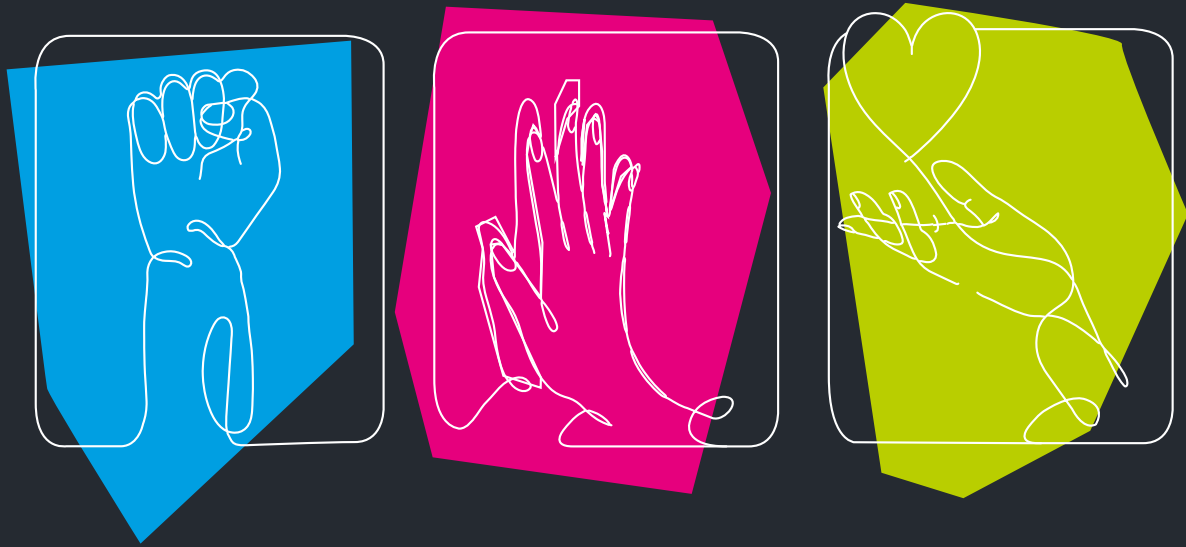




Strategic Plan

2024-2027

www.ilmie.ie



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ILMI, as a vibrant and relevant organisation, continues to cherish and to build on the legacy of over thirty years of the Independent Living Movement and the work pioneered by many disabled activists over that period.

Des Kenny, ILMI Chairperson



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**Conversations About
Activism and Change**
Independent Living Movement Ireland
and Thirty Years of Disability Rights
Edited by Sarah Fitzgerald

Contributions by:
Des Kenny
Eileen Daly
Selina Bonnie
Jacqui Browne
Maureen McGovern
Peter Keams
Ann Marie Flanagan
Dermot Hayes
Colm Whooley
Michael McCabe
Sarah Fitzgerald

Foreword by
Niall Crowley

A message from the Chairperson

This Strategic Plan offers an ambitious set of objectives to bring about change for disabled people across Ireland and to build an Ireland where disabled people are empowered to live Independent Lives with control, choice and options. What we as ILMI are trying to do is build on the legacy of CIL and those that have gone before, to build a new and stronger Movement that will have an active membership which is part of collective strategies for change.

Of the many excellent contributions designed and delivered during the past three years welding the values of ILMI into a new enhanced future, I am particularly proud of our online activism course which was designed to support emerging activists called "Strategies for Change". Participants in that course are already taking on key participation roles, locally and nationally, filling the void left by great activists who have passed on. What is also of importance is that these potential activists will step up to take the places of those of us who are anxious to see the learning of the past move into a new future with new activists who will continue to fight the same battles as we did but hopefully nearer to a final destination along the long road of inclusion and participation we, as disabled people must travel. Our new plan captures what we know worked successfully during the currency of the last plan, and also what needed to be modified from learning. The aim of this plan is to build upon work done and yet to be carried out over the next three years.

ILMI, as a vibrant and relevant organisation, continues to cherish and to build on the legacy of over thirty years of the Independent Living Movement and the work pioneered by many disabled activists over that period. The vision and values they created and worked to still guides our goal today of building a more inclusive society. Their legacy guided ILMI's work in our last plan and is central to what this new strategic plan offers over the next three years.

It is my personal wish that the span of ILMI's membership and contributions to policy formation will see ILMI grow as a cross-impairment DPO where disabled people from diverse disability backgrounds can find and be given, simultaneously, space to be individual and collectively committed to the goals of inclusion for all.

I know that ILMI has the commitment in directors and staff to deliver on the goals and targets which will flow from this strategic plan.



Des Kenny, ILMI Chairperson.

A message from the CEO

As a national cross-impairment Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO), our values are at the core of how we work towards achieving our vision of 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. The development of our new strategic plan has embedded our values in how we work and in the change we want to bring about.

The values of human rights, collective empowerment and social justice are interlinked but clearly define how we will work as a collective in the years ahead as we continue to grow ILMI as a DPO. Our plan outlines how we aim to build local structures and inform policy development and implementation locally and nationally. Our plan will continue to invest in disabled people, supporting activists to work collectively to build shared analysis and actions and ensure that the authentic collective voice of disabled people through DPOs builds a more inclusive Ireland.

Over the lifetime of our last plan, ILMI has grown and firmly established itself as a national DPO. Our board, members and staff have invested energy, creativity, passion and expertise into so many innovative and exciting spaces and projects. Over that time, we designed and delivered in-person and online programmes that broke new ground: our cross border social inclusion project ONSIDE, our innovative employment support programme CREATE, our development of a values-based Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) Making Inclusion a Reality. We created multiple peer and policy spaces informed our work, including a comprehensive CRPD report and analysis on political and media representation of disabled people.

We created peer spaces for younger disabled people, disabled women and spaces to connect, socialise and share experiences. We forged strong connections and developed strong policy analysis. We built a collective campaign to realise Personal Assistance Services as a right. ILMI as a DPO is now recognised by decision makers and politicians locally and nationally. Peer mentoring, peer support and collective spaces have energised the organisation. We designed and delivered an online activism course to support emerging activists called Strategies for Change, many of whom are taking on key roles, locally and nationally. Our new plan captures what we know has worked and aims to build upon that over the next three years.

As an organisation, we continue to build on the legacy of over thirty years of the Independent Living Movement and the work pioneered by many disabled activists and their vision for building a more inclusive society. They would have been proud of what their collective work has achieved, and how their organisation has grown and developed, especially in the last four years.



I want to thank ILMI members, staff and board for their commitment in developing this new plan. I want to thank Values Lab for their expertise in working with ILMI to develop a strong values-led plan that guides the work of our organisation in the years ahead.

It is my belief 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. Together we are stronger, together we can bring about change. In the lifetime of our last plan, we have achieved much, but in doing so we are raising expectations to deliver more. I am looking forward to realising the objectives in this plan with the board, members, staff and allies of ILMI.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damien Walshe".

Damien Walshe, CEO

Our vision, mission and core values

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 a cross-impairment National Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) led by disabled people and promote 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.

ILMI core values

Our core values reflect our philosophy of Independent Living and our ambitions for equality and human rights. They underpin our mission, and our plans and activities in pursuit of our mission. Our core values are interlinked and we seek to embed and engage these values across all of our functions and in our priorities, processes and practice.

Human rights

Human rights are about discovery, capacity, and control over one's life. It involves having options and making informed choices.

Statement of Outcome: ILMI seeks to promote and support disabled people's involvement in activism and their participation in collective action and decision-making, through providing and advocating for the required supports and the range of options, and advocating for the removal of barriers.

Statement of Process: ILMI provides collective spaces for thinking, sharing knowledge, and building skills, and works in a manner that offers opportunities for disabled people to use this thinking, knowledge and skills in taking actions to realise their rights and achieve their full potential.



Collective empowerment

Collective empowerment is about organising, shared analysis, representation, and consultation. It involves giving voice to the lived experience of being disabled and building collective power for change.

Statement of Outcome: ILMI seeks to secure a recognition of and supports for DPOs and their value as authentic autonomous spaces to build shared perspectives and make collective decisions, and to amplify and represent these perspectives and decisions in seeking systemic change.

Statement of Process: ILMI builds alliances, and develops and signals pathways for disabled people’s involvement in ILMI and the wider disability movement. We work in a manner that is authentic, democratic and participative in our own decision-making and representation work as a DPO.



Social justice

Social justice is about making rights real and achieving a more equal distribution of resources. It involves dismantling structural ableism, and embedding the social model of disability in policy thinking, policymaking, and policy implementation.

Statement of Outcome: ILMI seeks to shape and secure the policies, plans, legislation, services and resources that would ensure the full and active participation of disabled people in society.

Statement of Process: ILMI challenges negative narratives of disability and disabled people, individual and institutional discrimination, structures and systems that disempower, and vested interests that would maintain the status quo. We work in a manner that is independent and creative in offering hope that change is possible.



Strategic Objectives

As a values-led organisation, ILMI’s core values underpin and give direction to:

our priorities and the outcomes we seek to pursue; and our processes and how we work.

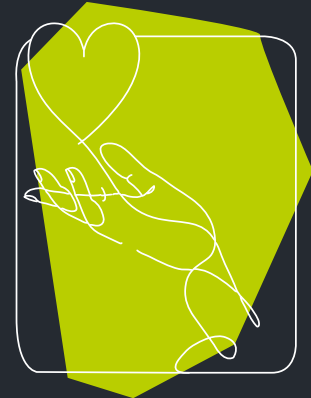
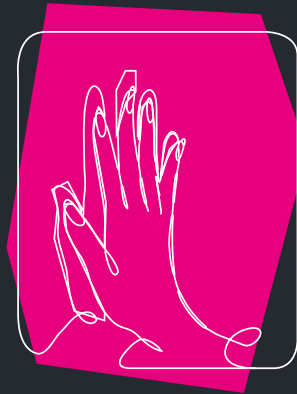
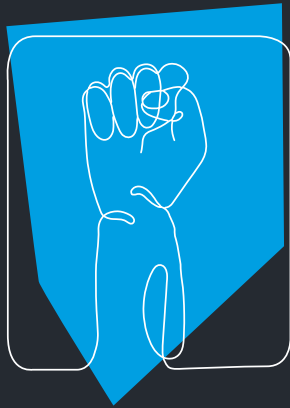
ILMI works towards three strategic objectives, aligned with the statements of outcome (the change we seek to pursue) for each of our core values.

ILMI seeks to:

1. Promote and support disabled people’s involvement in activism and their participation in collective action and decision-making.
2. Secure a recognition of and supports for DPOs and their value as authentic autonomous spaces.
3. Shape and secure the policies, plans, legislation, services and resources that would ensure the full and active participation of disabled people in society.



Strands of activity



Human rights

Promote and support disabled people's involvement in activism and their participation in collective action and decision-making.

ILMI will undertake the following strands of activity:

Engage and connect disabled people through: outreach initiatives, making connections, building relationships, and presenting ILMI's perspectives.

Capacity-building for activism through: training, peer mentoring and support, and analysis development.

Build and facilitate collective peer-led spaces to stimulate and enable belonging, collectivism, and activism.

Collective empowerment

Secure a recognition of and supports for DPOs and their value as authentic autonomous spaces.

ILMI will undertake the following strands of activity:

Organise, support, build capacity of, and network local DPOs to form and advocate for the collective interests of disabled people.

Engage with relevant stakeholders and organisations at local level to: identify and secure funding streams for DPOs; and promote inclusion and accommodation of DPOs in relevant local structures and networks.

Movement-building, through: engaging with national DPOs, including through the DPO network, to: promote networking and shared learning; build and strengthen agreed understandings of the nature and role of a DPO; promote shared organisational values, common agendas, and joint initiatives.

Social justice

Shape and secure the policies, plans, legislation, services and resources that would ensure the full and active participation of disabled people in society.

ILMI will undertake the following strands of activity:

Policy advocacy: working to secure the development and implementation of policies, legislation and strategies to improve the situation and experience of disabled people; developing agendas for this change and representing these agendas through policy forums and key decision-making structures; and amplify support for this work to secure real impact.

Promote and deliver Disability Equality training to key stakeholders.

Map potential allies and engage in alliance-building with civil society organisations to secure equality and rights outcomes for disabled people and to act in solidarity in progressing broader agendas for equality and human rights.

Devise and engage in public education and awareness campaigns.

Measures of success

ILMI identify the following measures of success for the implementation of our three strategic objectives for 2024 to 2027:

- Disabled people’s skills, capacity, and potential is developed through their engagement with ILMI.
- Spaces are created and facilitated by ILMI within which disabled people are enabled to grow and develop their activism.
- Number of active ILMI members engaging in action to progress social justice.
- Increased understanding, among all stakeholders and the general public, of the nature, purpose, and value of DPOs.
- Local DPOs are developed, supported, and grown across the country.
- Funding streams secured to support the work of local DPOs.
- The social model of disability is reflected in: disabled people’s analysis of their situation and experience; the collective action of ILMI-supported DPOs; and legislation, policies and national strategies which ILMI seek to influence.
- Increased representation of disabled people in policy structures and forums, including and beyond those with disability-specific agendas.
- Increased representation and engagement of disabled people within the platforms and networks developed by other groups experiencing inequality.
- Public awareness and understanding of, and constructive debate on ableism.
- New and improved outcomes for disabled people across a range of policy fields.

At a mid-way point during the life of this strategic plan, ILMI will reflect on our progress in delivering on our strategic objectives.

Strengthening the organisation

ILMI works to sustain its presence and role as a leading DPO. In this, we will maintain the highest standards of governance, in adhering to the Governance Code, and in accountability and transparency to our members and funders. ILMI will ensure to meet all legal and financial requirements, such as under the Charities Act 2009, and the Lobbying Act 2015.

The Board of ILMI continues to exercise responsibility and oversight for all governance and compliance requirements, taking steps to inform and strengthen its capacity as required.

ILMI members are central to the voice and collective advocacy of the organisation. ILMI works in a manner that engages and accommodates its members so that their voice is central to the positions developed by ILMI and their active engagement is at the heart of the collective advocacy pursued by ILMI.

The staff of ILMI are central to building the organisation and ensuring its impact. ILMI emphasises team-building and cohesion, and skills sharing and collective training to enable staff fulfil this potential.

ILMI will develop annual work plans based on this strategic plan. Annual work plans are devised to ensure a prioritisation of action relevant to the particular moment, and to enable the organisation to stay true to its mission and values while working within the available staffing and financial resources.

ILMI works in a manner that:

- is aligned with our values, by ensuring our work reflects our core values statements of outcome and process,
- is reflective, by creating spaces for the staff team to interrogate and celebrate progress and achievements in their work,
- has a cross-impairment focus, taking time to explore the implications and most effective means of pursuing this approach,
- demonstrates best practice in relation to reasonable accommodation of the full diversity of disabled people.

ILMI sustains and expands links to organisations that can inform and support our approach and the initiatives we deliver, and with whom sharing and learning can be achieved, including DPOs outside of Ireland.

ILMI works to a communication strategy to: profile the organisation; inform and raise awareness of key issues affecting disabled people, with a range of target audiences; and to engage our values more widely, through our communication with members, and through social and mainstream media.

Glossary of terms

Ableism	Ableism is a form of prejudice whereby people, structures and systems assume that non-disabled people are superior to disabled people. Typically, ableism is present where by non-disabled people make decisions on behalf of disabled people and design systems and structures that exclude disabled people from society. Ableism can also involve discrimination and prejudice against disabled people in society and enable unearned privilege to non-disabled people over the lived experiences of disabled people.
Charity model of disability	The charity model, much like the medical model, individualises disability and promotes the idea that people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The charity model asks that non-disabled people should feel pity for the disabled person's "tragedy", or inspired by a disabled person's achievements.
Disabled people	The term 'disabled people' has been used throughout the Plan in accordance with the UPIAS classification of disability and impairment which has been developed by disabled people themselves (UPIAS 1976). Where disabled people are referred to in the Plan this should be understood to include all disabled people, including those with physical impairments, intellectual impairments, people who experience emotional and mental distress and sensory impairments.
Disability	The word 'Disability' can be defined people who have impairments experiencing a disadvantage caused by environmental or social barriers that disables them from fully taking part in mainstream activities. 'Disability' is not the impairment. 'Disability' is created by social organisations which take little or no account of people who have impairment labels. Society disables people by excluding them from mainstream social, cultural and economic activities.
Disability Equality	Disability Equality is ensuring that every disabled person has the same equitable opportunities as non-disabled people to make the most of their lives, talents and dreams. The term was created by disabled activists to place the social model at the bedrock of Disability Equality and build on social model thinking-as-an-action with a strong framework of intersectional equality and emancipatory approaches. Disability Equality incorporates feminism, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, class, and other identities as integral aspects of disabled persons selves and should never lead to discrimination or abuse based on intersectional identities. Disability Equality is about enabling the social model to advocate for laws and policies that will protect everyone's dignity.
Disabled persons organisation (DPO)	ILMI is a Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO). DPOs, unlike disability services providers, are led by and for disabled people. DPOs work on a cross-impairment basis with disabled adults. DPOs are about bringing disabled people collectively together to bring about a more inclusive, equal society. DPOs are spaces for disabled people, informed through an equality, human rights and social model of disability lens. DPOs should be the voice of disabled people and that statutory, non-Statutory reach out to when looking to engage with the collective voice of disabled people (including media, cultural, sporting, economic, employment and social inclusion dialogues)
Disablism	Disablism is whereby disabled people are discriminated against based on their impairment. Disablism is a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on disabled people and the socially engendered undermining of their lived experience well-being.
Impairment	An Impairment is an individual experience – or perceived experience - of a physical, mental and / or sensory permanent condition.
Independent living	Independent Living is about having the freedom to have the same choices that everyone else has in housing, transportation, education and employment. Independent living is about choosing what aspects of social, economic and political life people want to participate in. Independent living is about having control over your life, to have a family, to get a job, to participate socially and to realise your goals and dreams

<p>Institutional discrimination</p>	<p>Institutional discrimination is the less favourable treatment of disabled people due to lack of real participation of disabled people in the design, development and delivery of policies and services. This results in direct and indirect methods of discrimination are often embedded in an institution's policies, procedures, laws, and objectives.</p>
<p>Intersectionality</p>	<p>The interconnected structure of social categorisations that disabled people with their other lived experiences of categories such as race, age, ethnicity, class, and gender. This interconnecting of identity relationships can be viewed as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination, oppression or even identities celebrations experienced by disabled people throughout their Lifecourse.</p>
<p>Lived experience</p>	<p>Lived experience of a disabled person is an individual 's story of lives that can be either medical or social model. From a social model and Disability Equality perspective the lived experience of disability is a social or societal experience. It can reflect the exclusion of people with impairments, due to social and environmental discrimination that acts as a barrier to their full equal and equitable effective participation in mainstream society. The lived experience of disability is fundamentally an issue of rights for and with the disabled person as the expert-of-the-lived-experience.</p>
<p>Medical model of disability</p>	<p>The medical model individualises disability and promotes the idea that people are disabled by their impairments or impairment-label differences to non-disabled people. The medical model always focuses on people's impairments from a medical perspective. In some ways it still looks at what is 'wrong' with the person and not what enabling supports the person requires throughout their lives. Its impairment cure or clinical stabilising focus creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their own lives. By its nature the medical model cannot recognise the rights of disabled people and assumes that disabled people need to be "looked after" or "cared for". The medical charity model has mainly non-disabled 'experts and professionals make decisions for disabled people. People informed by the medical / charity model language and thinking are limited to being focused on disabled people's impairments. A small number of people in the Republic of Ireland feel they are being 'politically-correct' by using the phrase "people with disabilities" which associates the word 'Disability' with just the person's impairment and overshadowing impairment label, such as 'person with impairment'. ILMI promotes the social model term 'Disabled People', where people with impairments are 'disabled' by Society's economic, cultural and socially created barriers.</p>
<p>Social model of disability</p>	<p>The social model looks at how society is structured and how it disables people. It isn't based on a person's impairment, it is about what barriers that exist in terms of attitudes, policy development, access or lack of supports that prevent people from participating in society as equals, with choice and control over their own lives. In this model it is society that disables people from achieving their hopes and dreams, not a person's impairment.</p>



Nothing about us without us

Independent Living Movement Ireland

Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, D07 RHA8

Tel: +353 (0)1 873 04 55 Email: info@ilmi.ie



www.ilmi.ie

