

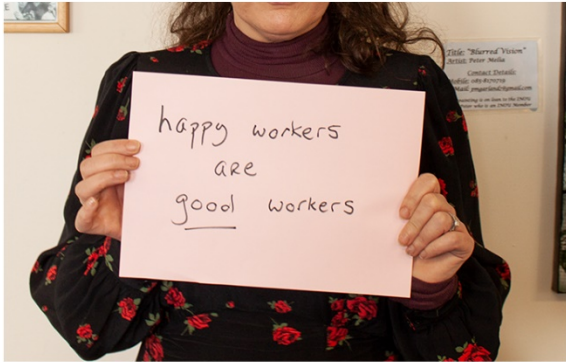
DECENT WORK SEMINAR

16th September, 2020



Coimisiún na hÉireann
um Chearta an Duine
agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and
Equality Commission

This project is supported
under the Irish Human
Rights and Equality
Commission Grant Scheme



Decent Work

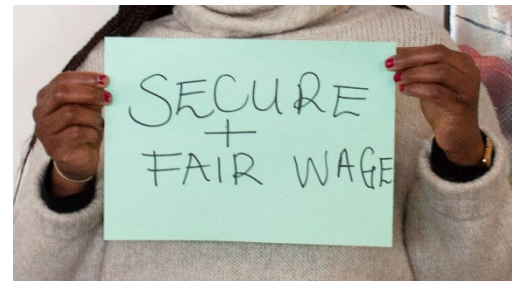
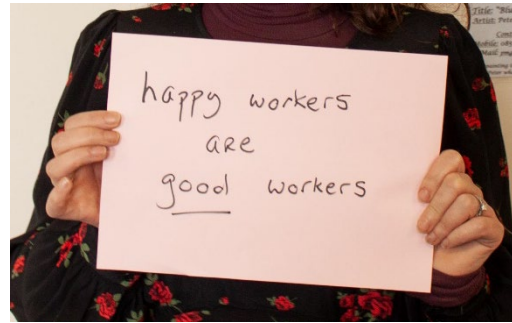
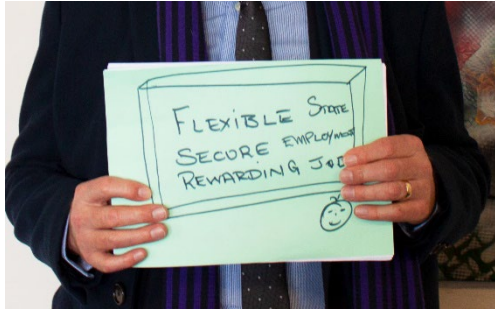


Project Aim & Objectives

- ▶ To raise awareness and share learning about the right to decent work; how this is underpinned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of decent work and ICESCR's Articles 6 & 7; and how these rights should inform the delivery of an inclusive National Employment Service.
- ▶ To hold two regional workshops to raise awareness and share experiences and learning on access to work and the right to decent work.
- ▶ To hold a national seminar in September 2020 building on and developing the outcomes of the workshops.
- ▶ To develop workshop and seminar materials to facilitate an informed discussion on the right to decent work.
- ▶ To note and write-up the workshop and seminar discussions to disseminate the awareness raising and learning arising to a wider audience.
- ▶ To feed this learning into the development and implementation of policies underpinning activation and employment services including *Pathways to Work* and *Future Jobs Ireland*.

Project to Date

- ▶ 3 workshops: Dublin & Longford with INOU affiliates and colleagues; third with INOU Individual Members, participants on INOU's *Building Futures & Shaping Futures* programmes .
- ▶ Briefing paper sent out in advance informing participants of:
 - ▶ International Labour Organisation's definition of *Decent Work*.
 - ▶ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in particular Articles 6; 7; and 9.
 - ▶ The rights to work; enjoy just and favourable conditions of work; social security, including social insurance.
 - ▶ UN Sustainable Development Goal 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*.
 - ▶ EU Pillar of Social Rights Principle 5: Secure and adaptable employment.
- ▶ At the workshops participants were informed of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- ▶ Webinar presented with issues, concerns, challenges raised at the workshops.



International Labour Organisation

- ▶ *“Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income,*
- ▶ *security in the workplace and social protection for families,*
- ▶ *better prospects for personal development and social integration,*
- ▶ *freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and*
- ▶ *equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men”*

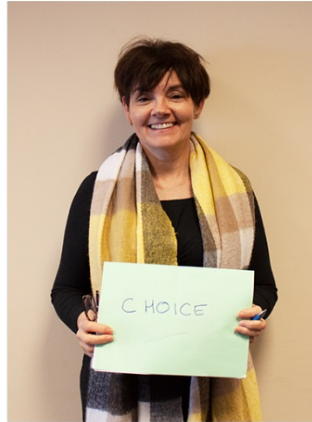


What does Decent Work mean in an Irish Context?

- ▶ Good wages, terms and conditions.
- ▶ Indicators of decent, better work: paid leave, greater flexibility, certainty of hours, acknowledgement of caring responsibilities.
- ▶ The importance of support services, affordable housing and childcare.
- ▶ Right to equality and equal treatment.
- ▶ Decent work can really build empowerment, confidence and independence.
- ▶ Importance of choice for people in making decisions to take-up decent work.
- ▶ Importance of welfare to work information supports.
- ▶ Role for Trade Unions in securing decent work and conditions.
- ▶ The question was posed: are there ideal working conditions? The issue of choice and the opportunity to self-improve were noted as important.
- ▶ Work does not exist in a vacuum: if services and supports are there, cost of living decreases, and the focus of an ideal job changes.

What does Indecent Work mean in an Irish Context?

- ▶ At what stage do e.g. long commutes make decent work indecent?
- ▶ Challenges in particular sectors e.g. uncertain hours, being tied to the company, lack of affordable / accessible childcare.
- ▶ Discrimination because of people's address; migrant status; duration of unemployment; ex-prisoners; Travellers; disabled; parent alone.
- ▶ Welfare to Work traps - system needs to respond better to atypical working patterns.
- ▶ Issues of agency staff and directly employed staff doing similar work with varying pay and conditions.
- ▶ Work Relations Commission need more teeth so that their recommendations are enforceable.
- ▶ Lack of job security for people working in the community sector.
- ▶ Transport difficulties in trying to access work, particularly in rural areas.
- ▶ Computer filtering blocking people, creating new barriers.



Small Group Discussion Questions

Precarious Working

- What does precarious work mean to you and for your work?
- How should social protection, education, training, employment supports and services respond?
- What needs to happen from both a Labour Market and Social Protection viewpoint in relation to Precarious Working?

Sustaining / Sustainable Employment

- What are the challenges facing people, especially people who may have been long-term unemployed in sustaining work once they access it?
- How should social protection, education, training, employment supports and services respond?
- Do you see Green Jobs providing some answers?
- How can people exercise their right to decent work, with good conditions of employment?

Automation and Digitalisation

- What are the challenges facing workers and people seeking work into the future?
- How should social protection, education, training, employment supports and services respond?
- Are there opportunities for workers and people seeking work as a result of potentially significant developments in automation and digitalisation?
- How does the State need to respond, in policy and in practice?

Precarious Working

- ▶ A job with few opportunities to upskill or move up; NMW; zero hours contract; little access to good T&C.
- ▶ Lack of certainty, having to take the job, fear of what will happen if leave, can be very difficult to exit, people dependent on the job.
- ▶ Impact on person with regard to relationships, well-being, limits opportunities to access more affordable financial options; flexibility re family responsibilities missing.
- ▶ Lack of decent work opportunities in a rural setting.
- ▶ Lack of a voice or support – particularly where not unionised workplace.
- ▶ Difficulty of decent jobs not being within reasonable commute.
- ▶ Huge issues for people with skills obtained in other jurisdictions that are not recognised here.
- ▶ Certain flexible working can suit some people given their lifestyle.
- ▶ Some employers are understanding - need to increase and deepen awareness.
- ▶ Importance of developing 'inner' confidence.

Sustaining / Sustainable Employment

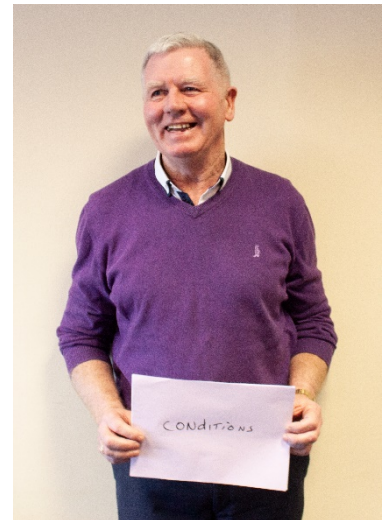
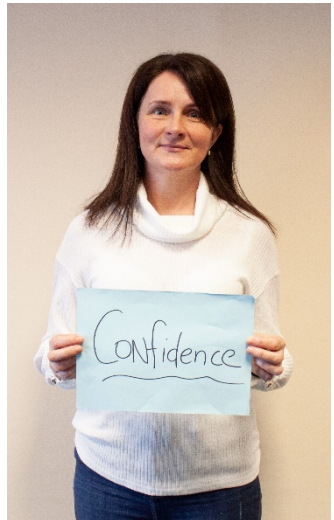
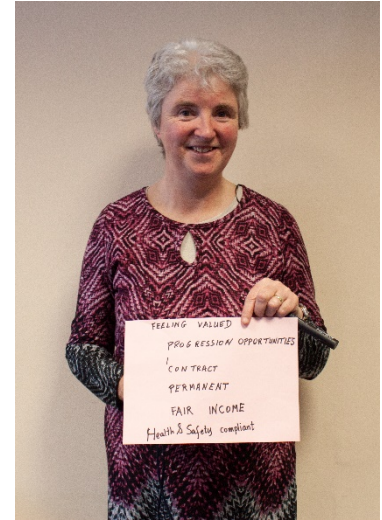
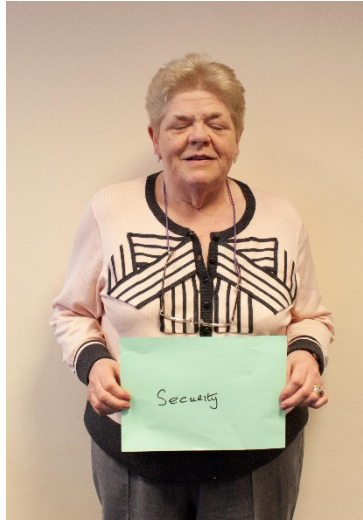
- ▶ Effects on people's mental well-being of not working, losing or leaving jobs in the early stages, working away from home and roll-over of short-term contracts.
- ▶ Challenges of low population density; access to charge points for electric cars; rural link bus transport working better in some places than others; lack of affordable car insurance for young people.
- ▶ Danger of a widening skills gap, given technological and other work changes.
- ▶ The importance of quality guidance; job security noted.
- ▶ Food Hubs, Bord na Mona change to greener energy/renewables and biodiversity noted as potential areas of growth.
- ▶ Enterprise and opportunity needs to be shared around rural Ireland.
- ▶ Commuting times for many people are too long, but high cost of living in Dublin is a major deterrent for people living in rural areas considering relocation.
- ▶ High-speed broadband rollout across the country would help people get flexible jobs that don't require transport, facilitate remote working.

Sustaining / Sustainable Employment

- ▶ Need to think of what services or programmes could benefit people more distanced from labour market e.g. people who are long-term unemployed who left school early.
- ▶ Employability/job-readiness and support is a large concern. This has to be addressed jointly with employers so that when people do get jobs after being long-term unemployed they can stay in them.
- ▶ Issues with literacy are a major concern for employability.
- ▶ Programmes like Skills to Advance need to be implemented.
- ▶ Childcare costs prevent people from taking up work or from being able to stay in employment.
- ▶ Waiting for social welfare payments such as WFP causes great stress. A streamlined payment with a quick processing time for people transitioning back to work would support people to make that transition.
- ▶ More recognition needs to be given to barriers such as confidence/self-esteem issues, soft-skills recognition and development of potential workers.
- ▶ There needs to be more quality career guidance so that people can get more meaningful and sustainable work.

Automation and Digitalisation

- ▶ Skilled jobs will be lost; drudge jobs left behind; alongside very specialised jobs.
- ▶ Migrants working as general operatives / pickers, jobs likely lost to automation.
- ▶ Caring work: needs to value it properly. Lack of nurses, carers, chefs.
- ▶ Middle class / professional jobs now under threat.
- ▶ Duration of learning / education has lengthened; people likely to work longer.
- ▶ Just transition: rural / urban digital divide; inbuilt prejudice visible in algorithms.
- ▶ Younger people accessing well paid work, older generations don't understand.
- ▶ Crisis now: robots reduce workforce by 50% over 20 years.
- ▶ Social & economic cost of income challenges arising from loss of good jobs.
- ▶ Developing skills through alternative routes: second chance gap: guidance question. Functional / digital literacy are issues.



Looking Forward

- ▶ Earn and learn - providing opportunities for people to earn while they learn can be very important to provide people with the chance to reskill / upskill.
- ▶ Importance of actual and virtual networks to combat isolation.
- ▶ Concept of empowerment a very important one.
- ▶ Importance of workplace democracy.
- ▶ People need to be made aware of their right to exercise their rights without penalisation and about participation in the discussions around conditionality and rights.
- ▶ Need for greater flexibility in work practices e.g. increased opportunities to ensure that more people can work from home.
- ▶ Need for ensuring that there is greater awareness of UN and ILO definitions and greater compliance with equality legislation.

Looking Forward

- ▶ It was noted that there is a need for the ICESCR / EU PoSR / ILO definition to be integrated into policy & practice.
- ▶ How is distance from the labour market measured, especially if the person is not on a social welfare payment?
- ▶ Promotion of cooperatives and co-op culture was highlighted as being useful.
- ▶ Importance of protecting workers' rights.
- ▶ Corporate Social Responsibility: important to provide work opportunities for people who may face very considerable challenges in getting employment.
- ▶ Aftercare support for people taking-up work.
- ▶ Income maintenance working group: feed into Gov policy and practice.
- ▶ Mapping of jobs that will be obsolete.
- ▶ Job rotation approach: SW recipients worked in progressive industry; workers took time out to reskill and move-up the ladder.

Looking Forward

- ▶ How to avoid yellow pack focus / perception of targeted approach: for women returners, there can be opportunities gaps; men whose job has disappeared but are not on a payment; young NEET men.
- ▶ It was noted that in the Netherlands for example that Revenue (assisting with tax returns) and other departments offer outreach services and these are very useful to break down the fear and apprehension that some people having using these services.
- ▶ Green jobs should be a massive part of industrial strategy – there are so many opportunities to create green jobs in Ireland due to our capability to, for example, produce electricity by wind and wave technology. Green jobs in construction, such as retro-fitting homes, could also provide huge amounts of jobs. Transport and agriculture are also areas where many green jobs could be created.

Next Steps

- ▶ A report of the project will be produced and disseminated to participants, key politicians and officials.
- ▶ A three minute video will be produced explaining what decent work is, the issues of concern raised through the project, the issues to be addressed over the coming period.

