



SOCIAL
JUSTICE
IRELAND

working to build a just society

Annual Report 2014



Social Justice Ireland

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Note from the Chairperson

Welcome to the Annual Report of *Social Justice Ireland*. This report covers the period from July 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014.

The past year has been very busy for us. Exiting the ‘bailout’ brought a little ray of light to Irish people. It was an opportunity for *Social Justice Ireland* to refocus our policy agenda. While the reduced oversight of the Troika is welcome, most people haven’t experienced any improvement in their quality of life. The growth in poverty and inequality in the past year poses a challenge to the common good and the work of social justice.

The Board of *Social Justice Ireland* keeps a strong focus on macro- economic and social policy while ensuring our activities are shaped from the perspective of vulnerable people and communities and are in the service of the common good. A key aspect of our agenda is the development and maintenance of a vision that is energising and achievable. The challenge is to identify and respond to the connections between the international, national and local policy frameworks in a manner that supports good practice and positive outcomes for all people and the environment.

The stance taken by *Social Justice Ireland* is developed by the Board in line with our strategic plan and from the perspective of human dignity, human rights, the common good and sustainability.

During the past year the organisation benefitted from the work and support of:

- The Academic Advisory Council who ensure that standards are maintained in the areas of research, publications and policy stance.
- The Budget Team who research and help to prepare the documentation.
- The Finance and Organisational sub-committee who work on sustainability issues e.g, structure, membership, funding and staffing.
- The Communications Sub-Committee which advises, supports and helps to evaluate our communications strategy.

Appropriate Board time was given to issues of governance. We are happy to confirm that *Social Justice Ireland* is compliant with the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland. It has also signed the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

An outline of our mission and activities are given in the following pages. You will see that while we have a broad agenda it springs from a focused vision. Evaluation is part of our ongoing processes where great attention is given to outcomes.

A notable feature of our work in the past year has been the growth in our engagement at international level (e.g. monitoring EU2020 Strategy, EU Crisis Monitoring Report covering seven

countries, presentations at international events) and at local level in Ireland (e.g. developing Public Participation Networks at Local Authority level, promoting civil society organisations' capacity for policy engagement). A further notable feature has been the development of a new initiative and publication: Ireland's *National Social Monitor*.

During the coming year we will be developing a new strategic plan. A sub-committee of the Board has been appointed to facilitate this process. They will be consulting you, our members, about the scope, direction and content of the plan. This is a special moment to review the past five years and shape the future of *Social Justice Ireland*.

We are particularly grateful to Board members and the members of the groups listed above who give generously of their time and expertise to enhance the work of *Social Justice Ireland*. They have been a great support to our staff who have put quality time into the work of the organisation. The following pages attest to the large volume of work done by *Social Justice Ireland*. Much of this work is done on a pro bono basis by the Staff, Board, Committee members and volunteers.

We are grateful to you, members of *Social Justice Ireland*. Your support, both financial and moral is very encouraging and energising.

Finbarr Tracey SVD

Work Programme

Our Strategic Plan covers the period 2011-2015. A work programme is developed each year on the basis of this plan. The following pages outline the work done under each of the Core Programmes during the past year.

Public Policy and Research

a) Research

- Published Socio-Economic Review for 2014 entitled *Steps Towards a Fairer Future*.
- Made a submission to the Department of An Taoiseach on the National Reform Programme.
- Made a Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the Review of Ireland's Foreign Policy and External Relations.
- Prepared and presented a paper on the Future of the Welfare State in University College Cork.
- Prepared *Budget Choices*, our submission on Budget 2015.
- Researched and published a Policy Briefing on Poverty and Income Distribution.
- Prepared a Briefing for the European and Local Elections.
- Researched and published *Budget 2014, Analysis and Critique*.
- Researched and presented a paper to our Annual Social Policy Conference entitled *A Framework for the Future*.
- Made a submission to the European Parliament Economic and Monetary Committee on *Austerity and the Troika's engagement with the euro area Programme Countries*.
- Made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Union Affairs on *The Social Dimension of Economic and Monetary Union*.
- Made a submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the *European Social Fund*.
- Researched and published the Policy Briefing *Investing for Growth, Jobs & Recovery*.
- Completed the work and published the study of a universal pension for Ireland.
- Wrote a paper on Basic Income for the Irish Journal of Sociology special edition on appropriate instruments for transformation in the 21st century with particular reference to Ireland.
- Made a Submission to the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare on Refundable Tax Credits.
- Made a Submission to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's consultation on the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Ireland.
- Made a submission to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Forfás on the *Action Plan for Jobs 2014*.
- Worked with four other organisations to research and publish the study on the Living Wage. (Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, TASC, NERI, and UNITE)

Europe Completed the Crisis Monitoring Report 2013 on seven EU countries commissioned by Caritas Europa. This was published in April 2014.

- Made a submission to the Caritas Europa 2014 Shadow Report process on Europe 2020 Strategy
- Researched and published a study of Ireland's performance on the social inclusion aspects of Ireland's National Reform Programme and the Europe 2020 Strategy
- Made an input into the Seminar preparing the Caritas Europa Crisis Monitoring Report and the Shadow Report for 2014. Presented a paper to a Caritas Europa Seminar launching a book entitled: *The Future of the Welfare State* in which we wrote a chapter on the Beveridge Model and its application in Ireland

b) NESC

Seán participates in the monthly meetings as a representative of the Community & Voluntary Pillar.

c) Meetings with Government Officials & Politicians

- Met with:
 - Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, TD, and Brendan Howlin TD, to discuss taxation, investment and social services as well as our Budget proposals.
 - Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, to discuss a wide range of social inclusion issues including our analysis and proposals for the introduction of a universal state pension.
 - Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan TD to discuss participation by civil society in the new local government structures, housing, environmental and community issues.
 - Micheál Martin. TD, Leader of the Opposition.
 - Gay Mitchell. MEP.
 - Brian Hayes. MEP.
 - A large number of TDs, Senators and Advisors in Leinster House to present and discuss our Socio-Economic Review.
 - The Independent Group of TDs in Leinster House to present and discuss our Budget proposals.

In all cases Government Ministers and politicians were accompanied by senior civil servants and/or their advisors.

Secretary Generals

- Secretary General, Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform.
- Secretary General, Dept. Finance.
- Secretary General, Dept of Foreign Affairs & Trade.
- Secretary General, Depart. of An Taoiseach
- Secretary General, Depart. of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Oireachtas and European Parliament Committees

- Prepared briefings for and made presentations to
 - The Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform on our Budget proposals.
 - The Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs on the social dimensions of Economic and Monetary union.
 - The European Parliament's Economic and Monetary union Committee on Austerity and the Troika's engagement with Euro-area countries.

Senior advisers and officials from other bodies (public & private)

- David Begg, General Secretary, ICTU
- Mr Danny McCoy, Director General, IBEC
- Andrew McDowell, Economic Adviser to An Taoiseach.
- Joao Macedo, Portuguese Embassy
-

d) Meetings with the Troika

Met the Irish Representatives of the Troika to discuss plans for exiting the Bailout.

e) Meetings with CV Pillar of Social Partners

- Participated in the regular meetings of the CV Pillar.
- Helped to organise and participated in the following bilateral meetings
 - Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government re Housing (4 meetings)
 - Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government re Community issues.(2 meetings)
 - Dept. of Social Protection on a wide agenda. (2 meetings)

- Dept. of Education & Science re Education issues. (3 meetings)
- Dept. of Finance re Tax and Budgetary issues. (2 meetings)
- Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform re Strategy & Budgetary issues.

f) Basic Income

Continued work with Basic Income Ireland, the Irish branch of BIEN (Basic Income Earth Network)

Empowerment and Spirituality

Facilitated and/or provided input into 33 workshops/conferences/seminars involving 2,346 people on a variety of public policy and values issues. Among these events were the following:

a) MA in Social Justice & Public Policy

- Members of the Programme Board
- Recruited a new intake for 2013-15
- Taught three modules.
- Working on options to secure the future of the programme in the light of the closure of All Hallows College.

b) Input to Seminars/Workshops

- Input to the Disability Federation of Ireland Annual Conference.
- Presented a paper in Bilbao on the Crisis Monitoring Report.
- Spoke to the Churches Ecumenical Week.
- Participated in a TV Programme on the recent Paper by Pope Francis.
- Helsinki: Presented the Crisis Monitoring Report at a conference organised by 2 MEPs entitled 'A Green Vision for Europe'
- Spoke at seminar organised by Bray Partnership
- Brussels – Launch of the Report on Social Welfare Systems in Europe (and wrote a chapter of this study).
- Spoke at the DIT Graduation in Dundalk
- Facilitated a WIT Seminar for Leaders
- Spoke at national conference on Coastal Communities held in Waterford

c) Hustings

Social Justice Ireland, Trocaire and St. Vincent de Paul Society organised a public meeting with candidates for the European Parliament in Dublin City Centre.

d) Strategic Alliances

Kairos Communications. This initiative is up and running.

- The working group representing both organisations has been very active.
- SJI appointed a paid intern to work on communications for six months.
- Kairos filmed the Social Policy Conference and in conjunction with SJI staff a number of Youtube clips were made. Podcasts were also made for the Crisis Monitoring Report and the Socio-Economic Review.
- Much work has been done on monitoring and improving media coverage.

Trocaire

- Formed a strategic alliance with Trocaire on research, advocacy, political analysis and application of Catholic Social Thought relative to Ireland and the Global South.

Waterford Institute of Technology.

- *Social Justice Ireland* in dialogue with WIT re research projects, education and regional development.

- e) **Government Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government.**
 - Seán Healy chaired a Working Group established by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to make recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into decision-making processes at the local government level. The Group completed its work on target. The Minister accepted the Report with minor changes. The guidelines for the establishment of People's Participation Networks in every Municipal Area and Local Authority throughout the country have been published. Work is progressing at varying speeds to implement the Report.
 - *Social Justice Ireland* in partnership with the Environmental Pillar hosted twelve public seminars around the country to outline the content of the Report.
- f) **Better for Europe Alliance**

Social Justice Ireland joined with eight other organisations to form the *Better for Europe Alliance*. The Alliance has a specific focus on the EU 2020 Strategy. The Alliance was formed as a result of an invitation from the European Commission. The organisations involved are DFI, Environmental Pillar, EAPN, INOU, NALA, NABCO, NWCI, SIPTU and *Social Justice Ireland*.
- g) **Claiming our Future**
 - Continue to be involved in steering group
- h) **Networking**
 - Facilitated meetings of the Alumni from the MA programme

Communication

- a) **Publications**
 - Socio-Economic Review 2014 entitled: *Steps Towards a Fairer Future*.
 - Briefing for European and Local Elections.
 - Policy Briefing on *Budget Choices 2015*.
 - *A Future Worth Living for*- the papers of the Social Policy Conference
 - *Budget 2014 Critique and Analysis*
 - Submission to the European Parliament Economic and Monetary Committee on *Austerity and the Troika's engagement with the euro area programme countries*.
 - Policy Briefing on *Investing for Jobs, Growth & Recovery*.
 - Policy Briefing on *Poverty and Income Distribution*
 - Policy Research Series: *A Universal Pension for Ireland*
- b) **Website**
 - Extensive work has been done on the website. A new web design has been put in place on a new platform.
 - *Social Justice Ireland* had over 2.5 million hits in the last 12 months.
- c) **Communications to Members**

Sent regular updates to members and sought their views on the work being done.
- d) **Electronic and Print coverage**

Engaged with the media, print and electronic, so as to promote the outcomes we sought in the various issues raised. In the past year we are aware of the following coverage in the media:

 - 18 **TV** interviews broadcast on news and current affairs programmes.
 - 889 views of videos on *Social Justice Ireland* YouTube channel
 - 54 interviews on **National Radio** news and current affairs programmes.
 - 122 interviews broadcast on 1,106 **Local Radio** news and current affairs programmes, many of which were repeated several times.

- 157 listeners to podcast on Social Justice Ireland YouTube.
 - Over 120 stories in the **National** press including eight editorials and five op-ed pieces.
 - 53 on line newspaper articles.
 - Over 30 stories in **International** press.
 - We are aware of a wide coverage in the **Local press**.
- e) **Social Media**
- Our combined social media footprint is now 9,245 –up from 6,362 (45%) in a year. (facebook 2,831 friends/followers; 3,782 followers on twitter and 2,632 on LinkedIn).

Members of the Board

Finbarr Tracey	(Chairperson)
Connor Barry	Sara Bourke
Micheál Collins,	Sheila Cronin,
Angela Durkin,	Joe Egan
Michael Howlett	Tom Jordan
Justin Killcullen	Ann Leahy (to March)
Sandra O'Hara	Bridget O'Keeffe
Seán Healy	Brid Ryan
Seán Ward	Brigid Reynolds

Retiring members of the Board

Connor Barry
Angela Durkin
Ann Leahy
Tom Jordan
Bridget O'Keeffe

The following have been nominated for election to the Board:

Connor Barry
Collette Bennett
Angela Durkin
Tony Fahey
Tom Jordan

Proposals for the Future

It is proposed to continue the work to which we are committed under the three programmes outlined above and which was evaluated at our recent Board meeting. The Board is working on a new strategic plan. It is hoped to launch this plan at our next AGM and begin implementation in January 2016. The Board has established a subcommittee to facilitate the process. They will be consulting you, our members, about the scope, direction and content of the plan. This is a special moment to review the past five years and shape the future of *Social Justice Ireland*. We welcome comments and suggestion on these proposals.

Social Justice Ireland

Annual General Meeting

held in Croke Park, Dublin, on Tuesday November 19, 2013

Minutes

Present: Finbarr Tracey, (Chairperson) Brendan Bartley, Sara Bourke, Micheál Collins, Mary Connaughton, Angela Durkin, Maurice Henry, Michael Howlett, Justin Kilcullen, Carmen Lee, Michael Moriarty, Michelle Murphy, Sean Healy, Therese Hassett, John O'Brien, Lorainne O'Brien, Muiris O'Connor, Brigid Reynolds, Brid Ryan, Kathleen Somers.

1. Opening

The meeting was chaired by Finbarr Tracey, Chairperson of *Social Justice Ireland*. Finbarr welcomed the 20 members present to the Annual General Meeting of *Social Justice Ireland*.

2. Minutes of the 2012 AGM Meeting

Micheál Collins proposed the adoption of the minutes of the last meeting. This was seconded by Michael Howlett.

3. Adoption of Annual Report

Copies of the annual report were circulated. The Chairperson, Finbarr Tracey introduced the report and highlighted the structural development of *Social Justice Ireland* during the previous year. Seán Healy presented an outline of the report. He highlighted the mission of the organisation and the three programmes designed to implement this mission. Muiris O'Connor proposed the adoption of the Report. It was seconded by Justin Kilcullen.

4. Adoption of the Financial Report

Brigid Reynolds presented the financial report which had been circulated to members. She noted the large volume of work that had been done pro bono by Board members and others. The Financial Report was adopted unanimously by the members.

5. Elections

Five members were nominated to fill the five vacancies on the Board. The following were returned unopposed; Sara Bourke, Justin Kilcullen, Sandra O'Hara, Finbarr Tracey, Seán Ward.

- 6.** The Chairperson invited comments from members. The following points were noted
- Members expressed "amazement at the quality and volume of work done" given the size of the staff.
 - Members put on record their appreciation and support of the stance taken by *Social Justice Ireland* on the various issues addressed in the report.
 - The significant public impact of the work of *Social Justice Ireland* was noted with acclaim.
 - The work done on strategic partnerships was seen as particularly welcome and members wished the partnerships well in the coming year.
 - The large volume of unpaid work done by members of the Board and Staff was applauded. Also the commitment of the Board and Staff to the mission of *Social Justice Ireland* was much appreciated.

7. Special Resolutions

There were no special resolutions passed.

- 8.** In the absence of any other business the meeting was closed @ 5.45 pm.

Mission

***Social Justice Ireland* advances the lives of people and communities through providing independent social analysis and effective policy development to create a sustainable future for every member of society and for societies as a whole.**

- We advance the lives of people and communities by working to build a just society. In doing this we give special priority to national and international issues related to poverty, inequality, social exclusion, sustainability and the environment.
- As an independent think tank *Social Justice Ireland* is a significant research resource in the area of social justice and public policy. We provide accurate social analysis of the current situation on an ongoing basis and identify effective policy proposals to address challenges.
- We are one of the leading advocates for the changes needed for a future that is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially. We identify credible alternatives and effective pathways to resolving challenges faced across a wide range of public policy.
- *Social Justice Ireland* works to ensure that every member of society, and society as a whole, can flourish and thrive in a sustainable manner. We have a special concern for those who are vulnerable or on the margins of society. We believe that the dignity of all is enhanced when those on the margins of society are included. Consequently we promote the development of an inclusive society in which everyone's rights and responsibilities are recognised and honoured.
- We work both nationally and internationally. The inter-relatedness of the local and the global requires that issues be addressed at different levels to ensure appropriate solutions are identified and implemented. We bring this perspective to bear on all we do.

Values

Social Justice Ireland promotes the values of both human dignity and the centrality of the community. The person is seen as growing and developing in a context that includes other people and the environment. Justice is understood in terms of right relationships. A just society is one that is structured in such a way as to promote right relationships so that human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated and the environment is respected and protected.

Social Justice Ireland speaks for those who have no voice in policy debates. We place a very high value on integrity in all we do and are confident enough to take an uncommon point of view or to propose an unpopular solution.

Core Programmes

To ensure both effectiveness and efficiency in our work and to achieve our strategic objectives, *Social Justice Ireland* has three programmes, each with a number of projects. These programmes address:

- 1) Public Policy & Research
- 2) Empowerment & Spirituality
- 3) Communications



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