



ANNUAL REPORT

20 22

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US





The annual report outlines the strategic objectives and activities of the Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) for the period from 2019 to 2022.

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Our Vision

Our vision is an Ireland where disabled persons have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives and can fully participate in an inclusive society as equals.

Mission

We are working collectively to create an Independent Living Movement in Ireland which is led by disabled people and promotes a rights-based social model of disability, challenging the unacceptable charity / medical model of disability. We are working towards the removal of societal barriers that prevent active equal participation of disabled people, challenging the denial of people's rights and the promotion of the philosophy of independent living.

Core Values

Our core values are underpinned by the philosophy of Independent Living and all activities are aimed towards promoting: Independence, Options, Rights, Empowerment.

Our Principles

We promote the active participation of disabled people in all aspects of the work of ILMI: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

We are a cross-impairment DPO (disabled persons organisation) formed to ensure that the voice of disabled people will be heard in campaigns, research and policy development.

We recognise and promote equality within our members, in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, marital status, socio-economic status and impairment.

We will actively promote an understanding of disability as an interaction between a person's impairment and the societal and environmental barriers that disable people's participation in society – and actively lobby to remove these barriers to participation and challenge the unacceptable medical / charity model of disability.

We are committed that ILMI continue to develop new innovative models to achieve equality of outcome, recognising that people have a variety of abilities, needs and wants.

Governance, Accountability and Transparency

ILMI aims to maintain high standards of governance, accountability, and transparency. The board of management held six meetings in 2022, and various individuals served as board members. The organisation also sends biweekly eBulletins to members and maintains an online presence through social media platforms.

Leadership and Representation

ILMI is committed to being led and represented by disabled people at all levels. The organisation runs programs like Virtual Online Inclusive Communities for Empowerment (VOICE) and Strategies for Change to empower disabled individuals and develop expertise based on lived experiences. ILMI is actively involved in various coalitions, networks, and committees related to disability rights and representation.

Promotion of Equality and Accessing Human Rights

ILMI's work is grounded in equality and a rights-based approach. The organisation completed the ONSIDE project, funded by the EU, which focused on IT and social inclusion in the border counties. ILMI also ran the CREATE project, supported by Pobal funding, to help disabled individuals develop skills and confidence for employment. Additionally, ILMI worked on the Full Spectrum Ireland project, supporting the development of an online collective for LGBT+ disabled people.

Political Campaigning and Strategic Policy Development

ILMI engages in political campaigning and policy development to promote independent living and effective implementation of policies. The organisation launched the PASNOW campaign, which focuses on advocating for the right to personal assistance services for disabled individuals.

The report highlights specific activities, achievements, and partnerships throughout the period, such as hosting webinars, participating in committees and networks, and providing support and resources to members. It demonstrates ILMI's commitment to promoting the rights and inclusion of disabled individuals in Ireland.



Des Kenny, ILMI Chairperson

Chairperson's Review

I am coming to this year's review as we arrive at the significant 30th anniversary milestone of ILMI's foundation in 1992 as the Centre for Independent Living. The challenges passed to us by our founders continue today. There is no end to the work of ILMI arguing and persuading our expectations as disabled people to be embodied into the new fabric of rights to guarantee our inclusion as equal citizens of a modern and accommodating Ireland.

The landscape of service provision is growing ever bigger and stronger as a money-hungry industry that ultimately must be challenged for its ongoing relevance and termination if scarce resources are to be re-allocated to independent living, supported families and to accessible communities. This is ILMI's challenge going forward.

ILMI members can be satisfied that our work in the year now being reviewed was prosecuted to successful conclusions by committed staff under the direction of our CEO, Damien, Walshe, and the guidance of ILMI's board of directors – my colleagues who have supported me in enriching ILMI's work with their own individual wealth of experience while managing the oversight role of good governance for our growing recognition as Ireland's leading DPO.

ILMI staff during the year continued to exploit the potential in digital technology for connectivity, employment and homeworking for disabled people. The ILMI working day continued its reach into late evenings in order to facilitate member participation in a huge menu of subjects and topics feeding into and creating new interest groups, building on the legacy of our movement and discovering the leadership seeds in disabled people who will follow on from our founders, three of whom died relatively recently: James Brosnan in late 2021 and Dr John Roche, Hubert Mc Cormack and David Egan in the early parts of 2022.



Des Kenny, ILMI Chairperson



Damien Walshe, ILMI CEO

Chief Executive's Review

Message from ILMI CEO Damien Walshe

In collating our Annual report, it gives us as a Movement a chance to reflect on another busy and successful year. So much has happened in the last twelve months that we should collectively be proud of, as we move ILMI from its current strategic plan to the development of a new plan that will take us from 2023 to the next four years of our evolution as a national cross-impairment DPO.

Before I acknowledge the work of board, staff and members in continuing to build our Movement, it is fitting that I begin by recognising members who contributed so much to the realisation of disabled people's lives over the last 30 years who sadly passed away this year. This year we lost our comrades Dr John Roche, Hubert McCormack and Michael Nestor, stalwarts of the Independent Living Movement. Their loss was huge and we collectively mourned and celebrated their memories.

While we remember our comrades who have passed, their vision and passion can and does continue to inspire us to collectively work together to realise a brighter future. This year saw the end of two large ILMI projects, namely ONSIDE and CREATE, as well as the completion of a short-funded project to support the development of Full Spectrum Ireland (FSI).

I would like to pay tribute to the hard work, energy and innovation of the ILMI ONSIDE who contributed to the delivery above and beyond our expectations. The staff, led by Peter Kearns, included Dr James Casey, Angela Coleman, Orla Beirne, Edel McGinley, Marie Gilligan, Fiona Brennan, Clive Lowry, Mark McCollum and Audrey Wilson. ONSIDE not only directly engaged with over 625 disabled adults across Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth, but also began to establish processes for growing local DPOs with ILMI's support.

This September saw the end of our Creating Raised Expectations and Aspirations Towards Employment (CREATE) project. Funded by Pobal funding, CREATE works with disabled people to develop their confidence and skills that supports them to start or progress on their employment pathway. Led by Patrick Flanagan, CREATE coordinator, with support from CREATE life coach Eileen Daly, ILMI developed online group coaching, employment skills workshops and peer mentoring to support 40 disabled people to explore employment and training options over an eighteen-month period. The project was a huge success and was testament to the work of Many thanks to Patrick and Eileen and all the trainers who participated in this programme.

This year we were delighted that the HSE had agreed to fund our peer mentoring position. Over the last three years, our peer mentor Shelly Gaynor had developed a programme for supporting disabled people beginning their pathway to independent living and we look forward to how this programme develops over the course of 2023 and beyond.

As part of our 30th Anniversary and also commemorating European Independent Living Day on 5th May, we hosted a webinar on our PASNOW campaign. Over the course of 2020 to 2022, we have worked with disabled activists locally, local elected representatives and political parties and in 2022 we were delighted to announce that each local authority has passed motions calling on a right to personal assistance for disabled people. This event was preceded with 30 days of action as members recorded short video clips to talk about the importance of PAS and why it needed to be invested in and legislated for. We followed up this successful webinar and campaign with an in-person presentation in the Oireachtas AV room with strong political allies. Our PASNOW campaign will continue as we work to bring legislation into the Dail and continue to build cross party support for a right to PAS.

As part of our 30th Anniversary we hosted a series of important webinars on Independent Living, which included a memorable input from the Legendary Adolf Ratkza. We also hosted a series of cultural events called "Smashing it" which featured Matt Frazer and Rosaleen McDonagh among others. All of these events can be accessed on the video section of our ILMI website <https://ilmi.ie/ilmi-video-resources/>

Coupled with our revamped website and video content, we continue to promote the work of ILMI with our weekly eBulletin, our social media presence and working to build links with media, including our very successful RTE 6 One News piece on December 1st to comment on the ESRI research to PAS.

On a personal level, I want to recognise the support and guidance that Des Kenny continues to give as chairperson of ILMI. I also want to recognise the work of Selina Bonnie (Vice Chair), Jacqui Brown (Secretary), Gordon Ryan (Treasurer), Brian Dalton, Ann Marie Flanagan, Catherine Gallagher, Seònaid Ó Murchadha, Sinead Murtagh and Aoife McNicholl.

We are extremely fortunate to have such skilled, creative and committed staff members that bring so much to the organisation. I want to acknowledge the work of the staff team over the course of 2022: Orla Beirne, Susan O'Brien, Nina Byrne, Dr James Casey, James Cawley, Angela Coleman, Patrick Flanagan, Shelly Gaynor, Edel McGinley, Niall Jordan, Nem Kearns, Peter Kearns, Claire Kenny, Clive Lowry, Nicola Meacle, Mark McCollum, Paula Soraghan, Fiona Weldon and Audrey Wilson. As CEO I want to thank them all for their dedication, expertise and passion they bring to their roles and their work as a team.

As projects have closed down and staff have sadly moved onto new roles, I want to especially recognise the contributions of Audrey, Clive, Edel and Orla who left ILMI as ONSIDE wound down. I would like to thank Niall and Nem for their work on the short project to develop Full Spectrum Ireland and Patrick for his management of CREATE over the last eighteen months and for Susan and James for their significant contribution to the organisation over the last years. I am sure you will join us in wishing them all the very best and to thank them for all they have done in ILMI over the years. I also want Linda McCourt and Carrie Minagh from NUI Maynooth who joined ILMI on placement as part of their education in 2022.

As always, it is vital to acknowledge the huge contribution made by disabled people who have been involved in the work of ILMI in so many different ways.

With the development of a new strategic plan which we will launch in 2023, it is my hope that ILMI can continue to grow as a national DPO and bring new ways to challenge the structural ableism that prevents disabled people from participating in society as equals.

As a national DPO, our strength is our collective voice. The full and active participation of members has been and will continue to be the key driver towards an Ireland where disabled people build a genuinely inclusive Ireland.

I look forward to how our members continue to drive that change in 2023 and beyond.



Damien Walshe, ILMI CEO



Political Campaigning

PAS NOW 30 days of action

PAS NOW Dail presentation

Position papers on media, politics and budget

Ongoing resourcing of Peer Mentoring

Continued successful online webinars

Investment in VOICE community development project

Completion of year 2 Strategies for Change



Leadership and Representation

Completion of ONSIDE with 627 disabled people

Successful CREATE employment programme

Supporting the development of Full Spectrum Ireland



Promotion of Equality and Accessing Human Rights



INDEPENDENT LIVING
MOVEMENT IRELAND

Governance, Accountability and Transparency

What we aim to do: We will maintain the highest standards of Governance, accountability and transparency to our members and funders and will develop a funding strategy to secure the sustainability of the organisation.

The ILMI board of management met six times over the course of 2022 and the following people served as board members over the course of 2022.

Des Kenny	Chairperson
Selina Bonnie	Vice Chairperson
Gordon Ryan	Treasurer
Jacqui Browne	Secretary
Aoife McNicholl	Co-opted January 2022
John Roche	RIP March 2022
Catherine Gallagher	Casual vacancy from June, elected at AGM 2022
Sinead Murtagh	-
Seònaid Ó Murchadha	-
Brian Dalton	-
Ann Marie Flanagan	-

AGM 2022

In October we held our AGM online. Based on feedback from our AGM in 2020, this year we held a virtual hustings for members to hear from board candidates. Again using an online election the Election Buddy system, members voted to return Selina Bonnie and Catherine Gallagher. The AGM also noted the contributions of Hubert McCormack and Dr John Roche who passed away in 2022.

In order that ILMI is transparent with all its work, we send a biweekly eBulletin to an email mailing list of 500 contacts, which includes all ILMI members. These are also uploaded onto our ILMI website eBulletin section <https://ilmi.ie/ebulletins/>

ILMI uses social media to increase our profile and ensure transparency in our work. By the end of 2022 we had 5,146 total Likes on our Facebook page an increase 896 from the last year. We have 1,558 followers on Twitter at the end of 2022, an increase of 723.

Staff

The following people were employed by ILMI in 2022:

Orla Beirne	ONside Community Navigator (until June 2022)
Susan O'Brien	Development Worker (until December 2022)
Nina Byrne	Communications Officer
Dr James Casey	ONside health and housing officer / ILMI Policy officer from Dec 2022
James Cawley	Policy Officer (until October 2022)
Angela Coleman	ONside administrator
Patrick Flanagan	CREATE coordinator (until September 2022)
Shelly Gaynor	Peer Mentoring Worker
Edel McGinley	ONside Community Navigator (until May 2022)
Niall Jordan	(FSI Community Development Worker Jan to June 2022)
Nem Kearns	(FSI Community Development Worker Jan to June 2022)
Peter Kearns	ONside Project coordinator
Claire Kenny	Policy Assistant
Clive Lowry	ONside Community Navigator (until July 2022)
Mark McCollum	ONside Community Navigator
Nicola Meacle	VOICE Community Development Worker (from January 2022)
Paula Soraghan	VOICE Community Development Worker (from January 2022)
Fiona Weldon	Strategies for Change Coordinator
Audrey Wilson	ONside Community Navigator (until April 2022)
Damien Walshe	CEO

Staff meet biweekly to ensure collective coordination of its work. The CEO provides direct support and supervision to all staff on a structured basis every six weeks to ensure accountability of projects within the strategic objectives.

Leadership and Representation

Our mission: Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) remains committed to being guided and represented by disabled individuals at every level. ILMI's primary focus is to establish structures that generate evidence-based policies and expertise rooted in lived experiences.



Virtual Online Inclusive Communities for Empowerment (VOICE)

Towards the end of 2021, ILMI proudly announced its successful selection as one of the pilot projects for the Community Development Programme by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Among 123 applications, the department chose seven pilot programs, including our Virtual Online Inclusive Communities for Empowerment (VOICE) project, which was personally unveiled by Minister Joe O'Brien TD.

VOICE aims to collaborate with disabled people residing in counties Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, and Wexford, representing a significant step towards a stronger movement. The primary focus is to create collective spaces that bring disabled people together. The project relies on digital networking, peer mentoring support, and activism with disabled people in the south of Ireland (CHO areas 4 and 5). VOICE's objective is to inform, mentor, and support disabled people in establishing genuine, locally representative structures while enhancing the capacity of mainstream local services to foster true inclusion of disabled people.

In early 2022, Nicola Meacle (Community Development worker for Cork, Kerry, and Tipperary) and Paula Soraghan (Community Development worker for Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford, and Wexford) joined our team. Throughout the year, we completed the comprehensive mapping of all seven counties, which included disability Service-Providers, local Partnerships, ETBs, 3rd level colleges and universities, Sports Partnerships, community groups, Men's Sheds, Disabled Persons Networks, and local media. We have already commenced group work in Cork, Tipperary, and Kilkenny and will expand to Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, and Kerry next year. VOICE's continuous development aims to create autonomous spaces for disabled people through community development approaches.

ILMI's VOICE Project is a community development initiative that assembles disabled people in collective spaces. Powered by digital networking, peer mentoring support, and activism, the project caters to disabled people in the south of Ireland (CHO areas 4 and 5).

As a genuine Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO), our utmost priority is to ensure disabled people have equal opportunities to become active members in their communities. This necessitates the creation and allocation of resources for fostering a collective shared analysis and enabling representatives to advocate collectively, thereby informing mainstream service provision and policy development.





Strategies for Change

Throughout 2022, the Strategies for Change program empowered and nurtured emerging disabled activists, fostering their growth and transformation. Under the guidance of Fiona Weldon, this groundbreaking initiative worked closely with 15 emerging disabled activists, enabling them to enhance their collective skills and deepen their analysis. The program not only equipped participants from the 2021 cohort with the necessary tools, but also provided ongoing support for them to apply their skills to specific issues.

As we progress, we encourage the active involvement of the SFC 2022 participants in these working groups, allowing them to translate their acquired skills into practical action. An additional testament to the impact of Strategies for Change is the compilation of video and online resources carefully curated by Fiona. These invaluable resources will be housed within the SFC section of the ILMI website, offering disabled activists the opportunity to access knowledge on disability equality and learn how to collaborate collectively in effecting transformative change. This platform is nearing completion and is scheduled for an official launch in 2023.

Strategies for Change has witnessed remarkable success in empowering disabled activists and catalysing positive change. The program has enabled participants to discover their own strengths, values, and inspirations, providing a platform for them to recognise the significance of their identities as disabled people in relation to the world around them. By exploring the role of values not just in theory but in the context of activism and achieving systemic change, Strategies for Change has fostered a deeper understanding of the transformative power embedded within our community and how to change society.

Values, although not solely sufficient in themselves, play a vital role in strategising for change. Through introspection, participants have gained insights into their personal sources of inspiration and the values that resonate with them. This process has illuminated their path forward, as they become more conscious of their own values and the driving forces that fuel their activism. By embracing their values and understanding the broader values within our communities, disabled activists have forged a powerful foundation for creating meaningful and lasting change.

The Strategies for Change program has been instrumental in nurturing a new generation of disabled activists, equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and collective consciousness to shape a better future for everyone. The journey of transformation experienced by participants is a testament to the profound impact of this program and the remarkable potential of disabled people when they are empowered to lead the charge for change. Together, we continue to strive towards a society that embraces inclusivity, equality, and the full recognition of disabled people's rights.

Peer Mentoring

In June 2022, the HSE agreed to provide ongoing funding for the peer mentoring role starting from 2023. This decision has been instrumental in enabling Shelly Gaynor, an exceptional peer mentor, to plan for future work and enhance the scope of her role. Since January 2020, Shelly has been instrumental in creating a robust peer mentoring framework that empowers disabled people to embark on their path towards accessing the necessary supports for independent living.

Real genuine practical supports such as peer mentoring is invaluable in the journey towards independence and empowerment. Shelly Gaynor's dedication and one-to-one guidance have significantly impacted the lives of disabled people, allowing them to carve out a life of their own choosing. Through personalised support, Disabled People gain the necessary tools and knowledge to make informed decisions, ensuring they receive the right supports at the right time in their lives.

Having access to the right supports plays a pivotal role in fostering active citizenship and full engagement in Irish society. By receiving tailored peer mentoring, disabled people can become fully engaged and active citizens, contributing to their communities and participating in various aspects of life. This personalised support empowers individuals to navigate the challenges they may encounter, fostering their independence, agency and self-determination.

Shelly Gaynor's exceptional peer mentoring services exemplify the transformative power of genuine support and guidance. With the continuation of funding, Disabled People will have the opportunity to experience the life-changing benefits of peer mentoring, enabling them to lead independent lives and fulfil their aspirations.

Representation

ILMI staff, board, and members continue to represent the Movement in spaces such as the Assisted Human Reproduction coalition, the Irish Network Against Racism, Community Platform, Add the 10th Alliance, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland, Community Work Ireland, the Coalition Against Hate Crime, and the National Women's Council. ILMI has been working with our partner organisations (As I Am, Disabled Women Ireland, the Irish Deaf Society, and the National Platform for Self-Advocates) to establish the DPO Network, which began in 2022 and has ended the year in a very strong position as a Network.

We continued to offer online spaces for training, consultation, and peer spaces. The ILMI Women's Group continued over 2022, as did our innovative Youth Space. We also held a number of very interesting webinars to build on our collective analysis, including two more in our "Everything You Wanted to know about disability but were afraid to ask," our "Let's talk about Sex" and "Let's talk about the social model." We also co-hosted a webinar with Community Work Ireland on the absence of community development approaches with disabled people called "In from the Margins."

As part of our 30th Anniversary, we hosted a series of important webinars on Independent Living, which included a memorable input from the Legendary Adolf Ratkza. Called 'Freedom and Choice' Marking 30 years of Independent Living in Ireland, disabled people joined us across Ireland for four online events over the month of October exploring IL what it is, and How to get it!

Dr Adolf Ratzka, his topic was The Importance of Understanding Independent Living for disabled people. Dr Ratzka is quoted as saying: “Independent Living does not mean that we want to do everything by ourselves or that we do not need anybody or like to live in isolation. Independent Living means that we demand the same choices and control in our everyday lives that our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbours, and friends take for granted. We want to grow up in our families, go to the neighbourhood school, use the same bus as our neighbours, and work in jobs that are in line with our education and interests, and raise families of our own. We are profoundly ordinary people sharing the same need to feel included, recognised, and loved.”

We also hosted a series of cultural events called “Smashing it,” which featured Matt Fraser and Rosaleen McDonagh, among others. All of these events can be accessed on the video section of our ILMI website <https://ilmi.ie/ilmi-video-resources/>.

ILMI’s online events have been incredibly successful, attracting a large number of participants. They offer a unique opportunity to be virtually present in the room with some of the most sought-after disability activists in the world. These events have become a game changer, as they eliminate barriers like transportation issues and supports planning or rostering, allowing individuals to come together and learn from one another. The online collective spaces fostered by ILMI promote a sense of belonging and strength within the dynamic and powerful collective. Participants have the chance to engage with like-minded individuals, elevating their activism and taking it to the next level. Realising the importance of identity in relation to disability, ILMI’s online events provide a platform for growth, learning, and the development of a thriving community. By breaking down barriers and facilitating collective spaces, ILMI is driving the success of the social model of disability on a day to day basis within individuals’ daily lives and empowering disabled people to become fully engaged and active citizens in Ireland.

Representation by ILMI over 2022:

Members of the Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) Coalition, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland, Community Work Ireland (CWI), National Women’s Council, Irish Network Against Racism, Community Platform, Coalition Against Hate Crime and the Add the 10th Alliance.

ILMI is also represented on the Oireachtas Disability Group (ODG), Taxi Advisory Committee the IHREC Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), the Housing Agency subgroup on disability and housing and presented to the Department of Justice discussion on hate crime legislation. ILMI actively participates in the CWI subgroups on Community work responses to Covid19 and Mental Health Network, NWC subgroup on disability and women and the NWC community workers subgroup. We also joined the Disability Housing Committee with Department of Housing and the NDIS subgroup on Assistive Technology and a series of NDA subgroups over the course of 2021.

ILMI has also had meetings with a number of politicians and held a consultation on our pre-budget submission “Invest in Inclusion” in the Oireachtas AV room. ILMI made a number of presentations to the Disability Matters Committee and Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality.

ILMI is a member of the Disability Participation and Consultation Network (DPCN). ILMI is an active member of the Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) Network which over the course of 2022 worked together to develop a vision and values and to inform the work of the DPCN.



Promotion of Equality and Accessing Human Rights

What we aim to do: Independent Living Movement Ireland's work will be grounded in equality and a rights-based approach, working towards an inclusive Irish Society.

ONSIDE

ILMI's three-year EU-funded IT and Social Inclusion project, in the border counties, named ONSIDE, came to a close in October 2022. Starting from developing and delivering in-person social inclusion and IT workshops towards the end of 2019, ILMI led the approach to move all workshops online during the pandemic. The ILMI ONSIDE team also pioneered the development of social inclusion workshops that broke new ground in cross-border areas.

According to the project's Coordinator, Peter, "One aspect of the Social Inclusion afternoons we were keen to emphasise was how disabled participants could create community connections in their local areas by having speakers from the local volunteer centre, various sports and cultural clubs, and the local ETB venues."

From April 2020 to September 2022, ILMI ONSIDE completed 13 combined groups in the IT and Social Inclusion programs, along with a unique ONSIDE Summer Youth Camp in July 2020. They conducted 143 social inclusion workshops (covering a range of relevant topics identified by disabled people engaging in ONSIDE).

In addition, the project coordinator and team ran a specific Youth Camp in June/July 2020 for young disabled people. Alongside the usual ONSIDE IT and Social Inclusion workshops, the team collaborated with Youth Work Ireland, who delivered a tremendous workshop for young people on sexual health and relationships. This marked the first time this workshop had been provided to young disabled people by the mainstream Youth body.

Retrospectively, the magnitude of what we achieved and the impact we had on hundreds of people's lives during a once-in-a-lifetime event is immense and perhaps not fully apparent yet. However, what is clear and evident is that 627 disabled people in the rural border counties of Ireland, who completed the Onside project, are now more technologically skilled, socially included, and active members of their local communities. This accomplishment is something ILMI can take great pride in.

ILMI's final contact numbers exceeded the 627 graduates through the efforts of our Navigators, which included direct one-to-one contact with over 1,500+ disabled adults and youth throughout the past three years in the border counties.

The Outreach and Navigation for Social Inclusion and Digital Engagement project (ONSIDE) was a dynamic and exciting creative venture coordinated by ILMI in the Republic of Ireland and our partners in Northern Ireland, Disability Action Northern Ireland; Supporting Communities; and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Through ILMI's active work with disabled adults and young people in the counties of Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Donegal, Monaghan, and Louth, led them to be more effectively involved in their own communities and lifestyle choices. Our vision was to facilitate disability equality-led independent living as a feature of border county community choices, not as 'special-needs' or 'special centres' outside of mainstream local participation.

ILMI's ONSIDE Project worked by providing one-to-one assistance to disabled participants in the form of free IT equipment and training. We also organised inclusion workshops which supported participants in accessing mainstream lifestyle choices beyond the traditional disability-service provider 'care' options. Additionally, we offered training and support for project participants to learn how to access and effectively use current web-based technologies.

The ONSIDE initiative facilitates disabled people in embracing affirmative roles as active citizens in their local communities and contributed to creating them more rich and diverse. It had a positive and sustainable impact on both disabled and non-disabled members of entire counties, fostering a truly inclusive society based on equality and participation. Public amenities, whether social, cultural, sporting, or educational, benefited from increased participation by disabled people, demonstrating a commitment to equality and real equity.



CREATE

In September 2022, we celebrated the completion of our ground-breaking Creating Raised Expectations and Aspirations Towards Employment (CREATE) project. Funded by Pobal, CREATE aimed to address the significant barriers that disabled people face in attaining meaningful employment in Ireland. Through the lens of the social model of disability, we recognised that the barriers to employment extend beyond what is visible on the surface, much like an iceberg. However, by bringing attention to both the visible and hidden barriers, we made a significant impact.

As a Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO), ILMI took on the employment challenge, offering a unique perspective and framework to tackle these barriers. This approach sets us apart and becomes a significant unique selling point (USP) for the project. Our methodology focused on empowering disabled people, providing them with the tools and support needed to access employment opportunities and take ownership of their journey. This approach proved to be instrumental in helping participants step onto the employment ladder, improve their working prospects, and foster a sense of empowerment.

Under the exceptional leadership of Patrick Flanagan, CREATE Coordinator, and with the unwavering dedication of our life coach, Eileen Daly, the project offered a range of services, including online group coaching, employment skills workshops, and peer mentoring. These initiatives created a peer-led space that had a profound impact on participants. Through comprehensive training and support, individuals gained confidence, developed essential skills, and expanded their knowledge, resulting in improved employment and education prospects.

70% are currently employed or engaged in employment activation programs. Moreover, 87% of participants experienced a significant increase in confidence, while 78% reported an increase in social interaction and activity. Notably, 39% of participants successfully accessed employment opportunities as a direct outcome of their involvement in CREATE.

The success and uniqueness of the CREATE project cannot be overstated. It has become a beacon of hope and a testament to what can be achieved when the right supports and opportunities are provided to disabled people in Ireland. We take great pride in our exceptional employee, Patrick Flanagan, whose unwavering commitment and dedication played a pivotal role in the success of the CREATE project.

As we move forward, ILMI aims to leverage the innovative learnings from CREATE and apply them to future employment-related programs. We firmly believe that by championing social inclusion and dismantling the barriers to employment, we can create a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

Full Spectrum Ireland

With funding secured from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) under the LGBT+ scheme ILMI was able to employ two part time community development workers to support the development of Full Spectrum Ireland, an online collective for LGBT+ disabled people.

This work was carried out from January to June 2022, with two part time community development workers employed by ILMI to work with the FSI Steering Group, FSI members and key LGBT+ mainstream service providers to build the collective capacity of FSI in relation to sexual health awareness and disability equality training for mainstream service providers.



Political Campaigning and Strategic Policy Development

What we will do: ILMI will empower members to be active agents of social change by participating in collective strategic campaigns to promote independent living and ensure effective policy development and implementation.



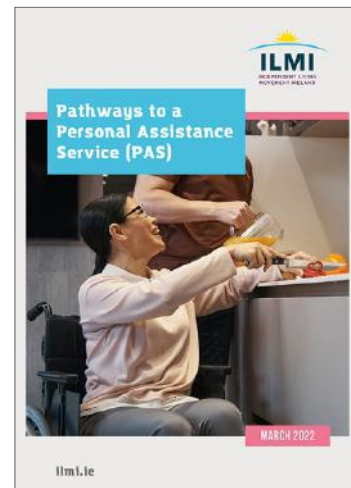
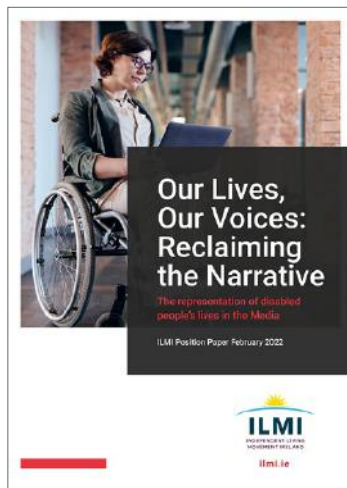
PASNOW Campaign

As part of our 30th Anniversary and also commemorating European Independent Living Day on 5th May, we hosted a webinar on our “PAS NOW!” campaign. Over the course of 2020 to 2022, we have worked with disabled activists locally, local elected representatives and political parties and in 2022 we were delighted to announce that each local authority has passed motions calling on a right to personal assistance for disabled people. This event was preceded with 30 days of action as members recorded short video clips to talk about the importance of PAS and why it needed to be invested in and legislated for. We followed up this successful webinar and campaign with an in-person presentation in the Oireachtas AV room with strong political allies. Our PASNOW campaign will continue as we work to bring legislation into the Dail and continue to build cross party support for a right to PAS

ILMI Submissions and Position Papers

Over the course of the year, we published a number of key position papers. We started 2022 with the publication of **Our Lives, Our Voices**, which explored how the media needed to support disabled people's voices as well as **"Enabling Participation: Supporting the Involvement of disabled people in political parties"**, **"Pathways to a Personal Assistance Service (PAS)"** and our pre-Budget submission **"Invest in Inclusion"**.

We also made a number of submissions to inform public policy, such as our **submission to the Assisted Decision-Making Bill**, the **HIQA Home Care Consultation** and the **Commission on a referendum on Housing**.



You can read each of the reports on our website by clicking on the image above

Nothing about us without us

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