

2005

annual report



Irish Council for International Students

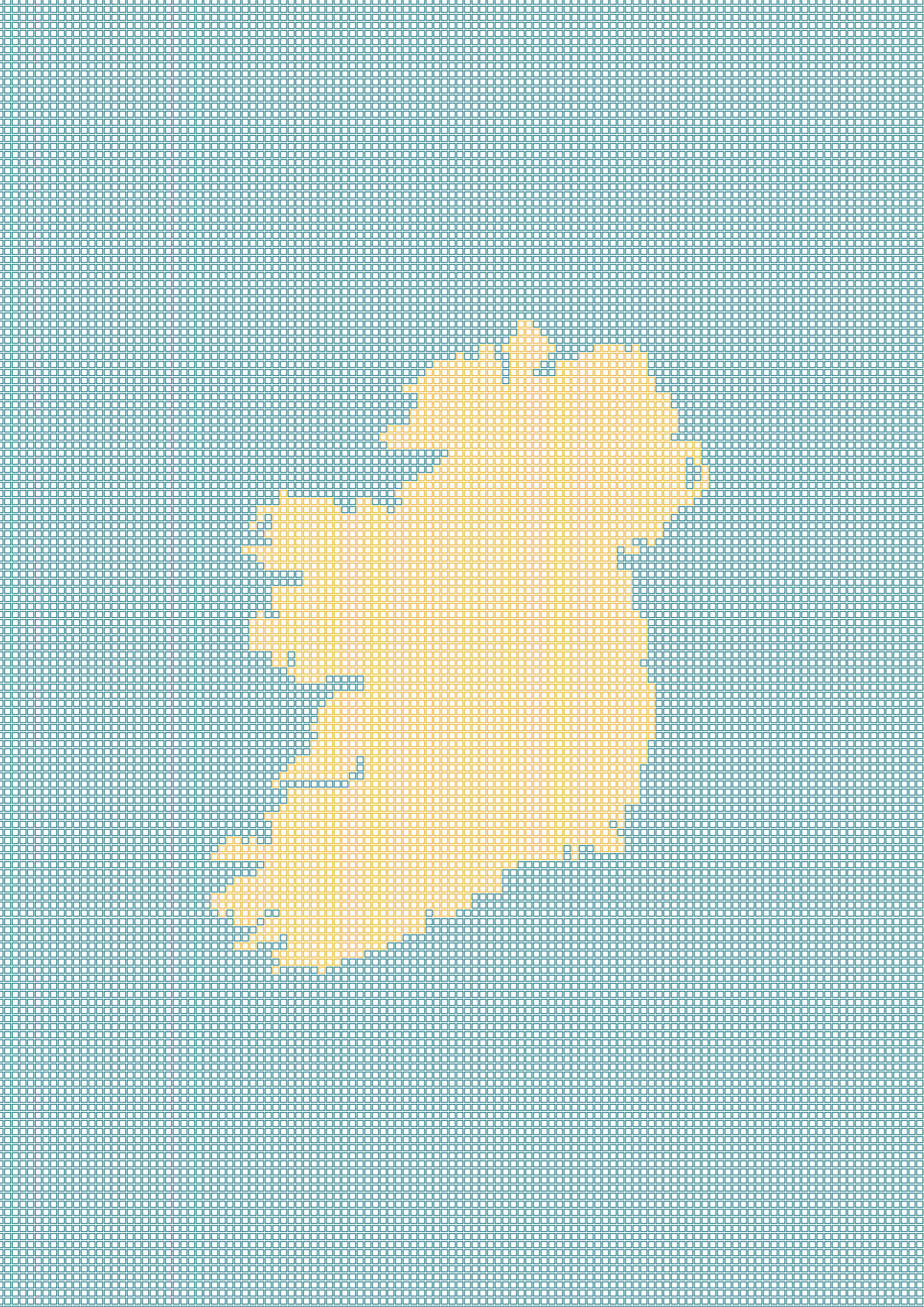
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About ICOS

Mission

Icos is an independent, non-profit network of educational institutions, civil society organisations and individuals interested in international education and working with government and other agencies to promote good policies and best practice in relation to the recruitment, access and support of international students in Irish education.

Vision

ICOS vision is that all international students who come to study in Ireland achieve their educational aims and are valued and treated equitably by the institutions that host them and by the wider society in which they live and work.

Values

ICOS values education as a fundamental human right and believes that international education contributes to global socio-economic development and intercultural understanding. ICOS, working in partnership with other actors including Government, particularly believes in working to achieve access to Irish education services for students from countries where opportunities for further education are least available.

Key aims

- Promoting the rights and entitlements of international students;
- Promoting best practice and professional standards in the quality of service offered to international students in Irish educational institutions;
- Promoting awareness of the role of international education in contributing to global understanding and human development.



A Message from the Chair

2005 was an important year for ICOS on many fronts and an interesting and challenging one from my perspective as Chair of the organisation. We started out the year with many unanswered questions: what would be the impact on ICOS of the structural changes in the sector recommended in the Interdepartmental Report on Internationalisation, how much progress could ICOS and Irish Aid make towards reaching an agreement on the management of the Fellowships Programme, who would replace Dr Wendy Cox, our long-serving Chief Executive who had retired in December, 04 and finally how best could ICOS serve its main stakeholders, international students and its members organisations looking to the future?

Happily over the course of a hard working 2005, ICOS has been able to find solutions to most of the aforementioned issues. The first step in the process was the appointment of a new Director, Sheila Power in March, '05. Sheila, working closely with the Executive Committee and staff of ICOS was able to undertake a review of ICOS' role such that at the end of the year ICOS has a clear strategy about what it wants to achieve over the next three years. The new strategy will see ICOS take a more proactive stand on policy issues affecting international students and also provide more tangible services for its members especially in the area of training. ICOS will also undertake activities to ensure that the voice of international students is heard and represented on issues which impact on their rights and welfare and to also to ensure that individual students can find support when needed.

There has also been a successful outcome to our negotiations with Irish Aid on the management of the Fellowship Training Programme (FTP) and I am pleased that we begin 2006 with a 2-year agreement in place. The outcomes of the Internationalization Report remain less certain and ICOS shares the frustration of many in the sector that there has been so little progress on the implementation of the recommendations in the report particularly with regard to the establishment of the new statutory body, Education Ireland, which is to be charged with, among other tasks, introducing a quality framework for the sector which is so badly needed to protect international students from exploitation. Most Irish institutions do an excellent job when it comes to providing quality services for international students. However, it takes only a handful of unscrupulous operators to damage the reputation of the sector as a whole.

At the end of 2005, I am happy to report that ICOS financial position is a healthy one. The accounts have been well managed and the organisation ends the year with a modest surplus. I take this opportunity to formally thank Irish Aid who are our main funders and who continue to show confidence in ICOS' capacity to provide effective management services in relation to the Fellowships Programme.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee for their commitment and support over the past twelve months and I would also like to express my appreciation to the hard working staff of ICOS both existing and new for their contribution to what has been a very productive year.

Marie Lawlor, Chair, Irish Council for International Students

Introduction

2005 was a year of change and review in ICOS as the organisation sought to clarify its role and set out its strategic priorities in relation to its key constituencies: international students, its member organisations and the Department of Foreign Affairs for which it administers aspects of the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme and from which it receives over 90% of its funding. This work was carried out against a backdrop of steadily increasing numbers of international students choosing Ireland as an education destination and expected structural changes in the sector signalled in the Government's Interdepartmental Report on the Internationalisation of Irish Education Services which was published at the end of 2004. There were also significant internal changes in ICOS during 2005 with my appointment as Director in March and two further permanent staff changes in July.

ICOS emerges from the year with a clear and shared vision among its members about what it wants to achieve and a consolidated relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs which is reflected in the first ever formal partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Irish Aid and ICOS which will run for two years from 1 January, 2006.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Chair of ICOS, Marie Lawlor and the other Executive Committee members in steering the organisation adroitly through the many changes and challenges it faced in 2005. Their work in turn was facilitated by a very hard working and dedicated staff who deserve considerable credit for maintaining a very high standard of service to international students and ICOS members while engaging creatively and actively in the review process.

We have set ourselves ambitious new targets for 2006 and the years ahead and we look forward to working with all who share our interest in making Ireland a welcoming and quality destination for international students.

Sheila Power, Director

Policy Issues

Internationalisation of Irish Education Services

ICOS continued in 2005 to maintain an active interest in developments related to the establishment of the proposed new statutory authority, Education Ireland which is to be charged with the responsibility of promoting Irish education services abroad as well as setting and maintaining quality standards for the sector. ICOS hosted a very well attended information session in February, 2005 in which Mr Paddy McDonagh, Assistant Secretary, Division for Social Inclusion and International & European Affairs, answered questions on aspects of the internationalisation report including the timeframe for its implementation. ICOS members were concerned about issues such as clustering of international students in particular disciplines and the lack of proper resourcing and training for staff in institutions to deal with internationalisation. ICOS members also used this forum to express some criticism regarding the Government's hasty introduction and lack of consultation with the sector on the new regulations on the working rights of international students which came into force in April, 2005.

At the end of 2005 was ICOS was disappointed that there was no progress in the implementation of the Internationalisation report and the organisation will continue to lend its support to educational institutions and other agencies which are lobbying the Government for the early establishment of a national statutory agency to address the issue of protection of learners and quality standards in the sector generally.



Mr Paddy McDonagh, Department of Education and Science with Marie Lawlor, Chair and Sheila Power, Director at ICOS Information Meeting on the Internationalisation Report. February, 2005.

White Paper on Development Cooperation

In 2005, ICOS consulted with members and made a submission on the organisation's behalf to the White Paper on Ireland's Overseas Development Aid (ODA) programme. Though not a development agency, ICOS is actively interested in capacity building and the international education component of Irish Aid and particularly in the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme for which it currently provides administrative services to the Department of Foreign Affairs. Among the points made in the ICOS submission were the need for greater engagement between the education sector and Irish Aid on the long term benefits and impact of the Fellowship Training Programme (FTP) and the need for coherence between Ireland's aid programme and the Government's broader Foreign Policy and Education objectives.

Immigration and Residence Bill

ICOS made a detailed submission on behalf of its members to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the "Government's Outline Proposals for an Immigration and Residence Bill". ICOS particular focus was on two areas which would affect international students, visa and pre-entry clearance and border controls on the one hand and the right to work on the other. In the case of visas, ICOS was anxious to see more efficient and more transparent procedures. ICOS also accepted the introduction of computerised data systems for security reasons but did not wish to see the cost of new systems being transferred to visa applicants many of whom were students. On the issue of the right to work, ICOS argued for family reunification rights for long-term students as well as working rights for spouses for long-term students and researchers. ICOS is also in favour of working rights for non-EEA graduates of Irish institutions in certain sectors.

ICOS also made separate representations to the Department of Justice Equality and Law reform seeking changes to restrictions on the working rights of shorter term study abroad and exchange students which it felt were affecting Ireland's competitiveness in this market.

Fellowship Programme Management



Mr Paddy McDonagh, Department of Education and Science with Marie Lawlor, Chair and Sheila Power, Director at ICOS Information Meeting on the Internationalisation Report. February, 2005.

Irish Aid Fellowships

ICOS' role

ICOS continues to provide a specialised Fellowship Management service to Irish Aid, the Development Cooperation Directorate in the Department of Foreign Affairs. This is a long-standing relationship and the Irish Aid Fellowship programme is still one of ICOS' core areas of activity. ICOS staff manage the administration of the programme and provide a range of support services to Study Fellows.

Services provided to the Fellowship Programme

- Financial and administrative services
- Coordination of placement of Fellows on academic programmes
- Pre-and post arrival information and briefings to Fellows
- Travel and logistics service
- Links with academic staff and host institutions
- Arrival briefings and orientation programmes including dedicated Orientation/ Fellowships Day and welcome party at start of academic year
- Accommodation arrangements
- Immigration assistance and advice
- Social and cultural events
- Support, advice and information to Study Fellows during the course of their fellowship.
- Monitoring academic progress and welfare of Fellows
- Reporting to DFA on fellowship matters



Mr Paddy McDonagh, Department of Education and Science with Marie Lawlor, Chair and Sheila Power, Director at ICOS Information Meeting on the Internationalisation Report. February, 2005.

Fellowship Awards

ICOS managed 88 fellowships (new and continuing Study Fellows) in the academic year 2004-5. As in previous years, the fellowship awards were overwhelmingly made to applicants from Irish Aid programme countries, namely Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda, Zambia and Vietnam. Fellowships were also given to students from Burundi, India, Palestine, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The majority of Fellows undertake postgraduate courses at third level institutions in Ireland in a wide range of disciplines from Agriculture and Rural Development to Health, Environmental Science, Education and Engineering. A small number of fellows are funded to take undergraduate courses in Biomedical Sciences at the Dublin Institute of Technology.

The success rate of Study Fellows on the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme is very high. This is attributable to the hard work and commitment of the Study Fellows themselves, the flexibility and support of the institutions which host them and the comprehensive range of services available from ICOS' professional staff.

In 2005, as in previous years, ICOS services achieved high ratings in Study Fellow evaluations and the organisation continues to seek ways to improve services even further.

Fellowship Funding

In 2005, total direct expenses on the fellowship programme amounted to nearly euro 1.5 million which was increase of 14.6% over the 2004 figure. This money is administered by ICOS on behalf of Irish Aid and covers all aspects of a typical fellowship – travel and insurance costs, monthly stipend, money for books, research and other special allowances.

2005	2004
€1,480,937	€1,292,470

IRISH AID direct expenses on the Fellowship Training programme administered by ICOS

Information, advice, support and training

ICOS continues to provide and update a largely web-based information service for international students which has links to third level colleges. In 2005, ICOS' website had an average of 17,000 hits per month and the office responded to 892 individual student enquiries. Most questions related to funding for study while the balance had largely to do with admission procedures and immigration issues. There is a wide geographical spread of enquiries with most funding enquiries coming from African countries and most admission enquiries coming from Pakistan and India. Accommodation was the most important issue for students from Europe.

From time to time, ICOS takes up individual student issues especially in cases where there has been an obvious injustice such as the failure of an institution to refund student fees where a visa has been refused. ICOS also operates a very small hardship fund for international students experiencing difficulty which can contribute to temporary relief in situations where long-term solutions have to be worked out. This fund was used on just one occasion in 2005.

ICOS information and training services for members were central to the organisational review carried out during the second half of 2005 and while it was not possible to deliver new courses or undertake new information initiatives in 2005, a great deal of effort went into internal capacity building in this area, the outputs of which will be evident in 2006.

External Relations

Most of ICOS funding in 2005, as in other years, came in the form of an administration grant from, Irish Aid, the Development Cooperation Directorate of the Department of Foreign Affairs for services provided in relation to the Fellowship Training Programme (FTP). It was a very important year in terms of the relationship between ICOS and Irish Aid in which there were several meetings and many exchanges of documents culminating in a formal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concluded in December 2005. This MOU outlines in some detail the respective responsibilities of Irish Aid and ICOS in relation to the management of the FTP for a 2-year period from 1 January, 2006 and involves considerably more devolved responsibility to ICOS especially from a financial management point of view. ICOS is very pleased with this new arrangement which has removed many of the uncertainties which existed in 2004 and which secures ICOS future for the next couple of years at least.

At international level, ICOS continues to maintain good contacts with both UKCOSA, the UK Council for International Education and EAIE, the European Association for International Education. ICOS was pleased to be represented at UKCOSA's annual conference in Coleraine in June, 05 and also delighted that Beatrice Merrick, Director of Services and Research at UKCOSA was able to be ICOS' guest speaker at its AGM. ICOS was not able to send a representative to EAIE's conference in Krakow in September but managed to attend a useful training event in Barcelona later in the year.

ICOS continues to network with Irish NGOs involved in international development through its membership of Dóchas. Dóchas is a very active organisation and very important in terms of keeping ICOS staff updated on development matters both from a European and Irish perspective.

ICOS continued throughout 2005 to maintain its strong links with the International Education Board Ireland (IEBI)/Education Ireland, sharing information and attending meetings where relevant. In May, the ICOS Director, Sheila Power was a contributor to Education Ireland's National Conference, "Internationalisation of Irish Education – a new vision, a new framework" where she facilitated a workshop on International Education: Social & Cultural Issues.

Other organisations to which ICOS lends its support and regularly liaises are the Africa Centre, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), Access Ireland Cultural Mediation Project and the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland (CSSI).



Mr Paddy McDonagh, Department of Education and Science with Marie Lawlor, Chair and Sheila Power, Director at ICOS Information Meeting on the Internationalisation Report. February, 2005.

Inside ICOS

Strategic Review

Under the direction and supervision of the Executive Committee, the Director carried out a comprehensive review of ICOS' role and its relationship with its key stakeholders. This involved focus group meetings and individual discussions with Executive Committee, staff and Council as well as a detailed members' questionnaire. The resulting ICOS Strategic Framework 2006-08 document outlines ICOS' priorities over the next three years.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of ICOS met 5 times during 2005 and the Chair, Marie Lawlor was called upon on many other occasions to support the Director particularly in the context of the negotiations with Irish Aid on the MOU and also in terms of ICOS' strategic review. The support of the Chair and all Committee members has been invaluable and much appreciated. All are busy in their own jobs but somehow managed to attend meetings, respond to phone calls and consider the many documents which were sent their way in the course of what was a very busy but productive year.

Staff

2005 was a year of two halves as far as staffing was concerned. The first 6 months saw many changes with the arrival of the new Director, Sheila Power in March followed by the appointment of Sue Heah, Office Administrator and Karen Mulchinock, Assistant Student Officer who both took up their positions in July. Meanwhile, Colin Tannam moved to the role of Programme Assistant. ICOS was sorry to lose Jennifer O'Brien in February. Jennifer had served the organisation very ably since her appointment as Assistant Student Officer in September, 2002. From July to December, ICOS enjoyed a stable staffing situation and benefited from having its full complement of seven staff in place.

Summary of Accounts

Income	2005	2004
Irish Aid Administration Grant	335,908	367,000
Membership Subscriptions	19,360	19,140
Interest Received	400	93
Amortisation of Capital Grants	3,809	3,555
Other Income	355	3,555
Total	359,832	393,343
Expenditure	2005	2004
Employment costs	271,331	298,798
Administration Expenses	82,211	87,824
Total	353,542	386,622
Surplus before Taxation	6,290	6,721

Balance sheet as at 31st December, 2005

	2005	2004
Fixed Assets		
□ Tangible assets	205,240	213,308
Current Assets		
□ Debtors	14,968	21,012
□ Cash at Bank and on Hand	115,148	79,388
Creditors		
□ Amounts falling due within one year	-135,000	-110,426
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	200,356	194,091
Creditors		
□ Amounts falling due after one year		-9,191
Net Assets	200,356	194,091
Capital & Reserves		
□ Revaluation Reserve	60,327	60,327
□ Income & Expenditure Account	140,029	133,764
	200,356	194,091

Approved by the Board : 27 April, 2006

Auditors BFC D

Chartered Accountants

1 Castlewood Ave, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Study Fellowships Administered by ICOS 2004-2005

IRISH AID FELLOWSHIPS – LONG TERM

COUNTRY	UCD	TCD	DCU	NUIG	UL	UCC	DIT	NUIM	UK*	Hosp.	Other	TOTAL
Burundi		1										1
D. R. Congo	1											1
Ethiopia	8	7	2	3		5			3			28
India	1											1
Lesotho	1											1
Mozambique	3											3
Palestine				1								1
Sierra Leone	1											1
Tanzania	7					1						8
Timor Leste	1	1									1**	3
Uganda	13	2										15
Vietnam	1											1
Zambia	13						11					24
TOTAL	50	11	2	4	0	6	11	0	3	0	1	88

* UK includes Study Fellows in N. Ireland (3 Study Fellows at University of Ulster at Coleraine).

** 1 Study Fellow at Athlone Institute of Technology

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IRELAND FELLOWSHIPS - SHORT TERM

There were no short-term fellowships administered by ICOS during this period.

OTHER FELLOWSHIPS/ SPECIAL CONTRACTS ETC

ICOS undertook no management of Fellowships for other sponsors or special service contracts this year.

Includes all Fellows in Ireland and the UK in the period from 1st October 2004 to 30 September 2005.

ICOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2005/2006

Chair

- Ms Marie Lawlor University College Dublin

Vice-Chair

- Ms Liza Kelly Dublin Business School

Hon Treasurer

- Professor Eamonn Gallagher (Resigned 30th June 2005)
- Mr. Philip Curtis (RCSI) (Appointed 30th June 2005)

Members

- Ms Ann Monahan National University of Ireland Galway
- Ms Christine Houlahan Irish School of Ecumenics
- Ms Mary Simpson Athlone Institute of Technology
- Dr Claire Bohan Dublin City University
- Rev. William McLaren Presbyterian Student Chaplaincy
- Ms. Marie E. Kennedy Dublin Institute of Technology (Appointed June 30th 2005)
- Ms. Suzanne Buckley University College of Cork (Appointed June 30th 2005)
- Ms Ann Campbell Dundalk Institute of Technology (Resigned 30th June 2005)

ICOS STAFF 2005/2006

- Sheila Power Director from March 2005
- Colin Tannam Office Administrator to April 2005
- Sue Heah Office Administrator from July 2005

Fellowships and Activities Section

- Louise Staunton Student Officer
- Jennifer O'Brien Assistant Student Officer to February 2005
- Karen Mulchinock Assistant Student Officer from July 2005
- Colin Tannam Programme Assistant from May 2005

Finance Section

- Lilian O'Dwyer Financial Administrator
- Deirdre Noyes Financial Assistant

Part time / temporary assistants

- Barbara Vasic

ICOS Council: Institutional Representatives and Individual Members October 1st 2005

President of Honour

- Dr. Patrick Hillery

Chair

- Ms Marie Lawlor University College Dublin

Vice-Chair

- Ms Liza Kelly Dublin Business School

Hon Treasurer

- Mr. Philip Curtis Royal College of Surgeons

Name of Representative	Position	Institution
Ms Kathleen Shehan	International Admissions Officer	American College Dublin
Ms Mary Simpson	International Officer	Athlone Institute of Technology
Mr Robert Griffiths	Head of EFL Department	Ballsbridge College of Further Education
Ms. Liza Kelly	Chinese Marketing Manager	DBS/LSB
Ms Helena Ahern	Head of Counseling Services	Dublin City University
Dr Claire Bohan	Dean of International Studies	Dublin City University
Ms Marie E. Kennedy	International Student Officer	Dublin Institute of Technology
Ms Ann Campbell	Senior Lecturer / International Officer	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Mr David Doyle	Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Mr Eoin O'Brien	Director	English Language Institute
Mr Leo O'Brien	Director of International Office	Griffith College Dublin
Ms Fiona Canning	International Officer	IT Blanchardstown
Mr Padraic Cuffe	Academic Administrator and Student Affairs Officer	IT Sligo
Ms Stella Browne	Administrative Officer	IT Tallaght
Mr Vincent Lennon	Head of Student Services	IT Tallaght
Mr Gerard O'Carroll	International Education Officer	IT Tralee
Ms Christine Houlahan	Executive Officer	Irish School of Ecumenics
Mr Mustafiz Gani	Youth Coordinator	Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland
Rev. Dr. John Stephens	Student Chaplain	Methodist Student Chaplaincy
Ms Cecily Grant	Admissions Officer	NCAD
Professor Conleth Cunnane	Department of Eng. Hydrology	NUI Galway
Ms Ann Monahan	Overseas Student Officer	NUI Galway
Ms Melanie Kilduff	International Officer	NUI Maynooth
Ms Brendan Gaine	Business Development Coordinator	Portobello College Dublin
Rev William McClaren	RCSI Student Chaplain Admissions and Student Services Officer	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Mr Philip Curtis		RCSI
Ms Corriena Brien	Student Services Advisor	RCSI
Mr Phillip J Smyth	Director	Shannon Coll. of Hotel Management

Name of Representative	Position	Institution
Ms Tara Ryan	Client Services Manager	Tipperary Institute
Ms Sarah Coyle	Acting Director of International Office	Trinity College Dublin
Prof David Dickson	Registrar	Trinity College Dublin
Mr Tom Lowth	Welfare Officer	Union of Students in Ireland
Mr Matt Murphy	Faculty of Food Science and Technology	University College Cork
Ms Suzanne Buckley	International Student Officer	University College Cork
Ms Marie Lawlor	Manager International Office	University College Dublin
Ms Carl Lusby	International Student Officer	University College Dublin
Mr Liam Ó Dochartaigh	Director, International Division	University of Limerick
Ms Josephine Page	Manager, International Division	University of Limerick
Ms Sinéad Cooke	International Affairs Manager	Waterford Institute of Technology

Individual Members

Ms Alice Grattan Esmonde

Professor Brian McMurry

Mr Don Niall

Professor Louis Smith

Mr John Magoye

Mr Oran O'Kennedy

Mr James Vale

Professor Eamonn Gallagher