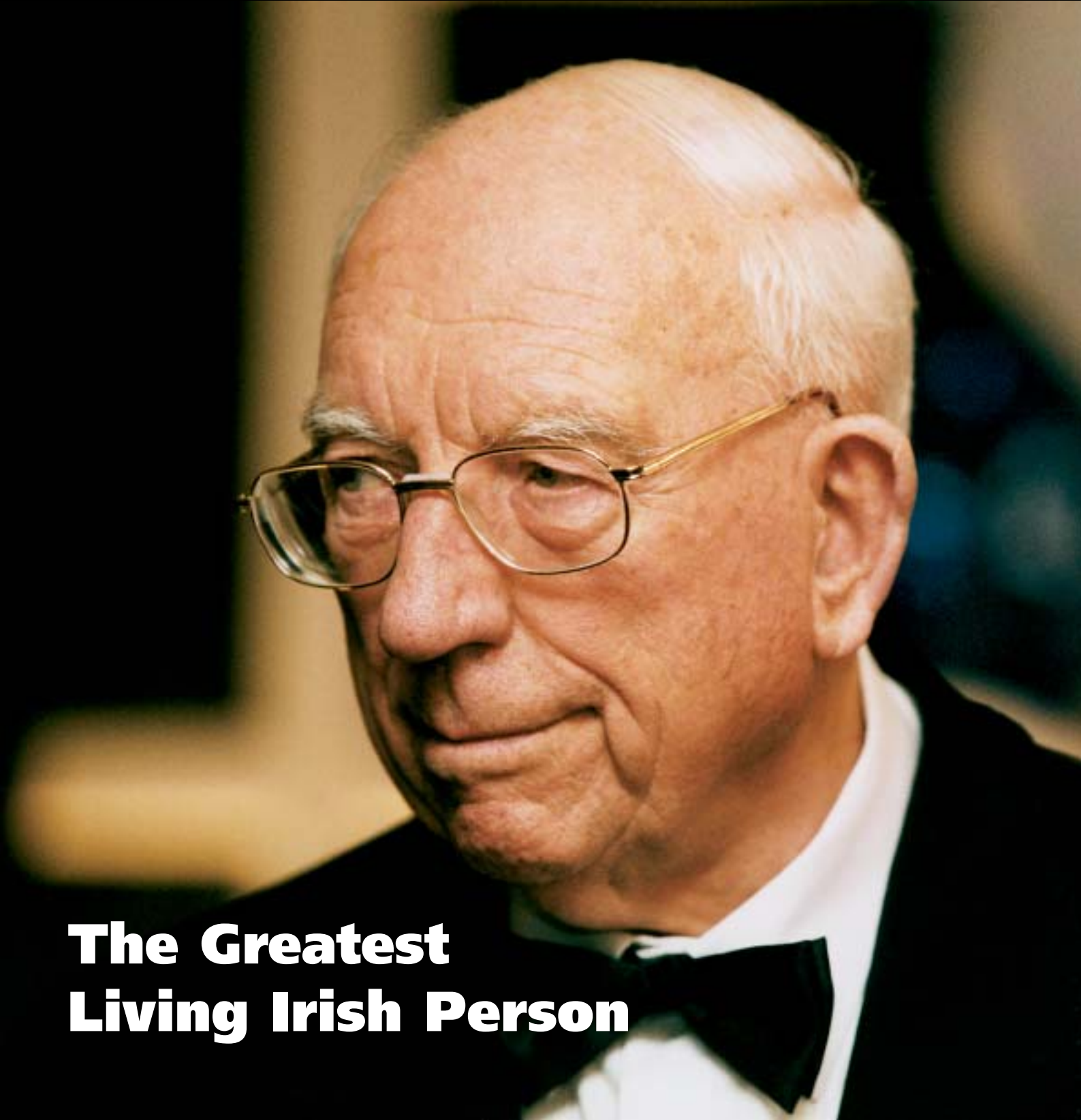


Rehab NEWS
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**The Greatest
Living Irish Person**



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Illness and injury now represent a greater cost to the economy and to individual workers than any other redundancies.

An international conference organised as part of Rehab's Workforce Plus initiative was told that thousands of jobs are in jeopardy in Ireland because of illness or injury in the workplace.

Rehab Group's Director of Research and Innovation, Dr Donal McAnaney, told the conference, titled "Jobs in Jeopardy, Protecting the Workability of Ill and Injured Workers", that over 20,000 Irish employees have been out of work and on short-term disability benefit for over 12 months. Some 16,000 of these workers are in real danger of losing their jobs, he said.

"Illness and injury represent a greater cost to the economy and to the individual worker in terms of jobs at risk than any other redundancies," declared Dr McAnaney.

He told the conference, which was addressed by a number of international experts, that time was the enemy for many absent from their jobs through illness and injury. If a worker was absent for six months there was only



Threat to jobs

a 50% chance of a return to work. That declined to a 20% chance after one year and reduced again to a 10% chance of successful return to work after two years absence.

"This is the hidden catastrophe that is affecting Irish workers, hindering the profitability of Irish companies and burdening the taxpayer through increased welfare

payments."

Dr McAnaney said a study of disability management in six EU countries showed Ireland does not compare well with other nations. "Part of the problem is the lack of awareness amongst employers and insurers as to what can be done and what constitutes good practice. But another difficulty is the ambiguity of



Left: At the Workforce Plus “Jobs in Jeopardy” conference in the Westbury Hotel were Minister of State, Tom Kitt TD, and Beverley Webster, Workforce Plus.

Above: Dr Donal McAnaney addressing delegates at the conference.

responsibility for the early rehabilitation of ill and injured workers. It is not clear whether such a response is the responsibility of welfare or labour affairs,” he said. Opening the conference, Minister of State Tom Kitt told delegates that the government will spend over €400 million on invalidity pension payments this year alone. “This is a huge amount of money to be paid out to people who are still of working age. Workforce Plus has recognised the cost that this imposes, not just on the State, but also on employers in terms of loss of productivity and to the individual in terms of their self esteem,” said the Minister.

The Minister said the changing nature of work today and the increased use of technology means a person who acquires a disability should not be regarded as permanently incapable of working. All it

may require is some flexibility from their employer to re-integrate them into the workforce. “Bearing in mind the cost of recruiting and training new workers, it is in the interests of employers to retain experienced workers, if at all possible. FÁS is introducing a new Employee Retention Grant which will provide employers with an opportunity to re-train workers who acquire a disability in the course of their working lives, to enable them to remain in their existing job, or to re-train for another job within the same company.”

Employers who wish to avail of Disability Awareness Training in their workplace can avail of a grant from FÁS, which covers up to 90% of the cost, the Minister said. FÁS also administers Workplace Adaptation grants, which provide assistance towards the cost of mak-

ing alterations to the workplace, or for purchasing a piece of specialist equipment to facilitate a person with a disability.

Workforce Plus was established by the Rehab Group to create a healthier and more productive Irish workforce. It addresses the growing rate of occupational accidents and ill-health in Ireland and the fact that prevention programmes and support systems for enabling an earlier return to work do not exist. Workforce Plus assists companies and those who are ill or injured with a co-ordinated approach to rehabilitation and addresses the ‘gap’ in provision of services to these members of the workforce.

For further information contact Keith O’Malley at: Tel: 01 272 3400, or email: workforceplus@rehab.ie

A new Rehab Foundation enterprise in partnership with FÁS aims to redress an imbalance rarely covered in the news - the lack of people with disabilities in the media.



Can you remember the last time you saw a person with a disability presenting a TV programme, a news report, or even participating in a TV debate on an issue that had nothing to do with their basic rights?

Sadly, the answer is probably no. And what's worse is that the situation is hardly any better across all forms of broadcast and print media in this country.

The fact is that although an estimated 350,000 Irish people – or 10 per cent of the population – have a disability, only a handful have ever been able to break in to a career in journalism, or other influential media jobs.

In an effort to help redress this imbalance, Rehab Foundation has initiated a social economy employment programme in partnership with FÁS which aims to

Making the headlines

unlock the doors barring access for people with disabilities, as well as others from marginalised groups to jobs in the Irish media.

Ten people have already been recruited from all over the country to participate in the programme which gets underway in January for an initial three year period. According to project manager, Katriona Burke, the enterprise is based on training through distance learning in

all of the skills the participants will require to build successful careers in any branch of print or broadcast journalism. These range from research and interviewing techniques, to written skills and radio or television presentation.

This will be co-ordinated by programme tutor, Dan Dwyer, who previously worked as a production manager with TG4, whilst a major part of Ms Burke's role will be to create outlets,



especially in the participants' local newspapers and radio stations, for their work with the enterprise.

"Many of the group haven't worked in the media before and therefore need intensive training in journalism skills if they are going to be able to make a living in this area," she says. "But this is very definitely an employment programme, rather than a training course. The participants receive wages paid weekly and throughout the learning process they will be contributing to a wide variety of media organisations."

This will include work experience, usually with their local newspapers and radio stations, whilst they will also contribute articles to Rehab's stable of publications which includes *Insight*, *Employer's Platform* and *Rehab News*. To assist them to work effectively from

home, each participant has been supplied with a laptop which they will retain as long as they remain with the enterprise. The group will also receive two days tuition a month in Dublin, which will incorporate lectures from some of the biggest names in Irish journalism and will be awarded records of achievement, culminating with a FETAC certificate.

Says Ms Burke: "The main objective of this enterprise is to enable the participants to make the leap into mainstream journalism. But given the likelihood that some will choose to specialise in areas relating to disability, it could contribute to ensuring more informed coverage of such issues in various parts of the country."

"The idea is that the participants will remain with the enterprise until they gain employment with media organisa-

**Project manager
Katriona Burke with
programme tutor Dan
Dwyer. The programme
includes everything
from research and
interviewing tech-
niques, to written skills
and radio or television
presentation.**

tions or have the necessary experience to freelance successfully. When one person leaves, their place will be filled so that there are always ten people with the enterprise."

Ms Burke said that the future of the initiative, which is almost totally funded by FÁS, after the initial three year scheme hinged on whether it could become self-financing. As a result, the money earned from the participants work will be ploughed back into the enterprise, with bonuses being paid on top of their wages when the necessary targets are exceeded. However, the participants will retain any payments they receive for ongoing journalism work they started doing before joining the enterprise.

Said Rehab Foundation chief executive, Stephen Farrelly: "By providing people with disabilities with greater opportunities to make careers in journalism, and therefore to become opinion formers, the enterprise has the potential in the longer term to bring about a significant change in public attitudes to disability in general."

For further information please call Katriona at **01 2057 329** or **01 2057 200** or email katriona.burke@rehab.ie

The guidelines for eligibility for Social Economy Programmes are available from your local FÁS office.

Rehab Recycling collected 120 million bottles and jars in 2002 - over 30 per cent more than its previous record returns.

Glass recycling levels in Ireland scaled new heights in 2002 – thanks to yet another massive upsurge in deposits at Rehab’s nationwide network of bring banks.

Rehab Recycling Partnership (RRP) collected more than 120 million bottles and jars or 40,000 tonnes of glass during the year – over 30 per cent more than its previous record returns.

But with an estimated quarter of a billion glass containers still ending up in landfill sites – Ireland remains rooted near the bottom of Europe’s recycling league table.

According to RRP general manager, Bob Rowat, consumers are the chief culprits for Ireland’s poor rating with less than one in five glass containers used by Irish households making it into the recycling stream. This compares to a recycling rate of over 50 per cent for waste glass from the commercial sector.

“To be fair, there is a considerably lower concentration of bring sites in Ireland, compared to levels in Europe’s best recycling nations, which makes it more difficult for people to participate in the recycling process,” he declared.

“But it makes no sense that people protest against other forms of waste management, such as incineration, whilst they needlessly clog up scarce landfill with glass - the most recyclable of all waste



Breaking the glass ceiling

materials.” Mr Rowat said that RRP had recently submitted plans to Government to increase its bring bank network from 1,400 to some 3,600 sites by 2006.

“But if we are really serious as a nation about protecting the environment, not just for ourselves, but for future generations, we really need to change attitudes among the vast majority of people in this country

who don’t recycle anything at present.”

He stressed however that in many parts of Ireland the message was getting through, most notably among the people of Galway, who emerged as the nation’s top recyclers for the first time according to an RRP study of yields at its bring bank network covering the first eight months of the year.



Many happy returns.

David Donnelly at work in RRP's Ballymount plant.

The survey revealed that Galwegians deposited a total of 31 glass containers for every man, woman and child in the county between January and August of 2002. Next best was Kerry where 25 items were collected for each member of the population, followed by Leitrim where the per capita yield was 22 bottles and jars.

Meanwhile, the biggest increases in recycling came in Kilkenny where yields soared by a staggering 150 per cent over the corresponding period in 2001. In Leitrim deposits jumped by a total of 119 per cent, whilst Meath and Roscommon both recorded growth rates in excess of 80 per cent.

Dublin and Cork emerged with the highest overall yields with a total of more than 54 million and 28 million glass containers respectively being collected. However, they came joint seventh in terms of per capita deposits – a total of 17 glass items for each man woman and child.

“These figures demonstrate that we are going in the right direction with more and more people getting involved in recycling their waste glass each year. We are very grateful for their efforts – every glass bottle that is kept out of landfill really does make a difference,” added Mr Rowat.

Rehab Recycling Partnership Recycling League Table January - August 2002

County	Tonnage	Bottles & Jars (000's)	Glass items per head of pop	Busiest Site
Galway (city & county)	1,804	5,863	31	Westside Shopping Centre
Kerry	989	3,214	25	Dunnes Stores, Killarney
Leitrim	171	556	22	Carrick-on-Shannon
Tipperary	729	2,369	18	Cahir
Kildare	739	2,402	18	Tesco, Naas
Kilkenny	407	1,323	18	Loughboy Shopping Centre
Limerick (city & county)	892	2,899	18	Crescent Shopping Centre
Dublin (city & county)	5,645	18,342	17	Tesco, Artane
Cork (city & county)	2,902	9,432	17	Dunnes Stores, Douglas
Mayo	495	1,608	14	Tesco, Ballina
Meath	497	1,615	13	Navan Civic Centre
Roscommon	183	595	11	Boyle
Louth	224	728	8	Mell car park
Cavan	129	419	8	Tesco, Cavan
Monaghan	102	332	7	UDC car park

Supported employment schemes in Waterford and Mayo are meeting with considerable success in integrating people with disabilities into the workforce.

A new supported employment service in Waterford is offering people with disabilities in the region the opportunity to enter the workforce and find employment in jobs that match their interests and abilities.

Waterford Employment Support Agency (WESA), is funded by FÁS through the National Development Plan, and was established by the Waterford Consortium for Supported Employment, in which NTDI is the lead agency.

Through its job coach service, WESA not only enables people with disabilities to find meaningful and viable employment, but also provides ongoing on-the-job support until the clients feels confident and secure in their position.

Although only up and running a few months, WESA has over 80 clients on its books, over half of whom are currently in employment, many in more than one job. The service is open to people with a range of disabilities including sensory, physical, learning, hidden and mental health disabilities. Referrals to the service come predominately through the consortium members, although there have been a number of self-referrals from clients.

“Prior to placing a client in employment, it’s important that we get to know the person, so that we can find positions for them that match their skills, interests



Job coaches' key to work

and abilities,” says Gillian Walsh, one of four job coaches employed by WESA. “We can then go out and approach employers with that specific person in mind and find out if there is a vacancy available, either for part-time employment or work experience.”

“It’s not just our clients who benefit from this free service. We are also assisting local employers with their recruit-

ment needs by matching job seekers to suitable vacancies, and by providing them with support and information on everything from disability awareness to access adaptation and employment grants.” It is hardly surprising, therefore, that employers in Waterford city and county region have reacted so positively to the supported employment programme and WESA currently have clients employed in areas as diverse as



Gillian Walsh, one of four job coaches employed by WESA with client Michael McCarthy. Michael works two days per week with the contact lens manufacturers, Bausch & Lomb.

administration, childcare, catering, sales, gardening, retail, teaching, and even oyster picking!

The Spring Garden Activation Centre for People with Learning Disabilities is a member of the Waterford Consortium for Supported Employment. Over the past few months, ten Spring Garden clients have been placed by WESA in a variety of jobs, with great success.

“It’s very noticeable how much their confidence levels have grown since they started working,” says Tom Coulton, manager of the Spring Garden centre. “Our clients are definitely more independent, and much more eager to represent themselves and have their own say. Not only have the employers made them feel welcome, they have also made them

feel equal.”

Prior to the establishment of WESA, Tom had managed to find some employment for his clients, but the process was very time consuming, and it was not possible for him to provide the level of commitment, dedication and support that the WESA job coaches provide.

David Dobbyn and Carol Melbourne have Downs Syndrome and are among the Spring Garden clients who have been placed in employment by WESA. It’s obvious that both of them really enjoy working in the local Tesco supermarket, where they do three hours a week with the assistance of job coaches, Karen Harland and Jo Cregan.

“I love working here”, says David. “The staff and customers are lovely.”

And it’s obvious that the admiration is mutual. On his birthday, David was presented with a cake, while staff and customers sang Happy Birthday to him. Carol, meanwhile, has other reasons why she enjoys working. “The money’s great!” she says.

Another client who has benefited from the service WESA offers is Michael McCarthy, a 21 year old from Dungarvan, Co Waterford. Michael works two days per week with the contact lens manufacturers, Bausch & Lomb, and has recently started working one day per week with Dungarvan Credit Union.

Michael recently qualified with a diploma in computer applications from NTDI Waterford’s Distance Learning course. His tutor at NTDI, John Mahony referred Michael to the WESA service.

Michael is now getting a chance to put his computer skills to use, compiling and updating databases for Bausch and Lomb’s busy HR Department, although he admits he felt apprehensive on his first day at work.

“This was my first job and I was very nervous when I started. Having Gillian,

Continued next page

“Although the service has only been up and running for a few months, we currently have over 90 clients on our books, 35 of whom are in employment” Work Web West



Pictured at the launch of Work Web West (left to right) Gerry McCreaner, Western Health Board; Peter Dooley, area manager NTDI Castlebar; Maria Quinn, Chamber of Commerce, Castlebar; Lucianne Bird, regional programmes manager, NTDI; Greg Barry, project co-ordinator, Work Web West; Barbara Ronayne, Local Employment Service; Enda Kenny TD, Leader of Fine Gael; Maura Ní Dhomhnaill, Western Care Association.

my job coach with me really helped. I was too shy initially to ask the other members of staff for help, but everyone here is so friendly and helpful that it's no longer a problem.”

In addition to his work in the HR Department, Michael is assisting Bausch and Lomb's Health and Safety Manager, George Brett, to compile a comprehensive audit of the company's office and manufacturing facilities and processes, with a view to identifying and eliminating potential accessibility problems for people with disabilities.

According to his job coach, Gillian Walsh, there has been a dramatic change in Michael's level of confidence in the four weeks since he started working at Bausch & Lomb. “There has definitely been a transformation in Michael's outlook since he started working. His expe-

rience here has given him great confidence and he is much more positive.”

Meanwhile, on the far side of the country in Mayo, NTDI is involved in another supported employment programme which is enjoying similar success. Work Web West was launched last September by Enda Kenny, TD, leader of Fine Gael. The organisation sources and develops full and part-time employment for people with disabilities.

Based in Castlebar, the project services the entire county of Mayo and is funded under the FÁS National Supported Employment Programme. The project comprises five organisations – NTDI, the Local Employment Service, Western Care Association, Western Health Board and the Mayo Chambers of Commerce. “Work Web West provides employment supports to people

with a broad range of disabilities, so that they can access the world of work in a meaningful way. Although the service has only been up and running for a few months, we currently have over 90 clients on our books, 35 of whom are in employment. Of these, nine are working full-time, with the remainder working anything from eight to 22 hours per week”, says Greg Barry, project co-ordinator.

“Local employers have reacted very positively to the project and we have clients placed in different types of jobs in a wide variety of sectors. Local employers include the likes of Dunnes Stores, Butlers Foods, Supermacs, Campbell Catering and the Western Health Board.”

A pilot disability awareness programme for schools that begins in the New Year could become a permanent part of the curriculum for all transition year students.



Mary Keogh with the Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy, TD, at the launch of the pilot phase of the programme.

Raising Awareness

Rehab Foundation will begin piloting a ground-breaking disability awareness programme for transition year students in the New Year.

If successful, the programme will be added to the curriculum in each of the country's 550 secondary schools with transition year classes next September.

Titled 'Educate for Inclusion', it is the first cross-category disability awareness programme ever developed for schoolchildren in this country.

The pilot phase, which was launched by Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy, will involve a total of five secondary schools in the Dublin area.

Funded by the Department of Education and devised by former Rehab employee, Mary Keogh, the programme

is made up of eight lessons on CD-ROM which address all of the big issues facing people with disabilities in their everyday lives.

The lessons comprise: Terminology and Myths; Etiquette and Language; Mobility Disabilities; Sensory Disabilities; Speech Disabilities; Hidden Disabilities; The Irish Government and Disability; and the Rehab Group.

Each lesson includes case studies and assignments, whilst there is also a comprehensive resource pack containing back-up resource material for teachers.

To ensure the programme is as interactive as possible, an Educate for Inclusion web site is being developed, whilst Insight magazine will also run articles complementing the lessons in each edition when it is fully up and running.

According to Ms Keogh, who has considerable experience in promoting disability awareness, the programme will provide students with a "unique opportunity to build their knowledge of different disabilities".

"Our intention is to provide a dynamic new approach to learning about disability issues. The programme takes each student through a step-by-step guide on different disabilities. It explains the everyday terms associated with disability and looks at the different issues facing people with disabilities in Ireland today.

"In addition to demonstrating the difficulties that society poses for people with disabilities, the programme will also show students how, with adequate facilities and support, people with disabilities can live equal lives."

The Women with Disabilities Network aims to equip participants with the necessary skills to become involved in decision-making processes.

There is a growing belief that women with disabilities in Ireland can face a “double discrimination”. Not only are they excluded from participating as equals in Irish society on the basis on their disability, but also because of their gender.

Women with Disabilities Network is an innovative new programme, initiated by NTDI and the Centre for Independent Living as part of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform’s ‘Equality for Women Measure’. The programme, which is funded under the National Development Plan, aims to redress the current situation by equipping women with disabilities with the skills and knowledge they need to overcome the barriers which currently prevent them from becoming actively involved in decision-making processes.

“The overall aim of the ‘Women with Disabilities Network’ is to facilitate and promote the participation of women in public policy-making, particularly in the areas of training, education and employment,” says project co-ordinator, Lindie Botha. In order to achieve this goal, the unique programme follows two essential stages. “The first stage is the leadership develop-



Women who network

ment programme, which will equip a core group of participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective lobbyists. Having completed the course, they will then develop a national network for women with disabilities, through which they will transfer their skills and knowledge to others. The basic principle

of the programme is that we empower individuals, so they go out and empower others.” While leadership programmes for women have been in existence in Ireland for some time, this is the first instance of a course being specifically designed for women with disabilities.



From left: Lindie Botha,
project co-ordinator;
Jane Forman, NTDI;
Maureen McGovern,
Disabled Women's
Network, and Dearbhla
O'Malley, Orbis

attain the valuable European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) certification.

“All of the training modules will run concurrently and incorporate a certain degree of flexibility enabling the participants to discuss and explore issues that arise which are of interest to them.

“Service providers, such as the Rehab Group, will also benefit from the programme which will offer unique insights into the experiences of women with disabilities. This body of learning can be used in future to ensure best practice when delivering services to people with disabilities.”

Originally from South Africa, Lindie has considerable experience in designing and implementing training, and has worked on a number of development programmes in Western Africa. She is enthusiastic about the Women with Disabilities Network, but recognises the ambitious scope of the project.

“Once the leadership development programme is completed, both the NTDI and the Centre for Independent Living will take a step back. It will then be up to the core participants themselves to establish an autonomous, sustainable national network for women with disabilities. Important decisions on the nature and the structure of the network will need to be made. For instance, should the network be for individuals, organisations or a mixture of both?”

For further information on the Women with Disabilities Network, and a copy of the application form, please contact Lindie Botha, Project Co-ordinator, at lindie.botha@ntdi.ie or telephone 01-4069458.

“We are currently looking for women with disabilities from diverse cultural, economic, social and geographic backgrounds to register for the programme”, says Ms. Botha. “Participants should have a keen interest, or activism, in the disability or community sector and want to promote the needs and interests of women with disabilities. They should also be committed to the development of the network and the transfer of skills to other women with disabilities.”

The programme, which will be delivered by Blanchardstown Institute of Technology and will commence early in 2003, was specially designed in response to the findings of a focus group organised

by the Disabled Women's Working Group.

It will run over a 12-month period and will consist of 4 modules comprising personal development, communication skills, computer applications and a special module examining gender, power and policy. In addition to continuous home-based practical assignments and mentoring, the participants will spend four or five weeks resident in the Institute.

“As well as being accredited by HETAC, the training modules will equip participants with a range of transferable skills that will be of benefit in the wider working world. The computer module, for instance, will enable participants to