



LIFELONG LEARNING SUMMIT

The Future of Lifelong Learning

Monday, 18th November 2019
Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin

#AONTAS50
#LifelongLearningSummit



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AONTAS **50** 1969
2019
Celebrating Fifty Years



#AONTAS50
#LifelongLearningSummit

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ABOUT THE LIFELONG LEARNING SUMMIT

The Lifelong Learning Summit is being held to mark 50 years of AONTAS and will explore the future of lifelong learning.

The Summit will bring together international and national speakers, learners, policy makers and adult and community education providers to explore the future of lifelong learning in Ireland. It will be an opportunity to reflect on the field of adult learning over the last 50 years and look towards its role in addressing the critical issues that society now faces, from climate change to challenges facing our democracy. In addition, we will launch a new network of adult learning advocacy organisations from across Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.

The Lifelong Learning Summit will:

- Highlight the wide range of benefits of adult and community education
- Explore how we can work collaboratively to build more inclusive and sustainable societies
- Showcase examples of best practice in adult and community education
- Explore the role of lifelong learning in building strong democracies and increasing civic engagement

AONTAS is the National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) in Ireland. The Summit will be the closing event of our current project; Increasing Pathways, Increasing Participation 2017-2019.

ABOUT AONTAS

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation. We are a non-governmental membership organisation established in 1969. The name AONTAS is an acronym in the Irish language, Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Trí Aontú Saorálach, meaning 'national adult education through voluntary unification'. AONTAS is the Irish word for unity or union. It was the founders' intention that the organisation be identified by its inclusiveness.

AONTAS represents over 400 members from across the lifelong learning spectrum. Our membership includes adult learners, tutors, statutory, nongovernmental, community and voluntary organisations from across the island of Ireland. AONTAS has built a strong reputation over 50 years. We are experts in community education, giving learners a voice, and advocating for educational equality for adults in Ireland. Through this expertise we have developed networks at regional, national, European and International

level, to share knowledge and address the issues of our members. The vision of AONTAS is for all adults to achieve their educational aspirations through an equitable lifelong learning system. Our mission is to advocate for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promote the value and benefits of lifelong learning.

What do we mean by Lifelong Learning?

AONTAS understands lifelong learning to mean all learning activity, formal, non-formal and informal undertaken throughout life and includes adult and community education, further education and training and higher education. The purpose of lifelong learning is based on UNESCO's four pillars of education: learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together.

OUR WORK

As part of our Strategic Plan 2019-2022, *A Vision for Educational Equality*, AONTAS will achieve three overarching goals in order to create greater educational equality for all adult learners in Ireland:

- **Learner Voice for Action:** Creating an inclusive lifelong learning society: Everyone should have the opportunity to actively participate and succeed in adult learning and to fulfil their educational ambitions regardless of their past educational experience, social class, sexual orientation, civil status, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or disability. The policy and practice in the adult, further, community, and higher education systems should be continually shaped by acting on a diverse range of authentic learner voices.
- **A Thriving Community Education Sector:** Community education will be sustainably funded, effectively measured and recognised on an equal footing with other areas of the education system. It will be recognised as having a specific and crucial role in supporting educational equality.

- **Lifelong Learning for Sustainability:** Policy makers will recognise the role lifelong learning plays in achieving social, civic, environmental and economic sustainability. We will also ensure the sustainability of AONTAS as an organisation.

Our core activities/areas of work:

- ✓ Policy and Representation
- ✓ Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal – *The Adult Learner*
- ✓ AONTAS Community Education Network
- ✓ AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival
- ✓ Promotion and Recognition
- ✓ Building a National Lifelong Learning Network
- ✓ European Activities
- ✓ Learner Voice including the National FET Learner Forum
- ✓ Information to Prospective Learners

SUMMIT AGENDA

Photos and video at this event

During this event, delegates may be photographed and filmed. These pictures are collected for the sole purpose of documenting this event and may be used in AONTAS publications, websites and other materials. If you do NOT wish to have your picture taken please contact a member of the AONTAS staff team.



9.00 – 10.00am	Registration – Exhibition Viewing
10.00am	Conference Opening: <i>What Adult Learning Means to Me</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Una Buckley, Adult Learner Representative National FET Learner Forum Advisory Group– Alan Hand, AONTAS Board Member– Kevin Hanly, Adult Learner, Limerick College of Further Education and Training– Joy-Tendai Kangere, AONTAS Board Member Chair: Dr Bríd Connolly, Lecturer, Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University
10.30am	Keynote Address: <i>The Nordic Secret – How the Nordic Countries Invented a New Kind of Education</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lene Rachel Andersen, Author, <i>The Nordic Secret</i>
11.00am	Break – Exhibition Viewing
11.30am	Poetry Reading: Noeleen Watson, Adult Learning Advocate Panel: <i>The Future of Lifelong Learning in Ireland</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Andrew Brownlee, CEO, SOLAS– Professor Tom Collins, Chair of the National Water Forum– Patricia King, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions– Niamh O'Reilly, CEO, AONTAS Chair: David Mallows, Principal Teaching Fellow, UCL Institute of Education
12.30 – 1.30pm	Lunch – Exhibition Viewing

<p>1.30 – 3.00pm</p> <p>Parallel Sessions – attendees will choose 1 session</p>	<p>Theme 1: <i>Learner Voice for Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Una Buckley, AONTAS Board Member – Dr Leah Dowdall, Head of Research, AONTAS – Dr Ted Fleming, Adjunct Associate Professor, Columbia University – Dr Paula Flynn, Assistant Professor, Dublin City University – Dr Peter Lavender, University of Warwick – Dr Stephen O’Brien, Lecturer in the School of Education, University College Cork <p>Theme 2: <i>Community Education: A Vision for the Future</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lene Rachel Andersen, Author, <i>The Nordic Secret</i> – Tara Farrell, Chairperson AONTAS – Nora Fahy, Project Manager, Roscommon Women’s Network <p>Theme 3: <i>Lifelong Learning: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Professor Tom Collins, Chair of the National Water Forum – Dr Koen DePryck, University of Brussels – Moira Leydon, Assistant General Secretary, Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland – Bethlehem Mengistu, former Country Director, WaterAid, Ethiopia – currently Irish Aid fellow in UCD <p>Theme 4: <i>Bridges, Borders and Boundaries: Learning with our Neighbours</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephen Evans, CEO, Learning and Work Institute, UK – Jim McHarg, Senior Manager, Participation and Empowerment, North Ayrshire Council, Scotland – representing Scotland’s Learning Partnership – Colin Neilands, Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland – Niamh O’Reilly, CEO, AONTAS
<p>3.00 – 3.30pm</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>3.30– 4.15pm</p>	<p>Launch of the Network for Adult Learning Across Borders (NALAB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Special Guest Speaker: Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills – Stephen Evans, CEO Learning and Work Institute, UK – Jim McHarg, Senior Manager, Participation and Empowerment, North Ayrshire Council, Scotland - representing Scotland’s Learning Partnership – Trevor Neilands, Northern Ireland Impact Forum for Adult Learning – Niamh O’Reilly, CEO, AONTAS <p>Chair: Tara Farrell, Chairperson AONTAS</p>
<p>4.15 - 4.30pm</p>	<p>Conference Close</p>
<p>4.30 – 5.30pm</p>	<p>Celebration to mark 50 years of AONTAS</p> <p>Musical Performance: Jamie O’Reilly</p>

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Time: Parallel Session will take place from 1.30pm – 3.00pm.

Registration: Parallel Sessions were booked when you registered for the Summit – a list of the attendees for each session will be displayed in the main Summit concourse.

Theme 1: Learner Voice for Action

Overview

AONTAS has made learner voice for action one its key goals in its new strategic plan. In this session, a panel of academics and learners will discuss some of the theory and methods used to frame learner voice action. The panel will explore some of the points raised in the background discussion paper and use the questions listed below to open a discussion with participants on the best practice in learner voice. The purpose of this discussion will be to spark a vision of what the future of learner voice will look like for the future of Irish adult education over the next five years. Participants will then work in groups to collaboratively develop a charter that can be shared across the Irish adult education sector.

Theme 2: Community Education: A Vision for the Future

Overview

Community Education was clearly articulated in the *White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life* (2000), twenty years on how can we dispel the myths of community education and harness its proven ability to innovate and respond to local learner needs? This session draws on learning from the Nordic model of non-formal adult education as an example of what is possible with political commitment. Building on learner and practitioner experiences in the Irish context, we will set out to discuss how a collective vision for community education can be achieved in terms of policy and practice.

Theme 3: Lifelong Learning: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Overview

The session will consider lifelong learning's role in imagining and contributing to a new vision for environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Sustainable development is characterised as a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and into the future. (DECLG, 2012, 10). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline a blueprint for a more sustainable future and cross all areas of society and development. This session will look at sustainability in education and the role of lifelong learning in implementing the SDGs. Panel participants will each approach the issue of sustainability and lifelong learning with a particular focus on environmental, economic, and social sustainability. The session will provide the space for critical reflection through a panel discussion followed by a Q&A session and interactive group discussions.

Theme 4: Bridges, Borders and Boundaries: Learning with our Neighbours

Overview

At the Lifelong Learning Summit we will launch the new network of advocacy organisations within the field of adult and community education in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Summit is also the closing event of the European Agenda for Adult Learning which enables the sharing of best practice within and across jurisdictions and has had an important role in the development of closer collaboration between the organisations that are launching the new network. This session will be an opportunity to explore the different adult and community education policy and practice contexts across jurisdictions in order to explore collaboration, exchange best practices and to learn from one another.

SPEAKERS AND CONTRIBUTORS



Lene Rachel Andersen

Lene Rachel Andersen is a member of the Club of Rome. She has a BA in Business Economy and studied Theology (1993-97). From 1993 to 2001, she wrote comedy and entertainment for Danish media and went to the US a number of times; she went there a Dane and returned as a European. Since 2005, she has worked as an independent futurist, author, philosopher, and publisher. For her books, she has received the Ebbe Kløvedal-Reich Democracy Baton (2007) and the Danish librarians' Døssing Prize (2012); among her titles are *Democracy Handbook* (2010), *Globalt gearskift* (2014), *Testosteroned Child. Sad.* (2017), and *The Nordic Secret* (2017)



Una Buckley

Una Buckley returned to education at the age of 50, she holds an Adult Learning BA (ALBA) Personal and Professional Degree, awarded by Dublin City University, and a certificate from Maynooth University in Adult and Community Education. Una is an advocate for the benefits of adult learning and for greater representation of adult learners across a range of stakeholders. She has served on the AONTAS Board and is a member of the National FET Learner Forum Advisory Group. Una was the Learner Representative on the Board of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for five years, becoming

the first adult learner appointed to a State board. At an International level, she has been involved in the development of the International Adult Learners Charter and has represented adult learners at a number of conferences: CONFINTEA VI (International Conference on Adult Education) Brazil 2009, and the ICAE (International Council of Adult Education) World Assembly, Sweden, June 2011 and Montreal 2015.



Professor Tom Collins

Professor Tom Collins is currently Chairperson of the National Water Forum. He is the former Chairperson of the first governing body of the Technological University Dublin and was also joint Chairperson of the governing bodies of DIT, IT Blanchardstown and IT Tallaght prior to their merger (2013-2019). He is the former Head of Education at Maynooth University (2006-2011); former Dean of Teaching and Learning there (2008-2011) and interim President there (2010-2011). Between 2011 and 2013, he was President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, Medical University of Bahrain. In 2016, he led the development on a national framework of student engagement in Irish higher education institutions on behalf of the Higher Education Authority. Professor Collins has been an active player in the evolution of Irish education policy for the past two decades. He was special government advisor in the development and publication of Ireland's only White Paper on lifelong learning – Learning for Life, in 2000. Between 2006 and 2012, he was Chairperson of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the statutory advisory body on all curriculum matters in Ireland from birth to eighteen. His scholarship, publications and other professional work throughout his career has focused on the links between educational underachievement and background disadvantage and he has led multiple initiatives in enhancing educational access and participation in Ireland.



Dr Bríd Connolly

Dr Bríd Connolly has been an adult educator for over 30 years, beginning with women's studies in 1985, as an outreach tutor with the Department of Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University. Since then, she has worked with many different learning and community groups at undergraduate and post-graduate levels, both non-formal and formal. Currently, Bríd teaches and supervises students at Doctoral, Masters, Higher Diploma and undergraduate levels. Bríd is also interested in creative writing and has enjoyed a few successes in recent years.



Professor Koen DePryck

Professor Dr Koen DePryck teaches lifelong learning, innovation of education and related subjects at the University of Brussels and at the International Institute of Education for Development in Suriname. He has more than 30 years of experience in teaching, managing and research on adult education and learning. He is involved in several educational projects in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean, focussing on local capacity building for environmentally, socially, economically, ecologically, culturally and institutionally sustainable education for global sustainability.



Andrew Brownlee

Andrew Brownlee was recently appointed as CEO at SOLAS, having served as Executive Director for Strategy and Knowledge there since January 2018. At SOLAS, he has played a key role in putting in place a strategic performance framework for the further education and training (FET) system, in implementing reforms to support a more integrated system and in developing a new 5-year FET strategy which will set out an ambitious new vision for its next critical phase of development. He joined SOLAS from the Higher Education Authority, where he was Head of System Funding and led the establishment of a comprehensive governance framework and the reform of higher education funding. Prior to joining the public sector he had a long and distinguished career in management consultancy, working for PwC, PA Consulting and Fitzpatrick Associates, developing strategy and managing change for a diverse range of clients, with a particular focus on the education and skills sector.



Dr Leah Dowdall

Dr Leah Dowdall is the Head of Research at AONTAS and is responsible for the development and implementation of a research agenda that produces policy-based research to drive AONTAS' advocacy work. She also leads the National Further Education and Training Learner Forum, a large-scale qualitative project focused on promoting learner voice in Irish Further Education and Training. She has previously worked in both the second and third-level educational sectors as a researcher and teacher.



Stephen Evans

Stephen Evans became Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute in 2016 after two years as Deputy Chief Executive, where he was responsible for Learning and Work Institute's research and development work. He joined from Working Links, a leading provider for employment and skills services, where he led on policy, strategy and business development. Prior to this, he worked for the London Development Agency as Director of Employment and Skills, commissioning programmes and leading the work of the London Skills and Employment Board; was Chief Economist at the Social Market Foundation; and spent six years as Senior Policy Advisor in HM Treasury, leading on policy to cut child poverty, increase employment and boost productivity.



Tara Farrell

Tara Farrell is the Deputy CEO of Longford Women's Link (LWL). A native of Roscommon, Tara has over 20 years' experience in the Community, Voluntary and Education sectors, working in a variety of areas including Project Management, Social Economy, Gender Equality, Conflict Resolution and engaging in Broadcast and Social Media. She holds an LLM in International Human Rights Law and has also lectured in Political Science in the University of Limerick and Management Development at Dublin City University. Tara is the Chairperson of AONTAS and is also a Director of Irish Rural Link and Roscommon Women's Network. Tara also lectures in Human Rights and Equality at St. Angela's College (National University of Ireland Galway) in Sligo.



Nora Fahy

Nora Fahy is Project Manager at Roscommon Women's Network (RWN), a local community project and charity that supports women and families throughout Roscommon. The organisation highlights and endeavours to address women's issue through empowerment, education, overcoming isolation and being a catalyst for change.



Professor Ted Fleming

Ted Fleming is Adjunct Associate Professor of Adult Education, at Columbia University, New York and External Academic Advisor to Larissa Learning City and Citizens' University – a UNESCO funded Project. He received the Jack Mezirow Theory of Transformative Learning Award for 'original contribution to the theory of learning' writing on Axel Honneth. In 2016, he delivered the inaugural Mezirow Memorial Lecture at Columbia University. Recent books include: Fleming, T., Kokkos, A. & Finnegan, F. (2019). *European Perspectives on Transformation Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Fleming, T., Finnegan, F. & Loxley, A. (2017). *Access and Participation in Irish Higher Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Murphy, M. & Fleming, T. (eds.) (2012). *Habermas, Critical Theory and Education*. New York: Routledge.



Dr Paula Flynn

Dr Paula Flynn is an Assistant Professor at Dublin City University Institute of Education. Her research and teaching interests include: student and learner voice; children's rights-based methodologies; inclusive education; and leadership for learning. Her student voice research has been published internationally, e.g. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* (2014); *Routledge International Companion to Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* (2013); and in *Radical Collegiality through Student Voice* (2018). She led NCCA research on consulting post-primary students in Junior Cycle curricular development (2014-17) from which she refined a framework for sustainable and authentic student voice engagement in local and national education discourse, The Learner Voice Space.



Alan Hand

Alan Hand is an Adult Learner Representative on the AONTAS Board. Alan returned to education to complete his Leaving Certificate after becoming unemployed in 2013 due to the recession. He completed his Leaving Cert through the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) run by Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) in summer 2016. He is a strong advocate for adult learning and has represented learners at local, national and European level, including serving on the National FET Learner Forum Advisory Group.



Kevin Hanly

Kevin Hanly is an adult learner who has just completed his studies in TV and Film Production at Limerick College of Further Education. Kevin is from Raheen, County Tipperary and describes himself as a self-advocate. Kevin is a Learner Ambassador from the National Learning Network (NLN) in Raheen, Limerick. The NLN group won an AONTAS STAR Award in 2016 for their Soundscape project which allowed learners to become 'Citizen Collectors' of Limerick City sounds in a sonic-mapping project. The group have used their STAR Award win to promote their great work. Kevin is passionate about the education system and has taken part in a number of local and national media interviews highlighting the impact that adult learning has had on his life as someone with autism and dyslexia. Kevin is a big Tipperary GAA supporter in hurling and football.



Joy-Tendai Kangere

Joy-Tendai Kangere is an Adult Learner Representative on the AONTAS Board. She is an advocate for adult learners, equality for women, girls and minority communities. She is an aspiring lawyer who is passionate about public interest law and access to justice. Joy graduated with a Bachelor of Civil Law from the University College Dublin Sutherland School of Law after she returned to education as an adult learner. Since then she was awarded the prestigious Denham Fellowship which enabled her to study at the Honorable King's Inns for the barrister-at-law degree.



Patricia King

Patricia King is the General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and is a former vice-President of SIPTU. Patricia also served as one of two Vice-Presidents of Congress. A full time official with SIPTU for over 25 years, she was the first woman to serve as a national officer of the union when she was appointed Vice-President, in May 2010. She has represented workers in all areas of the economy, in both the public and private sectors. Patricia was a lead negotiator in both the Croke Park and Haddington Road agreements. She played a leading role in the Irish Ferries dispute (2005-2006) and in subsequent negotiations that saw an overhaul of employment rights law and the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA). Patricia currently serves on the boards of the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) the Apprenticeship Council, Court Services Board and the Low Pay Commission.



Professor Peter Lavender

Professor Peter Lavender works in the Institute of Education, University of Wolverhampton. Formerly a full-time Further Education (FE) Inspector; Local Authority Officer for Adult Literacy; co-researcher and writer for the national inquiry on disabled students in FE; Director for Research and Development and Deputy CEO at the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales); Assistant Chief Assessor for the Association of Colleges Beacon Awards; Adviser to the National Union of Students; chaired the interim Board of the NUS National Society of Apprentices 2014; and received an OBE for services to education in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2006. He was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2015.



Moira Leydon

Moira Leydon is the Assistant General Secretary with the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI). Her current role is focused on education & research and includes areas such as curriculum, teacher professionalism, lifelong learning, vocational education and training and higher education. She represents the ASTI on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Women's Committee and Global Solidarity Committee; Education International's Teacher Union Research Network; OECD's Trade Union Advisory Committee on Education and Lifelong Learning. Moira is a member of the AONTAS Board since 2017.



David Mallows

David Mallows has over 30 years of experience in adult education as a teacher, teacher trainer, manager and researcher. He is a Principal Teaching Fellow at the UCL Institute of Education, London. He was previously Director of Research at the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC), and currently represents the European Basic Skills Network in EPALE as thematic coordinator for Life Skills. In 2018 he became a board member on the Editorial Board of The Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education: The Adult Learner.



Jim McHarg

Jim McHarg is Senior Manager of Participation and Empowerment at North Ayrshire Council Communities Directorate. He is responsible for Community Learning and Development, facilitation and implementation of Neighbourhood Planning, encouraging a coproduction model between Community Planning Partners and representative community partners, to engage local assets, build individual and community capacity and improve the health and well-being of residents of North Ayrshire. His role includes: building individual and community capacity, encouraging community empowerment and building social capital within communities to facilitate local management of community facilities and services; Assisting communities develop a process of subsidiarity to utilise all of their skills, qualification, physical assets and talents, to effect local control and ownership of community development at as local a level as

practicable; Providing a catalyst to accelerate the process of change and address within a planned approach, the concerns, aspirations and actions identified through community engagement.



Bethlehem Mengistu

Bethlehem Mengistu is an Irish Aid Fellowship Scholar at University College Dublin, School of Politics and International Relations. She is former Country Director at WaterAid Ethiopia where she led the development and delivery of an inspiring and ambitious country strategy to contribute to the regional, continental and global vision and leadership of WaterAid. In her role as Country Director she oversaw, guided and monitored the development and implementation of the country business/operational plan as well as budget. She also led the fundraising strategy and plan to secure a sustainable and broad base of income. She Represented WaterAid Ethiopia at various national, regional and international platforms and worked to promote WaterAid Ethiopia's programming innovations and learnings at national and international platforms to influence sector practice and policy.





Colin Neilands

Colin Neilands has been working in adult learning for almost 30 years, primarily in the community and voluntary sector. Colin set up and currently acts as the convenor of the Northern Ireland Impact Forum on Adult Learning, part of the United Kingdom's programme for the European Agenda for Adult Learning: The Forum seeks to share good practice and advocate for adult learning in Northern Ireland. For the past 4 years he has also worked in Northern Ireland as part of the EPALE UK team. Colin recently undertook a consultation on Belfast a Learning City to support the development of Belfast as a UNESCO Learning City. He is also an occasional trainer in good relations and leadership.



Dr Stephen O'Brien

Dr Stephen O'Brien is a lecturer in the School of Education, University College Cork, Ireland. He is a graduate of Cork, London and Bristol Universities. He has published widely on adult education; educational inclusion; educational policy; curriculum and assessment; and learning theory. He is presently working with Irish Research Scholar PhD candidates in the areas of adult education for global citizenship and increasing older male participation in further education and training. His current research interests include: storytelling in education; making cases for critical ethnography; engaging learner voice in educational policy provision; and 're-presenting' education (via art-science connections) to the wider public.



Seán Ó Foghlú

Seán Ó Foghlú has been the Secretary General of Ireland's Department of Education and Skills since 2012. The Department is one of the three largest state Departments in Ireland with a budget of approximately €9 billion. As the most senior civil servant in the Department, Seán leads an organisation that administers and provides strategic direction to Ireland's primary and second level schools, its further and higher education sectors, and a wide range of state agencies that are responsible for curriculum design, school examinations, special education support, the funding and oversight of further and higher education, teacher education, workforce training, research and evaluation. Seán is leading a major programme of reform in the Department which is set out in the Department's Strategy statement and the Action Plan for Education 2016 to 2019. Seán is also a member of the Civil Service Management Board which leads civil service renewal.



Jamie O'Reilly

Jamie O'Reilly is a young Irish singer songwriter. Dream folk is how Jamie describes his work. With his fragile, echoing voice and the soft guitar picking, Jamie puts his audience into a trance, reminding of a typical escape as we know them from fairy tales. Having played at several music venues e.g. the Christie Hennessy festival in Co. Kerry and also winning the SCC song writing competition in 2017 with his song 'Canvas', Jamie convinces with his performance. After finishing his diploma in Ballyfermot College of Further Education, he studied at Popakademie for a semester. He is currently working on his debut album in Germany.



Niamh O'Reilly

Niamh O'Reilly is CEO of AONTAS and is an experienced (15 years+) educationalist with expertise in adult learning methodology, learner voice, community education, policy analysis, organisational development and governance. She serves on the Board of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority. Her work at a European Policy level includes acting as the designated national coordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning in Ireland and, she served as an elected Board Member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) for 3 terms (2011-2017). She has lectured on adult learning in a number of Higher Education Institutions and will soon submit her PhD in Adult and Community Education.



Noeleen Watson

Noeleen Watson lives in Carnew, Co Wicklow, is mum to her four children and has two grandchildren. Noeleen has been on a journey of self-discovery and is amazing herself with her gifts as they are uncovered. As well as being a mum, she is a Graphic Designer, a Life Coach, an Energy Healer and Wellness Teacher, a Learner Advocate and so much more. She is an avid walker and loves taking photographs. Now with her special gift in words, Noeleen published her first book of poetry *Walking Lightly: An Uplifting Journey Through Poems*, in 2017.

CONTACT

For further information on the Lifelong Learning Summit conference please contact Theresa Sweeney on summit@aontas.com or call **01 406 8220**.

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