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## **European Agenda on Adult Learning Update**

The European Agenda on Adult Learning highlights the need to raise awareness and increase participation in adult learning. In 2013, AONTAS were invited by the Department of Education and Skills to participate in this EU campaign. The campaign involved a website, an online calendar of events and a Freephone Helpline number. It was supported by a Steering Committee which included ETBI, NCGE, NALA, AEOA and Leargas. In 2014 an application for further activities to promote the Agenda was successful and AONTAS were nominated as the National Coordinators of this project. The current project assisted by an Advisory Committee (which includes NALA and ETBI) will deliver on **three interlinked activities** and build on the work of the previous project.

### **Helpline and website**

AONTAS continue to maintain the helpline and website launched in the first project. Data gathered during the first project (2012-2014) shows a good response to the campaign with 10,000 people engaging with the website. The majority or 44% of One Step Up users were seeking courses and 10% were seeking basic skills. Data snapshots will continue to be gathered under this phase and inform key stakeholders in the project. Recently an evaluation of the website was carried out with Learner Ambassadors, those seeking education/ training opportunities and providers, on the usability of the website. This feedback will inform further developments planned for the website this year which aims to improve the information available to people with basic skills.

### **ETB Promotional Activity**

Under this year's project, Education and Training Boards can avail of €600 to contribute towards the organisation of an activity to raise awareness about its education and training opportunities and the benefits for learners. Six of the sixteen ETBs have already applied for the funds and held activities to showcase their learning opportunities locally or encouraged learners to act as role models and to speak about the benefits of learning. Hundreds of learners have already engaged in these awareness raising activities, the majority of these events took place during the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival in February. AONTAS' role of supporting local service providers has allowed for collaboration between stakeholders through the development of this activity.

## **Research/Analysis of PIAAC Data**

The third activity under the European Agenda on Adult Learning programme has been sub contracted to NALA and involves the analysis of PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) data to learn more about the barriers facing adult learners. The research will focus on four areas; skills use in everyday life, skills mismatch, societal trust and political efficacy and parental education. The outcomes from this research will include a short research report about the findings and their implications for practitioners across a number of service areas. These findings will be presented at four thematic seminars in September.

As well as the main activities the project continues to promote the website [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie) and Helpline number through our National and European networks and online platforms including the new platform for adult learning in Europe, EPALE. Further promotional material and social media campaigns are being developed to promote the project which runs until November 2015.