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THE AONTAS COMMUNITY EDUCATION NETWORK

Position paper on creating an effective funding mechanism for community education



“Community education is essential to surviving the recession: it is an investment in our future”

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1. Introduction

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation. The mission of AONTAS is to ensure that every adult in Ireland has access to appropriate and affordable learning opportunities throughout their lives, thus enabling them to participate in the economic, social, civic and cultural development of Irish society. AONTAS created a Community Education Network in order to raise the voice of the community education sector in order to ensure that it gains its rightful place in the adult education system. An outcome of the work of the network is this position paper which outlines the issues with the current funding system for community education and how this could be resolved in order to create an effective community education sector.

1.1 Community Education

Defining community education is not a straightforward task. In Ireland, two views exist within the Governmental White Paper¹; on the one hand community education is seen as an extension of the service provided by second and third-level education institutions into the wider community. In the other, it is viewed as a process of communal education towards empowerment, both at an individual and a collective level... “it is as an interactive, challenging process, not only in terms of its content but also in terms of its methodologies and decision making processes.” Its characteristics are outlined in the White Paper also, please see appendix 1 of this document.

Following extensive discussion and consultation the Community Education Network definition of community education is:²

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

1.2 AONTAS Community Education Network

The Community Education Network (CEN) is a political platform of independent community education groups within the AONTAS membership and serves under the organizational development section of the AONTAS Strategic Plan. The Network directs its work and actively participates in developing immediate and long term strategies in order to achieve the aim of securing a distinct funding stream for community education through actions based on the three themes of: resource, recognition and raise profile. This is the only national network dedicated to independent community education groups at national level and it constantly works to ensure that it operates effectively through engaging in ongoing evaluation and critical reflection. It has been in existence for over two years and has met on eight occasions, a report and details of all meetings are available from the AONTAS website: <http://www.aontas.com/commed/networkcen.html>

¹ White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life (2000). Dublin

² To learn more about community education watch this short film [here](#)

Any local, self-managed, independent community education organisation committed to raising the profile of, and lobbying for, a community education sector that is committed to social change can join the Network. A total of 134 organisations from 19 Irish counties have registered to be part of the Community Education Network. The mission statement of the Network is: “to achieve a greater public understanding of the value of community education and have it recognised as a distinctly funded sector of the Irish Education system.”

This position paper was the result of a collaborative process which has developed through various consultative methods (national meetings, regional visits, subgroup meetings and online discussions). Three national meetings of the community education network focused on various aspects of creating a mechanism for funding community education. The last meeting on May 5th aimed solely at this work and provided a solid grounding on what needs to be funded and how funding should be delivered. It was further developed and shaped by a voluntary subgroup of the community education network.³

1.3 Importance of Community Education

Community education is a progressive, inclusive and effective form of education that happens in the community.⁴ It empowers adults, has a beneficial impact on their families and community and reaches people who wouldn't otherwise engage in education. Community education ensures equality of opportunity for marginalised groups and also contributes to the economic regeneration of communities.

Community education is a **fundamental** component for bringing us through the recession. It has a proven track record for creating a supportive environment that **encourages** learners back into formal and community education, **enables** individuals to develop their **skillset** and **competencies**, and is the **bridge** to further learning and employment. Given the current economic crisis, finding approaches to expand participation by adults in education and skills development generates wealth and well-being. Community education grew in an environment of **economic difficulties**, the 1980s; it developed **effective** methods for addressing social issues by helping communities **tackle** unemployment, social problems and low civic participation. It is a key element to addressing intergenerational consistent poverty and education disadvantage. Community education **enables** individuals to reach their potential; it **empowers** the individual and builds confidence; also it nurtures community cohesion.

1.4 Providers of Community Education in the AONTAS Community Education Network

Community education is provided in a number of forms: as accredited (or non-accredited) education in the community through the VEC supported Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) community strand or the ALCES budget. Community education is also provided as accredited (and non-accredited) education in independent community education groups (NGOs) who have a focus on social change through a variety of funding streams. This paper focuses specifically on the social change model of community education and as such has the following features: it generally takes place outside institutions and responds to the needs of the community. It is education in the community, with the community and by the community. Community education groups are local, self-managed, voluntary organisations and are supported by a range of agencies and government

³ Funding mechanism for community education subgroup: Noel Fitzgerald (Draiocht), Marie Keegan (Crosscare), Avril Bailey (An Cosan), Joe Murdiff (Men Alone in No-man's Land - Main), Camilla Fitzsimons (Respond! Housing), Catherine Aylmer (Limerick Community Education Network).

departments for their education and social inclusion work. Community education is a vital part of community development. Therefore, in terms of funding this paper is only seeking change to the funding of community education for independent community education groups and not community education that is provided by statutory bodies such as the VEC.

1.5 Outcomes of Community Education

The outcomes and impact of Department of Education and Skills funded community education has been researched recently. This research charts the role of community education in terms of access and retention, civic and social engagement, impact on the health of learners, progression and also how it contributes to a fairer more just and prosperous Ireland.

Some of the key findings conclude that community education⁵:

- The openness of the learning environment is the key aspect of community education that allows outcomes to happen. It is essential that the group is a resource for the learning. This approach needs to be maintained in community education.
- There are wide benefits to community education across all the outcome areas, CSE, health and progression, but social engagement outcomes were the ones most frequently identified by learners. There would appear to be an emerging Human Capital Theory (HCT) emphasis in community education that some learners are in favour of. Providers and VEC personnel might benefit from promoting the role of community education for both individual and collective development to avoid it being perceived as functional adult education in local areas.
- About half the learner's sample were interested in accreditation for learning. Providers could respond to this desire by providing optional certification for learners. This desire does contribute to equality as it helps those learners with no qualifications to gain them. The role of the NFAQ needs to be better promoted.
- Community education makes a substantial contribution to a more just, equal and prosperous Ireland. This contribution needs to be consistently tracked by collecting data that takes into account all the outcomes of community education, not solely progression rates.
- Community education represents value for money for DES as even with conservative estimates, learners who start to volunteer as a result of community education could provide a high return of 28.8 million to the State and a low return of 9.1 million per annum.

Further outcomes of community education have been documented by community education groups, for example by An Cosán. The outcomes of the work include: **TBC**. Full details of this case study are documented in appendix 2.

1.6 Community Education and Community Development

Community education can provide a vital first step for many learners in entering, or re-entering, vocational and personal educational opportunities and many 'first step' programmes favour non-accredited learning as the

⁵ Exploring the Outcomes and Impact of Department of Education and Skills (DES) funded Community education (Draft, July 2010, p. 8)

most effective method for initial engagement in education. However the importance of the non-accredited learning runs deeper than offering an initial entry point to education due to its role in community development practice. Community education is understood as a socially transformative process with practitioners’ acting as critical educators. Taking everyday issues as their cue, they facilitate a problem posing process that encourages communities to interpret their world in a critical way. This new reading then informs community development collective actions, underpinned by corresponding reflection, undertaken to promote egalitarian change. This approach often works in a way that is non-accredited as it favours collective advancement over personal advancement.

“community development without the essential elements of emancipatory learning domesticates the activists and subverts the possibility of radical social change...adult education without the conduit of community development remains located in the personal” (Connolly, 1996, p. 40).⁶

1.7 Priorities for Community Education

1.7.1 The importance of non-accredited learning - it builds the capacity of a person to have choices

Non-accredited learning is an essential part of taking the step onto the National Framework of Qualifications; it acts as a strong foundation on which to build one’s learning journey. Non-accredited courses are essential for building the necessary skills for further learning such as: increased confidence and prerequisite skills such as self management and gaining a positive experience of learning and understanding. Non-accredited learning also addresses isolation, builds community and essentially builds the capacity of a person to have choices. Please see figure 1.

“Non-accredited learning is a gateway to getting onto an accredited course; it builds your confidence and lets you know about what accreditation is, it doesn’t seem so off putting.” Learner from Limerick

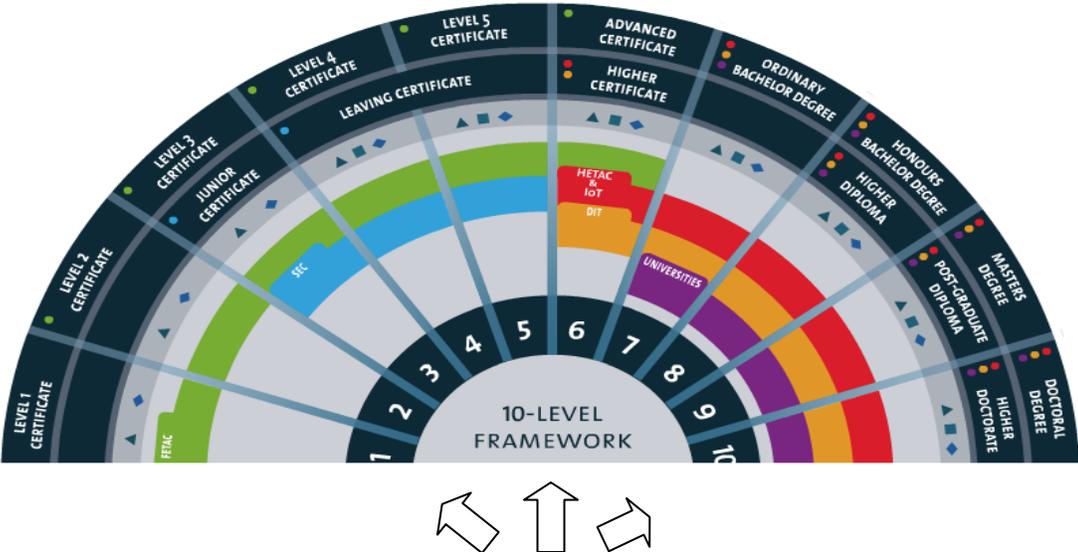


Fig. 1 Non-accredited community education (gateway to the national framework of qualifications)

⁶ Connolly, B. (1996) “Community Development and Adult Education: Prospects for Change?” in Fleming, T., Connolly, B., Ryan, A. (Eds.) Radical Learning for Liberation. Centre for Adult and Community Education. St Patricks College, Maynooth.

1.7.2 The role of community education in access, transfer and progression.

Non-accredited and accredited community education is central to access, transfer and progression due to its unique nature, from a community education network perspective this can also be encapsulated as follows:

Access: The student centred methodology takes cognisance of the lived experience of the person and gives the tools to build the capacity. Community education builds the capacity of individuals to engage in learning, for many it is the first step for accessing further learning.

Transfer: Transformation based on the lived experience of the person occurs during the process of community education. Transfer also occurs in the following ways also: from non-accredited to accredited learning and from non-formal to formal education. Community education acts to bridge the cultural shift from non-formal to formal. Community education learners are supported to move from lower to higher levels of the national qualifications framework.

Progression: This is assisted through the nature of community education: its location and part-time & flexible provision. Community education has accessibility attributes (example of Young Women's Course in An Cosan) furthermore non-accredited learning has a real and important role in the process as demonstrated in Year 1 of the Young Women's course (see appendix 1).

2. Funding Community Education

Preliminary research carried out by the National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN) focused on a small number of women's community groups which receive funding from a variety of sources, this illustrated the variety of funding sources accessed by groups (some from 13 sources). Furthermore, the *Community Education and Social Change* research carried out by Co. Donegal VEC, noted the issue of funding and its implications for groups, however it was not examined in detail.⁷

It appears that no extensive study on funding for community education has been undertaken at a national level. The sector cannot move forward to gain greater independence for growth and development if it is not funded appropriately; in turn this requires a full understanding of the funding environment. A small scale piece of research was carried out with the AONTAS community education network in 2009-2010 which sought to provide an overview of existing funding structures for community education with the aim of creating an informed position paper on the funding mechanisms for community education in terms of how it could benefit community education groups, learners and funders.

2.1. Funding Structures for Community Education

This summary gives a snapshot of the current funding received by a number of members of the CEN: the funding streams, the government departments involved in funding community education, time taken in the application process and the impact of the current funding structure on learners and organisations. A full report of this work is available online.⁸

⁷ *Community Education and Social Change* (2009) Co. Donegal VEC

⁸ www.aontas.com

Funding streams for Community Education

From the 40 respondents that answered the question relating to the number of funding streams accessed by community education groups **78** funding streams were named of which the average number access was 4.5 for 07-08 and 4 for 08-09. An outline of the number of funding streams accessed by groups is illustrated in fig. 2.

Some streams were accessed more than others, the majority of funding accessed originated from 10 separate governmental departments (on 92 occasions), the remainder from charitable trusts (26), businesses (5), EU funding (2) and other sources (7). Of the governmental departments, those most commonly accessed is illustrated in the graph, fig. 3.

Fig 2. Graph of the number of funding streams accessed by community education organisations for the years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

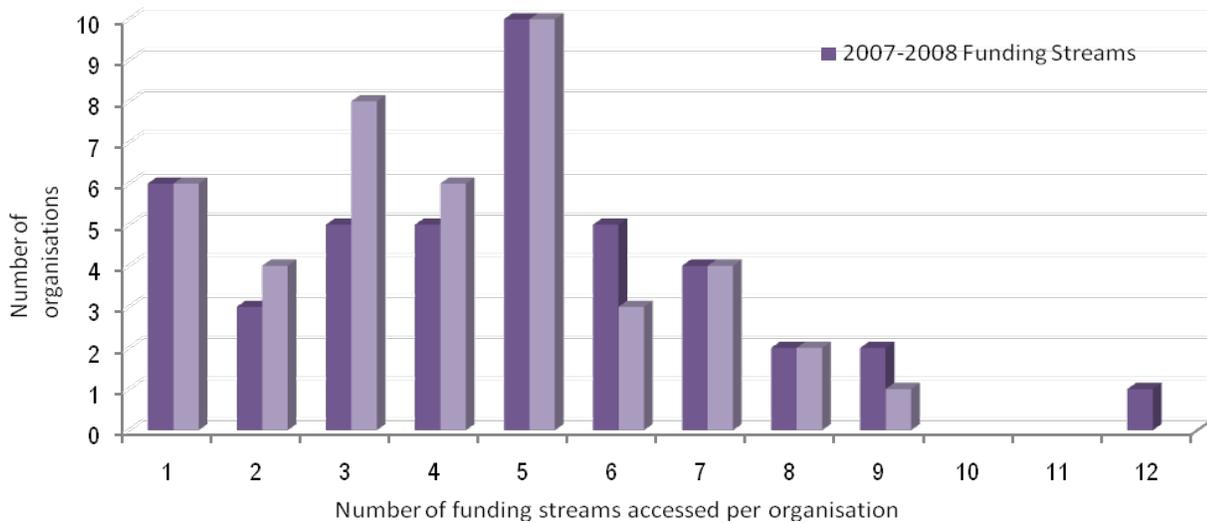
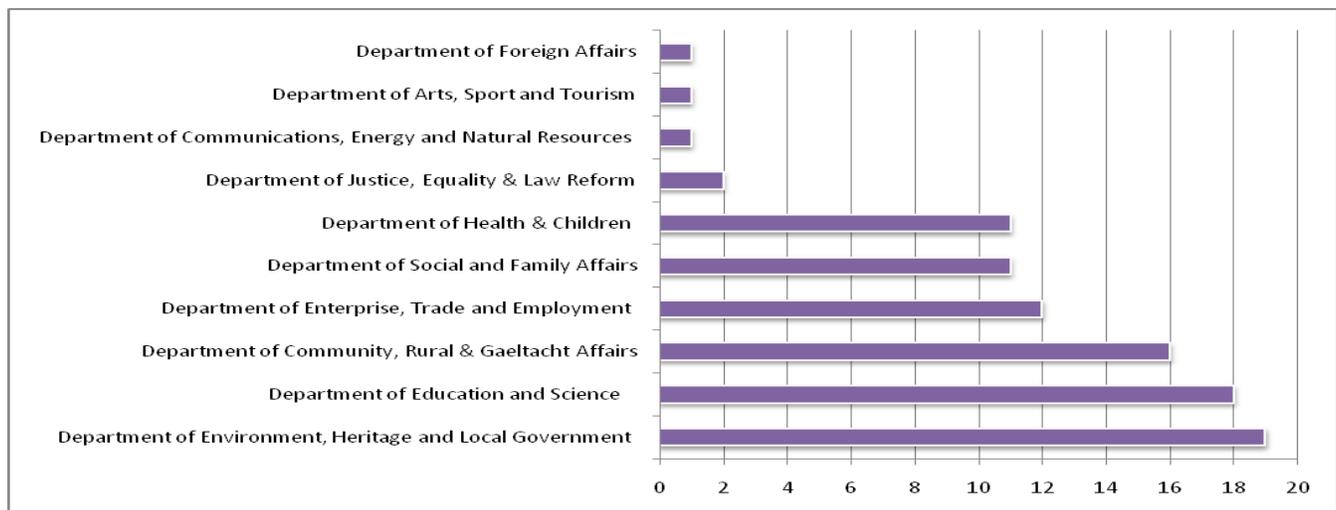


Fig 3. Graph of the number of times funding streams from various governmental departments are used by the respondents.



2.2 Challenges with the Current Funding System for Community Education

Of 40 respondents, an average of 4.5 funding streams was accessed to support their work for the period 2007-2008. This value decreased to 4 funding streams for the following year. The bulk of funding comes from 10 separate governmental departments, with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local government, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs comprising the main sources of funding. Further funding mainly originates from charitable trusts.

With regard to the time spent by organisations on the funding process there are huge variations, this may be due to the size of the organisation, the number of classes run and the level of funding they receive. Of the 32 respondents, two-thirds spend an average of between 1-200 hours per year. For voluntary time spent on the funding process it also varied greatly, with two-thirds of the respondents spending time of the application process – ranging from 2 hours to 2000 hours.

Regarding the impact of the funding process on community education provision to learners the main issue that arose was the time. This resulted in less time for course planning and time spent on a one to one level with learners. The lack of continuity between courses was also noted as an impact of the funding process. One could view this in terms of value for money; staff time would be better deployed to learners than to the funding process. Further impact to learners is the type of courses that can be offered, as funding criteria is often linked to the type of courses that can be delivered, courses such as personal development are often difficult to fund as they are not accredited. The opportunity to provide access to third level courses is uncertain and funding for such programmes is unpredictable.

3. Creating a new mechanism for funding community education

3.1 What does funding support?

In general different funding streams for community education support various aspects of the work of a community education organisation for example VEC funding for tutor hours only covers one aspect of community education provision. However, in order to create a full source of funding for community education a number of funding streams must be accessed (which is demonstrated in fig. 2), which is both time consuming, ineffective (in terms of time taken) and also does not lend itself to a sustainable sector as long term planning is thwarted due to the short term nature of funding schemes.

3.2 What needs to be funded?

In order to create an effective funding mechanism for community education it is necessary to get a clear picture of what needs to be funded. Following consultation with the community education network a detailed account was collected and three themes emerged with their corresponding specific examples (please see figure 4). This graph outlines all the areas that must be funded in order to run a community education organisation.

It becomes obvious from the multitude of areas to be funded that if funding for tutor costs is only received that all other areas must be met from additional funding. This is an ineffective process as numerous funding streams must be accessed in order to create 'whole funding' for a community education organisation. This will also explain why the average number of funding mechanisms used by community education groups in the CEN totals 4 (some with as many as 12).⁹ The inability to sustain a community education organisation with one of the

⁹ CEN Research Report on Funding Streams Accessed by CEN members

existing funding streams points to the need for an alternative, multi-annual funding mechanism that is cost-effective in the long term. Currently, the time allocated (both staff time and voluntary) to funding applications ranges from 2 – 1000 hours depending on the size of the organisation, number of learners and the kinds of funding streams being used.¹⁰ Maintaining this system is both ineffective (cost and time) and also creates an uncertain community education service where access, transfer and progression for learners is limited due to the lack of certainty around funding and continuity of courses.



Fig.4 Three core areas to be met by a ring-fenced funding mechanism.

¹⁰ CEN Research Report on Funding Streams Accessed by CEN members

3.3 The White Paper on Adult Education: Chapter 5 Community Education

The need for adequate resourcing of the community education sector was highlighted in The White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life in chapter 5¹¹: Community Education. It states that:

“as part of the consultation in preparing the White Paper, community-based groups drew attention not only to the inadequacy of the financial and other resources at their disposal, but also to the short-term nature of much of their funding; the multiplicity of funding sources; the differing demands of the respective funders and the fact that many of these groups were the indirect beneficiaries of funding allocated to other bodies rather than allocated directly to the groups themselves.” (p. 115)

As demonstrated in this paper the funding challenges still face community education groups ten years after the publication of the White Paper on Adult Education.

In addressing these issues the following objectives were stated (p. 116):

- (a) a more streamlined funding mechanism;
- (b) long-term funding;
- (c) a separate budget line for Community Education in the non-statutory sector, to be funded in the longer term locally through the Local Adult Learning Boards.

However the main stumbling block to the progression of this funding mechanism is that it was envisaged that the “Department of Education and Science and the National Adult Learning Council” will allocate the funds (p.116). As the National Adult Learning Council and Local Adult Learning Boards did not come to fruition, this paper endeavours to provide a valid, effective, practical alternative to that which was proposed in the White Paper. The next section will outline what needs to be funded for the effective community education sector and guidelines to how this can be achieved.

4. Proposed mechanism for funding community education effectively

In order to create an effective funding mechanism for community education, one government department must take the lead role in this process. Although community education and community development are interlinked the government department most suited for responsibility for community education is the **Department of Education and Skills**. Community education is a vibrant and important part of the adult education system and it must be seen within the context of the entire education system in order ensure: its recognition and a cohesive and complimentary education system that promotes access, transfer and progression within and between education sectors (formal education and community education).

It is proposed that one main source of funding to cover the complete cost of community education will be provided by the Department of Education and skills. In terms of what should be funded, the complete cost of community education must be taken into account otherwise the community education sector will continue to be blighted by insecure, unsustainable funding from a variety of sources. A set of proposed guidelines for the

¹¹ White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life (2000). Dublin

provision of ring-fenced, as outline funding it outlined below. The aim of the guideline is to ensure that funding provided is an effective use of resources that ensure quality education provision for learners.

4.1 Guidelines for effective funding mechanism

1. Funding will cover the true costs of community education

Rationale: If only funding for tutor costs is received then all other areas must be met from additional funding. This is an ineffective process as numerous funding streams must be accessed in order to create 'whole funding' for a community education organisation. The inability to sustain a community education organisation with one of the existing funding streams is an issue for the community education sector. The complete cost of funding community education must be central to the new funding mechanism.

2. Multi-annual funding scheme for community education groups – 3 year cycles

Rationale: In order to create a sustainable effective sector long-term planning must be possible therefore multiannual funding must be secured. This was also noted in the White Paper on Adult Education and 3 years was also suggested (p. 116).

3. Education provision that will be covered by the fund will include: vocational and non-vocational learning

Rationale: Community education is important for building the social fabric of communities and therefore it is essential that a variety of learning options are presented which meet the requirements of the community. Therefore there is a role for both non-vocational and vocational learning whereby both have equal weighting due to the complementary and important role they play for learners.

4. Education provision that will be covered by the fund will include accredited and non-accredited learning

Rationale: This point is constantly raised by both practitioners and learners (in the Community Education Network and the community education research¹²). Non-accredited learning is hugely important in the context of lifelong learning and as a gateway to the national framework of qualifications. It is imperative to taking the first step back into education and its funding must be on a par with accredited learning.

5. Funding mechanism will be locally managed

Rationale: For ease of administration and effectiveness funding should come from a central source but be delivered locally. This was also proposed in the White Paper, whereby the Local Adult Learning Boards would have taken on this role in the administration of funding for community education.

6. Funding will not be target-led but community-led

Rationale: One of the most valuable aspects of community education is its ability to respond quickly and effectively to the community. In order to maintain this flexibility and approach funding criteria should not be restrictive or target-led as this is in contrary to the very purpose and benefit of community education.

7. Funding administrators will have specific expertise in community education

¹² Exploring the Outcomes and Impact of Department of Education and Skills (DES) funded Community education (Draft, July 2010, p. 8)

Rationale: Community education is a complex and often misunderstood part of the adult education sector. In order to effectively fund the sector administrators must have the knowledge of how community education groups use funding and what methods of evaluation are effective.

8. Effective and authentic evaluation for the funding process

Rationale: Evaluation of funding is essential; however it is imperative that it reflects the true outcomes of community education, which often cannot be measured through standard methods. Effective evaluation will also benefit the sector and research in terms of its possible role in a longitudinal study on outcomes of community education. In order to do this the following is proposed: The creation of an effective evaluation mechanism for the funding scheme will be led by a Department of Education and Skills working group whereby one member will be represented by the AONTAS. AONTAS will work with the community education network in creating an effective proposal for funding evaluation that will feed into this process.

5. Conclusion

In order to create an effective and sustainable community education sector it must be adequately and effectively funded. The mechanism proposed looks at both what needs to be funded and how it can be funded with the aim of creating a new funding mechanism for community education that takes into account the nature of community education and the context of reduced resources. It aims to make the best use of resources, avoid duplication in terms of time taken in the funding application process, and provide sustainable long-term funding that will ensure a community education sector that meets the requirements of communities and learners. It is based on current research together with the grassroots views of members of the community education network which have shaped the document and therefore it accurately reflects the community education sector.

What needs to be funded

How community education can be funded



1. Funding will cover the true costs of community education
2. Multi-annual funding scheme for community education groups
3. Education provision that will be covered by the fund will include: vocational and non-vocational learning
4. Education provision that will be covered by the fund will include accredited and non-accredited learning
5. Funding mechanism will be locally managed
6. Funding will not be target-led but community-led
7. Funding administrators will have specific expertise in community education

Appendices

Appendix 1: White Paper on Adult Education: Characteristics of Community Education

Chapter 5 Community education

5.5 Support to the Development of Community Education (p. 113)

Key characteristics of the community education sector are:-

- its non-statutory nature;
- its rootedness in the community, not just in terms of physical location, but also in that its activists have lived and worked for many years within the community, have a deep knowledge and respect for its values, culture,
- and circumstances, and an understanding of community needs and capacity;
- its problem-solving flexible focus based on trust;
- its process rather than syllabus focus - participants are engaged from the outset as equal partners in identifying needs, designing and implementing programmes, and adapting them on an ongoing basis;
- its respect for participants and its reflection of their lived experience;
- its concern with communal values and its commitment to match curriculum and pedagogy with the needs and interests of students;
- its promotion of personalised learning and flexibility within the environment of a learning group. Its goals include not just individual development but also collective community advancement, especially in marginalised communities;
- its placing a key emphasis on providing the supports necessary for successful access and learning -- particularly guidance, mentoring, continuous feedback and dialogue, childcare etc;
- its collective social purpose and inherently political agenda - to promote critical reflection, challenge existing structures, and promote empowerment, improvement so that participants are enabled to influence the social contexts in which they live;
- its promotion of participative democracy. It sees a key role for Adult Education in transforming society.

Appendix 2: Case Study: An Cosán (The Shanty Educational Project)

“This is the first exam I have ever completed and I am 47, I am so proud. If only I had had a teacher like Nyamwenda years ago who believed in me - imagine what I might have done.”

The outcomes of community education impact the learner, their families and the community. Due to the diversity of provision available within the one organisation learners can move fluidly from basic to higher education. An Cosán houses the Shanty Educational Project Ltd. Since 1985 The Shanty has developed and refined a distinctive model of community education. “Transformative Learning” embodies a curriculum that touches the mind, heart, body and soul in a belief that it can generate enough individual and communal energy to change lives and communities.

“I was scared going into the class initially, mixing with people from so many different cultures. In case I said the wrong thing but it has been fantastic - we are a great team!”

In The Shanty a wide range of programmes span from basic education to third level education. Most are open to all local women and men while some cater for specific target groups (e.g., including young women, older people and community workers). Essential adult learner supports ensure that all participants reach their goals. Since 1999 The Shanty has welcomed over 6000 participants through its doors, 1251 awards were achieved by students on courses accredited by FETAC and HETAC (Further and Higher Education and Training Awards Council) and ICS 6 and 7 (Computer Skills).

Last year, the curriculum of The Shanty responded to the changing needs of the community by:

547	Student places were accessed
186	New students to the centre
32	Classes to choose from
14	Accredited options were available to participants. On the National Qualifications Framework and range from FETAC Level 2 to HETAC Level 7.
214	Accredited certificates awarded to 131 students

In addition **student supports** are provided including: supervised study, ICT, Moodle, peer study groups, tutorials, one-to-one and literacy supports. Through the supportive, learner-centred approach retention rates are high, e.g. the BA Degree Programme in Leadership and Community Development has 100% retention.

“I look forward to this all week. I was so isolated and introverted”.

Learner progression is central to ensuring learners can move onto appropriate courses, as such all tutors pay close attention to supporting students to identify ‘next steps’ on their learning journey. For example, a progression pathways workshop is held for past and current students of the Diploma in Community Drugs Work

programme. As a result of the 17 students who completed the course 9 were pursuing degree programmes and 4 were taking up employment.

“I am on the Young Women’s Education Programme and my 2 year old son gets minded every morning so I can study. This programme has been a great experience; my computer skills are much better and I am much more confident using the computer. Computers are the future and I want to study to further my career, and I hope to get a place on one of the courses I have applied for next year.”

Volunteering is central to the functioning of the organisation. There are eight core volunteers in The Shanty alone, 7 of whom have participated in courses at the Shanty. The nature of community education supports people to engage in learning, to successfully complete a course, to volunteer at the Centre and often to take up employment in the sector. It grows its own supports and volunteers

“My biggest achievement is how much I have changed within my work and how much it has benefited the work overall. I also acquired a full time job as a result of this course and one that I really enjoy and am passionate about.”

The Challenges

The biggest challenge to the work of An Cosan, and its education project – the Shanty, is funding. It is not merely an issue of the amount of funding but the way it is administered. For the year 2010, in order to maintain the work of An Cosan **13 government departments’ funding streams** were accessed. The time taken by a part-time grant writer, centre managers, co-ordinators and financial staff was approximately **1500 hours** (for the year).

An associated challenge that this process poses is that the funding applications are different for all 13 streams. This means that a different process is required for each: different data is required and different terminology used. This has a knock-on effect for reporting, all 13 streams require a report and again the format and process for each differs. Furthermore, the administrative cost of the funding application process is generally not covered by the funding stream.

Given the strain that the funding process presents time is taken away from working with learners and there is a friction between responding to the needs of the community and learners and the requirements of the criteria of the funding stream. In order to create learner-centred community education that is effective and value for money – a change to the funding mechanism is needed.

This case study demonstrates the value of community education and the need to provide a distinct funding stream for community education which is administered in a standardised manner with clear guidelines for application, data collection and reporting purposes.