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AONTAS

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COURSES FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE: THE CIR EXPERIENCE

Bill Toner, S.J.,
College of Industrial Relations,
Dublin.

INTRODUCTION

During the recession of 1974—75, when the number of unemployed persons in Ireland began to near 120,000, the staff of the College of Industrial Relations (CIR) in Ranelagh, Dublin, decided to offer special short day-time courses for unemployed people. These courses had the simple object of giving unemployed people something worthwhile to occupy their time with, and in this way to help their morale. The courses consisted mainly of some of the material offered in the evening trade union diploma classes such as Man and Society, and Economics. We also included some material on how to go about looking for a job, coping with interviews and so on. Attendances ranged from twelve to twenty. There was no charge for the courses.

Early in 1976 we applied to the Department of Labour for some financial assistance to help publicise these courses and at this point the courses came to the attention of AnCO, the Industrial Training Authority. AnCO raised with us the possibility of expanding our courses into month-long full time courses under AnCO sponsorship. The general heading of the type of training to be given would be 'Personal Development'. At the time this was not a clearly defined concept. The object of the course continued to be to give unemployed people as much help as possible in their here-and-now situation, and this could mean both helping them to cope better with the personal problems arising from unemployment and also developing skills which would help them gain employment. The courses were then expanded and eventually came to include such topics as: Career Planning, Job Application and Interviews, Human Relations Workshops, Speaking in Public, and so on. (See syllabus below.) The courses under AnCO sponsorship began in September 1976 and to date over 500 people have participated in them.

DEVELOPING AIMS OF THE COURSE

A varying backdrop to the course was the economic situation of the country. In the early days of the course all one could hope to do for many participants was to help them cope a little better with unemployment, by giving them a greater sense of personal worth, or merely by letting them see that they were not alone.

As job opportunities increased, other considerations emerged. For one thing it became clear to us in the College that the reason why many people cannot find jobs and keep them is because they do not know what they are looking for. Many young people leave school and drift into jobs which are unsuitable for them. It was found that many of the course participants had left jobs because they did not give them any opportunity to use their intelligence, education or special talents; or because they involved unsocial hours; or because a job did not give them any sense of fulfilment; or other reasons of this kind. As the course evolved these problems relating to choice of job had a considerable influence on the syllabus, and we in the College began to see that a major aim of the course should be to help a person who was at some kind of crossroads in his or her career.

Another major aim of the course came to be to help participants to compete in the job market on at least equal terms with their competitors. Applicants for jobs might have the qualifications for a job but be quite unable to 'sell' themselves to a prospective employer. Finally, we hoped that a course in Personal Development would also make a longer-term contribution, however modest, to Irish working life, through the training in personal and interpersonal skills which it would impart.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Selection in the first instance is made by the National Manpower Service. Placement Officers and Vocational Guidance Officers recommend the course to clients whose career pattern is unsettled.

There are no minimum educational requirements for attendance on the course. A check on 80 participants in three recent courses reveals the following data:

Educational Background

<i>Standard Reached</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>No.</i>
Primary	16	Under 20	22
Inter/Group Certificate	15	20—25	39
Leaving Certificate	43	Over 25	19
Graduates	6		
	80		80

About 65% of school leavers in Ireland currently attain Leaving Certificate standard. In the first two years of the course the sex ratio was 68% male, 32% female. In recent courses the ratio has been about 50% each; the reasons for this change are not clear.

JOB ASPIRATIONS

At the start of each course participants are asked on their registration form: "What kind of work are you looking for?" In the sample of 80 mentioned above replies were as follows:

Don't Know	22
Clerical/Secretarial	20
Computer-related	4
Sales	4
Nursing	3
Mechanical or Trade	3
Receptionist	3
Shop Assistant	2
Silk-screen printing	2
Storekeeping	2
Library	2
"Technical"	2
Social Work	2
Miscellaneous	9
	80

A final statistic of interest concerns the length of time participants had been unemployed. The figures for the 80 participants in question were as follows:

<i>Months since last full-time job</i>	<i>No.</i>
0-3	35
4-6	19
7-12	7
Over 12	13
Never had a job	6
	80

So although the course can be and is called a course for 'unemployed' people it will be apparent from these figures that only a certain section of the general mass of unemployed people would be likely to end up on the course. It has been our experience that it is not realistic to try to provide courses for the 'unemployed' in general without further delineating objectives, and, accordingly, participant profile. In our own case we have concentrated more in recent times on helping people to integrate themselves better into the world of work, and in a lesser measure on helping people to cope with unemployment. Another option would be to attempt a consciousness-raising exercise which might lead to protest of the kind that was common in the fifties. In fact, participants have displayed little interest in action of this kind and most have been concerned only to find a job which suited them. Membership of this particular section of the unemployed population changes so frequently that it does not seem to acquire any identity as a "class".

THE SYLLABUS

In keeping with the aims of the course there are several distinct but related strands running through the course content. The four principal ones are Personal Growth, Job Focus, Self-Presentation and Human Relations.

These could be broken down roughly as follows:
(Number of sessions in brackets)

PERSONAL GROWTH	HUMAN RELATIONS	JOB FOCUS	SELF-PRESENTATION
Personal Freedom Group Work (10)	Assertiveness Training (4)	Career Planning (7)	The Interview
Human Nature (8)	Transactional Analysis (2)	Job Hunting (3)	Job Applications (2)
Personal Growth (4)	Social Roles (2)	Job Mobility	Individual VTR Interviews
Creative Projects (9)	Conflict Resolution (2)	The Right to Work	The Employer's Viewpoint
Personal Development (3)	Understanding Organisations (2)	Competing for a Job	
		Job Motivation	
		Job Satisfaction	
		Going Solo (2)	Public Speaking

REACTIONS OF THE TRAINEES

The College staff have found the experience of lecturing and tutoring on the courses both rewarding and difficult. The most rewarding aspect is seeing the morale of the participants visibly improve day by day. The group is invariably a very depressed and amorphous gathering on the first day. By the end of the fourth week spirits are high, there is strong comradeship in the group, and the only voiced regret is that the course is coming to an end. Many of the groups form friendships with fellow-trainees and staff that last well beyond the end of the course. Most of the staff find the classwork moderately difficult, and certainly more difficult than ordinary night classes. Occasionally it can be difficult to capture the attention of the entire group, particularly if the subject matter is abstract. Most of the group are not the kind of people who attend evening classes. There is an element of 'outreach' in the exercise that does not make for soft audiences.

It is instructive to examine a sample of 58 responses from a questionnaire sent to all participants two to three months after respective courses. The particular question was: "Looking back on it do you think the course in Personal Development was of any benefit to you?" The replies can be broken down under the following categories:

Helped me to cope with unemployment	6
Helped me to clarify job aspirations	2
Helped me to get a job	19
Built up my self-confidence, self-knowledge, self-awareness	12
Improved relationships with others	2
"Yes" (not specific)	12
Some reservations about value of course	5
	<hr/>
	58

This particular group were in employment when they answered the questionnaire. The responses from those who had not succeeded in getting jobs were not markedly different, however, except in relation to actually getting a job.

PLACEMENT AND FINAL COMMENT

There is fairly solid evidence that about 65% of participants have obtained satisfactory employment within two months of the end of the course.

One thing that has struck the College staff forcibly is the need for more sheltered employment opportunities in Ireland. Over the three years of the course there have been a number of participants for whom it is very difficult to envisage any possibility of straightforward employment. This can be due to a variety of factors, particularly middle age, and personal peculiarities, but also health problems, including mild psychiatric disorders or a history of alcoholism, or such factors as a criminal record. In a competitive society, where there are more applicants than jobs, these people will obviously be discriminated against. Ironically such sheltered employment schemes as do operate in Ireland are for the benefit of heavily handicapped people, whereas the plight of mildly handicapped people can be worse in some cases.

A fuller version of this report may be obtained from the author on request at the College of Industrial Relations, Sandford Road, Dublin 6.

EDUCATION FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS AT ST. PATRICK'S INSTITUTION

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The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee staffs a school attached to St. Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders between the ages of sixteen and twenty. Courses are now provided for eleven months each year. All are given the chance to join one of the small school groups. These groups have a maximum of seven members. Ninety per cent join and most of them stay the course.

Programmes are offered in the conventional subjects ranging from home economics to crafts and humanities. There is an expanding remedial department. Students are grouped primarily on length of sentence which varies from 3 months to 5 years. At any one time the school would have an enrolment of 100. During the year 1978—1979 a very successful pre-employment course was inaugurated.

With few exceptions the participants in the programmes share a common socio-economic profile; they come from an urban background and from large families with an unemployed or absent father. Many have had an institutionalised childhood and all have a school record of irregular attendance and poor academic results. Less than 3% have persevered beyond second year in the local vocational school. Surprisingly most of them look back more in apathy than in anger at these years of frustration.

They failed to make the grade and in this respect they are part of a sizeable minority within the same disadvantaged socio-economic bracket. But these young persons belong to a minority within a minority; as well as 'losing' at school, they have 'lost' against the 'Law'. It is understandable, then, that the young person who joins one of the school groups thinks of himself in terms of failure. This is often cloaked but the hurt and scar is there. He feels a 'loser' even though the feeling is seldom clearly expressed.

CONVERSION OF ATTITUDE

From this data, it seems clear that a meaningful programme should offer hope; *hope meaning a sense of the possible*. The teachers at St. Patrick's are responsible for the programme presented to the students in the various subjects and they are concerned with possibilities: and these possibilities cover the development of skills and also the development of outlook. All would agree that the relevant possibility is the *conversion of attitude*.

This conversion of attitude involves the surrender of the negative outlook clearly in possession. This in turn would seem to require the 'unloading' of grievance and the only realistic context for this is a relationship between the educator and the student. There are favouring conditions such as the small class group of seven and

the lengthy period of 90 minutes twice weekly. Also school hours are experienced as a respite from the harsh climate of the prison and very much as a chance for self-expression from the relative security base of the peer group and in the presence of a friendly outsider. The educator is seen as an outsider in the sense that he is not of the system.

In this way the barometer is set at fair. All seems well for the introduction: now at the centre of the student are hard negative attitudes. If he is going to experience the possible, he must express the actual: he must be encouraged to say where he is at. As a preliminary to this 'release', it seems imperative that he be allowed show his strengths. From his activity he has learned to use his eye: he is good at observation and what the eye finds 'interesting' is impressed on the memory. So the student should be given the opportunity to describe what he has found interesting. He likes doing this. With his limited but concrete vocabulary he can recall vividly a successful 'stroke' (robbery), a show of power at his local disco or even an encounter with the 'Law'.

In these descriptions he expresses himself. Through them he relives moments of excitement and importance that he has gained the dangerous way on the margin of life. He is claiming that he, too, has made his mark. From these sessions it becomes clear that he is glad to be able to make his report but equally that he is frustrated at the inadequacy of his vocabulary. In the class session he seems to have found a good listener and this has enhanced his report. He is ready to have an immediate and relevant need satisfied. He could use some more words and perhaps use what he has more effectively. Here is when the educator is provided with an invited role. He is adding to one of the strengths of the student.

Another strength that the student at St. Patrick's has is an active imagination. The imagination can be used either as an evading or coping instrument. Because the student has found himself a 'prisoner' of a very harsh reality, he has developed a skill in the use of the imagination to tunnel a way out to a world of fantasy. But he wants to show this strength. This show of strength is often combined with his 'descriptions'. This means that his imagination works over the description of the 'stroke', the disco incident or the encounter with the 'Law'. The educator can meet the student by acknowledging this skill and encouraging the student to use his gift not merely as an evading instrument but also as a coping instrument.

At this stage there is possibility of facing the future and working on it with the imagination as a coping instrument. How long does it take to reach this stage? This depends on the quality of the *relationship*. It must be high in trust if the student is to learn a new use of an old skill. As Shaw has said: "learning something new always means unlearning something old". This brings the student to a crisis point: the surrender of the known and tried. Some incentive has to be offered if the student is to voyage out into the unknown and untried. Ideally this incentive would be a positive report from a pathfinder from among his peers. The suggestion of this article revolves around such an incentive.

EXPERIENCING THE POSSIBLE

In July 1979, I co-ordinated a Personal Development Course for the Unemployed. The course was sponsored by AnCO, the Industrial Training Authority and was designed and conducted by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions at their Advisory and Training Centre, Dublin. There were twenty participantsevenlydivided between male and female, ranging in age from 20 to 45 and covering a widely varied educational background. A student from St. Patrick's who was nearing the end of a three year sentence was among the participants. He attended the four-week course from St. Patrick's and reported back there each evening. With the other participants, he received the AnCO allowance. In his case it was £33 per week.

Naturally this young man of 20 was a little apprehensive about his identity but by the third day he experienced such a positive feel with regard to the level of trust and acceptance that he identified himself publicly. His decision said something about the impact of the group. Over the four weeks he invested fully in the course, responding to the input and contributing at the sessions. In particular he seemed to benefit from the input on 'Man and his Potential'. The conversion of outlook progressed and the level of self-confidence rose. During the Project Week, he made a contact on a visit to a factory out of which came a job opportunity which he followed up successfully. On the final day of the Course he was released a little ahead of the scheduled time. So three years of detention ended positively. On the final Friday evening he was free to spend the week-end as he wished and on the Monday he began work. His fellow participants were all either placed in a job or accepted for training courses with probability of worthwhile employment. Many of these accepted had already completed AnCO training courses but now they admitted to positive attitudes. All had benefitted from the interaction and had found the sessions on 'Man and his Potential' decisive. Built in to the course was a re-union evening fixed for a date two months ahead.

The experience of the young man who was freed to participate in the Course convinces me that an incentive can be spun out of the Personal Development Course. The relevant preparatory work done within the confines of the classroom at St. Patrick's is sited in an unreal setting. It is not a microcosm of the larger community towards which the young persons are rehabilitating themselves. Also their investment can seem academic. The Personal Development Course was experienced as leading somewhere and in good, accepting company. The AnCO representative who questioned the participants on the final day heard a lot of good news.

Perhaps the main thrust of 'Man and his Potential' inputs was the creation of a climate in which the participants could freely express the actual, unload themselves as they were and evaluate calmly. This is only done when the participant 'senses' *the possibility of adjustment*. In other words he must be able to *experience the possible*. Once this stage is reached the reality of the group is proven and challenge is possible. Here it was obvious that a different climate existed from that of the St. Patrick's classroom: the conditions were far more favourable for the launching of challenge.

THE PATHFINDER

So the incentive concerns environment: an environment created by and from a microcosm of the larger community. In this environment a stimulus is given to the imagination and it can dare resist the pull of fantasy and explore reality. The act of the imagination in this context was an act of *collaboration*. The participants exercised the act of imagination as coping with reality to the extent that the group listened cleanly. To use an image: the solo singer needed the accompaniment of the group if he was to sing truly. St. Patrick's can do preliminary work but even that is nullified unless it is *felt* to be a preparation for something *real*. If the real is supplied then the young persons will listen cleanly and the signal will be given for the launching of challenge: the challenge to convert attitudes — to surrender the destructive and cleanse self-disgust.

If our society is to become caring and compassionate, it must be willing to invest in providing conditions in which it is realistic to invite the young offender to engage in a rehabilitative process. Indeed some commentators would ask more. They would stress the relevance of Personal Development Courses for the disadvantaged before negative and destructive attitudes take root. However, here a plea is made

on behalf of the young offender in St. Patrick's that Personal Development Courses be provided. Those already investing in the education of young offenders would then have a relevant context for the preliminary work in which they are engaged.

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THE HISTORY OF AONTAS

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THE BIRTH OF AONTAS

An Idea

After returning from further studies in adult education, in Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, in 1967, I realised that I had to make contact with all those who were actively engaged in adult and community education in Ireland. I wanted to know what they were doing and what adult education structure existed in Ireland. But I first examined and analysed how contacts had been established in other countries, e.g. in England, Wales, Scotland, Canada and the U.S.A. These empirical yet analytical studies revealed the fact that each of these countries had formed a National Association of Adult Education. The functions of these National Associations differed little. They all sought to establish an effective network of communications between adult education practitioners, organisers, professors, agencies and researchers. The purposes of this network were obvious, clear yet vital for the development of (a) the adult educators and agencies themselves and (b) a meaningful and relevant adult education provision or system which would service the ever increasing number of adult learners, who were seeking and demanding special learning opportunities. Specifically these associations sought to become clearinghouses of information of the comprehensive adult education provisions in each country, and centres of exchange of ideas and experiences which would help adult educators develop their skills and competencies in the field. They were associations, which would facilitate the emergence of a philosophy of adult and community education which reflected the socio-economic, cultural, political and spiritual climate and aspirations of each country and its people. Each association hoped to motivate adults to comprehend the moral and social imperatives of adult education in a society, characterised by rapid technological change. These associations sought to promote greater involvement in adult education provision and at the same time they aimed at motivating their constituents or members to undertake training of the full-time and part-time professional adult educators and volunteer leaders. They also stressed the importance and need for research in adult education, the lack of which was obvious to all. The association also sought to perform a public relations function:

- (a) by regular publications, newsletters, occasional papers, workshops, seminars and annual conferences and
- (b) by international co-operation and participation in international agencies of adult education, and in other national bodies indirectly connected with adult and community education.

Thus, this international survey, empirical and pragmatic though it was, coupled with my own participation in the National Association of the Adult Education of England and Wales, provided an initial and necessary basic stimulation for me to consider the possibility of establishing a National Association of Adult Education in Ireland.

However, there was a basic personal and motivating reason, which when coupled with results of the international review of National Adult Associations stimulated me to translate these ideas and hopes into action. This personal reason arose out of a simple happening. The name of the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology (I was then the Director of this Institute) was changed to the Dublin Institute of Adult Education. The purpose of this change was simple, yet in keeping with sound adult education principles. It was agreed by all involved in the work of the Institute that the title of the Institute should more accurately reflect the work and commitment of the personnel of the Institute to provide in Dublin an adequate adult education service for adults of all ages, sexes, occupations and social classes. It was precisely at this time I felt the need to meet other adult educators, who were working in Ireland and discuss the core adult education problems and issues (motivating adults to participate, drop-outs from adult education programmes, curriculum development, etc.) with them. It was evident that if adult educators in Ireland could come together regularly, we could pool and exchange our experiences and thus there would gradually emerge a more effective adult education provision in Ireland.

The Adult Education Scene in Ireland — The Early Days

There were scattered throughout the country many adult education innovators and leaders, who for many years were providing significant adult learning opportunities and community leadership courses for many adults. There were the Vocational Education Committees, each one of which, in accordance with 1930 Vocational Education Act were charged with the duty of:

Establishing and maintaining, a suitable system of continuation education in its area and of providing for the progressive development of such a system.(1)

There was the pioneering and most effective work of the Department of Adult Education of University College, Cork initiated by the late Monsignor O'Rahilly, continued on by Con Murphy, and expanded and developed by Seán O Murchú. There existed in Dublin and throughout Ireland a multitude of voluntary adult education agencies, such as the People's College, (which has a link with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations), the Irish Farmers Association, Macra na Feirme and Macra na Tuaithe, the Irish Countrywomen's Association, the emergence of different kinds of Women's Clubs, the Workers' College, the Dublin Institute of Adult Education, etc. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and some of the bigger unions were either directly or indirectly involved in the adult education activities. One recalls here the work of the Liberty Study Group, a voluntary trade union agency, which in time gave birth to the comprehensive Adult Education and Development Section of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (the largest trade union in Ireland). Likewise at this time, the extension work of the County Committees of Agriculture was beginning to expand, develop and reflect the influence of the expertise of the Extension Department, Wisconsin University, U.S.A. Again as a reaction to the Breffni Tomlin Report on the Nature of Irish Management in 1967, the Irish Management Institute and Federated Union of Employers were encouraging management and employers to participate in adult education activities, especially in areas of management training. And thus a vast

number of agencies and adult educators were very active in the field and yet they had little or no communications with each other. There was no vehicle whereby these adult education leaders could discuss their mutual needs, identify gaps, exchange resources and thus develop (a) their own work, and (b) take action about changing the position, status, and state of the marginality which adult education occupied in Ireland. At that time (despite the achievements and happenings already mentioned), adult education was still the 'poor relation' of the educational system. There was very little financial support for adult education. In many instances, the programmes provided had to be self-financing.

The First Step

My first decisive step was taken in early 1968 when I contacted Sean O Murchu, the Director of the Department of Adult Education, University College, Cork. I discussed with him the possibility, the need and the usefulness of having a National Association in Ireland. He readily agreed and soon other adult educators were contacted.

It was decided to organise a special seminar on Adult Education on the general theme 'Adult Education in a Changing Irish Society'. This seminar was held in the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire in May 1968. Representatives of the different voluntary, statutory and community adult education agencies participated in this seminar. The main speakers at this seminar were Professor Alan Knox, Department of Adult Education, Columbia University; Dermot Egan, The Irish Management Institute; Bob Schouten, General Secretary of the European Bureau of Adult Education; and Bill Devereux, Assistant Educational Officer of the Inner London Education Authority.

The participants examined the different aspects of adult education, for example, the nature and extent of adult education, basic principles of adult education, adult psychology and adult learning, adult education and community change, new trends in adult education, programming, planning in adult education, co-operation in adult and community education. At the conclusion of this historical seminar it was decided to set up a committee which was charged with the 'responsibility of setting up a National Association of Adult Education'. The following were members of this committee:

Sean O Murchu, U.C.C.
Richard Langford, Headmaster, Birr, VEC
Micheal O Suilleabhain, Inspector, Department of Education,
Fr. Ronnie Neville, Muintir na Tire,
Marie Lewis, Irish Countrywomen's Association
Fr. Liam Carey, Dublin Institute of Adult Education,
John Holland, Principal, Dunshaughlin Vocational School,
Thomas Roseingrave, Director, Muintir na Tire,
Harry Cullen, Macra na Feirme,
Miss F. Murphy, Education Officer, Irish Congress of Trade Unions,
Jerome Connolly, I.A.O.S. (now I.C.O.S.),
Donal McGahon, Secretary, Foras Eireann.

The Committee completed the assigned task within one year and presented a report to the first annual Adult Education Conference, held in Athlone in May 1969. The report recommended the formation of a National Association of Adult Education.

The Second Step

It was decided at this first annual conference in Athlone in May 1969, to establish this National Association of Adult Education in Ireland. The then Minister for Education, Brian Lenihan, presided at the launching of this National Association. At this first meeting the following four important events took place:

- (1) There was general agreement that there should be a National Association in Ireland.
- (2) It was agreed that the title of this Association should be 'Aontas'.
- (3) All agreed that this Association, while endeavouring to fulfil functions similar to other National Associations of Adult Education should have a basic adult education philosophy. This philosophy is expressed as the development of the full man, by man and for man. It implies also the development of the community, a serious and a real commitment to the international peace and development.
- (4) The Minister for Education, in launching Aontas, announced the establishment of a Committee to examine the nature of adult education in Ireland and to make suggestions regarding the future structure of adult education in Ireland. (2)

A Working Committee was elected from the adult educators present and aided by a part-time secretary, given the task of drawing up a Constitution for Aontas. This latter task was to be completed within a year. One here must pay tribute to the work of such dedicated adult educators as Sean Clayton, Padraic Gallagher, the late Padraic Connolly (God grant him rest), Tom Lawless, Tom Llewellyn, Peter Taylor, Dick Langford, Micheal O Súilleabhain, Tony Quigley, John McKay, Liam Connellan, Brian Whelan, Seán Ó Murchú and many others who did not spare themselves or their free time, but worked very hard in order to provide a Constitution for Aontas. This Constitution, approved and ratified in 1970 continued as the Aontas 'Book of Words' until it was redrafted in 1978.

The Early Days of the National Association

The first home of Aontas was the Dublin Institute of Adult Education, which was founded in 1951 by the late Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Reverend Dr. McQuaid — himself a committed adult educator. Aontas employed the service of Carmel Quigley as a part-time secretary who continued to do most effective work for the Association until 1974. In 1974, due to the initiative of Tom Llewellyn, the Irish Farmer's Association, Aontas moved to offices in the Irish Farm Centre.

The first five years of the existence of Aontas were developing years, years of pioneering and endeavouring to communicate to all an understanding of the role and functions of Aontas. Aontas never considered itself an adult agency to provide courses or to compete with existing agencies. It was a co-ordinating body, a clearinghouse of ideas, a creative and innovative centre, a 'think tank' for adult educators, etc.

During these formative years Aontas held Annual Conferences on such topics as:

- (i) Adult Education in the 70's — 1970
- (ii) Social Change, Community Development and the EEC — 1971
- (iii) Community Adult Education — 1972
- (iv) Lifelong Education — 1973.

During that period two editions of the first Journal on Adult Education in Ireland were published and regular newsletters were circulated to the members.

Aontas initiated self-financing European visits for the members. The purpose of these visits, now regarded as part of the normal and bi-annual Aontas activities, was to provide an opportunity for adult educators, in Ireland, to examine and analyse the adult education in other countries, e.g. Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, etc.

In 1970 Aontas affiliated to the European Bureau of Adult Education. The faithful representative of Aontas, at the meetings of the Bureau, was Peter Taylor, Aer Lingus (a member of Aontas). Aontas has, from the very beginning of its existence, hosted the visits of foreign adult educators and adult learners to Ireland. The visit of the Wisconsin University Alumni has now become an annual event for Aontas.

In 1974 P. J. Carroll and Co. Ltd. expressed the desire to make a formal commitment to adult education in Ireland. This well known industrial enterprise selected Aontas as the agency through which it could visibly demonstrate such a commitment. And so in 1974, Aontas received £75,000 (£15,000 for five years) from P. J. Carroll and Co. Ltd. It was agreed by Aontas and Carrolls that the financial resources should be used:

- (a) to establish a full-time secretariat for Aontas;
- (b) to undertake a research project in adult education;
- (c) to sponsor an International Conference on Adult Education in Ireland.

The Association has successfully completed these clearly defined tasks. A Secretariat was established and a full-time Director, Mícheal Ó Murchú, was appointed in 1974. This Secretariat was first located in the Irish Farm Centre (1974) but soon moved to 62 Waterloo Road, Dublin 4, where it remained until 1979. The offices and secretariat of Aontas are now located at 14 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2. The personnel of the Secretariat has also been increased to include, in addition to the Director, two full-time administrative staff.

The Association commissioned a research project. This research project was undertaken by Maria Slowey and it sought to analyse the nature etc. of the participation by women in adult education in Ireland. This research project has been completed, but as yet not formally presented to the general community.

Aontas also co-operated with the other adult agencies in Ireland in sponsoring an international conference on workers' education. This conference coincided with the annual meeting of the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA). This conference was held in Dublin in 1978.

Thus Aontas, which until receiving this gift from Carrolls, had depended on membership fees for financial support, had in 1974 the opportunity to advance, more rapidly and thus function, with greater effectiveness, and provide a more adequate service for the members, who after the first five years numbered about 90 corporate members (statutory and voluntary) and 30 individual members. During this initial five years of the existence of Aontas, council meetings were held twice yearly. These council meetings examined the relationship between adult education and the Community School, the training of apprentices, trade union education, etc.

From the moment of the foundation of Aontas, it was agreed by all the members that a strong and vital liaison with government departments, especially the Department of Education was needed. Department of Education officials were invited to all council meetings and annual conferences of the National Association. One must express gratitude and appreciation to members of the Department who have contributed, in no little way, to the development of Aontas.

These members are Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Máire Ní Chionnaith, P. J. Breen. These members of the Department of Education were and indeed are always ready to help with their expert advice and guidance. Liason was also established in the other departments, e.g. Department of Labour, Department of Health and Social Welfare.

The Appointment of a Director of Aontas

An outstanding and most significant event in the history of Aontas was the decision, taken by Executive and the members of Aontas, to appoint in 1974, a full time Director, to manage daily the expanding work of Aontas and to promote the policies of Aontas as outlined in the Constitution.

Aided by the Carroll Grant, it was possible to implement this decision. In a special sub-committee, the Executive undertook the difficult task of selecting a Director. Mícheál Ó Murchú, a lecturer in the Department of Education, U.C.C., and a founder member of the Cork Council of Adult Education was selected. The work of Aontas grew rapidly with the appointment of the Director as the history of the last four years indicates.

REFERENCES

(1) *Vocational Education Act 1930*, Government Publications Office, Dublin 1930. p.47.

(2) The Committee subsequently labelled the Murphy Committee published an Interim Report in 1970 and a final Report entitled *Adult Education in Ireland* in 1973. This latter Report recognised the value and importance of Aontas' role and concluded that "it has the potential to become an effective National Association."

ASPECTS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

Maria Slowey,
Aontas — Carroll Research Fellow

INTRODUCTION

This article is based on a study carried out under the auspices of the Aontas—Carroll Research Fellowship. It should be pointed out that the article does not attempt a comprehensive summary of that work, but rather draws out some of the areas of direct relevance for adult educators. To this end various objective and subjective aspects of participation will be examined in the light of their implications for policy making.

Distinct ideologies, or perspectives, of adult education can be identified, which will have different consequences for adult education in terms of structures, content, methods and target population. However, most of these outlooks share a common tendency to argue the merits of adult and continuing education as a means of helping adaptation, at both a societal and individual level, to the effects of social, economic, technical, cultural and demographic changes. The Murphy Report, for example, gives fairly typical expression to this view — "Adult education has a particularly critical and difficult role to play in a rapidly changing society if it is to seek to provide information, knowledge, skills and attitudes to change which people may need, in order to cope with the changing conditions of individual, social and communal living." (1) For analytical purposes, approaches to adult education can be viewed according to whether they have, on the one hand, a predominantly Technical-Function orientation, or on the other a Liberal orientation. In the former case, the argument, broadly speaking, is that technological changes will have repercussions both in the content and pattern of work. Thus there is a need to keep all types of employees up-to-date with new developments, and to retrain others whose entire field has become obsolete. Furthermore changes are anticipated in the pattern of work, such as a shorter working week, paid educational leave, early retirement, etc. The liberal perspective traces its origins to the nineteenth century notion of the "cultivated person", which revived the distinction between education and training made by the Greeks. Here the tendency is to regard education as "an end in itself" for the personal development of the individual. Technical changes would be seen as permitting people to have more time to pursue general cultural activities, and adult education would be seen as having a role in helping them to put this time to good use.

While in general the discussion on the effects of change take place on this somewhat abstract level there are also very practical considerations involved. One such example relates to demographic changes occurring in the majority of western countries where the population of young people is decreasing, and the educational facilities, extended to cope with the baby-boom, are facing idleness. One way of coping with this problem is to try to attract a different client group, such as adults.

There is now quite a body of literature criticising many of the above assumptions, and asking questions such as — Is unimpeded technological growth actually possible? Does increasing industrialisation in fact lead to deskilling? What is the precise nature of the relationship between education and work? Does the social division of knowledge mean “Liberal” education will always be a form of cultural domination? This is not the place to enter into these debates; what we do want to do is to relate the universally acknowledged interest of adult educators in meeting change to one of the most important social and economic upheavals which has occurred over the past two decades — namely, the problematisation of the traditional role of women. In this period a great deal of work has emerged highlighting the overall situation of women in western societies, and documenting the problems experienced by women both at work (job discrimination, unequal pay, lack of promotion opportunities, etc.) and in the home (powerlessness, isolation, alienation etc.) and in their attempts to meet the demands of both spheres (the problems of “working mothers”). In keeping with these developments the various international bodies concerned with adult education have emphasised the special educational needs of women.”(2)

While to date women have predominated as clients of adult education services (although consistently under-represented in vocational types of activities) the question remains as to whether this participation appears to contribute to an improvement in the general situation of women or whether, on the contrary, it is in effect reinforcing traditional sex roles.

It thus seems that one of the most pressing issues for adult educators today is to provide a system of adult education which is relevant to this significant group of people, who are actively seeking change and are looking for assistance in achieving such change. The question must be asked as to whether it is sufficient to simply try and attract more women into availing of the present services, which in effect means adopting a policy of providing “more of the same”; or whether in fact the present offerings are of little use in meeting the challenge being posed by women's new roles and demands, and therefore totally new approaches are required. However, it is impossible to answer this question without some information about the significance of adult education for the women who are currently availing of its services. The objective of this study was therefore not so much to obtain generalisations about all women, but rather by examining a group of women who had — for whatever reason — decided to participate in adult education, to provide data to serve as a starting point for discussion amongst adult educators. This emphasis on discovering how women themselves view their participation in adult education, along with the exploratory nature of the subject in the Irish context, indicated that an indepth study of a relatively small sample would probably be the most fruitful approach. The survey undertaken covered 126 married women who had participated in some form of adult education activity in the year prior to the study. The sample was designed to include Representatives from the following four main content areas:

1. Hobby and Academic activities
2. Family and Home orientated activities
3. Community orientated activities and
4. Work related activities (3)

The following sections will examine both objective aspects of participation (extent of participation and content of participation) and subjective aspects (motivation, meaning of adult education, training interests). In considering these issues we will raise the question of the influence of formal educational background.

This is important because while there is a good deal of research which examines the relationship between formal educational background and the likelihood of an individual ever participating in adult education, the question of whether formal educational background also influences decisions and processes once an individual has participated in some form of adult education activity, has remained largely unexplored. This is a vital issue for adult educators as it would seem that a prerequisite for any schemes to attract people with a low educational background into adult education is an examination of the few representatives of this group who are currently participating.

PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION

Approximately one third of the sample had left school by the age of fifteen. (This corresponds exactly with the figures for female adult education participants in a large scale Dublin based survey.(4)) One question which we wish to pose, therefore, is whether those people with a relatively low educational background, who have participated in adult education, appear to demonstrate the same patterns as other educational groups, or whether distinctions based on formal education still operate. The two objective aspects of patterns of participation to be considered here relate to (a) extent of participation in adult education activities, and (b) the content of such participation.

(a) Extent of Participation

Extent of participation was assessed in terms of the number of adult education activities attended by the respondents since completing full-time education. Respondents were divided into those who had attended one or two courses and those who had attended three or more. This corresponded with a qualitative analysis of the interviews which separated respondents into "newcomers", who were in effect "trying out" adult education, and "oldhands" for whom participation in adult education was quite a familiar idea.

It is to be expected that those who had the most exposure to, and success within, an educational environment would in general be most likely to view adult education as a real and readily available option. One hypothesis which follows from this has been substantiated by many studies — that those who have a higher level of formal education will be more likely to participate in adult education than those with a lower level. However, what has not really been explored is the secondary hypothesis, that of those who do participate in adult education, those with a higher level of formal education will be more likely to participate to a greater extent than those with a lower level.

At first sight the data seems to support this latter hypothesis — those with the highest level of education, whether measured in terms of age left school, or in terms of highest educational certificate, were the most likely to be "oldhands". Thus over two-thirds (69.1%) of those who had some form of third level education were "oldhands", as opposed to approximately one third (37.5%) of those who had no educational qualifications. However, before drawing any conclusions it is necessary to consider the operation of another objective factor besides education, namely respondents' ages. On the one hand it would be expected that older women would have attended more courses simply because they would have had more time within which to do so; on the other hand, because of the increase in the average level of education over the past decades, it would be expected that older women would have, on average, a lower level of formal education than their younger sisters. In fact it appeared that these factors to some extent may balance each other out, as older and younger women were almost equally likely to be called "newcomers" or

“oldhands” (46.3% of women aged forty and under were “newcomers”; and 49.2% of the women over forty).

Thus from the point of view of adult educators there seems to be a retention problem with the lower educational groups. In other words, even when people with a lower educational background do come to participate in adult education activities, this study indicates that they are less likely to keep doing so than the higher educational groups. If, as seems reasonable to suppose, one of the objectives of adult education is to try to develop in the individual an attitude to adult education as a resource to be used on a fairly regular basis the fact remains that those with lower formal education seem less likely to do this. A dynamic and imaginative counselling scheme could possibly help in this area.

While it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions, a rather interesting pattern appeared when the analysis was taken a step further to look at the inter-relationships between these three factors simultaneously — namely, when extent of participation is examined in relation to educational background for each age group separately. While for both age groups, educational background influenced the extent of participation, the influence appeared to be a good deal stronger. In policy terms it could mean that there is more difficulty in attracting older women with a relatively poor educational background than younger women with a similar background, while it is easier to attract older women with a relatively good educational background than their younger counterparts. A possible explanation as to why educational background has a stronger effect on the participation pattern of older women than that of younger women would relate to the expansion of educational facilities over time. The older women who stayed in full-time education longer were more of the exception in their day, than younger women who achieved a similar level of education. These older women defied the odds, were more “strongly selected” and thus would be expected to be more committed to education in general. (5)

(b) Content of Participation

In considering the content of the activities attended, it must be borne in mind that sex is a key determinant of the types of courses attended. By concentrating on one sex we want to discover if there are further determinants operating within one sub-group — namely women. The question we wish to pose here is what, if any, appear to be the distinguishing characteristics of the women who take part in different types of adult education activities. Formal educational background would again be expected to have some influence here; it would be hypothesised that the women who have undergone the most intensive socialisation within the educational system will be the most likely to share its emphasis on the intrinsic value of education (and thus on spheres of knowledge associated with “culture”). On the other hand, women from a lower educational background would be expected to be less likely to accept the relevance of such topics and opt for topics which have closer relationships with their day-to-day experience.

The data from this study bears out these hypotheses quite clearly — when we look at the lowest and highest educational groups (those who left at fifteen or under and those who finished full time education aged over seventeen, respectively) we find that the type of course most likely to be attended by one group, was the least likely to be attended by the other. Thus, the main type of course attended by women in the lowest educational group was the low-status, but familiar

familial/home type of course, whereas this was the type least attended by the highest educational group (41.9% as opposed to 6.3%). On the other hand the exact reverse was true for the higher educational group choosing this type, as opposed to 16.3% of the lower educational group. Community orientated courses were attended mainly by women from a middle to high educational background, while similar proportions of all groups attended work-related courses (the range between groups being only 5%, with an average of 26%).

As has been pointed out the influence of **formal** educational background is well documented. What has remained unexplored, however, is the question of whether **informal** or adult educational background also exerts some influence. This is obviously a vital question, as it represents one indication of whether, and how, participation in adult education can be seen to have some real effect. Looking again at the sample in terms of "newcomers" and "oldhands" it is remarkable how the pattern is almost identical with that of lower and higher formal educational groups respectively. Thus "newcomers" are concentrated in the Familial/Home type courses (41.7%) while the largest category of "oldhands" are to be found in Academic/Hobby courses (33.3%). However, as we have seen, formal educational background influences the likelihood of an individual being either a "newcomer" or an "oldhand" so we must look at the influences of these factors separately. The trends which emerge when we look at this relationship between type of activity and extent of participation for each educational group are very interesting. Taking the lowest educational group, we find that "newcomers" were over five times as likely to have attended a Familial/Home type of course, than women with the same low level of formal education who, however, had more exposure to adult education. On the other hand these latter women were far more likely to have attended Hobby/Academic and work-related courses.

Thus in relation to influences on types of courses attended, it appears that for those who already start off with a good educational background it makes little difference how much actual involvement they have had in adult education activities — both "oldhands" and "newcomers" participate in wide range of courses. On the other hand there is evidence to suggest that the more those with a low or medium level of education participate in adult education the wider the range of options they perceive as being open to them. If this is thought of in terms of alternative "routes" leading to participation in different types of courses, the patterns for familial/home courses, and hobby/academic courses are quite clear. Participants in the traditional female interest courses will tend to be people of a low or medium level of education, with a low involvement in adult education. Participants in hobby/academic courses will tend to be either the better educated women (regardless of involvement in adult education), or those who have a low or medium level of education, but having a history of relatively high participation in adult education.

The importance of these relationships is that they imply that if people with a low educational background can be brought to participate in several adult education activities it may help them to "catch up" on their better educated sisters, to the extent that it widens their perceived range of content options.

In passing, it is interesting to note that, contrary to commonsense expectations, life cycle stage did not appear to have any influence on the type of course attended. One possible interpretation of this finding relates to women's changing perceptions of their social role. The figures for those participating in the traditional female courses relating to home and family could thus be seen as representing a balance between two factors working in opposite directions. The factor leading to a high participation in these types of courses by the younger women (ie. their life cycle

position), could be counteracted by the growing awareness amongst the younger women of a desire for something other than the traditional role of wife and mother. For the older women the decreasing direct relevance of familial/home type courses, might be outweighed by their adherence to more traditional roles, leading some of them to continue their involvement with such courses.

MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

A major and perhaps even dominant interest of both researchers and practitioners in the field of adult education has been the question of why people choose to participate in such activities. Participation in adult education is in general not a strongly normatively ascribed activity, therefore how people perceive their participation is usually regarded as an important issue. The understanding of motives used in this study is that they do not entirely arise from the individual as such but are socially produced. (6) A certain range of ways of viewing an action are available to individuals in particular situations, and it is difficult for them to define their actions outside these terms. More specifically the social role of married women has quite a determining influence on how motivation is expressed. In contrast to most of the research in adult education which has tended to rely almost exclusively on checklists of "reasons" for participation, a dynamic multi-dimensional approach was employed in this study. The complex issue of motivation for participation in adult education activities emerged as being comprised of four main dimensions.(7)

These dimensions differed in their time scales — two dimensions having a more forward looking element to them broadly referring to what the respondents hoped they would achieve by participating in adult education, with the other two dimensions emphasising factors located in the individuals' past which they regarded as "leading" them to participate.

(1) Content Orientation

The first dimension generally centres around the content of the activity attended, with respondents expressing their motivation in terms of a desire to pursue areas of knowledge relating to the course topics. Thus almost 40% of the sample expressed their motivation in terms of family and home based interests — or to put it more formally, they hoped that by participating in adult education they would achieve objectives relating to their knowledge or performance at home or in the family. It is interesting that not one woman expressing this type of motivation attended a Work or Community related course. One fifth of the respondents expressed a leisure/learning interest with a similar proportion giving work related reasons, and a further 15% seeing participation as serving community orientated ends. A rather interesting finding is that 15% of those who wanted to achieve work related ends, attended community and Home/Academic courses rather than Work Related courses. From a qualitative analysis of the interviews it appeared that many of these women were interested in obtaining training or qualifications in areas to which they may have had some difficulty in gaining access. For example, several respondents were very interested in becoming social/community workers but, as they were unable to obtain third level training for various reasons, they hoped that attendance at informal courses might at least "stand in their favour." As this possibility becomes less likely with increasing professionalisation, it is imperative that "alternative" routes must also be established and formalised through co-ordination with all the bodies involved — universities, professional associations, trade unions, adult educators, the Department of Education, etc. While this study confirmed that adult education undoubtedly provides subjective benefit for many participants, it is surely a short-coming if women who have participated for many

years find it has given them no advantage whatsoever in relation to the labour market.

(ii) Context of Decision

The second dimension of motivation relates to respondents' perceptions of the general context within which adult education entered their sphere of relevance as a "good idea". Over three-quarters of the sample (77.0%) expressed their decision to participate within a context of wanting an "interest", either inside the home (19.8%) or outside the home (57.2%). Eleven per cent gave more general reasons in the form that they had time available and were looking for something "to do". Eight per cent wanted to get involved or generally get into circulation, while the remainder (4.0%) did not reply in these terms.

It is obvious that all these categories relate to the structural situation of married women in Ireland. It is being increasingly recognised that being a wife and mother does not satisfy all the needs of women. The question is, however, whether adult education is simply acting as a legitimate "safety valve", providing as one writer puts it "toy" education. (8) The fact that the women who adhered most to a traditional female sex role ideology were the most likely to express their motivation in terms of an interest outside the home, would seem to give some support to this idea. (9)

(iii) Precipitating Circumstances

The circumstances which gave the respondents the final "push" into participating in adult education constitute the third dimension of motivation. It emerged that one of the main factors which helped them to actually decide to participate, once they had been "warmed up" to the idea by the previous dimension was the influence of another person. Thirty-seven per cent referred to the role played by another person, whom we shall call a "significant other". A further 18.3% decided to attend because they thought adult education was the only way they could activate a particular objective they had at the time. Having more time available prompted some respondents into participating, as well as a feeling of desperation expressed by others. As one woman put it "I thought I'd go mad if I didn't do something". Six per cent mentioned more or less fortuitous circumstances, while 16.7% did not give any precipitating circumstances.

(iv) External Influences

The final dimension related to external influences. Only 19.8% of the sample did not spontaneously refer to the influence of an external factor on their decision to participate. This is a very important factor in practical terms, because it highlights the communication networks by which information and stimulation is distributed. Thirty-seven per cent mentioned personal sources of stimulation — friends (27.8%), and relatives (9.6%). Thirty-six per cent mentioned official sources, of these 19.9% referred to social workers, Manpower, etc, and 16% voluntary associations. It is interesting that only one respondent mentioned her employer as a source of influence. Advertising was mentioned by 7.1% of the sample. As would be expected the majority of respondents who mentioned the more formal sources of influence (including advertising) had attended the more "public" types of courses namely work or community orientated courses. On the other hand the majority of those who cited more informal sources of influence attended more "personal" courses (family and hobby). While this is the dominant pattern, the fact that one quarter of those who referred to friends as a source of influence had attended a work related course, means that there is not a rigid demarcation between work/

public domain and non-work/private domain. Particularly for married women who have been out of paid employment for some time the informal network of friends is likely to be very important.

Coming back briefly to the influence of formal educational background it is interesting that in contrast to the important role it played in relation to the objective aspects of participation, it appeared to have no impact on how the women actually saw their participation in adult education. This implies that although women from low and high educational backgrounds were equally likely to express similar motivation, the way they translated these motives into action differed. Again it would seem that counselling could assist in optimising the correspondence between motivation and actual participation in adult education.

Having considered the above dimensions of motivation for a specific course we will go on to look briefly at the overall role which adult education played in the lives of these women. For 30% of respondents adult education activities largely played the role of a link with spheres of society outside the family. It constituted both a break in the daily routine, and a source of social contact and involvement. Approximately one quarter expressed the role adult education played for them in terms of the opportunities it provides for general personal development and educational improvement. An interesting response was that 15% of respondents saw adult education activities as providing a means through which they could not only use, but also assess their skills and abilities. This would again seem to relate to certain features of the situation of housewives who lack an external source of validation for their work.

TRAINING INTERESTS

Finally we will briefly examine some of the data concerning the role of work related adult education for women. (10) All the evidence indicates that the situation in Ireland is moving in the direction of modern industrial societies, with a tendency for an increasing proportion of women to return to remunerated employment after a period of child-rearing. (11) This is borne out by the fact that one third of the sample who were not working had a definite intention of returning at some time, a further 26.4% thought they "probably" would return, 10.3% were unsure, and 31% were definite that they would not return. These figures are almost identical with those of a recent nation wide survey. (12) All except two of the women had worked since leaving full-time education, and as would be expected for an adult education group they were concentrated more in the white-collar positions and the "lower" professions (nurses, teachers) than the population of women workers as a whole. It is striking, however, that in spite of being a relatively advantaged group, 53.2% of respondents in this study had never received any vocational training. When the third-level education groups were excluded this figure increases to 60%. Predictably, of those who did receive training this took the form of commercial courses in the majority of cases. Thirteen per cent of the sample had undergone some form of on-the-job training divided approximately in half between those who had received more than or less than three months training.

Adult educators must ask themselves how they are catering for this significant number of the population who are contemplating re-entry into the labour force. The question is made all the more vital when it emerges that of those who had received no vocational training whatsoever, almost half had no interest in now obtaining such training, even though this group was equally likely to be interested in returning to work. Unless there is a concentrated and co-ordinated effort by the relevant agencies women returning to work will continue to be concentrated in low skilled, low paid and low status jobs. As Walsh and O'Toole put it, "certain

occupations especially unskilled and routine jobs which require little training and where the penalties for discontinuity in one's working career are slight, may tend to attract women who are returning to work after interruptions for family formations." (13)

CONCLUSION

In the course of considering aspects of the patterns of participation in adult education, of subjective motivation for such participation, and of the training interests of the women in the sample, various ideas have been raised for adult educators. In particular the need for assistance for the members of lower educational groups who do participate in adult education, was stressed. However, in spite of the problems they face, there was some evidence to suggest that by participating in adult education they may at least widen their awareness of the range of courses available. The problem, however, recurs in relation to training interests; adult educators have an obviously vital role to play for the large percentage of married women who wish to return to work, in not only providing appropriate structures but in encouraging the women to make optimal use of such facilities.

NOTES

1. C. Murphy, **Adult Education in Ireland** A report of a Committee appointed by the Minister for Education. Dublin, 1973. p.2.
2. For example; UNESCO. **A retrospective international survey of adult education** Paris 1972; OECD **Reintroduction of women to the market after an interruption in employment**; ILO **Equal rights for working women** Geneva 1976.
3. Because of the varied nature of Adult Education provision (and frequent lack of adequate records) it is impossible to devise a sampling frame from which a random sample could be drawn. A form of stratified sampling was therefore employed covering five types of agencies: (a) Adult Education institutions; (b) Night schools; (c) Training agencies; (d) Community groups, and (e) University extra-murals.
4. Obtained by secondary analysis of the data kindly made available by Dr. M. McGreil from his study of over two thousand people in the Dublin area.
5. See the work of P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, **Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture** SAGE publications, 1977.
6. This is based largely on the work of C. W. Mills and H. Gerth **Character and Social Structure**, Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1970.
7. Several open-ended questions were used to elicit this information along with data given in other parts of the interview.
8. A. Krainc, "Let's do away with 'toy' education for women" **Convergence**, No. 1, Vol. 9, 1975.
9. A typology of self-concepts was developed in the study along a dimension of degree of adherence to traditional sex role ideology.
10. This will be discussed in more detail in a forthcoming article.
11. See Particularly B. M. Walsh and O'Toole **Women and Employment in Ireland Results of a National Survey** ESRI, Dublin, 1973.
12. *ibid.*
13. *ibid.*, p.99.

DESIGNING INSERVICE TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL-PRACTITIONER ADULT EDUCATORS:

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The purpose of this paper is to outline a strategy of designing inservice training activities for the professional-practitioner in Adult Education. The paper is based on the experiences of the author in a specific training program conducted while he was a Visiting Professor at University College, Dublin, serving as Director of the Kellogg Agricultural Extension Centre.

For the purposes of this paper the professional-practitioner is that adult educator who is practising in the field, rather than the professional who deals only with other adult educators, for example, the Agricultural Instructor in the Advisory Service as opposed to the Professor of Adult Education. The inservice training then is designed to make the professional-practitioner better able to function efficiently and effectively in his application of knowledge and skill in solving problems in the "real world".

When thinking about training and learning I am convinced that human beings learn from activities in which they are actively engaged. That is, we learn from interacting with environment which surrounds us, whether the interacting be physical, mental or emotional. The teacher/trainer is responsible for the establishment of that learning environment and the activities in which the learners engage. The best that the teacher-trainer can do then is to facilitate what the learner does as the basis for his learning. This paper suggests that the following tasks be considered as constituting the development of an inservice training program:

1. **Developing a strategy** for planning the training program.
2. **Identifying and specifying the "things to be learned"** by the trainees.
3. **Choosing and arranging activities in which learners can engage.**
4. **Conducting the activities.**
5. **Assessing the consequences of our efforts.**

The remaining portion of the paper will deal with a case study of this developmental procedure focusing on the first three tasks. Again, our discussion will be student centered — that is we will be concerned with "facilitating learning" rather than teaching.

The case study describes efforts in developing a program which was designed to balance theoretical thought (intellectual functioning) with the practical (or operational functioning). Conscious effort was made to facilitate the learner in connecting the potentially useful ways of thinking (intellectual functioning) to the real world (operational functioning).

Even though intellectual and operational functioning can be thought of as distinguishable phenomena, they cannot be carried out independent of each other. The purpose in thinking of them separately is to become more conscious that the two do exist; that they both are likely involved in all types of functioning, except that

which may be strictly intuitive or conditioned response. The typical practitioner-trainee will be most concerned with operational functioning.

The trainer of practitioners can err in two ways. First, he can emphasize operational functioning without revealing or emphasizing the thought processes which guide him and which might guide the trainee. Second, he can direct the learners' attention to theoretical, abstract ideas to the exclusion of a connection to concrete referents (the operational reality to which the ideas apply); the trainee is left to make his own connection.

The Case Example

Starting in December 1971 and continuing through midyear 1972 I worked with the professional staff of Macra na Tuaithe. The educational officer and I decided to consider a workshop that would span some months. By such a procedure we could introduce ideas during a session or sessions together. Staff could pursue the ideas on the job: (1) by trying them out (to see if they "made sense" in the real world); (2) by carrying on individual study, not only of resource materials that would be provided but of the job requirement situation itself.

The details of how the workshop would be pursued were very loose. The specifics would need to evolve as we acquired more insight into where the staff were (1) as learners, (2) in terms of the problems that were "bugging them", (3) in terms of the activities they were engaged in at the time which could provide a living laboratory for our study together. However, a firm decision on whether to proceed would depend upon further demonstrated interest and commitment by the staff.

Evolving the Strategy (Task 1)

We started with a one-day exploratory session.

Even though I did not reveal to the workshop participants the orientation from which I was operating until the end of the day, I used Tyler's curriculum rationale (Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, University of Chicago Press, 1950). The first question of Tyler's rationale deals with purpose: What purposes (objectives) should the program seek to attain? He suggests three sources of objectives: study of the learner, study of contemporary society, and study of subject matter. He also identifies two sources that can be used in judging the most pertinent of the possible objectives identified: (1) philosophy of the organization; and (2) what is known about how learning occurs (psychology of learning).

Tyler's first question provided the basis for my making inquiry into the nature of the learners with whom I was to deal (up to that time I had met some of them only casually). The day's session was started by my posing five questions, one at a time. Each person responded to each question:

- 1 Tell me something about your preparation for your job with Macra na Tuaithe (such as formal education, work experience, other experience and study).
In their responses I listened for clues as to "where they would be" in such things as formal exposure to ideas from behavioural sciences and other areas of study; how they might see their formal education and previous experience as being related to their present job.
- 2 Describe the circumstances in which you work (what do you work with; who do you work with; under what circumstances and conditions; for what purposes).
In listening to responses I sought clues as to how they conceive of their work situation; what ways of thinking about and characterizing it they might have.

3 What is the nature of the program of Macra na Tuaithe?

I listened to see the extent to which they might see their program as a collection of activities and events; as ways of engaging and keeping young people busy; as a means by which young people and their leaders can be helped to engage themselves in things of significance.

4 What do you see as the mission of Macra na Tuaithe?

I was anxious to hear how they would verbalize the purposes of the organization (a philosophy of the organization); the extent to which there was commonality-diversity in how this would be expressed; the extent to which their way of expression could provide useful guides to programming.

5 What do you consider useful ways of assisting Macra na Tuaithe leaders in performing their role more effectively?

I had already learned that the programme depended heavily upon volunteer leaders. In responses I listened for clues as to how they perceived their relationship to leaders; Do they see themselves as responsible for helping leaders learn what is expected? To learn how to go about their responsibilities with the club with growing confidence? Or do they see themselves getting volunteers "involved" and leave them to figure out the rest?

Furthermore, they were asked to give examples of situations related to programming in which they found themselves. Among those situations mentioned were the following:

Difficulty in getting across ideas and programmes in clubs (effective use of visual aids, literature, getting feedback).

Get leaders aware of possibilities of programmes we have that can be adopted and used in clubs.

Organizing our time (time use)

Knowing clubs so you can assess their needs.

Providing for diversity of interest in a heterogeneous club.

Deciding on particular content or area of a programme bearing in mind resources available.

These generalized situations could be categorized under the following broader areas:

- 1 Organizing professional time/resources
- 2 Organizing to facilitate learning.
- 3 Facilitating learning.
- 4 Evaluating their efforts.

Virtually all situations mentioned had some relationship to programming.

The day had been lively. When asked if, based on the clues they now had, they would wish that we try to arrange a 2—3 day session, the answer was "yes". It was suggested that the following be done in preparation for a next session:

- 1 Each write down his perception of the philosophy of the organization.
- 2 Since the next on-the-job activities for which they were responsible (and which would occur before we would be meeting together again) were training conferences for recently elected Macra na Tuaithe club chairman and secretaries, they were each to observe and analyze these training conferences in relation to:
 - a. What the learners were doing during this conference.
 - b. "Where" participants "were" when they arrived at the training session, in regard to understanding their roles, etc.

- c. How much time participants spent during these conferences (1) listening, (2) discussing, (3) doing something else.
 - d. How much of what the presidents and secretaries could be expected to be learning would concern questions they had about their roles and responsibilities.
 - e. What learning activities go on during the course of the conference weekend.
- 3 They were asked to study:
- a. Edgar Dale, "The Cone of Experience" from **Audio-Visual Methods of Teaching**, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1954, pp.42—56.
 - b. James W. Popham and Eva L. Baker, "Curricular Decisions", from **Systematic Instruction**, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970, pp.45—62.

Identifying Things to be Learned (Task 2)

A next session was scheduled for the weekend of January 28th—30th, 1972. I prepared a syllabus prior to that session which could serve as a guide for our subsequent work together. Two major purposes were specified for the work we would undertake:

- 1 To introduce participants to "ways of thinking" that offer potential enlightenment (systematic ways of thinking about . . .) problematic situations they face.
- 2 To provide experience in working with (operationalizing) these "ways of thinking" (so the meaning of these ideas comes to have relevance to the job).

The first of these purposes relates to "intellectual functioning". The second relates to engaging in "operational functioning" in which the intellectual ideas could be tried out; where the ways of thinking could be connected to concrete referents; where operational functioning might be improved.

In effect, they were being introduced to the process I was using in working with them. The workshop was organized so they were experiencing the process I was suggesting they consider using in working with their constituents. I was being guided in my work with them by the same ideas with which I was undertaking to assist them in developing a facility. Said another way, I was undertaking to facilitate their learning through a modeling process.

As has already been indicated, Tyler's curriculum rationale provided the basic orientation to the approach being used. That rationale specifies questions that should direct inquiry in formulating curriculum:

- 1 What objectives should Macra na Tuaithe pursue?
- 2 What learning experiences should be provided?
- 3 How should these learning experiences be organized?
- 4 How can the outcomes be assessed?

They were to be provided on-the-job experiences in dealing with each of these questions. We were faced with determining if they were already prepared to deal with Tyler's questions. How do you know what questions to ask in carrying on essential inquiry? Is it adequate to ask: what objectives should we pursue? What learning experiences do we pursue? Hardly. It was judged that they required more refined ways of thinking; ways that permit raising questions that have the potential for revealing more insightful evidence/data. Those ideas selected included the following:

Learning (change in behaviour) occurs as a result of activities engaged in by the learner.

Role of the teacher/leader can usefully be thought about as "facilitator of learning".

Learning experience provides a way of combining the roles of the teacher/leader (facilitator) with the definition of activities to be carried on by the learner.

Behavioural/Instructional objective is that type of objective which identifies the behaviour it is intended that the learner acquire and the content (subject matter) with which the behaviour is intended to be concerned. In effect, such objectives define the "things to be learned".

Obviously, these four ideas do not cover the range of those that might be considered. However, in the reality of time and other resources available, I judged these to be as many as we could manage. The ones selected represented my judgment of (1) a useful starting place and (2) those that had potential for making a significant difference in the functioning of the staff. I made this judgment on the basis of evidence collected from these specific workshop participants and from more general observations made of professional-practitioners engaged in similar work. Those general observations included evidence that adult educator practitioners typically do not organize their activities with the focus of attention on what the learner will be doing. Rather, they focus attention on planning and preparing for what they (the professionals) will do. Most often the professional prepares to make some sort of presentation; to tell his intended learners something.

Activities in which Learners were to Engage (Task 3)

Learning experiences (activities) proposed in which participants might engage included:

- 1 Work with observations from previous experience on the job.
- 2 Discussion of these observations, focusing on "telling questions" in a search for clarification of what is a "telling question" that can be derived from experience.
- 3 Studying resource material in search of (1) ideas that will provide enlightenment to problems which occur on the job, and (2) elaboration of ideas already acquired.
- 4 Analyzing on-the-job cases utilizing ideas being introduced.

A selected range of resource material (bibliography) was provided, some items of which could be supplied as handouts.

The Macra na Tuaithe staff was struggling to better understand what had just happened on the job or to develop plans for what was coming up. I was struggling to use their here-and-now problems/situations to assist them in better understanding the major organizing and elaborating ideas (outlined in the syllabus) and how these ideas can be utilized in pursuing the here-and-now. Between sessions they were reading/rereading some of the reference materials suggested and pursuing exercises related to their on-going work.

At this stage we were prepared to conduct activities (Task 4) by means of which learning might occur. The consequences of these efforts (Task 5) would be judged on the basis of (1) adjustments participants were able to demonstrate in their thinking as they designed activities required in their professional responsibilities and (2) observable adjustments they were able to make in their manner of functioning on the job.

As it turned out, in addition to the one-day exploration session in December, 1971, we worked together during three weekend sessions in 1972 (January 28—30, April 22—24, July 7—9) and a half-day in May. In each of these sessions we were working with the activities they were currently engaged in (having just completed or scheduled for the near future).

Together we had evolved a strategy. I had identified a selection of things that might be learned and suggested activities in which participants might engage as the basis for their learning. The activities included utilizing what was actually occurring in their job responsibilities at the time. The potential existed for finding out if practitioners can be assisted in adjusting the way they function on the job based on more adequate ways of thinking to which they could be exposed.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

D. Gordon MacIntyre,
Regional Director,
The Open University in Northern Ireland.

The Council for Continuing Education in Northern Ireland met for the first time in October 1974, and is therefore now just five years old. During its short life it has achieved quite a lot. It has also evolved; and since it would be rather tedious for the purposes of this article to trace in detail all the changes which have taken place, I merely record at the outset that there is some compression in what follows. Thus when I quote terms of reference, they are the current version, slightly amended from those we first adopted; when I describe the membership, I am taking it in the somewhat enlarged form in which it now stands.

It may also be helpful to explain my own credentials for writing this article. As Regional Director of the Open University in Northern Ireland, I was asked at the outset whether the Open University would accept a seat on the Council. I replied that I should be glad to attend personally, and from the beginning I have tried to play an active part. I chaired one working party and was a member of another; I was for two years a member of the Steering Committee and later of a three-man Review Committee which considered the Council's role and methods of proceeding; and I am now a member of the small Development Committee which was established as a result of the Review Committee's recommendations. I would stress, however, that opinions expressed here are my own, with no official or representative standing.

PRACTICAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The establishment of a Council of Continuing Education was first announced by the Minister for Education in the power-sharing Executive which flourished briefly during the early months of 1974. That the idea was pursued by the Department of Education later that year, after the Executive had fallen, might be seen as a small assertion of faith in the future at a time when it was not easy to be optimistic. The Permanent Secretary of the Department, Mr. A. C. Brooke, presided over the first meeting, and continued to be the Council's Chairman until his retirement early this summer. Membership is about 30, and includes representation from the Universities, the Education and Library Boards (at member and officer level), the Ulster Polytechnic, the Worker's Educational Association, the BBC and Ulster Television, the major Museums, the Public Records Office, the Arts Council, the NI Council of Social Service, the NI Prison Service, the Department of Agriculture (who run agricultural colleges), and professional associations of librarians and of teachers in Further Education.

The terms of reference of the Council are:—

1. To advise the Department of Education on:
 - (a) (i) the framework and development of continuing education in Northern Ireland,
 - (ii) the programme and facilities offered by the various providing bodies.

- (b) (i) publicity for these programmes and facilities,
 - (ii) the promotion of relevant research,
 - (iii) such specific matters as may from time to time be referred to it.
2. To exercise executive functions at the request of the Department, provided that in doing so the Council shall not override the powers and functions of constituent bodies.
 3. To act as a forum for the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas about continuing education in Northern Ireland.

The Council has normally met three times a year, and has operated principally through panels and working groups.

From this formal description two points immediately emerge. The first arises from the composition of the Council. Because of the size of Northern Ireland, it is possible for the Council to provide a mechanism whereby representatives of all the major providers can sit round one table. This is a very different position from that of the more recent Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education for England and Wales, where membership is on a personal basis, and in the nature of the situation major interests are represented only in a loose and indirect way. The concept of a forum for exchange and dissemination has a more immediate kind of reality in Northern Ireland. Yet the formal structure of the Council was needed to bring this about: prior to its formation people did not know each other so well. The fact that most of us are now on first-name terms may seem trivial: but personal relations are not unimportant in the business of fostering collaboration and avoiding pitfalls in notoriously difficult territory.

The other point is the Council's close formal relationship with the Department of Education. Again there is an interesting difference from the English Council, which has, in Dr. Richard Hoggart, a wholly independent chairman, and where the full-time secretary is administratively attached to the National Institute of Adult Education. The Northern Ireland Council not only is chaired by the Permanent Secretary, but normally meets in the Department of Education and is serviced by the Department's officers. There has obviously been a danger in this, and it is one of which the Department itself is keenly aware. In particular, the position of the Permanent Secretary is obviously in principle an anomalous one, presiding over a body which is in effect advising himself. I believe, however, that virtually every member of the Council shares my view that at least for its initial phase any disadvantages inherent in this situation have been far outweighed by the advantages. Not only is Mr. Brooke an admirable chairman, but his personal involvement has clearly helped to ensure that the various participating bodies are represented at a high level and has given the Council from its inception an authority which it might otherwise have taken much longer to acquire. Indeed it would be difficult to overstate the value of Arthur Brooke's own contribution to such success as the Council has achieved.

The clause in the terms of reference about executive in addition to advisory functions was inserted recently to legitimize what was already happening in practice, notably in the field of publicity. One of the Council's most active groups has been its standing Publicity Panel, and they have assumed an initiating role. In particular they have developed the practice of taking a stand for continuing education at Belfast's annual Ideal Home Exhibition, and in association with this have produced a leaflet in newspaper form about opportunities available in the Province and sources of more detailed information. The facilities of local press and broadcasting have also been used. In general it has been the aim of the Panel to secure better use of existing resources by increasing public awareness of the available opportunities and improved communication between providing bodies.

The latter aim has been shared by the Programme Co-ordination Panel, which has sought to avoid unnecessary duplication of provision, and has made some attempt to wrestle with the thorny question of rationalizing student fees and teachers' remuneration. The third standing group under the Council's umbrella is the Resources Panel, which grew out of a working party, and which is now following through some of that working party's recommendations, designed, through better information, co-ordination, and access, to improve the use rather than the provision of resources for continuing education in Northern Ireland.

WORKING PARTIES

Working parties, as might be expected, have been the Council's principal means of dealing with specific issues, and those so far investigated by this means have included adult literacy, the future of the Educational Guidance Service for Adults, the continuing education needs of released prisoners and detainees (a reference from the Minister of the day), the case for a residential adult education centre in Northern Ireland (we think there is a strong one), and continuing education for the socially disadvantaged (another request from a Minister). It is scarcely possible in the scope of this article to outline the contents of all of these reports, but each has been a workmanlike document, some have contained useful summaries of existing practice and provision, and all have produced thoughtful and constructive conclusions and recommendations. The reports on resources and on the continuing education needs of the socially disadvantaged have been published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

At our last meeting we also adopted a paper which the Department has submitted on our behalf as evidence to an Enquiry Team appointed to consider a structure for adult educational guidance in the Province.

Not all of our bright ideas, of course, have been implemented. Advisory bodies are in the literal, though not in this case, we trust, in the popular sense irresponsible, and the authorities which receive our advice have been operating in an unpropitious economic climate. At recent meetings the Department have, at our request, been reporting back to us on action taken (or otherwise) in response to our various recommendations. Nevertheless, the sense that progress in some directions was slow may have been one reason for a slight sense of malaise which affected the Council about half way through the period now under review. Another was that most of the ideas for consideration had arisen during the first twelve months of the Council's life, and had by then been dealt with, at least in some measure. New proposals did not seem to be coming forward, and after an initial flurry of activity there was a danger that the Council was running out of steam.

Accordingly a small review group was appointed to consider the Council's achievements to date, its objectives, and its future role. The group concluded that no radical changes were required, and that many aspects of the way in which the Council had developed served it well. Some thought was given to what had been part of the Minister's original statement in 1974, when he indicated that the new Council's first task would be to draw up a comprehensive scheme for continuing education for consideration by the Department. This possibility had also been mentioned in the background note which had been sent out with the original invitations to join the Council, but it was recognised that in practice such an undertaking had never been seriously considered. The group concluded that the Council's failure to address itself to the production of a comprehensive plan derived partly from uncertainty about what practical purpose such a plan could actually serve, and partly from a feeling that it would be out of date almost as soon as it was written. They were inclined to believe that these were valid considerations,

and that an attempt at this later stage to prepare a comprehensive plan would not be a particularly profitable exercise. The Council itself endorsed this view, considering that in order to draw up a detailed scheme it would be probably necessary to allocate to providing bodies precise roles which might hinder developments and initiatives. All members, however, supported the view that the Council should not shirk the responsibility to maintain an over-view of continuing education in Northern Ireland, and where appropriate, to establish guidelines for securing effective co-operation in the field.

DEVELOPMENT ROLE

The most significant development to emerge from the review was that the Council's Steering Committee was dissolved and replaced by a small Management Committee and a new Development Committee. The Steering Committee had been formed early in the Council's life, and because at that time the level of working party and panel activity had been so high, quite a complex structure had been devised to provide for representative and rotating membership. It was now felt that this mechanism was unnecessarily elaborate. The smaller Management Committee would deal with the running of the Council, while the role of the Development Committee would be rather to generate ideas and suggestions for the development of the Council's work.

The Development Committee was appointed in May 1978. Its Chairman is Prof. Hugh Sockett, Director of the New University of Ulster's Institute of Continuing Education, and it consists of three other members of the Council together with the Secretary and a Departmental Inspector. The first main business which it undertook was to organise a one-day conference on continuing education. This took place in March 1979. The day was opened by Lord Melchett, as Minister responsible, and in addition to a session in which some interesting developments in Northern Ireland were described, papers were given by Richard Hoggart of the English ACACE and by Paul Bertelsen of UNESCO. We were also pleased to welcome Michael Murphy of Aontas, whose presence at the conference is responsible for the 'commissioning' of this article. It is always difficult to assess the practical value of such occasions, but the conference threw up some stimulating ideas, and certainly raised the level of awareness concerning the work of the Council.

The other contribution of the Development Committee so far has been to open up the Council's agenda. Suggestions have been made about giving us a more active role in relation to research; a working party is being appointed to consider issues which would arise if paid educational leave were to be introduced; a study tour of adult education in Holland is proposed for March 1980; the Committee has undertaken to initiate consultation based on the ACACE paper, "Towards Continuing Education", with a view to producing and circulating a Northern Ireland discussion paper; the report of a recent community education project in certain areas of Belfast will be considered within this context; and a further review of the role and membership of the Council itself is to be undertaken.

Altogether, therefore, the Council may be said after five years of life to be in a fairly healthy state. It has established itself firmly on the educational map of Northern Ireland, it has a solid record of achievement, and it has plenty still to do. Of course it is not operating in a static environment. Since May there has been a change of Government and a new Minister responsible for Education; there is also now a new Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education, and it remains to be seen whether he will wish to think it wise to be as closely identified with the Council as was his predecessor: if the time were thought ripe to appoint an

independent Chairman that would no doubt mark another stage in the Council's evolution. The important thing seems to be that it should continue to evolve in response to changing needs and situations, for the contribution which can be made by a body such as the Council is now a matter of record. One of my own hopes would be that we can continue to be outward-looking and receptive to ideas from other places, for there is always, in a community as small as Northern Ireland, a danger of becoming parochial; and since this article is likely to be read mainly in the Republic I would add that the strengthening of links with your institutions must surely be of mutual advantage.

August, 1979

PEARSE COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT

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Prior to 1930, the majority of Irish people could only avail of primary education. In the early thirties, the Vocational Education Act created a new form of educational establishment and system—the Vocational School. Its main purpose was to give education of two years duration after primary school and its curriculum had a practical base. At the end of two years pupils obtained a certificate in Manual Training. This certificate qualified the student for trade-type occupations.

This type of education, prior to the 1950s, was not available to any great extent. The majority of people attended primary schools and remained there until they were 14 years of age — and then took up employment. The reasons were mostly economic. This meant that people of high intelligence, because of economic reasons, had to forego second level education. The vocational school system recognised this problem and by establishing evening classes, catered for the people wishing to continue their education beyond primary level.

In the late 1960s, free second level education was made available to all students and the vocational schools were granted permission to extend their range beyond the two year limit and students were then introduced to a curriculum leading to the Leaving Certificate Examination — similar to that available in the secondary school system. The evening school also expanded to allow people to proceed to the Leaving Certificate standard.

The economy has continued to expand and this has created problems for those whose education (prior to the introduction of the Free School Scheme) was limited to primary or the two year vocational education scheme. The level of education today is far higher than it was twenty years ago, with the result that a lot of these people feel inadequate. Attendance at evening school presents problems for many people and television tends to discourage evening time activity.

Other problems have begun to manifest themselves in recent years. The shorter working week has given more free 'day' time to workers. Women historically remained at home after marriage, but have now begun to take their 'place' in the industrial development ; they have money at their disposal and are anxious to improve their education. Firms and employers are now recognising the need for an educated work force and they are willing to release their workers for special training and education. Early retirement is now a feature of industrial life — this is also linked with redundancy brought about by the increasing use of more up-to-date production methods.

Research has produced the following problems in adult education:

- (i) Large numbers of people are semi-illiterate ; in some areas up to 15% of adults cannot read.
- (ii) There is a demand for education from adults ; during the day.
- (iii) Firms are seeking to improve the educational standards of their employees.

- (iv) Early retirement means that some form of re-education for leisure or other work is needed.

The vocational education system is moving to meet this demand and all vocational schools are now providing adult education programmes in their evening schools. In some areas, classes are being provided on a limited basis, during the day time. However, the big problem here is that the large birth rate in Ireland continues to demand all available space in day schools.

In Dublin City an effort is being made to establish day-time adult education classes in existing vocational schools. In Pearse College, Sundrive Road, Crumlin, day time courses have been in operation for the past three years. The demand for these courses is very high and during the current session, the College has been granted permission to develop as an Adult Education College.

Courses currently running in Pearse College are as follows:

1. Literacy Programme

This course is attended by adults with reading and literacy problems. It is under the supervision of a remedial teacher and each pupil is assisted by an adult (not a teacher) and is trained to read and write. At the end of one year they are ready to undertake basic formal education and may continue on a 3 year course and obtain examination qualifications.

2. Full-time Education Course for Adults

These courses are attended by adults who for some reason had to abandon their education at an early age or because of their commitment to their families and have not had any formal education contact for a long period of time. This is a 3-year course — the first year being used by the students as a refinding process and to determine their goals. They are advised by the guidance teacher and are free to have discussions with their teachers on their aims and abilities. In the second and third years they prepare for formal examinations. They have a choice of eight subjects and may select four to five of these for the second and third years of the courses.

3. Part-time Day Release Courses

These courses are attended by a wide variety of groups such as:

- (a) Trainee Professional Footballers
- (b) School Attendance Officers — studying education welfare.
- (c) Postmen — anxious to improve their education to enable them to take State examinations.
- (d) Night Telephonists — these people, mostly men, are free from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. each day. They attend three hours per day and study general subjects including languages. Their aim is to improve their standard of education and some intend proceeding to third level education.

It is proposed to widen the curriculum during next session to include programmes for:

- (i) Redundant Workers
- (ii) People on early retirement
- (iii) Training for people involved in welfare work.

The College is being redesigned to cater for 360 adult students and will be equipped to meet the needs of these pupils. The attendance during the current session in all class groups has been in the order of 60—65% and in certain groups has been as high as 82%. The literacy group, to date, has an 80% attendance record.

The long term proposals for the College are to establish links with other groups, agencies and educational establishments in Ireland and other countries and through this develop an educational programme that will be far reaching and less insular. Teachers and groups from other schools will be welcome and information on present and future developments will be given on request.

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 1979 A.G.M.

Micheál W. Ó Murchú
Aontas Director

INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The programme of Aontas for the period under review — January to December 1978 — exhibits the maintenance of established aspects of the annual programme together with the exploration and development of new areas of endeavour.

The recommendation in the **Report of Consumer Education Committee** for example, that "Aontas be designated the medium through which a programme of adult consumer education would be advanced" was a recognition of the established role of Aontas in adult education in Ireland: it underlined also the potential within Aontas to spear-head the development of consumer education in Ireland. Aontas has set up a working part on Consumer Education.

In December a worthwhile and stimulating seminar was organised by Aontas on the **UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education**. The outcome of the seminar so far has contributed in large measure to a process of crystallisation of the major domains of adult education which require development and investment: the training of adult educators; community development as a process of adult education; resources for adult education; and specific target groups.

This seminar was a logical follow-up to the very successful 1978 Annual Conference in Wexford which focussed on "The State Commitment to Adult Education".

In terms of organisational re-structuring, the adoption of the Memorandum and Articles of Association by the Annual General Meeting in June 1978 has provided Aontas with a proper organisational basis which among other things, has opened up the Association to a greater degree of participation by the members.

A National Directory of Adult and Community Education was decided upon, and in co-operation with St. Patrick's College, Maynooth the preparatory work, which will lead to the compilation of the first such directory in Ireland, was undertaken. Member organisations co-operated in responding to questionnaires on the training of tutors with a view to formulating a policy on priorities in training and research in Irish adult education. Work commenced on the expected barriers to access to the Universities by means of the Leaving Certificate on a cumulative basis and this investigation is in progress.

PROJECTS

Local Innovative Projects

Grant-aid was doubled for the scheme of projects during 1978/79 and totalled £1,000.00. The following projects were approved for grant-aid in 1978:

—Coolmine Community School, Co. Dublin.

Voluntary Project on "Learning Difficulties — Parental Involvement". Two hour long sessions per week for a period of 10 weeks.

—People's College, Dublin

Project on "Education and Urban Living". Week-end Seminar.

- Irish Pre-School Playgroup Association
Exhibition during International Year of the Child on "The Value of Play for the Pre-School Child". Week-end Seminar.
- Limerick Adult Education Institute
"Building Family Relationships" in co-operation with ADAPT, (Association for Deserted and Alone Parents). Information and lecture sessions plus follow-up where feasible.

Aontas/RTE Major Project

Mr. Oliver Maloney, former Director-General, Radio Telefís Éireann, invited Aontas, at the 1977 Annual Conference in Ennis, to submit a major adult education project which RTE "will be prepared to put the necessary resources into a development of this nature if active support is forthcoming from the adult education movement."

Following consultation with Aontas members at the December 1977 General Meeting of the Association, two major projects were identified and submitted to RTE during March 1978. 'Enterprise Development' was proposed on the 'Telefís Feirme' model plus radio with the main focus on identifying and presenting successful local enterprises with a view to stimulating emerging entrepreneurs, committees and groups to generate, promote and develop local enterprise. A magazine format was also proposed for television at peak viewing periods which would include consumer, political and health education. Submission of the Aontas/RTE Major Project has been acknowledged by RTE and we will be kept informed of any developments. A copy of the submission was sent to Aontas members.

Aontas Network of Voluntary Promoters

From a fund of £1,000 which the Executive Committee made available to the Director (the Director's Development Fund) to be used at his discretion, a pilot project was initiated in September 1977. The twin objectives of the Aontas Network of Voluntary Promoters are to promote Aontas and adult education locally, and to keep Aontas Head Office informed about local developments in the education of adults. The Project is working quite well in achieving its twin objectives as set out above and will be reviewed shortly. A review seminar was held in September 1978.

Aontas Annual Lecture Series

The Cork Council of Adult Education organised the second series of the Aontas Annual Lecture Series in Cork during February and March 1978. The theme of the series was "A Way to a Better Future" and the programme was as follows:

- "Vital for Democracy — Citizen Responsibility"
Rev. Prof. Liam Ryan, Maynooth College, Sociology Department.
- "2000 A.D. — Will Cork Still be Worth Living in?"
Mr. T. J. McHugh, Cork City Manager.
- "Future Job Opportunities"
Dr. A. O'Reilly, Manager, Research and Planning, AnCO.
- "Can Religion Improve the Social Aspect of our Society?"
Rev. Dr. Peter Birch, Bishop of Ossory.
- "Education for Better Industrial Relations"
Dr. Charles McCarthy, Department of Business Studies, T.C.D.
- "The Irish Identity in the European Context"
Mr. Liam de Paor, Lecturer in History, U.C.D.

The series was organised and promoted by the following members of the Council's Committee:—

Eilish Stuart, Chairperson

Michael O'Mahoney, Hon. Secretary,

Sean Cooney, Hon. Treasurer

Gerard Dunne, Treasa Healy, Patrick Hurley, Tim Looney, Patrick McAuliffe,

Mary O'Connell, Patrick O'Donoghue, Seán Ó Murchú and Peggy O'Sullivan.

The two Aontas Lecture Series which were organised, the previous one being in Limerick in 1977, have been successful in focussing attention on adult education in the two areas, in promoting Aontas, and in securing press and media coverage for the Lecturers. Aontas makes a grant-in-aid of £200 available to the local organising committee.

UCG Summer School

The following persons were selected and given a grant to attend the UCG Summer School on Adult Education: Michael O'Halloran, People's College and Priscilla Conway, Irish Pre-School Playgroups Association.

NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AGENCY

The National Adult Literacy Agency, which was set up by Aontas as an independent and autonomous body in April 1977, has set itself the following aim and objectives:

AIM:

To promote literacy as a common good in Ireland.

OBJECTIVES:

- To create an informed public awareness of the problems of illiteracy;
- To influence public policies and stimulate a public commitment to the alleviation of problems of illiteracy;
- To engage in research and activities, independently or in association with other agencies that will be relevant to illiteracy;
- To co-operate with national and international bodies concerned with the problems of illiteracy;
- To be an advisory and consultative body for the development of adult literacy schemes in Ireland;
- To be a clearing house for ideas and information concerning literacy schemes and projects in Ireland and in other countries;
- To provide a resource centre for all those who seek help with problems of illiteracy;
- To encourage organisers, trainers and tutors to develop their skills in combating illiteracy;
- To obtain resources from both public and private organisations towards accomplishing the objectives of the N.A.L.A.;
- To co-ordinate on a national basis all adult literacy schemes.

PROPOSED 5-YEAR PROGRAMME

Stage 1

The immediate task of the Executive Committee is the appointment of a National Co-Ordinator and the securing of adequately equipped office accommodation. It was expected that this work would have been completed by the end of 1977.

Stage 2

- Establish contact with all existing bodies operating in the field of adult literacy.
- Seek out areas of need for the services being offered. These might be selected either in the geographical or in the social sense — in either case they should be areas where there is evidence of need with insufficient coverage of help at present.
- Facilitate the appointment of field workers.
- Invite all Vocational Education Committees to nominate an Officer who would be responsible for the organisation and development of adult literacy schemes in their administrative area.
- Facilitate the emergence and the ongoing development of a community service to meet the needs of illiterate adults.
- Encourage the voluntary participative aspect of literacy work in Ireland.
- Optimise the use of all community resources to achieve the objectives of the Agency.
- Establish a Central Resource Centre where various teaching materials, publications, audio-visual and other aid would be available to those working as tutors, organisers, etc.
- Facilitate the provision of suitable training courses for tutors and organisers throughout the country.
- Issue a Newsletter to fulfill the function of spreading information on adult literacy provision. There is an obvious need to inform tutors, organisers, libraries, local authorities, etc. of the availability of training courses, of advice on training and teaching materials, of national and international publications, and of national and international trends in the area of adult literacy. The issuing of a Newsletter would also facilitate an exchange of views and ideas among those working in the field.
- RTE — the concern of RTE to assist in creating an awareness of the adult literacy problem in our midst and their concern also to assist in the area of tutor training is obvious from their recent successful series for tutors on Radio Eireann. The N.A.L.A. would co-operate fully with RTE in any future series dealing with any aspects of adult literacy in Ireland.

Stage 3

- Analysis of projects, experiments, and research would be undertaken.
- Set up a data base on patterns of:
 - need of adult literacy teaching from one area to another;
 - expression which this need had found from place to place;
 - form of response to expressed needs;
 - variations among schemes noting innovation and degree of success or otherwise achieved among them;
 - pinpoint some critical factors which have contributed most to the success of a particular scheme;
 - obstacles to the development of literacy programmes and their solutions.

Stage 4

Period of Consolidation

The Agency has received a cash grant of £5,000 from Aontas and has sought a meeting with the Minister for Education in the hope of securing financial and other assistance which would permit the immediate appointment of a National Co-ordinator and field workers throughout the country.

STUDY TOURS

University of Wisconsin — Extension

Thirty-four persons under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin — Extension participated in a week's study tour of Ireland in August. This was the eighth study tour and the group was led by Mr. Harv Thomson, Director of Performing Arts, University of Wisconsin — Extension.

UNESCO Travel Study Grants 1978

Aontas was awarded two travel study grants by UNESCO to be taken up during 1978. Aontas members were duly notified of the grants, and the Executive Committee nominated the following members from the applications received: Mr. Kevin McBrien, CEO, Co. Roscommon VEC; Mr. David Rowlands, Director, Community Education Project, The Queen's University, Belfast. The two grantees spent a total of three weeks in England and Scotland during September and October studying various aspects of adult education, including workers' education, literacy programmes, adult education training and residential adult education.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The General Meeting which was held in October 1978 passed the following two motions:

"That an Adult Education Section of a developmental nature be formed immediately by the Department of Education; disbursement of funds for Adult Education to be carried out by this section";

"That the Department of Education allocate funds for the provision of adult literacy programmes under certain heads of expenditure such as the appointment of full-time co-ordinators, the provision of appropriate learning and teaching materials and adequate provision for tutor training and research".

A copy of these resolutions was sent to the Minister for Education and the Education spokesman for Fine Gael and Labour. A meeting was requested with the Minister for Education to discuss those resolutions and related matters, but Aontas was not given the opportunity to meet the Minister for Education or officials of the Department during 1978.

Meetings of an informal nature were arranged with (i) the Minister for Education and (ii) officials of the Department engaged in the Irish National Commission for UNESCO to coincide with the visit of Mr. Paul Bertelsen, Chief of Adult Education in UNESCO, to Ireland to participate in the Annual Conference of Aontas on the "State Commitment to Adult Education".

The annual grant-in-aid of £10,000 was received from the Department of Education.

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICATIONS

Membership of the Association at 1st April, 1978 was as follows:

Corporate Members:	Statutory Bodies	— 44
	Voluntary Bodies	— 69
Individual Members:		— 97

A new scale of membership fees, which was approved at the General Meeting in October, 1978, will come into effect after the 1979 A.G.M., and is as follows:

	£
Statutory Bodies	40.00
National Organisations	40.00
Voluntary Organisations ¹	30.00
Other Voluntary Organisations	20.00
Other Corporate Bodies	30.00
Individuals	5.00

¹ membership over 500

PUBLICATIONS

Three issues of the Newsletter were published, Vol. 8, Nos. 1—3 and sent to members and other interested organisations.

AONTAS REPRESENTATION AT SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

Aontas was represented at, and made contribution to seminars and conferences both at home and abroad during the period under review. The Association continues to be a member of the following overseas organisations:

The European Bureau of Adult Education (EBAE)

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

The International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations (IFWEA).

PROGRESS IS MADE IN THE FIELD

In spite of the absence of a national policy for adult education, the adult education movement continues to make progress from year to year. In particular, the community education dimension merits special commendation. I refer, for example, to community education projects in Derry, Belfast, Sligo, Dublin and other centres. Community education makes great demands on the leaders, participants and institutions engaged in this outstanding work, but it is in a special way rewarding to the persons and communities involved in it.

The Cork Council of Adult Education is to be congratulated for organising the first adult education exhibition in the country during September 1978. Twenty-five agencies, representing statutory and voluntary agencies co-operated in this promotional venture. The exhibition was such a success in terms of the numbers who attended the exhibition, the enquiries made about courses and activities, and the subsequent increased participation in adult education during the following months that the Cork Council has decided to hold its second exhibition in the autumn of this year.

The provision of day facilities for adults in educational institutions continues to be expanded in response to the needs and aspirations of adults. This development signals the growing responsiveness of our institutions to the educational and social requirements of the adult population.

Growth in the number of workshops for the unemployed adult, particularly during 1978 which led to a high percentage of employment, deserves special mention. In these workshops the combination of personal/social development with technical skills and crafts has opened up new possibilities for the unemployed adult. AnCO, the Industrial Training Authority, has made a major contribution in this field. And the voluntary organisation, the National Council for Travelling People, has made an outstanding contribution in making workshop provision available for the travelling people.

How much more could be achieved in terms of personal and social, community and economic development if initiatives and developments such as those cited here were to vitalize and be strengthened by a national commitment to a vigorous and comprehensive adult education policy?

CONCLUDING NOTE

Developments which occurred in the field of adult education in Ireland during 1978 were encouraging and imbued one with a sense of optimism for the future. The annual programme of Aontas has been expanded and developed. The Government accepted in principle the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1974 on paid educational leave in June 1978 and a study is currently underway to determine the broad lines on which the Convention may be implemented. The Discussion Document by the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) on the NCEA Award Structure for Recurrent Education was published in May 1978. This Document has made a significant contribution to the literature on certification and recurrent education and among other things, it focusses on the necessity of enlarged access to educational opportunities for adults.

The appointment of a Principal Officer in the Department of Education with responsibility for adult education and other areas during 1978 was particularly welcome. A step nearer the setting up of an Adult Education Division in the Department of Education perhaps.

However, we still have not a national policy for adult education in Ireland, and in the light of recent developments such a policy, incorporating a scale of priorities requiring governmental investment is more necessary than ever.

1979 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF AONTAS ON CONSUMER EDUCATION — SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Tom Savage

SESSION ONE

Speaker: Miss Mor Murnaghan, Chairman, National Consumer Advisory Council,

Miss Murnaghan outlined the role of the National Consumer Advisory Council, pointing out what it could and what it could not do.

WHAT IT COULD DO

- (1) Advise on legislation to assure consumers interests.
- (2) Press for enforcement of existing legislation.
- (3) Make representations to manufacturers and traders on voluntary adoption of measures in consumers interests.
- (4) Maintain contact with similar organisations abroad.
- (5) Advise on proposals for national standards, Coded Standards or for EEC directives on food or other consumer goods.

FUNCTIONS DO NOT INCLUDE

- (1) Comparative testing.
- (2) Dealing with individual consumer complaints.
- (3) Enforcement of legislation.
- (4) Initiation of legislation.
- (5) Price matters.

The speaker showed the progress of consumer legislation following (though not claimed as consequent upon) the Council's submission in December 1974 to the Minister.

(a) Consumer Information Act January 1978 which included the setting up of the office of Director of Consumer Affairs.

(b) In process — the Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act, a revision and extension of the old Act.

(c) Hopes for a Consumer Credit Bill.

Miss Murnaghan spoke about the 5 Rights of the Consumer summed up by the EEC. She stressed the right to information and education and maintained that awareness of them needed to be fostered. In this connection she highlighted a role for Aontas. The picture emerging seemed to be of an Ireland relatively well served by existing and proposed legislation but with apathetic consumers who have not begun to demand their rights under these laws.

Miss Murnaghan indicated the actions taken by the Council itself through surveys, an examination of the National House Building Guarantee Scheme, a booklet and other consultative measures. She called for more to be done so that people could realise their rights and responsibilities, through information centres and use of radio and television.

SESSION TWO

Speaker: Mr. Alan Dukes, Chef de Cabinet, EEC — Commissioner Burke's office.

Mr. Dukes, in general outlined how in terms of activity and education the role of the EEC was light in regard to consumer education. Progress would have to be made at national level, with the EEC providing the guidelines through being a clearing house of activity elsewhere in the member states. But he did maintain that interpretation of the EEC's role should include an awareness of the Treaty's concern with qualitative aspect. Though the word 'consumer' is noticeable only by the infrequency of its use in the Treaty, he suggested that much relating to consumer was implicit in the nature of a Common Market.

Measures aimed at developing the market should take account of the consumers' interests. But the sheer complexity of that market can put the individual consumer at a disadvantage. Then he outlined the measures aimed at redressing this imbalance, through the five basic consumer rights.

- (1) Right to protection of health and safety.
- (2) Right to protection of economic interests.
- (3) Right to redress.
- (4) Right to information and education.
- (5) Right to representation.

Consumer education, he went on, must be aimed at helping the consumer to cope with the problem of choice from an immense variety of products and services. That means knowing his rights and responsibilities of other economic operators. Also since the law and production evolves so fast that education must be a continuing one. Each basic right gives rise to a specific educational need he added and went on to indicate how much progress had been made. 'Slow' was his description, due to limited manpower resources and because methods in consumer education were still at the embryo stage.

But there is:—

- (a) Information on initiatives taken in Member States.
- (b) Pilot projects on consumer education in schools and the training of teachers.
- (c) Preparation of pedagogic material.

SESSION THREE

Speaker: Ms. Mary Clark Legal Journalist with Special Interest in Consumer Law; U.K. Representative on the Economic & Social Committee of the EEC.

Ms. Clark suggested that protecting consumers meant going further than simply telling them what to do with their extra money. Consumer education should look at the Health Service, poverty, representation on government bodies, etc. She offered the word 'user' as preferable to consumer. She then traced the progress of British legislation from Victorian times to the present day — indicating how the Caveat Emptor of 1893 was ill suited to the needs of today's market place.

Taking up the subject of Consumer Information Ms. Clark believed that though advanced legislation existed in the United Kingdom, publicity didn't exist to get such information over to the public. She particularly highlighted the advantages of the Fair Trading Act, and of the Small Claims Court. The latter providing easy, quick remedies for the consumer which was so vital.

She saw weaknesses in the fractured nature of consumer representation and wondered about devising methods for the selection of representatives in any stronger body or bodies. In passing Ms. Clark queries the fact that Ireland's representatives on the EEC Economic and Social Committee did not wear a specifically 'consumer' hat.

Again stress was laid on the need for education and information and also for gaps in consumer legislation to be looked at especially the need for negligence to be proved before compensation for injury. Ms. Clark commended the work of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Consumer Advice Centres (suggested they have a central location near shopping), Law Centres, Community Law Groups, etc.

SESSION FOUR

Speaker: Captain Oliver P. Walsh, Director, The Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland.

Captain Walsh maintained that advertising in a free environment could never mould society because it moves in too many directions. But he did think that if Government or some advocacy group were to dictate the rules under which advertising must function, then it could indeed manipulate the public. He stressed the importance the industry placed on its credibility as an indication of its wish to prevent misleading claims.

He welcomed the Consumer Information Act 1978, but also rejoiced at the EEC assurance that the self-regulatory system would not be supplanted. However, he went on to point out that the self-regulatory system was itself examined to see if there were ways in which it should be changed. The changes would be:—

- (1) Consumers to have direct access to the authority;
- (2) Consumers represented on it;
- (3) A right to initiate complaints rather than wait for them;
- (4) Extension of pre-publication vetting of proposed advertisements.

He hoped that these changes would all be seen as soon as the Irish Advertising Standards Authority emerged.

Captain Walsh highlighted the use of advertising to achieve social objectives, stressed its support for the whole communications industry and scrutinised the many economic faces of the industry./

Turning to the Educational role of Advertising and advertising techniques, he said it was becoming increasingly important, and indicated some of its possible areas of application. His assertion was that Government and Consumer interests shared with the advertising industry the same ultimate objective — a consumer who is satisfied — encouraged into a transaction by advertising that was "legal, decent, honest and truthful."

SESSION FIVE

Speaker: Mr. T.J. Maher, President, Irish Co-operative Organisation Society

Mr. Maher called for the establishment of a strong Irish consumer movement, which would be in the interests of both the consumers and the farmers. Mr. Maher went on to talk about the serious adverse effects there would be on the Irish economy if there was a continuation of the existing misunderstanding and discord between sectors of the European economy.

Membership of the EEC had not improved understanding between sectors and he gave as instances a growing urban-rural rift and a deterioration in industrial relations. Increased food prices was one of the major points of discontent and this had been blamed on EEC membership and higher farm prices. He wanted the Irish consumer to know that food prices had in fact declined relative to industrial earnings, and that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was not against their interests.

Mr. Maher pointed out that only now were farmers earnings approaching those of industrial workers and their earnings influenced the standard of living of everyone in the community. He wanted CAP maintained and improved. He highlighted what he saw as the unique common interest farmers and other consumers had in Ireland, in that agricultural earnings were for the benefit of all the people of Ireland.

Mr. Maher maintained that farmers were willing to pay their fair share of taxation but the system should not be a disincentive to maximum production from the land. The President of the ICOS called for a co-ordinated effort between all sectors in order to obtain the full benefits of EEC membership.

SESSION SIX

Speaker: Mr. Jim Murray, Director of Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Murray said he could not say much about his future programme in Consumer Affairs, since he was just in the process of working out policy. He spelled out the implications of the Consumer Information Act, covering as it did both goods and services. He also dealt with what the Act had to say about price indications and other areas.

Though his function was to 'enforce' the Act Mr. Murray wanted that term to include the promoting of good practices, encouraging higher standards in advertising and in the information given with or about goods and services.

He indicated the importance he attached to the responsibility of providing a consumer information service in certain areas. The possibilities included leaflets, brochures, advertisements, seminars and consumer protection courses. Mr. Murray wanted feedback on the practical problems of consumers. But he was, he said, sure of one thing — Consumer education must begin at an early age, but must not end there. It was a lifelong process, and hence the importance also of Adult Education.

BOOK REVIEWS

TRAINING FOR ADULT EDUCATION

K. T. Elsdon, Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham in association with the National Institute of Adult Education of England and Wales, 1975, £2.80 hardback, £1.75 paper back.

The author is a Senior Inspector of Further Education in the Department of Education and Science. The system of training as outlined in the book reflects the author's experiences as an Inspector and of one who had much contact with adult learners in the formal adult education system as organised by the Local Education Authorities, the Department of Education and Science, the Workers' Education Association and the Extra-Mural Studies and Adult Education Departments of Universities — all of which are regarded as responsible Adult Education Bodies in England and Wales. These Responsible Bodies receive direct aid from the Department of Education and Science. The study is systematic and formalised along traditional lines of what the full-time and part-time professional adult educator does in the formal setting of the class situation. There is little or no reference to the training of the voluntary adult educator. An obvious deficiency or lack in this study is the author's failure to identify, clarify and analyse the many roles and functions of the adult educator, e.g. facilitator of learning, resource person, counsellor, link-person, consultant, group leader, etc. The study does not take account of the many new approaches to adult education which every adult educator should not only know about, but should experience, e.g. distance learning, multi-media learning, correspondence, self-directed learning, co-operative learning, peer group learning conscientisation, community development, learning networks, learning exchanges, and a host of non-formal adult education processes.

The author does contribute much to the debate of planning and designing curriculum (curriculum development) through his treatment of evaluation — a vital part of curriculum development — is weak and lacks reference to recent research of 'goal or objective free' evaluation.

The author makes a significant contribution in his emphasis and justification of in-service training of the professional adult educator (part-time or full-time). I agree with the author in his discussions regarding a career structure for adult educators. This latter discussion will be of particular significance to Irish readers, where there is little or no career structure for the adult educator. One cannot but praise his reference to the use of resources, but again I would have liked a more thorough treatment here, especially by identifying and indicating possible use of community resources. Indeed as I read through this study, I became aware that the author omitted to examine the concept of community education (cf. the recent International Conference on Community Education in Melbourne, Australia).

I agree with the author in his endeavour to link theory with practice, vis-a-vis, the training of adult educators. Likewise his emphasis on action research will be supported by recent trends in adult education research in the international field of adult education. While I have outlined some deficiencies in this book, many of the part-time adult educators (they are the majority in Ireland) will find it helpful and encouraging. It will enable them to provide more relevant and motivating adult learning experiences for the learners, who are accustomed to attending night classes throughout Ireland.

The author does not critically analyse the relationship between adult learning and environmental and ecological conditions. One is also compelled to ask the two basic questions which are only partially answered in this study. They are:

(1) Who and what is, in the opinion of the author, the adult learner? How does he interpret human energy or activity in the learning process? Malcolm Knowles in a recent lecture asserted that the starting point for purposeful learning is a 'BETTER ME' as parent, worker, as spouse, the motivation to learn is a function of experiencing self as now and what I would like to become and/or be and/or belong (Be-Become-Belong)



(2) What theory of **adult** learning does the author follow or adhere to? Some treatment of the different theories of adult learning would have been useful.

Furthermore it offers to the full-time adult educator, who is undertaking serious training programmes, many opportunities to question the philosophy, the methodology and the processes of adult education presented by the author.

The emerging debate on paid educational leave, recurrent education, education permanente, the continuing education unit (C.E.U.) will, I believe, force the author, to rewrite some parts of the book, if a second edition is forthcoming or contemplated.

Rev. Fr. L. Carey,
Centre for Adult and Community Education,
St. Patrick's College,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare.

LEARNING LATER: FRESH HORIZONS IN ENGLISH ADULT EDUCATION,

Enid and Edward Hutchinson, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, £6.95.

The detailed account of some recent educational initiative, written with enthusiasm, and full of hints of its great significance for our times, is the kind of reading that one is easily tempted to postpone. A fleeting glance at this book by Enid and Edward Hutchinson might suggest that it slips roughly into this category, but it would be unfortunate if those seriously concerned with an important aspect of contemporary adult education were to mislead themselves into neglecting this book. It deals with an initiative of much interest and raises policy issues that require to be confronted.

Enid Hutchinson was deeply involved in the launching and direction of what are known as the 'Fresh Horizons' courses at the City Lit. Centre for Adult Studies in London; and her husband, Edward Hutchinson, who collaborated in this book, will be familiar to some Irish readers in his role as long-serving Secretary of the National Institute of Adult Education. The book offers both an account and a study of the Fresh Horizons programme from its beginnings in 1966 to its later development in the early 1970s. It is the story of a planned, combined course for adults at a college in central London which offers a huge 'general' programme of evening courses for adults and which was expanding into the provision of adult courses during the day. What Enid Hutchinson set out to do was to devise a course comprising a number of selected subject areas and offer it to adults who wanted more than a series of single and perhaps unrelated courses.

The venture began as a day course, meeting twice a week with four hours of classes on each day — and continuing for two terms of 12 weeks each. The package was set before the students — English Language and Literature; Social Studies; Mathematics; Speech and Drama. Students were expected to submit a considerable amount of written work, but there was no examination and no certificate or diploma. In 1968, the programme was also offered in the evening with students coming for about six hours of classes spread over two evenings a week. And in 1973, with grants becoming available from the Inner London Education Authority, a full-time day course was launched. This involved 20 hours a week of class and tutorial time and lasted for 30 weeks. The curriculum was broadly as before, but with no Speech and Drama and the students selecting a number of other single courses from the City Lit offerings.

The programme still continues but the book is mainly concerned with the years between 1966—74. It contains much data from the records on the age, educational and other background of the students, and supplements this with information from a questionnaire sent to the majority of part-time day and evening students and with similar information from the small number of full-time students. Altogether about half of the students registered replied to the questionnaire, and although this raises problems about its totally representative nature, yet information of much interest was obtained. Clearly differences were to be expected between students who could attend only in the evening and those who could come twice a week during the day — and again, those who could devote themselves to a full-time programme. Overall, the striking fact is that the vast majority of the students were women — almost 80 percent altogether. Of the women who were part-time day students, about two-thirds were in the age group 30—44, while there was a larger proportion of younger women under 30 among the evening students.

Information about educational and other background drawn from the questionnaire survey has to be generalised cautiously, but it does seem reasonable to accept that the majority of the part-time women had a different education from a notional 'average woman'. Two-thirds of the respondents had attended grammar, comprehensive or private schools. This did not certainly seem to be true of the men students. In the early years of the course, a high proportion of the women seemed to have husbands who could be classified as managerial/professional. Of the evening women students the Hutchinsons' comment that the course took place in the heart of London beside a huge business commercial area and that thus the background of the students was not really too surprising. It is, in fact, a theme of the book that there have been great changes in the situation of women with earlier marriage, smaller families, greater technical aids in running a home, and that thus large numbers of women are re-orienting themselves, seeking new careers outside the home and the subordinate roles often given them in the working world. They are also affected by the increased educational opportunities for younger people, and their relative lack of certificates and qualifications makes it difficult for them to enter courses leading to desired qualifications. A consequence is that they seek a way to return to education to equip themselves for entry to universities and other institutions.

This is illustrated by figures given in the book of those who went on from the Fresh Horizons course to further studies. Of 297 part-time students who replied to the questionnaire, over 40 per cent went on to universities, colleges of education or social work courses. The total for all the students is very possibly less than this, but the figure is interesting. The trend is much more marked for the single full-time course of 1973—74 surveyed in the book. Of the 25 students, some 70 per cent went on to such higher education. Thus, whatever else the Fresh Horizons course was accomplishing, considerable numbers went on from it to higher education.

Some Irish readers may be struck between similarities between the Fresh Horizons course and the Certificate in Foundation course offered by the New University of Ulster, Institute of Continuing Education at Magee University College (a course which the book does not neglect to mention). The Institute began a full-time and part-time course in 1973, and it is interesting that both the Magee and Fresh Horizons full-time courses began in exactly the same year. The London part-time course had clearly been in operation for some years before this. There is a marked similarity in the type of subject area covered by both programmes, and the great majority of the Magee-based students who obtain the Certificate begin on courses of higher education. Yet there are considerable differences. The New University course leads to a Certificate: there are examinations and a quite large amount of formally assessed written work. For the part-time students, the course lasts for two years and there is a sizeable fee which almost all the students have to find themselves. The London fees are apparently considerably lower. While a small proportion of the N.U.U. full-time students have been residential — about 15 per cent over the years — the majority live at home, coming to the course during the day. In all, there are a number of fascinating contrasts and similarities.

The Hutchinsons' book is not content to survey the Fresh Horizons course. It takes up policy issues about such courses and adult education in England generally. It places great emphasis on the need for counselling in such courses, and I have no doubt that the stand taken on counselling is controversial — and every hope that further serious examination of this matter will be generated. It lists some other initiatives in Britain showing more or less similarities to the Fresh Horizons programme and, as this reviewer understands it, argues that this is a viable and cheaper approach to make large-scale provision for a need that the long-term

residential colleges like Ruskin have (with various nuances) been meeting on a small scale.

There is, of course, room for further argument about the Fresh Horizons course and the conclusions and arguments the Hutchinsons have made. There can be argument about the nature of the educational experience which the student undergoes on such courses, leading into analysis of the meaning of the curriculum. There is need for greater understanding of the social background of this adult education movement, and of the values implied and at stake. Yet the book is a valuable addition to the information available to those concerned with the education of adults and a serious contribution to the study of issues which ought to concern them. Those engaged in similar work will be grateful to the authors for producing this well-written work and it would be a pity if the issues raised are not analysed with vigour and fruit.

Frank D'Arcy,
New University of Ulster,
Institute of Continuing Education,
Derry.

TOWARDS CONTINUING EDUCATION: A DISCUSSION PAPER, 1979
AFTER EXPANSION: A TIME FOR DIVERSITY: THE UNIVERSITY
IN THE 1990s

Richard Hoggart, 1978. 50p post free.

A STRATEGY FOR THE BASIC EDUCATION OF ADULTS: A Report
commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, 1979.

£1 post free. Published by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education/ACACE, 19b De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE

The formation of ACACE was hailed by the optimistic as the long-awaited dawn of the new era in adult education. Birthrate statistics showing continuing falls in the school population, the apparent inevitability of increasing structural unemployment hastened by the microprocessor and other technological wonders, with the special support given by Whitehall to adult literacy seemed to suggest that Government was at last, becoming serious: "the mature student", a March 1979 DES research brief stated, "is now a central figure in educational planning for the 1990s.". Pessimists in the adult education fraternity, however, pointed to the long tradition of niggardly resources and speculated both on the political will and the political rationale in the establishment of yet another committee of the wise and the good. Nevertheless in 1978 and 1979 the DES also launched serious discussions with Universities on their plans for the 1990s; the favoured solution (Model E in Higher Education in the 1990s) spoke of a mature student population in Universities of around 50%. That clearly implied an expansion of the facilities for the returning adult to get to matriculation standards. It is no surprise, therefore, to see in these three ACACE documents a well-founded optimism.

Since the election of a Conservative Government in May, adult educators are back to an old habit: scratching around for resources to preserve programmes. "Although I recognise", wrote the Minister to Hoggart in June, "that adult education has suffered, as indeed have other sectors of education, from periods of financial constraint in the past and that further economies could endanger its development in the future, I am afraid that I cannot, in the present climate, hold out any hope of any significant redeployment of resources towards this sector". The hoped-for redeployment of resources, Hoggart was told, had already been built into estimates and further cuts are clearly in the pipeline. The way forward, the Minister suggested, was a rationalisation of what was currently being offered. He was 'heartened' to see that the promotion of co-ordination was within the Council's brief: by implication, the Council should get on with that and cut out the pipedreams. It takes two to quango.

The contrast between the demography of the UK (including Northern Ireland) and Ireland is very marked: so ACACE papers have to be read by Irish readers against a totally different set of background possibilities. These three documents consist of an orientating overview, a report with detailed recommendations on the development of basic education, and a pattern of development for Universities written by Richard Hoggart, the Council's Chairman. Each is a valuable and distinctive contribution to debate. On policy, for example, the attempt to set out the structure of a post-initial system of education is an excellent start. The Council has been clearly concerned also to provide a common focus for debate as well as a distinctive terminology around which the disparities of continuing, recurrent, lifelong, etc. could cluster.

Apart from the paper on basic education, however, it is clear that the **detailed** elaboration of schemes, suitably costed to allow implementation, is undetermined: the Council, by inviting contributions, clearly intends to move in that direction — if, at this particular juncture, that would be a worthwhile exercise. Hoggart's call for Universities to take more seriously their role as places of 'free objective enquiry into the nature of our lives' is a challenge to the diffuse enterprises called the contemporary University. The Report on basic education makes specific demands for a plan for its development and appropriately organised financial support (which they detail) and which, even in these hard times, might be implemented; if only because the need for adult basic education 'proves' what Tory critics of schooling have been saying for some time.

Yet, even if the money were about to flow to support the most grandiose system of continuing education, I would remain disturbed by the absence, in these papers, of a more radical and wide-ranging discussion of the relation between education and society in the post-industrial age. I am myself unable to do more than point to one major aspect of this relationship. To put the problem as crudely as I dare, **have we not now got to abandon the ideology of equality of educational opportunity which has dominated much thought (and some practice) in educational provision since the War?** That may appear to be a question that could only be considered by a reactionary seeking to usher in the Uncaring Society: I hope to show that it is not to be classified as that **and** that the question raises fundamental issues about the development of continuing education.

Education systems have social and individual goals: ACACE indicate the need to provide what is socially desirable and to create opportunities for individuals to pursue their own purposes which may, in a general or specific way, be in the public interest. One underlying argument for the development of British Secondary Education since the war was a "social good", i.e. that an educated population could withstand the blandishments of dictators: yet in the course of its development, it is the "individual good" — expressed in the notion of equality of educational opportunity — which has been massively predominant. Of course it remains an ideal as well as a target: as Halsey pointed out in 1963, we have wished the end but not the means, and he was referring to the lack of resources for compensatory education, comprehensive education, the resource differentials between the public and the private sector, and so on. The vocabulary of equality of educational opportunity, is the vocabulary of the race-track into which like compensation and handicap naturally fit. (How effective such compensating strategies can be, as invested in public policies, has been a source of detailed enquiry.) But what is the race for? For status, privilege, and a proper place in the positional economy. Educational achievement (the possession of an earned certificate) is a marketable commodity and market forces operate. Learners are motivated, if they take the race seriously, by such extrinsic rewards. Those who don't take the race seriously are a handful in the secondary schools because they don't take the premisses of the enterprise to their bosoms. Laws of supply and demand are evident: the more graduates there are, the more intense the competition for 'graduate positional' jobs, and the qualifications specified by employers right down the line creep up year by year. Yet, of course, the educational purists in our midst reiterate that education is valuable not for what it can buy, but for its own sake: the phrase 'graduate unemployment' is, for them, a curious contradiction. And the purist is, in one sense, right: my having a job prevents you having that job, but my knowing doesn't prevent your knowing: in principle, we could all know everything.

Public perceptions of the educational system (which many teachers would

support) is that it supplies the commodity of 'educated/qualified' personnel to the market; but that market **cannot** fulfil the expectations of those gaining the qualifications. Furthermore the "overproduction of the qualified" is being done at a time when the demand for the qualified personnel is dropping not only because there is a glut on the market, but also because technological inventions are making mere personnel a liability in the profitability of a company. Is it then being seriously suggested by ACACE, among others, that we should make the problem even more intense by encouraging adults to have a 'second-chance' to **retrain** (and thus enter severer competition for 'new jobs') primarily to improve their place in the positional economy? We must redistribute educational resources to the have-nots, suggests ACACE, following Russell: that may have marginally ameliorative effect socially, but it can't produce more jobs. And is this not to get into the same situation as 'compensatory education' in secondary education, where, if the Coleman Report is right, massive investments showed little real change?

ACACE make it clear that adult motivations on entry to education **are** diffuse: as Houle et al have shown, there are recreational and social as well as instrumental motivations. Yet perhaps the balance between those sets of motivation is as it is because of the presently **peripheral** nature of adult education: unlike secondary schooling, it is not seen as a determinant of future status. Yet an extension, however large, of an adult education system which implies a **promise** of such an **improved status**, will inevitably alter that balance. For that we must be prepared if we advocate the development of a co-ordinated **system**.

If the United Kingdom is moving into the post-industrial society, it will be a regional shift not a sudden social lurch: indeed the North-East of England, like North-West Ulster, and parts of Scotland is already there. Perhaps the ACACE, in the retrenched times of the next few years, should consider the character and educational/social problems of such a region against a background **not** of equality of educational opportunity but of a conception of **social growth** which the Council is in the obvious position to help Society work out. It is that kind of agenda the Council should embrace rather than the trivial donkey work which the Minister wants them to engage in. If they do, their future publications will command more serious attention than those which, for reasons outside their control, already seemed outmoded.

Professor Hugh Sockett,
Professor of Education,
Director of the Institute of Continuing Education,
The New University of Ulster,
Derry.

BOOK NOTES

Adult Education Vol. 52, No. 3, Sept. 1979

(National Institute of Adult Education — England and Wales, 19B De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GE.)

£0.70 plus postage.

This issue includes a number of articles written by people from a wide range of interests in adult/continuing education on the discussion document "Towards Continuing Education" published by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education in March 1979.

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the National Institute is published in this number. The Institute's income for the year ended 31st March 1979 was £172,642 and expenditure was £165,603. Members' contributions yielded £59,183 and the grant from the Department of Education and Science was £42,000.

CONVERGENCE

Vol. XII, No. 1—2, 1979.

(P.O. Box 250, Station F, Toronto, Canada M4Y 2L5.)

An international journal of adult education published by the International Council for Adult Education, this combined number includes a special report on "Lifelong Learning USA", — a very informative overview.

Subscription rates: 1 year \$10, 3 years \$25.

EUROPEAN BUREAU OF ADULT EDUCATION

Nieuweweg 4, P.O. Box 367, Amersfoort, The Netherlands.

—*Newsletter 1/2*

—*"Adult Education Policy in Europe"* — 10 Dfl.

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The Newsletter is published by the European Bureau in co-operation with the International Council for Adult Education.

Each Newsletter contains a position paper on a specific topic from a contributor in most of the European countries, together with a list of documentation centres, journals and related information. Useful and up-to-date picture of current European developments.

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Current issue — analytical article on "European Concepts of Recurrent Education" by Prof. Dennis Kallen, University of Amsterdam, and European Cultural Foundation.

—G. H. L. Schouten:

The European Bureau of Adult Education, 1953—1978. Dfl. 14

A readable and informative account of the events leading to the establishment of the Bureau and of the first 25 years of its operations by Bob Schouten, long associated with the affairs of the Bureau.

Handbook for Tutors Booklet No. 2 1978
Northern Ireland Adult Literacy Liaison Group.

Topics covered include organisation, training tutors, libraries, the applicant and the learner, thinking ahead, and planning a reading programme.

Games and Simulations in Literacy Training

International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, P.O. Box 1555, Tehran, Iran.
David R. Evans.

The material for the book draws heavily on the experience of the Centre for International Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, United States of America during five years of field work in rural Ecuador where the use of games and simulations in rural education was pioneered.

Chapters on why use games and simulations, what are games and simulations, literacy skill-practice games, numeracy skill-practice games, simulation games and role playing, using games for literacy training and an Appendix on Resource materials.

The title is one in a series on "Literacy in development — a series of training monographs" Edited by H. S. Bhola.

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CEDEFOP, Bundesallee 22, Berlin 15, West Germany.

Youth Unemployment and Vocational Training. Occupational Choice and Motivation of young people, their vocational training and employment prospects. Survey of Member States, July 1978.

An indispensable and insightful source of data on the quantitative and qualitative aspects of unemployment and associated areas of training and employment in the nine member states affording a comprehensive European perspective.

Vocational Training 1979 No. 1. £2.20 single copy.

This issue considers the European Social Fund Support for Vocational Training in the Member States, initiatives taken by member States and training developments.

Mícheál W. Ó Murchú,
Aontas Director

AONTAS POLICY

PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE — 1975

Having sought and considered the opinions of both sides of Industry, Employers and Trade Unions, and having considered a "Position Paper on Paid Educational Leave" prepared by the Director, for the September 1975 meeting of the Executive Committee, the Committee formulated the following policy:

Aontas believes that Paid Educational Leave, defined as leave granted to a worker for educational purposes, for a specified period during working hours, with adequate financial entitlements should be promoted at all levels of work for all workers in Ireland. This leave should not be confined solely to education and training purposes related to the person's work, in a strictly vocational context, but should encompass on an equal basis general, social and civic education.

CREATING AWARENESS — 1975

NEED OF GREATER AWARENESS

"Feed the media!" — Con Murphy.

"Adult Education, in its diverse facets, needs to be held up before the people in a brighter light. They must read about, hear about, see about, the various courses and activities that are available from the few hundred agencies that are affiliated to Aontas." — Richard Burke, T.D., Minister for Education.

Both comments, identical in their tenor, were heard at the Aontas Annual Conference, Cork, 18/20 April, 1975: both speakers suggest a similar remedy — publicise in every conceivable manner your courses, programmes and activities. After all, people cannot be expected to react or respond to something about which they have little or no information, or to data that is unmeaningful to them. Within the ranks of Aontas too there is evidence of a growing volume of opinion disconcerted by the number of non-participants in any form of adult education provision.

NATURE OF AWARENESS

"Awareness", I believe is a nebulous and ambiguous term: one must immediately ask — awareness of what, for whom, by whom, to what purpose and for how long? Awareness could be described as a half-way house. It does not necessarily signify completion in action, participation or commitment, because a person may be aware of something and remain totally passive or indifferent in the face of it. I am assuming that the kind of awareness under discussion embodies the notion of awareness leading to action, participation and hopefully commitment to the field of adult education by the majority percentage now non-participant in Ireland.

Another qualification is required here. Inherent in isolating a particular facet of any field there is the danger of treating it without due regard for the totality of

related aspects. "Awareness" as described above obviously has ramifications for research, training, formal and informal adult education, and such matters as programme design, but in this paper I wish to confine my remarks initially to the priming role of Aontas could play in practical terms both directly and indirectly to creating awareness leading to participation in increased adult education provision. Other variants of awareness will then be considered briefly.

PRACTICAL MEASURES.

1. Aontas should create and seize opportunities to stimulate a favourable climate towards adult education among members of government, statutory and voluntary bodies and the public. One of the most serious deterrents to advancing the status of adult education is the marginal, addendum, almost afterthought position of adult education in most educational institutions, not merely in Ireland but throughout the world, especially noticeable in budgetary allocations. Aontas should be ever ready to put its full support and advisory services behind adult education ventures and enterprises in the process of becoming operational, priority being given to Aontas members. Co. Meath VEC is a case in point and so is the Aontas presence at the UCG Summer School. The forthcoming West of Ireland Seminar on Adult Education in Westport, October 5 demonstrates an impetus, growth and movement which Aontas should fully support and encourage.
2. A national association such as Aontas should have something of major significance to say to the Irish people at least six times per year: this is not an unrealistic target. Already the separation of the AGM from Conference provides two such occasions annually and in the short term, before December 1975, the announcement and appointment of a Research Fellow as well as the Aontas deputation to meet the Minister for Education supply two more.
3. In addition newsworthy items should appear in the press on a monthly basis: it has been possible already to achieve the monthly target for June, July and August, 1975. One should not be injudicious in this respect, but ensure that items are of sufficient news value.
4. Briefing sessions with the press together with the formation of contacts with key people in the media are necessary, and a media-network is gradually being formed. By such measures the proper identify of Aontas will emerge and become consolidated in the public mind: adult education and allied activities will be kept before the people regularly. One would hope that Aontas policy and viewpoint would be increasingly sought on relevant matters. Again, there are some stirrings in this area: the Government appointed Women's Representative Committee recently requested a meeting with Aontas to discuss adult education broadcasting in the context of women in society. Aire na Gaeltachta has requested advice from Aontas on Pilot Leadership Training Courses in Gaeltacht areas and a draft programme is being prepared.
5. A regular series of Aontas programmes or slot-in-programme series on RTE radio/TV giving due prominence to adult education news, information, etc., should be investigated. Such a series could include the notion of creating awareness leading to participation. Discussions with RTE officials should thoroughly explore this real possibility. So too should incidental references to adult education in general programmes.
6. Membership of the Association should be increased not by a policy of recruitment but more by a policy of attraction and proven relevance. A growing membership constitutes one definite method of heightening awareness.

7. Members of Aontas Executive and Council could establish useful contacts with local press, radio and TV, and, if convenient, make themselves available for comment, discussion and interview. A regular column or feature in the local press would alert and assist awareness at local level. This is an area requiring painstaking cultivation.
8. The proposed publication of the *Aontas Directory of Adult Education Services* will demonstrate the nature and extent of adult education provision through personnel and facilities available on a county basis. Regions of neglect or oversight will become clear and it should be possible to concentrate on such areas and bring them up to an acceptable level of provision — such level to be defined.
9. Before Christmas 1975, the Activities sub-Committee will contact Aontas members to ascertain their needs and examine measures which Aontas might undertake to service. Fundamentally that will be an exercise in creating awareness and articulation of needs which will hopefully be answered in part at least through the instrumentality of Aontas Executive and Council.
10. Aontas should encourage its corporate members who are providing adult education to seek to define target populations. Although there are no statistics available to prove the point, Ireland is probably no exception to the general criticism that those already educated tend to constitute the bulk of participants in adult education programmes, formal and non-formal. In defining target populations the energy, organisation and planning skills of a full-time officer or as near to the position of full-time officer as is possible in these times should be recommended. Counselling and advisory services as well as time-tabling the programme to suit the adult are important considerations.
11. Among the adults apparently most difficult to motivate are those for whom learning, school and authority were/are unpleasant experiences. Such adults seem generally to be outside the boundary of orthodox adult education provision and while cracking this problem or suggesting measures to deal with it would require a greater analysis than this paper allows, I suggest that a step in the direction of such adults could be taken by:
 - (i) facing the problem realistically,
 - (ii) accepting that dispositions for learning lie within each such adult — dormant or stultified, perhaps, at the moment,
 - (iii) confidence-building exercises with the adult in learning, moving gradually from unstructured to structured sequences,
 - (iv) opening up the larger horizons with the adult.
 In the context of workers the instrument of Paid Educational Leave becomes crucial here in relation to many learning experiences.
12. Organisers of local/regional seminars, conferences, meetings and adult education programmes should seek maximum publicity for their endeavours through press releases to the local and national press, notices in "Today" columns, and invitations to correspondents to cover the event. Leading public figures/representatives in attendance, perhaps opening the session or participating on a panel lend an added public and publicity dimension to the occasion. The awareness and interest levels of the public figure are usually enhanced in the process through his/her involvement and a friend can be made or a friendship consolidated.
13. Superficially a matter of inconsequence, yet nonetheless the UCG Summer School too underlined the importance of adequate advertising and publicising of adult education programmes. There is no guarantee built into newspaper advertising in the conventional mode in which course titles are listed in a tele-

gramatic fashion that adults actually do comprehend. Advertisements and Prospectus should be adequately worded. Word of mouth based on first-hand experience is a well proven method of promoting adult education provision.

AONTAS CLEARING HOUSE FUNCTION

So far I have looked at ways Aontas could help directly and indirectly create awareness leading to participation. There is another feature of awareness worthy of comment: Aontas awareness of the nature and extent of adult education provision in Ireland and how Aontas might be kept up to date with present and developing programmes and innovations, undertaken by its members and thereby discharge its clearing house function with greater confidence.

14. Each corporate member should be requested to send a copy of its annual report and other relevant literature to Aontas. This should be done as a matter of course.
15. Aontas should appoint local correspondents in a voluntary capacity on county basis to send to Aontas Head Office reports and notices on a regular basis. Informal discussions with a number of interested persons point to the feasibility of this proposition. A brief training session by full-time practising journalists might be considered in this respect.
16. Members of the Executive Committee and Council who give talks or participate in seminars/discussions on adult education might consider sending a copy to the Head Office. Incidentally, Aontas policy documents on the *Murphy Report 1973* and on the "Function of Radio and Television in Adult Education" contain useful material for such talks and in my opinion much greater use could be derived from these documents in creating awareness of Aontas, its policy and adult education in general at all levels of Irish society.
17. The international dimension of awareness is also important: overseas agencies, institutions being familiar with developments in Ireland and conversely, Irish people knowing about advances in adult education abroad. The role of Aontas publications is central here. In view of the increased activities within Aontas, the Executive Committee and Council might wish to consider the possibility of issuing the Director's Progress Report, which now goes to the Council members only, to all members. The Progress Report would serve as a complement to the major items of Aontas news in the *Newsletter*.

SYMBOL/MOTTO/EMPHASIS

Should Aontas be represented by a symbol and appropriate motto?

A National Association of Adult Education stands for many things: witness for example, the aims and objectives of the Constitution of Aontas, the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, or the National Institute of Adult Education (England and Wales). Should Aontas from time to time, through its policy measures, accord prominence to certain aspects above others e.g. creating awareness leading to participation; importance of adequate training for adult and community education, information and counselling services, or should Aontas pursue its aims and objectives with equal emphasis, in their totality, or is there a middle ground of total pursuit within which elements are high-lighted?

LITTLE OR MUCH?

Aontas alone attempting to create awareness leading to participation will achieve little; Aontas, as catalyst, with the support of its members, individual and corporate, creating such awareness among all people, throughout the country can

achieve much. Aontas, therefore, and its members must commit themselves to courses of action, a number of which have been suggested here, to achieve the greater part.

Mícheál W. Ó Murchú,
Director.

21st August 1975

This discussion document on "Creating Awareness" was adopted as a policy document by the Executive Committee in September, 1975.

AONTAS SUBMISSIONS

NCEA DOCUMENT — 1979

The following is the Aontas submission to the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA), which was approved by the Executive Committee at their meeting on 4th May 1979. The document issued by the NCEA was titled "Discussion Document on an NCEA Award Structure for Recurrent Education".

The afternoon session of the Aontas General Meeting in October 1978 was devoted to a wide-ranging discussion on the Document. The meeting elected a Working Party to further analyse the Document and report to the Executive Committee. Having duly considered the Report of the Working Party, the Executive makes the following submission to the NCEA.

IMPORTANT AIMS

Aontas welcomes the Discussion Document as a significant contribution to the literature on certification and recurrent education in Ireland and particularly in relation to the following:

- the emphasis on enlarging access to educational opportunities for adults, leading to certification by means of an accumulation of credits,
- the attempt to quantify relevant work experience. This may be difficult to quantify with any degree of precision,
- the importance of utilising existing resources more fully,
- focussing attention on certain target groups,
- stressing one of the roles of recurrent education in Irish society today.

The scope of recurrent education, however, is much wider than that presented in the Document, and this should be noted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the practical experience and application of credit for work experience is relatively new and insufficiently researched, consideration should be given also to the notion of credit for social and community experience.

Greater attention should be directed (a) to paid educational leave particularly in the light of the Government's acceptance of it in principle during 1978, (b) to the role of the voluntary bodies in the field of recurrent education. Target groups, linked with a priority rating in an overall policy of recurrent education, should be more clearly identified. No costing has been attempted relative to any of the recommendations.

Consultation should be had with the institutions for which the Document has implications and this should include second level institutions.

AONTAS WOULD WELCOME SEMINAR

Should the NCEA decide to convene a seminar on recurrent education Aontas would be pleased to participate in it.

AONTAS/RTE MAJOR PROJECT

1978 MARCH

BACKGROUND

Invitation

At the 8th Annual Aontas Conference in Ennis in May 1977, Mr. Oliver Maloney, Director-General, Radio Telefís Éireann/RTE, read the keynote address on "The Role of Radio and Television in Adult Education". He issued an invitation to the adult education movement *via* Aontas to recommend:

"One major project a year in which it is desirable to mobilise on a national scale a threefold process of reflection, of action and of participation. RTE has already put resources into the literacy scheme and will probably be called upon to do more. The problem of unemployed youth might be another such project, or the debate on ecology and industry; the desire to join the EEC would certainly have been one in its day. I can say formally that RTE will be prepared to put the necessary resources into a development of this nature if active support is forthcoming from the adult education movement."

Co-Operation

Previous Aontas/RTE exercise has demonstrated the usefulness, effectiveness and timeliness of co-operative undertakings, such as: "*Give Your Child a Chance*" 1971/72. The award-winning radio series for parents and school-leavers in which thousands of people participated in listening-discussion groups around the country. Co-operation during 1974/75 in the preparation of the Aontas policy on adult education broadcasting. Aontas participated in a seminar on "*Broadcasting of Non-formal Education*" which RTE organised in April 1976 in Dunlaoire, Co. Dublin.

Through the Aontas sub-committee on Adult Literacy, on which RTE was represented, Aontas played an active part in initiating the radio series "*Helping Adults to Read*" which was aimed at the public and at tutors of adults who experience difficulties in their reading and writing. The series was broadcast twice in 1977, and was honourably mentioned at the presentation of Jacobs' Awards in 1977.

MAJOR PROJECT : SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK

Consultation with Members

Following a presentation by the Director of Aontas on the proposed project to the General Meeting of Aontas in December 1977, and subsequent group discussion and plenary session by the members, two major projects emerged as being suitable for broadcast presentation:

- (i) "Enterprise Development"
- (ii) Magazine Programme.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Objectives

To identify and present a weekly series of 30-minute programmes on successful local enterprises on Telefís Feirme model, plus radio (viewing/listening groups, printed material, feed-back, etc.) with a view to highlighting:

- (i) Major elements of the enterprise such as
 - origin and development of initiative
 - motivating forces
 - obstacles encountered
 - role of leadership, learning and local community.
- (ii) Importance of access to relevant information, facilities and resources — grant-aid, loans, technical assistance, training, skills, marketing.
- (iii) Decision-taking by local entrepreneur/community.
- (iv) Ways and means of maintaining the enterprise.

Action

- (v) Seeking to stimulate emerging entrepreneurs, communities and target groups, to generate, promote and develop local enterprise.

Target Audience

General: Youth (15 years +) and adult population in general

- Specific:
- (i) Students from Group and Intermediate Certificate upwards.
 - (ii) Unemployed, particularly unemployed youth.
 - (iii) Emerging entrepreneurs.
 - (iv) Adult students participating in adult education provision.
 - (v) Local community associations
 - (vi) Parents and teachers.

Possible Programmes

In the context of the title, objectives and target audience, it is useful to draw up an inventory of possible programmes. Some examples are given here:

- (i) "Carry on Learning", Belfast.
- (ii) Comharcumann Chorca Dhuibhne/West Kerry Development Co-Operative
- (iii) "Land Reclamation Project", St. Mullins, Carlow.
- (iv) "Men of Enterprise"
- (v) North Connacht Co-Operative.
- (vi) Rural Housing Organisation and "A Project for People".
- (vii) The Glencolumbcille Co-Operative
- (viii) "The Sunday Club", Belfast.

Contacts for Additional Material

- (i) "Starting your own Business", Irish Productivity Centre, AnCO, SFADCo. Pilot training courses at Shannon and Dublin.
- (ii) "Training for Employment", Pilot Project, Dublin — AnCO, and Dublin Institute of Adult Education.
- (iii) Youth Employment Action Team, Dublin.

MAGAZINE PROGRAMME

In this series of 30-minute television programmes, formal group viewing as recommended in the previous proposal was not envisaged. The subjects lending themselves to television presentation were consumer, health and political education.

Consumer Education

Examples of possible programme content:

Consumer information, advice and research relating to topics such as:

- Prices: Price consciousness, price trends, comparative prices, e.g. EEC countries, and reasons for price flexibility.
- Consumers' rights: What steps to take in particular circumstances, e.g. purchasing faulty equipment, goods, producer's guarantee.
- Directives— e.g. EEC directive on protection of participants in home study courses, necessity for directives.
- Consumer Legislation: Its introduction, range and implementation.
- Quality and standard of services, e.g. social services, social welfare entitlements.
- Complaints service and follow-up to secure consumer satisfaction.

Organisations which could assist by making information and persons available to participate in programmes from time to time e.g.

- Community Information and Advice Bureau
- Consumer Association of Ireland
- Free Legal Aid
- Irish Countrywomen's Association
- Irish Farmers' Association
- Irish Housewives' Association
- R.G.D.A.T.A.
- Tenants and Residents Associations

Political Education

The point requiring emphasis here is the great lack of information about the political system among Irish people. The number of people actively interested or engaged in politics seems to be minimal.

Examples of possible programme content:

- PR System: How it works, how a count works — in simplified form.
- Various stages in passing legislation through Dáil and Seanad, methods of approach.
- Role of the Deputy: deputy's clinics, phenomenon of empty Dáil — why? case study.
- Role of Minister, Taoiseach, Leader of Opposition — case study.
- Deputies in the EEC
- European Parliament
- Local Government, e.g. case study of a County Councillor.

Health Education

- Preventative approach
- Exercising for healthy body and mind
- Role of sports organisations
- Mental health
- Diet/over-eating/drinking
- Nutrition/under-nourishment
- Role of the Health Education Bureau
- Role of Health Boards
- Hygiene, health and young children
- Development programmes in health announced by the Minister for Health in February 1978.

MAGAZINE PROGRAMME FORMAT

Two possibilities are suggested:

- (i) In a 30-minute programme (26½ minutes excluding advertising) 7 minutes each to health and politics, and 12½ minutes to consumer education and affairs.
- (ii) Alternatively, taking a theme such as "You and Your Child" to include clothes, food, playschool, recreation, work, unemployment, and constructing a number of programmes on the theme incorporating the consumer, political and health aspects.

It may well be the case that the "You and Your Child" motif would encourage family viewing.

SOME PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

A variety of techniques seems more desirable:

- Interview
- Actuality material, in particular the use of film
- Dramatisation/sketches — getting message across in a light vein
- Cartoons.

BROADCAST TIME

Peak broadcasting time is recommended for the two projects — Enterprise Development" and Magazine Programme.

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The Health Education Bureau and Adult Education.

In addition to its informal public education programmes the Health Education Bureau co-operates with Statutory and Voluntary Organisations in providing Adult Health Education courses.

During the past year the Health Education Bureau has assisted the Cork

Council of Adult Education, St. Patricks College, Maynooth, Community College, Dunshaughlin, Tallaght Community School, Mid-Western Health Board, North Eastern Health Board, Nth. Tipperary Vocational Education Committee, Moyle Park College, Tarbert

Comprehensive School, The Peoples College and others, in the promotion of positive health attitudes in their communities.

As a statutory member of Aontas, the Health Education Bureau is happy to be associated with the National Development of Adult Education.

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