



# | Annual Report 2016



## Note from the Chairperson

Welcome to the Annual Report of *Social Justice Ireland*. This report covers the period from September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016

2015/16 was a year of opportunities and challenges. The long lead in to General Election presented many opportunities to present our policy positions and recommendations to politicians and their advisers. The lengthy process in the formation of Government provided many opportunities to dialogue with the political parties, the independent politicians and their policy advisers. The challenges centred on being ready to provide a rapid response to the many requests for up to date information in a user friendly format. These requests came from participants in the many arenas of dialogue that opened up at this time about the future of economic and social policy development. We also availed of opportunities to get our policy positions made known by taking part in the public discourse in the electronic and print media both local and national. We were greatly encouraged to find the local media particularly welcoming of our analysis and policy positions. Similar opportunities and challenges presented themselves in the lead up to the National Budget. More information about these initiatives is available in the rest of this report.

We were encouraged to note that both the Programme for Government and Budget 2017 reflect the policy positions advocated by us. The Minister for Finance in his budget speech noted that the overall 'Budget package of €1.3 billion favours expenditure increases over revenue reductions by over three to one'. This moved Government policy far closer to what we had advocated for several years.

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 (2016-2020) 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 develops, supports and helps to evaluate our communications strategy.

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. You will notice that *Social Justice Ireland* maintains a strong international involvement contributing to Caritas Europa's annual study on the Europe 2020 Strategy. We presented the findings of our study entitled *Europe: A Union for the Powerless as well as the Powerful* to the European Economic and Social Council – one of the key institutions of the European Union. We also contributed to a number of debates and conferences in Europe. Local and regional issues are an important part of our agenda. This is reflected in our encouragement and support of the Public Participation Networks (PPNs)

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. We completed the registration with the Charities Regulatory Authority before the target date. As required by Government, our solicitors have revised our Memorandum and Articles of Association to comply with the Company Act 2014 and have submitted them to Revenue for clearance.

Deep gratitude is due 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.

Thank you, members of *Social Justice Ireland*. Your support, both financial and moral is very encouraging and energising.

Justin Kilcullen

Chairperson

## Work Programme

Our Strategic Plan covers the period 2016-2020. 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

- Researched and published our *National Social Monitor*.
- Made a submission to '*Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union*'.
- Researched and published a Policy Briefing on the tax options for Budget 2016.
- Worked with the Living Wage Technical Group on updating the living wage rate and progressing the issue.
- Researched and published *Budget 2016, Analysis and Critique*.
- Researched and presented a paper at our Annual Social Policy Conference entitled *What should Ireland do now?*
- Researched and published the 2016 edition of our Socio-Economic Review, entitled *Choices for Equity and Sustainability: Securing Solidarity and the Common Good*.
- Updated our study of A Universal Pension
- Prepared and published a General Election Briefing entitled *Delivering Solidarity and Sustainability for Ireland*.
- Prepared 10 two-page policy briefings to supplement the General Election Briefing.
- Prepared a Policy Briefing on A Proposed Framework for the Government of the 32nd Dail
- Made a second submission to the Low Pay Commission. As a result we were invited to an oral hearing before the Commission.
- Made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Social Housing and were later invited to an oral hearing before the Committee.
- Made a submission to the Interdepartmental Group on a Policy Framework for Pensions and were later invited to an oral hearing before the Group.
- Made a submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on their Consultation on Commissioning human, social, and community services.
- Made a submission to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government on the draft Framework Policy on Local and Community Development.
- Researching an Employment Monitor.
- Worked with the Financial Transaction Tax working group (Claiming our Future) researching and promoting FTT in Ireland and across the EU.
- **Europe**
- Completed the National Shadow Report 2015 for Ireland on the Europe 2020 Strategy and submitted it to Caritas Europa for inclusion in the European Shadow Report.

- Researched and published the fourth in our European Research Series entitled *Europe: A Union for the Powerless as well as the Powerful?*
- Contributed to the Caritas Food Poverty Report for the Milan Expo.
- Requested by Eurofound to join an expert panel on Social Mobility and Inequality in Europe to review Eurofound's proposed research into social mobility and inequality. This research is due to be completed by the end of 2016.
- We continue to be involved in the European Semester Alliance. This is a group of civil society organisations who meet regularly with the European Semester Officers in Dublin. The group also produces publications on various European Commission documents for wider civil society and for the European Commission office in Dublin.
- We were invited to participate in a roundtable on Activity-Based Funding, the roll out of which formed part of the 2015 Country-Specific Recommendation on Health
- Produced a review of the National Reform Programme and submitted it to the Department of the Taoiseach
- Prepared a report on Europe entitled *Europe: A Union for the Powerless as well as for the Powerful. Review of the Social Situation in Europe and considerations for more sustainable and inclusive future.*
- Invited to be a keynote speaker at the European Catholic Bishops Conference.
- Invited by the Economic and Social Committee (EESC) of the European Commission to present the study *A Union for the Powerless as well as the Powerful in Brussels.*
- Meetings with DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission – re:
  - EU2020 Strategy and
  - Our *Europe: A Union for the Powerless as well as for the Powerful* study
- Meeting with DG Economic and Financial Affairs in Brussels– re financing for social housing
- Did a critique of the Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland from the European Commission.
- Met with the Dublin Office of the EU Commission to discuss this critique.
- Met with the Dublin Office of the EU Commission to discuss our two EU studies.

**b) Budget 2016**

- Four publications were prepared:
  - A Policy Briefing on 'Budget Choices' which included proposals and a costed Budget - published in June.
  - An analysis and critique of Budget 2016 published on the day following the Budget.
  - A policy briefing on Tax Options for the Budget
  - A policy briefing on *Poverty and Income Distribution.*

SJI presented the analysis and proposals in the following arenas:

- The Pre-budget forum hosted by the Minister for Social Protection.
- Two press conferences hosted by SJI in Buswells hotel – pre and post budget.
- The CV pillar meeting with Ministers Michael Noonan and Brendan Howlin.

**c) Social Policy Conference**

- Organised our annual social policy conference on the theme of *Measuring Up? Ireland's Progress: past present and future*
- The attendance was about 100 and representative of the various interests including policy-makers, academics and community activists
- There was good participation and feedback.
- We published the papers as a book on the day of the conference.
- With the help of Kairos Communications we videoed all the presentations and the Q & A sessions.

**d) Global Justice Day**

To mark World Day of Social Justice (February 20) we organised a seminar and discussion on TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Entitled '*T'TIPing the balance for Global Justice*. It attracted about 50 participants.

There were a number of follow-up events and discussions on the topic.

**e) National Budget**

- Three documents were researched and published:
  - An alternative costed Budget published in June.
  - A study of options on Taxation published in September
  - An analysis and critique of Budget 2016 published on the day following the Budget.
  - A policy briefing on *Poverty and Income Distribution*

We presented the analysis and proposals in the following arenas:

- The Pre-budget forum hosted by the Minister for Social Protection.
- A press conference hosted by *Social Justice Ireland*.
- The CV pillar meeting with the Ministers Michael Noonan and Brendan Howlin.
- A post Budget Seminar hosted by *Social Justice Ireland*.
- A briefing in Leinster House for TDs, Senators and their advisors.
- A briefing at the NERI Seminar on Budget 2015

**f) NESC**

Seán Healy is a member of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) and attends all the meetings.

**g) Meetings with Government Officials, Politicians & Advisers**

- In recognition of the work done to promote social and economic inclusion in Irish society, President Michael D. Higgins and Sabina Higgins invited six representatives of *Social Justice Ireland* to a garden party in Aras an Uachtarain with a number of other groups.
- Met Minister of State for Rural Development, Ms Ann Phelan TD.
- Met Mr. John McCarthy, Secretary General, Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government
- Met Mr John Murphy, Secretary General, Dept. of Jobs, Innovation & Employment
- Met Mr David Maloney, Assistant Secretary General, Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform
- Micheál Martin. TD, Leader of the opposition.
- Eoin O’Broin, Sinn Fein strategist
- Willie O’Dea, TD, FF spokesperson on Social Protection and his team.
- Derek Moran, Secretary General, Department of Finance
- Emer Connolly, Principal Officer, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- Paul Skinnader, Executive Director at Pobal
- SJI invited to make an oral submission to the Universal Retirement Savings Group.
- Met Ms. Mary Lou McDonald re issues for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dail
- Met Tommy Broughan TD and a number of Independent TDs and their advisers re Issues for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dail.
- Met Mr Seán O Foghlu, Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills

**h) Meetings with CV Pillar of Social Partners**

- Participated in the regular meetings of the CV Pillar.
- Participated in the meeting with Ministers Noonan and Howlin on Budget 2016.
- Led the representation from the CV Pillar to the Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government on Housing (three meetings).
- Led the representation from the CV Pillar to the Dept of Finance.
- Participated in planning to meet with the Dept of Health and HSE.
- Participated in the delegation to Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government on issues of concern to Community Groups.(three meetings)
- Participated in the delegation to the Dept. of Social Protection on a wide agenda.(two meetings)
- As the CV Pillar representative attended the Monitoring Committee of the EU Commission’s Operational Programme for the South & East Region of Ireland.
- Participated in the delegation to Dept. of Education & Skill re Education issues. (two meetings)

**i) Basic Income**

- Continued work with the Irish branch of BIEN (Basic Income Earth Network)
- Presented an analysis of two Basic Income proposals to Basic Income Ireland.

## Empowerment and Spirituality

*Social Justice Ireland* facilitated and/or provided input into **28** workshops/conferences/seminars involving **1408** people on a variety of public policy and values issues. [These figures do not include the work with the Public Participation Networks which are reported on in b) below]. *Social Justice Ireland* also facilitated the following:

**a) MA in Social Justice & Public Policy**

- Worked with the students to get their dissertations and assignments completed
- Participated in the final Exam Board meetings and graduation in All Hallows College.
- Had a number of meetings with Waterford Institute of Technology re the details for the continuation of the MA Programme in WIT. It is planned that the first intake of students will be in September 2017.

**b) Public Participation Networks (PPNs)**

Public Participation Networks have been established in each Local Authority in the country. They are a collective of Environmental, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary organisations, and are the main point of contact between non-profit organisations and the Local Authority. *Social Justice Ireland* has supported the PPNs since their inception as part of our commitment to local development and local participation in decision making.

Key activities since September 2015 have included

- Nine Regional Seminars for PPN volunteers and resource workers
  - Autumn 2015 in Dublin, Carrick on Shannon (Leitrim), Tipperary, Bagenalstown (Carlow) and Kells (Meath)
  - Spring 2016 in Dublin, Thomastown (Kilkenny), Cavan and Athlone
  - Attended by approximately 200 people from 28 of the 31 Local Authority areas.
  - These offered PPN workers, secretariat members and representatives an opportunity to network and share best practice, as well as to hear the current updates from the Department and from Seán Healy and Sara Bourke. The feedback was excellent with comments like *"Supremely useful in helping our PPN get on track"*, *"Great opportunity to interact with new people and get new ideas"*
- 15 county specific training seminars and events attended by 300+ people.
- Telephone and email advice to 15 PPNs.
- Briefings for County Council staff and management on PPN structures and operation.
- Meetings with Environmental Pillar and the Department re PPNs to progress policy issues, especially with regard to wellbeing.



- Contributed to a new “User Guide” for PPNs produced by the Community section of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- Seán Healy has been appointed to the National Advisory Group for PPNs, which will work to further develop the structures and help to move towards more deliberative democracy in Ireland.

**c) Input to Seminars/Workshops (other than PPNs) included the following:**

- Tom Johnson Labour Summer School, Kilkenny
- SMA Conference, Newry
- Basic Income Ireland Summer Forum
- Seminar to launched a book on unemployment in WIT
- Environmental Pillar’s conference on ‘promoting wellbeing’.
- Pensions Seminar in Trinity College
- Human Rights Conference, Belfast.
- Basic Income Seminar, Human Rights Conference Belfast.
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.
- Irish Missionary Union
- SSISI/ Royal Irish Academy Publication
- Institute of Technology Tallaght
- Volunteering Ireland Conference
- Ballineaspig Justice Group, Cork
- Dochas National Conference
- International Disability Consortium Conference
- Human Rights and Poverty Stone – Justice Day event
- INOU National Conference
- UL Irish Institute for Catholic Studies
- NERI Labour Conference in UL.

**d) Trocaire**

- Continued work with Trocaire re:
  - Assessment of the current economic context,
  - Tracking development aid flows
  - ODA policy and planning for the coming years
  - Political assessment of post-election situation (2 workshops being planned)
  - Researching fossil fuels divestment

**e) Irish Heart Foundation**

- Work continues on the strategic partnership with the Irish Heart Foundation on food poverty and obesity.
- A joint paper entitled 'Reducing obesity and future health costs – a proposal for health related taxation' was launched in June
- As part of the strategic alliance *Social Justice Ireland* was invited to join the 'Oireachtas Children's Future Health Group' The group will be advised by the Irish Heart Foundation, Prof Donal O'Shea (Obesity expert), Healthy Food for All, Children's Rights Alliance and *Social Justice Ireland*.
- A joint paper was published on *Envisioning a Future without Waste and Poverty*. The paper is to be translated into Spanish. This paper was prepared for an international conference organised by the University of the Basque country.

**f) ALONE**

- SJI entered a strategic partnership with ALONE and agreed a programme of work for 2016. This involved
  - A number of half day meetings
  - Input was given on developing and commissioning research.
  - Feedback on a variety of position papers and internal documents
  - Developing a Forcefield analysis map for the organisation
  - ALONE's post-election strategy.
- We also organised and attended a meeting between and NUIG to discuss a Research proposal.

**g) Hustings** In partnership with Trocaire and the St. Vincent de Paul Society we organised a 'hustings' in the Mansion House in January to ensure the issues of concern to the 3 organisations were put on the agenda of the political parties. All the political parties sent their spokespersons on Social Protection. The session was chaired by Michael Clifford. Over 60 people participated in a lively and informed debate.

**h) Claiming our Future**

Continue to be involved in steering group, in the Financial Transactions Tax Working Group and in the Economic Inequality Working Group.

## Communication

**a) Publications**

- Policy Briefing on *Poverty and Income Distribution*
- National Social Monitor 2016
- *Fairness in Changing Income Tax: 6 options compared.*
- *Measuring Up? Ireland's progress: past, present and future* - the papers of the Social Policy Conference (published November 2015)
- *Budget 2016 Critique and Analysis* (published October 2015)

- General Election Briefing entitled *Delivering Solidarity and Sustainability for Ireland*.
- Published 10 two-page policy briefings to supplement the General Election Briefing.
- Published a Policy Briefing on A Proposed Framework for the Government of the 32nd Dail
- Socio-Economic Review 2016 entitled: *Choices for Equity and Sustainability: Securing Solidarity and the Common Good*. (published April, 2016).
- Unemployment Monitor (published July 2016).
- Policy Briefing on *Budget Choices 2017* (Published June 2016)

#### b) Website

*Social Justice Ireland* had over **4.2 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:

- 14 **TV** interviews broadcast on news and current affairs programmes.
- 258 views of videos on *Social Justice Ireland* YouTube channel
- 19 interviews on **National Radio** news and current affairs programmes.
- 89 interviews broadcast on 229 **Local Radio** news and current affairs. programmes, many of which were repeated several times.
- Over 57 stories in the **National** press including 2 editorials and 2 op-ed pieces.
- 84 online newspaper articles.
- Over 10 stories in **International** press.
- We are aware of over 60 articles in the **Local press**.

#### e) Social Media

- Our combined social media footprint is now 13,346 –up from 9,245 (44%) in a year. (facebook 3855 friends/followers; 5829 followers on twitter and 3662 on LinkedIn).

## Proposals for the Future

The work of *Social Justice Ireland* for the next four years will be in the service of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. A plan of work for each year is agreed by the Board.

## Members of the Board of *Social Justice Ireland*

### Members of the Board of *Social Justice Ireland*

Justin Kilcullen	(Chairperson)
Connor Barry	Margaret Hassett
Colette Bennett	Micheál Collins,
Sheila Cronin,	Angela Durkin,
Joe Egan	Tony Fahey
Michael Howlett	Tom Jordan
Finbarr Tracey	Sandra O'Hara
Seán Healy	Brid Ryan
Seán Ward	Brigid Reynolds

### Retiring members of the Board

Joe Egan  
Justin Kilcullen  
Sandra O'Hara  
Finbarr Tracey  
Seán Ward

### The following have been nominated for election to the Board

Joe Egan  
Justin Kilcullen  
Sandra O'Hara  
Finbarr Tracey  
Seán Ward

## 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

**Social Justice Ireland**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

held in Croke Park, Dublin,

on Tuesday November 24, 2015 @ 5.15pm

**Minutes**

**Present:** Finbarr Tracey, (Chairperson), Connor Barry, Sara Bourke, Angela Durkin, Joe Egan, Maurice Henry, Tom Jordan, Seán Ward, John O'Brien, Justin Kilcullen, Maureen O'Connell, Sheila Curran, Margaret Hassett, Therese Hasset, Michael Howlett, Ivan Cooper, Charles Clark, Eamon Murphy, Carmen Lee, Seán Healy, Lorainne O'Brien, Brigid Reynolds, Brid Ryan.

**1. Opening**

The meeting was chaired by Finbarr Tracey, Chairperson of *Social Justice Ireland*. Finbarr welcomed the 23 members present to the Annual General Meeting of *Social Justice Ireland*.

**2. Minutes of the 2014 AGM Meeting**

Tom Jordan proposed the adoption of the minutes of the last meeting. This was seconded by Brid Ryan.

**3. Adoption of Annual Report**

Copies of the annual report were circulated. The Chairperson, Finbarr Tracey introduced the report. Seán Healy presented an outline of the report under the three programmes. He highlighted the work done on the development of the new strategic plan for *Social Justice Ireland 2016-2020*, a copy of which was circulated to members. He also noted the ongoing development of the work with the Public Participation Networks in the Local Authority areas. Justin Kilcullen proposed the adoption of the Report. It was seconded by Seán Ward.

**4. Adoption of the Financial Report**

Brigid Reynolds presented the financial report which had been circulated to members. She noted the areas of new funding and expenditure. 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; Margaret Hassett, Micheál Collins, Sheila Cronin, Michael Howlett and Brid Ryan.

**6.** In the absence of any other business the meeting was closed @ 5.40 pm.

*Social Justice Ireland* is an independent think-tank and justice advocacy organisation of individuals and groups throughout Ireland who are committed to working to build a just society where human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated and the environment is respected and protected.



*Social Justice Ireland,*  
Arena House,  
Arena Road,  
Sandyford,  
Dublin 18  
Phone: 01 213 0724  
Email: [secretary@socialjustice.ie](mailto:secretary@socialjustice.ie)  
Charity Number: CHY 19486  
Registered Charity Number:  
20076481  
**[www.socialjustice.ie](http://www.socialjustice.ie)**

