration. Courses are tailored individually but focus on the communication skills necessary for academic / professional life. Topics include note taking, report writing, listening, communication and preparation for Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS).⁵

Database of Adult Refugees Receiving English Language Tuition from IILT

As part of its work under Measure 17 IILT maintains a database of adult refugees attending its classes. This contains data on age, gender, nationality, language proficiency and course outcomes. It is used to provide data to the DES in respect of its reporting requirements to the Monitoring Committee of the EHRDOP and it is also used for internal research purposes.

Pre-Vocational Language Classes and Testing Programme

The provision of pre-vocational classes arose from the collaboration between IILT and FÁS in the context of the *Integrate Ireland* project funded by the Integra strand of the EU EMPLOYMENT Initiative. During the period 1997 to 1999 Integrate Ireland developed the concept of pre-vocational training to prepare adult refugees to take-up mainstream vocational training. On completion of the Integrate Ireland project pre-vocational training was mainstreamed in FÁS as a bridging programme. Subsequent to this IILT provided pre-vocational training to adult refugees seeking to access mainstream vocational training provided by FÁS. The provision of pre-vocational training courses, which was in place until this year, was funded by FÁS and provided outside the scope of Measure 17 of the EHRDOP.

Primary and Post-Primary Language Support

The specific objectives of actions under this heading are:

- To analyse the linguistic demands of primary and post-primary curricula and identify the language needed by non-national pupils in order to participate fully in the educational process.
- To develop materials to support the learning of English as a second language in schools.
- To present materials, methodology and supplementary aids via an ongoing in-service training programme for language support teachers.

Technically the funding of the actions taken under this heading fall outside of Measure 17 and reports on Measure 17 to the Monitoring Committee of the EHRDOP do not cover actions taken under the heading of Primary and Post-Primary Language Support. There is, however, a degree of synergy in that work in areas such as developing English language proficiency benchmarks and on the European Language Portfolio is relevant to all areas of the work of IILT. Because the latter is an important aspect of the work of IILT and is used in respect of both its language courses for adult refugees and in the supports it provides to language support teachers at primary and post primary levels it is described in the next section.

⁵ TOEFL assesses a candidate's capacity to use and understand Standard American English at a college level. It is a requirement for non-native applicants to many American colleges. It tests reading, listening, speaking and writing skills. IELTS tests the same communicative competences as TOEFL but focuses on "International English". It is accepted by most academic institutions in Australia, the UK, Canada and Ireland.

European Language Portfolio (ELP)

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) was developed and piloted by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division during 1998 to 2000. It was launched throughout Europe during 2001 - the European Year of Languages - as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. Within IILT, the ELP is the basis for all English language tuition and, as indicated below, IILT has developed a number of ELPs that have been designed for different types of learners (e.g., primary level school-going children, adult learners with no or very limited proficiency in English, and adult learners seeking access to mainstream vocational training).

The ELP has two main aims: (a) to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels; and, (b) to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired. Linked to these aims are the two main functions of the ELP: that is, its pedagogic function and its documentation and reporting function (see Box 5.1 for descriptions of these).

Box 5: Pedagogic and Documenting and Reporting Functions of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)

The pedagogic function of the ELP includes:

- enhancing the motivation of learners to improve their ability to communicate in different languages, to learn additional languages and to seek new intercultural experiences;
- encouraging and helping learners to reflect on their objective, ways of learning and success in language learning and, to learn autonomously;
- encouraging learners to enhance their plurilingual and intercultural experience, for example through contacts and visits, reading, use of the media and projects.

The documentation and reporting function of the ELP aims to document its holders plurilingual language proficiency and experiences in other languages in a comprehensive, informative, transparent and reliable way.

From Council of Europe: www.coe.int

Box 5.2: Six Levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Basic User
A1 Breakthrough
A2 Waystage
Independent user
B1 Threshold
B2 Vantage
Proficient User
C1 Effective Operational Efficiency
C2 – Mastery

From Council of Europe: www.coe.int

There are three components to the ELP:

- a language passport, which summarises the owner's linguistic identity, language learning achievement, and intercultural experience, and includes the owner's assessment of their language competence according to the Council of Europe's Common Reference Levels (see Box 5.2).
- a language biography, which is used to set intermediate learning goals, review progress, and record significant language learning and intercultural experiences;

- a dossier, in which the owner collects samples of his/her work and evidence of his/her achievements in second/foreign language learning.

The Council of Europe has established a European Validation Committee to accredit ELPs submitted to it. To date IILT has received validation for a number of ELPs designed for use with language learners at post-primary level, for new comers learning English as a second language in primary and post-primary schools, for adult newcomers (a) who are newly arrived in Ireland with little or no proficiency in English and (b) who have already spent some time here and / or have some proficiency in English, for adult newcomers preparing for mainstream vocational training and employment and for use in higher education. Through its involvement in the Milestone project funded by the EU under Comenius 2, IILT has been involved in the development of the *Milestone ELP* which has been specifically designed for adult migrant learners who are learning the language of their host community (see Annex I for the Self-Assessment Grid based on The Common Frame associated with this ELP).

The focus of the ELP on both linguistic and intercultural aims provides a tool that integrally links language learning with interculturalism: that is, language learning takes place within a pedagogy that is intercultural in contrast to language learning that has add-on or separate modules on “interculturalism” or “anti-racism”. With regard to this point, it is important to note that the ELP and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages are instruments contributing to meeting the political objectives of the Council of Europe as expressed in Recommendations R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers. The pre-amble to R (98) 6 notes the importance of actions in the field of access to language learning as an important means of not only equipping all Europeans meet the challenges of international mobility but also as an important means to promote mutual understanding and tolerance and respect of identities and cultural diversity.

Accreditation by Further Education Training and Awards Council (FETAC)

In addition to using ELPs validated by the Validation Committee of the Council of Europe, IILT has recently secured recognition from FETAC as an accredited education and training provider. Four FETAC accredited modules - Preparation for Work / Level 3, Personnel Effectiveness / Level 3, Computer Literacy / Level 3, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) / Levels 3 and 4 – are currently available to adult refugees taking English language courses at IILT in Dublin. Access to FETAC accredited courses is being expanded to IILT courses provided on an outreach basis during 2006.

5.4 Structures and Personnel Implementing Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Table 5.1 summarises the main personnel involved in implementing IILT.

Table 5.1: Personnel and Roles / Functions Implementing IILT

Personnel	Role / Function
Directors (2)	Directing research in areas of language benchmarking and resource materials development, delivering seminars to teachers in primary and post-primary schools as part of the language support programme, and reporting to DES.
Managerial Personnel (2)	Managing the delivery of English language classes and liaison with other organisations (e.g., FÁS, RIA, NGOs).
Support and Co-ordination Personnel (3)	Maintaining and reviewing quality standards of teaching, liaising with accrediting bodies (e.g., FETAC), and coordinating and supporting outreach courses.
English Language Teachers (34 in 2005)	Providing English language classes and reviewing student progress.

5.5 Promoting Participation in Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Noting the descriptions of the main actions undertaken by IILT presented above, this section looks at the promotion of and recruitment to its General English Courses among adult refugees. In doing this it is useful to differentiate between the General English Courses provided at its premises in Dublin and all courses provided at locations other than IILT's Dublin premises. The latter are referred to collectively as "Outreach Courses".

General English Language Courses in Dublin

A wide range of methods are used to promote awareness of the English language courses provided at its premises in Dublin. These methods now include:

- placing posters in a wide range of languages at locations and in organisations likely to be frequented by adult refugees (e.g., NGOs working with refugees, Ethnic Shops);
- distributing leaflets (in English) describing the courses on offer;
- liaising with and receiving referrals from the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) and FÁS;
- liaising with NGOs working with / providing services for refugees; and,
- providing information on IILT's website.

While in the early days of IILT there was a greater reliance on referrals from organisations such as the RIA, DSFA and FÁS, a substantial proportion of current participants are recruited via word of mouth (as many as 50%). This reflects the positive experiences of participants in IILT over the past number of years and associated with this is the passing-on of information to other members of their communities.

Outreach Courses

In broad terms recruitment to General English Courses provided at locations other than IILT's Dublin premises occurs by way of:

- requests from the RIA in respect of particular groups of refugees (mainly programme refugees);
- contacts with NGOs working with / providing services for refugees;
- contacts with local VECs;
- establishing direct contact with potential participants at a Mosque and through the Islamic Cultural Centre Ireland; and,
- contacts with Partnership Companies.

6. Participants in Integrate Ireland Language and Training

6.1 Number of Adult Refugees Participating in English Language Courses

Up to the end of 2001 a total of 416 adult refugees accessed General English language courses with IILT. Table 6.1 presents the numbers attending from 2002 to 2005 and provides a gender breakdown of participants. As noted earlier, progress in respect of gender equality is evident in the figures for 2005. Overall, to date, almost 3,000 adult refugees have attended general English Language courses. In terms of age, the majority (typically in the region of 80%) of participants are between 25 and 50 years of age. Reflecting the age profile of the population, a small number of persons aged 50 years and over participate in General English language courses (in the region of 6% of all participants in General English languages courses from 2000 to date).

Table 6.1: Gender Breakdown of Participants Attending General English Language Courses, 2002 to 2005

	Men	Women	Total
2002	251 (62.9%)	148 (37.1%)	399
2003	324 (59.0%)	225 (41.0%)	549
2004	410 (57.3%)	305 (42.7%)	715
2005	424 (50.1%)	422 (49.9%)	846
2002 - 2005	1,409 (56.2%)	1,100 (43.8%)	2,509

Table 6.2: Gender Breakdown of Participants Attending Academic English Language Courses, 2002 to 2005

	Men	Women	Total
2002	22 (61.1%)	14 (38.9%)	36
2003	14 (48.3%)	15 (51.7%)	29
2004	13 (44.8%)	16 (55.2%)	29
2005	26 (55.3%)	21 (44.7%)	47
2002 - 2005	75 (53.2%)	66 (46.8%)	141

Table 6.3: Nationalities of Participants in General English Language Courses, 2002 to 2005

	Main Nationalities	Number of Nationalities
2002	Congolese (10.5%), Romanian (10.5%), Vietnamese (9%), Afgan (7%), Iraqi (7%), Angolan (6%)	50
2003	Congolese (13%), Romanian (9%), Iraqi (7%), Angolan (7%), Moldovan (6%), Ukrainian (5%)	58
2004	Congolese (15%), Angolan (7%), Romanian (6%), Ukrainian (6%), Moldovan (5%), Russian (4%)	74
2005	Congolese (11%), Somali (7%), Angolan (5%), Moldovan (5%), Russian (5%), Romanian (4%)	73

The number of persons attending Academic English language courses is considerably smaller than that attending general English language courses and apart from 2002 the numbers of men and women attending these classes has been approximately equal (see Table 6.2)

The very wide range of nationalities found among participants is evident from the figures presented in Table 6.3. The prevalence of participants from North African countries is notable and reflects their number among the adult refugee population. The other nationalities consistently accounting for substantial proportions of participants include Romanians, Russians and Moldavians.

Table 6.4: Number of Persons Granted Refugee Status, 2000 to 2005

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
605	940	1,992	1,173	1,138	966	6,814

When the number of participants in English language courses in IILT is placed in the context of its target group it is evident that IILT is catering for a substantial proportion of the adult refugee population with English language needs. While it is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the level of provision in relation to the level of need, the figures presented in Table 6.4 on the number of persons granted refugee status suggest that - when language English needs are taken into account - IILT is now catering for a substantial proportion of the annual increase in its target population. However, it should be noted that there is also evidence of a level of under-provision in that at the end of 2004 there were 254 persons on IILT's waiting list for English language classes with the figure for 2005 being 340.⁶

⁶The figures on waiting lists include persons deferring places as well as persons who have registered but who did not turn-up for registration and, as such, represent an upper limit on the number of persons actually awaiting and available to take up places in English language classes.

7. Outcomes Among Participants on General English Language Courses

Due to differences in the manner in which data on participant outcomes are provided over the years, Table 7.1 focuses on outcomes for the years 2004 and 2005. Before commenting on the trends, it should be noted that in each year a substantial proportion of all persons attending IILT's General English language courses continue their studies into the following year (i.e., 270 of 715 in 2004 corresponding to 37.8%, and 302 of 840 corresponding to 40.0% in 2005). Outcomes are therefore calculated over a base of persons leaving / completing IILT courses in each year.

Table 7.1: Outcomes Among Participants in IILT's General English Courses, 2004 and 2005

	2004	2005	2004 & 2005
Progression to FÁS Pre-Vocational Course	97 (21.8%)	34 (6.3%)	131 (13.3%)
Progression to FÁS Mainstream Course	7 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (0.7%)
Progression to Further Education	22 (4.9%)	30 (5.6%)	52 (5.3%)
Progression to VTOS or Other Training	15 (3.4%)	6 (1.1%)	21 (2.1%)
Direct Entry to Employment	29 (6.5%)	17 (3.2%)	46 (4.7%)
Other ^a	275 (61.8%)	451 (83.8%)	726 (73.9%)
Total Leaving / Completing	445 (100.0)	538 (100.0)	983 (100.0)
Progressing within IILT	270	302	572
Total Participants in Year	715	840	1,555

^a Other includes persons completing IILT courses with: a level of proficiency that supports entry to further education, training or employment; persons leaving having reached a level of proficiency that meets their needs; persons leaving whose progression status is unknown; and, persons leaving for other reasons including changes in personal circumstances.

For the two years examined the majority of participants in each year complete their courses within that year. While it is difficult to identify a conventional "drop-out" rate because participants who leave for personal reasons (e.g., ill health or care responsibilities) can return to take up their studies at a subsequent time, the figures suggest that the majority of participants either complete their course at a recognised level of proficiency or at a level of proficiency that meets their needs.

Noting the above, overall known progression rates to further training, education or employment are 38.2% in 2004 and 16.2% in 2005. Across the two years, the known progression rate is 26.1%. It should be noted, however, that these progression rates are based on known outcomes at the point when a participant completes their course. Outcomes arising at some subsequent time are not determined. As is commented on below there is a case for more systematic follow-up of participants to determine more accurately the labour market impact of Measure 17.

8. Factors Supporting the Participation of People from Minority Ethnic Groups in IILT

From the brief history of IILT presented above it is clear that the nature, quality, relevance and scale of provision of the English language courses provided have evolved over time - initially with support from the EU and subsequently with support from the DES. Also, the early development of a grounded approach to pedagogic practice as well as the adoption of the ELP as a framework for supporting learning created a coherence to the work of IILT. More specifically in the context of promoting the participation of persons from minority ethnic groups in education and training the adoption of the ELP has provided a means of linking language acquisition with interculturalism and promoted an ethos of equality and respect for identity in the provision of English language courses. Flanking this are other actions in the areas of personnel training on equality and anti-racism and active participation in public events focused on promoting equality and appreciation of diversity as well as undertaking specific initiatives to support the participation of under-represented groups (notably women from a North African / Muslim background).

At a more practical level, other factors are also relevant to understanding the capacity to accommodate people from such a diverse range of nationalities in the English language courses provided by IILT. These include the following:

- the English language courses provided are specifically designed to meet the English language needs of the target population;
- courses are provided free of charge;
- courses can be completed on a suspended / interrupted basis (i.e., persons can leave for a period of time and return subsequently);
- the level of proficiency aspired to can be determined by participants;
- in addition to courses being provided centrally in Dublin courses are also provided on an outreach basis in location where there are known populations of adult refugees; a wide variety of methods are used to promote awareness of the availability of the courses including contacts with NGOs working with refugees, placing posters in locations frequented by refugees / members of minority ethnic groups, and working in partnership with other organisations (including VECs and Area Based Partnership Companies); and,
- providing training on equality and anti-racism to front-line personnel delivering English language courses.

Finally, though there is a lack of systematic research on the issue, it would appear that levels of motivation to acquire or increase proficiency in the English language are high among the target group of Measure 17. This, in turn, contributes to levels of participation.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The English language courses for adult refugees funded under Measure 17 of the EHRDOP and implemented by the DES in conjunction IILT are the main form of provision addressing the English language needs of adult refugees. The specific role of IILT in relation to adult refugees (under Measure 17) and its wider role in relation to addressing the language needs of asylum-seekers and the school-going children of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants is identified in *Planning for Diversity – The National Action Plan Against Racism*. In that regard, the pedagogic and other practices developed by IILT are of relevance not just to supporting the development of proficiency in the English language but also to promoting integration, interculturalism and respect for and a valuing of diversity.

Among the areas of improvement that can be identified on the basis of this measure study are the following:

- 1. Information on the Adequacy of Provision in Relation to Need:** From available data it is difficult to determine if the level of provision under Measure 17 is sufficient to address English language needs among the refugee population. The presence of waiting lists could be taken as indicating that the level of provision is below the level of demand at present. Among the issues arising is the absence of systematic data on the language needs of asylum seekers granted refugee status or humanitarian leave to remain. More systematic linkage between the granting of status, identifying language needs and referral to language tuition would address this issue.

In the context of the above, it is also important to note that, in addition to provision organised by VECs, there has been an increase in the number and types of organisations (e.g., libraries, information centres, religious orders, organisations working with members of ethnic minorities) providing English language classes for asylum seekers and refugees. There is, however, a lack of systemic information on the uptake of these courses by adult refugees and on outcomes in terms of English language proficiency. This further complicates the assessment of the extent to which current provision is addressing actual levels of need.

- 2. More Formal Documentation of Equality Policies and Practices:** While it is clear from the data analysed in this study that IILT has developed the competence to accommodate persons from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds on its courses and that it has a range of good practices supporting this, more formal documentation of its policies and practices in this regard would be useful. IILT's commitment to bringing forward an Equality Plan in response to FETAC requirements is one possible means of addressing this issue.
- 3. More Data on the Outcomes in Respect of English Language Proficiency:** The publicly available documentation on the outcomes of Measure 17 does not provide data on the English language learning outcomes of participants. The provision of data using the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages on entry to IILT and on participants leaving IILT would assist in this regard.

Three points should be noted with regard to the above. First, there is a strong emphasis on English language learning outcomes being set by participants in association with their

tutors. This, in effect, means that participants will stay with IILT up to the point at which they consider that they have secured outcomes set by themselves. The experience of IILT is that the language learning outcomes that are aspired to by participants are very varied. Second, and related to the former, is the issue of partial competencies. For example, with reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, participants may not reach a uniform level of competence across the five areas specified in the framework. This makes the issue of documenting language learning outcomes more complex than a straightforward specification of a single level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Finally, data relevant to addressing the above recommendation are held by IILT. Noting the foregoing points, these data should be used to give at least an aggregate summary of the language learning outcomes secured by participants.

- 4. More Systematic Follow-up of Progression Outcomes Secured by Participants:** Currently, data on progression to further education, training and employment is based on what is known in respect of participants when they complete their course with IILT. In order to more accurately assess the contribution of Measure 17 in enabling adult refugees to access the labour market the use of a follow-up contact process at six months to one year following completion of courses should be considered. In recommending this it is recognised that English language proficiency is just one of a number of factors that can influence progression outcomes. The recommended use of a follow-up procedure could also encompass identifying the non-language related barriers that adult refugees may experience in progressing to further education and training and accessing employment.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Self-Assessment Grid for the ELP for Adult Migrants

Understanding		
A1	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	Listening
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not stated explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	
A1	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	Reading
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not stated explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	

Speaking		
A1	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me to formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	Spoken Interaction
A2	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't really understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	
B1	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst skilful in areas where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	
B2	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	
C1	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	
C2	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around	
A1	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	Spoken Production
A2	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	
B1	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for options and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	
B2	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	
C1	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	
C2	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the content and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	

Writing	
A1	I can write a short simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.
A2	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.
B1	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.
B2	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.
C1	I can express myself in clear, well structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.
C2	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of

Equality Studies Unit

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