

aoctas

A review of adult education



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

Vol. 2, No. 1, 1980

Price £1.25

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AONTAS

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Published by Aontas.

Printed by Jetprint Limited, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Aontas Symbol and Cover Design by O'Connor O'Sullivan Advertising, Dublin.

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SUBSCRIPTION

Each member of the Association is entitled to receive one free copy. Each additional copy costs £1.25 to members (including postage), otherwise copies are available at £1.25 per copy including postage.

The Review is published twice annually.

CONTRIBUTORS

Intending contributors may submit articles 'on spec' or they may discuss their proposed article with the Director. Articles may be submitted on any relevant aspect of adult education and should not be more than 2,500 words approximately. Members are encouraged to contribute to the Review and share their views and experience of adult education with readers.

GROWTH IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE: THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION¹

P. J. Moriarty,
Assistant Chief Executive, ESB,
and Chairman, RTE Authority.

Exactly two years ago the theme of the IMI Conference in Killarney was "Jobs and Employment". I was invited to speak and I talked about the "no work" future facing us well before the year 2000. I gave two reasons for my predictions:

The intense competition from densely populated and rapidly industrialising nations like Japan, Korea, Taiwan, not to mention the Third World States of Africa, South America and the Far East where there are teeming millions with growing access to education, thrusting for their place in the sun and for better living standards.

I gave as the other reason the great technological spin-off from the American Space Programme which invented the Silicon Chip, the robot and a host of other gadgets which, when adapted to industrial use, would replace persons at work on a scale never seen before.

I argued that we needed to recognise urgently that we faced a depth of change which would make the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century look like a tea-party. I suggested the establishment of a small study group consisting of the best brains and philosophers in the land to predict the kind of society which is emerging and to develop a national strategy to deal with the implications for education, for employment, for leisure pursuits, for retirement and old age.

I was out of step at the 1978 IMI conference, before my time perhaps! At the 1979 one also where the theme and emphasis were on industrial success, entrepreneurship, economic expansion. At the 1980 IMI conference the theme was people but the emphasis was on current industrial relations conflict with very little about the new society which is approaching as a result of reduction in work requiring people. We have a great capacity for hoping that problems will go away, for having ten good reasons for doing nothing, particularly if change is involved. We are doing nothing to anticipate future shock even though everyone is talking about the threat to jobs from microprocessors and associated technology. It is a subject at every conference, meeting and seminar whether organised by trade unions or employers. So far we have not got beyond developing extremely polarised attitudes about it. They range from —

"We must resist this threat"

to

"Our survival depends on the increased productivity which the new technology will bring".

Precious little have we heard about a joint approach to educate society on the changes which will occur, or on the steps we must take to manage the change or the strategy which we must develop to adapt to it. It is business as usual in our competitive market economy as if nothing is going to happen.

¹Text of keynote address given at the Eleventh Annual Conference of Aontas in Limerick on 2 May, 1980

The gospel of the market economy is based on sectional interests (who sometimes go by the name social partners) who believe that every development is a God-given opportunity to be exploited. "Let there be exploitation", they say, "for it is a selfish world". What has the educational system, whether it be adult or otherwise, done to promote a new gospel that it need not necessarily be a selfish world or that the ability of society to accommodate to the changes may depend almost entirely on it becoming an unselfish world instead?

Can it be business as usual based on selfishness and sectional interest? I am convinced that it cannot because the changes we face are very different from anything we have experienced and far-reaching in their impact. It will be catastrophic if we do not find a new way to confront the problems, a way which is better than the adversary relationship which we have always had in industrial relations.

NEEDS OF EMPLOYMENT

Consider the employment question for a moment. Even though political parties talk a lot about it, unemployment is not a genuine political question in the sense that no national political party is responsible for it nor has a recipe to cure it. They should stop arguing about it. The plain fact is that current predictions for the whole Western World are a gloomy prospect of low growth brought about mainly by turmoil in world energy supplies and prices. When the world economy sneezes we, in Ireland, catch economic pneumonia. We have a growing population and a growing influx of married women into jobs previously held by men. If there was never a microprocessor in sight it is not unreasonable to conclude that the holy grail of full employment can never now be reached here or in any country in the foreseeable future — full employment, i.e. in full-time work, 40 hours a week for a whole year having three weeks' annual holidays.

When there is unemployment it is the young and the educationally disadvantaged who suffer not the skilled or the professionals. There is at present, in Ireland, a serious shortage of skilled trades and professions, skills particularly needed by the new job creating industries being sought and secured by the IDA and by native service industries like the ESB, Posts & Telegraphs, Local Authorities, the construction industry. It is a great paradox that many semi-skilled and white collar jobs may be lost due to the shortage of skilled manpower. Yet the fears of unemployment prevent trade unions and their members from permitting shorter craft training programmes. They resist any change from the old, some would say ancient, tradition of long periods of apprenticeship.

They stick to time served rather than measurement of skill and competence for a particular job as the determining factor. Variable training periods depending on the individual's progress is an inevitable development in the craft area but it will not be conceded easily. Professionals, too, resist the influx of technician classes to their ranks. Between them craftsmen and professionals may be compounding our employment problems by not recognising in time that the production of skilled craftsmen and professionals, and all the other skills in between in sufficient numbers is the mainspring of job creation for many other categories, men and women, where the lead-time in training is relatively short. Major structural changes in the education and development of people for work are badly needed but for too long it has been left to industry and to the Trade Unions to sort out at the negotiating table how the work itself should be restructured before anybody is prepared to do anything about the educational process. I think that educators should see their role more to anticipate the employment needs of our future society, to educate and train for them even though industry and the trade unions have not yet sorted out their problems. The problem at work may be more amenable to

solution if there are sufficiently trained people clamouring for jobs and a need for them in enterprises.

The textbook way of describing what I have been talking about is to say that there is a serious mismatch in our workforce — a shortage of skilled people and a surplus of unskilled and semi-skilled. Whatever way you describe it, it is an undesirable phenomenon and it will get worse with the new technological revolution. Thousands of unskilled jobs will disappear and so will jobs in offices, in machine operations, in assemblies, in warehouses and in the retail business. Some new jobs will be created in manufacturing, installing and maintaining the equipment of the new technology. Nobody expects, however, that the new jobs will balance the old in numbers and there is the prospect that our workforce will become as a result polarised. On the one hand, there will be a relatively small technological elite able to move with and enjoy advancing technology, able to adapt to changing circumstances. On the other hand, there will be a much larger proportion of the population whose skills are obsolete and who have not the education or mental attitudes to adapt to change.

It is no answer to shout "stop the lights". If we do, we may slowly but surely decline on this island to a primitive society. We need the industry to create the wealth of goods and products from which we get our standard of living, even though industry may be peopled by computerised robots, fed on silicon chips. Most people expect that it is likely that the new industrial revolution will move inexorably on. If this is correct the impact on our whole society will be deep, widespread and fundamental. It will create an irreversible demand for change in the way industrialised societies must organise themselves.

All societies except, perhaps, the most primitive are organised around work. Work is the means of producing goods, services and wealth for the society as a whole. Equally important is the fact that work is the means by which each individual in the society acquires the power to purchase some of the goods and services and wealth produced by the society. In the material sense work is identified with power and influence for the individual. At a different and higher level work is the badge of identification in society — a person is the butcher, the baker or the ESB man. It is a measure of self-respect to be an earning and contributing member in society. Contrariwise unemployment signifies misery, deprivation and lack of self-respect. Unemployment is a blemish on the whole of society and it is corrosive of the individual and of society. Assuming that there will be less and less work to go around the effect will be traumatic unless we develop plans to cope with it.

SOCIETY IS INTER-DEPENDENT

The first step towards the solution of any problem is to recognise that a problem exists and to understand its nature. It is perhaps the biggest shortcoming of our educational system that there is no real understanding in the community of how our society works, of the interdependence of the different sections of the community on one another and on the changes which are facing us. Such information as there is, is put out usually in a party-political manner or by sectional interests with their own axe to grind.

The recent "Late Late Show" in which farmers and PAYE people all but came blows was a good example of a dialogue of the deaf with neither side hearing what the other is saying or attempting to understand the points of view. It may have been good television entertainment, but viewed as adult education or public information, or creating an understanding it was a failure. Indeed I feel that the powerful medium of broadcasting, particularly television has sometimes spent itself and its talents on issues which divide society and on controversy to the neglect

of a role to educate society and to impart information on a whole range of important subjects in an open, fair and balanced manner. Sometimes the perceived entertainment value of confrontation, of daring disclosure and the tyranny of TAM ratings crowd out a more worthy objective of real adult education which gives the individual information about his society, which helps him cast a critical eye on it so that when he is given a chance he can make up his own mind. Broadcasting will have reached its kingdom when it will be accepted by all as a significant institution in the cultural uplifting of the nation and educating the individual so that he can exercise his free-will in a democratic way rather than be an anonymous follower of the group, a mere number to be counted in elections or in the passing of resolutions or voting for strike action.

Free will and individuality are man's most distinguishing features and cherished rights. To use them properly he needs access to continuing information and education. More emphasis has to be put on our right and duty to act as free individuals and adult education available to all the community through broadcasting, or by whatever means is crucial to this.

It is time to talk about the changes which are likely to take place in society:

the concept of a job for life will no longer be relevant. Job content, its location, indeed its very existence, may change in time scales far shorter than we associate at present with the normal working life-span of some 40 years;

whole industries and their associated skills will disappear while new skills and industries will be required. An example of the pace of change is that the giant firm of Siemens earns half its sales from technology which is less than 5 years old;

greater automation will cause more rapid expansion of the undesirable consequences of mass production which has dehumanised the workplace through more and more operating skills being taken over by micro-processors and robots. Elimination of work requiring people will mean more unemployment for more people or more leisure for everybody if there can be work-sharing. Indeed there must be work-sharing because to have work the prerogative of only a favoured and educated minority would create a very unhealthy imbalance in society.

What are the educational consequences of such changes? Firstly, education must be far more flexible than it is now. Young people must be prepared for a life in which they will have to adapt readily to changing circumstances. This argues strongly against early specialisation and places more emphasis on broader knowledge. Not one by many skills and professions could be developed from this. It could be the basis for expanding existing crafts to accommodate new developments rather than perpetuate the awful blunders of the past which created new crafts and categories to cater for new technology. The consequences of these blunders hit us all in the form of demarcation disputes. As the demand for more skill increases more and more of the working population will need adaptation and conversion courses to receive new knowledge and skill. The restoration of a human dimension to work and work-places will require education on skills which are now not part of any syllabus — skills with people, to organise their work in a meaningful, rewarding and participative manner. It is the "whole man" who comes to work and not just the piece which is required for high performance for 8 hours a day. The "whole man" is complex and has his own individual characteristics. Education for work must include greater understanding of this.

It is arguable that the biggest, single factor in our bad industrial relations scene is the almost total lack of knowledge about the human aspects of work by those coming to the workplace. Generations of professionals have been launched into the world of work from our Universities and Technological Colleges, having had no instruction on personnel management, industrial relations consultation or any of the people aspects of employments. Likewise generations of craftsmen have come to the work scene equally lacking in knowledge and so, too, have semi-skilled and service workers from the primary and secondary schools of our system. They confront one another in the workplace with nothing to go on except the traditions, legends, myths and slogans of "battles long ago" between trade unions and employers. "I dreamt I saw Joe Hill last night"!

One of the results of the technological revolution will be a need for continuing re-education during a lifetime. The burden will fall on those who undertake the task of adult education. We are all familiar with the concept of "learning curves" but what about "forgetting curves", i.e. the ability to shed old, outmoded skills, techniques and attitudes. It is the difficulty of teaching old dogs new tricks. Human nature causes "forgetting curves" to have a much longer time-scale than "learning curves" and this may be at the root of resistance to change. Not only individuals but organisations and nations also are often guilty of prolonging the "forgetting curve" by continuing to support ailing activities and industries in futile efforts to sustain them. What may be needed is recognition that they are in terminal decline. Help is often at the expense of profitable dynamic enterprise and it might be better to put the resources instead into education, retraining and adaptation.

Some argue that we face a future of diminishing work opportunities and that this, coupled with a decline in the work ethic, is really a welcome development for mankind presaging an age of relative leisure. If having a job, being a contributing and earning member of society are the measures of self-respect and identity, which I believe they are, then a world without work would be a dismal and sorry place leading to great unhappiness for many people. If, on the other hand, many people want to work, given a reasonable job, how do we accommodate to a situation of declining job opportunities. The answer is to devise a balance of some work and leisure for all. It seems simple and possible but there are many problems.

WORK: PAID AND VOLUNTARY

Three solutions are usually put forward to permit greater work-sharing — a shortening of working hours, more holidays and early retirement. Undoubtedly shorter hours would create opportunities for more employment but only if overtime is eliminated or diminished. Our record over the past 25 years is not good. In that period the official working week has been reduced from 48 to 40 hours but the average hours worked per week has not declined in most industries. There will be powerful opposition to the elimination of overtime and, as of now, the shorter working week seems a non-starter as a real contributor to job creation. More holidays, part-time work and early retirement could make a significant contribution but only if they are not regarded as opportunities for 'moonlighting' soaking up work which unemployed people could be doing. How many people who retire early on good pensions adopt a total life of leisure? Or how many people with part-time jobs are content to have one such job. Invariably, instead of being in one full-time job, they have 2/3 part-time ones. A phenomenon of modern life in developed countries is the unknown but considered very large number of people thus employed in what has become known as the 'black' economy.

Given that we will someday solve the problems which are associated with work-sharing, what do we do then in the greater leisure period which we have? It is, I

suppose, possible to contemplate greater participation in recreation, sport, travel, entertainment but, for this, we would all need more money. We could also spend our leisure time in continuing education, on contemplating art, culture and literature but these things are not enough for many people. They simply need work. The traditional job aspect of human endeavour will gradually diminish and this may put more emphasis on the nature of work itself. Working life could be made up of paid and unpaid, or voluntary segments.

This concept opens up possibilities for community work of all sorts — caring for the under-privileged, individual tuition for illiterates, cleaning our streets and parks, renovating our buildings, exploring and renovating archaeological and historic sites, such as Wood Quay, rehabilitating our inner-cities. There is no end to the projects available. The idea needs development, it needs leadership and it may have large-scale educational implications. Community work is very close to the hearts of many present-day youth who, for some reason or another, have become alienated from traditional occupations and seek fulfilment in various forms of social work. There is potential energy in youth to be harnessed for adult educational purposes. It could be a fulfilling experience to help prepare fellow human-beings for the inevitable trauma they face as they lose existing jobs and need to be re-educated and retrained for new forms of work. In this way well-educated and well-adapted youth could be channelled on a part-time, virtually unpaid basis, into sharing some of the burden of cushioning the impact of new technology on the majority of fellow humans who are less well-educated and less capable of making their own way, unaided, into a future about which they are apprehensive and insecure.

This concept of paid and voluntary work, making up a full lifetime of work would need new structures and new allocation of resources if it were to happen. There is a major human, unpaid resource there for the asking, I believe. The youth of today-might indeed respond to the challenge if we provide the scope for them to gain access to the majority of to-day's workforce who have never had the opportunity to be prepared for the post-industrial era. The majority of to-day's workforce know absolutely nothing about the new technology which is threatening their jobs. They are scared to death of losing their jobs to inanimate objects like computers. Their only experience of computers was, perhaps, a visit to the cinema to see "Star Wars" or Star Trek". If, however, they are correctly educated that the microprocessor is helping to amplify their brain power in almost the same way as the electric motor in the factory amplified their muscle power in the past, they may feel a certain pride in having made the grade to the era of new advanced technology. They could feel that they are part of the new order of things and that they have, personally, been able to move with the times rather than having been cast obsolete amongst the unemployed.

To get this process moving, we will need adult education focusing on the problems and themes which permeate our society. It should focus, too, on developing the eagerness of present-day youth to serve their community so that the up-hill struggle of transition into a new and improved work environment can be made by virtually all our citizens. The world will never be the same again with the arrival of the microchip. Man's history proves that he will find a new equilibrium in a society which, if correctly conceived and planned, will be far more human towards all its citizens than that which we experience to-day. It is up to all of us to be leaders in society so that the steps are taken in the right direction and that they are taken now and not when we are already in a crisis of major proportions.

A NEW STRATEGY

All I have said so far has been in the context of an accelerating and expanding technological era — the post-industrial revolution which may see almost the final elimination of man from the traditional work situations. This process is not of recent origin. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution in the 19th century the fundamental principle which motivated it has been the pursuit of labour efficiency. It was pursued through mechanisation, large scale production and rationalisation. Every possible opportunity was sought to substitute for labour because machines are predictable, need not be trained and do not cause industrial relations problems. They can work at speeds no man can match and they can provide power far beyond the capacity of the human muscle. The crazy habit of man talking back, of demanding consultation and horror of all horrors, demanding participation in decision-making in recent years, has accelerated the substitution of machines for men. One company prints on all its stationery "costs walk in the door on two legs". They might like to have added "so does trouble".

In the pursuit of large-scale production there has been vertical and horizontal integration and less and less labour per unit of production. Our professional educational system has been geared to producing very specialised graduates in industrial engineering, in costing, in financial control, in investment decision-making. As I said earlier, they receive no education at all in how to organise and motivate people, they are incapable of using people instead of machines. Herman Kaan of the Hudson Institute said at an IMI Conference a few years ago "that the specialised education of many professionals limits the range of options they consider in their decision-making".

It used to be the replacement of men's brawn with machines but the new revolution is mostly concerned with replacing men's brains. Computers talk to one another and rarely will they have to talk to humans anymore. A computer collecting debts in Canada sends out a letter after the third reminder which says "unless you pay immediately I will have to tell the humans about you"! The human is intrinsically slow, inconsistent, sometimes unreliable, but highly creative. The machine is all the things the human is not — fast, consistent, reliable, but totally non-creative. Our present day approach to technology is placing too much emphasis on the supremacy of the machine and leaving too little scope for the creativity of the worker.

There is a growing school of thought that "small is beautiful". Small businesses are usually the more labour intensive — for one thing they don't have the resources for investment in sophisticated equipment. There is better rapport between workers. The problems of managing large organisations with their hierarchies, family trees and complicated line/staff relationships are absent. Much of our modern industrial relations problems may stem from lack of exceptional management ability needed to run large organisations and manage satisfactorily their inherent human problems. Much of it may stem also from the inevitable de-personalisation of work and anonymity of individuals in the large organisation. My point really is that we may be able to save ourselves the worst excesses of the new technological age by a new strategy of going for small units of production and encouraging more employment of labour — we could have a beginning in the employment incentive scheme of the Department of Labour. We would need, of course, to change our company taxation system which favours the investment of capital against labour. Such a concept extends beyond labour — e.g. smaller generation stations require more men but they could also use alternative fuels such as refuse, biomass which would be a contribution to energy. We may be ready to embrace this concept but it would require a lot of selling.

There is a widely-held view that the work ethic has disappeared. As one cynic put it to me "only the fools go home tired". We must get rid of that view by demonstrating it to be untrue for the majority of people. We must tackle the problems of absenteeism, poor time-keeping and poor workmanship to restore pride to all sorts of work. Only then will we be able to make a bid for a wholesale restructuring of work which will focus on small being beautiful and on men before machines, energy and materials. Is there not a mighty task and a worthy role for adult education to overcome tunnel thinking in many firms, workers and trade unions?

My considered opinion is that the task of adult education cannot be left to institutions specialising in this alone. As changing attitudes is involved much can be achieved through the direct influence of interested people operating in their own field — how many of us have been moulded in our early lives by teachers in the small schools of rural Ireland?

In so far as institutions are concerned, I believe that the best hope lies in the non-sectional interests such as your own Association. We have only to look at the example of our farming co-operative movements or to the role that has been played by, say Muintir na Tire and Maera na Feirme in the adult education of our farming community, supported, I may say, by excellent radio and TV programmes. My regret is that we don't have a parallel for our industrial society focussing on education, achievement and confidence. It has been very slow getting TV programmes on economic/industrial affairs off the ground but, hopefully, RTE is now fully geared to do this. Membership of your Association is from a wide cross-section of educational groups. You have both a responsibility and a unique opportunity.

We are in the age of packaging, the age of suggestion, the age of the marketing man. We are pressurised, conditioned and made to feel deprived if worldly goods are not at our disposal. The mass media, the tabloids, the hidden persuaders have almost made unthinking robots of many of us. Work for many is an interval, an intrusion between visits to the lounge-bar society — we are made clamour to be entertained and amused. But the world to-day needs free men and women with free minds having access throughout their whole lives to increasing knowledge and wisdom to make sensible decisions about the future of mankind on a planet with diminishing resources and a mindless arms race between the superpowers putting the survival of our civilisation at risk.

TELEVISION AND THE ADULT EDUCATOR

H. Rex Cathcart,
Professor of Education,
The Queen's University, Belfast.

The national television service is approaching its twentieth anniversary. It has yet to define, or have defined for it, its educational role. That it has one is not to be doubted. The issue is, and has been from the beginning, whether that role is incidental to its general programming or whether there should in addition be a positive commitment to educational programming for specific target audiences. The problem of educational broadcasting for the broadcaster is that it may be, indeed often is, in conflict with his desire to win mass audiences and with his need to do so in order to satisfy both the licence holders and the advertisers. RTÉ has no particular statutory obligation, except perhaps as regards the Irish language, to fulfil a precise educational role. If it accepts an educational commitment, then the expectation is that this will be financed from an outside source. The original friction between the Department of Posts and Telegraphs and the Department of Education over the setting up of *Telefís Scoile* reflects this position. *Telefís Scoile* was launched on the basis that it would be funded by the Department of Education. (1)

The broadcaster is suspicious of the educator. His purpose is to maximise his audience and he is profoundly aware that for the mass of the population 'education' is the contrary of 'entertainment'. The didactic tone and purpose of educational programming is sufficient to ensure the great 'switch off'. As a result educational programming in most national services is denied the resources which are provided for general programming and so educational producers are seldom able to exploit the potentialities of the medium to the full. They simply cannot catch and sustain the interest of viewers in the same way as the richly budgeted producers in the main areas of programming. Naturally the broadcaster's stereotype of educational broadcasting is reinforced. The broadcaster is, therefore, pleased to confine the educator to a ghetto of off-peak hours, indeed often of unsocial hours, and to feel that the educational lobby can be silenced with the allocation of such slots to its needs, along with a special department to produce programmes to fill the slots. When this disposition is conjoined with an expectation of outside funding as in the Republic of Ireland, an insignificant role for educational broadcasting is assured.

Irish educators need to recognise the full implications of this situation and to examine its possibilities for their purposes. In the first instance they must attempt a reappraisal of general programming and of its educative impact. They should then seek ways to influence it and to promote its use for their ends. In the second instance when they do get a slice of the schedule cake on whatever financial basis, they need to ensure that the opportunities presented are not wasted, but effectively used.

THE EDUCATIVE ROLE OF GENERAL PROGRAMMING

Few would question the proposition that viewers learn from informational programming such as current affairs and documentary programmes. Fewer still would question the educative impact of cultural programming devoted to serious drama, the visual arts and music, traditional or classical. In the U.S.A. public service broadcasting, as transmitted on the noncommercial channels promoted by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is confined to such informational and cultural programming. Of it the adult educator and broadcaster, Henry C. Alter, has written: "Noncommercial television is becoming a force today . . . (by breaking) the stereotype that . . . what . . . is entertaining . . . cannot be educational. All anyone has to do to disprove that fallacy is to look at today's television programming." Alter argued that instead of providing a didactic experience, informational and cultural programming "educates in its own way, that is, by the subtle power exerted by any sustained exposure to impulses of significance or beauty". Such television raises the intellectual and aesthetic tone of the community, increases to a level of excellence the controversy over significant matters, and furthers the public's ability to make wise choices. Informational programmes, Alter went on to suggest, help "crystallize opinion and commitment", while cultural programmes enhance "sensitivity and taste". (2) It is significant that the noncommercial service, which carries the productions Alter praises, has shown the best of British broadcasting including series such as "The Forsyth Sage", "Upstairs, downstairs", Bronowski's "The Ascent of Man", Clark's "Civilization" and Cooke's "America".

The nature of the educative impact of one facet of general programming is suggested in an English study of environmental knowledge and attitudes among fifth year secondary pupils. The report on this extensive national survey in 1976 indicates that 60% of the 11,000 respondents stated that their environmental knowledge came from "reading, the radio and TV", less than 40% believed that they had gained most of their knowledge in their formal schooling. It is noteworthy that the 60% had significantly higher scores on factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge and beliefs.

The attitudes among the fifth year students revealed a remarkably inconsistent feature. The students were opposed to environmental sin in principle but not in their personal lives. They believed, for instance, in conserving the countryside but not if it restricted their access to scenic areas. They were for clean air and seas, for limiting nuclear power, for reclaiming land which had been mined, for care over insecticides, for saving farmland from housing and factories but they were against any laws which would restrict their standard of living or their freedom of choice. They did not want to reduce the use of cars, suffer taxation measures to lower the size of their families or have to burn smokeless fuel in their grates. The fifth year pupils in general were fully convinced that man has a moral duty to protect the environment but a wide range of their detailed attitudes were not compatible with this belief. Moreover, the most frequently selected response in respect to local environmental problems was, "None of the above are problems in our community". (3)

One could tentatively hypothesize from this research that the passive reception of information from television and the other mass media does influence attitudes. It may not affect behaviour as much as personal investigation and involvement but it could, *inter alia*, still be enough to influence a voter. In this particular instance, if a viewer is persuaded over a period of time to favour environmental virtue, he may do little or nothing practically about it but still cast his vote for the political party which advocates the conservation of environmental values. General programming

on television may help create a climate of opinion. Politicians are sensitive to this fact and it is not at all surprising that Richard Nixon, when he was President of the U.S.A., sought to divert the Public Broadcasting Service from the production of current affairs and documentary programmes to narrowly didactic 'educational' programming. He sacked the top executives to this end and tried to insist on the funds for programmes, which he reduced, being used in this way. (4)

STRATEGIES FOR THE USE OF GENERAL PROGRAMMING

RTE through its former Director General, Oliver Maloney, has already offered the adult education movement a major opportunity once a year to participate in the planning of general programming. He asked that the movement recommend "one major project a year in which it is desirable to mobilise on a national scale a threefold process of reflection, of action and of participation . . . I can say formally that RTE will be prepared to put the necessary resources into a development of this nature if active support is forthcoming from the adult education movement". (5) The initiative was as generous as it was unique.

There is a precedent for the type of broadcasting which is probably intended, if not for the invitation. In 1965, in response to the national need to promote progressive attitudes to agriculture among farmers and the community at large, RTE launched *Telefis Feirme*. The programme series was transmitted at peak time in the evening. At one level it was devised to appeal to the general viewer; at another it provided the stimulus for discussion among viewing groups of farmers all over the country. Ancillary literature was provided for the groups and for interested individuals. On the basis of the criteria then available, *Telefis Feirme* was an immense success. Significantly it was part of the schedule of general programming. It had a major budget as a consequence. It was entertaining; it was not, however, without a didactic tone.

The concept of devising series for general broadcasting which could be used for educational purposes appealed to the ACNO Task Force on Adult Education which evolved a master plan for involving the U.S. Corporation for Public Broadcasting in adult education activities. It recommended that "wherever possible broadcast components should be applied to multi-level audiences by varying the supporting learning situation. Experience has shown on some recent projects that it is possible to use the same television programmes as the basis for credit courses, non-credit informal education, and as an enhanced viewing situation for a general audience. One example is Bronowski's 'Ascent of Man', which is a general audience interest series being offered through the Public Broadcasting Service. Across the nation the general interest programmes are being supplemented with study guides and periodic classroom sessions and/or independent study correspondence materials to create a course for college credit. With fewer and less elaborate class meetings and written materials, the programmes fit into adult education informal settings. With no class meetings and with only a viewer's guide and perhaps selected readings, the meaning of the programmes can be enhanced for a general audience. At the same time, of course, the bulk of the audience can enjoy the programmes as originally presented, with no additional effort." (6) This exemplary series was viewed by millions in the United States; tens of thousands bought the accompanying text and on the first showing 200 colleges and universities offered "The Ascent of Man", along with the companion text and various instructional materials, as a course of study. Over 12,000 enrolled students followed the course. On the second showing in the Fall of 1975 the number of

schools, colleges and universities increased to 500 and the number of enrolled students reached 25,000. (7) Interestingly enough in Britain where the series was produced, a showing on BBC 2 was followed by one on BBC 1. No attempt was made to provide an educational back-up apart from the accompanying book. Without question this was because the series was not produced by an educational department!

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Adult educators may hope to influence general programming through the broadcaster's invitation and perhaps by their own persuasion. Undoubtedly it is true that if the movement provides adequate back-up it may hope to promote further experimentation. There are enough political, social and economic issues and problems within the nation to provide the *bases* for concerned efforts by broadcasters and educators for years to come and that is on the assumption of not one but several major projects per year.

It remains necessarily the case that, if successful, the pressure for adult educational programming will result in the conventional provision of programmes for target audiences at off-peak viewing time. If such a service is conceded, as the plan proposed by the RTE Educational Advisory Committee in 1979 envisages, then there are to hand criteria which will enable broadcasters and educators to ensure the effectiveness of their productions. A variety of successful and unsuccessful educational broadcast series on television and radio from a number of nations were investigated with a view to establishing the critical features which contributed to the success of a series. The findings were stated as guidelines:

1. The educational programmes must be planned for a specific target audience.
2. Specific educational objectives that are relevant to the needs and interests of the target audience must be clearly understood and agreed on.
3. A systematic multimedia approach must be used (involving ancillary materials and methods, H.R.C.) in which both knowledge specialists and media specialists are employed.
4. Educators who are capable of learning and understanding the instructional characteristics of the media must be found.
5. Clear and careful provision for personal interaction must be made.
6. Evaluation and feedback arrangements must be made to monitor audience reaction and change the instructional material to suit audience needs. (8)

If these guidelines are not adhered to then the broadcasts will be much less effective than they ought to be. The guidelines are not counsels for perfection. To follow them is, however, expensive; as indeed is television production in the first place. This prompts the questions which adult educators must ask themselves: is television the most effective way of reaching those whom we intend to help to learn? Is it cost-effective? Or, is the medium a desperate resort for getting to those non-participating masses whom we should be reaching by other means? Is the medium merely to be used because it offers a class of 40,000 or even 400,000 instead of the usual 20 or 40 and this prospect is heady stuff indeed? Are we really **just** interested in pearlcasting to thousands?

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NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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The past six years have seen the setting up of three national adult education advisory councils in the United Kingdom. The first, at the end of 1974, was the Northern Ireland Council for Continuing Education (CEC). This was followed three years later in England and Wales by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE), and early in 1979 the Scottish Council for Community Education (SCCE) was formed.

All three were formally established by their respective Ministries of Education to provide a national focus for the education of adults. On the face of it this represents a significant move by central government to give more importance to this relatively neglected field. It is still early days to test that assumption by results and I therefore only touch on it in this paper in which I look particularly at the constitutional position of the three Councils and a little of their work to date. Since I know most about ACACE, it will loom largest in what I have to say, but I must modestly state at this stage that I do not intend by that to suggest that ACACE is any more deserving of attention as *the* model to follow than are the others.

The programmes of work of the three Councils have recently been described by their respective Secretaries in the first issue of the new journal 'Continuing Education' (1). I can therefore set aside some of that detail to deal with more general matters.

ROLES OF THE COUNCILS

Firstly the context of the Councils' work, the 'area of interest' which they are expected to cover. ACACE has it clear enough in its title, and in the Minister's remit, that its concerns are two-fold, namely adult education and continuing education (2). The two are seemingly to be distinguished. Very broadly the former has been interpreted to be about making the best use of available resources in the 'here and now' (or at least over the next four to five years) and the latter to be a much more speculative exercise of shaping policy proposals for the next ten to twenty years, which might lead to a comprehensive system of continuing education for adults within which would be included that sector now known administratively as adult education. ACACE's vision has to be bi-focal, near-sighted on the well mapped ground of adult education and long-sighted on the 'terra incognita' of continuing education.

In Scotland SCCE is expressly concerned not with continuing education but with community education. This is clearly in direct descent from the Alexander report's (3) major recommendation that the adult education and youth services should be integrated under the umbrella term of community education. SCCE is itself the outcome of another of the Alexander recommendations. Given the difficulties so far experienced in making sense in practice of what some have called this 'shot-gun marriage' of two distinct if closely complementary services, it is not surprising that SCCE has spent much time in its first year to achieve an

operational definition of its sphere of interest (4). A further dimension in the Scottish scene is the recent establishment by the Scottish Education Department of a Tertiary Education Advisory Council which has formalised links with SCCE to help cover those mutual interests which may be included in the term 'continuing education'.

Northern Ireland chose not to confront this tangle of educational philosophy and semantics by simply using 'continuing education' to embrace all forms of further education. Some will applaud this 'no nonsense' approach, others may see it as side-stepping the fundamental issue of how continuing education can aspire to be different, both in quality and quantity, from the present provision, even in the widest sense, of adult education. There is of course absolutely no reason to suppose that CEC is shirking this issue. My own personal comment would be that CEC's implicitly gradualist approach to educational change is the only workable one, but care needs to be taken to conserve the notion of continuing education as a future goal as well as an emerging present reality.

All three Councils have as their central function the giving of advice. Unlike the others, ACACE has this explicitly assigned in its title. This did cause some consternation at the Council's inception when it was interpreted by some as a ministerial withdrawal from the strongly developmental role advocated by both the Russell and Venables reports. There may be some substance in this. To put the criticism bluntly, advice, which is relatively cheap to obtain, can be left in the air, whilst development, which is generally expensive to achieve, has actually to be put into practice. I personally feel that this distinction is unrealistically stark. In the event advice and development are not so easily distinguishable, although I would acknowledge that in England and Wales the Schools Council, with an annual budget of over £2 million, is a development body in the way that ACACE, with much less than a tenth of that budget, cannot be. In that sense ACACE cannot be regarded as a fully-fledged 'Post-School' Council.

Nevertheless all three Councils have the word 'development' somewhere in their official terms of reference: CEC is to advise on "... the framework and development of continuing education", SCCE is to "... promote the development of community education", and ACACE is to "... promote the development of future policies and priorities ... of education as a process continuing through life". Additionally CEC has within its remit the authority to "... exercise executive functions at the request of the Department" (of Education in Northern Ireland) with the proviso that "... in so doing the Council shall not override the powers and functions of its constituent bodies".

That last phrase indicates a further difference amongst the three Councils in the composition of their membership. CEC is essentially made up of representatives from institutions and bodies in, or associated with, the further education sector. The SCCE and ACACE membership is specifically made up of individuals who serve in their own personal capacity, and not as representatives of any institution. As such they are directly appointed by the respective Ministers, although it is apparent that they are chosen in order to encompass the widest possible range of experience and interests in the provision of education for adults.

One interesting distinction between ACACE and the other two Councils is that whilst CEC and SCCE are serviced "in house" by their respective Ministries and indeed CEC is chaired by a senior civil servant, ACACE appoints its own Secretariat. This can be seen as offering a greater sense of independence, or at least 'distancing', from central government. In the ordinary course of day-to-day business this may not be a very significant distinction, but I suspect that it may sometimes be important in the way that others, particularly educationists, perceive the status of the Council.

This notion of independence is further underlined in the ACACE terms of reference which require the Council to give priority to advising the Secretary of State for Education, but also specify that the Council may "advise generally". In simple practical terms of course it can only be an advantage for a Council to have its own full-time secretariate, which is responsible only to the Council's chairman and members rather than a civil service secretariat which has to fit its Council work amongst a number of other departmental responsibilities. Ultimately this is a matter of available resources and scale of operation, in which England and Wales must obviously have the advantage over Scotland and Northern Ireland.

All three Councils are directly financed by central government. ACACE has been successful in adding to this funding from other sources in setting up some enquiry projects, but it has also been generously supported by the Department of Education and Science with additional specific grants for major research purposes. This extra funding may be seen, in part at least, as one of the reasons why ACACE has been able to get so much under way over a fairly broad front in a relatively short space of time.

ENQUIRY CENTRAL FOCUS

Essentially it is this area of what may be called 'enquiry' that lies at the centre of all three Councils' work. If they are to be anything at all, they must be what are elegantly known as 'think tanks'. To be in a position to offer sound and sensible advice a Council must possess as much information on any particular subject as it can acquire. Often it is the subsequent dissemination of that information which forms the most valuable, at least the most immediately valuable, part of the advice being offered. The freedom with which ACACE is able to operate has allowed it to decide on a number of enquiry areas, where it wants to see 'development' and where it can assign funds from its own enquiries budget to appoint enquiry officers on short-term contracts to gather information and opinions and to draft preliminary reports for committees to revise before Council's consideration.

It is this highly adaptable form of procedure which has made it possible for ACACE to produce a substantial list of publicly available papers and reports. In under two years the Council has become something of a publishing house in its own right. This seems to me to be one of the most important aspects of a Council's work, because if it is to be in any way effective its advice must be widely disseminated. Again ACACE has the advantage over its Scottish and Northern Irish counterparts through the relatively large size of its potential 'readership'. This has led already, for example, to sales of over 2,000 copies of its adult basic education report and a thousand copies of the report on educational guidance services, not to mention the demand for over 16,000 copies of the discussion paper on continuing education.

It may well be a further reflection of ACACE's 'sense of independence' that from its beginning so much effort has been put into informing the educational world of all the Council's activities. This 'open information' policy undoubtedly generates a great deal of work for the small staff of the secretariat, but these efforts to keep in touch do seem to be appreciated by the 'field' and as a result the Council does receive most helpful responses to its work. This is not to say that this essential two-way communication works as well as it might or should, but we do seem to have largely avoided the counter-productive sense of mutual incomprehension which could otherwise exist between a small national body and a large field of national, regional and local interests. In that sense the smaller 'constituencies' of CEC and SCCE do not engender the same scale of difficulty; their local communications networks more nearly coincide with their 'national' networks, and they have more ready-to-hand means of communicating with their 'fields'. It is

interesting to note that SCCE is very conscious of this communications problem and it proposes to hold a series of local meetings to bring it into closer touch with workers in the field.

The actual effectiveness of what the three Councils have so far tried to achieve is not easy to assess. The relationship between national advice and local practice must always be difficult to chart, if only because there are so many other influences at work. It may be that ultimately the most important effects which any national council can hope for are shifts of attitude and awareness, of comprehension and consensus. It is those shifts which may then be seen to affect the actual practice and provision of educational opportunities for adults.

It would be quite inappropriate for me to assess the achievements of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Councils, I restrict myself therefore to noting one of the ways in which it seems to me, and I emphasize these are my personal views, that ACACE has been able to influence both the practice and the thinking in one part of the adult education field.

The ACACE report on adult basic education (5), originally commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education, made recommendations on the ways in which a more broadly based ABE provision might be developed from the recently built foundations of adult literacy work. There has been a good deal of preliminary local activity in this direction (to a measure this is probably reflected in the lively sales figures for the report) which the Council's report, particularly its appendices describing a whole range of current local initiatives, has helped to stimulate. And more clearly at the national level the Secretary of State has recently announced his acceptance of the report's major recommendation that there should be a national ABE Unit to co-ordinate local activities and to help develop training and teaching resources. The report has therefore both disseminated ideas at a local level and influenced national policy.

In a less obvious way the very fact that there are national Councils in existence, and specifically appointed by Ministers to advise, can only have an encouraging effect on workers in the field, where the real job of making provision takes place. In one sense it is unfortunate that all three Councils have been set to work at a time of increasing financial stringency. The cumulative public expenditure cuts of the past three or four years in England and Wales have hit adult education very hard and at times this may be seen as an odd background against which to be trying to plan the extension of educational opportunities for adults. It can also of course be seen as the very time when policy planning is most needed.

INDEPENDENT COUNCILS

A complementary feature of the 1970s has been the noticeable shift by education ministers and their civil servants away from the ostensibly rather re-active stance of administering the system towards a more pro-active inclination to develop new policies. Cynical observers may say they have not noticed much change, but in the DES, for example, there is now much more activity in gathering information and statistics on which to base long-term policy proposals. In that light, all three Councils may be regarded as contributing to the policy shaping, as distinct from policy making, part of that process.

That seems to me one of the main reasons why it is now appropriate to have independent advisory Councils. They can be seen to be presenting their own views as an independent and highly informed group representing only themselves. It follows from this that these groups are different in kind from the pre-existing national interest groups such as the National Institute of Adult Education and the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, both of which operate as umbrella

organisations to represent the consensus views of their membership bodies. The national Institutes can be of great assistance to the Councils in representing views from the field and in undertaking commissioned enquiries. It seems to me that this distinction of roles offers a valuable complementary source of experience and opinion which can be separately addressed to central and local government. The rather more representative nature of the CEC's membership can be viewed as the appropriate mid-way course in Northern Ireland where there is no other clearly defined 'umbrella' body.

With all three Councils now actively at work the early 1980s are likely to be their real proving ground. They now have the chance to contribute significantly to the planned growth of educational opportunities for adults over the last two decades of the century. It seems clear enough that the need for an increasingly educated adult population is going to become undeniable. Equally difficult to deny is the likelihood that present public funds for education will not grow to any great extent. The conclusion from the 1970s is that no part of the education system can any longer rely on additional resources from the growing margins of the national economy, as adult education did in the '50s and '60s. Positive policies within the total education and training budgets in the context of overall national needs and public expenditure seems to be the most sensible way forward. National advisory councils for the continuing education of adults are the obvious way to ensure that the educational needs of the adult population are no longer neglected.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- (1) **Continuing Education**, November 1979, National Extension College, Cambridge, pp. 25–27.
- (2) This putting together of adult and continuing education might be interpreted as a single ministerial response to the recommendations in the Russell Report (**Adult Education : A Plan for Development**, HM Stationery Office, 1973) and the Venables Report (**Report of the Committee on Continuing Education**, Open University, 1976) respectively for a National Development Council for Adult Education and a National Development Council for Continuing Education.
- (3) **Adult Education : The Challenge of Change** (HM Stationery Office, 1975).
- (4) The SCCE's first published **Occasional Paper** is an extended exploration of this definition.
- (5) **A Strategy for the Basic Education of Adults** (ACCE, 1979).

PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

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This article is an extract from a study entitled "Provision and Participation in Adult Education in Two Irish Counties". It deals with the findings of a survey carried out as part of the study.

THE SURVEY

The aims of the study were to analyse key characteristics of students in a selection of adult education activities; to compare and contrast students in similar institutions; and to compare and contrast students in similar institutions but in different parts of the country. To find out these facts it was decided to carry out a survey among students attending adult education classes.

The survey method was chosen because "the purpose of many surveys is simply to provide information". The survey was based on a questionnaire distributed among students attending adult education classes. County Meath was chosen as one of the counties due to the fact that there was a pilot scheme in adult education in operation in the county. The scheme began in 1975 with the introduction of a full-time adult education officer. County Offaly was chosen because it had a similar administrative structure to Meath and carried on the traditional provision of adult education without the services of a full-time officer. Both counties were situated in Leinster, were both basically agricultural counties and had approximately the same number of schools. Having decided on a survey, various sampling methods were considered before probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling was chosen.

Having used the scheme for calculations a total of 440 respondents were drawn. 240 were randomly drawn from County Meath and 200 were randomly drawn from County Offaly. Of these 384 responded comprising 196 in County Meath and 188 in County Offaly. This represented a response rate of 87.3%. Having decided on the sample size the questionnaire method was chosen for carrying out the survey.

Possible methods considered for the survey were participant observation, mail questionnaires, interviews, structured or unstructured questionnaires. all were deemed unsuitable due to the nature of the activity to be surveyed. The method chosen was a pre-coded structured questionnaire with a limited number of open ended questions. This questionnaire was deemed the most appropriate due to the fact that those to be surveyed were adults with minimum time available and this questionnaire was the least demanding and had a greater chance of response.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this section deals with a comparison of the survey results with the census data in the categories sex, age and occupational group. The second section deals with an examination of the marital status of the participants in comparison with the census data. Beginning in the third part the educational scene is looked at with the emphasis on the highest type of educational establishment attended in comparison with the census data. The next section deals with the reasons participants in the survey gave for attending adult education classes. Section five is devoted to an examination of the participants previous participation in adult education activities. The final part of the article deals with a comparison between the two counties. This involved detecting significant differences between the two under a number of headings.

Sex, Age and Occupational Group:

In the survey, from a total of 384 respondents 68.5% were female and 31.5% were male. A comparison with the census data (1) shows that in both counties with a combined population of 123,558, males predominate with 64,006 (51.8%) of the population with the female share of the population being 59,552 (48.2%).

In order to focus more specifically on the target population for adult education activities, a comparison with the census data for those over 20 years of age shows that 36,935 (29.9%) (2) of the combined population are male while 34,280 (27.7%) are female. Of the total population (71,215) over 20 years of age 51.9% are male while 48.1% are female.

As can be seen in Table 1 the largest number of the respondents in the survey were in the 18—25 age group.

Table 1: Age structure of survey participants in the two counties.

Age Category	Number	Percentage
18—25	157	40.9
26—35	134	34.9
36—45	46	12.0
46—55	28	7.3
56—65	11	2.9
Over 65	3	0.8
No Response	5	1.3
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Total	384	100.0

A comparison with the census data showed that of the combined population of both counties over 19 years of age the percentage breakdown was as outlined in the following table.

Table 2: Age structure of combined population (3) of both counties as per census data

Age Category	Number	Percentage
19—25	8,304	11.7
26—35	13,042	18.3
36—45	12,204	17.1
46—55	13,535	19.0
56—65	11,213	15.8
Over 65	12,917	18.1
Total	71,215	100.0

The next category of occupational status provided a difficulty in relation to comparison with the census data in that in the census data those over 14 years of age still in full-time education, housewives, unemployed and retired persons are all included in the category 'not gainfully occupied'. In the following table from the survey, housewives, unemployed and retired are included as separate categories in order to highlight their participation.

Table 3: Occupational Status of survey participants.

Category (a)	Number	Percentage
Agricultural Workers (b)	25	6.5
Professional Workers (c)	146	37.9
Manual Workers (d)	27	7.1
Unemployed	8	2.1
Housewives	115	29.9
Retired	3	0.8
Other	18	4.7
No Response	42	11.0
TOTAL	384	100.0

- (a) Irish Census of Population
- (b) Agricultural Workers includes Farmers and other agricultural workers.
- (c) Professional workers includes higher professional, lower professional employer—manager and salaried non-manual workers.
- (d) Manual workers includes skilled manual, semi-skilled manual and unskilled manual workers.

In the table from the census data in order to compare the findings it was not possible to isolate housewives, the unemployed or the retired as separate categories and they are included in the not gainfully occupied grouping.

Table 4: Occupational status of combined population in both countries as per census data (4) over 14 years of age.

Category	Number	Percentage
Agricultural workers	15,817	18.6
Professional workers	12,176	14.3
Manual workers	17,346	20.4
Not gainfully occupied	38,928	45.8
Others	747	0.9
TOTAL	85,024	100.0

From the above tables two important facts emerge:

- while 18.6% of the total combined population over 14 years of age are engaged in agricultural activity, only 6.5% of the survey sample attended adult education classes.
- Manual workers comprising 20.4% of the population were under-represented in the survey supplying only 7.1% of those who attended classes.

Marital Status

Continuing on from the previous section the next category looked at was marital status. This showed that of the sample 50.3% were married; 43% were single; 2.3% were widowed or separated and 1.8% were members of religious orders. The census data for the combined population of both counties produced the data that 42,232 (34.2%) were married; 72,156 (58.4%) single, 6,580 (5.3%) were widowed or separated and members of religious orders were included in the single category. The next section deals with an analysis of the education of the participants.

Highest type of educational establishment attended

In the survey questions 4 — 8 dealt with the education of the participants. The information collected in the survey included the age at which full-time education was completed and the number of years since the completion of full-time education. With regard to the highest type of educational establishment attended the survey revealed that 270 persons out of 384 in the survey attended secondary school. At primary level the picture was as follows:

Table 5: Number in survey who attended primary school.

Category label	Number	Percentage
Yes	360	93.8
No	10	2.6
No response	14	3.6
Total	384	100.0

At second level the following facts emerged:

Table 6: Numbers in survey who attended second-level education.

Category	Number	Percentage
Secondary	270	70.3
Vocational	74	19.3
Neither	40	10.4
TOTAL	384	100.0

Of the total sample 84 (21.9%) attended third-level institutions as follows: University 35 (9.1% of total sample); Regional College 6 (1.6% of total sample); Teacher Training Colleges 24 (6.3% of total sample) and other third level institutions 10 (4.9% of total sample). The Census Data (5) revealed the following information on the combined population of both counties.

Table 7: Highest type of Educational establishment attended full-time (persons aged 14 and over).

Category	Number	Percentage
Primary	52,618	67.7
Secondary	13,760	17.7
Vocational	8,711	11.2
Third Level	2,579	3.4
TOTAL	77,668	100.0

Number still at school: 7,356.

As can be seen from the above tables, the educational standard of those who attended adult education activities in the two counties is much higher than that of the general population. In fact the survey also revealed that 54.9% of the sample had acquired Leaving Certificate while 32% of the sample had acquired other qualifications after leaving second-level education. The next section deals with the reasons why these people attend adult education classes.

Reasons for attendance at classes

The student questionnaire contained a question on the main reasons for joining the class currently being attended: the benefits or satisfaction claimed from attendance. There were eight options open to students. The response of the total sample is summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Reasons for attendance: total sample.

Category	Number	Percentage
Help in getting better job	19	4.9
Improve performance in present job	29	7.6
Gain qualifications	22	5.7
Learn more about subject	87	22.7
Self Development	91	23.7
Social contacts	14	3.6
Get more out of Leisure	60	15.6
Other	5	1.3
No response	57	14.8
TOTAL	384	100.0

From the above table the two main reasons for attendance which emerged from the total sample were

- (1) Self Development and
- (2) To learn more about the subject.

A breakdown of the total sample by sex and the reasons for attendance is summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Reasons for attendance: total sample by sex.

Category	Number		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Help in getting better job	8	11	2.5	3.4
Improve performance in present work	17	12	5.2	3.7
Gain qualifications	6	16	1.8	4.9
Learn more about subject	29	58	8.6	17.8
Self Development	26	65	8.0	20.0
Social contacts	1	13	0.3	4.0
Get more out of leisure	15	45	4.6	13.5
Other	1	4	0.3	1.2
TOTAL	103	224	31.4	68.6

Number of missing observations: 57.

The most frequently mentioned reason for male attendance at the adult education classes was to "Learn more about the subject". Other interesting points to emerge were:

- (a) 5.9% of the male sample attended classes to gain qualifications while 7.2% of the female sample attended for the same reason.
- (b) Males had three times the motivation in attending to improve their performance in their present jobs; 16.7% of the male sample as against 5.4% of the female sample.
- (c) In the area of 'self development' 25.5% of the male sample and 29.1% of the female sample saw this as the main reason for going to adult education classes.
- (d) Only 1 male gave as his reason for attending "Social contacts" while 13 females gave the same reason.
- (e) In these days of high unemployment and lack of job opportunity only 7.8% of the male sample and 4.9% of the female sample went to local education authorities adult education schemes to seek 'Help in getting better jobs'.
- (f) As reasons 1, 2, 3 in the options were grouped in the questionnaire under the general heading of "work" it is interesting to note that 30.4% of the male sample responded under the heading of "work" as the reason for attendance while the corresponding female sample figure was 17.5%.
- (g) In County Offaly to "Learn More about the subject" got the highest response both from the male sample and the female sample, receiving 17 responses out of a sample of 58 male respondents and 33 responses out of a sample of 105 female respondents. In County Meath "Self Development" got the highest response rate among the female sample which responded, receiving 36 responses out of 120. The male sample reasons for attendance in Meath were shared by "Improving job performance" and "Learn more about the subject" each receiving 11 responses out of a sample of 45.

Previous experience of Adult Education

Respondents were asked in questions 15—18 about their previous experience of adult education Activities. The Tables summarise the replies.

Table 10: Previous attendance at evening classes.

Category	Number	Percentage
One course	110	28.6
2—3 courses	88	22.9
More than 3 courses	43	11.2
None	128	33.3
No response	15	3.9
TOTAL	384	100.0

A striking fact is that 62.8% of the total sample had previous experience of adult education at evening classes.

The next table outlines the results of previous attendance at a residential course or seminar.

Table 11: Attendance at residential course or seminar

Category	Number	Percentage
Yes	100	26.0
No	244	63.5
No response	40	10.5
TOTAL	384	100.0

The lack of residential centres in the two counties selected is reflected in the high proportion (63.5%) who have not attended at residential courses or seminars. An examination of the responses to this question in each county shows very few differences.

The next question sought to elicit information on the involvement of participants in correspondence courses. The response showed that only 35 (9.1%) of the total sample had experience of correspondence courses while 305 (79.4%) responded in the negative. Again there was little difference in the responses between Meath and Offaly which points to the fact that there is a possible market for correspondence courses in both counties. The final question gave the sample population an opportunity of expressing their other experience (if any) of adult education. This question produced the highest rate of non-response i.e. 202 (52.6%) out of the total sample. In addition another 135 (35.2%) stated that they had no other experience of adult education while only 47 (12.2%) replied that they had previous experience of adult education but did not state what the experience was.

The foregoing results of the survey were related to the combined sample of the two counties. In order to focus specifically on the participation pattern in relation to the aim of analysing key characteristics of students in each county, it is necessary to compare the results for each county.

Comparison between two counties:

In this section the chi-square test was used to show whether there was a significant difference in the two variable taking 0.05 as the acceptable level.

The participation by sex in the two counties was not statistically significant, the chi-square being significant at .2 level but as was indicated by the following table there was a greater tendency for female participation in County Meath.

Table 12: Participation by sex in counties Meath and Offaly.

Category	Meath	% of total	Offaly	% of total
Male	55	14.4	67	17.0
Female	141	36.9	121	31.7
TOTAL	196	51.3	188	48.7
Chi square Significance	equals	1.79231 with 1 Degree of Freedom	equals	0.2

A comparison of age groups showed that while Offaly had a slightly higher percentage in the 18—25 age group it was considerably lower in the 26—35 age group being only 27.3% of participants in Offaly as opposed to 43.2% in Meath. Overall in County Meath the 18—35 age group had a higher participation rate, while in County Meath there was a higher participation among the 36+ age group.

Based on the chi-square test there was no significant difference in marital status in either county.

An examination of the information gathered on Education in the survey was statistically significant at .03 level based on the chi-square test. This is highlighted by the fact that over twice as many people in County Meath (22.8%) who participated in adult education activity finished school before the age of 15 as did in County Offaly (10.1%). The rest of the age groups showed a consistent pattern. The number of years since the completion of full-time education was statistically significant at the .03 level with 22% of the Meath sample having completed full-time education 11—15 years ago, while 11.8% of the Offaly sample were in the same category. The participation by the older age group in County Offaly was further emphasised by the 19.8% who had completed their full-time education over 20 years ago as against 13.2% in County Meath in the same category.

Regarding attendance at Primary and Second-level schools, the differences in both counties were not significant. But regarding attendance at third level institutions the findings were statistically significant at the .03 level. Of the 84 people who attended third level institutions, 41.6% went to University, 7.1% to Regional Colleges, 28.5% to Teacher Training Colleges and 22.6% to other institutions. A county comparison showed that there was little difference between the counties in relation to university attendance. At Regional College level all the participants were from County Offaly. Also in County Offaly, 35.4% of the number who attended third level institutions went to Teacher Training Colleges while in County Meath the number was 19.4%.

The acquisition of educational certificates was also statistically significant at the .001 level as is illustrated in the following table.

Table 13: Highest Educational Certificates obtained.

Category	Offaly Number	% of total	Meath Number	% of total
Primary	17	4.4	23	6.0
Inter Cert.	27	7.0	42	11.0
Leaving Cert.	124	32.4	87	22.7
Group Cert.	9	2.3	22	5.7
None of these	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	188	49.1	196	50.9

Chi square equals 19.10406 with 4 Degrees of Freedom
Significance equals 0.0007.

Important facts raised were:

- 55.1% of the total sample had achieved Leaving Certificate.
- Of the 55.1% the majority were in County Offaly (32.4%) as against County Meath (22.7%).
- 211 people out of 384 had at least 5 years of schooling at second level.
- Regarding the acquisition of the Group Certificate, which is possible after 2 years at a Vocational School, County Meath had 11.3% of its sample with Group Certificates as their highest educational certificate obtained, while in County Offaly only 4.8% of the sample there had Group Certificate as their highest certificate obtained.

The acquisition of other qualifications was also significant as is illustrated in the following table which shows that of those who have other qualifications the majority are in County Offaly.

Table 14: Other qualifications obtained by survey participants.

Category	Offaly Number	% of total	Meath Number	% of total
Yes	71	20.1	52	14.7
No	88	24.9	142	40.2
No response	29		2	
TOTAL	188		196	

Chi square equals 11.48988 with 1 Degree of Freedom
Significance equals 0.0007.

An examination of the occupational status of participants in the two counties showed a significant difference at the .002 level. While there was no difference in participation by the farming community, there was far greater participation by the higher groupings in County Offaly than in County Meath. In County Offaly 25.4% of the total respondents in the sample were in the higher occupational groupings, while the figure for County Meath was 17.3%. In the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled areas there was no significant difference in the counties. It was noticeable that 2.4% of the sample were in the 'unemployed' category (0.6% in County Offaly; 1.8% in Meath). Meath had a greater participation rate among housewives (21.1% of total respondents) than Offaly had (12.6% of the total respondents).

Other categories in the survey such as distance travelled to course, advertising methods, other recreational habits, previous experience of adult education activities did not produce any significant points of comparison. But there was a significance at the .05 level in the reasons for attendance at classes. The two areas of greatest significance were:

- In County Meath 25.1% of the total respondents were attending classes for work related reasons while the figure for County Offaly was 17.6%.
- 31.1% of the total respondents in County Offaly attended classes "To Learn more about the subject". In County Meath the figure was 22.1%.

An analysis of this question by sex for each county revealed that:

- (a) Females in County Offaly were more motivated to attend classes for 'work' reasons than males in the same county.
- (b) In County Meath males and females attended in similar numbers for 'work' reasons.
- (c) Males and females in County Meath attended classes in almost equal numbers to 'get more out of leisure', but in County Offaly out of 29 respondents to this section of the question 96.6% were female while 3.4% were male.
- (d) 'To learn more about the subject' received the greatest response from males in Offaly, while 'To improve job performance' and 'To learn more about the subject' shared equal prime reason for males in Meath.
- (e) For females in County Offaly the main reason given was 'To learn more about the subject', while in County Meath the main reason given was 'Self Development'.

CONCLUSION

Having examined the provision of adult education and having analysed the results of the survey, the following general conclusions emerged:

- The most significant determinant of participation was the amount of earlier formal school experience.
- Participation in organised adult education programmes decreases with age.
- Most of the programmes attracted the younger age groups.
- Accessibility and proximity to courses appeared to influence participation.
- Outside of 2 miles from a centre the participation rate dropped considerably.
- There was a poor participation rate by the agricultural community.
- Three times as many females as males attended adult education activities.
- The largest single occupation group represented was that of housewives, with professional workers next.
- The advertising methods employed to attract people to classes did not influence greater participation.
- Previous attendance at an adult education course was a characteristic of two-thirds of the participants.
- Lack of residential facilities for adults to engage in further education was highlighted by the survey.
- The poor development of correspondence courses in Ireland was highlighted by the survey respondents. It was obvious that this is an area of educational opportunity which could be developed.
- Participants in the courses were drawn in disproportionate numbers from limited segments of the population.

The majority of these findings were in line with previous research as outlined in an earlier part of the study. In comparison between the provision and participation in the two counties selected it was evident from the survey that the Pilot Scheme in adult education in County Meath was successful in that it succeeded in attracting to its programme larger numbers of those with less education than County Offaly.

Other conclusions to emerge from the comparison were:

- That previous attendance at a secondary school was more likely to lead to participation in adult education in both counties.
- Offaly attracted a greater number of participants who had been to teacher training colleges and also attracted participants who had been to a Regional College. In Meath none of the survey participants had been to a Regional

College. This indicated that the Regional College in Athlone (Co. Westmeath) was of greater benefit to Offaly than the Regional College at Dundalk (County Louth) was to Meath.

- Meath attracted a greater proportion of unemployed and unskilled manual workers to its programmes, and a lot less professional workers than Offaly did.
- From the survey it appeared that there was a greater likelihood of the Offaly participants attending further adult education activities in greater numbers than Meath participants.
- The recreational habits and community involvement of the participants bore a great resemblance in both counties.
- From the survey it seemed that both counties would have to concentrate on redefining the purposes and forms of adult education in order to successfully improve participation by people less well educated. In Meath this was attempted by the introduction of the Pilot Scheme.

SUMMARY

To a large extent in both counties present adult education programmes are educating the educated, but this in no way diminishes the essential worth of these programmes. It does indicate however, that two major goals of adult education are not now being realised: only a minority of the population continue their education into adult life through organised programmes; and the ideal of lifelong learning is achieved only for a few.

(Note: The numbers on the tables and the references have been changed for the purposes of this article from the original study. References to appendices in the study have been omitted.)

REFERENCES

- (1) Census of Population of Ireland 1971.
- (2) Op. Cit.
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- (4) Op. Cit.
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POWER TO BRING CHANGE:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACRA NA FEIRME SINCE 1944

John Murphy,
General Secretary,
Macra na Feirme.

The development of any idea in life is not always the spontaneous work of a large group of people. Many people have good workable ideas. However, very few people have the courage, clear vision and ability to make these good ideas work. The origins and developments of organisations follow this pattern. The Irish Farmers Association, the Co-Operative Movement, the Smurfit Group and McInerney Properties are all examples of this. They grew because their beginnings were the ideas of a few individuals who had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve and then made their ideas work.

The development of Macra na Feirme was no different. The founding of the organisation in 1944 was the result of a marriage of the ideas of some agricultural advisers, some vocational school teachers and a few farmers. It was founded at a time when the main inspiration to farmers to maintain and increase production were the agricultural advisers through their Winter classes and the rural science teachers who gave rural science classes in the vocational schools.

Agriculture was at the time a 'Cinderella' industry. It was a victim of Britain's 'cheap food' policy of World War II. People stayed farming merely because they had no other alternative opportunity of employment. However, in the midst of this poverty an ideal and a hope prevailed among a few agricultural advisers and rural science teachers.

From their classes some of them formed discussion groups in which to keep farmers together. These discussion groups became the nucleus of the formation of the young farmers clubs in 1942 and 1943 and thus the nucleus of a bigger organisation, a national organisation — Macra na Feirme. Early initiators of the discussion groups and young farmers clubs idea were men like James McDwyer, a rural science teacher from Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny.

GROWTH AND NEW AGENCIES

The success of any movement is dependent on having its gospel spread to its members, potential members and potential supporters. In 1948, four years after the organisation's beginning, therefore, Macra na Feirme founded a fortnightly newspaper entitled "The Young Farmer's Journal". This was another good idea which was made to work and its eventual success was mainly the result of the work of Stephen Cullinan, a rural science teacher from Galway who worked in Athy.

He became the first secretary of Macra na Feirme and probably made the greatest impression through his dedication to the development of Macra na Feirme. The "Young Farmer's Journal" became the forerunner of the now weekly Irish Farmer's Journal, which is one of the most successful agricultural publications in Europe.

In 1949, another good idea was put to work. This was the establishment of the first Young Farmers Exchange Scheme whereby young farmers could go on an

exchange school to other countries. To-day the exchange scheme operated by Macra na Feirme has become very sophisticated and young farmers and other young men and women from around rural Ireland can participate in a number of exchanges to many countries of the world.

In 1951 the realisation of dreams continued with the formation of Macra na Tuaithe to cater for the needs of young people between 12 and 18 years of age. It was established that members in this age group had different needs which would not be catered for in the existing framework of Macra na Feirme.

Economic issues were continuously the concern of members of Macra na Feirme and often inspired debate among the members. Discussion of these issues often shortened the time that Macra leaders could devote to fulfilment of the organisation's original educational, social and cultural aims. The solution to the problem was to form an economic organisation. However, many of the leaders of Macra na Feirme feared that battles about economic issues would cause a split in the organisation on a party political basis. The fears were eventually overcome by the formation, in 1955, of a separate and independent organisation called the National Farmers Association. The organisation was given a new identity in 1972 and is now called the Irish Farmers' Association.

One year after the foundation of the NFA in 1955 a joint commission of Macra na Feirme and the NFA published recommendations for the establishment of an Agricultural Institute. To-day the Agricultural Institute has become a leader in agricultural research in the world. Another result of Macra na Feirme initiative and effort was the establishment of the Farm Apprenticeship Board in 1964. Its formation was brought to fruition after more than five years of work. Reverend Dr. D. Duffy of Carrickmacross and Dr. Bob O'Connor of the Economic and Social Research Institute were most closely associated with the beginning of the board. Now the Farm Apprenticeship Board has over 300 young men in training for a three year course of working experience and instruction leading to the qualification of farm manager. The board also has a number of young men in special training of two years as trainee farmers.

DEVELOPMENT OF MACRA NA FEIRME, 1944—1960.

There have been many changes in Macra na Feirme during its lifetime and it is relevant to examine these changes before discussing its present status.

Like all organisations, the strength of Macra na Feirme fluctuated during its history. The formation of the NFA in 1955 caused a great loss of members to the new organisation and drained the strength of Macra at that time. The energies of the leaders at every level in the organisation were devoted to getting the new organisation established and into action on behalf of Irish farmers. This left a vacuum and a weakness in Macra na Feirme for a few years. Macra's leaders eventually re-clarified the organisation's role to be the development of agricultural education, leadership training and personal development. These are the primary objectives on which the organisation is based on to-day.

In the early days, professional people such as clerics, teachers and agricultural advisors had many of the prominent positions in the organisation. They were elected to positions of chairmen and secretaries because the general membership believed that only such professionals were capable of having these positions. To-day the clerics, teachers and agricultural advisors who have the chief officer positions in the branches of Macra are a minority. The present officers would be representatives of the general membership of young farmers and other young rural adults of all classes and creeds. Many professional people are very involved in Macra na Feirme but their role is now mainly that of facilitators who help the members to fulfill the objectives of the organisation. This is as it should be. The

role of the University graduate should be to help others to help themselves. In Macra na Feirme we would like to have more professionals involved at local level.

Macra na Feirme was formed by men who especially wanted more knowledge and education about farming. During the 1940s and the 1950s and up to the 1970s learning took place through lectures. The programme of the organisation developed through lectures and film-shows. In recent years the trend has been to transmit education and training through involvement of participants in projects. In its early days Macra na Feirme was a male dominated organisation but to-day 40 per cent of its members are females. This trend is similar to the increasing influence of women worldwide since 1955.

MACRA NA FEIRME TO-DAY: FACILITIES AND PROJECTS

Macra na Feirme now comprises over 10,000 members in 380 branches spread throughout the twenty six counties. Up to 1974 there were few staff in the Organisation. One of the biggest changes occurred on the 1st of January 1974 when eight Adult Education Guidance Officers were employed. Each Guidance Officer is appointed to work with approximately 50 branches. The purpose of the Adult Education Officer in Macra is to train voluntary leaders to be effective leaders so that Macra na Feirme achieves its objectives in (1) Agricultural Education, (2) Personal Development and (3) Leadership Training. The initial reason for employing professional staff was to assist in the organisation and design of training courses for young farmers. We saw farmers as the consumers in the field of agricultural education and we saw that our role was to improve their skills and their efficiency and hence their farms.

The Agricultural Advisory Service and Vocational Schools were the main providers of training to farmers. We concluded there was a shortage of courses to train farmers in practical skills. We then examined farmers' needs and designed suitable course syllabi to meet those needs. This had some interesting results. One of the skills required by farmers was welding. To teach a person to weld in a short course of thirty hours one would need one welder for every two farmers. Most vocational schools had one welder. Hence the average school was not capable of providing a welding course.

The problems were similar in other skills. For a course on tractor maintenance one needs a tractor, a workshop and a teacher. In most counties it was difficult to get this combination. The problems were eventually resolved due to the efforts of all the educational authorities involved. Now a greater number of centres around the country are capable of providing a wide range of courses for farmers.

The role of the staff was to identify the needs of Macra members in a given area and then to seek the best combination of resources locally for a course. In many situations agricultural advisers, vocational teachers and master farmers were all involved in different sections of one course. Over one thousand young farmers participated in short courses of 10 to 40 hours duration each year since 1974.

We were worried from the beginning that courses like welding could become over-populated for the wrong reasons. They had an immediate appeal to young farmers. But there is no purpose in learning to weld unless you have a welder of your own and unless you really need to weld. The real need for most young farmers was to improve their ability to grow barley if they were grain growers and to get more milk per acre if they were dairy farmers. The question was how to teach a person who is already a reasonably good grain grower to do better. This led to the beginning of the enterprise projects. Each project consisted of a short course followed by a period of learning by doing and an assessment of the participants' practical skills.

Using grain growing as an example each participant grows ten acres of cereals and is visited and assessed personally in the field by an agricultural instructor. This method of learning by doing is not new. It is one of the central principles in our programmes and we have quantifiable figures to show that we are succeeding.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

It is difficult to train leaders because they must be given practical experience, they must be observed and they must be taught to observe other leaders. A large proportion of the time of the professional staff in Macra na Feirme is devoted to this improvement by means of Macra's leader training programme. The results of leadership training programmes in Macra na Feirme are startling. Seventy-six per cent of the present National Council of the IFA were members of Macra na Feirme. Indeed the leadership contests in the IFA often looked like a who's who of past Macra presidents and senior officers. The Boards of co-operatives are similarly influenced by past Macra leaders and indeed Dail Eireann has its share of past Macra men.

There are 160,000 farmers in the country from whom the economic organisations and co-operatives may choose their leaders. Yet, if history continues to repeat itself, many of the present Macra leaders will be the decision-makers in these organisations in a few more years. Everything depends on better leadership and we in Macra na Feirme realise that it is our job to train them and to help them to be better leaders. We are proud that we have developed a strong leader training team in Macra na Feirme in the past few years. This has been widely recognised and we now provide a training course for other organisations and institutions on a commercial basis.

It has been said that one of the greatest results of participating in Macra na Feirme is the most difficult to measure. This is the improvement of personal development of the ordinary member. We continuously strive to find better ways and new programmes to bring out the latent talents in every individual. The average member of Macra na Feirme would be involved for three nights per week in the Winter, participating in public speaking, drama, projects, etc. Commercial alternatives for past-times did Macra na Feirme no harm. They improved Macra by forcing us to develop better programmes.

The launching of the Development Officer Scheme by the Minister for State at the Department of Education, Mr. Jim Tunney, T.D., gave us our latest opportunity. Under this scheme we were given grant-aid to enable us to employ five extra people. These five people will be working in the development of three new services:

- (1) Farm Relief Work which provides farmers with relief workers;
- (2) Farm Partnership to encourage a gradual transfer of farm management and ownership and the final area we are developing is,
- (3) Our Farm Exchange Scheme to enable more young farmers to travel and see life and farming in other countries.

Increasing staff numbers does not on its own make an organisation more effective. The goals and the roles have to be clearly thought out and the staff must be trained to do their jobs. Mr. John Quinn supervises staff training in Macra na Feirme. The system of training used is in-service training. We endeavour to solve our training needs at our own staff conferences. To improve specific skills we send staff members to specialised courses.

Progress is all about clearly identifying a need and then tackling it in a practical manner until the problems related to satisfying the need are solved. There are many steps to be taken from the time one first gets a glimpse of the need to the stage that one solves the problem. Somewhere along the line most people fall down. The people who stay with it until they have succeeded are the people who get things done. They are the leaders.

February 1980

THE INITIATION AND EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF A MASS ADULT LITERACY SCHEME : THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXPERIENCE.

Dr. Aine Downey and Liam O'Dwyer

This paper is adapted from 'Adult Literacy Provision in Northern Ireland October 1975 to June 1977. Monitor and Research Report'. Submitted to the Department of Education in April 1978 for limited circulation.

BACKGROUND

In May 1975 the adult literacy sub-committee set up by the Council for Continuing Education "to examine the state of adult literacy in Northern Ireland and to make recommendations", presented its report.

Concerning the size and nature of the problem the report states (2.04), "If we assume that a reasonable proportion of the 1600 non-readers who have been entering society each year will take advantage of the opportunity offered by the B.B.C.'s literacy scheme, the problem facing us in Northern Ireland is a sizeable one".

As the sub-committee found that the existing formal provision (3.03) "is obviously inadequate for the needs of the province", some of its main recommendations were:

1. (5.03) "Fullest possible use should be made of the B.B.C.'s Adult Literacy Project . . . "
2. (6.04) "The Boards should be requested to make adequate provision for classes for adults with reading difficulties in each centre where adult programmes are normally offered."
3. (6.03) "Support should be given to a crash programme of training for teacher organisers, class teachers and volunteers but consideration should be given to the provision of more comprehensive courses".
4. (5.11) "Furthermore it is important that a research programme be set up immediately to monitor the B.B.C.'s Adult Literacy Project and related activities in Northern Ireland . . . "

In October 1975, the B.B.C. launched a campaign designed to encourage adults experiencing difficulties with reading, writing and spelling to seek help. It was decided, following the report of the adult literacy sub-committee that Northern Ireland should participate in the B.B.C. series 'On the Move', the Education and Library Boards assumed responsibility for the scheme in Northern Ireland and a form of organisation was established designed to unite the work of all those agencies already engaged in the adult literacy field while at the same time making provision for the anticipated increase in demand for help arising from the national campaign. The main elements in the organisation were:

- A central referral agency which served the whole of Northern Ireland;
- Area referral officers, one for each Education and Library Board;
- A team of organisers in each Board area;
- A register of tutors, teachers tutors and volunteer tutors.

B.B.C./ADULT LITERACY REFERRAL SERVICE

When the B.B.C. Adult Literacy Project began in October 1975, a central telephone line was installed so that people who needed help could ring up in

response to the invitation given after each showing of 'On the Move'. The Northern Ireland Referral Service, telephone Belfast 22488, was located in Belfast, in the premises and under the supervision of the Organiser of the Educational Guidance Service for Adults, and dealt with queries from any part of Ireland and a few from the south-west of Scotland where viewers received the Northern Ireland B.B.C. television programme. The day to day running of the service was the responsibility of the part-time co-ordinator, whose duties included answering the telephone and attempting to encourage and reassure callers; sorting requests for help and offers from would-be tutors, recording and dispatching them to referral officers of the appropriate Education and Library Boards at least twice weekly; keeping records for the B.B.C. and the Department of Education; and providing information about Adult Literacy Project for anyone interested. The service operated from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Additional times, one late evening in the week, Saturday mornings and Sundays for a few hours following the showing of an 'On the Move' programme, were operated but were eventually abandoned owing to lack of response. There was a panel of volunteers who took it in turn to answer the telephone when the co-ordinator was not on duty, and she was responsible for briefing them and for planning their rota.

Northern Ireland is divided into five Education and Library Board areas and a referral officer was appointed by each of the Boards to co-ordinate its adult literacy provision. The principal function of the referral officer was to contact, on receipt of information about a potential learner, the most suitable geographically placed organiser of his Board. But as the project developed the referral officers became differentially involved in a variety of other roles, some of the more important being:

- assisting in the selection of area organisers in conjunction with the Colleges of Further Education, where appropriate;
- allocating to the organisers and their centres financial resources made available to the project through their Boards and the Department of Education;
- ensuring, when necessary, that there are sufficient numbers of people willing to act as tutors;
- facilitating the training of volunteer tutors;
- arranging the payment of organisers and tutors;
- convening meetings of organisers and tutors;
- attending meetings of the Adult Literacy Liaison Group.

The referral officers were administrative officers of the respective Boards, with the exception of Belfast where a Principal Teacher was assuming this role.

AREA ORGANISERS AND TUTORS

Each Board appointed a number of area organisers whose main function was to make initial personal contact with the learners and arrange suitable tuition for them. The possible goals of the initial interview were stated as:

- to obtain information about the learner that will help place him/her with the most suitable tutor, and in the most suitable learning situation taking into account his motivation, ability and stability;
- to deal with a highly anxious adult in such a manner as to increase his confidence right from the start so that the scheme can help him with his problem;
- to suggest a suitable teaching programme;
- to be able to advise the tutor on any of the learner's specific abilities, interests or experience that may be used in the teaching/learning situation;
- to arrange for future meetings.

Despite the considerable amount of time spent by area organisers in interviewing and arranging tuition, many became involved in a variety of other activities. These included:

- arranging accommodation for tuition in consultation, when necessary, with the referral officer;
- recruiting people willing to act as volunteer tutors;
- placing volunteer tutors in the scheme;
- organising volunteer tutor induction and/or training courses;
- teaching;
- record keeping;
- monitoring progress in his or her area;
- advising on material resources.

In an attempt to resolve some of the difficulties which area organisers had been encountering in the initial implementation of the scheme, the Department of Education arranged a one day conference for area organisers. At this conference, which was held in February, 1976 and attended by all the area organisers and members of the Liaison Group, various problems were raised and solutions sought. Local meetings of organisers also took place in each of the Board areas.

It was decided to have teacher tutors and volunteer tutors working jointly in the scheme as it was felt that volunteer tutors sharing and co-operating in the work of the centres and in the tuition where there were no centres, would bring about a one to one situation quicker than would have otherwise been possible. It was envisaged that a volunteer tutor would therefore be involved in one or more of the following tasks:

- individual teaching;
- small group teaching;
- team teaching with other volunteer tutors or with teacher tutors;
- preparing learning materials;
- researching social sight vocabulary and language experience material.

In addition to the above tasks a teacher tutor could be involved in:

- diagnosis;
- preparing learning programmes for each learner in the overall group;
- guiding and training volunteer tutors;
- conducting pre and post lesson discussions with collective tutors;
- evaluating student progress;
- maintaining contact with area organisers and other agencies;
- record keeping.

Other elements in the organisation included:

- The Adult Literacy Liaison Group;
- The Department of Education in Northern Ireland.

ADULT LITERACY LIAISON GROUP

The Adult Literacy Liaison Group was formed by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland at the start of the project to overview the organisation of adult literacy provision. It was chaired by a senior member of the Department and met approximately every two months. The group had representatives of the main

interests associated with the work of adult literacy in Northern Ireland and as well as providing a forum for discussion between these interests, it published two booklets during the research period. The booklets, prepared by a working party of the group, were:

- i. *Booklist*, which noted materials which had proved valuable in use.
- ii. *Tutors Handbook*, which outlined the organisational framework of adult literacy provision in Northern Ireland and the planning of a teaching programme.

Other substantial matters considered by the group were conferences, publicity, a student record card and a 'Newsletter' for students, tutors and organisers. Much of the work with regard to the organisation and planning of adult literacy provision in Northern Ireland can be attributed to this group.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NORTHERN IRELAND

Apart from its membership of the Adult Literacy Liaison Group, and, indeed, any financial considerations, the Department of Education arranged a number of courses and conferences for various groups participating in the project. Most notable of these were the tutor training courses for teachers undertaken by a senior inspector of the Department during the winters of 1975 and 1976, which will be referred to later. Conferences arranged by the Department were as follows:

Conference for College Principals held in Ballymena on the 10th February, 1975;

Conference for area organisers held in Armagh on the 24th February, 1976;

'The use of B.B.C. material in Adult Literacy Training'. Lectures given by Lee Pascal in Belfast and Lisburn on the 18th and 19th February, 1977, respectively.

These then were the organisational elements of the adult literacy project, it remains now to examine the early implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Area Organisers

A total of 23 area organisers were appointed in 1975/76 and two additional organisers were appointed at the beginning of the 1976/77 period. Of the 23 organisers initially appointed, 7 were in Colleges of Further Education, 7 were peripatetic remedial teachers, 4 were secondary school teachers, 2 primary school teachers, 2 special school principals and 1 teacher in a special school.

Location of Literacy Centres

TABLE 1

	Coll. of F.E.	School	Teachers' Centre	Coll. of Ed.	Total
1975/76	25	8	2	1	36
1976/77	27	10	2	1	40

While most of the literacy centres were located in Colleges of Further Education and their out centres, the individuals responsible for the establishment and development of these centres were drawn from a variety of educational backgrounds and with differing experiences of adult literacy tuition. These differences, were in some way attributable to the immediacy of the situation which confronted

the Boards' officers, gave rise to certain organisational difficulties and partly contributed to the differing organisational forms of adult literacy provision in the province.

During the two year research period area organisers developed differing schemes of literacy provision within the overall organisational framework. Different organisers had differing types of problems, varying numbers of students referring themselves for tuition, tutor recruitment problems as well as time and distance constraints.

THE TUTORS

The total number of tutors who participated in the scheme during the two year research period is given as follows in Table 2.

TABLE 2

	T. Tutor	V. Tutor	Total
1975/76	73	292	365
1976/77	87	468	555

The table shows that there was a considerable increase in the number of tutors in the second year of the scheme. Of the 555 tutors who were in the scheme during the 1976/77 period 53% (292) were new tutors and 47% (263) were tutors who had been in the scheme the previous year. Of the 87 teacher-tutors, 77% (67) returned from the previous year, while 58% (272) of the volunteer tutors were new to the scheme. Over the two year period a total of 657 individuals came into the scheme as literacy tutors, 76% (502), were females and 24% (155) were male. All of the teacher tutors were or had been teachers.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TUTORS

An integral part of the overall United Kingdom, B.B.C. scheme has been the recruitment of non-teacher volunteer tutors. In this campaign potential tutors could contact the referral number and the B.B.C. referral agency would send the particulars to the person responsible at Board level. However, the policy for Northern Ireland was to use teachers as tutors whenever possible, the reason for this being that many teachers already had some training in the skills of teaching reading. Therefore, whilst Northern Ireland also operated a B.B.C. tutor referral service, the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards, through their referral officers and area organisers, were extensively involved in the recruitment and training of tutors.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education invited teachers already engaged in helping sub-literate adults to read and write to attend a pilot course in early June, 1975. The intention was that these teachers would form a nucleus of tutors to help implement the Adult Literacy Project in Northern Ireland. The topics dealt with on this course included:

- The organisation of the adult literacy programme in Northern Ireland;
- The World in Action film on adult literacy "A Well-Kept Secret";
- Making contact;

- B.B.C. materials;
- Teaching an illiterate, semi-literate adult;
- Locating and correcting reading difficulties;
- The Lawrence study;
- Practical problems.

In all, 33 teachers attended the course and a Senior Inspector from the Department of Education was in charge of the general arrangements. A follow-up course was held in September, 1975 so that the problems which had arisen in the meantime could be discussed and further suggestions as to the implementation of the programme could be made.

It was recognised that a pool of tutors would be needed in order to meet the expected increase in demand for help following transmission of the B.B.C. programmes 'On the Move' in October, 1975. Accordingly, in June, 1975 the Department of Education launched a recruitment and training programme by informing all primary, secondary and special schools, all Colleges of Further Education and Teachers' Centres of the project and inviting interested teachers to attend a two-day course. Approximately 344 teachers applied and 10 courses were held in various centres throughout Northern Ireland between September, 1975 and February 1976. The topics dealt with on these courses included:

- The organisation of the adult literacy programme in Northern Ireland;
- Making contact with the learner;
- The nature of the adult learner and in particular the quality of adult language;
- Experience and motivation, on which so much of the future programme would be based;
- The importance of establishing a happy and caring relationship between teacher and learner;
- The importance of the initial lessons;
- The planning and organisation of a teacher programme:
 - a. The use of language experience as an approach;
 - b. Word attack skills;
 - c. The development of sight vocabulary;
 - d. The development of comprehension skills;
 - e. Providing help with spelling and writing;
 - f. The diagnosis of specific difficulties;
 - g. The development of teaching strategies based on such a diagnosis;
 - h. The building up of suitable books and materials and other learning/teaching resource materials.

In anticipation of an increase in student enrolments during the second tuition year a further 8 courses were held between September 1976, and February 1977, and approximately 163 teachers attended.

Material for these courses was drawn from the Adult Literacy Resource Agency and the British Association of Settlements tutor training kits and various B.B.C. publications. However, much of the content was devised by the course organiser, a Senior inspector from the Department of Education, who has had a long involvement with adult literacy and the teaching of literacy skills. The film "A Well-Kept Secret" was also shown.

A register was kept of the teachers who had attended these courses and who were willing to become literacy tutors. This register was made available to the referral officers so that they could inform their organisers who could then contact these teachers as the need for those arose. Although many of these teachers did eventually enter into the scheme as tutors, some did not and a small number of these teachers remarked that they were never contacted by their organisers. Some of the reasons why these potential tutors did not enter the scheme would seem to be:

- Not enough students and/or too many tutors;
- When contacted they were no longer interested or available;
- Area organisers were not aware of these potential tutors.

As there was considerable area variation in student demand for help, it seems reasonable to assume that some of these potential tutors were never contacted simply because they were never needed. Moreover, as tutor involvement was dependent on student enrolment, delays in contacting some of these teachers were inevitable, and when eventually contacted many may have replied that they were no longer interested or available. However, there is also reason to believe that some of the organisers were not aware of the potential tutors living in their areas, although this cannot be quantified. In addition, one must also consider the possibility, noted by one organiser, that the lack of remuneration may have dissuaded a number of these teachers from participating in the scheme.

THE EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

As the training of tutors who were not teachers lay outside the province of the Department of Education, this responsibility fell to the referral officers and area organisers in each of the Board areas. Each of the Boards responded to this need, either by directly organising courses or with the Extra Mural Department of Queen's University.

Table 3 gives the total number of tutors who attended training courses.

TABLE 3

	Dept. of Educ.	Board	Other	Total
1975/76	62	78	52	192
1976/77	82	158	66	306

Department of Education refers to those courses undertaken by the Department of Education; Board refers to those courses undertaken or arranged by area organisers and referral officers, and Other includes those courses undertaken by the Extra Mural Department of Queen's University as well as four tutors who received their training outside of Northern Ireland.

Of the 365 tutors in the scheme during the 1975/76 period, 53% had attended a training course and of the 555 tutors in the scheme during the 1976/77 period, 55% had attended a training course.

THE STUDENTS

The total number of students in tuition in 1975/76 was 691: 359 of these students returned in 1976/77 and a further 578 students entered the scheme, giving a total of 937 students in tuition in the second year.

Table 4 shows the type of tuition received by the students:

TABLE 4

	1:1	Group	Both	Class	Not Known	Total
1975/76	259	298	86	0	48	691
1976/77	411	411	62	42	11	937

It is important to note that '1:1' refers both to a tutor and student working together either at home or in a room by themselves at a literacy centre, and to a tutor and student sharing a room at a literacy centre with other tutor-student pairs. 'Group' tuition refers to the situation in a 1:1 manner during a teaching session. With the exception of a small number of students, group tuition was centre based. 'Both' refers to students who were receiving both 1:1 and group tuition. 'Class' tuition refers to the situation where a tutor taught a group of students, usually 6 or more, with one exception these classes were held in literacy centres.

TABLE 5

	Centre	Home	Both	Other	Not Known	Total
1975/76	520	85	17	19	50	691
1976/77	680	157	55	28	17	937

'Centre' refers to the literacy centre which was the location of 1:1 group, class and both 1:1 and group tuition. 'Home' tuition generally took place in either the tutors home or the students' home. 'Both' refers to students who were receiving tuition both at home and at the literacy centre. 'Other' refers to other locations which were used for literacy tuition, e.g. a youth club, university premises, schools.

As most of the centres were located in Colleges of Further Education and schools, tuition was discontinued during the school holiday periods, and the tendency was for home-based tutors and students to be less regular in their meetings during these same periods.

In general, centre-based tuition was provided on two nights a week, but in some centres tuition was offered on three nights and in others on only one night each week. The length of time spent in tuition, which usually took place between 7.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. varied from 1½ to 2 hours. Most of the centre based students attended one, sometimes two, of the tuition periods each week.

It is not possible in this article to write about, and comment upon, all aspects of the literacy scheme, e.g. the role of the central referral service, the role of the library service, student non-starters, student drop-outs and problems in tuition, in conclusion table 6 gives an indication of the growth of formal adult literacy provision in Northern Ireland from 1975 to 1977.

TABLE 6

The total number (approximately) of enrolled adult literacy students
(the first of each month)

June '75 93	Jan. '76 399	June '76 691	Jan. '77 706	June '77 937
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CHILDREN'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Seán Ó Beacháin,
Principal,
Coolmine Community School,
Clonsilla,
Co. Dublin.

INTRODUCTION AND STRATEGY

Under the Aontas scheme of grant-aided Local Innovative Projects 1978/79 a submission was made to Aontas for funding on the basis that:

- a) some 15% of any year intake of pupils might be experiencing learning difficulties;
- b) few parents understand the reasons for these difficulties, and
- c) few parents realise the consequent frustration endured by both pupil and teacher.

It was argued that if the parents could understand something of the nature of these problems, how they are handled in school and the materials used by the school these parents might become more open to and more adept at, assisting their child at home. Furthermore, it was felt that such subsequent family involvement would motivate the child to great effort and reduce somewhat the often felt anxieties, thus resulting in greater learning. In 1978, all parents of pupils identified by the school at first and second levels were circularised; forty-two in all. The project was explained and there were five replies. Later on, Aontas granted their funding but due to a variety of unforeseen difficulties, a new effort could not be made until the following autumn.

In August 1979 all parents were again notified but this time they were told that the Principal wished to discuss the academic progress of their child. Forty-five parents arrived. The reasons were explained and what the parents would be required to do was outlined. It was agreed to proceed with the project.

I entertained the hope of having experts in such areas as psychological disorders and sociology of the family made available to the parents but decided against that as it would be vitally important that the speaker(s) would have on-going involvement in and experience of, dealing with such questions. Such a person, Miss Alice Quinn, Principal of St. Oliver Plunkett No. 2 Special School, Alma Place, Carrick Brennan Road, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, with expertise in these areas was requested to give three talks on the causes and consequences of learning difficulties. The idea that these talks would suit any parent in the area, rather than just those in our school was pursued by convening a meeting of the Principals in local feeder national schools and they agreed that they would inform the parents. They further agreed that an afternoon seminar for the combined staffs of these feeder schools would lend a lot of weight to the project. This was pursued but eventually only two of the six schools actually attended. The reasons being that 'A' school had now got their own remedial teacher and they could proceed as a single staff; 'B' had a qualified person, although not yet recognised or practising in that status and they were willing to proceed alone; 'C' school had a newly appointed Principal, four newly appointed teachers and two/three teachers just out of

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College. It was thus thought wiser to leave it for the time being. 'D' had a staff meeting on the 16th November a short time after the mid-term break and did not now want to go ahead on the 19th November. Schools 'E' and 'F' never had such a staff meeting as both Principals were 'classroom' people and were very enthusiastic.

This account of the Primary Schools' involvement raises quite a few questions on proper planning, leadership and attitudes.

STAFF BRIEFED

The following is a report of Miss Quinn's talk with the staffs in question. Miss Quinn who works at St. Oliver Plunkett's School, Monkstown brought along some equipment used by teachers in the school in their approach to the teaching of children with specific learning problems. Her only regret was that she could not take along more of this equipment and also some of her pupils in order to demonstrate some of their problems at first hand. She displayed a thorough knowledge of her subject and all the teachers present found her lecture interesting, informative and constructive. Miss Quinn issued an invitation to all to visit her school and observe at first hand how problems were handled and solved.

Some of the causes of disturbance and retardation were of immense interest. The theory that diet might play an important role was surprising to say the least. However, she instanced the case of a boy who was lethargic, morose, a loner, who took no part in games and stood apart from the lively activities of playtime in the school yard. It was noticed that this boy literally drank milk by the gallon so it was decided that milk be removed from his diet and the consequences observed. Amazingly, inside a fortnight he had come out of his shell and inside a month was taking part in games and generally mixing well with other children. No sooner however was milk re-introduced into his diet than all the old symptoms and behaviour patterns returned. The boy is now on a milk-free diet and has made good progress in all areas. She told this story to put teachers on their guard because of all the cans of drink, packets of crisps, sweets, etc. being swallowed by present day pupils it is very difficult to decide whether they may have a detrimental effect on children's learning and behavioural problems. Another very interesting piece of information to emerge from her lecture was that the ratio of boys to girls in the school was four to one and that this ratio held good for the child population as a whole. She also stated that at least 10% of the child population was in need of help.

Miss Quinn told teachers of patterns to watch for in children, things which could be symptomatic of certain disorders. The troubles caused by hearing difficulties was one area which was not always recognised. The troubles of left-handed children whose dominant vision was in the right eye was another. This caused problems in reading and writing and could be detected by the way in which a child could not keep writing straight along the left hand side of the page. She also instanced the case of a girl who was terribly handicapped by the fact that her brain mechanism for turning the picture coming to it from the eye right side up was not functioning. As a result she saw everything up-side-down and reading and writing presented almost insuperable difficulties.

Children of articulate parents were usually good talkers and often appeared in Infants Classes to be more intellectually gifted than others. However, these children often fell behind later when it came to reasoning and mechanical work such as were needed in Mathematics. Parents of such children who got glowing reports of their offspring from infant teachers were often at a loss to know how their children could have fallen behind as they progressed through school and were

inclined to blame the teachers.

Miss Quinn stressed the fact that P.E. is a very important aid to all children. It gives them muscular co-ordination which is so necessary. It also trains the hand to follow the dictates of the brain and the eye and helps children to develop mentally as well as physically. She gave a run-down on I.Q. tests administered to pupils on entry to the school. She also mentioned the difficulties in assessing the pupils through written examinations, the attainments achieved in spite of these difficulties and the concessions made by the Department of Education so that they could sit for Intermediate and Leaving Certificate. At the end of the lecture the teachers were unanimous that it had been a most interesting and informative lecture; "a really worthwhile exercise".

As a follow up to her series of lectures to parents in Coolmine Community School on Learning Difficulties of Children, Miss Quinn gave a further talk to teachers on the same topic at Scoil Bhríde. The lecture was well attended. Finally some teachers from Coolmine attending these initial talks suggested that Miss Quinn spend an evening with all teachers of English. This did take place on 28th November 1979. An average of 75 parents attended Miss Quinn's three talks.

PARENTS FAMILIARISED WITH MATERIALS

The second set of evenings for parents was confined to the parents of pupils actually attending Coolmine Community School because it was intended that they would go through the actual materials in use at the school as well as experience the actual methodology employed by the School's Remedial teacher Mrs. M. Franklin. The points and materials covered by Mrs. Franklin are as follows:

The talks were under these broad headings:

1. Selection of Pupils (Drumcondra Tests : Shonell)
2. The various reasons for failure:
 - physical and perceptual problems;
 - emotional problems;
 - low I.Q.;
 - illness;
 - dyslexia;
 - poor teaching, etc.
3. More detailed examination by Remedial Teacher in four areas:
 - a) letters and sound value
 - b) sight vocabulary
 - c) work attack skills particularly Phonic Analysis
 - d) comprehension.
4. Tape-recording of a pupil failing on a word-recognition test.
 - Analysis of errors.
 - e.g. confusion of short vowels a, e, i, o, u;
 - consonant blends not known;
 - e.g. br, bl, ch, dr, sw, etc;
 - vowel digraphs not known;
 - e.g. ai, ea, ie, oi, etc.
5. Teacher's Phonic Programme explained and abbreviated form of these exercises distributed to parents in a booklet with their particular child's weak areas indicated.

6. Practical Ways of Helping towards examination:
 - a) the essays
What ones come up most frequently. Get children to *relate* their experiences.
Use Radio, T.V., Newspaper for material.
e.g. Documentary on the Boat People / Kampuchae — "A Tragedy", "This is Your Life" — "My Favourite Personality" Report on Dalkey Train Crash — "An Accident".
 - b) letters
 - c) spelling — using evening paper
 - d) vocabulary — as above
 - e) hand-writing — Vere Foster Headline Copy
 - f) samples of Intermediate and Group Certificate. Papers distributed.
7. Help the child with extreme difficulty:
 - Social Sight Vocabulary List forms;
 - give illusion of success;
 - avoid inferiority complex;
8. Tape on Dyslexia:
 - What it is.
 - How to help.
9. Useful addresses:
 - shops to buy books in; publishers;
 - classes for poor readers.
10. How parents' attitudes help or hinder.
11. What I do in class:
 - a) S.R.A. Reading Laboratory
 - b) Phonic Programme
 - c) How I teach punctuation
 - d) The library
 - e) Reading Schemes
 - f) Written Work
 - g) Class Reader
 - h) Poetry
 - i) Homework — letters to parents
 - j) Listening Laboratory
 - k) Writing Laboratory.
12. Display of Materials used in class.
13. Parent/Teacher meeting.
14. Discussion of Problems as Parents see them.
15. Two Films:
 - "Speeding Up Reading"
 - "Comprehension".

Those involved found this a worthwhile project. Implicit in this report are suggestions for anyone who might pursue a similar effort and the lecture titles of the Course on Learning Difficulties are given below for ease of reference. On behalf of the School I wish to thank Aontas for the generous financial backing.

LECTURE TITLES OF COURSE ON LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

1. Possible Causes of Learning Difficulties.
2. Effects of Learning Difficulty on Non-academic Tasks.
3. Effects of Learning Difficulty on Academic Tasks.

1. POSSIBLE CAUSES OF LEARNING DIFFICULTY

- (a) Area of Intelligence
 - difference between verbal and performance items on I.Q. tests;
 - discrepancies associated with learning difficulties;
- (b) Area of Physical Development
 - eye defect; organic or neurological;
 - ear defect; organic or neurological;
 - motor co-ordination defect, hyperactivity etc.;
 - difficulty in integrating stimuli from different sensory channels;
 - unsuitable or inadequate diet;
- (c) Psychological Causes
 - anxiety, fear, stress etc.;
 - discipline necessary for children with learning difficulties as they cannot discipline themselves;
 - need for parental interest in boys with learning difficulties;
- (d) Environmental Causes
 - poor housing, over-crowding;
 - chaotic home life, lack of discipline;
 - poor schooling;
 - lack of continuity from school to school;
 - frequent changes of school or teacher.

2. THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING DIFFICULTY ON NON-ACADEMIC TASKS

- (a) Home Life
 - difficulties which ensue because of child's problem in understanding "position in space" and "time" concepts;
 - difficulties which arise from poor language development;
 - these children do not learn from seeing others perform, they must have a first hand experience;
 - guidelines for parents in handling a child with a learning difficulty;
- (b) School Life (social)
 - inability of child to cope with the order of school e.g. finding classroom, remembering to bring the correct books, waiting his/her turn, not calling out the answer when he/she knows it, etc.;
 - need for routine;
 - need for help in making and maintaining relationships with other children;
- (c) Social Life
 - depending on the type of difficulty the tasks that a child might find it impossible to do until a much older age than his/her peers e.g. ride a bicycle, climb a tree, hit a tennis ball, dance to music, etc.;
 - need for the child to develop activities, hobbies, etc. in which he/she can be successful;
 - need to gain independence in all possible areas;

3. THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING DIFFICULTY ON ACADEMIC TASKS

- (a) Different types of provision for children who fail to make academic progress at school:
 - Special Schooling
 - Child in a Special Class;
 - Child in a Remedial Class;
- (b) Usual areas of difficulty and some hints on helping the child overcome or cope with them. Areas covered were Reading, Handwriting, Spelling, Arithmetic, Poetry, Note-taking, Copying from blackboard;
- (c) Hints on how to cope with homework;
- (d) Hints on how to cope with the child's frustration at failure in academic tasks.

Further information on this project is available from the author.

1980 ANNUAL CONFERENCE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

Seamus O'Grady,
Aontas President.

In welcoming you all to our Annual Conference, I believe it is important that I should briefly review a number of issues which are relevant and significant in Irish adult education at the present time. 1980, the first year of this decade is a significant year for adult education in at least two respects. Firstly, it heralds the appointment of fifty full-time Adult Education Organisers to the educational sector, thus giving rise to the hope that the decade ahead will see substantial development and increase in the provision of adult education services. Secondly, however, 1980 has already shown itself to represent a period of financial cutbacks in public spending unprecedented during the past two decades. The challenge of this year, and perhaps the next few years, is, therefore, to determine how all of us together can reconcile these two situations towards the establishment of a strong adult education movement in this country.

I congratulate all those who have been appointed throughout the country as Adult Education Organisers and welcome those who are present at their first AONTAS Conference in this capacity. We in AONTAS welcome them into the field of adult education and wish them success with the task ahead. In particular, we look forward to co-operating with them and supporting them in their fulfilment of this task.

The advent of Adult Education Organisers into the system has been the constant focus of attention of educators since the beginning of this year. It is appropriate however, that AONTAS through this Conference should pay special tribute to the dedicated work and input in the past by C.E.O.s, school principals, teachers and many others within the education sector who have worked voluntarily and with deep commitment to maintain an adult education service for their communities. We recognise and pay tribute, too, to the enormous contribution made by various voluntary organisations in the field of adult education and the tremendous input made by volunteers with national, regional and local organisations to help meet the needs and demands of communities throughout the country. The future in Irish adult education is great but challenging; it will call for continued, dedicated work from the voluntary and statutory sectors, who will be required to work complementary to one another rather than in competition with each other. The appointment of Adult Education Organisers and the appointment of representative advisory Committees must be seen as a supportive service which will enable and facilitate voluntary groups to proceed with their task more assuredly in the future.

CHOOSING PRIORITIES

Financial constraints, while unpalatable and undesirable, should not however mean that the system becomes inoperable.

Indeed, they must be regarded as a challenge. However they are going to mean for us a great need

- firstly, to determine and choose the right priorities in our work and expenditure;
- to seek alternative sources of revenue for development, and
- above all to be totally efficient in the use of available funds.

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On the question of choosing the right priorities, I believe it important that we examine the quality and nature of our provision in adult education during the next few years as well as in the quantity. There is inevitable pressure on all of us in this emerging field to be seen to achieve results. One of the simplest ways to do this is to build up large numbers of classes with large numbers of participants and get involved in "the numbers game". I believe that all of us must also concern ourselves with a developmental role through innovative and practical projects and courses based on genuine community needs and that special priority must be given to projects associated with less advantaged members of our communities and our society.

Regarding alternative sources of revenue, I am convinced that there is no scarcity of funds from commercial and other sources for well prepared projects designed to meet community needs provided proper approaches are made and, while not wishing to switch responsibility from the State to the private sector, I think it is important that opportunities be given to interested enterprises to support adult education and, through such investment, contribute to communities and society as a whole.

However, while emphasising the inevitable fact that, nationally, we are in a period of financial retrenchment, I wish to state that I do not accept the present imbalance in emphasis within the State spending on education. Too little money is spent on adult education. I reject the recent directive from the Department of Education (reference F.39/9/1, April 11, 1980), recommending that adult education class tuition fees be increased by 40% with effect from the commencement of the 1980/81 session (as compared with a 16% fee increase for other courses) also and the emphasis in this circular that fees to be charged for adult education classes must "at least cover all of the costs in maintaining and providing these courses, i.e. costs of instruction, heating, lighting, class materials, advertising, etc." I consider this directive to be unjust and inequitable and likely to have its most serious effects on participation in adult education by the lower income groups of our society. The adult population, who, as taxpayers continuously contribute to provide an improved formal education system for young people in this country will, I believe, be excessively penalised through this directive. I reiterate the request of Paul Bertelsen of UNESCO, at our Wexford Conference calling on the State to remove all discrimination in education on grounds of age and urging that education provided by the state "should be made available on more or less equal terms to people of all age groups provided it meets their needs and their wishes".

I fully endorse this view and urge also that management of all educational establishments should open these institutions fully to the adult population — whether at primary, second or third level and remove all barriers which may exist between them and their hinterland community, thus facilitating desirable interaction between the formal education of the young people and the education of adults. I call, too, on educational planners in their design of educational institutions for the future to ensure that maximum provision is made, not alone for formal education of young people, but also for educational and other uses by the wider adult community.

In relation to educational finances and the Higher Education grants scheme, I urge the Government to immediately remove restrictive clauses from this scheme, such as that which states "that only at the discretion of a County Council and with the approval of the Minister may the recipient of a state higher education grant defer acceptance of this grant for more than two years". I believe that the Government should welcome deferment of these grants while young people acquire experience in the world of work and that they should actively facilitate and

encourage enthusiastic adults with work experience to return to the educational system towards establishment of a system of recurrent education in Ireland.

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

In the present economic climate I believe that one very important argument for a positive state commitment to development of adult education is the *economic* consideration. I think it is particularly relevant to refer to this point at the commencement of the Conference where economic factors are undoubtedly going to be of major relevance.

The potential of adult education to help the development of the Irish economy must be recognised by the Government. It is important to note that the Department of Education when issuing the terms of reference of the Adult Education Organisers included the provision of courses to develop skills for local economic development as one aspect of the work of these officers. Now, in apparent contradiction of this, we find restrictions on the workings of these organisers being introduced through this new directive limiting financial expenditure. Where is the logic in recommending that Adult Education Organisers educate for skills of economic development in mid-1979 and, in April 1980, issuing directives stating that if they do this every cost must be covered within the fees charged to participating students. The Government must not see adult education as something which will be provided liberally when money is plentiful and cut-back or restricted when money is in lesser supply. Adult education must be regarded as a central part of the country's provision in education generally, and should be endowed with the appropriate finances by the state. I welcome the announcement that a White Paper on education will be published soon and look forward to the inclusion of adult education on it. Again, I call on the Government during future education budgeting to allocate the necessary funds for adequate development of adult education in Ireland, and particularly for programmes aimed at *economic* and *social* development. Under the headings of economic development I would suggest that particular attention should be given by adult educators to such areas as: second chance education; education and training for development of entrepreneurial skills; education and training for management in the new technological age; education for a new work ethic in Irish society; education towards improved industrial relations in this country, and education for co-operative endeavour by communities throughout the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In relation to social needs I would suggest that priority consideration might be given, to some of the following areas and groups: early school leavers; the unemployed; young parents, particularly mothers; senior citizens; handicapped groups; community development, and adult literacy and adult basic education.

An over-riding consideration at all times must be, however, adequate provision for all socially deprived groups in our society aimed at eliminating social inequality. These are just a few of the important areas which, through active promotion from the state and active endeavour on the part of adult educators, could in the long-term have major positive repercussions for Irish society, and I would urge that they be reviewed and examined without delay by the relevant Departments of State with a view to providing the necessary support. Undoubtedly, some of the discussions in this Conference will centre on a number of the areas to

which I have referred. AONTAS, as part of its developmental role, will be happy to co-operate with and support agencies or individuals undertaking projects in these or other areas.

As 1981 has been designated as International Year of Disabled Persons, I believe it is important to refer specifically to the potential contribution which adult educators could make to this project. All of us in adult education should, immediately, initiate plans and proposals for programmes designed to create a greater appreciation of the needs of the handicapped as well as programmes which will be of direct benefit to disabled people. Here I will add the voice of AONTAS to those voices at the U.S.I. Annual Congress in January of this year which called for improved facilities for disabled students and the installation in our institutions of all facilities necessary to facilitate full participation by those who are disabled. (It should be recognised by adult educators that many senior citizens who could constitute a large part of adult education groups may be disabled in some respect.) As a nation, our record to date in providing facilities for the disabled has been entirely unsatisfactory and I ask for the future that educational planners and those planning public facilities of any sort take adequate cognisance of this need.

Many of the areas to which I have referred are points which AONTAS, through its Executive Committee, plans to discuss with relevant bodies and Government Departments. AONTAS has recently, again, written to the Minister for Education seeking a meeting to discuss with him important issues in Irish adult education. We have noted on the agendas and motions of other congresses that there are a number of contentious issues which still need clarification in relation to many areas of adult education. Amongst these are: rates of payment for those involved in adult education; rates of payment of travel expenses; the status of unqualified teachers, and questions relating to the points system in schools.

Serious consideration must be given, and action taken, to resolve these and other issues if we are to develop a strong and healthy adult education movement in Ireland.

I welcome the publication recently, by Mr. Eddie Collins, Fine Gael spokesman on Education, of the "Council for Adult Education in Ireland Bill, 1980". While having reservations about aspects of this Bill, and we have sought clarification from Mr. Collins on those points, I believe it to have been a serious attempt to give adult education in Ireland a new status and welcome it from this point of view. We hope that discussions which resulted from this debate and other recent public debates will contribute to a greater awareness amongst public representatives of the need for the development of adult education in this country.

Finally, I return to the issue of our Conference of this year. The theme "*Growth in a Technological Age: The Role of Adult Education*" is both exciting and challenging at the present time. It is our hope that discussions on this theme will give a specification of the objectives which must be borne in mind when shaping up the education system, and particularly the adult education system, which we need for the future. Many questions have already been raised about the need for flexibility within our education system, the need for re-education and re-training and the importance of preparing the individual for a much greater proportion of leisure time in life. This Conference will, inevitably, raise these and other issues for detailed discussions and, from our deliberations, I hope will emerge useful recommendations which will be valuable in guiding the development of our activities in adult education.

We express gratitude to our talented panel of speakers who will contribute throughout the Conference and hope that all of you will find the week-end fruitful and enjoyable.

REPORT TO PLENARY SESSION 1980 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dr. Fergus O'Ferrall,
Macra na Feirme,
Aontas Executive 1979—80

Arising from the Conference Papers and the general discussions this overview focuses upon:

- A. Some broad policy objectives and concerns for the adult education movement,
- B. Specific adult education activities;
- C. New adult education learning techniques, and
- D. Some unresolved issues.

A. BROAD POLICY OBJECTIVES AND CONCERNS

- Adult education has a major function in equipping people to take over the direction and management of technological change.
- Major structural changes are needed in the Irish educational system to facilitate the development of recurrent education.
- Major curricular changes are needed at all levels of educational provision.
- Human development is our key concern in approaching the change process; adult education must make a significant contribution to the development of truly human values, building new institutions and reforming existing ones.
- Adult education is central to the reform of our social institutions which control technological development.
- The goal of adult educators is to maximise human freedom, responsibility and autonomy: it should *not* seek to adapt the human being to an environment but rather enable each person to learn to control his life and environment.
- The benefits of technological development must be shared through wealth redistribution: "adult education should make greater efforts to help people grow in awareness and understanding of their world . . . and how it is controlled and for whose benefit".
- The adult education movement will have to fight for an explicit national policy on adult education provision.
- The place and organisation of work in our lives needs a complete reassessment.
- Adult education must apply the new learning technology which is available; trade unions, employers and statutory providers of training must be *flexible* in their structures and approaches.

B. SPECIFIC ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES (*not in order of priority*)

1. Programmes need to be developed in relation to the constructive use of leisure.
2. There exists scope for a massive development of voluntary and community work and adult educators will need to be able to provide the necessary training.
3. Courses in vocational preparation, especially for young school leavers are vital.
4. Adult education courses must result in an increase of power and control by the participants over their lives in three areas: A. technical competence, B. social awareness, C. social competence.
Adult education programmes in personal development and human relations are central to industrial relations and social progress.
5. More adult education programmes are needed to convert old skills into new skills relevant to work available.

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6. 'Problem Solving Skills' and 'Creative Thinking' are titles of adult education courses which should appear very regularly in our prospectus.
7. Adult education courses must contribute to the development of:
 - the co-operative movement
 - worker participation and control of the work place
 - the democratisation of education
 - the growth of voluntary organisations
 - the development of self help groups.
8. Adult education has a major contribution in the area of community and personal services which will be a major growth area for employment in the new technological age.

C. NEW ADULT EDUCATION LEARNING TECHNIQUES

Some criticisms were made of the structure of the Conference, and, in particular, opportunities for involvement by delegates. This poses a question: Do adult educators know enough about new technologies of learning? There are three models of learning in Human Relations training.

<i>Model</i>	<i>Suitable for</i>	<i>Techniques</i>	<i>Comments</i>
A. Didactic	Acquiring new knowledge, research	1. Reading 2. Lecture 3. Experiential 4. Discussion	Meaning external to Learner Passive Expert Centred Low Involvement
B. Reinforcement	learning how to do things, (skills)	5. Participation Training 6. Case Study 7. Role Play	
C. Experiential	learning concepts and behaviour models	8. Instrument- 9. Structured Experience	Meaning Internal to Learner Active Inductive Learner Centred High Involvement

The technique used in the Conference was that of a lecture followed by questions and answers. Copies of the lectures were also distributed. These all come from the didactic model. Were these techniques the best available to achieve the objectives of the Conference?

D. Some Unresolved Issues

1. "Full employment not now attainable" — are we to be optimistic or pessimistic about the contribution of technology?
2. Educationalists and policy makers need:
 - (a) to recognise the problems,
 - (b) to understand the issues and how people and society might develop, and
 - (c) to be flexible in meeting people's needs in the new age.
 Will the White Paper on Education contribute to this?

3. Will there be in future (a) work for an elite and none for the rest? or (b) some work for all but a great deal of leisure?
4. How do we change the 'polarised' attitudes in the face of technological change? i.e. Resisters approach (Luddite approach) vis a vis increased productivity (a) Are we seeking a centralised planned approach or a decentralised diverse approach? (b)
5. Are adult educators and broadcasters committed to the radical changes necessary if people are to win control over their own destiny? Is there a "new gospel" amongst us upon which we are agreed?

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 1980 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mícheál W. Ó Murchú
Aontas Director.

INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The period under review in this Annual Report encompasses the calendar year of 1979 — January to December. As in previous years the established programme was maintained and new areas of interest and activity were developed within AONTAS.

Services to members — corporate bodies and individual members — were continued and elaborated across a wide range of areas and activities including information and library services, day-to-day enquiries relating to facets of adult education in Ireland and overseas, and training, research and evaluation. These services constitute one of the major means through which AONTAS acts as a medium of communication and co-operation between all those involved in adult education in Ireland; they also act as a source of assistance to individuals engaged in adult education to develop their competencies in the field of adult education.

During the year progress was made in the following new aspects of the annual programme:

- the first *Draft National Directory of Adult and Community Education Agencies in Ireland* was compiled for Aontas by the Adult and Community Education Unit, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth;
- former Aontas-Carroll Research Fellow, Ms. M. Slowey submitted her report on "The Structure and Meaning of Women's Participation in Adult Education";
- the planning and organisation of the National Adult Education Week in September, 1980 was advanced;
- the role of Aontas in Consumer Adult Education as outlined in the Government appointed *Committee Report of Consumer Education Committee* was accorded positive consideration and response, and an Aontas delegation met officials in the Department of Industry, Commerce and Energy.
- Annual Conference was devoted to 'Consumer Education';
- preliminary consideration was given by the Executive Committee to AONTAS policy on 'National Structure for Adult Education'.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

£10,500 grant-in-aid was received from the Department of Education towards the secretariat expenses of the Association; this sum was an increase of £500 on the 1978 grant-in-aid.

A deputation from Aontas which included the Hon. Officers and the Director met officials of the Department of Education in April. The following points emerged in the course of the meeting:

- The Department is satisfied with the educational role of Aontas and the annual grant-in-aid since 1976 is an expression of this satisfaction.
- The Department requested a greater sum of grant-in-aid for Aontas for 1979 from the Department of Finance than the £10,500 which was included in the Book of Estimates.
- The current position of Aontas was made clear — no further sponsorship from Carrolls. Aontas looks to the Department to cover the costs of the secretariat i.e. establishment or administration costs, while an increased membership has been agreed for 1979/80 and sponsorship is being sought for projects.

- The Department was requested to allocate two of the fifty Adult Education Organisers announced in the Budget Speech in February, 1979 to Aontas to undertake information and research services and field work respectively.
- In the Estimates of Expenditure submitted to the Department for 1980 the Department was requested to make provisions for the appointment to the Association of two full-time professional Adult Educators to develop the information and research services and field services. Provision was not made by the Department for such appointment to be made in 1980.

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICATIONS

Three issues of the *Newsletter* Vol. 9, Nos. 1, 2 and 3/4 and two issues of the *Review* (new series) Vol. 1, Nos. 1 and 2 were published.

3,000 copies of each issue of the *Newsletter* are published and 800 copies of the *Review*.

Membership of the Association in April, 1979 was as follows:

	1979	1978
Corporate Members: Statutory Bodies	46	(44)
Voluntary Bodies	45	(69)
Other Bodies	34	
Individual Members	130	(97)

STUDY TOURS

Twenty-three adults and two children took part in the educational study tour of Austria. The Aontas group joined with the group from the People's College, Dublin for the two week visit in July. Members of the Executive Committee were invited to visit the European Parliament in Luxembourg from the 28th February to 2nd March by the Irish Office of the European Parliament in connection with the first direct elections to the European Parliament. Thirty-six Americans, under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin — Extension participated in a week's educational study tour of Ireland in August. This was the ninth such study tour organised by Aontas in association with the University of Wisconsin—Extension. Aontas was awarded travel study grants by UNESCO to enable four of its members to study adult education in France and West Germany in 1979/80. Travel costs are paid by UNESCO and the participants are responsible for other costs.

ADULT LITERACY

Aontas approved the project prepared by the National Adult Literacy Agency for submission to the Irish National Commission for UNESCO. The project was intended to secure funding from UNESCO for a National Adult Literacy Centre. It is understood the Irish National Commission for UNESCO, at the end of the period under review in this report, had not endorsed the NALA project. Projects being submitted to UNESCO for the purpose of funding are required to be endorsed by the respective National Commission for UNESCO.

Work was begun by NALA on a Constitution for the Agency. It is expected that the *National Directory of Adult and Community Education Agencies* will include a list of adult literacy agencies in the country. Mr. B. Conway, member of the Aontas Executive Committee 1979/80, acts as liaison officer between AONTAS and NALA.

COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee met on twelve occasions in 1979. In reviewing the work of the sub-Committees the Executive Committee re-named the General Purposes sub-Committee as the Finance and General Purposes sub-Committee; the Working Party on the European Community and the Working Party on Adult Consumer Education were absorbed into the Research and Development sub-Committee.

ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEES

Aontas was represented at and made contributions to seminars and conferences at home and abroad during the period under review.

Aontas continues to be a member of the following overseas organisations:

- European Bureau of Adult Education (EBAE),
- International Council for Adult Education (ICAE),
- International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations (IFWEA)

Aontas is represented by Mrs. S. Conroy on the Adult Education Advisory sub-Committee, City of Dublin VEC, and by Mr. S. Carton on the Adult Education Advisory sub-Committee, Co. Kildare VEC.

AONTAS ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES

Co. Monaghan VEC hosted the Aontas Annual Lecture Series in Monaghan 1979 to which Aontas contributed £200 grant. The theme was "Ireland : The Challenge of the 1980s". The speakers were as follows: Rev. Prof. Liam Ryan; Mr. Austin Currie, S.D.L.P.; Dr. D. F. O'Callaghan; Mr. Liam Connellan; Mr. Paddy Lane and Rev. D. Wilson.

HEAD OFFICE AND STAFF

In December 1978 Head Office was moved from 62 Wellington Road, Dublin 4 to 14 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2, for an initial period of 2 years with an option of a further nine months. Aontas library is located in Head Office. During the year Ms. Mary Donnelly, Executive Assistant who joined the staff as Clerical Officer in 1975 tendered her resignation. The position of Clerical Officer was filled and vacated on four different occasions in 1979.

INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION WEEK

Education Agencies are investing time, energy and money in informing the adult population about their services. This investment is meeting with a positive response as increased numbers of adults take part in the adult education services. The proposed National Adult Education Week, September 1980 was initiated by Aontas with a view to further assisting the adult population to become aware of what the adult education services offer. Aontas Head Office will promote the Week essentially by means of a National Media Information promotion. Member organisations will promote their services in a co-ordinated manner in their own communities.

The amount of research being conducted into adult education in Ireland is minimal, and if the Adult Education Movement is to advance, develop and innovate greater attention must be given, in particular to Action Research Projects. The Research and Development sub-Committee is preparing a paper on priority research topics. Based on the research findings available in Ireland, there is no

doubt about the necessity for the establishment of an Information, Guidance and Counselling Service for adults.

This service would benefit different types of adults:

- the person who is unaware of adult education services;
- the person who has some motivation but is confused by the range of choice;
- the person who has participated in adult education service and now requires guidance/counselling on a short or long term basis about further courses and activities;
- the person who wishes to plan a self-learning sequence and requires some assistance.

WHITE PAPER

The occasion of the publication of a White Paper on education affords an opportunity to give adult education its due status in Ireland, namely, stating that it is to be an integral part of the country's educational services. The realistic expectation within the Adult Education Movement in Ireland should not be dashed when a comprehensive and forward looking statement on education is being enunciated. It is essential in these times that the development thrust of a White Paper shows the inter-relationships within our educational system. A White Paper on Education which does not include adult education as an integral part is a truncated document and an incomplete statement nowadays. There is a great need for a Government Policy on adult education; each successive year without such a policy being articulated accentuates this point.

ENLARGED LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The establishment of the National Council for Educational Awards, NCEA and of An Chomhairle Oiliuna Talmhaiochta, ACOT, on a statutory basis, further enlarged the legal framework which has a direct bearing on adult and continuing education and training. ACOT, through its National and Regional structure, will develop and enhance the role of education, training and research in the agricultural sector which is pivotal to our social, economic and cultural development.

Specifically in regard to recurrent Education, Aontas welcomed the "Discussion Document on an NCEA Award Structure for Recurrent Education". The emphasis on enlarging access to educational opportunities for adults, leading to certification by means of an accumulation of credits is especially significant. Quantifying relevant work experience in relation to recurrent education is an important factor in motivating and encouraging participation.

COMMENTARY

AONTAS AND THE SENATE

Depending upon one's perspective and perception 1979 will be remembered in a variety of ways by different organisations and individuals. Much of the work of Aontas during the year was conducted quietly by telephone, letter writing, meetings and personal contact in continuing the services to members. At national level Aontas continued its work in creating a positive awareness among the public and public representatives of the value of Adult Education to the individual, community and national development. The member - servicing role of Aontas and its national role were fully acknowledged in the historic debate on Adult Education in the Senate on 21st November, 1979.

Senator Professor John A. Murphy moved the motion: "That Seanad Eireann calls on the Government to formulate a policy on Adult Education, provide a comprehensive adult education service with adequate funding and resources, and identify priorities in the development of adult education within the Government's development plan".

Senator Gemma Hussey seconded the motion. The Minister for Education Mr. John Wilson, T.D. was present and replied to the debate, underlining the various institutions and agencies in adult education and among other matters, the appointment of the new Adult Education Organisers. The debate was informative, constructive and wide-ranging and it underlined the key role being played by Aontas in promoting and developing the Adult Education Movement in Ireland today.

ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISERS.

The announcement of the proposed appointment of fifty Adult Education Organisers by the Minister for Education was a major development and marked a substantial increase in the provision of full-time professional adult educators appointed within the Vocational Education Committees: the organisers work with an Adult Education Advisory sub-Committee and promote and develop the Adult Education services in their administrative areas. Aontas is already involved in co-operating with the organisers and their Advisory sub-Committees and looks forward to being further associated with them and their work.

NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

The *National Understanding for Economic and Social Development*, July 1979 included various facets of education and adult education within its deliberations and conclusions.

The "Summary Report on Conclusions of Government — ICTU Working Parties" refer to 'Education and Training' as follows:

"The Government recognise the fundamental importance of further development of the education system to the future well-being of the country and, as far as possible, will provide additional real resources for this sector. The Government reaffirm their policy of giving priority to primary and second level in the allocation of resources for education. Greater emphasis needs to be placed in particular on scientific and technological education. The machinery for consultation with the various educational interests at each level will be improved. Services in the Adult Education Sector will also be developed. A study will be undertaken of the value of educational broadcasting at all levels from primary to adult education. The Government recognise the need of the educationally disadvantaged pupils and will give priority to their education in the allocation of funds within the sector. The Exchequer contribution for trade union education and advisory services should be increased."

Education and training set in the context of the *National Understanding* marked a new departure in national development policy in Ireland. In 1979 the process of setting up a Working Group on the International Labour Office Convention No. 140 on paid educational leave was initiated by the Minister for Labour, Mr. Gene Fitzgerald, T.D. The Working Group on which Aontas is represented is to make proposals for future policy on paid educational leave so as to enable the Government to take a decision on the question of ratifying the ILO Convention. The principle of the Convention has been accepted by the Government.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

In 1976 the Department of Education paid its first grant-in-aid of £10,000 to Aontas; this figure was increased to £10,500 in 1979 and to £15,000 in 1980. The almost fifty percent increase in the current year is particularly welcome in the light of the present difficult budgetary position. However, to continue the services to members at the existing level, it will be necessary for the Government and the Department of Education to make provisions for the payment of a grant-in-aid in 1981 adequate to cover, as a minimum, the administrative costs of the Association. Recent developments in the adult education, especially the appointment of full-time personnel in the field by statutory and voluntary agencies have significantly increased the level of servicing to member organisations by Head Office staff of three — Director, Executive Assistant and Clerical Officer. Obviously, additional professional and secretarial staff are required at Head Office to enable the growing demand on services to members to be adequately planned and carried through.

The financial position of Aontas was discussed by member organisations during the year. The Borough of Sligo VEC is to be congratulated for initiating support towards the adequate funding of Aontas by the Department of Education. The support of the Association of Principals of Vocational Schools in this connection was much appreciated also.

Longer term planning within Aontas in a national context has been necessary for some time and is more necessary now as increasing demands are made on Aontas services. It is hoped and anticipated that 1981 will usher in the framework, financial and otherwise, that will mark a strengthened Government commitment to Aontas enabling the Association to plan with greater confidence toward the requirements and tasks of *today and tomorrow*.

CONCLUDING NOTE

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Officers and members of the Executive, and members of the sub-Committees for their unfailing co-operation, assistance and courtesy throughout 1979. You, the members of Aontas — corporate and individual — are the National Association and I express my gratitude to you for your interest in and commitment to Aontas.

Go raibh barr feabhais áir ar saothar i gcónaí.

BOOK REVIEWS

IRELAND GREEN: Social Planning and Rural Development, Harry Bohan, Veritas Publications, Dublin 1979, viii + 115p. £2.97.

For the past decade or so Fr. Harry Bohan has been making a practical and significant contribution to rural development in the West of Ireland. He is best known for his work with the Rural Housing Organisation, a private limited company based at Shannon. Founded in 1972 the RHO has now over 800 houses either completed, under construction or in the planning stages and these are spread over 50 villages in eight counties. Here we have the clue to Fr. Bohan's philosophy of rural development: revitalise the villages. Why? Because, he argues, Irish villages form focal points and socio-economic centres for their hinterland populations; village life provides for smaller communities, face to face contacts, and informal relationships, opportunities for self-help, institutions which will be closer to the people (e.g. schools) and the basis for a truly Christian society — the ultimate objective of all development.

In this short book — 16 thin chapters — Fr. Bohan elaborates on this concept of rural social planning in the context of examining various development initiatives, analysing his own experiences and offering a critique of official policies and procedures. To illustrate the role of the voluntary organisations he takes the example of Muintir na Tire and concludes that while Muintir has had a special place in rural community development it has been handicapped by a lack of recognition and support from statutory agencies. Muintir has also been expected — by whom, the author does not say — to tackle projects which could only be realistically taken on by organisations with expertise and capital. Curiously, however, another approach to community development described in the book, this time by the statutory Shannon Development Company to involve local people in its planning activities, was deemed to be hampered by deficiencies on the voluntary side. There was little co-ordination between community groups, they had no vision as to what constituted a development programme for their local area, sectional interests rarely coalesced into a community organisation and people over-stressed what an official body could do for them and underestimated what they could do for themselves. Clearly, there are problems to be solved in both the statutory and voluntary sectors before an effective partnership between them can be established.

In any case, perhaps development efforts are most successful when they make a tangible response to people's needs. For, in describing the RHO's activities Fr. Bohan concludes that 'given the right catalyst, small communities have the resources within them to generate their own initiatives and solutions' (p.50). Choosing one village as an illustration, he tells how the RHO's initial move in building 24 houses was followed up by a series of projects in industry, recreation and services resulting in the rejuvenation of the local community.

But this is not the only kind of follow-up that Fr. Bohan wants to see. Housing provision simply creates the 'functional group' interacting for the principal purposes of daily life but residential communities should, ideally, be 'moral groups'. Such groups are characterised by a high content of mutual concern for the needs of group members, mutual aid and trust. Politically, moral groups can be organised to achieve material needs and to counterbalance unequal distributions of power. To achieve the transition from functional to moral group a community needs external support and Fr. Bohan describes an experiment with this process. In one village group leaders ran a series of discussion groups focussed on younger married couples and dealing with family needs, family development and com-

munity issues. Essentially, this was seen as an exercise in Christian renewal based on the premise that material development — especially if centrally planned — was not sufficient for human needs, and that people should have a deeper meaning to their lives. In the case reported these discussion groups in turn resulted in the strengthening of community leadership and new development projects. In this way, rural development and pastoral work are brought together with adult education.

Given this perspective on social planning it is not surprising that few of the national development institutions escape criticism in *Ireland Green*. While agreeing with the general tenor one could question specific arguments. For example, a Government statement (referred to but unquoted) to the effect that 'policy would aim for the maximum spread of development and so minimise population dislocation' could hardly be described as accepting the Buchanan proposal to concentrate on growth centres. Non-agricultural employment, it is suggested, has been concentrated in towns. True, but there has been considerable population renewal in rural areas, as the latest census figures show. Perhaps the author's views are unduly influenced by the position in Clare where the western half of the country continued to show population decline despite the general resurgence elsewhere. Parliament is rightly criticised for a failure to provide serious debate on rural development issues. Even Mother Church does not escape Fr. Bohan's censure. In Ireland the Church's social teaching generally has reflected the condemnations of other ideologies in the social encyclicals but it has not gone about the more positive task of adapting the Christian message to practical problems of development at home.

The author of *Ireland Green* is clear on where he stands. He is rejecting the compartmentalisation of religion away from economic life; he wants smallness and simplicity instead of bigness and complexity; and he wants a society which will focus its values away from consumerism and towards service to fellow human beings. His perspective is as much a theology of progress as a theory of rural development, as much a matter of personal faith as a proposition for empirical testing, and as much a concern for the preservation of the Church's constituency as for the material well-being of the rural population. Is it all possible? It is true, as he notes, that there is some rejection of inherited institutions and that new movements are emerging in response to human needs, often spiritual needs. In this context it seems certain he would interpret as the nihilistic response those current reports that among young Americans suicide is now the number two cause of death — after accidents. The dominant trends of western economic development are being questioned. And one cannot lightly dismiss the author's own practical experiences in validating his views. Yet there is a pervasive tension between his model of development on the one hand, and, on the other hand, his advocacy of individual initiative, efficiency and private enterprise — all pillars of our un-Christian acquisitive society. Like other proponents of the 'rural way of life', he is not always explicit about what its desirable values are. By contrast, one could compile a litany of rural traits from various points in the book, all of which, he implies, we would do well to abandon altogether. Take for example: "... if preferences such as that for leisure do not disappear as rapidly as new material desires arise, the resulting disharmony could make economic development difficult" (p.67); or the point that traditional forms of rural community co-operation discouraged technological innovation (p.67). Also deprecated are rural attitudes to risk-taking and farm management, together with low aspirations for economic achievement and the widespread distrust and jealousy of the successful local lad. Part of the problem here is a loose treatment or even confusion of what can be, admittedly, fuzzy concepts; 'individualism', for example, is regarded as a worthy attribute in p.1.

but, seen as a Celtic inheritance in p.90, it is a serious barrier to development. Basically the issue seems to be one of discerning how much of Knocknagow and the glory of the little village can be, or should be, preserved into the age of micro-electronics. Harry Bohan has written a provocative book. For this reason those conducting adult education courses relating to community development, economics or social administration will find his ideas a useful basis for discussion or critical review. However, those interested in a comprehensive account of the practical details of implementing local development projects will have to await a different type of publication.

P. Commins,
Economics and Rural Welfare Research Centre,
An Foras Talúntais,
Dublin.

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ADULTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND:
Report of an Enquiry set up by Lord Melchett, Minister of State for Education in
Northern Ireland (H.M.S.O., Belfast, November 1979, £2.00).

This short Report examines the background to adult educational guidance in Northern Ireland; looks at needs, with particular reference to the working class; considers major issues, suggests future patterns of finance and development, and makes several recommendations. The Report also reflects an attempt by its authors to come to terms with the relationships, and possible tensions, between statutory and voluntary provision. Indeed, the Report's very existence owes much to Labour Minister Lord Melchett's decision, in April 1977, to withdraw grant-aid from the voluntary Educational Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA) and to concentrate resources on the statutory Northern Ireland Further Education Service (NIFEFS). This decision caused such public protest — in Northern Ireland and further afield — that an Enquiry Team (comprising J. McG. Jackson, formerly Chief Inspector in the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, Professor J. E. Nesbitt, of the New University of Ulster, and Fr. Desmond Wilson, a Community Worker in Belfast) was convened. Their Report, presented to the new Conservative Minister, Lord Elton, makes additionally interesting reading in the context of an administration committed to public spending cuts.

Without saying so openly, the Jackson Report suggests that to reduce adult educational guidance at a time of high unemployment would be a counter-productive move. The section on existing provision argues: *"At a time when the combined resources of EGSA and NIFEFS fall so far short of what would be required to offer a readily accessible, province-wide educational guidance service to all adults who may need it, we see no grounds for concern that either service unnecessarily duplicates the counselling work of the other"*. (para 31). Such comment, and its corollary that the existence of two services provides "consumer choice", should be welcomed by an administration committed to "choice" and to a lessening of centralised bureaucracy.

It is not just at the policy level that Jackson argues for an extension of adult educational guidance. Need is clearly demonstrated in Section IV, where it is noted that any publicity by EGSA or NIFEFS causes more enquiries than either service can handle; that the introduction of new technology will force many people to change jobs or to retrain, or to seek additional education; and that high unemployment is a continuing factor in the need for educational guidance. As the authors say themselves, *" . . . we believe that the case for substantially enlarged guidance and counselling arrangements for adults is incontrovertible . . . "* (para 47).

Nowhere is this more necessary, the authors argue, than in working-class areas. A significant finding in this part of the Report concerns the limited number (7%) of working-class people whom NIFEFS estimate to be making use of their guidance unit. (No figure is given for EGSA clients.) Yet, 95% of the population of Northern Ireland live within 5 miles of a further education centre — a situation which calls not only for additional guidance units but also for sensitive and community-based fieldwork, the authors argue. They also point to the change in attitude which is required on behalf of some in adult education; *"It has been suggested to us that there are still educators who believe and teach that certain groups of working class people are inherently disadvantaged and should not therefore aspire to the full range of educational and career opportunities. The demoralisation of those subjected to this sort of attitude is understandable and it may give the providers of education an impoverished idea of what those affected*

may be capable of achieving. It is an attitude however which counsellors can combat if the adults in question can be induced to consult them". Leaving aside the notion of "inducement", this remains a challenge to adult education in Northern Ireland. Such sentiments also provide a framework within which the major issues can be considered. These emerge as integrity, confidentiality, professionalism, voluntarism, accessibility, client-orientation and fees. On the first and last two of these, Jackson is unequivocal: the need for integrity and confidentiality is fundamental, and guidance should address itself to the needs of each individual client informally and without bureaucracy. The charging of a fee is incompatible with the accessibility and informality which is proposed. On the professional/voluntary "mix" one senses a failure to grasp the nettle of the statutory NIFEGS/voluntary EGSA tension which underscores the Report. This is not to say that either service lacks professionalism — Jackson is not the first to applaud this aspect of the guidance services in Northern Ireland. Rather one wonders why the Report did not compare, in depth, the voluntary support given to EGSA with the statutory support given by the Belfast Education and Library Board to NIFEGS. From such a comparison might have arisen a perspective on guidance which linked the potential of the voluntary sector for experiment, informality and accessibility with that of the bureaucracies for structure, resources and financial support. Jackson notes the need for collaboration in Section VII, "A Pattern for the Future", in the context of a *"central agency charged with the task of co-ordinating adult educational guidance services in Northern Ireland"* (para 75).

Nevertheless, this Report has much to commend it. The commitment to a four-fold expansion of guidance units over a period of five years, to experiment and innovation, to the centrality of the client and to the continuation of the work so determinedly pioneered by EGSA are all welcome, as is much else. The recommendations to centralise co-ordination, information and training can, perhaps, best be seen as a rather unimaginative way of finding someone, somewhere, to dilute the tensions that so often occur when an independent, voluntary body paves the way for what is inevitably seen as insensitive intrusion by a statutory body. One senses, following Jackson, that the problem is not likely to go away . . .

Derak Ray,
District Secretary,
WEA Northern Ireland

BOOK NOTES

NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION AGENCIES

Aontas,
14 Fitzwilliam Place,
Dublin 2.
£2.50

First issue of the National Directory which was compiled for Aontas by the Centre for Adult and Community Education St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and with financial assistance from UNESCO. An overview of recent developments in adult education leads into the various institutions and agencies engaged in adult education in Ireland. Chapters include the following: National Organisations; Departments of Government; Agencies of Third Level Education; Local Statutory Adult and Community Education Agencies; Community and Comprehensive Schools; Voluntary Adult and Community Education Agencies; Churches and Adult and Community Education; Agricultural Adult Education Agencies; Employer—Employee Education and Training Agencies; Health Education Agencies; Broadcasting Agencies; Residential Adult Education; Training of Adult and Community Educators; Irish Cultural Studies; Adult Literacy Schemes; Periodicals and Journals, and Resource Personnel and Agencies.

MAJOR ISSUES IN PLANNING SERVICES FOR THE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS

National Economic and Social Council. 1980

Published by the Stationery Office and available from the Government Publications Sale Office, G.P.O. Arcade, Dublin 1. The authors of the report, Pauline Faughnan and Sile O'Connor, present a thorough and probing account of the topic under the following headings: Handicap in Ireland; Identification and Classification of Handicap; Education and the Handicapped Child; Employment and Training Opportunities; Community Services; Income Maintenance Services; Residential Care Services; Mobility; Preventive aspects and conclusions.

Christina Murphy

SCHOOL REPORT

Ward River Press, Swords, Co. Dublin 1980. £2.20

This guide to Irish Education by the Education Correspondent of *The Irish Times* is intended for parents, students and teachers. The book provides a useful, practical introduction to, and description of Irish education and includes a brief historical outline along with chapters describing the various aspects and levels of Irish education. Readers interested in the educational system *per se* or in specific aspects of the system will find a wealth of up-to-date information in *School Report*. Ms. Murphy is to be congratulated on her productivity and on successfully reducing a rather complex educational system to the size of the present book and in a language which is easily read. Adult education, however, is dealt with rather inadequately.

Brian Power

OLD AND ALONE IN IRELAND

A report on a survey of old people living alone. Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 18 Nicholas Street, Dublin 8. £1.75.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has carried out a major survey to obtain the views of old people living alone in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland on two vital aspects of their lives — the extent and nature of their contact with other people and their housing conditions. This report summarises the findings of the survey. These findings, and the extent of the deprivation they reveal, have wide implications, not only for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, but also for other voluntary organisations, Government and statutory bodies, professional workers and students, and all who are concerned with the welfare of the old and alone.

J. Sheehan and A.C. Barlow

FINANCING EDUCATION

Department of Adult Education, University College Cork.

This pamphlet contains the two lectures delivered at the Adult Education Congress in University College, Cork in February and March 1979. The lecture of Mr. Sheehan was titled "Some Issues in the Financing of First and Second Level Education", and Mr. Barlow spoke on "The Financing of Third Level Education — Two Roads Forward".

John Cowell

WHERE THEY LIVED IN DUBLIN

The O'Brien Press, Clare Street, Dublin 2. £9.00

This entertaining and informative book is essentially a guide to Dublin city via the national and international personalities who lived in Dublin city. There are sections on great writers, revolutionaries, politicians, painters and composers. With photographs. Useful both as a reference book and for adult education courses.

Sharon Gmelch (Editor)

IRISH LIFE

The O'Brien Press, Clare Street, Dublin 2. £11.50

A fascinating and original compilation of essays and photographs on the following aspects of life in Ireland; the physical setting; growing up in Ireland; the people and their tradition and looking forward. Contributors include: Sean McBride, Breandán Ó hÉithir, George Otto Simms, Joseph Raftery, Seán MacReamoinn, etc. Recommended as resource book for courses on various aspects of Irish life.

BALLYMAHON VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, CO. LONGFORD

(School Magazine)

Official Opening and New Extension 1980

A compilation of interesting and informative articles on the various facets of education in Co. Longford, with special reference to the Vocational Education system. A number of contributions also from leading national personalities.

European Bureau of Adult Education,
Nieuweweg 4, P.O. Box 367, 3800 AJ Amersfoort, The Netherlands.
NEWSLETTER, March 1980

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

Issue describes and analyses training for part-time adult educators and volunteers in member countries, together with related documentation and a section on new projects and publications.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS

Report of the 25th Anniversary Conference at "Het Witte Juis", Borne, The Netherlands.

Areas covered include policy making identifying needs, adult education legislation, co-operative planning and ventures in local adult education.

CONVERGENCE

Vol. XII, No. 1—2, 1980

International Council of Adult Education,
P.O. Box 250, Station F, Toronto, Canada M4Y 2L5.

Special issue devoted to "Women and Adult Education". Articles on participatory research development, employment opportunities, transition from home to work, women's organisations, and the changing role of women from various political economic and cultural perspectives.

BASIC EDUCATION, January 1980

National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2HN

Topics include the new 3R's, microprocessors, training for workshops, youth opportunities programme, literacy, numeracy and social and life skills, English language training, the workforce.

ADULT EDUCATION VOL. 53, NO. 1, MAY 1980

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

Subjects covered include, political literacy; pre-retirement education; lifelong education; continuing education; race and workers' education and a project method of teaching adult mentally handicapped students.

SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF EDUCATION
Spring 1980, Vol. 4, No. 4.
Scottish Institute of Adult Education,
4 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh EM2 4PA.

Articles include discussion of community education, literacy and numeracy, adult education in Scotland from 1968 to 1978, natural history, conservation and education./

SCOPE
June 1980, No. 34

A review of Voluntary and Community Work in Northern Ireland. Community Information Service, Northern Ireland Council of Social Service.

A lively and informational periodical. Articles include: Industrial Change in South-East Antrim and Education Representation for Parents.

M. W. Ó M.

CURRENT PUBLICATIONS

PRESENT IMPERFECT

Discussion paper on the difficulties confronting the public adult education service, in preparation for a full report to be published at the end of 1980. *Price: Single copies free.*

TOWARDS CONTINUING EDUCATION

Discussion paper outlining Council's initial approach to the development of continuing education policies and practices, in preparation for a full study to be published early in 1981. *Price: Single copies free.*

SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Discussion paper on the relatively low provision of science courses in adult education and possible approaches to changing this, in preparation for a fuller study to be published in 1981. *Price: Single copies free*

AFTER EXPANSION: A TIME FOR DIVERSITY

Personal contribution by Richard Hoggart to the debate on developments in university education for adults. *Price: 50 pence post free*

TO MAKE CONTINUING EDUCATION A REALITY

Personal paper by Professor Naomi McIntosh on making continuing education a reality. *Price: 50 pence post free*

ADULT STUDENTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Personal account by Professor H. A. Jones and Katherine E. Williams on the present state of adult student access to further and higher education in Britain. *Price: £1.50 post free*

A STRATEGY FOR THE BASIC EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Report commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on national policy proposals. *Price: £1.50 post free*

LINKS TO LEARNING

Report on educational information, advisory and counselling services for adults. *Price: £1.50 post free*

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Report of a survey of the numbers, types and functions of LDCs currently in existence. *Price: Single copies free*

INTER-AUTHORITY FREE TRADE AND FEE RECOUPMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Report of a survey of current arrangements in respect of non-vocational adult education courses. *Price: Single copies free*

COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN THE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Information report. *Price: Single copies free*

ACACE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT (HMSO)

Price: £2.50

These publications and papers are available from Council's Secretariat at
19b De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE.

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AONTAS REVIEW

An Irish Journal of Adult Education

The National Association of Adult Education

VOL. 2, NO. 1, 1980

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ISSN 0332-1568