

Supporting Unemployed People



inou

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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Michelle Kelly representing the INOUE at an AONTAS led Erasmus visit to Stuttgart in Germany.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson's Welcome



*Joanne Farrell
INOUE Chairperson*

Welcome to the INOU's Annual Report for 2024. It has been a year of great change amongst the staff team. On October 16th, John Stewart retired as the Director of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. John had worked for the INOU for over twenty-five years. He was appointed as INOU Coordinator in August 2008, before that position, John undertook the roles of INOU Assistant General Secretary and Personnel and Development Officer. At the organisation's Annual Delegate Conference in 2024 the job title of INOU Coordinator was changed to INOU Director.



*John Stewart
former Co-ordinator of
the INOU*

John made a huge contribution to the work and development of the INOU, not only was Araby House on North Richmond Street, Dublin 1 retrofitted, but the INOU now operates the Learning Hub on Townsend Street, Dublin 2.

On 26th June, at the INOU's Learning Hub, we said a fond farewell to two long-standing staff colleagues Lorraine Hennessy, Training Manager and Laura Pierce, Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator.

Lorraine joined the INOU as a Welfare to Work Trainer on 7th May 2007. Lorraine played a key role in the development and delivery of INOU Welfare to Work Training Services; co-ordinated the INOU's successful re-engagement process with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI); and was the Staff Representative on the INOU's Board of Management / National Executive Committee.

Laura Pierce joined the INOU as an Assistant Training Co-ordinator on 18th April 2011. Laura was subsequently appointed as an Assistant Local Training Initiative (LTI) Co-ordinator and then LTI Co-ordinator for the INOU's Building Futures programme. Lorraine, Laura and colleagues were instrumental in establishing the INOU's Learning Hub in Townsend Street in the South Inner City from where we now deliver our Building Futures and Shaping Futures Local Training Initiatives.

After competitive processes Bríd O'Brien became the new INOU Director; Michelle Kelly the Head of Training Services; Nicole Curran the Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator; Aisling Byrne the Building Futures Assistant LTI Co-ordinator; Sinead Boyle the Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator; Emma Cooray the Shaping Futures Assistant LTI Co-ordinator; and Rebecca Gorman the Head of Policy and Media. I wish them all every success in their new roles.

I had the honour of opening a range of INOU online events, which have covered a broad range of issues, including cross border ones, and I have always been impressed by the quality of the presentations given, the turnout of INOU affiliated organisations, mem-

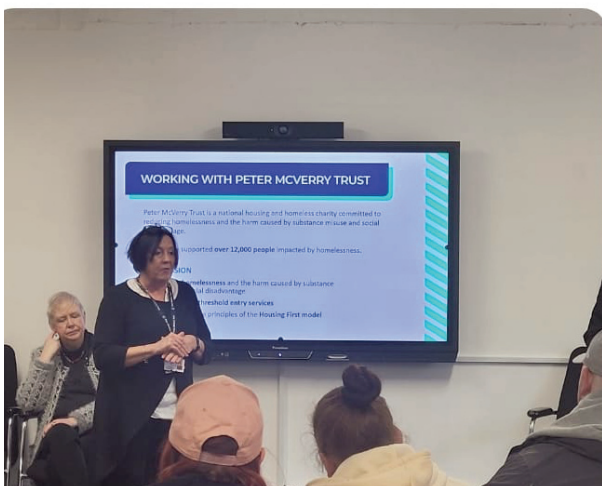
bers and other colleagues, and the extent of the engagement at these events.

As you will see in the rest of this Annual Report, the INOU has had another busy year. Colleagues in the Welfare Rights Information Service continue to support unemployed people and people on other social welfare payments with challenges they are facing securing a payment or seeking to take up employment.

A broad range of training has also been undertaken. In the INOU Learning Hub the organisation’s two Local Training Initiatives, Building Futures and Shap-

ing Futures, continue to be successfully run. While online the organisation ran its two QQI Level 6 programmes - Information, Advice and Advocacy and Welfare Rights – and a range of non-accredited programmes. The bite size training courses developed during Covid-19 continue to be popular.

I would like to thank my NEC colleagues and all of the staff for the dedication and commitment to the work and development of the INOU, and I look forward to continuing working with them as we plan strategically for the future.



In January, the INOU Learning Hub hosted a pilot mini recruitment event for learners on the Building Futures and Shaping Futures Local Training Initiatives. The event was organised in collaboration the Employer Relations Unit, Department of Social Protection, Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

Director's Report



*Bríd O'Brien
Director's Report*

As Joanne noted in the Chairperson's Report, it has been a year of great change amongst the staff team in the INOU. At the organisation's Annual Delegate Conference in May 2024 the job title of INOU Coordinator was changed to INOU Director. John Stewart retired from this post in mid-October and I moved from the post of Head of Policy and Media to the role of Director. John made a huge contribution to the work and development of the INOU. It was a pleasure working with him and I am very conscious that I have big shoes to fill as the organisation moves forward.

In the Training Team there were a lot of changes as well, with Lorraine Hennessy, Training Manager and Laura Pierce, Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator leaving us in late June. Michelle Kelly moved from being the Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator to the role of INOU Head of Training Services. Nicole Curran became the Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator and Aisling Byrne the Assistant Co-ordinator. Sinead Boyle became the Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator and Emma Cooray the Assistant Co-ordinator. I wish them all every success in their new roles.

I would like to thank Lorraine and Laura for all of their work with the INOU, as Joanne noted they made sig-

nificant contributions to the development of the INOU's training work and programme development. In late November, I was delighted to welcome Rebecca Gorman to the INOU as the new Head of Policy and Media.

Other key roles within the INOU are filled through our Community Employment programme and in 2024 Angela Hennessy-Cross, Agnes Piti, James O'Toole, and Sarah Oates left us. I would like to thank them all for their work and contribution to the INOU. Two other CE participants also left the programme, Alan Chambers and Vladislav Martinyiuk, they were based in Ozanam House on Mountjoy Square, and I wish them all the very best for the future.

Governance

Since 28th February 2020, the INOU has been registered on the Public Register of Charities, the organisation's Charity Number is 20205369. The INOU's Charitable Purpose has 5 main strands:

- The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship through the provision of a comprehensive welfare rights / welfare to work information, advocacy and training service.
- The advancement of education through the provision of training / education and acting as a sponsor of employability programmes such as Community Employment (CE) and two Local Training Initiatives (LTI).
- The advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health or disability through the provision of information on welfare, work, education and training and also directly supporting unemployed people and organisations working on unemployment.
- The advancement of community development

including rural or urban regeneration by supporting community based organisations in their work through the provision of training and information services with a view to enhancing the capacity of organisations to provide services and supports to unemployed people and other people experiencing social and economic exclusion.

- The integration of those who are disadvantaged and the promotion of their full participation in society by way of representing the interests and views of all unemployed people and their dependents at a national level; campaigning for an acceptable standard of living for all unemployed people and their dependents and by campaigning towards the achievement of full employment at an acceptable rate of pay.

The INOU is compliant with the requirements of the Charities' Governance Code and we continued to strengthen the governance and oversight framework in the organisation throughout the year.

Board Meetings

The National Executive Committee / Board of Trustees met on 10 occasions in 2024. Two Board Development sessions were also held: the first on 19th June focused on governance, including the INOU's QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Processes; and the second on 11th December, covered strategic planning and the development of a new plan. I wish to thank my NEC colleagues for their time, commitment and leadership in supporting the running of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed.

Annual Conference/AGM

The INOU's Annual Delegate Conference and AGM was held Wednesday 22nd May at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin, with over ninety people in atten-

dance. The Conference was Chaired by Joanne Farrell, INOU Chairperson. Sadly, Joanne's first task at the Conference was to remember Ann Fergus, long-standing INOU Chairperson, who tragically passed away at her home in August 2023. Ann served on the INOU's National Executive Committee and Officers Board, was highly regarded and respected throughout the organisation and her enormous contribution to the work of the INOU is impossible to measure.

John Stewart, INOU Co-ordinator / Director, gave an overview of the work of the organisation since the last AGM. John thanked all of the staff and the Board for their incredible dedication and commitment to the INOU during what had been a difficult period for the organisation. In addition to formally agreeing the Financial and Annual Reports and reinstating our Auditors, Browne Murphy and Hughes for a further year, the Conference also elected Joseph Doyle, INOU General Branch to the Board / National Executive Committee (NEC).

Conference Delegates discussed the five motions that had been proposed. Two motions came from the INOU General Branch, the mechanism through which people who are unemployed play an active part in the running of the organisation. The first motion called on the Government to increase the Community Employment and TUS payment rates and the second motion called on the Government to change the system for working part-time and signing-on to one based on the number of hours worked rather than the number of days. These motions were discussed and agreed.

The two motions from the INOU National Executive Committee (NEC) were also agreed – the first called on the Government to benchmark all social welfare rates at a level which is sufficient to lift people above



John Stewart, INOU Co-ordinator / Director addressing the Annual Delegate Conference in May.

the poverty line and provide them with a Minimum Essential Standard of Living; and the second motion called on the Government to deliver wrap around employment and support services that meet the needs of people who are unemployed, regardless of whether or not they are on a social welfare payment.

A further motion, from the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre called on the Government to properly support unemployed people and others marginalised in the labour market, to participate in education, training and employment programmes that will ensure they gain access to decent employment was also agreed.

Two Constitutional Amendments were passed at the Conference. The first amendment provided for a change to the INOU's Membership Structure to fa-

cilitate the participation of a greater number of INOU Member / Affiliated organisations in the work of the INOU by way of submitting motions, voting at AGMs / ADCs and nominating representatives on to the Board / NEC. The second amendment provided for a change to the job title of INOU Coordinator to INOU Director.

The round table element of Conference facilitated a good discussion on the INOU's priorities for the incoming Government after the next General Election, which took place in late November 2024. This discussion fed into a number of INOU policy documents including the organisation's Pre-Budget Submission and General Election Manifesto. The INOU is grateful to attendees for their participation and contributions.

At the subsequent Board Meeting on 7th June Joanne Farrell was re-elected as INOU Chairperson for a two year period. Mick Creedon was re-elected as Treasurer for a further two years. Evanne Kilmurray was re-elected as one of the two Vice-Chairpersons. Lisa Connell was also nominated and elected to the other Vice-Chairperson position.

Membership and Member Supports

South Dublin County Partnership joined the INOU as an affiliated / member organisation during the year; by the end of the year, we had 193 organisations in membership – further details can be found on the *Our Member Organisations* page of our website.

We continued to deepen the levels of engagement with our member organisations and other groups throughout 2024, and participation at on-line events remained strong. Over 750 people attended eleven online events, which included collaborative events:

- Cross Border with Advice NI and North Connaught and Ulster MABS;
- Employment Rights with Coolock Law and Mediation (CLM);
- two Employment Guidance and a Creating an Eco Social Welfare online event with Maynooth University;
- Literacy Resources with NALA and Kilkenny/Carlow ETB;
- ALL Innovation and Collaborative Fund with ALL;
- JobsIreland;
- Pobal's Deprivation Index;
- SOLAS; and
- Public Libraries.

The INOU also hosted eleven Conversations with Vulnerable people facilitated by Samaritans Ireland.

The INOU would like to thank Anne Corcoran, Partnership and Operations Manager with Samaritans Ireland for running this excellent module.

Regional Discussion Forums

Over 190 people participated in our six Regional Discussion Forums held online, three in April – May, and three in early November. The themes covered at these events included:

- Means Testing Social Welfare Payments: Policy Challenges;
- Exploring Means Testing for Allowance Based Schemes and some of the operational anomalies that occur;
- Information and Advocacy – from a policy perspective; and
- Social Welfare Payments – Issues and Anomalies: a scheme based overview underlying issues and anomalies occurring in Social Welfare Schemes.

Individual Membership

Our Individual Unemployed Member meetings continue to provide important opportunities for INOU General Branch members to have an input into the work of the organisation and to participate in the wide-ranging discussions on unemployment / employment related issues. Three members of the General Branch sit on the INOU's NEC / Board of Management and two General Branch members are represented on the NEC ADC Sub-Committee. The General Branch met nine times in 2024 and there were two Introductory Meetings for people who joined the INOU during the year. General Branch members also co-designed two online events during the year. Individual members are kept informed of events and developments that may be of interest to them and invited to contribute to the INOU's e-bulletin.

Welfare Rights Information and Advocacy Service

The Welfare Rights Information and Advocacy Service (WRIAS) provides a comprehensive, confidential and independent welfare rights information and advocacy service. The section provides these services through a telephone helpline, by e-mail, publications and directly through the INOU website.

2024 was another year of significant demands on our information and advocacy services. Through this service the INOU responded to almost 10,000 queries during the year, engaging with over 7,000 people with welfare to work queries, and supporting almost 1,500 people through access to supports for people engaged in the appeals process.

Colleagues in the WRIAS team participated in twelve Department of Social Protection supported Recruitment and Jobs Fairs and three other events answering queries raised on the day and following up with more detailed responses with attendees when required.

Working for Work

Working for Work is the most comprehensive guide to social welfare payments, back to work supports, education and training options for unemployed people and others distant from the labour market. As we approached the end of the year, very significant work had been completed on the production of the 31st edition of this key publication and we continue to be grateful to the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science / SOLAS for their on-going support for the publication.

Early in 2024 a *Back to Work Supports* leaflet was produced and circulated at events the INOU attended. This leaflet provides information on a range of options and supports for unemployed people

seeking to Return to Work from a Jobseeker's payments.

Training Services

The INOU delivers a significant suite of training programmes to a very diverse group of individuals and organisations including people who are unemployed; people in employment; people participating on employment and training programmes; organisations in the community and voluntary sector; service providers in the statutory, profit and not-for-project sectors.

Twenty training programmes, with over six hundred participants, were delivered in 2024. The majority of these programmes were delivered online, supporting a wider participation of people and organisations from across the country.

In 2024 the INOU received formal confirmation of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)'s acceptance of our overall Quality Assurance Procedures, further work has been undertaken as part of the QQI processes.

More information on the range of training services and courses delivered by the organisation are available on the *Training Services and Training Courses* pages of our website.

Building Futures

Building Futures, a Local Training Initiative, delivers a QQI accredited training programme and associated workplace internships that draws on learners' own life experiences to enable them to become peer educators, trainers, community workers and mentors. The 14th year of our programme was completed in 2024. All learners received QQI certification. Some learners also undertook workplace internships and volunteering opportunities which provided invaluable experience of and insight into

community and voluntary based workplaces. Learners also had opportunities to participate in workshops and additional training. A very successful Recruitment Process for the 15th year of the programme was completed during the summer period and the new Learners commenced training on September 18th, 2024.

Shaping Futures

Shaping Futures is a QQI Level 4 Programme that encourages and supports learners to gain employability skills. Successful learners will receive a QQI Level 4 Major Award in Employability Skills. As with Building Futures the programme focuses on participants developing their own life experiences into learning and development. The fifth year of this programme was completed in August with learners successfully receiving a QQI award. Following a very successful Recruitment Process, the Learners for the 6th year of the programme commenced training on September 18th, 2024.

Both programmes, Shaping Futures and Building Futures continue to be a huge success and we are delighted to report that we continue to hold Local Training Initiative designation for the programmes, which are based in the INOU's Learning Hub, 88-90 Townsend Street, Dublin 2.

Employer Linkages

The organisation maintained its work of monitoring job announcements and to place key information about job opportunities on the *Jobs Watch* section of the organisation's website. During 2024 over 9,600 jobs with 89 employers were highlighted.

The INOU continued to link with companies that are creating jobs to provide information about the incentives available to employers to recruit unemployed people. An *Employer Recruitment Incentives*

and *Supports* leaflet was produced early in the year and distributed at events the INOU attended and to employers making jobs announcements.

The INOU also gave an input at an NYCI online event of their global youth workers network on the theme of Meaningful and Dignified Work for Young People, which built on the INOU's consultation work for the development of the Government's *Employment and Youth Engagement Charter*.

Community Employment Project

The INOU has been a sponsor of a Community Employment (CE) project for the last 28 years. Participants are based both in our offices at Araby House, Dublin 1, at our Learning Hub in the South Inner City and at the Ozanam Centre on Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. The focus of the CE project continues to be on supporting participants to gain key skills, competencies and work experience in order to enhance their progression outcomes.

CE colleagues fill essential roles like housekeeping, caretaking, finance and office admin, web admin / social media, and information provision. Their work continues to be essential to the effective running of the organisation. The flexibility demonstrated by my CE colleagues has enabled the organisation to continue to meet the needs of unemployed people and I am very grateful to everyone for their input over the past year.

Staffing

As noted earlier, 2024 saw a number of significant staff changes. After competitive processes Bríd O'Brien became the new INOU Director; Michelle Kelly the Head of Training Services; Nicole Curran the Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator; Aisling Byrne the Building Futures Assistant LTI Co-ordinator;

Sinead Boyle the Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator; Emma Cooray the Shaping Futures Assistant LTI Co-ordinator; and Rebecca Gorman the Head of Policy and Media.

Details of the INOU Staff Team are available on page 15. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their dedication to the work and ethos of the INOU, it is a real privilege to be part of such a team.

On pages 10-14 there is a report from the Head of Policy and Media, Rebecca Gorman detailing policy developments, working in partnership, communications and submissions made in 2024. And on page 17-19 there is a Finance Report from Amanda Kelly, INOU Financial Controller detailing the organisation's income and expenditure, and financial position at the end of 2024.



The INOU Annual Delegate Conference held on May 22nd in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin.

Head of Policy and Media Report



Rebecca Gorman
Head of Policy
and Media

Context

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Quarter 4 2024 unemployment decreased by 1,600 to 116,100 people in comparison to the same quarter in 2023. The unemployment rate decreased to 4%. The unemployment rate for women also decreased over the year to 3.8% but increased for men to 4.3%. The unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 years rose to 9.9%, while the unemployment rate for people aged 25-74 years decreased to 3.2%. Young people accounted for 30.1% of the unemployed in Quarter 4 2024, an increase on the 2023 figure.

The number of people deemed long-term unemployed (over one year) decreased by 4.4% over the year to 28,200 people. The long-term unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point to 1.0. Women accounted for 49.6% of the long-term unemployed in Q4 2024, in comparison to 40% in Quarter 4 2023.

The Potential Additional Labour Force (PALF) captures people who may not fit into the official definition of unemployment, whereby people have to be actively seeking work for the previous four weeks and available to take up work in the coming two weeks of the survey. In Q4 2024, PALF stood at

113,700 an increase of 7.5% or 8,000 people on Q4 2023. The CSO noted that *“Of those who stated that they wanted to work but were not seeking work or available for work in Q4 2024, 25.0% said this was due to education or training. This compares to 27.3% a year earlier and 20.3% in Q4 2022. Persons not seeking work due to own illness or disability accounted for 32.0% of the total in Q4 2024, down from 32.3% in Q4 2023 and down from 39.5% in Q4 2022.”*

Policy Developments

On the theme of lifelong guidance, the Advisory Group established when the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance was developed in 2023, met to discuss moving some of the actions forward. As part of this work the first National Lifelong Guidance Framework forum / networking event was held in Dublin in May, and the INOU facilitated one of the roundtable discussions.

The INOU’s Head of Policy and Media represents the organisation on the National Apprenticeship Alliance Access and Inclusion Subcommittee, which met in February, April, June, and November. At these meetings the Access to Apprenticeship programme bursary; proxy indicators on socio-economic background re a baseline for under-represented groups; the Apprenticeship Incentivisation Programme run by Irish Traveller Movement; draft document *Tips for Apprenticeship Employers on Being Disability-Inclusive* were discussed.

The INOU is one of the three Community & Voluntary Pillar representatives on the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). NESC met in March, June, September, and December. Amongst the issues explored by NESC during the year were Good Jobs / Better Work; Boosting Housing Supply: Modern Methods of Construction; Understanding En-

ergy in Households and Communities; Migration; Energy Transition as an Opportunity to Eliminate Energy Poverty; and Understanding and Deepening Compact Growth.

The INOU continued to participate on the Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC), which met three times during the year, in April, July and September. Amongst the topics discussed by the LMAC were policy recommendations from OECD / EU Commission JRC / DSP Impact Evaluation of Ireland's Active Labour Market Policies; impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Labour Market; the National Economic Dialogue; and *Pathways to Work* Draft Annual Progress Report. The EU-OECD *Impact evaluation of Ireland's Active Labour Market Policies*, which focused on Community Employment and Tús (Community Work Placement Initiative), produced more positive results than previous research on Community Employment.

The LMAC Evaluation Sub-group, which met in April, June, September, and November. Amongst the issues the LMAC's Evaluation sub-group examined were potential research topics; *The Structure and Usage of the Public Employment Services* paper; the Departments of Finance, Enterprise, Trade and Employment presentation on their report *Artificial Intelligence: Friend or Foe*; *Pathways to Work* Key Performance Indicators; research on people engaged in small quantities of work; and Indecon's presentation on their preliminary results of the Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) evaluation.

The INOU Head of Policy and Media represented the INOU at the *National Economic Dialogue 2024* in Dublin Castle; and the launch of the *Employment and Youth Engagement Charter*. In 2022 the INOU ran six focus groups of young people to feed into the development of this charter. At the Department

of Social Protection's *Social Inclusion Forum 2024* she facilitated the workshop on employment.

At the IHREC Conference on *Equality At Work: Preventing Socio-Economic Discrimination*, the INOU Head of Policy and Media spoke on one of the morning panels, while two learners from the INOU's *Building Futures* programme spoke in the workshop on long-term unemployment in the afternoon. Amongst the other events she participated in were the consultations on the National Report under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on Women and Girls organised by D/Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY); the development of the next *Further Education & Training Strategy* by SOLAS; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Ireland's Eight Periodic Report as a State party hosted by DCEDIY; and the National Civic Forum held in Dublin Castle, organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Working in partnership

The INOU worked with colleagues in the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) throughout 2024, including on the planning of the CVP annual Think-in; preparation of a joint submission to the EU National Reform Programme and EU Semester process; completion of the European Economic and Social Committee's European Semester Group Questionnaire; the Budget 2025 meeting with Ministers for Finance; Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform; the CVP delegation for the meeting with the Department of An Taoiseach's Social Dialogue Unit. In 2024 the INOU also participated in the Linkage Groups and Bilateral meetings with the Departments of Social Protection; Rural and Community Development. The INOU HPM organised a meeting of CVP Linkage Group for the Department of Chil-

dren, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and in conjunction with the Department organised the bilateral meeting.

During 2024 the INOU continued to work with colleagues in the Community Platform. In February, the Platform launched its report to the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee in IHREC, and as a member of the working group, the INOU facilitated the panel discussion. The organisation also participated in Platform meetings to prepare for discussions with political parties on the Platform's Election Manifesto. The INOU was also a member of the Community Platform's working group on the issue of consistent poverty, a paper was published in September. Following discussions on Budget 2025 at a Platform meeting, the INOU prepared a note on the doubling of the penalty rates for people on a Jobseeker's payment.

As part of the Add10th Alliance, the INOU continued to seek the inclusion of a new ground in Ireland's equality legislation: one that would cover socio-economic status. Though there was a proposed Equality Acts Amendment Bill listed amongst the legislation named in the priority drafting Spring Session 2024, little progress was made on this issue in 2024. The Alliance met with IHREC to discuss this issue.

The INOU sits on the Programme Monitoring Committees for the European Social Fund+, called EIST (Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training) which runs from 2021-2027; the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2021-2027; and the previous ESF programme, PEIL (Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning) and attended a range of meetings throughout 2024.

The INOU Head of Policy and Media represented the INOU in a range of external initiatives / meetings including: the Interreg Project, Terremplo, led

by the Ballymun Jobs Centre; the FIT Choose Tech-Coalition for Tech Apprenticeship Access and Inclusion; the Maynooth University led Lifelong Guidance Practice Advisory Group; Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) Research Advisory Committee; the Energy Poverty Network led by Friends of the Earth; the pre-budgetary meetings hosted by the SVP; National Women's Council's led Alliance for a public system of early childhood education and care, known as Together for Public; EAPN Ireland and Community Work Ireland preparatory meetings for the 2024 Social Inclusion Forum; and the Better Europe Alliance to discuss the annual report to EU Commission on the EU Semester process.

Communications

In 2024 the INOU published five issues of our e-bulletin. In February, INOU e-Bulletin Issue 58 covered three INOU submissions on Ireland's second National Social Enterprise Policy; pre-legislative scrutiny for Jobseeker's Pay Related Benefit; means testing. Other articles covered National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance 2024-2030; work of three INOU affiliates: Ballymun Jobs Centre, WorkEqual, NCU Training; Community Platform submission to UN ESCR Committee; INOU Learning Hub mini recruitment event with DSP; INOU's online events update; 2022 Pobal HP Deprivation Index.

In April, INOU e-Bulletin Issue 59 included articles on Erasmus visit to Stuttgart; EU-OECD-DSP Community Employment & Tús evaluation; personal accounts of Community Employment; updates from affiliates Sligo Leader Partnership & CLM's Centre for Environmental Justice; follow-up piece on means-testing; articles on ESF+ study on long-term unemployment; Good data and the Census; ESRI report on gender and labour market inclusion; a poem from an INOU individual member; adding socio-economic status to equality legislation.

In July, INOU e-Bulletin Issue 60 included articles on INOU Learning Hub's trip to Helsinki; Pre-budget submission summary; IHREC's conference Achieving Equality at Work - Promoting Socio-Economic Equality in Employment; INOU's Annual Delegate Conference; INOU Welfare Rights Section Out and About; Community Employment Pilot Initiative; Ballymun Job Centre led Terremplo project; Lifelong Guidance Network Event; Social Inclusion Forum 2024; NWC report on 'Sex for Rent' exploitation; and Pathways to Work Mid-term Review.

In October, INOU e-Bulletin Issue 61 contained articles outlining key elements of Budget 2025; new Alliance for Public Early Childhood Education and Care; importance of Credited Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI); NESC's Towards a National Better Work Strategy; National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II 2024 – 2028; Trading for Impact, the National Social Enterprise Programme, 2024 – 2028; Understanding Life in Ireland – Ireland's Well-being Framework; and Community Platform's Eliminate Consistent Poverty report.

In December, INOU e-Bulletin Issue 62 had articles on what needs to be in the new Programme for Government; our retired colleague, John Stewart; Pathways to Work third annual progress report; a new programme Cuimsiú; Solas' 20th annual National Skills Bulletin; ATD Ireland film on socio-economic status ground; Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on means testing; INOU's new Training Calendar; INOU Discussion Forums; Irish Cancer Society services; OECD report on automation and generative AI.

Other communications work included an INOU View piece on the Government's Employment and Youth Engagement Charter and the INOU's consultation work for this Charter. Media interviews on the

Labour Force Survey for Q2 2024; the doubling of penalty rate for people on a Jobseeker's payment - other media outlets picked up on the INOU View piece on this issue; the perception that anyone who wants a job, can get one – an assumption often made when people talk about full employment.

Submissions

Early in 2024 a submission was made to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development and the Islands on the Heads of the Bill introducing the new Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit. A submission was also made to the Department of Rural and Community Development on their public consultation to develop Ireland's second National Social Enterprise Policy. An online survey was completed for the public consultation on EU Cohesion Policy in Ireland, the lead Department were the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. The INOU made another submission to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands, this time on the means-testing of social protection working age payments.

Later on, the INOU made a submission to the development of Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) which EU member states prepare annually and send into the European Commission as part of the EU Semester process. The Department of An Taoiseach are the lead Department on this policy area. The INOU contributed to the development of the Energy Poverty Network submission to the consultation on the Revised Energy Poverty Action Plan. An online survey / questionnaire was completed as part of the National Risk Assessment 2024 process.

Over the summer the INOU's pre-budget submission was sent to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in preparation for their Pre-budget Forum; to

the Houses of the Oireachtas; and the Government. Later on a submission was made to the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the issue of “Unemployment Blackspots”, followed up by a presentation. The online survey the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth commissioned for the development National Strategy for Women and Girls was completed.

Towards the end of the year, the INOU’s Post Budget Analysis was published on the organisation’s website and sent to the Houses of the Oireachtas; followed by the INOU’s General Election Manifesto which sought to bring to the attention of people standing in this election the issues facing unemployed people, others furthest from the labour market, and the community and voluntary organisations working with them. Later on further work was under-

taken seeking the inclusion of key priorities in new Programme for Government including sustained investment in public services; address systemic barriers in the labour market; introduce benchmarking of social welfare rates to lift people above poverty line, provide them with Minimum Essential Standard of Living; establish a pro-active and informative ‘Social Welfare Health Check’; introduce socio-economic status ground; properly resource youth groups, community organisations, community and adult education.

In January, May, and September the returns to the Lobbying Returns for the period September to December 2023; January to April 2024; and May to August 2024 were completed. Since September 2015, to December 2024, the INOU had made 208 returns.



Bríd O’Brien representing the INOU at the Together for Public event in September calling for the introduction of a public system of early childhood education and care.

Board of Trustees/National Executive Committee (NEC)

Board of Trustees / National Executive Committee (NEC)

The National Executive Committee / Board of Trustees is the governing body and Board of Directors of the INOU. NEC members are elected from amongst the wider membership of the organisation at the Annual Delegate Conference / AGM and normally serve for an initial term of two years. There were 10 normal NEC / Board Meetings held during the year and two Board Development Sessions. We are very grateful to all the members of the National Executive Committee for their input to the work of the organisation.

INOUE Officers Board

Officers Board

Joanne Farrell	Chair
Mick Creedon	Treasurer
Evanne Kilmurray	Vice Chair and Company Secretary
Lisa Connell	Vice Chair
John Stewart	Director (up to October 2024)
Bríd O'Brien	Director (from October 2024)

Nominating Organisation

Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
 Ballymun Jobs Centre
 Inner City Enterprise
 ICTU

National Executive Committee (NEC)

Philip Fitzsimons	INOUE General Branch
Breda Murphy	EDI Centre, Longford
Michelle Kelly	Staff Representative
Brendan Sherlock (Co-opted)	INOUE General Branch
Yvonne Browne (Co-opted)	National Employability Service
Michael O'Mahony (Co-opted)	INOUE General Branch

We would like to thank Lorraine Hennessy, NEC Staff Representative and Joseph Doyle NEC member, who stepped down from the NEC for their support for the work of the organisation.

We would like to like to thank the Staff Team for their commitment and dedication to the work of the organisation and also to thank those staff who left during the year.

Senior Management Team

Director	Bríd O’Brien
Head of Policy and Media	Rebecca Gorman
Financial Controller	Amanda Kelly

Finance Team and Administration Team

Book Keeper	Carol Thornton
Finance Administrator	Urszula Belmaati

CE Supervisor	Laura Rossney
HR Admin	Antonino Campanella
Office Administrator	Allison Harris
Housekeeper	Dinah Donegan
Caretaker	Dessie Divine

Welfare to Work Team

Manager Welfare to Work Section	Robbert J. Lynch
Senior Information Officer	Robert Kelly
Information Officers	Gerry McCaughey/Özgün Ademhann
Admin Support Worker	Rusha Lamichhane/Ezra Cruz

Training Team

Head of Training Services	Michelle Kelly
Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator	Nicole Curran
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator	Aisling Byrne
Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator	Sinead Boyle
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator	Emma Cooray
Training Administrators	Breda Owens/Olena Sorenko
Housekeeper – Learning Hub	Lorraine Hannon

Membership and Development Team

Membership / Project Worker	John Farrell
Admin Support Worker	Ray Brennan
Web Administrators	Michael Birmingham / Veronica Aretta
Jobs Researcher	Séamus Clarke
CE Workers based at Ozanam House	Richard Wilson and Bogdan Bondarenko
Staff who left in 2024	John Stewart, Lorraine Hennessy, Laura Pierce, Alan Chambers, Angela Hennessy-Cross, Agnes Piti, James O’Toole, Sarah Oates and Vladislav Martiny-

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The total income recorded for the year was €1,283,623 (2023: €1,214,728) and expenditure of €1,259,057 (2023: €1,209,087) resulting in a surplus for the year of €24,566 (2023: €5,641). Of this total income, €1,125,068 was secured from government grants and funding which represents a total of 88% of the organisation's income. The balance of the income recorded is self-generated income arising largely from the INOU's popular training programmes; which include both QQI and non QQI courses and our popular bitesize training courses. Overall, our income increased €68,895 which is a 5.5% increase on our 2023 income. This increase is a result of increased funding in our two directly funded programmes, Community Employment Scheme and our CDET learning hub. The balance of the increase is a direct result of our increased training income, which represents €8,217 of the increase. There was a further release of a 2020 grant from our deferred income which makes up €13,087 of the increase in our income for 2024.

The total expenditure recorded for the year 2024 was €1,259,057 (2023: €1,209,087) Our costs increased by €49,970 which is a 4.1% increase on our 2023 expenditure. This increase is a result of increase costs on our aforementioned directly funded

programmes, along with other price increases in costs across the board.


The INOU worked hard to maintain costs as much as possible but inflationary increases continue to be a challenge for the organisation. This challenge is compounded with no increase from our state funders in many years despite these increasing costs.

The reserves at the yearend was €293,948 of which €4,189 were restricted reserves and €289,759 were unrestricted reserves. Restricted reserves are represented by income received by the organisation that is restricted to a specific purpose by the donor and which was not fully expended at the year end. Such reserves are not available for the general purposes of the charity. Unrestricted reserves are available for the company to use in the furtherance of its purpose and objectives.


The INOU would like to thank our funders for their support throughout the year in allowing the organisation to continue delivering on our aims and objectives. In particular, we would like to thank the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Department of Social Protection, Pobal, SOLAS, and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board and all our affiliated organisations.



Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Income				
Charitable activities funding from Government and other funders	133,070	1,125,068	1,258,138	1,185,812
Other Income	24,077	—	24,077	25,703
Donations	—	1,408	1,048	3,213
Total Income	157,147	1,126,476	1,283,623	1,214,728
Expenditure				
Charitable Activities	(126,756)	(1,126,435)	(1,253,191)	(1,199,370)
Raising Funds	(5,866)	—	(5,866)	(8,288)
Other	—	—	—	(1,429)
Total expenditure	(132,622)	(1,126,435)	(1,259,057)	(1,209,087)
Net Income (expenditure)	24,525	41	24,566	5,641
Reconciliation of funds				
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2024	265,234	4,148	269,382	263,741
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2024	289,759	4,189	293,948	269,382

Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 €	2024 €	2023 €	2023 €
Fixed assets				
Premises Improvements		4,828		5,308
Computer Equipment		963		18,399
Fixtures and Fittings		10,983		13,658
		16,774		37,365
Current assets				
Debtors	51,744		49,962	
Cash at bank and in hand	417,126		332,244	
	468,870		382,206	
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year				
	(191,696)		(150,189)	
Net current assets		277,174		232,017
Total assets less current liabilities		293,948		269,382
Represented by:				
Unrestricted Reserves		289,759		265,234
Restricted Reserves		4,189		4,148
		293,948		269,382



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