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Editorial Comment

Ten years have passed
Ten years since the appointment of Adult Education Organisers with the inherent promise of a new era in adult and community education in Ireland. Presumably, this was meant to mark the beginning of the end for the old, traditional model, which was based on the assumptions that adults would learn only by night, only in schools, and take only courses offered in an arbitrary manner by local school-based officers, employed, like the tutors, in a part-time capacity. Now we had the first full-time professional persons employed in the field and so we could move on to establishing the professional, full-time, comprehensive adult education service which would begin to bring this state into line with its European partners.

Ten years have passed
And what has changed? Significant progress has been recorded in the areas of adult literacy programmes, daytime adult education provision, second chance education, community education courses and projects. There has been tremendous enthusiasm and hard work and effort; there has been a major input from voluntary workers. But unfortunately, at the end of all, it has to be said that all of this has remained unmatched and unrecognised by the official state agencies. The flower that blossomed so brightly in the wilderness has inevitably begun to wilt, particularly after the Great Education Famine of these later years.

In this edition, we have concentrated on the developments in adult and community education over these years and we have invited contributions from adult education practitioners, North and South. For the most part, the story they relate is not the tale of triumphal progress that it ought to be and only the naively optimistic would predict a future where, suddenly, the message has been received and the promises made good.

Nevertheless, in spite of and certainly not because of, state support, the most valuable work has been done. Foundations have been laid and, as has so often been demonstrated in this branch of education, when the decision is made to allocate funds to adult education, there will be maximum return on investment.
Probably, ten years will pass

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BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISERS

TED FLEMING

Congratulations and Happy Birthday. Adult Education Organisers are ten years old. It is ten years since the Minister for Education announced the appointment of Adult Education Organisers throughout the country. This provides a good opportunity to stop a moment and take stock of where Adult Education is just now.

Anyone thinking of the past ten years would do well to bear in mind that Margaret Thatcher is this year celebrating her decade in Downing Street. This is a relevant factor in commenting on adult education.

I am also reminded that I heard of these events which shaped the decade for many of us while studying adult education in New York during 1979. I felt excited by the prospect that fifty Adult Education Organisers were being appointed and that maybe adult education was on the verge of something big.

In 1980 I met the newly appointed AEOs at a seminar in Waterford. Them and me in a new career in adult education. Our new suits not yet frayed by the job, we willingly admitted that we did not know a great deal about adult education. All that was to change and much more over the rest of the decade. I became an AEO myself in 1985.

In 1973 and again in 1983, Commissions reported to the Minister making numerous recommendations for the development of adult education. In 1980 a Government White Paper made similar proposals. **The Programme for Action in Education 1984-1987** based its policies on the principal that

the education system should seek to make permanent and continuing education available to all citizens ¹

In spite of this there is no specific legislation on adult education. There needs to be a statutory provision stating the right of adults to lifelong learning and the establishment of structures which will bring this about.

On their appointment, AEOs very quickly discovered that they had no budget. They were appointed with great enthusiasm but without the money allocated to allow them to make things happen. This was made worse by the recent redefinition of what is meant by self-financing. Now it is here that Thatcher surfaces in the story. The only criteria in her policy are to minimise the cost to the state and maximise the cost to the

individual. The approach has spread to this country and financial rectitude rules. What makes the situation worse is that adult education is the only part of the educational system that must be self-financing. This strong systemic statement puts the life-long learning of adults at the bottom of the list of educational priorities in Ireland and places a disproportionate burden on the poor.

GLIMMERS OF LIGHT

There are some glimmers of light. One of these was the appointment of Adult Education Boards even on an *ad hoc* basis. While we still await the legislation that will give these a legal footing, the allocation to the Boards of a budget earmarked for Literacy and Community Education was a major breakthrough. Each Board and AEO uses these funds in different ways but, over the years, it is becoming clear that the \$400,000 allocation generates a level of activity that is out of all proportion to the sum of money involved. It is progress of sorts to see this allocation mentioned in both the Plan for National Recovery and the Book of Estimates set before the Dail in the autumn.

AEOs throughout the country have used these funds either to build a literacy scheme on a more professional base or to increase the range of courses available to adults in their own communities.

A typical example of the kind of activity made possible is provided by the community groups who have rented houses from local authorities or used vacant rooms in schools to provide day-classes, with the help of the AEO, in a range of subjects such as Basic English, Personal Development and Social Studies. Most of the students on these courses are from disadvantaged areas and reports such as **The Priority Areas in Adult Education** ² and **Live and Learn** ³ have identified the major impact of community education on the participants. The only journal of adult education in Ireland (**The Adult Learner**), published by the AEOs Association, provides a much needed stage to highlight these innovative programmes and examples of good practice.

A number of literacy schemes have used this budget to put their literacy scheme on a more secure and professional footing. Apart from AEOs, there are no jobs in adult education and the majority of literacy teachers were, until recently, totally voluntary. Voluntary workers have an important role in literacy schemes but only within the context of paid organisers and tutors. Modest steps forward have been made in this area though much remains to be done.

Space does not allow any detailed listing of interesting projects but it is fair to say that most of this activity would not have been possible without the advantage of a full-time adult educator in an area. This is an exciting

area in which to work and AEOs have repeatedly seen groups in disadvantaged areas making remarkable steps forward and take control of their learning and lives.

There are two major problems with this budget for Adult Education Boards. Firstly, the level of activity generated by the funding produces a demand for more classes, courses and programmes. Secondly, teachers' salaries rise each year making it impossible to match the level of demand and at the same time develop a comprehensive literacy and community education programme. Not only is there no possibility of expanding this service but it means that a series of cut backs is built into the allocation. The poor, as in Thatcher's Britain, must always wait.

Glimmers of light are scarce. The Educational Opportunities Scheme is welcomed by AEOs. Here unemployed adults can, without losing unemployment assistance, join a full-time programme that will provide them with a chance to sit the Leaving Certificate. It means that a few will have a Leaving Certificate. A few more will have a job but it will not change the conditions which cause unemployment. It will not change the conditions which caused half the adult population over 25 not to attend school beyond 15 years of age. We still await the expansion of this scheme beyond Tallaght and Limerick. This has been promised, postponed and promised again. Recently, at the Aontas Conference in Athlone, the Minister for Education announced the expansion of the scheme to all parts of the country by 1990. The years go by. The poor must always wait and hope.

A third glimmer of light comes from what some see as the fastest growing sector of adult education. Over the past number of years, an increasing number of women have taken up opportunities provided by day-time adult education. Many people, mostly women, are now ready and capable of returning to study and will not be satisfied with a Leaving Certificate, introductory courses, foundation programmes and endless collections of extra-mural diplomas. They want degrees. They want to study at third level. Though finance will be a problem, it is now time to find ways of breaking the restrictive practices of universities. The restrictive practice of confining universities to educating the young will have to change. It is ironic that so many in the universities who advise the Government and industry constantly, recommend a more flexible workforce — yes, but as long as it does not require a more flexible academic workforce! Women too must wait.

Even the hope held out by the distance learning programmes promised by the University of the City of Dublin (NIHE of old) are so long in being designed and implemented that the patience of many is at an end. There are reports and ideas on paper. Single subject certification for part-time

students is promised. Information technology degrees are available but are only one kind of learning. There is a real need for a liberal arts degree with emphasis on social studies, literature and history, etc. With so much publicity about the approach of 1992, it is time to lift the import restrictions on learning too and allow Irish students enrol in the full range of Open University degree programmes.

Glimmers of light have to be sought out and fanned into a flame. During the past couple of years Aontas has taken a few steps in some new directions. It has a new level of credibility as a forum for airing in an articulate and insightful way the major issues affecting adult education to-day. The *Aontas Newsletter* is more provocative. The annual conference is peopled by ground level practitioners. Students have a voice. Reports and publications are beginning to build up a body of research and literature on adult education in Ireland.

NALIA too has been hugely effective in putting literacy and basic education on a firm footing. Without it, training in adult education would all but disappear and its *Guidelines* for literacy work are a major contribution to the field.

People are thinking seriously about adult education. There is a change in the way adult education is perceived. Though this change is gradual, an increasing number of people perceive adult education as something a great deal more vital than night classes in flower arranging and basket weaving. IVEA and Aontas conferences, political lobbying and radio programmes all contribute to this increased awareness. This year the Teachers Union of Ireland published a policy document on adult education.⁴

It is not an accident that AEOs are active in and make a major contribution to the work of these organisations. Without the active participation of AEOs most of this progress would not have happened.

If this is a time for signposting successes, however modest, it is also a time for clearly pointing to failures and even making tentative proposals for the future.

BLACK SPOTS

Rather than make a long list of the areas where there may be dissatisfaction with developments, I intend mentioning just two, i.e. finance and policy.

FINANCE

Of the £1.2 billion spent on education in Ireland, only 1/6 of one per cent is spent on adult education. Included in this area are four major items :-

All day and night classes.

The Educational Opportunities Schemes in Tallaght and Limerick.
The Literacy and Community Education Budget.
The grant to Aontas, NALA and the Dublin Institute.

The day and evening classes account for about 75% of this expenditure. But according to the Department of Education's own regulations all of this expenditure must be met by students' fees. If teachers' salaries must be met entirely from students' fees and if the Government recovers about 40% in direct taxes from these salaries, it becomes clear that a profit is being made on these transactions!

The only expenditure not accounted for in this information given in answer to a Dail question is the cost of AEOs' salaries. So for a very small exchequer expenditure, a great deal of activity is generated. Rather than congratulations, we should hang our collective heads in shame that a government can get away with zero budgeting for adult education. It is time to make a case for and demand 1% of the total education budget for adult education.

As part of the cut backs of the present administration some centres have closed, basic facilities and services have been lost, fees have increased and most important a number of vacant AEO posts are left unfilled. Ground lost in adult education is only regained with great difficulty.

POLICY

Finally, let me turn to the area of policy. All the talk and discussions among practitioners about what might be done or what should be done is basically aimless and flawed if we do not have a national policy on adult education towards which we can all work. There is no policy. There is no direction. All we have is the next good idea without any discussion of whether it fits with a nationally agreed agenda as to where adult education ought to go in the next ten years.

Fine words can be written, speeches made and practitioners agree that adult education is an important instrument of social change. Without a well worked out policy, adult education will continue to take second place to instrumental or skill learning which will focus on training for jobs and a more competent workforce — all badly needed. Adult education will continue to be seen as hobby and leisure type courses with maybe literature or social studies included.

What will be forgotten is that adult education provides students with an opportunity to raise and ask important critical questions about where this society is going. It allows people to distinguish between public opinion and democratic participation. It will focus on changing social

and economic structures which needlessly disempower large groups in society. It will empower people to take an active part in the reconstruction of society in the interest of each and every person and not in the interest of the few. People would then know and understand what is happening in their lives and in society. This enabling and empowerment underlines what we already know — knowledge is power.

Adult education can let people discover why some people are powerful and why others are not. It can lead to discovering why some people must emigrate and others do not. It can lead to asking uncomfortable questions about why there is 70% unemployment in some areas and none at all in others. Complex and controversial questions like this can be asked and answered. It may even give people the confidence and the skills needed to act and change things. Is it any wonder it is not funded. In whose interest is a form of adult education proposed which prevents these questions being discussed and acted upon?

THE FUTURE

Adult educators dream. I do not mean the dreams of sleep but the dreams of wide awakeness where what is possible is constantly sought out. Adult Education Organisers dream of a future not too far away when the learning needs of adults will be treated seriously and supported with funding and resources. AEOs dream of a future where every adult will be able to learn whatever they need to know in order to lead a fully human life. Underused school buildings in every community will be available to meet and discuss. Public opinion will be formed in classes and learning circles throughout the land rather than defined in polls and surveys. Those who left school early will be able to return later. Adults of any age will be able to study for degrees. And more

Some AEOs dream of a free education system for adults. But all dream of an adult education system which receives a just proportion of the total education budget. By constantly looking at the balance sheets financial rectitude monopolises present energy and so attempts to abolish the future. Dreams reclaim the future. Adult education cannot wait. Let there be an end to the celebrations. There is work to be done. Get back to the future.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

There is now increasing interest amongst adult educators throughout the world in the role adult education can play in meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing society. Often the response is to be found, not amongst the formal adult education providers, but in new forms of community education. This situation is well summed up in a recent report in Australia on the phenomenon. The author refers to a quiet revolution in the way Australians and their communities are responding to the types of learning challenges being presented to them by the changing social conditions of the 1970s and the early 80s. 'One cannot but be struck by the extent to which traditional adult and community providers such as universities, colleges of advanced education, technical and further education colleges, state councils or boards of adult education, workers' education associations and the plethora of service based organisations such as YMCAs and CWAs, and so on, are being by-passed as people link up with, or fashion, their own community based continuing education capabilities'.¹

Generally speaking, however, community education has not, in Australia in the 1980s, developed a distinctive competence which demonstrates to a large section of the adult population that it can deliver, in some visible way, and to an appreciable degree what has so far not been delivered by the established adult education institutions and organisations. It does not provide a challenge to the power, prestige and relevance of established providers. Like community education in Great Britain, it is still marginal to the main provision of adult and continuing education.²

COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN IRELAND - THE RESPONSE

Northern Ireland is a part of the world where there has been a similar revolution in the way adults and their communities are responding to the changing social conditions of the 70s and 80s. How has it fared in terms of the development of community education? Does community education in this part of Ireland offer a challenge to the traditional providers of adult education?

Northern Ireland has been described as a society under siege, a society where there is a problem for every solution! The usual picture is one of violence and sectarianism. However it is, in fact, a society facing all the social and economic problems found throughout the rest of Ireland plus armed conflict and community division.

The situation is well summed up by a community worker in the Creggan area of Derry, a city profoundly affected by these changes.

'When I think of all the social problems there are I mean Creggan has everything. It's got poor housing. It's got people on low incomes. Those that are employed are on low wages; the majority are unemployed. When you're talking in terms of Creggan — widows, pensioners, single parent families — you name it we've got it. We've got poor facilities medically; we've got poor facilities as far as shopping is concerned; no telephone, no place to post your letters. I sometimes think that if we were back in biblical days and John the Baptist was running around looking for a wilderness he wouldn't go to the desert, he would come to Creggan! This is an estate of two and a half thousand homes and there is something like a population of thirteen thousand people. Perhaps the authorities are fortunate that the people up here have a certain amount of self-respect for themselves. God knows how they manage to keep this about themselves with the situation as it is. But somehow, the people manage to keep themselves together. Maybe it's a pity that people haven't lost the head a bit; that they haven't gone berserk and showed up the authorities for what they are — I don't know, unfeeling, inhuman, unconcerned. That's the impression we get up here; nobody cares, nobody's interested'.³

It is obvious from the above comments that many of the problems facing the working-class in Northern Ireland are similar to those found elsewhere in Ireland. However, in Northern Ireland they are compounded by violence and sectarianism. Some commentators see it as a society suffering from a vast nervous breakdown at community level, with the social fabric slowly disintegrating. This is far from the truth. The people are brave, resilient, humorous, friendly in the face of great change and adversity.

They have responded to their troubles and problems with imagination and initiative. They have been involved in various forms of community action designed to protect and regenerate community life and to tackle the social, economic and cultural problems common to both communities — Catholic and Protestant.

THE CHALLENGE FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

This process of community action has involved people from both communities, people with no politics as well as people with radical political views. It has resulted in the formation of numerous community associations, tenants' groups, community resource centres, welfare rights centres, women's groups, co-operatives, etc.

These developments provided, for a short period in the 70s, a bridge between the two divided communities emphasising their common

problems, their common culture. It even had some influence on paramilitary groups like the Protestant Ulster Defence Association. One of their spokesmen commented, 'We are aware that socially and economically we have more in common with our opposite numbers in the Republican (Catholic) side than we have with Loyalist (Protestant) big wigs. But how are we going to put this over? What formula are we going to find to get the ordinary people of Ulster to vote on real issues which concern them and not on the entrenched sectarian issues into which we are brainwashed?'⁴

A Catholic community leader echoing the above sentiment said, 'No matter what happens to the National question, in the final analysis the community struggle goes on, the struggle against the hopelessness and helplessness of ordinary people to manage to cope in a very complex society. We cannot separate politics from community action, no matter what we try to do about it, no matter how idealistic we may be'.⁵

This popular response in the 70s presented community educators with a real challenge. It indicated that community education for peace and reconstruction offered a possible alternative to violence and conflict by building a united working-class movement based on local community action. The response was wide and varied, e.g. community education workshops, community education programmes and projects, social studies groups, community work education forums, women's education projects, second chance projects. In the 1980s alongside these specifically 'educational' initiatives there are now a whole range of initiatives by voluntary service organisations concerned with specific issues and problems such as youth, welfare, crime, the elderly. They are increasingly adopting a community development, community education, approach to their work with an emphasis on outreach and working with people in local communities. Formal adult and further education institutions have, with a few exceptions, played no part in this greatly expanded community learning process.

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

However, despite the apparent strength and diversity of this community education movement there is a lack of clarity about its role and function which has hindered its development and acceptance as an alternative, but complementary, system to the more formal further and adult provision. This is reflected in two apparently opposed views about the role of community education, i.e.

- (i) It is about community based and controlled programmes for individual development and advancement.
- (ii) It is about community based and controlled programmes for community development and advancement.

Many community education projects are in fact about both, although there is a tension and conflict between desire for qualifications, training and access to higher education and the strengthening of local groups and communities to enable them to move together in the search for justice and equality for all. The former tends, often, but not always, to remove possible leaders from the community whilst leaving the social and economic situation unresolved. It provides a means of access to education and possible alternative life styles.

However, it would be wrong, given the limited access of working class adults to higher education, to deny them this opportunity to widen the range of choices available to them. We would suggest, in fact, that the majority of community education projects and initiatives fall into this category. What makes them distinctive is the involvement of local people in the organisation, management and control of such programmes.

Nevertheless, the second category is what really makes community education distinctive, i.e. using education as a tool for personal and collective liberation; assisting people to challenge the way things are; providing room for reflection on social, cultural, economic and political issues and problems; regarding education as an important resource to enable people to create a more democratic society and play a leading part in it.

What unites both of these approaches to community education is :

- A concern for the disadvantaged, for those who are regarded as education failures. They are, in fact, not a small minority but a large section of the adult population.
- A common process which emphasises the need to reach out into communities and support attempts to provide access into existing education resources and facilities.
- A concern with popular participation in such education programmes.
- An attempt to provide an alternative curriculum which uses the issues and problems facing people as the material for their own education.
- An emphasis on dialogue, discussion and democratic debate.

However, if those involved are to build an alternative, but complimentary, non-formal, community based, adult education system, they should start with these common characteristics and seek to strengthen them. There are a number of things they can do :

- Tighten up the informal network to provide something approaching an alternative system with opportunities to move across the system and gain access up into further and higher education.
- Provide more guidance for those involved as students in the system.

- Provide a means of accreditation for all those involved which takes account of different forms of learning and is not confined to examinations.
- Create more relevant learning material based on issues and problems for use by tutors and local people.
- Provide more training for tutors in the various skills, techniques and methods associated with community education.
- Provide more opportunities for tutors to share their problems and difficulties.
- Co-ordinate resources so that they can be used more effectively in the various educational programmes.

Such changes mean attempting to establish a collaborative process linking the formal to the non-formal provision and targeting specific areas or communities for joint work across the educational boundaries of numerous groups and institutions. Essential to the success of this approach is the transfer of public funds. However this is something of a chicken and egg situation. More money would help such a process of collaboration. However more money may not be available until there is evidence of a willingness to create such collaboration! Recent events in Northern Ireland would suggest that it is this failure to undertake such changes which has placed community education in the category of a poor relation in adult and continuing education. However there is some evidence that formal adult and further education is looking to community education as a means of attracting more adult students and possibly more income. This may provide the opportunity for community education organisations and groups to establish that collaborative network suggested above and to illustrate that, although distinctive, community education can complement the formal system.

The recently established Community Education Centre at the University of Ulster hopes to play a small, but important, role in assisting these developments through research, training, provision of resources and development work. The Centre is already involved in a major investigation of the needs and characteristics of community based learning. The evidence to date is that there is an unmet demand for more dialogue and training for those involved, or interested, in community education in Northern Ireland.

The Centre in Northern Ireland is one of two in Ireland, established with financial support from the C.S. Mott Foundation in the U.S.A. They plan to co-operate together, sharing experiences and working, where possible, on joint programmes. Hopefully they will be able to clarify the role of community education in contemporary Ireland, north and south, and contribute to its future development.

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A WHOLE NEW WORLD

MURIEL BOLGER

Tired of playing house. The novelty of knitting, sewing, coffee mornings and endless chatter to my siblings was fast wearing off.

Having three tots with an age gap of 3 years and 3 months between didn't leave much time for mental stimulation. I didn't mind those years. In fact, I really did enjoy them, but the tots were growing, getting on with their own lives and I realised I needed to start working on my own future.

I had seen friends, with older teenagers, suddenly losing their zest for living when the children left school. Their topics of conversation were about the exciting lives their offspring were leading. They didn't seem to realise that they still had a lot of living left to do themselves.

I cannot remember how, but an adult education brochure for D.A.T.E. (Dundrum Adult Training and Education) Centre turned up in my car and I read the options. I needed to do something that didn't even remind me that for 14 years I had been labelled as a house wife. I was now looking for a divorce—I was prepared to live without the other half of me—my house.

Creative writing sounded interesting. I loved writing letters and was an avid reader. I couldn't and still can't sit down without some printed matter in my hand, even if it is last week's Sunday Times.

We were all intrigued as to what Creative Writing really was and I almost high-tailed it out of the room when the tutor asked us to introduce ourselves and say what we had written!

I was too far away to escape unnoticed so I stayed. After a few sessions I had been infected by the writing bug. I couldn't wait to send something away and see my name in print. But, there was one snag. Two finger typing was out and so were lumps of Typex interspersing the text. You needed to be able to type, set your work out in a presentable fashion, if you were to have any chance of charming an unsuspecting editor into publishing you.

A PASTIME

Morning typing classes were available just across the yard, so finger exercises started in earnest. A natural progression seemed to be a continuation course in word processing. Technology, as far as I was concerned till then, was turning the knob on the washing machine. Now I was into bytes, modes, options, menus, parameters and printouts. The

mystic of computers took over. They were exciting and they could do almost anything. Besides they had a 'gobble-up button' which devoured millions of errors and my copy was flawless! It may have been driven, but it did look impressive with its justified margins.

Bit by bit pieces were accepted by Sean McCann in the Evening Press, the breaking ground of all of us would-be hacks in the group. He became our God. The buzz was fantastic. Phone calls flew from one to another. "Did you see so and so in to-night?" "That's her third piece." "I got my cheque!"

Nothing I have ever had published since has given me the same feeling as opening the paper and seeing my name in it. My family was so proud too. It was like a drug. I wanted to do more.

A CAREER

At the time I was enjoying myself thoroughly. I had made new friends and had a consuming interest. Then fate dealt me an unexpected hand and I needed a career. It was no longer a little hobby! With the benefit of hindsight, I can now see that some higher force was driving me in this direction, but at the time, it was good fun for good fun's sake.

AnCo, now FAS, initiated a once-off course called Women into Writing, with funding from the E.E.C. This was positive discrimination in favour of females — to help redress the imbalance in the print media. But there was another snag — it was for under 25s only. I applied anyway. I had nothing to lose.

The interview meant taking along a portfolio which luckily had been growing. At least there was something to present to make a case for myself. I was accepted, along with five other oldies! There was great difficulty filling the quota to start the course, although they were inundated with applicants in the over 25 age bracket. This age barrier seems to be an enormous anomaly. Most women cannot attend full time courses when their children are small and only have the freedom, energy and inclination as they get older, yet, despite their willingness, they are excluded from such schemes.

The course was five months duration 9 - 5, Monday to Friday. During it we were exposed to all types of writing, for scripts, stage, children, short stories, poetry — everything. We met names who had previously only existed on the spines of books. Guest speakers fostered our individual interests and although a very mixed group, socially, age and ambition wise it worked.

After only one month we had to get work experience. A rejection slip

prompted me to ring up and ask if I could look over the experts' shoulders and see how it should be done. They agreed and I found myself in the Newsroom of one of the dailies.

I was like a child in fairyland! The noise of a dozen phones ringing, the clacking of old fashioned typewriters, shouting across the tables, the smell of the ink, copy boys running about and everybody doing their own thing made me realise this was what I wanted. I really do feel that my 'advanced years' were a distinct advantage to me in this situation, and in fact, have since been told they were! Youngsters are always in for 'experience', but they have lots of inhibitions. They sit quietly at a desk and don't talk. Age gives you confidence. I was curious. I asked questions and wanted to know how everything was put together, who did what and when could I do it!

Seasoned journalists were burdened with my presence as they went on 'markings' to press conferences, the courts, the Dail, anywhere. A whole new world was unfolding before my eyes.

But I was lucky, many of the group did not have such happy times and only two or three opted for the same place to complete the other months 'experience'. In fact only three of us opted for newspapers at all.

BACK TO SCHOOL!

It was back to the classroom again. The paper allowed me to spend one day a week in their Features Department, where I was allowed write articles and was paid for them too! When January came it was back to the Newsroom and the Editor, who had got so used to seeing me around the place, said "Sure you know the ropes, I'll let you out on your own!"

The Millennium had just started, everything was opening, being launched, planned, speculated upon and it was probably the best possible time for a novice to break into journalism. They sent me out every day to cover something — usually 'colour stories', where I really couldn't do any harm! Faces became familiar, faces which now have names and belong to colleagues. They accepted me as though new mature journalists turned up every day of the week. No one queried my ability. I was treated as an equal. It was a heady feeling.

The AnCo course finished, but on starting I had decided to invest my allowance in a w.p. which proved to be probably the best decision I ever made.

A year and a half later, a member of the N.U.J. I am making a living as a free lance journalist, writing for the papers, magazines, trade publications. In fact I no longer write in the hope of something being

accepted. My work is commissioned before I begin. I work from home which suits the demands of family life.

My world has expanded beyond belief. I have met all sorts of people, been to all sorts of exciting events and know an awful lot more than I did when I started out. There is no doubt in my mind that none of this would ever have happened had I not gone to that Creative Writing class in Dundrum. It opened doors on a whole new world.

I think second time learning should be compulsory!

Muriel Bolger is a free-lance journalist from Blackrock, Co. Dublin. She writes feature articles for the daily newspapers and many of the leading magazines. When she can find the time, she attends daytime adult classes at the D.A.T.E. Centre, Dundrum.

ADULT EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT POLICY 1979/'89

— A REVIEW —
TOM INGLIS

Adult education can be a wonderful thing. It can be a celebration of learning; living proof that human beings have a natural instinct to learn, in the same way that plants have to grow. It can help people realise their potential; to be and do what they want. It can be dynamic, flexible and exciting. It has no particular form, no set curriculum. Its main asset is that it can mould itself to the needs and interests of each group of learners.

Adult education can be many things. It can be a desire to fill the mind with new ideas; to swill them round in the head like a glass of good wine. It can be about asking meaningful questions about one's self, one's family and the community and society in which one lives. It can be about attaining a new skill and taking pride in what one can make and build. This is the traditional understanding of adult education. Something which is an end in itself. The beauty of learning for learning's sake.

But adult education can be other things. It can be a means towards a specific end. It can be about attaining an educational certificate, diploma or degree. It can be a means towards a new job or change of career. Sometimes the end may not be so specific. Sometimes adult education is about improving one's self-confidence, one's self-respect, and gaining greater control of one's life.

One of the most conservative of British Tory Prime Ministers, Winston Churchill, had this to say about adult education in 1953.

There is perhaps no branch of our vast educational system which should more attract within its specific sphere, the aid and encouragement of the state than adult education. How many must there be in Britain, after the disturbance of two destructive wars, who thirst in later life to learn about the humanities, the history of their country, the philosophies of the human race, and the arts and letters which sustain and are borne forward by the ever conquering English language? This ranks in my opinion far above science and technical instruction which are well sustained and not without their rewards in our present system. The mental and moral outlook of free men studying the past with free minds in order to discern the future, demands the highest measures which our hard pressed finances can sustain. I have no doubt myself that a man or woman earnestly

seeking in grown up life to be guided to wide and suggestive knowledge in its largest and most uplifting sphere will make the best of all the pupils in this age of clatter and buzz, of gape and gloat. The appetite of adults to be shown the foundations and processes of thought will never be denied by a British administration cherishing the continuity of our island life.¹

If adult education is such a wonderful thing, if tens of thousands of Irish adults participate in education and learning each year and if the vast majority of these pay hard-earned money to fulfil their desire to learn, why is it that adult education has such a low image and status in Ireland? The main reason has to be that adult education receives little or no support or encouragement from the Government. Year in, year out successive Governments have effectively ignored adult education. They say wonderful things about lifelong learning, but paying lip service and saying nice things is an easy price to pay. What is missing from the Government, from public representatives and the Department of Education is an understanding of the state of chassis in which adult education in Ireland operates. What is needed is a clear commitment in the form of definite policies and plans for the development of adult education and sufficient funds so that it does not continue to stumble from year to year.

INITIATIVES

Despite the lack of an overall plan or policy for the development of adult education, despite the paltry funds it receives each year (one sixth of one per cent of the total education budget in 1987); there have been some important initiatives in adult education implemented by the Government in the past ten years. The most obvious perhaps was the appointment of Adult Education Organisers in 1979. This was one of the recommendations of the Murphy Report of 1973.² Others were the establishment of Adult Education Boards, recommended by the Kenny Report 1984;³ the allocation of funds to the Boards under the Adult Literacy and Community Education Budget for Disadvantaged Areas (ALCEB) in 1985; and the creation of the Educational Opportunities Scheme, run on a pilot basis in Limerick City and Tallaght, Co. Dublin.⁴

By and large, these were ad hoc, piecemeal measures used as a stop gap to bolster up and maintain a frail and fragile system of adult education. In the ten years since the appointment of Adult Education Organisers, there have been many important developments in adult education, despite its neglect by the Government. These have come about through the work of the many voluntary groups and associations working within adult education which includes, among others, literacy groups, daytime education groups, women's study groups, the Adult Education Organisers Association, and the work carried out by AONTAS (the National

Association of Adult Education) and NALA (the National Adult Literacy Agency). It must be recognised, however, that much of the development work of AONTAS and NALA is dependent on the annual grant-in-aid they receive from the Government.

There have been many excellent policy proposals put forward by AONTAS and NALA in the last ten years. However, it is primarily Government policies which will be examined and evaluated in this article. As a means towards this I propose to use a framework devised by Seamus Ó Buachalla in his examination of **Educational Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland**. (It should be pointed out, however, that out of 400 pages of his evaluation of educational policy, adult education warrants less than one page in total).

In examining education policy and its implementation, it is possible to identify three dimensions: these are the dimensions of policy relating to **access**, **process** and **structure**. Policies in the access dimension, relate to strategies and measures which influence, promote or facilitate access to and participation in education; the process dimension covers the central question of what goes on in the heart of any educational system, in the individual school and classroom and includes the quality of instruction in the curriculum, the physical and instructional environment of the school and other determinants of quality. The structure dimension covers the issues relating to the national and local organisation, the system, the details of management and funding and the articulation mechanism governing the links between sectors of the system.⁵

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Let us look, then, at Government policies on adult education in relation to these three dimensions. At first glance this may seem easy, because not only have there been few specific Government policies in relation to access, process and structure within adult education, there has been no overall policy in relation to adult education as a whole. Often the Government of the day will issue a general policy document on education and towards the end of the document there will be a token chapter or section dealing with adult education. Generally, in this section, one gets the impression that while the Government may genuinely aspire to a proper system of adult education, it does so in the same way as it aspires to, for example, world peace, a non-polluted environment, justice, freedom and equality. In contrast to the other sectors of education there has never been a concrete set of policies or plans put forward for the development of adult education. What one usually gets is minor proposals for immediate short-term developments.

Take, for example, the **White Paper on Educational Development**

issued by John Wilson, Fianna Fail Minister for Education in December 1980.⁶ Chapter XIII is devoted to adult and community education. The chapter is mainly a review of existing provision, particularly in relation to the appointment of adult education organisers which Wilson had sanctioned the previous year. It appears from reading the document, that the whole policy for the development of adult education centred on the appointment of adult education organisers. It said nothing about access or process, and little about the overall structural development of adult education as outlined for example by the Murphy Report seven years earlier. The summary of the proposals stated that "adult education activities will be promoted and developed as resources allow". However the proposal which demands most attention is as follows:

In developing adult education services the importance of cultural enrichment and recreational pursuits will be balanced against the more urgent demands of the market place for manpower with relevant skills.⁷

The message is quite clear; once you are an adult, education becomes a recreational pursuit, unless it is specific skill training. And the White Paper makes it clear that it does not propose to support what it sees as adult recreation. This conflation of liberal and general adult education to hobby and leisure type activities by those responsible for education development in Ireland continues to this day. Such a conflation ignores important and fundamental characteristics of adult education provision, such as literacy and numeracy, basic social competencies, second chance education, access to third level education, accredited learning, open learning and distance learning; none of which have anything to do with recreation.

The Programme for Action in Education 1984-1987 produced by Gemma Hussey, Coalition Government Minister for Education in January 1984, has even less to say about adult education. This time not only is there no chapter on adult education; not only is there no section on adult education; not only is there not one recommendation in relation to adult education; but the words "adult education" never occur once in the whole document.⁸

This is not to say that Gemma Hussey, Fine Gael or the Coalition Government did not care about adult education. There is strong evidence to the contrary, particularly in relation to the increased support given to adult education organisations such as AONTAS and NALA during her term of office, the establishment of Adult Education Boards and the ALCE budget. The establishment of the Educational Opportunities Scheme, and the general endorsement of the Kenny Commission's Report "Lifelong Learning".⁹ Similarly, the Labour Party has produced

some excellent policy documents on education which contain references to lifelong learning and permanent education.¹⁰

KENNY REPORT

So, what of the Report of the Commission on Adult Education, "Lifelong Learning" chaired by Ivor Kenny and submitted in 1984? If the recommendations of the Commission had been taken on board would this have represented a detailed, comprehensive, blueprint for the development of adult education in Ireland?¹¹ The simple answer is no. The report did include as Robin Webster, a former Director of AONTAS points out "a useful description of current adult education, but in the main it was descriptive rather than analytical, let alone critical".¹² Secondly, in concentrating on giving a thorough description of existing adult education provision, it ended up with having a good deal to say about the **structure** of adult education in Ireland, but very little to say about **access** to adult education and the **process** by which learning takes place within adult education.

The Commission made forty-seven recommendations. The majority of these have got to do with improving the existing structure of provision; what existing educational departments, institutions and organisations should do to improve existing provision and the resources which needed to be given to them to achieve this. As in the Murphy Report ten years earlier, a plan for a new structure for adult education in Ireland was set out in diagrammatic details from the Minister for Education down to the participants in actual courses.¹³ On the other hand, the Commission had very little to say about access to adult education and practically nothing to say about the process of learning within adult education. It did make recommendations about removing "the restrictions on the employment benefit system on participation in education by the unemployed", and that "courses for adults in basic education . . . should be provided free of charge".¹⁴ It did mention daytime adult education, creches, access to third level education and systems of accreditation for adult learning. But what it did not mention was ways of improving access to courses for people who cannot pay the high fees being charged under the self-financing rule, the need to improve ways of rehabilitating people whose love of learning has been damaged by the education system; and some way of insuring that there is access to adult education courses which are relevant to people's needs and interests.

PROCESS

Adult education covers a vast area of learning. It pertains to everything that takes place in first, second and third level education. It relates to issues and areas of learning not covered in first and second level education such as social and personal development, community education, recurrent and continuing education, social studies, etc. It

reaches out to people who have particular educational needs, e.g. women, men, unemployed people, those living in rural areas, the elderly, the disabled. It involves both informal learning that takes place in the traditional ten week course and formal learning leading to assessment and educational awards. It is this huge agenda that makes adult education different from any other level or form of education. And yet what really marks out adult education as different is not so much its content but the way in which it takes place, i.e. the process of adult education practice. Something which government and party political documents on education have consistently ignored.

The way adults learn, the process by which adult education takes place, is often completely different from other educational processes. There does not appear to be any recognition let alone policies about this important fact. Adult education will never develop properly in Ireland, it will never be the wonderful thing that it can be, until it has recognised and accepted that adults require educators and facilitators who are familiar and trained in the issues and challenges encountered in adult learning. At present in Ireland the vast majority of those who teach adult education courses have little or no training in how to be an adult educator. There are no requirements or regulations concerning who can or cannot teach an adult education course. Finally, even if tutors wish to develop their adult education practice there are only a handful of courses available which are open to them.

As this article has tried to show, adult education in Ireland is grossly underdeveloped. It requires many things to be done if adult education is to have the cohesive organisational structure and level of quality and access necessary to meet the challenges of the post-industrial society of the next century. What it needs most of all, more than additional funding and present ad hoc piecemeal measures for improvement, is a clear, coherent policy and plan for its development.

Dr. Tom Inglis is Director of AONTAS, the National Association of Adult Education. He is author of "The Moral Monopoly: The Catholic Church in Ireland", an important sociological study.

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EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

ANTON TRANT

In recent years, in Ireland, we are constantly being told that the country is in crisis — some commentators would say the worst crisis we have experienced since we achieved our independence. The country is in debt and we are struggling to pay our way. Unemployment has passed a quarter of a million. The haemorrhage of emigration has recommenced. The burden of taxation oppresses us. The problem of Northern Ireland remains a festering sore and violent crime has spread throughout the country. Our environment is being despoilt, our capital city is deteriorating and we share with the outside world a fear of nuclear disaster. We are a depressed people at a low ebb. Our very confidence in ourselves is shaken. We doubt our past and we are afraid of our future. The critical questions before us are: Can we pull back from the brink? Can we recover our poise and our confidence? Can we pay our way and hold up our heads again? Can we provide a living for all our people? In a word can we make this small country of ours a good place in which to be born, to live and to die?

It seems to me that if we are to answer these questions to our own satisfaction we must begin by having a good image both of ourselves and of the kind of society we want. As the psychologists say we must cultivate a positive self-image of ourselves as a people. We do not lack a self-image, but it is a negative and depressing one. Our self-image is perceived in terms of an overwhelming and unavoidable crisis. It is a self-image which startles and fascinates us, but also confuses and depresses us. We have to learn to convert this negative image into its positive counterpart before we can see hope and meaning in our world.

EDUCATION AND POLITICS

The ability to see meaning and a basis for hope in our surrounding world is the proper task of politics. The most important question before us today is not primarily economics; it is political and by extension educational—in the way that the ancient Greeks would have considered education. Two of the most important books on education were written by the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, but the interesting thing is that both books were intended primarily as political commentaries — Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. For it was inconceivable to the Greeks to separate education from politics. They were two sides of the same coin — the nature and development of the human person and the kind of society in which he would be at his best and happiest. Both aspects are equally important. If one is stressed at the expense of the other, the whole picture is distorted.

It seems to me that today the picture is indeed distorted — and that is because we have emphasised the development of the individual to the detriment of the good of society. We are suffering from the effects of excessive individualism. This is evident in our schools where the predominant consideration is individual success which can be quantitatively measured by a points system based on the public examinations. It is evident too in society at large, where the good of the individual is guaranteed by the sectional power group to which he belongs. But there is a price to be paid for unbridled individualism and it does not bring happiness in the end. It is on the contrary self-defeating and leads to what Emile Durkheim described as 'egoism' and 'anomie' — the twin symptoms of our modern malaise.

Egoism arises when the individual becomes detached from social life and his private good becomes preponderant over that of the community — he recognises no rules other than those founded on his private interests. Anomie in Durkheim's words comes when "greed is aroused without knowing where to find its ultimate foothold. Nothing can claim it since its goal is far beyond all it can attain" (E. Durkheim, *Suicide*, 1952).

COMMUNITY EDUCATION MOVEMENT

The cult of individualism has distorted for us the picture of the kind of society we should aim for — our image of the good life which cannot be separated from our own personal self-image. In the educational world within the last fifty years, a movement has grown up which seeks to redress this imbalance. It is called the community education movement. It has many strands and can be found in different countries and in different contexts, both urban and rural. In England the movement took its origins in a depopulated and underdeveloped rural area — Cambridgeshire in the 1920s and 1930s. The Education Secretary of Cambridgeshire, Henry Morris, is traditionally regarded as the father of the community education movement in England. Morris was a colourful charismatic figure and his passion for community renewal was not unlike our own Canon Hayes, founder of Muinistir na Tire. For Morris the answer to the problem of community renewal was the school.

"We have to find a principle of integration which will allow unity of communal life and architectural expression and at the same time give free development to that pluralism of associations on which growth and freedom depend. In medieval Europe, a common organisation for communal living was made possible by a system of common values and beliefs. In our time, that element of unity in the life of society which is essential will be attained by the organisation of communities around their educational institutes. It is by some such synthesis that modern communities can again become significantly organic, that the decay of civic life and architecture can

be arrested, and the planning of modern towns on lines of imaginative significance surpassing the achievement of the past, be made possible".

(W. van der Eyken and B. Turner, *Adventures in Education* 1969).

This was one of the first and most idealistic blue-prints for the community school. In Morris's thinking, the community school should be much more than a school; it should also be the cultural, social and recreational centre of the surrounding countryside. This was a magnificent ideal — in some ways reminiscent of the role of the medieval cathedral which Morris greatly admired. The idea was later taken out of its rural setting by several of Morris's disciples and translated into the urban context, where we find examples of the community school or college coalescing with sports, health and social centres. Some proponents of the idea would go so far as to dissociate it completely from school buildings as such, claiming that community education should take place in genuine community habitats — homes, flat complexes, public libraries, even railway stations and pubs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In looking at the community education movement, the important thing is to identify the main ideas which are emerging and to link them with the twin aims of education — the development of the individual person in harmony with the good of society. I see three dimensions in the community education movement.

1. **The School as a Community.**

The idea of community must first of all be found in the school itself. The school must be a community of friendship and love. Its underlying model should be a family rather than a factory. In any family, order may be important, as well as authority, discipline, purpose and productivity. But these are not the most important things. The most important things are sharing, friendship, love, caring, concern for others, unselfishness and forgiveness. If these are absent then there will be no growth, no learning, no fullness, or no real living. In a school, as in a family, a person should feel cherished, should feel a sense of worth and dignity and should never feel rejected or a failure.

2. **The School goes out to the Surrounding Community.**

School should never be a prison. The walls of the school are primarily to keep up the roof which keeps off the rain — not to prevent people from going out. The windows of the school are not only for letting in the light but also for looking at the world which is beckoning outside. The environment outside the school should be seen as the natural extension of the curriculum — and that environment includes people

to meet as well as places to visit.

School should be regarded as a home-base from which the students go out eager for experience and thirsting for challenges, and to which they return laden with ideas and impressions which have to be sorted out, reflected on and put into contexts of meaning and learning. Some of these forays abroad may be brief — a half-day field-trip or a one-day excursion. Others may be longer and more demanding — an expedition into the hills, a visit to a foreign country, a sojourn in the world of work. In some cases, the link with the school can be quite tenuous as when the school or the school system operates an outreach programme for people who for one reason or another do not wish to go to school at all. And in the school's exodus to the community outside, it should be remembered that it is not always one-way traffic — a matter of taking what the community can give by way of learning opportunities. The school too can contribute by way of social service and above all by performances in the expressive arts.

3. **The Community comes in to the School.**

In 1924 in a small elementary school in Lancashire the principal teacher, Terry O'Neill, without waiting for permission from his management board, started reopening his school in the evenings. As his biographer, Gerard Holmes explains, the action had startling results.

"At first only school children returned. Then came some older boys who had left school and were not at work. Then parents. Their children failing to return home because they were so engrossed in work of all kinds, the parents began to turn up and look for them, and these, after a while, came earlier and got in to the habit of staying and watching the children at work and play. The habit spread with the older people and the school became for some an alternative relaxation to the local pub . . . An increasing number of people moved about, talked, sang, sewed, sawed, read books, made pictures.

(Gerard Holmes, *The Idiot Teacher*, 1952).

One of the most obvious reasons for the community's coming into the school is to use the school facilities. But we are often too formal, too traditional, too suspicious in our concept of the community's use of the school. People may wish to use the school for all sorts of reasons. In Ballyfermot Vocational School in the 1960s, a group of local women came one night a week to talk, to knit and to enjoy a cup of tea together.

Nor should the community's incursions be confined to evenings only. They may also wish to come in the daytime and for the most sensible of all reasons — they wish to learn something and are willing to devote the time to it. In *Pearse College*, *Crumlin*, people of all ages and from all stations in life follow courses as various as *Leaving Certificate English* to elementary literacy. You may see a retired person following an intensive course in spoken French or a young mother with a toddler on her knee learning to appreciate Shakespeare. It should be added that such classes demand a special kind of teaching: adults may wish to sample courses and teachers before deciding what they want. And when they do decide they are often not slow in letting their teachers know their views about the way they want to be taught. Furthermore, not everybody who comes to the school will be content with being just a learner. There will be some who will want to teach and indeed have much to offer in this regard. I once heard of a primary school in England where the principal had scores of voluntary assistant teachers — all parents.

IMPLICATIONS

The Community Education Movement has three radical implications :

1. **A Community Oriented Curriculum.**

The school curriculum becomes more and more related to the concerns, opportunities and needs of the local community. For some people in education this seems like heresy — a betrayal of our great educational heritage as found embedded in traditional school subjects. It should be pointed out, however, that the school curriculum should always be considered as a dynamic and evolving entity, not something immutable and fixed for all times. Nor is there anything particularly sacred about school subjects as we know them. In our lifetime some have practically disappeared from view while others keep appearing on the educational horizon.

The great enemy of the community based curriculum is undoubtedly the public examination system as we know it. This should always be challenged and wherever possible, ignored altogether.

2. **Professionalism of Teachers**

The involvement of the community in its own education will obviously call for a redefining of teaching professionalism. Teachers are ambivalent about the nature of their work and because of this are very sensitive about anything which seems to touch on their professionalism. They regard with some envy and tend to emulate what they deem to be the more established professions — such as doctors and lawyers. They often forget, however, that some of the traits displayed by the established professions scarcely merit

emulation — such as for instance, a willingness to make large amounts of money out of human suffering and misery, a closing of ranks against outsiders who might question their practices and sometimes a closing of minds against new possibilities which are seen to threaten their status.

The essence of any profession is that it should be regarded as a calling to do a special kind of work in the service of others. In that case, a true professional has to be always open to the needs of others, to new articulations of these needs, and to new ways of meeting them.

3. **Control of Education**

Power and control are the important issues in education today. The celebrated Government Green Paper on education talked about the delivery of educational services with the Department of Education as the chief delivery agent — driving the educational bread-van so to speak. The teacher unions, for their part, see to it that a hard bargain is always struck about conditions of delivery. The institutional church jealously guards her ownership rights and her controlling influence over the minds and souls of her flock. If community education is to become a reality, however, all of these vested interests will have to be challenged — I am not questioning their legitimacy, but merely the amount of power which they possess. Community education will inevitably mean a growth in democratic participation and an increase in popular control of the apparatus of education.

CONCLUSION

I started this article by referring to the crisis which tends to depress and lead us into helplessness and fatalism. I have tried to show that the basis of the crisis is a false perception of where our own good and happiness lie. We are suffering from excessive individualism. My argument is that education should help us to acquire a truer perception of things and a better self-concept by making us more conscious of others — not just of their needs but of the very fact of their existence, which in itself challenges us as human beings. I would like to end on a note of hope. I think indeed that it is the duty of every educator to be hopeful. As Jacques Maritain once pointed out, the virtue of hope is based on the belief that something which does not exist, should exist.

There are two things about our country which give grounds for hope. We are a free people and we are a Christian people. Our present troubles may even make us at times doubt these facts. Nonetheless, they are historical facts. We strove against the odds and won our freedom and also against the odds we held on to our particular Christian tradition. We are what we are largely because of these two incontestable historical happenings. We

have yet to learn however how to live our freedom to the full and to clarify our minds about the kind of land we wish to live in. We have yet to learn how to think and act like a free people — intellectually, morally, culturally and economically. That is a task for education — education in the broad and full use of the term.

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THE TEN YEAR ADULT EDUCATION TALKIN' BLUES

AD HOCK.

I.

Way back in 1980 or was it '79?
I was having a mid-life crisis — 'twas the fashion at the time;
When glancing through the paper after reading Curley Wee,
To situations vacant and there what should I see
Ad. Ed. Organiser — your local V.E.C.
proudly presents for the first time on these shores
A strange new phenomenon never seen before;
An exciting new position, a chance to make your name —
So be an Organiser — life will never be the same.

II

This notice caught my fancy and wouldn't let it go,
And I knew that I was fated to be an A.E.O.
For I had been a teacher and had served my time in class
In places as diverse as Ealing and Ballyglass;
I had read ten thousand essays — you know the long, hard slog
Autumn, your favourite pastime, a day in that damned bog;
I'd had my share of History, attempting to get through
to those who knew the Land League as Division One or Two;
Bhí mé ag muinteadh Gaelige — worst of all, I'll have you know,
Putting the Modh Coimníollach where it was never meant to go.

Enough then of word selections,
An briathar is, those _____ corrections,
Those endless wars in foreign lands,
Lady MacBeth and her bloody hands;
Warning messers, advising prudence,
Active verbs and passive students;
Away, away, break all connections
And head in exciting new directions.

III

They said the job was very new,
They weren't sure what you had to do,
But for a start, just look around,
Survey the field and test the ground,
Talk to people of every sort
Make copious notes for your Annual Report;
It's a wonderful challenge — you're on your own,

What's that you say? You need a phone?
You can start things up when the time is ripe
A desk? an office? someone to type?
We're working on it, the notice is short,
Meanwhile think of your Annual Report;
Are there no limits? Well, isn't that funny,
Anything you like, if it doesn't cost money.

IV

So off to blaze the trail you go,
A fully-fledged born again A.E.O.
Off to educate the masses
With self-financing adult classes:
We forgot to say, as a general rule,
Adults cannot use the school,
And we forgot to add, come frost or sleet,
Don't wait for us to provide the heat
And so, I never travel afar
Without a Super Ser in the back of the car;
I also carry in that very same boot
An Acorn computer that doesn't compute,
A box of books that's labelled Liam
For me mobile Adult Literacy Scheme.
And Myles na gCopaleen, wouldn't you go green
If you saw the Brothers sewing machine.
And people ask where'er I go
Are you the caretaker or the A.E.O.?

V

I've met groups in their hundreds and once in a bar
And hosted a meeting in the Chairperson's car;
With classes in places where the sun never enters
In prefab loos called Community Centres;
Courses in upholstery, in dancin' and swimmin'
Improvers' classes for more assertive women,
Teach yourself guitar, — yes, learn as you strum,
And Know your Car for travellers that live outside Dundrum.

Macrame, Origami, with a teacher from Lahore
A wine-tasting experience for a group in Dublin 4;
Various martial arts, Karate and Kung Fu,
Cookery for flat dwellers where everyone makes stew,
A wonderful range of courses and the very best of sport
As well as vital fodder for the Annual Report.

VI

Oh yes, I've been to conferences, not just here but up in Derry,
But those, you'll understand, were the days before MacSharry;
I've endured position papers, dinner speeches by the score —
Yes, everyone got up and said the same as the one before.
Some took part very seriously and earnestly took notes
While others took the chance to canvass a few votes;
There were those who couldn't stop talking and those who just said naught
And those who seemed as if they lived in fear of constant drought.
I heard talks on emigration by ones who never left Kanturk
And talks on unemployment by people never out of work,
And talks about poverty and helping the lower classes —
With a few exceptions, they were talking through their elbows.

And all have got a theory to do with adult ed.
And everyone must hear it, no matter what's being said;
“Don't talk to me”, says one, “about literacy courses,
There seems to be no problem when they're studying the horses”;
“Subsidize them?” cries another, “only starts bad habits,
No responsibility, they breed out there like rabbits,
Be careful about paying them — could easily start a trend,
As Dev once said, the means don't justify the end”.
Here's to budding politicians, here's what I have found,
They mightn't be very literate but begod, they all can count.

VII

I've worked with all the agencies, I.C.A. and V. de P.
I've liaised with County Council, I've a friend in RTE;
I've searched for funds just everywhere, fully and semi-State,
I've kept numerous appointments with officials who were late;
I've gone on deputations whether to Charlie or to Garrett
Following, like a donkey, the latest E.C. structural carrot.
There was an Agency director who kept asking “Where's the sauce?”
In those days before ANCO emerged disguised as FAS
And heady discussions where everyone was straining
To grasp the vital difference — education v. training.

EPILOGUE

And so as I look back, I never ask what has been done
Any more than looking forward, asking can I carry on;
Despite cases made to ministers, despite the constant pleading
It all comes down to this — Mary still has problems reading.
Is there no one up there listening, have we got no friend at court?
Or has no one ever read my Annual Report.
There you have it, my career, and I may be at the pinnacle,
And isn't it a wonder that I amn't very cynical?

LIFE IN THE MARGIN

TONY DOWNES

This article is based on a paper given to adult education providers and participants at a seminar in Co. Dublin, following the publication of the Report "Lifelong Learning", February 1985.

"Adult or continuing education is an area which has been dreadfully neglected in this State for too long. Vocational Education Committees and Community and Comprehensive Schools have done an excellent job in providing hobby-type courses and opportunities for adults to take Leaving Certificate courses. But, in terms of the broader concept of education as a continuing process that goes on throughout life, there has been very little development". These words appeared, not, as one might suspect, in a statement produced by the Adult Education Organisers' Association, AONTAS, NACED or the IVEA. They are taken from the opening paragraph of the leader article in the *Irish Times* of May 26th, 1984, following the publication of the Report of the Kenny Commission, "Lifelong Learning" and they form a useful starting point in examining some of the barriers and impediments which contribute to the "dreadful neglect" and "minimal development" of adult education to which the writer of the leader article refers.

DEFINITIONS

Before proceeding, it may be helpful to 'clear the decks' by way of some definitions. Thus, I understand adult education as a **lifelong process which enables people to assume control over and responsibility for their own lives and the community and society in which they live**. Development is a **process of growth, expansion, achievement of potential and progress towards an objective**. In human terms, I believe, development requires vision, openness, enthusiasm, commitment and resources — probably in that order.

Impediments, on the other hand, derives from the Latin 'impedimenta' meaning hindrance or baggage of footsoldiers. Some baggage is essential as a survival kit for all of us but, obviously, the heavier the baggage the more it impedes progress. The accumulation of unnecessary baggage, physical or psychic, seems inevitable throughout the life span of individuals, organisations and communities. Major challenges for all of us lie in, firstly, recognising and acknowledging the excess baggage that we carry and secondly, somehow finding the courage to dump it. Impediments have come to imply barriers and obstacles to progress and barriers are there to be overcome, circumvented or minimised.

A MAJOR BARRIER

There is really only one major barrier which impedes the development of adult education and all others are essentially consequences or expressions of this central impediment. This impediment which permeates all our activities, institutions and practices in adult education is the fact that adult education in this State is fundamentally MARGINAL.

To be marginal is to be on the fringe, outside the mainstream of things. Marginal groups in the community — travellers, prisoners, the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the handicapped, the mentally ill and other such — are groups without power, status, influence or resources, relegated to languish on the periphery of our society and its communities. That adult education is marginal is not a matter for debate. However, a closer look at why adult education is marginal and how this marginality impacts on its status, providers and consumers may, I hope, prove instructive.

'MOTORWAY' EDUCATION

Firstly, we might ask why is adult education a marginal activity in our society? The short and facile answer is that it costs money and is a low priority. A more fundamental explanation, I would suggest, is that adult education has a low priority because it is marginal to our current education theory and practice, which does not even pay lip-service to the concept of continuing education or lifelong learning. Instead, it insists on blindly promoting and committing all resources to what Dr. Eric Midwinter has called the "motorway concept" of education.

According to this model, we fill our tanks to the brim at the educational filling station before we set out on the motorway of life and hope we don't run out of gas before we reach the end of that motorway. Unfortunately for this concept, people's needs are more complicated than a single fill up of educational gas for life can supply. Thus, the idea of lifelong learning has no part in our theory and practice and instead of being central, it is shoved into the margin. Regarded as a rather nice but impractical idea, we relentlessly press on as if all educational efforts concentrated into the early years of life is the best and only effective model.

This low priority is reflected in the lack of status accorded to adult education within our Department of Education, where, until quite recently, there was no single officer whose sole brief was adult education.

EFFECTS ON PROVIDERS

It is against this background and framework of marginality that providers must seek to develop adult education. Their efforts to do so frequently generate yet more expressions of marginalisation on the ground and produce an environment even more inimical to development.

Adult education providers are themselves polarised along the lines of our post-primary system. Their relationships with each other bear a close resemblance to the state of belligerence that exists between two blood brothers and are often marked by suspicion, wariness or at least a feigned indifference. V.E.C.s as the elder sibling, often see their patch being threatened by what they perceive as an upstart new arrival in the form of Community and Comprehensive schools, threatening their hitherto comfortable monopoly. The new arrivals, on the other hand, made to feel unwelcome by the elder brother, nevertheless with the brash confidence of youthful vigour set out to prove themselves as good as their elder, with predictable consequences for both. There is of course an elder sister, the private secondary school, who seems to have withdrawn into herself because she has been apparently ousted from favour by her two brothers.

This hostile family background presents the two main providers with one clear priority, viz. survival. Survival means playing the 'numbers game' in adult education, i.e. pack in the punters to secure the precious points to establish or retain the part-time post-holders and keep the show on the road. This in turn means entering the marketplace and selling adult education as a product in competition with the other providers. The values of the marketplace then come into play and predominate — with carefully defined and jealously guarded territories, with quality sacrificed to quantity, with access guaranteed to those who can pay and denied to those who cannot.

EFFECTS ON CONSUMERS

Finally we come to the consumers — the students for whose 'benefit' presumably this service has been devised. Is it any accident, I wonder, that women are the mainstay of adult education and this is the kind of service that we men provide for them? What baggage must the consumers carry and what are the obstacles confronting them?

The barriers confronting consumers centre around three areas, namely, access, relevance and participation. Barriers to access include inadequate information about the nature and content of courses, the social educational economic background of the student, the convenience of the educational setting — whether it is stiff and formal or whether it is relaxed and informal.

Barriers to relevance include the suitability or otherwise of the course for the needs of students. The ability of the tutor to relate to adults is another factor as is the apparent aimlessness of most courses offered.

As to participation, most adult students have no say whatever in the planning of the programmes offered them, in their organisation, or in the

selection of tutors, with consequent further marginalisation from the process. In effect, we, the providers, the experts, often treat adults like children in our day schools and, instead of encouraging self management and participation in the process of adult education, we make sure to retain total control.

Is it any wonder then that adult education is also marginal in its impact on the population as a whole and quite selective in its impact on local communities? The survey published in the Commission Report shows clearly that "73.7% of the adult population under review have never participated in any form of education after formal schooling". It also points out that this group has within it "disproportionately high numbers of older and working class people and rural dwellers".

Of the 26.3% who did participate, the survey points out that these tend to be "adults in the younger age groups, in the higher social categories and with most education."

IN THE MEANTIME

Having identified marginality and all its manifestations as the central obstacle to adult education development, the question remains: What can we, as adult educators, do about this state of affairs? This question is particularly pertinent in the present climate of fiscal rectitude and cut backs in public expenditure. While we think that lifelong learning may never become philosophically and functionally central to our educational system and that there is little we can do to change this, we may be proved wrong on both counts. Such a change will come about when the educational system is forced to adapt, for survival, to demographic and economic changes. The current emigration of our young people, together with the steady reduction in the birth rate and aging of our population already bear within them the seeds of significant change in our society, and have major implications for our education system at all levels.

In the meantime, adult education organisations, interest groups and individuals can and should unite to combat, especially through effective lobbying, all efforts to confine adult education to a marginal, peripheral role in our education system. In addition, each of us, within our own sphere of influence, can begin to circumvent or overcome those barriers of attitude, practice, provision or administration which fragment and polarise our potential and reinforce the marginality of our activities. This is particularly true of providers of adult education who should now begin to replace polarity with partnership, suspicion with trust, competition with co-operation and power with power-sharing.

LOCAL BROADCASTING

Without claiming to be futurologists, it is possible to identify trends in

adult education and in our society which will, if capitalised upon by adult educators, help shift lifelong learning away from its present marginal role. For instance, the work of the Independent Radio and Television Commission in legitimising local community broadcasting facilities throughout the country affords an opportunity for exciting possibilities in developing new adult learning models and strategies. A major challenge confronting adult educators is whether we can provide the basic local support structures to enable the proliferation of adult learning and tutorial groups outside the conventional school-based setting.

The growth of daytime adult learning groups, in particular, in recent years is already producing dissatisfaction with the apparent aimlessness of much of adult education options at present. The accumulation of extra-mural diplomas/certificates no longer satisfies many articulate and intelligent adult students who cannot easily afford either the financial or personal demands of full time third level study as mature students. Inevitably, Open University degree courses seem to be the only acceptable and relevant response to this need and the delaying tactics, through prolonged discussions, of Irish Universities cannot succeed much longer in stemming the demands for change.

Tony Downes is Adult Education Organiser for the North West area of Co. Dublin. He is at present the Chairperson for the Adult Education Organisers' Association.

THE UNIVERSITY & ADULT EDUCATION: Past and Future

DENIS O'SULLIVAN

If those of us who are part of university adult education are to poise ourselves to suggest directions for its development we need to understand its current position and how it has evolved. Hence the sub-title of this article — Past and Future.

EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

The adult education programmes undertaken by Alfred O'Rahilly at University College, Cork have been recognised as the prototype for extra-mural studies in Irish universities (O'Sullivan, 1989a). The high point of O'Rahilly's initiatives was the inauguration in 1946 of a Diploma in Social and Economic Science for local trade unionists. Such was the level of interest generated by this Diploma programme that invitations were received from Waterford and Limerick cities to provide a similar programme in their catchment areas. Additional diplomas were initiated to cater for the needs of women, those involved in agriculture and in general citizenship. In the process, enduring structures were put in place for the identification of needs and the delivery of learning opportunities for adults: the establishment of an Adult Education Committee and an Adult Education Department, the formalisation of co-operative linkages with local labour and rural organisations and statutory bodies, and the adoption of an outreach approach.

O'Rahilly's identification with Catholic social reconstructionism allowed the programmes to be disparaged as no more than Catholic social apologetics. In fact, the courses were wide ranging and grand in aspiration. A measure of the programmes is that they have outlived the era which generated them and, through organic development, continue to be found relevant to successive generations of adult learners. Since their inauguration over 300 courses have been provided in roughly 100 different centres throughout Munster, and while the recruitment of the current programmes, in common with other adult education courses, is demographically, socially and educationally unrepresentative, it does appear that diploma programmes have a particular attraction for those who are infrequent or first attenders in adult education, especially those with low levels of formal education (O'Sullivan, 1989).

The effect of the universities' involvement on the public perception of adult education is also inestimable. This is heightened by the realisation that this involvement occurred in an era when universities were a good deal more remote from the lives of ordinary people than they are at

present and when there was little by way of government, moral or financial encouragement to respond to the needs of the community.

O'Rahilly's initiatives were in sharp contrast with the sentiments of the Commission on Higher Education 1960 - 1967 on the role of the universities in the provision of adult education. It questioned the involvement of the universities in the provision of adult education on the basis that, *inter alia*, it involved 'the attachment of University qualifications to courses that are not really University courses' (page 659). The Commission gave grudging acceptance to the continued provision of adult education on the basis that it made few demands on university resources and provided linkage with the community, but only until such time as the newer sub-university level colleges recommended by the commission would take over this function. These misgivings must also have existed during the time of O'Rahilly's initiatives and one has to question the extent to which the university would have committed itself in the way it did to adult education were it not for O'Rahilly's status as President as well as his commitment to adult education.

The impact of one of the programmes, the Diploma in Social Study course, in terms of personal and social change was analysed in an extensive study of all eighteen centres providing the course in 1979. The respondents claimed that they had gained in knowledge, ability and motivation in relation to fourteen identified positions from family, community, occupation and social contexts. Since taking the course they reported increased extraversion, empathy and liberalism. They reported being more inclined to attend to media coverage of such important issues as politics, economics and current affairs and being more open to the points of view of a diversity of social groups. The majority of students reported a greater inclination to listen to ideas that differ from their own, as well as a willingness to see their own views as products of their background.

Two substantive interpretive changes were indicated: a more critical perception of Irish society with its inequality and social domination and an increase in the perceived social and political efficacy of the individual, particularly when in co-operation with others. This suggests that the effects of the course are not confined to simply confirming individuals in their social position, if it does this at all, but that it is also developing an awareness of other social positions, as well as the capacity and motivation to extend one's social involvement. There is also a sense in which the course can be said to have brought about more intensive changes: shy and unsure students became more extroverted and their range of concern with wider social issues was extended.

There continues to be a need for courses leading to non-negotiable

qualifications which do not cause the status dissent or uprooting associated with social and economic mobility (Lovett, 1989). What is required at this stage is an explicit recognition of extra-mural studies as a legitimate activity of the university in the funding policy of the Higher Education Authority. Of late there has been talk of extra-mural studies moving into the mainstream of university provision. The potential benefits of this development need to be balanced against the pitfalls. Extra-mural programmes and qualifications may well gain in status and recognition by being processed along with other university courses by the regular academic bodies. A tangible example of such recognition would be the acceptance of extra-mural courses for university credit purposes. What must be guarded against is that in being incorporated into the decision making processes and evaluative ideologies of the university the adaptability of the curriculum to local needs and the student-centred pedagogy may well be threatened. If placed on a firmer financial footing much more could be done by way of curriculum development and innovation in delivery styles in extra-mural studies. Already new programmes in community development, media studies are underway and there is much potential in relation to women's, political and family studies.

MATURE STUDENT ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

To argue for the centrality of the extra-mural tradition to university adult education isn't to ignore the needs of adults who wish to return to programmes which lead to negotiable qualifications. There are difficulties in estimating the number of mature students in the Irish university system. Estimates vary depending on how the mature student is defined and whether or not part-time courses are included. What does seem clear, however, is that the presence of those outside the conventional age group at university in Ireland is among the smallest in Europe.

A study of new, full-time entrants to third-level educational institutions in 1980 showed that less than 8% were aged 20 or over at the time of entry and 1.3% were aged 26 or over (Clancy, 1982). The comparison of trainee teachers in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland (Dunn and Morgan, 1979) is revealing — no student among the Irish Republic respondents was 26 years or more while 7.1% were in that age category in Northern Ireland. Carey and Slowey's (1986) analysis of new entrants to HEA designated institutions from 1979/1980 to 1983/1984 suggests that there had been a slight upward trend in enrolments from adults which was halted in 1984. It would also appear that a more restricted range of University degrees is on offer on a part-time basis since the mid-sixties.

All of this needs to be set alongside the growing interest among university and other third-level institutions in the mature student. This is reflected in the existence of committees, deliberations and reports on

how access might be widened across the age groups and in a greater willingness to make adjustments in terms of entry requirements and course structures. The tide has certainly turned since the era of the Commission on Higher Education 1960 - 1967. With regard to evening and part-time degree courses, a sense of threat among interest groups and undue caution about standards are evident in the submissions from graduate professions and some university staff to the Commission. Such was the tenor of the time that it was the proposed new colleges (to teach to pass degree level) which were recommended to experiment with flexible arrangements for part-time university courses, the Commission arguing that it could not "reconcile these ideas with our view of the University and of the value of the University in forming character and personality as well as in providing courses of instruction" (p. 125).

At University College, Cork, the structure of the evening B.A. programme has been made more flexible, allowing students the opportunity of covering the course more at their own pace. There are also indications that the provision of part-time university programmes is beginning to expand with consideration being given to the use of outcentres. The significance of the provision whereby students aged 24 years and over can matriculate on the basis of mature years also needs to be acknowledged, particularly in the light of discussions on institutional impediments to mature student access to universities. This is a generous provision since in effect it means that for matriculation purposes the adult student needs no other qualification apart from a desire to enter a university course of study. It could even be argued that universities are too *laissez faire* in this regard and that they are doing a disservice to students who might misjudge their capacity to cope with university study. The view, however, is taken that if mature students show themselves to be single-minded in their aspiration then, as adults, they should be viewed as the best evaluators of their own general preparedness for university study.

And even where quotas operate, at University College, Cork, the situation in recent years in the Arts faculty has been one of open access for mature students. In other faculties the quotas allocated for mature student entry are small but not insignificant and reflect the strong demand from the conventional age group for university places due to our current demographic situation. This should ease in the years ahead and allow for a much more democratic age structure in Irish universities. With regard to more specialized preparation, there is a growing need for the provision of access and bridging courses of the kind developed in Britain. These would help students to develop the necessary study skills as well as to master the skills and knowledge which students entering particular university programmes are assumed to possess. Finance represents a major impediment and unless some provision by way of paid

leave, grants, scholarships or tax relief is forthcoming then it is difficult to see how, in the short term, participation by mature students in our universities can be greatly increased.

ACADEMIC STUDY AND RESEARCH

University-based research on adult education has a major contribution to make in generating new styles of research and in raising wider theoretical issues. Research on adult education in Ireland as it stands tends to reflect the interests and concerns of the practitioner/provider base which for the most part generates it. In this context the research questions are understandable. Who attends and why? What difficulties do students have and why do they drop out? How are adults to be made aware of the existence and benefits of adult education? All of these questions are, of course, important in their own right but as was once remarked in relation to a similar feature of British adult education they operate "so close to the grindstone that the wider horizons hardly exist for them" (Ruddock, 1972). Accordingly consciousness-raising is widely perceived in terms of creating an awareness of adult education, is never seen to mask interest or advantage, and occupational background is seen in isolation from social stratification (O'Sullivan, 1989c). Focusing on the wider horizons, and raising these issues is a uniquely university function because of expertise, ethos and freedom.

The establishment of the Centre for Adult and Community Education at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth is a major intervention in this regard, and courses on adult education are now available as part of the Higher Diploma in Education programme in a number of Irish universities. At University College, Cork, the Bank of Ireland Centre for Co-operative Studies provides training and resources in co-operative education, and the Departments of Education and Adult Education have combined to provide extensive week-end training courses over three months for part-time teachers of adults in a number of V.E.C. areas throughout Munster.

CONCLUSION

University involvement in the provision of adult education in Ireland goes back to the beginning of the century. In developing beyond the O'Rahilly prototype of the administrative Department of Adult Education to embrace more financially attractive and high status programmes, the universities will need to be mindful of their unique niche in adult education provision. One can visualise a time when it will be in the universities' self-interest to attract students and expand professional continuing education. One can even see them in competition with one another, with other third-level institutions and with distance education and commercial providers in this regard. However, providing courses which empower, in its instrumental, expressive, ideological and activist dimensions, in geographically dispersed outcentres, at a

reasonable cost, and utilizing a curriculum and learning style responsive to students' needs will invite little competition. This is an example of the university repaying its dues to society; as its participation in the education of adults widens and deepens to encompass many exciting initiatives it must not be allowed to forget this legacy.

Dr. Denis O'Sullivan, a member of the Educational Faculty at University College, Cork, has a particular interest in Adult Education in the University setting and is currently editing a tribute to the late Dr. Alfred O'Rahilly entitled "Social Commitment and Adult Education" due for publication in Autumn 1989.

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BOOK REVIEW

FROM THE GROUND UP: A study of local employment initiatives in Dublin.

Pauline Faughnan, Social Science Research Centre, U.C.D.

Published by Combat Poverty Agency 1989. — Price IR£10.

Ever since the oil producing Arabs decided to form their own co-op in the early seventies and in the process visited widespread recession on Western economies, Europe has been faced with the challenge of mass unemployment. One response to this challenge has been the emergence of a policy to encourage local employment initiatives and, more recently, a particular emphasis on promoting community enterprise co-operatives. The impact of this policy in Ireland can be deduced from the fact that in the 70s a mere ten groups were engaged in community enterprise in this country compared to over 300 in 1988 and an expected 500 by 1990. In this context, Pauline Faughnan's study is timely and relevant as well as fascinating and challenging.

The study is no mere abstract and detached exercise in dry academic research — interested mainly in facts, figures and statistical data for computer analysis and cross reference. By consciously adopting a 'qualitative research' approach which is interested in understanding and learning as well as measuring. Ms. Faughnan's case study method enables the people of Tallaght and the North Inner City of Dublin to speak for themselves. Through structured and unstructured interviews, discussions with the people involved and participant observations, the process of attempting local enterprise in both communities is experientially revealed 'from the bottom up' with a clarity of focus that is both refreshing and, at times, startling.

This is an important study in the opportunity it offers, (a) local communities and groups to learn from the experience of two contrasting urban communities as they grapple with local unemployment through enterprise initiatives; (b) state agencies involved in job creation/training to identify adjustments needed in procedures, policies and practices of community enterprise in disadvantaged areas; (c) to link the lessons learned at local level to national policy issues. This study is also significant in that it raises more fundamental questions involving, for example, the relationships between community enterprise and community development as well as questioning the appropriateness and viability of promoting community enterprise in severely disadvantaged communities, given the social, economic and educational constraints on people in these communities and existing state resourcing

practices and support facilities available to local enterprise groups.

Besides revealing the problems of unemployed people engaged in local enterprise initiatives in attempting to use constructively available statutory resources, Pauline Faughnan's study indicates the emergence of new local support structures designed to complement, circumvent, or mitigate the inadequacies of existing official 'support' systems for local enterprise. Thus, for example, in the North Inner City, the Lourdes Youth and Community Services Project situates community enterprise within a community development framework which focuses on development through education and training in the community. This may be of particular interest to adult educators as well as community workers, since it adopts a holistic approach to community education, offering both full and part-time learning opportunities to adults and young people at no cost.

Other notable aspects of this study include the central role played by the Enterprise Workers in both communities — workers whose time frame for achievement, like the grants to local enterprise groups, is unrealistically confined to one year's duration and whose tenure of office is uncertain. Yet this study shows clearly the key role of Enterprise Workers as essential support/resource persons to emerging local groups and individuals. Similar uncertainty overshadows the Teamwork staffing and funding supports for Unemployed Centres whose potential for enterprise and community development cannot be actualised in a climate of grudging, temporary and indefinite resourcing.

In conclusion, one is tempted to agree with Tom Collins' mordant dismissal of the impact of community enterprise initiatives on job creation as mere contemporary manifestations of the Poor Law Relief Works of Famine times. Policies encouraging local employment initiatives may indeed offer a 'gleam of hope' in areas hard hit by unemployment; likewise, on the evidence presented in Pauline Faughnan's study (although she does not say so) one might be forgiven for perceiving them as efforts to place responsibility for job creation back on under resourced communities or individuals. Perhaps, such policies may simply result in people administering their own poverty in an illusion that they are engaged in its elimination? Either way, I cannot help feeling that the delicate plants of local enterprise initiatives are struggling against all the odds to take root in a mainly hostile environment — as evidenced in this study — and that, unless the climate determined by the policy brings about change, it would be unrealistic to expect more than sporadic success in job creation from community enterprise initiatives in severely disadvantaged communities.

T.D.

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Pat Mononey, Tipperary County (S.R.) VEC.	£10
Michael O'Hanlon, Bush Post Primary School, Riverstown, Dundalk.	£10

The Principal, St. Clare's Comprehensive School, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.	£10
Dennis O'Sullivan, Education Dept., University College, Cork.	£5
Mr. Chris Curran, National Institute for Higher Education, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.	£5
Council for the Status of Women, 64 Lr. Mount St., Dublin 2.	£10
Thomas O'Seaghdha, The Holy Family Community School, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.	£10
Antoine Ó Coileáin, Bord na Gaeilge, 7 Cearnog Mhuiréon, Baile Atha Cliath 2.	£10
Mr. M. J. Sheehy, Plunket School, Swords Road, Whithall, Dublin 9.	£5
Christopher Greene, Vocational School, Graigue-Na-Managh, Co. Kilkenny.	£5
Maureen Bassett, 24 Willington Crescent, Templeogue, Dublin 12.	£5
Mr. John S. Kelly, Principal, Scariff Community College, Scariff, Co. Clare.	£5
The National Adult Literacy Agency, 8 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1.	£10
AONTAS, 65 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2.	£10
The Librarian, Tralee Regional Technical College, Co. Kerry.	£10
Rev. A. Lehane, CSSP, St. Michael's College, Ailesbury Road, Dublin 4.	£5
Miss Lola M. Hefternan, Holy Child Community School, Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin.	£10
Mr. K. J. Lyons, City of Waterford VEC, 30 The Mall, Waterford.	£10
Daniel Sweeney, Rosses Community School, Dungloe, Co. Donegal.	£10
Sister Kathleen, St. Brigid's Secondary School, Killarney, Co. Kerry.	£5
Mary Finlay, Curriculum Development Unit, 28 Westland Row, Dublin 2.	£10
Sean Uas Ó Murchu, Director of Adult Education, University College, Cork.	£10
An Griannan, Adult Education College, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth.	£10
Kevin Warner, Co-ordinator of Education, Dept. of Justice, 72 St. Steven's Green, Dublin 2.	£10
Joan O'Connor, Kilbarrack Local Education for Adult Renewal, Dublin 5.	£5
Town of Bray VEC Offices, Co. Wicklow.	£10
Padraig Ó Broin, Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Drogheda,	£10
Sean Ó Ceilleachair, Leas-Phríomhoide, An Scoil Chuimsitheach, An Bothar Bui, Mala, Co. Chorcaí.	£10

Bro. Power, Colaiste Mhichil, CBS, Sexton St., Limerick	£5
Anne Ryan, 26 Maynooth Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare	£5
Sean Mac Cortain, Co. Offaly VEC, O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly	£10
Mr. L. O Muirchearthaigh, Co. Tipperary (N.R.) VEC, Church Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary	£10
Sr. Assumpta, Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Co. Longford	£5
Mrs. Bertha McCullough, Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf, Dublin 3	£10
Roy Rohu, Newpark Adult Education Centre, Blackrock, Co. Dublin	£5
Dublin Literacy Scheme, 1-3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin	£10
Town of Wexford VEC, Vocational School, Westgate, Wexford	£10
The Librarian, Dept. of Education, Marlboro St., Dublin 1	£10
Mr. J. Cronin, County Dublin VEC, Main Road, Tallaght, Co. Dublin	£10
Mr. R. Rice, Co. Laois VEC, Ridge Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois	£10
School of Adult and Continuing Education, 49 Salmon Grove, Hull, England, HV6 7SZ	Stg. £10
Seamus Puirseil, City of Dublin Adult Education Board, Dublin	£5
Mr. T. O'Brien, Principal, Riverside Community College, Dublin 15	£10
Pearl Quigley, Margaret Aylward Community College, Whitehall, Dublin 9	£5
The Director, Rehabilitation Institute, Roslyn Park, Sandymount, Dublin 4	£10
The Director, Comhairle Le Leas Oige, Donnybrook, Dublin 4	£10
Sean Uas Ó Longain, Co. Donegal VEC, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	£10
Mr. P. Connolly, Co. Louth VEC, Dundalk, Co. Louth	£10
Mr. S. Ó Beachain, Scoil Phobail Chuil Mhin, Cluain Saileach, Atha Cliath 15	£10
Christopher Glancy, AEO, Co. Carlow VEC	£5
Sean Conlon, AEO, Co. Clare VEC	£5
Tom Daly, AEO, City of Cork VEC	£5
Jerry O'Sullivan, AEO, Co. Kerry VEC	£5
Kathleen Forde, AEO, City of Dublin VEC	£5
Tony Downes, AEO, Co. Dublin VEC	£5
Liam Bane, AEO, Co. Dublin VEC	£5
Michael Riordan, AEO, Dun Laoghaire VEC	£5
Paddy Haverty, AEO, Co. Galway VEC	£5

Tommy Murray, AEO, Co. Roscommon VEC	£5
Douglas O'Connor, AEO, Co. Westmeath VEC	£5
Michael Fox, AEO, Co. Donegal VEC	£5
Noel Dalton, AEO, Co. Kildare VEC	£5
Eileen Curtis, AEO, Co. Kilkenny VEC	£5
Donal Ó Scolai, AEO, Co. Leitrim VEC	£5
Deirdre Frawley, AEO, City of Limerick VEC	£5
John Barry, AEO, Co. Longford VEC	£5
Foin Rua O'Neill, AEO, Co. Mayo VEC	£5
Pat Stanton, AEO, Co. Mayo VEC	£5
Mairead Wynn, AEO, Co. Offaly VEC	£5
Michael Burke, AEO, Co. Sligo VEC	£5
Jacinta Stewart, AEO, City of Dublin VEC	£5
Librarian, Burnley College, Burnley, Lancs, England	Stg. £10