

Independent Living Movement Ireland are nearly six months into the roll out of the ONSIDE social inclusion project in the border region. The *Outreach and Navigation for Social Inclusion and Digital Engagement* project (ONSIDE) is a dynamic and exciting creative venture that is coordinated by ILMI in the republic of Ireland and by our partners in Northern Ireland.

Over the next three years, we will actively work with disabled people in Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Monaghan, Donegal and Louth to create sustainable networks in the various counties..

ONSIDE works by providing tangible assistance to disabled participants in the form of accessible Information Communication Technology equipment, but it so much more. it is a unique platform that is the first of its kind in Ireland. Each programme will last approximately 8 weeks and contain a tailored mixture of workshops that will empower disabled participants and support them to take effect control of their participation in their local communities and beyond. Each workshop will have a different theme – most weeks there are guest speakers from a variety of local mainstream services. For example, one week will be an education week where a selection of speakers will inform participants about educational opportunities in their communities and how to access them, perhaps a speaker from the local ETB and Institute of Technology, another themed workshops will be on the local communities services from the Family Resource Centres and Community Centres and what's going on in them and how to access the services, another week will be attended by local MABS, Credit Union and Personal Finance speakers etc...The decisions are theirs as the disabled person to make as to what they want to receive form the workshops – be that information and access to employment, education, local support groups and activities or

simply just learning to pay bills online. It is our role to support them in getting the right information and technology they need, and to support them in making your decisions actually happen.

All the workshops are in mainstream community venues where disabled people will also be able to find out what is going on in their local communities. Completing these social inclusion and equality workshops are the IT training classes. At the end of the programme participants, if they need it, will be provided with a free tablet or laptop with the relevant, tailored accessible software for the disabled person to effectively use the device.

The workshops and training will be accompanied by a continued support network of locally based Community Navigators and Peer Advocates, in addition to facilitated digital communication platforms.

Disabled people will be given the actual physical and educational support to interact with their peers and wider community networks and to access, enjoy and avail of locally based community amenities and services.

The ONSIDE initiative will lead to disabled people taking affirmative roles as active citizens in their local communities and will have the added benefit of creating more diverse communities. It will have a positive, and sustainable impact upon local communities, both disabled and nondisabled and will lead to a truly more inclusive society based on equality and participation. Public amenities, whether social, cultural, sporting or educational will benefit from a larger participation of disabled people and this in itself will illustrate their commitment to equality.

Peter Kearns is the project Co-Ordinator and Angela Coleman is our administrator. The Community Navigator for Donegal is Orla Beirne, Marie Gilligan is the Community Navigator for Sligo/Leitrim and Edel McGinley is our Monaghan and West Cavan Community Navigator. James Casey is the project's Disability Equality and Inclusion Officer. The team have already begun the project and there are currently programmes running successfully in Donegal and Monaghan, more Community Navigators will be starting in early 2020 with the workshops starting in Leitrim, Cavan, Sligo and Louth, in addition to continuing in Monaghan and Donegal.



Photo shows Peter Kearns (far left) and Orla Beirne (far right) with the Donegal participants of our ONSSDE workshop.



Photo shows Edel McGinley (centre) and Peter Kearns with some of the guys from our Monaghan workshops.

We hope to run a bespoke series of Youth Workshops (participants 16-30 years of age) over the summer months. The ILMI team are especially excited about these as they will give young disabled people the opportunity to engage fully with the issues of disability rights and shape their own future paths.

For the ILMI ONSIDE team, the project reflects the values and goals of our grassroots disabled persons organisation with a emphasis on equality, diversity and true participation. For more on the project or if you know of any disabled people that may be interested in finding out more please visit [ILMI.ie/Onside](http://ILMI.ie/Onside) or ring James Casey on 087 7198521

**Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI)** was established as CIL in 1992 by and for disabled people. Its aim was to ensure that disabled people achieved Independent Living, choice and control over their lives and full participation in society as equal citizens.

We are a campaigning, national representative organisation that promotes the philosophy of independent living and to build an inclusive society. Central to the way we work is to ensure that policy decisions that impact on the lives of disabled people have to be directly influenced by those whose lives are directly affected.

Our philosophy can be summed up as: 'Nothing about us without us!' and 'Rights Not Charity'.

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. Visit [www.ilm.i.e](http://www.ilm.i.e) for more details or [info@ilm.i.e](mailto:info@ilm.i.e)