Equality
Research
Series

# Accommodating Diversity in Labour Market Programmes

*WRC Social & Economic Consultants*

NDP
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS

# Accommodating Diversity in Labour Market Programmes

## WRC Social and Economic Consultants

**Measure 33A Equality Studies Unit**

Funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union under the National Development Plan, 2000 – 2006

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# FOREWORD

The Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme is a key element within the National Development Plan. Its emphasis on employment growth, access to employment, addressing skills and labour market shortages and promoting lifelong learning places it at the heart of the development strategy pursued for and by Irish society. As such its focus on gender equality and social inclusion objectives is welcome.

Gender equality has been pursued through the Operational Programme by a variety of measures. These include measures targeted on women, the use of gender impact assessments on all measures and the gathering and analysis of gender data in the implementation of all measures. In a context where equality legislation establishes nine different grounds on which discrimination is prohibited - gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community - it is timely to look to a capacity within the various measures of the Operational Programme to establish, pursue and achieve equality objectives for a wider range of groups who currently experience labour market inequality.

The establishment of an Equality Studies Unit within the Equality Authority and funded by the Operational Programme is a key development in expanding this focus on equality. The Equality Studies Unit has the role of examining and enhancing the capacity of the Operational Programme to address the labour market inequalities experienced by older people, people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups (particularly refugees) and members of the Traveller community. It provides the foundations upon which a wider equality focus and practice can be further developed within the Operational Programme akin to the gender equality infrastructure that has been so successfully developed to date.

*Accommodating Diversity in Labour Market Programmes* draws together information and learning from eight different research projects carried out by the Equality Studies Unit in the first phase of its work. This overview report provides a summary picture of the labour market situations and concerns of older people, people with disabilities, Travellers and minority ethnic people. The knowledge developed and presented is crucial for the design and delivery of labour market measures with a capacity to prevent discrimination, accommodate diversity and achieve equality for these groups.

The report further highlights a range of issues in relation to data and indicator development within the Operational Programme. Addressing these issues will be crucial in assisting evidence based decision making by policy makers and programme providers as they seek to further enhance their work towards achieving labour market equality for these groups.

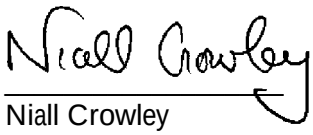
*Accommodating Diversity in Labour Market Programmes* is a timely report. It provides foundations for:

- a rolling programme of reviews of the measures within the Operational Programme from the perspective of the need for an equality focused practice
- assisting in the appropriate inclusion of older people, Travellers, minority ethnic people and people with disabilities in the National Employment Action Plan

- shaping a response to the current Mid-Term Review of the National Development Plan so that it contributes to the more effective pursuit of the wider multi-ground equality horizontal objective

- supporting the further development of an equality focused practice by labour market programme providers

We are grateful to Tom Ronayne of WRC Social and Economic Consultants for his work in preparing this consolidated report. His expertise and insight has added significant value to the work.



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September 2003

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **Introduction and Legislative Context** | **7** |
| 1.1 | Introduction | 7 |
| 1.2 | Legislative Context | 8 |
| **2.** | **Overview of the ESU Phase 1 Studies** | **10** |
| **3.** | **The Four Labour Market Reports: A Synthesis** | **13** |
| 3.1 | The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Older People | 13 |
| 3.2 | The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of People with Disabilities | 17 |
| 3.3 | The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees) | 21 |
| 3.4 | The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Members of the Traveller Community | 25 |
| **4.** | **Barriers to the Four Groups Participation in Labour Market Measures** | **29** |
| **5.** | **The EHRDOP, Equal Opportunities and Diversity** | **33** |
| 5.1 | Developing Focus on Equal Opportunities and Diversity | 33 |
| 5.2 | Labour Market Inequality | 34 |
| 5.3 | Overview of EHRDOP Measures and the Four Groups | 35 |
| 5.4 | General Observations | 38 |
| **6.** | **Developing Capacity to Promote Equal Opportunities** | **40** |
| 6.1 | The Implementation Architecture of the EHRDOP: Issues for Undertaking Measure Studies | 40 |
| 6.2 | Scoping the Parameters of the Measure Study Process | 41 |
| **7.** | **Conclusions and Directions** | **44** |
| **References** | | **46** |
| **Appendix A: Summary Findings / Recommendations of the Four Data Reports** | | **48** |

**List of Figures**


Figure 2.1 Data Availability to Produce Monitoring Indicators 11
Figure 3.1 Labour Force Participation Rates Among Older People by Gender (2001) 15
Figure 3.2 Labour Force Participation Rates Among People with Disabilities and Non-Disabled People, by Age (2002) 19


**List of Tables**


Table 3.1 Equality Legislation Provisions on Age Ground 14
Table 3.2 Summary of Context Indicators for Older People 14
Table 3.3 Equality Legislation Provisions on Disability Ground 17
Table 3.4 Summary of Context Indicators for People with Disabilities 18
Table 3.5 Equality Legislation Provisions on Race Ground 22
Table 3.6 Summary of Context Indicators for Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees) 23
Table 3.7 Equality Legislation Provisions on Traveller Ground 25
Table 3.8 Summary of Context Indicators for Members of the Traveller Community 26
Table 4.1 Indicative Summary of Barriers Concerning Accessing and Participating in Labour Market Programmes 31
Table 5.1 Measures in the EHRDOP 36
Table 6.1 Examples of the Complexity of Measure Architecture, EHRDOP 41


**List of Text Boxes**


Box 1.1 List of ESU Phase One Studies 8
Box 2.1 Definitions of Context and Programme Indicators 10
Box 2.2 Final Conclusion of an Initial Assessment of the Position of Selected Groups in Three Measures Under the EHRDOP 12
Box 3.1 Models of Disability in Research and Policy 20
Box 3.2 Definitions of Refugee Status and Rights in Relation to the Labour Market 22
Box 3.3 Conclusions on the Current Situation Regarding Traveller Participation in Labour Market Programmes 27
Box 4.1 Typology of Barriers to Participating in Labour Market Programmes 29
Box 5.1 Objectives of the EHRDOP 33

1

# INTRODUCTION AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

## 1.1 Introduction

The Equality Authority is implementing an Equality Studies Unit (ESU) which is a technical assistance sub-measure of the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EHRDOP) of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 (Government of Ireland, 1999). The brief of the ESU concerns labour market inequalities and their implications for labour market policy in respect of four groups of people: older workers; people with disabilities; minority ethnic groups (particularly refugees); and members of the Traveller community. Specifically, the ESU exists to:

- identify existing data deficits and advise on how they might be addressed so that access to and participation in the labour market can be tracked and analysed
- improve understanding of the specific labour market needs of groups exposed to social exclusion and discrimination and promoting a capacity to accommodate these differing needs
- research the labour market experience of these groups and draw on the findings to improve access and participation
- enhance the monitoring of outcomes for these groups through inputs to the responsible committees and other fora

In the first phase of its work, the ESU commissioned eight studies arising from these objectives (see Box 1.1 for details). Four studies addressed the state of development and the issues arising in relation to the availability of relevant population based data and monitoring indicators concerning the four groups. These are referred to collectively here as the 'data reports'. The other four studies (referred to collectively here as the 'labour market reports') documented the labour market inequality, experiences and concerns of members of each of the four groups. They also examined the barriers to accessing labour market programmes from the perspective of members of the four groups and from the perspective of programme providers.

**Box 1.1: List of ESU Phase One Studies**

**'Data Reports'**

Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2003) *Monitoring Indicators Under the EHRDOP and Equality Monitoring*

Goodbody Economic Consultants (2003) *Analysis of the Labour Market Situation of Travellers, Other Minority Ethnic Groups, Older People and People with Disabilities in Ireland*

McLoughlin (2003) *An Assessment of the Position of Selected Groups in Three Measures under the Employment and Human Resource Development Operational Programme*

Raymond Burke Consulting (2003) *Review of Labour Market Equality Indicators*

**'Labour Market Reports'**

Basten, Irwin and Heaney (2003) *Labour Market Inequalities for Older People in Ireland: Listening to the Views of Older People*

Bruce (2003) *Labour Market Experiences of People with Disabilities*

Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons (2003) *The Labour Market Needs and Experiences of Minority Ethnic Groups, Particularly Refugees, in Ireland*

Pearn Kandola Occupational Psychologists (2003) *Barriers Travellers Experience Accessing and Participating in Labour Market Programmes*

The aim of this overview report is to consolidate and integrate the findings of the eight Phase One reports (particularly the four reports concerning the labour market situation of members of the four groups) and to consider their implications in the context of the EHRDOP. This report seeks to meet these objectives by:

(i) presenting, by way of introduction, a brief overview of a number of the key themes and issues arising in the eight reports (Chapter 2)

(ii) providing a summary and synthesis of the key findings of the four labour market reports (Chapter 3)

(iii) presenting a typology of the barriers experienced by members of the four groups in relation to participating in the measures of the EHRDOP (Chapter 4)

(iv) assessing the relevance and capacity of the EHRDOP to engage with and address the labour market inequality experienced by people from the four groups (Chapter 5)

(v) scoping the development of practices to enhance the capacity of individual measures in the EHRDOP to address the labour market inequality experienced by people from the four groups (Chapter 6)

(vi) drawing a number of general conclusions and identifying future directions in relation to enhancing the capacity of the EHRDOP to address the labour market inequality experienced by people from the four groups (Chapter 7)

## 1.2 Legislative Context

Individuals and organisations responsible for the provision of labour market initiatives have certain obligations under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 as employers, educational and training bodies and service providers. These Acts aim to promote equality of

opportunity and prohibit discrimination on nine specified grounds in employment, vocational training, training or experience, access to employment and conditions of employment, service provision and educational establishments. The nine discriminatory grounds are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

## The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000:

- prohibit direct and indirect *discrimination* (and discrimination by association by service providers and educational establishments)

- prohibit *sexual harassment and harassment* on the discriminatory grounds

- require employers, educational and training bodies, service providers and educational establishments to *provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities* unless it costs more than nominal cost

- allow *positive action* measures

  (i) under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 in relation to:
  a) the gender ground
  b) people over 50
  c) people with a disability
  d) members of the Travelling community
  e) training or work experience (provided by or on behalf of the State) for any disadvantaged group (if the Minister certifies that it is unlikely that the group would otherwise receive similar training or work)

  (ii) under the Equal Status Act, 2000 in relation to disadvantaged groups or measures which cater for the special needs of persons

- impose *vicarious liability* on employers and service providers in relation to discriminatory acts of employees and agents unless the employers and service providers took reasonably practicable steps to prevent the discrimination

- contain a number of detailed exemptions

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 will have to be amended to implement the EU Race Directive, the Framework Directive and the Gender Equal Treatment Directive.

2

# OVERVIEW OF THE ESU PHASE ONE STUDIES

Two broad issues are addressed by the initial eight studies commissioned by the ESU. These are: documenting and assessing data availability and requirements for identifying and quantifying inequality associated with group membership and monitoring the actions being taken to address this inequality in the EHRDOP; and, identifying and documenting the labour market situation and concerns of members of the four groups.

Four of the reports - collectively referred to here as the 'data reports' - sought to document current practices concerning the collection and presentation of data on the labour market situation of the four groups and to examine current practices in relation to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the EHRDOP. The intent of these reports was to identify gaps in the *context indicators* on the labour market situation of members of the four groups and weaknesses in the *programme indicators* used in monitoring and reporting on the EHRDOP (see Box 2.1 for the definitions of context and programme indicators used in these studies).

As part of the ground covered by these reports the practices of a number of countries and institutions concerning context and programme indicators were reviewed (Raymond Burke Consultants, 2003). Also, a preliminary assessment was made of the position of the four groups in three of the measures being implemented under the EHRDOP (McLoughlin, 2003). The three measures examined were the Action Programme for the Unemployed (Measure 1), Early School Leavers - Progression (Measure 11a) and Sectoral Entry Training - Tourism (Measure 12b).

**Box 2.1: Definitions of Context and Programmes Indicators**

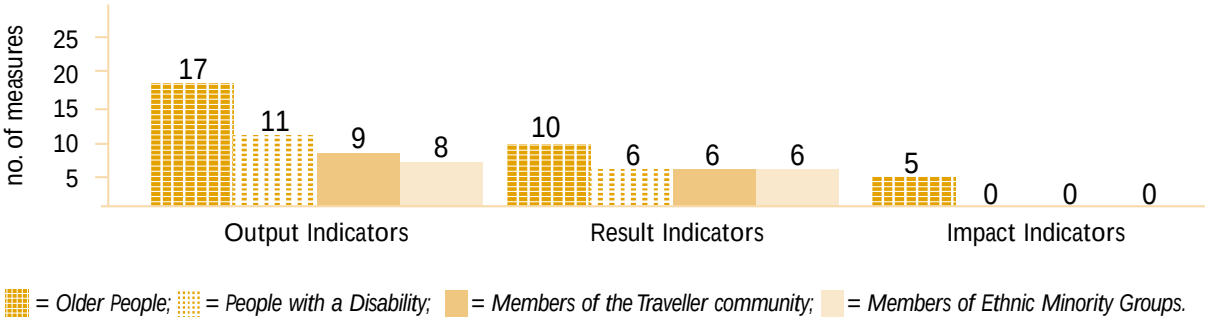
| | |
|---|---|
| **Context Indicators** | Refer to the context in which the programme, or a part thereof operates. Context indicators apply to an entire territory, population or category. Context indicators are not intended to measure programme achievement. |
| **Programme Indicators** | Refer to activities under a specific programme. Programme indicators refer only to the part or category of the public or part of the territory that has been effectively reached. Programme indicators try to monitor, as far as possible, the direct and indirect effect of the programme. Programme indicators are further sub-divided into three categories: output, result and impact indicators.<br>***Output Indicators*** Represent the product of the operator's activity or more precisely that which is obtained in exchange for public expenditure. An example in the case of a training intervention is the number of people taking part in a training course. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ***Result indicators*** | Represent the immediate advantage of an intervention for the direct addressees (direct beneficiaries). An example in the case of a training intervention is the number of participants who achieved certification. |
| | ***Impact Indicators*** | Represent the consequences of an intervention beyond its direct and immediate interaction with addressees. An example in the case of a training intervention is the number of graduates from a programme who are in employment one year following graduation. |

The broad thrust of the findings of the data reports is that current practice in the areas of collecting and presenting both context and programme indicators on the labour market situation of people from the four groups is weak. More specifically, the current situation in relation to context indicators is that substantial deficits exist in national data sources, for example the Census of Population and the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), concerning three of the four groups (people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups and Travellers) with current practice being weakest in respect of members of minority ethnic groups. The main issue arising with respect to older people is ensuring easy access to the considerable amount of data collected regarding their labour market situation.

A similar situation is presented by findings of the study of programme indicators in the EHRDOP (Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants, 2003). Across the 38 measures examined, data availability is highest in respect of older people followed by people with a disability. Particular deficits in programme indicators are identified in respect of Travellers and members of minority ethnic groups. Also, as is clear from Figure 2.1, the level of data availability is highest in respect of output indicators and lowest in respect of impact indicators.

**Figure 2.1: Data Availability to Produce Monitoring Indicators**




*= Older People; = People with a Disability; = Members of the Traveller community; = Members of Ethnic Minority Groups.*

*(Source: Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultant, 2003)*

The weaknesses identified in the four reports addressing context and programme indicators point to two broad issues that need to be addressed in order to (i) improve our understanding of the labour market situation of members of the four groups and (ii) enable the effectiveness of policy actions taken to address the labour market inequality experienced by them to be monitored, assessed and developed. First, the application of the equal opportunities principle to the EHRDOP has highlighted the need for agencies with responsibilities for collecting and presenting context and programme indicators to develop their data-collection in respect of members of the four groups. It is of note that a similar situation arose previously in relation to securing indicator data relevant to monitoring and promoting gender equality.

It is also worth noting that on considering the findings of the study of programme indicators in the EHRDOP (Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants, 2003), the EHRDOP Monitoring Committee has asked Implementing Departments and Agencies to report back to Monitoring Committee meetings on progress in implementing the recommendations and on any difficulties in seeking to implement them.

The second issue concerns addressing the methodological issues arising in securing context and programme indicators concerning members of the four groups. The difficulties arising in this regard vary in respect of people from the four groups with particular difficulties arising in relation to three of the four groups (people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups and Travellers). For example, in the case of people with disabilities, difficulties arise concerning the definition and measurement of disability (how to adequately capture and characterise impairments in terms of parameters such as their duration and severity) and in the use of particular definitions of disability to quantify labour market inequality based on indicators such as labour force participation and employment rates.

In response to these issues a range of recommendations concerning the collection and presentation of context and programme indicators are made in two reports (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2003 and Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants, 2003). Annex A presents a summary of these recommendations together with the recommendations arising from the other two reports addressing the issue of context and programme indicators.

Given the paucity of data concerning people from the four groups in national data sources, the four labour market studies commissioned by the ESU examining the labour market inequality experienced by them represent a valuable contribution to developing an initial profile of their circumstances and concerns in relation to participating in the labour market. Methodologically, each of the four studies draws on the existing literature concerning the labour market situation and experiences of group members and supplements this with focus groups, small-scale surveys and interviews with personnel in agencies responsible for implementing measures in the EHRDOP. The findings and conclusions presented in the reports from these studies span a wide range of areas: from contemporary social attitudes toward members of the four groups, through the evolution and orientation of policies addressing their situation, down to a detailed documenting of the experiences of particular individuals in respect of their attempts to secure access to particular labour market programmes and employment.

As a synthesis of the findings of the labour market reports is presented in the following chapter of this report, it is suffice to note here that the findings of the studies - when taken as a whole - point to a number of issues and challenges for agencies implementing measures under the EHRDOP. Among the issues arising are recognising and responding to the heterogeneous as well as the precise nature of labour market disadvantages experienced by people from the four groups alongside the need for measures and action to take account of the diversity of these four groups. Also there is a clear need to acknowledge the complex manner in which labour market inequality associated with group membership per se can be combined with and compounded by specific labour market disadvantages arising from a lack of pre-requisites for effective participation in the labour market (for example low initial levels of educational attainment as reflected in formal qualifications, literacy difficulties, low levels of vocational skills and outdated occupational experience).

With regard to this, it should be noted that one of the main conclusions of the report presenting an initial assessment of the participation of people from the four groups in three measures of the EHRDOP is the need to develop an understanding of the relationship between *labour market inequality, group membership* and *labour market disadvantage* (see Box 2.2). This issue is taken up briefly in Chapter 5 of this report. Among the challenges arising for agencies and personnel involved in implementing the EHRDOP is developing an effective course of action - broadly within the context of a pre-existing set of measures - to address the labour market disadvantages experienced by people from the four groups combined with developing strategies to combat the labour market inequality experienced by them due to group membership and strategies to ensure actions and measures take account of any practical implications that flow from group membership. The issues arising with regard to this are broadly addressed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of this report.

**Box 2.2: Final Conclusion of an Initial Assessment of the Position of Selected Groups in Three Measures under the EHRDOP**

Despite awareness of the need for equality, this area needs to be significantly developed. The relationship between equality and social and economic disadvantage needs to be clarified and much work is needed in developing equality policies and statements at both the national and local level and the embedding of these within practice.

*(McLoughlin, 2003)*

3

# THE FOUR LABOUR MARKET REPORTS: A SYNTHESIS

This chapter presents key context indicators concerning the labour market situation of each of the four groups and identifies the main concerns of members of each of the groups in relation to participating in the labour market. In addition, provisions of the equality legislation in regard to the ground relevant to each group are summarised in a box in the introduction to each sub-section. In profiling the labour market situation of the groups the data presented in the four labour market reports are supplemented by data presented in the data reports as well as data contained in recent releases from official sources such as the Census of Population and the Quarterly National Household Survey. However, due to the gaps and level of variation in the availability of data from official sources concerning the labour market situation of the four groups it is not possible to develop a systematic and consistent profile of their labour market situation. In synthesising the concerns, experiences and issues faced by members of the four groups this chapter draws on the findings of the primary research undertaken in preparing the four labour market reports, in particular the results of the focus groups, interviews, and small scale survey work undertaken with members of each of the four groups.

## 3.1 The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Older People

In comparison to other countries in the EU and at the level of the EU itself, there is a very limited body of research focusing specifically on the labour market situation of older people in Ireland. Part of the explanation for this lies in the relatively distinct population dynamics of the country, particularly the greater proportion of the population falling into younger age cohorts than is found in other EU and Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) member countries. The research that has been undertaken in Ireland reflects concerns regarding labour availability during a period of rapid economic and employment growth (Public and Corporate Economic Consultants, 2001) and concerns in relation to retirement (including early retirement) and provisions for and the choices of older people in respect of their participation in the labour force (Fahey and Russell, 2001).

Among the salient findings of these studies are that mandatory retirement, age discrimination, unsuitable hours and a lack of financial incentives are the main barriers for participation in employment by retired people. In addition, in relation to people involved in home duties and with an interest in taking up paid work, the lack of suitable jobs in local areas, a lack of part-time jobs, a skills mismatch - the non-congruence of skills available with skills required - age discrimination by employers and a lack of self-confidence were perceived as labour market barriers.

These findings are echoed in a recent Equality Authority study (2002) on older people and in the findings of the report prepared for the ESU on the labour market situation and concerns of older people (Basten, Irwin and Heaney, 2003).

Provisions of the equality legislation in regard to the age ground are summarised in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1: Equality Legislation Provisions on Age Ground**

| | Employment Equality Act, 1998 | Equal Status Act, 200 |
|---|---|---|
| Ground | Between 18 and 65 years (or maximum school going age and 65 for vocational training) | There is no upper limit. Treating someone under 18 less favourably or more favourably is not discrimination on the age ground |
| Positive Action | Measures which help integrate people over 50 into employment<br>Training or work experience for disadvantaged groups (as certified by the Minister) | Positive action measures for disadvantaged persons or measures which cater for special needs |
| Exemptions | Defence forces, An Garda Síochána and the Prison Service<br>- fixing different ages for retirement<br>- fixing maximum ages for recruitment<br>- different rates of pay or condition based on seniority or length of service<br>- employment in a private household<br>- where there is clear statistical or other evidence of significantly increased costs<br>- differences in the provision of vocational training as between Irish and EU Nationals and non-EU Nationals | - anything that is required by legislation<br>- 'public order' exemption in fees and allocation of places<br>- different treatment by educational establishments as between Irish and EU nationals and non EU nationals<br>- mature students |

## The Labour Market Situation of Older People

The period of rapid employment growth beginning in the mid-1990s led to a reversal of the earlier trend in the declining labour force participation of older people. Illustrating this is the increase in the employment rate of older people (defined as 50 to 64 year olds) between 1995 and 2000 from 45.2% to 53% (see Table 3.2). The employment rate of older women increased more rapidly than that of older men (see Table 3.2) and substantial gender differences exist in relation to the labour force participation rates of older people (see Figure 3.1, overleaf).

**Table 3.2: Summary of Context Indicators for Older People**

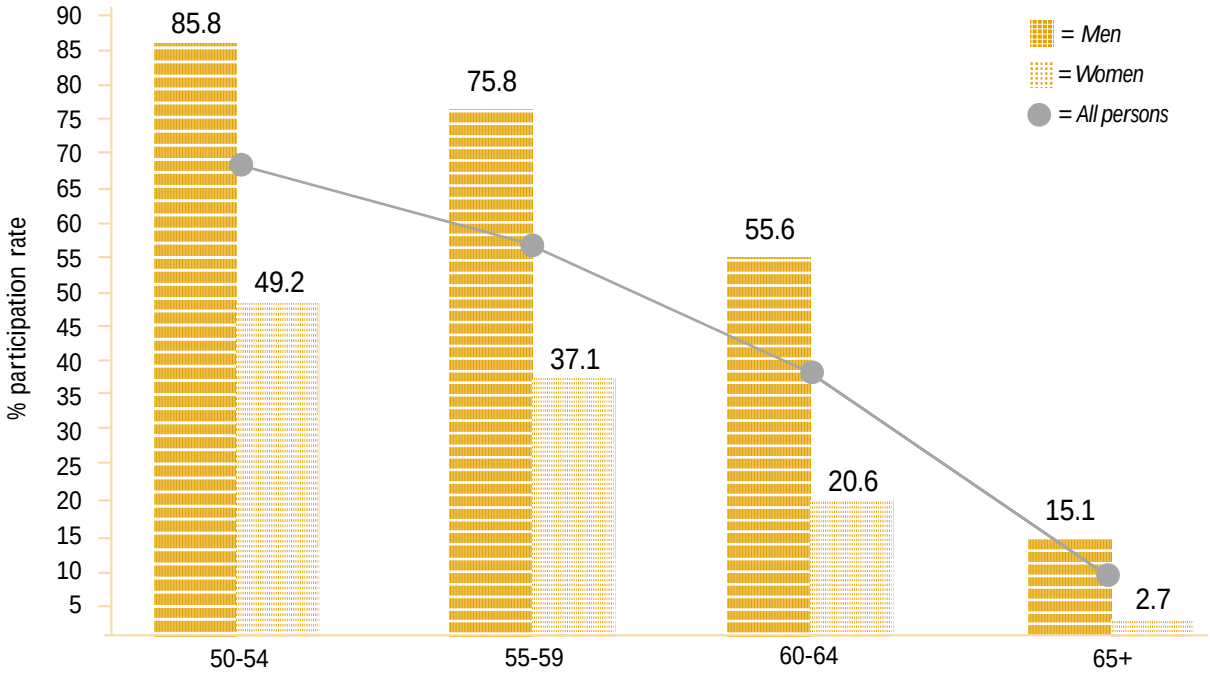
| | |
|---|---|
| Population | Based on Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures for 2000 (CSO, 2003b) approximately 26% of the population (989,600) is in the 50 plus age group. Over half (56.8%) of this section of the population is in the 50 to 64 year age group. Current projections indicate that the older population will increase to 1,490,000 by 2020. |
| Educational Attainment | Levels of educational attainment decline substantially with increasing age. This is reflected in the high proportion of older people who have no formal educational qualifications beyond basic schooling. In 2000, 63% of older people in Ireland (in this case defined as 55 to 64 year olds) held less than upper second level qualifications, compared to 45% among 15 to 64 year olds. Older women are better educated than older men. |
| Literacy Issues | Based on the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1997) literacy levels decline with increasing age. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Labour Force Participation | The period since the mid 1990s has seen a reversal of the earlier long-term trend toward a decline in the labour force participation and employment rates of older people. In 2000, the employment rate for the 50 to 64 year old age cohort stood at 53%, an increase of eight percent from 1995. The employment rates of both older women and men increased over the five-year period: from 24.8% to 34% in the case of women and from 66.3% to 71% in the case of men. The labour force participation rates for the relevant five-year age bands are shown in Figure 3.1. Among both men and women there is a substantial decrease in participation rates across the age bands with increasing age. Substantial gender differentials are present in relation to labour force participation. |
| Employment Issues | Older people are more likely to be self-employed than the working population as a whole. In 2001, 33% of older people were self-employed with the comparable figure for the working population being 17%. The sectoral profile of older workers shows that they are over-represented in the agricultural sector and the educational and health sector. Compared to the working population a higher percentage of older people are employed in the positions of managers and administrators. More older men than women are employed as managers and administrators. |
| Unemployment | The unemployment rate among older people has remained lower than the unemployment rate of the working age population between 1999 and 2001. In 2002, the national unemployment rate was 4%. This compares with a rate of 3.7% among 50 to 54 year olds, 2.4% among 55 to 59 year olds, and 1.9% among 60 to 64 year olds. Unemployment rates are slightly higher among older men than women (3.7% and 3.5% respectively among 50 to 54 year olds). |

In terms of employment, older people are over-represented in declining sectors (such as agriculture) and under-represented in growth sectors of the economy (such as financial and business services). The occupational profile of older workers is bi-polar as older people are over-represented at the top of the occupational hierarchy (in managerial and administrative positions) and at the bottom (in unskilled work). This pattern is more evident among women than men.

The unemployment rate of older people is lower than the national rate (see Table 3.2) though it should be noted that this is likely to reflect a degree of hidden unemployment among older people leaving the labour force early (Ronayne, 1997). Despite their lower unemployment rate, older people are more vulnerable than their young counterparts to remaining unemployed once they become unemployed. This is reflected in the higher rate of long-term unemployment found among the older unemployed compared to their younger counterparts. For example in 2002, the rate of long-term unemployment among older persons (in this case persons aged 45 years and over) was 43.4% compared to 30.7% among persons aged 25 to 44 years and 19.6% among persons aged 15 to 24 years (CSO, 2003a: 15).

**Figure 3.1: Labour Force Participation Rates Among Older People by Gender (2001)**




*(Source: Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2003)*

The reasons for the high risk of long-term unemployment experienced by older unemployed people include their lower levels of educational attainment compared to their younger counterparts, the presence of health difficulties limiting work capacity and employer recruitment practices. Recent evidence concerning the adverse impact of the latter from an OECD study is cited in the labour market report on older people:

> "Examining the age structure of new recruits, the authors found that 'many firms who employ a significant number of older workers, nevertheless, tend not to hire them'. Further analyses, which take into account the possibility that a low recruitment rate may be due to a small number of older people actively looking for work confirm these findings, leading the authors to conclude, 'older job seekers may be disadvantaged in hiring'." (Basten, Irwin and Heaney, 2003)

One factor compounding the higher risk of long-term unemployment found among older people is evidence of a declining tendency to participate in education and training with increasing age. Illustrative of this are the findings of the OECD International Adult Literacy Survey (1997) which show that, in the case of Ireland, just 9.1% of 55 to 64 year olds participated in education and training in the year prior to the survey compared to 18.4% among 45 to 54 year olds and 25% among 35 to 44 year olds. The lower level of participation in education and training by older people is also likely to reflect the operation of a range of barriers to participation including a low overall level of provision targeting older people, the lack of financial incentives and the youth oriented organisational culture of education and training providers (Ronayne, Hegarty and O'Shea, 1999).

## The Labour Market Concerns of Older People

Six key issues are identified in the report by Basten, Irwin and Heaney (2003) as defining the major concerns of older people in relation to their participation in the labour market. These themes are:

### 1. Emphasis on Formal Qualifications in the Contemporary Labour Market

The priority placed on formal qualifications was identified as the most important barrier experienced by older people in accessing employment and moving between jobs. Older people felt that their experience was either not recognised or undervalued. As is indicated below, this barrier is associated with the presence of other barriers seen as limiting labour force participation.

### 2. Presence of a Skills Mismatch between Skills of Older People and the Skill Requirements of the Contemporary Labour Market

Reflecting sectoral and occupational change in the labour market, and in particular the increase in the use of ICT in the contemporary workplace, older people felt that their occupational skills and competencies were 'out of sync' with those in demand in the contemporary labour market.

### 3. Difficulties in Accessing Training to Upgrade their Qualifications and Skills

Opportunities to engage in training were perceived to be limited. This limited access was seen as compounding disadvantages arising from the emphasis on formal qualifications and skills mismatch. Older people also voiced concerns that much of the training available was either for young people or could only be accessed on the basis of meeting restrictive eligibility criteria related either to prior qualifications or duration of unemployment.

### 4. Limited Availability of Jobs and Concerns About Poor Quality of Jobs on Offer

The concerns of older people regarding job availability indicated that not only were there limited 'suitable jobs' available to them but also that working conditions were poor in those jobs available to them. Accessing employment following loss of employment was seen as a major problem. Older people living in rural areas experienced particular difficulties in accessing employment due to the absence of employment opportunities and deficiencies in rural transport systems.

### 5. Financial Barriers Related to Taxation and Pensions Issues

There were concerns, particularly among older workers from manual occupational backgrounds, that returning to work would be associated with a loss of welfare entitlements. Concerns were also voiced regarding pension arrangements.

### 6. Negative Attitudes of Younger People Toward Older People

The contemporary labour market was seen as a place for young people with workplace practices and culture being shaped by young people to the detriment of participation by older people. The strong influence of young people in shaping workplace culture was also seen as representing a hostility to older workers.

Despite probing for perceptions and experiences of discrimination based on age, focus groups in this research indicated that there was little evidence of discrimination towards older people but that they did have concerns over unfair treatment.

From the perspective of assessing the relevance and capacity of the EHRDOP to meet the concerns of older people in relation to accessing educational and training opportunities, the major concerns of older people are being able to access relevant training opportunities to update their specific skills, acquire skills in demand in the contemporary labour market and acquire generic skills in the area of information and communication technology.

## 3.2 The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of People with Disabilities

Up until the publication of the results of the special module on disability in the labour force by the CSO (2002b) data on the labour market situation of people with disabilities was extremely limited in Ireland. In recognition of the data now available concerning the labour market situation of people with disabilities Table 3.4 presents a summary of the relevant context indicators and bases the profile of their labour market situation primarily on data from this source. As in the previous section, the identification of the labour market concerns of people with disabilities is based on the primary research presented in the ground report on this group (Bruce, 2003).

Provisions of the equality legislation in regard to the disability ground are summarised in Table 3.3

**Table 3.3: Equality Legislation Provisions on Disability Ground**

| | Employment Equality Act, 1998 | Equal Status Act, 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Ground | Disability is very broadly defined. It covers a wide range of impairments and illnesses. It covers all physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. | |
| Reasonable Accommodation | Employers, educational and training bodies and service providers are obliged to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, if without special treatments or facilities –<br>– the employee would not be competent or capable of undertaking duties<br>– it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the servic | |
| Positive Action | – measures which help integrate people with disabilities into employment<br>– training or work experience for disadvantaged groups (as certified by the Minister) | – positive action measures for disadvantaged persons or measures which cater for special needs |
| Exemptions | There is no obligation to provide reasonable accommodation if it costs more than nominal costs (or is a disproportionate burden to employers when the EU Framework Directive is implemented) | |
| Other Exemptions | – defence forces, An Garda Síochána or the prison service<br>– where there is clear statistical or other evidence of significantly increased cost<br>– employment in a private household<br>– if the person is not capable or fully competent | – anything that is required by legislation<br>– 'public order' exemption<br>– different treatment in fees and allocation of place by educational establishment as between Irish and EU nationals and non EU nationals<br>– different treatment to a student with a disability where by virtue of the disability the provision of services to others is made impossible or unduly difficult |

## The Labour Market Situation of People with Disabilities

The number and associated proportion of people in the population identified as having a disability varies depending on the manner in which disability is defined and the selected reference age range for the population.

Recent figures from the CSO are based on the following definition of disability, "a longstanding health problem or disability refers to anything that has affected respondent over the past 6 months, or that is likely to affect respondent for at least six months" (CSO, 2002b: 17). Based on this definition an estimated 271,000 persons corresponding to almost 11% of the population aged 15 to 64 years have a disability. The proportion of people with disabilities in the population increases steadily with increasing age reaching 15% among persons aged 45 to 54 years and 25.7% among persons aged 55 to 64 years. Almost half (46%) of people with disabilities reported that they were either born with a disability (15%) or were living with a disability for at least 10 years (31%).

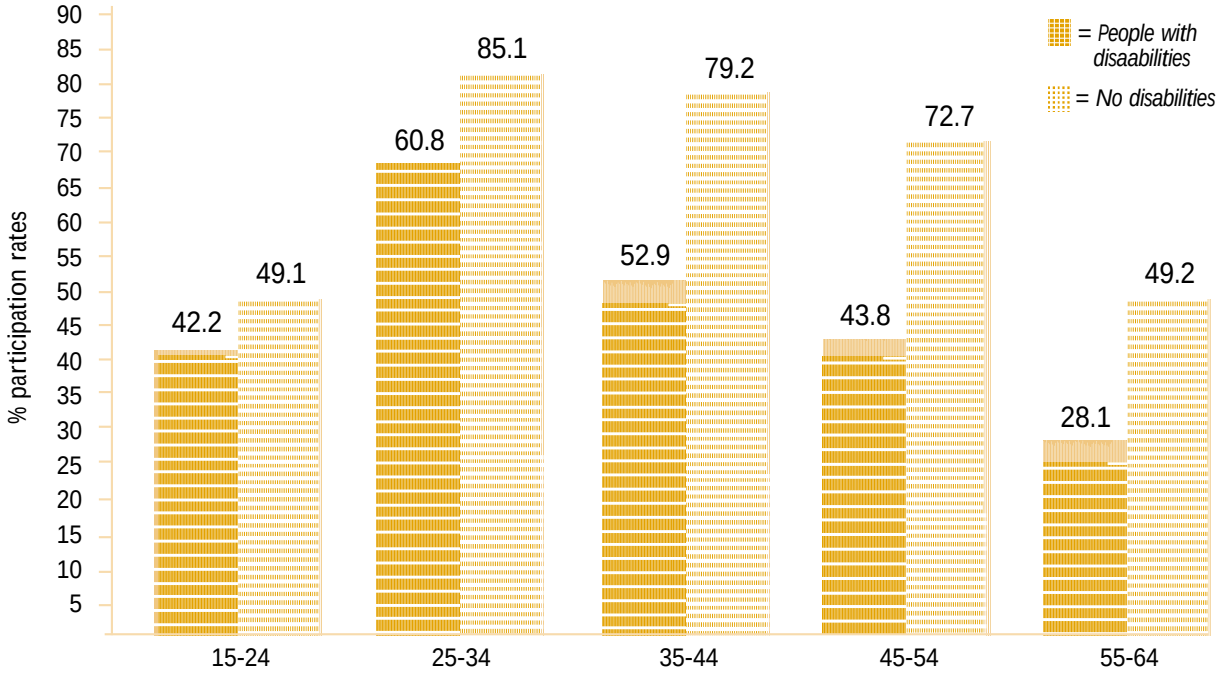
**Table 3.4: Summary of Context Indicators for People with Disabilities**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | The number of people with a disability aged 15 to 64 years is estimated to be 271,000 corresponding to 10.8% of the population in this age range. Slightly more men (142,700) report the presence of a disability than women (128,300). |
| Educational Attainment | No reliable source of data at present. Bruce (2003) reports that adequate initial education is a critical factor in effective labour market participation for people with disabilities and notes that this was a particular issue for people with disabilities who had been through the special education system. |
| Literacy Issues | No reliable source of data at present. |
| Labour Force Participation | The labour force participation rate of people with disabilities is 42.9% compared to 71.3% in the non-disabled population. As in the case of the population as a whole, the labour force participation rate of people with disabilities peaks in the 25 to 34 year age range and declines rapidly in subsequent age cohorts (see Figure 3.2) |
| Employment Issues | A somewhat higher percentage of people with disabilities are in self-employment (with no employees) than non-disabled people (14% compared to 10% respectively). People with disabilities tend to work fewer hours than people with no disability; just under one in 4 (23%) work less than 30 hours. The comparable figure among people with no disability is 16%. Also, one quarter of people with disabilities are in part-time employment compared to 16% among the non-disabled population. The occupational profile of people with disabilities is similar to that of non-disabled people. |
| Unemployment | Based on International Labour Organisation criteria, the unemployment rate among people with disabilities, at 6.5%, is higher than that of the non-disabled population (4.3%). |

Reflecting the complexity of relating self-assessed declarations of disability to capacities for work and to indicators of labour market inequality such as labour force participation rates, it should be noted that approximately one in 3 people declaring a disability in the QNHS stated that they were not restricted in the *kind of work they do or could do* with a similar proportion stating that they were not restricted in the *amount of work they do or could do.* The actual percentages are 33.5% and 36.3% respectively. At the other extreme, approximately 2 in 5 people with a disability describe themselves as considerably restricted in the *kind of work they do or could do* (44.5%) with a similar proportion stating that they were considerably restricted in the *amount of work they do or could do* (41.8%). In this regard it is of note that the preliminary results of a study of the labour market situation of people with disabilities being undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute for the ESU (Gannon and Nolan, 2003) indicates that labour force participation is strongly related to self-assessments of the severity of disability experienced.

As data on labour force participation by gender among people with disabilities is not provided in the published report of the CSO (2002b) on disability in the labour force it is not possible to provide a gender breakdown of labour force participation rates from published data. However this matter will be addressed in the forthcoming report by Gannon and Nolan.

**Figure 3.2: Labour Force Participation Rates Among People with Disabilities and Non-Disabled People, by Age (2002)**




*(Source: CSO, 2002b)*

The most striking feature of the labour market situation of people with disabilities (as a whole) compared to that of non-disabled people is the proportion classified as economically inactive (57.1% compared to 28.7% respectively). This figure increases to 71.9% among people with a disability in the 55 to 64 year old cohort. However, it should be noted that levels of economic inactivity are related to the nature of the disability experienced, for example 74.6% of persons with a mental, nervous or emotional difficulty declared themselves to be economically inactive compared to 44.6% of persons experiencing a hearing difficulty and 60.8% of persons experiencing a seeing difficulty.

When standard definitions of unemployment are applied, the unemployment rate among people with disabilities (6.5%) is over 2% higher than that of non-disabled people (4.3%). As with the rates of economic inactivity, unemployment rates also vary with the nature of the disability experienced, for example the unemployment rate among persons reporting a difficulty or long standing health problem or disability of the back or neck is 6.4% compared to 16.1% among persons with a hearing difficulty.

Among people with disabilities not in employment, almost one in five (18.5%) state that they would need assistance to be provided in order for them to work. What is notable in this regard is that among people with disabilities actually at work just 4.6% report that 'considerable' assistance is actually provided to them in order to facilitate their work with a further 3.6% stating that 'some' assistance is actually provided. The converse of this is that, in the case of the vast majority of people with disabilities, no assistance is provided in order to facilitate their employment.

A notable feature of the position of people with disabilities in employment is that, as a group, they work shorter hours than their non-disabled counter parts. This is reflected in both the actual number of hours worked and in the proportion engaged in part-time employment (as referred to in Table 3.4).

One final and general observation that needs to be made regarding the context indicators on the labour market situation of people with disabilities is that they highlight the methodological difficulties experienced in quantifying disability and, related to this, in quantifying levels of labour market inequality associated with disability based on indicators such as labour force participation and unemployment rates. Among the issues arising in this regard is variation in self-assessed levels of the

extent to which a disability results in restrictions on the kind and amount of work that can be undertaken. Paralleling this, however, are the varying extents to which provision is made for facilitating the participation of people with a wide range of specific disabilities in labour market programmes and the workforce and, as is indicated below, in responding to the social construction of disability in general and of specific disabilities by societal attitudes and institutional practices.

## The Labour Market Concerns of People with Disabilities

By way of introduction to identifying the main concerns regarding labour market participation among people with disabilities it is useful to acknowledge the significant shift that has taken place in the paradigms underpinning research and policy actions in this area, particularly the emergence of a rights based approach in relation to securing equality and the emergence of the Independent Living movement (Bruce, 2003). A number of key points regarding this are presented in Box 3.1.

**Box 3.1: Models of Disability in Research and Policy**

In the medicalised context of disability (and associated specialised rehabilitation programmes) work has been linked to both therapeutic enhancement and restoration of optimal level of functioning. In the welfare and social security context of disability, work has been seen as the most effective mechanism to restore individuals to productive levels of functioning and to reduce costs to the state. In charitable models of disability, work has been viewed as a path to meaningful activity and providing some form of day care or occupational therapy for those deemed unable to participate more effectively in society, particularly in the context of the significant advances of the Independent Living movement and civil rights focus, these traditional models of work have been seen as problematic. At best, they have been viewed as patronising. At worst, these models are regarded as diminishing the abilities, capacities and potential of those with disabilities to participate as gainfully employed citizens in their own right.

Central to the success of linking independent living and employment approaches has been the role and importance of research. Historically, research directed at understanding disability has focused on describing the characteristics of people with disabilities and the development of interventions to reduce disability related limitations. This functional limitations model has been severely criticised for its inability to provide a sufficient explanation for the poor levels of participation of people with disabilities in society, particularly with regard to employment.

The primary research focus now has shifted to investigating the effect of public attitudes on the design of the environment and on the assumed physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics necessary for full participation in community life and work. It has been suggested that attitudinal obstacles produce even greater restrictions on people with disabilities than do physical barriers. The author notes that a disabling environment contains both physical and attitudinal barriers and obstacles that infringe the rights of people with disabilities to live a valued life.

*(Bruce, 2003)*

Ten themes were identified as defining the major concerns of people with disabilities in relation to their participation in the labour market. These themes were:

### 1. Negative Social Attitudes Towards Disability

The prevalence of negative attitudes toward disability is a central concern of disabled people. Allied to negative social attitudes are unfounded assumptions and stereotypes regarding the work capabilities of disabled people.

### 2. Architectural, Physical and Transport Barriers

The widespread presence of architectural and physical barriers allied to inaccessible transport is a central concern of people with disabilities.

### 3. Stigma of Attending Special Schools

The experience of attending segregated special schools was seen as contributing to low self-confidence and stigma in the eyes of others.

### 4. Employer Attitudes and Recruitment Practices

Rigid recruitment procedures, the stipulation of minimum educational standards and a lack of flexibility in working conditions were all identified as barriers to employment. Allied to and underlying these barriers were adverse employer attitudes toward disability and lack of knowledge regarding disability among employers. Prejudice regarding disability at initial interview stage was a particular concern identified.

**5. Lack of Ongoing Supports and Follow-Up**
The process of accessing employment is hampered by a lack of supports to both employers and people with disabilities. The relevant supports include accurate information about disability, rights and entitlements as well as relevant assistive technologies.

**6. Lack of Relevant Skills in Dealing with People with Disabilities**
Many professionals working in both the statutory and private sectors were considered to lack disability specific skills. The issue of inflexible assessment systems, particularly in the area of medical assessments, was also identified as a barrier to securing employment.

**7. Lack of Disability Planning, Research and Funding**
The key concerns here referred to the absence of a coherent approach to planning for and implementing services relevant to assisting people with disabilities enter employment.

**8. Lack of Effective Legislation**
This was seen as a major impediment to obtaining and retaining work. Allied to this was a perceived dispersal of responsibility in relation to securing the rights of people with disabilities and the lack of an advocacy service.

**9. Adverse Effects of Administrative and Allowance Systems**
Most people participating in the focus groups considered that the allowance and benefit system in operation was a significant disincentive to work. Allied to this were concerns regarding the rigid application of eligibility criteria and the practice of conducting annual reviews of conditions that were permanent.

**10. Issues Related to Disclosure**
The main concern arising is disclosure of mental health or other disabilities in the context of seeking employment and the lack of clear guidelines or procedures regarding this.

From the perspective of assessing the relevance and capacity of the EHRDOP to meet the concerns of people with disabilities in relation to accessing educational and training opportunities, the major concerns of people with disabilities are ensuring that learning environments are accessible to all, that the range of supports required to facilitate their effective participation are present and that they are not hampered by restrictive and rigid eligibility criteria.

## 3.3 The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees)

Over the past decade Ireland has experienced a substantial increase in inward migration. This immigration has come mostly from EU and EEA countries but there has also been a substantial increase in the number of non-EEA immigrants. Given the nature of immigration policy, immigrants from non-EEA countries have come as asylum seekers, programme refugees, or immigrant workers on work-permits or visas (see Box 3.2 for definitions of refugee status and a summary of associated rights in relation to labour market participation).

The recent levels of immigration have added to the overall number of members of minority ethnic groups resident in Ireland and contributed to the level of ethnic diversity present in Irish society. The challenges posed by this have been documented in a number of recent publications (for example, Farrell and Watt, 2001).

Provisions of the equality legislation in regard to the race ground are summarised in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5: Equality Legislation Provisions on Race Ground**

| | Employment Equality Act, 1998 | Equal Status Act, 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Ground | The ground of race is defined to include race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins | |
| Positive Action | - training or work experience for a disadvantaged group of persons (as certified by the Minister) | - positive action measures for disadvantaged persons or measures which cater for special needs |
| Exemptions | - work outside the State (in a place where the laws or customs are such that the work needs to be done by a person of a particular race)<br>- differences in the provision of vocational training as between Irish and EU nationals and non EU nationals<br>- employment in a private household | - anything that is required by legislation<br>- 'public order' exemption<br>- different treatment in fees and allocation of places by educational establishment as between Irish and EU nationals and other non EU nationals |

As indicated by Table 3.6 refugees constitute a relatively small group in the overall context of recent immigration to Ireland. From Box 3.2 it is clear that while refugee is a status in law, refugees come from a range of ethnic and nationality backgrounds. Also, refugee status per se is not covered in the employment equality and equal status legislation and it is only with reference to the overlap between refugee status and the specification of the ground of race as encompassing 'colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins' in the Employment Equality Act that refugees are indirectly afforded protection under its terms. In recognition of this, the labour market report concerning refugees adopted a broader focus by examining their labour market situation as members of minority ethnic groups and within this examining and noting the particular issues that arise for them as refugees (Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons, 2003).

**Box 3.2: Definitions of Refugee Status and Rights in Relation to the Labour Market**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Convention Refugees:** | Convention refugees are persons who have been granted refugee status by the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. As indicated, prior to 1994 very few persons came to Ireland seeking refugee status. Section 3 of the Refugee Act 1996 grants convention refugees rights equivalent to those of Irish citizens. |
| **Persons Granted** Humanitarian Permission to Remain: | Humanitarian Permission to Remain is a status granted to persons who do not meet the definition of a refugee as set down in the Geneva Convention, 1951. Persons granted Humanitarian Permission to Remain are in practice treated as having rights equivalent to those of Irish citizens. The Refugee Act 1996 does not specify these rights, however. |
| **Programme Refugees:** | Programme refugees enter Ireland under the terms of a Government Decision and are granted rights equal to Irish citizens. Since Ireland's ratification of the Geneva Convention in 1956 four main groups of programme refugees have been admitted:<br>• following the Hungarian refugee crisis, 530 Hungarians in 1956<br>• following the US aided establishment of a military dictatorship in Chile, 120 Chileans in 1973<br>• 212 Vietnamese 'boat people' from refuge camps in Hong Kong and Malaysia in 1979 (currently the number of Vietnamese living in Ireland is approximately 800)<br>• following the refugee crisis in the former Yugoslavia initially 178 Bosnians in 1992 rising to approximately 830 at present. |
| **Family Unification:** | The immediate and dependant family members of persons granted refugee status who have been granted permission to remain in Ireland on the basis of family reunification. Such persons hold the same rights as a refugee. |
| **Asylum Seekers:** | Persons seeking protection and the granting of refugee status under the terms of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Apart from the once-off ministerial decision to grant the right to work to asylum seekers who had been in the country for more than one year up to and including the 26th July 1999, asylum seekers do not have the right to work and participate in labour market programmes. |

## The Labour Market Situation of Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees)

To date specific data on ethnicity, other than membership of the Traveller community, has not been collected in the Census or national sample surveys. Data on nationality collected for the first time in the 2002 Census of Population show that, of a total population of 3,858,495, some 224,261(5.8%) people were of non-Irish nationality (CSO, 2003b). For a further 1.3% of the population nationality was not stated.

Based on the results of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) concerning nationality presented in Goodbody Economic Consultants (2003), the number of persons aged 15 years and over defining their nationality as other than Irish is 161,200 (corresponding to 5.2% of the population aged 15 years and over). The largest sub-group within this is persons whose nationality is other than EU national or US national. Numbering 68,700 this group of non-nationals accounts for 2.2% of the population aged 15 years and over. At 60.6%, the labour force participation rate of this group of non-nationals is similar to that of Irish nationals (60.9%).

**Table 3.6: Summary of Context Indicators for Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | Accurate estimates of the adult membership of minority ethnic groups are difficult to make. Based on the figures reported by Goodbody Economic Consultants (2002), it is between 69,000 and 90,000 people. Of these, approximately 9,500 hold Refugee status or Leave to Remain. |
| Educational Attainment | Studies of the educational attainment of refugees in Ireland indicate that refugees as a group have a high level of educational attainment, particularly men. The lower educational attainment of women refugees derives from gender-based inequalities in their home countries, particularly where refugees are from a 'developing' country (Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons, 2003). |
| Literacy Issues | The literacy issues arising mainly relate to language competency in the language of the host country. |
| Labour Force Participation | Recent research published by the Refugee Council in the UK notes that the labour force experiences of refugees vary according to the level and nature of their educational and professional qualifications and experience. In this regard the research identified four groups:<br>• young people with no paid employment experience in the country of origin<br>• unqualified adults (i.e., those with little formal education)<br>• professionals who need to be registered or licensed to practice their professions<br>• qualified individuals with managerial, administrative and other professional backgrounds (cited in Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons, 2003). |
| Employment Issues | Underemployment, employment in low skill areas, and employment in sectors where host country language is not a barrier characterise the employment experience of refugees. Refugees possessing professional and technical skills that may not be formally recognised in host countries are at risk of downward occupational mobility in the labour market of host countries. Women refugees are more likely to be in employment than their male counterparts. |
| Unemployment | The experience of refugees in other countries indicates that refugees have higher levels of unemployment than the general population in host countries (Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons, 2003). |

Data from administrative sources analysed by Goodbody Economic Consultants (2003) provide a more detailed picture of the status of non-EEA immigrants with the right to work in Ireland. Two broad groups are identified (i) persons holding work permits, visas and work authorisations and business permits and (ii) refugees. The numbers of people in these two groups are estimated to be 38,275 and 9,511 respectively in 2001. While data from administrative sources on the number of asylum seekers in the country is considered unreliable, the number is estimated to be, at most, in the region of 32,000. The main countries of origin of recent applicants for refugee status are Nigeria, Romania, Moldova, DR Congo, Zimbabwe, Czech Republic, Poland, the Ukraine and Russia.

The report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 1999) outlined the relevance of vocational training in enhancing the employment prospects of refugees. Three roles were identified for vocational training (i) training to develop skills to enable the transition from unemployment to employment (ii) training to upgrade the existing skills of refugees; and (iii) training to enter to a trade or profession. Provided they meet the specified eligibility criteria for labour market programmes, refugees and asylum seekers covered by the decision regarding entitlement to work can also access labour market programmes. The report of the Interdepartmental Working Group also stated that measures to assist refugees to access employment should include pre-vocational training encompassing language training and orientation and guidance in respect of the vocational training system.

## The Labour Market Concerns of Members of Minority Ethnic Groups (Particularly Refugees)

Six themes were identified as defining the major concerns of members of minority ethnic groups in relation to their participation in the labour market (Conlon, O'Connor and Parsons, 2003). These themes were:

### 1. English Language Skills

The lack of language skills in English was identified as the principal barrier to effective participation in the labour market. Allied to this is the issue of being able to access language training relevant to a person's initial levels of language competence and their language needs as arising from the context of language usage (for example dealing with day to day issues, participating in training and accessing employment).

### 2. Ethnic Based Discrimination

Ethnic based discrimination was the second principal barrier to effective participation in the labour market. The experience of discrimination and consequent identification of this as an issue varied by gender, nationality, ethnicity, colour and legal status with persons from Africa reporting this as a more significant issue than persons from Eastern Europe or elsewhere and more men than women reporting this as a significant issue.

### 3. Job Search Culture

Lack of familiarity and knowledge about the processes and procedures associated with job-search in Ireland were considered to constitute a barrier to securing employment.

### 4. Qualifications and Experience

Issues related to the non-recognition of qualifications and the lack of work experience in Ireland were widely experienced as important barriers to accessing employment. In particular not having an Irish employer to act as a referee on a CV was seen as a difficulty.

### 5. Information

The concerns arising under the heading of information included:

i. the need for more information about legal status and associated rights (this related to both information for persons seeking employment and for employers)

ii. the need for access to information in an appropriate format taking into account the English language skills and literacy levels of persons requiring information

iii. the need for service providers to be aware of refugees' entitlements in relation to participation in vocational training and higher education

### 6. Childcare

Access to appropriate childcare was identified as a barrier to participating in educational and training provision and employment.

In addition to the above, a set of concerns more specifically related to participating in educational and training provision was identified. These concerns included:

i. based on difficulties associated with the non-recognition of qualifications many refugees consider returning to third level education. Pursuing this interest is perceived as problematic due to difficulties in actually securing places and the financial constraints of their circumstances

ii. accessing vocational training is seen as difficult due to long waiting lists

Overall, high levels of interest in participating in educational and training programmes were found among study participants. Among the key issues arising are access to English language training and access to information and guidance in relation to the range of programmes and associated eligibility criteria.

## 3.4 The Labour Market Situation and Labour Market Concerns of Members of the Traveller Community

The labour market inequality experienced by Travellers and the actions required to address this were set out in detail in a report by the Task Force on the Travelling Community (Department of Justice, 1995). While progress must be acknowledged since the publication of the report, the current situation regarding the implementation of the specific recommendations contained in the report has been summarised by Crowley as follows:

> "Significant challenges remain, however, to secure their realisation. An institutional infrastructure has been developed, based on the participation of Travellers and Traveller organisations, to drive the implementation of the recommendations. However, progress has been slow." (2001: 181)

Among the consequences of the lack of full implementation is that, almost 10 years later and following on the heels of a period of unprecedented economic and employment growth, the labour market situation of Travellers has changed little (see Table 3.8 for summary of indicators). When seen in the broader context of the pattern of occupational change and labour market developments (for example the decline in unskilled work and the increase in average levels of educational attainment among new entrants to the labour force) it is arguable that the labour market situation of Travellers has deteriorated relative to that prevailing at the time the Task Force issued its report. Also, as recently underlined by Collins (2001), public attitudes to Travellers remain predominantly negative. The extent of these negative attitudes is highlighted by the level of social distance expressed toward Travellers (44% of people would not accept Travellers as members of their communities, 93% would not accept a Traveller as part of their family).

Provisions of the equality legislation in regard to the Traveller ground are summarised in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7: Equality Legislation Provisions on Traveller Ground**

| | Employment Equality Act, 1998 | Equal Status Act, 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| | The definition of a Traveller includes Travellers involved in a nomadic lifestyle and settled Travellers | |
| Positive Action | Measures to facilitate integration into employment of members of the Traveller community | Positive action measures for disadvantaged groups or measures which cater for special needs |
| Exemption | Employment in a private household | - Anything that is required by Statute<br>- 'public order' exemption |

## The Labour Market Situation of Members of the Traveller Community

The overall picture presented by available context indicators on the situation of Travellers in the labour force is of a very marginalised group: levels of formal educational qualifications are low with consequent limiting effects on both access to employment and skills training; only a small minority of Travellers are in employment; and the unemployment rate is extremely high (see Table 3.8). To date there are no representative data available that would permit a more detailed analysis of the labour market situation of Travellers (although as noted previously a question relating to membership of the Irish Traveller community was included for the first time in the 2002 Census). The availability of such data would enable the influence of factors such as gender, age, type of accommodation and area of residence (such as city, small town, rural) among the Traveller population to be identified and a more systematic profile of their labour market aspirations to be undertaken. In the absence of such data, and as is indicated in the following section, there is a reliance on qualitative data to scope the labour market concerns of Travellers.

**Table 3.8: Summary of Context Indicators for Members of the Traveller Community**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | A question relating to membership of the Irish Traveller community was included for the first time in the 2002 Census, and 23,681 Travellers representing 0.6% of the total population were enumerated. Overall almost two thirds (62.7%) of the Traveller population was under 25 years of age. |
| Educational Attainment | In the 1996 Census of Population (CSO, 1998) enumerators identified a total of 10,831 Travellers living in 'halting sites, encampments, mobile homes and caravans'. Just 8% of Travellers so identified aged 15 years and over had completed the junior cycle of second level. This compares with a national figure of 63%. As these figures exclude Travellers in other accommodation they may over-estimate the low level of educational attainment among Travellers nationally. The Education Working Group of the Irish Traveller Movement estimate that just one in 10 Travellers entering second level complete the senior cycle (Irish Travellers Movement, 2002). |
| Literacy Issues | No formal study of literacy levels among Travellers has been undertaken. The profile of educational attainment of Travellers points to literacy being an issue for a substantial number of adults. |
| Labour Force Participation | Based on an analysis of the limited 1996 Census data, 60% of Travellers living in 'halting sites, encampments, mobile homes and caravans' are defined as participating in the labour force. However, only 9% are in employment. The economic status of Traveller men and women is markedly different: over half of Traveller men describe themselves as unemployed while 60% of Traveller women describe themselves as being on 'home duties'. |
| Employment Issues | The data available concerning employment related issues among Travellers is very limited. What there is suggests that among Traveller men there is a strong attachment to self-employment and work organised in the Traveller economy. |
| Unemployment | According to CSO figures from the 1996 Census 51% of the subset of Travellers identified by enumerators are unemployed. On that basis the unemployment rate among these Travellers is approximately 85% to 90%. |

## The Labour Market Concerns of Members of the Traveller Community

The labour market report on Travellers examined issues related to their participation in education, training, and employment, with a particular focus on their participation in training (Pearn Kandola, 2003). On the basis of a literature review of Traveller participation in training programmes, the report concluded that the factors responsible for the low level of participation and outcomes secured by Travellers, particularly in programmes not targeted toward Travellers or so called 'mainstream programmes', fall into three categories:

- a lack of recognition of the Traveller culture in the planning and delivery of programmes
- a lack of additional support during programmes
- a lack of follow up and development following programmes

The issues identified under the first category include the use of recruitment methods and selection criteria that may exclude Travellers, the use of predominantly written materials to provide information on programme content, and the absence of proactive strategies aimed at recruiting Travellers. More generally, and drawing on the concerns voiced by Travellers participating in the focus groups, providers of training were seen as operating with an ethos and a set of practices (for example in relation to the times that programmes were available or specifying minimum educational qualifications) that did not take into account aspects of Traveller culture or the circumstances of most Travellers. Other issues identified under this heading include a lack of trust in the relationship between providers of training and Travellers.

Drawing on a report prepared by Pavee Point (2001) the issues identified under the second of the above categories are presented as follows:

> "Because of the high poverty levels among Travellers they may require additional supports to attend programmes. These supports may include a gradual build-up of the formality of training, the provision of a comfortable training environment, flexible hours, and childcare support." (cited in Pearn Kandola, 2003:17)

The central issue arising under the heading of a lack of follow-up and development following participation in training programmes is *progression* or, more accurately in the context of Traveller participation, the lack of progression. The limited movement from participation in programmes targeted toward Travellers to more mainstream programmes is one aspect of this lack of progression. So also, however, is the limited movement of Travellers participating in training to mainstream employment following training. Among the factors identified as contributing to this situation is the absence of specific provision to assist Travellers to secure places on mainstream training programmes, the limited engagement with Travellers and advocacy on their behalf undertaken by employment services, and the presence of negative attitudes toward the employment of Travellers held by many employers. In this regard a key conclusion of the ground report on the labour market inequality experienced by Travellers is the absence of institutional responsibility for securing Traveller progression within the system of education and training provision (see Box 3.3).

**Box 3.3: Conclusions on the Current Situation Regarding Traveller Participation in Labour Market Programmes**

In conclusion, Travellers are not being identified as a potential audience on mainstream programmes. There is little being done to tailor messages and media to attract Travellers to programmes or to consider the group and individual needs of Travellers and the long-term development of Travellers. Although there is positive evidence of programme providers meeting some of the basic and higher level needs of Travellers, greater efforts are needed to promote access, participation and outcomes for Travellers within both mainstream and targeted programmes. The formal evaluation of the suitability of programmes for Travellers is less frequent on mainstream programmes and there is confusion over whose responsibility it is to ensure Traveller progression.

*(Pearn Kandola, 2003)*

A number of other specific barriers to Traveller participation in training were identified in the focus groups. These barriers included:

- the lack of information about training programmes among Travellers
- fears of losing welfare entitlements as a result of participating in training
- the perception that participation in training will by necessity inhibit travelling
- negative perceptions of training resulting from prior negative experiences in the school system
- low expectations that participating in training will actually lead to employment

The presence of these barriers, arising as they do from the perceptions and attitudes of Travellers toward participation in educational and training programmes, points to the need for the providers of training to engage more systematically with members of the Traveller community in order to address dispositions and attitudes acting as barriers to participation. For this process of engagement to be effective providers of mainstream training programmes must actively recognise members of the Traveller community as potential participants and ensure that the barriers to participation in education and training that they experience, as identified above, are addressed. In effect, realising outcomes for Travellers in mainstream training programmes requires complementarity between the actions taken by providers to secure equality for Travellers and changes in attitudes toward participation on the part of Travellers.

4

# BARRIERS TO THE FOUR GROUPS PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR MARKET MEASURES

In order to link the concerns of the four groups in relation to participating in labour market programmes with the structure and content of the EHRDOP and the roles and responsibilities of programme designers and providers, this chapter presents a typology of barriers to participation in labour market programmes drawing on the literature on this topic. Definitions of the five components of this typology are presented in Box 4.1 and an *indicative* specification of the barriers to participation experienced by members of the four groups, as presented in the labour market reports and as summarised in the previous chapter, is schematically outlined in Table 4.1.

**Box 4.1: Typology of Barriers to Participating in Labour Market Programmes**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Contextual Barriers:** | Contextual barriers include prevailing labour market conditions and trends, the policy stance towards issues such as social exclusion, equality and educational disadvantage, and the mix of programmes available as well as their target populations. They also include factors deriving from prevailing social attitudes and practices toward particular issues and groups of people. (Note: the latter when internalised can be viewed as dispositional barriers) |
| **Institutional Barriers:** | Institutional barriers concern factors related to the image, ethos, administration and practices of education and training providers. To a large extent these have evolved in the context of providing education and training for young adults and only in more recent years have mainstream providers begun to consider how they might attract and cater for 'non-standard' participants including members of the four groups being considered here. |
| **Informational Barriers:** | The third set of barriers concerns information about education and training opportunities and related issues such as information on the relationship between education / training and outcomes such as securing employment, employment stability over one's labour market career and potential income. |
| **Situational Barriers:** | Situational barriers such as lack of time, family / care commitments and the cost of participation play an important role in restricting access to education and training among sections of the adult population. These barriers include what are termed participation costs and opportunity costs. The former are the additional expenditure incurred in participating - on transport, books and materials. The latter include foregoing the opportunity to earn income by taking up a place on a programme. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Personal / Dispositional Barriers:** | The final set of barriers arise from personal / dispositional factors. Included under this heading are demographics, particularly gender and age, initial educational levels and a range of experiential, attitudinal and motivational factors. |

*(Ronayne, 2000)*

The following three points are important to bear in mind in reading and interpreting Table 4.1. First, the nature of the barriers experienced is not gender neutral. For example, among refugees, women are likely to have lower levels of initial education than their male counterparts while, among older people, women are likely to have higher levels of initial education. This has implications for practices in the area of the application of eligibility criteria specifying minimum educational requirements. Also, gender inequalities in patterns of care present different issues for women and men in the four groups in relation to the timing of programmes and the availability of care provision.

Second, an indication that a particular barrier arises in the case of just one of the four groups does not necessarily mean that it is not of relevance to members of the other groups. For example, the predominant orientation and ethos of contemporary learning / training environments favourable to participation by young people is presented as solely impacting adversely on older people though it will also impact on older persons from the other three groups. Arising from this point, it must be recognised that to the extent that people are members of more that one of the groups (for example a refugee with a disability, an older Traveller) the number and nature of the barriers experienced is likely to be cumulative.

Finally, in the case of barriers that are identified as adversely impacting on the participation of more than one of the groups, the severity of the barrier may be greater in some cases than in others. For example, it is clear from the labour market reports on the four groups that while fears relating to the loss of welfare entitlements arise to some extent in the case of members of all of the groups, this barrier represents a more significant issue for members of the Traveller Community than the other three groups. However, as it is difficult to precisely identify the relative importance of each of the barriers identified in relation to members of each of the four groups, the presentation of barriers in Table 4.1 is based simply on an indication of the presence or absence of a barrier in the case of each of the four groups. Noting these points, Table 4.1 illustrates a number of general issues concerning the predominant barriers to participation in labour market programmes experienced by members of the four groups that are relevant to the design and implementation of labour market programmes.

**Contextual Barriers:** Based on the four labour market reports, there is evidence that public and institutional perceptions of and attitudes toward members of the four groups vary, with attitudes toward members of the Traveller community and members of minority ethnic groups being strongly prejudiced. Systematic evidence of these negative attitudes based on levels of social distance is presented in McGreil (1999). In the case of people with disabilities, while social attitudes are not prejudicial in the same way, barriers related to the underestimation of the abilities of people with disabilities and the absence of the transport, architectural and technology infrastructures necessary for their full participation are clearly present. For older people, the youth centred culture of economic and social life is an over-arching contextual barrier.

**Institutional Barriers:** Institutional barriers can be seen as reflecting broader attitudes and values in society as well as the level of political commitment and legislative support for issues such as equal opportunities. The four labour market reports document a range of institutional barriers experienced by members of the four groups with some barriers being common to all four groups while others are confined to one or a number of the groups. Among the former are barriers arising from the inappropriate (and inflexible) location and timing of programmes, low levels of outreach recruitment procedures, lack of childcare, the operation of eligibility criteria based on duration of unemployment and welfare status considerations and the lack of orienting and pre-vocational provision.

The perceived orientation of the institutional environment and culture of education and training providers toward young people is presented as mainly adversely influencing the participation of older people. However, it should be noted that this orientation toward young people can be seen as reflecting public and policy orientations based on a conception of learning / training as a *preparation* for working life rather than as *integral* to working life. The increased emphasis on lifelong learning and the development of practices to ensure its realisation is now challenging this view and should, if realised, result in changes in educational and training environments more conducive to the participation of what have been termed 'non-standard' students.

More generally, many of the institutional barriers identified in the labour market reports can be seen as arising from weakly developed and articulated policies in relation to promoting and securing equal opportunities and in relation to making adjustments to accommodate diversity on a basis wider than gender. Viewed in this manner a strategic requirement for addressing the institutional barriers faced by members of all four groups is promotion of organisational policies, practices and cultures based on equality and respect for and accommodation of diversity.

**Table 4.1: Indicative Summary of Barriers Concerning Accessing and Participating in Labour Market Programmes**

| | *O* | *D* | *E* | *T* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contextual | | | | |
| Labour Market Trends: | | | | |
| Decline in Unskilled Employment | • | | | • |
| Increased Emphasis on Qualifications | • | | | • |
| Negative Public / Social Perceptions | • | • | • | • |
| Poor Infrastructural Provision Responsive to Groups Needs | | • | | |
| Institutional | | | | |
| Predominant Orientation to Provision for Young People | • | | | |
| Lack of Recognition and Response to Minority Ethnic Cultures | | | • | • |
| Lack of Physical Access | | • | | |
| Inappropriate Locations and Timing of Programmes | • | • | • | • |
| Lack of Relevant Personal Supports | | • | | |
| Lack of Orienting and Pre-Vocational Provision | • | • | • | • |
| Lack of Childcare / Care of Older People | | • | • | • |
| Operation of Welfare and Duration of Unemployment Eligibility Criteria | • | • | • | • |
| Informational | | | | |
| Absence of Outreach / Specific Efforts to Recruit from Group | • | • | • | • |
| Poor Tailoring of Documentation Regarding Issues of Language and Literacy | | • | • | • |
| Situational | | | | |
| Participation Costs | • | • | • | • |
| Opportunity Costs | | | | • |
| Fears Relating to Loss of Welfare Entitlements | • | • | • | • |
| Dispositional | | | | |
| Negative Attitudes Toward Participation Based on Prior Educational Experiences | | • | | • |
| Low Expectation of Benefits of Education and Training | | | | • |

*O = Older People; D = People with a Disability; E = Members of Ethnic Minority Groups; T = Members of the Traveller community.*

**Informational Barriers:** A common theme running through the four ground reports is the reliance of educational and training providers on written materials as the main means to promote awareness of their programmes. Corresponding to this is the lack of information strategies based on face-to-face / group contact and specific outreach to members of the four groups. This presents particular barriers when literacy issues are present among members of the four groups, when English is not a mother tongue, and when information is not available in media accessible to people with a disability.

**Situational Barriers:** To varying extents barriers arising from the cost of participation in education and training programmes are documented in the four labour market reports as being experienced by members of all four groups. Given the high proportions of persons in receipt of welfare payments in the four groups the possibility that participation will result in a loss of welfare entitlement is also identified as a barrier. In the case of members of the Traveller community, particularly men, the absence of casual income earning opportunities due to participation in education and training programmes is presented as a barrier.

**Dispositional Barriers:** The main group in relation to which dispositional barriers are identified as operating in the labour market reports is Travellers. The specific issue arising here is the acquisition of negative attitudes toward education and training while in primary education and the low expectation of the benefits to be gained from participation (specifically in terms of actually securing employment).

Finally, two more general points arise from the overview of the barriers to participation in education and training programmes presented above. First, and of most general relevance, is that the challenge of addressing the labour market disadvantage and inequality experienced by members of the four groups can be presented as the challenge of ensuring that education and training provision is open and actively responsive to the diversity of the situations, needs and identities of members of each of the four groups. Responding to this challenge in an effective manner will require the development of organisational policies and practices with equality at their core and the development of appropriate packages of programmes and implementation strategies to secure equality of access, participation and outcome. It is only when equality is placed at the core of policies and associated practices that the full range of barriers to participation as identified in Table 4.1 will be systematically and effectively addressed.

Second, it is clear from the four ground reports that the impact of a number of the barriers identified is particularly acute in respect of some groups (for example access and transport in the case of people with disabilities) *and* that the presence and severity of barriers experienced varies across members of each of the four groups (for example refugees with English language competence face less severe barriers to accessing labour market programmes and the labour market than their counterparts lacking such competencies. In this regard, it is clear from the labour market report (Pearn Kandola, 2003) on the members of minority ethnic groups that there is systematic variation in English language competence associated with nationality; for example, almost two thirds (63.3%) of persons of African nationalities reported that they have very good or fluent English compared to just one in twenty (5.8%) of persons of Eastern European and other nationalities). In effect, some members of each of the four groups may experience specific labour market disadvantages while others do not. This latter point raises the issues of the relationship between inequality associated with group membership per se and inequality associated with labour market disadvantage. This issue is examined in the following chapter.

5

# THE EHRDOP, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

This Chapter examines the promotion of equal opportunities for the four groups in the EHRDOP. It outlines the aims and objectives of the operational programme, considers the issue of inequality as it arises for and is experienced by members of the four groups, provides a brief overview of the measures comprising the EHRDOP with particular reference to members of the four groups and, finally, makes some general observations regarding how the measures comprising the EHRDOP variously engage with members of the four groups.

## 5.1 Developing Focus on Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The programme content of the EHRDOP is primarily aimed at addressing, "the labour market and human capital needs of the Irish economy for the period 2000-2006", (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2000: 1) and doing this in a manner consistent with contributing to the achievement of the objectives that underpin the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 and the European Employment Strategy. Given this overall aim, the programme content of the EHRDOP, as reflected in its 51 measures and sub-measures, seeks to address seven priority objectives (see Box 5.1).

**Box 5.1: Objectives of the EHRDOP**

1. To promote employment growth and improve access to, and opportunities for, employment.
2. To mobilise all potential sources of labour supply and enhance its quality in order to address skills and labour shortages across the economy as a whole.
3. To promote the development of a strategic lifelong learning framework.
4. To promote equal opportunities between women and men, in particular through a gender mainstreaming approach.
5. To promote social inclusion with particular reference to the re-integration of the socially excluded and the long-term unemployed into the labour force.
6. To strive for balanced regional development by addressing the existing and potential education, training and skills deficits of the BMW and S&E regions.
7. To contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment.

*(Department of Enterprise, Trade and Empployment, 2000:62-63)*

The four high level objectives of the NDP refer to consolidation/improvement of competitiveness, sustainable economic and employment growth, balanced regional development and social inclusion. The NDP also has four horizontal objectives concerning equality of opportunity, environmental protection, rural development and poverty. The importance of incorporating wider equality considerations in the implementation of the NDP is increasingly recognised in particular, in the implementation of the EHRDOP. For example, in the context of the 2003 Mid-Term Evaluation of the NDP the equal opportunities horizontal objective refers to the achievement of a more equal society for men and women through the mainstreaming of equal opportunities across all sectors, and in addition, the NDP/CSF Monitoring Committee has agreed that the Mid-Term Evaluation will include a relevant wider equality focus on the four groups of people with disabilities, older people (50+), refugees and Travellers.

The process associated with European Employment Strategy takes the form of each Member State preparing National Employment Action Plans which respond to an agreed annual set of Employment Guidelines and which up to 2002 were set out under a four-pillar framework of Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability and Equal Opportunities. This four-pillar framework has been adopted in the setting out of the measures comprising the EHRDOP and each of the seven priority objectives of the EHRDOP is cross-referenced to this four-pillar framework (for details see Table 5.1 below and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2000: 62-65).

The 2003 Employment Guidelines require that the employment policies of Member States shall foster three overarching and interrelated objectives of full employment, quality and productivity at work, and social cohesion and inclusion. They state that these objectives should be pursued in a balanced manner reflecting their equal importance in achieving the ambitions of the EU.

The Guidelines emphasise that, "Equal opportunities and gender equality are vital for making progress towards the three objectives" (European Commission, 2003: 1). This is reiterated in employment targets for women and older people under the first objective and in the specific naming of gender equality, inclusion and access to the labour market, work organisation and work life balance, and diversity and non-discrimination as components of the second objective. It is central to the third objective which requires: promoting access to quality employment for all women and men who are capable of working, combating discrimination on the labour market, and preventing the exclusion of people from the world of work. These equality requirements are addressed in a number of the employment guidelines (3,5,6,7 and 8) and are pertinent more generally to all the guidelines. The promotion of equal opportunities is therefore a central component of the Employment Guidelines.

## 5.2 Labour Market Inequality

Earlier we noted that the report by McLoughlin (2003) identifies the importance of developing an understanding of the relationship between *labour market inequality, group membership,* and *labour market disadvantage* (see Box 2.2). Before examining the measures comprising the EHRDOP it is useful to briefly consider the issue of inequality as it arises for and is experienced by members of the four groups. The labour market inequality experienced by members of the four groups can:

- arise from and be directly related to their group membership per se (the issues arising are related to discrimination, unequal treatment or the failure to accommodate diversity on the basis of group membership)

- arise from their disadvantaged status in relation to qualifications, competencies and capacities (the issues arising are related to the low levels of qualifications, competencies and capacities possessed by individuals from the four groups and the resulting labour market consequences)

In the case of particular individuals these two dimensions of labour market inequality can exist *separately* or *together*. Illustrating the former situation is a person with a disability possessing a third level qualification and, conversely, illustrating the latter situation is a person with a disability who is an early school leaver. It follows that, while all persons from the four groups face the potential of

experiencing inequality due their group membership, only a subset - the size of which is likely to vary across the four groups - will be labour market disadvantaged in relation to qualifications, competencies and capacities.

While not every member of these groups will be labour market disadvantaged in relation to qualifications, competencies and capacities, *these two dimensions of inequality are inter-related.* Membership of a particular group can be systematically related to the likelihood of possessing certain levels of qualifications, competencies and capacities. For example, as was discussed earlier, members of the Traveller community have substantially lower levels of educational qualifications than the settled population with one of the major factors contributing to this inequality lying in area of the failure to recognise and make appropriate adjustments for Traveller culture in the planning and delivery of educational provision. A similar pattern can be identified among people with disabilities particularly among those who were born with impairments or who acquired them in their early years.

In examining the extent to which persons from the four groups are participating in and securing outcomes from labour market programmes on an equal basis with others, consideration needs to be taken both of inequality deriving from discrimination, unequal treatment or the failure to accommodate diversity on the basis of group membership per se as well as the four groups particular experience of labour market disadvantage deriving from the lack of or low level of qualifications, competencies and skills.

## 5.3 Overview of EHRDOP Measures and the Four Groups

This section provides an overview of the measures comprising the EHRDOP with particular reference to members of the four groups.

The EHRDOP seeks to address educational and skill based deficits for individuals /groups *at various points of engagement in, or distances from, the labour market.* Thus alongside a general emphasis on promoting labour force development, the approach adopted in the EHRDOP includes actions to promote social inclusion and to address labour market disadvantage as manifested by low initial educational levels and the absence of relevant vocational skills and competencies to obtain and sustain employment, particularly in the five measures supporting the social inclusion objective of the EHRDOP. Under this objective three of the measures being implemented also specifically take into consideration group membership (Traveller Education, Vocational Training and Pathways to Employment for People with Disabilities and Integrate Ireland Language and Training Ltd - formerly the Refugee Language Support Unit). A further one of the social inclusion measures (Third-Level Access) - in addition to addressing labour market disadvantage - specifically targets people with disabilities and mature second chance students. The fifth measure associated with the social inclusion objective of the EHRDOP (Active Measures for the Unemployed and Socially Excluded) includes persons with a disability and members of the Traveller Community as among the groups it is seeking to cater for with their eligibility being defined on the basis of group membership combined with welfare status (being a recipient of one of a number of welfare payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs).

**Table 5.1: Measures in the EHRDOP**

| A. General Labour Force Development Measures | |
|---|---|
| **EMPLOYABILITY** | Undergraduate Skills (M26) |
| Schools Modern Languages (M10) | Postgraduate Conversion Courses (M27) |
| Sectoral Entry Training - Tourism (School Leavers) (M12a) | Training of Trainers - Primary, Post-Primary & Further Education (M28a) |
| Sectoral Entry Training - Tourism (Education) (M12c) | Training of Trainers - FÁS (M28b) |
| Sectoral Entry Training - Agriculture (M12d) | Quality - incl. Training of Trainers (M29a) |
| Skills Training for Unemployed & Redundant Workers (M13) | Quality - Certification & NQF (29b) |
| Apprenticeship / Traineeship - FÁS (M14a) | **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** |
| Apprenticeship - Education (M14b) | In-company Training – EI (M18a) |
| | In-company Training – FÁS (M18b) |
| **ADAPTABILITY** | **EQUALITY** |
| Lifelong Learning – General (M20) | Equal Opportunities Promotion And Monitoring – Education (M31a) |
| Ongoing Sectoral Training – Culture, Gaeltacht & Film (M24a) | Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring – NDP (M31b) |
| Ongoing Sectoral Training - Seafood (M24b) | **OTHER MEASURES** |
| Ongoing Sectoral Training - Forestry (M24c) | Education Infrastructure (M32a) |
| Ongoing Sectoral Training – Equine Institute (24d) | Training Infrastructure (M32b) |
| Ongoing Sectoral Training - Agriculture (M24e) | OP Technical Assistance (M33a) |
| Sectoral Training – Tourism (M24f) | Equality Studies Unit (M33b) |
| Sectoral Training - Tourism Education (M24g) | |
| MLT / HTBS (M25) | |

| B. Labour Market Disadvantage Measures | |
|---|---|
| **EMPLOYABILITY** | **Vocational Training and Pathways to Employment for People with Disabilities (M16)** |
| Action Programme for the Unemployed (M1) | **Integrate Ireland Language and Training (formerly Refugee Language Support Unit) (M17)** |
| National Employment Service (M2) | |
| ***Active Measure for the Unemployed and Socially Excluded (M3)*** | **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** |
| ***Early Education (M4)*** | ***Social Economy Initiative (M19a)*** |
| School Completion Initiative (M5) | Social Economy - Local Social Capital (M19b) |
| Early Literacy (M6) | |
| ***Employment Support Service (M15)*** | **ADAPTABILITY** |
| **Traveller Education (M7)** | ***Lifelong Learning – BTEI (M21)*** |
| School Guidance Service (M8) | Lifelong Learning National Adult Literacy Strategy (M22) |
| ***Third Level Access (M9)*** | Lifelong Learning - Further Education Support Services (M23) |
| Early School Leavers – Progression (M11a) | |
| ***Early School Leavers – Youthreach and Travellers (M11b)*** | **EQUALITY** |
| ***Sectoral Entry Training – Tourism (M12b)*** | ***Educational Equality Initiative (M30)*** |

Table 5.1 classifies the measures comprising the EHRDOP as either (a) 'general' or (b) 'disadvantaged' based on an analysis of their objectives, targeting and eligibility criteria. The discussion considers each of these from the perspective of equal opportunities for the four groups.

The Table shows that 28 of the 51 measures can be classified as general labour force development measures in that they are not specifically predicated on labour market disadvantage. This group of 'general' measures will absorb approximately 47% of planned expenditure under the programme.

Three general sub-measures have a specific focus on promoting equal opportunities, of which the first two are largely addressed to gender equality. These are:

- Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring – Education (M31a)
- Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring – NDP (M31b)
- Equality Studies Unit (M33b)

In broad terms, among these general labour force development measures there is a considerable emphasis on promoting adaptability and skill development. This is reflected in the large number (15) of these measures associated with the Adaptability Pillar the primary objective of which is, "to raise workplace-relevant skills and the competencies of individuals" (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2000: 72). The majority of the remaining general measures are associated with the Employability Pillar, particularly with the mobilisation of labour supply objective of that pillar.

Overall, these general measures make little specific reference to wider equal opportunities or to any of the four groups. The mobilisation of labour supply is a policy priority designed, " to ensure that all potential sources of labour supply - including increased female participation, married 'returners' older workers, people with disabilities and immigrants - become available to the labour market" (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2000: 67). In the context of the concerns of this report the identification of three of the four groups (older workers, people with disabilities and immigrants) as sources of labour supply is of particular note. Nevertheless the implications of this diversity for the design and delivery of mobilisation measures are not addressed in detail.

Twenty one measures / sub-measures can be classified as predicated on labour market disadvantage. Among the broad objectives of the labour market disadvantage measures are an emphasis on activating the unemployed and preventing long-term unemployment, addressing early school-leaving, improving adult literacy and promoting access to third level education among disadvantaged students and people with disabilities. These measures are planned to absorb approximately 53% of expenditure under the programme. However, it is important to note regarding the level of expenditure on labour market disadvantage measures that the stated expenditure in almost all cases is inclusive of participant allowances. In other words, the total expenditure is inclusive of welfare transfers / substitutions. If these amounts were removed from the picture the actual level of investment would be revealed to be significantly less than a cursory glance at the total figure might first suggest.

Three measures are each targeted exclusively on one of the four groups. These measures are:

- Traveller Education (M7)
- Vocational Training and Pathways to Employment for People with Disabilities (M16)
- Integrate Ireland Language and Training (formerly the Refugee Language Support Unit) (M17)

While a small number of measures are therefore targeted to deal exclusively with a single group, other measures mention a number of groups that are variously identified as 'marginalised', 'disadvantaged' or 'socially excluded'. This can and usually does include groups such as the long-term unemployed as well as some or all of the four groups being considered here. For example, people

with disabilities and members of the Traveller community are likely to be amongst those benefiting from the Back to Work Allowance Scheme (BTWAS) and the Back to Education Allowance Scheme (BTEAS) included under the Employment Support Services (M15) measure and, to a lesser extent, from the Lifelong Learning - Back to Education Initiative (M21) and the Educational Equality Initiative (M30). Travellers are also explicitly targeted under Early School Leavers - Youthreach and Travellers (M11b).

Overall then, in addition to the three measures listed above each of which is targeted exclusively on one of the groups, a further nine measures/sub-measures (the measures listed in bolded italics in Table 5.1) are part-focused on addressing labour market inequality associated with group membership in that membership of three of the four groups (older people being the exception) to varying extents are cited as among the intended beneficiaries and / or eligible categories of participants of these measures. However, in the case these measures participation by members of these groups is primarily on the basis of their experience of labour market disadvantage and not on the explicit design or intent of the measures to address labour market inequality on the basis of group membership.

In the context of the concerns of this report it is also of note that members of two of the four groups (people with disabilities and Travellers) are identified as among the eligible categories of grant-aided employees in the Social Economy Programme (M19a) and participants in Community Employment (as part of the Active Measures for the Long-Term Unemployed and Socially Excluded - M3) with this eligibility being linked to receipt of Unemployment Benefit / Assistance in the case of Travellers and receipt of Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Blind Persons Pension in the case of people with disabilities. A similar linkage with welfare status exists in the case of Travellers and people with disabilities in respect of programmes under the Employment Support Services Measure (M15).

## 5.4 General Observations

In the light of the above it is possible to make some general observations regarding how the measures comprising the EHRDOP variously engage with members of the four groups and thereby make a preliminary assessment of the relevance and capacity of the Operational Programme to promote equal opportunities for the four groups.

In presenting these comments it is important to acknowledge that the EHRDOP was not designed to systematically address the labour market inequality experienced by people from the four groups under consideration in this report. This is not to say that in the implementation of the EHRDOP consideration is not given to developing and delivering actions designed to address labour market inequality associated with membership of the four groups under consideration here. However, it recognises the fact that the understanding and application of the principle of equal opportunities is still evolving within the NDP as a whole and in particular within the EHRDOP.

As emphasised earlier, issues of inequality associated with group membership and labour market disadvantage need to be analytically separated while also recognising that, on a case-by-case basis, individuals may experience labour market inequality solely associated with their group membership or due to both their group membership and their disadvantaged status.

What this initial overview suggests is that it is primarily, though not exclusively, on the basis of the experience of labour market disadvantage that the measures of the EHRDOP take into account the inequality experienced by members of the four groups. Even within the focus on disadvantage, the EHRDOP rarely associates individual labour market inequality with group membership - apart from gender - and never attributes labour market disadvantage experienced by the four groups to discrimination and the failure to accommodate diversity either in society in general or in the education and training system. This means that measures are largely constructed with a view to addressing educational and skill deficits as observed in various individuals who are sometimes also observed as members of various groups (Travellers, people with disabilities and so on) but the

implications of group membership for the design and delivery of measures - other than some consideration of physical accessibility for disabled people - have not really been examined.

The importance of considering the issue of progression in this context should also be emphasised. One of the underlying themes running through the four labour market reports is the lack of accommodation made for people from the four groups in what are termed mainstream labour market programmes; and conversely, the reliance on special or targeted measures to accommodate the issues arising from group membership and labour market disadvantage in the EHRDOP. As noted in Chapter 3, one of the central findings of the study of the barriers that Travellers experience in accessing and participating in labour market programmes is the lack of effective progression to mainstream measures for Travellers participating in targeted programmes and the absence of an institutional mechanism to support this (Pearn Kandola, 2003).

However, as noted above, measures not addressed to labour market disadvantage make little specific reference to wider equal opportunities or to any of the four groups. In the context of the concerns of this report the identification of three of the groups as sources of labour supply is of particular note. Nevertheless here too the implications of this diversity for the design and delivery of mobilisation measures is nowhere considered in depth.

Finally, the EHRDOP in itself cannot be expected to address the discrimination faced by Travellers, people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups and older people in society at large. What can be expected, however, is that within the design and delivery parameters of the EHRDOP, the concerns of and barriers experienced by members of the four groups as identified in Chapters 3 and 4 can and will be addressed and there will be a more effective engagement with addressing the labour market inequality experienced by them.

6

# DEVELOPING CAPACITY TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In this chapter the issue of scoping the development of practices to enhance the capacity of the EHRDOP to address labour market inequality and to promote equality for the four groups is addressed. The development of effective practices in this area is central to meeting the second priority of the ESU (promoting and supporting the development of an equality focused practice in the measures comprising the EHRDOP through evaluating specific measures from this perspective and developing resource materials for organisations involved in implementing the measures comprising the EHRDOP). One of the main tools that will be used to develop such practices is undertaking evaluations of the individual measures. Following a brief indication of a number of the issues arising in undertaking measure studies that relate to the actual manner in which various measures are implemented, an introduction to a number of the key parameters arising in undertaking measure studies is presented.

## 6.1 The Implementation Architecture of the EHRDOP: Issues for Undertaking Measure Studies

In order to effectively engage with the EHRDOP and its constituent measures and sub-measures it will be necessary to develop and adopt a robust framework to examine the complex interaction between:

- national policy frameworks and resourcing issues
- the aims and objectives of the EHRDOP, including the design of various measures
- the delivery system at national and local levels ranging from what can be referred to as policy parents and implementing agencies down to a range of individual private subcontractors
- the specific characteristics of and issues arising for target groups

This framework will need to recognise not only the importance of high-level strategies and policies operating in the context of national policy in a range of areas (equality, lifelong learning, social inclusion) but also the actions of local providers / delivery agents of specific labour market programmes and their practices as it is these organisations (and the individuals they employ to deliver programmes) that represent the interface between policy and the members of the four

groups. Work undertaken in relation to the EHRDOP will therefore require a multi-dimensional engagement, working closely with the current reality but sensitive to policy developments in a range of pertinent areas as well as to the changing needs of the members of the four groups as they encounter a rapidly changing society and labour market context.

This will be a complex task. On the one hand the circumstances and needs of the various groups are complex and are often related to issues that pertain to society at large, issues that the EHRDOP alone cannot be expected to address; for example, the deeply in-grained prejudice against Travellers. In addition, the implementation architecture of the programme is complex involving policy parents, implementing agencies and sub-contractors. The supply chain often involves many actors as reflected in the three examples derived from the programme complement documentation presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Examples of the Complexity of Measure Architecture, EHRDOP**

| Measure No. | Measure Name | Policy Parent | Implementing Agency | Sub-Implementers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Traveller Education | Department of Education and Science | VECs and Non-VEC post-primary schools | National Psychological Service, Visiting Teacher Service, In-career Development Unit, the Inspectorate |
| 12 | Sectoral Entry Training – Tourism | Department of Tourism | CERT | National Training Centres, Temporary Training Centres, Sub-contracted arrangements |
| 21 | Lifelong Learning – BTEI | Department of Education and Science | VECs and Non-VEC post-primary schools | Community Education Groups |

The examination and enhancement of an equality focused practice will involve detailed interaction with the delivery system at all points and in a manner tailored to specific contexts. So, while it may be possible to identify policy and legislation that appears to require certain behaviours and presuppose the existence of enlightened policies and practices, it will be equally likely to encounter lack of knowledge of such aspirations and / or the lack of action / practice that adequately reflects policy intent. In short, an incremental engagement will be required in moving towards a re-envisioning of the EHRDOP from an equality perspective and in enhancing its capacity to address the labour market inequality experienced by members of the four groups. That process will need to be participative and non-threatening. In many cases policy parents, implementing agencies and other deliverers may be asked to consider changing horses in mid-stream and that, understandably, may not always be seen as a good idea. However, developing a capacity to give substance to the equal opportunities principle of the NDP in the operations of the EHRDOP will undoubtedly require changes in assumptions, attitudes and behaviours for many.

## 6.2 Scoping the Parameters of the Measure Study Process

Promoting and supporting the development of an equality focused practice in the measures comprising the EHRDOP through evaluating specific measures and developing resource materials for organisations involved in implementing the measures comprising the EHRDOP is a priority of the ESU. In scoping the development and implementation process associated with these practices it is necessary to be mindful of issues that arise at three different levels and which, individually and collectively, impinge on the overall achievement of this priority. These issues are: issues arising from the diversity that exists within the four specified groups and across the measures / sub-measures of the EHRDOP, best practice emerging from current and developing work in relation to promoting equality and the need to develop instruments and methodologies that can serve to both study and resource the implementation of good equality focused practice across the measures of the EHRDOP.

## Level 1: Diversity Within the Four Groups and the Measures and Sub-Measures of the EHRDOP

These diversities have been extensively addressed earlier in this report. In summary, they include:

- diversity in the situation, experience and identity of each of the four groups and diversity in the experience of inequality and disadvantage within and across the four groups: this diversity exists with regard to inequality arising from labour market disadvantage as well as from group membership; with regard to the experience of both forms of inequality between and amongst members of the four groups; and, with regard to the experiences of men and women within each group and indeed other sub groups within each group

- variation across the measures and sub-measures of the EHRDOP, as Table 5.1 has shown, this includes measures with primarily economic and sectoral objectives without a focus on group membership or disadvantage, measures targeted primarily on the basis of labour market disadvantage and measures targeted on the basis of labour market disadvantage and group membership. The range of agencies involved in delivering these measures and implementation architecture of particular measures has been noted above. The extent of this heterogeneity, in relation to both supply and demand, presents a particular challenge to scoping practice in this area. Clearly, there is a need to ensure sufficient specificity to engage with the concerns and objectives of individual measures, while also building towards a cohesive approach to promoting an equality focused practice across the EHRDOP

## Level 2: Best Practice Emerging from Current and Developing Work in Relation to Promoting Equality

At international, EU and national levels, work to promote good equality focused practice in this area can still be considered to be at an embryonic stage. Most of the material available to date has focused on promoting equality in relation to specific grounds, these for the most part being gender, disability and minority ethnic status, rather than promoting equality more generally. Additionally, the materials and tools currently available tend to focus on either very specific applications or very general applications, with the result that replication for or adaptation to other groups or contexts is a complex task. A further point to note is the tendency for some of this material to function as checklists - enabling little more than a superficial exercise to be undertaken. Finally, the impetus for developing material, and the bodies involved, varies from lobby groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working from the ground up to establish good practice on behalf of their target groups to international agencies and national or federal governments seeking to comply with international obligations (for example the Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995).

Notwithstanding both the limited amount of material currently available and the variety and limitations that exist within this, a number of core elements can be identified that are directly relevant to undertaking measure studies and that can inform the development of instruments and practices to enhance equality across the EHRDOP. These elements are presented below as a series of twinned or symbiotic elements, all of which require consideration in terms of priority and focus.

- **Institutional Context / Intervention Delivered**
  While there is clearly an interactive relationship between the measures of the EHRDOP and the organisations / agencies that deliver them, these are nonetheless different entities. Therefore, in terms of promoting an equality focused practice a balance must be achieved with regard to a focus on delivery organisations / agencies and a focus on measures and their design features

- **Development of Equality Awareness / Development of Equality Tools**
  These paired elements to an extent reflect that of the institutional context / intervention delivered. That is, equality awareness may exist or be developed at institutional level (or at policy parent level in terms of the points made above), but without the tools to operationalise

it, good practice at measure level will not follow. The converse of this is also true: tools may be available but, without proper awareness, they will not be used, or not used effectively

- **Establishing Principles of Equality / Identify Practice of Equality**
  Establishing principles of equality or equality policy may follow on from equality awareness or they may result from the imposition of obligations. In either case, however, the establishment of good practice cannot be assumed to follow. The necessary link between principles and practice (or policy and practice) – commitment, personnel training, and resources - must be in place

- **Delivering Equality Through Process / Delivering Equality Through Product**
  The dichotomy here relates to the extent to which equality can be achieved within the process of an intervention or within the impact of the intervention. This translates as the setting of output targets for measures rather than impact targets. A focus on the extent to which equality is promoted through impacts also highlights the need to situate good equality focused practice within any one measure within the overall context of the EHRDOP, and indeed as indicated earlier, within the context of a national framework of actions to promote equality

- **Target Group as Passive Client / Target Group as Empowered Participant**
  The extent to which target groups are involved in the design, delivery and review of measures is considered to contribute to the effectiveness of equality practice.

### Level 3: Develop Instruments and Methodologies that Serve to Evaluate and Resource the Implementation of Good Equality Focused Practice Across the Measures of the EHRDOP

The final consideration that must be factored into the development of practice to enhance equality across the EHRDOP concerns the need to develop mechanisms that facilitate both evaluating and resourcing good equality focused practice. It is also important, particularly in the context of the requirement to address the horizontal concerns of the EHRDOP, that these mechanisms facilitate the bedding down of good practice within the measures of the EHRDOP and the delivery systems associated with these measures. This requires that they function as effective tools and resources for delivery organisations / agencies rather than simply being either an evaluation mechanism or a checklist approach to the issues.

The elements listed at level two above and others as identified, are currently being explored through developing a set of instruments and designing a process of engagement that will achieve the following:

- establish collaboration with delivery agencies

- provide for flexibility in their implementation

- combine measure and target group specific elements with a broad-ranging concept of equality

- develop a systematic approach at measure level leading to cumulative knowledge and good practice across the EHRDOP

The details of these instruments and measures are soon to be piloted with a view to establishing best practice in terms of undertaking evaluations of how the equal opportunities principle of the NDP is being applied in the design and implementation of the measures comprising the EHRDOP.

7

# CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS

The brief of the ESU is to examine and enhance the capacity of the EHRDOP to address the labour market inequality experienced by older people, people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups (particularly refugees) and members of the Traveller community. The eight reports commissioned by the ESU to date have demonstrated through their findings and recommendations that the enhancement of the capacity of the EHRDOP to address the labour market inequality experienced by members of the four groups will require a range of actions that are both strategic in their intent and integrated in their delivery. The actions required include:

- the enhancement of national practice with respect to the regular generation of context indicators concerning the labour market situation of members of the four groups
- the systematic development and adoption of appropriate programme indicators used in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the EHRDOP
- the on-going review and assessment of the labour market concerns of members of the four groups as they arise from changing social and economic circumstances
- the development and deployment of actions specifically aimed at enhancing equality policy and practice in the design and delivery of measures in the EHRDOP

With regard to implementing these four broad lines of action the main conclusions and directions arising from this report can be summarised as follows.

First, the labour market situations of and inequalities experienced by members of the four groups are diverse. Moreover, they reflect a range of underlying causes varying from deep seated prejudice in public attitudes to an on-going failure to take appropriate and effective action at national policy level in order to ensure equal opportunities on the four grounds. In mitigation of this situation it can be noted that the commitment to securing equal opportunities in respect of members of the four groups is relatively recent. Moreover, there is evidence that despite this, actions are being taken to enhance existing policies and practices in respect of members of three of the four groups (see for example, the Progress Reports from Managing Authorities to the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee).

Arising from the findings of this report such actions now need to engage more systematically with the specific barriers experienced by members of the four groups in relation to participating in labour

market programmes as documented in Chapters 3 and 4. In doing this, the actions taken also need to be informed by the manner in which inequality can arise from both group membership per se and from the experience of labour market disadvantage. That is, actions are required that address the experience of inequality arising from group membership per se and from the overlap of group membership and labour market disadvantage. The following point develops this in the context of the EHRDOP.

Second, within the EHRDOP, it is clear that the majority of the measures catering for members of the four groups are designed primarily on the basis of addressing the labour market disadvantage experienced by individual members from each of the four groups. These measures include all five of the measures associated with the social inclusion objective of the EHRDOP. Also, as shown in Chapter 5, just three measures in the EHRDOP are specifically designed to address the inequality experienced by members of the four groups and in each case their rationale also includes addressing the labour market disadvantage experienced by members of the groups concerned (Travellers, Refugees and people with disabilities). There is no measure that is designed specifically to address the labour market situation and concerns of older people. In terms of future directions the main points arising are:

- the need to ensure the operation of equal opportunities principles and practices systematically across all measures of the EHRDOP (such actions will benefit all members of the four groups)

- the need to ensure that in the operation of measures targeted primarily on the basis of labour market disadvantage there is effective progression for members of the four groups participating in such measures and for this to be monitored

- the need to make a more specific response to the labour market situation and concerns of older people

Third, developing equality policy and practice in the implementation of the EHRDOP, will require engagement with *both* the design features of the measures and sub-measures comprising the operational programme and the delivery systems in place for these measures. Attention to the design features of measures is required in order to address specific barriers as they have been identified in Chapters 3 and 4. Attention to the delivery system is required in recognition of the implementation architecture of the EHRDOP as sketched in Chapter 6 and because of the significant impact that the delivery system can have on equality practice on the group as experienced by members of the four groups.

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# APPENDIX A: SUMMARY FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOUR DATA REPORTS

**Author:** Goodbody Economic Consultants (2003)

**Title:** *Analysis of the Labour Market Situation of Travellers, Other Minority Ethnic Groups, Older People and People with Disabilities in Ireland*

**Key Findings / Recommendations**

1 Develop agreement on definitions of indicators that are relevant from a labour market point of view.

2 Develop the Census of Population to provide adequate data on the population and labour market situation of these groups and which enables comparisons to be made with the general population. In particular the inclusion of questions on ethnicity in the 2006 Census of Population.

3 Include regular modules specifically on these groups in the QNHS and the EU SILC, where the groups are sufficiently large to be adequately covered in sample surveys of this nature (e.g., people with disabilities).

4 Following discussions with the CSO and a detailed analysis of the nationality and residency data in Census of Population 2002, testing of the ethnicity question to be included in the CP 2006 for a period of a year at least on the QNHS.

5 Develop a programme of special surveys aimed at filling remaining data gaps, particularly for groups where significant numbers are not living in households (e.g., asylum seekers, people with disabilities living in institutions). Research is also required on the reasons behind these statistics, for example in relation to why the labour force participation rate of some of these groups is so low (e.g., Travellers, people with disabilities) or in cases where additional information is required (e.g., on Ireland's minority ethnic population) in order to ensure the provision of additional and comprehensive information on the labour market experience of these groups

6 Carry out an audit of existing administrative data held on these groups and obtain agreement on a programme of action aimed at facilitating the development of these data sources as useful sources

of labour market information, particularly prior to the availability of Census data on minority ethnic groups.

7 Review European data requirements and ensure that the data required is available for Ireland and can thus readily be used to make international comparisons in relation to the labour market experience of these groups.

8 Agree a programme of action to implement the above data strategy among the various actors involved, the Equality Authority, CSO, Social Partners etc.

**Author:** Fitzpatrick Associates (2003)

**Title:** *Monitoring Indicators Under the EHRDOP and Equality Monitoring*

**Key Findings / Recommendations:**

**Produce** Indicator Reports from Data Currently Collected.

**Collect** Data on Beneficiaries to Produce Current Indicators.

**Define** Indicators Relating to Beneficiaries:

ESU to Provide **Guidelines** on Collection and Storage of Data on Four Grounds

Implementing Bodies Should Develop **Implementation Plans** for Monitoring on Four Grounds

OP Managing Authority Should Initiate **Consultations** in Relation to Use of Monitoring Indicators in EHRDOP

**Author:** Raymond Burke Consulting (2003)

**Title:** *Review of Labour Market Indicators*

**Key Findings / Recommendations:**

Programme Indicators should follow the guidelines specified in the Department of Finance's CSF Evaluation Unit's Report on Indicators, namely, to use Resource, Output, Results and Impact Indicators.

The CSO should be encouraged to expand the types of questions in the QNHS and other national sources to capture disability, ethnicity and other equality data.

While, in a number of cases, single population grouping indicators are reported (e.g., gender, race) it is a simple task to re-specify the indicators to cover all target population groupings, (e.g., *labour force composition/participation by gender* to *labour force composition/participation by ethnic background* etc.).

Indicators can also be prepared or specified from statistical and specialised reports on the labour market on areas of interest (e.g., older people, people with disabilities).

A 'lateral' approach to the determination and definition of relevant Labour Force Indicators should be adopted through:

- extending the concept of the most common equality measures (e.g., gender) to other population groups

- interpreting reports and statistics in a fashion to generate meaningful performance indicators

- considering the impact of government and other interventions by taking 'slices' of the Labour Market Cycle Continuum or stages and levels of economic and labour market involvement, which can be organised, semi chronologically, into career patterns.

**Author:** McLoughlin (2003)

**Title:** *An Assessment of the Position of Selected Groups in Three Measures under the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme*

**Key Findings / Recommendations:**

While providers have an acute awareness of their role in combating social exclusion and disadvantage, little has been done to target members of the target groups of concern here and their participation rates are low. Most providers feel that this is due to a lack of demand from the target groups as opposed to a lack of pro-active policies and practices within the measures. However, outreach work aimed at the target groups is limited in most cases and affirmative action remains localised and uncoordinated. Providers generally have an open and flexible attitude to doing more work with the groups concerned, but in many cases the specific supports needed by these groups are either unavailable or limited. Despite awareness of the need for equality, this area needs to be significantly developed. The relation between equality and social and economic disadvantage needs to be clarified and much work is needed in developing equality policies and statements at both the national and local level and the embedding of these within practice.

**General Policy Recommendations:**

Dedicated equality statements and strategies should be developed at national and local level.

Proactive outreach and affirmative actions should be initiated or strengthened.

A whole-centre / whole-agency approach should be encouraged in promoting equality

Greater flexibility should be provided for in the delivery of the measures.

Data collection and record keeping should enable analysis of the groups concerned.

Equality awareness raising and training should be made available in all centres.

Agreement should be reached at national level on the type and nature of training which cannot be accessed by people with disabilities.

Allowances should be reviewed to ensure there is an incentive for the groups concerned to participate in the measures and that secondary benefits are secured.

**General Recommendation on the Delivery of the Measures:**

Target numbers for participation of the various target groups should be set for the measures.

Equality issues should inform assessment processes.

Firm and definite targets should be set for physical accessibility to all centres.

Further ancillary services focused on the needs of the target groups, for example language skills, training materials for people with disabilities and, advocate type services should be developed. Customised training funds could be adjusted for this purpose.

Specific links should be forged with representative and support groups in the recruitment processes.

Linkages with other centres or institutions should focus on the best outcomes for current or potential participants. Agreements should be developed to govern this.

Providers should be encouraged to operate as part of local consortia or to undertake joint endeavours.

Combination of provisions and best practice should be encouraged in the provision of childcare.

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