

Policy Bulletin #2 **2010 The European Year Against Poverty**

Foreword

This Policy Bulletin is one of a series focusing on issues close to the heart of delivering projects under the European Social Fund (ESF). At current estimates for the 2007-2013 ESF Programming Period, London will benefit from £371 million ESF to be matched £ for £ from domestic public sources. This series of Briefings will seek to identify and understand some of the essentially "European" characteristics of ESF in becoming part of the general landscape of public provision.

In this Bulletin, we shall consider **2010, The European Year Against Poverty**.

The Issue at European Union Level

Since 1983, the European Union has annually launched a "European Year" awareness campaign to inform people and to promote public dialogue. These Years also encourage national governments to focus public attention on key themes. So, for example, whilst 2010 has been designated the European Year for Combating Poverty & Social Exclusion, the target, for 2011, is Volunteering and, for 2012, Inter-Generational Action.

According to the European Commission press release, the rationale behind 2010 is:

"Poverty and exclusion do not only strike at the well-being of individuals, their ability to take an active part in the life of society; they also impair economic development. The Union wishes to reaffirm the importance of collective responsibility in combating poverty; this doubtless involves the decision-makers, but it also calls for a response from the actors in the public and private sectors. Among its aims, the European Year will seek to give a voice to those who daily experience poverty and social exclusion."

In the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on this Year, there is clear targeting of ESF:

"The Commission will ensure that the activities financed during the European Year complement other relevant Community initiatives and activities closely linked to social inclusion, such as for example the Structural Funds, in particular ESF"

The European Year will focus on the following themes:

- child poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty;
- an inclusive labour market;
- lack of access to education and training;
- gender dimension of poverty;
- access to basic services;
- overcoming discrimination and promoting the integration of immigrants and the social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities;
- addressing the needs of disabled people and other vulnerable groups.

The Issue at UK Level

In planning the European Year activities, the 27 Member States will each adapt these themes to the national, regional and local situation and challenges, including considerations of territorial cohesion. Stakeholder involvement and participation will be mainstreamed throughout all the priorities. In implementing the European Year activities,

the Commission and the Member States will take into account the different ways in which women and men experience poverty and social exclusion. They will also ensure that the gender dimension is mainstreamed throughout the European Year priorities with a view to promoting gender equality.

In early discussions prompted by the Department for Work & Pensions amongst stakeholders, the UK programme of activity is aiming to contribute to the broader objectives of the Year through:

- **Raising awareness** of the causes, prevalence and consequences of poverty and social exclusion, and UK and EU strategies and policy that aim to tackle these issues
- **Promoting and facilitating engagement** and participation of a broad range of actors who have a role to play in tackling poverty and social exclusion, including business, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), people experiencing poverty and the organisations that represent them at a local, regional and national level
- **Ensuring a lasting legacy** from the Year ~ sharing good practice, knowledge and effective structures that facilitate ongoing dialogue between relevant actors.

The DWP National Programme for the European Year, as submitted for approval to the European Commission, is undertaking a range of preparatory activities in 2009 to raise awareness and mobilising active support across the public, private and VCS sectors. There is the possibility of a series of **Roadshows** during the Autumn of 2009.

For 2010, there is an option to invite regional bids for activity. Bids would be for up to £30k per region seeking a variety of innovative activities to address one or more aspects of the poverty and social exclusion agenda. Types of bids likely to succeed include:

- A conference involving People Experiencing Poverty, and those facing social exclusion
- A series of workshops, seminars or focus groups targeting end-users of services provided at all levels of government to review what's working and what is not
- Activity which includes the voices of young people
- Activity which seeks to galvanise public opinion, such as a celebration of the International Day of Older People (1 October) or the International Day of Poverty (17 October)

Additionally, there will be a significant portion of the budget inviting bids for programmes of activity at the grassroots level. The Draft National Programme proposes that bids are invited to deliver activities spread across the UK, aligned to one of the main thematic areas outlined: **socially excluded adults; child poverty; working age adults, particularly those suffering severe deprivation; older people.**

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