

## Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE): IHREC Project 2021-2022

### INOUE

*“The INOUE is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and Trade Unions. The INOUE represents and defends the rights and interests of those who want decent employment and cannot obtain it. We promote and campaign for policies to achieve full employment for all. We also campaign for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependents. The INOUE is an anti-sectarian, anti-racist, non-party political organisation which promotes equality of opportunity within society.”* (INOUE Mission Statement)

The organisation’s work includes the provision of Welfare to Work Information and Advocacy Services to people reliant on social welfare, community groups and other service providers, through our telephone and email based information service; at external events; and distribution of *Working for Work*. We are a QQI accredited training provider and provides a range of welfare to work related training programmes to community and statutory organisations; and to people who are long-term unemployed through our two Local Training Initiative programmes. The engagement of our affiliates and individual members in Regional Discussion Forums; thematic focus groups; in the organisation’s structures through the General Branch; the National Executive Committee; and Annual Delegate Conference. The INOUE’s policy development and advocacy work happens through collaborative working with other community groups; participation in policy committees and community events; interacting with policy making processes; and engaging with the media.

### IHREC Project 2021-2022

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed received funding from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Grants 2021-2022, under the funding strand *advancing social and economic rights and equality* to undertake a research project entitled *The impact of stigma on unemployed people exercising their socio-economic rights*.

In summary this research project will explore the impact of the stigma associated with unemployment on people’s ability to exercise their social and economic rights. Many people do not perceive their access to a social welfare payment as a right, even when they can access a jobseeker’s payment through their social insurance contributions. Other people experience the system as one of control, a questioning of their right to access adequate income, education, training, and employment supports. The introduction of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment demonstrated that the State saw existing unemployment payments as inadequate to address the impact of employment loss on people. The enhanced level of support was welcome, but it also created a two tiered system of unemployment payments, with enhanced payments going to those described in public discourse as unemployed through ‘no fault of their own’. Yet, the overwhelming majority of people who are unemployed do not chose to be. Many people who are not actively seeking work want a job, but it can be hard to keep looking if previous efforts have been unsuccessful. This in turn has an impact on people’s confidence and their ability to secure decent work and address their own socio-economic exclusion.

## **Overall Aim**

The overall aim of the project will be to research and document the impact of the stigma associated with unemployment on people's ability to exercise their social and economic rights including access to social protection, education, training and employment supports, and the securing of decent work.

## **Key Objectives**

1. To undertake research with people who are unemployed and explore in depth the impact of the stigma associated with unemployment on their lives.
2. To increase awareness and understanding of this reality and its impact.
3. To bring to people's attention that accessing social protection, education, training and employment supports, and decent work are key existing rights they have and could exercise.
4. To explore with people providing supports and services to unemployed people the impact of stigma on people's ability to engage and exercise their rights.
5. To explore with duty bearers the impact of stigma on unemployed people and how duty bearers could address this issue constructively to support people to exercise their socio-economic rights.

The project is aimed at people who are unemployed, community based organisations who provide supports and services to unemployed people and the Department of Social Protection who has lead responsibility for income supports and activation services for unemployed people.

The INOU will contract a researcher to support the roll out of this project, in particular to undertake the in-depth research that will provide the space to explore the issue of stigma and its impact on people's lives and their ability to exercise their social and economic rights.

The INOU has many years' experience of undertaking participative research, organising focus groups, thematic workshops to provide an opportunity for unemployed people, the organisation's individual members and affiliates to explore a range of issues including education and training, activation, re-modelled employment services, and decent work.

This organisational experience will be brought to the project and support the researcher to undertake their work. In this particular project participants will be drawn from the organisation's individual members, two Local Training Initiatives, and people identified through our affiliated organisations.

The researcher will also be requested to engage with key personnel in the Department of Social Protection and to explore with them how this sensitive issue can be addressed appropriately from a rights based and equality perspective.

A draft of the research will be presented to participants to ensure that their issues are captured and articulated appropriately, to discuss with them the findings and recommendations coming from the report, and how best these should be acted on.

### **Timeframe**

- The closing date for this tender will be May 20<sup>th</sup> 2022.
- The research work will take place over the months of June to August, 2022.
- A draft of the research will be presented in early September.
- Final draft will be published and disseminated in late September.

### **Management**

The project will be managed by a team consisting of the INOU's Coordinator, Head of Policy and Media, and Development and Membership Worker. The project team will liaise with the Financial Controller on the management of the project's finances. Regular reports will be made to the organisation's Coordinating Team, Officers Board and National Executive Committee and their advice and support will be sought over the lifetime of the project. The project team will undertake the regular reporting of the project to IHREC, and will work with the Financial Controller on the financial reporting required.

### **Project Budget**

Hiring of Researcher:	€5,250
Publication of research report:	€2,500
Dissemination of report:	€350
Administration:	<u>€610</u>
Total Project Cost:	€8,710

### **Expressions of Interest**

Expressions of interest should be sent to Bríd O'Brien, Head of Policy and Media, by email to [policy@inou.ie](mailto:policy@inou.ie) no later than close of business May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### **Thank you**