

NALA Factsheet:

Participation in the VEC Adult Literacy Service 2010

Did you know

The total number of learners in the Vocational Education Committee's (VEC's) adult literacy service (ALS) in 2010 was 54,741. The number includes learners in the adult literacy service, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Intensive Adult Basic Education (ITABE).

This represents an 11% increase on participation rates from 2009 (47,266). Over the past decade the overall trend in participation has seen more than a 200% increase, rising from 17,150 in 2000 to 54,741 in 2010.

Where do we get this information?

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provide the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) with this information. The information comes from the annual adult literacy returns (ALR's) that are provided to the DES by the 33 local VEC's.

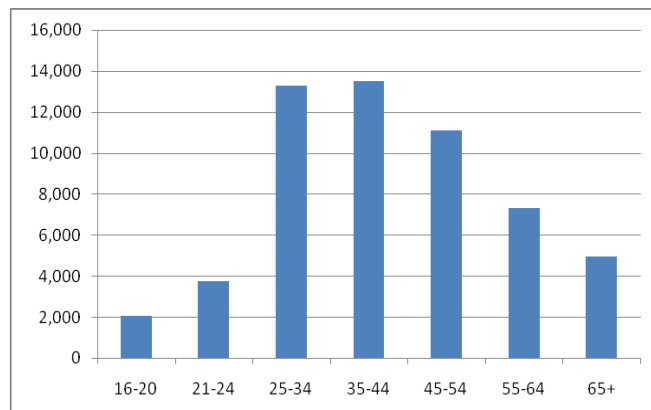
Gender Profile



Almost 60% (31,393) of literacy learners were women. This trend has remained constant over the past decade.

Age Profile

Almost 50% (26,781) of all learners in the adult literacy service were aged between 25 and 44 years. The youngest age group (16-24 years) was almost 11% and the oldest (65+ years) age group was 8% of the overall adult literacy population.



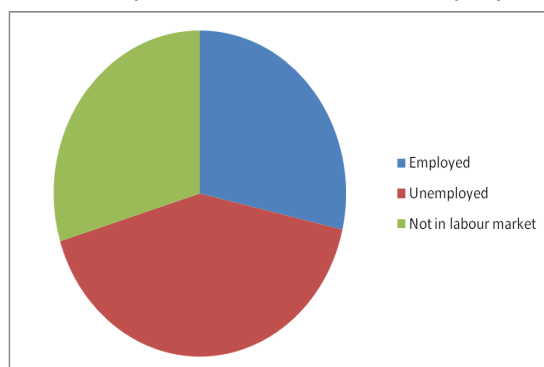
Educational attainment

Educational attainment	Number	%
No formal education	2,261	4.1
Primary	16,718	30.5
Lower secondary	19,688	40.0
Upper secondary	11,621	21.2

Almost 75% (38,667) of learners presented with less than a Leaving Certificate or FETAC level 4 qualification. This is a significant number when compared to the latest figures from the CSO which reported that 18% (379,100) of people in the labour force have less than a FETAC level 4 qualification (CSO, 2011).

Employment status

Over 23% (15,401) of learners were in employment. A further 41% (22,496) reported their employment status as unemployed. This is in contrast to the national picture where the unemployment rate stands at 14.3% (437,441) (CSO, 2011).



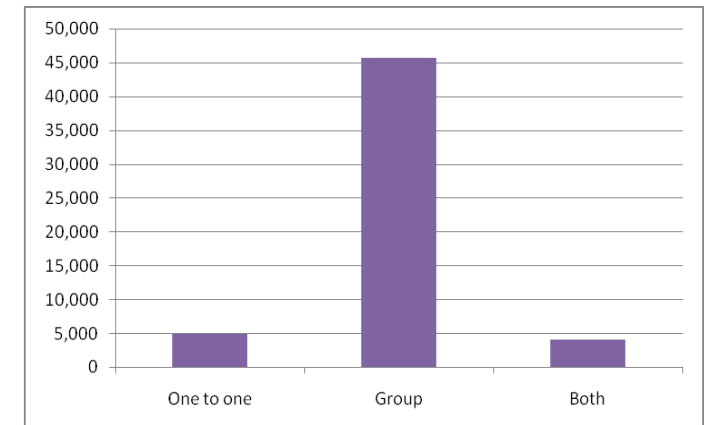
Numbers of learners on different literacy programmes

The majority of learners take part in mainstream literacy programmes. Mainstream programmes consist of either one-to-one or group tuition for typically two to four hours per week during the academic year.

Course	Number of learners	%
Mainstream	30,161	55.0
ESOL	11,507	21.0
Family Literacy	3,220	5.8
Skills for Work – workplace programmes for the private	2,203	4.0
Intensive Tuition for Adult Basic Education (ITABE) –	2,060	3.7
Return to Education – for Community Employment	1,891	3.4
Other workplace literacy	1,661	3.0
Return to Learning – for	556	1.0
Intensive literacy	554	1.0
Junior Certificate	438	0.8
Literacy for Irish students	344	0.6

Tuition type

The majority of learners 83.3% (45,683) take part in group tuition. This reflects the large number of learners engaged in mainstream adult literacy programmes.



Time spent in adult literacy service

The majority of learners 52% (28,686) spend less than one year in the adult literacy service with a minority 7% spending five years or more in the service.

Staffing levels

The adult literacy service is staffed by both paid and volunteer tutors. There are twice the number of volunteer tutors in the service (3,278) as there are paid tutors (1,518).

What is NALA?

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is an independent membership organisation, concerned with developing policy, advocacy, research and offering advisory services in adult literacy work in Ireland.

National Adult Literacy Agency

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