

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING GUIDANCE NOTE

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment, lack of employment opportunities and loss of traditional employment opportunities is a characteristic of the landscape of many RAPID areas. These issues coupled with educational issues impact on the quality of life of the areas.

A number of agencies are involved in providing training and employment services locally, including FAS, Obair Local Employment Services, City & County Enterprise Boards, Partnerships, local community and voluntary groups, etc.

The purpose of this guidance note is to outline a mechanism whereby the agencies that participate in RAPID can make a useful contribution to developing responses to economic and social disadvantage that are based on the provision of supports to employment and training.

All elements of the content of this programme in any given year is contingent on the funds available.

This thematic programme is a pilot initiative and will be reviewed to ensure effectiveness and value.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING AND RAPID

One of RAPID's key objectives is the integration and improvement of the delivery of services to people experiencing different forms of economic and social disadvantage. Difficulty in accessing appropriate employment and training opportunities is a major cause of economic and social disadvantage, and the RAPID Employment & Training theme presents a valuable and timely opportunity for local agencies to work together in a cohesive manner to address the needs of disadvantaged urban communities.

Each RAPID area, under the leadership of FAS, will be expected to develop a local strategy that will focus on working with local service providers to address the needs of RAPID residents and will focus on the following:

- Improved employment prospects through the enhancement of the jobseeking and career development skills of unemployed people.
- Enhanced training outcomes for unemployed people and low-skilled workers.
- Increased enterprise development through capacity-building measures for potential entrepreneurs and support measures for growing enterprises.
- Increased social enterprise development through awareness-raising and capacity-building measures and support for new social enterprises.
- Improved linkages among employment and training support service providers.

Within RAPID areas, a number of marginalised groups are at risk of economic and social disadvantage through lack of access to employment and training opportunities. These groups are:

Drug misusers	Early school-leavers	Ex-prisoners
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Lone parents	Migrant workers	Older workers
People with disabilities	Travellers	Unemployed 18 to 25 year olds

Employment and Training sub-groups are invited to consider the needs of these marginalised groups in developing their strategies. Each sub-group is responsible for setting its own local objectives, and each individual agency is responsible for designing the actions that it will implement, but sub-groups may wish to consider the following points:

- Within the resources available, it is estimated that 30 to 50 people per annum from each RAPID area can be targeted effectively for participant-focused interventions.
- In the current economic climate, unemployed 18 to 25 year olds are a particular priority for delivery of actions by FAS.
- Other key groups may be targeted, based on local circumstances and evidence of need.

Overall, the work attempts to meet just two aims:

- To increase the number of RAPID residents who access training.
- To increase the number of RAPID residents who access employment.

RESULTS AND INDICATORS

SUB-THEME	RESULT	INDICATOR
Improved employment prospects	Growth of a culture of employment in RAPID areas.	Better provision of services by employment support agencies on an outreach basis in RAPID areas.
		Better knowledge of career options for workforce entrants due to availability of work experience/ shadowing initiatives.
	Development of job-seeking skills for RAPID residents.	Better jobseeking skills due to the availability of career development workshops for RAPID residents.
	Development of new service models for RAPID residents.	Provision of better career information and guidance to RAPID residents.
	Development of job access initiatives	Maintenance of existing levels of CE and JI schemes in RAPID areas
		Progression into unsubsidised employment for unemployed RAPID residents
		Prioritisation of RAPID residents for vacancies in CE and community training centres

Expanded social enterprise sector	<p>Growth of a social enterprise culture in RAPID areas</p> <p>Development of social enterprise skills</p> <p>Development of new social enterprises</p>	<p>Increased participation in volunteerism and social entrepreneurship initiatives by schools and students from RAPID areas.</p> <p>Provision of better social enterprise information and guidance to unemployed people and under-represented groups.</p> <p>Better provision of services by social enterprise support agencies on an outreach basis in RAPID areas.</p> <p>Better social enterprise skills due to the availability of social enterprise training in RAPID areas and among disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Development of new peer-to-peer networking initiatives</p> <p>Increased availability and take-up of individual mentoring and support</p> <p>Increased take-up of Community Services Programme in RAPID areas</p> <p>Increase in new social enterprises created in RAPID areas</p> <p>Increase in survival and success for social enterprises created in RAPID areas</p>
Improved linkages between employment support service providers	<p>Provision of integrated support services for RAPID residents</p> <p>Development of activation strategies for clients not being served effectively by service providers</p>	<p>Improved progression and follow-up for people who complete training programmes and employment schemes</p> <p>Development of case conference approaches among employment support service providers and other relevant agencies to identify appropriate support interventions for individual clients</p>

INPUTS

The core resources being made available to RAPID areas are those presented through the budgets of the local state agencies and Departments involved in service delivery within the employment and training context.

1. City & County Enterprise Boards

City and county enterprise boards provide a range of support mechanisms to assist the start-up, development and expansion of small businesses in the manufacturing and services sectors employing ten or less people. These include:

- Financial supports
 - Capital grants up to a maximum level of €75,000 are available for machinery and equipment purchases or for purchasing or altering business premises
 - Employment grants towards the cost of labour are available to incentivise job creation in new/expanding projects. A grant of up to €7,500 for each job, up to a maximum of 10 jobs, may be provided.
 - Feasibility grants may be provided to assist with the cost of necessary pre-start-up studies carried out for the purposes of assessing market interest in and demand for a proposed new product or service.
- Soft supports
 - Training: City and county enterprise boards offer a variety of training programmes to entrepreneurs, such as start-your-own-business programmes, management development courses, sales and marketing courses, financial management training, e-commerce and IT skills training, etc. Various women-in-business initiatives and networks are also in place with a view to encouraging higher female participation in entrepreneurial and business activity.
 - Mentoring: Mentoring programmes seek to match up the knowledge, skills, insights and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with small business owners who need practical and strategic one-to-one advice and guidance.

2. Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

- Community Services Programme
 - CSP supports community businesses and social enterprises to deliver local services and employment opportunities for particularly disadvantaged groups in society. Over 325 community organisations across Ireland are already funded under the programme, delivering services to many thousands of people and providing employment (full and part-time) to over 1,660 people. As a general principle 70% of CSP-funded workers in a project must be from designated target groups, i.e., unemployed persons, lone parents, people with disabilities, Travellers and drug misusers.
- Dormant Accounts Fund RAPID Additionality
 - In 2006 and 2007 funding was made available from the Dormant Accounts Fund to support priority projects in RAPID areas. It is anticipated that RAPID areas will again benefit from Dormant Accounts support in 2008, subject to government approval. €7.5m was allocated specifically to RAPID areas in 2007 and it is expected that a similar amount will be ringfenced for use by RAPID AITs in 2008. AITs may find it appropriate to target some of these funds on actions

eligible for Dormant Accounts funding within this (or other) strategic themes.

- Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme
 - The LDSIP is a series of measures that are designed to counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion. The Services for the Unemployed measure of the LDSIP supports individuals in accessing suitable and sustainable employment opportunities and does this through targeting actions in the areas of education, training, work experience, job placement, enterprise, self-employment and social economy.

3. Department of Social & Family Affairs

- Activation and Family Support Programme
 - The objective of the Activation and Family Support Programme (AFSP) is to provide funding for programmes to assist individuals and families to enhance their employability through education, training and personal development opportunities and to improve their quality of life. DSFA invites applications from groups such as community groups, FRCs, Area Partnerships, etc that have identified needs in relation to social welfare customers in terms of personal development, education, training, parenting, literacy/ numeracy, life skills, budgeting etc as a suite of identified needs.
- The Back to Education Allowance
 - BTEA is a scheme for unemployed people, lone parents and people with disabilities who are getting certain payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The allowance can be paid to people who wish to do or take approved second or third level courses of education. Participants get a standard rate of payment which is not means tested.
- The Back to Work Allowance
 - BTWA is a scheme for long-term unemployed people, and recipients of certain payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Recipients continue to receive a reducing proportion of their previous social welfare payment on a sliding scale for three years after they enter a new job.
- The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
 - BTWEA encourages long-term unemployed people, and recipients of certain payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs to take up self-employment. People participating in the scheme continue to receive a reducing proportion of their previous social welfare payment on a sliding scale for four years after they establish a new enterprise.

4. FÁS

- Community-based services
 - Community Employment (CE) and Job Initiative are employment programmes primarily aimed at the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups. CE offers participants an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary, fixed-term basis. In this way, local organisations help to develop their area by sponsoring programmes, typically in the areas of social services, healthcare, heritage, arts, culture, tourism, sport, environment and education.

- The Local Training Initiative is a programme where community groups can set up a project aimed at providing training and community services locally. Training is delivered across a broad range of areas, e.g., childcare, horticulture, public health and genealogy. The aim of the programme is to provide flexible training opportunities to help people gain qualifications and progress to further training/education or into employment.
- Community Training Centres are independent community-based organisations funded by FÁS. They look after the training and employment needs of early school leavers, primarily aged between 16 and 21.
- Job Clubs
 - Job Clubs provide training to assist participants who are ready for work, to develop skills which they can use to find a job. The training topics range from health and safety to interview techniques and last up to 5 weeks. Job Club participants retain their social welfare allowances during the training modules and receive €20 per week to help in dealing with additional costs.
- Obair – Local Employment Service Network
 - Operating under the auspices of the partnership companies, the Local Employment Service Network (LESN) acts as the gateway to the full range of opportunities which are available to enable a long-term unemployed person enter/re-enter the labour market. The services provided by LESN are tailored to the needs of each individual client and the local environment within which they operate. Services provided include guidance, training, education and employment supports and are made available through a network of Contact Points.
- Training
 - Apprenticeships: Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which people are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland. The main craft trades have been designated by FÁS and come within the scope of the Statutory Apprenticeship system.
 - One Step Up: One Step Up aims to encourage employee training to increase employees' competency levels and promote an ethos of lifelong learning in the workplace.
 - Social Inclusion & Equal Opportunities: FÁS is involved in supporting key stakeholders to develop programmes and services that address the needs of targeted groups. These include members of the traveller community, lone parents, early school leavers, ex-prisoners, migrant workers and women wishing to return to the workforce.

LINKAGES WITH OTHER STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Health:

As health services policy continues to develop the provision of healthcare and support services at local community level by providers in the community and voluntary sector, it may be opportune to explore further the potential to develop new training and employment initiatives in certain sectors. In the past, a range of programmes have successfully piloted projects in areas such as eldercare, primary care and community health.

2. Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour:

A number of initiatives currently being undertaken in this area, such as Community-Based CCTV and Community Graffiti Reduction, have the potential to created spin-off employment in support of the objectives of these programmes,

e.g. CCTV monitoring, community arts projects, etc. Employment and training initiatives could also be targeted at people that might be likely to engage in crime or anti-social behaviour.

3. Family Support:

Significant improvements in a family's ability to establish and maintain a stable home environment are likely to occur as a result of productive participation in employment and training initiatives. New initiatives that accommodate the diverse needs of families, e.g., by making provisions for care responsibilities, by offering family-friendly scheduling, etc., will facilitate improved levels of participation and social inclusion.

4. Physical Environment:

As with the community safety theme, significant opportunities exist to carry out employment and training activities in conjunction with capital investment projects and community infrastructure development that may take place under the physical environment theme, e.g., ongoing maintenance and landscaping work in public spaces, etc.

5. Youth Support:

Initiatives that target early school-leavers and other young people with a view to improving their levels of participation in the workforce will also contribute to the youth support objectives of RAPID by providing support to young people that will enable them to maximise their potential.

6. Education:

There needs to be linkages between the formal and informal education sectors so that no person leaves the education and training sector without skills to gain employment. This is important in the areas of literacy and numeracy and prevention of early school leaving. There needs to be a holistic approach to education/training and employment thus decreasing the chance of long term unemployment, inter-generational unemployment and poverty.