

Submission to Equality Authority Agency re: Three Year Strategic Plan

We recommend four priorities for inclusion in the Equality Authority's strategic plan for the next three years:

1. The feminisation of poverty to be addressed from four perspectives:

- Lack of recognition of women's care work
- Lack of recognition by employers of women's atypical work
- Failure to provide adequate individual pensions rights for older women.
- Trapping young lone parents in poverty in not providing affordable, accessible childcare.

2. Social exclusion to be address from three perspectives

- Adequate income 9.4% of population is consistently poor; 23% is not at risk of poverty (SILC, 2003). Increase social welfare rates to 30% of Gross Average Industrial Earnings by 2007
- Working to ensure greater Government spending on social inclusion, from the present 16.5% to 27% over the next decade
- Promotion of an adequate minimum wage, linked to increased cost of living so as to prevent the phenomenon of the working poor and to protect a basic standard of living.
- Focus on the eradication of child poverty by showing the present reality of 66,000 children living in consistent poverty and working to promote strategies, structures and resources to address this issue.

3. Discrimination to be addressed from the perspective of:

- *Asylum seekers/refugees*
 - ❖ Legislation – educate people to its existence, e.g. New Employment Act 2004, and work for implementation of such legislation
 - ❖ Use the National Action Plan Against Racism as the main framework
 - ❖ Images presented in media: use of factual not emotive language
 - ❖ Inclusion: access to employment, services, education and all that enables active participation in society.
- *Travellers*
 - ❖ Education - access to primary school education that enables social inclusion and counteracts ghettoization of primary schools that cater for members of the travelling community.

- ❖ Social interaction - ensure that public services such as hotels, restaurants, public houses etc, give fair access to travellers for social interaction in the community in which they live.
- ❖ Housing – support travelling families in obtaining housing that suits them and allows dignity in living.

4. Disability to be addressed from the perspective of:

- Access to employment – 80% of people with disability are unemployed; many work in unsuitable and difficult physical work situations.
- Accessible transport for people with disability in rural areas.

Communication: A specific recommendation to the Equality Authority Agency:

- Develop a system and method of communication that will inform people on the grounds of the services it offers, the information brochures/leaflets it produces and the supports available to individuals under the eight grounds.
- That this process be directed especially towards people living in poorer areas of cities and towns and rural areas of the country.
- That literature be made accessible to those who struggle with literacy difficulties.