

NDP Gender Equality Unit

Preliminary results from gender mainstreaming the NDP

The Unit recognises that the results arising from applying a gender mainstreaming approach within the NDP cannot be divorced from the favourable economic climate which obtained in the period under review. It is clear that some of the results cannot be fully attributed to demand arising from skills shortages, and the Unit believes that the gender mainstreaming approach has influenced developments. Social partnership was also an enabling factor. The list below includes a number of achievements from the policy making phase of the NDP as well as outcomes which were directly influenced by the Unit.

New actions to promote gender equality in the period 2000-3

- Payment of childcare costs for trainees by FAS. (This payment was already a feature of some education programmes.)
- Provision of childcare funding (co-financed) of originally €50 million co-financed and since increased to €500 million for the period of the NDP;
- Provision of funding of €29 million for the Equality for Women Measure which was subsequently increased to €35 million.

General mainstream supports in the period 2000-3

- benchmarked gender equality achievements at 2000
- the establishment of new structures (two new specialist units and a new co-ordinating committee)
- the inclusion of equality between women and men was an agreed objective of the Employment and Human Resources Development Programme;
- the collection of a considerable amount of gender disaggregated data

New actions to promote gender equality following the Mid-Term Review in 2004

- Removal by Failte Ireland of the requirement to be on the Live Register to participate in their sectoral entry training (Measure 12B)
- Steps taken by the Department of Education measures to ensure greater participation by males in education
- Teagasc beginning to address barriers to participation by females in residential courses and to engage in outreach to attract more female course participants
- BIM offering flexible delivery of training courses
- The introduction of modular delivery, the accreditation of prior learning and flexible delivery modes by the Equine Institute, University of Limerick.
- Mainstreaming by FAS of its Expanding the Workforce Initiative, which offers individual tailored supports to women returning to the workforce and provides for progression to further education and training, if required.

General mainstream supports following the Mid-Term Review in 2004

- considerable involvement of main actors on gender equality issues (key policy makers, the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit and the Managing Authorities who have responsibility for the individual Operational Programmes);
- the adoption of gender mainstreaming as an integral part of the operations of the County Enterprise Boards Development and the collection of a range of new indicators by the Boards;
- the collection of some new gender disaggregated data (mostly measure participants) and also of some data on gender balance in decision making areas (Enterprise Ireland's Regional Innovation Strategies, Rural Development Measures);
- reporting by infrastructure measures, Housing and Childcare, of the gender effects of this spending.

It is also the case that organisations experiencing difficulty recruiting from their traditional cohort of applicants (male or female) and facing falling enrolment tend to be open to thinking in new ways about attracting applicants from both genders. The Unit also found a high level of flexible training provision. The process of gender mainstreaming the NDP has also raised awareness of gender equality issues.