



Creating Work
Opportunities For All



Annual Report 2025



All portraits feature ODI participants and partners,
we thank them for taking part

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Our Purpose

is to enable equitable access to employment for underrepresented people

Our Vision

is of an inclusive Ireland, where diversity in business thrives and equitable measures are adopted to eliminate inequality so that everyone has fair access meaningful employability

Our Mission

is to guide those who are facing barriers to employment and to support companies through collaboration and innovation

Our Values

Collaborative: We leverage our unique position to foster collaborative working relationships among our partner companies, stakeholders and participants to magnify our impact and ensure the best outcomes

Participant Centred: We commit to the rights and needs of our participants in securing pathways to employability, guided by the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals

Thought Leadership: We work with our business partners and Government to embed Corporate Social Justice thinking and actions in all their organisations to have positive impact on business outcomes

Open and Transparent: We ensure openness and transparency through effective governance and clear communication with all board members and stakeholders

Research Led: We leverage and conduct relevant research to ensure our work is targeted and impact driven

Impact Driven: We focus on high impact work that supports employability of marginalised people and changes the lives of participants and their families; we regularly monitor and evaluate our work to ensure maximum impact

Agile: We continue to be agile to remain relevant in responding to participant needs and company needs and adapt to changes in the market



Chair Introduction

I am pleased to introduce The Open Doors Initiative's annual report for 2025.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank our partners, supporters, and participants. The work of the Open Doors Initiative is vitally important and your ongoing commitment, in challenging circumstances, has been critical.

It is essential also to recognise the organisations, government bodies and funders that have partnered with and supported the Open Doors Initiative through 2025. Embedding inclusive practices is not easy and they have shown what can be achieved when every individual is valued.

I particularly want to appreciate the Open Doors Initiative participants. Their resilience, ambition, and willingness to engage with new opportunities is inspirational. Our participants' achievements are a reminder of what is possible when barriers are addressed with purpose and with collaboration. Together with our partners, the Open Doors Initiative was delighted to have helped over 39,900 people during 2025.

While, together, we can point to tangible progress, it is important to be clear that access to work, education, and entrepreneurship for those who have been marginalised remains a work in progress. Much still remains to be done to remove barriers to opportunity, and the need for inclusive, equitable pathways has, if anything, become even more urgent. So, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank

everyone who has contributed to the Open Doors Initiative over the past year. Your efforts are making a meaningful difference, supporting a more inclusive and sustainable approach so that, together, we can look forward to a future where diversity is welcomed as a source of strength and where opportunities are available and accessible to all.

Take care,

Paddy Hayes
Chair, The Open Doors Initiative

“It’s been a source of relief and comfort knowing Open Doors is ready to help out however they can in navigating the messy and competitive job market space. I feel fully prepared to take on the challenges of securing employment.”

- Open Doors Participant

CEO Foreward

The past year has been defined by a rapidly changing political, social and economic landscapes, placing renewed emphasis on the role our organisation must play in shaping a fair and inclusive society. At Open Doors Initiative, we have continued to position our work at the intersection of equity, and corporate social responsibility, supporting participants who face barriers to employability while working alongside businesses and government to drive meaningful, lasting change.

Our focus continues to be across a diverse participant base, who are willing to work and need the opportunity to do so. While each group brings distinct lived experiences, they also share a common challenge in accessing sustainable and meaningful employability. Addressing this requires more than programmes alone. It needs a systemic approach that aligns social impact with business strategy.

Over the course of the year, we strengthened our partnerships with organisations that recognise the importance of inclusive employment as a driver of both social value and organisational performance. These partnerships have been grounded in practical action, from rethinking recruitment pipelines to fostering inclusive workplace cultures and enhancing leadership buy in. The result has been a series of initiatives that support progression and retention.

Central to this work are our participants, whose resilience, capability, and ambition continue to shape and inform our approach. We have supported individuals in building skills and confidence, while

also enabling employers to access a wider and underrepresented talent pool. These outcomes reinforce the value of a more inclusive labour market, one that recognises potential in all its forms and the benefits that it brings.

Corporate Social Justice remains a key lens through which we engage with our partners. It is increasingly clear that organisations are expected to contribute to broader societal outcomes, not as an adjunct to their operations but as an integral part of how they create value. This requires a move from commitment to action.

As we reflect on the past year, there is a strong sense of progress, underpinned by collaboration and shared purpose. While challenges remain, there is also a growing alignment between social impact and business priorities. The Open Doors Initiative will continue to build on this, working with partners and participants to advance a more inclusive and equitable future of work.

My sincere thanks to the wonderful team at the Open Doors Initiative who make all this happen and are so vested in the work and the people we support. Thanks also to our Board for sustaining our work in such an enthusiastic and committed way.

We look forward to building on these achievements in the coming years.

Jeanne McDonagh
CEO. The Open Doors Initiative

Measurements and Reporting

The Open Doors Initiative works in partnership with more than 80 organisations across Ireland to advance equitable access to employment and education opportunities for people from marginalised backgrounds. Through this growing network of employers, community organisations, and training providers, the Open Doors Initiative and its partners supported almost 40,000 people through direct interventions in 2025 alone.

The data presented in this report is based on self-reported information provided by partner organisations. These figures were consolidated and analysed by the Open Doors Initiative team to provide an overview of the collective impact achieved during the year.

As part of their commitment to the initiative, partners work to create meaningful pathways into employment and career progression for those who continue to face barriers within Irish society. These pathways include training programmes, mentorship, work placements, apprenticeships, community-based supports, and direct employment opportunities.

In 2025, these collaborative efforts supported 39,936 individuals through direct interventions, representing a 34% increase

compared to 2024. This growth is particularly significant given the broader international context, where many organisations faced increasing economic pressures and, in some cases, scaled back inclusion initiatives and investment. Despite these challenges, the vast majority of Open Doors partners maintained their commitment to inclusive employment practices, with many organisations reporting improved outcomes and increased engagement across key impact areas.

The year also saw continued pressure on many communities across Ireland due to the rising cost of living, housing insecurity, increased migration-related support needs, and ongoing labour shortages in key sectors as well as global geo-political issues. These factors further highlighted the importance of employer-led initiatives that connect underrepresented groups with sustainable employment and upskilling opportunities. Open Doors partners continued to play a critical role in responding to these challenges by investing in inclusive recruitment, workforce development, and community engagement initiatives.

The highlights below provide a snapshot of the progress achieved in 2025 through the collective efforts of Open Doors and our partners.

OUTPUTS

1,481 INTERVENTIONS

Initiatives provided that aim to support individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to access employment, education, or entrepreneurship

28,904 SKILLED

People who successfully completed an intervention led by ODI or a partner company that enhanced their employment prospects through the development or enhancement of market-relevant skills

6,753 MENTORED

People who received mentoring by 1,865 employees from partner companies, adding up to over 56,000 hours of mentorship

55,613 SUPPORTED THROUGH FUNDING

Individuals supported through 166 interventions funded by Open Doors partners, with over 3.5 million expended

4,279 RECEIVED OTHER SUPPORT

Individuals supported through additional 111 activities such as language support, accessible materials, and others

269,662 HOURS

Time spent by over 8,700 staff from partner companies on interventions

OUTCOMES

1,777 SECURED EMPLOYMENT

People who accessed permanent employment at a partner company and/or after completing an intervention. This represents a 275% increase compared to 2023

94 PAID INTERNSHIPS

People who secured a paid internship or placement in a partner company and/or after completing an intervention.

51 NEW BUSINESSES

New companies created by people who completed an intervention that enhanced their entrepreneurial skills

5,630 PROGRESSED TO EDUCATION

People who progressed to further education, training, or other employment schemes after completing an intervention



The image features two women in professional attire against a blue background. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored blazer over a white button-down shirt; she is pointing her index finger to her chin in a thoughtful pose. The woman on the right has long dark hair, wears glasses, and is smiling broadly, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored top. The text 'Partnership in Action' is centered over the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Partnership in Action

Mentorship with Pobal

Pobal initially partnered with the Open Doors Initiative in 2024 through the Open Doors Mentoring Programme. Over the last two years, ODI has assisted Pobal staff and teams to become successful mentors.

Alongside this, ODI have provided additional guidance to enhance Pobal's internal people processes, policies and procedures and have also provided staff training on subjects such as Disability Awareness.

As part of the mentoring programme, Pobal has:

- Supported 35 mentees from marginalised communities
- Upskilled 30 Pobal staff members to become mentors
- Assisted 7 mentees to source new employment
- Successfully recruited 2 mentees into positions within Pobal through open recruitment competitions

Activities

In 2025, Pobal coordinated the ODI mentoring programme and supported over 35 mentees. The programme was very successful and rewarding for staff, with several mentees supported into training and employment across Ireland.

As a social inclusion agency, the programme aligns with Pobal's vision and mission, enabling staff to work directly with marginalised

communities and to gain a better understanding of the barriers faced by many individuals when accessing employment.

The Open Doors Mentoring Programme also enabled Pobal to recruit qualified candidates in ICT and Programme Management, as two mentees were employed directly through the programme.

Kateryna was one of the highly qualified and skilled mentees who wanted to improve her CV and interview experience, with the ultimate aim of securing employment as a Business Test Analyst (IT). Kateryna's skills and knowledge impressed her mentor, and she was encouraged to apply for an advertised role in Pobal.



“Before ODI, I wasn't sure where to start or if finding a job would be possible so soon. The programme showed me that I wasn't alone and that my experience matters. My mentor believed in me when I doubted myself, and with ODI's support I was able to secure a job offer.”

Kateryna, Mentee



“It was through the ODI Mentoring Programme that Kateryna came to our attention. She joined Pobal as a Business Systems Test Analyst in September 2025 and quickly made an impact, delivering work of a very high standard and becoming a valued member of the team. We are grateful to ODI for helping us find such quality talent.”

Graham, Mentor



“Our experience of the ODI mentoring programme has been very positive. It has helped us develop employee skills, access highly qualified mentees and support a more equal and inclusive society. We look forward to building on this success in 2026.”

Toff Andersen, Programme Lead, Pobal



Advancing Neuroinclusion at Codex

At Codex, neuroinclusion is embedded in how they design their culture, products, and ways of working. Over the past few years, Codex has advanced a range of initiatives aimed at improving workplace accessibility and supporting neurodivergent talent across Ireland. Through research, partnerships, and product innovation, they are helping to remove barriers and enable organisations to build environments where all individuals can thrive.

Driving Thought Leadership: Launch of Neuroinclusion Report

In December 2024, Codex surveyed 220 neurodivergent employees across Ireland and the UK to better understand workplace experiences, barriers, and employer support. The findings informed their Neuroinclusion in the Workplace report, launched in June 2025 in collaboration with neurodiversity consultant Mark Scully (Braver).

The report provides practical recommendations for employers and has directly informed Codex's product development and sourcing strategy, ensuring solutions are grounded in lived experience and real workplace needs.

Strengthening Expertise Through Partnership: AsIAm

Recognising the importance of expert input and lived experience, Codex partnered with AsIAm, Ireland's Autism charity. Together, they co-developed neuroinclusive products within

their Thrive range and delivered education initiatives to support Irish workplaces on their neuroinclusion journeys.

This collaboration has helped embed neurodivergent perspectives into product design and decision-making, while ensuring their approach aligns with recognised best practice.

Scaling Impact Through Thrive

Codex developed Thrive, their neuroinclusion-focused product offering, to help organisations create more inclusive environments. Thrive combines research-led insights with practical workplace solutions designed to address sensory barriers, support diverse working styles, and embed inclusive practices sustainably.

What differentiates Thrive is its foundation in lived experience and applied learning, offering practical, real-world solutions rather than theoretical guidance.

Building Awareness Internally

A key milestone in Codex's journey was launching a company-wide "Reasonable Accommodations Refresher" campaign to strengthen understanding and consistency across the organisation. The initiative provided guidance for employees and managers on accommodations, including flexible working arrangements, sensory adjustments, and communication preferences.



By reframing accommodations as enablers of performance, the campaign encouraged more open dialogue and increased confidence in supporting individual needs across the business.

Looking Ahead

Codex's neuroinclusion journey is ongoing. Their focus now is on deepening collaboration with the neurodivergent community, continuing to expand the Thrive range, and using their research to influence workplace practices at scale.

Ultimately, their goal is to create environments where every individual can thrive, regardless of how they think, process, or experience the world.

ESB's Traveller and Roma Inclusion Programme

ESB are committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered. They know that a diverse workforce is essential to driving innovation and achieving their ambitious goals, including their commitment to a Net Zero future. ESB recognises that diverse perspectives are crucial in developing sustainable solutions and are committed to strengthening the diversity of their workforce by actively recruiting, developing, and retaining individuals from underrepresented groups.

ESB are proud to partner with the Irish Traveller Movement to support the inclusion and empowerment of the Traveller community. Their journey began through collaboration with key stakeholders – including community advocates and representatives from the Irish Traveller Movement – who helped them understand the unique challenges and opportunities in this space. Through this partnership, they aim to provide opportunities for education, employment, and community engagement, ensuring that Travellers have a voice in shaping our shared future. Since 2023, ESB has:

- Worked with the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) to deepen their understanding of the Traveller community's culture and aspirations. This has been instrumental in ensuring that their programmes and policies are informed by lived experience

and community insight.

- Promoted ESB as an inclusive and accessible employer for the Traveller community. In partnership with the Irish Traveller Movement, they have participated in webinars to share insights into career opportunities at ESB and encourage applications. To further this outreach, they co-created a promotional video, which was shared across ESB and ITM platforms.
- Introduced their first company-wide Respect and Dignity training, which focuses on discrimination, harassment, and micro-aggressions, with real-world examples—including those affecting the Traveller community.

2025 marked an important milestone in their partnership, with early signs of impact beginning to emerge, reflecting the value of sustained engagement. ESB encourages other employers to consider TAIP not just as a programme, but as a catalyst for broader cultural change.

Traveller and Roma Community Engagement - TU Dublin Access and Outreach

Through collaboration between community partners and faculty colleagues, Technological University Dublin Access and Outreach has developed a sustained and impactful model of engagement with Traveller and Roma communities, creating pathways into apprenticeships, higher education, and accredited learning. Working closely with partners including Irish Traveller Movement, the initiative responds to strong community interest in apprenticeship opportunities and the need for accessible, culturally responsive information and practical experiences that build confidence and reduce barriers to higher education participation.

A key milestone was TU Dublin's first Apprenticeship Day, delivered in partnership with ITM, which attracted over 90 registrations and demonstrated significant demand for targeted outreach. Building on this success, TU Dublin introduced experiential "Try a Trade" Days at the Bolton Street campus, where participants could explore trades such as plumbing, bricklaying, and electrical work in university workshops. Six sessions were delivered in 2025, with further sessions continuing in 2026 due to growing demand from schools, youth services, and community organisations. Participants also received information on financial and academic

supports, including the Traveller Apprenticeship Incentivisation Programme bursary, Student Assistance Fund, laptop loan scheme, and academic learning supports.

Over the past two years, the initiative has evolved from a pilot into a sustained programme supporting progression into TU Dublin's Access to Apprenticeship course and other educational pathways. In parallel, Traveller and Roma students also completed a 20-credit micro-credential Certificate in Arts in Intercultural Community Development, delivered through the School of Social Sciences, Law and Education in partnership with community organisations and local authorities.



Work of the Open Doors Initiative

In 2025, The Open Doors Initiative continued its commitment to supporting people from marginalised backgrounds to access employment, education, and training opportunities.

We worked closely with refugees, migrants, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with a criminal history, and others facing systemic barriers to inclusion in the labour market. Through tailored one-to-one support, targeted programmes, skills-based workshops, mentoring, and employer engagement initiatives, we empowered participants to build confidence, develop job-ready skills, and take meaningful steps toward sustainable employment.

This year, we delivered 4,892 participant engagements, supported 963 individuals through one-to-one guidance, and welcomed

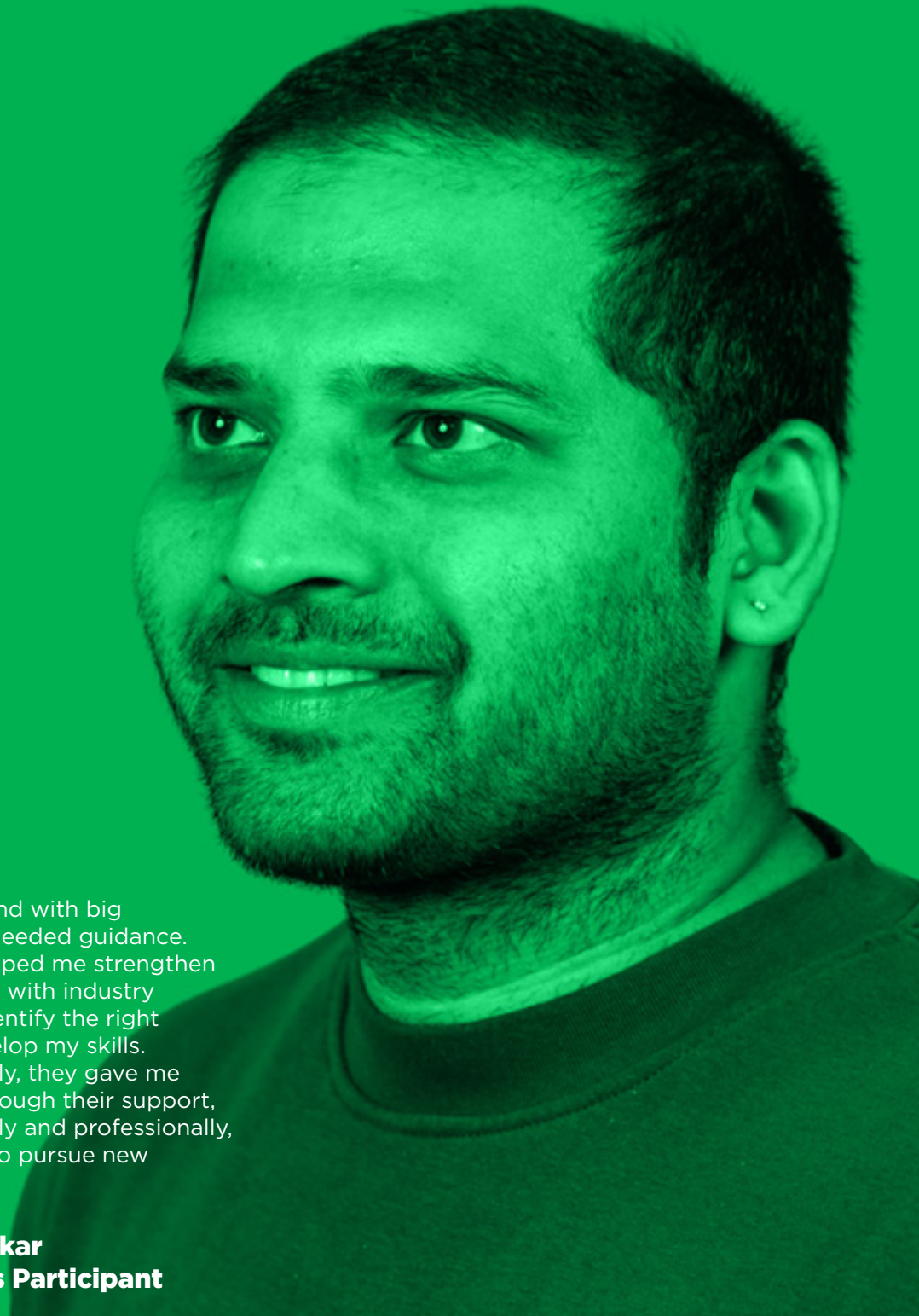
1,014 participants across our structured programmes, including Job Ready, Mentorship, and sector-specific training initiatives. We hosted over 30 workshops and career events, connecting over 2,600 participants directly with inclusive employers and industry professionals.

None of this work would be possible without the invaluable support of our corporate partners, community organisations, and funders. Their financial investment, expertise, volunteer time, and commitment to inclusive hiring enable us to deliver high-quality, impactful programmes and to reach those who need support most.



“I came to Ireland with big ambitions but needed guidance. Open Doors helped me strengthen my CV, connect with industry experts, and identify the right courses to develop my skills. Most importantly, they gave me confidence. Through their support, I grew personally and professionally, and felt ready to pursue new opportunities.”

Karthik Shankar
- Open Doors Participant



Our work with Participants

Pathways to Progress

Pathways to Progress is a targeted employability programme designed to address the specific barriers faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Ireland. While many participants bring valuable qualifications, international work experience, and strong professional skills, they often encounter systemic and practical challenges that limit access to meaningful employment.

Common barriers include limited professional networks in Ireland, a lack of Irish work experience, and difficulty navigating local recruitment processes and employer expectations. Many participants face

the under-recognition of overseas qualifications, language and workplace communication challenges, and employment gaps caused by displacement or time spent in the asylum process. Prolonged uncertainty and repeated setbacks can also significantly impact confidence and self-belief.

Pathways to Progress responds directly to these challenges through structured, practical, and personalised support. Participants receive tailored CV and interview preparation aligned with the Irish labour market, one-to-one mentorship with industry experts to build confidence and clarify career pathways, and workshops focused on workplace culture and employer expectations. The programme also facilitates direct engagement with inclusive employer

partners and provides networking opportunities that help participants build meaningful professional connections. Where relevant, participants are guided toward further education, upskilling opportunities, or qualification recognition pathways to strengthen their long-term prospects.



A programme of the
Open Doors Initiative

Funding

The programme was funded by the European Social Fund in 2025 (€213,226) and Bank of America (€15,856)

In 2025, the programme delivered 3,448 direct participant engagements through individual support, workshops, and programmes, and over 13,700 indirect engagements through the Migrant Hub and social media outreach.

Key Achievements in 2025

- 1,500+ participants attended workshops and events
- 520+ participants completed one of six Job Ready programmes
- 200+ received individual CV reviews, mock interviews, or LinkedIn support via the Employment Expert Programme
- 237 took part in Business English language courses, focusing on professional communication
- 720+ received direct advice and guidance from the ODI team
- 101 were matched with a mentor through the Open Doors Mentorship Programme
- 200+ attended our World Refugee Party in June at the Irish Museum of Modern Art
- 29 scholarships awarded through State Street Scholarships
- 13,700+ visits to our Migrant Hub
- 1,600+ views of our educational videos on YouTube



“The support I received from the Open Doors Initiative was incredibly helpful during my career transition. They provided guidance, resources, and encouragement that boosted my confidence. Thanks to their help, I improved my skills and found new opportunities I hadn’t considered before. I’m very grateful for their support and dedication.”

- Open Doors Participant



“Open doors initiative is very helpful in supporting and understanding the problems of migrants. The trainings and programs help to better adapt to Irish culture and get a job.”

- Open Doors Participant

Towards Work

Towards Work is our specialist programme focused on improving employment and self-employment outcomes for people with disabilities, a cohort who continue to face significant exclusion from the labour market in Ireland. Despite overall strong labour market performance, Ireland has one of the lowest rates of employment for people with disabilities in the European Union of 43% vs 54% EU average and the highest disability employment gap in the EU of 37% vs the EU average of 21.4%, with significant barriers still limiting access to meaningful and sustained work. This reflects one of the widest disability employment gaps in the EU and highlights persistent structural barriers to inclusion in the workforce.

Participants in Towards Work often face inaccessible application systems, interview processes that do

not account for different communication styles or support needs, and uncertainty around requesting reasonable accommodations. Some experience employer misconceptions about productivity or capability. Others have had interrupted career paths due to health, caregiving responsibilities, or lack of appropriate workplace supports. Over time, these barriers can affect confidence, career progression, and financial independence.

Towards Work takes a person-centred and forward-looking approach. Rather than focusing solely on job-readiness, the programme supports participants to define what meaningful work looks like for them and to build realistic, sustainable pathways toward it. Through tailored employability guidance, practical application support, and direct employer engagement, we help

participants navigate recruitment processes with greater clarity and confidence.

A distinguishing feature of Towards Work is our structured coaching programme delivered by a certified professional coach. This dedicated coaching space enables participants to explore their strengths, leadership potential, and long-term goals in depth. For those pursuing employment, coaching focuses on building self-advocacy skills, resilience, and strategic career planning. For participants interested in entrepreneurship, the programme provides focused support to develop business ideas, set achievable milestones, and take concrete steps toward starting and sustaining their own enterprise.



**Towards
Work**

A programme of the
Open Doors Initiative



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

Funding

The work of Towards Work is funded by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Key Achievements in 2025

- 2,500+ visits to the Towards Work Online Hub
- Over 780 direct engagements through programmes and events
- 150 people with disabilities received individual support and guidance
- 6 disability-specific skills & information sessions led by Towards Work
- 9 additional pre-employment sessions supported by Towards Work
- 169 individuals attended workshops, webinars, and information sessions
- 20 completed the Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities course (TU Dublin, funded by AIB)
- 58 received individual career coaching, with over 340 coaching sessions delivered
- 28 participated in a Job Ready programme
- 200+ participants in peer-to-peer LinkedIn support group
- 4 participants were awarded scholarships through the State Street fund.



“I found Open Doors through an online advertisement for their career coaching service. When I visited their website, I discovered a whole range of other supports that helped me with my job search.

Through Open Doors, I accessed different services that supported me with my CV, interview preparation and job searching techniques. This helped me secure a temporary role with TK Maxx, and I am now doing lots of interviews. Open Doors services are vital.

They make the job search process clearer and more transparent. Having access to a career coach is especially useful because the support can be tailored to what you need.”

Katie McKenna
- Open Doors Participant

Year Highlights

Career Coaching for People with Disabilities

In 2024, a pilot was run through Towards Work to support people with disabilities through career coaching. The need was identified as part of the Open Doors mentorship programme, where several participants with disabilities brought up that they did not feel confident about entering the job market and did not know what they wanted to do professionally. As a result, Open Doors developed a new programme that addressed the need of intensive and structured support, with each participant receiving up to 10 individual coaching sessions with a certified career coach.

After a successful pilot in 2024, the programme was fully launched in 2025, with 58 participants and 347 individual sessions. Open Doors partnered with career coach Melissa Roa, who worked individually with participants to help them shape their career plans, showcase their strengths, and take meaningful steps towards employment or entrepreneurship.

The programme had 95% of participants reporting that the sessions were 'very effective' (the other 5% stated that the sessions were 'effective') to help them achieve their professional goals and 100% saying they would recommend the programme to a friend.



“The Open Doors Initiative Career Coaching programme gave me practical support and renewed confidence in my job search. My coach helped me strengthen my CV, improve my LinkedIn profile, and better communicate my skills and experience to employers.

What made the experience stand out was how personalised it was. As our sessions progressed, my coach encouraged me to consider opportunities and career paths I might not have explored on my own. The coaching helped me see my experience in a new light, build confidence in my abilities, and approach applications and interviews with greater clarity.

For anyone navigating a career change or facing barriers to employment, the programme offers more than career advice. It provides encouragement, practical tools, and the confidence to move forward.”

- Career Coaching Participant

Accenture Marketing and AI Programme

The need for industry-specific training has been growing among Open Doors participants, which led to the creation of a brand new programme in partnership with Accenture.

The online programme includes CPD accredited self-paced courses through the Accenture Digital Skills platform, as well as group mentorship, live workshops, and a group project, which is presented to a panel of expert judges at the end of the programme.

The programme has run twice in 2025 with 60 participants. It was rated 4.5 out of 5 on average by participants, with 90% reporting improved confidence in Marketing and AI skills. Over 50% of participants also reported increased digital literacy and team work skills.



“The Open Doors programme has been a truly transformative experience for me. It not only equipped me with valuable digital skills but also boosted my confidence to take the next steps in my career. The training, support, and networking opportunities have been exceptional, and I’m grateful for the guidance that is helping me move closer to my professional goals.”

- Ignatius Paul Okoro, Participant



“We have partnered with Open Doors over the last year or so to co-create a digital marketing with AI programme for job seekers. Bringing our unique expertise together has meant that we’ve shaped something that is relevant. For other companies considering a collaboration with Open Doors, it’s a simple yes. It’s a collaboration that makes sense and you can see the direct impact as you watch people move into meaningful roles.”

- Ariana Ball, Accenture



Self-Employment for People with Disabilities

The course, which is provided by TU Dublin, ran for its sixth consecutive year, funded by AIB and supported by ODI. The course is NFQ Level 6 certified, awarding 5 ECTS credits upon completion. 20 participants joined the course in 2025, where they were also matched with business mentors to develop their business plans.

RiseUP

A bespoke entrepreneurship programme for refugees and asylum seekers, funded by Broadlake (€25,000), was launched in 2025. The programme includes tailored supports to entrepreneurs at all stages, divided in three phases:

- StandUP: monthly webinars for those interested in exploring entrepreneurship as a career opportunity, led by TU Dublin
- StartUP: individual mentorship, workshops, and access to expert advice clinic. Open to early stage entrepreneurs with validated ideas, led by ODI.
- ScaleUP: tailored support to businesses that are ready to scale, led by Broadlake.
- Mentorship and expert advice is offered by Open Doors partners Broadlake and Enterprise Ireland, as well as experienced entrepreneurs.

Business English Courses

237 migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers joined our Business English training programme in partnership with AllTalk Training, and funded by the European Social Fund (ESF+).

The programme included live online training sessions focused on professional communication and Irish workplace culture. Participants were also given access to the Professional English Toolkit (PET), with 8 hours of self-paced learning modules.



“The course helped me improve my English, build my confidence, and better understand workplace culture in Ireland. Alongside grammar and business vocabulary, we learned about the expectations and unwritten rules that are so important when looking for and keeping a job.

One of the highlights was meeting people from different countries, sharing experiences, and learning about each other’s cultures. It created a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone could learn from one another.

Thanks to the skills and knowledge I gained, I feel much more confident about my future employment opportunities. I am very grateful to the Open Doors Initiative for providing this valuable opportunity.”

- Open Doors Participant



“Throughout the learning process, I discovered a lot of new information and deepened my understanding of the language, different styles, culture, and intercultural communication. Each online lesson focused on a variety of language topics and covered different aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, and cultural studies. After every class, we received a detailed summary, which made it easier to recall key points, review the material, and complete homework tasks.”

- Open Doors Participant

State Street Scholarships

State Street kindly funded (\$48,925) The Open Doors Initiative to provide educational grants to help support participants. The objective was to create an accessible pathway to a scholarship fund for those who have less educational opportunities than others in society.

Open Doors set out a clear framework in which the individuals needed to meet specific and transparent criteria to apply for the Scholarship fund. We received 421 applications of which 41 were successful. Selected participants came from diverse backgrounds, including migrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people with a criminal history, and those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Courses which successful participants enrolled for include:

- Nursing
- Construction
- Project Management
- Marketing and Design
- Business/Accounting

External Training

In partnership with leading organisations, ODI provides free online training resources to help participants develop confidence and employability skills. These courses are accessible through the ODI website and include:

Accenture Skills to Success Academy

This free and interactive training supports Open Doors participants to plan their career, get a job and build skills for the future.

Accenture Digital Skills

Accenture offers Open Doors participants the full benefits of learning digital skills online for free. CPD certified courses in Digital Marketing, AI, Data Analytics, and more are available.

Solas eCollege

A leading online learning platform, allowing participants to learn at their own pace. Courses include: project management, information technology, graphic design, web design, digital marketing, software development and basic computer literacy.

INCO Academy

In partnership with Open Doors, INCO Academy offers 100% funded courses in Digital Marketing, Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, and Green Digital Skills. The courses are delivered virtually through hands-on workshops and real-world projects.

Generation Ireland

Free skills bootcamps to help anyone facing barriers to employment launch thriving and sustainable careers in tech and sustainability. Courses include AWS re/Start, [IT Support with Cyber Security](#), and Solar Installer.

Computers for Participants

53 participants from The Open Doors Initiative have received laptop donations in 2025, provided by partners EY, Certa, and Fenero. This initiative was set up to help bridge the digital divide that many Open Doors participants face, as access to a laptop can have critical impact on their opportunities to upskill and secure employment.



Other Activities



Cairde

Cairde – the Allies Network is a partner organisation of The Open Community. It is run by The Open Doors Initiative with the purpose of creating links with key areas of Irish society such as business, education, sports, the religious and other groups who can leverage their connections to enable families to integrate.

This can be by a number of ways and we encourage innovative and creative thinking. The North Star is to welcome families and help them create a home from home.

Community Sponsorship was pioneered in Canada in the 1970s. After four decades of the programme's success, we know that this is hugely positive for the lives of both refugees and local communities.

Refugees referred to the Community Sponsorship programme go directly to the community where they will reside and immediately begin the process of settlement. Under community sponsorship, private citizens and community organisations, rather than government officials, become the face of welcome for resettled refugees arriving to their country; supporting them through the process by providing a range of social and emotional supports, as well as providing accommodation, assisting in learning the language and seeking employment, enrolling in schools and any other necessary assistance.

With Community Sponsorship programme in Ireland,

communities will be supported to provide direct assistance to refugees settling in their locality through a structured programme backed by a unique collaboration between government, UNHCR, NGOs and civil society

Cairde is the means by which all of society can link in with this work and create a home from home. We look forward to future engagement with existing and other partners in this work

Open Doors secured legal and insurance support for the work and several corporate partners to help amplify its aims. We continue to grow this area of work



STEP Programme of the Open Community

Skills, Talent and Empowerment through Pathways (STEP) was launched in 2023 to help Irish employers address critical skills shortages through international recruitment. It is an EU co-funded, Irish government-supported programme that connects skilled displaced professionals with employers experiencing skills shortages. The programme is delivered in Ireland through a partnership between Talent Beyond Boundaries and The Open Community; with associate partners Fragomen and the Irish Refugee Protection Programme; and the Open Doors Initiative,

STEP gives Irish employers access to an untapped pool of more than over 150,000 skilled displaced professionals. It offers an employer-led and fully supported end-to-end process - from free talent sourcing and employment permit and visa guidance to post-arrival integration - helping employers and candidates navigate international recruitment more effectively.

The programme is designed to be efficient, low cost and focused on helping employers fill critical roles confidently with qualified and dedicated employees.

Value of Employer Partnerships

Partnerships remain central to ODI's approach. ODI works closely with employers, recruitment firms, universities, and community organisations to strengthen pathways into employment and expand access to opportunity.

A key strength of ODI's model is that employers are not only recipients of talent but active contributors to its development. Through mentoring, knowledge sharing, and direct engagement in programme delivery, employer partners help shape more effective pathways into employment for people from underrepresented communities.

This collaboration between employers, communities, and participants remains central to ODI's mission of expanding access

to opportunity and contributing to a more inclusive labour market in Ireland.

At the Open Doors Initiative, we are proud to be pioneers in bringing corporate social justice into practical action. We believe businesses have a real role to play in creating fair and inclusive access to opportunity.

Our work is grounded in clear values: inclusion, accessibility, equity, and dignity. These are not just ideas for us, they guide how we design programmes, engage with people, and work with employers.

We partner with companies that share this commitment. Together, we move beyond intention and turn values into action, creating real pathways into employment for people from underrepresented backgrounds.



“We started working with Open Doors back in 2019 to intentionally create a culture where people feel included. With their support, we reviewed our processes, onboarding, and introduced initiatives like pathways to inclusive recruitment. This year alone, we have placed over 60 employees from marginalised backgrounds, something we would not have achieved without Open Doors.”

Cora Lyons, Circle K



Our work with Employers

Partner Engagement

ODI works at the intersection of communities and employers in Ireland, creating practical pathways into employment by connecting underrepresented talent with companies committed to building more inclusive and accessible workplaces. This partnership-driven model expands access to employment opportunities for underrepresented communities and supports employers in accessing diverse talent and strengthening inclusive workplace practices.

Employer partners actively contribute to the delivery of ODI programmes. Their engagement includes providing mentors, delivering employability workshops, participating in recruitment and talent engagement events, supporting career pathways and sharing practical insights and best practices on inclusive recruitment and workplace integration.

Through ODI's employer network, companies contributed directly to mentoring, employability training, and talent engagement initiatives designed to support individuals from underrepresented

communities in accessing employment opportunities.

During 2025, employer engagement across ODI programmes resulted in:

- **Over 50 companies actively engaged in ODI initiatives**
- **More than 230 professionals volunteering as mentors, employment experts, and speakers from partner organisations**
- **Three new companies joining the ODI employer network**

Employer and partner engagement saw over 15% increase compared to 2024, reflecting the growing interest in inclusive workplace practices.

In addition, during 2025, more than **41 training sessions** were delivered, **reaching over 1,120 employees** across partner companies. These sessions focused on topics such as disability awareness, Inclusion workshops, inclusive recruitment, cultural competence, and accessible communication.



“We worked very closely with Open Doors, reviewing our policies and receiving practical, formal training. They are a trusted partner who provide expert equality, diversity and inclusion advice in a non-judgmental way, always meeting us where we are and supporting us on our journey. They are practical, approachable, and help us do better, bringing more people on board and working well with both our employees and the public.”

Jenny Maher, SEAI



External Relations

We spoke to companies and organisations across Ireland through a wide range of talks and training including the several government fora on varying issues such as disability. We also engaged with Pride and Transgender events; support for people living with HIV, International Women's Day events; Ibec, Small Firms Association, Chambers Ireland and other business events, on rights for various underrepresented cohorts in a range of seminars and general diversity and inclusion topics.

For our own partners, we supported and spoke at over 54 different events on various inclusion topics and gave over 45 hours of training in a range of areas to Leadership teams, HR and employees

Memberships & Associations

- The Open Community – lead on the Cairde Allies network and the STEP project
- Dublin Regional Enterprise Committee - supporting them in meeting their goals on inclusion in employment
- Dept of Business, Enterprise and Employment National CSR Hub members
- Dublin City PPN
- Dublin City Council Inclusivity Forum
- Diversity Charter Ireland
- INAR – Irish Network Against Racism
- Trans Equality Network
- Cork Chamber of Commerce
- Ukraine Civil Society Response Forum
- The Impact Hub Advisory Group

Signed our seventh UNHCR Refugee Pledge, reflecting our latest impact and progress and recognised as a social enterprise by People and Planet.

ODI Research

The Open Doors Initiative (ODI) is committed to delivering innovative research that is informed by lived experience and carried out by experts in the field. As thought-leaders in the area of corporate social justice, ODI strives to provide its partners and stakeholders with insight that will positively impact on business and those who are experiencing barriers to employability in Ireland.

Over 2025 we continued to build our research and resource hub. We launched two leading toolkits as well as a number of shorter guides for ODI partners.

Employers' Cultural Competence Toolkit

Our Employers' Cultural Competence Toolkit is a comprehensive guide designed to support Irish businesses to grow from cultural awareness to cultural competence workplaces. It aims to:

Support Employers: Equip employers with knowledge, strategies and resources to manage and leverage cultural diversity effectively.

Promote Inclusion: Ensure employees from diverse backgrounds feel respected, empowered and included.
Address Barriers: Identify challenges faced by ethnic minorities in recruitment and employment and provide actionable solutions.

This toolkit was launched in June 2025 at AIB's Head Office with a keynote speech from author and researcher Dr Toluwani Akaehomen and panel discussion featuring Melissa Bosch (EDI Lead at EY), Adrian Moynihan (Head of Consumer at AIB), and Abdul Bari Ahmadzai (Business Development at Open Doors Initiative). We were delighted to welcome so many attendees, and it was inspiring to see the shared commitment in the room

to equity, inclusion, and the creation of more culturally competent workplaces.

The Employers' Cultural Competence Toolkit was supported by AIB and the European Social Fund Plus Ireland.

Employers Toolkit for LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Authored by Dr Vanessa Lacey, Director of Gendercare, the Employer's Toolkit for LGBTQ+ Inclusion is an evidence-based guide for employers seeking to create inclusive, respectful and equitable workplaces for LGBTQ+ employees and jobseekers. Building on ODI's 2023 publication Inclusive Recruitment of Trans and Non-Binary Candidates, this expanded resource offers actionable guidance on:

Using inclusive language in policies and communications
Recognising and reducing microaggressions
Tackling homophobia and transphobia
Supporting effective allyship and leadership visibility

The toolkit draws on lived experience and extensive consultation with LGBTQ+ professionals, HR leaders and inclusion experts, ensuring that recommendations are both grounded and achievable.

This piece of research was launched by Minister Jerry Buttimer and Sinéad Kilkelly, Director of HR, at ESB's head office in October 2025.

Dr Vanessa Lacey shared insights from the research and we hosted a discussion with David McKeon, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist, ESB and Alex Jegorovs, Finance Strategy and Enablement, People Program Delivery Lead, Accenture. The panel was moderated by ODI's Head of Programmes, Talita Holzer.

This toolkit gives employers the strategies to make

inclusion real in everyday practice. It's about ensuring that every person, regardless of identity, can grow, thrive and succeed. It was supported through the Energy for Generations Fund and marks an important milestone in advancing equity and belonging across Irish workplaces

Engagement & Advocacy

The Open Doors Initiative is committed to working with Government in order to deliver policy and strategy that is strengthened by lived experience and is inclusive of all communities. ODI believes in the power of transparent civic participation that builds an innovative and inclusive Ireland.

Following the formation of a new government in January 2025, several ministerial portfolios and government departments were restructured and renamed to reflect revised policy priorities and administrative responsibilities. A number of key departments saw title changes, including the creation of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (formerly the Department of Justice), the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (previously Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth), and the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment (previously Enterprise, Trade and Employment). These changes formed part of a broader reorganisation of government structures aimed at aligning departmental mandates with the priorities of the new government.

Ahead of the formation of the new government, ODI published our "Programme for Government" recommendations which focused on equitable employment and supporting innovative business. Following, the release of the Government's Securing Ireland's Future, ODI issued a press release welcoming the newly formed governments commitment to disability inclusion and voicing concerns of the changes being

made to migration policy and approach. As part of the outreach to the newly formed government, newly appointment Ministers and elected officials were sent ODI's paper, A Vision for an Inclusive Ireland.

Public Consultation

ODI has actively participated in public consultation processes and development of policy papers over 2025. These included:

- Department of Children, Disability & Equality: Statement of Strategy
- Department of Social Protection: Statement of Strategy
- Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration: Statement of Strategy
- Department of Social Protection: Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 to 2025
- Department of Social Protection: Pathways to Work 2021 to 2025
- Department of Enterprise, Tourism & Employment: The Right to Request Remote Working

As well as the above submissions, ODI delivered recommendations for Budget 2026. This was sent to the Minister for Finance, the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste and other Ministers and departments.

Disability Inclusive Employment

Over 2025, and moving into 2026, ODI has increased efforts to advocate for innovative systematic changes to positively impact Ireland's low disability employment rate. This has coincided with an increase in Government efforts on this issue and the creation of a new national disability inclusion strategy, National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030. ODI actively contributed to the development of this strategy by:

- Policy Challenge Session: Attended session and shared input
- Closing the Disability Employment Gap: A paper discussing practical actions that can be taken to positively impact disability inclusion in employment
- Public Consultation: Submitted a paper on the design of the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030

ODI is committed to advocating for change for those experiencing barriers to employability to ensure systems that are designed to support do just that, instead of hinder or disincentivise.

Awards

During 2025, ODI was recognised through a number of leading national awards, reflecting both the strength of our mission and the impact of our work. We were proud to win the Diversity in Business Awards (Social Impact), the Image Business Woman of the Year Award, and the Newstalk Changemaker Business Award, recognising our leadership in advancing corporate social justice and creating meaningful pathways to employment for underrepresented communities.

We were also honoured through the Image Pitch Award, highlighting the strength of our vision and our ability to innovate scalable solutions. In addition, we were named finalists in the National Digital Awards, the Diversity in Tech Awards, the National Diversity and Inclusion Awards, and the Excellence in Learning Awards. These achievements are not just for ODI, but for all our partners who are working with us to build more inclusive workplaces across Ireland.

Employers for Change

Employers for Change is an employer disability information service. The service was established in recognition that supporting jobseekers with disabilities is only one part of the equation; employers also need practical guidance, confidence and clear information to create genuinely inclusive workplaces.

Ireland continues to have one of the lowest employment rates for persons with disabilities in the European Union. Ireland also has the highest disability employment gap in the EU, at 37%, compared with an EU average of 21.4%. These figures reflect the significant structural and attitudinal barriers that still limit access to meaningful and sustained employment for disabled people and underline the need for targeted support not only for individuals, but for employers themselves.

Employers for Change responds to this need by providing a central source of information, advice and practical guidance for employers seeking to recruit, retain and support people with disabilities. Through one-to-one consultancy, training, events, toolkits, online resources and stakeholder engagement, the service supports employers to build confidence and develop more inclusive approaches to recruitment, reasonable accommodation, workplace accessibility and communication. Its distinctive role is its employer focus, helping organisations identify barriers, strengthen practice and create workplaces where people with disabilities can access, sustain and progress in employment.

Key Achievements

In 2025 Employers for Change empowered over 1800 employees directly and reached over 11,000 through indirect engagements, strengthening our mission to foster disability-inclusive workplaces across Ireland.

- Provided consultancy to over 130 employers on disability and neurodiversity strategy, reasonable accommodation, policy review and good practice
- Trained more than 900 employees across the public, private and charity sectors
- 7100 users to the EFC website
- Grew to over 4200 followers across LinkedIn and Instagram where we share resources, relevant good practices and tips
- Spoke at four conferences
- Published 15 articles across the EFC blog, external publications and LinkedIn
- Held four online information sessions for 377 attendees
- Launched a research-based toolkit on disability awareness, equality and inclusion training in the workplace.
- Hosted an in-person event for 60 attendees - employers, business representatives, disability stakeholders, government department representatives and policymakers. The event was opened by Lord Mayor of Dublin Councillor Ray McAdam opened the event and highlighted Employers for Change's national impact.

Training

We delivered training to 900+ employees from various employers across the public, private and charity sectors.

EFC's Disability Awareness, Equality and Inclusion training is one of the few in Ireland to be CPD accredited, enabling participants to collect CPD points and receive a certificate of completion. This also allows non-public organisations to avail of the 90% training funding of the Work and Access Scheme. We always tailor the content to the needs of the organisations. The various sessions cover topics such as Building Disability Confidence, Inclusive Recruitment practices, Disability Inclusive practices for People Managers and Leaders, Accessible and Inclusive Communications, Reasonable Accommodation Passport and more.

All our main training is now CPD approved

Training Feedback

The feedback continues to be very positive. Based on 104 respondents:

- 97% are satisfied with the sessions
- 96% feels more confident regarding the covered topics
- 96% would recommend the training to someone else



An Roinn Leanaf, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

Funding

The work of Employers for Change is funded by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.



“The Disability Awareness Training by Employers for Change was truly outstanding. The content was exceptionally well-crafted, and the delivery was engaging and impactful. The trainer demonstrated remarkable expertise, handling the topics with both sensitivity and depth, while fostering an interactive and inclusive environment throughout the session. We cannot commend them highly enough!”

Emmanuel Okhifo, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager National Gallery of Ireland



“MSD is delighted to partner with Employers for Change in this important initiative, and we look forward to implementing the valuable lessons learned to foster a more inclusive workplace for everyone.”

Barry O’Driscoll, Site Projects Lead, MSD



“It was an excellent session and our staff were extremely interactive, we believe this is due to the highly interesting content of the webinar and Anna’s skills as a presenter creating an engaging and comfortable atmosphere... We left the webinar with a much clearer understanding of the various disabilities, how the majority of us view disabilities and the challenges around people’s unconscious bias. We are more aware of our language and the disclosure of reasonable accommodations. We highly recommend this webinar.”

Human Resource Management - Equality and Engagement Unit, Office of Public Works

Research based toolkit on Advancing Disability Awareness, Equality and Inclusion Training in the Workplace

In 2025, Employers for Change commissioned Dr Mary Keogh to carry out a practical research project examining current employer needs in relation to disability awareness, equality and inclusion training.

The research drew on literature review along with focus groups with Disabled Persons Organisations, support organisations, employers, and interviews with key informants from government departments and stakeholder bodies.

It identifies existing practices, common challenges, and areas where employers require further support or clarity. It resulted in a detailed research report and a practical toolkit designed to guide employers and training organisers in planning and delivering effective, rights-based disability inclusion training. The toolkit titled “[Advancing Disability Awareness, Equality and Inclusion Training in the Workplace](#)”, was launched at the annual EFC event on 27 November 2025.

Launch of the [WIDE Framework](#) - Widening Inclusion of Disability in Employment

In October 2025, Employers for Change partnered on the launch of the WIDE Framework portal, following a two-year collaborative national development process involving extensive research and consultation. The framework’s development was coordinated by AHEAD in collaboration with Employers for Change. The online platform supports employers to embed disability inclusion across workplace systems, practices and culture, and includes the open-source framework and a self-review tool for employers. <https://wide.employersforchange.ie/>

Online information sessions

To reach a wider audience beyond our training programme, Employers for Change collaborated with Ibec, the Department of Social protection, AHEAD and Dyspraxia Ireland to deliver a series of multi-employer online information sessions.

Media

To reach employers, hiring managers, HR teams and recruiters more widely, Employers for Change published 15 articles in blogs, the EFC Blog, LinkedIn and external publications, such as SFA Better Business Magazine, AHEAD Journal, Irish Examiner, Business and Finance, as well as through radio.

Topics covered a range of employer-focused disability employment issues, including inclusive recruitment, neurodiversity, reasonable accommodation, inclusive language and employee resource group good practice.

Collaboration with stakeholders

Mind the Gap – Cross-border project

Starting from November 2024, Employers for Change, together with Towards Work, participated in the Mind the Gap project, which aimed to better understand the employment gap experienced by disabled people across the island of Ireland. Funded by the Shared Island Civic Society Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The main project concluded with the launch of a report and recommendations at a summit in Newry on 25 June 2025.

NDA Public Service eLearning advisory group

Has been a member of the NDA eLearning advisory group. The new introductory e-learning module on disability equality aimed at public bodies was launched on the 13th of March, 2026.

NDA Autism resources review

Supported NDA’s development of “[A Review of Available Resources to Support Employers in Creating Autism-Friendly Workplaces](#)” and has been featured in the report with relevant resources.

Ibec Accessibility Toolkit and Assessment review

EFC contributed to the [Ibec Accessibility Toolkit](#) and Assessment materials that was launched in May 2025.

Connecting Partnerships and Employers

A core part of The Open Doors Initiative's work is building meaningful connections between employers and individuals from marginalised backgrounds. By acting as a bridge between participants and partner organisations, Open Doors helps create opportunities that deliver long-term value for both job seekers and employers.

Through these connections, participants gain access to professional networks, industry insights, training, and employment opportunities that may otherwise remain out of reach. At the same time, employers are supported to better understand the barriers many individuals face in accessing and sustaining employment, while also

strengthening inclusive recruitment practices and diversifying their talent pipelines.

Open Doors works closely with partners throughout this process, from identifying opportunities and promoting roles, to preparing participants, supporting onboarding, and delivering training to managers and HR teams. This collaborative approach helps ensure that opportunities are accessible, impactful, and sustainable for all involved.

“““

“There is a lot of alignment between Open Doors and what Deloitte is doing. If we can make the workplace inclusive, welcoming, and allow people to feel comfortable in who they are, that is where authenticity and creativity come in. That is where a true sense of belonging develops, something that many companies pay a lot of money to cultivate. Working with Open Doors gives you access to people who share your ideas and values.”

Sufi Musleh, Deloitte



Our work with Participants and Employers



In 2025, several Open Doors partners created placement opportunities for participants, including Fragomen, Harris PR, IDA Ireland, and Arthur Cox. These placements provided participants with valuable professional experience, opportunities to develop new skills, and pathways into long-term employment. For many participants, work placements represent a critical stepping stone towards sustainable employment, particularly for those who face additional barriers to entering or re-entering the workforce. Placements allow individuals to gain relevant industry experience, build confidence, expand professional networks, and develop practical skills in supportive workplace environments.

For employers, placements provide an opportunity to access diverse talent, strengthen inclusive workplace practices, and create more representative workforces. Many partners also reported that these experiences increased internal awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented communities, contributing to broader organisational learning and culture change.



“We worked very closely with Open Doors, reviewing our policies and receiving practical, formal training. They are a trusted partner who provide expert equality, diversity and inclusion advice in a non-judgmental way, always meeting us where we are and supporting us on our journey. They are practical, approachable, and help us do better, bringing more people on board and working well with both our employees and the public.”

Fatima Aydin, Fragoman



The Open Doors Mentorship Programme continued to deliver personalised, long-term support to participants in 2025, with more than 100 mentees receiving guidance from experienced professionals across a wide range of industries.

Through one-to-one mentoring relationships, participants received support with career planning, job searching, confidence building, professional communication, and workplace readiness. Mentors also provided valuable insights into industry expectations and recruitment processes, helping mentees navigate career transitions and identify achievable next steps.

The programme was strengthened by the involvement of mentors from 24 Open Doors partner organisations, including EY, Pobal, Workday, Cpl, Northern Trust, Diageo, ABM, Sodexo, and others. Their continued commitment reflects the important role employers can play in creating more inclusive professional networks and supporting equitable access to career progression opportunities.

For mentors and partner organisations, the programme also created opportunities for meaningful employee engagement, cross-cultural learning, and a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of people facing barriers to employment.



“I am really proud to be the first Public Jobs mentor on the Open Doors mentoring programme, supporting a master’s student with an immigrant background as they navigate the job market in Ireland for the first time.

With each session, we can see the mentee’s confidence grow, and for me, that’s why we do it. A partnership with Open Doors is a real way to live your values, not just talk about them.

For us in public jobs, it’s not just a strategic exercise, it’s the right thing to do.”

Louise Kavanagh, Public Jobs

Employment Expert Programme

In 2025, more than 200 individual support sessions were delivered through the Employment Expert Programme, including CV reviews, mock interviews, and LinkedIn profile consultations.

The programme brought together volunteers from partner organisations including e-Frontiers, Sigmar, Cpl, TTM Healthcare, Workday, Nestlé, and others, who shared their expertise to help participants strengthen their applications, improve interview performance, and better understand employer expectations.

These sessions provided participants with practical, personalised guidance tailored to their career goals and experience levels. For many, the programme also offered valuable opportunities to build professional confidence and engage directly with industry professionals in a supportive environment.

For employer partners, the initiative created a direct and impactful way for employees to contribute their skills and knowledge while supporting more inclusive access to employment opportunities.

Career Events

In 2025, Open Doors continued to deliver the Career Paths event series, designed to connect participants directly with inclusive employers across a range of industries. These events provided opportunities for job seekers to explore career pathways, understand recruitment processes, engage with hiring teams, and gain insight into workplace culture and inclusion initiatives.

By creating spaces for direct engagement between employers and participants, these events helped break down barriers to employment while enabling organisations to connect with diverse talent pools and strengthen community engagement efforts.



Break Into Transport

In March 2025, Open Doors hosted Break Into Transport, an in-person careers event focused on connecting job seekers from marginalised backgrounds with opportunities in the transport sector.

More than 100 participants engaged with leading employers including Irish Rail, Bus Éireann, and Dublin Bus, organisations that collectively employ over 11,000 people across Ireland. Attendees gained valuable insight into career opportunities within the sector, recruitment processes, and the skills required for different roles. The event also included practical employability supports, including mock interviews and guidance from recruiters, helping participants build confidence and prepare for future applications.

The event was hosted at the Wayfinding Centre, whose accessible and inclusive facilities reinforced the importance of ensuring equal access to employment opportunities for all members of society.



Recruitment Events with Sodexo

Open Doors partnered with Sodexo to deliver three targeted recruitment events in 2025, including one online Career Paths session and two in-person recruitment drives in Dublin and Cork. Together, these events attracted more than 270 registrations, demonstrating strong demand for direct engagement with inclusive employers.

The online session provided participants with insights into Sodexo's work, available career opportunities, recruitment processes, and practical employability advice, including CV preparation and interview techniques. Following this session, selected participants were invited to attend in-person recruitment events, where approximately 100 participants interviewed for open roles.

These events demonstrated the value of collaborative employer engagement initiatives that combine employability support with direct recruitment opportunities, helping participants access employment while enabling employers to connect with motivated and diverse candidates.

Design and Communications

The Open Doors Initiative has grown substantially over the past several years, so our communications strive to share the full expanse of our events and opportunities, as well as our impact and success stories, with an ever-increasing community. We reach our audiences primarily through online channels, including websites, social media accounts, email, podcasts, interviews and other media outlets.

Our two primary audiences within Open Doors are participants and partners. Participants from underrepresented communities engage with our services seeking to improve their hiring potential, employability skills, further education or entrepreneurship possibilities. Our network of professionals includes those from current and potential partner organisations, along with business leaders, government officials and other decision makers in Ireland. The communications

created for each audience are structured to their interests, while maintaining the strong overall ODI brand presence which is professional yet approachable, supportive and positive.

Within the overarching Open Doors organisation, we have the three programmes (Employers for Change, Towards Work and Pathways to Progress) who offer more specialised and targeted content, resulting in four primary websites and corresponding social media accounts. As each programme maintains a busy schedule of events, webinars, opportunities and information to share, we create a wide range of content to keep our audiences informed and reach even further than before. In 2025, we created more than 320 cumulative social media posts, consisting of still images, infographics, videos and articles.



Our online following continues to grow, with LinkedIn remaining our primary social media platform to reach our relevant audiences. The Open Doors Initiative gained over 2,000 followers in 2025, bringing us to 8,070, while the three programmes have a combined total of 7,163 followers. Instagram is our secondary platform where we grow organically, rather than through paid promotion, and between all accounts we now have 3,705 followers, up from 2,784 in 2024. Across our four websites, we had a combined visitor total of 28,900.

As the European Accessibility Act (EAA) came into force in June 2025, private and public bodies are subject to higher levels of accessibility across most of their digital platforms, which includes websites and other elements of digital communication. Maintaining full accessibility across all areas of promotion has always been a high priority for Open Doors, and through our Employers for Change programme, we have delivered training on inclusive and accessible communications to five organisations in 2025. This training provides practical, tangible steps which can be integrated into daily practice, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We also provided consultation to numerous partner companies on the accessibility of their websites, hiring platforms and digital documents.

Creating resources for our partners and the wider business community is an important part of our work, and ODI has produced three research-led toolkits in the past year: the Employers' Toolkit for LGBTQ+ Inclusion, the Employers' Cultural Competence Toolkit, and Disability Disclosure in the Workplace, An Employer Toolkit. All of these were designed to present information in a visually engaging manner that is easy to navigate and adheres to strict accessibility standards. Throughout the year, we also create a vast number of additional useful guides, informative documents and reports, to support our partners and affirm the impact of our collaborative efforts towards inclusion.



Governance

The Open Doors Initiative has a robust Governance structure and is supported by CEOs and Directors from a number of the partner companies. This board, under the stewardship of Paddy Hayes, our Chair, helps increase our governance and oversight standards and provide support to the team and work of Open Doors.

Leadership Advisory Board

- Kara McGann, Director, Ibec, 17th April 2024
- Denis Doolan, Director, AIB, 17th April 2024
- Noeline Blackwell, Director, Consultant, 17th April 2024
- Thomas Stone, Director, TUD, 17th April 2024
- Marian Cronin, Director, Sodexo, 17th April 2024
- Ursula Murphy, Director, Bank of America, 8th January 2024
- Hillary O'Meara, Director, Accenture, 14th June 2023
- Paddy Hayes, Chair, ESB, 1st March 2023
- Sharon Vize, Director, CPL, 6th November 2022
- Veronica Rodriguez Cabezas, Director, Consultant, 15th October 2022
- Barry O'Sullivan, Director, Diageo, 1st February 2022
- David Stanton, Director, Consultant, 31st August 2021
- Sharon Murphy, Director, WHPR, 12th July 2021
- Patrick Doyle, Director, eFrontiers, 4th February 2020
- Gerard Kiernan, Secretary, Icon, 4th February 2020

Employees

- Jeanne McDonagh, CEO
- Claire Hayes, Head of Policy, Research and Government
- Talita Holzer, Head of Programmes
- Lidia Oborina, Programme manager, Pathways to Progress
- Wayne Howe, Programme Manager, Towards Work
- Abdul Bari Ahmadzai, Business Development and Stakeholder Manager
- Anna Boda, Programme Manager, Employers for Change
- Mohamad Camera, Programme Executive
- Jessica Reid, Design and Communications Executive

Company Number 665789

Auditors Donal Ryan and Co, Auditors

Financial Statements

for the financial year ended 31 December 2025*

Income and Expenditure Account

for the financial year ended 31 December 2025

	2025 €	2024 €
Income	1,275,480	765,598
Expenditure	(845,238)	(781,177)
Surplus (deficit) for the financial year	<u>430,242</u>	<u>(15,579)</u>

Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2025

	2025 €	2024 €
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	<u>937</u>	<u>1,905</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors	184,169	375
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>931,387</u>	<u>973,129</u>
	<u>1,115,556</u>	<u>973,504</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	<u>(213,240)</u>	<u>(502,398)</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>902,316</u>	<u>471,106</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	<u>903,253</u>	<u>473,011</u>
Reserves		
Income and expenditure account	<u>903,253</u>	<u>473,011</u>
Equity attributable to owners of the company	<u>903,253</u>	<u>473,011</u>

*Full audited financial accounts are available at www.opendoorsinitiative.ie

Detailed income and expenditure account

for the financial year ended 31 December 2025

Income

	2025 €	2024 €
Donations (Membership Fees)	312,411	172,433
DCEDIY - Dept. of Children	147,543	149,999
Bank of America	34,588	49,049
International Protection Integration Fund	59,717	40,346
The Community Foundation for Ireland	-	45,000
ESF Funding	205,639	128,183
DCEDIY - TW	139,725	87,599
ESB Funding	-	10,000
IHREC Funding	15,000	12,683
ODI Funding	360,857	34,806
Other income	-	35,500
	<hr/> 1,275,480 <hr/>	<hr/> 765,598 <hr/>



Detailed income and expenditure account (continued)

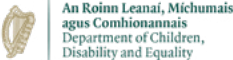
for the financial year ended 31 December 2025

	2025 €	2024 €
Expenditure		
Direct costs	124,770	132,323
Wages and salaries	558,052	493,833
Social welfare costs	61,923	54,704
Employee Pension Contributions	18,000	18,000
Insurance	1,448	1,333
Printing, postage and stationery	1,040	239
Marketing and Events	15,634	-
Courier and delivery charges	277	111
Telephone	1,942	1,794
Computer costs	9,980	11,229
Website Maintenance	20,413	12,499
Travelling and Subsistence	3,933	3,131
Consultancy fees	-	15,267
Consulting & Accounting	14,858	13,800
Bank charges	609	283
General expenses	3,294	17,099
Gifts	2,704	814
Auditor's remuneration	5,393	3,750
Depreciation	968	968
	<hr/> 845,238 <hr/>	<hr/> 781,177 <hr/>



Funding

A sincere thank you to all our funders and supporters for various initiatives, without whom we could not carry out our work:



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