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**INFLUENCING POLICY**

**PROMOTING ADULT EDUCATION**

**SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP**

**INFORMATION & RESEARCH**

**PROGRAMMES & PROJECTS**

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

## FOREWORD

Adult education has just come through one of the most significant periods of development in its history. The publication of the White Paper on Adult Education in 2000 set the scene for the development of a holistic Adult Education Service and earmarked specific resources for it. During the past three years under the direction of its second strategic plan, *Moving Forward*, AONTAS focussed its energies on the implementation of the recommendations of a number of government policy documents but specifically the White paper, *Learning for Life*. Much has been achieved in the external environment such as the implementation of the Back to Education Initiative, the development of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative, the recruitment of the Community Education Facilitators and increases in funding for the Adult Education Service generally. AONTAS has played a key role in lobbying for the implementation of these and other developments.

AONTAS has now come to the end of its last strategic plan and will be embarking on a new one in 2004. Already much of the groundwork for the development of the plan has been done during 2003. Over the past year AONTAS has made some significant achievements including the provision of a support and training programme for the Community Education Facilitators in collaboration with the VECs and the Department of Education and Science. We have listened to the concerns of our members through the organisation of regional meetings and we have brought these concerns to the attention of the Department of Education and Science and other Government departments and agencies. AONTAS has played an important representative role on a number of national fora including the Educational Disadvantage Committee, the National Adult Learning Council, the Steering Group of the Education Equality Initiative and the Steering Group of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative. It has also contributed its expertise to the Consultative Group set up by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

During 2002 AONTAS organised a successful pre-election campaign ensuring that adult education remained on the political agenda and that a Minister of State with responsibility for adult education was re-appointed. Since her appointment as Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, Ms. Síle DeValera has supported AONTAS events and has established a good working relationship with AONTAS.

As President of AONTAS over the past two years and as a member of the Executive Committee and Officer Board for nine years I have seen AONTAS move from strength to strength, taking its place at the decision and policy making tables and continuing to strive for an integrated and holistic Adult Education Service. I have declared my intention of running again for President in 2004 and, if elected, I am committed to ensuring that the next phase of our work not only consolidates the gains made but also ensures the continued development and expansion of the Adult Education Service.

I have been fortunate during my current period of office to have had the privilege of working with a very committed Executive Committee and an energetic and effective staff team. Their work in influencing policy and lobbying for the development of the Adult Education Service has been a key driver of the implementation of the recommendations of the White Paper on Adult Education. Next year the local and European elections will afford AONTAS another opportunity to highlight the important role adult education plays in the social, economic and civil development of the State. I look forward to leading AONTAS to take up that challenge. In conclusion I would like to thank my colleagues on both the staff and Executive Committee for their work and support during 2003 and to also thank the staff of the Further Education Section of the Department of Education for their continued commitment and support.

John Ryan, President

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## OVERVIEW

At the end of 2003 AONTAS completed the final year of its strategic plan, *Moving Forward* which was adopted by the AONTAS membership at its Annual General meeting in 2001. The plan focussed on the implementation of the recommendations of the White paper on Adult Education, *Learning for life* which was launched in August 2000. By the end of 2003 many of the recommendations had been implemented thus making a reality some of the key developments which had been the focus of an AONTAS lobby over a period of years. In particular the implementation of the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) including a specific strand for community education, saw the largest injection of financial resources into the Adult Education Service outside of the Adult Literacy and Community Education Budget (ALCES).

The recruitment of the Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) by each VEC was seen as of particular significance by AONTAS since the call for community resource workers was a key demand in its response to the Green Paper, *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning* in 1998. During 2003 AONTAS was given the role of developing and delivering a training and support programme for the CEFs in collaboration with the VECs and the Department of Education and Science. A Steering Group comprising representatives from the Department of Education and Science (DES), Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), Adult Education Organiser's Association (AEOA), AONTAS and Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM) was set up to recruit a National Co-ordinator for the support programme and to advise and guide its progress. The National Co-ordinator, Ms. Maureen Kavanagh was recruited in April and the first training schedule was delivered in July. A second schedule of training was delivered in November. The programme is reported on in more detail in the body of this report. The partnership model adopted by the Steering Group has been a key element in the success of the start-up of the programme and has facilitated the development of a vital working relationship between AONTAS and the VECs in particular.

2003 saw a change in personnel in the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science with the departure of Margaret Kelly, Principal Officer and the arrival of Pauline Gildea to take up the position in the Section. It is true to say that everyone in the Adult Education sector was familiar with the work Margaret contributed to its development and with her deep commitment to adult education and lifelong learning. AONTAS would like to formally acknowledge her work and to wish her well in her new post. During 2003 AONTAS has established a good working relationship with Pauline Gildea who also brings a strong commitment to the development of the Adult Education Service and

fresh approaches to the work. AONTAS looks forward to a continued sound working relationship with the Department through Pauline and her colleagues.

During 2003 AONTAS continued its work in influencing and shaping policy developments through its contact with key agencies, representation at a national level, publication of discussion and policy papers and research. In particular AONTAS published a document entitled **Childcare and Adult Education** in response to the importance of this issue which is continually highlighted at regional meetings as well as by the BTEI and the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative(AEGI). While substantial funding has been allocated by the Government for childcare provision through the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, access to affordable childcare still remains an issue for adult learners. The main concern is the lack of integration of childcare into education and training programmes. Later in the year the VEC providers experienced problems with their funding for childcare and programmes were also badly affected by the changes made in the Community Employment Schemes. AONTAS brought these issues to the attention of the Government departments responsible in support of its members. While the VEC childcare issue was resolved at the end of the year, nonetheless the experience illustrated the vulnerability of the service and the need for specific inter-departmental policy decisions in relation to the integration of childcare into education and training programmes. This is one of the issues highlighted in a paper on adult and community education currently being prepared for the Minister of Education and Science by the Educational Disadvantage Committee. The Director of AONTAS serves on this committee and has taken a lead role in the development of the paper, and in bringing the issues of concern to the Adult and Community Education sector to the attention of the Committee. It is expected that this paper will be presented to the Minister in early 2004. The issue of integrated childcare was also identified as a key support needed by adult learners in the research report, **Gender and Learning** which was launched in March by Minister DeValera.

One of the major developments of 2003 was the launch of the new National Qualifications Framework in October. AONTAS had already contributed to the discussions and debates which preceded the launch of the Framework through its involvement in the Consultative Group established by the NQAI in 2002. The Framework is set to facilitate access, transfer and progression across formal and non-formal education and training, and as it becomes embedded will provide opportunities for adult learners to gain qualifications through both routes. Coupled with the development of the Framework, work is being carried out by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) in the development of quality assurance and AONTAS became involved in the pilot programme by supporting a number of member groups to experiment with using the FETAC quality assurance template. AONTAS has also initiated a research project which is designed to develop a quality assurance framework for women's community education. The preliminary work of the project was completed by the end of the year and the second phase which will involve case studies will be carried out between January and September 2004.

At its AGM in May the AONTAS membership was addressed by Dr. Janos Toth, President of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) of which AONTAS is an active member. Dr. Toth is also president of the Hungarian Association of Folkschools and is interested in developing partnerships with Irish adult education providers particularly now

that Hungary is about to join the European Union. AONTAS was invited to send a delegation to Hungary during its adult education week at the end of September and to make a presentation to the General Assembly of the Folkschools. AONTAS invited Mr. Fred Goulding, President of the AEOA and Ms. Helen Ryan of NALA to accompany the Director and President on the exchange visit. During the visit the AONTAS delegation learned about adult education in Hungary and explored some possibilities for future co-operation. The delegation also presented an overview of the work of the Irish Adult Education Service which was received with great interest.

During May and June AONTAS organised six regional meetings which were designed to give members an opportunity to reflect on the work of the past three years and to contribute their ideas and issues to the formation of the next strategic plan. The first meeting was held in Clare and was opened by Minister of State, Ms. Síle DeValera who gave an encouraging address to the local audience. As usual these meetings proved to be extremely informative and offered a huge opportunity to hear the concerns of the local adult education providers, tutors and learners. The issues raised at the meetings were documented, included in a draft plan for 2004-2006 and presented for discussion to members at a general meeting in October. Consultations and discussions were also held with the Executive Committee, the staff team and other key agencies in the sector. The finalised plan will be presented to members at the AGM in 2004.

The Autumn General Meeting also saw the launch of the *Adult Learner* in its eighteenth year of production. The 2003 edition took as its theme and title, *Community Education* and was launched by Dr. Liam Bane, AEO who has chaired the editorial board during that time and who has played a key role in ensuring that the journal was produced each year. Liam stepped down from the editorial board, vacating his place to Eileen Curtis, AEO, Kilkenny. AONTAS acknowledged the tremendous work done by Liam over the past eighteen years and pledged its commitment to continue to support the AEOA in its production of the *Adult Learner* which is the only journal of adult and community education produced in Ireland. The journal was widely disseminated by AONTAS to colleagues at home and abroad.

Throughout the year AONTAS continued to represent the interests of adult learners at a number of national fora including the National Adult Learning Council (NALC), the Educational Disadvantage Committee, the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) Steering Group and the Education Equality Initiative (EEI) Steering Group. The Director also serves on the Governing Authority of University College Dublin which, in 2003, saw the retirement of Dr. Art Cosgrave as President and the appointment of Dr. Hugh Brady to this position. Members of the AONTAS staff team and Executive Committee also represented AONTAS at consultative groups, conferences and seminars. A major disappointment during 2003 was the lack of progress on the signing of the establishment order for the National Adult Learning Council. This curtailed the work of the Council and led to fears that it might not be established by statute at all. However the Department of Education and Science began a review of its functions during 2003 and AONTAS was assured by Minister Dempsey at his announcement of the Budget Estimates in December that the Council would be supported. He also announced that the adult education budget would remain the same for 2004 with a 3% increase for inflation. This came as somewhat of a relief given the context of a downturn in the economy. AONTAS however is concerned that the budgets for adult education should not just be maintained but substantially increased.

AONTAS also met during the year with other key agencies in the sector, including the IVEA, the AEQA and NALA among others. One of the main focuses of discussion at these meetings was the development of structures for the Adult and Community Education sector. AONTAS has prepared a discussion paper which is currently being examined by a number of key organisations and hopes to progress this work during the period of the next strategic plan.

By December 2003 AONTAS had completed the work of the STANCE Project (Strategies to Advance Networks' Collective Empowerment) with the Women's Community-based Networks. This project was jointly funded over a period of three years by the DES and the then DSFCA. A final conference has been planned for February 2004 and a final report of the project will also be available then. The key success of the project has been the establishment of the NCCWN (National Collective for Community-based Women's Networks) which AONTAS will continue to support into the early part of 2004. AONTAS also completed its partnership in a Grundtvig Project, entitled *Gender Genuine Education* with a closing conference in Germany in October.

A major task undertaken by AONTAS during the year was the sourcing of new premises and the organisation of the move from Earlsfort Terrace to Ranelagh. This was completed by the beginning of September and an official opening of the new premises took place on October 14th. For the first time in its history AONTAS has acquired custom designed premises with a secure long lease. This has already made a huge difference to the environment within which the staff team works. AONTAS continued to develop itself as a learning organisation, paying attention to the strengthening of the staff team and the Executive Committee in order to ensure the best use of experience and expertise. It is hoped that the securing of our technical, financial and human resources will allow us to consolidate the gains made during the past three years and move up a gear in the development of the Adult Education Service. I would like to thank my colleagues on the staff team and the Executive and Officer Board for their work and support during the year and I look forward to taking up the challenges presented by the next three years.

Berni Brady, Director

**INFLUENCING POLICY**

**PROMOTING ADULT EDUCATION**

## INFLUENCING POLICY AND PROMOTING ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A key objective of the work of AONTAS is to influence policy development in the area of adult and community education and to promote its important role in making lifelong learning a reality. It does this in a variety of ways but in particular through its representational work and through the development of policy papers and discussion fora.

### REPRESENTATION

#### Educational Disadvantage Committee

The Educational Disadvantage Committee established in March 2002 continued its work through 2003 meeting on ten occasions. The Committee discussed potential ways to better coordinate all the initiatives currently in place to tackle educational disadvantage within the school system. Two papers were submitted to the Minister in March 2003, one entitled *Identifying Disadvantage for the Purpose of Targeting Resources and Other Supports* and the other on *Teaching Supply and Staffing in Disadvantaged Settings*. AONTAS Director Berni Brady is a member of the Committee and during 2003 developed a paper on behalf of the Committee, outlining the role of adult and community education in tackling disadvantage. The paper has identified a number of key actions based on the recommendations of the White Paper on Adult Education that are needed to progress the development of the Adult Education Service. The paper is being discussed by the Committee and feedback incorporated into it. It will be submitted to the Minister for Education and Science early in 2004 following a planned focus group with adult learners.

#### National Adult Learning Council

The National Adult Learning Council (NALC) met on just three occasions during 2003. Director Berni Brady represents AONTAS on the NALC, which is made up of twenty five members from across the adult education and training fields. NALC, which was established in 2002, published its first Annual Report in 2003, providing an outline of its work to date. This has included agreeing a mission statement and priorities for the Council, agreeing its operational procedures and evaluating the *Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning*.

Throughout 2003 AONTAS continued to express its concern that the ministerial order which would give NALC a statutory role has still not been completed. This has hampered the progress of the NALC and its work, as staff cannot be recruited, technical units cannot be established and priority areas of work cannot be tackled. AONTAS in its annual pre-budget submission urged that NALC be signed into statute as a key priority. AONTAS made representations to the Chairperson of NALC and to the Ministers at the Department of Education and Science to urge them to progress its establishment. A review of the functions of the Council was initiated towards the end of 2003 and it is hoped that progress will be made during 2004 when the review is due for completion.

## Education Equality Initiative

The Education Equality Initiative (EEI) is funded by the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science through the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006. This initiative is divided into two phases, the first of which ran 2000-2003. Phase One aimed to address educational disadvantage among adults in Ireland through the funding of eighteen pilot projects over this period of time.

Of the eighteen projects funded, five were two year projects and thirteen were three year projects.

The projects addressed the educational disadvantage experienced by the following groups:

- Adults in treatment programmes for addictions
- Adults who wish to develop basic competencies
- Adults with learning difficulties including dyslexia
- Adults with mild learning disability;
- Community-based learners who wish to access higher education
- Lesbian and gay adults who wish to continue their learning
- Traveller men
- Isolated rural communities wishing to engage in education
- Traveller women
- Women who have experienced violence
- Women who wish to participate in second-chance education.

Drury Research was commissioned by the Department of Education and Science to evaluate Phase One with a view to informing Phase Two the EEI. The second Phase is due to commence in 2004 and will run until 2006. The evaluation highlighted a number of issues which were identified as follows:-

- The value of pre-development work
- The need to build confidence before addressing the educational needs of target groups
- Sensitivity to needs of the target group
- The need for more specialised tutors in community education
- Practical supports including:
  - Outreach services
  - Counselling
  - Childcare facilities
  - Guidance and progression
  - Transport

The evaluation highlighted the need for a partnership approach to the delivery of community education which would ensure that all the services and supports needed are in place. Research in the area of educational disadvantage has shown it to be the result of multiple social, economic and educational factors and this evaluation suggests a multidisciplinary approach involving collaborative links between a broad range of voluntary, community and statutory agencies as a way forward to address the issue at local, regional and national level.

## Adult Education Guidance Initiative

The Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) which was established in 2000 is funded by the Department of Education and Science under the auspices of the National Development Plan 2000-2006. Currently it consists of twenty five pilot projects throughout the country which aim to provide a quality educational guidance service for adults. The Initiative is in its third phase of development and an evaluation is underway. Early results from the evaluation show that adult learners are still experiencing difficulty with the same barriers to access identified by the AONTAS membership namely childcare, finance and transport. A fourth phase of the Initiative has not been sanctioned as yet.

## National Framework of Qualifications Consultative Group

There were major developments in the field of accreditation during 2003 and AONTAS engaged with many aspects of this work. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) launched the new National Framework of Qualifications at the end of October. The launch itself was a landmark event in Irish education, and AONTAS staff and member groups attended the launch conference at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham to mark the occasion and participate in discussion.

Work is continuing within the NQAI to put in place the policies and procedures that will support the Framework when it becomes fully operational. AONTAS staff participated throughout 2003 in the Consultative Group to the NQAI, which helps to shape and inform policy and planning. Director Berni Brady and Policy Analyst Finola McDonnell represent AONTAS in this work. Staff also participated in other NQAI events held during 2003, including a seminars on the inclusion of international and professional awards in the Qualifications Framework.

## POLICY AND DISCUSSION PAPERS

### Local Structures in Adult Education

AONTAS continued to highlight the absence of consistent local coordination in adult education during 2003. In particular it was concerned about the delay in establishing Local Adult Learning Boards as recommended in the White Paper 2000. AONTAS will lobby for the establishment of the Boards within the VEC sector as a matter of urgency. Policy Analyst Finola McDonnell developed a paper examining the possible connections between Local Adult Learning Boards and County Development Boards, as part of the process of identifying a model of local coordination. This was then discussed by the AONTAS Executive Committee, and with representatives from the IVEA, ADM and City and County Development Boards. AONTAS plans to continue this discussion through 2004, as the Local Elections in June will create a focus on local representation.

## Childcare and Adult Education

At the AGM in May, AONTAS launched a policy discussion paper entitled *Childcare and Adult Education* which examined the childcare options for participants in adult education. A particular focus of the document was on the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, which is increasingly being promoted to adult education providers as a means of meeting their childcare needs. However, as the document highlights, this Programme is largely targeted at building crèche premises and providing staffing grants. It does not provide the flexibility needed in adult education, and provides no funds for childcare allowances.

As a follow up to the publication of the document, two members of AONTAS staff, Maureen Kavanagh and Finola McDonnell met with a representative of the Childcare Directorate at the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform in September. A number of issues in relation to childcare provision were clarified at this meeting, and ways forward proposed. AONTAS will follow up on these discussions during 2004.

## Community Education Policy Document

During 2003, the AONTAS Community Education policy document was updated, with a view to publication in early 2004. It will be a good source of information for people who are interested in understanding community education but who have little experience of the sector. It also highlights some of the upcoming challenges for those working in the sector itself. In updating the original edition, which was published in 2000 this document reflects the very changed policy environment in which community education is now operating, and looks at what the sector has achieved in recent years. It also sets out to define community education, by naming its core dimensions and describing its role in the wider education system.

## SUBMISSIONS

### Pre-Budget Submission

In developing its annual pre-budget submission in autumn, AONTAS recognised that to press for implementation of all outstanding aspects of the White Paper *Learning for Life* was not practical. Four main policy priorities were therefore identified for the coming year, and formed the basis of the submission. The four are:

- Permanent establishment of the National Adult Learning Council (NALC)
- Establishment of a distinct budget line for community education
- Provision of adequate childcare for adult learners
- Expansion of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative.

The announcement in November of the pre-budget education estimates by Minister for Education and Science, Noel Dempsey, and the subsequent confirmation of these figures in the budget reassured AONTAS that current funding levels are at least to be maintained. Funding for the NALC was confirmed at the same level for 2004 as 2003, while grant-in-aid for adult education organisations received a 3% increase. AONTAS welcomed these continued supports in its media statements at the time. However, AONTAS also expressed disappointment that no significant increases in funding were awarded to the Adult Education sector and will therefore continue to press for increased funds in 2004.

### NAPIncl 2003-2005

In May, AONTAS made a submission to the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPIncl) 2003-2005. Each EU member state is required to submit this action plan to the EU Commission every two years. Ireland's plan complements the existing National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Partnership Agreement *Sustaining Progress*. The AONTAS submission, which can be accessed through the website, made a number of recommendations on using adult education as a tool to tackle social exclusion. AONTAS staff also attended a consultation on the NAPIncl held in April.

***SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP***

***INFORMATION & RESEARCH***

## SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

AONTAS is first and foremost a membership organisation and it endeavors to support its members through consultation, networking, providing information and undertaking research.

## AONTAS MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

During 2003 AONTAS continued to support and represent its members and consulted with them on the framing of the next strategic plan through its general and regional meetings.

### Consultation and Networking

The thirty-third Annual General Meeting of AONTAS was held in May. AONTAS President John Ryan chaired the meeting and welcomed Dr. Janós Sz. Toth, President of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) who spoke on the theme *Developing Civil Society*. Dr. Toth congratulated AONTAS on its role in bringing about a number of significant developments in Irish adult education. The successes of AONTAS, he felt, could be linked to its implementation of a number of clear strategic plans. Dr. Toth emphasised the similarities between the achievements of AONTAS and the activities of the EAEA. He commented that both were working to promote a learning society through social inclusion, increasing professionalisation and establishing standards of good practice within the sector and developing recognition for non-formal learning. He said that as representatives of civic organisations we had to endeavour to empower citizens, especially in the light of European enlargement. He concluded by stating that our common objective was to mobilise people to learn and to this end, he wished AONTAS success and a close and fruitful cooperation.

Brid Connolly, AONTAS Hon. Secretary formally launched *Childcare and Adult Education* an AONTAS policy discussion document on the childcare options for participants in adult education, with a particular focus on the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme. This discussion document was later disseminated to all AONTAS members and relevant agencies. It was also made available on the AONTAS website.

During May and June AONTAS held its annual series of regional meetings to consult members with a view to establishing priorities and to clarify the key themes on which the organisation should base its work and direction over the next three years. The first regional meeting held in Ennis was opened by Minister of State Síle DeValera and was also addressed by Ms Padraigin Uí Riordáin, C.E.O. of Co. Clare VEC. The subsequent regional meetings were held in Tralee, Cavan, Donegal, Carlow and Dublin where the local CEO of each VEC was invited to open the meeting. AONTAS Director, Berni Brady gave an update on developments within the Adult and Community Education sector. Maureen Kavanagh, AONTAS Project Manager facilitated a workshop designed to maximise input by members to the strategic planning process. The outcomes of these meetings were recorded and included in the draft strategic plan which was presented to the membership at a General Meeting in October for further feedback and discussion.

Also at the General Meeting in October the *Adult Learner* 2003 with the theme *Community Education* was officially launched by Liam Bane, AEO, Co. Dublin VEC and chair of the editorial board. Liam stepped down from his position as chair of the board after eighteen years of voluntary involvement. In a lively and engaging presentation Dr. Bane spoke of the history of the *Adult Learner* in particular the first edition in 1985, which had included an article on community education. Comparing the 1985 and the 2003 edition Liam drew attention to the development and presentation of the journal and thanked AONTAS for its support in financing the publication for the past nine years. He then gave an overview of the current edition of the journal and extended his thanks to contributors both past and present.

AONTAS Director, Berni Brady presented a draft of the next AONTAS strategic plan 2004-2006 which was based on consultation with membership, staff, Executive Committee and key agencies in the sector. At this meeting a brief questionnaire was also completed by those in attendance on the impact of the adjustments in the VEC childcare budget and the cuts in the Community Employment Scheme had on their adult education centres.

## AONTAS Membership

As of 31st December 2003 the AONTAS membership totalled five hundred and nine members (for a full listing see Membership List). This represents an overall increase of 7.2% in membership on the 2002 figure. The most significant increase was in the number of individual members whose number increased by 18.5% during the twelve-month period.



During the past year AONTAS quarterly membership mailouts included a variety of material to inform members of internal and external developments within the Adult and Community Education sector. Following each mailout the AONTAS newsheet, publications and events were included on the AONTAS website [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com) to enable members and others interested in adult education to access them directly. The Membership Officer maintains a full listing of AONTAS members' contact details and posts members' events on the site. The AONTAS directory of members which is sent annually to all corporate members and other agencies on request is an invaluable resource for networking purposes.

In September a questionnaire was sent to all AONTAS members and Executive Committee to elicit their views on a wide range of membership services with a view to identifying strategies to support their various needs. To date ninety six (18.7%) completed questionnaires have been returned and these will form the basis for a report on membership services for the incoming Executive Committee.

## Tracking Report

In 2003 a report was compiled by the Membership Officer based on a tracking survey of the AONTAS/NCIR/NOW Access Course participants (1996-1997). AONTAS was interested in finding out how involvement in the course had made an impact on the career progression of the eighteen participants in the five years since the project finished. Fourteen participants responded to the questionnaire and of these eight had continued with their education. Seven had received a recognised qualification and, if successful in her remaining examinations the remaining respondent will receive a B.A. in Psychology and Archaeology in 2004. The range of institutions attended by participants was varied but the factors which impeded their studies were issues frequently highlighted by AONTAS. Funding was the greatest barrier followed by transport and child/eldercare. Of the six who did not continue with their education two were unable due to family commitments and of these one did eventually return to the workforce on a part-time basis. The other worked in a voluntary capacity with her local education group. A further two returned to paid employment and another chose to seek paid employment. One respondent who envisaged returning to college was unable to do so due to the distance of her chosen college. The report was disseminated to respondents and to a cross section of the AONTAS membership.

## Hosting International Colleagues

In May 2003 sixteen Canadian adult educators representing a cross-section of organisations, institutions and associations with a particular focus on the needs of the English-speaking population visited Ireland. One of their goals was to create a network that would allow for an ongoing exchange of ideas with colleagues in Europe and to facilitate this process AONTAS organised a series of inputs from NALA, FAS, NQAI and the Department of Education and Science. AONTAS Director, Berni Brady provided an input on adult and community education in Ireland. Each input was followed by an information exchange session where issues and challenges of common interest to Irish and Canadian adult educators were discussed.

## THE AONTAS INFORMATION SERVICE

In May 2003 Frances Killeen was appointed Information Officer to AONTAS. Based on the results of an information audit conducted in 2002 to elicit the information needs of AONTAS staff, members and the Executive Committee, the Information Officer designed an information strategy for the organisation. As part of this strategy a number of actions have been implemented to update the Information Service, while several pre-existing services continue to be maintained.

The AONTAS internal library continues to be developed to suit the information needs of the staff team and the Executive Committee. A detailed weekly internal newsbulletin is circulated to staff members to keep them informed of recent newspaper reports, publications and other general information. In response to topical issues factsheets continue to be developed and AONTAS now has an up-to-date factsheet on *Distance Learning* and *Repeating the Leaving Certificate*. The AONTAS *Funding Document* was also updated during 2003.

The Information Officer has met with other Information Officers from relevant statutory, voluntary and community organisations. The aim of these meetings is to enhance working relationships with other organisations and to facilitate the exchange of information.

The AONTAS website, which is maintained by the Information Officer, continues to be an invaluable information source for AONTAS members and others with an interest in adult education and lifelong learning. The average number of hits on the website throughout 2003 was 41,000 per month. The busiest months for the website were January, October and November. Statistics reveal that the most frequently visited pages on the AONTAS website were the *Publications and Links* section and the *News and Events* section. Within the *Publication and Links* section visitors can download many of the AONTAS publications and gain access to many other websites related to adult and community education. The *News and Events* section keeps visitors up-to-date with developments in adult education and informs them of relevant events which may be coming up.

AONTAS through the Information Service participated in a number of public events such as the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis and the IFA's *Driving the Agenda for Women in Agriculture* conference. The Information Officer and the Membership Officer prepared and delivered talks on educational opportunities in Ireland on a number of occasions in St. John of God's hospital in Stillorgan.

Support to the STANCE project and the Community Education Facilitators Training and Support Programme was also provided by the Information Officer. The information needs for these projects included training opportunities, funding sources, useful publications and recent developments affecting community groups and women's groups.

In November 2003 the Information Officer formed part of an AONTAS delegation attending the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) General Assembly. The purpose of the EAEA is to link and represent European organisations which are involved in adult learning. The focus of the General Assembly conference was on learning and active citizenship. Throughout the event the history of the EAEA was highlighted by an exhibition and a panel of speakers. This year's assembly also saw the presentation of the first Grundtvig Award in Adult Education in recognition and celebration of excellence in adult education. The winner of this award was a project entitled *Women in Europe Learning Together*, designed to provide women returners with tools and strategies to overcome barriers to employment and learning.

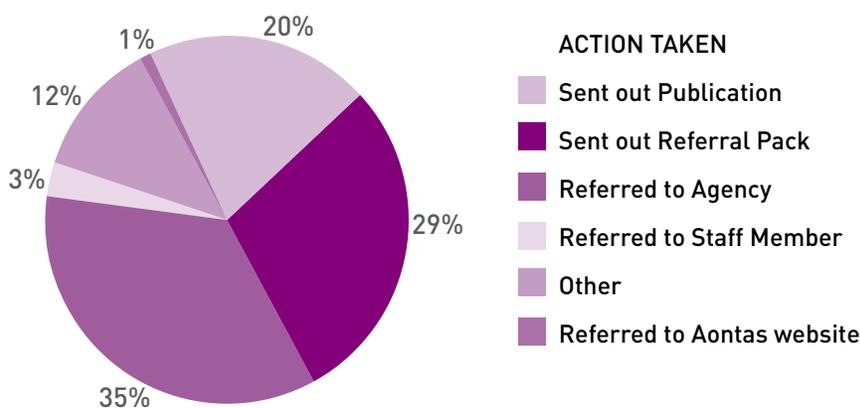
## Information Referral Service

During the period June –December 2003 the AONTAS Information Referral Service dealt with 478 queries. The figures for the year were approximately 1800. These figures are down on last year's figures but a significant increase in the average monthly website hits for 2003 would suggest that more people are now using the AONTAS website as a means of accessing information, rather than contacting AONTAS directly. Feedback on the Information Referral Service is generally very positive. August and September were the busiest periods for the service. These times are traditionally a very busy time as providers and learners gear up for the coming adult education year.

Seventy eight per cent (78%) of all queries received since June 2003 were received by telephone. Sixteen per cent (16%) of queries were received by email and the remainder of queries were either relayed through the post or by individuals personally calling to AONTAS. The majority of those contacting AONTAS had heard about the organisation's Information Referral Service from other agencies and NGOs, while other sources such as the phone book, the Internet and word-of-mouth resulted in a large number of referrals.

Almost three quarters of the queries received by the Service were from females either enquiring on their own behalf, for their partners or mothers making enquiries on behalf of their sons or daughters. Organisations and groups such as Citizen Information Centres, Guidance Services, and third level institutions also contacted the Information Referral Service on a regular basis. Thirty eight per cent (38%) of queries handled by the Information Referral Service were from individuals / groups seeking publications, while a further 30% of queries were from individuals seeking information on how to go about accessing courses. Seventeen per cent (17%) of queries received were related to funding both for groups and for individuals wishing to pursue a course of study. The remaining queries were broad and varied. Examples include how to go about participating in distance learning, repeating the Leaving Certificate, studying in Ireland etc.

In response to queries, publications were sent out as requested. Thirty five per cent (35%) of those who contacted the AONTAS information referral service were referred on to AEOs, VECs, other support agencies, third level institutions and Government departments. The Information Referral Pack continues to be in great demand. The pack is continuously updated and amended to include the most up-to-date information available.



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Gender and Learning

**Gender and Learning**, a study of the learning styles of men and women and the implications for the development of educational opportunities, was launched in March 2003. The research which was carried out by Shannon Curriculum Development Centre, was commissioned by AONTAS on behalf of the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science.

An event was held at Buswell's Hotel in March, where the report was officially launched by Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, Ms. Síle deValera. The Minister highlighted a number of key findings of the research in her presentation, including the fact that men were found to be more highly motivated by vocational or practical courses, whereas women enjoyed more exploratory learning approaches. Overall it was found that once men and women had taken up a learning opportunity, their needs were strikingly similar. The report was circulated to a wide range of agencies and organisations, including members, Government departments and education and training bodies. AONTAS would like to see the recommendations of the report implemented in the context of the expanding provision of adult and community education opportunities.

### Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education

Work began in AONTAS in 2003 on developing a Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education. This Framework could in future be adopted and used by other adult education providers to measure the quality and impact of their work. Eleanor McClorey has been contracted as researcher to carry out this project, which will take a case study approach to developing a Framework. A Research Steering Group has been set up to guide the project and support the researcher in her work.

At the end of 2003 the project is well underway, with a literature review completed, a project timetable established and an initial seminar with representatives of the Women's Community Education Networks having taken place in November. Work will proceed on the next stages of the research in 2004.

### Cross-Border Research Project

Policy Analyst Finola McDonnell has been a member of the Advisory Group to a research project being conducted jointly by the Community Work Education and Training Network (CWETN) in Northern Ireland, and the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA). The study entitled ***Education and Training to Strengthen Community Development as an Anti-Poverty Strategy*** started in summer 2003. This is a small research project and will be completed in spring 2004. Hilary Tierney has been contracted to carry out the research, which so far has mapped the context and trends in community development and education / training on both sides of the border. The project will culminate in a report being published and recommendations being made. Possible mechanisms for sharing good practice, setting standards in the sector and ensuring that the principles of community development are recognised on an all-island basis will be identified.

## Back to Education Initiative/Community Strand

AONTAS took an instrumental role in lobbying for the implementation of the Back to Education Initiative and welcomed its implementation in 2002. Many of the AONTAS member groups from both the statutory and voluntary sectors were successful in accessing the B.T.E.I. Phase One funding. Phase Two of B.T.E.I. will be released in early 2004, thus AONTAS deemed it important to assess the experience of implementing the B.T.E.I. particularly among the community groups who are AONTAS members, with a view to informing the next phase. Because AONTAS provides the training and support programme to the Community Education Facilitators it was also in a position to gain feedback from them on the B.T.E.I. and their analysis of its impact within the community.

All projects have found participation in the B.T.E.I. to be a hugely positive experience but a number of issues were identified which need to be addressed.

- A central issue emerging from the research was the lack of support available to projects to implement the B.T.E.I. and its reporting requirements. AONTAS recommends that a support structure be established to work with B.T.E.I. projects. In addition the Community Education Facilitators could offer further support at local level for providers. Their role must be clarified in relation to the second phase.
- More regional information sessions carried out by the Further Education Unit with community education providers to create awareness, to clarify the application process and supports available.
- Successful projects need to be brought together regionally and nationally at regular intervals for networking, training, sharing ideas and information and identifying emerging policy issues.
- The budget draw-down process needs to be streamlined. AONTAS recommends that projects be allocated their funding in quarterly timeframes, provided all report requirements / returns are fulfilled by projects.
- AONTAS recommends that 15% of budget allocation is earmarked for outreach work to projects to be used at pre- entry to programmes and to maintain support for participants once engaged within a B.T.E.I. project.
- AONTAS recommends that the B.T.E.I. includes integrated child/elder care and transport supports as a right to participants.

These recommendations formed the basis of the analysis of Phase One B.T.E.I./ Community Strand. Following discussions with relevant personnel the report was forwarded to the Further Education section of the Department of Education and Science.



**PROGRAMMES & PROJECTS**  
**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

## PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Building partnerships is an essential feature of the work of AONTAS, both with its member organisations and other key players in the sector. Becoming involved in partnership work enhances the knowledge base of the Adult and Community Education sector and strengthens its role as a key part of lifelong learning.

### STANCE PROJECT

STANCE (Strategies to Advance Networks' Collective Empowerment) is a three year programme, which began in January 2001 with funding from the Department of Education and Science and the then Department of Social, Family and Community Affairs now the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The aims of STANCE are:

- To develop Women's Networks as regionally based infrastructures of support in addressing women's social exclusion
- To facilitate the development of a partnership approach to linking Women's Networks and key agencies at national level with a view to influencing policy.

STANCE works with Women's Education Networks across the country which are involved in developing the capacity of their locally based women's groups to address women's social exclusion and provide opportunities for further education and training. During 2003 STANCE supported twenty-five Women's Networks across Ireland. The regional training and information meetings continued to be an important vehicle for Networks to meet and share ideas and information as well as to participate in training with a view to enhancing their effectiveness. In March/April STANCE together with Banulacht delivered five regional training and information meetings which developed a policy proofing template using the twelve critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action to assess the work of the Women's Networks.

Maintaining contact with Women's Networks is a key action of the project and in doing so ensures that AONTAS as a representative body remains in tune with the projects on the ground in order to effectively represent their interests. The current insecure climate in relation to the Community and Voluntary sector had a huge effect on the work and enthusiasm of this sector during 2003. Planned programmes were shelved or cut back due to a lack of funding or reductions in staff. The Community Employment Scheme cutbacks were particularly difficult for many of the Networks and their member groups. In order to assess the impact of the cuts the National Collective of Community based Women's Networks (NCCWN) through the STANCE Project carried out a questionnaire survey on its members. This coincided with AONTAS carrying out a similar survey among its membership.

The development by the Women's Networks of the National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN) in 2002 has been a major outcome of the STANCE project. The aim of the National Collective is to provide a collective mechanism for Women's Networks to participate in, develop and respond to national policy developments and to

strengthen the capacity of member Networks to be involved in regional, national, European and global policy issues.

Throughout 2003 STANCE played an integral role in supporting the ongoing development of the National Collective. Key areas of work included:

- Development of internal structures i.e. Steering Group and Management Committee including regional representation
- Lobbying of Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Information exchange between Networks
- Development of Draft Strategic Plan
- Submission to Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Review of Community Development Support Programme
- Accessing funding from Combat Poverty Agency for regional training
- Developing pre- budget submission
- Holding NCCWN national conference ***Stronger, Surer, Bolder***
- Accessing three year core funding under the White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity, Scheme of Grants for Federations and Umbrella Bodies.

The success of the National Collective of Community based Women's Networks in accessing core funding was a major achievement and a reflection of the enormous progress this fledgling organisation has made in such a relatively short time. While the funding is a very welcome and indeed a key development, it is not enough to facilitate the regional development of the NCCWN or its organisational structure. These core pillars of the NCCWN i.e. bringing Women's Networks together regionally to inform and direct the work and having regular Steering Group and Management group meetings are essential to its effectiveness. Some funding towards regional training was accessed from the Combat Poverty Agency. However, if the NCCWN is to continue to strengthen and build its membership and ensure an effective representative structure, more resources will have to be sourced.

2004 presents a challenging year ahead for the National Collective. The group will soon be recruiting a coordinator and launching its strategic plan. However with the strength, enthusiasm and successes to date 2004 should see the National Collective move into critical spaces to play a pivotal role in representing women's networks in key areas including community education, health, childcare and combating poverty.

During the final phase of the STANCE programme, an evaluation of the project was carried out in the last quarter of 2003. The focus of the evaluation was to assess whether the project had fulfilled its aims and objectives. Overall it was found to have made a very positive contribution, both to individual networks and to the sector as a whole. The Networks highlighted the fact that STANCE had given them access to new information, greater confidence and belief in themselves. It had also provided space to explore their work and challenged them to be more strategic and more proactive in their work locally and collectively as a sector at regional and national levels. Key outcomes include:

- Strengthening of the policy work of the Networks, giving them a clearer analysis and a greater understanding of the bigger picture and their role within the policy arena.
- The breaking down of barriers to policy development with Networks taking proactive action. During the STANCE project Women's Networks made an enormous contribution to policy development at local, regional and national levels. This has included making policy submissions to a variety of policy arenas for example, Draft National Plan for Women, County Development Boards' Strategic Plans, Rapid Strategic Plans, National Anti- Poverty Strategy, Forum on Educational Disadvantage, Community Development Support Programme Strategic Plan, South Western Health Board Women's Health Plan. They also recognised the importance of working with a broad range of organisations and agencies to effect change.
- Facilitation of links between Networks to become both regionally and nationally connected. This was the first time that Networks were facilitated to come together regionally and nationally and thus the sector was provided with the impetus to work collectively together. A model of best practice of regional development has also been developed which may be replicated by other sectors of membership or indeed by other membership organisations.
- Greater profile for the Women's Community Education Networks and their work. They are now seen as important representative organisations to consult with.
- Establishment of the National Collective of Community based Women's Networks.

AONTAS has a long track record of supporting the Women's Community Education sector. Through the two N.O.W. (New Opportunities for Women), W.E.N.D.I. (Womens Education Networks Development Initiative) and STANCE AONTAS has witnessed and supported a massive progression in the capacity and impact of the sector. The development of the National Collective of Community based Women's Networks marks the beginning of a new era for the sector and a major strategic development. Moreover, 2004 marks the beginning of a new strategic plan for AONTAS, and represents a real opportunity for the women's sector through NCCWN in particular and themselves in their own right to continue to progress the community education agenda.

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION FACILITATORS

During 2003 thirty four Community Education Facilitators have been employed by the VECs as recommended in the White Paper on Adult Education. The CEFs have responsibility for:

- Promoting the development and nurturing of new community-based learning groups
- Providing support to new and existing community education groups in the form of technical, administrative and educational inputs
- Developing and encouraging partnerships and links with statutory and other providers
- Promoting the role of the sector in supporting outreach and referral to the statutory sector
- Liasing on quality assurance, accreditation and certification issues
- Helping community education interests to access funding
- Networking of groups, both nationally and locally, supporting their participation in community fora, and facilitating a co-ordinated input from the sector into the work of Local Adult Learning Boards(LALBs) and the County and City Development Boards CDBs
- Sharing good practice from the sector and supporting the mainstreaming of relevant lessons into national policy and practice
- Monitoring initiatives, reporting to LALBs on developments and provision, and informing the work of the National Adult Learning Council.

The White Paper has identified a number of broad groups within the sector, which are engaged in community education. They are as follows:

- Community-based Women's Groups
- Men's Groups
- Travellers and other Ethnic Minorities
- People with Disabilities
- Community Arts Groups
- Older People.

As well as the groups identified above the Department of Education and Science wishes to include groups dealing with homeless people and people re-entering the community after prison. The Community Education Facilitators will be required to engage with these groups and will therefore need to demonstrate a deep-rooted knowledge of the community they serve as well as the broader context within which they will work. They will also need a very good understanding of the statutory providers in the locality and be able to develop strong links with them. At a professional level they will be required to work as part as an integrated team which will include the AEO, ALO, AEGI personnel and others as appropriate. In order to engage successfully with community-based groups they will need a clear understanding and empathy with the philosophy and processes of community education.

Maureen Kavanagh was recruited as National Co-ordinator to deliver the national Training and Support Programme to the team of CEFs. This Programme is designed to bring the Community Education Facilitators together nationally for information, training and support. Its aims are as follows:

- To provide induction and on-going training to the Community Education Facilitators
- To provide a forum for networking of Community Education Facilitators at national level
- To enable the Community Education Facilitators to share information and models of good practice
- To keep the Community Education Facilitators informed on developments relevant to their work
- To support the Community Education Facilitators on an ongoing basis through continued contact, information and research.

The Training and Support Programme is advised and guided by a Steering Group whose membership is as follows:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| – Berni Brady      | Director, AONTAS  |
| – Pauline Gildea   | Principal Officer, Further Education Section,<br>Department of Education and Science              |
| – Fred Goulding    | A.E.O.A.  |
| – Leonora O'Reilly | A.E.O.A.  |
| – Fiona Hartley    | I.V.E.A.  |
| – John Ryan        | I.V.E.A.  |
| – Bernie Judge     | Further Education Development Unit  |
| – Maureen Kavanagh | National Co-ordinator, Training/Support<br>Programme  |
| – Bernie McDonnell | ADM Ltd.  |
| – Des O' Loughlin  | Assistant Principal Officer, Further<br>Education section,<br>Department of Education and Science |

The Terms of Reference of the Steering Group are:

- To oversee the work programme of the National Training/Support Programme Co-ordinator for Community Education Facilitators
- To approve the training/support programme for CEFs and guide its implementation
- To develop and maintain links with the Strategic Management Initiative for CEOs/AEOs of VECs, so as to ensure complementarity of both training initiatives.

Two national training and networking seminars were held during 2003 in July and November respectively. These examined the roles of the CEFs, what community education is, effective partnership building and funding to community education. These seminars enabled the CEFs to network, share experiences of their work and to raise any concerns and issues relating to that work. In December, technical skills training in evaluation techniques was delivered on a regional basis to the CEFs.

The Training and Support programme has also provided a range of information support and mail-outs to the CEFs during 2003. Topics covered have included:

- Refugees and asylum seekers and the English language
- Community and Adult Education in other countries
- Funding
- Childcare
- EU Adult Education policy developments
- Accreditation.

The employment of the CEFs is another building block in the development of an effective Adult Education Service for Ireland. AONTAS is committed to this development and looks forward to working with the CEFs and their VECs over the forthcoming years through the Training and Support Programme.

## OTHER PROJECTS

### Community Development Consultancy Course

This course which is being run in partnership with Community Action Network(CAN )and Meitheal is funded by the Equality for Women Measure under the Regional Operational Programme of the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The aim of the course is to train women to enable them to become consultants in the areas of community development and community education. A call for applications was made at the end of 2002. From one hundred and twelve applications, thirty-two were short listed for interview based on set criteria of at least five years experience in community development/ community education, basic facilitation and group work experience. Eighteen women were selected to participate in the Course which started in April 2003 and is scheduled to end in June 2004. The course is being delivered through seven modules. Ongoing one to one support is provided to each participant.

An internal evaluation was held after module two and an external evaluation is currently underway. The programme is supported by a Management Team consisting of representatives from AONTAS, CAN, Meitheal and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC).The Management meetings are also attended by two course participants.

### Quality Assurance Project

Since 2002, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) has been developing a Quality Assurance model which all providers of FETAC programmes will be required to use in future. The aim is to ensure consistency in the quality of all further education programmes accredited by FETAC, whether delivered in large or small, formal or non-formal organisations. The new Quality Assurance model will have a significant impact on all providers, but especially on small adult education providers, community education groups and those running the Back to Education Initiative.

FETAC has involved a consultative group in the development of its Quality Assurance model. AONTAS takes an active role in this group, represented by Policy Analyst Finola McDonnell. In Autumn 2003, a number of providers were invited to pilot the draft FETAC Quality Assurance model to test its feasibility. Three AONTAS member groups examined the FETAC

model and gave feedback and comments. A review process is being carried out by FETAC which will continue into 2004. AONTAS will continue to participate in this review to ensure our members' views are adequately heard.

## In from the Margins

*In from the Margins* is a National Women's Council of Ireland Project. Niamh Keaveney serves on the Advisory Group on behalf of AONTAS. The role of the Advisory Group is to provide advice and expertise to the project team. The project works with women's groups across Ireland and aims to link them to policy in three main areas; anti racism, poverty and health. The project so far has held six regional seminars, which have proven to be very successful and have provided an opportunity for women to voice their concerns and develop plans to combat poverty, racism and promote health in their communities.

## Grundtvig Learning Partnership

2003 has been the final year of the AONTAS involvement in the Gender Genuine Education learning partnership. The main outcomes of the project were the production of a publication entitled *Gender Genuine Education: A Challenge for Adult Education* which included articles from each partner country, and a final conference entitled *Gendered Lifelong Learning- A New Context for Civil Society in Europe*, held last September in Germany. Both of these enabled the learning partnership to disseminate the learning from the project and highlighted the successful elements of this particular learning partnership.

Being involved in the Grundtvig Learning Partnership has broadened the links which AONTAS has in Europe. It provided us with strategic connections to adult education centres in several countries in the EU and has raised the profile of AONTAS as a key player in the field of adult education. It has also expanded our knowledge of how Grundtvig partnerships work which will enable AONTAS and its members to access opportunities under this initiative.

## Implementation and Advisory Group of the White Paper, Supporting Voluntary Sector Activity

The Implementation and Advisory Group (IAG) was established in July 2001 to oversee the implementation of decisions contained in the White Paper.

The main decisions of the White Paper were as follows:

- Commitment by Government to consulting with the Voluntary and Community sector through a range of channels. Best practice principles were laid down
- Voluntary activity support units to be established in all government departments with significant dealings with the sector

- The State to act as an enabler of voluntary sector activity in such areas as accreditation of learning, volunteering and an improved regulatory framework
- Additional funding of the sector through:
 

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| – National Anti-Poverty Networks                           | €761,842 |
| – Networks and Federations Grant                           | €2.54m   |
| – Training and Supports Grant                              | €2.54m   |
| – Community and Voluntary fora in local government support | €1.27m   |
| – Volunteering   | €1.27m   |
| – A programme of research                                  | €507,895 |
- Review of legislation and regulation governing charitable voluntary organisations and fundraising
- Statutory funding of voluntary organisations changed from annual or ad hoc to multi-annual grants.

During 2003 the Networks and Federations Grant was re-advertised with a significantly reduced grant size, €2.54m to €1.827m a year for three years. The Training and Support scheme was also downsized, from €2.54m to €690,000 for the first year and €600,000 each in years 2 and 3. The research grant was deferred until at least 2004.

On the review of the regulatory framework, during 2003 the IAG had discussions on how best to organise a wide consultative process around the proposed new regulatory framework. The NQAI gave an input on the development of the national accreditation framework as part of the group's work on this issue.

Maureen Kavanagh resigned from the IAG in June 2003 following her appointment as National Co-ordinator of the Community Education Facilitators' Training and Support Programme. Her place has been taken by her alternate.

## THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

In addition to the work in all areas of adult and community education and lifelong learning, nationally, AONTAS continues to be very influential in shaping the European agenda, through the work of the EAEA. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) celebrated its fiftieth birthday, in 2003, at the General Assembly, which took place in Larnaca, Cyprus, in November. To mark the event, EAEA inaugurated the first Grundtvig Award for an outstanding product in adult and community education and lifelong learning.

The EAEA is a European-wide non-governmental organisation, (NGO), founded with the purpose of linking organisations which are directly involved in every level of adult education and lifelong learning. It was originally known as the European Bureau of Adult Education and representatives of European associations of adult education and lifelong learning founded it in 1953. A number of past presidents of the organisation joined the current president, Janos Sz Toth, along with members and representatives from around one hundred organisations in thirty four European countries to commemorate the birthday. As the AONTAS representative, Brid Connolly Hon. Secretary had the honour of chairing this part of the General Assembly.

The first Grundtvig Award in Adult Education was launched in order to recognise and celebrate excellence in adult education. The Award was to be given to the organization or participants who presented the best product of a transnational project in adult learning. Adult education projects with at least one transnational partner were eligible to enter a product for the award. Products included videos, photographs, books, power point presentation, slides and posters. Indeed any product that is accessible to the public, that is presented in a comprehensible way, and that may be useful and/or transferable to others was eligible to enter this competition.

There were about forty entries to the competition, coming from all over Europe, including Ireland. The 2003 Award went to ***Women in Europe Learning Together***, a project designed to provide women returners with tools and strategies to overcome barriers to employment and learning, using Open and Distance Learning (ODL) methodology, tailored materials, action plans and guidance. It was a Grundtvig funded project, with transnational partners from the UK, Poland, Romania, Ireland and Italy. It was selected by EAEA as an excellent example of the work that is occurring in Europe currently, at a time when adult education is reaching more people and making more connections than ever before.

Details of the 2004 Grundtvig Award will be published on the EAEA Website: [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org) e-mail: [eaea-main@eaea.org](mailto:eaea-main@eaea.org) and entries are welcome from all transnational projects, not just Grundtvig funded ones.

The work of the EAEA involves board meetings in Europe every three months, and a General Meeting annually, which will be held in Metz in France in November 2004. The main aim of the EAEA is to establish a learning society which promotes critically reflective active citizenship, and the widening of access and participation in formal, non-formal and informal adult education for all, particularly for groups currently under-represented. The purposes of learning may be for personal fulfilment, social change, active citizenship, environmental sustainability, cultural and intercultural awareness and knowledge, skills development and in employment related fields. Brid Connolly, Hon. Secretary of AONTAS is an Executive member of the EAEA Board.



**MEMBERSHIP  
LIST**

# MEMBERSHIP LIST

## Corporate Statutory

An Bord Altranais  
 An Chomhairle Leabharlanna  
 Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland  
 BA Modular Degree Programme  
 Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)  
 Canal Communities Partnership  
 Centre for Adult & Community Education, Maynooth  
 City of Cork VEC  
 City of Dublin VEC  
 City of Limerick VEC  
 City of Waterford VEC  
 Clare Co Library  
 Co Carlow VEC  
 Co Cavan VEC  
 Co Clare VEC  
 Co Cork VEC  
 Co Donegal VEC, Donegal Town  
 Co Donegal VEC, Letterkenny  
 Co Dublin VEC  
 Co Galway VEC  
 Co Kildare VEC  
 Co Kilkenny VEC  
 Co Laois VEC  
 Co Leitrim VEC  
 Co Limerick VEC  
 Co Louth VEC  
 Co Meath VEC  
 Co Offaly VEC  
 Co Roscommon VEC  
 Co Tipperary VEC (NTH)  
 Co Tipperary VEC (STH)  
 Co Waterford VEC  
 Co Westmeath VEC  
 Co Wexford Partnership Limited  
 Co Wexford VEC  
 Co Longford VEC  
 DCU/Centre for Lifelong Learning  
 Development Studies Centre  
 Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service  
 Dublin City Council  
 Dublin City Development Board  
 Dublin Corporation Public Libraries  
 Dublin Institute of Technology  
 Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology  
 Fáilte Ireland  
 FAS  
 Finglas Cabra Partnership  
 Foroige  
 Galway City Partnership  
 Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC)  
 Irish Country Women's Association (I.C.A.)  
 Irish National Teachers's Organisation (I.N.T.O.)  
 Irish Vocational Education Association (I.V.E.A.)  
 Institute of Public Administration (IPA)  
 Institute of Technology, Sligo  
 Irish Centre for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education  
 Kerry Education Service  
 Letterkenny Institute of Technology  
 Limerick Senior College  
 Macra na Feirme  
 National College of Ireland  
 National Training and Development Institute  
 NUI Galway  
 OSCAIL - The National Distance Education Centre  
 Public Service Executive Union  
 R.T.E.  
 School of Practical Child Care  
 Teachers' Union of Ireland  
 The Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy  
 The Open University in Ireland  
 The Procoach Institute Ltd.  
 Tipperary Institute  
 Udaras na Gaeltachta  
 University College Cork  
 University College Dublin  
 Western Health Board  
 Women's Studies Centre, NUI Galway  
 WRC Social & Economic Consultants Ltd

## Corporate Voluntary

ACCEPT Counselling Association of Ireland  
 Access 2000 Wexford Ltd.  
 Adult Community Education Network  
 Adult Learning Programme (A.L.P.S.)  
 AEO'S Association  
 Age and Opportunity  
 Ait Na Ndaoine C.D.P.  
 AKIDWA (Akina Dada Wa Africa)  
 An Comhchoiste Reamhscolaiochta  
 An Teach Ban  
 Aonad Family Resource Centre  
 Ard Scoil na nDeise  
 Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools  
 Ballyboden Adult Social Education (B.A.S.E.)  
 Ballybofey & Stranorlor Women's Group  
 Ballyhoura Development Ltd.  
 Ballymun Men's Centre  
 Ballyphenane/Togher C.D.P.  
 Bansha/Kilmoyler Ladies Club  
 Banulacht  
 Bawnogue Women's Development Group  
 Bellinter House Conference Centre/Our Lady of Sion  
 Borrisokane Area Network Development  
 Brackenstown Adult Scene Of Education (BASE)  
 Brainwave, The Irish Epilepsy Association  
 Bridge Project  
 Busy Bees Women's Group  
 Cahir Ladies & District Club  
 Carlow Area Network Development Organisation (CANDO)  
 Castlemaine Family Resource Centre  
 Catholic Youth Care  
 Cavan Monaghan Rural Development Co-op Society  
 CEO'S Association  
 Clare Women's Network  
 Clondalkin Adult Morning Education (CAME)  
 Clondalkin Traveller's Development Group  
 Clondalkin Women's Network  
 Co. Kildare Centre for the Unemployed Ltd.  
 Comhlahm  
 Community Action Network (CAN)  
 Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA)  
 Community Awareness of Drugs (C.A.D.)  
 Community Women's Education Initiatives  
 Connolly Information Centre for the Unemployed  
 Cooneal/Ballysakeery Womens Group  
 Corduff Community Development Project Ltd.  
 CORI Education Office  
 Cork Adult Education Council  
 CREATE  
 Darndale Belcamp Discovery Centre  
 Deonach  
 DOCHAS for Women  
 Donegal Local Development Co Ltd  
 Donegal Town Women's Group  
 Donegal Travellers Project  
 Donegal Women's Network  
 Douglas Community School  
 Dr Steven's Centre  
 DRAIOCHT  
 Drogheda Area Women's Network  
 Drogheda Community Forum  
 Drogheda Resource Centre for the Unemployed  
 Drop in Well Creative Learning Centre  
 Duagh Family Centre  
 Dublin Adult Learning Centre  
 Dundrum Adult Training & Education (D.A.T.E)  
 Dunrath Training & Development  
 Educational Guidance Service for Adults  
 Eiri Corca Baiscinn- West Clare Development  
 Enable Ireland Cork  
 Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Associations  
 Fingal ICTU Centre for the Unemployed  
 Firhouse Women's Group  
 Forum Women's Working Group  
 Francis Street Community Education Centre  
 Galway Peoples' Resource Centre  
 Greater Blanchardstown Development Project  
 Greendale Community School  
 Harmony Community Dev. Programme  
 Holywell Trust Support Agency  
 Hospital Family Resource Centre  
 Institute for Social Awareness & Rural Development  
 Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed  
 Iveragh Information Technology Training Ltd.  
 Joint Managerial Body  
 Knocklyon Adults in Educational Studies (K.A.I.E.S.)  
 Kerry Action for Development Education

Kildare Women's Group  
 Kilkenny Women's Studies Group  
 Killarney Counselling Centre  
 Kilternan Adult Education  
 Kiltimagh C.D.P.  
 KLEAR LTD  
 Larkin Unemployed Centre  
 Leitrim Women's Network  
 Leixlip Women's Studies Group  
 LES Guidance Service Limerick  
 Letterkenny Woman's Centre  
 Limerick Centre for the Unemployed  
 Limerick Womens Network  
 Longford Women's Centre  
 Loreto Centre  
 Lourdes Youth & Community Services  
 Lucan 2000 Ltd.  
 Mary Immaculate Secondary School  
 Mayfield Community Adult Learning Project  
 (C.A.L.P.)  
 Maynooth Adult Daytime Education (M.A.D.E.)  
 Media Access Training  
 Men's Development Network  
 Mercy College  
 Mercy Education Centre  
 Mercy Family Centre  
 Mevagh Resource Centre  
 Ministries Development Group  
 Moycullen Adult Education Group  
 National Collective of Community Based  
 Women's Networks (N.C.C.W.N.)  
 National Adult Literacy Agency  
 National Parent's Council Primary  
 National Training Centre  
 National Women's Council of Ireland  
 National Youth Council of Ireland  
 Navan Traveller's Training Centre  
 Nenagh Community Network  
 Network Kildare  
 New Inn Womens Group  
 New Ross Community Development Project  
 Newbury House Family Centre  
 North Kerry Together  
 North Leitrim Women's Centre  
 North Meath Communities Development  
 Association  
 North Wall Women's Centre  
 North West Inner City Women's Network  
 Northside Community Enterprises Ltd.  
 PARTAS  
 Pavee Point Traveller's Group  
 People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd  
 People's College  
 Presentation Family Centre Ltd.  
 Presentation Learning Centre Headford  
 Prussia Street Women's Group  
 R.A.V.E.  
 Redeemer Centre of Ongoing Learning  
 Ronanstown Women's Group/CDP  
 Rowlagh Womens Group  
 Ruhama  
 S.A.O.L. Project Limited  
 Sacred Heart Secondary School  
 Scoil Dara  
 Scoil Mhuire  
 Seamount College  
 Second Chance Education Project for Women  
 Shanty Education and Training Centre  
 Sligo Adult Guidance in Education (SAGE)  
 Soilse  
 South West Wexford Community Development  
 Project  
 Southill Integrated Development Programme  
 Southside Women's Action Network (S.W.A.N.)  
 South-West Kerry Women's Association  
 (S.W.K.A.)  
 St. Vincent's Trust  
 St. Aloysius' College  
 St. Andrew's Resource Centre  
 St. Davids Secondary School  
 St. Kilian's Adult and Community Education  
 St. Munchin's Family Resource Centre  
 St. Patrick's Women's Group  
 Tallaght Adult and Community Training  
 (T.A.C.T.)  
 Trinity Adult Resource Group for Education and  
 Training (T.A.R.G.E.T.)  
 Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed  
 Teach Tearmainn Women's Refuge Project  
 The James Joyce Centre  
 The Media Co-op  
 Tipperary Women's Network  
 Togher Family Centre Ltd.  
 Tralee Centre for the Unemployed  
 Tralee Women's Forum  
 Tuam Community Development Resource  
 Centre  
 Tullamore Women's Network  
 URRUS - A Ballymun Youth Action Project  
 Warrenmount C.E.D. Centre

Waterford Women's Centre  
Waterford Women's Community Network  
Weightwatchers  
West Cork & Beara Womens Network  
West Training & Development  
Western Women's Link  
Westmeath Community Development  
Whitefriar Community, Education &  
Development Project  
Wicklow Information Network (WIN)  
Women Educating for Transformation  
Women of the North West  
Women Together Tallaght Network  
Women's Advisory Committee  
Women's Community Projects (Mullingar)  
Association Ltd.  
Women's Education Research & Resource Centre  
Women's Equality in Bray (WEB)  
Women's Issues Task Force  
Women's Resource & Development Agency  
Workers' Educational Association  
Yoga Therapy Ireland  
Youth Information Centre, Letterkenny

## Individual Members

Mr. Martin Ade-Onojobi  
 Ms. Aine Ahern  
 Ms. Fidelma Arthur  
 Mr. Patrick B. Bannon  
 Mr. Denis Barrett  
 Ms. Mary Blake  
 Ms. Deborah Brock  
 Ms. Honor Broderick  
 Ms. Mary Brodie  
 Ms. Melissa Butler  
 Ms. Geraldine Butler  
 Ms. Elaine Butler  
 Ms. Sandra Byrne  
 Ms. Theresa Byrne  
 Ms. Sylvia Caffrey  
 Ms. Frances Callan  
 Ms. Dorothy Calvert  
 Sr. Chanel Canny  
 Rev Liam Carey C.C.  
 Okereafor Darlington Chigozie  
 Mr. Serge Claes  
 Mr. Matthew Gerard Clarke  
 Ms. Marie Cody  
 Mr. Martin Coen  
 Mr. Donal Coffey  
 Mr. Peter Coffey  
 Ms. Agnes Coleman  
 Ms. Ursula Coleman  
 Ms. Grainne Collins  
 Sr. Bernadette Collins  
 Ms. Marie Comerford Kealy  
 Ms. Maureen Condon  
 Fr. Martin Convey  
 Ms. Martina Crehan  
 Mr. Jerry Cronin  
 Mr. Donal Crosse  
 Ms. Susan Cullinane  
 Ms. Dolores Cummins  
 Ms. Jacinta Cunneen  
 Ms. Orla Daly  
 Ms. Anna Dangerfield  
 Ms. Merike Darmody  
 Ms. Fiona De Buis  
 Mr. Loman Michael Dempsey  
 Ms. Aisling Devine  
 Ms. Emer Dolphin  
 Ms. Kathleen Doran  
 Mr. Stephen Doran  
 Ms. Marian Dowd  
 Mr. Trevor Dowling  
 Mr. Tony Downes  
 Ms. Catherine Doyle  
 Prof. Sheelagh Drudy  
 Mr. Ed Du Vivier  
 Ms. Monica Duffy  
 Ms. Liz Duffy  
 Mr. J.G. Dunne  
 Ms. Susan Dunne  
 Sr. Angela Durkin  
 Mr. Hugh Durnin  
 Ms. Rita M Edwards  
 Mr. Mike Egan  
 Ms. Paula Faller  
 Ms. Mary Farrell  
 Ms. Gabrielle Farren  
 Ms. Maeve Finch  
 Ms. Riona Fitzgerald  
 Mr. John Fitzgibbon  
 Ms. Rhonda Flanagan  
 Ms. Mary Flannery  
 Dr. Ted Fleming  
 Mr. Desmond Fleming  
 Ms. Mary Foudy  
 Ms. Theresa Gallagher  
 Mr. Christopher Glancy  
 Mr. Brian Glennon  
 Ms. Cathleen Hartnett  
 Ms. Joan Hassett  
 Ms. Brigid Haugh Mac Sweeney  
 Ms. Aobhan Haverty  
 Ms. Patricia Hayden  
 Ms. Elizabeth Hayes  
 Ms. Kate Headon  
 Mr. Sean Hennessy  
 Ms. Marietta Herraghty  
 Ms. Sylvia Hickey  
 Ms. Mary Hickey  
 Mr. Pat Higgins  
 Ms. Cathleen Hogan  
 Ms. Eileen Holian  
 Ms. Freda Holly  
 Ms. Eleanor Hough  
 Ms. Geraldine Hunt  
 Mr. Kevin Hurley  
 Ms. Margaret M. Hurley

Mr. Mark Hurst  
Ms. Susan Hymas  
Dr. Tom Inglis  
Sr. Margaret Ivers  
Ms. Niamh Jackson  
Ms. Deirdre Johnson  
Ms. Jean Johnston  
Mr. Larry Kavanagh  
Ms. Alison Keane  
Ms. Carol Kearney  
Ms. Brid Kelly  
Mr. Michael Dermott Kelly  
Ms. Margaret Kelly  
Ms. Paula Kelly  
Ms. Diana Kelly  
Ms. Niamh Kennan  
Ms. Fiona Keogh  
Ms. Máire Kerrane  
Mr. Yousaf Khan  
Mr. Liam Kilbride  
Mr. Nick Killian  
Ms. Paula King  
Ms. Sonya Kinsella  
Ms. Bernadette Kinsella  
Ms. Josephine Lally  
Mr. Paul Larkin  
Ms. Kerry Lawless  
Ms. Deirdre Lawlor  
Ms. Siobhan Lynch  
Ms. Nora M. Edgeworth  
Ms. Sarah Mackey  
Ms. Eileen Magee  
Ms. Anne Marron  
Ms. Mary Mather Leahy  
Ms. Eileen McCaffrey  
Ms. Josephine McCann  
Ms. Vivienne McCann  
Ms. Catherine McCarthy  
Ms. Pamela McCarthy  
Ms. Margaret McCarthy  
Ms. Fiona McCauley  
Ms. Mary McCoy  
Ms. Teresa McCullagh  
Mr. Sean McDermott  
Ms. Mary McDonagh  
Ms. Mary McEvoy  
Mr. Dermot McGarthy  
Mr. Pat McGill  
Ms. Maureen McGovern  
Ms. Valerie McGrath  
Ms. Catherine McKinney  
Ms. Sinead McMahon Coffey  
Ms. Ann McNamara  
Mr. John McPartlan  
Ms. Marian McRory  
Sukar Meah  
Ms. Kay Meany  
Mr. Peter Melanie  
Ms. Catherine Melvin  
Ms. Meabh Mhic Gairbheith  
Ms. Mairin Mhic Lochlainn  
Mr. Adrian Mitchell  
Mr. Patrick Moloney  
Ms. Marie Mooney  
Ms. Patricia-Anne Moore  
Mr. Paul Moynihan  
Ms. Kaye Mullaney  
Ms. Ciara Murphy  
Mr. Fergus Murphy  
Mr. Denis Murphy  
Ms. Shelagh Murphy  
Ms. Clora Neilan  
Ms. Cait Ni Mhurchu  
Ms. Ann O'Brien  
Ms. Loretta O'Brien  
Ms. Katarina O'Brien  
Ms. Maire O'Brien  
Mr. Sean S. O'Broin  
Ms. Eva O'Connell  
Ms. Catherine O'Connor  
Ms. Elizabeth O'Connor  
Ms. Mary O'Donnell  
Ms. Tina O'Donnell  
Ms. Siobhan O'Dowd  
Ms. Noelle O'Dwyer  
Mr. Declan O'Dwyer  
Ms. Julia O'Gorman  
Ms. Anne O'Keefe  
Mr. John O'Loughlin  
Mr. T O'Mahoney  
Mr. Michael O'Mahoney  
Mr. Colm O'Maolmhuire  
Ms. Kitty O'Reilly  
Chinedy Nnamdi Orji  
Ms. Trish O'Rourke  
Ms. Angela O'Shea  
Dr. Sylvia O'Sullivan  
Mr. Rory O'Sullivan  
Mr. Joseph O'Sullivan/Noel Keenan  
Ms. Sorcha O'Toole

Mr. Colm O'Tuathalain  
Ms. Toni Owens  
Mrs. Vera Owens  
Songonuga Oyeleye  
Mr. Paul Patton  
Ms. Angela Potter  
Ms. Mary Rafferty  
Mr. Robert Redmond  
Ms. Fionnuala Richardson  
Mr. Paddy Robinson  
Ms. Miriam Ryan  
Ms. Orna Ryan  
Ms. Patsy Ryan  
Mr. Seamus Scanlan  
Mr. Eugene Scully  
Ms. Betty Scully  
Ms. Vera Shaw  
Ms. Mary Sheehy  
Ms. Mary Sheridan  
Ms. Carol Spellman  
Ms. Bernadette Sproule  
Ms. Imelda Staunton  
Ms. Ruth Stewart  
Mr. Jim Strain  
Ms. Deirdre Sullivan  
Ms. Gabrielle Thorsch  
Ms. Fiona Wall  
Ms. Amy Ward  
Ms. Sarah-Beth Watkins  
Mr. Brian Webberley  
Mr. Robin Webster  
Ms. Aine Whelan  
Ms. Pamela Whitaker  
Ms. Catherine White  
Mr. Owen Wims

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2003**  
**ACCOUNTS**

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## COMPANY INFORMATION

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Directors</b>         | Mr. John Ryan (President)<br>Mr. Tom Hussey (Vice-President)<br>Ms. Brid Connolly (Hon. Secretary)<br>Cllr. Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)<br>Mr. Denis Barrett<br>Ms. Anna Dangerfield<br>Mr. Andrew Doherty<br>Ms. Susan Dunne<br>Ms. Loretta O'Brien<br>Mr. Seán O'Connor<br>Mr. James O'Loughlin<br>Ms. Leonora O'Reilly |
| <b>Co-opted Members</b>  | Ms. Jan Lewis<br>Ms. Valerie O'Carroll   |
| <b>Secretary</b>         | Ms. Brid Connolly  |
| <b>Company Number</b>    | 80958  |
| <b>Charity Number</b>    | 6719   |
| <b>Registered Office</b> | 83-87 Main Street<br>Ranelagh  |
| <b>Auditors</b>          | Anne Brady & Associates<br>The Anchorage<br>Charlotte Quay<br>Dublin 4   |
| <b>Business Address</b>  | 83-87<br>Main Street<br>Ranelagh<br>Dublin 6   |
| <b>Bankers</b>           | Bank of Ireland<br>Lower Baggot Street<br>Dublin 2   |
| <b>Solicitors</b>        | P.J. Walsh & Company<br>12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street<br>Dublin 2  |

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## **DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003**

The Board of Directors of AONTAS present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2003.

### **Principal Activity**

The principal activity of the company is the promotion and development of adult education in Ireland.

### **Results for the year and state of affairs at 31 December 2003**

The results for the year and the state of affairs of the company at 31 December 2003 are set out on pages 51 to 54 of the financial statements. The results for the year show a surplus/(deficit) of €47,848 (31 December 2002 : (€126,111)).

### **Health and Safety of Employees**

The company has adopted a safety statement in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

### **Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986**

The reporting requirements of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986 relating to financial statements do not apply as AONTAS is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

### **Directors**

The Executive Committee constitutes the Board of Directors of the company under the terms of Article 28 of the Articles of Association of the company.

Mr. John Ryan (President)  
Mr. Tom Hussey (Vice-President)  
Ms. Brid Connolly (Hon. Secretary)  
Cllr. Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)  
Mr. Denis Barrett  
Ms. Anna Dangerfield  
Mr. Andrew Doherty  
Ms. Susan Dunne  
Ms. Loretta O'Brien  
Mr. Seán O'Connor  
Mr. James O'Loughlin  
Ms. Leonora O'Reilly

The following members were appointed as co-opted members:

Ms. Jan Lewis  
Ms. Valerie O'Carroll

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## **DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2003**

### **Books of Account**

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 202, Companies Act, 1990, regarding proper books of account include the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The books of account of the company are maintained at 83-87, Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

### **Auditors**

The auditors, Anne Brady & Associates have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 160(2) of the Companies Act, 1963.

Signed on behalf of the Board:

**Mr. John Ryan**  
**Director**

**Date:** 7 February 2004

**Cllr. Patrick Nolan**  
**Director**

**Date:** 7 February 2004

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## **STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that year. In preparing these the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2001. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board:

**Mr. John Ryan**  
**Director**

**Date:** 7 February 2004

**Cllr. Patrick Nolan**  
**Director**

**Date:** 7 February 2004

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AONTAS**

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS on pages 51 to 54 for the year ended 31st December 2003 which comprise the Income & Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 55.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors**

The directors' responsibilities for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and Irish Accounting Standards are set out in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and auditing standards promulgated by the Auditing Practices Board in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2001. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company; whether, at the balance sheet date, there exists a financial situation requiring the conveying of an extraordinary general meeting of the company; and whether the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the company's balance sheet and its profit and loss account are in agreement with the books of account.

We report to the shareholders if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration or directors' transactions is not given and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

**AONTAS** (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AONTAS**

We read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. This other information comprises only the Directors' Report. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

### **Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors Basis of audit opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31 December 2003 and of its surplus and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2001.

We have obtained all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report on page 46-47 is consistent with the financial statements.

Section 40(1) of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1983 does not apply as the company is limited by guarantee.

**Anne Brady & Associates  
Chartered Accountants and  
Registered Auditors  
The Anchorage  
Charlotte Quay  
Dublin 4**



**Date:** 7 February 2004

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

| <b>Income</b>          | <b>Note</b> | <b>2003</b>      | <b>2002</b>    |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
|                        |             | €                | €              |
| Grants receivable      | 2           | 1,081,050        | 705,040        |
| Members' subscriptions |             | 18,865           | 16,961         |
| Sales of publications  |             | 63               | 1,163          |
| National conference    |             | (953)            | 17,013         |
| Interest receivable    |             | 95               | 157            |
|                        |             | <u>1,099,120</u> | <u>740,334</u> |

### Expenditure

#### Administration

|  |  |                |                |
|--|--|----------------|----------------|
| Administration                           |  |                |                |
| Salary costs                             |  | 159,301        | 143,582        |
| Pension scheme                           |  | 67,681         | 30,668         |
| Staff training and expenses              |  | 14,046         | 13,384         |
| Postage and courier services             |  | 19,679         | 13,349         |
| Printing and stationery                  |  | 16,162         | 15,890         |
| Advertising                              |  | 19,244         | 11,800         |
| Telephone                                |  | 13,189         | 10,851         |
| Motor and travel                         |  | 8,662          | 5,647          |
| Executive and general committee expenses |  | 25,959         | 24,658         |
| Legal fees                               |  | 12,851         | 96             |
| Audit and accountancy fees               |  | 6,398          | 5,820          |
| Bank interest and charges                |  | 909            | 650            |
| Representation and affiliation           |  | 24,464         | 21,607         |
| Miscellaneous                            |  | 2,014          | 1,640          |
| Rent of venues and equipment             |  | 6,173          | 2,674          |
| Computer costs                           |  | 282            | 11,768         |
|  |  | <u>397,014</u> | <u>314,084</u> |

#### Premises

|  |  |                |               |
|--|--|----------------|---------------|
| Light and heat                                   |  | 3,060          | 3,455         |
| Rent and rates                                   |  | 70,246         | 42,858        |
| Repairs and maintainance                         |  | 37,220         | 13,063        |
| Leasing charges                                  |  | 261            | 2,807         |
| Insurance  |  | 7,598          | 5,871         |
| Cleaning   |  | 3,692          | 2,243         |
| Depreciation of computers and office equipment   |  | 25,954         | 12,715        |
| (Surplus)/deficit on disposal of tangible assets |  | 9,918          | -             |
|  |  | <u>157,949</u> | <u>83,012</u> |

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

|   | Note   | 2001<br>€               | 2002<br>€             |
|---|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Development</b>                                  |        |                         |                       |
| Salaries  |        | 235,866                 | 213,130               |
| Consultants and contract staff                      |        | 49,539                  | 7,377                 |
| Travel and subsistence                              |        | 40,656                  | 20,565                |
| Printing and publications                           |        | 53,402                  | 23,147                |
| Conferences / seminars / membership meetings        |        | 47,743                  | 37,937                |
| National conference                                 |        | -                       | 78,059                |
| Public Relations                                    |        | 8,648                   | 7,531                 |
| Video Production                                    |        | 605                     | 827                   |
| Information - library                               |        | 6,969                   | 5,503                 |
| Evaluation  |        | 9,935                   | 4,800                 |
| Recruitment   |        | 10,705                  | 18,443                |
| Childcare   |        | 7,584                   | 3,392                 |
|   |        | <u>471,652</u>          | <u>420,711</u>        |
| <b>Research</b>                                     |        |                         |                       |
| Community education                                 |        | -                       | 1,760                 |
| Quality assurance framework for community education | 22,824 | -                       | -                     |
| Women and mens research                             |        | 1,833                   | 46,878                |
|   |        | <u>24,657</u>           | <u>48,638</u>         |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                            |        | <u><b>1,051,273</b></u> | <u><b>866,445</b></u> |
| <b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>               |        | <b>47,848</b>           | <b>(126,111)</b>      |
| <b>Surplus brought forward at 1 January</b>         |        | <u><b>15,434</b></u>    | <u><b>141,545</b></u> |
| <b>Surplus carried forward at 31 December</b>       |        | <u><b>63,282</b></u>    | <u><b>15,434</b></u>  |

The notes on pages 55 to 58 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 7 February 2004 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr. John Ryan**  
Director

**Cllr. Patrick Nolan**  
Director

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003

|   | Notes | 2003           |                | 2002           |                 |
|---|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
|   |       | €              | €              | €              | €               |
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>                                   |       |                |                |                |                 |
| Tangible assets                                       | 7     |                | 66,455         |                | 41,907          |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                                 |       |                |                |                |                 |
| Debtors   | 8     | 17,866         |                | 23,184         |                 |
| Cash at bank and in hand                              | 9     | 160,056        |                | 185,315        |                 |
|   |       | <u>177,922</u> |                | <u>208,499</u> |                 |
| <b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b> |       |                |                |                |                 |
|   | 10    | (181,095)      |                | (234,972)      |                 |
| <b>Net Current Liabilities</b>                        |       |                |                |                |                 |
|   |       |                | <u>(3,173)</u> |                | <u>(26,473)</u> |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                                     |       |                |                |                |                 |
|   |       |                | <u>63,282</u>  |                | <u>15,434</u>   |
| <b>Represented by:</b>                                |       |                |                |                |                 |
| Income and expenditure account                        |       |                | <u>63,282</u>  |                | <u>15,434</u>   |
| <b>Accumulated Surplus</b>                            |       |                |                |                |                 |
|   |       |                | <u>63,282</u>  |                | <u>15,434</u>   |

The notes on pages 12 - 17 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 7 February 2004 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr. John Ryan**  
Director

**Cllr. Patrick Nolan**  
Director

## CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

|   | Notes | 2003<br>€              | 2002<br>€              |
|---|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Reconciliation of operating surplus/(deficit) to net cash inflow from operating activities</b> |       |                        |                        |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) less interest receivable  |       | 47,753                 | (126,268)              |
| Depreciation  |       | 35,872                 | 12,715                 |
| Decrease/(Increase) in debtors  |       | 5,318                  | (12,586)               |
| (Decrease)/Increase in creditors  |       | <u>(53,877)</u>        | <u>166,457</u>         |
| <b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>  |       | <b><u>35,066</u></b>   | <b><u>40,318</u></b>   |
| <b>Cash Flow Statement</b>  |       |                        |                        |
| Net cash inflow from operating activities   |       | 35,066                 | 40,318                 |
| Returns on investments and servicing of finance   | 12    | 95                     | 157                    |
| Capital expenditure   | 12    | <u>(60,420)</u>        | <u>(52,890)</u>        |
| <b>Decrease in cash in the year</b>   |       | <b><u>(25,259)</u></b> | <b><u>(12,415)</u></b> |
| <b>Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net debt (Note 13)</b>                          |       |                        |                        |
| Decrease in cash in the year  |       | (25,259)               | (12,415)               |
| Net funds at 1 January 2003   |       | <u>185,315</u>         | <u>197,730</u>         |
| <b>Net funds at 31 December 2003</b>  |       | <b><u>160,056</u></b>  | <b><u>185,315</u></b>  |

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

### 1. Accounting Policies

#### 1.1. Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles under the historical cost convention and comply with Financial Reporting Standards of the Accounting Standards Board as promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

#### 1.2. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

|                       |   |                       |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Fixtures and fittings | - | 20% Straight Line     |
| Office equipment      | - | 20%/25% Straight Line |
| Computer equipment    | - | 33.3% Straight Line   |

#### 1.3. Leasing

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

#### 1.4. Pensions

Payments to defined contribution pension schemes are charged to the profit and loss account in the period to which they relate.

#### 1.5. Grants receivable

Where specific grants are received in the year and none, or only part, of the related expenditure has been incurred, the unused portion of the grant is carried forward in creditors and accruals as deferred income.

| 2. Grants receivable  | 2003             | 2002             |
|---|------------------|------------------|
|   | €                | €                |
| Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs: Support for locally based womens groups | 71,500           | 105,400          |
| Department of Education & Science:  |                  |                  |
| Grant in Aid  | 402,000          | 384,000          |
| S.P.I.D.A.S. supplement   | 348,000          | 330,000          |
| CEF Training and Support programme  | 120,000          | -                |
| Department of Justice & Equality  | 122,139          | -                |
| Womens Community Education Research   | -                | 313              |
| Miscellaneous   | 5,476            | 14,728           |
|   | <u>1,069,115</u> | <u>834,441</u>   |
| Opening deferred income   | 184,000          | 54,599           |
| Closing deferred income   | <u>(172,065)</u> | <u>(184,000)</u> |
|   | <u>1,081,050</u> | <u>705,040</u>   |

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

### 3. Continuing operations

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that the company has only continuing operations in accordance with the Companies (Amendment) Acts, 1983 and 1986.

| <b>4. Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>                 | <b>2003</b>  | <b>2002</b>  |
|---|--------------|--------------|
|   | €            | €            |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging: |              |              |
| Depreciation of tangible assets                       | 25,954       | 12,715       |
| Loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets             | 9,918        | -            |
| Operating lease rentals                               |              |              |
| – Plant and machinery                                 | 8,648        | 7,531        |
| – Office equipment                                    | 261          | 2,807        |
| Auditors' remuneration                                | 6,398        | 5,820        |
|   | <u>6,398</u> | <u>5,820</u> |

### 5. Employees

|  | <b>2003</b> | <b>2002</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | €           | €           |
| <b>Number of employees</b>                             |             |             |
| The average numbers of employees during the year were: | 11          | 10          |
|  | <u>11</u>   | <u>10</u>   |

| <b>Employment costs</b> | <b>2003</b>    | <b>2002</b>    |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                         | €              | €              |
| Wages and salaries      | 356,185        | 324,077        |
| Social welfare costs    | 38,982         | 32,635         |
| Other pension costs     | 67,681         | 30,668         |
|                         | <u>462,848</u> | <u>387,380</u> |

### 6. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the company to the fund and amount to €67,681 – (2002 : €30,668 ).

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

| <b>7. Tangible asset</b> | <b>Office equipment</b> | <b>Computer equipment</b> | <b>Fixtures &amp; Fittings</b> | <b>Total</b>   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
|                          | €                       | €                         | €                              | €              |
| <b>Cost</b>              |                         |                           |                                |                |
| At 1 January 2003        | 48,624                  | 65,054                    | 12,398                         | 126,076        |
| Additions                | -                       | 20,517                    | 39,903                         | 60,420         |
| Disposals                | -                       | -                         | (12,397)                       | (12,397)       |
| At 31 December 2003      | <u>48,624</u>           | <u>85,571</u>             | <u>39,904</u>                  | <u>174,099</u> |
| <b>Depreciation</b>      |                         |                           |                                |                |
| At 1 January 2003        | 25,362                  | 56,327                    | 2,480                          | 84,169         |
| On disposals             | -                       | -                         | (2,479)                        | (2,479)        |
| Charge for the year      | 6,790                   | 11,184                    | 7,980                          | 25,954         |
| At 31 December 2003      | <u>32,152</u>           | <u>67,511</u>             | <u>7,981</u>                   | <u>107,644</u> |
| <b>Net book values</b>   |                         |                           |                                |                |
| At 31 December 2003      | <u>16,472</u>           | <u>18,060</u>             | <u>31,923</u>                  | <u>66,455</u>  |
| At 31 December 2002      | <u>23,262</u>           | <u>8,727</u>              | <u>9,918</u>                   | <u>41,907</u>  |

| <b>8. Debtors</b>             | <b>2003</b>   | <b>2002</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                               | €             | €             |
| Other debtors and prepayments | 17,866        | 23,184        |
|                               | <u>17,866</u> | <u>23,184</u> |

| <b>9. Cash at bank and on hand</b> | <b>2003</b>    | <b>2002</b>    |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                    | €              | €              |
| Current accounts                   | 158,961        | 184,360        |
| Deposit accounts                   | 955            | 955            |
| Cash on hand                       | 140            | -              |
|                                    | <u>160,056</u> | <u>185,315</u> |

| <b>10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b> | <b>2003</b>    | <b>2002</b>    |
|---|----------------|----------------|
|   | €              | €              |
| Trade creditors   | 686            | 36,234         |
| PAYE / PRSI   | -              | 1,364          |
| Wages control   | -              | 6,562          |
| Deferred Income - grants receivable                       | 172,065        | 184,000        |
| Accruals  | 8,344          | 6,812          |
|   | <u>181,095</u> | <u>234,972</u> |

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

### 11. Taxation

The company has been granted exemption from taxation and this exemption has pertained since its incorporation.

| <b>12. Gross Cash Flows</b>                     | <b>2003</b>     | <b>2002</b>     |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
|   | €               | €               |
| Returns on investments and servicing of finance |                 |                 |
| Interest received                               | <u>95</u>       | <u>157</u>      |
| Capital expenditure                             |                 |                 |
| Payments to acquire tangible assets             | <u>(60,420)</u> | <u>(52,890)</u> |

### 13. Analysis of changes in net funds

|                          | <b>Opening<br/>balance</b> | <b>Cash<br/>flows</b> | <b>Closing<br/>balance</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
|                          | €                          | €                     | €                          |
| Cash at bank and in hand | <u>185,315</u>             | <u>(25,259)</u>       | <u>160,056</u>             |
| Net funds                | <u>185,315</u>             | <u>(25,259)</u>       | <u>160,056</u>             |

### 14. Controlling Party

The company is controlled by the Board of Directors.

### 15. Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved by the board on 7 February 2004 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr. John Ryan**  
Director

**Cllr. Patrick Nolan**  
Director











