

AONTAS

The Voice of Adult Learning



The role of community education for skills
development and social inclusion



AONTAS Community Education Conference
Thursday 17 November 2011
Radisson Blu Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8

Overview

Community education is non-formal, process-focussed learning that takes place in non-hierarchical settings, and offers opportunities for individual development, social analysis and in some cases social action.¹ In 2009 almost 60,000 learners participated in DES funded community education and AONTAS estimates a further 30,000 learners participated in programmes organised by independent community groups. The range of programmes includes: FETAC accredited courses mostly level 1 to 5, and non-accredited courses which build confidence to progress and access further learning.

Community education in Ireland has developed as a unique educational response to the diverse needs of adult learners, especially those who have gained least from formal education. It has developed strategies, approaches and supports to address the main obstacles facing adults accessing and participating in education and has a proven track record in engaging learners who are traditionally hard to reach. It is unique in that it meets the national policy priority for all learners, including targeting the most disadvantaged groups, at the qualification levels identified in the National Skills Strategy. It also has wider benefits for the learner, thus delivering a highly effective, responsive form of education provision. However because of its diversity and perceived lack of systematic structure it is often not well understood and still commands minimal funding, despite its success in attracting adults back to education.

This conference aims to address the challenges facing community education in the current context and explore strategies for sustaining and further developing a diverse, responsive community education sector with appropriate structures and funding. In meeting this aim 5 key objectives will shape an engaging, participatory and action-focused conference that will share best national and international practices.

The conference will:-

1. Demonstrate the value of a diverse community education sector
2. Inform and influence policy makers about the value, role and importance of community education as an integral part of the education system
3. Support community education practitioners in their work
4. Give a voice to learners in community education
5. Contribute to the development of a strategy for the structural development of the community education sector

The value of diversity in community education provision will be explored and its role as an equally important part of the education system will be promoted in order to gain greater recognition for the sector and commitment to its development. Community education cannot develop in isolation. Cooperation and partnership between educators across the education system is vital to support its role as a distinct form of learning but also one that supports learners to progress to further and higher education.

The key component to creating a sustainable community education sector is effective policy and structural development that draws on the expertise, strengths and vision of educators and learners. The conference will provide a space for dialogue between practitioners, learners and policy makers in order to collectively create partnerships for the integration of community education into the entire education system, and contribute to the development of a strategy for the structural development of the community education sector. The conference will also offer practical workshops for sharing learning approaches and models of practice on the most pressing issues facing community education.

Why attend?

- ✓ Learn from an international expert on lifelong learning and community education: Professor John Field
- ✓ Explore an international model of structural development for community education: Britten Mansson Wallin (The Swedish National Council of Adult Education)
- ✓ Benefit from practical workshops on evaluating outcomes, professional development, community education for social action, effective funding for community education and the power of community education learners
- ✓ Build relationships across the sector with policy makers, educators and learners
- ✓ Be a part of shaping a new policy document for governing and financing community education

Who should attend?

- Community education practitioners
- Community education learners
- Education policy makers
- Further education staff
- NGOs with a learning/social action agenda
- Community development practitioners
- Trade unions
- Universities
- Academics
- Researchers

CONFERENCE AGENDA

08.30

Registration

09.30

Overview of Conference

09.45

Opening Ceremony: Minister for Training & Skills, Ciaran Cannon TD

10.00

Panel Discussion: The Diversity of Community Education

10.30

Keynote 1: Professor John Field, University of Stirling

11.15

Exhibition with Coffee Break

11.45

Practical Workshops

Workshop A: Capturing the outcomes of community education

Workshop B: Continuous professional development for community education practitioners

Workshop C: Community education for social action

Workshop D: Effective funding for community education

Workshop E: Why choose community education? A learners' perspective

1.15

Lunch

2.15

Keynote 2: Britten Mansson Wallin, Secretary General,
The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

2.45

World café

3.30

Coffee break and entertainment

4.00

Keynote 3: Senator Katherine Zappone

5.00

Closing

Keynote speakers

John Field, Professor of Lifelong Learning and Co-Director of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling



John has a long-standing background of interest and involvement in lifelong learning. Much of his work throughout his career has involved developing second chance opportunities for non-traditional learners, as well as researching a range of aspects of adult learning. He teaches introductory sociology as part of the Adult Learning and Teaching programme, and serves as course director for the Master/Diploma in Educational Research. Externally, he serves as a Visiting Professor of Birkbeck College, University of London. He currently chairs the Advisory Board for the ESRC Research Centre on Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies (LLAKES), University of London. He served as a commissioner of the National Commission of Inquiry on the Future of Lifelong Learning.

Britten Mansson Wallin, Secretary General of The Swedish National Council of Adult Education



Britten Mansson-Wallin has been the Secretary General of The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) since 1994. The National Adult Education Council is a non-profit organization with national responsibility for government grants to study associations and folk high schools and for the monitoring and evaluation of activities. She is also a board member of the International Programme Office in charge of EU programs in Sweden and a member of the Långmanska Cultural Foundation, which provides support to the publication of books and research papers.

Senator Katherine Zappone



Dr. Katherine Zappone is an Independent Senator, appointed by Taoiseach Enda Kenny to the 24th Seanad. She is a Director of the Centre for Progressive Change, Ltd. and was appointed by the Minister for Justice to serve as a Commissioner on the Irish Human Rights Commission from 2001 to the present. Katherine is an educator and a passionate advocate for human rights. She taught ethics and practical theology for a decade in Trinity College, Dublin, has lectured widely throughout Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States and has written extensively on matters related to ethics, spirituality, education, equality and human rights. She is a Co-Founder of An Cosan, a large, community organisation committed to eradicating poverty through education. Katherine is a former Chief Executive of the National Women's Council of Ireland. She has published memoirs, 'Our Lives Out Loud: In Pursuit of Justice and Equality' (Dublin: O'Brien Press) with her married partner, Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan. Katherine holds a PhD in Education and Religious Studies from Boston College.

Workshops

A - Capturing the outcomes of community education

AONTAS members frequently cite the need for learning about methods of evaluating the outcomes of community education in their locale. In response to this request the workshop will explore experiences and methods for integrating evaluation techniques into daily practice.

B - Continuous professional development for community education

Community education practitioners come from diverse work experience backgrounds, this diversity adds to the richness of their practice however there is a need to support practitioners in terms of their knowledge of theory, practice and developments in community education. This practical workshop will explore the key concepts in effective continuous professional development of practitioners.

C - Community education for social action

This workshop will focus on exploring different experiences of a social action model of community education. By exploring case studies the workshop will centre on the role and value of this model and its impact on the individual, community and greater society.

D - Effective funding for community education

Since its establishment in 2007 the AONTAS Community Education Network has been working towards developing a proposal for an effective funding mechanism for community education through its research and position paper. The impact of funding on provision, potential and pitfalls of proposed models for funding community education will be explored.

E - Why choose community education? A learners' perspective

This learner-run workshop will focus on why learners access community education, how the delivery of community education differs from other education provision and the role learners can play in shaping and advocating for quality community education.

Booking Form

Making a Living: Making a Life - the role of community education for skills development and social inclusion
AONTAS Community Education Conference
Thursday, 17th November 2011

Venue

The conference will take place in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8. The venue is disability friendly. Please indicate on the booking form if you require the conference in sign language or any other special requirements.

Costs and booking details

The conference fee covers the costs of refreshments, lunch, conference materials and facilities only. All conference bookings must be accompanied by the full conference fee. Cheque/Postal Orders should be made payable to AONTAS or pay online at www.aontas.com/commed/conference2011. Payments can also be made directly to the bank, please contact dlarkin@aontas.com for further details. The conference will accommodate a maximum of 150 people so early booking is advisable as places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Closing date for booking is 28th October 2011.

Expenses

It is the policy of AONTAS to contribute towards essential childcare/eldercare costs for participants from community and voluntary groups. A limited fund for assistance with public transport costs is also available. Please indicate on the booking form if you require this support. We do not provide childcare/eldercare facilities but contribute towards the costs incurred while attending the conference. A claim form will be available on the day.

Conference Booking Form

Please type or print in block letters

First Name	Last Name
Organisation	
Address	
Email	
Phone Number	
Special Requirements (dietary etc)	

AONTAS Member:	(please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare/Eldercare:	(please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transport costs:	(please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Workshops:

Please indicate your choice of workshop in order of preference:

1 = first choice 2 = second choice

A: Capturing the outcomes of community education

B: Continuous professional development for community education

C: Community education for social change

D: Effective funding for community education

E: The role of community education learners

Conference Fees per Participant

The fee for members of AONTAS (individuals or small organisations) is €70 per person, but if you book before 7th October you will only pay €50 (that's a 30% saving).

The fee for members of AONTAS (medium/large organisations) is €140 per person, but if you book before 7th October you will only pay €100 (that's a 30% saving).

The fee for Non-AONTAS members is €200 per person, but if you book before 7th October you will only pay €150 (that's a 25% saving).

***If you join AONTAS before 7th October you can avail of the member rate.** Join now at www.aontas.com



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