

**IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION
OF THE UNEMPLOYED**

Supporting Unemployed People



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Chairperson's Report



Ann Fergus
INOUE Chairperson

Welcome to our 2020 Annual Report.

It is a great privilege for me to be welcoming readers to the INOU's 2020 Annual Report – the organisation's first Annual Report following the INOU's inclusion in the Public Register of Charities, in March of this year.

2020 has been an extraordinary year for the country, Europe and the wider world. The devastation that has been visited on communities, families, individuals, businesses and other organisations resulting from the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic has been immense. I would like to take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families and friends of loved ones who have lost their lives to the illness and also to pay tribute to the work of the tens of thousands of people throughout our health and other services for their care of people who have been struck down by this dreadful virus. I would also like to express solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of people who either temporarily or on an on-going basis have lost their jobs as a result of the measures introduced to combat Covid 19 and also to acknowledge the importance of the financial measures introduced by the State to assist workers and businesses in these very difficult times. I am also conscious that there were many people unemployed prior to the pandemic who should not be lost sight of in terms of the measures needed to support people to get back to work.

Like most other organisations, Covid 19 has had a dramatic impact on the work of the INOU and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Officer Board and NEC colleagues and the Staff Team of the organisation for their extraordinary dedication and commitment to maintaining the work of the INOU during the year.

The measures introduced in response to Covid-19 have had a significant impact on the way in which the organisation operated during the year as my colleague John Stewart, Co-ordinator, has outlined in his report. In response to the initial 'shut down' the organisation had to move a wide range of work activities, meetings and events etc. online. The organisation has also been able to utilise available and upgraded technology to allow people to continue to access our services. Given the huge impact on employment and the numbers being supported through the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and other vital supports that have been put in place to assist people during the pandemic, the demands on our Information Services have increased significantly.

We have also maintained and further developed our on-line platforms to enable Learners to continue their education and/or to participate in training and other events. Suffice it to say, the financial impact on the organisation have been very significant in terms of meeting the IT and other costs involved in moving the work of the organisation on-line and in making our offices Covid-19 compliant. We were delighted to reopen our office on 10th August having been closed since the end of March. Unfortunately, following the escalation of the measures designed to combat Covid 19, the organisation significantly reduced activity in Araby House from 22nd October up to the end of the year.

2020 did, however, see a number of very positive developments in the organisation. The measures introduced to combat the spread of Covid 19 required the organisation to look at new ways of working and engaging with our member organisations. The numbers of people engaging with the INOU, at Discussion Forum meetings, training and other events has been very encouraging. I was delighted to welcome people to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission funded Decent Work Webinar on 16th September. A full report on the Decent Work Project has been published in 2021. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the Building Futures and Shaping Futures Learners for their achievements during what has been a very challenging year and to acknowledge the work of the staff in the Training Unit for their innovative response to the need to maintain our education and training services. I am also delighted to

Chairperson's Report



highlight a very positive development in relation to the INOU's Training Services. Towards the end of the year, discussions progressed with the City of Dublin Education and Training Board for the INOU to take over the running of a significant Training Centre. This is a very exciting development for the organisation and will significantly enhance our capacity to further develop our Training Services. I look forward to reporting in next year's Annual Report on the success of this development.

We also produced the 27th edition of our flagship publication, *Working for Work*. The book has developed very significantly over the last 27 years and continues to be the primary source of information on back to work supports, education and training options, employment service provision and social welfare entitlements in the country. The book is unique and plays a key role in supporting the information needs of unemployed people and of others distant from the labour market. The book is also widely used by employment services personnel across all employment service providers. We look forward to publishing the 28th edition of the book during 2021.

We held our Annual Conference and AGM on line on Wednesday 29th July. The Conference had a particular focus on governance and organisational aspects and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the representatives from our member organisations that attended this on-line event. I look forward to the day when we can resume our AGM/ADCs in the more traditional format where we have an opportunity to meet Conference Delegates in person and I hope that time is not too far away.

I was grateful to be re-elected to serve a further two year term on the NEC and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague Brendan Carmody who was also re-elected to serve on the NEC for a further period of 2 years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Standing Orders Committee, Elaine Harvey, Frank McDonnell and Joe Williams for their work in support of the Conference. Our long-standing NEC colleague and friend Seamus Orr stood down from the NEC after the AGM. I would like to place on record my huge thanks and appreciation for the commitment and dedication to the work of the

NEC and the wider organisation that Seamus has demonstrated in over 16 years of involvement. I would also like to send every good wishes to Seamus for the future. Given the on-going impact of Covid 19 on the organisation, it was agreed by the NEC at their July meeting that Officer Board members should remain in place for a further year.

I was also delighted to be invited to write the Foreword to an excellent publication which was written by Michael Quinn, an ex INOU employee, and published by the INOU – *A History of Araby House and North Richmond Street, Dublin*. This publication is dedicated to the memory of everyone involved in or with no. 8 North Richmond Street prior to the INOU's acquisition of the building in 1997. The book is also dedicated to everyone involved in the work of the INOU and the Full Employment Trust (the legal owners of Araby House) over the last 23 years. On 2 April 2020, the Trustees of the Full Employment Trust stepped down to facilitate the appointment of a new Board of Trustees. I am delighted to be serving with Michael and INOU colleagues, Joanne Farrell, Philip Fitzsimons and John Stewart and other colleagues Joan O'Reilly and Eric Conroy on the new Board. I would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in the Full Employment Trust down the years and particularly those Trustees who played such an important role both in the acquisition and the naming of Araby House. I would also like to wish my fellow Trustees every success in the years ahead.

As we moved towards the end of 2020 and into 2021, the future still remains very uncertain in terms of the reopening of society and the economy. 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 period 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 2020.

Chairperson



Co-ordinator's Report



*John Stewart
Co-Ordinator, INOU*

I would like to thank my Officer Board and NEC colleagues and all of the staff in the INOU for their ongoing support, dedication and commitment to the work of the INOU during what has been a most extraordinary year in the life of the organisation.

I would like to echo our Chairperson's condolences to the families and friends of loved ones who have lost their lives as a result of Covid 19 and to pay tribute to the work of our health and other services for their care of people who have been struck down by the virus. I would also like to express solidarity with people who have lost their jobs and livelihoods as a result of this public health emergency.

In March, we took the decision, in light of the Government's advice at the time, to implement a 'working from home' policy in the organisation and to significantly reduce access to our office, Araby House. The transition from being an essentially office based to a 'remote working' organisation was not without its challenges and I would like to sincerely thank all of the Staff Team for their co-operation with the new and untested working arrangements that needed to be introduced. The revised working arrangements have had a significant impact on the way in which the organisation operated during the year. The organisation had to move a wide range of work activities, meetings and events etc. online. We were fortunate in that this period coincided with a major, previously planned, IT upgrade which, when completed, better facilitated staff working from home. Due to the pre-existing nature of the organisation's Information Services – which are solidly built on an effective telephone based service, the transition from the office to an on-line and remote service was seamless due to the incredible commitment of the Staff Team involved.

Given the huge impact on employment and the numbers being supported through the Pandemic Unemployment

Payment and other vital supports that have been put in place to assist people during the pandemic, the demands on our Information Services and across the organisation have increased significantly.

Notwithstanding the huge challenges facing the organisation during the year, 2020 has been another year of very significant output and activity for the organisation in which we:

- Successfully completed the application process to register the INOU on the Public Register of Charities
- Published the 27th edition of our key publication Working for Work
- Began the process of distributing 25,000 copies of the publication,
- Continued to support the work of the St. Stephen's Green Trust's Traveller Employment and Enterprise Initiative
- Continued to track job announcements and link with many of these welcomed announcements to promote the employer incentives to recruit people who are unemployed
- Met on-line with a wide range of Ministers and 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
- Developed new ways of delivering education and training due to Covid 19 measures
- Progressed discussions with the City of Dublin Education and Training Board on the INOU running a significant Training Centre.
- Successfully completed the 10th year of the Building futures programme and completed the recruitment process for the Year 11 intake
- Successfully developed a second LTI Programme – Shaping Futures
- Dealt with over 7,500 queries through our Welfare Rights Information Service
- Significantly increased the number of Discussion Forum Meetings by moving the meeting on-line
- Continue to publish E Bulletins
- Completed the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Funded Decent Work Project
- Significantly completed work on ensuring compliance with the Governance Code for Charities
- Completed our involvement in SkillsMatch – a signifi-

Co-ordinator's Report



- cant EU Project focussing on soft skills development
- Completed work on redesigning the INOU's website – www.inou.ie
- Completed work on making the INOU's Office, Araby House, Covid 19 compliant
- Published a History of Araby House and North Richmond Street, Dublin

Inclusion in the Public Register of Charities

I am delighted to report that the organisation successfully completed the application process for inclusion in the Public Registry of Charities. We were formally notified of this achievement in March, including confirmation of the INOU's Charity Registration Number: 2020 5369.

In reaching a decision to apply for Charity Status, close consideration was given to the organisation's governance structures and the day to day work of the organisation and the extent to which this work met the criteria set by the Charities Regulator for registration as a Charity. We concluded that the organisation was able to demonstrate a high level of compliance with the Governance Code for Charities and a decision was taken in November 2019 to pursue Charity Status. This decision underpinned the ongoing commitment of the INOU to openness and transparency in terms of how we operate including a high level of priority to ensuring good governance across the organisation. We look forward to operating as a Charity in the years ahead and to further developing the organisation within the context of our newly acquired Charity status.

Membership and Member Supports

We were delighted to welcome the following organisations into membership during the year:

- Kerry Supported Employment/EmployAbility Service Kerry
- EmployAbility Mayo,
- The Irish Wheelchair Association (the Ability Programme)
- JobMatters
- EmployAbility Dublin North
- EmployAbility Limerick
- Employment Response North West

We very much appreciate that our membership numbers have held up well notwithstanding the very considerable

disruption experienced by so many of our member organisations during 2020. At the end of the year we had over 200 organisations in membership – details of our member organisation can be found on the INOU's website www.inou.ie.

I am delighted to report that we have 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 2020 we facilitated 14 'Conversations with Vulnerable People' Training events of which 13 were delivered on line by Anne Corcoran from the Samaritans. The 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 2021.

We also held a range of additional Collaborative Online Events for Members: 2 with Community, Law and Mediation and one with Deloitte. 259 people from 114 organisations attended these events.

Regional Discussion Forums

Due to Covid 19, we were unable to run our traditional Discussion Forum Meetings. However, I am delighted to report that participation at our on-line Discussion Forum events has been exceptionally positive and we are very grateful to everyone who took time out to join us at these on-line events.

We held 9 on-line Regional Discussion Forum meetings during the year involving a total of 264 participants from 134 organisations. The themes discussed at the meetings included: the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and other Covid 19 related supports; Budget 2021, updates on a range of policy developments and an overview of the queries to our Welfare to Work Information Service.

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 General Branch meetings were held in 2020 (eight of the meetings were held on-line). 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 two on-line INOU Introductory Meetings for our Individual Members during the year. We also circulated information, through email, our website and social media on a range of training events, JobFairs, and Information roadshows.

We held an inaugural virtual get-together for Individual Members in November 2020. This 'virtual chat and cuppa' provided an opportunity for INOU members to stay in touch with each other during a time of such significant worry and apprehension for people. The feedback from events has been very positive and we will be organising further virtual get-togethers in 2021.

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.

2020 saw an unprecedented demand for our information and advocacy services in large part due to lay-off, short-term and job losses caused directly by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The section:

- Supported 6,205 clients in seeking to access the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) inclusive of:
 - o support in Review / Clarification of eligibility and qualification criteria;
 - o preparing to request a review of eligibility and qualification for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) with DSP;
 - o accessing Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) and secondary benefits where necessary.
- Supported 1,317 clients (Employees and Employers) in seeking to access the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) and Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) inclusive of support in Review / Clarification of eligibility and qualification criteria.

As part of our standard Information and Advocacy services the section also:

- Supported 43 clients in seeking Reviews of Overpayment Recovery decisions prior to seeking a Social Welfare Appeal.
- Supported 436 clients in seeking Reviews of Decisions by Deciding Officers / DSP prior to seeking a Social Welfare Appeal.
- Supported 82 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.
- No oral hearings were attended in January or February. Due to COVID-19 no oral hearings were scheduled with the Social Welfare Appeals Office from March onwards
- Supported 18 clients in progressing Customer Service issues to the official DSP Complaints Process.
- Supported 2 clients in preparing a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.
- Supported 5 clients in preparing cases for WorkPlace Relations.
- Supported 3 clients in preparing a complaint to the Data Protection Commissioner.

The majority of queries received in 2020 were from individual people directly affected by the loss of employment because of COVID-19 who were seeking the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), with the INOU website again providing the largest numbers of direct referrals and contacts.

Due to the speed at which the pandemic occurred, the subsequent application of both the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) / Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS), and ongoing changes and amendments to the PUP payment the level of queries from INOU affiliated organisations, EmployAbility, the Local Employment Services and other organisations significantly increased during the year.

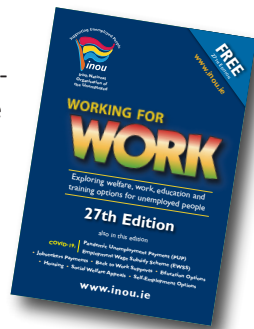
As part of our ongoing work in support of Jobseekers the Welfare to Work Section would normally have attended a number of jobfairs and information events, hosted/promoted by the Department of Social Protection throughout the country, providing information and support for jobseekers seeking to return to work. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic these events could not be held.

Co-ordinator's Report



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. 25,000 copies of the book were produced, inclusive of additional information specifically related to the COVID- 19 measures as relevant to Jobseekers and those on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS)/Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS). We are grateful to the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Education and Skills /SOLAS for their on-going support for the publication.



Due to national health and safety procedural guidance, and operational restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the launch of Working for Work was rescheduled to the first quarter of 2021, with distribution of the publication ongoing subject to public safety guidelines.

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. Colleagues in the Training Unit also represent the INOU on several external groups and committees including Wicklow Local Community and Development Committee, The European Adult Learning Agenda Steering Group and the North East Inner City Adult and Education Community Forum.

During 2020 our training provision had to change significantly to meet the impacts of the pandemic. Our usual delivery methods had to be altered or completely change to blended and online provision. Developing our programmes to be delivered fully online took time in order to ensure suitability and the high standards that we are known for resulting in a lower number of days delivery. However, moving some of the training to online has in-

creased our participation rates significantly, resulting in a much wider reach across the country and a broader scope of participants. We also delivered 7 specifically tailored training sessions on Welfare and Covid 19 and Budget Updates.

We delivered a total of 30 days of QQI training, delivered 8 days of 'on request' training to organisations across the country, 3 non-accredited training days and 7 specific training. These 48 training days included the following.

- Social and Civil Information – QQI Level 6
- Information, Advice and Advocacy – QQI Level 6
- Introduction to Social Welfare – Non-Accredited
- Welfare to Work – Non-Accredited

The Training Unit continues to work in partnership with Community Law and Mediation in the delivery of a further three QQI, Level 6 awards - Accommodation and Housing Advocacy: Family Rights Advocacy and Employment Law Advocacy.

Due to the pandemic, we have suspended our work with DCU to provide student placement opportunities. We would hope to restart this work, circumstances allowing, in the Autumn of 2021.

We applied to and were successful in receiving a grant from Solas under the Mitigating Against Education Disadvantage Fund. This will allow us to develop further blended learning opportunities for those most distanced from the labour market. We will also be providing a space to which people from these backgrounds can come to take part in learning, both INOU provision and others, with access to technology including computers, laptops and WIFI. We would like to thank SOLAS for the support in developing these opportunities for those most disadvantaged groups.

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. Despite the impact of Covid 19 the tenth year of our programme was completed in 2020. 13 Learners from Dublin and surrounding areas completed nine QQI modules at levels 5 and 6. 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. Recruitment for the eleventh year of the programme was completed in August and 10 new participants commenced training in September.

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 focusses on participants developing their own life experiences into learning and development. The first year of this programme was completed in August with 14 learners successfully receiving a QQI award. This was possible due to the quick response of our dedicated training team to develop and move modules online and develop an associated website. There is a significant workplace internship within the programme including voluntary work opportunities that allows participants to experience different realms of the labour market in order to find where they fit in best. Learners also had opportunities to participate in workshops and additional training. The second year of the programme recruited 10 learners who began in September and continue to take part in the programme.

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.

Towards the end of the year, negotiations were significantly advanced with the City of Dublin Education and Training Board on the INOU to take over the running of a significant Training Centre. This is a very exciting development for the organisation and will significantly enhance our capacity to further develop our Training Services.

Skills Match

As previously reported the INOU was the Irish Pilot Partner in a European project entitled Skillsmatch. This project's aim was to develop and demonstrate a European-wide assessment and learning guiding and training technology which will help users adapt their skills to the demands of the labour market with a particular focus on non-cognitive (NC) or 'soft' skills. This is a particularly useful tool for those looking for work or those

working with jobseekers to identify suitable employment and the NC skills required for such positions.

I am delighted to report that the project has been successfully completed resulting in the development of a significant web based platform and App. The Skills Match platform and App seeks to identify and improve the development of NC skills of individuals. The platform and App enable the assessment and evaluation of such skills and recommends user actions for bridging the gap between their skills profile and the one recommended for the person's desired or target occupation. The platform and App will also provide options for measuring NC skills development linked to open badges to provide recognition of the new learning and skills.

As the Irish Pilot Partner, the INOU carried out three stages of the platform testing phase. All participants were INOU individual members or referred through three of our affiliate organisations. This ensured that those participating in the testing phases had both a rural and an urban focus, included both unemployed and employed and across a broad range of age groups.

During 2020 we successfully carried out the last phase. The three phases of testing included approximately 150 participants. This provided very detailed and constructive feedback to the developers. We would like to thank the EDI Centre in Longford, Arklow Jobs Club and South West Inner City Local Employment Service (SWIC LES) for their invaluable support in this work. We would also like to acknowledge the participation and involvement of everyone who attended our workshops.

We would also like to thank the project leaders, Stockholm University and Paul O'Raw from the Learnovate Centre in Trinity College for the opportunity to take part in such an innovative and interesting project. The platform and app can be accessed via <https://skillsmatch.eu/skillsmatch-platform/>

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 2020 we listed 135 Companies that were announcing 18,244 jobs. This was down from 2019 when we listed 207 companies that announced 25,597 jobs.

Co-ordinator's Report



24% of the jobs announced were Dublin based. A further 48% of the jobs were countrywide where they were in a number of locations. 12% in Munster was next highest, followed by 11% in the rest of Leinster outside Dublin, 4% in Connaught and less than 1% in Ulster.

The statistics from the Job announcements listed on Job-sWatch show that, in 2020, Information Technology was the single largest sector with almost 4,663 job announcements, a little in excess of one quarter of the job announcements. Retail was the second largest sector we monitored with 3,475 jobs. Transport/Aviation; Pharma/Science/Agriculture; Childcare and Social Care; Banking, Accounting and Finance; Medical and Health and Customer Service were all sectors where we noted over 500 job announcements during 2020.

Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

I am delighted to continue to represent the INOU on the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition. The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition brings together Member States, companies, social partners, non-profit organisations and education providers, who take action to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe. The Coalition tackles the need for digital skills of four broad groups:

- **Digital skills for all** – developing digital skills to enable all citizens to be active in our digital society
- **Digital skills for the labour force** – developing digital skills for the digital economy, e.g. upskilling and reskilling workers, jobseekers; actions on career advice and guidance
- **Digital skills for ICT professionals** – developing high level digital skills for ICT professionals in all industry sectors
- **Digital skills in education** – transforming teaching and learning of digital skills in a lifelong learning perspective, including the training of teachers

CE Project

The INOU has been a sponsor of a Community Employment Project for the last 24 years. Participants are based both in our offices here at Araby House and at the Ozanam Centre. The work undertaken by the CE Participants continues to be essential to the effective running of both organisations 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 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. CE staff have always played a key role in enabling the organisation to undertake its work. CE colleagues fill essential roles like Reception, Cleaning, 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 during the Covid 19 pandemic and I am very grateful to everyone for their input over this period.

Annual Conference

We held our Annual Conference and AGM on line on Wednesday 29th July. The Conference had a particular focus on governance and organisational aspects and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the representatives from our member organisations that attended this on-line event.

At the Conference, our Chairperson Ann Fergus and NEC colleague Brendan Carmody were both re-elected to serve a further two year term on the NEC. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ann and Brendan on their election and also to thank the Standing Orders Committee, Elaine Harvey, Frank McDonnell and Joe Williams for their work in support of the Conference. Our long-standing NEC colleague and friend Seamus Orr stood down from the NEC after the AGM. I would like to place on record my huge thanks and appreciation for the support that Seamus has given me over his years on the NEC and also to thank Seamus for his commitment and dedication to the work of the NEC and the wider organisation during his involvement. I would also like to send our very best wishes to Seamus for the future.

Given the on-going impact of Covid 19 on the organisation, it was agreed by the NEC at their July meeting that Officer Board members – Ann Fergus, Joanne Farrell, Philip Fitzsimons and Mick Creedon should remain in place for a further year.



Co-ordinator's Report

- **Website Development**

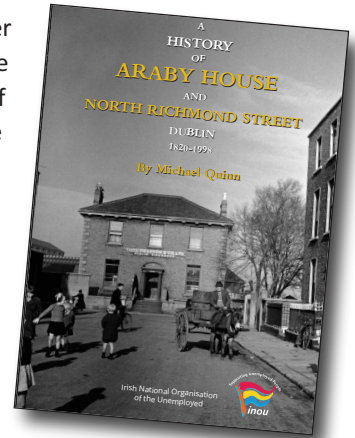
I'm delighted to report that the organisation has completed its work on redeveloping our website — www.inou.ie. The site has been completely modernised and developed in such a way as to be significantly more compatible with mobile devices. I would like to thank the members of the organisation's Web Development Steering Group – Robbert Lynch, Ray Brennan and Jennifer Harrington for their input to the new site and also Tom Dukes, Digital Revolutionaries for his technical input and support in the development of the site.

- **A History of Araby House and North Richmond Street, Dublin**

8 North Richmond Street/Araby House has been the home of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed for over 23 years. The acquisition of the building, by the people involved in the INOU at that time has been instrumental in enabling the organisation to grow and develop. The foresight shown by the staff and Board Members involved is greatly appreciated as is the commitment shown down the years by the owners of the building, the Full Employment Trust.

We were delighted when Michael Quinn, who was then an INOU employee, expressed an interest in researching the history of the building with a view to developing a poster depicting the various owners, occupants and uses the building had been put to since it was built over 150 years ago up to the year that the INOU moved in. The first stage of Michael's work culminated in the production of

a wonderful framed poster which proudly sits in the main entrance lobby of Araby House. We were also very fortunate when the then Dublin Lord Mayor, Councillor Nial Ring, was able to assist the organisation in securing a small grant from Dublin City Council towards the cost of producing a more comprehensive history of the building and its place in North Richmond Street. We are deeply grateful to Councillor Ring and Dublin City Council for their support. We also wish to acknowledge and thank the Penrose Estate for their permission for the use of Lee Miller's evocative photograph on the front cover of the book. Unfortunately, we were not in a position to publish many copies of the book, however we have a very limited stock available, free of charge.



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, SkillsMatch and the St. Stephen's Green Trust for their financial assistance during the year.



*Dublin in the Rare Aoul Times:
Araby House and
North Richmond
Street*

Head of Policy and Media Report



Bríd O'Brien
Head of Policy
and Media

Context

2020 will be remembered as the year Ireland started off with 'full employment', when the focus of employment and activation policy was expected to move to people most distanced from the labour market and finally address their socio-economic exclusion. However, before the first quarter of 2020 was over, the COVID-19 pandemic was unfolding, and Ireland is still grappling with its social and economic impact.

Four times a year the Central Statistics Office (CSO) publishes the Labour Force Survey which provides the official figures on employment and unemployment in Ireland. To ensure that this data is comparable, for example across regions, sex, and age ranges, the CSO uses the International Labour Organisation standard methodology. However, in 2020 given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Irish labour market, the CSO also produced estimated figures taking into account the impact of the health crisis on employment.

Using the standard Labour Force Survey (LFS) methodology, 2,306,200 people were employed in Quarter 4, 2020, 55,000 fewer people than in the last quarter of 2019. Full-time employment rose slightly over the year to 1,871,200 people. But part-time employment fell by 12% to 434,900: 73% of this drop occurred as women's part-time employment decreased by 42,800.

Over the year the labour force decreased by 26,600 to 2,445,100. Two factors influence changes in the Labour Force, the demographic effect, which was positive (+22,200); and the participatory effect, which was negative (-48,900). The participation rate fell by 1.4 to 61.3%, reflecting the very challenging year Ireland's labour market has experienced because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Q4 2020, 138,900 people were unemployed: 28,300 more people than in Q4 2019. The unemployment rate was 5.7%, an increase of 1.2 over the year. The number of people deemed long-term unemployed was 36,800 and the long-term unemployment rate was 1.5%. In Q4 2019 these figures were 38,700 and 1.6% respectively.

The Principal Economic Status (PES) captures data on how people described themselves, for example whether they are at work or unemployed or a student or on home duties. In Q4 2020, 249,600 people described themselves as unemployed: an increase of 96,800 on the same quarter last year.

Another useful statistic is the Potential Additional Labour Force (PALF). In Q4 2020 PALF stood at 162,500: 63,800 more people than a year ago. This figure captures people who are deemed as 'inactive' but who may well view themselves as unemployed.

When the impact of COVID-19 is factored in, the numbers of people employed drops to 1,970,609 at the end of the quarter. While the numbers of people unemployed increases to 468,655 with an unemployment rate of 19.4%. In *Labour Market Insight Series 5*, the CSO provided a supplementary analysis to the Labour Force Survey Q4, 2020, and amongst the key findings they noted:

- Those in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) in Q4 2020 were more than twice as likely to self-classify themselves as *Unemployed* using Principal Economic Status (PES) at 25.7% as to be officially classified as *Unemployed* (11.5%).
- In Q4 2020, approximately one in five (21.0%) of all those aged 15-64 years who reported having lost employment or been laid off due to COVID-19 indicated that they did not expect to return to the same job.
- Nearly half (45.7%) of all those aged 15-64 years who reported having lost employment or been laid off due to COVID-19 indicated that they had already returned to the same job compared to one in seven (14.3%) of those who were receiving the PUP and just over a half (51.6%) of those who were benefitting from the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS).

Policy Developments

2020 started out with the Government finally publishing the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025*, work that was led by the Department of Social Protection and into which the INOU had contributed in 2019. Under the Roadmap, the Government’s ambition is for Ireland to become one of the most socially inclusive States in the European Union and ‘to reduce the number of people in consistent poverty in Ireland to 2% or less’. Though this target may appear ambitious, it is not as strong as the target set under the Roadmap’s predecessor, the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSI) 2007-2016* which was “To reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016, under the revised definition.”

This target was revised after the last crisis “to reduce consistent poverty to 4 per cent by 2016 (interim target) and to 2 per cent or less by 2020, from the 2010 baseline rate of 6.3 per cent.” According to the 2019 Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) the consistent poverty rate was 5.5%. However, for people who were unemployed the consistent poverty rate was much higher at 20.2%.

The General Election 2020 took place in early February and the INOU produced a *General Election Manifesto* which was circulated to election candidates for their consideration. This pre-COVID-19 document raised the challenges facing people at the time who remained unemployed, the inadequacy of income supports, the need for person centred services and supports, the importance of accessible decent work, and the role of community based organisations in responding to socio-economic exclusion, a ground noticeably absent from Ireland’s equality legislation.

An analysis of the Political Parties General Election Manifestos on INOU issues was published on the website and sent to INOU Individual Members and Affiliated Organisations. In June the Green, Fianna Fail, and Fine Gael parties published the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*, the content and implications of which was brought to the attention of INOU affiliates and individual members through the organisation’s e-bulletin.

The INOU continues to be one of the three Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) representatives on the

National Economic and Social Council. Amongst the work undertaken by NESCC was finalising their reports on *Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland* and *The Future of the Irish Social Welfare System: Participation and Protection*. NESCC explored the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how to ground the recovery in sustainable development. Work was undertaken on actions to deliver on housing policy; the potential of digital and the need for an inclusive approach; and work commenced on the Department of An Taoiseach led work on a “Shared Island”.

In April the new Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC) held its first of five meetings in 2020. The INOU is one of eleven members of this Council which also includes academics, policy makers, employers, employer body and trade union representatives. The Department of Social Protection is the lead Department, working alongside their colleagues from Departments of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science; Public Expenditure & Reform; Enterprise, Trade & Employment; Taoiseach; and SOLAS. Initially the LMAC advised on the DSP Working Paper on the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Ireland’s labour market which was published in May.

The Council then worked on a Discussion Paper: “Preparing for Economic Recovery” which was published in late June. Later on in the year the LMAC responded to the draft “Pathways to Work” document; the Institute for Employment Studies Report on Irish Public Employment Service; and the proposed new Work Placement Experience Programme announced in the July Jobs Stimulus package. These documents have yet to be published on the LMAC website page on www.gov.ie

Working in partnership

The INOU, as a member organisation of the Community Platform, participated in workshops organised by Values Lab on the development of a General Election 2020 Manifesto. The three core values of the manifesto were: community; participation; decency including decent work. Later on it was agreed to COVID-19 proof the General Election manifesto as a ‘Values for a Just Recovery’ document; and to explore what social dialogue / social partnership should now entail.

Head of Policy and Media Report



The Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP), of which the INOU is one of seventeen organisations, held four meetings in 2020 and a think-in on the theme of a Just Transition to a low/post carbon economy and society. The CVP organises bilateral meeting with a range of Government Departments, and in 2020 the INOU participated in bilateral meetings with the Department of Justice and Equality; Department of Social Protection; Department of Rural and Community Development which has responsibility for the five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024 and the National Social Enterprise Policy. The INOU is one of the two CVP organisations representing the Pillar on the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group which met in May and September.

In April a letter was sent from the CVP to the Irish Times on the impact and implications of COVID-19 for people living on the margins of Irish society; another to the leaders of all of the political parties and those negotiating the programme for government on the theme of social dialogue / social partnership. In September, the INOU participated in the CVP pre-budget bilateral meeting with the Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe, TD, and the Minister for Public, Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath, TD.

The INOU continued to participate on the Advisory Committee of the Maynooth University lead research project, ACA PES (Coalesce), which focused on the development of public employment service policy and practice. The project published *"The High Road Back to Work: Developing a Public Employment Eco System for a Post-Covid Recovery"* and held a webinar on it in June. In September Maynooth University organised two seminars on the theme of *'Digitalisation and Activation: Apps, Algorithms, Public Employment and Guidance Services'*, the INOU was a panellist in the afternoon seminar.

The INOU continued to support the Traveller Employment and Enterprise Policy (TEEP) Officer throughout 2020. The organisation made a presentation at an online event on policy developments relevant to the work of the TEEP programme. Four TEEP programme Advisory Group meetings were held in 2020. Unfortunately, given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, the programme was closed at the end of the year.

In March the INOU joined the COVID-19 NGO Group which continued to meet through-out 2020. This work

was co-ordinated by Community Work Ireland, which created a useful space for organisations to hear how other groups were managing the impact COVID-19 on their work and their issues of concern, and to inform them of how the INOU was maintaining its work, in particular the Welfare Rights Information Service and Training programmes. The INOU also contributed to the joint submission entitled *"Marginalised Groups: Promoting Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights in the COVID-19 Crisis"* which was sent to politicians, senior Civil Servants, and the media; and to other work that arose out of the meetings.

Other networking and working in partnership activities in 2020 included the INOU participating in a series of workshops organised by Friends of the Earth for environmental, community and voluntary organisations on the theme of 'build back better' after Covid-19, which lead to a pre-budget statement published in early October. The INOU also chaired an EAPN meeting on the issue of basic income; participated in the APT Project's Labour Market Access Network; and the OECD Country Report on Missing Entrepreneurs / Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2020.

The INOU is a member of the monitoring committee for the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL), how European Social Funding was distributed in Ireland up to 2020, which held its tenth meeting in the Autumn of 2020. In July the INOU participated in an on-line public consultation exercise on the EU Cohesion Funding for the period 2021 to 2027. In September the INOU participated in a meeting organised by the EESC European Semester Group on *"how organised civil society takes stock and sets out prospects for the European Semester"* at which a very useful discussion about social partners / social dialogue took place.

IHREC Decent Work Project

This project was funded through the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Grants Scheme 2019-2020. In early 2020, the INOU ran three workshops on the theme of 'Decent Work', one in Dublin and the other in Longford for affiliated organisations, and the third for INOU Individual Members and participants on the INOU's Local Training Initiative programmes.



Head of Policy and Media Report

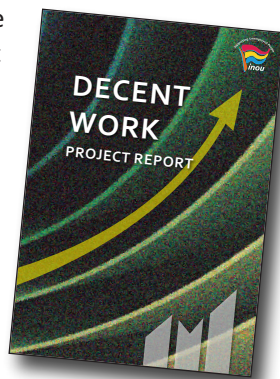


A briefing paper was circulated in advance of the workshops to inform people of the different international definitions / descriptions of decent work and the implications of the changing world of work: a reality many attendees were familiar with through their own work and search for work. At each of the workshops a presentation was made, followed by small group discussions and a reflective exercise on what decent work meant to the participants, which was captured through photographs.

In September the final event took place by webinar on the theme of 'Decent Work'. Tony Geoghegan, IHREC Commissioner; Ger Gibbons, ICTU; and Nichola Harkin, IBEC spoke on the theme of decent work and what it means for their organisation. The INOU made a presentation on the project and the issues arising.

The learning and findings of the project were published in a report and a short video on the theme of decent work was produced.

In December the INOU participated in IHREC's event entitled "Conversation on Socio-Economic Rights, Poverty and Socio-Economic Discrimination".



Communications

- When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, new social welfare measures were introduced. It took time for the terms and conditions of these supports to be clarified, leading to regular updates of the INOU's website on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment; the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme; and the Working Family Payment criteria.

- Throughout 2020 the INOU was on a variety of radio programmes including the Joe Finnegan Show on Northern Sound; Morning Ireland; Michael Reid Show on LMFM; Newstalk; Radio Kerry; Today with Sarah McInerney: discussing the implications of COVID-19, the changes made to the PUP throughout 2020, whether or not people could holiday abroad.
- Requests were received from TV programmes like RTE's Prime Time looking to speak to someone who had lost their job due to the pandemic; 6 One News interview on PUP and holidays abroad issue; and later on in the year someone who has been living on the PUP throughout 2020.
- While the print media, including the Irish Independent and the Irish Examiner, explored the pros / cons of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), the logistics of applying for it, and the differences the rates and terms and conditions of a PUP vis-a-vis a Jobseeker's payment.
- During 2020 the INOU engaged with the media on statistical issues like the Live Register, how long some people are on it, the figures in a particular county; and the quarterly Labour Force Survey. Outlets included Northern Sound radio; Clare FM and RTE's News website.
- During October the expectations of and reaction to Budget 2021 were sought by RTE Radio and TV, and Virgin Media's Ireland AM. Other topics covered at this time included youth unemployed on RTE Radio's This Week programme; Newstalk on COVID-19 and unemployment; the Irish Examiner on how few people use the formal complaint system; LMFM and the Sunday World on the implications of Level 5 lockdown.

- The INOU published four e-bulletins throughout 2020, covering a broad range of topics including policy developments that could have an impact on unemployed people's lives; the work of organisations providing supports and services; and people's personal experiences of addressing unemployment. Issues 41-44 are available at <https://www.inou.ie/analysis/e-bulletin/>

Head of Policy and Media Report



Submissions

- In January, May and September the HPM, on behalf of the INOU, completed the Lobbying Register for the periods covering 1st September, 2019 – 31st December, 2019; January 1st to April 30th, 2020; and May 1st to August 31st, 2020.
- In February the INOU made a submission to Indecon on drafting the Partnership Agreement for new ESF+ and ERDF programmes.
- In March the INOU made a submission to the Department of An Taoiseach on Ireland's submission to the EU's National Reform Programme on behalf of the Community & Voluntary Pillar (CVP); and contributed to the Better Europe Alliance one which is coordinated by the EAPN.
- In April the INOU coordinated the Community & Voluntary Pillar (CVP) response to Ireland's draft submission to the EU's National Reform Programme.
- In June a submission made to the Special Committee on COVID-19 Submission on Vote 37 expenditure, which includes the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme.
- In July the INOU HPM represented the organisation at the Department of Social Protection's Pre-Budget Forum, one of the few in-person events held in 2020. An initial pre-Budget submission was sent into the Department, the final one sent to Government and Houses of the Oireachtas in the Autumn, and distributed to a wider audience through the INOU's e-bulletin Issue 43.
- In August the National Statistical Board Consultation on-line survey was completed.
- In November a submission was made to the Department of Social Protection's Statement of Strategy 2020-2023. A short briefing paper on social welfare issues for the Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality was written: to inform a pre-recorded panel discussion which was videoed by Zoom, and for circulation to the Assembly itself.
- In December a submission was made to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on their Statement of Strategy 2021-2023.



National Executive Committee

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 Conference and normally serve for an initial term of two years. There were 9 NEC/Board Meetings held during the year. 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

Ann Fergus	Chair
Joanne Farrell	Vice Chair
Philip Fitzsimons	Vice Chair
Mick Creedon	Treasurer
John Stewart	Co-ordinator

Nominating Organisation

South Galway MABS
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
INOUE General Branch
Ballymun Jobs Centre

National Executive Committee (NEC)

Evanne Kilmurray	Company Secretary	Inner City Enterprise
Brendan Carmody		INOUE General Branch
Breda Murphy		EDI Centre, Longford
Lorraine Hennessy		INOUE Staff Representative
Brendan Sherlock (Co-opted)		INOUE General Branch
Yvonne Browne (Co-opted)		National Employability Service
Jerry Dixon (Co-opted)		Arklow Jobs Club

We would like to take this opportunity to thank **Seamus Orr** for his contribution to the work of the organisation for over 16 years. Seamus stepped down from the NEC following the AGM on 29th July.

INOU Staff 2020



2020 has been a most challenging year for the staff in the organisation. We would 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
Head of Policy and Media
Financial Controller

John Stewart
Brid O'Brien
Patrick Caulfield

Administration and Finance Team

CE Supervisor
Book Keeper
HR Assistant
Finance Administrator
Receptionist
Cleaner

Laura Rossney
Carol Thornton
Karen Treston
Muhammad Kashif
Leanne Leech, Luke Dunne
Dinah Donegan

Welfare to Work Team

Manager Welfare to Work Section
Senior Information Officer
Information Officers
Admin Support Worker

Robbert J. Lynch
Robert Kelly
Conor Flynn/Tom McMahon
Rebecca Doyle

Training Team

Head of Training
LTI Co-ordinator
LTI Co-ordinator
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator
Assistant LTI Co-ordinator
Training Administrator

Lorraine Hennessy
Laura Pierce
Michelle Kelly
Sinead Boyle
Jonathan Carley
Marie Hughes

Membership and Development Team

Membership/Project Worker
Admin Support Worker
Web Administrator
Jobs Researcher

John Farrell
Ray Brennan
Jennifer Harrington
Dionne Byrne

CE Workers based at Ozanam House

Danielle Mulgrew, Leyla Evloeva,
Patrick Brogan

Staff who left in 2020

Hugh Gilhooly and
Jennifer Harrington



Year in photographs

The INOU working with the Great Care Co-op



During the year the INOU worked with Great Care Co-op: Ireland's first care workers cooperative owned and operated by carers. Founded in conjunction with Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), the cooperative is led by skilled experienced migrant women dedicated to providing quality home care. Owning and operating the business themselves means that workers can ensure good pay and good conditions.

Shaping Futures Year 2



Members of the Shaping Futures group outside Araby House.

Members of the Decent Work Project



Income	2020	2019
Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection - CE	259,588	239,288
Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection	255,600	255,637
Dept of Rural & Community Development - Pobal	88,776	86,466
Dept of Rural & Community Development - Social Partnership	41,448	41,448
Dept of Education & Skills - Solas	20,000	20,000
CDETB Local Training Initiative	180,906	126,591
Office Rental	12,400	19,250
Community Education & Development	29,160	39,487
Other Income	26,728	29,700
Mitigating Against Education Disadvantage Fund	8,423	—
St.Stephen's Green Trust	8,750	—
TOTAL	931,779	857,867

Running Expenses	2020	2019
Wages and salaries	452,106	381,529
Community Employment Wages	235,069	228,301
Social security costs	55,381	46,468
Staff recruitment costs	—	293
Staff pension costs defined contribution	6,555	8,219
Shaping Futures Project (LTI) 4	9,694	22,954
INOUE other services costs	3,066	6,420
Building Futures Project (LTI) 5	18,894	21,942
Outreach Work	—	3,554
National Executive Committee	2,767	8,108
Welfare to Work Information Support	3,481	3,079
Dept of Social Protection - Sundry Projects	58	1,413
Community Employment Materials & Training	3,230	8,177
Rent and rates	15,617	15,598
Canteen	1,290	4,447
Membership	240	1,101
Light and heat	4,623	6,475
Repairs, maintenance and renovations (Incl.Covid 19 measures)	17,319	6,839
Insurance	3,178	1,570
IT purchasing & equipment	8,134	7,393
Travelling expenses	398	1,851
Annual delegate conference	—	3,462
Legal and professional fees	2,447	2,583
Audit & accountancy fees	6,951	4,824
Bad and doubtful debts	1,511	—
Printing and publications (including Working for Work)	32,426	40,901
Stationery	683	4,168
Telephone	1,931	2,277
Skills match project (Sweden)	2,694	1,615
History of INOUE	2,215	—
IHR & EC	4,102	—
Sundry expenses	4,923	10,064
Depreciation	22,754	4,673
Loss on sale of tangible assets	1,201	—
	924,938	860,298
Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	6,841	(2,431)



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

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