

**AONTAS**  
Annual  
Report  
**2006**



AONTAS



2020

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EDUCATION - COMMUNITY

# Foreword

2006 was a year of growth and development within AONTAS. We have in place a strong staff team and an active Executive Committee working to ensure that adult and community education receives the recognition it deserves. As a key player in the delivery of an inclusive society, adult and community education has been over-looked and undervalued. The role it plays in developing the social, economic and cultural realms of Irish society are clear to those of us who work in the sector. However we need to get this message out to the wider public. Many of our politicians fail to recognise the invaluable role the sector plays. Given the challenges facing Irish society over the next few years, the role played by our sector will assume a strategic importance. Areas such as active citizenship, cultural diversity and economic flexibility place enormous challenges before us. A well resourced and comprehensive adult education service has the capacity to offer positive responses to these challenges both at local and national level.

The General Election this year places an opportunity before us to advance the development of adult and community education in Ireland. It is important that we grasp this opportunity to have our voice heard when decisions are being made about the priorities for the next Government. Our election campaign is focusing on a number of key demands which were launched at the end of the Adult Learners' Festival and which will be disseminated as part of our election strategy. Central to any developments within the sector is the re-establishment of the National Adult Learning Council. The Dept. of Education and Science must publish the findings of the review of NALC so as to allow for debate on the issue to take place. Failure to publish the review to-date has undermined the previous Council and blocks any possibility of a re-establishment of NALC.

I would like to thank Berni and the staff in AONTAS for their work over the last twelve months. Special tribute must go to the staff for the excellent handling of the Adult Learners' Festival. The Executive and Officers of AONTAS have contributed significantly to the work of the organisation ensuring that the members' interests are well represented. I and the other members of the Executive Committee with the staff team look forward to the new challenges presented by our new Strategic Plan over the next four year period.

**John Ryan, President**

# Overview

## Introduction

As we approach the end of 2006 AONTAS has also come to the end of its third Strategic Plan, Sustaining Growth and Development, which has been the backdrop for its work over the past three years. The latter part of the year was largely taken up by a broad and wide consultation process designed to develop the next Strategic Plan and a new phase of work for AONTAS for the next four years. The consultation process is described in the body of this report by the Membership Development Officer. Looking back on the past three years we can list a number of key achievements. AONTAS has:

- Worked consistently to ensure that adult and community education remained part of the overall political agenda
- Expanded its membership by 17 per cent
- Upgraded its support for members through the work of the Membership Development Staff Team
- Developed a promotional strategy which includes upgrading of its website and the publication of the Explore magazine
- Provided an information referral service to adult learners
- Established the Training and Support Programme for Community Education Facilitators as a model of best practice
- Established, in partnership with NALA, the Irish Research Association for Adult and Community Education (IRAACE)
- Developed and piloted a Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education.
- Supported the development of the Management and Steering Groups of the National Collective of Community -based Women's Networks through training for its members
- Published a number of important policy and discussion documents and made submissions on a variety of issues and concerns for the adult and community education sector
- Organised a successful local election campaign highlighting the needs of adult learners

- Represented the concerns of adult learners at a number of important fora: -
  - Educational Disadvantage Committee
  - Advisory Group on Access to Higher Education
  - Steering Group, Education Equality Initiative
  - Steering Group, Adult Education Guidance initiative
  - Consultative Group, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
- Increased and improved its financial and technical resources

## Recognition and Resources

While much has been achieved since the publication of the White Paper, Learning for Life (2000) adult and community education has received mixed attention from policy makers over the past three years. The lack of visibility of the sector within the Budget estimates in 2005 was a worrying development and during the past year much of the work of AONTAS was focussed on putting adult and community education back on the political agenda. As a result the estimates for 2006 heralded a healthier position for adult and community education and for AONTAS as an organisation. However notwithstanding an almost 50% increase in programme funding for the sector since 2002 bringing the budget from €113 to €169 million, in relative terms this is just slightly over 2% of the overall education budget of €8billion. AONTAS believes that adult and community education needs and deserves a much greater investment to enable it to realise its true potential and has recommended that the budget allocation should increase by 1% per annum in relative terms to bring it to 10% of the total education allocation by 2013 at the end of the next National Development Plan. Such a cumulative increase would allow for strategic and co-ordinated growth of the sector.

## Current Developments affecting Adult and Community Education

AONTAS has been working during the year to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to it by a number of developments at a policy level. Among these was the formation of the new Ten Year Framework Social Partnership, Towards 2016. A short list of demands was compiled and disseminated to the Social Partners and discussions were held with them during the negotiations and consultations leading up to the formation of the Framework with a view to having those issues included in it. AONTAS was pleased to see that one of the underpinning principles of the Framework is, 'a focus on upskilling, early school leavers, literacy, lifelong learning and particular emphasis on retraining those with least educational attainment.' A submission was also developed and made to the new National Development Plan process and AONTAS began to prepare for the forthcoming General Election in 2007 by briefing politicians on the issues of concern to those working and learning in the sector.

A major disappointment of the last three year period has been the suspension of the National Adult Learning Council and the lack of development of co-ordinating structures at a national and local level. Despite repeated requests to the Department of Education and Science, and parliamentary

questions to the Minister of State at the Department, for the release of a review of the functions of the Council no information has been secured. AONTAS intends to pursue the matter as part of its work in 2007. Feedback from annual regional meetings and other networking fora of members has shown that the lack of co-ordination at both national and local level is a crucial weakness in the sector and one which leads to fragmentation of its work.

## Achievements and Successes

On the positive side the work that AONTAS has been engaged in with Minister DeValera and Department of Education and Science staff through the year has paid off in terms of a number of important activities proposed or taken up by AONTAS. Three meetings were held with the Minister during the year and AONTAS made a strong case for financial support for the first national Adult Learners' Festival, mainstreaming the Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education and for research. We are particularly pleased with the positive outcome of these meetings and with the allocation of funding to support each of these projects. We very much look forward to getting them off the ground in 2007 and we know that they will add to the overall development and visibility of the adult and community education service as a whole. Minister De Valera retired from her position at the end of the year and AONTAS would like to thank her most sincerely for her ongoing support, her empathy with the sector and her ability to listen to and understand its issues. We wish her every success in her future career and we look forward to working closely with her successor.

## Working together at a National Level

In early January AONTAS facilitated a meeting of the key partners in the adult and community education sector including the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN), National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and representatives from the Adult Education Departments of NUI/ Maynooth and University College Dublin. The purpose of this meeting was to explore areas of common purpose, to feed in to the new partnership negotiations and to prepare a submission to the National Development Plan process. AONTAS held meetings throughout the year with each of these partners and also connected with other key stakeholders such as IBEC and the teacher unions. As a follow up to the National conference held in 2005 to mark the European Year of Citizenship through Education, AONTAS held a seminar that examined the role of adult and community education in developing active citizenship. It was attended by a range of organisations from the adult and community education sector, development education and other agencies concerned with civil society issues. The seminar was addressed by Ms Britten Mansson-Wallin, Director of the Swedish National Council for Adult Education, who described the functions of the Swedish Council and its role in promoting and supporting non-formal education. The Swedish Council is an interesting model of a national co-ordinating body and one which could be useful in an Irish context.

## International Work

AONTAS continued to participate actively in the work of the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA) and AONTAS Vice President, Brid Connolly was re-elected to the Executive Board of the EAEA at the General Assembly in Spain in November. A short report prepared by Brid is presented in the body of this report. AONTAS is also a member of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). In June the Director was invited to a four day seminar held in Uruguay and organised by the ICAE and the Uruguay Ministry of Education and Culture, together with a number of prominent Latin American NGOs. An objective of the seminar was to generate an international space for the exchange and analysis of policies, emerging issues, new trends and practice in the area of youth and adult education with the aim of proposing possible action guidelines. The Director presented a paper entitled, *Developing Innovative Responses to the Education of Adults and Young People: The Irish Experience* which has been published in the ICAE journal Convergence (Volume xxxix (2-3) 2006. The Director also participated in a panel discussion on active citizenship and contributed to preparations for the ICAE's World Assembly scheduled for January 2007 in Nairobi. In January 2006 the Director was selected to participate in an exchange programme organised by the Irish Institute of Boston College, sponsored by the Government of the USA. The visit was themed around Active Citizenship and Education, and involved a variety of interesting visits to schools, colleges and NGOs in Boston and Alabama. Reports of both activities have been written for the Explore Magazine in Issue No.3 and Issue No. 6 respectively. International connections are extremely important for our work as such spaces afford a rich opportunity for learning new ways of working and valuing and exchanging our own best practice.

## Conclusion

Throughout the year the Executive Committee and Officer board met six times with one of these meetings including the staff team. Members of the Executive Committee also participated in working groups including the Steering Groups for the QAF project, the Adult Learners' Festival, the Strategic Plan and the development of the Irish Research Association for Adult and Community Education (IRAACE). Members also attended a wide range of events on behalf of AONTAS and some members acted as local co-ordinators in the planning of the Adult Learners' Festival. During the year AONTAS had some staff changes with the Policy Officer, Finola McDonnell and the Information Officer, Frances Killeen moving on to new positions outside of the organisation while Ciara Murphy was recruited as Receptionist/Clerical Assistant. As always the work of AONTAS rarely comes to a standstill and with the adoption of a new strategic plan in the New Year is set to move up a gear once more. I would like to thank all the members of the staff team for their work during 2006 and also the Executive Committee who commit many voluntary hours to AONTAS, and have been extremely supportive of the staff team as well as being a tremendous resource to the organisation as a whole. I would also like to thank the Department of Education and Science staff for their continued support. We look forward with optimism to 2007.

**Berni Brady, Director**



INFLUENCING & PARAPHICIPATING

# Influencing and Participating in Policy Development



# Influencing and Participating in Policy Development

## Introduction

2006 has been a critical year for the adult and community education sector in terms of policy development. The year marked the end of the last National Development Plan (2000-2006), under the auspices of which, a number of important developments took place. Since it was drawn up in 1999 there have been significant changes in the education sector as well as in the economy and society as a whole. For example the National Framework of Qualifications has been developed, FETAC and HETAC have developed new policies and procedures affecting all those offering and taking part in accredited programmes, and the national Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education has been established and has published its own Access Plan on progressing the access agenda. The Back to Education Initiative has been embedded within the sector and substantial developments have been made in the National Adult Literacy Programme and the Adult Education Guidance Initiative. AONTAS has been actively involved in all of these developments in both advocacy, informative and supporting roles.

## Activities

During the latter half of 2005 AONTAS held a number of regional meetings that were designed to feed into its submission to the new National Development Plan 2006-2013. Spring 2006 brought a new round of Social Partnership talks and AONTAS compiled a short list of demands which were disseminated to organisations directly involved in the talks. The Policy Officer attended regular briefings on the progress of the talks organised by the Wheel which was one of the organisations representing the Community and Voluntary Sector. AONTAS convened a meeting in January of a number of partners in the adult and community education sector to prepare for a submission to the National Development Plan process. They included the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), the National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN), NUI/ Maynooth and University College Dublin.

A number of key submissions were made by AONTAS during 2006 including:-

- Submission to The National Development Plan process
- Submission to the Taskforce on Active Citizenship
- Submission to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
- Budget Submission on behalf of the Sector

Policy position papers were also drafted by the staff team for presentation to the political parties with the objective of ensuring that adult and community education be included in their manifestoes for the General Election in 2007. Meetings were held with all the Education spokespeople and as result a number of parliamentary questions were raised in the Oireachtas in April. These focused on the following issues.

- The National Adult Learning Council
- Work-based learning
- National Adult Literacy Programme
- Mc Iver Report
- Implementation of the Recommendations of the White Paper

The ongoing work in the area of policy development also included the following activities:-

- The Policy Officer continued to represent AONTAS on the Advisory Group to the Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education and facilitated participation by community-based groups in a survey on access issues.
- The Policy Officer and the Director attended meetings of the Consultative Group of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and also worked with FETAC towards the development of their Quality Assurance Process.
- The Irish Research Association for Adult and Community Education (IRAACE) was launched in October after a series of meetings and a feasibility study facilitated by AONTAS and NALA. The meeting was addressed by Professor John Field of the University of Stirling.
- The Director participated in three consultation meetings organised by the Department of Education and Science; Active Citizenship; Developing a Strategy for English for Speakers of Other Languages; Developing a Strategy for Inclusion of Adults with Disabilities in Further Education.
- A follow up seminar on Active Citizenship was organised by AONTAS in April to discuss and disseminate the outcomes of the 2005 Conference organised to mark the European Year of Citizenship through Education.
- The Policy Officer participated in meetings of the Citizenship Education Network and the Social Policy Workers' Network.
- The Director participated in a consultation meeting organised by the Government Task Force on Citizenship.

- A review took place of The Adult Learner, the Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education. A new expanded Editorial Board was established and a decision was made to include at least three peer refereed articles in the Journal. The new journal will be launched in 2007.

**Berni Brady, Director**

## **Participation in the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA)**

AONTAS maintains a high profile in Europe, through The European Association for the Education of Adults. The EAEA has over 100 national member associations, representing over 5,000 adult and community education associations. As an NGO, it continues to promote adult and community education at European level and the span of the association now reaches from Ireland on the west to Russia, Armenia and Ukraine on the east. The EAEA has been influential in connecting EU and non-EU countries, and in building relations throughout Europe. The key themes for 2006 and 2007 are overcoming poverty, advancing active citizenship and advocating equality, and the equality of opportunity through adult education, formal and non-formal. The community of adult and community education is essential in the promotion of critical democracy and social cohesion, particularly in countries where there is prolific economic emigration, and poverty is increasing.

The General Assembly is the main opportunity to meet with colleagues and like-minded adult educators from the member associations. In 2006, the Assembly was held in Aviles, in northern Spain, in November, in association with the Federation of Popular Universities, Spain. The practice of partnering national events in adult and community education has raised the profile of EAEA among national policy makers and practitioners. The General Assembly warmly accepted the invitation of AONTAS to hold the next GA in Dublin in 2008, an event which will bring people from all over Europe to Dublin, and a key opportunity to exhibit the best of Irish adult and community education to the wider audience.

The EAEA maintains relationships with the European Commission, hosting a reception annually, in order to influence policy in lifelong learning and adult education. It also works with the Council of Europe, The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), UNESCO, and the International Labour Organisation.

At the General Assembly, Bríd Connolly, Vice President of AONTAS, was re-elected to the Executive Board. This is her third and final term. In the newly elected Executive Board, members are drawn from Hungary, Latvia, England, Switzerland, Finland, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain, in addition to Ireland. The president of EAEA is Janos Sz. Toth, and the General Secretary is Ellinor Haase. EAEA has three link offices, in Helsinki, Budapest, and Madrid. The web site is [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org), and it provides a newsletter, information on European projects and links with member associations.

**Brid Connolly, Vice President**

## Launch of IRAACE

The launch of the Irish Research Association of Adult and Community Education (IRAACE) took place at the National Library in Dublin on October 26 2006. More than fifty researchers from across the field attended the event, which introduced a proposed constitution for IRAACE and offered an opportunity for researchers to discuss the importance of such an association.

The highlight of the morning was an address from Professor John Field of the University of Stirling, which explored the challenges facing researchers in the adult education field. Professor Field described the current state of research in the UK in an attempt to draw out lessons for Irish researchers. He also presented an analysis of the content of research that is currently produced. He posed many questions for those present, and set the tone for the vibrant group discussions which followed his presentation.

The event, which was chaired by Brid Connolly of NUI/Maynooth, marks a milestone for the IRAACE development committee, which has been working to put an association in place for almost two years. IRAACE will facilitate networking among researchers, encourage collaboration and promote the work of researchers at national level. Prospective members will be able to join the association formally when the legal structures are put in place at the beginning of 2007.

**Maria McMullen, *Membership Support Worker***



STRONG  
WOMEN  
ARE  
STRONG



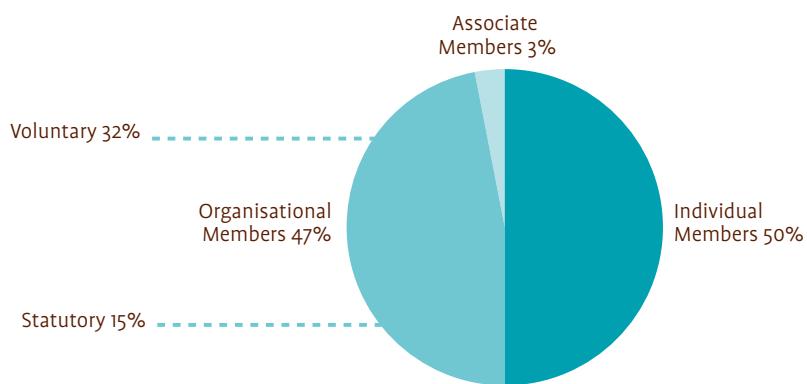
Strengthening and Building  
the Capacity of Members

# Strengthening and Building the Capacity of Members

## Introduction

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 597 members, which is an increase of 5% on last year's total. The breakdown of membership is: 20 associate members, 296 individuals and 281 organisational (of which 92 are statutory and 189 are voluntary).

A number of projects were initiated during the year to increase member involvement and participation in the organisation. This in turn enabled AONTAS to respond to the needs of its members including learners, adult and community education providers and tutors.



## Learner Networks

As part of the membership development work a programme was undertaken to initiate the development of learner networks. Between March and June 2006 three networks were created around the country in collaboration with a number of AONTAS members.

The aim of the networks was to give learners the opportunity to meet each other, share experiences and exchange information regarding developments at national level. It also served as a mechanism to ensure that AONTAS policy work is informed by the lived experiences and needs of learners themselves.

The format for the three networks was: an introduction/networking session, presentations on national developments in adult and community education and an input from one learner speaking about his/her experience. A number of themes pertinent to the learners were then explored and discussed. Feedback on areas for future work was discussed and learners made an evaluation of the day.

Information gathered from the meeting was reported back to participants and was used to feed into the policy and strategic planning work of AONTAS. A full report is available from the AONTAS office.

## Network Meetings

1. The first meeting was held solely for men involved in community education from the Dublin area; members involved were from Ballymun Men's Centre and Dublin Men's Coalition. Over twenty male learners attended the event in All Hallow's College, Dublin on 29th March 2006. Group discussions regarding issues important to learners explored the following topics: the type of activities needed for men's community education; the learner supports needed; attitudes and barriers to returning to learning; and the recommended processes that foster good community education practice.
2. The second meeting was aimed at mature students in higher education and was held at the Teachers' Club, Dublin on May 3rd. Over twenty learners attended from a number of AONTAS member organisations including educational institutions and community groups involved in outreach courses. The day was planned in conjunction with NIMSO (Network of Irish Mature Student Officers) and was designed to give students the opportunity to meet each other and share experiences, for AONTAS to share information with students regarding developments at national level and to feed into the policy work of AONTAS and NIMSO. Discussion groups were created on the basis of issues raised by the participants and covered financial implications for mature students, institutional supports and the application process.
3. The third learners' network meeting took place in Waterford on Friday 16th June and was held solely for men's groups in the Southeast region. The event was organised in conjunction with the Men's Development Network and brought over twenty learners from seven groups together. The meeting was kindly hosted in the premises of an AONTAS member, Waterford Institute of Technology. The morning consisted of inputs from AONTAS staff, the Men's Development Network and importantly from a learner who shared his experience of returning to learning. Discussion groups were created and a lively debate ensued.

From the feedback obtained so far, learners have expressed the view that the networks provide an important mechanism for improving the adult and community education service by ensuring that those who use it, i.e. the learners, are heard. They have also expressed their enthusiasm for opportunities that facilitate discussion with other learners and found the experience to be positive and motivational. We hope to further develop this work in the coming year as directed by the AONTAS Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010.

## Consultation for the AONTAS Strategic Plan

The AONTAS membership was extensively consulted in preparation for the Strategic Plan,(2007 - 2010). The draft consultation document, which was generated from the views of our members, served as a basis for consultation. In preparation for the consultation a number of analyses were

carried out including a review of the AONTAS membership, an analysis of the attendance of members at networking events and a review of member representation on the Executive Committee. A detailed consultation plan was created aimed at supporting all members to contribute in a variety of ways to the Strategic Plan, including assistance to hard to reach groups.

The membership consultation process commenced in September and concluded at the General Meeting in late November, which served as the final consultative meeting before redrafting the consultation document. Members were consulted by way of letter, email, focus group, one-to-one meetings, telephone surveys and regional meetings, as appropriate. The consultation document was posted to all members and was made available on the AONTAS website for comment.

Following the consultation process a report on member responses was compiled and used to inform the redrafting of the document, a process assisted by an Executive Steering Committee. As a membership organisation all inputs and responses are crucially important to the work of AONTAS and we will ensure that the points raised will be reflected in the final Strategic Plan document as much as possible. Any information not used directly to shape the Plan will be considered in future work and projects. We had an excellent response from our members and we appreciate the time and effort that members kindly set aside for this work. The new Plan will be presented for adoption at the Annual General Meeting of 2007.

## **Changes in Membership Categories and Fees**

AONTAS has a very wide variety of organisational and individual members which continues to expand each year. While the range of membership reflects how adult and community education has developed over the years, the original categorisation of membership dating back to 1983 had ceased to reflect those changes, and thus it was decided by the Executive Committee to update the relevant parts of the Articles of Association. Constitutional changes were proposed and adopted unanimously by the membership at the AGM on May 11th 2006. Coupled with this a change in the fees was also proposed as they had remained unchanged for over fifteen years and did not take into account the increasing cost to service members.

The category and fee structure proposed is detailed on the AONTAS website. The fees take into account the income of each member organisation and is designed to ensure that AONTAS remains accessible to all organisations and individuals. The membership also approved the addition of a new category of Associate membership which is designed to include other interested organisations world wide. These changes will assist in the recruitment of new members from all areas of the adult and community education sector in the coming years and a new database of members is currently being compiled.

**Niamh O'Reilly, Membership Development Officer**

**Maria McMullen, Membership Support Worker**

Promoting Adult and  
Community Education



# Promoting Adult and Community Education

## Introduction

Since recruiting a Communications Officer in 2005 and subsequently developing a public relations strategy, AONTAS has begun to establish a much more visible profile both locally and nationally. AONTAS also provides an information referral service to potential adult learners as well as regular information mailshots and bulletins to its members.

## Public Relations Strategy

### Media Coverage

AONTAS issued eighteen press releases on various topics during 2006. This work generated considerable coverage for the organisation in the local and national media. At local level, AONTAS conducted five radio interviews for stations throughout the country, and received coverage in twenty one articles in various local newspapers. At national level, AONTAS conducted one radio interview and received coverage in twenty nine articles in the national daily and Sunday newspapers. We also succeeded in highlighting adult education on the RTÉ television news during the year.

AONTAS received coverage in various miscellaneous publications, for example Village magazine, Woman's Way and Inside Government. We also received publicity through the newsletters and E-Bulletins of various organisations, including the National Women's Council of Ireland, the Educational Guidance Service for Adults in Northern Ireland and the European Association for the Education of Adults ( EAEA). An interview with Director Berni Brady was also featured in Adults Learning – the journal produced by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in the UK. The Director is also a correspondent for a European Communications Network, Infonet, and from time to time contributes to magazines produced by other Agencies in the sector.

### Explore Magazine

Four issues of the AONTAS magazine, Explore, were produced during 2006. The size of the magazine was increased from twenty-four to twenty-eight pages and a new international section was added to the magazine. The numbers of organisations and individuals requesting Explore continued to rise throughout the year and each issue was distributed to more than one thousand organisations throughout the country. Contributions to the magazine from AONTAS members and external sources also increased on a continuous basis throughout 2006.

## Media Training Programme

Two media training sessions were delivered to AONTAS members during 2006. The first of these took place in Donegal in April and the second took place in Dublin in June. Participants on both training sessions gave very positive feedback to AONTAS. The Communications Officer has been able to track the success of these media training sessions through the media monitoring service employed by AONTAS. This service tracks all coverage for adult education issues at national and local level. Interest in receiving media training continues from AONTAS members throughout the country, most recently from Community Education Facilitators.

## Adult Learners' Festival

Although not taking place until 22-26 January 2007, planning for the first ever nationwide AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival began in January 2006. Throughout the year, various AONTAS staff members worked on researching, promoting and organising the festival. A Festival Steering Group comprising representatives of AONTAS and other national organisations was established and met on a monthly basis. Meetings also took place with all the key stakeholders in the adult and community education sector and with all national organisations whose work links into adult learning.

A website for the festival, [www.adultlearnersfestival.com](http://www.adultlearnersfestival.com), was developed and various support materials for groups participating in the festival were devised, printed and distributed throughout the country. AONTAS also held meetings with a number of potential sponsors for the festival and was successful in enlisting support from the Department of Education and Science, FETAC and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. We would like to thank them for their support.

As well as coordinating the events and activities taking place throughout Ireland during the week of the festival, AONTAS also worked on organising two large events at national level; the STAR Awards Ceremony for adult learning projects and the 'Demand Your Right To Learn' event which launched the AONTAS pre-election campaign.

## Training Links

During 2006, AONTAS successfully applied for funding from The Wheel's 'Training Links' programme. This programme is part-funded by the National Training Fund of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and its purpose is to address the training needs of community and voluntary organisations.

With the funding we received, AONTAS has established a Training Network that focuses on training in lobbying skills for thirteen of our member organisations. This training will take place during the first half of 2007 and will focus, specifically, on the forthcoming general election. However, it is anticipated that the training will have long-term effects and that its benefits will spread throughout the AONTAS membership.

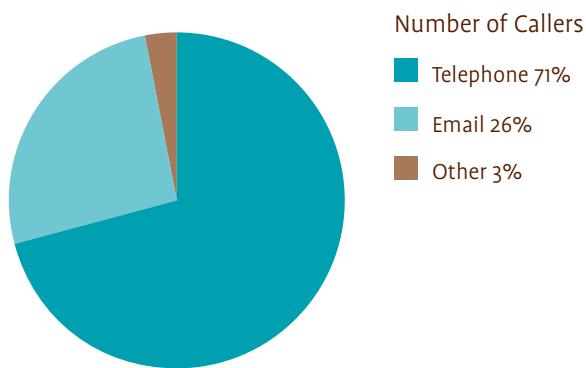
**Martina Quinn, Communications Officer**

# Information Service

## Information Referral Service

### Introduction

In 2006, 504 individuals/ groups seeking information on a diverse number of aspects of adult education contacted the AONTAS Information Referral Service. This represented a decrease in queries compared to 2005. This trend seems to illustrate the greater availability of information services locally with the growth of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative and the use of technology to access information. For example all the material in the information Referral pack is also available on the website. The table below shows how information seekers accessed the Service during 2006.



### Service Users

Once again AONTAS, through increasing its media profile, influenced the number of people/groups contacting the Service. Callers heard about it through several different media channels including the internet and press releases. As usual word-of -mouth continues to play an important role in the promotion of the Referral Service. Telephone calls continue to be the most popular way for people/groups to contact the Service and this was certainly apparent in 2006 with over three hundred and sixty people/groups phoning the office to seek information. The online facility for people to e-mail in queries is beginning to develop as a popular choice with one hundred and thirty one e-mails received in 2006.

In 2006 approximately three times more women than men contacted the service.

Once again the majority of people contacting the Service were hoping to find information on a specific course accounting for approximately 36% of callers. Approximately 15% of the calls were from people looking for information on how to get back into education and were less specific about what they wanted. Part-time courses are proving to be the most popular choice for the learner and almost half of the specific course queries were in relation to part-time courses.

A new emerging trend is a clear increase in the number of people calling in relation to funding. The funding queries were mainly in relation to funding for groups, funding for courses and funding in relation to social welfare payments, revenue and grants. This trend was also reflected in the demand for publications in 2006 as the AONTAS Funding Document proved to be the most requested publication. This document can also be accessed via the website.

### **Information Referral Pack**

The AONTAS information referral pack, which is updated regularly, continues to be an important resource for members and potential adult learners. During 2006 AONTAS introduced new information sheets specific to each county. The “In Your Area” sheets proved to be very popular as contact details of Adult Education Officers, Adult Guidance Projects, Partnerships, Third Level Contacts and other useful contacts were included in the sheets along with information on funding, Leaving Certificate and distance learning. In 2006 two hundred and four publications were sent out as a result of queries received and information requested.

### **Members E Bulletin**

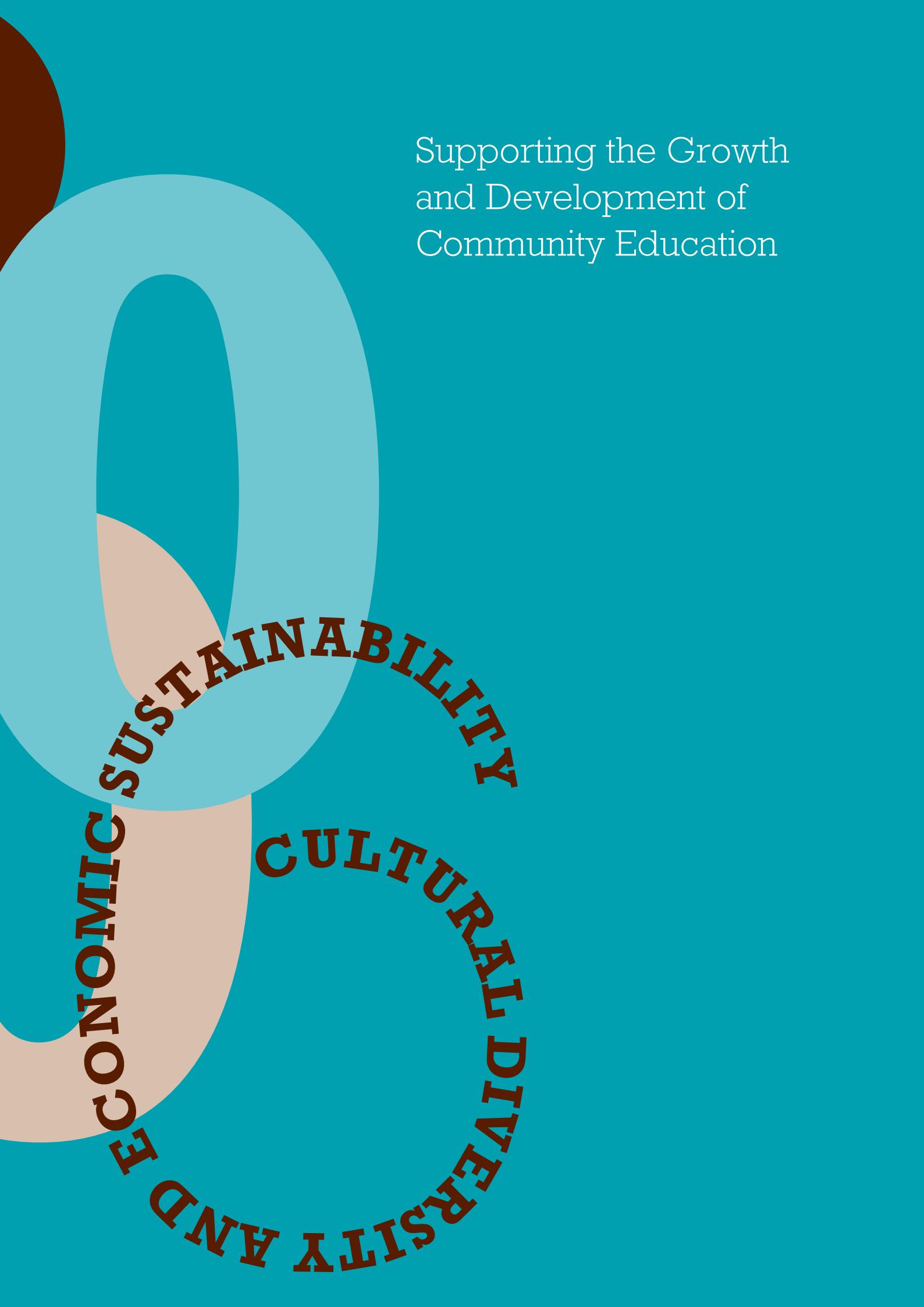
AONTAS updates its members on a monthly basis regarding funding, upcoming events, courses and news on policy developments through the members E-Bulletin. The response from the membership to the bulletin has been very positive and members have begun to use it as a vehicle for exchanging as well as receiving information.

### **AONTAS Website**

Throughout 2006, AONTAS conducted a number of surveys with member organisations, staff and external contacts, with a view to updating, developing and improving the AONTAS website. This work is ongoing and has proved very beneficial in assisting us to make the website as user-friendly and accessible as possible. The website seems to be attracting more and more visitors every year and the site this year took a massive leap in hits. The site now receives on average over two million hits per month. Once again referrals from search engines accounted for a large proportion of visitors. News and Events was the most popular section on the website followed closely by information on distance learning.

**Jennifer Gunning, Administrative Support Worker**





Supporting the Growth  
and Development of  
Community Education

**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND ECONOMIC**

# Supporting the Growth and Development of Community Education

## Introduction

As part of its Strategic Plan AONTAS took a lead role in supporting the growth and development of community education as a key sector providing access to and progression for adult learners. AONTAS has a very broad range of community-based members and throughout the year we endeavoured to promote and highlight their work through profiling case studies, developing links with FETAC and the National Access Office and feeding in their concerns and issues to government departments and policy processes. AONTAS also developed a proposal for the mainstreaming of the Quality Assurance Framework for Women's Community Education and lobbied strongly for funding to support it. The hard work has paid off and we hope to activate the project in 2007 with Department of Education and Science funding. The Community Education Sector is well represented on the AONTAS Executive Committee and members regularly contribute to the promotion of community education through their representative work. AONTAS continued to link in with the National Collective of Community based Women's Network (NCCWN) and to support the Collective in its work. AONTAS is also involved in a number of other key projects.

## Community Education Facilitator's Training and Support Programme

AONTAS continued to deliver the training and support programme for the Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) in 2006. The CEFs are employed in each VEC to support the development of community education at local level. Their work involves support to local groups on a wide range of issues, networking groups and developing interagency working relationships for more effective community education delivery. They also play a key representation role on behalf of their Vocational Education Committees (VECs) at local and county fora. The training and support programme is run in conjunction with the VECs and Further Education Section of Department of Education and Science and is overseen by a national steering group. The practical planning of the events is done through a subgroup comprising CEFs and the national co-ordinator. Jennifer Gunning provides part time administration support.

## 2006 Programme

The 2006 programme was structured to provide;

- Two sets of regional one day training sessions the focus of which was interagency links with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), sharing a partnership model of practice from Clare Lifelong Learning Network and exploring qualitative outcomes from the work of the CEFs
- Two one and half day national sessions looking at models of work from outside Ireland and developing links with POBAL.

## Outcomes

The main outcome is to ensure that the CEFs have a space to network and share work regionally and nationally while being informed from key inputs. Through their work at local level the CEFs have developed good relationships with community groups and agencies, which has resulted in stronger relationships between these groups and the Vocational Education Committees (VECs). Other outcomes were as follows:-

- The links with POBAL resulted in a meeting of representatives of the CEFs and the Local Partnership Education Co-ordinators to discuss areas of common concern in their work.
- Future work with MABS at a local level on incorporating money advice and support into a community education programme.
- Inputs from key speakers from outside Ireland, Jane Thompson from NIACE and Stuart Hashagen from the Scottish Community Development Centre.

## Information to Community Education Facilitators

AONTAS also provides information to the Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) on an ongoing basis. These quarterly mailouts inform CEFs of funding initiatives, and keep them updated on the latest policy developments in adult and community education. The mailout also contains relevant information resources that are made available to them at their training sessions. This year also saw the development of the Community Education Section of the Website. The CEF news section will be updated regularly with details of National and Regional Training including, dates, venues, speakers and any other relevant news which may be of interest to the CEFs. It will also be a way of accessing presentations made by speakers at events and all presentations will be easy to download from the site.

**Maureen Kavanagh, National Co-ordinator**

**Jennifer Gunning, Administrative Support Worker**

## Education Equality Initiative

2006 sees the end of the Education Equality Initiative (EEI) which was funded under the National Development Plan (2000-2006). Over the period of this initiative twenty seven pilot projects were supported to explore the development of supports and programmes designed to achieve education equality. The projects incorporated most of the nine grounds for equality designated under equality legislation and used a variety of methods to overcome educational disadvantage. A national working group, whose role was to ensure that the lessons emerging from the projects were documented and fed into policy, oversaw the work of the EEI.

The ultimate aim of EEI is to embed the practice lessons into mainstream policy and provision thus improving access to learning for educationally disadvantaged adults. All projects identified outreach, early engagement and suitable learning environment with learner centred methodologies as essential in overcoming barriers for educationally disadvantaged adults. Outcomes from the EEI include higher profiles for the projects involved, clearer understanding of learner centred provision, stronger financial and project management in projects and networking links between projects.

EEI phase 1 (2000-2003) produced a booklet on the policy and practice lessons from the projects. EEI phase 2 (2004-2006) plans to build on these lessons and publish a strong document for policy makers highlighting the need for a much more diverse and flexible system of financing for adult and community education. Maureen Kavanagh represents AONTAS on the working group for EEI.

## Back to Education Initiative/Community Strand

During 2006 the BTEI-community Strand funded sixty community-based groups to provide part-time adult education provision designed to meet the needs of individuals, communities and society. The overall aim of BTEI is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities. The sixty groups funded under BTEI community strand are providing an array of diverse, creative and flexible learning opportunities at local level. While the focus of BTEI is on the formal up-skilling of adults, the community strand has enabled community groups to develop their work with hard to reach target groups and ensuring that accreditation options are available to learners. It is important that community groups continue to have access to funding from DES to support their education work at local level as it gives them valuable recognition for their contribution to adult and community education. Maureen Kavanagh is part of the assessment group for BTEI-community strand and works with FEDU on ongoing issues from the strand.

## Making Connections

AONTAS in its work in promoting the importance and value of adult and community education has continued to develop and strengthen its links with other key partners in the sector. Through participation at conferences and seminars AONTAS ensures that role of adult education, and in particular, community education in achieving social inclusion and developing opportunities,

learning is highlighted. In 2006 AONTAS has linked with IVEA, POBAL, the Wheel, TUI, Planet, MABS, NALA and NCCWN to promote adult and community education and network on developments in the field. Inputs on the role of adult and community education in fostering active citizenship were made through out the year. AONTAS by developing relationships with key departments such as Education and Science and Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is ensuring that the issues and concerns of the membership providers are raised.

**Maureen Kavanagh, National Co-ordinator, *CEF Training and Support Programme***



POSITIVE RESPONSES



## Organisational Members

A.L.P.S.	Community Partnership
ACCEPT Counselling Association of Ireland	Carlow Youth Training
Access 2000 Wexford Ltd.	Castlemaine Family Resource Centre
Adult Community Education Network	Catholic Youth Care
AEO'S Association	CELT (Centre for Environmental Living and Training)
Age Action Ireland	Centre for Adult & Community Education, Maynooth
Age and Opportunity	CEO'S Association
AILIM Community Training Development Agency	City of Cork VEC
Ait Na n Daoine CDP	City of Dublin VEC
An Chomhairle Leabharlanna	City of Limerick VEC
An Cosan	City of Waterford VEC
An Tochar Adult Education Centre	Clare Co Library
Aonad Family Resource Centre	Clare Women's Network
Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools	Clondalkin LES
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland	Clondalkin Women's Network
Athlone IT	Co Carlow VEC
Avondhu Development Group	Co Cavan VEC
Ballyfermot Local Employment Service	Co Clare VEC
Ballyhoura Development Ltd.	Co Donegal VEC, Letterkenny
Ballymun Men's Centre Ltd.	Co Donegal VEC, Donegal Town
Ballyphenane/Togher C.D.P.	Co Dublin VEC
Banulacht	Co Galway VEC
Bawnogue Women's Development Group	Co Kildare VEC
Blanchardstown Area Partnership	Co Kilkenny VEC
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)	Co Laois VEC
Borrisokane Area Network Development	Co Leitrim VEC
Brackenstown Adult Scene Of Education (BASE)	Co Limerick VEC
Brainwave, The Irish Epilepsy Association	Co Longford VEC
C.E.F.A.	Co Louth VEC
Canal Communities Partnership	Co Offaly VEC
CANDO	Co Roscommon VEC
	Co Tipperary VEC (NTH)

Co Tipperary VEC (STH)	Drogheda Resource Centre for the Unemployed
Co Waterford VEC	Duagh Family Centre
Co Westmeath VEC	Dublin 12 Women's Action Group
Co Wexford Partnership Limited	Dublin Adult Learning Centre
Co Wexford VEC	Dublin City Council
Co Kildare Centre for the Unemployed	Dublin City Development Board
Co Limerick Adult Education Guidance Service	Dublin College of Management and IT
Community Action Network (CAN)	Dublin Corporation Public Libraries
Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA)	Dublin Employment Pact (DEP)
Community Awareness of Drugs (C.A.D.)	Dublin Inner City Partnership
Connolly Information Centre for the Unemployed	Dublin Institute of Technology
Corduff Community Development Project Ltd.	Dublin Men's Coalition
CORI Education Office	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology
Cork Adult Education Council	Dunrath Training & Development
County Carlow Adult Educational Guidance Service	Easkey Community FRC
Crosscare	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
D.A.T.E. - Dundrum Adult Training and Education	Eiri Corca Baiscinn - West Clare Development
Darndale Belcamp Discovery Centre	Enable Ireland – Cork Service
DCU/Office of Vice President for Learning Innovation	Fáilte Ireland
Development Studies Centre	FAS
DOCHAS for Women	FETAC
Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service	Finglas Cabra Partnership
Donegal Local Development Co Ltd.	Forbairt Naionrai Teo
Donegal Town Women's Group	Foroige
Donegal Travellers Project	Forum Women's Working Group
Donegal Women's Network	Francis Street Community Education Centre
Doras Buí - Parents Alone Resource Centre	Galway City Partnership
Douglas Community School	Galway People's Resource Centre
DRAIOCHT	Greater Blanchardstown Development Project
Drogheda Area Women's Network	Greendale Community School
Drogheda Community Forum	Harmony Community Dev. Programme
	Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC)

Hospital Family Resource Centre	MABS National Development Ltd
I.C.A.	Macra na Feirme
I.N.T.O.	Mary Immaculate Secondary School
I.V.E.A.	Mayfield Community Adult Learning Project (C.A.L.P.)
ICS SKILLS	Maynooth Adult Daytime Education (M.A.D.E.)
Institute of Public Administration (IPA)	Men's Development Network
Irish Centre for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education	Mercy College
Irish Coach Institute	Mercy Education Centre
Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed	Mercy Family Centre
Irish Training & Educational Centre	Mevagh Resource Centre
Iveragh Information Technology Training Ltd.	Ministries Development Group
Joint Managerial Body	More2life Business and Lifecoaching
Kerry Action for Development Education	N.C.C.W.N.
Kerry Education Service	National Adult Literacy Agency
Kerryhead/Ballyheigue Family Resource Centre	National College of Ireland
Kildare Women's Group	National Learning Network
Kilroy's College	National Parent's Council Primary
Kilternen Adult Education	National Training Centre
KLEAR LTD	National Traveller MABS
Larkin Unemployed Centre	National Women's Council of Ireland
LES Guidance Service Limerick	National Youth Council of Ireland
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Navan Traveller's Training Centre
Letterkenny Woman's Centre	Nenagh Community Network
Limerick Community Education Network	Network Kildare
Limerick Institute of Technology	New Directions Women's Education Project
Limerick Recource Centre for the Unemployed	New Inn Womens Group
Limerick Senior College	New Ross Community Development Project
Limerick Womens Network	Newbury House Family Centre
Literacy Development Centre, Waterford Institute of Technology	North Kerry Together
Longford Women's Link	North Leitrim Women's Centre
Loreto Centre	North Meath Communities Development Association
Lourdes Youth & Community Services Ltd.	North Wall Women's Centre

North West Inner City Women's Network

Northside Community Enterprises Ltd.

NUI Galway

OAK Partnership

One Family

Parents Education Programme

PARTAS

Pavee Point Travellers' Group

People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd

People's College

Presentation Family Centre Ltd.

Prussia Street Women's Group

Public Service Executive Union

Quarryvale Family Resource Centre

R.T.E.

Redeemer Centre of Ongoing Learning

Regional Educational Guidance Service - Waterford IT

Ronanstown Women's Group/CDP

Rowlagh Womens Group

Ruhama

S.A.O.L. Project Limited

Sacred Heart Secondary School

Scoil Dara

Scoil Mhuire

Second Chance Education Project for Women

Sliabh Luachra Local Development

Sligo Adult Guidance in Education (SAGE)

Soilse

South Kerry Development Partnership Co Ltd.

South West Wexford Community Development Project

Southill Integrated Development Programme

Southside Women's Action Network (S.W.A.N.)

South-West Kerry Women's Association (S.W.K.A.)

St. Vincent's Trust

St. Aloysius' College

St. Andrew's Resource Centre

St. Catherines Community Services Centre

St. Kilian's Adult and Community Education

St. Munchin's Family Resource Centre

T.A.R.G.E.T.

Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed

Tallaght Partnership

Teach Tearmann Women's Refuge Project

Teachers' Union of Ireland

The Caha Family Resource Centre

The College of Progressive Education

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project

The Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Association

The Media Co-op

The Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy

The National Agency for Beauty Therapy Education & Training

The Open Training College

The Open University in Ireland

The WEB Project

Tipperary Institute

Tipperary Women's Network

Tir Boghaine Teo

Tirhugh Resource Centre

Togher Family Centre Ltd.

Tralee Centre for the Unemployed

Tralee Women's Forum & Co Ltd.

Tuam Community Development Resource Centre

Tullamore Creative Women Journeying Together	Ms Aine Ahern
Udaras na Gaeltachta	Ms Veronica Allen
University College Cork	Ms Sharon Baker
University College Dublin	Mr Patrick B. Bannon
URRUS – A Ballymun Youth Action Project	Mr Denis Barrett
Warrenmount C.E.D. Centre	Ms Noreen Barron
Waterford Women's Centre	Ms Mary Blake
Weightwatchers	Simplice Bodji
West Cork & Beara Womens Network	Ms Breda Bolland
West Cork Community Partnership	Ms Ruth Bourke
West Cork Traveller Centre	Mrs Patsy Brady
West Training & Development Ltd	Ms Mary Brodie
Western Health Board	Ms Rita Brophy
Westmeath Community Development	JJ Brosnan
Whitefriar Community, Education & Development Project	Ms Eimer Bourke
Women Educating for Transformation	Ms Gobnait Burke
Women of the North West	Ms Sinead Burke
Women Together Tallaght Network	Ms Elaine Butler
Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association Ltd.	Ms Elaine Butler
Women's Development Group	Ms Sandra Byrne
Women's Education Research & Resource Centre	Ms Breda Cahill
Women's Equality in Bray (WEB)	Ms Dorothy Calvert
Women's Issues Task Force	Ms Anne Carberry
Women's Resource & Development Agency	Mr Derek Henry Carr
Women's Studies Centre	Ms Gill Casey
Workers' Educational Association	Ms Caroline Casey
WRC Social & Economic Consultants Ltd	Ms Monica Cassidy
Yoga Therapy Ireland	Ms Rosemary Clarke
Youth Information Centre, Letterkenny	Ms Liz Cleves
<b>Individual Members</b>	Mr Brian Clifford
Ms Theresa Ahearne	Mr Donal Coffey
	Ms Ann Cole
	Ms Agnes Coleman
	Sr Bernadette Collins

Ms Grainne Collins	Ms Paula Dunne
Ms Maureen Condon	Ms Anne Dunne
Fr Martin Convey	Mr Jeremiah Gerard Dunne
Ms Olive Costello	Sr Angela Durkin
Mr Ray Creighton	Mr Mark John Dyer
Mr Jerry Cronin	Ms Rita M Edwards
Mr Timothy Crowley	Mr Anthony Thomas Egan
Ms Cathy Cryan	Mr Brendan Egan
Ms Susan Cullinane	Ms Paula Faller
Ms Jacinta Cunneen	Ms Maggie Feeley
Ms Noreen Dake	Ms Adele Finnegan
Ms Andrea Dalton	Ms Kay Fitzgerald
Ms Orla Daly	Ms Carina Fitzgerald
Ms Anna Dangerfield	Ms Riona Fitzgerald
Ms Merike Darmody	Ms Eileen Fitzgerald
Ms Fiona De Buis	Mr John Fitzgibbon
Ms Teresa Delaney	Ms Priscilla Fitzpatrick
Ms Olayinka Dixon-Oludaiye	Ms Liz Fitzsimons
Mr Andrew Doherty	Ms Mary Flanagan
Mr John Doherty	Ms Mary Flannery
Ms Emer Dolphin	Dr Ted Fleming
Ms Liz Donnelly	Mr Desmond Fleming
Ms Colette Dorrian	Mr David Flynn
Ms Tracey Dorricott	Ms Cora Foley
Ms Linda Dowling	Ms Trish Forde
Ms Flori Downey	Ms Mary Foudy
Ms Elizabeth Doyle	Mr Paul Gaerty
Ms Catherine Doyle	Ms Theresa Gallagher
Ms Tara Doyle	Ms Lorraine Galvin
Prof Sheelagh Drudy	Mr Brian Glennon
Mr Ed Du Vivier	Mr Padraig Glynn
Mr Martin Duffy	Ms Marie Gonnely
Ms Gillian Dunlop	Mr Stephen Goulding
Ms Susan Dunne	Ms Patrisha Greaney

Ms Margaret Griffin	Mr Michael Dermot Kelly
Ms Bernie Grummell	Ms Margaret Kelly
Ms Betty Hannon-Flavin	Ms Diana Kelly
Ms Angela Harness	Mr Richard Kelly
Mr Kevin Harrington	Mr Michael Kenny
Ms Elizabeth Harrington	Ms Máire Kerrane
Ms Jillian Harrison	Ms Jenny Kilbride
Ms Joan Hassett	Mr Liam Kilbride
Ms Brigid Haugh MacSweeney	Ms Paula King
Ms Aobhan Haverty	Ms Debby King
Ms Fiona Healy	Ms Rhona King
Ms Lucy Hearne	Ms Hilary Kinneen
Mr Bernard William Heck	Ms Bernadette Kinsella
Ms Phyllis Heduau	Ms Marian Kinsella
Ms Marietta Herraghty	Ms Josephine Lally
Ms Mary Hickey	Mr Michael Lanigan
Mr Pat Higgins	Mr Paul Larkin
Ms Cathleen Hogan	Ms Lara Lawless
Ms Una Holden	Mr Sean Lawless
Ms Freda Holly	Ms Kerry Lawless
Ms Tracey Holsgrove	Ms Deirdre Lawlor
Mr Marcus Hopkins	Ms Catherine Leonard
Ms Eleanor Hough	Mr Ray Lucey
Ms Margaret Howard	Tsambwa MacDonald Freeman
Ms Joan Hughes	Ms Breege Madden
Ms Geraldine Hunt	Ms Eileen Magee
Mr Kevin Hurley	Ms Lesley Malone
Ms Margaret M. Hurley	Ms Anne Marron
Ms Niamh Jackson	Mr Larry Masterson
Ms Deirdre Johnson	Ms Mary Mather Leahy
Ms Jacqueline Joynt	Mr Robbie Matthews
Mr Larry Kavanagh	Mr Patrick Maunsell
Ms Alison Keane	Ms Louise McCann
Ms Anne Martina Kehoe	Ms Eilish McCann

Ms Anita McCann	Mr Damien Murphy
Ms Josephine McCann	Ms Theresa Murphy-Sheehy
Ms Vivienne McCann	Mr Luke Murtagh
Ms Pamela McCarthy	Ms Clora Neilan
Ms Teresa McCullagh	Ms Cait Ni Mhurchu
Mr Sean McDermott	Ms Stephanie Nwaigwe
Ms Mary McEvoy	Mr Aiden O'Brien
Mr Sean McGaley	Ms Louise O'Brien
Mr Dermot McGarthy	Ms Ann O'Brien
Mr Pat McGill	Ms Ashling O'Brien
Ms Catherine McGinely	Ms Margaret O'Brien
Ms Bernie McGinley	Ms Loretta O'Brien
Ms Verona McGivern	Ms Maire O'Brien
Ms Valerie McGrath	Mr Sean S. O'Broin
Ms Sinead McMahon Coffey	Ms Ruth O'Callaghan
Ms Orlagh McMullan	Ms Eva O'Connell
Ms Ann McNamara	Ms Fiona O'Connor
Ms Marian McRory	Ms Catherine O'Connor
Ms Kay Meany	Ms Elizabeth O'Connor
Ms Carol Melody	Ms Mary O'Donnell
Mr Adrian Mitchell	Ms Catherine O'Dowd
Mr Frank Molloy	Ms Karen O'Dowling-Keane
Ms Mary Molloy	Ms Mary O'Driscoll
Ms Edel Moloney	Ms Anna O'Dwyer
Mr Patrick Moloney	Ms Noelle O'Dwyer
Ms Vanessa Montgomery	Ms Julia O'Gorman
Ms Helena Moran	Ms Maeve O'Grady
Patsy Moran	Mr John O'Loughlin
Ms Elizabeth Mulhall	Mr James O'Loughlin
Ms Kaye Mullaney	Mr T O'Mahoney
Ms Sarah Murphy	Mr Colm O'Maolmhuire
Mr Denis Murphy	Ms Majella O'Neill
Ms Marian Murphy	Ms Jennifer Osborne
Ms Margaret Murphy	Mr Rory O'Sullivan

Ms Mary O'Sullivan	Mr Gerard Slattery
Ms Avril O'Sullivan	Ms Sheila Smith
Ms Maria O'Sullivan	Ms Lynda Stacey
Mr Joseph O'Sullivan/Noel Keenan	Ms Annette Stacey
Ms Sorcha O'Toole	Mr Paul Stanley
Ms Toni Owens	Ms Imelda Staunton
Mr Paul Patton	Ms Ruth Stewart
Mr Gary M. Pheasey	Mr Stephen Stewart
Ms Sandra Phillips	Mr Michael Thompson
Robias Phiri	Mr Ricky Thompson
Ms Angela Potter	Ms Gabrielle Thorsch
Ms Emma Quirke	Ms Geraldine Tighe
Ms Mary Rafferty	Ms Ita Treacy
Ms Janice Ransom	Mr Ray Walker
Ms Liz Redmond	Ms Fiona Wall
Ms Fionnuala Richardson	Ms Anne M. Walsh
Mr Michael Riordan	Ms Sarah-Beth Watkins
Mr Paddy Robinson	Mr Robin Webster
Ms Barbara Ronayne	Ms Catherine White
Mr Michael Rooney	Ms Julie White
Ms Hilary Ryan	<b>Associate Members</b>
Ms Patsy Ryan	Manzoor Alam
Ms Orna Ryan	Femi Anjorin
Mr Seamus Scanlan	Aaron Conant
Mr Eugene Scully	Zachory Lee Cook
Mr Kevin Sharkey	Okereafor Darlington
Ms Mary Sheehy	Nino Elkanishvili
Ms Emer Sheerin	Norma Ferrell
Ms Carmel Sheridan	Isiaka a Isajimi
Ms Mary Sheridan	Andrew Jilani
Mr Eugene Sherry	Marcie Jones
Ms Bernie Sibbald	Ehsan Kazemi
Ms Trish Sinnott	Yousaf Khan
Mr Dermot Andrew Skelly	Dr Thomas O'Brien

A.K.M Anisur Rahman  
 Amjal Rasouli  
 Koi Tirima  
 Khalid Usman  
 Pam Wadeson  
 Community Action for Relief and Development (CARDEV)  
 Hope Worldwide – Pakistan  
 People's Association for Rural Development (PARD)

## Executive Committee Officers

Mr John Ryan – President, City of Limerick VEC  
 Ms Brid Connolly – Vice-President, Dept. of Adult & Community Education, NUI/ Maynooth  
 Mr Patrick Nolan – Hon. Treasurer, County Wexford VEC  
 Marian Duffy – Hon. Secretary, County Carlow VEC.

## Organisational Members

Ms Mary Hilda Cavanagh – Irish Vocational Education Association  
 Mr Pat Higgins – Adult Education Officers Association  
 Ms Jan Lewis – Second Chance Education Project for Women, Donegal  
 Ms Marie Mulvihill – Francis Street Community Centre, Dublin  
 Ms Valerie O'Carroll – Clondalkin Women's Network, Co. Dublin  
 Mr John Murphy – Dublin's Men's Coalition  
 Ms Ruth Smith – Tipperary Women's Network  
 Ms Rose Todd – National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks  
 Ms Maria Gorman – Kerry Education Services

## Individual Members

Ms Cora Foley

## Co-opted Member

Mr John Farrell – Teachers' Union of Ireland

## Staff

Ms Berni Brady, Director  
 Ms Jacinta Cuthbert, Office Manager  
 Ms Maureen Kavanagh, National Co-Ordinator Community Education Facilitators  
 Ms Jennifer Gunning, Administration Support Worker  
 Ms Niamh O'Reilly, Membership Development Officer  
 Ms Maria McMullen, Membership/Policy Support Worker  
 Ms Martina Quinn, Communications Officer  
 Ms Finola McDonnell, Policy Officer \*  
 Ms Frances Killeen, Information Officer \*  
 Ms Ciara Murphy, Clerical Assistant/ Receptionist

\* Both members of staff left AONTAS by the end of 2006.



# Financial Statements



## Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### Organisational Information

<b>Directors</b>	Mr John Ryan (President)
	Ms Brid Connolly (Vice-President)
	Cllr Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)
	Ms Marian Duffy (Hon. Secretary)
	Ms Cora Foley
	Ms Maria Gorman
	Mr Pat Higgins
	Ms Mary Hilda Cavanagh
	Ms Jan Lewis
	Ms Marie Mulvihill
	Mr John Murphy
	Ms Valerie O'Carroll
	Ms Ruth Smith
	Ms Rose Todd
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	Mr John Farrell

**Secretary** Ms Brid Connolly

**Company Number** 80958

**Charity Number** 6719

**Registered Office**  
83-87 Main Street  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

**Auditors**  
Anne Brady McQuillans DFK  
Iveagh Court  
Harcourt Road  
Dublin 2

**Business Address**  
83-87 Main Street  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

**Bankers**  
Bank of Ireland  
Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

**Solicitors**  
P.J. Walsh & Company  
12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street  
Dublin 2

## Directors' Report

The Board of Directors of AONTAS present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2006.

### Principal Activity

The principal activity of the organisation is the promotion and development of adult education in Ireland.

### Results for the year and State of Affairs at 31 December 2006

The results for the year and the state of affairs of the organisation at 31 December 2006 are set out on pages 53 to 57 of the financial statements. The results for the year show incoming resources of €51,029 (31 December 2005 : (€49,229)).

### Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986

The reporting requirements of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986 relating to financial statements do not apply as AONTAS is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

### Directors

The Executive Committee constitutes the Board of Directors of the organisation under the terms of Article 28 of the Articles of Association of the organisation:

Mr John Ryan (President)  
Ms Brid Connolly (Vice-President)  
Cllr Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)  
Ms Marian Duffy (Hon. Secretary)  
Ms Cora Foley  
Ms Maria Gorman  
Mr Pat Higgins  
Ms Mary Hilda Cavanagh  
Ms Jan Lewis  
Ms Marie Mulvihill  
Mr John Murphy  
Ms Valerie O'Carroll  
Ms Ruth Smith  
Ms Rose Todd

The following members were appointed as co-opted members

Mr John Farrell

## Books of Account

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 202, Companies Act, 1990, regarding proper books of account include the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The books of account of the organisation are maintained at 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

## Events after the Balance Sheet Date

There have been no circumstances or events subsequent to the year end, which require adjustment or disclosure in the financial statements or in the notes thereto.

## Auditors

The auditors, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 160(2) of the Companies Act, 1963.

Signed on behalf of the Board

**Mr John Ryan**  
Director

**Ms Marian Duffy**  
Director

*Date: 3rd March 2007*

## Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the organisation and of the surplus or deficit of the organisation for that year. In preparing these the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the organisation will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the organisation and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2005. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board

**Mr John Ryan**  
Director

**Ms Marian Duffy**  
Director

*Date: 3rd March 2007*

## Independent Auditors' Report to the Shareholders of **AONTAS**

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31 December 2006 which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 58.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.

### Respective Responsibilities of Directors and Auditors

The directors' responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland) are set out in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (Ireland and the United Kingdom).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2005. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company; whether, at the balance sheet date, there exists a financial situation requiring the convening of an extraordinary general meeting of the company; and whether the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the company's balance sheet and its profit and loss account are in agreement with the books of account.

We report to the shareholders if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration or directors' transactions is not given and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

## Independent Auditors' Report to the Shareholders of **AONTAS**

We read the other information contained in the annual report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. This other information comprises only the Directors' Report. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

### Basis of Audit Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland and the United Kingdom) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

### Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31 December 2006 and of its surplus and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2005.

We have obtained all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report on pages 48 - 49 is consistent with the financial statements.

## **Independent Auditors' Report to the Shareholders of **AONTAS****

Section 40(1) of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1983 does not apply as the organisation is limited by guarantee.

**Anne Brady McQuillans DFK**  
**Chartered Accountants**  
**Registered Auditors**  
**Iveagh Court**  
**Harcourt Road**  
**Dublin 2**

***Date: 3rd March 2007***

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2006

		<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Restricted and unrestricted funds	2	1,043,440	1,040,989
<b>Resources Expended</b>			
<b>Administration</b>			
Salary costs		195,732	183,544
Pension scheme		26,211	21,753
Staff training and expenses		10,856	5,989
Postage and courier services		21,753	11,917
Stationery		13,153	17,449
Advertising		-	3,236
Telephone		10,255	8,248
Travel and subsistence		9,858	8,927
Executive and general committee expenses		29,616	32,800
Legal fees		165	1,001
Audit and accountancy fees		7,000	7,622
Bank interest and charges		893	875
Representation and affiliation		19,155	13,948
Miscellaneous		206	35
Rent of venues and equipment		1,535	1,300
Computer costs		1,617	4,646
		348,005	323,290

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2006

	Notes	2006 €	2005 €
<b>Premises</b>			
Light and heat		3,126	3,012
Rent and rates		91,856	91,962
Repairs and maintenance		14,090	14,595
Leasing charges		1,600	893
Insurance		7,663	9,020
Cleaning		3,125	2,907
Depreciation of computers and office equipment		17,865	24,706
		<u>139,325</u>	<u>147,095</u>
<b>Development</b>			
Salaries		325,616	304,937
Pension scheme		38,717	31,705
Consultants and contract staff		2,913	8,829
Travel and subsistence		32,075	29,035
Printing and publications		36,552	41,299
Conferences / seminars / membership meetings		21,076	106,740
Public relations strategy		24,037	-
Information resources		7,263	6,955
Evaluation		-	630
Recruitment		3,877	14,071
Childcare		<u>847</u>	<u>1,925</u>
		<u>492,973</u>	<u>546,126</u>
<b>Research</b>			
Quality assurance framework for community education		4,200	71,751
IRAACE		7,908	1,956
		<u>12,108</u>	<u>73,707</u>

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2006

	Notes	2006 €	2005 €
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>992,411</u>	<u>1,090,218</u>
 <b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for year</b>		 51,029	 (49,229)
 <b>Fund balances at beginning of year</b>		 <u>(21,790)</u>	 <u>27,439</u>
 <b>Fund balances at end of year</b>		 <u>29,239</u>	 <u>(21,790)</u>

Income and expenditure arises from continuing operations. The charity has no recognised losses other than the movement in funds for the year.

The notes on pages 58 – 63 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 3rd March 2007 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr John Ryan** **Ms Marian Duffy**  
Director Director

## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2006

		2006		2005	
	Notes	€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	8		11,826		29,691
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	9	13,188		10,776	
Cash at bank and in hand		97,598		616	
		<hr/> 110,786		<hr/> 11,392	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>					
	10	<u>(93,373)</u>		<u>(62,873)</u>	
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>					
		<u>17,413</u>		<u>(51,481)</u>	
<b>Net assets/(liabilities)</b>					
		<u>29,239</u>		<u>(21,790)</u>	
<b>Income funds</b>					
Restricted funds	13		-		-
Unrestricted funds	14		29,239		(21,790)
<b>Total funds</b>			<u>29,239</u>		<u>(21,790)</u>

The notes on pages 58 – 63 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 3rd March 2007 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr John Ryan**  
Director

**Ms Marian Duffy**  
Director

## Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 December 2006

	Notes	2006 €	2005 €
<b>Reconciliation of operating surplus / (deficit) to net cash inflow from operating activities</b>			
Operating surplus / (deficit) less interest receivable		50,597	(49,320)
Depreciation		17,865	24,706
(Increase) in debtors		(2,412)	(3,202)
Increase / (Decrease) in creditors		<u>84,190</u>	<u>(22,820)</u>
<b>Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities</b>		<u>150,240</u>	<u>(50,636)</u>

### Cash flow statement

Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities		150,240	(50,636)
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	11	<u>432</u>	<u>91</u>
<b>Financing</b>			
<b>Increase / (Decrease) in cash in the year</b>		<u>150,672</u>	<u>(50,545)</u>

### Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds (Note 12)

Increase in cash in the year		150,672	(50,545)
Net debt at 1st January		<u>(53,074)</u>	<u>(2,529)</u>
<b>Net funds at 31st December</b>	12	<u>97,598</u>	<u>(53,074)</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 1. Accounting Policies

#### 1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles under the historical cost convention and comply with reference to the recommendations of the revised Statement Of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting by Charities issued by the Charity Commissioners in 2000.

#### 1.2 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	–	20% Straight Line
Office equipment	–	20% Straight Line
Computer equipment	–	33.3% Straight Line

#### 1.3 Leasing

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

#### 1.4 Pensions

Payments to defined contribution pension schemes are charged to the profit and loss account in the period to which they relate.

#### 1.5 Grants receivable

Grant income receivable from the Department of Education and Science in respect of the CEF Training and Support programme, the Adult Learners Festival and the Members' Handbook and grant income receivable from the Wheel Organisation are treated as being restricted as the incomes are applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

Where specific grants are received in the year and none, or only part, of the related expenditure has been incurred, the unused portion of the grant is carried forward in creditors and accruals as deferred income.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 2. Sources of Income

	<b>2006</b> €	<b>2005</b> €
<b>Restricted Funds</b>		
Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	-	5,214
Department of Education & Science Grants:		
CEF Training and Support programme	138,407	135,000
Adult Learner Festival Grant	20,775	-
Once off conference grant	-	15,000
The Wheel Training Links	98	-
	<hr/> <u>159,280</u>	<hr/> <u>155,214</u>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>		
Department of Education & Science :		
Grant in Aid (Core Funding)	452,000	430,000
Grant in Aid (supplementary)	-	27,500
S.P.I.D.A.S. supplement	408,000	365,000
Members' subscriptions	21,025	18,671
Other Grants	859	-
National conference	-	22,655
Interest receivable	432	91
Miscellaneous	<hr/> <u>1,844</u>	<hr/> <u>2,093</u>
	<hr/> <u>884,160</u>	<hr/> <u>866,010</u>
Total Income	1,043,440	1,021,224
Opening deferred income	-	19,765
Closing deferred income	<hr/> <u>-</u>	<hr/> <u>-</u>
	<hr/> <u>1,043,440</u>	<hr/> <u>1,040,989</u>

### 3. Continuing Operations

The statement of financial activities has been prepared on the basis that the organisation has only continuing operations in accordance with the Companies (Amendment) Acts, 1983 and 1986.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 4. Net Outgoing Resources for the year

	2006	2005
	€	€
Net outgoing resources for the year is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	17,865	14,802
Auditors' remuneration	<u>7,000</u>	<u>7,622</u>

### 5. Employees

Number of employees	2006	2005
The average numbers of employees during the year were:	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>
<b>Employment costs</b>		
Wages and salaries	521,348	444,719
Social welfare costs	-	43,762
Other pension costs	<u>64,928</u>	<u>53,458</u>
	<u>586,276</u>	<u>541,939</u>

### 6. Pension Costs

The organisation operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are made by both the employee and the employer. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the organisation in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by AONTAS to the fund and amount to €64,928 (2005 : €53,458).

### 7. Taxation

The organisation has been granted exemption from taxation and this exemption has pertained since its incorporation.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 8. Tangible Assets

	<b>Office equipment</b>	<b>Computer equipment</b>	<b>Fixtures and fittings</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
At 1 January 2006	48,624	92,985	49,519	191,128
Disposals	-	(64,022)	-	(64,022)
At 31 December 2006	<u>48,624</u>	<u>28,963</u>	<u>49,519</u>	<u>127,106</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 January 2006	43,134	90,514	27,789	161,437
On disposals	-	(64,022)	-	(64,022)
Charge for the year	5,490	2,471	9,904	17,865
At 31 December 2006	<u>48,624</u>	<u>28,963</u>	<u>37,693</u>	<u>115,280</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 December 2006	-	-	11,826	11,826
At 31 December 2005	<u>5,490</u>	<u>2,471</u>	<u>21,730</u>	<u>29,691</u>

### 9. Debtors

		<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
		<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Other debtors and prepayments		<u>13,188</u>	<u>10,776</u>

### 10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Bank overdraft	-	53,690
Pension fund loan	2,951	-
Trade creditors	6,977	467
Wages control	928	-
Deferred income – grants receivable	73,720	-
Accruals	<u>8,797</u>	<u>8,716</u>
	<u>93,373</u>	<u>62,873</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 11. Gross Cash Flows

	2006	2005
	€	€
<b>Returns on investments and servicing of finance</b>		
Interest received	432	91

### 12. Analysis of changes in net funds

	Opening balance	Cash flows	Closing balance
	€	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	616	96,982	97,598
Overdrafts	(53,690)	53,690	-
Net funds	<u>(53,074)</u>	<u>150,672</u>	<u>97,598</u>

### 13. Restricted Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
Specific Funds:				
Grants from Department of				
Education & Science:				
– CEF Training and Support programme	138,407	(138,407)		-
– Adult Learner festival	20,775	(20,775)		-
The Wheel Training Links	<u>-</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>(98)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>159,280</u>	<u>159,280</u>	<u>(159,280)</u>	<u>-</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

### 14. Unrestricted Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
<b>General Fund</b>	<u>(21,790)</u>	<u>884,160</u>	<u>(833,131)</u>	<u>29,239</u>

### 15. Controlling Party

The organisation is controlled by the Board of Directors.

### 16. Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved by the board on 3rd March 2007 and signed on its behalf by

**Mr John Ryan**  
Director

**Ms Marian Duffy**  
Director

