

POLICY PROMOTION PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP

National Adult Learning Organisation

AONTAS ANNUAL REPORT
2007





The mission of AONTAS is to ensure that every adult in Ireland has access to appropriate and affordable learning opportunities throughout their lives, thus enabling them to contribute to and participate in the economic, social, civic and cultural development of Irish society.



THE WORK OF AONTAS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS WILL BE UNDERPINNED BY FIVE KEY VALUES:

- AONTAS is committed to the concept of lifelong learning and its role in enabling people to participate in the human, social, economic and cultural development of Irish society.
- AONTAS affirms and supports the key role of adult and community education in combating poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that everyone benefits from, and contributes to sustainable economic development.
- AONTAS is committed to the concept of equality of access, participation and outcomes in adult and community education.
- AONTAS affirms and supports the key role of adult and community education in promoting democracy and active citizenship.
- AONTAS is committed, through a process of action and reflection, to its growth as a learning organisation, a model of best practice and a leading centre of expertise in the field of adult learning.

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FOREWORD

Closing the Chapter

Reflection is one of those processes in adult and community education that we all ought to do, but are sometimes too busy with the day-to-day activity to take the time out to do it. However, this is now my opportunity to look back on nearly ten years of work with AONTAS as I am bowing out this year.

The Changes

The changes we have lived through during that time are profound and startling. I doubt if I could tell that we would have two erstwhile enemies sitting side-by-side on the Northern Ireland Assembly benches. I did not predict that we would adopt the euro with gusto and that it would take much more than a quarter of a million of them to buy a family home. But I am proud that we in adult education have been in the front line of responding to the needs of our new Irish populations, in the same way as we responded to unemployment, emigration and the needs of marginalised and disenfranchised people everywhere a decade earlier.

The White Paper

In the meantime, we have had some crucial changes in adult and community education. The *White Paper*, in 2000, was a milestone in policy development. It was also a milestone in the development of the distinct philosophy, which distinguished it in the myriad of education and training philosophies. This philosophy stemmed from the practice, particularly in community education, which demonstrated a truly learner-centred approach, woven through with the sociological imagination. This philosophy integrates the inner landscape of the learner, tutors, facilitators, with the social and political landscape in which we find ourselves.

Critical Citizenship

Adult and community education is the key resource to critical citizenship and participative democracy. Adult learners are active citizens: participating in adult and community education is an act of altruism, a contribution to the community. This is a difficult message to get across, because the main thrust of traditional education has shifted towards the notion that students and pupils are customers or consumers of education, rather than participants in joint learning projects. Networking with like-minded people from Europe, and especially in the Nordic countries, shows that this work is a safeguard against complacency, especially the work done by non-formal adult and community education. Adult and community education depends on the engagement with integrity and openness to the learning and wisdom that underpins the knowledge society. In meeting the needs of modern Irish society, adult and community education has also kept awareness and consciousness raising on the agenda.

Rewarding

The work with AONTAS has been hugely rewarding for me. Meeting with like-minded people is surely the most affirming and inclusive learning environment anyone could wish for. Through the work with AONTAS, I have encountered commitment to the advancement of adult and community education, at all levels: commitment to learners and commitment to changing the environment in which learners find themselves, whether it is challenging current funding obstacles or fighting for child and elder care. I would like to pay particular tribute to my colleagues on the Executive Committee especially fellow officers, John Ryan and Paddy Nolan who also complete their terms of office at the AGM in 2008.

As we know, progress is impossible without change, and we are still waiting for changes in other areas. We are still waiting for a national co-ordinating structure for adult education, which would support and validate the localised work. We are still waiting for secure and adequate resources for adults participating in adult and community education; indeed, we are waiting for the full implementation of the White Paper, which would give real authority to the knowledge that we have created together. Knowledge is of no value unless it is put into practice, but the work with AONTAS has underpinned the belief that it is possible to create a much better society, and believing in yourself can make anything happen.

Brid Connolly, Vice President.

OVERVIEW

Introduction

As the adult and community education sector grows the work of organisations like AONTAS increases and develops to reflect this growth. 2007 has proven to be a particularly active year for AONTAS and this report can really only give a snapshot of that work, highlighting the most important activities. In January we launched the first National Adult Learners' Festival, an event which had been planned for some time. The Festival generated great enthusiasm amongst the adult and community education community with numerous events throughout the country, a celebration of the achievements of adult learners at the STAR awards and the launch of a pre-election campaign designed to ensure adult and community education is part of the political agenda. AONTAS members, supported by lobbying resource packs, played their part in bringing the ten demands outlined in the 'Demand Your Right to Learn' campaign to the attention of those running for election.

In May at the Annual General meeting AONTAS members adopted the fourth Strategic Plan which had been drawn up after an extensive consultation process. The plan which will underpin the work of AONTAS until the end of 2010 identified four key priorities for the organisation namely:-

- Policy
- Promotion
- Practice
- Partnership

These four areas are interrelated with, and underpinned by a fifth priority which is organisational development. These priorities will enable AONTAS to be at the forefront of policy development in adult and community education, to represent the voice of the sector, to be the chief promoter of the significance and value of the sector and a leading body for supporting and sharing best practice. Research and partnership with key agencies and our members will compliment and inform this work. AONTAS members also agreed to change the name of the Association to the National Adult Learning Organisation to better reflect the holistic definition of learning as understood and practiced by AONTAS. This year's report is laid out according to the priorities identified in the plan.

Research

In 2007 AONTAS received research funding from the Department of Education and Science and is now engaged in a major research project on community education in Ireland. Research was also undertaken in relation to third level fees and the lifelong learning needs of older people. AONTAS also played a key role in re-establishing IRAACE, the Irish Research Association for Adult and Community Education. Together with NALA, AONTAS will support the development of the Association throughout 2008 with a view to building a strong research base for the sector.

Also in 2007 AONTAS received funding to mainstream the Quality Assurance Framework for the Women's Community Education groups and the training of leaders began in June. By June 2008 AONTAS will have completed the first phase of the project and will publish the Framework and a User's Guide. The Steering Group will also explore the possibility of adapting the Framework for use by other community-based groups. The Framework will also be introduced to the Community Education Facilitators through their national training programme.

Supporting and Developing Membership

Developing and supporting our members was a central focus of our work throughout the year. During the consultation leading up to the development of the Strategic Plan community education groups expressed a need for greater visibility and support for their work and thus the Community Education Network was established holding its first meeting in November. It is hoped that the Network will strengthen the voice of community education and build its capacity into the future. Members have also been extremely active throughout the year in promoting adult and community education through the Festival and the pre-election campaign. AONTAS has established a membership section in its small library for reports and information about the work of its members. A database of case studies has also been built up and adult learners have made their stories available for promotional purposes. Members are kept informed of developments in adult and community education and contribute their experience through the e-bulletin, the website and the Explore magazine. A new membership resource pack including a comprehensive Information Booklet for adult learners was produced in 2007.

Promoting Active Citizenship

The role of adult and community education in promoting active citizenship featured strongly in the membership consultation process and this issue tied in to discussions with the Development Education Section of Irish Aid which approached AONTAS to explore and develop links between development education and adult and community education. AONTAS subsequently prepared a research proposal which was accepted by Irish Aid . The research project will be carried out during 2008. More information on this project is available in the policy/research section of this report.

Funding for the Sector

In September AONTAS prepared a Budget Submission for the sector focussing on four of its key demands i.e. action on third level fees for part-time learners; a review of the Back to Education Allowance to include low paid workers; doubling of the childcare allowance for adults in further education and training and a doubling of the budget for the Adult Education Guidance Initiative. As yet none of these issues has been addressed but AONTAS will continue to lobby for change, and will urge the government to deliver on its

commitment in the Social Partnership Framework, Towards 2016 , to remove part-time fees for workers pursuing their first degree. AONTAS has been conducting a series of meetings with political party spokespeople to ensure attention is paid to the key demands outlined in our campaign literature.

International Partnerships

AONTAS continues to play an active role in the work of the European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA) with Brid Connelly, Vice President serving on the EAEA Executive Board. Brid, Jacinta Cuthbert and Berni Brady attended the General Assembly of the EAEA in Riga in December and also held a planning meeting with EAEA staff in relation to the 2008 General assembly which will be held in Ireland and hosted by AONTAS. John Ryan, President and Berni Brady attended the General Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education which was held in Nairobi in January and which contributed to the preparations for CONFINTEA V1, the sixth UNESCO conference on Lifelong Learning in 2009.

The Challenge of Change

Many changes have taken place during 2007. New staff have been appointed and others have left. Changes have also happened within the Executive Committee and major changes have taken place within the Further Education Section of the Department with practically a whole new staff team appointed in preparation for decentralisation of the section to Athlone in 2008. New political party spokespeople were appointed after the general election. All of these changes affect the way we work; new relationships have to be developed and communicating the importance of our work as an organisation and of the sector as a whole is paramount. This means working quickly and efficiently and ensuring our message is clear. Many challenges lie ahead for AONTAS but we are optimistic and confident that we have the capacity to take up these challenges and ensure that adult and community education will achieve its rightful place on a par with other sectors of the education service.

I would like to acknowledge the continuing support of the Minister for Lifelong Learning and the staff of the Department of Education and Science who we have worked closely with throughout the year as well as all those agencies and individuals who have helped to support and promote our work.

I would also like to say a sincere thank you to our departing officers, John, Brid and Paddy who have at all times supported me, the staff team and our work with unmatched generosity. I wish you all good health and success in your future work.

Berni Brady, Director



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COMMITMENT TO WORK
TOWARDS ENSURING THAT
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POLICY



POLICY

Influencing policy in the area of adult and community education has been a key focus of the work of AONTAS since the adoption of its first Strategic Plan, 'A Vision for the Future', 1998-2000. Since then it has been a lead player in the development of the White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life, 2000 and on developments in the sector which have followed. In this fourth Strategic plan AONTAS has made a firm commitment to work towards ensuring that adult and community education is firmly established as part of the education system on a par with other sectors of the system. At the end of the first year of the plan AONTAS has engaged in a number of activities designed to progress this objective.

Adult Learners' Festival Political Event

The closing event of the first annual Adult Learners' Festival in January 2007 saw the launch of the AONTAS '**Demand Your Right to Learn**' campaign in which Ireland's 300,000 adult learners were encouraged to use their vote in the general election to demand their right to learn. Each of the political parties' spokespeople on education, attending the launch in Buswell's Hotel in Dublin were invited to respond to ten key demands which AONTAS had identified as priorities for the development of the Adult Education Sector. AONTAS called for a commitment from each of the parties, should they be elected to Government to improve funding, structures and supports for the Sector. AONTAS members were provided with election packs containing resource materials for lobbying local T.D.s and election candidates. AONTAS also ran a petition in the run up to the election which was signed by over 1,500 adult learners. The petition will be presented to the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning at the 2008 policy event at the close of the second annual Adult Learners' Festival.

Outcomes from the Election Campaign

- The appointment of a Minister of State with responsibility for Lifelong Learning and with an extended brief to include the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- The collection of over 1500 signatures from adult learners throughout the country on the 'Demand Your Right To Learn' petition, supporting AONTAS demands for improvements to the Sector.
- Over 20 parliamentary questions raised in Dáil Éireann before the election on the topic of adult learning.
- Stated commitments in the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour election manifestoes to abolish fees for part-time courses in higher education. The Progressive Democrats, the Green Party and Sinn Féin also promised AONTAS they would address this issue if in government after the election.

- A joint commitment in the Fine Gael/Labour strategy on tax and jobs to introduce two weeks annual paid training leave, targeted at low-skilled workers.
- The Government announcement before the election that the eligibility criteria for the Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) would be changed from 1 September 2007 onwards, so that people on low incomes will no longer have to pay fees to participate in the BTEI.
- Pledges from Fine Gael, Labour, the Green Party and Sinn Féin to reinstate the National Adult Learning Council if in Government after the election.
- A commitment in the Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael election manifestoes to provide dedicated funding for English language training for speakers of other languages.
- A commitment in Labour's election manifesto to provide a dedicated annual budget for women's community education.

Working with Political Representatives

After the 2007 General Election Mr. Sean Haughey T.D. was reappointed as Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science with an extended brief as Minister for Lifelong Learning across both the Departments of Education and Science and Enterprise, Trade and Employment. AONTAS met with the Minister in June to outline its plans and to present its Budget submission for 2008. The Minister was also invited to open the Autumn General Meeting and launch the AONTAS Membership Resource Pack. Towards the end of the year AONTAS began a series of meetings with all political party spokespeople with a view to building relationships and ensuring a continuing commitment to achieving our 10 key demands and to keeping adult education on the political agenda.

POLICY PAPERS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

Throughout the year AONTAS developed a number of policy and discussion papers based on research and consultations with its members and other key stakeholders.

Part-time Fees in Higher Education

In June 2007 AONTAS produced a paper on Part-time Fees in Higher Education which outlines the organisation's stance on fees charged for part-time courses in third level institutions. The paper was drawn up following extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, including third level institutions, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the National Access Office. The paper identifies the need for the removal of fees for part-time students in order to ensure equal access for all learners in higher education. However the paper highlights that fees for part-time learners are "*one piece of the jigsaw*" and comprehensive supports, including financial assistance are also required for smooth progression through the system. AONTAS has

presented this paper to both Ministers Hanafin and Haughey but to date no real progress has been made on the issue despite it being identified in Towards 2016, the Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015 in relation to providing targeted support for employees participating in part-time courses at third level.

The Lifelong Learning Needs of Older People in Ireland

AONTAS was asked by the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science to provide a scoping paper on the lifelong learning needs of older people. The paper was informed by broad consultation with relevant stakeholders including providers of services to older people and older people involved in lifelong learning. It has been well received by the Department and other organisations working with older learners and will inform more in-depth research in the area during 2008. AONTAS submitted a proposal to Age & Opportunity, in November to examine the extent to which the learning needs of older people are understood and addressed within the adult and community education sector, and to explore how adult educators might be supported to develop innovative approaches and processes which will engage older people in learning and strengthening their voice in relation to their right to learn. The research will commence in early 2008 and will be completed by the end of May.

Exploring and Developing Links Between Development Education and Adult and Community Education

In the early part of 2007 AONTAS was approached by the Development Education Section of Irish Aid to explore ways in which links could be made with adult and community education. Following a consultation with a sample of the AONTAS membership and paying due consideration to our strategic priorities, the theme of active citizenship was identified for the proposal. The overall aim of the research will be to examine the extent to which development education is understood in the adult and community education sector and to explore how adult educators might be supported in integrating development education into their work and processes, using active citizenship as the main focus. Funding for this research has since been secured from Irish Aid to recruit an external research consultant to undertake the project and work will commence in 2008, following a tendering process.

Development of Guidelines for the Inclusion of Men in BTEI

AONTAS was commissioned by the Further Education Section in 2007 to develop clear practice guidelines for the inclusion of men in the Back To Education Initiative (BTEI), which aims to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities. A review of the BTEI conducted

during consultation with BTEI service providers generated a discussion document (2006) which identified the challenges currently facing the initiative. As just 25% of participants in 2005 were men, the review highlights the ongoing need for specific strategies to attract men. The discussion document made a number of recommendations regarding the implementation of the BTEI in the future. One such recommendation called for research to identify examples of best practice on the inclusion of men and disseminate the findings.

The guidelines will promote the inclusion of men, who traditionally are seen as hard-to-reach in relation to engagement with second chance education programmes. The development of guidelines has been informed by desk based research, interviews with the Adult Education Guidance Service and focus groups with formal and community strand providers of BTEI as well as men currently engaged in BTEI learning activities. The research will be completed by spring 2008. It is one of a suite of four research projects commissioned by the Further Education Section to support the development of BTEI.

Professional Development and Support Services for Adult and Community Education

In 2007 AONTAS submitted a discussion paper on professional development and support services in adult and community education to the Further Education Section of the DES and the Steering Group for the Community Education Facilitators' Training and Support Programme. The rationale for developing a more integrated support service is mainly to bring coherence and co-ordination across services. There are now more resources available to adult and community education than ever before, and this has led to the expansion of the service with more personnel employed in its organisation and delivery. The development and implementation of the various Quality Assurance Frameworks, and the process of strategic planning at local level, have required a range of new skills within the sector including leadership, change management, strategic thinking and planning and the development of partnerships.

The features of the model put forward in the discussion paper have very much in common with the original recommendations of the White Paper concerning Staff Development and Support. These include a national co-coordinating body with responsibility for developing services, research and informing policy. The establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group also proposed in the White Paper would be a very helpful starting point to progress this issue. This group, if established could begin the essential work of examining how existing support services are resourced and delivered with a view to developing an integrated and coherent approach to the delivery of a professional development system for the adult and community education sector as a whole.

Quantitative Research on Community Education Provision in Ireland

In 2007 AONTAS developed a research project aimed at providing a clear picture of the current provision of community education in Ireland. The study aims to look at who the providers are; what funding sources are available; the types of courses being run and information on gender and age profile of learners in community education.

Community education is supported by a diverse range of agencies which provide supports from core funding for the staffing of organisations to programme funding for the various courses that are run at local level. These include the Vocational Education Committees (VECs); The Back To Education Initiative (BTEI); The Community Development Programme (CDP) and the Once-off Grants to local and voluntary groups from Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; Pobal; Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme. There are also a large number of other agencies which support community education such as Department of Children and Health, Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, FÁS, Dormant Accounts as well as a number of private funders such as the Joseph Rowntree Trust.

The White Paper on Adult Education 2000 acknowledged the importance of community education and its contribution in reaching large numbers of learners in disadvantaged areas. Today community education is provided by a wide variety of organisations and groups at local level. The outcomes of this research which will be carried out in 2008 will include a detailed quantitative documentation of community education provision in each county area across Ireland and a comprehensive and publically available database of community education providers which can be updated regularly.

Other Activities

- In February, 2007 AONTAS made a submission to FETAC regarding the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational and Educational Training (ECVET).
- AONTAS is represented on the Social Policy Network, which includes statutory and non-statutory organisations with a social policy remit. The purpose of the Network is to inform and update its members of the social policy work being carried out by other member organisations, which may be relevant to their own work. The Network also supports its members in their work through brief educational inputs and updates on current social policy trends.
- The **Adult Learner Journal** was re-launched at the AONTAS AGM in May 2007. The Editorial Board of the Journal is currently reviewing submissions for the 2008 edition.

- In October 2006, a new research association for the adult education sector in Ireland (**IRAACE**) was launched at the National Library in Dublin. Initiated jointly by AONTAS and NALA the Association aims to facilitate networking, promote existing research and inform new aspects of the research agenda. A development committee was established at the launch and met in September 2007 to identify research priorities, and to discuss ways in which AONTAS and NALA might support the work of IRAACE in the future. An upcoming research event in Dublin has been scheduled for April 2008. The event will offer attendees the opportunity to network with other researchers, to discuss current projects and to showcase their work. It is anticipated that this event in April will be the first of two events hosted by IRAACE in 2008.
- The AONTAS General Meeting held in Dublin in November 2007 offered an opportunity to promote our position paper on part-time fees; this was incorporated into a presentation on the '**Financial Barriers to Education**' given by the Policy & Research Officer.

The workshops facilitated at the General Meeting 2007 also had a strong policy focus, in order to give the membership the opportunity to be actively involved in the direction of the policy work of AONTAS, by identifying gaps in research and emerging policy priorities for the sector. Feedback gathered from each of the workshops will inform the position papers and research studies undertaken by AONTAS during the course of this strategic plan.



PROMOTION

**...AONTAS HAS PROMOTED
THE WORK OF ADULT AND
COMMUNITY EDUCATION
PROVIDERS...**



PROMOTION

AONTAS believes that building the profile of adult and community education is very important. Building awareness of its value will be a priority over the life of the current strategic plan thus ensuring that state agencies and politicians understand the contribution that adult and community education makes, not just to our economy but to our society as a whole. During the past year AONTAS has promoted the work of adult and community education providers through the Adult Learners' Festival and supported its members to highlight their practice and outcomes. It has also supported and encouraged individual adult learners back to education and training through its Information Referral Service.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

The PR strategy for 2007 centred around three key events – the first Adult Learners' Festival in January, the pre-election campaign 'Demand your Right to Learn', and preparation for the second Adult Learners Festival to be held in February 2008. During 2007 there was also a change in personnel with Martina Quinn leaving AONTAS in June and a new Communications Officer, Niamh Farren appointed in August 2007.

Adult Learners' Festival

The first Adult Learners' Festival took place from January 23rd until 27th and more than one hundred events were organised throughout the country. The Festival was opened by Minister Sean Haughey with a celebration of learning marked by the STAR (Showcasing Teamwork, Awarding Recognition) awards ceremony. Forty six projects in total were nominated for awards and the six winning projects were presented with their awards at the Royal College of Physicians by Dr. Hugh Brady, President of University College Dublin. In the lead up to the event AONTAS supported a network of local link co-ordinators around the country to promote the Festival and encourage groups to organise events.

The Festival was a great success and generated a high level of interest from learners, providers and media at both a local and national level. The closing event which was addressed by Dr. Tom Collins, Professor of Education at NUI/Maynooth launched the AONTAS pre-election campaign '**Demand Your Right to Learn**', The education spokespeople from all the political parties were invited to outline their party's position on adult and community education.

AONTAS staff worked with a Steering Committee of representatives from relevant organisations such as the VECs, FÁS, NALA, the IVEA and Active Retirement to organise an ambitious programme of events for the Festival. All events were promoted through an intensive advertising and media campaign supported by AONTAS. The Festival was also

supported by popular comedian Pat Shortt. Building on the success of the first Festival, planning for the Adult Learners' Festival 2008 began in April 2007. Nominations for the 2008 STAR Awards closed in October 2007, and with 131 projects submitted the event promises to be even bigger next year.

A full report of the Festival can be downloaded from the AONTAS website at www.aontas.com.

Media Coverage

During 2007 AONTAS continued to expand its communications activities, issuing almost thirty press releases responding to various issues of relevance to the sector. AONTAS was particularly successful in attracting media coverage during the Festival, but also gained coverage in further education supplements of national newspapers and in the lead up to the Budget. The organisation featured in fourteen national newspaper articles and seven national broadcast interviews, including a feature in the RTE programme 'Nationwide'. AONTAS also participated in almost twenty interviews on local radio stations throughout the country, and twelve interviews on community radio.

AONTAS continued to monitor coverage of the adult and community education sector in local and national print media through using a media monitoring service provided by Media Market. Following a brief review of usage of the service in late 2007, AONTAS will restrict usage to key times of the year, such as the Festival and Budget, but expand the service at these times to include broadcast coverage. This will allow AONTAS to monitor media coverage at these times and also evaluate the effectiveness of particular media campaigns.

Explore

Changes in personnel resulted in three issues of *Explore* produced in 2007 as opposed to four in 2006. Feedback indicates that *Explore* continues to be an excellent resource for practitioners and learners in adult and community education. Member organisations and individuals regularly submit articles for inclusion. *Explore* came into its own during the lead up to the general election, by allowing AONTAS the opportunity to focus on the priorities and promises of different political parties in relation to adult and community education.

The AONTAS E-bulletin

The AONTAS E-bulletin is a mechanism for AONTAS members to share information. It is e-mailed to all members with an e-mail address on a monthly basis. The E-bulletin was reviewed in March 2007 following the findings of a survey sent to all members. Adult Education News and AONTAS News proved the most popular sections of the E-bulletin

and as a result these sections were expanded. The E-bulletin has also proved a useful tool in communicating information to members about the Adult Learners' Festival. From September 2007, the E-bulletin had a dedicated Adult Learners' Festival section. The design of the E-bulletin also changed to incorporate the colours of the new AONTAS logo. In addition to this, hyperlinks were added to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. Members are encouraged to submit information for inclusion in the E-bulletin on an ongoing basis.

Website Development

A review of the AONTAS website following extensive consultation with membership informed a number of changes to the existing website. A new website incorporating these changes and a visual theme reflecting the current strategic plan will go live in time for the Adult Learners' Festival 2008. In addition the newly developed Festival website www.adultlearnersfestival.com was revamped to reflect the design concepts and theme chosen for the 2008 Festival.

Demand your Right to Learn Campaign

The Demand Your Right to Learn Campaign was a nationwide pre-election campaign organised by AONTAS and focusing on ten key demands for improvements to the adult learning sector. The campaign was launched at the closing event of the Adult Learners' Festival 2007. AONTAS prepared a comprehensive campaign pack which included the ten key demands, posters and media support materials. The campaign packs were widely distributed and used by members of AONTAS and training was also provided by AONTAS to support members to develop their own local campaigns. Copies of the demands and the packs can be downloaded from the AONTAS website. The outcomes of the campaign are reported in the policy/research section of this report.

INFORMATION REFERRAL SERVICE

The success of the first annual Adult Learners' Festival and the increased publicity AONTAS received resulted in a very busy year for the AONTAS Information Referral Service.

Providing Information

This year queries increased dramatically by almost three thousand compared to last year's figures. In 2007 January, August, September and December proved to be the busiest months for the service. August and September are traditionally busy times for the service as providers and learners gear up for the coming adult education year. However the increase in

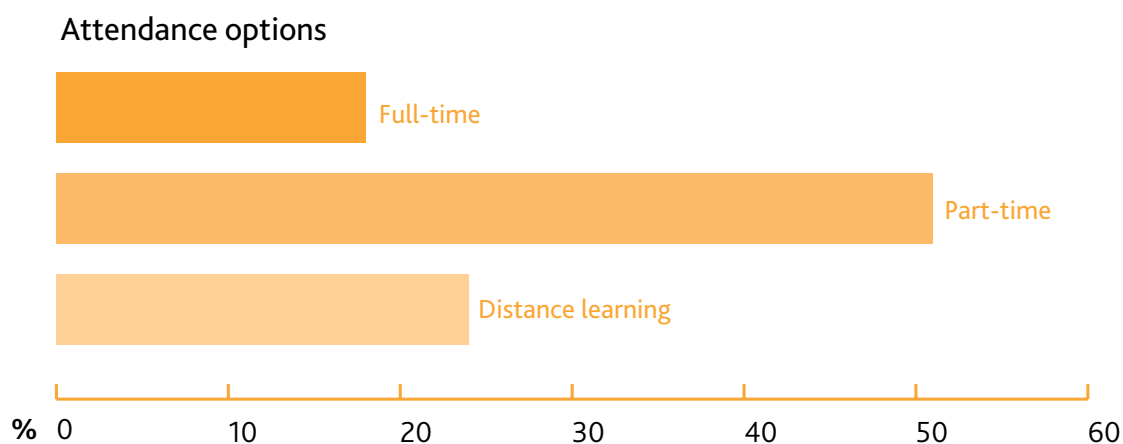
queries throughout December and January can be linked directly to the success of the Adult Learners' Festival.

In 2007 the service was contacted by individuals, community groups, Citizens Information Centres, libraries and a range of other organisations/groups. Seventy one per cent of those who contacted the service were female. While 3,485 queries were received, many individuals had more than one query. Seventy per cent of the year's queries were course related. Once again the website, word of mouth and media coverage all continue to play an important role in the promotion of the Referral Service

The telephone continues to be the main way in which people contact the Service and this year approximately 2,500 people phoned the AONTAS office with queries. However a new emerging trend is an increase in the number of people contacting the service by e-mail. The online facility for people to e-mail in their queries is further developing as a popular choice with 987 e-mails received in 2007.

Distance learning and part-time courses were identified as the more popular choices for learners. However the number of people looking for distance learning courses in 2007 decreased whilst the number of learners looking to find suitable full-time courses increased. This changing trend may be related to the fact that distance education and part-time options require payment of full fees.

Preferred Course Attendance Options for Adults Contacting the Information Referral Service.



The success of the 'Demand Your Right to Learn' campaign also had a direct impact on the nature of queries received by the Service in 2007. This year the service received a number of policy focused queries from both adult learners and providers. Many of the queries were focused on the topics included in the AONTAS ten demands and it certainly seems that this policy focus is now also an emerging trend for Service generally. The Service continues to be a very important starting point for many adult learners and a useful resource for those working in the field of adult education.

The Information Booklet

AONTAS originally provided information sheets on a variety of topics to learners contacting the organisation. However, the increase in the volume and complexity of queries called for an information resource for learners that was comprehensive, flexible and easy to understand. The Information Officer and the Resource & Communications Officer led out the project to produce a booklet designed to assist learners in their lifelong learning journey. The Information Booklet is primarily aimed at existing adult learners and prospective adult learners who contact the Information Referral Service with adult learning queries. The booklet includes information ranging from basic education to post-graduate study, making it a document that learners can dip in and out of depending on what level they are at and what level they want to achieve.

From a broad financial supports section to a thorough list of learning opportunities available to an extensive contacts list, the booklet is packed full of all the information a prospective adult learner might need. The booklet also includes inspirational stories from adult learners who have started their lifelong learning journey and are encouraging others to do the same.

This booklet will be a resource during future Adult Learners' Festivals when queries increase substantially. The contents are all a direct response to an analysis of the queries which are received on an on-going basis and cover some of the most frequently asked questions from learners. The Glossary of Terms section is a response to a proposal during the consultation process of the Strategic Plan. This booklet will be part of the new AONTAS Membership Resource Pack and since it is produced in-house it can be easily amended to reflect emerging trends in the sector. The booklet can also be downloaded via the website.

The AONTAS Information Booklet was launched by Minister for Lifelong Learning, Sean Haughey T.D., at the AONTAS General Meeting on Wednesday, 28th November 2007 as part of the new AONTAS Membership Resource Pack. Although the booklet has only recently been launched it has been a very popular publication request for both learners and providers in the adult education sector. Feedback to date has been very positive.

Library and Publications

The library continues to act as an invaluable information resource for AONTAS staff members, Executive and members. The library houses adult education journals as well as reports and research from relevant organisations. Throughout 2007, AONTAS members were encouraged to submit annual reports, information leaflets, research documents etc. to build up the membership section of the library. Learners and providers continue to request publications from AONTAS. **Gender & Learning 2003, Community Education 2004, The Adult Learner 2007, At the Forefront and Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework Project Report** were the most frequently requested publications in 2007. Where possible, the requests are directed to our website where publications can be accessed and downloaded. Many learners and providers also requested information and material in relation to the 'Demand Your Right to Learn' campaign.

INFONET

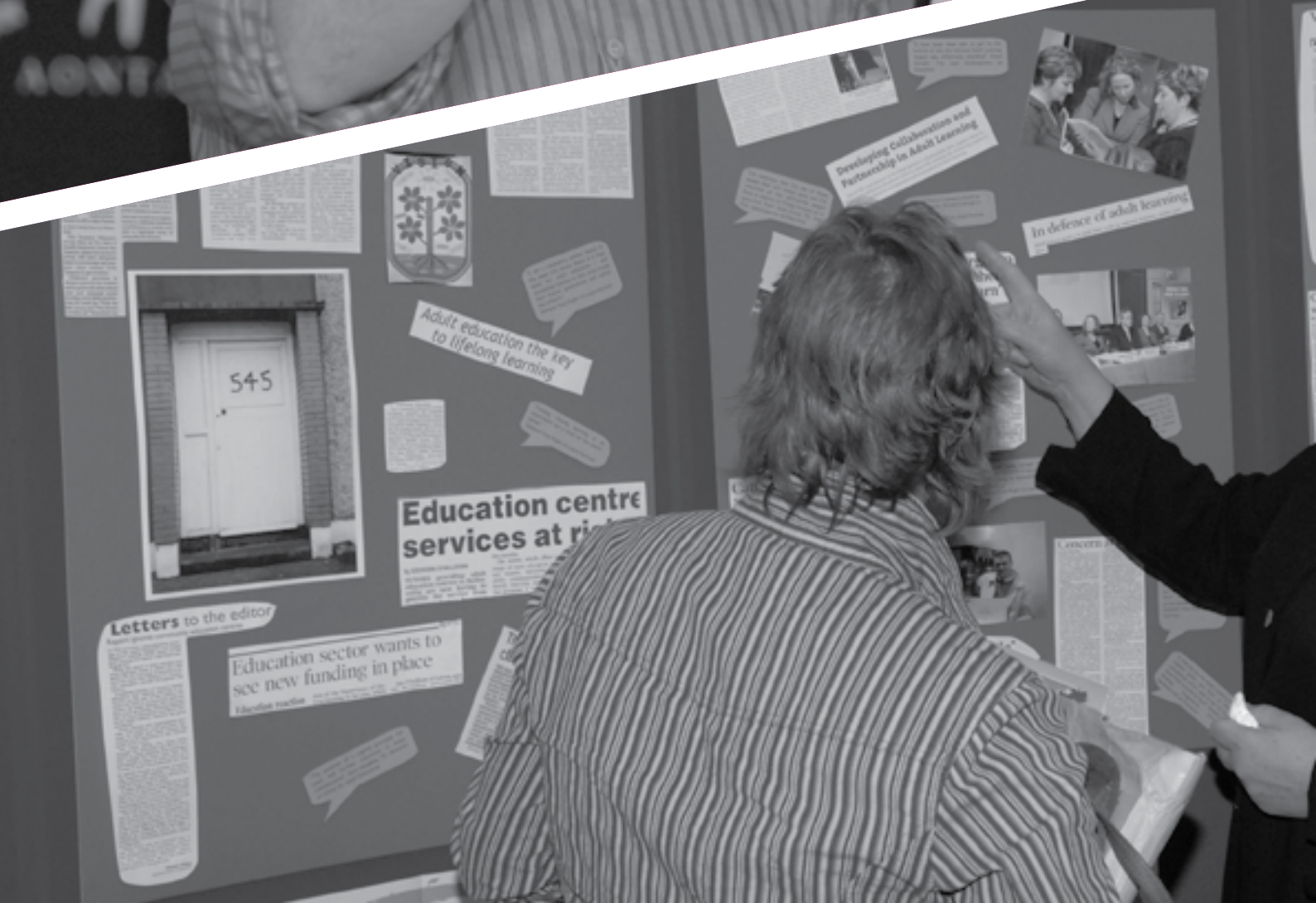
Infonet is a network of periodicals and other media for adult education in Europe. Its objective is to strengthen the European dimension of editorial work and thereby inform readers about European matters. The network is funded under Grundtvig 4 and consists of thirty partner countries which contribute to the information network through writing articles and meeting regularly to exchange information and develop the network. The AONTAS Director is a partner correspondent and articles are written once a month for distribution through the network. The network can be accessed through the website at www.infonet-ae.net.

Presentations

During 2007 the Information Officer and other members of staff attended and made presentations at a number of events on behalf of AONTAS.

Examples include:-

- Information briefings to clients in St John of God's Hospital and Cluain Mhuire.
- Presentation to the Irish Traveller Movement.
- Presentation to AIKE International; a representative body from the Finnish vocational adult education centres.
- A range of conferences and membership events.
- Hosting a range of international delegations.



...AONTAS MEMBERS WHO
ARE PROVIDERS OF ADULT
AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION
ENDEAVOUR TO PROVIDE A
FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE AND
QUALITY SERVICE...

PRACTICE



PRACTICE

AONTAS members who are providers of adult and community education endeavour to provide a flexible, responsive and quality service to adult learners throughout the country. AONTAS supports that practice through promotion, facilitating fora for discussion and from time to time through the delivery of training and action research projects.

THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION FACILITATORS TRAINING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2007

AONTAS continued to deliver the Training and Support Programme to the Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) as part of organisation's work in supporting continuous professional development in adult and community education.

Regional Meetings

The theme for the Programme in 2007 was continuous professional development at a practice level. This was addressed at the spring regional meetings through identifying what supports are currently in place for community education tutors and sharing models of good practice from the CEF work at local level. Following discussion two areas were identified by the CEFs as needing attention at a national level:-

1. Diversity of qualifications and experience

Community education tutors work part-time either during the day or at night and generally have a variety of qualifications and experiences. Most community education tutors come with an experiential background having developed their skills through their work and have a variety of career paths.

2. Resources for Professional Training for Tutors

Funding for in-service training was identified as inadequate and in some cases for community education tutors non-existent.

There is a growing recognition of the role of continuous professional development in developing quality, professional adult and community education provision. More and more adults are engaging in adult and community education either in institutions or in community groups. The range of courses has increased and delivery methods are becoming more varied as they respond to learners' needs. Advances in technology have created new possibilities for how courses can be planned and delivered. All these require adult and community education tutors to have an expanding range of skills, competences and

knowledge. Tutors not only need to be subject experts but they must also demonstrate effective facilitation, group work skills and show an understanding of adult learning methodologies all of which require training.

The CEFs agreed at the regional sessions that without a group or body such as the Inter-Agency Working Group on professional development proposed in the White Paper these issues will continue to hinder the development of professional adult and community education provision. A report on the regional meetings was sent to all VECs, the Further Education Section of DES, IVEA and the National Steering Group.

National Training

In May the CEFs participated in a two-day national training for trainers event which covered the LEAP model of planning and evaluation. LEAP stands for Learning, Evaluation and Planning. The Scottish Community Development Centre developed this framework which is based on the principles and values of community education and development. It is a practical toolkit that is designed to support all aspects of project, programme and policy planning and development. The LEAP framework emphasises self-evaluation and can be used in different contexts. It assists with planning more effectively and working in partnership. At the end of the two days each CEF was trained to put in place the LEAP model at local level.

Diversity training was offered as part of the continuous professional development for the CEFs in the autumn. Openminds delivered training to the CEFs on diversity awareness and they describe diversity consciousness as "having the ability to be aware of one's surroundings and respond to them normally. It is being sensitive to the mosaic of human differences that combine to create any organisation." Many of the CEFs who participated in the training followed up by organising to deliver diversity training in their respective VECs.

Autumn National Event

The wider benefits of learning were the focus for the autumn national event. The CEFs have been concerned that community education is becoming defined within boundaries of what can be measured, marked and numbered. For community education the wider benefits of learning are essential as it is often the first step to learning for many adults. Community education has been recognised as being able to reach learners who have been failed by the traditional, formal education system. As part of their training, the CEFs explored in creative and energising ways the wider benefits of community education at a one day workshop hosted by the Crooked House Theatre. This was followed by participation at the Co. Clare Adult Education Service conference on the wider benefits of learning the next day.

During the year the CEF training and support programme continued to provide ongoing information support to the CEFs in a range of areas such as funding for community education, policy development and training opportunities in Ireland and in Europe.

TRAINING LINKS

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

The Lobbying for Adult and Community Education Network

The aim of the Network established by AONTAS was very specific, i.e. to provide training in media and lobbying skills to Network member groups in advance of the general election 2007. Thirteen member organisations participated in the training which took place on a regional basis with four groups over three sessions. On the 1st of May 2007, all participants came together in the Royal Dublin Hotel to present their work and receive certificates of participation.

The duration of the training programme coincided with the AONTAS pre-election campaign, 'Demand Your Right to Learn'. AONTAS distributed lobbying resource packs to all its members as part of this campaign, including those groups involved in the Training Network. This was found to be very beneficial by the Network member groups, as it gave them a national focus for their own lobbying work and also provided them with useful tools, such as template press releases, templates for writing letters to their local candidates, posters to publicise the campaign, etc.

The Network increased the capacity of AONTAS community group members to engage in lobbying activities and to increase their existing lobbying and media skills. It also built up the relationships between AONTAS and the member groups, between the member groups themselves, and between the trainees taking part and their own organisations. The Network was a success overall and it laid the foundations for the establishment of the Community Education Network.

CASE STUDIES

Feedback from media personnel indicates that the experiences of adult learners are of particular interest to journalists and broadcasters. In this context AONTAS developed a strategy in 2007 which supports adult learners to engage with media with the aim of promoting adult and community education. A database was established and will be expanded to include a variety of adult learners of different ages, backgrounds, experience and location. Over the next two years, AONTAS will identify adult learners, in particular those who illustrate key policy concerns, and support them to act as advocates and to engage with mainstream media. This support will involve hands on training as well as resource materials for spokespersons.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK MAINSTREAMING PROJECT

In April 2007 the Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) Mainstreaming Project commenced. The project aims to:-

- Provide a benchmark for women's community education groups to quality assure their work, their learning processes and their outcomes in a holistic and integrated way. As a result, groups will be able to demonstrate more fully the quality and value of their work and promote the rationale for a secure funding base for women's community education.

The Mainstreaming Project follows a pilot project which ran from 2003-2005. The pilot project involved a researcher working closely with five women's community education groups from AONTAS membership to articulate a shared vision, and set of goals, principles, dimensions and practices of women's community education. These shared understandings were then written up as a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which other women's community education groups could use to quality assure their work.

Training Leaders

In 2007 AONTAS received funding from The Department of Education and Science to achieve the first objective of training Leaders and supporting them to lead their groups through the quality assurance process using the QAF. A consultant facilitator was recruited to deliver the training. This work involved informing women's community education groups about the project, inviting them to send forward Leaders to participate in the training and getting the training underway.

The training programme involves Leaders attending six two-day workshops over the course of September 2007 to June 2008. Every time Leaders come to a training workshop they prepare to go back and facilitate one quality assurance workshop with a quality assurance working group convened by management in their organisations. The quality assurance happens over six stages, or six workshops and culminates in a quality assurance plan in which groups identify how they will address gaps in practice in their work that they have identified throughout the process.

In 2007, training took place in three training locations around Ireland meaning that there were three training programmes running concurrently throughout the last quarter of the year.

The following activities were carried out from April 2007-December 2007:

- Five information workshops were held around the island to inform groups about the project in Donegal, Clondalkin, Central Dublin, Belfast and Ennis;
- Forty-two Leaders from 17 AONTAS affiliate groups were recruited to participate in training about the QAF;
- The project facilitator developed a Leader training programme;
- The first and second Leader training workshops were run in each of the training locations – Donegal, Dublin and Limerick;
- The project facilitator supported the Leaders by telephone and email to carry out their first two quality assurance workshops in their organisations.

There are four more training workshops to be carried out in the first half of 2008. By the end of 2007 all of the Leaders reported that doing the first two quality assurance workshops with their organisations had had extremely positive outcomes. As some Leaders from the second Dublin training workshop reported, participating in the process so far had facilitated members of their organisations to develop, *“a shared awareness about the work and a sense of belonging together as an organisation [as well as] renewed energy and confidence in our work.”*

LEARNER NETWORKS

AONTAS continued its commitment to create a space for adult learners to network and push forward their issues through participating in policy work. Extensive planning work with a number of member organisations working with adult learners involved in community education, outreach courses and third level education has taken place. Learners have been facilitated to identify what they want to achieve through networking and how to organise that networking to the best advantage. Work in 2008 will incorporate the previous planning with a view to participating in a Grundtvig Learning Partnership.

AONTAS was invited to be part of the application process for a Grundtvig Learning Partnership designed to create a European Adult Learners' Network aimed at developing innovative approaches to engaging learners in both national and European democratic structures, focusing on how a country's culture helps shape participation and involvement. If the application proves successful, it will offer an exciting opportunity for the adult learners from the AONTAS membership to engage in an international project.





PARTNERSHIP

**...AONTAS RECOGNISES THE
IMPORTANCE OF WORKING
COLLABORATIVELY WITH
KEY STAKE HOLDERS IN THE
ADULT AND COMMUNITY
EDUCATION SECTOR...**



PARTNERSHIP

Currently a broad range of agencies and funders provide and support adult and community education. AONTAS recognises the importance of working collaboratively with key stakeholders in the adult and community education sector at local, national and international levels with a view to tapping into and sharing information experience and expertise.

Throughout 2007 AONTAS met with a number of key agencies including the IVEA, NALA, NCCWN, TUI, EGSA Northern Ireland and the Workers Educational Association. Members of staff and the Executive Committee also attended a range of events throughout the year. AONTAS continued to work with staff of the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science. AONTAS also organised a number of Advisory Groups to assist with key projects such as the Adult Learners' Festival, the Quality Assurance Framework Project as well as other research projects. Members of these groups represented a range of agencies including the Further Education Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science, IVEA, Active Retirement, FETAC, FÁS, Chambers Ireland and NALA. This model of working is one which has been used successfully by AONTAS for the past number of years, allowing the opportunity to access expertise and build relationships with key stakeholders. AONTAS also represents the issues of adult learners on a number of key groups.

National Advisory Group to the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education

AONTAS as a member of this group has been involved in assisting in the development of the National Access Plan 2008-2013. The group met quarterly in 2007 to advise on the drafting of the plan which will be complete by early 2008. The main work of this plan will focus on actions to increase the participation rates of disadvantaged learners in third level education. Adult and community education are considered important entry routes for many learners and AONTAS, through this group, ensures that this is recognised. The barriers that many learners face and information from the learners who are members of AONTAS and from the mature student's network are used to inform the AONTAS participation on the National Advisory Group. The main areas of concern to be addressed in the new plan are funding for students on part time programmes; review of the existing grants system; how to provide effective routes of access, transfer and progression to higher education for all learners and creating more formal links between further and higher education.

National Advisory Group to the Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI)

A new advisory group was appointed in 2007 to support the ongoing work of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative. The group meets four times per annum. The AEGI now delivers an adult education guidance service in every VEC area and during 2007 a number of the services were expanded to include extra personnel. The AONTAS Director serves on the Advisory Committee and was also a member of the selection committee appointed to decide on the expansion of services.

Consultative Group of the NQAI

AONTAS continues to represent the adult and community education sector on the NQAI Consultative Group which met three times in 2007.

European Study on Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning

AONTAS participated in a joint study on *Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning* with five other countries who are members of the EAEA. The partner countries in the study were Ireland; Germany; United Kingdom; Poland; Greece and Spain.

The objective of the study was to contribute to the collection of available data on women's participation in lifelong learning and to make recommendations concerning lifelong learning for women. The study focused on learning in the tertiary, non-academic sector, in particular adult education. It also considered the relationship of learning with access to and progress in, the labour market.

Directives so far have raised awareness of the need to acknowledge the equality of women and men, but there is still a long way to go. The extent of women's participation in lifelong learning does not equate with better conditions for access to the labour market and employment. Women's participation rate in lifelong learning and level of educational achievement exceed those of men, but EU female employment has not yet reached the Lisbon aim of 60% (with the exception of Ireland); it is currently at 55.7%, and for women aged 55-64, 31.7%. In spite of good performance in a wide range of subjects in education and training, women in employment are still concentrated in fewer sectors than men.

Equally the wage-gap between women and men has to be bridged; not only do a high proportion of women work in low-paid jobs, but women are often paid less for the same work.

The study shows that although the actual position of women in the labour market varies greatly, there are certain common features found across Europe that include the wage-gap, gender segregation, levels of part-time working, breadwinner models, difficulty of career progression. Barriers such as the lack of childcare provision, difficulty of reconciling work/study and family life and differential access to employment-related training (as opposed to adult education) continue to hamper women's progression. The study entitled '*Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning*' will be published in 2008. The Irish report can be found on the AONTAS Website.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS (EAEA)

AONTAS is an active member of the EAEA and has been represented on the Board of the Association for the past six years by Brid Connolly, Vice President. A short report from Brid follows.

My term of office on the Board of the European Association for the Education of Adults ends in October this year. This will complete six of the most rewarding years of my life as an adult educator, and I will leave it behind with a touch of sadness. However, it is also important to move on, to make space for new ideas and new energies.

EAEA is a Non-Governmental Organisation, of over 120 members drawn from forty one countries. The work of EAEA is policy development on the European stage, publications and information for members, developing practice through projects and international co-operation. EAEA has a Head Office in Brussels, and three link offices, in Helsinki, Madrid and Budapest. This means that EAEA has a wide reach, enabling it to connect adult education work in a strong network.

I was elected to the Board in 2002, as the Irish representative, and re-elected in 2004, and 2006, and it was an immense privilege for me to serve on it. The Board of EAEA is composed of twelve people, representing different countries of the forty-one members. During that time, I have attended meetings in places that have become very dear to me: Riga, Vilnius, Ljubljana, Budapest, Bonn, Helsinki, Lillehammer, and more. Apart from visiting these places, which in itself was absolutely wonderful, our hosts were the member organisation, which meant that we were introduced to the heart and soul of these places, rather than on the outside as tourists. It is Ireland's turn to host the meeting in October 2008, and our chance to return the hospitality.

Each member of the Board of EAEA works in adult and community education at some level. Therefore I got to meet practitioners and policy makers from all areas of adult education, including academics, popular educators, IT specialists, and directors of national organisations. It was a fantastic opportunity to dialogue with people who have such vast experience, both in the West, but also in Eastern Europe. It was also revealing to reflect on the social network of practice and policy in which we Irish are fortunate to participate and as the Irish representative I was able to demonstrate and share experiences from our work here. We have also been hugely influential in the strategic development of the EAEA participating actively in its various projects.

The highlights of my time on the board include the sponsorship of the first Grundtvig Award, and meeting the winners, who have represented some of the most innovative initiatives in the field. For example, I met with Israeli and Palestinian adult educators working for peace together, reminding me of the kind of work I did with NUIM and the People's College, Belfast, in the nineteen-nineties. I also worked on the communication strategy, and the editorial board of EAEA news. I represent EAEA on the editorial board of LLinE, the Journal of Lifelong Learning in Europe. Overall, I was happy to be part of such an pioneering endeavour.

The main news of 2007-2008 in EAEA is the appointment of the new Secretary General, Gina Ebner and she heralds a new era in EAEA. The 2008 General Assembly of EAEA will take place in Dublin in October.

Brid Connolly, Vice President



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

...AONTAS IS ALSO
COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING
ITSELF AS A LEARNING
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DEMAND
RIGHT TO



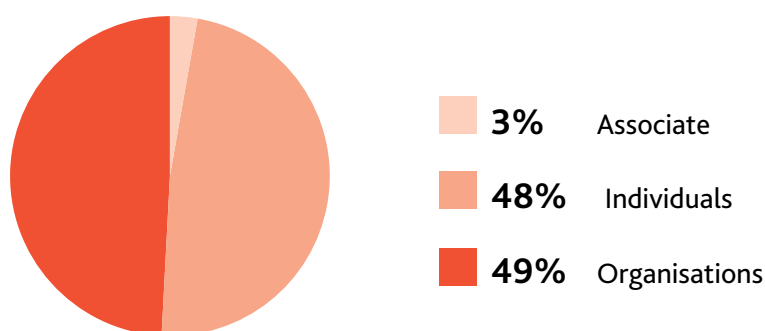
AONTAS pre-election campaign
2007



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AONTAS is first and foremost a membership organisation and it is committed to the support and development of its members. It is also committed to developing itself as a learning organisation, a centre of expertise and a model of good practice for the sector.

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 588 members. The breakdown of membership is: 17 associate members, 281 individuals and 290 organisational (of which 93 are statutory and 197 are voluntary).



MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Using the framework of the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010 a number of projects were initiated to meet the needs of the AONTAS membership.

Community Education Network

The Community Education Network is a new platform for community education groups within the AONTAS membership which was established as a space for promoting community education and as a political platform for shaping policy. The need for such a platform was identified during the Strategic Plan consultation process. Community groups voiced their concern regarding the need for a representative body for community education, a stronger voice for community education and a more direct way to be a part of the policy work of AONTAS. AONTAS staff together with a Steering Group, composed of members from a community education background, guide the work and policy actions of this Community Education Network. It is proposed that these meetings will take place three times a year to support and progress the work.

The first meeting of the Community Education Network took place on Thursday 8th November at St Andrew's Resource Centre, Dublin. The plan for the day was to create a relaxed informal environment designed to facilitate active participation of attendees and

allowed critical reflection on the work of community education. The focus of the day was to establish the Network, its aims and objectives, and identify what opportunities are available for the Community Education Network to effect change. A strategic work plan for the Community Education Network was created, based on the responses of the participants and the Steering Group. It is envisaged that the Network will be action-orientated and will carry out specific areas of work focussing on three key themes:

- Resources – through active lobbying work
- Recognition – through discussion, debate and clarification on the definition of community education and
- Raising the Profile – through local and national media work.

Membership Recruitment

As part of the membership recruitment drive a new application form was produced, in line with the changes to membership categories and fees. Following a review of membership needs this application form became part of a bigger project, the AONTAS Membership Resource Pack, encompassing the policy, promotion and information requirements of our members. It is envisaged that the Resource Pack will be used by our membership, adult and community education groups, adult learners and, very importantly, prospective adult learners. The content of the Resource Pack focuses on four specific areas: Membership, Information, Policy and Promotion. The Pack was officially launched by Minister Sean Haughey at the General Meeting on Thursday 28th November 2007.

Membership Meetings

Creating a meeting space for members is essential to strengthening the AONTAS membership; it provides information on our work including particular lobbying priorities and promotional activities. The two main meetings this year focussed on specific areas of our work: the Annual General Meeting concentrated on the AONTAS Strategic Plan 2007-2010, and the General Meeting gave members the opportunity to discuss key policy issues for the sector.

The Annual General Meeting, in May, was the setting for presenting the membership with the new AONTAS Strategic Plan 2007-2010. After extensive consultation the Strategic Plan was redrafted in line with the membership responses to the consultation document. The membership had the opportunity to comment on, and adopt, the final document which is based on the four themes: policy, promotion, practice and partnership with the cross-cutting theme of organisational development.

At the General Meeting, in November, the 10 AONTAS Demands were revisited in terms of the achievements made and the areas outstanding for further work. Regarding the latter, AONTAS sought its members' views on specific policy and research activities. A number of themed workshops were run on the following areas: structural development in the sector; funding mechanisms for community education; active citizenship and reacting to changes in government policy. All discussions will feed into the policy and research activities of AONTAS over the coming year.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

During 2007 the Executive Committee met six times. New members were elected to the Committee at the AGM in May according to the new rules adopted by membership in 2006. Committee members now serve for two years before going for re-election for a further two years thus allowing an opportunity for members to develop their knowledge and experience as Board members. In November a joint meeting was held between the Committee and the staff team. This proved to be really successful, allowing members and staff to get to know one another and exchange ideas and information. Executive members also serve on advisory and working groups and represent AONTAS at a wide range of events.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

2007 saw some changes in the staff team with the departure of Martina Quinn and Maria McMullen. New appointments in 2007 included Adele McKenna, Policy/Research Officer, Niamh Farren, Communications Officer, Kathryn Laing, Clerical Assistant/Receptionist and Eleonora Peruffo, Administrator. The staff team worked together in February to develop a workplan for the year and reviewed the workplan in June and December. AONTAS continues to invest in the development of the staff team through internal and external training as well as individual mentoring and team building.

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF LIFELONG LEARNING (IALLA)

The International Academy of Lifelong Learning Advocacy (IALLA) is a training course for lifelong learning advocacy leaders which is organized by the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE). In its third year, a call for applications was made in April 2007 and from a response of ninety, 30 participants were chosen. AONTAS supported an application from Niamh O'Reilly, Membership Development Officer who participated in the course which was held in Montevideo, Uruguay during September 2007. The three week course focused on generating a broader vision on adult education within the framework of human rights and active citizenship and developing linkages with the most important globalization issues that affect the world.

AONTAS sees this analysis as key to developing an understanding of the 'bigger picture' environment in which adult and community education operates. The learning from this course has enabled Niamh to have a greater understanding and awareness of the link between current global issues and adult and community education. This global perspective will be brought into her daily work and will add to the development work of the organisation and will also further strengthen our links with the international adult education movement.



Niamh O'Reilly and her fellow learners at the IALLA Academy





MEMBERSHIP LIST



MEMBERSHIP LIST

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

A.L.P.S.
Access 2000 Wexford Ltd.
Addiction Response Crumlin
Adult Community Education Network
AEO'S Association
Age Action Ireland
Age and Opportunity
ALLIM Community Training Development Agency
Ait Na nDaoine CDP
An Bradán Feasa
An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
An Cosan
AN t-IONAD GLAS
An Tochar Adult Education Centre
Aonad Family Resource Centre
Archangel Training & Consultancy Group Limited
Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland
Athlone IT
Avondhu Development Group
Ballinasloe Local Learning Centre
Ballyfermot Local Employment Service
Ballyhoura Development Ltd.
Ballymun Men's Centre Ltd.
Ballyphenane/Togher C.D.P.
Banulacht
Bawnogue Women's Development Group
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)
Brackenstown Adult Scene Of Education
(BASE)
Brainwave, The Irish Epilepsy Association
C & I Systems
Canal Communities Partnership
CANDO Community Partnership
Carlow Youth Training
Castlemaine Family Resource Centre
Catholic Youth Care
CEFA (Community Education Facilitators' Association)
CELT (Centre for Environmental Living and Training)
CEO'S Association
City of Cork VEC
City of Dublin VEC
City of Limerick VEC
City of Waterford VEC
Clare Co Library
Clare Women's Network
Clondalkin LES
Clondalkin Women's Network
Co Carlow VEC
Co Cavan VEC
Co Clare VEC
Co Donegal VEC, Letterkenny
Co Donegal VEC, Donegal Town
Co Dublin VEC
Co Galway VEC
Co Kildare VEC
Co Kilkenny VEC
Co Laois VEC
Co Leitrim VEC

Co Limerick VEC
 Co Longford VEC
 Co Louth VEC
 Co Offaly VEC
 Co Roscommon VEC
 Co Tipperary VEC (NTH)
 Co Tipperary VEC (STH)
 Co Waterford VEC
 Co Westmeath VEC
 Co Wexford Partnership Limited
 Co Wexford VEC
 Co Kildare Centre for the Unemployed
 Co Limerick Adult Education Guidance Service
 Community Action for Relief and Development (CARDEV)
 Community Action Network (CAN)
 Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA)
 Community Awareness of Drugs (C.A.D.)
 Community Training & Education Centre
 Connolly Information Centre for the Unemployed
 Corduff Community Development Project Ltd.
 CORI Education Office
 Cork Adult Education Council
 County Carlow Adult Educational Guidance Service
 Crosscare
 Cultur
 D.A.T.E. – Dundrum Adult Training and Education
 D8CEC
 Darndale Belcamp Discovery Centre
 DCU/Office of Vice President for Learning Innovation
 Development Studies Centre
 DOCHAS for Women
 Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service
 Donegal Local Development Co.Ltd.
 Donegal Town Women’s Group
 Donegal Travellers Project
 Donegal Women’s Network
 Doras Buí-A Parents Alone Resource Centre
 Douglas Community School
 DRAIOCHT
 Drogheda Area Women’s Network
 Drogheda Community Forum
 Drogheda Resource Centre for the Unemployed
 Duagh Family Centre
 Dublin 12 Women’s Action Group
 Dublin Adult Learning Centre
 Dublin City Council
 Dublin College of Management and IT
 Dublin Corporation Public Libraries
 Dublin Employment Pact (DEP)
 Dublin Inner City Partnership
 Dublin Institute of Technology
 Dublin Men’s Coalition
 Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology
 Dunrath Training & Development
 Easkey Community FRC
 Educational Guidance Service for Adults
 Eiri Corca Baiscinn – West Clare Development

Emyvale Local Learning Centre
 Enable Ireland – Cork Service
 Eolach.ie
 Equal Ireland
 Fáilte Ireland
 FÁS
 FETAC
 Finglas Cabra Partnership
 Forbairt Naionrai Teo
 Foroige
 Forum Women's Working Group
 Four Roads Local Learning Centre
 Galway City Partnership
 Galway People's Resource Centre
 Greendale Community School
 Harmony Community Dev. Programme
 Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC)
 Hospital Family Resource Centre
 I.C.A.
 I.N.T.O.
 I.V.E.A.
 ICS SKILLS
 Institute of Public Administration (IPA)
 Iona House
 Irish Coach Institute
 Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
 Irish Training & Educational Centre
 Iveragh Information Technology Training Ltd.
 Joint Managerial Body
 Kerry Action for Development Education
 Kerry Education Service
 Kerryhead/Ballyheigue Family Resource Centre
 Kildare Women's Group
 Kilroy's College
 Kilternan Adult Education
 Kingscourt Youthreach
 KLEAR Ltd.
 Larkin Unemployed Centre
 LES Guidance Service Limerick
 Letterkenny Institute of Technology
 Letterkenny Local Learning Centre
 Letterkenny Woman's Centre
 Limerick Community Education Network
 Limerick Institute of Technology
 Limerick Resource Centre for the Unemployed
 Limerick Senior College
 Limerick Womens Network
 Literacy Development Centre, Waterford Institute of Technology
 Longford Local Learning Centre
 Longford Women's Link
 Loreto Centre
 Lourdes Youth & Community Services Ltd.
 MABS National Development Ltd.
 Macra na Feirme
 Mary Immaculate Secondary School
 Mayfield Community Adult Learning Project (C.A.L.P.)
 Maynooth Adult Daytime Education (M.A.D.E.)
 Men's Development Network

Mercy College
 Mercy Family Centre
 Mevagh Resource Centre
 Ministries Development Group
 More2life Business and Lifecoaching
 N.C.C.W.N.
 National Adult Literacy Agency
 National College of Ireland
 National Learning Network
 National Parent's Council Primary
 National Training Centre
 National Traveller MABS
 National Women's Council of Ireland
 National Youth Council of Ireland
 Navan Traveller's Training Centre
 Nenagh Community Network
 Network Kildare
 New Directions Women's Education Project
 New Inn Womens Group
 Newbury House Family Centre
 North Kerry Together
 North Leitrim Women's Centre
 North Wall Women's Centre
 North West Inner City Women's Network
 Northside Community Enterprises Ltd.
 NUI Galway
 NUI Maynooth, Centre for Adult & Community Education
 OAK Partnership
 One Family
 Parents Education Programme
 PARTAS
 Pavee Point Travellers' Group
 People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd.
 People's Association for Rural Development (PARAD)
 People's College
 Pitman Training Centre Swords
 Portarlington Local Learning Centre
 Presentation Family Centre Ltd.
 Prussia Street Women's Group
 Public Service Executive Union
 Quarryvale Family Resource Centre
 Quo Vadis Solutions
 R.T.E.
 Redeemer Centre of Ongoing Learning
 Regional Educational Guidance Service – Waterford IT
 Ronanstown Women's Group/CDP
 Roscommon Higher Education Local Learning Centre
 Rowlagh Womens Group
 Ruhama
 S.A.O.L. Project Limited
 Sacred Heart Secondary School
 Scoil Dara
 Scoil Mhuire
 Second Chance Education Project for Women
 Sliabh Luachra Local Development
 Sligo Adult Guidance in Education (SAGE)
 Soilse
 South Kerry Development Partnership Co. Ltd.
 South West Kerry Family Resource Centre

South West Wexford Community Development Project
 Southill Integrated Development Programme
 Southside Women's Action Network (S.W.A.N.)
 South-West Kerry Women's Association (S.W.K.A.)
 St. Vincent's Trust
 St. Aloysius' College
 St. Andrew's Resource Centre
 St. Catherines Community Services Centre
 St. Kilian's Adult and Community Education
 St. Munchin's Family Resource Centre
 T.A.R.G.E.T.
 Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed
 Tallaght Partnership
 Teachers' Union of Ireland
 The Adult Learners Forum
 The Caha Family Resource Centre
 The College of Progressive Education
 The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project
 The Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Association
 The Media Co-op
 The Milltown Institute
 The National Agency for Beauty Therapy Education & Training
 The Open Training College
 The Open University in Ireland
 The WEB Project
 Tipperary Institute
 Tipperary Women's Network
 Tir Boghaine Teo
 Tirhugh Resource Centre
 Togher Family Centre Ltd.
 Tralee Centre for the Unemployed
 Tralee Women's Forum & Co.Ltd.
 Tuam Community Development Resource Centre
 Tullamore Creative Women Journeying Together
 Údarás na Gaeltachta
 University College Cork
 University College Dublin
 URRUS – A Ballymun Youth Action Project
 Vocal Women's Group Dublin 15
 Warrenmount C.E.D. Centre
 Waterford Women's Centre
 Weightwatchers
 West Cork & Beara Womens Network
 West Cork Community Partnership
 West Cork Traveller Centre
 West Training & Development Ltd.
 Western Health Board
 Westmeath Community Development
 Whitefriar Community, Education & Development Project
 Women Educating for Transformation
 Women of the North West
 Women Together Tallaght Network
 Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association Ltd.
 Women's Education Research & Resource Centre
 Women's Resource & Development Agency

Women's Studies Centre
Workers' Educational Association
WRC Social & Economic Consultants Ltd.
Yoga Therapy Ireland
Youth Information Centre, Letterkenny

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Mr Michael Abiola-Phillips
Ms Theresa Ahearne
Ms Veronica Allen
Ms Sharon Baker
Mr Patrick B. Bannon
Mr Denis Barrett
Ms Noreen Barron
Ms Eileen Bellew
Ms Mary Blake
Simplice Bodji
Mrs Patsy Brady
Ms Mary Brodie
Ms Rita Brophy
JJ Brosnan
Ms Una Buckley
Ms Gornait Burke
Ms Sinead Burke
Ms Elaine Butler
Ms Elaine Butler
Ms Sandra Byrne
Ms Theresa Byrne
Mr Derek Henry Carr
Mr Dave Carr
Ms Caroline Casey
Ms Gill Casey
Ms Monica Cassidy
Ms Liz Cleves
Mr Brian Clifford
Mr Donal Coffey
Ms Agnes Coleman
Ms Grainne Collins
Fr. Martin Convey
Ms Olive Costello
Mr Ray Creighton
Mr Jerry Cronin
Mr Timothy Crowley
Ms Cathy Cryan
Ms Susan Cullinane
Ms Jacinta Cunneen
Ms Noreen Dake
Ms Andrea Dalton
Ms Orla Daly
Ms Anna Dangerfield
Ms Merike Darmody
Ms Fiona De Buis
Ms Teresa Delaney
Mr John Doherty
Mr Andrew Doherty
Ms Emer Dolphin
Ms Liz Donnelly
Ms Colette Dorrian
Ms Tracey Dorricott
Ms Linda Dowling
Ms Flori Downey
Ms Catherine Doyle
Ms Elizabeth Doyle
Prof. Sheelagh Drudy
Mr Ed Du Vivier
Mr Martin Duffy
Ms Liz Duffy
Ms Gillian Dunlop
Mr Jeremiah Gerard Dunne
Ms Paula Dunne
Ms Susan Dunne
Sr Angela Durkin
Mr Mark John Dyer

Ms Rita M Edwards
Mr Anthony Thomas Egan
Mr John Farrell
Ms Maggie Feeley
Ms Carina Fitzgerald
Ms Riona Fitzgerald
Ms Eileen Fitzgerald
Mr John Fitzgibbon
Ms Priscilla Fitzpatrick
Ms Liz Fitzsimons
Ms Mary Flanagan
Ms Mary Flannery
Dr Ted Fleming
Mr Desmond Fleming
Mr David Flynn
Ms Cora Foley
Ms Trish Forde
Ms Mary Foudy
Mr Paul Gaerty
Ms Lorraine Galvin
Ms Deirdre Germaine
Mr Dewlen Giles Bowler
Munaza Gilmore
Mr Brian Glennon
Mr Pdraig Glynn
Ms Marie Gonnely
Ms M. Teresa Gonzalez
Mr Stephen Goulding
Ms Patrisha Greaney
Ms Margaret Griffin
Bernie Grummell
Francis Nana Gyasi
Mr Mohammad Hamidur Rashid
Ms Betty Hannon-Flavin
Ms Angela Harnesse
Mr Kevin Harrington
Ms Jillian Harrison

Ms Joan Hassett
Ms Brigid Haugh MacSweeney
Ms Aobhan Haverty
Ms Fiona Healy
Ms Lucy Hearne
Mr Bernard William Heck
Ms Phyllis Heduan
Ms Marietta Herraghty
Ms Mary Hickey
Mr Pat Higgins
Ms Cathleen Hogan
Ms Una Holden
Ms Freda Holly
Ms Tracey Holsgrove
Mr Marcus Hopkins
Ms Eleanor Hough
Ms Margaret Howard
Ms Joan Hughes
Ms Geraldine Hunt
Mr Kevin Hurley
Ms Margaret M. Hurley
Ms Niamh Jackson
Ms Deirdre Johnson
Ms Jacqueline Joynt
Mr Larry Kavanagh
Ms Noleen Kavanagh
Ms Diane Keane
Ms Alison Keane
Ms Janet Keegan
Ms Anne Martina Kehoe
Mr Michael Dermot Kelly
Mr Richard Kelly
Ms Margaret Kelly
Mr Michael Kenny
Ms Máire Kerrane
Mr Liam Kilbride
Ms Rhona King

Ms Debby King
Ms Paula King
Ms Hilary Kinneen
Ms Bernadette Kinsella
Ms Marian Kinsella
Mr Paul Larkin
Mr Sean Lawless
Ms Kerry Lawless
Ms Lara Lawless
Ms Catherine Leonard
Mr John Leslie
Mr Ray Lucey
Ms Gemma Lynch
Tsambwa MacDonald Freeman
Ms Breege Madden
Ms Lesley Malone
Ms Anne Marron
Mr Larry Masterson
Ms Mary Mather Leahy
Mr Robbie Matthews
Mr Patrick Maunsell
Ms Mary McCabe
Ms Eilish McCann
Ms Louise McCann
Ms Vivienne McCann
Ms Anita McCann
Ms Pamela McCarthy
Ms Teresa McCullagh
Mr Sean McDermott
Ms Mary McEvoy
Mr Sean McGaley
Mr Dermot McCarthy
Mr Pat McGill
Ms Catherine McGinley
Ms Cara McGinley
Bernie McGinley
Ms Verona McGivern

Ms Valerie McGrath
Mr Cathal McManus
Ms Orlagh McMullan
Ms Ann McNamara
Ms Marian McRory
Ms Kay Meany
Ms Carol Melody
Mr Adrian Mitchell
Ms Mary Molloy
Ms Edel Moloney
Ms Vanessa Montgomery
Ms Helena Moran
Patsy Moran
Ms Elizabeth Mulhall
Ms Kaye Mullaney
Mr Denis Murphy
Mr Damien Murphy
Ms Sarah Murphy
Ms Margaret Murphy
Ms Marian Murphy
Ms Theresa Murphy-Sheehy
Mr Luke Murtagh
Ms Clora Neilan
Ms Cait Ni Mhurchu
Ms Maria Nolan O'Connell
Ms Stephanie Nwaigwe
Mr Aiden O'Brien
Dr Thomas O'Brien
Ms Ann O'Brien
Ms Ashling O'Brien
Ms Maire O'Brien
Ms Louise O'Brien
Mr Sean S. O'Broin
Ms Ruth O'Callaghan
Ms Eva O'Connell
Ms Catherine O'Connor
Ms Fiona O'Connor

Ms Noreen O'Donovan
Ms Catherine O'Dowd
Ms Karen O'Dowling-Keane
Ms Shiela O'Driscoll
Ms Mary O'Driscoll
Ms Noelle O'Dwyer
Ms Anna O'Dwyer
Ms Julia O'Gorman
Ms Maeve O'Grady
Mr John O'Loughlin
Mr James O'Loughlin
Mr T O'Mahoney
Mr Colm O'Maolmhuire
Ms Jennifer Osborne
Mr Rory O'Sullivan
Ms Maria O'Sullivan
Ms Avril O'Sullivan
Ms Mary O'Sullivan
Mr Joseph O'Sullivan/Noel Keenan
Ms Sorcha O'Toole
Ms Toni Owens
Mr Paul Patton
Robias Phiri
Ms Angela Potter
Mr Mick Power
Ms Emma Quirke
Ms Mary Rafferty
Ms Janice Ransom
Ms Liz Redmond
Ms Fionnuala Richardson
Mr Michael Riordan
Mr Paddy Robinson
Ms Barbara Ronayne
Mr Michael Rooney
Ms Orna Ryan
Hussein Saleh Hamed Buhidma
Mr Seamus Scanlan

Mr Eugene Scully
Mr Kevin Sharkey
Ms Mary Sheehy
Ms Emer Sheerin
Ms Carmel Sheridan
Ms Mary Sheridan
Mr Eugene Sherry
Ms Anne Shorthall
Ms Trish Sinnott
Mr Gerard Slattery
Ms Sheila Smith
Ms Annette Stacey
Mr Paul Stanley
Ms Imelda Staunton
Mr Stephen Stewart
Ms Jasmin Storan
Mr Michael Thompson
Ms Gabrielle Thorsch
MS Geraldine Tighe
Ms Ita Treacy
Ms Linda Turner
Ms Vera van der Velden – Lyons
Ms Pam Wadeson
Mr Ray Walker
Ms Fiona Wall
Ms Anne M. Walsh
Ms Sarah-Beth Watkins
Mr Robin Webster
Ms Catherine White
Ms Julie White

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Community Action for Relief and
Development (CARDEV)

People's Association for Rural Development
(PARD)

Manzoor Alam

Femi Anjorin
Aaron Conant
Zachory Lee Cook
Okerefor Darlington
Norma Ferrell
Isiaka a Isajimi
Andrew Jilani
Marcie Jones
Ehsan Kazemi
Yousaf Khan
A.K.M Anisur Rahman
Koi Tirima
Khalid Usman
Pam Wadeson

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers

John Ryan – President, City of Limerick VEC
Patrick Nolan – Hon. Treasurer,
County Wexford VEC
Brid Connolly – Vice-President,
NUI Maynooth
Marian Duffy – Hon. Secretary,
County Carlow VEC

Organisational Members

Pat Higgins – Adult Education Officers
Association (until May 07)
Marie Mulvihill – Francis Street Community
Centre, Dublin (until May 07)
Rose Hearne Todd – National Collective
of Community-based Women's Networks
(until May 07)
Valerie O'Carroll – Clondalkin Women's
Network, Co Dublin (until May 07)
Mary Hilda Cavanagh – Irish Vocational
Education Association

Ruth Smith – Tipperary Women's Network
Jan Lewis – Second Chance Education
Project for Women, Donegal
Stephen Flitton – Warrenmount CED
John Murphy – Dublin Men's Coalition
Maria Gorman – Kerry Education Services
Elva O'Callaghan – National Collective of
Community-based Women's Networks
(until May 07)
Eithne NiDhonncaidh – Co. Galway VEC
Morgan Dunne – Co. Wexford VEC

Individual Members

Cora Foley
Jillian Harrison

AONTAS STAFF 2007

Berni Brady, Director
Jacinta Cuthbert, Head of Organisational
Development
Maureen Kavanagh, National Co-ordinator
of the Community Education Facilitators
Maria McMullen, Membership/Policy
Support Worker (left Summer 2007)
Martina Quinn, Communications Officer
(left Summer 2007)
Niamh O'Reilly, Membership Development
Officer
Jennifer Gunning, Information Officer
Ciara Murphy, Resource and
Communications Officer
Adele McKenna, Policy and Research Officer
Dympna Larkin, Membership Liaison Officer
Niamh Farren, Communications Officer
Eleonora Peruffo, Clerical Officer
Kathryn Laing, Clerical Officer/Receptionist



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AONTAS Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

Organisational Information

Directors

Mr. John Ryan (President)
Ms. Brid Connolly (Vice-President)
Cllr. Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)
Ms. Marian Duffy (Hon. Secretary)
Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh
Mr. Morgan Dunne
Mr. Stephen Flitton
Ms. Cora Foley
Ms. Maria Gorman
Ms. Jillian Harrison
Ms. Jan Lewis
Mr. John Murphy
Ms. Eithne Níc Dhonnchadha
Ms. Ruth Smith

Secretary

Ms. Brid Connolly

Company Number 80958

Charity Number 6719

Registered Office 83-87 Main Street
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

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

Business Address 83-87 Main Street
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Organisational Information

Bankers Bank of Ireland
Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

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

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 December 2007

The Board of Directors of AONTAS present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2007.

Principal Activity

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

Results for the year and state of affairs at 31 December 2007

The results for the year and the state of affairs of the organisation at 31 December 2007 are set out on pages 67-71 of the financial statements. The results for the year show net incoming resources of €3,930 (31 December 2006: €51,029).

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

In common with other companies operating in Ireland in this sector, the company is dependent upon voluntary income donations. The directors are of the opinion that the company is well positioned to manage the costs of running the company.

Directors

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

Mr. John Ryan (President)

Ms. Brid Connolly (Vice-President)

Cllr. Patrick Nolan (Hon. Treasurer)

Ms. Marian Duffy (Hon. Secretary)

Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh

Mr. Morgan Dunne

Mr. Stephen Flitton

Ms. Cora Foley

Ms. Maria Gorman

Ms. Jillian Harrison

Ms. Jan Lewis

Mr. John Murphy

Ms. Eithne Níc Dhonnchadha

Ms. Ruth Smith

Future Developments

The company will continue to carry out its objects as a Charity. (CHY 6719)

Books of Account

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

Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986

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

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

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

Auditors

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

Signed on behalf of the Board

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director

Date: 5th April 2008

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities for the year ended 31 December 2007

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

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

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director

Date: 5th April 2008

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31 December 2007 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cashflow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 72.

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

Respective Responsibilities of Directors and Auditors

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

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

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company and whether the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the company's balance sheet and its income and expenditure account are in agreement with the books of account.

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

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

Basis of Audit Opinion

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

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

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31 December 2007 and of its net outgoing resources for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006.

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

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report on page 62-63 is consistent with the financial statements.

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

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

Date: 5th April 2008

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2007

		2007	2006
	Notes	€	€
INCOME			
Restricted and unrestricted funds	2	1,255,624	1,043,440
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Administration			
Salary costs		175,766	195,732
Pension scheme		24,686	26,211
Staff training and expenses		15,608	10,856
Postage and courier services		28,183	21,753
Stationery		13,353	13,153
Telephone		9,025	10,255
Travel and subsistence		9,859	9,858
Executive and general committee expenses		20,604	29,616
Legal fees		55	165
Audit and accountancy fees		7,314	7,000
Bank interest and charges		837	893
Representation and affiliation		25,410	19,155
Miscellaneous		684	206
Rent of venues and equipment		3,790	1,535
Computer costs		839	1,617
Research and projects apportionments		(13,450)	-
		322,563	348,005

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2007

	2007	2006
Notes	€	€
Premises		
Light and heat	3,624	3,126
Rent and rates	92,724	91,856
Repairs and maintenance	19,077	14,090
Leasing charges	6,515	1,600
Insurance	7,634	7,663
Cleaning	3,307	3,125
Depreciation of computers and office equipment	18,669	17,865
	151,550	139,325
Development		
Salaries	321,150	325,616
Pension scheme	35,473	38,717
Consultants and contract staff	18,354	2,913
Travel and subsistence	22,544	32,075
Printing and publications	98,733	36,552
Conferences / seminars / membership meetings	16,123	21,076
Public relations strategy	5,326	4,137
Adult learners festival	134,102	19,900
Information resources	4,797	7,263
Recruitment	1,990	3,877
Childcare	117	847
	658,709	492,973

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2007

Research and Projects		
BTEI men's participation research	13,545	-
Quality Assurance Framework	37,271	4,200
Research (including IRAACE)	52,674	7,908
Wheel training links	15,382	-
	118,872	12,108
Total resources expended	1,251,694	992,411
Net incoming resources for year	3,930	51,029
Fund balances at beginning of year	29,239	21,790
Fund balances at end of year	33,169	29,239

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

The notes on pages 72-78 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 5th April 2008 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007

	Notes	2007		2006	
		€	€	€	€
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	8		36,989		11,826
Current Assets					
Debtors	9		32,753		13,188
Cash at bank and in hand			174,539		97,598
			207,292		110,786
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year					
	10		(211,112)		(93,373)
Net Current (Liabilities)/Assets			(3,820)		17,413
Net Assets			33,169		29,239
Income Funds					
Restricted funds	13		-		-
Unrestricted funds	14		33,169		29,239
Total Funds			33,169		29,239

The notes on pages 72-78 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 5th April 2008 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 December 2007

		2007	2006
	Notes	€	€
Reconciliation of net incoming resources to net cash inflow from financial activities			
Net incoming resources less interest receivable		2,032	50,597
Depreciation		18,669	17,865
(Increase) in debtors		(19,565)	(2,412)
Increase in creditors		117,739	84,190
Net cash inflow from financial activities		118,875	150,240
Cash Flow Statement			
Net cash inflow from financial activities		118,875	150,240
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	11	1,898	432
Capital expenditure	11	(43,832)	-
Increase in cash in the year		76,941	150,672
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds (Note 12)			
Increase in cash in the year		76,941	150,672
Net funds at 1st January		97,598	(53,074)
Net funds at 31st December	12	174,539	97,598

The notes on pages 72-78 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 5th April 2008 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

1. Accounting Policies

1.1. Basis of Accounting

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

1.2. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

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

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

1.3. Leasing

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

1.4. Pensions

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

1.5. Grants Receivable

Grant income receivable from the Department of Education and Science in respect of the CEF Training and Support programme, the Adult Learners Festival, Research, the Information Pack, BTEI and the Women's CE Quality Framework and grant income receivable from the Wheel Organisation, FETAC and NQAI are treated as being restricted as the incomes are applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

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

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

2. Sources of Income

	2007	2006
	€	€
Restricted Funds		
Department of Education & Science Grants:		
CEF Training and Support programme	156,872	138,407
Adult Learner Festival Grant	94,083	20,775
Research	52,674	-
Information Pack	35,000	-
BTEI	13,543	-
Quality Assurance Framework	41,471	-
The Wheel Training Links	15,382	98
FETAC	12,650	-
NQAI	3,000	-
	424,675	159,280
Unrestricted Funds		
Department of Education & Science:		
Grant in Aid (Core Funding)	442,000	452,000
S.P.I.D.A.S. supplement	355,142	408,000
Members' subscriptions	31,543	21,025
Other Grants	-	859
Interest receivable	1,898	432
Miscellaneous	366	1,844
	830,949	884,160
Total Income	1,255,624	1,043,440

3. Continuing Operations

The statement of financial activities has been prepared on the basis that the organisation has only continuing operations in accordance with the Companies Acts.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

4. Net Outgoing Resources for the year

	2007	2006
	€	€
Net outgoing resources for the year is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	18,669	17,865
Auditors' remuneration	7,314	7,000

5. Employees

	2007	2006
Number of employees		
The average numbers of employees during the year were:	10	9

	2007	2006
Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	496,916	521,348
Other pension costs	60,159	64,928
	557,075	586,276

6. Pension Costs

The organisation operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are made by both the employee and the employer. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the organisation in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by AONTAS to the fund and amount to €60,159 (2006: €64,928).

7. Taxation

No charge to current or deferred taxation arises as the organisation has been granted exemption by the revenue authorities in Ireland.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

8. Tangible assets

	Office equipment	Computer equipment	Fixtures & fittings	Total
	€	€	€	€
Cost				
At 1 January 2007	48,624	28,963	49,519	127,106
Additions	3,685	40,147	-	43,832
Disposals	(26,863)	(4,804)	-	(31,667)
At 31 December 2007	25,446	64,306	49,519	139,271
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2007	48,624	28,963	37,693	115,280
On disposals	(26,863)	(4,804)	-	(31,667)
Charge for the year	737	8,029	9,903	18,669
At 31 December 2007	22,498	32,188	47,596	102,282
Net book value				
At 31 December 2007	2,948	32,118	1,923	36,989
At 31 December 2006	-	-	11,826	11,826

9. Debtors

	2007	2006
	€	€
Other debtors and prepayments	32,753	13,188

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2007	2006
	€	€
Pension fund loan	-	2,951
Trade creditors	1,331	6,977
Wages control	-	928
Deferred income - grants receivable	201,553	73,720
Accruals	8,228	8,797
	211,112	93,373

11. Gross Cash Flows

	2007	2006
	€	€
Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	1,898	432
Capital expenditure		
Payments to acquire tangible assets	43,832	-

12. Analysis of changes in net funds

	Opening balance	Cash flows	Closing balance
	€	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	97,598	76,941	174,539

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

13. Restricted Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
Specific Funds:				
Grants from Department of Education & Science:				
CEF Training and Support programme	-	156,872	(156,872)	-
Adult Learner festival	-	94,083	(94,083)	-
Research	-	52,674	(52,674)	-
Information pack	-	35,000	(35,000)	-
BTEI	-	13,543	(13,543)	-
Quality Assurance Framework	-	41,471	(41,471)	-
The Wheel Training Links	-	15,382	(15,382)	-
FETAC	-	12,650	(12,650)	-
NQAI	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
	-	424,675	(424,675)	-

14. Unrestricted Reserves

	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
General Fund	29,239	830,949	(827,019)	33,169

AONTAS (being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007

15. Controlling Party

The organisation is controlled by the Board of Directors.

16. Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 5th April 2008 and signed on its behalf by

Ms. Brid Connolly
Director

Ms. Maria Gorman
Director



Aontas

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