



**THE IRISH NATIONAL
ORGANISATION OF
THE UNEMPLOYED**

ANNUAL REPORT 2002



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This Large Print edition of the INOU 2002 Annual Report has been produced in support of the INOU's commitment to developing accessible information products and materials.

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson's Report

There were a number of significant developments within the organisation during 2002. Not least of these, was the appointment in March of a new General Secretary, Eric Conroy who replaced the previous General Secretary, Tony Monks, who left the organisation at the end of 2001. Eric brings wide and diverse experience to the INOU having previously worked with Guinness and more recently with Concern and Goal. As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Eric to the organisation and wish him success in the challenges that lie ahead.



*Ann Fergus
Chairperson*

On the economic front, the Irish economy continued to experience a very significant slowdown during 2002 with unemployment levels continuing on an upward trend. At the beginning of 2002, the Live Register stood at 152,800 whilst unemployment, as measured by the Quarterly National Household Survey stood at 4% of the national labour force. By the year-end, the figures had increased to 166,100 and 4.5% respectively with long-term unemployment rising for the first time since 1994.

In this context, the INOU views with increasing concern the seemingly relentless attack on supports designed to assist unemployed people move from social welfare to work. The restructuring of the Back to Work Allowance and the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance that was announced towards the end of the year (to take effect from January

2003) excludes the overwhelming majority of unemployed people and effectively marks the abolition of the Scheme. Similarly, the on-going contraction of active labour market programmes such as Community Employment and Jobs Initiative and the curtailment of the Social Economy Programme further restrict the opportunities available to long-term unemployed people.

The Budget for 2003 that was announced in December of this year was the last opportunity for the Government to deliver on commitments entered into in relation to the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF). This was the opportunity for the Government to show that social partnership could deliver and that it is worthwhile to enter negotiations for a successor to the PPF. It also provided an opportunity to test the Government's commitment to a

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revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy and their continued commitment to eliminate longterm unemployment. Whilst the INOU recognised that the economic climate and a forecasted fall in the projected Government surplus may have restricted room for manoeuvre in the Budget, we also believed that it was both possible and necessary to deliver a Budget that would make a meaningful impact on the lives of unemployed people and their dependants.

In advance of the budget, the INOU called for, amongst other things, an increase in the lowest social welfare payment by Euro 11.20pw; increased personal tax credits; a raising of the Qualified Adult payment to 70% of the personal rate; an increase in the income limit for the retention of secondary benefits by Euro 103.00 and the extension of medical card coverage to all children under 18 years of age. Unfortunately what was subsequently announced fell far short of these demands. In particular, the meagre increase of Euro 6.00 per week on the basic rate of social welfare payments was an insult to unemployed people.

Another key issue for the INOU in 2002 was the debate around the organisation's reentry into the negotiations on a successor to the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. It was recognised that the negotiations for any future agreement would be conducted in a significantly changed economic environment. At the outset, there appeared to be a lack of enthusiasm for a new national agreement amongst some of the Social

Partners.

Notwithstanding the disappointing outcome of the Budget, the INOU continued to be supportive of national partnership agreements. The significant benefit of a major reduction in unemployment had taken place in the period of the INOU's involvement in social partnership and there is a very real sense that the national agreements played a key role in underpinning this very welcome drop in unemployment. The INOU's analysis of the effectiveness of participating in social partnership together with details of INOU demands for any successor to the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness were discussed and voted on at our Annual Delegate Conference on 26th September 2002. The Conference delegates gave the General Secretary a very clear mandate to participate in the subsequent negotiations and as the year came to a close, negotiations were still on-going within Government Buildings.

The Annual Conference also saw both existing and new NEC members being elected to serve for a two-year period on the Committee. Elections to positions of Chair, Vice-Chairs and Treasurer of the INOU were held at the first NEC meeting following the Conference and I was privileged to be elected Chair. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair, Barrie McLatchie, and the outgoing Vice-Chair, John Mathews, for their dedication and commitment to the work of the INOU.

As we move towards 2003, there is



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a strong feeling that the overall economic situation will continue to decline leading to increased levels of unemployment. The INOU views these developments with increasing concern and I would re-iterate the views expressed by Barrie McLatchie, in the 2001 Annual Report that the focus of attention should not lead to a shift away from measures to assist the long-term unemployed.

It continues to be essential that national employment policy be balanced between preventing the emergence of a new generation of long-term unemployed people and providing access to decent jobs for those that saw few of the benefits of the economic boom.

**Ann Fergus,
Chairperson**

Brian Corr R.I.P.

The INOU staff, NEC and INOU General Branch were deeply saddened at the loss of the Vice-Chairperson of the INOU General Branch Brian Corr who died in June 2002.

Brian lived in Cavan and was a long standing INOU Individual and General Branch member. He was a dedicated, passionate and committed advocate for the rights and entitlements of unemployed people, both locally with the Cavan Unemployment Action Group, of which he was a co-founder, and nationally with the INOU.

Brian was a regular attendee at Individual Meetings, Conferences and other events and he is greatly missed by the INOU staff, his General Branch colleagues and the wider organisation.



BRIAN CORR R.I.P.



General Secretary's Report

The year 2002 was a period of transition for the INOU on two fronts: a consistent rise in unemployment from a low point in mid-2001 and of staff turnover, including my appointment as General Secretary in March 2002.

On regular occasions early in my tenure as General Secretary, I had to contend with the notion from several quarters that we had effectively reached "full employment". The INOU defines full employment as being a situation whereby anyone who wants a job can get a decent job within a reasonable period of time. This effectively means the elimination of long-term unemployment. Unemployment stood at 72,600 (or 4.0%) in the last quarter of 2001 and rose to 84,100 or 4.5% of the labour force by the end of 2002. Equally significantly in 2002, the level of long-term unemployed increased for the first time since 1994. This was worrying in the context of the government's NAPS target to eliminate longterm unemployment by 2007 at the latest. The INOU raised these issues throughout the year and had a high profile in the media commenting on the "relentless" rise in unemployment and warning government of the possibility of slipping back to the bad old days of the 1980's and early 1990's.

Negotiations for a new Partnership Agreement



*Eric Conroy
General Secretary*

A significant part of the General Secretary's time in 2002 was taken up with the preparation and subsequent negotiations for a successor to the Programme for Prosperity & Fairness (PPF). The INOU commenced their campaign at the NEC conference in the Marino Institute in June. At this meeting, we determined our core policy issues for the forthcoming talks.

These included:

- Social Welfare Benchmarking (30% G.A.I.E.)
- Commitments on Community Employment numbers & programme improvements
- Increase in Retention of Secondary Benefits threshold

Our entry into the talks was ratified at the Annual Delegate Conference in September. Thereafter the INOU worked with the Community Platform and the Community & Voluntary Pillar to prepare a united stance for our sector in the negotiations. The formal

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negotiations with Government and the other social partners began at the end of November. However, not much progress was made before Christmas and the talks were parked until the New Year. Very little real negotiation took place in this period.

For a variety of reasons, there was not the same enthusiasm for a social partnership agreement as in the past. Given the state of the national finances, the Government had less room to underpin a wages agreement with tax breaks and were content not to meet their ongoing commitments from the PPF (including Community Employment). The employers were unhappy about what they felt would be another inflationary wages agreement. The Community and Voluntary sector was becoming increasingly frustrated at what little resources were being put on the table on social issues. Therefore 2002 ended with little likelihood of an agreement. However the INOU was committed to the partnership process and recommenced the talks in January 2003.

Development Section

The work of the Development Section during 2002 continued to focus on establishing and maintaining links both with our affiliated organisations and organisations wishing to affiliate to the INOU. The INOU's membership base continued to grow during the year and we were very pleased to welcome into membership the following organisations:

· Clare Citizens Information Centre, Ennis

· PLANET, Gorey

· Supporting Unemployed in Laois (SUIL), Portlaoise

· Special Project for the long-term Unemployed (SPLTU), Tallaght

During 2002, the Development Section commenced work on a significant project funded by ADM under the technical support strand of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. During the year the INOU completed the training aspect of this project.

The INOU Welfare to Work Trainer delivered three two-day Welfare to Work training courses to Partnerships and Community Group staff providing front-line information services to unemployed people. The trainer also delivered a Taxation and Welfare to Work Training course and facilitated a workshop in an ADM Income Maintenance Working Group Housing Seminar. Also, as part of this project, the INOU printed two leaflets, 'Moving from Social Welfare to Work' and 'Employer Incentives to Recruit Unemployed People' which were distributed to Partnerships, Community Groups and Territorial Employment Pacts. The leaflets were aimed at unemployed people and employers through the Partnerships and Community Groups services. Initial work was completed on three practical resource guides to assist Partnerships, Community Groups and Territorial Employment Pacts and it is expected to complete these by Spring 2003.





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Annual Delegate Conference 2002

The 14th INOU Annual Delegate Conference was held on 27th September 2002 at the Royal Dublin Hotel in Dublin. The Conference was very well attended with over 90 delegates, representing more than 35 affiliated organisations, being present on the day. The President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), Senator Joe O'Toole, opened the Conference. At the heart of the Senator's speech, was the then just published Justice Flood Report. The Senator called for immediate action, including legal action, against those named in the Report and the introduction of structures and protocols to ensure Ministers act in good faith.

Senator O'Toole said that these same people, twenty years ago, were lecturing to unemployed people and yet bleeding the country of its resources at the expense of the ordinary compliant taxpayer. "It is unconscionable", he concluded "that tax cheats are flourishing at a time when tax revenue has taken a huge plunge".

Eric thanked Senator O'Toole for his impassioned speech and said the increase of 24,000 people on the Live Register shows that there is no room for complacency and that the current difficult state of the public finances could not be used as an excuse for the Government to renege on its commitments. "There are still a number of fundamental issues to address", Eric added "and two of the most significant of these are Benchmarking and Community Employment".

The General Secretary argued that while the Government had committed to reaching the benchmarking figure of Euro 150, in 2002 terms by 2007, (increases in inflation from 2002 are to be added to the Euro 150 figure), this hadn't been linked to earnings and the INOU will continue to campaign to achieve this. Eric thanked the affiliates for their involvement in the INOU CE campaign. He also said there were a number of reports and reviews which were analysing CE and other Active Labour Market Programmes currently and added that the INOU will be looking to influence these.

A number of motions at the Conference were about Community Employment. Many delegates expressed their concerns at the reductions in CE below what was agreed in the PPF. Other successful motions included increasing the Euro 317.43 limit on retaining Secondary Benefits and fully assessing the lack of transport options for unemployed people.

The Conference, however, began on a sad note. The vice-chairperson of the INOU General Branch, Brian Corr died during the year. Fittingly, the Conference observed a minute's silence in his memory. In the afternoon the Conference delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of the INOU entering into negotiations for a new National Agreement.

Welfare to Work Section Queries

The demand for Welfare to Work information and advocacy services remained considerable throughout the 2002 period. The challenge of

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meeting this demand was heightened by staff changes in the section during the year. While the number of queries remained consistent, the section identified a need to develop and refine its information provision and advocacy services in response to the growing requirements of clients in dealing with the ever more complex and complicated nature of Welfare to Work issues. The diversity and range of queries was equalled by the differing sources from which they came, with a significant proportion coming from affiliated organisations, Local Employment Services and unemployed people themselves. The implementation of a regular review process to oversee the ongoing development of the Welfare to Work section was pivotal in formulating a section input into the forthcoming INOU strategic plan.

Working for Work

The ninth edition of Working for Work was published during the year with the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Coughlan T.D., present at the official launch on the 25th July at Araby House. A total of 20,000 copies were printed and distributed throughout the country to affiliates, individuals and other organisations. It's clear, concise and comprehensive information ensured that it continues to remain a key and indispensable tool for both information providers and unemployed people. The demand for the publication continued to grow, with requests for copies outstripping supply, and with user response and feedback very positive.

Training Courses



Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Coughlan T.D. at the launch of Working For Work in Araby House.

Demand for INOU training courses was strong throughout the year, with all courses well attended. A total of twelve training days were provided through two training Calendar's, March - June & September - November, consisting of six training modules:

- Introduction to Social Welfare (1 day)
- Welfare to Work (2 days)
- Introduction to Social Welfare Appeals (1 day)
- Taxation & Welfare to Work (1 day)
- Delivering a Quality Information Service (1 day)
- Your Rights at Work (1 day)

Our 'on-request' training services saw a marked increase in the number of courses requested and provided. This is an area that the Welfare to Work section is keen to continue to develop as an important part of its strategy in providing





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tailored training services to meet the specific needs of individual user groups.

Communications and Media

The unrelenting rise in unemployment throughout the year and the dramatic cuts in Community Employment dominated our media operations in 2002. The INOU was successful in securing regular media coverage on issues affecting the Unemployed, particularly at times of Live Register and QNHS announcements, with an increase in coverage from the enlarged local radio network.

Our main media campaign during the year, called '*Consultation not Cuts*', focused on our opposition to cuts in Community Employment which attempted to bring C.E. participant numbers below the ceiling of 28,000 as agreed in the PPF.

A major part of this campaign was the development and distribution of a campaign pack to INOU affiliates setting out ways they could lobby politicians and obtain media coverage to highlight the impact of the cuts. The pack suggested possible letters for CE participants to send to their local TD's and draft press releases for affiliates to send to their local media. This was taken up by a good number of affiliates and their staff and helped the general campaign of awareness on the impact of CE cuts on disadvantaged communities and on unemployed people.

The INOU also participated in two CE protest marches to Dail Eireann organised by CE supervisor groups.

The General Secretary spoke at both meetings and criticised the government for breaking the terms of the PPF in relation to CE.

Given the consistent high levels of interest in our website (www.inou.ie) throughout 2002, preparatory work was undertaken to review the entire site to make it more informative, user friendly and interactive. It is hoped to relaunch the site in Spring 2003. The website, which is updated regularly, includes all INOU press statements and publications along with the latest Live Register and International Labour Organisation figures.

Following staff changes, we have re-aligned the press function as part of the policy formulation process. This ensures that our media message is fully in tune with our policy on all issues affecting unemployment and the needs of unemployed people. Publications is now the responsibility of the Welfare to Work Manager. The Bulletin has been refocused as a tool for the communication of information, strategic material, campaigning and sharing of information to affiliates.

Araby House

The on-going development of Araby House continued throughout 2002. The training room to the rear of the building was significantly advanced with funding received from the Dept. of Social & Family Affairs. Structural work was done on the walls and ceiling and a new central heating system was installed, including a boiler. Tenders were received to finalise the room, including installation of new windows and refurbishing the floor. It is planned

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to complete the room early in 2003 and to furnish it as a training room.

OUNI

Throughout 2002 the priority for the Organisation of the Unemployed: Northern Ireland was to ensure that the views and experience of unemployed people were heard at the level of policy formulation. OUNI members were vital to the realisation of this and particularly the unemployed people who accessed the facilities of their local unemployed centres, groups and community organisations.

Throughout the year a great deal of progress was made on influencing policies that affect the lives of those without work. OUNI's work in advocating the needs and experiences of unemployed people to the Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment resulted in many of the barriers faced by the unemployed being addressed in the final report. More detail on the work of this Taskforce can be gleaned further on in this report.

Our work on the Northern Ireland Consultative Civic Forum in many ways came to fruition during 2002. The 'Regional Anti-Poverty Strategy' working group, which the OUNI coordinator chairs, produced the discussion document entitled 'A Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion' in May. The Deputy First Minister, Mark Durkan and Junior Minister, James Leslie launched the report in June 2002 saying that "the report is not only welcome, it is also timely as we are currently evaluating New TSN, the Executive's strategic approach to tackling poverty."

Subsequent to the introduction of the report the OUNI coordinator through the Civic Forum was invited onto the advisory panel to feed into the evaluation process of New TSN.

Both of these major pieces of work have ensured that the views of unemployed people are being fed into the process of policy formulation. Work has also continued on advocating the need for socio-economic rights to be included in the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights. It must be reiterated that throughout all of this advocacy and representation, unemployed people were actively involved – through our seminars, the Annual Delegate Conference and our work with the regional New Deal focus groups.

The suspension of the Assembly in October 2002 was a serious blow to our hopes of local politicians formulating policies that would genuinely meet the needs of the people in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, OUNI will continue to work with our membership to gain support – at whatever political avenue is open to us – for programmes and policies that will lead to employment growth, quality training and an adequate income for all.

Eric Conroy
General Secretary



GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



COMMITTEES

Committees

Committee	Representative	Main Topics Covered/ Outcome
National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Eric Conroy	Developing a strategy document for Ireland
National Economic and Social Forum (NESF)	June Tinsley	Report on Labour Market Issues for Older Workers.
PPF Plenary Meetings	Eric Conroy	Monitoring PPF
Social Economy Monitoring Committee	Eric Conroy	Monitoring of the Social Economy programme.
Standing Committee on the Labour Market	Eric Conroy	Deliberating on Indecon Consultant's Review of Active Labour Market Programmes
Employment and Human Resources OP Monitoring Committee	Eric Conroy	Monitoring progress of human resources element of the National Development Plan.
National Employment Advisory Committee	June Tinsley	Deliberating on Fitzpatrick Associates' Review of National Employment Services
Equality Authority – Equality Studies Unit Monitoring Committee	June Tinsley	Monitoring progress of the Equality Studies Unit.
Community & Voluntary Pillar	Eric Conroy	Preparation for the National negotiations
Community Platform	June Tinsley	Preparation for the National negotiations

National Executive Committee

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is the governing body of the INOU and is responsible for ensuring that resolutions agreed at the Annual Conference are factored into the work of the organisation for the year ahead. The NEC is also ultimately responsible for the management of the staff and all funds and assets of the organisation. The composition of the NEC is prescribed by the INOU Constitution and normally meets 11 times a year. NEC members are elected from amongst the wider membership of the organisation at the Annual Delegate Conference and normally serve for an initial term of two years.

NEC - November 2002

Name	Nominating Organisation
Officers Board	
Ann Fergus <i>Chairperson</i>	Galway Peoples Resource Centre
Barrie McLatchie <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Padraig Malone <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>	Limerick Trades Council
Delia Colohan <i>Treasurer</i>	Ballinasloe Resource Centre
National Executive	
Des Bonass	Dublin Trades Council
Noel Clune	ICTU
Tony Jordan	Ait na nDaoine, Dundalk
John Mathews	Dundalk Centre for the Unemployed
Pat Murphy	Larkin Unemployed Centre
Paul Billings	Clondalkin Centre for the Unemployed
John Farrell	Staff Representative
Anne McCloskey	Crumlin Citizens Information Centre
Richard McGhee	Employment Development Information Centre, Longford
Rotimi Adebari	Supporting Unemployed in Laois
Ruth Dooley	Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



National Executive Committee

Co-opted Members

John Curtis	Dublin 12 Centre for the Unemployed
James Stapleton	Irish Refugee Council
Margaret McKearney	EXPAC

NEC Members who left in 2002

Emma Jane Hoey	Triskele Community Training and Development
Richard O'Leary	INOUE General Branch
Wendy Jarvis	Cavan Information and Opportunities Centre
Danny McDermott	Strabane Community Unemployed Group
Michael Wall	Staff Representative

The NEC and staff would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the work of the organisation by all the people who left the NEC during the year.

I.N.O.U. Staff



2002 saw a number of significant staffing developments in the organisation. In March, a new General Secretary, Eric Conroy was recruited following the departure of the previous General Secretary, Tony Monks, at the end of 2001. Eric brings wide and diverse experience to the organisation. A person with a strong commitment to social justice, equality and social inclusion, Eric was appointed as a trustee of SPADE (St.Paul's Area Development Enterprise) in the Smithfield area of Dublin's north inner city in 1987. In 1990, Eric left his then employer, Guinness, to work for Concern and then subsequently with GOAL. Eric is also involved in conservation issues and is an active member of An Taisce in Dublin.

The organisation also took the opportunity during the year to review its internal staffing structure which resulted in the creation of a dedicated Policy Officer position and a new post of Manager of the Welfare to Work Section. These changes did not result in a net increase in staff positions within the organisation.

The National Executive Committee would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of all staff in the organisation and wish all those who left during the year every success for the future.

General Secretary Team

General Secretary	Eric Conroy
Policy Officer	June Tinsley
Admin Support Worker	Ann Middleburgh

Administrative and Finance Team

Financial Controller	Anne Gibney
Book Keeper	Carol Thornton
Administrator/CE Supervisor	Patricia Watters
Receptionist	Mairead Kenny/Sadie Caffrey
Cleaner	Theresa McDermott
Caretaker	Vacant

Welfare to Work Team

Manager	Robbert Lynch (From December 2002)
Information Officer	Kevin Costelloe
Trainer	Helen Fields-Molloy

I.N.O.U. STAFF



I.N.O.U. STAFF

I.N.O.U. Staff

Admin. Assistant

Suzanne Farrington

Personnel and Development Team

Personnel & Development Officer John Stewart

Development Worker John Farrell

Admin. Support Worker Maria Walsh

OUNI Staff

Northern Ireland Co-ordinator Lynn Carvill

Northern Ireland Administrator Cathy Kelly

Staff who left in 2002

Noeleen Hartigan

Ray Towell

Michael Wall

Sharon Moran

Janice Doody

Linda Mullen

Cian Molloy

Welfare to Work Team

Co-ordinator

Caretaker

Information Officer

Admin. Support Worker

Admin. Support Worker

Welfare to Work Co-ordinator

Press/Publications Officer

Financial Report

IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31st December 2002



INCOME	2002 Euro	2001 Euro
Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs	159,122	146,204
Combat Poverty Agency	132,307	135,227
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	48,000	46,980
FAS	99,499	88,699
ADM	3,219	-
Charge out of staff & resources	10,044	8,552
Working for Work		
- Department of Education	13,625	13,332
- FAS	13,625	13,332
Sundry Income	7,518	25,414
	486,959	477,740
Less EXPENDITURE		
Wages & Salaries	314,165	281,815
Staff Training	8,266	830
Recruitment Costs	6,207	-
Travel Expenses	639	444
Stationery	3,238	3,612
Postage and Courier	6,062	6,196
Telephone	9,405	7,215
Equipment Rental	178	432
Premises: Maintenance & Other Repairs	25,671	16,933
Rent	15,237	15,237
Light and Heat	2,641	3,450
Insurance	8,685	5,633
General Secretary Costs	-	7,965
Campaigns	-	8,388
ADM Related Costs	3,219	-
National Executive Council	10,928	6,060
Annual Delegate Conference	5,075	5,282
Audit and Accountancy	2,569	3,073
Bank Interest and Charges	474	527
Printing and Publications	42,501	46,867
Sundry Expenses	6,027	3,842
Depreciation	11,835	10,967
	483,022	434,498
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	3,937	43,242

FINANCIAL REPORT



Publications

- **Working for Work, 9th Edition**

The INOU's comprehensive reference guide to exploring welfare, work, education and training options for unemployed people. Launched by Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Social & Family Affairs. 20,000 copies were distributed.

- **Bulletin**

INOU newsletter. Approximate circulation of 1,000 copies per edition.

- **Long-Term Unemployed People's Experiences of the Employment Action Plan**

INOU research project report, funded by the Combat Poverty Agency.

- **INOU Pre-Budget Submission**

- **INOU Information Leaflets**

'Moving from Social Welfare to Work' and 'Employer Incentives to Recruit Unemployed People', funded by ADM

'Your Rights at Work and Claiming an Unemployment Payment', funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs

- **INOU Annual Report 2001**