

Visibility

- A set of television programmes on community education from the perspective of communities, practitioners and learners entitled "Beyond the Classroom"
- Community Education Network information leaflets
- History of the Community Education Network leaflet
- 13 national meetings of the CEN plus national and regional seminars

Value

- Community education research specifically involving members of the CEN "Sowing the Seeds of Social Change"
- Small scale research on the funding streams used by members of the CEN
 - A national conference dedicated to community education in 2011
 - Development of a clear definition of community education

Community Education Network Definition of Community Education

Community education is a process of personal and community transformation, empowerment, challenge, social change and collective responsiveness. It is community-led reflecting and valuing the lived experiences of individuals and their community. Through its ethos and holistic approach community education builds the capacity of groups to engage in developing a social teaching and learning process that is creative, participative and needs-based. Community education is grounded on principles of justice, equality and inclusiveness. It differs from general adult education provision due to its political and radical focus.



"It was a chance to meet new friends and learn from other members of my community"

"I have never felt such a sense of achievement and I'll never forget the support of the group"

"My personal satisfaction with engaging in education and thinking led me to gain employment in my local community"



How do I become a member

All AONTAS members are eligible to become members of the Community Education Network. Membership of the network is free and open to any AONTAS member that meets the criteria of being a local, self-managed, independent community education organisation that is committed to raising the profile of, and lobbying for, a community education sector that is committed to social change.

To find out more contact:

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Apply for membership online

The support regarding FETAC validation was wonderful. I even found other groups to submit a joint application - the meetings are a lifesaver!

AONTAS Community Education Network



AONTAS Community Education Network

The AONTAS Community Education Network was established in 2007, with almost 100 members from across Ireland it works to achieve a greater public understanding of the value of community education and has been recognised as a distinctly funded sector of the Irish Education system.

Why Become a Member of the AONTAS Community Education Network?

The AONTAS community education network meetings are the only space that draws together community education groups, from various backgrounds at national level. The action-focused meetings serve AONTAS members in a tailored method in order to support the development of a strong community education sector.



Benefits of membership and participation in AONTAS Community Education Network meetings are based on the 5 communities of action for the Network:

FETAC/BTEI support - Community of Support
Peer support, information exchange and shared learning with other community education groups regarding current changes and challenges facing the sector (e.g. changes in the BTEI funding process and the FETAC Common Award System)

Funding - Community of Advocacy
Identify and lobby for specific issues relating to community education including how community education should be effectively and sustainably funded.

Training - Community of Educators
Supporting continuous professional development for community education practitioners (e.g. free training to members and access to training resources)

Support - Community of Practice
Collective action for demonstrating the value and outcomes of community education (e.g. free training in measuring outcomes of community education)

Reflection - Community of Reflection
Facilitating discussion on community education in a changing context - how to maintain its role and ethos (e.g. community education conference/inputs at meetings)

Achievements of the AONTAS Community Education Network

Over the course of the 4 years of the CEN a number of tangible outcomes can be observed in addition to greater engagement, support and cooperation with, and between, community education groups. Achievements of the AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN) are outlined as per the AONTAS Strategic Plan, all documents are available to read online and include:

Voice

- A strong, cohesive, active network of community education practitioners
- An effective voluntary steering group to support the development of the Network
- A detailed evidence-based position paper on a funding mechanism for community education which was distributed to the Department of Education and Skills and promoted at the AONTAS conference on community education
- A suite of manifestos for community education organisations to support the changing needs of the sector
- Training Links programme on advocacy and training to support local election campaign (2009)

"Now I am more confident, it has opened up a new world to me... Thanks to my involvement in community education I am having the time of my life."