

MIGRANT RIGHTS CENTRE IRELAND ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

POLLING BY MRCI DURING THE YEAR SHOWED THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN IRELAND REMAIN WELCOMING AND SUPPORTIVE OF PEOPLE WHO MOVE HERE TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES OR THEIR FAMILY.

2024 was a year of substantial migration to Ireland. We continued to see a huge demand for workers from outside the EU to move here on employment permits. We now have in the region of 60,000 people on employment permits in Ireland. This includes over 30,000 on general employment permits working mainly as carers, meat factory workers, chefs, agriculture workers, welders and drivers.

Just over 14,000 new general employment permits were issued in 2024. As permit numbers grow, we continue to see a corresponding increase in cases of exploitation coming through our doors.

While the far right continued to be active in 2024 and gained some traction in the local elections, migration was not a key issue around the general election later in the year and there were no far right candidates elected. Polling by MRCI during the year showed that the majority of people in Ireland remain welcoming and supportive of people who move here to make a better life for themselves or their family.

In 2024, our Information and Support Centre was busier than ever. We continued to provide high quality casework supports to migrant workers and their families. We supported 3,400 cases in 2024 with some of the most common issues being registration of immigration permission, employment permit issues, change of status, family reunification, citizenship, regularisation and employment rights Issues.

The number of people coming to us with signs of trafficking or severe labour exploitation increased substantially in 2024. We provided supports and representation in 40 new cases and helped to secure 9 formal adjudication decisions and settlement awards for labour exploitation victims totalling €322,000.

2024 saw a huge victory for MRCI's employment permit campaign that took over 15 years to secure. As part of the Employment Permits Act 2024, we managed to secure for the first time ever the ability for employment permit holders to change employer while staying on their existing permit. This is a game changer as it will give workers options, empower them to stand up for themselves and better equip them to challenge exploitation and sub-standard conditions of employment. We also secured the right to work for partners of permit holders.



We also campaigned hard to reunite migrant workers with their families in 2024. The current family reunion rules are leaving thousands of lower paid migrant workers separated from their partners and children for many years. Our campaign group, led by people affected themselves, was very active getting this issue onto the agenda of the government. Their activities included a protest outside the Department of Justice on the International Day of Families, and several impactful online campaign actions. A review of this policy has been promised.

As chair I would like to commend the incredible work of the staff, team, board, volunteers, community members, funders, donors, and supporters, without whom none of this would be possible.

We look forward to continuing to advance migrant worker rights in 2025. Protecting workers from exploitation and reuniting them with their families are our top priorities for the year ahead. We will continue to ensure that everything we do is led by those affected and we are confident that more big positive changes lie ahead.

Lucy Peprah
Chair MRCI

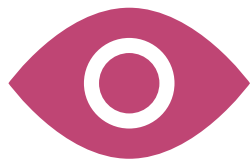
OUR VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

From its inception, MRCI's emphasis on community work has been critical in bringing about the empowerment and participation of migrant workers on issues that concern them.

Community work is concerned with addressing the root causes of inequality through collective action for change. Core to our theory of change is supporting migrants in low wage work to organise, engage in and lead on issues that

affect their lives. We operate a sophisticated structure that combines a front-line service, building the capacity of migrant workers by using a community work process, and engaging in strategic public awareness, policy, and advocacy.

OUR VISION



Our vision is for an open, equal, just and diverse society where migrant workers and their families can move, work and live in dignity.

OUR MISSION



Grounded in social justice, antiracism and equality, our mission is to empower migrant workers in low paid and precarious work to secure and advance their rights through collective action.

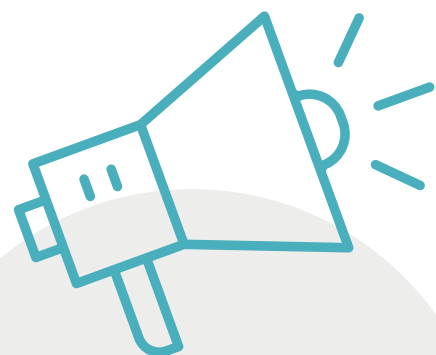
OUR VALUES



- People closest to the struggle are closest to the solution.
- People acting collectively make change possible.
- People lead when they have the tools to do so.



OUR 2024 IMPACT AT A GLANCE



7000+

Our core campaigns - Family Reunion, Employment Permit Equality, Fair Fees, and Justice for the Undocumented- have grown to over 7,000 active members in 2024, driving impactful campaigns for change.



3,400

MRCI's free and confidential Information and Support Centre provided 3,400 information and casework supports to migrant workers and their families.



**15
YEARS**

After 15 years campaigning, employment permit holders can now change employers without applying for a new permit. This will help combat exploitation as it gives workers options and increases their ability to stand up for themselves.

60k+



We now have a total reach of 60,000+ people across all platforms, this enables us to reach more people with important information and ensures our campaign actions are as strong as possible.



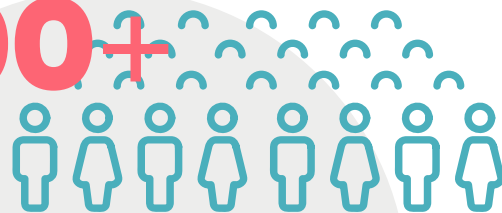
In May the Ministers of Justice and Enterprise, Trade, and Employment heeded MRCI's calls and announced that eligible spouses and partners of General Employment Permit (GEP) now have the right to work in Ireland.



66

We supported 66 people who reported severe labour exploitation including 9 suspected trafficking situations.

100+



Over 100 people participated in the Family Reunion Protest outside the Department of Justice, asking to be reunited with their families.



ADVANCING RIGHTS

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT CENTRE

During 2024, MRCI's Information and Support Centre continued to operate via telephone, website, email, video calls and face-to-face appointments. The Information and Support Centre continues to be very busy and is a critical access point for migrants seeking support.

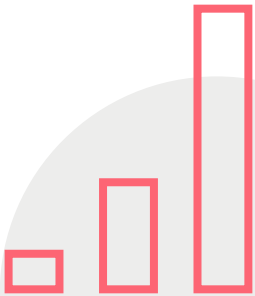
HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024



Provided free and confidential information and casework supports on 3,393 cases to migrant workers and their families.



Our Caseworkers supported people from 111 nationalities.



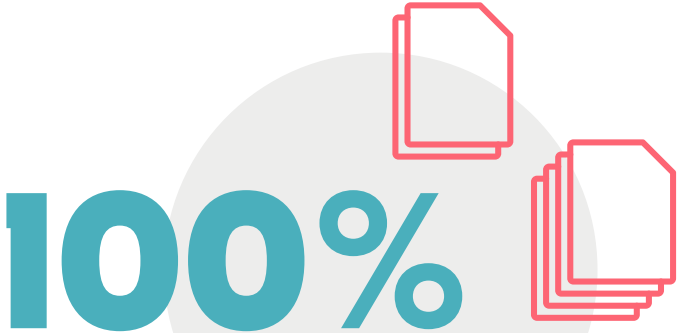
Top Presenting issues:
General Immigration 47%,
Work Permits 17%,
Family reunification 10%,
Employment 10%,
Housing and Social Welfare 4%



People supported were doing essential jobs. These included mushroom workers, meat factory workers, dairy farm workers, restaurant workers, carpenters, welders, and healthcare assistants.



We supported 47 people in difficult situations with emergency needs payments



We saw a 100% increase in people with employment permits being provided with assistance and representation regarding employment rights breaches.



TACKLING EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING FOR LABOUR EXPLOITATION

MRCI is a national assessment centre for people who experience Trafficking for Labour Exploitation. In 2024 MRCI continued to see an increase in cases of reported severe labour exploitation with a corresponding increase in assessments and cases of suspected TLE requiring support and advocacy. Most people are non-EU employment permit holders, and the restaurant sector has been the most prevalent to date.

After eight years of calling for a new identification system, the new National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was passed into law in June 2024. The Act gives

effect to new multidisciplinary approach to identify victims of trafficking and provide support.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

- Assessed, screened, and supported 40 new people who presented with signs of trafficking for labour exploitation.
- 5 victims formally referred to the NRM (Another 4 suspected victims chose not to come forward).
- 6 suspected TLE victims provided with emergency needs supports.
- 26 victims of exploitation from previous years were provided with a range of ongoing supports.
- Provided direct representation to 26 people with significant claims before the Workplace Relations Commission.
- Won nine formal adjudication decisions and settlement awards for severe labour exploitation victims totalling €322,000 in 2024.
- The new National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was passed into law in June 2024 which should greatly improve identification of suspected victims.

COMMUNITY WORK

FAMILY REUNION



The Family Reunion campaign group is made up of people who are living and working in Ireland but who are currently denied the basic right of having their immediate family with them. They want to see change happen, so that families can stay together. MRCI is calling on the Department of Justice to remove the barriers that are keeping families apart. and enable all workers to have their family with them from the start.

- We carried out two successful mass email actions in 2024. Over 1,300 people emailed Minister McEntee directly about this issue. Separately, almost 500 people sent 2,300 emails to their local TDs about the unfair family reunion rules.
- A hugely successful protest took place outside the Department of Justice on May 15th, with over 100 people in attendance. Two representatives from the group presented a letter to the Minister's office, we secured great media coverage on the day which included spokespeople from the campaign talking to media.
- The campaign planning group has grown to 30 members and there were 23 meetings held during the year. Overall, almost 1,500 people affected by the family reunion rules have joined the campaign.



MAKING EMPLOYMENT PERMITS FAIRER

In 2024, MRCI continued its work to gain parity in terms of rights for all people who come to work in Ireland on an employment permit. In the first half of the year, we continued to focus these efforts on the upcoming legislation i.e. the Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill which was enacted into law in June. We have an Employment Permit Equality campaign group which is a group of hundreds of general employment permit holders. They are campaigning for equal rights for all people on employment permits. We believe that all workers should be able to stand up for their rights in work and be able to change job if they need to.

- As part of the Employment Permit Bill, MRCI secured the right for general employment permit holders to change employer without applying for a new permit, provided they have completed at least nine months with their current employer.
- We continued to engage with the DETE against the introduction of a Seasonal Employment Permit. Seasonal permits have led to huge rates of exploitation for workers in other jurisdictions. While DETE ultimately decided to introduce this permit as a pilot
- in 2025 we have been able to push for stronger protections for workers who arrive on these permits.
- We held a webinar in November 2024 on 'Protecting Yourself from Exploitation at Work' and the new change of employer process.
- We continued to work to bring employment permit holders into the campaign and find meaningful ways for them to participate and own the campaign.



JUSTICE FOR THE UNDOCUMENTED (JFU)

This is a community of people living in Ireland without an official status. JFU campaigns for a pathway to papers for all undocumented people in Ireland. We believe that if you live here, you belong here. In 2024 we focussed on staying connected to the undocumented community across Ireland, sharing updates and keeping people informed about their rights. We also continued to advocate for an ongoing regularisation for undocumented people.

- A community meeting was held with 50 undocumented people attending.
- A WhatsApp Community was established, with weekly posts to keep people engaged.
- Over 400 current undocumented people became members of the community in 2024.



FAIR FEES

The Fair Fees campaign group is made up of migrant workers and international students, who are deeply concerned about the extortionate cost of the Irish Residence Permit card. The Irish Residence Permit (IRP) card costs €300 yet it only costs the state €20.44 to produce and deliver each card. Most people living in Ireland from outside the EU are forced to pay this fee every year, some even more often. The Fair Fees campaign group is calling for a reduction in IRP fee in line with similar services, such as a passport (€75) or driving licence (€55).

- The Fair Fees Group met 6 times in 2024. There was strong ownership and leadership of the campaign by those affected.
- We secured a high-level meeting with the Department of Justice and we presented our case for reducing the fee along with a representative from the campaign.
- Good Media coverage in June highlighted the high level of income received by the Department of Justice from IRP card fees.

GROWING REACH

GROWING OUR SUPPORTERS NETWORK AND COMMUNICATIONS



In 2024, MRCI delivered information to thousands of migrant workers across Ireland. MRCI effectively communicated news, updates and information with weekly posts across all platforms including the use of videos, images, graphs and social media advertising.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

- We grew our mailing list by almost 2,000 supporters, to a total of 18,480.
- We sent 65 emails to our supporter list.
- We grew our active communities across our core campaigns - Family Reunion, Employment Permit Equality, Fair Fees, and Justice for the Undocumented- to over 7,000 active members in 2024, driving impactful campaigns for change.
- We grew our reach across social media and email substantially during 2024. We now have a total reach of 60,000+ people across all platforms

SUBMISSIONS, CONSULTATIONS AND OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS



- Presented opening remarks to the Joint Committee on Justice on the proposal for Regulations and a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on international protection, asylum and migration.
- Briefing Note on Family Reunion: Granting the immediate right to family reunion to all migrant workers in full time employment.
- MRCI analysis and recommendations on the Family Reunion Application Process.
- MRCI Briefing Note on Employment Permit Equality- Granting all employment permit holders the freedom to work in any job after a period of 2 years.
- MRCI Policy paper on "Increasing equality and reducing risk by promoting human rights compliant pathways for safe and regular migration".
- MRCI Briefing note on Low Wage Sectors.
- MRCI Briefing note on salary increases for GEP holders.
- MRCI Briefing note on Seasonal Permits.
- MRCI Family Reunion survey 2024.
- MRCI Pre-Budget Submission 2025.
- MRCI Spotlight Briefing TLE casework in 2024.
- Submission to Children's Rights Alliance Report Card.

NETWORKS AND SOLIDARITY



MRCI supports and engages across a range of progressive civil society spaces. MRCI is a member of the Children’s Rights Alliance, Community Work Ireland, Community Platform, European Anti-Poverty Network (Ireland), Irish Network Against Racism, Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, National Youth Council of Ireland, National Women’s Council, Ukraine Civil Society Forum and the Platform for the International Cooperation of Undocumented Migrants, Sex Workers Alliance Ireland allies network and the Trans Equality Together Coalition. A staff member of MRCI joined the Uplift Board in 2024.

MRCI sat on the Migrant Integration Strategy Monitoring and Coordination Committee and on the National Anti-Human Trafficking Stakeholder Group and Trafficking for Labour Exploitation subgroup. MRCI participated in Community Work Ireland Policy and Practice Working group, contributed to the AKIDWA’s work on Migrant women in the workplace, supported National Women’s Council campaign for publicly funded

childcare, attended the MNI conference for health care assistants, and participated in the UN Day for the Eradication for Poverty.

MRCI continues to provide organisational supports to the Great Care Co-Op, The Hope and Courage Collective and Amal Women’s Association.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Structure

In 2024. The Board, Director, and Leadership Team in MRCI continued to ensure the processes and systems were in place to deliver the work while responding to team needs.

Management

MRCI held a team day to agree organisational priorities for 2024 and held four quarterly planning sessions with the team to deliver on these. MRCI began work on planning the next strategic plan 2025-2027 with the team and board. We had a team building overnight in May in Monaghan with other team-building events during the year.

The team attended a cultural awareness training, and two staff members completed high level training courses. Two Bobby Gilmore Fellows completed their fellowships, and we hosted two student placements.

MRCI worked to ensure compliance under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and that all systems, policies, and protocols were in place to deliver work from home.

MRCI engaged an external consultant to optimise the organisation’s data management by focusing on a detailed analysis of the existing systems and processes at MRCI.

OUR TEAM AND BOARD

THE TEAM



Our small but powerful team was at the heart of everything we accomplished in 2024. Driven by passion and dedication, our staff worked relentlessly to uphold migrant rights, foster community empowerment, and champion collective action.

This year, we said goodbye to Isabel Toolan, Andreas Bloom and Stanley Nwaneri and wish them all very well in their careers. We also said goodbye to the Director Edel McGinley. MRCI is very grateful to Edel for her exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to running MRCI. Under her leadership, MRCI has

not only expanded its reach but also deepened its impact within the migrant community in Ireland

We welcomed Vidya Nagaraju, Pretty Ndawo, Daniel Korolev and Tolu Oluyede to the team in 2024. We had two students join us during the year from Maynooth University, Leanne Lowry and Ahlam Deria.

In 2024, the people involved in the work were from a range of nationalities and backgrounds. Amongst the many things that unites us, we are all passionate about justice and equality.



THE BOARD



MRCI's Board are a source of strength, helping the organisation navigate difficult periods and remain focused on our goals and strategic objectives. Our Board met five times in 2024, including the AGM.

Special thanks to our Board of Directors, Anastasia Crickley, Angelisa Zerpa Andara, Bobby Gilmore, Champika Wanniarachchi, Dee Lowry, Francis Njógúna, Ian McArdle, Lucy Peprah (Chair), Michael O'Sullivan and Raluca Anucuta. Anastasia and Raluca stepped down in 2024 from the board, MRCI is deeply grateful for their commitment and contribution to MRCI over the years.

Finance Sub-group and Audit Committee
The Finance Subgroup met four times during 2024. A big thanks to our Finance Subgroup, Cathal McAllister, Francis Njógúna, and Michael O'Sullivan. The overall purpose of the Finance Subgroup is to, on behalf of the Board, monitor the financial management of the organisation and ensure best practice is maintained.

Employment Sub-group
The Employment Subgroup met four times in 2024. A big thanks to the Employment Subgroup members Lucy Peprah, Angelisa Zerpa Andara, Raluca Anucuta and Dee Lowry. The Employment Subgroup aims to, on behalf of the Board, maintain and develop excellent employment practice within MRCI.

COMPLIANCE

MRCI complies with the Charities Governance code for Community and Voluntary organisations in Ireland. We are signed up to and compliant with the Charities Regulator voluntary Guidelines for Charitable

Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. MRCI has a dedicated section on company governance on our website to ensure full transparency.

OUR FUNDERS
AND DONORS

A special thanks to all our donors and funders in 2024, without which our work would not be possible!

- Columban Missionary Society
 - Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth – National Integration Fund
 - Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth- Asylum and Migration and Integration Fund
 - Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth- Ireland Against Racism
 - Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government - Scheme to Support National Organisations
- Department of Justice and Equality – Victims of Crime
 - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
 - Lakeside Fund
 - Open Society Initiative for Europe
 - Order of Discalced Carmelites
 - Orr Mackintosh Foundation
 - Robert Bosch Foundation
 - Rethink Ireland - Equality Fund
 - Rowan Trust

Special thanks to all those who gave one off and recurring donations to assist the work of MRCI in 2024. Without your support our work would not be possible.

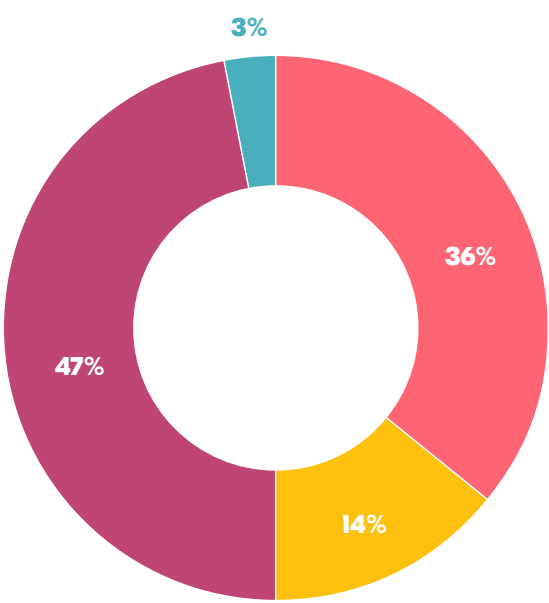
FINANCIAL
REVIEW

The financial outcome for 2024 is set out in the audited financial statements.

In 2024 MRCI had an income of €898,019. Our income can be split into four broad categories: Philanthropic, Government Grants, Irish Grants and Fundraising and Donations Income.

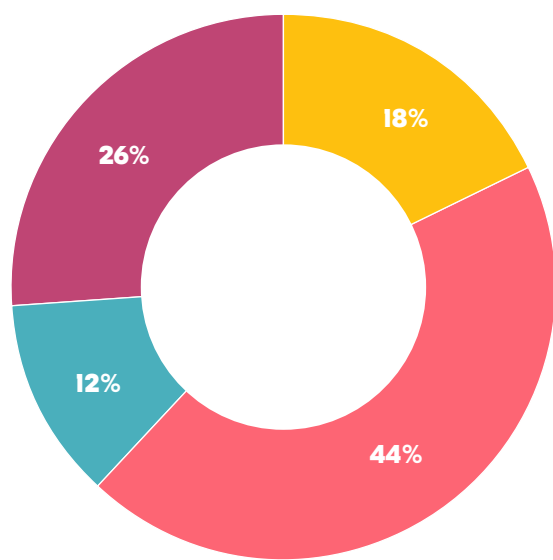
In 2024, MRCI's expenditure was €897,031. Our expenditure can be categorised in four broad headings: Community Work, Services, Programmes and Organisational costs.

2024 Income
€898,019



- Philanthropic
- Irish Grants
- Government Grants
- Donations & Fundraising

2024 Expenditure
€897,031



- Community Work
- Services
- Programmes
- Organisational cost

A YEAR IN PICTURES

MIGRANT RIGHTS CENTRE IRELAND ANNUAL REPORT 2024



MRCI is a non-governmental organisation and a registered charity (CHY17071), governed by a board of directors and by a number of funders. Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20062873