

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Chairperson's Report	2
Mike Allen - A Tribute	3
Oliver Scally, National Executive Committee	3
General Secretary's Report.....	4
Communications And Media	5
Welfare To Work Section	5
Projects	6
Organisation of the Unemployed Northern Ireland (OUNI)	7
ADC 2000	8
Committees	11
Staff	12
Publications	14

INOU Annual Report 2000

Chairperson's Report

The economy in the Republic of Ireland continued on its rapidly expanding path in 2000. GNP is estimated to have grown by almost 10% with employment growing by almost 5%, while unemployment continued to fall. This very strong growth led to a substantial rise in inflation, which averaged at a sixteen year high of 5.6% in 2000. The inflation issue was one that the INOU campaigned vigorously on over the course of the year, as it undermined the real value of welfare payments.

At the beginning of the year the live register stood at 176,000 while unemployment as measured by the Quarterly National Household survey stood at 6%. By the years end the comparable figures were 142,000 and 3.7% respectively. While this downward trend was welcome, the end of the year saw signs that the spectacular economic and jobs growth of recent years may be beginning to slow down. In particular the emerging slowdown in the IT sector in the US will have serious repercussions for the Irish Economy should it develop into a full blown recession.

However the impressive overall statistics in relation jobs growth and reducing unemployment do not give the full picture. There continued to be significant regional variations in the rate of unemployment: unemployment at the years end stood at 5.8% in the Border region and at 4.8% in the South East. Even where falling unemployment was at or above the National average, long-term unemployed people continued to have difficulties in accessing suitable employment opportunities. A survey of unemployed customers in the Galway area, undertaken for the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs in May/June 2000, for instance, revealed some depressing facts behind the headlines that Ireland was facing a labour shortage. Over half the long term unemployed (54%) did not have the minimum education requirements for any of the 637 jobs advertised in Galway at the time of the survey.

The number of jobs without previous experience requirements was just 85. Added to these barriers the survey also showed disturbingly high problems with literacy, with 34% among the long term unemployed and 15% among the short-term having literacy difficulties.

While this survey was limited to the Galway area, it nevertheless throws cold water on the Taoiseach's publicly expressed view that *"there is a job for anyone who wants one"*. It reinforces the INOU's contention that the focus of government policy in relation to unemployed people must be to invest in providing them with the work experience, education and training they need to allow them access decent sustainable jobs.

Budget 2001 was the biggest give-away budget in the history of the state. It presented a historic opportunity to redistribute the wealth and opportunities generated by our booming economy.

The INOU had clearly identified this Budget as the first crucial test of the Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness. The Programme's *"core objective"* is to *"build a fair, inclusive society in Ireland"* and promises to address *"the needs of people on low incomes by providing for significant improvements in their living standards"*. However the Budget saw a continuation of the Government's widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. Tax reform again favoured the higher paid and the opportunity to remove those on the minimum wage from the tax net was not taken up. In social welfare increases the £8 given to those on the lowest social welfare payments was contrasted with the £10 increase in the Old Age Pension, which the INOU believe typified the Governments distinction between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor.

The view that while Ireland has grown more unequal as a result of successive budgets was given added fuel by the publication of a report by the ESRI (commissioned by the Combat Poverty Agency) on the distribution of income in Ireland. The report findings showed that income inequality had increased between 1994 and 1998. In 1998 the bottom 10% of households had 3.4% of all disposable income while the top 10% had of households had 25%. The report concluded that Ireland is one of the most unequal societies in the EU. Reducing this level of inequality is the key challenge facing Ireland for the future and must be the measure by which Government policy is judged.

Barrie McLatchie

Chairperson

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Mike Allen

The year 2000 saw the departure of Mike Allen, the INOU's long standing General Secretary, to take up the post of General Secretary of the Labour Party. Mike had been involved with the INOU since its inception in 1987 and played a pivotal role in the organisation's development and in the wider fight for the rights of the unemployed in Ireland and Europe. His achievements in developing and maintaining the organisation, from its beginnings as an unfunded pressure group to the current position where it is a recognised social partner, cannot be underestimated. During his time with the INOU he was a tireless and passionate campaigner, advocate and lobbyist on behalf of unemployed people.

His analysis of the causes of Ireland's unemployment problem and the solutions to it are as relevant now as they were at the INOU's inception. In particular his uncompromising commitment to the development of full employment in Ireland and the elimination of long-term unemployment, remain key goals to be achieved. On behalf of our Affiliates, Members, National Executive Committee and staff, past and present, we wish him well in whatever future work he undertakes.

Oliver Scally, National Executive Committee

1951 - 2000

Oliver died during the Christmas period, and his loss will be felt greatly by his fellow NEC members and the staff of the INOU.

A native of Offaly, Oliver lived in Cork with his wife and family. A forthright, and enthusiastic member of the National Executive since 1998, Oliver was always an active participant in INOU activities. He enjoyed being a public voice for the unemployed, and was often called on to do national and local media interviews. He believed strongly in the right of unemployed people to be treated with dignity and fairness, and in the need for decent training leading to guaranteed work. He provided practical assistance to numerous individual unemployed people and was available to assist people whenever it was required. He also lobbied numerous politicians and others, both locally and nationally, to improve the unemployment situation. He will be remembered fondly by all those he came into contact with through his work with and for the unemployed.

INOU Annual Report 2000

General Secretary's Report

This has been a difficult year for the INOU, both in terms of major internal changes and in terms of the opportunities for the organisation to further its agenda. Internally the year saw the departure of many staff, due in the main to certain funding lines no longer being available to us. In particular the loss of Integra funding and funding from ADM had a serious impact. It was not possible to renew contracts for many staff, particularly those working directly on the Integra and ADM projects. The year also saw the departure of the General Secretary, Mike Allen.

Strategic Plan 2000-2003

The INOU Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003 was formally adopted at our Annual Delegate Conference on 6th October 2000. The Plan presented to the ADC incorporated the points raised at an earlier Special Delegate Conference (on 29th October 1999) and had been widely circulated prior to the ADC. The contribution of all those that assisted in the formulation of the final Plan was invaluable.

The Plan outlines the organisational, political and economic context in which the INOU will operate up to 2003 and sets out how the organisation will respond to these developments. The Plan is set in a context of considerable economic growth in which the achievement of the INOU's twin aims of Full Employment and adequate incomes for those dependant on social welfare are realisable goals. In order to achieve the goals set out in the Plan, the strategy proposes a re-organisation of work within the INOU. This will allow us to maintain a high degree of focus on the issues that face unemployed people, while putting a higher degree of emphasis on developing linkages with our affiliated organisations.

The timeframe for the Plan largely coincides with the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The Plan identifies a number of key Organisational, Policy and Administrative Objectives.

Membership

The INOU is a federation of over 200 member organisations. An important decision in respect of the number of categories of membership was reached at our Annual Conference on 6th October. Following discussion amongst Conference Delegates on proposed revised categories of membership, new membership categories were agreed. These are:

- Local community based organisations tackling unemployment.
- Local community based organisations concerned with particular communities of interest or delivering specialist services of assistance to unemployed people.
- National NGO organisations concerned with related issues.
- Trade Unions/Trades Council.
- Area Partnerships/Community Groups/LES.
- Other organisations expressing solidarity or seeking access to training or information.

Our membership base is growing all the time and we welcome new applications for membership. The following organisations became members during the year:

Galway Centre for the Unemployed Jobs Club

West Limerick Resource Centre

Citizens Information Call Centre (Cork)

Sligo Leader Partnership

Ballybeg Key Project

Teach Na Failte

NUS/USI

INOU Annual Report 2000

North West Employment Focus

Communications and Media

The year saw a consolidation of a lot of our media work, with particular emphasis on harnessing information technology for information gathering and for circulating and promoting INOU policy positions.

The INOU web-site www.inou.ie was launched in September. The site has up to date press releases and publications as well as relevant archive material from the last two years of the INOU's work. The home page of the site has the most up to date Live Register and International Labour Organisation figures and a link to an explanation of how these are calculated. Unfortunately access to information technology by unemployed people remains disproportionately low. However the site has received positive feedback from individual unemployed people, INOU affiliates, researchers and journalists. A text only version of the site has been constructed to W3C accessibility standards to ensure that as wide a range of people as possible can access the information regardless of their physical abilities. The text only site conforms to 'Bobby Standards' and carries the 'Bobby Approved' badge.

All INOU press releases are uploaded immediately on the web-site and circulated by email to all INOU affiliates who have this capacity. An extensive database of local and national media email contacts has also been developed.

Welfare to Work Section

In addition to the economic role accurate and comprehensive welfare-to-work provision plays, such a service also plays a crucial part in the battle against social exclusion. An inclusive society demands a confidential, independent information service, where skilled personnel can support individuals in making the best choices for themselves.

The demand for the welfare-to-work service remained high in 2000. The challenge of meeting this demand was heightened by the staff changes in the section over 2000. The trend towards a significant proportion of queries coming from employers, the Local Employment Service, and FÁS supervisors was maintained in 2000, reflecting both the current economic climate, as well as the high profile the section continues to have as an expert information provider. 2000 also saw a continuation of the trend in the growing number of information requests around rights in work, and the INOU continues to fill this gap in welfare-to-work information.

The volume of information requests increased substantially in 2000, with almost 5,000 queries logged to the end of October. We attribute this dramatic increase to factors including the increased complexities in welfare-to-work infrastructure, especially in relation to secondary benefits, and the volume of employment opportunities now available – which are being accessed by a broader cross section of the social welfare reliant population (e.g. people with disabilities). The fact that many of these employment opportunities are short-term and insecure in nature has also added to the burden, as people need to check their outcomes for each potential job.

The seventh edition of Working for Work was published, with 25,000 copies being printed and distributed. The publication is more popular than ever, its comprehensiveness making it an indispensable tool for information providers.

Demand for INOU training programmes provided by the section was strong throughout 2000. The section places a high priority on being flexible in responding to requests for training, and has been able to meet a very high proportion of the demand.

Five modules were provided:

- Introduction to Social Welfare (1 day)
- Welfare-to-Work (3 days)
- Taxation and Welfare-to-Work (1 day)
- Introduction to Social Welfare Appeals (1 day)

INOU Annual Report 2000

- Delivering Quality Services (1 day)

Twelve days training were provided in the January-May 2000 calendar, with a further eleven days in the (shorter) September-December 2000 period. In addition, the section is still providing a significant volume of requested training.

Projects

This year saw the completion of two important projects that the INOU have been involved in since 1998.

In April the INOU launched '*Applications Welcome*' an information campaign to bridge the gap between employers and people who are long-term unemployed. This campaign marked the culmination of the INOU's two-year Integra project. The project investigated barriers to long-term unemployed people in accessing work, with a particular emphasis on working directly with groups of unemployed people to document their views and experiences and working in a similar fashion with a number of small enterprises. The project has shown that barriers still exist for unemployed people re-entering the labour market, despite the growth in overall employment. The most significant of these barriers are current recruitment and selection procedures and negative perceptions on the part of employers. The '*Applications Welcome*' campaign was based on these findings and incorporated an Employers Pack and advertising campaign.

The campaign highlighted the barriers faced by long term unemployed people in accessing the labour market. It also encouraged employers to examine their recruitment and selection procedures and to consider hiring people who have been long term unemployed.

The Employers Pack contains practical information and resource materials on recruitment and selection methods, which can be used to overcome any barriers that unemployment may have created. The pack also contains information on the complete range of financial subsidies and incentives available to employers who recruit long-term unemployed people. '*Applications Welcome*' was promoted throughout the country highlighting the aims of the campaign, and the availability of the Employers Pack.

The Integra Project was run in co- operation with the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland, the Small Firms Association, FÁS, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs and the National Union of Journalists.

This period also saw the winding down of the INOU's work as a selected organisation funded by ADM to provide support to Partnerships and Community Groups. The work covered two distinct areas: Providing strategic information and analysis to Partnerships and Community Groups and enhancing their work in relation to long-term unemployment, particularly by assisting them to engage long-term unemployed people within their management and planning structures.

Some of the key outcomes of the project were:

- 76 members of staff of Partnerships and Community Groups trained in welfare to work information provision.
- 5 seminars run on unemployment related topics
- 9 briefing papers on policy related matters produced and disseminated
- 53,000 copies of four welfare to work publications disseminated.
- 17 workplans for including unemployed people in local structures developed
- A comprehensive help pack on developing mechanisms to facilitate unemployed peoples involvement in local structures

The INOU wishes to place on record its appreciation to the staff who worked on both projects: Nicola Phelan, John Farrell (ADM) and, Shirley Connellan, Carole Sullivan and Stephan Grogan (Integra).

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Organisation of the Unemployed Northern Ireland (OUNI)

The Organisation has grown both in stature and credibility over the past year as the name of OUNI and the work it is doing spreads across Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. 2000 has been a year in which we have ensured that the issues faced by unemployed people have been brought to the attention of both politicians and the general public. This has been partly achieved by forging relationships with NI Assembly members responsible for developing and implementing policies that directly affect the lives of unemployed people. In September members of the OUNI Northern Ireland Council met with Training and Employment Minister Sean Farren, outlining concerns we had around the inflexibility of some elements of the New Deal programme, and regional disparities of the distribution of unemployment. The meeting was constructive and we intend to keep the Minister abreast of the views of those at the receiving end of labour market policies.

Unemployment remained a major issue for the region with the overall rate as measured by the ILO falling from 6.7% at the beginning of the year to 6% by the years end, of whom almost 43% were long term unemployed. This figure of 6% represents 43,000 people. However large numbers of unemployed people are also classed as economically inactive, in other words they want to work but for a variety of reasons (e.g. discouragement, family commitments, sickness) they were not actively seeking work. This category of people continued to increase in Northern Ireland and by October 2000 stood at 59,000, with the largest increase being among the 50+ age group. The rate of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland among people of working age is 29% as compared to 20% for the UK. This is of particular concern as it would indicate that as the official levels of unemployment continue to fall, there is a growth in 'hidden' unemployment.

Another development was the cross border seminars which were held to address the issues facing unemployed people from the border counties looking for work and training on both sides of the border. This followed the establishment of an OUNI Cross Border Committee emanating from an OUNI motion at our last Annual Delegate Conference to identify existing and potential barriers into employment and training for the unemployed living in the border counties. The Border regions suffer disproportionately from unemployment, lack of investment and job opportunities and this work provided an opportunity for OUNI and INOU affiliates to share their perspectives and to build a common analysis and approach to the issues. This work has been most worthwhile and is still ongoing through consultation with our affiliates close to the border, with EURES and with other relevant bodies.

After a long campaign, OUNI was successful in having its Co-ordinator, Lynn Carvill, elected onto the Northern Ireland Consultative Civic Forum. This provides the Organisation with a strategic platform from which to further the policies of OUNI and to lobby for changes which we feel are essential to improve the lives of unemployed people and to tackle unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Indeed, Lynn has been elected chairperson of the Regional Anti-Poverty Strategy Group a sub-committee whose remit is to do exactly that.

OUNI continued its work of organising New Deal Focus groups and inputting the analysis gained to the New Deal Task Force. This work is key to ensuring that the experiences of unemployed people are fed into the monitoring of the New Deal and that those responsible for delivering it are made aware of the problems faced by people the system is supposed to be helping.

The formulation of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and the public consultation process around it provides a unique opportunity for the people of Northern to articulate a vision of the type of society they wish to build. As an organisation which has a vision of society based on the provision of adequate incomes, jobs and opportunities for all, it is vital that OUNI work proactively to try to ensure that the voices of unemployed people are heard in the consultation process. To this end OUNI has become involved in organising a series of seminars in the region on the theme of economic and social rights to be included in the bill. This work is ongoing and hopefully will have a positive outcome in terms of the provision of the Bill.

INOUE Annual Report 2000

There has always been an axe hanging over the head of OUNI in relation to funding. This has inevitably affected the continuity of our work and has been a drain on the morale of both staff and the Northern Ireland Council. The successful bid to both NIVT (Cathy please insert real names for the two acronyms please) and JRCT alleviated the strain at the end of the year and gave us the springboard required to continue developing the objectives of OUNI.

There are many people and organisations that have been of invaluable assistance to OUNI throughout the year 2000. Our thanks must go to all our affiliates who steer the work of the organisation. We are also deeply grateful to our main funder, the National Lottery Charities Board (now known as the Community Fund) without whom we would not have been able to highlight the issues and problems that affect those who are unemployed and advocate the policies that would have a beneficial impact on their lives. For all those who supported us both financially and in other ways, including the Trade Union movement, we are very grateful.

ADC 2000

The year 2000 ADC was held in the Marino Institute. The keynote speaker was Séamus Healy T.D. who had recently been elected to the Dáil as an Independent. Over 100 participants attended on the day and took part in two workshops on Community Employment and the National Employment Action Plan. Delegates also debated and voted on sixteen motions covering issues of concern on labour market programmes, literacy, the rights of asylum seekers, social welfare payments and child poverty.

INOU Annual Report 2000

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 each year. NEC Members are elected from the membership of the organisation at the Annual Delegate Conference and normally serve for an initial term of two years.

NEC - October 2000

Name	Nominating Centre
Barrie McLatchie <i>Chairperson</i>	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Anne Fergus <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>	Galway Centre for the Unemployed
John Mathews <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>	Dundalk Resource Centre for the Unemployed
Delia Colohan <i>Treasurer</i>	Ballinasloe Resource Centre
Des Bonass	Dublin Trades Council
Noel Clune	ICTU
Wendy Jarvis	Cavan Information and Opportunities Centre
Tony Jordan	Ait na nDaoine, Dundalk
Padraig Malone	Limerick Trades Council
Pat Murphy	Larkin Unemployed Centre

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Oliver Scally (RIP)	Cork Centre for the Unemployed
Helen Ryan	NALA
Michael Wall	Staff Representative
Paul Billings	Co-opted
Dennis Blighe	Co-opted
NEC Members who left in 2000	
Anne Bowen	Staff Representative
Emma Jane Hoey	Farney Information and Resource Centre
Mary Murphy	ICTU
Kenny McAdams	Disability Action
Padraig MacLochLainn	Inishowen Branch

The NEC would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the work of the organisation by those NEC Members who left during the year.

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Committees

Committee	Representative	Main Topics Covered/Outcome
National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Tony Monks	Developing a 10 year strategy document for Ireland
National Economic and Social Forum (NESF)	Camille Loftus	Report on alleviating labour market shortages issued November 2000. Lone Parents team due to report 2001
PPF Plenary Meetings	Tony Monks	Monitoring PPF
Social Economy Monitoring committee	Tony Monks	Monitoring of the Social Economy programme.
P2000 Basic Income Working Group	Camille Loftus	Cost and implications of introducing basic income guarantee
Trade Advisory Forum	Tony Monks	Advice to Gov. on issues/barriers to developing the export sector
Standing Committee on the Labour Market.	Camille Loftus	High support programme for those unable too progress to the open labour market. Mainstreaming of CE jobs
Productive Sector OP Monitoring Committee	Tony Monks	Monitoring progress of investment in the productive sector element of the National Development Plan.
Employment and Human Resources OP Monitoring Committee	Camille Loftus	Monitoring progress of human resources element of the National Development Plan.
Refundable tax credits working group	Camille Loftus	Examination of the role refundable tax credits can play in the tax and welfare systems, including the possibility of paying FIS through the tax system

INOUE Annual Report 2000

Staff

The INOU experienced a significant reduction in its staffing levels during the year. A major development earlier in the year was the departure of the long standing General Secretary, Mike Allen. During the course of the year, an internal organisational review was undertaken in response to the completion of the INTEGRA Project - Combating Prejudice Against the Unemployed in April 2000 and the departure of the Labour Market Team Co-ordinator and a number of other key staff. A new Development Team was also created from amongst existing staff in order to deliver on Strategic Plan objectives.

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	Tony Monks
Press Officer	Noeleen Hartigan
Press Assistant	Carole Phillips
Administrative and Finance Team	
Administrator/Financial Controller	Anne Gibney
Book Keeper	Carol Thornton
Receptionist	Michael Wall
Database Administrator	Janice Doody
Security	Peter Dunne
Cleaner	Sadie Caffrey
Caretaker	Ray Towell
Welfare Rights Team	
Team Co-ordinator	Camille Loftus
Welfare Rights Officer	Vacancy (post subsequently filled)
Welfare Rights Trainer	Helen Fields-Molloy
Personnel and Development Team	
Personnel and Development Officer	John Stewart
Development Worker	John Farrell
Admin Assistant	Sharon Moran
OUNI Staff	
Northern Ireland Co-ordinator	Lynn Carville
Northern Ireland Administrator	Cathy Allen

INOU Annual Report 2000

Staff who left in 2000	
Mike Allen	General Secretary
Carole Sullivan	Labour Market Team Co-ordinator
Mary Flavin	Welfare Rights Officer
Nicola Phelan	Partnership Worker
Michael Gallagher	Admin Assistant
Anne Bowen	Welfare Rights Trainer
Stephen Grogan	Integra Researcher
Shirley Connellan	Integra Researcher
Maeve Adams	Receptionist
Vera Copeland	Admin Assistant

INOU Annual Report 2000

Publications

- **Working for Work, 7th edition**

Launched by Dermot Ahern, Minister for Social , Community and Family Affairs.

- **Bulletin**

Eight editions. Approximate circulation of 1,000 copies per edition.

- **Integra Project**

" Combating Prejudice Against the Unemployed - Making the Most of Our Human Resources"

Project Reports

Final Report
Blanchardstown Report
Ballyfermot Report
Dundalk Report
Galway Report

Resource Material

Employers Pack
Job Seeking Skills Pack

Additional Reports

Final Conference Report
A Class Act: Policy Makers, the Print Media and Unemployment

- **'Delivering the Promise of Partnership: A fair share for all'**

INOU pre Budget submission

- **INOU Annual Report 1999**