

Information and Advocacy

INOUE Discussion Forum

November 2024



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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government supporting communities

Points Noted at ADC Roundtables

- Need for a better-connected system, better communication and provision of accurate comprehensive information by Intreo.
- Information should be more accessible and understandable. Staff 'need to know what they should know'.
- Close information gap 📍 clearer information on entitlements & progression.
- Access to information to find way.
- Barriers are bigger than inconsistent information.
- INOU & other non-profit organisations who advocate must back-up why they are proposing changes & forecast outcomes.

INOU Decent Work Project Report

- “Advocacy is required. A particular example was given of the recent unemployment of someone who cared for a relative and the difficulty of engaging with the system now.” (p13)
- “More advocacy for unionisation of workers outside of unions/representative bodies is needed. Participants note that it would be important to normalise unionisation and encourage all workers to join unions despite threats from employers/businesses to cut jobs if workers unionise.” (p24)
- “The Commission has produced guidance and tools kits for public bodies on the Duty, which is also very relevant for civil society organisations like the INOU and Trade Unions as you all have a clear role in advocating for the Duty as a mechanism to improve workplaces, including employment issues, and service provision.” (p29)
 - Commission = IHREC
 - Duty = Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty
- Link: <https://www.inou.ie/resources/publications/decent-work-report/>

INOUE Decent Work Project Report

- “The importance of welfare to work supports and information was cited, including places / offices where people could go to hear about these supports. There is a need to ensure that information is available for people to make informed decisions. Participants felt the Department of Social Protection could do more in this regard, including ensuring that employers understand how their staff’s income may be affected by their working arrangements.” (p14)
- “Across the workshops participants noted that the Department of Social Protection needs to provide more comprehensive information and fully explain to people what their entitlements are; for people who are making the welfare to work journey, what supports may be available and entitlements they can keep. For example, if the person had been longterm unemployed they could hold onto their medical card. It was also noted that many people find it hard to access information in Intreo offices.” (p20)
- “Another call was made for more funding to support workers in community based organisations to do checkins, keep in contact with more people who have used their services over a longer period of time, to make sure their transition back to work goes as smoothly as possible. The complexity, nuance, and details of payments and schemes were noted and support workers often feel unable to provide sufficient information to the people using their services and would welcome more support from the Department.” (p21)

Department of Social Protection

Mission and Values

- DSP mission is to promote active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.
- DSP value public service, customer focus, engaged staff, innovation, and professionalism.

Strategic Objectives

- DSP overall objectives for 2023 to 2026 are:
 - to continue putting their clients at the centre of all their operations,
 - to provide an efficient and effective service, and
 - to carry on developing their staff, structures, and processes.
- Link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3758a-annual-report-2023/>

Towards a Civil Society for Transformative Change

- “exploring a shared concern in regard to the barriers to effective advocacy currently faced by community organisations, and a shared interest to advance an agenda for strengthening a civil society for transformative change to progress social justice, equality, and environmental sustainability.” (Introduction)
- “Funding for community organisations is a barrier to advocacy. It is precarious, insufficient and at times does not reflect what needs to be done. It can be withdrawn with ease, involves organisations as service providers, and comes with controlling conditions. The state drives the agenda, through this funding, and imposes its understanding of community development. Funding defines what community organisations do, and makes them part of the system, almost a part of the public sector.” (p2)

Towards a Civil Society for Transformative Change

- “Community organisations could take steps to protect advocacy, forming coalitions that manage inhibiting funding arrangements, or that serve as independent platforms for advocacy. There is a need to create and invest in such safe spaces.” (p3)
- “They would assert an equality and human rights perspective as a foundation stone for their work, take steps to engage and defend their values, redefine the range of work they are involved in through an advocacy lens, and create independent spaces, as needed, within which to give full effect to their advocacy.” (p5/6)

Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector

- **Commitment**
- All Government Departments, Local and Regional Government and Agencies of the State (Public Bodies) will commit to the utilisation of the values and principles detailed here to inform all collaboration and partnership working in the context of consultation, policy and programme design, development, implementation and monitoring at a national, regional and local level.
- Link:
<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/225876/9732c425-65df-4e92-b154-a51ca518b233.pdf#page=null>

Values

- It is important for collaboration and partnership working at a local, regional or national level that all relevant organisations and public bodies consider the values listed below and ensure that these values inform the design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes. This will ensure that all members of the community are considered as part of that partnership process and are facilitated to engage with the processes in an effective way. This in turn will support more effective policy and programme design and implementation that allows all members of the community to engage with policy and programme processes that will/may have an impact on them and their communities.



Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector

Principles

- Principle 1: Respect
- Principle 2: Subsidiarity
- Principle 3: Harmonisation
- Principle 4: Value for Money
- Principle 5: Implementation
- Principle 6: Collaboration