

IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION
OF THE UNEMPLOYED

Supporting Unemployed People



inou

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



INOU Annual Report 2023

Chairperson's Report	2
Co-ordinator's Report	4
Head of Policy and Media Report.....	12
National Executive Committee.....	18
INOU Staff	19
Financial Report	20

Ann Fergus, RIP, Chair of the INOU, with then Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varadkar TD, holding a copy of the first edition of 'Working for Work' at a launch in Araby House.



Chairperson's Report

Chairperson's Welcome



*Joanne Farrell
INOUE Chairperson*

On Saturday 26th August, our dear friend and colleague Ann Fergus, INOU Chairperson, passed away suddenly at her home. Ann was involved in the work of the INOU for over 30 years. During this period Ann served on the National Executive Committee and the Officers Board, including as Chairperson for many years. Ann was a tireless and fearless advocate for unemployed people. She was highly regarded and respected throughout the organisation and her enormous contribution to the work of the INOU is impossible to measure. Ann is very sadly missed by the organisation and by everyone who knew her. I would like to, again, extend the organisation's deepest sympathies to Ann's son Alan, Ann's daughter Arlene and the wider family on this terrible loss. May she rest in peace.

We were also deeply saddened and shocked at the passing of Barrie McLatchie on the 9th May. For nearly 25 years, Barrie represented my organisation, the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre, on the INOU's Board of Management/National Executive Committee. Barrie's passing has been felt deeply by everyone who knew and worked with him at the INOU and we again offer our most sincere con-

lences to Barrie's wife, Mary and family and to the staff and Board of Management of the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.

We were also very sad to hear of the passing of Robert Finan, Larkin Centre for the Unemployed. Robbert represented the Larkin Centre on the INOU's National Executive Committee from 2007 – 2009. We would like to take this opportunity to offer our deepest sympathies to Robert's family and the staff and Board of the Larkin Unemployed Centre.

The passing of so many of our friends and colleagues during the year understandably has caused much shock and sadness in the organisation and I would like to pay tribute to all the staff and my Board Member colleagues for maintaining the work of the organisation during such a challenging period. I would also like to thank my Board Member colleagues for ratifying my appointment as interim Chairperson of the organisation until we hold our AGM in May 2024. I am honoured to undertake this role which was so capably fulfilled by Ann Fergus for many years.

Notwithstanding the many challenges that faced us during the year, 2023 has been another year of exceptionally high output from the organisation as documented in this Annual Report. I am very grateful for the extraordinary level of skills, commitment and dedication of the Staff Team and my NEC Board Member colleagues to the work of the INOU.

The INOU continued to run the majority of its events on-line during the year and the number of people engaging with the organisation at Discussion Forum meetings, training and other events has continued at a very high level. This model of service delivery/engagement will continue to be a feature of our overall engagement strategies well into the future.

Chairperson's Report



I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the Building Futures and Shaping Futures Learners for their achievements and the staff in the Training Unit for their on-going development and delivery of our education and training services. I particularly want to congratulate the LTI Staff Team on their success in recruiting to both of our LTI programmes that commenced in September.

We held our Annual Conference and AGM on Wednesday 24th May at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin. This was the first in-person ADC/AGM since 2019 and we would like to sincerely thank all the representatives from our member organisations that attended this event.

The Conference Opening Address was delivered by Fr. Peter McVerry. Peter delivered a very thought-provoking speech which highlighted the growing orthodoxy that requires us to believe that we need more and more goods and services, that self-sufficiency is the ideal state and that our independence and security depend on what we possess. Peter outlined that, in this world, there is no ceiling to what we should possess and that the everyone for themselves mantra has been transformed into a virtue and the common good is secondary to capital accumulation. Peter also outlined that the antidote to this was solidarity.

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 re-elected five members to the National Executive Committee (NEC). I would like to congratulate my colleagues Mick Creedon, Philip Fitzsimons, Mary Smith and Evanne Kilmurray on their election to the NEC. I would also like to thank Conference for re-electing me for a further period on the Board. I would also like to thank Liam Short-

all, INOU General Branch, who stood down from the NEC. I would also like to thank Mary Smith, EDI Centre Longford, who stood down from the NEC at the end of December.

Notwithstanding the very positive developments in relation to employment/unemployment, the year ahead will still be challenging for many people given the on-going cost of living increases. Budget 2024 provided a further welcomed level of financial support for hard pressed individuals and families. Much work however still needs to be done and the INOU will continue to press for financial and other related services and supports for unemployed people and other groups who are reliant on a social welfare payment.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my condolences to staff and NEC colleagues who lost loved ones during the course of the year.

I would like to send my best wishes to all of the INOU's unemployed Individual Members and their families and to our Member organisations for the year ahead. I would also like to again thank my NEC colleagues, all the staff of the INOU and all the representatives of our affiliated organisations for their incredible support for the work of the organisation during the year.



Ann Fergus with Barrie McLatchie



*John Stewart
Co-ordinator INOU*

I would like to echo our Chairperson's comments in relation to the very sad passing of some dear friends and colleagues during the year.

We were deeply shocked and saddened when Ann Fergus, Chairperson, passed away suddenly at her home on 26th August. Ann was involved in the work of the INOU for over 30 years and served on the National Executive Committee and the Officers Board, including as Chairperson for many years. Ann was a tireless and fearless advocate for unemployed people. Highly regarded and respected throughout the organisation Ann's contribution to the work of the INOU is impossible to measure. I would like to, again, extend the organisation's deepest sympathies to Ann's son Alan, Ann's daughter Arlene and the wider family on this terrible loss. May she rest in peace.

We were also deeply saddened when we heard that Barrie McLatchie passed away on the 9th May. For nearly 25 years, Barrie represented the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre on the INOU's Board of Management/National Executive Committee and we again offer our most sincere condolences to Barrie's wife, Mary and family and to the staff and Board of Management of the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.

We were also very sad to hear of the passing of Robert Finan, Larkin Centre for the Unemployed.

Co-ordinator's Report

Robert represented the Larkin Centre on the INOU's National Executive Committee from 2007-2009. We would like to take this opportunity to offer our deepest sympathies to Robert's family and the staff and Board of the Larkin Unemployed Centre.



Robert Finan, RIP

I would like to thank my Officer Board, NEC and staff colleagues for their on-going support, dedication and commitment to the work of the INOU during what has been another year of very significant output and achievement in which, amongst other things, we:

- Completed significant work towards the publication of the 30th edition of Working for Work. This is a major milestone in the production of this key publication.
- Tracked close to 10,000 job announcements by over 70 employers.
- Met on-line and in person with a range of Departmental officials and other key stakeholders.
- Participated in a range of on-line forums/structures on issues affecting unemployed people.
- Made submissions on a range of themes relating to unemployment/employment, education and training.
- Completed a very comprehensive programme of on-line education and training.
- Successfully engaged with the QQI Re-engagement Process.

Co-ordinator's Report



- Successfully completed the 13th year of the Building Futures programme and completed the recruitment process for the Year 14 intake.
- Successfully completed the fourth year of the Shaping Futures programme and completed the recruitment process for the Year 5 intake.
- Continued to enhance our first class Learning Hub in the South Inner City and successfully completed discussions with the CDET on the INOU remaining at the Learning Hub until at least October 2028.
- Dealt with over 7,000 queries through our Welfare Rights Information Service.
- Continued to run our very successful on-line Discussion Forum Meetings and other member events and recommenced some in person events. We held our first in-person Annual General Meeting since 2019.
- Published four editions of the INOU's E Bulletin.
- Successfully completed our work with the Department of Social Protection on the consultation phase of the development of a new Employment and Youth Engagement Charter.
- Continued to ensure compliance with the Governance Code for Charities.
- The advancement of education through the provision of training/education and acting as a sponsor of employability programmes such as CE and two LTIs.
- 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.

Governance

From 28th February 2020, the INOU is registered on the Public Register of Charities – Charity Number 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 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 during the year. Two Board De-



velopment sessions were also held. The first on 21st June had a focus on Governance/ and the second on 12th December had an issues and policy focus.

Annual Conference/AGM

We held our Annual Conference and AGM on Wednesday 24th May at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin. This was the first in-person ADC/AGM since 2019 and we would like to sincerely thank all the representatives from our member organisations that attended this event.

The Conference was Chaired by Ann Fergus who was delighted to see a return to in-person ADCs/AGMs. Tragically, this turned out to be Ann's last ADC/AGM and I would like pay tribute to her exceptional Chairing of these important events over so many years.

The Conference Opening Address was delivered by Fr. Peter McVerry. Peter delivered a very thought-provoking speech which highlighted the growing orthodoxy that requires us to believe that we need more and more goods and services, that self-sufficiency is the ideal state and that our independence and security depend on what we possess. Peter outlined that, in this world, there is no ceiling to what we should possess and that the everyone for themselves mantra has been transformed into a virtue and the common good is secondary to capital accumulation. Peter also outlined that the antidote to this was solidarity.

In my response, I outlined that our Welfare Rights



Ann Fergus, INOU Chairperson, with Minister Byrne keynote speaker at our 2017 (end of November) Conference on Best Practice in the Employment Services

Information Service had dealt with over 7,000 queries in 2022, with a significant number from people facing homelessness. I also referred to the cost of accommodation which is beyond so many people and advised that the work of the Peter McVerry Trust and other similar organisations are making a difference and transforming many people's lives.

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 five members to the Board/National Executive Committee (NEC). I would like to congratulate Mick Creedon, Joanne Farrell, Philip Fitzsimons, Mary Smith and Evanne Kilmurray on their election to the NEC. I would also like to thank Liam Shortall, INOU General Branch, who stood down from the NEC.

At the ADC/AGM, Delegates discussed four motions that had been proposed. Two motions proposed by the INOU General Branch were discussed and agreed. The first motion called on the Government to extend the eligibility criteria for participation on Community Employment and the second motion called for the Department of Social Protection to ensure that all unemployed people are prop-



INOU Annual Delegate Conference 2023

Co-ordinator's Report



erly informed about their options and supports available.

Two NEC motions were also agreed – the first a call on the Government to benchmark all social welfare rates at a level which is sufficient to lift people above the poverty line and provide them with a Minimum Essential Standard of Living and the second, a call on the Government to deliver wrap around employment and support services regardless of whether the person is in receipt of a social protection payment.

The round table element of Conference also featured a very good discussion on the challenges facing organisations and unemployed people in the context of falling unemployment and increased employment and impact of the cost of living increases on unemployed people and other groups that are reliant on social welfare.

At the Board Meeting on 2nd June Joanne Farrell was re-elected at INOU Vice-Chairperson and Evanne Kilmurray was elected to the second Vice-Chairperson position. Joanne was subsequently elected as INOU Chairperson at the September Board/NEC meeting and I would like to thank Joanne for undertaking this key role given the circumstances.

Membership and Member Supports

We very much welcomed applications for membership from Dublin Northwest Partnership, North Connaught and Ulster MABS, Dublin South MABS and Employability Roscommon during the year. The number of organisations in membership held up well and at the end of the year we still retained close to 200 member organisations. Details on our member organisation can be found on the INOU's website www.inou.ie.

I am pleased to report that we have also continued to deepen our relationship with the Samaritans and their vital work in supporting front line staff in our Member organisations who are dealing with clients in distress. In 2023 we continued to run the on-line 'Conversations with Vulnerable People' training events which were delivered online by Anne Corcoran, Partnerships and Operations Manager with Samaritans Ireland. These free events are aimed at frontline Information Providers in INOU member organisations and feedback has been very positive from programme participants. We look forward to continuing this collaborative work in 2024.

We also held nine additional Online Events for Members (excluding our online Discussion Forums). We partnered with and/or showcased the work of the following organisations at these events: the Department of Social Protection's Employers Relations Team; Community Law and Mediation; Samaritans Ireland; An Cosán; the National Youth Council and Accenture; Maynooth University; St. Vincent de Paul (Minimum Essential Standards of Living). We ran an online event outlining 'How unemployment is measured'. Two of these online events were instigated by the INOU General Branch. We also developed a new series of Cross Border Living and Working online events and ran two of these during the year, partnering with the Cross Border Partnership for Employment Services, Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre, Advice NI, North Connaught and Ulster MABS and the Border People's Project. Over 600 people attended these online events.

Regional Discussion Forums

I am pleased to report that participation at our on-line Discussion Forum events has been positive again this year and we are very grateful to everyone who took time out to join us at these on-line events.



We held six on-line Regional Discussion Forum meetings during the year involving almost 250 participants from over 70 organisations. The themes discussed at the meetings included: the changing nature of work, the potential issues arising from moving from work to a social welfare payment and updates on a range of policy developments.

I would like to thank everyone who attended the meetings for their input and insights into the various themes addressed in the meetings.

Individual Membership

We greatly value the involvement of Individual/General Branch Members in the work of the organisation. Nine on-line General Branch meetings were held in 2023. These meetings continue to provide important opportunities for 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. We also held three online INOU Introductory Meetings for our Individual Members during the year. We circulated information, through email, our website and social media on a range of training events, JobFairs, and Information roadshows.

Welfare Rights Information and Advocacy Service

The Welfare to Work Section 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 websites.

2023 was another year of very significant demands on our information and advocacy services. The diversity and range of queries was equalled by the differing sources from which they came, with, as in previous years.

Our Information and Advocacy Services:

- Supported 171 clients in seeking Reviews of Overpayment Recovery decisions prior to seeking a Social Welfare Appeal
- Supported 619 clients in seeking Reviews of Decisions by Deciding Officers prior to seeking a Social Welfare Appeal
- Supported 205 clients in preparing appeals, both Standard and Oral hearing applications to the Social Welfare Appeals Office
- Supported 14 organisations and groups in assisting clients in making appeals to the Social Welfare Appeals Office
- Assisted 3 clients in preparing a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman
- Supported 5 clients in progressing Customer Service issues to the official DSP Complaints Process

These figures are inclusive of supports to a total of over 7,091 clients in applying for, accessing, and qualifying for a range of income supports from the Department of Social Protection including Jobseekers Payments (Jobseekers Allowance / Jobseekers Benefit), Disability Payments (Disability Allowance / Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension), Carer's Payments (Carer's Allowance / Carer's Benefit) and payments under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme.

As in 2022, the INOU website again providing the largest numbers of direct referrals and contacts.

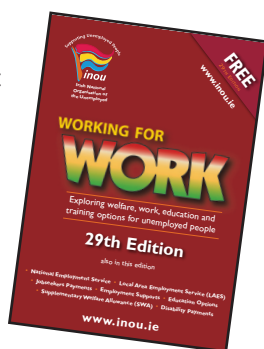
As part of our ongoing work in support of Jobseekers, the Welfare to Work Section would normally attend jobfairs and information events, hosted / promoted by the Department of Social Protection throughout the country, providing information and

Co-ordinator's Report

support for jobseekers seeking to return to work. These events resumed in 2022 and colleagues from our Information services have actively participated in events during the course of the year.

Working for Work

Working for Work is the most comprehensive guide to social welfare entitlements and education, training and employment 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 30th edition of this key publication with a view to commencing distribution of the publication early in the New Year. The production of the 30th edition of the book marks a very significant milestone for 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.



Training Services

The INOU delivers a significant suite of training programmes to a very diverse group of individuals and organisations. These include people who are unemployed; people in employment and people participating on employment and training programmes. The organisations that we deliver training to include a mix of community and voluntary sector organisations but also include Education and Training Boards, Employment Services Providers and others. Our Head of Training also continues to represent the INOU on the Wicklow Local Community and Development Committee.

I am delighted to report that the move to training online has continued to significantly increased our participation rates resulting in a much wider reach across the country and a broader scope of participants during the year. A wide range of training activity was undertaken during the year including:

- The delivery of specifically tailored training sessions on Social Welfare and Budget Updates
- On-going delivery of our Welfare Rights and Information, Advice and Advocacy QQI Level 6 programmes
- The continuation of a range of non-accredited training programmes
- The continuation of a range of 'bite sized' training programmes

In total, the organisation delivered 14 training events to over 491 participants.

We also commenced the QQI Re-engagement process during the year. This process culminated in an on-line Panel Site Visit on 5th December. The results of the visit were encouraging and as we move into 2024, we will be further developing our QQI Quality Assurances Policies, Procedures and Practices.

More information on the range of Training services delivered by the organisation and details of our Training calendar are available on our website www.inou.ie.

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 13th year of our programme was completed in 2023. All learners received QQI certifica-

tion. 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 14th year of the programme was completed during the summer period and the new Learners commenced training at the beginning of October.

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 focus on participants developing their own life experiences into learning and development. The fourth 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 5th year of the programme commenced training at the beginning of October.

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.

Learning Hub

I am delighted to report that during the year, we successfully concluded discussions with the CDET on the INOU remaining at our Learning Hub until October 2028. I would like to thank the CDET for their continued support for our programmes and their support for our continuation at this wonderful facility.

The INOU's Learning Hub is based at 88-90 Townsend Street, Dublin 2 and is currently being used to deliver the INOU's two Local Training Initiatives.

Employer Linkages

The organisation continues to monitor job announcements and to place key information about job opportunities on the Jobs Watch section of our website www.inou.ie. During 2023, we listed 72 Companies that announced almost 10,000 jobs.

83 people from 30 organisations covering 17 counties (North and South) attended an online event showcasing the work of the DSP's Employer Relations Team. Feedback from the event was very positive. We also publicised 10 virtual recruitment fairs co-organised by the DSP, through emailing our local Organisational and Individual Members and using social media posts. We publicised the calendar of Work and Skills in-person events organised by the DSP in October and participated at JobFairs.

Employment and Youth Engagement Charter

We successfully completed our collaboration with the Department of Social Protection in the development of a new Employer Youth Employment Charter. In 2022, the INOU successfully managed the consultation process on the proposed Charter which involved running a series of Focus Group Meetings with young unemployed people. During the last year, further work was undertaken on the development of the new Charter by the Department and I am pleased to report that as we ended the year, the Department was in the process of finalising a new Employment and Youth Engagement Charter with an anticipated launch date by the end of the first quarter of 2024.

Co-ordinator's Report



CE Project

The INOU has been a sponsor of a Community Employment Project for the last 27 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, Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. The work undertaken by the CE Participants continues to be essential to the effective running of the organisation and we greatly appreciate the work undertaken by all the Participants. 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. I am delighted to report that three of our CE staff have progressed into long-term sustainable employment during the last year.

I want to sincerely thank all of the CE Staff Team for their incredible commitment and dedication to the work of the organisation over the last year. I also want to thank our CE colleagues who left the organisation during the year and to wish them every suc-

cess for the future. CE staff have always played a key role in enabling the organisation to undertake its work. CE colleagues fill essential roles like Reception, Housekeeping, Caretaking, Office Admin, Web Admin, Information provision and more. The flexibility demonstrated by my 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 this period.

Funding

Details of the organisation's income and expenditure are set out in the Financial Report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Rural and Community Development, Pobal, the Department of Social Protection, SOLAS, the City of Dublin Education and Training Board for their financial assistance during the year. I would also like to thank Amanda Kelly and Carol Thornton for their very efficient management of the organisation's financial resources during the year.



Attendees at the INOU Welfare Rights Information Event – Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare – 2023

Head of Policy and Media Report



Bríd O'Brien
Head of Policy
and Media

Context

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) Q4 2023, 117,700 people were unemployed at the end of 2023, an increase of 5,100 people over the year. The unemployment rate in Q4 2023 was 4.2%, an annual increase of 0.1 percentage points (ppt). The unemployment rate for women was 4.3%, the same as Q4 2022; while the unemployment rate for men was 4.1%, an annual increase of 0.1 ppt. Women accounted for 49% of the unemployed in Q4 2023, slightly higher than in Quarter 4 2022.

The unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 years was 9.4%, an annual increase of 0.3 percentage points. While the unemployment rate for people aged 25-74 years olds was 3.4%, a decrease of 0.1 percentage point. Young people accounted for 29% of the unemployed in Quarter 4 2023, in comparison to 27% at the end of 2022.

The number of people deemed long-term unemployed decreased by 14.2% over the year to 29,500 people, while the long-term unemployment rate fell by 0.2 percentage points to 1.1%. The CSO notes, excluding people whose duration was not stated, that *"Over a quarter (26.6%) of unemployed persons were in long-term unemployment in Q4 2023 which is down from 32.8% a year earlier"*. Women accounted for 40% of the long-term unemployed in Q4 2023, slightly lower than in Quarter 4 2022.

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 2023, PALF stood at 105,700, an increase of 73.4% or 44,700 people on the same quarter in 2022. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) noted that the increase was amongst young people, primarily a demographic effect i.e. changes in the size of the working age population.

The increase in the number of people employed in Ireland continued to grow, with 2,706,400 people were employed in this quarter, an increase of 89,700 on Q4 2022. A 2.6% increase in full-time employment accounted for 65% of the increase in employment overall. The employment rate was 74%, an increase of 0.7 percentage point over the year. Women accounted for 41.5% of people in full-time employment in Quarter 4 2023, 0.7 percentage points higher than Q4 in 2022.

Part-time employment increased by 5.5% to 592,400. Women accounted for 67% of people in part-time employment. Part-time underemployment increased by 36% to 139,800 people. In Q4 2023 women accounted for 60% of people who described themselves as underemployed, a decrease of 2.5 percentage points over the year.

Policy Developments

The INOU's Head of Policy and Media represents the organisation on the Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC) and the LMAC's Evaluation Subgroup. During 2023 the LMAC discussed and responded to the proposed Pay-Related Jobseeker's Benefit Scheme and the potential introduction of a Working Age Payment; the mid-term review of Pathways to Work 2021-2025 and its Key Performance

Head of Policy and Media Report



Indicators; the DSP's Green Paper on Disability Reform; and twice met with the OECD / EU team evaluating the Community Employment and Tus programme, which is part of OECD-EU project on policy impact evaluation through the use of linked administrative and survey data.

The INOU's Head of Policy and Media participated in meetings, including an Advisory Group, and responded to draft documents on the development of a National Framework on Lifelong Guidance, the Department of Education coordinated this work. The National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance and accompanying Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) were published in December 2023. It is envisaged that the Advisory Group will have a role to play in supporting the delivery of these strategic actions.

At the beginning of 2023 the INOU became a member of the National Apprenticeship Alliance Access and Inclusion Subcommittee, which met five times throughout the year. The issues covered included proposed work to support implementation of access and inclusion actions in the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025; overview of apprenticeship access and inclusion policy and practice across tertiary education; Access and Inclusion Bursary and other initiatives. The INOU was one of the judges for one of the panels for the Apprenticeship of the Year Awards 2023.

In March, 2023 the new ESF+ programme was launched, entitled EIST (Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training), and it will cover the time period 2021-2027. The INOU sits on the EIST monitoring committee, which met twice in 2023. The monitoring committee for the previous European Social Fund (ESF) programme met at the end of the year, while earlier in the year the INOU participated in an

evaluation interview to discuss the ESF/YEI funding in Ireland 2014-2020. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science are the lead department for this programme. In the Autumn, the INOU joined the *EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 (AMIF) Programme Monitoring Committee*. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) are the lead department for this programme.

The INOU is one of the three Community and Voluntary Pillar representatives on the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). NESC met four times in 2023 and discussed research work undertaken on Climate Transition in Agriculture: An Integrated Framework for Action; Social Enterprise on the island of Ireland; Inequality and well-being frameworks: Strengths and limitations; Ireland as Thriving, Protective, and Forward Looking; Building a 'Good Jobs' Economy; Towards Affordable, Integrated and Sustainable Residential Development; Bringing Nature into View - Natural Capital Accounting; Energy & Just Transition; and Housing & Compact Growth. In 2023 NESC also marked its fiftieth anniversary including a conference at the end of the year in Dublin Castle.

During the year the INOU's Head of Policy and Media represented the organisation as a panellist at the Cowork4YOUTH Youth Employment Open Event which the ESRI hosted; gave the input at a workshop called '*Employment - Expanding Opportunities and Ensuring Work Pays*' at the Department of Social Protection's Social Inclusion Forum; and facilitated a workshop at the Department's consultation event in Dublin Castle on their Green Paper on Disability Reform. The INOU HPM and Welfare to Work Section Manager also met with a visiting del-

legation of Australian Members of Parliament in their embassy in Ireland who were examining Ireland's Public Employment Service.

Working in partnership

Amongst the work the INOU undertakes is analysis of Government policies, related advocacy work, and working with a wide range of other organisations on issues of common concern. During 2023 the INOU worked with the other organisations in the:

- *Add the 10th Alliance* to seek the inclusion of socio-economic status as a ground in Ireland's equality legislation. As part of this work, the INOU met opposition TDs and in February attended the second reading of Sinn Féin's Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 on this issue. The organisation also participated in a research interview with All Together in Dignity Ireland on the equality ground of socio-economic status.
- *Better Europe Alliance* on a document to go into the Department of An Taoiseach and the European Semester Office in Dublin on the 2023 Country Report on Ireland and the European Commission's Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland.
- Attended four meetings of the *Community and Voluntary Pillar* which covered policy developments and consultations; collaborative governance and social dialogue; funding for the community and voluntary sector; external bodies the CVP is represented on; and bilateral meetings with Government Departments. A number of follow-up meetings on particular topics also took place.
- Participated in bilateral meetings the *Community and Voluntary Pillar* had with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY); Ministers for Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform; Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD); Department of Social Protection (DSP); Department of An Taoiseach on a range of topics. Preparatory meetings took place in advance of these bilateral meetings. The INOU organised one meeting with the DRCD on Ireland's second National Social Enterprise Policy; and a bilateral meeting with DCEDIY.
- Attended six meetings of the *Community Platform*; participated in two working groups, one focused on the issue of consistent poverty, and the other the Platform's project on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The INOU was also one of the Platform's representatives at a meeting with senior officials in the Department of Social Protection on the Platform's Collaborative Governance paper.
- *Cost of Living / Budget 2024 Working Group* coordinated by the SVP met a number of times in 2023 to discuss how best to deal with the income inadequacy, poverty, social exclusion issues that organisations in the group sought to address through Budget 2024 and other processes.
- During 2023 the INOU Head of Policy and Media chaired eight meetings of the board of the *Dublin Adult Learning Centre* and attended four meetings of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- Participated in three meetings of the *Energy Poverty Network* led by Friends of the Earth. In June a joint Pre-Budget statement that was cir-

culated on the morning of the National Economic Dialogue.

- Attended three meetings *Maynooth University's Lifelong Guidance Practice Advisory Group* which provides an opportunity for practitioners, policy makers, academics and representative bodies to discuss the issues and challenges arising and the opportunities to address these appropriately.
- The INOU is a member of the *Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) Research Advisory Committee* which met twice in 2023.
- Attended two meetings of the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion Linkage Group* - amongst the issues discussed were the mid-term review of this strategy and the ongoing ingrained challenges that need to be addressed.

Communications

Early in the year clips of the INOU's engagement with the Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight on Chapters 9-12 of the report of the Commission on Taxation and Welfare were circulated through the INOU's social media. The INOU sent an e-alert to all TDs asking them to support the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021, which sought to include the ground of socio-economic status in Ireland's equality legislation.

Four Issues of the INOU e-bulletin were published and circulated online during 2023. Issues 54 to 57 covered a broad range of topics and policy developments; the work of INOU affiliated and other community based organisations; and work undertaken by the INOU itself.

The INOU was interviewed by RTE at Cowork4YOUTH Youth Employment event; *Irish Daily Mail* on the number of people who have been on the Live Reg-

ister for more than five years; Phoenix FM on the INOU's Pre-Budget submission and Post-Budget analysis; Newstalk Breakfast Show on Irish Independent article on Government's proposed Pay-Related Benefit for Jobseekers changes.

The organisation was also contacted by a number of media outlets seeking to speak to an unemployed person on a particular topic e.g. the Budget. The organisation informs our individual members of these requests and links them with the relevant contact if they are interested in availing of such an opportunity. In one instance given the angle the media outlet wished to pursue, the INOU referred them to a more appropriate community based organisation.

Submissions

At the beginning of the year the INOU made a submission to the Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight on Chapters 9-12 of the report of the Commission on Taxation and Welfare, and was invited to a meeting of this Committee to discuss the issues arising. The INOU participated at a stakeholders hybrid meeting on the European Semester 2023 & the National Reform Programme submission hosted by the Department of An Taoiseach, and made a submission to this process.

Early in 2023 the INOU participated as a panellist at the Department of Social Protection's Stakeholder Event as part of their public consultation on a new Pay-Related Benefit for Jobseekers and the potential Working Age Payment. The organisation made a submission to this consultation and subsequently met with the DSP to discuss our submission to their consultation in more detail.

Throughout the year other submissions were made to Pobal on the development of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2024+; on

the development of the Department of Social Protection's Statement of Strategy 2023-2026; to the Low Pay Commission on the sub-minimum youth rates within the National Minimum Wage structure; to the Department of Social Protection on the issues of benchmarking of working age social welfare payments and the means testing of social assistance payments.

A number of online surveys were completed including on the development of (i) a Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance, led by the Department of Education; (ii) Central Bank of Ireland's Consumer Protection Code Review; (iii) a National Equality Data Strategy, led by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; and (iv) the survey for key stakeholders on the Mid-Term Review of Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024, commissioned by SOLAS.

During the summer the INOU made a Pre-Budget Submission to the Department of Social Protection and the organisation participated in the Department's Pre-Budget Forum, the submission was subsequently sent to the Government and the Oireachtas. In the Autumn, as part of the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP), the INOU met with the Ministers for Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform on Budget 2024. The organisation also



Ann Fergus with Mike Allen of Focus Ireland and Dr Mary Murphy at the launch of the 20th Edition of 'Working for Work' in Araby House.

spoke at a Fianna Fáil Social Protection Roundtable for CVS organisations on Budget 2024 key asks. After the budget the organisation's Post Budget 2024 Analysis was circulated to the readers of the INOU's e-bulletin and published online.

The Lobbying returns for the period 1 September-31 December 2022; 1 January-30 April 2023; and May to August 2023 were completed in January, May, and September, 2023 respectively.



Members of the INOU's Welfare Rights information service (Robbie Kelly, Gerry McCaughey and Robbert Lynch) in Lisdoonvarna 2023.



Gerry McCaughey (right) INOU at Roma and Traveller event in Kildare town.

National Executive Committee



Board of Trustees / National Executive Committee (NEC)

The National Executive Committee / Board of Trustees is the governing body, or the Board of Directors of the INOU. NEC members are elected from amongst the wider membership of the organisation at the Annual 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

Ann Fergus	Chair (RIP 26 th August)
Joanne Farrell	Vice Chair (Chair from 8 th Sept)
Evanne Kilmurray	Vice Chair and Company Secretary
Mick Creedon	Treasurer
John Stewart	

Nominating Organisation

South Galway MABS
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Inner City Enterprise
Ballymun Jobs Centre
Co-ordinator

National Executive Committee (NEC)

Michael O'Mahony	INOUE General Branch
Philip Fitzsimons	INOUE General Branch
Mary Smith	EDI Centre, Longford
Lorraine Hennessy	INOUE Staff Representative
Brendan Sherlock (Co-opted)	INOUE General Branch
Yvonne Browne (Co-opted)	National Employability Service

We would like to thank Liam Shortall who stepped down from the NEC for all his support for the work of the organisation as an NEC member and also Mary Smith who stepped down from the NEC at the end of December.

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

Co-ordinator	John Stewart
Head of Policy and Media	Bríd O'Brien
Financial Controller	Amanda Kelly

Finance Team and Administration Team

Book Keeper	Carol Thornton
Finance Administrator	Urszula Belmaati

CE Supervisor	Laura Rossney
HR Admin	Sarah Oates
HR Admin	Antonino Campanella
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	James O'Toole, Gerry McCaughey
Admin Support Worker	Rusha Lamichhane

Training Team

Head of Training	Lorraine Hennessy
Building Futures LTI Co-ordinator	Laura Pierce
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator	Nicole Curran
Shaping Futures LTI Co-ordinator	Michelle Kelly
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator	Sinead Boyle
Training Administrator	Agnes Piti
Housekeeper – Learning Hub	Angela Hennessy-Cross

Membership and Development Team

Membership / Project Worker	John Farrell
Admin Support Worker	Ray Brennan
Web Administrators	Brendan Kinsella (left December) / Veronica Aretta
Jobs Researcher	Séamus Clarke
CE Workers based at Ozanam House	Richard Wilson, Vladislav Martinyiuk, Alan Chambers
Staff who left in 2023	Tom Haran, Dionne Byrne, Muhammad Kashif, Lorraine Johnson, Sheila O'Malley, Brendan Kinsella, Leopold Tusumba

Finance Report



The INOU's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102) and in accordance with Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (Revised 2015) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities'.

The financial results for 2023 are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. A surplus of income over expenditure of €5,641 (2022: surplus of €15,200) was recorded by the INOU for the year end 31 December 2023. The total income recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year was €1,214,728. Of this total income, €1,105,955 was secured from government grants and funding which represents a total of 91% 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 the recently introduced bitesize training courses.

The total expenditure recorded for the year 2023 was €1,209,087. Of this expenditure a total of

€1,063,203 was related to costs directly incurred for the charitable activities of the organisation. This represents 88% of the organisation's total costs.


The reserves at the year end was €269,382 of which €4,148 were restricted reserves and €265,234 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.




Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2022 €
Income				
Donations	—	3,213	3,213	—
Charitable activities funding from Government and other funders	124,857	1,060,955	1,185,812	1,188,486
Other Income	25,703	—	25,703	23,867
Total Income	150,560	1,064,168	1,214,728	1,212,353
Expenditure				
Charitable Activities	(137,244)	(1,062,126)	(1,199,370)	(1,190,928)
Raising Funds	(8,288)	—	(8,288)	(6,225)
Other	(352)	(1,077)	(1,429)	—
Total expenditure	(145,884)	(1,063,203)	(1,209,087)	(1,197,153)
Net Income	4,676	965	5,641	15,200
Reconciliation of funds				
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2023	260,558	3,183	263,741	248,541
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2023	265,234	4,148	269,382	263,741

Statement of Financial Position

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 €	2023 €	2022 €	2022 €
Fixed assets				
Premises Improvements		5,308		5,789
Computer Equipment		18,399		37,036
Fixtures and Fittings		13,658		16,394
		37,365		59,219
Current assets				
Stocks			1,429	
Debtors	49,962		46,576	
Cash at bank and in hand	332,244		314,851	
	382,206		362,856	
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	(150,189)		(158,334)	
Net current assets		232,017		204,522
Total assets less current liabilities		269,382		263,741
Represented by:				
Unrestricted Reserves		265,234		260,558
Restricted Reserves		4,148		3,183
		269,382		263,741



IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

ARABY HOUSE
8 NORTH RICHMOND STREET
DUBLIN 1
DOI WY49

Tel: 01 856 0088

E-mail: info@inou.ie

Website: www.inou.ie

The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Government of Ireland
through the Department of Rural and Community Development



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



pobal
government supporting communities



An Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
City of Dublin Education and Training Board

SOLAS
learning works