



An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

European Social Fund Newsletter 2008 Issue 1

Although it occurred in late 2007, there is no doubt of the significance of the launch of the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013.

The (then) Minister for Innovation Policy Minister at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,



Mr Michael Ahern T.D., launched the New European Social Fund Human Capital Investment Programme 2007-2013 for Ireland in the Gresham Hotel on the 18th December 2007.

The launch took place as part of a wider event celebrating 50 years of the European Social Fund and specifically exploring the contribution made to Ireland by the ESF since joining the then Common Market in 1973



. The event was moderated by noted historian and journalist, Mr John Bowman.

The audience was welcomed to the event by Mr. Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. This was followed by a speech giving an Overview of ESF & EU Policy by Ms Denise Sorasio, Director, DG Employment, of the European Commission.

A number of presentations on the contribution investments under the European Social Fund has made to different areas of the Irish life were made commencing with



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Sheena Matthews, Sports Instructor, South Dublin County Council. Sheena is a graduate of a number of FAS training programmes and her contribution is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter, she was followed



by David Doyle who is Co-ordinator of the Nickol Garda Youth Diversion Project, which works with and supports young people in Dublin city centre. The final presentation was made by



Tony McGuire, CEO of Systems Dynamics, who participated in Enterprise Ireland's 'Leadership 4 Growth' Programme at Stanford University in the United States. In his speech Minister Ahern stated that the **(ESF)** is the EU's financial instrument for investing in people by improving their employment opportunities through upskilling them, and helping to raise their standard of living by improving their job prospects.

He noted that since Ireland joined the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, over €6 billion in ESF monies have been invested here in co-financed Exchequer training, education and equality programmes.

He also stated that In the period 2007-2013, the ESF will spend over €10 billion per year across all Member States; an amount that represents more than 10% of the European Union's total budget".

□ The Programme will support



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skills training and higher education courses (in support of the National Skills Strategy), some basic literacy and education courses, and interventions for those experiencing continued barriers to participation in both urban and rural areas.

The specific objectives of the 2007-2013 ESF HCI OP for Ireland were detailed as follows:

- To provide education, training and other supports necessary to upskill the workforce as a means of enabling it to respond to the challenges posed by international competition, to enhance worker productivity, and to assist in meeting the evolving needs of industry and the economy
- To provide for increased activation and participation with certain groups who can contribute to Ireland's workforce, but who face barriers to employment, progression and participation.

The Government's determination to remove barriers to employment among marginalised groups and to help these people – irrespective of race, gender or age – to realize their potential by providing better access to lifelong

learning and rolling out tailored training schemes, such as the HCI-OP could facilitate was emphasized.

“In particular measures will address early school leavers, worker mobility, women in the workplace, as well as attempting to improve participation of people with a disability in the labor market. These projects also aim to bring more people into the social mainstream, including new immigrants”.

Sheena Matthews shared her story with us:

“I left school at an early age, with no idea or direction as to where my life was going or what I wanted to do next. I became pregnant at a young age and became dependant on weekly social welfare payments to support myself and my child.

I went from job to job. Jobs which I didn't really like or enjoy doing, I was at a stage in my life where I felt I was at a dead end.

It seemed like that for a long time and I really felt that my life was going nowhere.

After some time I decided to join the local gym to lose weight and gain confidence, this was also a place where I found inspiration. I spoke to a staff member there. I remember looking at this girl and thinking, I want to be her!

I spoke to the staff, and they told me of a Fas course that could offer



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me the education and qualifications I needed.

Spoirt Teic

The year on the course was one of the best times of my life! If I could do it all again, I would in a heartbeat, This was the turning point in my life. I found the course to be very educational and fun. There was a wide variety of subjects which included gym, aerobics, swimming, and all sorts of sports and games.

The day I graduated I felt a great sense of achievement and pride and I was ready to go out into the world and share my knowledge.

Since graduating I have had the privilege of working with people of all ages, from young children in various schools around Dublin to the early school leavers on the Second Chance Project (an experience!), and also the members of the south Dublin senior citizens club. I have enjoyed every moment!

Presently I am working full-time for South Dublin County Council, as a tutor and sports instructor on the Spoirt Teic course which I graduated from. I really love my job as I get to help others to make a transformation to their lives, just as I have. We have a brilliant team of instructors on the course which is coordinated by Mick Browne. Fas and South Dublin County Council

work very closely in relation to the course, we do have a face to Fas and that's our fas officer Adrienne Mooney, together Mick and Adrienne work behind the scenes to ensure the course is successful.

I would like to thank everyone involved in helping me to get to where I am today, and for giving me the opportunity to share my story in the hope that it will give others the inspiration to follow their dreams. If I can do it, anyone can!"

There must be other similar stories to be told as a result of people participating in ESF funded measures and we would encourage you to send any such information to the ESF Managing Authority.

In her address



Denise Sorasio stressed that the ESF has quietly but efficiently helped to change the lives of millions of people all across Europe. The Commission estimate that:

Every year, the Fund helps 9 million people throughout the Union, including 1.2 million older workers.

Thanks to the ESF, about 2 million unemployed people per year manage to start a new job – and a



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new life. The ESF has helped to shape the social face of Europe.

She noted that for the next seven years, the global ESF budget for the 27 Member States is EUR 76 billion, 10% of the budget of the Union.

If this is added to that the national public and private contributions, the global value of ESF projects will exceed EUR 100 billion. This represents an investment in human capital of more than EUR 14 billion a year.

In Ireland, the ESF alone will invest around EUR 376 million between now and 2013.

The Irish ESF OP contains all the elements for a successful transition into the future. It responds to the real human resources needs of Ireland and the Commission's assessment of where the challenges for Ireland's labour market lie.

The Commission will continue support for Ireland's efforts and confirmed they will work hard to maintain their constructive co-operation.



If anything, the economic and financial events of recent months have highlighted the growing need for meaningful and targeted implementation of the 2007-2013 HCI OP. Aggressive engagement with the key beneficiaries identified under the HCI OP is now required in order that Ireland is in a position to avail fully of any future economic upturn.



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