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European Structural  
and Investment Funds



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# EU Structural Funds in Wales 2000-2023 – Cross Cutting Themes



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# Introduction

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The Cross Cutting Themes (CCT) have been a part of the European funded programmes in Wales since 2000. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming (which in Wales includes support for the Welsh Language) and Sustainable Development are mandated by the European Commission. The third CCT (for the 2014-2020 programmes) Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion is Wales specific.

The CCT aim to improve the quality and the legacy of the projects supported through Structural Funds and to add value to the programmes overall. Moving the activity supported from compliance with legislation and regulation, to recognising good practice and the benefits that a more diverse workforce and a healthy environment can have at a local, regional and national level, distributing the benefits of the Structural Funds programmes in a more equal and sustainable way.

The Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming cross cutting theme aimed to reduce injustice and promote social cohesion to address the imbalance in earning for women and men and others with protected characteristics.

Cover: STEM Gogledd

## 2 Cross Cutting Themes

In the 2007-2013 programme, the University of Glamorgan's **Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE)** pilot project worked with employers, employees and self-employed women in an innovative and ground-breaking approach, to tackle the multiple causes of gender pay gaps in Wales.

The project had three strands: pay analysis and media campaign 'Let's Talk About Pay' led by Cardiff University, Occupational Segregation, specifically focusing on women in Construction and IT led by the Women's Workshop BAWSO and women entrepreneurship led by the University of South Wales.

Analysis by the project led to the establishment of the Gender Employment and Pay Network (GEPN) and producing an Equal Pay Barometer – an online searchable tool showing the jobs that men and women do in Wales, their working patterns, average pay and pay gaps.



Participant of Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE)

### 3 Cross Cutting Themes

Since 2007, **Agile Nation** and its successor **Agile Nation 2**, led by Chwarae Teg, has promoted gender equality and supported career advancement for women with targeted support for employees as well as working with employers on improvements in Equality and Diversity Strategies. The project delivered two strands across Wales, supporting nearly 7,000 women to pursue leadership qualifications and receive mentoring to improve their position in the workforce. Over 1,260 employers were engaged with and supported to tackle gender disadvantage in the workforce and promote modern working practices and diversity.



*Participants of Chwarae Teg's Agile Nation 2 project*

Led by Threshold DAS Limited, **LIMITLESS** supported women in employment aged 18+ across Carmarthenshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Pembrokeshire. The project offered three support programmes to those who were or had experienced domestic abuse:

The Well Being Integrated Support Hub (WISH) Programme provided individually tailored support to build confidence, self-esteem and address the many and diverse needs of women. It also offered a range of support to businesses and organisations in relation to gender, equality and diversity.

WEB (Women Exploring Business) Programme, specifically written by 'Threshold DAS' for women was designed to inspire women who wanted to set up their own business but who faced barriers because of their gender. The Welsh Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Qualification (W-DASVQ) was a qualification aimed at survivors, ex-service users and others interested in support work as a career. This complemented the plans of the Welsh Government Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Team to develop a National Survivor Engagement Framework.

## 4 Cross Cutting Themes

EU funding has also been essential in supporting and facilitating a range of initiatives to bring about a step change in overcoming this the gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related subjects. STEM projects such as **STEM Gogledd**, **STEM Cymru 2** and **Technocamps 2** have enabled pupils to take part in workshops to build on their existing knowledge of IT and computing, and the **Trio Sci Cymru** project has encouraged young people, especially girls, to study STEM subjects at school and consider a career in those fields.



*Engineering Education Scheme Wales' (EESW)  
STEM Cymru 2 project*



*STEM projects*

**STEM Cymru 2**, led by Engineering Education Scheme Wales (EESW), supported 15,609 young people aged 11-19 to increase their participation in STEM subjects, with 54% being female. Working in project teams, young people addressed engineering problems and developed the key skills demanded by employers. In the sixth form strand, teams worked with industry mentors to develop practical solutions to challenges faced by the host companies, with some of the solutions proposed being adopted and implemented by those companies.



*Participants of the STEM Cymru 2 project*

## 5 Cross Cutting Themes

Many other EU funded projects have been working with schools and colleges, around the STEM agenda including the **Centre for Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Human-Machine Systems (IROHMS)**, a multidisciplinary technology centre located at Cardiff University. The project targets new opportunities from Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics and Human-Machine Systems (HMS). IROHMS has taken forward Cardiff University's strong commitment to support female participation in STEM and team members have also worked in partnership with other Cardiff University initiatives and EU funded projects such as **FLEXIS**, to coordinate and delivery activity, supporting widening access and enhancing STEM activities in schools.



*IROHMS Virtual Lab, Cardiff University*

Understanding the complexities around engagement and the reservations some communities have with mainstream services, the **Achieving Change through Employment (ACE)** project, delivered by CGL Ltd, supported black, Asian and minority ethnic and migrant individuals to overcome the often, complex barriers they can experience in the employment market in Wales. Building on the success of the **Increasing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employment and Tackling Economic Inactivity** project from the 2007-2013 programme, a pool of volunteers provided 1-2-1 mentoring, help with confidence building skills and knowledge, volunteering and work experience opportunities. The project also provided an e-learning 'Rapid English' package to help those participants with low English language ability.



*Participants of Achieving Change through Employment (ACE) project*



*Participants of Achieving Change through Employment (ACE) project*

## 6 Cross Cutting Themes

**JobSense** provided a pan-Wales specialist employability service, helping long term unemployed/economically inactive people aged 25 and over who are deaf or have hearing or sight loss to find work. Led by The Royal National Institute for Deaf People in partnership with Elite Supported Employment Agency and Centre of Sign-Sight-Sound (COS), specialist employment advisers supported participants to overcome challenges, improve their confidence and vocational skills, and supported individuals while in employment. Engaging with B businesses to identify appropriate vacancies, the project was able to raise awareness of the value and benefits that employing people with a sensory loss can bring.



*Jobsense project*



*Jobsense project*

Across north Wales **ADTRAC**, led by Grwp Llandrilo Menai, provided personalised wellbeing and employability support for almost 1,200 young people, many with complex disabilities. ADTRAC teams offered a bespoke mentoring service helping young people to develop personalised action plans to improve their mental wellbeing and employability, gain qualifications or enter either education, training or employment.



*ADTRAC supported young people across North Wales*

## 7 Cross Cutting Themes

**GO Wales: Achieve Through Work Experience** operated across Wales, led by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), supported over 1800 students in higher education who were at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), finding suitable employers and work experience opportunities for them to develop their skills and confidence, and increase their employability. The project was successful in engaging and supporting students who faced particular barriers, with 26% of participants being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background and 70% identifying as disabled or as having a Work-Limiting Health Condition (WLHC) including Autism Spectrum Disorder and mental health condition.



*Participants of GO Wales:  
Achieve Through Work Experience project*



*Participants of GO Wales:  
Achieve Through Work Experience project*

**Out of Work Service-Healthy Working Wales (16-24yr)**, managed by the Welsh Government Department for Health and Social Services (DHSS), worked with young people not in education or training and affected by substance misuse and/or mental health issues. The project supported them back into education, training or employment to help reduce poverty and social exclusion. Many faced additional barriers, including having been involved in the justice system, in many cases low educational attainment, insecure housing, lack of childcare and transport, no access to financial support, and a lack of understanding of educational, training and employment options and opportunities available to them.

The **Regional SEN Transition to Employment Initiative**, a Real Opportunities project, addressed the lack of employment support for young people with learning disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The project operated in nine local authority areas throughout south Wales in partnership with ELITE Supported Employment Agency; Mencap Cymru; and Remploy with the National Autistic Society. Individualised training supported over 1,700 participants with summer or part-time jobs while at school, community-based experiences, job coaching, and independent living and social skills. Sustainable social enterprises were also set up, staffed by both disabled and non-disabled workers, providing long term employment for young people.

All projects across the Structural Fund programmes were tasked with supporting speakers of the Welsh language, either through providing a bilingual service, or as with some projects, delivering activity which specifically promotes the Welsh Language, such as **Working Skills for Adults 2**, led by Torfaen County Borough Council and their entry level award 'Using Welsh in the Workplace'.



## 8 Cross Cutting Themes



*Working Skills for Adults – Theresa Ball*



*Working Skills for Adults 2 participants*

**Trac 11-24** led by Denbighshire County Council, provided opportunities through the medium of Welsh and as part of the procurement process held a specific meet the buyer event through the medium of Welsh. **Advanced Media Production**, led by Aberystwyth University, delivered many of its modules in the Welsh language. One participant stated, ‘as a first language Welsh speaker it was great to be able to study the majority of the modules through the medium of Welsh’.



*Advanced Media Production project*



*Advanced Media Production project*

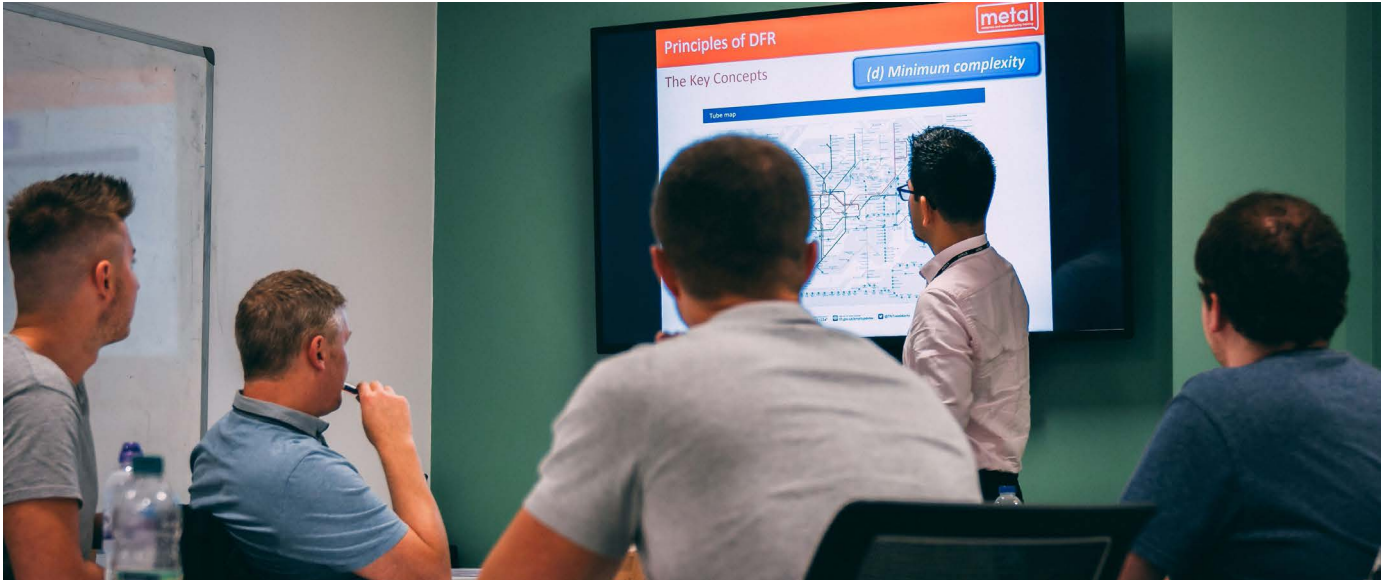
**Healthy Working Wales In-Work Support**, led by Welsh Government’s Department for Health and Social Services, provided a Welsh speaking participant with a Welsh speaking case co-ordinator to assist them through their physiotherapy sessions.

**North Wales Business Academy**, led by Grwp Llandrillo-Menai, offered their Welsh speakers the opportunity to complete their assignments and to receive learning materials in Welsh.

A core principle for both the European Commission and the Welsh Government, Sustainable Development as a cross cutting theme, is a crucial element ensuring that programmes and operations meet social, economic and environmental objectives. An attractive environment plays a key role in enticing and retaining people to live and work in Wales, providing the quality of life for Welsh residents and ensuring our environment is protected for generations to come. Many projects have delivered awareness raising, education or training courses directly supporting sustainable development.

## 9 Cross Cutting Themes

**Materials and Manufacturing Education Training and Learning (METaL2)**, an industry demand led project led by Swansea University upskilled over 1,179 people, from over 93 different companies, in the field of Advanced Materials and Manufacturing. Sustainable development was incorporated into METaL2's training modules, specifically around environmental legislation and the influence industry has on the environment. A training course on the circular economy, examined some of the most crucial, global, sustainability challenges and how the circular economy offers a new path to overcome these issues.



METaL seminar

**Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships 2 (KESS 2)**, led by Bangor University delivered a number of activities around sustainable development training, including 'Introduction to Sustainability' workshops and a monthly series of webinars where students were asked to demonstrate how their research would align with sustainability goals. The Annual Award celebration, where students give a presentation on their research activities, has also introduced a specific award for 'Sustainability'.

Sustainable Development has also played a key role in the capital projects funded, especially in relation to building innovation. There are some excellent examples which include green roofs, living walls, bio-diversity elements and resource efficiency measures.



Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships 2 (KESS 2) Award winner



Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships 2 (KESS 2)

## 10 Cross Cutting Themes

The **Research Institute for Innovative Materials, Processing and Numerical Technologies (IMPACT)** and **Computational Foundry**, a world class computer science research facility, led by Swansea university are located on what was previously a brownfield site.



*IMPACT building*



*IMPACT building*

Both projects embraced sustainable development principles in both the pre-planning design stage and the construction phase, achieving 'BREEAM Excellent' status. Design features include good daylight, natural ventilation and acoustics, locally sourced material where possible and the recycling of construction waste on-site. Photovoltaic panels mounted on the roof of the Computational Foundry building provide clean energy and treated panes of glass on the south facing facade of the IMPACT building allows for passive heating and glare protection as well as preventing heat loss during the winter months.

To encourage biodiversity a central courtyard wetland, using native plants, shrubs and trees form part of the design, as do Swift and bat nest boxes along with a 'green' living wall on the north elevation of the IMPACT building.

IMPACT architects, AHR won an Education Estates 2020 award for their design of the IMPACT building. The award, Innovation in Delivering Value, recognises innovation that has helped contribute to value in the design of learning spaces.



*CUBRIC building*



*CUBRIC interior*

The **CUBRIC II** project, led by Cardiff University, systematically integrated aspects of the cross-cutting themes into its design. The building achieved BREEAM 'excellent' status incorporating a range of resource efficiency measures, including three green roofs, and has won numerous awards. In 2016 it was awarded an Environmental Sustainability Bronze Award, while in 2017 it triumphed in the Life Science Research Building Category at the 2017 S-Lab Awards, also winning the Chairman's Special Award Constructing Excellence in Wales and the Project of the Year and the Design through Innovation title at the 2017 RICS Awards, Wales. In 2018 the building was given a Silver award for the Green Impact Scheme.

## 11 Cross Cutting Themes

**Ty Du Strategic Site** is a joint collaboration between Caerphilly County Borough Council's Regeneration and Planning Service and Welsh Government to construct 4 high quality employment buildings. The new business premises include generous operational space, car and cycle parking, external seating and break out areas within an attractive landscaped setting, including new trees and hedgerows. Solar PV cells and water efficiency measures have been used. Supporting green infrastructure and biodiversity, a 25-year Landscape Management Plan will see conservation of boundary hedges alongside new tree planting and year-round planting to benefit pollinator species.



*Ty Du Strategic Site*



*Ty Du Strategic Site*

There are some clear examples of projects funded through Structural Funds, where the focus on the environmental has been complimented by raising awareness, skill building within the community and opening up opportunities to individual and groups who may otherwise have been excluded from taking part.

Partnership working has been key to the success of **Swansea Community Solar Storage** led by Gower Power. Engaging with local community groups to build the skills and increase the confidence of community members, the project has also provided support for those most in need to adopt energy saving measures in their homes to alleviate fuel poverty. It also works with the community to raise awareness and understanding of climate change-related energy issues.



*Gower Power's Swansea Community Solar Storage project*

## 12 Cross Cutting Themes

**Reduce Industrial Carbon Emissions (RICE)** led by Swansea University in partnership with University of South Wales focussed on innovative processes to reduce Wales' CO2 emissions and decrease Welsh Heavy Industry's energy & raw material consumption. The RICE team successfully incorporated equality outcomes into a project that is primarily concerned with the environment, supporting more girls and young women to participate in STEM and recognising the importance of a diverse project team with regard to innovation and ideas.



*Reduce Industrial Carbon Emissions (RICE) polytunnel*



*RICE project – Super Science Swansea 2020*

Across Wales, as part of the commitment to benefit communities through European funding, projects have been delivering activity which contributes to equality of access, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and encourages social cohesion and engagement. Community benefit activities include providing local employment, training, apprenticeships and work placements schemes; volunteering schemes; working with local charities, enhancement to the natural and built environment and sponsoring schemes and donations.



*Transport for Wales team at Taffs Well Allotments*



*Transport for Wales team at Taffs Well Allotments*

The **South Wales Metro** project, is led by Transport for Wales, who along with their contractors, have been engaging in community outreach across Wales. There are nine sites undergoing improvements in preparation for electrification and all are benefiting from community action initiatives. Examples include: Griffiths Construction and Transport for Wales collaborated on the renovation and improved accessibility, of an allotment space in Taffs Well which had become dilapidated and overgrown.

## 13 Cross Cutting Themes

Balfour Beatty with the support of Mikerry Rail Limited, developed and improved an area within Treorchy Comprehensive School which is going to be further developed and used as a memorial garden.

Following the devastating impact of Storm Dennis in February 2020, Transport for Wales teams came together to show their support for communities which were badly affected. Over four days team members assisted in clean-up operations in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd, managing to remove around 7 tonnes of silt, stones and debris in adverse weather and assisted in clearing out the Lido. Many colleagues and corporate partners also supported recovery efforts by donating and raising money to aid affected communities.

In North Wales the widening of the **A55** road, to up-grade it to modern dual carriageway standards has brought additional benefits to the local communities, improving connections for local businesses and residents with improved drainage reducing the risk of flooding in the area.

Seeking to retain as much of the habitat as possible, especially in terms of hedgerows, landscaping has been undertaken including planting new hedges, new stream crossings underneath the A55 and the creation of wildlife tunnels. 42 trout and 10 eels were also successfully rescued from the Afon Wig Culvert. Procuring labour and materials locally helped to reduce costs and carbon emissions with the contractor speaking to Careers Wales and the local supply chain before and after they were awarded the contract to discuss the skills and supplies needed.

The project engaged with local schools, delivering virtual lessons to Year 10 pupils at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Bethesda and virtual STEM lessons with Year 9 pupils at Ysgol Tryfan as part of their 'Activities Day'. Several older students also spent time on the Site and with Project Management as part of their work experience placements.

A series of fund raising were supported by the contractor Alun Griffiths, for Wales Air Ambulance, MacMillan; and a large donation to the local Arfon Foodbank.