



# Legal Education for All Project [Draft] Project Action Plan

May 2005



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



**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND:**  
helping develop employment by  
promoting employability, the business  
spirit and equal opportunities and  
investing in human resources

## **Summary of the project**

The project will engage disadvantaged communities with the legal system and equip them to understand, use and work within it by implementing a series of actions devised to facilitate the engagement of the target groups and develop their access routes to legal education and information.

A core group of up to 20 participants will be recruited and linked to law centres where they will avail of intense high support processes in order to fast track to legal education

Modules of learning will be designed and delivered to community organisations with the aim of providing accredited modules through informal routes

A schools law course will be designed and piloted in local secondary schools with the aim of heightening awareness among disadvantaged communities and areas to the possibility of laws studies as a real career option.

The Transnational element of the project will work with Slovakian partners to build solidarity on a range of issues and to exchange modules of learning which will be jointly delivered to project participants.

The North – South dimension of the project will be used to develop opportunities for exchange of information and to make links with accrediting bodies and mainstream providers to benefit the target participants.

## **Overall Management and Organisational Structure**

**Project Name:** Legal Education for All Project [LEAP]

**1.1 Name of Development Partnership:** LEAP Partnership

**1.2 Name of Designated Partner Organisation**

Irish Traveller Movement  
4/5 Eustace Street  
Dublin 2

Phone: 6796577  
Fax 6796578  
Email: itmtrav@indigo.ie  
Established 1990  
Legal Status: Registered Charity

Number of Full time and Part time Staff: 10

Type of Organisation: NGO

Nominated person with overall responsibility for implementing the Project

Elizabeth Davidson Project Coordinator

Financial Controller for the Project: Catherine Joyce ITM Coordinator

### 1.3 Details of partners organisations:

Ballymun Community Law Centre

Address: 34 Shangan Road  
Ballymun  
Dublin 9

Telephone: +3531 8625805

Fax:

Email: [fmurphy@bclc.ie](mailto:fmurphy@bclc.ie)

Type of organisation: Non – Profit Community organisation

Contact Person: Frank Murphy

#### **Role within the Development Partnership:**

Ballymun Community Law Centre has a long history of working with disadvantage in the Ballymun area. This has resulted in a strong working relationship with the local community seeking to address issues in law and also to empower the community to understand their situation and to seek the tools with which to redress imbalances

**Address:**

**Community Legal Resource**  
10 River Lawns  
Kill  
Co Kildare

Telephone:

045877750

Fax:

Email:

dellis@indigo.ie

Type of organisation:

private not-for-profit

Contact person

Dave Ellis

**Role within the Development Partnership**

Community Legal Resource [CLR] is a legal resource that meets the needs of community voluntary and not-for-profit organisations and agencies in an inclusive and empowering way through the provision of information, support, training and research. These skills will be brought to the project at a number of levels to facilitate the project to maximise the mainstreaming of its objectives.

## **Trinity College Law School**

Address: Trinity College Dublin 1  
Telephone:  
Fax:  
Email: gwhyte@tcd.ie  
Type of organisation:  
Contact person: Gerry Whyte

### **Role within Development Partnership:**

Trinity Law School has experience of the supporting and facilitating access programmes within the University and will lend its expertise to the project. In addition will provide supports to participants and also aid in the design and development/delivery of learning modules.

## FAS

National Training and Employment Authority  
Poppintree Training Centre  
Finglas  
Dublin 11

Telephone : 01 8140296  
Website address [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)  
Contact Person Ann Gilton  
Type of Organisation Semi-State Agency

### Role in this Development Partnership :

- Use FAS extensive experience to support and facilitate this project at all stages
- FAS Traineeship programme can provide advice and support
- FAS can provide training allowances as required
- FAS will support the mainstreaming of the learning of the project both during and after the duration of the project
- FAS will bring the commitment and experience of working with the target groups to bear on the Project

## **1.5 Managing the Project**

The Development Partnership will act as the effective management committee for the project. The Development Partnership will meet between six and eight times a year to oversee the development planning and implementation of the project. It is envisaged that as the project rolls out that different players will assume different roles according to their interest and expertise. In addition there will be representation on the DP by participants of the project, selected from a User's Forum which will be established in order to achieve empowerment. There will be training/facilitated sessions for the Development Partnership throughout the project so that decisions and roles are re-evaluated in a consensus framework to enhance the process.

### **Increasing membership of Development Partnership**

It will be possible by mutual consent to include additional partners to the Development Partnership at any time during the lifetime of the Project.

As the EQUAL Coordinator and staff including the financial manager are employees of the Irish Traveller Movement, responsibility for staff development, pay and conditions will be the responsibility of ITM's management committee. To this end supervision and support for the Coordinator will be provided directly by the Coordinator of the Irish Traveller Movement

## **1.6 Advisory Committee**

A voluntary advisory committee will be established to comment and assist in all aspects of the project. The members of this committee will consist of relevant professional and community and statutory bodies who will ultimately be influential in the mainstreaming of the learning of the project: It is envisaged that this group will be fluid in that members will reflect the geographical areas from which participants are identified in order that they may maximise the support and linkage to mainstream opportunities in their areas. Target members for this group include : The Law Society, The Human

Rights Commission , Comhairle, The Legal Aid Board, the Department of Justice, Independent Law Centres, The Dublin Solicitors Bar Association, The Higher Education Authority etc. An Equality sub-group will be formed from the advisory group to monitor this aspect of the work.

## **1.7 Project Coordinator**

The coordinator of the project will have overall responsibility for the daily operation of the project – including all the necessary administration. The coordinator will work with the financial manager of the Irish Traveller Movement in the production of financial reports and detailed budgets for the project

The Coordinator will be accountable to the Development Partnership and as a result of this will

- Produce reports on the project
- Receive advice and direction on any issues arising or other potential development that could inform the project
- Discuss the best strategies to mainstream the learning

The Coordinator will facilitate the operation of the advisory group and provide the necessary support to ensure proper documentation of the work in progress.

The Coordinator will ensure that all necessary documentation and reporting requirements of the Project are met in a timely manner, and ensure that the Development Partnership is informed of events that arise during the course of the Project. It will also be part of the responsibility of the Coordinator to represent the Development Partnership at events at programme level in Ireland and abroad.

The staff of the project will be the Coordinator, administrative assistant and trainers as outlined in non-financial tables annexed hereto. Volunteers and lawyers working on a *pro-bono* basis will also become part of the project.

Flow chart

## 2.1 Objectives

The project will aim to develop access routes to Legal education for students from ethnic minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged areas and to inform and develop in those communities an engage and provide high-level support to a small group [20] of participants to enable them to advance to or take part in a course of legal education and training. The project will also deliver

High university points, which creates a perception that one has to be of a superior intelligence to study law.

The idea that legal training is only availed of by a limited affluent sector of society that is already representative of the legal profession as a whole.

A lack of participation by the groups targeted means that those communities have no familiarity with the legal profession, dealing with the legal profession or accessing legal training. In relation to the proposal objective and context, an additional reason for legal training being perceived as inaccessible could be that the law is often seen as a hostile force in disadvantaged communities inasmuch as it is often the criminal law that members of such communities encounter. The partner organisations will provide direct contact with legal professionals, legal training facilities, professional bodies representing the legal profession (law society, Bar Council and legal executives) promote awareness of legal training, and the relevance of legal development within the community. Participants will receive intensive support and mentoring through the participating law centres, complemented by opportunities for gaining experience with legal practitioners. This 'high support' approach will address the sense of isolation that non-traditional sectors of the community could experience in formal legal training. Also the question of access, and high university points will be dealt with by creating alternative routes into legal training that take into account the background of each participant. Legal training is often perceived as inaccessible for a myriad of reasons:

Socio-economic factors:

Financial: The common factor between all the groups targeted is their socio economic background, one of the indicators of which is lack of financial resources.

Legal training can be prolonged, and financially unviable without private means or support.

The project will address this lack of financial resources, by ensuring the participants are financially supported throughout the training period, and also by providing access to existing resources such as work experience and mentoring within the partner organisations that would otherwise be inaccessible. A variety of training courses will be developed to allow participants a choice in how far they want to go at any one time, while always ensuring that each course will provide a qualification that will give them access to the legal profession at some level.

Lack of formal qualifications: access to legal training like other academic courses is largely based on academic merit, which is often not achieved in non-typical communities.

The DP will be promoting and facilitating access taking into account a broad based view of ability including commitment and willingness to engage with the training, while also ensuring the ability of each participant to access a form of education that is most suitable to their achievement level. The participants themselves in conjunction with the DP will determine the access point. The DP will thereafter develop an access route for further academic education or professional training when participants feel confident enough and have acquired enough training and experience to move to the next level.

Present lack of integrated approach to accessing the legal professions by non-typical communities: Most existing access programmes to third level target specific schools and universities, but do not target specific communities of academic courses. While this approach may address the lack of diversity in third level education, it does not result in diversity in certain professions.

## **Policy Context/ Rationale for the Project**

The project will seek to address elements set out in the National Employment Action Plan under section 1.3.3 Social Cohesion and Inclusion and section 2.7.7 Travellers of the Employment Action Plan in particular

- Create new opportunities for unemployed people and for marginalized groups to access employment and training
- Ensure that those in low pay have access to higher incomes and the opportunity to progress to better paid and more highly skilled employment
- An increase in the Traveller participation rate at 3rd level institutions

The project will

- Open new areas of employment to people from backgrounds that have not traditionally pursued opportunities in the legal area.
- By expanding opportunities for ethnic minorities and low-income students to undertake legal training the project will provide a practical route of entry to the legal profession
- By providing pre-law course training, and providing employment placement assistance, it is envisaged that Participants from non-traditional background will have greater access to new areas of employment

The project in its aim objectives and content is based on addressing many of the priority policy areas Equal seeks to address. The project is, we believe, the first attempt by the independent legal sector to develop employment opportunities for communities experiencing racism, poverty, and social exclusion within a sector where there is very little representation in the legal profession, or which has mostly negative experiences of the legal system.

The Independent community Legal sectors exist to address many of the problems created through racism, poverty and Social Exclusion. The provision of legal and mediation services to many of the most marginalised communities.

## **Categories of people the project will impact on**

1. The Traveller community
2. Geographically defined areas that traditionally experience poverty and social exclusion

## TABLES

## **Project Actions/Strategy**

### **A. Overall strategy**

Section 2.1 analysed the range of factors causing the inequality and discrimination to be addressed by the project. In order to address those factors two elements will underpin all aspects of the project:

- (1) The project will be delivered at community level by organisations operating within the community.
- (2) Mentoring and other necessary support will be provide to all participants in the project in a structured and planned way

### **B. Multi-level approach**

The factors identified in 2.1 point to the need for a multi-level approach to the project. The participants will have a wide variety of skills and requirements. In order to deal with this diversity it is planned that the project will offer a selection of options so that the participants will be able to have their requirements met at an appropriate level. It is further envisaged that participants entering the project at a particular level will have the opportunity and support to move to other options as and when this suits their needs. The options that will be available are:

- (a) A diploma level course which could also provide an entry to a law degree course
- (b) Accredited law courses within the local community
- (c) Supporting participants to take up existing courses, for example, the FAS legal secretary traineeship, FETAC Law courses in VECs etc
- (d) Fast track legal module
- (e) Pilot school law course which would recognise that in the long term the factors in terms of perception discussed in 2.1 need to be addressed in the schools.

### **C. Partnership approach**

The success of the project will very much depend on the utilisation of all available support, skills, and expertise. The project will therefore adopt a strategy of seeking the assistance and support of and working in partnership will all the key players involved in legal services, education / training and community development. For example, the project will engage with:

- (a) The governing bodies of the branches of the legal profession, i.e. the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland and the Bar Council
- (b) Third level institutions and academics with particular knowledge or experience that would be of benefit to the project
- (c) Relevant Government Departments including Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Education
- (d) Relevant State agencies including FAS and the Equality Authority
- (e) Accreditation bodies, FETAC
- (f) Relevant local community and voluntary organisations including local area partnerships
- (g) Organisations at both EU and international levels which would have knowledge or expertise that would be of benefit to the project

The Main actions of the project will be to :

1. Organise community information and consultation day
2. Agree Strategic Plan and implement plan
3. Devise special para-legal diploma course
4. Devise mentoring programme
5. Organise local accredited law courses
6. Arrange participation on available courses with mentoring
7. Design and pilot schools law course
8. Legal educational and vocational counselling to be introduced
9. Design and pilot fast track legal module
10. Engage with partners
11. Consultation procedures to be put in place
12. Consider structural and legislative reform proposals and any research necessitated

13. Implement evaluation procedure and quality management system
14. Devise Training module
15. Offer support to local teachers and schools
16. Ensure involvement of all legal and educational stakeholders in the process
17. Independent monitor to ensure progress and effective evaluation

## **Overcoming Barriers:**

### **Childcare**

In the development of the project every effort will be made to ensure that childcare is not a barrier for potential participants

### **Literacy**

Literacy is a major issue within the Traveller community and amongst disadvantaged groups who may have little formal education and individual supports will be made available to those participants who need to improve their levels of literacy in order to fully achieve their potential.

### **Transport**

It is envisaged that the reasonable transport costs of the participants be covered

### **Disability**

The Development Partnership is committed to the realisation of Equality for all individuals and groups experiencing exclusion and discrimination. To this end an equality statement will form part of the DP agreement

The project overall will strive to ensure that its meetings are accessible to disabled people.

### **Linguistic/Cultural Barriers**

As part of the induction process for participants and Development Partnership anti-racism training will be delivered in order to address cultural differences. It is not envisaged that there would be language barriers in the project in Ireland but for the Transnational element there will be translators provided.

### **Other Barriers**

Discrimination is the major barrier to Travellers educational inclusion. Its negative impact on Travellers self-belief and their mistrust of an educational system which fails to acknowledge them Cannot be underestimated.

The project will be seeking to change policy and practise which is informant by the dominant culture's understanding of the 'norm' which effectively excludes all those who are outside of this experience. Equality and awareness raising training will be an integral part of the project at all levels.

## **Mainstreaming /Multiplier**

The DP realises that for the project to have any lasting value, the objectives of the project need to be adopted by the various agencies targeted by the project, that is the legal professions representative bodies' government agencies, and third level education providers. In order to achieve this the structures of the DP will engage the participation of these bodies, so that they have a role in the planning and development of the project, and also through the delivery of training, recognition of qualifications, and the provision of work experience to participants.

The project being concerned with legal education as the first step to opening up employment in the legal sector, will work with the HEA, to inform their equity of access to higher education policy, as this is the main forum for developing access programmes into third level education.

### **Dissemination:**

Brochures, newsletters, e-mail groups, and a media strategy will all be used as methods of bringing the work of the project to a broader audience, and will also assist in creating networks.

The partners will all use the various fora that they already participate in as a platform to disseminate information, and invite wider support for the project.

Policy seminars will be used not only to disseminate information but also as ideal networking opportunities. These seminars will be targeted at all the stakeholders in the legal system, such as State legal services, private practitioners, and their representative bodies, to explore the value of diversity in the legal system and to develop strategies to further the objectives of the project in a mainstream context. The purpose of these seminars is to raise awareness of the project and to open up opportunities for potential employment and/or further training for participants.

A piece of research will be commissioned to document the life of the project, the experiences of the participants, documenting the barriers and also the affect of the intervention of the project on their career paths. This will form a major part of the dissemination the learning of the project and prove a useful tool in the mainstreaming activities.

## **Empowerment**

### **Structure:**

The management structure of the project is designed to give target communities and participants a strong role in designing and implementing the project. The steering committee will have representatives from both the community and the participants, so they are constantly informed of the progress of the project and can influence its development. Ballymun Community Law Centre, and ITM are run by management groups drawn from their own communities, and therefore ultimately are always accountable to those communities, the democratic structure of the individual partners making up the DP will also transfer into the structure of the DP itself, and provide another conduit to influence the progress of the project.

### **Practices:**

All the partners and participants will be invited to take part in planning and implementing the project, through the management structure of the project as mentioned above. All the information in relation to the project will be disseminated through newsletter and reports, and the project will distribute information through its partners and networks within the target communities, and invite feedback by maintaining a communications system consisting of phone and e-mail. Information and consultation will be two of the guiding principles that will inform the DP, thus ensuring that the communities targeted will have every opportunity to influence within the structures of the DP, and also

### **Actions:**

All the activities of the programme will be drawn from the strategic statement for the Development Partnership which will inform its work throughout the project. This means that the actions will be largely shaped and belong to the target communities, and in particular be based on the needs of those communities. This participation will be maintained throughout the project, through the supervision of the steering committee. The participants in the project will be drawn from the target communities and will also have a voice on the steering committee.

## INNOVATION

### **Gender Mainstreaming:**

In recruiting participants, a clear demographic has already been identified, however the DP will be active in ensuring that the participants are not only representative of communities but also other diverse aspects of our society. The Equality sub group of the steering group will be specifically tasked with making recommendations and devising strategies to ensure that all possible inequalities are taken into account, including any imbalances in gender participation, but also looking at other factors that can cause double inequality such as age and having a disability.

This will involve:

- At the beginning of the project this sub group will work with staff to draft an equal opportunities policy for the recruitment of participants on the course.
- A number of strategies will be formulated that address factors such as childcare, family life, and financial resources, that can have a inhibiting effect on the participation of many women in the labour market and education, and to look at ways that the design and delivery of educational programmes can be as flexible as possible, without compromising the quality of the training being delivered.

The Budget put aside to support participants will be calculated to take into account the strategies referred to above.

The Equality sub group will have an ongoing role in equality proofing the various activities undertaken by the DP

The DP will liaise with other groups active in addressing inequalities within the communities targeted to seek their input into the development of a Statement of Strategy, and ongoing areas of work. For example the National Traveller Women's forum is a source of expertise in relation to gender issues within the Traveller Community, and the National Women's' Council is a source of such expertise in the wider community.

## **Transnationality Objectives Actions and Outcomes**

The Main Objectives of the Transnational partnership are:

The exchange of learning and best practice in tackling educational and socio-economic disadvantage

To develop and deliver training modules to inform and empower participants

To provide opportunities for Transnational experience and learning to participants from both countries

To increase knowledge and skills in staff of the issues particularly facing minority ethnic groups

The place of the law centre as a tool for community development in a local setting is recognised and supported by the State, and this model would be useful to the project. Also professional legal education in the UK has been deregulated to an extent to make it more accessible to a wider group of participants, this could also provide lessons in the Irish Context.

The DP will work through its established European networks during the preparatory phase to research this area further.

As the concept behind LEAP has no precedent in the Irish context, the DP will seek to establish Transnational partnerships with groups who have sought to diversify participation in particular labour markets, and in particular the legal profession, and to learn from their experiences. For example the European Roma Rights Centre in Hungary has for many years been involved in providing legal training to Roma advocates across Europe, as well as providing support to Roma undertaking legal training. Their experience in this area would be very valuable to LEAP.

By bringing together projects with an interest in legal empowerment of socially excluded communities, LEAP will be able to access a network of support and resources, which will assist the project through its implementation phase.

### **Actions**

There will be 5 Transnational meetings. The purpose of these meetings will be to exchange information and ideas on the creation of sustainable opportunities for employment and access to further education for those from the target groups of the respective projects. Active participation will be

sought from each partner in the development of ideas and programmes. The meetings will also be used to develop networks for further action and lobby for necessary changes to realise a truly inclusive Europe for nomadic populations.

Study visits will be organised for participants from each country to travel and take part in common training which will be developed jointly by the partners.

**Outputs and overall value:**

Training modules will be developed with the aim of informing and empowering on Human Rights issues in the respective countries, these will be made available in two languages.

It is envisaged that the work of each project will provide challenge and support in each others work.

It will be particularly interesting to contrast the experience of Roma in Slovakia with the experience of Travellers in Ireland from both a Traveller and settled viewpoint.

Transnational Partner Details:

The Kolping Foundation

Info here

### **North – South links**

Informal links have been established with Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group [BTEDG] and also with Queens University which will be explored and developed during the lifetime of the project. BTEDG forms part of the West Belfast forum and has links to Traveller Groups throughout Northern Ireland.

Links with Queens University are with a new programme in leadership which will create a link with other faculties. The project will aim through mainstreaming to have access to legal education in Northern Ireland opened to a more diverse group.