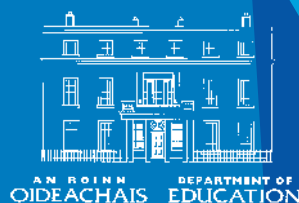


# REPORT ON THE AONTAS CONFERENCE





FAIRWAYS HOTEL, DUNDALK, CO. LOUTH  
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# LEARNER LEARNER



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# Introduction



*President Mary McAleese*

*“To be a citizen of Ireland is also to be a European citizen... The preamble to our European Union is a dreadful story of the Europe of the educated elites and the uneducated masses; a pre-democratic Europe that was vain, full of empires and vanities, of war and death and unspeakable cruelties. It was a world of massive, bullying egos, where people were really very, very dreadfully abused, where they crushed the dignity and the quality of human life in a stampede for power”*

**President Mary McAleese**

### **The European Year of Citizenship Through Education**

The 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, held in Athens in November 2003, sent out a clear message about the role of education in the emerging and expanding Europe. That message was that education must take cultural and social diversity into account, encourage intercultural learning and social inclusion, and provide quality education for all. The Athens Conference set managing diversity, intercultural education, and quality education as key education priorities.

The Council of Europe subsequently designated 2005 the European Year of Citizenship Through Education, to draw attention to how crucial education is to the development of citizenship and democratic culture. It was envisaged that the Athens priorities would guide the activities of the Year of Citizenship Through Education, undertaken across Member States. The ‘Year’ aimed to stimulate a general interest in education, citizenship and democracy, and strengthen the commitment of member states to put education for democratic citizenship into practice.

The designation of 2005 as the Year of Citizenship Through Education established a framework for actions to be taken at the level of Member States. This was envisaged as the beginning of a sustainable process to provide – in the broadest and most inclusive sense – education for democratic citizenship. In Ireland, a national coordinator was appointed to the Citizenship 2005 project – [Citizenship2005.ie](http://Citizenship2005.ie) – to promote, support and coordinate activities throughout the year.

## **The AONTAS Citizen Learner Conference**

AONTAS, the Irish National Association of Adult Education, saw the European Year of Citizenship Through Education as an opportunity to highlight how crucial adult and community education is to the development of citizenship, and to the quality of participation in Irish society. To mark the Year, AONTAS organised a ‘Citizen Learner’ conference on the role of lifelong learning in developing citizenship and civil society. The conference was also seen as an opportunity to contribute to national policy and practice.

### **Conference Rationale**

AONTAS recognises that the fundamental right to education has an enabling function in relation to the attainment of other rights. Its work is premised on the belief that education is a right that does not diminish with age or condition. Access to education is critical, not solely because it provides a key to economic security, but also because it is a key to respect, recognition and status, to the exercise of informed choice and, crucially, to sustaining a caring, inclusive and supportive community and society.

AONTAS is increasingly concerned that education policy in Ireland is being driven by the ever-expanding demands of the marketplace, to the detriment of the development of the whole human person. AONTAS understands adult education as a process of empowerment and growth that supports people to become active, analytical, questioning and caring in the complex modern age, and to sustain the essential qualities that enable us to take our full place in civil democratic society.

Ireland has learned the value of education in sustaining economic growth, and recent prosperity is evidence of that. Whilst no one would dispute the necessity of economic sustainability, strong resilient communities are equally essential to continuing prosperity. There appears to be markedly less elaboration of the democratic and civic outcomes from the education process, and markedly less emphasis on the empowering role of adult and community education, in a multicultural Ireland and in a global world.

Currently, it is estimated that six per cent of our population is now of non-Irish origin, and that future economic growth depends on Ireland continuing to be a destination of choice for immigration. This offers new opportunities to create a richly diverse and multicultural Ireland. It offers opportunities to address the challenges of tackling child poverty, integrating new ethnic groups and cultures, supporting migrant workers, addressing housing and health needs, and supporting our people to become confident and caring in the face of consumerism and individualism.

### Conference Objectives

The conference had four specific objectives:

- To explore the concept of citizenship and civil society in the context of a rapidly changing world
- To provide a forum for listening to and exchanging experiences of citizenship in Ireland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- To challenge adult educators, policy-makers and funders to think about how their work can contribute to the development of an inclusive civil society
- To explore ways in which lifelong learning can be a mechanism for the promotion and support of active citizenship

### Conference Proceedings

The conference was convened in Dundalk, Co. Louth on 11-12 May 2005. AONTAS provided interactive spaces within which conference participants could explore concepts of adult education and citizenship in an emerging and changing Ireland. Such spaces included an exhibition area, a keynote address, workshops, a panel of speakers, an open forum and a celebratory networking dinner.

This conference report clusters conference dialogue and exchange around three pivotal themes that emerged over those two days, interspersed with observations from keynote speakers and animators. These themes are citizenship, exclusion, and democracy.

*“What is our gift to the next generation? Is it going to be a peaceful and prosperous Europe of animated citizens, fully engaged with their own nations and with their Continent? We live now in the Europe of democracies, not in the Europe of the old empires. We have a shared belief in human rights. We believe in the equality of all humanity. We have opportunities now... to realise our potentials as individuals, as community, as country, and as continent, unheard of in other generations.”*

**President Mary McAleese**

*“We are fortunate that we have organisations like AONTAS, and the huge umbrella that it offers for organisations the length and breadth of the country, which are encouraging men and women to find their feet and to find themselves through second chance and through adult education... Through AONTAS... the rights of our citizens to access to education is honoured”*

**President Mary McAleese**

The report also summarises additional material from the conference proceedings in the section entitled ‘Critical Reflections’. The final section of the report sets out the adult education agenda for citizenship that emerged from the deliberations of conference speakers and participants. This agenda is in four parts: a citizen-learner agenda, an adult educator agenda, an AONTAS / civil society agenda, and a statutory agenda.

## **Section One: Conference Themes**

## Theme One: Citizenship

The concept of ‘Citizenship’ has its origins in radical and revolutionary understandings of the human person. The ‘citizen’ enjoys autonomy, dignity and self-respect as an individual, with all other citizens, within a society characterised by equality, justice and solidarity. ‘Citizenship’ places the human person in the context of a community or collective. The ‘citizen’ can only exist within a social and political world sustained by a citizenry.

*“Citizenship is a living and a life process – citizenship begins with birth, and ends with death. How we engage with our citizenship is another matter”*

**Dr. Eilis Ward, NUI Galway**



*Dr. Eilis Ward*

### Citizenship Contexts: From Local to Global

Some understandings of citizenship are caught up in attachment and loyalty to nationhood and membership of a nation state or particular geographical territory. This understanding of citizenship is narrow and restricting, and does not adequately fit or reflect the realities of contemporary experience. Modern life and social systems support the idea that citizenship is a reality at the global, as well as at the local, level. There is a growing awareness that global institutions, discourses and policy agendas impact on local life and action.

At a very basic level, most human rights and responsibilities are secured in international law, rather than in the laws of nation states. International trade agreements and markets determine socio-economic status and the basis of earning one’s livelihood. Culture, education and leisure are global processes.

All of this, together with the movement of peoples – of which we, in Ireland, have much experience historically and presently – supports the notion of citizenship as a global concept. This concept of global citizenship is valid in socio-economic terms, in culture and leisure terms, in historical terms and in terms of legally-secured rights and legislation. At this moment in history, the focal points of power no longer rest within national boundaries and with national governments. There is now increasing scope for global action as global citizens. Key sites for action exist beyond the parameters of national boundaries.

The women's movement was the first to seize the potential for action in this global context. One can look to the women's movement, and also to the environmental movement, as well as to the North-South 'Make Poverty History' global action campaign, for established modes of global citizen action. The slogan 'think globally, act locally' is being revisited. 'Think locally, act and advocate globally' might be a more useful mantra for today's citizens as learners, social activists and educators.

*"We live in a complex world and, if we want to advance social and economic justice, we have to recognise we have to act in our local and national contexts, but also have our eye and our understanding on global and international processes that affect our reality"*

**Kumi Naidoo, CEO, CIVICUS**

### **Citizenship Concerns: Pragmatic and Ethical**

Citizens have pragmatic concerns about their personal issues, related to their own sense of self-interest. Most also have ethical concerns with, and for, others, involving empathy, solidarity and justice.

Pragmatic citizenship is concerned primarily with personal needs, wants and desires, and the needs of those with whom we most immediately identify. Pragmatic concerns relate to how we understand our self-interest, and may be framed in relation to the day-to-day practicalities of life and short-term timeframes.

Ethical citizenship is concerned with a sense of the self with others, and how the self relates to others. It is to do with empathy, with a sense of justice, equality and rights and fairness, with a commitment to human flourishing and protection from harm for the other.

The pragmatic and the ethical citizenship concerns interlink and interconnect. In the modern global order, health, environmental, and economic issues are world issues involving us all, and cannot be addressed by any one community of citizens in isolation. Sometimes the concerns of ethical citizenship may bring us into conflict with local, national or international practices, norms or values that run counter to justice, equality and human rights. Citizenship concerns in both rich and poor countries involve tackling health issues, recognising that the viral diseases such as SARS and HIV/AIDS are no respecters of national or continental boundaries, and that poverty anywhere in the world has an impact on all our lives.



*Kumi Naidoo*

The environment, gender equality, health, and poverty are all global issues that concern citizens from pragmatic and ethical perspectives. Understanding our role as a global citizen, and the pragmatic and ethical concerns that motivate us, illuminates our exercise of citizenship at local level, and encourages us to build partnerships with other citizens and sectors, to pull our weight together, and to challenge the inequalities and injustices that impede the realisation of human potentials.

### **Expressions of Citizenship: Intrinsic and Engaged**

Citizenship is given with human life, and is not earned. Citizenship is a living and a life process – citizenship begins with birth and ends with death. In this sense, it is intrinsic to human life. We give expression to our citizenship through our engagement with life in many spheres – family, enterprise, local community, nationally and globally.

All kinds of factors influence our capacity to express our citizenship. Everyone, in one form or another, is an engaged citizen. Intrinsic and engaged citizenship are concepts that tolerate, and include, acts of resistance and transgression that may challenge the norms and understandings of the ‘good’ or ‘active’ citizen.

It is probable that, over a lifetime, all of us will move in and out of different forms of engagement with our citizenship. Whilst we may give expression to our citizenship in different forms throughout our life, our citizenship and our intrinsic rights remain constant.

*“The term ‘active’ citizenship is prescriptive. It suggests participation in a range of approved and laudable activities and its opposite is ‘passive’, which is undesirable and reprehensible”*

**Dr. Eilis Ward, NUI Galway**

## Education and Citizenship

Adult and community education can facilitate education for citizenship in important ways:



*Fintan O'Toole*

*“I was thinking of my own father, who was unable to read and write when he left school in inner-city Dublin in the 1940s. He learned to read from... taking part in amateur drama... and... becoming active in the Labour Movement... forcing himself to be educated in order to be able to participate”*

**Fintan O'Toole, Journalist**

- **Self-knowledge and reflective practice**

Adult educators need to be able to reflect critically on their formation as citizens. They need to be conscious of their own changing positions in relation to the contexts, concerns and expressions on the citizenship continuum. Educators need to know where they are coming from, and the influences that have expanded and constricted their understandings of citizenship. Adult educators need to be able to reflect on how their personal attitudes influence and inform their work.

- **A critique of ‘good’ citizenship**

It is not the task of an adult educator to prescribe, determine or assist the practices of ‘good’ citizenship. The concept of the ‘good’ citizen is often associated with uncritical compliance with handed-down notions from history, adherence to traditional values, and compliance with the politics of the day. The adult educator needs to be able to raise and pursue the questions that raise awareness across the citizenship continuum.

- **Promoting a healthy citizenship arena**

It is the task of an adult educator to have an understanding of how a healthy civic space, in which one can exercise citizenship, is constituted. Such a space can hold difference of opinion, and manage dispute. It can hold diverse moral perspectives and attitudes. It can

tolerate transgressions in the exercise and expression of citizenship, and protect citizens from harm in the expression of their citizenship. Essential skills for the expression of citizenship – such as deliberation across political, religious, moral and ethical difference, critical thinking, and the ability to interrogate and question and change our own views – can be taught within such spaces.

- **Considerations on citizenship**

Adult and community education offers spaces for adults to reflect on their circumstances, and opportunities to harness their talents and energies and to challenge oppression. Such reflection can include consideration of the different ways we make our contributions as citizens, and the ways we receive back from the collective of citizens, from society. Adult and community education can highlight that citizenship is a lifelong and a collective process, that being valued, respected and listened to is intrinsic to being a citizen, that citizens have a right to be informed, and that the language of social rights and social inclusion is part of the language of citizenship

- **Challenges to the equation of citizenship with consumerism**

Consumerism is an individualised process of product exchange with exact and precise transactions and the allocation of price and value. Citizenship is a collective process and is an expression of the collective, of commonality and solidarity. Citizenship is about variables and inclusion, about contributions depending on our means (in terms of taxes and other forms of contribution), and collection depending on our needs. The terms ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship’ have been co-opted from their revolutionary origins, and tamed and commodified to mean something precious and exclusive. Adult education has a social function in challenging this co-option. Adult education has a responsibility to prioritise the development of the citizen over the development of the consumer.

- **Programme Content**

Adult education can provide teaching in the knowledge of history, social theory, philosophy, how power is held, how laws are passed, the structures and systems of society and how these work – all of this is important information in understanding citizenship, and in the exercise of citizenship

- **The development of critical thinking**

Engaged citizenship depends on the capacity for critical thinking. Critical skills can be available to all, and can be taught. Critical thinking is the ability to:

- Question and interrogate views and values, including one's own
- Analyse structures of power
- Think about how the world and its problems and difficulties are structured, make suggestions and propose solutions
- Negotiate across different values and attitudes
- Put out one's own values for questioning and analysis
- Think and consider effects and outcomes before taking action
- Refuse to accept handed-down values, traditions and attitudes, without questioning their relevance, usefulness and meaning
- Challenge oppression that is presented under the guise of 'traditional values' or 'common-sense'
- Plan, take action, reflect, build confidence and learn

Adult and community education is an avenue to participation in local, national and international fora. It makes a contribution to the strengthening of civic space and the democratic process, and is an expression of citizenship.

Adult and community education can support an adult citizenry, who are educated, self-directed and confident, and engaged in the large and small issues of community and society.

*"We have to recognise... part of the vision and purpose of adult education has to be about creating opportunities for adult citizens to better understand the society they live in and giving them skills to participate more effectively in society."*

**Kumi Naidoo, CEO, CIVICUS**

## Theme Two: Exclusion

Gender, class, race and ethnicity, disability, age and sexual orientation interweave with each other, resulting in the characteristics of exclusion. Exclusion has a broad range of variable features that include having one's needs overlooked within a broader development agenda; isolation from services, structures and planning processes; and sustained negative portrayal of one's identity and community.

Exclusion results in diminished quality of life, including physical and mental health impacts, decent livelihood and employment impacts, self-esteem impacts, and diminished access to the wealth and prosperity of the local, national and global community.

Economic globalisation promised the uninhibited movement of goods, ideas, and technology, with the aim of delivering global progress and global prosperity. Instead, neo-capitalist globalisation has delivered a phenomenal growth in the gap between rich and poor countries, a widening gap between rich and poor within countries, increased poverty and lower standards of living in the developing world, and an unstable and unsustainable global order. The gap between North and South, and gap between rich and poor in rich countries ('the South in the North'), continues to widen, despite the rhetoric.

### **The Dynamics of Exclusion – Superiority, Entitlement and Violence**

The politics of the global economy and the marketplace create oppressive societies and exclusionary environments. Exclusion is a taught process that maintains itself by teaching some communities of citizens that they are superior to other communities of citizens, and that they have rights and entitlements that are deservedly theirs and that can rightfully be withheld from others.

The separation of different categories and communities of citizen from each other, and the manipulation of people in the interests of the maintenance of powerful elites, maintains such 'teaching'. Communities of ordinary people can be taught to perceive another community of ordinary people as a threat to their rights, entitlements and privileges, and to subsequently engage in acts of oppression and violence in order to protect such entitlements. Citizens can be manipulated and contained by being given a promise of superiority over another community of citizens. Citizenship can be reduced to the promotion of a sense of being one

*“Citizenship and Traveller does not sit or fit easily together – they are not on an equal footing, not treated equally, and something has to be done about this... When Travellers try to engage, there are many assumptions about who Travellers are, and where we are going... one being that we are going to become country people”*

**Michael McDonagh, Manager,  
Navan Travellers Workshop**

rung up the ladder over someone else. This form of citizenship can be given expression through hatred, bigotry and acts of violence against minority or subordinated communities.

The animator of one of the discussion spaces elaborated on how the process of exclusion works in both Northern Ireland and the Republic to maintain the exclusion of Travellers.

The Louth African Women's Association gave account of some of the challenges facing black women in a mono-cultural society. Having resisted the opportunities for multiculturalism and diversity presented by the Traveller culture, Ireland is now engaged in the politics of resistance to new forms of multiculturalism and diversity. Examples were also given from Northern Ireland.



*David Ervine MLA*

*“There were always reasons [within Unionism and Loyalism] for not engaging [with Nationalists]. Maybe when you have it all, you don't need to talk to anyone”*

**David Ervine, MLA**

Engagement in dialogue across difference is the essence of the democratic process. Notions of superiority and entitlement create a rationale for non-engagement in dialogue across difference. The power of perception that has been shaped by the politics and education of exclusion is such that it:

- Defines ‘the other’ as problematic or deficient in some way
- Determines how ‘we’ act towards ‘them’
- Moulds the services developed
- Infiltrates the manner in which those services are provided
- Maintains the inequality in status between various communities
- Puts the focus on sameness and rehabilitation, rather than on difference and diversity
- Presents the tackling of exclusion as insuperably difficult and problematic

### **Exclusion and the Culture of the Marketplace**

In the current global order, there is unrelenting emphasis on the economy and the marketplace. The economy is presented as the centre and driver of the social system.

The culture of the marketplace supports the dynamics of exclusion. Such a culture tends towards the promotion of understandings of the human person as consumer, worker or client, rather than as engaged citizens, imbued with a sense of solidarity with others and with an understanding of our global shared citizenship. It tends to support a culture that equates education with employment, with income levels and, thus, with the enhanced purchasing power of the consumer. The culture of the marketplace tends to diminish understanding and respect for the range and variety of collective contribution by citizens to society, beyond earning and buying power.

Within the culture of the marketplace – with its emphasis on skills for work and skills for life – adult education can become a process for supporting the development of dutiful, rather than engaged and informed, citizens. Instead of addressing serious social issues, adult education can be steered towards fostering a feel-good factor, combined with a lot of managerial activity. Adult education can be co-opted and integrated into servicing the capacity of the economy to generate profit for the few, fuelled by the work of many.

There is a process of reshaping adult education happening that:

- Views education as a mode of reception and transmission of skills and attitudes useful to the economy
- Promotes education as a support to the consumer, rather than as a support to an engaged citizenry
- Promotes the role model of the consumer, the purchase of a product, and the payment for passive consumption as a determinant of the ways in which people are expected to relate and interact with the system generally and with adult education
- Promotes notions of society as a marketplace and an economy over considerations and understandings of participative social democracy

An alternative understanding of an economy as part of the social system, working in the service of society and the human and social development of a sustainable social order, is increasingly marginalised or absent in public discourse.

### **Education and Challenges to Exclusion**

Education that is about challenging exclusion, and contributing to building more inclusive and democratic understandings of citizenship, has to be prepared to challenge any notion of a hierarchy of citizens. Such education has to be about taking apart the notions of superiority, entitlement, and the divisions being promoted – unpacking what ‘having it all’ actually constitutes. Such education has to be about building the confidence and the capacities central to citizenship.

*“Products are delivered to consumers with activity focused on counting, measuring and monitoring the products, rather than exciting people, firing their imaginations and righting wrongs”*

**Jane Thompson, Adult Educator**



*Jane Thompson with John Ryan, President of AONTAS*

Adult and community education – with its life enhancement, educational, political and social purposes – is one of the keys to unlocking the oppressions of exclusion. Adult educators and learners can challenge the politics of exclusion through:

- Building inclusive education provision in partnership with communities of citizens
- Supporting mutual respect, listening, and recognition of difference
- Prioritising community-building processes, and recognising the importance of funding and resources in these processes
- Encouraging and facilitating engagement with a range of understandings and expressions of citizenship
- Providing opportunities for learning about democracy, diversity and human rights, and recognising the power of knowledge as a currency in the knowledge society
- Challenging the focus on adult education solely for the market economy
- Generating hope in a more inclusive and diverse society through creating and facilitating experiences that bind people together, that offer mutual reinforcements and opportunities to share in the celebration of each other’s struggles
- Reflecting on the inherent potential for empowerment and politicisation in education, and consciously linking education to the real struggles and issues in people’s lives locally and globally
- Creating linkages with other educators, communities of learners, NGOs, policy-makers and funders, who share similar visions and aspirations

Adult and community education is education that keeps its focus on empowerment through group solidarity and co-operation, collective participation in decision-making processes, the insertion of human rights perspectives, recognition of community, and the generation of policy and practice lessons in addressing exclusion. It supports and resources dynamic models of personal, social and community development, and challenges discrimination.



*Sile de Valera TD*

*“Social cohesion, within an adult education perspective, should be viewed as a dynamic political process in which excluded and marginalised people are individually and collectively supported and resourced towards securing a greater share of the national and collective wealth and well-being”*

**Sile de Valera TD,  
Minister of State for Adult Education**

## Theme Three: Democracy

Commitment to inclusion is the bedrock of democracy. The authority of democracy and the democratic mandate for governance depend on inclusion and participation. Political participation is about the democratic rights of citizens to inclusion in shaping the political process. The exercise of the right to vote is only one part of a cycle of political participation in democratic governance. Democracy is citizenship-driven and civil society, the media, and adult and community education all have vital functions to perform in the service of citizenship and democracy.

### Civil Society and Democracy

The potential development of civil society as a social resource that serves democracy is shaped by the changing nature of community, shifts towards more participative and inclusive forms of democracy, the challenge of globalisation and the risks, as well as the potential associated with information technology and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy.

Civil society can only serve democracy when it is imbued with a democratic and inclusive vision of the kind of society in which we want to live. Those engaged with the issues of citizenship and democracy have to be able to give coherent and inclusive answers to the question: What kind of a world are we working for?

Answers to such a question might include:

- The economic and social progress of those communities of citizens that are most marginalised
- A reconsideration of our understanding of ‘minorities’, and a recognition that women, young people, the aged, those with the HIV / AIDS virus, the Roma and Travelling communities – supposed minorities – taken together constitute the majority in any country and in the world
- A conceptualisation of the world rooted in understandings of the human person as relational and interconnected with others and with their environment
- A recognition that the kind of society in which we live – characterised by inequality, poverty, injustice and marginalisation, great disparities in power and influence between genders and classes, the prevalence of violence, the tacit acceptance of the culture of violence, including ‘domestic’ violence and other forms of violence against women – is not in fact a ‘normal’ or desirable society in which to live
- A reframing of relationships away from a paternalism, which talks about beneficiaries, charity, victims, and recipients, to renewed perspectives, understandings and experiences of relationships that recognise and respect our equality as citizens and our equality in terms of rights

- A reframing of understandings of security – personal, local and global – away from the rhetoric of ‘the war on terror’ and towards holistic and inclusive understandings of human security rooted in freedom from hunger, homelessness, poverty and violence
- Challenges to the co-option and manipulation of the language of security, freedom and democracy to support engagement in activities that manifestly do not reflect the wishes and understandings of the great majority of global citizens and that lead us to greater global fragmentation and disunity
- Commitment to addressing terrorism and global security through the creation of a global order where everyone has a stake, a voice and material benefits accruing from that order.

*“There are 900 refuge spaces in Northern Ireland, and they are always full of women whose domestic conditions are such that it is better and safer for them to leave their homes. And there is not a word about this form of violence. Were 900 families unsafe in their homes because of political violence and intimidation there would be an outcry, and it would constitute a crisis”*

**David Ervine, MLA**

### **The Media and Democracy**

Reflections on the ‘war on terror’, on what constitutes a normal society, and the potential for linkages across civil society encourage consideration of the relationship between citizens, the media, and access to the range and diversity of information that people need to be literate and informed on any issue.

The media have an important role to play in fostering democracy and citizenship. That role includes the presentation of information that is useful and usable, and that comes from a range of viewpoints and sources, the capacity to make a contribution to national and international ‘conversations’ on relevant issues, and a responsibility to facilitate citizens’ engagement with the media as part of the democratic process.

The vital public role of the media in relation to citizenship and democracy is recognised in the legislation that governs the media. Citizens have a stake in both State and privately owned television and radio, through the granting and distribution of public licenses. However, within the culture of the marketplace and the culture of consumerism, the media are allowed to operate as though they were a set of private institutions. It is not required to have real engagement with the public about what information is gathered and how – from what sources and the agendas of those sources – how information is presented, and to what uses it may be put. The media often paper over difference, diversity and distinctions, and do not fully reflect the scale and the nuances of a debate. Access to information relevant to citizenship, how that information is constructed, and whether the information is designed to be engaged with or to be consumed are central considerations for democracy.

## Education and Democracy

Education is inextricably linked with the processes of a strong civil society, a critical and engaged public, and richer, more inclusive and more diverse expressions of democracy.

Adult and community education involves fostering linkages across sectors with a focus on the commonalities in the work of strengthening civil society and participative democracy. It is about using the knowledge, information, materials, resources and people power of civil society in the adult and community education process. Coordination, coherence and synergy are all essential components of shifts to justice and equality, locally and globally, through an education process that includes lobbying and advocacy work.

For adult educators, this means making connections with other civil society organisations through curriculum content, outreach, literacy, and education across a whole range of social issues, which can include HIV / AIDS, drugs and alcohol and health issues, domestic violence and community development. It means an inclusive and interconnected view of the world and one's work within that world. From that comes the inclusive methodology of how one goes about one's work, who we link up with, and how we use language that attracts, that includes, that builds awareness, that communicates dignity and respect.

A key political issue for adult education is the erosion of participative democracy through a distorted emphasis on the marketplace and the economy, and the promotion of a consumer culture as a goal and end in itself. Adult education for life is critical to economic survival – it is neither a luxury nor an add-on. Adult and community education can serve both the needs of a participative democracy, and a viable and thriving economy. Education that cannot serve democracy will not serve the new economy, which needs creative engagement to drive economic progress. There is scope and space for critical dialogue about how education processes for democratic participation, and for struggle, serve the economic future. A political agenda remains to be shaped around these themes.

*“Adult Education is a huge potential resource for continually reinventing and refashioning democracy, and supporting civil society’s struggles against poverty, inequality and social injustice”*

**Jane Thompson, Adult Educator**

## **Section Two: Critical Reflections**

Critical reflections on adult education, citizenship and democracy, and on the resourcing of adult and community education provision to support citizenship and democracy and challenge exclusion permeated the Conference.

### **Adult Education**

Adult Education supports stepping-stones to inclusive citizenship. Such steps may include working with diverse groups and individuals to strengthen their capacity to participate and to be heard. The road to genuinely participative democracy is a long one, and there needs to be recognition and resources for the long-term processes of adult education. Adult education contributes to opening society to new understandings of community, and to inclusion, multiculturalism and diversity, rather than separatism. Building community and cultural identities, and supporting diversity within a democratic and participative vision for society, creating sites for reflection on community, the process of change, and diversity and the emergence of new understandings of multiculturalism and integration, citizenship and democracy are all integral to the process of adult education.

### **Citizenship**

Citizenship is collective and human-rights based. However, the specific local or national context within which citizenship is exercised is an important determinant in whether human rights are respected. Therefore, citizenship is a site of struggle – it is contested and conflictual.

This is the situation in Ireland. Following the outcome of the citizenship referendum in 2004, ‘citizenship’ is a legally-defined and constitutionally-protected constricting and exclusionary term. This presents additional challenges for adult educators and civil society organisations dedicated to building collective and human-rights based understandings of citizenship. An understanding of our global citizenship can be supported through exposure to other cultures and to new ways of understanding and seeing the world.

### **Democracy**

The world has shifted in shape and structure as part of the process of globalisation. However, as citizens, we may not have yet fully absorbed or given shape and meaning to that shift in our daily and public lives. Non-governmental organisations are leading and energising the adult education debate on active citizenship. More adult educators, and more policy-makers and funders, need to think beyond programme administration and organisation and into the issues of equality, democracy and global citizenship. More emphasis on rights-based work, and harnessing the resources and the power of the media, is relevant to adult education for citizenship and democracy.

### **Resourcing Adult and Community Education for Citizenship and Democracy**

The focus and the systems for the public funding of the adult and community education sector may, in recent years, have exerted a conservative influence on the work of the sector, and weakened resolve to challenge exclusion and injustice in society. Adult education needs public funds to deliver a public service and, as a society, we should expect that money paid in tax is re-invested in public services. It is perfectly appropriate that such money should come back to people in the form of adult and community education. What is problematic is that ‘public’ money often returns with particular ties, structures and ideologies attached to it. It is these attachments that need to be challenged and addressed, rather than access to and use of public resources to serve the public services. The structures and ideologies that accompany public funding can constrict the space for participative and democratic action.

Often the resourcing of adult and community education, as a process to support human and social development, is crisis-driven, piece-meal, and on a pilot rather than mainstream basis – temporary rather than dedicated. Resources for the sustained long-term work of social inclusion are undercut in the name of economic rigour and efficient use of public resources. There is no valid social or economic rationale in systems that force people who want to be engaged in human and social development to be so preoccupied with financial survival that ‘a begging bowl culture’ permeates their work.

The discourses that justify under-investment in adult education need to be consistently challenged, and new discourses shaped that recognise that investment in educationally aware adults is essential to maximise investment in children’s education, because adults play a key role in creating an educationally nurturing environment for their children. The knowledge base of parents and communities, and their understanding of the education system, is a key factor in determining a child’s likely progress through education. Investment in adult education is equally critical within an ever-changing and unpredictable world order, within the fluid emerging understandings of global citizenship and the emergence of the knowledge-based social order. Investment in adult education is an investment in supporting and strengthening the democratic process locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Section Three: Where to Next?  
Moving Forward from the  
European Year of Citizenship  
Through Education**

## Where to Next?

*“Adult education is about reshaping democracy to allow people to participate and to shape what they participate in”*

**Conference Participant**

Peace and security can only be built on the foundations of equality, diversity and inclusion. The conference proceedings left no doubt that the only alternatives to inclusion, equality, participation and democracy are violence, bigotry, racism, hatred, oppression, human misery, suffering and war.

Ireland, in common with other countries around the world, has experience of the suffering and oppression that emanates from societal systems and national and international relations that lack justice, equality, transparency, accountability and solidarity. This new millennium is already so visibly marked by poverty, injustice, violence, and the culture of death. These painful alternatives to genuine peace and security are real and current in Ireland, in Europe and around the world. Such alternatives are not a viable option for human life and society.

The essential finding that emerged from the AONTAS Citizen Learner Conference 2005 was that adult education is a process of human and social development integral to the exercise of citizenship, to the strengthening of democracy, and to the building of sustainable peace and security in society.

Threaded through the conference addresses, workshops, and discussions were a series of challenges, proposals, and recommendations concerning citizen-learners as adult education participants, educators, policy makers, activists and funders. This report identifies four agendas, which address four interrelated communities of citizen learner:

- The adult learner
- The adult educator
- AONTAS and civil society organisations
- Government, the State and funders

Taken together, these four agendas contribute to inclusive understandings of citizenship, challenge exclusion, and support participative democratic governance. These Citizen Learner agendas

allow adult education to realise its potential as an agent of human and social transformation, and to contribute to analysis and awareness of education, citizenship and democracy locally, nationally and internationally.

Education – shaped, resourced, and driven by these agendas – has a role to play in tackling injustices and in building the conditions for genuine peace and security in society.

*“The spaces within systems that feel oppressive have to be occupied. They have to be used imaginatively and creatively and subversively, until those spaces are prised open again and contribute to the process of change... If you are intending to have a fairer world and a more just world, then those are the spaces you have to operate in... You have to crack them open in alliance with others who feel the same”*

**Jane Thompson, Adult Educator**

## The Citizen Learner Agenda For The Adult Learner



*Delegates at the Conference*

*“Adult education has to focus on supports to the development of the citizen, not the development of the consumer”*

**Conference Participant**

As a citizen adult learner, you:

- Become expert on your own life, tap into your own life story and experiences as a powerful educational resource, and take opportunities to reflect on your own development as a citizen
- Believe in the power of fun and enjoyment in education
- Believe that anyone, of any age, can re-enter learning and no-one is too old to learn
- Expect from others, and offer to others, mutual respect, the capacity to listen, equality of participation, and recognition of difference
- Respect all the varied and multiple starting points and reasons for participation in adult education
- Take personal responsibility, as part of the collective, for the creation of a society of equals
- Believe that adult education is a right and an expression of citizenship
- Believe that adult education is a form of participation in community life
- Believe that adult education is a space to think about how we are all part of the global picture and the global world

*“Thousands of men and women have found in adult education a place of welcome, a place of respect, and an opportunity to journey both into themselves and into a new kind of life for themselves”*

**President Mary McAleese**

## The Citizen Learner Agenda for the Adult Educator

*“Adult education promotes the taking of an active role in shaping the overall direction of society and engaging proactively in community and societal decision-making”*

**Sile de Valera TD, Minister of State for Adult Education**

As a citizen adult educator, you:

- Create a place of welcome, equality and respect for adult learners
- Give people the opportunity to articulate their own stories and experiences; stories are a fundamental connecting tool in creating community, and story-telling has a vital role in sustaining community
- Reflect – through these stories – on how people’s lives and attitudes are transformed
- Understand how people learn and how attitudes shift
- Take a personal sense of responsibility for the creation of a society of equals
- Make shifts in curriculum content to cover issues relevant to people’s lives locally and globally, so as to maximise linkages with real issues, as well as achieving educational and literacy goals
- Become part of the knowledge and skills networks, access this learning, harness experience and reflect on all the knowledge and innovation that is around us
- Engage in dialogue, planning, and coordinated delivery with other adult educators and community and civil society organisations
- Create and maintain linkages and connections across community and civil society with like-minded others who support your work
- Are aware of how you are part of replicating cultures of exclusion, restriction, conformity and confinement
- Reflect on your practice – take space to analyse and reflect on your work in dialogue with others
- Consider whether your education practice is supporting the development of the citizen or the development of the consumer
- Assess practice on a continuum, from education for a market economy through to education for global citizenship and participative governance, and make changes that shift practice along that continuum

- Aim for participative, self-educative and collective experiences within the education process
- Resist and challenge solely technocratic forms of accountability
- Distinguish between the managerial task of grading and codifying experience and the educator's task of facilitating exploration of the meaning, significance and relevance of experience
- Communicate success – collect and tell stories of success and stories of transformation

*“Not everything that counts can be measured, and not everything that can be measured counts”*

**Albert Einstein**  
**(as quoted by Kumi Naidoo,**  
**CEO, CIVICUS)**



*President Mary McAleese with members of the Louth African Women's Group  
at the Conference Exhibition*

## The Citizen Learner Agenda for AONTAS and Civil Society Organisations

*“Adult education evolved from the local groups, and we must always remember that. The whole heart of what adult education is comes from the community itself and, after all, it is there to support members of that community”*

**Sile de Valera TD, Minister of State for Adult Education**

As a citizen member of a civil society organisation, you:

- Work to encourage professional and personal cooperation across organisations
- Ensure a higher profile for adult and community education as a human and social process for citizenship, inclusion and democracy
- Become a source of information, and encourage the energetic and informative exchange of ideas
- Are a model of open discussion and transparency for wider society
- Maintain a clear-sightedness on the issues of gender and recognition of women’s leadership as the engines, drivers, workers, educators, curriculum developers, and grass roots activists in the adult education and early childhood education movements (and recognition that, although they make up 90 per cent of the grassroots global activism on these issues, they are not represented proportionally at the higher levels of the decision-making process)
- Challenge the donor-driven or funder-driven environment that undermines the pedagogy of adult education, and resist the reframing of the language of education into the language of the marketplace (particularly when the use of such language is a prerequisite for funding)
- Link up at the interfaces between adult education and education processes, such as early childhood development, and formal, informal and civil education, and invest in the potential for connectedness
- Promote inclusion. Start with the question: Who is not at the table? and make linkages from there
- Become active within a European context and within the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) on policy and resources
- Respect community and the importance of community-building processes, funding and resources

- Encourage participation. Progress for the greatest number depends on participation, and knowledge is one of the keys to participation
- Engage in policy work on diversity, equality and inclusion
- Work for enhanced status for adult education, and recognition that its processes and methodologies have a significant contribution to make in wider public and political life

*“Today the language of adult education is more likely to be about modules, credits, levels, outputs, inputs and indicators. There is scope and space for critical dialogue about how education processes for participation, for activity, and for struggle serve the economic future – a political agenda could be shaped around these themes”*

**Jane Thompson, Adult Educator**

## The Citizen Learner Agenda for Government, State and Funders

*“Education that cannot serve democracy will not serve the new economy that needs creative engagement to drive economic progress”*

**Fintan O’Toole, Journalist**

As a citizen policy-maker or funder, you:

- Recognise that adult education can support the development of cohorts of leaders who bring creative answers to the problems and challenges of modern society
- Take up fully the role and responsibility of Government, through the Department of Education, to facilitate and resource the citizen learner agendas and the provision of adult and community education
- Prioritise adult education for personal and social development
- Profile and resource non-formal and informal education in order to maximise innovative contributions to citizenship and democracy through adult and community education
- Recognise and resource citizenship as real and meaningful participation in society
- Be transparent about funding priorities and the rationale for those priorities
- Work together, across Government departments, to focus on challenges to all forms of exclusion, and to allocate resources to tackle barriers to participation
- Encourage systems of accountability, transparency and value for money in adult education that prioritise the human and social processes of adult education as distinct from the labour needs of a market economy
- Recognise the importance of the European context of citizenship and participative democracy
- Address global challenges in relation to poverty and to building equality and inclusiveness

*“What we are talking about is giving everyone the same opportunity, not only to participate in, but – indeed – to set the political agenda for the future. Adult education has that function as a participative and empowering process, which strengthens the democratic system”*

**Síle de Valera TD, Minister of State for Adult Education**

# Conclusion

## Future Work on Citizenship

Since the AONTAS Citizen Learner conference in May 2005, the organisation has participated in a number of activities to mark the European Year of Citizenship Through Education. A DVD has been produced to accompany this Report, and special citizenship case studies have featured in the AONTAS E-Bulletin and on the organisation's website, [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com), highlighting the work of AONTAS members in the promotion of active citizenship

In November 2005, representatives of the organisation attended the sixth annual conference on Citizenship Through Education in England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This took place in Dublin, and provided AONTAS with an opportunity to measure developments in citizenship education since its own conference earlier in the year.

Over the coming months, the organisation intends to feed the findings that emerged from the Citizen Learner conference to policy-makers in Ireland. The organisation hopes to meet with key policy-makers to discuss the future direction of policy in relation to adult education and the promotion of active citizenship. AONTAS also hopes to do some work on the theme of active citizenship before the next General Election, encouraging members to participate in the democratic process by lobbying politicians and voting. AONTAS will also continue to advocate the benefits of citizenship through education to all those involved in the adult education sector. Policy updates on citizenship through education work will be included on the AONTAS website.

# Appendices

## Appendix One: Conference Programme

	<b>Wednesday 11 May</b>
1.00-3.00pm	Registration and Light Lunch
3.00-3.15pm	Welcome and Introduction: Berni Brady, Director, AONTAS
3.15-4.00pm	Opening Address: President Mary McAleese
4.00-5.00pm	Citizenship in Action: Demonstration of practice in developing and supporting the citizenship agenda by multicultural and community projects. Interactive space
7.00pm	Conference Dinner
	<b>Thursday 12 May</b>
8.45 - 9.45 am	Registration
9.45 - 10.00 am	Welcome and Opening: Síle deValera TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science
10.00 - 11.00am	Plenary Session Chair: Berni Brady, AONTAS Theme: A Global Perspective on Citizenship and Civil Society Key Speaker: Kumi Naidoo, Chief Executive Officer, CIVICUS, World Alliance for Citizen Participation
	<i>Open Forum</i>
11.00 - 11.30 am	Coffee Break
11.30 - 1.00 pm	Discussion Groups: Active Citizen Stories

1.00 - 2.30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.30 - 3.30 pm	Plenary Session Chair: John Ryan, president, AONTAS Theme: Learning Active Citizenship Panel Discussion: Jane Thompson, Research and Development Officer, NIACE Eilis Ward, Lecturer in Women's Studies, NUI Galway Fintan O'Toole, Columnist Kumi Naidoo, CIVICUS
3.30 - 4.15 pm	Closing Address: David Ervine, Progressive Unionist Party
4.15 pm	Conference Close

## Appendix Two: Conference Speakers

### David Ervine

David Ervine was born in Belfast in 1953. He left school in his mid-teens with few qualifications, but continued his education while serving a prison sentence in the 1970s. David then became involved in politics, and played a key role in securing the loyalist ceasefires of 1994 and in the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. He is leader of the Progressive Unionist Party and a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, which is currently in suspension. He has been a member of Belfast City Council since 1997.

### Kumi Naidoo

Kumi Naidoo is Secretary General and CEO of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, an international alliance of civil society organisations dedicated to strengthening citizen participation and civil society worldwide. Kumi was previously the founding director of the South African NGO Coalition, during which time he served on the task team to draft new NGO legislation. He has also worked extensively in adult education and social and economic justice work in South Africa, and has published several articles on NGOs, civil society and youth and resistance politics.

An ANC activist since a very young age, Kumi was expelled from school at 15 for his anti-apartheid activities and subsequently went into exile for some years. He returned to South Africa in the early 1990s, and was centrally involved in the first democratic elections in 1994.

Kumi holds a doctorate in political science from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He currently serves as Chairperson of the Partnership for Transparency Fund, which supports civil society efforts to eradicate corruption, and is a Board member of the Association for Women's Rights in Development. He has been appointed by the UN Secretary General to the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN Civil Society Relations, and he also chairs the International Facilitation Group of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, which held joint civil society mobilisations around trade, debt and aid in 2005.

### Fintan O'Toole

Fintan is an author, critic and columnist with The Irish Times. He has written extensively on Irish culture, politics and economics and explored the concept of identity in post-modern Ireland. His works include *Ex-Isle of Erin: Images of a Global Ireland* (1997), *The Lie of the Land: Irish Identities* (1998), and *After the Ball: Ireland after the Boom* (2003).

**Jane Thompson**

Jane Thompson is Research and Development Officer at NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in the UK. She has considerable experience of teaching and writing about educational policy and practice, especially in relation to education for social change. At NIACE, Jane works on issues related to social exclusion, active citizenship, neighbourhood renewal and cultural action. Before joining NIACE in 2000 she worked at Ruskin College Oxford and the University of Southampton. She is an honorary research fellow at the University of Warwick, and an external examiner in adult and community education at the National University of Ireland and Glasgow University.

**Eilis Ward**

Dr. Eilis Ward is a lecturer in Women's Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has a particular interest in politics and participation, especially women's political participation, and has researched and written extensively on this issue both in Ireland and internationally. Eilis is currently involved in the development of Civil Social and Political Education studies for the school curriculum, and has authored a number of articles on issues of human rights, foreign policy and development education.

## Appendix Three: Facilitators, Animators & Reporter

### Conference Facilitators

Liam Bolger  
Nóirín Clancy  
Bríd Connolly  
Emer Dolphin  
Christy Duffy  
Susan Dunne  
Niamh Keaveney  
Oonagh McArdle  
June Meehan  
Elva O’Callaghan

### Conference Animators

Benedicta Attah, Local Election Candidate, Dundalk  
Majda Bne Saad, Director of Development Studies Centre, University College Dublin  
Michael McDonagh, Navan Travellers Workshop  
John Murphy, Ballymun Men’s Centre  
Simon Ó Croinin, Health Services Executive / Rathcairn Gaeltacht  
Mairead O’Reilly, Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann, Inis Óirr  
Donal Toolan, Disability Activist / Democracy Commissioner  
Dorothy Walker, Deirdre Reid and Ann Malone, Fatima Groups United, Dublin 8  
Paul Yam, Wah Hep Chinese Community Association / Northern Ireland Equality Commission  
Naveed Yosuf, Islamic Foundation of Ireland

### Conference Reporter

Eleanor McClorey

## Appendix Four: Exhibitors

Áit na nDaoine

AONTAS

Clondalkin Women's Network

Drogheda Daycare Centre

Dundalk Media Centre

Irish Wheelchair Association

Johnny K.

Léargas

Learning Disabled

Louth African Women's Group

Louth County Enterprise Board

Louth Vocational Education Committee

Non-formal Adult Education in Flanders

Redeemer Centre for Ongoing Learning

Tara Education Centre

## Appendix Five: Conference Participants

Katrien Allaert, Werknemerswelzijn	Monica Cassidy, Larkin Centre
Aoibheann Barnes, Catherine McAuley Centre	Yves Chavanne, Blanchardstown Men's Outreach Project
Brian Barrett, Galway County Council	Úna Clancy, Women Together Tallaght
Denis Barrett, AONTAS Executive	Regina Clarke, Redeemer Centre for Ongoing Learning
Bernadette Beatly, Rowlagh Women's Group	Liv Colonne, Sociumi
Seán Beirne, Co. Roscommon VEC	Brid Connolly, Honorary Secretary, AONTAS
Brian Bennett, Institute of Technology Carlow	Mary Connolly, Tara Education Centre, Co. Louth VEC
Tom Berkery, North Tipperary County Council	Margaret Connors, Southside Travellers Action Group
Pdraig Bishop, Action South Kildare	Sally Connors, Southside Travellers Action Group
Martha Bolger, Co. Kilkenny VEC	Johanna Connors, Southside Travellers Action Group
Breda Bollard, The Web Project	Mary Connors, Southside Travellers Action Group
John Bonham, Co. Laois VEC	Peter Considine, South East Regional Authority
Kathleen Bonner, Second Chance Education Project for Women	Joan Courtney, Tralee Women's Resource Centre
Noel Bourke, Co. Offaly VEC	Kieran Coyne, Galway County Council
Damien Brennan, Co. Leitrim VEC	Bruno Craps, Toemeka
Deborah Brock, Tallaght Partnership	Seán Creamer, North Tipperary VEC
Bernie Broderick, Duagh Family and Community Resource Centre	John Cronin, Limerick City Council
Karen Bunyan, Waterford Institute of Technology	Seán Crowe TD, Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Education
Mary Butler, Co. Kilkenny VEC	Seán Cunnane, Co. Kildare VEC
Mary Byrne, Senior Citizens Action Forum	Lorraine Cunningham, DAWN Drogheda
Catherine Byrne, Dun Laoghaire VEC	Eileen Curtis, Co Kilkenny VEC
Ann Cannon, Southside Women's Action Network Ltd.	Philip Daly, Lourdes Youth & Community Services
Des Carlan, Higher Education & Training Awards	Anna Dangerfield, AONTAS Executive
John Carr, Irish National Teachers' Organisation	Pauline Davy, Southside Women's Action
Gill Casey, Waterford Institute of Technology	

Network Ltd.	(Core VTOS)
Gert De Coorde, UPV-VUB	Michael Fox, Co. Offaly VEC
Nele De Kock, Vormingplus Mechelen	Crona Gallagher, Co. Donegal VEC
Susan de Solden Hoff, Co. Carlow VTOS	Robbie Gallagher, Monaghan County Council
Griet Debussche, Vormingplus Antwerpen	Maureen Gannon, National Learning Network, Monaghan
Tony Deffely, Teachers Union of Ireland	Stuart Garvie, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Denise Depauw, Vormingplus Halle-Vilvoorde	Paudie Geary, City of Waterford VEC
Evita Dhaenens, Administratie VOB	Bernie Gildea, NUI Maynooth / RAACE
Deirdre Doherty-Ryan, Co. Dublin VEC	Pauline Gildea, Department of Education and Science
Declan Doocey, Co. Waterford VEC	Francis Gilmartin, Co. Leitrim VEC
Angela Duffy, Dundalk Institute of Technology Mature Student Society	Martin Gormley, Co. Donegal VEC
Marian Duffy, Co. Carlow VEC	Sandra Gowran, Citizenship2005.ie
Bernadette Duffy, Network Kildare	Elizabeth Griffen
Edith Durojaiye	John T. Griffin, Co. Limerick VEC
Mary Elliott, Co. Dublin VEC	Ruth Griffin, National Youth Federation
Annette Ennis, Women Together Tallaght Network Ltd.	Carmel Habington, An Cosán
Clement Esebamen, Tallaght Partnership	Denis Hackett, Co. Offaly VEC Adult Education Centre
Rita Fagan, Weightwatchers	Josephine Hassett, Tralee Women's Resource Centre
Ger Fahy, Limerick City Council	M. Heraghty
Sarah Fahy, Limerick County Council	Mary Hession, Co. Louth VEC
Shauna Farrell, County Monaghan Partnership	Pat Higgins, AEOA
Josephine Finn, Department of Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth	Annette Honan, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Derek Fitzpatrick, Dublin City Development Board	Sinéad Howard, Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Helen Fitzpatrick, Co. Monaghan VEC	Judy Howard, Reception and Integration Agency
Mary Flanagan, Clare Reading and Writing Scheme	Kevin Hurley
Anne Flannery, Larkin Centre	Len Hurly, Equality Authority
Bairbre Fleming, UCD Adult Learning Centre	Tom Hussey, AONTAS Vice President
Ted Fleming, Department of Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth	Pat Hynes, Galway County Council
Maria Flowery, Dublin City University	Sinéad Jackson, WRC Social and Economic Consultants
Helena Flynn, Adult Education Centre	Carolinne Janssens, Administratie VOB

Deinol Jones, AONTAS Executive	Siobhán Magee, National Council for Vocational Awards Support Service
Bernie Judge, Department of Education and Science	Mary Maher, Dublin Adult Learning Centre
Phil Keane, Inchicore Family Resource Centre	Mary Mahon, Carlow Youth Training
Carmel Kelly, Redeemer Centre for Ongoing Learning	Ann Malone
Tara Kelly, Co. Carlow VEC	Margaret Malone, Wicklow County Council
Hilary Kendlin, Fingal Development Board	Seamus McAleavey, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Helen Keogh, VTOS	Oonagh McArdle
Mary Kett, Department of Education and Science	Frances McCandless, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Yousaf Khan, Districk & Tehsil Newshera	Anita McCann, National Parents Council Primary
Benny Kieran, Monaghan County Council	Áine McClean, Donegal Travellers Project
Margaret Killeen	Pauline McDermott, Co. Mayo VEC
Phil Killeen, Southside Women's Action Network Ltd	Sarah McDonagh, Co. Galway VEC
Úna Kirk, Co. Louth VEC	Teresa McEvoy, Co. Laois VEC
R. Lally, St. Vincent's, Dundalk	Nicky McFadden, Co. Westmeath VEC
Michael Lawlor, Co. Wicklow VEC	Pauline McGaley, Warrenmount CED Centre Ltd.
Eilis Leddy, Co. Wexford VEC	Gerry McGee, Co. Leitrim VEC
Ronny Leenknecht, SoCiuS	Margaret McGinley
Joe Lenaghan, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism	Mary-Ann McGlynn, Drogheda Partnership
Paddy Lavelle, Co. Waterford VEC	Eileen McGlynn, Doras Luimmi
Louise Levins	Peter McGrane, Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Jan Lewis, AONTAS Executive	Ewan McGrath, Community Office Exhibition
Orla Leyden, Roscommon County Council	Matt McGrath, South Tipperary VEC
Gerry Lodge, Laois County Council	Eugene McGuinness, Co. Louth VEC
Lourdes Youth & Community Services	Deirdre McHugh, Co. Monaghan VEC
Avril Lynch, Carlow Youth Training	Maryanne McInerney, STAG Youth
Gemma Lynch, NALA	Ruth McKeever, Dundalk Institute of Technology Mature Student Society
Kay Lynch, NUI Maynooth / RAACE	Brenda McKenna, City of Limerick VEC
Lorraine Lynch, Dublin Adult Learning Centre	Owen McKeown, Dundalk Institute of Technology Mature Student Society
Siobhán Lynch, Co. Dublin VEC	Helen McKinley, West Cork and Beara Women's Network
An Macharis, Citizenne	
Bernadette MacMahon, Vincent Partnership for Social Justice	

Ann McLean, Donegal Travellers Project  
 Jenny McLoughlin, Cavan/Monaghan  
 County Development Board  
 Marie McManamo, Educational Guidance  
 Initiative  
 Ursula McMorrow, Health Services  
 Executive West Region  
 Siobhán McQuillan, Dundalk Institute of  
 Technology Mature Student Society  
 Mary McSkeane, Border Counties  
 Childcare Network  
 Áine Meagher, Weightwatchers  
 Kevin Meenan, Dundalk Town Council  
 Sheilann Monaghan, Killinarden Enterprise  
 Park  
 Geraldine Moncha  
 Anne Mooney, NUI Maynooth  
 Patricia-Anne Moore, University of  
 Limerick  
 Kathleen Moorhouse, Southside Travellers  
 Action Group  
 Sandra Mullen, Clondalkin Travellers  
 Development Group  
 Marie Mulvihill, Francis Street CEC  
 Meg Murphy, The Web Project  
 John Murphy, Ballymun Men's Centre Ltd  
 Breda Murphy, Waterford Women's Centre  
 Margaret Murphy, AONTAS Executive  
 John Murray, Co. Roscommon VEC  
 Luke Murtagh, North Tipperary VEC  
 Maura Nash, Doras Luimmi  
 Elizabeth Neary  
 Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha, Co. Galway VEC  
 Patrick Nolan, AONTAS Treasurer  
 Loretta O'Brien, AONTAS Executive  
 Martin O'Brien, Co. Sligo VEC  
 Marie O'Brien, Bawnogue Women's  
 Development Group  
 Tony O'Brien, Co. Clare VEC  
 Valerie O'Carroll, AONTAS Executive  
 Damien O'Connell, PAUL Partnership  
 Eva O'Connell, Cork Adult Education  
 Council  
 Ruth O'Connell, St Vincent's, Dundalk  
 Regina O'Connor, Co. Kildare VEC VTOS  
 Siobhan O'Dowd, Ballyphelane/ Togher  
 Community Development Project  
 Molly O'Duffy, Dublin Inner City  
 Partnership  
 Marie O'Farrell, Co. Kildare VEC VTOS  
 Nora O'Hanlon, Network Kildare  
 Obiajulu Okosi, Louth African Women's  
 Group  
 Margaret O'Leary, Southside Traveller  
 Action Group  
 Ciarán Ó Mathúna, Co. Louth VEC  
 Kathleen O'Reilly, Redeemer Centre for  
 Ongoing Learning  
 Leonora O'Reilly, AONTAS Executive  
 Maureen O'Riordan, Co. Kildare VEC  
 John O'Shea, Co. Cork VEC  
 Ned O'Sullivan, Kerry County Council  
 Peggy O'Sullivan, Senior Citizens Action  
 Forum  
 Liesbeth Provoost, Vormingplus Oost-  
 Brabant  
 Sheila Purcell, UCD Adult Education  
 Centre  
 Orla Purcell, City and Guilds  
 Aideen Quilty, WERRC  
 Helen Rafferty, City of Waterford VEC  
 Margaret Reynolds, South Tipperary VEC  
 Fionnuala Richardson, People's College  
 Margaret Richardson, Fingal County  
 Council  
 Eilish Roche, Mallow Return to Education  
 Paul Francis Rogers, Finglas Cabra  
 Partnership

Anne Ryan, NUI Maynooth  
 Eimear Ryan, Cavan Partnership  
 Kerin Ryan, Co. Wicklow VEC  
 John Ryan, AONTAS President  
 Bunmi Salako, Louth African Women's  
 Group  
 Denise Shannon, Léargas  
 Kevin Sheehan, Limerick County Council  
 Emer Sheerin, NUI Maynooth  
 Carmel Sheridan, City of Limerick VEC  
 Assi Shittu, Louth African Women's Group  
 Emily Smartt, Bawnogue Women's  
 Development Group  
 Deirdre Smith, Inchicore Family Resource  
 Centre  
 Ruth Smith, AONTAS Executive  
 Youssef Souissi, VOEM  
 Bernadette Sproule, City of Dublin VEC  
 Brian Stanley, Co. Laois VEC  
 Catriona Stewart Short, Adult Education  
 Centre, UCD  
 Caroline Stokes, Waterford Women's  
 Centre  
 Mary Sweeney, Co. Laois VEC  
 Michael Tiernan, Order of Malta  
 Rose Todd, Waterford Institute of  
 Technology  
 Mary Toher, Co. Longford VEC  
 Seán Treacy, City of Limerick VEC  
 Joanna Tuffy, Labour Party  
 Arthur Twomey, Carrigaline Community  
 School  
 Theo Van Malderen, SoCiuS  
 Sigrid Vandeput, Citizenne  
 Andrea Varadi, Hungarian Folk High  
 School Society  
 Roel Verlinden, Vormingplus Vlaamse  
 Ardennen-Dender  
 Lode Vermeersch, FOV  
 Sadie Ward Mc Dermott, AEO, Co. Louth  
 VEC  
 Kieran Walsh, Limerick City Council  
 Richard Walsh, Teachers Union of Ireland  
 Bridget Ward, Clondalkin Travellers  
 Development Group  
 Elizabeth Waters, An Cosán  
 Lien Wauters, De Wakkere Burger  
 Kate Whalley, Women's Equality in Bray  
 Áine Whelan, Co. Waterford VEC  
 Deirdre Whitefield, Wicklow County  
 Council  
 Marie Williams, Tallaght Project  
 Rhonda Wynne, UCD Adult Learning  
 Centre

## Appendix Six: Glossary

ANC – African National Congress

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CIVICUS – an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

ICAE – International Council for Adult Education

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly (in Northern Ireland)

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NUI – National University of Ireland

TD – Teachta Dála, i.e. members of the Dáil – the Irish Parliament

UCD – University College Dublin

VEC – Vocational Education Committee

VTOS – Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme



AONTAS is the Irish National Association of Adult Education, 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 which is accessible to and inclusive of all.



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