

and lobbies on behalf of the sector and facilitates networking among members and supports their work.

AONTAS Community Education Network

The Community Education Network is a platform for community education groups within the AONTAS membership and it serves as a space for promoting community education and as a political platform for shaping policy. We have 3 meetings a year and over 110 community education groups/networks are members. We work from a strategic workplan that centres on three themes: resource, recognition and raise profile, with the production of Beyond the Classroom fitting into the latter theme. As part of this work we engage in dialogue with various academics and politicians regarding how we can improve the community education sector. We produce small scale research in order to support our advocacy work and we aim to develop partnerships with government departments, politicians, statutory providers and other NGOs in order to advance community education. For further information please see our community education network section of the website: <http://www.aontas.com/commed/networkcen.html>

Bios

Donnacha O'Briain

Donnacha Ó Briain is an award-winning documentary maker from Dublin. His directing credits include the Emmy-nominated 'The Seminary', the documentary 'Chavez: Inside the Coup' which won over 20 international prizes, as well as RTE's recent 2-part series 'The Rutland'. His work has been broadcast on RTE, BBC, ZDF, Al-Jazeera, and ARTE. He is a member of the Screen Directors Guild of Ireland.

Liam Kilbride

Liam Kilbride has extensive academic and practical experience of adult and community education. Currently the Education Development Officer with Presentation South East since 2001, he has acted

in roles such as lecturer and facilitator and has initiated a number of networks, partnered in EU Grundtvig transnational programmes and carried out evaluations of projects and national and international level.

Liz Waters

Liz has been involved in An Cosán for the past 14 years, first as a part time tutor, then Manager of the Community Education Centre at An Cosán in 1999 and community education since 2001. An Cosán is committed to the eradication of poverty through education. She has always worked in the community and voluntary sector, in residential childcare, community education, psychotherapy and then the Shanty. Liz is on the Executive Committee of AONTAS and the steering group of the Community Education Network.

Joe Murdoff

Joe is Founder and Development Director of (MAIN) Men Alone in No Man's Land. MAIN is a Community Based Men's Group (CBMG) that works with men one-to-one and in groups. MAIN promotes and encourage men's personal confidence and effectiveness, creates a threat-free, non-intrusive environment where men can feel welcome and belong, promotes men's health, training and security of tenure and helps men access other services as appropriate. Joe is on the steering group of the Community Education Network and is on the board of DCT



AONTAS

Adult Learners' Festival 2010

Learning Communities

Launch of 'Beyond the Classroom'

Wednesday 24 February,

1.00pm – 3.40pm

Lighthouse Cinema , Dublin

Beyond the Classroom

Beyond the Classroom is a set of three television programmes that provide an insight into the area of community education. The programmes have been produced by Dublin Community Television (DCTV) in partnership with the AONTAS Community Education Network from funds obtained through the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound and Vision programme. The programmes focus on the history of community education, examples of practice and the learners' perspective.

Background to the Project

As part of the ongoing relationship with AONTAS it was suggested in mid 2008 that DCTV and the AONTAS Community Education Network would be a good fit to explore a production project. This series, supported by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland sound and vision scheme is the most visible result of that partnership and seeks to bring the techniques, principles and potential of community education fully into view.

The television programmes will be broadcast on Dublin Community Television and will be made available for other community television stations both within Ireland and abroad.



These innovative, creative, critical, educational, and entertaining programmes that focus on real people and communities form the Beyond the Classroom series which not only capture the spirit of community education but also point a way for community television as it too is transformed by these important community education concepts.

Beyond the Classroom – The Television Programmes

1. Beyond the Classroom: The Practitioners

This programme attempts to capture the essence of the discussion around the practice and impact of community education here, today: Dublin in 2010. All involved in making it endeavored to create a useful tool for those who are seeking to develop their own practice and theory of community education.

Presented both as a 3 part series and a single, 'as live' document of the 90 minute conversation it offers a snapshot of the state of thinking about community education in Ireland. This is important television that has not only learnt about, but subsumed itself into the community education process and principles. From the round table set to the care and attention to their words from these inspiring educationalists and activists this is not television that talks down to an audience but rather an opportunity to consider some of the most important questions for our communities today.

2. Beyond the Classroom: Community Education in action

When it was proposed that Beyond the Classroom should consist of a 'history' of community education in Ireland – 'Whose History' was the first question. As community education is adopted by communities in response to their particular needs, it is also formed and shaped by the skills and resources of that community. Only by looking across multiple projects do the commonalities and principles come into view. The learner centred nature, the transformative project at the core of community education, the holistic approach to education. These four case studies span the last 30 years and provide an insight

into what community education is, how it has been used in the past by Dublin communities and the role of the networks which have developed to support community education.

The stories not only talk about community education though. They give us the stories of Dublin's Communities that are not often heard – the success stories where those central actors look back at what they have achieved, at how their work has transformed not only themselves but their communities. A message of strength and hope that is as relevant to a funder, government agency or educational institute as it is to a community or learner, these stories which start in the depths of another recession may be an important part of the answers we are looking to for many of today's most pressing problems.

3. Beyond the Classroom: The Learners' experiences

Within community education the gap between learner and practitioner is often absent. Not only did many of the practitioners in the previous discussion present themselves as ex or current learners but the process itself speaks of a journey, a partnership where everybody must be open to learnings and examination and 'reflexive' practices. However, framed as a communication from current learners to those who are considering doing a community education course this 45 minute TV programme deals with the issues that new and prospective learners face as they embark on this journey.

From the practical tasks around, for example, childcare and integrating community education with day to day life to the vital issues around identity and confidence – thinking of yourself as a learner and how to deal with this new role. Honest and approachable this programme is facilitated by Liam Kilbride as a community education session within itself. Not only are the words spoken by the participants important – but the supportive atmosphere and use of experiential learning techniques is demonstrated

by the participants.

DCTV invites centres to distribute this programme to prospective learners to support their consideration of whether to start on a community education course and the full series is being released under a creative commons licence to facilitate this.

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound and Vision Fund

Sound & Vision, the Broadcasting Funding Scheme was established to provide funding in support of high quality programmes on Irish culture, heritage and experience, and programmes to improve adult literacy. The Scheme has been in operation since 2005.

DCTV

Dublin Community Television (Channel 802) Dublin Community TV broadcasts to about 200,000 homes on Chorus: NTL 802. They broadcast a wealth of innovative, creative, and critical programmes that focus on real people and communities. Dublin Community Television fulfills its core mission by '... *providing affordable access to transmission, training, basic production equipment and facilities for a broad range of individuals, community groups and activists, and by broadcasting a wealth of innovative, creative, critical, educational, and entertaining programmes that focus on real people and communities in all their diversity from around the world.*'

AONTAS

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation, a voluntary membership organisation. It exists to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education which is accessible to and inclusive to all. The members of AONTAS who now number almost 600 include individual, organisational and associate members. AONTAS promotes the importance of adult and community education as a key part of lifelong learning. It influences the development of policy